5. Muñoz Marin's Shift from Independence to Autonomy, 1944-1946

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Those among the Populares who believed in independence for Puerto Rico were encouraged by the international situation. The Atlantic Charter had reaffirmed the colonial peoples’ rights to choose whatever form of government they desired; the Yalta Conference in February, 1945, had agreed upon reviewing the existing mandated territories; and at the San Francisco meeting where the United Nations Organization was being formulated, considerable attention was given to the whole colonial question. Eventually the document that emerged from the San Francisco meeting, the United Nations Charter, was to reserve three chapters for colonies and their aspirations. Chapter XI was entitled “Declaration Regarding Non-self-governing Territories,” while chapters XII and XIII dealt with the “International Trusteeship System” and the “Trusteeship Council,” respectively. On a number of occasions, independentista leaders in Puerto Rico capitalized on the situation to appeal to the international body and to major Western leaders.

Their main efforts, however, were concentrated on domestic politics in the hope of pressuring Popular leader Muñoz Marín into seizing the opportunity to win independence for the island. Soon after Senator Tydings introduced in Congress the inde-
The independence bill discussed in the previous chapter, a pro-independence assembly of 200 persons was held in April, 1943, in San Juan. The majority of those present were *Populares*, although Liberals, Nationalists, and Communists were also present. The insular advocates of independence turned out in force at the hearings in May, 1943, to demonstrate to Congress the widespread support for the Tydings bill. But the PPD leader did not openly endorse the bill, thus leaving doubt in the minds of many United States Congressmen as to how much support the *independentistas* had. More importantly, there was little support for independence in the administration or the Congress of the United States.

Indeed, Muñoz Marín stated on a number of occasions his qualified opposition to either statehood or independence. One such occasion was at a roundtable conference at the University of Chicago radio in July, 1943, when he expressed his desire to see the "colonial" status ended, but ruled out independence and statehood on economic grounds. It was more realistic, he argued, to work for an elective governor at the time.

Undaunted, the *independentistas* prepared for the organization in August of 1943 a Pro-Independence Congress (CPI). Muñoz Marín was fearful that the CPI leadership, among whom were prominent *Populares*, might develop into a new party. He called, therefore, an informal meeting of the party leadership, including the *independentistas*, and announced that he would not attend the scheduled meeting because the PPD was officially neutral on the status issue. The Popular leader cautioned the *independentistas* that "the only interest which the Popular party as such could have would be in the resolutions or actions of the Congress that might be prejudicial to the party's work or lead to confusion among the voters."

The *independentistas* proceeded to organize the Pro-Independence Congress. Muñoz Marín wished the Congress "much success in the expression before the people and the Government of the United States of the ideals that without doubt are those of large numbers of Puerto Ricans."

The 1800 delegates at San Juan hammered out statements of purpose and goal. The delegates expressed their desire in these statements to work for independence by peaceful methods, in part by means of marshaling public sentiment behind, and lobbying for, their goals. Dr. Juan Augusto Perea, once a political associate of Nationalist leader Albizu Campos, was elected president.
were later named to represent the CPI in Washington, and Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, residing in the United States, was appointed the group’s legal advisor.

Differences between the CPI leadership and Muñoz Marín were soon to emerge. The CPI condemned the elective governor bill (S.1407), then being considered by Congress, as a “smoke screen” for colonialism. The more radical among the independentistas moved in March, 1944, for the creation of an independence party, but were thwarted by those who felt that the establishment of a new party would only divide and weaken their forces and benefit the Coalition. Dr. Augusto Perea and his followers charged that the CPI had become a branch of the PPD and resigned. Late in 1944, the CPI presidency was given to Concepción de Gracia. For the moment, a measure of harmony was restored between the CPI and the Populares.

Muñoz Marín could not afford a rupture just before the 1944 elections. He proceeded as gingerly as he could to keep the status question out of the elections. As early as October, 1943, he had maintained that independence would not be an issue in the elections a year hence. He said he was not willing to discuss the status issue until Congress conceded that Puerto Rico had the right of plebiscite to determine its final status.

In this endeavor, the Puerto Rican senator could point to the opposition to independence and statehood among United States Congressmen. Rafael Soltero Peralta, representing the Masons of Puerto Rico, interviewed influential legislators on the island’s future status. Representative Crawford of Michigan, who was a member of the House Committee on Insular Affairs, was interviewed several times. Crawford stated that Puerto Rico should not think of statehood or independence for the next twenty-five years. He said bluntly, in a later interview, “I’m going to explain the real reason. Puerto Rico cannot be independent because the United States has to maintain an army, and a navy in the island to defend the territory against the Russian menace, which after this war will try to dismember this continent to take possession of South America.” To give Puerto Rico a free hand in making treaties, he continued, would be to run the same risk as in the case of Argentina. He was apparently referring to Argentina’s resistance to supporting the Allied war effort.

