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Que Ondee Sola - November 2001

Michael Rodriguez-Muniz

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La Noche
de la Familia

Jacqueline Jackson
visits NEIU

On
Paseo Boricua

The Muslim Influence
in Latino Culture

Que Ondee Sola

November 2001

Northeastern Illinois University • Chicago

Vol. 29 No. 7

Latino Retention?

Latino Professors?

Latino focused courses?

NEIU—

Latino Cultural Center?

A Hispanic Serving Institution?

NEIU: 31% LATINO

Mexican/Caribbean Studies Minor?

LET THE
ADMINISTRATION
KNOW THAT THE
STUDENTS CANNOT
BE PUSHED AROUND
ANY LONGER

Puerto Rican, Mexican, Chicano History?

Words from the Editor

November already? I swear I was just registering for the Fall semester and now I'm in the process of registering for Spring 2002. For some of us our college experience is winding down, for others its just the first semester, but regardless, we thank you picking up another edition of *Que Ondee Sola* and sharing your time with us.

We, at *Que Ondee Sola* have had a very successful semester thus far. Judging by the speed our magazine racks are being depleted of issues, QOS has surely expanded its readership and will continue to provide a quality publication.

One of the reasons I attribute our success to is the growing number of students who are interested and willing to submit articles and poetry to be published in our humble pages. This edition features a number of articles written by students who have never had anything published in *Que Ondee Sola*. We thank them for sharing their perspectives with our readers.

In this edition, we have featured several articles about a few of the activities that took place at NEIU as part of either the Equity in Action Series Program and Hispanic Heritage Month. *Que Ondee Sola* and the Union for Puerto Rican Students would like to thank the Hispanic Heritage and Equity in Action Committees for their great work and effort to provide our campus with quality events.

Finally, we invite all of our readers to write to us and let us know what you think of the articles and commentaries in QOS. All constructive criticism and suggestions are welcomed and invited. Thanks for reading and see you next month!

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Que Ondee Sola

is a 29 year old Puerto Rican/Latino student monthly journal/magazine. Our mission is to provide our campus with a relevant, engaging, and educational publication that deals with student issues, particularly those of Latinos and other people of color, along with issues that are of importance to our communities.

Que Ondee Sola also affirms the right of Puerto Rican self determination.

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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 lie solely within the staff.

We appreciate all suggestions and contributions.

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Submission Information:

QOS needs a hard copy of submission, along with it on a disk. Contact us for details such as length and deadlines. QOS reserves the right to publish as we see fit.

Questions & Mexican/ Caribbean Studies Minor

In the September edition of *Que Ondee Sola*, the Student Steering Committee of the Mexican/ Caribbean Studies Minor voiced its opposition to the treatment the students had received in dealing with the hiring of the coordinator of the Mexican/ Caribbean Studies Program.

Since then, the Student Steering Committee, comprised of Chime-xla, UPRS, and *Que Ondee Sola* have had several opportunities to discuss various issues and concerns with the new coordinator of the Minor, Dr. Victor Ortiz.

The discussions have ranged from communicating our visions and hopes for the program, as well as, addressing various proposals. Our most recent meeting took place on October 25 in *Que Ondee Sola*'s office.

At this meeting the Student Steering Committee restated its commit-

**Latinos
make up 31%
of the total
school
population.**

ment to the program and our intent to be involved to the maximum of our capabilities in ensuring that this Minor be developed and expanded with respect to its historical integrity, as intended for the benefit of NEIU students.

Of the several issues that were discussed during that meeting, the most important was our emphasis on the Mexican, Chicano, and Puerto Rican History courses. The Mexican/ Caribbean Studies Minor,

Where is the Latino line in the History Department?

while it is an interdisciplinary minor, it is heavily rooted in a critical analysis of history as it pertains to the Latino experience. The Student Steering Committee believes that for this program to be successful, these courses must be taught on a regular basis by professors that are responsive to students, academically solid, and represent the student population.

Judging by the conversations we have had with Victor Ortiz, the Stu-

Why are only a few of NEIU's professors Latino?

dent Steering Committee is encouraged by his willingness to listen, dialogue, and as he put it, "facilitate" the needs of the students.

The Student Steering Committee will be seriously looking into this issue in the near future. In addition, we will be actively researching other important issues of the Latino students on campus. The purpose is to seek answers to questions many Latino students have been asking:

- Why are only a few of NEIU's professors Latino?
- Why doesn't NEIU have a Latino cultural center?
- Where is the Latino line in the History Department? Where is the already established Puerto Rican History line?
- Why do most of NEIU departments have a serious shortage of

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Celebrating “La Noche de la Familia”

Edith Germain

Photography by Joe Davis

As part of the Hispanic Heritage Month, Northeastern’s Hispanic Heritage Committee and the Office of Alumni Affairs presented our University community with “La Noche de la Familia.” The event was held in Alumni Hall on September 28. The celebration, which was dedicated in memory of Dr. Jorge Prieto, opened its doors at 6:00 p.m. to give the students and their families time to enjoy wine and hors d’oeuvres.

The program began at about 7 p.m. with greetings from President Steinberg. She gave her speech in Spanish first, which surprised most of the guests, and then addressed the audience in English. Following President Steinberg were Lisa Cooper, Director of Alumni affairs who thanked the audience for attending and Maria Luna, Student Trustee of the Board of Trustees, who spoke of the importance of family.

Once the speeches were made, the audience was entertained by Estampa Colombiana- Colombian Folkloric Children’s Dance Group and Tierra Colombiana Folkloric Dance Company which were both choreographed by Edgar Serna. The children and teenagers who performed ranged from 8 to 19 years of age. Following the children’s performances, the audience got to enjoy the sounds of Bomba drums thanks to Afri-Caribe who also brought



their Puerto Rican sounds and flavor to Northeastern.

