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## **Interracial books for children: special issue on Puerto Rican materials. Volume 4, Nos. 1-2 Spring 1972**

New York, NY: The Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.,  
Spring 1972

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# 100 CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT PUERTO RICANS: A STUDY IN RACISM, SEXISM & COLONIALISM

In a substantial effort to evaluate children's books on Puerto Rican themes, the Council assembled as many titles as could be found that were published in the United States, in English, about Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans. The core of the collection was the fifty books considered "the best available in the New York Public Library" from the federally-funded South Bronx Project list which appeared in December 1971. More titles were garnered from less-known sources, such as the lists of the Migratory Children's Program of the Connecticut State Department of Education, the Information Center on Children's Cultures of UNICEF, and the *Instructor* magazine (January 1972).

The books collected were all published by U.S. firms between 1932 and the beginning of 1972, and ultimately totaled 100. (This total does not include books published in Puerto Rico and/or in Spanish exclusively. Information on these books appears on page 5.) At the present time, the Council may have the dubious distinction of possessing the most complete collection of Puerto Rican children's books ever assembled.

The Council sought out Puerto Ricans of different age groups to study the books for accuracy and authenticity. Students and faculty in the Departments of Puerto Rican Studies of colleges and universities in the metropolitan area took a leading part in the study. Puerto Rican school children also participated. As word of the project spread, an increasing number of Puerto Ricans became involved. A complete list of the reviewers and other contributors to this study will be found on page 2.

## Findings of the Study

Far from finding the books accurate and authentic, the reviewers discovered extraordinary distortions and misconceptions ranging all the way from simple misusages of Spanish to the grossest insensitivities and outright blunders, including editorial errors that in "non-minority" books would never be tolerated.

This issue of the Council Bulletin presents the general findings of the study and some individual book reviews in conjunction with feature articles. Reviews of the rest of the 100 titles will appear either in future Bulletins, as special supplements, or gathered together in pamphlet form. Here are the major conclusions of the study.

• The books warp the facts of Puerto Rican history. They further

the colonialist viewpoint by idealizing the status quo in Puerto Rico—U.S. relations. History books for young people omit or distort events unfavorable to the U.S. and dismiss Puerto Rican nationalist leaders as raving fanatics. This topic is developed in "The Colonialist Viewpoint: Distortions and Omissions in Children's History Books"

• The books are flagrantly sexist and reflect a problem common to all children's literature that stereotype women in subordinate and demeaning roles. See "Feminists Look At the 100 Books" for an extensive analysis beginning on page 7.

• Pervading the books is a strong undercurrent of race and class bias which results in the portrayal of Puerto Ricans as inferior beings. Not one of the 100 books represents any kind of *significant* step toward the creation of Puerto Rican self-identity.

## "The Puerto Rican Problem"

What follows is a presentation of the study's findings as they relate to stereotyping and other flaws stemming from institutional racism and economic class bias.

In conforming to today's demand for "socially relevant" books, publishers and writers have generated a new genre of books dealing with "The Puerto Rican Problem." The result has been books with a theme but no content, with a Ghetto, U. S. A. background but without memorable characters—and what in other books would be the setting has, in these books, become the story. The story lines are marked by a virtual absence of humor, and the characters are portrayed as having a poverty of emotion or inner fantasy life—in brief, the stories are decidedly lacking in literary merit.

There was and still is a need for books that deal with the realities of urban ghetto life. But when books about Puerto Ricans present *nothing* but this single topic, then the books become racist rather than relevant. For what they say is that the only possible reality for a Puerto Rican must be a poverty-stricken ghetto existence.

On top of this is the pervasive political bias of the authors. Ghetto problems are portrayed as inherent to Puerto Ricans, not as inherited by them. For the resolution of problems, the authors place the onus on the Puerto Ricans. The solution to all problems—a solution which the authors believe is both desirable and attainable—is to "make it" in

(continued on page 14)

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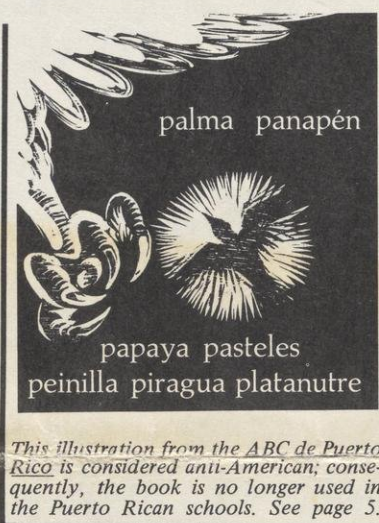
# Interracial Books FOR CHILDREN

Published by the Council on Interracial Books for Children

VOLUME FOUR, NOS. 1 & 2

DOUBLE ISSUE

SPRING 1972



This illustration from the *ABC de Puerto Rico* is considered anti-American; consequently, the book is no longer used in the Puerto Rican schools. See page 5.

## WHAT THE CHILDREN SAY

by the Children's Art  
Workshop Collective

"The School," a branch of the Children's Art Workshop, is a small alternative school for Puerto Rican children on New York's Lower East Side. Because we don't use public school textbooks, we are always looking for new material. So one can imagine how happy we were when the Council on Interracial Books for Children brought us two shopping bags full of picture books to review, with the promise of more books to follow.

We had no idea there were so many books specifically written about Puerto Rican children, and the children at first were wide-eyed to see themselves in the books. After we had gone through the first two, and then the third shopping bag of books—twenty-two in all—we asked the Council *not* to bring us any more.

Most of the books were insulting and evoked the dullest situations imaginable. We found them objectionable for several reasons.

The first has to do with the racial and cultural stereotypes portrayed. Many of the books seemed to be an amateur introduction, by white authors, to "See the ghetto, see the Puerto Ricans." Only a few books,

(continued on page 15)

## Book Publishing in Puerto Rico — Children's Books as Weapons In the Fight for Identity

Why would an eminent anthropologist, an eminent sociologist, and an eminent radical turn to writing books for children?

Ricardo E. Alegría is a Puerto Rican anthropologist and director of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. He is also the author of several books for Puerto Rican children. In an interview with this Council, Ricardo Alegría commented on the almost total ignorance of Puerto Rican history and culture he has observed in the United States. "Of course the United States is ignorant of us," he said. "The United States has tried to erase our history and our identity."

Ricardo Alegría explains his writing of children's books as a necessary step in the struggle to defend the Puerto Rican identity against the heavy assaults of Americanization. He notes that in the Spanish literary tradition books specifically for children have not occupied a very large place, but that in Puerto Rico the recognition is spreading that knowledge about Puerto Rico's past must be made available directly and quickly to the youngest generation if Puerto Rico is to survive. His books for children are about the Taino Indians and about the earliest period

of Spanish colonization when Taino, African and Spaniard met to begin the fusion of cultures and peoples from which the Puerto Rican identity has sprung. See page 5.

Luis Nieves Falcón is one of Puerto Rico's most eminent sociologists. He is a professor at the University of Puerto Rico and until last year directed the Social Science Research Center of Puerto Rico. In 1967 along with other concerned historians and scholars, Nieves Falcón formed Acción Social, Inc. to seek out relevant curriculum materials for the Puerto Rican schools.

"We were dismayed at the damage being done to the self-image of Puerto Rican children," Nieves Falcón told us, "because the schools have been deliberately inculcating in them respect for the life and culture of the U.S. to the detriment of the life and culture of Puerto Rico."

Acción Social set about to produce books for children from which they could form positive identification. Three of these books have been published: *Fabián, Poemas y Colores* and *Mi Música*. These are described on page 5.

Juan Angel Silén is one of the young radical writers who are creat-

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# AN OVERVIEW OF THE 100 BOOKS: WHAT THE STATISTICS REVEAL

The 100 children's books, when viewed as a group, fall into patterns which are normally impossible to see when the titles are viewed individually. These patterns bring into sharper focus the series of conditions which lead to the publication of inferior children's books.

Even the pattern of dates of publication for the 100 books is revealing. In the three decades before 1960, eight titles; between 1960 and 1966, thirty; between 1967 and 1971, sixty-two. The peak year was 1969 with twenty titles. One cannot help but speculate that the 1969 titles were the fruit of the book publishing world's response to the long hot summers of 1967 and 1968 and, in particular, to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King in April 1968. The time lapse between a raw manuscript and a published book—approximately twelve months—is too close to warrant another explanation. And the subsequent pattern? Loss of interest and a downward trend, with twelve books appearing in both 1970 and 1971.

It appears that the most recent "cause" or publishing fad—ecology and the American Indian—is crowding Puerto Rican titles off publishers' new lists. As the Puerto Rican liberation movement becomes more vocal and violent in demanding greater recognition of the problems thrust upon them by a racist society, the children's book world may respond with a new wave of books about Puerto Ricans.

The 100 books were produced by forty-two publishing firms. Nine of these, each publishing four or more of the titles, accounted for 46 per cent of the total output. Put another way, one-fifth of the publishers produced one-half of all the available titles. One might hope that any company choosing to enter the minority arena and publishing a number of titles on one particular ethnic group would become sensitive to the stereotypes and distortions which demean that minority and, being better informed, make an effort to search out material of quality. Unfortunately, our study reveals this hope to be wishful thinking—there seems to be absolutely no positive correlation between number of titles

and either higher quality or fewer stereotypes and distortions.

Of the forty-two publishing houses, only two are minority-owned and specialize in ethnic materials. These are New Directions (*Discovering Puerto Rico*) and Research for Urban Education (*Events in the History of Puerto Rico*). The latter firm is described on page 16. While ownership and orientation are no guarantee of better quality, these are a definite step in the right direction and should lead to the eventual publication of more authentic material.

Of the eighty authors who wrote the books, only five are Puerto Ricans: Pura Belpré, Maria Brau, Antonio Colorado, John Figueroa and Pablo Figueroa. Editorial claims to the contrary, the remaining seventy-five non-Puerto Rican writers lack the innate Puerto Rican historical and cultural outlook and life style to provide authentic background and honest insights into the liberation struggles of an oppressed people.

Although no precise figures are available on the ethnic background and place of residence of these non-Puerto Rican writers, a close analysis of the information about them on the jacket blurbs (and, where these were not provided, by direct contact with the authors) shows them to be typically white, middle class and suburban. Sixty-five of the books (two-thirds) are written by women—a routine occurrence in trade children's books, where income and status are low relative to other professions. (The opposite is true for illustrators—two-thirds of the illustrated books are done by male artists.) And it is interesting to find that 50 per cent of the authors could be considered professional children's book writers, being credited with three or more published titles in *Children's Books in Print*.

Eleven of these writers authored two or more of the 100 books. On the other hand, a significant number of the books—approximately one-third—are written by new authors whose book on Puerto Ricans represents their first published work.

Ninety-four books are illustrated (the six exceptions are either fictional or are sports biographies for ages 12 and up). The books with artists' illustrations total sixty-six, and the remainder are photographically illustrated. Of the thirty-eight younger children's "picture books," usually dependent on colorful art work, a significantly large number—fourteen—use photographs. This may be partially explained by the striking absence of Puerto Rican illustrators for the books. Since the illustrators, like the authors, are preponderantly non-Puerto Rican, middle class and suburban, it may be that the publishers actually sought out photographers hoping thereby

to lend authenticity and mood to the books.

Sixty-four artists, including thirteen photographers, were involved in creating the pictures for the 100 books. Comparatively few of these artists are newcomers to the field, unlike the situation with the authors. Two-thirds of them would fall into the professional category in that *Children's Books in Print* credits them with illustrating four or more books. For only eleven of the artists was it their first published children's book.

Three of the illustrators—Lorenzo Homar, Sam Morales, and Bill Negron—are Puerto Rican. Only one of these has previously illustrated a children's book: Sam Morales illustrated both *Events in the History of Puerto Rico* and *Antonio's World*.

To what extent have the children's trade publishers recognized the need for bilingual material with Puerto Rican content? Of the 100 books, only three are bilingual and, at this writing, only five others are available in a Spanish edition.

A librarian's raw classification of the 100 titles shows that only one-fifth—twenty titles—qualify in the general category of non-fiction. Considering the urgent need for factual material presenting the realities of Puerto Rico's past and present, this small percentage is just another indication that the U.S. children's book world finds it unprofitable to take Puerto Rico seriously.

The overwhelming majority—four-fifths of the titles—are fictional. Folktales account for five of these. Stories that use Puerto Rico as their primary setting are surprisingly few: one biography of a Puerto Rican pirate, eight picture books, and three animal stories.

Almost two-thirds—sixty-three books—are stories which take place in urban ghettos in the U.S. and draw their themes from a narrow range of stereotyped plots and characterizations. And nearly all of these, to the exclusion of other cities, are set in New York and may be described as "how-to-adjust-to-the-ghetto books." They mirror an image of the inner city as conceived by the white American middle class, and this image is neither authentic nor identity-building.

Even if one were to eliminate two subcategories of books—there are fourteen where the child is not specifically identified as Puerto Rican, and there are eight more where the Puerto Rican is only a secondary character—fully one-third of the books portray poor Puerto Rican children in the ghetto passively submitting to the indignities imposed on them as minorities in the United States.

To conclude our statistical overview, sixteen of the titles are available in relatively inexpensive paper-

## Ripping Off Our Culture

A Letter from Piri Thomas

Ever since I was old enough to become aware of ugly words, I became supersensitive to one in particular—the word *exploitation*. I learned through hard personal experience that exploitation was one of the chief weapons used against minorities by the managers of an oppressive system, in their insatiable greed for profits.

It didn't matter how high the piles grew of the crucified and raped bodies of their victims. In fact, the higher the mountains of the exploited, the greater the joy of the exploiters, for it attested to the success of their efforts at plundering. Their plunder of minority peoples has ranged the gamut from back-breaking labor to the sensitive toil that creates fine arts.

In the course of preparing this special issue of *Interracial Books for Children*, we have come upon information that reveals new strip mining tactics, tactics particularly insidious, because the mining and plundering is of our souls.

Now the exploiters want to cash in on the renewed pride of Puerto Ricans, both here and in Puerto Rico, in wanting to know all that is possible of their roots, their heritage, their culture.

How can the exploiters make mucho profits on this? Simple. Since we Puerto Ricans are more and more becoming vocally and politically active, they see us suddenly as a potential publishing market.

So out comes a published work of three volumes entitled *The Puerto*

*Rican Heritage Encyclopedia* selling for a hefty \$59 in the United States and—hold on to your money, Puerto Ricans—for \$100 in Puerto Rico! To ease the mercenary blow, it's only \$25 down and \$75 in nice easy terms and, who knows, maybe even minus the credit charges, handling charges and the mucho miscellaneous charges—you know the spiel. Sign here, pay later, amigo. Who is publishing these books? A new firm called Plus Ultra in New York. Are they Puerto Ricans? You bet they aren't. And who is selling these books to Puerto Rico? The same people who sell *Selecciones (Reader's Digest)*. Dig that!

These people have noses that are mucho sensitized to the smell of big profits.

The overpricing of books that Puerto Ricans need for themselves and their children is just the beginning of a whole new round of exploitation by book publishers. A few years ago Blacks were the book publishing fad. Today it is the American Indians. Next year, two years from now—but damn sure sometime soon—book publishers will try to make Puerto Ricans a fad.

We Puerto Ricans serve you yanqui publishers notice ahead of time. We Puerto Ricans are not a fad. We are a people with dignity.

How dare you exploit our people's need of their own knowledge and still consider yourselves honorable! Just dig yourselves if you can! You won't win against us, 'cause we will walk tall or not at all. ■

### Reviewers and Contributors to this Issue

Diana Caballero—bilingual teacher and member of the Puerto Rican Education Collective; The Children's Art Workshop Collective; Irma Garcia—member of the Puerto Rican Studies Department of Lehman College; Jose Garcia—film maker and member of the Puerto Rican Education Collective; Latin American Students Organization (LASO) of Columbia University—Emanuel Crespo, Edith Dávila, Charles DeLeon, Arlene Riviera, Jose Santiago, Alan West; Miguel Ortiz—Teachers and Writers Collaborative; Dolores Prida—member of the Spanish American Feminists and the Puerto Rican Forum, publisher and editor of *La Nueva Sangre*; Carmen Puigdollers—member of the Puerto Rican Studies Department of Lehman College. Council on Interracial Books for Children Bulletin Collaborative—Brad Chambers, Nessa Darren, Henry Gordillo, Constance Gruen, Susan Ribner, Virginia Rice, Al Schwartz, Lillian Smith, Ralph Tavares, Byron Williams.

back editions (see listing, page 4), but the rest appear in hard cover at a total cost of \$369.76, an average of \$3.70 per volume. While offering little in the way of reliable reference material about Puerto Rico or Puerto Ricans, the books do provide

valuable insights into the present state of children's book publishing. Assembled as a group, these books can best be used as primary source material for a course on the nature and scope of racism and sexism inherent in American society today. ■



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is published quarterly by the  
Council on Interracial Books for  
Children, Inc., 29 West 15th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10011



# The Colonialist Mentality: Distortions and Omissions In Children's History Books

By Irma Garcia

The study that follows is based on a review of the so-called trade or supplemental reading texts frequently used in history and social science classes to fill the gaps left by standard history texts. Puerto Rico is notoriously invisible in standard history texts. A survey of the standard classroom histories shows that nearly always Puerto Rico is not even worthy of a full sentence, and generally it appears only as a map reference. Meanwhile, how are Puerto Ricans treated in children's trade or supplemental readers, which devote entire books to the subject?

In the article below the twelve books available in English that purport to tell the history of Puerto Rico are analyzed. All the books are published by major book publishers and appear on the list of 100 Books on page 4. They are referred to in the article below by the name of the authors. These are the twelve books:

Bowen, J. David, *The Island of Puerto Rico* (Lippincott); Brau, M. M., *Island in the Crossroads* (Doubleday); Colorado, Antonio J., *The First Book of Puerto Rico* (Watts); Kurtis, Arlene Harris, *Puerto Ricans: From Island to Mainland* (Messner); Manning, Jack, *Young Puerto Rico* (Dodd); Masters, Robert V., *Puerto Rico in Pictures* (Sterling); McGuire, Edna, *Puerto Rico: Bridge to Freedom* (Macmillan); Norris, Marianna, *Father and Son for Freedom* (Dodd); Reynolds, Mack, *Puerto Rican Patriot* (Macmillan); Rollins, Frances, *Getting to Know Puerto Rico* (Coward); Sterling, Philip & Maria Brau, *The Quiet Rebels* (Doubleday); Tuck, Jay Nelson & Norma Coolen Vergara, *Heroes of Puerto Rico* (Fleet).

The twelve history books about Puerto Rico are written from a colonial standpoint. They continue the colonialist mentality (1) by constantly emphasizing the smallness of the island and the docility of its people, (2) by idealizing conditions in Puerto Rico and its relationship with the United States, and (3) by ignoring or misinterpreting Puerto Rico's tradition of struggle for independence.

The books describe Puerto Rico from the classical Anglo-American point of view: Puerto Rico, a story of oppression under Spain, a story of success under the U.S. All too often the authors distort history, leaving out major controversial events and minimizing the importance of others.

## Indians as Passive

Without exception, the books stress the assumed passivity of the Taino Indians. Here is how the authors describe the Tainos: "easy-going," "lacking in fierceness," "carefree," "gentle," "sweet and gentle," "not very energetic."

