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## Que Ondee Sola- January 1999

Ruben Gerena

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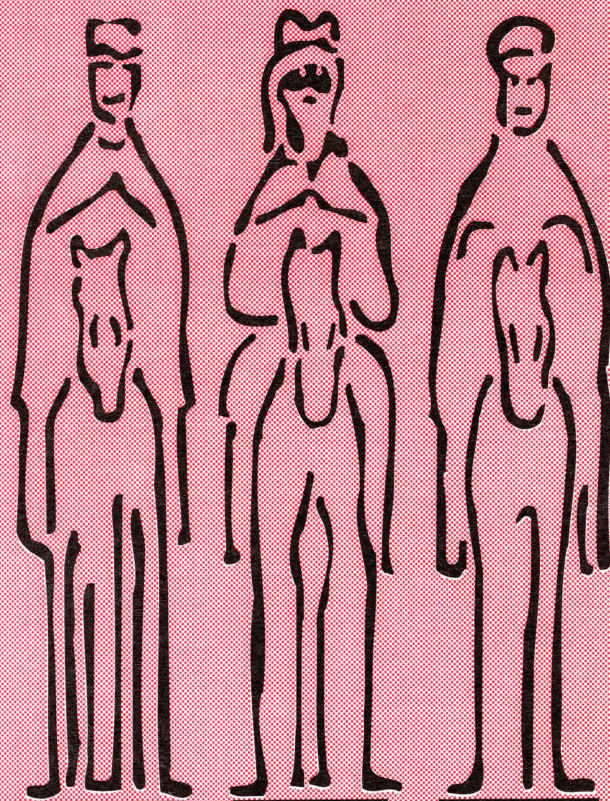
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January 1999  
Volume 29, No. 1

# ¡Feliz Día de los Reyes!

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY • CHICAGO



**3KINGS**

ISSUE

**QUE ONDEE SOLA**

*January 1999*

**THREE KINGS DAY  
JANUARY 6, 1999  
QUE ONDEE SOLA**



# UPRS Commentary

The Union for Puerto Rican Students (UPRS) is an enigma. At least, it is to those who do not understand it. The UPRS was created more than 25 years ago as the forerunner here at NEIU in the battle for equality and freedom and the obliteration of oppression and colonialism. It was meant to be an organization which brought to light the many facets of the Puerto Rican culture, history and experience, both on the island and in Chicago. Its dedication to the Northeastern student body can be seen in the role UPRS played in the creation of Proyecto Pa'lante and Mexican-Caribbean Studies Minor. Also not known to many people is the instrumental role we played in making sure the school implemented a book waiver program. It was members of UPRS that worked together to form *Que Ondee Sola*, which happens to be the longest running Latino student run publication in the entire US. The Chicano Student Union

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## 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 within the staff. We appreciate and encourage any and all suggestions or contributions.

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# IN HIS OWN WORDS:

