

the scars of history on my face  
and the veins of my body  
that aches  
vomito sangre  
y lloro libertad  
I do not ask for freedom  
I am freedom

# El Grito

A JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN-AMERICAN THOUGHT

fall 1968

one dollar

# El Grito

A JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN-AMERICAN THOUGHT

Volume II, No. 1

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# Editorial

Volume I, Number 1

Contrary to the general pattern of ethnic minorities in the history of the United States, Mexican-Americans have retained their distinct identity and have refused to disappear into The Great American Melting Pot. Not having the good grace to quietly disappear, we have then compounded our guilt in America's eyes by committing the additional sin of being glaringly poor in the midst of this affluent, abundant, and over-developed society.

In response to this embarrassing situation, American ingenuity has risen to the occasion and produced an ideological rhetoric that serves to neatly explain away both the oppressive and exploitative factors maintaining Mexican-Americans in their economically impoverished condition, and Mexican-Americans' refusal to enthusiastically embrace The American Way of Life with all its various trap-pings. Although recitations of this rhetoric vary in emphasis and degree of sophistication, the essential message is the same: Mexican-Americans are simple-minded but lovable and colorful children who because of their rustic naïveté, limited mentality, and inferior, backward "traditional culture," choose poverty and isolation instead of assimilating into the American mainstream and accepting its material riches and superior culture.

Formulated and propagated by those intellectual mercenaries of our age, the social scientists, this rhetoric has been professionally certified and institutionally sanctified to the point where today it holds wide public acceptance, and serves as the ideological premise of every black, white, and brown missionary's concept of, and policy towards, Mexican-Americans. Yet this great rhetorical structure is a grand hoax, a blatant lie—a lie that must be stripped of its esoteric and sanctified verbal garb and have its intellectually spurious and vicious character exposed to full view.

Only Mexican-Americans themselves can accomplish the collapse of this and other such rhetorical structures by the exposure of their fallacious nature and the development of intellectual alternatives. *El Grito* has been founded for just this purpose — to provide a forum for Mexican-American self definition and expression on this and other issues of relevance to Mexican-Americans in American society today.

# Editorial

Volume II, Number 1

This issue of *El Grito* reflects the multi-American roots and interests found in the Mexican-American Historical Culture existing today in the fields as well as in the cities. It contains bilingual poetry, prose from Mexico, an analysis of social science studies of Mexican-Americans, and an article on nationalistic movements.

The poetry of Alurista in this issue represents a resurgence of an old poetic form in a contemporary setting — bilingual poetry in Spanish and English. Alurista's poetry attests to the creative literary fountain contained within biculturalism and bilingualism. This literary sphere of dual symbolism and its richness of expression has long existed, and its expression is now in the pages of *El Grito*.

The review essay by Professor Romano, dealing with social science studies of Mexican-Americans, amply illustrates that dehumanization and its attendant ramifications does not spring from white southerners and Chicagoans of Polish descent alone. In fact, the process of dehumanization also springs from the halls of academe, masked as social science. Romano's article shows how the actual history of Mexican-Americans has been academically obliterated by the social sciences, replacing that long and complex history with what he calls "social science fiction."

This issue of *El Grito* also presents the prose of Silvio Villavivencio, young author of the new literary wave in Guadalajara, Jalisco. The work of Villavivencio, and other writers like him, is doubly important to Mexican-Americans because rampant ethnocentrism in American educational institutions has essentially excluded this expression of their historical culture. As a result of this educational attitude, young Mexican-Americans have been callously torn from their intellectual heritage and cultural roots, leaving them at the mercy of Ichabod Crane.

Nick C. Vaca's article addresses itself to the question that is foremost in the minds of Mexican-Americans, Filipinos, Chinese, American Indians, Hawaiians, Pakistanis, East Indians, Arabs, Koreans, Peruvians, Guatemalans, Panamanians, and many of the other colored minorities that constitute American society. That question is: What is the effect of Black Nationalism on their own relative posi-

tions in America today? This is a momentous question, for these "other minorities" constitute well over 3,000,000 people in California alone.

These works, and others that are to follow in subsequent issues of *El Grito*, display the continuing historical and contemporary manifestations of Mexican-Americans in their universe.

Much of what has been presented in the past issues of *El Grito* has defined what Mexican-Americans are not. Previous works have exploded the myth that we are social vegetables encased in our traditional culture, as social scientists would have us believe; nor are we the quiescent types, as historians would also have us believe. Actually, the active definition of Mexican-Americans has existed for generations. *El Grito* is merely one more channel for its articulation.

# The Poetry of Alurista

Mis ojos hinchados

Mis ojos hinchados  
     flooded with lágrimas  
 de bronce  
 melting on the cheek bones  
 of my concern  
     razgos indígenas  
 the scars of history on my face  
     and the veins of my body  
 that aches  
     vomito sangre  
 y lloro libertad  
     I do not ask for freedom  
 I *am* freedom  
     no one  
 not even Yahweh  
     and his thunder  
 can pronounce  
     and on a stone  
 la ley del hombre esculpir  
     no puede  
 mi libertad  
 and the round tables  
     of ice cream  
         hot dog  
     meat ball lovers meet  
 to rap  
     and rap  
 and I hunger  
     y mi boca está seca  
 el agua cristalina  
     y la verdad  
     transparent  
 in a cup  
     is never poured  
 dust gathers on the shoulders  
     of dignitaries  
 y de dignidad  
     no saben nada  
 muertos en el polvo  
     they bite the earth  
 and return  
     to dust

cantos de ranas viejas

cantos de ranas viejas  
sobre el nopal lagunas de amargura  
cristales perlas de mejillas gatunas: noches  
    en las que el buho vigila  
el águila flota en las nubes: roncas  
    melodías en el pantano  
fogoso ritmo de plumas danzantes: sacerdotes  
ascetas de barbada piocha: capricorniana  
    en su tributo el solar Tonatiuh  
Emanando rayos de obsidiana  
en los tristes ojos de la rana sabia: tradición  
    pretérita de Quetzales sagrados ritos  
    nocturnos de luna arrulladora  
    melodía en el ocaso de la ceremonia: matrimonial  
    contrato con el cenote  
    – lamosa tumba, ancestral trono  
esmeraldas lágrimas en el croar  
    – tempestuoso lamento de Tlaloc  
los iniciados reciben la sabia  
    – del sol ojos de sapo

tarde sobria

tarde sobria  
    caminas en el agua pavimento cruel  
bolsillos sin papel  
    sin ruido tus pasos  
    past Ortega's store – no dimes to spend  
gotta look for Jesse  
    go down see cindy – la gavacha  
go to Joe's  
    go down see Virginia  
mañana el jale  
pero "orita" el tiempo es mío  
    patrol car – he stop me  
no time to walk, too young  
the man  
    he doesn't know my raza is old  
on the streets he frisks me

on the job he kills al jefe  
 en la tienda no atiende a mi mamá  
 the man  
 he say he wanna marry mi carnala  
 hell no!  
 ella es mujer, no juguete  
 the man  
 he likes to play  
 he got a lot o' toys  
 and he don't know  
     que las tardes que me alumbran  
 y las nubes que me visten  
     pertenecen a mi raza  
     a mi barrio  
 along with Ortega's store  
 in the afternoons  
     dust built walled castles  
 as i swim through the smog  
     and the smell of the cannery  
 basin headed man of black-white stroll  
     stick in hand don't know  
 no papers in my pockets  
     my I.D. is my bigote  
 gonna look for Jesse – forget the gavacha  
     go get Joe  
 to see Virginia

grietas paredes

Grietas parades  
     – calaveras urbanas  
 (Has olvidado)  
     – árboles de limón  
     – trinos de asfalto  
 (en la tarde las moscas)  
     – ladrillos de zócalo vermellón  
 Recuerdas?  
     Selvas de fruta fresca  
         – mango ilusión  
 Y la brisa de dios  
     – el acuariano Ehecatl  
 Paseos: germinante lodo

Eres barro  
– Ometeotl te moldeó  
de pómulos gatunos  
sagaz asceta  
de bronce calor fundido  
– cardinal balám  
Tonatiuh rajo grietas  
– brotafuego  
en tus venas crecen plumas  
– y Quetzalcoatl se embellece  
tus hijos juegan canicas  
tus padres parieron muerte  
– naciste  
naciste y eres  
barro  
bronce barro en tu perfil  
y el de tus grietas paredes

nuestro barrio

Nuestro barrio  
en las tardes de paredes grabadas  
los amores de Pedro con Virginia  
en las tardes  
barriendo  
Dust about  
swept away in the wind of our breath  
el suspiro de dios por nuestras calles  
gravel side streets of solitude  
the mobs from the tracks are coming  
en la tarde  
mientras Don José barre su acera  
mientras dios respira vientos secos  
en el barrio sopla la vejez de Chon  
y la juventud de Juan madura  
en la tarde de polvo  
el recuerdo de mi abuelo  
– de las flores en su tumba  
of dust  
polvorosas flores  
blowing free to powdered cruces

must be the season of the witch

Must be the season of the witch

la bruja  
la llorona

she lost her children  
and she cries

en las barrancas of industry  
her children

devoured by computers  
and the gears

Must be the season of the witch  
I hear huesos crack

in pain  
y lloros

la bruja pangs  
sus hijos han olvidado

la magia de Durango  
y la de Moctezuma  
— el Huiclamina

Must be the season of the witch

La bruja llora  
sus hijos sufren; sin ella

I've been conditioned

I've been conditioned  
to cry  
to reckon time  
to die?

Not while on fire  
los frijoles de olla  
hirviendo  
conciéndose ya  
el barro lo labré yo  
no time to die  
'cause los frijoles are on  
se me antojan  
y su aroma me baña  
sudo

y se me enchina la piel  
to tears I'll yield  
to time no more record to keep  
but die?

