

*Editorial  
Palitosa*

May 14, 1970

Mr. Andrew Viglucci, Editor  
The San Juan Star  
G. P. O. Box 418  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Dear Mr. Viglucci:

Your editorial of May 13, "Cambodia and Treason", chastizing Representative Belaval has my strong support.

The tradition of democratic dissent holds that no man, policy or country is beyond criticism. This tradition has been a cornerstone of U. S. history.

A man wrote once the following statement regarding an american president:  
"His Mind, taxed beyond its power is running hither and hither like some tortured creature on a burning surface, finding no position on which it can settle down and be at ease... He is a bewildered, con founded and miserably perplexed man. God grant he may be able to show there is not something about his conscience than all his mental perplexity." (1)

The man was Abraham Lincoln; the President was not Mr. Nixon, but President Polk; the occasion, the Mexican War of 1848 which Lincoln opposed. Would we call Lincoln a "traitor"?

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(1) The man was Mark Twain. The President was Theodore Roosevelt; the war was the struggle against the Filipinas at the beginning of the centura. Was Mark Twain a "traitor"? Or was he rather a creative genius in U. S. letters and a American as apple pie?

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Or would we consider him as one of the best symbols of American democracy?

On another occasion, another man wrote: "This Republic's life is not in peril. It has swung itself loose from its safe anchorage and is drifting, its helm is in pirate hands. The stupid phrase needed help, and it got another one: "Even if the war be wrong we are in it and must fight it out: we cannot retire from it without dishonor." Why, not even a burglar could have said it better. We cannot withdraw from this sordid raid because to grant peace to those little people upon their terms-independence-would dishonor us. You have flung away Adam's phrase you should take it up and examine it again. He said, "An inglorious peace is better than a dishonorable war."

The star Editorial, however, has a flaw it implies that Representative Belaval is an American fringo. I disagree. To me he is a Puerto Rican "incondicional". The two birds, although they flock together, are not of the same feather. An experienced political ornithologist may discern certain differences. To an American fringo, "Our Country, right or wrong" is his passionate motto. (And there is implied the possibility that no matter how much he may support it, the Country may still be wrong. To a Puerto Rican "incondicional", the Country can never be wrong. It is right invariably, inevitably, and indubitably right. So it was under Spain; so it has been under the United States.

To the "incondicional", during the Spanish period to dissent was to be a "fili-bustero", a "mambi", even an anarchist. During the U. S. period, it is to be a subversive, a traitor or a communist. The Puerto Rican "incondicional" is blind

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to history. He belongs to a pathetic tradition which is an affront to democracy here and every where like the French Bourbons, he will never learn.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Arturo Morales Carrión

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- 1- The Lincoln Encyclopedia (New York, 1950), page 203
- 2- Mark Twain, Letters from the Earth (New York, 1963), page 98.

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