



# Que Ondee Sola

FEBRUARY 1989, Volume 22, No. 7

## JULIA DE BURGOS

The staff of **QOS** would like to dedicate this issue to **Julia de Burgos**.

**Considered by many Puerto Rico's National Poetess.** The themes of her poetry deal with profound social questions and the quest for our national independence. She was deeply concerned with the poor, Puerto Rico and general human relations.



*...You belong to your husband, your master, not I; I belong to no one or to everyone, because to all I give myself in pure feelings and in my thoughts.*

The **U.P.R.S.** and **QOS** salute our black brothers and sisters at **UNI**, as we observe **Black History Month**

# What Does Black History Month Mean?

Black history month is a time to reflect on the culture and history of African people in America.

Black history month is commemorated during February and that is when the campus celebrates and honors the great leaders of the past, the culture, and the rich history of Black people.

One question raised by some students on campus is: Why is there only one month out of the year to celebrate Black History?

Some people ask, why is Black History not part of the general requirement courses at UNI?

*Your country? How came it yours? Before the Pilgrims landed, we were here.*

—WEB DuBois

Let's look at some probable answers to these questions. One reason might be that American society does not want to allow Black people to learn they have a culture, history and a people. When people are raised in this country, the first thing they are taught is American history, and they are taught to know about great men like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson. But they are not taught the history of Black people or great Black leaders like Paul Cusse, Charles Fourten, WEB DuBois, Fredrick Douglas, Richard Allen or Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King, Jr., Fred Hampton and Malcolm X.

The magazine *American Scholar* now says Europe was where civilization began. Well this "fact" is quite distorted and in plain English not true! It is proven that civilization and humanity began in the continent of Africa. Europeans learned everything they knew at that time from the great African civilizations. But this fact is never told to people so that

they can understand how much Black people have contributed to world development.

This type of distortion is also shown through movies like Cleopatra who was suppose to be the most beautiful woman in the world, and on film and television she was portrayed by Elizabeth Taylor. But Cleopatra, in actual fact, was a Black woman. When you see a racist movie like Tarzan, you have to ask yourself, how can a white man go to Africa and in less than 20 years know more about the African animals, and about his surroundings than the

Black people who lived there for thousands of years.

This distortion makes-out Black people as inferior and glorifies American history to the detriment of Black history. One should realize that Black people did help to build this country, but they helped by force, because the United States was built on the sweat and blood of Black people.

What this comes down to is that Western civilization tries to deny the existence of Black people's history, by the mere fact that they do not teach it.

Black history should be part of the general requirement, because if it were not for the African civilizations there probably would not be an

American country at this time. Remember, European merchants did not go to Africa to help "civilize savages," they went to rob, kill and rape the African motherland. And they did it.

The UNI administration, should encourage activities that foster a positive self-identity of Black people, including courses on Black history.

Black history month should be a time to reflect on the rich history of a people who have resisted oppression for hundreds of years and whose dynamic culture, a culture of resistance, a culture that has been transformed, but represents a historical continuation nonetheless, has influenced American art, music, culture and society in general and will continue to do so.

*You degrade us and then ask us why we are degraded—you shut our mouths, and then ask why we don't speak—you close your colleges and seminar-ies against us, and then ask why we don't know more.*

—Frederick Douglass

## 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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# JULIA DE BURGOS

*Considered by many Puerto Rico's National Poetess*

Julia de Burgos (Julia Constanza Burgos García) was born in the Santa Cruz Barrio of Carolina, Puerto Rico, on February 17, 1922. In 1931, after finishing her primary education in Carolina, she attended the High School of the University of Puerto Rico. This is a significant fact since that school had been reserved for the privileged few: children of professors from that and other universities, or people with social influence. Julia arrived there because of early evidence of her talent. Born of an extremely poor rural family, her childhood was full of suffering and bad omens. She frequented the Catholic church because she received a few pennies from the priest, and the Evangelical church because they gave her food; in a spiritualist center, she laid in a coffin as part of a ritual for which she also received a small sum of money. But despite her poverty, the beauty of her countryside and the murmur of a ravine near her house, which flowed into the Río Grande de Loíza a short distance away, opened her eyes to beauty and her ears to music, which in her case would be the music of the poetic word. One day she would repay her debt to her countryside in her epic poem *Río Grande de Loíza*.



