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The Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, Transnational Latin American Solidarity, and the United States during the Cold War

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In June 1958, Carlos Padilla Pérez, a member of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, addressed a gathering of Argentines organized by the Amigos pro Libertad de Puerto Rico in Buenos Aires. He thanked them, his "fellow citizens of Our América," for their solidarity and evoked the image of a shared history and a common heritage. Just as the Argentines "crossed the Andes in pursuit of the enemies of freedom" during the wars of independence in the 1800s, so, too, did Puerto Ricans join the continental fight against Spanish colonialism. The Puerto Rican general Antonio Valero de Bernabe "fought for the independence of Mexico" and then hastened to continue the battle against Spanish colonialism alongside "the Liberator Bolivar in whose army he achieved positions of distinction." Recognizing that the historical moment has changed—"the patriotic armies are no longer intertwined along the paths of Our América as they once were"—Padilla nonetheless urged Argentines to support Puerto Rico's ongoing struggle against colonialism, now directed against the United States. Above all, he emphasized that Puerto Rico

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is part of Latin America and that the U.S. occupation of the island nation represents a threat to the entire region. "[Freedom of Puerto Rico] is of critical importance to each of you because the United States threatens to extend the colonial regime that it has imposed on Puerto Rico under the name of the 'free associated state' over all the peoples of Our America. We are conscious . . . that as long as Puerto Rico awaits its freedom and is prevented from exercising its powers as a sovereign people, then the goal of unity that we pursue is blocked because it prevents us from joining the Latin American family."[1]

Puerto Rico became a U.S. colony in 1898, following the Spanish-American War. In order to ensure its control of the island, the U.S. Congress passed the Foraker Act in 1900 and the Jones Act in 1917. The Foraker Act ended U.S. military rule in Puerto Rico and established a civilian government, with North American governors appointed by the United States, while the Jones Act made Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens.[2]

By and large, the Puerto Rican response to these acts was muted. During the first three decades of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico, various political figures and parties called for independence. However, their demands, weakened by internecine political fights and the absence of a unified political strategy, were ineffective. Pedro Albizu Campos's ascension to secretary general of the Nationalist Party in 1930 radically altered the situation.[3] Under his leadership, the Nationalist Party transformed what had been inchoate dreams for independence into a determined fight to actually achieve it.

The Nationalist Party did not advocate either capitalism or socialism, and, despite allegations to the contrary, the party was not fascist.[4] Many in the party, including Albizu Campos, were fervent Catholics.[5] However, the glue that held the party together was the desire to establish Puerto Rico as a sovereign nation, not agreement as to what economic system they would implement once independence was achieved.

Nationalists defined Puerto Rico as part of the "Latin American family" and sought a sovereignty anchored in the joint history and the future of what they perceived to be a shared transregional reality. They identified with the former colonies of Spain, now independent republics, because they shared a common language, culture, religion, and history. They also confronted the same enemy: the United States. The Nationalist Party understood that Puerto Rico was a small Antillean nation confronting a formidable imperial power in the region. In order to strengthen efforts to end U.S. colonialism, the Nationalists consciously sought—and received—solidarity from democratic, leftist, anticolonial, and anti-imperialist individuals, organizations, and governments across Latin America.

The Nationalist Party ceased to participate in elections in the 1930s, which

has made it difficult to gauge concretely what percentage of the Puerto Rican population belonged to or supported it. It is also a challenge to determine the social makeup of the party. However, police records of Nationalist Party members and sympathizers arrested after the October 1950 revolt, which is discussed in greater detail later, offer some clues. Following the uprising, the Puerto Rican police arrested 1,106 people.[6] The police recorded brief descriptions of those they arrested, noting such information as their skin color, size, position within the party, place of origin, residence, and work. Information on these cards reveals that the party attracted Puerto Ricans from across the island, from the capital, San Juan, to the small towns and farms in the mountainous interior. It also shows that peasants, small landowners, intellectuals, shopkeepers, professionals, students, and laborers joined or sympathized with the party. Puerto Ricans of all races and both genders were members of the party.[7] Miñi Seijo Bruno analyzed the 140 combatants who took part in the insurrection. Her detailed study reveals that male fighters outnumbered female ones but that "non whites," which is how the census characterized Puerto Ricans of African descent, "had a greater degree of representation in the insurrection than the white race, when compared to their percentage in the 1950 census."[8]

This chapter examines trans–Latin American solidarity with Puerto Rican independence and the Nationalist Party in the 1950s, during the height of the Cold War. It reveals the deep bonds of solidarity that existed among and between Latin Americans, the importance that people throughout the hemisphere placed on securing a free and independent Puerto Rico, and the profound anger that many Latin Americans felt at the U.S. government's imprisonment of Puerto Rican Nationalists who fought to end colonialism in their country.

The existence and persistence of Latin American solidarity with the struggle for Puerto Rican independence during the Cold War exposes cracks in U.S. efforts to extend hegemonic control over the region and the world. At a time when the U.S. government was vociferously cloaking itself in the mantle of democracy, its colonial hold over Puerto Rico clearly contradicted its own discourse and sharply challenged its efforts to portray itself as a trustworthy supporter of those nations in Africa and Asia that were struggling against European colonialism or that had recently achieved national independence. The U.S. government both failed to understand and was unable to extinguish Latin American solidarity with Puerto Rico. Support for Puerto Rican independence and demands for the release of Nationalist Party political prisoners extended throughout the continent and involved individuals, organizations, parliamentarians, and governments of various political stripes. It drew on a historical legacy of regional support for anticolonial and anti-imperialist struggles and

reflected the determined efforts of members of the Nationalist Party to generate support for their struggle. Latin American solidarity with Puerto Rico persisted despite the attempts of the U.S. government to obviate or overcome it through the political changes it engineered in Puerto Rico or through the construction of tighter alliances with repressive, anticommunist governments. The endurance of this solidarity with Puerto Rican independence simultaneously makes manifest the weaknesses of U.S. Cold War rhetoric and policies, speaks to the perseverance of a transregional identity, highlights a shared opposition to foreign rule, and anticipates and prefigures the continental spirit of anti-imperialist revolution that erupted following the 1959 Cuban revolution.

Much of the literature on Latin America unfortunately overlooks Puerto Rico—the only remaining U.S. colony in the hemisphere—when discussing the United States and Latin America.[9] As a result, it describes dynamics that do not reflect the Puerto Rican reality and ignores the important connections that existed between Puerto Rico and the rest of the region. For example, in their discussion of Latin America from 1944 to 1948, Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough argue that much of Latin America experienced a period of "democratization, a shift to the Left, and labor militancy" in the years immediately following World War II. However, they point out, by 1948 (and for some countries as early as 1945), government repression increased, and "the popular forces, the Left, and democracy suffered a historic defeat."[10] While this description applies to much of Latin America, it clearly does not fit Puerto Rico for the obvious reason that Puerto Rico was a U.S. colony, before, during, and after the war. Puerto Rico did not enjoy a democratic spring after the war; instead, Nationalist political prisoners languished in U.S. and Puerto Rican jails. Certainly, the island shared the wave of repression that hit Latin America in the late 1940s and 1950s, but this was not new, since Nationalists had been experiencing similar attacks for decades.[11] When Greg Grandin makes an important critique of "historians of U.S. policy toward the region [Latin America]" who focus on "what preoccupied U.S. policymakers," it appears that he is not taking Puerto Rico's colonial status into sufficient consideration. He calls on historians to pay attention to "what was being fought over in Latin America itself."[12] Yet, what the Nationalists were fighting for was independence from the United States, so it would be difficult, if not impossible, to discuss politics in Puerto Rico and ignore the U.S. government's role in it.

