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## Puerto Rican Home Country Project

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honor individual contributions to community advancement, and the quarterly newspaper *El Foro* with a nationwide circulation of nearly two thousand issues for workforce development experts and practitioners.

The forum has been the pioneering Puerto Rican interest-group organization in the United States. The agency was at the center of a debate between advocates of a resource development strategy that was mostly individualistic and technocratic and proponents of a program of grassroots mobilization to produce collective benefits. Ironically, whereas many within the forum's leadership favored the grassroots mobilization approach, their embrace of antipoverty funding during the mid-1960s signaled a shift in goals from mobilization and agenda setting to service provision and organizational maintenance—a change that has had a lasting impact on the politics of the Puerto Rican community.

*See also* ASPIRA; Bonilla, Frank; Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños; and Pantoja, Antonia.

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JOSÉ E. CRUZ

### PUERTO RICAN HOME COUNTRY PROJECT.

The Puerto Rican government's relations with the Puerto Rican diaspora community have been powerfully influenced by the political maturation of the community, by colonialism, and by changes in political party control of the insular government. From 1898 through the 1950s, successive governments of Puerto Rico (whether the military regimes in the late nineteenth century, the U.S. colonial administration from 1900 to 1951, or the Puerto Rican Commonwealth government) have promoted migration of Puerto Rican workers and families to the continental United States, as well as to Hawaii, Mexico, and the Caribbean. These governments have managed the migration and settlement of workers through offices in Washington, New York, and other large cities.

#### Early History

The relocation of Puerto Ricans has been a permanent feature of capitalist development under colonial rule. The grant of U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans in 1917 gave Puerto Ricans unrestricted access to U.S. labor markets and facilitated state-sponsored migration. Migration was

a means to control population growth, to reduce budgetary pressures on the state to provide social services, and to ameliorate the prospects for social unrest associated with poverty and unemployment. Although it was never official policy, the government of Puerto Rico has envisioned migration as a one-way movement leading to permanent settlement of labor migrants.

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, the Puerto Rican government set up the Identification and Employment Bureau in New York City to assist Puerto Rican workers who had left their economically devastated country in search of jobs. With the expectation of enhancing the employability of Puerto Ricans, the bureau issued identification cards attesting to their U.S. citizenship. With the launching of Operation Bootstrap, an ambitious industrialization program in the late 1940s, the Puerto Rican government devised a new approach to promote migration and to manage the massive exodus of Puerto Ricans to the United States. The labor migration strategy had two components: a formal labor contract program for domestic and farmworkers, and an informal policy of strongly encouraging and facilitating the departure of scores of thousands of Puerto Ricans to the United States. In coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor, the Puerto Rican government implemented a labor contract program for young women to work as domestics in private households in a few major U.S. cities. The program failed to recruit sufficient numbers of female workers to slow the population growth rate. By the time it ended in the late 1970s, the seasonal farm contract labor program had managed to recruit and employ approximately 350,000 Puerto Rican male workers.

The greatest exodus of Puerto Ricans took place during the period of intensive industrialization from the late 1940s to the late 1950s. Operation Bootstrap altered Puerto Rico's economy and precipitated significant labor dislocations. But manufacturing failed to create enough jobs to solve the unemployment crisis. In the context of a desperate employment situation with a burgeoning population, policy makers realized that massive emigration was an indispensable safety valve to reduce societal pressures attributable to unemployment and poverty. Reduction of surplus population through migration and permanent relocation was a component of Operation Bootstrap, and one of the key responsibilities of the established Bureau of Employment and Migration.

The bureau's task was to offer job placement services for scores of thousands of Puerto Ricans who arrived in New York and other cities. While the Puerto Rican government, under the firm control of the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD), denied it had a policy of promoting emigration, it did acknowledge "that the government strives to help those who decide to leave to adjust more

quickly in their new home community." Specifically, the government sought to "duly orient" the migrants "regarding occupational opportunities and adjustment problems in ethnologically diverse settings." In 1951, the bureau was upgraded to the Migration Division and worked to counter the racially motivated public opposition to the presence of Puerto Ricans in New York. It did so through a public relations and education campaign, and by encouraging the dispersal of the New York Puerto Rican population to other metropolitan areas. The Migration Division also worked as a social agency to alleviate the problems that Puerto Ricans encountered in employment and housing practices because of virulent racism. The Migration Division established branch offices in major urban labor markets where Puerto Ricans were employed.