She received her teaching certificate from the University of Puerto Rico in 1933. She taught in a small rural school in the Cedro Arriba Barrio of Naranjito. She first came into contact with the Nationalist Party when she was a rural teacher and this cost her job. From then on she wore the uniform of the Women's Section of the Cadets of the Republic of the Nationalist Party. Between 1935 and 1937 she began her great creative work. Her poetic inclination, expressed in poems such as *Domingo De Ramos* (The Ponce Massacre), *Reply in Eight Parts* and the *Time is Ours*, written in 1937, is of social and anti-imperialist content. Her speech, *Women in the Face of Our Homeland's Sorrow*, dates back to 1936. She left Puerto Rico in 1940 and lived in Cuba until 1942. She studied languages and other courses irregularly at the

University of Havana. From June 1942 on, she lived in New York. From 1943 to 1944 she worked as the editor of *Pueblos Hispanos* (Hispanic Peoples), an anti-imperialist magazine directed by Juan Antonio Corretjer and run by Consuelo Lee Tapia. She died in New York on July 6, 1953.

Julia published the following books: *Precise Poems to Myself*, a very short, typed edition, (1937). In 1938, her renowned book, *Poem in 20 Rounds; Song to Simple Truth* (1939) was published. *The Sea and You* was published posthumously in 1959.

# Río Grande de Loíza \*

—Julia de Burgos

Río Grande de Loíza! . . . Extend yourself into my spirit  
and let my soul get lost in your streams,  
to search for the fountain that stole you away as a child  
and in a mad impulse returned you to the path.

Coil yourself around my lips and let me drink you,  
to feel you mine for a brief moment,  
and hide you from the world and hide you in yourself,  
and hear astonished voices in the mouth of the wind.

Get off for an instant from the loin of the earth,  
and look for the intimate secret of my longing;  
lose yourself in the flight of my bird imagination,  
and leave a water rose for my illusions.

Río Grande de Loíza! . . . My source, my river,  
ever since the maternal petal raised me to the world;  
with you went down from the rugged hills,  
to look for new furrows, my pale desires;  
and all my childhood was a poem in the river,  
and a river in the poem of my first dreams.

Adolescence came. Life surprised me  
pinned to the widest part of your eternal voyage;  
and I was yours a thousand times, and in love,  
you awoke my soul and kissed my body.

Where did you take the waters that bathed  
my figure, with the stream of the newly risen sun?

Who knows in what remote Mediterranean country  
some faun on the beach will be possessing me!

Who knows in what showers of what distant lands  
I will be spilling in order to open up new furrows;  
or if perhaps, tired of biting hearts,  
I will be freezing in ice crystals.

Río Grande de Loíza! . . . Blue. Dark. Red.  
Blue mirror, fallen blue piece of sky;  
naked white flesh turned black  
each time night gets in your bed;  
red stripe of blood when under rain  
floods of mud vomit on the hills.

Man river, but man with purity of river,  
because in your blue kiss you give your blue soul.

My very dear river. Man river. The only man  
who, kissing my body, has kissed my soul.

Río Grande de Loíza! . . . Big river, big tear.  
The biggest of all our insular tears,  
if it were not for those flowing out  
through the eyes of my soul for my enslaved people.

