

# Que Ondee Sola

magazine

\* President  
of the  
Board  
Dr. Carlos  
Azcoitia

\* 40 years of the  
Union for  
Puerto  
Rican  
Students



# Editorial

For this edition, *Que Ondee Sola* features Latino educational leader Dr. Carlos Azcoitia. Azcoitia is the founding Principal of John Spry Community School and Community Links High School, a Comprehensive Community School in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood. The school includes a pre-kindergarten through high school program with a 100% high school completion rate and the goal of 100% post-secondary graduation. As a community school, it offers extended learning opportunities and leadership development for students, teachers, parents and community members.

He served as the Deputy Chief Education Officer of the Chicago

Public Schools where he was administratively responsible for a large number of wide-ranging departments, programs and services. He has been a teacher, administrator, and has served as principal in the Chicago Public Schools. He has a long and deep history of being in the forefront of educational reform. A well-known, respected, and knowledgeable educator, he greatly contributes his time and expertise to several boards, committees and councils in Chicago by assisting them in a meaningful, hands-on capacity. He is the founder of LUPE (Latinos United for Priorities in Education) and board member of the Chicago High School for the Arts. Dr. Azcoitia is the author of several published books on school reform.

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## Misión

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

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

## Que Ondee Sola

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## Interview with the President of the NEIU Board of Trustees

# Dr. Carlos M. Azcoitia

Que Ondee Sola



Recently, I interviewed educational leader and President of the NEIU Board of Trustees, Carlos M. Azcoitia. Throughout our conversation, Azcoitia expressed his deep commitment to the Latina/o community, and his ongoing support of Latina/o educators who seek to transform academic environments. Currently, an Assistant Professor at National-Louis University, Azcoitia believes that everything he does revolves around the development of schools and student education, particularly, of Latina/o students. After graduating from the University of Puerto Rico, Carlos moved to Chicago

where he earned a Master's degree in Elementary Education, and later his Doctors in Educational Administration at Northern Illinois University. Early on, Carlos became aware of the importance of community and school relations. He understands that communities play a critical role to the success of students, and the progress of schools.

Walking through the culturally diverse hallways of Northeastern, I can't help to notice other Latina/o students also attending this university. A feeling of joy appears, as I am proud to see so many Latina/o students studying, rushing to be on time to their classes, and others enjoying being college students. But, neither them nor I can escape the sad reality that many Latina/o students never graduate from college. Due to the documented low levels of Latina/o student retention at NEIU, I asked to share his vision for Northeastern as a "Hispanic Serving Institution." Carlos affirmed the need for the University to become much more intimately connected with what is taking place in local Latina/o communities. Ultimately, he called for a greater sense of connection for Latina/o students and faculty within NEIU. He also emphasized the need for the University to listen to student voices, and go above and beyond to meet the needs of Latina/o students.



I agreed and mentioned how NEIU has come along way in terms of Latina/o-focused programs and services, which are the fruits of past and current Latina/o student struggles. From that struggle, it is now a reality that the university will provide a cultural and resource center for Latina/o students. Carlos views the Latina/o Cultural & Resource Center as a space where Latina/o students can develop a sense of identity and interact with other Latina/os. Most importantly, Azcoitia believes this new facility will also form a sense of belonging in which Latina/o students will fully engage both the university and their communities. He recognizes the importance of students transforming the world around them, and the fact that the cultural and resource center will help students achieve that.

In addition, as the Latino and Latin American Studies program merges into a major, I believe it is important to think about the role that students and professor play in terms of its transformation. Azcoitia thinks the same. Viewing the soon-to-be major as a great accomplishment. Azcoitia believes that a LLAS major would offer an opportunity for students to participate and engage in the transformation of society. Carlos is hoping that the program will encourage and shape students to become leaders and organizers of their communities by bridging school and community together as a single force that would create a better and more just

world for ethnic people.

When we were rapping up our conversation, I handed Dr. Azcoitia a recent edition of *Que Onde Sola*. As he explored its pages, I explained QOS is reaching its 40th year anniversary and that it is the longest run magazine speaking specifically on the realities of Puerto Rican and Latina/o students in the United States. He replied, "to understand ourselves we must know our history, in this case QOS presents a great history of leadership that everyone must value." Azcoitia further expresses that there is a Puerto Rican identity we have to pursue and, with that, we have to operate in a certain capacity to channel our energy, and that would be the reason and importance of our celebration.

To conclude, I would like to thank Dr. Carlos Azcoitia for his time and powerful insight. As a young Latina/o student, I mentioned to Azcoitia how it was an honor to have such a conversation on important and relevant topics. I believe it is critical for Latina/o students to think and act around issues that were covered in our conversation, such as: why there is such a low percentage of Latina/os graduating from college, what is the future of the Latino and Latin American Studies program, and the responsibility we have in terms of developing the Latina/o Cultural and Resource Center.

