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A HISTORY OF PUERTO RICAN RADICAL NATIONALISM, 1920-1965

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
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The Ohio State University
1973

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My last words of appreciation and gratitude belong to my wife, who comforted and gave me strength in my direst moments. To her, my undying love and appreciation.
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.  INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. NEW MASTERS AND OLD SERVANTS: THE SEARCH FOR AN INDENTITY</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. A TRADITION OF VIOLENCE AND TERROR</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE PUERTO RICAN NATIONALIST PARTY</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.  NATIONALISM AND TERROR</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE QUIET DECADE</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. THE NATIONALIST REVOLT OF 1950</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. NATIONALISM AND THE UNRESOLVED QUESTION OF STATUS</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To this day the political history of Puerto Rico remains the story of a colonial entity governed from beyond the seas. Throughout its long history Puerto Rico has remained a colonial possession, first of Spain and afterwards of the United States. Because of this the question has been repeatedly raised whether a genuine movement for independence has ever existed in the island. These doubts were strengthened in the 1930's by Antonio S. Pedreira, a Puerto Rican intellectual who wrote an interpretative essay on insular society. Throughout his work Pedreira characterizes Puerto Ricans as a docile people, who lacked the will, stamina and desire to do things on their own. Later on, the severe judgment and ideas espoused by Pedreira were developed further by René Marqués, another Puerto Rican intellectual, who used such terms as peaceful, tolerant, fatalist, aplatanado and fangotado to describe the seemingly inborn characteristics of the islanders in general. Influenced by his clear-cut republicanism, Marqués vents his frustration at being a colonial on the people of Puerto Rico. In a scathing condemnation Marqués declares that in Puerto Rico "violent acts...are not, in a final analysis, the result of a revolutionary doctrine, a heroic tradition or a clear conscious rebelliousness...but rather the desperate acts of weaklings, forced into action so as to retain a sense of dignity and self-respect."
If one is to believe Marqués, the numerous and bloody Nationalist incidents in the twentieth century were acts born out of desperation, and the participants in those acts were not really seeking political freedom. This is indeed possible, but to reject Nationalist violence as farcical is a far easier task than to probe into the insular past, seeking a nexus, a precedent, a problem or a set of problems that may help to clarify events in the twentieth century. Thus, to better understand twentieth-century radical nationalism in Puerto Rico it is necessary to study briefly insular separatism and political aspirations in the preceding century.

It was in the nineteenth century, according to Lidio Cruz Monclova and José A. Gautier Dupena, among others, that a conscious awareness of a Puerto Rican identity began to emerge. More important, it was in the early years of this century that a Puerto Rican desire for greater independence and a more liberal self-government came to the fore. This desire for a greater voice in their own affairs created among many islanders a separatist feeling that led to attempts at insurrection against Spain.

The first outward manifestation of Puerto Rican separatism followed indirectly as a result of Napoleon's usurpation of power in Madrid in 1808. In an attempt to preserve the empire, the Central Council and later on the Council of Regency invited the overseas provinces to send deputies to the Cortes that was to meet in 1810 in Isla de León, near Cádiz. In its instructions to the Puerto Rican deputy to the Cortes, the municipal government of San Germán
recognized the sovereignty of Ferdinand VII but added the warning that "in the event that said sovereignty does not prevail, the island would regain possession of her natural rights to govern herself in the best possible way."  

Although the island remained a colonial possession, the separatist spirit of Venezuela strongly stirred Puerto Rican tendencies in the same direction. Out of this feeling grew the 1822 conspiracy led by Luis Guillermo L. Ducoudray Holstein, a French adventurer approached by island separatists. This French soldier of fortune—a somewhat similar though lesser version of Lord Thomas Cochrane—went to New York where he obtained some ships and recruited a group of foreigners to undertake the operation. His plans called for his ships and men to land at Añasco, near the city of Mayaguez, and proclaim the "República de Boricua" with a provisional government under his leadership. In Puerto Rico, Ducoudray Holstein's agent was Pedro Dubois, a native of the island of Guadeloupe who resided in the town of Naguabo. In his endeavors to promote the rebellion, Dubois carelessly approached men who were not in accord with his ideas, some of whom denounced him to the authorities. Shortly after his arrest in September 13, 1822, Dubois was tried quickly and executed for conspiracy. The plot ended in utter failure when the ships of Ducoudray Holstein were detained and confiscated in Curacao.  

Nearly thirteen years elapsed before a new attempt at rebellion occurred. The new plot, a military uprising called the Sergeant's
Revolt involved officers and sergeants from a battalion of the Granada Regiment, which comprised the Spanish garrison in Puerto Rico. A dismal failure from the very beginning, the uprising was quelled without gunfire or bloodshed. As a result of this abortive plot, six sergeants plus captain Pedro de Loizaga, the most prominent leader, were returned to Spain. This, and the transfer of several enlisted men to La Habana, Cuba, was the only punishment meted out by the authorities.\textsuperscript{18}

Clearly this was a minor event not rating the importance given to it by José Pérez Moris, who in his work claimed that "nearly two-thirds of the population of San Juan aimed to take part in the revolt."\textsuperscript{19} Likewise, it is hard to accept Bailey W. Diffie's claim that the would-be conspiracy mentioned above "marks the first definite move toward separation from Spain."\textsuperscript{20} The truth seems to be, as Cruz Monclova quietly remarks, that "the plot failed...as a result of the information given by a soldier."

This fruitless plot was soon followed in 1838 by another unsuccessful attempt at an uprising in San Juan. With the exception of some civilians the leaders belonged once more to the Granada Regiment. As in the Sergeant's Revolt, some of the leaders were exiled. Other less fortunate participants were garroted, while several members of distinguished creole families were forced to flee to Venezuela in order to save their lives.\textsuperscript{22} One other result of this abortive uprising was the disbanding of the Granada Regiment, undermined by separatists elements and deemed untrustworthy by the government. Like the Sergeant's Revolt, the 1838 conspiracy was a total fiasco, suppressed before it really began. But unlike the preceding movement it had the adherence of
influential and distinguished creole families, thus supporting the assertion that "the revolutionary movement of 1838 was planned and supported by the best insular families, not only in the capital city, but also in the interior of the island." 

During the next three decades insular separatists evidently did not undertake a single act of overt rebelliousness, notwithstanding the repeated exile of Puerto Rico's most prominent separatist and abolitionist. Although two incidents of a seditious nature occurred—one in 1855 and another in 1867—they were not of a political nature but were concerned instead with purely military affairs. The former occurred among a group of gunners of the Castle of San Cristóbal who protested that a law limiting military service in Spain to two years was not applicable to artillery men serving in the island. The latter, called "El Motín de los Artilleros", "was undertaken by Spanish soldiers as a result of military affairs, and was in no way related to insular politics."

After these three decades of inactivity, separatist tendencies in the island culminated in the Lares rebellion, otherwise known as "El Grito de Lares", on September 23, 1868. Although unsuccessful, this was the most important and strongest armed protest ever staged during the Spanish regime. With varying emphasis and opinions modern scholarship has amply described and documented the details and particulars of this often praised, often maligned event. Thus, it should suffice here to say that it was the result of the revolutionary activities of Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances. Traveling extensively between New York,
the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Saint Thomas, Curacao and Venezuela, Dr. Betances collected arms and money and became the inspirational and intellectual force who united the elements which took part in the revolt.28

A highly controversial subject, the written accounts of El grito de Lares vary according to the political beliefs and cultural background of each writer. Thus, while Robert W. Anderson believes that "it was a brief and pathetic flurry of revolt,"29 Manuel Maldonado Dennis nearly equates it with Cuba's 1868 revolutionary movement while presenting a brief hypothetical study of the reasons behind Cuba's success and Puerto Rico's failure.30 There is no consensus among historians about the true meaning of El grito de Lares. Juan Rodriguez-Cruz, for example, states that nearly 800 men took part in the rebellion.31 This number is also used by Loida Figueroa in citing Cruz Monclova,32 although the latter writer clearly states that the total of participants was between 300 and 400.33 To make matters even more difficult, Cruz Monclova in his fine study of Puerto Rican history gives eleven other sources where figures for the participants vary from five hundred to one thousand.34 El grito de Lares, unlike El grito de Yara, did not signal the road toward political freedom. But before its demise, the rebels—including several foreigners who played a prominent part—captured the mountain town of Lares, proclaimed a republic and created a provisional government that, significantly, was composed entirely of Puerto Ricans.35 In the aftermath of the rebellion, seventy-nine of those arrested died
of yellow fever in the jails of Arecibo, Aguadilla, Ponce and Mayagüez. Most of the leaders of the revolt were at first condemned to be garroted. Subsequently, this sentence was changed to life imprisonment in Cádiz, but most of the leaders were pardoned later in the year as a result of the 1868 liberal revolution that unseated Isabel II from the Spanish throne. 

El grito de Lares remains one of the most polemical and difficult topics for those interested in Puerto Rican political history. Within Puerto Rico a polarization of feelings has unfortunately occurred, and only those who are independentistas—regardless of their ideological position—seem to respect and identify with the event of 1868. This is indeed a tragic development, because El grito de Lares belongs to all Puerto Ricans and not merely to those who first desired separation from Spain and later wanted independence from the United States. Unwittingly, the conservative and traditional elements thus created the first nineteenth-century event that would serve as a rallying point for the forces of radical nationalism in the coming century. By default, the so-called forces of the left gained a powerful symbol that could unify and give some cohesion to their movement. Moreover, and most important of all, the pro-independence forces acquired a symbol that eventually would be looked upon with sympathy by other elements of the population who preferred to remain overtly uncommitted, but still sympathetic toward the goal of political freedom.

After the unsuccessful grito de Lares, there occurred in the city of Camuy the incident called La Estrellada. In spite of the assertions
of several historians, this was neither an uprising nor a seditious conspiracy, but a heated exchange of gunfire between the civil guard and a group of men entrenched in the house of a wealthy rancher.

For nearly three decades after the Lares revolt no incidents of a violent nature occurred in Puerto Rico against the Spanish administration. But the activities of Betances outside the island kept colonial governors in a state of constant apprehension. Although none of his schemes succeeded, Betances tried in the mid 1870s to raise anew the cry for independence in the island. But Betances lacked the support of the masses, and more importantly, he lacked the support of the old liberal leadership which had helped so readily in 1868.

Even though the years after 1868 saw no overt acts of a separatist nature, colonial administrators were for the most part intent on preventing any such outburst. Using and often times abusing their enormous power, each governor chose whatever method he thought best to keep the island under control. The most notorious of the governors was Romualdo Palacio González. In the late 1880s he used the nefarious method known as componte to suppress whatever activities he believed were tinged with separatism, thus creating a short period of brutal repression which is often described as a reign of terror.

The last outburst of insular separatism during the nineteenth-century occurred on March 24, 1897, in the southwestern town of Yauco. Like the Ducoudray Holstein conspiracy, this attempt at rebellion endeavored to bring arms and men from New York, while in the island a group of men hoped to kindle the spirit of insurrection with the capture
before the would-be rebellion got under way, and without much fighting, nearly 130 ill-equipped men were arrested and jailed. The Yauco incident may be classified more as a riot than as a conspiracy. It was, in spite of the number of prisoners, a somewhat minor affair not taken too seriously by the Spanish authorities. This is clearly seen by the attitude of the Spanish administration, which in June began to free some of the participants. Although it is not entirely clear, it seems that by the end of 1897 and the early days of 1898, all of those arrested as a result of the Yauco uprising had been set free.

Thus, it was in this low key that insular separatism under the Spanish regime came to an end without having tasted the fruits of victory, or at least, of near victory. Of the eight incidents or acts of overt violence presented in the preceding pages, only five can be truthfully classified as acts of a separatist nature. If one looks at this as the dismal record of 100 years, one may then join the somewhat larger group which believes that a real movement for independence has never existed in Puerto Rico. But the record speaks for itself. These five incidents represent the efforts, however small, of a people—or part of a people—to achieve political freedom in the face of great odds. Perhaps what is meant by those holding the opinion that a real Puerto Rican independence movement has never existed is, that no movement for independence has ever come close to success. Certainly, there have been no revolutions comparable to the American Revolution or to the Latin American wars for independence, but as has been shown above it is
an undeniable fact that during the Spanish regime there were attempts at
insurrection in Puerto Rico.49

In a final analysis it must be stated that during the nineteenth-
century Puerto Rican separatism was kindled by the ardent propaganda
from the lands once called the Spanish Main, crystallizing a sector of
separatist tendencies. Unlike other political groups the separatists
chose to utilize the revolutionary way as the only means of making their
aspirations a concrete reality.

Unfortunately for the islanders, after Spain's defeat on the
continent, more and more of its energy was diverted to the island with
disastrous results for the advocates of independence. Despite such
drawbacks, the separatists had defied Spanish authority in 1822, 1835,
1838, 1868 and 1897. Less fortunate than similar groups in other
nations, they were defeated in their endeavors and Puerto Rico remained
a colony.

The Autonomic Charter of 1897

On November 25, 1897, eight months after the Yauco flare-up, a
most important event took place when María Cristina, the Queen Regent
of Spain, signed a royal decree granting autonomous government to
Puerto Rico.50 This concession of autonomy was wrested from the Madrid
government in the midst of its embarrassing difficulties in Cuba. At
the time Spain was also confronted with the increasing hostility of
American public opinion to its Cuban policy. Thus, one must admit that
the need to retain Puerto Rican good will in a moment of crisis was a
strong reason for the liberal concession made by Spain.
The controversial autonomic charter of 1897 was obtained mainly through the efforts of Luis Muñoz Rivera (1859-1916), a Puerto Rican political leader who was active during the last years of the Spanish regime and during the first two decades of the American administration. In the early 1890's Muñoz Rivera was one of the leaders of the Puerto Rican Autonomic party. This political organization had been created in 1887 and, as its name indicates, it supported Puerto Rican demands for self-government. As a step toward the desired goal of autonomy, Muñoz Rivera wanted his party to arrange an alliance with a peninsular party willing to promote a policy of self-government toward the island. This peninsular group, naturally, had to have the capability to obtain the autonomic reforms for Puerto Rico from the government at Madrid.

On July 23, 1896, the autonomists held a caucus in the town of Caguas, Puerto Rico, in which a commission was chosen to go to Madrid. The purpose of this commission was to reach an understanding with a peninsular party willing to give Puerto Rico the liberal reforms the autonomists wanted. Upon reaching Madrid the commission arranged a friendly alliance with the Liberal Fusionist Party (Partido Liberal Fusionista), whose leader was Práxedes Mateo Sagasta. Sagasta promised to grant autonomy to the island if ever he and his party came to power. On August 18, 1897, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, the leader of the party then in power—the Conservatives—was shot and killed by an Italian anarchist in San Sebastián. The following month a liberal Spanish government under the leadership of Sagasta came to power. Due to the previously mentioned reasons, Sagasta kept the promise he made to the Autonomic party and promptly formulated the
grant of autonomy for Puerto Rico.

It is a common practice for some American historians to minimize the importance and to ridicule this form of government for its short duration—it lasted only a little over five months—or for the naivete of insular politicians, as Gordon K. Lewis infers, in believing that Spain would have allowed the Charter of 1897 to fulfill its promises. It is rather a moot point whether the charter would have been a success or not. But what must be pointed out is that the charter of autonomy indicated a profound and unequivocal change in Spanish colonial policy. The established concept of a metropolis with unlimited power vis à vis the dependant colony gave way to the idea of a moderate and relative power, establishing the principle that the colonists were entitled to a recognition of well-being and happiness on the basis of human rights.

As a result of the Decree of 1897 Puerto Rico obtained many rights and privileges which the people had been denied for nearly four hundred years. Yet, Edward B. Locket, a mainland writer, derides the autonomic government as "another Spanish gesture...doomed at birth...unuseless document that would later on prove troublesome for the United States." Unfortunately for Puerto Ricans, most of the rights and freedoms obtained in 1897 were abrogated during the first year of American occupation.

Under the Autonomic Charter the head of government was a governor-general appointed by the king of Spain. Legislative powers were vested in an insular parliament of two bodies of equal power: the Chamber of Representatives and the Council of Administration. The latter was composed of fifteen members, seven of them appointed for life by the
governor-general while the other eight were popularly elected. Half of them were re-elected every five years. The Chamber of Representatives was an elective body of thirty-five members, and, as in the Council, each member served for five years. To be eligible to become a representative or a member of the Council, a person had to be either a native-born Puerto Rican or a Spanish citizen who had resided in the island continuously for five years. The governor-general was to be assisted by an Executive Cabinet formed by Puerto Ricans. His powers included the right to appoint seven members of the Council of Administration and the secretaries of his cabinet. His veto powers were restricted to the right to forward any act of the insular parliament that he judged to be beyond the powers of this body to the Spanish Council of Ministers. The Spanish Council of Ministers had to return or approve the bill within two months. If the Council of Ministers failed to act within this time, the governor-general had to sanction and proclaim the bill. Although the governor-general had the power to dissolve one or both chambers of Parliament, he could do so only with the approval of at least one of the members of the Executive Cabinet. Furthermore, the governor-general had, by law, to reconvene the insular parliament three months after it had been dissolved.

Among the chief provisions of the charter of 1897, one of the most important provided that "when the present constitution should once be approved by the Cortes of the Kingdom for the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, it should not be amended except by virtue of a law and upon the petition of the insular parliament."
Although the Constitution of 1897 did not give Puerto Rico complete home rule, its shortcomings were more than offset by the authority given the insular parliament to participate in the writing of any commercial treaty offered the island, and the provision that "the insular parliament shall have the power to frame the tariff for the duties to be paid in merchandise as well for its importation into the territory of the island as for the exportation thereof."\(^6^3\)

In sum there is very little doubt that the charter of 1897 offered major reforms. Not only would Puerto Ricans elect delegates with full voting rights to both houses of the Cortes,\(^6^4\) but they would also elect all members of the insular Chamber of Representatives, and eight of the fifteen members of the Council (senate). Even more important, the legislature was given power to legislate in all matters of purely insular importance, to fix the budget, determine tariff and taxes, as well as to accept or reject commercial treaties concluded by the home government without Puerto Rican participation.\(^6^5\) In 1897 Puerto Rico was far from being a free nation, nevertheless the island had acquired a greater measure of local autonomy than at any other time since the conquest.

The autonomic charter was decreed in November 1897; in February 1898, the first Puerto Rican cabinet was appointed; in March, general elections were held for the legislature; in April, the Spanish-Cuban-American War began; on July 17, 1898, the insular parliament of Puerto Rico opened. Seven days later, American troops began the conquest of the island. The autonomic charter, the result of nearly two decades of patient petitioning and planning by Puerto Rican politicians had been in
operation only briefly when the Spanish-Cuban-American War ended the experiment.

Ironically, Spain's belated grant of liberal government was to acquire great importance in the twentieth century, as it became a symbol of minimum expectations acceptable to Puerto Rican leaders and political parties. Finally, the Decree of 1897 gave twenty century radical Nationalists a second and most important weapon in their campaign against the new rulers, with the rather novel and legalistic although appealing interpretation which they would give the charter of 1897.

The Impact of Insular Politics: The Unionist Party to 1922

In 1898, by virtue of the Treaty of Paris which ended the Spanish-Cuban-American War, Puerto Rico came under the suzerainty of the United States. The two-year period of military occupation (1898-1900) was remarkable for the degree of harmony and cooperation between two such dissimilar peoples. Even the two newly established parties—the Republican and the Federal—vied with one another in their ardent declarations of Americanism. But the era of amity and friendliness soon ended. Differences that appeared over policies relating to the appointment of insular officials developed into bitter exchanges between the two parties, each striving for a better position in the new political game—the island vis-à-vis Washington. The necessity to please Madrid was now substituted by the necessity to please Washington—not necessarily to help the island—but as a means to advance personal political fortune and retain power in the island.
In 1900 island politicians were dismayed, to say the least, with the passage of the Foraker Act. The disappointment with the new form of government created by Congress and the deeply partisan rivalry which divided Puerto Rico prompted Luis Muñoz Rivera—in self-imposed exile in New York—to return to the island, where he joined others in the creation of a new political structure. After the dissolution of the Federal Party, a new party, the Unionist party (Partido Unión de Puerto Rico) was created. Led by Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón—an old time Republican—and Muñoz Rivera, among others, this party since its beginnings was characterized by two strong wings: the autonomist or pro-American led by Muñoz Rivera, and the pro-independence wing, which after the death of Matienzo Cintrón was led by José de Diego. With the emergence of the Unionists, Puerto Rico for the first time in its history had a political party which espoused the ideal of independence in its platform, although in the fifth point of its plank the party also defined statehood or self-rule under the American flag as acceptable definitive status conditions. The Union of Puerto Rico dominated insular politics from its formation in 1904 until the early 1920's. It was this party which led the struggle against the Foraker Act, and for the extension of greater measures of self-government to the island. As the years passed and it became clear that the temporary Foraker Act was becoming permanent, and as it was seemingly impossible to obtain any reforms, the Union Party became more militant and its independence wing grew increasingly stronger under the leadership of José de Diego. Mainly as a result of the continued indifference of the United States
Congress to Puerto Rican problems and requests, the latent emotional nationalism of most islanders came to the fore.

In 1913 due to the influence of de Diego and the independence wing the Unionist Party dropped statehood from its list of acceptable alternatives. This act and the more extreme statements of the de Diego faction had a negative impact in Washington. Accordingly, it was the desire of Muñoz Rivera to lessen the influence of de Diego upon the party. This was achieved between 1914 and 1915, with the adoption of the so-called Rules of Miramar a set of standards covering party activities. These rules "reiterated that independence...was the ultimate goal of the Union of Puerto Rico; however, its immediate goal was to obtain major reforms of the Foraker Law by orderly legislation...."

In a direct rebuke to de Diego and his followers the rules specified that "no Union party member would be permitted to make any statements or commit any act which would jeopardize the party program...." While the struggle within the Union party favored Muñoz Rivera and his more moderate faction, other Puerto Ricans joined the political arena in an effort to give impetus to the pro-independence movement. Thus, in 1912 a group of Puerto Rican intellectuals created the first independentista party of Puerto Rico, called Puerto Rican Independence Party (Partido de la Independencia de Puerto Rico). Although this party had no impact upon the insular political scene, its brief appearance--coupled with the Rules of Miramar--showed how insular politics were becoming polarized between independence and statehood, between pro and anti-American factions. It should be understood though, that...
in spite of the intended feeling for or against independence there was no evidence at this time in Puerto Rico of hatred or hostility toward the United States.

This lack of a hostile anti-American group was not lacking in importance, but the most baffling development during these years was the behavior of the Unionist Party. As previously mentioned, this was the first party which espoused the ideal of independence in its platform. But until 1913 this party can only be considered as an opportunistic conglomerate of politicians, striving to preserve the power it had acquired in 1904. No other conclusion can be reached when one considers that this party pretended to be the vehicle through which Puerto Ricans could obtain either statehood, some sort of self-government or independence. The fact that this party simultaneously defended the three viable alternatives to end the anomalous political position of the islanders under the Foraker Act, is in itself proof of its desire to remain in power by garnering votes from adherents of each of the three formulas. It seems that what moved the Unionist Party was not the welfare and the interest of the islanders, but the desire to perpetuate itself in power--continuismo in an insular setting.

The political spirit of these years has been aptly summed up by Lewis, when he states that under the American administration

The rules of the game had changed somewhat, but the game itself remained the same. The advancement of personal political fortune...could always be profitably secured by taking a fierce stand on status, one way or the other. This is why so large a part of all party programs and pronouncements of the period were consumed with statements on the issue....
That is why, too, so much of the political history of the period was an elaborately executed ballet wherein the active parts were played by an elite group of professional politicians...switching membership from one group to another as the interest of the moment dictated, engineering party splits and mergers and issuing sonorous pronunciamentos in which the plangent rhetoric only faintly disguised the single enduring motive of political preferment...

After 1913, when the Unionists dropped statehood as an acceptable solution to the island's political situation, the position of the party became somewhat less confusing. But the squabbling between the autonomist and the pro-independence factions continued unabated. After the passage of the Jones Act in 1917, the sharp division between "independentistas" and pro-United States Americanizers threatened to destroy the party. Old leaders like Muñoz Rivera and de Diego were dead. New leaders who came to the fore polarized politics around the issues of independence and statehood. A new feeling, a new intransigence lent a bitterness and intensity to island politics which had not been so evident in earlier years.

For the new leaders the Jones Act, with its elective bicameral legislature, liberalized governmental opportunities and collective citizenship was not enough, and the existing political tensions were heightened by the internal struggle for power among the new political generation. Many of these young men had been children at the time of the Spanish-Cuban-American War. They were products of a new environment, brought up in a bitter and tense political atmosphere. It is not then surprising that they were more radical, less flexible and
less conciliatory than the earlier generation. Imbued with nearly twenty years of high-strung oratory, disappointments and frustrations, they held strong and impatient viewpoints. Most members of the generation of Muñoz Rivera had considered that there were two or three acceptable solutions to Puerto Rico's political situation. For the insular young Turks there could be only one. They were either independentistas or autonomistas or estadistas. This changed the complexion of Puerto Rican politics, which became bitter, tense, and obsessed with the idea of a solution for Puerto Rico's political limbo.

In the general insular elections of 1920 the Unionists once more were victorious, as they had been since 1904.77 It should be stressed that at this time the Unionists fought statehood "as contrary to the origins of race, language, traditions and customs of the Puerto Rican people."78 Yet, in an astonishing declaration made in New York shortly after the elections, Unionist Party President Antonio R. Barceló declared that "Puerto Rico would accept statehood or independence as final solutions to the Puerto Rican status question.79 The impact of Barceló's incredible statement upon the insular political scene had to be shattering, if measured against the tense electoral campaign of 1920, where Unionist orators stressed the party's pro-independence stand. Even more unsettling was the fact that this declaration came several days after Barceló publicly proclaimed in San Juan before leaving for the United States: "Let me go to Washington to request independence."80 Barceló's two conflicting statements show the uncertainty, confusion and opportunism which plagued the Leadership of
the Unionist party. His equivocal declarations illustrate the puzzling
methods used by the party which dominated insular politics for over
twenty years, mostly on the basis of its "vaunted" desire for political
freedom.

The equivocal declarations and attitude of the leaders of the
Union of Puerto Rico did not seem to take the pro-independence wing
within the party by surprise. The previous year, (1919) militant
members of this faction had created two associations whose purpose
was to maintain alive the desire and ultimate goal of independence.
The first of these organizations was the Pro-Independence Association
(Asociación Independentista), founded in San Juan in 1919 and headed
by José S. Alegria. The other organization was called the Nationalist
Association (Asociación Nacionalista), headed by José Coll y Cuchí.
According to Fernández García, several Nationalist Youth Associations
were formed by students in San Juan, Rio Piedras, Santurce and other
towns, in 1920, while in Mayaguez the Pro-Independence Mayaguez Party
(Partido Independentista Mayaguezano) was organized.

The aforementioned data show that the advocates of independence
did not remain idle while the Unionist Party followed its erratic and
metamorphic behavior. The event that brought about a schismatic division
of the autonomist and independence wings of the Union of Puerto Rico
occurred in February 11, 1922. On this date the party finally abandoned
the ideal of independence, repudiating it for a milder program of auto-
nomous self-government which was called Estado Libre Asociado.

The reaction to the final and complete turnabout of the Union of
Puerto Rico was not long in coming. In April 1922, the Nationalist
Association—headed by Dr. Guillermo Salazar—met in the Habana theater in Ponce. An agreement was reached to hold a constituent assembly for the establishment of a new political party. Nearly five months later, on September 17, 1922, the Nationalist Party was instituted in the city of Rio Piedras under the leadership of José Coll y Cuchi. 36

Thus was born the party which in later years and under a markedly different leadership was to exert so much influence in the life of Puerto Rico. That the Nationalist Party came into being as a result of the ambiguous, unpalatable and opportunistic behavior of the Unionist Party is undeniable. The slow metamorphosis in the political thought of this organization between 1904 and 1922 and its consequences have been presented above. The judgment made in the preceding pages that this was an opportunistic conglomerate of politicians who sought to perpetuate their political powers is considered apt and just. No other proof is needed but the repudiation of the ideal of independence in 1922, when party leaders became convinced that the ideal was "safely" expendable. Thus, the ideal of independence was used as a garment is used to protect oneself against the weather: it is put on whenever needed and discarded when considered a burden. Anything was possible and accepted in the game of insular politics so long as it served to prolong the life and power of the political organization. This hypocrisy finally led to a union of the more radical elements into an organization that eventually would pose a serious threat to the established system.
ensayos de interpretación puertorriqueña (San Juan, 1934). Pedreira was by no means the first Puerto Rican writer to characterize the islanders as docile. Salvador Brau, Historia de Puerto Rico (New York, 1904), p. 222, uses the same term to describe insular society (el pueblo). See also V. García de Diego, Diccionario etimológico español e hispánico (Madrid, 1955), p. 235, who defines docil as compliant, submissive (obediente). For a completely different opinion of Puerto Rican character, see Germán Delgado Pasapera, Antecedentes, hechos y transcendencia de la revuelta Nacionalista de 1950 (Mayaguez, Puerto Rico: C.A.A.M., 1971), p. 2.

"El Puertorriqueño docil," Revista de ciencias sociales, VII (marzo-junio, 1963). Like Pedreira’s Insularismo, "El Puertorriqueño docil" is devoted entirely to the question of how and why the Puerto Ricans are such gentle, docile types. Thus, no specific page is given in the footnote.

This term is defined by Marqués, "El Puertorriqueño docil," p. 37, as submissive, humble, resigned. See also Diccionario enciclopédico Quillet (8 vols.; Buenos Aires: Editorial Argentina Aristides Quillet, S. A., 1968), p. 376, which defines aplatanado as "a person who wants to remain in the same social rank, lacking the desire to improve, even though the ability to do so is present."

This term is defined by Marqués, "El Puertorriqueño docil," p. 37, as "espiritualmente en cuclillas." See also Diccionario enciclopédico U.E.E.H.A. VII (8 vols.; Mexico, 1968), p. 1130, which defines amgotado as "to be intimidated, to lose courage and valor, servile."

"El Puertorriqueño docil," p. 40. My own translation. All translations are by the author, unless otherwise indicated.


Jose A. Gautier Dapena, Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal puertorriqueño en el siglo XIX (San Juan, 1963). Most of the seventy pages of this short book (not including the appendices) are used to show how a Puerto Rican identity began to emerge in the 19th century. Thus, as in footnote four above, a specific page is not deemed necessary.

E. Fernández García, ed., El libro de Puerto Rico (San Juan, 1923), p. 91. See also Bailey W. Diffie, Porto Rico: A Broken Pledge (New York, 1931), p. 186. Once more, Figueroa, Breve Historia, Vol. II, p. 53, asserts that a separatist feeling can be traced to the latter part of the 18th century. See also Lidio Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Siglo XIX (3 vols.; Rio Piedras, 1970), Vol. I, p. 35, (below), who states that "notwithstanding the lack of evidence Puerto Rican separatism seemingly started during the last years of the 18th century," Monclova’s work is the most outstanding history of Puerto Rico ever written.


His name was Ramón Power y Giralt. The text of the instructions can be found in Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, vol. I, p. 517.

The translation is from Fernández García, El Libro de Puerto Rico, p. 91.

For details see Figueroa, Breve Historia, Vol. II, pp. 53-56.

This gentleman is a somewhat difficult figure. He is called a Swiss adventurer by Brau, Historia de Puerto Rico, p. 235; and by Paul G. Miller, Historia de Puerto Rico (New York, 1935), p. 251. But Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Vol. I, p. 122 states that he was a Frenchman born in Alsace who had taken part in the Venezuelan wars of independence, helping Bolívar.

Miller, Historia de Puerto Rico, p. 251. See also Figueroa, Breve Historia, Vol. II, pp. 122-123.


Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Vol. I, p. 143, who states that "at the time of his arrest in Curacao Ducoudray Holstein was accompanied by an intendant, five coronels and one hundred officers. Upon searching the ship, authorities found 6,000 rifles, 500 carbines, 150 pairs of pistols, twelve field guns, 200 saddles, fifteen barrels of musket cartridges and sixty barrels of gunpowder."

Miller, Historia de Puerto Rico, p. 264.

José Pérez Moris, Historia de la Revolución de Lares (Barcelona, 1872), p. 32

Two persons were garroted, both being sergeants in the Regimiento de Granada. One was named Francisco Salinas, the other Ezequiel Santillana. Those who fled to Venezuela belonged to the Vizcarrondo household, from San Germán one of the oldest insular families.

Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances.

Some of the best articles on the topic are: José A. Corretjer, "Consecuencias de la Revolución de Lares en Puerto Rico," Puerto Rico Ilustrado, XXVIII (enero 16, 1937); Jose Perignat Jr., "Por que fracasó la Revolución de Lares," Carteles, XXVIII (La Habana, noviembre 22, 1936), Juan Rodríguez Cruz y George Ulibarri, "Información final sobre la Revolución de Lares, Puerto Rico," Caribbean Studies, VIII, (enero, 1969), pp. 71-83.


30 See Maldonado Denis, Puerto Rico, pp. 42-45, 36-49.

31 Rodríguez Cruz, "Informe final sobre la Revolución de Laredo," p. 71.


33 Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Vol. I, p. 451. The number 800 is used by Cruz Monclova in page 463, same volume, to refer to those which had been arrested, rather than the number of participants.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., p. 453. Among the foreigners there was Manuel Rojas, a Venezuelan who was appointed leader of the rebels. There were also Mathias and Enrique Bruckmann, two Americans.


38 Diffie, Porto Rico, p. 188, erroneously calls La Estrellada an uprising. According to Fernández García, El libro de Puerto Rico, p. 93, both Brau and Cayetano Coll y Toste "considered the Camuy uprising of more importance than the Laredo Rebellion."

39 For a detailed account of this event see Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Vol. II, part 1, pp. 259-265.

40 Figueroa, Breve Historia, p. 242. See also Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Vol. II, part 1, pp. 397-398. Details of the abortive attempts taken under the leadership of Betances from other Caribbean islands may be seen in Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Vol. II, part 2, pp. 425-432. See also Diffie, Porto Rico, p. 188.


42 Inquisitorial tortures applied by the Guardia Civil. Brau, Historia de Puerto Rico, p. 235, describes the componte as "an act where late in the evening police forces dragged unsuspecting persons from their homes, who after being tied, were then led into an uninhabited place or to a police station, where demeaning punishment was meted out."
Puerto Rican historians have amply treated this somber period. For the best accounts see Lidio Cruz Monclova, Historia del año 1887 (Rio Piedras, 1958); Antonio S. Pedreira, El año terrible del '87 (San Juan, 1937); Barbosa de Rosario, La obra de José Celso Barbosa, Vol. II.


Memoria de la sección Puerto Rico del Partido Revolucionario Cubano, p. 13; and Borinquen, periódico quincenal, órgano de la sección Puerto Rico del Partido Revolucionario Cubano, Año I, Núm. 10 (Nueva York, 1898), as quoted in Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Vol. III, part 3, p. 45.


Geographic reality alone makes it quite difficult to try to equate or compare any rebellion or attempt at rebellion in Puerto Rico with a revolutionary movement in the North American continent, or in the heretofore Spanish empire in the American mainland.


The grant of autonomy was originally approved by the Spanish Council of Ministers on November 9, 1898, and submitted to the Queen for her approval. See La Democracia, año VIII, Núm. 1838, as quoted in Cruz Monclova, Historia de Puerto Rico, Vol. III, part 3, p. 94.

See Appendix A, for a break-up of Puerto Rican political parties dating from 1869 to 1946.