Puerto Rico represented a particular challenge to the United States and its efforts to dominate the region politically and ideologically. Members of the Nationalist Party refused to renounce the struggle for Puerto Rican independence.[13] Their repudiation of U.S. rule demonstrated to Latin America and the rest of the world that some Puerto Ricans were willing to undertake

bold and dramatic actions, at great personal sacrifice, to liberate their nation. Their commitment to independence and Puerto Rico's status as a colony revealed the hypocrisy of the United States at a time when Washington was loudly proclaiming the virtues of democracy, defending human rights, and defining itself as the friend of the global movement against colonialism.[14] This contradiction, combined with the sympathy and political support that individuals, parties, and governments throughout Latin America expressed for the colonized Caribbean island and for the political prisoners jailed by the United States for resisting Puerto Rico's subordinate status, mattered to politicians and government officials in Washington. It explains, in part, why the U.S. Congress allowed Puerto Ricans to vote for their own governor and worked with the Popular Democratic Party to engineer Puerto Rico's transition from an outright colony to a more disguised one as a Free Associated State. It also contributed to saving the life of Oscar Collazo, the Puerto Rican Nationalist who received the death penalty following his attack on Blair House, the temporary residence of President Harry Truman, in November 1950.

Trans-Latin American Solidarity with the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party in the 1920s and 1930s

Latin American solidarity with the Nationalists in the 1950s reflected, in part, the work of pro-independence forces in the 1920s and 1930s. Pedro Albizu Campos and the Nationalist Party understood that Latin American solidarity was critical for Puerto Rico to obtain independence. To that end, they promoted opposition to U.S. imperialism and support for Puerto Rican independence across the Americas. From 1927 to 1929, Albizu Campos traveled throughout the region in a "patriotic pilgrimage" to meet with "the people of our race."[15] As the party newspaper reported, he would begin his trip in the "heroic Dominican homeland from where he will continue his travels through Ibero-América." (During his travels, Albizu Campos visited the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru.)[16] Albizu Campos undertook this trip to inform Latin Americans about "the protests of a country that refuses to accept the shameful enslavement that the imperialists from the north have imposed on it." He and the Nationalist Party wanted the peoples of the continent to learn about "the island's tragedy"; they also hoped to expose the "false Yankee democracy so that [Latin Americans] could better prepare themselves against the imperialist economic policies from the North."[17] Albizu Campos's mission bore fruit. During his 1927 visit to Cuba, illustrious Cubans such

as Dr. Enrique José Varona, Dr. Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, Dr. Enrique Gay Galbó, and Juan Marinello Vidaurreta, among others, formed the Junta Nacional Cubana pro Independencia de Puerto Rico.[18] Strong bonds of mutual support existed between many Cubans and Puerto Ricans. Both Puerto Rico and Cuba had remained Spanish colonies throughout the nineteenth century, long after 1824, when Madrid's other American possessions had achieved independence. United in a common struggle, they had organized joint pro-independence committees, such as the Junta Revolucionaria in New York City, and fought together on the battlefield to end colonial control of their nations. This common heritage explains why anti-imperialist Cubans committed themselves to securing the independence of their sister Antillean nation. However, Cubans were not the only Latin Americans to form organizations and conduct campaigns in opposition to U.S. colonialism and repression in Puerto Rico, as events during the 1930s made clear.

During the 1930s, conflict between the Nationalist Party and the U.S. government increased. The Nationalist Party garnered greater popular support and stepped up its militant activities against U.S. colonial rule in response to increased U.S. government repression against the party. Across Latin America, anti-imperialist and antifascist forces took up the cause of Puerto Rico and the Nationalist political prisoners. In 1936, leaders of the Nationalist Party were accused and convicted of seditious conspiracy and sentenced to between six and ten years in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia.[19] Pro-independence events were held in Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay in support of the Nationalists.[20] In Argentina, in 1936, the University Federation of Argentina sent a petition to U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull "demanding the release of the Nationalist leader Juan Antonio Corretjer." They also demanded "an end to the unjustified repression by the North American regime against the Nationalists."[21] And, in Costa Rica, the Communist Party dedicated one week to "the struggle for Puerto Rican independence." It called on its members to "raise money to send cables to the governor of Puerto Rico to protest the abuses that North American authorities have carried out against Puerto Rican Nationalists."[22] The Confederation of Anti-Imperialist Students of America, which was meeting in Mexico, wrote to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1937 "to bring to your attention the immense clamor of protest that has risen in our hearts over the unjust incarceration of Pedro Albizu Campos, Juan Antonio Corretjer, and other leaders of Puerto Rican Nationalism, now banished to the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia, accused of the most honorable act which any man could accomplish—to struggle for the Independence of his country."[23] The relationships that the Nationalists built with Latin Americans in the 1920s and 1930s persisted through the 1940s and 1950s.

The 1950s: Defiance and Solidarity at the Height of the Cold War

The United States emerged from World War II as a major power in the world and the dominant force in the western hemisphere. The United States' position as one of two superpowers allowed it to expand its political reach, economic penetration, and military operations around the globe. Nevertheless, it continued to view Latin America as a foreign yet integral and essential extension/possession of itself. The United States had profound economic ties with, even a dependency on, Latin America. Indeed, as Bethell and Roxborough point out, referring to the postwar period, "Latin America remained the United States' most important export market and source of imports and, after Canada, the area in which most U.S. capital was invested."[24]

Puerto Rico played an important military and geopolitical role in the U.S. government's plans for the hemisphere. The U.S. Navy viewed its bases at Roosevelt Roads and Vieques as critical to its outward defense against "communism," both on the mainland and throughout the western hemisphere. As Vice Admiral William Barby warned at a 1947 Lions Club luncheon in San Juan, the United States needed to prepare for a "possible attack from overseas." Alerting his audience to the very real "danger of invasion in the next seven to ten years," he added, "this danger required readiness in the Caribbean," specifically at the U.S. Navy bases in Puerto Rico.[25]

However, the United States colonial rule in Puerto Rico undermined Washington's efforts to portray itself as a supporter of democracy and freedom in opposition to communist totalitarianism and repression. The Nationalist Party knew that the United States' possession of Puerto Rico weakened the latter's image as the leader of the "free world." This understanding, combined with its history of working with anticolonial and anti-imperialist forces across Latin America, allowed the party to call upon sympathetic sectors throughout the region (and the world) to support its demand for sovereignty.

The Nationalist Party's work in the United Nations exemplified its recognition of the importance of hemispheric and global support for its struggle. In a 1948 interview, Pedro Albizu Campos remarked on the power exerted by the United States and other colonial powers, a group he referred to as the "United Front to render a restricted interpretation of Chapter 11" in the United Nations. (Chapter 11 and particularly Article 73 said that the imperialist powers "are bound to respect the political, economic, and cultural aspirations of the nations intervened in by their armed forces.") At the same time, he affirmed the importance of the international body since "it is of general knowledge that all the Latin American countries, and, in fact, all the nations of the world—

with the exception of the colonial powers—are willing, when the opportune moment arises, to implement the principle of the independence of all subjugated countries like Puerto Rico. That principle is incorporated in the Charter of the United Nations Organization, and its recognition is binding upon the despotism of the United States which shackles us."[26]