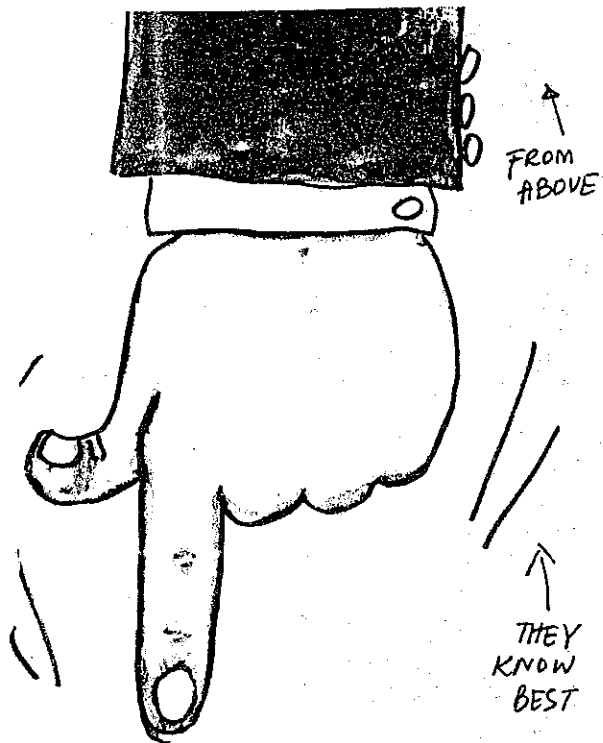
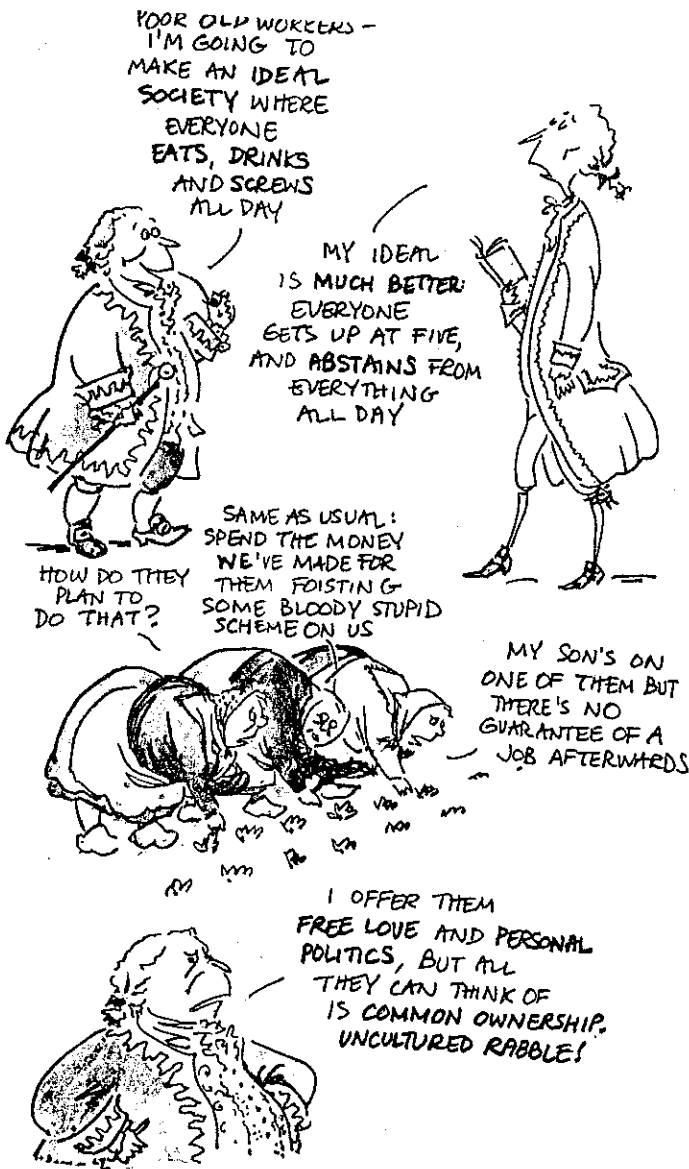
(Translated by María Arrillaga)

\*The name of a River in Loíza Aldea, Puerto Rico

# Socialism for Beginners

The QOS staff is pleased to offer the continuation of this special insert, which is designed to acquaint our readers with a simplified version of political economy. In this society, we are not often exposed to a different vision of the world, so we have initiated this process, not to convert or proselytize, but to enable our students to have a more critical view of the society by understanding the new social system which is springing up around the world. While we differ with some of the analysis and criteria of *Socialism for Beginners* by Anna Paczuska, with illustrations by Sophie Grillet, we are excerpting it because it is a work which simplifies the understanding and development of socialism.

## UTOPIAS



Whenever the oppressed rise up against inequality and injustice, the rich condemn them as a 'mob' and a 'rabble'. They put down rebellions with enormous cruelty but remained convinced of their own moral superiority.

