

EDITED BY RAMÓN BOSQUE-PÉREZ AND  
JOSÉ JAVIER COLÓN MORERA



# PUERTO RICO UNDER COLONIAL RULE

**Political Persecution and the  
Quest for Human Rights**

# Puerto Rico under Colonial Rule

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*Edited by*

RAMÓN BOSQUE-PÉREZ

AND

JOSÉ JAVIER COLÓN MORERA

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS

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*To the people of the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico,  
and to those in the United States and abroad  
who supported their struggle for peace and justice.*

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# Contents

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
FOREWORD BY CONGRESSMAN JOSÉ E. SERRANO	xi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xiii
INTRODUCTION: PUERTO RICO'S QUEST FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	1

## PART I

### POLITICAL PERSECUTION IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY PUERTO RICO

ONE	Political Persecution against Puerto Rican Anti-Colonial Activists in the Twentieth Century <i>Ramón Bosque-Pérez</i>	13
TWO	The Critical Year of 1936 through the Reports of the Military Intelligence Division <i>María E. Estades-Font</i>	49
THREE	The Smith Act Goes to San Juan: <i>La Mordaza</i> , 1948–1957 <i>Ivonne Acosta-Lespier</i>	59
FOUR	Imprisonment and Colonial Domination, 1898–1958 <i>José (Ché) Paralitici</i>	67



## PART II

## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

FIVE	Puerto Rico: The Puzzle of Human Rights and Self-Determination <i>José Javier Colón Morera</i>	83
SIX	The Changing Nature of Intolerance <i>Jorge Benítez-Nazario</i>	103
SEVEN	Puerto Rican Political Prisoners in U.S. Prisons <i>Jan Susler</i>	119
EIGHT	Puerto Rican <i>Independentistas</i> : Subversives or Subverted? <i>Alberto L. Márquez</i>	139

## PART III

## THE VIEQUES CASE

NINE	Vieques: To Be or Not to Be <i>Jalil Sued-Badillo</i>	153
TEN	Expropriation and Displacement of Civilians in Vieques, 1940–1950 <i>César J. Ayala and Viviana Carro-Figueroa</i>	173
ELEVEN	New Dimensions in Civil Society Mobilization: The Struggle for Peace in Vieques <i>José Javier Colón Morera and José E. Rivera Santana</i>	207
	FURTHER READING	233
	LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	237
	INDEX	243

# Illustrations

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## TABLES

6.1	Groups of Disliked Neighbors according to Frequency Obtained	107
6.2	Most Disliked Groups among Disliked Neighbors	108
6.3	Activities Permissible to Disliked Group (Percentages)	108
6.4	Age and Disliked Group	109
6.5	Years of Schooling and Disliked Group	109
6.6	Political Status Preference and Disliked Group	110
6.7	Political Status Preference and Attitude toward Civil Rights of Disliked Group	112
10.1	Principal Landowners of Vieques in 1940–1941 and their Properties in 1944–1945	178
10.2	Summary of Naval Land Acquisitions	180
10.3	Civilian Ownership of Farms in Vieques, by Barrio, 1940, 1945, 1950	190
10.4	Population of Vieques, by Barrio	191

10.5	Barrio and Sector of Residence at the Time of the Expropriations	192
10.6	Barrio Where Relocated after the Expropriations	193
10.7	Vieques: Civilian Land Ownership in 1940, 1945, 1950	198
10.8	Vieques: Non-Farm Property in 1940, 1945, 1950	199
10.9	Vieques: Assessed Value of Land, Improvements to Land, and Personal Property in 1940, 1945, 1950	199

## FIGURE

10.1	Population Growth, Vieques and Puerto Rico	195
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# Foreword

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ONE OF THE CONSTANT and most important congressional agendas that I have pursued in my long tenure in the U.S. Congress has been protecting human and civil rights. As a Puerto Rican, I know very well that political dissidents and minorities often suffer the most from political repression and institutional racial discrimination.