None of the books mentions the fact that the Tainos were a heroic people who had stopped the advance of the Carib Indians in their conquest of the Antilles. This was long before the "discovery" of Puerto Rico by Columbus. In addition, the authors assume that it is correct to judge the Taino culture by white European values.

At first most Tainos submitted to the Spaniards because they thought that the white men were gods. When the Spaniards' cruelty became unbearable, the Tainos rebelled by escaping to the mountains or by committing suicide. In 1511, word got around that the Indians or the neighboring island of Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti) had killed Spaniards. The Tainos decided to make an experi-

ment. They drowned the conquistador Diego Salcedo in a river and watched him for three days so as to be sure that he was not immortal. (The Puerto Rican writer René Marqués has narrated this incident in an excellent short story, *Three Men by the River*.)

Confident now that the white men were mortal, the Tainos launched an island-wide uprising, but their weapons of arrows, clubs and hatchets could not compete against the arms of the Spanish nor against the Spaniards' horses and hunting dogs. Then the Tainos formed an alliance with the Caribs and in 1511 fought two more battles—at Yauco and Yagueca. In the last battle, their chief Agueybana was killed. The Tainos never recovered from this blow.

Most of the authors dismiss the Tainos in a sentence or paragraph or two. Brau devotes two pages to them, but she writes from the point of view of the conquistadors. The killing of Tainos by the Spaniards is justified, but when Spaniards are killed, it is a "massacre."

None of the books grant the Taino culture dignity. They compare the Tainos to the warlike Caribs, who are considered "superior." The books also neglect Taino contributions to Puerto Rican culture. Bowen and Brau do mention a few in passing, but there is no appreciation of how significant the Taino heritage is to Puerto Ricans. (For missing facts on the heritage left us by the Tainos, two children's books not published by U.S. firms are available. These are Ricardo Alegría's *History of the Indians of Puerto Rico* and *Events in the History of Puerto Rico* by Pablo Figueroa et al.

## African Heritage Missing

The authors of the books published by U.S. firms ignore Puerto Rico's African heritage. They light-

ly gloss over the Spanish trade of African slaves, and they fail to mention any of the six major slave uprisings that occurred during the Spanish colonial regimes. Puerto Ricans are a fusion of Indian, Spanish and African. By emphasizing the Spanish component and by under-reporting the non-white heritage, the books leave the reader with a distorted impression of reality. (For information on the African contribution to Puerto Rican culture, see Juan Angel Silén, *Hacia una vision positiva del puertorriqueño*, and Ricardo E. Alegría's *Discovery, Conquest and Colonization of Puerto Rico*.)

## Spanish Colonialism

All the books present Spanish colonialism for what it was while depicting Anglo-American colonialism as "benevolent."

The 19th century is seen as a century of oppression, illiteracy and docility, and the claim is even made that during this period Puerto Rico was without newspapers, cultural societies or political organizations. This is totally false. Puerto Rico's political and cultural organizations and Puerto Rican writers were active from the very beginning of the 19th century, and it was during this century that the Puerto Rican national character became truly a fusion of Spaniard, Indian and African. The cultural and political societies were not continuous, for repression by the government in Spain was strong. The organizations were dispersed time and again because they represented the liberal or independence point of view.

When Latin American colonies started to rebel against the mother

## American Imperialism

As can be expected, the authors see the next important event in our history—the Spanish American War (1898)—as the beginning of the end of all our problems. Bowen admits that the years following the U.S. takeover were not happy ones for Puerto Rico, and he refers to this period as "the imperialism of neglect." Brau sees the U.S. occupation as superior to the Spanish occupation, but she is the only author to question why the U.S. granted sovereignty to Cuba and not to Puerto Rico.

Again the books present the illusion of Puerto Ricans as a passive people. The books fail to explain why Puerto Rico so readily accepted the U.S. takeover. True, many Puerto Ricans "smiled back at the American troops." Even Muñoz Rivera, head of Puerto Rico's autonomous government (granted by Spain in 1897 after years of struggle) welcomed the Americans. Why? Because at the moment the people believed the U.S. would grant them the kind of government that would eventually lead to independence. What lay ahead for Puerto Rico was a form of government more oppressive than the autonomous charter granted by Spain's government.

Until 1917 the U.S. exerted absolute political and economic control over the island. To silence growing discontent, the U.S. Congress passed the Jones Act in 1917, granting Puerto Ricans the right to elect their own legislature if they became U.S. citizens. By the Act, Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens unless they signed a document refusing it.

Here are sample quotes from the



The Second Indian Offensive from *Events in the History of Puerto Rico* (Research for Urban Education)

country early in the 1800's, Spain made changes in her policy toward Puerto Rico—and at the same time toward Cuba. Realizing that her two "most loyal colonies" might also fight for independence, Spain allowed the islanders to send representatives to the Spanish court. After 1815, a series of measures to develop Puerto Rico's economy were enacted. At the same time, Spain gave absolute powers to the governor to end all insurrections. "Perfumed imperialism" made its debut on Puerto Rican history.

books about this period of our history: "North Americans were not accustomed to being responsible for others and did not know how to go about it." . . . "With all good will perhaps, the U.S. was trying to impose its culture on Puerto Rico." . . . "The people of Puerto Rico are proud that they are American citizens."

## Bootstrap: Success for Whom?

All the books accept the next phase of U.S. economic policy called "Operation Bootstrap" as a glowing

success. Unmentioned are such realities as these: 80 per cent of the Puerto Rican economy is now controlled by U.S. corporations; Puerto Rico must now import more than 90 per cent of the goods it consumes; and the U.S. has a monopoly on Puerto Rican commerce, both export and import. Prices of many goods and basic necessities in Puerto Rico are higher than in New York or other American cities. Yet one quarter of all Puerto Rican families live on \$1.37 a day, and the average income of Puerto Ricans is half of what is earned by citizens in Mississippi, the poorest state in the U.S. As prices have climbed because of inflation, and as industrialization has slackened off at an alarming rate, more and more Puerto Ricans are getting poorer. The prosperity that all the American history books write about just is not there.

Just as the Spaniards had attempted to institute some economic improvements while conducting political repression—so the United States has done with Operation Bootstrap.

The independence movement has a long tradition in Puerto Rico. Originating in the Taino struggles against the Caribs, it gained momentum against the Spaniards and continues—at an accelerating tempo—against the U.S. It is amusing to see authors extol the struggle for independence when it is directed against the Spaniards yet ignore or downgrade the struggle when it is directed against the U.S.

The books treat the leader of the Nationalist Movement, Pedro Albizu Campos, with a striking lack of objectivity.

Albizu Campos was one of the few Puerto Ricans to attend Harvard University Law School. He graduated with the highest honors and went on to become the recognized leader and hero of the Nationalist Party. Here is how the U.S. history books treat Albizu Campos. His name is not mentioned by Colorado, Masters or Rollins. He is belittled by Tuck and Vergara and by Kurtis. He is denounced for violent tactics by Brau. And he is labeled a fanatic by Bowen and a paranoid by Norris. One may well wonder how the authors would treat Albizu Campos if Spain, not the U.S. were the oppressors of Puerto Rico today.

Individually and as a group, the books serve as an effective tool for continuing the U.S. domination of Puerto Rico. They not only rationalize the interference of the U.S. government and U.S. industry in Puerto Rico but also ensure that yet another generation is kept ignorant of the facts. ■

## About the Author

Irma Garcia, who taught in the schools of Puerto Rico, is now an instructor of bilingual languages of the Puerto Rican Studies Department at Lehman College in New York.



## THE 100 BOOKS: A COMPLETE LISTING

ANGELITA Wendy Kesselman/Norma Holt (photo) 1970 Hill & Wang  
 ANTONIO'S WORLD John Figueroa/Sam Morales 1970 Hill & Wang  
 AROUND ANOTHER CORNER Emily Hearn/Edward Malsberg 1971 Garrard  
 BARTO TAKES THE SUBWAY Barbara Brenner/Sy Katzoff (photo) 1961 Knopf  
 BASEBALL FLYHAWK Matt Christopher/Foster Caddell 1963 Little, Brown  
 THE BOY WHO WOULDN'T TALK Lois Kalb Bouchard/Ann Grifalconi 1969 Doubleday  
 CANDITA'S CHOICE Mina Lewiton/Howard Simon 1959 Harper  
 CARLITO'S WORLD Veronica Nash/David K. Stone 1969 McGraw-Hill  
 CARMEN Bill Binzen/Bill Binzen (photo) 1969 Coward  
 CASA MEANS HOME Nardi R. Campion/Rocco Negri 1970 Holt  
 CHITO Peter Burchard/Katrina Thomas (photo) 1969 Coward  
 CITY HIGH CHAMPIONS William Heuman 1969 Dodd  
 CITY HIGH FIVE William Heuman 1964 Dodd  
 THE CLUBHOUSE Peggy Mann/Peter Burchard 1969 Coward  
 THE DAY LUIS WAS LOST Edna Barth/Lillian Obligado 1971 Little, Brown  
 DEAR UNCLE CARLOS Seymour Reit/Sheldon Brody (photo) 1969 McGraw-Hill  
 DISCOVERING PUERTO RICO Natalie Nelson/(photo) 1970 New Dimensions  
 DOÑA FELISA Marianna Norris/(photo) 1969 Dodd  
 DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY Caroline Crane 1970 Random House  
 EMILIO'S SUMMER DAY Miriam Anne Bourne/Ben Shecter 1966 Harper  
 ENRIQUE Pablo Figueroa/Bill Negron 1970 Hill & Wang  
 EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF PUERTO RICO Pablo Figueroa/Samuel E. Morales 1967 Research for Urban Education  
 FATHER AND SON FOR FREEDOM Marianna Norris/(photo) 1968 Dodd  
 THE FIRST BOOK OF PUERTO RICO Antonio J. Colorado/(photo) 1965 (rev. 1972) Watts  
 FRIDAY NIGHT IS PAPA NIGHT Ruth A. Sonneborn/Emily A. McCully 1970 Viking  
 GANG GIRL H. Samuel Fleischman/Shirley Walker 1967 Doubleday  
 GARBAGE CAN CAT Victor Sharoff/Howard N. Watson 1969 Westminster  
 GETTING TO KNOW PUERTO RICO Frances Rollins/Haris Petie 1967 (rev. 1969) Coward  
 THE GIRL FROM PUERTO RICO Hila Colman 1961 Morrow  
 THE GREEN SONG Doris Troutman Plenn/Paul Galdone 1954 McKay  
 A GUY CAN BE WRONG Barbara Rinkoff/Harold James 1970 Crown  
 HABLAMOS! PUERTO RICANS SPEAK Henrietta Yurchenco/Julia Singer (photo) 1971 Praeger  
 HERE I AM! Virginia Olsen Baron, ed./Emily Arnold McCully 1969 Dutton  
 HEROES OF PUERTO RICO Jay Nelson Tuck & Norma Coolen Vergara/(photo) 1969 Fleet  
 I AM FROM PUERTO RICO Peter Buckley/Peter Buckley (photo) 1971 Simon & Schuster  
 I AM HERE (YO ESTOY AQUÍ) Rose Blue/Moneta Barnett 1971 Watts  
 ISLAND IN THE CROSSROADS M. M. Brau/Herbert Steinberg 1968 Doubleday  
 THE ISLAND OF PUERTO RICO J. David Bowen/(photo) 1968 Lippincott  
 JOSÉ'S CHRISTMAS SECRET Joan M. Lexau/Don Bolognese 1963 Dial  
 JUAN BOBO AND THE QUEEN'S NECKLACE Pura Belpré/Christine Price 1962 Warne  
 MAGDALENA Louisa R. Shotwell/Lilian Obligado 1971 Viking  
 MARIA Joan M. Lexau/Ernest Crichlow 1964 Dial  
 MARÍA AND RAMÓN G. Warren Schloat, Jr./G. Warren Schloat, Jr. (photo) 1966 Knopf  
 MIGUEL'S MOUNTAIN Bill Binzen/Bill Binzen (photo) 1968 Coward  
 MIRA! MIRA! Dawn C. Thomas/Harold L. James 1970 Lippincott

MONCHO AND THE DUKES Eleanor Hull/Bernard Case 1964 Friendship Press  
 THE MUSICAL PALM TREE Robert Barry/Robert Barry 1965 McGraw-Hill  
 MY DOG IS LOST Ezra Jack Keats & Pat Cherr 1959 T. Y. Crowell  
 MY HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE Toby Talbot/Robert Weaver 1970 Cowles  
 MY UPS AND DOWNS IN BASEBALL Orlando Cepeda & Charles Einstein 1968 Putnam  
 THE NOONDAY FRIENDS Mary Stolz/Louis S. Glanzman 1965 Harper  
 OTÉ Pura Belpré/Paul Galdone 1969 Pantheon  
 THE PARSONAGE PARROT Jean Bothwell/Pamela Baldwin-Ford 1969 Watts  
 THE PEOPLE DOWNSTAIRS & OTHER CITY STORIES Rhoda Bacmeister/Paul Galdone 1964 Coward  
 PEPPER. A PUERTO RICAN MON-GOOSE James Ralph Johnson/James Ralph Johnson 1967 McKay  
 PEREZ AND MARTINA Pura Belpré/Carlos Sanchez M. 1961 Warne  
 THE PIRATE OF PUERTO RICO Lee Cooper/David Stone 1972 Putnam  
 A PRESENT FROM ROSITA Celeste Edell/Elton C. Fax 1952 Messner (out of print—available as paperback, see below)

### THE LEAST OFFENSIVE OF THE 100 BOOKS

FICTION: *Angelita* (age 5-10); *Magdalena* (10-14); *Don't Look at Me that Way* (12 and up); *Santiago* (5-10); *I Am from Puerto Rico* (10 and up); the first story, "A Day for Antonio," in *Antonio's World* (12 and up).  
 HISTORY: *Events in the History of Puerto Rico* (12 and up).  
 HISTORICAL FICTION: *The Pirate of Puerto Rico* (8-12).  
 BILINGUAL EARLY READERS: *What Do I Do?* (4-7); *What Do I Say?* (4-7).  
 MODERN FOLKTALES: *The Green Song* (8-12); *The Violet Tree* (8-12).  
 FOLKTALES: *The Three Wishes* (8 and up); *The Tiger and the Rabbit* (8 and up).  
 DOCUMENTARIES: *Hablamos!* (12 and up).

PUERTO RICAN PATRIOT Mack Reynolds/Arthur Shilstone 1969 Macmillan  
 PUERTO RICANS: FROM ISLAND TO MAINLAND Arlene Harris Kurtis/(photo) 1969 Messner  
 PUERTO RICO: BRIDGE TO FREEDOM Edna McGuire/(photo) 1963 Macmillan  
 PUERTO RICO IN PICTURES Robert V. Masters, ed./(photo) 1969 Sterling  
 THE QUIET REBELS Philip Sterling & Maria Brau/Tracy Sugarman 1968 Doubleday  
 RAMÓN AND THE PIRATE GULL Robert Barry/Robert Barry 1971 McGraw-Hill  
 RAMÓN OF PUERTO RICO Frances H. Kohan & Truda T. Weil/Herbert Townsend 1964 Noble  
 ROBERTO CLEMENTE: BATTING KING Arnold Hano 1968 Putnam  
 ROSA-TOO-LITTLE Sue Felt/Sue Felt 1950 Doubleday  
 ROSARIA Susan Thaler/Genia 1967 McKay  
 SANTIAGO Pura Belpré/Symeon Shimin 1969 Warne  
 SEVEN IN A BED Ruth A. Sonneborn/Don Freeman 1968 Viking  
 THE SEVENTEENTH STREET GANG Emily Cheney Neville/Emily McCully 1966 Harper  
 THE SILVER CART Irving Sloane/Irving Sloane (photo) 1971 Random House  
 THE SPIDER PLANT Yetta Speevack/Wendy Watson 1965 Atheneum

THE STREET KIDS Herbert Danska/Herbert Danska 1970 Knopf  
 THE STREET OF THE FLOWER BOXES Peggy Mann/Peter Burchard 1966 Coward  
 A SURPRISE FOR CARLOTTA Nellie Burchardt/Ted Lewin 1971 Watts  
 THAT BAD CARLOS Mina Lewiton/Howard Simon 1964 Harper  
 THREE CAME RIDING Ellsworth Newcomb/Cristina F. Christensen 1964 Norton  
 THE THREE WISHES Ricardo E. Alegria/Lorenzo Homar 1969 Harcourt  
 THE TIGER AND THE RABBIT & OTHER TALES Pura Belpré/Tomie de Paola 1965 Lippincott  
 TINO Marlene Fanta Shyer/Janet Palmer 1969 Random House  
 TOMÁS TAKES CHARGE Charlene Joy Talbot/Reisie Lonette 1966 Lothrop  
 A TRAINFUL OF STRANGERS Eleanor Hull/Joan Sandin 1968 Atheneum  
 TRES CASAS TRES FAMILIAS Edna Beiler/Ezra Jack Keats 1964 Friendship Press  
 TWENTY-ONE CHILDREN Virginia H. Ormsby/Virginia H. Ormsby 1957 Lippincott  
 TWO AND ME MAKES THREE Roberta Greene/Paul Galdone 1970 Coward  
 TWO BLOCKS APART: JUAN GONZALES AND PETER QUINN Charlotte Leon Mayerson, ed./(photo) 1965 Holt  
 THE VIOLET TREE Doris Troutman Plenn/Johannes Troyer 1962 Farrar, Straus  
 THE WAY IT IS John Holland, ed./(photo) 1969 Harcourt  
 A WEEK IN HENRY'S WORLD Inger McCabe/Inger McCabe (photo) 1971 Macmillan  
 A WEEK IN LEONORA'S WORLD Eliot Elisofon/Eliot Elisofon (photo) 1971 Macmillan  
 WHAT DO I DO? Norma Simon/Joe Lasker 1969 Whitman  
 WHAT DO I SAY? Norma Simon/Joe Lasker 1967 Whitman  
 WHAT IS A BIRTHDAY CHILD? Ruth M. Jaynes/Harvey Mandlin (photo) 1967 Bowmar  
 WHAT'S WRONG WITH JULIO? Virginia H. Ormsby/Virginia H. Ormsby 1965 Lippincott  
 WHEN CARLOS CLOSED THE STREET Peggy Mann/Peter Burchard 1969 Coward  
 WILLIAM, ANDY AND RAMÓN Hortense Jones/Peter Buckley (photo) 1966 Holt  
 THE WORLD OF CARLOS William Hairston/George Ford 1967 Putnam  
 YOUNG PUERTO RICO Jack Manning/Jack Manning (photo) 1962 Dodd



from *Antonio's World* by John Figueroa (Hill & Wang)

Of the 100 titles, the following are available in inexpensive paperback: ANTONIO'S WORLD (Random-Singer), DISCOVERING PUERTO RICO (New Dimensions), ENRIQUE (Random-Singer), THE GIRL FROM PUERTO RICO (Dell), HERE I AM! (Bantam), ISLAND IN THE CROSSROADS (Zenith), MONCHO AND THE DUKES (Friendship), THE NOONDAY FRIENDS (Grosset & Dunlap), PALANTE (McGraw-Hill), A PRESENT FROM ROSITA (Washington Square Press), PUERTO RICO IN PICTURES (Sterling), THE QUIET REBELS (Zenith-Doubleday), THE SPIDER PLANT (Washington Square Press), THE STREET OF THE FLOWER BOXES (Archway), TWO BLOCKS APART: JUAN GONZALES AND PETER QUINN (Avon), A WEEK IN HENRY'S WORLD (Macmillan), and A WEEK IN LEONORA'S WORLD (Macmillan).