As part of its efforts to secure international support, the Nationalist Party designated Thelma Mielke, a New Yorker who supported Puerto Rican independence, to represent it in the international body.[27] The party believed that the United Nations offered it an important platform from which to inform the world of Puerto Rico's colonial status and to call on nations, particularly those in the region, for solidarity. Furthermore, Latin American nations had substantial influence in the international institution, since they "represented two fifths of the votes—20 out of 51—, . . . making [them] the most important single voting bloc."[28] The Nationalist Party's appeals for support posed a problem to the United States as it attempted to exert its influence over Latin America. As Ivonne Acosta-Lespier notes, "the plans the United States had for the hemisphere were hindered by the campaign in the United Nations of Puerto Rican Nationalists and independence activists who portrayed the United States as a colonial power."[29]

In order to clean up its public image and do away with the perception that its colonial hold over Puerto Rico contradicted its self-designation as the number one defender of freedom, the U.S. government implemented a two-prong strategy to effect changes in Puerto Rico's status so that it would appear that the island was no longer a U.S. colony and to silence the voice of those who most determinedly opposed ongoing U.S. colonialism, the Nationalist Party. To accomplish the first goal, Washington worked with like-minded Puerto Ricans to transform Puerto Rico's status so that it would appear that the United States no longer colonized it. In 1946, President Harry Truman appointed the first Puerto Rican governor, Jesús Piñero, a close collaborator of Luis Muñoz Marín, the leader of the Popular Democratic Party (PPD). Then, in 1948, after fifty years of U.S. colonial rule, Muñoz Marín became the first elected Puerto Rican governor.[30] Muñoz Marín had abandoned his support for independence during the 1940s and tied his political wagon to his relationship with the United States. Cognizant of the contradictions that U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico posed to the emerging superpower, Muñoz Marín "sought to take advantage of the need of the United States to address the worldwide rise of anticolonial and anti-imperialist sentiment."[31] He presented himself as the man who would end colonialism by converting Puerto Rico into a Free Associated State.

The road to the Free Associated State involved a number of legislative

changes. In 1950, President Truman signed Public Law 600, which allowed Puerto Ricans to vote for their own constitution. A referendum was held in Puerto Rico on the new constitution in 1952. Of 783,610 registered voters, 463,828 (59.0 percent) cast ballots; 373,594 (47.1 percent of total registered voters and 81.5 percent of those voting) supported the terms set forth in the constitution, and 82,877 (11.0 percent of total registered and 18.5 percent of those voting) opposed them.[32] As a result of the vote, the constitution went into effect on July 25, 1952, the anniversary of the day in 1898 when the United States had invaded Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War.

Muñoz Marín and the U.S. government seized the opportunity to declare that Puerto Rico was no longer a U.S. colony, since Puerto Rico now had its own constitution and was a Free Associated State.[33] Although this change did result in the devolution of some governing functions to Puerto Ricans, it did not fundamentally change the island's colonial relationship to the United States. As a Free Associated State, which is an anomaly in U.S. history, Puerto Rico could now direct its own internal political affairs, such as local and gubernatorial elections. However, the U.S. government continued to exert control over all federal matters, foreign relations, and economic and military issues. For example, Puerto Ricans have had no voice in favor of or against any U.S. decision to go to war, since they cannot vote for any federal officials, yet they were subject to the draft when it was in effect.[34] The new arrangement worked to the benefit of the United States and Muñoz Marín. As Ayala and Bernabe note, "the U.S. State Department . . . looked favorably upon legislation that would allow the United States to argue Puerto Rico was no longer a colony while not reducing its ultimate rights over the island."[35]

The U.S. government (along with Muñoz Marín and the PPD) understood that the establishment of the Free Associated State alone would not convince the world that Puerto Rico was no longer a U.S. colony. This realization led to the second part of Washington's two-pronged strategy: the elimination of the Nationalist Party as the voice and symbol of resistance to U.S. colonialism. The measures that would facilitate the wave of repression that engulfed the Nationalist Party in the 1950s began in the late 1940s, in Washington, D.C. In 1948, the U.S. Congress passed and imposed on Puerto Rico Law 53, frequently referred to as the Gag Law. This law made it a felony to "encourage, defend, counsel, or preach, voluntarily or knowingly, the need, desirability, or convenience of overturning, destroying, or paralyzing the Insular Government, [the local Puerto Rican government] or any of its political subdivisions, by way of force or violence; and to publish, edit, circulate, sell, distribute, or publicly exhibit with the intention to overturn [the Insular Government]."[36] This law effectively made it illegal to struggle for or even speak in favor of the independence

of Puerto Rico. The arrests of hundreds in Puerto Rico and the United States following the insurrection on the island on October 30, 1950, and the November 1950 attack on Blair House in the U.S. capital amply demonstrated the full scope of this law.

However, even before the uprising, the Nationalist Party was subject to increased repression and anticipated that more attacks were to come. In May 1950, the Nationalist Party issued a statement in which it denounced U.S. government plans to carry out "the immediate assassination of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos . . . and of the other leaders of [the Nationalist] party, and the dissolution of the same."[37] As Oscar Collazo wrote in his memoirs, speaking of the period just before the insurrection, "the persecution and harassment against the Nationalists had arrived at such an extreme that they had to use force to defend themselves."[38]

The Nationalist Party understood the change from an outright colony to a Free Associated State to be merely cosmetic; at the same time it was alarmed that the transformation could and, according to the vote for the constitution, apparently did deceive people, both in Puerto Rico and around the world, leading them to believe that colonialism had indeed ended in Puerto Rico. This perception, combined with the growing number of party members arrested and fears that the U.S. government had plans to imprison or assassinate Pedro Albizu Campos, convinced the party leadership that only a dramatic and substantial rejection of the political changes being carried out in or planned for Puerto Rico would notify their compatriots and the world that the island remained a U.S. colony and that patriotic Puerto Ricans would resist both the repression and the new status. It is against this backdrop that the Nationalists launched the insurrection on October 30, 1950, in Puerto Rico and attacked Blair House in Washington, D.C., on November 1, 1950.

The Nationalist Party Attacks in the 1950s

Blanca Canales was a social worker who had supported Puerto Rican independence since she was nine years old. In her memoirs, she recalls that her favorite thing to do when she was young was to "stand on the balcony behind the house and harangue the neighborhood kids about patriotism." She received military training after she joined the Nationalist Party in 1931 and stored munitions for the party in her home. In 1950, she led the Nationalist uprising in Jayuya, her hometown of about 1,500 people, situated in the mountainous interior of the island. Years later, she recalled that she, like other Nationalists, launched the attack for two reasons. "We thought that they [the 'puppet government

and the U.S. empire'] would try and imprison Albizu Campos, something for which they would pay a heavy price [this time] since when don Pedro was arrested in the 1930s he asked us all to remain calm." They also rose up to protest "the plan to approve the law that would establish the Free Associated State."[39]

According to some sources, the date for the uprising was moved forward several months as a result of growing U.S. attacks against the party.[40] Estanislao Lugo was a member of the Nationalist Party, a trusted compañero of Albizu Campos, and one of the party's seven military commanders. According to him, the Nationalists initiated the "Revolution" because they got word on October 29, 1950, that the police "were going to search the houses of the Nationalists and arrest those who had arms." To prevent this from happening, he and his men retreated to a farm to await orders. The police got wind of their presence and arrested them on October 30.[41]

When other military units of the Nationalist Party heard the news of their arrest, they followed instructions and attempted to attack colonial institutions, such as post offices and police stations, in seven other small towns in the interior of the island, as well as the governor's palace in San Juan.[42] The attacks were generally unsuccessful. Only in Jayuya were the Nationalists able to "attack the police headquarters, burn the Selective Service cards and the Federal Post Office, and proclaim the Republic of Puerto Rico."[43]