No time  
frijoles en barro  
olla hirviendo  
gotta have 'em (i won't die)

unexpectedly: my night gloom came

Unexpectedly  
    my night gloom came  
injusta capa fúnebre  
I realized  
devoured me  
y mis tripas gnawed at  
la luna y su eclipse  
the cultural assassination  
of my people  
    de mis abuelos  
y corrí hacia el sol  
    el de mis padres  
the one that printed  
    on my sarape  
fantastic colors  
    through the prism  
    – la pirámide del sol  
at the sacrificial Teocatl  
my fathers wore their plumage  
    to listen  
and soplaron vida con sus solares rayos  
en mi raza

i found a picture

i found a picture  
    on a wall, hung up  
was staring  
    knowing not  
the space that filled my room  
    con flores margaritas  
    mariposas  
    abejas trabajadoras  
and he?  
    couldn't taste but stare  
    at my beehive  
    at my miel  
on the same wall he erected  
    con ladrillos de papel  
nailing a frame  
    cutting his space in a picture hung himself  
up or down (¡qué importa!)  
    ante su caja de idiota  
    hipnotizado y estéril  
stares  
    hung up on his own perspective; blind  
and in my room i flow melting (y me alimento con miel)

salsa con crackers

Salsa con crackers  
 ¿cómo? con la boca  
 prelogical fruit  
     prehistoric experience entre las palmas  
 entrando a primaria  
 y a la salida  
     after school con Chona  
 a las quesadillas  
     de la bruja con limones embotellados  
 and cucumbers con chile piquín  
 – a veces jícama  
 a veces nada – sin dinero without friends  
 pobre and abandoned, hungry  
 crackers do not quench my pangs  
     my gut swelled  
 tengo hambre  
     crackers do not show their fangs  
 no bite, no poison or enchantment  
 even con salsa  
     arid, dry, desiertas de calor

can this really be the end

Can this really be the end  
     out to hand a jump right in  
 come see her, come on now  
     to chicano town go down  
 again  
 A ver la feria de colores cuetes  
     campanas  
     y ventanas de cartón  
 paredes de papel, terruño seco piso  
 al bautizo de San Juan  
     dove descending drifting dead on head  
 of Christos, the man Jesus  
     he ain't dead  
 Pedro will tell you in a rezo to the sun  
 y Macario su rosario y su misa!  
 Dog chow cookies, belly lead  
 to shoot, to kill  
     and crumble melting in a wall  
     blood spilt  
     paredes tatuadas  
 paredón final  
     muerto

# The Anthropology and Sociology of the Mexican-Americans:

## THE DISTORTION OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

### *A Review Essay*

OCTAVIO IGNACIO ROMANO—V.

Suppose that you are a traveler from outer space. You land on earth. Everything has been devastated by some final war. You wander about, looking. Finally you find a trap door leading down into the ground. There you find an underground library — left there for posterity. You are now that posterity.

Curious, you pull a book down from a shelf. The book you select is about Mexican-Americans, written by a social scientist. You begin to read. Interesting. Strange. Intrigued, you read more about Mexican-Americans, more books by social scientists from the same shelf. You read Tuck, Griffith, Saunders, Clark, Edmonson, Rubel, Heller, Madsen, Landes, Kluckhohn, and Samora. By the time you finish reading these books you have come to two conclusions: (1) Earthlings used social science to “explain” history, and, (2) Mexican-Americans had virtually no history to speak of, trapped as they were in their isolated Traditional Culture, an ahistorical process to begin with.

The first conclusion is correct. The second is not. Here’s why.

### *The Concept of Traditional Culture*

The social concept of Traditional Culture is a passive concept — scientifically, philosophically, and empirically equipped to deal with human beings only as passive containers and retainers of culture. In the United States, all social science studies of Mexican-Americans have blindly relied upon this totally passive concept of Traditional Culture in order to, (1) describe the foundations of Mexican-American culture, (2) to “explain” the existence of Mexican-Americans over time, and (3) to use the idea of Traditional Culture as a final cause of empirical life. For these reasons, social science studies have

dealt with Mexican-Americans as an ahistoric people – with a place in history reserved for them only when they undergo some metamorphosis usually called acculturation. As a consequence, Mexican-Americans are never seen as participants in history, much less as generators of the historical process.

This stultified view of Mexican-Americans is clearly illustrated by the following statement by William Madsen, anthropologist.

Mexican-Americans caught in the middle of the conflict between two cultures may react in one of several ways. Some retreat to the security of the conservative Mexican-American world. Some seek geographical escape by migrating to the larger cities of Texas or to California, Michigan, or Illinois. Some escape into the twilight zone of alcoholism. Some rebel and commit crimes or engage in antisocial behavior. As their numbers increase, more and more *acculturated* Mexican-Americans are trying to create for themselves a respected place embracing the best of both worlds. (p. 109, my emphasis)

According to Madsen, Mexican-American culture represents a retreat, whereas acculturation represents creativity and change. It is with bi-polar dichotomies such as this that the notion of the passive Traditional Culture is perpetuated.

Is this view historically accurate? Is it true that people of Mexican descent in the United States have waited to become acculturated before participating in history?

### *Mexican-Americans; An Historical Perspective*

Contrary to the ahistorical views of anthropology and sociology, Mexican-Americans as well as Mexican immigrants have not simply wallowed passively in some teleological treadmill, awaiting the emergence of an acculturated third generation before joining in the historical process.<sup>1</sup> For example, in 1883 several hundred cowboys in the Panhandle went on strike, and this strike call was signed by a man named Juan Gomez. Aside from this signature, it is not known how many of these strikers were of Mexican descent. What is known, however, is that this event signaled the beginning of over seventy years of labor strife between Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and their employers.<sup>2</sup> Then, in 1903, over 1,000 Mexican and Japanese sugar-beet workers went on strike in California. This was followed by a wave of strikes in Los Angeles, initiated by Mexican railway workers. In 1922 Mexican field workers sought to organize in Fresno; this effort was followed by the formation of a large union *La Confederación de Uniones Obreras* in southern California dur-

ing 1927. This worker confederation organized twenty locals with over 3,000 members. Its first strike was called in the Imperial Valley in 1928. Scarcely two years later, in 1930, some 5,000 Mexican field workers were on strike in the Imperial Valley for the second time. Not long after that, in 1933, the largest agricultural workers' strike to date in California took place when 7,000 Mexican workers walked out of the onion, celery, and berry fields in Los Angeles County. Later, in the same year, Mexican workers were on strike in the southern area of the San Joaquin Valley. That was the same year in which Mexicans and Mexican-Americans struck for the third time in the Imperial Valley.

Only three more years had elapsed when, in 1936, 2,000 Mexican celery workers went on strike outside of Los Angeles. In this same year, 2,500 Mexican workers tied up for several weeks a \$20,000,000 citrus crop in Orange County.

These upheavals, virtually continuous from the turn of the century until World War II, were only the major events which took place in California. These, however, were not the only efforts made by Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. During the thirties, for example, workers of Mexican descent were striking in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Idaho, Colorado, Washington, Michigan, as well as in California — that is, in eight different states of the Union.

These were only the agricultural strikes. Parallel efforts included the 1934 sheepherder strike in west Texas, a similar action by pecan shellers in San Antonio, as well as a protest in south Texas. Moreover, several thousand Mexican coal miners went on strike in New Mexico during the mid-thirties. Here, too, a union was organized. It was called *La Liga Obrera de Habla Española*, with a membership of 8,000 individuals.

In Arizona the story was much the same, with labor unrest beginning as early as 1915 with a strike involving 5,000 workers. This unrest has continued sporadically over the years.

The growing labor movement involving Mexicans and Mexican-Americans was met with massive military counter-action in order to break the strikes. Massive deportations followed, even though the unrest continued.

Then, in 1946, after decades of widespread and constant turmoil and upheavals followed by military action against demands for a better life, a sociologist named Ruth Tuck made the following incredible statement:

For many years, the (Mexican) *immigrant and his sons made no effort to free themselves. They burned with resentment over a thousand slights, but they did so in pri-*

vate. . . . Perhaps this *passivity* is the mark of any minority which is just emerging. . . . (p. 198, emphasis mine)

Thus, in one semantic stroke, this sociologist wiped out the decades of strife in which Mexican immigrants and their sons fought to free themselves. In effect, Tuck wiped out history. In so doing, she set the stage for what was to follow in subsequent anthropological and sociological studies of Mexican-Americans.

*Social Science, Mexican-Americans, and the Distortion of History*

Ruth Tuck's opinion of a population that does nothing but "burn with resentment privately" became the dominant view of Mexican-American character in the literature of the social sciences. Scarcely eight years later, for example, the sociologist Lyle Saunders wrote,

A closely related trait of the Spanish-speaking people is their somewhat greater readiness toward acceptance and resignation than is characteristic of the Anglo. Whereas it is the belief of the latter that man has an obligation to struggle against and if possible to master the problems and difficulties that beset him, the Spanish-speaking person is more likely to accept and resign himself to whatever destiny brings him. (p. 128)

And again from Saunders,

The Spanish-speaking person, by contrast (to Anglos) is likely to meet difficulties by adjusting to them rather than by attempting to overcome them. Fate is somewhat inexorable, and there is nothing much to be gained by struggling against it. If the lot of man is hard — and it frequently is — such is the will of God, incomprehensible but just, and it is the obligation of man to accept it. . . . In the collective recollection of village life there is only the remembrance of men and women who were born, resigned themselves to suffering and hardship and occasional joys, and died when their time came. (p. 129)

In this manner, as Ruth Tuck before him, Lyle Saunders distorted history, essentially rewrote history, and perpetuated the concept of an ahistoric people, the "somnolent, passive Mexican" referred to in Vaca's article,<sup>3</sup> the Mexican lazily asleep under the cactus in the popular and ignorant mind.

Saunders' "study" was quickly followed by another equally distorted interpretation, Munro S. Edmonson's *Los Manitos*, a New Mexico study. Here the perverted litany continues when he states that ". . . fatalistic acceptance of things which 'just happen' are a source of wonder and despair to Anglo housewives with Mexicano

servants, but they are a *precise* expression of the Mexican attitude . . ." (p. 60, emphasis mine) Edmonson goes on to say, "Hispanos give a characteristic shrug of acceptance of death and illness as inevitable." (p. 60) In other words, Hispanos do not cry at funerals, they just give a "characteristic shrug." These absurd statements are not enough for Edmonson, he has more. Hispanos have no "individual responsibility" in sexual relations (p. 60), perhaps they are like cats and dogs, whereas Anglo sexual practices provide "rational" alternatives. In other words, not only is history distorted, but Hispanos are now sexually irresponsible and irrational. There is little need to dwell upon such absurdities, except to point out that Hispanos are also said to be fatalistic about the "natural order of things" due to their religion (p. 60), are willing "to live with failure," live in "mañana land," are politically apathetic, and finally, ". . . where Hispano culture is fatalistic, American culture is markedly activist." (p. 61) In this simple little phrase, like Tuck and Saunders before him, Edmonson cleanly wipes out history and simultaneously classifies these people of New Mexico as basically un-American. This is a theme that is incessantly recurrent in all of the social science literature on Mexican-Americans. It is an ideological precursor to the current un-American charges leveled against the Tijerina movement in New Mexico today.

