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Que Ondee Sola - July 2009

Xavier Luis Burgos

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After 27 years of student struggle at NEIU,
the Illinois State Legislature approves \$1.5 million for a



**Latinalo Cultural
& Resource Center**

Que Ondee Sola July 2009 Vol. 37 No. 6

Hasta La Victoria Siempre

We have won a Latina/o Cultural & Resource Center, but the struggle continues!

In an e-mail sent by President Sharon Hah's on June 19, it was stated in a swift and inconsequential manner that "[The State of Illinois funded] \$1.5 million for costs associated with facility renovations for the construction of a Latino Cultural Center..." Finally, we have won, after years of being told there was never enough money, space, or time by many administrators!

When I received a text message from a friend about this e-mail during the carnivalesque chaos of the 31st annual Puerto Rican People's Parade on Paseo Boricua I first thought about the powers of memory and forgetting. "Who will remember, 20 years from now, those who worked tirelessly to make this happen,?" I thought. "Who will remember all those who gave time, energy, sweat, tears, and love to this struggle?"

One person that should be remembered is State Senator Iris Martínez who stated on an historic meeting on May 1 organized by Latina/o student leaders at NEIU that "If I am going to continue to work hard for this institution... I want to make sure that Latinos are [being] catered to." The \$1.5 million for a Latina/o Cultural & Resource Center (LCRC) at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) speaks exactly to that!

As written tirelessly in *Que Ondee Sola* (QOS) magazine before, this struggle began 27-years-ago with the university's destruction of Albizu-Zapata Portable 1, a small, grassroots student-led space of Latina/o cultural and political affirmation. Twenty-seven years later, almost

no one remembers the individual people who have continued the effort to place Latinas/os in a prominent place at the university – whether it be in resources, academia, and institutional space. But this goes beyond the individual.

QOS magazine has made sure to preserve and continue the collective history and struggles of Latinas/os at NEIU alongside the Union for Puerto Rican Students (UPRS) and the Chican@ Mexican@ Latin@ Student Union (ChiMexLa) organizations. When I got involved in these groups years ago I inherited a struggle for a space older than myself. As new students enter this university they too will inherit the struggle of our people on campus. Students come and go, just as I will, but we should never forget that the accomplishment of a LCRC on campus is part of an historic trajectory – the sum of the work of many people over decades with a strong connection with the Puerto Rican and Mexican communities of Chicago.

Nonetheless, I do want to recognize that the group of students from QOS and UPRS this past year were phenomenal, such as Ruthy Venegas, Samuel Vega, Marcuz Erazo, Juan Morales, Jacklyn Nowotnik, Miosotis Cotto Santos, and Joshua Cruz. The Latina/o Coalition that we created with Alpha Psi Lambda with the help of Stephanie Gómez, Jessica Urbina, and Vanesa Corado and the Movimiento Cultural Latino Americano (MCLA) organization also helped intensify the work for a LCRC. Without these people and organizations, 2009 would not be the year that

Editor-in-Chief & Designer

Xavier "Xavi" Luis Burgos

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Staff Writers/Artists

Magdaleno Castañeda

Samuel Vega

Jacklyn Nowotnik

Marla Mojica

Stephanie Gómez

Miosotis Cotto Santos

Ruthy Venegas

Joshua Cruz

Marcuz Erazo

Juan Morales

Guest Transcriber

Luis Xavier Muñoz

Misión

Que Ondee Sola was established in 1972 and remains the oldest Puerto Rican & Latina/o university student publication in the U.S. Our mission is to provide the NEIU community with a relevant and engaging publication that deals with student issues with a focus on Puerto Ricans and Latinas/os, our communities, and our patrias.

Que Ondee Sola continues to affirm the right of Puerto Rican self-determination, freedom for all Puerto Rican political prisoners, and support for a truly participatory democracy.

Que Ondee Sola

is published at Northeastern Illinois University. The opinions expressed in Que Ondee Sola do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration. Responsibility for its contents lies solely with the staff.

We appreciate and encourage suggestions and contributions.

Contact Que Ondee Sola

5500 N. St. Louis Chicago, IL 60625

Room E-041

(773) 442-4583

queondeesola@gmail.com

we finally get what we need as Latinas/os at NEIU. Although history shall forget them as individuals, as it has forgotten so many, they will be alive *ad infinitum* in the walls and the murals of a unique space that will provide a brighter future for one of the most important ethnic groups in the country.

However, it must be stated that the struggle is not over. Complacency has risked decreased funding for Proyecto Pa'Lante every year and fans the flaming threat of morphing the Latino & Latin American Studies program (LLAS) into a generic and sterile "global studies" program - two programs that are at NEIU today because of student struggle decades ago. In QOS and in meeting after meeting we have made it a point to write and say **"Latina/o Cultural & Resource Center"** and not just a "Casa Latina" or anything else. This new space must include the vision that we as Latina/o students

have placed out there, which includes the centralization physically of integral Latina/o-focused programs and student organizations (a blueprint of which we gave personally to President Hahs and have detailed in the November 2008 and April 2009 editions of QOS and we will provide in this edition). As simply said by staff writer Samuel Vega, "Don't forget it is to be a Latina/o Cultural and RESOURCE Center. Now that's something we need to set a precedent for and redefine what these spaces at universities really mean." As we have stated before, QOS, UPRS, and the Latina/o student leaders of NEIU must be at the table of planning and decision-making for this space (we already have created a Latina/o Task Force that includes students and faculty. We should be the committee to guide the process of an LCRC)— it is, after all, owned by the students of NEIU and no one else. Lets make Fall 2009 a semester to remember!



This photo (which adorned the cover of the June 2009 edition of QOS) depicts the student organized meeting on May 1, 2009 between State Senator Martínez and President Hahs regarding the Latina/o Status of the university, including some faculty and administrators. From right to left: Suleyma Pérez (Pres. office),

Jessica Urbina (Alpha Psi Lambda), Marla Mojica (DALE), Juan Morales (QOS), Ruthy Venegas (UPRS), Samuel Vega (UPRS), Stephanie Pérez (Alpha Psi Lambda), Víctor Ortíz (LLAS), Sharon Hahs, Daniel López (El Centro), State Senator Iris Martínez, Xavier Luis Burgos (QOS), Xavier Ríos (DALE), Elizabeth Martínez (MCLA), José López (LLAS)

Northeastern Illinois University is a designated “Hispanic Serving Institution”

“The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) was established in 1986 with a founding membership of eighteen institutions. Because of HACU's exemplary leadership on behalf of the nation's youngest and fastest-growing population, the Association rapidly grew in numbers and national impact.