Luis Muñoz Marín, the governor, called the attacks a "conspiracy against democracy helped by the Communists" and "a criminal conspiracy by a group of fanatics."[44] The U.S. government sent planes to bomb Jayuya and Utuado, another town in the mountains of Puerto Rico, and the National Guard to attack the Nationalists. By November 1, 1950, most of the fighting was over; sixteen Nationalists, seven police, and one National Guard were killed; nine Nationalists, twenty-three police, six National Guard, and eleven civilians were wounded.[45] The government then applied the Gag Law and arrested 1,106 people, including Pedro Albizu Campos and the leadership of the Nationalist Party, and members of the Communist Party and of the Puerto Rican Independence Party, another pro-independence party. Although the majority of the detained were released soon thereafter, over one hundred people served lengthy prison terms. In 1962, thirty-one Puerto Ricans were still held in Puerto Rican or U.S. prisons.[46] Blanca Canales, for example, spent twenty years in jail.[47]

In New York City, two members of the Nationalist Party, Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola, learned of the unsuccessful uprising and decided to act to defend it. According to Collazo, who was head of the Nationalist Party in New York City, Torresola commented that newspaper reports "made it appear as if the fighting was nothing more than an issue exclusively among Puerto Ricans. Nothing mentioned the direct part the United States was playing in

the genocide." He added that they needed to act quickly because "it is urgent that the world's attention be focused on Puerto Rico and that we expose [U.S.] imperialism as the principal protagonist in the tragedy."[48] Thus, without much planning or training, fueled by their indignation and by their desire to expose what they considered the "slaughter" then taking place in Puerto Rico, Collazo and Torresola went to Washington, D.C., to call attention to what the United States was doing in Puerto Rico. Security guards at Blair House, President Truman's temporary residence, confronted them as they approached the house, a gunfight ensued, and Torresola was killed and Collazo severely wounded.[49] Following his trial, Collazo was found guilty of "first degree murder, assaulting the residency of the president of the United States, and of carrying illegal arms" and sentenced to die.[50]

In 1954, four Nationalists, led by Lolita Lebrón, fired shots in the U.S. Congress to tell the world that Puerto Rico "is a colony."[51] "We went," said Rafael Cancel Miranda, one of the four, "because we wanted to call the attention of the world to our reality." Their timing and motivation underscore the importance the Nationalist Party placed on world opinion. The attack occurred shortly after the United States had "reported to the United Nations that Puerto Rico was a sovereign nation, and at the same time as the Organization of American States was meeting in Caracas, Venezuela."[52] They wanted the world to know not only that some Puerto Ricans considered this untrue but also that they were willing to sacrifice their lives to expose what they considered the colonial reality of their homeland.

Latin American Solidarity with the Nationalists

The late 1940s and the 1950s were a difficult period for left and anti-imperialist forces in Latin America. Determined to secure its control over the hemisphere, the United States government practiced the Truman Doctrine, which dictated that the goal of U.S. foreign policy was to "halt the spread of communism" through containment.[53] Working with pro-capitalist forces and the military across the region, the United States encouraged or sponsored the rise to power of conservative, anticommunist governments. By the end of 1954, dictatorial rule had replaced democratic governments in eleven countries.[54] Repression of the left became the order of the day. In Chile, which was technically democratic, the government of Gabriel González Videla moved against his coalition partners in the Communist Party, sending scores of them to camps.[55] Repression was not limited to the left. The U.S. government considered the

reformist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala to be such a threat that it organized its overthrow and instigated the imposition of a military dictatorship in 1954.[56]

The United States influenced how Latin American nations voted in the United Nations. Both the U.S. government and leaders of the Popular Democratic Party, the party of Luis Muñoz Marín, were eager to remove Puerto Rico from the UN's list of non-self-governing territories.[57] In January 1953, the United States informed the secretary general that "it is no longer necessary or appropriate for the United States to continue to transmit information on Puerto Rico" to the United Nations.[58] In a clear indication of the power the United States exerted over the United Nations, the General Assembly voted to remove Puerto Rico from the list of non-self-governing territories. The majority of Latin American states voted in favor of the resolution, with only Mexico and Guatemala opposing it.[59]

However, it would be a mistake to think that this conservative atmosphere and repressive reality defined the totality of Latin America in this period. Various expressions of the left and anti-imperialism persisted throughout the region. Solidarity with Puerto Rican independence and support for the Nationalist prisoners were evident across the hemisphere. In fact, solidarity with the Nationalist prisoners was one significant way to expose and oppose U.S. imperialism in the region. Just as they had done in the 1930s, democratic and anti-imperialist Latin Americans responded to the appeal and actions of the Nationalist Party and signed petitions, wrote letters, staged demonstrations, and formed solidarity committees that demanded an end to U.S. colonialism, freedom for the Nationalist prisoners, and the commutation of the death penalty for Oscar Collazo.

Cubans responded rapidly and forcefully to news of the October 30, 1950, uprising. On October 31, the Cuban House of Representatives "named a commission composed of leaders of all the political parties to discuss the feasibility of sending a three-man congressional mission to San Juan to 'end the persecution of the Nationalists' and 'protect the life of Albizu Campos.'" The commission planned to ask President Carlos Prio Socarrás of Cuba for "a Cuban army airplane to fly the mission to San Juan" should the project be approved. On the same day, President Prio sent a cable to Governor Muñoz Marín "asking him to guarantee the safety and lives of nationalist leader Albizu Campos and his compañeros."[60] Muñoz Marín dismissively rejected the proposed visit of the Cuban congressmen, saying they "are profoundly misled regarding the political situation in Puerto Rico" and that they were operating on a "base of information that is maliciously false. Naturally, such an investigation would definitively lack any approval or sympathy on the part of this government."[61]

The Cuban historian Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, who had worked in solidarity with Puerto Rican independence since Albizu Campos's 1927 visit to the island, angrily shot off a telegram to Muñoz Marín stating, "Secure that I am interpreting the feelings of the Cuban people, I send you and your gang of accomplices in the Yankee barbarism [the repression that followed the October 30 uprising] the strongest protest possible for the murder of Puerto Rican patriots and the persecution of Doctor Pedro Albizu Campos, brothers of the democratic and liberatory ideals of Martí and Hostos." He signed himself President of the Cuban National Junta for the Independence of Puerto Rico.[62]

In November 1950, eighty-seven lawyers practicing in Havana met to form the Committee of Lawyers in Support of Puerto Rican Independence. In an April 1951 message to the Fourth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Relations of the American Republics, they called on the delegates to "take all necessary measures to secure the immediate release of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos and all the Puerto Rican political prisoners and to organize the Republic of Puerto Rico as soon as possible . . . [actions] which will strengthen the fraternal relations among the American nations and the sense of democracy in our hemisphere."[63]

Leaders of the Nationalist Party found refuge in Cuba in the early 1950s. Juan Juarbe Juarbe, the party's secretary of foreign relations, took up residence in Cuba and conducted his work and the party's international business from Havana. In March 1951, he wrote a message to the Fourth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Relations of the American Republics asking the delegates to present the case of Puerto Rico to the Organization of American States so that "this nation will have the opportunity to freely and openly determine its own future."[64]

Cuban and Latin American demands for the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners continued. In 1953, writers from across Latin America met in Havana, Cuba, on the centenary of the birth of José Martí, "the Apostle of Antillean Independence." The writers from the Caribbean and from Central and South America sent a letter to President Dwight Eisenhower "respectfully soliciting a complete amnesty for all those imprisoned for the last two years, in prisons on the Island and in the United States, for the persecuted and exiled members of the Nationalist Movement of Puerto Rico who have fought for the independence of their homeland. Among them is their leader, Doctor Pedro Albizu Campos, whose state of health, under the prison regime to which he is submitted, ensures his death in the very near future."[65]