From Munro Edmonson's 1957 "study" it is an easy jump to Florence Rockwood Kluckhohn and Fred L. Strodbeck's 1961 report that, conceptually, is the exact mirror image of the Edmonson publication. The Kluckhohn-Strodbeck section on Hispanos in New Mexico is based upon a sample of twenty-three in a community of 150 people. Then this minute sample is used to describe Mexican-American and New Mexican value orientations for the past 400 years! It is important to keep this fact in mind in view of Celia Heller's subsequent study of Mexican-Americans which relies heavily on the Kluckhohn sample of twenty-three, and also the Samora-Lamanna Chicago study of Mexican-Americans which accepts the same views without question.

The historically distorted studies of Tuck, Saunders, Edmonson, and Kluckhohn-Strodbeck have been widely accepted in departments of anthropology and sociology throughout the United States. These books have become *the* authoritative sources of information about Mexican-Americans for a wide variety of institutional agencies, from schools of medicine, departments of social welfare, to departments of employment and other governmental agencies. In this way, thousands upon thousands of people, many of them Mexican-Americans themselves, have been indoctrinated with the historically

perverted notion that Mexican-Americans are an ahistoric people who have had no history except that of a long and tedious siesta.

But, one might say, these are "old studies" — the latest of them published in 1961. Fortunately we live in a nation dedicated to "progress." Obviously, then, such stereotypes of Mexican-Americans have been corrected in the intervening years — thanks to science which is the handmaiden of progress. To see if this is so, let us turn to three widely circulated current studies of Mexican-Americans: *The Mexican-Americans of South Texas* by William Madsen (1964), *Mexican-American Youth: Forgotten Youth at the Crossroads* by Celia Stopnicka Heller (1968, third printing), and *Mexican-Americans in a Midwest Metropolis: A Study of East Chicago* by Julian Samora and Richard A. Lamanna (1967).

Today these books are used in the training of professionals as well as in race and ethnic relations courses in colleges and universities. Therefore, it is of importance to consider them in some detail.

#### *William Madsen's Mexican-Americans*

In *The Mexican-Americans of South Texas*, Madsen begins by saying,

In our melting-pot process, there is a willingness to accept foreign holidays, foods, and some expressions of speech. However, it is assumed that every acculturated American shares certain core values with the rest of the population. His behavior must be comprehensible and predictable in most situations. Every American is expected to show maximum faith in America, science, and progress. (p. 1)

But apparently faith in progress and progress itself are two different things, for Madsen's volume reveals no significant change from the views of its predecessors. It, too, deals with Mexican-Americans as an ahistoric people. It, too, deals with this population as if it were composed of passive, anxiety-ridden receptors who must undergo a complete psychological, cultural, and personality metamorphosis before they can be considered fullfledged members of society. Madsen sees this total changeover as associated with acculturation and a simultaneous movement from the lower into the middle class. In his words, "By whatever criteria one judges successful acculturation among Mexican-Americans, it is generally a middle- or upper-class phenomenon." (p. 3) *Ergo*, lower class Mexican-Americans are not Americans at all. Once again we see the un-American theme which appeared in Edmonson's publication.

As it turns out, the creatures who inhabit Madsen's book are the same as those found in the works of Tuck, Saunders, Edmonson, and

Kluckhohn. For example, Madsen bases his study on his conceptualization of the traditional culture which allows him to say, "Fatalistic philosophy produces an attitude of resignation which often convinces the Anglo that the Latin lacks drive and determination. What the Anglo tries to control, the Mexican-American tries to accept. Misfortune is something the Anglo tries to overcome and the Latin views as fate." (p. 16) Then he adds, "Acceptance and appreciation of things as they are constitute primary values of *La Raza*." (p. 17) In these comments once again we see Edmonson's "characteristic shrug" and Saunders' passive people who are born, live, and die in total and abject resignation. Here, too, we see Tuck's creatures who make no effort whatever to free themselves. Once again these social scientists want us to believe that Mexican-Americans accept hunger, malnutrition, death, exploitation, oppression, and segregation with characteristic shrugs, and, according to Madsen, with an "acceptance and appreciation of things as they are." Once again the history, especially the history of non-acceptance, has been totally obliterated.

The obvious implication, of course, is that because Mexican-Americans are so resigned, then all salvation must come from without.

In Madsen's world, not only are Mexican-Americans passively fatalistic, their women are super-passively-fatalistic with a touch of sado-masochism thrown in for good measure. For example, "The Mexican-American wife who irritates her husband may be beaten. She should accept this punishment as deserved. Some wives assert that they are grateful for punishment at the hands of their husbands for such concern with shortcomings indicates profound love." (p. 20)

There is more. Mexican-Americans ". . . regard envy as a destructive emotion and admit that it is a major barrier to the material advancement of *La Raza*. Envy is felt to be such a powerful emotion that it is difficult or impossible to suppress." (p. 22) "While the Anglos try to keep up with the Joneses, the Latins try to keep the Garcias down to their own level." (p. 22) They accomplish this through gossip, ridicule, witchcraft, and fear. (p. 22-23)

What Madsen has said, of course, is that Mexican-Americans are the generators of their own problems. Consequently, they are their own worst enemies. This is all a part of their traditional culture which they learn from their parents. Therefore, their parents are their own worst enemies.

Let us delve a little more into what this author has said about the family. "The family is the main focus of social stratification in all classes of Mexican-American society." (p. 44) In addition, "An-

glos believe that equality in the home and self-advancement are necessary to maintain the American ideals of freedom, democracy, and progress. Mexican-Americans believe that putting family above self is necessary to fulfill the will of God." (p. 46) From this it follows that not only are Mexican-American parents their children's own worst enemies, they are also a potential threat to the American ideals of freedom, democracy, and progress. And, according to Madsen, going to college doesn't seem to help much either, for, "A good many of the Mexican-Americans who go to college don't seem to know what they want out of an education. This lack of purpose is particularly characteristic of Latins who are seeking a higher education than their parents received." (p. 108) All of this, of course, leads to a "characteristic lack of goal orientation," a modern euphemism for the Mexican slumbering under the cactus.

To summarize Madsen's views, due to their own culture Mexican-Americans are the generators of their own problems. This impedes their material advancement. Therefore, today they are just as they have always been, and they will not progress until they change completely. Thus, *Madsen has equated economic determinism with cultural determinism*, just as Oscar Lewis has done.<sup>4</sup> Finally, Madsen has made Mexican-American culture the final cause of all of the problems that Mexican-Americans have encountered throughout history.

### *Celia S. Heller's Mexican-Americans*

Celia Stopnicka Heller opens her book with the following introductory statement:

The Mexican-American minority has received little attention from the mass media of communication and, outside the Southwest, there is hardly any awareness of its existence. . . . Moreover, in those southwestern states, where they are concentrated, an awareness exists but there is no corresponding knowledge about them. Of course, few people in those states would admit ignorance and more would vouch that they "know all there is to know" about Mexican-Americans. The "all" very often consists of a stereotypic image of Mexican-Americans that is widespread. I have heard numerous comments which reflect it. The comments about Mexican-American youth in particular — made even by individuals having contact with them, such as teachers, school administrators, and social workers — run something like this: How "Mexican" the young people are in their ways, how lacking in ambition, how prone to delinquent behavior.

Even for the person who is not satisfied with those stereotypes it is not easy to obtain factual information. (p. 3-4)

As we shall see, Celia Heller is more than well satisfied with "those stereotypes," almost exuberant — adding some of her own to boot. Her starting point, as in other such books, is the traditional culture of the Mexican-Americans. From such a notion she proceeds to construct the following image of Mexican-Americans. First, Mexican-Americans are not quite Americans, or, in her words, "among the least Americanized." (p. 4) In this one phrase she suggests that there are immutable and incontrovertible criteria that define what an American is, which, as it turns out, is something that Mexican-Americans are not. If, then, Mexican-Americans are not Americans, what are they? This question poses absolutely no problem to Miss Heller for, wouldn't you know, Mexican-Americans are really all alike. Know one and you know them all, as we say. Or, to put it in her own words, Mexican-Americans exhibit a "marked lack of internal differentiation" and therefore constitute an "unusually homogeneous ethnic group." (p. 15)

Mexican-Americans, she goes on to say, have a language problem with a "foreign" accent often persisting to the third generation (p. 30), their progress is retarded because of their large families (p. 33), and they manifest an unusual persistence in traditional forms. (p. 34) All of this makes for a socialization process in Mexican-American families that is not conducive to advancement." (p. 34) This is especially true since "parental indulgence hampers the son's need for achievement." (p. 37) Then she sums it up by saying, "This lack of emphasis upon 'making good' in conventional terms is consistent with the themes of fatalism and resignation which run through Mexican-American culture." (p. 38)

In less than forty pages, then, this sociologist has said that Mexican-Americans are not Americans, that they are all virtually alike, that they tend to speak with a foreign accent, that they are held down by their own families, that their sons are helpless victims of parental indulgence which retards them, and that they are fatalistically resigned to this cultural miasma. Miss Heller is just warming up. She then goes on to add that Mexican-Americans are also characteristically lazy and somewhat irrational about it all. In her own words, "The combination of stress on work and rational use of time . . . forms little or no part of the Mexican-American socialization process." (p. 38) Due to their parents' and their parental culture, therefore, Mexican-Americans learn "lax habits," have no "habits of self-discipline," because they are "vigorously trained to be depend-

ent" people. (p. 39) All of this would not be so bad if only Mexican-Americans would only try to think for themselves. But, this is not the case for "few Mexican-American homes stress higher education." (p. 39) In fact, they don't even stress "intellectual effort." (p. 39)

What is a major consequence of all this Mexican-American cultural persistence? CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR!! Let Cecilia Stopnicka Heller tell us in her own words:

"... it may be suggested that the excess of juvenile delinquents among Mexican-Americans . . . is not composed of deviants from the cultural pattern of the Mexican-American population but rather of *boys who over-conform to this pattern.*" (p. 76, emphasis mine)

In summary, Celia S. Heller believes that virtually all Mexican-Americans are the same, that they behave like foreigners, that the parents are their children's own worst enemies, and that they are fatalistically resigned to all of this. In addition, Mexican-Americans do not stress work or even rationality, they have lax habits, they are undisciplined, have no initiative and even less ambition — all because of their traditional culture, which breeds excessive crime.

