

● PS7 Confidential file: Puerto Rico

Box 8

Private

*(B.F.)*  
Puerto Rico

February 3, 1942

Dear Rex:

It is good to get yours of January 29th and I hope the sinus is all well again.

I am not at all surprised at what you say. Frankly, I get no complaints and no objections except from Bolivar Pagan and I am afraid he is wholly a politician. Senator Marin is far more disinterestedly working for the good of the people of Puerto Rico.

x  
\*<sup>LEAD</sup>  
\*PP-7155

One thing occurs to me which I would like to have you look into. There is, of course, a real shortage of sugar because so much of it will have to go into alcohol. No one knows how long it will be before this shortage suddenly becomes a surplus, but in all human probability, there will be need for increased sugar production this year and next year. Is it possible to take certain land now owned by the sugar companies and which has never produced cane, and plant sugar on it on the basis of government ownership of the land and a rental system to small holders, the sugar to be marketed cooperatively and ground and refined through one of the existing centrals?

x389

x241  
x1414  
x311  
x227-1

Perhaps you will think it wiser not to produce any more sugar in view of the temporary nature of the demand. But if we could produce some of it through small land holdings, it would point the way toward the breaking up of the large absentee landlord land holdings.

As ever yours,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Honorable R. G. Tugwell,  
Governor of Puerto Rico,  
San Juan, Puerto Rico.

fdr/dj

x400 Puerto Rico



LA FORTALEZA

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

January 29 1942

OFFICE OF THE  
GOVERNOR

THE WHITE HOUSE  
FEB 2 10 45 AM '42  
RECEIVED

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

The Navy doctor who has been looking after a bad sinus infection I acquired in Washington last month said to me yesterday, "Puerto Ricans would poison their grandmothers just to be nasty to someone -- if they didn't have American Governors to turn all the hate on." I looked at him in some amazement, because although he has been in the Navy for 27 years, he was born here -- in fact, his father was a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. "Yes," he said, "you're letting it worry you, and you mustn't. I know these people. I used to be one of them. But when I retire it's going to be out near the Naval Hospital in Washington, not here."

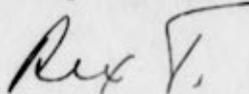
But he was wrong. I'm not letting it worry me any more than any Governor of Puerto Rico would need to worry now. I was sorry to see the navy dependents go, but I understand the reason. The fact that the army women were not sent, too, saved us from civilian hysteria about it all. But hysteria is a daily problem in this crowded island and every day I have to dampen it down.

I have had no trouble about Civil Defense except in San Juan where Bolivar Pagan's cohorts saved themselves in the last election from the defeat they got everywhere else. But, of course, it isn't very important anywhere else. For a month I sat and watched them trade jobs and graft and then I fired the whole lot and appointed an administrator, who is doing very well. I hear they are sending a delegation to the States and that Bolivar is sounding off -- calls me a Quisling, I hear. Just what the connection is, I don't know. But it makes a good paragraph for the papers who don't love us any more than ever, even if there is a war.

Our Legislature meets in two weeks. I think I told you that Munoz-Marin has control by about one vote in each house. But it is a well-disciplined majority. And we expect to do a lot of business. I am well aware that our sugar friends and the coalitionists have been hoping to stop the Puerto Rican New Deal with martial law. I had not thought it necessary to speak to you about it. But if something of the sort comes your way, you will recognize its origin.

Collins of the Army and Hoover of the Navy meet daily with me in my office. There is good understanding all round. And, I think, you can count on solid discipline from the whole works here -- including the people, for 90 per cent of them are wholly with us.

Most respectfully yours,



R. G. Tugwell  
Governor

*G. F.*  
*Puerto Rico*

OFFICE OF THE  
GOVERNOR



LA FORTALEZA  
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO  
February 11, 1942

THE WHITE HOUSE  
FEB 13 11 57 AM '42  
RECEIVED

*file*

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

*x241*  
*x892*

In your last letter you made a suggestion which had to do both with the increase in sugar production and with the division of large estates into small holdings. I do not know that we can proceed in exactly the way you suggest, but we have programs well under way for accomplishing the results you have in mind. If Providence allows us a few years to work them out, I think, the end results will be satisfactory; and I am sure that both the production of sugar and foodstuffs this year will be greater than ever achieved in Puerto Rico before.