## Interview with José Solís Jordán

By Michael Rodríguez

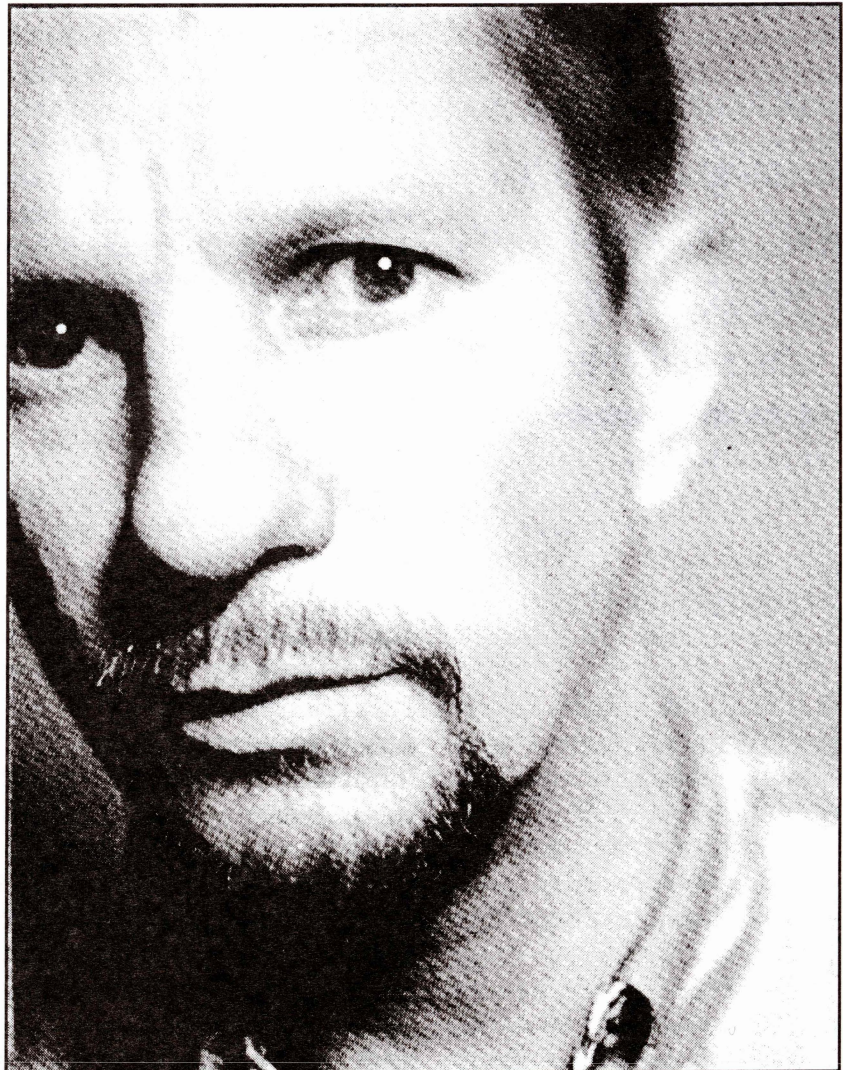
On February 22, 1998 the trial of the US versus Prof. José Solís Jordan will begin.

This interview is designed to give you an opportunity to learn about the man who stands to be the 16<sup>th</sup> Puerto Rican political prisoner. This interview is a follow-up to a prior interview that was published in the February 1998 issue of *Que Ondee Sola*

QOS: Can you tell the NEIU student body about yourself?

Currently, I'm a professor at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) in the College of Education. I teach courses on the history of education in Puerto Rico and also the sociology of education.

I was born in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico to a military family. This meant that I had an opportunity to travel to many different places while growing up and attend both private and public schools throughout Puerto Rico. While in high school a group of students and I embarked on a campaign to get the Puerto Rican flag to fly at our school. Prior to our efforts the only flag flying was the U.S. flag. After a year-long struggle we finally won. When I graduated from high school the dynamics of UPR were very heated and politicized around the issue of Puerto Rico.



For these reasons my parents didn't encourage me to go to UPR feeling I would get into trouble. Instead, they convinced me to study abroad. I went to study in Texas at (TCU) Texas Christian University. Later I returned to Puerto Rico and began teaching in the public school system. I then came to

the University of Illinois in Champagne-Urbana to get my doctorate degree in education in 1987. After I graduated I began to teach at DePaul University from 1991-95. In 1995 I returned to Puerto Rico to teach at UPR.

*(Continues on page 5)*



*UPRS is dedicated to ensuring that our traditions, our language, and realities will be preserved and developed.*

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(now called Chimexla) also has its roots in UPRS. It is evident that our efforts to help the student body have not gone in vain. Throughout the years, UPRS and *Que Ondee Sola* have sponsored an impressive list of activities.

In the last spring semester of this millennium we will continue to follow our objectives. Our main goal is to promote the Puerto Rican culture and history. Far too often, Puerto Rican history is not talked about or researched. Many do not know the impact Ramon E. Betances and Ruiz Belvis had on Puerto Rico in their quest to end slavery and their plight for freedom. Also the story of how the Puerto Rican flag was created is rarely even touched upon. As far as culture is concerned, very little is ever shown and even less is understood. Puerto Ricans are constantly subject to stereotypes on what it means to be Puerto Rican. UPRS seeks to immerse itself in the reality of the Puerto Rican experience. Music such as La Bomba y Plena and la Danza can be heard and felt telling the story of El puertorriqueño. The mixture of Taino (indigenous people of Puerto Rico), Spanish, and African blood created our foods, language, and traditions. There is so much that I can speak about, but I would rather encourage you to learn more about the Puerto Rican history and culture. UPRS is dedicated to ensuring that our traditions, our language, and realities will be preserved and developed.

