

*the founding of  
the Commonwealth  
of Puerto Rico*

*program of events*

*july 25th 1952*

*july 25th*  
*the date that*  
*grew in meaning*

FOR MORE THAT fifty years July 25th has been a holiday in Puerto Rico, a date set aside to mark an event in history. Like so many events distinguished in the history books, this one was military in character, though exceptionally lacking in bloodshed: on July 25th, 1898, the Army of the United States, at war with Spain, landed at the little south coast town of Guánica.

The subsequent defeat of the Spanish defenders and the occupation by the Americans was accomplished with dispatch. Within a few weeks Puerto Ricans were moved from the orbit of the old kingdom of Spain of which the island had been a part since Columbus landed, to the orbit of the United States.

The event which we are here to celebrate today on the same day of the month of July of 1952, is no less important historically, but totally different in its whole nature: it is an act of freedom, of mutual agreement. Today the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico stands created by the common will of the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress of the United States. From to-

*Continued on next page*

day on, July 25th will be a date that has grown in meaning for the people of Puerto Rico; a date made memorable not in records of war and acts of power, but rather in that history where the true growth of mankind is written down—the annals of government by the consent of the governed.

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is the product of historical development, of triumphant ideals, of economic realities and also of the inventive tenacity of a people. The roots of this new kind of body-politic go deep. Even in the days of Spain, while the large and potentially rich countries to the south were taking their freedom by force, Puerto Rico, a small island with few resources, sought autonomy rather than separation. The goal held little glamour but much promise. Its attainment was difficult, requiring dogged patience rather than military heroism. There were no battles, but years of conferences that brought forth hard-gained, limited concessions. Finally, in 1897, the goal was achieved: Spain granted Puerto Rico a Charter of Autonomy.

Yet that charter was really a grant by a friendly government in Madrid, rather than a compact between peoples. As it turned out, a change of sovereignty revoked it within a year.

And so, the whole long, arduous task had to be undertaken again, from the beginning. Confidence had to grow and understanding, a mutual understanding between peoples of different backgrounds, different traditions, different languages. It was a slow process, slow as all real growth is slow.

Yet the progress over the last half century has been tremendous. It cannot be measured only by documents and charters. It must be measured also in terms of a vital intangible—the growing faith of one people in another. In that last half century the people of Puerto Rico have come all the way from military government to the enjoyment of full self-government. The establish-

ment of the Commonwealth which we are celebrating today means the removal of the last shred of the colonialism, real or imaginary, that once bound the people of Puerto Rico.

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has grown organically out of traditional Puerto Rican aspirations. It provides autonomy without separation, inclusion without loss of identity.

Henceforth Puerto Ricans will live under their own constitution written by their own elected constitutional convention, and approved by the people of Puerto Rico under a compact with the Congress of the United States. Our own elected Legislature makes all local laws. Our own elected governor administers these laws and has the power of appointment over all insular officials. Thus local government is made entirely responsible to our electorate.

And, recently, that same electorate was given the opportunity to approve or disapprove existing relations between the island and the Federal Government. These relations — containing generous provisions most advantageous to the island—were overwhelmingly approved by the Puerto Ricans.

The proclamation of the new Commonwealth and its Constitution is the final proof of good faith and complete confidence between the Federal Union and Puerto Rico. It would be noteworthy at any time. In today's world of tension and violence this peaceful, democratic and creative solution of a difficult problem by two peoples is a national and international event of the first magnitude.



## *statement by the President of the United States*

The White House, July 3rd 1952

I HAVE TODAY signed H. J. Res. 430, approving the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which was adopted by the people of Puerto Rico on March 3, 1952.

I welcome this early approval by the Congress of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which I recommended in a Special Message on April 22, 1952.

The adoption of this Constitution was authorized by the Act of July 3, 1950. It is gratifying to me to be able to sign the Act approving the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico two years to the day after I approved the enabling legislation.

The Act of July 3, 1950 authorized the people of Puerto Rico to organize a republican form of government pursuant to a constitution of their own choosing. That Act, adopted by the Congress in the nature of a compact, became effective only when accepted by the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum.

On June 4, 1951, the people of Puerto Rico voted by a large majority to accept the Act of July 3, 1950, thereby reaffirming their union with the United States on the terms proposed by the Congress. Following the referendum, the voters of Puerto Rico elected delegates to a Constitutional

Convention. The Convention convened in San Juan on September 17, 1951, and concluded its deliberations on February 6, 1952.

