



Señor Luis Muñoz Marín, political leader of Puerto Rico, is pledged to freedom of the island, but now isn't at all sure that Puerto Rico can afford liberty

PUERTO RICO GROWS UP

BY FRANK GERVASI

The island will soon have its choice of statehood, nationhood or dominion status. If it picks nationhood—and the odds now point in that direction—it will be the first purely Socialistic country to sit on our front doorstep

WE'VE owned Puerto Rico as a colony for nearly half a century, but judging from the wrongly addressed mail received almost daily by our businessmen down there, a lot of Americans still believe it's a town in Florida, one of the lesser banana republics, or the capital of South America. The postal authorities correct our deficiencies in geography, and the letters reach their destinations, but our ignorance in this and other Puerto Rican matters hasn't helped to endear us to the 2,000,000 people who live there.

A few leathery septuagenarians who remember when we landed on the Caribbean island in '98 say that we were hailed as liberators, but the record shows that we were greeted with silence. For about 400 years the Puerto Ricans had fought for freedom from

the Spaniards. Spain had just granted them self-rule when we arrived and they saw us only as a lot of imperialistic *Yanquis* and a new enemy. Off and on for forty-seven years they agitated for independence from us and now, due largely to the efforts of a big and bulbous island politician named Luis Muñoz Marín, who was a three-day-old baby when the battleship Maine exploded and sank in Havana harbor, they're about to get it.

Until ten years ago, when Muñoz welded Puerto Rico's rebellious political factions into a peasants' party whose revolutionary motto is "Bread, Land and Liberty," we gave the Puerto Ricans little cause to love us. We bought up most of their good land for cane farming and turned their island into a big sugar factory. We exploited the workers. We wrecked the island's foreign trade. Our ignorance of Puerto Rico's geographic whereabouts was equaled by our apparent inability to cope with a population grown too great for such a small island, and we failed also to cope with a housing shortage and unemployment.

Those conditions bred political unrest, a few unpublicized but bloody riots and, eventually, Luis Muñoz Marín. His Popular Party advocated division of the large estates into small farms, government ownership and operation of public utilities and other social changes.

Muñoz's radical tendencies struck a responsive chord in the New Deal, and Washington encouraged him. Since then, the Puerto Ricans have regarded us with considerably more friendliness than they'd shown before. In fact an unascertainably large number aren't so sure that they want independence at all. If the bill recently introduced in Congress means anything, we're determined, now, to give it to them.

Our stewardship wasn't precisely a picnic for us, either. We needed Puerto Rico. It's an important bastion in the eastern screen of Caribbean strong points guarding the Panama Canal. It's the source of about a sixth of all our sugar. But the island was an economic liability, a political headache and an imperial wart on our democratic nose from the day we acquired it along with Cuba and the Philippines from Spain.

We are now about to try to reduce the financial outlay—the price of colonial glory—and relieve and possibly cure the political migraines entailed in colonial stewardship. We hope to accomplish all this with Congressional legislation which will allow the Puerto Ricans to decide by a referendum whether they want (1) outright independence, (2) annexation to the United States as a state or (3) some form of dominion status such as Canada enjoys in relation to Britain.

The alternate forms of sovereignty are offered in a bill introduced in the Senate by Senator Millard F. Tydings, the Maryland Democrat. The bill was drafted by Luis Muñoz Marín and the Joint Commission of the Insular Legislature who made certain that, no matter which of the three forms of sovereignty the Puerto Ricans choose, the island shall continue to have the financial assistance of the United States. For the past five years this has been at the rate of from \$80,000,000 to \$100,000,000 a year. America furnished funds for public works, sanitation projects and education, and rebated to the

insular treasury duties collected on imports of Puerto Rican rum.

Muñoz himself won't predict which form of freedom the Puerto Ricans will choose, but Puerto Ricans willing to guess say that the islanders will vote overwhelmingly for dominion status or outright independence. They remind you that, as political boss of the island, Muñoz can swing the referendum any way he wants.

Before 1940, Muñoz was one of the chief advocates of full independence. There is no reason to believe that he has changed his mind although he admits he has since learned a lot about economics and recognizes the dangers which the island faces once it is cut loose from stepmother America. He might, therefore, urge the islanders to vote for dominion status and perpetual financial affiliation with the United States.

U.S. to Control Land, Sea, Air

The Tydings Bill specifically provides, however, that whatever the Puerto Ricans decide, the United States shall retain all naval, military and air rights on the island. Puerto Rico will enjoy the physical protection of American arms and it, in turn, must fulfill the strategic role assigned to it by geography. Congressional approval of the Tydings Bill is important to 2,000,000 Puerto Ricans but it's even more important to the United States. With it America relinquishes the last sizable bit of colonial real estate acquired in its war with Spain. Cuba obtained its independence within four years after America defeated Spain. The Philippines are expected to be freed next July.

