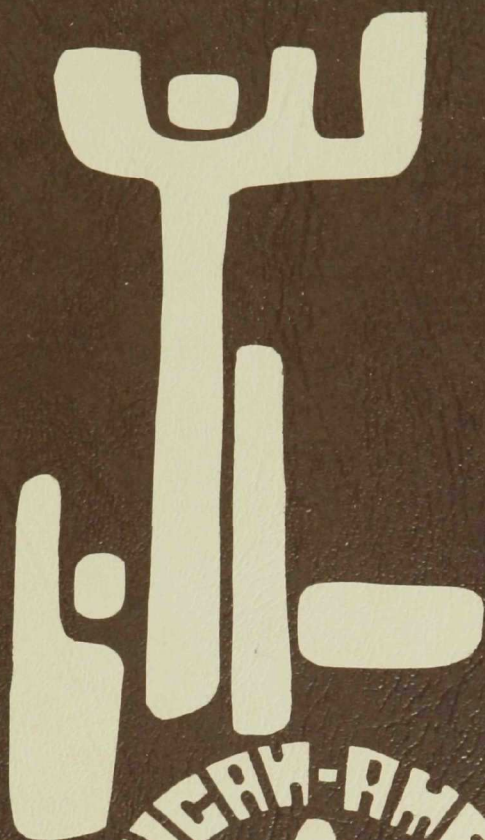
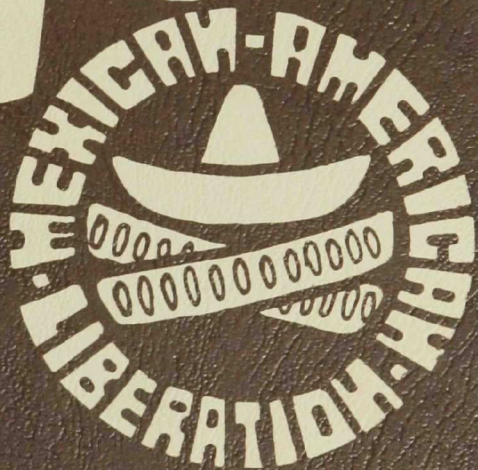


El Grito

A JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN-AMERICAN THOUGHT



fall 1967 - one dollar



El Grito

Volume 1, No. 1

Fall 1967

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EL GRITO is published quarterly by Quinto Sol Publications Inc., P. O. Box 9275, Berkeley, California 94719. Subscription price—one year, \$4.00.

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Third printing – February, 1969

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The graphic illustrations on pages 6, 16, and 26 are by REBECCA H. MORALES, a fourth year student in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley.

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COVER DESIGN BY RAMON RODRIGUEZ

EDITORIAL

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 trappings. 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.

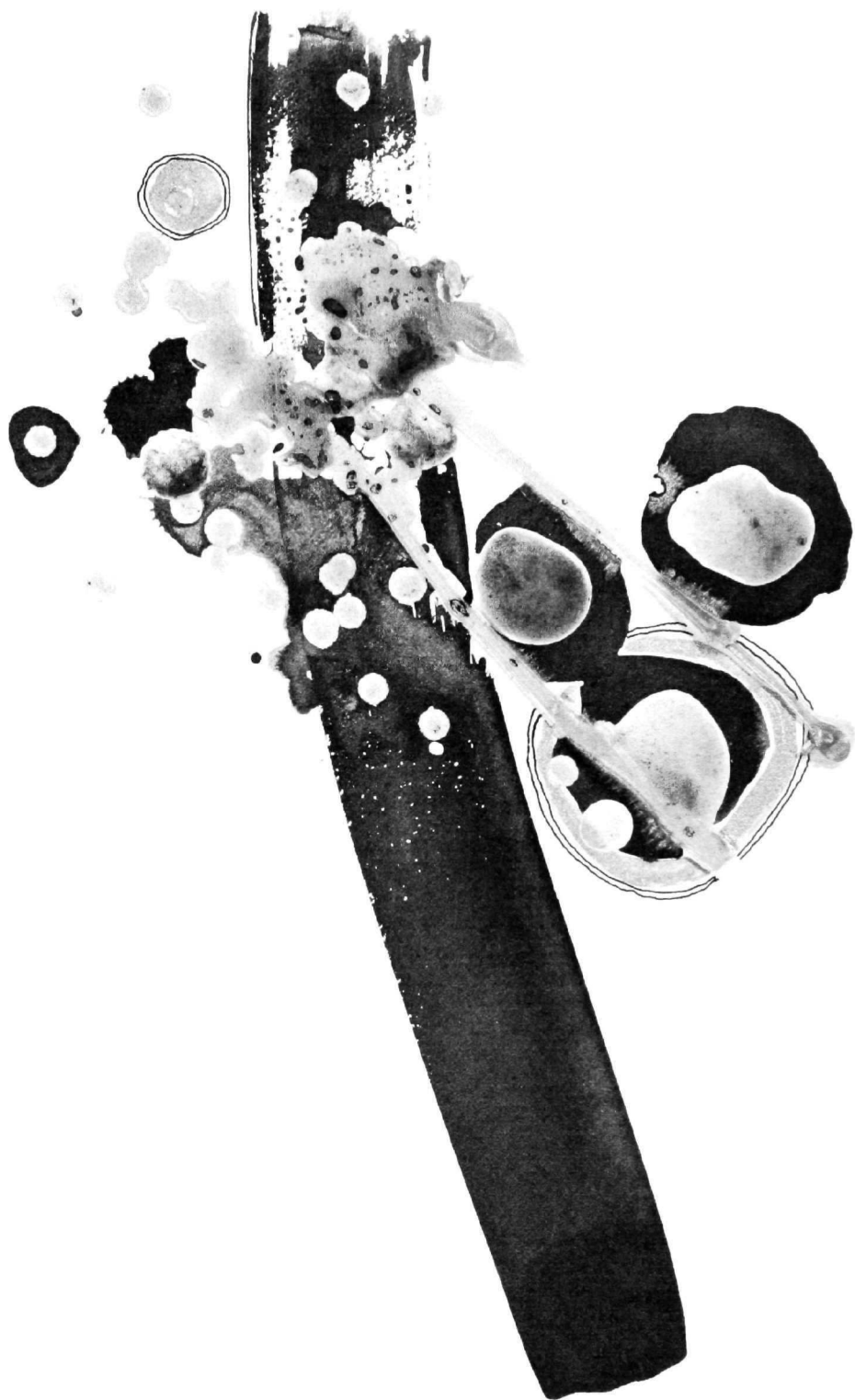
MINORITIES, HISTORY, AND THE CULTURAL MYSTIQUE

Octavio Ignacio Romano-V., Ph.D.

There are times in history when all ethnicity ends, when skin color ends, when particular group history as well as religious affiliation also ends. This phenomenon can be seen whenever members of an oppressed ethnic, social, or religious group themselves become the oppressors of either their own people, or others who may happen to be unlike them. History is replete with such incidents, incidents that continue to occur throughout the world regardless of ethnicity, skin color, history or religion. When this happens, the exploited become the exploiters, the excluded become the excluders.