The Constitution approved by the Constitutional Convention was submitted to the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum on March 3, 1952, and was approved by an overwhelming majority. On April 22, 1952, I transmitted the Constitution to the Congress for approval in accordance with the provisions of the Act of July 3, 1950. The Constitution will now become effective upon the acceptance by the Constitutional Convention of the conditions of approval and the issuance of a proclamation by the Governor of Puerto Rico.

H. J. Res. 430 is the culmination of a consistent policy of the United States to confer an ever-increasing measure of local self-government upon the people of Puerto Rico. It provides additional evidence of this nation's adherence to the principle of self-determination and to the ideals of freedom and democracy.

We take special pride in the fact that this Constitution is the product of the people of Puerto Rico. When the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is proclaimed by the Governor, Puerto Rico will have a government fashioned by the people of Puerto Rico to meet their own needs, requirements and aspirations.

With the approval of H. J. Res. 430, the people of the United States and the people of Puerto Rico are about to enter into a relationship based on mutual consent and esteem. The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the procedures by which it has come into being are matters of which every American can be justly proud. They are in accordance with principles we proclaim as the right of free peoples everywhere. July 3, 1952 should be a proud and happy day for all who have been associated in a great task.

# *resolution by the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico*

Resolution No. 34, approved July 10,  
1952

To accept, in behalf of the people of Puerto Rico, the conditions of approval of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico proposed by the Eighty-Second Congress of the United States through Public Law 447 approved July 3, 1952.

Whereas, the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as adopted by the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum held March 3, 1952, was submitted to Congress by the President of the United States pursuant to the terms of the compact referred to in Public Law 600, approved by the President of the United States July 3, 1950 and by the people of Puerto Rico at the referendum of June 4, 1951;

Whereas, the Congress of the United States has approved the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to be operative if the Constitutional Convention accepts the terms of said Public Law 447 of July 3, 1952, which reads as follows:

## **PUBLIC LAW 447**

Approving the constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which was adopted by the people of Puerto Rico on March 3, 1952.

Whereas the Act entitled "An Act to provide for the organization of a constitutional government by the people of Puerto Rico", approved July 3, 1950, was adopted by the Congress as a compact with the people of Puerto Rico, to become operative upon its approval by the people of Puerto Rico; and

Whereas the people of Puerto Rico overwhelmingly approved such Act in a referendum held on June 4, 1951, and a constitution for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was drafted by a constitutional convention held as provided by such Act from September 17, 1951, to February 6, 1952; and

Whereas such constitution was adopted by the people of Puerto Rico, by a vote of three hundred seventy-four thousand six hundred and forty-nine to eighty-two thousand nine hundred and twenty-three, in a referendum held on March 3, 1952; and

Whereas the President of the United States has declared that the constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico conforms fully with the applicable provisions of such Act of July 3, 1950, and of the Constitution of the United States, that it contains a bill of rights, and provides for a republican form of government, and has transmitted the constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to the Congress for its approval; and

Whereas the Congress has considered the constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and has found it duly to conform to the above requirements; Therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled, That the constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico which was drafted by the selected delegates to the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico and adopted by the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum of March 3, 1952, in accordance with the Act entitled "An Act to provide for the organization of a constitutional government by the people of Puerto Rico", approved July 3, 1950 (64 Stat. 319; 48 U. S. C., secs. 731b-731e), is hereby approved by the Congress of the United States, except section 20 of article II of said constitution; **Provided**, That section 5 of article II thereof shall have no force and effect until amended by the people of Puerto Rico under the procedure prescribed by article VII of the constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico by adding to such section 5 the following declaration: "Compulsory attendance at elementary public schools to the extent permitted by the facilities of the state as herein provided shall not be construed as applicable to those who receive elementary education in schools established under nongovernmental auspices"; **Provided further**, That except for the purpose of adopting the amendments to section 5 of article II and to section 3 of article VII as herein provided, article VII of said constitution likewise shall have no force and effect until amended by the people of Puerto Rico under the terms of said article by adding to section 3 of article VII the following new sentence: "Any amendment or revision of this constitution shall be consistent with the resolution enacted by the Congress of the United States approving this constitution, with the applicable provisions of the Constitution of the United

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States, with the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, and with Public Law 600, Eighty-first Congress, adopted in the nature of a compact': And provided further, That the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico hereby approved shall become effective when the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico shall have declared in a formal resolution its acceptance in the name of the people of Puerto Rico of the conditions of approval herein contained, and when the Governor of Puerto Rico, being duly notified by the proper officials of the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico that such resolution of acceptance has been formally adopted shall issue a proclamation to that effect."