In the U.S. Congress, I defend a political agenda that promotes civil rights in the United States and human rights all over the world. Puerto Rico, a territory conquered by the United States in 1898, has to be part of this democratizing agenda. As a Puerto Rican, serving a large Latino constituency in New York, I have a particular interest in the political history of the island where I was born and, most importantly, in its future and well-being.

I favor the elimination of the current colonial status and actively promote self-determination for Puerto Rico in accordance with applicable international norms. I am convinced that Puerto Rico is fully prepared to achieve a completely democratic and noncolonial relationship with the United States. It is a moral imperative as much as it is a political necessity.

Both Puerto Rico and the United States are ready for change. I see with hope how important sectors of the political leadership in Puerto Rico are actively promoting consensus-based procedural mechanisms, such as the possible convening of a constitutional convention, to ask Congress to make changes to the current political framework. As long as Puerto Rico remains a nonincorporated territory of the United States, the responsibility of Congress is to facilitate a process of full decolonization. I am going to remind my fellow Congress members of this obligation as many times as I can. In the recent past, Puerto Ricans have fought united against democratic deficits, poverty, discrimination, militarism, and environmental degradation, as in the Vieques case, in one of the most effective peace movements in recent history. What more proof do we need of the Puerto Rican determination to achieve a better future?

If Puerto Rico's effort toward self-determination is to succeed, then it is important to inform ourselves with the historical context. In the past decade, I have insisted in Congress on the need to get the historical record straight as it relates to the facts of the often unknown political repression faced by those Puerto Ricans who have opposed colonialism in Puerto Rico and in the United States during the twentieth century. In March 2000, I asked the then director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Louis J. Freeh, to release classified and unclassified documents related to the FBI's persecution of the *independentista* movement of Puerto Rico in the twentieth century. I was pleased by the fact that the FBI understood the need to begin a process to let the hidden historical facts come to light.

More than 140,000 pages of documents have been released since March 2000. A full set of those documents is being delivered to the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Hunter College, City University of New York). The documents are being prepared at the center to eventually make them available for use by students, researchers, and the general public. Another set is being sent to the Puerto Rico Senate, where it has assisted in the first stage of a legislative inquiry on the involvement of federal agencies in political persecution in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rico Senate has made available some of the files to the Puerto Rican Athenaeum and to the Luis Muñoz-Marín Foundation. The accessibility of this rich collection of historical documents, simultaneously in San Juan and New York, opens the door to new research and other educational initiatives and contributes to the effort of uncovering the hidden history of state-sponsored political persecution.

The book you are about to read also is part of that effort to rediscover a true and seldom explored history of how the voices of decolonization in Puerto Rico were silenced by agencies of the United States and Puerto Rico through often illegal means. It is a history that the American public is not aware of, but should be. It is a history that is still in the process of being fully discovered. Now that we face new challenges in the protection of basic civil liberties in the aftermath of the terrible September 11, 2001, incidents, it is important to read books like this one. It reminds us that our liberties cannot be taken for granted; they need to be defended and cultivated.

CONGRESSMAN JOSÉ E. SERRANO  
(D-NY)

## Acknowledgments

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THIS BOOK IS THE COMBINED EFFORT of many individuals and organizations that recognized how important it is to promote the full realization of human rights of Puerto Ricans. As this book goes to press, we wish to give testimony of our gratitude to them. We want to express our appreciation to the individual authors who contributed to this volume, generously allowing us to publish the results of their research and reflections. Earlier versions of some of the chapters in this book were included in our book in Spanish, *Las carpetas: Persecución política y derechos civiles en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: CIPDC, 1997). Our thanks to those authors, Jorge Benítez-Nazario, Alberto L. Márquez, José (Ché) Paralitici, and Jan Susler, and to the authors who contributed to this book, Ivonne Acosta-Lespier, César J. Ayala and Viviana Carro-Figueroa, María E. Estades-Font, José E. Rivera Santana, and Jalil Sued-Badillo.