Soon after, HACU and its allies were instrumental in convincing Congress to appropriate money specifically for HSIs. For the first time ever, HSIs were granted \$12 million in 1995 from federal resources. Since then, funding has increased significantly because of HACU's persistent advocacy. In 2008, for example, \$93.2 million were appropriated for HSIs under Title V of the Higher Education Act. HACU has recommended \$175 million be appropriated for fiscal year 2009.

Our nation's economic and social success rests on the level of skills and knowledge attained by Hispanics, now the nation's largest minority population. Education, indisputably, is the key. HACU is committed to Hispanic success in education, from kindergarten through graduate school and into the work force of tomorrow. Everyone has a stake in HACU's crucial goals: to promote the development of member colleges and universities; to improve access to and the quality of postsecondary educational opportunities for Hispanic students; and to meet the needs of business, industry and government through the development and sharing of resources, information and expertise.”

Membership fees for NEIU in 2009 will be \$7,650. (<http://www.hacu.net>)

Latinas/os on Campus Fall 2008

- Latina/o Students: 27.1% of the total population
- Incoming Freshman: 41.4%
- Total Degrees Conferred to Latinas/os in Fall 2008: 17.4%

Latina/o Faculty Fall 2007

- Professors: 3 or 3.5%
- Associate Professors: 11 or 10.1%
- Assistant Professors: 9 or 12.3%
- Total: 23 or 8.6%

<http://neiu.edu/~isp/home.html>

The NEIU Latina/o Task Force Proposal for a Latina/o Cultural & Resource Center

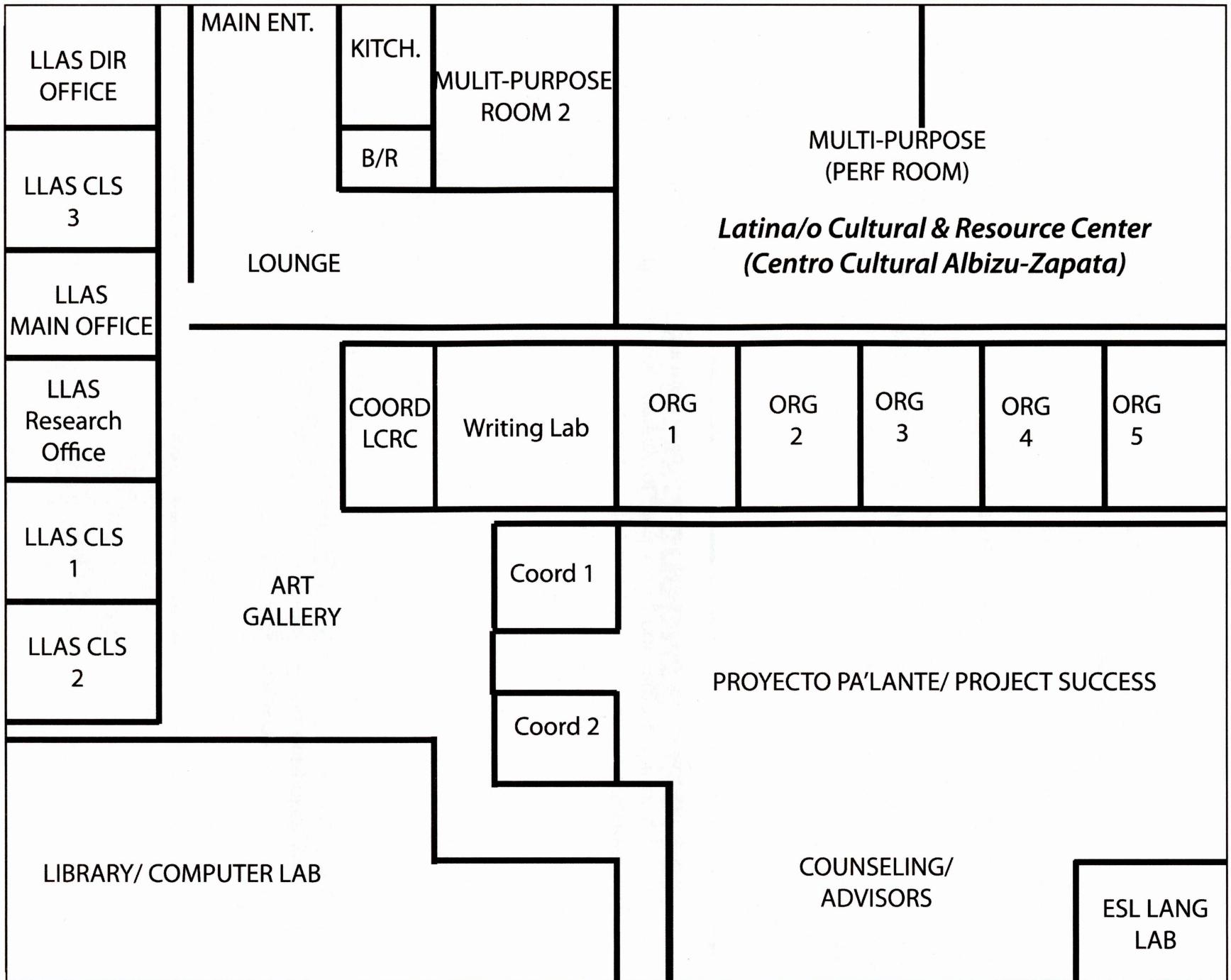
Summary of the facts:

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) maintains the largest Latina/o student population in the Midwest and therefore is a "Hispanic Serving Institution." However, there are a disproportionate number of Latina/o tenured track faculties. There is an extremely low Latina/o retention rate. There does not exist a centralized space for Latina/o cultural and social affirmation nor for academic excellence.