The Spanish translation of the foregoing English text is the following:

#### LEY PUBLICA 447

Aprobando la Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico, que fué adoptada por el pueblo de Puerto Rico en 3 de marzo de 1952.

Por cuanto, la ley titulada "Ley proveyendo para la organización de un gobierno constitucional por el pueblo de Puerto Rico", aprobada en 3 de julio de 1950, fué adoptada por el Congreso como un convenio con el pueblo de Puerto Rico, para tener efecto una vez aprobada por el pueblo de Puerto Rico; y

Por cuanto, el pueblo de Puerto Rico aprobó abrumadoramente dicha ley en un referendun que se llevó a cabo el 4 de junio de 1951, habiéndose redactado una constitución para el Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico por una convención constituyente que se efectuó según lo dispuesto por dicha ley, desde el 17 de setiembre de 1951 hasta el 6 de febrero de 1952; y

Por cuanto, dicha constitución fué adoptada por el pueblo de Puerto Rico en una votación de 374,649 contra 82,923 en referendun celebrado el 3 de marzo de 1952; y

Por cuanto, el Presidente de los Estados Unidos ha declarado que la Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico está enteramente conforme a las disposiciones aplicables de dicha ley del 3 de julio del 1950 y de la Constitución de los Estados Unidos, que contiene una carta de derechos y provee para una forma republicana de gobierno, y ha transmitido la Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico al Congreso para su aprobación; y

Por cuanto, el Congreso ha considerado la Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico y ha hallado que la misma llena debidamente los anteriores requisitos:

POR TANTO,

Resuélvese por el Senado y la Cámara de Representantes de los Estados Unidos de América reunidos en Congreso: Que la Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico que fué redactada por los delegados electos a la Convención Constituyente de Puerto Rico y adoptada por el pueblo de Puerto Rico en referendun del 3 de marzo de 1952, de acuerdo con la ley titulada "Ley proveyendo para la organización de un gobierno constitucional por el pueblo de Puerto Rico", aprobada el 3

de julio de 1950 (64 Est. 319; 48 C. de E.E. UU.; secs 731b-731e), queda por la presente aprobada por el Congreso de los Estados Unidos, excepto la sección 20 del artículo II de dicha Constitución; Disponiéndose, que la sección 5 del artículo II de la misma no tendrá fuerza y vigor hasta que sea enmendada por el pueblo de Puerto Rico de acuerdo con el procedimiento prescrito por el artículo VII de la Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico, agregándole a dicha sección 5 la siguiente declaración: "La asistencia obligatoria a las escuelas públicas primarias, hasta donde las facilidades del Estado lo permitan, según se dispone en la presente, no se interpretará como aplicable a aquellos que reciban instrucción primaria en escuelas establecidas bajo auspicios no gubernamentales"; Disponiéndose, además, que excepto para el fin de adoptar las enmiendas a la sección 5 del artículo II y a la sección 3 del artículo VII, según se dispone en la presente, el artículo VII de dicha Constitución no tendrá asimismo ninguna fuerza y vigor hasta que sea enmendado por el pueblo de Puerto Rico de acuerdo con los términos de dicho artículo, agregándole a la sección 3 del artículo VII la siguiente nueva oración "Cualquier enmienda o revisión de esta constitución deberá ser compatible con la resolución decretada por el Congreso de los Estados Unidos aprobando esta constitución, con las disposiciones aplicables de la Constitución de los Estados Unidos, con la Ley de Relaciones Federales con Puerto Rico y con la Ley Pública 600 del Congreso Octogésimo-primer, adoptada con el carácter de un convenio"; Y disponiéndose también, que la Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico que por la presente se aprueba comenzará a regir cuando la Convención Constituyente de Puerto Rico haya declarado en resolución formal su aceptación, a nombre del pueblo de Puerto Rico, de las condiciones de aprobación aquí contenidas, y cuando el Gobernador de Puerto Rico, luego de ser debidamente notificado por los funcionarios correspondientes de la Convención Constituyente de Puerto Rico de que se ha adoptado formalmente tal resolución de aceptación, expida una proclamación a tal efecto"

