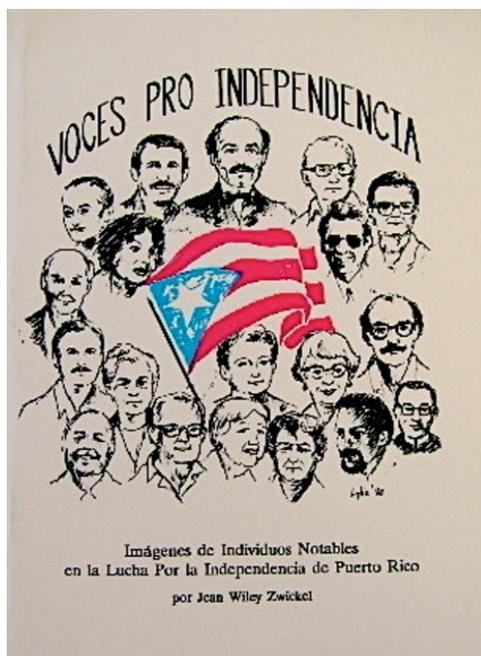


Voices for Independence:

In the Spirit of Valor and Sacrifice



Portraits of Notable Individuals
in Support of Puerto Rican Independence

by Jean Wiley Zwickel



White Star Press
Vallejo, California, U.S.



1. Don Pedro Albizu Campos

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 2. Oscar Collazo | 3. Irvin Flores |
| 4. J. Benjamín Torres | 5. Pedro Aponte |
| 6. Bishop Parilla | 7. Nefalí García |
| 8. Rosa Collazo | 9. Arturo Meléndez |
| 10. Ruth Reynolds | 11. Blanca Canales |
| 12. Francisco Matos | 13. Juan Mari Brás |
| 14. Isabel Rosado | 15. Jorge Farinacci |
| 16. Jacinto Rivera | 17. Laura Albizu |
| 18. Antonio Negrón | 19. Rafael Cancel |

Voices from the Present

This book is a refreshing addition to the growing number of voices calling for peace, justice and independence.

— Matt Meyer, National Chairperson, War Resisters League

“Voices for Independence” is a fine collection of biographical sketches of a wide range of proponents of Puerto Rican independence. The author seems to have captured in good fashion the spirit, shape and substance of the independence movement through these portraits of representative figures of that movement.

The book reflects her long interest in and commitment to the cause of the *independentistas*, but the passion of the convinced is expressed in reasoned, restrained and persuasive fashion.

“Voices for Independence” is a vital and valuable introduction to an important movement and a crucial issue.

—Richard Chartier, Baptist minister,
former United Methodist missionary to Argentina,
and editor Fellowship magazine

The Peacemaker newsletter, beginning with its inception in the late forties, has been sympathetic from its nonviolent perspective to the anti-colonial struggle of the Puerto Rican independence movement. Fortunately, the newsletter has benefitted over the years from the regular reports of Jean Zwickel, a close observer of and participant in the Puerto Rican scene who shares *The Peacemaker's* nonviolent orientation. I look forward to her *Voices* as a book to be trusted to give us the human side of a much misunderstood political movement.

—Paul Encimer, editor *The Peacemaker*

Jean Zwickel has performed a valuable service by chronicling the many and varied voices for liberation in Puerto Rico. These are the voices all too seldom heard by those of us on the mainland—those of us who forget that the United States, just as much as the states of Europe, has a history of colonial oppression.

—Rev. Dr. David Sammons (Minister Emeritus),
Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church,
Walnut Creek, California

These well-written essays help the reader enter into the complexities and premises of the liberation struggle in Puerto Rico, and to draw lessons from those encounters that should be useful elsewhere.

—Rev. Robert McAfee Brown,
Pacific School of Religion,
Berkeley, California

“... her wonderful book is causing a furor among us with knowledge of the deep roots of the struggle, dignity and independence of Puerto Rico, because those in our midst often believe that Puerto Rico is fully absorbed into the American Empire. But we who live on the beautiful island of *Borinquen* know that is not so. This is why her book is an educational and motivating book in the grand struggle of the indomitable Puerto Rican people.”

—The Right Rev. Tito Mora, Bishop
Episcopal Church of Columbia

“Voices for Independence” is a swift reminder to all Americans that, despite our modernity in many ways, our political position in regard to Puerto Rico is archaic. This book serves to educate us on the needs and desires of the Puerto Rican people to express themselves in self-determination and independence.

—Edward Asner, actor

Areas Controlled by the United States

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Communications | 9. Banking system |
| 2. Port | 10. Environment |
| 3. Currency | 11. Social Security |
| 4. Immigration | 12. Internal security |
| 5. Travel customs | 10. Military service |
| 6. Trade | 12. Judicial system |
| 7. Postal system | 13. Foreign relations |
| 8. Transportation | |

—Ecumenical Committee for the Future of Puerto Rico

Voices from the Past

When a long train of abuses and usurpations threaten to bring that people under Absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such a government.