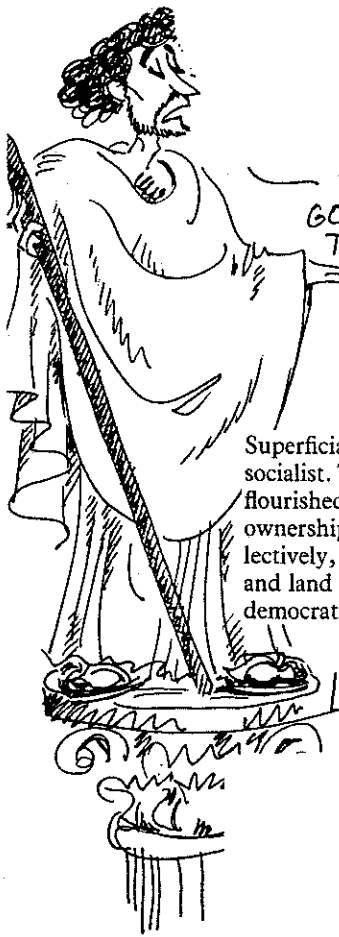
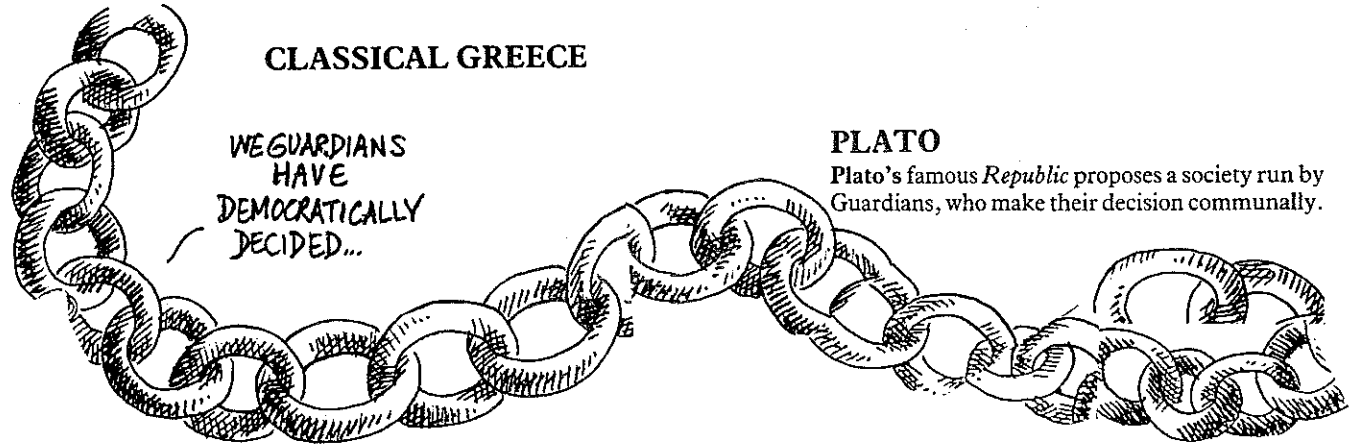
There have always been those among the ruling class, however, who feel sorry for the poor and want to relieve their misery. These are the Utopians. They dream up ideal societies - Utopias - for the poor to live in, but which they don't want common people to organize for themselves. (It never occurs to them that ordinary folk might have that ability.) They invent schemes in which liberty, like charity, can be carefully doled out to the deserving poor.

CLASSICAL GREECE

WE GUARDIANS  
HAVE  
DEMOCRATICALLY  
DECIDED...

PLATO

Plato's famous *Republic* proposes a society run by Guardians, who make their decision communally.



THAT THE MOST EQUAL  
GO IN A ROW ON THE LEFT,  
THE NEXT MOST EQUAL  
ON THE RIGHT  
AND THE  
LEAST EQUAL  
UNDERNEATH

Superficially, some early Greek societies appear socialist. The Spartan system, for example, which flourished until 146 BC, was based on the state ownership of land. Children were brought up collectively, people ate communally at public tables, and land was equally distributed. But it was not democratic.