The Solution:

A [comprehensive] Latina/o Cultural & Resource Center

- A centralized location for current and future Latina/o-focused programs and the Latino & Latin American Studies program and Proyecto Pa'Lante/Project Success
- Office space for Latina/o-focused organizations and publication
- Performance and class space for courses and cultural and academic events
- Counseling and Academic advising (with Latina/o advisors)
- Latina/o-focused Library-Computer lab
- Dual-language program (New teacher-training program)
- Expansive study abroad program/scholarships (emphasizing Puerto Rico, Mexico, and other Latin American countries)
- Research facilities/archives (foster links between NEIU and Latina/o communities)
- Resources/services for undocumented students
- LCRC Director and staff



Que Ondee Sola

The Origins of the Struggle:

Two articles about the **original** Latina/o Cultural Center
in the August 3, 1982 edition of the *Independent*

Latinos Rally for Portable

A rally was held on Wednesday, July 21, 1982 at 12:30 p.m. in P-1 (portable one mobile unit) responding to the planned removal of the unit from the university grounds. With the removal of P-1, three student organizations (Chimexla Student Organization, Union for Puerto Rican Students (U.P.R.S.), and the Advisory Board to the ChicanoMexicano Puerto Rican Studies) will no longer have a permanent site to carry on their activities. The rally was sponsored by the U.P.R.S., Que Ondee Sola, and the Sociology Club. Representatives from the U.P.R.S. and the Sociology Club addressed the issue of the removal of the unit will "strip the identity of the latino community to reaffirm their cultural,

political, and social awareness on campus. The purpose of P-1 is one of a power question and struggle". Also speaking was Irma Romero, a graduate of UNI and outspoken leader of the latino community. Ms. Romero sited "that the end of P-1 will not be the end of the Puerto Rican struggle. President Williams is not responding to the needs of the Black, Latino, and Third World students at the university. The conditions are going to bring us together". Ms. Romero also mentioned a vital service of P-1 is "providing a warm spot in a big, cold, and impersonal environment". The student organizations plan on staying in the unit until the final day of eviction July 26, in the hope that the school administration will either not remove the unit, or provide an alternative site to continue on with their activities.

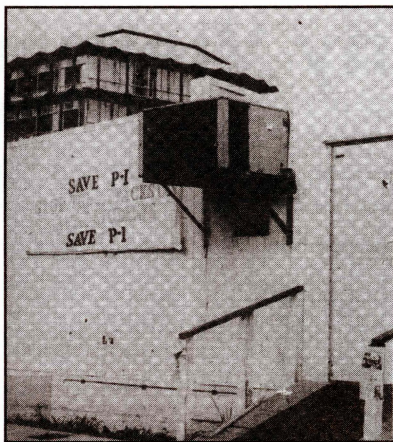
Students Fight Closing

by Arthur L. Gilbert

All the white mobile units adjacent to the west end of B wing are going to be removed. The units were originally planned as temporary quarters for the administrative offices of the university, and were put in place in 1970 with a life expectancy of five years. The decision to remove the units was based upon the cost benefits of keeping up and maintaining the facilities. With a complete overhaul of repairs on the units the cost would exceed the actual value of the units, according to a University spokesman. The units are being used presently by the staff from Proyecto Pa'lante, Project Success, Special Services Counseling

center and three Latino student organizations. Portable One (P-1) is the meeting place and home of Chimexla Student Organizaton, U.P.R.S. (Union for Puerto Rican Students) and the Advisory Board to the Chicano Mexicano Puerto Rican Studies. In 1975, President Muellen allowed access to Portable One for the Union for Puerto Rican Students. The U.P.R.S. contends that the conditions of the mobile units comes out of neglect on the part of the university, rather than from use. The Physical Facilities Department maintains that these units are daily cleaned and constantly inspected and repaired as needed. The in house staff from Proyecto Pa'lante, Project Success and Special Services Counseling centers will be relocated around September

in the old financial aid office presently being remodeled. The three student organizations will not be relocated. Portable One has been used by these student groups as a study facility, providing a support system, and to also provide movies, speakers and materials for the Latino population on campus. It has been used as a working area throughout the year. In addition the portable one unit has been used as an occasional meeting place for the Sociology Club and a church study group.



This photo from 1982 of Portable I has a banner over it stating:
"Save P-I - Stop The Attacks on Latino Students!"

The university policy does not specifically require some landscaping and removal of utility provide housing for student organizations, and facilities to be turned into a green park...

feels no present obligation to relocate these student groups. A signature drive to petition for P-I to support these three student groups that will soon be *[The rest of the sentence was missing from the original copy of this article]...* be speakers and food available. The removal of the units if not dismantled will require a crane to lift them over the B wing. The units will either be sold or disposed of as scrap or resold as whole unit facilities if there are buyers available. The area will then

José Fulgencio

National Student Exchange Program

A terrible loss for NEIU students

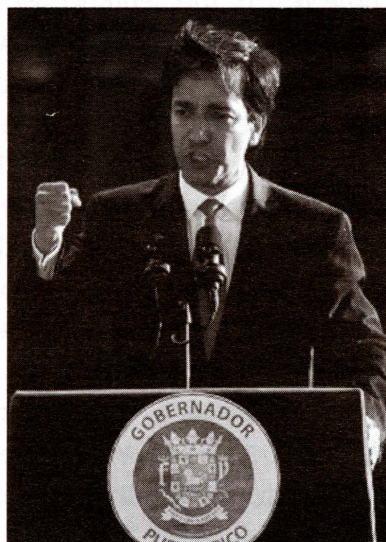
As I was sitting down on a nice soft chair in my hotel room I got a message on my facebook account. As I read it I could not believe what it said: the National Student Exchange program at NEIU is being cut because of budget constraints. My first thought was "this cannot happen". The NSE program is one of the greatest programs that NEIU has to offer for students who want to experience a study abroad that fits their budget and who want to stay within the United States. Before I even start to go into my experience as a program participant, I will highlight what the NSE is all about.

NSE is a program that serves the students of the United States, Puerto Rico and Guam. Every participating state and territory of the United States has participating schools. Illinois currently has three and NEIU is the only one in the Chicago area. Students can participate in this program for one semester or the whole academic year, depending on your schedule and the school's constraints. You can either pay your schools tuition or pay the tuition of the school in which you will be studying abroad. If you want to know more information in detail you can contact Flora Llacuna, the program director for NEIU, her office is in the Dean of Students office in the B-Building.