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The Estate of Carlos Raquel Rivera (1923–1999) generously allowed the use of artwork by this distinguished Puerto Rican graphic artist. We thank the family of Carlos Raquel Rivera and particularly his son Edgardo Rivera

Rodríguez. The work used on the cover was a trial print of *Elecciones coloniales* (1959, Linoleum, 13 1/4" x 18 1/2") that displayed the full eagle. The version of the work finally printed and circulated by the artist only showed the lower part of the eagle (1959, Linoleum, 8 1/4" x 18 1/4"). The only known surviving copy of the trial version is located at the *Museo de Historia, Antropología y Arte* of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). Our special thanks to Flavia Marichal Lugo, Associate Director of the *Museo de Historia, Antropología y Arte* at UPR, who facilitated access to the artwork. We also thank UPR photographer Jesús E. Marrero who provided the digital images.

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To all of those mentioned, and to those who have been omitted due to space limitations, our deepest gratitude.

## INTRODUCTION

# Puerto Rico's Quest for Human Rights

---

AS ONE OF THE VERY LAST and most populated colonial territories in the modern world, Puerto Rico occupies a relatively unique position. Like other nonindependent countries in the Caribbean, the island is seeking, with great difficulties, to leave its colonial legacy behind and initiate a new partnership with the United States, with the Caribbean and Latin American region, and with other countries of the world.

After four centuries under Spanish colonial rule and a century under U.S. hegemony, Puerto Rico remains today an “unincorporated territory” that “belongs to” but “is not part of” the United States.<sup>1</sup> During the past three decades, the United Nations Decolonization Committee has repeatedly recognized the right to self-determination of Puerto Ricans and the need to initiate a process conducive to full decolonization. The last century left a mixed balance in diverse areas of the social and economic life of 7 million persons who identify themselves as Puerto Ricans or are of Puerto Rican descent, the 3.7 million that live on the islands,<sup>2</sup> and the 3.4 million residing in the Continental United States.<sup>3</sup>

While Puerto Rico has shown substantial progress in areas such as education, health, and economic infrastructure, surpassing a large number of less-developed countries in a variety of socioeconomic indicators, it continues to present a profile of high unemployment rates and a distressing crime and drug trafficking problem, paired with growing social inequalities. More than a century of interaction with the United States has produced an economy that is largely integrated to the mainland. Still, Puerto Rican society clearly shows its Caribbean and Latin American personality, including the predominance of the Spanish language on the islands and a noticeably strong cultural national identity that extends to Puerto Rican communities in the United States.



On another level, the long interaction with the United States, at least in the long run, has resulted in the acquisition of expanded legal rights and relative political stability.<sup>4</sup> Contradictorily, it also has injected strong elements of political intolerance and the denial of basic rights for some political sectors, primarily those that have challenged colonialism.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the process of construction of U.S. hegemony in Puerto Rico has involved a combination of “carrot and stick”—rewards and punishment—practices.

But neither the coercions nor the rewards have been able to erase unresolved contradictions that afflict the colonial arrangement. Therefore, some key conflicts re-emerge on a cyclical basis. A case in point is Vieques, where the movement to end the use of the island for military exercises by the U.S. Navy intensified in recent years,<sup>6</sup> particularly after the accidental death of David Sanes, a civilian killed during military trainings in April 1999. Since then, a wave of massive civil disobedience interrupted many times the military exercises, attracted the interest of the international public opinion, and sparked a strong community building process inside of Vieques.

During four years of renewed activism, the struggle resulted in the detention of more than 1,000 protestors. Hundreds of persons from all three traditional political tendencies (pro-independence, pro-statehood, and pro-commonwealth) endured several days to several months of incarceration after being accused of “trespassing” by federal authorities. While this type of offense is normally punished with a fine, particularly in cases of civil disobedience, U.S. authorities in Puerto Rico opted for the extremely harsher approach of sending hundreds of protestors to prison. Among the prisoners of conscience were members of the clergy, teachers, students, artists, labor leaders, and even legislators.<sup>7</sup> The Vieques story illustrates how a human rights claim can generate a successful consensus-building coalition that mobilizes the emerging Puerto Rican civil society and sectors of the international community to object to increasing militarization and environmental degradation. At the same time, such a coalition was effectively proposing an alternate model of self-sustained local economic development. It also shows how a community struggle that emphasizes unity beyond party lines and the creation of solidarity bridges can overcome repressive measures.