Senator Allen J. Ellender of Louisiana echoed some of Crawford’s sentiments. He doubted whether the Puerto Ricans were
capable of self-government, and would rather grant autonomy in small doses. Representative Cole of New York believed that the United States could not give up control, especially as Puerto Rico depended upon federal funds. Nebraska’s Senator Hugh Butler believed that to grant the island independence would be to abandon United States responsibility towards it. Several other senators and representatives were opposed to giving either independence or statehood to the island. A few supported whatever the islanders desired. But the only influential legislator willing to give Puerto Rico independence was the chairman of the Senate Committee on Insular and Territorial Affairs, Senator Tydings.

Partly in response to the challenge of the independentistas, the November, 1944, PPD platform contained a promise to hold a plebiscite on the definite status of the island “no later than the moment of the structuring of world peace.” But the PPD insisted during the campaign that status was not an issue in the elections. In a pamphlet called People’s Catechism, Muñoz Marin directed his remarks about the island’s status to “impatient” Populares:

Then, if a Popular elected by the people on November 7, 1944, tries to use the position to which he was elected to vote for independence, statehood, or any other form of definite political status, would he be violating the people’s mandate?

Yes, clearly he would be violating the people’s mandate. No Popular will act that way. He who would act that way would no longer be considered a Popular by the people.

The PPD won a landslide victory in 1944. The Republicans and Socialists were effectively excluded from their positions of power. Furthermore, a Popular, Jesús T. Piñero, was elected to the post of resident commissioner. Muñoz Marin’s power could not now be threatened by the Coalition. The challenge to his power came, however, from members of his own party who had independentista leanings. For instance, newly elected Popular representative Benjamin Ortiz, soon to become the House majority leader, declared his belief in independence for Puerto Rico and offered financial support to the CPI. Another prominent Popular, Antonio Pacheco Padró, argued in a newspaper article that since the issue of independence could disrupt the PPD Muñoz
Marín, the only man capable of achieving independence, should take the initiative.\textsuperscript{19}

On December 10, 1944, the Pro-Independence group held another meeting. It was attended by leading Populares.\textsuperscript{20} A resolution was adopted by the CPI calling upon the insular legislature to raise the issue of independence before the Congress of the United States.\textsuperscript{21} Two weeks later the CPI president, Concepción de Gracia, wrote letters to President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Marshal Stalin informing them about Puerto Rico's desire for independence.\textsuperscript{22} Muñoz Marín was concerned that the CPI political structure was gradually assuming permanence in the form of delegations throughout the island. To him it appeared too much like activities preliminary to the organization of a new party, despite the CPI leadership's assurances to the contrary.\textsuperscript{23}

The CPI's intention was, as Tugwell explained, to maneuver the Popular leader into announcing something concrete about his 1944 plebiscite promise. The governor advised Muñoz Marín to play down the plebiscite issue until he had discussed the matter with the Department of the Interior. Tugwell told Undersecretary Fortas, "He [Muñoz Marín] wants something beyond it [the elective governor bill then bogged down in Congress]—though just what that something is, is not quite clear, and could best become clear, I believe, through conversations between Muñoz, the Secretary, and yourself."\textsuperscript{24} Fortas replied to the governor after consulting with Secretary Ickes,\textsuperscript{25} expressing the belief that Muñoz Marín should come to Washington to reach some understanding with the department on the elective governor bill, specifically, and the status question, generally. Fortas preferred for the Puerto Rican leader not to make a public statement, for fear of arousing "unwarranted hopes."\textsuperscript{26}

Apparently impressed by the independentista agitation in Puerto Rico, Senator Tydings introduced on January 10, 1945, a bill (S.227) to provide for the island's independence.\textsuperscript{27} Like his independence bill of 1943, the present measure provided for the election of a Puerto Rican constitutional convention and the writing of a republican constitution. A year after the president of the United States endorsed the constitution, a twenty-year transition period was to follow. As in the earlier bill, the United States was to reserve the right to expropriate insular land for defense purposes and to maintain military and naval bases in Puerto Rico.
Section 3 (n) of the bill provided for United States intervention in insular affairs under emergency situations. Encouraged by the Tydings independence bill, the CPI moved quickly to capitalize on the international situation. CPI leader Concepción de Gracia and Representative Vito Marcantonio of New York announced their intention of presenting Puerto Rico's case before the forthcoming United Nations conference in San Francisco. On March 26, 1945, the independentista leadership prevailed upon Representative Marcantonio to introduce an independence bill that incorporated some of the changes to the Tydings bill requested by the CPI. In May the CPI requested a seat in the future United Nations Organization as a prelude to recognizing the island as an independent state.

