



EXECUTIVE SESSION: Point Four students hear Governor Muñoz Marín (white suit) tell how Puerto Rico does it

HAMILTON WRIGHT PHOTOS

Puerto Rico:

AMERICA'S EXHIBIT "A"

The island commonwealth, which gets no Point Four funds itself, is showing students from 79 nations the best ways to use theirs

by Henry La Cossitt

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

OCTAVIO ALZONA is a captain in the Army of the Republic of the Philippines. He is attached to what is known as the Economic Development Corps which, since 1951, has been charged with the resettlement of ex-rebel Hukbalahaps who have surrendered after being promised safe conduct and land.

Resettlement, however, has proved to be a vexatious problem for which the government was not entirely prepared. So Captain Alzona was sent to, of all places, Puerto Rico, where I met him in an office of the Puerto Rican Department of State on Fortaleza Street in San Juan.

Captain Alzona was there because of a project that is proving to be one of the most effective international public-relations programs the United States ever had. That the idea originated in Puerto Rico, not in Washington, does not detract from its value.

Captain Alzona was a guest of Harold Stassen's Foreign Operations Administration. He was one of some 1,500 students who, over the past four years, have been sent by 79 nations to see how Puerto Rico, in partner-

ship with the United States, does it. He was studying Puerto Rican rural resettlement and related activities under what is known as the Technical Cooperation Program, a joint operation of the United States and Puerto Rico. "What I learn here," Captain Alzona told me, "we can apply at home."

This is precisely what Puerto Rican Governor Luis Muñoz Marín, a Georgetown University alumnus, had in mind in the summer of 1949 when he went to Washington to suggest the program to President Truman. It was his idea that Puerto Rico — poor, underdeveloped, overpopulated, under-resourced, struggling to raise its standard of living and achieve economic balance — could serve as a working model for Point Four applicants, most of which would be suffering from one or another — or all — of these ills.

Puerto Rico is part of the American political system and receives grants-in-aid in the manner of the several states, as well as other federal financial help. Thus it is not eligible for Point Four aid as such, but the principle is the same, as President Truman agreed. In

1950 the Puerto Rican legislature appropriated \$50,000 to set up an office in San Juan and Washington then formally designated the island as a Point Four training center. The program has been operating ever since with bipartisan support, with the Interior Department acting as co-ordinator for FOA and the Puerto Rican Department of State. It is under the direction of an alumnus of the University of Texas and Columbia, Dr. Arturo Morales Carrion, Under Secretary in the Puerto Rican State Department.

Parallels With India

APPlicants ask for Point Four funds for projects in almost every field: economic, political or social. In each of these, Puerto Rico has an example of solid achievement.

Somebody has said that it is an emotional compulsion below the Rio Grande to have a case against the United States. This may be true — but 35 people from information offices in Latin-American nations went home last March after five months' study of community education, astonished at Puerto Rican gains.



IN THE FIELD: Filipino trainee and wife learn at hydroponic farm

Some students come from the colonies of other nations. Puerto Rico was once a colony itself and is now a "Free Associated State," or commonwealth, and the students want, among other things, to see how this transition was accomplished. Among them, for example, was A. L. Adu, an administrator of the Africanization program of the Gold Coast, which is moving toward autonomy.

Indian students, of whom there have been more than expected, all remark on the similarities between Puerto Rico and India, despite the enormous difference in size. Both, they point out, were former colonies; both are poor and underdeveloped and overpopulated. One Indian, Junreivat Chinda, said the island's success or failure "is of first importance to millions living in underdeveloped areas throughout the world."

Western Hemisphere colonies also send

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