## RELEVANT LITERATURE FOR CLASSROOM USE

### Selected Short Stories, Poems and Dramas by Modern Puerto Rican Writers

For teachers and librarians who would like to add Puerto Rican literature to their lesson plans and bookshelves, a number of contemporary poems, short stories and dramas from the last three decades appear in English (or English translations) and can be used to advantage by students in upper elementary grades and junior and senior high school. These are listed below with the publishers or other source.

*Down These Mean Streets*, by Piri Thomas, is the well-known, tell-it-like-it-is account of the author's life in East Harlem (paperback, New American Library). *Savior, Savior Hold My Hand*, to be published by Doubleday in September 1972, is the sequel to *Down These Mean Streets*.

The protest poems of Pedro Pietri, a talented young poet who lives in New York, are available on record (Discos Coqui). Almost all the poems are in English. The record, "Pedro Pietri and Casa Puerto Rico," is \$3 plus mailing and is distributed in New York by Casa Puerto Rico, 106 E. 14th St., New York, N.Y. 10003. Pietri's poems have also appeared in the newspaper *Palante*, and one of his major poems, "Puerto Rican Obituary," is included in the McGraw-Hill book, *Palante, Young Lords Party*.

Felipe Luciano, a young New York poet whose poems have appeared in *Palante*, is also represented in a new anthology, *Black Spirits—A Festival of New Black Poets in America* (Random House).

### BOOKS NOT REALLY ABOUT PUERTO RICANS

The following books erroneously appear on a number of "recommended" lists about Puerto Ricans. The books are actually about other Third World people and for this reason are excluded from the 100 Books: *Especial Rosita*, *Juan Marichal*, *Little League Amigo*, *Mystery of the Fat Cat*, *Ramón Makes a Trade*, *Santiago* (by Ann Nolan Clark), *Sea Beach Express*.

These books appear on "recommended" lists about Puerto Ricans but are actually about animals and are therefore excluded from the 100 Books: *The Little Red Hen*, *The Tiger!*, *Señor Baby Elephant*, *The Wise Rooster*.

These books appear on "recommended" lists about Puerto Ricans but portray Puerto Ricans in only minor or peripheral roles: *The Noonday Friends*, *The People Downstairs and Other City Stories*, *Seventeenth Street Gang*, *The Street Kids*, *Two and Me Makes Three*, *Parsonage Parrot*.

*Papo Got His Gun and Snaps*, by Victor Hernandez Cruz, are books of relevant poetry (Random House). Victor Hernandez Cruz grew up in New York City on the Lower East Side and now teaches at Lehman College.

Another young New York poet is Jesus Papoleto Melendez. He teaches junior high school students poetry in a workshop under the auspices of the Teachers and Writers Collaborative. Melendez' first book of poems, *Have You Seen Liberation?*, is privately published. For information write to Jesus Papoleto Melendez at 1420 College Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10456. His second book of poems, *Street Poetry*, will be published in late May by Barlenmir House Publishers, Bronx, N.Y.

Several excellent short stories have been translated and appeared in the *San Juan Review*. This was an English language magazine that was published from February 1964 through October 1966. The author Pedro Juan Soto, who translated several of the short stories, was the literature editor. Many libraries have back copies of the *Review*, and a complete set is available at the New York Public Library.

Among the translations that appeared in the *San Juan Review* were two stories by the renowned René Marqués—"Purification on Cristo Street" (August 1965) and "Three Men by the River" (March 1964), a short story about the famous Taino Indian experiment. Pedro Juan Soto is represented by several of his stories from *Spiks*—"Champs" (October 1965), "Scribblings" (December 1965) and "The Innocents" (September 1965). Translated from *Terrazzo*, by Abelardio Díaz Alfaro, are two short stories that are well-known throughout Puerto Rico—"Josco" (May 1964) and "Peyo Mercé English Instructor" (June 1965), the hilarious story of a Puerto Rican instructor who has been ordered to teach his students from a United States reader.

"There's a Little Black Boy in the Water" (April 1964), by José Luis Gonzáles, is the story of a slum child who leaps into the water after his own reflection and drowns. The first issue of the *San Juan Review* carried "Grandma's Wake" (February 1964), by Emilio Díaz Valcárcel, a humorous story as narrated by a young Puerto Rican boy about his grandmother's "wake." Two other stories by Valcárcel, who was one of the first Puerto Rican writers to depict the confusion and trauma suffered by Puerto Rican soldiers in the U.S. army, appeared in the *San Juan Review*—"Black Sun" (October 1964) and "Damian Sanchez, G.I."

The bilingual poems of Jaime Carrero, a young writer who was raised in New York and now teaches



at the Inter-American University in Puerto Rico, were included in two issues of the *San Juan Review*—"Neo-Rican Lessons" (June 1966) and "Neorriqueño" (April 1965).

In drama, two plays by René Marqués can be read by junior and senior high school students. "La Carreta," translated into English as "The Ox-Cart" (Charles Scribner), is the classic story of a rural family who migrates to San Juan and New York. (This play has been performed in Puerto Rico, Europe and recently in New York by The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, directed by Miriam Colon.) Also by Marqués and written in English is the play "Palm Sunday" (Editorial Cultural—see listing of Puerto Rican publishers, page 14), the drama of the Ponce Massacre of Nationalists in 1937.

Educators seriously concerned about giving their students relevant and valid literature about the Puerto Rican Experience will want to use many of the works discussed above as an alternative to the 100 books that the Council studied. In addition, all the works discussed above and a number of other short stories, poems and dramas by Puerto Rican writers can be read in Spanish by intermediate and advanced language classes.

For too long, the works of Puerto Rican writers have been invisible—invisible due to neglect and Puerto Rico's colonial status. If it had not been for the *San Juan Review*, there would be virtually no Puerto Rican literature in translation. Readers will be interested to know that several of the short stories that appeared in the *San Juan Review* from 1964–1966 will appear imminently in an anthology in English to be published by the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (see listing under "Where It's At" on this page). The anthology will include short stories by Emilio S. Beloval, Abelardo Díaz Alfaro, José Luis Gonzáles, René Marqués, Pedro Juan Soto and Emilio Díaz Valcárcel.

Also among books coming out is a volume of poetry—an original paperback titled *The Puerto Rican Poets* (Bantam). The latter will be published in August 1972. Edited by Ivan Silén and Alfredo Natilla, it is bilingual and includes poems from the turn of the century to the present. ■

#### PUBLISHERS, TAKE NOTE: INTRODUCING B·A·T LITHO

This issue of *Interracial Books for Children* is printed by the Puerto Rican firm B·A·T Litho Corp., 37 East 18th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10003 Tel: 982-8120. The printing firm has plate-making facilities on the premises and eight presses, including two 23 x 35 Miller offsets and one 20-1/2 x 28-3/8 Heidelberg offset. Publishers, please take note: Use this Bulletin as a sample of B·A·T's printing work.

## Children's Books from Puerto Rico: An Annotated Listing

The following is a list of books written by Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico for Puerto Rican children. They were all published within the last five years. Publication costs for many of the books were paid out of pocket by the authors (this fact is noted below as "privately published"). None of the books were printed in Puerto Rico, but a number of titles to appear in 1972-73 are planned as all-Puerto Rican operations and will use printers in Puerto Rico. Many of the books are flawed by printers' errors, misspellings, etc., but these are very minor. Books available in English editions are indicated when the translated title appears within parentheses following the Spanish title. All the books were originally published from Puerto Rico with the exception of the *ABC de Puerto Rico* (Troutman Press, Sharon, Conn.).

ALEGRÍA, RICARDO E.

*Historia de nuestros indios*, 1968 (*History of the Indians of Puerto Rico*, 1970), privately published as part of a series titled *Colección de Estudios Puertorriqueños*, San Juan. This book was the first to bring to Puerto Rican children facts about their Taino Indian heritage. It is written from a rather traditionalist standpoint, however, and the references to "our Indians" are patronizing.

*Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización de Puerto Rico*, 1968 (*Discovery, Conquest and Colonization of Puerto Rico*, 1969), privately published as part of the series *Colección de Estudios Puertorriqueños*. This book gives more information on the early history of Puerto Rico than any other history book written for young people. Some facts about the African heritage—facts missing in school texts—are presented. The book has the drawbacks mentioned in the entry above.

*Cuentos folklóricos de Puerto Rico*, 1967. Illustrations by Rafael Seco. Privately published. An expansion of this book was published in the U.S. by Harcourt, Brace & World as *The Three Wishes: A Collection of Puerto Rican Folktales*, 1969, with illustrations by Lorenzo Homar. The latter book won the 1970 internationally renowned Biennial of Illustrations, Bratislava, Yugoslavia, for the illustration of the folktale *The Castle of No Return*. The *New York Times* review of the book made no mention of the illustrations. Lorenzo Homar is one of Puerto Rico's top illustrators.

DÁVILA, VIRGILIO

*Pipo—Poemas Infantiles*, 1968. Illustrated by Luis Herrero Cabello. Published by Editorial Cordillera. The poems "Andresito" and "Mi Conducta" were well liked by the reviewers, but the other poems in this book were considered to be too traditionally moralistic and pedagogical for relevance to children of today.

DÍAZ MONTERO, ANÍBAL

*Pedruquito y sus Amigos*, 1967 (*Young Peter and His Friends*, 1969). Privately published. Also *La Biblioteca Encantada*, 1967. Privately published. Neither of these books have to do directly with Puerto Rican cultural heritage or ethnic identity. Both books are stories set outside Puerto Rico. The first is about a boy's imaginary adventures with animals in distant lands. The second also has animal tales and stories about famous persons, among these, Charles A. Lindbergh and Babe Ruth.

FELICIANO MENDOZA, ESTER

*Nanas*, 1970. Published by Editorial Universitaria (University of Puerto Rico Press). The author has a solid reputation as a writer of children's poetry. *Nanas* is a book of poems that do not directly encompass Puerto Rican themes, but they have a universal appeal and the illustrations are charming.

NIEVES FALCÓN, LUIS, editor

*Fabián*. Fotografía por Ángel Aponte. Texto de Wenceslao Serra Deliz. Diseño gráfico: Rafael Rivera Rosa. Published through Editorial Edil, 1968. This book won high praise from the Council reviewers. It depicts

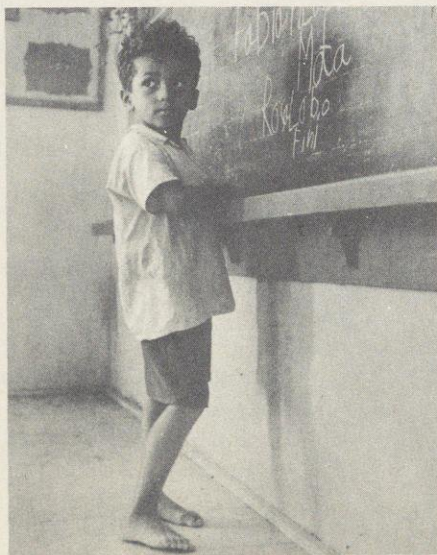


Illustration at left is the controversial photograph of barefooted Fabián which caused cancellation of series of twelve books that were to have been written expressly for Puerto Rican children. See entry immediately above for Nieves Falcón.

in photographs the life of a young boy in rural Puerto Rico. What it lacks in Madison Avenue slickness is more than made up for by authenticity and a mood only hinted at in the *100 Books* published in the U.S. This is the first of a series that was to have been created for their relevancy to a new Puerto Rican-oriented curriculum in the public schools. The present school administration took the book out of circulation and cancelled the series. The little boy photographed in the book was shown going to school in bare feet, and this was considered detrimental to "the image of the Commonwealth."

*Poemas y Colores*. Texto de Wenceslao Serra Deliz. Diseño gráfico: Rafael Rivera Rosa. Published privately through Editorial Edil, 1968. This is the second of the series mentioned in the entry above. It too was highly praised by the Council reviewers. All the color drawings are by Puerto Rican children, and the poems accompanying these were written in collaboration with young Puerto Ricans. (The motive of the series has been to create books *with*, not just *for*, children.) The poems, a schematic representation of the planned book series, show the contribution to Puerto Rican culture of Taino Indians, Spanish conquistadors and African slaves.

*Mi Música*. Texto: Wenceslao Serra Deliz. Diseño gráfico: Rafael Rivera Rosa. Privately published through Editorial Edil, but not yet available for distribution. This is a history of the development of music in Puerto Rico, portraying the instruments that Indian, Spanish and African have fused into one culture. Although the book has not yet been distributed, first copies have been seen by the Council. The books have been held up at the publisher because the Office of Economic Opportunity, which originally funded the series, withdrew support. The books were regarded as subversive to the Commonwealth, due to their heavy emphasis on strictly Puerto Rican, rather than American, culture. Arrangements have since been made with the new Puerto Rican publisher, Librería Internacional, to take over the series. The new publisher informs us that it is committed to publish all eleven titles originally intended for the series. This is great news. *U.S. publishers take note*: this is an all-Puerto Rican operation. The books are to be published *and* printed in Puerto Rico. Refrain from interfering.

DEL ROSARIO, RUBÉN

*ABC de Puerto Rico*. Poesía: Isabel Freire de Matos. Diseño y grabados: Antonio Martorell. Published by Troutman Press, Sharon, Conn. This is the one substantive title produced by an Anglo American publisher and considered by the Council reviewers, along with the Nieves Falcón books, as the most relevant books for Puerto Rican children available. It is 68 pages and highly priced at \$6.95 (as of December 1971), out of the reach of most parents. Nevertheless, the content is authentically Puerto Rican, and it suffers from none of the distortions, misused idioms, etc., characteristic of the books about Puerto Rico published in the U.S. The book was used in the public schools of Puerto Rico as a third grade reader but was withdrawn two years ago. The illustration accompanying the letter "P" depicts a small pitirre bird, often used as a symbol of Puerto Rico standing up to the United States. The picture is reproduced on page 1. ■

## WHERE IT'S AT: IMPORTANT SOURCES IN PUERTO RICO

**INSTITUTE OF CULTURE OF PUERTO RICO.** The Institute is directed by anthropologist and children's book author Ricardo Alegría. Government supported, the Institute publishes sociological, cultural and literary books—many are reprints—pamphlets, music albums and records. It also publishes a quarterly magazine on cultural affairs, *Revista*, priced at \$2.50. A 20-page catalog, listing all the works published by the Institute, is titled "Catalogo de Publicaciones y Discos" and is available by writing to Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, Oficina de Ventas, Apartado 4184, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00905.

**PUBLISHERS IN PUERTO RICO:** Editorial Edil, Editorial Cultural, Editorial Cordillera, Editorial Club La Prensa, Librería Internacional. These book publishers are described on page 14. When possible, order books directly from them. Money is desperately needed to expand Puerto Rican publishing operations. The Council on Interracial Books for Children has experienced highly efficient service when ordering directly from the publishers.

**SOCIETY OF PUERTO RICAN AUTHORS** (Sociedad de Autores Puertorriqueños). The Society, whose 100 members are writers and who often pay to print and distribute their own books, last year opened a small bookstore in San Juan. Members meet once a month to talk about ways of publicizing each other's works. A sixteen-page 1971 catalog of books by Society members and by some other Puerto Rican writers is available from the Society at Apartado 3983, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00903. ■



# Liberation Heroes and Heroines of Puerto Rico

## RAMON EMÉTERIO BETANCES

Born in Cabo Rojo, April 8, 1827. Died September 18, 1898.

Educated in France to be a medical doctor, he returned to Puerto Rico where he helped combat a cholera epidemic. His nationalist views and involvement in the abolitionist movement in Puerto Rico made him an enemy of the governors who exiled him on various occasions. From 1867 on, he went to New York and the Dominican Republic where he worked to raise money, arms and men for a Puerto Rican revolt against Spain. In 1868, the revolutionary planning bore its fruit in *El Grito de Lares*, the cry of independence raised in Lares. The republic of Puerto Rico was proclaimed, but the revolutionaries were unable to hold out against Spanish forces and were soon defeated. Betances returned to Paris where he lived the rest of his life. On his deathbed in 1898 he received word of the U.S. invasion of his island. "I don't want Puerto Rico to be a colony either under Spain or the United States," he said. "What is the matter with Puerto Ricans, that they don't revolt?"

## JULIO VIZCARRONDO

Born in San Juan, December 9, 1830. Died July 22, 1889.

A Black abolitionist, he was exiled from Puerto Rico at the age of 20. After four years in New York, he returned to Puerto Rico where he emancipated his own family's slaves. Founded a school shortly after his return for the daughters of poor families, writing the necessary textbooks himself. Also published a newspaper called *El Mercurio*. Again exiled in 1863 for his abolitionist views; in Spain he organized the Spanish Abolitionist Society and a magazine dedicated to expressing the Latin American voice in Spain. While still in Spain, he was elected by the citizens of Ponce, Puerto Rico, to represent their city in the Spanish Parliament.

## EUGENIO MARÍA DE HOSTOS

Born in Mayaguez, January 11, 1839. Died August 11, 1903.

Studied in Puerto Rico and in Spain. After several years of journalistic struggle in support of Spanish republicanism, he eventually moved to New York and openly es-

poused the cause of Cuban and Puerto Rican independence. Travelled to Chile in 1871, where he took part in the fight for the rights of the exploited Chinese laborers. An ardent supporter of the Antillean Confederacy of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo. Returned to Puerto Rico after the U.S. invasion and organized the League of Patriots. A prolific writer, many say the greatest Puerto Rico has had.

## LOLA RODRIGUEZ DE TIÓ

Born in San German, September 14, 1843. Died November 10, 1924.

Studied in Mayaguez. Partisan of the revolutionary movement organized by Betances, she wrote the words of *La Borriquetia*, most famous of Puerto Rico's revolutionary songs. Exiled several times for her political activities. One of the earliest known feminist leaders in Puerto Rico, she struggled for women's rights equally with Puerto Rican independence.

## ROSENDO MATIENZO CINTRÓN

Born in Luquillo, April 22, 1855. Died December 13, 1913.

Taken to Spain as a child where

he remained until completion of his studies in law. Returned to Puerto Rico in 1884 and became one of the principal leaders among the Autonomists. After the U.S. invasion, he was named President of the High Court of Ponce by General H. O. Davis. He is best remembered for his campaign to discourage Puerto Ricans from selling their lands to U.S. interests—a campaign that was disappointingly unsuccessful.

## PEDRO ALBIZU CAMPOS

Born in Ponce, September 12, 1894. Died April 21, 1965.

Leader of the modern Nationalist movement. Studied law at Harvard University, graduating with the highest honors. Active in the sugar cane and other strikes of the 1930's. Fought in courts the illegality of the U.S. takeover of Puerto Rico. President of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party after 1930. The motto by which he lived and died was "When tyranny is law, revolution is order."

## MARIANA BRACETTI

Born in Mayaguez, date unrecorded. Died 1904, date unrecorded.

A leader in the *El Grito de Lares* revolutionary movement and member of the *Junta Revolucionaria* formed during the 1868 uprising. She was known by her comrades as "Brazo de Oro" (golden arm) for her revolutionary zeal and was imprisoned for her active role in the struggle. Unfortunately, she is usually credited only for sewing the Lares flag designed by Eméterio Betances. Considerably more detail is recorded about Puerto Rican liberation heroes than about heroines.