Muñoz Marín could not ignore the activities of the CPI, among whose numbers were many Populares. On January 21, 1945, Resident Commissioner Piñero declared that Congress should clarify its position on the status question by permitting the islanders to decide on a plebiscite. Governor Tugwell echoed Piñero's sentiments in his message to the Puerto Rican legislature on February 13, 1945. He said, "Fairness to everyone requires that the Congress offer the choices it is willing to accept rather than to require that Puerto Ricans should petition for status with the risk of rejection."

The Popular leader persuaded other insular legislators of the wisdom of Tugwell's argument, as he explained to Secretary Ickes, for on February 20, 1945, the Puerto Rican legislature passed a resolution requesting Congress to offer options of political status from among which the islanders could choose. But the resolution insisted that it be done in such a manner "that our people may have clear knowledge of the mutual economic relationships and the recognition of mutual moral obligations that would exist under each of the alternative forms that Congress may present to them." Copies of the resolution were sent to the president, the secretary of the Interior, the chairmen of the Senate and House committees responsible for insular affairs, and others.

But if Muñoz Marín had hoped to dissuade Senator Tydings from proceeding with his independence bill, he was disappointed, for the senator opened hearings on S.227. Tydings did, however, postpone the hearings once he had heard independentistas until after the insular legislative session came to an end. He sought to
give all an opportunity to testify. Secretary Ickes had made clear the administration’s position even before the hearings had started. “I have repeatedly said,” the secretary wrote on March 3, 1945, “that I consider it not only right but desirable that the people of Puerto Rico should be given an opportunity to express freely and democratically their desires in regard to their ultimate relationship to the United States. This expression might well be given in a plebiscite to be held under conditions prescribed by the Congress of the United States, but it should be only after a full consideration of alternatives which the Congress may be willing to grant to the people of Puerto Rico and full exploration and exposition of the economic consequences to each of them, both to Puerto Rico and to the United States.”

To explore all possible avenues for a definitive solution to the status issue, the Puerto Rican legislature named members to the Joint Legislative Committee that it had created in 1943. Muñoz Marín was appointed as chairman of the committee. The remaining eight members represented all political groups and parties except the Nationalists.

The administration in Washington took steps to be informed about the possible status alternatives and their economic implications. In April, 1945, special assistant to the secretary of the Interior, Jack B. Fahy, prepared an eleven-page memorandum. He illustrated both United States and Puerto Rican interests with facts and figures and considered how they would be affected in the following alternatives: “quick statehood,” “quick independence,” “provisional statehood,” and “provisional independence.” In listing United States interests, Fahy pointed out that 94 percent of the island’s goods came from the mainland, making Puerto Rico its seventh-best customer. In 1940, for instance, United States farmers received $20 million for food consumed on the island, while mainland manufacturers and processors sold $100 million worth of merchandise. There were likewise interests in United States railroads, truckers, and steamship lines. Continental sugar industry, too, had money invested in Puerto Rico (no figures were given), but Fahy pointed out that United States cane- and beet-sugar growers probably desired to see the island become independent, and thus end insular competition.

The memorandum went on to point out the extent of Puerto Rico’s interests tied with the island’s continued relationship with the United States. Without tariff-free access to United States mar-
kets for the island’s sugar, tobacco, rum, fruits, and so on, Puerto Rico would lose $50 million, which it was not likely to make up as an independent country because it had very little to offer other countries. Puerto Rico also desired to retain United States excise revenues on its rum, which came to $25 million yearly, and it also sought to be exempted from United States tariffs on imports like rice, beans, and textiles because it would save the island about $7 million. The list of benefits Puerto Rico wished to retain was long: exemption from United States Coastwise Navigation Laws so as to utilize cheaper foreign rates and thus save $8 million; exemption from the Sugar Act of 1937, which in 1938 cost the island 25,000 in unemployed, 100,000 in idle acres, and $20 million in income; change in agricultural policy because the existing policy was exacerbating problems of unemployment; and, finally, protection from State department tariff concessions to other countries. In 1939, for example, the United States treaty with Cuba seriously affected the Puerto Rican pineapple industry.

