

TRANSCRIPT OF RICARDO ROMERO, San Francisco, May 22, 1982

I'd like to talk tonight about the question of repression and resistance of the ChicanoMexicano people. Our people have struggled against colonialism since 1519 when the Spaniards first arrived on these shores in the Americas. We struggled against the Spaniards for three hundred years, following the heroic example of \_\_\_\_\_ who was a nephew of Montezuma in the Aztec empire, whose position was that the Spaniards were here to destroy the Native people and as such that we should struggle to the end against them. It took three hundred years for our people to defeat the Spanish. In 1821, Mexican independence was acquired from Spain, but our independence was short-lived because we had a neighbor to the north who was a rising capitalist power and their capitalism was based on expansionism-- that was the United States of North America. With the encroachment of white settlers into Texas, in the 1830's, headed by people like Austin, and Houston, who became Mexican citizens and relinquished their United States citizenship so that they could acquire land grants from the Mexican government. And in doing that, they had a plan that as soon as there was more white settlers than Mexicans in these territories that they would rise up and secede from the Mexican nation. There are many reasons why these things took place -- they were already racist, they felt they were a superior people to us, they felt that they had the right under Manifest Destiny to take the national territories that belong to our people, the Mexican national territory. There was also another thing that played an important role. They were pro-slavery and the Mexicans had a law in their constitution that it was against slavery. These are important reasons of how these things came about. From the state of Chiapas on the Guatemalan border to the state of Colorado, the Mexican nation existed. In 1844 with the election of Polk, an avowed expansionist who believed in Manifest Destiny, the whole mechanism was put in motion to take the rest of the Mexican territory. Now this was done...Mexico was coming out of

eighty five years of internal strife and revolution. Mexico was a weak nation at that particular time and was no match for the military might of the United States. So, based on that, they declared war on Mexico and in the declaration of that war -- and by the way it took Polk about a month and a half before he could get a declaration of war against Mexico and the United States troops were already in Mexico city...that was almost two thousand miles into the Mexican nation before they could get a declaration of war. We see that all of this transpired and it came about because it was a power grab for land and it gave the United States access to the Pacific Ocean and it gave them access to the Gulf of Mexico, which was very important for them militarily at that time. And all this takes place and we lose nine hundred and forty five thousand square miles of our national territory. And many people don't really like to deal with that. Many people today don't really like to talk about that. But the thing that proves that this is still Mexico is the names and the states in these particular areas...California, Colorado, Arizona, Nuevo Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Utah. People don't like to deal with what happened to the Mexican people because then it brings the struggle home. A lot of people like to deal with the whole question of struggles that are far removed from us. That's why many people don't support the Puerto Rican independence struggle. Because the FALN has brought the struggle home. And in understanding these things we start to get a whole thing that the Mexican people never resisted. That we didn't have any history of resistance, that we let the United States colonize our homeland and that we enjoyed it. In 1848, we had one year's time to pick up our families, our possessions, and everything that we owned, and move across the border. And if not, then automatically we became United States citizens. We had no choice in that matter because we were forced to sign a treaty, the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, under the barrel of a gun. But our people did resist. And there's a history of resistance of the Mexican people against colonialism of the United States that seems to be the best kept secret. We resisted to the point that the first governor in the occupied territories of Mexico that was imposed on