## JOSÉ DE DIEGO

Born in Aguadilla, April 16, 1866. Died July 17, 1918.

Studied in Puerto Rico and in Spain, where he was a student of law at the University of Barcelona. Entered politics in 1891, laboring for Autonomy from Spain. Became a powerful champion of independence from the U.S., advocating Puerto Rico's union with Cuba and Santo Domingo to form the independent Antillean Confederacy. He was a public speaker of exceptional force and a prolific writer and poet.



Ramon Eméterio Betances



Julio Vizcarrondo



Lola Rodriguez de Tió



Eugenio María de Hostos



José de Diego



Mariana Bracetti



Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón



Pedro Albizu Campos

## LIBERATE YOUR LIBRARY

The following books purport to be about the history of Puerto Rico or sociological studies of Puerto Ricans, while really serving to further stereotypes of the Puerto Rican, and Council reviewers have found them insidious. Many of these books are used in schools of education, which increases their danger—teachers accepting erroneous material as factual cannot help but spread the misinformation in ever-widening circles.

*Albizu Campos: Puerto Rican Revolutionary* by Federico Ribes Tovar (Plus Ultra 1971). A deceptively attractive book because it deals with a subject not yet treated elsewhere with good photos and lists of Puerto Rican independence movements. But the text is ahistorical, badly written and the idiosyncratic product of an eccentric mind. The Page 6

author is neither Puerto Rican nor Spanish.

*La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty—San Juan and New York* by Oscar Lewis (Random House 1966). Roundly condemned by most Puerto Ricans as a sociological study generating misconceptions. For a detailed analysis, see *The Poor: A Culture of Poverty or a Poverty of Culture*, ed. by J. C. Winter (Erdman's, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1971).

*The Puerto Rican Heritage Encyclopedia* by Federico Ribes Tovar (Plus Ultra 1970). Three volumes. At present the only such reference work available in pseudo-encyclopedia format. The writing is slipshod, the books are unindexed, and their viewpoint is archaic. For further comment see the article by

Piri Thomas on the Editorial page of this Bulletin.

*Spanish Harlem: Anatomy of Poverty* by Patricia Cayo Sexton (Harper 1965). Filled with racist stereotypes derived from secondary sources and unfortunately used as a reference book in many schools of education.

### Suggested Reading

For a more honest interpretation of the Puerto Rican Experience, the Council suggests the following:

*Breve Historia de Puerto Rico* by Loida Figueroa (Editorial Edil—see listing of Puerto Rican publishers, page 3). Volume 1 (to 19th century) and Volume 2 (19th century to 1893) were both published in 1969; Volume 3 (1894 to 1922) is being written. A wordy but very detailed historical accounting.

*El Movimiento Libertador en la Historia de Puerto Rico* by Don Ramón Medina Ramírez (privately printed 1970; available through Casa Puerto Rico—see "Relevant Literature" article, page 4). An eyewitness account of the history of the modern Nationalist movement.

*Hablamos! Puerto Ricans Speak* by Henrietta Yurchenko (Praeger 1971). A documentary in which Puerto Ricans speak for themselves.

*Palante* by Michael Abramson and the Young Lords Party (McGraw-Hill 1971). The first book to be published on the Young Lords Party, with excellent photographs and interviews. Also suggested for young readers and classroom use.

*Puerto Rico: A Profile* by Kal Wagenheim (Praeger 1970) and *Puerto Rico: Freedom and Power*

*in the Caribbean* by Gordon Lewis (Harper 1963). These two handbooks are probably the best yet available for facts and dates.

*Puerto Rico, Una Interpretación Histórico-Social* by Manuel Maldonado Denis (Editorial Edil 1969). An eye-opening account of Spanish and American imperialism in Puerto Rico.

*Puerto Rico: Showcase of Suppression* (Centro Social Juan XXIII—see Information Clearinghouse, page 14). This packet of six monographs presents the social and economic realities of the island of Puerto Rico.

*We, the Puerto Rican People* by Juan Angel Silén (Monthly Review Press 1971). An interpretation of the Puerto Rican Experience by one of the new radical Puerto Rican writers.



# FEMINISTS LOOK AT THE 100 BOOKS

## *The Portrayal of Women in Children's Books on Puerto Rican Themes*

Compiled by Dolores Prida and Susan Ribner in collaboration with Edith Dávila, Irma Garcia, Carmen Puigdollers and Arlene Rivera.

from *Angelita* by Wendy Kesselman and Norma Holt (Hill & Wang)



Sexism might be defined as those attitudes and actions that relegate women to a secondary and inferior status in this society, and prevent them from developing into full human beings. Women are expected to find primary fulfillment in marriage and motherhood where they function as servants for other people rather than as people in their own right. A concept of women's mental and physical inferiority is the philosophical underpinning for male supremacy. Among other things, it excludes women from a wide range of occupational pursuits, and makes their value as human beings synonymous with their physical appearance and sex appeal.

Of the 100 books for and about Puerto Rican children analyzed in the Council study, boys are the main characters in thirty-two books of fantasy and fiction, while only eighteen books in this category portray girls as the central characters. This imbalance is an indication of the sexism that pervades the book publishing world. Publishers claim that books about girls are less profitable to produce because boys will not read them (while girls do read about boys). Boys as a rule stay away from books about girls because the authors create girl characters who are dull, uninteresting and unadventurous. Authors claim that they are only portraying the reality of femaleness but, as our study will show, this claim is untrue.

While oppressive conditions have undeniably maimed many girls and women, making them passive and adventureless, the books we are talking about are fictional, and in such books authors have the opportunity—and the obligation—to counteract centuries of literary abuse of the female sex by creating girls in all kinds of exciting roles and by breaking them out of their traditional confines.

The unfortunate finding of our study is that with only a few minor exceptions, the books repeat and reinforce the traditional female stereotypes. Very few of the Puerto Rican girls have any character at all, and their activities are dull. Mothers and other adult women are portrayed as similarly uninteresting. In fact, the non-Puerto Rican authors in depicting their misconceptions of Puerto Rican life—not one of the fiction books about girls was authored by a Puerto Rican—have circumscribed the female role all out of proportion to reality. Not only is the female role in the books more constricted than a comparable Anglo American girl's would be, but it is even more limited than the Puerto Rican female role is in actual fact. A Puerto Rican girl faced only with the prospects presented in these books might reasonably choose not to grow up at all.

from *Carmen* by Bill Binzen (Coward)



### Early Childhood Readers

The training necessary to mold the special female being starts at birth when girls are handled as if they are more passive and fragile than boys. By four and five years of age, their training for housewifery and motherhood has begun, as girls are taught at home how to help mother cook, clean and take care of baby. At school, during the first couple of grades, both girls and boys are taught how to read and write, but in other ways teachers and books start gearing girls toward the gentle "womanly arts" of doll and house playing, painting, sewing, etc., while the boys are encouraged to avoid these in favor of more active, adventuresome and challenging pursuits.

There are eight books about Puerto Rican girls in the four-to-seven-year-old category. They present no challenge in either text or illustration to the traditional rearing of young girls.

The eight nice, obedient Puerto Rican girls in these books help their mothers at home and do "female" activities at school. (Being Puerto Rican, they also learn English as a school activity.)

In six of the eight books, girls are pictured playing with dolls, and in three stories, dolls play a major role in the plot. While there is nothing objectionable about girls (or boys) playing with dolls, when it is done to the exclusion of all else, that is harmful. The dolls shown are blond

and fair-skinned, while their owners are usually brunette and dark-skinned.

At this young age, girls are often physically active—not yet concerned with the image of fragility that they will later be expected to project. In these eight books, however, the heroines are pictured in dresses, playing girls' games like hopscotch or jumprope. Not one girl, for example, is pictured in an active role in any way similar to the hero of *A Week in Henry's World*—constantly jumping off things, playing baseball, standing on his hands, and racing down streets.

A comparison with four-to-seven-year-old fictional boy characters in the "100 books" reveals in additional ways just how restricted the eight girls are. Not one girl takes a trip out of the neighborhood as does Barto in *Barto Takes the Subway*. Not one girl does anything as heroic as Miguel who "saves a mountain" for the neighborhood children in *Miguel's Mountain*. The authors have consciously restricted the lives of these Puerto Rican girls, even more than is true in real life.

### Intermediate Age Books

There are six books with heroines in the eight to twelve age range. Here are some of the stereotypical situations found in them:

- The girls give up dolls and begin to rely on girl friends and pets instead.

- School takes on increasing significance in their lives, and for a brief period they might excel in certain aspects of reading and writing (or in learning to speak English). It is permissible for girls to be smart at this age, as long as they begin to act as if they were less intelligent by the time they start dating boys.

- Fun activities portrayed are playing with girl friends, gardening, sewing, play-acting, and joining the girl scouts.

- The girls are homebodies. Rarely do they venture outside the home alone. Even in the company of others they do not go great distances away from home. They are kept busy helping their mothers clean and cook. They always follow the orders of their fathers.

- They are generally sweet, responsible, docile, nice.

Several additional stereotypes appear in the six books and seem to be tied directly to the authors' concept of female Puerto Ricanness.

- The authors have given four of the six girls older brothers who take care of them, make decisions for them, and order them around. The girls thereby become even more constricted in what they can do.

- These older boys are often called *hombrecito*—"little man"—by their families. They take over as head of the family in the father's absence. They order the mother around. No such importance is ever given the girls in the same way, and

no author ever challenges this concept.

- Fathers in these books are depicted as supreme commanders of their particular nuclear families. They are waited on and catered to. Their authoritarianism and leadership position is never challenged by the authors.

- While some feminists have recently complained that children's literature often brands the girl who likes physical activity as a "tomboy" (implying that she is acting like a boy instead of like a normal female), these books about Puerto Rican girls don't have even one "tomboy" in them. The authors have apparently decided that Puerto Rican girls uniformly don't go in for sports and other strenuous physical activities. All six of the heroines wear dresses at all times. (In reality, Puerto Rican girls do not wear dresses 100 per cent of the time.)

- Possibly because the girls are Puerto Rican, the authors feel compelled to have them be the smartest kids. Candita becomes the best new English speaker in her class (*Candita's Choice*). Rosita enters 6-1 (the top) class after she learns English (*A Present from Rosita*). Magdalena reaches an IGC (Intellectually Gifted Children) class (*Magdalena*). The racist implication is that when you're Puerto Rican you must be above average to prove yourself.

What are boys' activities at this age in the Puerto Rican fiction

books? They learn how to deep-sea dive (*I Am from Puerto Rico*); they camp out alone at Bear Mountain (*The Silver Cart*); and they go by themselves to Coney Island (*Antonio's World*). They secretly get jobs (*José's Christmas Secret*). They hide sisters in abandoned buildings and scavenge food for them (*Tomás Takes Charge*). They play basketball (*City High Five*), baseball (*Baseball Flyhawk*), chess (*A Guy Can Be Wrong*), and run clubhouses (*The Clubhouse*). Girls of this age are just not allowed any such exciting activity. Is it any wonder that boys don't want to read books about girls?

### Teenagers—Early and Late

There are two books about younger and two about older Puerto Rican teenagers. In the two early teenage books, the heroines become interested in boys and are strongly influenced by them. They make decisions according to what their boy friends think, and they take orders from them. As would be expected, appearance becomes more important.

The authors have done their own racist thing on the early teenage girls. At a time when girls of most backgrounds begin to exert a certain independence from home, the only action the authors see Puerto Rican girls engaged in is joining predatory gangs. To limit the alternatives for independent action as a female to

## A SPECIAL FEATURE

of the study "100 Children's Books About Puerto Ricans: A Study in Racism, Sexism and Colonialism" appearing in the Spring 1972 *Interracial Books for Children*, a quarterly bulletin of the Council on Interracial Books for Children, 29 West 15th St., New York, N.Y. 10011. Subscription: \$3 per year. Bulk rates for this feature available on request.



“deviant” behavior is a good example of the close affinity of sexism and racism.

The girls in the two late teenage books finally get down to where it's at—marriage and “career.” In the latter case, since the authors have made the girls “poor Puerto Ricans,” they are involved in supporting their families, yet they are relegated exclusively to very low positions in the job market, as waitresses and babysitters. “Careers” above this level are never seriously considered.

Of course, the books end with the girls planning marriage. While the author of *Don't Look at Me that Way* happily doesn't see marriage as her heroine's only purpose for being, it is nonetheless her destiny. No alternative is presented.

Males in the Puerto Rican fiction books for boys fare not much better than the girls. The boys are not concerned with romance in these books (*The World of Carlos* and *Moncho and the Dukes*), but being subject to racist attitudes of the authors, the boys all turn out to be juvenile delinquents. And at the same time, subject to the authors' sexist attitudes, the boys are more proficient than the girls in crime, and as gang leaders they tell the wayward girls what to do.

#### How Mothers Are Portrayed

Of the eighteen books, nine depict mothers exclusively as housewives; six are housewives who also work at low-skilled jobs in factories, hospitals or as cleaning ladies, and all cook, clean and mother after work. In two books no mother is depicted, and in one we don't know what the mother does.

What this says to a Puerto Rican girl is that if she decides to become a mother, the odds are close to 100 per cent that she will be a housewife or a combined housewife and low-income, low-skilled worker. Not a single alternative is presented. No group of people is so limited in role.

In addition, mothers are usually portrayed as characterless and vague, especially in stories where the father is present. (Magdalena's grandmother proves the one exception to this stereotype.) Mothers are also presented as weak. They are the ones who cling most to tradition (a weakness from the authors' point of view), who miss Puerto Rico the most (another weakness from the authors' point of view), and who have the most trouble adjusting to the United States (still another weakness from the authors' point of view).

These stereotypes are contrary to reality in which Puerto Rican mothers are so frequently strong figures in the home.

#### Other Adult Women

Are there no interesting, skilled, creative, dashing Puerto Rican women for young girls to dream about and emulate? Not in these books.

Take a look, for example, at the jobs assigned to the women who are

not mothers. There is not a single woman in all the eighteen books who is clearly defined as a Puerto Rican and who holds a position outside the home other than a low-skilled uninteresting job. A few possible Puerto Rican professionals appear in minor roles: Spanish-speaking Carolla Santos owns a dress store in *Rosaria*; a Spanish-speaking teachers' aide helps out in *I Am Here*; and the classroom teacher in *A Surprise for Carlotta* is named Mrs. Lopez, although there is no indication that she is anything other than Pure Americana. These are the only possible Puerto Rican professional or semi-professional women mentioned in the books. All Puerto Rican women neighbors and friends in these fiction books have jobs similar to the mothers.

Is this the reality for Puerto Rican women—the reality the authors and editors feel so compelled to write about? Hardly. The authors' middle class values keep them from discussing the true realities of ghetto life—the reality of drugs, the reality of prostitution, and all the other realities poor women are oppressed by every day. The authors' politics won't allow them to show the reality of the increasing number of Puerto Rican activist and revolutionary women. The authors' racism won't allow them to show Puerto Rican women as skilled professional lawyers, teachers, and doctors, few though these may be. And their racism and sexism and lack of imagination keep them from showing women in fantasy situations, as astronauts, Puerto Rican fairy-godmothers, or whatever.

A number of non-Puerto Rican professional women, however, are portrayed in the books: teachers, nurses, social workers, and librarians. One white girl wants to be a doctor (*Candita's Choice*); one white woman is a school principal (*Magdalena*); one Black woman is a judge (*Gang Girl*); one Black woman is a teacher's aide (*What Do I Do?*); and one Asian American woman is a teacher (*What Is a Birthday Child?*).

It is interesting to note that other than the principal, judge and would-be doctor, all these jobs are women's traditional “professional” roles—mostly service jobs and jobs dealing with young children. And in the fiction, they're minor walk-on parts at that (except for the teachers and the social workers who are constantly trying to take over for the Puerto Rican adult women).

The eighteen fictional books in which girls are the central characters are reviewed in the paragraphs that follow.

*The criteria used in the reviews that follow are not limited exclusively to the feminist viewpoint but include other criteria discussed in the lead article “100 Children's Books About Puerto Ricans: A Study in Racism, Sexism and Colonialism” on page 1 of this Bulletin. For a fuller understanding of these reviews and specific terms appearing therein, the reader is advised to consult the page 1 article.*

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD READERS

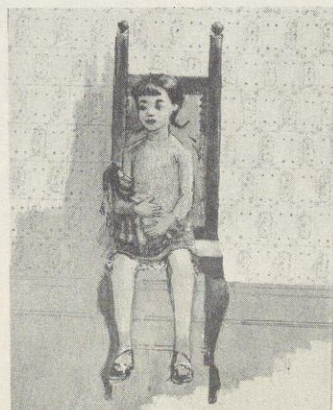
##### WHAT IS A BIRTHDAY CHILD?

by Ruth M. Jaynes, photos  
by Harvey Mandlin (Bowmar)  
and

##### DEAR UNCLE CARLOS

by Seymour Reit, photos  
by Sheldon Brody (McGraw-Hill)

These two early childhood readers are uninspiring Dick and Jane books with Puerto Rican characters. The first depicts the events that take place in a middle-class school on the birthday of five-year old Juanita (of undetermined Latin origin). Juanita does the following female sex-stereotyped activities: listens passively to singing, records and stories; cuts flowers from the beautiful outdoor garden; dresses up in adult women's clothes; plays with the big blond doll; and eats punch and cookies



from *Maria* by Joan M. Lexau and Ernest Crichlow (Dial)  
with her classmates.

In *Dear Uncle Carlos* (one of the three male-authored fictional books), the Puerto Rican girl, Wanda—also about five years old—writes a birthday letter with the help of her parents to an uncle in Puerto Rico. As usual, Spanish words are misspelled. “Feliz Cumpleaños” (Happy Birthday) is incorrectly spelled “Feliz Compleaños.” The book is unimaginatively done, and the child isn't even allowed to write her own letter, but some adult's imitation of a child's writing appears.

##### WHAT DO I DO?

by Norma Simon and  
Joe Lasker (Whiteman)

This book has the virtue of being the only one of the eighteen fictional books that is bilingual. Unfortunately, Spanish is given a secondary position by being put under the English in smaller print.

The book portrays with some humor and liveliness the events in the day of a young Puerto Rican girl (about five years old) who lives in a housing project and goes to school in a neighborhood that is mixed black, brown, and white (majority non-white).

Once again, there are gross mistakes in Spanish. For example, the heroine's name is Consuela. Consuelo is the correct spelling.

The book will win no feminist prize since nice, obedient Consuela does mostly “girl things”—helping with the baby at home, setting the table, etc. Physically, however, she is active, and one picture of her sprawling on the floor in school,

playing with a wagon, is good and unusual. For some unknown reason the father looks like Frankenstein, and for once, the housewife-mother looks realistically exhausted at the end of the day.

(In a companion bilingual book—*What Do I Say?*—the main character is a boy, and this book has more going for it. The Black school teacher is not an aide, as she is in *What Do I Do?*, and the Spanish text is, for a change, correct.)