Indeed, the Vieques struggle was able to achieve a major victory as the U.S. Navy decided to cease the use of the island for storage of ammunition, training, and maneuvers as of May 2003. By that date, the navy transferred most of the lands still under its control—some 14,500 acres—to the U.S. Department of the Interior.<sup>8</sup> In 2001, the navy had transferred another 8,200 acres to the U.S. Department of the Interior (3,050 acres), the Vieques municipal government (4,250 acres), and the Puerto Rico Conservation Trust (800 acres). The navy still retains around 100 acres where two communication facilities exist. At the present time, community efforts concentrate

on achieving the full devolution of those lands and the complete cleanup of the areas affected by the U.S. Navy's military practices.

The decades' long Vieques struggle, although characterized by peaceful civil disobedience during the last few years, was not exempt from the violent events of the past decades. During a previous wave of protest, when twenty peaceful protestors were sent to prison in November 1979, one of the activists was found hanging in his cell in the Tallahassee Federal Correctional Institution. Noting that the body of Angel Rodríguez Cristóbal showed signs of violence, several pro-independence organizations labeled this a case of political assassination.<sup>9</sup> Shortly after, the *Macheteros* and two other Puerto Rican clandestine organizations responded with a deadly attack on a navy bus carrying personnel assigned to the Sabana Seca Naval Communications Station. In the attack, two members of the U.S. Navy were killed and several others wounded.<sup>10</sup> The potential for more violence continued to grow as a bomb was planted in front of the Puerto Rico Bar Association building on January 7, 1980, and a U.S. Navy officer, Lieutenant Alex de la Zerda, was linked to the incident and, in fact, subsequently indicted by federal authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Quite frequently the denial of political and civil rights precipitates this type of spiral of violence that can easily grow out of control. The Puerto Rican experience presents an excellent case study of these conflictive dynamics within the United States' jurisdiction. In times when there are strong currents in the direction of strengthening mechanisms for the surveillance and investigation of citizens and hastily drafted laws chip away fundamental civil liberties, it would be wise, especially for democratic sectors, to examine the experiences with file compiling, political policing, and overt and covert political repression on the island.

Coercion and open repression by legal and/or physical means have been distinctively present under U.S. rule. Among others, as the reader would see in this book, this includes the incarceration of journalists and the closing of opposition newspapers by U.S. colonial authorities early in the twentieth century, the imprisonment of the Nationalist Party leadership in the mid-1930s, the killing in 1937 of twenty independence sympathizers in what came to be known as the "Ponce Massacre," the implementation in the 1950s of *la mordaza* (a gag law that sent to prison many independence advocates for making written or verbal expressions against the government), and the decades' long police practice of compiling secret files that affected tens of thousands of independence advocates.

However, at least partially as a result of ideologies promoted by the metropolitan and colonial states, the instances of political repression, both overt and covert, are largely overlooked and left out of most academic works.

While diverse scholarly projects have explored the evolution of the United States–Puerto Rico political interactions, the changes in the island's economy, and the dynamics of migration to the United States, among others,<sup>12</sup>

there is limited research and published scholarly work, particularly in English, in the area of human rights and political persecution and intolerance in the Puerto Rican context. The multidisciplinary book presented here tries to begin to fill that gap. The chapters were authored by academics and intellectuals working within and beyond the academy who come from a variety of disciplines, including political science, sociology, history, and law.

This book does not attempt to cover all of the topics that could conceivably fall under the rubric of human rights in the Puerto Rican context, but rather it offers a sampling that intends to provoke thought and expand knowledge in an area largely understudied. The chapters deal with issues of human rights and political persecution during the twentieth century, paying particular attention to a set of historical and contemporary cases and current ones, including the recent Vieques case. Accordingly, the chapters have been grouped in three parts: Political Persecution in Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico, Contemporary Issues, and The Vieques Case.