us by the United States was assassinated by our people. And that was Governor Vance (?) in New Mexico. In the state of California, General Pico defeated Kearney's army and in the state of Texas Juan Cortina raised an army that controlled three hundred square miles fighting the encroachment of white people into our homeland. And that doesn't end there. On the other side of the border, there were all these things that were happening also. The French imposed an emperor in Mexico -- Maximilian -- and it was the first anti-imperialist defeat by the Mexican people as we defeated the French in Puebla on the Cinco de Mayo. We have this glorious history of struggle and many people, our own people, don't understand that. And many of our people don't understand that the Mexicans were instrumental in the 1930's in the labor strikes, in the labor movement, in the mining industries. Twenty eight Mexicanos died at the Ludlow Massacre. And everybody talks about Ludlow, but they don't talk about the Mexicanos that died at Ludlow. So you always think it was just this workers' type of struggle, and it was, but the majority of people that died there were Mexicans. The strikes at Silver City, New Mexico, the movie Salt of the Earth, that's a history of our people's struggle towards resistance against colonialism. The pecan workers' struggle, headed by a woman -- a sister by the name of Gonsales. The great deportations in 1936, when they claimed that they deported a half a million of our people back to Mexico. And we know that the figure was closer to a million and why. There's a repeat of that in 1982 but I'll get to that later. Because of the great depression and again, because capitalism and imperialism can't resolve its own internal contradictions, they need scapegoats and they always look towards the Mexican as their scapegoats when their economic conditions start to crumble. So out of all these deportations, all of this struggle is being waged, in Nuevo Mexico there's the formation of an armed clandestine movement that is known as Las Gorras Blancas (Sp?) who again are fighting against the encroachment of our homeland. And it's interesting to note that Nuevo Mexico was the last state admitted to the Union, and you know why?

Because they had to wait until there were more whites than Mexicans before they accepted New Mexico into the Union. So we're not the first that had rose up and we're not the last. We're a continuation of our people's struggle. But always our struggle was like divided. The emergence of the Chicano movement in the 1960's was a development of the United Farm Worker's in California in 1965, the emergence of the land grant struggle by Tijerna in Nuevo Mexico in 1966, the formation of Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado in 1965, the formation of La Raza Unida Party in 1969 by \_\_\_\_\_ Gutierrez. So this is our history and in order for us to determine our future we have to look back at our history. Now we have a dialectial process by which we can do that. So we think one of the mistakes that Las Gorras Blancas made, which is very significant, was that they abandoned the clandestine movement and they became an open organization and went to the elections and were destroyed. So even back then there's a clear picture of why we can't deal with electoral politics or why we can't participate in that at any level. And I'd like to talk a little bit about the Chicano movement because it's all part of our history. The term Chicano -- what does that mean? Well, basically what it meant was that we still didn't want to be Mexicano. And at that particular time we used to say well, the reason we're Chicano is because we don't identify with being Mexicano and we can't identify with the United States. But what does that really mean? Chicano plays an important part and it's an important aspect of our history and our struggle. In 1969, at the Crusade for Justice, the second annual Chicano youth conference, twenty five hundred young ChicanoMexicano people from across this country come to this conference and there in 1969 for the first time, the Mexicanos in the occupied territories raise the question of nationhood. And we do that and it's raised by a brother from San Diego, California whose name is \_\_\_\_\_, the poet, and he raises the question that the northern part of Mexico is Atzlan. And out of this conference there comes the formation of the spiritual, El Plan Espiritual de Atzlan. So for the first time there's an understanding of nation-

hood. Politically there was no basis for it. It was based on that La Raza Unida Party would be our political party, that wherever we were the majority we would control and where we were the minority we would become a pressure group, and it based itself on community control, of taking over the centers and having walk-outs in the schools, and creating Chicano studies programs. So for the first time there was the thought of nationhood. So the United States government, understanding this and understanding that the Mexicans were talking about nationhood, unleashed a wave of repression against us, that we didn't know what hit us. In the state of Colorado, nine ChicanoMexicano political activists were killed. In the state of California, four that I know of right off hand that nobody talks about. Everybody knows who Ruben Salazar was that was killed in the moratorium in 1970 in L.A. But nobody talks about Lyn Ward that was also killed in that same moratorium and Lyn Ward was killed fighting in the streets, not hiding in a bar. So there's a problem that we had. In Nuevo Mexico, they killed two of the leaders of the Black Berets, Rito Canales and Antonio Cordoba. They shot Antonio 26 times and they said that they were trying to steal some dynamite from a construction site. And we know that the Albuquerque police department has a death squad within it and those are the people who killed our people. All this repression was coming down on us and we didn't know why. Now we look back and we understand that because we dared to think of nationhood, that politically we didn't know what we were doing, we had no basis, that we were talking about socialism, we were a nationalist movement. But it's important...it's a dialectical process and we have to look at that as such. Because when you talk about nationhood, you talk about the dismemberment of the United States federal system. So they had to try to terrorize our people into submission. Ricardo Falcon, who was a leader of the student movement in Colorado, who was a member of La Raza Unida party, was killed in 1972 on his way to a national convention of La Raza Unida party in El Paso, Texas, and we all reacted to it by saying, some white racist pig killed him. Because that's how nationalists react to things. In 1979, we start to do a study of why our