The Migration Division attempted to mitigate the social and economic trauma of poor, disenfranchised laborers so that other Puerto Ricans would not be discouraged from migrating to the United States. The PPD devised the Migration Division as a component of its industrialization program. By permanently relocating Puerto Rican workers through its employment placement services, providing social services, mounting public relations campaigns to project positive images of Puerto Ricans, through voter education and registration programs, and by representing the Puerto Rican diaspora community, the Migration Division was essential to the PPD's objective of permanently reducing the island's surplus population.

The Migration Division became directly engaged in the political affairs of the Puerto Rican community in New York by claiming to represent the interests of that community in its dealings with city and state officials. The division also attempted to build a constituency by coordinating the activities of hometown associations. Although the Migration Division was able to nominally organize these associations as the Council of Spanish American Organizations, it failed to generate the requisite political base in the Puerto Rican diaspora community. During the socially turbulent 1960s, the Migration Division lost its stature as the predominant Puerto Rican organization when it was challenged by independent Puerto Rican community-based associations and political organizations. During this period Puerto Ricans became aware of "their poverty, powerlessness and oppression" and the growing irrelevance of the Migration Division to address this reality. ASPIRA, the Puerto Rican Family Institute, the Puerto Rican Forum, and the Puerto Rican Association of Community Affairs benefited from the Great Society antipoverty programs. These new community activists rejected the leadership of the Migration Division, which was seen as an arrogant and paternalistic extension of the government of Puerto Rico. Moreover, declining migration further undermined the importance of the Migration Division.

### End of the Programs and Legacy

Frequent changes in political party control have resulted in transitory and inconsistent Puerto Rican government relations with the diaspora community. The defeat of the PPD in 1968 by the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP) dramatically affected the future of the Migration Division. The PNP had little use for the division which it believed was an extension of the PPD. With the return of the PPD to power in 1972 the division was revitalized and instructed to "support existing local organizations, foster their integration into broader confederations, and strengthen the bonds between Puerto Ricans on the Island and in the mainland." The PPD clearly was interested in establishing workable relations with Puerto Rican leadership in the United States whose political influence was significant. The PNP returned to power in 1976 and for the next eight years, the Migration Division was again ignored. When the PPD reacquired control in 1985, it strengthened the Migration Division and in 1991 upgraded it to the Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs. The Department established a Political Orientation and Action Program to coordinate voter registration and education campaigns. It established AIDS awareness and social services programs. It actively supported cultural awareness activities that were designed to strengthen cultural knowledge and ties between the diaspora community and Puerto Rico.

With the defeat of the PPD in 1994 by the PNP, the Department of Community Affairs was abolished. Although the PPD regained power in 2000, it did not reactivate the department, but assigned much of its work to the Puerto Rican Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA). Similarly to the Migration Division, the PRFAA serves as the mainland office of the governor of Puerto Rico, and it provides advocacy, community outreach, and cultural support services for Puerto Ricans in the United States. It also organizes nonpartisan voter-education and registration campaigns.

While the PPD-controlled governments continue to build links to permanent Puerto Rican diaspora communities in the United States, these communities have forged an independent political and cultural identity, distinct from that of the island of Puerto Rico. The government of Puerto Rico no longer makes the claim that it represents the interests of this complex and varied community.

*See also Puerto Rico Migration Division and Puerto Ricans.*

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## PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT.

By the eighteenth century, a sense of uniqueness had emerged in Puerto Rico. In his 1788 account of the Spanish colony, Abbad y Lasierra describes a distinctive *criollo* culture among island-born inhabitants. By the nineteenth century, this perception of distinctiveness turned into nationalism.