Along with learning about the Puerto Rican culture, we seek to learn about other cultures and peoples. Throughout our history as an organization we have had members of all nationalities. Why? The reason is we promote the Puerto Rican culture while simultaneously promoting the learning and acceptance of other cultures. The themes of our discussions and activities often relate to all people because they are based on human principles such as freedom, respect, and self-determination.

The student body must understand that we are also here to help and provide students with a way of having their voices heard. *Que Ondee Sola* is always in search of writers, poets, and artists who want to give their perspective on anything. Likewise UPRS encourages students to come and share their perspectives with us. Also come share your ideas and criticisms with us. Please, let us know how you feel about us and the activities we are doing. If you want more information about UPRS, whether about meetings and/or activities please call us at **Ext. 3805** or better yet visit us at the *Que Ondee Sola* office at **E-041** below Beck's bookstore across from the Students Lounge.

Please don't make any assumptions purely on what you have just read or heard about us. The only way to truly know what we are about is to take moment of your time and come to see for yourself. Thank you and may you have a great semester.

Michael Rodríguez  
President of the Union for Puerto Rican Students

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I have five children. My oldest son is a graduate student at U Of I in Champagne-Urbana and my oldest daughter is in her third year of pre-med. I also have a son who's a junior in high school, a daughter sixth grade and another in second grade. Returning to Puerto Rico allowed the children to be raised with family and loved ones.

I'm part of La Asociación de Profesores Puertorriqueños Uni-versitario (APPU), which translates into the Puerto Rican Association of University Professors. This organization works around issues and problems involved in university life. We were also part of the phone company strike and general work strike during 1998.

QOS: Can you tell us about the events leading up to your arrest and about the day you were arrested?

This whole situation began with the involvement of Rafael A. Marrero.\* It seems Rafael A. Marrero is working for the FBI as an informant and now is the key government witness against me. Apparently he was, and has been, and continues to be on a campaign to impact in a negative way the Independence movement. He does not nor does anyone else have the capacity to destroy the Puerto Rican Independence movement whether here in Chicago or in Puerto Rico. His goal was to bring down the movement or at least create dissent in it. To carry out his goals Rafael A. Marrero bombed a military recruitment center in Chicago on Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 1992. He hoped his actions would create a spring board for subsequent repression's against the Puerto Rican

Cultural Center, community implemented programs at Clemente High School, and the gentrification of the Puerto Rican community.

On Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup> 1997 in Old San Juan, I was arrested by twenty or more FBI agents dressed like comandos. They blocked the streets on both ends and there were many cars in front of our house. It was a very militarized arrested. The reason for this, I feel was to intimidate me and to send out a message to the Puerto Rican com-

*He does not nor does anyone else have the capacity to destroy the Puerto Rican Independence movement whether here in Chicago or in Puerto Rico.*

munity. It stated to Puerto Ricans that this is what happens when you dare to confront the regime of colonialism in Puerto Rico under the United States. It seemed like they wanted me to go along with their little campaign. When I didn't go along with their campaign they had to follow through with the arrest and indict me.\*\* I subsequently found out at one of my hearings that the FBI had done a physiological profile of me. The results [probably to their surprise] stated that I was an academic, a basically nice guy, obviously Pro-Independence, a father of five and a hus-

band. Principally, my arrest and indictment was based on the word of Rafael A. Marrero. As I said before Marrero carried out a bombing and is now the government witness against me. Marrero confessed to the bombing and since then has received immunity.

Since my arrest there has been a barrage of lies and manipulations to put more pressure on me. I was later informed there was a possibility of making a plea bargain if I would state I was guilty. I was not under any circumstance going to say I was guilty for two reasons. First, I would not admit guilt for a crime I did not commit. Second, I would not criminalize the struggle.

Now we are in a position of pursuing our defense to fight the fight in court. The trial begins with the Jury Selections on February 22, 1998.

QOS: How are you feeling going into the trial?

