

October 5, 1960

The Honorable Mikhail A. Menshikov
Ambassador of the Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics to the United
of America
Embassy of the USSR
1125 - Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

The September 24, 1960 issue of The New York Times contained the text of Premier Khrushchev's address of the previous day to the UN General Assembly. The Premier's address bracketed Puerto Rico with such African colonies as Angola and Mozambique. I do not know whether this misrepresentation of economic, social and political conditions in Puerto Rico was deliberate or the result of ignorance. I will make only two comments on this particular matter. First, I believe, Mr. Ambassador, that you are neither stupid nor ill-informed. Quite the reverse--our discussions during your visit last year to Puerto Rico convinced me that, despite the polarity of our respective political views, you are intelligent, competent and an able representative of your country. I can only infer that you were denied the opportunity to comment on the text of the Premier's address prior to its delivery.

I will now comment on the Premier's misrepresentations about Puerto Rico.

Politically, I know from our discussions of last year that you are familiar with Puerto Rico's status as a Commonwealth freely associated with the US. The essential meaning of Puerto Rico's present status is that Puerto Rico is neither a colony nor a territory of the U.S.

The electorate of Puerto Rico will determine Puerto Rico's future political relationship with the US as among the options of Commonwealth status, statehood and independence. The Puerto Rican voters will again register their opinions on these matters on November 8 this year.

You and your aides are, I believe, free to visit Puerto Rico at any time. You could, if you wished, observe both the course of the political campaigns now underway and the conducting of the election on November 8. You should understand that we in Puerto Rico take pride, and I believe justifiably so, in the integrity of our elections. We are vigilant in our effort to prevent corrupt election practices--buying of votes; coercion or intimidation of the individual voter. In political matters I believe it fair to say that we Puerto Ricans are unanimous only in our belief that achievement of unanimity of political opinions is attainable only at a price which we will not pay--voter coercion and intimidation.

In economic and social matters Premier Khrushchev emphasized the achievements of the Central Asian Republics of the USSR--areas which he characterized as having been "colonies" under Czarist rule.

In economic matters, Premier Khrushchev particularly emphasized electric power generation as an index of emergence from colonial status. He stated that power generation in the Central Asian Republics now amounts annually to 800 kilowatt-hours per capita.

In social matters, Premier Khrushchev stressed higher learning. He stated that in the Central Asian Republics there were 88 students at university-level institutions per 10,000 inhabitants.

The statistics cited by Premier Khrushchev reflect substantial accomplishments. Now let me give you comparable data on Puerto Rico.

During the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1959 and ending June 30, 1960, electric power generated in Puerto Rico amounted to about 865 kilowatt-hours per capita. This figure excludes power which was directly generated and consumed by the Puerto Rican sugar industry which, as you know, is a substantial part of our economy.

In the first half of 1960 the number of students at university-level institutions in Puerto Rico was about 98 per 10,000 inhabitants. This figure excludes Puerto Ricans studying in the US just as Premier Krushev's figure excluded Central Asians studying in metropolitan areas such as Moscow and Leningrad.

Both because of the ambiguous categories used by Premier Krushev and his omission of the per capita relationships, I cannot make similar comparisons in the matter of increases in technically and professionally-skilled manpower in the Central Asian Republics. To illustrate, the ratio of physicians to population in Puerto Rico in 1959 was 8.5: 10,000. But Premier Krushev's category was "doctors and skilled medical personnel". How many physicians? And what sorts of skills are comprehended by the phrase "skilled medical personnel"?

Premier Krushev also emphasized the greater rates of growth achieved in the Central Asian Republics as compared with the USSR as a whole. Similar comparisons between Puerto Rico and the USA demonstrate a similar relationship. To illustrate, electric power generated annually per capita in Puerto Rico increased nearly ten-fold during the period 1940-60. Comparable data for the USA show a less than a 3 1/2-fold increase during the same period.

I would not wish to be misunderstood. My purpose is not that of belittling the economic accomplishments of the USSR as a whole nor those of the Central Asian Republics. I will not however permit Premier Krushev's denigration of Puerto Rico to stand on the record. We Puerto Ricans are a

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a proud people even though our population is about one percent that of the USSR and our area about 4/100 of one percent that of the USSR.

I do not allege that Premier Krushchev's treatment of Puerto Rico was "slandorous" (a word which I have observed is frequently used by representatives of the USSR); I do believe Premier Krushchev's treatment of Puerto Rico misrepresented the facts. Unless the USSR promptly, formally and publicly corrects the record I shall have no alternative but that of submitting this letter for publication.

Sincerely yours,

Teodoro Moscoso
Administrator