Cuban solidarity with the Nationalists continued; concern for Pedro Albizu Campos's health increased as his physical condition deteriorated. Following their arrests in the 1950s, Albizu Campos and other prisoners, such as Isabel

Rosado and Ruth Reynolds, all developed physical symptoms consistent with exposure to radiation. In order to diagnose Albizu Campos's condition, determine the cause of his illness, and prescribe treatment, Dr. Orlando Daumy, at the time president of the Cuban Association of Cancer, traveled to Puerto Rico to examine Albizu Campos. Upon his return to Havana, he wrote to Laura Meneses de Albizu, Albizu Campos's Peruvian wife, to inform her of his findings.[66] He concluded that Albizu's wounds were burns, the result of radiation, and that his general state "corresponded to someone who had received intense radiation."[67]

Members and supporters of the Nationalist Party worked very hard to educate people about U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico and the situation of the prisoners. Lydia Collazo is the daughter of Oscar Collazo. Like her mother and sisters, she was detained after Oscar Collazo's arrest in Washington, D.C., in 1950.[68] She was released soon thereafter, but her mother, Rosa, served almost seven years in prison. Lydia Collazo was active in campaigns to save her father's life and to release all the Nationalist prisoners.[69] She used to write to supporters in South America: "When my father was in prison, I inherited all the people that he used to write to. I was forced to answer those letters [and] I had to write in my bad Spanish. It was terrible!"[70]

One of the groups she corresponded with was the Argentine Asociación de Amigos pro Libertad de Puerto Rico (Argentine Association of Friends for the Freedom of Puerto Rico), a solidarity organization led by two Argentines, Rito D. Luna (president) and Naldo Espeleta (secretary).[71] The group formed on August 4, 1956, and had an office, a telephone number, and statutes that described the group's goals, officers, membership requirements, and subcommittees.[72] In 1956, the group sent a letter to Lydia Collazo and Ruth Reynolds, a North American pacifist who had a long history of working in support of Puerto Rican independence. Both she and Lydia Collazo belonged to the American Committee for the Independence of Puerto Rico. (The government convicted Ruth Reynolds of "advocating the violent overthrow of the U.S. government" following the October 30 uprising in Puerto Rico, and she served eighteen months in jail in Puerto Rico.)[73] They wrote in the letter, "We are aware that your committee has the same goal as ours: the independence of Puerto Rico. Let's exchange publications. Here are some of ours."[74]

The Argentine Association of Friends campaigned for the release of the Nationalist prisoners and the independence of Puerto Rico. In 1956 and 1957, the association raised particular concerns regarding the health of Pedro Albizu Campos and expressed the widely held fear that he might die in prison. In December 1956, the association wrote to Governor Muñoz Marín, insisting that he release Albizu Campos, "due to [his] advanced illness . . . and his imminent

death at any moment."[75] The organization published the bulletin *Puerto Rico Libre* and, in 1958, was planning its National Congress.[76]

In order to understand more specifically how the Nationalist Party promoted solidarity with its cause throughout Latin America, we turn to the activities of Carlos Padilla Pérez. Carlos Padilla Pérez, selections of whose speech open this chapter, was a student at the University of Puerto Rico when the October 30 uprising occurred. He joined the revolt, was arrested, and was jailed in the infamous La Princesa jail in San Juan from 1950 to May 1952, along with many of the Nationalist prisoners. Upon his release, the Nationalist Party assigned him to work in the party's Secretariat of Foreign Relations, a job he carried out during much of the 1950s. He was in Cuba in 1954 when the Nationalists attacked the U.S. Congress. The Fulgencio Batista government arrested and tried him, but he was found not guilty. Nevertheless, he was forced to leave Cuba, so he went to Central America. He left Guatemala after the 1954 overthrow of the Arbenz government and traveled to South America to conduct "an intense campaign in favor of the freedom of his homeland."[77]

During his "exile," he worked as a journalist, which allowed him to acquire "a deep knowledge of the problems of Latin America." He built ties with politicians in Ecuador; lived in Argentina for many years, where he worked closely with the Association of Friends of Puerto Rico; traveled to Chile to talk about the prisoners; wrote articles about Puerto Rico; spoke in universities and schools across the region; and published at least two books in Argentina to educate his fellow Latin Americans about the colonial situation of Puerto Rico.[78]

In Ecuador, he worked closely with anti-imperialist politicians who sponsored a "Solidarity Agreement with the Peoples of Algeria and Puerto Rico" in 1957. Displaying the sense of a shared trans–Latin American identity that characterized many of the regional statements in support of Puerto Rican independence, the document proclaimed, in its first point, that "the Nation of Puerto Rico has the total right to fight to constitute itself as an Independent Republic and to reintegrate itself into our family of sovereign Latin American peoples." Point 4 reflected the important role that Ecuador and, most likely, other Latin American countries believed was available to the United Nations in furthering this goal. It stated that Puerto Rico had the right "to ask those international bodies that they carry out in the strictest manner possible the Charter of the United Nations, which allows the people of Puerto Rico to determine, free from any pressure, their sovereign future."[79]

The proposed resolution elicited much support as well as serious reservations from members of the Ecuadorean Parliament. Congressman Otto Arosemena Gómez, as well as other congressmen, questioned whether the Ecuadorean Parliament could pass a bill that possibly contradicted the position of either

the president or the chancellery, although he pointed out that he did not know what their position was. Congressman Jorge Luna Yépez, one of the agreement's main advocates, affirmed the ties that Ecuadoreans have with Puerto Ricans, who are "our brothers," since they share the same "blood, tradition, and culture." He then pointed out that the same parliamentary body had previously passed resolutions in support of international events such as the Bolivian Revolution. Luna Yépez reminded his fellow congressmen that they had unanimously approved an agreement backing don Pedro Albizu Campos, "the last of the Liberators of Hispanoamérica," who now "lies in prison." Concluding that the House must take stances "consistent with what it has done in previous years," he urged his co-parliamentarians "not to forget that [Puerto Rico] is the last of the nations that speaks our language, has the same legacy, shares our culture, [and] still lacks an independent government." Therefore, he concluded, "we who represent the Ecuadorean people" need to pass this agreement, which should "encourage the Executive" to carry out a similar action.[80] The debate continued, with passionate arguments for and against it. When the vote was taken, an "overwhelming majority" voted in favor of the resolution.[81]

The agreement received widespread coverage in Ecuador and Puerto Rico and throughout Latin America. *El Siglo*, the newspaper of the Communist Party of Chile, published an article titled "Ecuadorean Deputies Support Independence for Puerto Rico." It noted that this declaration "joins at this time with the continental clamor of the most democratic voices, demanding a complete amnesty for all the prisoners, persecuted and exiled, of the Movement for the Liberation of Puerto Rico, among whom is Doctor Pedro Albizu Campos." The article paid particular attention to the poor health of Albizu Campos, "who was recently the object of a continental-wide homage, under the auspices of the World Organization of Freedom, upon the celebration of his sixty-sixth birthday, in prison." The list of Chileans who signed the Manifesto in favor of Puerto Rican independence included Clotario Blest, the labor leader who subsequently contributed to the formation of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR); Salvador Allende, a leader of the Socialist Party and future president of Chile; and Rafael Tarud, a senator from the Independent Left party, among others.[82]

The ongoing imprisonment of the Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners generated considerable concern and protests from politicians, activists, students, and intellectuals across Latin America. In 1959, the Third National Conference of Socialist Youth held its meeting in Buenos Aires. The group passed a Declaration that condemned the Free Associated State "as a disguise which obscures the colonial regime that exists in the Island." It also demanded "the

liberty of all imprisoned Puerto Rican patriots, among whom is found Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos."[83]