After the entertainment, Provost López addressed the audience with the tribute to Dr. Jorge Prieto and also presented the awards to the people who were being honored that day. Among those who were being honored were:

- Blanca & Guadalupe Delgado- identical twins who graduated from Northeastern in May 2001. They represent the will to succeed regardless of their current situation.

- Fernando & Maria Gracia and their daughters Frika & Kalinka Gracia- are examples of the struggle of parents trying to get their kids through college while attending col-

lege themselves and the importance of education.

- Rose Becerra- outstanding volunteer who began helping her commu-





Following the award presentations, the audience was then invited to the dance floor by the rhythms of Merengue and Salsa. One of the first persons on the dance floor was Dr. Angelina Pedroso showing her latest merengue moves and Lisa Cooper who proved that there is no boundary when it comes to dancing to some good ole Merengue. The program concluded with those in attendance mingling and dancing. "La Noche de la Familia" was a great success.

nity by starting with her own family and then acquired a position in the Logan Square Neighborhood Association to help make a difference in her community.

•Edgar Serna- a recognized dancer,

teacher, and choreographer for Estampa Colombiana and Tierra Colombiana. Serna began his dance studies with Libby Komaiko who is part of the dance program here at Northeastern.

The author is an NEIU student.

Chimexla Que Ondee Sola Union for Puerto Rican Students

Will not participate in
International Day

- Due to the unprofessional and disrespectful treatment the above named student organizations have received in the last 2 years.
- Due to Que Ondee Sola being banned and censored from the event.
- Due to the refusal of the Foreign Language professors involved in the unprofessional spectacle last year to apologize for their actions.

SOME QUESTIONS

Jeanette Hernández

TO ASK OURSELVES AS WE WAVE OUR AMERICAN FLAGS

Now that we are in the aftermath of the September 11th Tragedy and at the dawn of our invasion of Afghanistan, this country is more united than ever before and probably at its patriotic peak. Since there is so much talk about our invasion of Afghanistan being about the defense of freedom and democracy, I offer some questions applying the template of our nefarious foreign policies toward the Third World, particularly Latin America. The bloodbath in our backyard was also said to be in the name of freedom and democracy. These questions are ones that seem to be avoided, to which no answers seem forthcoming in the mainstream media.....

Why do we have such a problem with the word terrorism? How much of it are we willing to engage in or sponsor around the world? How many of the world's butchers, dictators and mercenary armies were trained on U.S. soil?

We were hit hard, almost 6,000 dead in the attacks, but how is that different from our U.S. -style, low-intensity conflicts that left 200,000 dead in Guatemala alone? The 75,000 dead in El Salvador? Or the 300,000 dead in Colombia?

How are the poppy fields doing in Afghanistan? Can the U.S. keep its hands out of that proverbial cookie jar? What does our track record in Colombia forecast?

Given a war with some inevitable "collateral damage," just what are we talking here, Mr. Bin Laden's tent? Isn't the word "casualty" a euphemism? Why don't we call it what it really is?

Mr. Bush is looking awfully good these days in the eyes of the American public... Can you imagine him ungrateful for the cause of his 80+% approval rate?

Our leaders are talking about "draining the water to kill the fish." What happened in El Salvador the last time we put that military strategy to work? More importantly, what does the water represent in this analogy?

To what extent is our imperialism cultural? Did we really expect to sneak it past the billion or so sisters and brothers in the Islamic World and expect them not to notice?

How many parents have kissed their daughters and sons in the armed services goodbye for the last time?

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DEAD IN GUA-
TEMALA ALONE?
THE 75,000
DEAD IN EL SAL-
VADOR?**

How many are People of Color, poor and working class?

In this so-called just war, how many defense contractors will be operating at anything less than full capacity? Will they perish as another hard-hit business?

For how many nations is a day like September 11th just another day? What is it like to wake up in Iraq? Or in Vieques for that matter?

Whose decision was it to train Mr. Bin Laden at the CIA? Which of our vital interests did he serve at that time? Has yet another of "our" SOBs gotten out of hand, ala Manuel Noriega (trained at our very own U.S. Army School of the Americas)? Why do we maintain the naive hope that doing business with shady characters will somehow work for the common good?

Why are so many men suddenly

ranked by the way the Taliban have been treating women citizens since 1997? Weren't we calling the Taliban "freedom fighters" not too long ago? Why were we as a government willing to look the other way on the Taliban's atrocious human rights record?

The Taliban's practice of executions in the soccer stadium are barbaric, but how is that different from the regimes we've installed in our own backyard like the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile that did the same? How is this different from the death penalty right here at home?

Certain patriotic folks are comparing this conflict to World War II. Have we forgotten that we as a nation waived all human rights conditions because a certain Mr. Hitler promised to take care of the communists? What conditions are we willing to ease or lift from Pakistan? What actions are we willing to

ignore from the Northern Alliance? Did these folk suddenly become freedom-loving and democratic?

If we "win" this war, how long will it take for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to inundate Afghanistan with predatory loans?

Finally, like opponents of the death penalty have asked for years, why do we bomb people who bomb people to show that bombing people is wrong?

These are just some of the questions to ask as we brace ourselves for another chapter in a long series of military interventions that like the history we created in Latin America and the rest of the Third World, we continue to struggle with being remembered as the nation who funded the slaughter—and called it freedom and democracy.

Ingredientes:

4 o 5 cocos
canela (al gusto)
clavos de especie (al gusto)
1/2 libra de gengibre
1 libra de arroz
1 caja de pasas (opcional)

Procedimiento

Mezcle la canela, los clavos y el gengibre machacado y haga un té con suficiente agua. Saque la leche de los cocos, la cuela y la mezcla con el té. Añade sal al gusto, azúcar dorada y azúcar blanca. Mezcle con arroz y pasas en un caldero y mueva constantemente para que no se pegue. Tape y cocine a fuego lento.