You will recall Heller's introductory comments in which she derided the stereotypes about Mexican-Americans held by teachers, school administrators, and social workers. This disclaimer did little, if anything, to conceal the fact that she actually expanded the existent stereotypes to the lazy, ahistoric, somnolent, childish, and criminally intent Mexican — giving such dehumanizing views a spurious legitimization by calling them social science. But neither the crocodile tears of her disclaimers, nor the false mask of scientific procedure, conceal the fact that Heller's book is one of the most vicious in existence today. It is vicious because it classifies millions and millions of people as being virtually all alike, just as Adolf Hitler classified millions of people twenty-eight years ago as being all the same — calling them the progenitors of all of their own problems — problems which were said to be the direct *consequence of their own history*, a history which, in Hitler's eyes, was also a Traditional Culture.

#### *Julian Samora and Richard A. Lamanna's Mexican-Americans*

The volume titled *Mexican-Americans in a Midwest Metropolis* by Samora and Lamanna perpetuates the same spurious fiction of its predecessors. For example,

The very nature of some of the value orientations of the Mexican-Americans presents a barrier to their rapid as-

similation. There is a note of fatalism and resignation in the attitudes and behavior of the residents and an orientation to the present (not unlike that described by Kluckhohn in connection with the Southwest) that would have to change somewhat before they could be expected to achieve significant changes in their social situation. (p. 135)

Thus, Samora and Lamanna, like Heller, Madsen, and the others before them, place the final cause of social conditions upon the Mexican-Americans themselves. In doing so, they also commit the fallacy of equating economic determinism with cultural determinism. This is the modern version of the Protestant Ethic as described by Max Weber many years ago.

### *Social Science Fiction*

What are these Mexican-Americans who have been created by social scientists?

First, they are masochistic, for, according to Tuck, they make no effort to free themselves from the social conditions in which they find themselves. Therefore, they are passive. This is primarily due to their religion according to Saunders. He then draws a picture of a world populated by vegetables which he chooses to call the Spanish-speaking people — people who are born, resign themselves to suffering, and then lay down and quietly die when their time comes. The same blobs are molded from the same semantic clay by Munro Edmonson. To him, these people behave as they do according to their religion, are somewhat irrational as well as irresponsible, live in mañana land, are politically apathetic and characteristically fatalistic. In addition, they are un-American. Madsen elaborates on the un-American theme, then proceeds to elaborate on the social vegetable theme. These un-American social vegetables are produced by their own parents who follow their own traditional culture which, as it turns out, is the prime generator of all of the problems faced by these people. Taking her cue from her predecessors, quoting them profusely, Celia Heller zeroes in on the Mexican-American family as the principal cause of all that foreign behavior among Mexican-Americans, adding that this produces a population of people who are virtually all alike, resigned to their lot, basically lazy, irrational, lax in their habits, have no initiative, less ambition, and, as such, are criminally prone.

William Madsen asserted that to be "American" one must espouse a faith in progress. But, clearly, these studies represent no progress at all. Perhaps a peek into the past history of the United

States will clarify this apparent ambiguity. For example, some one-hundred years ago the New Mexico senator, Thaddeus Stevens, said that the native New Mexicans were “a hybrid race of Spanish and Indian origin, ignorant, degraded, demoralized, and priest-ridden.”<sup>6</sup> The only difference between the rhetoric of Thaddeus Stevens and that of the social scientists is the jargonese. There is no difference in meaning. During these same American frontier days, many other writers depicted the “idle, thriftless” natives they encountered in the west. In the words of Carey McWilliams,

Essentially this same impression was formed by a wide variety of observers: men and women; officers, miners, surveyors, trappers, mountainmen, sea captains, and journalists. Passed along to those who were about to leave for the borderlands, repeated by all observers, these stereotyped impressions were national currency during the Mexican-American war and the patriotic sanction long continued. (p. 131-2)

It is clear from these statements that contemporary social science views of Mexican-Americans are precisely those held by people during the days of the American frontier. In short, there has not been any significant change in views toward Mexican-Americans for the past 100 years. Certainly this is not progress at all. What we have, instead, are contemporary social scientists busily perpetuating the very same opinions of Mexican culture that were current during the Mexican-American War. These opinions were, and are, pernicious, vicious, misleading, degrading, and brainwashing in that they obliterate history and then re-write it in such a way as to eliminate the historical significance of Mexican-Americans, as well as to simultaneously question the legitimacy of their presence in contemporary society.

### *The Significance of Mexican-American History*

Historically, Mexican-Americans have been, and continue to be, a pluralistic people. As such, they cannot be described according to a simplistic formula, despite the strident assertions made by social scientists, assertions that insist upon the antiquated idea of a bipolar process of change beginning at one point and leading all Mexican-Americans in the same direction, like sheep — from stagnant fatalism to assimilation and creativity.

But actual history itself reveals this formulation to be a grand hoax, a blatant lie. Witness the seemingly endless decades of labor conflict initiated by Mexicans and Mexican-Americans — briefly outlined at the beginning of this paper — conflict which involved lit-

erally tens of thousands of people of Mexican descent and which at one time spread to eight different states in the nation — conflict which was met with massive military counter-action. Social scientists have never asked themselves just why such massive military action was necessary in order to deal with a “resigned, passive, fatalistic, non-goal oriented people with lax habits and no plans for the future.” To ask themselves this question would be to acknowledge history, a history of constant confrontations brought about by elements of the same “traditional culture” which they have repeatedly described as virtually stagnant and actionless. “Long charged with a lack of ‘leadership’ and talent for organization, they proved all too effectively that neither talent was lacking,” wrote Carey McWilliams in 1949. (p. 193) Proof of this assertion is the fact that Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were the pioneers of the trade union movement in the American Southwest.

These organized confrontations led the same author to say that, “By 1930 the myth of the docility of Mexican labor had been thoroughly exploded. . .” (p. 193) since they were quick to rebel against the subordinate status imposed upon them. *But McWilliams did not count on either the semantic genius, or the frontier-expansionist mentality, of the social scientists who later came west to rewrite history* — to merge the myth of the docile Mexican with that of the fatalistic and non-goal oriented Mexican-American — which is no change at all, but only a latter-day repetition of the ideas that have been predominant since before the days of Manifest Destiny.

### *Confrontation With Life*

If the “traditional culture” of Mexican-Americans is not that described by social scientists, then what is it? What are the origins of the historical movements and conflicts of the past? What are the roots of the movements and conflicts taking place today? Have Mexican-Americans simply been reacting blindly to external circumstances? Have they merely tried to imitate people of other cultures? Or has their historical confrontation with life come from elements within their historical culture, elements heretofore ignored in studies of Mexican-Americans.

These questions can be answered in two ways. First, the concept of the “traditional culture,” as presently used by social scientists, must be totally dropped. Instead, the concept of the historical culture must be adopted. Second, the idea of the non-intellectual Mexican-American must be dropped also. Instead, in order to answer these questions, one must know something about the intellectual history of Mexican-Americans.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Nick C. Vaca, 1967.

<sup>2</sup>This event, as well as the historical events that follow, is from Carey McWilliams, 1949, pp. 195-209.

<sup>3</sup>See Nick C. Vaca, 1967.

<sup>4</sup>See Nick C. Vaca, 1968.

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*Editor's Note:* Reprints of this article are available in quantities over twenty-five. THE ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS is the first of two articles written by Professor Romano for *El Grito*. The second article, appearing in the next issue, will deal with the intellectual roots of the Mexican-American's historical culture and how this relates to the movements and conflicts of the past as well as those taking place today.

# — Es Aquí — Dice Felipe

SILVIO VILLAVIVENCIO

Translated by Octavio I. Romano-V.

DOS PARES de ojos que te miran. Me miran.

— Es aquí — dice Felipe.

En este momento los rostros se contraen. Hace un instante los dedos de Felipe recorrían el papel desdoblado, pero ahora todo está quieto, los rostros están fijos.

Y este calor húmedo y sofocante que sube desde abajo. . . . Una gota de sudor se resbala por tu espalda y el miedo asoma por tus ojos. Felipe se queda mirando hacia afuera, luego se vuelve: otra vez sus dedos se deslizan entre las rayas del plano. Y entonces nos dice:

— Tercera calle. . . . Fíjense bien: hay dos puertas de entrada.

Nuevamente piensas en el miedo. Recuerdas el rostro de Buitrago: debió *saber* lo que es el miedo, antes de morir. Y tu miedo brota por tus ojos, mueve sus dos brazos, su torso de buey, sus aletas de pescado, sus patas de araña, su ondulante cola de serpiente, y grita.

— Sería peligroso que alguien nos viera; hay que tener cuidado. Entraremos separados. Pero sobre todo, no decir nada, no hablar nada . . . ¿Comprenden?

Ha seguido hablando largo rato. Yo desde aquí puedo mirarlo todo. La cara de piojo de Felipe, el rostro contraído de Carlos, las manos temblorosas que se mueven. Las arañas de tu miedo, pateando. ¿Y si te da miedo a la hora de la hora? ¿Y si te da? Sientes la risa: violenta, inevitable. Y te ríes. Y entonces oyes que te dicen, ¿qué te pasa? Y tú contestas, nada. Todos te dicen, ¿qué te pasa? Nada. Y entonces sé lo que es el miedo, el mío, en los ojos de los otros. Nada.

— El paquete lo colocaremos media hora antes. Exactamente media hora. ¿Qué me dicen? ¿Está bien todo? — dice Felipe.

Apoya su rostro entre las manos. ¿Te cansas, Felipe? Mientras sigas hablando nadie sabrá nada, pero si yo hablo verán otra vez mis ojos, descubrirán mi araña. Felipe está pensando ahora. Acaricia su frente con la mano derecha: Felipe está cansado. Y entonces oyes la voz de Carlos que te dice:

— El paquete hacia arriba, los nudos indicarán la posición. Tú pondrás el paquete, pero si lo pones hacia abajo no sucede nada, ab-so-lu-ta-men-te nada. ¿Entiendes?

Y si te da miedo vendrá la risa con sus dientes amarillos, vendrá la risa subiendo las escaleras. ¿Pero quién te dice que yo tengo miedo? ¿Quién tiene miedo de nada? ¿Quién? Bueno, me gustaría saber lo que hay adentro de tu cabeza. Vamos suponiendo que lo ves: no verás nada. Es un abismo, si te asomas te dará vértigo. No me mires. ¿Para qué me miras?