—Declaration of Independence

If it were possible to open the heart of every Puerto Rican and if it were possible to see the collective soul of the million human beings who inhabit this forgotten rock, we would see there written in indelible letters the word “independence”.

—Luis Muñoz Marín
First elected governor of Puerto Rico

Only Anglo-Saxons can govern themselves.... It is the Anglo-Saxon manifest destiny to go forth as a world conqueror. He will take possession of the islands of the sea.... This is what fate holds for the chosen people.

—William Allen White, Emporia Gazette

God Himself never made a race of people so low in the scales of civilization that it welcomes a foreign master.

—William Jennings Bryan

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable.

—Thomas Jefferson

Voices for Independence:

In the Spirit of Valor and Sacrifice

Jean Wiley Zwickel

Zwickel * White Star Press

Cover & “map” by Lydia Collazo

Copyright © 1988, 1991, 1993, 1998 by Jean Zwickel
Second Edition Copyright © 2014 by Daniel B. Zwickel
Daniel B. Zwickel, publisher & editor
Jean Wiley Zwickel, Publisher Emeritus

Zwickel * White Star Press
1825 Sonoma Blvd., Suite 427, Vallejo, California 94590-6063
(925) 439-7638 * Daniel@peacehost.net * www.WhiteStarPress.us

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photo-copying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN-13: 978-1497332126

ISBN-10: 1497332125

Printing history:

First printing (English) 1988

Second printing (Spanish) 1991

Third printing (English) 1993

Electronic publication (English & Spanish) March, 1998

Second English Edition, revised 2014

Printed by CreateSpace, an Amazon company

From the House of Representatives of the United States Congress

H.J.RES.218

“Self-determination for Puerto Rico”

Whereas the move toward the elimination of colonialism in all parts of the world is now irreversible; and

Whereas this is in full accord with the commitment of the people of the United States in the Declaration of Independence of 1776 to the principle that all colonial peoples had the inalienable right to self-determination and the right to assume their place as sovereign states among the nations of the world, as well as the mandate of the 13th amendment to the Constitution of the United States that the status of inferiority for any people be forthwith abolished; and

Whereas the practices of the United States with respect to Puerto Rico have been developed in open contradiction to the principles upon which this Nation was founded, as was stated by Mr. Justice Harlan in his dissenting opinion in the Insular Cases, *Downes versus Bidwell* (1901), “The idea that this country may acquire territories anywhere upon the Earth by conquest or treaty, and hold them as mere colonies or provinces—the people inhabiting them to enjoy only such rights as Congress chooses to accord to them—is wholly

inconsistent with the spirit and genius, as well as with the words of the Constitution;” Now therefore, be it

Resolved, ...

TRANSFER OF POWERS

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress of the United States to comply with the sovereign rights of the people of Puerto Rico and its adjacent islands, as defined in the Treaty of Paris of December 1898, and therefore the sovereign rights of the People of Puerto Rico to freely decide their political status without any intervention whatsoever of any government and/or force foreign to said people. It is hereby further declared to be the policy of the Congress of the United States that this process of self-determination should comply with the requirements adopted by the United Nations in its charter and in the several resolutions and decisions concerning decolonization specifically relating to Puerto Rico.

It is further declared hereby that the United States of America recognizes that Puerto Rico constitutes a full-fledged Latin American nation, that in accordance with the American heritage of respect to the integrity and full sovereignty of all nations, the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico should follow the principles developed by the United Nations after the approval, twenty years ago, of the historic declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.

*[Portion of resolution introduced by Congressman Ronald Dellums
March 31, 1987]*

Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Adopted by General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960

The General Assembly,

Mindful of the determination proclaimed by the peoples of the world in the Charter of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Conscious of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples, and of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing the passionate yearning for freedom in all dependent peoples and the decisive role of such peoples in the attainment of their independence,

Aware of the increasing conflicts resulting from the denial of or impediments in the way of the freedom of such peoples, which constitute a serious threat to world peace,

Considering the important role of the United Nations in assisting the movement for independence in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories,

Recognizing that the peoples of the world ardently desire the end of colonialism in all its manifestations,

Convinced that the continued existence of colonialism prevents the development of international economic co-operation, impedes the social, cultural and economic development of dependent peoples and militates against the United Nations ideal of universal peace,

Affirming that peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law,

Believing that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith,

Welcoming the emergence in recent years of a large number of dependent territories into freedom and independence, and

recognizing the increasingly powerful trends towards freedom in such territories which have not yet attained independence,

Convinced that all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory,

Solemnly proclaims the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations;

And to this end Declares that:

1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.
2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
3. Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.
4. All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete

independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected.

5. Immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or color, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom.

6. Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

7. All States shall observe faithfully and strictly the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the present Declaration on the basis of equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of all States, and respect for the sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity.

(Source: <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/declaration.shtml>)

From the Committee on Decolonization of the United Nations Resolution

**[UNITED NATIONS] SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE
SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

Resolution adopted by the Special Committee at its 132nd meeting on 11 August 1987:

The Special Committee,

Recalling the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960,

Having examined the report of the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the implementation of the resolutions concerning Puerto Rico,

Recalling the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico and, in particular, the resolutions adopted in August of 1984, 1985, and 1986,

Conscious of the growing importance for the peoples and nations of Latin America of affirming their unity and cultural identity,

Recognizing the clearly Latin American character and identity of the people and culture of Puerto Rico,

Noting the widespread concern about the recent revelations, confirmed by judicial decisions and by statements of the current Administration of the Territory, that for decades there has been a systematic practice of discrimination and official persecution directed against tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans who support independence, in flagrant violation of their civil and political rights,

Bearing in mind the declarations concerning Puerto Rico adopted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at their Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government, held at Harare [Zimbabwe] from 1 to 6 September, 1986 and at their Special Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau on Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Georgetown [British Guiana] from 9 to 12 March, 1987,

Having listened to the statements of the representatives of the various trends of Puerto Rican public opinion, of the social and cultural organizations of Puerto Rico and of the representatives of political parties, social organizations and eminent Latin Americans,

1. Reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December, 1960, and the full applicability of the fundamental principles of that resolution with respect to Puerto Rico;
2. Expresses its hope, and that of the international community, that the people of Puerto Rico may exercise without hindrance its right to self-determination, with the express recognition of the people's sovereignty and full political equality, in conformity with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV);
3. Requests the Rapporteur to present a report to the Special Committee on the implementation of its resolutions concerning Puerto Rico;
4. Decides to keep the question of Puerto Rico under continuing review.

Table of Contents

Mark Twain on Imperialism	xxvi
Introduction by Congressman Ronald V. Dellums	xix
Foreword by Prof. Richard Levins	xx
A Note to Conservatives from Daniel Zwickel	xxii
<i>Dedicado a la Abuela Jean</i>	xxiii
<i>Una Canción — A Song For My Mother</i>	xxvi
Preface by Jean Zwickel	xxliii
1. Don Pedro Albizu Campos— Nationalist leader for independence	1
2. Laura Albizu Meneses— Albizu’s daughter and peace activist	6
3. J. Benjamín Torres— professor and biographer of Albizu Campos	7
4. Pedro Aponte Vázquez— educator, historian and journalist; investigator of the death of Albizu Campos	10
5. Gutiérrez del Arroyo Sisters— intimate friends of Albizu Campos	12

6. Jacinto Rivera Pérez— former president of the Nationalist Party	15
7. Carlos Vélez Rieckehoff— former acting president, Nationalist Party	17
8. José Antonio Negrón— former treasurer, Nationalist Party	19
9. Isolina Rondón— secretary, Nationalist Party	21
10. Isabel Rosado Morales— retired social worker, elderly activist	23 23
11. Blanca Canales— one of the leaders of the 1950 revolution	25
12. Antonio Morales Ramírez— restaurant manager, co-founder, Nationalist Party	27
13. Rosa y Lydia Collazo— wife and step-daughter of Oscar Collazo	28
14. Oscar Collazo— attacked the Blair House while Truman was there	30
15. Rafael Cancel Miranda—	

participant, 1954 attack on Congress	33
16. Irvin Flores Rodríguez— same as above	36
17. Doña Consuelo Corretjer— widow of “Comandante” Juan Antonio Corretjer	39
18. José Luis Rodríguez— served time in prison	42
19. Alberto Rodríguez Santana— serving time in prison	44
20. Norberto Cintrón Fiallo— victim of Federal Grand Jury	46
21. Sylvia Maldonado— AFSC staff, house searched by FBI	48
22. Jorge A. Farinacci García— one of Hartford Sixteen, arrested during raid of August 30, 1985	52
23. Tinti Deyá y Alexis Massol— opposing 2020 Plan	55
24. Neftalí García—	