Recipe sent by: Arnaldo Henriquez Moreno from Bronx.

Taken from www.elcolmadito.com.

Desde La Cocina

Arroz con Dulce



Report from the Peace and Justice Camp

October 15, 2001

Photography courtesy of Boricua

The following is a statement from Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques one of the leading organizations in the struggle for peace in Vieques. We have chosen to publish this statement because we think it will give our readers a closer look at this movement, especially in this post-September 11 period. The people of Vieques are still struggling to live without bombs, cancer, and fear! We urge you to support peace in Vieques and please visit www.viequeslibre.org for more detailed information about this very important issue.

Warm greetings from Vieques. These are difficult days for those

who love and struggle for peace. US and British military forces bomb the Afghani people and yesterday, the US Navy ended twenty days of bombing - day and night, from ships and jets - here on Vieques.

The moratorium on civil disobedience during these maneuvers allowed the diverse sectors and community organizations of Vieques a space to carry out two people's assemblies and several other meetings, organized by the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques (CRDV) with the support of a large segment of our community in struggle. These conversations focused on the Navy imposed

referendum, the next civil disobedience actions and the need to better coordinate efforts among the Viequense organizations and with the solidarity groups from the main island of Puerto Rico and the US.

On May 4, we held a "strike" for peace on Vieques and in support of our jailed mayor, Dámaso Serano. Hundreds of Viequenses participated in an ecumenical act in the Public Square, a march to the gates of the Navy Base - Camp García - and a rally at the Peace and Justice Camp (PJC) to denounce the maneuvers and to call for peace. The participants included labor leaders, teachers, students, fishermen, the

Vieques Women's Alliance, the First Lady of Vieques, Nelly Rodríguez, the Vice Mayor, Henry González, Monte Carmelo, the Vieques Youth United, Methodist Pastor Lucy Rosario, Parrish Priest Padre Nelson, Reverend Lester McGrath of the Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico and the Ecumenical Coalition for Peace on Vieques, among others.

A meeting at the PJC last week of the principal organizations of the struggle here, began a process designed to improve coordination of local efforts and to strengthen the struggle before the next military exercises and our next civil

another meetings of the Vieques organizations.

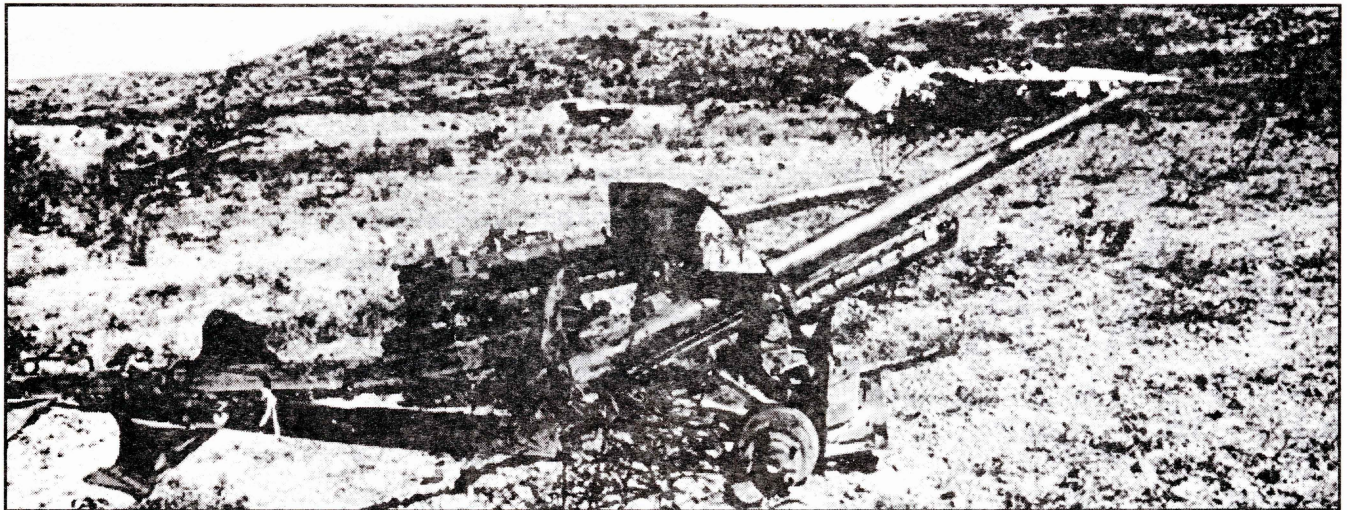
The Vieques organizations set a tentative date of November 3 for a meeting here with the groups from Puerto Rico. It is suggested that each group send no more than three delegates to the meeting to discuss 1) the current situation, 2) the roles of the diverse organizations and 3) next maneuvers-next civil disobedience actions and, long term joint strategies for the struggle.

We congratulate the Vieques Women's Alliance (VWA) for a successful campaign - Care for your health, Avoid violence - coordi-

the local Catholic Church held its second Family Outing at the Public Beach, Sun Bay, with the participation of Bishop Rubén González, great music and food and long hours of dominos.

On Sunday, October 21, we will travel to the Federal Jail in Guaynabo to participate in a show of support for our mayor, Dámaso Serrano.