See Lewis, Freedom and Power, pp. 45-46, who adamantly refuses to believe that Spain "would have maintained and extended the promise of 1897," if Puerto Rico had remained under Spanish control. "Nothing in Spanish national history," adds Lewis, "justifies such an expectation."


Earl Parker Hanson, Puerto Rico, Land of Wonders (New York, 1960), p. 49.


Cruz Monclova, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 37.

For a detailed account of the powers invested in the governor-general see New Constitution, pp. 63-69. See also Documents on the Constitutional History of Puerto Rico, pp. 34-42.


During the late Spanish regime, this party was known as the Orthodox Autonomy Party (Puros) and was led by José C. Barbosa. It was dissolved after March, 1899, and was then reconstituted under the name Puerto Rican Republican Party. It advocated rapid Americanization and incorporation of Puerto Rico as a territory of the United States. See Robert J. Hunter, "Historical Survey of the Puerto Rico Status Question, 1898-1956," in Status of Puerto Rico: Selected Background Studies prepared for the United States-Puerto Rico Commission on the Status of Puerto Rico (Washington, 1966), p. 65. Hereinafter cited as Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico.

This was the Liberal party of the late nineteenth-century, led by Luis Muñoz Rivera. Under its new name it wanted a unique territorial status under which Puerto Rico would have all the privileges of statehood, except voting Congressional representation. This party was specific in
According to Diffie, *Porto Rico*, p. 190, this was the first anti-
American party in the island.

for the effusive declarations of the Republican party platform. See
also pp. 49-52 for the pro-American declarations of the federal party,
later called American Federal party.

69 Members of both political parties made speeches and declarations
which when heard by and reported to Washington by the colonial adminis-
trators, were viewed as nothing more but a means to curry favors and
obtain the support of the new regime. For a clear example of this
desire to be on the winning side see *First Annual Report of Charles H.
Allen, Governor of Puerto Rico (Washington, 1901)*, pp. 44-45; and the
*Third Annual Report of William H. Hunt, Governor of Puerto Rico

70 De Diego, in spite of being an ardent defender of independence
did not display any hostility toward the United States. See José Coll
y Cuchi, *El Nacionalismo en Puerto Rico* (San Juan, 1923), p. 13, where
de Diego is quoted as follows: "We do not desire the independence of
our country out of hatred against the United States. We ask simply for
what is ours."

71 Hunter, *Status of Puerto Rico*, p. 67; Coll y Cuchi, *El
Nacionalismo en Puerto Rico*, p. 3.


73 *La Democracia* (San Juan), September 7, 1914, as quoted in Hunter,
*Status of Puerto Rico*, pp. 73-74. The entire text of the so-called
Rules of Miramar is included in the above mentioned edition of *La
Democracia*. As a result of the adoption of these rules and their re-
adoption in 1915, de Diego sailed for Spain, and his influence over the
party declined considerably.


75 See above, p. 16.


77 See Appendix B of this dissertation.


79 *El Mundo* (San Juan), January 13, 1921, as quoted by Pagán,
*Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños*, Vol. I, p. 202. This statement was
made by Barceló early in January, 1921.

81 Coll y Cuchí, El nacionalismo en Puerto Rico, p. 158. See also Pagán, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. I, p. 202. The information given by Pagán is obscure, as he doesn't give any dates for the founding of the "Asociación Independentista". See also Fernández-García, El libro de Puerto Rico, p. 95, who claims that the Pro-Independence Association founded in San Juan was presided by Julio César González, who was also the organizer of other associations in Ponce and Mayagüez.

82 Fernández García, El libro de Puerto Rico, p. 93.

83 La Democracia (San Juan), February 13, 1922, as quoted in Pagán, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. I, pp. 212-213; Diffie, Porto Rico, p. 190; Fernández García, El libro de Puerto Rico, p. 99.

On April 12, 1900, President William McKinley signed into law Senate Bill 2264, thereafter known as the Foraker Act, which established a civil government for the island of Puerto Rico. This act went into effect on May 1, 1900, and as of this date the relations between the United States and Puerto Rico entered a new stage. In contrast to the relatively harmonious military period, the Foraker Act opened an era marked by distrust and bitter accusations. After enactment of the Foraker Act, relations between the island and the mainland were, for the most part, characterized by disappointment and frustration on the part of Puerto Rican politicians and islanders in general, and by aloofness and neglect from the United States. The first organic law for Puerto Rico—the Foraker Act—it must be stated was the central point from which all causes of unrest and complaints arose in Puerto Rico. The problems emanating from this law created enmity and much ill-will, and definitely enhanced the tense atmosphere which favored the emergence of separatist factions.

It seems clear that prior to the passage of the first organic law, the expectations of most Puerto Ricans were that whatever changes were to occur under American rule were to be good, or at least more palatable than under Spain. This is proved by the friendly reception accorded the American army, and the more or less cordial relationship maintained throughout the military period. But new masters mean a new relationship,
a new set of rules, terms and adjustments. Puerto Ricans confidently expected the new arrangements to be the embodiment of the best liberal-democratic principles of the American nation. Those islanders who were politically interested and articulate logically assumed that the United States, known for being dedicated to democratic principles and liberal institutions at home, would do nothing less than extend similar principles and institutions to those who came under its jurisdiction. It was also reasonable for Puerto Ricans to assume that Congress would consult them on the new form of government to be inaugurated. Furthermore, the islanders expected that under American sovereignty they would be able to retain all political authority that Spain had granted through the autonomic charter of 1897, while looking forward to added freedom, as Spain had been an autocratic state and the United States was a republican-democratic nation.

All these hopes, however, came to naught in early 1900. Puerto Ricans were sorely disappointed when Congress, in its first legislative act for the island, assumed the position of an absolute sovereign and unilaterally created the governmental structure which defined political, economic and fiscal relationships between the island and the mainland.

Briefly stated, the Foraker Act provided for a presidentially appointed governor who would serve a four-year term, an appointive Executive Council of eleven men, and a House of Delegates of thirty-five popularly elected persons who would serve two-year terms. The Executive Council would have both executive and legislative duties, serving as the governor's cabinet and departamental administrators, while sharing in legislative functions as the insular Upper House. All laws passed by the
insular legislature would be subject to the governor's veto and to Congressional annulment. The Executive Council would have five Puerto Ricans, but a clear-cut permanent American majority of six members. The Foraker Act established restricted male suffrage plus property and educational qualifications for office holders. The people of Puerto Rico were granted the right to send a Resident Commissioner to Washington, a non-voting representative to the United States Congress. As a result of the Foraker Act Puerto Rico became an unincorporated territory of the United States under the direct fiat of Congress. The Act gave Congress the power to legislate for the island territory. It could and did withhold citizenship and the Bill of Rights, while concurrently it levied taxes which marked the island as foreign. These Congressional prerogatives over the newly acquired island possession were confirmed by the United States Supreme Court in a series of decisions popularly known as the insular cases.

It was in this way that the distinction between incorporated and unincorporated territory was thus drawn, with the Court holding that by explicit and conscious action Congress had chosen not to extend the Constitution to the new possession, while desiring to treat Puerto Rico in a different manner than the treatment accorded other territories. Thus, the island fell into a new classification of "unincorporated" territory with the implication that its destiny was not yet charted but would remain subject to the future decisions of Congress. There was a sharp distinction between the treatment accorded Puerto Rico and its people, and the way in which the United States had treated other lands, however acquired. For the first time in a treaty which added territory
there was no promise of citizenship to the residents of that territory. Contrary to procedures followed during the acquisition of Alaska, there was now no promise, either actual or implied, of statehood. With Puerto Rico the United States did not annex a territory, but a mere possession or dependency.

The Foraker Act gave Puerto Rico a civil government in which Congress paid little or no attention to the principles of consent of the governed, or to the right of a people to participate in the determination of its own affairs. To the disillusionment of the islanders Congress acted as an autocratic body, dictating laws without consulting those who were affected. Puerto Ricans, in effect, were not citizens but subjects over which Congress could rule without restriction.

Puerto Ricans were greatly disappointed with the Foraker Act, which denied them American citizenship and the right to elect all members of the insular legislature. The first organic law gave them very little cause to rejoice, and although they were not satisfied they had no alternative but to accept a form of government which they considered less liberal than that granted by Spain under the autonomic charter of 1897. This relative lack of liberalism and autonomy was one of the many reasons why Puerto Ricans from the very beginning objected to the first organic law. The Foraker Act thus became the first and most grievous point of friction between the United States and Puerto Rico.

Puerto Ricans further contended that the Foraker Act was a betrayal of the official proclamation and promise made by General Nelson A. Miles after the American military seizure of the island. In his proclamation
General Miles in part stated: "We have come to bring you protection, not only to yourselves, but to your property, to promote your prosperity and to bestow upon you the immunities and blessings of the liberal institutions of our government." Puerto Ricans not only resented the denial of this pledge, but also resented the ugly implication made clear with the Act of 1900 that while the United States was taking over the island Puerto Rico was in turn not to be accepted as a probational member of the family of American states, or even as a young ward in trusteeship ultimately destined to come of age and be free.

Some scholars, like Leo S. Rowe, have tried to lessen early American actions and attitudes toward Puerto Rico, claiming that Americans were profoundly influenced by "the fear of a foreign people within their midst." This seems to be a far cry from the truth, for as Julius W. Pratt states, "few Senators appeared to have objected seriously to the annexation of Puerto Rico, which was nearby and peopled chiefly by the white race, though of alien tongue." Pratt's statement is strongly supported by the fact that in their opposition to the Treaty of Paris and the acquisition of new territory, Senators George F. Hoar, of Massachusetts, and George G. Vest, of Missouri, did not once mention the island of Puerto Rico. Their opposition was directed against the acquisition of the Philippine Islands, not against the Annexation of Puerto Rico. What Rowe does not say is that the actions and attitude of some American leaders toward the small though beautiful Caribbean island were influenced by the idea that Puerto Ricans as a whole were an inferior race.
This idea is best portrayed by the attitude of General George W. Davis— the most important occupation official during the military period—who in the latter half of 1899, and at the request of the War Department, submitted a report with recommendations for a future civil government for Puerto Rico. In his report Davis urged a government built around the appointive powers of the President, and vigorously opposed the placing of such power as an elective legislature in the hands of "an untrained, uneducated people." Davis' report was of dire consequences for Puerto Rico on two counts. First, it recommended an appointive and not an elective form of government. Second, his recommendations in favor of an appointive government were accompanied by numerous references to the alleged inferiority of the Puerto Rican people.13

The belief that Puerto Ricans were unfit to govern themselves was widespread. This is clearly seen when one realizes that the civil government that was inaugurated under the Foraker Act followed the recommendations made by Davis, and similar ones made by Elihu Root, the Secretary of War, later on during the year. Root recommended that "Puerto Rico be given a government in which the decisive and controlling roles would be allotted to Americans appointed by the President."14 It should be pointed out that a few days later, in his message to Congress proposing the creation of a temporary civil government for Puerto Rico, President McKinley's recommendations closely followed those suggested by Root. Certainly, neither of these men was advocating a liberal grant of local autonomy in their proposals.
It would be naive to declare that General Davis' statements on the alleged inferiority of the Puerto Ricans were completely forgotten by Congress when the Foraker Act was being prepared. It would also be foolish to deny that some American leaders in 1900 had not been influenced by that distinctive pattern of thought which historians have called the "New Manifest Destiny." Unfortunately for Puerto Ricans, this misconstrued belief permeated the young American nation during the last decades of the nineteenth-century. Basic to the New Manifest Destiny was the dogma of Anglo-Saxon superiority, derived from the writings of Charles Darwin and from Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism.

To observe what could be termed Social Darwinism in practice, one needs only to take a close look at the scheme of government set up by the Act of 1900. The popularly elected lower house was more than offset by an upper chamber (Council) devised to insure its dominance by North American appointees, thus allowing the Americans to overrule any legislative measure passed by the House of Delegates.

Graham H. Stuart, an American political scientist, states that it was expected that this body (the Executive Council), "would take ascendancy over the lower house...." In fact, says Stuart, "nearly two-thirds of all the bills passed during the first Puerto Rican legislative session originated in the upper chamber." Stuart's assertion was seemingly right, for in a moment of expansive mood, Governor Charles H. Allen admitted, after his first year as governor of Puerto Rico "that the Executive Council, as intended, was a valuable conservative force in the onward rush of progressive legislation." As it has been briefly demonstrated, the system of government established by the first
organic law had a definite purpose: to give an outward appearance of democratic legitimacy, but skilfully prepared to defeat any insular attempt to obtain a greater measure of self-government or change in the preponderant position held by continentals in the legislative branch.

It is instructive to note how, in legislative functions, the Act placed an efficient and unassailable triple veto over the heads of the Puerto Rican members of the legislative assembly. First, there was the unwritten veto power possessed by the American members of the Executive Cabinet who were, simultaneously, members of the Executive Council. Second, there was the governor's veto power over any measure passed by the legislative assembly. Third, there was the veto power of the Congress of the United States over any law passed by the Insular legislature. Incongruously, the supposedly liberal-minded people of the United States proceeded to treat the proud and sensitive people of Puerto Rico as a ward entitled to a measure of material welfare, but certainly not ready for the freedom which they were ready to grant immigrants who came to the mainland. As Carl J. Friedrich, an American scholar, has observed, "it is a strange inconsistency, this readiness to cherish a vigorous 'state of liberty idealism' for any and all within the continental United States, combined with an equal readiness to withhold it for those who had come under American jurisdiction by conquest and the power of arms."19

An assessment of the Puerto Rican situation is rather ironic. Prior to 1898, Puerto Rico was a colony of autocratic Spain behaving autocratically. After 1900, Puerto Ricans were unpleasantly surprised by the vaunted democratic United States behaving autocratically. This
overbearing behavior on the part of the United States served to deny
the islanders the enjoyment of three of the basic principles of American
democratic ideals; consent of the governed, the right of a people to
participate in the determination of their own affairs, and election by
the people of their governing officials.

Thus, when assessing Puerto Rico's first organic law one reaches
the conclusion that it was not only undemocratic but deficient. Ac­
cording to Lewis, the Act of 1900 was undemocratic and deficient in at
least three ways in which the Spanish autonomic charter of 1897 had
promised real advance. First, Lewis claims that the autonomic charter
guaranteed special Puerto Rican participation in the negotiation of
treaties likely to affect the island's economy, while under the Foraker
Act this power was reserved unilaterally to Congress. Second, the auto­
nomic charter could not be amended without the prior consent of the
insular legislature, while under the organic law the amendment power was
reserved, by implication, to Congress. Third, in 1897 Puerto Rico gained
full electoral representation in the Spanish Cortes, while the Foraker
Act gave the island the sole right of having a Resident Commissioner who
could not even obtain by law the right to speak and represent the people
of his native land. 20

Other American historians share Lewis' harsh but considered opinion
of the Foraker Act. Vincenzo Petrullo, for example, believes the Act
of 1900 was undemocratic "because Puerto Ricans didn't have any say in
the writing of the Foraker Act, and because the Act was never submitted
to the Puerto Rican people for ratification and approval." 21 A similar
idea to that of Petrullo and Lewis is held by Peter J. Fliess, a political scientist who believes that "in comparison with the 1897 autonomic charter, the civil government of 1900 was a retrogressive step...that reduced Puerto Rico to an anomalous position and left very little hope for self-government." 22 In his skillful essay on Puerto Rico, Robert J. Hunter depicts the true nature of the first organic law, when he states that Puerto Ricans were to be granted a "civil government restricted and controlled so that the United States would retain final authority over its actions." 23

It should be stressed that Lewis, a brilliant social scientist, is the same writer who scathingly criticized the autonomic charter as a chimera, due to Spain's ability to renege on her concessions. Yet, this same writer, when comparing the Decree of 1897 and that of 1900 has no other recourse but to admit that liberal-democratic America had come out second best before autocratic Spain.

What Lewis and others saw and criticized forty or more years into the twentieth century was seen and criticized by Puerto Ricans in 1900. For the islanders, the most obnoxious affront under the organic law was the loss of Spanish citizenship coupled with the refusal of Congress to grant Puerto Ricans American citizenship. As stated elsewhere, under late Spanish rule the island had had representation in the Cortes. Now, with the loss of citizenship, Puerto Rico became a voiceless entity, a political satellite in the abnormal position of being not free, not a state, not an incorporated territory of the Union, but still under American rule and with diminished authority in the direction of its own affairs.
Insular efforts to amend the first organic law began almost immediately after its approval. These efforts were directed toward the acquisition of American citizenship, and the establishment of a greater degree of self-government. In their endeavor to acquire a larger voice in their own affairs, Puerto Ricans were at a great disadvantage, as there was of course no way they could legislate favorably in this matter. What Puerto Ricans did was to send tides of complaints, petitions, letters and delegations to Congress to plead for a broadened base of participation in their own government, but Congress failed to turn its attention to any reform of the island's political structure.

In a seemingly justified complaint, Puerto Ricans protested that "they were mere decorative figures in the Executive Council, where sometimes they didn't even participate in the deliberations." The islanders also resented the luxurious life enjoyed by the heads of the departments which the islanders claimed derived from utilizing public funds to the detriment of the island's economy. One other complaint raised by the Puerto Ricans was that they were not given a reasonable share of the appointments made by the civil administration.

In an example of apologetic writing, Stuart claims that the latter complaint was made under false pretenses. But the truth seems to be that Puerto Rican leaders had good reason to be unhappy and raise their voices against the injustice of not being able to have a voice in the management of their own affairs. A summary found in Governor Beekman Winthrop's fifth annual report indicates that of the total number of government employees, 2,548 were Puerto Ricans, as compared with 313
In salaries the Puerto Ricans were getting $1,220,567 as against $355,000 received by the Americans. This is the evidence used by Stuart to brand as false the Puerto Rican complaint that they were not given a reasonable share of the appointments made by the civil administration. But these statistics do not tell the whole truth. Simple arithmetic reveals that the average annual pay for Puerto Rican employees was approximately $479 as compared with $1,134 for the American employees. The discontent and bitterness created by this situation was enhanced by the fact that continentals held all the positions of importance and responsibility in the upper echelons of the administrative machinery. This unequal situation kept the insular atmosphere tense and unstable.

The Puerto Rican desire for a greater voice in their affairs, coupled with the preponderant and galling position of the continental members of the Executive Council created an ever-increasing antagonism between the latter body and the House of Delegates. Adding fuel to this tense situation was the troublesome practice of colonial governors of working and cooperating, in matters of government, with the minority party, while denouncing and opposing the majority party as disloyal for its autonomic ideal.

The result of the tension prevailing in Puerto Rican politics since 1900 culminated in the legislative deadlock of 1909, when the House of Delegates and the Executive Council refused to accept or consider certain bills that each chamber wanted to pass. A crisis followed when the House refused to vote appropriations as a means of pressuring the
Council into signing some of the bills presented by the former. But the crisis was not occasioned simply by disagreement over specific bills under consideration, it was nothing else but an attack upon the whole structure established by the Foraker Act. The real issue at stake was whether Puerto Ricans should have legislative freedom or continue to be dominated by the mainland-controlled Council. The severe dispute that ensued reached President William Howard Taft who, in response to a message sent by Governor Regis H. Post, belabored the ingratitude of the Puerto Ricans after all the advantages they had secured under American rule. President Taft recommended and obtained the amendment to the Foraker Act to prevent the recurrence of a legislative deadlock. The amendment of the Act of 1900 was in itself inconsequential to Puerto Rican aspirations. But the words and actions of President Taft comparing Puerto Rico's position to that of a "favored daughter upon whom the father has lavished his generosity," and his adamant opposition to the extension of any degree of political power to the islanders served to exacerbate the anti-American atmosphere in the island. The reaction of Puerto Ricans to President Taft's speech was sarcastic and bitter. La Democracia characterized the President of the United States as "a colonial politician who is openly and frankly imperialistic." President Taft, in order to obtain further information about what was going on in Puerto Rico, sent the Secretary of War, J. M. Dickinson, to the island. Dickinson stayed in Puerto Rico but one week. During this brief stay the Secretary found out that Puerto Ricans intensely resented their form of government, and their status as
second-class citizens. The Secretary received scores of communications, all with identical requests: give Puerto Rico a more democratic form of government, with an elective Senate to take the place of the Executive Council. One of the many messages received by Dickinson was sent by the city of Arecibo, that stated in part:

The common council of the city of Arecibo believes that the Puerto Ricans have a right to be made American citizens...collectively. The unanimous aspiration of this country is to be left free to make its own laws by means of two elected houses...these laws being conditioned to the approbation of the government. We want to discontinue the confusion of legislative and executive franchises in only one body, as practiced today by the Executive Council. Then we shall have a chance to show our aptitude for self-government."

Insular dissatisfaction with the existing situation and the desire to obtain more self-government and citizenship was such that in an unprecedented step rival political parties joined forces and sent Dickinson a message similar to that sent by the council of Arecibo. In his report to the President, Dickinson noted that "there is a general and almost universal desire and demand of all classes, interests, and political parties for American citizenship...and for an elective upper house..." In spite of the desires of the islanders, Dickinson proceeded to make his own recommendations, which were rather different and of a markedly retrogressive nature. When President Taft submitted the Dickinson report to Congress, he recommended the revision of the Foraker Act along the lines proposed in the report. In his message to Congress the President favored a more restricted exercise of self-government rather than the liberalizations expected by the Puerto Ricans.
As a result of Dickinson's investigation, a bill incorporating most of the provisions contained in the recommendations of the Secretary of War was introduced in Congress by Senator Marlin E. Olmstead, Chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. The bill was passed promptly by the House, but in a message to Congress dated February 23, 1910, Puerto Ricans claimed that the bill was not satisfactory, since it curtailed the few liberties granted by the Foraker Act. Inasmuch as the report of the Committee on Insular Affairs strongly upheld the Puerto Rican contention, the Olmstead bill never became law. With the defeat of the effort to replace the Foraker Act with the Olmstead bill the first ten years of civil government under American jurisdiction came to a close. Undeniably, the most important problems embittering Puerto Rican-American relations centered around the Foraker Act.

But the struggle to wrest some concessions toward more self-government was not the only problem besetting the American administration in the island. Another problem of similar importance was the Puerto Rican demand for citizenship. For the sensitive islanders the acquisition of citizenship would mitigate in part the odious stigma of second class citizenship and the implications of inferiority which that abnormal situation suggested. As in the struggle for greater autonomy there was not much the Puerto Ricans could do but exert pressure upon Congress by whatever means were available. Thus, once more Puerto Ricans resorted to sending petitions and messages to Congress justifying their demands. It should be pointed out that in this endeavor Puerto Ricans were not alone, as some American insular officials, the American press and some
members of Congress tried their best to pressure Congress into amending the Foraker Act so as to grant citizenship to the islanders.

Like the aforementioned contest for more autonomy, the striving for citizenship was filled with tense accusations and debates, thus increasing the animosity between Americans and Puerto Ricans. The long and arduous effort to obtain American citizenship for Puerto Rico began just one year after the passage of the Foraker Act. Between 1901 and 1910 twenty-one measures were presented to Congress in an effort to amend the organic law. Of these, four dealt with revenue provisions, while six were more or less inconsequential changes in the wording of the Act. The eleven remaining bills attempted, without success, to obtain the much desired American citizenship for the island. Of these eleven measures only one originated in the Senate and it was introduced by Joseph Benson Foraker, the author of the 1900 organic law.

It should be noted that the six Congressmen who vainly tried to obtain citizenship for Puerto Rico were northerners, members of the Republican party and conservatives. These common characteristics do not give an explanation of their desire to help Puerto Rico. A plausible explanation could be that these Congressmen were following regional politics, as most members of Congress who opposed any and all measures giving citizenship to Puerto Rico were Southern Democrats. Notwithstanding the importance of regional politics, it would be a naive and simplistic judgment to believe that no other motives compelled these Republican members of Congress to try to amend the Foraker Act for the benefit of Puerto Rico. A credible explanation was given in 1902 by Representative
Llewellyn Powers, Republican of Maine, while speaking in defense of a bill providing for a delegate from Puerto Rico to Congress. At this time Powers based his pro-insular stand "in the admitted fact that Puerto Rico is permanently to remain a part of our territory, and... because of her large business interests, importance and rapidly increasing trade with the United States...." Another credible explanation is that the Congressmen felt that in its treatment of Puerto Rico the United States was being unfair and undemocratic. This feeling is best exemplified by the remarks made by Senator Hoar in 1899 in his opposition to the Foraker Act, demanding that "Puerto Ricans be given a share in determining what kind of government they wanted, plus an equal voice in its administration...." Senator Hoar was one of several Congressmen who disagreed sharply with the Act of 1900. Their dissent led to a reaction and desire to amend and liberalize Puerto Rico's first organic law. A final important explanation for the pro-insular stand taken by some members of Congress in the citizenship issue could have been the strategic importance of the island, lying athwart the northeastern approaches to the Caribbean, and close by to major sea routes to the projected isthmian canal.

The earliest Congressional measure seeking citizenship for the island was a House Joint Resolution introduced by Representative Edward D. Crumpacker, of Indiana, in December, 1901. Coming just one year after the organic law, this resolution was remarkable but doomed to failure, for it not only requested citizenship for Puerto Rico but it also sought to incorporate the island into the United States."
next effort, also abortive, was made in 1902 by Representative Dennis T. Flynn, of Oklahoma. The next two efforts, both of which occurred in 1904, came from the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, Federico Degetau. All the above-mentioned measures ended their short lives within the ambit of the House Committee on Insular Affairs, which stubbornly refused to give any consideration to the problem.

But slowly and from several directions, powerful pressure was being applied upon Congress to amend the Foraker Act and grant citizenship to Puerto Rico. In 1905, Governor Beekman Winthrop became the first American official in the insular Administration to request citizenship for Puerto Rico. That same year, in his annual message to Congress, President Theodore Roosevelt recommended "the adoption of legislation that will explicitly confer American citizenship to all citizens of Puerto Rico," adding that "there is, in my judgment, no excuse for failure to do this." Probably as a result of President Roosevelt's recommendations a new bill—Senate Bill 2620—was introduced in the Senate by Foraker on January 4, 1906. This new bill proposed to amend section seven of the Foraker Act, so as to make all islanders and those aliens living in the island who so desired, citizens of the United States. On April 20, the bill was returned to the Senate by the Committee on the Pacific Islands and Puerto Rico, with the recommendation that it be approved. In Puerto Rico, support for the bill was widespread among members of the American Civil Administration, although for widely differing reasons, as will be readily seen.

To demonstrate their support for the new bill, various members of the Insular Administration sent written communications to Congress. In
a message dated January 15, 1906, Governor Winthrop declared that
"to my mind it is not only desirable but exceedingly important that
Congress at this session confers American citizenship upon Puerto
Ricans...American citizenship will eradicate an injustice...Personally
I can see absolutely no reason why it should not be granted."50

An earlier message defending citizenship for Puerto Rico had
been received by Congress, written by the then Secretary of Puerto Rico,
Regis H. Post. In his message, Post grudgingly admits that

Something might be properly done in regard to giving
the People of Puerto Rico citizenship. I believe that
in a way it would be a perfectly empty gift, inasmuch
as they today enjoy every benefit which they could
possibly have if they were American citizens, but
everyone old enough to think bitterly resents not
being American citizens. 'I think that they consider
it rather a slur in their honor that they should not
be deemed worthy of citizenship.' I can not see
where they could be anymore of a 'menace' to our nation
as citizens of the United States than as citizens of
Puerto Rico...Without sacrificing any of our control
it is wise to gratify Puerto Rican wishes as much as
possible...."51

It is baffling how two members of the Insular Administration could
write two such dissimilar and contrasting messages. One is proper and
diplomatically correct. The other displays a disparaging and disdainful
tone. In his message, Post—a future governor of Puerto Rico—shows not
only his lack of political expertise, but the inadequacy of his prepara-
tion to occupy a position of leadership over the Puerto Rican society.

In 1906, and notwithstanding Post's comments, American citizenship
for Puerto Rico was not an empty gift. It was a dire necessity not only
to restore the islander's self-respect, but also to eliminate many of
the hardships which this American-made political limbo had created, while
lessening the dissatisfaction and bitterness cropping up in the island.\textsuperscript{52}

Puerto Rican hopes of citizenship diminished even more when in
spite of all the support it marshalled, Senate Bill 2620 was soundly
defeated in the House late in 1906.\textsuperscript{53} In the same year two other bills
introduced by Representative Henry A. Cooper, of Wisconsin and Representa-
tive Everis A. Hayes, of California, were also defeated.\textsuperscript{54} But the
pressure being exerted upon Congress was increasing. In 1906, President
Theodore Roosevelt again requested that citizenship be given to the
islanders.\textsuperscript{55} This recommendation was strongly urged in the President's
annual message to Congress in 1907 and again in 1908.\textsuperscript{56} During these
years four new bills were introduced in the lower house providing citizen-
ship for Puerto Rico. One bill was introduced by Representative Hayes.
A second bill was introduced by Congressman Albert Douglas, of Ohio.\textsuperscript{57}
The last two bills were introduced by Representative Cooper, who between
1900 and 1909 introduced ten different measures favoring Puerto Rico,
although without any success.

The Congressional struggle to obtain citizenship for Puerto Rico
changed its nature in 1910. Beginning in this year and probably due to
the pressure exerted by the Executive since 1905 and by the great pressure
of public opinion,\textsuperscript{58} the desire to amend the Foraker Act was replaced
by an effort to supersede it with a more adequate and liberal organic
law. While a concerted effort was begun in Congress to replace the
organic law, in Puerto Rico the islanders welcomed George R. Colton,
the first governor having any knowledge of Spanish. Colton's appointment
raised hopes of better things to come. The struggle for citizenship and the aforementioned demands for a liberalization of the Act of 1900 were two of the most thorny questions causing so much ill-will between Puerto Ricans and Americans. But these were only two of the many problems poisoning the relationship between the two peoples.

One other cause of serious discontent in the island was the fact that the governors sent to Puerto Rico were, for the most part, political appointees lacking the experience, preparation and interest to deal with the problems of colonial administration. Probably because they were appointed to pay off political debts, none of the early governors was required to know Spanish. As representatives of the sovereign and overwhelming power of the United States over the island, governors came to be seen as the symbol of the alleged American injustice and inequality. The fact that to a great degree they were imbued with an anti-creole prejudice helped to make a bad situation even worse. This attitude is clearly illustrated in the remarks made by governor Arthur Yaeger on 1916 to the House Committee on Insular Affairs that "Puerto Ricans were a tropical people lacking the stamina and conditions of American life."

The prejudice illustrated above was enhanced by the American governors' most grievous flaw—their belief that "the natives" were inferior. This is clearly depicted in one of Governor Charles H. Allen's early declarations, where in an apparent paraphrase of General Davis' earlier discriminatory statement, Allen declared that "as a people, Puerto Ricans were unfit to at once assume...the management of their own affairs...." Allen added that "Congress went as far as it could safely venture in
the form of government already existing in the island...and that a departure from the general form of government...would be a grave mistake....” Following a biased and fallacious line of reasoning, Allen further declared that

Nature has done so much for this people and has required so little in return that the problem of life has been free from those terrible anxieties which possess the soul of the toilers of other climates and by their very inexorable demands develop those qualities of thrift, industry and perseverance which underlie individual as well as national prosperity. In a climate where...little clothing is required and shelter means protection from the tropical sun rather than climatic changes; where a man can lie in a hammock, pick up a banana with one hand, and dig a sweet potato with one foot, the incentive to idleness is easy to yield to, and brings its inevitable consequences.

The condescending language and attitude of Davis, Dickinson, Allen and Yaeger was also echoed in the narrow utterances of Post in 1906. Because they were the most important officials in the insular administration, governors were carefully watched by Puerto Ricans. Thus, their prejudiced remarks, their disdainful attitude and actions created an ever-deepening barrier between Americans and Puerto Ricans.

Frank H. Richmond, who served as Assistant Attorney-General of Puerto Rico in 1902, and later on as associate judge of the district court of San Juan, characterized the Puerto Rican governors as “noted for the seriousness with which they take themselves and the amateurish pettiness of their activities; the calmness with which they assume that they are doing these people the Puerto Ricans good and that the little they know of business and administration is far superior to methods in vogue in the island....”
The problems and resulting tension during the first decade of civil administration were compounded by the seemingly innocuous desire of the United States to Americanize the small Caribbean island. It is not the purpose of this paper to dwell at any length on the importance of this vexing and prolonged problem, so amply documented by modern scholarship. Suffice it to say that the desire for the Americanization of the island was quite evident in the United States, its leaders and the national press immediately after 1898. With the establishment of the Foraker Act, Dr. George Groff became the island's first Commissioner of Education. He was the first of a group whose main task was to reshape the Puerto Rican school system and forcibly introduce American ideas which were supposed to replace the islander's Spanish cultural heritage, making it possible for Puerto Ricans "to be absorbed into the mainstream of North American culture."

The strenuous but surprising resistance of the small and seemingly divided Puerto Rican people against assimilation by the larger civilization to the north created a deep feeling of resentment among leaders of the American government. The idea was expressed by popular writers as well as some members of Congress that Puerto Ricans were an unruly, ungrateful lot, unfit for self-government, who would never become Americanized because of their alien cultural traditions. The language issue—whether to use English or Spanish as the main language in the school—was one more item that further clouded the insular atmosphere.

But as previously stated the main points of contention causing tension between Americans and Puerto Ricans centered around the Foraker
Act and were of a political nature. The problems centering around citizenship and a greater degree of self-government, although treated separately in the preceding pages, were of such a nature that the solution of one could mean the solution or amelioration of the other. This twofold struggle continued unabated after 1910, and continued pressure was exerted upon Congress for changes in the Foraker Act.

The efforts of several Congressmen—notably that of Congressman Cooper—to liberalize the organic act in favor of Puerto Rico have been noted. After 1910 Cooper's place was seemingly taken by Representative William A. Jones, of Virginia. Three different bills seeking citizenship for the island were introduced by Representative Jones in 1912. Only one of these bills—H.R. 20048—was acted upon, being approved both by the House Committee on Insular Affairs and by the House of Representatives. Support for citizenship was voiced both by Governor George R. Colton and President Taft, but the bill failed to reach the Senate either during the second or third sessions of the 62nd Congress. It should be stressed that this bill considered only a grant of citizenship and not the creation of an elective Insular Senate. Thus, it was greatly opposed not only by insular politicians but by other insular organizations as well. The positions of the Puerto Ricans was made clear in a letter dated February 7, 1913, sent by Luis Muñoz Rivera—the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico—to the Chairman and members of the Senate Committee on the Pacific Islands and Puerto Rico. In said letter Muñoz Rivera stated that

Citizenship, unless it is accompanied by a liberal reform, will be an honorable title, but not a practical solution. We prefer self-government without citizen-
ship, to citizenship without self-government. It would be a plain injustice to deny us citizenship. It would be a greater injustice yet to deny us an effective participation in the affairs under the control of the Insular administration. The dissatisfaction now felt in Puerto Rico will prevail until...the question...affecting our right to govern ourselves is settled...my countrymen...do expect today [that] Congress grants them American citizenship together with a law creating two elective houses and investing them through their representatives in both chambers, with power to make their laws to regulate all their local matters.