people were killed, and we find out that the CIA had a code name program for the Chicano student movement and for La Raza Unida party and it was called Operation Chaos. And the man who killed Ricardo Falcon, Terry Brunson, was a member of George Wallace's American Independent Party at that time. So these aren't just freak things that happen. Ricardo was so instrumental in organizing in our state that after he was dead, while he was alive, the Fort Lufton police department was blown up and completely levelled. After Ricardo's death, two brothers were charged with that crime, and they went to them and they made them a deal that if they would say that Ricardo Falcon had did it, they would drop charges on them. And Ricardo was already dead. So that shows the political significance that this man represented to our people and the great fear they had against him. Even in his death they wanted to dirty him up. In 1973, with the occupation of Wounded Knee, we led a demonstration nationally, we organized demonstrations nationally, to support the occupation of Wounded Knee by the Native Americans. And that was on a Wednesday that we had a demonstration of two thousand people in Denver. And that Friday night the Crusade for Justice was attacked by the Denver police department, over four hundred of them, and they killed Luiz Junior Martinez, they shot Ernesto V \_\_\_\_\_ in the back, they beat many of our people, they arrested 86 people. But for the first time in contemporary time, based on political thought, our people fought back. Mario Vasquez, who was a young brother of 19 years old, shot three Denver policemen and Junior Martinez shot one before he was killed. So for the first time there was a new level of struggle in the Chicano movement. In late 1973, a brother in Colorado by the name of Kiko Martinez is -- one day we get up and his pictures are in the newspapers and the headline that he's accused of placing eleven bombs throughout the city. Kiki Martinez was an attorney. And he was a people's lawyer. He didn't work for anybody. He worked for our people. And he lived out of his car. He defended the people who were involved in Scotts Bluff, Nebraska and in

Grand Island, Nebraska when the formation of AIM came into being. He was the attorney of record. They charged him with firebombing a building in Nebraska and the case was dismissed when he went into political exile. And Kiko is back now and he's facing charges and he's going to court for those things. In 1974, in a car in Boulder, Colorado at \_\_\_\_\_ Park, Reiz Martinez, Neva Romera and Una \_\_\_\_\_ are killed in a car explosion. Reiz Martinez was Kiko Martinez' brother. Twenty four hours later, Florencio Granado, Cimberto Terran, Francisco Dougherty are killed in another explosion in a car. And Antonio Alcantar loses a leg in that particular explosion, in the last one. And then there becomes this vacuum within the Chicano struggle in Colorado because everybody is scared to move. All of these things have just come down and we didn't understand what was happening. At at the same time, the formation, the development of the Chicano struggle in the United States, there's an uprising of the Mexican struggle in the southern half of our nation. 1968, the student massacre at \_\_\_\_\_. Twelve hundred of our people are slaughtered by the Mexican government at Tla \_\_\_\_\_ and thousands injured. And they said that there was only two hundred killed. The other thousand they dumped in the lime pits in Mexico. In 1969, \_\_\_\_\_ Vasquez Rojas is heading the guerrilla forces and is killed by the Mexican government in Mexico. In 1963, Ruben \_\_\_\_\_, a Zapatista who was leading the peasant movement in Mexico, is assassinated and killed by the Mexican government.