This event is being organized by the All Puerto Rico with Vieques Coordinating Committee. On the 27th, the CRDV in coordination with a group of athletes from Puerto Rico in solidarity with our struggle, will



disobedience actions. Joint preparation of a calendar of activities to avoid scheduling conflicts and to foment mutual support of protest and other actions; sharing of human and material resources; planning with more care and time; the need for meetings among the Vieques groups and between the local organizations and solidarity groups on the main island of Puerto Rico and in the US, were among the topics discussed. This process will continue on the 20th of this month with

nated this weekend with the Governor's Office of Women's Affairs. Vieques women had the chance to receive direct services (mammograms, bone density tests, etc), and participate in talks and workshops on a wide range of health issues. We also recognize the excellent work done by a group of Puerto Rico university students that organized a weekend long concert- SOUNDS OF VIEQUES -with activities for children and dedicated to Vieques children with cancer. Yesterday,

celebrate a Rally of Walkers, Runners for Peace on Vieques - by Air, Sea and Land. At the Public Beach - Sun Bay - children will participate in special activities with giant and baby kites and a "rain of flowers". At the same time, in the Public Square, runners and adults will meet and at noon begin the run/walk to the Peace and Justice Camp where they will meet up with the children's group that will walk from Esperanza to the PJC. At the Camp

Vieques...continued on page 12

Monuments of Resistance

Angel M. Fuentes

The monuments of resistance stand tall, marking the entrance and an exit to a place where people of African, Taino, and Spanish descent combined live, meet, and express themselves, as they should. They stand 56 feet tall and weigh about 40 tons. They're made of steel, representing those people who worked in the steel mills of Chicago in the 1940's and 50's.

They represent a migration of people who sought to better their lives. A representation of a people who have struggled to rid themselves of 500 years of oppression.

Light blue, red, and white mark the colors painted on their faces. A single star illuminates each of them.

The people who live among them adore them and bring them a sense of home or it may remind them of the possibility of one day returning to the place where they were born. They symbolize pride and each year they are celebrated with smaller versions of them labeled in the rear window of cars, silkscreened on the front of t-shirts or recreated with colorful beads.

Between them Smiley walks uttering drunken iniquitous words. You also can hear the intrusive sound of sirens frequently piercing the air. On occasion you may hear the loveliness of Bomba's singing, playing, and dancing. Most importantly the Division Street Puerto Rican flags, a one of a kind monuments that can't be seen nowhere else stand there to send a message of resistance. A message that says that the Puerto Rican is here in the City of Chicago and it's here to stay.



“humboldt parks’ magnificent mile”

the flag adorns it as a symbol of pride.
i enter “mi barrio” with my heart open wide,
it is “division street” la calle de mis sueños
the land of boricuas a.k.a. puertorriqueños
it’s where all of Puerto Rico meets on one city street.
where compadres sip on their frias to beat the city heat.
where Dona Laya sells limbres, and Don Luis sells piraguas
just as they did back home in Manati, and in Caguas.
i can smell the aroma of chuletas, floating in the air.
i see the children playing “tag” as if without care
from Sabana Grandes; down to Paco’s Liquor’s liquors
they can’t change “Humboldt Park” like they did wicker.
it is “mi viejo division” y un día volvere
to find “mi familia” forming a bembe
there’s Pito on the clave, and Pupi on the cowbell.
while tio Jimmy plays the congas and sings so well.
marquitos’ on his side singing the coro,
while the good people pass on our “calle de oro”
Division isn’t just a street, it’s a state of mind.
where “the pride of people, y de la patria”
are what you will find.

“en la tierra de division”

coco 2001

Vieques...continued from page 9

we will hold a rally with protests against the Navy presence, reflection and prayer for peace, music and messages from leaders of the struggle here.

From the 23rd to the 27th of October, the Caribbean Project for Peace and Justice (CPPJ), based in Puerto Rico, the CRDV, the CPRJ and the VWA, will be hosts in Vieques for the Annual Meeting of the Peacebuilding and Demilitarization Network of the American Friends Service Committee, pacifist organization that has for decades supported the Vieques cause. That same week, a delegation from the East Asia-US-Puerto Rico Network Against Militarism, will visit Vieques to meet with women from the island and share experiences of their respective struggles. The visit is coordinated by María Reinat, of the Institute for Latin Empowerment with support from the CRDV, CPPJ and the AVW.

We are recruiting for the next round of civil disobedience actions. Those interested should contact the CRDV at the PJC 787 741-0716.

Please write to our Prisoners for Peace on Vieques:

Dámaso Serrano #21626-069
Freddy Marrero #21686-069
Eduardo Villanueva #22278-069

MDC Guaynab Apartado 2146
San Juan, PR 00922-2146

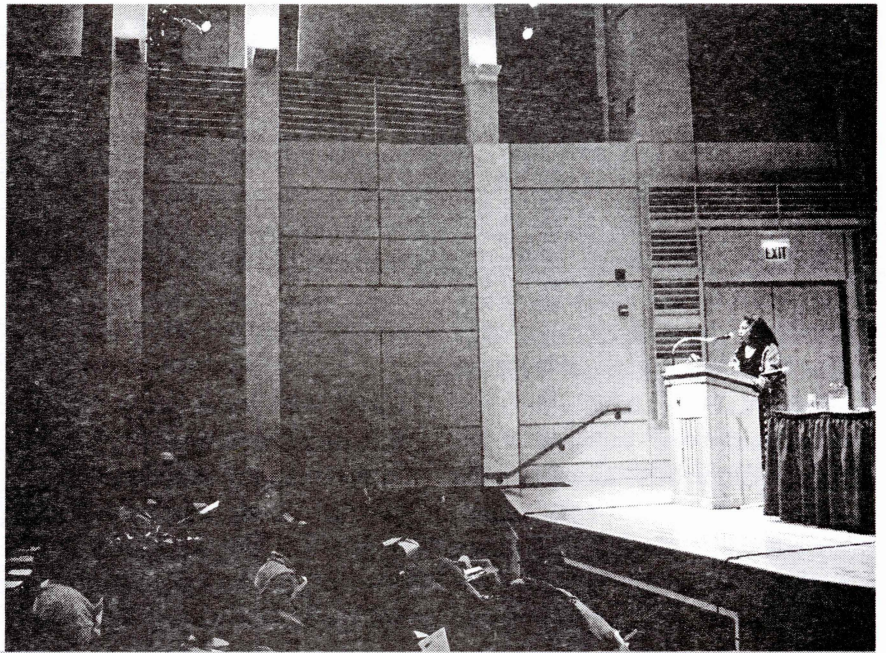
Alberto de Jesús
MCC 150 Park Row
New York, NY 10007

