

**LA COLECCION RUBY BLACK COMO FUENTE
PARA EL ESTUDIO DEL SIGLO VEINTE
PUERTORRIQUEÑO**

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La Colección Ruby Black lleva el nombre de la conocida periodista norteamericana que actuó como corresponsal en Washington del periódico **La Democracia** durante las décadas de 1930 y 1940. El inicio de esta colaboración con el importante diario puertorriqueño, dirigido por Luis Muñoz Marín, se debió en gran medida a la amistad que entablaron Ruby Black y la escritora Muna Lee, primera esposa de aquél, en los círculos literarios del Nueva York de los años veinte.

El ascenso de Franklin D. Roosevelt a la presidencia de los Estados Unidos hizo posible que el papel de Ruby Black rebasara el de mero corresponsal. Su amistad con la primera dama Eleanor Roosevelt le abrió las puertas de la Casa Blanca, y la periodista se convirtió en enlace personal entre Luis Muñoz Marín y el presidente Roosevelt.

La familiaridad de esta perspicaz corresponsal con la vida política de Washington y sus contactos en los círculos influyentes del gobierno norteamericano le proveyeron valiosa información sobre el curso de los acontecimientos más significativos. Esta información le permitió a Muñoz Marín orientar de manera más certera sus acciones y en poco tiempo Ruby Black llegó a ser una aliada importante del joven líder y su emergente proyecto político.

La Colección Ruby Black agrupa cerca de 2,500 documentos que abarcan los años de 1926 a 1948. El cuerpo fundamental de la Colección lo integran cartas y artículos periodísticos. Hay también fragmentos de publicaciones, tales como hojas sueltas del **Congressional Record** y noticias de periódicos de los Estados Unidos y Puerto Rico. Además, existen documentos oficiales de diferentes ramas del gobierno norteamericano: por ejemplo, piezas de legislación y comunicados de prensa de los departamentos del Interior, de Agricultura y de Guerra. Todos ellos ofrecen información sobre asuntos relacionados con Puerto Rico.

La Colección comprende asimismo un pequeño grupo de fotografías de diversa procedencia, entre las que sobresalen las de los viajes de Eleanor Roosevelt a Puerto Rico en 1934 y 1944. A éstas se suman otras de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, de la Escuela de Medicina Tropical y del proyecto de viviendas de la Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration.

Estos documentos han sido organizados de acuerdo a un criterio cronológico, por años y meses. A cada documento se le ha asignado un número de acuerdo con esta secuencia. Para facilitar su consulta, el Centro de Investigaciones Históricas preparó un catálogo-inventario que ofrece

información detallada sobre cada uno de los documentos: fecha y naturaleza de cada uno, una síntesis de su contenido y otras observaciones pertinentes.

El valor primordial de la **Colección Ruby Black** reside en la abundante correspondencia que contiene. En ella encontramos cartas de destacadas personalidades de la época, tanto norteamericanas como puertorriqueñas, que recogen el testimonio íntimo de algunos de los actores principales en el proceso político de Puerto Rico durante un período crítico de nuestra historia.

Resultan de especial importancia las cartas intercambiadas por Luis Muñoz Marín y la periodista. Su lectura nos ayuda a reconstruir la trayectoria ideológica y política del joven líder mientras que las agudas observaciones de Ruby Black reflejan las concepciones del liberalismo novotratista sobre diversos aspectos de la situación de la Isla.

Complemento valioso de esta correspondencia son los numerosos artículos, muchos de ellos en borrador, producidos por la pluma de la periodista para **La Democracia**. La mayor parte estos artículos datan de los primeros años de la década de 1930 y tratan temas del estado económico y el proceso político experimentados en Puerto Rico en esta época. En ellos hallamos valiosa información sobre la situación imperante en los principales sectores de la economía del país (el azúcar, el café, la industria de la aguja) y la repercusión que sobre ellos tiene la legislación novotratista que se está poniendo en vigor. Además, recogen noticias sobre los esfuerzos realizados por llevar a cabo una reconstrucción económica permanente de la Isla, especialmente el del Plan Chardón y las actuaciones de ciertas agencias federales tales como la PRRA.

Muchos artículos están dedicados a informar sobre el curso que siguen los asuntos puertorriqueños en la capital norteamericana. Prestan atención especial a las posturas asumidas por diferentes congresistas y funcionarios ante cuestiones de importancia para la Isla, como lo fue el proyecto Tydings; también se ocupan de las gestiones realizadas en Washington por los diversos sectores políticos puertorriqueños, principalmente aquéllas de los dirigentes Liberales y Coalicionistas. Por último, recogen observaciones de primera mano sobre el ánimo imperante en la Casa Blanca con respecto al destino de la Isla.

En general, la **Colección Ruby Black** es un importante instrumento para el estudio de los grandes problemas que afectaban la Isla entre los años de 1930 y 1945. Por la naturaleza del contenido y las apreciaciones y juicios que emiten los corresponsales la documentación puede apoyar investigaciones en torno al carácter de las relaciones entre Estados Unidos y Puerto Rico; al papel que jugó la Isla en la política exterior norteamericana; las repercusiones que tuvieron en Puerto Rico las directrices económicas y políticas provenientes de los Estados Unidos y la trayectoria de nuestros partidos políticos y su liderato.