The United States may assume new responsibilities in the Pacific by acquiring land formerly owned by the Japanese but it will do so through the trusteeship concept formulated at the San Francisco Conference—as a

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La Perla is one of the worst slums in San Juan. The place is pocked with malarial puddles, barking dogs, squealing pigs and children who run naked



THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED

BY WILLIAM A. KRAUSS

There are bloodhounds and foxhounds and rabbit hounds, but who ever heard of a fish hound? It's a wise master who knows his dog

FIRST the dog intruded, and afterward the girl. The dog wasn't much to look at; in fact, wasn't anything to look at; but the girl had been very favorably designed by nature (her hair was radiant, her eyes had flecks of gold in them). Yet out of a perverseness of his temper, Tony Greer paid more affable attention to the dog than to the girl that brilliant West Indian morning.

Tony was owner-captain of the forty-foot auxiliary schooner Tar II. It is somewhat important to observe that he was stuck squarely in the middle of a phase.

Possibly his age, which was twenty-two, and the fact that he had lately been reading all the prefaces and some of the plays of Bernard Shaw can be held partly accountable for his condition of mind. He found it interesting to be cynical. He cultivated a light, mocking laugh. He had been heard to say, frequently, acidly, "The whole world is strewn with snares, traps, gins and pitfalls for the capture of men by women." He accompanied the remark by a dense shaking of his blond head. Few of the natives along the sun-scarred wharf understood, or cared, what he was talking about.

When the dog came along—the small brown dog with the brown eyes and brown nose, brown as a brown shoe from cutwater to counter—Cap'n Tony Greer did not recognize it for what it was. He thought it was only a dog, and not much of a dog. A mongrel. A monochromatic hound with an excess of top-hamper around the ears and tail, and too little draft for her beam. In a word, an ordinary parcel of barracuda bait. That was all Tony Greer saw the morning this creature sniffed her way solemnly down the Cotte-Plage jetty and, after a moment's casual survey, hopped nimbly aboard Tar II.

Tony, for all his talk, did not know a snore when he bumped into one.

He was squatting in the cockpit under a jury sunsail, waxing a length of thread; he looked up and found himself face to face, eye to eye, with the hound. The hound studied him languidly for the space of several breaths, and then grinned—or appeared to. The grin was broad, warm, cordial, yet at the same time courteous. It was also amusing. It was comical. It got to Tony, who liked dogs without being silly about them.

"Come here," he said, and the dog jumped down from deck to cockpit. The long tail wagged; the grin persisted, civil and enormously good-humored. The grin was, Tony observed, the result of some mishap: several front teeth had been knocked out—or kicked out—and a gash in the hound's upper lip had healed crookedly. The effect was altogether roguish.

"Hey, boy," Tony said, and, looking closer, "Hi, old girl." He put out a hand and patted the small dog's head. She lowered her rump, sat, adjusted herself comfortably and proceeded to sniff the air with thoroughness and interest, turning her brown ferret head brightly from side to side.

This examination occupied not less than a full minute. Then the dog, moving with a certain grace, stepped to the portside gunwale and surveyed the blue water of the inner harbor, sniffing the while. After that, she grinned pleasantly at Tony and ambled forward along the deck.

"So long, pooch," said Anthony Greer; and he waved a hand and returned to the mending of his flying jib.

THAT was the beginning of it; the inspection of Tar II by the small, saddle-colored, short-haired hound with the ferret face and the cockeyed grin. When Tony Greer, always an avid prober after the cause that propels the effect, turned it over in his mind later on, he described it as destiny in dog's clothing.

Half an hour later the girl arrived.

It was hot that morning on the Cotte-Plage jetty. Across the inner harbor to the east the white city of Port-au-Prince hugged its hills. Only a little wind ruffled the waters of the bay. Far westward, where the Gulf of Gonave merges with

the Windward Passage, high shining clouds were piled like an aerial barrier of snow. This was the island of Haiti, lifting out of the green West Indian sea. The day was, as has been said, brilliant—and there were tourists in the city.

The girl was a tourist. Only a tourist—only an American tourist—would have worn the blue slacks, the bare midriff, the parti-colored sandals. Of course, the effect was good, even splendid. The girl was slender and you would have called her tall. Her hair was warmly brown, and radiant; her eyes were large, and had the flecks of gold in them. A certain number of freckles powdered the bridge of her nose, producing an effect altogether charming. She walked out on the jetty and stopped beside Tony Greer's schooner.

She coughed lightly. "Monsieur," she said. "Je vous demande pardon—"

Tony Greer raised his eyes from the bundle of jib that occupied his lap. He saw the sun-browned oval face with the fine, delicate planes and shadows. He saw the long, well-molded legs that the slacks served (Continued on page 89)



"Well, looka there!" Burton said. "The darn' thing's pointing!"

"Monsieur," the girl said. "Je vous—"
Tony raised his eyes to the girl on the pier. "You can speak English," he said. "I understand it like a shot"

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