The history of the United States is no exception, for here members of all groups, however they may be defined, have participated in this type of activity at one time or another. One instance in which the exploiters as well as the exploited were members of the same minority group is to be found in the case of the bitterly fought garment industry strikes in New York City prior to World War I. In this case the exploiters were Jews, and the exploited were also Jews. Parallel situations can be found among the Negroes of the United States. One example of this intra-ethnic oppression is Booker T. Washington's use of controlled press and bribery in order to popularize his submissive philosophy and squelch rival philosophies, notably that of Dubois. An even better case in point, and one hardly in need of documentation, is Uncle Tomism. In these cases, like the Jewish internal struggle in the garment industry, Negroes have bitterly fought each other.

The history of the West and Southwest also counts with such occurrences, as witness the oppressive tactics employed within the early Mormon movement, in which banishment and



lawless killing were the order of the day. In California the so-called "native Californians" enjoyed relative immunity from the violence that raged between Americans and Mexicans in the mining districts of California. In fact, ties of marriage and the bonds of commerce brought the Spanish quickly into the American camp. In so doing, the "native Californians" thereby gave their tacit approval and demonstrated a moral indifference toward the violence, the shooting, and the numerous lynchings of Mexicans in early California. A more contemporary example of exploiters within this group is to be seen in the case of Mexican-American labor contractors who delivered and still deliver cheap Mexican labor to farming interests which are operated by members of other minorities which themselves had been oppressed and exploited upon their arrival in the United States as immigrants. The famous Tong Wars among the Chinese is still another classic example of minorities taking oppressive action against members of their own group. A more recent example of this type of exploitation within the Chinese-American community can be seen in the reported "sweat shop" conditions of the sewing rooms of Chinatown in San Francisco, where workers are reported to still be working in squalid conditions with a work week that often extends beyond 75 hours. Numerous other examples such as these have transpired in American history.

Members of minority groups who have joined in the exploitation of their own group, or in the exploitation of other groups, traditionally have made use of certain words to describe the condition and behavior of those who are "beneath" them in the social order. That is to say, once they occupy some position or role in society that is above abject poverty they all too often speak of those who remain in such straits as people who are fatalistic, resigned, apathetic, tradition oriented, tradition bound, emotional, impetuous, volatile, affected, non-goal-oriented, uncivilized, unacculturated, non-rational, primitive, irrational, unorganized, uncompetitive, retarded, slow learners, underachieving, underdeveloped, or just plain lazy. In using such words as these to describe other people they thereby place the reasons or causes of "inferior" status **somewhere within the minds, within the personalities, or within the culture** of those who are economically, politically, or educationally out of power.

On the other hand, no matter from which group they come, those in power describe their own station in life as resulting directly from goal-oriented behavior, a competitive urge, responsibility, rationality, a long cultural tradition, etc., etc. In short, they place the reasons or causes of their "success" **somewhere within themselves**. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Anglo-descended Americans describe their relative position in American society as having its origins somewhere **within** the Anglos themselves. Much the same is said of the relative position in American society of Italian-Americans, Irish - Americans, Japanese - Americans, Chinese - Americans, Mexican-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and American Indians. Such "logic" virtually assumes that each of these groups has existed essentially in an historical vacuum, untouched and unaided by others. Such logic also assumes that a cultural mystique, as expressed through individuals, is the prime motivating force in society, as if striving itself were a function of internalized culture and sub-culture alone.

Members of **all** ethnic, subcultural, and religious groups in the United States in describing their own "success" or the "failure" of others have indulged in and have perpetuated this mystique. If one is to follow this deeply imbued but still mystical rationale to its natural conclusion, then one must also believe that there is no Filipino-American mayor of a city because there is something lacking within Filipino-American culture; that there is no Mexican-American state senator in California because there is something lacking in Mexican-Americans and their subculture; that there has been no person of Oriental descent as a president of an American university because there is some shortcoming in Japanese- and Chinese-Americans; and that there are no Jewish presidents of the United States because of some traditional shortcoming in Jewish-Americans.

To repeat, and never often enough, members of **all** minority groups in the United States have played this game and have used this rhetoric, beginning in colonial America when the Puritans, themselves an oppressed minority, in turn spoke of their indentured servants as fatalistic and emotional (childish) individuals who were unmotivated and resigned to their lowly lot. This peculiar rationale has remained with us to this day, as witness the ubiquitous terminology of contemporary Ameri-

can social science that repeatedly describes people in the lower rungs of society as underachievers, retarded, fatalistic, tradition bound, emotional, etc., etc., etc. Good examples of this can be found in the Parsonian universal dichotomy which divides social systems into the instrumental-rational social systems (us, of course) **versus** the affective-emotional social systems (they, naturally), and the Murray Wax universal dichotomy which refers to rational-scientific peoples (us, wouldn't you know) **versus** the magic oriented peoples (everybody else, poor slobs).

This contemporary rhetoric is an historical abortion that is composed of the Weberian version of the Protestant Ethic ("success" is a State of Grace divinely bestowed upon individuals, i.e., it is **something within us**); of cultural Darwinism ("success" is the outcome of competition in which the culturally superior survive and succeed, i.e., **something within us**); and modern American liberalism ("success" belongs to those who organize, those who are achievers, those who are rational, i.e., again **something within us**).

From this kind of thinking it naturally follows that the "unsuccessful" are not in a State of Grace, do not belong to the "right" culture, or they have failed to organize rationally. All this rubbish is insidious arrogance. To interpret historical processes in this manner is to believe utterly that God, nature, society, and rationality are all solidly on the side of success.

But there is more to history than such tribal law, no matter how sophisticated its rhetoric or its ideological fountainhead. Thus a new rhetoric is needed; a rhetoric that will make obvious once and for all that for us to call other people underachievers, emotional, fatalistic, etc., is but a gross and ill-concealed act of patting ourselves on the back. A new rhetoric is needed that will enable us to view history from a perspective that is free from tribal egos and total self-interest. Only in this manner can people transcend the cultural, the ethnic, and the tribal mystique, and truly be free.

Such a rhetoric should begin with the premise that peoples and cultures **do not** evolve or ever exist as isolated or isolable entities, participating only in their own histories, independent of the world around them, and therefore responsible only to themselves. To believe otherwise is to believe in the independent cultural, ethnic, or religious entity. This belief, of course,

has been known to us in recent years as the Aryan myth.

But the history of the world is not that of independent historical traditions. Instead it is the existence of mutual histories. In this light it need no longer be said that historically, exploitation and oppression have required complicity with members of an exploited group of people. In the same manner, and as attested to by world history, all too often members of oppressed minorities have become the oppressors of other such groups.

In recent years the mystique of culture has been extended to apply to the poverty-stricken of society. Hence the suggestion has been made that the ways of poverty are also isolable and therefore evolving an independent history. This is carrying the already over-worked notion of the cultural mystique to an absurdity of cosmic proportions. Any slum-dwelling pimp or prostitute knows better as they look over their Uptown clientele, pay off the police, and work the nightclubs.

