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Fighting For the Nation: Military Service, Popular Political Mobilization and the Creation of Modern Puerto Rican National Identities: 1868-1952

Harry Franqui

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A Dissertation Presented
by
HARRY FRANQUI

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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University of Massachusetts/Five College Graduate Program in History
FIGHTING FOR THE NATION: MILITARY SERVICE, POPULAR
POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND THE CREATION OF MODERN PUERTO
RICAN NATIONAL IDENTITIES: 1868-1952

A Dissertation Presented

by

HARRY FRANQUI

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DEDICATION

A mi madre, por sacrificar tanto por el bienestar de sus hijos.
A mis hermanos y hermanas, por el orgullo que sienten al ver los suyos tener éxito y por siempre estar prestos a tender una mano.
A mi esposa y compañera Patricía, por ver en mí cualidades que yo desconocía, por su fe en mí y por su incansable apoyo.
A mis hijos, por inspirarme a ser mejor persona.
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I would like to thank the graduate School of the University of Massachusetts for granting me a Graduate Diversity Writing Fellowship for the year 2009-2010. This fellowship facilitated the completion of this project in many ways. The research for this project was done during the summer periods and abroad, in Puerto Rico, at several locations. I was able to conduct extensive and sustained archival research thanks to the generosity of the Bauer-Gordon Summer Research Fellowship, (2004, 2006); and the support of Robert and Jeanne Potash, via their Latin American and Iberian Travel Award, (2004, 2005). The UMass Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies also contributed to my research by offering me a Research Grant in 2006. The ALANA Fellowship for Underrepresented Minorities, which I was granted for the year 2003-2004, allowed me for the first time in my life to focus solely on my studies. I believe that in that year I matured as a scholar. For those reasons, I am ceaselessly obliged.

I would also like to recognize the professionalism and courtesy of the staff at Centro de Investigaciones Históricas de la Universidad de Puerto Rico and at the Archivo Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín. The latter went out of their way to make sure I could get all the documents I requested as speedily and as inexpensively as possible.

I owe much to the Professor Jane Rausch. She was patient, understanding and supportive, and helped me stay on track. Thank you Jane.

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Last but not least, I am thankful and everlastingly indebted to the Puerto Rican veterans and their families for sharing their memories, for opening a window into history for me, and for the warm welcome they offered me. ¡Muchas gracias, no se les olvida!
ABSTRACT


MAY 2010

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This project explores the military and political mobilization of rural and urban working sectors of Puerto Rican society as the Island transitioned from Spanish to U.S. imperial rule. In particular, my research is interested in examining how this shift occurs via patterns of inclusion-exclusion within the military and the various forms of citizenship that are subsequently transformed into socio-economic and political enfranchisement. Analyzing the armed forces as a culture-homogenizing agent helps to explain the formation and evolution of Puerto Rican national identities from 1868 to 1952, and how these evolving identities affected the political choices of the Island. This phenomenon, I argue, led to the creation of the Estado Libre Asociado in 1952. The role played by the tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans in the metropolitan military in the final creation of a populist project taking place under colonial rule in the Island was threefold. Firstly, these soldiers served as political leverage during WWII to speed up the decolonization process. Secondly, they incarnated the commonwealth ideology by fighting and dying in the Korean War. Finally, the Puerto Rican soldiers filled the ranks of the army of technicians and technocrats attempting to fulfill the promises of a modern industrial Puerto Rico after the returned from the wars.

In contrast to Puerto Rican popular national mythology and mainstream academic discourse that has marginalized the agency of subaltern groups; I argue that the Puerto Rican soldier was neither cannon fodder for the metropolis nor the pawn of the Creole political elites. Regaining their masculinity, upward mobility, and political enfranchisement were among some of the incentives enticing the Puerto Rican peasant into military service. The enfranchisement of subaltern sectors via military service ultimately created a very liberal, popular, and broad definition of Puerto Rico’s national identity. When the Puerto Rican peasant/soldier became the embodiment of the Commonwealth formula, the political leaders involved in its design were in fact responding to these soldiers’ complex identities, which among other things compelled them to defend the “American Nation” to show their Puertorriqueñidad.
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INTRODUCTION

Every day tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans drive by the *Monumento al Jíbaro* in Cayey Puerto Rico. Unbeknownst to them, this monument, hidden in plain view, guards a key for understanding Puerto Rico’s past. The monument overlooks the modern highway P.R.52, which cuts through the Cordillera Central and its extension, the Sierra de Cayey, linking the San Juan metropolitan area with south-western Puerto Rico. Very tellingly, the monument depicting a humble but proud peasant family, with a mountain range as its background and faced by the highway system and the Caribbean Sea rests in a foundation of Korean dirt drenched in Puerto Rican blood. More than a bridge between the “Island” and the capital, this highway and the monument guarding it serve as a historical bridge. Far from being a sad reminder of the disappearance of the Jíbaro before the juggernaut of industrialization, this monument actually recognizes the indebtedness of modern Puerto Rico to the Island’s common folk.

The political entity we know as the *Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico* or the Commonwealth came into existence during the Korean War. Tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans, who came mostly from the mountains and sugar cane plantations, participated in this conflict. The war they fought in Korea was a battle for the decolonization of the Island as the soldiers became a living symbol of the philosophy behind commonwealth status. In this sense, the foundation of the statue is also the foundation of the modern Puerto Rican state and of modern Puerto Rican national identities. There is no intention of my part, however, to rewrite a nationalist history, but rather to tell a history left out by nationalists and even by anti-colonial narratives. In essence, I try to tell the story of the Puerto Rican soldier’s contribution to the political and socio-cultural histories of the Island.
In this study I intend to analyze the military as an institution in an attempt to comprehend its impact on the converging socio-cultural and political histories of Puerto Rico. In particular, this project explores the military mobilization of popular sectors of Puerto Rican society, especially the rural sectors, under two different metropoles, Spain and the United States. Such experience, I argue, affected the political and socio-economic histories of the Island and its cultural development. Thus, the subject of this study is the military mobilization and demobilization of rural and urban working-class sectors of Puerto Rican society from the mid-eighteenth hundred to the mid-nineteenth hundred. The analysis of patterns of inclusion-exclusion within the military as these forms of citizenship subsequently transformed into socio-economic and political enfranchisement is of particular interest.

After the failed insurrection against Spanish rule, *el Grito de Lares de 1868*, the barring of natives of Puerto Rico from the Spanish colonial armed forces, a very restrictive polity, and dearth of a common education were some of the patterns of repression and exclusion that led to the slow development of a distinct national identity in the Island. However, this was embryonic as Puerto Ricans still retained many cultural affinities with Spain such as language and religion. The disjuncture created by the Cuban-Pilipino-Spanish-American War of 1898 left a mark in the developing of Puerto Rican national identities. Moreover, the inclusion of Puerto Ricans into the U.S. Armed Forces and mass political mobilization profoundly altered the national character of the Island. The former provided a unifying and pro-state experience as well as the chance for social mobility while the latter accounted for a wider polity and a flexible national discourse. Under United States’ rule the military, and to a lesser degree political
participation, were open to the masses. The U.S. also embarked in a comprehensive build
up of the public education system which was intended to Americanize the inhabitants of
Puerto Rico. Hence, although cultural affinity was absent between Puerto Ricans and
Americans in 1898, the fact that military institutions, the political arena, and the public
school system were opened to the masses deeply influenced the islander’s national
character.¹

Attempting to tighten its control over the Island, Spain decided to exclude Puerto
Ricans from military service after a failed insurrection attempt in 1868. Under American
rule thirty years later, the military became a tool for the “Americanization” of the Island
as part of a broader nation-building project in the circum-Caribbean. In essence we are
comparing a project of anti-nation building by virtue of exclusion, the Spanish
authorities’ response to growing discontent against their rule in the Island, with a U.S.
project of nation building via limited inclusion (both politically and militarily) and
cultural assimilation. In this regard, analyzing the armed forces as a culture-
homogenizing agent and as a vessel for socio-economic and political empowerment helps

¹Attention will be given to the role played by the public education system in the
Americanization of the Island. However, this last factor has been well covered by several
authors, and since it is a supporting argument, it will be treated by examining secondary
sources. See, Aida Negrón de Montilla, La americanización de Puerto Rico y el sistema
de instrucción pública, 1900-1930, 2da Ed. (Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial de la
Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1990). Negrón de Montilla documents the attempts of the
metropolis to reproduce in Puerto Rico an education system similar to that of New
England in which English was the mandatory, and only, language; and the teaching of
U.S. history and American mainstream cultural values came to be the cornerstone of the
system. More importantly perhaps is her detailed study of the department’s
memorandums and guidelines which openly called for policing those native teachers that
strayed from the approved curriculum and included Puerto Rican culture in their lessons,
as well as those who criticized the colonial regime. And, Roamé Torres González,
Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad: La presencia del inglés en Puerto Rico, (Río
Piedras, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2002).
to explain the formation and evolution of Puerto Ricans’ national identities from 1868 to 1952. Hence, studying the mass participation of popular sectors in military institutions should provide us with a new understanding of the development of Puerto Rico’s national identities and how these evolving identities affected the political choices of the Island.

In fact, I argue that the “modern Puerto Rican nationality” is a hybrid born out of the perceived cultural affinity and political and military exclusion offered by the Spanish authorities coupled with the perceived lack of cultural affinity and partial political and socio-economic inclusion offered by the United States. Participation in U.S. institutions provided unifying experiences for the Puerto Rican masses which allowed for the strengthening of their national identities but with an American touch. Access to education and military positions also offered an opportunity for mobility and the chance to overthrow old socio-economic hierarchies, a phenomenon that led to the creation of new elites that owed their well being and thus their allegiance to the new metropolis.

Hence, one of the purposes of this study is to put into historical context the role played by popular sectors in creating a national identity of their own and in developing a political space that fit their identities. Studying the patterns of inclusion-exclusion within the military and the degree of political participation of the masses, under both Spanish and American metropoles, helps to explain how Puerto Ricans’ national identities developed during the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. This phenomenon, I argue, eventually facilitated the creation of the Estado Libre Asociado in 1952.

Historian Florencia Mallon has argued that the degree of military, paramilitary, and political mobilization of peasants and indigenous groups contributes to the depth of the liberal spirit of a country’s polity. She believes that political groups considered as
class not only sense a stake in nation-state formation but also seek to participate on its design. Participation, she argues, is contested at the local level and filtered through regional politics until it moves towards the national level where negotiation continues and a contract is reached among contesting forces. Mallon calls this stage hegemony, a process that will continue endlessly as counter-hegemonic forces keep challenging the hegemonic entity or polity.²

The contestation of hegemony is not a new phenomenon. Mallon argues that indigenous, peasants and other subaltern groups have always harbored ideas of social justice and legal equality. It is not, however, until periods of crisis that these groups get the opportunity to strengthen their political stand and gain more inclusion and participation in developing or re-defining the nation and its institutions, either by being included in political coalitions or by being mobilized for war. Mallon thus emphasizes the construction of alternative national projects, (popular, inclusive and liberal), through the political and military mobilization of peasants and other subaltern groups during periods of crisis. When subaltern groups are successfully integrated within the new

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² Florencia, Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Post Colonial Mexico and Peru*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1995), 4,6, 9-10. Traditionally, Mallon argues, national democratic discourses have included promises of universal potential for autonomy, dignity and equality for all peoples. In practice, however, entire groups of people have been barred from access to citizenship and liberty according to Eurocentric class, racial, and gender exclusionary criteria. Mallon associates this type of nationalism with the historical mission that the upper classes in a given country have reserved for themselves, the creation of the nation and control of national identity. Subaltern groups, she contends, have nonetheless initiated projects for “collective identity based on a premise of citizenship available to all, and with individual membership beginning with the presumption of equality.”² In other words, subaltern groups have taken the challenge of national democratic discourses and attempted to create their own version of a more egalitarian practice trying to make real the unfulfilled promises of nation and democracy.²
hegemonic coalition, the popular sectors are incorporated into the country’s polity and economy, and the state becomes a real negotiator between labor and capital while embarking on land reform. The combination of these factors attests to the liberal spirit of a hegemonic political alliance based in a national populist discourse. Applying these criteria to the case of Puerto Rico should help us determine whether the popular sectors were really integrated into the Island’s polity and economy and hence, as part of a truly national popular project.

Mallon’s approach is useful for understanding how subaltern groups affect the development of national and democratic discourses and the creation of state’s polities. However, her model has been applied only to sovereign countries. Can we find similar patterns in non-sovereign countries, colonies, territories, protectorates, provinces, or semi-autonomous states? More specifically, can elements of these models be applied to the case of Puerto Rico, a late-colonial state? If we treat the metropolis simply as contenders in the political arena, we may find Mallon’s approach useful. Benedict Anderson has argued that the origin of nationalism is the belief that a nation in fact exists. In turn the nation is an imagined political community, “and imagined both inherently limited and sovereign.”

3 If we followed standard definitions of “political sovereignty,” we will be hard pressed to accept Puerto Rico as a nation and also the existence of Puerto Rican nationalities. As a matter of fact there is no “national period” in Puerto Rican history since most historians subscribe to political independence as a determinant factor to switch from the “colonial” to the “national” period. Nancy Morris, however, has

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argued that a group’s self recognition as a nation is usually based on “some combination of objective characteristics of history, language, culture, and territory” which may lead to a desire for self-determination but which not necessarily is “equal to a desire for political independence.” Based on this premise, this study will try to show how national sovereignty has several different meanings in the case of Puerto Rico, and how the Island’s double colonial experience led to the creation of very flexible national identities and political communities in which a case for autonomismo (political freedom without outright separation from the metropolis), annexation, or independence could be made using the same symbols usually identified with the Puerto Rican nation and independence. More importantly, it is the empowerment of the popular sectors that accounts for this broad and inclusive definition of national identity.

Studying military mobilization as political enfranchisement requires us to answer the question, who controls military and political institutions and mobilization? In the case of Puerto Rico, Spain sought and mostly succeeded in completely controlling the military in the Island and in exercising tight control over the colonial political apparatus. The story under United States rule quite different. The U.S. exercised direct control of the armed forces in the Island, but it always needed the unwavering support of local politicians to foment enrollment among the popular sectors. Thus, from very early on Puerto Rican politicians and local leaders wielded a degree of indirect control over the military, even if they responded directly to Washington. The same can be said of the political institutions. While the U.S. retained most of the political power during the first half century of the twentieth century, it also had to rely on local politicians in order to

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present a more palatable colonial rule to the inhabitants of the Island. This situation allowed for the gradual creolization and eventual popularization of metropolitan institutions and projects.

In the early 1940s, it would be Luis Muñoz Marín, the first elected governor of the Island and main architect of the final commonwealth formula, who would galvanize the new electoral power of the masses into a popular project of social justice but with the personal goal of obtaining the independence of the Island. Moreover, he would use the participation of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. military as bargaining tool to advance the decolonization project, and finally to sell the concept of the commonwealth formula to the electoral masses. But this is not a story of the manipulation of the masses to obtain a political goal: it is actually the opposite. Muñoz Marín sought to use the electoral power of the masses, and that of the military, to gain his objective, but he ultimately had to yield to the masses’ will and renounce independence. Thus we have a rural and lower class mass mobilized by a political party, the Popular Democratic Party, and a military, which due to its colonial nature was under metropolitan control but also responded to local leaders and local realities. The result of this combination was a very flexible and open definition of national identities in the Island and a very pluralistic and social-oriented state.

The role played by the tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans in the metropolitan military in the final creation of a populist project taking place under colonial rule in the Island was threefold. I argue first that these soldiers served as political leverage during WWII to speed up the decolonization process; that they incarnated the commonwealth ideology by fighting and dying in the Korean War; and finally, that the Puerto Rican
soldiers would thereafter join the army of technicians and technocrats attempting to fulfill
the promises of a modern industrial Puerto Rico. In contrast to Puerto Rican popular
mythology and mainstream academic discourse that has marginalized the agency of
subaltern groups; I argue that the Puerto Rican soldier was neither cannon fodder for the
metropolis nor the pawn of the criollo political elites. Regaining their masculinity,
upward mobility, and political enfranchisement were among some of the incentives
enticing the Puerto Ricans into military service. The empowerment of popular sectors by
enfranchisement and participation in the political and military institutions of the
metropolis ultimately created a very liberal, popular, and broad definition of Puerto
Rico’s national identity. It is important to stress the point that if these soldiers were used
to complete a national populist project centered on industrial modernization and a new
modern national identity, they were not mere puppets. When the Puerto Rican Jíbaro
soldier became the embodiment of the Commonwealth formula, the political leaders
involved in its design were responding to the open and flexible identities evident among
popular sectors of Puerto Rican society, which among other things compelled them to
defend the “American Nation” to show their Puertorriqueñidad.

Thus, I seek to put into historical context the role played by popular sectors in
creating a national identity of their own, how such identity became hegemonic(however
briefly), and why it was necessary to develop a political status to accommodate the new
Puerto Rican identities. In other words, this project attempts to illustrate the influence of
the masses in altering the conceptualization of Puertoricaness in a never ending contest
for control of Puerto Rico’s national identities and how this phenomenon has translated
into the political arena culminating with the creation of the Estado Libre Asociado in
1952. This project will explore the overlapping areas of cultural and political identities, or when popular national identities meet political national identities. To reiterate, the subject of this study is the political and military mass mobilization and inclusion-exclusion patterns of popular sectors in Puerto Rico under both metropoles and how such processes altered the character of Puerto Rican national identities and thus the Island’s political history. This work should contribute to our understanding of the history of the United States and Puerto Rico, as well as of the development of national identities and popular projects among colonial subjects.

The structures and processes I have chosen to study have dictated that I take a longue durée approach- at least to define the timeframe of this study, but without disregarding archive-specific research. To do so, I have not followed a perfectly linear narrative but an exponential one. Generally speaking, times of crisis, such as wars, famines, and economic depressions, have served as accelerators of historical processes. Periods of crisis tend to lead to the fall or rise of empires and political systems, to the cyclical realignment of the world or, in a more local way, to the inclusion or exclusion of disenfranchised groups within a state’s or empire’s polity. Therefore, this project focus is on critical historical junctures. It will examine periods of political, military and economic upheaval under Spain and the U.S. and the policies followed by both metropolitan powers and local leaders, in an attempt to map the intersection of local, national, and international histories and their effect on the structures under study. The Lares Revolt of 1868, the Cuban-Pilipino-Spanish-American War of 1898, the First World War and the Great Depression, the Second World War and the Korean War will serve as the historical junctures that allows us to see with more clarity the contestation of
hegemony in the Island. Furthermore, this study tries to combine history from above and history from below. Interviews, personal letters, memoirs, and journals would be used as much as newspapers, government (U.S. and Puerto Rico) and military records, census data, and congressional hearings on the political status of the Island (from 1910s-1950s).

Chapter 1, *Birth of a Nation: From 1868 to 1898, a labor of Thirty Years*, begins by analyzing the scholarly and popular debate about the significance of the Lares’ revolt of 1868 and the policies followed by Spain before and after the event. Special attention will be given to the socio-economic and political situation of the Island leading up to and after this event. Was this revolt a national movement, a popular uprising, or an attempt to revolution? In this chapter I argue that the revolt may have not been a national revolution, but that the policies followed by the Spanish colonial authorities after the event fueled the emergence of a unique national Puerto Rican identity. Furthermore, the chapter traces the importance of military institutions under Spanish sovereignty and how the metropolis, seeking to limit Puerto Rican participation in the military to forestall insurrection and the development of a distinct Puerto Rican national identity, accomplished the opposite.

Chapter 2, *Puerto Rican a là Americana: An Alternative Nation? 1898-1914*, deals with the transfer of sovereignty over Puerto Rico from Spain to the United States in 1898 by examining the factors that facilitated or hindered the transition. In this chapter I argue that passing from one metropolis to another was a relatively easy task due to several factors: the war in Puerto Rico was relatively bloodless; Spain officially relinquished control over the Island; the U.S. slowly increased access to political power, and Puerto Rican elites and the popular sector participated actively on the institutions of
the new metropolis. Without a real opposition, the new metropolis attempted to
“modernize” the Island and its inhabitants through a nation-building project supposedly
guided by “benevolent assimilation” and “compassionate uplifting”, in short, a
comprehensive plan to “Americanize” the Island and its inhabitants. This nation-building
project, which for the first two decades of U.S. control over the Island was firmly in the
hands of the metropolis, relied heavily, both directly and indirectly, on the military.

Chapter 3, “A New Day Has Dawned for the Puerto Rican Jíbaro”: World War I
and Mobilization of the Puerto Rican Peasant, begins by addressing the debate for
vesting Puerto Ricans with American citizenship in 1917, just as the United States
prepared to enter the First World War. I will argue that the unwillingness of the vast
majority to resist becoming American citizens reflects the impact that the institutions of
the new metropolis already had on Puerto Ricans and ultimately doomed the
independence movement’s hopes, at least by political means. Moreover, the first mass
participation of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. military and the newly created Puerto Rico
National Guard, and the support of the newly elected Puerto Rican legislature for the war
effort momentarily cemented U.S. control over the Island, and more importantly, over the
islander’s loyalty. However, overreliance on the criollo elites to mobilize and control the
peasantry and urban working classes had started to undermine the metropolis’ control
over the military apparatus, the political structures in the Island, and over the nation-
building project via military service.

Chapter 4, Economic Wretchedness and the Nationalist Challenge: Prelude to the
Battle over Modern Puerto Rico, addresses the socio-economic and political situation of
the Island during the Great Depression and in the eve of the Second World War. During
this period, mostly due to economic hardship, but also because of the emergence of the Nationalist Party led by Pedro Albizu Campos and the violent response of the U.S. colonial authorities to the nationalist challenge, the Island experienced real political instability. This chapter analyzes how the economic distress afflicting the Island fueled political discontent and how such discontent was in turn used by two emerging political leaders, Pedro Albizu Campos and Luis Muñoz Marín, to further different decolonization processes. I argue that what transpired during these years of political violence, especially the shooting war between Nacionalistas and the Insular Police, was also a battle for control of Puerto Rican identities.

Chapter 5, Education, Industrialization and Decolonization: The Battlefields of the Puerto Rican Soldier During the Second World War, explores how once more, war brought the promise of political and economic advancement by rekindling Puerto Rico’s strategic position. Again, the Puerto Ricans were called to arms and responded with overwhelming enthusiasm. Different projects of decolonization and modernization, which included the revitalization of the economy and of the Puerto Rican’s self esteem, rested on the roles these soldiers were about to play. This chapter analyzes the military mobilization of tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans during World War II and how such mobilization responded to military and diplomatic necessities and local political realities. Emphasis is put on what Continental and Puerto Rican politicians and opinion makers expected to gain from military collaboration and participation.

In this chapter I argue that the metropolis sought to secure the loyalty of natives of the Island by allowing their mass entry into the U.S. military and by conferring upon them the same benefits as Continental veterans. Furthermore, a return to the idea of
Americanization through military service (and public education) made a comeback as WWII engulfed Europe. The metropolis was also more inclined to granting a higher degree of self-government to Puerto Rico since it would enhance its standing in the international arena and could very well quench political unrest in the Island. The metropolis’ plans, however, had to compete with those of local politicians. Aware of Puerto Rico’s military and diplomatic relevance, Luis Muñoz Marín, leading the Popular Democratic Party, followed a strategy that supported the war effort and placed the socio-economic restructuration of the Island above everything else while using the participation of Puerto Rican soldiers in the war, and the Island’s strategic position as leverage to extract political concessions. Furthermore, Muñoz Marín and the *Populares* tried to secure veteran’s benefits so that these men and women could attempt to change the dire socio-economic condition of the Island. Unlike WWI veterans, before WWII ended, the Puerto Rican soldier, just like his Continental counterpart, could count on generous package of benefits designed to ease the soldier’s re-entry into civil life. A march towards a “modern” Puerto Rico had started, and these *Jíbaro* soldiers would be spearheading such movement. That Luis Munoz Marín came to depend on the votes of the peasantry and rural working classes to attain political power and on their military mobilization to advance the socio-economic restructuration of the Island would force him to change his personal political views, first tactically and later definitively.

Chapter 6, *Fighting for the “Nation”? War at Home and Abroad and the Creation of the Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico*, analyzes the state of political forces in the Island and in the U.S mainland at the end of the Second World War. I will address political and diplomatic factors and how they affected the process of decolonization in
Puerto Rico. I will argue that faced by the indifference of Congress and ever increasing complex Puerto Rican national identities, Luis Muñoz Marin opted for the path of autonomismo, leading to the creation of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The viability of the Estado Libre Asociado would be proved in the local confrontation with the Nacionalistas, and the free association pact would be sealed in blood on the battlefields of Korea as the Puerto Rican soldier became the incarnation of the ideals of the commonwealth; the coexistence of the “the two great cultures of the hemisphere” in one space. In the process, new modern Puerto Rican identities emerged and briefly became hegemonic, and they would prove impossible to be controlled by the state.
CHAPTER 1
BIRTH OF A NATION: FROM 1868 TO 1898, A LABOR OF THIRTY YEARS

Puerto Rico necesita reformar su instrucción pública españolizando la convenientemente y para ello se hace indispensable prescindir por completo de los profesores naturales de este país... [y] de prescindir de ciertos puestos de empleados hijos de este país. En esta Provincia sólo deben admitirse los empleados [born in the Island] más subalternos, siempre que hayan dado pruebas inequívocas de un acendrado españolismo.  

Historian Florencia Mallon has argued that during periods of crisis subaltern groups get the opportunity to strengthen their political stand and gain more inclusion and participation in developing or re-defining the nation and its institutions, either by being included in political coalitions or by being mobilized for war.  

Focusing on the creation of national discourses and identities and how they alter state formation, Fernando López-Alves argues that political and military mass mobilization of peasants and lower classes, the type, duration, timeframe, purpose, and who leads such mobilization affect the creation of a region’s polity and leads to a higher or lower degree of democracy within a

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5 “Puerto Rico needs to reform its public education conveniently Hispanicizing it, and to this end it is necessary to get rid of the professors born in this country... [and] to ban the people of this country from certain positions. Those born in this province should only be allowed to occupy the most subaltern positions, and only after unequivocally proving their unyielding españolismo.” See, Leg. 5112. Expediente 15 Memoria presentada por el Gobernador supr. Civil de Puerto Rico D. Laureano Sanz, in Gautier Dapena, Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal, 46-47.

6 Mallon, Peasant and Nation, 4, 6, 9-10.
given state. Both scholars try to measure to what extent marginalized groups become parts of the hegemonic group in a given society by virtue of political and military mobilization. This chapter analyzes the policies followed by the Spanish metropolis and its colonial apparatus in Puerto Rico during periods of crises with regard to political and military mobilization, and how those policies affected those born in the Island. Thus, the questions in this chapter are; did military participation transformed into political enfranchisement? Is the opposite true? Did demobilization of the inhabitants of Puerto Rico mean political and socio-economic disenfranchisement? Did disenfranchisement and displacement encourage the development of a distinctive Puerto Rican national identity? And, if so, how did the development of a unique national identity affect the choices of the criollo elite in the Island.

This chapter outlines patterns of inclusion-exclusion from the Spanish military and paramilitary institutions in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico and how they influenced the political choices of the criollo elite, and altered the self perception of those born in the Island. I try to show a link between Spanish policies aimed to demobilize the Puerto Ricans, in an effort to destroy the basis of a potential rebel army while providing cheap labor for the incipient export-oriented agricultural enterprises, and colonial policies seeking to curtail the emergence of a Puerto Rican national identity. I argue that the combination of these policies weakened the criollos and liberals politically (as the colonial administration intended) but also made more evident the differences between peninsulares and those born in the Island and thus fueled the emergence of unique Puerto Rican national identities.

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The *sine qua non* in discussions about nationalism and national identity in Puerto Rico is without doubt, *El Grito de Lares* of September 23, 1868, the biggest revolt against Spanish rule ever staged in the Island. On January 6, 1868, prominent Puerto Rican separatists exiled in New York, under the guidance of Ramón Emeterio Betances, founded the *Comité Revolucionario de Puerto Rico*. They aimed to overthrow the Spanish regime in the Island and to create a democratic republic. The revolutionary committee proceeded to organize cells in the Island for this purpose and to secure weaponry for the rebel army. A series of setbacks doomed the plans of the *revolucionarios*. They managed to secure 500 rifles, six canons, ammunitions and the small transport ship, “*El Telegrafo*”, to arm the revolutionary army; however, their ship was confiscated in Saint Thomas. And, Betances, who had planned to land in Puerto Rico.

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8. Note on translation and language usage: All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. I have tried to use the original Spanish version for titles, offices and names throughout this narrative as long as it did not cause confusion to do so. Translations and abbreviations are offered and used throughout the text but their use is limited. When referring to Puerto Rico, Island is capitalized since it actually does not refer to its geographical shape. “*Island*” is more of a nickname for Puerto Rico. *criollo* is used throughout this work, unless citing works where *creole* is used, for the sake of accuracy. In Puerto Rico, *criollo* refers to a mostly white elite differentiated from the peninsular elite by their place of birth, the Americas.

9. Since the exiles in New York had a ‘revolutionary’ agenda, including the abolition of slavery I use the term “revolutionaries” to refer to them. The leaders of the revolt in Puerto Rico, which included slave owners who disagree with the abolition of slavery, are referred to as “rebels”.

Rico with men and weapons the first day of the revolution, set originally for September 29, was detained in Santo Domingo and never made it to the Island.\footnote{By order of the Dominican president Buena Ventura Báez, Betances and his men were precluded from sailing to Puerto Rico., See; Jiménez de Wagenheim, \textit{El grito de Lares},192, and; Negroni, \textit{Historia militar}, 297.}

Meanwhile, the leaders in Puerto Rico faced problems of their own. On September 19 a rebel agent, Pedro García was captured by army colonel Don Antonio Balboa, while raising funds for the insurrection in the western city of Mayagüez. Balboa alerted the Capitán General Julián Juan Pavía, who launched a full investigation.\footnote{See; José A. Gautier Dapena, \textit{Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal puertorriqueño en el siglo XIX}, (San Juan, P.R.: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1975), 103-105, and; Negroni, \textit{Historia militar}, 298.} The next day, the \textit{miliciano} Carlos Antonio López, informed his commander Juan Castañón in the northwestern town of Quebradillas, that he had come to know of revolutionary plans being drawn in the house of Manuel María González in Camuy, further north. Castañón informed the mayor of Quebradillas who in turn alerted the mayor of Camuy.\footnote{The \textit{milicianos’} commanders in Quebradillas and Camuy believed that the mayors of their respective municipalities, Carlos Gonzalez and Pablo Rivera were involved in the conspiracy and were conspiring to alert the rebels. See; Jiménez de Wagenheim, \textit{El grito de lares}, 160-62, and; Gautier Dapena, \textit{Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal}, 105.} In the first hours of the morning of the 21, Spanish authorities detained the rebel leader Manuel María González and searched his house. The Spanish authorities found a list of members of the rebel cell and a copy of their \textit{reglamento}. The Camuy rebels who were not arrested moved to Lares and warned the rebel cell in that town. From Lares, messengers were sent to alert the rebel cell in Mayagüez that their plans had been compromised and of the need to launch the rebellion as soon as possible. They also wanted the Mayagüez cell to
try and to alert the rest of the cells throughout the Island. Reckoning that time was of the essence, the leadership of the rebel cells in Camuy, Lares and Mayagüez decided to launch their revolt six days before originally planned.

On September 23, 1868, hundreds of rebels started to converge at the farm of Manuel Rojas, a coffee grower in the mountain town of Lares and rebel leader. On their way to Lares the rebels exhorted slaves and jornaleros\textsuperscript{14} to join them in some cases threatening to kill them if they did not do so.\textsuperscript{15} That evening the rebels marched into the town itself and took it without resistance. They proceeded to form a provisional government of republican character. The Republic of Puerto Rico, with a president and a cabinet appointed by the chief military leaders present in Lares, Manuel Rojas and Juan de Mata Torreforte, was officially established on the morning of September 24.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} Juan de la Pezuela y Ceballos, \textit{Gobernador y Capitán General} of Puerto Rico (1848-52) created the \textit{Reglamento Especial de Jornaleros} on June 11 of 1849 in order to provide a cheap labor force for the plantations and other enterprises. Free Blacks, people of mixed race, and poor whites age sixteen or over, were subjected to the \textit{reglamento} which forced to work for others. Even those who own land but could not provide for all their needs were forced them to work for others either for wages or goods. The jornaleros were obliged to carry a notebook at all times where their daily activities were to be written. Their freedom of movement was also severely hindered. Though the \textit{reglamento} included penalties for employers’ abusive behavior, all kinds of exploitations were the norm. See; Luis A. Figueroa, \textit{Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico}, (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, and San Juan, P.R.: University of Puerto Rico Press, 2005), 142-48 166-173. See also, James L. Dietz, \textit{Economic History of Puerto Rico, Institutional Change and Development}, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1986), 43, 45-52.

\textsuperscript{15} Jiménez de Wagenheim believes that those threatened were the slaves and jornaleros working for landlords who were not part of the rebellion. The rebels apparently killed Agustín Venero, a freed black, for refusing to join them. See; Jiménez de Wagenheim, \textit{El grito de Lares}, 170-74, and; Gautier Dapena, \textit{Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal}, 108.

\textsuperscript{16} Francisco Ramírez was named President of the Republic of Puerto Rico, Clemente Millán as Minister of Justice, Federico Valencia as Minister of Treasury,
and Torreforte instructed the new government to recruit and organize more rebel soldiers and to secure funding by forcing the merchants to loan monies to the republic. By decree, the rebel government declared null the hated jornalero (passbook) system that forced landless peasants to work as peons, and promised freedom to those slaves who joined them in the fight against the Spaniards. The rebels also welcomed foreigners to join their ranks and become patriots of the republic. Another decree gave Spaniards in Puerto Rico three days to swear allegiance to the new republic or to leave the Island if they did not. The decree also warned of extreme repercussions if the Spaniards decided to stay and did not support the rebels and the republic.

The chief rebel commanders, Rojas and Torreforte, proceeded to name the officers of the Ejército Revolucionario, which at that point consisted of roughly 600 men. They named eight brigadier generals plus colonels for the infantry, artillery and cavalry. Apparently these colonels were quickly promoted to generals. The rebel leadership seemed to have ignored the absurdity of such chain of command for such a small number of rebels for the sake of unity. Late in the morning of the 24, the rebels proceeded to the

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Aurelio Méndez Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Bernabé Pol as Secretary of State. See Jiménez de Wagenheim, El grito de Lares, 179-80, and; Negroni, Historia militar, 298-300, and; Gautier Dapena, Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal, 107-08.

17 Jiménez de Wagenheim, El grito de Lares, 179.

18 See the original decrees in: Gautier Dapena, Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal, 102-103. For an analysis of the decrees see; Jiménez de Wagenheim, El grito de Lares, 179-84. See also; Negroni, Historia militar, 29, and; María Asunción García Ochoa, La política española en Puerto rico durante el siglo XIX, (Rio Piedras, P.R.: Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1982), 150-52.

19 Negroni counts at least twelve generals vs. ten in Jiménez de Wagenheims work. See Jiménez de Wagenheim, El grito de Lares, 179-80, and; Negroni, Historia militar, 299.
town of San Sebastian del Pepino. The commanders of the *Milicias Disciplinadas* in Pepino, Lieutenant Manuel Cebollero and Eusebio Ibarra, who were part of a rebel cell, had spent the previous night organizing slaves and *jornaleros* into a fighting force to join the rebel column coming from Lares. They had also promised the rebel leadership that their *milicianos* would join the rebellion. Later that morning, roughly forty rebels on horseback entered Pepino’s plaza shooting and chanting “death to the Spaniards and the Queen”, while exhorting the *milicianos* to join them. To their surprise, and that of the Spanish authorities present, the *milicianos* responded to the rebels with intense fire ignoring the calls of Cebollero and Ibarra. More rebels continued to pour into Pepino, but their efforts bore no fruits against the effective fire of the *milicianos*, and the town’s civilians who fired rifles and guns and threw dynamite against them from the rooftop of buildings surrounding the plaza. The battle lasted over an hour before the rebels, repulsed twice and driven off the Plaza by the *milicianos*, decided to head back to Lares. The confrontation left eight rebels dead and two *milicianos* wounded. Fighting against *milicianos* and civilians, the rebels lost the only engagement of the revolt. Disconcerted by the unwillingness of the *milicianos* to join them and recognizing that without them on their side, they could not possibly defeat the peninsular troops in the


Island, the rebel army quickly melted away. Scattered in the mountains, and with no hope of a general uprising or aid coming from the exterior, the rebels who initially escaped eventually surrendered. Over 500 rebels found themselves imprisoned. Eighty died while in custody due to poor sanitary conditions. Seven were sentenced to death, but by virtue of a general amnesty, all rebels were set free by January 1869.

From a strictly military standpoint the revolt was a fiasco. Lares was the only town taken by the rebels and the Spanish authorities crushed the revolt in roughly twenty-four hours. The brevity of the uprising is even more damning when taking into account that the rebel army was defeated by milicianos, who were an auxiliary corps manned almost exclusively by Puerto Ricans. Furthermore, the rebels did not enjoy broad support from the inhabitants of the Island, who were either unaware of the events or chose either to remain neutral or loyal to Spain. Lack of communication and coordination, and poor leadership just accentuated the absence of support from the Island’s community in general. Over sixty percent of the participants were jornaleros, peasants, or slaves, many of whom declared that they were forced to joining the rebels under pain of death. Though a failure from a military point of view, many Puerto Rican historians consider the Lares’ uprising as a defining moment for Puerto Rican

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25 Warned of Cebollero and Ibarra’s plans, Pepino’s mayor, Luis Chiesa, decided to arm the civilians and to put the milicianos under the command of a retired Spanish officer, Colonel Pedro Miguel San Antonio, whom restricted the milicianos to their barracks until the rebels entered the plaza. Ibid., 188-90.

26 See; Ibid., 78, 174, 182, and; García Ochoa, *La política española*, 151.
nationality, a moment when the Island’s people ceased to see themselves as Spaniards.27 While one school of thought, and the Island’s mainstream media, regards this revolt as the birth date of national consciousness in Puerto Rico and as a true national uprising, others see it as a group of criollos and recently arrived hacendados seeking to correct what they perceived as economic and political injustices.28 Economic historian James L. Dietz interprets the revolt as “the point at which the development of Puerto Rico’s productive forces came into fundamental conflict with Spain’s sociopolitical domination”.29 Though most of the academic work falls into the second category, the most popular view is that describing Lares as a national revolution.

27 See; Jiménez de Wagenheim, El grito de Lares, 82-85.

28 For those who see the revolt as the birth of Puerto Rico’s national identity see; Antonio Correjter, “The Day Puerto Rico Became a Nation”, The San Juan Star Sunday Magazine, 22 September 1968, and; Vicente Géigel Polanco, El Grito de Lares: gesta de heroísmo y sacrificio, (Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial Antillana, 1976). A more balanced history of the revolt is found in Lidio Cruz Monclova, El Grito de Lares, (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1968). Economic historians follow the second trend, see; Laird W. Bergard, Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), 41-45, 140, and; Dietz, Economic History, 72-74, Bergard and Dietz agree that “Lares was a concrete manifestation of the attempt by members of the more powerful creole class to end the dominance of the hated Spanish merchants.” Ricardo Camuñas-Madera also emphasizes the economic nature of the uprising. He argues that commercial relations between non-peninsular (criollos and foreigners) farmers and peninsular monopolists supported by the colonial regime in the Island were dominated by the later leading the hacendados from the coffee zone to opt for revolution to correct the unequal relationship. See, Ricardo Camuñas-Madera, Desplazamiento y revolución en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX, (San Juan, P.R.: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 2000), xi-xii, 97-107. For a discussion of stated and unstated causes of the revolt and a synthesis of the economic, displacement and discrimination theories see; Jiménez de Wagenheim, El grito de Lares, 82,117.

29 Dietz explains that as the strength of large landowners and small merchants increased, “Spanish domination and in particular, peninsular control over the largest commercial establishments and credit, it became an obstacle rather than an ally to the
In fact, despite its short life, *El Grito de Lares* has inspired many politicians and poets, whom often were the one and the same in Puerto Rico’s political history. Writing for the *San Juan Star* in celebration of the first centenary of the revolt, Juan Antonio Corretjer (1908-1985), one of Puerto Rico’s greatest poets and untamable fighter for Puerto Rico’s independence, described the revolt as “[t]he day Puerto Rico became a nation”. Of course that vision is possible in hindsight which also allows for the reformulation of Puerto Rico’s national mythology, its stories and histories, and Puertoricaness itself. The failed revolt became an obscure footnote in the Island’s history until the 1930s when the *Partido Nacionalista Puertorriqueño* (Nationalist Puerto Rican Party) adopted the Lares revolt as a national icon. Even more tellingly, in 1969, Luis A. Ferré, the first governor of the Island presiding over a party seeking federated statehood, declared the event a national holiday. At first glance it may look contradictory that such opposing political camps embraced the same event as part of their national iconography. However, Puerto Ricans from different sides of the political spectrum understood that control of the national symbols had and still has an important role in Puerto Rican politics. As argued by Arlene Dávila, command of the national mythology and its icons provides for influence over national identities and wields significant political power. This point was not lost on the Spanish authorities. Just about 7% (39 members of this class, as well as educated professionals, just as it had in the rest of the New World.” See; Dietz, *Economic History*, 73.

30 Correjter befriended the nationalist leader Pedro Albizu Campos and became secretary general of the Nationalist Party in the 1930s. He was imprisoned in 1937, 1947 and 1950.

out of 551 detainees) of the Lares’ rebels were born outside the Island. However, foreigners occupied important positions within the rebel cells, a fact that became the basis for the Spanish colonial government’s portrayal of the revolt as being foreign-inspired and led.\textsuperscript{32}

While the Lares uprising may have not been a national movement, the policies followed by the Spanish colonial authorities in its aftermath fueled the emergence of unique Puerto Rican national identities. From this standpoint Lares had undeniable important consequences. If the revolt itself did not separate Puerto Ricans from Spaniards, clumsy Spanish colonial policies would make the differences all too clear. Following the insurrection the newly appointed Governor and \textit{Capitán General} of Puerto Rico, General Laureano Sanz, moved to exclude natives of the Island ("los hijos de este país") from teaching positions while promoting the \textit{españolización} of public and private instruction. Sanz also sought to exclude Puerto Ricans from the clergy and from all administrative posts except the most "subaltern ones"\textsuperscript{33} These measures created even more friction between \textit{peninsulares} and the \textit{criollos}, especially the elite, for they closed traditional routes to socio-economic and political improvement.

\textsuperscript{32} Jiménez de Wagenheim, \textit{El grito de Lares}, 78.

\textsuperscript{33} Sanz wrote; “Puerto Rico necesita reformar su instrucción pública españolizándola convenientemente y para ello se hace indispensable prescindir por completo de los profesores naturales de este país”. He also argued for the “conveniencia de prescindir de ciertos puestos de empleados hijos de este país. Nunca pueden dar aquí buen resultado”. He added “… en esta Provincia [Puerto Rico] sólo deben admitirse los empleados [born in the Island] más subalternos, siempre que hayan dado pruebas inequívocas de un acendrado españolismo”. See, Leg. 5112. Expediente 15 \textit{Memoria presentada por el Gobernador supr. Civil de Puerto Rico D. Laureano Sanz}, in Gautier Dapena, \textit{Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal}, 46-47.
Exclusionary policies were not restricted to the political realm and the colonial administration. “Los hijos de este país”, who had not only served faithfully for over 300 years but had also suppressed the Lares revolt, found themselves excluded from the military. Soon after the revolt the colonial administration proceeded to ban Puerto Ricans from its armed forces in an attempt to forestall other insurrections. The criollos leading the Lares’ revolt had not been able to mobilize the masses to support their cause even after appealing to the national spirit of Puerto Ricans.  

In an Island were different languages could be heard by moving from one barrio to another; where Corsicans, Italians, French, Germans, Irish and others had settled in colonies with their families and created enclaves, by all means and purposes isolated from the rest of the Island; and with few roads connecting the different towns, and with no common experience or common education to share beyond their immediate community, it was difficult if not impossible to appeal to national identity feelings.  

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34 See: Manifiesto de los patriotas borinquenos que dirigen el movimiento revolucionario, in Gautier Dapena, Trayectoria del pensamiento liberal, Apéndice Núm. 4, 102-103.  

35 Estela Cifre de Loubriel argues that the principal element in the formation of the Puerto Ricans as a people (pueblo) was the exponential progression of the Island’s population during the nineteenth century which itself was the result of mass immigration. She identifies three distinct immigration waves during this century, 1800-1850, 1850-1880, and 1880-1898. The first stage was characterized by an influx of immigrants from Santo Domingo, as well as French elements from Haiti and political émigrés from Venezuela. Foreign immigration, triggered by the real Cédula de Gracias of August 10, 1815, accounted for much of the immigration to Puerto Rico during this first period. Military personnel and loyalists started to arrive after the defeat of the Spanish armies in the former empire and soon monopolized the Island’s bureaucracy. 32% of the total immigration for the whole century occurred between 1851 and 1860. During this second period, there was a marked increase of peninsular immigration, but Lares and Yara soon made Puerto Rico less attractive to this group. The third period was characterized by a slow decrease in immigration, especially of peninsular origin. Though it never overtook the peninsulares, foreign immigration held steady throughout the century. Immigration
After 1868, and especially under Sanz’s leadership, the Iberian metropolis embarked on a project of anti-nation building. Political exclusion, demobilization of the population, and the españolización of the Island were the tools with which to avoid the emergence of a strong Puerto Rican national identity; an identity that could be used to rally those born in the Island against the Spaniards. However, Sanz’s plans had the opposite effect. By closing the military to natives of Puerto Rico the Spaniards created a common denominator for those born in the Island; exclusion by birthplace. Barring “los hijos de este país” from the military was more damaging than any other form of exclusion by the colonial administration since it affected the majority of the population not just a small criollo elite. By following exclusionary policies the Spanish colonial authorities made more obvious the differences between peninsulares and Puerto Ricans, lost the opportunity to co-opt Puerto Ricans into serving Spain, and ultimately fueled the development of a Puerto Rican national identity. In effect the combined exclusion of Puerto Ricans from the colonial administration and the military undermined the loyalty of the inhabitants of the Island and put them on the path of a separate and unique national identity.

of peninsular origin (or of Spanish insular possession) accounted for 88.2% of the century’s immigration while foreigners accounted for 8.5%. It is noteworthy that foreign immigrants were mostly farmers, professionals and artisans while peninsular immigrants were for the most part military personnel (including guardias civiles), merchants and public employees. See: Estela Cifre de Loubriel, La inmigración a Puerto Rico durante el siglo XIX, (San Juan, P.R.: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1964), XLIX-LIII, LXXXIX, XCIX-CI, and; Estela Cifre de Loubriel, Catalogo de extranjeros residentes en Puerto Rico en el siglo XIX, (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1962), XXXV-XXXVII, XXXVIII-XLI, L-LVI. The vast majority of foreigners living in Puerto Rico resided in the South/South-West, the West and North-West tip of the Island, and the coffee region adjacent to these areas.
The development of this identity was slow. Political exclusion intertwined with short-lived political reforms after 1868. This pattern would not change until the end of Spanish sovereignty over the Island in 1898. Soon after the *Grito de Lares*, most of the *criollo* leadership, which comprised the liberal movement, disenchanted with the results of the revolt, opted for a policy of watered-down *autonomismo* or a higher degree of political freedom, instead of independence from Spain. The reluctance of the *criollo* leadership to sever its ties to Spain, and degrees of cultural affinity with Spain, may have slowed the development of a unique Puerto Rican national identity. This is not to say that the *criollos* that stayed in the Island had many other options. The demobilization of the Puerto Ricans reduced, if not arrested altogether, the political choices of the *criollo* leadership. In fact the *criollos*’ position was weakened by the sudden absence of Puerto Rican militias. Military exclusion provided Puerto Ricans with a common experience that may have moved them towards a shared identity but it also weakened the *criollos* and liberals.

Controlling access to the military and paramilitary apparatus and seeking to curtail the power of the liberals and *criollos* in the Island were not new colonial strategies. Nor was military service a marginal issue for the inhabitants of the Island. A review of the political trajectory and of the development of the Puerto Rican militias

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36 Román Baldorioty de Castro and Luis Muñoz Rivera, leaders of the Autonomist Liberal Party (pro-autonomy) in Puerto Rico talked openly about the impossibility of obtaining independence through war. One of the reasons was the state of illiteracy and poverty of the peasantry which they thought would not allow for an effective revolt or the survival of an independent republic. According to Jiménez de Wagenheim’s findings, of the men taken prisoners after the revolt who were asked about their literacy 40% responded negatively. This number was probably higher as the authorities probably did not question the slaves involved in the revolt. Jiménez de Wagenheim, *El grito de Lares*, 79.
during the nineteenth century should help to illustrate how Spain sought to neutralized
the liberals and the criollo elite in the Island by disarming the population in addition to
showing the military character of the colony and of those who made it their home.

Puerto Rico has had an intimate history with military institutions. From 1582 to
1897, the Island was ruled either as a presidio, a camp, or a military plaza, and, it was not
until 1897 that Puerto Rico enjoyed a civil government. In 1582 the first garrison of
regular Spanish troops was assigned to the Island, and the functions of Governor and
Alcaide (keeper) del Morro were fused into one position effectively making the Island a
Capitanía General. The duties of the Capitán General included the command,
organization and jurisdiction of the army and militias. The post was usually reserved for
areas deemed of strategic military importance. Within the Spanish Empire these
administrative positions were separated from, and subordinated to, the offices of the
viceroys or governors. In the case of Puerto Rico, however, this office also entailed the
administration of all affairs of the Island. In the late eighteen century, as part of the
Bourbon reforms, Intendentes de Ejército y Provincia were added to the imperial
bureaucracy and existed along the positions of Governor, Viceroy or Captain General
throughout the Spanish Empire, but not in Puerto Rico were the Capitán General
remained as absolute ruler. For most of its history Puerto Rico was first and mostly a
military bastion and everything else was secondary.

37 Negroni, Historia militar, 60.

38 Puerto Rico’s Capitánía General formed part of the Viceroyalty of the New
Spain and of the Real Audiencia de Santo Domingo until the Real Audiencia de Puerto
Rico was created in 1831.
39 See: Negroni, Historia militar, 66-67, 24-26. The Capitanías Generales were
located in strategic areas to protect the sea routes and the empire against indigenous
As Héctor Andrés Negroni argues, since the Island was but a military camp the islander could be nothing but a soldier or at least be influenced by Puerto Rico’s military baggage.\textsuperscript{40} In 1887, in a study of the Puerto Rican Jíbaro, Francisco del Valle Atiles declared: “Since those remote days when Spain fought wars with England and the Netherlands, [he refers to the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a period during which no less than fifty-six invasions took place] until this very day, the jíbaro has been a good Spanish soldier, willing to die for the motherland \textit{(patria)}; called by the government or volunteering, he has heeded the call of duty…”\textsuperscript{41} Such was the military nature of the Spanish colonization of the Island that the most common form of communication between the \textit{Capitán General} and the inhabitants of Puerto Rico was the \textit{Bando}, a type of general orders usually employed by a military commander to let his troops know what was expected of them.\textsuperscript{42} The military nature of the Island can also be illustrated by its budget. Even in 1842, when the population had increased from roughly 80,000 inhabitants in 1783 to almost half a million; and with coffee, sugar and tobacco production rising to unseen levels, and a favorable trade balance, military expenditures still accounted for 50\% of the Island’s budget rapidly rising to 69\% in 1846, and finally

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{40} Ibid., 29.
\footnote{41} Ibid, 218-220. Negroni is citing Francisco del Valle Atiles, 30, (42:537).
\footnote{42} Ibid., 78-79.
\end{footnotes}
leveling at 50% by 1865. Even though Puerto Rico prospered economically, and its population grew exponentially during the nineteenth century, the military nature of the colony remained mostly unchanged.

As Spain strengthened its hold of the territories in the Americas, it sought to regulate the administration of its possessions. *Milicias Irregulares* (irregular militia) existed in Puerto Rico since the very first days of Spanish colonization and conquest in 1508 until 1692, when they were replaced by the *Milicia Irregular Urbana*. Field Marshall, Campo Gaspar de Arredondo, *Capitán General* between 1690 and 1695, resolved to create a territorial division in the Island called *partidos urbanos* instead of *villas* due to the cumbersome process established by the Council of Indies to create the later. These *partidos urbanos* (the equivalent of towns and villages) were to be administered by governor’s appointees with the title “*Teniente a Guerra*”. The functions of the *Teniente a Guerra* included that of auxiliary mayor, justice of the peace and police chief. With the title of “*Sargento Mayor de la Milicia Urbana*”, the *Teniente a Guerra* was in charge of organizing and training a militia within his jurisdiction. In turn, the *Milicias Urbanas* were composed of white free males between the ages of sixteen and sixty.

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44 The *Real Cédula* of October 7, 1540, signed by Felipe II of Spain ordered all Spaniards (age twelve to sixty) living in the West Indies to form part of the militias, before that *cédula*, the militias had organized themselves voluntarily in times of need.

45 Negroni, *Historia militar*, 62-63. The *Milicia Urbana* was to be composed of white free males between the ages of sixteen and sixty and was entrusted with public order and territorial defense.
sixty. Their mission included safeguarding public order and territorial defense.\footnote{Ibid, 66-67. Tenientes a Guerra survived in Puerto Rico until 1870 when this office was replaced by elected officials.} The milicia was the only military body opened to those born in the Island until 1741 when those born in the Island were permitted to join two of the units of the permanent garrison. In 1700 there were 1000 men in the Milicias Irregulares Urbanas. As Negroni suggests, since the permanent garrison of the Island during this period never exceeded 400 men, the militia was the core of Puerto Rico’s defenses.\footnote{Ibid., 105.} By 1763, the militias counted 5,611 men out of a total population of only 46,197 including women and children.\footnote{Fernando Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 1809-2000, Nueva edición revisada y ampliada, (Mayagüez, P.R.: Editorial Isla, 2000), 106, and; Dietz, Economic History, 31.} One out of every nine inhabitants was directly involved in the militias. Furthermore these militia men, unlike the regular army garrison troops, had settled in the Island, were part of communities, and perhaps more importantly, they were part of families. The men of the Spanish army were rotated in and out, but the militia was organic to the Island and had grown roots in it.

In 1765, the Milicia Irregular Urbana was itself replaced by two bodies, the Milicia Urbana and the Milicia Disciplinada (urban and disciplined militia respectively), by virtue of the reforms launched by Field Marshall Alejandro O’Reilly.\footnote{In 1783 Governor Juan Daban assigned the cavalry units of the Milicias Disciplinadas to deliver the mail, in fact creating the first postal service in the Island, as way to justify the expenses incurred in providing for this recently created body. Negroni, Historia militar, 66, 112.} O’Reilly arrived in Puerto Rico on April 8, 1765 entrusted by Carlos III de Borbón to inspect the
defenses and garrisons of the Spanish Antilles. In his report on the conditions of the Island, O’Reilly dedicated only eleven sections to the political and economic situation of the Island while writing fifty-three on military matters.\(^{50}\) Finding the defenses in poor state, the troops demoralized, and the absence of relevant data regarding the *Milicias Irregulares*, he recommended their dissolution and the creation of a disciplined entity divided in two corps using the *Reglamento* of the Cuban Militias.\(^{51}\) Out of O’Reilly’s recommendations emerged the *Milicia Urbana* as a type of police force, and the *Milicia Disciplinada* which became the equivalent of a military reserve and the main auxiliary corps for the regular troops stationed in the Island. The *Milicias Urbanas* created as a reserve or auxiliary corps and replacement pool for the *Milicias Disciplinadas*, and in charge of police duties and coastal watch, came to consist of roughly 38,000 men by 1832 or 11% of the Island population.\(^{52}\) This figure is impressive by itself but more so when taking into consideration that it does not include those serving in the *Milicias Disciplinadas* which had roughly 7,000 men under arms, or those serving in the *Battallones Fijos* (battalions of the Spanish army assigned permanently to the Island).\(^{53}\)

Manning the regular garrison of the Island with “*hijos de este país*”, or those born in the Americas, was not an accepted practice within the Spanish Empire. Nonetheless, more often than not, reality superseded legislation. By the 1640s, “*hijos de este país*”

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 131.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 108.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 117-120.

\(^{53}\) Since 1741 there had been artillery and infantry battalion in San Juan, both *fijos* (permanent) and half the positions in it were opened to those born in the Island. Ibid., 106-07.
were being used to garrison the fortifications in San Juan. Reprimanded for this practice, Capitán General Fernando de la Riva Agüero (1643-48) responded that without those born in the Island there would be no one to guard the walls.\(^{54}\) It was not until 1741 that those born in Puerto Rico were legally accepted into the regular forces assigned to the Island. By royal decree natives of the Island were allowed to fill up to half the allotted military positions for the garrison in Puerto Rico. Consisting of a force totaling 400 men this troop came to be known as the “Batallón de Veteranos” or “Fijo”.\(^{55}\) The Fijo was to be reinforced by peninsular troops attached to it and supported, initially, by the Milicias Irregulares and later by the urbanos and disciplinados. After his inspection of the Island’s defenses, O’Reilly discharged half the soldiers of the Fijo and promoted augmenting the garrison in the Island with peninsular troops which started to rotate in regimental strength in 1795.\(^{56}\)

The expansion in size and role of the militias and regular troops in Puerto Rico did not occur in a political vacuum nor was this phenomenon just the result of O’Reilly’s report and recommendations. Events in Europe and in the Spanish Empire in the Americas precipitated the growth and relevance of the Puerto Rican militias. The French Revolution and subsequent revolutionary and Napoleonic wars propelled the wheels of change in the Americas as much as it did in Europe.\(^{57}\) Undoubtedly, the Napoleonic

\(^{54}\) Ibid., Negroni 128.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 129. Negroni citing Reglamento para la Guarnición de la Plaza de Puerto rico, castillos y fuertes de su jurisdicción, de febrero 12 del 1741.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 131.

\(^{57}\) In 1808 the Spanish Empire in the Americas extended from California to Cape Horn and from the mouth of the Orinoco to the Pacific Ocean. This empire was divided
invasion of Spain provided for the brief rise of liberalism in the peninsula and in the Island. By the decree of January 22, 1809, after three centuries of absolutist rule, the Junta Suprema y Gubernativa de España e Indias provided for the election in the Island of one diputado a cortes (representative to the courts). The decree also recognized the American colonies as Spanish provinces.\(^{58}\) It is at this point that political tendencies in the Island became more contrasting, and not surprisingly this is also the beginning of a

in four viceroyalties and was inhabited by seventeen-million people. Roughly two decades afterwards, Cuba and Puerto Rico were all that was left of such vast empire. Many scholars have tried to explain what caused Spain to lose its empire so abruptly. The most common explanations include Spain’s economic stagnation within the frame of the industrial and commercial revolutions, and the commercial expansion of Europe (particularly England), the creole-peninsular competition, the coming of nationalism, the Bourbon reforms, as well as the impact of the Enlightenment, the French and American revolutions, and the Napoleonic Wars. A work that emphasizes the role of the Bourbon reforms in bringing about insurrection, by among other things, ending the de facto autonomy if not independence of the American territories is; John Lynch, *The Spanish-American Revolutions, 1808-1826: A Unified Account of the Revolutions that Swept Over South America and Central America in the Early Nineteenth-Century*, (2nd edition) Revolutions in the Modern World, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1986), 1,2,7-9,23. For the role of the Napoleonic Wars in bringing about independence to the former Spanish empire see; Jay Kinsbruner, *Independence in Spanish America: Civil Wars, Revolutions and Underdevelopment*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 3, 6, 37, 157. See also; Timothy E. Anna., *Spain and the Loss of America*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983). Anna argues that “the massive weakening of the old principles of society and government in the peninsula,” which started with the Napoleonic invasion of 1808, “made American independence possible” (xii). It was, however, the restitution of the constitutional regime that made Spanish-American independence inevitable by “destroying the cohesion of the central government in Madrid” (245). For a work of synthesis see also; Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713-1826*, John Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983). The French and American revolutions, as well as the commercial and industrial revolutions play major roles in this comparative synthesis. She rejects the role of panaceas for diverse historical events that have been given to structural, neo-Marxists and dependency theories, as well as general explanations based on capitalism, imperialism and modernity. Liss rather emphasizes the role of ideas and individuals and seeks to show how the material and ideological elements of revolutions, especially how they interplay, are equally important (222).

\(^{58}\) Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos*, 11-12.
long campaign to demobilize those born in Puerto Rico. Criollos and some reform-minded peninsulares grouped under liberal and reformist ideas while the merchant class and the colonial administration became markedly conservative. The liberals and reformists won the general elections held between 1809 and 1813, and during this period Puerto Ricans earned Spanish citizenship.

The rapid growth of the militias and the political power gained by the liberals in the Island alarmed the Spanish authorities. In 1810, Capitán General Salvador Meléndez (1809-20) tried to dissolve the Milicias Urbanas but failed to do so. In effect the Milicia Urbana expanded from roughly 17,000 men in 1810 to 33,000 in 1813. Furthermore, the militias in Aguadilla and Mayagüez (North-West and West part of the Island respectively) came to include batteries with over forty pieces of artillery. The urbanos, which were composed in its entirety of “hijos de este país” had become a formidable force. With the peninsula in despair due to the French invasion and fearing insurrection in the rest of the empire, Melendez could not push too hard and risk alienating the Island’s population nor could he really rescind of the urbanos manpower.

The French invasion of the Iberian Peninsula and the wars of independence in the Spanish Empire compelled political fluctuations and created military needs which at first benefited the Island. The milicias expansion and the weakness of the crown and the cortes, allowed the liberals briefly to gain the upper hand, both on the peninsula and in the Island. That does not mean that the Spanish colonial administration in the Puerto Rico did not try to curtail the power of liberals and separatists alike. In what is known as

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59 Ibid., 13.

60 Negroni, Historia militar, 118-19.
the “Falso motín de Santa Teresa”, Governor Melendez planed to stage a mock uprising so he could use the opportunity to move against separatists and liberal elements. The newly created constitutional government, warned of Melendez’s intentions, alerted the population which stayed in their houses during the mock uprising of October 15, 1813, and the ruse failed.\(^{61}\) However, after France’s defeat and the restoration of the absolutist monarch Fernando VII, the militias came under attack as well as the liberals.

Fernando VII moved quickly to reduce the power of liberals and the role of the militia in the Island. On May 4, 1814, he returned Puerto Rico to colonial status. Those born in Puerto Rico lost political representation and their Spanish citizenship. The return of the king also doomed regular military units in the Island. *El Fijo* which had participated in the Haitian Revolution between 1792 and 1793, and was again sent to Santo Domingo in 1809-12, came under suspicion when it was dispatched to Venezuela. Sending the *Fijo* to Venezuela to aid the royalist’s armies drew criticism from *criollos* in Puerto Rico which prompted Fernando VII to suppress the body in 1815.\(^{62}\) Despite the protest of prominent *criollos* and even the secretary of government in the Island, the *Fijo* was not to be reinstated. It is important that even the colonial administration recognized that dissolving the body was not just unnecessary but counterproductive since it offended the sensibility of loyal Puerto Ricans.\(^{63}\) Seven decades would pass before the “*hijos de este país*” were again accepted into the Spanish army units serving in the Island.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 293.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 133.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 133-34. Negroni citing the *Secretario de la Gobernación de Puerto Rico*, Don Pedro Tomás de Córdoba, “No se ha podido desimpresionar a los puertorriqueños que la extinción [sic] de este cuerpo veterano no tuvo por causa la desconfianza que
Emboldened by the return of the absolutist king, Melendez sought to neutralize the *Milicia Urbana* and in 1817 created a new *reglamento* which stripped the *urbanos* of firearms restricting them to the use of machete and spears. Moreover, he sought to put the *urbanos* under the direct control of the Capitán General circumventing local authorities. The *reglamento* also established the separation of whites and *morenos* who until then had fought in the same units. Thus, the only regular military unit in the Island which accepted Puerto Ricans, *el Fijo*, had been suppressed and the all-Puerto Rican *Milicia Urbana* was seriously weakened by removing its firearms. As if these measures were not enough, Melendez proceeded to create a force mirroring the *milicias*.

The *Instituto de Voluntarios* existed in the Island between 1812 and 1898 as a paramilitary corps made of mostly peninsular volunteers. The origin of this corps lay in the fear of the colonial authorities that sooner or later both the *Milicias Urbanas and Disicplinadas* would become the nucleus of a rebel army. Hence the *Instituto* was intended to counterbalance and eventually replace the militias. In its inception this volunteer corps was exclusively for civilians born in Spain. Later the *Instituto* was divided in two battalions of “*Voluntarios Distinguidos*”, one for those born in the Island and another for *peninsulares*. Merchants and landowners from San Juan made the bulk

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64 Ibid., 119. Curiously enough, the *Reglamento* set July 25 for the corps’ annual inspection. That is also the date for the American invasion in 1898 and the creation of the Estado Libre Asociado in 1952.

65 Ibid., 120-21.
of these corps. In 1813, Capitán General Melendez dissolved the battalions and reorganized them into the *Cuerpo de Voluntarios Distinguidos*. Melendez also decreed that the new corps was to be integrated by those born in Spain or their first generation born in the Island and authorized the use weaponry, including firearms, and uniforms similar to that of the regular Spanish Army while simultaneously banning the use of firearms among the *urbanos*. The *voluntarios*, who hailed from the most conservative families, served as a counterbalance to the *urbanos*.