### The Era of Spanish Colonialism

After centuries of neglect, Spain initiated a series of reforms in Puerto Rico in the late 1700s. The resulting economic development, increased immigration, urbanization, and population growth generated a sense of economic stability and potential autonomy. The nineteenth-century revolutions gradually shrank the Spanish American empire to Puerto Rico and Cuba. Spain itself was subjected to change in 1812, when it adopted a constitutional parliamentary government. Unfortunately, Spain's political history throughout the rest of the century wavered between authoritarian monarchical regimes and liberal periods of constitutionalism. Puerto Rico enjoyed periods of moderate rule with parliamentary representation and citizenship, alternating with periods of absolutist control.

Spain's support of loyalist immigration to its remaining colonies undermined their potential for independence by fostering the formation of a conservative elite suspicious of autonomy; this would be replicated under the United States. Yet pro-independence efforts, though harshly repressed, subsisted throughout the nineteenth century. Though the 1868 Grito de Lares is usually singled out as the sole revolt, ongoing conspiracies were engineered by pro-independence leaders Andrés Vizcarrondo, Ramón Emeterio Betances, Segundo Ruiz Belvis, Eugenio María de Hostos, and Román Baldorioty de Castro, among others. Many suffered imprisonment and exile, leading to the establishment of revolutionary cells overseas, most significantly in New York City, where Puerto Ricans allied with Cuban exiles to work for mutual independence.

Conditions eased slightly in the 1870s, a constitutional period that saw the abolition of slavery, the restoration of parliamentary representation, the sanctioning of political parties, and provincial status. Yet absolutism lingered. The Autonomist Party eventually managed to negotiate an Autonomic Charter in 1897, gaining a degree of self-rule.

Unfortunately, its implementation was interrupted by the 1898 Spanish-American War.

### United States Colonialism

Expectations that the United States would grant Puerto Rico statehood, recognize its sovereignty, or acknowledge the modicum of autonomy that Spain had conceded were soon dashed, fostering the re-emergence of independence movements. The granting of U.S. citizenship under the 1917 Jones Act was locally regarded as a deliberate anti-independence strategy. The U.S. Supreme Court compounded the situation through a series of decisions, known as the Insular Cases, that declared Puerto Rico an unincorporated territory. Statehood was thus precluded, as was the automatic extension of constitutional protections except through Congressional action.

During the 1920s and 1930s, local political parties were in turmoil as factions splintered off and regrouped into new formations along pro-independence and pro-statehood lines. The Nationalist Party, founded in 1922, was the exception. It consistently supported revolution as a pro-independence strategy, especially after Pedro Albizu Campos assumed its presidency in 1930.

Nationalists were most significantly involved in the 1936 execution of a brutal police chief (in turn, the executors were summarily killed by police) and the Ponce Massacre, a peaceful demonstration that turned violent when the police fired into the unarmed crowd, killing twenty people and wounding over a hundred. The federal government prosecuted Albizu Campos and other Nationalists for seditious conspiracy. After fully serving his sentence, Albizu Campos, whose leadership went unchallenged, returned to Puerto Rico in 1947. Nationalists were instrumental in two other revolutionary actions. The 1950 Nationalist Insurrection, triggered by the imminent establishment of the commonwealth, brought attacks against the Governor's Palace in San Juan, Blair House (President Truman's residence), and police headquarters around the island. In 1954, calling attention to the island's continued colonialism, four Nationalists attacked Congress, wounding five congressmen.

### Independence Movements under the Commonwealth

The ideological debate shifted under the Popular Democratic Party (PPD). Focusing on social justice and economic development rather than on colonialism, the PPD achieved electoral dominance in the 1940s. When it advocated for autonomy, a faction splintered off into the Pro-Independence Congress, becoming the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) in 1946. The PIP peaked in the 1952 elections, the year that the commonwealth was established, placing second to the PPD, but has barely managed to garner 3 to 5 percent of the electoral vote since then.