Ahora Felipe manotea explicando los detalles del asunto. El calor ha seguido subiendo, subiendo. Tienes miedo, ¿sí o no? No. No tienes miedo, pero allí está ese canijo animal entre tus ojos, allí está esa risa agasapada en el estómago, esa maldita risa que te sube desde el fondo. ¿Sí o no?

— Yo creo que eso es todo. Mañana, después de las cinco, nos reuniremos aquí. Si algo sale mal no habrá reunión: qué cada quién se vaya por su lado.

Carlos ha dicho que sí y los tres salimos en silencio.

— Sí — dice Carlos.

Mientras otra gota de sudor se desliza por tu espalda afiebrada.

TE HUNDES, otra vez te hundes entre el humo de la piquera. A un metro de mi cabeza el ventilador se mueve: ligero rumor de las aspas que rompen el aire. En la otra mesa alguien se ríe. Volteas: es una gorda y otro tipo al que no alcanzas a ver.

— . . . Eso es lo que no entiendo bien — dice la gorda.

Respira con dificultad, como si la vida le fuera a faltar, de pronto, entre la pausa del respiro. Tú te volteas para mirarlo todo. Acomodo mi asiento al otro lado de la mesa: ahora puedo mirarlos de frente.

El tipo hace un ademán, pero se detiene; luego ofrece un cigarro a la gorda. Es demasiado tarde para darle la lumbre: la música empieza.

— Bailemos — le dice.

Y la arrastra entre las mesas mientras la gorda se ríe. Ahora la abraza, la va abrazando de todo a todo. Desliza sus dos manos hacia abajo, hacia abajo. Bailan con dificultad, jadeando. La música se arrastra, embotadora, lenta. Agustín Lara al ritmo de blues. Y tú descendes, como sicoanalizado, te hundes, cáes, morboseando.

Mañana estaré tieso, pero vendrá la risa como un vómito. ¿Y si te da miedo? ¿Qué me dices? Nada. En las películas de guerra siempre hay alguien que tiene miedo, es natural. Pero tu miedo no es un miedo de película. Bueno, antes de los balazos dice algún sargento: "Todos tenemos miedo, muchacho. No te preocupes, todo saldrá bien. Okey." Pero eso se oye muy bien en el cine. El miedo mío sale de las tripas y no del corazón. Una verdadera mierda.

La música se detiene.

— Sentémonos — dice la gorda jadeando.

Y el tipo le besa el cuello, mientras sus manos regresan, arrastrándose, hasta las enormes espaldas de la gorda. Dos caras brillantes de sudor. La gorda y su amigo regresan a la mesa.

— . . . pero no por toda la noche — dice la mujer.

Entonces piensas en Elena, los recuerdos se agolpan. Te hundes, te hundes y luego regresas — agarrado del vértigo — hacia arriba. No, no te dejes atrapar por las cosas del pasado, “ahora perteneces a la organización, y el presidente es un hijo de puta,” como dice Felipe. Flotas. “Este país es una mierda — dice Felipe —, una gigantesca mierda y un puerco es el Jefe. Los colgaremos de los huevos a todos. Eso, a todos.” Pero ahora tú estás aquí, completamente solo.

El murmullo ha ido subiendo poco a poco, mientras el humo denso lo envuelve todo. Te has olvidado de la gorda por un rato. Estás tranquilo, casi tranquilo; pero de pronto regresan tus recuerdos: y entonces te das cuenta, *sabes*, que eres un hombre. Recuerdos, sólo recuerdos: dice Felipe: “*y por fin, ¿qué te importa todo este asunto? Tu familia está bien, tu hermano también está bien. De plano que no te entiendo, por esta santa cruz que no te entiendo. Pero aún es tiempo de que lo pienses bien. Esto de meterse con el gobierno es peligroso, muy peligroso. Los tipos esos no se van a andar con delicadezas. Primero te van a joder de lo lindo y luego te van a seguir jodiendo, hasta que revientes . . . Como Buitrago. ¿Qué tal?*”

“¿De modo que tú crees que no puedo? Mientes. No soy lo que tú piensas.”

Recuerdos. Mientes, Felipe.

— Tráigame otra copa.

— ¿Agua mineral también?

— Claro que sí puedo.

— ¿Cómo dice?

— Agua mineral.

Agustín Lara al compás de bolero. La gorda y su compañero se retiran. Nuevas risas de la gorda. Ruido de sillas que se arrastran, ruidos turbios, Agustín Lara, música, tienes miedo, ¿sí o sí?

Alguien se te va a acercar, alguien se me va a acercar, se me va acercando. Y no puedes mirar su rostro, no quiero mirar su rostro. Y oyes la voz:

— ¿Tienes un cigarro?

Está junta a ti y sin mirarla le extiendes la caja. Le enciendes el cigarro y entonces puedes mirarla. Ella te dice:

— ¿Para qué estás solo? ¿Quieres que bailemos?

— Sí — le dices.

Sí, le digo. Me conduce entre las mesas. Y entonces repega su cuerpo al mío. Es una serpiente, y la serpiente se mueve, se desliza por mi cuerpo. Mientras no te acaricie tú no sentirás nada, lo que se dice nada; pero si lo hace sentirás el deseo: violento, irrefrenable. La música se desliza despacio, despacio. Y la serpiente va reptando por tu cuerpo.

— Esto me gusta — dice la serpiente acariándote.

Atención, las cosas dejan de tener sentido, se desdibujan. Sus bordes se diluyen en una marejada absurda. Ganas brutales, deseo irracional que te sube por las venas. ¿Quién tiene miedo? ¿Quién tiene miedo? ¿Quién?

— ¿Cincuenta pesos? Está muy bien — dice la serpiente.

BUENO, tú te estabas muriendo de la risa. Habías dicho: esta bombita aventará mierda por todos lados. ¿Te imaginas? Se volverán loquitos buscando al culpable. ¿Qué paso? Nada. Pero mire nada más como quedó todo el local: hecho mierda, señor. Una puritita y celestial mierda. ¿Te das cuenta, Carlitos? Las ventanas rotas, los escaparates rotos, la mercancía quemada. ¿Qué tal, eh? ¿Qué tal? Los vamos a hacer talco. Y no quedará piedra sobre piedra, como dicen que dijo Atila. Pero ahora sudas, el miedo te sube por las manos. Y Felipe está allí, de pie, entreteniendo al empleado para que tú coloques la bomba.

— Quisiera ver los otros modelos. ¿Podría mostrármelos? — dice Felipe.

Bueno, ¿de modo que yo cargo con el paquetito? Renuncio. *“Lo pondrás con cuidado. Eso, con cuidadito. Carlos nos esperará afuera . . . Pero si no puedes . . .”* Y este miedo sucio y nauseabundo. Ellos, como los perros, pueden oler el miedo. ¿Y si me río? Sí te ríes estaremos jodidos. ¿Quién se ríe cuando le llega el miedo? ¿Quién?

— De cuatro pulgadas — dice Felipe al empleado.

Tiemblan tus manos. Claro que te está mirando. Seguro: ese tipo ya sabe lo que llevas en el paquetito. Sabe.

— No, no. Eso es más bien para el tubito que entra en el orificio de la chumacera. El cordón eléctrico viene aparte — dice al empleado.

Es una bomba y va a estallar. Te está mirando, sabe. ¿Qué sabe? Nada. Caminas. *“Tú pondrás la caja, entre las macetas de la entrada.”* Caminas. Stop. Macetas con flores a siete metros, hacia la izquierda. Siga con cuidado. *“Primero te vas haciendo como que ves*

*las cosas en los exhibidores; pero tú no ves nada: de lo que se trata es de colocar la caja sin que se den cuenta. Sencillo, sen-ci-llí-si-mo.*” Pero el tipo ese no me quita los ojos de encima, a lo mejor está disfrazado de vendedor y nos quiere joder. Yo de plano me largo. “*Pones la cajita con cuidado, no sea que todos volemos.*”

— No sé exactamente lo que usted busque. Este motor es lo mejor que tenemos. Las instrucciones vienen aquí, en este cuader-nito — dice el individuo.

Y te sigue mirando, me sigue mirando. Aunque por el momento todo salga bien después me van a agarrar: el tipo ese me sabe de memoria. Primero una santa golpeada, con el rifle. Luego te van a interrogar y entonces verán tus ojos. Los militares son unos hijos de puta. Policía de seguridad. ¿Seguridad? In-se-gu-ri-dad, más bien — como decía el difunto locutor de Radio Cien. “Al tipo ese, al locutor, lo agarraron miando: apareció al día siguiente con un agujero así, en la cabeza,” dice Felipe. Pero ahora de lo que se trata es de que el individuo, el vendedor, me mira. ¿Verdad que son zapatos? De charol, señor. Eso, eso, precisamente es lo que tiene la caja. ¡Mier-da!, si es una bomba. . . .

— En este catálogo puede ver los otros modelos. Lo escoje y nosotros preguntamos a la bodega, si lo tienen . . . — dice el empleado.

Maldito piojo, le deja a uno la parte más difícil. Caminas. El hombre te mira de nuevo, entonces detienes el chorro de la risa. Stop. A cuatro metros espacio para bombas. Siga con cuidado. Danger. Me van a joder, Carlitos, me van a joder, te lo juro. Niebla. El miedo se sube, se va subiendo. Primero despacio, despacio. Pero detén el choro de la risa, deténlo, grandísimo pendejo. Si te ríes nos agarran.

Felipe mueve las manos explicando las características del motor que necesita. Y el hombre, con sus ojos saltones, va midiendo tu miedo. En un momento se te echará encima, empezará a golpearte. Pero no, nada sucede.

Zapatos, señor. Aquí lo dice claramente este rótulo: zapatos. Bueno, mire, realmente no son zapatos, eso lo dije por broma: son unas cuantas velitas, dos pequeñas baterías, un reloj despertador, para la mañana, ¿sabe?, y estos son unos alambritos eléctricos. Total, nada. ¡Pero si es una bomba y va a estallar! Tú piensas que piensa el empleado: ese tipo tiene miedo, luego trae una bomba. Recuerdos, otra vez los recuerdos. Felipe mascaba su chicle y manoteaba: “Hace cuatro años — dice Felipe — me di cuenta de que yo era un cobarde. Lo soy, todos lo somos. Y, fíjense bien, la diferencia está

en que yo lo sé, lo que es una ventaja frente a las demás gentes. ¿Qué me dices?" Que a mí no me vengas con pendejadas filosóficas. El miedo es algo concreto: es una espina de pescado, es una piedra, por ejemplo. Recuerdos.