The pimps and the prostitutes know that the outcasts, the poor, and the oppressed minorities cannot exist without the complicity of members of their own group, the cash from others, and the purchased understanding of the authorities. This process, in short, is mutual and interdependent history. Similarly anyone who is the least bit cognizant of history is aware of the fact that the poor, the minorities, and the outcasts have never existed independently from the rest of society. Yet we have been led to believe that such is the case by the high priests of modern society who garb themselves in medieval costumes each year at graduation time only to repeat medieval notions with electronic amplification to graduating college seniors. They then retreat to their monasteries to write what some people have called social science, which is but mere tribal rhetoric and the fiction of totally independent cultures.

But the history of the world has been one of interdependent histories, of interdependence based on mutual activities, mutual agreements, and mutual survival. This interdependency has been the history of the world—including the United States. As such, all conditions of life in the United States exist in interdependent tandems with the rest of society. They do not exist as cultural, ethnic, or religious isolates as we have been led to believe. Therefore, the responsibility for social conditions in the United States is mutual. For this very reason a new

rhetoric is needed to take this mutualism into account while at the same time discarding the teleological-cultural-tribal-mystical interpretation of the historical process.

Such a rhetoric would unequivocally take into account that minorities themselves engage in oppressive behavior, using duplicity and complicity as major tactical maneuvers. Therefore, the new rhetoric must postulate that duplicity, complicity, coalitions, and social networks are much more fundamental to the historical process than are ethnicity, skin color, group history, tradition, and religious affiliation.

* * *

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THE ADVERTISEMENT

Steve Gonzales

The following advertisement originally appeared in the September 6 issue of THE WHITE LIBERAL'S DIGEST, and the September 9 issue of THE SOUTHWESTERN JOURNAL OF CULTURAL ENGINEERING. It is being brought to you as a public service by EL GRITO:

American Ethnic Supply Company, a Division of I.B.M. (Intergalactic Business Machines, Inc.), is proud to present the latest model in its popular "Other Minorities" line—the all-new Mark IV MEXICAN-AMERICAN!! Superbly crafted and made of only the finest foamium, chromium and tacomium, the Mark IV has been expertly engineered and computer-programmed to efficiently serve all your Mexican-American needs.

Far ahead of the field with its advanced design, the Mark IV MEXICAN-AMERICAN is the first model to offer you that long-hoped-for engineering breakthrough — Multipox Stereotypification — a literal triumph of American ingenuity and technology! Produced after ten years of intensive Social and Cultural Engineering research by our team of dedicated Industrial Anthropologists and Cybernetic Sociologists, the Multipox Stereotypification system allows you by the simple turning of a dial to select the **particular** MEXICAN-AMERICAN you need to suit your particular purpose:

- (1) a familially faithful and fearfully factional folk-fettered fool
- (2) a captivating, cactus-crunching, cow-clutching caballero
- (3) a charp, chick-chasing, chili-chomping cholo
- (4) a brown-breeding, bean-belching border-bounder
- (5) a raza-resigned, ritual-racked rude rural relic
- (6) a peso-poor but proud, priest-pressed primitive
- (7) a grubby but gracious, grape-grabbing greaser

A second significant design feature of the Mark IV is its Instantaneous Convertibility. With this engineering innovation, you'll never again have to worry about being caught in an embarrassing position with your MEXICAN-AMERICAN; when the need arises for him to disappear, a simple utterance of the verbal command "Civil Rights" will instantaneously convert the MEXICAN-AMERICAN into an inconspicuous muted-brown tea-tray, complete with service for six.

The all-new Mark IV is truly revolutionary in terms of safety design—it is the first one-hundred percent guaranteed safe MEXICAN-AMERICAN!! If at any time the Mark IV should begin behaving in a contrary, threatening, or subversive manner, a clear enunciation of the verbal command "Traditional Culture" will immediately initiate the self-destruct mechanism, culminating in the Mark IV committing full harikari with the blunt end of an original 1914 Edition of William Madsen's *THE MEXICAN-AMERICANS OF SOUTH TEXAS*. In the event of this, of course, you will be immediately furnished another MEXICAN-AMERICAN at no cost to you by the American Ethnic Supply Company.

For complete specifications and a full description of the many quality features of the Mark IV, send for our free illustrated brochure, or better yet, visit your local dealer and try out a MEXICAN-AMERICAN for yourself. Upon purchase of the Mark IV, the American Ethnic Supply Company will furnish, at no extra cost to you, your MEXICAN-AMERICAN'S lifetime supply of American Grease Pellets—the very latest in easy insertion! And remember, when it comes to the MEXICAN-AMERICAN—"Only your Supplier Knows For Sure!"

* * *

STEVE GONZALES was born in San Diego, California. He graduated from San Diego State College in 1965 with a B.A. in Anthropology. He presently attends the University of California at Berkeley, where he is a doctoral student in Education/Anthropology and is chairman of QUINTO SOL the Mexican-American Student Organization at the University of California, Berkeley.

PROLOGUE

On June 10 Reies Lopez Tijerina, founder and leader of LA ALIANZA FEDERAL DE MERCEDES, was arrested for allegedly taking part in an attack on the Rio Arriba County courthouse in Northern New Mexico. He and nineteen others were subsequently charged on 26 counts which included first degree kidnapping (punishable by death), assault with intent to commit murder, dangerous use of explosives, and unlawful assault on a jail. The Tierra Amarilla incident was the culmination in a series of attempts to bring attention to Tijerina's claim that millions of acres of land throughout the Southwest have been illegally taken from Mexican-Americans since 1848. LA ALIANZA asserts that the original settlers were guaranteed their property rights through Spanish land grants, and more specifically, through the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848.

The following is a chronology of actions taken by Tijerina and his ALIANZISTAS after numerous futile attempts to channel their claims through the United States Courts.

1966

July 4 Weekend . . . A 62 mile protest march from Albuquerque to Santa Fe.

October 15-19 . . . 600 Mexican-Americans sit-in and block passage into Kit Carson National Forest.

1967

May . . . 200 Mexican-Americans sit-in at Governor Cargo's office after he failed to keep his appointment.

June 3 . . . District Attorney Alfonso Sanchez leads raid on Alianza meeting and takes membership list.

June 5 . . . ALIANZISTAS attempt to make citizen's arrest on District Attorney Sanchez. Shooting breaks out—policeman and jailer wounded. Lieutenant Governor F. Lee Francis calls out National Guard and State Police.

June 10 . . . Tijerina captured.

July 24 . . . Tijerina released on \$5000 property bond.

INSURRECTION IN NEW MEXICO— THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

Armando Valdez

In 1846 the Mexican population rose in armed insurrection against the American incubus. The insurgents gained control of northern New Mexico and succeeded in killing the first Anglo-American governor of the territory, Charles Bent, before the United States troops crushed the revolt. These insurgent leaders still linger as folk-heroes in the minds of many Mexican-Americans in New Mexico. Recently, in the very same region, a group of Mexican-Americans—LA ALIANZA FEDERAL DE MERCEDES led by Reies Lopez Tijerina—allegedly staged a guerrilla attack on Rio Arriba's county courthouse in Tierra Amarilla. As a sequel to the recent activities of LA ALIANZA, the threat of an armed insurrection by the Mexican-American population of northern New Mexico is again thrust into the forefront of the "land of enchantment."