Cartas para la historia

Como hemos señalado, las cartas de Luis Muñoz Marín y Ruby Black constituyen algunos de los documentos más valiosos de la Colección. Esta correspondencia se inició a fines de 1931 cuando Muñoz le propuso a la periodista que se convirtiera en corresponsal de **La Democracia** en

Washington, así como en su “ministro de relaciones exteriores” en esa capital.¹ Como tal, debería enviar información detallada sobre los acontecimientos económicos y políticos norteamericanos e internacionales, en especial todo lo que fuese de interés para Puerto Rico. Al explicarle la posición editorial de **La Democracia**, Muñoz afirma:

You know the general policy of the paper. We are for independence, but we dont' bait the U.S. unless driven to it. We have a special tenderness for the Democratic Party, in spite of its having statehood in its platform - that does not mean anything - because of its traditional liberal attitude towards Puerto Rico and the Philippines. We are opposed to begging money for the American taxpayers and instead claim the right to have our own tariff, to get rid of the coastwise shipping law and to be empowered to regulate absentee ownership.²

Esta cita recoge algunos de los temas fundamentales presentes en la Colección: la condición política de Puerto Rico y sus consecuencias económicas, la repercusión en la Isla de la política norteamericana hacia otras posesiones, especialmente las Filipinas, y, a su vez, la postura asumida por Muñoz ante estos problemas.³

La coyuntura del Nuevo Trato le imprime características específicas al tema de la condición política de la Isla. Por ejemplo, las cartas de Muñoz Marín y Ruby Black de los años 1933 y 1934 recogen intensas discusiones sobre la elaboración de una campaña política en contra del recién nombrado gobernador Gore. En ellas, Muñoz expresa su preocupación por que los ataques del Partido Liberal en contra de Gore fuesen interpretados por la Casa Blanca como ataques en contra de la administración Roosevelt como tal:

We should like to make it clear to the Administration that we do not wish to embarrass it. In fact, our attack against Gore is in the final analysis a service to the Administration, if you consider the amount of bad opinion that can be created throughout Latin America by the presence here as Governor of the man who conceived the americanization promotion scheme. Play on this, I mean diplomatically. Remember the Pan-American Conference is in December and the Cuban situation is bad enough.⁴

Dado el papel determinante que jugaban los nombramientos presidenciales

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1. Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Colección Ruby Black, Muna Lee a Ruby Black, 17 de noviembre de 1931, cartapacio V, doc. 1. Todos los documentos que se citan de aquí en adelante pertenecen a la misma colección.
 2. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 13 de diciembre de 1932, cartapacio VI, doc. 10.
 3. Hay en la Colección una carta de Theodore Roosevelt a Ruby Black (3 de noviembre de 1933) en la cual esboza sus ideas sobre el futuro político de Puerto Rico a la luz de la experiencia de las Filipinas. Véase cartapacio VII-B, doc. 217.
 4. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 13 de septiembre de 1933, cartapacio VII-B, doc. 161.

en la conformación del gobierno de la Isla, muchas de las cartas de estos primeros años están dedicadas a discutir asuntos relacionados con la designación de diversos funcionarios.⁵ En ellas queda constancia de los múltiples reclamos de los puertorriqueños por una mayor participación en la conducción de sus asuntos y de sus críticas a la forma en que los Estados Unidos gobernaban los asuntos de la Isla al dejar su suerte en manos de la buena o mala fe de funcionarios que a menudo ostentaban un espíritu antagónico al liberalismo de la administración Roosevelt. Las maniobras y negociaciones políticas descritas reflejan la política colonial imperante en esos años: el papel de los partidos políticos norteamericanos en los asuntos puertorriqueños; la ingerencia de los departamentos y agencias federales; el peso de los diferentes sectores del Congreso norteamericano, y las diversas formas de intervención de la Casa Blanca.

La piedra del puente

El tema de la condición política de la Isla se encuentra estrechamente vinculado al de la política exterior de los Estados Unidos hacia América Latina. Ya en el año de 1928, la escritora norteamericana Muna Lee aludió a este hecho, específicamente en lo relativo al aspecto cultural:

Specifically, the University which is unique among all other schools in that it is a North American institution in a Latin American environment, with a bi-cultural heritage and influence, has been most dreadfully crippled... And I love this University. It is truly Pan American. Here if nowhere else old Spain and the young United States meet and give of their best without misunderstanding and without distrust.⁶

Años después, en un memorándum dirigido a un funcionario del Departamento de Estado, Muñoz Marín insistió en el destacado papel que jugaba Puerto Rico en las relaciones entre Estados Unidos y América Latina.⁷ En esa ocasión, señaló cuán perjudicial resultaba para el prestigio de los Estados Unidos el que se permitiera la persecución de aquellos puertorriqueños que luchaban por la independencia de Puerto Rico.

Las arrugas de la democracia

El problema de la relación entre los Estados Unidos y Puerto Rico, se tornó aún más crítico con el surgimiento del movimiento nacionalista. La correspondencia del año 1937 expresa el clima de sorpresa e indignación prevaleciente en la Isla ante los sucesos de la Masacre de Ponce. En su carta del 27 de marzo Muñoz recogió la impresión prevaleciente:

5. Véase, al respecto, las cartas de Muñoz Marín al Dr. Ernest Gruening, Director de la División de Territorios y Posesiones Insulares del Departamento del Interior. Por ejemplo, la carta del 11 de febrero de 1935, cartapacio IX, doc. 31.

6. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 9 de febrero de 1933, cartapacio VII-A, doc. 17, y la del 26 de mayo de 1933, *ibid*, doc. 77.

7. Memorandum for Laurence Duggan, 2 de febrero de 1937, cartapacio XI, doc. 10.

The Ponce situation has been horrible enough, in a free country, to bring down any government into complete disrepute. Newspaper accounts in the states have been government fakes. Read **El Mundo** and **Democracia** accounts. 19 dead, more than 50 wounded. A photograph (**Imparcial** will publish it when it resumes publication Thursday) showing police firing into crowds (not into nationalist cadets). Responsible citizens of all parties aghast, indignant, believing (poor souls!) this must cause Winship's fall. Barceló execrated because he said it was just local affair. There is a sense of despair that U.S. will ever wake up and stop this stupid, dishonorable procedure.⁸

Y la de abril expresó su desilusión con el liberalismo norteamericano en estas palabras:

My inclination is not to accept, and never again to expect anything like justice or fair dealing for Puerto Rico from the U.S. - specially from U.S. liberalism with its chronic mutual-protection backstairs methods acquired through a long habit of being in the minority.⁹

Muna Lee fue aún más enérgica al expresar su repudio de lo acontecido:

It makes me - and I am writing in passionate anger but with an underlying seriousness deep as the bedrock of my being - it makes me, for the first time in my life, profoundly and bitterly ashamed of my own citizenship - the citizenship that I worked like a fool to secure to myself and other women. ¹⁰

Aprovechando la destacada intervención de Arthur Garfield Hays en la investigación de los hechos de Ponce, Muñoz le envió un mensaje al Presidente sugiriendo un cambio en la política hacia Puerto Rico:

You are going to see the President, and I should like to make a few specific suggestions.