##### CARMEN

by Bill Binzen (Coward)

Sex stereotyping is heavy in this ghetto-adjustment photograph book (male authored). Carmen (four or five years old) is the empty-headed female who has no inner resources for amusing herself on a rainy day. Her brother, of almost the same age, is shown absorbed in his cars, “as usual,” not at all troubled by the rain. Carmen needs externals to save her. As only a “female” would do, she puts on her brightest dress hoping to cheer herself up. Then she looks out the window and notices a new girl in a window across the street, to whom she proceeds to display her doll. Later the two girls meet on the street and play that girl's game, hopscotch. Next day they play together again, wearing their best dresses, with their dolls and Teddy bears.

There are also problems of story continuity in this book. The setting is a cold and rainy day in February, yet when the rain stops, the girls play outdoors in cotton dresses, without coats, on a dry pavement. One cannot help noticing that Carmen's blond friend is better and more expensively dressed.

##### MARIA

by Joan M. Lexau, illustrated  
by Ernest Crichlow (Dial)

Although the book appears on recommended lists of books about Puerto Ricans, there is no mention in the text that Maria is Puerto Rican. She comes from an Hispanic culture, however.

A lack of understanding of Hispanic cultural background is evident in this book. The parents sell an antique doll that was a family relic in order to obtain money for food, shoes, and a cheaper doll for their child. It is doubtful, however, that Spanish parents would do such a thing since it is a cultural tradition to respect and cherish objects that belonged to one's great-grandmother and that have been passed on to each generation.

The book is also negative from a feminist viewpoint. As in many of the stories, there is a big brother who knows it all, makes the decisions and protects the girl. Even more offensive is that, once again, the dominant object in Maria's life is a doll (again of lighter skin color than the little girl).

Maria is another adapt-yourself-to-America book, with the father always talking about “When we are

rich.” And what might seem “practical” from one standpoint—selling a doll in order to have more money—is, in the context of this story, something else: the selling of one's culture in order to make it in a different society.

##### I AM HERE—YO ESTOY AQUÍ

by Rose Blue, illustrated  
by Moneta Barnett (Watts)

This is a well-written, nicely illustrated and a rather touching story, but it has serious flaws.

It is the story of Luz' first day in a U.S. kindergarten. Luz has just come from Puerto Rico, misses home, is afraid of the new school, and doesn't speak English. A white teacher, and a Spanish-speaking teacher's aide, sympathize with Luz's language difficulties and give her multilingual lessons. By the end of the day, with the added help of seeing her first snowfall, Luz adjusts, and she learns to say in English, “I am here.”

Pattern one: This is an adjustment-to-America book, with the moral being “All you have to do is learn English, and everything will be alright.”

Pattern two: Aside from the welcome addition of the female Spanish speaking teacher's aide, sex stereotyping is strong in this book. The classroom illustrations show girls, exclusively, playing with dolls. Both boys and girls are playing with paints and blocks. Boys, exclusively, are playing with peg boards, trains and planes. The text has Luz in the following actions: crying, being upset, sitting, eating, and gradually adjusting. Except for learning a little English and playing in the snow, she is passive and meek all day—a traditionally “feminine” approach to a difficult situation.

Pattern three: The book lacks authenticity. When Luz is given a hot dog for lunch she acts as if she never saw one before. Most U.S. foods and pseudo-foods—like hot dogs—are well known in Puerto Rico.

##### ANGELITITA

by Wendy Kesselman, photos  
by Norma Holt (Hill & Wang)

This book has aroused heated controversy. It has been described as a “beautiful” and “touching” story, with excellent photographs. One reviewer felt that this story of a young girl's move from Puerto Rico to New York is portrayed with “that touch of fantasy and beauty that all lives, no matter how poor they appear, contain.” Other reviewers consider this book an “overly romantic,” “abominable concoction of saccharine sentimentality.”

To *Angelita's* credit, while a major portion of the book concerns a girl and her doll, it shows her in a much wider scope of activities than any of the other early childhood books about Puerto Rican girls. We see Angelita in Puerto Rico climbing mountains, playing with a crab on the beach, riding horses, swim-



ming, and even being self-sufficient enough to “go off by herself into the hills.” Aside from *Rosa-Too-Little*, of the book by that name, Angelita is the only Puerto Rican girl pictured in shorts, also underpants, without a top—allowing her that freedom of movement to be an active, physical person.

Of all the early childhood books, *Angelita* comes closest to portraying the starkness of the contrast between rural and ghetto living conditions. In some ways, this story patterns itself after the other books. It is a story in which the heroine eventually adjusts to ghetto, U.S.A. and does so with the help of that first-seen snowfall (“...for the first time she was happy in New York”). Puerto Rico is portrayed as overly romantic, overly beautiful, even though the father does admit that it’s hard to make a living there.

In an otherwise quite authentic book, it is unfortunate that the authors chose to substitute the term “coquille bird” for coqui. A coqui is a tree frog, indigenous to Puerto Rico, and in many ways a national symbol. The authors tell us they deliberately changed it because coquille bird would be better understood in the U.S. than coqui.

#### ROSA-TOO-LITTLE

by Sue Felt (Doubleday)

This well-known, extensively used book (published in 1950) is found on all lists of books for Puerto Rican children. It is about a young girl, Rosa (nowhere in the book is it stated that she is Puerto Rican), who desperately wants a library card and learns to write her name for that express purpose. Views on this book range from Good to Poor, from a “nothing, boring, uninteresting, uninspiring” book to a “nice, simple, motivational” story.

There is little that is Puerto Rican about the book and, aside from a few Spanish words and her darker skin, Rosa could be an Anglo American child living in a city neighborhood.

Rosa’s being “too little” for various activities is objectionable to Puerto Ricans who are always being told that their country is ten or one hundred times smaller than every other place, and that their physical stature is too little for certain jobs (police work, for example).

Most of the reviewers agree that the only positive aspect of the story is Rosa’s keen interest in books and her diligent effort to learn how to write her name. While this is a positive action, it in no way challenges stereotypes. Those who recommended *Rosa-Too-Little* for the Liberated Child’s Library in the first issue of *Ms.* magazine should take a closer look at the stereotypes portrayed in this book.

Rosa, too small for most things, is big enough to help her mother cook, and the mother is always depicted with her apron on. On the streets the girls play their usual games of jump rope (wearing dresses

of course), while the boys play with live things and train pigeons on the roof. Sometimes the girls and boys all play in the fire hydrant water, but in the illustrations the boys actually *play*, while the girls stand passively, somewhat frightened, in the spray. The only adult women presented, other than the mother, are the librarians (a female occupation), and even this is denied to Rosa, since they are all pictured as very Anglo American. To the book’s credit, Rosa does *not* play with a doll, and sometimes she is pictured wearing shorts.

Some reviewers liked the illustrations, while others found them depressing and dull. One felt Rosa looked like an American Indian and saw this as indicative of the general confusion in the U.S. about ethnic groups.

#### INTERMEDIATE AGE BOOKS

##### A SURPRISE FOR CARLOTTA

by Nellie Burchardt, illustrated by Ted Lewin (Watts)

An outrageous book. For one thing, the author confuses Spanish with Italian. “Com’ un’ angelina!” (p. 43) is misspelled Italian. Spanish words are often misspelled and misused in the book, Carlotta and Francesca are not Spanish names.

The heroine, Carlotta (who is about eight), is portrayed as “the other” type of female—the competitive, jealous, classical brat. She is terribly nasty and hostile, yet no particularly good explanation is offered for her behavior other than that she is short for her age. Her major action in the book is falling in love with a duck at school and taking care of him for a weekend (motherhood training?). Her one creative act is to name the duck “Dandelion.”

Carlotta actually does some non-feminine things, such as touching snakes before boys dare to, and helping to construct a duck cage in school. As boys will do, she hits people physically when she’s mad. She is not actually a tomboy—she’s not at all athletic and is always pictured in her darling little skirts. But as she grows up physically, we are given to understand that she will grow up mentally, i.e., she will give up her outrageous behavior and act her sex.

The men in her family are clearly The Unchallenged Rulers. Her brother is the *hombrecito* of the house; the father makes all major decisions, and he is served meals first “not just so he could get to his job on time, but also because that was the way it had always been in Puerto Rico.” (p. 71)

##### MY HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE

by Tony Talbot, illustrated by Robert Weaver (Cowles)

A slicker-than-usual book about moving out of the ghetto. Eleven-year-old Juana’s family moves from their “condemned” slum neighborhood to Islip, New York, after their

tenement and all their belongings are destroyed in a fire.

Juana, like Carmen of *Spider Plant*, doesn’t want to move from her Puerto Rican neighborhood (roosters, botanicas, bodegas, etc.), nor does she want to part with her possessions which she sees as extensions of herself. After the fire, Juana convinces herself that what counts are “their lives, not the objects that were ready to be discarded.” The family then moves with not one possession to their new empty house and are “ready for a new start.” What sounds like American practicality in Juana’s attitude is, in this case (as in *A Present from Rosita* and *Maria*) something else, for the objects and the neighborhood they so willingly relinquished really symbolize their Puerto Ricanness. It is presented more subtly in this book,



from *Rosa-Too-Little* by Sue Felt (Doubleday)

but the moral is still: if you want to make it in America, then you’d better leave your old culture behind—burn it—and start clean.

Because Juana is a girl, her mother prohibits her from packing cartons. “It’s man’s work,” she says. The book is concerned mostly with Juana’s emotions about moving (female) rather than her actions (male). The only future she sees for herself is in vague terms of “weddings and babies.” She takes some initiative, however, in curing her sick dog, and she does wander around her neighborhood by herself.

An unwary reader might easily be deceived by this book because it does have touches of solid realism, such as the girl wetting her bed from anxiety and her fourteen-year-old brother smoking marijuana (but also causing the fire with it). The excellent illustrations and the correct use of Spanish might also make people feel that the book has something going for it, but these are just fancy coverings for the same old female stereotypes and assimilationist themes.

##### MAGDALENA

by Louisa R. Shotwell, illustrated by Lilian Obligado (Viking)

The best book in this particular age group, *Magdalena* is about a 6th grade girl and her grandmother. For a change, this is not predominantly about suffering and ghetto adjustment. It has welcome touches of fantasy, magic and adventure. The writing is better, wittier and more poetic than most, and the illustrations are exceptional.

This is in some ways a real Women’s Book. Adult male authority figures are notably absent, and the females have true character and strength. The all-wise, warm, dignified grandmother, who is into spiritualism and herbal remedies, is unforgettable, and even the school principal is a woman (white, of course). The emphasis in the book is on people and their humanity, not on the social environment.

Magdalena herself does some mildly courageous and adventure-some things—for example, actually going out on her own to visit an eccentric old woman. Magdalena and her girl friend Spook are the best writers in their IGC class, and they consciously choose to write about the memorable *women* in their life. Unfortunately, one dominant theme in the book concerns Magdalena’s braids—i.e., her appearance, a female concern.

The book is consciously interracial with one white, eccentric woman and one memorable, very wise Black male 6th grader, Sam, as important characters.

##### A PRESENT FROM ROSITA

by Celeste Edell, illustrated by Elton C. Fax (Messner) and

##### THE SPIDER PLANT

by Yetta Speevack, illustrated by Wendy Watson (Atheneum)

These two books were written by New York City teachers. They are both rather dull adjustment-to-the-ghetto books that skirt the edges of real problems and present unreal solutions to unreal situations.

The heroines, Rosita and Carmen, are both twelve years old with older brothers, and with mothers who find it hard to adjust to the U.S. Both attend what seems to be totally unreal, non-ghetto type schools where the teachers are loving and the classes, calm and pleasant. Adjustment to school and learning English are unrealistically easy for both girls. Their major problem is in overcoming prejudices that are blocking their chances for friendship with other children. The burden of proof is placed on the girls; that is, they must prove their worth through exemplary conduct.

Carmen of *The Spider Plant* has been stigmatized for the crime of digging up dirt twice in Central Park, and to redeem herself she must give cuttings of her spider plant to every kid in the class, as well as put on an allegorical play proving her innocence. In the second book, Rosita is faced with anti-Puerto Rican prejudices and must learn English, be in the top of her class, paint beautiful scenes for a school play, constantly salute the flag, and remodel her mother’s hand-sewn wedding gown to fit her blonde, beautiful girl friend who needs a costume for a school play. Then, and then only, are the two girls accepted and loved (as evidence, according to the authors, that racism is easily overcome!)

*The Spider Plant* has the distinction of being recommended by some feminist groups, yet it portrays Carmen washing dishes after dinner while her brother, the “hombrecito,” begins his homework (although she has homework as well). She also joins the girl scouts where she will learn homemaking and gardening. Is this a feminist book?

*A Present from Rosita*, written in stilted English, is practically an outright propaganda book and claims that it is not only good to become an “American,” but that this is easy to accomplish.

#### CANDITA’S CHOICE

by Mina Lewiton, illustrated by Howard Simon (Harper)

This well-known old-timer (1959) is not only written in stilted English but utilizes several of the grosser themes pervading the adjustment-to-New York-from-Puerto Rico books.

Eleven-year-old Candita has The Language Problem. Rather than be humiliated for not knowing English in school, she refuses to speak at all until she has learned it perfectly. Secretly she learns to read “Bushy Tail the Squirrel,” and eventually she speaks perfect English in school and is destined to win honors for her excellent language adjustment.

White paternalism has a field day in this book. Candita’s white girl friend is *the* one who always makes her feel better, and *the* one whose father gets Candita’s sculptor father a job sweeping floors in a museum, for which he is overwhelmingly grateful.

As a female, Candita is allowed to resist and then learn English, read, baby sit, get appendicitis, and dream of being with her father, “to live in his house and learn his work, and then to cook and to sew for him.” Carving and modeling figures would be fine for her to learn, but she won’t have much time for that after taking care of her father.

#### EARLY TEENAGE BOOKS

##### ROSARIA

by Susan Thaler, illustrated by Genia (McKay) and

##### GANG GIRL

by H. Samuel Fleischman, illus. by Shirley Walker (Doubleday)

These two are probably the most dangerous of the fictional books. Both are about teenage Puerto Rican “good girls” who turn “bad.” Disillusioned with American ghetto life, they join gangs, take part in robberies (directed by male gang members), and are rehabilitated by white social workers and boy friends who teach them that they can make it by staying within the American mainstream. The onus for all “deviant” behavior in these books is on the individual girls. The moral of both books is: there is no good reason for being disgruntled by society—it is all your own wrong attitude that gets you in trouble.



An outrageous incident in *Gang Girl* has one of the boy gang leaders shot and killed by cops while running from an attempted burglary. No one, not even the dead boy's girl friend, Maria—the fourteen year old heroine—is particularly angry with the police, or upset about the boy's murder. Everyone blames themselves instead. They have "learned their lesson," and The Spanish Ladies, the fighting gang that Maria heads, must be reformed. In the process, the male author reforms the gang, in some respects, from "bad" to worse. While the girls do stop beating up on other neighborhood girls, they change from an active, independent female group to a passive social club with the most frivolous of "female" interests. As a start, the social worker suggests: "It's fun to learn how to fix yourselves up. I could get a friend of mine who works in a beauty parlor to come and show you how to do your hair and put on make up."

The reviewers feel that this carefully "researched" book—publisher's blurb—has absolutely no veracity, and no relation to the reality of Puerto Rican ghetto life—except, of course, for the intrusion of social workers and the brutality of the police.

*Rosaria* (there is no such Spanish name—the correct spelling is Rosario) is a slightly more realistic, more Puerto Rican, more "hip" and hence more dangerous book. Rosaria, a brilliant teenage writer drops out of school and joins her brother Carlo's gang because of a clearly defined (and correct) anger at a society that has destroyed her father through racist union practices. Directed by male gang members, she helps rob a jewelry store, and after being arrested, speaks eloquently of American injustice, refusing to accept guilt, and stating that she knows only of "the crime of being poor, the sin of going hungry."

While Carlo (Italian spelling of Charles, in Spanish it is Carlos) serves five years in prison, the heroine is rehabilitated in Project

Step-Ahead as a teacher's aide in a summer school where she meets a handsome blond Yale-bound boy who "saves her," with the help of the social worker. (The author does not allow a Puerto Rican girl to "save" herself or be saved by another Puerto Rican woman, or by any Puerto Rican, for that matter. Anglo-American arrogance assumes that only Anglo Americans know the answer for the "poor Puerto Ricans.") Together, this all-American team convinces Rosaria that her bitterness is unfounded. . . "You can't blame others for your own mistakes," says her blond boy friend (meaning that if a union discriminates against you, it's your own mistake, etc., etc.)

As in *Candita's Choice*, the father of the Anglo boy gets Rosaria's father a job, and from then on, everything is fine.

#### OLDER TEENAGE BOOKS

##### THE GIRL FROM PUERTO RICO

by Hila Colman (Morrow)

and

##### DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY

by Caroline Crane (Random House)

Here are two more books with remarkably similar story lines. Two Puerto Rican teenage girls, both high school dropouts, must find jobs to help support their large, fatherless families, run by docile and "backward" mothers. The girls' lives are complicated by the presence of younger brothers who have run-ins with the police. The girls get jobs as waitresses and babysitters, and in the latter position, both are presented with almost identical problems: they babysit for well-off white patronizing liberal women. These women, in turn, have neighbors or nephews who are eligible white college boys and who are interested in the girls, but treat them in heavy racist and sexist stereotyped ways. A central question in each book is how the girls will relate to these patronizers and their middle-class values.

Eighteen-year-old Rosa of *Don't*

*Look at Me that Way* discovers the latent racism of American liberals, and she rejects them and their values. She is the only protagonist in all the eighteen fiction stories who is offered the rags-to-riches American dream by white benefactors (free car and free college) but rejects the offer as degrading and patronizing.

Of all the stories, *The Girl from Puerto Rico's* fifteen-year-old Felicidad is the only female protagonist to return to Puerto Rico to live, finding the U.S. unsatisfactory. She goes back, however, only because she had wanted very much to be an "American," but found that Americans didn't want her. This theme might be interesting if handled correctly, but the author is unsure of what position to take on the issue and so she equivocates and contradicts herself.

The ending, for example, is utterly mystifying. Although everything in the book reveals to Felicidad that New York City and white liberals really are racist, she, for no apparent reason, leaves for Puerto Rico stating that her patronizers are "her two good friends" and that New York was truly a "wonderful city."

These two teenage books discuss heretofore taboo subjects and offer truths about ghetto living that are usually avoided. From both stories the reader learns that not all Puerto Ricans are fair skinned (even though the heroines usually appear to be very fair). From *Don't Look at Me that Way*, the reader learns that poor children often eat paint off walls and get poisoned; that cops aren't liked; and that people don't believe prisons rehabilitate. That women get pregnant, sometimes without husbands, and that they sometimes die in childbirth (Rosa's mother). That marriage is not usually bliss and that men do abuse women. From *The Girl from Puerto Rico*, the reader learns that men (Felicidad's father) sometimes die from trying to uphold the image of their masculinity. And that Puerto Ricans sometimes take out their frustrations at ghetto living on their

natural allies, their Black neighbors, and vice versa.

While Felicidad is to a degree strong and willful and engaged in meaningful activities, she is more often wishy-washy, inconsistent, and concerned with dating problems. Her major concern in the book is whether to marry Fernando and have children in Puerto Rico or to stay in New York, date white American boys and go shopping on Fifth Avenue. She ends up, as expected, in Fernando's arms, swooning as he proposes to her.