After the shelving of H.R. 20048, a new bid for changes in the organic act was made by Senator Miles Poindexter of Washington, later in the same year. Once more the Senate refused to consider the protracted matter. 74

Although the Puerto Rican legislation had suffered many setbacks and encountered adamant opposition from the Senate, Puerto Rican hopes had been stirred in 1912 with the election of Woodrow Wilson as President of the United States. Prior to his inauguration, President Wilson announced that he favored citizenship and the extension of home rule to the island. Notwithstanding the presidential declaration, it was not until March, 1914—a full year after the Wilson Administration took office—that a Puerto Rican bill was reported out of a Congressional committee. The bill, H.R. 14866, sponsored by Representative Jones and Senator John F. Shafroth, had the support of President Wilson and Governor Arthur Yaeger. 75 In reporting the new bill to change the organic law and to grant citizenship, the House Insular Affairs Committee criticized preceding Congresses for their long delay in granting revisions to what originally had been called a temporary government. It censured
the Senate for twice having failed to act on major improvements recommend-
ed by the House. The new bill by Representative Jones represented a
more liberal approach than any previously reported, but the outbreak
of World War I in the Summer of 1914 overshadowed the Puerto Rican
issue.

In 1915, a flow of appeals for home rule action came from the
island. The New York Times editorialized repeatedly in favor of
prompt action, demanding that the island be organized as a territory.
In January, 1916, Representative Jones presented a new bill—H.R. 9533—
a similar measure as that introduced in 1914. The House approved the
Jones bill on May 23, 1916, but it failed to come to the Senate floor
for debate during the 1916 session, prompting remarks that it would
suffer the same fate as earlier bills that had been approved by the
House. But in his State of the Union Message on December 5, 1916,
President Wilson gave great support to H.R. 9533, thus placing great
pressure upon Congress to act upon the protracted problem. In his
message, President Wilson stated: "The argument for the proposed amend-
ment to the Organic Law for Puerto Rico is brief and conclusive. The
present laws governing the island...are not just. We have created
expectations of extended privileges which we have not justified."
Following what at times was a heated debate, after innumerable amendments,
and after strong opposition and delaying tactics, the Jones-Shafroth Act
was finally approved on March 2, 1917, on which date President Wilson
signed it into law.

The Jones Act was a step, albeit small, in the evolutionary
process toward self-government. The bill's significant features
included a grant of collective citizenship and liberalized governmental opportunities. Puerto Rico now had an elective bicameral legislature, although a veto power was vested in the appointed governor, subject to two-thirds override, which would then be sent to the President of the United States, who had the power of absolute veto. Moreover, the auditor, the attorney-general, the commissioner of education and the judges of the Insular Supreme Court were also presidential appointees. Congress also retained the power to annul any act of the legislature.

The passage of the Jones Act did not resolve the question of final political status for the island. Puerto Rico had won some coveted gains from Congress, but the island was still an unincorporated territory of the United States. During the long fight for reform of the Foraker Act the question of status had become the predominant issue of insular politics. Intense feeling had developed either for or against independence. The young leaders who came to the fore were impatient, very vocal and adamant in their demands. The insular political scene had changed, and besides all the schismatic feelings there remained the question of the permanent status of Puerto Rico, which was still unresolved. Furthermore, despite the provisions for a popularly elected legislature, a veto power was still held by the appointed governor and by the President of the United States, two political figures in whose election the Puerto Ricans played no part. Strangely enough Puerto Rican males were compelled to fight in a war to secure for others the rights of self-determination, while the same rights were denied to them. Nevertheless, with the passage of the Jones Act, two long-standing demands of Puerto Rico had been met. The people were given
the right to elect all members of a legislative body, and United States citizenship was extended to them. Congressmen felt that for the moment, at least, the Puerto Rican situation had been corrected and could be set aside.

To the chagrin of Congress, however, no sooner had the new organic law been proclaimed than insular agitation for additional concessions resumed. Puerto Ricans constantly reminded Congress of their claims through a steady flow of petitions and delegations. This persistent outflow of propaganda plus the continuous talk about independence had very little effect in Washington. This is clearly shown by a letter which Horace M. Towner, Chairman of the House Insular Affairs Committee sent to the Puerto Rican legislature. In his letter Towner declared that "friends of Puerto Rico will soon find it difficult to help the island if this propaganda is continued. I assure you that there is not now, and there is not likely to be, any considerable sentiment in this country for the independence of Puerto Rico. There is a legitimate ground for a larger measure of self-government, but that has been greatly injured by the active independence propaganda." 80

An additional cause for discord in insular-mainland relations appeared in 1921, when President Warren G. Harding appointed E. Montgomery Reily, a Kansas City businessman to whom he owed a political debt, as governor of Puerto Rico. 81 A much criticized governor, 82 Reily quickly managed to alienate most of the insular political leadership when in his tactless inaugural address he made slighting remarks: about respected Santiago Iglesias Pantin, 83 while directing a broadside against the
Union of Puerto Rico and its pro-independence stand. After saying that independence for Puerto Rico would never be considered, Governor Reily avowed that there was not the least sympathy for Puerto Rican independence in the United States, adding: "Neither my friends, is there room on this island for any flag other than the stars and stripes. So long as Old Glory waves over the United States it will continue to wave in Puerto Rico." 

The challenge to the pro-independence stand of the Union party was further emphasized in a letter addressed to that party's leader, Antonio R. Barceló, on the subject of patronage. In this letter, Reily stated:

I have just started to clean house. While discussing appointments, I want you to fully understand that I shall never appoint any man to any office who is an advocate of independence. When you publicly renounce independence and break loose from your pernicious and un-American associates, then I will be glad to have your recommendations.

This uncompromising stand by the island's newly appointed governor touched off a wave of recriminations between the executive branch and the Union party, which dominated the insular legislature. For nearly two years the battle ebbed and flowed, with harsh recriminations being attributed to both sides.

During this stormy dispute Reily's behavior came under the scrutiny of mainland newspapers who demanded an investigation of insular affairs. In February 1923, despite President Harding's staunch support, Reily resigned. Notwithstanding the turmoil of the years when Reily was governor, several important events took place. First in 1922, the United
States Supreme Court reaffirmed the doctrine that Puerto Rico was an unincorporated territory in the case of *Balzac v. People of Puerto Rico*, basing its opinion in the light of Congressional intent in the Jones-Shafroth Act. Second, during the same year several unsuccessful attempts were made in Congress to settle the status question. Third, Representative John I. Nolan, of California, sponsored a bill to incorporate Puerto Rico as a territory, while Representative Phillip P. Campbell of Kansas, and Senator William H. King of Utah, with the endorsement of President Harding sponsored a bill drafted by Miguel Guerra Mondragón, a well-known Puerto Rican lawyer. Although unsuccessful, the bill was noteworthy because some of its features foreshadowed the present Commonwealth idea, and because it kept alive the formula for a middle ground between statehood and independence.

Throughout the remainder of the decade Puerto Ricans continued to exert pressure upon Congress in an effort to bring about changes in the Jones Act. In 1924 a bill to permit an elective governor passed the Senate but was never considered by the House. The following year proposals for an elective governor were once more defeated.

Between 1923 and 1929—the years when Horace M. Towner was governor of Puerto Rico—the status issue lay dormant, almost forgotten, although in Congress, Resident Commissioner Dávila undertook and unsuccessful one man campaign to try to obtain some liberal concessions from Congress. Between 1926 and 1929, Dávila presented nine different measures giving a greater degree of autonomy to the island. But like similar bills he had presented in 1923 and 1924, neither of these projects received the approval of Congress.
It should be mentioned that these years were, after the unpleasant quarrels of 1921-1923, devoid of friction or animosity. This was mainly due to Governor Towner's ability to bring the competing political factions into a more harmonious and cooperative relationship, and his acceptance and popularity with Puerto Ricans, which did much to smooth over the distrust which had grown up under Governor Reily. But in 1928, President Calvin Coolidge touched off another wave of denunciations and recriminations, when answering a message of the insular legislature. In their message Puerto Rican leaders once more asked for a larger participation in their own affairs, while denouncing Puerto Rico's condition as that of a subjugated colony. In his reply—sent to Governor Towner—President Coolidge cited the favored position of Puerto Rico as in many ways superior to that of a state, claiming that Puerto Rican control over its internal affairs already exceeded that of any state or territory.

The acrimonious dispute that followed was punctuated by an upsurge of anti-American propaganda, stronger stands by insular political parties on the question of status and reform, and by Resident Commissioner Díaz's lengthy and passionate denunciation of President Coolidge's letter on the floor of the House.

Thus, at the close of the 1920's, Puerto Rican-American relations were at a low ebb, marred by sporadic incidents which prevented the two peoples from working together toward the solution of common problems. In sum, it must be said that most if not all of the problems presented in the preceding pages as causes of schisms between Americans and Puerto Ricans were still present by the end of the 1920's.
Rico there was still widespread dissatisfaction with the extent of the reforms, accompanied by an intense desire for a definite decision in the unresolved status question. On the other hand, it can not be denied that the foundation upon which rested the agitation for the separation of Puerto Rico from the mainland was somewhat curtailed with the passage of the Jones-Shafroth Act. But too many years of hostile bickering, indifference and mistrust could not be bridged with one act of Congress. It was disheartening to both parties but in 1929 Puerto Rico and the United States were not any closer together than in 1900.
The history of the American administration in the island, at least until the 1940s, was one of negligence compounded with ignorance. In a typical comment, Robert W. Anderson, *Party Politics in Puerto Rico* (Stanford, California, 1965), p. 13, asserts that the United States was "a rather absent-minded and rather amateur imperialistic power." Gordon K. Lewis, *Puerto Rico Freedom and Power in the Caribbean* (New York, 1968), p. 58, claims that "if there was not outright cynicism, there was at least indifference, ignorance and arrogance frequently masquerading as national policy in the Caribbean...." See also Pedro Muñoz Amato, "Major Trends in the Constitutional History of Puerto Rico, 1493-1917," *Revista de derecho, legislación y jurisprudencia*, XII, (San Juan, julio-septiembre, 1949), p. 288, who quotes Senator Albert Fall, at the 1917 Congressional Hearing on the legislation of 1917 for the island as saying "very few members of the Senate understand what they are attempting to legislate about at all." But the most baffling non-action of Congress was to leave Puerto Rican affairs in the hands of the Bureau of Insular Affairs of the War Department. Lewis, p. 58, calls this "a calculated insult." Hunter, in *Status of Puerto Rico*, p. 64, sums up the attitude of Congress toward Puerto Rico when he states that after 1900 "Congress turned its attention to other matters. To all intents and purposes it quietly forgot the territory....The American press, which had followed the Puerto Rican legislation with avid interest, likewise turned to other topics."

Subsequently, and as a courtesy but not as a matter of legal right, the Resident Commissioner was allowed a seat and voice in the House. See *U.S. Congressional Record*, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1904, p. 1525. See also Julius M. Pratt, *America's Colonial Experiment* (New York, 1950), p. 186.

The power of Congress over the island was seen early, when in an unexpected and far-reaching move, it deprived Puerto Ricans of their Spanish citizenship, at the same time denying the islanders American citizenship, thus creating an abnormal body politic known as "the People of Puerto Rico."

The insular cases which primarily affected Puerto Rico were: *Drooto v. Bidwell*, 182 U.S. 1 (1901); *Downes v. Bidwell*, 182 U.S. 244 (1901); and *Dooley v. United States*, 183 U.S. 151 (1901).

Pratt, *America's Colonial Experiment*, p. 68.
To use the words of a former Resident Commissioner to Washington, "Congress could be restrained only by basic injunctions to be found in the Constitution of the United States." See Antonio Fernós Isern, "From Colony to Commonwealth," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCLXXV (January, 1953), p. 19. The most direct confirmation of Congressional power over the island was given by the United States Supreme Court in the so-called insular cases, where the Court, in effect, endorsed the right of Congress to legislate for the island.

See U.S. Congressional Record, 56th Cong., 1st Sess., 1900, p. 3507. For a good example of the Puerto Rican reaction against the alleged betrayal committed by the United States against the island with the Foraker Act and later on with the Jones Act of 1917, see U.S. Congressional Record, 70th Cong., 1st Sess., 1928, LXVI, part 6, p. 6348, where the full text of a message sent by the legislature of Puerto Rico is given. The message in part states "give us the freedom that you enjoy, for which you struggled, which you worship, which we deserve and you have promised us."

Leo S. Rowe, The United States and Puerto Rico (New York, 1904), Chap. 1.

Pratt, America's Colonial Experiment, p. 68.


For an enlightening insight on this subject see Brigadier General George W. Davis, Report on Civil Affairs in Puerto Rico, 1898, U.S. War Department, Vol. 1, part 6 (Washington, 1900), pp. 546-550; and A. Hyatt Verrill, Puerto Rico: Past and Present (New York, 1920), p. 134. In Verrill's work there are innumerable examples--mainly in the form of statements made by American officials in the insular administration--which show that the idea of Puerto Rican racial inferiority was widespread among continentals.


18. Ibid., p. 83.
26. Fifth Annual Report of Beekman Winthrop, Governor of Puerto Rico (Washington, 1905), p. 41. This seems to be a very valid complaint, as attested by the evidence presented by Thomas Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics and the New Deal (Gainesville, 1960), p. 23. In this work Mathews presents a letter written in 1933 by Cordell Hull, who states that "when I first came to Puerto Rico in 1915 all the Federal positions except a few of the lower grades were held by Americans...and in the insular government, the Governor and all his principal assistants were all Americans...." Further proof that the Puerto Rican complaint was justified is presented by Earl Parker Hanson, Transformation: The Story of Modern Puerto Rico (New York, 1955), p. 45, where it is stated that "Puerto Ricans, for the first seventeen years were...excluded from high positions in their own government...."
27. Stuart, Latin America, p. 252.
29. This practice was started by Governor Allen against the Federal Party. It was also used by Winthrop against the Union of Puerto Rico.
30. This is the so-called Olmstead Amendment to the Foraker Act. It provided that "if at the termination of any fiscal year the appropriations necessary for the support of government for the ensuing year shall not have been made, an amount equal to the sums appropriated in the last appropriation bills for such purpose shall be deemed appropriated." See U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXXVI, p. 11.
31. La Democracia (San Juan), May 17-28, 1909, quoted in Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 69.


34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. See Butler, Status of Puerto Rico, pp. 70-71. See also Dickinson, Conditions in Puerto Rico, pp. 9-25, which contains the full text of the bill proposed by the Secretary of War to replace the Foraker Act.

37. As quoted in Stuart, Latin America, p. 256.


39. Some of the most outspoken opponents of any legislation favoring Puerto Rico were John T. Morgan, Senator from Alabama; Augustus D. Bacon, Senator from Georgia; John S. Williams, Representative from Mississippi; William P. Borland, Representative from Georgia; and Champ Clark, Representative from Missouri.


42. U.S. Congressional Record, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., 1901, p. 57.


44. U.S. Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1904, pp. 1543, 4592. During the Administration of the First President Commissioner from Puerto Rico. He served from 1902 to 1904, when he was succeeded by Tulio Lurinano, who served until 1910.

Several examples suffice to demonstrate the hardships created by the islander's lack of citizenship. First, Puerto Ricans in the state of New York were denied jobs in government facilities, such as the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Second, Puerto Ricans traveling abroad were denied the assistance of American consulates. Third, and most important, Puerto Ricans were in the predicament of being neither aliens nor citizens of the United States. Under these conditions they had no sovereignty to renounce, which prevented them from becoming American citizens through naturalization. See Senate Report No. 2746, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 4, 6, where Larrinaga, Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, made this fact known to Congress.

Some examples that can give the reader an idea of how strong public opinion was in favor of citizenship for Puerto Rico can be seen in the following articles: Albert Gardner Robinson, "Causes of Unrest," The Independent, LX (March 15, 1906), pp. 612-615; William Hayes Ward, "Puerto Rico and the United States: Citizenship for Puerto Ricans," The Outlook, XCIII (October, 1911); "Puerto Ricans and American Citizenship," Review of Reviews, XXXVIII (July, 1908), pp. 95-96; "Puerto Rico's Grievance," The Outlook, IC (November, 1911), pp. 643-644.
George R. Colton was the first governor to have any knowledge of Spanish. He became governor in 1909.


See Verrill, Puerto Rico: Past and Present, p. 314.

Allen, First Annual Report, p. 98.

See above, p. 49.

A writer who witnessed the condescending attitude of the Americans toward the 'inferior natives' was Wilfrid H. Callcott, The Caribbean Policy of the United States, 1893-1920 (Baltimore, 1942), p. 130. On this page Callcott states that "very few American officials were willing to treat the Puerto Ricans as equals." For the belief in the inferiority of the 'natives' see also Verrill, Puerto Rico: Past and Present, p. 314. Other American historians like Hanson, Diffie and Lewis, have criticized this attitude of superiority with which Americans viewed and treated the island of Puerto Rico.


My own translation. See Epstein, "La enseñanza del inglés y el status político de Puerto Rico, p. 297. To read on the intent and desire to Americanize the island, see Hanson, Transformation, pp. 50, 53. The urgent need and desire for Americanization was presented repeatedly in the New York Times. On August 6, 1898, the New York Times editorialized that "vastly better results will come in Puerto Rico if the islanders learn English." On February 22, 1899, the newspaper once more declared that "Puerto Rico must be Americanized."

See Earl Parker Hanson, Puerto Rico, Land of Wonders, (New York, 1960), p. 40. See also Lewis, Freedom and Power, p. 2; and Locket, the Puerto Rico Problem, whose underlying theme is that Puerto Ricans
were either foolish on stupid in rejecting American ideas and ways of life. According to Locket, Puerto Ricans are not good Americans because Spanish is their language, and their cultural background is different from that in the mainland.

69. The bills were the following: H.R. 24961; H.R. 17836; H.R. 20048. See Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1912, XLVIII, Index.


71. The 62nd Congress extended into the early months of 1913.

72. See U.S. Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 3rd Sess., 1913, pp. 4661-4662. This page gives samples of the cablegrams sent by the Federacion Regional de Trabajadores and from the Puerto Rico Civic Association opposing the granting of citizenship for Puerto Rico.

73. Letter sent by Luis Muñoz Rivera, Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner to the Chairman and members of the Senate Committee on the Pacific Islands and Puerto Rico in U.S. Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 3rd Sess., 1913, pp. 4661-4662.


75. Ibid.

76. See the New York Times, in the following dates: August 1, 1915, Section II; September 12, 1915, Section II; October 28, 1915, and November 21, 1915, Section II.


78. U.S. Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1916, p. 17.

79. U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXXIX (1917) part 1. This law is popularly known in Puerto Rico as the Acta Jones.

80. In Democracia (San Juan), March 8, 1921, quoted in Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 79.

81. Reily was nominated by President Harding on May 6, 1921. This appointment was confirmed on May 11, without any opposition or questions regarding Reily's qualifications. See New York Times, on the following dates: May 7, 1921; and May 12, 1921.

83 Leader of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

84 El Mundo (San Juan), August 1, 1921; La Democracia (San Juan), July 31, 1921.

85 New York Times, August 18, 1921; La Democracia (San Juan), August 18, 1921.

86 For an example of the tense and often times furious debates which occurred due to the struggle between Governor Reily and the Unionist Party, see U.S. Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1922, pp. 3372, 3479, 3584; and U.S. Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1922, pp. 5024-5031.

87 See the lengthy editorial of the Grand Rapids Herald (Michigan), April, 1922 in U.S. Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1922, demanding "a thorough and prompt investigation of the serious charges levelled by Resident Commissioner Davila against Reily."


89 Six of these measures were presented in 1927. See U.S. Congressional Record, 69th Cong., 1st Sess., 1927, part 12. The other three bills were presented in 1928. See U.S. Congressional Record, 70th Cong., 1st Sess., 1928, part 11.


91 For the entire text of the message see U.S. Congressional Record, 70th Cong., 1st Sess., 1928, p. 6348.

92 For the entire text of President Coolidge's letter see New York Times, March 16, 1928; and U.S. Congressional Record, 70th Cong., 1st Sess., 1928, pp. 6335, 6348.

93 U.S. Congressional Record, 70th Cong., 1st Sess., 1928, pp. 6325-6339.
CHAPTER III

A TRADITION OF VIOLENCE AND UNREST

In many ways the 1930's were terrible years for Puerto Rico. During these years Puerto Rico—not truly a rich port—was caught in the agonizing travail of virtual starvation, mass unemployment and economic unrest. The story of the long struggle to rehabilitate the half-starved, ill-housed and distressed people of Puerto Rico has been the subject of many papers and studies. It will suffice to say that the extremely bad socio-economic conditions were but one more ingredient which, when added to the political ferment and the ever-present question of status led to unrest, violence and death. Violence, non-Nationalist and non-political, was seemingly the accepted way to solve individual problems and personal differences within the island.

In 1930, perhaps prompted by the severe suffering at the hands of the disastrous hurricane of 1928, unemployment, poor salaries and hunger, the picture of a not so docile but increasingly aggressive Puerto Rican begins clearly to emerge. Tired of suffering of waiting and of being exploited, the islander began to fight back, albeit in a minor manner. Early in this year the island was plagued by a series of strikes by agricultural workers, who demanded better salaries and working conditions. Although the strikes began in an orderly manner, hard fought clashes between the workers and the police were not an uncommon occurrence. The first violent encounter occurred late in January, when at the city...
of Ponce the police had to disperse forcefully a group of nearly three hundred men taking part in a demonstration.⁴

Two weeks later, during a meeting held by striking demonstrators in the city of Caguas, a riot occurred which resulted in five seriously wounded persons.⁵ During this incident police forces repeatedly clashed with and fought the striking workers.⁶ With the end of the agricultural work stoppage, police-civilian confrontations—a most ominous development—ceased. But notwithstanding the fact that labor unrest soon disappeared, violence remained a fixture of insular life, which was filled with criminal actions where many people suffered serious wounds, were maimed for life or even lost their lives.

A careful reading of three of the main insular newspapers in 1930 shows that violent, aggressive behavior seemed to be endemic in the island.⁷ Like most Latin Americans, Puerto Ricans seemed to have a penchant for violence as a means of solving their problems and differences. Thus, it is not surprising to find out that in their individual and non-collective behavior, a great number of Puerto Ricans resorted to violence as the easiest and quickest way to resolve a problem, any problem. For example, during the months of August, September and October of the aforementioned year, the island suffered a virtual wave of criminal actions. During these three months, eighty-two criminal attempts against human life were recorded. These incidents do not involve misdemeanors, rape, arson, or robbery, but murders and attempted assassinations.⁸ These eighty-two incidents resulted in forty-four deaths and fifty-three wounded persons. Of the latter, ten were severely wounded, raising the
probability of added deaths. It should be pointed out that of the above-mentioned criminal actions, only one was politically motivated.9

The propensity of the islanders to use violence in everyday life can not be denied if one takes into account that between July, 1930 to December, 1931, a grand total of 2,501 serious criminal acts were committed in Puerto Rico.10 Of these, 244 were outright murders, while nearly 2,200 were violent acts against individuals.11 The situation became so bad that by March, 1932, El Imparcial was using the term "ola de sangre" to refer to the continuous and unabated turbulence and bloodshed plaguing Puerto Rican society. If one takes into account the brief though poignant facts given above, it is indeed folly to deny that violence was a way of life in Puerto Rico. This brief description is in stark contrast to the much debated but often accepted notion that the islanders are a passive and docile people.

Starting in 1932, the pattern of aggression and disorder received an added impetus, as this was an election year in the island. Politically motivated crimes would now add their weight to the already agitated insular scene. This was clearly evident after the month of March, when most political parties started their campaigns. The first violent encounter between political opponents occurred early in March, when a riot was set off by a group of Liberals who tried to stop the inscription of new electors, claiming fraud was being perpetrated. Liberal partisans started the incident by throwing rocks and disobeying police orders. The subsequent melee resulted in three deaths and several wounded persons.12 Fear of further clashes between Liberals and Republicans in the city of
Rio Piedras prompted insular authorities to increase the number of policemen in that city. Soon afterwards, a second riot involving members of the same two political organizations occurred. This was a running fight between the towns of Vega Baja and Vega Alta, where fire arms, stones, sticks and knives were readily used, resulting in two wounded civilians. The following day—the last day of April—two more islanders were wounded in a fracas involving Liberals, Republicans and Socialists.

The tense political atmosphere leading to violent encounters and dead and wounded people grew as time went on. The reader should bear in mind that politically motivated aggressions were occurring simultaneously with what has been termed non-political, individual type aggressions mentioned in earlier pages. Thus, if one accepts that the latter were occurring at the same pace as in preceding years, the picture that emerges is one of near chaos, where violence was indeed endemic, a way of life.

Insular society during the remainder of 1932 continued to be marred by a succession of politically motivated incidents. During May, three separate riots involving Liberals and Republicans occurred. One, near the town of Ciales, resulted in fourteen wounded persons. Afterwards, a lull in the political fighting ensued, and no other acts of aggression occurred until the month of November, when a shoot-out was staged by members of the Republican and Liberal factions, resulting in the death of a bystander. The last recorded incident of 1932 occurred on November 8, in the Santurce section of the metropolitan area of San Juan when police clashed violently with members of the Coalitionist party. In the resulting brawl six persons were severely wounded, two of them policemen.
As pointed out earlier, election day 1932 was considered peaceful by no other than Luis Munoz Marin, because only two men had been killed and only five had been wounded. But on Munoz Marin and the leadership of the other political parties rested much of the blame for many of the violent incidents which occurred in Puerto Rico during 1932. Their intemperate attitude and behavior toward political opponents, their incendiary and passionate rhetoric, their endless and unnerving accusations and counter accusations served only to exacerbate an already dangerous and tense atmosphere. A good example of this inflammatory and inciting rhetoric is the statement made by Munoz Marin on May 10, when the statesman and future governor of Puerto Rico declared that "when the law does not protect, people must protect themselves by using force if necessary."^®

Munoz Marin's contentious statement was made in May. In the same month three different politically motivated riots occurred in the island. If the leaders spoke in such a provocative manner, it is not surprising that their partisan followers, accustomed to a life where violence was commonplace, reacted accordingly. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, one tends to think that insular politicians were not thinking of Puerto Rico, but of themselves, and any manner of speech was acceptable as long as it achieved the ultimate goal of prolonging their stay in power. Undeterred by the potentially explosive effects of such passionate rhetoric upon their frantic followers, insular politicians added their rancor to an already dangerous situation.

It is indeed difficult to accept the idea of Puerto Rican passivity and docility if one takes into account the information given in the
preceding pages. This vaunted judgement is rendered untenable when one considers some of the precautionary measures taken by the authorities for election day, 1932. To begin with, besides the special guard assigned to each voting place, all electoral colleges were also patrolled by an insular policeman. Besides that, a specially formed patrol of five men --termed a flying patrol--was created for the area of San Juan. Armed with carbines, the patrol was supposed to deal with any special disturbance in its area. A similar patrol was created for the area of Puerta de Tierra. Five of these special groups were assigned to Santurce and two to Río Piedras. Four other similar police detachments were held on standby for "emergencies" at police headquarters. 21

Readers must bear in mind that these were special measures taken only for the then metropolitan area of the capital city. Although no information concerning the preventive measures taken for the rest of the island has been found, one can only wonder at how many similar police patrols were placed in use or on standby throughout the island.

With the passing of the 1932 elections, politically motivated crimes came to a stop. But the violence and criminal actions which had prompted El Imparcial repeatedly to use the term "bloodbath" when referring to the persistent bloodletting in insular society did not come to an end. The continuance of this unlawful behavior was to establish a precedent for the havoc and turmoil which the Nationalists later on brought to Puerto Rico. The party was, in effect, following the example of individual members of insular society. Thus, the acts of Nationalist-inspired violence which occurred between 1932 and 1935 are seen within the context of this insular
pattern of violence. It should be stressed, though, that unlike other aggressions—regardless of their motivation—Nationalist activities added new and disturbing elements such as leadership, fierce anti-Americanism, planned activities and virulent hatred.

Political violence unrelated to the Nationalist party once more came to the fore in 1936 simply because 1936 was, once more, an election year. The first incident in what was to be an extremely violent year occurred early in January. During this month electoral registration proceedings for the next general elections slated for November were underway. During the first days of registration two riots occurred which resulted in the death of two civilians. A couple of days later, on January 11, several persons were killed and a few others seriously injured as disturbances continued between members of the different political parties. To help restore some semblance of order, 250 special police were placed on duty near the registration centers. Throughout the remainder of January political violence reigned supreme in Puerto Rico, while the insular police showed its inability to cope with the situation. On January 13, for example, a shooting incident involving Liberals and Coalitionists occurred in San Juan, resulting in three gravely wounded persons. The following day six violent clashes involving the use of firearms were recorded in different towns across the island. Three persons were killed and many others were wounded due to these events. Among the incidents, there was a highly disturbing one where a truck loaded with women came under small arms fire, demonstrating that under the passionate political atmosphere, not even women were exempt from the havoc engendered by political fanaticism.
The bloodshed continued at a steady and ever increasing pace. On January 15 one person was injured and another died as a result of a shooting incident in the town of San Lorenzo. Two days later law and order seemingly vanished from several insular communities, when rioting occurred in the towns of Vega Baja, Canóvanas, Yabucoa and San Sebastián. The results of such turbulence were appalling, with eight deaths and nearly sixty injured persons. On Tuesday, January 21, the town of Manatí had to be patrolled by reinforced police forces armed with carbines due to the panic created by lengthy shooting incidents between Liberals and Coalitionists. On the same day, a truck flying the Coalitionist flag was shot at while traveling near the town of Jayuya.

The near chaos created by political passion and a callous disrespect for other men and their beliefs diminished during the last days of January, although sporadic confrontations between opposite party members continued. In an effort to defuse the explosive political atmosphere, several leaders of the Coalitionist and Liberal party held a joint meeting in the town of Bayamón, asking the people of Puerto Rico to stop the bloodletting. The tardy call for peace and sanity was nothing but window dressing, a useless display of solidarity by the men who were, to a great degree, responsible for the turbulence, disorder and fury plaguing insular society during electoral registration proceedings. These men—and their underlings—were the ones who had set the tone and example for their party followers, with the trading of insults and occasional blows, and with their many libelous, deceitful and poisonous speeches. The lack of concern of these political leaders is demonstrated by their call for peace and tranquility,
which came not at the beginning but at the end of registration proceedings, when they knew that political violence would naturally diminish and eventually cease. Thus, the responsibility for the political chaos and near anarchy in Puerto Rico every four years can not be placed solely over the shoulders of the people, but to a great degree upon the heads of their leaders who led the islanders into violence with their unbecoming and improper behavior.

On the same day of the overdue call for peace, a riot was touched off between Liberals and Nationalists, when the latter attempted to wrest the Puerto Rican flag from marching Liberals. This incident, the first in which Nationalists clashed with other party followers, was the last of the politically motivated confrontations which had started early in January. For the next eight months calm prevailed throughout the island as the passions engendered by partisan politics ebbed to a relative low level, in spite of the Muñoz Marín-Romero Barceló struggle for control of the Liberal party, and the inflammatory articles published throughout this struggle by La Democracia and La Correspondencia. Calm prevailed notwithstanding the furor occasioned by Senator Millard E. Tydings bill for insular independence. But peace and tranquillity could not endure, inasmuch as 1936 was an election year. Thus, political encounters ending in death and injury once more became commonplace during the month of October, although for no apparent reason these incidents were less severe and of less duration than the incidents during the early part of the year.

The first confrontation, which ended with ten wounded persons, occurred near the town of Vega Alta, and involved Liberals and Coalitionists. A week later and in the same town, members of the same two
political groups engaged in a brawl that degenerated into a large riot in which firearms were widely used. To restore peace and prevent serious bloodshed, police detachments from the towns of Vega Baja and Bayamón were rushed into the panic-stricken town. In quick succession two other political shootings occurred within a week, followed by the attempted assassination of one of the leaders of the Liberal party as he left a meeting of the latter organization.

According to the standards set by Muñoz Marín in 1932, election day 1936 was somewhat peaceful and lacking in violence, as there were only six wounded people and two deaths during that day. Luckily for Puerto Rico, the celebration of the general elections meant that another four-year cycle of aggression and violence had come to an end. The island would have to wait nearly four years before new electoral registration proceedings and new general elections came anew. It was but a short waiting period before the cyclical atmosphere of hatred, violence and disrespect for the other man and his political beliefs could be recreated, once more leading to politically motivated crimes and bloodshed.

Rowdyism, political mobs, aggression and violence have no place in the electoral process. Unfortunately, such turbulent behavior was encouraged by a political atmosphere that was both passionate and reckless. But as reprehensible as they were, the many political incidents plaguing insular society in the 1930's can not be seen as isolated occurrences that might be repeated during the next general elections. Rather, these recurring violent encounters must be accepted for what they were: an established pattern of behavior prompted by the bitter, partisan political
campaign and the resulting atmosphere of intolerance. The fact remains that during election campaigns violence was expected and the insular authorities prepared accordingly. When violence was less than expected it prompted statements like that of Muñoz Marín in 1932—when only two murders were recorded on election's day—that "the police department rejoices for the peaceful and orderly manner in which the elections took place." That violence was a way of life—at least every four years—is made even clearer by Muñoz Marín's subsequent statement, when the insular leader declared that the lack of violence in 1932 "was a surprise for police officials, because much more was expected." 42

The brief picture of insular society herein presented challenges the idea of Puerto Rican docility and passiveness. Rather, it presents a society wracked by turmoil and violence, whether motivated by politics every four years, or by everyday personal problems and differences. Violence in Puerto Rico, regardless of the reasons, was endemic. The tense and agitated insular scene, with its numerous murders and crimes, its many political encounters always ending in bloodshed and its turbulent behavior is seen as a precedent setting situation that helped create the wave of terrorism inaugurated by the Nationalists in the 1930's. Nationalist violence was but one more element within the island's violent behavioral pattern. The Nationalist party did not bring violence into Puerto Rican life and society. It was treading a much used and well worn path.
Footnotes


2 The evidence for this assertion is non-conclusive as no study on the subject was found. Nevertheless, the statement seems a reasonable one if one takes into account that in 1932 Muñoz Marín was evidently surprised "at the lack of violence on election's day" when only two men were killed and five were wounded. Muñoz Marín made this statement when comparing the 1932 elections' day with that of 1928, which resulted in four deaths and a similar number of seriously wounded persons. See El Mundo (San Juan), November 9, 1932.

3 The strikes started in mid-January and lasted until the end of February. At different times the strikes affected the towns of Hauhúno, Atoyó, Patillas, Aguadilla, Ceiba, Fajardo, Luquillo, Río Grande, Caguas, Lajas, Carolina, Manatí, Jayuya, Ponce, Caguas, Arecibo, Río Piedras, San Lorenzo, Juncos, Las Piedras and Guaynabo. Labor unrest was also strong in San Sebastián and Guayama. See El Mundo (San Juan), January 21 to February 28, 1930.

4 El Mundo (San Juan), January 24, 1930.

5 Ibid., February 8, 1930.

6 Ibid.

7 The relevant newspapers are El Mundo (San Juan); El Imparcial and La Democracia.

8 See El Imparcial for the aforementioned months, 1930.

9 El Imparcial, August 8, 1930. This incident occurred in the city of Río Piedras.

10 El Mundo (San Juan), January 26, 1932.

11 Ibid. Of these criminal actions 2167 were cases of assault, aggravated assault, or assault with intent to commit murder. There were thirty-two cases of armed theft, and eighty-eight cases of rape. This account does not include suicides, arson or misdemeanors.

12 El Prensa (New York), March 6, 1932.
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For information on these early Nationalist incidents see chapter V, pp. 100-110.

For details on some minor encounters see La Prensa (New York), January 24, and 31, 1936.

This bitter struggle ended when Jesús María resigned to all his positions within the Liberal party and subsequently formed the Popular Democratic party.
This newspaper was the organ of the Liberal party.