A delegation of Ecuadoreans was so concerned about the fate of Puerto Rico and the prisoners that they visited the island. Jorge Luna Yépez, "an eminent jurist and head of the ARNE (Acción Revolucionario Nacionalista Ecuatoriano) Movement" and "the author of the resolution on Puerto Rican independence approved by the Ecuadorean Cámara de Diputados," said he would not leave Puerto Rico "without hugging Pedro Albizu Campos."[84] The Ecuadorean delegates were able to visit Pedro Albizu Campos in the Presbyterian Hospital in San Juan. Finding him in very poor health, "a human ruin," the four delegates began to sob, and one of the deputies was so upset he could not attend a meeting following the visit; another suffered a heart attack, from which he recovered sufficiently to return to Ecuador two days later.[85] The delegates returned to Ecuador convinced that "Puerto Rico does not enjoy sovereignty."[86]

Hemispheric attention did not focus exclusively on Pedro Albizu Campos; it also extended to Oscar Collazo, the Nationalist who had attacked Blair House, where President Truman was staying in Washington, D.C, and who, following his conviction in a U.S. court, received the death penalty. The U.S.-based "Committee to Save the Life of Oscar Collazo" understood the importance of generating international opposition to his death sentence. At one of the organization's meetings, the group agreed to "ask the United Nations to appeal to [President] Truman to commute the sentence." They group also decided to "send a letter to the Latin American diplomats in Washington, D.C., asking them to intercede with the North American Chief Executive." A speaker at the meeting read two telegrams, one from Mexico and the other from the University Alliance of Montevideo, Uruguay, sent to express the senders' backing of the goals of the event.[87]

Many people throughout Latin America mobilized to save the life of Oscar Collazo. The Committee to Save the Life of Oscar Collazo called on Puerto Ricans to attend an event on July 10, 1952, a few weeks before he was scheduled to die. To encourage Collazo's compatriots to attend, the leaflet for the event pointed out that "the call to save Oscar Collazo's life is international. Governmental entities, prominent personalities, workers' unions, and student congresses in Argentina, Uruguay, Peru, San Salvador, Spain, Cuba, and other American nations have demanded that the President of the United States commute his sentence."[88] Both the Guatemalan and Uruguayan Congresses passed resolutions supporting Collazo. The Mexican intellectual and writer José Vasconcelos, a long-time supporter of the Nationalist Party, wrote an article in favor of Collazo titled "Puerto Rico Is Spanish America."[89]

Believing that the death sentence was about to be carried out, the Uruguayan Group for the Freedom of Puerto Rico wrote to Collazo's wife, Rosa, offering her and her family their "deepest solidarity and spiritual presence . . . on the eve of this painful event that will add a new name to the list of those who have been sacrificed for the cause of a free and dignified Iberoamérica." The letter continued, "Oscar Collazo will not offer his life only [to impact] the destiny of Puerto Rico, rather [his death will have an effect] on all the Americans who carry out the same struggle in all the corners of the continent."[90] On July 24, 1952, the death sentence was changed to life in prison as a result of "the broad scope and the international support" that the campaign to save his life had generated.[91] When the organization heard that the death penalty against Oscar Collazo had been vacated, it sent Rosa Collazo a telegram welcoming the decision.[92] The Foreign Relations Secretariat of the Nationalist Party issued a statement thanking all those who had contributed to saving "the precious life of the patriot Oscar Collazo." It particularly thanked "the Spanish American nations [that] raised their voice regarding the life of this extraordinary man."[93]

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Nationalist prisoners were released gradually. Not wishing to have Albizu Campos die in jail and thus become a martyr, Muñoz Marín pardoned him in November 1964, and he died in April 1965. The four Nationalist prisoners who attacked the U.S. Congress and Oscar Collazo remained prisoners until the late 1970s. President Jimmy Carter approved Andres Figueroa Cordero's release in 1978, when he was dying of cancer. Responding to national and international demands, most especially those emanating from Latin America, Carter granted the remaining four Nationalists an unconditional pardon in 1979. Oscar Collazo was a political prisoner in U.S. jails for twenty-nine years, making him, at the time, the longest-held political prisoner in the western hemisphere.

Conclusion

The Nationalist Party drew on a common history of Spanish colonialism, a shared sense of being Latin American, and a joint antipathy to U.S. imperialism to build trans–Latin American solidarity with Puerto Rican independence and anticolonial political prisoners. Further, it referenced a shared identity based on a common language, culture, and religion. Latin American solidarity was important to the Nationalist Party for two reasons. First, the Nationalist Party considered Puerto Rico to be a part of Latin America and believed that U.S. colonial rule wrongly prevented it from fully participating with its sister republics of the hemisphere as a sovereign and equal member of the American

family of nations. Latin American solidarity with the Puerto Rican independence movement affirmed this position by rejecting the right of the United States to colonize Puerto Rico. Second, the Nationalist Party knew that, in fighting to end U.S. colonial rule, it was up against one of the most powerful nations on earth, if not the most powerful. To enhance the possibility of achieving victory, it turned to supportive forces throughout the continent, expecting that they could function as a counterweight to the United States.

For many Latin Americans, in turn, colonized Puerto Rico was a powerful symbol of U.S. imperialism in the region. U.S. domination of Puerto Rico clearly exposed the hollowness of the U.S. government's claims to uphold democracy, human rights, and anticolonialism. Puerto Rico was a potent symbol for progressive forces in Latin America because it resonated with a reality they shared, understood, and repudiated. It represented a particularly blatant example of the hegemonic control that the United States hoped to exert over the entire continent. Because the chasm between the U.S. government's portrayal of itself and the colonial reality of Puerto Rico was so stark, independence for Puerto Rico and freedom for the Nationalist prisoners were key demands of democratic, leftist, and anti-imperialist forces across the western hemisphere during the 1950s.

The U.S. government understood that its colonization of Puerto Rico discredited its claims to promote democracy and human rights. In an effort to conceal its relationship with Puerto Rico, the U.S. government worked with Luis Muñoz Marín and the Popular Democratic Party to (supposedly) end Puerto Rico's colonial status. To that end, it created the legislative anomaly of a Free Associated State—and proceeded to imprison those members of the Nationalist Party who resisted its attempts to mask colonialism behind the façade of an elected Puerto Rican governor and a new name.

The 1950s are typically defined and viewed as a time of repression and U.S. hegemony in the Americas; a period when anticommunist governments ruled and leftist and anti-imperialist voices were silenced. This chapter shows that, as with most totalizing appraisals of the past, the United States did not reign supreme; across the Americas, voices of solidarity spoke out against U.S. colonialism. From Cuba to Ecuador to Argentina to Chile, Latin Americans protested U.S. control in Puerto Rico and the imprisonment of the Nationalists. They sent cables, wrote letters, and published articles demanding independence for Puerto Rico and freedom for the Nationalist political prisoners. Lauding Pedro Albizu Campos as "a symbol of the as yet unfree but indomitable Latin America," as Ernesto "Che" Guevara characterized him when he spoke at the United Nations in 1964, they clamored for an end to the deplorable and inhumane conditions he suffered in jail, just as they worked to save the life

of Oscar Collazo.[94] And, in some cases, they succeeded. Oscar Collazo spent twenty-nine years in prison, but he did not die there. Latin American solidarity, combined with support from many other people from around the world and the work of anticolonial Puerto Ricans, helped to save his life, just as it contributed to securing the release of other Nationalist political prisoners. And, in doing so, Latin Americans joined with pro-independence Puerto Ricans to defy U.S. imperialist attempts to convince the world that Puerto Rico was not a U.S. colony and that those who were captured fighting for its independence were not political prisoners.