#### SECOND SIDE OF TAPE

...Vasquez Rojas is killed and he was the leader of the guerrilla forces in Guerrero. In 1974, Lucio Cabanas was killed and assassinated by the Mexican government. In 1979, Florencio' \_\_\_\_\_ Medrano is killed in Mexico, assassinated by the Mexican government. In 1979, Carlos Zapata dies in March of that same year in Colorado. But more importantly I'd like to go back to who Medrano was. In 1973 there was then a call sent out, 1972-73-71, there was a call sent out by Luiz Echeverria who was the president of Mexico at that time, a call to the leadership of the Chicano movement to come to a conference in Mexico City, to participate in a

conference, and the people that were invited were Reiz Lopez Tijerina, Jose Angel Gutierrez, Bert Corona, Di Antonio Rodriguez from CASA, \_\_\_\_\_ Corky Gonzales, Caesar Chavez. Corky Gonzales did not go, but he sent his son-in-law; Caesar Chavez did not go, but he sent a representative. And what happened was, it was a slick move by the Mexican government at that time to quell the situation in the occupied territory. And what they did was that when the leadership of the ChicanoMexicano struggle from the occupied territories went to Mexico to meet with Echeverria, the Mexican revolutionaries said what kind of movement and what kind of a struggle is this Chicano struggle? They're coming, the leadership of this movement is coming to meet with Echeverria, the man who ordered the troops on our people at Tla\_\_\_\_\_. So it was a slick move in dividing our people. So when that took place and because of all the repression that had come down against us in our movement, there was some of us who said we have to develop a revolutionary relationship with our brothers and sisters in Mexico and some of us then got together and in 1974 I was honored by having the privilege of meeting Florencio \_\_\_\_\_ Medrano who was head of El Partido Proletario Unido de las Americas. And at that particular time they had<sup>La</sup> Colonia Ruben \_\_\_\_\_ in the state of Morellos and I was there in the month of July and they had taken over that land in March and there was 4700 people occupying that land that was owned by a rich Italian industrialist. In meeting Medrano for the first time we talked about six hours and he said we have so many things in common that we're going to have to get back together and spend three or four days because there's many things that we have to talk about. And going back and having this relationship with Medrano to show that there was a revolutionary sector in the ChicanoMexicano struggle in the occupied territories. That it just wasn't the so-called leadership that was being co-opted by the Mexican government. And how was it co-opted? Jose Angel Gutierrez became the head of the VECAS (sp?) program, where they gave him a hundred full-paid scholarships so that they would hand-pick people from the Chicano student movement to go study at the University of Mexico all expenses



paid. And as a matter of fact, Jose Angel Gutierrez doesn't head that program anymore. His wife still does. And we said to ourselves, how in the world could anybody accept to go to study -- a Mexican from the occupied territories -- how could you accept to go to study in Mexico City when our people don't even have enough to eat in Mexico? And anybody who participated in those programs were traitors to our people's struggle. And in understanding all these things and in seeing the whole historical aspect of our peoples' movements and struggles, La Raza Unida was nothing more than Acuna says in his book, but born-again Democrats. And now where is La Raza Unida party? Jose Angel Gutierrez has resigned from national chairman of La Raza Unida party and has gone with the Democratic Party. Reiz Lopez Tijerina who told us that we had to wage these struggles to reclaim our land based on the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and Spanish land grants, what is Reiz Lopez Tijerina doing today? Reiz Lopez Tijerina is trying to get a pardon. He got one pardon but he had two cases... from Jerry \_\_\_\_\_ when he was the governor of New Mexico. Now he's trying to get the other pardon from Bruce King so that he can exercise the most sacred thing he says that he has...the right to vote. And Caesar Chavez... they created a ChicanoMexicano AFL-CIO. That's what they created. And Rudolfo Corky Gonzales is into boxing and business. He's got a stable of fighters, he promotes fights. But that was our leadership. So some of us then looked at what was the role, and what was the new direction to be? And in meeting Medrano, Medrano then said to me, Ricardo, you know what? Mexico's no different than Vietnam, because there's a north and a south to it, the north is occupied, and we're going to wage the armed struggle in the south because the conditions are right for that. This was in 1974 and it was a real shock to me. And then I started and some of us started to see clearly what it was that the role of our people's struggle would be. That we had to base our struggle on socialism, and we had to base our struggle on reclaiming our homeland. So we started to see and understand why it was that we were oppressed, why it was that we were over-