The other militia corps, the *disciplinado*, was probably saved by the fact that it was essential for the defense of the Island as to curtail its effectiveness, and by the sheer lack of peninsular manpower to substitute it. Though the *disciplinados* survived Melendez’s purge of Puerto Rican elements from the Spanish military, the demobilization of the inhabitants of the Island would continue until the whole military and paramilitary apparatus was firmly controlled by *peninsulares* and their offspring. The *urbanos*, weakened as they were in 1817, continued to fulfill their duties for another five decades until 1853 when the Capitan General, Lt. General Fernando de Norzagaray (1852-1855) ordered the suppression of the *urbanos* in several towns. In 1855 the official order came to disband the rest of the corps which was finalized in 1860. Eventually, Puerto Rican

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66 Ibid., 121.


68 Ibid., 15, 120. The demobilization of the *urbano*, the largest paramilitary unit in the Island, coincided with the implementation of the *Reglamento Especial de Jornaleros* of June 11 of 1849 ordered by Gobernador y Capitán General of Puerto Rico Juan de la Pezuela y Ceballos. The reglamento was intended to provide cheap labor especially for sugar plantations, and other enterprises. This third attempt to coerce the lowest strata in Puerto Rico to work in the fields came during a period of low sugar prices
militias would be replaced by the Instituto de Voluntarios and the Guardia Civil (Civil Guard).

In 1820, there was yet another brief wave of liberalism and constitutional government. With the triumph of the constitucionalistas in Spain that year, the Constitution of Cadiz of 1812 once more ruled the Island, and the liberales, who continued to dominate the elections, actively sought to curtail the power of the Capitán General by separating military matters from civilian affairs. The Spanish cortes passed a law presented by the Puerto Rican representative, Demetrio O’Daly providing for the separation of civil and military commands in Puerto Rico, and Francisco González de Linares became the first civil governor of the Island in 1822. This separation of powers, however, was short-lived; it was annulled in December 1823 with the return of the absolutist regime of Fernando VII. After Fernando VII’s death on September 1833, María Cristina de Borbón became regent queen on behalf of Isabel II, and named Francisco Martínez de la Rosa as prime minister. The new peninsular regime reestablished the cortes and called for new elections to be held on July, 1834. The liberals continued to dominate the elections until 1836 when for the first time conservative representatives were elected, mostly due to the restrictive system of which made imperative cheapening production costs. See; Dietz, Economic History, 44-45.


70 Ibid., 30-35.

71 Ibid., 36-38.
“electores pudientes” or well-to-do voters, which favored the conservatives. Even after the triumph of the conservatives in 1836, Spain saw fit to end American representation in the cortes and to vest the military governor of the Island with dictatorial powers known as “facultades omnimodas”. This absolutist period lasted until the Revolución Gloriosa of 1868 which resulted in the overthrowing of Isabel II and her eventual abdication on June 25, 1870. The return of a semi-constitutional period occurred as the result of a combination of revolts which shocked the Spanish Empire in 1868. And, at least in Puerto Rico, constitutionalism was severely limited by the weakness of the liberals who had witnessed the military and paramilitary apparatus in the Island gradually fall into the hands of the peninsulares and their conservative allies.

In 1864, the Cuerpo de Voluntarios Distinguidos, which since 1812 had acted as a counterbalance for the Puerto Rican militias, was reorganized and expanded with the name of Instituto de Voluntarios. Negroni agrees that the expansion was necessary to replace the permanent garrison in the Island much of which had been sent to La Española to suffocate the Dominican rebellion which followed that island’s reincorporation to the Spanish empire in 1861. The need to replace the troops was indeed real. However,

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72 Ibid., 35-41.

73 García Ochoa, La política española, 125-28, and; Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos, 44-45.

74 Negroni, Historia militar, 124. The Spanish governor, José Núñez de Cáceres, announced the independence of Spanish Santo Domingo, and the creation of the state of Spanish Haiti on November 30, 1821. Haiti’s president, Jean-Pierre Boyer, decided to invade Santo Domingo and to reunite the island under the Haitian flag. The twenty-two years of Haitian occupation led to deep resentment of Haitians among Dominicans. Fearing another Haitian invasion, the Dominican Republic returned under Spanish sovereignty in on March 17, 1861 due to Dominican General Pedro Santana’s negotiations with the Spanish ruling Liberal Union of General Leopoldo O’Donnell.
nothing but the *peninsulares’* fear and their mistrust of those born in the Island justified the replacement of regular troops by the volunteers. Though the *urbanos* had been demobilized a few years earlier, the *disciplinados* were still in place and could have taken the place of the regular troops. The colonial authorities, nonetheless, decided once more to insult the militia by strengthening the *peninsulares* and those born in Puerto Rico who were known conservatives and ultra loyalists.

On June 7, 1867, an event known as the *Tercer alzamiento de artilleros*, occurred in San Juan. Disgusted by not enjoying the same privileges as the artillery men serving in the peninsula, a group of soldiers from the artillery regiment rioted. Though the uprising was triggered by the economic inequalities between peninsular soldiers serving in the Island and those in the peninsula, the governor, Lt. General José María Marchessi (1865-1867) ordered the execution by firing squad of a corporal and took the opportunity to exile several separatists, among them, Ramón Emeterio Betances and Segundo Ruiz Belvis. 

Ironically, exile put these separatist leaders directly in touch with Cuban revolutionaries in New York and may have triggered the events that led to the Lares revolt of 1868.

It is noteworthy that the Spanish Glorious Revolution (*Revolución Gloriosa* or *Septembrina*) of September 18, 1868 in the peninsula combined with the *Grito de Lares* of September 23 in Puerto Rico and the *Grito de Yara* of October 10 in Cuba to bring a

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liberal government to Spain. However, even though Spain was flirting with liberalism, the governor of the Island, General José Laureano Sanz (1868-1870 and 1875) was markedly reactionary. Sanz engaged heavily in political persecution and banishment to quiet the liberals, and went so far as to create a Guardia Civil and to vest the Instituto de Voluntarios with military protections (fueros) while serving as a political body. Under Sanz the main mission of the voluntarios was to keep the liberals under surveillance and to counter the Puerto Rican milicias which the colonial authorities had never fully trusted.76 Furthermore, when the Spanish cortes approved a new constitution on June 6, 1869, it was not extended to Puerto Rico. At this point, the cortes were bent upon following a colonial policy of assimilation regarding insular possessions.77

After the Lares insurrection, the Instituto de Voluntarios began to expand while the milicias were being extinguished. Between 1868 and 1870, Sanz reorganized the Instituto into nine battalions roughly divided by districts. On 27 July 1869, at Sanz’s urging, the Reglamento de Voluntarios was published. Among other things it allowed its members to be protected under the “fuero activo de Guerra” during time of war, and the “fuero criminal” after fifteen years of service.78 These protections effectively awarded legal impunity to the voluntarios. Furthermore, on November 1, 1868 at the urgency of Sanz, the Spanish minister of overseas possessions authorized the creation of the Guardia

76 Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos, 51-52.

77 Ibid., 47, 52. Of roughly 650,000 inhabitants only 2,580 were allowed to vote resulting in the election of seven conservative diputados and four liberals.

78 Negroni, Historia militar, 122.
Civil in Puerto Rico. The Guardia Civil was always limited to internal affairs, meaning that its mission was to control the population and civil order. Sanz immediately moved to make of the guardia a loyal and effective repressive tool. Since its inception its members were from the conservative faction in the Island who immediately proceeded to persecute the liberals. In its first years, the guardia was composed of roughly 300 men, all of them peninsulares. Like the voluntarios, the Guardia Civil soon came to be protected by all the fueros protecting the military.

Immediately before the Lares revolt, the Milicias Disciplinadas were composed of 7,900 men, which as Negroni points out was about the same strength of the Puerto Rico U.S. National Guard in 1992 when the Island’s population approached four million inhabitants. Since a lieutenant, an alférez (second lieutenant in the Spanish military) and a few soldiers from the militia participated in the revolt, the loyalty of the whole corps was put in doubt. On February 12, 1870, Governor General Sanz ordered the suppression of the Milicias Disciplinadas’ active service effective March 1870. The troop was discharged. The cadre of officers was allowed to continue wearing their uniforms and to

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79 The origin of the Guardia Civil goes back to Spain in 1844 when this body was created under shared command of the ministry of war for organization, personnel and discipline, and the ministry of government of government for services and mobilization. See, Ibid., 125.

80 By 1898 the Guardia Civil included the offspring of peninsulares and had grown to about 800 men. These “new” criollos were of the most conservative stock. The peninsulares, being a group incapable of reproducing, since their offspring would be criollos or Americans, had to secure some positions for their children. Thus, these positions were not completely closed to criollos but to liberals.
receive monthly payments for service and pension, but for all purposes they had no reason d’être.  

Military education also came to be reserved for *peninsulares* and their conservative allies. Out of O’Reilly’s recommendations a military academy had been founded in the Island in 1765.  

In 1874 the *Academia* was reorganized and renamed the *Academia de Infantería* with room for sixteen cadets. Though in theory anyone between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five could apply for admission (fourteen, if the applicant was a member of a military family), the acceptance requirements effectively banned those not belonging to the elite from studying in the *Academia*.  

Moreover, two thirds of the positions were to be filled by the children of military personnel leaving the remaining third children of civilians. Since Puerto Ricans were effectively banned from the military (until 1884) two thirds of the cadets were actually the children of peninsular officers, and, given the rigorous requirement for admittance, only those in position to secure an extraordinary education for their children could hope to send them to the *Academia*. This elite academy, which provided the best education in the Island until the change of sovereignty in 1898 was in effect reserved for *peninsulares*, their offspring, and the

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82 Ibid., 139. Intended to provide officers for the Island’s garrison this *Academia de Caballeros Cadetes* had room for thirty-two students, one for each company of the permanent garrison in 1784.

83 The examination for entrance into the *Academia de Infantería* included reading and writing, Castilian grammar, rhetoric, French, arithmetic, Spanish geography and history, notions of morality, and knowledge of the Spanish constitution. Ibid., 140.
In 1880 the Island was allowed to send students directly to the military academies in Spain, but being that the admittance process was as rigorous and with the added economic constraint, the military schools were for all purposes reserved for the Island’s elites.

For practical purposes, the elimination of el Fijo in 1815, the urbanos between 1855 and 1860, and the disciplinados in 1870, coupled with the strict requirements and exclusionary policies of the military academy, combined to demobilize the inhabitants of Puerto Rico with the exception of the peninsulares and their conservative allies. Moreover, as Puerto Ricans were being excluded from traditional military and paramilitary institutions, the colonial administration used every opportunity to strengthen the Guardia Civíl and the voluntarios. The dearth of a military force that could counterbalance the military institutions in the hands of peninsulares weakened the liberals who had to be content with whatever liberal reforms emerged from the political crises which periodically took place in the peninsula.

Out of the reforms that followed the critical period of September 1868, emerged the first political parties in the Island. On November 20, 1870 the Partido Liberal Reformista (PLR) was founded in Puerto Rico. Farmers, cattle ranchers, industrialists, storekeepers, professionals and the middle class made the bulk of the party. The liberal-reformists were divided between two philosophies: autonomy and assimilation.

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84 The curriculum of the Academia de Infantería included: algebra, geometry, trigonometry, military commands, tactics, psychology, logic and ethics, history, French, topographic drawing, gymnastics, cosmography, physics and chemistry, accounting, fencing, fortifications, the art of war, military law, ballistics and use of small arms, principles of artillery. Ibid., 141.

85 Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos, 52-53.
The latter became dominant breaking with a long tradition of liberals seeking autonomy dating back to the first Puerto Rican delegado a las cortes, Ramón Power y Giralt. Undoubtedly, the quick suppression of the Lares’ rebels, and the political persecution and banishment of separatists and liberals alike provided the ground for this apparent rupture with autonomist ideals.

A few days after the establishment of the PLR, the conservatives followed suit and created their own party. New elections were held in 1871 and were completely dominated by the liberals. These general elections conformed to the Spanish constitution of 1869 which allowed for fifteen diputados a cortes to be elected. The liberals obtained over 90% of the votes (9,773 versus 1,004) and elected 14 diputados. Sanz, who had been replaced by the liberal governor Lt. General Gabriel Baldrich (1870-1871) on May 20, 1870, was the only conservative elected running for the district of San Juan where most conservatives concentrated.86 The conservatives responded promoting instability by causing riots and accusing governor Baldrich of harboring liberals. Their efforts bore fruit, and Baldrich was relieved of his charge on September 13, 1871 and replaced by yet another conservative, Ramón Gómez Pulido, in order to placate the influent conservatives.87 New elections were held on April 1872 but instead of following the electoral law of 1870, they were run under a decree recognizing the voting rights of only free Spaniards, who were at least twenty-five years old, and who were literate or could instead pay eight pesos to the colonial authorities. Nine of the fifteen delegates elected

86 Ibid., 54-55.

87 Ibid., 58.
were *peninsulares* and eight were from the conservative faction. This phenomenon was known as *cunerismo* or election by birthplace.\(^{88}\)

The liberal delegates elected in that election succeeded in presenting the irregularities of the 1872 elections before the *cortes* paving the way for new elections to be held in August of the same year. The liberals won every district but that of San Juan where the conservatives concentrated to elect Sanz once more. This period was followed by a series of reforms including the final abolition of slavery, more extensive male suffrage, freedom of the press and association, and the elimination of the governor’s *facultades omnimodas*. In 1873 the liberals controlled every district as the conservatives abstained from participating.\(^{89}\) None of these reforms would have been possible without Amadeo I de Saboya’s abdication to the throne which prompted the Spanish Cortes to declare the first Spanish Republic on February 11, 1873.\(^{90}\) The government of the new republic moved to make of Puerto Rico one of the eighteen states included in the Spanish federal republic and extended all the protections of the Spanish constitution of 1869 to those born in Puerto Rico.\(^{91}\) These measures were short-lived.

The fall of the Spanish Republic on January 3, 1874 brought the accession of Alfonso XII and a parliamentary monarchy to the peninsula, but the Island regressed to a

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 58-59.

\(^{89}\) Ibid., 65-66.

\(^{90}\) The Federal Republic’s government fell in less than a year (January 3, 1874) with the pronouncement of Madrid’s Captain General, Manuel Pavía calling for all parties with the exception of Federalist and *Carlistas* to form a new government. The federalists had been weakened by the schism with the radicals.

\(^{91}\) Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos*, 69-70.
more absolutist reality. Once more, Laureano Sanz was sent to Puerto Rico as governor with restored *facultades omnimodas*. He immediately eliminated constitutional guaranties as well as freedom of the press and association. Sanz also imposed a new *Bando* (decree) banning vagrancy and expelled from the government and teaching positions those deemed to be liberals. Moreover, following Sanz’s steps, on March 4, 1873, the Capitán General Juan Martínez Plowes had promoted the *Instituto de voluntarios* to “active reserve of the Army” and expanded the corps to thirteen battalions with four companies of 100 men each. The *voluntarios* were composed of the most pro-Spanish elements in the Island, and since its members belonged to the conservative party (later *Incondicional Español*), they effectively became a political party in arms. After his return to power in 1875, Sanz obtained permission to double the *guardia civil*, and used both corps to persecute the liberals. Even though Sanz was removed in 1875, mostly due to international pressure, his successor, General Segundo de la Portilla (1875-1877) was able to help elect “cuneros” from the conservative families. The conservatives (“*Incondicionales*” after 1880) without the participation of the liberals won all the seats in the general elections of 1876 and dominated all six general elections between 1879 and 1896. In just eight years after the Lares Revolt the liberals in the Island had been weakened to the point that participating in general elections became pointless.

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92 Negroni, *Historia militar*, 123.

93 Ibid., 126.

94 It should be noted that the autonomists-liberals, boycotting the *Ley Electoral Maura* of 1892, which imposed a payment between ten and twenty-five pesos for electoral rights, did not participate in the general elections of 1893 and 1896. In the elections of 1891 the *autonomistas* elected two *diputados a cortes* including Rafael María de Labra and Miguel Moya y Ojanguren, representatives from Sabana Grande and
In 1887, out of the havoc created by the colonial administration’s persecution, the introduction of “compontes” or corporal punishment and imprisonment of hundreds of liberals, under the governorship of Romualdo Palacio emerged the Partido Autonomista Puertorriqueño (PAP).\textsuperscript{95} Though Román Baldorioty de Castro, founder of the party and arguably one of the most influential Puerto Rican political figures of the nineteenth century, desired a more flexible and autonomous relation with the metropolis, the autonomistas’ assembly chose the views of Rafael María de Labra. Thus, the goals of this new party were to obtain the same political and legal identity and protections as those living in the peninsula and to seek the greatest degree of decentralization within the framework of national unity.\textsuperscript{96} Even Luis Muñoz Rivera, soon to emerge as one of the dominant political figures in the Island and faithful friend of Baldorioty de Castro, did not believe that full autonomy was an attainable goal and urged instead for decentralization. Weighting the options of the liberals, Muñoz Rivera rejected annexation to the United States on the grounds that “all Puerto Ricans feel proud of their Latin blood”. He also rejected the “…separatist rebellion which no one amongst us defends, and, given the people’s circumstances is an impossible utopia.” \textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 91-92.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 92.

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 95. Bayrón Toro citing, \textit{Obras Completas de Luis Muñoz Rivera, 1890-1900, Introducción, notas y recopilación del Dr. Lidio Cruz Monclova}, 1ra edición, (San Juan, P.R.: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1963), 45.
The autonomistas did not participate in the general elections of 1893-96. The whole period was marked by constant dissension amongst the autonomist leadership and of electoral boycotting in protest of what they perceive as unfair electoral laws which severely limited the number of voters. However, on August 8, 1897, an anarchist assassinated the Spanish Prime Minister Antonio Cánovas del Castillo setting the stage for Práxedes Mateo Sagasta to assume the presidency of the Spanish government.

Sagasta, as leader of the Partido Liberal Fusionista Español, had agreed with Muñoz Rivera to grant an autonomous government (régimen autonómico) to Puerto Rico in exchange for the autonomistas support of his party. To reflect the nature of the new alliance with Sagasta, the autonomist party changed its name to Partido Liberal Fusionista Puertorriqueño. The republican faction within the autonomist party, led by José Celso Barbosa abandoned the party and created the Partido Autonomista Histórico (Ortodoxo). Soon after coming to power Sagasta made good his promise to the autonomistas by securing the Carta Autonómica (Autonomous Charter) on November 25, 1897.

The Carta Autonómica of 1897 was liberal indeed. Sixteen Puerto Rican delegates were to be elected by popular vote to represent the Island in the cortes of the

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98 Bayrón Toro, 105-106. The idea of the political pact comes from Muñoz Rivera and Rosendo Matiernzo Cintrón who were part of the autonomist commission entrusted with securing a political pact with a Spanish party. The other members of the commission were José Gomez Brioso and Federico Degetau, the latter opting for not participating in the final pact as he espoused federal ideals.

99 The conservatives (Incondicional Español) were not impervious to the rapid changes occurring in the peninsula and in the colonies. In 1897, a wing of the party is expelled and proceeded to form the Partido de Izquierda Progresista Incondicional (Leftist Progressive Unconditional Party), later to be known as Partido Oportunista (opportunist party). Ibid., 106.
kingdom while three senators were to be chosen by an assembly of elected officials to serve in the Peninsular Congress. The assembly also elected the eight members of the Consejo de Administración (Administrative Council), which together with the 32 member and popularly-elected Cámara de Representantes (Chamber of Representatives) constituted the Puerto Rican Parliament or legislature. Title VII, article 43 of the charter guaranteed veto power to the Puerto Rican parliament over decisions reached by the Peninsular Congress, while Article 2 declared that the “present constitution shall not be amended except by virtue of a special law and upon petition of the insular parliament.”

The charter also provided for the creation of a cabinet by the winning coalition or party. The seven ministries of the new cabinet were of extreme importance and included: Treasury; Agriculture, Industry and Commerce; Public Works, Communication and Transportation; Public Education; and Justice and Government, plus a presiding cabinet member. However, as established by Article 41, the governor retained command of all the armed forces in the Island, and all authorities and offices remained subordinated to his office. Moreover, the charter was declared by royal decree and not by a law passed by the cortes. Thus, while seeking liberal reforms, Sagasta and the liberals had to circumvent the most republican of Spanish institutions.

The new regime was inaugurated on February 8, 1898 and general elections were held in March 27 of the same. Of roughly 120,000 votes the autonomistas obtained over

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100 To read the document in its entirety, see; Antonio Fernós López-Cepero, Documentos Históricos-Constutucionales de Puerto Rico, segunda edición ampliada, (San Juan, P.R.: Ediciones situm Inc. 2005), 19-37.

101 Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos, 106-07.

102 Fernós López-Cepero, Documentos Históricos-Constitucionales, 29.
97,000 versus the conservatives 3,729 votes.\textsuperscript{103} Sixteen \textit{autonomistas}, ten from the liberal faction and six from the orthodox, were elected as \textit{diputados a cortes}. On April 10 of the same year the first cabinet was formed and the three senators chosen.\textsuperscript{104} On April 21, 1898 scarcely two months after the inauguration of the autonomic government, the Governor General of the Island declared Martial Law. On July 17, 1898 constitutional guarantees were reinstated and the Insular Parliament was inaugurated. Eight days later the United States invaded Puerto Rico.

The \textit{Carta Autonómica} and the subsequent electoral victory represent the triumph of the \textit{autonomistas}, and throughout the following century it would capture the imagination of different political groups seeking autonomy or other decolonization formulas. However, the circumstances of such success must be examined. The granting of the Autonomous Charter had as much to do with chance (the assassination of Cánovas del Castillo) as with international and colonial problems plaguing Spain. By 1897, the Cuban war of independence was in full swing and diplomatic relations between the United States and Spain had reached a historical low. In 1895, when the Cuban rebellion started with the \textit{Grito de Baire}, the U.S. followed a path of neutrality, which actually favored the Spaniards.\textsuperscript{105} Support of the Spanish regime, however, was conditional. The

\textsuperscript{103} Of 121,573 votes, the \textit{autonomistas} obtained, 82,627 votes; the \textit{Orthodoxos} 15,068; while the \textit{Incondicionales} secured 2,144 and the \textit{Oportunistas} 1,585. There seem to be over 20,000 votes invalidated or not counted. Bayrón Toro, \textit{Elecciones y partidos políticos}, 107.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 109.

\textsuperscript{105} The Cleveland and McKinley administrations were especially opposed to an independent Cuba. This posture was the result of a century-old policy which favoured and was ready to support Spanish sovereignty over the Island. This rationale was based on the assumption that a Cuba controled by a weak Spain would be nearly as valuable to
Spaniards had to facilitate Cuban trade with the U.S. and were not to relinquish Cuban sovereignty to any foreign country or the Cubans. Moreover, any modification of sovereignty that “did not result in U.S. acquisition of the island was unacceptable.”

When it became evident that the Spaniards could not bring an end to the war, the Cleveland administration took a firmer stand seeking to gain concessions for the Cubans hoping that such measures would stop the conflict and prevent the independence of the island. The Cuban rebels themselves had become an unwanted third party. By 1897 it was evident that sooner or later the Cuban rebels would win the war. For three years the Cubans had been destroying the logistic infrastructure of the island, rendering the Spanish army incapable of launching major military actions. The rebels “had brought the Spanish army to the brink of defeat.” They were so certain of their imminent victory that they rejected Spain’s offering of autonomy. Unlike their counterparts in Puerto


Ibid., 6.


Prime Minister Cánovas del Castillo, emboldened by the death of the rebel general Antonio Maceo on December 6, 1896 offered very limited autonomy to both Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Cuban rebels immediately rejected the overture and eventually so did the autonomistas in Puerto Rico, who also decided not to participate in the elections. Cánovas del Castillo’s offer convinced most of the autonomistas in Puerto

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Rico, the Cuban leaders had the military means to obtain independence. This situation left McKinley’s administration with two choices: to accept Cuban independence or to sanction military intervention. McKinley followed Cleveland’s latest approach. In his inaugural address he referred to the unrest in Cuba, and stated that a “firm and dignified policy that would protect the rights of Americans everywhere was needed.”¹¹⁰ The increasingly aggressive posture of the United States government put Spain in a precarious position and made the ceasing of hostilities imperative. It is within this context that the autonomic charter of 1897 came into existence.

Soon after the second class battleship Maine exploded in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898, the U.S. entered the war and quickly defeated inferior Spanish forces weakened by years of fighting in Cuba and the Philippines. As a result of its victory over Spain, and by virtue of the Treaty of Paris of December 10, 1898, the United States gained full control over Puerto Rico, Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippines, and limited control – by the Teller Amendment - over Cuba.¹¹¹ As it had been with the short Rico of the need to make a pact with Sagasta and the liberal fusionistas. See Carmelo Rosario Natal, Puerto Rico y la crisis de la Guerra hispanoamericana (1895-1898), (P.R.: Editorial Edil, Inc., 1989), 146-153.

¹¹⁰ There was plenty of support for intervening in Cuba. Since 1895, Republicans were calling for Cuba Libre not least because the Junta Cubana in the U.S. kept the Americans interested in the war. Spanish criminal behavior was widely publicized, and perhaps exaggerated, by the yellow press, but reporters did nothing but to say what the public wanted to hear. Furthermore, religious papers supported intervention on moral grounds, using the same axioms that fuelled Manifest Destiny. By 1898, opinion polls coincide that something had to be done about Cuba. See; Lewis L. Gould, The Spanish-American War and President McKinley (Lawrence Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1982), 18, 23-24. See also; LaFeber, The New Empire, 337.

¹¹¹ The term “pacification” in the Teller Amendement, allowed McKinley’s administration to first established a military ocupation and ultimately to impose the Platt
lived political reforms obtained throughout the nineteenth century, the lifespan of the
Carta Autonómica was at the whims of the military and political rulers from the
peninsular metropolis. The Puerto Rican delegates were excluded from the peace
negotiations even though the future of the Island was at stake, and according to the
Island’s legal political relations with Spain, as stated in the charter of 1897; they had veto
power over such decisions. That they did not have a voice in the Paris protocols
evidenced the ephemeral and capricious nature of liberal overtures within the Spanish
political establishment.

The failure of the liberales and later of the autonomistas to secure a stronger
presence within the Spanish military in the Island or to restore the Puerto Rican militias
left them in a very weak position from which to negotiate with both Spain and the United
States. The autonomistas were also undermined for reasons beyond their control.
Throughout the nineteenth century the separatists consistently failed to become a
significant threat to the colonial authorities in Puerto Rico. More likely, their failed and
sometimes stillborn attempts to overthrow the Spanish authorities served as an excuse to
demobilize the inhabitants of the Island, to arm the most loyalists and conservative
elements of Puerto Rican society, to curtail civil rights, and to persecute those liberals
who stayed in the Island. Thus, separatists’ attempts served to erode the position of the
liberals who had to prove their loyalty and endure cyclical waves of retrograde political
persecution.

Amendement to the Cubans. The Platt Amendement defined American-Cuban relations
for half a century.
During the periods of crises that periodically visited the peninsula and the rest of the Spanish Empire, especially between 1808 and 1824, and 1868, Puerto Rico did not obtain its independence. Instead of more inclusion, these periods of crisis provided opportunities for the metropolis to exclude from the Island’s polity groups which had previously enjoyed limited inclusion, while giving bureaucratic positions and putting the military into the hands of newly-arrived *peninsulares* and royalists from the American mainland. Actually, with the exception of some short-lived liberal openings, those born in the Island were gradually demobilized and coerced into working for agro-capitalist enterprises. The demobilization and *peonización* of those born in the Island were but two sides of the same coin. Not surprisingly, demobilization occurred while new policies, such as the *reglamento de jornaleros*, were established to provide cheap, and in some cases free labor for the developing agro-capitalist industry.

When the Americans invaded on July 25 of 1898, neither the will nor the skills to resist them or to overthrow the colonial regime were present among the population of the Island which had been finally demobilized in 1870. Even, Ramón Emeterio Betances, who had dedicated his life to winning Puerto Rico’s independence, lamented that Puerto Ricans were not rising in arms to overthrow the Spaniards and warned that such lack of initiative would doom its political future making it a perpetual American colony. Betances lamented:

“What are the Puerto Ricans doing? Why don’t they take advantage of the blockade to rise en masse? It’s extremely important that when the first troops of the United States reach shore, they should be received by Puerto Rican troops, waving the flag of independence and greeting them. Let the North Americans
cooperate in the achievement of our freedom; but not push the country to annexation. If Puerto Rico does not move quickly, it will become an American colony forever."  

Eugenio María de Hostos, another exiled Puerto Rican revolutionary and independence advocate, always decried not being allowed to become an artillery officer because though he had the will to fight for freedom he did not know how.  

With the suppression of the disciplinados in 1870, civilian participation in the defense of the Island came to an end and would not be fully restored until the creation of the United States Puerto Rico National Guard in 1919. The "hijos de este país", with the exception of the most unconditional loyalists, were excluded from this vital access to socio-economic and political power. Captaincies had been passed down from father to son to grandson, and the capitán de milicias was a respected community member. Moreover, even though conservative well-to-do volunteers replaced the milicias, they did not capture the imagination of the Puerto Ricans, nor did they instill the pride the milicias once did and continue to do. For, if the milicias had existed to protect the Island, the

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entities which replaced them were intended for the suppression of the local population and the persecution of the liberals. As a matter of fact, every work of Puerto Rican military history traces the existing U.S. Puerto Rico National Guard units to these militias which came to be known as *milicias puertorriqueñas* and purposely exclude the *Guardia Civil* and the *Instituto de Voluntarios* from their lineage.\(^\text{114}\)

In 1870, with the dissolution of the *disciplinados*, Puerto Rico’s military and paramilitary apparatus came to be completely in the hands of *peninsulares*, and later shared with their offspring. It has been pointed out that displacement of those born in the Island by *peninsulares* precipitated the Lares Revolt and subsequent attempts to overthrow the Spanish colonial regime, as well as the emergence of a distinguishable Puerto Rican identity; ironically exclusion from the military has not been analyzed as displacement, disenfranchisement and hence, a cause of severe grievance against Spain. In effect, after 1870, as Negroni rightly points out, *los hijos de este país* were relegated to the role of prisoners with the Island as their prison.\(^\text{115}\)

The exclusionary policies of the Spanish colonial administration, as early as the 1810s, when the rest of the empire, but Cuba and Puerto Rico, revolted and finally won independence, created tensions between *criollos* and *peninsulares* at the highest levels of power. The emergence of the *Instituto* and the final suppression of the *milicias* sent a


\(^{115}\) That is, at least until 1882 when once again, and due to the inability of the peninsula to furnish enough troops, Puerto Ricans began to be recruited to help garrisoning the Island. Puerto Ricans came to be drafted into the Spanish military under the *Ley de Reclutamiento Y Reemplazo del Ejército del 1878*, effective in Puerto Rico in 1882. See; Negroni, *Historia militar*, 136-37.
message to those born in the Island; they were not to be trusted for they were not really Spaniards. More importantly, the male population that did not belong to the elite found itself ever more excluded from access to socio-economic power, and even adulthood for if they could not defend their land, they remained in childlike state, especially given the colony’s military character and tradition. Removing the natives of Puerto Rico from the colonial armed forces, a very restrictive polity, and dearth of a common education were some of the patterns of exclusion that led to the slow development of a distinct national identity in the Island. Thus it was not the Lares Revolt itself, but the policies followed by the colonial authorities afterwards what fueled the developing of a distinctive Puerto Rican national identity or identities. However, this was embryonic as Puerto Ricans still retained many cultural affinities vis-à-vis Spain such as language and religion. The developing of a separate identity was also slowed by the criollo elite’s reluctance to move toward independence, which itself was a consequence of the weakening of the criollo elite by the demobilization of the inhabitants of the Island. Nonetheless, the landslide victory of the autonomistas in 1898 shows that the majority of the inhabitants had moved away from the incondicionalismo español. This is even more important when considering that the autonomistas of 1898 were not sponsoring the water-down version defended by the liberals right after the Lares revolt, but a more radical stance which among other things declared the right of the Puerto Ricans to govern their Island as they saw fit.

When the first U.S. soldiers landed in the Island, most Puerto Ricans had no reason to support the Spanish colonial administration. As a matter of fact, initially, the majority of the people openly embraced the invaders. Soon afterwards resistance against
the American occupation materialized. Most of the resistance as well as much support
given to the new imperial master was to come from the *criollo* elites who had played the
power game with the Spanish metropolis and would continue to do so with the U.S. This
time, however, *separatistas, autonomistas* and *anexionistas* had learned their lesson.
There would be neither independence, nor autonomy or inclusion into the Union if the
Puerto Ricans did not bear arms either as part of the armies of the new metropolis or as
native militia. Under the new regime, enfranchisement, regaining masculinity and
decolonization were to be sought by all means, including and in fact emphasizing,
military service.
CHAPTER 2

PUERTO RICAN A LÀ AMERICANA: AN ALTERNATIVE NATION? 1898-1914

The native [Puerto Rican] soldiers have become an object lesson to the communities in the neighborhoods of their posts... and from that standpoint, as from many others have undoubtedly been a very potent education influence. Each man of the battalion will be a committee in himself to spread among the natives, stories of American prestige... The soldiers feel a pride in their service and there is an undoubted stimulant by it toward general loyalty.”116

In the aftermath of the Spanish-Cuban-Pilipino-American War of 1898, the United States engaged in its first overseas nation-building projects. As de facto ruler of the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico, the United States sought to transform the socio-economic and political structures of these countries into something more in tune with mainstream American tenets. In few places were these efforts as intense and prolonged as in Puerto Rico. As the United States took over Puerto Rico, it immediately began sanitary and relief efforts while building a public education system in the image of the New England school system. The transformation of the Island was not limited to humanitarian projects. The American colonial administration sought to change the socio-economic and political structures in Puerto Rico too. In essence the structures created or re-imagined by the colonial authorities were intended to mold the Puerto Ricans in the image of Americans. Indeed, the new metropolis’ early attempts to “modernize” the

Island and its inhabitants through a nation-building project supposedly guided by “benevolent assimilation” and “compassionate uplifting”, were part of a comprehensive plan to “Americanize” the Island and its inhabitants. This nation-building project relied heavily, both directly and indirectly, on the military.

The American colonial administrators, however, were not the only actors in this play. The criollo leadership, from diverse political tendencies and for different reasons, initially welcomed the Americans, participated actively in the institutions of the new metropolis, and urged the acceptance of Puerto Ricans into the U.S. military as well as the creation of a native militia to garrison the Island. Furthermore, the criollo leadership developed and championed its own versions of Americanization for the Island. This chapter analyzes the role of the U.S. military as part of the metropolis’ nation-building project and the motivations of the criollo elite for supporting Puerto Rican participation in the new military institutions. Did the combination of an American nation-building project and criollo encouragement of participation in the institutions of the new metropolis affect the self-perception of Puerto Ricans and hence their national identity? Did early U.S. efforts to Americanize the Puerto Ricans transcend cultural differences? And, did any alteration of Puerto Rican national identities transmute into political movements or alter political loyalties among the inhabitants of the Island? Furthermore,

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117 On February 16, 1899, U.S. President William McKinley accepted the “burden of the Philippines, to safeguard the happiness of their inhabitants,” as he proclaimed a campaign of benevolent assimilation. See: Gould, *Spanish American War and McKinley*, 123. McKinley was adopting Captain Alfred T. Mahan’s views with regards to the territories acquired as a result of the War with Spain in 1898. See: Alfred Thayer Mahan, “The Relations of the United States to their New Dependencies,” in *Lessons of the War with Spain and Other Articles*, reprint 1970 (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1899), 247-249.
did the new metropolis succeed in reversing perceived patterns of political exclusion among the Island’s population? By answering these questions this chapter seeks to underline the links between the military remobilization of the Puerto Ricans, political enfranchisement, and the development of cultural and political identities in the early years of American dominance over Puerto Rico.

Several factors facilitated the transfer of sovereignty over Puerto Rico from Spain to the United States in 1898 and in fact eased the nation-building project as envisioned by U.S. officials. The war in Puerto Rico was relatively bloodless which eliminated much of the trauma usually associated with this kind of event. American troops landed in Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898, and their campaign extended until August 12 of the same year when Spain and the United States signed an armistice. During this period the U.S. forces engaged the Spaniards on six occasions suffering thirty-six wounded and seven killed in action while the Spaniards suffered eighty-eight wounded and seventeen killed in action. Moreover, U.S. Army Major General Nelson Miles, commander of U.S. troops in Puerto Rico, took great pains not to alienate the local population. He even


119 When it was discovered that Private Louis J. de Haass of the Sixth Illinois Volunteers had defrauded a restaurant owner by paying with confederate money miles recommended harsh punishment. After a court-martial de Haas was sentenced to thirteen months of solitary confinement and hard labor. Trask, *War with Spain in 1898*, 365.
went so far as to try to obtain the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners in Spain and Africa in an attempt to win the goodwill of the Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{120}

General Miles took into account the support, or at least the neutrality, of the local population when designing his plan of action in Puerto Rico. Surprising even his closest aides, he changed the initial landings, scheduled to take place in Fajardo in the northeast tip of the Island, to Guánica which is located in the southwest. Much emphasis has been put on inter-service rivalry and Miles’ obsession with relegating the Navy to a secondary role in this campaign to explain the landing at Guánica. It is likely, however, that military and political matters weighed more on Miles than inter-service rivalry. As Miles informed the naval commander of the expedition, the population of the southern part of the Island was more inclined to side with the Americans than those near the capital and that landing in the south would take the Spaniards by surprise, tipping their defenses off balance.\textsuperscript{121}

Regardless Miles intended to limit the role of the Navy in the Puerto Rican campaign that was indeed the result of his strategy. After landing at multiple sites along the southern coast the invading force moved west and north in four different columns advancing without naval cover. That it was the army which received the most exposure during the campaign, was part of Miles’ plan. He had informed Secretary of War Russell A. Algers of the benefits of marching across the country as opposed to marching under the protection of the fleet’s guns along the coast. He insisted that his troops’ visibility would attract the support of the Puerto Ricans. In this regard he even opposed the naval

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 366.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 351-53.
bombardment of San Juan on the grounds that it would cause unnecessary harm to civilians and needlessly alienate a population willing to assist the Americans.\textsuperscript{122} In effect, Miles undertook a campaign for the hearts and minds of the Puerto Ricans. His gamble paid off. The immense majority of Puerto Ricans sided with the invading force and welcomed the American soldiers as liberators. Puerto Ricans also volunteered as scouts, provided intelligence, and organized small foot and mounted raiding parties across the Island which scourged the Spaniards and their allies by burning their plantations and stores and seizing their property. These actions hindered the Spanish defense and accelerated Miles advance.\textsuperscript{123} In early August, the \textit{Gobernador General} of Puerto Rico Manuel Macías y Casado, complained to the Spanish Minister of War that: “The majority of this country [does not] wish to call itself Spanish, preferring American

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 355-56.

\textsuperscript{123} The \textit{partidas sediciosas} (seditious parties) had the effect of forcing the \textit{voluntarios}, who had been deployed far from their communities, to abandon their posts and return to their lands to protect them from these attacks. See; Trask, \textit{War with Spain in 1898}, 356, 359-60. At first these parties were of spontaneous and independent nature or sanctioned by the Americans and engaged in sabotage against Spanish lines, and giving logistical support to the U.S. Army. There were also parties who sided with the Spanish Army but they were mostly “\textit{voluntarios}”. Historian Fernando Picó has found some groups formed completely on Puerto Rican initiative. Both the pro-American and pro-Spanish parties had to procure their own supplies which led to the ransacking of haciendas and appropriation of cattle. As the war ended the parties continued the raids in what is known as the \textit{tiznados} (black faces). These latter parties did in fact engage heavily on personal, economic, and political revenge which was exemplified by the burning of credit and, debt books, as well as haciendas and plantations. See; Fernando Picó, \textit{1898: La guerra después de la guerra}, Segunda Edición (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1998), 86-92.
domination. This, the enemy knows and is proven to him by greetings and adhesions in towns that are going to be occupied.”

Miles’ carefulness in not aggravating the population responded to U.S. designs for the Island. On May 26, Captain Alfred T. Mahan, Secretary of War Alger, Secretary of the Navy John D. Long, and General Miles held a war council. The U.S. had considered invading Puerto Rico before Cuba to force the Spaniards to support the war in

124 Macías to Correa, 5 August 1898, cited in Trask, War with Spain in 1898, 360, from Rivero, Crónica de la Guerra Hispanoamericana, 624.

125 If someone could claim responsibility for the U.S. readiness to accomplish its project of extra-continental expansion, that would be Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan. The impact of Mahan on the development of U.S. foreign policy was enormous. Congressmen, presidents, diplomats and high-ranking military personnel, were well acquainted with his work and many even studied under him and/or befriended the prolific strategist. Among Mahan’s friends were: Theodore Roosevelt, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and John Hay, Secretary of State under President William McKinley. In addition, in 1902, Mahan was elected President of the American Historical Association, the most coveted position for a historian. American leaders were divided between two expansionist theories, that of entrepreneur Andrew Carnegie, who applied Herbert Spencer’s survival of the fittest theory to commerce and business, and that of Mahan. Carnegie deferred from Mahan in that he saw an industrial competition, not a military one. For Mahan, however, the fittest often gained ascendancy through military power. What is more, the industrial and commercial competition and expansion proposed by Carnegie would lead to rivalry for markets and raw materials, and thus sea power was needed. Mahan argued that in order to maintain economic power the U.S. should control vital sea lanes militarily. This approach required securing territorial bases to guarantee its dominion of the regions important to its commerce. Moreover, military sea power was needed to ensure that the nation enjoyed peace and industry uninterrupted by wars. Furthermore, he was convinced that merely utilitarian arguments would never convince nor convert mankind to join the great mission of the west, the uplifting and remaking of lesser races. Thus, military preparedness and civilizational discourse were fused in Mahan’s The Influence of Sea Power upon History. See; Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1890), 83-84. And; Alfred Thayer Mahan, Naval Strategy: Compared and Contrasted with the Principles and Practice of Military Operation on Land. Lectures Delivered at the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, R.I. Between the Years 1887 and 1911, ((Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1911), 100-101. Also see; LaFeber, The New Empire, 97; and, Anders Stephanson, Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 88.
Cuba from their own home shores. The navy, however, discarded this plan because it did not need Puerto Rico to win the war in Cuba. Furthermore, the navy was concerned with dividing the fleet between Cuba and Puerto Rico which could lead to an unfortunate sea fight that could alter the balance of maritime power in Spain’s favor. Thus, the U.S. decided to mount two expeditions in the Caribbean, but not simultaneously. Santiago in Cuba would be the first target, and Fajardo, Puerto Rico would follow. Once Santiago, where Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete’s fleet had anchored, had fallen there would be no need to attack Havana.\footnote{At least on paper, Mahan explained, the Spanish Navy seemed almost the equal of its U.S. counterpart, to the point that even some American naval officers considered that after losing the \textit{Maine} in Havana the American edge over Spain had shifted in Spain’s favor. Mahan, \textit{Lessons of the War with Spain}, 30-34: and, Gould, \textit{Spanish-American War and President McKinley}, 74.}

On July 3, the U.S. Flying Squadron destroyed Cervera’s fleet when it attempted to escape the American blockade, and on July 13, the Spanish garrison in Santiago de Cuba and its department surrendered. At that moment the war was practically over.\footnote{In May 1, 1898 U.S. Admiral George Dewey’s command destroyed the Spanish fleet in the Pacific and on July 13, the 35,000 troops who made up the Spanish garrison in Santiago de Cuba and its department surrendered. Even Mahan conceded that there was nothing else for the Spaniards to do but to surrender. See, Mahan, \textit{Lessons of the War with Spain}, 30-34.}

There was no need to invade Puerto Rico to win the war. The U.S. had achieved such military superiority over Spain that even Admiral William T. Sampson opposed Miles’ request for armored vessels to escort his transports to Puerto Rico.\footnote{Trask, \textit{War with Spain in 1898}, 348-350.} Still, Miles received the order to proceed to Puerto Rico on July 18, and the Island was invaded seven days later. The motive for such action was to occupy the Island before the end of hostilities
prevented the U.S. from doing so. President McKinley’s administration had decided in early June, to annex Puerto Rico “in lieu of indemnities” and the physical presence of the U.S. military in the Island would undoubtedly strengthen the U.S.’ position. That Puerto Rico came to be a colonial possession of the United States did not stem from historical accident but rather from a calculated design.129

On July 18, the Spanish asked the French government to approach the United States with a request for a cease of hostilities as a preliminary to peace negotiations. The French ambassador to the U.S., Jules Cambon, communicated the Spanish request to the White House in the afternoon of July 26. President William McKinley rejected the offer for it did not say anything about the Puerto Rico or the Philippines. On July 30, through the office of the French ambassador, McKinley delivered armistice terms to Spain demanding that it relinquish control of Cuba and cede Puerto Rico, other islands in the Caribbean and the Ladrones in the Pacific. Spain answered on August 1, inquiring if any other territorial indemnification could be substituted for Puerto Rico to which Washington responded negatively. Defeated in the Philippines and in Cuba and unable to

129 Since 1890 Mahan had been stressing the need to secure and preserve naval bases in the Caribbean to protect the American sea lines. According to Mahan, the interest of the U.S. in the Caribbean was to enforce the Monroe Doctrine and preclude a strong naval European power to gain a hold on Cuba. Mahan understood the purchase of Louisiana and the Florida as part of the Jeffersonian idea to exclude European powers from the Americas, a philosophy that later extended to Cuba, Puerto Rico and Hawaii, and finally to Panama. Following Mahan’s doctrine, the main reason for the United States to intervene in the Cuban Revolution was to secure important bases in both Cuba and Puerto Rico. These islands undoubtedly enticed the imagination of American entrepreneurs, but they were more important to defend the projected isthmian canal, which had been an American concern since the United States reached the shores of the Pacific. See; Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, 83-84; and Mahan, *Naval Strategy*: 349-50, 368.
win in Puerto Rico, the Spaniards agreed to American terms, and an armistice went into
effect on August 12, 1898.\textsuperscript{130}

By virtue of the Treaty of Paris of December 10, 1898, which officially ended the
state of war between the United States and Spain, the former gained full control over
Puerto Rico, Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippines, and control limited by the Teller
Amendment over Cuba. Spain had officially relinquished control over Puerto Rico and
on October 18 of the same year the change of sovereignty was completed with the
evacuation of the last Spanish troops and the raising of the American flag in all public
buildings. That day witnessed the inauguration of a military government which lasted
until May 1900.

The way in which the Puerto Rican campaign had been conducted and the high
esteem that Puerto Rican leaders and politicians had for the United States and its
republican institutions allowed for a widespread sense of goodwill towards the new

\textsuperscript{130} The Cuban Rebels, who had been excluded from American front lines
operations, were also excluded from the armistice’s deliberations and the signing of the
Treaty of Paris, as were the Filipino rebels and the Puerto Rican delegates to the Spanish
Cortes. General Calixto García, the principal rebel leader in Cuba, and his troops were
not allowed in Santiago. Even the Spanish General, Valeriano Weyler, had expected the
Cuban insurrectos to conduct the last part of the campaign after the taking of San Juan
Hill. See; Pérez, The War of 1898, 94, quoting Valeriano Weyler, Mi mando en Cuba,
(Madrid,1910-11). In the case of Puerto Rico, Title VII, Article 43, of the Carta
Autonómica of 1897, guaranteed the veto power of the Puerto Rican parliament over
decisions reached by the Spanish Cortes where over a dozen Puerto Rican delegates sat
with both voice and vote. Article 2 declared that the “present constitution shall not be
amended except by virtue of a special law and upon petition of the insular parliament.”
Since the U.S. military disbanded the Insular Parliament, and there were no Puerto Rican
delegates present to sign the Treaty of Paris of December 10, the passing of sovereignty
over Puerto Rico to the United States was in violation of the legal relationship between
Spain and Puerto Rico and thus illegal. This position would become the most compelling
argument embraced by the independence movement some thirty years later.
metropolis amongst the general population. There was a belief that the Island would be given independence or be incorporated as a state of the Union. The latter option seems to have had the most support among both the elite and the masses. As a matter of fact the annexionist movement dates back to 1898 when the former autonomist leadership formed two parties, the Federal and the Republican, both with statehood as their goal. As discussed by Rafael Bernabe, both Republican and Federal leaders in Puerto Rico believed that the U.S. was not a nation but a political entity, a republic providing space for many nations and peoples to coexist in equality while enjoying the benefits of constitutional democracy. The leaders of these two parties saw in the Union the most ample and perennial way of sovereignty. Unsurprisingly, roughly ninety percent of the population in Puerto Rico (and of course for this number we use the archives and reports of the metropolis) favored annexation to the United States during the first years after the war. Nonetheless, neither independence nor federated statehood was granted to

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131 Even Ángel Rivero Méndez, a Puerto Rican Captain of Artillery in the Spanish Army and stationed in Puerto Rico, who later served as interim governor and officially ceded the Island to the U.S. authorities, praised the way in which the invading force behaved. “Esta breve campaña del 1898, de 19 días de duración, es un modelo de guerra culta, moderna y humanitaria. La invasión del general Miles revistió todos los caracteres de un paseo triunfal, debido a su política de guerra sabia y humanitaria; se respetaron las costumbres y religión de los nativos; se mantuvo en toda su fuerza la autoridad civil, a pesar de la guerra; no se utilizó el abusivo sistema de requisar, sino que todo fue pagado, incluso el terreno donde se levantan las tiendas, a precio de oro.” In Ángel Rivero, Crónica de la Guerra Hispanoamericana en Puerto Rico, quitad in; Nadal, Guardia Nacional: Sucesora de las Milicias Puertorriqueñas, 34-35.


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Puerto Rico. Instead the U.S. installed a military government and replaced it with a civilian colonial administration less than two years later.

As it is evident from the diplomatic correspondence during the war, the United States intended to keep Puerto Rico as a permanent possession. Furthermore, the political elite and the popular sectors overwhelmingly favored becoming a state of the Union. This situation begs the question; why did Puerto Rico become a colony as opposed to an incorporated territory on its way to federated statehood? The type of territorial and political expansion of the United States helps to understand the U.S.’s reluctance to incorporate Puerto Rico as a territory. As the U.S. expanded westward the indigenous inhabitants of the continent were eliminated, displaced or forcefully removed. Settlers of mostly European background re-peopled the new territories and Congress moved towards statehood once the socio-economic and political structures of such territories were firmly in the hands of Euro-Americans.\footnote{See, José López Baralt, \textit{The Policy of the United States Towards its Territories with Special Reference to Puerto Rico} (San Juan, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico 1999), and, \textit{Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico American Expansion and the Constitution}, ed by Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2001).}

Though the leaders of the annexionist movement knew this history, they believed that as a “civilized”, and “Christian” people fit for self-government, the Puerto Ricans would be smoothly incorporated into the Union.\footnote{See; Bernabe, \textit{Respuestas al colonialismo}, 16-18. Also see; Roberto Barreto, “Appurtenant [sic] and belonging… but not a part of”: ¿Por qué el gobierno de los Estado Unidos le negó a los puertorriqueños el derecho al gobierno propio?” in 1898: Enfoques y perspectivas: Simposio Internacional de Historiadores, Cuba, España, Estados Unidos, Filipinas y Puerto Rico, (San Juan, P.R.: Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia-First Book Publishing of Puerto Rico, 1997), 447-463.} What escaped the annexionist leaders was that among the leadership and opinion-making...
groups in the U.S., Catholicism was not considered the religion of the “civilized”, nor did they believe that Catholics had aptitude for democratic self-government.136 Worse yet, the Puerto Ricans were considered to be the result of miscegenation; an unholy mix of Indian, Black and Spaniard. That the U.S. came to control Puerto Rico in 1898, when the dictums of Social Darwinism, pseudo-scientific racism, the White Men’s Burden and Manifest Destiny combined to guide U.S. policies upset the plans of the annexionist movement in the Island.137


137 The peculiar phrase “Manifest Destiny” was first used in an article and regarding the impending war with Mexico in the Morning Star, December 27, 1845. Manifest Destiny’s religious character was summarized by Reverend Josiah Strong. In 1895, the Evangelical Alliance published Strong’s Our Country, Its Possible Future and its Present Crisis, which sold 176,000 copies. The basic characteristics of Strong’s work were liberal theology, mission at home and abroad, social gospel, and the final competition of the races with God’s blessings supporting the Anglo-Saxons who were supposed to command, Christianize and civilize the world. Manifest Destiny had several contributors in academia. After 1880, John Fiske, a historian and evolutionist, promoted the vision of history as a dualistic struggle of worldwide proportions between conquering civilization and retreating barbarism. This very popular author, also a philosopher, reconciled the traditional religious belief in creation, with the then revolutionary new principle of biology, evolution. The consequence was a firm belief on the dominion of advanced races - of which the Anglo-Saxon was the most advanced - over lesser ones. John Burges, founder of Political Sciences at Columbia University and mentor of Theodore Roosevelt, was also instrumental in developing racial theories to explain the destiny of the United States. He believed that the civilized states, founded by various branches of the Teutonic races, had a “claim upon the uncivilized populations as well as duty towards them, and that claim is that they shall become civilized.” This version of survival of the fittest, called Aryanism or Teutonism, proposed that there was a common racial ancestor, or master race as the root of all those people whose language belonged to the Indo-European family, and that in some races, especially the Teutons, the line was purer. See; Stephanson, Manifest Destiny, 28, 43-42, 60, 79, 81, 83-84.
Even the most influential American military strategist during this period believed that the racial composition of the new territories posed a threat to the social fabric of the United States. One of the most important points in Mahan’s theory was that sea power, “as a national interest, commercial and military, rests not upon fleets only, but also upon local territorial bases in distant commercial regions.” These territories, Mahan believed, had to be extensive and densely populated by a population bound to the sovereign country by “those of interest which rest upon the beneficence of the ruler; of which beneficence power to protect is not the least factor.” According to Mahan’s definition, the purpose of acquiring colonies should be limited to strategic naval bases, rather than turning them into a dump for the unwanted—as he believed was the case of Australia. For this reason, Mahan harbored doubts about annexing the Philippines. He was solely interested in obtaining the military bases needed to reach the Asian and Latin American markets, and protecting the sea lines and the racial integrity of the United States.

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137 On July 12, 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner in *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* announced the end of a formative era and the beginning of a new epoch. It was time for the Anglo-Saxon reunion under American leadership. When Strong’s sense of sacred mission, the expansive Anglo-Saxonism of Fiske and the Social Darwinism of Burges, met the Manifest Destiny of Turner, it was time to look for new frontiers. These views were evident in Roosevelt’s *The Winning of the West 1885-94*, as well as in other authors’ frontier novels. See; Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 24, 34-35, and, Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, 83. Also see; LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 95, 98-99.


139 Ibid.
Regarding the new colonies, Mahan argued that the U.S. should follow the “beneficial and parent-like approach of the British instead of the inhumanly oppressive Spanish model” for “alien subjects were still in race-childhood.” He concluded that ultra-maritime territories could only be secured when “the advantages and interests of the inhabitants are the primary object of the imperial administration.”140 In short, Mahan proposed to use “uplifting benevolence” to pay for the acquisition of the bases needed to ensure the prominence of the Anglo-Saxon race. In the process he established a dictum in U.S. extra-continental expansion.

The McKinley and successive administrations, as well as much of the American public, came to believe that colonies were needed from a military and economic perspective but that their inclusion as states of the Union would threaten the racial integrity of the U.S.141 Consequently, in 1898 U.S. imperialism needed to become colonial and depart from republicanism. In essence that transformation was also the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court during the infamous Insular Cases which tested the relationship between the metropolis and the new territories. In the case of Downes v. Bidwell, 182 U.S. 244 (1901), Justice Edward D. White stated that following the doctrine of automatically incorporating into the Union newly acquired territories would curtail the ability of the U.S. to obtain territories needed to advanced its foreign policy but

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140 Ibid., 245-247.

141 Even labor sectors and farmers in the U.S. opposed incorporating the new territories into the Union. Labor sectors believed that corporations would strengthen their hold over the means of production while the farmers feared that corporations would inundate the American markets with cheap tropical products, especially sugar. This last position especially worried beet producers. See, Bernabe, Respuestas al colonialismo, 23-25.
undesired as part of the Unión.\textsuperscript{142} That Puerto Rico was simultaneously wanted and unwanted by the U.S. had an impact on the American as well as the criollo plans for the Island.

An independent or federated Puerto Rico was not a political option for the McKinley administration. This situation had led to the passing of the Foraker Act of 12 April 1900. According to historian Estades Font, the situation in Puerto Rico, where political factions and the population supported the Americans and where a military native corps and a native Insular Police led by American officers guaranteed U.S. sovereignty, facilitated the transition from a military to a civilian government.\textsuperscript{143} Secretary of War Elihu Root, who initially opposed ending the military government, chose Puerto Rico to try out the new colonial policy of no incorporation based on the aforementioned

\textsuperscript{142} The Insular Cases were a series of cases brought before the U.S. Supreme Court mostly due to the passing of the of the Foraker Act, which made Puerto Rico a non-incorporated territory of the United States. During the deliberation the U.S. Supreme court basically considered whether the “Constitution follows the flag?” The justices decided, in a five to four decision, that newly annexed territories were not part of the United States for purposes of the U.S. Constitution in the matter of revenues and administrative matters. The court also noted that the Constitutional guarantees of a citizen's rights of liberty and property were applicable to all. However, “Territories” were only due the full protections of the Constitution when the U.S. Congress had incorporated them as an “integral part” of the United States. See, Bernabe, Respuestas al colonialismo, 24-26. Judge White, a native of Louisiana, and former confederate officer and state senator, was also the first Roman Catholic to serve in the Supreme Court (1894-1921). He was appointed by President Cleveland and made Chief Justice by President Taft. It seems as if his ruling had more to do with racial prejudice than with religious beliefs. See; “Justice White” [Questia Online Library]; accessed 29 October 29, 2008; available from http://www.questia.com/library/encyclopedia/white_edward_douglass.jsp accessed 29 October 2008.

\textsuperscript{143} María Eugenia Estades Font, La Presencia Militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico 1898-1918: Intereses estratégicos y dominación colonial (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán Inc., 1988) ,107-110.
conditions, and, as recommended by Mahan, he emphasized following the British imperial model.\textsuperscript{144}

Known for its sponsor’s last name, Ohio senator Joseph B. Foraker, the Foraker Act of 1900 established a civilian government for Puerto Rico. The colonial administration was headed by a governor and an executive council appointed by the President of the United States. Six members of the council were Continental Americans. The people of Puerto Rico, as defined in Article 7 of the act, would elect thirty-five members for the insular Chamber of Delegates and a non-voting representative (\textit{comisionado residente}) to Congress.\textsuperscript{145} The Foraker Act also established a political body to be known as the Puerto Rican people. According to this article, those Spanish subjects who resided in Puerto Rico by April 11, 1899, and their offspring, would be recognized as citizens of Puerto Rico, unless they opted for keeping their allegiance to Spain. By virtue of named citizenship, this political body, the Puerto Ricans, was under the protection of the United States. The act also declared Puerto Ricans to be American nationals.\textsuperscript{146}

The Foraker Law disillusioned the leadership of both the Republican and the Federal parties. When general elections took place on November 6, 1900 to elect the Puerto Rican representative to Congress and members of the Insular Chamber of

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{145} See; Fernós López-Cepero, \textit{Documentos Históricos-Constitucionales de Puerto Rico}, 55-72. As provided by the Foraker Act, public education was to be conducted in English, now an official language.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 45.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Delegates, the Federals abstained from participating. The Republicans, on the other hand, immediately took part in the colonial government. The Republicans accused the Federals of being anti-Americans. Mobs of Republican supporters, known as *Turbas Republicanas*, organized under the name of “*Comite para la Defensa del Partico Republicano*” (Committee for the Defense of the Republican Party). These mobs harassed the Federals and the members of the *Federación Libre del Trabajo*, forcing Muñoz Rivera and Iglesias Pantín to flee the country.

Some Federals participated in the elections of 1902 breaking the monopoly of the Republicans. In the elections of 1904 and 1906, the Federals, former members of the FLT and some dissenters from the Republican Party, joined together in the creation of *Partido Unión de Puerto Rico*, and gained control over the Insular House of Representatives. Between 1908 and 1914 *Unión* would not lose a single district or the office of *comisionado residente*. In 1912, disenchanted with U.S. colonial policies, *Unión* discarded statehood as a solution. Independence, added as a possibility in 1913 would be renounced in 1922. The concept of the *Libre Estado Asociado* (Free

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147 The Federals had participated of the municipal elections between October 26, 1898 and February 5, 1899. Led by Luis Muñoz Rivera, the federals won in forty-four municipalities, and the Republicans securing the remaining twenty-two. Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, 111-15.

148 Bernabe, *Respuestas al colonialismo*, 30-31. He argues against the belief that the *Turbas Republicanas* were engendered by the resentment against the old Spanish regime and the insular classes which benefited from it. As evidence, he cites the *Turbas*’ violence against workers, especially the members of the FTL, and the disposed who had nothing to do with the old regime or the elites.
Associated State) which had been the dominant one among members of *Union* since the 1910s became its only solution to the status question in 1922.\(^{149}\)

As argued by Rafael Bernabe, the early colonial policies of the U.S. government paved the way for *de facto autonomismo*. Even when the *anexionistas* controlled all the positions opened to Puerto Ricans in the colonial administration, they could not do more than to engage in the administration of the colonial regime.\(^{150}\) As discussed above, *criollo* political leaders timidly challenged the metropolis and eventually shifted their political goals. However, they did so within the parameters established by the metropolitan power. Ironically, by participating in the colonial administration, Puerto Rican leaders, many of whom were ardent anti-colonialists, showed acceptance of the colonial regime and, in fact, further legitimized American control over the Island.

There were other reasons for accepting, or at least not opposing, the American presence in the Island. Puerto Rico may have not moved politically in the direction that the native political leadership desired, but there had been real political changes for the masses. One of these changes was the creation of the *Partido Obrero Socialista* in June of 1899, led by Santiago Iglesias Pantín. For the first time workers in the Island enjoyed organized representation. This development was followed by the creation of labor organizations such as the *Federación Libre de Trabajadores*. Moreover, suffrage was extended under American rule. There were roughly 132,000 registered voters in 1898;

\(^{149}\) See; Bernabe, *Respuestas al colonialismo*, 48-51, and; Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, 111-42.

\(^{150}\) Bernabe, *Respuestas al colonialismo*, 27.
159,000 in 1902; 221,000 in 1910; and over 273,000 in 1914. The voting population of the Island more than doubled in a single generation.\textsuperscript{151}

The U.S. slowly increased access to political representation, and urban and rural workers found themselves suddenly enfranchised. Such headway would have not been possible if the McKinley administration, its successors, and the U.S. courts did not believe in upholding the principles of freedom of the press, assembly, speech, and freedom of worship in the territories. The U.S. was engaging in colonialism, but it was liberal colonialism.\textsuperscript{152} As argued by Ángel Quintero, the criollo leadership of Unión lost appeal due to the metropolis’ influence amongst the working class. The working classes used the liberal aspects of the metropolis, such as suffrage and free-association, to oppose the “conservative and senorial,” independence project of Unión and the unflappable pro-Americanism of the Republicans.\textsuperscript{153} Whether intended or not, the new metropolis was creating political spaces which weakened the economic and political power of the criollo elites.

Puerto Rico, like the other territories acquired during the war, was not to be incorporated into the Union but that did not mean that the population and the territory itself should not be molded into something more “American”. In this regard on February 16, 1899, President McKinley accepted the “burden of the Philippines, to safeguard the

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\textsuperscript{151} Those of twenty-one years of age or older, who were literate, or who paid taxes were allowed to vote: See; Bayrón Toro, \textit{Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico}, 120, 125, 128, 132, 136, 140, and 144.


\textsuperscript{153} Ángel G. Quintero Rivera, \textit{Conflictos de clase y política en Puerto Rico}, Quinta Ed. (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1986), 70-82.
happiness of their inhabitants,” and later included the other territories, as he proclaimed a campaign of “benevolent assimilation”. The United States would rule the new territories, and in exchange it would civilize and modernize the natives via Americanization. From socio-economic structures to individuals, the U.S. colonial administration attempted to reshape the new territories in the image of the continental United States. The main difference between the continental nation-building project that led the United States across North America to the shores of the Pacific and the one taking place in the Caribbean was that the new territories would not become fully integrated into the Union nor would the natives become fully Americans. The new project of extra-continental nation-building would seek to Americanize but not to include the natives as part of the American nation. In fact, the U.S. colonial policies of assimilation were aimed at creating satellite nations orbiting the new universe which had the U.S. as its center. For such a project to succeed the elites in the territories had to be loyal to the metropolis.

In 1898, the immense majority of the Puerto Ricans were Catholic, spoke Spanish, and had deep cultural differences with mainstream Americans who were perceived as being English-speaking, Anglo-Saxon, and protestant, and as discussed in Chapter 1, the population of the Island was well on its way to develop a strong national identity mostly due to the exclusionary policies followed by the Spanish colonial authorities after the Lares Revolt of 1868. It has been noted that the development of

154 Gould, Spanish American War and McKinley, 123. McKinley was adopting Captain Alfred T. Mahan’s views with regards to the territories acquired as a result of the War with Spain in 1898. See, Mahan, “The Relations of the United States to their New Dependencies,” 247-249.
strong national identities occur in opposition to a more discernible Other. In the aftermath of the War of 1898, the American soldiers in the Island and the subsequent colonial administrators presented the Puerto Ricans with a different Other. However, if there were cultural differences between the new metropolis and the natives of the Island, they were cast aside by U.S. material superiority which allowed the new metropolis to not only overcome those differences but to project cultural superiority.