Given these facts, Fahy continued, both “quick statehood” and “quick independence” would be disastrous for the island. Under immediate statehood the total drop in federal and state expenditure in Puerto Rico would be from $51 per capita to $39. With immediate independence the per capita insular government expenditure would fall from $39 to $20. The island’s population density, its need to increase agricultural production, and other special problems made it necessary that either “provisional statehood” or “provisional independence” be tried out for ten years, at the end of which the whole situation should be reviewed. If there was no satisfactory progress, then greater autonomy should be implemented. Fahy ruled out dominion status because Puerto Rico’s present state of productivity could not sustain it.

The memorandum completely ignored the island’s potential in industrialization, as was pointed out in a critique offered by Interior’s legal counsel William Brophy. Nor did it explore in any detail the dominion status. But Fahy’s memorandum clearly showed the extent to which Puerto Rico depended upon the United States. Under such conditions the Department of the Interior could not possibly accept independence programs along the lines suggested by the Tydings bill.

In the same month that Fahy prepared his memorandum, Governor Tugwell addressed another to Secretary Ickes. His conclusions about Puerto Rico–United States relationships were the
same as those of Fahy. Tugwell discussed what he considered to be the ten essential points in the matter of status. The long association between the two, the governor said, made it impossible to deal with the island's problems except with the help of the United States. Puerto Rico needed special treatment in social security benefits, aid in education and health, and relief for the unemployed. Therefore, Tugwell continued, the island should not expect a political arrangement in which control of the expenditure of federal funds would be in extent greater than in the case of a state. So long as Puerto Rico received federal money, the islanders should expect a measure of supervisory control by the United States. Tugwell insisted, however, that changes in the Organic Act should be subject not only to Congressional action but to ratification by a convention of insular representatives.45

Muñoz Marín's thinking was much like that of Fahy and Tugwell to the extent that it was primarily concerned with economic matters. Early in May, 1945, the Popular leader and the rest of the Joint Legislative Committee members arrived in Washington. Before Muñoz Marín testified at the Tydings hearings on S.227, he met with administration officials to clarify his position on status. The Puerto Rican leader told Fahy, Interior's legal advisor Fowler Harper, and DTIP director Benjamin W. Thoron that he desired permanent economic ties with the United States accompanied by maximum political freedom—"sovereign home rule," he phrased it.46

"Here lives a free man," not "here lies a man," was the way he summed it up. The Puerto Rican senator did not question the United States' right to maintain military installations on the island, nor its control in insular foreign affairs. But he insisted that Congress should offer several alternatives, each one with economic guarantees clearly spelled out. The PPD leader pointed out that an elective-governor bill at that stage would not please the islanders because they disliked "absentee sovereignty." The memorandum from Thoron summed up Muñoz Marín's position in this way, "... he desires an economic arrangement that will be at least as favorable as the present one, with as many of the attributes of complete independent sovereignty as possible. He wants to be free to reject any proposal that does not appear sufficiently generous, but wants to avoid making the choice between divorce without alimony and a wardship with generous maintenance allowance."47
Much the same caution was expressed by Undersecretary Abe Fortas in an article in the *Washington Post*. Puerto Ricans, he said, were in a “hopeless struggle with the Malthusian law: there are just too many people on too little and too poor land.” Political solutions must adjust to economic realities, he argued. “Perhaps the Puerto Ricans,” he concluded, “do not want to sue for divorce and perhaps we should not propose that the ties between us be dissolved. But there is one thing we can all agree upon: Puerto Rico should have complete home rule.”

The Puerto Rican Joint Legislative Committee addressed a letter to Senator Tydings as chairman of the Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs. The independence bill (S.227), the letter said, should be amended so as to include other political alternatives: statehood, and a “form of dominion government based on full and final political rights.” In all cases the bill should provide for “certain minimum economic conditions,” which were stipulated: one, free trade between the island and the United States, regulated by bilateral agreements periodically; two, exemption from United States internal-revenue taxes for insular exports to the mainland, provided that Puerto Rico collected export taxes on such products at the same rates imposed by the United States; three, maintaining for a period of time favorable conditions for the island’s cane farmers; and four, temporary continuance of other grants and aids to the island, to be stopped only when the island’s productivity and commerce reached a certain level.

In his testimony before the Senate committee on May 7, 1945, Muñoz Marin argued that while he personally favored the dominion status he did not approve any status alternative that did not have the backing of the Puerto Rican people. But he insisted on economic guarantees. “It could be this or that, and submit that to a vote of the people of Puerto Rico, with their knowledge that under any circumstances they would have minimum economic conditions.” Senator Tydings believed that the Puerto Rican Joint Legislative Committee’s request was fair-minded, and he asked its members to formulate a plan in accordance with its recommendations. This the insular committee did. Its program included a referendum on three options, each one to be accompanied by adequate economic guarantees. They were: independence, statehood, and dominion.

