On November 1, 1970, the Puerto Rican people approved in a referendum the granting of the right to vote to 18-year-olds. In this manner, the base of participation in the destinies of the country was broadened. It was a day that did honor to democracy in Puerto Rico.

The Popular Democratic Party, obligated now as never before with the bettering and affirming of the democratic values, backed with energy and enthusiasm this civic vindication. The Popular Democratic Party is proud that in the municipalities where the PDP won in 1968, the highest percentage of votes was cast in favor of the 18-year-old vote in the referendum. This fact reveals the commitment that the PDP has of encouraging the aspirations of the new generations of Puerto Ricans and of incorporating them into our political life.

We consider that this is the proper moment for the PDP to reaffirm its basic ideological position before the youth of Puerto Rico and all the people of Puerto Rico.

I The Crisis

Puerto Rico is now passing a difficult and confused era in its history. The political climate has been polarized with the confrontation between the separatists, on the hand, and the stateholders on the other. There is a growing economic crisis, which endangers the gains which cost us so much effort. Industrial growth is declining and cordial relations between capital and organized labor have been ruptured. Delicate problems have arisen in the relations with the federal government and the army and the exercise of its functions in Puerto Rico. The feeling of unity of our people to a great degree has been lost, and in many areas, doubts and discontent grow. And confronting all this is a government
that is adrift.

Concerning this multiple crisis which concerns us all, the PDP considers it its bound duty to make the following Pronouncements:

II The Pronouncements:

1) The PDP believes firmly in the understanding and friendship between the people of Puerto Rico and the people of the United States of America, which has expression in the COMMON CITIZENSHIP and in the PERMANENT ASSOCIATION between the two countries. The PDP definitely rejects the assimilation, the annexion and the incorporation of Puerto Rico as a state of the American Union. It equally rejects, and with the same vigor, all the modalities which characterize the independence movement. The PDP defends the autonomic concept, that is, full self-government, based on the free association with the United States which permits and allows the affirmation of the cultural personality of Puerto Rico and the sustained growth of its social and material progress. The PDP has profound respect for the other political formulas which are debated in Puerto Rico, but it affirms emphatically that the confrontation between them ignites rancor, incites the passions and destroys the vital feeling of living in harmony, without which we cannot face the serious problems that now envelop us.

2) The PDP reaffirms its unquenchable faith in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It maintains that in spite of all its present imperfections it better serves the needs of the people of Puerto Rico than either statehood or independence. The PDP understands that as a party which does not bow either to special interests or to powerful and absorbing economic interests, it has the clear responsibility of waging a battle, constant and militant, to better the Commonwealth status and to give it the degree of political authority and juridical standing that is the inalienable right of Puerto Rico.
3) The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was created by the people of Puerto Rico in the exercise of its natural right of free determination of its destiny as an autonomous community in free association, through compact, with the United States. Since its constitutional beginning, as the expression of the Constitutional Convention in its Final Declarations on February 4, 1952, the people of Puerto Rico retained "the right to propose and accept modifications in the terms of its relations with the United States of America, so that these at all times are the expression of the agreement freely made between the people of Puerto Rico and the United States of America."

This right was solemnly recognized in the Resolution approved by the United Nations on November 27, 1953. This right was also recognized in the Message of the President Dwight D. Eisenhower before that world body and unequivocally affirmed by the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico in June, 1954, when it affirmed that: "We consider that the development of Commonwealth will be realized through changes, mutually agreed upon, directed at eliminating those functions of the federal government that experience shows are unnecessary to the Commonwealth concept and, for that reason, reduce its deep and clear significance." The PDP recognizes that experience has shown that, within the basic concept of association, fundamental changes must be made in the terms of the relations, above all in certain areas which in these times create a deep concern in Puerto Rico or influence directly vital aspects of the life of the people of Puerto Rico. To this effect the people of Puerto Rico issued a mandate via a plebiscite of July 23, 1967, which has been flagrantly sabotaged by the present Governor of Puerto Rico.