I feel real optimistic about the trial. All along I wanted this trial to become an opportunity for us to educate people. There is nothing I would like better than to turn the courtroom into a classroom. I think we are going to be able to do that. What I mean by that is that the case of Puerto Rico's colonial status will be made. Along with the trial the case of the Puerto Rican community in Chicago will be made around the issues of gentrification and the use of counter-intelligence programs against Puerto Ricans. This gives us the opportunity to educate people outside the Puerto Rican community on a broader scale.

*(Continues next page)*



Also what is making me feel good is the support I've received from student organizations such as *Que Ondee Sola* and the people in the Puerto Rican community in Chicago.

In Puerto Rico, I have received support from labor unions and academic organizations as well. What that does is it encourages, energizes and nourishes the human spirit to continue the struggle. As my close compañero José López said "We have reason on our side and the right is on our side, the moral argument." The government has the political power on their side. That then means we must be judicious, on guard and clear on how we defend this case.

My family is very strong and I have a wonderful wife who is my companion. Our kids are strong though its is very difficult to contemplate their father being the next political prisoner. We talk about the possibilities that can happen but it helps having a loving family to deal with moments in history like this in a personal and professional way.

QOS: Is there anything else you would like the reader to know?

We must continue to be firm in demanding the excarceration of the 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners. Through this trial one can witness the oppression of the Puerto Rican Independence movement. No matter what we must not lose sight of the fact that the struggle must continue. We must continue to work against elements that would like us to disappear or be destroyed. Also the spirit of this struggle must be generated out a love for ones

people and not of a hatred of other people. I think that at times repressive actions tend to fuel in us hatred, and I've always thought hatred is not a good motivator because it creates obstacles against our better judgement. Better judgements can be made in a struggle whose spirit is founded in love. That's not a semantic twist on meanings or a manipulation of words. It really means you can fight, a very powerful fight in whatever way out a love for something and not out of a hatred. So when we decide to do something we should think very carefully about what our motivations are.

I always recommend at any time we engage in struggles whether by student organizations or individuals in student organizations, whatever concerns or criticisms are brought on by the group, that we be careful about that which we are criticizing. Does it serve to divide us or does it serve to bring us together? If it serves to divide then we should question it carefully. If it serves to bring us together then it is something to work for. These are things that need to be thought out as you can see in my case. Now many have learned and are learning that divisive tactics are usually tactics employed to hurt the possibility of a struggle moving forward.

What can people do to support you?

My case, the USA versus Jose Solis Jordan is not just about me. Granted its me at the individual level who is the example for the moment of a whole history of struggle. With that in mind, what we can do is educate people, so then the case becomes a springboard

for the people to talk about the issues of colonialism, gentrification, and education in the Puerto Rican community. Support the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and support this community in forging a democratic education at Clemente high school. We should support the development of Paseo Boricua. It is our space to be preserved and developed by the Puerto Rican community.

Bring classes of students and your family members to witness the trial because having a full courtroom sends out a powerful message. My focus is on the question of education and of people letting the government know that they are being watched. Let the government know you are watching cautiously and carefully to how this case is being handled. The government knows it is a political case which will be dealt with and will be defend as one.

\* Rafael Marrero was an F.B.I. agent provocateur who worked at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center from 1987 to 1995.

\*\* Prof. Jose Solis Jordan was charged with in a four-count indictment with conspiracy, possession of explosives, and destruction of government property.

Editors note: To support compañero Solís, please send your contribution to the Jose Solis Jordan fund c/o the Law Offices of Jed Stone, 434 W. Ontario-Suite 400, Chicago IL 60610. Contact QOS for copies of February 1998 interview about Prof. Jose Solis Jordan.



# NEIU Community Says: THE S.O.A. IS NOT OKAY!

by Jeanette Hernández

The U.S. Army School of the Americas trains military men from Latin America. Right now, members of the NEIU community and activists from across the country are organizing to be on the doorstep of Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia for what promises to be the largest protest to close the School in history.

In commemoration of the assassination of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in El Salvador, a vigil and protest is held every year in front of the military base that houses the SOA, the institution that is responsible for the military training of those assassins. Four Maryknoll church women were raped and killed by SOA graduates on the Salvadoran countryside. Archbishop Oscar Romero was also killed by SOA graduates during mass in San Salvador after pleading that the government stop the summary killings of untold numbers of peasants, labor organizers, teachers — just about anyone who made a social plea or demand. *And that's just in El Salvador in the 1980s...*

Every November, at least until the School is closed, the vigils will continue.