It had two kings, and a class of semi-slaves – helots – to do all the work. Those who formed the collective government were an elite, whose sole ambition was to organise wars against neighbouring states.

They would not be elected, but would be the top layer of an unchangeable hierarchy in which people's class is determined at birth.

Plato was a conservative critic of Athenian democracy, which he took to mean the rule of the mob. He complained that there was too much liberty because craftsmen, peasants and shopkeepers could freely debate in the Assembly, vote and stand for election to public office. Radical critics wanted more, not less, democracy.

The *Republic* was a profoundly conservative ideal, but achieved an important, if undeserved, reputation. For centuries it was a major influence on democratic thinkers, who believed that legislation from above could bring equality. It was the inspiration for Thomas More's famous *Utopia*, published in Britain in 1516.

ATHENS IS FULL  
OF LIBERTY  
AND FREE SPEECH!

IT MUST  
BE STOPPED!



ATHENS WON'T  
BE A GOOD  
DEMOCRACY  
'TILL THOSE WHO,  
THROUGH POVERTY,  
WOULD SELL THE  
CITY FOR A DRACHMA,  
CAN VOTE!

**MORE'S UTOPIA**

Utopia, which means both 'nowhere' and 'a beautiful place' in Greek, is More's imaginary island. Private property has been abolished. Everybody takes equal turns to work on the land.

OF COURSE THE DIRTY WORK IS DONE BY THOSE WHO ARE LESS EQUAL THAN THE OTHERS — ADULTERERS, RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS, P.O.W.'S, THAT SORT OF THING — THEY'RE BONDSMEN



THOMAS MORE

RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS, EH, THOMAS? OFF WITH THEIR HEADS, I SAY!



KING HENRY VIII

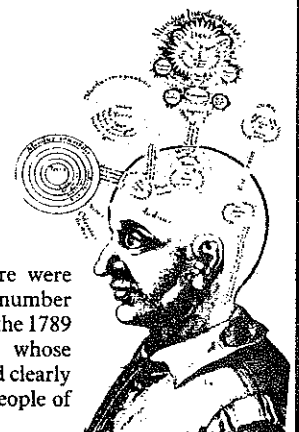
There are many fine things about Utopia. Utopians live simply, but not poorly. They despise gold (they use it for chamber-pots), and believe in the pursuit of pleasure. Intellectual activities such as studying art and literature are highest rated, but 'eating, drinking, defaecating, scratching and copulating' are also to be enjoyed.

Prisoners of war (Utopians have an aggressive foreign policy, sending out their excess population to found colonies elsewhere), convicted criminals and religious zealots are the 'bondsmen' who do the dirty work so their betters can be equal.



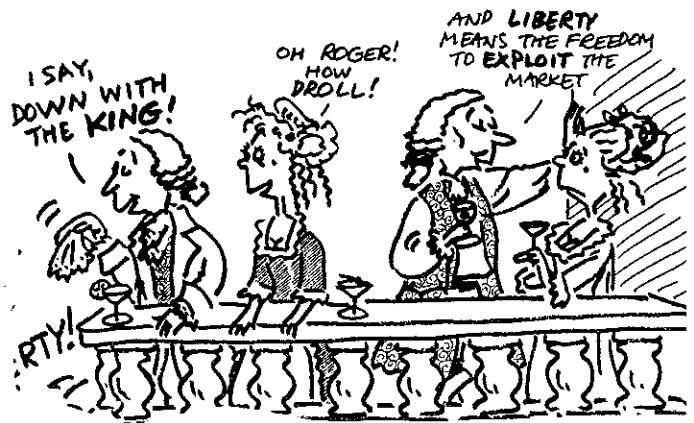
Nevertheless, Utopia has been an important inspiration to socialists. Like Plato, More pleaded for a society based on reason. Like other Utopian idealists he condemned injustice and argued for an egalitarian and communally-run alternative. But like other Utopians, More provides no mechanism for achieving his ideal. Utopians do not understand that people can only win freedom for themselves...

After Plato and More's schemes there were many other Utopian plans. An amazing number were drawn up in France before and after the 1789 Revolution. The French Revolution, whose effects were felt all over the world, showed clearly how freedom means different things to people of different classes.



# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution of 1789 was a massive popular movement against the decaying feudal order. United round the slogan 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity', Parisians overthrew the king, who was sent to the guillotine. France became a republic.



Robespierre and the Jacobins seized the leadership of the revolution. They represented the interests of the rising merchant (bourgeois) class. Everybody fought for liberty, but to the Jacobins liberty meant the right to run business and own property. To the Parisian poor (*Sansculottes*), such liberty meant little more than the 'freedom' to sell their labour to the rich.







## Notas Historicas

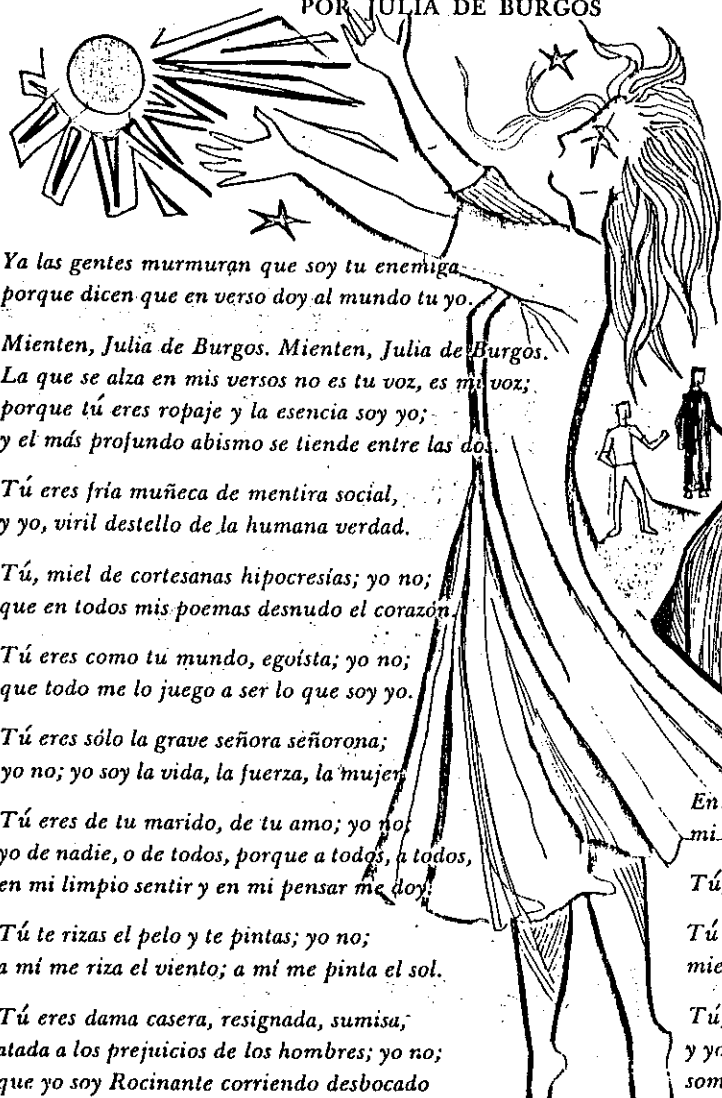
La poetisa puertorriqueña Julia de Burgos nació en Carolina el 17 de febrero de 1917. Se graduó de maestra en la Universidad de Puerto Rico, trabajando como tal en Coamo. A los 21 años de edad preparó una edición privada de sus primeros poemas, la que tituló *Poemas Exactos a mi Misma* (1937). Luego publicó *Poemas en Veinte Surcos* (1938) y *Canción de la Verdad Sencilla* (1939), este último mereciendo Premio del Instituto de Literatura Puertorriqueña. Además cooperó como periodista en varios diarios de Cuba y los Estados Unidos

Esta mujer de sensibilidad exquisita, espíritu rebelde y gran inteligencia, creyó siempre en la independencia de Puerto Rico, en las reformas sociales y en mejoras radicales para la clase obrera en la Isla. Dicha preocupación se refleja en varios de sus poemas aunque en general su poesía es-

tá llena de tonalidades líricas, preocupaciones metafísicas y de un acentuado ardor amoroso. Julia de Burgos fue una de las más grandes poetisas contemporáneas, no sólo de Puerto Rico, sino, como aseguran críticos extranjeros, de toda Hispanoamérica. Murió trágicamente en Nueva York (en completa soledad y con sólo el lazo espiritual de su hermana Consuelo Burgos desde Puerto Rico) en 1953.