# Que Ondee Sola: The Voice for Latina/o Students

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As Que Ondee Sola (QOS) reaches its 40th year as an organization, it has provided the Latina/o students with a base to write about the reality of the world around them. In many ways, the QOS staff has taken up a leadership role that serves the Latina/o population of students on campus. Throughout the years, it has been the voice of the Latina/o struggle at Northeastern Illinois University. Since the beginning (1972), Que Ondee Sola came with a mission to provide the NEIU community with a relevant student publication that expresses the realities of so many young Latina/o students on campus and in the world.

The magazine has been at the front for many of the Latina/o student struggles that are taking place currently and historically. For the past years, Que Ondee Sola has covered and consistently provided the NEIU students with updates on the Latino and Latin American Studies Program as it develops into a major. In addition to that, QOS has fought for and subsequently made sure students we are all well aware of the status of our Latina/o Cultural and Resource Center as well as the complex realities of Latin America and the beautiful island of Puerto Rico.

QOS publishes 8 editions yearly that range from different themes and

topics from the African presence in the Caribbean to acknowledging and supporting Latina women in March for an International Women's Day edition. As a young Puerto Rican male that was born and raised in the Humboldt Park community and the first to go to college in my family, Que Ondee Sola has been, in many ways, an outlet to tell a story of what so many other young Latinos confront and go through every day. It has allowed me to share my thoughts and feelings of the world around me and the influences that impact my community.

Most importantly, Que Ondee Sola supports the idea and practice of Puerto Rican self-determination and continues to advocate for the freedom of last the remaining political prisoner Oscar Lopez Rivera. With that, the QOS staff understands that the students of NEIU play a major role in contributing to the progress of a Latina/o status. Overall, we have a responsibility to engage ourselves in that process, and to carry on the historical legacy of student struggles. With the many wonderful accomplishments that result from our labor, we must continue to document and better our realities. To conclude, I encourage Latina/o students to be part and write for Que Ondee Sola magazine.

# *Union for Puerto Rican Students* **40 Years Is Only The Beginning**

Union for Puerto Rican Students (UPRS) is an organization that has struggled for projects and initiatives that have helped Latinos progress academically. From programs like Projecto Pa'Lante to the Latino Cultural and Resource Center that is coming soon, UPRS has struggled to provide spaces for Latinos. In 1971, only 59 Latino students attended Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), and today, NEIU is a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Latino students in 1971 felt completely marginalized in the academic institution in which they were a part of. A majority of these students were transfers from community colleges and did not feel like Northeastern was reflective of the inner cities in which they came from. Students that were from Humboldt Park, Pilsen, and Little Village did not feel that there was a connection with the academic life and community, which sparked the creation of Union for Puerto Rican Students. People like Luis Gutierrez and Miguel DeValle who has been a part of this organization acknowledge the hard work that UPRS puts into making sure that the University lives up to its "Urban Mission."

The leadership of UPRS struggles for

student rights and student expression, and the ability to be able to practice self-determination, self-reliance, and self-actualization. UPRS has been able to build a Latino community on campus, and to be the voice of the marginalized Latino students on campus. From English and Math developmental courses to the Latino and Latin American Studies major that will be active in Fall of 2012, UPRS has been successful in making sure Latino students at NEIU can excel academically. Before the programs and courses that exist today, incoming Latino students tended to drop out in their second year of college, but through the work of UPRS, we have been able to change that harsh reality.

Union for Puerto Rican Students will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in fall of 2011. Forty years ago if you would have asked the administration if they believed our organization would have lasted for 40 years, they have probably would have said when hell freezes over due to the tug of war between students and administrators. UPRS started as a movement to voice the issues that Latino students faced at Northeastern. Today, we start organizing and preparing for the 40th Anniversary with the understanding that this is not the end of our struggle,

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but we will continue to struggle for the things that are necessary for Latino students to feel like they are a part of a community, and most importantly, that they graduate.

Union for Puerto Rican Students is not just your ordinary organization, but it is a student led movement. In the last 40

years, this movement has allowed Latinos to become apart of a bigger picture, to be able to create our own programs, our own institutions, to be able to serve our own needs and people. UPRS will continue to struggle, to create new projects, and to build more institutions. We will continue to be the voice of the Latino students at NEIU.

## Destituyen de sus puestos de carrera a todo el liderato de la Federación de Maestros

El secretario de Educación, Jesús Rivera Sánchez, destituyó de sus posiciones de carrera a los 11 miembros del comité ejecutivo de la Federación de Maestros, quienes no podrán ejercer su profesión en el sistema público ni en el privado.