4) The PDP backed the creation of the mechanism of Ad-Hoc Committees as an adequate means to exercise the mandate of the people of Puerto Rico as determined in the 1967 plebiscite. And as long as they fulfill the wishes of the people for an integral growth of Commonwealth status, the PDP backs them. The highly censurable manner in which the government of the New Progressive Party (PNP) has manipulated this procedure, trying to
channel, by means of the presidential vote, the development of Commonwealth towards statehood, in open violation of the wishes of our people, has discredited the mechanism of the Ad-Hoc Committees before public opinion. Preoccupied by the necessity that in the process of considering fundamental modifications to the present compact, the Puerto Rican people be given the most ample participation, the PDP, once it wins the 1972 elections, will propose that a Constitutional Assembly, with the purpose of exercising the right, recognized by the Constitutional Convention of 1950, in its Resolution Number 23, of formulating new terms in the relations of our people with the United States and at the same time make clear to the President, the Congress and the public opinion of the United States, the thinking of Puerto Rico.

The Popular Democratic Party understands that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico belongs to the people of Puerto Rico. For that reason it is the people to whom it corresponds to look for the means of its dynamic development, defining the fundamental bases on which will be structured the relations between Puerto Rico and the United States. To this vision of our constitutional reality responds the plan to convocate a Constitutional Assembly, whose agreements will be subject to the approval of the people of Puerto Rico, in a referendum.

Now, we also understand that in the process of modifying our compact of association with the United States, special and careful attention should be given to the following vital areas with reference to which it is necessary to find satisfactory solutions for both countries.

III Areas Vitales:

a) Common Defense:

The Popular Democratic Party understands that the concept of common defense should be defined clearly in any organic revision of the compact as an obligation which demands that each of the two countries participate in the defense of the other, in the eventuality that another country undertake aggressive acts against either. In what concerns Puerto Rico's obligation, the form and manner in which our share towards the
common defense, in war and peace, including the draft, should be made, should be the result of previous agreements between both countries as a result of the revision of the compact.

This has not been the case up to now since the determinations on the form and manner in which our people should fulfill its defense obligations have been made unilaterally by the Congress and President of the United States. In order to give full expression to the concept of free association, we understand that such determinations should be done in consultation and in mutual agreement with the people of Puerto Rico.

We understand also that the system of consultation and mutual agreement should be made extensive to any matter or negotiations which, as is happening with the Nuclear Disarmament Treaty with Latin America, involve international agreements of the United States and which affect directly the life of the people of Puerto Rico and its territory. On this last matter the PDP is unequivocally opposed to the exclusion of Puerto Rico from the Nuclear Disarmament Treaty.

The PDP energetically condemns the action taken by the Navy in the case of Culebra and Vieques and until the fundamental position expected from the CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY on common defense, the PDP proposes to continue insisting vigorously in the promptest abandonment by the Navy of the islands of Vieques and Culebra and also that the bombing practices on Culebra be stopped and the necessary measures taken to prevent any further acquisition of land by the Navy on said islands.

b) Emigration and Immigration:

1. Puerto Rico has been and always will be a hospitable country towards foreigners. This tradition makes us proud and it should not disappear neither under chauvinistic pressures nor patriotic claims. The country will always need outside influences to assure and better its development.

Nonetheless, we should recognize that this is a densely populated island, which barely produces enough to maintain its almost three million inhabitants. In
consequence, Puerto Ricans have been the involuntary actors in one of the most dramatic migration episodes in the contemporary era. Nearly a million Puerto Ricans have had to seek opportunities for a better life in the United States during the last 25 years. This tendency maintains its intensity and could become more pronounced as a result of the actual economic crisis and growing unemployment in Puerto Rico.

Parallel with this phenomenon, there has occurred in the last few years a massive immigration to Puerto Rico which has cancelled, in some years, the difference between those coming to the island and those leaving. We are confronted with the serious problem of the supplanting of displacement of our people by another of foreign extraction. This is a grave problem which could acquire an alarming magnitude.