WHEREAS, as it appears from the report of the Bill of Rights Committee of the Constitutional Convention, from the debates in the Constitutional Convention and from the explanations to the people in connection with Section 20 of Article II of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, it has always been the purpose of the people of Puerto Rico and their representatives in the Constitutional Convention to give to said Section the sole scope of a declaration of human rights, whose value before God and before life is evident, and toward whose realization the State may and should cooperate through equitable measures of a public nature that will encourage private initiative, promote industries and



further the development of social responsibility;

WHEREAS, as it appears from the report of the Bill of Rights Committee, from the debates in the Constitutional Convention and from the explanations to the people with reference to Section 5 of Article II of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the people of Puerto Rico and their representatives in the Constitutional Convention, in establishing compulsory education in the elementary public schools never had the purpose of making such obligation applicable to persons receiving elementary education in private schools;

WHEREAS, as it appears from the report of the corresponding Committee of the Constitutional Convention, from the debates in the Convention and from the public explanations relative to Article VII of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, it was always understood by the people of Puerto Rico and by their representatives in the Constitutional Convention that amendments to the Constitution would have to be adopted in conformity with the fundamental provisions embodied in the Compact agreed upon between the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress of the United States;

WHEREAS, it behooves this Constitutional Convention to accept or reject, in behalf of the people of Puerto Rico, the stipulations contained in Public Law 447;

WHEREAS, in the judgment of this Constitutional Convention, the said stipulations should be accepted, to the end that the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico may take effect immediately according to its own terms.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THIS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF PUERTO RICO in the exercise of its authority and in the fulfilment of its obligation toward the people of Puerto Rico:

First: To accept, in behalf of the people of Puerto Rico the conditions of approval of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico proposed by the Congress of the United States, as set forth in Public Law 447.

Second: That a certified copy of this Resolution be transmitted by the President of this Convention to the Governor of Puerto Rico so that the latter may proceed to proclaim the effectiveness of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico according to the terms embodied in this Resolution.

Third: To ask the Governor of Puerto Rico to notify the President of the United States, for his information and that of the Congress, of the approval of this Resolution by the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico.

Fourth: To request of the Governor of Puerto Rico to call the Legislature of Puerto Rico to special session, once the effectiveness of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall have been proclaimed, with the recommendation that the said legislative body propose the necessary amendments to Section 5 of Article II and Section 3 of Article VII which shall be submitted to the people of Puerto Rico at the next general election, so that, if approved by the people, the said amendments may form a part of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and Section 5 of Article II and Article VII of the said Constitution may take force and effect."

## *the flag of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico*

THE FLAG now officially approved by the Legislature as the symbol of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has long been a part of our love of country. As all great flags, ours was first born in the hearts of the people and has become something deeply rooted in our feelings for freedom.

The flag was first presented at a meeting of Puerto Rican patriots assembled in Chimney Corner Hall, New York City, on December 22, 1895. This group was affiliated with the Puerto Rican section of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, spearhead of the movement for the independence of both countries from Spain.

Although at that time the flag was presented to the group by Juan de Mata Terreforte, its design had been approved at a previous meeting of the Directorate of the Puerto Rican section at the suggestion of Manuel Besosa. The original flag was made by the young daughter of Manuel Besosa, beautiful Mima, still living and now participating in these ceremonies.

According to Mima Besosa, her father brought home a few pieces of ribbon and asked her to make a small flag "about five inches wide by eight inches long, with five alternate red and white stripes and a blue triangle

on one side with a white five-pointed star on the field of the triangle".

This design is the same as that of the Cuban flag, except for the colors of the field and the three main stripes. In fact, due to the similarity of the two flags the Directorate of the Puerto Rican section of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in New York City, sought, and secured, the approval of the banner by the Cuban delegate, Tomás Estrada Palma, who later became the first president of the Republic of Cuba.