At this time La Correspondencia was an independent newspaper, but its journalism often times rivalled La Democracia in its sensationalism and its demagogic rhetoric. One other newspaper whose articles were as inflammatory as those of La Democracia was El País, the organ of the Republican party.


La Prensa (New York), October 8, 1936.

Ibid, October 19, 1936.

These two incidents resulted in two deaths, one of them a woman. See La Prensa (New York), October 22 and 24, 1936.

The leader was Samuel R. Quiñónez.

La Prensa (New York), November 4, 1936.

El Mundo (San Juan), November 9, 1932.
CHAPTER IV

THE PUERTO RICAN NATIONALIST PARTY

As stated in an earlier chapter, the Nationalist party was formally instituted on September 17, 1922, in the Teatro Nuevo in the city of Río Piedras. Under the leadership of José Coll y Quchí, the constituent assembly approved the following declaration of principles:

It is the desire of the Nationalist party to constitute Puerto Rico into a free, sovereign and independent republic, in accordance with the principle of nationalities. It will participate in the electoral process with the intention to govern and manage the interests of the people of Puerto Rico and to change our hopes into reality. We declare that the Nationalist party...exists to insure a responsible government and to effect the will of the people.

The above declaration demonstrates that the new group was an organization with definite political pretensions, hoping for victory in the ballot box in the future. Its declaration of principles then, belies the assertion made by Anderson that "the Nationalist party was founded in 1922 chiefly as a discussion group dedicated to the intellectual propagation of the ideal of national sovereignty for Puerto Rico." The growth of the new party was extremely slow and discouraging. Its members were not peasants or laborers, nor were they part of the landed elite. During this period most of the Nationalists were members of the struggling middle class—hispanophiles and advocates of hispanidad. With a very small membership, the party's potential at the ballot box was negligible, and although from the very beginning it could be termed an
anti-American organization, its activities were open, legal and certainly non-violent.

According to Mathews and Anderson, the Nationalists appeared on the ballot for the first and only time in the elections of 1932. This is a somewhat misleading assertion, because the Nationalist party entered partial slates, primarily for local offices, in 1924 and 1928. But in spite of the intense political activity undertaken by the party through rallies, lectures, meetings and newspaper advertising, the mass of the Puerto Rican people remained uninterested. This is clearly shown by the very few votes the new advocates of independence received in the above mentioned years.

Between 1922 and 1929, the new political group was led by six different men. After Coll y Ouchf, its first president, there came in succession some lesser known figures such as Federico Acosta Velarde, Miguel Marcos Morales and Angel Villamil. In 1929, when the Unionist party was revived, the president of the Nationalist organization was José S. Alegria. The reader should keep in mind that the Nationalist party was formed mostly by unhappy members of the old Union of Puerto Rico, when this party turned its back on the ideal of independence. Thus, when Romero Barceló—the old master of political maneuvering according to the dictates of the moment—reconstituted the Union of Puerto Rico and renewed its traditional pro-independence stand, many moderate Nationalists, including Coll y Ouchf and Alegria returned to the fold of the Union of Puerto Rico. Upon the resignation of Alegria, Antonio Ayuso Valdivieso was elected president in the same year. While these changes were going on within the small and still unimportant Nationalist group, certain
events that were to change its character and attitude were taking place.

In 1924, upon the totally unexpected alliance of the Unionists and Republicans, a young Ponce lawyer named Pedro Albizu Campos—then a member of the Unionist party—approved in principle the shocking political pact. In a public statement, Albizu Campos approved the Alliance and its goals "of self-government, as stated in the Alliance public manifesto...." But after giving some thought to the startling and unpalatable pact, there was a great reaction against the Alliance within the rank and file of the Unionists. It seems that Albizu Campos was one of those Unionists who felt unhappy with the path undertaken by the Union of Puerto Rico. In 1924, at the age of 34, he abandoned the Unionist fold which he had joined in 1921 at the age of 30, and shortly afterwards joined the then struggling Nationalist organization. During the next few years Albizu Campos traveled extensively throughout the Caribbean area and Latin America, extolling the aims and goals of Puerto Rican Nationalism, in an effort to gain the moral support of the latter countries on behalf of Puerto Rican independence. In what Maldonado Denis romantically calls "una segunda peregrinación de Bayóán," the young lawyer visited Mexico, Cuba, Santo Domingo, Haiti, Panama, and Peru. In a more objective and serene tone, Pagán sees Albizu Campos' trip as nothing more than a "pro-independence propaganda trip throughout several countries of Spanish America." Upon his return to Puerto Rico on January 27, 1930 the future leader undertook a new and radical approach to the solution of Puerto Rico's political status. In his speeches Albizu Campos extolled the virtues of militant, overt action, and the use of violence if necessary
to acquire independence. It was upon his return from Latin America that Albizu Campos developed and presented his thesis concerning the Treaty of Paris of 1898. According to Albizu Campos the United States held Puerto Rico illegally, because "on the date of the ratification of the Treaty of Paris, Puerto Rico was a sovereign nation...as a result of the Autonomic Charter given...the 25th of November, 1897, in which the independence of Puerto Rico from Spain was formally recognized." In a further development of his thesis Albizu Campos claimed "that the United States holds Puerto Rico in violation of international law, since during the negotiations that culminated in the Treaty of Paris, there were not present any Puerto Rican plenipotentiaries, and the final document was never submitted to the People of Puerto Rico for approval." This is the reason, Albizu Campos adds, "why the above mentioned treaty is null and void in what concerns the island of Puerto Rico." 

Regarding citizenship, Albizu Campos contended that "American citizenship does not enter into the question of our national freedom. This citizenship was imposed without our desire or consent. Spain, by treaty, recognized our international entity prior to the Spanish-American War. This status Spain was powerless to alter without our consent...That treaty of Paris being void nullifies everything that has since followed, including citizenship." 

This is, in essence, the thesis formulated by Albizu Campos in 1930, after his return from his trip throughout Latin America. His personal position became party doctrine after 1930, and was used by members of the Nationalist party to defend their radicalism and violence, adducing that Nationalists are not subjects of the United States because the main-
land government lacks the authority to prosecute them for their acts."\(^{17}\)

On May 11, 1930, under the presidency of Ayuso Valdivieso, the Nationalist party held a general assembly in San Juan, in the Puerto Rican Athenaeum.\(^{18}\) In this meeting, Ayuso Valdivieso presented his resignation, since he was unable to accept or support the radical and extremely aggressive position being preached by Albizu Campos. According to Pagan "the crude language full of invectives used by Albizu Campos caused a heated argument with José Coll y Cuchí, who declared himself strongly against the language and the new tactics being suggested by Albizu Campos, and he withdrew from the assembly after arguing that political freedom could be obtained through legal and non-violent means."\(^{19}\) In what may be termed prophetic words, Coll y Cuchí added: "If we create an environment filled with insults and hatred, the people will not come to us....We will not be defending but rather irreparably damaging our ideal."\(^{20}\)

From the above, it is clear that Albizu Campos' new radicalism was meant to be impetuous, stormy and violent. Two extremely important decisions were taken during the Nationalist convention of 1930. Firstly, and probably due to the leadership vacuum created with the resignation of Ayuso Valdivieso and the earlier departure of some of the most moderate leaders, Albizu Campos was elected party president\(^{21}\). This was a terribly important decision, because unlike his predecessors the new leader felt no commitment to legal process, and his election has to be termed a repudiation of the party's earlier peaceful and non-violent policy. Secondly, it was during this convention that the Nationalist party adopted a new and rather aggressive program, influenced--no doubt--by the fiery and passionate oratory of its newly appointed leader. In part, the new party
There shall be no delay in the immediate suppression of North American colonialism, and the party promises to call a constituent convention that will establish the government of a free republic, sovereign and independent, as soon as it receives a majority of votes.

Those Puerto Ricans proud of their origin...must join the Nationalist party in order to present a united front to the invader. They shall refrain from joining other political parties, as this will only confuse the Puerto Rican people, weakening the national resistance, thus benefitting the North American imperial invasion, cleverly led from Washington in its endeavor to reduce our country to impotence, enfeebling it so that we shall become pariahs in our own country.

The Nationalist party will put an end to the illusion that our country can become an American province and will deal harshly with those that...would like to establish a colonial regime...The party will abolish the imposed educational system that uses the language of the invader, which serves only to confuse and stupefy our youth, gravely endangering our cultural personality....

In the realm of economics, the Nationalist party declared the following:

The party will organize working men so that they can recover from foreign enterprises what is rightfully theirs, assuming the immediate direction and management of these enterprises with men of responsibility and patriotism.

It the party will try by every means that the weight of fiscal measures is placed over the shoulders of foreigners, to eliminate latifundia and absenteeism...it will eliminate the coastwise shipping laws...which exclusively benefit the invader the United States.

The party will exclusively favor and foment insular commerce.
The party will prompt and promote the consumption of Puerto Rican agricultural and industrial products. It will encourage exports and the creation of a merchant marine. It will favor and support Puerto Rican banks, and will organize them where there are none.

Clearly, the political and economic program adopted by the party in 1930 was highly nationalistic. The ideas of Albizu Campos, embodied in the party's declaration of principles represent an anti-imperialistic approach toward the relations between the United States and Puerto Rico. For the Nationalists, the year 1930 means new leadership, methods and tactics, everything leading to an old goal: political freedom for Puerto Rico. Yet, in spite of the passionate words of its new leader, the party in 1930 was not totally committed to violence and terror. A careful reading of the politico-economic declaration of principles cited above shows that the Nationalists hoped to acquire power through legal means, i.e. "through a constituent convention that would establish a free and sovereign government in Puerto Rico as soon as it wins a majority of votes." Thus, what one sees in the 1930 declaration of principles is a mixture of ideas and aspirations where both legal and potentially illegal means are contemplated as possible course of actions in the quest for political power.

Although historians should not deal in the speculative, one can not fail to wonder what would have been the course of the Nationalist party if after 1930 the people of Puerto Rico had voted it into power. But speculations aside, when dealing with the Nationalist organization one can not ignore or underestimate the importance of Albizu Campos, under whose aggressive leadership the party rose to prominence and exercised a con-
tinuous and unsettling influence in Puerto Rican life and society for over three decades. Thus, in order to better understand the Nationalist party, it is necessary to study, as well as possible, the life of its leader, because there is no question that after 1930 Albizu Campos and the Nationalist party were one and the same.

Without judging his actions in black and white—as good or bad—the controversial figure of Pedro Albizu Campos, like that of Augusto Cesar Sandino in Nicaragua, looms larger than life in Puerto Rican political history. To his followers he came to represent the only hope—however distorted—they could seize in their tragic quest of an elusive ideal. To those men and women he became known as "el maestro", a brilliant man possessed by an enduring dream that eventually led to his imprisonment, sickness and death. In a sense, the insular authorities after 1930 did much to help create the mystique that today surrounds Albizu Campos. The government of Puerto Rico, because of its often times doubtful actions against the Nationalist leader, is to a great degree responsible for the fact that today he is considered a martyr by the remnants of his followers and by the different pro-independence groups within the island.

For another segment of Puerto Rican society, namely those who desire independence for the island but who reject the violence and terrorism of the Nationalists, Albizu Campos represented a fearful though alluring figure. This group was dreadfully afraid of Albizu Campos because he represented change, radical change and the dangers which this meant. These Puerto Ricans would like to witness Puerto Rico's political freedom but only within a democratic framework. But as mentioned before, these
individuals in spite of their fears, found Albizu Campos an enticing figure. The explanation lies in the fact that they derived a vicarious pleasure from Albizu Campos' exploits against the powerful United States. Their latent nationalism saw Albizu Campos with sympathy. Yet, this group refrained from any aggressive political activity, as it did not want to be identified with the Nationalists, preferring to remain uncommitted. Nevertheless, the Puerto Ricans within this assemblage represent a sizable segment of the population which showed remarkable strength at the polls between 1948 and 1956.  

There is a third and by far the largest group within Puerto Rico that sternly opposed Albizu Campos and viewed his actions with utter dismay. This group, formed to a large extent by pro-American pro-Statehood sympathizers, also includes many islanders who would rather keep the status quo.

In their reaction to Albizu Campos and the Nationalists, the three groups mentioned above are easily identifiable. Their emotions run high, their arguments are passionate, their positions unyielding. The point that this writer wants to stress is that the leader of the Nationalist party was such a controversial figure that he arose deep and nearly fanatical feeling among his countrymen, whether in his favor or against him. Thus, the words and actions of Albizu Campos, who wanted so much to unite the Puerto Ricans in what he thought was a common cause, became a divisive force which fractionalized Puerto Rican society, irremediably polarized politics and created a bitter factionalism which is today the curse of Puerto Rican political life.

This man whose impact upon insular society is felt even today was
born on September 12, 1891, at Barrio Machuelo Abajo, in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He was the illegitimate son of Alejandro Albizu Romero, a Puerto Rican merchant of Basque descent, and Juliana Campos, a woman of mixed parentage. The dark skinned youth received primary and secondary education in his native city of Ponce, where he excelled in his studies. As a consequence, the freemasons of the Aurora Lodge of Ponce gave him a scholarship so that he could go to the United States for his education.

The young man stayed one year in the University of Vermont, where he began to study engineering. Inasmuch as he studied only one year at Vermont, it is absolutely impossible, as Federico Ribes Tovar asserts, that "there in Vermont he...earned his Doctorate in Sciences (specializing in Chemistry) and also studied engineering." But notwithstanding the latter author's biased writing, one thing is certain. During his year at Vermont Albizu Campos showed that he was an above average student. Consequently, he was urged to go to Harvard by one of his professors—a Harvard graduate—although it was not until a year after his enrollment at the latter institution (1913) that he was given a partial scholarship covering some of his expenses. In order to increase his meager income and meet expenses, the young student earned money by helping other students prepare for their examinations and making translations. The Great War interrupted his studies and he joined the United States Army, where he eventually attained the rank of second lieutenant. Upon the conclusion of World War I, the young man returned to Harvard to continue his studies. Jobs were scarce, thus in order to earn some badly needed money, Albizu Campos accepted what was available: lawn mowing.

It was at Harvard that the future Nationalist leader met Laura
Meneses, the woman who later became his wife. According to Ribes Tovar, Miss Meneses—a Peruvian citizen—was at Radcliffe College studying Natural Science, a discipline in which she had acquired a doctoral degree from San Marcos University in Lima. After nearly a two year courtship, they were married on July, 1922, in the Puerto Rican town of Juana Díaz.

Albizu Campos spent nearly eight years in Harvard. He returned to Puerto Rico in 1921. In that same year he obtained his law degree after some difficulties with one of his professors who forced him to repeat a final examination. Upon his return to Puerto Rico Albizu Campos began practicing his profession. The young couple, according to Albizu’s wife “lived poorly in a small wooden house in the Cantera district of Ponce.”

As previously stated Albizu Campos joined the Unionist party upon his return to Puerto Rico in 1921. Three years later he left that party and joined the fledging Nationalist movement. The following year he was elected vice-president of this organization, during this party’s general assembly. Shortly afterwards, in the mid 1920’s he was entrusted with a propaganda mission to Latin America by the party leadership, from which he did not return until the first month of 1930. During this trip, Albizu’s family moved to Perú, staying at the home of Miss Menese’s parents. Upon their return to the island the family had grown to five members, with the addition of a son, Pedro, to his two young daughters, Laura and Rosa Emilia.

The year 1930 was an extremely important one not only for Albizu Campos, but for the Nationalist party as well. It was in this years, as stated elsewhere, that Albizu Campos developed and expounded his thesis of the nullity and inaplicability of the Treaty of Paris of 1898 to Puerto
Rico. But the most momentous event of 1930 for Puerto Rican political life was the accession of Albizu Campos to the presidency of the Nationalist party, with his new and radical ideas concerning Puerto Rican-American relations.

But in spite of all its bravado, the Nationalist organization held hopes that it might achieve victory through the polls. Thus, their contention—contained in the party's declaration of principles—that they would establish a republic when they acquired political power through elections.

In order to prepare for this political success, the party took steps to draw public attention. It organized a campaign of public political meetings that attracted large crowds of people, and, in view of the enthusiasm which the people showed, gave the impression that the party was about to sweep the elections through the island. Besides political meetings the party leadership devised other activities through which it hoped to attract public attention and, hopefully, votes. Several of these activities are worth mentioning. First, and soon after his election as president, Albizu Campos placed into effect a policy of non-cooperation with the insular administration. This meant, in brief, that all party members would refrain from participating in governmental affairs. "We do not want appointive offices" said Albizu Campos. "We do not propose to accept any public position until our party elects its own candidates..."

In this speech by Albizu Campos the reader is once more made aware of the party's hopes and illusions of acquiring power legally. In fact the party was so confident of gaining some degree of power through the
polls that its members were ordered to refuse appointive offices, waiting for their expected victory in the approaching elections.

Second, late in 1930 during the depths of the depression, the Nationalists launched another dramatic activity which consisted of an issue of bonds on the Wall Street market to raise money to establish the Republic of Puerto Rico.\(^{40}\) The bonds were issued in five denominations, the largest being $100.\(^{41}\) The first public sale was of $200,000, announced in April, 1931, in San Juan.\(^{42}\) If the sale was successful, the issue would eventually grow to $5 million. In the mainland, the first attempt to sell the bonds, bearing the party seal and signed by officers of the Nationalist party, was attempted in the summer of 1932.\(^{43}\) Questions concerning the legality and purpose of the bonds were raised by Washington. Although there were serious doubts as to the legality of the bonds, since they were issued by a non-existent republic and were thus considered fraudulent, no legal action was ever taken.\(^{44}\)

The third and last incident which gave the Nationalists timely and much wanted publicity revolved around a letter written early in 1932 by a Dr. Cornelius Rhoads, who had been working under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation in one of the leading hospitals of the island.\(^{45}\) The letter, a shocking document, was similar to some of the disdainful and contemptuous statements made by American officials and mentioned in preceding pages.\(^{46}\) In it, Dr. Rhoads had written that

They [the Puerto Ricans] are beyond doubt the dirtiest, laziest, most degenerate race of men ever inhabiting this sphere. It makes you sick to inhabit the same island with them... a tidal wave or something to totally exterminate the population is necessary... I have done my best
to further the process of extermination by killing off eight and transplanting cancer into several more.47

This letter was described by James Beverly, then Governor of Puerto Rico as tantamount "to a confession of murder," and as "libel on the Puerto Rican people."48 The Nationalists gave the document full publicity and quickly generalized that all Americans were secretly campaigning to exterminate the Puerto Rican people. Although Dr. Rhoads denied that the letter was a serious one, and a thorough investigation ordered by the governor could not produce any evidence against the doctor, the incident was one more terribly unfortunate one in Puerto Rican-American relations. Although no formal charges were ever brought against anybody, the incident served, as in earlier years, to embitter the relationship between the two peoples. Furthermore, it served to start off the Nationalist party's 1932 campaign in a rather advantageous manner.

But before the party was given a place in the ballot, it had to secure and present petitions for recognition with signatures of at least ten per cent of the total votes tabulated in the previous election.49 The Nationalists, which had only polled 728 votes during the 1924 and 1928 elections, faced a difficult time, as they had to present over 30,000 signatures on petitions to be recognized as a legal political party and be included in the ballot. According to Mathews, the Nationalists were able to qualify because they were aided directly by the Union-Republican party, a pro-American pro-statehood organization.50 The strange behavior of the latter organization was designed as a move against the Puerto Rican Liberal party, previously known as the Union of Puerto Rico.

After being placed on the ballot, the Nationalists undertook a
vigorous campaign of political meetings, two of which deserve to be mentioned as examples of the tone and vigor with which the party was carrying on its activity. On the night of July 9 the party held a public meeting in the Plaza Baldorioty de Castro in San Juan, where Santiago Iglesias and Romero Barceló came under harsh criticism. Albizu Campos, the principal speaker, was introduced at about nine o'clock and spoke for over two hours, bitterly criticizing Romero Barceló, Iglesias and Chief Justice Emilio del Toro as traitors to their country. In the lengthy harangue Albizu accused the police of persecuting party members. He then pledged on his honor that if any Nationalist lost his life at the hands of the police, the chief of police would forfeit his own life. Yet, in spite of the threatening tone of the speeches, the meeting ended peacefully.

The following day, in Ponce—Puerto Rico's second largest city—a Nationalist meeting was held in the Plaza Central. Unlike the gathering mentioned above, this meeting did not end so peacefully, as some of the speakers referred to American sailors then in port as bandits, while others referred to the American flag as a symbol of rape, robbery and piracy. The meeting ended when most of the speakers were taken to jail.

Prior to the November election, on September 25, 1932, the Nationalist party held a general assembly in the Municipal Theatre, in San Juan. On this convention, Albizu Campos was nominated as a candidate for senator-at-large, while Francisco Vicent was nominated as a candidate for representative-at-large. In this same convention and according to Pagan, the Nationalist party nominated a candidate for Resident Com-
missioner to Washington, and several candidates for senatorial and representative posts.55

The results of the 1932 general elections were a bitter disappointment to Albizu Campos and the Nationalist organization. Out of a grand total of 383,722 votes, the party received 5,257, less than two per cent of the vote.56 In his quest for an at-large post, Albizu Campos received 11,882 votes, twice the amount obtained by the party, but far below what had been expected.57 After this extremely poor showing, the Nationalists refused to participate in "colonial elections," and embarked upon an increasingly hostile program which soon became a crusade of violence.58

The elections of 1932 shattered Albizu Campos political enthusiasm and destroyed his confidence in the genuineness and legitimacy of the democratic process. Confronted with the results of the election, the Nationalist leader returned to his policy of non-cooperation with the existing regime, while proclaiming the necessity of violence (lucha armada) in order to obtain political freedom.59 In the summer of 1933, Albizu Campos contemptuously characterized the electoral process as a "periodic farce whose only purpose is to divide the Puerto Rican people."60 Later on, and still directing his remarks toward the 1932 election results, Albizu Campos painted the following picture of Puerto Rican society:

Puerto Rican society has the dubious distinction of lacking the most precious human values such as honor and patriotism. Morally, yankee imperialism has led us into self-contempt; materially, it has changed us from proprietors into peons, and from peons into beggars condemned to death. Nationalism is the only escape out of this situation, as it makes us free men for whom human dignity has no price, men who can't understand why they shouldn't have the right to govern the destiny of their children and fatherland.61
From the above it is clear that 1932 was a year of decision for the Nationalist party and its leadership. It was in this year—and as a result of the bitter rejection received at the polls—that the Nationalists finally rejected the use of legal means and embarked upon a career of violence and terror. The hatred preached by Albizu was to bear fruit in the 1930's, in an ever increasing series of disruptive acts which finally ended in repeated acts of crime and savagery. Notwithstanding the vaunted docility of the Puerto Ricans as expounded by Marqués, violence became an everyday occurrence. It became the catchword for radical nationalism, the catchword for a misguided love of country which led only to suffering and destruction.

Unfortunately for Puerto Ricans, the Nationalists confused love of the homeland with the narrow and bitter concept of the national state. Because of the rigidity of their thinking, they could not disentangle the concept of love for Puerto Rico from the fixed idea of separate independence. Anything other than independence seemed to clash with their love for Puerto Rico.

But, like Luis Muñoz Marín once said,

Love of country must mean love of all the country, both the patria and the people. To the Puerto Rican, patria is the colors of the landscape, the change of seasons, the smell of the earth wet with fresh rain, the voice of the streams...the fruits, the songs, the habit of work and leisure, the typical dishes for special occasions and the meager ones for everyday, the flowers, the valleys...but even more than these things, patria is the people. Their way of life, spirit, folkways, customs.... Without these latter things patria is only a name, an abstraction....But with them / the Puerto Ricans / it is an integral whole. The homeland and the people. Those who profess to love the country
while taking an irresponsible attitude towards the destiny of its people suffer from spiritual confusion. The implication of their attitude is that we must save the country even though we destroy the people.

Love for Puerto Rico couldn't be expressed in more beautiful words; it is indeed unfortunate that in 1932 the Puerto Rican Nationalist party held views diametrically opposed to those of Puerto Rico's first elected governor, and of its own volition chose the land over its people.
Footnote

1 See above, p. 22.


6 For the number of votes and the locality where the votes were given in the 1924 general elections see Pagan, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. I, p. 246. The 399 votes received by the party were divided as follows: Ponce, 96 votes; 57 in Cayey; 183 in Caguas, and 61 in Yabucoa. In the 1928 elections the party received a grand total of 329 votes. See Pagan, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. I, p. 313.

7 The Union of Puerto Rico "disappeared" as a party in 1924, when it joined the Republican Party (holding opposite political views) into a virtually new political organization called The Alliance (La Alianza). The Alliance, a creature of expediency from the very beginning, collapsed four years later. This so-called Alliance shows once more the political opportunism of the old Unionist leaders, who as told in a preceding chapter, went to any extreme in order to retain political power. Thus, in 1924, in order to remain politically powerful, the Union of Puerto Rico felt it was necessary to join its old opponents—the Republicans—defenders of Puerto Rican statehood.

8 My own translation. See El Mundo (San Juan), mayo 11, 1924.

9 According to Laura Meneses de Albizu Campos, Albizu Campos y la Independencia de Puerto Rico (San Juan, 1961), p. 27, Albizu Campos joined the Union of Puerto Rico in 1921 at the age of 30. He left the Unionist party sometime in 1924 and shortly afterwards joined the Nationalist party. He was then 34 years old. See also Pagan, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. I, p. 235, which positively states that in 1924 Albizu Campos was a member of the Union of Puerto Rico.

In Paulino Castro, Historia sinóptica del partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico (San Juan, 1947), p. 14, the author tells about Albizu Campos joining the Nationalist party, but in an unclear manner, and without citing any specific dates. In p. 61, same work, Castro cites an interview supposedly given by Albizu Campos in 1926 to a writer for a periodical publication titled Los Quijotes, where he asserts that the Ponce lawyer was one of the founders of the Nationalist party. Without taking into account the information given by Laura Meneses de Albizu Campos
wife of the Nationalist party leader—Maldonado Denis, Puerto Rico, p. 110 cites Castro's account as correct, accepting the idea that Albizu Campos was one of the founders of the Puerto Rican Nationalist party.

Of the four books mentioned above, only that of Pagán is free of bias, either for or against Albizu Campos. Striving for a degree of objectivity and setting passionate opinions aside, it seems that the truth lies in what is told by Albizu Campos' wife, and corroborated by Pagán.

10 See Maldonado Denis, Puerto Rico, p. 111. It should be pointed out that once more the data given by the latter writer is at variance with that given by other writers who were closer to the Nationalist leader than Maldonado Denis. In the above mentioned page Maldonado Denis points out that Albizu Campos' trip to Latin America started in 1925. But Meneses de Albizu Campos, Albizu Campos y la Independencia de Puerto Rico, p. 27, states that it was in 1926 that the Nationalist party sent her husband on a trip to Latin America. In spite of the biased nature of their writings, Federico Ribes Tovar, Enciclopedia Puertorriqueña Ilustrada (3 vols.; San Juan, 1970); Juan Antonio Corretjer, Pedro Albizu Campos (Montevideo, 1969); and Castro, Historia Sinóptica, seem to agree on this point with the wife of the late Nationalist leader.


12 El Mundo (San Juan), enero 27, 1930.

13 Armando Torres Vega, Penumbras en la vida de mi pueblo (San Juan, 1952), p. 91; Corretjer, Pedro Albizu Campos, pp. 23-24. Luis Muñoz Rivera, Campañas Políticas (Madrid, 1925) pp. 324-357.


15 Torres Vega, Penumbras, p. 91; El Imparcial (San Juan), junio 28, 1930; Castro, Historia Sinóptica, p. 14; Corretjer, Pedro Albizu Campos, p. 27. In all probability Albizu Campos developed these ideas from those of Eugenio María de Hostos, Madre Isla (La Habana, 1939), p. 120, who was the first Puerto Rican to deny the validity of the treaty of 1898 between Spain and the United States, because Puerto Rico had not been present and because the islanders had not been consulted to see if they accepted the transfer from Spanish to America sovereignty.

16 New York Times, May 25, 1930

17 Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 5.
See El Mundo (San Juan), mayo 13, 1930.

See also El Mundo (San Juan), mayo 13, 1930, where Coll y Cuchi, while abandoning the party's convention, stated that "he could not belong to an organization which uses only insults and preaches hatred."

See El Mundo (San Juan), mayo 13, 1930.


El Mundo (San Juan), mayo 13, 1930; Pagán, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. I., p. 331.

Maldonado Denis, Puerto Rico, p. 112.

See above, p. 90.

See Appendix B.


Albizu Campos' mother must be considered a mulatto woman, as she had white and Negro blood. Some writers, in their quest to whiten Albizu Campos' skin, claim his mother was a mestizo, as she also had Indian blood. It is nearly impossible to accept this assertion.

Corretjer, Pedro Albizu Campos, p. 75. A completely different version is given by Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 3, which states that "a group of Americans arriving in Ponce during Albizu's youth are reported to have taken an interest in him and later arranged passage for him to come to the United States for his education...."

Meneses de Albizu Campos, Albizu Campos y la independencia de Puerto Rico, p. 20.


Meneses de Albizu Campos, Albizu Campos y la independencia de Puerto Rico, p. 20. The name of the professor--a Harvard Alumnus--was Thompson, although no first name could be found. A slightly different version is given by Corretjer, Pedro Albizu Campos, p. 75, who claims that "while at Vermont, two Harvard University professors took notice of his ability and urged him to go to Harvard."

Meneses de Albizu Campos, Albizu Campos y la independencia de Puerto Rico, p. 20.

Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 3.

35. Ibid., p. 11.


41. *Puerto Rican Independence Bond Issue*, Letter from Governor Roosevelt to General Parker, April 23, 1931, as quoted in Mathews, *Puerto Rican Politics*, p. 32. (General F. Lejeune Parker was Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs.)


45. *El Mundo* (San Juan), enero 27, 1932.

46. See above, pp. 35-36, 49, 51-52.


49. This was due to an electoral law approved by a senate controlled by Barceló, the old Unionist leader.

50. The reason for this apparent collusion of two distinct and diametrically opposed political parties is found in the desire of the Union-Republican party to weaken the Unionists, called Liberals in 1932. See Mathews, *Puerto Rican Politics*, pp. 35, 39.

See Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 3; and Anderson, Party Politics in Puerto Rico, p. 45. For the general results of the 1932 elections see Appendix B.

See El Mundo (San Juan), November 11, 1932, which claims that Albizu Campos only received 11,634 votes. Most other sources give 11,882 as the number received by the Nationalist leader. Notwithstanding the slight disparity, Albizu Campos demonstrated that he was a poor vote getter.


Maldonado Denis, Puerto Rico, p. 115.

My own translation. See El Mundo (San Juan), junio 28, 1933.

Ibid., noviembre 16, 1933.

CHAPTER V

NATIONALISM AND VIOLENCE

Reference has been made previously to the vigorous campaign of political meetings undertaken by the Nationalists during 1932, an election year in which the party hoped to elect one or more of its members to the insular legislature. But within its political activities, party speakers began to use an oratory that can be best described as fiery, passionate and inciting. These provocative speeches helped precipitate early in 1932 the first in a long series of incidents that led to violence, outright murder and civil disobedience.

The first such incident occurred on April 16. On this date the party held a meeting in Plaza Baldoñez, a short distance from the Capitol Building, honoring the memory of José de Diego, an earlier advocate of Puerto Rican independence. The principal orator of the event was Albizu Campos. In his turn upon the rostrum the Nationalist Leader denounced the bill being considered by the insular legislature to adopt as the official banner of Puerto Rico a flag of a single white star on a triangular blue field.¹ In the words of Pagán "Albizu excitó a la gente..."² which upon this incitement set out for the Capitol Building less than half a mile away. On the way the large crowd dismantled a wooden fence and armed itself with pickets, as well as stones and sticks.³

Following Albizu Campos, who led the multitude,⁴ the now unruly crowd reached the Capitol Building where it was confronted by a group

108
of police which barred its way. The mob forced its way into the edifice. Quickly, fighting erupted in the west stairway that led to the legislative (second) floor, not yet finished, and in the opposite end of the lobby, where a small group of Nationalists had gained the second floor. At this juncture, with the police battling two sections of the mob, the marble balustrade leading from the main floor to the legislative chamber gave way, precipitating a struggling mass of humanity—rioters and policemen—twenty-five feet to the floor below.  

The above incident caused the death of a young demonstrator—Manuel Rafael Suarez Diaz—while many others received injuries of varying degrees. Many similar incidents would occur in the coming years. The death of Suarez Diaz occasioned a great hue and cry in which the young rioter was depicted as a martyr. During the burial ceremonies, both the Nationalist and Liberal parties used what should have been a solemn occasion to strongly attack their political opponents. As a result of the aforementioned incident—later known as the flag day riot—Albizu Campos and Jose Portilla, a member of the San Juan municipal council, were arrested on charges of inciting to riot. Two months later both men were brought to trial and found innocent of the above mentioned charges. Ironically, the bill which brought about such tempestuous protests was not considered by the Puerto Rican House of Representatives.  

In the United States, in the meantime, in an action that was pleasing to all Puerto Ricans regardless of their political views, President Hoover signed a bill that officially restored the old Spanish spelling of the name of the island. Shortly after 1898 the spelling had been anglicized
The flag day riot was but a mere prelude to what would become a continuous campaign of disruptive acts undertaken by the Nationalists. A week before Albizu Campos and Portilla were declared innocent of inciting to riot, another party member, Luis F. Velázquez, assaulted Emilio del Toro, Chief Justice of the Puerto Rican Supreme Court, by slapping him across the face. According to Velázquez he attacked the Chief Justice to avenge an insult to the Puerto Rican flag which had occurred when Justice Del Toro had participated in ceremonies honoring the American flag in Puerto Rico. Although this was a very minor affair, it shows the lack of respect and the contempt which Nationalists held for the established government and its functionaries.

Without defending the actions of Velázquez—which were indeed reproachable—one has to marvel at the speed with which this individual was brought to trial. Only five days after the attack on the Chief Justice, Velázquez was sentenced to one year’s imprisonment. This decision was appealed by Albizu Campos and upheld by the District Court of Appeals. In a later decision on the case, the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston reversed Velázquez’ conviction on the ground that it was the Federal rather than the insular courts that had jurisdiction in the case. Freed on a technicality, Velázquez could still be tried of aggravated assault, as the decision handed down by the Boston Court so stipulated. But Chief Justice Del Toro refused to bring action against the Nationalist, asserting that he “wanted neither to persecute nor to make a martyr of his assailant.”
During the remainder of the year, two very minor incidents involving Nationalist party members occurred, but without involving any violence. 

Early in 1933, and following what may be termed his 'harassment' policy against the authorities, Albizu Campos commemorated the death of Suárez Díaz, the young Nationalist killed in the flag day riot. A few words must be said concerning two groups that took part in this activity. One was called the Cadets of the Republic and the other was called the Daughters of Liberty. These two groups were part of the Nationalist organization, having being founded by Albizu Campos in 1932, when he also founded something called the Liberating Army of the Republic, with a supposedly strong-arm force which was the so-called Cadets of the Republic.