U.S. material superiority enabled it to embark on infrastructure projects, to launch health and relief campaigns, and to create a public education system where the Puerto Rican youth could be Americanized. Moreover, political enfranchisement became a reality for previously marginalized groups, and the criollo elite actively participated in

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155 See for example, George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 39-40. Fredrickson explains that finding peoples of brown and bronze skin color in the Americas debunked the European belief that skin color was a chameleonic adaptation of the skin to a region’s weather. It was instead a permanent characteristic. Though the new understanding of skin pigmentation became a pillar for racist beliefs and doctrines, it also influenced the emergence of nationalist movement as for the first time there was a permanent “Other”. And, Anna Triandafyllidou, “National Identity and the ‘Other,’” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 4 (July 1998): 593-612. Triandafyllidou proposes that the existence of a “significant Other”, in her study the Macedonians, influences the development of the national identity of an inner community, in her article the Greeks, by presenting not only the inner community but the state with a model against which they can define themselves.

156 Religious differences, to a certain degree, were bridged by American Catholic clergy and protestant missionaries. After the change of sovereignty the Catholic Church lost half its clergy in the Island which decided to return to Spain rather than living under the American flag. The American bishop, Jaimes H. Blenk, arrived in the Island in 1899 and until 1906 worked tirelessly to fill the vacuum left by the Spanish clergy. Soon after the invasion the main protestant churches in the U.S. launched missionary campaigns in Puerto Rico. Churches and private schools ran by different protestant denominations were soon built throughout the Island. See, Francisco J. Vega, “La situación de las Iglesias en Mayagüez en torno a 1898,” in *El impacto de 1898 en el oeste puertorriqueño*, Cuadernos del 98 # 12, (San Juan, P.R: Librería Editorial Ateneo, 1998-99), 58-59. And, Michael Campbell, “Imperialismo sin un imperio colonial”: Misioneros protestantes en Puerto Rico 1898-1914,” *El impacto de 1898 en el oeste puertorriqueño*, 65-67.
the political institutions of the metropolis. More importantly, perhaps, is that the military
remobilization of the Puerto Ricans started during the first months of the American
occupation. Thus, health and relief campaigns, the creation of a public education
system, more political inclusion, and the remobilization of the Puerto Ricans worked as
perceived inclusion especially when contrasted with Spanish policies of exclusion and
displacement.

More tangible things than political rights created a favorable opinion of American
rule among the working classes and especially among the peasantry. The popularization
of education in the Island by the creation of a comprehensive public education system
was one of the most important policies followed by the metropolis. As one of the most
effective tools to promote the culture, ideals and beliefs of the hegemonic group in a
given place, the public school system became a major battleground for control of Puerto
Rican loyalty. The metropolis attempted to reproduce in Puerto Rico an education
system similar to that of New England with English as the mandatory and only language.
The teaching of U.S. history and American mainstream cultural values were the
cornerstone of the system. In that regard, the metropolis had the help of criollo elites
which clamored for the establishment of such system.157 On October 30, 1898, less than

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157 Thirty six schools had been opened by the end of the military government
raising the number of schools from 551 to 587. The enrollment in public schools went
from 25,644 in June 30 1898 to 28,691 in April 30, 1900. However only 19,752 students
were actively attending in school in 1900 compared to 18,243 in June 30, 1898. The
figures are more striking when considering that the school population was roughly
300,000. The Insular Commission on Public Instruction found that in most cases the
schools lacked buildings and books, and that absenteeism and unpreparedness among the
teachers was the norm. Furthermore, regardless of attendance and performance, all
students eventually graduated. See; House Documents Vol. 14 No.2: Reports of the War
Department. 1900. Civil affairs in Porto Rico. Oct. 18,1898 – April 30,1900 56th
Congress, 2nd Session 1900-1901. Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal
two weeks after the transfer of sovereignty, an assembly of Puerto Rican educators and prominent figures decided that the American method of schooling should be adopted as soon as possible if Puerto Rico were to become a state of the Union. Furthermore, as historian Rosario Natal details, Puerto Rican newspapers were beginning to publish advertisements in English promoting American universities. It would not take long before the Island’s elites began to send their youth to study in the mainland.

The prompt creation of a public education system by the American colonial administration was intended to Americanize the population of the Island and to impede the emergence of a Puerto Rican national identity. For over two decades, the Department of Education in Puerto Rico remained firmly under American control. The department’s memorandums and guidelines openly called for policing those native teachers that strayed from the approved curriculum to include Puerto Rican culture in their lessons, as well as those who criticized the colonial regime. Ironically, the school, a place for

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158 The assembly demanded co-education, free and compulsory schooling, and the establishment of schools to prepare male and female teachers. The educators believed that only in that way could they reach their goal “that Puerto Rico becomes a state of the Union.” See, Rosario Natal, *La crisis de la Guerra Hispanoamericana*, 254, citing *La Correspondencia* 17, 20, 25, 28 December 1898.

159 See; Aida Negrón de Montilla, *La americanización de Puerto Rico y el sistema de instrucción pública, 1900-1930*, 2da Ed. (Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1990). Negrón de Montilla documents the attempts of the metropolis to reproduce in Puerto Rico an education system similar to that of New England in which English was the mandatory and only language; and the teaching of U.S. history and American mainstream cultural values came to be the cornerstone of the system. More importantly perhaps is her detailed study of the department’s memorandums and guidelines which openly called for policing those native teachers that strayed from the approved curriculum and included Puerto Rican culture in their lessons,
learning, became a tool for cultural assimilation and political repression. That is not to say that the public school only served the interest of the metropolis. By popularizing education the colonial administration weakened the position of the criollo elites, which served the metropolis, but also created the opportunity for socio-economic mobility among groups with no previous chance for such a thing.\footnote{Estades Font, \textit{La Presencia Militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico}, 88-89, and; Bernabe, \textit{Respuestas al colonialismo} 14-21, 124-28. The popularization of education and the opening of political spaces weakened the local elites and allowed for a more dynamic contestation of political power between the metropolis and its colonial allies, political elites opposing them and the emerging workers and socialists movements.}

Of all the means used by the American colonial administration to promote the Americanization of the Puerto Ricans one has always been neglected by scholars: the military. The militarization of the Island under U.S. rule has been studied from a diplomatic and strategic point of view, however, the role that military institutions rendered in altering national identities and the influence of these soldiers in the political development of the Island have been mostly ignored.\footnote{Works dealing with military institutions in the Island are: Humberto García Muñiz, “El Caribe durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial: El Mediterráneo Americano,” in, \textit{Puerto Rico en las relaciones internacionales del Caribe} (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán Inc., 1990), And: María Eugenia Estades Font, \textit{La Presencia Militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico 1898-1918: Intereses estratégicos y dominación colonial} (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán Inc., 1988), And; Arturo Morales Carrión, \textit{Puerto Rico y la lucha por la hegemonía el Caribe: Colonialismo y contrabando, siglos XVI-XVIII}, (Río Piedras, P.R.;, Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, Centro de Investigaciones Históricas: Colección Caribeña., 1995), And; Héctor Andrés Negroni, \textit{Historia militar de Puerto rico: en conmemoración del encuentro de dos mundos}, (España: Ediciones Siruela S.A., 1992).} Since the early days of American rule over Puerto Rico, military institutions played a pivotal role. The Island

as well as those who criticized the colonial regime. And, Roamé Torres González, \textit{Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad: La presencia del inglés en Puerto Rico}, (Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2002).
was under direct military rule between October 18, 1898 and May 1900. Even after a
civilian government replaced the military regime, Puerto Rico continued, but for a few
exceptions, under control of the Bureau of Insular Affairs. The BIA was an organ of
the U.S. War Department created in the aftermath of the War of 1898 to administrate the
overseas colonies. Puerto Rico was under direct control of War Department from 1909
until President Franklin Delano Roosevelt placed it under the Department of the Interior
in 1934.

There are two aspects of the role of the military in the Island that need to be
considered. The U.S. military involvement in Puerto Rico had a direct approach and an

162 The Bureau of Insular Affairs (BIA) was established as a branch of the War
Department by an Act of Congress in July 1, 1902. The BIA’s origins are found in the
Division of Customs and Insular Affairs existing between 1898 and 1900 and the
Division of Insular Affairs which existed between 1900 and 1902. The BIA was almost a
replica of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The main difference was that instead of civilians,
who were believed to be prone to corruption and to promote their own economic
interests, military officers, who were supposed to be impervious to corruption, would run
the new colonial apparatus. Moreover, as most U.S. army officers had experience in the
Indian Wars, they were considered ideal candidates to deal with the population of the
Philippines, Puerto Rico, the Panama Canal, and later on, of the Dominican Republic.
The BIA administered the customs and supervised the civil affairs of the Philippine
Islands between 1898 and 1939; Puerto Rico, 1898-1900, 1909-34; and Cuba, 1898-
1902, 1906-09. It supervised the Dominican Customs Receivership from 1905 to 1939,
and the Haitian Customs Receivership, 1920-24. President William Howard Taft, who
served as Secretary of War between 1904 and 1908, put the Island’s affairs under control
of the War Department’s Bureau of Insular Affairs as a response to the Puerto Rican
Chamber of Delegates’ reluctance to pass the governor’s budget for 1909.
Responsibility for Puerto Rico transferred to Division of Territories and Island
Possessions (later the Office of Territories and still later the Office of Territorial Affairs)
to the Department of the Interior by Executive Order 6726, May 29, 1934. The transfer
got into effect in March 2, 1935. The BIA was abolished by the Reorganization Plan
No. II in July 1, 1939. The bureau was replaced by the Division of Territories and Island
Possessions of the Department of the Interior which operated between 1939 and 1950.
See, “Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior” [National Archives and
Records Administration, Center for Electronic Records]; accessed 29 October 2008;
available from http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/350.htm; and
Estades Font, La Presencia Militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico, 120-23
indirect approach, and both roles fomented ties with the Puerto Rican peasantry and
further Americanization. Direct involvement refers to the remobilization of the Puerto
Ricans and their inclusion in the armed forces of the metropolis. Indirect involvement
concerns any interaction of non-military nature between the U.S. Army and the people of
Puerto Rico. While fulfilling the later the military is adopting the role of a governmental
entity. It was the authority on the Island (at least during direct military rule) but it was
also in charge of offering relief to the population especially during catastrophes. In this
regard, the military government soon found itself fulfilling that function after August 8,
1899, when hurricane San Ciriaco destroyed the majority of the crops, thousands of
peasants’ dwellings, and killed roughly 3,400 Puerto Ricans. The population received
military rations from the troops garrisoning the Island, as well as medical care. The role
of the U.S. military, however, went beyond immediate relief. As estimated by military
authorities, the Army had to assist a vast portion of the population for several months.

It was during the relief effort after San Ciriaco that a junior medical officer
discovered the cause of chronic anemia, the worst ailment afflicting the Puerto Rican

163 Relief efforts started before San Ciriaco. In December 1898 the military
governor, Guy V. Henry had requested from Muñoz Rivera a report detailing “any cases
of poverty or destitution which cannot be relieved by the inhabitants of the place” with
the intention “if possible, to help these people.” See, Guy V. Henry, Brigadier General,
Department of Porto Rico to Senor [sic] Munoz [sic] Rivera, December 12, 1898,
(Arquivo General de Puerto Rico, Fondo Oficina del Gobernador, Serie Correspondencia
Gobernador, 1898, Caja, 135).

164 The military government estimated that relief efforts had to be provided for a
full quarter of the Island’s population estimated roughly to be 1,000,000 people. See;
Reports of the War Department, 1900, 771. Also see; Departamento de la Guerra.
Dirección del Censo de Puerto Rico, Informe sobre el Censo de Puerto Rico, 1899 (San
Juan Puerto Rico: reprint by Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 2003), 106. And;
(San Juan P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, reprint 1998), 40.
peasantry in the early twentieth century. While in charge of the medical detachment in Ponce, Bailey K. Ashford, a U.S. Army doctor, realized that the poor physical condition of the Puerto Rican Jíbaro, was not due to the climate but to hookworms. Bailey found that the worm *Ancylostoma duodenale* was the cause of the epidemic anemia in Puerto Rico. The remedy was simple enough; purging the parasites by administering the patients a concoction of Thymol—a phenol found in the oil of thyme—diluted in alcohol.¹⁶⁵

The medical establishment in the Island had long argued that the chronic anemia or “laziness” affecting the peasants, which was responsible for one third of all deaths in the Island, was due to the climate, nutrition, bad hygiene or malaria, or a combination of these factors, and as such, it was endemic in the mountains and coastal plains where the Jíbaro lived. Ashford recounts that when asked how their relatives had died, most peasants would respond, and physicians would confirm: “De la anemia- la muerte natural, of anemia- natural death”.¹⁶⁶ Even his wife, who came from prominent *criollo* families, explained to him “… that is the anemia of the country. They all die of it eventually.”¹⁶⁷

Ashford could hardly believe that a whole “agricultural class” was dying of anemia.¹⁶⁸ He was even more dumbfounded by the upper classes’ lack of interest in treating such a preventable and curable disease. After years of trying to persuade the medical establishment to adopt the relative easy cure for pandemic anemia, Ashford was


¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 42-45.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. As his tests showed, it was anemia indeed as the white corpuscles in blood known as eosinophiles which should not exceed four percent were running up to forty percent in the blood of the peasants he sampled.
finally able to secure the creation of the Porto Rico Anemia Commission with a budget of 5,000 U.S. dollars in 1904.\textsuperscript{169} After initially setting up the anemia camp in Bayamón, Ashley decided to move to Utuado, almost at the center of the Island but with roads connecting to the Northwest, so those more in need of treatment could reach him. That first campaign treated 5,490 patients.

Not everyone was content with the sanitary campaign of the Porto Rico Anemia Commission. The effect that curing the \textit{Jíbaros} could have on the socio-economic and political realm frightened some elements of Puerto Rican society. Bailey writes that a would-be assassin, who also had hookworms, entered his hospital in Utuado but was quickly subdued by him and his assistant and treated for the anemia. The cured man returned months later to the hospital, and asked Ashford to decide what to do with the man who had hired him to harm the doctor. Ashford asked him to make sure the \textit{Jíbaros} from Utuado did not elect him to any political position.\textsuperscript{170}

For the year 1905-06 the Anemia Commission moved its base to Aibonito, another mountain town but near the southeast.\textsuperscript{171} By the end of the second year the Commission had treated 170,000 patients, and the death rate had been reduced to .12 of one percent for those treated. Deaths from anemia fell from 11,875 in 1900-1901 to 1,758 in 1907-1908. The campaign lasted seven years. Between 1904 and 1911 over 310,000 people were successfully treated for the anemia. In Doctor Ashford’s account

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 56.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 57-62.

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 68-70.
that number represented “1,600,000 visits over mountain trails and hot coast-lands to see the doctor.” 172

Ashford also stated that after compiling the answers given to him by planters in a survey he devised, the planters estimated a gain of 61% in workers efficiency. 173 A planter from Aguadilla wrote to him that:

I have observed that some of our peasants at a certain period of the year were left completely without support, for this terrible disease prevents them from working, and they had to beg in order to live. To-day, however, after cure of their anemia, they [the peasant and agricultural workers] own something -a little business, a cow, a nice little house, and, in addition subsist happily and work constantly. 174

Ashford also discovered that if the cause of the anemia was parasitical, it was severely aggravated by the peasants’ malnutrition. He recommended that socio-economic problems such as extremely low income, which he believed accounted for malnutrition and ignorance plaguing the Jíbaro, should be addressed to finally eradicate once and for all preventable diseases crippling the Puerto Rican peasantry. 175 Only that way, he believed, would the Jíbaro awaken from his long sleep and small world and become an integral part of Puerto Rican society. He wrote: “Yet this is the man of whom we have to make a citizen, a man with a vote and a say in the affairs of the Island. He has been the awakening of Rip Van Winkle, and he has awakened into a world that leaves

172 Ibid., 82-83.
173 Ibid., 91.
174 Ibid., 91-92.
175 Ibid., 77, 79-80.
him gasping, stunned. He is neither a degenerate nor a fool.\(^{176}\) Adapting a paternalistic
stance, the military establishment in the Island, from infantry to medical officers took the

*Jíbaro* as a ward to be protected, and reshaped.

A special relationship between the U.S. military and the peasantry started to
develop during the early days of the American occupation as a result of the relief efforts
and sanitary campaigns launched by the military government. As discussed by historian
Estades Font, the motives behind such practices were not exclusively humanitarian. She
explains that controlling tropical diseases was economically and militarily vital for
American expansion. The labor force of the new territories, the occupation troops, and
the civilian population of the mainland needed to be protected from such diseases.\(^{177}\)

Most of the relief, sanitary and humanitarian campaigns carried out by the military and
civilian colonial authorities in Puerto Rico targeted formerly disenfranchised groups: the
peasants, *Jíbaros*, and urban workers. In this respect, these efforts were part of a broader
strategic agenda-- securing the loyalty of the inhabitants of the Island and promoting pro-
American feelings. These sectors of Puerto Rican society were also the main target of
Americanization efforts. Either consciously or unbeknownst to them, the metropolitan
administrators were playing a game of divide and conquer. Be that as it may, the
question remains whether these efforts were rewarded. This type of military involvement
could not be perceived but as a positive gesture. In many respects, the services provided
by the military and its interactions with the population facilitated the development of a

\(^{176}\) Ibid., 92.

\(^{177}\) Estades Font, *La presencia militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico*, 101;
quoting President McKinley’s second annual message of December 5, 1898.
special relationship between the native population of the Island and the U.S. military and thus eased the acceptance of American rule.

Military involvement in the Island was not limited to providing aid or functioning as *de facto* government. As early as 1899 Puerto Ricans were serving in U.S. army units.\(^\text{178}\) This phenomenon was the result of several factors. American politicians begun to feel the pressure from their constituencies to bring the troops home as soon as the war was over. Consequently, the elected officials of the states of the American Union, which had pressured the War Department to send their volunteers into battle before the war ended, started to urge the McKinley administration to bring back the troops. By August 23, 1898, General Miles was proposing to return as much as a third of the invading force to the mainland. Shortly after, the War Department decided to send fresh regular and volunteer troops to conduct the occupation.\(^\text{179}\) However, after the transfer of sovereignty, continental politicians demanded the return of these fresh troops too, especially the volunteer state militias.

The manpower situation was further complicated due to the Pilipino insurrection which aggravated the shortage of regular U.S. troops. With state officials clamoring for

\(^{178}\) Before and during the invasion of Puerto Rico, the American forces organized three Puerto Rican corps charged with facilitating the invasion and the war effort in the Island. The first group, the Porto Rican Commission, was composed of a dozen Puerto Ricans and presided by an American. The PRC mediated between the population and American soldiers, explained the aims of the war, and try to convince the native population to support the U.S. Once in Puerto Rico, General Miles ordered the creation of the Porto Rican Scouts. The PRS were attached to General Schwan’s brigade. This cavalry unit included seventy men. Miles also ordered the creation of the Porto Rican Guards to keep the public order and named a Puerto Rican as the unit’s commanding officer. Puerto Ricans also joined the invading force as skirmishers, guides, scouts and spies. See, Negroni, *Historia Militar de Puerto Rico*, 367-69.

the return of their respective states’ militias and a well organized insurrection against the American occupation forces in the Philippines, there was little support for continuing to occupy Puerto Rico with continental troops, especially when the Americans faced no organized political resistance and enjoyed the goodwill and support of the general population. The Island, however, secured from Spain mostly for its military value, had to be defended. It is within this framework that Puerto Ricans began to serve in the U.S. military in organized corps.

Puerto Rican politicians were only too eager to volunteer the population for military service. Cayetano Coll y Toste, a prominent figure in Puerto Rico and a civilian secretary to Brigadier General George W. Davis, the military governor of Puerto Rico, claimed that he encouraged Davis to form a battalion of native volunteers to replace the American troops in the Island while touring Spanish military installations. In fact, the process of organizing a native military had been initiated under Davis’ predecessor, Major General Guy V. Henry. Additionally, the first proponent of Puerto Rican military service in the U.S. military was a most unlikely figure, Eugenio María de Hostos. Historian Rafael Bernabe has discussed many of the political responses to American imperialism developed by Puerto Rican leaders by the turn of the nineteen century. In a work that demystifies early independence and statehood defenders, Bernabe argues that many of the latter where in fact radical anti-colonialists. Even Eugenio María de Hostos

proposed Americanization of the Island and its inhabitants as a way to lead toward self-determination, democracy, and modern republicanism.\textsuperscript{181}

On January 20 1899, Eugenio María de Hostos, as one of the Puerto Rican commissioners traveling to Washington to discuss the future of the Island, urged President McKinley to reduce the American occupation forces and to create a native militia of at least 300 men.\textsuperscript{182} The same petition included the replacement of the military government by a civilian one while Congress decided, with the consent of the Puerto Ricans, the future of the Island.

Regarding education, Hostos proposed that “the military schooling of the people of Puerto Rico be considered as one of means we need for the education of our people.” Military instruction, he argued, “is a tool for the physical strengthening and discipline of the life and character of the Puerto Rican people” \textsuperscript{183} He also proposed the establishment of seven institutes in which military training would be used to promote discipline of the body and soul, teach strong work ethics and concepts of rights and obligations. In essence, Hostos believed that the right type of military training promoted civic virtues.

\textsuperscript{181} Bernabe, \textit{Respuestas al colonialismo}, 29-36.

\textsuperscript{182} “El mensaje al presidente de los Estados Unidos” in Eugenio María de Hostos, \textit{Los rostros del camino; Antología} (San Juan P.R.: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. Programa de Publicaciones y Grabaciones, 1995), 154-56.

He envisioned “civilian schools to be military schools and the military training in our schools to be civic learning for life.”

Hostos also defended the Americanization of the Puerto Rican which he understood as the political modernization of the inhabitants of the Island. In 1900, disillusioned with the policies of the McKinley administration, he stated that the president had betrayed the goal of Americanizing the Island. Though Hostos preferred an independent Puerto Rico and ideally part of an Antillean Confederation, he considered that if the people of Puerto Rico so desire it, the Island should become a state of the American Union. Furthermore, he believed that Americanization “would prepare Puerto Rico to effectively assert its independence”. Those thoughts were not contradictory. Hostos believed in self-determination but feared that centuries of oppression had weakened the Puerto Ricans to the point to where they might not even constitute a people. According to Hostos, to exercise self-determination the Puerto Rican needed to adopt the ideals guiding the creation of the United States, which he considered the “the


\[\text{\textsuperscript{185}}\]“En vez de un plan de gobierno que habría americanizado a Borinquen en cuanto el Americanismo es un bien, y la habría preparado para ejercer eficazmente su independencia en la vida de relación con los demás pueblos de la tierra, McKinley y el sindicato político que no ven más allá de la continuación del partido republicano en el poder, no vieron otra cosa en Puerto Rico que el campo de explotación que creían dar a la codicia de sus parciales o a la vana gloria del vulgo americano” “Carta al Director de La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico,” October 1900, in Hostos, Los rostros del camino, 156-58.
most complete civilization in existence.”\textsuperscript{186} For Hostos, military education and service might very well serve to speed the Americanization- understood as political modernization- of the Puerto Ricans and their eventual self-determination.

Other prominent politicians adopted Hostos’ philosophy. Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón, one of the founders of the Republican Party in Puerto Rico, and initially an intractable promoter of statehood for the Island, shared some of the ideas espoused by Hostos with regard to Americanization. For Matienzo Cintrón Americanization meant democratic modernization. Political freedom, democratic rights, secular education, separation of Church and State, workers’ and women’s rights, and the utilization of research and science for the betterment of all aspects of human life were all part of his understanding of democratic modernization.\textsuperscript{187} This radical position, as argued by Rafael Bernabe, would eventually lead him to organize the \textit{Partido Independencia} in 1912.\textsuperscript{188} Just as many others who admired the founding principles of the United States of America, Matienzo Cintrón grew disillusioned with the colonial apparatus established in the Island by the McKinley administration via the Foraker Act of 1900. Like Hostos, he denounced the “false Americanization” taking place in the Island. He believed that if Americanization was “democratic modernization” then by imposing a colonial regime to the Puerto Ricans the government of the United States was engaging in false


\textsuperscript{187} Bernabe, \textit{Respuestas al colonialismo}, 32.

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 30-33.
Americanization and thus betraying its founding principles. However, strong opposition to American policies in the Island came late and was, in many occasions, drowned out by the majority of the criollo political establishment.

With no initial opposition from the criollo leadership, with the blessing of the military governors, and the real need of manpower elsewhere, the remobilization of the Puerto Ricans under American rule proceeded swiftly. On March 2, 1899 Congress, through the Army Appropriation Bill, authorized the creation of a native corps in Puerto Rico. On March 24, Major General Guy V. Henry, commanding officer of the Porto Rico Military Department ordered the recruitment of natives to form a battalion. In early May, the 400 men needed for the Porto Rico Battalion had been recruited, equipped and trained. On May 20, 1899, General George W. Davis, who had replaced General Henry, published General Order No. 65 activating the battalion of Porto Rican Volunteers.

In many respects, the battalion of volunteers was primarily regarded as colonial troops and only expected to defend the Island. The military authorities added a cavalry battalion and changed the name of the Porto Rico Battalion to the Porto Rico Regiment United States Volunteers (P.R. U.S.V.) in 1900. The name change in name is

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189 Ibid., 34-35.

190 The order set the unit’s strength at four companies, A, B, C, and D, with 100 men each. They were located in Mayaguez, Ponce and San Juan. Muratti, History of the 65th, 2-3.

191 Ibid.

192 General Order No. 34 of February 12, 1900. The order allowed for the organization of companies E, F, G, and H as a cavalry battalion. These troops were stationed in Henry Barracks in the mountain town of Cayey. José Norat-Martínez, ed., Historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería (San Juan, P.R.: La Milagrosa, 1960), 11.
significant if only for the fact that the words “United States Volunteers” drove home the point that Puerto Ricans were now United States nationals as established by the Foraker Act. Over the following year, the Puerto Rican volunteers replaced the Continental Americans troops garrisoning outposts throughout the Island. In 1905 all American soldiers in the Island, but their commanders, were natives of Puerto Rico.

The native corps became a regiment of the United States Army in July 1, 1908 by an act of congress. It is very interesting that this was the same year when Unión consolidated its political power. Unión represented a challenge to the American colonial administration since the party advocated more autonomy or even independence, and as the polls showed, the ardently pro-American Republicans were losing their appeal. Was transforming the native regiment into a regular army unit an attempt to secure the loyalty of the troops or even intimidate the political opposition? These soldiers never indicated discontent with the political arrangement, but then again, even during World War II, the colonial authorities had many of the regiment’s members, including officers, under surveillance. Thus, it is more than feasible that the colonial authorities were in fact trying to send a message to both their political opposition and the troops. These native troops played a very important role in the acceptance of American rule and on the

193 By February 23 1901, Continental American troops remained in the Island but their role was limited to support duties. Hospital, signal, and artillery detachments, and an infantry battalion were all that was left of the occupation forces by of December 15, 1900. See; Reports of the War Department. 1900, 106; Norat-Martínez, Historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería, 9-11.

194 Norat-Martínez, Historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería, 12.

195 The regiment’s structural organization did not suffer any more changes until it started to expand in preparation for the First World War.
Americanization project itself. Losing their allegiance could seriously weaken the 
American position in the Island.

The challenge to American rule did materialize. In 1909, Unión, which 
dominated the Chamber of Delegates in Puerto Rico, directly challenged the colonial 
administration by refusing to pass the governor’s budget. President William Howard Taft 
(1909-1913) moved swiftly to curtail the means of political opposition and obtained from 
congress an amendment to the Foraker Act enabling the governor to use the budget from 
the previous year if the Puerto Rican Chamber of Delegates did not approve his proposal. 
This amendment also authorized the president to place the Island under the War 
Department’s Bureau of Insular Affairs.\(^{196}\) Estades Font has emphasized that it was in 
the interests of the metropolis and its colonial administrators to weaken Unión, which 
was heavily dominated by coffee growers, who after gradually losing socio-economic 
influence since 1898 and aggravated by the perpetuation of the colonial status, had turned 
anti-American.\(^{197}\) Moreover, she argues that the militarization of the Island was an 
integral component of American colonial domination. President Taft’s decision of 
putting the Island under direct control of the War Department when local politicians 
demanded more autonomy and a path towards self-determination surely supports her 
argument.

The question remains, however, why was the metropolis so decisive and harsh in 
dealing with the Puerto Rican Chamber of Delegates? Had it not been elected by a vast

\(^{196}\) See; Estades Font, *La presencia militar de los estados Unidos en Puerto Rico*, 
126-27.

\(^{197}\) Ibid., 121-128.
majority of Puerto Ricans and presumably held their allegiance? Furthermore, the U.S. soldiers in the Island and the police, with the exception of most officers, were Puerto Ricans in American uniforms. Was not there a possibility that these soldiers and policemen in charge of the security apparatus might turn against the metropolis if its policies became too unpalatable? In 1909, the native regiment and the insular police in Puerto Rico were commanded by American officers. This situation surely strengthened Taft’s determination to deal harshly with the Chamber of Delegates. As governor of the Philippines, President Taft had opposed creating a Pilipino regiment led by Pilipino officers but supported creating it under the command of American officers. He argued that under U.S. commanders Filipino soldiers would be “entirely loyal” to the U.S. and would perform efficiently while Pilipino commanders could lead the troops “into either ladronism [sic] or insurrectoism[sic].”¹⁹⁸ The colonial administration’s policies to deal with Unión show that in fact the metropolis was confident in having the upper hand regarding the loyalty of not only of the troops and the police but of the majority of the population.

As previously discussed, Americanization campaigns targeted mostly previously disenfranchised groups. Likewise the military remobilization of the Island pinpointed disenfranchised groups and in fact exploited anti-Spanish sentiments. It is very telling that the first volunteers to serve in the native corps came from the town of Lares, where

anti-Spanish and pro-independence sentiments had been strong since the second half of the nineteenth century and the only place where the 1868 revolt against Spain succeeded.

Moreover, the majority of those enlisting in the U.S. military were of humble origin. The U.S. military, an institution usually associated with repression, became a vehicle for social mobility and political enfranchisement in early twentieth-century Puerto Rico. As part of the Americanization campaign and as a form of colonial domination that was overt regarding the political classes but nuanced with respect to the individuals who went through the institutions of Americanization, the military remobilization of the Puerto Rican served the metropolis very well during the first

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199 The residents of Lares who joined the battalion of volunteers on March 28, 1899 were: Manuel González, Juan Feliciano, Maximiliano Grauláu, Primo Hernández, Antonio Montes, Vicente Rivera, and Ramón Santiago. José de Rodríguez, and Agustín Carbonell, also from Lares became the first Puerto Rican Sergeant and Corporal serving in the U.S. battalion of Volunteers. And, Fermín Rojas, another lareño who joined on March 30 of the same year, was in charge, with José F. Santiago from San Juan, of creating the first mess hall. See; Antonio E. Padrón, El 65 en revista (New York: Las Américas Publishing Company, 1961), 22-23.

200 This is supported by the fact that the officers’ corps was closed to natives until 1904. Since the pay of an enlisted man was much less than what a professional, merchant or hacendado could make, not to mention that these classes expected to serve as officers, it is obvious that those joining where of humble means. In July 4, 1904, Jaime Nadal became the first Puerto Rican to be appointed as a 2nd Lt. in the regiment. Before Nadal, Puerto Ricans only served as non-commissioned officers (Sergeants) and recruits. See; Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Proyecto Caribeño (C.I.H.P.C.); Caja 31, Cartapacio 11, Documento 2, Puerto Rican Provisional Regiment of Infantry: Register of Officers Showing Dates of Appointment, July 1901-October-1909. Public Law 160 – with 6700-6 of March 3, 1903 allowed the Governor of Puerto Rico to nominate one midshipman to Annapolis. The Resident Commissioner could nominate five candidates by virtue of Public Law 8, 66th Congress 6700-27 of July 11 1919. See; (C.I.H.P.C.) Caja 30, Cartapacio 7, Documento A.
decades of American rule. The American colonial administrators knew this only too well.

Military Governor, General Davis, in his report to congress stated:

The native troops… may be relied upon for performance of the principal military service for Porto Rico. They are a selected body of men, and exercise a most beneficial influence. The inhabitants of the island generally are proud of them, and the criminals hold them in wholesome fear. 201

Since its inception the Puerto Rican volunteer corps was relied upon to perform three core missions. First, these soldiers were in charge of defending the Island against foreign threats. Second, they acted as deterrence, first against criminals and later against domestic political opposition. And, lastly, and probably more importantly; they were supposed to provide an example to be followed by the general population.

So impressed was Davis with the performance of the native troops and with how well the population regarded them that he recommended further reductions of continental troops which at the time represented less than half or 735 of the 1,635 U.S. troops in the Island. 202 He believed that with the added 475 officers and men of the Insular Police, a

201 Reports of the War Department, 1900, 105.

202 According to First Lt. J.S. Battle (11th U.S. Infantry), and first inspector of the Insular Police, this corps was created in view of the vacuum left by the retreating Spanish forces and the “the reign of terror was existing everywhere. Armed bands of assassins and incendiaries were in control of the largest part of the island, levying tribute from the merchants and planters.” Since he found the Army incapable of dealing with these bans due to their lack of knowledge of Spanish and the Islands’ topography, Major General Guy V. Henry, military governor ordered the creation of the Insular Police on February 7, 1899. Two clerks and the inspector were the only Americans in the initial force which begun duties on February of the same year. See: Reports of the War Department. 1900, 226-28.
third of the previous Spanish police agents, the Island’s security needs could be easily met.²⁰³

The American leaders liked showcasing their apparent colonial success by bringing the Puerto Rican troops to Washington. The band and first battalion of the native regiment participated in the inaugurations of President McKinley in 1901, and in Theodore Roosevelt’s in 1905.²⁰⁴ But, the main role of these troops was to highlight the virtues of American rule before their compatriots. The native troops had a very visible role. They performed as firemen, had their own baseball team, which participated in the local tournament, while the regiment’s band appeared in public and communal events.

In a telegram dated March 11, 1901, Charles H. Allen, the first appointed civil Governor of Puerto Rico, communicated to the U.S. Secretary of War, Elihu Root, that it was advisable to make the Porto Rico Regiment of Volunteers a permanent outfit. Allen believed that native troops, under the command of continental officers, would be adequate to garrison the Island. Commenting on troop loyalty Allen wrote: “They have been tried in almost every emergency except that of meeting in arms people of their own country. Whether or not they would be found wanting as such an important moment, should it ever arise, I do not feel competent to say”. Allen continues: “But it can be said that in many discussions on the subject with the officers that they would be loyal to the sovereignty of the U.S. and implicitly obey the orders of their

²⁰³ Reports of the War Department, 1900, 105-106.

commanding officers. As an arm of safety their presence is therefore desirable.\textsuperscript{205} The question, whether they would fight against their fellow countrymen, would not have to be answered until 1950.

Not just their loyalty was expected but by wearing the U.S. Army uniform, Puerto Rican soldiers were to spread pro-American feelings among the population. The native soldier, Allen stated, had become:

\ldots an object lesson to the communities in the neighborhoods of their posts\ldots and from that standpoint, as from many others, has undoubtedly been a very potent education influence. Each man of the battalion will be a committee in himself to spread among the natives, stories of American prestige\ldots The soldiers feel a pride in their service and there is an undoubted stimulant by it toward general loyalty.\textsuperscript{206}

Several trends that would mark Puerto Rican participation in U.S. Military institutions are identifiable in Allen’s statements. First, a professional and loyal military integrated by natives of the Island would guarantee stability for the metropolis. Second, service in the military was identified with progress and modernity. Third, the native soldiers, by becoming a model for the population, would be an instrument for the Americanization of the Island further consolidating the command of the metropolis over its colonial subjects. When a real impasse emerged between the criollos leading Unión

\textsuperscript{205} See; Charles H. Allen, Porto Rico Civilian Governor to Elihu Root, U.S. Secretary of War, Telegram, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Fondo: Oficina del Gobernador, Serie: Correspondencia General, Caja 224, Folio 1595, Mayo 1900.

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
and the American colonial administrators in 1909, the metropolis flexed its muscles for it was certain that it could count on the native military apparatus and the general public’s support. These trends would become more obvious and would be further developed and challenged by the native leadership during the First World War. However, before the Great War, the military and paramilitary apparatus in the Island was firmly in the hands of the metropolis.

Under United States’ rule, access to military institutions for the “hijos de este país” was reestablished while political participation- to a certain degree- was opened to the masses. Soon after the war ended, natives of the Island started to replace U.S. continental soldiers. From the beginning the new insular soldiers did not become part of a home militia or National Guard but elements of the United States Army tightly controlled by the American colonial administration. Additionally, the new metropolis gradually allowed for a higher degree of political participation eventually creating the space for mass electoral enfranchisement. These two apparently disconnected trends facilitated the transfer of sovereignty over the Island from Spain to the United States, and, more importantly, they transformed the character of Puerto Rican nationality. The inclusion of Puerto Ricans in the armed forces of the new metropolis, and mass political mobilization, especially of the rural sectors, gradually led towards competing national identities.

The U.S. also embarked in a comprehensive build up of the public education system, which was intended to Americanize and modernize the inhabitants of the Island, while launching massive sanitary and relief campaigns. Hence, although cultural affinity might have been absent between Puerto Ricans and Americans in 1898, the metropolis’
control of the education system allowed for the projection of American material superiority disguised as cultural supremacy. Furthermore, sanitary and relief campaigns allowed for positive interaction between the new metropolis and its colonial subjects. Whether these attempts were successful in “Americanizing” the Puerto Ricans is not the issue. What is important is that even the people living in the most remote corners of the Island started to learn about the United States and the culture of its dominant groups.

The fact that the military institutions, the political arena, and the public school system were opened to previously disenfranchised groups began to profoundly alter the islander’s national identity. Participation in American institutions provided unifying experiences for the Puerto Rican masses which allowed for the strengthening of their national identity but with an American touch. Public schools offered a homogenized pro-metropolis oriented experience for hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans while the opening of the U.S. military to groups previously excluded from it and other sectors of Puerto Rico’s society conferred these groups with a sense of inclusion. Access to education and military positions also offered an opportunity for mobility and the chance to overthrown old socio-economic hierarchies, a phenomenon that led to the creation of upwardly mobile classes and neo-elites who owed their well being and thus their political allegiance to the new metropolis.

Puerto Rican politicians’ participation in the military and civil governments of the new metropolis further legitimized the American presence in the Island. The former autonomists became anexionistas and roughly ninety percent of the population in Puerto Rico favored becoming a state of the Union during the first years after the war. Recognizing the pro-American sentiments of the population during the early stages of the
American occupation, the political leadership in Puerto Rico decided to exploit it by supporting participation in the political institutions set by the new metropolis and emphasizing military service. Puerto Rican elites and the popular sector participated actively in the institutions of the new metropolis further legitimizing U.S. sovereignty.

The early American attempts to create a new Puerto Rican via military service—which were supported by the *criollo* elite, including supporters of independence—were curtailed by the limited scope of the project. There was no dearth of interest or lack of enthusiasm amongst American officers and *criollo* leaders to embark on this project, nor was the general population unenthusiastic. However, the small size of the United States military apparatus, which because of its mission did not require massive armies, limited the size of the military in Puerto Rico and its effect on the population. Nonetheless, the re-mobilization of the Puerto Ricans begun during the first years of American rule as Puerto Ricans came to wear U.S. Army uniforms and replaced Continental troops garrisoning the Island. Furthermore, a special relation started to emerge between the military and Puerto Rico’s population as military doctors and engineers combed the mountains and towns of the Island building sanitary facilities, roads, and schools and launched massive health and relief campaigns. The First World War would provide the grounds to retry the projects of Americanization and modernization via military service at levels previously unimaginable and with more players involved.
CHAPTER 3

“A NEW DAY HAS DAWNED FOR THE PUERTO RICAN JIBARO”: WORLD WAR I AND MOBILIZATION OF THE PUERTO RICAN PEASANT

Downtrodden, unthought [sic] for as he [the Jíbaro] has been, he is now in the limelight. The testing and refining process will be hard for him. But he and his brother will become the nucleus of a new Porto Rico. The anemic disease warped man will be a thing of the past. And the domain of the Jíbaro will at last come into its proper place in the great Economic and Social scheme of this island.207

In 1908, the U.S. government had sought to secure its control over the military apparatus in Puerto Rico by making the native military corps a regular regiment of the United States Army by an act of Congress.208 As a corollary to this measure, the Taft administration attempted to augment the political power of the colonial bureaucracy in Puerto Rico by giving full control over the Island to the War Department’s Bureau of Insular Affairs (BIA) and by curtailing the ability of the Puerto Rican Chamber of Delegates to challenge the presidential-appointed governor.209 After taking these steps,

207 The Porto Rico Progress, 12 July 1918, (Microfilm, Colección Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus). The Porto Rico Progress was published in English between December 8, 1910 and the early 1960s. Its tone was adamantly pro metropolis.

208 Norat-Martínez, Historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería, 12.

209 In 1909, President William Howard Taft (1909-1913) moved swiftly to hinder the means of political opposition in the Island and obtained from congress an amendment to the Foraker Act of 1900 enabling the governor to use the previous year budget if the elected Porto Rican Chamber of Delegates did not approve his budget proposal. This
the U.S. colonial administration enjoyed but a few years of relative political calm. Under American rule, as it had been the case under Spanish control, a crisis tended to highlight the military importance of Puerto Rico and to accelerate its political development. These lessons were not missed by Puerto Rican politicians. Another quandary, this time the First World War, once again provided for faster negotiations between the metropolis and the colonial administration, the criollo elites, and to a certain degree, the general population.

In 1917, as the United States prepared to enter World War I, the metropolis imposed American citizenship upon the natives of Puerto Rico. American citizenship preceded the first mass military mobilization of Puerto Rican peasants, agro-workers and urban working classes in Puerto Rico. Since the very early days of American presence in the Island, the metropolis’ leaders and its colonial administrators had argued that military training and values would “Americanize” and “modernize” the Puerto Rican. During WWI, Puerto Rican leaders, who had supported military instruction and service since the days of the American invasion in 1898, joined the chorus of those who argued that serving in the military would create a new man out of the Puerto Rican peasant. In this regard, Puerto Rican politicians and leaders talked openly of using military service to create a “new modern man out of the Jíbaro”; one modern individual, integrated into the socio-economic structures of the Island as a productive agent by virtue of his military

amendment also authorized the president to place the Island under the War Department’s Bureau of Insular Affair. See Estades Font, La presencia militar de los Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico, 126-29.
training. In a very real sense, both the *criollo* elites and the metropolis were engaging in reshaping the very essence of the Puerto Ricans’ individual and collective identities.

The metropolis and the *criollo* elites found themselves locked in a battle for control of the nation-building project via military service. Unlike the early days after the American invasion, the native political leadership was no longer monolithically blindly pro-American which led to the emergence of different “Americanization” and “modernization” projects from the ranks of the *criollo* elite. Moreover, several factions sought to transform active participation in the war effort into political gains. During the First World War, Puerto Rican politicians encouraged military participation of the Islanders in the U.S. military and support of the war effort, while promoting and facilitating workers migration to the continental U.S. hoping to alleviate the dire economic situation of the Island. Supporting the war effort, some thought, would prove the Puerto Ricans’ loyalty to the U.S. and to the ideals of democracy and freedom. Others believe that participating in the war would prove Puerto Ricans’ manhood and adulthood which would put the metropolis in a very awkward position if it continued to deny them political equality and to ignore their capability of self-government and of self-determination.\(^{210}\) Whatever their final reasoning, mass military service became a tool for different factions which sought to achieve their goals by modernizing the Puerto Rican *Jíbaro*—and by extension Puerto Rico—through military training and service.

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\(^{210}\) Though similar, self-government and self-determination are not the same. The former refers to a higher degree of self-rule and the liberalization of the colonial regime which some groups thought it would lead to eventual independence. Self-determination meant allowing the Puerto Ricans to decide the political status of the Island by themselves be it inclusion in the Union as a federated state, independence or any other political arrangement.
This chapter analyzes the projects and goals of the metropolis and its colonial administrators vis-à-vis those of the criollo elites and the response of the masses to the political changes occurring during this period. Was extending American citizenship to the Puerto Ricans and the subsequent mass mobilization of the peasantry and the urban working classes a transformative experience? Did a new Puerto Rican emerge from this experience? Was the military-trained Jíbaro integrated into the modern socio-economic structures of the Island? Did the competition between the criollo elites and the metropolitan colonial authorities evolve into a shift of allegiances among the Puerto Ricans by the war’s end? In other words, was American colonial rule in the Island as strong as it had been before the war? And, was the first mass mobilization of Puerto Ricans accompanied by true political transformations?

On June 28 1914, the assassination of the Hapsburg heir, Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo by the Bosnian-Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip activated several European alliances finally triggering the First World War. By August 4, five European empires were at war and would soon drag many other nations into the conflict. On April 6, 1917, after years of carnage and with both belligerent alliances unable to win a decisive victory in the Western Front, the United States entered the conflict on the side of the Entete. On March 2, 1917, Congress had passed the Jones Act, also known as the

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211 By August 4 1914, five major empires were at war. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was in war against Serbia, the German Empire against, France Russia and Britain. The latter formed the Entete and were eventually joined by Japan, Italy and the United States among others. Austro-Hungary and Germany were known as the Central Powers and were joined by the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. By the end of the war over 20,000,000 soldiers and civilians had been killed, the Austro-Hungary, German, Ottoman, and Russian Empire had collapsed, and dozens of nations emerged to take their places. See Martin Gilbert, The First World War: A Complete History (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 14-17, 32-34, 473-80, 497-523.
Jones-Shafroth Act. This law granted American citizenship to the natives of Puerto Rico, and served as the Island’s constitution until 1952. Unlike its antecedent, the Jones Act allowed Puerto Ricans to elect their own territorial legislature and provided for universal male suffrage. That Puerto Ricans became American citizens in 1917 have been attributed by many to the need for soldiers as the U.S. entered the First World War. However, citizenship was as just one of the provisions included in the Jones Act. The passing of the Jones Act was the result of years of constant negotiations between Puerto Rican and American leaders.

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212 The Jones Act granted American citizenship to all Porto Rican citizens and to American citizens who became Porto Rican citizens after moving to the Island and residing in it for a year. The Act established a period of six months to reject American citizenship. It included legislation to allow underage children whose parents had previously rejected Porto Rican citizenship or who were of foreign nationality, to claim U.S. citizenship in adulthood. Article 5c., allowed for “erroneously informed” people—those from parents who had chosen to keep Spanish citizenship in 1900 and did not know they could become U.S. citizens—to claim such status. See Ley Orgánica Jones, Artículos 5, 5a, 5b, 5c., in Fernós López-Cepero, Documentos Históricos-Constitucionales de Puerto Rico, 79-82.

213 Articles 25-28 of the Jones Act established the Porto Rican legislature allowing for the creation of a senate and a house of representatives. The members of the legislature were required to know how to read and write in both English and Spanish. The Senate would be composed of two senators for each of the seven electoral districts and five senators not attached to any district. The House would consist of 39 representatives, one per district, and another four not linked to any district. The President of the United States, however, still had an extraordinary amount of power. For instance, he had the authority to appoint the governor, the education commissioner, and the Island’s Supreme Court judges. See Ley Orgánica Jones, Artículos 5-5a 25-28 in Fernós López-Cepero, Documentos Históricos-Constitucionales de Puerto Rico, 93-96.

American citizenship for the indigenous people of Puerto Rico—known then as Porto Rican citizens—had been contemplated by U.S. leaders well before 1917. President Theodore Roosevelt continually proposed granting American citizenship collectively to Puerto Ricans, but did not find much support in Congress. As a result of the political crisis of 1909 in Puerto Rico, officials at the War Department studied the possibility of granting citizenship to the Puerto Ricans. They came to the conclusion that even though the status would be well received, collective citizenship was a premature step since the majority of Puerto Ricans, they argued, were illiterate and unprepared for full political rights. As an alternative, the Office of the Secretary of War suggested facilitating the individual acquisition of U.S. citizenship by natives of the Island who were educated and owned business or land.\footnote{This opinion was shared by Secretary Jacob McGavock Dickinson (March 1909-May 1911) and Secretary Henry L. Stimson (May 1911-March 1913), though Stimson shifted his position later. See, Estades Font, \textit{La presencia militar de los Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico}, 204-06, citing; “Hearing Upon the Bill Proposing to Amend the Present Organic Law of Porto Rico, January 31, 1910, to February 24, 1910”, Library of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.} This recommendation was aimed at appeasing the local landlords and merchant class. Senator Elihu Root opposed collective U.S. citizenship on the grounds that Puerto Rico could not be admitted as a federated state and hence such move would create two classes of citizens—a practice he believed to be inconsistent with U.S. democratic traditions.\footnote{Estades Font, \textit{La presencia militar de los Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico}, 207, citing; Senator Elihu Root to Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, December 7, 1911.}

Despite opposition from prominent Congressmen, projects to grant U.S. citizenship to the Puerto Ricans were presented before Congress in 1912 and 1913. President Taft, (and later President Wilson) the BIA and most of Congress supported
such measure. Taft’s appointee, Governor George Colton (1909-1913), also endorsed taking this step which he thought would improve the United States’ image in Latin America. Colton’s support for citizenship was not an aberration. His successor, Arthur Yager (1913-21) was even more vociferous regarding this matter. These projects, as well as the support for granting American citizenship to the Puerto Ricans shown by Taft, Wilson, the BIA (reluctantly), Congress, and opinion-making groups in the mainland responded to both local and international considerations.

In Puerto Rico, the emergence of a radical wing within the dominant political coalition- Unión, which under the leadership of José de Diego demanded independence under an American protectorate, coupled with the creation of the Independence and the Socialist parties in 1912 and 1915 respectively to underline the socio-political unrest festering in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, in 1913 Unión, though still working towards

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217 President Taft appointed Colton as Governor of Porto Rico in mid September 1909. According to the New York Times, Colton who at the time was serving in the Philippines as customs collector, had work in a similar role in the Dominican Republic, spoke Spanish fluently and had diplomatic ties with many Latin American leaders. See “The New York Times, 13 September 1909;” accessed 12 August 2008; available from http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html; and, Governor George Colton to Secretary of War, December 13, 1912, in Font, La presencia militar de los Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico, 208.

218 Yager served as governor of the Island from 1913 to 1921. He was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson, a fellow Democrat and a former classmate from John Hopkins University. Yager had a Ph.D. in political sciences and had headed Georgetown College in Kentucky. He served throughout Wilson's terms in office, and was succeeded by Warren G. Harding’s appointee Emmet Montgomery Reilly. See “Puerto Rico Under Dr. Yager: Citizenship in the New Bill,” The Progress of the World, American Review of Reviews: An International Magazine XLIX, no. 1 (April 1914): 399-400.

219 In the general elections of November 3, 1914, Unión, which had controlled all districts in the Island since 1906, lost the districts of Mayagüez, Aguadilla and Ponce to the Republicans. However, it continued to be the dominating political force obtaining over half the total votes cast, winning 51 municipalities out of 75, re-electing Muñoz
autonomy, had made independence its final solution to the status question after a period of self-government under American tutelage.\(^{220}\) However, as early as 1915, convinced that the U.S. would never grant independence, nor statehood to Puerto Rico, Luis Muñoz Rivera—moderate leader of the Unionistas and Resident Commissioner in Washington between 1910 and 1916—came to believe that a type of self-government or autonomy in the likes of Australia’s or Canada’s was the best option for the Island.\(^{221}\) That the dominant party in the Island had renounced inclusion into the Union highlights the growing discontent with American rule in Puerto Rico. The metropolis, it seemed, had squandered the general goodwill and pro-Americanism prevalent in the aftermath of the war of 1898.

On the eve of World War I it certainly looked as if the metropolis’ control over the Island was becoming precarious. Many Puerto Rican political leaders opposed the

\(^{220}\) The Socialist Party, led by Santiago Iglesias Pantín, and its union, Federación de Trabajadores de Puerto Rico, were associated with the American Federation of Labor presided by Samuel Gompers. The Socialists defended Americanization and permanent union with the United States. See Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico,143-45.

\(^{221}\) Most of the discontent with the metropolis was voiced through La Correspondencia which was first the newspaper of the radicals within Unión and later of the Partido de la Independencia (Independence Party). President Woodrow Wilson made clear that the Unionist Party would have to abandon the goal of independence to get the administration's approval to amend the Foraker Act. Muñoz Rivera conceded and autonomy became the goal of the Unionist Party. See Bernabe, Respuestas al colonialismo, 49-51.
granting of American citizenship without statehood or a general referendum on it. Muñoz Rivera, though originally one of its main architects, opposed passing the Jones Act if it included U.S. citizenship. He believed that such action would freeze the political development of the Island while doing little to eliminate the colonial relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Nevertheless on May 23, 1916 the U.S. House of Representatives approved the legislation and sent it to the Senate, but it did not reach the Senate floor before the Congress recess.\textsuperscript{222}

Some of the provisions of the Jones Act irked Muñoz Rivera. One of his main concerns was that the version sent to the U.S. House of Representatives included restricted suffrage based on literacy and taxation.\textsuperscript{223} Also, while extra powers would pass to the Puerto Ricans, such as the right to have a two house elected legislature; the bill included veto power for the governor who remained a presidential appointee. Moreover, collective U.S. citizenship was in fact imposed on the Puerto Ricans who were not allowed to have a referendum on this matter. They had the right to reject U.S. citizenship but doing so would turn them into foreigners in their own land. The \textit{Unionistas}, who had abandoned statehood as a goal in 1913, saw collective American citizenship as a

\textsuperscript{222} In view of the failure of the Senate to consider this bill before recess, President Wilson decided to cancel the elections in the Island scheduled for November 1916 so there could be an especial election once the Jones Act was approved the following year. See, Bayrón Toro, \textit{Elecciones y partidos políticos puertorriqueños}, 147-48.

\textsuperscript{223} Restricting suffrage on the basis of literacy and taxation was opposed by all political parties as it would deny voting rights to 165,000 registered voters from a total of roughly 250,000. Bolívar Pagán, \textit{Historia de los Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños} (1898-1956) Tomo I, (San Juan, P.R.: Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 1972), 174-75.
Muñoz Rivera probably understood that the irreversible nature of collective U.S. citizenship for the Puerto Ricans could have a defusing effect with regard to political tensions, which could hinder the chances of advancing his party’s political goals. By then, the colonial administrators also understood the political value of granting collective U.S. citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico.

Probably no one was more adamant about granting American citizenship to the Puerto Ricans than Governor Yager. Yager’s campaign to bring U.S. citizenship to all Puerto Ricans was closely followed in the continental United States. In 1914 the American Review of Reviews observed that Puerto Ricans should be granted American citizenship and measures of self-government to reward their “continued improvement under American tutelage.” Additionally, American citizenship, the journal stressed, would eliminate “the germ of nationhood” fostered by the ill-conceived Porto Rico citizenship. The article continued by stating that complete self-government—meaning independence—was not an option because the Puerto Ricans “… are a Latin American people with the characteristics and traditions of their forebears still clinging about them.” This journal also made clear the dominant attitude towards the Island among opinion-making groups and the true reasons for the change of heart regarding granting U.S. citizenship to the Puerto Ricans:

\[\text{\textsuperscript{224}}\text{The Unionistas believed that granting American citizenship would killed the chances of independence by definitely incorporating Puerto Rico as a territory. Jose de Diego, Speaker of the House argued as such. See Bolívar Pagán, Historia de los Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños (1898-1956) Tomo I, (San Juan, P.R.: Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 1972), 173-74.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{225}}\text{American Review of Reviews: An International Magazine, 399-400.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{226}}\text{Ibid.}\]
The interest of our own country and Porto Rico demand this perpetual connection. It is for Congress therefore to make the people of this tropical isle reasonably satisfied with our rule; for the Stars and Stripes cannot permanently wave over a discontented and rebellious people.¹²²⁷

Quenching social and political unrest in the Island and restoring a positive image of the United States in Latin America had moved American leaders and opinion makers to favor U.S. citizenship for the Puerto Ricans as early as 1909.²²⁸ The outbreak of World War I probably accelerated the passing of the Jones Act, however, it is doubtful that Congress granted citizenship to one and a half million Puerto Ricans just to have more manpower for a war in which they were not yet involved, especially when at the time “dark races”, including Puerto Ricans, were not trusted as fighting troops.²²⁹ When

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¹²²⁷ This journal highlighted that in 1914, over 200,000 children were attending public schools in the Island. In 1914 Congress abolished tariffs on sugars which crippled the industry in the Island. *American Review of Reviews: An International Magazine*, 399-400.


²²⁹ The War Department limited African American participation to eight segregated combat regiments. 380,000 African Americans either volunteer or were conscripted during WWI. However, 89% of those soldiers were assigned to labor units instead of combat ones. The all-Black 93rd division distinguished itself fighting alongside the French Army, but this was poorly received by the Southern-dominated Wilson administration and military commanders who argued that the French were giving away military accolades to Black soldiers unnecessarily and unmerited. The American Expeditionary Force Command in Europe even insisted that the French banned African Americans from fraternizing with white French women because they worried of the social unrest the return of these Black soldiers might cause in the United States. After WWI was over, the War Department concluded that in future wars African American and, by extension, other “dark” races should be limited to labor tasks. Based on distorted accounts of the African-American performance during WWI, the military developed policies based on racial stereotypes, a military version of white supremacy. See John Sibley Butler, “African Americans in the Military” *The Oxford Companion to American
the United States took over Puerto Rico in 1898, the rationale used to retain the new colony, as well as the Philippines, was that Puerto Ricans were not capable of self-government mostly due to their racial composition, and centuries of Spanish obscurantism. Contemporary imagery of the inhabitants of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, presented them as ape-like black beasts, or as black children in need of Uncle Sam’s guiding (white) hand.\(^{230}\) It is not coincidental that the U.S. Armed forces began to heavily restrict the role of African Americans in the military after the Spanish-American War. Precluding African Americans from combat positions was but the local manifestation of an imperial ideology justified on the grounds of the incapability of darker races for self-government. Conversely, all the prejudices used to explain segregation and the “inferiority” of African Americans were applied to the new territories. In this sense, Puerto Ricans became Blacks and Blacks became Puerto Ricans with all the prejudices and structural disadvantages that such conversion entailed for both groups.\(^{231}\) Racial prejudice led military planners to prefer excluding Puerto Ricans from the military, at least as fighting troops.


\(^{231}\) To see the trajectory of the policy of excluding African Americans from combat positions see, Dalfiume, *Desegregation of the U.S. Forces*, 26-27.
Neither is it feasible to argue that Congress granted citizenship to Puerto Ricans in order to deter a German attack on the Island.\textsuperscript{232} Attacking Puerto Rico, regardless of the citizenship of its inhabitants, would have meant both an attack on U.S. soil, and a flagrant violation of the Monroe Doctrine, and hence a major \textit{causus bellis}. The U.S. did not need Puerto Ricans to become American citizens to exercise its right to protect the Island which was an American possession recognized as such under international law. However, the strategic location of Puerto Rico at the heart of the archipelago of islands blocking access to the Panama Canal indeed influenced the rapid passing of the Jones Act in 1917. A friendly native population that could assist in the defense of the Island, mostly by not joining or welcoming invading forces, was deemed imperative by the U.S. Navy and the War Department.\textsuperscript{233} Thus, is more than likely that the need to prevent

\textsuperscript{232} In 1900, Congress approved the creation of the General Board of the Navy to advise the Secretary of the Navy on long range naval strategy. Based on rumors that Germany was seeking to buy the Dutch Virgin Islands, or any suitable island that would provide it with a naval base in the region, the General Board designed an Atlantic Battle Plan for 1900-1919. According to the battle plan, the U.S. Navy expected the German Empire to challenge the Monroe Doctrine. In the initial planning, Great Britain, compelled in 1901 to accept American dominance over the projected Isthmian canal, would remain neutral. The German forces would probably attack Culebra Island off the east coast of Puerto Rico, forcing the U.S. Navy into an unfavorable battle, and would then proceed to New York or Chesapeake Bay. American fears were not unfounded. As a matter of fact, in the early twentieth-century the German Navy conducted naval exercises that for the first time had as the imaginary enemy, the United States instead of Britain. Moreover, those exercises largely confirmed the assumptions of the U.S. Navy battle plan. See Robert L. Beisner, \textit{From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. The American History Series, (Arlington Heights Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1985), 132; and, Langley, \textit{The Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire 1900-1934}, (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 21, quoting: Holger Herwig, \textit{Politics of Frustration: The United States in German Naval Planning, 1889-1941} (Boston: Little Brown, 1976), 101-09.

\textsuperscript{233} In 1898, General Miles’ had relied on the active support of the Puerto Ricans to quickly defeat the Spanish forces holding the Island. The need to hold and preserve Puerto Rico, as well as maintaining a large friendly population to defend the Island, was
unrest in such an important possession accelerated granting American citizenship to the Puerto Ricans. It is clear that American politicians recognized the calming effect that granting citizenship and somewhat broadening political rights would have in the Island. Moreover, by granting them American citizenship, Congress and President Woodrow Wilson were affirming that the U.S. intended to hold the Island in perpetuity since there was no precedent for an American territory populated with American citizens to be allowed to separate from the Union.\textsuperscript{234} Puerto Rico had to be held as an American possession for its militarily value, and American citizenship might very well do the trick.

Finally, Wilson’s approach to international mediation, his “New diplomacy” based among other things on “Self-Determination,” was incompatible with the outright colonial status of Puerto Rico. In December 7, 1915, Wilson declared before Congress that it was imperative to solve the Puerto Rican question by granting them a higher degree of self-government. More importantly, Wilson tied the passing of the Jones Act being drafted to national security and defense preparedness. He argued that it was also a matter of credibility; the world was watching whether the U.S. was serious about self-

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{234} The type of citizenship granted by the Jones Act is known as statutory citizenship, meaning that citizenship was granted by an act of Congress and not by the Constitution; hence it was not guaranteed by the Constitution.}
determination and freedom. In his October 26, 1916 closing campaign speeches, Wilson became the first statesman to commit his government to the pursuit of a League of Nations and to “articulate a comprehensive synthesis of Progressive Internationalism and the New Diplomacy” based upon the principles of the equality of nations, self-determination, peaceful settlement of disputes, freedom of the seas, disarmament and collective security while making a call for social justice for women, children, and workers. Securing the loyalty of the Island’s population and international credibility moved Wilson to adamantly support U.S. citizenship for the Puerto Ricans and some measures of self-government in 1915. Wilson’s promises would be well-received and tested in Puerto Rico. The Jones Act was finally signed into law on March 2, 1917 and,

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235 Wilson also made reference to the Philippines in his speech. See Bolívar Pagán, Historia de los Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños (1898-1956), 172.


237 The way in which President Wilson approached war readiness lifted the hopes of many liberals, progressives and radicals at home and abroad. One welcomed measure was the Revenue Act of September 8, 1916, which practically placed the entire burden of preparedness on the country’s wealthiest class. Wilson neither obtained a liberal settlement nor was he able to secure American participation in the League of Nations. Furthermore, the excesses committed by Postmaster General Burleson, the Espionage Act, and the violations of freedom of speech cost Wilson the support he had enjoyed from the liberals and the socialists- which were responsible for Wilson’s victory in 1916- and the Democrats lost the congressional elections of 1918. Wilson tried and failed to win the support of the Republican Senate and in the process further alienated his former supporters. The Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles and American participation in the League of Nations. Wilson’s dream of a New World Order and the end of the Balance of Power System did not materialize, at least during his lifetime. See, Ibid.

238 In his first annual message to Congress on December 2, 1913, Wilson had expressed his positive opinion with regard to granting American citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico. Speech reprinted in, Bolívar Pagán, Historia de los Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, (1898-1956), 171-72.
for the most part, it was welcomed by the Puerto Ricans. Muñoz Rivera did not live to see the passing of the bill. He had returned ill to the Island in September 1916 and died on November 15. At least, his concerns about restrictive suffrage, which were shared by all political factions, especially by the Socialists, were addressed in the Senate and the act finally approved came to include male universal suffrage.

On April 6, 1917, triggered by Germany’s resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare and the public outrage created by the Zimmerman telegram, the United States declared war on Germany. Three days later the Porto Rico House of Delegates, in a

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239 Republicans and Socialists celebrated the passing of the bill as a victory and stepping stone towards equality. The Unionistas, under the leadership of its new president, Antonio R. Barceló, welcomed the act but saw it just as a measure of self-government before the last stage of their political solution—independence, was attained. Though officially the Unionistas talked about self-determination their leaders started to publicly call for independence after the Jones Act passed. See Bolívar Pagán, *Historia de los Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños* (1898-1956), 179-86.

240 U.S. citizenship and majority of age were the only requirement. See Bolívar Pagán, *Historia de los Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños* (1898-1956), 179.

241 Johann von Bernstorff, the German ambassador in the United States forwarded a coded message originally sent by the German Empire Foreign Secretary on January 16, 1917, to Heinrich von Eckard, German Ambassador in Mexico. Attempting to knock Great Britain off the war the German High Command had decided to resume unrestricted submarine warfare but feared that such action might draw the United States into the war. The telegram instructed the German ambassador in Mexico to propose a military alliance to the Mexican government. He was authorized to offer the Mexican government aid in recovering Texas and the territories lost during the Mexican-American War of 1846-48. The British government intercepted the telegram and made it public in the American press on March 1, 1917. Thomas J. Knock has argued that Wilson moved closer to intervention due to his failure to secure a negotiated settlement to end the European conflict. Based on this failure, on the belief of the war coming to an end, and disheartened by Germany’s unrestricted submarine warfare, Wilson decided to go to war to secure a position for the U.S. in the peace negotiations. The President believed that he would succeed in forcing the European leaders to accept a liberal settlement and the League of Nations by appealing to the people of Europe. See Knock, *To End All Wars*, 116-17; and, Gilbert, *First World War*. 
message to President Wilson offered the “…absolute solidarity of the people of Puerto Rico to you and the great American Nation in the conflict with Germany”\textsuperscript{242}

Immediately after the declaration of war, Puerto Rican leaders volunteered their service and that of their fellow countrymen, expressed their desire to enlarge the Porto Rican Regiment to brigade, and requested the acceptance of Puerto Ricans as volunteers. The Secretary of War, while praising their loyalty and patriotism declined the offer.\textsuperscript{243}

On May 18, Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1917 calling for all males between the ages of 18 and 32 to fill out registration cards.\textsuperscript{244} The territories of Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico were not included in the original Selective Service Act. Amid the furor and the demonstrations of patriotism taking places across the United States, the Puerto Rican legislature asked Congress to extend the draft to the Island.\textsuperscript{245} The local newspapers regarded this request as an act of patriotism from the Puerto Rican legislature, and President Wilson promised to remedy the situation.\textsuperscript{246} The date for the initial registration day in Puerto Rico was not a matter decided solely by Wilson and

\textsuperscript{242} Declaration reprinted in, \textit{El Águila de Puerto Rico}, 10 April 1917.