Recientemente el Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña publicó su obra poética recogiendo en dicha edición, además de los poemarios mencionados arriba, varios poemas inéditos y su libro póstumo *El Mar y Tú*.

### A Julia de Burgos (1917-1953) POR JULIA DE BURGOS



*Ya las gentes murmuran que soy tu enemiga  
porque dicen que en verso doy al mundo tu yo.*

*Mienten, Julia de Burgos. Mienten, Julia de Burgos.  
La que se alza en mis versos no es tu voz, es mi voz;  
porque tú eres ropaje y la esencia soy yo;  
y el más profundo abismo se tiende entre las dos.*

*Tú eres fría muñeca de mentira social,  
y yo, viril destello de la humana verdad.*

*Tú, miel de cortesanas hipocresías; yo no;  
que en todos mis poemas desnudo el corazón.*

*Tú eres como tu mundo, egoísta; yo no;  
que todo me lo juego a ser lo que soy yo.*

*Tú eres sólo la grave señora señorona;  
yo no; yo soy la vida, la fuerza, la mujer.*

*Tú eres de tu marido, de tu amo; yo no;  
yo de nadie, o de todos, porque a todos, a todos,  
en mi limpio sentir y en mi pensar me doy.*

*Tú te rizas el pelo y te pintas; yo no;  
a mí me riza el viento; a mí me pinta el sol.*

*Tú eres dama casera, resignada, sumisa;  
atada a los prejuicios de los hombres; yo no;  
que yo soy Rocinante corriendo desbocado*

En este número de NOSOTROS reproducimos un poema de nuestra poetisa que ella tituló *A Julia de Burgos*. Admitimos que no es éste uno de sus poemas más divulgados o popularizados (*Río Grande de Loíza* es el poema de Julia que más se conoce en Puerto Rico). Tampoco es *A Julia de Burgos* uno de los poemas suyos de más altos valores poéticos o estéticos. Sin embargo, por su contenido social, porque él refleja el reto o desafío que la poetisa Julia de Burgos lanza a su otro yo: Julia de Burgos, la mujer, que ha de vivir de acuerdo a las leyes, normas o moldes sociales y éticos que los demás le imponen (problema siempre vigente y siempre angustioso para el espíritu libre y rebelde del escritor o el artista) nos ha parecido oportuno reproducirlo en este tercer número de nuestra revista.

*En mí no, que en mí manda mi sólo corazón,  
mi sólo pensamiento; quien manda en mí soy yo.*

*Tú, flor de aristocracia; y yo la flor del pueblo.*

*Tú en ti lo tienes todo y a todos se lo debes,  
mientras que yo, mi nada a nadie se la debo.*

*Tú, clavada al estético dividiendo ancestral,  
y yo, un uno en la cifra del divisor social,  
somos el duelo a muerte que se acerca fatal.*

Tomado de *Nosotros*—Revista trimestral, Diciembre 1965.

# STERILIZATION

The staff of **QOS** is happy to reproduce this artwork created by Caryn Creamer, a freshmen at UNI.

*This past fall my art instructor said we would have to do a poster on a social comment of our choice. All of the posters from the other students were good, but there were a few that grabbed my attention more than others.*

