

8 April 1960

Borrador

I have read the letter from the Puerto Rican Senator Charles H.

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

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

~~Muñoz Marín~~ at that time:

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

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

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

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

In replying, we are not so much concerned with Senator Juliá's utter lack of respect for history, as with his utter lack of information. His ignorance matches his venom. Was President José Figueres, the great democratic leader of Costa Rica, a Latin American "dupe" when, speaking before the Meeting of American Presidents in Panamá in 1956, he referred to Governor Muñoz as "one of the thinkers who had done most to solve New World problems"?

Shall we classify President de la Guardia of Panamá as another "dupe" because he ~~was~~ stated that Muñoz Marín "is a great New World figure" and ~~he~~ asked for Commonwealth assistance in ~~developing~~ ^{planning} Panamá's economic development? ~~He~~ ^{Did}

President Lleras Camargo of Colombia "sneer~~ed~~" at Puerto Rico ~~in~~ ^{when he} requesting ~~the~~ cooperation of the/ Commonwealth technicians in the preparation of a master plan for that

republic? Is President Rómulo Betancourt a Latin American "dupe" because of his close friendship and ^{well-} known personal admiration for Governor Muñoz?

And how about President Villeda Morales of Honduras who has praised the Commonwealth and sent mission after mission of Honduran students and public officials to be trained in Puerto Rico? And how about Mr. Galo Plaza, former President

of Ecuador and one of the top architects of good inter-American relations? Was he publicly "sneering" at Puerto Rico when he extolled "the extraordinary performance of her people under the leadership of their great Governor," at the last Governors' Conference, ~~by San Juan?~~ ^{And} ~~the~~ the seven Latin American countries that sponsored a resolution on Puerto Rico at the United Nations in 1953 —

^{were they} also "sneering" at the Commonwealth status when they ~~stated~~ ^{declared} that "the agreement reached by the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, in forming a political association which respects the individuality and the cultural characteristics of Puerto Rico, maintains the spiritual bonds between Puerto Rico and Latin America and constitutes a link in continental solidarity."?

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

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

A: Dn. A.M.C.
Para su informacion
[Signature]

Pv
Sobre Julia

VETERANOS DEL AREA METROPOLITANA

- A V I S O -

Los veteranos nos reuniremos simbólicamente HOY, LUNES, 18 de abril, de 5:00 a 6:00 PM FRENTE AL CAPITOLIO para ofrecer nuestro respaldo al compañero veterano y líder legionario, Senador Juliá quien consideramos fué atropellado en el Senado por exponer en la prensa, para la historia, su opinión sobre la censura al Presidente Eisenhower impulsada por facción partidista en la Legislatura de Puerto Rico.

COMITE ORGANIZADOR

por Ricardo J. Pagán
Miembro

FAVOR DE AVISAR Y TRAER OTROS COMPAÑEROS CON USTED.

Textos de Cartelones a Usarse en Esta Ocasión

COMPAÑERO VETERANO JULIA
RESPALDAMOS SU ESFUERZO
POR ADECENTAR LEGISLATURA

VETERANOS REPUDIAMOS
ATROPELLO CONTRA
COMPAÑERO JULIA Y OTROS
LEGISLADORES

DISGUSTA A VETERANOS
POLITQUERIA BARATA EN
NUESTRA LEGISLATURA

JULIA TIENE RAZON
CAPITOLIO NO DEBE SER
CLUB DE MONIGOTES

NECESITAMOS LEGISLADORES
DE CARACTER Y VOLUNTAD
LIBRE

SERVIMOS EN LA GUERRA
PARA TODOS TENER
DEMOCRACIA Y PROGRESO
GENERAL. HAGAN USTEDES
IGUAL

PODER LEGISLATIVO DEBE
SUPERARSE CON CIVISMO Y
RESPECTO A IDEAS DE TODOS

¿DONDE ESTA EL BALANCE
DE PODER?
DEMOCRACIA LO NECESITA

VETERANOS PENDIENTES
ASUNTOS LEGISLATURA

VETERANOS PEDIMOS
LEGISLACION DE MAS SERVICIO,
ORDEN Y RESPETO AL PUEBLO.
TONTERIAS, NO.