Industrial Mission, environmental expert

25. Francisco Matos Paoli—
educator and outstanding poet 61
26. Andrés Jiménez—
Jíbaro singer and composer` 64
27. Arturo Meléndez—
UPR (University of Puerto Rico) professor,
president, University Professors Association 66
28. Iván O. Hernández—
Psychologist 68
29. Alfonso Damman—
priest, founding member of PRISA and union worker 72
30. Lydia Milagros González—
CEREP, author of La Otra Cara de Puerto Rico 75
31. Obispo Antulio Parrilla-Bonilla—
Catholic Bishop and author 76
32. Padre Pedro Del Valle Tirado—
deposed Episcopal priest 80
33. Obispo Francisco Reus Froylán—

retired Episcopal Bishop of Puerto Rico	83
34. Padre André Trevathan— Episcopal priest	87
35. Jorge Luis Landino— mason, lawyer	89
36. Ada Rivera Ruiz y Miguel González Rodríguez— founders of “Villa Sin Miedo”	
37. Roberto Resto Piñero— leader of Villa Sin Miedo	94
38. Ramón “Chino” Santiago— poet and philosopher of Villa Sin Miedo	96
39. Rafael Hernández Ramos— poet	97
40. Rubén Berríos Martínez— President of the Independence Party and former Senator	98
41. Juan Mari Brás— lawyer, former Secretary General of Socialist Party	101
42. Carlos Gallisá—	

Secretary General of Socialist Party	104
43. Jorge Rodríguez Beruff— professor; authority on militarism in Puerto Rico	107
44. Ismael Guadalupe— native of Vieques	109
45. Richard Levins— professor, Organismic and Evolutionary Biology Department, Harvard School of Public Health 111	111
46. Margarita Pérez— director of Proyecto Caribeño Para Justicia y Paz (AFSC)	116
47. Carlos Zenón— President of Vieques Fishermen’s Association, protector against U.S. Navy occupation of Vieques	120
48. Piri Thomas— author and poet	123
49. Ruth Reynolds— long-time American activist for independence	126
50. Josefina Rodriguez— director of Asuntos Exteriores del Movimiento	

de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueño

51. José Manuel Monsanto (Pepín)—
Puerto Rican prisoner, principal translator of
this book

52. Translators and proofreaders—

References and Resources

128

THE GREAT AMERICAN WRITER, MARK TWAIN had a great deal to say on imperialism in the Caribbean. As a member of the Anti-Imperialist League, along with such notables as Jane Addams, William Jennings Bryan, Clarence S. Darrow, Andrew Carnegie, William James, David Starr Jordan and Samuel Gompers with Gov. (Mass.) and former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury George S. Boutwell as its president, spoke vociferously against our adventurism in that arena.

Here is just one sample of his writings on the subject. It was published in the New York Herald on October 15, 1900. Twain was writing about the Philippines, but it takes little imagination to substitute the name “Puerto Rico”. I would go so far as to say, with confidence, that Twain would heartily endorse that exchange as it fits the context, the geography and the spirit of his words.

—Daniel Zwickel

Mark Twain on Imperialism

I left these shores, at Vancouver, a red-hot imperialist. I wanted the American eagle to go screaming into the Pacific. It seemed tiresome and tame for it to content itself with the Rockies.

Why not spread its wings over the Phillippines, I asked myself? And I thought it would be a real good thing to do.

I said to myself, here are a people who have suffered for three centuries. We can make them as free as ourselves, give them a government and country of their own, put a miniature of the American constitution afloat in the Pacific, start a brand new

republic to take its place among the free nations of the world. It seemed to me a great task to which we had addressed ourselves.

But I have thought some more, since then, and I have read carefully the treaty of Paris, and I have seen that we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Phillippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem. . .

It should, it seems to me, be our pleasure and duty to make those people free, and let them deal with their own domestic questions in their own way. And so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land.

You may read more about the Anti-Imperialist League at:
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/league.html>

Introduction

I am very pleased that someone so knowledgeable has compiled this important collection of perspectives by those who seek independence for Puerto Rico.

The United States holds Puerto Rico in a colonial status. Yet, few North Americans appreciate the political and economic situation of Puerto Rico.

The colonial control has direct and pervasive effects in the most important areas of Puerto Rican national life including monetary currency, defense policy and economic production.

The lack of Puerto Rican self-determination and the un-balanced relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico has been, and continues to be, a source of conflict.

With a better understanding of Puerto Rico and its relationship with the U.S., I believe that U.S. citizens will live up to the principles of our Declaration of Independence and of our Constitution and concede the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence.

True self-determination for Puerto Rico would be an unmistakable symbol to Latin America and the world of a U.S. commitment to political freedom, national sovereignty, and a willingness to accept other peoples' choices of political and

economic systems. It would insure a relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States that would be based on dignity and would be free of frustration and exploitation.

“Voices for Independence” by Jean Zwickel is important for both nations.

—Ronald V. Dellums, Member of Congress

Foreword

Reflections on seeing the outline and selections from Jean Zwickel's "Voices for Independence: In the Spirit of Valor and Sacrifice"

It is now nearly ninety years since the events euphemistically described as the "change of sovereignty" brought Puerto Rico under United States rule. Most of today's Puerto Ricans are four generations away from Spanish times, four centuries of exploitation that only the trauma of the new conquest could soften in nostalgic reminiscences.