Since its inception in 1946, the School of the Americas has left a legacy of violence in practically all of Latin America.

*SOA alumni have gone on to become notorious for brutality in their home countries, such as directing death squads, mandating murder or organizing torture*

Not accidentally, Latin America became more repressive and dictatorial during that time. For example, quite a few countries have had "dirty wars" like Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, Uruguay, Brazil, etc. All of South America had military coups, with the exception of Colombia (where the military has always been in power). Some of these coups ousted popularly elected presidents such as Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973 and Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954. SOA alumni have gone on to become notorious for brutality in their home countries, such as directing death squads, mandating murder or organizing torture. Colombia has the greatest number of graduates and not coincidentally, the most atrocious human rights record in this hemisphere and is well known for drug trafficking. How could all this happen after we as a nation generously created an institution that teaches its graduates, if we are to take the School's mission statement seriously, to *foster coopera-*

*tion, promote democratic values and respect human rights?*

As an undergrad, I did some research on the School of the Americas. I concluded that aside from the School's failure to meet its own mission, it isn't safe to say the U.S. is uninvolved in Latin America simply because military aid has ceased. On the contrary, if we're still training their military and police, we play a key role in imparting doctrine to those countries. Part of that doctrine is contained in the training manuals the School uses, which describe some pretty heinous acts that constitute torture. Some terms are vague, like the use of the term "neutralize" — so does it mean murder, or just cut someone's tongue out? However, the training videos leave little to the imagination. For example, one depicts the use of electric prods on prisoners and dousing them with salt water.

*(Continues page 8)*



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I think we as American citizens and taxpayers also play a key role in opposing the School.

The School has managed to remain open in spite of its dubious track record for several reasons. Year after year, deliberations to close the School ended with a vote that lost by a narrow margin.

For decades, the School also survived on Cold War paranoia, particularly after the Cuban Revolution. The "domino effect" pseudo-logic was that the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean would fall to some out-of-control, contagious "communism." However, this is a problematic assumption when you consider that another Latin American country didn't fall to "communism" until the success of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979, a full twenty years after the Cuban Revolution. For the other twenty or so countries to fall, we'd be in for a wait. Further, when entire villages full of elderly folk, women and children would be "neutralized" because of suspected "communism" like the massacre at *El*

*Mozote* in El Salvador, we've clearly and disastrously, infected our neighbors in Latin America with our own Cold War mania faster than any "communism" has.

### **In short, "stability" is about making Latin America safe for the mobility and prevalence of global capitalism.**

Since the end of the Cold War, the School has tried to reassert its viability by offering drug interdiction courses for pretty much the same tough guys in Latin America. Everybody wants to wage their war on drugs. There is a problem with that excuse as well: several SOA graduates, most notably Manuel Noriega, have been pinched for drug trafficking and/or drug money laundering.

### **The "Domino Effect" pseudo-logic was that the rest of Latin American and the Caribbean would fall to some out-of-control, contagious "Communism."**

Of course, the School of the Americas is in the business of preaching stability in Latin America. And yet another problem, as I've already noted, is that Latin America has become *less* stable since the School has been operating. This calls for a critical look at what "stability" in this case means. In short, "stability" is about making Latin America safe for the mobility and prevalence of global capitalism. Multinational corporations are in the business of finding labor forces and natural resources that are cheap, compliant and easy to extract. Once labor forces and community groups organize, delimit the land, or press for benefits, the multinational corporations cry instability, as empowerment of the poor must not get out of hand. The corporations pressure the local government to restore stability (repress labor dissent) or else they will find a country that can. Since a few local bigwigs and greedy leaders will lose out from the corporate withdrawal, they feel obliged to get the corporations to stick around by any means necessary, so in they call the U.S. trained military.