represented in prisons and under-represented in colleges. We started to understand why a big percentage of our people were on welfare, we started to understand why we lived on hand-outs. Because we lost our homeland. When we study and we see that the state of California by itself could be the fifth richest country in the world, we understand why MEXicanos are poor, why we're oppressed. When the state of Texas by itself could be the thirteenth richest country in the world, we start to understand why we're poor and oppressed. Because we lost our homeland. And why is it that many people don't want to deal with the question of socialist reunification of our homeland. And not just to deal with the United States imperialism, but to deal with the fascist dependent capitalist state of Mexico too and topple that government. Because that's as repressive a government as exists on the face of this earth. And people talk about Chile, Pinochet. Talk about Jose Lopez Portillo and the Mexican government and the national bourgeoisie and the ruling class in Mexico. When you have over 800 disappeared political activists in Mexico who are probably dead and we have thousands of political prisoners in Mexico. So, unmask the Mexican government. That's what we have to do. We have to unmask the Mexican government. And we have to start to deal with that government because of what it does to our people. And in looking and understanding these things the only way we can do that is by reclaiming our homeland and waging struggle in the southern half of our nation and in the northern half of our nation. And by struggle I mean armed struggle. I'm not talking about civil rights, because when you talk about socialist reunification and the reclaiming of our homeland, you are talking about dismembering the United States federal system, and when you are talking about that you are talking about creating and participating and being part of a revolutionary struggle that will hopefully lead us to a prolonged, protracted peoples' war. The examples we look to and the struggles that we learn from-- because no one people have a monopoly on struggle -- it belongs to the people and we should be able to learn from the most progressive sectors, in our opinion, is the Puerto Rican INdependence struggle for independence and socialism. And why? Because the

Puerto Rican people have brought the struggle to the mainland and the most important lesson that we can learn from that is there is a basis by which to wage struggle within the confines of the United States. That's why we support and completely support the struggle for the creation of the Republic of New Afrika. Not just because we're both oppressed people -- the reason we support it is because through the creation of the Republic of New Afrika it's also the dismemberment of the United States federal system and that falls right in line with our strategy to defeat United States imperialism. We support the national liberation struggles that are being waged by the Irish against the Irish people, against the British; we support the \_\_\_\_\_ for their homeland, the Basque peoples' struggle, most people know them, against Spain and France, because again they fall in line with our strategy to defeat United States imperialism. We support any national liberation struggle in the world that will weaken and destroy United States imperialism. That's why we support the Palestinian peoples' right to their homeland and we have learned from the Palestinian experience that they created the state of Israel out of Palestine, they forceably removed 4½ million people from their homeland, but they couldn't remove the national consciousness of the Palestinian people to who they are and to wage struggle. And today once again we're being affected by the whole question of the Migra. And it's interesting to note that since we put forth the position on reunification of our Mexican homeland that when we went to May the 1st, Mayday last year in El Paso and Juarez, and four hundred fifty of us crossed the border illegally, to participate in the demonstration in Juarez; and some brothers and sisters came across to participate with us in the demonstration in El Paso, we put forth a clear position that we do not recognize the border imposed on our homeland by United States imperialism, we do not recognize the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. For us to recognize that treaty, for us to recognize that border, is to recognize the legalisms of imperialism, that the United States has a right to colonize our homeland.