Some 40% of all Puerto Ricans live outside of Puerto Rico, scattered from the Virgin Islands to Hawaii. In Puerto Rico itself, four generations of school children have been taught that English is the language of advancement, that U.S. history is real history, that the only Puerto Rican heroes are those who rushed to serve the conquerors. The press and media, U.S.-owned or licensed or dominated, reporting the news with the deliberate and the unconscious biases which select United States events as news, blithely assume that the U.S. president is their president, and that the enemies of the State Department are their enemies as well. U.S. commodities fill the daily lives of people; the poverty of the colony is buffered with imported food stamps.

And yet, in spite of the most intense and pervasive brainwashing, voices of independence are raised again and again.

At times the struggle reaches crescendos of fury; at other times it is a whisper in the night, a scrawl on a wall, a rebellious school composition. Just as the governors and investors rejoice in the final decline of national feeling it is reborn in a new form. Some courageously proclaim their commitment to independence. For others it is a dream discarded at daylight as the practical compromises of prospering in a colony dismiss the concerns which are seen as impractical. Political movements rise on tides of hope and collapse, crushed by force or demoralized by the seeming futility of so uneven a struggle.

Jean Zwickel's *Voices for Independence: In the Spirit of Valor and Sacrifice* gives us an insight into the depth and resilience of Puerto Rico's cry for freedom. She has gathered together many voices, both impassioned and analytic, and has shown us not only the political thinking but also the personal experiences of *independentistas*, the daily existence within the nationalist community.

It is important for many reasons: it presents us with a part of Puerto Rico's history, culture and present reality that is erased in the official line of how "we" brought them "the blessings of our advanced civilization." It also gives a sense of how history remains alive despite the Great Eraser, how when the experience of life in the colony rekindles the feelings of protest, there is a tradition to draw on which gives form to those feelings. And for people already committed to the struggle it provides materials for analyzing

critically the ways of thought and feeling of a movement that has kept the spirit alive but has yet to triumph.

—Richard Levins, Professor, Harvard School of Public Health,
Board Member, Puerto Rican Support Committee,
Board Member, NY Marxist School

A Note To Conservatives

What is suggested here is radical-that Puerto Rico be granted independence from the United States. Some conservatives may believe that the our current relationship with Puerto Rico is justified and that to suggest otherwise is unpatriotic, but consider this: in our own revolution the conservatives wanted to continue our relationship with England; the radicals wanted independence. With regards to slavery, the conservatives were with the status quo while the radicals were the abolitionists. In the old Soviet Union the conservatives were the hard-line Stalinists; the radicals wanted democracy.

In defense of conservatism, where “radical” comes from a Latin word meaning “root”, the intent of conservatism is to conserve. Conservationists, historical preservationists are conservatives, and while conservatism is a block to progress, one must consider the nature of the progressive act: is it destructive or is it just? To tear down a valuable, historical old building, or an ancient forest is an act of destruction. To grant a nation of people self-determination is just. Those who are blindly conservative are just as myopic as radicals with no concern for the consequences of their actions. Each must balance and temper the other. But where justice is concerned they must stand united and save their partisan rhetoric for when they can afford it.

If you are a “conservative” I respect and share your concern for the value of the past and of tradition; I only ask you to respect our

hope for the future. Please read these pages with an open mind and with reasoned thought. If you do not agree with us at least understand our passion and convictions.

We all long for peace, support the struggle for liberty and believe in justice. There is much more that we have in common than divides us.

—Daniel B. Zwickel

Acknowledgments

I gratefully acknowledge the following:

Mary Ericsson and **Mary Webb**, my creative writing teachers, for their instruction and encouragement;

Abe Zwickel, my husband, for his faithful support in the cause of independence;

Daniel Zwickel, my son, for his expertise and long hours at the computer, editing, formatting and proofreading;

Donald White, business associate of Daniel, for his expertise in transferring text from an ancient Commodore CBM 8032 to an IBM XT clone;

James Queen for his dedication and long hours typesetting and working with his laser printer.

And finally, our eleventh-hour savior, **Jerome L. Wilski**, for, among many other things, retrieving our two and only scrambled data disks from never-never land with a Mace Utilities disk, by Paul Mace.

—Jean Wiley Zwickel
Pittsburg, California

Dedication

To a beloved friend and mentor,
Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos,
whose spirit continues to spur me on.