Most recently, the southeastern Mexican state of Chiapas has been racked with human rights violations and drug trafficking—problems that were nonexistent prior to the recent Mexican military and paramilitary occupation. The indigenous people's resistance efforts and proximity to the rich oil reserves, vast forestry tracts and cash crop lands have rendered them targets of the 60% of the Mexican military in Chiapas alone — just for stability no doubt. On December 22, 1997, 45 civilians were massacred in a church

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# Vejigante Girl

By Elisa Espinoza

On the Island of Borinquen (Puerto Rico), there was a girl named Elizabeth. She lived in the town of Loiza by the Atlantic Ocean. There were many, many trees and animals. Tall palm trees with coconuts lined the beach with flowers, monkeys and jaguars all around them.



Elizabeth lived with her mother, her grandmother, her younger brother David, her older sister Ada, and their dog Soni. Every Monday, Elizabeth's mother would go to the market to buy fish, vegetables, fruit, utensils and seeds. She would also buy Elizabeth a book.

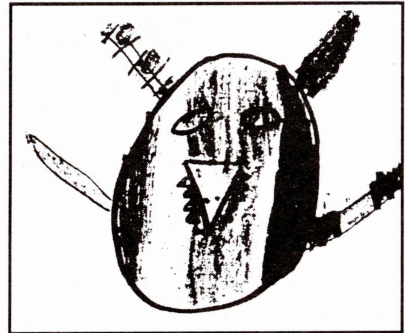
Elizabeth loved books, animals and plants. But most of all, she loved *Vejigantes*.

The first time she went to a Vejigante Festival she was 5 years old. She was fascinated by the festival and treasured that moment. She was very excited to see men and boys who dressed up to scare the evil spirits away. When she was a little girl, Elizabeth was scared of the men who wore the colorful

masks and costumes. She would hide behind her mother's dress as the men would run among the crowd. But she was older now and knew that their purpose was to scare away the evil spirits that roamed throughout the island.

Elizabeth loved *Vejigantes* because to her they were magical. As magical as the nights when the sky would be full of stars and constellations.

As the year went by, it was time for the annual Vejigante Festival. Elizabeth wanted to be a Vejigante very, very, much! She spoke with her grandmother and her grandmother agreed to help her with her costume. It would be Elizabeth's job to make it colorful



When the festival began, there were parades of marching *Vejigantes* with a lot of different colorful costumes and masks. At the festival people selling T-shirts, jewelry, and food. Vendors were selling *alcapurrias*, *pasteles*, *pastelillos* and *mantecado de coco*. Everything looked delicious.

Elizabeth was walking in the third row of *Vejigante*. She really, really wanted to be a front row *Vejigante* walking with the *Vejigantes* who were her own age. These *Vejigantes* were *Vejigantes* for at least three years or more. The third row and back was for beginners. This was Elizabeth's first year at the *Vejigante* Festival. Being a girl, she had never been invited to participate. The boys and men thought that girls should not be allowed since they couldn't do a good job. Elizabeth

(See page 10)



**Vejigante Girl...**

wanted to show them that she was cool like them. So she started to act cool. Elizabeth bobbed and tickled the children and made the babies giggle. Suddenly, some bullies came along and started to push Elizabeth, chase her and almost ripped her costume. Then the captain of the bullies tore off her mask!! When the boys in the front row turned around, they were aston-

*Suddenly, some bullies came along and started to push Elizabeth, chase her and almost ripped her costume.*

ished!!!! Because they thought girls couldn't be Vejigantes. Then the oldest boy said, "Hey, if you can pass this test you can become a front row Vejigante." The test was she had to run up to the bully and tease him, bob him and say, "Why don't you pick on somebody your own size?" Elizabeth did that and the bully said, "I challenge you to a race." "O.K.!" said Elizabeth. "The first person to reach the end of the Vejigante festival is the winner. On your mark, get set, GO!" said the bully.

The race was on and the bully was winning. Elizabeth had trouble looking through the rows of Vejigantes. Then, she got an IDEA! Elizabeth would go through the sidewalk. The sidewalk was crowded but it was much easier to run on. Elizabeth was the WINNER! The bully was the last one there. Eliza-

beth was made a front row Vejigante and she is still a front row Vejigante today.

(Editors note: The author of Vejigante Girl was written by Elisa Espinoza who attends Interamerican School. Mr. Howard Emmer is her teacher)

**S.O.A....**

rest and detention. Some of them figure within our ranks here at NEIU.