1. Just changing Governors or Directos of Territories won't solve any of the deep-seated problem we have.
2. When a change is made in the governorship, appoint a first-class continental, one to whom the fool post doesn't mean anything as such, but to whom it means a great deal as an opportunity for the definite liquidation of a problem.
3. Instruct this man - and let it be published - that his task is to aid Puerto Ricans in studying economic solutions under independence and under statehood, as the only two American solutions to the problem of definite political status.

8. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 27 de marzo de 1937, cartapacio XI, doc. 27.

9. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 21 de abril de 1937, cartapacio XI, doc. 60.

10. Muna Lee a Ruby Black, 12 de noviembre de 1937, cartapacio XI, doc. 241.

4. Simultaneously introduce an administration bill giving Puerto Rico a fair chance to vote on independence or statehood within, say, two years. If Congress passes a rotten bill, through extreme sugar beet selfishness, let Roosevelt veto it and try again.

5. Then let the Governor go to it and develop an intelligent consciousness of what statehood means and what independence means economically. (Of course, this must be done in obvious and transparent good faith **not** in the spirit of the Tydings bill - that's why you need a very first rate man as Governor).

6. Let the plebiscite take place and let Puerto Rico shoulder the responsibilities of its own decision at the polls. (Mr. Nunn has the draft of a bill to this end which I gave him).

This is the only way in which you can get unanimous backing for a policy here. If you say statehood, you'll have a terrific kick from a great part of Puerto Rico. If you say independence, you'll have a terrific kick, too. Why not say for us to day - and thus settle the whole mess.

The only duty of the U.S. in such a policy is to behave honorably and fairly, without exerting influence on one side or another and without threats of any kind, specific or implied, against any of the two solutions.¹¹

El castigo de la independencia

La presentación del proyecto Tydings de 1936 en el Congreso de los Estados Unidos, poco después del asesinato del Jefe de la Policía de Puerto Rico, provocó una gran tirantez en las relaciones entre la Isla y los Estados Unidos.¹² Las cartas intercambiadas por Ruby Black y Muñoz Marín recogen interesantes polémicas en torno a esta difícil situación política.

En sus cartas de los meses de junio a agosto, Muñoz Marín describió el panorama de las fuerzas políticas puertorriqueñas; evaluó las repercusiones del proyecto Tydings y expuso sus razones para llevar el Partido Liberal a la abstención electoral.¹³ Durante estos meses de intensa lucha política, Muñoz Marín ya se destacaba como un fuerte dirigente no tan sólo en el seno del Partido Liberal, donde se enfrenta a Antonio Barceló, sino como figura clave en la conformación de una nueva fuerza política.¹⁴

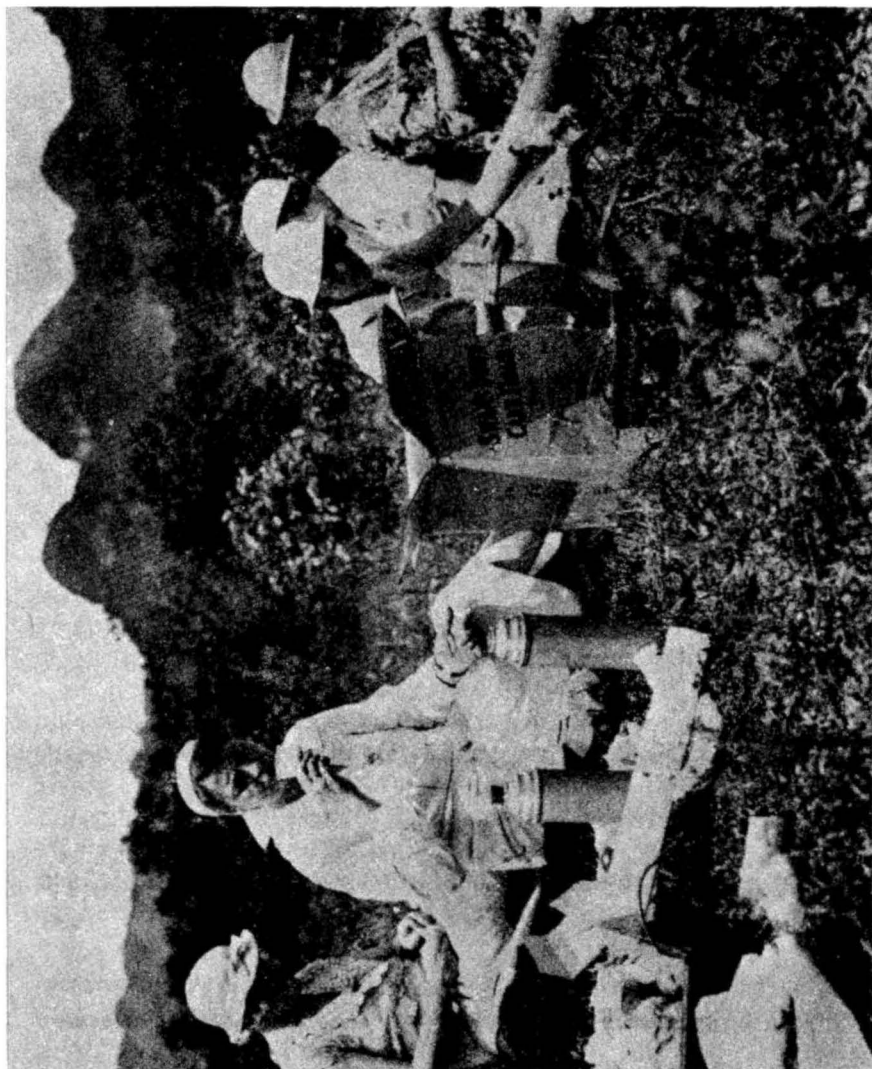
A raíz del debate sobre la posible abstención electoral de los liberales surgió una significativa diferencia de opinión entre Muñoz Marín y Ruby Black. En su carta del 8 de junio de 1936, ésta explicaba cómo la campaña abstencionista

11. Luis Muñoz Marín a Arthur Garfield Hays, 14 de junio de 1937, cartapacio XI, doc. 115.

12. El proyecto Tydings (S. 4529, Cong., 2a Ses., de 24 de febrero de 1936) proveía para la celebración de un referéndum sobre la independencia para Puerto Rico.