Una Canción — A Song For My Mother

It would be a Scottish tune with a salsa back beat—all bagpipes and cuatros, Highlander ice and Caribbean fire, Celtic pragmatism and *Boriqua* passion

This is a song for my mother, daughter of a schoolteacher and a Unitarian preacher. *Abuela Jean, independentista.*



A committed pacifist from her early 20s, my mother married a radical Jewish social activist and conscientious objector, Abraham Zwickel, who served time in prison in the best Thoreau tradition for refusal to cooperate with the military. Mother was a member of the Harlem Ashram, an interracial, pacifist Christian commune when they met on a march protesting Jim Crow, in 1943.

The founders of the Ashram were Ralph Templin and Jay Holmes Smith, two Methodist ministers expelled from India for their pro-Gandhi activities. When the great Puerto Rican nationalist, Don Pedro Albizu Campos, under house arrest in Columbus Hospital in New York City, heard of the Ashram, his followers invited members to meet Don Pedro. His response to the question of Indian independence was, “India is Britain’s problem – Puerto Rico is yours!” Thus began over fifty years of my parents’ involvement in the Puerto Rican independence movement.

On April 19, 1999 David Sanes Rodríguez, a civilian observer for the Navy and living on the small island of Vieques, off the southern Puerto Rican coast, was accidentally killed when a live Navy bomb fell on him during an exercise. The Viequens' response was something they themselves, much less the U.S. Navy, would have scarce imagined until it actually happened. Few, if any of them would have consider themselves to be pacifists, yet they recognized the futility of violent resistance against the might of the U.S. military. Puerto Rican passion notwithstanding, from what corner might this movement have appeared? Under whose auspices might it have been nurtured?

My mother packed a lot of power in that diminutive frame of hers. A cultured, well educated Middlebury College grad with a degree from the Sorbonne, and an accomplished pianist, her vocation as a schoolteacher was really just a sideline to her true calling. She was well-traveled, once having bicycled across Europe, staying at youth hostels in centuries-old castles, and barely escaping Germany by train in 1939 when Hitler was closing its borders! Yet she and my father lived their lives in voluntary simplicity, dedicated to the pursuit of peace and social justice.

Quiet and unassuming, they rubbed shoulders with the best of them. In her post-college years Mother would arrange readings for the great Canadian pacifist poet, Wilson MacDonald when he would come to New York City. Jay Dinshaw, founder and president of the American Vegan Society, and Wilson Riles, Sr., former California State Superintendent of Schools were house guests in our Southern Californian home. Up, nearly, to her death in 1981, whenever the woman who called herself Peace Pilgrim blew into our town, her

radio and television interviews and church and college appearances were arranged by my mother.

Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, once invited my folks to come and march with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma. Among her papers at Marquette University is a letter to my folks, dated 1969. And in a near-brush with pop celebrity, my folks also turned down an invitation to a party with Woody Guthrie as a guest, in Topanga Canyon where we were living, in the early 1950s.

At a public meeting my father once asked Richard Nixon, how he, as a Quaker, could justify his staunch militarism. (Nixon mumbled something about “different kinds of Quakers.”) My folks were embraced by Joan Baez at peace rallies. César Chávez became a vegetarian under their influence, and my mother would make fresh vegetable and fruit juices for him when he was fasting. Former U.S. Representative, Congressman Ronald Dellums, author of a “Transfer of Powers” bill on behalf of Puerto Rico, writes an introduction to this book, and actor Ed Asner writes a complimentary blurb for its cover.

My parents never sought celebrity, nor were they ones to capitalize on their many friends who were very public figures, who all recognized the sincerity and strength of my folks’ beliefs and their great integrity. Mother and Father’s mission, if you will, was to live their lives in such a way as to demonstrate the power of pacifism, non-violence and civil disobedience. This is what they brought to the island nation of Puerto Rico and its *Isla Nena*, Vieques.

One day they realized that, after devoting so many years to the Puerto Rican cause, they had never actually been there! They

remedied that soon enough, getting to know the many people who are at the forefront of the independence movement, including the prime movers of the nonviolent Vieques uprising. In the 1970s and '80s, over a period of eight years or so, my folks would stay in Puerto Rico, getting to know it and its people, learning its politics and economics. My mother would interview individuals on the political and social issues of the day and publish in national and international peace and justice magazines.

One such article resulted in a \$5,000 grant from a peace group in Germany to a "land rescue" community called Villa Sin Miedo (Village Without Fear) for property up in the of Puerto Rican highlands after the U.S. army burned the original settlement to the ground. Along the way, as a delegate of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), my mother appeared before the United Nations Committee on Decolonization. As the only Anglo speaking on behalf of the Puerto Rican people, she was the one person quoted by name in the New York Times the next day.

So much for background. Now we get to the heart of the story.