And we don't recognize that border or that treaty for that reason. A major thing took place because the people that we have fraternal relationships with in Mexico, the Comite de Defensa Popular, they accepted our position that we have to struggle for reunification and the reconquering and the reclaiming of our occupied territories to our Mexican nation. They had a demonstration, I think it was Thursday, right after Villa Sin Miedo happened, at the US consulate in Juarez, and overnight they had five hundred people supporting the whole question of Villa Sin Miedo in Puerto Rico. And secondly they said that they weren't going to stop with a revolution within the confines of what is now known as Mexico, that they weren't going to stop until they reclaimed the occupied territories. So again we have the whole question that's been surfacing this last year and I'm sure all of you are aware of it. What did Jesse Helms say about El Salvador? You either stop it in El Salvador or we're going to have to deal with it north of Mexico. What does Henry Jackson say? He says the Russians are creating these problems on the border. It's not the Russians that are creating the problems on the border. It's us that are creating the problems on the border. But that's what happens. They never can imagine that oppressed people will always rise up against their oppression. The border is two thousand miles long and we want to create chaos on that border. And we create chaos on that border because they admit that a million and a half of us cross it illegally every year. So there is already the basis for a clandestine movement because you're doing something illegally every year. And if you can move a million and a half Mexicans across that border, can you imagine the Ho Chi Minh Trails they got there? But again we're faced with this. And that's why this escalation. I happened to be in Quebec and I saw this Walter Cronkite. He was on national TV in Canada, in Quebec. And they asked him what do you think are the major problems facing the United States in the 1980s? And he says, I think the major problem facing the United States through the 80s and further on up through the 90s and into the twenty first century is

that we're going to lose the Southwest to the Mexicans. And they asked him how can you say this? Why do you say this? And he said there was a major error made, we did not displace the Mexicans from their homeland. And what does that mean? He'd never say that in the United States. But what does that mean? By 1990, Los Angeles, California is going to be over 50% ChicanoMexicano. Every major city in the occupied territories -- San Antonio is already 75%, El Paso is already 80%, Albuquerque is already 60% -- but every major city in every state in the occupied territory is going to be over 50% ChicanoMexicano. And a lot of people don't really realize but the United States imperialism clearly understands the potential of our people for struggle. There happens to be 70 million of us on that side of the border; there happens to be 20 million of us on this side of the border. So if Nicaragua gives you fits, I mean gives United States imperialism fits with 2 million people, and they don't know what to do in El Salvador with 4 million, and they don't know what to do in Cuba with 11 million, and they don't know what to do in Guatemala with 10 million, then you know why they fear the Mexicans. And in a country where the conditions are ripe for revolutionary struggle -- 55% of the Mexican nation is unemployed and a new work force coming into the job market every year of 800 thousand people and the Mexican government only able to produce 250 thousand jobs a year. That means you're short 550 thousand jobs a year on top of a 55% unemployment rate. You tell me how long that's going to last. The petroleum boom that was supposed to be the main thing... they tripled their production and they cut the oil prices. The United States cut the oil prices. And what happened? The peso was devalued from 24 to 1 to 50 to 1 in a week's time. All of this is leading and will lead to revolutionary struggle. There is no out. The concessions that the Mexican government has had to make around the question of the political reforms in 1979 -- it was either political reform or revolution. That's why they accepted the outlawed parties to the election and they went to the election. And in doing that there was a split in the

left in Mexico again. But the Mexican government is running out of concessions and the United States government is running out of concessions to make. And the only road left for us is to wage a struggle to reclaim our homeland. In closing tonight, I would just like to say that socialist reunification equals dismemberment of the United States federal system. And dismemberment of the United States federal system equals destruction of United States imperialism. Patria o Muerte. Venceremos.