Notes

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1. Presentation by Carlos Padilla Perez, Buenos Aires, June 27, 1958, box 4, file 2, Ruth Reynolds Papers, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños (hereafter cited as CEP), Hunter College, City University of New York. Although the document does not identify whom he is addressing, it is more than likely that it was Argentine members of the Asociación de Amigos pro Libertad de Puerto Rico and other supporters. In a June 24, 1958, letter, Rito D. Luna, the president of that organization, wrote about his conversations with Padilla and the fact that the group "is very busy working on a public event." See Letter from Rito D. Luna to Ruth Reynolds, Buenos Aires, June 24, 1958, box 4, folder 2, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

2. It was not until 1946 that a U.S. president, Harry Truman, appointed a Puerto Rican, Jesús Piñero, as governor. In 1947, the United States allowed Puerto Ricans to elect their own governor, Luis Muñoz Marín. See César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 158–59. To this day, Puerto Rican citizenship is, to put it bluntly, odd. Puerto Ricans living on the island cannot vote in any federal elections, although Puerto Ricans who migrate to the mainland can. Thus, Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico cannot vote in presidential, senatorial, or congressional elections. They can, however, serve in the U.S. military and pay taxes.

3. The Nationalist Party had formed in 1922.

4. Gordon Lewis and Luis Angel Ferrao both characterized the Nationalist Party as fascist. See Gordon Lewis, *Puerto Rico: Freedom and Power in the Caribbean* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963), 136; Luis Angel Ferrao, *Pedro Albizu Campos y el nacionalismo puertorriqueño* (San Juan: Editorial Cultural, 1990). In fact, as we shall see, many of the party's firmest supporters throughout Latin America were communists or socialists.

5. Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 105.

6. Marisa Rosado, *Las llamas de la aurora* (San Juan: Ediciones Puerto, 2006), 200.

7. Archivos Fotográficos, Departamento de Justicia, Documentos relacionados con los sucesos nacionalistas, Tarea 90-29, Tomo 2, Archivo General de Puerto Rico. Pedro Albizu Campos was the son of a former slave and a Basque landowner.

8. Miñi Seijo Bruno, *La insurrección nacionalista en Puerto Rico 1950* (Rio Pedras, PR: Editorial Edil, 1989), 243.

9. One exception is Laura Briggs, who argues for the centrality of Puerto Rico for students of U.S. foreign relations. "Puerto Rico is a good place to think about the meanings of colonialism and globalization because it has for a century been where the U.S. has worked out its attitudes toward its own expansionism." Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 2.

10. Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War, 1944–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2.

11. As in many other Latin American countries, local and national forces carried out the repression, not the United States directly. Thus, Puerto Rican police attacked and arrested members of the Nationalist Party. However, the orders to do so came from Washington.

12. Greg Grandin, "Off the Beach: The United States, Latin America, and the Cold War," in *A Companion to Post 1945 America*, ed. Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 426.

13. The Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), which formed in 1946, also advocated an end to U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico. Many of its members left the Popular Democratic Party in the 1940s when it became clear that Muñoz Marín had abandoned his earlier support for independence. Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 157–58.

14. For a discussion of how U.S. race relations and the civil rights movement challenged U.S. government claims to support freedom and anticolonialism, see Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

15. "La cruzada nacionalista," *El Nacionalista de Ponce*, June 24, 1927. For Albizu Campos and the Nationalist Party, race had nothing to do with genetics or "biology." Race was defined by "our culture, our values, our nobility, and our Catholic civilization." "Concepto de la Raza," *La Palabra* (Puerto Rico), October 19, 1935, 27, as reproduced in Pedro Albizu Campos, *Escritos*, ed. Laura Albizu-Campos Meneses and Mario A. Rodríguez León (Hato Rey, PR: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas, 2007), 26.

16. For a description of his trip, whom he met, and what he did in these various countries, see Ramón Medina Ramírez, *El movimiento libertador en la historia de Puerto Rico*, vol. 1 (San Juan: Imprenta Nacional, 1964), 73–81.

17. "La cruzada nacionalista," *El Nacionalista de Ponce*, June 24, 1927; Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 107.

18. "El caso de Puerto Rico es el atentado más grave que ha hecho Estados Unidos contra Ibero América," *El Mundo*, November 26, 1927. Enrique José Varona was one

of the founders of the Junta Revolucionaria pro Independencia de Cuba y Puerto Rico in New York, along with José Martí and Ramón Emeterio Betances. Roig de Leuchsenring was the famous historian of Havana, whose support for Puerto Rican independence continued into the 1950s and beyond. See also Medina Ramírez, *El movimiento libertador en la historia de Puerto Rico*, 78–79.

19. Luis Nieves Falcón, *Un siglo de represión política* (San Juan: Optimática, 2009), 96; Ché Paralitici, *Sentencia impuesta* (San Juan: Ediciones Puerto, 2004), 66–68.

20. "Gran mitin en Uruguay por la independencia de Puerto Rico," *La Palabra*, March 16, 1936.

21. "La Federación Universitaria Argentina Solicita," *El Mundo*, May 20, 1936.

22. "La fraternidad Iberoamericana en acción," *La Palabra*, June 8, 1936.

23. Letter from Natalio Vázquez, Secretary General of the Confederation of Anti-Imperialist Students of America, to President Roosevelt, June 24, 1937, Mexico City, Mexico, box 4, folder 2, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

24. Bethell and Roxborough, *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War*, 24.

25. César Ayala Casás and José Bolívar Fresneda, "The Cold War and the Second Expropriations of the Navy in Vieques," *Centro Journal* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 19. See also Katherine T. McCaffrey, *Military Power and Popular Protest: The U.S. Navy in Vieques, Puerto Rico* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

26. Fernando González Alberty, "An Interview with Albizu Campos," *El Imparcial*, January 4, 1948.

27. Thelma Mielke, interview with author, New York City, July 6, 2007. Following the 1950 uprising in Puerto Rico, Mielke sent an urgent request to Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations, asking him to "bring the Puerto Rican revolt before the Security Council as a matter endangering international peace." A U.S. delegate dismissed her appeal, claiming that the "Puerto Rican developments were entirely a local affair" and that "the case could not be brought before the world organization." "Island Rebel Asks U.N. to Investigate," *New York Times*, November 3, 1950.

28. Bethell and Roxborough, *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War*, 24.

29. Ivonne Acosta-Lespier, "The Smith Act Goes to San Juan: *La Mordaza*, 1948–1957," in *Puerto Rico under Colonial Rule*, ed. Ramón Bosque-Pérez and José Javier Colón Morera (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 60.

30. Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 158.

31. Ibid.

32. An analysis of these results is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, the number of Puerto Ricans voting for the constitution indicates a certain degree of disagreement with the Nationalist Party's rejection of the constitution and its advocacy of the ongoing struggle for independence. See Humberto García Muñiz, "Puerto Rico and the United States: The United Nations Role 1953–1975," *Revista Jurídica de la Universidad de Puerto Rico* 53 (1984): 9.

33. Ibid., 10.

34. For a discussion of the legal ramifications and contradictions of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico, see Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall, eds., *Foreign in a Domestic Sense* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

35. Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 162.

36. Acosta-Lespier, "The Smith Act Goes to San Juan: *La Mordaza*, 1948–1957," 59. The law was modeled on the Federal Smith Act, "which made it illegal to advocate the violent overthrow" of the U.S. government. See Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 160.

37. Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico, "The Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico Denounces the Plans of the United States," San Juan, May 20, 1950, box 29, folder 4, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

38. Oscar Collazo, *Memorias de un patriota encarcelado* (San Juan: Fundación Francisco Manrique Cabrera, 2000), 274.

39. Blanca Canales, *La constitución es la revolución* (San Juan: Comité de Estudios Congreso Nacional Hostosiano, 1997), 3, 20, 24.