*Don't Look at Me that Way*, on the other hand, comes closer to being a feminist book than any of the eighteen. In an interview, the author told us that she does deliberately write from a feminist viewpoint. The book shows, in the treatment of Rosa's mother, just how badly poor women in America are oppressed by society and by men, and the way in which younger women, especially Puerto Ricans, are considered sex objects for men's enjoyment.

As an individual, Rosa is strong, practical, smart, and she is not dependent on male opinion for her own ideas. Toward her boy friend and her white suitors she is unusually tough. In a semi-rape scene she wounds her attackers with cut glass. She will probably marry her Puerto Rican boy friend Julio, but she knows that this is not the answer to life, and she is not all that excited about marital prospects.

*Don't Look at Me that Way* undoubtedly has the most going for it in the teenage category. It is fairly authentic, good reading, and avoids the traditional sell-out to Americana. Although the girl is not particularly Puerto Rican as a person, she stands apart as one of the only characters in these books verbally to affirm pride in being Puerto Rican.

#### SUGGESTED READING

For a view of how some Puerto Rican women feel about women's position today and the role of Puerto Rican women in the Women's Liberation Movement in the United States and Puerto Rico, see:

#### In English

○The section titled "Revolution within the Revolution," in the book *Palante, Young Lords Party* by Michael Abramson and The Young Lords Party (McGraw-Hill 1971), pages 45-58. This book also contains excellent short autobiographical accounts by Puerto Rican women—Iris Morales, pages 24-28; Carmen, pages 36-39.

○The articles "The Role of Women in Puerto Rico's Liberation Movement," by Carmen Eneida Parrilla, and the "Position Paper on Women" by the Young Lords Party. Both are included in the pamphlet "Cultural Identity Vs. Cultural Invasion," which is part of a packet titled *Puerto Rico: Showcase of Oppression*. This packet, published in Puerto Rico, is distributed by Latin America Publications Service, Box 12056 Mid City Station, Washington, D.C. 20005. The cost is \$2.50 per packet, \$.75 for the pamphlet mentioned.

#### In Spanish

○A recent mimeographed report on the economic exploitation of women in Puerto Rico prepared by and available from the Independence Party, Muñoz Rivera Avenue, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico.

○Nancy Zayas is preparing an anthology of writings on the women's movement in Puerto Rico. It will be published during summer 1972 by Librería Internacional, Inc., Saldaña Núm. 3, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico.

#### BOOKS TO AVOID

○*The Puerto Rican Woman* by Federico Ribes Tovar (Plus Ultra Educational Publishers 1972). This book, written by a Moroccan male, has evoked strong criticism by Puerto Rican women. On March 18, 1972, at a Puerto Rican women's conference sponsored by the Puerto Rican Studies Department and the Puerto Rican Alliance at Brooklyn College, a person trying to sell the book was stopped from doing so by the women attending the conference. ■



from *Rosa-Too-Little* by Sue Felt (Doubleday)

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from *Magdalena* by Louisa R. Shotwell and Lilian Obligado (Viking)



from *The Spider Plant* by Yetta Speevack and Wendy Watson (Atheneum)



from *Gang Girl* by H. Samuel Fleischman and Shirley Walker (Doubleday)



from *What Do I Say?* by Norma Simon and Joe Lasker (Whitman)



# New Study Confirms Educational Slaughter Of Puerto Rican Children

Puerto Rican Educators Association Study

The State of New York, the City of New York and the New York Commission on the Cost, Quality, and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Schools should be indicted for complicity in the slaughter of the educational lives of thousands upon thousands of Puerto Rican students. These parties have blatantly neglected the educational needs of 300,000 American citizens.

The case against the city and the state will be made increasingly clear throughout our report to the Commission. However, we the Puerto Rican educators, must also bring to light the injustices perpetrated by the Commission on the Puerto Rican student.

The last and only real effort by the City of New York to study the problems affecting the Puerto Rican student was made in 1953. It took the Board of Education one million dollars and four years to complete a study of the educational picture of the Puerto Rican pupils in the New York City public schools. Even then, the study concluded that more research had to be done in this area.

Today, eighteen years later, the Commission wants to do the same thing in six weeks with \$3,000. The Commission has been in existence since the fall of 1970. It had almost completed the other aspects of the educational picture in New York State before it realized the existence of the Puerto Rican community. It did not attempt to do anything about the Spanish speaking child until a few weeks before it had to submit its recommendations.

We will prove time and again that the problems are multiplying and becoming more complex. The Commission, whose recommendations will have serious consequences on education in the state for the next ten years, is a classic example of the lack of concern and the irresponsibility of the establishment toward a large number of those students whom they are failing. The Commission's meager attempt is another case of too little too late.

Nevertheless, given these unbelievable handicaps, we will in this paper, attempt to open the discussion on the whole area with the hope that the Commission will be inspired at this late date to take action on the special steps which are needed to bring about the immediate cessation of the brutality with which the educational system has treated the Puerto Rican and Spanish surnamed pupils in New York State.

The anger that is so clearly apparent in this statement which serves as preface to the Puerto Rican Educators Association report, *The Education of the Puerto Rican Child in New York*, begins to seem remarkably controlled as one reads

through the findings of the study itself. The study does, literally, document the "slaughter of the educational lives" of Puerto Rican students in the New York City school system; and surely in this culture that insists on formal education as the fundamental prerequisite for any social or material hope, no one can deny that to destroy educational life is to destroy life itself. The PREA report blames much of the destruction revealed in statistics of poverty, unemployment, misery and drug use on "the brutality with which the educational system has treated the Puerto Rican and Spanish surnamed pupils in New York State."

The Fleischmann Commission has not scheduled public release of the 270-page PREA report (prepared at the Commission's request in September and October 1971) until after the Commission has made its recommendations to the New York legislature. Ms. Awilda Orta, president of the PREA, questions the Commission's intentions of making the report public. "We're afraid it will get lost in the shuffle," she said, "or that the Commission will not publish it in full." So the PREA is determined to publish the full report themselves, in spite of limited resources for such a project; the Council on Interracial Books for Children pledges its support in making this most important document public as soon as possible. Since any attempt at summary seems unfair, here we can only illustrate the conditions revealed by the PREA study through a few of the facts stated in it and commented on to a representative of our Council by Ms. Orta.

The reason for the study's concentration on New York City is in the fact that of the state's 292,000 Puerto Rican public school students, almost 90 per cent (about 260,000) are in the New York City system. Or, to put it another way, 23 per cent of New York City's public school system pupils are Puerto Rican.

The grim results of the school system's own achievement-testing over the past few years are fairly common knowledge. Those statistics show that the lowest reading levels are found in schools with the highest number of Puerto Rican students, and that Puerto Rican children are two to three years behind in reading skills as compared to other groups. But the PREA study points out that roughly half—about 135,000—of Puerto Rican public school students in the city speak Spanish only.

Aggravating the insecurity and frustration of a Puerto Rican student who cannot understand the language spoken in New York schools (where only one-tenth of 1 per cent of the

teachers are Puerto Rican) are the "psychological damages suffered as a result of the ambivalence he feels upon not being certain of his status as either a Puerto Rican or an American. . . . What is he? He's not sure. He's only sure that he is different from many others."

Virtually nothing in the school's textbooks, programs or curriculum provide the Puerto Rican child with a positive self-image. Not only the alien language, but the books as well, foster the sense of being different. And in this culture, the report continues, the implication is made over and over again that what is different is inferior. The PREA study lays the responsibility for the lower reading and scholastic achievement levels found among Puerto Rican students squarely at the door of the school system itself: "The major factor in this deficiency is a lack of consideration of the Puerto Rican pupils' linguistic and cultural differences." In fact, the study finds, insensitivity to these differences has reached the extreme that: "The inadequacy of the system's ability to measure even this limited proficiency (in use of the English language) results in a significant number of pupils being erroneously and unjustly placed in classes for children of retarded mental development."

Among the figures, graphs and statistics contained in the PREA study, one, by itself, seems enough to justify the charges it levels at the school system. *More than one half—59 per cent—of all Puerto Rican students entering the 10th grade drop out of school before completing the 12th.*

The Board of Education's *Puerto Rican Study*, made 18 years ago at a cost of more than a million dollars, took notice of the unfairly disadvantaged position of a Puerto Rican or Spanish surnamed student forced to try to cope with learning in a classroom where only an alien language is spoken. The *Puerto Rican Study* advocated bilingual school programs; other states, especially in the Southwest, have recognized the need for bilingual programs; Federal commissions have also recommended bilingual school programs. As the PREA study points out, everyone pays lip service to the idea of bilingual programs. But the PREA reveals that New York City has very few such programs—and that most of those are a sham.

According to Ms. Orta, who is herself the director of a special bilingual program at J.H.S. 45 in East Harlem, a bilingual program is one in which students study the school curriculum in the language of their home and at the same time study a second language. As the student progresses, the second language is also used as the language in which he or she studies until the point is reached where the student can use either language equally well. Thus, the student becomes truly bilingual without sacrificing other areas of education in the process.

(continued on page 16)

## U.S. DISTRIBUTORS & SUPPLIERS OF PUERTO RICAN MATERIALS

An asterisk indicates that the firm is operated by Puerto Ricans.

(Readers are requested to inform this Council about any sources inadvertently not included in the list below.)

**\*BATEY BOOK DISTRIBUTING CO.** Directed by Victor Rodriguez, a commercial artist. This is a year-old firm and is at the same address as BAT Litho Co., the first Puerto Rican-operated major printing house in New York City. The Batey catalog lists Hispanic but features Puerto Rican materials. Batey is the distributor for the Puerto Rican bi-monthly magazine *Isla Literaria* (\$8 for six issues). Batey also features two series of posters. The less expensive series consists of three black and white 22½ x 34½ enlargements of scenes depicted in *Events in the History of Puerto Rico*. One poster depicts the Taino Indians attacking a Spanish ship and is titled "The Second Indian Offensive." These posters sell for \$1 each. The second series are ten hand-printed original serigraphs of Puerto Rican 19th century freedom fighters, with handwritten biographies. Price of each is \$7.50 and \$50 for the folio of ten. The address of Batey is 37 East 18th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10003

**CHILDREN'S MUSIC CENTER, INC.** Langston Hughes helped prepare the initial booklists for this combination record store, bookstore, and mail order house. It is one of the few centers that for years has been selecting and distributing books and records relevant to ethnic minorities in the U.S. The center's 26-page catalog, "Best Records and Books about Spanish Speaking Americans," lists books, records, songs, film strips on Mexican and Chicano subjects, but there are specifically Puerto Rican materials. Write to Children's Music Center, 5373 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90019.

**\*PUERTO RICAN HERITAGE PUBLICATIONS.** A year-old firm that deals exclusively in Puerto Rican books, records, prints and crafts. Located on the first floor of a two-family house in Brooklyn, its colorful assortment of Puerto Rican musical instruments, masks, rag dolls, bracelets and rings give it the appearance of a happy museum. Celia M. Vice is president of the firm. She also has rings made of *corozo* nuts emblazoned with the Nationalist flag. Send for catalog to 802 Flushing Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11206.

**\*PUERTO RICAN RESEARCH AND RESOURCES CENTER.** This is newly organized and Washington, D.C. based. The Center has substantial plans for future operations, including a newspaper that will evaluate books and audiovisual materials about Puerto Ricans. Right now the only materials it stocks in response to requests from teachers and librarians are the following two books and poster: *Events in the History of Puerto Rico*, \$2 (the children's book published by Research for Urban Education, Inc.), and Kal Wagenheim's *Puerto Rico: A Profile*, published by Praeger. A full-color poster—the first of a planned series—depicts the heroic uprising at Lares in 1868, and is available for \$6. The address is 1519 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

**SPANISH BOOK CORPORATION OF AMERICA.** This distributor is Anglo-operated. It runs the new Librería Hispánica at Rockefeller Center in New York City, which is the Spanish counterpart of the Librarie de France on the Rockefeller Center Promenade. It emphasizes literary works and study aids published in Spain and Latin America but is becoming increasingly active in stocking books from and about Puerto Rico. Specifically, it stocks all titles listed in the Projecto LEER Bulletin. The title of its 200-plus page catalog is "Spanish Books; Elementary Schools, High Schools, Colleges, Libraries," and a special supplement listing Puerto Rican books is planned. Send inquiries to Linda Goodman, Spanish Book Corp., 610 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10020.

**TRANS-CULTURE BOOKS,** distributors for Troutman Press. Troutman is located in Sharon, Conn., and is Anglo-owned. However, almost all the authors and illustrators of its 15-volume Puerto Rican library about Puerto Rico are Puerto Ricans. Troutman published the award-winning *ABC de Puerto Rico*, until recently a third-grade text in Puerto Rican schools. Troutman books currently in use in the schools of Puerto Rico are, in grades 3 to 6, *La Canción Verde* (The Green Song) and *El Arbol de la Violeta* (The Violet Tree) and, in grades 6 to 12, *Aunque Quise el Silencio* (Although I Wanted Silence). The last is actually college-level reading fare. There is as yet no English translation of this book. The first two books mentioned are the only Troutman books authored by a non-Puerto Rican. They were written by Doris Troutman Plenn, who is the partner in the husband-wife team, Abel and Doris Plenn, the publishers of Troutman. Doris Plenn wrote the two books in English, after having gone to Puerto Rico with her husband who was a writer-in-residence at the University of Puerto Rico. David McKay published *The Green Song* in 1954 and Farrar, Strauss published *The Violet Tree* in 1960. It was Mr. Plenn's idea to translate the two books into Spanish and to make them available in Puerto Rico. That idea launched the Plenns into book publishing. ■



# AMERICANIZATION OF SCHOOLS IN PUERTO RICO

The article that follows is a chronological tragi-comedy of what happens when an alien language is imposed on a people for the ostensible purpose of "education." The article is difficult to follow, but a careful reading will provide important insights into the dynamics of cultural oppression.

Ismael Rodríguez Bou, Permanent Secretary of the Superior Educational Council in Puerto Rico, for the 1966 United States-Puerto Rico Commission on the Status of Puerto Rico, prepared a study titled "Significant Factors in the Development of Education in Puerto Rico," which was later published by the Commission in *The Status of Puerto Rico: Selected Background Studies Prepared for the United States-Puerto Rico Commission on the Status of Puerto Rico*. The article has been excerpted from Rodríguez Bou's study.

When we come to realize that the teaching of Spanish and English have taken up from one-fifth to one-half of the school program, we may easily see that our school curriculum has been and still is language oriented. The curriculum has been overloaded with linguistic studies.

The first American educators who came to the island thought that the Spanish spoken in Puerto Rico was not an appropriate vehicle to transmit the culture the people already had and much less the culture the educators intended to introduce. Their experience at this time in Hawaii and the Philippine Islands, where there was no common language to serve as depository and transmitter of the cultures of the people of those islands made the Americans believe that the Spanish language in Puerto Rico, taken by some for a patois, should be replaced by English. Dr. Victor S. Clark, misinformed and mistaken, made the following statement:

There does not seem to be among the masses the same devotion to their native tongue or to any national ideal that animates the Frenchman, for instance, in Canada or the Rhine provinces. Another important fact that must not be overlooked, is that a majority of the people of this island does not speak pure Spanish. Their language is a patois almost unintelligible to the natives of Barcelona and Madrid. It possesses no literature and little value as an intellectual medium.

(In refuting Dr. Clark's mistaken ideas about Puerto Rico's language, Rodríguez Boul quotes another Puerto Rican scholar, Dr. Cebollero, as follows:)



Americanization of a first grade class in Puerto Rico, featuring Pinocchio and Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf. Photo from *Young Puerto Rico* (Dodd, Mead)

In making such a hasty generalization about the quality of the Spanish spoken by the Puerto Ricans, Dr. Clark was unaware that the Castilian form of Spanish is not spoken in Spain itself outside of the province of Castille and that the difference between Castilian and Spanish as spoken in most of Spain and in the Spanish countries of America is a matter of the pronunciation of a few letters and of a certain rhythm and inflection. His reference to Barcelona as a place where the Puerto Rican brand of Spanish would not be understood is particularly unfortunate because the native of Barcelona does not speak Spanish but Catalan, one of the principal dialects of Spain. That the Spanish spoken in Puerto Rico is as good as that spoken in most of Spain and better than the Spanish spoken in many provinces of Spain itself has been attested by Dr. Tomás Navarro Tomás, a noted Spanish philologist from the University of Madrid, who recently made a study of spoken Spanish in Puerto Rico.

President McKinley enjoined Gov.

Charles A. Allen to prepare the Puerto Ricans for Statehood as rapidly as possible. Thus Commissioner of Education Martin G. Brumbaugh — and those who succeeded him — became more set in the determination to make Puerto Ricans a bilingual people. This was the first time under the American government that the President of the nation expressed himself on a specific political solution for Puerto Rico.

Since the order issued by President McKinley, several policies have been developed in favor of bilingualism. This is an instance in which the educational philosophy, at least insofar as language is concerned, has followed clear and specific political objectives. The different commissioners of education, appointed by the Presidents of the United States and responsible only to them and to Congress which ratified their appointments varied in their attitudes in regard to the teaching of English with changes in instruction from Washington, and of course, with changes in the political administration in the United States.

Five different phases in Puerto Rican education are clearly defined from 1900 to the present:

1. The first phase prevailed between 1900 and 1905. It was begun by the first commissioner of education of Puerto Rico under the American government, Victor S. Clark, who with Dr. John Eaton, was in charge of the reorganization of the school system of the island in 1899. His policy established English as the sole medium of instruction.

2. Commissioners Martin G. Brumbaugh and Samuel McCune Lindsay adopted a policy of bilingualism, directed at the conservation of Spanish and the acquisition of English. Spanish was the language of instruction in the elementary school and English was used for teaching in the secondary schools (grades 9-12).

3. During the administrations of Commissioner Falkner and his successors (1905-16), English was used as the medium of instruction in all the grades of the school system.

During these years, motivated in part by the excesses of these commissioners, a period of separatist sentiments arose in Puerto Rico. Those in favor of English as the language of instruction were identified as American *asimilistas*, and those in favor of Spanish as *separatistas*. To this day the teaching of English has never been able to free itself from a certain political involvement. Sometimes it has even had the characteristics of an issue; this has made very difficult the development of a well-oriented methodology to teach English.

4. During the administration of Commissioners Paul G. Miller and Juan B. Huyke (1916-34), and even during the first years of Dr. Jose Padín's administra-

tion (1934-37), Spanish was the language of instruction in grades 1-4 and English in grades 6-8. The fifth was a grade of transition: half of the subjects were taught in English and half in Spanish. In the secondary schools, only English was used for instruction.

## THE SITUATION TODAY: CENSORSHIP IS CHARGED

For a brief period, from 1965 to 1968, a movement developed within the public schools of Puerto Rico to enrich the curriculum in order to build up the Puerto Rican identity. The writings of Puerto Rican authors were put on the required lists, and for the first time patriots from Puerto Rico's past were to be given equal prominence to that accorded in the schools of Puerto Rico to George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Dwight D. Eisenhower. There was also a drive to remove the teaching of English from its high priority status and to treat it on a par with other subjects.

The movement to "Puertoricanize" the schools came to an abrupt halt when the industrialist and pro-statehood advocate Luis A. Ferré became governor in 1968, with Ramón Mellado Parsons, a dairy farmer, as Secretary of Education. Under the new administration, English was given preferential treatment. Spanish today is the official language of instruction, yet double class periods are assigned to the teaching of English while only single class periods are devoted to other subjects.