Bueno, pero aquí está el tipo ese, mirándote. Niebla, recuerdos entre la niebla. Anoche, anoche tú y la serpiente dormían. Los cuerpos separados. Pero tú despiertas a la mitad de un sueño, no puedes dormir y oyes los pequeños ruidos que salen del cuerpo de la mujer, a tu lado. Un cuerpo que hace pequeños ruidos en la noche. Un cuerpo, y el cuerpo tiene miedo a veces. Duerme y tiene miedo. No lo sabe y tiene miedo. Entonces te levantas, dejas a la mujer en la cama. Vas al baño y te miras en el espejo, te miras. Inventario: dos agujeros en la nariz, una boca abierta, dientes amarillos y ese cochino animal entre los ojos: definitivamente un hombre, un solitario rostro lleno de agujeros. Y en este instante te preguntas por Felipe, por la repartición de la tierra, por los prisioneros políticos, por todo. Y no encuentras nada en tu cabeza; lo que se dice, nada. Pero ahora estás aquí, esperando, acechando el instante preciso. ¿Por qué? Tú no lo sabes, y allí está la risa acurrucada entre tus vísceras. ¿Te das cuenta?

Ahora ya estás más cerca de las macetas: unos cuantos pasos y habrás llegado. Tus ojos han descubierto el lugar perfecto para colocar la caja. Das otro paso sin mirar al hombre. Desciendes. No, no debo pensar en nada. Y piensas entonces en no pensar en nada. Tienes demasiado tiempo: entre un paso y otro hay una eternidad. "Si yo te contara mi vida, necesitaría otra vida igual," dice Felipe. ¿Pero qué importancia tiene la vida de un hombre? Si tu cabeza estuviera vacía podrías escribir allí cosas razonables. Felipe escribe a menudo. Escribe, por ejemplo: El futuro de la patria está en nuestras manos, es un caso de conciencia, es necesario hacer algo, patria o muerte, estamos en el asunto a pesar nuestro, y otras lindezas por el estilo. Estamos a pesar nuestro. Pero, ¡mierda!, yo estoy aquí y estoy afuera.

Ahora lo ves acercarse, ha mirado el animal entre tus ojos. El estómago se te contrae como en el instante que precede al vómito, pero la risa no llega y se queda allí, agazapada, esperando. Felipe ha desaparecido: sólo queda el vacío, allí donde antes estaba su cuerpo. Entonces te das vuelta y, con la caja entre las manos, caminas hacia afuera. El hombre, el vendedor, se ha quedado atrás, ya no te mira: has dejado de importarle. Entonces comprendes, con los ojos enrojecidos, que vas a soltar el llanto.

Guadalajara, Jalisco

# “It is here,” says Felipe

SILVIO VILLAVIVENCIO

TWO PAIR of eyes look at you – look at me.

“It is here,” says Felipe.

At this moment, the faces tighten. A brief moment ago Felipe’s fingers were feeling along the unfolded paper. But now everything is still, and the faces are fixed.

Humid, suffocating heat rises from below. A drop of sweat slides along your back, and fear peeks through your eyes. Felipe pauses to look outside, then back. Again his fingers glide between the lines of the map. Then he tells us:

“Third street. Look carefully! There are two front doors.”

Once again you think of the fear. You remember Buitrago’s face. He must have *known* what fear is, before he died. Your fear germinates and takes form through your eyes. It moves its two arms, moves its torso of an ox, its fins of a fish, its spider’s legs, its undulating tail of a serpent . . . and screams.

“It will be dangerous if someone sees us. We must be careful. We go in separately. Above all, say nothing. Do not speak. Understand?”

He’s been talking for a long time. From where I stand I can see everything; Felipe’s flea-face, Carlos’ contracted face, and the trembling hands that move around. The spiders of your fear kick furiously. What if, at the crucial moment, you are overcome with fear? What if you are? You feel the laughter coming, violent . . . inevitable. And you laugh. “What’s wrong with you?” you hear them ask. You answer: Nothing. Everyone asks you what’s wrong. Nothing. Then I know what fear is – my fear – in the eyes of the others. Nothing.

“We will place the package one half hour before. Exactly one half hour. What? Is everything alright?” asks Felipe.

He rests his face between his hands. Getting tired, Felipe? While you keep on talking no one will notice anything. But if I talk, then everyone will see my eyes, and they will discover my spider. Felipe is thinking. He strokes his forehead with his right hand. Felipe is tired. You hear a voice. Carlos is speaking.

"The package goes above, the knots will indicate the position. You will place the package. But if you put it below, then nothing will happen. Ab-so-lute-ly nothing. Understand?"

But if the fear overtakes you, then the laughter will come out with its yellow teeth, rising up the staircase. Who has told you that I am afraid? Who can possibly be afraid of nothing? Who? Well, I would like to know what is in your head. Let us suppose that you can look inside. You see nothing. It is an abyss. If you look, you will get dizzy. Don't look at me. Why are you looking at me?

Now Felipe waves his arms as he explains the details. The heat continues to rise and rise. You are afraid. Are you? Or aren't you? No. You are not afraid, but still there is that sickening animal between your eyes. There is the laughter, caught in your stomach, that damned laughter that rises from deep inside. Yes or No?

"That's all, I think. Tomorrow, after five, we meet here. If anything goes wrong, no meeting. Everyone goes his own way."

Carlos has said yes, and the three of us leave in silence.

"Yes," says Carlos.

Meanwhile, another drop of sweat slides down your feverish back.

YOU SINK. Again you sink into the smoke-filled bars. A few feet from my head a fan spins, the light sound of the blades cuts the air. Someone laughs at the next table. You turn. It's a fat woman with some character you can't see.

". . . that is something that I don't understand too well," the woman says. She has trouble breathing, as if her life were going to abandon her between one breath and another. You turn so you can see everything. I move my chair to the other side of the table. Now I can see their faces.

The character makes a gesture, then holds back. He offers the fat woman a cigarette. It is too late to offer her a light, for the music has begun.

"Let's dance," he says.

He drags the fat woman between the tables. She is laughing. He puts his arms around her in a full embrace, then slides his hands down and down. They dance with difficulty, breathing heavily. The

music drags along lazily. Agustín Lara in blues time. You descend, as if psychoanalyzed. You sink, you fall, you become morbid.

Tomorrow I'll have a hangover. But the laughter will come anyway, like vomit. And if your fear gets you? What are you telling me? Nothing. In war movies there is always someone who is afraid, naturally. But your fear is not that of a movie. Anyway, before the bullets even begin some sargeant always says, "We are all afraid, boy. Don't worry, everything will be alright. Okay?" That sounds very good in the movie. But my fear stems from the guts and not from the heart. It is actually shit.

The music stops.

"Let's sit down," says the fat woman, panting.

The character kisses her on the neck, while his hands return, dragging themselves back up to her enormous shoulders. The two faces are bright with sweat as the fat woman and her friend return to their table.

". . . but not for the whole night," she is saying.

Then you think of Elena. Memories tumble together. You sink, you sink; then you return in the grip of a dizzy spell . . . vertigo. No. Do not let yourself get trapped by the past, ". . . now you belong to the organization, and the president is the son of a whore," as Felipe says. You are floating. "This country is a piece of shit," says Felipe, "a gigantic piece of shit, and a pig is the chief. We will hang them all by the balls. That's it, everyone." But you are here, now, and you are completely alone.

The murmuring voices have become louder and louder, while the dense smoke covers everything. For a while you have forgotten the fat woman. You are at peace — or almost at peace. But soon your memories return, and it is then that you become aware — *you know* — that you are a man. Memories. Only memories. Felipe says, "*And when all is said and done, what do you care about all this business. I don't understand you, and that's a fact. By this Holy Cross I do not understand you. There is still time to think this over carefully. It's dangerous to become involved with the government, very dangerous. Those people don't deal in dainty amenities. First, they're going to beat the hell out of you. Then they're going to continue, until you break . . . like they did Buitrago. What do you think?*"

So, you think I can't? You lie! I'm not what you think I am. Memories. Felipe, you lie!

"Bring me another drink!"

"With mineral water?"

"Of course I can."

"What?"

"Mineral water."

Agustín Lara in bolero time. The fat woman and her companion are leaving. More laughter from the fat woman. The sound of dragging chairs, muddled noises, Agustín Lara, music, you are afraid . . . yes or no?

Someone is going to come close to you, someone is going to come close to me — is coming closer to me. You can't look at the face. I don't want to look at the face. You hear the voice.

"Have you a cigarette?"

She is close to you, and without looking at her you hand her the package. You light her cigarette, and then you look at her. She says,

"Why are you alone? Want to dance?"

"Yes," you reply.

Yes, I tell her. She guides me between the tables. Then her body presses against mine. She is a serpent, and the serpent moves. It slides against my body. As long as she does not caress you, you will feel nothing, absolutely nothing. But if she does, you will feel the desire, violent and irresistible. The music unwinds slowly, slowly. And the serpent is unwinding along your body.

"I like this," says the serpent, caressing you.

Look out! Everything around you (becomes fuzzy, undone. Shapes dissolve absurdly into a pounding sea. Savage, irrational desire surges through your veins. Who is afraid? Who is afraid? Who?

"Fifty pesos? Very well," says the serpent.

WELL, you were dying with laughter. You had said this little bomb is going to spread shit all around. Can you imagine? They're going to go crazy looking for whoever did it. What happened? Nothing. Just look at what happened to the entire area. Full of shit, mister. A pure and celestial shit. Have you seen it, Carlitos? Broken windows, broken showcases, burned merchandise. What do you think, eh? What do you think? We will pulverize them. And we will not leave one stone standing on another, as they say Attila said. But right now you sweat and the fear rises in your hands. Felipe is there, standing, keeping the clerk busy while you place the bomb.

"I'd like to see the other models. Can you show them to me?" says Felipe.

Well, so I'm the one that's supposed to carry this little package? I quit! "You will place it carefully, very carefully. Carlos will wait for us outside. But if you can't . . ." This dirty, nauseating fear. I'm sure they can smell fear, like dogs can. And if I laugh? If you laugh we will all be screwed. Who laughs when fear overtakes him? Who?

"Four inches," Felipe tells the clerk.

Your hands shake. Surely that clerk is looking at you. That character already knows what you are carrying in the little package. He knows.

"No. No. That is for the small tube that goes into the opening of the slot. The electric cord is separate," says the clerk.