\textsuperscript{243} Secretary of War, Memorandum, Feb 25, 1918 (Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Proyecto Caribeño, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras), Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, B.  Hereafter CHIPC.

\textsuperscript{244} C.I.H.P.C., Caja 18 Cartapacio 1 Documento 10, A.

\textsuperscript{245} House Committee on Public Lands, Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Possessions, \textit{A Bill to Amend the Organic Act of Puerto Rico, Election of Governor: Hearings on H.R. 3309, 80\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 1 sess.}, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, Microform Collection), 19 May 1947, 35-36.  HHereafter, \textit{H.R 3309}

\textsuperscript{246} C.I.H.P.C., Caja 18 Cartapacio 1 Documento 10, A.
Congress. On June 6, Yager informed the chief of the BIA, Arthur McIntyre\textsuperscript{247}, that his administration was working out the system of registration and that they could be ready “to have the date fixed during the later part of July although it would be necessary to have 10 or 15 days for publicity work among the Jibaros [sic] and illiterate men of the mountain”\textsuperscript{248} Yager’s statement underlines the fact that the colonial administration was indeed eyeing the peasantry to form the bulk of the National Army in Puerto Rico. A presidential proclamation set registration day in Puerto Rico for July 5 of the same.\textsuperscript{249}

Puerto Ricans responded enthusiastically to the draft.\textsuperscript{250} On that first registration day, 104,550 Puerto Ricans registered for the draft. Eventually, 236,853 men inscribed for selective service and 17,855 were called to service. All of those called, except for 139, reported for duty. A few days after the first registration day Governor Yager declared: “This [the number of registered men] is larger than the official estimate and I think it is a great compliment to the people of Porto Rico that they should have met this

\textsuperscript{247} A native of Alabama, Frank McIntyre, served on the Mexican border, until the war with Spain of 1898. He was part of the invading force sent to Puerto Rico. From 1899 to 1902, McIntyre served in the Philippines. In 1905 he was sent to the Bureau of Insular Affairs, served as Acting Chief at least since 1910, and became the Bureau’s Chief proper in 1912, a position he occupied until 1929. That same year he became a brigadier general. McIntyre was a late comer with regard to granting collective U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans.

\textsuperscript{248} Yager to McIntyre, June 6, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7, Documento 1, J.

\textsuperscript{249} C.I.H.P.C., Caja 18, Cartapacio 1, Documento 10, A; and, Muratti, History of the 65th, 8.

\textsuperscript{250} Muratti, History of the 65th, 8. All of those called, except for 139, reported for service.
situation so patriotically.”  

251 The first training camp for Puerto Rican officers began in August of the same year. The 200 slots allowed for the officers’ camp had been filled with celerity by the elite and professional class. 

252 The speed with which the war effort in the Island advanced and the eagerness to show support led Yager to comment that the “patriotism of the island has been stirred and intensified by America’s entrance into the Great War as shown by the eagerness with which the people responded to the recent draft”. Yager was quick to find the root of these demonstrations of patriotism stating that Puerto Ricans were “as eager to get into the “big war game” as any other class of citizens under the Star and Stripes.”  

253 For Yager it was clear that citizenship, even if of a different class, had bought much goodwill and secured the loyalty of the Puerto Ricans at a critical historical junction.

There were challenges to Yager’s narrative of patriotism among the Puerto Ricans. In a letter to Frank McIntyre, Chief of the BIA, the Governor expressed his fear that an independence leader may attempt “some propaganda in the matter of renouncing

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251 Yager to McIntyre, July 10, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7, Documento 1, I.

252 Doctors, dentists, engineers, lawyers, professors, businessmen, industrialists and landowners became the bulk of the Puerto Rican officers’ corps. See, Nadal, Guardia Nacional, Sucesora de las Milicias Puertorriqueñas, 42. Yager was not easily impressed with the volunteers showing up for the officer camp. He wrote the chief of the BIA: “700 applicants for the officer’s training camp, not the best quality. I’m sure that many more young men of a better class than this could have been secured.” See, Yager to McIntyre, July 20, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7, Documento 1, H.

253 Memorandum, February 25 1918, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, B
American citizenship for the purpose of avoiding the draft law.”254 Even after the show of “patriotism” during registration day to which he made reference in previous letters, Yager suggested having the first draft after September 2, 1917, when the allotted time for renouncing U.S. citizenship would have expired.255 He was also concerned about having a representative of labor on one or more of the General Board of Exemptions under the selective draft because Santiago Iglesias Pantín, “would be the one and he would do it selfishly.”256 As his correspondence indicates, Yager and the metropolitan authorities were not oblivious to the challenges to American sovereignty and policies in the Island. However, the plans for mobilizing the Puerto Ricans continued inexorably and for the most part, undisturbed.

On late September, 1917, in the Tapia Theater in San Juan, behind a banner reading “Go Ahead Porto Rico” and surrounded by members of the colonial government, the mayors of the Island and Antonio R. Barceló, the Unionista president of the newly-created Puerto Rican Senate, two white-dressed women escorted Governor Yager’s daughter while she drafted the first ballot in the island.”257 This overly-symbolic ceremony marked the beginning of Puerto Rican mass participation in the armed forces of the United States. Most of the press, both in the continental U.S. and the Island

254 Yager to McIntyre, July 20, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, H.
255 Ibid.
256 Ibid.
257 Newspaper Clip, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, E; and, Nadal, Guardia Nacional Sucesora de las Milicias Puertorriqueñas.
reported that the day had been marked by “rejoicing and celebration through the Island.”

In accordance with the Jones Act, elections were held in the Island on July 17, 1917. Again Unión came up as the dominant political force obtaining over half the votes casted (90,155 out of 175,006) while the Republicans tallied 60,319; and the Socialists 24,468. More importantly, the Unionistas elected Félix Córdova Dávila as Resident Commissioner in Washington D.C., a position held by Muñoz Rivera until his death. Unión also elected 13 senators and 24 representatives to the new Insular Legislature, which gave them a majority in both houses. José de Diego, leader of the separatist faction within Unión, became speaker of the Insular House of Representatives and Barceló, Unión’s president, became leader of the Senate.

Since Yager supported more self-government for the Island and liberal reforms but not statehood, an unwritten alliance developed between the Governor and Unión during the war period. Ironically, the Republican Party, which preached 100 percent Americanism and desired nothing but federated statehood, found itself at odds with Yager who seemed to favor some liberal reforms for the colony but not much else. The Socialists, however, suffered the harshest antagonism from the governor- the attitude was

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258 Ibid.

259 In1916, Martin Travieso, Unionista, and Manuel V. Domenech, Republicano had been named Secretary of Puerto Rico and Commissioner of the Interior respectively. These were the highest ranking Puerto Ricans in the executive council and for the first time Puerto Ricans have a majority in the council. Bayró Toró, 147 In the elections of 1917, The Republicans elected 5 senators and 14 representatives while the Socialists elected one senator and one representative. Unión won 52 municipalities and recovered the Aguadilla district-lost in 1914. See, Bayró Toró, Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños, 149-52.
reciprocated. This not to say that participating in the war was opposed by political
groups alienated by Yager’s courtship of the Unionistas. The situation only provided for
far more complex approaches towards the war effort, but nonetheless favorable ones.
Mobilizing the Puerto Ricans came to be the means to different ends for the Republicans
and Unionistas, as well as for the metropolis, which sometimes found itself at odds with
Yager’s own project.

President Wilson envisioned the creation of a National Army that would unify the
multi-ethnic United States into one nation. Fearing that the more than 15 million
immigrants who had reached the United States between 1900 and 1915 might not support
the United States (especially the German-American population), Wilson’s administration
launched a campaign promoting 100 percent Americanism. He believed that the war
would end the hyphenations of ethnic and national groups in the United States. Wilson
proclaimed: "Any man who carries a hyphen around with him carries a dagger that he is
ready to plunge into the vitals of the republic."²⁶¹ The blind patriotic mind-set promoted
by the Wilson administration under the “100 percent Americanism” rubric is evident in
the efforts of the Committee on Public Information to promote “unanimity of thought and
action that would translate into victory on the battlefield and the realization of the melting
pot ideal at home.”²⁶² If the war was to bring an end to all hyphenations and the

²⁶⁰ Bolívar Pagán, Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños (1898-1952),
189-190.

²⁶¹ Barbara L. Tischler, “One Hundred Percent Americanism and Music in Boston
during World War I,” [American Music 4, no. 2 (Summer, 1986): 164-176]; accessed 22

²⁶² As explained by Barbara L. Tischler, slogans, parades, speeches, posters, and
news articles were among the means used by George Creel's Committee on Public
emergence of a single American Nation, it would have to be fought on cultural grounds as well as on actual battlefields.\textsuperscript{263} The War Department took Wilson’s unifying rhetoric to heart.

As the war in Europe continued, military plans accelerated in the U.S., and the War Department authorized the creation of the 94 Infantry Division to be composed of four Porto Rican regiments.\textsuperscript{264} Though unconvinced of their value as first line combat troops, the War Department believed that mobilizing the Puerto Ricans would prove useful. These soldiers could relieve Continental American soldiers from non-combat assignments freeing them for combat duty, while inspiring loyalty among the population of the Island. The political and economic value of mobilizing as many Puerto Ricans as possible was well understood by the War Department. Frank McIntire, Chief of the

\begin{quotation}

Information seeking to create patriotic consensus in the U.S. ethnically diverse population. “While Creel did not use the term officially, the ideology of 100 percent Americanism permeated his writings and speeches”. Creel wrote that what the war required was: “no mere surface unity, but a passionate belief in the justice of America's cause that should weld the people of the United States into one white-hot mass instinct with fraternity, devotion, courage, and deathless determination.” Tischler, “One Hundred Percent Americanism,” 164-176.

\textsuperscript{263} Creel noted that other wars "went no further than the physical aspects, but German 'Kultur' raised issues that had to be fought out in the hearts and minds of the people as well as on the actual firing-line." Tischler, “One Hundred Percent Americanism,” 164-66, 174-76, from, George Creel, \textit{How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information That Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe} (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1920), p. 3-5.

\textsuperscript{264} The 94 Division would consist of four regiments 373, 374, 375, 376, the first two were assigned to the Tactical Brigade 187 while the 375-Colored, and the projected 376 were to form part of Tactical Brigade 188. A Home Guard “Guardia de la Patria” was also established to take over defense of the Island in the unlikely case the Porto Rican division was sent overseas. Negroni, \textit{Historia military de Puerto Rico}, 422-23, 440-45.
\end{quotation}
Bureau of Insular Affairs, wrote a memorandum to the chief of War Plans Division informing him of the political, economic, and social benefits of mobilizing Puerto Rico’s “…large surplus population, that is, a population for who in the present there is no continuous employment.”

Dealing in strict utilitarian terms and after making clear that his views were not of a military nature, McIntire reported that the men who had gone through military training in the Island “…have been very much improved, physically and otherwise, and are better off for having had it and to that extent are of greater economic value.”

Not only did the colonial administration expect military training to improve the value of the trainees as workers, but while in service, their absence from the employment pool should alleviate the Island’s chronic unemployment. With regard to the impact these men would have in the Island’s socio-political structures, McIntyre argued that their training “will have given them a new point of view, their return to the civil life will establish a different and better element in the body politic.” It is clear that the BIA believed that the trainees, even if full Americanization proved impossible, would be at least more pro-American after receiving military training with the added bonus of also becoming more productive.

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265 Memorandum from Chief of the War Plans Division, December 18, 1918, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, A.

266 Ibid.

267 Ibid. The BIA estimated that: “The National Army had for its Porto Rican contingent about 12,800 men organized into eight white and four colored provisional training battalions, provisional division of 3 provisional regiments.”
The Republicanos, who continued to preach complete Americanization and becoming a State of the Union as Puerto Rico’s only choice, were quick to adopt the “100 Percent Americanism” campaign launched by the Committee on Public Information. This was evident by their leaders’ actions and words as recorded in the Insular Legislature. More importantly, through their newspaper, *El Águila de Puerto Rico*, the Republicanos more than echoed Creel’s campaign of blind patriotism and Americanization. Exhortations and instructions to: “Prove that you are a 100% American” and slogans such as: “Today is an honor to say: ‘I am an American’” were accompanied by drawings of whole Puerto Rican families, boys dressed in military garment, an older father with his hat off, and a mother carrying a baby; all, solemnly watching the Puerto Rican troops marching under the American flag. *El Águila*, like many other local newspapers, routinely published long stories about recruitment, Puerto Ricans serving in Continental units, “heroes” who had fallen in Europe, the training of the Puerto Rican troops, and the commissioning of officers in the Island. Throughout the war period, the narrative espoused by the Republicanos was of full cooperation with the war effort while underlining what they believed was the unbreakable ties between the United States and the Island. They also defended the idea of modernizing the Jíbaros

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268 A semi-bilingual publication based in Ponce, *El Águila de Puerto Rico*, was published between January 8, 1902, and July 3, 1931. It reappeared on January 1, 1934, but ceased to exist two months later. It always functioned as an organ of the Republican Party.

269 See, *El Águila de Puerto Rico*, 6-9 October 1918.

270 *El Águila* congratulated “our old friend don Pedro Albizu Campos, whom in the recent graduation of cadets from the Officers Training Camp at Las Casas, earned the rank of First Lieutenant in the Army reserve.” See, *El Águila de Puerto Rico*, 8 November 1918; and, 10-14 April 1917, 10 October 1918; and 6 December 1918.
through soldiering. The Republicanos were among the most ardent proponents of showing the Puerto Rican’s Americanism, social and political maturity, and readiness to become a state of the Union by participating in the war.

The Unionistas, divided between separatistas and autonomistas, wanted the war effort and the mobilization of the Puerto Rican to lead to independence or more self-government respectively. Hence, they approached every aspect of the mobilization in the Island as if they were raising a Puerto Rican Army and not a contingent for the U.S. Army. As plans were put into action, and the Puerto Ricans started to mobilize for war, Córdoba Dávila attempted to secure that the units raised in Puerto Rico were truly Puerto Rican that is, composed, trained and led by Puerto Ricans. In this regard, he wrote to the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker (March 9, 1916-March 4, 1921), offering the creation of new regiments but also requesting that more Puerto Ricans be trained as officers and that those serving in the regular army be allowed to transfer to the Island.  

By mid-May, 1918, the War Department approved the voluntary transfer of Puerto Ricans serving in the continental U.S. to Puerto Rico. Soon, Puerto Rican officers and non-commissioned officers serving in the regular army began to apply for transfers to the “Porto Rican detachment, National Army, Porto Rico”.  

Meanwhile, Yager was trying to secure the creation of a Puerto Rican national guard despite the opposition of the War Department which preferred that all resources be directed towards the creation of the

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271 House of Representatives U.S., Félix Córdoba Dávila to Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, January 10, 1918, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, C.

272 Memorandum from Adjutant General of the Army, May 15, 1918, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 4 Documento 1, L.
Puerto Rican division as part of the National Army.\textsuperscript{273} Yager’s attempts to secure the creation of a Puerto Rican National Guard followed the initiative of his predecessor, Governor Colton, in 1910.\textsuperscript{274} Like Colton, Yager believed that the creation of the National Guard in the Island would enhance the islander’s loyalty toward the U.S. by instilling a sense of national pride, which the the added bonus that such action would also be beneficial regarding the Puerto Rican’s political attitude towards the metropolis and its

\textsuperscript{273} Yager to McIntyre, July 10, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, I.

\textsuperscript{274} Responding to Governor Colton’s inquiries with regard to the legality of establishing a National Guard in the Island, the office of the Attorney General of Porto Rico responded affirmatively based on recent decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, i.e. Kopel vs. Bingham, 211 U.S. 469, which stated that:

\begin{quote}
It may be justly asserted that Porto Rico is a completely organized Territory, although not a Territory incorporated into the United States, and that there is no reason why Porto Rico should not be held to be such a territory as is comprised in Section 5278.
\end{quote}

The office of the Attorney General also informed the governor that the means for appropriation of moneys to support a territorial militia in the Island already existed. “Your present inquiry obviously relates to the word “Territory” as used in Section 1661 U.S. Revised Statutes as amended by the Act of February 12, 1776, and the act of June 30, 1906:

\begin{quote}
That said appropriation shall be apportioned among the several states and Territories, under the direction of the Secretary of War, according to the number of senators and Representatives to which each state, respectively, is entitled is entitled in the Congress of the United States, and to the Territories and District of Columbia such proportion and under such regulations as the President may prescribe.
\end{quote}

If Porto Rico is a Territory within the meaning of Section5278, Revised Statutes, it would seem to follow that it is likewise a Territory within the meaning of Section 1661 as amended.” He also informed Colton that the Comptroller of the Treasury had decided that under the Act of July of 1862 and August 30, 1890, and March 4, 1907, that Porto Rico was entitled to allotments for territorial organized militia. This letter responded to the War Department’s reasoning that it could not make the required appropriations for a territorial militia in Puerto Rico because the Island did not constitute a territory of the United States. See, Acting Attorney General of Porto Rico, I.R. Brown to Governor of Porto Rico, March 26, 1910, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 29 Cartapacio 12 Documento 9.
relation to the Island. In 1910, just as in 1917, the Department of War did not heed to the governor’s plans.

With regard to the creation of a native militia Colton argued: “Certain things have occurred and are occurring which, I believe, will remove any anti-American spirit that may have existed in the island. I am certain that no such spirit is prevalent today, and while I do nor deem it a matter of supreme importance, still I think the organization of a body of territorial militia here would have a very beneficial effect and tend to support and increase the sentiment of national pride in the fact that Porto Rico is a part of the Unites States which is arising among the people of the island. It would be unfortunate if this trend of affairs should be checked by the appearances of distrust on the part of the Federal Government.” See, Governor Colton to Colonel McIntyre, Acting Chief Bureau of Insular Affairs, September 24, 1910, CIHCP, Caja 29 Cartapacio 12 Documento 8. Among the benefits of instituting a National Guard in the Island were the promotion of loyalty and patriotism by giving the “Porto Ricans the same opportunity to serve their country, and also knowledge of the principles of the U.S. military tactics, which would be of great benefit to the Federal Government in case of need in the tropics of ___ troops” would encourage Porto Ricans to learn English. I.R. Pierson to Governor Colton, April 9 1910, CIHPR, Caja 29 Cartapacio 12 Documento 16.

Frank McIntyre, Acting Chief of the BIA, informed Colton that the “Acting Secretary of War [Jacob M. Dickinson] is not altogether favorable to this proposition [creation of a National Guard in the Island].” On the other hand, McIntyre stated that the Army Chief of Staff, Major General Leonard Wood “is wholly favorable to the proposed organization, and not only believes in the propriety of it, but believes, from a military point of view, it would be an extremely valuable organization. I think, therefore, it is a question of short time when the department will adopt General Wood’s views.” McIntyre also suggested the Governor to begin working in passing the necessary militia law in the Island to initiate the process and assure him that the department will be ready to assist him with the appropriations. See, Frank McIntyre Acting Chief of Bureau to Governor Colton, September 16 1910, CIHPR, Caja 29 Cartapacio 12 Documento 5, B. General Wood’s views were at odds with the War Department’s. Appointed by President Taft in 1910 as Army Chief of Staff (a position that among other things provided advice to the Secretary of War) Wood tried unsuccessfully to break the bureau system currently favored by the War Department. The Secretary of War, Jacob M. Dickinson, had earlier notified Taft that “the Department has been consistently opposed to the establishment of a militia force in Porto Rico for the reasons indicated by the Judge Advocate General [the judicial arm of any of United State Armed Forces including the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine corps and Navy] and is to-day of the same view.” See, Acting Secretary of War to President William H. Taft, July 23, 1910. CIHPR, Caja 29 Cartapacio 12 Documento 7. After their original reasoning for denying the Island the right to a territorial militia was debunked, the officers of the War Department found a new rationale to oppose such measure. Supporting the secretary’s position the Judge-Advocate-General wrote that the “military force, largely composed of natives of the
Where to train the Puerto Rican soldiers was one of the first battles the Unionistas fought over control of the mobilization process. For the metropolis the issue became a matter of economic value, racial prejudice, and part of the Americanization campaign. In November 19, 1917, the Washington Post announced that 8,000 white Puerto Ricans were to be sent to Camp Jackson in South Carolina- to the 81<sup>st</sup> Division, while “4000 [Puerto Rican] negroes” would be sent to Camp Upton Yaphank in New York as part of colored division. Based on comments from War Department’s officials the article stated:

> It is also felt that by training them in connection with our own citizens the Porto Rican soldiers will come to feel themselves as part of the Army of the United States. The psychological influence will be considerable factor in making the Porto Rican American soldier in no way distinguishable from the men from New York, Michigan, or California. They will be led in English under native Porto Rican and American officers.

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island, has been continuously stationed there, and as this force has been found adequate to all emergencies, it has not been regarded by the Executive as a measure necessary to the general welfare or to the preservation of civil order in the island that the organization of a new and untried military force should be attempted…” Therefore “…it is not advised that the time is opportune for the establishment of a militia force in the island of Porto Rico.” Apparently, the Secretary of War did not consider prudent to arm more Puerto Ricans, who may or may not be completely loyal to the metropolitan authorities. See, Militia in the Island of Porto Rico: Memorandum by the Judge-Advocate-General. Elbert F. Baldwin to President Taft, July 13, 1920, CIHPR Caja 29 Cartapacio 12 Documento 6.

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277 Washington Post, November 19 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, F.

278 Ibid.
These men were not only expected to look like any Continental Americans but they also were supposed to come out of their training thinking and behaving like them. The War Department was indeed bent on fulfilling Wilson’s idea of creating one American nation through the military.

Though Yager himself believed that military training would create a new Puerto Rican he came to oppose sending the recruits overseas for training. In a letter to the Chief of the BIA, Frank McIntire, Yager urged him to train the troops in Puerto Rico. He stated that it would be humiliating to the soldiers and their officers to send them straight to the Continental U.S. because: “Perhaps, 1/3 of these men who will be accepted for service never worn shoes in their lives. They wear nothing but a cotton shirt and cotton trousers and have nothing else to wear unless it is furnished to them.”\(^{279}\) What Yager described was the typical clothing of the Puerto Rican Jíbaro from the mountains and the agro-worker of the sugarcane fields. He had faith in the redeeming qualities of scientific military training but feared that to the common Continental observer they would look “like a bunch of ragamuffins and tatterdemalions out of which an observer who doesn’t know the actual condition here would think it utterly impossible to make them soldiers.”\(^{280}\) He insisted that if training in Puerto Rico was not possible, then, whatever the cost, the Puerto Rican recruits should be given “at least some preliminary training and organization, equipped, uniformed and fed for a while and on regular army rations.”\(^{281}\)

\(^{279}\) Yager to McIntire, November 9, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, D.

\(^{280}\) Ibid.

\(^{281}\) Ibid.
is evident from Yager’s statement that the bulk of the Porto Rican soldiers were coming from the files of the malnourished peasantry.

Yager, with the aid of the Unionistas also made the case for the unfairness of training abroad when the Island could use the economic injection of building training facilities and hiring the required civilian staff and services to run the camps. McIntyre responded by informing Yager that it was too expensive to train in the Island and that “‘wherever [Puerto Rican] troops are trained they will be a great economic advantage to Porto Rico due to large war pay, allotment to dependants, and insurance.’” 282 Moreover, playing on Córdova Dávila’s request that the Puerto Ricans be allowed to fight in a truly Puerto Rican unit, McIntyre informed him that were they to train in the Island “… they would be sent abroad in small units contingents to fill vacancies in units abroad and would lose their identity as Porto Rican troops.” 283 He also reminded Yager that training in the U.S. would “‘ make them better men on returning to Porto Rico, physically and otherwise, this, even though they should not go abroad at all for service.’” 284 This statement, besides pointing out the transformative experience the BIA believed military training to be, is also indicative of the expected nature of a Puerto Rican contingent’s participation in the war- they were not considered fit to join the fight in Europe, even after training in the U.S. alongside Continental Americans. Despite the BIA’s opposition, Yager’s and the Unionistas’ efforts, especially Córdova Davila’s personal plea to

282 McIntire to Yager, November 24, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 7 Documento 1, E.

283 Ibid.

284 Ibid.
President Wilson, paid off and the War Department agreed to train the Puerto Ricans in the Island. Córdova Dávila soon took credit for keeping the troops on the Island.²⁸⁵

To house the trainees, a large military training facility was built in Puerto Rico between 1917 and 1918. Located in Santurce, east of San Juan, and with an area of 537 acres, Camp Las Casas served to train over 500 Puerto Ricans as officers of the United States Army and roughly 18,000 soldiers.²⁸⁶ It is very telling that the camp bore the name of fray Bartolomé de las Casas- the Dominican friar who in 1522 wrote *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (Brevísima relación de la destrucción de Las Indias) detailing the Spaniards’ atrocities committed against the indigenous population of the Americas. Las Casas’ defense of the native peoples of the Americas earned him the title “Champion of the Indians”. By choosing his name for the training camp, both the colonial administration and the criollo elites were satisfied. The former, subordinated to

²⁸⁵ Córdova Dávila claimed that with the support of hundreds of cablegrams from businessmen, and the mayors and legislators of the Island, he insisted to be allowed to see Wilson who granted him a short interview. He finally convinced Wilson to support training Puerto Rican troops in the Island. Córdova Dávila also tried to convince the War Department to buy Puerto Rican coffee for the military. Due to the inexpensive nature of Brazilian coffee and the high cost of the coffee produced in Puerto Rico, the War Department refused Córdova Dávila’s proposal but accepted to at least buy local coffee for the Puerto Rican troops. See, *Porto Rico Progress*, 8 March 1918.

²⁸⁶ After the second training camp at Las Casas (February 1-15 May 1918) came to an end 13 Captains; 46 First Lieutenants; 133 Second Lieutenants (classified as Caucasians); and 6 First Lieutenants and 49 Second Lieutenants (Classified as Blacks) obtained commissions to served in the Infantry Section of the National Army. The first camp (27 August-27 November 1917) conducted at Henry Barracks graduated 27 Captains, 47 First Lieutenants, and 106 Second Lieutenants – all Caucasians. The third and last training officer Camp ((21 June-6 November 1918) commissioned, 23 First Lieutenants and 255 Second Lieutenants. A total of 726 officers were trained and commissioned in Puerto Rico between August 27 1917 and November 6 1918. See, Report by, Capt. Luis Raul Esteves, Acting Adjutant General, May 27, 1918. Headquarters 2nd Porto Rico Training Camp, Las Casas, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 4 Documento 1, K.; and, Negroni, *Historia militar de Puerto Rico*, 440.
the Bureau of Insular Affairs, itself modeled on the Bureau of Indian Affairs, could very well see themselves as protectors of the Puerto Ricans, whom many regarded as Indians, at least institutionally. The latter could go beyond that role and pin the friar’s name to redeeming Hispanic and Catholic values.

287 Under the motto “Kill the Indian save the Man” Captain Richard Henry Pratt opened the first Indian Industrial School in Carlisle Pennsylvania Indian School in 1879. Schools following this model multiplied throughout the United States until the early 1910s. Imagined as a social experiment its main purpose was to assimilate and acculturate young Native Americans. In essence, by distancing them from their communities, the program sought to uproot the students’ “Indianess” and create a new man out of the Indian. After the United States took over Puerto Rico in 1898, natives of the Island were sent to these schools. The "Porto Rican Indians", a group of sixty-plus Puerto Rican youngsters were sent to Carlisle Indian industrial boarding school. A small group of men were the architects of the idea to send Puerto Rican children to the Carlisle, Tuskegee and Hampton Industrial Schools. Richard Henry Pratt, John Eaton, and Nelson Miles knew each other well. They had in common their service in the Civil War and Indian Wars, and were in charge of Indian Scout Units, as well as Buffalo Soldier Units. Pratt convinced leaders of the U.S. government of the worthiness of his social experiment with the children of Indian chiefs. Eaton became the first Secretary of Education of Puerto Rico and was intellectually responsible for the plan to Americanize the Puerto Ricans using Pratt’s approach. The way the idea was sold to the Puerto Rican families who agreed to send their children to the school made them believe that Carlisle was a type of university. In fact those sent to Carlisle belonged to educated elite. Ill-treated even while in route to the schools, the students wrote letter complaining that they were being treated as “Indians despite [them]selves”. Those who could, sent their children to other schools, and Pratt himself sent some of the students to regular schools. However, though maltreated the majority of the “Porto Rican Indians” sent to Carlisle stayed in the school and finish their courses. Sonia M. Rosa-Vélez, ¿Qué pasó con los becados? La saga de los estudiantes puertorriqueños en la Escuela Industrial para Indios de Carlisle (Inedited Essay) Author’s Library; and, Sonia M. Rosa-Vélez, The Puerto Ricans at Carlisle Indian School: An Experiment in Americanization Through Education. (Forthcoming Essay) Author’s Library; and, Sonia M. Rosa-Vélez, Acquiring the American Spirit: Americanization Through Education and the Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Government Minority Boarding Schools, 1899-1930, (Forthcoming Essay) Author’s Library.

288 Benedict Anderson has pointed out that the final replication of the former master’s ways came in the obsession of the new states with legitimizing themselves through archaeological excavations that allowed scholars and administrators to connect them vertically to vanished civilizations and horizontally to European metropoles. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, 120-127. Puerto Rico was not the
Yager and Córdova Dávila were also allied in their efforts to secure the opening of spaces in the military for traditional and emerging *criollo* elites. In July 1915, the War Department’s judge advocate had to send a memo stating that there should be no different legal status between Puerto Rican West Point graduates and their Continental American counterparts. Citizenship, the judge argued, was not a requirement to serve as an officer of the U.S. Army. The appointment of Luis Raul Estevez as a 2nd Lt. in the Porto Rico Regiment of Infantry quickly followed this decision.\(^{289}\) The Porto Rico Regiment, however, with all its excess personnel, the waiting lists to join, and its colonial nature was not the best place to advance in rank. As soon as the United States entered the war, officers of the regiment started to resign their commissions so they could enter the regular

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exception. In fact a courtship with the indigenous past began way before the creation of the Commonwealth in 1952. After the creation of the Commonwealth, public-funded archeological excavations tried to recover the Pre-Columbian past. These efforts have continued and in present day they include DNA testing to find the percentage of native blood in the Island’s population. Dr. Juan Martinez Cruzado, a geneticist from the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez, conducted a DNA survey for this purpose. According to the study funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation, 61 percent of all Puerto Ricans have Amerindian mitochondrial DNA, 27 percent have African and 12 percent Caucasian. (Nuclear DNA, or the genetic material present in a gene’s nucleus, is inherited in equal parts from one’s father and mother. Mitochondrial DNA is inherited only from one’s mother and does not change or blend with other materials over time.) According to Martinez Cruzado’s study a majority of Puerto Ricans have native blood. Moreover, there is further evidence that Taínos were not extinguished in the 1600s. After 200 years of absence from official head-counts, a 2,000 people Taíno community appeared living in a north-western mountain region in a military census from the 1790s. See, Juan C. Martinez Cruzado, “The Use of Mitochondrial DNA to Discover Pre-Columbian Migrations to the Caribbean: Results for Puerto Rico and Expectations for the Dominican Republic,” *KACIKE: Journal of Caribbean Amerindian History and Anthropology*; accessed 28 December 2008; available from http://www.kacike.org/MartinezEnglish.pdf.

\(^{289}\) War Department Judge Advocate General, E. H. Crowd, Memorandum to Chief of Staff, July 2, 1915, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 6, Documento 6, H.
army and advance in promotion. 290 The need of instructors for Las Casas also opened the
doors for non-commissioned officers (sergeants) of the Porto Rico Regiment to obtain
commissions as officers. 291

The mass mobilization of the Puerto Ricans, the manpower committed to the war
effort in Europe, and the occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic made the
metropolis and especially the colonial administration in Puerto Rico more dependent on
the criollo elites. Mobilizing the Puerto Rican peasantry, and carrying out other extra-
insular services for the BIA became a means for the elite to assert their political power
and to move forward their political goals. 292 Securing the training of the traditional
Puerto Rican elites and the emerging professional classes as officers would serve to
preserve a certain social hierarchy since such training would place them in command of
the thousands of peasants and workers mobilized for war. The criollo elites and the
emerging professional classes were to have a role in the war as long as it was a leading
one.

Yager, who was not shy to use colonial subjects to run his share of the American
Empire, fought hard to secure that they received the training that would allow them to
carry out their colonial duties. As early as May of 1917, he had tried to arrange for an
extra five presidential appointees from the Island to attend the U.S. Naval Academy at

290 Yager to McIntyre, July 10, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7,
Documento 1, I.

291 Yager to McIntyre, June 6, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7,
Documento 1, J.

292 Yager informed the BIA’s Chief that he was, “… looking for someone to aid
the Governor of Saint Thomas to deal with Mr. Jackson and sugar laborers but the war
and Santo Domingo have taken many of Porto Rico’s best men.” Ibid.
Annapolis. The Governor was not alone in these efforts. As Puerto Rican representative to Congress, Córdova Dávila also pressed this matter and wrote to President Wilson asking that he give five of his fifteen presidential Annapolis appointments to Puerto Ricans claiming that Hawaii and Alaska, territories smaller in population than Puerto Rico, had already that many. In July 24, 1918, Wilson responded (to Yager) negatively but expressed willingness to remedy that situation.293 By early 1919 new legislation was in placed allowing for an extra five appointees to be nominated by the Resident Commissioner.294 The Resident Commissioner made good use of his power of appointment.

Again, as with any other opening of the U.S. military to Puerto Ricans, the press celebrated the event. On July 3, 1919 the newspaper El Tiempo, published an editorial congratulating Córdoba Dávila “for his efforts to secure this new evidence of confidence

293 La Democracia (San Juan), 2 August 1918, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7, Documento 2 F.

294 P.G. Miller, Commissioner of Education to Córdova Dávila, August 7, 1919, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 6, Documento 6, G. Public Law 160 – with 6700-6 of March 3, 1903 allowed the Governor of Puerto Rico to nominate one midshipmen to Annapolis while the Resident Commissioner could select five nominees. (PL 8, 66th Congress 6700-With-27 of July 11 1919); See C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7, Documento 2, A. The colonial administrators also sought to secure equal treatment to their children born or residing in the Island. See, P.G. Miller, Commissioner of Education, to Col. C.B. Hodges, asst. to the Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, D.C.: Requesting his son and Osvaldo de la Rosa be admitted to West Point. Puerto Ricans were not the only colonial subjects attending the elite military institution, Emilio Aguinaldo Jr. was among the Pilipino cadets sent to the West Point. By 1924, eleven appointees from the Philippines and four Puerto Ricans had received commissions from the military institution. Osvaldo de la Rosa and Virgil Miller graduated from West Point in 1924. Luis Raul Esteves had graduated from West Point in 1915 and Francisco Cintrón in 1918: both remained in the Puerto Rico National Guard in the post war years. See Frank McIntire Letter to Governor Horace Tower, June 16, 1924, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 6, Documento 6, B.
in the American citizens of Porto Rico.” The article stated that the new legislation and Córdoba Dávila’s work indicated a “veritable union between the Island and the Nation, and which; at no distant day, will be crowned by the complete felicity of our people.” Gauging the meaning of the event El Tiempo reminded its readers that the only ones entitled to nominate candidates for Annapolis were the senators and representatives of the U.S. and the delegates from the incorporated territories. That Puerto Rico was “put on the same level as the states and territories in so far as the quota for the Naval academy” should show the “Independentistas of the tropical republic” how the:

Great Republic, of which we form a part, is each day giving us another proof of confidence in us, opening the doors of all institutions of the country to Porto Rican American citizens and putting them on the same place as citizens of the mainland…

Obtaining capable personal to help the BIA fulfill its colonial duties was one of Yager’s priorities when he fought for more access to military institutions for the Puerto Ricans. Securing the loyalty of the criollo elites and the Island’s population while bettering the international image of the United States were added bonuses. For the most part, Yager played his cards right throughout the war period, and his efforts to secure more spaces in

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295 El Tiempo, (San Juan), 3 July 1919, CIHP, Caja 30, Cartapacio 7, Documento 2 E.
296 Ibid.
297 Ibid.
298 Ibid.
the military for the Puerto Ricans were generally applauded. Only the issue of race
gained him real criticism during this period.

The United States military was still a segregated organization during WWI. In
this regard Continental officers and Yager himself expressed pro-segregationist views to
McIntyre. In one of his letter Yager informed him that it had been necessary to “keep
the blacks out because of prejudice [sic] amongst the soldiers of the regiment themselves
who did not want blacks in the regiment.” 299 However, Yager argued, “blacks are
anxious to join regiment and I’m told they make excellent soldiers under white officers
and I’m confident a full regiment of them could be formed in the island.” 300 In further
correspondence Yager complained: “Many Porto Ricans seem to feel that the Governors
and officials in the states consider all Porto Ricans as Negro troops: but that of course
touches the sensibility of the white people here.” 301

Judging by the local press and politician’s statements, Yager’s worries seemed
unfounded. It is more than likely that he was expressing his own fears of racial mixing
than that of the Puerto Ricans. The Governor, referring to “our race problem, just as
they have it in South Carolina” agreed to train Black and White soldiers together if
absolutely necessary but warned that “they must be separated.” 302 To be fair, whether or
not Yager wanted to segregate Puerto Ricans in the military by race was mostly irrelevant

299 Yager to McIntyre, June 6, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7,
Documento 1, J.

300 Ibid.

301 Yager to McIntyre, September 5, 1917, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30, Cartapacio 7,
Documento 1, G

302 Ibid.
since it was the policy of the U.S. Army to segregate troops racially. To that effect the Regiment 375 was designated to train and field Black Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{303}

Regarding the decision to segregate the troops in the Island, the newspaper \textit{Justicia}, commented: “Under the administration of Arthur Yager the line separating the men of color is finally established in Puerto Rico” followed by “…the old racist fart from Kentucky accused of being the instigator”.\textsuperscript{304} The editorial continued by arguing that “the complete triumph [of the U.S. and the Allies] will also defeat all privileges.”\textsuperscript{305}

These comments, in a newspaper that consistently challenged Yager’s administration show the complex nature of the Puerto Rican opinion-making groups with regard to the war effort. Puerto Rican participation in the armed forces of the metropolis was strongly encouraged, and there was consensus about wanting to see the U.S emerge victorious, but that did not blind leaders from the leading political parties to the fact that many of the

\textsuperscript{303} \textit{El Diluvio}, one of the most vociferous critics of the Yager Administration took special interest in the 375\textsuperscript{th} Porto Rican Colored Regiment and wrote a series of articles detailing their training and progress. They are not the less intelligent, nor the less smart, neither the ones less disposed to learn and ready to defend with honor the name of Puerto Rico. They are “…the more apt, humble and the most attentive of the recruits are those of the 375” The editorial also mentioned that “the boys of the 375 will one day respond to the call of arms with the same unconditional bravery and tenacity shown by the colonial French troops and the brave Black soldiers of America.” See, \textit{El Diluvio}, 24 August 1918.

\textsuperscript{304} Acusan al viejo racista de Kentucky de ser el instigador. El triunfo definitivo derrotará también todos los privilegios”.” \textit{Justicia} (San Juan), 8 June 1918, in C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 4 Documento 1, J. José Celso Barbosa, undisputable leader of the Republicans, took especial interest in the well-being of the Porto Rican Negro Regiment-the 375. He wrote to Col. Frank C. Wood, commander of the 375 expressing his willingness to accept that the “national citizenry were divided in organizations and racially” but hoping that when the men’s willingness to sacrifice in “defense of their nation” would help to erase such divisions. See \textit{El Águila de Puerto Rico}, 5 October 1918.

\textsuperscript{305} \textit{Justicia} (San Juan), 8 June 1918.
freedoms espoused by Wilson were not enjoyed by Puerto Ricans. Moreover, local politicians continuously sought to link inequalities, prejudices and injustices at home with the ideals espoused by Wilson when making the case to go to war.

The attitude of Puerto Rican leaders and opinion-making groups was similar to that of African-American leaders, including W.E.B. DuBois, who during World War I supported the war effort by encouraging black participation. Black leaders, who had argued that disdain of dark races was the real cause of the war, identified the United States and the Allies as the lesser of two evils, and thus, as their best chance for advancement. African-American leaders adopted a policy of “first your country, then your rights” and of “Close Ranks” with “our fellow white citizens.”

In Puerto Rico, the narratives were similar. The differences in the movements can be seen in the fact that the issue of race, as determined by skin color, was not the main concern of Puerto Rican leaders. Furthermore, since the Island had an undecided political status, there were several approaches to what came after closing ranks “with our co-citizens from the North”. Nonetheless, just as African-American leaders, so Puerto Rican leaders hoped to advance their respective agendas after showing the willingness and readiness of their people to come in the defense of the U.S., and the ideals of freedom and democracy in times of need. They expected that participating in a war sold as crusade against totalitarianism, colonialism and militarism would bring decolonization and equality at home.

Another difference between Puerto Rican and African-American leaders, even if both wanted to use military training to erase racial biases and prejudice, was that the

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306 Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U.S. Forces, 11-14.
former wanted to remake the very essence of the Puerto Rican through military training. The criollo elites were not the only ones bent on reshaping the Puerto Ricans. As the recruits began to make their way into Las Casas for training, an editorial in *The Porto Rico Progress*, a publication adamantly pro-metropolis, observed: “So a new day has dawned for Porto Rico’s Jíbaro.”307 The training acquired in the military, the editorial argued, would prepare the Jíbaro to join the drive towards a modern Puerto Rico.

Downtrodden, unthoug [sic] for as he [the Jíbaro] has been, he is now in the limelight. The testing and refining process will be hard for him. But he and his brother will become the nucleus of a new Porto Rico. The anemic disease warped man will be a thing of the past. And the domain of the Jíbaro will at last come into its proper place in the great Economic and Social scheme of this island.308

The same journal, and other newspapers reported that the majority of those joining the U.S. Army were Jíbaros who wore shoes for the first time in Camp Las Casas after induction.309 *El Buscapié* affirmed: “After the War, these soldiers will be our greatest leaders, teachers, and champions of freedom and democracy.”310

307 *Porto Rico Progress*, 12 July 1918.

308 Ibid.

309 According to these reports the most troublesome piece of clothing for the trainees were the army boots. Quartermasters had trouble finding shoes for the majority of the men who had never worn shoes and as result “have feet almost as broad as they are long”. So had the trainees trouble getting used to blisters- even if they followed their own steps “…with a gratified smile…” Commenting on the need to stop drills often to allow the Jíbaro-trainee to rest his feet the editor continued, “perhaps is not a rigidly military proceeding but the men so treated are going to fight to destroy militarism. *Porto Rico Progress*, 5 July 1918.

310 *El Buscapié*, 14 January 1918.
Commenting on the attitude of the public when seeing the Porto Rican soldiers, the editorial continued:

…nobody can watch them without feeling a revolution in their blood and in the spirit which moves them to support in any possible way our soldiers, be it with a simple smile or with exhortations of courage and steadfastness.\(^{311}\)

Addressing the poor physical state of the inductees Francisco del Valle Atiles, wrote for *Buscapié*, a publication that constantly celebrated the expansion of the U.S. into the Caribbean and Latin America and the role of Puerto Rico as the center of the imperialist venture; that military training would correct the “organic poverty” shown by the physical examination of the recruits. He was quick to add: “While the Puerto Rican may be lacking in physical condition due to malnutrition and disease, he overcompensates in spirit” a trait he identified with Hispanic gallantry. Moreover, in a Puerto Rican version of *Arielismo*,\(^{312}\) this editorial argued that the Puerto Rican “requires of the material and industrial might of the Continental American,” (identified as the

\(^{311}\) Ibid.

\(^{312}\) *Ariel* was published in 1900 by Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó and gave way to *Arielismo* as a literary and political movement. *Arielismo* offers an idealized picture of Latin American culture which is marked by noble spirituality and gallantry as opposed to the United States which represents materialism. Rodó took William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* to represent this cultural and spiritual divide between the United States and Latin America. The main characters in Rodó’s versión are Ariel and Calibán. Ariel symbolizes Latin Americas’ noble spirituality rooted in the Greco-Roman ideal of beauty and the Christian value of charity. On the other hand, Calibán (which is an anagram for Canibal) represents U.S. expansionism and utilitarianism. Latin America’s spirituality, according to *Arielismo*, would help to create a better society by allowing the best men to flourish and lead the masses. The U.S., however, engrossed in materialism, and lacking Ariel’s spirituality, is presented as utterly unable to escape mediocrity. See, José Enrique Rodó, “*Ariel,*” [Brevario de la Juventud (Valencia, España: Editorial Cervantes, 1920): The Project Gutenberg EBook]; accessed 28 December 2008; available from http://www.pgdp.net.
Anglo-Saxon), to correct such deficiencies.\textsuperscript{313} After assimilating such Anglo-Saxon characteristics, the \textit{Jíbaro} inductee would create a space for the “two great cultures of the American hemisphere—the Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon— to coexist.”\textsuperscript{314}

According to these narratives military training would fuse material and moral progress, national, and cultural identity into one being, the \textit{Jíbaro}. These ideas gained strength throughout the war. This interpretation of the potential role of military training for modernizing Puerto Rico via the military training of its peasantry was found in almost all the local newspapers and was voiced by all political parties, especially the Republican. The autonomist faction within \textit{Unión}, however, benefited more from it than any other political group. Indeed the \textit{Unionistas}, who held political control during the war years, benefited more than any other political faction from the ambivalent narratives used to promote the war effort in the Island.

Soon after the Armistice, \textit{The Porto Rican Progress} reported derisively that the \textit{Unionistas} claimed that the “Puerto Rican soldier has created a New Americanism”, one that allowed for “these two great cultures” to co-exist.\textsuperscript{315} In fact the New Americanism espoused mainly by the \textit{Autonomistas} and certain \textit{Separatistas} from \textit{Unión}, challenged both the Republican \textit{criollos}—who would accept nothing but the complete assimilation of

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\textsuperscript{313} \textit{El Buscapié}, 17 October 1917.
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\textsuperscript{314} See \textit{El Buscapié}, 17 October 1917. A few weeks later this newspaper commented on the possible role of the Island as a bridge between Latin America and North America: “Por nuestra condición de pueblo bilingüe, por ser este el punto de conjunción de dos civilizaciones y las dos razas predominantes en el hemisferio occidental; nuestra Universidad puede llegar a ser… la Universidad Panamericana.” See, \textit{El Buscapié}, 4 November 1917.
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\textsuperscript{315} \textit{Porto Rico Progress}, 13 December 1918.
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the Puerto Ricans, and the assimilation project of the metropolis. The *Unionists’* approach to the constructed identity of the new Puerto Rican and the New American was so appealing that those publications which were in fact organs of the Republican Party or staunchly pro-metropolis, published several editorial and commentaries which essentially made the case of the *Unionistas*, mostly due to the ambivalent or conflicting nature of national discourse and patriotism.

Eager to cooperate with the war effort and the defense of the “Nation”, the Red Cross, *Club de Damas* (women’s clubs or associations), and in many cases, the townspeople made sure that the departing recruits received care packages. A newspaper commented that “all soldiers arrive with a bill book with the inscription “Adelante Soldado Portorriqueño.” And many of them received, besides the normative ration of cigars, cigarettes, and some cash, items which appealed to their national spirit, such as cloth with the inscription “Recuerde el Carolina” (Remember the Carolina) and the words of *La Borinqueña*, considered at the time a national hymn that would become the national anthem in 1952.\(^{316}\) It is obvious that the feelings towards the nation and the understanding of the nation itself were, to say the least, complex. A *Jíbaro* told a reporter that his wife and children were crying when he left for training, but that he said to them that “it was for the Patria and the Patria would protect them if I fought to protect her.”\(^{317}\) It is clear that this *Jíbaro*-soldier expected his sacrifice not to be in vain. In his

\(^{316}\) See *Porto Rico Progress*, 5 July 1918. *El Carolina*, a ship carrying Puerto Rican workers to the United States, became Puerto Rico’s U.S.S. Maine during the war after being sunken by a German submarine a few miles from the east coast. Dozens of Puerto Ricans drowned as a result of the attack.

\(^{317}\) Another commented about his wife and children: “they’ll be all right. The Gobierno will take care of them.” Ibid.
understanding, he was not fighting for a foreign power; he was fighting for his motherland, and in case he made the ultimate sacrifice, the motherland would take care of his offspring. Luckily, he would not have to make such sacrifice.

By October 31, 1918 three of the four regiments authorized for the Porto Rican division had been trained and manned with 10,600 officers and soldiers. On November 11 an armistice between the Allies and the German Empire came into effect ending hostilities in Europe. Amid fireworks, dancing, the colors of the U.S. and of the allied nations, out of the gates of Las Casas came marching the 12,000 soldiers and trainers of the Porto Rican contingent of the National Army. The celebration climaxed with a military review of the Porto Rican Division in the Plaza 2 de Marzo in Condado—commemorative of the Jones Act of 1917. Knowing that demobilization would come rather sooner than later The Porto Rico Progress upped the ante and announced that the men from Las Casas “no matter what their future may be, cannot help being better men for the few months of training they have had.”

On December 18, 1918 demobilization orders arrived, and on January 1919, the Puerto Rican division had been completely demobilized. The soldiers training in the Island did not see combat. A soldier lamented after receiving his discharge papers and examining the document and the blank space reserved for “battles, engagements, and

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318 The Treaty of Versailles of June 28, 1919 officially ended the First World War.

319 Porto Rico Progress, 29 November 1918.

320 Ibid.
skirmishes”: “If there were only three or four names in that line, how proud I’d be.”

The political leaders who sought to advance their goals through war participation would have strengthened their positions tremendously if the Puerto Rican Divisions had reached the European theater and bled alongside the Continental-American and Allied soldiers.

The old Porto Rican Regiment at least saw its role extended during the war. Brought to full strength in 1914, the regiment had been sent to defend the Panama Canal in 1917. It is significant that these troops were sent outside the Island to take over defense of Isthmian Canal. Not only was the Canal vital for American projection of power and national security, hence the importance of receiving such assignment, but the role of Puerto Rican troops ceased to be solely of a domestic nature. The local press deemed sending the regiment overseas a gesture of confidence in the Puerto Ricans. Reflecting their new political identity, upon their return to Puerto Rico, the men of the “Porto Rican Regiment” found their unit’s name changed to the “65th Infantry, U. S. Army,” courtesy of the National Defense Act of 1920. Significantly, the term Porto

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321 Porto Rico Progress, 27 December 1918.

322 Puerto Ricans were being recruited in New York and other cities in the U.S. El Águila reported that in some cases when asked their names from recruitment purposes, some Puerto Ricans answered, “Yo soy Puertorriqueño” to which the recruiter answered: “All right, puertoricans [sic] are Americans: so, you must fight for your Nation.” According to the article, after being told they were U.S. citizens, most went willingly. Many of the Puerto Ricans recruited in New York were sent to the 396th, African-American units. They fought attached to French units in the Western Front in France. Among them was Rafael Hernandez, one of Puerto Rico’s greatest composers.

323 In three days the 654 vacancies of the Porto Rico Regiment were filled with volunteers. McIntyre to Yager, March 13, 1914, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 4, Documento 1, I; and Muratti, Historia del Regimiento 65, 9.

324 On July 1, 1908, under authority of an Act of Congress approved on May 27, the Porto Rico United States Volunteers became officially part of the regular army and
Rican was dropped as the regiment was included in the renumbering of federal units. World War I brought Puerto Rico American citizenship, and the Island’s regiment received a permanent niche in the regular army of the United States.

Demobilization came swiftly but that was not to be the end of the “Porto Rican contingent.” The three regiments from Las Casas were reorganized in 1922 as part of the Army Reserve Corps. In 1919, Secretary of War Baker authorized Yager to organize an infantry regiment and a cavalry battalion, officially creating the Porto Rico National Guard. In 1923, this corps was reorganized into the 295 Infantry Regiment, P.R.N.G. Responding both to the prestige that came from wearing a military uniform and to economic hardships, neither the National Guard nor the regular army units in the Island lacked volunteers to fill their ranks, and, in fact, there were waiting lists to join such units.  

As the victory celebrations subdued, Puerto Rican politicians tried to cash on any political leverage they believed to have earned because of their support of the war effort. Still convinced that the soldiers who trained in the Island would become the nucleus of a new Puerto Rico, some moved to secure that any benefits granted to the Great War’s veterans in the U.S. were also extended to the Puerto Rican veterans. Roughly a month

was named the Porto Rico Regiment of Infantry U.S.A. See Muratti, Historia del Regimiento 65, 6.

after the Armistice, *Diluvio*, which had been very critical of Yager’s administration throughout the war period began a campaign promoting the inclusion of Puerto Rican soldiers as beneficiaries of the Secretary of Interior Dane’ proposed benefit for veterans—which sought to provide soldiers with the opportunity to buy farmlands with low-interest loans. *Diluvio’s* editor, Norberto Escabí, argued that in Puerto Rico there were over 200,000 *cuerdas*\(^\text{326}\) of public lands- and hundreds of thousands more in private absentee idle hands that could very well be put to good use by the more than 15,000 soldiers whom in their majority were peasants. The editorial warned that the majority of the Puerto Rican soldiers had developed new worldviews, habits, and ideas through the hard training and labor of the military camps, and, consequently, the old standards of living would not satisfy them now.\(^\text{327}\) It is clear that the editorial was appealing, and not so subtlety, to the perennial fear of socio-political unrest harbored by the colonial authorities. *Diluvio* also called for putting a stop to the Puerto Rican labor exodus. It argued that the training of the soldiers and the farmland legislation should help to create the necessary conditions so the labor exodus would become unnecessary.\(^\text{328}\)

\(^{326}\) One *cuerda* equals 0.97122191 acres. 200,000 *cuerdas* equal 194,244.3820465 acres.

\(^{327}\) “Pronto tendremos que afrontar el que la desmovilización del primer contingente de doce mil soldados portorriqueños, que acudieron presurosos al llamamiento de la nación, cuando peligró la libertad. La mayoría de esos labradores han aprendido a vivir una vida nueva. Todos, o su inmensa mayoría, han cambiado completamente sus puntos de vista. Lo que ayer les pareció natural; los standards [sic] de vida que aceptaron antes sin proferir un aqueja, con los nuevos hábitos e ideas adquiridas en la dura y provechosa labor del Campamento, no puede, no podrá satisfacerlos. *Diluvio*, November 16, 1918

\(^{328}\) *Diluvio* accused the colonial authorities in the Island of the most virulent and silly Jingoism. That same issue published a caricature of the effects of immigration with the caption: “Juan Boricua, no salgas aunque el Diablo te lleve; mira aquí cómo sales, …
Some steps were taken to prepare the soldiers for their return to civilian life. As part of the demobilization process the soldiers attended a series of talks and seminars. C. Hendrickson, director of Agriculture of the Food Commission, Félix Reina and F.G. Rodil, a functionary and the Director of Education respectively, spoke to the men of the 374 and 375 about re-entering civil life. By means of these talks, the trio stated, they wish to prepare the soldiers to continue to work on food conservation and food crop development. Among other topics they covered food control, production of food substitutes, and development of new agricultural industries. Hendrickson and Reina commented that it was for the soldiers to exploit what they were to learn and to create a new “relation of Porto Rican soldiers with the agricultural life,” while Rodil discussed the opportunity of “making Porto Rico a self-supporting country.” The soldiers indeed received a tall order. Moreover, it is very telling that the publications advocating the extension of rights to Puerto Rican veterans and covering their demobilization-training were the Socialist-leaning, Diluvio, and the staunchly pro-metropolis, Porto Rico Progress. Unionistas and Republicanos were too busy positioning themselves in order to further their respective political goals.

mira aqui como vuelves.” The Puerto Rican worker was shown leaving in high spirits and wearing his best clothes and coming back extremely dilapidated and beaten up. See Diluvio, November 16, 1918. In late November 1918, El Águila condemned the treatment received by Puerto Rican workers aboard the ship “City of Savannah” in route to New York. Their arrival to New York coincided with the Armistice which prompted the local authorities to stop them from disembarking. Sent back without proper supplies and care, and mistreated by the crew many returned sick, and several workers died. El Águila de Puerto Rico, 23 November 1918; and Diluvio, 2 November 1918

329 Porto Rico Progress, 27 December 1918.
The *Unionistas* were quick to demand a solution to the status issue suggesting that Puerto Rico be allowed to send a delegate to the Peace Assembly to demand independence for the Island. As the *Unionistas* started to call for resolving the status question, Republicans and colonial administrators attacked them as selfish and irresponsible in view of the earthquake and tidal wave that punished the Island in November 1918, and the subsequent cholera epidemic that crippled the west coast.  

The next month, Representative Cayetano Coll y Cuchí, who after de Diego’s death in 1918 became the most prominent separatist among the *Unionistas*, passed a memorial and resolution in the Insular Legislature urging President Wilson to support self-determination for the Puerto Ricans. Coll y Cuchí’s resolution stressed that failing to act positively would undermine the moral grounds of the American representatives in the peace negotiations and thus jeopardize their mission. Puerto Rico, he argued, “… has demonstrated its fitness and capacity for self government, that is being at present and always has been denied the island.”

Coll y Cuchí reminded the president that Porto Ricans:

…let out a cry of joy when the American Congress extended its laws to the island territory and called its sons to arms in order that they might play part in the great task of giving liberty to the world. And our soldiers gathered in the camps and our riches flowed into the vaults of the government without the slightest doubt delaying the decided impulse of our spirit. Thus was seen the rare spectacle of a

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330 Ibid., November 29, 1918.
331 Ibid., December 6, 1918.
people who was itself not free hastening to give the blood of its sons to defend other nations.\textsuperscript{332}

The Porto Rican soldiers, he continued, “…left their homes to fight for democracy, resting in the belief that when the war was over, victory won, and peace established, Porto Rico would be given the same freedom for which it fought.”\textsuperscript{333} He skillfully linked Wilson’s international rhetoric to Puerto Rico’s issues. The resolution continued: “Our culture and civilization and the pride of our glorious race oblige us to decline to accept as legitimate a government that does not spring from our own will.” He proceeded by denouncing that the elected representatives of Puerto Rico were subject “to the veto of one man who was neither born in our land nor expects to find here the final peace of death.”\textsuperscript{334}

The easy passing of the non-binding resolution emboldened the \textit{Unionistas} who the next week tried to pass another one. This time they sought approval for a resolution calling on the President and Congress to allow the organization of a Republican form of government in the Island.\textsuperscript{335} Don Manuel Rossy, Republican leader of the house, still espousing 100 percent Americanism, declared while denouncing the bill: “I am an American citizen and I stand for American sovereignty. That is my Americanism.”\textsuperscript{336} He argued that \textit{Unionistas} had poorly worded the resolution to disguise their true goals,

\textsuperscript{332} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{333} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{334} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{335} \textit{Porto Rico Progress}, 13 December 1918.

\textsuperscript{336} Ibid.
independence. The Speaker of the House, Miguel Guerra, had tried to convince legislators to pass it unanimously by appealing to the need of a more liberal and democratic government. Defending democratic and nationalist aspiration he declared that the day for Puerto Rico to voice its desire for self-government had indeed arrived. Frustrated by the intransigence of the Republicanos, Ponce’s Representative Manuel Lastra challenged Rossi to claim full responsibility before the people of Puerto Rico for the defeat of a plan for a more liberal government.³³⁷ Rossi riposted:

You, [the Unionistas] stand for the Republic of Porto Rico, and we stand for statehood in the Union. We travel different roads and we seek different ends. We will not be on [sic] at this late hour to content ourselves with a loosely worded proposition that leaves in doubt the kind of sovereignty we want.³³⁸

After a heated discussion, Guerra replied to Rossy’s comments. He made a distinction between the old Americanism, which Rossy represented, and the new spirit of Americanism. Guerra explained that while holding in high esteem the old Americanism, and while being loyal to the teachings of American statesmen, the younger generation and their new Americanism believed in the future of Puerto Rican nationality. Indeed the debate turned upon who was more American in an attempt to show who best understood the path that the Puerto Ricans ought to follow.

Officially, Unión did not demand independence. However, their leaders spoke openly about it and spared no effort in fighting against statehood. Undeterred by the failure of the resolution, Coll y Cuchí challenged the metropolis declaring to the press

³³⁷ Ibid.
³³⁸ Ibid.
that, “year after year we have demanded independence or statehood… Without achieving any…” and, “the Jones Act, let’s be honest, does not satisfy the aspirations of the portorrican [sic] people.” Coll y Cuchí linked Puerto Rico’s need of “independence nationhood” to Wilson’s “self-determination” rhetoric. He added that Córdova Dávila’s proposal in the U.S. House of Representatives to create a referendum to decide the political status was not a surprise and that “we [the Unionistas] had always believed that after the war ended, there would be the opportunity to move the Island towards that goal [independence].” The reporter himself was quick to link the goal of the separatistas in Unión to a long line of revolutionaries and champions of independence. There was much opposition to any referendum on the status question, especially while Unión retained political power. During the war Buscapié had derided the idea of having a plebiscite to define the status arguing that the hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans who enlisted in the military draft had already decided that issue.

For a while it seemed as if the Unionistas would be able to realize their goals with considerable support from the general public. The general election of 1920 witnessed a triumph for Unión. Of 249,431 votes cast, the Unionistas obtained 126,446. They re-

339 Periódico El Mundo (San Juan), 18 February 1919.

340 Ibid. The reporter asked Coll y Cuchí: “Do you believe that through Wilson’s mediation will the puertorriqueños obtain the dream longed by Hostos, Betances, and de Diego, that is, the independence of our mother land?”

341 This publication also defended the expansionist policies of the metropolis and declared that when “…when the war ended the U.S. would have absolute control of the Caribbean, and would continue its missionary colonization in the Caribbean.” El Buscapié, 4 November 1917. Ironically, this pro-metropolis publication, El Buscapié as well as El Águila periodically wrote columns defending suffrage and full rights for women.
elected Córdova Dávila, 15 senators and 26 representatives. Their two candidates were elected to the new executive positions of Public Service Commissioners. Only the senatorial district of Ponce remained in Republican hands, which with 63,845 votes cast in their favor also won in 16 municipalities, and elected 3 senators and 9 representatives. The Socialists won 8 municipalities with 59,140 votes and elected 1 senator and 4 representatives.

*Unión* was the dominant political party in the Island, but its success hid the deep-rooted divisions splitting its members into almost irreconcilable bands: those who wanted independence- initially led by José de Diego, and succeeded by Cayetano Coll y Cuchí, Barceló and Córdova Dávila among others; and those who wanted to secure autonomy and who still spoke of pro-Americanism, led by Juan B. Huyke and Martín Travieso. The *Unionistas* had personal divisions as well. Córdova Dávila himself, however, spoke of the possibility of becoming a state of the Union if statehood was granted with the “same dignity and grandiosity” of the other 48 states. In 1920, Barceló traveled to the United States with the purpose of gauging how much had changed in Washington with the election of the Republican candidate Warren H. Harding as president. He proudly declared: “Let me go to Washington to demand independence”. But once in New York he showed the ambivalence and division of his own party by declaring that the *Unionistas*’ immediate goal was to obtain the right to elect their own governor and that

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342 Bolívar Pagán, *Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños* (1898-1952), 188-89
they were happy and proud of having U.S. citizenship. Moreover, he declared that Puerto Rico would accept independence or statehood, as final solutions to the status question.343

In his inaugural speech in July 29, 1921, Harding’s appointee, E. Montgomery Reily, let Puerto Rican leaders know that he would not tolerate foreigners inciting political unrest among Puerto Ricans or demanding independence. Reily stated that as long as the Stars and Stripes flew over the United States, it would continue to fly over Puerto Rico. He also warned the Socialists by declaring that he would not allow labor leaders to incite unrest among workers. Montgomery Reily’s inaugural speech was well-received by the Republicans. It made the Socialists weary and left the Unionistas feeling betrayed. On August 3, the leadership of Unión met in assembly. At the end of the meeting, a crowd accused Córdova Dávila of collaborating with the new governor and knowing beforehand what Reily would say in his inaugural speech. As the crowd chanted “Viva la independencia,” Córdova Dávila yelled back: “Viva Puerto Rico Americano.” Though this was not the end of Unión, Reily’s persecution of Unionistas whom he deemed separatists and his exaltation of those he believed wanted only limited self-government would finally destroyed the party, at least as a counterweight to the Republican Party.

On January 1922, Congressman Philip Campbell, Republican from Kansas, and Senator William King, Democrat from Utah, introduced the Campbell Bill. This bill, for

343 Ibid., 201-02.

344 Montgomery Reily was despised by Socialists and Unionistas alike and his arbitrary decisions even won him the antipathy on many republicans. Iglesias Pantín came up with the nickname Moncho Reyes to deride the governor. Bolívar Pagán, Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños (1898-1952), 205-206.
the first time mentioned openly the creation in Puerto Rico of a *Estado Libre Asociado*,

which unlike the one created in 1952, included an American Commissioner in Puerto Rico and a governor to be chosen by the elected Puerto Rican legislature, not by the people. With the leaders of Unión in disarray as a consequence of internal divisions and the latest political developments, they temporarily adopted the *Estado Libre Asociado* as their goal. Soon the bill showed signs that it would produce no results. In April 1922, a faction of Unión decided to create the *Partido Nacionalista Puertorriqueño*, which was constituted on September 17. Fearing that a Socialist-Republican alliance might end their political dominance, the Unionistas sought an alliance with their archrival, the Republicanos. For the elections of 1924, Republicans and Unionistas formed an alliance- Alianza Puertorriqueña. Republican Party dissidents, incensed by the alliance with a party dominated by autonomists and separatists, allied themselves with the Socialists to form a coalition. The Puerto Rican soldier and the heavy burdens put on him, as well as the promises made to *los hijos de este país* quickly disappeared from the politician’s mind as they ushered the Island into an era of political alliances. Incessant fighting for political survival and dominance left no room or interest, for little else.