With the appointment in 1933 of Robert H. Gore as governor of Puerto Rico and due to the galling actions of the new appointee, an upward trend of violence began. Perhaps part of the trouble was caused by the explosive political climate in the island, but to this must be added Governor Gore's complete lack of experience or suitable previous knowledge to prepare him for the post. In any case within two months of his appointment a flood of letters and cables petitioned for his ouster, while university students forced the University to close for two weeks, while protesting his behavior. Moreover, on what may be termed one of the earliest of such incidents, the governor's summer home at Jajome Alto was bombed shortly after Governor Gore and Colonel Francis H. Riggs, Chief of the insular police had left for San Juan. Soon afterwards another bomb was also found in La Fortaleza, the Governor's official residence. According to a mainland publication, the Governor received an anonymous
"letter from a friend" warning him that his family was to be poisoned.23

Like one of his predecessors—E. Montgomery Reily—Governor Gore
seemed to possess a knack for becoming involved in unpleasant quarrels
with the Puerto Ricans, with the results mentioned above. Undoubtedly,
the Governor's actions and the subsequent insular reactions did much to
enliven the active anti-American position of the Nationalist party.24

While these events were occurring, late in 1933 the Nationalist
Party held a general assembly in the Victoria theater of Humacao, where
it ratified "the continuation of an active and militant attitude necessary
to create the proper radical atmosphere where its plans could succeed."
During this assembly the party designated a commission to draft the Cons-
titution of the future Republic of Puerto Rico.25

In spite of all these ominous occurrences the year 1934 transpired
without any untoward incidents. The next act in the unfolding Nationalist
drama of violence took place late in October, 1935. During this month
Albizu Campos used the facilities of an insular radio station and on two
successive Sundays berated the student body of the University of Puerto
Rico. He called the men "effeminates" and the women "drunkards" and
said the latter sex was aping American women with their smoking and
drinking.26

The insults were resented by the students who immediately laid plans
for an assembly at which time they proposed to denounce Albizu Campos for
the slanderous statements he had uttered against the student body. But
the Nationalist leader was unwilling to allow the student's demonstration
to take place and a show of force by Nationalist party members was staged
in Rio Piedras. An armed clash resulted when University policemen saw a suspicious character with a package under his arm. When the police approached the man fled with three other companions in an automobile. The men were chased and overtaken by the police. Two policemen got on the running board of the car and instructed the occupants of the car to drive to the police station. The men seemed to comply with the order but after going a short distance someone in the car opened fire on the policemen, seriously wounding one of them. In the resulting battle, the police killed three of the participants and seriously wounded the other. As a police car started to take the wounded policemen to a hospital, a bomb was thrown at it, injuring all the occupants of the same. The bomb throwing Nationalist was chased and killed in a gun battle with the police. A bystander was also killed. Later on the police seized the first car used by the Nationalists and it was found loaded with explosives, bombs and revolvers. The Rio Piedras confrontation between police and Nationalists, whose main cause was the offensive language and behavior of Albizu Campos, resulted in five deaths and about forty injured people.

It is clear that after 1932 the Nationalist party lacked a constructive program, and sustained itself from a bitter hatred of the existing regime. Completely alienated by its repudiation at the polls, the party fell back into a demagogic pattern of behavior characterized by direct behavior action, pseudo military machinations and ultimately overt criminal activities. By its acts of 1932-1935 the party set the tone it would follow in the years to come.
The best evidence that the Nationalists had fostered fear and intimidation within the Puerto Rican community is seen from the actions—or non-actions—of the insular newspapers. It is indicative that not a single Puerto Rican newspaper voiced any editorial condemnation of the violence which occurred as a result of the activities started by Nationalist party members. 33

During the subsequent funeral ceremonies for the four dead Nationalists Albizu Campos spoke at great length to a large gathering of observers and mourners. In his speech the Nationalist leader violently assailed the government, the police, and the Chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico, Carlos A. Chardón. He also included in his tirade the leaders of the Liberal party "which he thought were part of a plan to assassinate the Nationalist Party directors." Among other accusations Albizu Campos claimed that the Governor and Colonel Riggs had sent the police "with the deliberate purpose of murdering the Nationalist representation of Puerto Rico." In reprisal Albizu Campos promised that for every Nationalist killed a continental would lose his life. At this point it should be recalled that during the 1932 election's campaign he had threatened death to the Insular Police Chief if a Nationalist died. Before ending his speech the Nationalist leader asked the members of the crowd—estimated by the police to be between 5,000 to 8,000—to raise their right hands and swear to avenge the murdered national heroes fallen for their country's honor. According to an insular newspaper Albizu Campos first told the crowd"VENIMOS AQUI A PRESTAR JURAMENTO PARA QUE ESTE ASESINATO NO QUIDE IMPUNE." Later on when he ended his funeral oration, Albizu
Cainpos told the multitude: "Levantad las manos todos los que se crean libres. Juramos que el asesinato no perdurará en Puerto Rico..." Like an echo, the multitude answered "so be it."  

Shortly after the Rio Piedras incident, the Nationalist party held an assembly under the leadership of Albizu Campos in the Campo Alegre theater in Caguas. After a harangue by the president, several unanimous decisions were taken. First, the assembly ratified a previous determination to boycott colonial elections. Second, the party demanded from the United States to leave Puerto Rico immediately under peaceful conditions or it (the Party) would resort to arms to attain this purpose. Third and last, Albizu Campos decreed that all active members of the party had to serve a period of military service in the organization.  

In February, 1936, another act unfolded in the tragic drama. Barely four months had passed since the Rio Piedras confrontation when the pledge of vengeance elicited by Albizu Campos from his followers became a shocking reality. Colonel Francis E. Riggs, Insular Chief of Police, a retired United States army officer and head of the insular police since 1933, was shot thrice as he stopped his vehicle to investigate some shots he heard while on his way home from church. Born in Washington, D.C. in 1887, Colonel Riggs graduated from Yale in 1909 and afterwards served in the armed forces from 1911 to 1920, when he retired. He was a major in an artillery unit during The First World War, and after the war he was a military attache in Leningrad. Colonel Riggs was a member of a prominent family from Washington and Maryland. He was appointed Insular Chief of Police by Governor Gore upon the recommendation of Senator Tydings.
At the time of the incident, Colonel Riggs was unarmed. He was shot down by two young Nationalists—Elias Beauchamp and Hiram Rosado—members of the Cadets of the Republic. After his arrest, Beauchamp told police he had shot the Chief of Police in revenge for the massacre of four Nationalists near the University of Puerto Rico the previous October. On the same day of Riggs's death, a shooting incident between police and party members took place in Utuado, deep in the mountainous part of the island. Two deaths resulted from this incident. One was police district chief Francisco Vélez Ortiz. The other was a young Nationalist named Angel Mario Martínez.

Immediately after their arrest, Beauchamp and Rosado were taken to police headquarters where they were questioned. Shortly after they entered the building, a volley of shots was heard by a crowd outside police headquarters. It was then announced that the Nationalists had tried to seize some weapons from a nearby rifle-rack which was unlocked, and had to be killed by their guards. Retribution had come swiftly to the two assassins, but not in accordance with insular law. As there was no death penalty in Puerto Rico, one has the suspicion that the Ley de Puga had been invoked. In an official communique, Governor Blanton Winship acknowledged that "both...were killed by the police." In a somewhat more apt comment, Hunter states that "the killers were lynched by the police who had taken them into custody."

The Nationalist act of terror, coupled with the bitter popular reaction against the police brutality, threw the island into great turmoil. Puerto Ricans were greatly divided in regard to the moral implications
of what had occurred. Some condemned the lawlessness which had resulted in three brutal murders, but others claimed the Nationalists were justified and blamed everything on Governor Winship and his administration.

Insular newspapers editorially deplored the tragedy of the death of Riggs, but showed most indignation at the police killing of his assassins. In its editorial El Imparcial openly declared its belief that "police had killed on orders from higher up."48 El Pais, an advocate of statehood for Puerto Rico called Colonel Riggs's death "a political assassination that is a spiritual liability to the Nationalists, because the Colonel's affable personality was not representative of the colonial regime condemned by the independentistas."49

For Rafael Martinez Nadal, president of the Insular Senate, neither murder was justified in any way. For Martinez Nadal, the murders were a double tragedy.50 For the Liberal party organ, one crime was less to be condemned than the other. It contended that Riggs's murder, while not defensible, was explicable; whereas the murder of the two Nationalists was neither.51

In the United States the murders gave rise to vigorous press comments. New York's Spanish-language daily, La Prensa, saw no honor for anyone in the affair. "The Nationalist act of madness," it claimed, "was matched by police bestiality."52 Most mainland press comments related the Riggs's murder to the question of insular political status, blaming the American government for its inability to formulate a coherent policy toward the island possession. In a strongly worded remark, the New York Times rebuked the mainland administration, claiming that "never since the
United States took the island from the Spaniards...have the people of Puerto Rico been exactly sure of the form of government that would eventually be theirs....Washington policies toward Puerto Rico have varied with each administration...."53 In an editorial comment along the same lines the Washington Post remarked that

The only policy which we have consistently followed with respect to Puerto Rico is one of drifting.... The people of this island have never been advised as to what may be their final position in the American scheme, or as to whether they are ultimately to belong to that scheme at all...until recently extremist agitation had been largely restricted to displays of untempered speech. But now...resort to terrorism by members of the Nationalist party reveals a situation that can no longer be ignored. 54

Jolted into action by the violent occurrences, the insular government launched an investigation and began searching various Nationalist headquarters and homes of party leaders. Governor Blanton Winship took a personal hand in planning the search for arms and for compromising evidence against Nationalist chieftains. These raids were carried out at daylight on March 7, 1936, and according to government sources "military arms and equipment, a bomb and important documentary evidence" were turned up by the police. 55

The great body of evidence, according to government officials, was related to events which had taken place before the assassination of the Chief of Police. This evidence, combined with material collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation was deemed sufficient to justify the arrest of Albizu Campos and a number of his followers. Strangely enough they were charged not with murder, but with sedition, illegal recruiting
The documentary evidence and a record of the utterances and speeches of Albizu Campos were presented to a Federal Grand Jury which brought indictments against Albizu Campos; Juan Antonio Corretjer, (the secretary general of the party), Luis F. Velázquez, Julio Velázquez, Rafael Ortiz Pacheco, Clemente Soto Vélez, Erasmo Velázquez, Juan Gallardo and Pablo Rosado Ortiz. Freed on bond, Albizu Campos attended the funerals of the two slain Nationalists. Before a large multitude, he ended his funeral oration with accusatory phrases against the police and the government.

The trial of the Nationalist leaders, which was scheduled for July 14, was a very questionable procedure, as charged by Robert Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union. Baldwin argued, with reason, that if Albizu Campos and his accomplices were to be indicted, it should be as accessories to the crime of murder, not under the federal charge of sedition. Baldwin further argued that with the arrested Nationalists the government was initiating a series of political trials that would serve only to fan the flames of resistance to the American administration in the island.

For the trial the government sent two federal prosecutors to help Cecil Snyder, the local prosecuting attorney. Even with this help, as well as a staunch conservative judge--Robert A. Cooper--the trial was not an easy one. The jury was unable to reach a decision, and after nineteen fruitless hours of deliberation it was released and a mistrial was declared. Now followed what has been termed one of the most undignified and prejudicial actions of the American judicial system in Puerto Rico. A new trial with a new jury was immediately ordered. In spite of the
pleas of Congressman Vito Marcantonio and others, the second trial began in June 27. A new jury was chosen, consisting of ten resident continentals and only two Puerto Ricans. According to Mathews "the state this time was taking no chances." With this clearly pro-American jury, acknowledged as such by Snyder the prosecuting attorney, the Nationalists were convicted quickly on July 31, 1936, and sentenced to terms ranging from two to ten years, to be served at the federal penitentiary at Atlanta. The dubious quality of this sedition trial left a bitter taste in the island. The fact that the Nationalists were convicted by a jury panel of ten Americans and only two Puerto Ricans from an island where there were nearly two million Puerto Ricans and only about five thousand American residents caused severe criticism. A few outspoken critics voiced the opinion that in the second trial the cards had been stacked against Albizu Campos.

After a series of futile appeals, the sentences were upheld by the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in February 12, 1937. On June 1, 1937 a petition for certiorary was denied by the United States Supreme Court.

In its opinion, the Circuit Court of Appeals cited Albizu in a speech in Mayaguez in August, 1932, as threatening the life of the Governor if any Nationalist should be killed by his (the Governor's) orders. It also cited a speech in Humacao, and another one at San Juan's Plaza de Armas, where Albizu Campos threatened the life of the Chief of Police and invited Puerto Ricans to convert their homes into armed arsenals in order to overthrow Yankee imperialism in the island. Furthermore, the Court cited another speech made by Albizu Campos in October, 1935.
where he once more incited the people to arm themselves to overthrow the American government in the island. Finally, the Circuit Court of Appeals cited several other instances in which the Nationalist leader had incited the people to acquire arms and by his speeches and actions had created the conditions leading to the violent occurrences starting in 1935 at Rio Piedras and ending with the assassination of Riggs in 1936.64

In June, 1937, Albizu Campos and the other convicted men were sent to Atlanta penitentiary. But the saga of the Riggs' murder did not end with Albizu Campos' imprisonment. Prior to this, six of the policemen involved in the shooting of Rosado and Beauchamp were indicted for murder, after an investigation lasting nearly two months.65 Four of the accused were acquitted, while the case against the other two officers ended in a mistrial. One other result of the Riggs' assassination was the so-called Tydings' Independence Bill, introduced on April 23, 1936 "to provide for a referendum in Puerto Rico on the question of independence, to provide for carrying it into effect and other purposes."66 The story of the Tydings' Bill, its reasons and repercussions has been amply studied and documented by modern scholarship, and any mention of its genesis and development will be inconsequential to this study.67 It will suffice to say that the bill, after causing a tremendous furor and raising bitter accusations between Puerto Rico and the mainland, failed to get favorable congressional action and thus died the same death of many other similar measures.

During the eleventh months between Albizu Campos' arrest and his final conviction, several other incidents of a violent nature occurred
on the island. As in most Latin American countries, a center of agitation was found among the youth, mostly from the University of Puerto Rico and from an organization called The Puerto Rican High School Federation, which claimed to represent the Puerto Rican high school students. Both groups staged wildcat strikes. Violence and bloodshed was averted due to the firm hands of Dr. José Padín and Carlos Chardón, which prevented a complete disruption of the educational program. A complete return to normality was prevented by the attempt of a young Nationalist student publicly to commit suicide. When news of the Tydings' Bill reached the island, school disturbances increased markedly. In several towns the flag of the United States was lowered and replaced with the Puerto Rican flag. As in earlier instances the insular police was unable to cope with the wave of disorder and disruption which swept the island. Consequently, several units of the Puerto Rican National Guard had to be called to duty to preserve a semblance of order.

It should be stressed that the continuous student disorders, the many incidents involving both the American and Puerto Rican flag, and the clashes between police and students were all occurring in the interval between Albizu Campos' arrest and his final sentencing in June, 1937. During these eleven months, the relations—if that is the word—between the police and the citizenry were becoming unbearably tense. A terribly bad situation was made even worse when on the first day of June, policeman Orlando Colón was shot and killed as he entered his home. Shot three times through the back, Colón died immediately. After an all night investigation Colonel Enrique Orbeta, the new Chief of Police, declared that "Colón's death was probably the result of a Nationalist vendetta." The dead
policeman had recently testified against Dionisio Pearson, the only Nationalist who was acquitted on charges stemming from the October riots in the University of Puerto Rico. Before 1936 came to a close, two other violent crimes involving Nationalist party members occurred. The first took place in the port city of Mayaguez where Domingo Saltari Crespo, a Nationalist youth, tried to assassinate Santiago Iglesias, a declared foe of independence. Saltari Crespo fired four shots at Iglesias, giving him a flesh wound in the right arm. The assailant freely admitted that he was a sergeant in the Cadets of The Republic. On March, 1937, Saltari Crespo was tried, found guilty and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. To close the extremely violent year that was 1936, a Nationalist by the name of Arturo Hernández murdered policeman Antonio González Cortés with a poniard.

There is very little doubt that the numerous violent incidents of 1935-1936, some of which resulted in outright murders committed both by the Nationalists and the police, created an intolerably tense atmosphere where a frightful and ghastly flare-up of dire consequences could take place at the slightest provocation. During the years after 1932, police-student and police-Nationalist confrontations had been frequent. Police had killed Nationalists and the latter had retaliated in kind. It was a deadly and frightening game, where nobody had anything to gain and much to lose. But at the end of 1936 nobody stood to lose so much as did Puerto Rico. With the situation as it was nobody could predict what would happen next. That question was tragically answered by the spectacular though incredible events which transpired in Ponce, the island's
second largest city, on Palm Sunday, March 1937—events more commonly known as the Ponce Massacre.

In order to get an idea of why the Ponce massacre occurred, the reader must bear in mind what has been said in preceding pages concerning the bad blood between the police and the Nationalists, and the police and another sector of the population, namely the students. One other aspect that may help one to understand the tragic event was the manifestations of dissatisfaction by the followers of Albizu Campos after the trial and conviction of their leader in 1936. Usually these consisted of parades by the Army of the Liberation, fiery oratory and violent verbal denunciation of the colonial regime. Through these activities, the party faithful hoped to exert enough pressure for the release of their leader.

The insular administration, under Governor Winship, was determined that such manifestations and disturbances would not be carried out. To allow them to be undertaken periodically would only keep the people stirred up and resentful. The authorities believed that such a state of affairs would nullify the good accomplished by removing from the scene the main cause of agitation—Albizu Campos. This attitude was shared by few outside the government. The American Civil Liberties Union warned that this policy was designed to cultivate the very unrest that it was trying to eliminate. But the actions of the government against the Nationalists continued to be of a repressive nature. For example, on one occasion a request for a parade was denied in San Juan, and to back up the denial automatic weapons were set up in different places along the proposed route. Prior to this the Nationalists had planned a
parade for which a permit had been obtained. The organizers of the activity postponed it indefinitely "due to the bellicose attitude of the government..." According to Mathews, protests lodged by the American Civil Liberties Union about the excessive restrictions to peaceful demonstrations were paid no heed by the government, whose policy was "the prohibition of public meetings, parades and assemblies not only of Nationalists but of others as well."

The events leading to the tragic Ponce affair began innocently enough. The Nationalists wanted to stage a parade on Sunday, March 21. They requested permission for this parade from the municipal authorities, but since the mayor—José Tormos Diego—was in San Juan, the acting mayor refused the permit. When Tormos Diego returned on Saturday night, March 20, he granted permission for a parade that would have no military character whatsoever. On the previous day, the Insular Police Chief, Colonel Orbeta, had visited the city of Ponce to acquaint himself with the plans of the Nationalists for the proposed Palm Sunday parade. After returning to San Juan, he conferred with Governor Winship and they agreed that the Nationalist parade, if carried out as planned could possibly result in gunplay, and therefore it should not be permitted. Colonel Orbeta returned to Ponce Sunday morning and found out that Tormos Diego had authorized the activity. He undertook to convince the mayor that the permission should be revoked. The mayor was finally convinced by the Chief of Police and he revoked the permit on Sunday afternoon when the Nationalists had already gathered in front of the Nationalist Club and were ready to start their activity. The mayor, Colonel Orbeta, and
the Ponce Chief of Police held a conference with the Nationalist leaders until around 3 p.m., almost the time of the parade. The conference was a failure, as the mayor refused to renew the permit and the Nationalist leaders refused to allow the mayor to go back on his word.

While these events were taking place a considerable concentration of police forces was directed toward Ponce. The men were heavily armed with rifles, carbines, sub-machine guns, tear gas, hand guns and billy clubs. In what at that moment seemed to be a completely hostile and unwarranted act, Ponce's police force was augmented from thirty-five to about two-hundred men,\(^88\) and this heavily armed force began to take stations along the route of the parade. Shortly after 3 p.m. nearly eighty cadets fell into line, three abreast, with about twelve young nurses following immediately behind. The cadets were dressed in black trousers, white shirts and small caps, while the nurses wore white dresses. Following closely behind was a band of five musicians.\(^89\) When the time to begin marching approached, the small band began to play "La Borinqueña"\(^90\) and then the order to proceed forward was given. According to the American Civil Liberties Union report heavily armed policemen were lined up in the rear, front and sides of the cadets, which group was actually surrounded.\(^91\) The group of police facing the would-be paraders were strewn across Marina street, positively blocking the intended path of the cadets and accompanying groups. The policemen standing behind the cadets were armed with Thompson sub-machine guns.\(^92\) Finally, there was a large contingent of well armed policemen facing the Nationalist club.\(^93\)

When the cadets began marching, a police captain named Bernardo Soldevila held up his hand and ordered the parade to halt.\(^94\) At this
critical juncture it is well to review the steps that led to this confrontation, starting with the Nationalist request for a permit to stage a parade in Ponce on Palm Sunday, 1937. The permit was at first refused, then granted. At the very last moment the permit was revoked on orders from the insular administration.

There is no doubt that the Ponce affair grew out of contradictory and confusing orders issued by the authorities, although some fault is also found in the Nationalist demonstrators, mostly young people, who decided to proceed with the parade. The conflict of official authority and purpose, plus the bad blood existing between Nationalists and police, produced an explosive situation that led to bloodshed. The idea comes forth that in the unfortunate Ponce affair, the semi-militarized police was given a tragic opportunity to take revenge for the murder of their old commander, Colonel Riggs, and for the murder of other policemen, such as Orlando Colón and Antonio González Cortés, by firing upon an unarmed concentration of civilians.

It will probably never be determined who fired the first shot. The versions are numerous and contradictory. But both the American Civil Liberties Union and the official government report agree that not one of those participating in the parade was armed. Thus, the onus of having fired the first shot, which occurred almost immediately after Captain Soldevila raised his hand and ordered the paraders to stop, is almost necessarily placed somewhere in the ranks of the police. In the ensuing melee and panic, the police began firing wildly into the unarmed crowd. Nineteen were killed, including two policemen, and over 100 were
Reports of the event were extremely contradictory, but whether due to panic or design the reaction of the police was needlessly brutal. As Mathews states "given the benefit of the doubt, which may never be completely cleared away, that one civilian shot at and killed a policeman, this under no stretch of the imagination can defend the slaughter which was carried out in Ponce on Palm Sunday afternoon, 1937." Most of the dead were little more than children, none were armed. The sworn statements of the attending doctors and the many photographs of the dead and wounded indicate that the vast majority of the people were shot in the back while seeking refuge.

Several photographs were taken before and after the confrontation began, and are remarkably revealing. One, taken before the shooting began, shows that not one civilian can be shown carrying a weapon. This terribly important fact was admitted by police officials before a Legislative Committee. A second picture of the changing scene shows the police advancing toward the large group of men, women and children in the corner of Aurora and Marina streets. A more important and revealing picture was taken by Carlos Torres Morales, photographer for El Imparcial, at the moment that one or two shots rang out. What the picture clearly demonstrates is one policeman shooting into the crowd of civilians, not into the formation of cadets, while others are in the act of drawing their hand weapons and several are pointing their shoulder weapons toward the fleeing crowd. The policeman who was firing was clearly distinguishable, shooting directly into the civilians on the curb.
The aforementioned account serves only to illustrate why the Ponce affair was termed, and will go down in Insular History as a massacre. A series of questions can be raised which make the role of the government in this tragic and controversial act extremely dubious and quite censurable. First, if there was such a fear of violence and gunplay, why were the paraders allowed to congregate in the first place? Second, why were they not arrested for disobeying a lawful order given by the mayor? Next, if there was fear that weapons were being carried or concealed, why did not the police frisk the Nationalists? Fourth, where were Colonel Orbeta and Captain Blanco, the Ponce chief of police? Why, when the time for the parade grew nearer, were these two police officials—the highest ranking police officers in Ponce at the time—wandering around the city, seeing the sights, and away from the scene of the tragedy until the sickening event was over? Finally, it is extremely hard to believe that the men participating in the parade came to Ponce to engage in a shooting battle with the police. The reason for this is that the men who came to Ponce brought their wives and children and relatives with them. It seems that they were going to a fiesta rather than to a shooting match with the heavily armed police. Thus, it is only just and proper to claim, as did Arthur Garfield Hays and the other members of the Commission of Inquiry of the American Civil Liberties Union that at Ponce a massacre had indeed been committed; that civil liberties such as freedom of speech and the right of assemblage had been denied under Governor Winship. In its decision, the Commission of Inquiry severely criticized the pressure tactics of the Nationalist party, a main cause of the tragic affair.
As a result of this unfortunate incident, a storm of wrath was directed against Governor Winship and his administration. There is no doubt that a better handling of the matter by the Insular authorities could have prevented this "Bloody Sunday" in Puerto Rican history. On the mainland, the tragedy of Palm Sunday, 1937 received wide coverage, most of it critical of Governor Winship's handling of the affair.109

After the Ponce affair, two other events involving Nationalist party members took place. Clearly, they were terrorist affairs widely condemned in the island. The first incident occurred in June 8, the day after Albizu Campos and seven of his associates left Puerto Rico for the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. On this day several unidentified men fired over a dozen shots at United States District Judge Robert A. Cooper, the judge under which the Nationalists had been tried and sentenced.110 Judge Cooper was enroute to his home and as his car passed another vehicle, the occupants of the latter opened fire. One bullet pierced the windshield of the judge's car, but nobody was injured. Over two months later, Arturo Rivera Córdoba, allegedly one of the conspirators in the attempt against Judge Cooper, confessed how ten Nationalists conspired to take the life of the United States District Court Judge.111 Six months after their arrest, eight of the alleged conspirators stood trial before Associate Justice Martín Travieso of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court. The defense counsels refused to participate in the selection of jurors, introduce evidence or cross examine witnesses for the prosecution. Thus, the whole proceedings occupied little more than four hours, when the defendants were found guilty and sentenced to five years imprisonment at Atlanta.112
The other incident worth mentioning took place on July 25, 1938, when Insular authorities staged a parade in Ponce to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the United States landing in Puerto Rico. Several Nationalists fired a score of shots at the governor's reviewing stand. This time their target was Governor Winship, who was in the reviewing stand waiting for his scheduled address on the anniversary occasion. As a result of the shooting spree and the exchange of fire between Nationalists and police, two persons were killed and one was wounded. As a consequence of this latest episode nine Nationalists were indicted for murder, although the exact number of those who took part in the attempted assassination is still a matter of controversy.

Notwithstanding the confusing statements put out by the press, seven of the participants in the attack had been tried and sentenced to life imprisonment by January 17, 1939.

During the remainder of 1938 minor incidents of a terrorist nature continued to occur in Puerto Rico. One incident, for example, involved the dynamiting of the home of Reverend Nestor J. Aguilera for the simple reason that he was a minister of the Puerto Rico National Guard. But 1938 was a somewhat quiet year in which cases arising in previous years came to a close. One example of this is the end of a government case against eleven Nationalists accused of murdering policeman Ceferino Loyola during the 1937 Palm Sunday Massacre. Having an admittedly weak case, the government finally released the eleven accused men.

A second example involved policeman Narciso Miranda, charged with the murder of Juan Torres, a sixteen years old garage worker, during the
Palm Sunday affair. It took the jury only fifteen minutes to acquit the policeman. It is indeed a sad comment on insular justice that nobody was in anyway penalized by the events at Ponce on March 21, 1937. The lives of nineteen Puerto Ricans and countless others who were injured were not deemed worthy of a serious effort by the authorities to clarify the incident, which even today is a highly controversial and emotional theme.

In the preceding pages an effort has been made to recount and examine those events involving the Nationalist party of Puerto Rico covering the years 1932 to 1938. As the reader has seen, most if not all the events were of a violent nature, often times ending in bloodshed and murder. The years comprised in this chapter were those when party terrorism, albeit sporadic, reached maximum intensity. In all their forays, the Nationalists were outmanned, outgunned and defeated. In 1938, with its maximum leader and many of his closest associates in jail, radical nationalism in Puerto Rico seemed to have come to an early end.
Footnotes


6 Ibid. See El Imparcial, April 18, 1932, which claims that a young girl named Carmen Julia Marchand was seriously wounded. This newspaper claims that the two injured demonstrators were Nationalist party members. See also U.S. Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., 1937, p. 5276, where it is claimed that ten persons were injured; and Pagan, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. II, p. 31.

7 New York Times, April 18, 1932.

8 Ibid., June 24, 1932.

9 Ibid., April 20, 1932.

10 Hunter, Puerto Rico, A Survey, p. 8. See also La Prensa (New York), May 17, 1932.


13 New York Times, June 25, 1932. During his trial, Velázquez was defended by Albizu Campos.

14 Ibid., July 2, 1932.

Three Nationalists named J. Enamorado Cuesta, Plinio Graciani and Guillermo Fiol Negron were accused of defaming the American flag. In a second incident, a minor police-Nationalist confrontation occurred in Ponce during a meeting where verbal attacks were launched against visiting American seamen.

President Roosevelt apparently gave some consideration at this time to the idea of appointing a Puerto Rican, for he inquired about Judge Martín Travieso and Dr. José Padín in a letter to retiring Governor James Beverly.

One of the actions of the new Governor, which rankled the Puerto Ricans enormously, was the demand that every major appointee had to give him an undated resignation on accepting office. The Governor claimed he was following President Roosevelt’s policy, but this was tersely denied by the White House. See Hubert Herring, "Rebellion in Puerto Rico," The Nation, CXCVII (November 29, 1933), p. 618; New York Times, August 15-17, 1933. Another and more bothersome practice of Governor Gore was to label as anti-American anyone who defended the use of Spanish as the main language in Puerto Rican schools, which was the policy of José Padín, the Commissioner of Education. For details see George W. Hinsman, "Puerto Rico Shows Unrest," Christian Century, L (November 15, 1933), p. 1452; "Governor Gore is Threatened and Applauded," Newsweek, II (November 4, 1933), p. 2. It should be of interest to the reader to know that Gore’s appointment was bitterly criticized in the mainland. While condemning Gore’s appointment, the New York Herald Tribune, August 30, 1933, remarked: "One can not keep from sympathizing with the resentment of the Puerto Ricans, due to the spoil-manship of Mr. Roosevelt’s policy in the island." For more detailed information on Governor Gore’s policy in the island, see Hubert Herring, "Forgotten Puerto Rico," Christian Century, L (December 6, 1933), p. 1533.

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It should be stressed that no Nationalist was ever connected with the bombings and threats upon the Governor, although in a speech prior to the attempts on the Governor, Albizu Campos made reference to the newly appointed official. See Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 7.


El Mundo (San Juan), October 25, 1935.


Pagan, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. II, p. 72. The four dead Nationalists were Ramon S. Pagan, Pedro Quiñonez, Eduardo Rodriguez Vega, and Jose Santiago. The dead bystander was Jose Munoz Jimenez.

This obvious fault of the insular press was harshly criticized by mainland newspapers. See New York Herald Tribune, February 25, 1936.


El Mundo (San Juan), October 26, 1935.

Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 250.


El Mundo (San Juan), October 22, 1935.


41. La Prensa (New York), February 24, 1936; New York Times, February 24, 1936.


46. Wire from Governor Winship to Ernest Gruening, February 23, 1936, as quoted in Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 249.

47. Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 92. Lewis, Puerto Rico: Freedom and Power, p. 80, claims that "Riggs' murder was untypical in its stark brutality, of a society remarkable for the absence of serious violence in its public life." Here, Lewis seems to be paraphrasing Marquez and Pedreira in the often voiced idea of Puerto Rican passiveness.


50. El Mundo (San Juan), February 25, 1936.

51. La Democracia (San Juan), February 26, 1936. For editorial comment along the same lines see also El Mundo (San Juan), El Imparcial, and La Correspondencia, all of February 25, 1936.


Personal File, Luis Raúl Esteves, letter from General Winship to Gruening, March 7, 1936, as quoted in Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 251.

Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 92.


For complete details, see El Mundo (San Juan), February 25, 1936.

For the complete details of the proceedings, which involved the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior, see Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, pp. 266-270. Maldonado Denis, Puerto Rico, pp. 118-119 states that regardless of the consequences, the Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, following instructions from higher up had already decided that the Nationalist leaders were to be imprisoned.

Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 268.


Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 269. A similar opinion is held by Maldonado Denis, Puerto Rico, pp. 118-119.


Ibid.

New York Times, April 23, 1936. The policemen involved were José R. Vázquez, a district chief; corporal Federico Cabán, and patrolmen Fernando Loyola, Américo Ortiz, Jacinto Barbosa and Francisco Velázquez.

Literary Digest, CXXI (March 7, 1936), p. 17.

See La Prensa (New York), March 14 to March 17, 1936, for Padin’s strong stand against proposed student’s strikes. As a result of his firm stand, the proposed general student strike never materialized.

El Mundo (San Juan), March 19, 1936.

See La Prensa (New York), March 18, 1936, where a highly inflammatory proclamation made by the Puerto Rican High School Federation called the island’s students to arms in order to defend “La sagrada madre patria...violada y humillada....” The proclamation added “Let us not surrender our brothers, let us not allow their incarceration without a protest, without a fight.”

Not all the students approved and supported the actions of the Puerto Rican High School Federation. An example of this was the students of the Cayey High School, which voiced their disapproval and rejection of the call to arms and violence made by the Puerto Rico High School Federation. See La Prensa (New York), April 1, 1936.

One of these incidents took place in San Juan’s Central High School, where a strike was staged protesting the removal of a Puerto Rican flag from the school’s flag pole. When the Puerto Rican flag was pulled down, the students destroyed the flagpole. See El Mundo (San Juan), May 1, 1936.

For other incidents of a similar nature see La Prensa (New York), May 4 to May 16, 1936. Among the towns where the American flag was brought down and substituted with the Puerto Rican flag were Aguadilla, Cabo Rojo, Naguabo, Ponce, San Juan, Toa Alta and Quebradillas. Most of the time the police was forced to bring down the Puerto Rican flag and replace it with the American one. In more than one instance, armed clashes between students and the police took place. See La Prensa (New York), May 4 to May 7, and May 16, 1936.

La Prensa (New York), May 14, 1936. The National Guard had been previously mobilized in March 6, 1936 due to an alleged plot to overthrow the government. See New York Times, March 6, 1936. On March 20 of the same year two companies of National Guardsmen had to patrol the streets of Utuado to prevent the Nationalists from closing the schools and creating a student strike. See La Prensa (New York), March 20, 1936.


Ibid. A Nationalist named Carlos Marchand Paz was accused and later on found guilty of Colon’s murder, and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment. See New York Times, July 30, 1938.

New York Times, October 27, 1936. At the time, Iglesias was the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner to the United States Congress.

La Prensa (New York), October 27, 1936.

Ibid., March 12, 1937. Saltari Crespo appealed and his case was not resolved finally until December 6, 1938, when his ten year sentence was upheld by the Insular Supreme Court. See New York Times, December 6, 1938.

Ibid., December 3, 1936.

These tactics had brought some early and unexpected results, as attested by a cable sent by Romero Barceló and Martínez Nadal to the President of the United States requesting that the case against Albizu Campos be ended as a means to insure the tranquility of Puerto Rico's public life. See La Prensa (New York), July 10, 1936.

Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 309.

Letter from Earl P. Hanson to Roger Baldwin, January 25, 1937, as quoted in Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 310

La Prensa (New York), September 5 and September 10, 1936. This parade had been planned and authorized for September 6, 1936.

Letter from Roger Baldwin to Ernest Gruening, March 9, 1937, as quoted in Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 310.


The withdrawal of the permission to hold the parade was given to the Nationalists in a written note. This occurred on Sunday morning, the same day of the parade. See Commission of Inquiry, p. 12. See also Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 9; and the New York Times, March 28, part IV, 1937.

Commission of Inquiry, p. 10.


Puerto Rico's National Anthem.
It is perhaps significant how with the tense situation they claimed to have in hand, neither Colonel Orbeta nor local police chief Blanco were at the scene of the confrontation. According to the Commission of Inquiry, p. 14, both of these gentlemen "came near the scene around 2 p.m. Finding it too tense, they left and wandered around Ponce seeing the sights. They did not come back until after the tragic event was over."