13. Véase las cartas de Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, de 29 de junio de 1936, 3 de julio de 1936, 15 de julio de 1936, 5 de agosto de 1936 y 18 de agosto de 1936, cartapacio X, docs. 70, 72, 82, 95, 100.

14. Véase, Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 7 de octubre de 1936, 5 de noviembre de 1936, cartapacio X, docs. 111 y 143.



No. 8 - La señora Eleanor Roosevelt y sus acompañantes celebran un "picnic" en un campo cercano a Lares. Ruby Black es la tercera que aparece de izquierda a derecha. 1934. C.I.H. Colección Ruby Black.

ponía en peligro la posición de liderato obtenida por el dirigente ante la administración del Presidente Roosevelt y amenazaba la legitimidad lograda para la causa de la independencia, asociándola con los métodos de lucha utilizados por los nacionalistas.¹⁵ En su respuesta del 25 de septiembre, Muñoz destacó que en vista de la grave coyuntura política que vivía el país, particularmente después de los actos nacionalistas y del Proyecto Tydings, se justificaba el boicot electoral.¹⁶

Posteriormente, Muñoz realizó varias gestiones a favor de la solución definitiva de la condición política de Puerto Rico, sin que conllevara el costo económico previsto por el proyecto Tydings. Una de estas gestiones fue la presentación en el Congreso del proyecto Cartwright.¹⁷ A la vez, en sus cartas describía las acciones encaminadas a afianzar la solución independentista en el programa del Partido Liberal.¹⁸

El Nuevo Trato en el trópico

La correspondencia de estos años también recoge diversas reflexiones en torno a la grave situación económica de la Isla, la importancia del sector azucarero y la urgencia de que se pusieran en práctica en Puerto Rico las políticas de reconstrucción económica comprendidas en el Nuevo Trato.¹⁹ Muñoz toma en consideración los factores internacionales (por ejemplo, la situación cubana), las condiciones domésticas norteamericanas - tal como se reflejan en la legislación azucarera - y la peculiaridad del estado social y económico puertorriqueño.

A principios de 1934 la administración del presidente Roosevelt mostró un mayor interés por aliviar la crisis económica que sufría Puerto Rico. Así, durante el mes de marzo, visitaron la Isla Eleanor Roosevelt y un grupo de funcionarios norteamericanos. Ruby Black acompañó a la Primera Dama en este viaje como corresponsal de la agencia **United Press** y aprovechó la ocasión para estrechar los lazos entre Muñoz Marín y la Casa Blanca.

En parte como resultado de esta visita, se inició la elaboración de un plan para la reconstrucción económica permanente de Puerto Rico. En cartas del 27 de junio y 13 de diciembre de 1934, Luis Muñoz Marín apeló al presidente Roosevelt para que este plan fuera puesto en práctica a la mayor brevedad posible dada la situación desesperada del pueblo puertorriqueño y la consiguiente amenaza al orden público.²⁰ El Presidente le respondió el 17 de diciembre asegurándole que todas las dificultades serían

15. Ruby Black a Luis Muñoz Marín, 8 de julio de 1936, cartapacio X, doc. 76. Véase el Apéndice I.

16. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 25 de septiembre de 1936, cartapacio X, doc. 115. Véase el Apéndice II.

17. Véase, por ejemplo, Luis Muñoz Marín al Representante John J. Dempsey, 22 de junio de 1937, cartapacio XI, doc. 126. Se refiere a H.R. 4885, 75º Cong., 1ª Ses.

18. Véase Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 22 de junio de 1937, cartapacio XI, doc. 128.

19. Véase, por ejemplo, la carta de Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 23 de febrero de 1934, cartapacio VIII-A, doc. 57, así como la del 6 de abril de 1934, cartapacio VIII-B, doc. 98.

20. Luis Muñoz Marín al presidente Franklin D. Roosevelt, 27 de junio de 1934, 13 de diciembre de 1934, cartapacio VIII-B, docs. 183 y 259.

QUE SE CUMPLA LA LEY DE HORAS Y SALARIOS!!!
DESDOBLAMOS A MR. CLAIBORNE 100%



No. 9 - Protesta de trabajadores de Toa Baja para que se cumpla la ley de horas y salarios. C.I.H. Colección Ruby Black.

vencidas y que el Plan Chardón se pondría en marcha.²¹

Sin embargo, la correspondencia de fines de la década de 1930 presenta una crónica detallada de los obstáculos que encontraban los intentos de reformar la base económica de la Isla, no tan sólo por las posturas conservadoras del gobernador Blanton Winship, sino por las condiciones particulares imperantes en Puerto Rico, que diferían de aquéllas en las cuales se inspiraba la legislación novotratista.