Many Vietnams

Commentary on the new administration in Puerto Rico

La Claridad newspaper, April 16-22, 2009 edition



The government of Luis Fortuño seems to be practicing as a political strategy that slogan of Ernesto Guevara calling for the creation of “many Vietnams” against Yankee imperialism. In this case, clearly,

we’re not talking about an anti imperialist struggle or “many Vietnams” as Che defined it, but rather the many battlefronts that the annexationist government has opened with the goal of controlling the colonial institutions, taking their scarce power from them, and destroying those organizations and forums which can oppose his political projects.

Scarcely ninety days after taking over the government, the Fortuño administration faces off against the country’s attorneys in an attempt to erase the membership requirement, with the goal of dismantling the Bar Association. Previously he had stuck three political commissaries into the vacancies at the Supreme Court and obtained the majority in that forum.

Public employees are threatened with more than 30 thousand layoffs and with the nullification of collective bargaining agreements signed by the

public sector. In this battle, “fortuñism” faces dozens of unions which would disappear if the NPP [New Progressive Party] achieves its goals.

These and other unions may disappear if the law creating the so-called public-private alliances is passed. Under this method of privatization provided for by the law, privatized businesses don’t have to recognize the unions or contracts of the workers in the privatized government agencies. For example, a privatization of the Electrical Energy Authority (EEA) does not require recognition of the UTIER [the EEA union] or the current contract.

Another war front was opened by the current government with the presentation of the project which makes discretionary the review of administrative agency decisions by the Appellate Court. This greatly limits unions, environmentalists, and other sectors to protect themselves from administrative excesses and abuses. This abuse of power in the NPP counts on the shameful complicity of the Judicial Branch.

At the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), Fortuño forces are preparing for an assault on the institution. There are already close to a dozen projects proposed to alter the command structures in the university system, including expanding the number of Trustees, the governing body of the system, and creating a pro statehood majority. Recently, a legislative commission burst into the Office of the President of the UPR one morning and searched everywhere, including the waste baskets, trying to find evidence of the

quality and price of wine drunk by the President.

The other Vietnam beginning to take form is at the Department of Education, with the expansion of the school day, without any purpose or explanation whatsoever for the additional hour. But where a great explosion is anticipated is in the project that provides for a five minute "reflection" in the school system. It thus appears that Fortuño and his "little friends from Guaynabo" are not aware of the history of the attempts in the 1950's to impose a space in the school curriculum for prayer and reflection. That project ended up in an electoral and religious war in the 1960 elections with the Christian Action Party (CAP) and the bishops of the Catholic Church. One of the leaders of the PAC was Baltasar Corrada del Río, who today is a close advisor of Fortuño.

As if this weren't enough, there is a discussion starting in Education to begin the programmatic mandate of the NPP to implant "bilingual education" in the public system. "The little friends from Guaynabo" are also apparently unaware of the battles which took place over the decades against the teaching of English. That educational policy was imposed by Washington from the beginning of the 20th Century through 1959, the year when the teaching of Spanish returned and left behind that educational aberration, to which they wish to return now.

The field of sports has also been converted into a battleground. In the drunkenness of power that clothes the pro statehood forces, it's been very difficult for them to accept that a city led by a PDP [pro commonwealth] mayor can be the seat of the Central American Games of 2010. The regionalism of the NPP mayors of the district avoided stripping Mayagüez of the seat. But the war continues. Now the strategy of Jorge Santini

and company is to remove from Mayagüez the largest possible number of events. In this struggle they are requiring the resignation of David Bernier as chairman of the organizing committee. (He is PDP and a potential candidate in 2012). They named an NP P, Israel Roldán, who has served as a true sportsman since he assumed the direction of the baseball aficionado, and then the mayor of Mayagüez objected to him, in a personal vendetta because Roldán represented one of the council members in litigation against the Mayor.

And if all these Vietnams weren't enough to keep drowning us as a people at the hands of the politicians, both pro statehood and pro commonwealth, the flaming President of the House of Representatives threatens us with a local plebiscite. On the other hand, the NPP mayors of San Juan, Bayamón, Guaynabo and now Guayama, insist on the use of English for public signs and governmental agencies, in what clearly constitutes cultural aggression.

Facing all this abuse of power, an opposition must urgently coalesce, bringing together multiple sectors. Professions and occupations must come to the defense of their memberships. Unions must cast aside their past and present differences, as they face a threat to the very existence of the entire organized workers movement. Could there be a greater threat? The cultural struggle again takes priority, in defense of our language. Cultural workers must organize a resistance. On the political level, the independence movement must play its vanguard role, working with a common strategy that brings unity in action of the broad sectors of our people, everything transcending party lines. Organizing an opposition is the principal task of the moment.

Congress Considers Referendum

on Puerto Rico's Political Status



San Juan - Puerto Rico's top political leaders are heading to Washington, D.C., Wednesday to battle over a bill that could result in the first congressionally mandated referendum on the future of the island's political status.

Proponents of statehood for Puerto Rico say a bill before the House Natural Resources Committee would, if enacted, mark the first time that islanders would get a real say in their future. But opponents argue that the Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2009 is stacked in favor of making the island the 51st state.

The House committee has scheduled a hearing on the bill on Wednesday.

"This is historic," said former Miami Mayor Maurice Ferré, a Puerto Rico native who was in

San Juan this week promoting the bill, HR 2499. "In the 111 years the U.S. flag has been in Puerto Rico, Congress has never asked: What is Puerto Rico's position? This bill will give me as a Puerto Rican the opportunity to offer my opinion, which has been denied to me for 74 years."

The United States took possession of Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War in 1898. Puerto Ricans have been U.S. citizens since 1917, but their representative in Congress does not vote, they do not cast ballots in presidential elections and they pay no federal income taxes.

Whether the island should keep its status as a commonwealth or become a state is a hotly contested issue here that creates a bitterly divided electorate.

Puerto Rico's congressional representative, Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, proposed the legislation. It would order a two-tiered, nonbinding plebiscite that would first ask Puerto Ricans whether they would like to change their political status. If the majority says yes, then a second plebiscite would be held offering three options: independence, independence with a special association with the United States or statehood.