This year, some of the NEIU folks attending the November vigil stated their reasons for participating. Most are decidedly *not* "crossing the line" Griselda Rosales (Criminal Justice major) said, "I'll be at the vigil to stand up for those who can't speak for themselves, those who have lost all hope for a better world." Belky Liz (Criminal Justice major) will attend the vigil. She says, "I want to continue something I started last year when I went to the vigil and this year's vigil in DC in April." Irena Strel (BOG Program) is attending the vigil because "Last year's vigil was good. This year's will be even better." Joanne Mineo

*I'll be at the vigil to stand up for those who can't speak for themselves, those who have lost all hope for a better world."*

## GETTING HOME ALIVE BY

AURORA LEVINS MORALES  
AND ROSARIO MORALES

*I am a child of the Americas,  
a light-skinned mestiza of the Caribbean,  
a child of many diaspora, born into this  
continent at a crossroads.*

*I am a U.S. Puerto Rican Jew, a  
product of the ghettos of New York I  
have never known. An immigrant and  
the daughter and granddaughter of  
immigrants. I speak English with  
passion: it's the tongue of my conscious-  
ness, a flashing knife blade of crystal,  
my tool, my craft.*

*I am Caribeña, island grown. Spanish  
is in my flesh, ripples from my tongue,  
lodges in my hips: the language of garlic  
and mangoes, the singing in my poetry,  
the flying gestures of my hands. I am of  
Latinoamerica, rooted in the history of  
my continent: I speak from that body.*

*I am not african. Africa is in me, but I  
cannot return. I am not taina. Taino, is  
in me, but there is no way back. I am  
not european. Europe lives in me, but I  
have no home there.*

*I am new. History made me. My first  
language was spanglish. I was born at  
the crossroads and I am whole.*



# MARCHING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

By P. Angel  
Fuentes

On December 9, 1998 I along with other students, educators and activists committed to social change joined the campaign to release the 15 Puerto Rican Political Prisoners. Our destination was to the United Nations in New York city for the signing of the "Declaration of Amnesty" For some of us this would be our first trip to New York and maybe even first demonstration in support of the Puerto Rican patriots.

We arrived on Thursday afternoon, December 10, 1998 and participated in a service in honor of the 15 political prisoners. Speaking at the service was Rafael Cancel Miranda, a national hero of Puerto Rico, who was imprisoned for 25 years. Former President Jimmy Carter released him. Also present and representing the Chamoru people was Senator Angel Santos from Guam. Both men spoke against US imperialism. Next, in observance, Que Bonita Bandera was performed/sung by the Juventud de la Comunidad Bruderhof of New York. Hector Rivera member of the New York Welfare poets read some of his work.



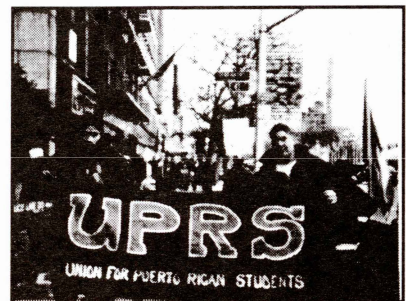
Following the service a rally was held across the United Nations at the Ralph Blanche Plaza. We marched, chanted freedom slogans and carried and raised our Puerto Rican flags high along with pictures of all of the 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners. This public demonstration was our way of adding a voice to the unjust price the Puerto Rican political prisoners are paying. Present at this march, too were non Puerto Ricans, supporters of Mumia Abdul Jamal (death row inmate) and supporters from different cities.

Later that evening more enlightenment on the matter was shared by Prof. Jose E. Lopez and the declaration for amnesty for the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners was signed.

I left the city of New York, New York finding every event during this day motivating. While we headed back to Chicago, I reflected back to the speeches made at the demonstrations. I learned that there are not only 15 Puerto Rican Independence activists in-

carcerated for their struggles toward the decolonialization and demilitarization of Puerto Rico, but many other political prisoners from the Black liberation, Native American sovereignty and other movements. These men and women are serving long federal prison sentences. They are professionals, and teachers, organizers in their communities, artists, mothers, and fathers.

My thoughts conclude that in order to gain independence for a nation like Puerto Rico, one must maintain public awareness and pressure.





# EDADE AIDAZI FELLIFE

QUE ONDEE SOLA • JANUARY 1999 • VOLUME 29

# LOS REVES