A los líderes federados se le cancelaron sus certificados docentes de forma permanente, por lo que quedan sin



licencia para dar clases. El líder del gremio, Rafael Feliciano, junto con los otros 10 destituidos, calificó la medida como una represiva y sin precedentes, que tiene el propósito de golpear a la dirección de la Federación



de Maestros y amedrentar al magisterio para que no luche contra los planes de la actual administración de privatizar las escuelas y eliminar el sistema de retiro de estos docentes.

“Los miembros del comité ejecutivo sabíamos que nos exponíamos a toda la maldad y saña represiva del Secretario, pues las vistas disciplinarias son un pelotón de fusilamiento”, dijo Feliciano en conferencia de prensa en la sede de la unión de empleados de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados, en Hato Rey. En el mismo lugar la Federación celebrará una asamblea de delegados.

Feliciano dijo que continuarán en sus posiciones en la Federación aunque no cobren sus salarios. No obstante, continuarán el proceso administrativo apelando a la Comisión Apelativa del Servicio Público y no descartaron acudir a los tribunales.

En la asamblea de la tarde Feliciano dijo que discutirán las acciones dirigidas a detener las destituciones, incluyendo la posibilidad de un paro laboral de 48 horas además de un boicot a las pruebas puertorriqueñas de aprovechamiento académico el 1 de abril.



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## La independencia es otro nombre de la dignidad

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Quiero dedicar este homenaje a la memoria viva de dos Carlos: Carlos Lenkersdorf y Carlos Monsiváis, amigos muy queridos que ya no están, pero siguen estando.

Y empiezo por decir gracias: Gracias, Marcelo, por este regalo, esta alegría. Te digo gracias en nombre propio y también en nombre de los muchos sureños que jamás olvidarán su gratitud a México, el país de su exilio, refugio de perseguidos en los años de mugre y miedo de nuestras dictaduras militares.



Y quiero subrayar que México merece, por eso y por muchos otros motivos, toda nuestra solidaridad, ahora que esta tierra entrañable está siendo víctima de la hipocresía del narcosistema universal,

*Eduardo Galeano / Claridad, Jueves, 3 de marzo de 2011*

donde unos ponen la nariz y otros ponen los muertos, y unos declaran la guerra y otros reciben los tiros.

Este acto generoso me honra por venir de quien viene. La ciudad de México está a la vanguardia en la lucha por los derechos humanos, en un amplio abanico que va desde la diversidad sexual hasta el derecho a respirar, que ya parecía perdido.

Y mucho me honra recibir esta ofrenda, porque mucho tiene de desafío: en nuestros países la independencia plena es todavía, en gran medida, una tarea por hacer, que nos convoca cada día.

En la ciudad de Quito, al día siguiente de la independencia, una mano anónima escribió en una pared: Último día del despotismo y primero de lo mismo.

Y en Bogotá, poco después, Antonio Nariño advertía que el alzamiento patriótico se estaba convirtiendo en baile de máscaras, y que la independencia estaba en manos de caballeros de mucho almidón y mucho botón, y escribía: Hemos mudado de amos.

Y el chileno Santiago Arcos comprobaba, desde la cárcel:

—Los pobres han gozado de la gloriosa independencia tanto como los caballos

que en Chacabuco y Maipú cargaron contra las tropas del rey.

Todas nuestras naciones nacieron mentidas. La independencia renegó de quienes, peleando por ella, se habían jugado la vida; y las mujeres, los analfabetos, los pobres, los indios y los negros no fueron invitados a la fiesta. Aconsejo echar un vistazo a nuestras primeras Constituciones, que dieron prestigio legal a esa mutilación. Las Cartas Magnas otorgaron el derecho de ciudadanía a los pocos que podían comprarlo. Los demás, y las demás, siguieron siendo invisibles.

Simón Rodríguez tenía fama de loco, y así lo llamaban: El loco. Decía locuras, como éstas:

—Somos independientes, pero no somos libres. La sabiduría de Europa y la prosperidad de los Estados Unidos son, en nuestra América, dos enemigos de la libertad de pensar. Nuestra América no debe imitar servilmente, sino ser original.

Y también:

—Enseñemos a los niños a ser preguntones, para que se acostumbren a obedecer a la razón: no a la autoridad como los limitados, ni a la costumbre como los estúpidos. Al que no sabe, cualquiera lo engaña. Al que no tiene, cualquiera lo compra.