The insular committee’s recommendations were incorporated
in a bill, S.1002, and introduced by Senator Tydings on May 15, 1945. A day later the resident commissioner co-sponsored a companion bill, H.R.3237. The Tydings-Piñero bill, as it came to be known, amplified greatly the Maryland senator’s independence bill, S.227. It provided for the Puerto Rican electorate to choose from among independence, statehood, and dominion, each with the necessary economic guarantees suggested by the insular Joint Legislative Committee. The procedures for organizing a constitutional convention and drafting a constitution were the same for independence and dominion. The independence status, however, differed in one important economic provision from the dominion status: under the first, federal aid was to be gradually reduced on the recommendations of a five-man economic commission and effected by presidential proclamations; while under the second, federal aids and benefits were to continue on the basis then prevailing.

Although Secretary Ickes supported the Tydings-Piñero bill in principle, the Department of the Interior was not certain about some of its legal aspects. It was still not sure a month after the bill’s introduction whether the dominion status would require a constitutional amendment. Muñoz Marín, apparently concerned about the hesitancy in the administration and Congress, wrote to Harry S. Truman, who had succeeded to the presidency after Roosevelt’s death in April, 1945. He requested President Truman to urge Congressional action on S.1002. “I do not request,” he went on to elaborate, “that you urge the approval of the bill, as you may not wish to commit yourself on all details, but that you send a message supporting the principle of self-determination under economic conditions that shall be workable in Puerto Rico.”

The *Popular* leader faced a barrage of criticism by the CPI. He had, the *independentista* organization argued, deliberately sabotaged the Tydings independence bill (S.227) by sponsoring the Tydings-Piñero measure. The CPI believed that Muñoz Marín had sufficient influence among circles in Washington to win independence for Puerto Rico. By August, 1945, the CPI leadership was accusing Muñoz Marín of supporting “colonialism” dressed up in a “new package.”

Governor Tugwell, in Washington at the time, believed that the Tydings-Piñero bill was lengthy and complicated and that a simplified procedure would help to speed up Congressional con-
sideration of a plebiscite in Puerto Rico. On August 29, 1945, his aide dispatched for the president’s consideration a seven-page joint resolution to be adopted by Congress. The joint resolution spelled out more clearly what each of the three status options included in the Tydings-Piñero bill meant. The “Associated State” (dominion) alternative envisaged, for instance, the continuation of existing relationship between the island and the United States in all major respects, except that the supreme executive power was to be vested in an elective governor who would have the authority to appoint executive heads and judges of all insular courts. Under this status Congress could not nullify laws enacted by the Puerto Rican legislature. Tugwell’s plan called for permitting the Puerto Ricans to decide in a plebiscite which one of the three they preferred, after which Congress would enact legislation effectuating the islanders’ choice at the earliest possible time.

Upon Truman’s request, presidential advisor Samuel Rosenman took the matter up with Senator Tydings and chairman Bell of the House Insular Committee. Rosenman found Tydings “violently opposed” to Tugwell’s suggestion. Congress, Tydings insisted, would not accept the proposal because for one thing it was not disposed to grant statehood. Instead, the senator suggested that the president make a general statement that Congress grant, “within such limits as may be set” by it, the kind of government that Puerto Rico desired. The president should include in his message, Tydings insisted, the stipulation that Congress should not submit any proposition it was not willing to carry into execution.

Even though Muñoz Marín was at this point considering the establishment of a commission to study the status question—much to the annoyance of Tugwell, who thought the suggestion was tangential—Rosenman prepared a draft message for Congress after consulting Secretary Ickes, Senator Tydings, and Governor Tugwell. On October 16, 1945, President Truman delivered his brief message to Congress. The time had come, he said, for the Puerto Ricans to decide on their political status. Congress should permit the Puerto Ricans to choose from among four possible alternatives: the right to elect their own governor, with a wider measure of local self-government; statehood; “complete independence”; and a dominion form of government. The president cautioned Congress not to submit any proposal that it was
not prepared to enact finally into law. The president's message included elective governor as one of the alternatives, perhaps out of the realization that Congress might not be willing at that time to consider the other three alternatives.