A committee of the Insular House of Representatives investigated the incident and was in agreement with the investigation performed by Puerto Rico's Attorney General. Neither could pinpoint the origin of the shot which opened the way to tragedy. See El Mundo, (San Juan) May 30, 1937, for the details and conclusion of the latter investigation. See also El Mundo (San Juan), April 10, 1937 for the details and conclusion of the Committee of the Insular House of Representatives.

Commission of Inquiry, p. 18, categorically asserts that "no evidence was ever found that civilians had weapons, that a civilian could have fired first. No weapons were found anywhere." The governmental investigation was undertaken by the Department of Justice. There is no desire to doubt governmental investigations, but usually these investigations when referring to the police end by somehow defending or painting as inevitable the role of the latter organization.

In spite of the fact that both the governmental and The American Civil Liberties Union reports recognize that not one Nationalist was armed, some writers continue to claim that the first shot was fired by a party member. In this sense see Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 9, who is doubly incorrect when he stated that a Nationalist fired the first shot at the chief of police.

Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 97. Pagan, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. II, p. 120 states that there were only seventeen dead, also using a similar figure for the wounded.

102 Letter from Roger Baldwin to Ernest Gruening, May 15, 1937, as quoted in Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, p. 312. See also Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 96.
103 Commission of Inquiry, p. 15.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., p. 17.
106 Ibid., p. 13.
107 Ibid., p. 62.


110 New York Times, June 9, 1937. It should be pointed out that on September 11, 1936, Judge Copper received a letter threatening his life for having sentenced Albizu Campos and his associates. See La Prensa (New York), September 11, 1936. Later on, the young man who did the threatening was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment. See La Prensa (New York), September 22, 1936.

111 Arrested besides Rivera Cordoba were Jesús Casellas Torres, Julio Pinto Gandía, Manuel Avila, Juan Álamo, Aníbal Arzuaga Casellas, Tulio Monge Hernández, Dionisio Vélez Avilés, Raimundo Díaz, Juan B. Colón and Santiago Nieves Maisán.


114 Of the two dead persons one was Angel Esteban Antongiorgi, a Nationalist. The other casualty was Colonel Luis Irizarry, of the Puerto Rican National Guard. Detective Juan R. Colón was wounded when courageously he used his body to shield Governor Winship. See New York Times, July 26, 1938; Hackett, The Nationalist Party, pp. 10-11; and Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 96.

115 According to the New York Times, July 27, 1938, thirteen were arrested. Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 11 only mentions that a number of Nationalists were arrested; Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 96, claims that only nine were indicted.

116 See the New York Times, September 2, 1938 and January 17, 1939. Two of the defendants turned state's evidence and the charges against
them were dropped.


118 Ibid., May 29, part I, 1938.
CHAPTER VI

THE QUIET DECADE, 1939-1949

The two years after the departure of Albizu Campos for prison were years of turmoil and disorder in Puerto Rico. But beginning in the middle of 1939 there was a lull in Nationalist activities. Politically, comparative calm prevailed in the island throughout 1939. Although there was no violence, Nationalist-inspired acts against the Insular and Federal authorities did occur. For instance, starting in 1940, Ramón Medina Ramírez, the acting president of the party, urged all Nationalists not to register for military service and to resist their induction into the American Armed Forces.\(^1\) In spite of this appeal, over 200,000 Puerto Ricans registered for the draft, and by December 4, 1940, the insular trainee quota of 4,800 had been filled with volunteers.

As a result of their anti-draft stand, many party members were arrested in 1941 for failure to register, brought to trial and sentenced to jail terms.\(^2\) During this same year, the acting leaders of the party--Medina Ramírez and Rafael López Ríos, the acting secretary--were indicted and found guilty of conspiracy to prevent operation of the Selective Service Law. Both were given four year suspended sentences and placed on probation for five years.\(^3\)

The next year, 1942, was an extremely quiet one. No Nationalist incidents took place. Between this year and 1947, only two noticeable events involving Nationalist party members occurred. One was late in
1941 when Albizu Campos refused to accept an early release on parole due to good behavior. This action automatically forced him to serve another nineteen months of his jail term. The other noteworthy event took place in 1943, when Albizu Campos was released from the Atlanta penitentiary on a four year parole. Subsequently the Nationalist leader went to New York City, where in June 8, 1943 he entered Columbus Hospital due to a heart condition and also for treatment of his left arm, which he claimed was partially paralyzed. While in New York the Nationalist leader remained in constant touch with Nationalists in that city and in Puerto Rico. He stayed in New York until December 17, 1947, when he went back to the island to take over active leadership of the party.

Before following the actions of Albizu Campos in Puerto Rico, attention must be paid to a series of political events which, starting in the late 1930's, substantially changed the tempo of island politics. During these years many of the older generation of politicians had either died, lost their zeal or were being challenged by newcomers in the political arena. One of the newcomers was Luis Muñoz Marín, who in 1938 founded the Popular Democratic party. To defuse the tense political situation and to put an end to the problematic and troublesome question of status, the new party took a rather novel approach toward the status question in the elections of 1940. In its platform, the party included the following pledge: "The Popular Democratic party declares that the final political status of Puerto Rico is not an issue in this election. Any vote cast for this party will not be interpreted as a vote in favor of any given political status."
The rise to power of the Popular Democratic party marked a momentous event in the political history of Puerto Rico. Muñoz Marín, an ardent independentista early in his career, was never to forget the question of status, but he would also work toward the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of the impoverished island, forgotten under the stress and strain of status debate. This two-pronged attack ultimately proved to be highly successful. Unknowingly at this time, Muñoz Marín represented the forces of change that were to spell doom for Albizu Campos and radical nationalism in Puerto Rico. Besides his concerted effort for economic rehabilitation, Muñoz Marín represented the resurgence of an old idea—that of a middle ground between statehood and independence. In his quest for this middle road to freedom Muñoz Marín had the avowed and decisive help of Harry S. Truman, President of the United States from 1945 to 1952, and the overwhelming support of the Puerto Rican people.

The first steps in the long road toward a liberalization of Puerto Rico's Organic Act really began in 1943, during Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. In that year the Puerto Rican legislature passed a resolution petitioning Congress for additional local autonomy, including the popular election of the governor. Unlike innumerable other petitions by Puerto Rican legislatures and administrations, this one was answered promptly and in encouraging terms by President Roosevelt. On March 9, 1943, the President sent a special message to Congress recommending an amendment of the Organic Act of 1917 to permit the people of Puerto Rico to elect their own governor, and to redefine the functions and essential character of the island-mainland relationship. On the previous day,
the President had sent a letter to Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes announcing the creation of a committee to consider and make recommendations of changes needed in the Organic Act including his basic proposal favoring the election of the island's governor. The committee would be of an equal number of Puerto Ricans and continentals, with Secretary Ickes as chairman.  

The special committee created by President Roosevelt met in Washington, D.C., from July 19 to August 7, 1943. Besides Secretary Ickes its continental members included Abe Fortas, Undersecretary of the Interior Department, Governor Tugwell and Father R.A. McGowan. Puerto Rican committee members included Senators Celestino Iriarte and Muñoz Marín, Supreme Court Judge Martín Travieso and José Ramírez Santibañez. After long and wrangling sessions, the committee unanimously recommended that Puerto Ricans be given an opportunity to exercise freely the powers of local self-government and to elect their own governor starting in November, 1944. Shortly after receiving this report the President sent another message to Congress on September 28, renewing his earlier recommendations for additional self-government for Puerto Rico. The special committee prepared a draft bill which included seven far-reaching and controversial recommendations that would undoubtedly enlarge Puerto Rico's powers of self-government. The draft bill was then submitted as Senate Bill 1407 in October, 1943. Some of the proposals were too controversial to appeal to legislators who were annoyed by earlier acts of Puerto Rican extremists, while others were haunted by fear of socialism or were committed to other status formulae.
Nevertheless, Bill 1407 was considered by the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. When it was reported back, however, most of the items considered controversial by the Senate had been removed, except the principle of the elective governor. Thus changed the bill was approved on February 15, 1944 by the Senate. Still, the legislative fight was far from over, as the House of Representatives was in no hurry to consider the Puerto Rican legislation.

Feeling strongly that the House was dragging its feet on his recommendations, on September 4 President Roosevelt sent a letter to Congressman C. Jasper Bell, Chairman of the House Committee on Insular Affairs, requesting early consideration of the proposed legislation. Even the Presidential endorsement of the Elective-Governor Bill was not enough, however and the House failed to act on the proposed reform. Thus, the Puerto Rican status situation remained unchanged in spite of overwhelming Puerto Rican sentiment for change and President Roosevelt's efforts since 1943. The inertia of Congress also resisted the generally favorable press and public reactions to the Presidential messages, notwithstanding the worldwide reaction against all forms of colonialism.

When President Roosevelt died on April 1945, Puerto Ricans in general were stunned by the loss of their powerful friend. But soon after Harry S. Truman took over the Presidency, there was evidence that like his predecessor, President Truman felt that Puerto Ricans should be allowed a larger voice in their own political affairs. Therefore, it was no great surprise when on October 16 the President sent a special message to Congress asking that the people of Puerto Rico be allowed to settle
for themselves their political future. In part, the President's message stated: "It is now time, in my opinion, to ascertain from the people of Puerto Rico their wishes as to the ultimate status which they prefer, and within such limits as may be determined by the Congress, to grant them the kind of government which they desire."¹⁹

In his message the President listed four alternatives that Congress might submit to the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum. These were: (a) an elective governor and enlarged local autonomy; (b) statehood; (c) complete independence; and (d) a dominion status. In a further part of his message President Truman stated that:

> Uncertainty has been created among the people of Puerto Rico as to just what the future of Puerto Rico is to be. These uncertainties should be cleared at an early date. In the interest of good faith Congress should not submit any proposals to the Puerto Ricans which the Congress is not prepared to enact into law. I hope that appropriate legislation be enacted designed to make definite the future status of Puerto Rico.²⁰

The President's special message was delivered late in the Congressional session. Because of this Truman reiterated his request that Puerto Ricans be allowed to choose their form of government and ultimate status with respect to the United States in the State of the Union Message in January, 1946.²¹ Soon afterwards Resident Commissioner Jesus T. Piñero introduced legislation in Congress to fulfill the President's suggestion for a referendum. Before Congress could act on the bill introduced by Piñero, the Puerto Rican legislature passed a bill of its own providing for such a plebiscite. In successive moves Governor Tugwell vetoed the measure, which was then overridden by a two-thirds majority vote of the
An important event which significantly affected insular political life then occurred, when Governor Tugwell resigned the governorship of the island on June 24, 1946. Speculation as to whom would be Tugwell's successor created anxiety and heightened the tension in the island. On July 9, in a special session, the insular legislature cabled President Truman requesting the appointment of Piñero as the next insular governor. In an editorial on mid-July the New York Times claimed that "President Truman had over thirty-one potential candidates, all of them continentals, except Piñero." The editorial added that "if the best interests of the Puerto Ricans is the yardstick, it could be a wise move for the President to choose Mr. Piñero... the appointment would give the Puerto Ricans a sense of dignity and pride they have not had since we acquired their island from Spain in 1898." The newspaper further added that "...he should be appointed and the Senate should ratify the choice." Soon after the New York Times editorial, in a precedent-shattering action, the President appointed Piñero as the first native governor of the island of Puerto Rico.

It is indeed strange how some historians and politicians who have dealt with the Puerto Rican status question and the development of Puerto Rican self-rule tend to minimize or ignore completely this courageous step taken by President Truman in 1946. When delving into historical monographs pertaining to Puerto Rico's development from colony to Com-
monwealth, one frequently finds something akin to the disturbing under-
statement "no changes of any consequence took place from 1917 to 1947."\(^{26}\) The appointment of Piñero was not a significant change in Puerto Rico's colonial status, but it rid the Puerto Ricans of one of the most obnoxious symbols of their colonial situation—a foreign governor. The memories of Reily, Gore and other unpleasant names could be set aside more easily, as no longer would a foreign governor affront the islanders. It is indeed clear that all previous efforts to give Puerto Rico a larger measure of self-rule, regardless of their nature or who made them, lacked the personal courage, strength and determination of President Truman's 1946 decision.\(^{27}\)

The impact of the President's decision, plus an entirely different atmosphere in the House of Representatives—the stumbling block for the Elective-Governor Bill of 1944—were the main reasons behind a series of significant moves concerning the Puerto Rican question, which started after 1947. In this year Congressman Fred L. Crawford, from Michigan, introduced H.R. 3309, another Elective-Governor Bill.\(^{28}\) This legislation encountered almost no opposition in the House. Senator Hugh Butler's companion bill moved easily through the Senate.\(^{29}\) The bill that made possible the election of the governor by Puerto Ricans was passed on the closing minutes of the last day of the first session of the Eightieth Congress. It was, as a matter of fact, the last piece of legislation passed by that Congress.\(^{30}\)

In a later speech defending his measure Representative Crawford stated:
Speaking frankly and bluntly...I am not too well pleased with the way the Congress of the United States treats our people who live in the colonies and territories. At the present time there is too much disposition on the part of Congress to forget those who live under the American flag offshore and remember those who are subjects of foreign nations.

In a further comment, Representative Crawford referred to what may be termed an almost total lack of knowledge about Puerto Rico by members of Congress, "who refer to Puerto Rico, Cuba and other foreign countries, classifying Puerto Ricans as members of a foreign nation." It is significant that when Representative Crawford accused members of Congress of knowing little or nothing about Puerto Rico, and of ignoring the discriminating commercial practices used against the island, not a single member of Congress raised any objection.

On August 4, 1947 President Truman signed the Crawford-Butler Act, more commonly known as the Elective Governor-Act, making it possible for Puerto Rico to become the first territory in United States history to elect its own governor. This amendment to the Jones Act also empowered the governor to appoint all the members of his cabinet with the advice and consent of the Insular Senate. The auditor and the judges of the Supreme Court continued to be appointed by the President of the United States.

It is indeed ironic that 1947, the year when the Nationalist leader was freed on parole, was also the year when the Nationalist movement was partly disarmed by steps taken in Washington. The appointment of Piñero and the subsequent Elective-Governor Act were moves that greatly pleased
the insular Americans. There is no doubt that in 1947 the foundation upon which the Nationalists based their verbal attacks against the United States in their quest for political freedom had been greatly weakened. The issue of the presidentially appointed foreign governor— one of the most sensitive and emotionally powerful arguments which Nationalist party leaders stressed in their highly inflammatory rhetoric— had been taken away from them.

Several other important developments in the Puerto Rican situation occurred during 1948. First, during the early days of February, in a special message, President Truman once more urged Congress to allow the people of Puerto Rico to choose their own form of government. The second development took place during the last days of February, when the President visited Puerto Rico. In a speech delivered on February 20, the President reiterated his desire for a solution to the status question, claiming, as he had done in his earlier messages to Congress that "the Puerto Rican people should have the right to determine for themselves Puerto Rico's political relationship to the United States," adding that "this is a relationship which is mutually beneficial."

President Truman's speech was of great importance, as 1948 was an election year on the island. Through the changes adopted in the Elective-Governor Act the insular government had arrived at a position in which the scope of its authority over the island was roughly equivalent to that of a government of a federated state. In practice the Federal government operated in Puerto Rico separately from the insular government, just as it exercised certain functions for the citizens of a state. In
such matters as defense, currency, international diplomacy, politics and numerous other areas the Federal government performed its duties under Federal law, and with exceptions, Federal laws applied in Puerto Rico.

But since the whole structure had been established by Congressional law, there was great concern that some future Congress may change or repeal it. Only by indirect means—suggestion, persuasion and mass pressure—had the Puerto Ricans participated in obtaining or approving the position in which they found themselves. With the injection by Muñoz Marín of a middle ground proposal between the two classical status forms, predicated upon close association with the United States, the hard-won concessions wrested from Congress had to be given a sense of stability, of permanency.

This desired stability and permanency was to be obtained through the 1948 general elections, probably the most significant ever held in the island to that date. Through this election the islanders for the first time had the opportunity to elect their own governor and legislature. A fact of even greater importance was that they were voting to determine what kind of government they wanted for their future relationship with the United States, as the Popular Democrats unveiled their new idea of the Commonwealth plan—Estado Libre Asociado—a not-so-new idea of government, as has been shown in preceding pages.

For the 1948 general elections the Popular Democratic party platform pledged that the legislature would be authorized to call the voters for a plebiscite—at a future time when the existing conditions warranted it—
to vote on various alternatives for what could be an ultimate status, although voters from other parties were assured that the opportunity to seek future changes would not be foreclosed. The alternatives envisaged by the Popular Democrats were three. The first, federated statehood, was supported and defended by a coalition of the Republican and Socialist parties. The second, complete separation from the United States and the establishment of an independent republic, was supported by the newly created Independence party. The third idea, that of an autonomous self-governing Commonwealth in association with the United States, was supported by the Popular Democratic party.

Some insight to the Popular Democratic supported Commonwealth plan was provided in 1948 by Femos Isern, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, in a lecture delivered at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and Foreign Affairs at Princeton University. In his speech, Dr. Femos Isern stated:

There is a fundamental difference between the status of Puerto Rico and that of a state of the Union. The local government structure of Puerto Rico rests upon an Organic Act, a statute unilaterally stipulated by the sovereign for a totally dependent people. There exists the plenary legislative authority of Congress over the island without constitutional limitations. But let us suppose a government...founded on a constitution adopted by the people and that they alone shall be empowered to amend...and that the Federal Government cease in the exercise of its plenary powers; That all these conditions form the basis for a new and bilateral organic pact which could be amended only through mutual consent rather than unilaterally. Without doubt such changes would mean for Puerto Rico a status of democratic sovereignty, since its government would rest upon the will of the people, who would have duly adopted their own constitution and their pattern of relations with the Federal Government.
This speech neatly summarized the proposed idea of the Popular Democratic party, although the party kept repeating that in no way would this action close the doors to some future effort to get statehood or independence.

A further step in the development of the Commonwealth idea came in a Fourth of July speech by Muñoz Marín, the Popular Democrat candidate for governor. During his speech the gubernatorial candidate suggested that Congress should authorize the insular legislature to call a plebiscite to choose between statehood and independence whenever the Puerto Rican Legislature might decide that the economic development of the island warranted it. The significant element in this proposal was the idea that the Puerto Ricans not only had the right to determine a final status, but also to declare through their elected representatives their readiness to make such a determination.

In the election campaign which followed it was made clear that a vote for the Popular Democratic party would signify approval of the plan to seek the right to prepare for a constitution. It was generally on this understanding that the extremely important 1948 elections were held. Under these conditions and alternatives, the Popular Democrats received 392,386 votes against 182,977 for the statehood coalition, and 65,351 for the Independence party. Obtaining 392,386 votes against nearly 250,000 of the combined opposition groups, the Popular Democratic party received 63 per cent of the total votes cast.38

The Popular Democrats claimed that the results of the elections showed the unequivocal expression of the people's will. The Popular
Democratic leaders also claimed they had a mandate from the people to implement a Commonwealth type government and to that effect they began to prepare legislation to be presented in Congress.

But before going ahead with the momentous political events that were taking place in Puerto Rico, one must take a step back to 1947 and the return of Albizu Campos to the island.

Soon after his return, scattered though suspicious incidents began to take place. Early in January, 1948, ten thousand rounds of caliber .22 and .45 ammunition were stolen but quickly recovered by the police. Local rumors linked the incident with the return of Albizu Campos and with recently intensified activities by the Nationalists. Other signs of unrest soon followed at the University of Puerto Rico, where on April, members of the faculty and the student body claimed that "strangers to the University" were creating problems within the campus. These accusations were soon followed by a student strike occasioned by the refusal of Jaime Benítez--University of Puerto Rico Chancellor--to allow Albizu Campos to speak to the student body in the University auditorium, claiming that the "University would not be used as a center of agitation and direct action by some groups." After nearly one hundred students stormed the office of the chancellor and demanded his resignation, the University was indefinitely closed on Wednesday, April 14, while extra police detachments patrolled the campus and extraordinary precautions were taken near Puerto Rico's White House (La Fortaleza).

As a result of the continuous Nationalist inspired disturbances, the University of Puerto Rico, which had been opened on May 3 was once more
closed on May 8 for the remainder of the term, after serious student-police confrontations resulted in many arrests.43

It should be pointed out that during 1948 and 1949 Albizu Campos was formally reelected President of the Nationalist Party, position which during his jail term in Atlanta had remained nominally vacant, the party having been run by an acting president.

The fact that the Nationalists were seen as responsible for the unrest and violence after 1948 is not in itself surprising, nor should it be construed as prejudice on the part of any specific group against the Nationalist organization. A look at some of the names of those students arrested as a result of the riotous University incidents during the months of April and May is extremely revealing, if one considers present day Puerto Rican politics. One of the names is Jorge Luis Landing, presently the leader of one of the most staunch pro-independence however small political groups on the island. A better known name is that of Juan Mari Bras, a militant activist in his student days and later on a firebrand orator who has led several strongly anti-American organizations and demonstrations. Nevertheless, the figure around which agitation and violence revolved in 1948-1949 was that of Albizu Campos, who upon his return to the island continued to make speeches and public utterances filled with strong anti-American references.

A good example of what may be termed incitement to violence is a speech the Nationalist leader gave at Lares on September 23, 1949, in which he said:
The struggle initiated 81 years ago against Spain...for the independence of Puerto Rico continues. The Nationalist Party is going to dynamite the United States. It is going to throw out the United States. The Yankees have killed many Puerto Ricans and in justice we have a right to destroy them. The right is ours, and they are the culprits. The time will come in which that right will be exercised. Here, the only subversive is the government of the United States and its agents. They are the ones who want to destroy life. They want to kill all of us with diseases, vaccinations and starvation. Some day they are going to pay with their lives....There have been greater empires than the United States—more powerful. Today they are ashes. It may be that before long the American plague will be but a memory. It may be that this could happen within the year—within two....The time arrives when justice arms the weak and routs the giants....This time will be preceded by a struggle with arms, with all that is necessary to obtain the independence of Puerto Rico.44

A careful reading of this speech reveals a remarkable line of thought. Throughout it the idea comes out clearly that some incident of a bigger nature than any other preceding incident might be in the offing. The speech refers to violence in the past, in the present—meaning 1949—and contains suggestions of strong action to be taken in the near future. The nature of this speech brings to mind some noteworthy words written by Juan Antonio Corretjer in 1969. According to Corretjer, in a speech given by Albizu Campos on December 10, 1947, the Nationalist leader, while speaking about the United States stated: "I do not believe they will be so foolish to annex Puerto Rico....They will have to be awakened to the fact that Puerto Rico is a non-assimilable nation. The United States will have to be made aware of this in a general manner, and not through individual events." In a follow-up comment on this speech by Albizu Campos, Corretjer remarked that "if one takes these words into consideration, the meaning of the insurrec-
There is very little doubt that Albizu Campos' speeches point toward an incident of a bigger nature which is going to happen. But at this juncture, one can go no further in time, if the coherence and correlation of this narrative is to be maintained.

Without hesitation one has to acknowledge that from the point of view of radical insular nationalism, the period covered in the preceding pages represents a hiatus in the activities of the Nationalist party. This was closely linked to Albizu Campos' imprisonment and absence from the island. Yet, as shown above, there was a great deal of activity during this decade, although mostly related to the evolutionary process through which Puerto Rico hoped to achieve an ever increasing degree of self-rule. The reader must bear in mind, though, that the last two years of the 1940's show an increasing activity by Nationalist party members. If to this one adds Albizu Campos' two ominous speeches, then, the hopes that the insular scene would remain calm was indeed a vain one. Inadvertently, Puerto Rico was getting closer to the most catastrophic and tragic event of its long history. Like the old Spanish proverb says, Puerto Rico was enjoying "la calma que precede a la tempestad."
Footnotes

1 New York Times, November 20, 1940. The only insular newspaper which published the anti-draft appeal was La Democracia, then managed by Muñoz Marín, up to that time a firm and committed Independentista.

2 Ibid., February 1 to February 19, 1941. In all, ten Nationalists were given jail terms ranging from twelve to thirteen months imprisonment.

3 Ibid., February 23, 1941.

4 U.S. Congress House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, The Nationalist Party: A factual Study of the Puerto Rican Insurrectionists under Albiizu Campos, The Blair House Shooting, Various Assassination Attempts, and the Communist Praise for these Seditionists, by William H. Hackett (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 4. See also New York Times, November 6, 1941. It should be pointed out that most Nationalists were paroled, but refused to report periodically to their respective parole officers. Henceforth, most were returned to prison. True to form, the example of "el maestro" had to be imitated by his followers.


7 La Democracia (San Juan), July 22 to July 24, 1940, as quoted in Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 99.


9 The resolution of the Insular Legislature was studied, accepted and recommended for approval to the President by the then Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes. See U.S. President, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt (13 vols.; New York, 1950), Vol. XII, p. 117. Hereinafter cited as Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses.

10 U.S. Congressional Record, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., 1943, p. 1686. See also Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses Vol. XII, p. 117.

12 Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses, Vol. XII, p. 118.

13 U.S. Congressional Record, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., 1943, pp. 7841-7842. See also Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses Vol. XII, p. 118. The complete text of the message to Congress is found on pp. 412-417 of the latter source.


15 During this time Governor Tugwell's socio-economic program of land reform under government guidance and public operation raised the specter of a socialist experiment in the island that antagonized most members of Congress. Another item that was sharply criticized as socialistic and fascistic was the creation of a variety of public authorities that were to operate specific phases of the insular economic structure.

16 Hunter, Puerto Rico, A Survey, p. 13. Significant changes in the bill were as follows: (a) Retention of section 34 of the Organic Act, which gives Congress the power to annul any act of the Insular Legislature; (b) Rejection of the right of the Joint Advisory Council to advise on future political status; (c) Rejection of the requirement that Congress never alters the political relationship without the consent of the People of Puerto Rico. It can be said that the Senate Committee had rewritten the bill. See also New York Times, February 16, 1944; and Lidio Cruz Honclova and Antonio J. Colorado, Noticia y Pulso del Movimiento Político Puertorriqueño (Mexico, 1955), pp. 91-92.

17 Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses Vol. XII, p. 416.


Fems Isen, "From Colony to Commonwealth," p. 20; Hackett, The Nationalist Party, also espouses a similar idea, although he never states it directly.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.  Some of the most vivid and at the same time most incredible examples of the total ignorance of the American nation and public concerning Puerto Rico was given in 1929 by Governor Theodore Roosevelt in an article published in the Washington (D.C.) Sunday Star, December 8, 1929, and included in the U.S. Congressional Record. In said article Governor Roosevelt is asking for help for Puerto Rico, and in doing so states: "The island of Puerto Rico is neither known nor understood by the vast majority of our citizens...many have no idea where it is. Since I have been here I have had letters forwarded to me addressed 'Puerto Rico, Philippine Islands;' 'Puerto Rico, Central America;' and 'Puerto Rico, Cuba.' One college graduate even addressed me as Ambassador Roosevelt, American Embassy, Puerto Rico...while others have sent requests for the foreign stamps of Puerto Rico." See U.S. Congressional Record, 71st Cong., 2nd Sess, 1929, p. 280.

When signed by President Truman, the Elective-Governor Act became Public Law 362. See U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. LXI, p. 770. See also New York Times, August 6, 1947; El Mundo (San Juan), August 6, 1947.
which would have permitted the Governor to appoint the members of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico." See Truman, Public Papers, Vol. III, p. 366.

35 U.S. Congress, Senate, Message from the President of the United States, 80th Cong., 2nd Sess., February 2, 1948, Congressional Record, XCIV, p. 929; El Mundo (San Juan), February 3, 1948.

36 New York Times, November 2, 1950. See also Truman, Public Papers Vol. IV, pp. 153-154. See also El Mundo (San Juan), February 4, 1948 for an editorial praising President Truman's insistence that Puerto Ricans be allowed to decide their status with respect to the United States. See also El Mundo (San Juan), February 22, 1948 for similar editorial comments.

37 Antonio Fernós Isern, La significación de la Reforma (Washington, 1948). This was a lecture delivered at Princeton University on May 5, 1948, pp. 8-9, quoted by Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 112.


40 El Mundo (San Juan), April 17, 1948.

41 Ibid., April 12 to April 14, 1948.

42 Ibid., April 15 to April 16, 1948.

43 For details see El Mundo (San Juan), May 5 to May 8, 1948.

44 As quoted in Hackett, The Nationalist Party, pp. 4-5.

45 Corretjer, Pedro Albizu Campos, p. 33.

46 Ibid.
CHAPTER VII
THE NATIONALIST REVOLT OF 1950

The elections of 1948 were a historical landmark for Puerto Rican society. For the first time in its long history, the island possessed a popularly elected government. There was a feeling that this government, working with legislative support, could become a strong force in an effort to achieve further status changes. Immediately, the newly elected insular administration undertook a campaign to convince Congress of the wisdom of adopting a Commonwealth type government similar to that proposed by the Popular Democrats in the 1948 election campaign. To that effect Muñoz Marín visited Washington during the summer of 1949, and again in February of 1950. While in Washington, the newly elected governor requested legislation that would fulfill the campaign pledges of 1948. Muñoz Marín emphasized that the really significant change had occurred already in the passage of the Elective-Governor Act, and that the drawing of a Puerto Rican constitution "was actually a much shorter step than the one already taken."¹

Shortly before Muñoz Marín returned to the island, Dr. Fernós Isern, the Resident Commissioner in Washington, introduced in Congress a bill to give effect to the National referendum held in Puerto Rico in 1948. The Resident Commissioner characterized the bill's purposes as "to duly recognize the principle of government by consent," adding that the proposed status was nothing else but a Commonwealth of American citizens...where a new form of Federal relationship was developing.² A companion bill was
presented afterwards in the Senate by Senators Joseph C. O'Mahoney, and Hugh Butler, Democrats from Wyoming and Nebraska, respectively.\(^3\)

In further comments explaining the bills presented in Congress Dr. Fernós Isern stated that all existing fiscal, economic and political arrangements between the United States and the island were being restated in a section called The Statute of Federal Relations. The remainder of the bill's provisions spelled out the procedure for drafting a constitution. According to the bill the people of the island would elect delegates to a Constitutional Convention, would vote ultimately to approve or reject the finished document, and would then submit it to Congress for approval. After brief but controversial debate, Congress approved the bill, which was then sent to President Truman for his approval.\(^4\)

Fearing that the Popular Democrats intended to accept the Commonwealth system as the final answer to the status question, the bill was bitterly opposed by the Independence and Statehood parties. Both groups expressed their disapproval of the proceedings taking place in Washington. The objections of the Statehood Republicans centered around the extent and significance of the reforms, and what they termed to be false claims of public support for the Commonwealth idea at home. This party objected to the Popular Democrats claim that the elections of 1948 had been a virtual referendum in which the ideas embodied in the bill presented in Congress by Fernós Isern had received overwhelming approval from the people of Puerto Rico. The Statehood Republicans considered this a misrepresentation. According to the Republicans, the plebiscite being prepared would offer only a chance between a few minor reforms and no
reforms at all. They called the Commonwealth idea a misleading one and demanded that this name tag be removed from the bill. The Republicans further wanted the proposed changes to be simply described as an Organic Act Reform Project.

The independence advocates, on the other hand, claimed that the Popular Democrats were seeking to perpetuate the existing colonial relationship. Curiously enough, the statehood advocates claimed that the proposed reforms were but a devious scheme that was intended to lead toward separation. The strongest opposition to the passage of the Puerto Rican legislation did not come from Puerto Ricans or from Congressional conservatives who traditionally opposed liberalizing trends. Instead it came from Congressman Vito Marcantonio, who fiercely protested in favor of Puerto Rican independence, calling the bill a supine reaffirmation of the status quo, a continuation of subservience under the guise of liberalization. The objectivity of Congressman Marcantonio's protests was belied by the fact that he represented a part of New York City heavily populated by Puerto Ricans. Thus Marcantonio's actions are seen as a way to retain his Congressional post by pleasing his Puerto Rican constituents. The New York Congressman was but one more politician seeking to retain that degree of power he had acquired—however small—using the Puerto Rican status question as a leverage. 5

In spite of all the protests President Truman signed the Act of July 3 (Public Law 600), authorizing the people of Puerto Rico to organize a republican form of government pursuant to a constitution of their own choosing. 6
Notwithstanding the swiftness and ease of passage of S. 3336, in itself a striking departure from the slow, tortuous progress of most Puerto Rican legislation in the past, a word of caution is necessary. It should be noted that widespread controversy, conflicting opinions and interpretations surrounded the bill from its inception. While the Popular Democrats saw the Commonwealth as a new kind of state equal to but different from statehood while claiming that a new form of Federal relationship was developing, others saw the bill that eventually gave birth to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in a different light. The House Committee on Public Lands, for example, clearly stated that

The bill under consideration would not change Puerto Rico's fundamental political, social and economic relationship to the United States. Those sections of the Organic Act of Puerto Rico pertaining to the political, social and economic relationship of the United States and Puerto Rico, and concerning such matters as the applicability of...laws, customs, internal revenue, Federal judicial jurisdiction...would remain in force and effect.7

In further comments, the House Committee on Public Lands added that

"this bill does not commit the Congress, either expressly or by implication, to the enactment of statehood legislation for Puerto Rico in the future. Nor will it in any way preclude a future determination by Congress of Puerto Rico's ultimate political status."8

In spite of the above declarations and notwithstanding the opposition it marshalled, the Act of July 3 (Public Law 600) was one more step, albeit controversial, in the slow process toward insular self-government begun so many years in the past. The Act, although adopted by Congress, by its own terms could only become effective when accepted by the people
of Puerto Rico in a referendum.

In the island events had kept pace with what was happening in Washington. Two weeks after Fernós Isem introduced legislation toward the implementation of Commonwealth status, both houses of the insular legislature approved a joint resolution endorsing the Resident Commissioner's proposed bill. Soon afterwards, on July 2, 1950 Governor Muñoz Marín instructed the insular Elections Board to prepare an island-wide referendum on the Puerto Rican constitution bill which had been passed by Congress. Late in August the Governor of Puerto Rico signed a law setting June 4, 1951 as the date for the referendum on Public Law 600. A registration of new voters for the above-mentioned referendum was scheduled for November 4, 1950.

Immediately, an intense political campaign opened up in Puerto Rico, in which the merits of the alternatives under Public Law 600 were discussed. It was a heated debate in which political parties, the advocates of Commonwealth as well as the opponents, took an active part. The Nationalist and "Independentistas" opposed the referendum, while denouncing it as a fraud through which the United States wanted to perpetuate the island's colonial status. The Nationalists urged the people to abstain from registering to vote.

The appeal of the Nationalists was a last ditch effort to stem the onrushing flow of events which ultimately were to destroy their party. But the Nationalists, who had never been a large group, were soundly rejected in this instance as they had been rejected in all elections in which they had participated, the 1932 elections included. The advocates of violence, who had never much had popular support, not knowing what else
to do, resorted once more to violence, as they had done so often in the past.

The first incident of what was to be a tragic week for Puerto Rico took place very early in the morning of Friday, October 27, 1950. A police cruiser was trailing a car occupied by Albizu Campos and some of his followers. The Nationalist leader had been holding rallies around the island extolling the virtues of independence and urging the Puerto Ricans to reject the new constitution. At that very moment—1:00 A.M.—he was returning home from a meeting held the previous day in the city of Fajardo, honoring Antonio Valero de Bernabé, a Puerto Rican general who had taken part in the South American Wars of Independence under Simón Bolívar. When both automobiles were in the outskirts of the city of San Juan, another vehicle forced the police cruiser off the road. In the ensuing confusion Albizu Campos' car sped off from the scene. Immediately afterwards the police stopped the offending vehicle and arrested its four occupants, who were accused of different violations of the weapons law. Several weapons were found in the vehicle intercepted by the police, including one sub-machine gun, two pistols, several fire bombs and a small amount of ammunition.