Don Simón decía locuras, y hacía locuras. Allá por mil ochocientos veinte y pico, sus escuelas mezclaban a los niños y a las niñas, a los pobres y a los ricos, a los indios y a los blancos, y también unían la cabeza y las manos, porque enseñaban a leer y a sumar, y también a trabajar la madera y la tierra. En sus aulas no se escuchaban los latines de sacristía y se desafiaba la tradición del desprecio por el trabajo manual. Poco duró la experiencia. Un clamor de indignadas voces exigía la expulsión de este sátiro que ha venido a corromper a la juventud, y el mariscal Sucre, presidente del país que ahora llamamos Bolivia, le exigió la renuncia.

A partir de entonces, anduvo a lomo de mula, peregrinando por las costas del Pacífico y las montañas de los Andes, fundando escuelas y formulando preguntas insostenibles a los nuevos dueños del poder:

—Ustedes, que imitan todo lo que viene de Europa y de los Estados Unidos, ¿por qué no les imitan la originalidad, que es lo más importante?

Este viejo vagabundo, calvo, feo y barrigón, el más audaz y el más querible de los pensadores de América, estaba cada día más solo, y solo murió.

A los ochenta años, escribió:

—Yo quise hacer de la tierra un paraíso

para todos. La hice un infierno para mí.

Simón Rodríguez fue un perdedor. Según la escala de valores de este mundo, que sacraliza el éxito y no perdona el fracaso, los hombres como él no merecen memoria.

Pero, ¿acaso no está vivo don Simón en la energía de dignidad que hoy recorre nuestra América de norte a sur? ¿Cuántos hablan por su boca, aunque no lo sepan, como hablaba en prosa aquel personaje de Molière que no sabía que hablaba en prosa?

¿Acaso don Simón no nos sigue enseñando, un siglo y medio después de su muerte, que la independencia es otro nombre de la dignidad? Es verdad que todavía pesa, y mucho, la herencia colonial, que aplaude la copia y maldice la creación y admira, como denunciaba don Simón, las virtudes del mono y del papagayo. Pero también es verdad que son cada vez más los jóvenes que sienten que el miedo es una cárcel humillante y aburrida, y libremente se atreven a pensar con sus propias cabezas, sentir con sus propios corazones y caminar con sus propias piernas.

Yo no creo en Dios, pero sí creo en el humano milagro de la resurrección. Porque quizás se equivocaban aquellos dolientes que se negaban a creer en la muerte de Emiliano Zapata, y creían que



se había marchado a Arabia en un caballo blanco, pero sólo se equivocaban en el mapa. Porque a la vista está que Zapata sigue vivo, aunque no tan lejos, no en las arenas de Oriente: él anda cabalgando por aquí, aquí cerquita nomás, queriendo justicia y haciéndola.

Y fíjense ustedes lo que ha ocurrido con otro perdedor, José Artigas, el hombre que hizo la primera reforma agraria de América, antes que Lincoln y antes que Zapata.

Hace casi dos siglos, él fue vencido y condenado a la soledad y al exilio. En años recientes, la dictadura militar del Uruguay le erigió un ampuloso mausoleo, queriendo encerrarlo en cárcel de mármol. Pero cuando la dictadura intentó decorar el monumento con algunas de sus frases, no encontró ninguna que no fuera subversiva. Ahora el mausoleo tiene fechas y nombres de batallas, y ninguna frase. Involuntario homenaje, involuntaria confesión: Artigas no es mudo, Artigas sigue siendo peligroso.

Cosa curiosa: con tantos vivos que hablan sin decir, en nuestras tierras hay muertos que dicen callando.

Bienaventurados sean los perdedores, porque ellos cometieron la insolencia de amar a su tierra, y por ella se jugaron la vida. Pero está visto que el patriotismo es el honorable privilegio de los países

dominantes: sólo los que mandan tienen el derecho de ser patriotas. En cambio, los países dominados, condenados a obediencia perpetua, no pueden ejercer el patriotismo, so pena de ser llamados populistas, demagogos, delirantes: nuestro patriotismo se considera una peste, peste peligrosa, y los amos del mundo, que nos toman examen de Democracia, tienen la mala costumbre de conjurar esta amenaza a sangre y fuego.

Bienaventurados sean los perdedores, porque ellos se negaron a repetir la historia y quisieron cambiarla.

Bienaventurados sean los perdedores, y malditos sean quienes confunden el mundo con una pista de carreras y lanzados a las cumbres del éxito trepan lamiendo hacia arriba y escupiendo hacia abajo.

Bienaventurados sean los indignados, y malditos sean los indignos.

Maldita sea la exitosa dictadura del miedo, que nos obliga a creer que la realidad es intocable y que la solidaridad es una enfermedad mortal, porque el prójimo es siempre una amenaza y nunca una promesa.

Bienaventurado sea el abrazo, y maldito sea el codazo.