For the past four years, LA ALIANZA has struggled to bring



its claim on vast acreages of land throughout New Mexico and Colorado to the attention of state and federal officials. In July of 1966, ALIANZISTAS staged a sixty-two mile protest march from Albuquerque to Santa Fe. In October of the same year, ALIANZISTAS closed off to public use for five days, the five-hundred thousand acre Carson National Forest. Two forest rangers were arrested for trespassing ALIANZISTA-held territory and later released. On June 5, 1967, ALIANZISTAS allegedly shot up the county courthouse in Tierra Amarilla, a northern New Mexico townlet. This incident at Tierra Amarilla, as described in the news media, had overtones of guerrilla warfare—attacking a village courthouse, seizing hostages and fleeing into surrounding hills—all guerrilla tactics. The facts regarding the alleged attack on Tierra Amarilla are obscured by contradictory and sensationally written news reports. However, it is significant that state officials felt that the situation warranted the mobilization of the National Guard—complete with tanks. Generally, the National Guard is mobilized only to meet emergencies arising from natural disasters or massive civil disorder. Therefore, it is evident, judging from this desperate reaction, that New Mexico officials felt an eminent threat of insurrection by the Mexican-American population.

ETHNIC DENOMINATOR

Before considering the basis of the current conflict in New Mexico the ethnic designation for the Hispanic population of New Mexico must be clarified. Though the term Spanish-American is commonly used in New Mexico to denote persons of Hispanic heritage, the ethnic designation, Mexican-American is more appropriate. It must be acknowledged that some residents of relatively isolated New Mexican villages are the direct descendants of Spanish colonists. However, to designate such persons as Spanish, either culturally or linguistically, is to negate the influences of Mexican and Indian elements which blended over the centuries with Spanish elements so that today a uniquely heterogeneous culture totally distinct from Spanish culture prevails in these regions. In essence, the adoption of the term, Spanish-American, gained prominence in New Mexico during the 1920's as a reaction to the great influx of Mexican immigrants into the United States during that decade. The "earlier" residents sought to dissociate themselves from

the unskilled, uneducated "aliens." A similar identity transformation occurred in Texas during the same period and the term Latin-American made its debut.¹ This phenomenon of self-reclassification is not without parallels in the history of European immigration to the United States, especially among the Northern and Western European immigrants of the late nineteenth century. An implicit factor in this phenomenon of self-reclassification is a dichotomy between the cultured (i.e. established/wealthy) and the non-cultured (i.e. foreign/poor). Therefore, to designate the Spanish-surname, Spanish-speaking population of New Mexico as Spanish-American is not only grossly contradictory to historical fact but is a vacuous ethnic taxonomy.

INSURRECTION

The question of an impending armed insurrection in New Mexico may best be examined by considering the current conflict in its historical context. Since insurrection is the product of a long period of ferment, an historical perspective is imperative if causation is to be established.

LA ALIANZA's struggle stems from an effort to regain lands annexed to the United States by the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. This treaty guarantees the protection of the civil and property rights of the residents of the annexed territories.² However, it is an historical fact that these rights—though guaranteed by treaty—were never meant to be taken seriously by the United States government. In fact, the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was a treaty of conquest dictated by the United States upon a defeated Mexican government. The Mexican residents in annexed territories were accorded the treatment of a conquered people. Moreover, the annexed territories (greater in area than Germany and France combined, and representing about one-half of the territory then held by Mexico) were dealt with as spoils of war. These formerly-Mexican, American citizens have been assigned the role of a subordinate citizen since their conquest.

¹Carey McWilliams, *NORTH FROM MEXICO* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1949), pp. 78-79, ET. AL.

²CF. *Ex. doc. No. 50 (H of R) 30th Cong., 2nd Sess. and Ex. doc. No. 52 (Senate) 30th Cong., 1st Sess.*

The conduct of General Stephen W. Kearny, commander of the United States military expedition through New Mexico and eventually California attests to the fact that the newly-absorbed American citizens were considered and correspondingly treated as a conquered people. Kearny was the first United States official to declare to the people of New Mexico that their rights "of person and property" would be held inviolable. Simultaneously, Kearny was under orders to declare the residents of this territory citizens of the United States and to **demand their allegiance**. Kearny's sanguine chauvinism is forcefully conveyed by Phillip St. George Cooke in his narrative, *THE CONQUEST OF NEW MEXICO AND CALIFORNIA*, in the following description of addresses by Kearny to the villagers of Tecolote and San Miguel, New Mexico, respectively:

. . . the General and suit were conducted by the alcalde to his house and there, through his interpreter, General Kearny, addressed him and the village notables, informing them of the annexation and its great advantages to them. **He required the alcalde to take the oath of allegiance.**³

. . . the General and his staff, the alcalde and a priest and a few others ascended a flat housetop overlooking the plaza; the General, through his interpreter, delivered his address with the advantage of its success at Tecolote, but whether the priests's influence, the crowds', or his own peculiar firmness, the alcalde positively refused to take the oath. The General then enlarged upon the perfect freedom of religion under our government, mentioning that his chief of staff, then present, was a Roman Catholic. All persuasion failed, and at last **the old man was forced to go through the form and semblance of swearing allegiance.**

This attitude displayed by Kearny is merely an example of the subsequent attitudes and behavior of **gringos** toward the incipient wards of the United States—Mexican-Americans. It established a precedence of Anglo domination, both political and cultural. This arrogance of the conquering nation has re-

³*Phillip St. George Cook, THE CONQUEST OF NEW MEXICO AND CALIFORNIA (Emphasis my own), p. 18.*

Cooke, op. cit., p. 20 (Emphasis my own).

sulted in the loss to Mexican-Americans of over two million acres of public land and one million, seven hundred thousand acres of communal lands in New Mexico since 1854. One million, eight hundred thousand acres of these lands are now in the possession of the United States federal government. These and other equally significant land losses have occurred in violation of articles viii and ix of the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which guarantees the security of "property of every kind to Mexicans in the acquired territory." Only six years after the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, Congress enacted a law reserving congressional prerogative to pass upon private land claims in New Mexico by direct legislative enactment, an action diametrically opposed to the treaty. Provisions for adverse proceedings or for surveying the boundaries of tracts were completely excluded from this act.³ Since the motion of Manifest Destiny characterized the United States during the mid-nineteenth century, it should come as no surprise that Congress enacted such a law. During this period Americans were convinced that they were the legitimate heirs of **all** North America and viewed their struggle with Mexico as a struggle for their heritage; their manifest destiny was to rule North America from Atlantic to Pacific. The armies of Fremont, Taylor and Kearny realized this "American Dream."

ANGLO LAW

A major factor in the transfers of land from Mexican to Anglo propriety was the change in legal jurisdiction. The manner in which the Anglo legal system was introduced into this territory and its impact on the indigenous population is historically paralleled only by the introduction of Christianity into this same region several centuries earlier. Both of these doctrines were equally unsolicited and equally forced upon their unsuspecting beneficiaries by equally fervent "missionaries" of a conquering political order. Both doctrines were employed as instruments for exploiting and dominating their conquered subjects.