Al respecto resultan de interés las cartas de Jesús T. Piñero a Ruby Black. En ellas se exponía la posición de los colonos azucareros puertorriqueños en relación a la política agraria de la administración Roosevelt.²² También son importantes las cartas de Earl Parker Hanson sobre las dificultades internas de la **Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration**;²³ así como las de Robert Claiborne relacionadas con la puesta en vigor en la Isla de la legislación federal sobre salario mínimo.²⁴

De 1938 en adelante, la correspondencia entre Ruby Black y Luis Muñoz Marín fue cada vez más escasa. Esto quizás obedeció a que el dirigente estaba enfrascado en la lucha política que culminó ese mismo año en la fundación del Partido Popular Democrático. Algunas de sus cartas aluden a este proceso como, por ejemplo, la que data del 16 de noviembre:

Let me give you a general idea of my work here. The Popular Democratic Party progresses and registration is based on the bulk of the liberal electors, with some socialists and republicans. It is a long job but not a difficult one. After the party is registered completely, I intend to have rural committees in 77 towns as other parties have. I am not merely trying to organize a party for electoral action: I am trying to organize the people for democracy.²⁵

Las virtudes del apoliticismo obrero

También en su carta del 5 de abril de 1938 discute la situación política prevaleciente en Puerto Rico, especialmente el papel jugado por el movimiento obrero norteamericano en la huelga de los muelles de ese año.²⁶ A raíz de estos sucesos, Muñoz establece la relación que considera debe existir entre movimiento obrero y partido político:

In the meanwhile a very strong new element has entered into the

21. Presidente Franklin D. Roosevelt al senador Luis Muñoz Marín, 17 de diciembre de 1934, cartapacio VIII-B, doc. 265.

22. Cartas de Jesús T. Piñero a Ruby Black del 15 y 25 de octubre y del 13 de noviembre de 1935, cartapacio XI, docs. 203, 207 y 218.

23. Véase, por ejemplo, Earl Parker Hanson a Ruby Black, 27 de octubre de 1936, cartapacio X, doc. 138.

24. Véase, por ejemplo, Robert Claiborne a Ruby Black, 23 de marzo de 1939, cartapacio XIII, doc. 58.

25. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 16 de noviembre de 1938, cartapacio XII, doc. 127.

26. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 5 de abril de 1938, cartapacio XII, doc. 33.

situation on which I would like to consult you particularly - C.I.O. Under C.I.O. a very successful dock strike was carried out. **La Democracia** was the only paper that supported the strike 100% and did all it could to get public opinion on the side of the workers. The C.I.O. leaders, both from the states and down here, consulted with me occasionally on tactics. The C.I.O. has the special virtue here of being non-partisan while the A.F.L. as you know, is merely a tool of the job-seeking socialist politicians. A wise C.I.O. movement in sugar, especially the factories, in railroad and motor transportation, would create a real labor defense in Puerto Rico in which workers could join without consideration of their political affiliation.

I should like to do all I could to this end, as being good for the workers, and as helping to develop a more effective democracy. I am of course conscious of the fact that I can not go directly into the C.I.O. work unless I decide that that end and not political leadership is my job. As long as I do not take this decision I shall be careful not to involve C.I.O. activities with my party. A labor movement adjoined to one political party is just as bad as a labor movement adjoined to another.²⁷

El aliado mayor

Finalmente, en las cartas de 1940 se deja sentir la inminencia de una plena participación de los Estados Unidos en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. En su carta del 3 de diciembre a Muñoz Marín y Jesús T. Piñero, Ruby Black recalca la importancia de que el Partido Popular Democrático, a raíz de su reciente triunfo electoral, se pronuncie a favor de la defensa de la democracia y de la solidaridad hemisférica.²⁸ Ya en una carta del mes de enero del mismo año, Luis Muñoz Marín había elogiado la labor del Almirante Leahy, percibiendo con gran claridad los objetivos de su gobierno a la luz del papel destacado que habría de jugar la Isla en el esfuerzo de guerra de los Estados Unidos.²⁹

En conclusión, le advierto al lector que estas notas no agotan el rico contenido de la Colección. En realidad, sólo paladean una fracción de una documentación más amplia y compleja que servirá para descubrir algunos resortes ignorados del discurso populista en gestación o para precisar los orígenes de conceptos ideológicos y estrategias políticas que luego sufrieron la prueba de urgencias imprevistas y de tensiones mayores. Será, sin lugar a dudas, otro apoyo más para explicar la continuidad y los cambios del autonomismo contemporáneo en una coyuntura histórica crítica y decisiva.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Ruby Black a Luis Muñoz Marín y Jesús T. Piñero, 3 de diciembre de 1940, cartapacio XIV, doc. 32.

29. Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black, 8 de enero de 1940, cartapacio XIV, doc. 2.

Nota de redacción

Después de concluido este artículo se descubrieron en el Museo de Antropología, Historia y Arte de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 389 documentos que debieron pertenecer originalmente a esta Colección. Agradecemos a la directora del Museo, María del Carmen Ramírez y a Flavia Marichal de Dávila, curadora del mismo, la oportunidad de obtener fotocopia de dichos originales para completar la Colección confiada al CIH.

APENDICE I

Carta de Ruby Black a Luis Muñoz Marín

July 8, 1936.

Dear Luis (CC to Muna):

As your advisor on continental psychology, and your sponsor before the federal government for more than three long years, I feel that I must set forth what I consider (to quote you) "the most difficult situation I have ever met" with regard to Puerto Rico. I hope you will read this letter a couple of times, carefully, and think it over before replying or acting.

In these nearly four years, the following things have been accomplished, through my contacts and your intelligence and statesmanship:

1. You became the Puerto Rican whose advice was most highly regarded and most closely followed in Washington.

2. As a result, you accomplished unprecedented results for Puerto Rico - and the Liberal Party - which I need not here enumerate but which your memory will list.

3. The independence movement, which was considered here as negligible before this administration, became, before the Washington government, economically and intellectually respected, and acceptable to those in power as representing a fair and feasible solution to the problems of Puerto Rico and those of the United States in respect of Puerto Rico and of Latin America, as well as the decent recognition of the aspirations and the rights of a people.

4. The Liberal Party came to be recognized as the real defender, in Puerto Rico, of liberalism and economic reconstruction and the oponent of absentee landlordism rather than the defender of the "Spanish aristocrats" and "Anti-American element" and "political bossism" which it had been previously pictured as representing through many long years.