Pierluisi believes that a congressionally ordered referendum would have more weight than past plebiscites and would force Washington's hand to take action on Puerto Rico.

"There's no doubt that Puerto Rico's status has

vestiges of colonialism, which has enormous deficits for democracy," Pierluisi said. "This bill is very important, because it would have moral, political and international weight. You cannot consult the people and not act on it."

But critics say the referendum is unfair, because the first question unites two key forces: those who want statehood and advocates for independence. In the past, such plebiscites have offered a single question offering the three choices. Statehood and commonwealth generally come in at a dead heat, and a tiny percentage of Puerto Ricans vote for independence.

"This is a bill that creates a runoff with the voters who come in at second and third place," said Puerto Rico's House Minority Speaker Héctor Ferrer, a member of the Popular Democratic Party, which advocates an enhanced commonwealth.

"This is like a boxing match. If we do not win Wednesday's round [before the House committee], we are still going to win the fight."

Ferrer and Puerto Rico Senate Minority Speaker

José Luis Dalmau are among those who will speak Wednesday against the bill, arguing it does not represent a consensus of Puerto Rican voters.

"This would be another useless exercise," Dalmau said.

Both Puerto Rico's governor, Luis Fortuño, and Pierluisi are members of the New Progressive Party, which argues that Puerto Rico is a colony that deserves to become a full member of the union.

Now that their party enjoys control of the legislature, the governor's office and the resident commissioner's office, they believe the time has never been better to push for statehood for Puerto Rico.

Ferré points out that adding millions more voters could affect the 2012 presidential elections. There are 300,000 Puerto Ricans registered to vote in Florida -- although only those born in Puerto Rico would be allowed to cast ballots in the referendum.

Cándida Cotto, La Claridad, Mayo 2009

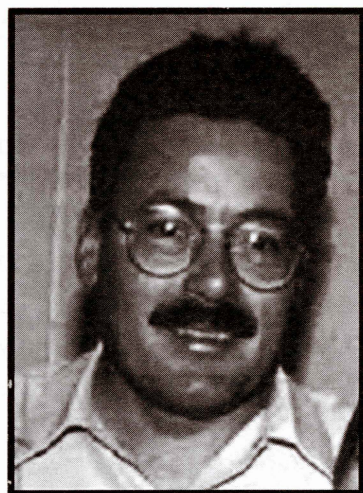
Recomiendan a liberar a **Carlos Alberto Torres**

El prisionero político puertorriqueño Carlos Alberto Torres, podría ser puesto en libertad en octubre de este año si el Buró de Libertad Bajo Palabra (BLP) del Gobierno de Estados Unidos acoge una recomendación positiva a esos efectos del oficial examinador Larry Glem.

El martes 26 de mayo en horas de la mañana

el hermano puertorriqueño, quien lleva ya 29 años en prisión, compareció ante el oficial examinador por vía de conferencia televisiva, desde la prisión federal Pekín, en Illinois, donde se encuentra encarcelado.

Jan Susler, asesora legal de Torres y quien estuvo presente en la vista, informó a Claridad



que el Oficial Examinador recomendó que Torres saliera en libertad bajo palabra el 3 de abril del 2010 con lo cual cumpliría 30 años de prisión. La determinación de Glem – explicó Susler – significa que 180 días antes de

esa fecha Torres debería ser trasladado a lo que se conoce como una media casa. Aunque Susler advirtió que el examinador hace su recomendación y que son los comisionados del BJI quienes toman la decisión final sobre la excarcelación, se expresó esperanzada en que se dé la libertad de Carlos Alberto.

Susler describió que durante la vista el Oficial Examinador hizo preguntas al prisionero político puertorriqueño sobre los cargos de conspiración sediciosa, los años en prisión y la cantidad de cartas de apoyo recibidas para su excarcelación. En las preguntas a Susler, ésta pudo informar respecto a la experiencia de los compañeros que salieron de prisión hace diez años, los cuales se han integrado de manera ejemplar a la sociedad puertorriqueña.

Bajo las reglas del propio Buró de Prisiones, la contestación de si se acepta o no la recomendación del Oficial Examinador debe comunicarse al preso en 21 días. Susler no descartó que de ser afirmativa la contestación, Carlos Alberto pueda estar en la media casa en su isla Puerto Rico.

Aquí, el portavoz del Comité Pro Derechos

Humanos (CPDH), licenciado Eduardo Villanueva, expresó su satisfacción con el resultado de la vista y el hecho de que el trabajo que se ha hecho tanto en Puerto Rico como en Estados Unidos propició para que se le levantara el castigo que se le había impuesto a Carlos Alberto. Hay que recordar que se suponía que en enero de este año Torres asistiera a la vista de libertad bajo palabra, pero días antes se le acusó de poseer una fisga. La situación, denunció Villanueva, “tenía todos los visos de ser fabricada”. Destacó que la campaña de excarcelación para que se le levantara el castigo a Carlos Alberto representa un triunfo para el pueblo y que fueron miles las cartas de apoyo recibidas tanto de Puerto Rico, Estados Unidos, de México y hasta de España.

“Esto es sumamente importante porque eso le demuestra al pueblo que el trabajo que se hace por los derechos humanos y en defensa de los prisioneros políticos no es en vano, que ellos (en referencia a Estados Unidos) tienen que tomar en cuenta que estas personas tienen pueblo, tienen una nación detrás, comunidades completas en apoyo a sus derechos humanos, así que nos da un estímulo para que se siga la lucha para que se culmine con la excarcelación de Carlos y complete la excarcelación de Oscar López”.

Para reforzar y prevenir que no se haga algo arbitrario y se desatienda la recomendación del Oficial Examinador, el Lcdo. Villanueva apeló a que el pueblo y todos los sectores políticos les pidan a las personas que se van a presentar ante la Asamblea General de la ONU el próximo mes de junio a que incluyan en sus ponencias el reclamo de excarcelación de todos los presos políticos puertorriqueños. En particular de Oscar López Rivera, quien ya lleva 28 años en prisión y tiene 66 años de edad.