For years my mother had been beating her head against a brick wall, trying to get the international peace and social justice community interested in Puerto Rico, to little avail. Finally, her harping paid off. She managed to get the attention of Matt Mayer of the War Resisters League (WRL). A conference in Northern California resulted, which my mother and I attended. A few years later, Puerto Rico's status having finally become a major issue, an international delegation to study the effects of militarization on

Puerto Rico and Vieques, the first of several such annual events, was organized by the WRL and the FOR.

On the way to Vieques one sunny day, John Lindsay-Poland, of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)'s Task Force on Latin America & the Caribbean, so much as admitted that, had it not been for my mother's persistence, that delegation would never have come into being and here's the chorus of the Song.

That evening there was a huge town meeting with all the movers and shakers of the resistance present, and I believe that there had to have been a feeling of empowerment on the part of the people of Vieques. Here, after all, were pacifist peace activists from all over the United States, plus delegates from Panama, the Philippines and Okinawa, acknowledging the struggle of the Puerto Rican people, and, perhaps even more importantly, *listening* to them.

It took a tremendous amount of courage and will to rise up, a year and a half later, against the might of the U.S. Navy. Might a measure of that have come from that town hall meeting? I cannot say, but I believe that Ismael Guadalupe, Carlos Zenón and Bob Rabin may admit as much. Who knows? Of course, her son would think that. This is just my biased, unsubstantiated opinion, but I believe my mother's hand to have been in that *intifada*, that my parents' tireless advocacy of nonviolent resistance there bore fruit that day on that beautiful *Isla Nena*.

My mother tells the story of Zenón's going fishing one day. Anchoring his vessel in front of the Guided Missile Destroyer, USS Dewey, he was told to move, that the Navy had maneuvers to conduct. Well, Carlos had his fishing to do so the Navy would just

have to wait. The maneuvers scheduled for that day were cancelled.

Few are aware of my mother's existence, save a small number among the New York, Chicago and San Francisco ex-pat Puerto Rican communities, among them the famed poet and *independentista* Piri Thomas; the acclaimed Nationalist patriot, Alejandrina Torres, who was among the prisoners of conscience my folks would visit at the Federal facility in Pleasanton; and the "Vieques Three" – Rabin, Zenón & Guadalupe.

None took to the streets upon her passing, but her life is a monument to the indomitability of the human spirit in "Valor and Sacrifice" in pursuit of a just and peaceful world. Theologian, author and professor Cornel West wrote: "Justice [is] what love looks like in public." It is also Abe and Jean Zwickel's love for humanity, manifest.

When the roll is called, she will be hailed as a mother of Puerto Rican independence and those who know will call, in the Latin American tradition of recognizing and honoring those who are absent, yet present in spirit, *Abuela Jean, Independentista, ¡Presente! Y que ¡viva Borinquen libre!*

Preface

In the course of our six trips to Puerto Rico my husband and I found great joy in the green rolling hills resplendent with flower-laden trees, mangos free for the picking, the sweet meat of coconuts, the tropical density of El Yunque, the warm waters of the Caribbean, and year-round temperatures in the 80s.

There were adventures aplenty as we camped in our Chevrolet van on friends' ranches, in the Villa Sin Miedo land rescue community, in the backyard of the Episcopal Bishop's home. But most thrilling of all was meeting with activists in the independence movement. As word got out of our friendship with the great patriot Pedro Albizu Campos, doors opened to us throughout Puerto Rico. María Teresa Babín, in giving us a copy of her anthology of Puerto Rican literature, inscribed in the book: "With friendship at first sight." This was the spirit we encountered wherever we went.

Just a few among a kaleidoscope of snapshots in our minds: vigiling with the parents of Carlos Noya for their son, a victim of the Federal Grand Jury; a jeep ride into the mountains of Adjuntas; hospitality on the ranches of Ché and Rosa Negrón and Irma and Guillermo de Jesús; the solemn procession from the Cathedral to the cemetery with floral wreaths honoring those who fell in the Ponce Massacre; shaking hands with Juan Antonio Corretjer at a vigil at the National Guard protesting their participation in U.S. military maneuvers in Honduras.

The sad words of Juan Mari Brás, “They took my son. What more can they do to me?”; the visionary and courageous leadership of Villa Sin Miedo as they strove towards economic independence; quiet-spoken Carlos Zenón as he told of continuing to fish despite a Navy warning of a bombing operation; an Episcopal service in the patio of the church after Padre Pedro had been locked out; the celebration a year later in his Iglesia Episcopal del Pueblo; our ever-willing *chofer*, Ñin Negrón.

These were people I wanted to write about. As I interviewed *independentistas* I found, within a wealth of oral history, significant events in the struggle for self-determination, problems in a colonial regime, and a wide range of political views.

