December 6, 1960

TO: ARTURO MORALES CARRION

I believe the attached is worthy of your attention.

MS/f
cc: NYO
I had a long lunch with Father Illitch today. Monsignor Illitch, as you know, was our best friend and indeed close friend in Cardinal Spellman's office. You also know that we have been plying him with copies of the various editorials for their shock effect upon Spellman.

Ilick tossed out one suggestion in the course of our discussion. He said that whatever may have been their public attitude, a great many of the Catholic bishops in the United States suspected, without knowing, that the bishops in Puerto Rico may well have been right because they didn't believe that they would have taken such drastic measures unless the Puerto Rican government had been gravely in the wrong. He thought there was still an important job to do to see that the hierarchy, meaning the bishops in the United States itself, were much more thoroughly informed on the whole issue of Puerto Rico and that if they were better informed the bishops in Puerto Rico would be completely isolated in this hassle.
Toward this end he thought it would be a good idea to go to some trouble to put together 260 copies of the Popular Democratic Party platform plus the two pastoral letters, plus the important statements by Martinez and the bishops in this respect, and expressed his opinion that if these basic documents were put together, the bishops could see for themselves the fallacy of the Puerto Rican bishops' position.

I want to discuss this with him further, but I consider Illitch sufficiently an ally in this whole thing, in addition to my own evaluation of the situation, to believe that he is perfectly right that one of the most important jobs at this stage is to give the facts to the hierarchy up here in far more detail than was possible during the campaign.

Now, actually a packet of this sort in 260 copies is going to be a tremendous production problem, far beyond our means to handle. It would probably cost some money too. Does the Popular Party have any funds that this could be done with? If not, could some of the facilities of the Department of Education be recruited for this job?

My understanding is that once the basic material is produced, Illitch would see that it gets into the hands of these 260 bishops.

Incidentally I have observed that not only churchmen but some Catholic laymen up here, too -- how many I have no way of knowing -- are also of the opinion that the Bishops in Puerto Rico would never have taken such drastic measures unless the Puerto Rican government were a virtual cesspool of immorality and anti-Christian sentiments; And of course their position is understandable. In the U. S. context they couldn't conceive of one of their bishops doing this unless the situation were extremely dramatic.
Even among some Protestants there is the feeling that birth control and sterilization must be extraordinarily liberal in Puerto Rico, whereas in fact it is no more so than in the United States, as you know. I doubt if it is possible or desirable for us to address ourselves to doing a repair job on this subject to the general public, but I think this suggestion of Illitch's warrants very serious consideration.

cc: GA, JB, TH, EP, HA, AMC, Gov, NYO.