Sí, pero... Cuántos perdedores, ¿no?

Cuando algún periodista me pregunta si soy optimista, yo contesto, sinceramente:

—A veces. Depende de la hora.

Siempre me parecieron más bien inhumanos los optimistas “full time”.

Creo que el desaliento es un derecho humano, y de algún modo es también la prueba de que somos humanos, porque no sufriríamos el desaliento si no tuviéramos aliento.

Hay que reconocer que no es muy alentadora la realidad, que tiene la jodida costumbre de recompensar a los exprimidores del prójimo y a los exterminadores de la tierra, el agua y el aire.

Y en cambio, las más apasionantes aventuras de transformación de la realidad suelen quedarse a mitad de camino, o se extravían y se pierden, y muchas veces terminan mal.

Hay que reconocerlo, digo, pero también cabe preguntar: Cuando esas lindas experiencias colectivas terminan mal, ¿de veras terminan? ¿No hay nada que hacer, sólo nos queda resignarnos y aceptar el mundo tal cual es, como si fuera destino? Hace pocos años, se puso de moda la teoría del fin de la historia. Más de uno se tragó ese sapo, a pesar de que el sentido

común nos demuestra, con poderosa sencillez, que la historia nace de nuevo cada mañana.

Lo mejor de este asunto de vivir está en la capacidad de sorpresa que la vida tiene. ¿Quién podía presentir que los países árabes iban a vivir este huracán de libertad que están ahora viviendo? ¿Quién iba a creer que la plaza de Tahrir iba a dar al mundo esta lección de democracia? ¿Quién iba a creer lo que ahora puede creer ese muchachito plantado en la plaza durante días y noches, cuando dice: Nadie nos va a mentir nunca más?

Al fin y al cabo, cuando la historia dice adiós, o eso parece decir, ella nos está diciendo, o al menos murmurando: hasta luego, hasta luego, nos estamos viendo.

Y yo me despido de ustedes, ahora, que ya es hora, como la historia me enseñó, diciéndoles gracias, diciéndoles: hasta luego, hasta luego, nos estamos viendo.

*\* Palabras pronunciadas el 22 de febrero de 2011, en la ceremonia de entrega de la Medalla 1808, que el jefe de Gobierno de la ciudad de México, Marcelo Ebrard, otorgó al escritor Eduardo Galeano*

*Reproducido de La jornada*

# *On the Puerto Rican People:* **“You Will Not Silence Them and You Will Not Silence Me”**

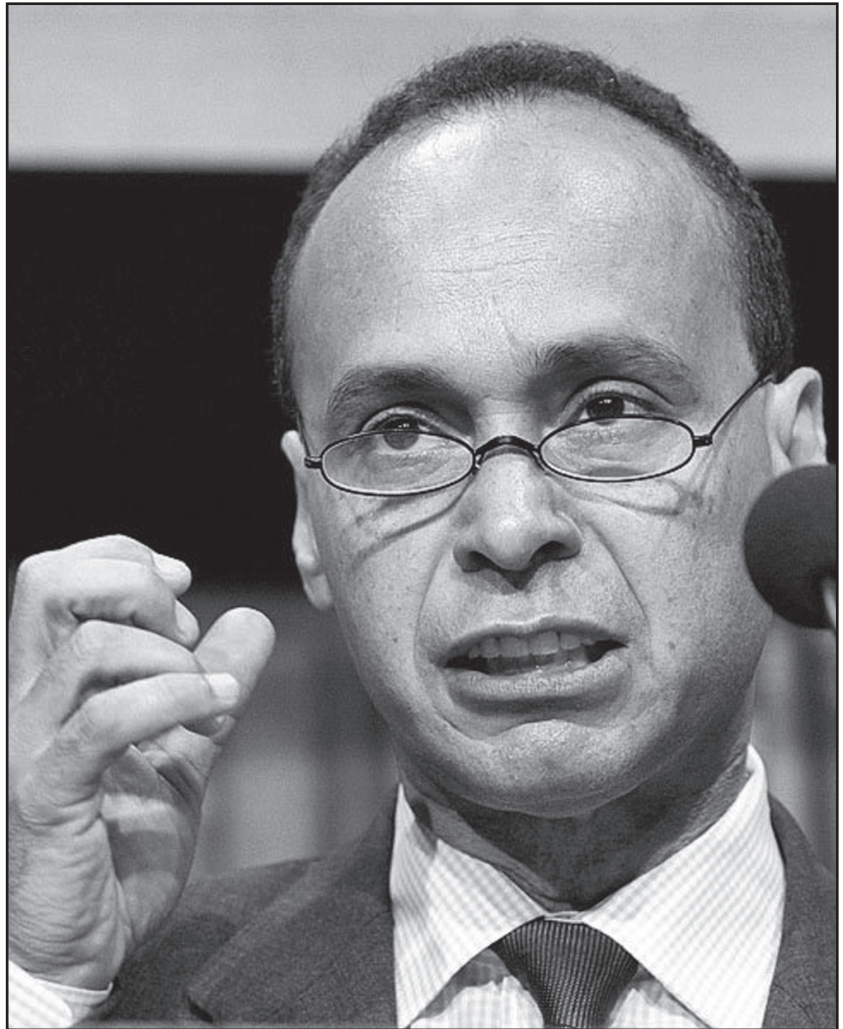
*The following is adapted from a speech by Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez, delivered this morning to the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.*