I Dreamed

Melissa Morales

When I was a little girl
I dreamed of becoming a doctor
Just to heal and cure, all that's out there
My life was taken from me
Because I was very blind to see
It was a cold and stormy night
This was very unusual, it gave me a fright
While I was walking down the block
A man grabbed me and I stood in a shock
He hurt me in many ways
He treated me like a toy he could play with
I fell to the ground
Blood and piss was all around
What can I do? I can't move
I tried to get away
And every time he would hurt me in a different way
My dream to become a doctor was shattered
When in that night, my body parts got scattered
He buried me in the ground
All I could do was frown
My dream never came true
I got killed and my dream too

As a part of the Equity in Action: "Diversity And Equity" program, on Friday October 12, 2001, Jacqueline Lavinia Jackson visited North-eastern Illinois University and was the keynote speaker for an activity titled "Protest in Vieques." The presentation began at approximately 11:00 am in NEIU's Recital Hall. Michael Rodríguez, editor of Que Ondee Sola, and member of the Union for Puerto Rican Students gave the welcome. In the welcome Michael introduced the island of Vieques giving historical facts and data, in addition to, raising the issue that still exists around the United States Navy occupation of



Jacqueline Jackson visits NEIU

Cristina Vera



the island. He also read a poem written by UPRS titled "Thank You Vieques" and thanked Mrs. Jackson for her involvement in the Vieques struggle for peace.

Following the welcome was the introduction given by Professor Barbara Scott, of the Sociology and Women's Studies Departments. In the introduction Professor Scott gave background information and accomplishments of the keynote speaker, Jacqueline Lavinia Jackson. Mrs. Jackson is the wife of the Reverend Jesse Jackson from the Rainbow Push Coalition who has also taken a great interest in

Vieques. She is an activist and a very distinguished individual in her own right. She organized the Chicago Chapter of AFRICARE after leading the first expedition of African-American women to Ethiopia in the 1970's. In 1990, she was present when Nelson Mandela was finally freed from prison. There were many other of her outstanding accomplishments mentioned, but most recently and related to the address was her participation in Vieques.

Mrs. Jackson addressed the recital hall that was filled to capacity with only standing space left, on

how the issue of the United States Navy occupation of Vieques was brought to her attention. She had only planned on visiting the island to view for herself what she was being told. But in June of 2001, she actively participated along with several other individuals in an act of civil disobedience by trespassing on to US Navy "territory." She was arrested and jailed but she refused to pay a \$3,000 bail. Also, upon refusal to allow a strip-search and body cavity examination, she was placed in solitary confinement. She told the audience that she had left several other civil disobedients in jail upon her release. She was aston-

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continued from page 13

ished at the manner in which the US federal prison treated women prisoners who are only accused of committing peaceful acts of civil disobedience for Vieques.

After her presentation, the floor was opened for the audience to ask questions. The first question that came from an audience member was about current events in international relations and not about Vieques. Since Mrs. Jackson came to address concerns for the island, she was kind enough to refrain from answering the question at that time and addressed it later.

Questions and comments from the audience varied from the Navy seeking another alternative, contacting congressmen and other officials or simply thanking her for her presence and involvement with the issue.

Along with some members of the audience Mrs. Jackson highly suspects that the Bush administration will not “keep its promise of ceasing the Navy practices in May of 2003.” She stressed



the importance of every single individual having a role in contacting their representatives because there is only so much that they can do, but it is up to us, the people to speak out. She also made reference to Robert Kennedy, an environmentalist lawyer, who also committed an act of civil disobedience in Vieques. He has taken up the case and study of the 13 species that are in danger of extinction on the island because of the Navy’s occupation. There is no doubt that the number one affected species in danger is the “human species.”

The time was running short, so the discussant for the address Victor Ortiz, Assistant Professor, Mexican/Caribbean Studies Program, Sociology, NEIU gave his time over to Mrs. Jackson in the form of a question. At the end, Mrs. Jackson was thanked by a Puerto Rican audience member who was extremely grateful for her involvement in the Vieques movement. Murrell J. Duster, Dean of Academic Development, made the final closing remarks. Afterwards, a few students had the pleasure and honor of having lunch with Mrs. Jackson.