The decision to devote a full section to the Vieques case responds to the fact that, in many ways, this struggle sums up the vast majority of the human rights issues that this book will cover. In Vieques, issues of colonialism and militarism, the popular struggles that emerge and challenge those structures, and the responses generated by the state as a reaction to them constantly overlap. If the Vieques case illustrates the complexity and prevalence of those issues, then it needs to be examined and understood in the context of the larger Puerto Rican reality. The first two parts of this book provide tools for such a study.

The four chapters included in the first part of the book are intended to give the reader a historical background on the topic of political persecution. The opening chapter, "Political Persecution against Puerto Rican Anti-Colonial Activists in the Twentieth Century," by co-editor Ramón Bosque-Pérez, offers an overview of how metropolitan authorities have shaped repressive institutions in Puerto Rico and the role played by those in curtailing anti-colonial activism. Particular attention is given to the role of the FBI and its influence on local police. The chapter analyzes the *carpetas* police espionage scandal, which erupted in the late 1980s, and traces the FBI's involvement in the design, implementation, and use of the secret files that the island's police maintained for decades. The author suggests that the effects of the "culture of fear" that developed early in the twentieth century have not disappeared, in spite of the steps taken in the aftermath of the scandal.

The exploration of the twentieth century continues in chapter 2, "The Critical Year of 1936 through the Reports of the Military Intelligence Division," by María E. Estades-Font. Estades-Font examines secret reports on "subversive activities" produced by the Military Intelligence Division (MID) of the U.S. Army. The author documents the surveillance conducted by that branch against the leadership and members of the Nationalist Party, particu-

larly during 1936, and the involvement of the MID in political persecution. The year 1936 was critical, because it marked a turning point in the escalation of violence between the *Nacionalistas* and the colonial government.

In chapter 3, “The Smith Act Goes to San Juan: *La Mordaza*, 1948–1957,” Ivonne Acosta-Lespier examines and places in historical perspective Law 53 of 1948, a statute that mimicked sections of the Smith Law and was known in Puerto Rico as *la mordaza*, or the “Gag Order.” According to Acosta-Lespier, for nearly ten crucial years, the Gag Order managed to mortally wound the Nationalist Party, and through fear it decreased the electoral force of the pro-independence movement, giving way to the electoral rise of the pro status quo and annexation forces. She also proposes that Law 53 was instrumental in providing an adequate political environment for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Part I closes with chapter 4, “Imprisonment and Colonial Domination, 1898–1958,” where the author, José (Ché) Paralitici, presents a historical overview of the cases that have involved the incarceration of anti-colonial activists. It covers persecution and imprisonment of journalists early in the twentieth century, those jailed for opposing the draft (compulsory military service) since 1917, and the cases of Nationalists and other anti-colonial fighters from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Part II of this book includes four chapters that deal with contemporary issues. It is intended to contribute to some of the current debates over human rights in Puerto Rican society, including new scenarios of political intolerance. Chapter 5, “Puerto Rico: The Puzzle of Human Rights and Self-Determination,” by co-editor José Javier Colón Morera, explores the recent developments in the discussion of the so-called political status and inserts the subject of political persecution as an unavoidable element to be considered when discussing the possible steps that would lead to the island’s complete decolonization. The author argues that there are still enormous challenges to the climate conducive to the respect of human rights. Colón Morera argues that the relative intra-elite consensus reflected in the Bill of Rights of the 1952 Commonwealth Constitution has been under attack on various fronts: by some “tough-hand,” anti-crime initiatives implemented by the government of Puerto Rico during the 1990s and by the effects of some federal initiatives such as the imposition of the death penalty (which is prohibited by the Constitution of Puerto Rico).

Chapter 6, “The Changing Nature of Intolerance,” by Jorge Benítez-Nazario, presents the main findings of research on patterns of prejudice in Puerto Rico based on data from the World Values Survey (WVS). This chapter places the reader in the intersection between human rights and political culture and provides elements that allow reflection on the levels of intolerance in different aspects of daily life. Benítez-Nazario takes a critical view of the generalized belief that Puerto Rican society is characterized by civility

and tolerance of ideas and lifestyles different from those of the majority. The author discusses problems of religious, racial, and ethnic prejudice and demonstrates that none of the traditional political sectors are free from the problem of hostility and fear toward “the other.”