Two weeks ago I spoke about a serious problem in Puerto Rico. The problem is a systemic effort by the ruling party to deny the right of the people to speak freely, to criticize their government openly, and to make their voices heard.

I talked about student protests that had been met with violent resistance by Puerto Rican police. I talked about closed meetings of the legislature, and about efforts to silence the local Bar Association.

I was not the first to speak about it. And I could have said much more.

I could have gone into greater detail about how a federal judge -- whose picture I displayed on the floor -- jailed the head of the Puerto Rico Bar Association rather than let him



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disseminate information to the members of his organization.

A judge with a history of close ties to the ruling party and with a clear history opposing the Bar Association and who was described by my good friend Charlie Rangel -- after the judge handed out harsh sentencing to protesters of the bombing of Vieques -- as “reminiscent of

the judges we had in the U.S. in the South in the civil-rights movement who wanted to punish a community to stifle freedom of speech.’’

I could have detailed the complaints of students, legislators, the press, and the general public who were beaten and pepper sprayed by police who clearly went too far in suppressing the people’s legitimate right to demonstrate. Female students who were treated with gross disrespect by the police and whose stories were captured in the searing report by the ACLU of Puerto Rico, “Human Rights Crisis in Puerto Rico: First Amendment Under Siege.”

This was the government overreaction to demonstrations at the university over budget cuts and the layoffs of at least 17,000 and maybe as many as 34,000 public employees. And demonstrations at the Capitol over budget cuts and layoffs were also met by riot police, clubs, and more pepper spray.

The images of police tactics and behavior explain why, according to the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, there is an ongoing investigation -- as we speak -- into allegations that members of the Puerto Rico Police have used “excessive force, had conducted unconstitutional searches, and acted discriminatorily.”

How could you see the pictures and not speak out?

And I was hardly the first to speak out about these matters (see, for example, this statement by Mary Kay Henry, president of the Service Employees International Union or this editorial from the Puerto Rico Daily Sun) and I will not be the last...

As a member of Congress, it is more than my right -- it is my obligation -- to speak out when fundamental freedoms are attacked.

And what was the response to my speech defending the right of the Puerto Rican people to be heard?

It was to challenge my right to be heard here in the U.S. Congress.

The resident commissioner of Puerto Rico said that only he is authorized to speak about Puerto Rico in this body.

This week the Puerto Rico legislature debated a resolution of censure -- yes, censure -- condemning me for speaking out against these abuses.

A leading member of the ruling party even said, essentially, “Gutierrez was not born in Puerto Rico. His kids weren’t born in Puerto Rico. Gutierrez doesn’t plan on being buried in Puerto Rico... So



Gutierrez doesn't have the right to speak about Puerto Rico..."

Let me tell you something -- if you see injustice anywhere, it is not only your right but your duty to speak out about it.

We don't speak out against injustice or apartheid or human rights abuses or the denial of rights to women in places around the world because we ourselves were born there. That's silly. Where we see injustice we speak out because it is the right thing to do.

Ironically, by questioning my right to speak out on behalf of free speech, they have made my point crystal clear. By challenging my free speech, they have amplified the words of my five-minute speech more than if I had spoken for five hours.

And it is their right. My critics have the right of free speech even as they deny that same right to others.

And I want them to understand this: Your efforts to silence me -- just like your efforts to silence so many people in Puerto Rico who disagree with you -- will fail, just as every effort to blockade progress only makes the march toward justice more powerful and swift.

I may not be Puerto Rican enough for some people, but I know this: Nowhere on earth will you find a people harder

to silence than Puerto Ricans. You won't locate my love for Puerto Rico on my birth certificate or a driver's license, my children's birth certificate or any other piece of paper.

My love for Puerto Rico is right here -- in my heart -- a heart that beats with our history and our language and our heroes. A place where -- when I moved there as a teenager -- people talked and argued and debated because we care deeply about our island and our future.