I think you cannot deny that these things have been accomplished. Nor, I think, can you deny that I had a slight part, as a pipe-line or communications system, in making them happen. So I ask you to take time to consider my point of view.

What now nearly brings me to despair is that I see all this laboriously and carefully built structure toppling. I can see my pipeline being stopped up, my communications wire out, and all the plans we made for Puerto Rico being smashed.

Here belongs and interpolation: Of course, this need not have happened but for the emotionalism and unreasoning state of mind of a former friend of ours - and what better argument for independence is there than the fact that the whim of one balked man can at all affect the future of 1,800,000 people?

But this interpolation is beside my present point. I put it in lest you erroneously think I forget that factor. These facts remain:

1. Puerto Rico still belongs to the United States, whether we like it or not.

2. Its future still depends upon having "friends at court", unfair as that may seem.

3. Its independence can be won only by peaceful negotiations of the kind for which you built the foundations because:

a. Our military and economic force is greater than yours.

b. Our silly national pride will not permit us to let go of any possession except with our free will and consent. (Remember that Aguinaldo did not win independence for the Philippines when he insurrected - only when he worked with men like Quezon and Osias on a friendly basis of economic relations).

c. We as a government - legislative, executive, judicial - will not recognize as legitimate and reasonable any movement for independence based upon law evasion, violence, or even "peaceful insurrection", since we feel that, as long as you are under our jurisdiction, you must obey our laws, and within certain limits, follow our civic mores.

From all these facts I conclude:

1. That, by "stopping the elections", even if you succeed, you will completely nullify the accomplishments numbered 1, 3, and 4, and seriously hamper the effects of the accomplishments numbered 2, because:

a. This is not a technique acceptable to our mores, or understandable to our strange minds.

b. Our governmental officials will consider you and your associates outlaws and "soreheads" who did not have the courage to make a fight when powerful forces were against you, and they will not for one instant believe that all those who did not vote favor independence.

c. The Liberal Party will be considered as extinct, and your influences as nil, and your virtual pledge to throw out those racketeers will be considered broken - not because you failed (you have had great influence although the leader of a legislative minority), but because you did not even try.

2. That, if you pursue your present course, there will be violence during the elections (because Liberals who support your stand will be there to stop other Liberals from voting, to heckle those who vote), and that, equally inevitably, this violence will be laid at your doorstep.

3. That you can no longer, on your own and through me, expect any support from any government official, and that you will have difficulty in getting even a thoughtful hearing.

Therefore, I hope that you, as a believer in democratic government and the right of a people or a party to go to heaven or hell in their own way, will accept the decision of the majority in the convention (if it should turn out that way), and say, in effect, "I still think I was right, but I accept the verdict of the majority. I will go out and fight to win with all the power that in me lies. If we fail, our principles live. We will still fight for independence and for economical justice. We have won many victories in the past four years even though our victory at the polls was stolen from us in 1932 and may be stolen from us in 1936." (Al margen aparece la nota siguiente: "Better to say it before convention.")

If course, I even think you should run for resident commissioner. Many a man has been licked once and risen to greater victories. I'm not yet sure you

would be defeated.

Parenthetically: Stell and I talked over this proposal, not quite in these words. At the end, I said, "Of course, he could not accept what we propose without various changes." She said, "So we should propose something slightly different in the hope that he will reach this conclusion." I agreed that this was so, but I have not the nature nor the time to work out devious and indirect means. I was never feminine or colonial. I can only propose what I think best, directly and openly, and hope that you will accept or will think of something better that will accomplish the same ends. The only ends I care about are you and Puerto Rico.

Another point: If you can do anything along these lines, do it, by all means, before YYY arrives so it will not look to him, or to Washington, or to Puerto Rico, as if he had influenced your decision.

I personally think, and Stell agrees with me, that independence will be delayed much longer by abstention from the elections than by a defeat of the party at elections in which huge slush funds have been used against you and independence. The hard fact is that you won't get independence without our consent. I have spent many thoughtful hours over the question, and I am sure the cause of independence will be immeasurably discredited by abstention from voting. Refusing to vote will just "prove" to congressmen that you are not fit for selfgovernment. I say this out of 12 years spent in learning the reactions of senators, congressmen, government officials, and taxi-drivers.

All this is written without consultation with anybody but Stell, not even Herb. It comes out of my deep-felt belief in you, Puerto Rico, and independence. I have not here tofore expressed these views to anybody. Nor have I expressed my view against abstention from elections to anybody except Stell in our conference today, and in talks with you before you left. I have not mentioned my opinion to Walter, although he talked against your stand.

This is in the nature of a footnote, and I hope it won't divert your mind from the important point of the letter.

JJJ reports that his information is that sentiment for independence is dwindling rapidly within the Liberal Party (doubtless learned from ALC, and doubtless H has told you this, since he was present at their conference.)

DDD is now determined to have the Liberals win the elections, and to have the group on our side to win in the democratic national committee. Of course, he could have earlier guaranteed both results easily if he had wanted to.

MMM is especially anxious to have Iglesias out.

I simply refuse to talk to him about you or about independence or about "statements". I told him bluntly in a dinner conference at his house (with Mrs. D., Mrs. C., and Mr. J. present) that I had done all I could do with Farley and his aides in connection with the national committeeman and committeewoman; that he could easily accomplish outsting the old committeeman if he would carry out the President's oft-repeated mandate, that no federal official should be on the national committee; and that I could not afford to put myself in the

position of having Farley and his associates want to run when they see me coming. They still stop, even in busy moments, and bring in up the subject of PR with me, and they must remain in that state of mind.

He still seems unwilling to do a damn thing to get his ends accomplished, wanting me to do the job. It is very important to him, now that Farley is out until after elections, and Bill Howes, whose secretary is a pal of Jean's, is acting postmaster general. I told him 10 days ago that would happen, and Tuesday the President announced that Howes would act in Jim's place during Jim's leave.