The association of Cuba and Puerto Rico in their struggle for freedom has a deep meaning for both our peoples. The Puerto Rican flag is blessed with this strong feeling for freedom within the pattern of American democracy. The flag which Governor Luis Muñoz Marín will raise today, side by side with the flag of the United States, is the flag of a bulwark of government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Truly, the lone white star, symbol of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, stands on solid ground—the three equal sides of its blue triangle really evoke the integrity of the democratic government in its three branches, legislative, executive and judicial. Again, the three free-flowing red stripes are the lifeblood of the three branches of government which, although performing independent and separate functions, are kept together by a system of checks and balances—the two white stripes which stand for the freedom of the individual and the rights of man.

These are the principles of Puerto Rican democracy. They have been a living tradition with our people for quite some time. They are today properly and honorably embodied in the Constitution of the Commonwealth because they have been all along in our hearts and in our minds.



## *july 25th* **Constitution Day**

Military and civic parade, (see details in following pages).

Reading of the Proclamation by the Governor, creating the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, by the Hon. Roberto H. Todd, Jr., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Reading of the Preamble of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, by the Hon. Antonio Fernós Isern, Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in the Congress of the United States.

Proclamation address by the Hon. Luis Muñoz Marín, Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Planes of the U. S. Air Force and the U. S. Navy in formation flight.

Ceremony of the Flag. The Governor will raise the flag of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico while the band plays the Puerto Rican anthem. Simultaneously, the flag will be raised in similar ceremonies by the mayors throughout the 77 municipalities of the Island. At 4 PM, in special ceremony, the Governor will raise the flag over fortress El Morro.

Presentation of Colors by the Governor to the commanders of the armed forces of the Commonwealth, National Guard and Insular Police, and to two representatives of the civilian community, rural school teachers Lala Rivera de Rivera and Miguel A. Negrón Toro.

National Anthem of the United States of America.

# *the order of the parade*

Insular Police Motorcycle Escort

Grand Marshal—

Col. Miguel A. Muñoz

Assistant Grand Marshal—

Lt. Col. Otto T. Riefkohl

Adjutant—

Col. Rafael Sepúlveda

Honor Escort—

Veterans of the Spanish American War  
Veterans of the Korean War.

## FIRST DIVISION

Assistant Grand Marshal—

Col. Virgilio Cordero, U.S.A.

Adjutants—

Lt. Col. J. V. Lyons, U.S.M.C.

Major M. Figueroa, U.S.A.

Lt. C. R. Nevins, U.S.N.

Units of the Army of the United States

Army Band No. 81

Veterans of Korean War

Company F, 296th Infantry

Heavy Mortar Company 482nd. Field

Artillery Battalion

Battery "A", 482nd Field Artillery  
Battalion.

Units of the Tenth Naval District,  
U.S. Navy

U.S. Navy

U.S. Marine Corps. *Hutch*

Unit of the U.S. Air Force

Puerto Rican National Guard

123rd. Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion

## SECOND DIVISION

Assistant Grand Marshal—

Col. Manuel A. Font, U.S. Inf. Res.,  
former member 65th Inf.

Adjutant—

Major José Fuertes, Ret. U.S.A., former  
member 65th Inf.

Civil Air Patrol

Association of Retired Officers of the  
65th. Inf and other services of the U.S.  
Armed Forces

American Legion

Executive Committee

Massed Colors

Legionnaires

American Legion Auxiliary

Boy Scouts of America

Girl Scouts of America

Volunteers, Civil Defense, Government of  
the Capital

Insular Fire Service

## THIRD DIVISION (Motorized)

Assistant Grand Marshal—

Captain Gerardo Delgado, I.P.

Adjutant—

Lt. Jesús Martínó Martínez, I. P.

Insular Police Units

Floats—

Agricultural Extension, UPR

Boy Scouts of America

Boy Scouts of America

Department of Education

Department of Health

Department of Finance

Puerto Rico Land Authority

Puerto Rico Housing Authority

Economic Development Administration

Department of Agriculture and  
Commerce

Government of the Capital

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Symbolic Float of The Flag.



## editorial excerpts and other comment

### Caribbean Charter

Puerto Rico's new constitution, voted by a 4½ to 1 majority, is a remarkable document. In it the people of this Caribbean island dependency have voted to constitute themselves a commonwealth—or, as the constitution phrases it in Spanish, a free associated state—of the United States. The fact that the constitution is wholly the product of the Puerto Ricans themselves is an effective answer to the propaganda charges that Puerto Rico is being held in a sort of bondage. This is anticolonialism at its best.