That's still true today -- and that freedom is still beating in the hearts of university students, and workers who've been fired and members of the Puerto Rico Bar Association and every person who believes in free speech. You will not silence them, and you will not silence me.

Abraham Lincoln, a leader who valued freedom above all else, said: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves."

It's good advice, and I hope Puerto Rican leaders take it.

*A video of Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez's speech to the U.S. House of Representatives:*  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUy-cglbAGg>

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# Texas Immigration Bill Has Big Exception

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Amid a number of bills filed in Texas that address the issue of illegal immigration, one, proposed by Republican state Rep. Debbie Riddle, stands out.

As proposed, House Bill 2012 would create tough state punishments for those who “intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly” hire an unauthorized immigrant. Violators could face up to two years in jail and a fine of up to \$10,000.

But it is an exception included in the bill that is drawing attention. Those who hire unauthorized immigrants would be in violation of the law -- unless they are hiring a maid, a lawn caretaker or another houseworker.



It is a tough immigration bill with a soft side that protects those who hire unauthorized immigrants “for the purpose of obtaining labor or other work to be performed exclusively or primarily at a single-family residence.”

Texas state Rep. Aaron Pena, a Democrat, said the exception is a wise one.

“With things as they are today, her bill

will see a large segment of the Texas population in prison” if it passes without the exception, he said.

“When it comes to household employees or yard workers, it is extremely common for Texans to hire people who are likely undocumented workers,” Pena said. “It is so common, it is overlooked.”

The bills and other illegal immigration-related bills filed by Riddle and others reflect an increased pressure from constituents for action on the issue, Pena said. Because the federal government isn’t doing its job, residents press state officials to act, he said.

Leo Berman, a Republican state representative, agreed that there was a stronger voice from Texas voters on the issue. “Absolutely,” he said.

The Texas legislature convenes only once every two years, so Texas has not passed tough anti-illegal immigration laws like some other states. The result has been that unauthorized immigrants in those states are relocating to Texas, Berman said.

Berman himself has filed a number of immigrant-related bills this legislative session. One would make English the official language of Texas, a move that would save millions in printing costs, he said. The law wouldn’t affect schools or

ballots, he added.

Another bill would place an 8% surcharge on all money wired from Texas to Latin America. About \$480 million could be collected from money sent to Mexico alone, the representative said. The proceeds would be earmarked for state hospitals.

A third bill would require police officers to ask every person they stop what their citizenship status is.

Amid all of these tough proposals, why the large exception to Riddle’s bill on hiring unauthorized workers?

Riddle did not return repeated calls for comment. Her office said she would not comment on the bill because it could still be modified.

In a interview with the Texas Tribune, Riddle’s chief of staff, Jon English, explained that the exception was to avoid “stifling the economic engine” in Texas.

“It is an admittedly clumsy first attempt to say, ‘We are really focusing on the big businesses,’” English said. Texans shouldn’t be punished for hiring lawn care companies who hire unauthorized immigrants, he said, according to the Texas Tribune’s website.

# The Release of a New Chapter: *Batey Mixtape*

Que Ondee Sola

“Liberation Through the Arts” is an alternative to having a creative outlet to share your stories. Batey Urbano in the last 8 years has provided a space for the youth to be able to express themselves in an artistic manner. From the ages of eleven to twenty-three, youth have practiced true collectivity in the Batey Urbano, and have received a true sense of community, leaving with the ability to think critically. As youth transition out of the Batey to go into their careers, they never forget the space that has helped them grow and that has made them the individuals they are today.

The existing collective in the Batey Urbano created a project that can fundraise money for equipment that was stolen, but also created a project that would make a mark for the New Year. It was a project that followed our motto “Liberation Through The Arts,” and allowed our youth to participate in something more permanent. There is no greater feeling than to be a part of something that everyone is able to see. So our goal was to create a project that the whole community can be a part of. The perception is a lot of the youth in our community do not ever feel like they are really a part of something or can ever claim something as their own. We wanted to change that reality and give our youth something to be a part of, give them

something to claim.

Batey created and released its first mix-tape January 21, 2011. With three months of long studio hours, organizing artists, creating labels and covers, the Batey Urbano collective was successful in producing a project that would touch everybody that has touched the Batey. With fourteen tracks that would allow people to step in the shoes of these artists, the Batey Urbano Mixtape has created one of the most creative collaborations that exist in our space. From the youngest artist being fourteen to the oldest being twenty-three years old, these artists were committed to allow Batey to showcase their talents and to give them a space they can claim. Being a part of the Batey is much more than Friday night events, but we are a family that believes in providing a space for youth in our community, so that they are able to engage in productive activity and to be apart of a grouping that believes in meaningful alternatives.