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345 Ibid., 211-12.

346 The Republicans allied with the Socialists took the name of *Constitucional Histórico* (originally known as Republicano Puro) to conform to electoral laws. Unión obtained 132,755 votes, the Republicans 30,286; the Socialists 56,103, and Constitucional Histórico 34,576. Altogether, the Alianza received 163,041 votes versus 90,679 cast for the coalition. The Alianza won 71 municipalities while the coalition secured 4 and elected 2 senators and 3 representatives. The Nationalist Party participated in the election, as well as the Federal party and splints of the principal parties but did not win a significant number of votes anywhere.
The combination of political developments, in the form of American citizenship for the Puerto Ricans and an elective legislature in 1917, and the military mass mobilization of the Island’s peasantry and urban workers, further complicated the relationship between the metropolis and the colony. The War Department, through the BIA, would have preferred to continue treating the Island as a giant reservation. American citizenship, however, invested the Puerto Ricans with more legal rights and recourses, making unilateral and unpopular policies easier to challenge by the different political groups in the Island. The immediate goals of the War Department and the Wilson administration (securing the loyalty of the Puerto Ricans by granting them American citizenship and silencing critiques of imperialism) were achieved. But this victory would prove a double-edge knife in the long run.

Mass participation of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. military, the newly created Puerto Rico National Guard, and the willing support of the newly elected Puerto Rican legislature for the war effort, temporarily cemented American control over the Island, and more importantly, over the islanders’ loyalty to the metropolis. As some supporters of the metropolis argued during the war years, the unwillingness or inability of the vast majority of the Puerto Ricans to resist becoming American citizens and their determination to participate in the war reflected the impact that the institutions of the new metropolis had had on the Puerto Ricans. That same institutional influence would lead the Puerto Ricans to expect more political and socioeconomic opportunities, if not equality. Oblivious to the transformation occurring in Puerto Rico, the metropolis was slow to respond to these challenges and no major political changes would take place after
1917 until yet another war, the Second World War, highlighted, once again, the strategic importance of the Island.

The mass mobilization of the Puerto Rican peasantry and urban workers, and the initial enthusiasm shown by the inductees hid the fact that control over the military apparatus in the Island was no longer the exclusive prerogative of the American colonial administrators. The traditional and emerging criollo elites, as well as the professional classes, had to be called upon to train and lead the massive army of peasants soldiering in the Island. Out of sheer necessity, the metropolis broadly opened the officer’s corps to los hijos de este país providing in the process the tools for the local elites and emerging professional classes to attain and consolidate political power. criollo leaders, which for different reasons and with different goals in mind supported the war effort, by the war’s end, had succeeded in wresting exclusive control over the nation-building project via military service from the metropolitan authorities. This situation, even if not immediately apparent in the post-war years, would eventually put the local elites in a better political position than they had been before the WWI.

The passing of the Jones Act and the imposition of American citizenship upon the Puerto Ricans coupled with the death of Luis Muñoz Rivera temporarily weakened the Unionistas. The coming of the war brought the temporary resurgence of the Republicans who were the first to marry the war effort and the 100 percent Americanism campaign, to their own political goal, statehood. By the war’s end, however, by turning President Wilson’s promise of ending the hyphenations in the American nation into a call for a New Americanism that promoted creating a new Puerto Rican out of Hispanic gallantry and Anglo-Saxon industrialism, the autonomistas within Unión had found an image they
could use to sell their third way, the *Libre Asociación*, to the general population. This was in essence a return to Hostos and Matienzo Cintron’s idea of Americanizing the Puerto Rican, which meant creating a modern political individual without losing the essence of *Puertorriqueñismo*, only this time, economic modernization superseded political modernization. The *autonomistas* had found a new philosophy and an agent to incarnate it. There could be a space for the Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic cultures to coexist. The *Jíbaro* would be that new man and Puerto Rico that new space. The *autonomistas* of the 1920s were not able to fully exploit or develop their new popular philosophy, but the seed had been planted for the generation coming of age during the war, and they would retake this narrative decades later.

Over 18,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. armed forces during WWI. After the Armistice these soldiers were quickly demobilized and returned to the hills and coastal valleys. Neither the metropolis nor the colonial administration created vocational or capacitating projects to make good on the promises of creating a new modern *Jíbaro*. The promises of a new *Jíbaro*, integrated into the economy as its driving force, and as the “new teachers of freedom and democracy,” remained mostly unfulfilled. However, the creation of the Puerto Rico National Guard in 1919, and transforming the provisional regiment into a regular U.S. Army regiment, (*el 65*), absorbed some of the best soldiers and restarted the military in Puerto Rico as a professional career.

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347 See discussion in Chapter 2.

348 10,000 Puerto Ricans moved to the U.S. and many more visited the mainland as seasonal workers during this period.

349 Many were absorbed by the National Guard but that was a part time commitment as opposed to full time training and duty.
Many of the future career officers (and certainly the vast majority of the troops) identified themselves simply as *Jíbaros* from Cabo Rojo, Cayey, Lares, here and there… and became an important emerging socio-economic and political group. These soldiers and officers did not interfere directly in politics, as they followed the strict subordination to civilian authority practiced by the U.S. Army. *criollo* politicians, however, tried to employ the soft enticements of the military (prestige, manliness, heroism) and its tangible aspect (economic improvement) to boost different political projects, from simply redefining the parameters of the colony to full decolonization. But this would have to wait.

The metropolis had secured the islanders’ loyalty in part by giving them citizenship but the fact that the Island remained mostly dormant after WWI, even after the promises of integrating the *Jíbaros* as the axis of progress did not materialize, was a function of the temporary economic boom brought by the war. The Great Depression would bring unrest to the circum-Caribbean basin in the 1930 and mark the end of economic and political stability in the American informal empire and its Caribbean colonies, especially Puerto Rico. Yet another war would force the United States to once again mobilize the Puerto Ricans. The challenges to the metropolis would be stronger and more direct. Overreliance on the *criollo* elites to mobilize and control the peasantry and urban working classes would continue to undermine the metropolis’ control over the military apparatus and the political structures in the Island. A new challenge in the form of nationalist clandestine paramilitary units would be, more than a military challenge, recognition of the political value of the military in the Island’s society.
In his late years and by then a general, Luis Raul Esteves commented that he believed that Camp Las Casas served as the “first blood transfusion received by our tired people. Not only did it [military training] awaken our Jíbaro, but it taught him how to live a better life.” Esteves had doubted that the “malnourished jibaritos” he encountered at Las Casas would ever be ready to serve as combat troops and longed serving with his Continental unit- the 23rd Infantry. However, his opinion changed:

I witnessed our boys’ physical transformation becoming aware of their disciplined spirit and military pride inherited from our ancestors; I changed my mind and felt proud of serving with Boricua troops...

Esteves’ assessment may have been lost to the dominant political leaders in the early 1920s, but the emerging leadership, among them Luis Muñoz Marín and Pedro Albizu Campos, were not to forget what they witnessed or experience during the Great War. The Jíbaro, who had been presented at best as a romantic figure and at worst as a reason for the Island’s backwardness had proven that his alleged shortcomings were a function of the structural social inequalities inherent to the Island and not a characteristic of his persona. As mature leaders, both Albizu Campos and Muñoz Marín would try again to re-create the Puerto Ricans’ national identity and the Island’s socio-economic structures by virtue of military training. Their different paths would eventually lead to an armed struggle between los hijos de este país.

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350 Negroni, Historia militar de Puerto Rico, 442.

351 Ibid. Esteves stated that this experience moved him to fight for the creation of the National Guard in Puerto Rico.
CHAPTER 4

ECONOMIC WRETCHEDNESS AND THE NATIONALIST CHALLENGE: PRELUDE TO THE BATTLE OVER MODERN PUERTO RICO

Nationalism [has] organized and mobilized the vital strength of Puerto Rico to counter the enemy. The nation has passed from passive resistance to counterattack. The entire nation has condemned these killings and it is firm in its resolution that they will not repeat themselves... It is the plan to exterminate the Puerto Ricans. [But] Nationalism has destroyed all Yankee inventions. The enemy has now left only the traditional arms of assassination. The country will vindicate the killings of its heroes, Pagán, Quiñones, Rodríguez-Vega, and Santiago. The Yankee Chief of police, Colonel Francis Riggs, has declared to the nation that there will be war. The Nationalists recognized his frankness and pick up the glove. There will be war. War against the Yankees!352

The 1930s in Puerto Rico were marked by economic distress and political instability. The economic misfortunes of the Island were not simply a matter of the metropolis’ economic problems extending to its colonies. Puerto Rico’s problems had started previously to the Great Depression and were linked to the exploitative colonial

nature of its situation. As the depression castigated the U.S. mainland, it simply aggravated a preexisting condition in the Island. Puerto Rico’s dire economic picture; an alternatively unemployed or overworked, underpaid, malnourished rural population and a rapidly impoverishing urban sector, stirred discontent which was ultimately aimed at the metropolis and its colonial administrators.

As the most recognizable face of poverty, hunger became the rule for the Puerto Rican urban workers and peasantry, the economic situation turned into a political one. A rapidly deteriorating situation gave way to a reign of political violence in the mid and late 1930s. A virulent Nacionalista anti-American campaign and the colonial authorities’ belligerent and sometimes criminal persecution of the Nacionalistas marked this historical period. The Nacionalistas, however, were not passive victims; they fought violently to the point that the Island came to be called “America’s Ireland” or the “Ireland of the Caribbean.” In fact, before U.S entrance into WWII, the metropolis and its colonial administrators used the militarized Puerto Rico Insular Police to fight a brief war

353 In the Baltimore Sun edition of July 30, 1930, Luis Muñoz Marín had warned that the U.S. “does not wish to have a small Ireland on their hands by establishing a permanent satrapy in Puerto Rico.” Muñoz Marín was particularly incensed by the apparent preference of the Brookings Institution Report for getting rid of democratic institutions in the Island, such as the legislature, for the sake of scientific efficiency in dealing with Puerto Rico’s socio-economic problems. See A.W. Maldonado, Luis Muñoz Marín: Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution (San Juan, Puerto Rico: La Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2006), 83-84. By 1937 Jay Franklin, Washington commentator for the Stern Papers, had labeled Puerto Rico the Ireland of the Caribbean. See Lester D. Langley, The United States and the Caribbean, 1900-1970, (Athens: The University of Georgia, 1980), 72. On August 14, 1939, New York Congressman Vitto Marcantonio, while outlining his charges against Governor Blanton Winship’s administration, which he described as “Five Years of Tyranny in Puerto Rico” used Stern’s new nickname for the Island to describe the political unrest during a speech on the floor of the House on August 5, 1939. Marcantonio had presented these charges to President Roosevelt and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes several months earlier. See Félix Ojeda Reyes, Vitto Marcantonio y Puerto Rico: Por los trabajadores y por la nación (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Huracán, 1978), 73-74
in Puerto Rico against the Nacionalistas leaders, their paramilitary units, and simple party members. The fear of social unrest during the early 1930s, followed by a brief reign of political violence forced the federal government to take a closer look at the Island’s economic and political situation. Hence, while violence closed some roads to Puerto Rico’s socio-economic and political development, it also opened other avenues.

This chapter analyzes how the economic distress afflicting the Island fueled political discontent and how such discontent was in turn used by emerging political leaders, Pedro Albizu Campos and Luis Muñoz Marín, to further different decolonization processes. The history of the rise of Pedro Albizu Campos and the Nacionalistas is well known. An electrifying leader decides that only a violent struggle would free the

354 Albizu Campos was born in Ponce on September 12, 1891 as the grandson of a slave on his mother’s side, a domestic worker who died in his childhood. His father, Alejandro Albizu Romero, came from a rich family of Spanish immigrants. Albizu Campos received a scholarship to study at the University of Vermont after graduating with honors from the Ponce High School in 1912, a school mostly reserved for Puerto Rico’s southern white elite. After two years in Vermont he transferred to Harvard University and graduated in 1917. On May 17 of the same he volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army during WWI. After completing the Officers Training Camp at Las Casas, he earned the rank of First Lieutenant in 1918. He was honorably discharged in April, 1919 from the 375th Regiment, an outfit created in the Island for Black Puerto Ricans. Albizu Campos resumed his studies in Harvard after the war eventually graduating with a law degree in 1923. During his later years at Harvard he became an admirer of the Sinn Fein Irish separatist movement. He returned to Puerto Rico after marrying Laura Meneses, a Radcliffe-educated Peruvian, and joined the Unionistas as a staunchly pro-independence champion. However, when he was not selected by the Unionista leadership as candidate to the legislature in 1924, he left Unión to join the Nationalist Party created by Unionist dissenters in 1922. His tactics were such that eventually he forced the founding leadership to leave the Party. Cayetano Coll y Cuchi, cofounder of the Nationalist Party, declared that Albizu Campos’ “intolerance and fanaticism [sic] was going to alienate Puerto Rican people from the independence ideal”. See, FBI, Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, Vol. 4., 54-55; and El Águila, 8 November 1918: and, April10-14, 1917, October 10, 1918; and December 6, 1918; and Maldonado, Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution, 85-86, 87, citing Luis Ángel Ferrao, Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño 1930-1939, Vol. II (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, Inc., 1990), 395.
Island of the American grip (which he believed was the cause of all of Puerto Rico’s troubles). He thus wages war against the metropolis and the colonial authorities hoping that the Puerto Rican masses will rise and expel the Americans. On the other hand, Luis Muñoz Marín, the bohemian “Bard of politics” and patrician heir of Luis Muñoz Rivera, would spend the 1930s vacillating between socialist ideals (especially the socio-economic restructuration of the Island) and his belief in independence, but always condemning violence. Both Albizu Campos and Muñoz Marín benefitted and suffered immensely from the same conditions plaguing the Island.

I argue that what transpired during these years of political violence was also a battle for control of Puerto Rican identity. It is obvious that Albizu Campos had no chance of militarily overthrowing the colonial government. Although tactically insignificant from a military point of view, the Nacionalistas’ daring attacks against the metropolis’ agents fulfill their intended role; these attacks gained local and international attention to Albizu Campos’s cause. His movement, however, had little possibility of success if it could not polarize the Puerto Rican’s self perception vis-a-vis Continental Americans. Using Hispanic and Catholic iconography for his party and paramilitary units, and emphasizing Spanish traditions and conservatism, were but a call to the Puerto Ricans to see themselves as completely different from Continental Americans. Albizu Campos was appealing to what he believed was Puerto Rico’s true national identity.

Eventually the Nacionalistas would challenge not only the American presence but also the legitimacy of the Insular Police and the U.S. Army and National Guard Units in the Island as truly Puerto Rican or as national institutions representative of the Puerto Ricans.
On the other hand, Muñoz Marín, though a self-proclaimed *Nacionalista* and ardent advocate of independence, rejected violence, preferring political means and preserving good relations with the United States to achieve that goal. Though his fortunes indicated otherwise in the mid 1930s, shortly before U.S. entry into the Second World War Muñoz Marín would emerge as the dominant political leader. However, his political goals would be compromised, both by the requirements of the global war and by his new source of political power; the tens of thousands of votes he received from the rural masses and from the urban working classes.

Before Muñoz Marín emerged as the leading politician in the late 1930s (a role he continued to fill well into the 1960s), he had to fight his way to the center stage of insular politics, and in the process, he would find his own political path. As explained in the previous chapter, for the elections of 1924 the *Unionista* leader, Antonio R. Barceló made a political alliance with the staunchly pro-American *Republicanos* to form the *Alianza* which faced the *Coalición* made up of Santiago Iglesias Pantín’s *Socialistas* and dissenting *Republicanos* who had created the *Partido Constitucional Histórico* (originally known as *Republicano Puro*). This move secured the prevalence of *Unionistas* and *Republicanos* over the emerging *Socialistas* in 1924.\footnote{Unión obtained 132,755 votes and the Republicans 30,286; the Socialists 56,103, and *Constitucional Histórico* 34,576. Altogether, the *Alianza* received 163,041 votes versus 90,679 cast for the coalition. The *Alianza* won 71 municipalities while the coalition secured 4 and elected 2 senators and 3 representatives. The Nationalist Party participated in the election, as well as the Federal party and splinters of the principal parties but did not win a significant number of votes anywhere. See Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, 163-66.} Before the general elections of 1928, however, the *Alianza* lost a significant number of *Republicanos* who joined the rank and file of the *Coalición*. Though the *Alianza* again dominated the elections, the
Coalición, especially its Socialista wing, were weakening the Alianza’s grip on Puerto Rican politics. Soon after the elections, the Unionistas from the Alianza, unhappy with having to equally divide government positions with their minority Republicano partners, splintered into two groups, and Barceló moved to dissolve Alianza. On January 1932, what was left of Alianza joined the Republicanos Puros led by Manuel F. Rossy forming the Partido Unión Republicana. With this stroke Barcelo’s Unionistas lost the right to continue calling their party Unión. After failed legal attempts to regain their name and party insignias, the Unionist leaders rebranded themselves as Partido Liberal Puertorriqueño (PLP).

Shortly before the election of 1932, the reunited Republicanos, and some Autonomistas from the former Alianza, entered into a pact with the Socialistas in what came to be known as the Coalición Republicana Socialista. It certainly seemed as if the political career of Barceló was coming to an end. The dire situation faced by the Liberales left Barceló with no option but to act boldly, and he soon moved to embrace

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356 Of 321,113 registered voters 256,335 cast a vote in 1928. Alianza obtained 132,286 votes versus 123,415 of the Coalición. The Alianza elected for the fourth time Félix Córdova Dávila as Resident Commissioner in Washington and won 47 municipalities, elected 11 senators and 21 representatives, and won the senatorial districts of San Juan, Aguadilla, Mayagüez and Guayama. The senatorial districts of Arecibo, Ponce and Humacao were won by the Coalición (running under the name Socialistas–Coalicionistas) which also secured 8 senators, 18 representatives and 47 municipalities. See Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 168.

357 See Thomas Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 3ra edición, Traducido del inglés por Antonio J. Colorado (San Juan, Puerto Rico: La Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2007), 26. And, Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 167-68.

358 Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 35. And, Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 173-76.
publicly the ideal of independence. Many within the *Liberales* were in fact *Autonomistas* but by taking up eventual independence as part of their platform, the PLP gave the impression of unanimous thought with respect to the Island’s political future. During the campaign, a firebrand *Independentista* Muñoz Marín emerged as an inspiring young leader. His articles in *La Democracia*, his father’s newspaper, gave him a tribune from which to attack the colonial administration and political opponents. Running for the Liberal Party, he was elected as “Senator at large” (*por acumulación*). Though the *Liberales* obtained more votes than any other party, the Republican and Socialist coalition dominated the elections and split the most important positions in government (that of resident commissioner in Washington, president of the senate, and speaker of the house) among them.\(^\text{359}\) The staunchly pro-American and anexionist *Republicanos* and *Socialistas* were returned to power. Or so it seemed.

Though the *Liberales* did not dominate the elections, their performance was quite impressive. The electoral power gained by the *Liberales* derived from two sources. First, the popularity of their leading figures, the hardened veteran Barceló and the young, charismatic Muñoz Marín made the PLP a very recognizable organization. Second, Muñoz Marín’s anti-monopoly and pro-labor rhetoric was very appealing to the masses.

\(^\text{359}\) During the general election of 1932 registered voters increased to 452,783 (from 321,163) since for the first time women were allowed to vote in the Island made possible by Public Law 74 sponsored by Senator Manuel A. García Méndez. Of 383,722 votes the PLP obtained 170,168; *Unión Republicana* 110,794 and the *Socialistas* 97,438. The *Nacionalistas* obtained 5,257 and Albizu Campos running for senator at large secured 11,882 votes. As a result Santiago Iglesias Pantín became Resident Commissioner (a position he occupied between 1933 and 1939). The presidency of the Senate and the House went to Rafael Martínez Nadal and Miguel A. García Méndez respectively. See Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, 168, 177, 181.
due to the extreme economic conditions plaguing the Island. It did not take long for Muñoz Marín to identify the economy as the principal issue in the minds of most Puerto Ricans.

Under American control, land concentration and the proletarianization of the peasantry had advanced hand in hand in Puerto Rico. The monopolization of lands by absentee-owned sugar corporations meant that most of the Island’s arable land was dedicated to grow and export that crop which in turn made the Puerto Ricans dependent on imports for foodstuffs. Land concentration, high population density, and dependence on exports for foodstuffs exacerbated economic hardships in Puerto Rico. This process gradually led to the pauperization of the Puerto Rican peasant, especially the cane worker and his family.

The economic situation in Puerto Rico deteriorated tremendously in the late 1920s. In 1928, hurricane San Felipe crippled the coffee industry which saw its production reduced from 32 million pounds to just five million the next year and the loss of its remaining European markets. In 1930, the Brookings Institution, an independent

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360 As explained by historian Cesar Ayala, the proletarianization of the Puerto Rican peasantry was a function of land scarcity and high population density. This process accelerated as a result of the passing of the Hollander Bill of 1901, and by the implementation of U.S. tariffs in the Island which finally killed the coffee industry in Puerto Rico, and forced small-peasants and subsistence-farmers to sell their lands. Cesar J. Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom: The Plantation Economy of the Spanish Caribbean, 1898-1934*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 159-61, 164-65.


The study described the economic situation of the Island as “deplorable” with rural families’ annual income averaging between $250 and $275. Urban families earned a little more, but in these areas the cost of life was higher, and there were fewer opportunities to have home orchards to supplement dietary requirements. In addition, the Organic Acts used to govern Puerto Rico (Foraker and Jones) required that imports be carried exclusively by the U.S. merchant marine, the most expensive in the world, which made foodstuffs in the Island between 8 to 14 percent more expensive than in New York. The cost of food on the Island was aggravated by the fact that daily wages in Puerto Rico were less than $1 while in New York they were $4 to $10. In fact, manufactured goods were so expensive that “in 1930 only one person in four had ever worn shoes.” On September 26, 1932, another hurricane, San Ciprián, caused 225 deaths, and left over

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363 Based in Washington the Brookings Institution was a non-profit public policy think tank. In the 1930s it was recognized as both liberal and scientific. The Brookings Report, “Puerto Rico and its Problems”, a 700 page document was written after two years of research by seven scholars and professionals under the guidance of Victor S. Clark, formerly Puerto Rico’s Education Commissioner. The report stated that the Island’s condition was deplorable. According to the Brookings Report, excessive, inefficient government, and partisan politics were to blame for Puerto Rico’s maladies. But the main cause of Puerto Rico’s troubles, according to the report, was overpopulation. See, Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution*, 82-84.


365 Ibid.


367 Ironically, Dr. Bailey K. Ashford’s crusade to eradicate the hookworm-caused chronic anemia of the Puerto Rican peasant was undermined by the lack of this basic item. By 1925 a study found that although the death rate related to hookworm had been dramatically reduced, the incidence of the disease had not. See Dietz, *Economic History* 129; And Ashford, *A Soldier in Science*, 37-54.
3,000 wounded and more than 100,000 Puerto Ricans homeless. San Ciprían also ruined the small producers’ minor fruit crops on the north coast.\textsuperscript{368} When the Great Depression made its way to the colony, Puerto Rico was in no shape to withstand its assault.\textsuperscript{369}

While most politicians continued to engage exclusively with matters of political arrangements and patronage—such as the political status of the Island and positions in the colonial bureaucracy, Muñoz Marín was preoccupied with the economic and social maladies affecting the peasantry and urban working classes. In fact, he challenged the Brookings Institution’s conclusions which blamed overpopulation as the main cause for Puerto Rico’s socio-economic distress, instead holding capitalism and the sugar corporations accountable for the situation.\textsuperscript{370} The Liberales benefitted immensely from Muñoz Marín’s early understanding of the masses’ dire situation. Furthermore, on the mainland, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president bringing with him a very liberal agenda to the White House. The coalition of Republicanos and Socialistas would soon find their politics out of tune with the reformist drive of FDR’s administration. The Socialistas and Republicanos may have dominated the elections in the Island, but it

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{368} Mathews, \textit{La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato}, 28.
\item \textsuperscript{369} In 1935 the percentage of the male population with no economic activity in the Island (10 years and over) reached and all time high of 24.2\%. The percentage of women engaged in economic activity, on the other hand, had slowly increase going from 15.8\% in 1899 to 34.3 in 1935. 150,000 heads of families were unemployed Dietz, \textit{Economic History}, 131, 153, Table 2.14.
\item \textsuperscript{370} The report’s recommended making the sugar industry more competitive instead of limiting land ownership, export quota or raising workers’ salaries. The report recommendations were in opposition to Muñoz Marín’s understanding of the problems. For him, the root of the problem was capitalism and the sugar corporations, and thus he was bent on enforcing the anti-monopoly federal law limiting corporation land ownership to 500 acres. See Maldonado, \textit{Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution}, 82-84.
\end{itemize}
would be Muñoz Marín who would be seen constantly in Washington and as having FDR’s administration’s ear.  

The Liberales were not the only political faction benefitting from economic hardships. The Nacionalistas, who had reorganized their party in 1930 and elected Pedro Albizu Campos as their president, also participated in the elections of 1932. They hoped to elect Albizu Campos to the senate, which seemed a reasonable proposition since his frequent public speeches were usually attended by a multitude of people. The Nacionalistas, however, were extremely weak to the point of requiring the unrequested, albeit welcome, assistance of the Republicanos to obtain the 30,000 signatures needed to inscribe their party. After obtaining only 1.4% of the votes in the general elections of 1932, and failing to elect Albizu Campos as senator at large (who with 11,882 votes doubled his party’s tally) the Nacionalistas withdrew from the electoral process. Obtaining independence for whatever means became the mission of the Nacionalistas.

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371 The Coalición found themselves as the Washington outsiders as their policies were incongruent with those of the New Dealers. Muñoz Marín had many contacts with the continental press, including Eleanor Roosevelt’s biographer, Ruby Black and Ernest Gruening. The latter was the first director of the Office of Islands and Territories, an office which took over the War Department’s Bureau of Insular Affairs responsibility over Puerto Rico in 1935. See Maldonado, Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution, 113-115.

372 Ibid., 87.

373 The Nacionalistas had obtained 329 votes in 1928 and where thus required to re-inscribe the party. The Republicanos sought to weaken the Liberales by splitting the pro-independence vote between the two. Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 43.
The 1932 elections were the last ingredient in the radicalization of Albizu Campos and his followers.\textsuperscript{374} Soon after the elections Albizu Campus challenged the legitimacy of American sovereignty over the Island basing his claims on the legal relationship between Spain and Puerto Rico before the 1898 invasion as established by the Autonomous Charter secured by Luis Muñoz Rivera in 1897.\textsuperscript{375} If American sovereignty was illegal, then the U.S. had no right to exert any authority over Puerto Rico nor was the Puerto Ricans’ duty to obey or cooperate with what then constituted an occupation force. Slowly but surely, what amounted to political tensions would turn into an open shooting war between the colonial authorities and the \textit{Nacionalistas}.

On July 1, 1933, the newly elected president of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, replaced the competent governor James Beverly with the inadequate Robert

\textsuperscript{374} Members of the Nationalist Party, put off by Albizu Campos’ radical extremism, left the party and founded the \textit{Partido Independentista} on October 21, 1934. On September 23, 1934 the \textit{Partido Comunista Puertorriqueño} was also founded and later joined the International Communist. Bayrón Toro, \textit{Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico}, 183.

\textsuperscript{375} Albizu Campos based his arguments on the provisions of Title VII, article 43 of the \textit{Carta Autonómica} of 1897 which guaranteed the veto power of the Puerto Rican parliament over decisions reached by the Cortes of the Kingdom where over a dozen Puerto Rican delegates sat with both voice and vote. Article 2 declared that the “present constitution shall not be amended except by virtue of a special law and upon petition of the insular parliament.” Since the military disbanded the Insular Parliament, and there were no Puerto Rican delegates present to sign the Treaty of Paris of December 10, the passing of sovereignty over Puerto Rico to the United States, the \textit{Nacionalistas} argued, was a violation of the legal relationship between Spain and Puerto Rico and thus illegal. The discussion on this subject continued well into the 1940s and reached the U.S. Congress. See House Committee on Public Lands, Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Possessions, \textit{A Bill to Amend the Organic Act of Puerto Rico, Election of Governor: Hearings on H.R. 3309}, 80\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 1 sess., (Amherst, University of Massachusetts: Microform Collection), 19 May 1947, 15-16,19. (Hereafter, \textit{H.R 3309}). To read the document in its entirety see Antonio Fernós López-Cepero, \textit{Documentos Históricos-constitucionales de Puerto Rico}, 19-37.
H. Gore. During Gore’s short term there were no less than eighty-five worker strikes and labor conflicts, and a bomb was found in the governor’s summer residence in Jájome. The Coalición, which had won the elections of 1932, threw its support behind the governor who sought to quench labor protests using the Insular Police. The Liberales and most of the press openly challenged and ridiculed the incompetent governor. The Coalición’s support of the governor, who defended anti-labor initiatives, started to create a schism between workers and the Socialist Party. Within this context, Albizu Campos, however briefly, gained support among workers. His harsh and well deserved attacks against absentee corporations, the Federación Libre de Trabajadores (which he accused of betraying the workers), and against the Insular government, gained him the attention of the sugar cane workers. In 1934 a general strike of sugar cane workers in Puerto Rico allied this labor sector (for the very first time) with the Nacionalistas and effectively ended the era of political stability in the Island. The workers requested the assistance

376 Gore had contributed $10,000 to FDR’s campaign and placed his three newspapers at the disposition of the president. He did not have any real experience that prepared him to govern the Island. He thought of Puerto Rico as Florida’s insular junior partner unaware that their economies were not complimentary but in competition with each other. His lack of understanding of Puerto Rico’s political arrangement led him to make a series of early mistakes while his disregard for the islanders’ idiosyncrasies soon gained him many enemies. See Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 68-109; and Luis M. Díaz Soler, Puerto Rico, sus luchas por alcanzar estabilidad económica, definición política y afirmación cultural. 1898-1996 (Isabela, P.R., 2000), 210-211.

377 In 1937 Esteban Bird calculated the yearly wages of cane cutters in Puerto Rico and their average family. He concluded that the cane cutter dedicated 94% of his income to food. At this rate the daily budget for food per family member was 12 cents. This was only 4 cents more than the daily food expense for feeding a hog in the United States. See Ayala, American Sugar Kingdom, 159-161, 164-65, 239, citing, Esteban Bird, The Sugar Industry in Relation to the Social Economic System of Puerto Rico. In 1930, 400,000 or 25% of the population lived in lands dedicated to sugar cane production which were 13.3% of the total land. That translated into sugar cane taking 50% of the
of Albizu Campos, who negotiated on their behalf. However, shortly after the strike was resolved, Albizu Campos lost their support. Fixated in obtaining the Island’s independence, the Nacionalistas had not developed a labor ideology that could win them the loyalty of the working classes permanently.\(^{378}\)

Aware of Gore’s inability to govern the Island and the endless cycle of strikes FDR feared that Puerto Rico was on the brink of anarchy. Persuaded by Muñoz Marín’s personal plea, he chose retired general Blanton Winship to replace Gore.\(^{379}\) Winship assumed this role on February 5, 1934, and brought Elisha Francis Riggs with him to serve as chief of the Insular Police. Riggs had served in Nicaragua where he helped Anastasio Somoza with the organization of his police and paramilitary apparatus. Under Winship, the militarization of the Insular Police acquired special relevance especially after 1935. The police was issued machine guns and riot control gear and their training

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\(^{378}\) The Nacionalistas were “neither anticapitalists nor prosocialist.” The Party made no demands for reorganization of the economic structure beyond the transfer of ownership of the means of productions to Puerto Rican capitalists. See Dietz, *Economic History*, 161-62; and Díaz Soler, *Puerto Rico, sus luchas por alcanzar estabilidad económica, definición política y afirmación cultural*, 214-15.

\(^{379}\) Muñoz Marín had been the most vociferous opponent of Gore, even publishing an article in *La Democracia* entitled, “Governor Gore You are a Damn Liar”, on September 6, 1933. The article was in response to Gore’s denial to FDR that he had requested for undated letters of resignation from all appointees to important government positions. Gore called the story a “Liberales fairy tale.” Gore’s removal was attributed to Muñoz Marín’s efforts by the local press. In effect, a local journalist wrote: “He has overthrown his first governor!” and over 50,000 people received him in San Juan when he returned from Washington on January 21, 1934 coinciding with the news of Gore’s replacement. Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution*, 107-08, 115; and Mathews, *La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato*, 111-13.
was intensified under Winship’s personal supervision.\(^3\) One of the darkest chapters in Puerto Rican history was about to be written.

Labor conflicts and the Nationalist challenge notwithstanding, there was little evidence to indicate that political violence in the Island would increase sharply. FDR’s administration had taken some steps to relieve the political pressure in Puerto Rico. Besides removing the publicly ridiculed Gore, FDR changed the administrative arrangement of the Island. On March, 1934, the president signed Executive Order 6.726, which transferred supervision of Puerto Rican affairs from the War Department to the Department of the Interior headed by Indian rights’ advocate Harold Ickes.\(^4\) Within the Department of the Interior the newly created Division of Territories and Island Possessions (DTIP) took over the role of the Bureau of Insular Affairs (BIA). The DTIP was itself entrusted to Ernest Gruening, a long-time friend of Muñoz Marín.\(^5\)

\(^3\) By 1937 special training for the Insular Police was given by the Chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Puerto Rico, Edgar K. Thompson and agent Myron E. Gurnes. Machine gun marksmanship, firing with tracer bullets and from a cover position were among the subjects taught at Fort Buchanan by the FBI agents. See, Ojeda Reyes, *Vito Marcantoni y Puerto Rico*, 76-78. And Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution*, 120.

\(^4\) The BIA was completely abolished by the Reorganization Plan No. II in July 1, 1939 and replaced by the Division of Territories and Island Possessions of the Department of the Interior which operated between 1939 and 1950. It was later known as the Office of Territories and still later the Office of Territorial Affairs. See “Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior” [National Archives and Records Administration, Center for Electronic Records]; accessed June 6 2009; available from http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/350.htm; and Estades Font, *La Presencia Militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico*, 120-23.

War Department officials opposed the transfer which they blamed on special interests while defending the department’s record as Puerto Rico’s fair champion. The transfer, however, went into effect on May 22, 1935. Removing the last vestige of military rule over the Island, however, was a symbolic gesture that appeased politicians but had little value for the vast majority who were more concerned with feeding, clothing and housing their families. This is not to say that FDR’s administration was oblivious to the economic hardships troubling the Island and fueling political unrest.

In 1933, to combat the effects of the Great Depression in the continental U.S. the Federal Emergency Relief Administration came to exist by virtue of the Federal Emergency Relief Act. Initially, the program was extended to Puerto Rico in what came to be known as the Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration (PRERA). Though the director of the PRERA immediately set to work, his efforts were hindered by Gore and the Coalicionistas who sought to control the institution for political ends. On May 28, 384

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383 An official from the War Department declared: “This transfer has long been agitated by special interests bent upon commercial and political exploitation of Porto Rico. The sinister machine of the sugar lobby against Porto Rico has long been strongly resisted by the Secretary of War and the BIA. The great demons of the politicians for Porto Rican patronage have also been resisted. It was over their protests [the administrators of the BIA] that the Harding administration paid a political debt by appointing a Missouri politician [E. Montgomery Reilly- who was actually from Texas] as governor of Porto Rico. It was over their protest that the present administration paid a political debt by appointing a Floridian [Robert H. Gore].” C.I.H.P.C., Caja 30 Cartapacio 10 Documento 4, A, Clip from The Washington Herald, June 7, 1934.

384 The Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration (PRERA) began its work in the Island in 1933 with the main objective of reducing unemployment. Harry Hopkins named James R. Bourne as the agency’s director. Though Bourne and his wife quickly set to work and to distribute aid, their projects were not on a big scale. Furthermore, since they hired many people associated with the Liberals, Coalition leaders accused
1935, an executive order created another agency to tackle the deep-rooted economic problems in the Island. The new office, the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (PRRA), was directed by a prominent Puerto Rican, Carlos Chardón. It is worth noticing that in the case of Puerto Rico, “relief” was substituted for “reconstruction”. The word selection underlined the extreme conditions vexing the Island. The mission of the PRRA was ambitious, and its focus on reducing unemployment and poverty provided the chance to also remove causes of unrest. The them of using federal funding to strengthen the Liberales. See Mathews, _La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato_, 130-33, 150.

385 “It was to meet these conditions --- to relieve unemployment ---- to remove as far as possible the causes of agricultural depression — to create new sources of wealth and income — to establish new standards of living— that there was created by Executive Order on May 28, 1935, the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (P.R.R.A.), as the agency through which sight be expended such Federal work relief and emergency funds as were available for Puerto Rico, towards the attainment of the above objectives.” The objectives of the program were defined by the President in a letter dated August 1, 1935: “The Administration's program intends not merely immediate relief but permanent reconstruction for the Island. To this end the projects in contemplation will see to insure every person on the Island a position of reasonable independence and security. The economy of the Island is, of course, agricultural and the solution of its problems must be in terms of agricultural rehabilitation. It will therefore be sought to secure for each citizen a place on the land which will give him a fair share in the fruits of his own labor and a position of independence and security. This will require the establishment of many persons on small farming units. It will also require that these small farmers be insured adequate processing and distributing facilities at reasonable cost. Diversification of agricultural production will be sought by the program in order that the Island may approach a self-sustaining status. Cheap and available electric power, good roads, reforestation and adequate housing are also essential to the Administration's program...I am anxious that the Government of the United States shall discharge fully its responsibilities to the Puerto Rican people....” Immediately after the Executive Order was signed, by virtue of which the P.R.R.A. was created, the offices of the agency were established and in December 1935 the whole reconstruction administration program was already functioning. See, “Information Research Section, Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, December, 1938” [National Archives and Records Administration, Center for Electronic Records]; accessed 19 March 2009; available from http://newdeal.feri.org/texts/578.htm.
socio-economic reconstruction plan for Puerto Rico was designed by Carlos Chardón, Rafael Menéndez Ramos and Rafael Fernández García, but it had much influence from Muñoz Marín and some even referred to it as Plan Muñoz. Yet, the PRRA’s offices were not fully staffed until the end of the year. Meanwhile, political unrest continued to escalate.

On July 4, 1935, the Nacionalistas initiated a bombing campaign by detonating bombs in the PRRA’s office in San Juan and several other government buildings. A few weeks later a bomb went off at the U.S. Court Building in Puerta de Tierra followed by the bombing of a police station. The bombings continued throughout the summer, but so far there had been no casualties. Meanwhile, ever more radical, Albizu Campos carried on with his island-wide tour. On October 24, 1935, the Insular Police detained Nacionalistas armed with revolvers near the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras where students were protesting against Albizu Campos, who had called the male and female students “effeminate” and “prostitutes” respectively for failing to be at the vanguard of the fight for the Island’s independence. On their way to the police station a gunfight between the Nacionalistas and the police left four Nacionalistas and a policeman dead and forty wounded. There had been outbursts of political violence in the

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previous years, but nothing came close to the outright war that had just started between the *Nacionalistas* and the Insular Police.\(^{389}\)

During the nationalists’ funeral, on December 8 of the same year the Nationalist Party declared the formation of the *Ejército Libertador*, and warned that for every dead nationalist an American would be killed.\(^{390}\) In fact, Albizu Campos declared that the whole party was now a liberating army and reminded his followers of the “Sacred Oath” they had taken to defend the fatherland.\(^{391}\) The next month, the Nationalist Party ordered the general drafting into the military of all nationalists over eighteen years old as an immediate necessity for “national security”. Albizu Campos issued a party resolution “to

\(^{389}\) There had been outburst of violence before but not like these acts. On April 12, 1932, Albizu Campos and some 800 followers stormed the Puerto Rican legislature after being informed that the single star with five stripes flag designed by Puerto Rican exiles in New York in 1895, had been made the official flag of the Island by the Insular Legislature. In the scuffle trying to reach the legislative chambers the rail of the stairs collapsed and a *Nacionalista* died. Santiago Iglesias blamed the police for being too lenient and attributed their leniency to the fact that the *Nacionalistas* were from middle and upper classes, had they been from the working class, Santiago Iglesias commented, “all their heads would have been cracked.” Albizu Campos threatened the Insular Chief of Police with death if a single nationalist died during the 1932 elections. See Negroni, *Historia militar de Puerto Rico*, 450-54; Mathews, *La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato*, 248-49; Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, 182; and Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution*, 89-80.


\(^{391}\) Albizu demanded that party members took an “Oath of Honor” in which they swore to defend the Nationalist’s ideal with their lives and belongings if necessary and to give unquestioning loyalty to “the leader”. See Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution*, 87, citing Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño*, 395.
declare military service compulsory for all members of the party” who would join the nationalist paramilitary force, Cadetes de la República, trained by Albizu Campos and José Enamorado Cuesta since 1932.392

What started as political unrest had turned into violence, and the situation appeared the control of the Insular Police, in fact threatening to become a military problem. Albizu Campos had decided to defy U.S. sovereignty by force which made the creation of paramilitary units necessary. The Cadetes de la República and the Ejército Libertador, however, were not much of a military challenge. In fact, it seems that the role they would eventually play in Puerto Rican politics stemmed from Albizu Campos’ recognition of the political value of the military in the Island’s society. It is apparent that Albizu Campos understood the symbolic power of military service and the impact it had on the self perception of Puerto Ricans. After all, he was himself a WWI veteran and former U.S. Army officer.393 In order to fully exploit the symbolic power of the Nacionalistas’ paramilitary units, the Ejército Libertador had to be as conspicuous as possible. He thus decided to call publicly for the creation of the Ejército, to have the Cadetes wear uniforms, to organize them as a regular army, and to have them conduct

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392 Report on Monthly Summary of Subversive Activities, C.I.H.P.C. C.18, Ct. 4, Doc. 2 A. Enamorado Cuesta was the general military instructor in the Nationalist Party. He was a U.S. Army WWI veteran and served in the reserve with the rank of Captain until 1929. He briefly served in the Republican Army in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War. See FBI, Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico Vol. 4., 50.

393 In 1917, Albizu Campos interrupted his studies at Harvard to volunteer for service during the First World War. He was assigned to a Black regiment which trained in the southern U.S., which according to Gruening taught him “what it was to be a Negro, not only in the army, but in America. All his love for America turned to hate.” Maldonado, 139, citing Ernest Gruening Many Battles, the Autobiography of Ernest Gruening (New York: Liveright Publishers, 1973), 196-97.
military exercises and parades in broad daylight and in public spaces.\footnote{Albizu Campos emulated many of the policies and tactics of the Irish Sinn Fein, such as the oath to sacrifice life and property in order to achieve independence. He also copied from the Fascist and Nazi movements in Italy and Germany. The party’s organ “published Benito Mussolini’s ‘Ten Commandments of Fascist Youths’ which included “God and Fatherland” above all else; total surrender of the “body and soul” to the Leader”. The use of black shirts by the Cadetes and a black flag with a white cross were unmistakable symbols of the conservative and right –wing nature of Albizu Campo’s ideology. See Maldonado, \textit{Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution}, 118-19.} The paramilitary nationalist units’ main target was the Puerto Ricans’ sense of honor, duty, and manhood; in short Puerto Rican identity, which the Nacionalistas identified with the Island’s Hispanic legacy.

According to a U.S. Army report on subversive activity, which was monthly conducted by the intelligence section (G-2) of the 65\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Regiment, in late January, “units [of the Nationalist Party had] begun to drill in violation of Sections 7-8 Chapter 1 of the Federal Penal Code of 1910.”\footnote{Report on Monthly Summary of Subversive Activities, C.I.H.P.C. C.18, Ct. 4, Doc. 2 A.} The nationalist units, sometimes armed with machetes, chose to have their own military exercises (drills) across from the Puerto Rico National Guard (PRNG) Armories which apparently unsettled the commanders of such units.\footnote{“National Guard Major Samuel F. Howard, reports that there are 2 Nationalist companies, one armed with machetes and another with no visible weapons, holding drills in front of armories disturbing the National Guard exercises.” \textit{Report on Monthly Summary of Subversive Activities}, C.I.H.P.C. C.18, Ct. 4, Doc. 2 A.} That the Nacionalistas attempted to provoke and intimidate the PRNG was apparent. These incidents were also a clear attempt to contest the legitimacy of the Puerto Rico National Guard as a true national corps. Moreover, while the Nacionalistas’ drills sent the unequivocal message that they were preparing militarily, which was
probably intended to daunt the guardsmen, the fact that they did not carry weapons
precluded the Insular Police from stopping their drills, and so they were free to continue
harassing the PRNG units.

Meanwhile, despite Albizu Campos’ diatribe against students of the University of
Puerto Rico, his party was gaining a strong foothold in this institution. A Puerto Rican
captain in the 65th Infantry reported that he had gained the trust of a nationalist student
“who informed him that he is a captain in a Nationalist company, part of a battalion of
175 members in Río Piedras,” and that they “are raffling a submachine gun amongst them
to raise funds to buy more weapons.” The report shows two weaknesses inherent to
the Nacionalistas. First, evidently it was not such a hard task to infiltrate the
organization and to get their members to openly discuss their plans. Second, and more
importantly, the fact that they had to raffle weapons to obtain funds in order to secure
more weapons indicated the financial weakness of the movement though not of their
members. This second point is of the outmost importance because the Nacionalistas had
seen their movement grow during times of economic hardship. While pride and a sense
of having a mission may for a while content the unemployed and malnourished to the
point of even expressing fanatic support for a cause, in the long run, the leaders of such
movements have to provide for the wellbeing of their followers or see their ranks
dwindle. The Nacionalistas were not ready to fulfill that role, and it would cost them

397 “Captain Eduardo Andino UPR, has gained the confidence of a nationalist
student who informed him that he is a captain in a Nationalist company, part of a
battalion of 175 members in Río Piedras. They are raffling a submachine gun amongst
them to raise funds to buy more weapons.” Ibid.
dearly. While they could attract young middle and upper class Puerto Ricans, they did not have the same appeal among the masses.\textsuperscript{398}

According to Army intelligence, the \textit{Nacionalistas}, who boasted to have 10,000 members in the \textit{Ejército Libertador}, had plans to take over the Island.

The [nationalist] leaders are planning a coup to take place in the no distant future, during which all police stations and National Guard armories, except San Juan and Cayey where the 65\textsuperscript{th} is too strong, will be attacked simultaneously, to gain arms, ammo, and complete control of the island. The Nationalists have made a black list of persons to be killed.\textsuperscript{399}

The plan was sensible indeed. The National Guard, as a reserve component made of multiple units scattered throughout the Island, left its installations in charge of a skeleton crew when they were not conducting exercises. Moreover, even when the PRNG conducted monthly exercises, they did not train in unison which meant that at any given time there were dozens of targets which could be quickly overtaken. Once weaponry was secured from the PRNG armories, the planned assaults on police stations would have a better chance to succeed. Taking on the 65\textsuperscript{th}, which, as a U.S. Army regular unit, was

\textsuperscript{398} Santiago Iglesias accused the police for being to lenient with the \textit{Nacionalistas} and attributed their leniency to the Nationalists belonging to the middle and upper classes. After a nationalist riot in the Insular Legislature building, he stated that if they had been from the working class “all their heads would have been cracked.” See Maldonado, \textit{Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution}, 89-80.

\textsuperscript{399} \textit{Report on Monthly Summary of Subversive Activities}, C.I.H.P.C. C.18, Ct. 4, Doc. 2 A. The 10,000 figure was taken from Albizu Campos’ speeches. The FBI estimated that at the time the Nationalist strength was close to 2,000 members. See \textit{FBI, Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico} Vol. 4., 49.
well-trained and armed, and manned to operational levels, was the Nacionalistas’ biggest challenge. And, apparently, they had no plans to do so.

While uniformed cadets openly challenged the colonial authorities and the PRNG, other Nationalist elements were targeting the Insular Police and Puerto Rican and Continental government officials. Going after individual policemen became a favorite tactic employed by the Nacionalistas. This trend continued until October 1936 when the Nacionalistas set their sights on political leaders from the other parties and high value targets from the colonial administration. On February 23, 1936, Nationalists Hiram Rosado and Elias Beauchamp killed the chief of the Insular Police, Colonel Riggs, and were in turn executed while in police custody. The Intelligence Section of the 65th reported that roughly 8,000 people attended the funeral of the Nacionalistas held the very next day in Santurce. Albizu Campos, who had sworn to avenge the death of the four nationalists killed by the Insular Police the previous October 24, 1935 near the University of Puerto Rico, addressed the crowd gathered at the cemetery late in the afternoon. He declared that the death of the young nationalists had not been in vain since “for every nationalist killed we gain 100 adherents.” The intelligence section agreed in principle with Albizu Campos. The report stated that it was “evident that the public sentiment is running high against the Insular Police for the shooting of the nationalists after they had

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400 In January, a Nationalist wounded the chief police and another policeman in the mountain town of Utuado. On February 23, 1936, the same day the Chief of the Insular Police Riggs was assassinated, the Chief of Police in Utuado was once again wounded by nationalists. Targeting individual policemen became a favorite tactic employed by the Nacionalistas. This trend continued until October of the same when the Nacionalistas started to also target political leaders from the other parties. See Negroni, Historia militar de Puerto Rico, 450-54. And Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 248-49.
been arrested.”  

Emboldened by the growing support shown to the Nacionalistas Albizu Campos publicly celebrated the assassination:

Colonel Riggs, a tyrant, has fallen. Colonel Riggs ordered the murder of our comrades in Río Piedras last October… On the occasion of their funeral a solemn promise was made, Beauchamp and Rosado have made good their promise. They are dead but they have done their duty.  

He went further and implicated the governor and his superiors with the assassinations. “General Winship is following higher authorities attempting to kill any nationalist sentiment which may be developing in the people.” Local leaders were not exempt from Albizu Campos’ threats. He accused the whole directive of the Liberal Party- the other party seeking Independence- the local press, and the functionaries of the PRRA of complicity with Winship and Riggs. Ironically, the Liberales, just like the local press, had been extremely sympathetic and accommodating towards Albizu Campos and very supportive of the Nationalists. The Liberal leadership went as far ascondemning the political targeting of Nationalist leaders. The Liberals, especially Muñoz

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401 Report on Monthly Summary of Subversive Activities, C.I.H.P.C. C.18, Ct. 4, Doc. 2 A.  
402 Ibid.  
403 Ibid.  
404 A groups of nationalists wounded Iglesias Pantín in Mayagüez during a public rally in Mayagüez on October 25, 1936. The next week a nationalist mob attacked a political meeting held by the Liberales apparently because the latter were using the Puerto Rican flag. Domingo Saltari was eventually arrested for the Mayaguez’s incident and sentenced to ten years in prison. See Negroni, Historia militar de Puerto Rico, 450-54. And Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 248-49.  
405 Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 249.
Marín, were in fact the lone effective opposition to Winship. Nonetheless, Albizu Campos apparently considered that the existence of a party seeking independence by peaceful means, and of an agency bent on alleviating the economic situation in the Island (PRRA), would rob him of potential adherents and momentum.

The 65th intelligence section warned that: “Colonel Riggs was very popular but indignation against his assassination has been overshadowed by strong popular indignation against the police for what is considered the murder of the young assassins by them.” The report concluded by pointing out the weaknesses of the Nacionalistas but warning “that if this party movement is unchecked there will be others assassinations attempted.” Furthermore, the intelligence section saw “no danger of general uprising but these young men and their organized companies encouraged and abetted by [Albizu] Campos may attempt such coup against police and National Guard armories.” The officers of the 65th, a mostly Puerto Rican unit tracing its lineage to 1899, evidently believed they would enjoy the support of the population and emerge victorious from a faceoff with the Nacionalistas. The report also pointed out one of the roots of

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406 Report on Monthly Summary of Subversive Activities, C.I.H.P.C. C.18, Ct. 4, Doc. 2 A. Colonel Riggs may have very well paid for the stubbornness of Winship. Riggs had tried to befriend Puerto Rican leaders including Albizu Campos. He was Catholic, spoke Spanish fluently and was described by Gruening as being “sincerely interested in Puerto Rico’s needs and aspirations.” Muñoz Marín described him as a “humanitarian and liberal person”. See Maldonado, Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution, 139, citing, Gruening, Many Battles, 197; and Luis Muñoz Marín, Memorias: Autobiografía Pública (1898-1940) Vol. I (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 1982), 147.

407 Report on Monthly Summary of Subversive Activities, C.I.H.P.C. C.18, Ct. 4, Doc. 2 A.
nationalists’ support, police brutality. The warning fell on deaf ears, and violence would only continue to escalate.

The metropolis and colonial authorities responded to the Nationalist challenge by misusing the legal system to persecute the Nationalist leaders and by threatening the Island with independence. The Federal Bureau of Investigation joined the surveillance of the Nacionalistas. U.S. Marshalls and Insular Police carried out raids in March and found military equipment, weapons and a bomb in the possession of the Nationalists.408

On March 5, 1936, Albizu Campos and other seven Nationalist leaders were arrested and charged with sedition and conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States.409 The next month, a Federal Grand Jury submitted accusations against Albizu Campos and other leaders of the party.410 Local newspapers and politicians, as well as the American Civil Liberties Union were against trying the Nationalist leader for sedition instead of murder or conspiracy to commit murder. Albizu Campos’ defense argued that it was preposterous to try him for sedition when the U.S. Congress was in the process of preparing an independence bill for the Island.411 The metropolis, however, had had

408 Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 249.

409 Ibid., 250.

410 The other defendants were Juan A. Corretjer, secretary of the Partido Nacionalista, Luis F. Velázquez, Clemente Soto Vélez, Erasmo Velázquez, Julio H. Velázquez, Rafael Ortiz Pacheco (who would later escape to the Dominican Republic), Juan Gallardo Santiago, and Pablo Rosado Ortiz. See Maldonado, Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution, 147-48.

411 On June 6 1937, Albizu Campos was moved from Puerto Rico to Atlanta and the following day Nacionalistas tried to assassinate federal judge Robert A. Cooper, who sentenced Albizu and the party's leadership to prison terms. See FBI, Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico Vol. 4., 42; and Maldonado, Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution, 148.
enough of the Nacionalistas and sought to strengthen federal authority in the Island by trying and convicting Albizu Campos in a federal court. A predominantly Puerto Rican jury did not convict the defendants. Albizu Campos’s standing among Puerto Ricans had reached its zenith. On July 31, a second trial, with a jury composed of ten Continentals and two Puerto Ricans, concluded with a guilty verdict. Albizu Campos and Luis Velazquez were sentenced to seven years in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary.

A month after Riggs assassination, Senator Millard Tydings, a Democrat from Maryland, introduced a bill to grant independence to Puerto Rico. Tydings presided over the Senate branch of the Committee of Territories and Insular Affairs in the U.S Congress and, as a close friend of Colonel Riggs, was enraged by his assassination. If Riggs’ assassination was not enough to move Tydings to introduce a punitive independence bill for Puerto Rico, his racial beliefs undoubtedly drove him to propose such a measure. As the co-author of the Tydings-McDuffie bill of 1934 to grant independence to the Philippines, he had declared that the Filipinos were a “burden for the federal budget and a menace to the racial composition of the U.S.”

According to the bill introduced by Tydings, Puerto Rico would obtain its independence in four years at the end of which full

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412 The jury was selected to ensure a conviction. The statement of a member of that second jury, Elmer Ellsworth, a Continental American residing in the Island who would join the Populares and be elected as senator in 1940 denounced the unfairness of the trial. He stated: “I cannot refrain from saying that my associates on the jury seemed to be motivated by strong, if not violent, prejudice against the Nationalists and were prepared to convict them, regardless of the evidence. Ten of the jurors were American residents in Puerto Rico and the two Puerto Ricans were closely associated with American business interests. It was evident from the composition of the jury that the Nationalists did not and could not get a fair trial.” Elmer Ellsworth to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 17 October, 1936, in ACLU, vo. 2.653.

413 Rosario Natal, Luis Muñoz Marín y la independencia, 80.
economic tariffs would be established between the two countries. Moreover, if Puerto Rico voted for independence, all federal aid would cease immediately, and the transitional government would assume responsibility for the defense of the Island. As the Island’s economic relief and reconstruction had come to rely solely on the federal monies channeled through the PRRA, the passing of such bill meant economic ruin for Puerto Rico.

President Roosevelt, Secretary of the Interior Ickes, and Secretary of the Division of Territories Gruening gave lip service to the Tydings bill, although, in fact, they did not considered granting independence to the Island as a real option. The president secretly gave his support to the Tydings bill since the harsh measures that were included in it guaranteed that it would be rejected, not only by most Puerto Rican politicians but by the masses, resulting in a de facto popular vote to preserve the colony intact. This strategy was designed to enhance the image of the United States in Latin America and to shield FDR’s administration from accusations of imperialism. In that regard, Secretary Ickes declared to the New York Times that the administration would give sympathetic considerations to any “political demand which is responsibly backed by a majority of the people of Puerto Rico.” In other words, the responsibility for moving towards independence was put, falsely, on the Puerto Ricans. Knowing that the bill would not pass in Congress, and that if for some reason it did, it would be rejected by the Puerto


Ricans, Ickes reasoned that introducing the bill in Congress would have a quieting effect among separatist elements in Puerto Rico.\footnote{Rosario Natal, \textit{Luis Muñoz Marín y la independencia}, 79.}

Gruening, who had been a close friend of Muñoz Marín, felt even more aggravated by Muñoz Marín’s reluctance to condemned Riggs’ assassination than by the act itself. In fact he believed Muñoz Marín had stabbed him in the back by refusing to publicly condemn Riggs’ assassination. Muñoz Marín, on the other hand, thought that Gruening was in essence asking him to blame all Puerto Ricans for the assassination while keeping quiet in the matter of Rosado and Beauchamp’s execution while in police custody. When Muñoz Marín finally condemned the assassination of Riggs and Beauchamp and Rosado’s execution, Gruening had already decided to wage war on Muñoz Marín and the \textit{Liberales}.\footnote{Maldonado, \textit{Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution}, 140-46.} A former opponent of Winship, Gruening quickly turn into his ally. Gruening hit where it hurt Muñoz Marín the most, with a purge of Liberal elements from the PRRA.\footnote{Ibid., 146.} According to a Continental PRRA employee, the purge created a sense of fear and killed the agency’s dynamism. Furthermore, with Muñoz Marín out of political favor the PRRA became ineffective. After all, to Puerto Ricans, even to his detractors, “Muñoz was the PRRA.”\footnote{Working for the PRRA Planning Division, Hanson and team of planners prepared a report of the Tydings Bill’s effect on the Island which they describe as “alternating [sic] periods of chaos and dictatorship” after a U.S. withdrawal. Groening ordered him to collect and burn all copies. Carlos Chardon and Rafael Fernández García resigned from the PRRA and Rafael Menéndez Ramos left government altogether. José Padín, the education commissioner, who brought his first political defeat to Governor Gore- who had wanted him sacked for not being sufficiently pro-American, and who as}
The Tydings Bill had the desired outcome and effectively killed the independence spirit among many Liberal leaders.\textsuperscript{420} Muñoz Marín thought that the intention of Tydings was to “obtain from the people of Puerto Rico under duress a mandate for a continuation of the colonial system.”\textsuperscript{421} The bill divided the Liberal Party by causing a schism between Muñoz Marín and Barceló. Muñoz Marín believed that participating in the elections of November 1936 would be fatal for the Liberales who would lose the elections because they would be identified with an independence that meant economic ruin. He reasoned that abstaining from the elections of 1936 would give the Liberales time to regroup and to secure economic guarantees that would make independence viable and thus more attractive to Puerto Ricans. His plan then, was to participate in the elections of 1940 from a position of strength.\textsuperscript{422} Barceló, however, did not share Muñoz Marín’ convictions and led the party during the campaign for the November elections. Muñoz Marín, though he himself did not run for office, campaigned strenuously for the interim governor had calmed the students protests against the Tydings Bill, also resigned. Maldonado, \textit{Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution}, 140-46 146-47, 150, citing Earl Parker Hanson, \textit{Transformation: the Story of Modern Puerto Rico} (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1955), 162, 168.

\textsuperscript{420} The Liberals were not the only political faction affected by the Tydings Bill. The Republican leader Martínez Nadal was so offended by the terms of the bill that if passed, he vowed to campaign for independence while the socialists demanded that the statehood option ought to be included. The Republicanos finally agreed on demanding statehood but moving to independence if their demands were ignored by Congress. See Bayrón Toro, Bayrón Toro, \textit{Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico}, 183-85; and Bolívar Pagán, \textit{Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños (1898-1956)} Tomo I (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 1972), 78,82; and Maldonado, \textit{Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution}, 144-45.

\textsuperscript{421} Rosario Natal, \textit{Luís Muñoz Marín y la independencia}, 88-89.

\textsuperscript{422} Ibid., 90-91.
Liberales. Barceló, showing how disconnected he was from the socio-economic maladies afflicting the Island’s population, declared that he would welcome independence “even if we starve to death.” Such declarations did little to convince the already-starving peasantry and urban workers to vote for the Liberales.

Soon after the defeat of the Liberales in the general elections of 1936, Barceló issued an ultimatum to Muñoz Marín urging him either to follow the party’s policies or to form his own party. After failed attempts at reconciliation, on March 31, 1937, Muñoz Marín and his followers were expelled from the Liberal Party. Muñoz Marín and close to 40% of the former Liberales founded the Popular Democratic Party (Partido Popular Democrático, PPD) on July 22, 1938. An object of derision after its creation, the PPD would become an important force in Puerto Rican history. Before Muñoz Marín and the Populares emerged as the dominant force in Puerto Rican politics, relations between the Island and the U.S., which had suffered tremendously due to the events of 1936, would deteriorate even further.

Incarcerating Albizu Campos did little to silence the Nationalists. Political violence in fact increased after his capture. On October 25, 1936, a group of nationalists

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423 See Bolívar Pagán, Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños (1898-1956), 83-87; Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 306-308; and Maldonado, Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution, 152-53.

424 Under the initiative of socialist senator Bolivar Pagán, Puerto Rico ran its first elections with universal suffrage. The only requirements to cast a vote during this election were to be at least twenty-one years of age and be legally registered. Voting was moved to closed colleges to guarantee secret ballots. Of 764,602 voters 559,500 cast their votes. The Liberales obtain 252,467 votes electing five senators, twelve representatives and nineteen municipalities and controlling a single senatorial district. The Coalición obtained 296,988 votes; 152,739 and 144,249 votes cast for Unión Republicana and the Socialistas respectively. The Coalición was able to control six senatorial districts, elect fourteen senators, twenty-seven representatives and fifty-eight municipalities. Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 185-86.
wounded the Socialist leader Iglesias Pantín, during a rally in Mayagüez. In November, a nationalist mob attacked a political meeting held by the *Liberales* because the latter were using the Puerto Rican flag. Such acts, and the introduction of the Tydings Bill, had started to dissipate popular sympathy for the *Nacionalistas*, and many Nationalists leaders began to leave the party disgusted with the violent campaign. These events, however, paled in comparison to the colonial response to the nationalist challenge.

On March 21, 1937 the Insular Police opened fire on a group of unarmed *Nacionalistas* parading in the southern town of Ponce. Originally the Nationalists had been denied permission to hold the parade. The Mayor of Ponce José Tormos Diego later approved the event as a “civic parade” with the Nationalists’ promise that the event would not have a military character. The new chief of the Insular Police, Colonel Enrique Orbeta, rushed to Ponce under Winship’s orders and convinced the mayor to revoke the permit. Orbeta and Tormos notified the Nationalists and warned them not to proceed with the march. Roughly eighty cadets in black shirts followed by the “Daughters of the Republic” and the “Nationalists Nurses” prepared to march. Police Captain Guillermo Soldevilla, leading a contingent of more than 150 policemen armed with rifles carbines and submachine guns, ordered the Nationalist to stop as they initiated the march. A single shot was heard followed by a police barrage. When the shooting was over seventeen Nationalists and spectators had been killed and roughly 100 lay wounded. Two policemen also died from bullet wounds.\(^{425}\) The slaughter of the unarmed nationalists, which came to be known as the Ponce Massacre, led to widespread

\(^{425}\) See, Manuel E. Moraza Ortiz, *La masacre de Ponce* (Hato Rey, P.R.: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas, 2001), 81-83; and Negroni, *Historia militar de Puerto Rico*, 450-54.
discontent if not open hostility towards the police and Governor Winship. The massacre did little to weaken the Nacionalistas. In fact it won them more sympathizers. *El Mundo* reported that over 15,000 people attended the funeral in Ponce and roughly 5,000 in Mayagüez.\(^{426}\) Even the American Civil Liberties Union concluded that the event had been a massacre.\(^ {427}\)

Local newspapers published page-size pictures of the massacre on a daily basis. *El Imparcial* offered a $25 prize to the person making the best analysis of the shooting and providing “the best evidence of the first shot.”\(^ {428}\) The 65\(^{th}\) Intelligence Section complained that *El Imparcial* “will not publish any theories blaming the nationalists.”\(^ {429}\) Such theories may have been hard to find. Even members of the National Guard were openly critical of the Insular Police. Asked by a reporter, Lieutenant Colonel Miguel A. Muñoz (PRNG) criticized police tactics such as encircling the crowd and failing to provide an avenue of escape to the nationalists. In what eventually emerged as the most accepted explanation, he stated that the wounded and dead policemen (the prosecution’s

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\(^{426}\) Ojeda Reyes, *Vito Marcantonio y Puerto Rico*, 73.