Chapter 7, “Puerto Rican Political Prisoners in U.S. Prisons,” by Jan Susler, discusses the presidential pardons granted by former President Clinton in 1999 to several Puerto Rican pro-independence activists who had been in prison for fifteen to twenty years. She argues that, although a step in the right direction, the action taken by former President Clinton left various issues unresolved. Susler discusses the political and social background that led to the imprisonment of previous and present activists, as well as their prison conditions. The author also discusses the campaign for the release of these political prisoners and closes with an analysis of how the September 11, 2001, aftermath affected their treatment, prison conditions, and overall climate.

Chapter 8, “Puerto Rican *Independentistas*: Subversives or Subverted?,” by Alberto Márquez, reflects on the role played by the process of political intelligence as a means to repress or advance social struggles in a colonial context. The author suggests that pro-independence organizations have been more *subverted* than *subversives* and argues that they must develop a greater capacity to understand and act upon the intelligence process as a way to promote their own agendas.

Part III of this book is devoted fully to Vieques as a case that captures the diversity and complexity of issues involved in human rights struggles in contemporary Puerto Rico. Chapter 9, “Vieques: To Be or Not to Be,” by Jalil Sued-Badillo, provides an overview of the role played by this island as a conflictive frontier since the times of the Spanish colonization. Sued-Badillo traces this history, emphasizing how a strong, cultural Puerto Rican identity was formed in Vieques early on during that period. Sued-Badillo advances the notion that Vieques was a crucial part of the Puerto Rican process of national identity building.

Chapter 10, “Expropriation and Displacement of Civilians in Vieques, 1940–1950,” by César J. Ayala and Viviana Carro-Figueroa, examines the expropriation of civilian lands in the periods 1942–1943 and 1947–1950 by combining archival data from the *Archivo General de Puerto Rico* with data from fifty-three interviews of residents of Vieques who were displaced. This integration of data allows the researchers to thoroughly describe the process of displacement.

Part III closes with chapter 11, “New Dimensions in Civil Society Mobilization: The Struggle for Peace in Vieques,” by co-editor José Javier Colón Morera and José E. Rivera Santana. This chapter explores the ways in which this movement for peace has been able to overcome political persecution and develop strategies that create more active, regular, and public manifestations of political protest. The chapter contains a specific and

detailed description of the detrimental ecological impact of the military trainings. The authors contend that this case is only one example, an extreme one, of the need to give a voice to the communities in the development of their collective future.

As a whole, the chapters in this book present compelling historical evidence of a pattern of state-sponsored political persecution on the island during the twentieth century. Those practices should not be overlooked or underestimated while assessing current conflicts and outcomes or while formulating or refining state policies on Puerto Rico's political future.

It is our hope that this book will serve scholars, students, and policy makers, as well as the general public, in the process of understanding today's Puerto Rican reality.

## NOTES

1. The distinction comes from a set of decisions made by the U.S. Supreme Court in the early years after the acquisition of Puerto Rico and other overseas territories. The cases, known collectively as the *Insular Cases*, addressed the constitutional rights of the new territories and their peoples. For a discussion of the cases and their implications, see, for instance, Rivera Ramos 2001.

2. The archipelago of Puerto Rico is located in the eastern part of the Caribbean. It is formed by three inhabited islands—Puerto Rico, Vieques, and Culebra—plus a number of smaller noninhabited islands and islets.

3. The most recent U.S. Census shows that Puerto Ricans continue to be the second largest Latino group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2001).

4. For detailed explorations of that arduous evolution during the twentieth century, see, for instance, Cabán 1999; Fernández 1996; Rivera Ramos 2001; Trías Monge 1997.