We met with Puerto Ricans from one end of the political spectrum to the other, from revolutionaries to advocates of nonviolence, from musicians and poets to professors, lawyers, religious workers and political leaders. We met many who had suffered years of imprisonment. We met some who had committed acts of violence. In the role of reporter, I did not pass judgement. Despite our personal commitment to nonviolence, my husband and I could not fail to understand the frustrations of a people seeking to liberate themselves from a mighty military power. We had only to look back to our own heritage of revolutionary struggle for independence. Even while disagreeing with the flag-waving militarism of our national anthem, I found myself emotionally stirred by the singing of the *Borinqueña*, and the display of the Puerto Rican flag. To

attain independence it seems necessary to go through a stage of self-realization and national pride.

Granted, we went firmly convinced of the immorality of our holding a colony in subjugation, and in total agreement with the United Nations' declaration that all countries had a right to self-determination. We did meet with a few who advocated statehood, and some who were satisfied with the present status. We were well aware that in past plebiscites, only a small minority declared themselves for independence.

But nor did our thirteen colonies have majority support for independence. We understood the deep psychological fears of a people whose country has been under a colonial regime for five hundred years. It is difficult to overcome a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt because of their dependency on United States welfare. We saw all around us the persecution, harassment, imprisonment of those who dared to join in the struggle for independence.

It is not our mission to tell Puerto Ricans what methods they should use to achieve their liberation, but rather to appeal to the world community-peacemakers within and without the churches, all those seeking justice—to help bring about a peaceful solution lest further violence erupt.

I saw the strength of the independence movement not so much in numbers, but in the deep conviction and courage of the people I interviewed, their willingness to face hardships and speak out

regardless of consequences. And there are hundreds more of their caliber.

So I present to my readers some of the courageous and dedicated people I came to know and love: voices ringing out loud and clear for independence, in the spirit of valor and sacrifice.

—Jean Zwickel
Pittsburg, California, 1988

Voices for
Independence:

In the Spirit of Valor and Sacrifice

Jean Wiley Zwickel

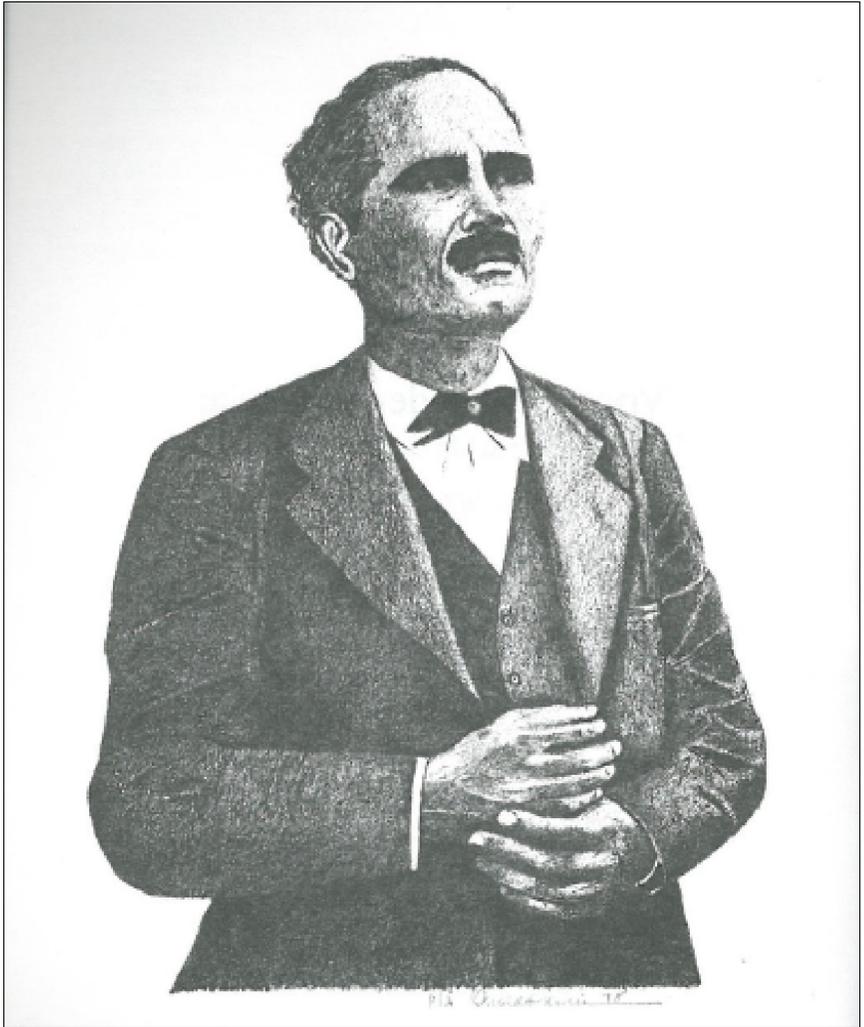


illustration of Pedro Albizu Campos by Osvaldo García, 1978