\(^{427}\) Arthur Garfield Hays conducted the investigation which reached that conclusion. The ACLU believed that the police had panicked resulting in a “police riot” and the subsequent massacre. The Insular Police insisted that the first shot had been fired from the Nationalist Party’s headquarters and later stated that a Nationalists who was not part of parade fired the first shot killing a policeman. Ojeda Reyes, *Vito Marcantonio y Puerto Rico*, 74.


\(^{429}\) Ibid.
evidence that the nationalists initiated the shooting), had probably been hit by friendly fire. Colonel Muñoz was not an anti-metropolis pundit. In fact, he had served the colonial administration in several positions including that of Assistant Attorney General. There was no evidence at all to put into question the loyalty of this former commander of the American Legion in Puerto Rico and vice-commander of the National American Legion. Nonetheless, the 65th intelligence officers stated that his analysis of the Ponce Massacre was “unbecoming of an officer of the guard” and believed that “he [would] be forced to resign” [presumably by Winship].

Governor Winship was so determined to eliminate the nationalist threat that he would not tolerate the mildest dissent or opposition.

Under Winship, the decapitation of the Nationalist leadership and the silencing of the opposition continued unabated. During the next April 16, the anniversary of the birth of Puerto Rican politician and poet Jose de Diego, who tirelessly fought for independence, the atmosphere was undeniably tense. For the last few years the Nacionalistas had been holding a mass and a rally by de Diego’s tomb. Winship was so decided to deny the Nacionalistas any opportunity to celebrate de Diego’s birthday that

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430 Currently serving as executive officer (XO) of the 295 Regiment (PRNG), Lieutenant Colonel Miguel A. Muñoz served as a captain in Camp Las Casas during the WWI, as commander of the “Porto Rico American Legion” and vice-commander of the National American Legion. He graduated from Cornell Law in 1913 and became the personal secretary of Governor Yager in 1914. During his legal career he was Assistant Attorney General, judge of the district court of San Juan, acting prosecuting attorney of the supreme court of Puerto Rico, and president of the Public Service Commission. “He was also a militant politician member of the Liberal Party and was removed from his last post by the Coalitionists in the senate.” See Ibid.

431 On January 10, 1938, Julio Pinto Gandía and other seven Nationalist leaders are sentenced to five years in prison.
he put regular army units and the National Guard on alert. Across the Island, the Insular Police impeded groups larger than two persons from entering the cemeteries to present flowers to the “Puerto Rican patriots.”

The Nacionalistas, however, promptly wasted any sympathy obtained after the Ponce Massacre by perpetrating a series of attacks on judges and even the governor. On July 25, 1938 Governor Winship sponsored the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the U.S. military invasion of Puerto Rico. This yearly celebration was usually held in San Juan or Guánica- the place of the original U.S. landings. In what could only be seen as a show of force and calculated provocation, Winship decided to hold the celebration in Ponce, roughly a year after the massacre of the unarmed nationalists. More than 50,000 people congregated to watch the parade and to listen to Winship’s speech. A battalion of the 65th Infantry, led by Colonel, Luis A. Irizarry, a well-known and respected Puerto Rican officer, was marching before Winship and the parade’s guests of honor when a nationalist commando with at least five shooters opened fire. Ángel Esteban Antongiorgi fired more than ten shots directly at Winship, who remained undisturbed as the rest of his entourage ducked for cover. A detective shot and killed Antongiorgi. Irizarry died in the shooting which also left thirty-two wounded. Once order was reestablished, Winship delivered his speech as planned. Colonel Irizarry’s death provoked a wave of public outrage against the Nationalist Party. On September 28, several nationalists were convicted in connection with the attempt against Winship further debilitating the party’s

432 Ojeda Reyes, Vito Marcantonio y Puerto Rico, 74.

leadership. The fallout of the shooting was even more troublesome. Any chances of convincing FDR to remove Winship, a priority for Secretary Ickes and whom Muñoz Marín had continued to attack from La Democracia, dissipated after the attack.

Police brutality had gained the Nacionalistas much support among the Island’s population. However, they apparently did not understand that the islanders’ sympathy was also a repudiation of violence. The events of July 1938 eroded the support they had amassed. The press, criollo and Continental politicians were quick to point out that the blood spilled that day was Puerto Rican blood, and that fact undermined the nationalists. Even the remaining official leadership of the Nationalist Party sought to distance itself from the incident. Rafael Medina Ramírez, speaker of the Nationalist Party in the Island, condemned “anarchical” acts even if planned with “good faith” and “conducted patriotically and heroically” for they only provide an excuse to the colonial administration to implement the “most barbaric of official terrorisms.”

The nationalist leaders’ statements evidenced the breaking of communications between the political arm of the party and its armed wing, and a growing schism between Albizu Campos (who condoned any violent act against Continental Americans and their “allies”) and moderate

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434 The following Nacionalistas were convicted: Tomás López de Victoria, Casimiro Berenguer, Elífas Escobar, Santiago González, Vicente Morciglio, Leocadio López, Juan Pietri, Guillermo Larrogaiti, Prudencio Segarra.


elements in the Nationalist Party. As the party’s leadership crumbled, the ranks of the nationalists petered out. Even more disheartening for the Nacionalista leaders was that whenever opportunities arose to obtain a job, even if it meant working for the colonial administration or for the metropolis armed forces, party members quickly applied for such jobs.437

Shortly after the failed attempt to assassinate Winship, political violence subsided. Winship’s persecution of the Nacionalistas, which succeeded in incarcerating the most militant wing of the party, had much to do with decreasing violence. Many remaining militants went underground to avoid Winship’s hunt. Scores of nationalist leaders disenchanted with Albizu Campos’ radical tactics switched allegiance, mostly joining the Populares or the Independentista party. However, the main reason for the abating violence was the Nacionalistas failure to mobilize a considerable segment of the population, especially the urban and rural working classes, to continue engaging the colonial authorities.

The Nacionalistas’ failure to win the support of a sizeable portion of the population was also a rejection of their iconography and emphasis on Spanish traditions. After all, at the time, the majority of Puerto Ricans had been born under U.S. sovereignty, and those lucky enough to have been schooled had been exposed to a curriculum based

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437 “The 296th Infantry of the Puerto Rico National Guard is recruiting 34 enlisted men for a service company. 75 applicants were checked up last week of which 9 were found to be members of the Nationalist Party. These will not be accepted as members of the guard.” See Report to Chief National Guard Bureau, April 27 1937, Extract from 65th Infantry Report April 14 1937, Col. F.H. Lincoln, General Staff, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, C.I.H.P.C. Caja 19, cartapacio 2, Documento 11 H. Hereafter, El Imparcial de Puerto Rico: Diario Ilustrado, April 1 1937, Report to Chief National Guard Bureau, C.I.H.P.C. C. 19, Ct. 2, Doc. 11 V.
on the New England public school model. In other words, the nostalgic discovery of the “Hispanic” past was an alien concept to the Puerto Rican masses of the 1930s, except for the elites who still traced their lineage to the Peninsula. Moreover, for all means and purposes, the Nacionalista “rediscovery” of the Island’s Hispanic past was incongruent with the drive towards progress and a modern Puerto Rico. Both progress and modernization, and hints at industrialization, were at the core of the PRRA’s effort to improve Puerto Rico’s socio-economic condition. Many Continental and Puerto Rican politicians had accepted the PRRA’s plan as a solution for the Island’s maladies. The Nacionalistas could not compete with the metropolis’ material superiority which implied a vague promise of a better future. Hence, the combination of violent acts, the lack of an alternative path forward, the disconnection with the masses socio-economic realities, and the emphasis in Spanish tradition were as responsible for the Nacionalistas’ demise as it was political persecution.

As the Island descended into a shooting war between the police and the Nacionalistas, the police ranks swell. The National Guard also expanded during this period—though the expansion had little to do with the Nationalist challenge. Nonetheless, it is very telling that whenever volunteers were requested for the National Guard or the 65th Infantry, the Puerto Ricans, even Nacionalistas, quickly moved to fill those positions.438 While the Insular Police stained their record and lost much credence in their battle against the Nacionalistas, the National Guard and the regular U.S. Army in the Island stayed out of the fray, at least in the public’s eye. The U.S. military in Puerto Rico had always functioned as a possible avenue of socio-economic advancement, which

438 Ibid.
appealed to a large segment of the Island’s population. Its prestige remained unblemished by this period’s violence. That the Puerto Rican units were not involved in the brutal repression of their fellow countrymen would ease the conscience of tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans who would soon join the armed forces of the metropolis. Albizu Campos had challenged the Insular Police and the legitimacy of the armed forces in the Island as true national corps and had lost the duel.

Albizu Campos was not the only one losing in this battle. The independence movement was seriously weakened by the Nacionalistas’ radicalism. Locally, the separatist leadership was balkanized, and popular support for independence seriously waned due to the endless cycle of violence. Outside the Island such violence worked as a self-fulfilling stereotype. If there ever was any doubt in the minds of Continental politicians that Puerto Rico would descend into chaos if it became independent, there was the proof. The independence movement would never recuperate from this blow. To add to the Island’s calamities, the split of the Liberal Party and Muñoz Marín’s fall from Washington’s grace hindered the progress of the socio-economic reconstruction effort led by the PRRA. In a sense, those who could afford to lose the least lost more than anybody else.439

Muñoz Marín, unlike Nationalist leaders, understood that the islanders’ indignation was a rejection of all types of political violence. He had condemned Riggs’ assassination and the subsequent execution of Beauchamp and Rosado by the Insular Police in 1936, as well as the Ponce Massacre of 1937. This stand gained him the

439 See Maldonado, Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution, 152-57; and Mathews, La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato, 304-09.
antipathy of Tydings and Winship, and of many other metropolitan administrators. It also cost him his friendship with Ernest Gruening. Muñoz Marín’s political career almost ended after 1936 as a consequence of Riggs’ assassination and the Tydings Bill.

Unfettered, Muñoz Marín immediately condemned Irizarry’s assassination but he also denounced what he considered to be the root of the incident. He declared:

> We emphatically condemned and repudiate violence, as well as when it comes from the government as when it comes from individuals. Our opposition to violence- as an evil itself, and as a danger to our people’s future democracy and freedom- is so strong and unequivocal, that we condemn it even in cases when the most extreme provocation may seem to justify it.  

Muñoz Marín was slowly emerging as a better option to the endless cycle of violence between the Nacionalistas and the Insular Police. He skillfully denounced the Winship administration for provoking the incident while also condemning the nationalists. His attempts to appear fair and balanced endeared him with the Puerto Ricans, and while his actions may have irked colonial administrators and continental politicians, he presented the metropolis with a more palatable alternative to political violence. Furthermore, though at the time he did not hold any official position, Muñoz Marín had been associated by the public with both the PRERA and PRRA. Thus Muñoz Marín presented himself as fair-minded leader apparently in touch with the socio-economic problems of the Island while campaigning to end the colonial relation. He would eventually rise to power with a popular mandate to tackle the first issue and with the personal conviction of

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advancing the latter. These two concerns were to eventually become the pillars of his new party’s platform.

Whereas Muñoz Marín had initially amassed political power riding on his father’s brand name and thanks to his position as a Washington insider, his comeback to the political center stage was to be fueled by hundreds of thousands of votes coming from the Puerto Rican Jíbaros, rural and urban workers. The young professional classes in the Island would dessert traditional parties and join his new party to try and lead the Island out of its economic malaise, but it would be popular support what gave Muñoz Marín and the Populares the moral and political strength to demand from Washington the needed economic reforms and the eventual decolonization of the Island.

The high point of Muñoz Marín’s political trajectory lay ahead. In great measure his rapid ascendance was facilitated by the outbreak of war in Europe on September 1, 1939. But that he emerged as the most prominent leader in Puerto Rico during the war years was also the result of the political chaos prevailing in the Island previous to the outbreak of the war. The shooting war between the Nacionalistas and the Insular Police was detrimental to FDR’s Good Neighbor policy and forced Congress and the president to take a more pronounced interest in the political and socio-economic conditions of the Island. In a sense, it was necessary to complement the Good Neighbor policy with a domestic corollary for Puerto Rico, which was after all a Caribbean and Latin American nation. This newfound interest in Puerto Rican politics and socio-economic matters helped to bring Muñoz Marín to the insular political scene with strength that he did not enjoy before, and that he probably would have not held if FDR had not found it suitable to improve the relations between the U.S. and Puerto Rico.
During the Second World War, Muñoz Marín would use the military-diplomatic value of the Island to advance the decolonization project while extracting every possible economic concession with the intention of fixing socio-economic problems and readying Puerto Rico and the Puerto Ricans for eventual independence. The Puerto Ricans, and especially the *Jíbaros*, were about to be mobilized both politically and militarily on a scale and fashion never seen before. During the war years, the Island would undauntedly start its movement towards industrialization- as way to a modern Puerto Rico and towards decolonization. The peasants and urban workers turned soldiers would spearhead the effort, and in the process change the meaning of decolonization.
CHAPTER 5

EDUCATION, INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION: THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE PUERTO RICAN SOLDIER DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

After two years, the War Department has given Puerto Rican Americans the same opportunities as any other American, to enter the United State Army and fight for the Nation as well as to obtain such benefits as could certainly be of advantage to the underpaid, inadequately educated Puerto Rican, who has little opportunity to improve himself. Puerto Ricans, it is stated, will now be able to enter the army and have their lots improved learning trades that will not enable them to help win victory, but will afford them a means to a better livelihood after the war, thus benefiting themselves and raising the standards of their communities and of Puerto Rico.\(^{441}\)

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\(^{441}\) The editorial was written in response to an announcement by the War Department that it would drop higher educational qualifications for Puerto Ricans for admittance into the U.S. Army. See Clip from *Puerto Rico World Journal* 29 March 1944; filed in, 65\(^{th}\) U.S. Infantry, Headquarters 2\(^{nd}\) Corps Report on Monthly Summary of Subversive Activities, Puerto Rico Area, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department, D.C.: April 3 1944, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 21 Cartapacio 4 Documento 3. Hereafter “65\(^{th}\) U.S. Infantry Intelligence Report, March 1944.” The local selective service units in the Island were instructed to require a 4\(^{th}\) grade education for acceptance into the army, which was the standard for Continental Americans. In the previous years, natives of the Island had been required to have at least an 8\(^{th}\) grade education in order to be considered for service. On October 1943, the Mayaguez Lions Club initiated the complaint that culminated with the War Department reestablishing same parameters for Puerto Rican and Continental recruits. See Clip from *Periódico El Mundo* (San Juan), 13 January 1944, filed in “65\(^{th}\) U.S. Infantry Intelligence Report, March 1944.” C.I.H.P.C., Caja 21 Cartapacio 4 Documento 1.
With the end of the Second World War in sight, U.S. congressmen discussing a bill to make the office of the governor of Puerto Rico subject to election could not help but wonder what impact this measure would have in helping to modernize and democratize the Island. Puerto Rican and Continental Americans residing in the Island testified before Congress that through their willingness to support and participate in the war effort, the Puerto Ricans, especially the tens of thousands who joined the U.S. military, had shown they could be trusted to carry out both tasks.\textsuperscript{442} Congressmen were notably worried about the possibility that the returning soldiers might cause unrest in the Island if reemployment opportunities were not readily available. Those testifying on the matter were quick to stress the need to create economic opportunities, but they also pointed out that political development was necessary and ultimately linked to the returning Puerto Rican soldiers and the peaceful decolonization of the Island.\textsuperscript{443} Echoing the Island’s press and the dominant political thought, Elmer Ellsworth, a Continental American and Insular Senator, stated: “The G.I. Bill will help them [the Puerto Rican veterans] in the creation of a better Puerto Rico.”\textsuperscript{444} That better Puerto Rico, however, had to offer more than economic opportunities. A congressman asked: “Will the [1944 Governor’s] Bill


\textsuperscript{443} The Insular Senator Elmer Ellsworth was answering questions from U.S. Senator Robert A. Taft. Taft, a Republican from Ohio, was a member of the Committee on Insular Affairs and a Republican Party leader between 1938 and 1953. He was very influential in issues regarding the economy, labor, defense, foreign policy, taxation, and veterans' affairs. See \textit{Hearings on 78\textsuperscript{th} Cong., S.725-1, Doc. A-2 (Amherst, University of Massachusetts: Microform Collection), November-December 1943, 182.

\textsuperscript{444} \textit{H. 1032-4}, 30-32.
alleviate tensions in Puerto Rico and ease the comeback of Puerto Rican soldiers?” Jesus T. Piñeiro, a leader of the Popular Democratic Party, promptly answered: “That is the urgency of the Bill, so the boys feel that some steps have been taken in the right direction.”

World War II was a catalyst for socio-economic and political change in the Island. With the exception of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s decision to transfer Puerto Rico from the War Department to the Department of the Interior on March 1934, no major changes to Puerto Rico’s political relationship with the metropolis had occurred since 1917, when Congress imposed U.S. citizenship upon the Puerto Ricans and created an elective insular legislature through the Jones Act. War, yet again, highlighted the strategic importance of the Island and provided for faster negotiation between the metropolis and the colony.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the years preceding the U.S. entrance into World War II were marked by economic distress and political instability in Puerto Rico. In fact, a shooting war between the Nationalistas and the militarized Puerto Rican Insular

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445 Jesús T. Piñero Jiménez (April 6, 1897-November 16, 1962) distinguished himself first as a Republicano leader and later as founding member of the Popular Democratic Party. He served as Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in Congress from 1945 to 1946 when he was named Governor of the Island by President Harry S. Truman. He served until 1949 when he was replaced by Puerto Rico’s first elected governor, Luis Muñoz Marín. See H. 1032-4, 30-32, 35-38.

446 Executive Order 6.726, transferred supervision of Puerto Rican affairs from the War Department to the Department of the Interior led Harold Ickes. The BIA was completely abolished by the Reorganization Plan No. II in July 1, 1939 and replaced by the Division of Territories and Island Possessions of the Department of the Interior which operated between 1939 and 1950. It was later known as the Office of Territories and still later the Office of Territorial Affairs. See “Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior” [National Archives and Records Administration, Center for Electronic Records]; accessed 6 June 2009; available from http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/350.html. And Estades Font, *La Presencia Militar de Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico*, 120-23.
Police briefly threatened to become a full military affair. By 1939, however, the colonial administration had gained the upper hand over the Nationalists. Puerto Rico did not become the dreaded “Ireland of the Caribbean.” Still, the political violence that reigned in Puerto Rico in the mid to late 1930s, forced the federal government to take a closer look at the Island’s socio-economic and political situation.

The outbreak of World War II, even before the juggernaut of the German and Japanese militaries became apparent, and the U.S. slowly started to ready itself for war, made Continental politicians ever more open to finding solutions to the Island’s plight and to avoiding a repetition of the 1930s. Thus, war brought the promise of political and economic advancement by rekindling Puerto Rico’s strategic value. Once more the Puerto Ricans were called to arms and, for many reasons, responded with overwhelming enthusiasm. Different projects of decolonization and modernization, which included the

447 During the war the Nacionalistas became a secondary concern for the FBI. The Spaniard community, some 5,300, especially those who identified with Franco and the Nacionalistas, became the primary focus of surveillance. The FBI, the Military Intelligence Division, the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Office of Strategic Services, aided by the Puerto Rican Insular Police, investigated possible Falangistas’ activities and maintained extensive files on the Falange and its sympathizers in Puerto Rico.” Founded on October 1933 as an umbrella for traditional and ultra conservative groups in Spain, the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista engendered Spanish Fascism. The Catholic Church was also under surveillance since the Spanish Church and Rome authorized all appointments to the Island. Through social clubs, especially Casa España and Casino Español, the Spaniard elite in concert with the Catholic Church and Falangistas in Puerto Rico, spread fascist propaganda and sent monies to the Franco’s Nationalists, usually with the help of the Catholic Church, during the Spanish Civil War. It was feared that the local group of the Falange Exterior, would try to aid the Nazis during WWII. That the Spanish consul in San Juan, the Falangista Mariano de Amuedo found proper to declare that after the war Puerto Rico would “become a dominion of Spain such as Canada was to the United Kingdom” did little to ease the fears of federal authorities. See 103, Andrew Lefebvre, Puerto Rico: Quiet Participant in Thomas M. Leonard and John F. Bratzel, ed., Latin America During World War II (Lanham Maryland: Rowman &Littlefield, 2007), 96-101, 103.
revitalization of the economy as well as the Puerto Rican’s self esteem, rested on the roles these soldiers were about to play during and after the war.

This chapter analyzes the military mobilization of tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans during World War II and how this process responded to military and diplomatic necessities as well as local political realities. Emphasis is put on what Continental and Puerto Rican politicians and opinion makers expected to gain from military collaboration and participation. In essence, the first question to be answered is: how did the metropolis and criollo politicians try to transform the strategic relevance of the Island and the massive enrollment of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. military into political gains? I argue that the metropolis sought to secure the loyalty of natives of the Island by allowing their mass entry into the U.S. military and by conferring upon them the same benefits as Continental veterans. Furthermore, among metropolitan agents, the idea of Americanization through military service (and public education) made a strong comeback as war engulfed Europe. Concurrently, the metropolis became more inclined to granting a higher degree of self-government to Puerto Rico since it could enhance its standing in the international arena, and could very well quench any political unrest in the Island.

The metropolis’ plans, however, had to compete with those of local politicians. Aware of Puerto Rico’s military and diplomatic relevance, Luis Muñoz Marín, leading the Popular Democratic Party, followed a strategy that supported the war effort and placed the socio-economic restructuring of the Island before anything else while using the participation of Puerto Rican soldiers in the war, and the Island’s strategic position as leverage to extract political concessions. Furthermore, Muñoz Marín and the Populares tried to secure veteran’s benefits so these men and women could attempt to change the
dire socio-economic condition of the Island. Muñoz Marín’s strategy was threefold: supporting the war effort; using the participation of Puerto Rican soldiers in the war and the Island’s strategic position to barter political concessions; and using the soldiers’ benefits and training to advance the socio-economic restructuration of the Island.

In fact, the mass military mobilization of Puerto Ricans was essential to the Populares’ reconstruction and decolonization plans. Once socio-economic problems were alleviated, Muñoz Marín believed that, Puerto Ricans would have enough self-confidence to overwhelmingly support independence. The Puerto Rican turned soldier was thus expected to bring more than economic respite or technical knowledge. These soldiers were also supposed to erase a colonial inferiority complex by showing that they could bear the same burden as any other man.

This chapter then analyzes two very different projects. On the one hand, the metropolis sought to show Puerto Ricans that they were regarded as American as any Continental, which hopefully would generate loyalty towards the metropolis and simultaneously enhance the United States’ image as emerging leader of the Free World. On the other hand, the dominant political leader during this period, tried to use military participation to advance the decolonization of the Island by obtaining concessions from the metropolis and by ultimately decolonizing the Puerto Ricans themselves by turning the experience of these soldiers into a lesson on self-confidence, and, in more practical terms, by using their veteran’s benefits and skills learned in the military to reconstruct the Island and its socio-economic structures.

These political projects were not impervious to the needs of the masses being mobilized to carry them out. Actually, I argue that both the metropolis’ and the
Populares’ projects were influenced, if not outright changed, by the sudden enfranchisement of tens of thousands of peasants and urban workers. This enfranchisement was in part possible due to military mobilization. Thus, the military mobilization of the Puerto Rican, as we address it in this chapter, had a political, socio-economic, and very popular character.

War in Europe seemed imminent by 1938, while Japan continued its inexorable march in China. The American public, however, was not prepared to support involvement in a European war nor were the armed forces of the U.S. ready to participate in it. If the Good Neighbor policy had put Puerto Rico’s problems in the sight of FDR’s administration in the early 1930s, the impending war and the reluctance of the American public to consider participating in it moved the Island to the center stage of U.S. preparedness and defense efforts.\footnote{In part due to the Great Depression- which made it difficult to explain military spending in Central and South America to the American public - FDR’s administration started a retrenchment from the area while seeking to improve relations with the these nations. His administration emphasized cooperation and trade rather than military force to maintain stability in the hemisphere. In his inaugural address on March 4, 1933, Roosevelt stated that “in the field of world policy I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor--the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others.” On December of the same, Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, participated in the Montevideo Conference (also known as Pan American or 7th International Conference of American States) and signed the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. Hull declared American opposition to armed intervention in inter-American affairs, and backed the main issue of the Convention stating that: "No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another". Seeking to prove his repudiation of the interventionist policies of past administrations, in 1934 FDR secured the abrogation of the 1903 treaty with Cuba-based on the Platt amendment- that gave the United States the right to intervene to preserve internal stability or independence. See Robert Dallek, \textit{Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy}, 1932-1945 (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 38-39, 62-63, 65, 122-23.} FDR’s administration decided to base its military
strategy on the concept of Hemispheric Defense.\textsuperscript{449} The United States would stay out of the war and concentrate on preparing and strengthening the defenses of the western hemisphere to stop any assault on the Americas far from the mainland. Puerto Rico was to play a vital role on this strategy. For decades, the Island had been crucial to the defense of the Panama Canal. This time, however, its importance went beyond protecting the Canal. This design was an extension of Alfred T. Mahan’s strategy for the defense of the American empire.\textsuperscript{450} The U.S. Navy planned to stop naval aggression far from the mainland in what it called the Caribbean Sea Frontier. The waters surrounding Culebra Island, a Puerto Rican municipality lying off the east coast, would be the stage for such a battle.\textsuperscript{451} Puerto Rico effectively became the center of the Hemispheric Defense strategy, and the first American line of defense against German aggression. The importance of Puerto Rico in the defensive plans of the United States is best expressed in a presidential letter to Congress dated September 28, 1943:

When the present war became imminent, however, it was obvious that the chain of islands stretching in a great arc from Florida to the shoulder of South America, enclosing the Caribbean Sea, formed a vast natural shield for the Panama Canal,

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\textsuperscript{450} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{451} Ibid.
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suited in distance and conformation to the use of the military plane. And of the
island shield Puerto Rico is the center. Its possession or control by any foreign
power - or even the remote threat of such possession - would be repugnant to the
most elementary principle of national defense.\footnote{Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, \emph{A Bill to Amend The Organic Act of Puerto Rico Election of Governor: Hearings on S. 1407, 78th Cong., 1st sess.,} (Amherst, University of Massachusetts: Microform Collection), 16-25 November, 1 December 1943, 7-8. Hereafter \emph{S.1407}. The statements were delivered in September 28, 1943 in a Message from the President of the United States on Progress on Puerto Rico, and included as part of the hearings.}

The fortification of the Island became a priority, and by 1939 the construction of multiple army, naval, and air bases was well on its way.\footnote{The Department of War built multiple camps and forts, and opened medium and small naval and air facilities throughout the Island. Established in 1925 under the name of Fort Miles, this installation became a permanent fixture of the U.S. Army in the Island under the name of Fort Buchanan (first commander of the Puerto Rican regiment of Volunteers). During WWII it served as Headquarters of the Department of Puerto Rico and as induction center. Fort Bundy was built in 1940 to serve as general headquarters for coastal artillery units in eastern Puerto Rico. Camp O’Reilly, in honor of Field Marshall Alejandro O’Reilly, recognized as “padre de las milicias Puertorriqueñas” was finished in 1942. Camp Salinas (later renamed Santiago) and Camp Tortuguero opened in 1940 to serve as training centers for the National Guard and Army units in the Island. Between 1941 and 1943, at a cost of over $10,000,000, the Department of War built Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, comprising installations in Culebra and Vieques islands and the town of Ceiba on the east coast. This base was intended to provide maritime control over the whole circum-Caribbean area. Between 1939 and 1943, and with a cost of over $50,000,000 the War Department built Isla Grande Naval station (originally intended for naval aviation) near San Juan Bay. This facility housed the 10th Naval District and the Caribbean Sea Frontier headquarters. Protecting the Panama Canal, the Venezuelan Oil fields, and trade in the area were the main responsibilities of this naval command. On September 6, 1939, a major air base known as Borinquen Field or Puerto Rico Air Base No. 1 and capable of handling all types of military planes became operational at Punta Borinquen in the northwest city of Aguadilla. This installation provided the U.S. with a southern air route to Africa and Europe via Brazil. Loosey Field was established on January 1, 1941 east of Ponce in the southern coast. In 1940 and 1941 airports were built in Arecibo and Vega Baja respectively to support Camp Tortuguero and to provide an airbase for anti-submarine}

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however, was concerned about the possibility of American troops finding themselves without the support of the Island’s population, which in case of an invasion, might mean that these bases would become nothing more than isolated outposts. Consequently, the administration sought to improve relations between Puerto Rico and the U.S. which had deteriorated to an unprecedented low due to the events of 1936, the Ponce Massacre of March 21, 1937, and the continuation of the shooting war between the Insular Police and the Nacionalistas. 454 The first positive step taken by FDR was the removal of Governor Winship, himself the target of an assassination attempt in July 25, 1938. President Roosevelt replaced him with Admiral William D. Leahy who took charge of that office on September 11, 1939. Leahy was entrusted with supervising and supporting plans for military expansion in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean and with advancing military coordination with South American countries. 455 Of equal relevance was his mission to promote social and political stability in Puerto Rico which the administration considered essential to its defense plans. Urged by Muñoz Marín, Leahy went out of his way to prevent fraud in the general elections of 1940- the first in which the Populares would participate. 456

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454 See Moraza Ortiz, *La masacre de Ponce* (Hato Rey, P.R.: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas, 2001), 81-83; and Negroni, *Historia Militar de Puerto Rico*, 450-54.

455 Rosario Natal, *Luis Muñoz Marín y la independencia*, 139-40. After his tenure as governor, Leahy became the White House Chief of Staff, a fact that illustrates how important Puerto Rico was for FDR’s plans.

456 Some of the fraudulent activity included the buying of votes and the “corralling” of rural voters. The latter refers to the practice of enticing Jíbaros known to sympathize with the opposition with the promise of rum into corral-like buildings which
The Popular Party was extremely weak after its creation in 1938. Most analysts and political rivals dismissed Muñoz Marín’s intent on participating in the elections as a Quixotic if not an outright act of foolishness. However, by 1940 the political picture in Puerto Rico seemed to favor the rise of the *Populares*. Albizu Campos was still a federal prisoner in Atlanta and the nationalist movement had been seriously weakened. The *Nacionalistas* remained dormant during the period of late 1938 and 1940. Meanwhile the dominant traditional parties faced a series of setbacks. Barceló and Iglesias Pantín died in 1938 and 1939 respectively. After Barceló’s death the new president of the *Liberales* decided to make statehood the political goal of the party and most *Autonomistas* and *Independentistas* abandoned the PLP to join the *Populares*. *Unión Republicana*’s principal leader, Martínez Nadal, was absent from most of the campaign then stayed closed until the election was over precluding them from voting. Leahy was appalled by such practice and ordered the police to set direct lines between the police headquarters and political parties’ headquarters with orders to act immediately on any reported case. Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution*, 176-77.

The Nationalist Party continued its activities throughout the war period but they did not attract the numbers they once had and limited themselves mostly to rallies and collection of funds. In 1943, they were more concerned with securing the cancellation of Albizu Campos’ four year probation period. To that effect on June 6, 1943, Juan Antonio Corretjer, acting as party’s secretary, ordered political activity to be kept at a minimum in Puerto Rico so as not jeopardize their leader’s pardon. The biggest nationalist rally occurred on August 15, 1943 when some 10,000 people, including over 1,800 delegates from the Island’s 77 municipalities and their families, attended a pro-independence congress. However, a “Great Nationalist Meeting” held on June 13, 1943 in Barrio Obrero, Santurce, was attended by only 100 people, and even less attended a meeting in Caguas on July 25. Based on the number of people still paying the party’s membership dues, the FBI estimated that no more than 500 people remained as members of the Nationalist Party in 1943 of which only 150 were known to the public. *FBI, Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico*, Vol. 4, 1-13.

as he fought against cancer finally succumbing in 1941. To make matters worse for the annexionists, García Méndez left the party and formed the *Partido Unión Republicana Progresista* months before the election. *Unión Republicana* honored the pact with the *Socialistas* and continued the *Coalición* while *Unión Republicana Progresista* and the *Partido Laborista Puro*, which splintered from the *Socialistas*, joined what was left of the *Liberales* to conform *Unificación Puertorriqueña Tripartita*. This incessant splintering and confusing net of tactical alliances further weakened the traditional parties. The nature of their alliances also showed that political survival, not addressing the socio-economic problems of the Island, was their priority.

On the other hand, while campaigning for the 1940 general elections, Muñoz Marín opted for downplaying resolving the political status and spoke instead of alleviating the socio-economic problems of the Island. The insignia of the PPD, a *pava* (the traditional hat of the Puerto Rican *Jíbaro*) and the slogan, “*Pan, Tierra, Libertad*” proclaimed the priorities of the *Populares*. Claiming that the rural masses distrust him because of his association with independence, Muñoz Marín announced in a meeting in San Juan that “el status no está en issue”.

Resolving the political status of the Island was not to be his party’s immediate goal. This position was resented by much of the Popular Party’s *independentista* wing. The outbreak of WWII in Europe a year before the elections helped Muñoz Marín convince the most pro-independence elements in his


party that it was not the right time to fight for independence. Muñoz Marín was thus able to keep the masses’ support and avoid a schism in his new party.

Muñoz Marín wasted no time in linking his campaign to the war effort. Not only would the status question be put on hold for the duration of the conflict, but the Populares committed themselves to supporting the Hemispheric Defense plans and the war effort. Recognizing the change in Roosevelt’s attitude towards Puerto Rico, as well as the cause for such change - the renewed military importance of the Island, Muñoz Marín would use the latter to promote social and economic development, which he thought essential in advancing the decolonization of the Island.\(^{461}\) The mass political mobilization of the Jíbaros and urban working masses had started but not as imagined by Albizu Campos who remained in jail. Tactical decisions, however, tend to alter broader strategic views and goals. Muñoz Marín may have temporarily adopted the Jíbaros’ point of view with regard to independence in order to win the political battle, but what he had learned from them during the 1936 and 1940 campaigns had started to erode his own independentismo.\(^{462}\)

With the votes of hundreds of thousands of peasants, Jíbaros and urban workers, Muñoz Marín and the Populares surprised the coalition of Socialistas and Republicanos, as well as the Unión Tripartita of Liberales, Progresistas and Laboristas Puros by


\(^{462}\) According to Maldonado, the touring of the country and the endless meetings with Jíbaros, workers and peasants started to convince Muñoz Marín that the Jíbaros’ rejection of independence was not “an irrational, mindless, fear of independence… nor was it the product of a demeaning cultural defect of Puerto Ricans ashamed of their nationality”. Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution*, 180-85, citing Muñoz Marín, *Memorias*, Vol. 1, 180-186.
obtaining a pyrrhic, but important, triumph. Though the PPD obtained fewer votes than the Coalición, it secured a majority in the Senate (10-9) and a tie in the House of Representatives (18-18). FDR publicly congratulated Muñoz Marín, who became president of the Puerto Rican Senate, and offered his full cooperation and support for his project of “social justice and economic rehabilitation.” Once in power, Muñoz Marín and the Populares sought to control the socio-economic reconstruction effort in the Island while carefully moving forward the process of political decolonization.

In many respects Muñoz Marín benefitted from FDR’s concerns regarding the Island. World War II was responsible for bringing the New Deal in full force to Puerto Rico. Roosevelt took a significant step by naming Rexford G. Tugwell as governor of the Island in August, 1941. Leahy, Tugwell’s predecessor, had secured clean elections in 1940 and started Roosevelt’s plans to make of Puerto Rico an island fortress with a friendly population, but it would be Tugwell who would lead the Island during the war years. Tugwell was more a scholar than a politician, and had become one of the foremost champions of the New Deal, as well as one of its leading ideologues. His appointment as governor could only mean that FDR’s administration was serious about improving social and economic conditions on the Island. Strategic considerations were behind the

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463 In the general elections of November 5, 1940 the Coalición obtained 222,423 votes (134,582 Unión Republicana and 87,841 the Socialistas) good for 9 senators 18 representatives and 37 municipalities and the office of the Resident Commissioner in Washington which went to Bolívar Pagán, new president of the Socialist Party. Unificación Tripartita secured 130,299 votes, 3 representatives and 11 municipalities. The Populares amassed 214,857 votes, 10 senators 18 representatives and 29 municipalities. Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 194 and, Rosario Natal, Luis Muñoz Marín y la independencia, 155.

464 Díaz Soler, Puerto Rico, sus luchas por alcanzar estabilidad económica, definición política y afirmación cultural, 260-62.
appointment of Tugwell to whom the President told that his first duty as a representative of the United States in Puerto Rico was to “shape civil affairs… so military bases, which might soon have to stand the shock of attack, were not isolated in a generally hostile environment.” Moreover, Roosevelt and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes had made clear that sending such a prominent New Dealer like Tugwell to Puerto Rico would help to undermine the charges of imperialism emanating from Latin America since the early 1930s. Whatever reasons brought Tugwell to Puerto Rico the fact of the matter is that he shared many of Muñoz Marín’s concerns.

Tugwell and Muñoz Marín, though many times at odds, were natural allies. They both believed that a restructuring of the Island’s economy and society were badly needed. However, Muñoz Marín sought eventual independence for the Island while Tugwell did not believe such status to be practical. In this regard Tugwell thought that liberalization of the political status, granting more autonomy and powers to the Island, or even moving towards statehood were the best options for both the Puerto Ricans and the metropolis. In order to push his goal forward, Tugwell used the strategic importance of the Island to convince the President and Congress that political change was needed.

In a letter to FDR dated March 10, 1942, Tugwell expressed concerns about the loyalty of the population in case of an attack. In this letter Tugwell made clear that both the British and Dutch had lost their possessions in the Pacific to the Japanese because these countries never won the loyalty of the native population who saw them as foreign rulers. The U.S. had to avoid that from happening in Puerto Rico. To guarantee the

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loyalty of Puerto Ricans in case of an attack, Tugwell recommended, that the President ought to support “a new status for Puerto Rico now.” Moreover, he wrote that such a gesture would disassociate the U.S. from “the colonial empires” and could serve to avoid “the risk of a Malaya or Java here [in Puerto Rico].”

The Caribbean Advisory Committee (CAC), a local version of the Caribbean Committee established between Great Britain and the United States to study possible collaboration in the Caribbean, recommended to FDR in March 1942 that he should support an amendment to the Organic Act of Puerto Rico, which had remained unchanged in all major respects since 1917. The suggested amendment would make the office of the governor an elected one. This measure, the CAC believed, “would in fact have the effect of converting Puerto Rico into a state, except for income tax-purposes and for voting representation in Congress.” Moreover the letter expressed that that such a move would show that the “United States has no ambition to be a colonial power,” and that this measure was submitted more “for its general than for its local effect.” These events followed a unanimous request made on February 10 by the Puerto Rican legislature (a Muñoz Marín’s initiative) to Congress and the President to allow Puerto Ricans to find a solution to end the colonial regime on the Island. The letter did not make

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466 Ibid., 268-69.

467 Ibid., 328.

468 Ibid., 328, 268. The CAC was the local corollary to the Caribbean Commission set by Great Britain and the United States in 1942 to coordinate collaboration in the Caribbean.
reference to the issue of the elective governor, which Muñoz Marín did not support as it could block the path to eventual independence.\textsuperscript{469}

FDR did in fact move to support the creation of an elective governor for Puerto Rico. On March 9, 1943 the President asked Congress to consider “as soon as possible an amendment of the Organic Law of Puerto Rico to permit the people of the Island to elect their own Governor and redefine the functions and power of the Federal government and the government of Puerto Rico.”\textsuperscript{470} The previous day, Roosevelt had ordered Secretary Ickes to establish a commission of four Puerto Ricans and four Americans to make a study and report on the amendments required to provide for such measures.\textsuperscript{471} Tugwell and Muñoz Marín were members of this committee which met in Washington D.C. from July 19 to August 7. On September 28, in a special message to Congress on the status of progress in Puerto Rico, Roosevelt urged, once more, that Congress adopt the recommendations of the committee as a matter of “right and justice for Puerto Ricans.”\textsuperscript{472} FDR saw “no reason why their [the Puerto Rican’s] Governor and other officials should continue to be appointed from without.”\textsuperscript{473}

\textsuperscript{469} Rosario Natal, \textit{Luis Muñoz Marín y la independencia}, 174-75.

\textsuperscript{470} S.1407, 309-310. The statements were made in a letter dated March 8, 1943, from the President to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, and included as part of the hearings.

\textsuperscript{471} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{472} Ibid., 8. The statement was made in September 28, 1943 in a “Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Report on Progress on Puerto Rico,” and included as part of the hearings.

\textsuperscript{473} Ibid., 310. The statements were made in a letter dated March 8, 1943, from the President to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, and included as part of the hearings.
In a letter to Senator Dennis Chavez (New Mexico), Chairman of the Subcommittee of the Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs of the Senate, Muñoz Marín expressed his support, although not enthusiastically, for the Governor Bill and added that it was essential to incorporate in such bill the necessary provisions so that Congress could not alter the Organic Act unilaterally.\footnote{Muñoz Marín skillfully included the military participation of Puerto Ricans in the world conflict as well as the ideological icons used by Allied propaganda, especially democracy, national self-determination, and the principle of the consent of the governed, to support his demands.} In February 15, 1944, the bill, with the proposed amendments, was approved by the Senate. It would not reach the House of Representatives until August of that year, when the war appeared to be nearing its end.

With the bill sent to the House leaders from the PPD launched yet another campaign to secure the passing of the Governor Bill with the proposed amendments. Jesús T. Piñero declared before the House that doing so was essential for the peaceful decolonization of the Island by showing the returning Puerto Rican veterans that “some steps have been taken in the right direction.”\footnote{Elmer Ellsworth, a native of} 474

\footnote{Ibid., 218. The statements were made in a letter dated November 20, 1943, from Luis Muñoz Marín, president of the Senate to Senator Dennis Chavez, and included as part of the hearings.}

\footnote{According to the Atlantic Charter of August 14, 1941, the Consent of the Governed Principle established that the signatories believed in “The rights of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights of self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.” See, Senate Committee on Territorial and Insular Affairs, \textit{A Bill to Provide For the Withdrawal of the Sovereignty of the United States over the Island of Puerto Rico and for the Recognition of its Independence: Hearings on S.952, 78th Cong., 1st sess.,} (Amherst, University of Massachusetts: Microform Collection), 3, 6, 10, and 11 May 1943, 31. Hereafter, S.952.}
Massachusetts but longtime resident and Senator in Puerto Rico (PPD), accused Congress of excessive paternalism and urged the representatives to approve the bill. Senator Ellsworth declared that Puerto Rico should be an example for “all the islands being liberated in the Pacific that they too would be free.” Moreover, Ellsworth was quick to point out that approving the bill “will clear the atmosphere throughout all Latin America of accusations of Uncle Sam’s merciless exploitation of Puerto Rico.”\(^{477}\) Such strategic considerations as well as the impact that the Governor Bill could have regarding U.S. foreign relations did not escape federal officials. Abe Fortas, Undersecretary of the Interior, declared during the hearings before the House that approving “this substantially increased measure of home rule” would be seen as an indication of goodwill being “most beneficial in reaffirming the leadership of the United States in world affairs.” Fortas emphasized that “not only will it have that effect upon the people of Latin America but also throughout the world.”\(^{478}\)

The bill, however, died over the issue of denying Congress the right to change the Organic Act without the concurrence of the people of Puerto Rico or their elected representatives. The House would not approve it without eliminating this provision, and Muñoz Marín, disillusioned with the limited nature of the bill, asked Secretary Ickes to let it die. The proposal to allow Puerto Rico to elect its governor failed because of protests from Puerto Rico and the President’s indifference, who after his letter to

\(^{476}\) *H 1032-4*, 30-32.

\(^{477}\) Ibid., 27-29; and House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Providing for the Term of Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico, Election of Governor: Hearings on S.1407, 78th Cong., 2nd sess.* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts: Microform Collection), 26 August 1944, 24-25.

\(^{478}\) Ibid.
Congress of September 1943 did not make a single effort to push the bill. The President’s support might have convinced Congress to grant Muñoz Marín’s requests. The war situation, however, had changed by August 1944 on all major fronts, and hence Roosevelt did not even try to push the bill as it was not longer imperative to do so.

In September 1943, the President had strongly endorsed the Governor Bill. Presidential support, however, was absent when the House convened in August 1944 to discuss the bill approved by the Senate in February. The difference may have well been that the Allies were in full pursuit of the German armies across Europe. War in Europe appeared to be nearing its end, and Japan was never a threat to the Caribbean. Thus, once the danger in the Caribbean had completely dissipated, FDR forgot about Puerto Rico. As the military importance of the Island declined in comparison to other war theaters, promoting a change of its political status ceased to be a pressing matter for the administration.

Muñoz Marín had also had to contend with the most staunchly separatist wing within his own party. The independentista faction within the PPD convinced Senator

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479 Ibid., 5-7. See also; Trías Monge, *The Trials of the Oldest Colony*, 103-05.

480 Tugwell believed that Roosevelt’s attitude towards Puerto Rico was shaped partly by misinformation as well as by traces of imperialist ideas he learned during his years in the Navy. According to Tugwell, Muñoz Marín “succeeded in alienating both Secretary Ickes and President Roosevelt. More important is the fact that FDR distrusted Muñoz Marín, who, he thought, was a Nationalist, or at least a sympathizer of the Nationalists. Distrust of Muñoz Marín was also the product of the imperialist side of Roosevelt, the navy man, who could not support autonomy wholeheartedly because “he just never thought that Puerto Ricans were the equals of Continental Americans. As a matter of fact, in 1934 Tugwell had to join Ickes in persuading Roosevelt not to return the Virgin Islands, then under control of the Department of the Interior, to the Department of the Navy. Roosevelt’s attitude towards ultramarine possessions led Tugwell to believe that “There was an admiral concealed somewhere in Roosevelt.” See Tugwell, *The Arts of Politics*, 1. 146-151.
Millard Tydings, to present yet another Independence bill, which he did in April 2, 1943. Hearings were held in the Senate on May of the same year.\textsuperscript{481} During these hearings, however, the Assistant Secretary of War, John J. McCloy, made it clear that the military was against the independence of the Island since Puerto Rico was still vital for the defense of the Panama Canal. Moreover, McCloy labeled Puerto Rico as “irreplaceable for Caribbean defense” and informed the Committee that its independence “was not in the best interest of the military.”\textsuperscript{482} Senator Robert A. Taft, a member of the Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, declared during the hearings that Puerto Rico was still necessary to secure the military control of the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{483} For all purposes, the fate of the 1943 Independence Bill was sealed with the testimony of McCloy, who, guided by Senator Taft, convinced the whole committee of the impracticability of granting independence to Puerto Rico during wartime.

The Tydings bill not only lacked support among American officials but also among Puerto Ricans. A letter from Muñoz Marín addressed to Senator Tydings, dated April 29, 1943, reminded Tydings of the resolution approved unanimously by the Puerto Rican legislature on February 10 requesting a referendum to end the colonial regime as soon as the conditions allowed it, and of the President’s decision to create a committee to work on reforms to the Organic Act. Muñoz Marín made clear in this letter that he could not support the bill since doing so might break the delicate equilibrium that had led to the resolution from the Puerto Rican legislature requesting a referendum on the political

\textsuperscript{481} S. 952, 24-25. See also; Trías Monge, \textit{Trials of the Oldest Colony}, 108-09.

\textsuperscript{482} S.952, 15-18.

\textsuperscript{483} Ibid., 10, 15, 17-18.
Muñoz Marín probably had in mind that he had been elected because he proclaimed that the political status would not be an issue, and that a vote for the PPD was not a vote for independence. Moreover, the military had made clear that it would opposed independence for the Island during wartime.

Furthermore, the new Tydings bill was only a slightly improved version of the one rejected by most Puerto Rican politicians in 1936. Although the bill provided for a period of twenty years before full trade tariffs were implemented between Puerto Rico and the U.S., federal aid to the Island was to be cut almost immediately. Moreover, the Armed Forces made clear that they would not support any Independence Bill that would not guarantee the retention of all military installations and their right to appropriate lands for expansion of those bases as needed. In other words, independence under the Tidings bill would mean that the U.S. military, especially the Navy, would control much of the Island and that Puerto Rico would not enjoy the benefits of any federal aid nor special trade arrangements. This was not independence but a de facto transfer of its sovereignty from Congress to the military, which would not have the responsibilities that Congress had but would enjoy all of its rights and then some more. Lacking support from the military, the State Department, or even from members of the Committee, and with the backing of only the staunchest Independentistas in Puerto Rico, the bill did not survive for long.

Many Independentistas in the PPD wanted the party to support Tydings bill openly, but Muñoz Marín considered that this option was the equivalent of political

\footnote{Ibid., The statements were made in a letter dated April 29, 1943, from Luis Muñoz Marín to Senator Millard E. Tydings, and included as part of the hearings.}
suicide. He was aware that not only the President but most Congressmen, the military, and almost every person with a voice in this matter were opposed to independence. At any rate, explaining support for an independence bill to his constituency would have been extremely difficult— if not impossible, when even the Nacionalistas were remaining dormant and at least paid lip service to supporting the war effort. Furthermore, he had come to believe that independence had no future under the current economic and social situation. As early as 1936, he noted that the reaction of thousands of Jíbaros whenever he spoke to them about independence was of fear and uncertainty. Most of them were afraid of independence and would not vote for it. This realization had moved Muñoz Marín to run the first PPD campaign based on social and economic reform and avoiding the status issue. Most certainly Muñoz Marín kept independence as his goal, but he knew that the social and economic situation of the Island had to be greatly improved, and that he had to secure enough economic guarantees from the United States for the survival of the new republic in order to persuade the Jíbaros to vote for independence.

The new Tydings bill did not offer the economic guarantees or the full sovereignty that Muñoz Marín deemed necessary for independence to be viable and

485 The Nationalist local leadership had declared on December 14, 1941 that although it recognized that “a state of war existed between totalitarian and democratic powers,” and that the “feasibility of the realization of the ideal of independence of Puerto Rico depends on the survival in the world of the ideals and systems of democratic governments. Which are the only ones that guarantee the right of people to govern themselves according to the principles of free determination” it had still “pending with the United States of North America a solution of the fundamental problem of our political sovereignty, but it holds that the union of its forces with those of said nation in the struggle against the common enemy of the democratic cause, in no way means or implies the renunciation of the ideal of independence for our country.” FBI, Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, 1-13, 52.

486 See, Rosario Natal, Luis Muñoz Marín y la independencia, 125-131.
Furthermore, during his first campaign he has asked the masses to let him borrow their vote and to remove him from office, along with the rest of the Populares, if they strayed from their campaign promises of socio-economic justice or betrayed them by moving towards independence.\footnote{488} To that end and before the famous Operation Bootstrap (\textit{Manos a la Obra}) was launched in 1948, Tugwell and Muñoz Marín embarked in several public-sponsored ventures seeking to promote the industrialization of the Island, and the creation of industrial jobs and small business.\footnote{489} Additionally, in order to alleviate unemployment they promoted the military mobilization of the Puerto Ricans, especially the peasantry and urban workers (who were the backbone of Muñoz Marín).

\footnote{487} By 1939, the public sector had already become the main source of national income in the Island going from $25,000,000 (14.2\% of the national income) in 1929 to 63,000,000 (32.1\%) in 1939. While manufacturing had remained stable and services double their share of the national income, the sugar industry had dwindled from 49.4 \% (87 millions) in 1929 to 30.1\% (59 millions) in 1939. All that while only employing 19,116 people compared to the Sugar industry which fully employed a quarter of the work force. See Dietz, \textit{Economic History of Puerto Rico}, 138, Table 3.1, and; 177, Table 3.12. It was not hard for politicians to realize that a better future for the Island was not to be found in the sugar cane fields.


\footnote{489} This campaign aimed to make Puerto Rico’s economy self-sufficient and had high socialist overtones. Economic historian James L. Dietz branded it “State Capitalism”. According to Dietz, as the private sector in the Island did not engage in promoting capital growth the Puerto Rican government had to become a “collective capitalists, promoter, and entrepreneur.” These functions, Dietz explained, had not been carried out by private capital. The government of Puerto Rico bough and/or established cement, glass, boxboard, and shoes factories. It also bought the Island’s electric companies, founded a development bank and mostly followed a socialist-style approach to the Island’s socio-economic problems, including land reform, administrative reorganization, and small scale public-led industrialization. See Dietz, \textit{Economic History of Puerto Rico}, 185.
Marín’s political power) which incidentally gave him another card with which to advance political decolonization in his dealings with Washington.

If Tugwell and Muñoz Marín disagreed on the path to political decolonization, they certainly agreed on the importance of military preparedness and mobilization as a way to improve conditions in the Island. The economic impact of the military preparedness was hard to miss. In November of 1939, as the U.S. accelerated readiness procedures in response to the outbreak of WWII in Europe, the War Department decided to augment the army units in Puerto Rico which at the time consisted of the 65th U.S. Army Infantry Regiment and the 295th and 296th regiments of the Puerto Rico National Guard. After announcements were made to that effect, the press reported a wave of volunteers congregating outside the induction centers in the Island.\textsuperscript{490} Mobilization in the Island moved speedily. In 1940 and 1941 U.S. Army units expanded exponentially. The Selective Service in the Island, with 122 local boards, led and staffed (mostly) by Puerto Ricans, registered roughly 525,000 men between the ages of 18 to 64. During this first period Puerto Ricans were accepted under the same standards (with the exception of English literacy) as their Continental counterparts.\textsuperscript{491} To process the Puerto Rican

\textsuperscript{490} Clip from \textit{New York Times}, 11 November 1939, filed in C.I.H.P.C., Caja 21 Cartapacio 4 Documento 1. On July 1, 1939, the War Department created the Department of Puerto Rico to coordinate the effort in the Caribbean.

\textsuperscript{491} Clip from 29 March 1944, filed in 65th U.S. Infantry Intelligence Report, April 3 1944, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 21 Cartapacio 4 Documento 1. The War Department ordered the local selective service unit in the Island to reinstate the 4th grade education requirement for admittance into the army, which was the standard for Continental Americans. On July of 1942, the War Department had authorized the Commanding General of the Puerto Rican Department to require an 8th grade education from natives of the Island in order to be considered for service. The Puerto Rican Department was also authorized to “weed out the most undesirable men” thought to be “inferior physically, mentally, and in other ways” to Continentals. On October 1943, the Mayaguez Lion’s
recruits an army reception and induction center was established in Fort Buchanan, a basic training station at Camp O’Reilly (Gurabo), and an advanced training center at Camp Tortuguero (Vega Baja).\footnote{492} The 65th was quickly brought to war strength, attached to the U.S. Army Second Army Corps and sent to Panama in January 1942. The regiments 295 and 296 of the P.R.N.G. were called into active service in 1940 and gradually took over the 65th’s responsibilities-first in the Island and latter on throughout the Caribbean Basin.\footnote{493}

Continental and local politicians were not the only ones invested in the mass mobilization of Puerto Ricans. Convinced that “Puerto Rican men inducted under U.S. standards were drastically inferior to Continental troops” the U.S. Army’s Puerto Rican Department unilaterally set higher standards for natives to be admitted in the service in July 1942, including twice the schooling of that of Continental Americans.\footnote{494} More satisfied with the men selected after the new requirements were instituted, the War Department decided to use these men to replace Continental troops in the Caribbean area.

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\footnote{493} The 65th was sent to Panama, the southern Continental U.S., North Africa, Corsica, France and Germany and though it underwent chemical, amphibious and jungle warfare, infiltration and other intensive training, it remained restricted to security and service missions. See Melvin C. Walthall, *We Can’t All Be Heroes: A History of the Separated Infantry Regiments in World War II* (New York: Exposition Press, 1975), 24-25; and Muratti, *History of the 65th*, 12-14; Vargas Interview. The 295th, served mostly in the Caribbean, including Panama, Jamaica and the Dutch Caribbean Islands. The 296 trained for war in the Pacific but the war ended with them waiting deployment in Hawaii.

\footnote{494} *Puerto Rican Induction Program, 1.*
The Puerto Rican monthly quota was raised as the reports on the new inductees’ performance showed improvement, and over 16,000 men were inducted using the new standards.\textsuperscript{495} Such policy, however, was taken as demeaning by the Islanders. In March of 1944, under pressure from civic groups and local politicians, the War Department ordered the local selective service unit in the Island to reinstate the 4\textsuperscript{th} grade education requirement for admittance into the army and to set the monthly inductee quota at 1,500 men. Between March 1944 and April 1, 1945 roughly 18,380 men were inducted in the army. The War Department, however, decided that these new troops would be used as “fillers for Puerto Rican units and as service troops in overseas theaters”.\textsuperscript{496} Thus, the War Department found a way to still deny equal opportunity to those born in the Island.

It was the general attitude that Puerto Ricans, as colored troops, were not suited for combat duty. The Bureau of the Budget’s report on the inductee program on the Island declared that: “Puerto Ricans obviously are not as valuable as Continentals for

\textsuperscript{495} The Free French, British and Dutch government opposed sending Puerto Rican troops to their Caribbean possessions believing it may stir racial tensions. The presence of Puerto Ricans, who were considered Colored troops in these overwhelmingly Black colonies could undermined the racial structure of power and endanger the abysmally small white elite. As a matter of fact that was the War Department’s reason for not sending Black Continental troops to the Caribbean. At any rate, the War Department did not believe it could spare any white troops, especially for a war theater that had become a secondary concern after the Allied invasions of North Africa and Sicily in 1943. Nonetheless, to placate their European Allies, the U.S. War Department assured them that only white, highly-educated (referring to 8\textsuperscript{th} years of schooling), English speaking Puerto Ricans would be sent to their possessions. For instance see; British Joint Staff Mission, Offices of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Washington D.C., June 2, 1943 to Secretary of War Stimson; War Department, “Outgoing Classified Message,” 18 September 1943, Operations Division W.D.G.S. Latin American Theater; United States Deputy Chief of Staff to Field Marshall Sir John Hill, Combined Chief of Staff Building, Washington D.C., October 12, 1943, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 22 Cartapacio 4 Documento 1, 3, 4.

\textsuperscript{496} \textit{Puerto Rican Induction Program}, 1-3
Army service because of lower educational and physical standards, racial and historical traditions and background, aptitude, etc…” Not only did the War Department believed that their race poorly suited non-whites for combat duty, but that it also made them intellectually inferior to Continental white soldiers. Though the same regulations, with regard to schooling were applied to Puerto Rican recruits, and then doubled, Continental officials still believed that Puerto Ricans were deficient in intellect which they blamed on the recruits’ race. Furthermore, the report reiterated the myth of Puerto Rican docility (created shortly after the 1898 invasion) and ignored the Island’s military tradition.

The BoB report stated that the use of native officers in the Puerto Rican units was “a major reason for the retention of many men whose effectiveness and/or efficiency is questionable in comparison with Continental troops.” The conclusions of this report with regard to the protective role played by Puerto Rican officers, however, goes against many of the troops’ preference for serving under Continental officers as they were less demanding than their Puerto Rican counterparts. According to these soldiers, Puerto Rican officers seemed to always have something to prove, the proverbial chip on the shoulder.

The War Department’s low opinion of the Puerto Ricans was set before recruitment began. In the Puerto Rican Induction Report prepared by the Bureau of the

497 Ibid, 7-8

498 Ibid., 6

499 See Víctor Vargas, interview by author, videocassette, Barranquitas, Puerto Rico, 6 August 2001. Lupercio Ortiz, interview by author, videocassette, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 6 August 2001; Juan Mercado-Santana, interview by author, videocassette, Barranquitas, Puerto Rico, 6 August 2001. All the interviews conducted by the author are in the author’s possession.
Budget in 1945, it is stated that the Puerto Rican inductee “admittedly, was not generally suited for front line duty” but would valuable for other duties and “thousands of potential actual combat U.S. Continental personnel would thereby be released from secondary services.”

A War Department adamant in showing that all “available sources of non-father (pre-Pearl Harbor) manpower were being exhausted before fathers were called” thus proceeded to mobilize thousands of Puerto Ricans- which it did not trust nor did it intend to send into battle.

According to the Bureau of the Budget, the Puerto Rican Induction Program admittedly had another purpose “not directly related to the actual prosecution of the war.”

The War Department, through induction, sought to “provide employment for many idle Puerto Ricans classified as 1-A”. FDR, members of Congress and the military, had continuously expressed their fear of local unrest. Excluding able, and unemployed, Puerto Ricans from the military could have been taken as an outright insult especially considering that unemployment in the Island went from 99,100 in July 1941 to 237,000 in September 1942 because of the strain imposed on the Island by German U-boats, rationing, the prioritization of military needs, and the failure to establish war industries in Puerto Rico.

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500 Puerto Rican Induction Program, 2

501 Ibid.

502 Ibid.

503 Ibid.

504 Lefebvre, “Puerto Rico: Quiet Participant”, 95; and Dietz, Economic History of Puerto Rico, 186.
That Puerto Rican soldiers were excluded from the battlefield was not the result of any refusal on their part. Soldiers, local leaders, the press, and the general public in the Island demanded the opportunity to see action. Local leaders were interested into getting as many Puerto Ricans as possible in the military, and many were certainly aware of the economic and political effect of doing so. However, Puerto Rican leaders and opinion makers did not want military participation to be a handout. It was important for Puerto Rican leaders to debunk the myth of the Puerto Rican soldier inferiority (and thus of the Puerto Ricans’ in general) and so they pushed the matter of sending the troops into action—just as they had done during WWI. The War Department may have wanted to save face by including Puerto Ricans in the military but restricting them to service duties, an opinion shared by Continental politicians and opinion makers, but local leaders and soldiers demanded a chance to prove their worth in the battlefield. For once, there was the symbolic regaining of manhood. This could be attained by first being able to support their families and secondly by sharing the burden of “national defense” by fighting, and if necessary, dying in war. Furthermore, many local leaders, including Muñoz Marín, thought that active participation in the war would convince Puerto Ricans that they could stand on their own, individually and collectively, and that they could in fact run the

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505 Many Puerto Rican career officers tried unsuccessfully to receive combat assignments in Europe or the Pacific Theater. See J.A. Ulio, Major General, War Department Adjutant General, to Honorable Luis Muñoz Marín, President, Senate of Puerto Rico, February 2, 1945; an Luis Muñoz Marín to Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, January 8, 1945; and Colonel Miguel A. Muñoz to Luis Muñoz Marín, December 26, 1944, Archivo Luis Muñoz Marín (A.L.M.M.), Sección IV: Presidente del Senado, Serie I: Gobierno Federal, Correspondencia, Subserie II, War Department, Cartapacio 29, Documentos, 1,3, 5-9.
Island by themselves. In a very real sense, being allowed to fight was perceived as a mean to end psychological and sociological perceptions and complexes of inferiority.

As local leaders encouraged the population to support and join the military, economic opportunity, personal and national improvement joined national duty as part of the rationale used to exhort the Puerto Rican peasantry and working urban classes to join the military. Economic hardships and the call for national defense—with everything that it entails, combined to drive the Puerto Rican masses into recruiting stations. The War Department casually reported that: “The number of volunteers appears to be comparatively much higher than in the Continental United Sates. Some months, it is stated, volunteers supplied the complete quota.”

Economic distress was not missed by military officials when asked to comment on Puerto Rico’s exceptionally high volunteer rate. Citing the senior commander of the U.S. Army Puerto Rican Department, Major General James Lawton Collins, an editorial in the Christian Science Monitor observed that:

Since Puerto Rico’s economic problems are so acute, a grocery store clerk in a small coastal town would probably never have earned more than a few hundred

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506 Though the Nationalists had remained dormant during the period of late 1938 and 1940, the passing of the Selective Service Law awakened its leaders who quickly boycotted draft registration. By 1943, forty-five members of the party had been jailed for failure to register for the draft. After serving parts of their sentences for draft dodging several Nacionalistas were released and later accused the officers at the correctional facilities of forcing them to complete registration cards. FBI, Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, Vol. 4., 42.  

507 Puerto Rican Induction Program, 4. Some 23,000 Puerto Ricans volunteers were accepted by the War Department though more than 70,000 volunteered.
dollars a year before becoming a soldier. His Army pay plus the Government’s allowance to his wife and family will be actually a raise in income.\textsuperscript{508}

Lawton Collins’ comments rang especially true to the peasantry and the \textit{Jíbaros}. An old saying in the 65\textsuperscript{th} declared, “Poverty takes me to war, if I had any money I would not go.”\textsuperscript{509} That seemed to be the case for many Puerto Ricans who joined the military before and during World War II. Víctor Vargas, who joined the 65\textsuperscript{th} Infantry in 1940 at age sixteen, stated: “I joined because of the economic situation. I used to go downtown on a donkey to sell vegetables and tubers, but there wasn’t any money. When the war [World War II] came, I took that opportunity and started to earn $21 per month.”\textsuperscript{510}

Francisco Salinas, who enlisted in 1939 declared: “For many Puerto Ricans there is no better institution than the Army. The Army gives the \textit{Boricuas} housing, clothes, order,

\textsuperscript{508} “Army orders given in Puerto Rico in English and Spanish” Clip from the Christian Science Monitor, April 7 1942, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 21 Cartapacio 4 Documento 2A. The comments were not off the mark. Per Capita Net Income had taken a dive in 1931 to $108 from a previous $122 and by 1933 it had hit bottom at $86. Puerto Rico’s PCNI was less than a third of the poorest state’s PCNI, (Alabama with $270) and a sixth of the aggregated PCNI in the Continental U.S. which was $575. Reconstruction under the New Deal and the coming of the war propelled a slow recovery and by 1940 PCNI was back to 1930’s levels. As land reform and the war effort started to make an impact PCNI continued to rise: to $184 in 1942; $218 in 1943; $236 in 1944; and $270 by 1945. Underlining the correlation between the war effort and PCNI, after a relatively small increase to $271 in 1946, PCNI again started to decline; to $254 in 1947, and to $252 in 1949. PCNI would not rise to war levels until 1950 when it reached $279. See, Dietz, \textit{Economic History of Puerto Rico}, 140, Table 3.2, 184, Table 4.1, 205.


