PAPOLÍTICO
Poems of a Political Persuasion
by Jesús Papoleto Meléndez
Introduction by Joel Kovel and DeeDee Halleck

PAPOLÍTICO, POEMS OF A POLITICAL PERSUASION is award-winning poet Jesús Papoleto Meléndez’ sixth book of poetry. Witty, wise, personal and political, Meléndez, often weary of the social issues and politics of the day, has created an exciting compilation of new and previously published poems in a collection that he has daringly named after himself to nudge people out of complacency. His poetry is written with satirical and ironic wit, presented in a “cascading” style that dictates the beat and rhythm of his poems he has become known for. This volume contains some of Meléndez’ classic poems, like “A San Diego Southern/African Night,” with new poems that are a bit edgier and challenge the status quo. Despite the frustrations and harsh realities, we live in today, Meléndez maintains an eternal belief that it is never too late for our future to be changed for the better, making PAPOLÍTICO a poetic call for tolerance, reflection, reconciliation, and healing.

“If someone claims they married Puerto Rico, it means they must have married the poet, Papoleto, who is the essence of the island, its people, struggles, dignity, music and dance. Not in a very long time has a son of Borinquen unearth its history and its foibles, from romance to politics of this enchanted harried nation as Papoleto has done in this collection, PAPOLÍTICO!”

—Ntozake Shange, poet, writer, and author of the classic choreopoem, for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbows is enuf (1977)

“I truly appreciate where Papoleto is coming from politically, and his latest book, PAPOLÍTICO, has been aptly named. I love his sense of humor and of course, his sarcasm – he is good and crazy! What’s important here is that Papoleto deals with the pain, the love, and the uncertainties of life as only a true poet could. From the first poem to the last, it’s clear that he lives and breathes poetry naturally. It was a real pleasure reading PAPOLÍTICO and traveling into the mind and soul of a tender human being.”

—Abiodun Oyewole, The Last Poets
author of Branches of the Tree of Life (2014) and The Beauty of Being (2018)

“Papo’s latest poetry collection, PAPOLÍTICO, does not allow even the most progressive or the most radical of us to get away with the hypocrisy of simply living and getting by. His metaphors demand you swallow the fetid water of racism, the rancid meat of capitalism, the insidious candy of nihilism, and forces us to think of what we’ve become as a nation.”

—Felipe Luciano, poet, community activist, journalist, lecturer

About the Author

JESÚS PAPOLETO MELÉNDEZ (“Papo”) is an award-winning New York-born poet who is also a playwright, teacher and activist recognized as one of the founders of the Nuyorican Movement. He has published several volumes of poetry: Casting Long Shadows (1970), Have You Seen Liberation (1971), Street Poetry & Other Poems (1972), Concertos On Market Street (1994); and the stage plays The Junkies Stole the Clock (New York Shakespeare Festival, 1974), and An Element of Art (El Porton Theatre Co., 1978). His book, Hey Yo! Yo Soy! 40 Years of Nuyorican Street Poetry, A Bilingual Edition (2012), is comprised of his three previously published books from the 1970s.

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