And indeed, Senator Tydings had become by this time extremely doubtful about the referendum bill. As early as September, 1945, he had reservations about the bill, which he himself had sponsored, and hinted that his independence bill, S.227, should be considered instead. A day after President Truman's message, he made known his intention to submit only two alternatives, namely, independence and elective governor with greater autonomy, because there was no support for statehood, and dominion status had not been properly defined. It was a very skeptical chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs who a week later sent four-column questionnaires to his colleagues in the committee with the intention of discovering their positions on President Truman's four alternatives. There was no point, Senator Tydings told his colleagues, in holding hearings if there was no support for statehood and dominion. Apparently there was little sentiment among the rest of the committee for statehood or dominion, for on November 27, 1945, Senator Tydings canceled hearings on S.1002 that he had scheduled for January, 1946. He was going to offer the island independence once more if the majority of the insular legislators should request it.

Popular leader Muñoz Marín cabled Tydings on December 1, 1945, relaying to him the unanimous decision of the Permanent Commission of Puerto Rican Legislature on Political Status that hearings on S.1002 should be held as scheduled. The insular leader also requested a "round table conference" to discuss economic conditions to accompany the various status alternatives. Tydings replied two days later: he was not prepared to consider anything but independence, and Muñoz Marín should submit more liberal economic provisions than those set forth in S.227. His party's pledge was, the Popular leader wrote back, to have "the broadest possible alternatives for the plebiscite under sound, workable economic conditions." Muñoz Marín's appeal to Representative Bell elicited a more categorical response: the Congressman did not think that the House Committee on Insular Affairs would act favorably on the referendum bill.

The Puerto Ricans continued, however, to exert pressure on
Congress. A petition bearing 300,000 signatures was forwarded to the United States legislature;\textsuperscript{78} Resident Commissioner Piñero announced his intention to confer with Congressional leaders;\textsuperscript{74} and the Puerto Rican legislature authorized Muñoz Marín to lead a delegation to Washington to discuss with Senator Tydings and Congressman Bell all aspects of the status question.\textsuperscript{75}

But the most dramatic demonstration of Puerto Rican displeasure was shown when in February, 1946, the insular legislature passed two bills, S.195 and S.196. S.195 provided for a plebiscite in July, 1947, of Puerto Ricans on the island's political status; and S.196 provided for taking a poll among the qualified voters of Puerto Rico as to who should be recommended to President Truman as the next appointed governor, should that office become vacant.\textsuperscript{76} (Governor Tugwell had indicated in December, 1945, his desire to resign, and was expected to do so soon.)\textsuperscript{77} Tugwell vetoed S.195 on the grounds that it interfered with Congress' power to legislate on the matter of status, and indeed would jeopardize the chance of Congressional authorization of a plebiscite. The governor vetoed S.196 as well, arguing that the bill constituted an interference with the powers of presidential appointment and senate confirmation.\textsuperscript{78} Promptly the Puerto Rican legislature passed the bills over Tugwell's vetoes.\textsuperscript{79} On only two other previous occasions since 1898 had this happened, and both times the president had upheld the veto.\textsuperscript{80}

Meanwhile, Muñoz Marín visited Washington in April, 1946, as head of the ten-man delegation created by the insular legislature in December, 1945.\textsuperscript{81} Newspaper reports spoke of his meetings with Senator Tydings and of their discussions of economic arrangements to accompany each status alternative. Tydings agreed to incorporate the delegation's request in the new bill.\textsuperscript{82} But disagreements emerged soon between Senator Tydings and Muñoz Marín, specifically over what is not clear.\textsuperscript{83} Muñoz Marín no doubt met with administration officials, too, and their discussions must have included the matter of Tugwell's vetoes, although there is no record of this in the files of the Office of Territories or the Department of the Interior.

Administration officials were uneasy about the vetoes. While the Department of Justice approved the vetoes, DTIP's legal advisor Irwin W. Silverman believed that there would be serious implications if the president upheld the vetoes on the two bills, especially on S.195, because it would be construed as disapprov-
ing the principle of self-government. Secretary of the Interior Julius A. Krug, who had been appointed to the office after Ickes’ resignation in February, 1946, wrote to F. J. Bailey, assistant director of the Bureau of the Budget, on May 3, 1946. He said he agreed with Tugwell’s action on S.196. “Unless and until,” he explained, “the Congress decided to permit the people of Puerto Rico to elect their governor, or itself enacts a measure authorizing an advisory poll such as the bill contemplates, the appointment of a governor should be strictly complied with.” He disagreed with Tugwell’s veto on S.195, however. The secretary conceded that a “unilateral plebiscite” had an element of “unreality and a wishful thinking quality,” because Congress was sure to balk. There was, however, the larger question of the right of self-determination involved in the matter. Krug continued, “...a sustaining of the veto would be regarded by Puerto Rico, South America and the European nations both large and small as a denial in practice of an oft-expressed principle.”