The practical effect of the constitution is to give Puerto Rico complete home rule. The island has enjoyed a large measure of home rule for many years; it gained the right to elect one house of its Legislature in 1900 and the other in 1917. In 1947 it was granted the right to elect its Governor (as it elects its Delegate to Congress). Under the new constitution Congress will relinquish its residual right to repeal insular laws, and the power to appoint auditors and justices of the insular Supreme Court, previously vested in the President, will now go to the people themselves. Thus, the people of Puerto Rico, who are, of course, full American citizens, will manage all their own affairs in the same fashion as residents of the States.

*The Washington Post, March 9, 1952*

### The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

With the important exception that Puerto Rico owes allegiance to no crown, the constitution approved in Monday's referendum places the island in a relationship with the United States closely approximating that between the dominions of the British Commonwealth and the Government of the United Kingdom.

Economically, the arrangement of imperial trade preference is the most important thing in the British system. Puerto Rico, under the new constitution, will have a similar arrangement with the United States; it will remain within our tariff walls. Further, like the dominions, Puerto Rico henceforward will legislate for itself on internal matters. The Congress in Washington will no more be able to alter its future laws than the Parliament in London can alter the laws of Australia. When the Congress ratifies the new constitution, as it is expected to do, its half century of rule over Puerto Rico will be finished.

*The Sun, Baltimore, Md., March 5, 1952*

### Puerto Rico, a Commonwealth

The Constitutional Assembly of Puerto Rico completed the preparation of the fundamental public law of the country on February 6th... In the preamble to the constitution, which is a model of democratic doctrine, the determining factors in the life of Puerto Rico are stated to be as follows: "our citizenship of the United States of America; our loyalty to the principles of the Federal Constitution; the coexistence in Puerto Rico of the two great cultures of the American Hemisphere; our fervor for education; our faith in justice; our devotion to the courageous, industrious, and peaceful way of life; our fidelity to individual human values above and beyond social position, racial differences, and economic interest; and our hope for a better world based on these principles".

These principles, inspired in a deep understanding of political and social realities, and on a sound idealism, are adhered to faithfully throughout the text of the constitution... In America there has been born a Free State... under the unimpeachable juridical procedures of free elections, by debate in a representative assembly and by popular ratification.

*El Tiempo, Bogotá, Colombia, March 11, 1952*

### The New Juridical-Political Status of Puerto Rico

It will be extremely interesting to study the Puerto Rican political process. The fact that its constitution takes inspiration, as has been announced, from the constitution of the United States, gives assurance that this political document is fundamentally based on the essence of democratic ideology. Within its internal autonomy, the Puerto Rican community will be influenced by American

*Continued on next page*

democratic institutions—those institutions which in the United States represent the highest level of democracy and which at the same time provide clear proof of what a republic ought to be.

*The Panama American, Panama City, March 7, 1952*

#### **Puerto Rico Committee Drafts Excellent Judicial Article**

... the Journal has been privileged to receive a copy of the judicial article presented by that committee to the convention early in December... Here is a pattern for a well-integrated, well-managed, and well-safeguarded judiciary, which would be a credit to any freedom-loving people.

*Journal of the American Judicature Society, December, 1952*

#### **The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico**

As provided by the new constitution there will be a general election every four years to elect, by popular and direct vote, the governor of the island as well as the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The Legislature shall enact all the laws of the State, and the governor shall execute them through a full cabinet of ministers or secretaries. The Secretary of State, confirmed by the Legislature, shall be the lieutenant governor. The island keeps revenues from local income tax as well as from customs. Excise taxes collected on island products in the Mainland will be returned to Puerto Rico. This is effective and economically independent self-government.

The new constitution blazes a trail in the constitutional system of the United States. This is the first time a territory chooses directly its own authorities, makes its own laws, handles its own revenues. The governor and the judges of Alaska and Hawaii are appointed by the President of the United States. Here the Puerto Rican government designates its whole judicial power. Puerto Rico will have a representative in Congress, with voice but no vote. This is in reality a Commonwealth. The only thing asked by the United States in authorizing the creation of the new state—and I presume Muñoz Marín himself suggested it—was that the constitution be a democratic charter. This is what was desired and nothing else.

*Germán Arciniegas in El Tiempo, Bogotá Jan. 1952*

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