It is a bomb and it is going to explode. He is looking at you. He knows. What does he know? Nothing. You continue walking. "You will place the box between the flower pots and the entrance." You walk. STOP! Pots with flowers at seven meters, toward the left. Continue with care. "First you pretend that you are looking at the items in the showcases, but you see nothing. It's all a matter of placing the box without their noticing. S-i-m-p-l-e. V-e-r-y, v-e-r-y s-i-m-p-l-e." But that character doesn't take his eyes off of me. He is probably disguised as a clerk and he wants to screw us. I'm leaving. "You put the little box down carefully, or we all go flying through the air."

"I'm not exactly sure what it is that you want," says the clerk. "This motor is the best that we have. The instructions are here, in this booklet."

He continues to look at you, he continues to look at me. Even though everything goes well, for the moment, later they will catch me. That character has memorized my face. First will come the ungodly blow with the rifle. They will ask questions. Then they check your eyes. The military men are sons of whores. Security police. Security? In-se-cu-ri-ty is more like it, as the dead commentator used to say on Radio One Hundred. "That commentator, they caught him urinating. Next day he was found with a hole in the head, here," says Felipe. But now the main concern is with that individual, the clerk who is looking at me. Isn't it true that these are really shoes? Patent leather, mister. That is precisely what is in the box. Bullshit! It's a bomb. . . .

"You can see the other models in this catalogue," the clerk is saying. "Select one and we will call the warehouse to see if they have it. . . ."

That damned flea, he's left the hardest part to me. You walk. The man looks at you again, and you hold back the gush of laughter. STOP! At four meters, room for bombs. Continue with care. DAN-

GER. They're going to screw me, Carlitos, they're going to screw me, I swear to you. Foggy confusion. The fear rises, it is rising. First slowly, slowly. Hold back the gush of laughter, hold it, you great big bastard. If you laugh they will catch us all.

Felipe moves his hands, explaining the type of motor that he wants. And the man with the bulging eyes is measuring your fear. In a minute he will jump you and begin to beat you. But no. Nothing happens.

Shoes, mister. That's what it clearly says here on the label: shoes. Well, look, actually they're not really shoes. I just said that for a joke. It's just a few candles, two little batteries, an alarm clock for the morning — you know? — and these are some little electric wires. All told, nothing. But it is a bomb and it is going to explode! Now it seems that the clerk is thinking, "That character is afraid. He must be carrying a bomb." Memories. Again the memories. Felipe was chewing gum and making gestures with his hands. "Four years ago," says Felipe, "I found out that I was a coward. I am. We all are. But take notice. The difference is that I know it. And that is an advantage over everybody else. What do you say, eh?"

Do not come to me with that philosophical bullshit. Fear is something concrete. It is a fishbone, it is a stone, for example. Memories.

Well, here's that character looking at you. Foggy confusion. Memories in the fog. Last night, last night you and the serpent slept. Your bodies were apart from each other. You awake in the middle of a dream. You can't sleep, and you hear the small noises that emit from the body of the woman beside you, a body that makes small noises in the night. A body. Sometimes the body can be afraid. You get up, leaving the woman in bed. You go to the bathroom and you look at yourself in the mirror. You look at yourself. Inventory: two holes in the nose, an open mouth, yellow teeth, and that filthy animal between the eyes. Definitely a man. A solitary face full of holes. At that moment you ask yourself about Felipe, you ask yourself about the redistribution of land, about the political prisoners, about everything. You ask yourself and you find that nothing is in your head, absolutely nothing. But now you are here, waiting, looking for the precise moment. Why? You don't know. Meanwhile, the laughter huddles there in your guts. Or have you noticed?

Now you are closer to the flowerpots. A few more steps and you have arrived. Your eyes have found the perfect spot for the box. You take another step without looking at the man. You bend over.

No. I must think of nothing. And you think about thinking nothing. You have too much time. Between one step and another is an eternity. "If I told you the story of my life, I would need another just like it," says Felipe. But of what importance is the life of one man? If your head were empty, then you could write reasonable things in there. Felipe often writes things. He writes, for example: The future of the fatherland is in our hands. It is a matter of conscience. Something must be done. Our country or death. We are involved in spite of ourselves — and other such lofty phrases. We are involved in spite of ourselves! Shit. I am here and I am also somewhere else.

Now you see him approach. He has seen the animal between your eyes. Your stomach contracts, just as it does before you vomit. But the laughter does not come out. It remains there — crouched, waiting. Felipe has disappeared. Only empty space remains where his body stood. Then, with the box still in your hands, you turn around and walk out of the store. The clerk remains behind. He no longer looks at you. You have ceased to interest him. As you walk along your eyes redden, and you realize that you have reached your breaking point.

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*“The Black Phase” is the first in a series of articles to be presented by Nick C. Vaca, dealing with the philosophical, intellectual, and ideological character of Mexican-Americans. In the next issue of EL GRITO, Mr. Vaca will present an article titled “The Negro Movement as an Anti-Revolution” in which he puts forth the view that the basic nature of the Negro movement in the United States today is antithetical to traditional and historical revolutions.—EDITOR*

## The Black Phase

NICK C. VACA

“We have loved long enough.  
Today we start to hate.”

—PAUL DE LEGARD, 1887

“The new intellectual life of the  
Germans is . . . the German youth . . .  
Right is on its side.”

—JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

“Race is almost a metaphysical concept,  
but on a physiological basis. . . Race  
is power. Whoever feels that power  
in him possesses it, and exercises it.”

—MOELLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1905

These three men have been credited by historians with perverting Nietzschean philosophy into a doctrine which served as the philosophical and ideological foundation on which the Third Reich found the fertile soil for its birth and growth. It was the sophistry of these writers that provided the intellectual legitimization for the blinding nationalism to which a depressed and distressed nation desperately clung; an intellectual ideology that made all "wrongs" right and all "rights" divinely ordained. There is abundant historical evidence to document how the philosophy of Legard, Langbehn, and Bruck was translated from the sphere of the metaphysical into an absolutist, nationalistic doctrine that served to justify any action taken by Germany. The acts of genocide committed by Germany to the Gypsies, the Jews, and other minorities, loom as undiminished evidence of what the concept of nationalism, when transported from the transcendental to reality, can enshrine in a cloak of sanctity.

To the contemporary historian as well as to the contemporary layman, the acts of Germany still linger so vividly in their minds that they can directly associate extreme nationalism and fascism only with the Germany of a crumbling Western Europe. The crimes committed against the Jews and Gypsies by the Germans have been tried by the world's countries, each in their own manner, and each has come to the solemn conclusion that the Germans were heartless creatures that subjected the Jews to what may well be the worst persecution suffered by any group in recent history. For the last twenty years, Germany alone has carried the symbolic cross attesting to man's supreme cruelty to man, thereby providing a convenient monument to which the world could point an accusing finger of guilt; an action guaranteed to safely place the accuser in the sphere of sinlessness and further add weight to the cross that Germany still bears. Even now, though the ovens of Treblinka and Auschwitz have been destroyed, the Jews are still universally thought of as being persecuted and the Germans as the persecutors. It is almost as if these two groups contain the intrinsic qualities of good and bad.

The type of nationalism that inspired Germany's cruel acts was not, as the world would like us to believe, an unnatural and unique occurrence. It was simply another example, in a long line of examples, of frenzied nationalism. The nature of nationalism, wherever it is encountered, is composed of many facets, of which an indispensable requisite is a concept of national, racial, religious, or ethnic superiority. Once this requisite has been established and accepted, all subsequent action for its advancement needs only the

most tenuous justification. It was no accident that Langbehn, Legard, and Bruck dwelled at length and in a poetic fashion on the loss of the former superior German state and the equally pure German character that had been mysteriously vitiated in the process of modernization. *In describing the ancestors of the German people in such flawless terms, they were establishing the atmosphere by which their revival would be attained at any cost. The passionate and eloquent cries of despair generated by these three muses of "racialism" touched the soul and stirred the passion of nearly all the German people. After all, what German would dare deny that the once pure German race had been driven to its historical and biological nadir by forces alien to the essential German character itself?* To be a German in the 1930's and to question German racial superiority was tantamount to heresy.

Though the writings of these three philosophers glorified the lost German race and lamented its loss, they proposed nothing remotely pragmatic in nature for its revival. Instead, they satisfied themselves with establishing an atmosphere of futility and despair, an atmosphere that proved ideally suited for Hitler. That Hitler was a person of violent nationalistic and fascistic character should not have surprised anyone aware of the economic, political, and psychological crisis of Germany. Any other type of leader would have failed to fill the void that Legard, Langbehn, and Bruck had created. Only a leader such as Hitler could have, in the eyes of the Germans of that period, revived the great and glorious Germany that had been lost in the shadows of history. For this end no action was beyond contemplation and, worst of all, beyond execution.

It is in the tradition of most popular historians and writers to end at this point, having added to the condemnation of the German people for their persecution of the Jews. But this would not only be a negation of the universality of nationalism and fascism, it would also be a negation of the contemporary situation in the world, since time has shown that nationalism has succeeded in invading the cloisters of the Jewish character, corrupting the myth of Jewish sanctity.

The eruption of nationalism in Israel would not have been so startling to the world had it not been so righteous in its condemnation of Germany, and, more importantly, had it acknowledged that frenzied nationalism is not restricted by geographical, racial, or religious boundaries. Rather, the world should have realized that nationalism may vary in its degree of frenzy, and that its nature of

being based on superiority is historically and immutably the same in all of its manifestations.

The creation of the state of Israel has never been a question to cause concern or dissent in the international camp of liberal thinkers, where it is considered not only heresy to attack the concept of Jewish nationalism but even to be indifferent to it. After all, what the children of the Diaspora desired was nothing more than to be united in their historical home and once more live a life based on brotherly love and mutual respect for their neighbors. And since they had been wandering for the last 4,000 years, living as unwanted guests in foreign lands, why should they not be given a land of their own, regardless of the fact that other people occupied this same land? The Jewish quest for a national home added a new dimension to the game of nationalism. The concept of "historical suffering" added a note of emotion that diverted the attention of the world from the real feast — nationalistic aspirations. After all, how could anyone deny to one group of people who had suffered so much anything as small as a nation carved out from other nations. The Jews were the perfect people to be given a nation. They would start no wars, invade no lands, colonize no people, persecute no one, mete out justice and equal treatment as a matter of nature and in almost every way be perfect in their conduct.