An uneventful weekend followed, but as a result of the widely publicized arrest of armed Nationalists, and the absolute secrecy imposed by the police on the details of the case, the atmosphere in the island was one of tension and uncertainty as the day of the registration of new voters approached. The apprehension of the islanders grew as a result of a prison break from the Insular Penitentiary near Río Piedras which occurred on Saturday, October 28. A grand total of 112 prisoners
escaped, posing a serious problem to the Insular Police, who had to be concentrated in the San Juan area to cope with the unexpected and potentially explosive situation. Although no proof was ever presented that this massive outbreak of prisoners was in any way connected with Nationalist plans, it unwittingly helped whatever plans the Nationalists had in mind, as it forced the Insular authorities to concentrate their police forces in the metropolitan area in an effort to capture the escapees. This situation left the rest of the island without adequate police protection. Such a situation could not have escaped the attention of the Nationalist leaders, as it offered them the opportunity to act without the threat of adequate police retaliation.

It was under these circumstances that two days later, the first incident of what was later to be known as The Nationalist Revolt of 1950 took place. Doomed to failure from its very beginnings, this rebellion was planned as an act of desperation in a suicidal effort to counter the forthcoming referendum on Public Law 600.

It should be noted that although wholly rejecting the tag of docility placed by René Marqués on Puerto Ricans in general, this writer tends to accept Marqués contention that the real objective of Puerto Rican radical nationalism "was not to kill and much less obtain in victory, but rather to die." But one should not confuse lack of preparation, inadequate leadership, a suicidal impulse--as Marqués himself states--and the absence of a "metodología terrorista," with docility. The least one can say is that in order to commit suicide, a sane man needs a great amount of firmness and decision.

There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that the revolt of 1950 had
been foretold by Albizu Campos in several of his speeches. Between 1932 and 1936, the utterances and threats of the Nationalist leader probably were given little importance, until the Riggs assassination occurred. But the preceding narrative records that the threats of Albizu Campos after 1932 were not mere bombast. Violence did occur, and people died because of Nationalist militancy. Attention is called to Albizu Campos' speech of December 10, 1947, and to the grave implications of his speech of September 23, 1949.

A clear example of the inflammatory rhetoric used by the Nationalist leader, and which undoubtedly led to the turbulent week of 1950 is seen in a speech he made at Utuado on February 23, 1950. In this speech Albizu Campos declared that:

The Yankees do not have the right to be bosses of the people of Puerto Rico...valor and dignity are only needed; neither money nor arms are. There are arms in the "cuartel" of the police. All these arms are yours...also the arms of the National Guard, all these arms are ours. A people full of valor and dignity can not be overcome by an imperialist. He that does not wish to die must hide himself; there is nothing for those who look for salvation neither in arms nor in money. If you wish to be free, you must fight for it.

The first incidents of the Nationalist revolt occurred around three o'clock in the morning of October 30, in the southern coastal towns of Peñuelas and Ponce. Peñuelas is a small quiet town in southern Puerto Rico. On the above mentioned date, the early morning silence in Barrio Macana was shattered by a fusillade of shots directed at a group of police officers trying to search the house of the Nationalist party leader in the city of Ponce. Police suspicions that an arms cache was
held in the house were prompted by an anonymous caller. After obtaining a search warrant, a group of thirty police under the command of lieutenant Ismael Lugo were dispatched to the house, and received in the manner described above. In the brief but intense exchange of fire which followed, three Nationalists lost their lives. Four policemen were also wounded. Fighting broke out immediately in Ponce, Puerto Rico's second largest city, when a small band of revolutionists attacked the police station, which they tried to set on fire. Simultaneously, in a Ponce sector called "La Playa," a shooting incident caused the death of a police corporal. Almost at the same time, in the northern coastal city of Arecibo, fifty miles west of San Juan, a similar attack took place when the police station and a police vehicle came under fire. As a result of this incident four policemen and one Nationalist were killed.

Violence spread throughout the island like wildfire. The pattern to be followed by the insurrectionists became clear after incidents similar to those which had occurred in Ponce and Arecibo were now repeated in the northwestern town of Quebradillas; in Arroyo, a southern town; and in the municipalities of Naranjito, Utuado and Jayuya, located in the mountainous central section of the island. In all the above-mentioned towns, Nationalist attacks were directed against police officers and police stations, and against United States Post Office Buildings. The latter were attacked mainly through the use of fire bombs, which usually caused extensive damage. Nationalist attacks reached their maximum intensity between midday and two o'clock in the afternoon of October 30. During these hours several towns suffered the ravages caused by destructive fires, and the dead and wounded occasioned by gunfire.
The first of these incidents took place shortly before noon when a small but well-armed group of rebels attacked La Fortaleza, the governor's residence. The attack was staged by five men who approached the main gate of the palace in an automobile, stopping in front of and nearly blocking the entrance. One of the assailants—a man by the name of Raimundo Diaz Pacheco jumped out of the vehicle, armed with a sub-machine gun. The gunman fired upon the two policemen standing at each side of the entrance to the palace, fatally wounding one. The assailants immediately drew fire from other police and plainclothesmen on duty in the area. In the action which followed four of the assailants and one policeman were killed. The dead Nationalists were Domingo Hiraldo, Roberto Acevedo, Manuel Torres Medina, and Diaz Pacheco, who was the leader of the group. None of the would be assassins was able to enter the governor's residence. As in previous instances the encounter between police and Nationalists was brief, but casualties were heavy. According to the police lieutenant in charge at La Fortaleza, the gunfire from the attackers lasted less than ten minutes and by one o'clock complete calm had been restored around the palace. Besides the attack against La Fortaleza, San Juan police fought brief sharp clashes with the rebels near a United States Post Office and near a police station.

Meanwhile, in the rest of the island the Nationalists kept up their attacks, and violence continued unabated during the afternoon and night of October 30. In Peñuelas, greatly augmented police forces had been unable by one o'clock to dislodge the Nationalists from their stronghold in the house in Barrio Macana. At this time there were
eight wounded and three dead as a result of the sustained action.

The next target of the revolutionists was the small town of Jayuya, with a population of nearly 1,500 and lying in a valley surrounded by some of the highest mountains on the island. Shortly before one o'clock the police station was attacked and soon afterwards set on fire. There were six policemen inside the building. All of them were shot to death as they fled the burning building in a desperate effort to save their lives. Firemen who tried to put out the blaze came under intense small arms fire. When one of the firemen was killed the rest of the men withdrew, leaving the city at the mercy of the flames, which completely destroyed part of the small town. Utilizing the advantage of the difficult terrain, the insurgents were able to capture the town and isolate it from the rest of the island. Efforts undertaken by the mayor of Adjuntas, a neighboring town, to free Jayuya failed. A police detachment of fifteen men dispatched with that express purpose could not enter the town in the face of the strong opposition of the rebels.

From Jayuya the Nationalists moved toward Utuado, where they attacked the post office with fire bombs, and after clashing with police forces seemingly took over the town.

As a result of the inability of the police to cope with the threat posed by the Nationalist rebels, Governor Muñoz Marín was forced to call the National Guard in an attempt to restore order. Adamantly refusing to declare martial law "since it was unnecessary," the Governor on Monday night delivered a speech over most of the radio stations, asking the people to remain calm while condemning the flare-up as "a criminal
The situation in Puerto Rico the night of October 30 was not a desperate one but it was far from being satisfactory. The major cities and towns, key government posts and institutions—including the University of Puerto Rico—were being patrolled by the National Guard. Rigid restrictions were placed in effect which controlled and curtailed the freedom of movement of the population. Jayuya and possibly Utuado were in the hands of the Nationalists, the latter having been seemingly captured during Monday night. The insular police, although willing, were unable to bring order out of the utter confusion. Dozens of Puerto Ricans had been killed or wounded, and several cities had suffered the ravages of fire and destruction.

The insular authorities, hardly prepared for such eventualities, initially showed great restraint in their actions. The Governor's speech on Monday night obviously was designed to bring confidence to the worried islanders and to minimize the importance of the outbreak. But in the moment of danger Governor Muñoz Marín began to see Communism and Communists everywhere. A similar reaction was voiced by many American publications, which like the Governor, characterized the revolt as Communist inspired and Communist led, a charge which was never proved. In Washington, several Congressmen held a similar opinion, although not once during the revolt was the outbreak mentioned or debated in the Senate or in the House of Representatives. There was in Congress a total lack of interest in what was happening in Puerto Rico. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that it was not until November 3 that
some Congressmen spoke out against the revolt, which by this time had already run its course.

As stated earlier, by Monday night the Nationalists had gained complete control of Jayuya and possibly of Utuado. Due to the inability of the police to dislodge the insurgents from their positions and to recapture the towns, a strong National Guard force from the garrison at Arecibo was sent to the area with the avowed purpose of recapturing the two towns and reestablishing order. Striking during the early hours of October 31, and using tanks, heavy automatic weapons and at least two fighter planes, the National Guardsmen were able to enter the two rebel strongholds by 10:30 A.M.

The guardsmen reached the outskirts of Jayuya on Monday shortly before midnight. The advance against the rebels did not start until 5:30 Tuesday morning and was slowed down by felled trees strewn across the road, by ditches, and by the resistance of the rebels. But the unequal encounter did not last long, and after fighter planes strafed several vehicles, government troops entered the town. Still, it was not until 10:30 A.M.—after several hours of sporadic shooting—that the town was firmly under government control, with guardsmen patrolling the streets and the last pockets of resistance apparently eliminated. According to press reports released the same day, the small town looked as if an earthquake had struck it, with several blocks destroyed and many other buildings charred by fire.

At Utuado, the second Nationalist stronghold, the Guardsmen encountered less resistance and by 2:00 A.M. government forces were
again in control of the town. The last fighting in Utuado occurred around 1:15 A.M. Shortly afterwards the houses of the two Nationalist leaders in the town were surrounded and searched. Arms and ammunition were found in both residences. In all eighteen Nationalists were captured near the two municipalities. With the recapture of Jayuya and Utuado, all armed resistance in the central mountainous section of the island came to an end. But the same could not be said of other sectors of the island, where fighting was still going on.

During the day violence had erupted in Mayaguez, the third largest city in the island, notwithstanding the fact that the city was being patrolled by the National Guard. In this city the first incident and resulting casualties occurred when a police vehicle was attacked and three police officers were injured. Several unfortunate incidents where civilians allegedly disobeyed the orders of the guardsmen resulted in the death of three other persons. Although Nationalist activities in Mayaguez were of minimal importance, the prevalent tense atmosphere was heightened when several crude hand grenades were found in a parked vehicle, and a sackful of molotov cocktails was found in a sector called "La Quinta."

Shortly before dusk, a shooting incident lasting nearly ten minutes occurred in Arecibo, where earlier during the day National Guard units had seemingly crushed the resistance of the Nationalists. Before the day was over, a violent gun battle with a barricaded Nationalist erupted in San Juan. The action began when a barber named Vidal Santiago barricaded himself in his barber shop—called Salón Borigua—located in
the Barrio Obrero section of San Juan. The exchange of fire began around five in the afternoon and continued for nearly thirty-five minutes. In a display of courage and tenacity, the Nationalist, in spite of being severely wounded fought the police and National Guard to a stand still. The barber, a small man only in stature, was finally captured when the guardsmen blew open the door with dynamite and hurled tear gas bombs inside. This gun battle was the last armed encounter at the time between government forces and the followers of Albizu Campos. It resulted in five wounded persons, including two spectators—one of them a child—two guardsmen and the barber. This brief although tragic episode was brought to the attention of the Puerto Rican public through a startling and distasteful broadcast which treated the event as a delightful and entertaining public spectacle.

While Puerto Rico labored under the abnormal conditions depicted above, the Nationalist leader was conspicuously absent from any of the places where his followers fought and often times died for their ideals. In a move which could be interpreted in many ways, Albizu Campos had delegated his authority among local leaders who actually were the men who led the revolutionists in whatever actions were undertaken. In Utuado, for example, the men who led the Nationalists were Damión Torres and Carlos Roldán—the local leaders. The house of the former was used as a hiding place during the revolt. In Jayuya, the men who led the fighting which later on spread to Utuado were Elio Torresola and Carlos Irizarry. Thus although Albizu Campos was the spiritual leader of the movement, it must be emphasized that he rarely took a weapon to defend
the ideal which he professed to love so much. Ironically, the man who could persuade, incite and cajole others into violence was not a man of action, but a man of words. Perhaps because he was a talker and not a doer, "el maestro" remained safely in his home in San Juan, which soon after the beginning of the revolt came under the close surveillance of the authorities. On Tuesday morning the house of the Nationalist leader was surrounded by the police, which actually isolated the house from the rest of the city. Strangely enough no accusations had been formulated against Albizu Campos, nor any desire for his arrest had been evinced by the authorities.

On that day (Tuesday) the second thread of the drama was picked up 1600 miles away, when two residents of New York's Puerto Rican colony took a train to Washington. Both men were members of the Nationalist party. One was Griselio Torresola, 38 brother of Elio, the local party leader in Jayuya. The other was Oscar Collazo, admittedly a long time friend of Albizu Campos. According to a Washington, D.C. newspaper, when Albizu Campos was paroled in 1943 he lived in Collazo's house, where he stayed for nearly two years. 39 On Tuesday night both men stayed at a hotel under assumed names. Unknowingly for everyone but them, these two men had come to Washington on a grisly mission: to kill Harry S. Truman, the President of the United States.

Wednesday was a hot, drowsy day in Washington. By noon President Truman was resting on the second floor of Blair House, a yellow brick mansion on Pennsylvania Avenue, between Jackson Place and Seventeenth Street. Blair House was the President's temporary living quarters while
repairs were being made to the executive mansion. As usual, on the street below guards kept a constant vigil. A policeman and a secret service agent were standing by Blair House's east sentry box. Two more policemen were standing in front of the west sentry box, while another was at the mansion's entrance.

Just after 2 P.M. a taxicab stopped at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Seventeenth Street. Out of the car came Collazo and Torresola. The men quickly separated, one walking along Pennsylvania Avenue on the Blair House side. The other man (Torresola) walked quickly on the opposite sidewalk. They approached Blair House, with Collazo in the lead. When he passed the east sentry box flanking the steps of Blair House, Collazo turned around and drew an automatic pistol from his pocket. At point blank range he began to fire at the policeman near the mansion's entrance. The policeman, private Donald Birdzell, was severely wounded in both knees, but managed to move toward the street and away from the President's temporary quarters. Before collapsing from his wounds, Birdzell brought Collazo down with a shot through the chest.

In a simultaneous action, Torresola ran up the steps of Lee House, adjoining Blair mansion, and began shooting at privates Joseph Downs and Leslie Coffelt, standing by the West sentry box. In a quick blaze of gunfire, the assailant wounded Downs and killed Coffelt, before being fatally wounded. The gun battle, which began around 2:15 P.M., raged furiously for a full three minutes before the would be assassins were shot down. This abortive attempt on the life of the President of the
United States resulted in three wounded men—the two policemen and Collazo—and two dead: Torresola and Coffelt. The latter died on the operating table in the emergency room of a hospital four hours after the shooting. 41

The attempted assassination of President Truman raised several intriguing questions. First, were the two assailants following a wild scheme of their own or were they part of a conspiracy directed from Puerto Rico? A second question sought to link the Blair House shooting and the Nationalist revolt with the Communist party, both in the island and on the mainland. Regarding the latter question, it should be recalled that earlier during the Puerto Rican uprising Governor Muñoz Marín had sought to link the Nationalists with the Communists. In spite of the alleged connections between the two groups, 42 no evidence of a substantial and unequivocal nature was ever produced to confirm such allegations. 43

In later years a thorough investigation was made at the request of the Puerto Rican Government. This investigation established that the island's Communist party, first organized in 1933, remained totally uncommitted to the Nationalist violence of 1950. At the time of the uprising, thirty-two Communists were detained and subsequently released, as there was no evidence linking them to the rebellion. 44

The first question, regarding a connection between the Washington shooting and the revolt in Puerto Rico was based, unlike the second one, on facts of a seemingly clear nature. The first alleged link revolved around Torresola, one of the assailants, who as previously stated, was
the brother of Elio, one of the Nationalist leaders in the insular uprising. Another possible connection was the fact that Torresola had returned from the island shortly before the attempt on the President's life. One other important fact was that both assailants were members of the Nationalist party. To this may be added Collazo's alleged declaration that "he was a Puerto Rican Nationalist and had made the attempt so his people could be free."45 A more damaging bit of evidence linking the two events was a letter found in one of the pockets of Torresola, which read as follows:

My Dear Grisello: If for any reason it should be necessary to assume the leadership of the movement in the United States, you would do so without hesitation of any kind. We are leaving to your high sense of patriotism and sure judgment everything regarding the matter.46

This damaging letter was signed by Albizu Campos and according to the investigation made by the Secret Service, it had been written only a few weeks before the Blair House shooting.47

The abortive attempt against President Truman was not the work of professional or trained gunmen. The way in which the attack was made reveals not only a total lack of preparation, but also a complete lack of information regarding the schedule the President was likely to follow that day. Police reaction was that the attack made no sense, because if the attackers had waited another hour they might well have succeeded, as the President was scheduled to leave Blair House at 2:50 P.M. for a ceremony at Arlington cemetery.48

It is an indisputable truth that the motive which moved the two men to storm Blair House arose solely from the bloody political controversy
in Puerto Rico. But the plan they followed was formed in such ignorance as to suggest insanity. According to a *New York Times* editorial "...in spite of the protection he gets, men bent on killing him [the President] regardless of their own end and armed with modern weapons always could have a chance to carry their design. Why? [Because] The President walks to and from his temporary home in the morning, at noon and in the evening."49

The preceding information definitely links the attempt on the Executive with the Puerto Rican uprising. But it is quite clear that the Washington affair was a decision taken on the spur of the moment, without proper preparation, without any knowledge of the President's daily routine and of his schedule for the day of the attempt. Clearly, the attempted assassination was undertaken by amateurs, and involved only members of the Puerto Rican Nationalist party. This amateurishness leaves no doubt that the attack was the work of men seeking to dramatize their party's fight for outright independence. Ironically, the attack was a case of trying to kill a benefactor, as the President was encouraging self-rule. In all probability, President Truman was the best friend the island has ever had in the White House.

While these events were taking place in the mainland, Puerto Rico continued to live under the abnormal conditions created by the uprising. In San Juan, Albizu Campos' home remained surrounded by government forces. After the attempt on President Truman, and prodded by mainland authorities, Governor Muñoz Marín ordered the police and National Guard to close in and capture the Nationalist leader.50 Thus, early on Thursday morning
repeated requests were made asking Albizu Campos to surrender. Upon his refusal the guardsmen used bazookas to destroy both doors of the house. Immediately, tear gas canisters were thrown inside the building. Shortly after this, at 3:15 A.M. Pedro Albizu Campos, the fiery leader of Puerto Rican nationalism, surrendered to the police in a most undignified manner: his personal body guard, Alvaro Rivera Walker, placed a white towel over a broomstick and thrust this makeshift white flag through a window in a pathetic gesture of impotence.51

With the capture of Albizu Campos, the Nationalist party members still free in the somewhat accessible mountains of Puerto Rico began to surrender to the police. On that day, nearly three hundred Nationalists carrying all kind of weapons surrendered. It is impossible to ascertain how many Nationalists—participants and non-participants were detained by the authorities, as many of the arrested persons were soon released for lack of proof that linked them to the uprising. In the aftermath of the revolt most press releases cited different and controversial figures, claiming they represented the number of men arrested for the events of October, 1950.52 The truth seems to be that nearly one thousand persons, including most members of the Communist party, were arrested as a result of the uprising.53 As noted elsewhere, all Communists were soon released as the authorities could not connect them with the rebellion. Research done for the Governor's Committee on Civil Liberties in 1958 disclosed that at the time of the insurrection, a list of 4,257 alleged Nationalist party members and sympathizers had been compiled by the Division of Internal Security of the Puerto Rican police. Of this amount, only about one hundred persons were involved directly in the affair.54
On Friday, November 3, Puerto Rican life and activities began to take on a semblance of normality. For the first time since the rebellious outbreak, banks and business establishments in the area of San Juan opened to the public. Restrictions curtailing the freedom of movement within certain areas of the island were lifted. Late on Friday evening, Governor Muñoz Marín declared that the uprising had been suppressed. The Governor's declaration was confirmed the next day, when registration of the new female voters proceeded without incident. Similarly, on Sunday, November 5, the registration of new male voters proceeded apace, without any violence. In both instances the number of new registered voters reached record numbers. On the same day the Governor began the demobilization of the National Guard. All was back to normal.

The preceding narrative on the Nationalist revolt—a complete and dismal failure—could be adeptly called a study in the politics of despair. The movement lacked popular support, and although Albizu Campos' personality made him a very well known figure, his charismatic qualities were not powerful enough to convince Puerto Ricans that a bloodbath was necessary in order to achieve independence. The Nationalist leader, fifty-nine years old at the time of the revolt, was once more to pay dearly for his commitment to violence and terror. Shortly after the end of the uprising he was accused of attempted assassination, unlawful possession of firearms and explosives, and of subversive activities and conspiracy to overthrow the legally constituted government of Puerto Rico. Between the months of February and August, 1951, Albizu Campos was brought to trial and convicted on three different occasions.
The first conviction occurred on February 15, when the Nationalist leader was found guilty of attempt to commit murder. Under this charge, he was given a fifteen-year prison sentence on March 17. Although there is little doubt of the guilt of the Nationalist leader, there is also no doubt that in this trial, like the one in 1936, the hand of justice was weighted against this man. No other conclusion can be reached if one considers the case. In it, Albizu Campos had two co-defendants: Doris Torresola and Juan José Muñoz Matos. All three pleaded innocent. Yet, in spite of the fact that the same evidence was presented against the three defendants, when the trial came to an end Albizu Campos was the only one found guilty.59

On February 21 Albizu Campos was found guilty of unlawful possession of firearms and explosives and subsequently was given a ten year jail sentence.60 The Nationalist leader's last conviction came in August, when he was found guilty of twelve counts of conspiracy to overthrow the government by force, and sentenced to a fifty-four year jail term.61 In all, the leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist party, a man of strong and sincere but misguided beliefs, a man with a brilliant but possibly disturbed mind obsessed by an ideal, was given a seventy-nine year prison sentence for the events of October, 1950.62

As a result of the abortive revolt, 119 Nationalist were convicted of acts of violence committed during the uprising. Sixty-one were accused of violating Law No. 53, an insular version of the Federal Smith Act. Another result of the rebellious outbreak was the violent death of twenty-eight Puerto Ricans, while seventy-seven others were injured.63
In the United States the assault on Blair House led to a prolonged investigation which unsuccessfully sought to prove that the attempted assassination was the result of a conspiracy directed from Puerto Rico. The protracted investigation led the Federal authorities to arrest several Puerto Ricans residing in New York City as alleged co-conspirators. On November 11, 1950, while he was recovering from his wounds at Gallinger Hospital, a Federal Grand Jury formally charged Collazo with first degree murder, the attempted assassination of the President of the United States, and two counts of assault with intent to kill. Ironically, the same day, Griselio Torresola was buried in Puerto Rico, five hours after the body arrived from New York.

On February 27, after pleading not-guilty, Collazo went on trial for his life, as conviction on the charge of first degree murder carried a mandatory death sentence. A week later Collazo was found guilty on all counts by a jury in the District of Columbia. A month after his conviction, and after being denied a new trial, the lone survivor of the Blair House affair was sentenced to die in the electric chair. Before being taken away, and showing no emotion, Collazo softly told judge Edward A. Taft:

I am not pleading for my life. I am pleading for my cause...I use this last plea for the right of my country to be free...The Americans will never be able to kill the ideals I stand for.

The Nationalist revolt officially lasted five days. Historically, it was Puerto Rico's largest act of rebellion against constituted authority. It was also an adventure within the realm of the impossible which taxed...
to the utmost the ability of the insular government to cope with such an unexpected situation without trampling on the constitutional rights of the Puerto Rican people. It has already been mentioned how at the beginning of the outbreak the actions of the authorities were tempered with restraint. But as the outbreak developed and tempers became ragged, the actions of the insular officials lacked moderation and became, to say the least, unreasonable. Mass arrests were undertaken. Without proper legal procedure members of the Independence party were detained without proof of sympathy on their part with Nationalist violence. Many suspects were held incommunicado for extensive periods of time, armed searches and seizures were carried out without proper authorization, and suspects were illegally fingerprinted. Moreover, physical coercion was used by the police to obtain confessions. There is little doubt that as a result of the short-lived revolt Puerto Rico lived hours in which repressive measures at odds with democratic principles were put into practice. Although each measure was justified by what was considered to be the overriding demands of public safety, government actions as a result of the Nationalist outbreak seemed to be guided solely by political motives and by an incipient mood of panic which gave rise to abuses incompatible with the established system of government. 66
Footnotes


4 U.S. Congressional Record, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1950, pp. 8321, 9602, and 9629.

5 Regardless of his reasons, it should be pointed out that the only dissenting voice when the Puerto Rican legislation was voted by the House was that of Representative Marcantonio. See Robert J. Hunter, "Historical Survey of the Puerto Rico Status Question, 1898-1956," in Status of Puerto Rico: Selected Background Studies prepared for the United States-Puerto Rico Commission on the Status of Puerto Rico (Washington, 1966), p. 117.


8 Ibid.


10 Ibid., July 2, 1950.

11 Ibid., September 1, 1950.

The arrested were Antonio Muya Vélez, Rafael Burgos Puentes, Eduardo López Vázquez and Miguel Rosario. The first three were charged with carrying concealed weapons, while Rosario was charged with an infraction of the Public Vehicles Law. See El Mundo (San Juan), October 28, 1950. See also Diario de la Marina (La Habana), October 28, 1950.


16 See above, p. 158.

17 See above, p. 157-158.


19 El Mundo (San Juan), October 31, 1950.

20 Ibid. The dead were José A. Ramos, Guillermo González Ubides, and Arturo Ortiz. The injured included lieutenant Lugo, and policemen Ignacio Ortiz, Enrique Alvarado and José A. García.

21 Ibid. The dead police officer was Corporal Aurelio Miranda.

22 New York Times, October 31, 1950. The Leader of the Nationalists who attacked the Arecibo Police Station was Hipólito Mercado Díaz, who died in the attack.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid. According to El Mundo (San Juan), the attack on the Governor's palace lasted nearly one hour, and occasioned three dead and five wounded.


According to *El Mundo* (San Juan), November 1, 1950, the Nationalists burned down fourteen buildings in the town.

According to *El Mundo* (San Juan), November 1, 1950, the Nationalists burned down fourteen buildings in the town.

The wounded were lieutenant Francisco Rivera Hernández, policemen Ángel O. Lozada and detective Arnaldo O. Bruckman.

At the time of the Nationalist revolt this writer was a young man fourteen years old. The expressions of glee and mirth, and the laughter with which the broadcast was heard are still vividly remembered today.

*El Mundo* (San Juan), November 2, 1950, wrote a stinging editorial rightfully condemning the attitude of the Puerto Rican public, "most of whom saw the events comprising the Nationalist revolt as a mere public spectacle."

*El Mundo* (San Juan), October 31, 1950. There were two other men, Heriberto Castro and Antonio Ramos, who actually led the Nationalists in their resistance against government forces. Both men died in the fighting near Utuado.

Torresola had returned to New York from Puerto Rico shortly before both men came to Washington.

This weapon was later identified as a Walther P-38. The weapon used by Torresola was a Lugger automatic pistol.
The idea of a link was based mostly on the records of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which claimed that the cooperation between the two groups was fourteen years old in 1950. This assertion was based on the fact that in 1936 Albizu Campos was in part defended by the International Labor Defense, which according to the Justice Department, is the legal arm of the Communist party. See New York Herald Tribune, November 2, 1950; Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 13; New York Times, part IV, November 5, 1950.


Hackett, The Nationalist Party, p. 12. See also El Mundo (San Juan), November 2, 1950.


Ibid.


New York Times (editorial), November 2, 1950. The same day of the Blair House shooting, two gasoline bombs were thrown into the Puerto Rican Government Labor Office in New York City, but the bombs failed to explode.

"Puerto Rico Revolt Endangers Truman," p. 28.

El Mundo (San Juan), November 3, 1950. See also Rexach Benítez, Pedro Albizu Campos, p. 7.

El Mundo (San Juan), November 3, and November 6 to November 8, 1950. See also the New York Times, November 6 to November 8, 1950.

El Mundo (San Juan), November 7 to November 8, 1950. See also the New York Times, November 10, 1950, where Puerto Rico's attorney general, Vicente Geigel Polanco, declared that nearly one thousand persons had been arrested as a result of the revolt.

Helfeld, Discrimination for Political Beliefs and Associations, pp. 24-29.
The last encounters between government forces and the rebels had occurred the previous day, and were clashes of little importance. For details see *El Mundo* (San Juan), November 3, 1950.

One of these was the Old San Juan area. The lifting of restrictions did not apply to the University of Puerto Rico, which remained closed until Wednesday, November 8, 1950.

A grand total of 70,955 women were registered on that Saturday. The next day, 86,947 men were also registered, making a combined grand total of 157,902 new registered voters. See *New York Times*, November 6 to November 7, 1950.

This charge stemmed from Albizu Campos's alleged attempt to kill a police detective outside his home "when Albizu and others hurled homemade bombs and fired upon the police." See the *New York Times*, February 8, 1951.

*New York Times*, February 15 and March 17, 1951; *El Mundo* (San Juan), February 15 to February 17, 1951.

*El Mundo* (San Juan), February 21, 1951.


After his second trial Albizu Campos became ill while in jail. He suffered from hallucinations and accused the authorities of bombarding him with electronic rays. On September 25, 1953, the Nationalist leader was ruled mentally ill by a medical commission. See *New York Times*, September 25, 1953.

Helfeld, *Discrimination for Political Beliefs and Associations*, pp. 24-29, as quoted by Anderson, *Party Politics in Puerto Rico*, p. 46. The figures given by Hunter, *Status of Puerto Rico*, p. 118, are slightly different and come to twenty-seven dead and ninety wounded. *El Mundo* (San Juan), November 3, 1950, states that the death amounted to twenty-nine persons. Most sources agree that seventeen of the dead were Nationalists.

See Appendix C, which gives the names of those Puerto Ricans, Nationalists and otherwise, arrested in the New York area as a result of theBalir House Shooting.

*New York Times*, April 7, 1951. On July 25, a week before his scheduled execution, Collazo's death sentence was commuted by President Truman to life imprisonment.

Lewis, *Freedom and Power* pp. 340-344. For an authoritative study on the excesses in which the Government of Puerto Rico indulged as a result of the Nationalist revolt, see Helfeld, *Discrimination for Political Beliefs and Associations*.
CHAPTER VIII

NATIONALISM AND THE UNRESOLVED QUESTION OF STATUS

The stated aim of the Nationalist Revolt was to obtain independence for Puerto Rico, or at least to dramatize the island's political situation on a worldwide scale that would pressure the United States into giving the island its independence. In terms of both goals the rebellious outbreak was a failure and although several leading Latin American newspapers gave wide coverage to the insurrection, what really attracted the attention of newspapers and world leaders was the unsuccessful attack against President Truman.

In Puerto Rico the revolt was repudiated by the great majority of the islanders. This was demonstrated clearly when the planned registration of new voters, scheduled for the first week of November was completed successfully two days after the rebellion had come to an end. On November 4, a great total of 70,955 women registered. The following day 86,947 new male voters were certified, making a grand total of 157,902 new voters. This large turnout shows clearly that the revolt had failed completely to stop the drive of the islanders toward self-government and toward a possible solution to the status question.

On June 4, 1951, some 506,185 of the 777,675 registered voters participated in the referendum for Public Law 600. This number represented nearly 65 per cent of the registered voters in the island. Of these, 387,016 voted in favor of approving Public Law 600 (Act of July 31), and
119,169 voted against proceeding to draw up a constitution. After the referendum the Puerto Rican Legislature called for the election of delegates to a Constitutional Convention. Through a special election held on August 7, 1951, the voters of Puerto Rico elected ninety two delegates. Of these, seventy were Popular Democrats, fifteen were Statehood Republicans and seven were Socialists. The group was a representative cross section of the professions and occupations in the island. In accordance with its electoral strength in 1948, the Independence party was qualified to participate in this convention with a minimum of three seats. But as it had done in the referendum on Public Law 600, the pro-independence group refused to participate.

Under the presidency of Fernós Isern the Constitutional Convention met for the first time in San Juan on September 17, 1951 and concluded its deliberations on February 6, 1952 when the delegates voted on the document they had prepared. Of the ninety two delegates, eighty eight voted in favor and three against. The new government thus constituted was referred to as a Commonwealth in English, while in Spanish it became the Estado Libre Asociado, literally meaning Free Associated State. The text of the Constitution was widely printed in insular newspapers, and over a million copies were printed in Spanish and nearly 30,000 in English. After being widely distributed and discussed the Constitution was submitted to the people of Puerto Rico in another referendum held on March 3, 1952. It was accepted by a vote of 374,649 in favor and 82,923 against. The Constitution was then sent to Washington, where it needed the approval of the President and the Congress. On April 22 of
the same year President Truman sent the Constitution to Congress with his endorsement.

In Congress, a lively debate began over the nature and intent of the new relationship. The extremely different interpretations given to the Constitution by Puerto Ricans and Americans gave rise to lengthy and acrimonious debate while Congress pondered about the extent of power that was to be extended to Puerto Rico. After some minor amendments, Congress accepted the constitutional document, but with a blunt warning to future Puerto Rican legislatures concerning the supremacy of Congress, when it warned that "Any act of the Puerto Rican Legislature in conflict with the Puerto Rican-Federal Relations Act or the requirements of the Constitution as set forth in Public Law 600 or the Constitution of the United States...would be null and void."\(^7\)

Immediately after this stern warning of Congressional prerogatives Congress approved Joint Resolution 430\(^8\) accepting the Constitution creating the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which was then signed into law by President Truman on July 3, 1952.\(^9\) A week later the Puerto Rican Constitutional Convention reassembled in the island and accepted the changes requested by Congress. Later that year the people of Puerto Rico accepted the amended Constitution by a vote of 420,000 to 58,000. It was in this way that the lengthy legislative struggle that began in 1948 came to an end.

The Puerto Rican Constitution and the 'new' relationship it created between Puerto Rico and the United States raised many questions concerning the nature of the legislation. Students of constitutional law have
exhaustively examined the record for evidence of Congressional intent, popular understanding, and judicial approval or disapproval. There were many who have sought to define the new creation, either in print, political debate or legislative analysis. It is difficult for any two persons to arrive at exactly similar conclusions on the subject. It should suffice to say that there are two widely differing views concerning the position of Puerto Rico today. Persons sympathetic to the 'new' status and its leadership believe that the Commonwealth is a healthy and dynamic new creation, based on government by consent, that any changes in its internal structure are solely dependent upon the will of the Puerto Ricans; and that changes in its relationship with the Federal Government are only possible through bilateral action.