Within the Mexican legal system, land ownership was based

³Clark S. Knowlton, *CAUSES OF LAND LOSS AMONG THE SPANISH-AMERICANS IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO* (*Mimeographed paper: Texas Western College, n.d.*) p. 6.

primarily upon traditional and recognized rights of occupancy. Grant lands were immune from taxation since the financial needs of the Mexican and, formerly, Spanish governments were met by taxes upon harvests and livestock increases. Accordingly, the concept of property taxation was totally remote and a system of land survey was unknown to the Mexican land owner. Land boundaries were vague and imprecise, and land titles were generally unregistered. Conversely, the Anglo concept of property taxation as the economic base of county government demanded an authoritative system of land survey and concomitant registration of land titles. Therefore, the mandatory transposition of largely antithetical legal systems experienced by the Mexican-American residents of the acquired territory placed their land-ownership in a very precarious position. Under the jurisdiction of the Anglo legal system, property owned by Mexican-Americans became subject to property taxes, precise delineation of boundaries and registration of land titles. Herein lies a major causal factor in the demise of Mexican-American land ownership.

Avaricious Anglos employed their legal system as an instrument of intimidation, fraud and deceit. Obscure and unregistered land titles held by Mexican-Americans were challenged in Anglo courts by lawyers, surveyors, land recorders, as well as by no lesser personages than governors, state supreme court justices, state and national politicians. Anglo lawyers, particularly, saw the vulnerability of Mexican-American land ownership and proceeded with great enterprise (*i.e.* Yankee ingenuity) to defraud Mexican-Americans of their land. One very common practice, for example, involved legal partners jointly conspiring to obtain these lands. One legal partner would file suit against an unregistered parcel of land while his associate would offer his services for the defense of the land title, **agreeing to accept land as retribution for his services**. Regardless of the outcome of the case, both lawyers would win; the Mexican-American land owner would be the sole loser. Indicating the prevalence of this fraudulent practice is the fact that **one out of every ten** Anglos in New Mexico in the 1880's was a lawyer.⁶

The policies of the federal government further contributed to the land losses of Mexican-Americans in New Mexico result-

⁶*Knowland, OP. CIT., p. 5.*

ing from unregistered and obscure land titles. The Homestead Laws opened up **over one million acres** of these lands to Anglo settlers.

ANGLO TAXES

Prior to 1848, property taxes were totally absent from the socio-political system of the annexed territory. However, the advent of Anglo law was accompanied by the practice of land taxation. Accordingly, land taxation provided yet another source of facile land gain for Anglos. Tax-delinquent properties multiplied during the period immediately succeeding the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The extent of the property losses that ensued is exemplified by the subsequent demise of the Anton Chico grant near El Cerrito, New Mexico. By 1860, the property had become chronically tax delinquent and large parcels of the two hundred and seventy thousand acres were sold to meet the taxes levied. In 1926, the New Mexico legislature passed a statute declaring that lands delinquent in taxes for three years would be sold for the cost of the delinquent taxes. A decade later, in 1939, only eighty-five thousand of the original two hundred seventy thousand acres remained under Mexican-American ownership. Moreover, twenty-two thousand acres of these remaining lands were under lease.⁷

The most vicious form of deceit employed by Anglos was the practice of differential tax assessments. In an effort to dispossess Mexican-Americans of their property, tax assessments levied against them were greater than those levied against Anglos. Once the property was transferred to Anglo ownership, the tax assessment was reduced. In *NORTH FROM MEXICO*, Carey McWilliams cites incidences in which taxes of \$1.50 per acre levied against grazing lands owned by Mexican-Americans were reduced to thirty and forty cents per acre when transferred to Anglo ownership.⁸

Federal land reclamation projects, irrigation projects and the establishment of forest reserves all directly contributed to the losses of vast expanses of Mexican-American properties. Though the land owners received retribution for their confiscated property, the severity of the losses assumed subtle forms.

⁷McWilliams, *OP. CIT.*, p. 78.

⁸McWilliams, *OP. CIT.*, p. 77.

The enormous amount of land required for these projects greatly increased the competition for agri-land. Powerful land corporations (generally Anglo-owned) seeking to expand their operations, incessantly strove to force out smaller landowners, frequently Mexican-Americans, by some strange coincidence. Moreover, increased conservation and water-use costs heightened the pressures directed against these smaller landowners who frequently were forced to sell at a great financial loss. Land losses due to these factors still occur today in the Albuquerque region and in the Mesilla Valley in the vicinity of Las Cruces, New Mexico.

The terms of the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, ratified by Mexico and the United States on May 30, 1848, have been flagrantly violated by the United States. Anglo law served not to protect the rights of the Mexican-Americans but conversely served to intimidate and exploit them. The historical accounts of the duplicity and intimidation employed to defraud Mexican-Americans of their land endure as testimony of Anglo disregard for the property rights of the Mexicans residing within the territory annexed to the United States, particularly in New Mexico. Consequently, Mexican-Americans in New Mexico were from the onset disenfranchised of their rights and concomitant opportunities. Today the situation has not changed; Mexican-Americans largely occupy a subordinate position as citizens of New Mexico and are, in every sense of the word, a minority group. Moreover, the demarcation between Mexican-Americans and Anglos is not only socio-economic but geographic as well. The population of the six northern counties of New Mexico is approximately seventy percent Mexican-American and these counties are generally referred to as the Spanish-American counties. In contrast to an urban ghetto, northern New Mexico constitutes a regional ghetto which extends over six counties and encompasses several hundred square miles. This entire region is plagued by chronic poverty, economic decline, high mortality rates and a growing out-migration rate. The 1961 per-capita income in these northern counties ranged from \$662 to \$818 as compared to a range of \$2,000 to \$3,000 for the remaining counties of New Mexico. Unemployment rates for the northern counties compared to the remaining areas of the state are 16 percent and 5.1 percent, respectively. Fifty-nine percent of the state's draftees are drawn from the Mexican-American

population which comprises only 30 percent of the state's population. Approximately 13 percent of the state's population resides in the six northern counties, yet this region comprises 30 percent of the state's welfare expenditure.* Essentially, the Mexican-American population of northern New Mexico is living in abject poverty. For these persons, the prospects for the future look increasingly dismal.

In this setting of chronic poverty, complemented by a long history of suppression and exploitation, the query of armed insurrection becomes a superfluous one. Poverty and exploitation have historically been the prime ingredients of revolution. Today, both of these elements are present in northern New Mexico as they were prior to the 1846 insurrection. The recent activities of LA ALIANZA symbolize the discontentment of an exploited, impoverished people—a discontent that may once again provide the impetus for insurrection in New Mexico.