It was not until some twenty years after the state of Israel had been created that the omnipresent head of nationalism peered from behind the façade of religious covenant. The Arab-Israeli war of the summer of 1967 was a classic example of frenzied nationalism in its finest hour. The Jews in Israel forgot about Treblinka and Auschwitz when they released thousands of Arab soldiers to cross the oven of the Sinai Desert without food or water. The concept of the Aryan race promoted by Hitler was also forgotten when six Israeli soldiers were exchanged for 600 United Arab soldiers. The question of colonization has lost its relevance now that Israel holds 18,000 square miles of Arab territory and more than 1,000,000 Arabs. The question of equality of treatment is forgotten when these 1,000,000 Arabs (Arabs now constitute forty-eight percent of the Israeli population) are not allowed to travel freely, vote, join the Israeli army, hold office, or be employed in civil service jobs in their Israeli-held homeland. The historical protests against German militarism are forgotten when General Moshe Dayan is heralded as a national savior and military parades are a cause for national celebration.

The behavior of Israel after the Arab-Israeli war would not have come as such a surprise to the world had it not blinded itself to the

real aims of Israel. It was the concept of "historical suffering" that blinded the world. It was the cultivation of this concept that led Clarence L. Coleman, President of the American Council for Judaism, to state:

"'Jewish' Nationalism is an ideological movement which is not philanthropic but thrives on philanthropy; which is not religious but employs religious institutions for political ends; which calls itself by different names at different times, but which is always a political-national movement operating through a sovereign state and its quasi-governmental arm, the Jewish Agency — Zionist Organization." (Quoted in *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time* by Moshe Menuhin, Exposition Press, 1965, p. 392).

Speaking more directly to the concept of "historical suffering," Leonard R. Sussman of the American Council for Judaism states:

"The Zionist movement wants to picture Jews constantly in trouble. It is bad for fund-raising and bad for immigration to Israel if Jews are not in trouble. But 'trouble' must be of a particular kind. It must be 'Jewish' trouble. It must fit the Zionist pattern of inevitable anti-Semitism just as surely as the 'inevitable' class war fits classic Marxism." (*Ibid.*: p. 475)

For those who doubt that Jewish nationalism is based on racial superiority, Professor Morris R. Cohen has said the following in his book, *The Faith of a Liberal*:

"Zionists fundamentally accept the racial ideology of the Anti-Semites, but draw a different conclusion. Instead of the Teutons, it is the Jew that is the purer or superior race. All sorts of virtues, idealism, etc., are the characteristic qualities of its spirit. Only in Palestine can this spirit find root, and only in the Hebrew language its adequate expressions." (*Ibid.*: p. 368)

In the United States, as in Israel, Jews commonly have taken a new perspective on oppression and persecution as their political, economic, and social position has improved. The question of exploitation that has perennially concerned the Jews is forgotten when they engage in it. After viewing the effects of the nationalistic fervor in Israel, it is not surprising to note that it has been the Jewish merchant who has exploited and continues to exploit Negroes in the ghettos of American cities. And perhaps the justification given for this exploitation issued in the Jewish Press should also not startle

anyone. It was the rationale of the Jewish Press that if the Jewish merchants did not take risks to conduct business in the Negro ghettos, then who would? This is an evasive way of saying, "If we do not take the risks to exploit you, then who would?" It is also not surprising to note that Arthur Herzberg, an influential rabbi from Englewood, New Jersey, stated that the Jews were no longer among the group of the "have nots" but rather they were now in the "have" camp and that a re-examination of the Jewish-Negro relationship should be conducted. The rabbi was in effect saying that the Jews, as an unassimilated group with new economic power in America and international status with Israel, have now "arrived" and should act accordingly. Or, in simpler terms, "Now that we have 'power' let us no longer be concerned with groups less fortunate than ourselves." With this thought in mind it comes as no surprise that a Negro and former teacher in the New York school system, John F. Hatchett, wrote in a teacher's magazine that "black children" were being "mentally poisoned" by Jews who dominate and control the educational bureaucracy of the New York public school system. (Newsweek: October 21, 1968)

This reversal of roles by the Jews in Israel and in the United States displays the universal nature of nationalism. The suffering that the Jews have undergone for the last 4,000 years are insidiously used to help cloud the otherwise patently obvious acts of Jewish nationalism. Everything committed by Jews is justified in the eyes of the world by the immense suffering which they have undergone. And just as the Germans were justified in their actions in attempting to restore the great Germanic race and the creation of a glorious Germany, so are the Jews justified in their actions by the salvation of their ethnicity and their ancient nation. For the contemporary Jews no action is too "wrong," no "right" right-enough, and no action unthinkable in helping to establish the great state of Israel.

*As students of the Jewish movement, the Negroes in the United States have been slow in appreciating the two factors which helped promote national and international Jewry — the concept of a supreme race and the concept of historical suffering as legitimizers for all actions.*

Although Marcus Garvey's "Back to Africa Movement" was less than successful in actually getting Negroes to return to Africa, he was in many ways the ideological precursor to Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and a myriad of other "black militants" whose call back to the cultural roots leads a direct path to Africa. And though Stokely, *et al.*, have also been less than successful in establishing

historical roots with Africa, they have succeeded in providing a symbolic ethos which helps to sustain the downtrodden and despairing American blacks. The call for proudness in being "black," the re-discovery of the beauty of the Negro woman, the vogue of the "natural" hair style and the wearing of the African habit, has created a cult of "blackism" with an avowed hatred for anything white that has degenerated into a "blacker than thou, thus purer than thou" syndrome. This syndrome is more racially symbolic than pragmatically valuable. From the cloisters of "black revolutionaries" (*sic*) throughout the nation the call for "black power" has been issued and re-issued, and each time without any real program outlined for the achievement of this "black power." What these "revolutionaries" have succeeded in cultivating is a cult of blackism that legitimizes any action in the name of "black power" and the liberation of black people in America. It is therefore not surprising that Black Panthers and similar groups across the nation issue a rhetoric so highly pedantic and nebulous that it sounds like an unsophisticated version of Legard, Lanbehn, and Bruck. The extreme nationalistic tendencies of the black movement are best exemplified in a quote from Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton's book, *Black Power*, Mr. Carmichael and Mr. Hamilton state, "In the end we cannot and shall not offer any guarantees that Black Power, if achieved, would be non-racist." This statement loses a great deal of its tenuous nature when it is viewed in comparison with other statements made by blacks throughout the nation, statements like, "Blacks built this country, and if 'whitey' don't come around we're going to burn it down." The black nationalists, like Legard, Langbehn, and Bruck in Germany; Moshe Dayan, Ben Gurion, Abba Eban, and Levi Eshkol in Israel, have succeeded in establishing the necessary requisite for black fascism in America by eliminating all shades of grey in any question of race. Because their dialectic seldom extends beyond the pale of the supremacy of "blackism," they have succeeded in reducing the question on racism to a dichotomy of "we blacks are right, you whites are wrong."

But for those outside the "black and white issue," and for a peripheral few in these two groups, the statements of these black nationalists constitute an undeniable tendency toward fascism. For those outside of the "black and white" issue there is no essential difference between living in a white racist society and a black racist society, a white fascist society and a black fascist society. Racism and fascism are equally repugnant no matter what the color of the fascist or racist.

The Negro movement has yet to become as adept and sophisticated as the Jew in using the aegis of suffering for the advancement of its economic, social, and political position in the United States. But it is quickly improving. It is not that the Negro has not suffered greatly at the hands of America; what is disturbing is the totally ethnocentric concept of suffering which the Negro has employed. One of the implicit and sometimes explicit bases of the Negro movement is that poverty, discrimination, injustice, and all of the other deleterious effects of living in a "racist" society affect only the black man. By taking such a narrow view of these universal conditions, black nationalists completely negate the wretched existence of American Indians, Filipinos, poor whites, Mexican-Americans, and the rest who have suffered and continue to suffer in an unjust America. One would think that the Negro, like the Jew, would be most sensitive to the existence of suffering in America irrespective of the group involved. But the understanding and the empathy for the suffering of other people by the Negro is displaced by an ethnocentrism that prevents him from correcting his myopic view of the plight of others. What is disconcerting is not so much the attention that the American Negro receives, but that his nationalistic tendencies overpower his compassion, making him depreciate the plight of others, ignore them, or stifle their call for help and understanding. Not unlike the Jewish merchant's action in the Negro ghettos, the Negro sees the advancement of himself as his primary goal regardless of who gets left behind in the same miserable existence from which he is desperately trying to escape. It is not at all unlikely that the Negro will at some future date find himself in one of the niches of power in American society and act accordingly — in oppressing others. This is of course the ultimate aim to which the Negro seemingly aspires, but even in the process of obtaining that goal he is systematically "putting down" his "brown brother."

It is this type of ethnocentric and nationalistic attitude that led a nationally known Negro professor at San Jose State College to state publicly that, "While Blacks were out protesting, Mexican-Americans were sitting at home before their television sets, eating beans." Simultaneously, as Negroes have come to dominate the Educational Opportunities Program for minorities at the University of California at Berkeley, the recruiting of Mexican-American students has dropped almost forty percent! It is not surprising, therefore, that in Oakland, California, American Indian and Mexican-Americans recently joined forces to protest against virtual exclusion by the Negro dominated anti-poverty council. The Indians and Mexi-

can-Americans found it necessary to totally disrupt a meeting of the council in order to emphasize the exclusion of the "other minorities." Similarly, during 1967 and 1968 conferences on urban problems and minorities were held at San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles, and many other southwestern cities. In each instance, they have been oriented predominantly to the Negroes, while Mexican-Americans have been handed a perfunctory role. Negro speaker after speaker appears in public forums throughout the Southwest to air his views. Systematically, these presentations exclude Filipinos, Hawaiians, Indians, Samoans, Koreans, and many of the other peoples that comprise the population of the American Southwest. At best, these people are mentioned in passing only — testimony to the new tokenism of modern America.

There are those historicans who adhere to a view of a cyclical history; a history that repeats itself throughout various stages of history but in different guises. Whether this concept of history is valid or not, it is undeniable that the extreme nationalism that occurred in Germany and Israel is occurring in the Black movement today.

If *EL GRITO* is truly to function as a forum for contemporary Mexican-American thought, it must have the active participation of its Mexican-American readers. We invite contributions in both written and graphic form—academic papers, book reviews, short stories, poetry, satire, drawings, photographs, and cartoons. Relevance of topic and quality of work are the only editorial standards.

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