Others regard the Commonwealth as nothing but an empty word. In their opinion, Puerto Rico remains essentially a colony of the United States, with a form of government and an Insular-Federal relationship scarcely changed from the organic acts. In such a widely accepted view Congress remains sovereign and can change the Puerto Rican Constitution, laws or relationship by unilateral action whenever it so desires. In effect, Puerto Rico remains a colony still subject to the capricious and ever-changing mood of Congress. 10

The highly controversial Constitution of Puerto Rico was officially proclaimed by the Governor of Puerto Rico on July 25, 1952. Without any undue emphasis, it must be accepted that the events which culminated in the adoption of Commonwealth status prove how completely the people of Puerto Rico rejected the revolt of 1950. The islanders not only
rejected Albizu Campos' call to arms, but soon afterwards they overwhelmingly approved measures which the Nationalist leader and his followers most heartily opposed. The islanders followed not the path of violence, chaos, and anarchy preached by the Nationalists, but the path of law and order to which they had become accustomed.

During the long months covering the struggle over status legislation the members of the Nationalist Party were always in the limelight, as 119 were convicted of acts related to the uprising. Two of the most talked about cases were the ones involving Gregorio Hernández Rivera and Ruth Reynolds. The former was the lone survivor of the attack on La Fortaleza. In two different trials during 1950-1951, Hernández Rivera was found guilty of illegal possession of firearms and of attempted murder. On February 20 of the latter year he was sentenced to a thirty year prison term. The case of Miss Reynolds, an American pacifist and long-time friend of Albizu Campos, involved the only non-Puerto Rican connected with and accused of crimes related to the October revolt. On August 22, 1951, Miss Reynolds went on trial on charges of seeking to overthrow the insular government by force. Two weeks later, she was found guilty and soon afterwards sentenced to a six year prison term.

But notwithstanding the many trials and convictions of Nationalists due to the unsuccessful revolt, the attention and interest of most people, including Puerto Ricans, centered around the newly created status. To the surprise of Washington and San Juan, the establishment of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico did not end status debates, which continued unabated in the island, while outside—as already stated—
jurists, political scientists and journalists continued their queries about the legality of the legislation and the real nature of the reforms. When the island's new status was brought before the United Nations, a heated debate ensued, in which the Puerto Rican status question became an international argument.

This situation developed on March 22, 1953, when the United States notified the international body that under its new status Puerto Rico was no longer a non-self governing territory. In accordance with the idea that a significant change had taken place in the relations of the island vis-à-vis the mainland, the United States felt it was unnecessary to continue to transmit information on Puerto Rico to the United Nations under Article 73e of the Charter, which pertained to territories whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government.

In the message sent from Washington to the United Nations it was stated that "Congress has agreed that Puerto Rico shall have, under its Constitution, freedom from control or interference...in respect to internal government...." Immediately, India challenged the United States' assertion that Puerto Rico had attained a full measure of self-government. This opposition was soon joined by the nations of the Communist bloc, which forced a United Nations' debate on the whole matter.

While the United Nations' Committee on Information from Non-Self Governing Territories debated the Puerto Rican question, a demonstration that would eventually have a greater impact on Puerto Rican-American relations took place in front of the United Nations' building. The demonstrators were eleven picketing women who identified themselves...
as members of the Women's Committee for the Liberation of Puerto Rico's Political Prisoners. Led by a woman named Lolita Lebrón, the women had spent several hours passing out leaflets demanding a hearing before the United Nations' Committee mentioned above. 18

The last noteworthy event concerning island Nationalists occurred in 1953 on October 1, when the ailing leader of the party, then 61 years of age, was pardoned by Governor Muñoz Marín. Albizu Campos' civil rights were fully restored on the condition that he abstain from any further terrorist activity. 19 The release of the Nationalist leader was seen as an act of good will that hopefully would deter any further Nationalist outburst. These hopes were abruptly dashed on March 1, 1954, with a sudden and unexpected terrorist attack against the Congress of the United States. On this day, around 2:30 in the afternoon and while 243 members of the House of Representatives stood for a vote on a routine issue, four Puerto Rican Nationalists unleashed panic in the chamber as they began to shoot into the crowded assemblage, while shouting slogans demanding the independence of Puerto Rico. The assailants were led by Lolita Lebrón, the same woman who earlier had led the pickets in front of the United Nations headquarters when the Puerto Rican status question was being debated.

The terrorists had entered the Congressional chamber without any difficulty, sitting in one of the back rows of the visitors' gallery. After a short wait, the woman stood up, took out a pistol from her purse, and began to shoot into the crowded room below. In a trance-like attitude, the three men accompanying her imitated every one of her actions. In the
wild shooting spree which followed, where nearly twenty-five shots were
fired. Five Congressmen were wounded, one of them critically.

Immediately after the firing ceased, guards and onlookers wrestled
and subdued three of the assailants. The fourth was able to escape into
the streets, but was captured soon afterwards at a nearby bus station,
denying that he had taken part in the shooting. Besides Miss Lebrón, the
assailants included Andres Figueroa Cordero, Irving Flores Rodríguez
—the one arrested near the bus station—and Rafael Cancel Miranda, who
at twenty-five was the youngest of the four.

Apparently, the shooting demonstration was plotted in New York on
February 22. The day for the attack—March 1—was chosen to coincide
with the opening of the Tenth Inter-American Conference at Caracas,
slated to discuss Western Hemisphere Affairs, and including a session on
the Puerto Rican status question. The assailants came to Washington
by train, having left New York City's Pennsylvania station around 8:30 A.M.

Upon her arrest, a note was found in Miss Lebrón's purse. In part
it stated:

Before God and the world my blood clamors for the
independence of Puerto Rico. My life I give for the
freedom of my country. This is a cry for victory in
our struggle for independence. I state that the
United States of America are betraying the
sacred principles of mankind in their continuous
subjugation of my country, violating their rights
to be a free nation and a free people.

Besides this angry cry against American rule in Puerto Rico, Miss
Lebrón's note also declared her allegiance to the ideas and work of
Albizu Campos. On the back of the note, the female terrorist had added
In many respects the actions of Miss Lebrón and her accomplices were remarkably like those of Collazo and Torresola in their attempt against President Truman. To begin with, both groups called their acts a demonstration, and they stated the attacks were intended to call attention to the plight of Puerto Rico. Earlier, Collazo had gone further and testified that he actually had hoped to start a revolution in the United States in which, hopefully, Puerto Rico could shake free from the United States. Secondly, Miss Lebrón and her associates, like Collazo and Torresola, travelled from New York to Washington by train, buying only one-way tickets. In all probability the members of both groups expected to be killed while committing their act of terrorism. Thirdly, neither Miss Lebrón, nor Collazo or Torresola had ever been in Washington before. A fourth similarity is that in their respective attacks, both groups used the same type of weapons. Furthermore, there is the unmistakable fact that both attacks lacked planning and preparation, being undertaken on the spur of the moment and in a wild and helter-skelter manner. In the Blair House affair Collazo had claimed that "They wanted to kill anybody in range," while Miss Lebrón told police that "They fired at random, having no predetermined target and intending to kill no one." Finally, one must add that in one respect the reaction evoked by the Blair House incident and the shooting in Congress was nearly the same in Puerto Rico and the mainland. In both instances, insular and mainland officials quickly denounced the Communist Party and its adherents as co-conspirators, or as the group which provided the
leadership and inspiration for the attacks. But as in the Blair House affair, no evidence was ever found linking the Communist Party with the Nationalist attack on Congress.

When news of the criminal act reached Puerto Rico, the islanders generally reacted in stunned and angry disbelief. Individuals, schoolchildren, private and public groups, civic associations, politicians from all political parties, and government officials sent innumerable messages to Washington, to the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner and to the wounded members of Congress and their families, repudiating the Nationalist attack on their lives.

In a note sent to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Governor Muñoz Marín called the shooting "savage and unbelievable lunacy...completely unrepresentative of the people of Puerto Rico." In a separate message the Legislature of Puerto Rico repudiated what was termed "the actions of that group of fanatical terrorists." Condemnation and repudiation of the criminal deed was also present in the editorial comments of insular and mainland newspapers. The New York Herald Tribune put it succinctly when it stated bluntly that "They [the terrorists] do not represent Puerto Rico."

It is clear, by the examples given above that the shooting of Congress was a criminal act completely rejected by the people of Puerto Rico. On the mainland, the reaction of the wounded Congressmen was similar to that of the New York Herald Tribune, and in separate statements they made it clear that they held no bitterness against the people of Puerto Rico.
Only two persons went on record as approving and accepting the attack on Congress. One was Julio Pinto Gandía, a Nationalist leader in New York, who defended the shooting as a "spontaneous impulse caused by the refusal of the United States government to give up its control of Puerto Rico and its people." The other was Albizu Campos, the recently pardoned leader of the Nationalists, who hailed the attack as an act of "sublime heroism."

Three days after the shooting of Congress, each of the four Nationalists was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on five counts of assault with a deadly weapon and five counts of assault with intent to kill. Under the stated charges, each of the terrorists faced a possible seventy-five year sentence. The four party members mentioned above were not the only ones arrested as a result of the attack upon Congress. Since 1950, the Federal Bureau of Investigation had not stopped its surveillance of Nationalists living in the United States. The attack upon Congress was immediately linked with the previously attempted assassination of President Truman. Federal and insular authorities decided to crack down on party members in the island and on the mainland. For this purpose a meeting was held in Washington immediately after the attack on Congress, where the decision was made to arrest all Puerto Rican Nationalists and the members of the Puerto Rican Communist Party.

In Puerto Rico the crackdown began on Saturday, March 6, with an early morning raid on the apartment occupied by Albizu Campos in old San Juan, where after a two hour gun battle police seized the Nationalist leader and four other companions—namely José Rivera Sotomayor, Isabel
The police party which made the arrests was led by Captain Dudley Osborn, and Juan de Soto, a Commonwealth detective. The group approached the second story apartment where the Nationalist leader resided around 6:00 A.M. De Soto's knock on the door was answered by Rivera Sotomayor. When the party identified itself as police officers, Rivera Sotomayor refused to open the door and so the police proceeded to smash the door with an axe. This action was met by gunfire from within, which was promptly returned by the police. The exchange of gunfire, which included the use of homemade fire bombs, lasted until seven o'clock. Shortly after this police began using tear gas. It was then that Rivera Sotomayor gave up. After his arrest, he informed the police that Albizu Campos wanted to surrender but was physically unable to do so. The next occupant of the apartment to come out was Miss Pérez, who crying but still defiant refused to tell the authorities how many persons were still inside. Finally, around 7:55 in the morning, three police officers went into the apartment, where they found the Nationalist leader and two more women—Miss Torresola and Miss Rosado Morales—lying in the floor overcome by tear gas.

In spite of the two hour long gun battle, where scores of shots were fired, no one was seriously wounded. Inside the apartment the police found six hand weapons, and over one hundred rounds of ammunition. Within a week after the roundup of party members started on the island, forty-four of them had been detained. Also arrested on the basis "that they were active in a subversive organization contrary to Law 53," were
the principal leaders of the Puerto Rican Communist Party, eleven men altogether. 49

As a result of the shooting of Congress, and due to his complimentary remarks concerning the event, Albizu Campos was jailed on March 7, in a summary revocation of the executive pardon he had received the previous month of October. According to Governor Muñoz Marín the pardon had been given because of Albizu Campos' age and failing health, but "on the conditions that he refrained from any subversive act." The Nationalist leader, in the opinion of the insular Governor, violated those conditions with his public praise of the attack upon Congress, for which he was once more committed to prison to continue serving his sentence. 50

Meanwhile, in the United States, in simultaneous actions which began during the first week of March, mainland authorities subpoenaed ninety one Nationalists to appear before three different grand juries investigating the attack upon Congress and Nationalist terrorism in general. Nearly three months later, seventeen party members were indicted in New York on charges of seditious conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States by force, including a charge of conspiracy to attempt to assassinate officers of the governments of the United States and Puerto Rico. 51 Before the seventeen co-defendants were brought to trial, four of the accused admitted their guilt and turned state evidence. These men were Gonzalo Lebrón Sotomayor, Francisco Cortés Ruiz, Carlos Aulet and Angel Luis Medina.

During the trial, damaging testimony against those accused was given by a former Nationalist—Guillermo Hernández Vega—and by Lebrón Sotomayor.
In his testimony, Hernández Vega, a member of the Nationalist Party from 1947 to 1950, declared that in April of the latter year he had been selected to assassinate former Representative Frederick L. Crawford, of Michigan, while Crawford was visiting the city of Ponce. The witness further stated that by devious means he "managed to miss" Crawford while he was visiting the city. According to Hernández Vega, he left the party late in October, 1950, when he and others—which he didn't mention—were ordered to attack the Arecibo police station.

In related testimony, Lebrón Sotomayor declared that the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party had planned to kill President Eisenhower on October of the previous year. According to this witness, the man who informed him of the future attacks was Pinto Gandía, one of the accused Nationalists. Lebrón Sotomayor also declared that the plans included attacks upon Congress and the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner, Fernós Isern. In subsequent declarations the witness stated the conversations concerning the future attacks on the government of the United States had taken place at his Chicago home.

On October, 1954, after a somewhat protracted trial, the thirteen co-defendants were found guilty as charged and given six year jail sentences. With regard to the four Nationalists who had taken part in the attack upon Congress, the six-year sentence was to run concurrently with a previous twenty five to seventy five year jail sentence stemming from that attack. On May of the following year the thirteen convicted men appealed the decision to the United States Court of Appeals, which unanimously upheld the judgment of the lower court. Five months later
the United States Supreme Court upheld the conviction of twelve of the accused, who were then committed to Federal penitentiaries. The four Nationalists who turned state evidence were placed on probation after receiving suspended sentences.

On October 30, two weeks after the conviction of the seventeen party members indicted for seditious conspiracy came to an end, another group of twelve Nationalists was arrested, six of them in New York, four in Chicago and two in Puerto Rico. The accusation against the latter group was similar to that made against the former group of seventeen. During the first week of March, 1955, ten of the accused were brought to trial and found guilty as charged, while one of the defendants—Serafín Colón Oliveras—was acquitted. Early in April, the convicted members of the group were given sentences ranging from eighteen months to four years. Nearly a year later this conviction was unanimously upheld by the United States Court of Appeals. This decision by the Circuit Court of Appeals brought to a close the actions of mainland authorities against members of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party who had been in any way involved with terrorist attacks dating back to 1950.

While the Nationalist organization was being broken up in the United States, in Puerto Rico the last remaining group of party members linked with the Washington events was brought to trial late in 1954. Of the fifteen co-defendants, twelve were acquitted. The remaining three were found guilty early in 1955 and sentenced to jail terms ranging from three to ten years.

During the remainder of 1955 and up to 1960 almost no events involving Nationalist Party members took place. One important exception occurred
on June 5, 1956. On this date, because of his rapidly deteriorating mental and physical condition, Albizu Campos was removed from the state penitentiary in Rio Piedras and taken to the Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan, where a closely guarded room became his "prison cell." The Nationalist leader remained at the Presbyterian Hospital until November 16, 1964, when he was given a full pardon by Governor Muñoz Marín. 64

At the time of his release the once fiery orator had suffered a remarkable change. White-haired and frail looking, "el maestro" was an infirm old man of seventy-three, who had been unable to talk or walk since suffering a stroke eight years before. Five months after he became once more a free man, the leader of Puerto Rico's Nationalist Party became severely ill on April 21, dying the same day from pneumonia and kidney complications.

The death of Pedro Albizu Campos did not mark the end of the Nationalist Party. But as mentioned elsewhere, after 1932 Albizu Campos and the party were one and the same. The death of its long-time leader meant that the party, its role and importance has diminished greatly as other organizations--political and non-political--have assumed the place and role which the Nationalists occupied for so many years. 65 Never a large organization, the Nationalist Party began to die a slow death after the incarceration of its leader for the events of 1950. The long agony was prolonged by Albizu Campos' short-lived freedom in 1953. With his confinement the following year, and the imprisonment of so many party members after the 1950 and 1954 events, the travail of a long, slow death was virtually assured.
There is very little doubt that in his own personal way Albizu Campos loved Puerto Rico dearly. But his love of "patria," intense as it was, clouded his reasoning and led him to embrace a life of violence and bloodshed that was rejected by the people of Puerto Rico. Under his leadership the Nationalist Party and the independence it preached, became inextricably associated in the minds of most Puerto Ricans with death and disorder. It is indeed ironic that instead of being a unifying force, the words and actions of Albizu Campos became the most divisive and debilitating element which has been encountered by the insular pro-independence groups. Still, it would be naive to deny that a sizable segment of the population still clings to independence for the island as an ideal. The deep seated Puerto Rican desire to attain a position of dignity and equality vis-à-vis the United States has been demonstrated over and over in the past history of the island. The prolonged, often discouraging struggle for concessions from Congress, the classic debates over status, the insistence upon a compact with bilateral assurances, and finally the creation of the Commonwealth—are all evidence of this ingrained need.

The Nationalist party and Pedro Albizu Campos are now part of Puerto Rico's past, of its history. The many reprehensible acts which they committed are also past and, hopefully, forgiven. It now remains for the present governments of the United States and Puerto Rico to find a viable way to bridge the gap created by much bitterness, distrust and a distinct cultural heritage, with an enduring and lasting friendship based on mutual respect and understanding.
Respect and understanding will eventually lead to political equality, and this will undoubtedly satisfy the islanders' pride and honor, the honor inherent in feeling equal to other men, and of being treated in equal terms by the next man, regardless of whether that man is a Spaniard or an American.
Footnotes

1 See El Nacional (Mexico, D.F.), October 28 to November 10, 1950; El Universal (Caracas), October 28 to November 8, 1950; La Prensa (Buenos Aires), October 28 to October 30, 1950; Diario de La Marina (La Habana), October 25 to November 30, 1950. A magazine which gave wide coverage to the insurrection was Bohemia (La Habana), Cuba.

2 An example of this is the way in which A Manha Àte, a Brazilian newspaper condemned the attack on President Truman, calling it "bestial and stupid" while depicting Albizu Campos as a "fanatic not working for the well being of Puerto Rico." The quotes are from the New York Times, November 5, 1950. Besides Brazil, other Latin American nations whose newspapers condemned the attack and its motives were Mexico, Cuba, Argentina and Costa Rica. Details concerning the indignation of world leaders as a result of the attack can be found in the New York Times, November 3, 1950. See also statement by Edward G. Miller, "Assassination Attempt Shocks the World," U.S. Department of State Bulletin, XXIII (December, 1950); and The Times (London), October 28 to November 30, 1950.

3 New York Times, November 6 and 7, 1950. See also El Mundo (San Juan), November 7, 1950, in which the total number of new registrants is slightly different—156,632.


5 The missing delegate was absent due to illness.

6 Hunter, Puerto Rico, A Survey, p. 17. It should be pointed out that the percentage of voters going to the polls on all of these occasions was larger than the percentage usually participating in presidential elections in the United States. For example, the March 3 decision in favor of the Constitution was approved by 81 per cent of the eligible voters.

7 U.S. Congress, Senate Report No. 1720, 82nd Cong., 2nd Sess., June 10, 1952 from Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to accompany Senate Joint Resolution No. 151, p. 6, as quoted by Hunter, Status of Puerto Rico, p. 122.

8 This Joint Resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives by Resident Commissioner Fernós Isern. When later it was signed by President Truman, it became Public Law 447. See Fernós Isern "Puerto Rico's New Political Status," p. 395.

9 "Puerto Rican Constitution Signed," U.S. Department of State Bulletin, XXVII (July, 1952), p. 91. Two amendments were made to the Constitution. The first was made in Article II, section 20, concerning
basic human rights. Congress opposed this section claiming it was basically a socialistic pronouncement. The second and last amendment was a change in the language of Article II, section 5, to make it clear that compulsory attendance to elementary public schools did not forbid attendance to private schools.


El Mundo (San Juan), February 20, 1951.

Miss Reynolds had three co-defendants named Rafael Burgos Fuentes José Mejías Flores, and Eduardo López Vázquez. Miss Reynolds was the only one of the defendants who asked for a jury trial. See New York Times, August 22, 1951.

New York Times, September 6, 1951. The case against Miss Reynolds did not end until November 18, 1954, when her sentence was reversed by the Puerto Rico Supreme Court. For details see New York Times, November 18, 1954.


The United Nations Committee held hearings on the United States position. By a narrow 22 to 18 vote the Committee upheld the United States contention. Later on, by a 24-17 vote it authorized the United States to cease transmitting information to the United Nations on Puerto Rico.

The eleven demonstrators were arrested, brought to trial and given suspended sentences on September 25. The arrested demonstrators included the wife and two daughters of Oscar Collazo. See New York Times, September 26, 1953.

New York Times, October 1, 1953.


The wounded included Representatives Clifford Davies, George H. Faloon, Kenneth Roberts and Ben Jensen. The most critically wounded Congressman was Alvin M. Bentley, with a perforated lung and shattered liver. He recuperated, as did all the others.

According to La Prensa (New York), March 3, 1954, Miss Lebrón was at that time 34 years old and had a criminal record dating back to 1945, when she was arrested, convicted and sentenced to a five year term for theft. In 1949, according to the same source, she was sentenced to six month jail term for a similar offense.

Unlike Figueroa Cordero, who had no criminal record, Flores Rodríguez had served a prison sentence for refusing to obey the Selective Service Act.

Like Flores Rodríguez, Cancel Miranda had also paid with a jail term his refusal to obey the Selective Service Law. The young man was the son of the Nationalist Party leader in the city of Mayaguez, who at the time of the attack upon Congress was serving a sentence due to his active participation in the Nationalist Revolt of 1950. See La Prensa (New York), March 3, 1954.

In a statement made after the shooting spree at Congress, Miss Lebrón stated: "We wanted to let the world know that Puerto Rico must be free." See La Prensa (New York), editorial, March 3, 1954.

In both instances, automatic pistols were used, either German Lugers or P-38s.

One of the island leading politicians who repudiated and condemned the attack was Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, leader of the Puerto Rican Independence party. See La Prensa (New York), March 3, 1954.

For a detailed account of the many messages received from Puerto Rico rejecting the Nationalist act of terrorism, see U.S. Congressional Record, 83rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1954, parts 2 to 5 and appendices.

The Legislature of Puerto Rico, with 24 votes in favor and 5 abstentions, used an extremely strong language to reject and spurn the terrorist attack upon Congress. The abstentions belonged to the five "Independents," members of the insular legislature. See La Prensa (New York), March 3, 1954.

Another strongly worded condemnation of the attack on Congress was voiced by La Prensa (New York), editorial, March 1, 1954.

It needs to be mentioned that on March 14, 1954, a San Juan parade was held in support of the five wounded Congressmen. The act was termed impressive, because even when it was boycotted by the Popular Democrats and the Puerto Rican Independence Party, police estimates placed the number of participants between seven to 15,000. See New York Times, March 15, 1954.

See Appendix C.
In the *New York Times*, March 7, 1954, Governor Muñoz Marín declared that the action against the Nationalists in Puerto Rico was undertaken after a week-long study of "their certain and undoubtedly ideological connection with the Washington shooting and their possibly conspiratorial connections with it, and because they constitute a subversive force in Puerto Rico which is unregenerated."

The sister of Griselio Torresola, one of the earlier assailants of Blair House. The male companion was, reputedly, one of Albizu Campos' top aides.

Captain Osborn, a native of Charlottesville, Virginia, was acting as a liaison officer for the 124th Military Police Battalion of the National Guard, working in association with the Insular police. See *New York Times*, March 7, 1954.

At the time of his arrest, Albizu Campos was clad in blue pajamas, with a long towel wrapped around his shoulders and wet clothes wrapped around his feet. According to the *New York Times*, March 7, 1954, Albizu Campos' garb "represented his defense against what he charged was an atomic energy ray being employed against him by the United States."

Three detectives suffered superficial wounds, allegedly from ricocheting bullets. They were Rafael Fernández, a detective lieutenant wounded in one arm; Basilio Acosta, wounded in the chin; and Pedro Luis Palma, who was hit by an exploding tear gas canister.

Three .38 automatic pistols, one .32 revolver, one .22 pistol and one .38 revolver.


Law 53 was an Insular version of the mainland's Smith Act. Enacted on June 10, 1948, Law 53 stipulated that "It was a felony subject to ten years in prison or $10,000 fine or both to promote, advocate, advise or preach, willfully or knowingly the necessity, desirability or expediency of overthrowing, paralyzing or subverting the Insular Government or any of its political subdivisions thereof, by means of force or violence." In Puerto Rico this law was called "La Ley de la Mordaza."

Among the arrested Communist Leaders were Juan Santos Rivera, president of the party; César Andreu Iglesias, the Secretary General; June Speed, the latter's wife; and Pablo García Rodríguez, party treasurer. The eleven arrested Communists were indicted late in 1954 for conspiracy to advocate the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force and violence. These charges were dropped in

It must be added that earlier in 1954, three of the top leaders of Puerto Rican Communist Party—Juan Santos Rivera, Pablo García Rodríguez and Juan Sáez Corales—were exonerated from having any connection with the attack upon Congress. See New York Times, April 24, 1954.

50 As a result of the 1950 events Albizu Campos was serving what amounted to a 79 year prison sentence. When pardoned by Governor Muñoz Marín in October, 1953, the Nationalist leader had served less than three years of his sentence. For details see New York Times, March 7, 1954 and January 1, 1960. See also La Prensa (New York), March 7, 1954; New York Herald Tribune, March 7, 1954.

51 The charges stemmed from the incident at Congress on March 1, 1954. See Appendix D for the names of those arrested and the final action taken against each of them.


53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., October 13, 1954.


57 The Nationalist whose conviction was reversed was Jorge Luis Jiménez.

58 See Appendix D.

59 See Appendix E.

60 New York Times, March 11, 1955. The testimony presented during the trial linked the defendants with the Blair House incident of 1950, the Nationalist revolt in Puerto Rico and the wounding of several Congressmen in 1954.

61 See Appendix E for information on the respective sentences.


63 Ibid., January 5, 1955. The three jailed men were Ramón Medina Ramírez, José Rivera Sotomayor and Juan Hernández Valle. The latter was one of the members of the group of twelve indicted in the United States for the Congressional incident.
It should be noted that in 1960, Albizu Campos had been given a "partial pardon" which eliminated most of his jail sentence, but that pardon did not set him free, as after its concession Albizu Campos still had to serve a fifteen year term stemming from the revolt of 1950. See *New York Times*, November 16, 1964.

See Carmen Ramos de Santiago, *El Gobierno de Puerto Rico: desarrollo constitucional y político* (Rio Piedras, 1965), pp. 256-286, for a concise treatment of the rise of such pro-independence groups as the Movimiento Pro Independencia (M.P.I.), the "Federación Universitaria pro-Independencia (F.U.P.I.), and the "Juventud Independentista," among others.
## APPENDIX A

### Puerto Rican Political Parties from 1869 to 1946

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Conservador</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Liberal Reformista</td>
<td>Incondicional Español</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870-1874</td>
<td>Liberal Réformiste Incondicional Español</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Asimilista</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Autonomista</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Liberal Fusionista</td>
<td>Asimilista-Indentista (ortodoxo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Unión Autonomista</td>
<td>Liberal (Americano) Obrero-Socialista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Federal Republicano Puertorriqueño</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Unión de Puerto Rico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908-1912</td>
<td></td>
<td>Socialista</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td></td>
<td>Republicano Puertorriqueño</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partido Nacionalista</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partido Popular Democrático</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Unión de Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Republicano Puertorriqueño</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Alianza Puertorriqueña</td>
<td>Socialista Constitucional Constitucional Histórico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Coalición: Unión Republicana Partido Socialista</td>
<td>Partido Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
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<td>Partido Popular Democrático</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For detailed information on the foundation of the Republican party, the Federal party, the Socialist worker's party (Partido Obrero Socialista), the Union of Puerto Rico, and the Puerto Rican Nationalist party, see Pagan, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, Vol. I.

2. The "Alianza Puertorriqueña" was formed by the alliance of the Union of Puerto Rico and the Republican party (Partido Republicano).

3. This was the new name used by the old Union of Puerto Rico beginning in 1932.

4. Luis Muñoz Marín, who was stymied in his attempt to wrest control of the Liberal party from aging Romero Barceló, created this party in this year. See Mathews, Puerto Rican Politics, pp. 257-267, 288-309, where the story is excellently documented.

5. If it is considered that after its ineffectual showing in 1932 the Nationalist party engaged exclusively in direct and militant action outside the electoral system, then the Puerto Rican Independence party was the first political agrupation based wholly on the ideal of independence. For a full account of the story of the Puerto Rican Independence party, see Anderson, Party Politics in Puerto Rico, pp. 95-117.
## Appendix B

### Statistical Comparison of the Total Vote Cast by Political Parties

During the General Elections from 1914-1956

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1914</th>
<th>1917</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1924</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1932</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union of Puerto Rico</td>
<td>107,619</td>
<td>90,155</td>
<td>126,446</td>
<td>132,255</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party</td>
<td>82,574</td>
<td>60,319</td>
<td>63,845</td>
<td>30,286</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24,468</td>
<td>59,140</td>
<td>56,103</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>97,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statehood Republican Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>110,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>170,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Democratic Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered voters</td>
<td>273,116</td>
<td>244,530</td>
<td>268,643</td>
<td>326,093</td>
<td>321,113</td>
<td>452,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total votes cast</td>
<td>204,233</td>
<td>175,006</td>
<td>299,431</td>
<td>253,520</td>
<td>256,335</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1944</th>
<th>1948</th>
<th>1952</th>
<th>1956</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union of Puerto Rico</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party</td>
<td>144,294</td>
<td>87,841</td>
<td>68,107</td>
<td>64,121</td>
<td>21,655</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statehood Republican Party</td>
<td>152,739</td>
<td>134,582</td>
<td>101,777</td>
<td>88,189</td>
<td>85,172</td>
<td>172,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>252,467</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38,630</td>
<td>28,203</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>66,141</td>
<td>125,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Democratic Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>214,857</td>
<td>383,220</td>
<td>392,033</td>
<td>429,064</td>
<td>433,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered voters</td>
<td>764,602</td>
<td>714,960</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>883,219</td>
<td>873,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total votes cast</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Taken from Págán, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, vol. I, pp. 163-164.

2. The data covering from 1919-1956, with the exception of total votes cast was taken from Hunter, Puerto Rico, A Survey, p. 105.

3. The information concerning total votes cast was taken from Págán, Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, vol. I, pp. 163-164, 199, 245, 312.
Appendix C

Nationalists Arrested in New York
As a result of the Attack on Blair House

1. Carmen Dolores Torresola, the wife of Griselio Torresola.

2. Rosa Collazo, the wife of Oscar Collazo.

Both of these women were jailed on November 2, 1950, on lieu of a $50,000 bail. After twenty-seven days in jail without a hearing, bail was reduced to $2,000. Judge John W. Clancy ruled that "the government had no right to hold the two women without giving them a hearing." Afterwards the judge sternly commented: "There is no evidence against these women." See New York Times, November 28, 1950.

After fifty-one days in jail, Mrs. Torresola— an expectant mother— was freed on her own recognizance. During all this time Mrs. Torresola was not given a hearing, and was kept in prison notwithstanding the fact that Federal authorities repeatedly admitted having no evidence against her. See New York Times, December 23, 1950.

On December 28 the charges against Mrs. Torresola were dropped. Nearly a month later, the charges against Mrs. Collazo were dismissed for lack of evidence.

3. Julio Pinto Gandía, one of the leaders of the Nationalist movement in New York.

4. Juan Bernardo Lebrón

These two men were charged as co-conspirators in the attempted assassination of President Truman. Both were jailed on November 22, on lieu of a $50,000 bail. On December 23, federal attorney Irving H. Saypol admitted the government had no evidence linking these men with the Blair House affair. Nevertheless, both men remained in prison, although their bail was reduced to $1,000 on December 28. The following day Gandía and Lebrón were freed on bail. For details see New York Times, December 23 and December 28, 1950.

It should be pointed out that prior to 1945 Gandía had been jailed on charges of draft evasion. He was freed in 1945. Neither of the two men were connected further with the Blair House affair.
5. Juan Cortés Cordexo, Mrs. Collazo's uncle.

6. John Correa, an alleged member of the Nationalist party.

7. Also arrested were the two daughters of Mrs. Collazo by a previous marriage—Iris and Lydia.

8. Carmen Collazo, the daughter of Oscar Collazo by a previous marriage.

It should be stressed that not one of these persons was ever connected with the attempted assassination of President Truman. Prior to the 1954 Nationalist attack on Congress, only one person—Collazo—had been found guilty in connection with the Blair House shooting.

On July 25, 1952, President Truman commuted Collazo's death sentence to life imprisonment. His execution had been set for August 1, 1951. The attempt to prove that the Washington attack was a conspiracy had not been abandoned by the Secret Service at this time.
Appendix D

The Group of Seventeen

This was the primary group of Nationalists indicted on charges of seditious conspiracy stemming from the March 1, 1954 shooting of Congress.

1. Rosa Collazo
2. Jose A. Otero Otero
3. Armando Díaz Matos
4. Manuel Rabago Torres, an official in the party's Chicago branch.
6. Carmelo Álvarez Román, a member of the party's New York municipal board.

The above named individuals were given six year jail sentences for their participation in the conspiracy which culminated in the attack upon Congress.

7. Julio Pinto Gandía
8. Juan Francisco Ortiz Medina

Besides their six year sentence, these men received six months jail terms for contempt when they refused to answer the questions of the Federal Grand Jury investigating Nationalist party activities in the mainland. For further details see New York Times, March 12, 1954.

9. Dolores Lebrón
10. Rafael Cancel Miranda
11. Irving Florez Rodríguez
12. Andrés Figueroa Cordero

These were the four Nationalists who participated in the armed attack upon Congress. As previously stated, their six year jail term was to run concurrently with the 25 year jail sentence they had received as a result of the attack of March 1.
13. Francisco Cortés Ruiz, the director of the Nationalist Party firearm training camp in Chicago in 1953.


15. Carlos Aulet

16. Angel Luis Medina

These were the four Nationalists who pleaded guilty of the charges brought against them by the Federal Government and turned state evidence. See New York Times, September 8, 1954. Early during the following month of November these four men were given six year suspended sentences and placed on probation for five years. They were prohibited from associating with Nationalists or any other group whose objective was the overthrow of the Government of the United States. See New York Times, November 2, 1954.

17. Jorge Luis Jiménez. His conviction was reversed by the United States Supreme Court.
Appendix E

The Group of Twelve

This was the second and final group of Nationalists arrested in the United States on October 30, 1954, on charges of seditious conspiracy against the Government of the United States. These charges stemmed from the attack against President Truman and the subsequent attack upon Congress.

Arrested in New York:
1. Carmen Dolores Torresola
2. Santiago González Castro
3. Pedro Avilés
4. Serafín Colón Oliveras
5. Esteban Quiñónez Escuté
6. Antonio Herrera Moreno

Of the above named individuals one was acquitted, namely Colón Oliveras. Santiago González Castro received a six month sentence. The other four members of this group were sentenced to four year terms.

Arrested in Chicago:
1. Julio Flores Medina
2. Angel Luis Arzola Vélez
3. Miguel Vargas Nieves
4. Maximino Pedraza Martínez

The stiffest sentence in this group was handed to Arzola Vélez, who was given a four year term. The others were committed to a Federal Penitentiary for a period of eighteen months.
Arrested in Puerto Rico:

1. Juan Hernández Valle

2. Isabel Rosado Morales

These two were the alleged couriers of instructions sent to party members in the mainland. At the time of their indictment, they were awaiting trial in San Juan for violation of Law 53. Apparently, the case against Isabel Rosado Morales was dropped. On December 24, 1954, Hernández Valle was convicted and given a 3 to 10 jail term to be served in Puerto Rico.

For details and information on the arrests and subsequent action against this group of individuals, see New York Times, October 30, 1954; January 5, February 8, March 11 and April 1, 1955.
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