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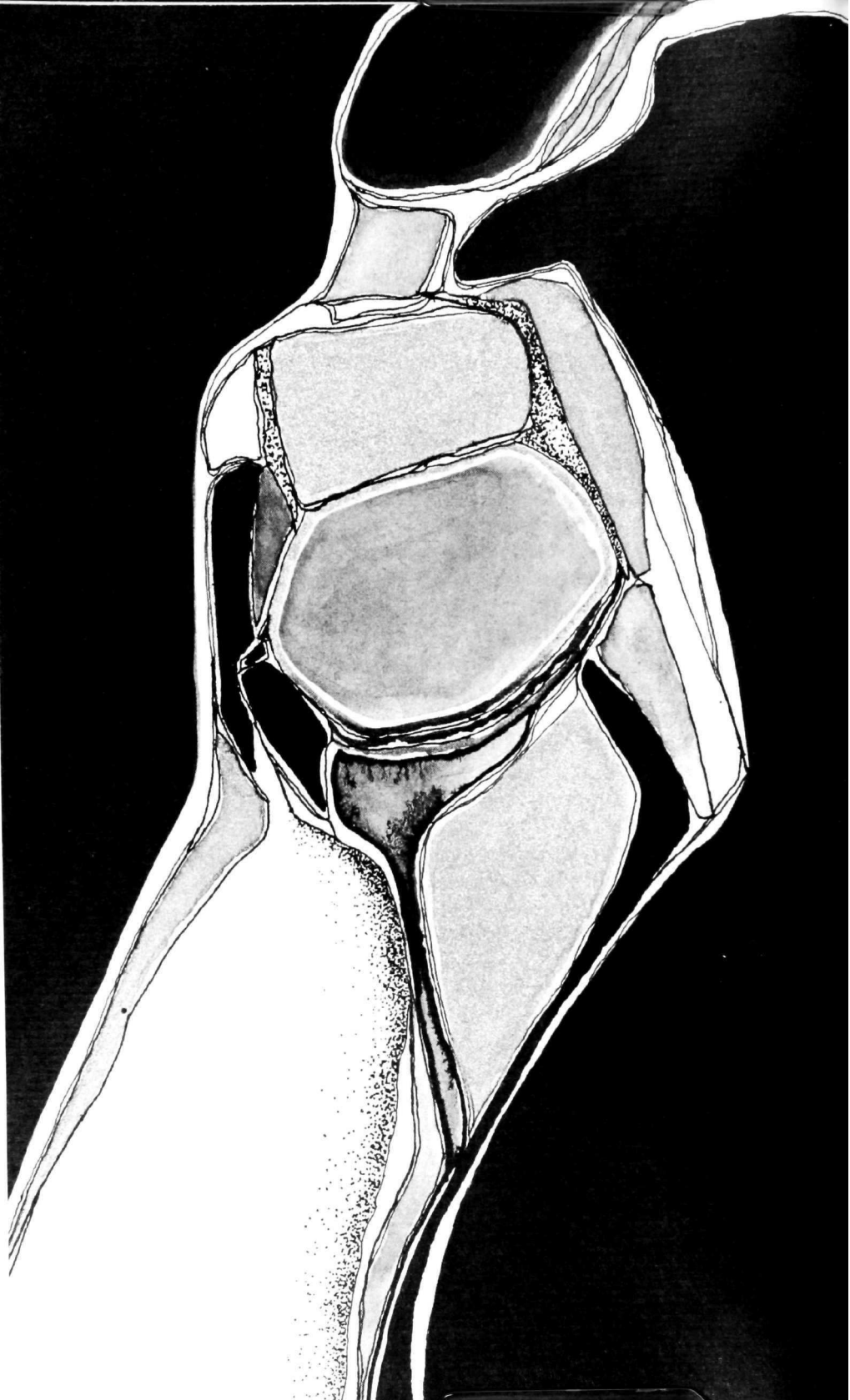
*The depressed state of the northern counties correlates land losses and welfare cases. Under the welfare statutes, welfare assistance cannot be extended to families who own land; the depressed economy affords meager economic gains from lands, especially smaller plots, and in this sense, encourages the sale of land at drastic losses for the sole purpose of becoming eligible to receive welfare assistance.

MARTÍN

Nick C. Vaca

Late Autumn in Tracy was always a frightening experience for me. The late September air was always torn between clinging to the oppressive heat of summer or accepting the cooling autumn winds that portended the coming of winter. The west winds blowing from San Francisco would raise the dust from the surrounding harvested farm fields and a brown sheet of dust would settle over Tracy. The clear blue skies of summer would begrudgingly accept the gray clouds of autumn, and I knew that the bitter cold and damp fog of the San Joaquin Valley winter would soon descend upon us. The winds would rise, the dust would dance and the setting sun would become a crimson red—a crimson red that filled the entire west skies, and I, in my fertile and imaginative youth, believed that the world would soon end. The fact that mornings would follow such horrible evenings never dispelled my belief that the world would be consumed by a fiery hell with a red sky as its herald. I made a promise to myself that I would never play outside when such a red sky predicted the death of the world. So awesome was the nature of these skies that I broke this solemn promise only once in my entire youth.

When my thoughts were not occupied with the destruction of the world, my days were spent in idle playtime. My playmates were never outside my family, and they were usually limited to Catarino, my older brother, and Vicente, my cousin. It was not that I disliked any of the other children in the neighborhood, but our family was so large that I never had any reason to go outside of it for friends. Besides, the three of us seldom fought and I saw no reason to upset our tranquil relationship. But, though we never played with the other children in the neighborhood, we were nevertheless well acquainted and



on good terms with them. We would roam our neighborhood, challenge kids to a quick and vicious game of marbles, defeat them, and then move on to other parts of the neighborhood in search of further conquest. The houses in which we, the dirty, brown children of our part of town, lived, would have been rustic had it not been for the misery that permeated them. They were usually constructed by the owners with lumber that did not always meet exact dimensions or was rarely of a uniform type. The houses, I thought, sagged more from the weight of the sorrow from within than from the lack of adequate construction. There were no sidewalks, just extended front yards that fused with the dust of the road.

The bizarre construction of the houses and the haphazard location of the lots provided many alleys that afforded us private areas of play. It was usually in these alleys that we would spend most of our playtime during the summer and late autumn months, playing marbles, cars, or whatever our combined imaginations happened to produce.

One late afternoon, during a lull in our activities we became aware of an intrusion in our neighborhood. As the sun was shedding its final shafts of light and the west wind was beginning its wicked dance making the dust race through the alleys, a small, dark woman stumbled into the alley where we were playing, stopped, cupped her leathery hands to her mouth and shouted into the wind,

“Martín!”

and then shuffled away.

When we were sure that she was out of hearing range, Vicente began an analysis of her. Because her hair was drawn tightly from her forehead braided and set atop her head so that they formed dikes, he concluded that she was from Mexico. Her eyes, set in deep sockets, her high cheek bones, dark, leathery skin and pure white teeth, further convinced Vicente that she had just arrived from Mexico. Her dress reached her ankles and her thinning red sweater had several holes and missing buttons. She had a small belly which she used as a resting place for her folded arms. From this observation, I added that she had had a lot of children. I knew this because my mother had the same type of belly and she had ten children.

After Vicente had completed his analysis of the woman, our

thoughts turned to Martín. The name Martín fascinated us more than did the woman. We had never seen him before and largely because of this we delighted in imagining how he looked and in making rhymes with his name. The clarity and sharpness of the sound produced by pronouncing his name lent itself very nicely to many rhymes, but the one that we enjoyed the most was,

“Martín el violín.”

It was such a quick and exact rhyme that I would often find myself repeating it when I played alone among the whistling eucalyptus trees near our house.