On January 21, setup began at 3pm with sweeping, mopping, setting up stages, and making sure sound worked properly; this all became a part of what we imagined this day to be. People from all over Chicago came together to celebrate the hard work that each individual put into this project. As people walked through



the door receiving their free mix-tapes, I began to see the results of our hard work come to life. Our open mic list flooded with names that wanted to be a part of our space, a part of our hard work, and a part of our bigger picture. Artists get on the stage and leave their hearts there, creating an environment where others are compelled to do the same.

With a full house, we were able to raise money to recuperate some of the equipment that was stolen, but more importantly, everyone was able to be a part of something great. Watching the artists creatively express their stories and seeing the audience intrigued allowed Batey to start a breathtaking New Year.

## ***Let's Deport Everyone!***

The current, hotly contested debate on immigration is moving more into the realm of the extreme. And it is going to get hotter and ever more dangerous!

Newton's Third Law of Motion states that "for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."

The action? Decades of a broken system that deports and separates thousands of families that have undocumented and documented members. A system that also promotes



the destitution of hundreds of thousands of young people who cannot go to college because they came to the U.S. as paper-less children. Moreover, legal proposals that instill fear and hatred for

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the more than 12 million undocumented.

The reaction? Millions of people, mostly Latinas/os, marching on March 10, 2006 and every May 1 since then, in cities across the country, demanding comprehensive immigration reform. Another reaction was an increase in Latina/o voter participation, especially in swing states, that voted for President Barack Obama because he promised to address immigration in his first 100 days. Due to former Chief of Staff Rahm Emmanuel and others in his close circle he never followed-up on his obligation. In a last minute gesture, he pushed for the passing of the Dream Act, a bill that would've provided a path of citizenship to the foreign-born if they came to the U.S. as children and either went to college or joined the military. The Democrat-controlled Senate rejected it twice.

Now we have another sort of reaction, one that could have been expected, but many wished would never come. A national move to the Right. The result of the Midterm elections was a Republican re-take of the House of Representatives, an increase in the Senate, and a ridiculous 690-seat gain in State Legislatures across the U.S.

On January 5, in a press conference by the "Coalition of State Legislatures for Legal Immigration," the new goal for the right-wing was made clear. Challenge the

14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which allows for citizenship by anyone born in the country, in state government so that it can climb the ladder to the federal level. In essence, the vision is to deport all of the "anchor-babies" of the undocumented, along with their families. According to one Oklahoma legislator, the issue of citizenship is the "holy grail of the illegal immigration debate."<sup>1</sup> For a California Congressman, the issue is about proving that "it takes more than walking across the border to become an American citizen. It's what's in our souls."<sup>2</sup> Six states, from Pennsylvania to Nebraska, are beginning to discuss such legislation and the coalition is pushing 40 other states to do the same.

One of the main arguments for this attack on a 143-year-old Constitutional Amendment is that the U.S. is one of the few countries in the world that allows birth-right citizenship. This is true. No country in Europe does so, and some, like Ireland, France, and the UK have repealed such laws in the recent past.<sup>3</sup> Hatred for the "other" is the main motivation. For the Europeans, it is the belligerent disgust for the Roma peoples or "gypsies," that are "diluting" their alleged national cohesiveness. And even more ironic is their hatred for Middle-Eastern and African peoples, who, as former colonial subjects in their vast Empires, were contracted to work to maintain their economic productivity. If anyone thinks

that anti-Latina/o racism is not motivating the immigration debate in the U.S., think again! After the draconian SBI 070 law was passed in Arizona, allowing police authorities to detain anyone “who looked like” they did not have papers, another deceitful bill was approved. HB 2281 bill outlawed all ethnic studies classes from K-12, most notably Chicana/o studies, in a largely Mexican state (and a former territory of México).<sup>4</sup>

It is evermore frightening when it was the “Tea Party” – a loosely connected body of reactionary populists who want to reinterpret the constitution to meet their own, utopian ends – who put these demagogues into power. But this utopia

is obviously, not for everyone. Whenever there are those who are openly calling for the exclusion of human beings while using language that speaks to an almost spiritual calling blessed by God, beware of their final solution. In the distorted rationale of such movements, “the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.”

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## ***Pictografía*** | Juan Antonio Corretjer

Caía un sol todo Borinquen sobre  
mi frente descubierta.

Yo me acerqué en silencio, conmovido,  
hasta esa hipnosis que grabó una estrella,  
no sé en que ardiente areyto de presagio,  
para que esta mañana se leyera.

Recoge tu Destino, Borincano,  
en esta luz que se ha tornado pétrea.  
Ni sol, ni lluvia; ni traición, ni nada,  
podrá borrar lo que se ha escrito en piedra!

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