STUDENT DISCUSSION ON VIEQUES: BORICUA UNITY AND PEACE

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

1:40pm

E-041 (below Beck’s Bookstore)

Sponsored by UPRS & QOS

REYNALDO RODRIGUEZ

Pinceladas en una guerra

Lienzo de Paz y Justicia

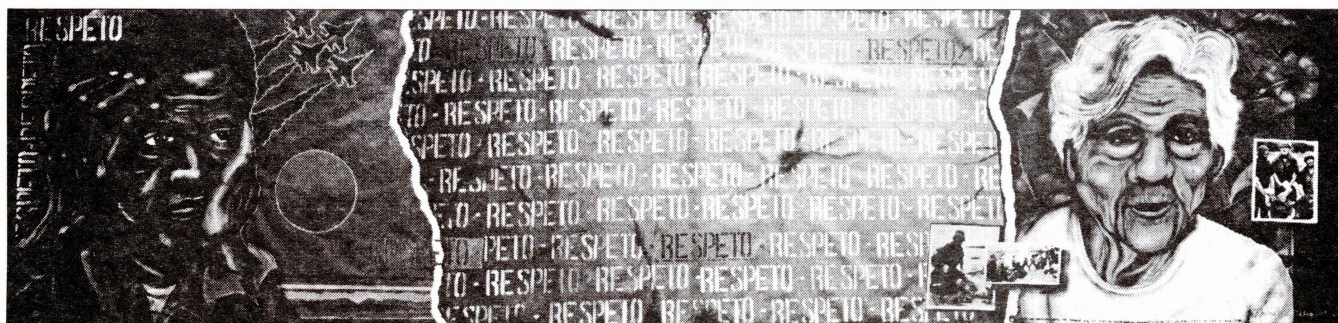


El talentoso artista Puertorriqueño, Reinaldo Rodríguez, quien desde el 1994 reside aquí en la ciudad de los vientos, ha vivido en Bridgeport, Connecticut y Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

refleja con gran talento en todos los trabajos que desempeña.

En 1994 se mudó a Chicago y en mayo del 1996 tuvo su primera

Isla o en los Estados Unidos. Sus obras resaltan las tradiciones, costumbres, flora, fauna y gente de Puerto Rico, Además, el artista intenta enseñarle a los jóvenes medi-



Desde estas comunidades recoge la experiencia cultural boricua que se

exhibición en Genesis Art Village llamado "Light & Soul." Comienza a trabajar directamente con el Centro Cultural Segundo Ruiz Belvis y mediante el Chicago Area Project creó 3 murales colaborando con varios jóvenes. En septiembre del 1999 Reynaldo logró su segunda exposición - Retrospectiva, Reflexiones y Vivencias.

ante el arte como sentirse orgullosos de ser puertorriqueño.

Nos dice: "Ayer, hoy y mañana, el arte es mi ruta;" y su cariño por los niños se refleja tanto en su trabajo diario con el Centro Cultural Ruiz Belvis, como con otras instituciones de nuestra ciudad como lo son El Museo Infantil de Chicago. "Este trabajo me llegó al alma pues

...continued on page 19

Questions... continued from page 3

courses that deal with the Latino/ Latin American experience?

Latinos make up 31% of the total school population.

•Why then are Latinos so invisible and ignored by this Administration and so many of the departments?

These are just a few those important questions that the Administration must begin to answer and problems they must begin to address.

Latino students, we must not only ask why, but we must answer these questions?

More next month!

Reynaldo ha logrado crear dibujos, murales, instalaciones y pinturas que captan la esencia de lo que es ser puertorriqueño, ya sea viviendo en la



THE MUSLIM INFLUENCE IN THE LATINO CULTURE

Special Contributor, **Robert Donald Hull**
Member of the Muslim Students Association of NEIU

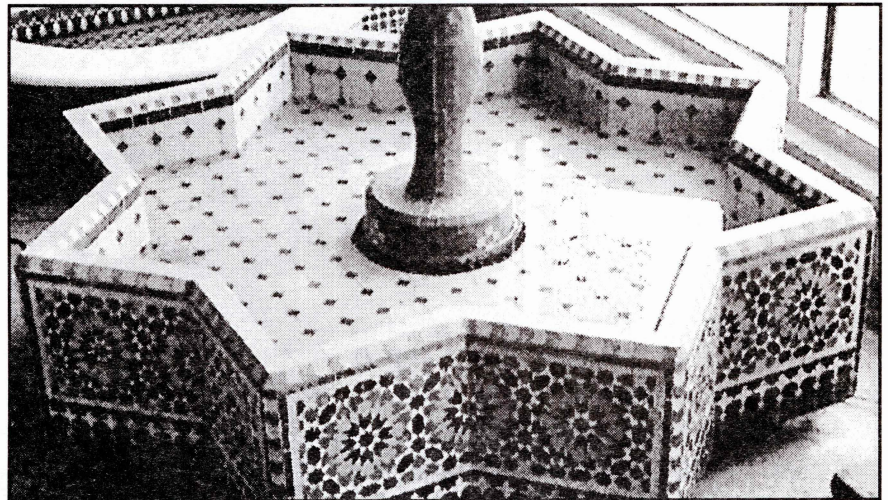
On October 9, 2001, from 10:50am to 1:30pm the Hispanic Heritage Committee in conjunction with the Muslim Students Association hosted an event titled, *The Muslim Influence in the Latino Culture*. The event took place in cafeteria room SU003 in which the guest speaker was Abdur Raheem Ocasio, a Puerto Rican Muslim from the famed section of New York City known as "El Barrio." Ocasio, a native of New York, converted to Islam at the age of 19 due to his University studies during the 1970s, and has spoken at several Universities including Howard University in Washington D.C. Presently, he is involved with La Alianza Islamica, which is a Latino community based Islamic organization in New York that does several programs including summer recreation, after-school tutorials, drug and substance abuse counseling, marriage counseling and equivalency diploma instruction for high school dropouts.

Ocasio began his presentation with a brief introduction of Islam, what it is, and how it is an encompassing way of life. He stated that, a Muslim, an adherent of Islam, is one who submits to God's will in their life. How peace, fair dealings, right conduct, truthfulness, integrity and respect are the bedmark of

Islamic faith, and a Muslim must live by these daily. He stressed that ultimately, everything in the universe is in a state of submission to the one God through the universal laws, and henceforth is Muslim, whether through acknowledgement or not.