According to information brought to the attention of the Council on Interracial Books for Children, the pro-statehood government also set about to censor out of school texts writings that depicted poverty and alienation and other realities of the Puerto Rican Experience. Here are examples of censorship charges lodged with this Council. In the upper grades, *La Carretta* by René Marqués and *Spiks* by Pedro Juan Soto were removed from the required reading lists, and the political writings of Pedro Albizu Campos were removed altogether.

In the elementary grades, *ABC de Puerto Rico* was discontinued as a reader in grades one to three because illustrations in the book were considered, according to its publisher, "anti-American." Luis Nieves Falcón, editor of the *Acción Social* series of elementary grade books, has informed this Council that the book *Fabian* was considered "subversive" and on that account government funds to continue the series were cancelled. Details about the censoring of these books appear on page 5.

In spite of the renewed efforts to intensify the teaching of English, the study carried on by the International Institute of Teachers College of Columbia University in 1925 found that the achievement of students in English at the end of the third grade did not justify the effort, the time and the money devoted to its teaching, and that even less justified was the denial of opportunities to the rest of the subjects of the curriculum. The study made by the institute recommended that English be taught from the fourth grade on instead of beginning its teaching in the first grade. However, the sensible recommendations made on the basis of the findings of the Teachers College survey were disregarded, and until 1934 the English language continued to be taught from the first grade.

5. The first commissioner of education who faced the problem of the teaching of English in Puerto Rico, critically and experimentally, was Dr. Jose Padín (1934-37).

When Dr. Padín took charge of direct-



With readers like this, indoctrination into the American way of Dick and Jane and Spot begins early in the schools of Puerto Rico

ing the educational tasks of the Department of Education he decreed, on the basis of his experiment and other observations, that Spanish be used as the medium of instruction in all the grades of the elementary school. English was given special attention (double periods daily and well-prepared teachers), but it was taught as a subject and as a foreign language.

6. Dr. Padín was succeeded by Dr. Jose M. Gallardo in 1937. Here is a letter Dr. Gallardo received from President F. D. Roosevelt dated April 8, 1937.

My Dear Dr. Gallardo:

I have decided to appoint you Commissioner of Education for Puerto Rico and have sent your name to the Senate.

I desire at this time to make clear the attitude of my administration on the extremely important matter of teaching English in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico came under the American flag 38 years ago. Nearly 20 years ago Congress extended American citizenship to Puerto Ricans. It is regrettable that today hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans have little and often no knowledge of the English language. Moreover, even among those who have had the opportunity to study English in the public schools, mastery of the language is far from satisfactory. It is an indispensable part of American policy that the coming generation of American citizens in Puerto Rico grow up with complete facility in the English tongue. It is the language of our Nation. Only through the acquisition of this language will Puerto Rican Americans secure a better understanding of American ideals and principles. Moreover, it is only through thorough familiarity with our language that the Puerto Ricans will be able to take full advantage of the economic opportunities which became available to them when they were made American citizens.

Puerto Rico is a densely populated Island. Many of its sons and daughters will desire to seek economic opportunity on the mainland or perhaps in other countries of this hemisphere. They will be greatly handicapped if they have not mastered English. For it is obvious that they always will and should retain facility in the tongue of their inherited culture, Spanish. Clearly there is no desire or purpose to diminish the enjoyment or the usefulness of the rich Spanish cultural legacy of the people of Puerto Rico. What is necessary, however, is that the American citizens of Puerto Rico should profit from their unique geographical situation and the unique historical circumstance which has brought to them the blessings of American citizenship by becoming bilingual. But bilingualism will be achieved by the forthcoming generation of Puerto Ricans only if the teaching of English throughout the insular educational system is entered into at once with vigor, purposefulness and devotion, and with the understanding that English is the official language of our country.

Sincerely yours,

(S) Franklin D. Roosevelt

The substance of this message led Dr. Gallardo to abandon Padín's policy and try out different procedures:

(But by 1942 he had practically returned to Padín's policy and established Spanish as the medium of instruction from the first to the sixth grades. Junior high schools had now been established, and here English was the principal medium of instruction, with some subjects taught in Spanish. In senior high schools, both English and Spanish were used.)

These changes in policy brought about a stern letter from the Hon. Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior of the U.S. This letter reads:



The Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, March 31, 1943

My Dear Dr. Gallardo:

I have before me a transcript of your testimony before the Chavez subcommittee on the question of the schools of Puerto Rico with reference to the teaching of English.

I say with regret that the evidence that you gave fails to impress me that there has been assiduity on your part in carrying out my distinct understanding with you on the subject of teaching English. Moreover, you seem to have paid little attention to the specific instructions from the President. I think you know that I would not have recommended you to the President for this post if I had not been assured that you realized as much as I did the obligation to teach English in the Puerto Rican schools. I am equally confident that the President would not have tendered you the appointment if he had not had my assurance and yours that this would be the keystone of your school policy. I am gravely disappointed, and I shall, of course, fulfill my obligation to advise the President as to my feelings.

Sincerely yours,

(S) Harold L. Ickes  
Secretary of the Interior

This letter from Mr. Ickes prompted the resignation of Dr. Gallardo.

In June 1945 the superior council on education formulated a series of principles for a school language policy for Puerto Rico. Among them we find the following: English should be the second language of Puerto Rico, Spanish should be the medium of instruction in the elementary school, and in secondary school it should be used as the medium of instruction in all or most of the subjects taught.

In 1947 Prof. Mariano Villaronga became commissioner of education. He said:

It is obvious . . . that in order to obtain the best results English should be taught in all levels of the school system; but if this teaching is to be effective it should consider English as a subject and not as the medium of instruction through which all the other subjects are taught.

Commissioner Villaronga resigned June 30, 1947, because his confirmation was withheld indefinitely probably due to his views on the teaching of English. He was appointed commissioner again on January 3, 1949, by the first elected governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Muñoz Marín.

Commissioner Villaronga, in a circular letter sent to the school districts on August 6, 1949, declared that:

. . . Spanish will be the vehicle of instruction in the high school. This change, which responds to a long-felt need, extends definitely the use of the vernacular as the teaching means until the last year of high school.

In an article in the *San Juan Review* of June 1965, Adrian Hull describes the Villaronga policy as follows:

Under the Villaronga policy, an English section was created in the Department of Education whose function was to produce teaching materials and to supervise English teaching in the public schools from the 1st grade through the 12th. Whereas three general supervisors had formerly been responsible for the supervision of all English teaching in the public schools, the staff was augmented to include a director, seven general supervisors, and some curriculum technicians. A corps of local supervisors was created, known as zone supervisors of English. English was to be taught as one of several subjects of the curriculum, but with the status of a preferred subject.

As has been shown, during the decades of American government on the island the policy to be followed in the teaching of English has claimed a great part of the attention of commissioners, teachers, and supervisors. Everything else in the educational system has seemed to be subordinated to the teaching of English. Commissioners Padín and Villaronga, although they gave preferential treatment to English, did not believe that all other subjects should be subordinated to the teaching of this subject. ■

# Art Directors, Take Note



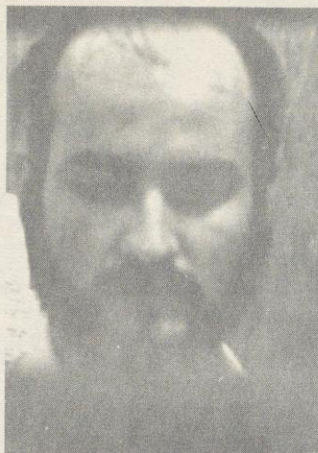
**DAVID COTTES** attended Pratt Institute and is an instructor of Fine Arts at the Center for Puerto Rican Public Relations. He has had one man shows at the Francisco Oller Art Gallery. **Art Directors, take note:** Mr. Cottes' address is c/o Francisco Oller Art Gallery, 432 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Tel: (212) 683-9279.



**JUAN MALDONADO** studied in Italy and Paris and is now teaching Fine Arts in a public school in the South Bronx. He has illustrated books for Puerto Rican Heritage Series of Plus Ultra and has had one man shows. Mr. Maldonado is the Director of the Francisco Oller Art Gallery, housed in the building of the Society of Friends of Puerto Rico. **Art Directors, take note:** Mr. Maldonado's address is c/o Francisco Oller Art Gallery, 432 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. Tel: (212) 683-9279.



**ANTONIO MARTORELL** is the founder and director of the Taller Alacrán (Scorpion Workshop), a collective workshop in the slum area of Santurce, Puerto Rico. He is well known in Puerto Rico as an illustrator and graphic artist, creating woodcuts, silkscreens and posters, and has designed sets for the theater festivals of the Puerto Rican Institute of Culture. He designed and illustrated the *ABC de Puerto Rico*, the Troutman Press children's book that has been awarded prizes by the American Institute of Graphic Arts and the Puerto Rican Institute of Literature. **Art Directors, take note:** Mr. Martorell's address is: c/o Taller Alacrán, Calle Cerra 726, Par. 15, Santurce, Puerto Rico. Tel: (809) 724-8180.



from *ABC de Puerto Rico* (Troutman Press)

from *Events in the History of Puerto Rico* (Research for Urban Education)



A Self-Portrait



**WILLIAM NEGRON** has done free-lance drawings for the *New York Times*, *Sesame Street* magazine and *The Lamp*. He illustrated two books in the Challenger series: *Enrique* and *Tejanos*. **Art Directors, take note:** Mr. Negron's address is 70 Amherst Road, Valley Stream, N.Y. 11580. Tel: (516) 791-4153.



**SAMUEL E. MORALES** graduated from the High School of Art and Design. He is a graduate of Pratt Institute and has studied at the N.Y.U. School of Commerce. He has worked with Chilton Publications, Benton & Bowles and other agencies and has illustrated *Events in the History of Puerto Rico* for Research for Urban Education, Inc. and the story *Antonio* for the Challenger series. **Art Directors, take note:** Mr. Morales' address is 93-20 242nd St., Bellerose, N.Y. 11426. Tel: (212) 347-4933.



# Book Publishers In Puerto Rico: A Survey

Here is a list of independent book publishers in Puerto Rico—publishers not financially dependent upon the government. Companies publishing children's books are noted.

New publishers may be added in subsequent Bulletins.

Descriptions given are from a 1971-72 survey conducted by the Council on Interracial Books for Children. It is significant that the publishers were unknown to the Office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in New York at the time the Council initiated the survey in 1971. In response to inquiries, we were told that the Office of the Commonwealth had no category for book publishers in its promotional listings of Puerto Rican businesses and no knowledge that such publishers existed.

A source that is supposed to know about the publishers is *La Empresa del Libro en America Latina*, a listing for the book trade of publishers in Latin America, compiled and distributed by R. R. Bowker. Only three of the publishers below appear in the Bowker listing, and the information given by Bowker is dated and too scanty to be of practical use as a reference source.

The Spanish Book Corporation of America, a private distributor of Spanish-language books, informed us that they have difficulty finding information about the publishers in Puerto Rico. Our Council has encountered no difficulty in obtaining the information below, nor in the matter of ordering books. It is suggested that the Council's name be mentioned when ordering books from the publishers.

**EDITORIAL CLUB DE LA PRENSA**, Apartado 2229, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00902. Ernesto Juan Fonfrías, director. Began 1952. Seven titles published in 1971 (all printed in Spain). No children's books. Five full-time employees. Most of the books are written by the director who is right of center, and a few are written by the director's close friends and others.

**EDITORIAL CORDILLERA, INC.**, Ave. F. D. Roosevelt 237, Hato Rey, Puerto Rico. Began 1962. Twenty-three titles published in 1971 (all printed in Mexico). Two children's books, one published in 1968, the other in 1969. Three more children's books planned for 1972. Seven full-time employees. Publishes selective Puerto Rican, Latin American, Spanish and Russian classic literature.

**EDITORIAL CULTURAL**, Roble, 51, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico 00925. Francisco Vasquez, director. Began 1963. Fourteen titles published in 1971 (13 printed in Spain, one in

U.S.). No children's books. Publishes books on Puerto Rico, almost exclusively by contemporary Puerto Rican writers—dramas, novels, essays, short stories—and is the publisher of such important writers as René Marqués, Enrique Laguerre and Pedro Juan Soto. Two other independent publishers—Editorial Antillana and Editorial Coqui—are now part of this firm.

**EDITORIAL EDIL, INC.**, Apartado 23088 Universidad, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico 00931. Norberto Lugo Ramírez, director. Began in 1967. Served as publisher and/or broker for 47 titles in 1971 (all printed in Spain), three of which are children's books. Five full-time employees. Editorial Edil is part regular publisher, part vanity publisher; that is, in addition to publishing some writers and giving them 10 to 12 per cent royalties, Edil frequently has the authors pay the costs of publishing their own books. Many of Puerto Rico's major writers have used the services of Editorial Edil. Besides producing many university texts—sociology, economics, law, etc.—Edil offers a sizable number of classic Puerto Rican and non-Puerto Rican books, including a 37-title junior library (at \$1 each) of Spanish translations of Daniel Defoe, Jules Verne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, R. L. Stevenson, etc.

**LIBRERÍA INTERNACIONAL, INC.**, Saldaña 3, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico 00925. José Carvajal, Director. Juan Angel Silén, Editor in Chief. Begun in 1969 by concerned faculty members of the University of Puerto Rico as a store for protest literature. Actually began publishing one year ago, with four books published in 1971 (three printed in Puerto Rico and one in Spain). Four children's books planned for 1972. Eight full-time employees. Just published two outstanding books dealing with liberation struggles: *Puerto Rico, Grito y Mordaza* by Nieves Falcón, et al. This is loosely translated "Puerto Rico, Scream and Suppression." This book is a vivid account of the 1971 university student strikes and of the government repression that followed. The other book is *Puerto Rico, Supervivencia y Liberación* by the radical priest Monseñor Antulio Parrilla. A loose translation is "Puerto Rico, Survival and Liberation." ■

## 100 CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT PUERTO RICANS (continued from page 1)

America, to adjust, to assimilate; in other words, to become "true Americans." This solution is almost always achieved in the books through the substitution of The American Way for Puerto Rican cultural values.

What the authors have done is to perpetuate and repeat a series of myths that do a great deal of damage to America's poor and ethnic minorities. Full status in America is in fact *not guaranteed by any cultural sacrifice, no matter how large*. Social acceptance and economic success is achieved only to the degree that the political and economic Establishment is willing to allow. The onus should be on the system's racist attitudes and exploitative economic practices.

The Puerto Rican image endlessly repeated in the books is this. From an idyllic farm in Puerto Rico—always a beautiful and gentle island—emerges a family that is happy or unconcerned about their country's dependent status on the U.S. The family moves to New York, either to make money or for no apparent reason. They move in the cold of winter (Puerto Ricans never seem to make the trip in spring, summer or fall).

Once settled in a run-down and badly overcrowded apartment in the inner-city ghetto, the family begins the task of "adjusting." In the early childhood readers, the adjustment follows a simplistic pattern, which is repeated over and over again. A young child is troubled by an inability to speak English and by loneliness for Puerto Rico and friends left behind. These troubles disappear as soon as the child (a) learns some words in English, (b) makes new friends, (c) receives a doll or a pet, or finds a lost one, (d) sees the first snowfall. These are solutions, or rather very pat devices, that instantly transform the troubled child into a happy, laughing one—and the story ends.

The magic formula for the eight-to-twelve age group is only slightly more complex—English more difficult to learn, friends harder to find, etc. The older children are given a somewhat expanded repertoire of responses, however. To avoid the humiliations of the language handicap, they refuse to speak English or stop speaking altogether. They are aware of their overcrowded living conditions and express concern. They experience minor encounters with racism or innocuous run-ins with the police. Unfortunately, the child's first responses (which should serve as an indication that something is wrong with society) are twisted to prove that something is wrong with the child. In the process, potential social actions for change are coopted and channeled into "socially acceptable" behavior.

The devices used to resolve the conflicts are almost the same as with the younger children, with a few additional ones. In nearly every story a white social worker (never a Puerto Rican social worker), a white school teacher (never a Puerto Rican teacher) or a white minister or church leader (never a Puerto Rican leader) appears on the scene to help rescue the child. The white person

(continued on page 15)

# INFORMATION CLEARING HOUSE

An excellent source for action suggestions on implementing **community control of schools** is United Bronx Parents, an organization of, by and for Puerto Ricans. The group has extensive materials in Spanish and English for use in evaluating teacher performance, and in organizing parents. One sheet, "How Parents Can Evaluate and Improve Their Child's School Books" (25¢), gives facts to know, questions to ask principals, and ways to organize to acquire more relevant books in the schools. Other pamphlets are listed in the group's "Educational and Training Materials—Material de Entrenamiento y Educacional." Send for free copy to United Bronx Parents, 791 Prospect Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10455. Along the same lines, Ellen Lurie of United Bronx Parents has written a worth while book titled *How to Change the Schools—A Parents' Action Handbook on How to Fight the System*, Random House, 1970. She states: "Schools should be for the children. And in our large cities today, that simply does not happen. These schools exist for the sake of the system. We parents must take our schools back from that system." The book sells in stores for \$2.95. However, it can be ordered from United Bronx Parents for \$2.00 plus 25¢ mailing.

*Puerto Rico: Showcase of Oppression* is a packet of six pamphlets on Puerto Rican **history and culture**: "Journey to Identity," "The Historical Evolution of Puerto Rico," "Promised Progress, An Examination of Operation Bootstrap," "Puerto Rico Decade 70, A Summary Evaluation of Political Development," "A Church Perspective," "Island Under the Gun, Culebra Confrontation," and "Cultural Identity vs. Cultural Invasion." The \$2.50 packet is available from Latin America Publications Service, Box 12056, Mid City Station, Washington, D.C. 20005. Bulk rates are available. Make checks payable to LAP Service.

Community News Service confirms a "veil of silence" in newspapers and other media on **news about Puerto Ricans**. CNS, which gathers news about the Puerto Rican and Black communities in New York, is operated by Puerto Ricans and Blacks, on a 50-50 basis. Six reporters and three desk editors cover the news from the South Bronx, El Barrio, Harlem, Central Brooklyn and to the city newspapers. Twice a day a helmeted motorcycle messenger delivers a calendar of events and a file of relevant news stories. Yet Puerto Rican news events rarely get beyond the CNS files. The Council on Interracial Books for Children urges all community organizations to subscribe to CNS to learn news about Puerto Ricans that is being denied them by Establishment media. Foundations, please take note: CNS needs support. Phone Humberto Cintron at (212) 864-2850, or write to CNS, 209 West 125 St., New York, N.Y. 10027. Readers will be interested to know that CNS was the first of the news services to file stories detailing the charges of racism in book publishing, which have been documented in a continuing series of articles by our Council in *Publishers' Weekly*.

*Puerto Rican and Proud* is a four-page bilingual fact sheet for **elementary school children** on the contribution of the Tainos, the Spanish and the Africans to Puerto Rican culture. Available free from Foundation for Change, 1619 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019. Bulk orders also free on request.

*The Rican Journal*, **A Chicago-based quarterly**, will serve as a "voice for second generation Puerto Ricans." The first issue appeared in December 1971. Articles are of high interest to junior high, high school and college language, social science, history classes, etc. Since the journal's goals do not include monetary profit, first-time subscribers are asked to become \$10 contributors, and thereafter to pay the regular annual subscription rate of \$4 for four issues. Write *The Rican Journal*, 2409 N. Geneva Ter., Chicago, Ill. 60614.