La Cultura en primera fila

La actividad cultural ha sido golpeada con severidad y no precisamente por la crisis que experimenta la economía de Puerto Rico y del mundo. En nuestro País los golpes vienen de otra dirección, del partido político que



tomó control del Gobierno el pasado 2 de enero. Nunca un gobierno anexionista ha tratado de promover la cultura nacional. Más bien todo lo contrario. ¿Recuerdan a doña Leticia del Rosario, aquella que una vez tomó las riendas el Instituto de Cultura y de inmediato intentó liquidarlo?

Pues esa misma tarea parece haberse propuesto el gobernador Luis Fortuño. Como hay déficit en las finanzas públicas elaboró un nuevo presupuesto que es 30% por ciento más pequeño que el vigente, por lo que debiera esperarse que todas las instituciones y actividades patrocinadas con fondos públicos se vean reducidas en esa misma proporción. Pero ése no fue el caso de las instituciones y actividades culturales. El golpe presupuestario para éstas es superior al 70 por ciento. El Gobernador y quienes lo asesoran saben muy bien que tras recibir ese golpe las instituciones culturales no podrán funcionar. De eso precisamente se trata. Lo que se busca es que no funcionen.

Ellos saben muy bien que el vigor de nuestra

cultura nacional, que se ha enriquecido cada día a pesar de los golpes que recibe del colonialismo, es y será la principal barrera contra el anexionismo. Podrán sacar todos los votos posibles, pero mientras los puertorriqueños

seamos portadores de una cultura nacional tan enriquecida como la que tenemos, su anexionismo siempre será un proyecto trunco. Por eso es que se ensañan contra las instituciones culturales. Porque les duelen.

Los golpes continuarán pero, como decía aquella mítica luchadora española, "no pasarán". Primero intentaron destruir nuestra cultura obligando a nuestros niños, durante casi cuarenta años, a estudiar en inglés. Pero la cultura se fortaleció a pesar de esa agresión. Luego nos arrojaron con sus medios de comunicación y sus símbolos culturales, pero los nuestros se les impusieron.

Esa lucha ha sido de todo el pueblo y su vanguardia han estado los trabajadores de la cultura de todos los sectores: artistas plásticos, creadores musicales, escritores, actores, en fin, todas y todos los que cada día nos ayudan a soñar nuevas realidades.

Esos grupos, que han sido tan importantes en nuestra historia, están en pie de lucha junto a todo nuestro pueblo. Como era de esperarse, el

pasado 5 de junio, cuando decenas de miles de trabajadores salieron a la calle a reclamar justicia, los creadores culturales estuvieron en primera fila. Marcharon al frente portando los retratos de los hombres y mujeres que les precedieron, los grandes de nuestra historia. Luego, a lo largo

del camino montaron pequeños oasis culturales, estaciones donde el arte se convertía en denuncia.

En los próximos meses y años habrá que dar muchas batallas y en todas ellas, como siempre ha sido, los trabajadores y trabajadoras de la cultura estarán en la primera fila.

Xavier "Xavi" Luis Burgos

Fíjate: Yuppies Strike Back

Some more *bochinche* for you, my beautiful people:

"But also he fails to see that the people within the community are doing it to themselves. Putting the flags up was the action of ghettoization to themselves. My point is my friends is that before publishing a article there needs to be two things to happen here. One please proof read your articles. And second please have a point or take English 101," says a reader (I will call him "angry joe") of my May 2009 Fíjate article in *La Voz del Paseo Boricua* newspaper.

"¡Ay miño, qué revolú!" my grandmother would say if she only know what new drama her grandson got himself into. Well, as you all know, *soy sin pelo en la lengua, papá*. For new readers, let me explain what I mean by all this and why "angry joe" is so hysterical.

Well, in my last column I highlighted the urgent threat that the Puerto Rican community is facing with its displacement from Humboldt Park, represented in the form of a divisive e-mail by a new yuppie resident. In this e-mail, the resident was trying to persuade a community business owner from mingling with the ¡Humboldt Park NO SE VENDE! campaign, which is a grassroots

organization seeking to preserve Paseo Boricua.

As Boricuas in Chicago, we have seen this time and time again: when our communities are "redeveloped" and "repackaged" we are then treated as unwelcome pests. Like the story of a conguero friend of mine who raised his children in Bucktown only to have his oldest son one day be harassed in front of their home because a yuppie could not believe that a Puerto Rican



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family could live on “his” block, the arrogance of such an e-mail is evident to anyone who can feel human emotions. So, of course, I published a piece of it with a response. *¿Ay bendito, porqué tú hiciste eso,?”* my grandmother would say. Well, for long as we have a Puerto Rican community, we must seek to provide an open and democratic forum from which we must discuss pressing and relevant issues. The preservation of Paseo Boricua and its discontents is the issue.

But anyway, what a backlash I got from that! From close friends and associates jokingly saying “don’t e-mail Xavi anything, he’ll publish it in Fíjate!” to less funny and cute phone calls, e-mails, and even visits to the Puerto Rican Cultural Center; some people, one way or another, was bothered/amused by my column.

All joking aside, I write all this not for ego, but to again highlight the issue: if we do not talk and do something about the displacement of the Puerto Rican community in Humboldt Park, then the forum to discuss, engage, envision, and build will no longer exist.

As for “angry Joe’s” e-mail, it does pinpoint an important and dangerous trend in thought by many new yuppie residents (not all are “angry new residents” - some are actually decent people who respect and understand the efforts of longtime residents to build this community and therefore seek to participate in it, not sabotage or bogart it): that Puerto Ricans have no right to claim this area as ours.