5. See, for instance, Bosque-Pérez and Colón Morera 1997; Comisión de Derechos Civiles 1989.

6. Vieques activism has been more visible in recent years but is hardly a new phenomenon. For background information and an analysis of the Vieques movement, see, for instance, Barreto 2002; McCaffrey 2002; Murillo 2001.

7. For instance, Norma Burgos, a pro-statehood leader and member of the Puerto Rico Senate, and Lolita Lebrón, a pro-independence activist and former political prisoner, were both sentenced to sixty days in prison. Also, numerous persons from the Continental United States who participated in acts of civil disobedience assumed a share of the prison sentences, among others, Jacqueline Jackson (the wife of Reverend Jesse Jackson); U.S. Congressman Luis Gutiérrez; labor leader Dennis Rivera; environmental lawyer Robert F. Kennedy Jr.; the Reverend Al Sharpton; actor Edward James Olmos; New York Democratic Party leader Roberto Ramírez; New York State legislator José Rivera; and New York City Council member Adolfo Carrión (more recently Bronx borough president).

8. U.S. Department of Defense, "Department of Navy Transfers Vieques Property," News Release No. 291-03, April 30, 2003, [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2003/b04302003\\_bt291-03.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2003/b04302003_bt291-03.html) (accessed December 26, 2003).

9. See "Puerto Ricans Vow to Avenge Death in U.S. Prison," *New York Times*, November 18, 1979, p. 33.

10. The organizations *Ejército Popular Boricua—Macheteros* (Popular Boricua Army), *Organización de Voluntarios por la Revolución Puertorriqueña* (Organization of Volunteers for the Puerto Rican Revolution), and *Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Popular* (Armed Forces of Popular Resistance) claimed responsibility for the armed action. See "2 Sailors Dead, 8 Wounded in Independentista Ambush," *San Juan Star*, December 4, 1979, pp. 1, 20. Also see "Navy Men Slain Near San Juan in Terrorist Ambush; Terrorists Kill 2 U.S. Sailors Near San Juan," *Washington Post*, December 4, 1979, p. A1.

11. On January 25, 1980, federal authorities indicted Lieutenant Alex de la Zerda, at the time the spokesperson for the U.S. Navy at the Roosevelt Road Naval Base, and another two men. They were charged with bombing the Puerto Rico Bar Association building and conspiring to bomb an airplane. See the *New York Times*, "Navy Officer and 2 Others Held in San Juan Bombing" (January 26, 1980, p. 8) and "3 Arrested in Bomb Plot Linked to Protest on Puerto Rico Island" (January 27, 1980, p. 18).

12. See, for instance, Acosta-Belén 1986; Bonilla and Campos 1986; Cabán 1999; Dietz 1986; Fernández 1996; History Task Force 1979; Pérez y González 2000; Rodríguez 1989; Sánchez Korrol 1994; Trías Monge 1997; Weisskoff 1985.

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PART I

Political Persecution in  
Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico

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## ONE

# Political Persecution against Puerto Rican Anti-Colonial Activists in the Twentieth Century

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Ramón Bosque-Pérez

[Intelligence work] does not always show in arrests . . . but it does show in a remarkable collection of facts, available for future use . . . and it shows also in the knowledge that it imparts to these persons of revolutionary design that the government is watching.

—A. Mitchel Palmer, U.S. Attorney General, 1920 Annual Report<sup>1</sup>

We have to investigate in such a way that neither the interviewed persons nor those under investigation learn about our work. [. . .] This is so, because our investigations deal with individuals who hold pro-independence ideals and when they learn that we are investigating they argue that we are engaging in persecution and repression because of their political beliefs and, as we all know, this is prohibited by our constitution.

—Intelligence Division, Police of Puerto Rico,  
from a confidential *Investigations Handbook*, discovered in 1987.<sup>2</sup>

DURING THE SUMMER of 1987, Puerto Ricans were hit by the “revelation” that the Police of Puerto Rico had been compiling secret files and lists of alleged “subversives,” and that tens of thousands of individuals of all ages and social sectors were listed. The scandal was big news in the local media and was even covered by some periodicals in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Within weeks, the Puerto Rico Civil Rights Commission opened an investigation. As the local