To discuss the Muslim influence on Latino culture he began by explain-

so the Muslims declared to fight against them as they were oppressing the Spanish population. The Christian monarchs of Spain gathered an army of 70,000 soldiers and the two armies went to battle in the year of 711. The Muslims defeated the Christian army, and Islam became the way of life within a few years for 75% of the Spanish population. There was no forceful



ing how the Muslim army from Morocco lead by Tariq ibn Ziyad came to Spain to invite the elite of society to accept Islam. These elite refused so the Muslims told them they had to pay a minimal poll tax, referred to as Jizya, which supports the army and entitles the citizens to full protection under the Islamic government. The elite still refused

conversion to Islam, but the Muslims brought a better way of life to the Spanish population, contrary to what they experienced under the Christian monarchs. Islam was dominant in Spain for almost 800 years, from 711 to 1492, and its influence within Spain has manifested itself in many aspects of Latino culture today.

For example, the family structure as being a unit of cohesion and solidarity with typically definitive roles for both the father and mother. The father as the responsible leader and provider, and the mother as an equally essential nurturer of the family. Latino culture is at its roots patriarchal, so this aspect is compatible with the concept of family values in Islam. Also, there are only two groups of peoples in the world who are identified primarily by language, and to a lesser extent, religion, they are Latinos and Arabs. Both have varying skin complexions and hair textures, with Roman Catholicism and Islam as practiced predominantly by both groups, and Spanish and Arabic as the major spoken languages. Both the Spanish and Arabic language share a linguistic commonality between them as many Arabic words and phrases were incorporated into the Spanish idiom of speech. For example, the word *camisa* meaning shirt in Spanish comes from the Arabic word *camiz*, meaning also shirt. In southern Spain where Muslims were predominant, they used the word *aceituna* for olive, a term which is still said by Latinos today. *Aceituna* is derived from the Arabic word *zaytuna*. Other examples are, *azucar* from the Arabic word *sukkar*, meaning sugar, and alcohol from the Arabic word *Al-kohl*. Also, the common expression in Latino culture *ojala*, meaning "If God wills", is very similar to the Arabic equivalent "enshallah." There are hundreds of other words and expressions in the Spanish language derived from Arabic.

Ocasio also addressed that the social identity of many Latinos in the Americas, as well as throughout the

Caribbean have been influenced by the Spanish through the conquest of their lands, shortly after the expulsion of Muslims in Spain during the Inquisition. The architecture styles that are predominant in the Americas, such as *la plaza*, that is the center of activity, in which the surrounding buildings and churches revolve around it came from the Spanish who were influenced by Muslims. Also, many women, particularly in the countryside wear a modest form of dress consisting long head scarves and dresses, which is strikingly similar to the Muslim woman's dress. This was typical until the mid-twentieth century, with the influence of Western culture and different modes of thought marginalizing traditional ways. He even spoke of the Flamenco Spanish dance, widely popular today, originating from the Muslim influence in Spanish culture. Ways of cooking food in different Latin American countries, which consist of using oils, and methods of mixing and tossing food ingredients, came from the influence of Muslims upon the Spanish.

He stated that the only real Arabs are from Saudi Arabia, and the only real Hispanics are from Spain, in which both groups of peoples have commonalities between them and reside in several countries (20 Spanish-speaking countries and 20+ Arabic-speaking countries) are a mixture of several racial groups, inclusive of Indian, African, European and Arab. He concluded his speech with addressing to the audience the basic tenets of Islam and how the Latinos must play a vital role in America in educating their brothers and sisters about Islam, and showing them the common strug-

gles they face being a minority in a land where the very fabric of their culture and heritage is being challenged. Although a devout Muslim, he still is Puerto Rican and proud of his Latino heritage and optimistic about the advancements of Latinos in coming years. Also he stressed that considering the influx of Latino converts to Islam, others, including some Muslims should also be educated that Islam looks beyond the color line, economic standing or noble birth, and that only by the content of the character is a person more noble in the sight of God. At the very end, he took questions from the audience which included one person asking what Ocasio's position was pertaining to the prior events of September 11. Ocasio plainly stated that what occurred has no basis in the Islamic teaching at all, considering the Prophet Muhammed's statements and what the Qur'an says to how human beings should interact with one another, and their daily relations amongst each other. Though the event only lasted an hour the audience learned many things they did not know before about Islam and its influence on Latino culture.

For more information please go to, www.latinmuslims.com
Or, contact the author at neiu_msa@hotmail.com.

Editor's Note: *QOS would like to recognize the great work of MSA in informing our campus about the Islamic Faith and for their genuine support of UPRS and QOS.*

Solidarity between Communities of Color:

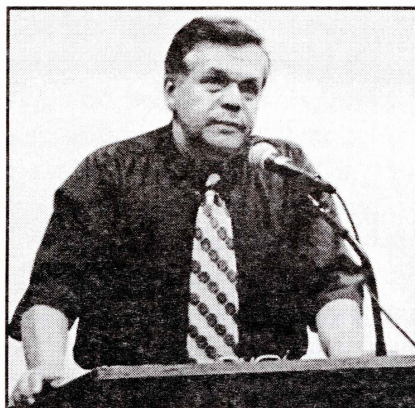
Amnesty, Expungement, Vieques

Cristina Vera

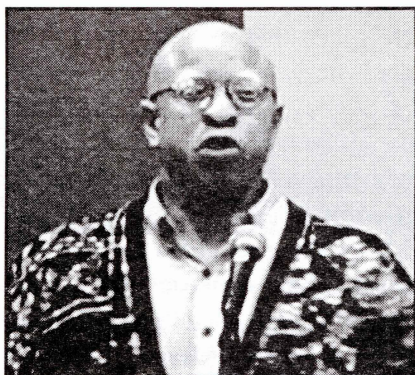
On Thursday October 11, 2001, the panel discussion titled "Solidarity Between Communities of Color: Amnesty, Expungement and Vieques" was presented as a part of the Seventh Annual Equity in Action Program. To begin the presentation, Yaditza Romero, President of the Union for Puerto Rican Students opened with brief remarks for the evening. Michael Rodríguez, editor of *Que Ondee Sola* gave the introduction. This was an informative presentation for demonstrating the solidarity that exists between the Latino and African-American communities.