In other words, Ill wants the Liberals to win in PR and in the DNC but he wants somebody else to see that these things happen, without any of the effective aid he could give.

Well, this may be a valedictory - except for demands that La Democracia send me the more than \$600 it owes me and except for reporting the news as it happens to you and **La Democracia**.

As always,

APENDICE II

Carta de Luis Muñoz Marín a Ruby Black

September 25th, 1936

Dear Ruby,

Let me attempt to give the story in synopsis, with its background.

1. **BACKGROUND.** The Unionist Party was founded in 1904. Its platform then: independence, or autonomy, or statehood. This platform was useful to catch all kinds of voters. Then within half a dozen years of the founding of the party, autonomy and independence had gained definite adherents within the party. Statehood was dropped about that time, so that it never did much harm. The party almost split in 1915 on the independence - autonomy issue. It almost split again in 1923, on the same issue. When the Liberal Party was founded in 1932, there was for a while a dangerous split on this issue; but the straight independence program, which I wrote, was approved unanimously. Independence feeling has been growing, and autonomy feeling diminishing, for a number of years, this probably due to increasing economic suffering and to the continuous blunders of the Washington Government. While independence was at first an issue imposed by intellectuals because it could not be opposed without showing a lack of collective pride by others, it is now an issue believed in all over the island and sustained by local leadership.

2. **FLASHBACK.** The Roosevelt administration starts promising an economic reconstruction plan. The plan is shaped by a group in Puerto Rico, and accepted by the Administration. The Coalition parties oppose the plan tenaciously because it includes a readjustment in the sugar industry, decreasing the profits of the mills and increasing the incomes of the farmers and workers. In this fight the independence issue is temporarily overshadowed by the action of a Washington Government which evidently wishes to do economic justice to Puerto Rico. We do not forswear independence at that time because it happens that we believe in it fundamentally. The Administration knows this, so far as I am concerned, from the very first conversation I had with the President in your presence. But in backing and explaining the Administration, we certainly increased goodwill towards the United States enormously among the mass of our people.

3. In the course of these proceedings the Liberal Party, under my leadership, becomes increasingly liberal, so that only a very small group remains within the party in opposition to really liberal tendencies, besides which large numbers of the Socialist and Republican electorate begin leaning towards the new liberal leadership. Although the reconstruction planning begins much before the appointment of Ernest Gruening, the latter certainly gives strong support and invaluable help to the realization of reconstruction.

4. The stage is set for the elections of 1936. The liberal forces control the Liberal Party completely. And the Liberal Party, with many thousands of

Socialist and Republican votes, is going to sweep the elections with independence in its program, because it happens that we believe in it, but with reconstruction as the immediate issue.

5. Colonel Riggs is murdered by two fanatics, who are in turn stupidly lynched by the Police. Gruening expects me to make a statement about this. I believe that I will create a manner of civil war if I do. It is my judgment that I should not make such statement, and I don't make it. Plus that, in Puerto Rican psychology it is not expected of me to make such a statement, and the proof of that is that no Puerto Rican newspaper requests its Washington representative to ask me for a statement on the subject. However, for the sake of understanding the picture, it is no necessary to believe that my judgment was correct. It can be assumed that my judgment was incorrect and that I should have made such statement.

6. Two months elapse. Gruening continues to consult with me on diverse economic matters. But suddenly the Tydings independence bill is presented as an Administration measure. This bill says to Puerto Ricans that independence can be of their own choosing and it paints a picture of hunger and horror as necessarily connected with independence. Nothing could have been more accurately designed to split the Liberal Party, to bring back its small reactionary group into influence and control, than this threat of independence with hunger, and ruin, and destruction. Nothing, at the same time, could have given the really liberal forces a more dramatic and ghastly sense of total irresponsibility by the Washington government than the sudden presentation of such a bill. Result, a new power for the reactionary element in and out of the Liberal Party; a keener sense of the necessity of being free from such sudden gusts of irresponsibility by the liberal and independence elements in and out of the Liberal Party. The Tydings Bill was of course written by some petit lawyer under Gruening supervision, perhaps with suggestions from Tydings.

7. The moment the Tydings Bill is presented, the Liberal Party has the election as good as lost and the liberal elements in the Liberal Party have their power threatened. It so happens that those that believe in independence are, with a slight overlapping, those that believe in the New Deal and in economic justice; and that those that are against independence, also with a small overlapping, are those that are against the New Deal and economic justice through (ilegible) and exploitation of selfish economic interests. Therefore, at one stroke Gruening (but oficially the Administration) has placed control of the elective part of the Puerto Rican Government, for a number of years to come, in the hands of the anti-liberal, anti-economic justice and anti-New Deal element, and has considerably weakened the liberalism of the Liberal Party, which was the only remaining engine for the protection of these helpless masses down here. Thus, Ernest Gruening, with years of liberalism as his background is solely responsible, through a lunatic quirk of his mind, for having released the greatest reaction that Puerto Rico has known for years.

8. Faced with this situation, and after several minor attempts at correcting it, such as the presentation of the Resolution to study the economic relationships mutually beneficial to the United States and Puerto Rico under independence,

I come to the conclusion that the only way of protecting the integrity of the liberal forces is by withdrawing from the elections, a device that frees our mass-strength from the influence of huge sums of money to be spent in the purchase of votes if the liberal forces remain in control of the Liberal Party. This proposal is defeated by one vote in the Convention of July 26, which is regarded by everyone here as a tremendous victory, because to ask a political party to withdraw from elections is equivalent to asking Don Juan to become a monk (which of course he eventually does, when it is too late). Popular feeling far outruns the delegate strength.

