

LA FORTALEZA

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

March 26, 1957

Memo for Sr. Morales Carrion
from Roger Baldwin

I have spoken with the governor about a matter you have investigated, and he asks me to consult you; it concerns the possible membership of Puerto Rico in United Nations specialized agencies.

I attach some documents of those agencies to show that associate membership is open, with the consent of the State Department, and that other countries not sovereign states, have joined. I suggest that a memorandum be prepared for the governor on the advantages and disadvantages, if any, of making application.

This is not a part of my duties in connection with civil rights in Puerto Rico, but a natural result of my connection with the United Nations.

The points that occur to me in considering the relation of P. R. to the U. N. are:

1. These specialized agencies deal with subjects that are wholly within the jurisdiction of P. R. and therefore distinguish its interest from that of the federal government. It could not be argued that US membership serves P.R. interests adequately.

2. If it is said that a State also has such matters within its jurisdiction and that P. R. is no different in its relation to the federal government, it must be noted that the States are represented at Washington and take part in shaping federal authority and policy.

3. If it is argued that membership in U N agencies looks like a step toward independence, the answer is obvious that the constitutions of these agencies provide for associate membership of autonomous but not sovereign governments. It is within the concept of an associated "free state" that it can maintain its US relation fully and at the same time be represented for special purposes within its jurisdiction in an international agency.

4. The advantages of membership are clear, even

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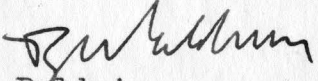
without voting rights. If that seems unfair in agencies which deal only with practical matters not involving the foreign policies of sovereign states, it can be better corrected by urging changes from inside than out.

5. I would think that procedures should be.

- a. to prepare a full memo for the governor, covering the agencies for which application might be made for associate membership, with the arguments as indicated in this memo.
- b. to explore with the State Dept. its attitude to the proposal. (I can help then with the US delegation to the UN, and with the Under Secretary, Christian Herter).
- c. to designate some one official in P. R. to handle the matter here, through Washington and at the U. N. The office of the Commonwealth in NY is well equipped for liaison work through Clarence Senior, who is familiar with the UN procedures.

6. I hardly dare venture suggestions as to the public relations aspects, since that is the government's business, but since this move, if made, will have world-wide attention (slight indeed) as well as effects in P. R. I would think it desirable to get (1) some preparation of public opinion by having the proposal informally made by somebody (2) getting the legislature's support at some point and (3) anticipating and countering in advance the points of opposition.

I would hope that while I am here (until April 5) the matter might be more fully discussed with the governor by a small group of those familiar with the problem.


Roger Baldwin