The new secretary of the Interior minimized the dangers pointed out by Tugwell in his veto. He argued that a plebiscite could be preceded by “an educational campaign” so that the voters could “clearly and intelligently realize the precise character of the alternatives to be placed before them.” Greater care should be given, Krug argued, as to the political, economic, and social consequences of the alternatives offered, since Congress would regard the result of the plebiscite as a “conclusive expression of the will of the Puerto Ricans.” He concluded, “If the voters come to the polls with such an understanding of the implications of their choice, the plebiscite may well be a valuable guide to the Congress and need not jeopardize the proposal made by the President to that body in October [16, 1945], that it offer the Puerto Ricans alternative forms of status.” Two draft letters with a similar message were prepared by the Department of the Interior for the president to send to Tugwell in the event that he accepted Krug’s recommendations.

But the president chose to follow the advice of Governor Tugwell. On May 16, 1946, President Truman sustained Tugwell’s vetoes on both bills. The approval of S.195 might have been interpreted erroneously to mean that the United States was willing to accept any plan selected by the Puerto Ricans. And the acceptance of S.196 “would [have] constitute[d] an interference with the powers of the President and the Senate of the United States.”
Truman's action put a final damper on the hopes of a plebiscite, which had been raised nearly a year ago when S.1002 was introduced.

Whatever lessons Muñoz Marín learned from his experience with the Tydings-Piñero bill, one thing emerged clearly. He realized that he could not have either independence or statehood with the kind of economic guarantees necessary to sustain a tolerable standard of living. Given the choice, he would naturally select both political sovereignty and economic safeguards. But he did not have the choice. Even if Congress were willing to grant independence, it was unlikely that it would generously extend for an indefinite period of time federal benefits that the Popular leader considered adequate. Statehood was ruled out because there was hardly any sentiment for it in Congress. Furthermore, by most accounts the economic arrangements that would accompany statehood would spell disaster. There was much talk of dominion status among prominent Puerto Ricans and non-Puerto Ricans. But this alternative was yet politically vague and constitutionally uncertain, thus causing Congressmen to shy away from it.

These were the realities that faced Muñoz Marín by 1946. In contrast to his guarded enthusiasm and optimism for independence apparent in the previously discussed memorandum to Secretary Ickes in January, 1937, he had serious doubts in 1946 about independence as a practical goal even for the foreseeable future. This is not to say that he had no reservations about complete political separation in 1937. Indeed, they must have been partly the reason why he called for a moratorium on the status issue in 1940. And his first years with the political responsibility of carrying out the Popular programs must have added a few more. But try as he might to avoid the issue of political independence, it was thrust before him in 1943 when Senator Tydings introduced his independence bill. Muñoz Marín remained cool to it, even though the bill had incorporated many of the provisions requested by the Puerto Rican in 1936 when the senator first offered the island independence. The PPD leader was even less enthusiastic when Senator Tydings offered independence again in 1945 and persuaded the senator to sponsor instead the referendum bill (S.1002). There was no point, he told officials of the Department of the Interior, in being concerned merely about political labels. No doubt his lack of enthusiasm was partly because Congress did
not show any either. Besides, he was unable to obtain from Senator Tydings the kind of economic assurances that in his opinion were necessary for the island to survive.

Muñoz Marín's growing disenchantment with independence as an appropriate solution, at least for the time being, correlates significantly with the widening political rift between him and the CPI. If before November, 1944, he did not feel politically safe to challenge the independentistas, he felt sufficiently powerful by the end of 1945 to demand strict loyalty from his followers on the status question and to confront the CPI directly with some of the reservations he had always harbored about independence. You are a Popular or an independentista, not both, he told his followers by the end of 1945.

The hardening of positions occurred after Muñoz Marín supported the Tydings-Piñero referendum bill instead of the independence measure introduced earlier by Senator Tydings. In a newspaper polemic in September, 1945, between CPI leader Concepción de Gracia and the PPD head, Muñoz Marín was accused of being an obstacle to the Popular party's goal of independence. Why include statehood in the bill, the independentista leader asked, when there was no backing for it in Congress. Dominion status, Concepción de Gracia continued, was a device to perpetuate the “colonial” status. He charged that Muñoz Marín had become the sole arbiter of the PPD. In reply, Muñoz Marín insisted that the party was not opposed to independence and accused the CPI, by veiled references, of disrupting his efforts to get Congress to approve the referendum bill. In October, 1945, the CPI formally repudiated the plebiscite measure and called for the reconsideration of Tydings' S.227. Soon thereafter, Muñoz Marín declared that is was incompatible for a Popular to be a member of CPI. Some of the independentistas determined to organize the CPI into a new political party, but were thwarted by moderate members in the organization.

