

This could not have happened without the situation we have described. But the importance of the leadership should not be underestimated. Albizu came forward as the movement's brilliant and courageous leader at a moment when the influx of the people into the independence movement required precisely such brilliant and courageous leadership. The pitiless persecution he has suffered ever since has been the highest recognition of this fact. That he did not succeed in leading Puerto Rico into independence could not be charged to any incapacity on his part.

Somewhere else I have pointed out that during the two different periods of his leadership Albizu led the independence movement during two corresponding periods of imperialist development and world reaction: first during the period of the rise of fascism and then during the period when U. S. imperialism reached the summits of atomic monopoly power. These two periods were from May, 1930, when he was elected his party's president, to June 7, 1937, when he entered the Atlanta Penitentiary, and from December 15, 1947, when he came back home, to November 2, 1950, when he was again taken into custody.

In this particularly difficult situation, his party and his leadership were additionally crippled by the absence of a regularly developed Marxist movement in Puerto Rico. It was too late in Puerto Rican history for the national bourgeoisie to take the full leadership --most of it was already compromised by collaboration with the foreign oppressor--and the lack of a Marxist ally accentuated the petty bourgeois shortcomings of the whole situation. Albizu himself, with all of his genius, was a bourgeois leader without a bourgeoisie to follow him.

A few facts about the Nationalist Party's mass character and vanguard role follow: Under its pressure, another and more conservative petty bourgeois party (the Liberal, later to be transformed into the Popular Party) was organized. In the 1932 election, the Popular Party gained thirty-six per cent of the electorate and in 1936, forty-eight per cent. Under the Nationalist Party's pressure, the Republican Party (traditionally a colonial appendage to the American G.O.P.) added "independence" to its program.

After a strong campaign of the Nationalists, the Asociacion de Colonos de Cana* was organized. The Nationalists' campaign to expose

* An organization of small farmers. They own land, but are totally dependent on the big corporations' sugar "central" to get their cane ground and prepared for market. The central further dominates him by loaning him money on his crop in advance of his harvest.

and discredit Governor Colonel Theodore Roosevelt led to his removal in 1932.

In 1934, workers in the sugar fields went on a spontaneous strike. Shaking the shackles of the A.F.L., the workers at Fajardo (the Armstrong, New York, sugar empire which had been an A.F.L. stronghold since the start of the century) kicked out the collaborationist A.F.L. leaders and called Albizu to lead the strike to victory, which he did. Following this, Albizu led the whole industry strike into which the Fajardo outburst had spread.

Finally, with anti-Nationalist repression at its highest peak, the U. S. Court indicted Albizu Campos and seven other party leaders in April, 1936. And his followers raised thousands of dollars by collections of nickels and dimes from the broad masses and paid the million dollar bail on the very day of the indictment.

THE CADETS

The youth organization of the Nationalist Party was called the Army of Liberation--or Cadets of the Republic. They wore white pants, black shirts (symbolizing mourning for the country's colonial bondage), and overseas caps. Some of the battalions (groups, in reality, as there was no regularity in the numbers) used wooden rifles for drilling and parades.

Officers wore white pants and a white coat over a black shirt and a tie, and a regular officer's cap. They also used parade swords.

The girls' organization was called the Women's Auxiliary Corps, and their uniform was a skirt, blouse, and cap, with colors matching the uniform of the Cadets.

ALBIZU CAMPOS

Pedro Albizu Campos was born at Barrio de Tenerias, a rural area in the neighborhood of Ponce on "the Day of Saint Peter and Saint Paul", as he was fond of repeating, in 1891. He was seven years old when the U.S. invaders went through his native city late in July, 1898.

He received his early education in the public schools of Ponce, up to high school. At that time a scholarship offered to the brilliant teenager by the Logia Aurora (Ponce's Freemasons) enabled him to go to college at the University of Vermont.

It was during his studies at Vermont that two Harvard professors, while teaching a summer course there, took note of his talents. Because his scholarship did not cover his full college education, the Harvard