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## FEDERAL SURVEILLANCE OF THE PARTIDO INDEPENDENTISTA PUERTORRIQUEÑO



This collection highlights the FBI's efforts to disrupt the activities of the largest of the Puerto Rican independence parties, Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño, and compromise their effectiveness. In addition, these documents provide an insightful documentary history and analysis of why independence was the second-largest political movement in the island, (after support for commonwealth status), and a real alternative. These documents provide invaluable additions to the recorded history of Puerto Rico.

**Date Range:** 1941-1982

**Content:** 10,083 images

**Source Library:** Federal Bureau of Investigation HQ Library; U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command

### **Detailed Description:**

Puerto Rico, a commonwealth of the United States, has strong pro-statehood and pro-commonwealth movements, the latter made up of those who want to keep the status quo or some modified version of it. But in the 1930's, 1940's and early 1950's, the independence movement was much more widespread than it is today, and ranged from legal political parties to violent militant groups.

The Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (PIP) began as the electoral wing of the Puerto Rican independence movement. The party was founded on October 20, 1946 by Gilberto Concepción de Gracia. He felt the independence movement had been "betrayed" by the Partido Popular Democrático, whose ultimate goal had originally been independence.

PIP is the largest of the independence parties, and the only one that is on the ballot during elections (other candidates must be added in by hand). In 1948, two years after being founded, the PIP gathered 10.2 per cent of the votes in the island. In 1952, two years after an armed uprising of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, it obtained 19 per cent of the votes, its highest electoral support ever, which made it the second electoral party on the island for a moment.

FBI surveillance of the independence movement and its militant wings began in the late 1930s. By the 1940s, the FBI had a full-scale surveillance effort underway due to its lean towards socialism and at times, communism. For many Americans, they did not become aware of the independence struggle until November 1, 1950, when two Puerto Rican nationalists tried to shoot their way into Blair House, where President Truman was living while the White House was being remodeled. Mr. Truman was not injured, but one of the Puerto Ricans and a White House guard were killed in the gunfire. From this point until the 1970s, the FBI targeted Puerto Rican political parties and their members.

FBI surveillance of the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño was extensive. The COINTELPRO program was extended to include both this party and many of its leading political figures and rank-and-file members. This collection includes FBI surveillance and informant reports and correspondence from a variety of FBI offices including San Juan, New York City, Miami, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, Boston, and New Haven. In addition, there are excerpts from intercepted correspondence; Justice Department memoranda, correspondence, and analyses; newsclippings and articles; copies of handbills, pamphlets, and newsletters; Extremist Intelligence Section reports; speech excerpts. There are also documents that have been made available from the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command. These documents include materials from the 771st Military Intelligence Detachment, Headquarters U.S. Army Forces Antilles, and U.S. Army Criminal Investigative Division; and, 1940s Military Intelligence Division reports. There are a few materials from the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Many of these documents have been very recently declassified (November-December 2010 and April-May 2011).