\textsuperscript{510} Víctor Vargas, interview; Lupercio Ortíz, interview; Juan Mercado-Santana, interview. Vargas was not the only one to mention the $21 payment. Antonio E. Padrón stated that “the stipend earned by the lower class Boricua, and even the middle class, is lower than that offered by the armed forces.” Padrón, \textit{El 65 en revista}, 1961, 132.
recreation, school, a pension, three hot meals [last tres calientes], and a decent pay. Where is the Boricua going to find all that?" The veterans who most frequently cited economic reasons for joining the army also stated that once in the army they were very happy and took pride in wearing the uniform. Their pride, some of these veterans testified, came from the respect and admiration they received from the rest of the community and a feeling of being important and needed. Lawton Collins, Commander of the Puerto Rican Department, identified other reasons besides economic improvement for Puerto Rican participation in the war effort. He stated: “It would be hard to find any community where civilians have cooperated more wholeheartedly and unselfishly with the army than in Puerto Rico. We have several gifts of lands from individual Puerto Ricans for army projects here”. The overwhelming support for the war effort and the numbers of Puerto Ricans joining the military even started to worry the Nacionalistas - whom as discussed in the previous chapter understood the symbolic value of military service with regard to national identities.

511 Padrón, El 65 en revista, 132-33.

512 Vargas Interview; Ortíz, interview, Mercado-Santana, interview. These veterans cited the poor economic situation of the Island as their reason for joining the army. However, all of them mentioned that the respect and the treatment they received when in uniform was one of the motivations to remain in the military. Also see “Army orders given in Puerto Rico in English and Spanish” Christian Science Monitor, 7 April 1942.

513 “Army orders given in Puerto Rico in English and Spanish” Christian Science Monitor, 7 April 1942.

514 The Great Assembly of the Nationalist Party appealed to the Pan-American Convention in Rio, and the Atlantic Charter, asked for the withdrawal of all U.S. armed forces from the Island, the recognition of national sovereignty and demanded “the right and privilege of having a military representative in the High Command of Democracies
The mobilization of tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans went beyond personal economic improvement—whole families and communities were affected by it. According to the Bureau of the Budget, federal payments in the form of dependant’s benefits and “readjustment payments” (a type of unemployment benefit after being discharged) were pumping $28,074,000 annually into the economy by 1944, and that excluding the regular army pay. The BoB estimated that after the war at least 30,000 veterans would seek unemployment benefits under the Servicemen Readjustment Act of 1944. Entitled by this act to a weekly unemployment pay of $20 for 52 weeks ($1040 annually), these soldiers’ readjustment pay meant a monthly boost to the local economy of $600,000 or 31,200,000 annually in wages. The readjustment weekly benefit was substantially more than the $12 weekly pay a veteran could earn working as a waiter in Fort Brooks Officer’s Club, itself a higher pay than what most Puerto Ricans earned at the moment. Many veterans in fact made use of this provision. Miguel A. Muñoz, so as to accept equal risks in the war and have the same joy in victory.” *FBI, Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico* Vol. 4., 53-54.

U.S. Army payment for a private was $21 a month in 1940. In January, 1943 a new pay scale went into effect starting at $50 a month for a private. Overseas pay meant an extra $10 a month. Ironically, Puerto Ricans serving in Puerto Rico were entitled to overseas payment while in the Island (an overseas possession) but not while training in the U.S. The Bureau of the Budget monthly figures included: Administration Induction Programs, $5,800; Dependents Benefits, (Exclusive of regular payment allotment): Monthly Benefit of Men Already in the Service, 1,850,000; Initial Payment to Dependents of New Inductees, 118,000 for a total of 1,965,000. Separation Payments: “Mastering out lump sum payment” 80,000; Weekly Readjustment Payment ($20/weekly for 52 weeks), 285,700. The total monthly expenses were thus $2,539,500 for an annual rate of $28,074,000. *Puerto Rican Induction Program, 3-10.*

The *Ley de Salario Mínimo de 1941* set the hourly wage in the Island at 25 cents of a dollar. In theory that meant that a fully employed worker should earn $10 per
Director of the Veterans Administration in the Island, informed Muñoz Marín that by June 30, 1948 roughly 49,000 veterans had received unemployment readjustment pay for a total of $40,755,971.\(^{518}\) However, those numbers show that although almost as twice the number of the expected veterans received unemployment payments, the total payments remained close to the Bureau’s 1945 estimate. This in fact indicates that veterans were not sitting idle to receive a paycheck, as the BoB had feared, but were seeking employment or retraining under the provisions of the Readjustment Act.

Regarding the Puerto Rican units being created the report concluded that “few, if any, foresaw the cost of creating this comparatively small segment of the Army.” The Puerto Rican soldiers averaged 2.6 dependants which meant an annual dependant payment of $560 per men. Moreover, Puerto Ricans were entitled to overseas payment while serving in the Island (an overseas possession) which translated into their pay being equal to those troops deployed around the world and between 10% to 20% higher than soldiers stationed in the Continental U.S.\(^{519}\) As illogical as they may be, those were not

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\(^{519}\) By the guidelines of the Service Men’s Dependents Allowance Act of 1943, enlisted men and warrant officers deployed overseas earned 20% more than those stationed in the Continental U.S while officers earned 10% more. See Puerto Rican Induction Program, 7.
policies instituted by local officials but by the War Department based on Puerto Rico’s political status and geographical location. Furthermore, *anexionistas* in the Island preferred the Island to be treated as a state, even if that meant a decrease of the War Department’s moneys assigned to the Island.\(^5\)

The BoB took special aim at dependant’s benefits. It blamed the local Selective Service Boards, “whose member are predominately, if not entirely Puerto Ricans,” of failing to verify dependants’ claims and of fomenting the steady increase of inductees applying for dependants benefits. The BoB report stated that it was “almost unbelievable that 97 out of every 110 men inducted (more of 60% being single) were supporting an average of 2.6 persons when joining the Army.”\(^6\) The report did not take into account

\(^5\) Officials of the Bureau of the Budget went as far as proposing a pay reduction for Puerto Rican soldiers since they believed that it would make sense to treat the Puerto Rican soldiers different than Continentals since army regulations did not “take into account the much higher level of living of Continental soldiers’ families, nor the much lower cost of living in Puerto Rico.” See *Puerto Rican Induction Program*, 10. However, as previously discussed, the cost of living in the Island was higher and wages much lower than in the Continental U.S., which had led to the pauperization of the peasantry and extreme poverty of the urban working class, and this situation further deteriorated during the early years of the war. Prices of imported food went up 90% between 1941 and 1946 while locally produced food increased 48% during the same period. Local food production was only increased thanks to the land-reform program carried out by Muñoz Marín and Tugwell. Supported by a federal recognition of the “Law of the 500 Acres”, the government bought lands with over 500 acres and distributed them among landless peasants. This program was credited with bringing the land area devoted to food production from 230,000 acres in 1940 to 300,000 acres by the war’s end. Most interesting, yuca, and tubers such as names and batatas, plantains and yautías made the bulk of the increase in locally-produced foods. All of them were staples of the Puerto Rican peasant’s diet. Sugar producers were adamantly opposed to devoting some of their lands to food production, even during the 1941-42 period when the Island faced starvation fearing that they would lose their production quotas. See Dietz, *Economic History of Puerto Rico*, 204-203; and Tugwell, *The Stricken Land*, 215.

\(^6\) *Puerto Rican Induction Program*, 10.
that by 1933, families in Puerto Rico already averaged five members.\textsuperscript{523} Ironically, the BoB, which used the cultural and social conditions of the Puerto Ricans to argue against their usefulness as fighting troops, overlooked the extended Puerto Rican family, many of which were led and supported by the oldest son, whom among his patriarchal duties counted being the first to go to war. The BoB ignored that, especially in rural areas, many Puerto Rican couples lived as concubines, which meant that many of those labeled as “single” likely had a partner and children from their unrecognized union. Moreover, as it is evident from the BoB report itself, local members of the selective service board were strictly following this institution’s and the War Department’s guidelines, as well as the laws passed by Congress.\textsuperscript{524} The BoB also complained that the local government was bent on helping recruits to secure documentation for purposes of dependent benefits. However, this was no different than in any of the states on the mainland to the point that many of the initiatives devised by the local government in Puerto Rico to aid the veterans and recruits in securing benefits were verbatim copies of Continental states’ legislation.\textsuperscript{525}

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\textsuperscript{523} Dietz, \textit{Economic History of Puerto Rico}, 147.

\textsuperscript{524} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{525} There was a very important provision which allowed for veterans 25 years old and younger to claim that their studies were interrupted because of military service which entitled them to a monthly pension of $50 and $75 for single and veterans with dependants respectively while they continue their studies. The same applied for veterans over 25 year of age but they had to prove that their studies were in fact interrupted. Another provision set a monthly pension of $80 and $90 for single and married veterans pursuing vocational rehabilitation 80 to single and married veterans respectively for up to a period of four years. The local government aided in securing documents necessary to claim all these benefits and even created a manual of veterans’ rights in Spanish. See Administración de Veteranos, Servicio Selectivo- Puerto Rico, \textit{Información para veteranos: derechos y beneficios}, Mayo 8 1945, (Archivo Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín
The Bureau of the Budget’s report denounced that the induction program in Puerto Rico functioned as a “glorified WPA” or a “WPA in ‘uniform’”. Proportionally, the report indicated, Puerto Rico received a larger monthly dependant benefit than any other state of the Union.\textsuperscript{526} The report accused local officials of treating mobilization as a workers’ program and of “expending large sums of money haphazardly” while “ground work is being laid [by the Puerto Rican senate] for continuing post-war expenditures in whatever form of pensions may be finally adopted.”\textsuperscript{527} The \textit{Populares} were in fact counting on the Puerto Rican soldier to bolster the socio-economic reconstruction effort in the post-war years.

The American soldiers who fought in WWII enjoyed some tangible benefits not experienced by their WWI predecessors. The \textit{Populares} would make sure that no benefit (i.e., vocational rehabilitation, unemployment benefits, re-employment, discharge compensation, life insurance, medical assistance, mortgage loans) remained unclaimed by Puerto Rican veterans. The PPD leaders also fought to extend the same benefits to WWI veterans. Altogether, the WWI and WWII veteran population residing in Puerto Rico in

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\textsuperscript{526} \textit{Puerto Rican Induction Program}, 7.
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\textsuperscript{527} Ibid., 7, 10.
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1947 totaled 70,426 men and 210 WACs or Women Army Corps veterans.\textsuperscript{528} Even though a fifth of WWII veterans were no longer residing in Puerto Rico in 1947, over 14% of Island’s population consisted of veterans. The sheer number of veterans eligible to participate on the several federal readjustment programs facilitated the \textit{Populares} effort to change the nature of the Island’s socioeconomic structures and eventually to embark on the industrialization of the Island with native know-how.

Arguably, the most important of those benefits was the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the G.I. Bill, which allowed almost eight million WWII veterans in the U.S. to go to college- a feat that has been credited with the dramatic expansion of the middle class in the mainland.\textsuperscript{529} The G.I. Bill had a similar

\textsuperscript{528} Of those residing in the Island in 1947, 13,271 served in WWI and 52,586 in WWII. See Contact Division, Veterans Administration Center, “Estimated Veteran Population, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands,” San Juan, P.R., June 9, 1947; A.L.M.M., Sección IV Serie 1 Subsección 1: Datos y Estadísticas Sub-serie 33 Cartapacio 29 Documento 2º. The Military Aide to the Governor of Puerto Rico, Teodoro Vidal, prepared a report which stated that between November 20, 1940 and March 31, 1947, 65,034 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. military of which 368 lost their lives (combat, training, and accidents). 70,138 volunteer for service but only 23,198 were accepted. Over 12,000 WWII Puerto Rican veterans were not living in the Island by 1954. See Teodoro Vidal, Ayudante Militar del Gobernador, “Participación Puertorriqueña en la Segunda Guerra Mundial y en el Conflicto de Corea.” A.L.M.M., Sección V Serie 9: Artículos, Discursos, Mensajes, Declaraciones Luis Muñoz Marín Gobernador de Puerto Rico 1949-1964, Noviembre-Diciembre 1954, Cartapacio 7 Documento 9. By the war’s end there were over 67,500 men serving in the Puerto Rican Department. It climaxed at roughly 91,000 (including Continental troops) in 1943. See Negroni, \textit{Historia Militar de Puerto Rico}, 444-45.

\textsuperscript{529} The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act was finally signed into law by President Roosevelt on June 22, 1944. The Veterans Administration became responsible for carrying out the law’s key provisions: education and training, loan guaranty for homes, farms or businesses, and unemployment pay. Millions of veterans who would have flooded the job market after the war suddenly had the option of attaining college and vocational education. According to the Veterans Administration, in 1947, “veterans accounted for 49 percent of college admissions. By the time the original GI Bill ended on July 25, 1956, 7.8 million of 16 million World War II veterans had participated in an
effect in the Island. Understanding that many Puerto Rican soldiers would not be able to use the benefits of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, for too many had little formal schooling, Muñoz Marín and the *Populares* designed training and vocational state programs for the returning soldiers so they could make use of these hard-earned benefits. The returning soldier was not to go back to the fields; high schools, vocational schools and the University of Puerto Rico were waiting for him.

The Department of Education and the Veterans Administration worked closely to retrain and in most cases to help the veterans finish high school. In 1946-47 the Department of Education in the Island had readied itself for the returning soldiers and trained 1,167 academic teams which employed 3,677 people to cater 36,584 veterans. Besides primary and secondary teachings the DoE conducted over 650 workshops and 8,418 veterans received diplomas that first year. The DoE was spending over $3,000,000 annually to run these programs. During the academic year of 1947-48 the local government helped over 40,000 veterans to obtain the necessary credentials or certifications necessary to receive education under the Servicemen Readjustment Act. That year the DoE again counted 36,584 veterans finishing high school, 1,798 in vocational (industrial) schools, and 936 pursuing vocational agricultural studies.

Furthermore, between 1944 and 1952, the VA “backed nearly 2.4 million home loans for World War II veterans.” More compelling, few veterans “collected on one of the bill's most controversial provisions—the unemployment pay. Less than 20 percent of funds set aside for this was used.” See “G.I. Bill History” [United States Department of Veterans Affairs]; accessed 4 December 2009; available from http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/history.htm.

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530 Memorandum Muñoz to Muñoz Marín, 1948.
531 Ibid.
According to a report from Pedro Gil, Director of Veterans’ Division the Department of Education, over 48,075 veterans were receiving some kind of secondary education. Over 2,000 were receiving vocational industrial training and roughly 1,200 were enrolled in vocational agricultural studies. The report boasted that over 50,000 veterans were receiving some kind of instruction.

The enrollment in the University of Puerto Rico increased 24% from 5,869 students in 1941-42 to 7,300 for the year 1944-45, and it would continue to expand mostly in part to accommodate a growing veteran population- which now had the means to go to college. The total veteran population for the academic year 1947-48, rose to 2,074 students. The next year 2,307 were attending the U.PR. As the U.P.R. grew in terms of enrollment, it was also restructured to emphasize the teaching of social sciences with the intention of producing a harvest of economists, public administrators, social workers, and all types of professions associated with public service. Moreover as explained by Henry Wells, strengthening the social sciences core did not diminished interest in applied sciences which in turn supplied the new commercial and industrial

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532 Ibid.


534 Memorandum Muñoz to Muñoz Marín, 1948.

535 1,777 attended Río Piedras’ Campus and 530 attended the Mayagüez’s Campus. Ibid.
enterprises’ demand for accountants, staticians, engineers, scientists, managers, and all types of technicians.\textsuperscript{536}

On August 1947, the University of Puerto Rico inaugurated an Industrial Arts School (\textit{Escuela de Artes y Oficios}) with 1,200 students mostly veterans. The school, which when finished would have room for 7,000 students, covered twenty-two acres, included twenty-five classrooms, one administrative building, fourteen buildings for practical workshops, four classroom buildings, a bakery and a cafeteria.\textsuperscript{537} This school offered over fifty courses designed to train carpenters, electricians, experts on car bodywork, sheet metal work, and cast iron works, as well as auto, aviation, and general mechanics, plumbers, experts on refrigeration, and welders. Five more of these schools were eventually built.\textsuperscript{538} The director of the Veterans Administration in the Island understood the priority of these schools and stated that although they were not exclusively for veterans, former servicemen would receive preference for admission.\textsuperscript{539}

The importance of these thousands of soldiers who received technical training went beyond that of providing technicians. They subsidize the schooling of thousands more since their tuition, books and other expenses were paid in full by the Federal Government which allowed the U.P.R. to expand in other areas while keeping tuition

\textsuperscript{536} See Pablo Navarro Rivera, \textit{Universidad de Puerto Rico: De control político a crisis permanente 1903-1952} (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 2000), 98-105; and Wells, La modernización de Puerto Rico, 86-87.

\textsuperscript{537} Memorandum Muñoz to Muñoz Marín, 1948.

\textsuperscript{538} The schools were built in Ponce, Mayagüez, Arecibo, Humacao and Guayama. See Memorandum Muñoz to Muñoz Marín, 1948.

\textsuperscript{539} “Todas estas escuelas no serán exclusivamente para los veteranos, pero se le dará preferencia en todo tiempo al veterano que interese asistir a ellas.” Ibid.
rates low and offering scholarships. Hence, it is not surprising that the U.P.R. administration went out of its way to make sure that “not a single veteran who wished to enroll in the University of Puerto Rico and who met the admission requirements, was denied the opportunity to attend either Río Piedras or Mayagüez because of lack of space.” These citizen soldiers, through vocational and college education, were to become the technicians and technocrats of a new political framework, the “Commonwealth” and of its main project, the modernization of Puerto Rico’s economy via industrialization.

But before Muñoz Marín moved towards the Commonwealth formula, he had already engaged the military in promoting the Island’s industrialization and in providing essential services commonly reserved for state agencies or the private sector. The National Guard (and the State Guard) were occupied with providing entertainment during towns’ Fiestas Patronales and helping public schools with extracurricular activities ranging from athletics and field days to conducting seminars on industrialization for civilians and veterans. Moreover, through their own radio show the National Guard sought not only to provide entertainment but to remain engaged with communities hosting guard units. The P.R.N.G. also appointed godmothers and honorary officers in

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540 Ibid.

these communities seeking to create a sense of belonging. The military was in fact busy with community and state building projects as it continued to take on civilian roles to fill the vacuum of non-existent civilian structures. This added another dimension to the role of the military in the Island- beyond providing economic relief by direct and indirect employment and beyond its character and nation building role as proposed by local and Continental leaders. In many areas the military in the Island had taken a leadership role in the effort to reconstruct Puerto Rico. Unsurprisingly many of the officers of the National Guard also worked for the relief and reconstruction agencies in the Island. Furthermore, many of the enlisted men and officers had trained or were training to fill the needs of the coming insular industrial revolution.

542 On April 46, the State Guard helped the Ponce High School celebrate its Field Day. The Appointment of “Godmothers and Honorary Officers in each town where companies are organized has resulted in greater cooperation from local authorities and prominent citizens. Our aim is to make each community realize that the State Guard company in each town is its own so they will look it up to the limit. The state guard units are no longer consider by the public as something foreign to them, but as organizations of their own.” See Luis Raul Estevez, Adjutant General, Report on the Puerto Rico State Guard, for the Year 1945-46 (C.I.H.P.C., Caja 17 Cartapacio 3 Documento 2), 5. Hereafter Report on the Puerto Rico State Guard, for the Year 1945-46.

543 A good example of the overlapping military-civilian roles of the Puerto Rican soldier is Miguel A. Muñoz, the director of the Veterans Administration in the Island during this period. He was a Colonel in the National Guard who served as executive officer (XO) of the 295th Regiment (P.R.N.G.), as a captain in Camp Las Casas during the WWI, as commander of the “Porto Rico American Legion” and vice-commander of the National American Legion. He had been the personal secretary of Governor Yager in 1914. After he publicly criticized the tactics of the Insular Police during the Ponce Massacre of March 21, 1937 he had been under pressure from Governor Winship to resign his commission. See, El Imparcial de Puerto Rico: Periódico Ilustrado, 1 April 1937, clip, in Report to Chief National Guard Bureau, April 27 1937, Extract from 65th Infantry Report April 14 1937, Col. F.H. Lincoln, General Staff, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, C.I.H.P.C., Caja 19, Cartapacio 2, Documento 11 H. Another example is Colonel Juan C. Cordero-Dávila who served with the 65th Infantry during WWII and after the war commanded the 296th Regimental Combat Team of the P.R.N.G. Cordero-Davila, who would eventually lead the 65th during the Korean War, was also the director of the Puerto
With the help of Tugwell, Muñoz Marín and the *Populares* had been able to plant the seeds of socio-economic change during the war years and the early postwar period. However, political advancement had been limited by an intractable Congress and by the most militant pro-independence wing within the PPD. The PPD won the elections of November 1944 in a landslide, even after bitter accusations between Muñoz Marín and the *Independentistas* in the PPD were made public.\(^{544}\) The *Independentistas* had wanted the total rejection of the Governor Bill and a compromise to celebrate a referendum to vote for independence a month after the general elections of 1944. Once again, Muñoz Marín ran the PPD’s campaign on the basis of social and economic reform, allegiance to the war effort, and assurances that a vote for the *Populares* was not a vote for independence. The platform of the PPD, however, made clear the intention of the *Populares* to submit to the direct decision of the Puerto Ricans, “not later than the

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\(^{544}\) Of 591,978 votes the PPD obtained 383,280. Partido *Unión* Republicana obtained 101,779; Partido Socialista 69,107; Partido Liberal 38,630. The *Populares* won all district senate seats, 3 of 5 seats for senators at large, 34 of 35 seats in the House of Representatives, 73 of 77 municipalities, and elected Jesus T. Piñero as Resident Commissioner in Washington D.C. See Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, 202-03.
moment when the world peace is structured, the question of the final political status desired by the people of Puerto Rico. Muñoz Marín, who followed the war closely, probably thought, as many did, that the war would be over before Christmas that year. Thus, the PPD platform of 1944 was a repetition of that of 1940 with an emphasis on ending the colonial regime, as soon as the fighting was over, via a referendum in which all the political sectors had a chance to promote their status preference.

On January 10, 1945 Tydings presented yet another Independence Bill, identical to the one introduced in 1943. During the public hearings held during March 5-8 of that year, the position of the different groups with interests in Puerto Rico remained the same as in 1943. U.S Navy Captain G.B. Parks, representing the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, officially declared that “from the viewpoint of national security Puerto Rico is of great strategic value as a site for naval operating base,” and that after the war the facilities in the Island were to be used to locate the “Task Force in charge of defending the Caribbean to deny the approach of any threat from east or south.” For that reason, the Navy was “opposed to any bill for Puerto Rico independence that does not provide for the retention of the naval and military reservations, and does not also provide for the right of expansion and the selection of new sites at any time in the future.” The armed forces’ position clearly indicated that the military leaders planed to continue using Puerto

545 See H.R. 3309, 44-46.


547 Ibid., 27-29.
Rico to project U.S. power over the Caribbean Basin after the war ended— and that they wanted a free hand with regard to expanding their footprint in Puerto Rico.

The death of President Roosevelt in April 1945 brought an inexperienced and uninformed Harry S. Truman to the presidency of the United States. This event could have not been more relevant. \(^{548}\) Truman was willing to support self-government for the Island—a position that FDR had abandoned. He also made clear to Tugwell that he was against independence for Puerto Rico. In an attempt to secure a fair referendum, Tugwell tried to convince Truman that “if there is a plebiscite, neither of us should say so in a way to influence Puerto Rican’s choice,” and Truman agreed that he thought the Puerto Ricans “should have the right to make even a disastrous choice.” \(^{549}\) Unbeknownst to Truman, he was, in fact, reversing his predecessor’s policy. However, without outright support from the president there was little chance of convincing congress to grant independence to the Island.

As it had been the case in 1943, Muñoz Marín could not support the Independence Bill of 1945. He wanted economic guarantees and a chance for the Puerto Ricans to vote on status options. Moreover, these options should be guaranteed by Congress. Muñoz Marín was still operating under the assumption that once the war was over the sacrifices made by Puerto Rico and its loyalty towards the Allies’ cause would be

\(^{548}\) When Truman became President, he was unaware of the abandonment of the Good Neighbor policy and immediately followed a course which actually reverted to the former policy. Truman met with Tugwell on August 23, 1945, and informed him that he saw his presidency as no more than an extension of the Roosevelt regime. Therefore, Truman was in favor of taking action toward self-government for Puerto Rico and estimated that if he pushed, “it would be done, he would predict, in six months.” Tugwell, *The Stricken Island*, xvii-xix.

\(^{549}\) Ibid., xix.
rewarded with a referendum sponsored by Congress to find a formula to decolonize the Island. The Department of the Interior had come to believe that the Puerto Rico should not sever its ties with the United States but that home rule was a must. Ironically, the position held by Muñoz Marín, who was already recognized by the U.S. government as the most influential and popular leader in Puerto Rico, strengthen the Interior’s opinion.

On October 16, 1945, in a special message to Congress on Puerto Rico, Truman declared that it was the policy of his administration to promote the political, social and economic development of people who have not yet attained full self-government, “and eventually to make it possible for them to determine their own form of government.” Truman went further and emphasized that it was time to “ascertain from the people of Puerto Rico their wishes as to the ultimate status which they prefer within such limits as may be determined by the Congress,” with the end of granting Puerto Ricans the kind of government which they desire. Truman probably did not intend to curtail the right of Puerto Ricans to choose their status, but he was concerned that they might vote for a formula that Congress was not ready to support. Such occurrence would undoubtedly

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551 Rosario Natal, *Luis Muñoz Marín y la independencia*, 191; quoting Under-Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas: “Perhaps they do not want to sue for divorce, and perhaps we should not propose that the ties between us be dissolved. But there is one thing we can all agree upon: Puerto Rico should have complete home rule.”


553 Ibid.
have diplomatic repercussions for the United States at a moment when it was trying to assert itself as the leader of the free world. Therefore, Truman suggested that Congress consider four different possibilities: “(1) the right of the Puerto Ricans to elect their own Governor with a wider measure of local self-government; (2) Statehood for Puerto Rico; (3) complete independence; and (4) a Dominion form of government [similar to the political arrangement between Canada and the United Kingdom].” Congress, which was not interested at all in a referendum, did not even hold public hearings for the new Tidings-Piñero bill.555

Cornered by the Independentistas in the PPD, by another American President that did not support the independence of Puerto Rico, by a Congress that would not give Puerto Rico an independence that the Island could survive, and compelled by the loyalty he felt towards his constituency, which had elected him on the premise that a vote for the PPD was not a vote for independence, and aware of the Island’s growing dependency on federal funds- including veterans’ benefits, Muñoz Marín began to turn decidedly towards autonomismo. In 1946, he expelled the Independentistas from the PPD, who responded by forming that same year the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño, or PIP. The third Tydings bill, and its sequel, the Tydings-Piñero bill, had an unexpected

554 Ibid. Although, Truman repeated this position in his State of the Union Address, the proposal of the President with regard to dominion status, was indeed vague, and he did not pursue it vigorously “Message to the Congress on the State of the Union and on the Budget for 1947, January 21 1946” [Truman Presidential Museum and Library, Harry S. Truman Papers Staff Member and Office Files: White House Press Release Files: Dates: 1945-1953, Item 18]; accessed 27 February 2006; available from http://www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpaper/presshst.htm.

555 The Bill has come to be known as the Tydings- Piñero Bill as Piñero and Muñoz Marín talked Tydings into re-introduce it but with statehood and self-government as political options in the bill. Trías Monge, Trials of the Oldest Colony, 105.
effect. It almost destroyed the PPD, and in the end, it forced its leadership to define the party’s status preference. Muñoz Marín had come to the conclusion that the U.S. would not offer enough guarantees to make independence viable nor could he persuade the people to vote for it. This experience finally moved Muñoz Marín to seek *autonomismo*, or a higher degree of self-government, a formula that he knew Truman would support.

The reluctance of Congress to consider a referendum drove Muñoz Marín to endorse yet another Governor Bill in 1947. This time, Muñoz Marín, expressed his enthusiasm for the bill in a long cablegram to Congress. The PPD immediately mobilized in favor of the bill. Piñero, whom Truman had appointed as governor of Puerto Rico (the first Puerto Rican to serve in such position), and Antonio Fernós Isern, the new Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner in Washington and member of the congressional committee studying the bill, hurried to express their support and to educate the members of the committee on the benefits of approving the bill.

Showing the new, although limited, decolonization spirit of the White House, the new Secretary of the Interior, J.A. Krug, declared that Article 76 of the United Nations Charter made the approval of the Governor Bill necessary. Krug also convinced the committee that approving it would send a message to “the nations of the world, and particularly of South America” that the United States adhered to the principles of democracy and self-government and had no colonial empire.” He also called on

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556 H.R. 3309, 15-16, 19.

557 Ibid., 3, According to Article 76 of the United Nations Chart, the U.S., as the metropolitan power, had the responsibility to “promote the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants” of territories and islands possessions.

558 Ibid., 5.
Congress to commit itself to sponsor a referendum to decide the political status of Puerto Rico in the near future. 559 In his deposition, Piñero followed the anti-colonial line and emphasized the prestige that this bill would bring to the United States throughout the world. During the hearings he also promoted a Congress-sponsored referendum and hinted at the possibility of a third status. 560 James A. Beverley, a former governor of the Island, informed Congress that over 99% of Puerto Ricans were intensely loyal to the United States (and that their war service was evidence of such loyalty) and that approving the bill would not affect national defense. Moreover, he also advocated the idea of holding a referendum as soon as possible. 561

During the hearings before the House a single letter from the Independentistas, and the personal testimony of Ruth M. Reynolds, Secretary of the American League for Puerto Rico’s Independence, expressed opposition to the bill. Reynolds argued that Puerto Rico should be granted independence and that American sovereignty over the Island was illegal. 562 In fact, of the eighty letters and cablegrams included in the records

559 Ibid., 5-6.

560 Ibid., 8-9, 10-11, 13.

561 Ibid., 35-36.

562 Reynolds based her arguments on the provisions of the Autonomic Charter of 1897, a position earlier developed by Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos, leader of the Nationalists. Title VII, article 43 guaranteed the veto power of the Puerto Rican parliament over decisions reached by the Cortes of the Kingdom were over a dozen Puerto Rican delegates seat with both voice and vote. Article 2 declared that the “present constitution shall not be amended except by virtue of a special law and upon petition of the insular parliament.” Since the military disbanded the Insular Parliament, and there were no Puerto Rican delegates present to sign the Treaty of Paris of December 10, the passing of sovereignty over Puerto Rico to the United States was a violation of the legal relationship between Spain and Puerto Rico and thus illegal. Representative Fred L. Crawford rebuked Ms. Reynolds and proceeded to discredit her testimony by pointing out
of Congress, only the one sent by the PIP was against the bill. The rest of the messages, signed by mayors, senators, independent organizations and common people supported it.\textsuperscript{563}

Representative Fred L. Crawford, who during the hearings expressed his preference for Puerto Rican statehood, made clear on the record that he was completely against independence.

I do not propose to give Puerto Rico its independence. Statehood is a different proposition, change of political status is a different proposition, but the United States will either defend Latin America, including Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo and Haiti and South America or we [the United States] will come under the domination of some power in Europe.\textsuperscript{564}

Adhering to an end of siècle rationale used to take over Cuba and Puerto Rico during the Cuban-Pilipino-Spanish American War of 1898, Crawford emphasized that although he trusted Puerto Ricans, he believed that some European power might attempt to gain a foothold there from which it could operate against the United States, and therefore independence for the Island would be a blow against national defense.\textsuperscript{565}

Unlike the Independence Bills’ hearings of 1936 and 1943, in which Senator Tydings made clear that Congress would never grant statehood to Puerto Rico, in 1947 Congress’ the links of her organization and the independence movement with Communists parties in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Ibid. 42-42, 47.

\textsuperscript{563} Ibid., 15-29.

\textsuperscript{564} Ibid., 54.

\textsuperscript{565} Ibid., 55.
attitude towards Puerto Rico had shifted considerably to the point that statehood was actually being considered by members of Congress and the military.\(^{566}\)

Undoubtedly, the first consequence of the Cold War was to revive, or more accurately, to increase the military importance of Puerto Rico, which made independence unthinkable for Congress. The United States, however, had also emerged from World War II as the self-proclaimed leader of the free world, a position quickly challenged by the Soviet Union. The decolonization of Puerto Rico thus assumed more relevance than ever before, especially with the intense propaganda that characterized the Cold War. The diplomatic value of decolonizing the Island rivaled its military worth, a point that politicians on both sides were quickly to realize.

The Governor Bill of 1947 was approved by Congress after the Department of Interior and the political leaders of the Island went out of their way to establish that its passage would not curtail the powers of Congress over Puerto Rico.\(^{567}\) This time Muñoz Marín did not try to obtain from Congress guarantees that it would not make further changes to the Organic Act except with the consent of the people of Puerto Rico.\(^{568}\) It was obvious that he had bigger plans for the Island and that he had been gaining support

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\(^{566}\) S.952, 52-53.

\(^{567}\) By the Act of August 5, 1947, the people of Puerto Rico were authorized to elect their own Governor. This Act also provided that the heads of all executive departments of Puerto Rico were to be appointed by the elected Governor of Puerto Rico, including the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Education. As a result of the Act, therefore, the people of Puerto Rico assumed direct responsibility and control over the executive branch of the local government. The President of the United States still retained authority to appoint the Auditor and the Justices of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico. See, \textit{H.R. 3309}, and \textit{S.1184}. The act providing for the governorship of Puerto Rico by election is Public Law 382, 80th Congress.

\(^{568}\) Trías Monge, \textit{Trials of the Oldest Colony}, 105.
of the Interior and powerful Congressmen to find a formula to decolonize Puerto Rico with a future referendum. In August 5, 1947, President Truman signed the Governor Bill which became Public Law 382, providing for the election of the governor of Puerto Rico. The significance in passing the Governor Bill was that the Interior and powerful Congressmen established without doubt the military and strategic significance of Puerto Rico, but more importantly, they recognized the diplomatic gains that decolonizing the Island offered the U.S.

In a visit to Puerto Rico in February 21, 1948, Truman reiterated his commitment to local self-government, and labeled the nomination of an island-born governor, that of Jésus T. Piñero, and the elected-Governor Bill, as significant steps toward the increasing measure of self-government in Puerto Rico. More relevant, perhaps, was the fact that Truman pointed out that the relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. was mutually beneficial and that it was an example to the world of how well the “democratic approach to the problem of national existence in the modern world” worked. Moreover, Truman stated that Puerto Rico represented “what the American people are trying to encourage in the world at large.” The president recognized the value of Puerto Rico in global politics, a point that Puerto Rican politicians did not miss. In 1948, Muñoz Marín became the first elected governor of Puerto Rico. From this office, with firm


570 Of 640,714 votes cast the PPD obtained 392,386, the Independentistas, 65,351; the Estadistas (former Republicanos) 89,441; and the Socialistas 64,396. The former Liberales under the name of Reformistas obtained 29,140. Estadistas, Liberales and Socialistas formed another coalition. The PPD won all offices and municipalities but the
command of the political apparatus and with overwhelming popular support Muñoz Marín would launch a new offensive to decolonize the socio-economic and political structures in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rican veterans and the military units still active in the Island in many ways would spearhead the new campaign.

When men of the 65th returned home on November 9, 1945, they were received as heroes by an enthusiastic multitude crowding the streets of San Juan and waving both Puerto Rican and American flags. The Victory Parades did not stop until the spring of 1946 as Puerto Rican units continue to return from overseas deployment. In several speeches Muñoz Marín made clear the reasons for sending Puerto Ricans to join the fight overseas. The common Puerto Rican, Muñoz Marín argued, was forging democracy abroad and at home. He did not hesitate to identify who those heroes were; “soldiers and citizens and Jíbaros…” That the returning Puerto Rican “heroes” wore U.S. Army uniforms and that they were received by crowds waving the Island’s unofficial flag and the stars and stripes evidenced the intricate nature of national identities in the Island.

town of San Lorenzo, two senators and a representative at large- positions which were won by Socialistas and Estadistas. See Bayrón Toro, Elecciones y partidos políticos puertorriqueños, 210-11. Once Muñoz Marín was elected, it became harder for the Independentistas to gain support from anti-American factions in Cuba, Brazil and Central America, and the U.S. was able to shield itself from accusations of colonialism. Tugwell, The Arts of Politics, 64.

571 Norat-Martínez, Historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería, 53.

572 Report on the Puerto Rico State Guard, for the Year 1945-46.

During the war, both the metropolis and the local politicians’ projects had in common their emphasis on creating a modern Puerto Rico. Modernization had meant political Americanization as understood by some local politicians as early as 1898, and as late as the 1920s. For the metropolis, however, Americanization was still intrinsic to modernization, but it also entailed cultural assimilation not just political. Thus the initial projects of both the metropolis and the criollo elites had presupposed some type of modernization via Americanization with the meaning and extent of the latter varying accordingly. These projects were not completely rejected by the masses but re-imagined as they went through the metropolitan institutions usually cheered by a cacophony of modernizing discourses echoed and distorted by the Puerto Rican elites.

Cultural and political assimilation had been at the core of modernization projects for four decades. During WWII, however, the emphasis was on economic modernization- first suggested during WWI.\textsuperscript{574} The socio-economic reconstruction programs in Puerto Rico have been studied either by over emphasizing a pure economic or political focus. They center on relief agencies such as the PRERA and PRRA, and economic strategies like the Plan Chardón, Rex G. Tugwell’s and Muñoz Marín’s promotion of local industry during WWII, and the subsequent and world famous Operation Bootstrap (“\textit{manos a la obra}”) leading to the final industrialization of the Island. Such narratives have left out the role of tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans serving in the U.S. military during WWII. Initially they represented an economic boom- in the form of new wages and unemployment relief- just by serving in the armed forces.

\textsuperscript{574} The Porto Rico Progress, 12 July 1918, (Microfilm, Colección Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus). Op. Cit.
Furthermore, as military mobilization advanced, their salaries and benefits came to
eclipse the funds available to both the PRERA and PRRA. However, through their
service they provided more than temporary economic relief.

Unlike WWI veterans, before WWII ended the Puerto Rican soldier could count
on a generous package of benefits designed to ease the soldier’s re-entry into civilian life.
A march towards a “modern” Puerto Rico had started and these soldiers would be leading
such movement. That Luis Muñoz Marín came to depend on the votes of the peasantry
and rural working classes to attain political power and on their military mobilization to
advance the socio-economic restructuration of the Island would eventually force him to
change his personal political goals, first tactically and later definitively. Fittingly,
militarization and enfranchisement of the Puerto Rican masses during WWII coincided
with a growing dependence in the Island on the federal government’s political, legal and
financial intervention.\textsuperscript{575}

Old metropolitan ideas regarding the impact of military training on Puerto Rico’s
social and economic structures resurfaced during the war.\textsuperscript{576} This was not a new theory.
Immediately after the 1898 invasion and during WWI, military service had been consider
as a builder of character and national identity and as a way to remake the Puerto Ricans
in the Continental’s image. But even in WWI, the metropolis’ nation-building project,

\textsuperscript{575} An “institutional” link with the metropolis, specifically with the Federal
Government was hard to miss. For example, the PRERA and PRRA, as well as other
relief and reconstruction efforts, were Federal initiatives and federally-funded.

\textsuperscript{576} The \textit{Christian Science Monitor} after pointing out that 35% of the Island’s
population was illiterate, argued that “trained Army officers are inculcating in thousands
of Puerto Ricans improved ideas of diet, education, and sanitation which they believe
will contribute to raising the standards of domestic and community life when the war is
which heavily relied on modernizing the Puerto Rican via military service, had started to escape the hands of the metropolitan administrators. History repeated itself during WWII as the plans of the metropolis- including type, size, and length of mobilization had to contend with an empowered Puerto Rican senate led by a popular and skillful politician such as Muñoz Marín. Moreover, Muñoz Marín worked incessantly to make the Puerto Rican soldier an integral part of the socio-economic restructuring of the Island.

By the end of the war, control of the nation, and now state-building project via military service was firmly in the *Populares*’ hands. Thus, while the U.S. military had envisioned service as a way to build a new Puerto Rican and thus a new Puerto Rico, as early as 1898- and most certainly during WWI, this project really came to bear fruit when it was appropriated by Puerto Ricans. Nonetheless, the military in Puerto Rico, be it the National Guard or the regular Army units, remained part of the United States military and depended entirely of federal funds to function. This could only allow for a third path as the *Populares* continue to employ the military for nation and state building.

The first mobilization of the Puerto Ricans during WWII was more political in nature than military and it happened in 1940 with the *Populares* first electoral victory. The second mobilization of the Puerto Ricans was in fact military as the Island became an integral part of the U.S. war effort and Puerto Ricans were called to arms. This effort had strong economic impact in terms of federal monies transferred to Puerto Rico and unemployment relief. The third mobilization was social in nature as the Puerto Rican soldiers moved from the fields to classrooms and put to good use the skills learned while in the military and the benefits to which they were entitled. Thus WWII ended with the Island moving towards socio-economic restructuration very rapidly and with LMM
accepting the third way. The fourth mobilization would happen during the Korean War and would be socio-political in nature, becoming and creating the *Estado Libre Asociado*. Korea would become a propaganda war for sponsors of the third way which entailed a new Puerto Rican for a new Puerto Rico.

It was the *Jíbaro* who started to convince politicians of the third way, a hybridism that allowed for a political identity and a cultural one. Muñoz Marín’s change of heart with regard to independence was thus *Jíbaro* inspired and popular in nature. Initially a tactical decision born out of the need of securing the vote of the peasantry and urban workers which did not see independence as a solution to their everyday problems, the idea that the “Status no está en issue” became a kind of end in itself as political decolonization took a backseat and socio-economic decolonization became imperative. Many have branded this change as a sellout or the cooptation of the people’s will, but in fact Muñoz Marín was responding to the masses’ needs and will, which at this historical junction coincided with one of the greatest social reconfigurations in U.S. and Puerto Rican history. When WWII ended and during the immediate post war years the Island moved rapidly to achieve the socio-economic change envisioned by Muñoz Marín and Tugwell. Shying from independence Muñoz Marín had started to adopt the third way, a place between independence and statehood. The Korean conflict would become a propaganda war to support such third way which entailed a new Puerto Rican for a new Puerto Rico.
CHAPTER 6
FIGHTING FOR THE “NATION”? WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD
AND THE CREATION OF THE ESTADO LIBRE ASOCIADO DE PUERTO RICO

For fifty-four years we, the Puerto Ricans, have lived under the political tutelage of our co-citizens of the North. We have assimilated their entrepreneur spirit and industrial skills; and fed our soul and thoughts with the most sacred of men’s attributes: their admiration and respect for freedom, justice and equality...

...without adulterating our Hispanic heritage, nor have we soiled it with artificial trends of Sajonic assimilation: and without relegating our Hispanic culture, sentiments and traditions, which we conserve pure, like the most precious legacy of our gallant and noble ancestors.577

During the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, military mobilization served both as a political bargaining chip and as tool with which to advance Puerto Rico’s socio-economic restructuring. As discussed in the previous chapter, Luis Muñoz Marín and the Populares came to rely on the sheer electoral power the masses gave them to demand and embark on a reform of such grandiose scale. As the military in Puerto Rico became an essential instrument for political and socio-economic modernization,

577 Colonel Juan César Cordero, Commanding Officer, 65th U.S. Army Infantry Regiment, South Korea, August 13, 1952 in José Norat-Martínez, ed., Historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería (San Juan, Puerto Rico: La Milagrosa, 1960), 84-85. The author considers Norat-Martínez’ work as a primary source since it is a collection of news and documents from the regiment’s historical office and the local press presented in chronological order. The quoted material from Spanish sources is presented in the author’s translation to English unless otherwise specified.
however, the Island shifted closer to the U.S. Not only was Puerto Rico more dependent than ever on federal transfers to effectively run reconstruction and relief agencies (not to mention the military), but as shown by the tens of thousands of peasants and urban workers who became soldiers, there was a growing affinity and acceptance of U.S. institutions and values throughout the Island- which were then led and ran by Puerto Ricans. This phenomenon curtailed the ability of Muñoz Marín to move towards independence, and soon after becoming Puerto Rico’s first elected governor in 1948, he began to earnestly consider a third option between federated statehood and independence.\footnote{In 1946, Muñoz Marín had expelled the Independentistas from the PPD, who wanted him to support another independence bill sponsored by Senator Tydings. The Independentistas responded by forming that same year the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño, or PIP. See discussion in previous chapter.}

That third option would eventually be known as the commonwealth formula or estado libre asociado. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 would not only provide the opportunity to mobilize tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans and to make them part of the socio-economic reconstruction of the Island (as their WWII counterparts had been) it would also provide a space where the Puerto Rican soldier would incarnate the ideals of the Commonwealth formula. During the Korean War the mobilization of tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans retained its relevance for the furthering of the political and socio-economic reconfiguration of the Island. However, the symbolism of such participation with regard to national identities and the PPD’s project of decolonization, and thus the acceptance of the Commonwealth formula, was of the outmost relevance during this period. That the \textit{estado libre asociado} came into existence in 1952 is well known. The part played by the Puerto Rican soldiers fighting in Korea to advance this
formula, however, has been almost completely ignored.\footnote{Few works hint at the connection between service in Korea and promoting the commonwealth formula. See Silvia Álvarez Curbelo, “La bandera en la colina: Luis Muñoz Marín en los tiempos de la guerra de Corea”, 1-17, in Fernando Picó, ed., Luis Muñoz Marín, perfiles de su gobernación, 1948-1964 (San Juan, P.R.: Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín, 2003), and Harry Franqui-Rivera, Glory and Shame: The Ordeal of the Puerto Rican 65th U.S. Infantry Regiment During the Korean War, 1950-1953 (Master’s thesis, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University), 2002.} This chapter thus studies the contribution of the Puerto Rican soldier in the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1952 and in securing its survival.

In his inaugural address of January 20, 1949, President Harry S. Truman made public to the world that the U.S., as leader of the free world, was bent onto combating the “false philosophy” of Communism, not just by strengthening its military alliances with “peace-loving” countries, but by its determination to “work for a world in which all nations and all peoples are free to govern themselves as they see fit, and to achieve a decent and satisfying life.”\footnote{“Inaugural Address, January 20 1949” [Truman Presidential Museum and Library, Harry S. Truman Papers Staff Member and Office Files: White House Press Release Files: Dates: 1945-1953, Item 19]; accessed 23 February 2006; available from http://www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpaper/presshst.htm.} He emphasized that the U.S. sought no territory, that “we have imposed our will on none”, and that “the old imperialism-exploitation for foreign profit-has no place in our plans.”\footnote{Ibid.} Moreover, the U.S. was to embark on a new plan to make available its technology and expertise, as well as its capital, to the underdeveloped world. This policy, known as Point Four, was a global version of the Good Neighbor policy. Truman believed that to defeat Communism, the U.S. had to convince the world that it did not intend to create a world empire, nor did it want to possess colonies.
Accordingly, decolonizing Puerto Rico became a priority for his administration.

On March 13 1950 the new Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner in Washington D.C., and PPD ideologue, Antonio Fernós Isern, inspired by Truman’s Point Four, introduced a bill on the House (H.R. 7674) to provide for the organization of a constitutional government in Puerto Rico. Senator Joseph C. O’Mahoney, then Chair of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, introduced the bill on the Senate (S.3336) that same day. In a statement before a joint Senate and House committee, Muñoz Marín declared that approving these bills would be of great value to the United States “which is constantly accused by the Latin American countries and the Communists of running a colonial system.”

Unlike his remarks regarding previous bills, Muñoz Marín’s statements, though linking the situation of the Island to the greater fight against Communism and colonialism, were not adversarial. In fact, after Truman’s inaugural speech, Muñoz Marín had offered to make of Puerto Rico a world showcase of Truman’s Point Four. The gesture was reciprocated. The atmosphere during these hearings was congenial, at least between the Populares and the members of Congress.

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583 By July 1950, the Island had received over 10,000 professionals, government officials, academic, journalists, and students under the Point Four training program institutionalized by the Puerto Rican legislature, with the support of Truman and the Interior Department. See Maldonado, Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution, 285-86; and “Luis Muñoz Marín Y Rafael Leónidas Trujillo: Una pugna caribeña (1941-1961)”, 41, in Picó, Luis Muñoz Marín, perfiles de su gobernación.
Most of the Congressman agreed with Muñoz Marín’s views, and one even pointed out the positive effect that a recent visit to Haiti by elected Puerto Rican officials had had on their Haitian counterparts. Moreover, members of Congress noted that passing this bill could only “elevate our position before the United Nations”, especially since the United States was a signatory to the United Nations charter and therefore had to adhere to the calling for self-government which it included. Others emphasized that its adoption would advance the “defense of democracy in the eyes of the world, and especially with our fellow Americans south of Rio Grande.”

Although the Independentistas tried to call into question the legitimacy of the legislation and of Muñoz Marín’s government, Congress gave its blessing to the Senate version of the bill. On July 30, 1950 President Truman signed the Congress Act of July 3 (S. 3336), into Public Law 600 giving the Puerto Ricans the right to write their own constitution and to establish a relationship with the U.S. in the nature of a compact. P.L. 600 authorized the people of Puerto Rico to organize a republican form of government pursuant to a constitution of their own choosing. That act, adopted by Congress, would become effective only when accepted by the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum. As these hearings were coming to an end, congressmen exhorted Inés Mendoza (Muñoz Marin’s second wife) to address the audience. She declared: “this growing solidarity [between

\[584\] H.R.7674-S.3336, 27.

\[585\] Ibid., 38.

\[586\] Ibid., 47, 64,
the U.S. and P.R.] will be paid back to the U.S. someday."  

Her words could have not been more prophetic. Soon los hijos de este país would be fighting in the hills of Korea alongside the United Nations and against each other in the hills and towns of Puerto Rico.

A referendum was set for June 4, 1951 in which the Puerto Ricans would cast a vote to “accept” or “reject” the provisions of P.L. 600. Muñoz Marín and the Populares enjoyed broad popular support. Having overwhelmed all the other political parties and alliances during the general elections of 1948 they were firmly in control of the political apparatus in Puerto Rico. Acceptance of P.L. 600 in the coming referendum was

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588 Inés Mendoza Rivera was born on January 10, 1908 in Yabucoa. She was the daughter of an illiterate worker who “had worked himself into economic security.” She earned a teaching certificate by age seventeen and a degree from the University of Puerto Rico four years later. Because of her testimony denouncing the Ponce Massacre she was removed from her teaching position. She was known as a nationalist school teacher when she met Muñoz Marín in 1938. In fact she had recently broken with the Nationalists after she “heard Albizu comment to his wife Laura that it was necessary “to kill Americans.” Persecuted by the pro-American parties – which won the 1936 elections- and who intended to eradicate “independentismo” from Puerto Rico’s schools, she had been sacked from her teaching position and sought Muñoz Marín’s aid. They quickly became romantically involved. Though living together for almost ten years, they had to wait until 1946 to marry because of Muñoz Marín’s first wife, Muna Lee would not grant him a divorce. See Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution,* 159-167.

589 Of 640,714 votes cast the PPD obtained 392,386, the Independentistas, 65,351; the Estadistas (former Republicanos) 89,441; and the Socialistas 64,396. The former Liberales under the name of Reformistas obtained 29,140. Estadistas, Liberales and Socialistas formed another coalition. The PPD won all offices and municipalities but the town of San Lorenzo, two senators and a representative at large- positions which were won by Socialistas and Estadistas. See Bayrán Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos puertorriqueños,* 210-11. Once Muñoz Marín was elected, it became harder for the
hardly in doubt. This is not to say that there was no opposition. The staunchly pro-
American Estadistas opposed at least in principle what they regarded as a perpetuation
of the colonial status and an obstacle to achieve federated statehood. Nonetheless, even
though they had come second in the 1948 elections, the PPD had obtained more than four
times the Estadistas’s votes. The only chance the Estadistas had was to convince the
voters to reject P.L. 600 and to have a congress-sponsored plebiscite including statehood
and independence as options. The Independentistas were in a similar predicament. They
had obtained even fewer votes than the Estadistas and their efforts to stop passing of P.L.
in Congress were fruitless. They chose to campaign against the acceptance of P.L. 600 by
exhorting their members to abstain from voting in the referendum, and if they voted, to
do so against it. However, even when combining their mass appeal with the rest of the
parties opposing the PPD, they were still unable to match the Populares’ strength. In
fact, Independentistas, Estadistas and Socialistas had continued their exodus to the PPD
after 1948. Furthermore, the Socialist Party supported P.L. 600, which made its passing
almost inevitable.

The traditional parties were just too weak to stop the PPD by peaceful means.
The Nacionalistas, however, had long ago shunned the electoral process as a means to
obtain their goals. A violent confrontation pitting the nationalists’ Ejército Libertador
and the Puerto Rico National Guard and Insular Police was about to shock the Island.590

Independentistas to gain support from anti-U.S. factions in Cuba, Brazil and Central
America, and the U.S. was able to shield itself from accusations of colonialism. See
Tugwell, The Arts of Politics, 64.

590 A balance account of the public confrontation, mostly through discourses,
radio speeches and commentaries to the press, can be found in Carmelo Rosario Natal,
Ablizu Campos, who had been convicted of sedition and conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States in 1937, returned to Puerto Rico from New York City on December 15, 1947, four years after been released from federal prison on probation.591 He immediately started a campaign to derail the PPD’s projects and ordered the mobilization of the *Ejército Libertador* once more. Only a day after his return Albizu Campos held a press conference and warned the U.S. that after depleting all peaceful means to obtain independence, the “Nationalist Party would resort to the use of force to attain its goals.”592 His threats also targeted Muñoz Marín. Albizu Campos declared that “Muñoz must be stopped and we will stop him.” Muñoz Marín publicly warned Albizu Campos to abstain from violence. Albizu Campos resorted to question Muñoz Marín’s *Puertorriqueñidad* while demanding that the Puerto Ricans abstain from voting in the 1948 general elections. He also condemned the teaching of English language in Puerto Rico, declared that “every person serving in the Selective Service Boards should be shot”, and commanded the *Nacionalistas* to start arming themselves with “revolvers.

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591 Mathews, *La política Puertorriqueña y el Nuevo Trato*, 249; and Maldonado, *Puerto Rico’s Democratic Revolution*, 147-48. On March 5, 1936, Albizu Campos and other seven Nationalist leaders were arrested and charged with sedition and conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States. The next month, a Federal Grand Jury submitted accusations against Albizu Campos and other leaders of the party.

rifles, guns, shotguns, knives and daggers to defend the cause of the Revolution.\footnote{593}{See Seijo Bruno, \textit{La insurrección nacionalista en Puerto Rico}, 40; citing \textit{El Imparcial de Puerto Rico} 13-14, 17 January 1948; \textit{Periódico el Mundo} (San Juan) 23 March 1948.}

Despite Muñoz Marín’s warnings Albizu Campos’s diatribe continued unabated. On September 23, 1950, during the anniversary of the Lares Revolt of 1868, he addressed the crowd gathered in Lares’ Plaza Pública and spoke against P.L. 600 and the participation of Puerto Rican soldiers in the Korean War. He ended his speech by calling the Puerto Ricans to defy the U.S. and its colonial pawns in the same way that “the men of Lares defied despotism, with revolution!”\footnote{594}{Ibid., 42-43 citing “Pedro Albizu Campos,” Paredón Records, P-2501.}

That the \textit{Nacionalistas} were planning a coup or insurrection was hardly a secret. Emboldened by the apparent inaction of the insular government, Albizu Campos continued his call to arms against the U.S. and its representatives in the Island- Muñoz Marín, the \textit{Populares}, and anyone who served, worked, or were in any way related to the metropolis. In his speeches, Albizu Campos defied the hated Gag Law of 1948, which prohibited planning or promoting by any means the overthrowing of the Island’s government by violent means.\footnote{595}{The Insular legislature wrote Law 53 (better known as \textit{Ley de la Mordaza} or Gag Law) and on June 10 1948, Jesus T. Piñero, as appointed governor of the Island, signed it into law. The Gag Law declared a felony to persuade people or to plead for overthrowing the Island’s government by violence or force. Printing or publishing any material encouraging people to engage on such activities and creating any kind of organization to carry out any of these acts became felonies under this law. The law, which was derogated in 1957, closely resembled the U.S. Alien Registration Act (also known as the Smith Act) passed by Congress on 29 June, 1940. This act made it illegal for anyone in the United States to advocate, abet, or teach the desirability of overthrowing the government. The law also required all alien residents in the United States over fourteen years of age to file a comprehensive statement of their personal and
the cars of Albizu Campos’ motorcade and found explosives, weapons, and ammunition in the car’s trunk. Throughout the Island the Nacionalistas rushed to hide their weapons, and the chaos led to a gunfight with the Insular Police. After this second event, the Police started a series of raids against known Nacionalistas. Albizu Campos immediately ordered the Ejército Libertador to launch a general attack against the Insular Police, political leaders and elected officials at midday on October 30.

The insurrection actually begun on October 28 as the Nacionalistas helped some 112 inmates to flee from the Insular Penitentiary. For a long time thought as a diversion, the mass escape was in fact design to secure additional manpower and weapons for the insurrection. The leader of the inmates who escaped that day, Pedro Benejam Alvarez, who was in jail for stealing military weapons and ammunition from Camp O’Reilly, had promised the Nacionalistas to hand over the stolen weapons in exchange for his freedom in the Republic of Puerto Rico. After the plans of the insurrection had to be accelerated because of the events of October 27, the Nationalists helped Benejam Alvarez occupational status and a record of their political beliefs. Within four months a total of 4,741,971 aliens had been registered. The American Communist Party and other left-wing groups in the mainland were the main targets of this legislation. On May 1948, the Insular Police established the Internal Security Unit, which worked closely with the local FBI unit to keep the Nacionalistas, Communists and Independentistas under surveillance. See Díaz Soler, Puerto Rico: Sus luchas por alcanzar estabilidad económica, definición política y afirmación cultural, 319-323.

596 Negroni, Historia Militar de Puerto Rico, 455; and Seijo Bruno, La insurrección nacionalista, 77.

597 According to Nationalist Anibal Torres, and other participants interviewed by Seijo Bruno, Albizu Campos himself ordered the riot. The Nacionalistas had contacted at least one of the guards and several inmate leaders who promised weapons and 1,000 men to join the insurrection. See Seijo Bruno, La insurrección nacionalista, 83-87.
and others to escape. The mass escape served in fact as a diversion as it kept the Insular Police occupied, but it also alerted them of the impending battle.

As ordered by Albizu Campos the Nationalists launched their attack on October 30 on what is known as the *Grito de Jayuya*. The revolt became a series of gunfights between Nacionalistas and the police in the cities of Ponce, Arecibo, Mayagüez, the town of Naranjito, and a more concerted attack in San Juan- including the attempted assassination of Muñoz Marín in La Fortaleza (the governor’s house). Albizu Campos designated the town of Utuado as the rendezvous point for all Nacionalistas to converge. He chose Utuado as the Nationalists’ main line of resistance believing its geographical location and the area’s topography would allow the Ejército Libertador to resist for at least a month. In that time they expected to gain enough international attention and support as to force the General Assembly of the United Nations to intercede in their favor. The local Nationalists attempted to take the town, but after a firefight with the Insular Police, they had to take refuge in a few houses. Aided by the National Guard, the Insular Police quickly overwhelmed the Nationalists in Utuado during the night of October 30.

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598 *Periódico el Mundo* (San Juan), 31 October 1950; *El Imparcial de Puerto Rico*, 31 October 1950.


600 Ibid., 53-59. Nationalists claimed that the National Guard summarily executed prisoners in Utuado where five Nationalists, a guardsmen and policeman died, as well as a civilian and a fireman. However, the account of how a groups of unarmed Nacionalistas who had just surrendered and were subsequently fired upon, are contradictory. The testimony of some of the Nacionalistas who survived the shooting and several townspeople, points to the Nationalists been killed and wounded (as well as the National Guardsmen escorting them) after soldiers manning a picket sometime after
The Nacionalistas were able to take and briefly hold the central mountain town of Jayuya. They proceeded to burn the Insular Police station, the United States Postal Service building, and the equipment and records found in the Selective Service offices. Just like the other Nationalist cells, they were supposed to make their way to Utuado but lack of vehicles, disorganization and the prompt mobilization of the National Guard prevented them from doing so. During that first day Blanca Canales, (one of the few women involved in the insurrection) atop a hotel, proclaimed the Republic of Puerto Rico. But in fact the Nacionalistas in Jayuya were trapped, and the revolt was coming to a quick end. The Air National Guard bombed and strafed the town as a National Guard infantry company surrounded it. Those Nacionalistas who were able to escape the encirclement fled to the hills. With the National Guard in close pursuit, and alerted that their leader had surrender in San Juan, the remaining Nacionalistas came down the mountains to surrender on November 2, 1950.601

The battle in Puerto Rico was over. By no means had it been bloodless. Eighteen Nacionalistas had been killed and eleven wounded. Seven policemen and a Guardsman were killed while twenty-one police officers and eleven soldiers were wounded. A fireman and two civilians also died during the gunfights.602 After his arrest, still defiant and inexplicably jubilant, Albizu Campos declared that the “nation was undergoing a midnight line saw the approaching column, panicked and fired on both the soldiers and the prisoners.

601 Ibid., 127-134.

602 Negroni, Historia militar de Puerto Rico, 456.
glorious transfiguration.” Muñoz Marín instead talked of the “tragic and useless death of 31 Puerto Ricans.” He was quick to link the revolt to the “island’s Communists” who had joined Albizu Campos and his diehard followers. He warned the Nacionalistas that: “A government founded on votes cannot be destroyed.” It is obvious that Muñoz Marín sought to link the revolt to what was perceived as the biggest enemies of western democracies; fascism and communism.

The revolt also had an extra-insular chapter. On November 1, 1950 Nacionalistas Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola, attempted to assassinate President Truman in front of the Blair House in Washington. Torresola was killed in the attempt, and Collazo was seriously wounded and captured. Pvt. Leslie Coffelt, a White House guard, was shot and killed by the assailants. Two other White House guards were wounded during the gunfight. During a press conference the next day, shrugging off the attacks and lamenting the unnecessary loss of life, President Truman reaffirmed his commitment to support the right of Puerto Ricans to write their own constitution.


604 Ibid.

605 “Press Conference, November 2 1952” [Truman Presidential Museum and Library, Harry S. Truman Papers Staff Member and Office Files: White House Press Release Files: Dates: 1945-1953, Item 278]; accessed 28 February 2006; available from http://www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpaper/presshst.htm. The conference was held a day after Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola, members of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, attempted to assassinate President Truman in front of the Blair House in Washington. Torresola was killed in the attempt, and Collazo was seriously wounded and captured. Pvt. Leslie Coffelt, a White House guard, was shot and killed by the assailants. Two other White House guards, Pvt. Joseph Downs and Pvt. Donald T. Birdzell, were wounded during the gunfight.
Governor Muñoz Marín passed his first test with flying colors as he quickly suppressed the revolt and succeeded in discrediting the Nationalists, especially after the assassination attempt on the president. Furthermore, the local and continental press presented the insurrections as a local affair. Even though martial law was declared—which entitled the White House and the continental U.S. Army troops in the Island and the Caribbean region to have a more prominent role in containing the insurrection—Muñoz Marín and the colonial administration made sure that only the Insular Police and the Puerto Rico National Guard participated in the affair. The commander of the U.S. Army units in Puerto Rico and the Antilles, Brigadier General Edwin L. Sibert, turned his units’ ammunition over to the National Guard during the insurrection, but did not provide aid in any other way.

The insurrection was in fact a Puerto Rican affair. All of those involved, and all the dead and wounded were Puerto Ricans commanded by Puerto Ricans. But besides the obvious nationality of the participants, the revolt was a Puerto Rican affair in the sense that it was the Nacionalistas’ last ditch effort to stop P.L. 600. They had hoped to bring the international community on their side but succeeded in doing the opposite. The revolt was suppressed quickly and with almost the same number of casualties on both sides (which showed restraint by the local authorities from abusing their power as they had overwhelming superiority and could have inflicted significantly more casualties on

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The outcome of the revolt served to prove the viability of a Puerto Rican autonomous state and to discredit those who arguing that the Island would descend into chaos if left in the hands of the Puerto Ricans. Furthermore, locally, the insurrection made opposing P.L. 600 by peaceful means even more difficult. On November 3, Muñoz Marín made a personal radio call for all women to register for the coming referendum and the next day for all males. Far from blocking P.L. 600 the Nacionalistas had to deal with the fact that a record 779,695, including 157,393 new voters, registered themselves to vote in the coming referendum. The Nacionalistas’ military wing had been defeated, their leaders imprisoned, and their ideology popularly rejected.

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607 Over 140 Nacionalistas took part in the revolt, though it is still believed that probably about the same number were not able to participate and thus evaded capture. Three of the Nationalists were women. Over 80% were between the ages of 15 to 34. 14% had college education and 18% had finished high school. Only 6 had no schooling. 69% of the Nacionalistas were described as workers (agricultural, 44% and non-agricultural 56%) while the rest was divided equally between professionals, land or business owners, independent and white collar workers. See, Seijo Bruno, La insurrection nacionalista, 233-34, 243-45.