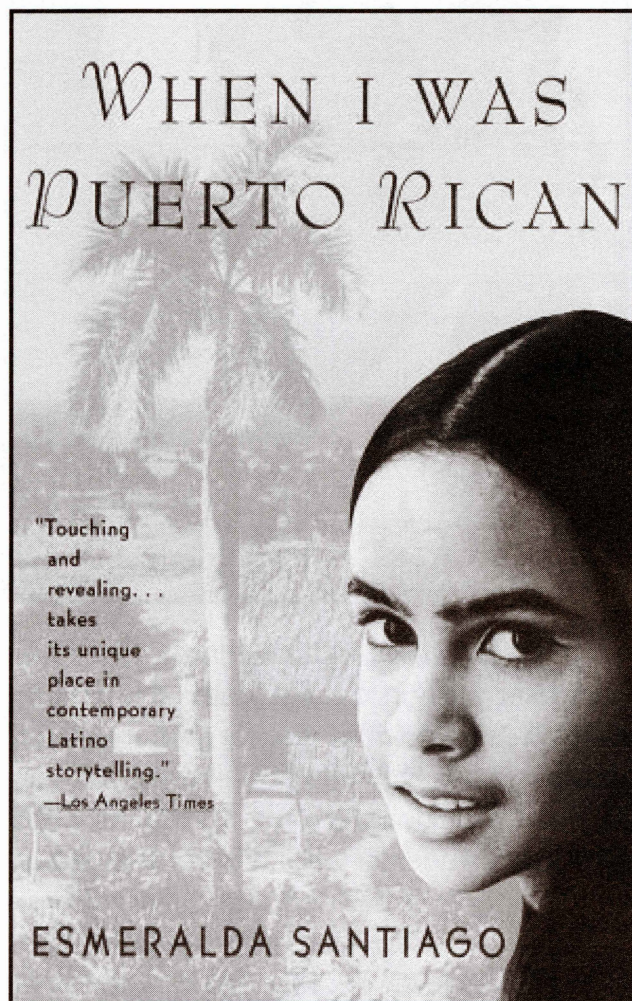
Well, if one looks up the origins of ghettos, then one will see that they were areas in European cities where Jews were forced to live because



they were beyond the “Kingdom of Christ.” This forced segregation did not deter this group to produce communities full of culture, history, and commerce. Humboldt Park was left to us Boricuas as a poor, worn-out slum by its Eastern European residents who left to the suburbs. Although, it is not perfect, walk down Division Street today and compare it to the street that my mother walked on decades ago, there is a huge, positive difference (businesses, festivals, buildings that look like Viejo San Juan...etc) and with its Puerto Rican identity intact (beginning with those two, 59-foot Puerto Rican Flags). But with “angry Joes” walking around, how long will it last?

If you want to get involved to preserve Paseo Boricua, please contact (773) 342-8022, participatorydemocracy@prcc-chgo.org, or visit www.myspace.com/humboldtparkpd

When I Was Puerto Rican: A Book Review



Santiago grew up in Macún, Toa Baja and starts her story off recounting this one extremely hot day en la isla. So hot that when she accidentally touched her tin house her fingertips were stung by the heat of the metal. Her story goes on to tell the memories of her childhood: the arguments between Mami and Papi, the Americanization of Puerto Rico, being a *jíbara*, becoming *casi señorita*, understanding what *pocavergüenzas* were, and realizing the difference between herself and her family members. However, as lovely as *La Isla del Encanto* is, Santiago begins to realize that sometimes things just are not as lovely as the island itself. She begins to grow up and realizes the truth of life.

I remember during the middle of my junior year in high school, a friend in my Latin American Studies class recommended I read Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican*. It was not until recently did I remember the book and I am glad I did. There were parts in this book that made me laugh because my life was so similar to hers. A few times I cried because some of the same things Santiago went through, I went through as well. I even smiled a few times because I saw a lot of myself in this little *jíbara*, whom would grow into this beautiful young woman full of aspirations. One of my favorite parts was when Santiago was about seven or so, and at the time she liked to talk to her dad about things that she did not understand. So one day she asked him what were sins, why she could not say "*Ay Dios Mío*", and was it a sin to not go to church? Her father said it was if you were Catholic and then Santiago asked if they were Catholic and her father responded

Have you ever ran your fingers through your hair and remember that one spot where you had the biggest knot because Mami gave you the *cocotazo* you deserved? Or caught yourself singing a *salsa vieja* because that was Papi's favorite? Or have a memory of *Abuela* always rubbing Vick's Vapor Rub on you because it was the cure for everything? If you find yourself smiling at any of these it's because you grew up just like Esmeralda Santiago... Puerto Rican.

by saying, "yes, but not very good ones." as getting in touch with the little *jíbaro* that every Puerto Rican has inside them. Although the book is titled *When I Was Puerto Rican*, I don't think one has to be Puerto Rican to feel *el ritmo de su corazón* that this book makes you feel. And as Santiago said in her book, "*el mismo jíbaro con diferente caballo*" - "same jíbaro, different horse."

Juan Antonio Corretjer, 1953

Oubao-Moin

El río de Corozal, el de la leyenda dorada.
La corriente arrastra oro. La corriente está ensangrentada.
El Río Manatuabón tiene la leyenda dorada.
La corriente arrastra oro. La corriente está ensangrentada.
El río Cibuco escribe su nombre con letra dorada.
La corriente arrastra oro. La corriente está ensangrentada.
Allí se inventó un criadero. Allí el quinto se pagaba.
La tierra era de oro. La tierra está ensangrentada.
En donde hundió la arboleda su raíz en tierra dorada,
allí las ramas chorrean sangre. La arboleda está ensangrentada.
Donde dobló la frente india, bien sea tierra, bien sea agua,
bajo el peso de la cadena, entre los hierros de la ergástula,
allí la tierra hiede a sangre y el agua está ensangrentada.
Donde el negro quebró sus hombros, bien sea tierra o sea agua,
y su cuerpo marcó el carimbo y abrió el látigo su espalda,
allí la tierra hiede a sangre y el agua está ensangrentada.
Donde el blanco pobre ha sufrido los horrores de la peonada,
bajo el machete del mayoral y la libreta de jornada
y el abuso del señorito, allí sea tierra o allí sea agua,
allí la tierra está maldita y corre el agua envenenada.

Gloria a esas manos aborígenes porque trabajaban.
Gloria a esas manos negras porque trabajaban.
Gloria a esas manos blancas porque trabajaban.
De entre esas manos indias, negras, blancas,
de entre esas manos nos salió la patria.