“Martín el violín.”

“Martín el violín.”

“Martín el violín.”

Yet for all our fantasies and vivid imaginations, none of us could really satisfactorily imagine how he looked—not until one afternoon when the wind from the west began its piercing song, and the convulsing dust covered rooftops and the west skies turned a crimson red. As I was ready to leave our back alley and flee the horror of the red sky, Martín appeared in the alley with a whirlwind of dust dancing about him. He was awfully small—much smaller than any of us had ever imagined him to be. And when I saw how thin he was, I thought to myself how very appropriate was the rhyme we had created. Not only was he small, but he was unbelievably skinny. Yet, strangely enough, right in the middle of his thin and frail body was an enormous belly, as huge as the basketball with which we played. It was his enormous belly that caused us to immediately dislike him. For us, a large belly meant that a person ate well—too well. When my mother would take us with her on one of her rare shopping trips into Stockton, we would walk down the sidewalks and enviously watch the men with their fat bellies and puffy cheeks and wish that we could just for once in our lives, eat as much as we wanted. We could imagine that their meals consisted of entire chickens, steaks, potatoes and all the trimmings that we knew must certainly accompany such a feast. Perhaps, I hated Martín more than the others, because of his belly. It was this intense dislike for him and his belly that made me forget the monstrous significance of the red sky. We inspected him as closely as we could, trying to discern as much about him as possible through the sheet of

dust. His face was scarred and dotted with white spots and his rat-like teeth would sparkle in the evening sun, as he spoke to his younger brother. His hair was cut very short, giving him his only semblance of neatness. His clothes were dirty, and his shirt failed to completely cover his belly. His short pants displayed a pair of skinny legs that I found difficult to believe could support his belly. It was only his shoeless, calloused feet and filthy arms that made him look a little less resentful in our eyes. His large round eyes gave him the appearance of a scared lemur, ready to flee at the first sign of danger.

Even if we had wanted to start a conversation, the strong wind would have prevented it. As it was we simply stared at each other. We stared in a silent eternity, an eternity that was broken when Martín languidly picked up a clod from the ground and threw it at us. Calmly and simply. No reason. He just threw it. He missed, and he had made a terrible mistake. He had given us a reason to hurt him and his belly. His throw had come closest to my cousin, who quickly responded with a practiced hand. But Vicente's throw was too late, for Martín and his replica had managed to escape behind the wooden fence that bordered the alley.

It was not an instant showdown between Martín and ourselves. He would throw and duck and the clods would burst into a thousand pieces against the side of the house; we would throw, duck and miss. We managed to miss each other for ten minutes of intense battle. This type of warfare was not at all unfamiliar to us and we had managed to develop tactics and even particular strategies for winning battles. When we tired of this particular phase of our encounter with Martín, we decided to utilize one of our more fundamental plans for flushing him out into the open. Near the north side of our house there was a large hole, which had been dug for rubbish, and since the rubbish had not yet been dumped into it we decided that it afforded us an excellent opportunity to stage a decoy. The hole had a small mound of dirt that faced the west, and we decided to place my worn red cap a very small distance behind the mound and weigh it down with stones to keep the wind from blowing it away. The position of the cap gave the appearance to those that viewed it, that I had hidden in the hole. We anticipated that Martín would see it and believing that I was in a very vulnerable position, would openly

attack me. When our meticulous plan had been set, the three of us waited, panting with excitement. We didn't have to wait long. Martín, an obvious novice in this game, quickly understood the seeming vulnerability of my apparent position and crept as closely as he possibly could. When he felt that he was in the best possible position, he slowly got up, the dust and weeds slowly falling from his palms and knees, reached into the makeshift hop-sack satchel containing his ammunition and began throwing clods as fast and fiercely as his thin arms could hurl them. He was a real pigeon. We came running out of our hiding place and Catarino shouted,

“Martín!”

He turned, his eyes wide with the knowledge that he had been fooled, and met a hail of clods. One hit him on the temple, my throw, one sunk deeply into his belly, and as he turned to flee into the shadows of the alley another bit his back. He ran until he felt that he was safely out of throwing distance, turned, his cheeks streaming tears, his face distorted by anger, anguish and hurt, picked up a clod and made a last futile gesture of defiance as he hurled it in our direction. The weed-embedded clod fell ten feet short of its target. We had won a real victory. What a fool he was, we all agreed. He deserved it. Yes, of course, but not really. Why in the hell had he thrown that damn clod in the first place? He must have known he would lose.

When my brother and cousin had gone inside the house to eat dinner, I slowly walked to the place where he had made his last defiant gesture. The darkness of night was beginning and the last rays of red were disappearing from the sky. The wind whistled in my ears as I stopped to examine the area of his last stand, and noticed a small, gray, cast iron cap pistol with a broken trigger. I assumed that it must belong to him. I bent and retrieved it from its bed of dust. My first impulse was to keep it, to slip it into my pocket and walk back to the house and display it as part of the booty of our last battle. But I didn't. I placed the gun in my pocket and walked into the part of the alley where I had seen Martín disappear. As often as his mother had come out into the alley and called his name, none of us really knew where he lived. I walked into the night and crept by the wooden houses examining each one trying to figure which one contained Martín and his enormous belly.

The darkness of the night had forced the houses to light their windows, and as I walked by each house, I would peer into them trying to see Martín's face. I finally decided that he must live in the trailer that had recently appeared in the vacant lot in the Gonzales' backyard. With this assurance, I headed toward the dark, windowless, wooden trailer that looked as if Martín himself had built it. I approached the door and knocked softly, still not sure that this was the right place, and then I heard a soft,

“pase”

and instantly I knew that it was Martín's house. I was reluctant and yet anxious to enter the house. Reluctant, because I knew that he must surely have told his mother of our battle and I would be exposing myself to a severe scolding or an actual beating; but anxious because I knew that it was supper time and I would get to see the food that made Martín so fat. I walked up the last step, being very careful not to fall and gently pushed the door open so that a thin shaft of light pierced the cold night. A strange odor struck my nose as I took my first step into the small trailer. It was kerosene! I hadn't smelled kerosene since our family had left the labor camp in “el hoyo” five years ago. How could he eat so well and still use kerosene lamps, I thought to myself, as I took my final step into the trailer.

Because the light in the trailer was very dim, I didn't immediately notice Martín and his mother. But as my eyes grew accustomed to the dimness of the trailer, I saw her sitting on an empty lard can turned upside down. Tears were slowly moving down her cheeks as Martín quietly sobbed in her arms. I placed the gun on the floor, reached behind my back and grabbed the door, and began to slowly retreat into the cold night. As I left, my eyes made a final sweeping movement searching for the table that contained the food that made Martín so fat. On a weather-worn table, with peeling red paint, dinner was set. There lay the food that had made Martín so enviable in our eyes—a small stack of corn tortillas and a glass of water.