The regular session of the Puerto Rican Legislature began yesterday, and we have a considerable program of legislation running all the way from Civilian Defense to the establishment of a Transportation Authority, touching in between on reorganization of the Civil Service Commission and other such matters. The first act of the Legislature was to pass unanimous resolutions, which I am convinced were genuinely meant, of support for our war efforts and for your own leadership.

The politicians of the Coalitionist party continue to belabor me, but I guess I simply have to take it. I tried appeasement a little earlier and found it too expensive -- they wanted everything. These attacks are the blackmail which I was promised if I did not comply.

I hope you are finding time once in a while to go to Hyde Park and look at your trees. I know what about three days of that does for you -- even at the worst of times.

Most respectfully yours,

*R. G. Tugwell*

R. G. Tugwell  
Governor

*x400 Puerto Rico*

*L. F.*  
*Puerto Rico*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 23, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR *x6*

I see no reason why the F.B.I. *x10-D*  
should not investigate the suggestion of  
Rex's that Delegate Pagan has an unlimited  
drawing account in Washington which is  
put up by the sugar lobbyists. *x911*

*x* As I remember it, Pagan only  
sits in the Congress as a matter of courtesy,  
which can be revoked at any time. Further-  
more, I think he is selected by the Puerto  
Rican Legislature and not by popular vote.

What do you think?

F.D.R.

*x407-D*  
Note from the Secretary of the Interior, 2/20/42,  
to the President, enclosing photostatic copy of  
letter he received from Hon. R. G. Tugwell, Governor  
of Puerto Rico, 2/17/42. Refers to strikes in  
sugar industry. States he is aware that Pagan in  
Washington had an unlimited drawing account with the  
sugar producers association and that attempts, serious  
ones, were being made to bore into Army, Navy, Interior  
and Agriculture.

*x241*  
*x400 Puerto Rico*



*file*  
*C. F.*  
*Puerto Rico*

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE  
FEB 25 10 54 AM '42  
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February 25, 1942.

My dear Mr. President:

My Solicitor's Office advises me that Pagan has the courtesy of a seat in the House of Representatives by virtue of a rule of that House, and, of course, rules may be amended. He has no constitutional or statutory right, although he has certain statutory rights, as, for instance, that of the franking privilege.

I like your suggestion of asking the FBI to investigate him and I am writing to Mr. Hoover to that effect.

*x10-73*

Sincerely yours,

*Harold I. Fisher*

Secretary of the Interior.

*x6*

The President,  
The White House.

**SOLIVAR PAGÁN**  
RESIDENT COMMISSIONER  
PUERTO RICO  
SUITE 437, HOUSE OFFICE BLDG.  
HOME ADDRESS:  
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

*fill*

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, D. C.

*26-26*

MEMBER OF COMMITTEES  
ON  
INSULAR AFFAIRS  
AGRICULTURE  
LABOR  
TERRITORIES  
NAVAL AFFAIRS  
MILITARY AFFAIRS

*New Nation*

February 21, 1942.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
FEB 23 9 09 AM '42  
RECEIVED

*Handwritten*

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt  
President of the United States  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

About two months ago when I had a conference with you at the White House, you suggested me that upon my going over to Puerto Rico for the Christmas holidays I might gather full information about conditions in Puerto Rico, especially about Governor Tugwell's administration, so that I might bring the matter to your consideration later.

The present conditions in Puerto Rico are in such a mess and bad shape, mainly affecting the desirable unity of the Island's people during the duration of the war effort, that I feel it is my duty to urgently report the situation to you.

Will you please tell me when I may call at the White House for a few minutes to talk about conditions in Puerto Rico?

With my highest consideration and respect, Mr. President, I remain,

Very respectfully yours,

*Solivar Pagan*

- Thurs*
2. Commissioner Pagan, Puerto Rico, writes that the President suggested around Christmas that he gather full information on conditions in Puerto Rico, particularly with reference to Tugwell administration. He states present conditions there are in such a mess and bad shape, mainly affecting unity of Island's people during war, that he feels it his urgent duty to report situation to the President.

x  
x 400 P.R.