Gloria a las manos que la mina excavaran.
Gloria a las manos que el ganado cuidaran.
Gloria a las manos que el tabaco, que la caña y el café sembraran.
Gloria a las manos que los pastos talaran.
Gloria a las manos que los bosques clarearan.
Gloria a las manos que los ríos y los caños y los mares bogaran.
Gloria a las manos que los caminos trabajaran.
Gloria a las manos que las casas levantaran.
Gloria a las manos que las ruedas giraran.
Gloria a las manos que las carreteras y los coches llevaran.
Gloria a las manos que las mulas y caballos ensillaran y desensillaran.
Gloria a las manos que los hatos de cabras pastaran.
Gloria a las manos que cuidaron de las pjaras.
Gloria a las manos que las gallinas, los pavos y los patos criaran.
Gloria a todas las manos de todos los hombres y mujeres que trabajaron.
Porque ellas la patria amasaran.
Y gloria a las manos, a todas las manos que hoy trabajan
porque ellas constuyen y saldrá de ellas la nueva patria liberada.
¡La patria de todas las manos que trabajan!
Para ellas y para su patria, ¡Alabanza!, ¡Alabanza!

Puerto Rican on the Moon

On swells that the sea tides bring
to gently kiss its shoreline,
from Aguadilla's fair clime
a woman sets off to sing,
not just, in Chicago, to string
a long lament and then die.
I was born child of that cry
like creature wild in the rain,
and live in wait to regain
everything lost I espy.

Across a blue which became
more dull the more miles he flew,
toward that city closer drew

a peasant from Las Marías.
In his voice his hope declared as
he vowed from long day to return.
But first came my birthing's turn,
and after toil without slack
he just never made it back:
gave out in a plant's daily churn.

I am the child of a tear,
the offspring of honest sweat,
and Grandpa's was sole love met
with joy my own joy's delight
to keep the memory in sight
of that cup of wail in tear

like some dream in song is spoken
of an isle in dreams I've been,
for I am Puerto Rican,
without a thing, but unbroken.

And the blowhard that denies it
best gingerly step and beware
lest in a hallway somewhere

he pay the insult belies it.
For, so rumor certifies it,
it's all the same clair de lune
shines on hill, sea, and lagoon.
And, so, I shout to knave's din
I'd still be Puerto Rican
even if born on the moon.

Miguel Piñero

This Is Not The Place Where I Was Born

puerto rico 1974
this is not the place where i was born
remember — as a child the fantasizing images my mother planted
within my head —
the shadows of her childhood recounted to me many times
over welfare loan on crédito food from el bodeguero
i tasted mango many years before the skin of the fruit
ever reached my teeth
i was born on an island about 35 miles wide 100 miles long
a small island with a rainforest somewhere in the central
regions of itself
where spanish was a dominant word
& signs read by themselves
i was born in a village of that island where the police
who frequented your place of business-hangout or home came as
servant or friend & not as a terror in slogan clothing
i was born in a barrio of the village on the island
where people left their doors open at night
where respect for elders was exhibited with pride
where courting for loved ones was not treated over confidentially
where children's laughter did not sound empty & savagely alive
with self destruction . . .
i was born on an island where to be puerto rican meant to be
part of the land & soul & puertorriqueños were not the

minority
puerto ricans were first, none were second
no, i was not born here . . .
no, i was not born in the attitude & time of this place
this sun drenched soil
this green faced piece of earth
this slave blessed land
where the caribbean seas pound angrily on the shores
of pre-fabricated house/hotel redcap hustling people gypsy taxi cab
fighters for fares to fajardo
& the hot wind is broken by fiberglass palmtrees
& highrise plátanos mariano on leave & color t. v.
looneytune cartoon comicbook characters with badges
in their jockstraps
& foreigners scream that puertorriqueños are foreigners
& have no right to claim any benefit on the birthport
this sun drenched soil
this green faced piece of earth
this slave blessed land
where nuyoricans come in search of spiritual identity
are greeted with profanity
this is insanity that americanos are showered
with shoe shine kisses
police in stocking caps cover carry out john wayne
television cowboy law road models of new york city detective
french connection/death wish instigation ku-klux-klan mind
panorama screen seems
in modern medicine is in confusion needs a transfusion quantity
treatment if you're not on the plan the new stand
of blue cross blue shield blue uniform master charge
what religion you are
blood fills the waiting room of death
stale air & qué pasa stares are nowhere
in sight & night neon light shines bright
in el condado area puerto ricans under cover cop
stop & arrest on the spot puerto ricans who shop for the flag
that waves on the left-in souvenir stores —
puertorriqueños cannot assemble displaying the emblem
nuyoricans are fighting & dying for in newark, lower east side
south bronx where the fervor of being

puertorriqueños is not just rafael hernández
viet vet protest with rifle shots that dig into four pigs
& sociable friday professional persons rush to the
golf course & martini glasses work for the masses
& the island is left unattended because the middle class
bureaucratic cuban has arrived spitting blue eyed justice
at brown skinned boys in military khaki
compromise to survive is hairline length
moustache trimmed face looking grim like a soldier
on furlough further cannot exhibit contempt for what is
not cacique born this poem will receive a burning
stomach turning scorn nullified classified racist
from this pan am eastern first national chase manhattan
puerto rico ...

Continued from **page 9**

This program meant a lot to me. I was a participant last spring semester when I went to the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras. My experience in Puerto Rico is priceless. The culture, the education, life experiences and the many friendships I built over in Puerto Rico can never leave my heart. Educationally, as a Latino I enhanced my Spanish speaking skills as both a writer and speaker. Since all my classes were taught in Spanish I had to pay special attention in class and study twice as hard to get the grades that I wanted. My life experience in the dorm was both amazing and horrible. Another experience that I will never forget is when my friends and I went to Justas 2008 in Ponce. Justas is a weekend carnival type festival where all the colleges and university students from Puerto Rico get together and have their track and

field team compete in the University Olympics.

I have more experiences that I could talk about but I just wanted to highlight some experiences so the university administration can listen and read to see that cutting the NSE program can prevent another student like me from experiencing this great program that can impact one's life. Many students do not study abroad due to financial constraints but the NSE program was formed so that a student can experience a study abroad program in a very low price. This program would benefit any student who wants to experience a different environment and want to expand their social and educational network outside of Illinois. You only live life once and the experiences that you take with you from a study abroad will shape the person that you will become.

Disclaimer: In our June 2009 edition, we did not give credit to our staff writer Marla Mojica in her article "D.A.L.E. Presents: Latino Avanzando Series." QOS sincerely appologizes for the mix-up.



**HUMBOLDT
PARK IS
NOT FOR
SALE!**