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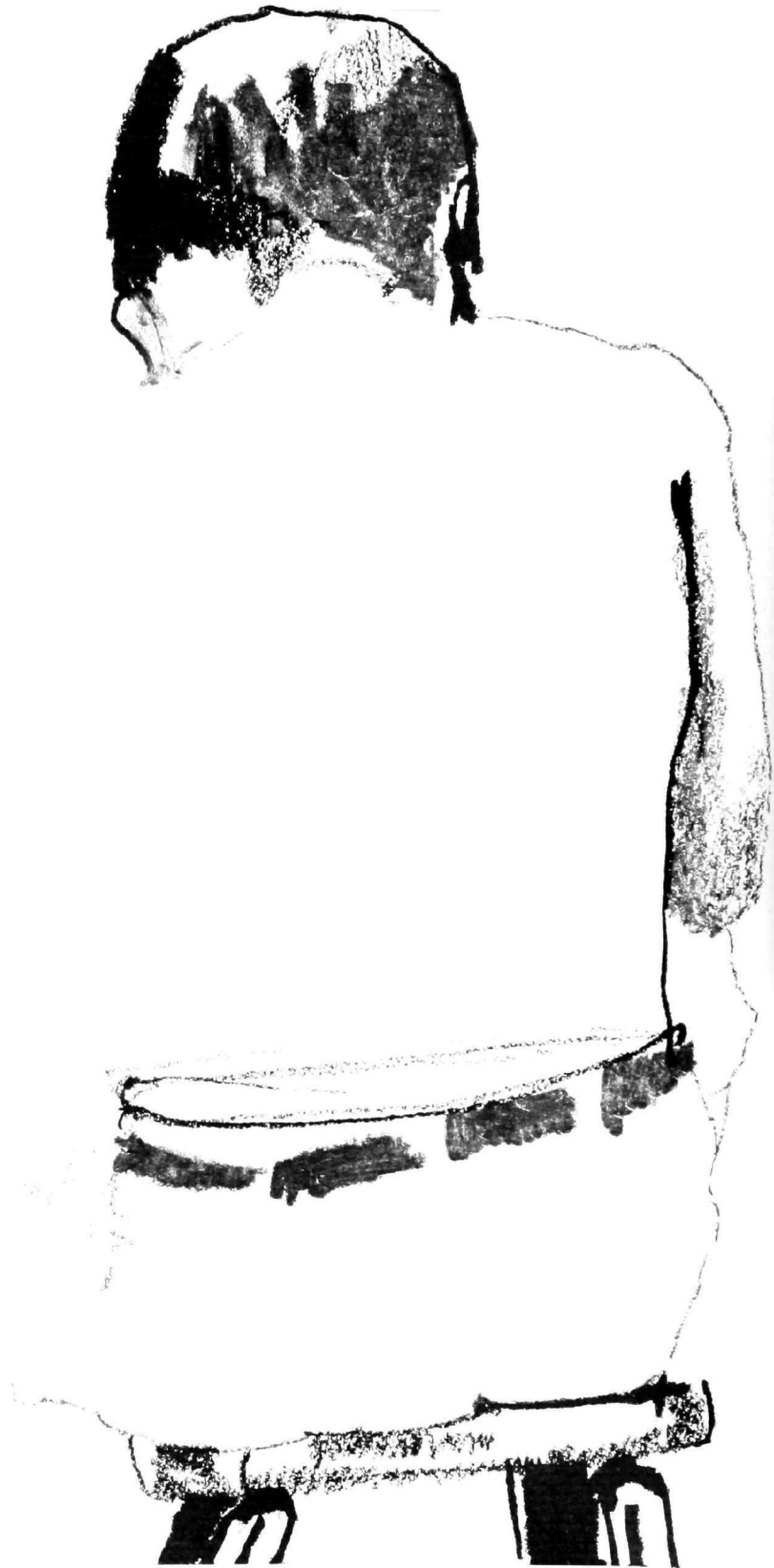
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HARRY S. ISRAEL

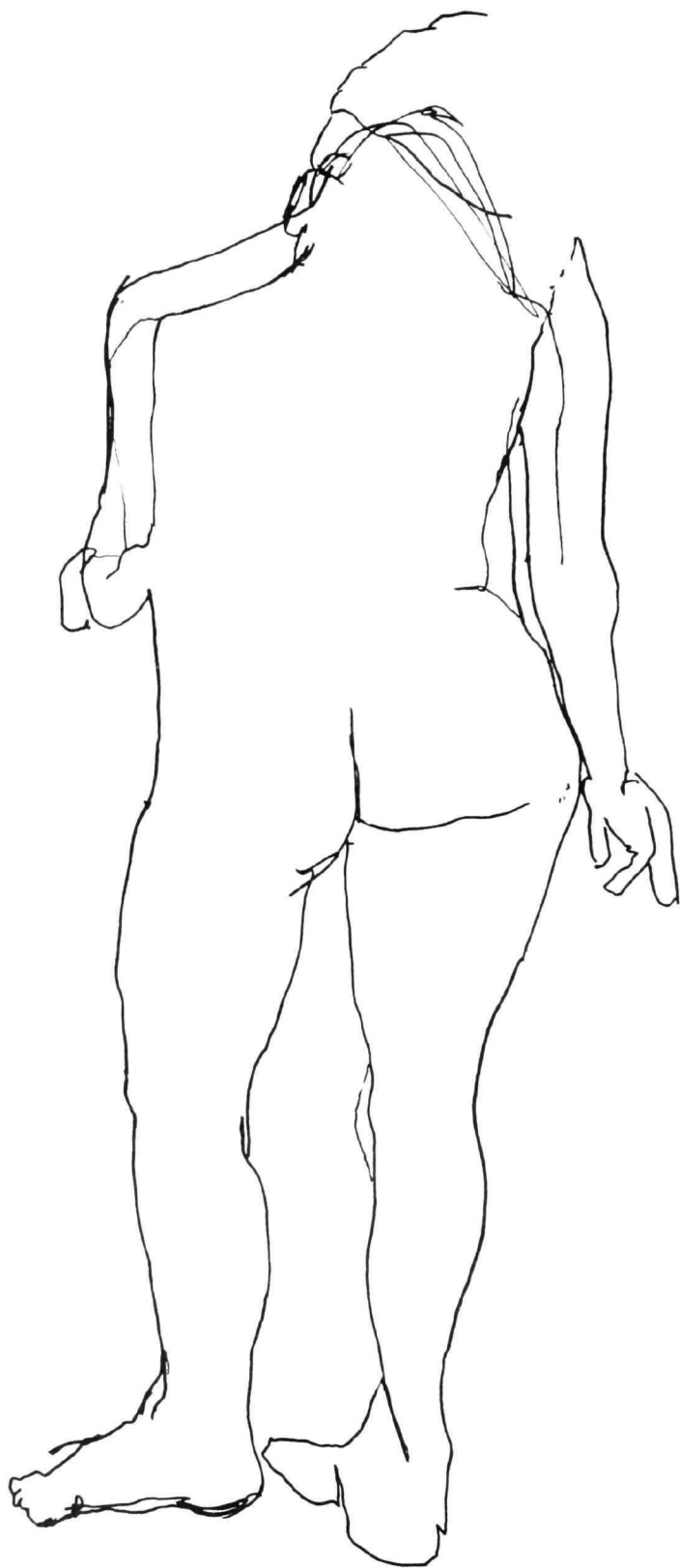
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