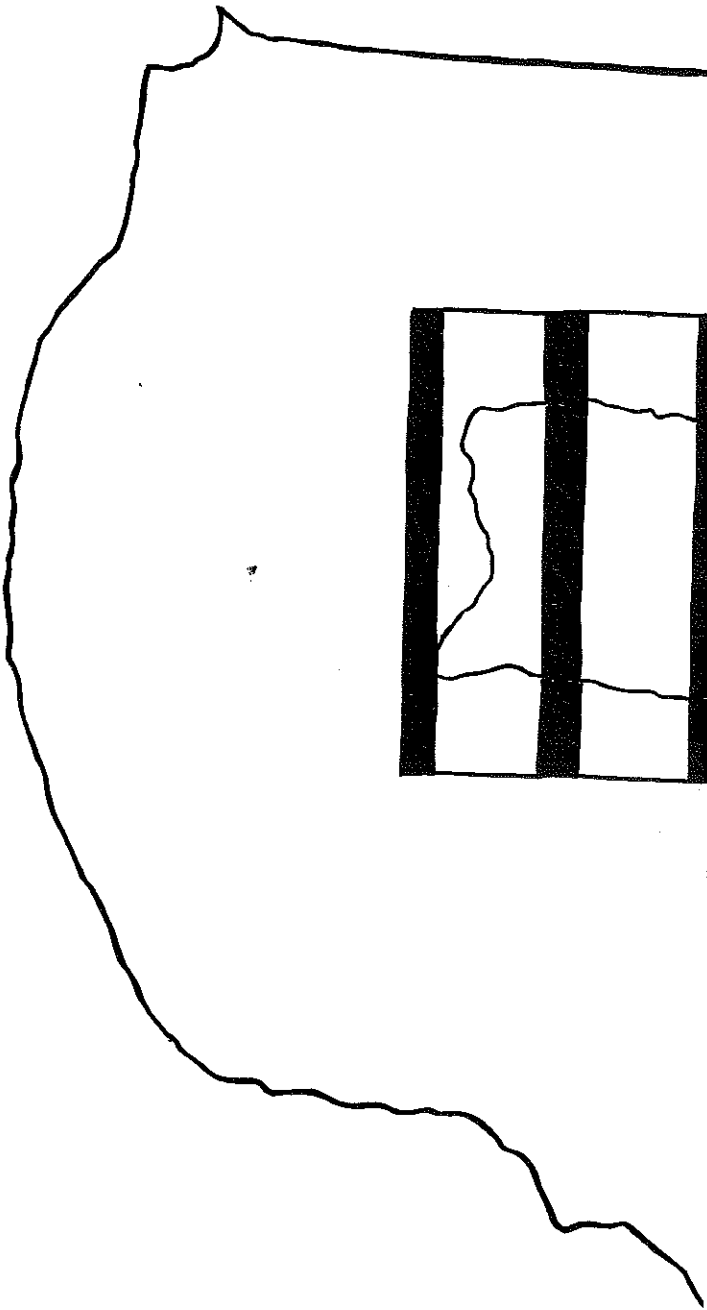
*One woman did a piece on Apartheid in South Africa, another on gentrification and one on poverty in the U.S. I felt a little something extra in these pieces, and I wanted my poster to convey a similar feeling.*

*The piece is on the United States colonization of Puerto Rico. It is an outline of the U.S. with Puerto Rico in bars, in the center. The bars represent how the U.S. has complete control over Puerto Rico.*

Caryn Creamer

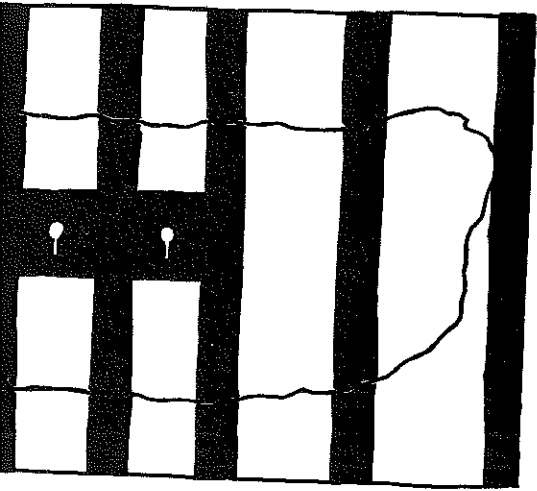
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PARISH: ZOH-HOZ: ARA-SH-PA

MINIALISM



*History is a Weapon!*

**SELF-DETERMINATION  
FOR THE BLACK NATION**

featuring

**Chokwe Lumumba**

Educator, attorney and revolutionary  
Black Nationalist from Jackson, Mississippi;  
Chairperson of the New Afrikan People's  
Organization

**Friday  
February 17  
at UNI  
Time and Place TBA**

Sponsored by the  
Union for Puerto Rican Students