9. As the Convention of August 16 approaches, tremendous forces are exerted to nominate reactionary candidates. In spite of this, I had a majority of the delegates to that Convention. Here a trick I have explained in my Manifesto of September 8th is played, as a result of which all the progressive candidates had to resign and all the reactionary of low grade candidates were nominated. Of course I was not a candidate in any case, but Jones could have been nominated; instead Lopez Antongiorgi was. Not only that, but the Central Committee of the party was selected illegally, twenty-four hours after the Convention was closed, by a small group at the offices of the President of the party, with an enormous majority of reactionary elements (which in Puerto Rico also happens to mean anti-independentists). Then comes the meeting which was attended by two hundred and fifty-three town leaders, men known to mobilize considerably more than half of the Liberal electorate. This meeting, at Coamo, unanimously approves a Resolution, and every leader signs it, saying that unless the program of the Liberal Party with regard to independence and economic justice were protected by adequate representation in its Central Committee, they would lead their forces to active and militant "Retraimiento" (withdrawing from the elections). At this point it became apparent that two influences were at work to ride us out of the Liberal Party, even in the face of the certainty of ignominious defeat at the polls.

1. The sugar industry, which does not care who wins but is interested in making all political parties in Puerto Rico equally harmless to its interest, and
2. The third-grade leaders who have come to the front and who know that unless I am politically killed before Barcelo dies, they will have to go back to being third-grade leaders.

In the weeks following the August 16th Convention, I always remain open to any reasonable proposal for the reestablishing party solidarity, while protecting the platform of the party. As a test I made a proposal that would not have been accepted by the leaders that were backing me because it was a complete surrender to the reactionary group. I made it knowing that it would not be accepted in order to have that group on record as deliberately wishing to hand the party over the reactionaries, even at the cost of splitting it. The proposal was not accepted. Then I called my supporters into Convention at Caguas. The first Convention had included only town leaders. The Caguas Convention included town and ward leaders. It was attended by nine hundred delegates, being more than four times as large as the regular Liberal Convention. They were strong for splitting the party. My mental process at that

time is as follows: "About one third of the party is against me because they believe I am mistaken in my procedure, but they still believe in me; they don't hold me in deep hatred. If I split the party, I shall have these people against me for the next thirty years; if I preserve the solidarity of the party of my own volition, and even against the proven wishes of the other group, I shall have all these people with me for ever, or at least ninety nine percent of them". On this basis, I have a Resolution proposed, protecting the program of the party, not with a handful of new members in the Central Committee but with the founding of what is to all intents and purposes the structure of a new political party. "Acción Social Independentista", with machinery in every town and every ward in the island and with enormous prestige among the masses; and on this basis I cooperate in the futile elections of 1936. My cooperation, as well as the cooperation of the nine hundred leaders assembled in Caguas, does not mean that we think that the elections will signify anything, whoever wins, but that we wish to preserve the unity of the mass for the really important work that is to be done in the next few years. During the first days of October every committee of "ASI" (Thus) will be organized on the island. ASI will take no action during the elections but will be ready for action after the elections. It is not limited to Liberals. Anyone that believes in its program of independence and economic liberalism is eligible to join.

10. In the meantime Gruening has acquired such a deep prejudice against independence, originating in the fact that I did not give a statement about Riggs, that he begins handing the whole machinery of the PRRA to the reactionaries that opposed its creation, that sabotaged every New Deal measure in Puerto Rico and that had repeatedly insulted him, and Roosevelt, and Ickes, through their newspaper publicity. I do not mean strictly that he is handing it over to the Coalition. He is handing it over to the reactionaries, whether Coalitionists or Liberals, and, of course, such reactionaries abound more in the Coalition. Besides this, he has brought to life in virulent form the old servility that the first three years of the Roosevelt Administration had done so much to destroy; language referring to 100% loyal Americanism, etc., etc., etc. is now heard on the lips of stupid selfseekers and skulduggery artists, who don't know what loyalty to anything means. "Agents provocateurs" induce people to declare for independence so that their jobs may be endangered. Reserve officers are questioned as to their belief in independence as if it were incompatible to believe in independence by constitutional means and at the same time be loyal to their trust, if they accept their trust. An independence test is set up for employment in Reconstruction which I, an avowed independence leader, was trusted to help create. This is vigorously denied, but is nevertheless absolutely true. Of course always some petty excuse is found; but the reality is that the man responsible for an Administration Bill giving Puerto Ricans the opportunity to choose independence is having the belief in independence punished and discriminated against at every turn. In this, of course, Gruening is closely allied with the old fool (La Fortaleza). It is an alliance between imbecile militarism and mentally prostituted liberalism. I have proof of every assertion that I make, it is going to be very difficult to make

the world believe in the honesty of the proposed plebiscite, although I think that with "Acción Social Independentista" we can win a plebiscite even under dishonest conditions; but should it take place and be lost, the prestige of the United States will not be enhanced thereby. Of course I believe, literally, that Gruening is crazy. I venture the prophecy (and no prophecy of mine has gone wrong as yet) that within one year he will be in an insane asylum. The symptoms are clear: violent action towards vague objectives and with absurdly insufficient motives. The whole work of the Roosevelt Administration is undone. Ill-will towards the United States, save in the cases of job-holders or job-seeking sycophants, has enormously increased. Independence feeling, in spite of my efforts is taking an unfriendly tinge towards U.S. The liberal phases of Reconstruction, save a few paternalistic gestures as to the proper food to eat, etc., etc., etc., are rapidly disappearing. It will take very little time for it to become the most reactionary organization ever known in Puerto Rico. Sycophancy is at a premium. Honesty of conviction is persecuted and punished; the moral tone of public life is being lowered to levels unknown under Harding. If a great political and economic movement is underway it is due to the personal prestige of leaders that follow me and is happening in spite of all else that goes on. The motivation for all this? I refused to give a statement. Assuming that I was wrong, that I should have given it, that hardly is a cause even for personal revenge against me; but assuming this to be sufficient cause in certain types of mind for personal revenge, it is certainly what a psychiatrist will call wholly insufficient motivation for the results described above. It is like shooting a thousand men because one man refuses to lend you his pencil, or even to give you back your own pencil.

And so ends the most glorious, the most fairminded, the most generous, and the most dastardly four years of the American regime in Puerto Rico.

*Luis
(rúbrica)*