By February, 1946, the Popular leader was willing to force a showdown. He classified the CPI as a partisan political movement whose goal of independence was in conflict with the aims of the PPD. The Popular party's central committee endorsed Muñoz Marín's declaration. The CPI denounced the move and directed its members not to abandon the PPD. Only the general assembly of the PPD, the independentista leaders argued, could make a decision that amounted to the expulsion of a group of followers.
At the same time that he virtually expelled the independentistas, Muñoz Marín laid the philosophical grounds for the switch from independence to autonomy by writing a series of articles in the San Juan daily newspaper, El Mundo. United States aid to the island, he pointed out, had increased from $3 million in 1933 to $35 million in 1943. The benefits included increased United States expenditure in the military and naval activities in the island, and production heightened by war needs. He called these benefits “artificial aids” because they were generated by the war. Puerto Rico had to develop without “artificial aids” if it was going to be able to accommodate the needs of a projected 3,000,000 people in 1960.

In succeeding articles he criticized those who would ruin everything in order to resolve hastily Puerto Rico’s future status. The island’s future lay in industrialization, for which it needed United States markets and dollars absolutely. This meant that the existing relationship could continue for some time and that there was no pressing need to resolve the island’s status right then.

The insular leader’s conclusions were borne out by the findings of the Tariff Commission, which had investigated the economic aspects of the various political status alternatives. The Tariff Commission reported that mere political change would not solve the island’s fundamental problems. It cautioned against seeking quick solutions to problems that required long-term planning and consideration. Independence, the Tariff Commission report concluded, would cause a depression, making it necessary for the United States to reestablish its authority over the island. Nor would the lengthening of the transitional period be of any help because Puerto Rico’s fundamental problems would remain unaffected.

In June of 1946, Muñoz Marín left no doubt as to the shift in his position that was in evidence in February, 1946. He wrote another series of articles, under the title “New Paths Toward Old Objectives.” This time he openly abandoned plans for independence or statehood in the immediate future and argued for the continued relationship of United States and Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rican leader admitted that the existing relationship was not perfect but pointed out that it had been largely beneficial to the island. He elaborated on arguments he had presented earlier concerning Puerto Rico’s drive for industrialization, its need for
United States markets, and so on. These benefits could not be continued by highly favorable bilateral treaty agreements under independence because such arrangements tended to be inflexible.98

A political solution, the insular chief continued, could be worked out without destroying the existing economic benefits that accrue to Puerto Rico, outside the framework of the known classical forms of independence and statehood. This would be "Pueblo Asociado de Puerto Rico," a status under which Puerto Ricans would have complete internal authority, and one which would serve as transitory for some status in the future. The future status, independence or statehood, would be considered when certain economic indexes would be reached and when it would be clear that the island could sustain its implementation.99

For many Populares, Muñoz Marín's new policy was hard to swallow when for so long they had believed that the PPD's goal was independence. But the central committee officially endorsed the change signaled by the articles.100 For the CPI, whose members had been effectively excluded from influential positions within the Popular structure, the parting of the ways had come. So, too, for many die-hard independentistas. After mass rallies and executive meetings by the CPI in the months after July, the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (PIP) was organized on October 20, 1946.101

The defeat of the referendum bill raises questions of motives. Why did the Department of the Interior agree upon including independence and statehood when it realized that economically neither was practical and that Congress was not favorably disposed to granting either one? It was ironic, furthermore, for Interior's secretary to object to Tydings' independence bills but not to independence when it was offered with other status options. The same might be said about statehood. In part, the ambivalence stemmed from the United States' moral obligation to honor the principle of allowing colonial peoples to choose their own government, and from the specter of possible economic and political chaos on an island that had assumed strategic importance in postwar global politics. Besides, there was no clear and firm indication as to what Muñoz Marín, the island's most powerful político, desired. Beyond demanding absolute economic guarantees, he was saying that the people should decide.

Then what did he hope to achieve by supporting the referen-
dum bill? He, too, did not accept independence and statehood as workable solutions. Muñoz Marín presumably hoped to diffuse the challenge to his leadership by the independentistas. More than that he hoped to get Congress to accept the principle of consulting with the Puerto Ricans to decide on the status question. When he did not quite succeed in either, he decided to reorient his whole approach to the issue. He consolidated his position by expelling the Independentistas from the PPD and shifting his party's platform to some kind of dominion status, the details of which were to be formulated in the next few years. Meanwhile, he concentrated his efforts on getting a compatible Puerto Rican appointed to the governor's post soon to be vacated by Tugwell and urging Congress to permit elective governorship.