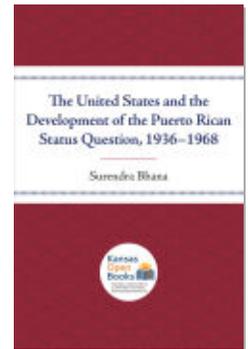




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AND THE DEVELOPMENT
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STATUS QUESTION
1936-1968**

THE UNITED STATES
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OF THE PUERTO RICAN
STATUS QUESTION
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by Surendra Bhana

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To

DON McCOY

friend and mentor

Acknowledgments

The question of Puerto Rican status has never ceased to be debated by the people of the Caribbean island since it was acquired by the United States in 1898. Why, then, begin the study in 1936? The date represents the beginnings of a significant departure in the debate. The murder of Col. E. Francis Riggs, the Tydings independence bill, and the split in the Liberal party created conditions for the birth of the *Partido Popular Democrático*, the party of Luis Muñoz Marín that was to deviate from the "either independence or statehood" approach and to implement the Commonwealth. The study traces the development of the new status up to 1968.

Puerto Rico achieved rapid progress in its political autonomy within the scope of the study. The major portion of the book is devoted to its discussion. The formulation and implementation of the Commonwealth status, however, is highlighted, for it is within this brilliant and unique experiment in federalism that the Puerto Ricans have attempted to accommodate their economic needs and wants and to satisfy their sense of *dignidad*. Its great merit, of course, is that it is not irrevocable. If in the future Puerto Ricans should decide upon some other form of status arrangement, they can draw upon the fruits of past debate on the question.

I enjoyed sharing in the debate, thanks to Donald R. McCoy, who originally suggested the study of the topic. My debt to Professor McCoy extends beyond that, however. He wisely guided me in the original research, and later advised in the revision and expansion of the work.

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