The reality is that Puerto Rico has a very limited capacity to absorb large masses of immigrants, without causing serious dislocations in our economic, social and cultural life. That capacity has already been reached in certain areas of activity, and it is because of this that evident tensions and irritating discriminations have arisen which can quicken the deterioration of our social solidarity, in prejudice of both our country and those groups of foreigners that live among us, among which are found many persons of quality and value who have helped our progress.

2. The Popular Democratic Party before this situation filled with risks, considers that Puerto Rico should exercise with mutual agreement of the government of the United States, jurisdiction on the entry of aliens to the islands. This is necessary in order to incorporate into our country those outside groups needed to maintain a high degree of cultural, social and economic development, as well as to allow us to confront the grave problem of the supplanting or the displacement of the Puerto Rican population with one of foreign origin.

c) Economic Aspects:

A. Puerto Rico has reached a high level of economic development and technological refinement although we still confront a serious problem of poverty which the PDP pledges itself to continue battling energetically. It could be said that in the
passage of the last thirty years our country has integrated itself into the social, economic and technological mainstreams which characterize an industrial economy in the Twentieth Century.

B. But with all that, the level reached in the United States has been higher than ours, and we do not anticipate that this difference can be fundamentally altered within the foreseeable future.

C. The Congress and the President affect the economic mechanism of the United States by the decisions they make. These are laws and executive orders conceived from the perspective of the richest, most developed and powerful society that humanity has known, and designed to fit a series of realities, social, cultural and geographic, distinct from ours. What is good, convenient and just for Puerto Rico. For this reason, the indiscriminate application to Puerto Rico or those Laws and executive orders can dislocate our delicate economic mechanism and Puerto Rican society. The fear that this could happen weighs upon us as a disquieting factor on: the will of the country, and preoccupies the working mass which requires many jobs with good wages, as well as the investor whose capital Puerto Rico needs in order to maintain an adequate rate of economic growth.

d) Other Areas of Revision:

1. The Popular Democratic Party understands that, in order to give full force to the concept of Commonwealth, it is necessary to redefine the areas of strictly local jurisdiction, distinguishing them from other areas in which the jurisdiction should be exercised in consultation or by mutual agreement between Puerto Rico and the United States, and also those that should fall exclusively within the federal sphere.

In our judgment, the CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY should enter in depth this question and define with complete clarity the thinking of Puerto Rico on such aspects as coastwise shipping, customs and tariffs and the reach of the federal internal revenue laws; employee-worker relations working conditions and minimum salaries; determinations on air and maritime transportation and mass communications (radio and television); and the consultation and agreement of Puerto Rico in the preparation of international or political
treaties of the United States when these affect directly the life of the people of Puerto Rico and its territory. We do not pretend to make an exhaustive listing, but we do understand that the CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY should study with complete latitude all the aspects which in its judgment deserve examination in a fundamental revision of the terms of the convent.

2- The Popular Democratic Party shall maintain in that CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY, unalterably and inescapably, the position that the autonomy to which our people aspire should be complete as regards all its internal aspects.

3- In the same manner we sustain that with respect to those powers that the People of Puerto Rico consent to delegate to the Congress, there should be provided an adequate system of consultation that guarantees to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico an effective participation in those decisions that could directly affect it.

In this DECLARATION we have synthesized the ideological position of the Popular Democratic Party in relation with some of the problems and realities that Puerto Rico confronts today. We have maintained a position of responsibility to avoid all suspicion of rancor or partisanship. We propose to maintain our political positions with vigor, militancy and courage. When necessary we shall criticize our political adversaries, severely but constructively. We affirm that our actions will always be based on the firm conviction that a political party such as ours responds to all the people, that the political adversaries we combat are also our compatriots, and that the necessities of our people and the highest values of our cultural and spiritual patrimony are above all political affiliation and require our deepest preoccupation and our most decided will to serve. That is how the Popular Democratic Party was born in 1938, and that is how it rebuilds in 1970.