608 The Estadistas changed their hearts and decided that they could not oppose the passing of the P.L. 600 but with the understanding that they did so believing that this step would led the people of Puerto Rico “to equality within the American citizenry, in fact, a step towards statehood...” as announced in a general assembly on August 5, 1951. Only the Independentistas continued to oppose the credendum and to blame the United States for provoking the insurrection. See Bolívar Pagán, Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños, 303.

609 Díaz Soler, Puerto Rico, sus luchas por alcanzar estabilidad económica, definición política y afirmación cultural, 338.

610 Bolívar Pagán, Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños, 300

611 Albizu Campos and several Nacionalistas were charged with violating Law 53, the Gag Law. He was kept in isolation in La Princesa jail house from November 14, 1950 to May 18, 1951 when he was transferred to a bigger and better ventilated cell.
There was another battlefield in which Puerto Rican soldiers were engaged. On June 25, 1950, war had broken out in Korea. The North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) quickly overran most of the Korean peninsula, forcing South Korean and U.S. forces into a small perimeter in Pusan. The United States was caught unprepared to deal with the crisis as it had demobilized its huge military after World War II, and was suffering an acute shortage of manpower. Major General Edmond L. Almond, the commander of X Corps during the Korean War, believed that when war broke out, the U.S. Eighth

Pedro Albizu declared that he was being bombarded with radioactivity in his cell. The Justice Department argued that he had premature senile dementia. His trial took place between June 30 and August 5 of 1951. He was sentenced to 12 to 54 years of confinement. As Albizu Campos continued to complain of radiation a psychiatrist declared him insane and on September 30, 1953, Muñoz Marín conditionally pardoned him. The government offer stated that he should pledge to not try to overthrow the government of Puerto Rico again. He refused the offer but was declared mentally incompetent and set free nonetheless. A year later he would again be sent to jail after Nacionalistas, Lolita Lebrón, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, Rafael Cancel Miranda and Irving Flores opened fire from the gallery of the House of Representatives in Congress wounding five congressmen. On November 15, 1964, Albizu was again pardoned by Muñoz Marín. He died on April 21, 1965. He was buried in the Old San Juan Cemetery. See Díaz Soler, Puerto Rico, sus luchas por alcanzar estabilidad económica, definición política y afirmación cultural, 338-39; and Negroni, Historia militar de Puerto Rico, 456-57.

Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, supported North Korea’s aggression thinking that “it would benefit the geopolitical position of the USSR in the Far East.” In a gross miscalculation, Stalin believed that the United States would not intervene. Immediately after the U.N. forces crossed the 38th parallel and with Kim Il-Sung’s regime crumbling, Stalin “dictated a telegram to Mao Zedong [Communist China’s leader] advising the Chinese to mobilize five or six divisions to the 38th parallel.” On October 25, 1951, the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) launched their first phase offensive of the Korean War. Intelligence reports, however, disregarded the presence of large numbers of Chinese soldiers in North Korea until the CCF launched a large scale offensive on November 25, 1951. Vladimir Zubok, and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev, (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 54, 65.

Army, the only force the United States had available to thrust into combat, was just 40 percent effective. The Eighth Army was not prepared physically or psychologically for battle in the summer of 1950. This situation would change the role of Puerto Rican units within the U.S. military.

Racial prejudice had kept Puerto Rican units from seeing combat during WWI and WWII. Major General Luis Raúl Esteves, a Puerto Rican West Pointer and adjutant general of Puerto Rico’s National Guard, declared in 1951: “I was greatly discouraged [during WWII] when the blindness of the Federal Military Authorities in Puerto Rico denied us that opportunity [to fight].” General Esteves thought that the Puerto Rican regiment in the U.S. Army, the 65th Infantry, was never trusted in combat because the federal authorities believed that “although the Puerto Ricans were valiant individuals, they could not be trusted in their collective abilities and valor.” This racial prejudice was part of mainstream tenets which, backed by pseudo science and popular writings, stated that the inferiority of colored races justified segregation at home and imperialism abroad- in essence, a dogma for domination and imperialism based on a racial hierarchy of power. As part of the decolonization project, fighting in this war was in fact significant. Not just because it was fought under the U.N. flag but because it

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614 Ibid.

615 Ibid., 997. Official army documents, however, seem to have overrated the readiness and strength of the four divisions composing the Eighth Army. The 1st Cavalry Division appeared on paper as being 84 percent combat ready, while the 7th, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions had 74, 65, and 72 percent ratings, respectively.


617 Periódico el Mundo (San Juan), 1 March 1951.
could very well undermine the basis for racial hierarchies of power—the inferiority of
darker races—and prove to the Puerto Ricans themselves that they were not inferior to
Continental Americans (specifically white people) or anybody else.

On July 26, 1948, President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 “calling on the
armed forces to provide equal treatment and opportunity for black servicemen.” In
compliance with the executive order, the army reluctantly started to integrate its forces.
Yet, as late as 1950, Puerto Ricans still did not receive any assignments that promised
action. As a result, they were not sent either to basic school or to the Army Command
and Staff General Staff College, which trained company and field grade officers in the
fundamentals and principles of higher command. The outbreak of the Korean War
would bring a striking change to the mission of the Puerto Rican soldier in the U.S.
military.

A combination of factors convinced the military authorities to use Puerto Rican
units, specifically the 65th Infantry Regiment, as first-line combat troops during the
Korean War. The gravity of the moment was the most important consideration. There
were two reasons why the U.S. Army did not assign the 65th Infantry to supporting roles
during the Korean War as it had during the two world wars. The first was the army’s
lack of manpower. The second was the regiment’s (and the Puerto Rico National
Guard’s) performance during a training exercise, Operation Portrex, held recently off the

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618 McGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces, 291.

619 Harris, Puerto Rico’s Fighting 65th, 4-5.
east coast of Puerto Rico and in Vieques Island. However, had there not been such an acute shortage of military personnel, Puerto Rican units might have had to fulfill the same supporting roles they had carried out in the previous wars.

In Puerto Rico, the National Guard was activated; the 65th was mobilized, secretly ordered and embarked to Korea. The Island’s participation in the Korean War was more significant than in previous wars since Puerto Ricans were entering this conflict very early, and they were going in as first-line combat troops. Puerto Rican military officers, and many soldiers, saw the war as an opportunity to prove they were as good as or better than their Continental counterparts, and thus their participation became a fight for equality at the most personal level. For political leaders in Puerto Rico, the outbreak of the Korean War gave them an opportunity to prove that their people were ready for self-determination, that they had learned the ways of democracy and freedom, and were ready to fight in defense of what was popularly promoted as America’s values. In a sense, military service would prove that Puerto Ricans were politically mature according to the parameters of the Western world. Consequently, the political leadership in Puerto Rico, regardless of partisan affiliation, actively supported the participation of tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans in the conflict.

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620 This exercise convinced the army that the 65th was battle worthy. Operation Portrex took place on Vieques Island, off the east coast of Puerto Rico, in late February 1950. It was the largest joint amphibious-airborne exercise to that date. During this exercise, the 65th played the role of “Aggressor.” Its mission was to defend the Island against the liberating forces of the U.S. Army 3rd Infantry Division (reinforced), plus a battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division. To everyone’s surprise by the end of the exercise the soldiers of the 65th still controlled a significant part of Vieques. The 198th Fighter Squadron of the Puerto Rico Air National Guard also participated and won accolades during the exercise. See Harris, and P.R.N.G. Annual Report 1949-50, 15.

621 See discussion in Chapter 2.
Local leaders in Puerto Rico thought the war might also accelerate the decolonization process. After all, the development of the political status of the Island and the role of Puerto Rico’s participation in the U.S. military had followed parallel paths. Moreover, P.L. 600, signed into law on July 30, called for Puerto Ricans to write their own constitution through a constitutional convention, and that document was to define both the status of the Island, and its relation to the United States. The coming of the Korean War intensified the struggle between the political parties in Puerto Rico, which sought to promote their respective visions for the political development of the Island. Every legitimate political party had reasons to believe that supporting the war effort would promote their particular goals. Consequently, all political factions, except the Nationalists, supported the war effort.

Both the Estadistas and the Socialistas, who continued to propose ending the colonial regime through the full incorporation of Puerto Rico into the Union, supported participation in the war. The leadership of these parties saw in the Korean War the opportunity to prove, not only to Americans but to Puerto Ricans themselves, that Puerto Rico was ready to join the United States on equal terms. The rationale was that Puerto Ricans had learned the American ways and were willing to do their share for the Union, even if that meant dying in defense of the nation. On the other hand, the Independentistas supported the war, because its leaders hoped to prove that if Puerto Rico became independent, it would not turn anti-American or Communist. Just like their ideological antagonists, the leaders of the pro-independence movement also sought to demonstrate that Puerto Rico was politically responsible and mature. Ironically, the champions of independence and the advocates of annexation pursued a common strategy.
promoting their respective political goals through participation in the Korean War. The Nacionalistas orchestrated the only opposition to military participation. But after their insurrection and the attempt to assassinate President Truman failed, Muñoz Marín succeeded in discrediting their movement. Consequently, the only voice opposing Puerto Rico’s cooperation with the U.S. military was silenced, and disgraced by its own deeds.

The Populares had more reasons than anybody else to support Puerto Rican participation in the war. The military mobilization of tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans during WWII had provided economic relief and the means to launch the most comprehensive socio-economic restructuring in the Island’s history, and with local manpower and know-how. WWII and military mobilization had in fact allowed the Populares to keep their promises of social justice. Mobilizing the Puerto Ricans again carried the implicit promise that another generation of veterans could receive all the opportunities and benefits to which the WWII veterans were entitled, and use those benefits to join in the socio-economic restructuring of the Island. For the Populares, however, who had moved to support a third way (the commonwealth), participating in the war also provided a battleground to test the viability of the new political status and promote its main discourse with regard to political and cultural identities. Korea would be the arena where Puerto Ricans would show that Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic cultures (identified by the press and politicians as the two great cultures of the hemisphere) could

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622 Periódico el Mundo (San Juan), 31 October 1950; El Imparcial de Puerto Rico, 31 October 1950. The FBI and the insular police estimated Nationalists compose about .5 percent of the population.
coexist, not just in one place, but in one body. Thus, throughout the war the PPD would vigorously call the Puerto Ricans to arms and use every opportunity to link the war effort with their own decolonization project, the socio-economic restructuring of the Island and the making of a new Puerto Rican for a modern Puerto Rico.

Support for the war effort and the call to send Puerto Ricans to Korea started soon after the outbreak of hostilities. In early August 1950, Fernós Isern, serving as Puerto Rico’s resident commissioner, declared in Washington that the Island was ready to field an army of 75,000 men to join the forces of the United Nations. Fernós Isern believed that if Washington asked for this volunteer force, the quota would be easily filled. Although Fernós Isern probably considered the economic situation in Puerto Rico when he calculated such a high number of volunteers, he did not mention it in his declarations. Instead, he stressed the patriotism of Puerto Ricans, asserting they would not fail to come to the defense of democracy and the nation.

Ordered to prepare the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment for duty in Korea, the commanding officer, Colonel William W. Harris, asked permission to recruit about 2,000 volunteers to bring the regiment to 10 percent above war strength. The Pentagon agreed, and Harris proceeded to solicit recruits over the radio and through the local press. At first, Harris doubted he could collect all the men he needed but he soon was surprised to

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623 See Periódico el Mundo (San Juan), 12 October 1950, Norat-Martínez, Historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería, 84-85; and Puerto Rico, Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico, Preámbulo, in Fernós López-Cepero, Documentos históricos-constitucionales de Puerto Rico, 145

624 Periódico el Mundo (San Juan), 1 August 1950.

625 The fact that more than 61,000 Puerto Ricans ultimately served with the U.S. forces during the Korean War validates Fernós Isern’s claims.
find the streets and sidewalks leading to the recruiting and induction center at Fort Buchanan jammed with men waiting to get in. In his memoirs, Harris stated, “We could have recruited fifty thousand if we needed that many. We literally turned them away in droves after we reached our quota.” The fact that Governor Muñoz Marín publicly exhorted Puerto Rican youth to respond to the call of the 65th and to defend other peoples’ right to democracy because it was “our privilege... ...as our people has developed one of the best democracies in the world...” surely helped fill the ranks.

Any doubts Puerto Ricans may have had about joining the U. S. military were eased by the stance of the Island’s political parties. The Puerto Rican press echoed the call to arms. It might have done an even better job than the political leadership in linking participation in the U.S. military with decolonizing the Island. Even as late as 1950, the press ran editorials in which the autonomous period of 1897 to 1898 stood as the minimum standard to which Puerto Rico should aspire. Moreover, the press called for a greater degree of autonomy, which was to be accomplished by allowing Puerto Ricans to draft their own constitution. Waxing nostalgia for the Island’s brief taste of autonomy, a journalist wrote: "Under the Autonomic Charter of 1897 we enjoyed a relative

626 Harris, Puerto Rico’s Fighting 65th, 46-47. Harris commanded the 65th Infantry from 1949 to 1951.


628 El Imparcial de Puerto Rico, 1 June 1950. Borinqueneers is an English transliteration of Borinqueños or the hispanized term colloquially used in the Island to refer to those born in Puerto Rico, which itself is a direct reference to the Island’s Arawak ancestry who called the Island, Boriken, or Buruquina.
sovereign life, until it was brusquely replaced by an intractable military regime as a consequence of the war of 1898.”⁶²⁹ These calls for more autonomy appeared beside articles lauding the 65th Infantry (nicknamed the Borinqueneers in an English transliteration of Borinqueños), and citing the regiment as a possible catalyst in forging a new national identity.⁶³⁰ Moreover, these editorials ran alongside commentaries praising Muñoz Marín and Fernós Isern for their commitment to earn the right for the Puerto Ricans to write their own constitution.⁶³¹

The rationale behind these articles was that the Borinqueneers’ commitment to Korea as first-line troops “will help Puerto Ricans to come out of their complexes of insularism, and erase the marks of inferiority, which are the byproduct of hundreds of years of colonial type regimes.”⁶³² This statement adds another factor to explaining why support for military service, especially combat duty, was so widespread. Fighting alongside U.S. and United Nation soldiers could help to prove, not only to Continental Americans but also to Puerto Ricans themselves, that they were the equals of their co-citizens from the mainland. Thus both the press and the political leadership thought it necessary to convince the people of Puerto Rico that they were ready to decide their own future.

On October 12, 1950, Puerto Rico learned that the 65th was fighting in Korea. Once the news got out, the day came to resemble a holiday more than anything else. The

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⁶²⁹ *El Imparcial de Puerto Rico*, 1 June 1950

⁶³⁰ *Periódico el Mundo* (San Juan), 12 October 1950.

⁶³¹ *El Imparcial de Puerto Rico*, 1 June 1950.

⁶³² *Periódico el Mundo* (San Juan), 12 October 1950.
Island’s newspapers were full of stories, pictures of the 65th, and the ceremonies held previous to their departure. The private sector joined the chorus with paid advertisements wishing the 65th a prompt return, and exhorting Puerto Rican soldiers to uphold the ideals of democracy and freedom. In both leading newspapers, *El Mundo* and *El Imparcial*, the tone was the same. The latter proclaimed, “As it was yet another symbol of the United Nations, under the American flag flies the flag of the 65th Infantry Regiment, this flag flies today in Korea.”\(^\text{633}\) The colors of the 65th came to represent not only the regiment, but Puerto Rico, “fighting alongside the peace-loving nations of the world.”\(^\text{634}\)

Muñoz Marín, told the departing soldiers in a farewell speech published two months later in the press, that their fight was one for freedom and democracy. He stressed that they were not fighting for a clichéd democracy but for a democracy that entailed a fight against “scarcity of economic means; scarcity of knowledge; scarcity of wisdom…”\(^\text{635}\) Governor Muñoz Marín had lost no time in linking participation in the war to the *Populares’* platform which ever more openly prioritize economic freedom and social justice over political sovereignty. The Island’s media also reminded Puerto Ricans what they were fighting for. “This regiment (the 65th) goes again overseas in defense of our Nation’s freedom,” asserted *El Imparcial*.\(^\text{636}\) Another editorial in *El Mundo* stated, “

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\(^\text{633}\) *El Imparcial de Puerto Rico*, 12 November 1950.

\(^\text{634}\) Ibid.


\(^\text{636}\) *El Imparcial de Puerto Rico*, 12 November 1950.
It should bring great satisfaction to Puerto Rico that the military authorities in the United States found the 65th competent and qualified to actively take part in this vital endeavor that encompass so much for the Christian world." Even before the 65th was mobilized, the press ran patriotic news and editorials that sought to comfort fathers and mothers "before the imminent probability that their sons will soon find themselves obliged to carry on their patriotic duties by participating in the conflict." Defense of the Nation, democracy, and freedom, mixed with patriotism and local pride in the narrative put forward by the Island’s press. Surrounding this discourse was the call to decolonization and the creation of the new Puerto Rican.

As political leaders and the press issued a call for fighting in defense of the Nation, Puerto Ricans responded en masse. On several occasions the military authorities in Puerto Rico had to announce that they did not need more volunteers. Even when the war had turned into a bloody stalemate and long lists of casualties appeared almost every week in the Puerto Rican press, the recruiting stations never lacked volunteers, at least not until 1953. Eventually, over 61,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

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637 Periódico el Mundo (San Juan), 12 October 1950.
638 Ibid., 27 August 1950.
639 Through most of the Korean War, the quota assigned to Puerto Rico by the Selective Service was filled with volunteers. “The selective service informed that there has not been any recruitment since February, 1951, when it was formally authorized to fill Puerto Rico’s quota with volunteers.” See Periódico el Mundo (San Juan), 4 November 1952. Another article informed that the Department of Defense asked from the Selective Service Office (SSO) in Puerto Rico for 1,272 draftees. A spokesman for the SSO informed that although “during most of the last year the Selective Service in Puerto Rico barely had to recruit at all, and the major part of the quota assigned to PR (about 2 percent of the men called to arms) was covered with volunteers, the reserve of volunteers is running low thus it would be necessary to proceed with recruitment.” See El Imparcial de Puerto Rico, 21 January 1953. It was not until the court martial of
Forces during the Korean War. 43,434 fought in the Korea, most of them with the 65th Infantry. Of the latter group, 39,591 or roughly 91% were volunteers.\textsuperscript{640} Although ninety-four Puerto Ricans became known on the Island and the Department of the Army decided to integrate the 65\textsuperscript{th} that the number of volunteers declined. During the Battle of Jackson Heights, which took place between October 25-29, 1952, men from A and F Companies left the battlefield without permission, and some of them refused to go back to the fight. The next day, roughly thirty men from C Company also abandoned their positions. Another damaging incident occurred on the night of November 3-4. While on a combat mission, the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Platoon, L Company, 3/65, divided into four groups, never reached its objective, and some of its soldiers refused to follow the platoon leader across a river. Thirty-nine more men were arrested, because of this incident. On November 23, 1952, a military court found First Lieutenant Juan E. Guzmán guilty of disobedience of orders and willful disobedience of the command to move his unit into combat. The court sentenced Guzmán to five years of confinement, total forfeiture of pay, and dismissal from the armed forces. On April 24, 1953, an army board of review upheld the decision of the court. The rest of the men were tried in several mass trials between December 1952 and January 1953. They were found guilty of willful disobedience of a superior officer’s command to return to a forward position, and/or of misbehavior before the enemy by running away. The sentences ranged between six-month to eleven years of confinement. The sentences also included total forfeiture of pay and benefits, and dishonorable discharges. Though the sentences were upheld by a military review in 1953, the Secretary of Defense (under pressure from Puerto Rican groups and the Governor) later annulled them and the soldiers were returned to duty and assigned to other regiments. The trials led to the integration of the 65\textsuperscript{th} with Continental troops- a policy much resisted in the Island. For a detailed account of the events leading to the court martial and of the trials themselves see, Harry Franqui-Rivera, “Hold to the Last Man,” 62-89, “The Last of the Borinqueneers,”90-118, “Separate and Unequal,” 120-153 in Franqui-Rivera, \textit{Glory and Shame: The Ordeal of the Puerto Rican 65\textsuperscript{th} U.S. Infantry Regiment During the Korean War.}\textsuperscript{640}

\textsuperscript{640} The period covered is June 20, 1950 to July 25, 1953. According to the selective service office in Puerto Rico (led by Coronel Rafael Jiménez de la Rosa) 10,185 volunteers were rejected in Puerto Rico. They suffered 3,540 casualties of which 747 were killed in action (KIA). One out of every forty-two U.S. casualties was Puerto Rican. Puerto Rico sustained one casualty for every 660 inhabitants, twice as many as the rate for Continental troops, which stood as one for every 1,125 inhabitants. See Teodoro Vidal, Ayudante Militar del Gobernador, Participación Puertorriqueña en la Segunda Guerra Mundial y en el Conflicto de Corea, A.L.M.M., Sección V Serie 9: Artículos, Discursos, Mensajes, Declaraciones Luis Muñoz Marín Gobernador de Puerto Rico 1949-1964, Noviembre-Diciembre 1954, Cartapacio 7 Documento 9, 2-3; and “State-level Lists of Casualties from the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts” [National Archives and Records Administration, Center for Electronic Records]; accessed 1 December 2001; available from http://www. nara.gov/nara/electronic/homensx.htm.
Puerto Rico’s poor economic situation was partially responsible for a high enrollment during peacetime, other reasons compelled Puerto Ricans to join and then stay in the U.S. military. Soldiers killed in action (KIA) received full military burials in Puerto Rico, some of which the governor attended. The wounded (WIA) were welcomed home as heroes. Those facts may explain why Puerto Rico sustained a high enlistment ratio, notwithstanding a high casualty rate among its troops. Those men were praised as heroes because they died or were maimed defending the Nation.

Puerto Rican leaders, the press, and the common folk continued to show their support for the war effort, and especially for the 65th’s soldiers throughout the conflict. On May 21, 1951, scarcely two weeks before the people of Puerto Rico voted to accept the provisions of P.L.600, roughly 300 hundred veterans of the 65th arrived in San Juan. This group was the first contingent of Puerto Ricans to finish their tour of duty under the U.S. Army’s rotation system. They received an extremely warm welcome from both the leaders and the people of Puerto Rico. The Governor declared the day a national holiday and hosted a ceremony to honor the returning “heroes and their families.” Even a comic strip in a local newspaper followed the exploits of the Puerto Rican heroes. Avenues and plazas were named in honor of the regiment, while monuments went up to commemorate the dead. The coat of arms of the 65th was painted on all the public buses in the capital, and on the sides of train engines and freight and passenger carts. Groups of parents collected and sent tons of packages, containing Puerto Rican food, music, letters, and gifts to the Puerto Rican soldiers. The private sector also showed its support. Serrallés, Inc., a Puerto Rican distillery, sent a thousand cases of rum. Newspapers sent

641 See Periódico El Mundo (San Juan), 13 November 1952.
free copies to Korea for distribution to the soldiers. Lest the Puerto Rican soldiers in Korea forget what they were fighting for, Muñoz Marín had his speeches taped and sent to them.

Some of the farewell messages from soldiers of the 65th embarking for Korea support Fernós Isern’s presumption that Puerto Ricans would respond patriotically to the call to arms. “We will fight for our motherland until victory is achieved,” wrote one departing soldier. “I will fight for the motherland until we secure victory and thus enjoy eternal peace and democracy,” vowed another Borinqueneer. Though at first glance these statements may read as the usual discourse of soldiers yet to see battle, it would be wise to consider the deep implications of such comments. First they referred to Puerto Rico when talking about the motherland (usually patria or madre patria) but to the U.S. when referring to the Nation. In a very direct way they were actually accepting the defense the American nation as their duty as Puerto Ricans. Secondly; fighting in the war, as part of the United States military and the United Nations command, was perceived as a way to secure democracy and freedom at home, which went along with the Populares’ new ideology.

That the leading newspapers handpicked the statements that more closely resembled the developing ideology behind the commonwealth formula is a possibility but it is more likely that Muñoz Marín and the Populares had started to adopt the views of the peasants and workers turned soldiers. After all, in his previous three campaigns Muñoz Marín had to convince his constituents that social justice and not independence was his party’s priority. Furthermore, the fact that these two newspapers, which more

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642 El Imparcial de Puerto Rico, 13 October 1950.

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often than not were at odds with Muñoz Marín, chose to present this narrative (which clearly benefitted the *Populares*’ plans) attests to the growing support for the commonwealth project.

Puerto Ricans had responded to the call to arms, both by fighting and by supporting the Island’s fighting men. More important, they had responded to a call to defend the United States, reaffirming that they considered themselves part of it. But the call to arms also emphasized the attributes of Puerto Rico and its Anteamerican heritage. By responding to this call, Puerto Ricans evidenced their complex identities which allow them to be Puerto Ricans and Americans simultaneously and interchangeably, and to negotiate and synthesize cultural and political identities. This in fact became the essence of the Commonwealth formula in its early days. Thus, the Puerto Rican soldiers who went to fight in Korea, especially with the 65th Infantry, became national icons and the incarnation and champions of the commonwealth’s philosophical matrix. These soldiers became an energizing element in the fight for decolonization. Major General, Luis Raúl Esteves, the adjutant general of Puerto Rico’s National Guard, summarized the regiment’s initial service in Korea in an open letter to the men of the 65th. He told the Borinqueneers: “With your conduct in Korea, you are destroying the discrimination that hurt us so much during the war [World War II]; you are writing a glorious page in our history . . . Puerto Rico is proud of you.”

By linking the Korean War and the active participation of the Puerto Rican soldier to the project of political decolonization, the PPD ensured the acceptance of P.L. 600. Furthermore, Muñoz Marín soon equated the battles being fought in Korea to those being

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643 *Periódico el Mundo* (San Juan), 1 March 1951.
fought at home. On May 28, 1951 he held a ceremony honoring the guardsmen, policemen, and firemen who fought the nationalist insurrection. Addressing those about to be awarded medals for their service during the insurrection, Muñoz Marín declared that just as their brothers in Korea were doing, they had put “their lives between the assailants of freedom and peace and the people of Puerto Rico.” The Nacionalistas, he argued, believed that they had the right to “impose their views on the people by violent means” and could not respect the will of the people as expressed through the electoral process.644 The Nacionalistas had hoped to derail the referendum and the Populares’ project of decolonization. Ironically, their actions provided the Populares with the opportunity to link their project to local and global decolonization and democracy.

On June 4, 1951, the people of Puerto Rico voted by a large majority to accept the provisions of P.L. 600.645 Following the referendum, the Puerto Ricans elected delegates to a constitutional convention on August 27. The constitutional convention, led by Fernós Isern, convened in San Juan on September 17, 1951, and concluded its deliberations on February 6, 1952. The constitution it adopted was submitted to the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum on March 3, 1952, and was passed by an


645 76% of the votes were in favor of P.L 600. See, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, A Joint Resolution Approving the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico: Hearing on H.J. Res. 430, 82 Cong., 2nd sess., (Amherst, University of Massachusetts: Microform Collection), 25 April 1952, 1-3, And, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, A Joint Resolution Approving the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico: Hearings on S.J. 151, 82nd Cong., 2nd sess., (Amherst, University of Massachusetts: Microform Collection), 29 April, 6 May, 1952, 1-3, 13-15. Periódico el Mundo (San Juan), 7 June 1951; El Imparcial de Puerto Rico, 7 June 1951.
overwhelming majority. On April 22, 1952, in a special message, Truman recommended that Congress granted early approval of the constitution drafted by the convention and argued that such action would be evidence of the United States’ adherence to “the principle of self-determination and its devotion to the ideals of freedom and democracy.” The constitution was approved by Congress on H.J. Res. 430, and signed into law by the President on July 3, 1952. Upon signing the constitution Truman reiterated the importance of the event for the free world.

After the acceptance by the constitutional convention of the conditions of approval and the issuance of a proclamation by Governor Muñoz Marín, the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico became effective on July 25, 1952, exactly fifty-four years after the American invasion. The date could not have been more symbolic, for the constitution was supposed to erase all traces of colonialism, including the anniversary of the Island becoming an American colony. Many Continental politicians thought that the establishment of the Commonwealth showed that the United States was not only “disposed to increase the well being of Puerto Rican fellow citizens but was willing to allow them to define for themselves the relationship they would establish with the federal

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646 81% of the voters voted in favor of the constitution prepared by the convention. See, Ibid. Hearing on H.J. Res. 430, 82 Cong., 2nd sess.


union.” 649 Truman remarked that the “American people should take special pride in the fact that the constitution was the product of the people of Puerto Rico.” 650 These comments are representative of how important it was for the United States to prove its adherence to the principles of self-determination. Soon afterwards, Muñoz Marín asked President Truman to stop submitting annual reports on Puerto Rico to the United Nations, a decision which led the international organization to remove the Island from the list of non-self-governing territories on November 27, 1953. 651 According to both the Puerto Rican and the U.S. government, the Island had ceased to be a colony, and the U.N. had certified the end of the United States as a colonial power.

According to its preface, the new constitution was intended to promote the “coexistence in Puerto Rico of the two great cultures [Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic] of the American Hemisphere.” 652 Puerto Rican soldiers fighting in Korea thought they were doing just that. A copy of the constitution was sent to Korea before ratification along with a number of Puerto Rican flags. One soldier commented, “We know and understand the things we are fighting for, but it is better to have a document of our own, stated in the

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words of our people.” Another Borinqueeneer added, “Now we have two Constitutions to defend.” It is significant that two corporals made these comments in 1952, which means that they were not part of the 65th Infantry’s old guard but volunteers who joined the army after the war broke out. They enlisted to defend the nation to which they felt they belonged, but they were also proud of having a document expressing the will of the Puerto Rican people.

On August 13, 1952, exploding Chinese artillery rounds and the strains of the Puerto Rican national anthem, La Borinqueña, set the mood as a group of Puerto Rican soldiers proudly raised their homeland’s flag beside the Stars and Stripes on a mountainous battlefield in South Korea. The soldiers commemorated the creation of the Estado Libre Asociado after half a century of direct U.S. colonial rule. Colonel Juan César Cordero, the first Puerto Rican commander of the 65th U.S. Infantry Regiment, felt that all Puerto Ricans in the U.S. military, especially those in his regiment, had contributed more than their fair share to the creation of the commonwealth. Addressing the troops in Spanish, Cordero stated: “Today more than ever, we the Puerto Ricans have motives to feel highly proud of our citizenship. Today we ceased to be group citizens taken by the hand and led by the rest of our co-citizens from the North.” Cordero told his men that it was important that they continue to be American citizens, but he also emphasized that “we too have a constitution that emanates exclusively from our own will.” He added, lest anybody forget how they had obtained their constitution, “Patiently

653 Pacific Stars & Stripes, clipping, circa March 1952, Rodríguez Papers.

654 Ibid.

655 Norat-Martínez, Historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería, 84-85.
but armed with faith in the great democratic attitudes of our great nation, we hoped for the day in which, not only we were allowed to enjoy our individual freedom and our rights as individuals citizens, but also to determine our own destiny.\textsuperscript{656} Cordero was mistaken in one respect. The Puerto Rican soldier had not only waited, he had fought for such status and became instrumental in the battle for psychological, political, and socio-economic decolonization. The Puerto Rican soldier advanced the decolonization process by proving to Puerto Ricans that they were the equals of their “co-citizens of the North.”

Cordero expressed the complex paradigm of Puerto Rican national identities that August 13 in Korea: “For fifty-four years we, the Puerto Ricans, have lived under the political tutelage of our co-citizens of the North. We have assimilated their entrepreneur spirit and industrial skills; and fed our soul and thoughts with the most sacred of men’s attributes: their admiration and respect for freedom, justice and equality.” Puerto Ricans, in Cordero’s opinion, had assimilated and embraced what the United States represented, but without ceasing to be Puerto Ricans or “without adulterating our Hispanic heritage, nor have we soiled it with artificial trends of Sajonic assimilation: and without relegating our Hispanic culture, sentiments and traditions, which we conserve pure, like the most precious legacy of our gallant and noble ancestors.”\textsuperscript{657}

Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans had assimilated trends from American culture. It would have been impossible not to do so after half a century of U.S. rule and after going through the institutions set by the metropolis to Americanize its new subjects. But the Puerto Ricans did not renounce their Anteamerican heritage but fused it with that of the

\textsuperscript{656} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{657} Ibid.
newcomers. In the process, a new nationality identity slowly but surely emerged, finally becoming hegemonic during the Korean War. The Puerto Rican soldier was instrumental in making the new national identity hegemonic. The cultural and the political, the insular and the continental, the Puerto Rican and the American could, according to the soldiers’ and politicians’ discourse, coexist and strengthen each other. The words of two Puerto Rican POWs may express this better. Released after two years of imprisonment in a Chinese camp, Corporal Fernando Arroyo told a correspondent of the *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, “They (the Chinese) often tell me about big trouble and revolution in Puerto Rico because American [sic] exploits masses. I tell them I am American and they are liars.” Master Sergeant Enrique R. Fernández, Arroyo’s prison mate, added: “We may come from Puerto Rico and speak a different language but the communists could not take away from us one thing, we are Americans.”

As discussed earlier, the historical juncture of 1898 gave way to the development of very complex national identities in Puerto Rico. This process was furthered by the U.S. presence and active campaigns to Americanize the natives on the Island, but more importantly, by the active support given by Puerto Rico’s political leadership to cooperate militarily with the metropolis. This, many thought, would bring about the decolonization of the Island, either by becoming a state of the union or an independent republic. Paradoxically, military participation eventually made it easier for Puerto Ricans to embrace an identity that allowed them to negotiate between being Americans and Puerto Ricans or to be both simultaneously and hence, to embrace the Commonwealth status.

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*658 Pacific Stars & Stripes*, clipping circa August 1953, Rodríguez Papers.
A heavy burden was placed on the Puerto Ricans during the Korean War because of the strong support of the war effort championed by political leaders and the press. Puerto Rico hailed the soldiers of the 65th as heroes, even before they reached Korea. Editorials talked about the role of the Puerto Rican soldier as a catalyst for forging a new modern Puerto Rican nationality. Military participation was equated with patriotic duty and the defense of the nation, and the men of the 65th were singled out as the quintessential example of what it meant to be Puerto Rican. Consequently, the Puerto Rican community felt obliged to either volunteer for military service or actively support the war effort on the home front. In short, many Puerto Ricans came to believe their duty to defend the American nation.

Since the very early days of U.S. domination over the Island, politicians and the press sought to hasten the decolonization process by using colonial instruments, and in this case the metropolis’ military. In the end, however, a midpoint was chosen when it became obvious that military participation had not moved Puerto Ricans toward either full assimilation or full rejection of American culture and values. If the project of nation building through military service had passed from metropolitan to Creole control during WWII, during the Korean War such project became popularized. As peasants and urban workers continued to join in mass the armies of the metropolis and to support the Populares’ project of social justice and the economic restructuring of the Island, their views with respect to identity, political and cultural, became hegemonic. Unable to convince his constituency of the viability of independence, incapable of winning elections without the support of the masses, and aware of the significance of military

\[659\] *El Imparcial de Puerto Rico*, 1 June 1950.
service (and federal aid and support) for the reconstruction of the socio-economic structures in the Island, Muñoz Marín and the *Populares* revived and championed a political status which they thought offered the space for development and growth—politically, culturally, socially and economically speaking. When the Puerto Rican soldier became the embodiment of the Commonwealth formula, the political leaders involved in its design were in fact responding to the peasants and urban worker’s complex identities as reflected and empowered by their military service. Among other things, their national identities compelled them to defend the “American Nation” to show their *Puertorriqueñidad*. As such, the new status, at least for the time being, offered a space where most Puerto Ricans could feel comfortable.

Former Governor of Puerto Rico, Rexford G. Tugwell predicted in 1958;

The [Commonwealth] Constitution might prove so satisfactory that it would arrest furthest progress towards union, at least temporarily, and would also make it impossible for Muñoz’s successors to press farther towards independence.\(^{660}\)

The constitution indeed proved satisfactory to both American politicians and Puerto Ricans. The United States was able to shield itself against charges of colonialism and to proclaim itself as the true champion of the free world. In late 1952, the government of Puerto Rico asked President Truman to stop presenting annual reports on Puerto Rico before the United Nations, which led the international organization to remove the Island from the list of non-self-governing territories on November 27, 1953.\(^{661}\) For a while, Puerto Rico became a miracle, a window for the underdeveloped


world to see what could be accomplished by aligning itself with the United States. For Puerto Ricans the *Estado Libre Asociado* offered a high degree of sovereignty that few thought possible at the time while retaining its relation to the United States. It also brought a respite to a people that had been fighting for a change in their colonial status for over fifty years. Both Puerto Ricans and Americans grew comfortable with the Commonwealth, perhaps too comfortable, and over fifty years later the Island still has the same political status. 

Epilogue:

Those Puerto Rican soldiers, who celebrated the creation of the Commonwealth by raising the now legal Puerto Rican flag and by playing the national anthem in a forgotten hill in Korea, made another symbolic contribution to the emerging nation. The Puerto Rican *danza*, "*La Borinqueña*", composed in 1867 as a Creole version of the European waltz and quickly banned by the Spanish authorities, had been for a long time the unofficial anthem of the Island. In 1922, the director of the 65th regimental band adapted "*La Borinqueña*" to be used as the regiment’s march. In July 24, 1952 that

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662 The *Independentistas* had their best showing ever in 1948 obtaining 126,228 votes; the *Estadistas* obtained 85,591, the *Socialistas* 21,719 and the *Populares* 431,409. The *Populares* won the Governorship, and the Resident Commissioner post, the 8 senatorial districts, and 40 district representatives. They also elected 14 of 22 senators at large and all of the municipalities. Though the *Independentistas* became the biggest opposition block, replacing the *Estadistas*, the growth was short lived and in the elections of 1956 the *Estadistas* would once more become the leading opposition party. The *Populares* would not really face a challenge until 1968-the second election after Muñoz Marín’s retirement from public life- when Luis A. Ferré, running for the *Partido Nuevo Progresista*, won the governorship. However, the PNP did not become a serious threat to the PPD until the elections of 1976, when the political system in the Island evolved into a two-party system. All the while, the *Independentistas* continued their decline becoming a permanent minority. See Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, 216-17, 225-28, 231-35, 245-252, 261-69.
version became the official anthem of the *Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico*.

Unbeknownst to these soldiers, their regiment, el *sesenta y cinco* had safeguarded that expression of Puertoricaness.
CONCLUSION

Usually, when metropolitan powers and empires engage in transforming the socio-economic and political structures of the colonies or territories under their sphere of power, they call these projects “nation building” when in fact they are engaging primarily in “state building”. Their efforts are better described as state-building because they focus on creating or reimagining the public and private infrastructures that should allow for a territory or country to operate according to the rules set by the hegemonic world power or coalition, which are considered as modern and thus desirable. Among these structures that make a country or territory “modern” are; sanitary-health facilities, a bank system tied to western models, a public education system, political and judicial institutions that resembles that of the dominant power, and of course, a professional military.

These institutions in fact serve to change the self-perception (if not the loyalties) of individuals and native groups in such territories, and since it is the metropolis’ desire to do so, they are indeed engaging in nation building via state or institution building. Hence, metropolitan powers do engage in “nation building” but only because the structures they built or change in the colonies to create a state more in tune with the metropolis, ultimately alters the socio-cultural identities of the colonial subjects and their national identities.

It is worth considering that the metropolis is not really hegemonic in deciding what the colonial subjects are to become. Local realities and idiosyncrasies more often than not alter the metropolis’ designs. Institutions have to be adapted to such things as climate and geography, and more importantly, to cultural differences. Moreover, as elite colonial groups become engaged in the nation building process (an inevitable process
since the metropolis needs them to secure the loyalty of the colonial masses) the metropolis is forced to negotiate with pre-metropolis or emerging colonial elites with regard to the socio-economic and political structures of the colony. Laura Briggs has argued that "...internal power relations of gender, race, class, age, and so on, can be worked out through the structure of colonialism (what structures are untouched by it) without being in any meaningful sense determined by them." I do agree with the first premise. Even within colonial structures there is space to negotiate internal power relations, but I would add that these colonial institutions can also be turned around to resist the metropolis. Furthermore, power relations are inevitably influenced by the metropolitan structures, but the colonial subjects have a say in altering the nature of these institutions too.

To some extent the degree of colonial or criollo engagement with the metropolitan structures determines how liberal or at least how responsive to the colonial subjects’ needs the metropolitan policies towards its colony are. The degree of criollo participation in state and nation building projects is in itself influenced by the needs of the metropolis. And, during periods of crisis, metropolitan-colonial negotiations tend to

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663 Benedict Anderson has argued that vernacular languages, which had been chosen as language-of-states based on unselfconscious inheritance or convenience became tools to unify (or Russify) ethnically diverse empires. In this regard German, Russian, and English became “universal-imperial” as well as “particular-national” as the imperial dynasties courted nationalism and national languages while claiming to preside over polyglot peoples. As their empires became global, and too big and too far to be ruled by nationals, the metropoles responded by Russifying the educational system as to provide an army of indigenous clerks to run the colonies. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86, 109-10.

accelerate. The need to rely on local elites to command the support of the colonial masses gradually leads to the Creolization of the institutions and projects set by the metropolis to control or assimilate their subjects. When this happens, there is a chance that the nation building project of the metropolis falls into the hands of a native elite. Depending on the nature of the native coalitions gaining control over these projects, there is also the possibility that eventually such projects and the institutions devised to carry them out, become popularized and that a very pluralistic polity supported by flexible and open national identities becomes hegemonic.

As per our case, the more that Spain was able to exclude those born in Puerto Rico from the colonial administration and the military, the more repressive it became. As discussed in chapter one, the Spanish colonial administration tried since the early nineteenth century to restrain the power of colonial elites by reducing the presence of those born in the Island in the colonial militias. However, it was not until the once vast Spanish Empire was reduced to Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and some smaller possessions, that the Spaniards were able to concentrate on closing all avenues to enfranchisement, especially the military, to los hijos de este país. After the failed insurrection of Lares in 1868 and the final exclusion of the Puerto Ricans from the military, the liberal criollo political leadership moved towards autonomismo while the exiled leadership joined revolutionary juntas in the United States and continued to advocate for independence. By the dawn of Spanish control over the Island, the Iberian metropolis also tried to keep the Island by passing the Carta Autonomica de 1897, but this gesture came to late and only placated the criollo political elite as it did not change the daily dynamics in Puerto Rico.
Though the Spaniards were able to quench political insurrection until they finally lost the Island to the U.S., they had alienated themselves from the general population fueling the emergence of a distinct Puerto Rican national identity. As a matter of fact, when the U.S. troops landed in Puerto Rico in 1898 the Spaniards could not rely on the loyalty of the islanders. Four hundred years of history and dominance, however, are hard to erase. The natives of Puerto Rico probably started to develop distinct national identities during the last third of the nineteenth century, and while the vast majority felt no loyalty towards Spain, they still retain a high degree of cultural affinity.

Under United States’ rule, access to military institutions for the “hijos de este país” was reestablished while political participation- to a certain degree- was opened to the masses. Soon after the U.S. seizure of the Island, Puerto Ricans started to replace U.S. continental soldiers. From the beginning the new insular soldiers became elements of the United States Army tightly controlled by the American colonial administration. Additionally, the new metropolis gradually allowed for a higher degree of political participation eventually creating the space for mass electoral enfranchisement. These two apparently disconnected trends facilitated the transfer of sovereignty over the Island from Spain to the United States, and, more importantly, they transformed the character of Puerto Rican nationalities. The inclusion of Puerto Ricans in the armed forces of the new metropolis, and mass political mobilization, especially of the rural sectors, gradually led towards competing national identities.

The U.S. embarked in a comprehensive build up of the public education system, (which was intended to Americanize and modernize the inhabitants of the Island according to the metropolis’ standards), and launched massive sanitary and relief
campaigns. Although cultural affinity might have been absent between Puerto Ricans and Americans in 1898, the metropolis’ control of the education system allowed for the projection of American material superiority disguised as cultural supremacy. Furthermore, simultaneous sanitary and relief campaigns allowed for positive interaction between the new metropolis and its colonial subjects. A special relation started to emerge between the military and Puerto Rico’s population as military doctors and engineers combed the mountains and towns of the Island building sanitary facilities, roads, and schools and launched massive health and relief campaigns.

The fact that the military institutions, the political arena, and the public school system were opened to previously disenfranchised groups began to profoundly alter the islander’s national identities. Participation in U.S. institutions provided unifying experiences for the Puerto Rican masses which allowed for the strengthening of their national identity but with an American touch. Public schools offered a homogenized pro-metropolis oriented experience for hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans while the opening of the U.S. military to groups previously excluded from it and other sectors of Puerto Rico’s society conferred these groups with a sense of inclusion. Access to education and military positions also offered an opportunity for mobility and the chance to overthrow old socio-economic hierarchies, a phenomenon that led to the creation of upwardly mobile classes and neo-elites who owed their wellbeing and their political allegiance to the new metropolis.

The early American attempts to create a new Puerto Rican via military service—which were supported by the criollo elite, including supporters of independence—were curtailed by the limited scope of the project. The small size of the United States military
apparatus at the beginning of the twentieth century, limited the size of the military in Puerto Rico and its effect on the population. Still, the re-mobilization of the Puerto Ricans began during the first years of U.S. rule as Puerto Ricans came to wear U.S. Army uniforms and replaced Continental troops garrisoning the Island.

It was not, however, until the First World War, when over 18,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. armed forces, that the U.S. had to heavily rely on the criollo elites to mobilize militarily and lead thousands of Puerto Ricans. The chance could have not come at a better time for Puerto Rican politicians who had started to aggressively challenge colonial policies. The First World War provided the grounds to retry the projects of Americanization and modernization via military service at levels previously unimaginable and with more players involved.

The coming of the war temporarily brought to power the staunchly pro-American Republicanos who were the first to embrace President Wilson’s 100 percent Americanism discourse, and to tie it to their own political goal of federated statehood. By the war’s end, however, by turning President Wilson’s promise of ending the hyphenations in the American nation into a call for a “New Americanism” that promoted creating a new Puerto Rican out of Hispanic gallantry and Anglo-Saxon industrialism, the autonomistas within Unión had found an image they could use to sell as a third way, the Libre Asociación, to the general population. This was in essence a return to Eugenio Maria de Hostos and Rosendo Matienzo Cintron’s early idea of Americanizing the Puerto Rican, which for them meant creating a modern political individual without losing the essence of Puertorriqueñismo, only this time, economic modernization superseded

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665 See discussion in Chapter 2.
political modernization. The *autonomistas* had found a new philosophy and an agent to incarnate it. There could be a space for the Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic cultures to coexist. The *Jíbaro* would be that new man and Puerto Rico that new space.

After the Armistice, however, the *Jíbaro* soldiers were quickly demobilized and returned to the hills and coastal valleys. Neither the metropolis nor the colonial administration created vocational or educational projects to facilitate these soldiers’ readjustment into civilian society. The promises of a new *Jíbaro*, integrated into the economy as its driving force, and as the “new teachers of freedom and democracy,” remained unfulfilled. The *autonomistas* of the 1920s were not able to fully exploit or develop their new popular philosophy, but the seed had been planted for the generation coming of age during the war, and they would retake this narrative decades later.

The imposition of U.S. citizenship previous to U.S. entry into the war, the mass participation of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. military, the newly created Puerto Rico National Guard, and the willing support of the newly elected Puerto Rican legislature for the war effort, temporarily cemented U.S. control over the Island, and more importantly, over the islanders’ loyalty to the metropolis. As some supporters of the metropolis argued during the war years, the unwillingness or inability of the vast majority of the Puerto Ricans to resist becoming American citizens and their determination to participate in the war reflected the impact that the institutions of the new metropolis had had on the Puerto Ricans. That same institutional influence would lead the Puerto Ricans to expect, if not equality, at least more political and socioeconomic opportunities.
The mass mobilization of the Puerto Rican peasantry and urban workers, and the initial enthusiasm shown by the inductees hid the fact that control over the military apparatus in the Island was no longer the exclusive prerogative of the American colonial administrators. The traditional and emerging *criollo* elites, as well as the professional classes, had to be called upon to train and lead the massive army of peasants soldiering in the Island. Out of sheer necessity, the metropolis broadly opened the officer’s corps to *los hijos de este país* providing in the process the tools for the local elites and emerging professional classes to attain and consolidate political power.

*criollo* leaders, which for different reasons and with different goals in mind supported the war effort, by the war’s end, had succeeded in wresting exclusive control over the nation-building project via military service from the metropolitan authorities. The “*Creolization*” of both the military and the project of nation-building had begun. This situation, even if not immediately apparent in the post-war years, would eventually put the local elites in a better political position than they had been before the WWI. Oblivious to the transformation occurring in Puerto Rico, the metropolis was slow to respond to these challenges, and no major political changes would take place after 1917 until yet another war, the Second World War rekindled the strategic importance of the Island.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War Puerto Rico experienced natural disasters, the Great Depression, and the end of political stability. The emergence of the Nationalist Party as a radical force under the leadership of Pedro Albizu Campos is one of the most striking characteristics of this period. Albizu Campos, in Anderson’s jargon, was one of many colonial subjects who discovered the “limit of their inward ascension”
during his educational pilgrimage to the metropolis. According to Anderson, awareness of their exclusion from the metropolitan power circles would become the basis for the colonial subjects to see themselves as “nationals” separate from the metropolis.\(^{666}\)

Initially staunchly pro-American, Albizu Campos would eventually lead his followers in a virulent anti-U.S. campaign in an attempt to create the Republic of Puerto Rico. The Nationalists of the 1930s resorted to underlining the differences between Continental Americans and Puerto Ricans while emphasizing Hispanic traditions. Recognizing the relevance of military traditions in the Island and the impact that military institutions were having on the population, the Nacionalistas created their own paramilitary units.

The Nacionalistas’ failure to win the support of a sizeable portion of the population was also a rejection of their iconography and their emphasis on Spanish traditions. After all, at the time, the majority of Puerto Ricans had been born under U.S. sovereignty, and those lucky enough to have been schooled had been exposed to a curriculum based on the New England public school model. The Nationalist’s nostalgic discovery of the “Hispanic” past was an alien concept to the Puerto Rican masses of the 1930s, except for the elites who still traced their lineage to the Peninsula. Moreover, for all means and purposes, the Nacionalista “rediscovery” of the Island’s Hispanic past was incongruent with the drive towards progress and a modern Puerto Rico. Both progress and modernization, and hints at industrialization, were at the core of federal efforts to improve Puerto Rico’s socio-economic condition. The Nacionalistas could not compete with the metropolis’ material superiority which implied a vague promise of a better future. Hence, the combination of violent acts, the lack of an alternative path forward,
the disconnection with the masses socio-economic realities, and the emphasis in Spanish
tradition were as responsible for the Nacionalistas’ demise in the 1930s as was political
persecution.

Old metropolitan ideas regarding the impact of military training on Puerto Rico’s
social and economic structures resurfaced during the Second World War. This was not
a new theory. Immediately after the 1898 invasion and during WWI, military service
had been consider as a builder of character and national identity and as a way to remake
the Puerto Ricans in the Continental’s image. But even in WWI, the metropolis’ nation-
buiding project, which heavily relied on modernizing the Puerto Rican via military
service, had started to escape the hands of the metropolitan administrators. History
repeated itself during WWII as the plans of the metropolis- including type, size, and
length of mobilization had to contend with an empowered Puerto Rican senate led by
such a popular and skillful politician as Muñoz Marín. Moreover, Muñoz Marín worked
incessantly to make the Puerto Rican soldier an integral part of the socio-economic
restructuring of the Island.

By the end of the war, control of the nation and state-building project via military
service was firmly in the Populares’ hands. The U.S. military had envisioned service as
a way to build a new Puerto Rican and a new Puerto Rico, as early as 1898- and most
certainly during WWI. This project, however, came to bear fruit when it was
appropriated by Puerto Ricans. Nonetheless, the military in Puerto Rico, be it the

667 The Christian Science Monitor after pointing out that 35% of the Island’s
population was illiterate, argued that “trained Army officers are inculcating in thousands
of Puerto Ricans improved ideas of diet, education, and sanitation which they believe
will contribute to raising the standards of domestic and community life when the war is
over.” Christian Science Monitor, April 7 1943.
National Guard or the regular Army units, remained part of the United States military and depended entirely of federal funds to function. This could only allow for a third path as the Populares continue to employ the military for nation and state building. The military relevance of the Island, the immense size of the U.S. military and the Puerto Rican contingent (with over 65,000 islanders serving in the U.S. armed forces), allowed for the Creolization of the military and of the agencies in charge of reconstructing the socio-economic structures of the Island. Very tellingly, Puerto Rican military officers came to preside over many of these agencies and openly supported Muñoz Marín and the reconstruction effort.

The first mobilization of the Puerto Ricans during WWII was more political in nature than military, and it happened in 1940 with the Populares first electoral victory. The second mobilization of the Puerto Ricans was, in fact, military as the Island became an integral part of the U.S. war effort and Puerto Ricans were called to arms. This effort had strong economic impact in terms of federal monies transferred to Puerto Rico and unemployment relief. The third mobilization was social in nature as the Puerto Rican soldiers moved from the fields to the classrooms and put to good use the skills learned while in the military and the benefits to which they were entitled through the G.I. Bill of 1944. WWII ended with the Island moving towards socio-economic restructuring very rapidly and with LMM beginning to accept the third way, the commonwealth.

It was the Jíbaro who started to convince politicians of the third way, a hybridism that allowed for a political identity and a cultural one to coexist. Muñoz Marín’s change of heart with regard to independence was thus Jíbaro inspired and popular in nature. Initially a tactical decision born out of the need of securing the vote of the peasantry and
urban workers which did not see independence as a solution to their everyday problems, the idea that the “Status no está en issue” became a kind of end in itself as political decolonization took a backseat and socio-economic decolonization became imperative. Many have branded this change as a sellout or the cooptation of the people’s will, but in fact Muñoz Marín was responding to the masses’ needs and will, which at this historical junction coincided with one of the greatest social reconfigurations in U.S. and Puerto Rican history. When WWII ended and during the immediate post war years, the Island moved rapidly to achieve the socio-economic change envisioned by Muñoz Marín and the Populares.

Benedict Anderson has argued that a final wave of nationalism occurred during the post war era, especially in Asia and Africa and that it was directly linked to the those colonial subjects who made the educational peregrination to the metropolis and found out they belong to another “family”. These nationalist movements seeking political independence were led by “lonely bilingual intelligentsias unattached to sturdy local bourgeois,” which read another language. This intelligentsia, however, was able to “bypass print in propagating the imagined communities” not only to illiterate masses but to “literate masses reading different languages.” It is tempting to fit what happened in Puerto Rico into Anderson’s “final wave”. After all, Muñoz Marín, the architect of the final commonwealth formula, for a time spoke a language different to that of the masses, at least symbolically. Moreover, his campaigns were marked by the use of radio speeches to circumvent both the difficulties of traveling in the Island and illiteracy. But

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668 Anderson, Imagined Communities, 139-140.
instead of asserting this formula, I propose that a different wave of nationalism visited the Island.

Creolization of the military and other metropolitan institutions paved the way for another phenomenon, which I call “Popularization”. As Creolization yields to Popularization, the former metropolitan institutions, originally intended to change the colonial subjects into something more attuned with the metropolitan master, can turn into tools for resisting complete assimilation. This metamorphosis may occur when the metropolis finds itself in need of the colonial subjects’ manpower- as in WWII- and the military, and other metropolitan institutions have to open to the masses. In this instance the military can become a type of megaphone for the masses to express their voices- and there is a real chance of altering both the metropolis and the criollo elites’ plans. If the military and its project of nation and state-building had fallen in the hands of the criollo elites during WWII, the process of “Popularization” had already begun as the native political leaders owed too much to these soldiers.

During WWII the Populares used military service to begin their project of social justice and succeeded in gaining control over metropolitan institutions. As discussed earlier, Florencia Mallon has argued that the degree of military, paramilitary, and political mobilization of peasants and indigenous groups contributes to the depth of the liberal spirit of a country’s polity. She believes that political groups considered as class not only sense a stake in nation state formation but also seek to participate on its design. Participation, she argues, is contested at the local level and filtered through regional politics until it moves towards the national level where negotiation continues and a contract is reached among contesting forces. Mallon calls this stage hegemony, a process
that will continue endlessly as counter-hegemonic forces keep challenging the hegemonic entity or polity. Subaltern groups, she contends, have initiated projects for “collective identity based on a premise of citizenship available to all, and with individual membership beginning with the presumption of equality.” In other words, subaltern groups have taken the challenge of national democratic discourses and attempted to create their own version of a more egalitarian practice trying to make real the unfulfilled promises of nation and democracy.

Mallon thus emphasizes the construction of alternative national projects, (popular, inclusive and liberal), through the political and military mobilization of peasants and other subaltern groups during periods of crisis. When subaltern groups are successfully integrated within the new hegemonic coalition, the popular sectors are incorporated into the country’s polity and economy and the state becomes a real negotiator between labor and capital while embarking on land reform. The combination of these factors attests to the liberal spirit of a hegemonic political alliance based in a national populist discourse. By the end of WWII, the political and military mobilization of popular sectors in the Island started the drive towards a popular, inclusive and liberal national project and in the process the project of political decolonization would take another meaning.

The next mobilization of the Puerto Rican happened after the military and the nation and state building projects had been creolized and took place during the Korean War, and during this war the military became fully popularized. This mobilization had a

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670 Ibid., 4.

671 Ibid., 9-10.
socio-political character nature and was essential in the creation of the *Estado Libre Asociado* in 1952. Korea would become a propaganda war for sponsors of the third way which entailed a new Puerto Rican for a new Puerto Rico. During this war, military service not only served as a path to political and socio-economic enfranchisement for the Puerto Rican peasantry and urban workers, it also allowed for their national identities to become hegemonic and to translate into the political realm by virtue of the *Estado Libre Asociado*. That is not to say that everyone welcomed the ELA or the philosophy behind it. In fact, pro-Annexation groups, echoing the *Independentistas* in the Island, soon denounced it as a farce. 

But the ELA’s creation had a very popular, liberal, and pluralistic origin supported by an alternative conception of the Puerto Ricans’ national identities.

The tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans turned soldiers during WWII and Korea had the opportunity to become part of an emerging or broadening middle class. The masses cultural discourse was characterized by neither a rejection nor an acceptance of the 100% Americanism espoused by some metropolitan agents and native politicians, or the Hispanic revival of the nationalist movement. Instead, their discourse was a hybrid

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672 The *Independentistas* had their best showing ever obtaining 126,228 votes, the *Estadistas* obtained 85,591, the *Socialistas* 21,719 and the *Populares* 431,409. The *Populares* won the Governorship, and the Resident Commissioner post, the 8 senatorial districts, and 40 district representatives. They also elected 14 of 22 senators at large and all of the municipalities. Though the *Independentistas* became the biggest opposition block, replacing the *Estadistas*, the growth was short lived and in the elections of 1956 the *Estadistas* would once more become the leading opposition party. The *Populares* would not really face a challenge until 1968-the second election after Muñoz Marín’s retirement from public life- when Luis A. Ferré, running for the *Partido Nuevo Progresista*, won the governorship. However, the PNP did not become a serious threat to the PPD until the elections of 1976, when the political system in the Island evolved into a two-party system. All the while, the *Independentistas* continued their decline becoming a permanent minority. See Bayrón Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico*, 216-17, 225-28, 231-35, 245-252, 261-69.
popular language which fused and accepted Americanism and *Hispanismo*, as well as other cultural influences, as they understood them. The popular hybrid culture inched its way forward to eventually become the dominant cultural and political discourse. Had tens of thousands of Puerto Rican peasants and urban workers not been mobilized for war and then enfranchised, such popular discourse would have had a hard time becoming politically hegemonic.

This discourse was hard to accept by the nationalists. For the *Nacionalistas*, the “Nation” could not survive; in fact it had no purpose at all if it did not have its own independent state. Becoming an independent state to secure the survival of the nation went from being the means to becoming the end as *Nacionalistas* were willing to sacrifice every last Puerto Rican to obtain an independent Puerto Rico. This narrow vision put them at odds with most Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans obviously identified culturally with the Island - though the influence of fifty years of U.S. institutions was noticeable in every aspect of Puerto Rican life- but politically, they identified with the U.S. In effect, even to this day *Nacionalismo* expresses itself in every possible cultural form but does not translate into political power.\(^673\) For the *Nacionalistas* the “Nation” was an ideal, a concept higher than the Puerto Ricans themselves. For they imagine the Puerto Rican nation as a sovereign political entity, as a Republic. The *Populares* on the

\(^{673}\) The concept of “Anglo-Saxon” and “Hispanic” cultures’ coexistence was soon to be abandoned by the ELA as a decade known as *sexenio de la puertorriqueñidad* (1953-59) witnessed a series of state-sponsored cultural policies aimed at stopping further Americanization of Puerto Rican culture. The creation of the Insituto de Cultura Puertoriqueña, several *ateneos*, cultural centers, and folkloric troupes and festivals, under the auspice and control of the Commonwealth evidenced this process. See for example, Jaime L. Rodriguez Cancel, *La Guerra Fría y el sexenio de la puertorriqueñidad; Afrirmación nacional y políticas culturales* (San Juan Puerto Rico: Ediciones Puerto, 2007).
other hand came to consider the Puerto Ricans to be the “Nation”. Thus, political
sovereignty in the form of an independent state came second to the welfare of the people.
In fact, when Muñoz Marín and metropolitan leaders backed the creation of the ELA,
they were responding to the variegated essence of Puerto Rican national identities.

Muñoz Marín and Albizu Campos were part of the intelligentsia that Benedict
Anderson identifies as the future leaders of national movement of decolonization. Albizu
Campos, after his pilgrimage to the metropolis was never able to speak again the
language of the masses for he never understood that many Puerto Ricans had come to
adopt traits of American culture as their own. Muñoz Marín, who was at heart a
nationalist and a fervent Independentista, learned to speak the language of the people.
And as a true nationalist, he put aside his personal preferences in favor of the people’s
will who are after all the embodiment of the nation.

The institutions and plans of the metropolis- and of the criollo elites- may have
been changed by the masses, but in the process the masses were changed as well. After
fifty years of U.S. dominance, Puerto Ricans identities were divided into a very Puerto
Rican cultural side (which mainstream mainly identified with Hispanic legacy), albeit
with a heavy American influence, and a political identity attuned mostly with the precepts
of Americanism. Puerto Rican society- where the political meets the cultural- provided
the space for these two identities to merge. Nobody expressed the hybridism of Puerto
Rican identities better than the Puerto Rican soldiers who thought their duty was to
defend the American Nation, to which they thought they belonged, because it was their
duty as Puerto Ricans. In this regard we can then find Puerto Ricans serving in the U.S.
military during the Korean War, with the overwhelming support of the population, who
were proud of their Puertoricaness and who saw no incongruence with proving their 
*Puertorriqueñidad* by defending the American nation and wearing a U.S. Army uniform. The colonial subjects going through these institutions- with the cheering of the *criollo* elites- found it hard not to be receptive to the metropolis’ tenets. And thus, these soldiers who among many other things cited “freedom”, “democracy”, “fighting for our nation”, “defending our nation in peril”; had in fact adopted much of the metropolis’ creed, even if creolized or popularized, and even with the inherent contradictions of a colonial subject fighting for his nation while wearing the uniform of the metropolis. By bleeding alongside the soldiers of the United Nations in Korea, the Puerto Rican soldiers would become the heroes of the emerging nation.

But as Mallon warns us, hegemony is always in contestation. Soon after the creation of the Commonwealth, the *criollo* elites tried to create a sanctioned national identity to fit the new state’s official discourse. Arlene Dávila has argued that that after Puerto Rico became a commonwealth, the PPD sought to counter the pro-independence movement, and thus secure the survival of the commonwealth, by appropriating the Nationalist Party’s icons and discourse. The PPD’s appropriation of the nationalist discourse and imagery, Dávila argues, led to the neutralization of independence as a political option. Here she misses the point, for Muñoz Marín abandoned independence as an immediate political goal after he became disenchanted with the cold reception that the masses in Puerto Rico gave to the idea of independence in 1936. He did not appropriate the symbols of Puerto Rican nationalism. He identified them correctly and altered his political posture accordingly. Moreover, he did so only after spending another

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decade trying to secure independence for the Island, after realizing that important groups
in the United States were starting to favor statehood for the Island, and recognizing that
he would not command the loyalty of the Puerto Rican peasantry and urban worker if he
moved towards independence. Most notably, Dávila has argued that the creation of the
Racial Triad- the “brave and gallant” Spaniard, the “noble” Taino, and the “strong” Black
African- to encapsulate Puerto Rican culture and identities, was the ELA’s attempt to
consolidate its position, and defeat the Independentista movement, by dominating
cultural identities in the Island. The racial triad, however, was not an attempt to move the
Island away from independence or Puertorriqueño, but a last ditch effort to hinder
further Americanization. In essence, the new state sponsored identity was intended to roll
back half a century of American influence. Nonetheless, the Popularization of the
metropolis institutions meant that the criollo elite lost control over the Islanders’ national
identities. New national identities emerged in the Island, but they were and remain
impossible to be controlled by the state.

A word on the fate of the Jíbaro;

As was the case for WWII veterans, the majority of the Puerto Rican soldiers who
fought in Korea came from the mountains, sugar cane plantations and the urban working
classes. And, once more, the returning Jíbaro-Soldier would renounce subsistence
agriculture or life as a sugar cane-cutter. Many would become the technocrats and
technicians of the Puerto Rican “industrial miracle” and would join a broadening middle
class. But they did not renounce their identity. In fact many of those Jíbaro/soldiers,
who went on to study and became professionals and/or remained in the National Guard,
subsidized their plots of land with the income from their new professions. Ironically, the
*Jíbaro*, a heavily romanticized figure to be sure and the quintessential icon of the *Populares*, and of modern nationalist and independent movements in the Island, survived as such in great part due to military service.
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