Professor José E. López from the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, who is an NEIU, UIC, and Columbia College professor began the presentations. He was able to speak briefly about each of the three areas: amnesty for undocumented workers, expungement and Vieques. But first he gave the audience some historical background. He began with the idea that for the past 500 years, there have been historical problems that have existed and unfortunately continue to exist because they have simply been "glossed over," since the start of colonialism in 1492. In Spain in 1492, four very important events took place that ushered in the modern period: the expulsion of the Jewish people and of the Moors, the Colombian Expedition and the publication of the first Castilian Gram-

mar. According to Professor López, the problem with the modern period is colonialism. Prior to 1492 modern racism did not exist, only categories



Above: Professor José López
Below: Algje Crivens



and prejudice. Racism is the main justification of the colonial system. Professor López stated, "we don't live in a post-colonial world, we live in a very colonial world."

Professor López also briefly spoke about the issue of amnesty for undocumented workers. Currently in the United States, there are an estimated 11 million undocumented workers, 6 million of which are Mexican. They pay taxes but do not receive benefits and protections under the law. Currently, there is a national campaign to grant amnesty to all the undocumented workers.

Vieques was the main issue that Professor López was invited to speak about. Some of the main points about Vieques that he spoke of were as follows: 2/3 of Vieques has been under the US Navy since 1941. Out of the 33,000 acres of land, civilians occupy only 10,000 acres. Roosevelt Roads, which is located on the island of Puerto Rico, is one of the largest military base outside the continental US. The Navy's presence on Vieques has created much radioactive and toxic waste. Many suspect that this toxic waste is the cause of the extremely high rates of cancer on Vieques. Heart and cardiovascular problems have greatly increased since 1941. All of the points that he mentioned are some of the reasons why St. Croix has the most Viequenses today.

According to Professor López there is a sea current that goes through Vieques that affects the life of the Caribbean as a whole. This has created serious ecological problems for

Vieques and the Caribbean. On September 12 in respect of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 a moratorium on civil disobedience was called. But as of September 24, Professor López said the "US Navy began to bomb again... they have accelerated instead of rethinking."

The next issue that was discussed was expungement. Expungement is the clearing of one's criminal record. Illinois State Representative Constance Howard has proposed a bill that would grant those that have been wrongfully convicted, those who have committed non-violent misdemeanor or level 4 felony crimes and have served their debt to society an opportunity to have a new beginning. Many people have committed crimes in their youth and now have many difficulties finding employment. The process of expungement is very lengthy and costly.

Illinois State Representative Constance Howard was invited but sent her apologies for not being able to attend. From her office, Algie Crivens came on her behalf. Crivens spoke about how he was wrongfully convicted of murder in 1991. He spent 8 years of his life in jail for a crime that he did not commit. Fortunately in 1999 he was freed. Still though, it took Crivens two years to have his record expunged for the crime that he did not commit. He gave a detailed description of the process of expungement that he referred to as "a long process after losing so much time and space." He also said that presently there are over 1 million Americans unemployed for crimes that were committed in their youth. Even though they have paid their debt to society, criminal records are preventing many Black and Latino people from finding work and becoming productive

members of our society.

The Union for Puerto Rican Students chose to organize this activity to demonstrate the solidarity that exists and continues to grow between the Latino and African-American communities. The issues of expungement, amnesty, and Vieques are all issues that affect people of color amongst others as well. Each one of these issues affects the lives and futures of fellow human beings and represent violations to our human rights. The Latino and African-American communities will continue to demonstrate solidarity as they struggle for these rights.

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The author is an NEIU student.

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los niños son el futuro del mundo. Presentarle a los niños de todos los grupos étnicos el arte cultural Puertorriqueño fue emocionante y desde el principio quise compartir con ellos," nos cuenta Reynaldo. "Las recién concluidas Fiestas Puertorriqueñas y El Desfile Puertorriqueño de Chicago me escogieron como trabajador de la cultura tanto para montar sus veladas culturales y reinados como para crear El Afiche de este año. Además, este joven pintor es quien diseñó el afiche para la Fiesta Boricua que celebramos este fin de semana.

Otro proyecto educativo que actualmente esta desarrollando es Biéques en mi corazón, un drama cultural que destaca la historia de Vieques desde que se introduce la esclavitud

hasta la Diáspora Boricua. Esta obra honra a los portadores de nuestro legado. Bieques en mi corazón destaca la gran unidad tanto del pueblo Puertorriqueño aquí en Chicago por sus gestiones por la Paz en Vieques así como la sublime solidaridad, como es el caso de la Honorable Jackie Jackson. "Son tantos los heroes se han esmerado porque La Marina se decida a favor de La Paz y dentro de esos me enorgullese en especial de tener a los pescadores de Vieques como mis hermanos, su ejemplo heroico hace palpar mi corazón. A ellos le dedico este humilde drama cultural."

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the Chicago Ahora edition of Fiesta Boricua 2001. QOS chose to reprint this article because the September QOS included a UPRS statement, and the October QOS, a student reflection both pertaining to his most recent exhibition on Vieques. He is a talented Puerto Rican artist and it is our pleasure to show our readers some of his works.



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in support of

World AIDS Day
NEIU

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Where: Under the Puerto Rican flag at the
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Sponsored by Vida/SIDA, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center
and the Union for Puerto Rican Students at NEIU.