A Council survey reveals that the following colleges and universities in the New York area have initiated **programs in Puerto Rican Studies**: Brooklyn College (no degree), City College (B.A.), Hunter College (B.A.), John Jay Junior College (no degree), Lehman College (B.A.), Manhattan Community College (no degree), and Queens College (no degree). The State University of New York has Puerto Rican Studies departments, without degree conferral, at Albany, Binghamton and Stonybrook; with B.A. and M.A. degrees at Buffalo, in cooperation with the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. Readers may be surprised to learn that Columbia University, despite a strong student movement for a combined Puerto Rican and Latin Studies Institute, still has not even earmarked funds to research the possibilities of such an institute.

A leading **journal of concerned young Puerto Rican poets** is *Guajana*, edited by José Manuel Torres, and published irregularly. Subscription is by contribution. Address is Las Palmas #1059, Santurce, Puerto Rico 00907.

The literary journal *Sin Nombre* is edited by the Puerto Rican lawyer and



activist Nilita Vientos Gaston. It takes the place of the internationally recognized *Asomante*, formerly published by the Association of Graduate Women of the University of Puerto Rico and discontinued two years ago by the Association on the grounds that it was unrepresentative of the thinking of Puerto Rican women. *Asomante* had published the first works of René Marqués, Juan Soto and other now important writers. In recent years articles in the magazine have been reflecting the growing nationalism and pride in Puerto Rican heritage, which was regarded by the Association officials as subversive. The editor of *Sin Nombre* is the same woman who edited *Asomante*. Subscription is \$10 a year. Address is Cordero 55, Santurce, Puerto Rico 00905.

An indication of the rapid growth of the nationalist movement in Puerto Rico is the development of the pro-Independence newspaper *Claridad* from two pages in 1960, published occasionally, to a full 24-page tabloid, published twice a week. Eight pages are bilingual and give the news to the Puerto Rican community in New York. The weekend edition of *Claridad* has 40,000 subscribers in Puerto Rico and 8,000 subscribers in New York. Subscription is \$15 annually. Write to *Claridad*, Toscana 1153, Urb. Villa Capri, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico. A second independentist newspaper, the 24-page *La Hora*, began publishing last September. Individual copies in U.S. are 15¢. Write to Editorial La Hora, Inc., Apartado 7446, Estación Barrio Obrero, Santurce, Puerto Rico 00915.

The periodic bulletin of **Projecto LEER** (Project READ) lists books in Spanish for kindergarten to 12th grade. No distinction is made in listings between Puerto Rican and other Latin American cultures. However, the bulletin seeks to supply a wide variety of information of interest to and about Puerto Ricans. First published in 1967, the bulletin's most recent issue was Number 10, Winter 1971. Projecto LEER was originally started as a private foundation by the New Jersey library wholesaler, Bro-Dart, to identify the market for Spanish-language books and to outline areas where such books are needed. Bro-Dart abandoned the project two years ago because it failed to arouse the interest originally anticipated. Projecto LEER is now housed in the Organization of American States Building (Washington, D.C. 20006), sustained by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The director is Martha V. Tomé and the consultant is Susan B. Benson.

One of the new **neighborhood museums** is El Museo del Barrio, which shows exhibits specifically on Puerto Rican history and culture. A coloring book for children accompanies each exhibit. Past exhibits have included the "Indian Heritage of Puerto Rico," "Handicrafts of Puerto Rico from Pre-Colombian Times," and the present exhibit is "What We Know About Puerto Rico," with all the art work done by children. The museum is directed by Marta Vega. It is located at 206 E. 116th St., New York, N.Y. 10028. Tel: 348-0777.

*Palante* is the bi-monthly newspaper published by the **Young Lords Organization**. Subscription is \$7.50 per year (24 issues) and is available from the Young Lords Organization, 352 Willis Avenue, Bronx, N.Y. 10454. Make checks payable to Young Lords Party. ■

## 100 CHILDREN'S BOOKS ABOUT PUERTO RICANS

(continued from page 14)

teaches the child English, acts as a "neutral" intermediary to arbitrate gang feuds, or finds a new place for the Puerto Rican family to live.

Another major resolution of conflict is provided by a "successful" move to better living quarters. Usually the stories depict a family moving from one tenement to a slightly better tenement, frequently to a project, and sometimes to suburbia. Once the move takes place, underlying problems disappear. This physical move is easily accomplished, according to the books, if the Puerto Rican family has the *will* to bring it about. That new apartments are scarce or prohibitively expensive is not even a consideration in the books. That discriminatory restrictive covenants exist is never mentioned. The move takes place, the story ends happily, and another Puerto Rican family is well on the way to assimilation and

Angloization.

The happy glow dims in books where the children have entered their teens. All the problems so easily resolved earlier are back again. Where are the nice, well-adjusted, English-speaking, snow-loving Puerto Rican children now? By their teens, they have suddenly dropped out of school, joined gangs, turned to drugs and started committing crimes.

The authors have taken the young people's legitimate complaints of poverty, overcrowding, and racism and have transformed the expression of these complaints into so-called unacceptable or criminal behavior, i.e., robbing stores, etc. Because of their own political stance, the authors choose *not* to channel legitimate discontent into positive protest and rebellion. Radical protest among young Puerto Ricans is a fact, but you would never know it by reading the 100 books reviewed in the study, for in none of the books is it offered as a possible course of action. The au-

thors of the teenage books just cannot admit that it is society that needs to be changed, not the Puerto Rican teenager.

Having placed the Puerto Rican teenager in roles which they consider criminal, the authors then proceed with rehabilitation—that is, to force them for the umpteenth time to believe in the making-it-in-America myth—the myth the teenagers have already rejected. And the authors rehabilitate the teenager, not by the efforts of other Puerto Ricans, but almost exclusively through the benign intervention of the all-wise white benefactor. Nonbelief in the ability of Third World people to solve their own problems is the very nub of racism.

Of the 100 books only six were authored by Puerto Rican writers (see "Overview of the 100 Books: What the Statistics Reveal," page 2). Thus, besides the distortions already noted, the books are flawed by gross inaccuracies deriving from confusion about Puerto Rican traditions and customs—and in addition, because almost all the authors are white and middle class and live in the suburbs, the books are also flawed by misconceptions of what it is to live in Ghetto, U.S.A.

Here are instances of these inaccuracies and misconceptions:

- Policemen are depicted as the people's best friend. This may be true in middle class neighborhoods, where the authors live. It is totally contrary to reality in the ghetto.

- School teachers are portrayed as loving, kind, bilingual and as having answers to all the problems. Such is not reality in New York City schools, the setting of almost all the stories. See the article "Educational Slaughter of Puerto Rican Children," page 11.

- Contrived and stilted English is used as a demeaning device to suggest that a foreigner is speaking: short, simple sentences, verbs always in the present tense, noncontractions, etc.

- Puerto Rican names in the books are often Italian rather than Spanish—Carlo instead of Carlos, Carlotta instead of Carlota, etc.

- Mexican customs, dress and foods are mistakenly used as if they were Puerto Rican.

- Notably lacking in the books are Puerto Ricans of African descent, or Afro Borinquens. This not only ignores the significant African contribution to Puerto Rican culture, but falsifies the reality of the Puerto Rican racial makeup. ■

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS AS WEAPONS

(continued from page 1)

ing a literary ferment in Puerto Rico. Juan Angel Silén is the author of the fast-selling *We, The Puerto Rican People* and the editor of Puerto Rico's newest publishing firm, Libreria Internacional. On a recent visit to the Council's office in New York he and Nancy Zayas described with eager enthusiasm a series of children's books they are jointly writ-

ing. The first of the series is a collection of Puerto Rican creation myths. "These myths are highly distinctive to Puerto Rico," Juan Silén said, "but so far no one has thought to record them for young people. It is important that Puerto Rican children know that they have cultural roots that are different from the North Americans."

### Survey of Book Publishers

A Council survey of the five independent book publishers in Puerto Rico—publishers not supported by the government—shows that books specifically for children are still very limited, with only three children's books appearing in 1971. But seven such books are projected for 1972. Indications are that this number will be more than doubled in 1973.

Listings of the book publishers and other pertinent data obtained by this Council appear on page 14. Four of the five publishers, it will be noted, have come into existence during the past ten years and employ a total of thirty-seven full-time workers. In 1971 these firms published ninety-one titles, including the three children's books.

A look at where the books are actually printed is revealing. Of the 91 titles, 68 were printed in Spain, 23 in Mexico, 1 in the U.S. and 3 in Puerto Rico. That so few are printed in Puerto Rico is explained by the high cost of book printing on the island due to the virtual absence of facilities there. Existing presses are geared to newspaper and magazine, not book, manufacture, and the only binding facilities available are owned by the government. The cost of printing a book in Spain or Mexico is one-third the cost of printing the same book in Puerto Rico.

According to the sociologist Nieves Falcón, "Our shortage of book printing facilities is a result of the U.S. stranglehold on the Puerto Rican economy. U.S. book publishers have long held a tight grip on this market, the biggest being the Puerto Rican schools. While profiting from this market, U.S. publishers have felt no obligation to publish our writers."

Despite the lack of printing facilities, and perhaps partly because of it, two art forms of high excellence have emerged in Puerto Rico. One is silk screen printing as a substitute for commercially printed posters to advertise programs and events throughout the countryside. Puerto Rican illustrators have long excelled in silk screen printing and enjoy an international reputation. The second is the short story as a literary craft more readily publishable in magazine and underground newspapers than in book form novels. The short story as mastered by Puerto Rican writers also has international renown.

Puerto Rican writers have recently banded together in the *Sociedad de Autores Puertorriqueños*. It has nearly a hundred members, and many of them attend weekly meet-

ings to discuss ways of promoting each other's books. Last year the *Sociedad* opened a bookstore where authors bring their books for sale (see listing on page 5). The *Sociedad's* point of view about Puerto Rican needs for books was expressed to us by Isabel Cuchi Coll, their president. She said: "The destiny and the duty of the Puerto Rican writer is to defend the Puerto Rican heritage against those who are seeking to destroy it."

Two cultural organizations publish books to preserve the works of past Puerto Rican writers. The largest and most prestigious of these has been the Ateneo, but recently the *Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* has taken over this function and publishes books, music and records, in addition to editing a quarterly magazine (see "Where It's At: Important Sources in Puerto Rico," page 5).

### Puerto Rican Studies Program

The *Instituto* also establishes cultural and historical museums and arranges art exhibits and theater festivals. It sponsors cultural seminars and offers the only graduate level program of courses in Puerto Rican Studies. Ironically, the University of Puerto Rico (which is highly conservative and government controlled) has refused to establish such a course of studies or to accredit that of the *Instituto de Cultura*. Graduates of the *Instituto's* courses receive their M.A. degree from the University of New York at Buffalo.

Unhappily, we are told, the operations of the *Instituto* are undergoing severe curtailment, because funds that used to go to it have this year been diverted to the Boy Scouts and the American Legion in Puerto Rico.

The largest book publisher on the island—the only one with large-scale printing equipment—is the government-run Department of Education. The Department is also the biggest purchaser of children's books in Puerto Rico. This market fails to provide the support to Puerto Rican authors that one might expect. The writers and publishers we interviewed in Puerto Rico explain this by pointing out that the present government is primarily interested in Americanizing Puerto Rico, while most Puerto Rican writers see their role as defending the Puerto Rican identity. ■

## WHAT CHILDREN SAY

(continued from page 1)

such as *Angelita* and *I Am from Puerto Rico*, portrayed the characters with any degree of depth or emotion or handled the plots on more than a superficial level.

Our second objection has to do with a flaw we find in almost all children's books, and which occurs regardless of the author's ethnic background. Most children's books insult the intellect of children. It's as though the adult authors have decided that if one thinks and writes

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## WHAT CHILDREN SAY

(continued from page 15)

as simplistically as possible, avoiding all but the blandest of topics, they will be on the child's level and therefore their book will be of interest to a child. This is not so—for we have found that stories the children like the most have been those with either a touch of fantasy in them, or those which introduce new information to stir their imagination.

Pura Belpré's *Perez and Martina* is a good example. It is not a particularly Puerto Rican fairy tale the way it is written, because the author has given it such a strong Spanish flavor. Nevertheless, the children all loved it for its qualities of fantasy.

The children also loved the fantasy in Irving Sloan's *Silver Cart* of the two boys finding a \$20 bill; the way the boys spend the money, however, is middle class and unrealistic for children on the Lower East Side. In the story the boys use the money to buy tickets for an overnight camping expedition to Bear Mountain.

*I Am from Puerto Rico* by Peter Buckley, an unusual picture book, stirred the children's imagination by giving them information they had not known about the island in an exciting way.

The poetry books were particularly well liked. *Poemas y Colores*, a book of poems in Spanish, written by Puerto Ricans and published in Puerto Rico (see page 5), won the highest accolades.

The children's picture books depicting "ghetto life" were utterly boring. The children in our school just don't want to hear about—or see in photographs—the poor Puerto Rican kid who lives in the tenement, comes from a family of seven, and plays stickball in the streets. What's the big deal? Anyway, the books don't by any stretch of the imagination show what life is really like in ghetto communities.

One aspect that surprised us was the large number of books illustrated by photographs. These weren't particularly well received, but Bill Binzen's *Carmen* and *Miguel's Mountain* got a number of comments because the pictures had been taken right in our own neighborhood. The book *Angelita*, though uptown, was well liked.

An interesting thing we observed about the photo books was that they drew a lot of attention from the junior and senior high school students when they sat around at our after-school art workshop. These older boys and girls were fascinated by the way photographs were used to illustrate a story, and in most cases the pictures stimulated them to read the text. Our experience leads us to wonder if this might not be a valid technique for preparing texts on the junior and senior high school levels, on some kind of regional basis. The reality that the photos depict so sharply, which the little children had rejected, seemed literally to draw the older boys and

girls into the books.

To return to the picture books we reviewed, it almost goes without saying that—no matter how offensive the stories were—they were liked better if they contained Spanish words here and there. And Spanish names were remembered throughout the entire stories.

Our effort to review the books with the children and to work out ways to elicit honest and sincere responses from them was not entirely wasted. It was disappointing. And it may be that some of the books were actually damaging to the children's own self image, so that at times we had to explain to the children why an author presented a situation in a particular way to counteract the offensive effects of racial stereotyping. It may be, as the Council on Interracial Books for Children has proposed, that even the most racist of books can be turned to good use in the classroom for exploring the nature of racism and the wide variety of its disguises, but for very young children such exploration has its limits. The unhappy fact is that Puerto Rican children are so accustomed to being treated in demeaning ways that they actually identify with the derogatory stereotypes in the books.

The experience with the Puerto Rican children's books brought home to us, more clearly than ever, the fact we've been realizing for quite some time: in every class in our society there's a group on the bottom—oppressed by everyone else, looked down upon, talked down to, thoroughly dominated, and usually misunderstood—our children. They deserve better than what they've been getting. ■

### NEW STUDY CONFIRMS EDUCATIONAL SLAUGHTER OF PUERTO RICAN CHILDREN (continued from page 11)

In Ms. Orta's own program, some students study in English while learning Spanish as a second language; others study in Spanish while learning English as a second language. Eventually, these students will be able to study and to communicate in either language. This is the philosophy behind all the recommendations for a system of bilingual education. Only two schools, serving less than 1,500 students, are fully bilingual by this definition, and a very few schools, such as J.H.S. 45, have special programs that are genuinely bilingual. But in most of the schools that even claim to have instituted bilingual programs, actual practice is quite different. It is these programs that are indicted in the PREA study.

In the majority of supposedly bilingual programs in New York schools (there are at least 40 such programs), no real attempt is made to teach Puerto Rican children in Spanish—which, since it is the only language that such a large number of them speak, is the only language in which it is reasonable to expect them to learn. Instead, the schools content

themselves with providing instruction in English as a second language.

At best, this kind of a program can only reduce the time that a non-English speaking child will waste sitting frustrated and uncomprehending in mathematics, history, and geography classes taught in English. By the time that the special English lessons might bear fruit, of course, such a student has fallen far behind. All too often, in the process, the student's self-confidence, interest and hope will have fallen away as well. And in most of these programs, even the special instruction in English amounts to little more than tokenism. Known widely as "pull-out" programs, the procedure is for a teacher of English-as-a-second-language to select two or three Puerto Rican children in a class and take them out of the classroom for 30 minutes of special instruction each day.

The PREA study finds that less than one-fourth of the Puerto Rican children significantly handicapped in school by their lack of English are in any kind of bilingual program at all, while less than 10 per cent of the programs that do exist are genuinely bilingual. After all the school system's rhetoric about bilingual education is stripped away, the fact is that only about 4,000 children are served by programs that are really bilingual. According to PREA statistics, that means that *less than 3 per cent of those Puerto Rican children desperately needing help in New York schools actually get it*. The other 97 per cent more than 130,000 children—are victims of educational genocide.

*Editors' Note: Individuals and organizations interested in helping to ensure publication of the PREA report—and in publicizing its findings—are urged to get in touch with the Council on Interracial Books for Children at 29 West 15 Street, New York, N.Y. 10011, or directly with Ms. Awilda Orta, president of the Puerto Rican Educators Association at J.H.S. 45, 2351 First Avenue, New York, N.Y. ■*

## A Book Is Born

by the authors of  
Events in the History of Puerto Rico

We never planned to start a publishing house. Our aim—two Puerto Ricans and a non-Puerto Rican who had long lived in Puerto Rico—was to write a book that would help give Puerto Rican youngsters a sense of themselves and an opportunity to examine their roots and hopefully arrive at a more positive self-image.

For several years we had been taking the idea to large and small publishing companies and were told that any material on Puerto Ricans would necessarily be regional in scope and would be "a commercially unsound investment" of money, time and energy.

Finally, we pooled the little money we had, obtained incorporation papers for Research for Urban Education, hired a researcher and an artist, visited printers for estimates, met with New York City

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Board of Education technicians to determine the size and style of type, paper texture, book size, kind of binding required in the schools, etc.

One of our group, Sam Morales—he was the illustrator and the only one not already employed full time—enrolled in a course on book publishing at New York University. We would meet together in the evenings as he passed on to us what he learned during the day, and from there on out we divided the work load into assignments for all of us—from writing various parts to editing what the others did to the final proofreading of the galleys and checking the color overlays.

The research required was extraordinary. Hours upon hours in the Public Library studying in detail the history of Puerto Rico, a history that is utterly missing in the textbooks. Even at the library, there was shockingly little in English texts, and what information of substance we found was almost always in

Spanish language books.

We visited Puerto Rico many times to check out the type and style of the Taino Indian dwellings and the landscape. We were surprised to learn that the palm tree, which we had thought was indigenous to the island, was brought there by the Spaniards.

Volume one covers the period of the Tainos on the island before Columbus came, the wars of the Tainos with the Spanish, and the final conquest of the Tainos. We are now at work on the second volume, which covers 400 years of Spanish rule and the emergence of "the Puerto Rican" from the three population groups: Indian, Spanish and African. The third volume will cover the period from 1898, when the U.S. conquered Puerto Rico, to the present.

*Events in the History of Puerto Rico* is distributed by Batey Book Distributing Co., 37 East 18th St., New York, N.Y. 10003. ■

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