40. For a detailed discussion of the uprising based on interviews with participants, see Seijo Bruno, *La insurrección nacionalista en Puerto Rico, 1950*. Her work conveys both the detailed planning that preceded the event and the inevitably spontaneous actions that accompanied it.

41. Estanislao Lugo, interview with author, San Juan, May 21, 2008.

42. Rosado, *Las llamas de la aurora*, 200. These attacks corresponded to plans and tactics that the military leadership of the party had previously developed.

43. Seijo Bruno, *La insurrección nacionalista en Puerto Rico*, 252.

44. "Revolt Flares in Puerto Rico; Soon Quelled with 23 Dead," *New York Times*, October 31, 1950, 1.

45. Ibid., 17; José Enrique Ayora Santaliz, "La insurrección nacionalista del año 1950," unpublished manuscript, October 2000, personal archive, Ponce, Puerto Rico.

46. Letter from Carlos Santiago, "Dear Friend," July 1962, box 28, folder 6, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

47. Canales, *La constitución es la revolución*.

48. Collazo, *Memorias de un patriota encarcelado*, 279.

49. In the shooting, one White House guard was killed and two were wounded. "President Resting," *New York Times*, November 2, 1950.

50. Collazo, *Memorias de un patriota encarcelado*, 287.

51. After her release from prison, in 1979, Lolita Lebrón returned to Puerto Rico, where she campaigned for an end to U.S. colonialism, the U.S. Navy bombing of Vieques, and the imprisonment of Puerto Rican political prisoners. She died in August 2010 and is buried near Pedro Albizu Campos, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

52. Rafael Cancel Miranda, in conversation with author, San Juan, March 12, 2006.

53. Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States, and the World*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 116.

54. Dictatorships ruled Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Paraguay. Bethell and Roxborough, *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War*, 18.

55. See Tomás Moulian, *La forja de ilusiones: El sistema de partidos, 1932–1973* (Santiago: ARCIS and FLACSO, 1993), 96; Lessie Jo Frazier, *Salt in the Sand: Memory, Violence, and the Nation-State in Chile: 1890 to the Present* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 165–67; Karin Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920–1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

56. Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1952–1954* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Greg Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

57. See García Muñiz, "Puerto Rico and the United States," 10–18. According to Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter, in the early 1950s, the U.S. government had to submit an annual report on the status of Puerto Rico, as well as on Alaska, American Samoa, Hawaii, the Panama Canal Zone, and the American Virgin Islands. Ibid., 20.

58. Ibid., 26.

59. Ibid., 58. It was not until 1973 that the General Assembly again considered the status of Puerto Rico. Ibid., 169.

60. "Desea enviar comisión aquí," *El Mundo*, November 1, 1950.

61. "Muñoz dice eso tocaría a camaras," *El Mundo*, November 2, 1950.

62. "Leuchsenring envía protesta al gobernador," *El Mundo*, November 2, 1950.

63. "Mensaje del 'Comité de abogados pro independencia de Puerto Rico' de Cuba a la IV Reunión de Consulta de los Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores de las Repúblicas Americanas," Havana, Cuba, April 4, 1951, box 46, Campos file, number 1, Vito Marcantonio Papers, New York Public Library (NYPL).

64. "Mensaje del Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico a la Cuarta Reunión de Consulta de los Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores de las Repúblicas Americanas," Havana, Cuba, March 14, 1951, p. 3, box 46, Campos file, number 1, Vito Marcantonio Papers, NYPL.

65. Letter from Writers of América to President Dwight Eisenhower, Havana, Cuba, February 25, 1953, Puerto Rico (2): Nationalists, Ralph T. Templin Collection, United Methodist Church Archives—GCAH, Madison, NJ.

66. Laura Meneses de Albizu was living in Mexico at the time because the U.S. government had cancelled her U.S. citizenship in 1948 and subsequently expelled her from the country. See Laura de Albizu Campos, *Albizu Campos y la independencia de Puerto Rico* (Hato Ray, PR: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas, 2007), 137.

67. Letter from Laura de Albizu Campos to Ruth Reynolds, Mexico City, August 6, 1957, box 4, folder 3, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

68. "Widow of Assassin Seized as Plotter on Hunger Strike," *New York Times*, November 4, 1950.

69. Her mother's cellmate in New York City was Ethel Rosenberg, with whom she

became close friends. Lydia Collazo, in conversation with author, Levittown, Puerto Rico, May 25, 2008.

70. Ibid.

71. Progressive Argentine forces had a long history of anti-imperialism in general and support for Puerto Rican independence in particular. For more on this practice, see Florencia Ferreira de Cassone, *Claridad y el internacionalismo Americano* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1998), esp. 256–61; and Alfredo L. Palacios, *Nuestra América y el imperialismo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Palestra, 1961), esp. 274–283, 321.

72. "Estatutos," Buenos Aires, August 4, 1956, box 19, folder 8, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

73. "Ruth M. Reynolds," *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1987): 41.

74. Letter from the Asociación de Amigos pro Libertad de Puerto Rico, Buenos Aires, August 16, 1956, box 19, folder 3, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

75. "Release of Albizu Asked from Argentina," *El Imparcial*, December 21, 1956, as cited in FBI Files, "Quarterly Summary Report," San Juan, January 31, 1957, 105-11898-NR. The FBI kept very close tabs on news in Latin America about the Nationalist Party.

76. Letter from Rito Luna to Ruth Reynolds, Buenos Aires, June 24, 1958, box 4, folder 2, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP. The Committee had previously put out a bulletin "at the time of Nixon's [May 1958] visit."

77. Carlos Padilla Pérez, *Puerto Rico: Al rescate de su soberanía* (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones del Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico, 1958), 7–8. I thank Andres Bisso for informing me about Padilla Pérez's publications.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid., 103.

80. Ibid., 105–6.

81. Ibid., 131.

82. *El Siglo*, September 14, 1957, cited in Padilla Pérez, *Puerto Rico*, 139.

83. Declaration of the Third National Conference of Socialist Youth, Buenos Aires, May 28–30, 1959, box 4, folder 2, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

84. "Diputados Ecuatorianos prometen luchar por la independencia de Puerto Rico," *El Imparcial*, December 22, 1957, cited in Padilla Pérez, *Puerto Rico*, 159–60.

85. "Ecuatorianos lloran en visita a Albizu Campos," *El Imparcial*, December 22, 1957, cited in Padilla Pérez, *Puerto Rico*, 160–62.

86. "Una lección objetiva," *El Imparcial*, December 23, 1957, cited in Padilla Pérez, *Puerto Rico*, 162–63.

87. "Comités Collazo irán a Washington y a las N. Unidas," *La Prensa*, July 19, 1952.

88. "Hay que salvar a Oscar Collazo," n/d, box 20, folder 1, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

89. Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, Foreign Relations Secretariat, "Our Gratitude," Havana, July 28, 1952, box 29, folder 4, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

90. Letter from Raúl F. Abadie-Aicardi to Rosa Collazo, Montevideo, July 9, 1952, box 20, folder 2, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

91. Paralitici, *Sentencia impuesta*, 158.

92. Telegram from Alianza Universitaria Federación Latinoamericana to Rosa Collazo, Montevideo, July 10, 1952, box 40, folder 2, Ruth Reynolds Papers, CEP.

93. Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, Foreign Relations Secretariat, "Our Gratitude," Havana, July 28, 1952.

94. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader: Writings on Politics and Revolution*, ed. David Deutschmann (North Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2003), 285.

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