

BROWN BERETS
San Diego

L.V. Why were the Brown Berets organized?

B.B. The Brown Berets were organized to help clean up the problems of our barrios which only exist to keep our people shackled to the white man's, the gringo's economic system. We see that we have to find new ways to gain our self determination outside the existing system. Because this system was built by the gringo to help the gringo - and to enslave other people. For instance, prior to 1847 the lands we live in today were owned by chicanos and indians. We find now that all this tierra is owned by the gringo. And that our people instead of owning the businesses they work in, they work for the gringo at minimum wage and can barely make enough to live decently. We are enslaved not with chains around us that are visible. But, its an economic enslavement which begins in the educational system because this system does not teach us how to live in our society but, they teach us everything anglo.

L.V. How do you plan to fight this slavery?

B.B. There is only one way to deal with it. First we have to recognize what our needs are. We must fulfill those needs ourselves because the gringo is not going to solve them for us; he never has - he never will. Because, he doesn't know us. As to how we do this it will be determined by how much resistance the man will put to our demands. We don't intend to rise up in arms today and take it all, but what we need we'll get one way or another.

L.V. Are the Brown Berets violent?

B.B. We do not advocate violence. But, if someone is going to be violent with us, we are going to have to do whatever is necessary to save our lives and those of our carnales. If by talking we can fulfill the needs of our people, we will talk. Our people need clinics, jobs, schools that teach, and we're gonna get em one way or another. Up to this point the gringo has not proved himself to be nonviolent.

L.V. As we all know some of the barrios in San Diego have been fighting each other. What will the role of the Brown Berets be in stopping this condition.

B.B. In uniting the barrios we would like to say to our carnales and carnalas that the enemy wants us to be divided so that they can control us better. By fighting each other we're not going to change anything. We are not our own enemy. The enemy laughs at us every time we fight each other. The gringo is the one that has created the conditions in the barrio that are building so much frustration in us that has to be let out. And we take this frustration out on each other. We blame ourselves. We should not fight a brother who lives in the same lousy housing, who goes to the same lousy schools; who is in the same condition we're in. We have to fight together to help ourselves not to destroy ourselves.

L.V. How do the Brown Berets feel about drug abuse?

B.B. As every vato who has grown up in the barrio knows, a good pusher will not use dope. He knows better, because if he gets hooked on it, then he can't think clearly, and he becomes a slave to the dope. The man is the biggest pusher there is. He can increase the flow of dope, and he doesn't use it. Because he knows that if he takes it, he will become a slave to it. He just uses it to keep us high so that we won't be able to deal with him. To deal with the man we must have a clear head at all times. To help our people, we must have a clear head at all times. A man who is high is a man who can be controlled. The man doesn't want his children to be hooked on dope. That's why now that the middle class gabacho is using stuff they call it a national problem. But before when only Chicanos were using they didn't care because they want Chicanos to stay high and numb.

L.V. What do the Brown Berets tell a vato that has been in and out of jail and who finds that everytime he comes back to the barrio nothing has changed. He finds out that he's been doing time for nothing.

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B.B. Up to this point we have been going to jail for nothing. If we're going to go to jail at all let's go to jail for trying to change the conditions that keep our people down. If we're gonna go to jail let's go to jail for trying to get jobs, housing, clinics, and schools which will really serve our people. We must struggle

to create a better world for our children. That's worth dying for
L.V. What are the Brown Berets planning to do to insure that our people get a good education.

B.B. We have two ways to go, either the anglo educational system will change and teach true history, or we'll have to create our own schools. WE can no longer stand lies being taught to our children. We have to prepare our people to become doctors, lawyers, professionals that will serve the communities they come from and not split from the barrio and never see the people again. We have to move together to see that our people get a proper education. We have to do it no one else will.

L.V. It seems that many chicanos feel that the two major political parties have really done nothing for the chicano. What political alternatives do the Brown Berets see for our people.

B.B. To gain political power let's not look at it as getting a Chicano president or governor or congressman, but let's look at it as gaining control of the barrios of our communities, control at the local level. We cannot put faith in the Kennedys or Johnsons. We know that Johnson who was president of the U.S. and was supposed to be helping us, had Chicanos living in shacks on his ranch and they were working for him for lousy wages.

In dealing with terms of political power let's think in terms of grabbing the political power that determines our destinies in our barrios.

L.V. One of the things that I hear the Brown Berets talk about is dealing with police brutality with the day-to-day harassment of our people. What is the Brown Beret position as far as law enforcement agencies are concerned.

B.B. Well the law enforcement agency to this point has been nothing more than an extension from the white racist community to keep us in line, to keep us in our place. It has never served to actually protect us. Like I said before - we're not advocating violence but if the police come into our communities and for no reason at all such as the neighborhood house issue where 14 year old kids were knocked out by grown men and dragged into alleys and left there - their heads split wide open by grown men - supposedly adults and left there to lie bleeding. If he's going to come in here and be violent on that level then there's only one way to deal with that man and that's on the level he's dealing with us. And that is if he wants to throw chingasos then that's where it's at. We're here to protect our people. You notice that only in the barrios are there more policemen - only in the barrios. They drive at night with only - parking lights on, they stash stuff in people's cars just to bust them, they'll bust them just for three chicanos talking together. What it's coming to is that they are there to harass us, to oppress us, to beat on our heads until we say, "sí, patroncito: no patroncito,". But no, it's got to change.

L.V. Earlier we talked about the economic system that we live under which has nothing to offer chicanos as a group. What other economic alternatives do the Brown Berets see as suitable for our people?

B.B. The things we should strive to do is: first of all, why should we get rid of white exploiters to replace them with chicano exploiters? We must establish free medical centers, because one of the biggest pig-capitalist businesses in this country is the medical profession. It really is: you walk into a doctor's office and he charges you \$10 to \$15 just to walk into his door and talk to him, and have him give you a few pills and tell you "You probably have a headache, and go home and sleep it off," and there goes 20 or 30 dollars.

That's really exploitative. So we should establish clinics in our barrios... free clinics, free health services for our people. We should attempt to remove those nasty junkyards that are all over Logan and National City, and everywhere, in which trucks are endangering our people, and replace them with clinics, replace them with food co-ops, replace them with beautiful parks, swimming pools so the children can have a place to swim when it gets very hot during the summer.

In total depth, it is a socialistic society we must adhere to because a capitalist society is what is not working here in this country right now, It is destroying the earth. This is why we have this big concern with nature and ecology, and it is all due to the capitalist system. It's not working and never will work. We have to replace it with something a little more humane, and not replace it with Chicanos that are going to exploit other Chicanos.

L.V. How does the Brown Beret organization feel about the draft?

B.B. The Draft? No Chicano, no Latino, none of our Raza should ever serve in the American Armed Forces, never. Why should we go fight a faraway nation when we have a fight right here in our barrios? The fight in Vietnam is just for greedy old men that furnish boots and uniforms and shift like that, just for the purpose of making money for themselves while at the same time exterminating the minorities. You notice the casualty rates in Vietnam, how high they are for chicanos? We don't make five percent of the population, and yet we take 20% of the losses in Vietnam.

If you want to join the service, all I can say is: join it learn how to use weapons, and then leave it - and I don't mean wait to terminate your time of duty, but just split and come home and help your people's struggle.

L.V. How do the Brown Beret's relate to the struggle of the black people, the Puerto Rican people, of all the other oppressed people in the United States, at this point.

B.B. As I said before, some Raza, we all have a common language and cultural background. I've seen so many times in the service where if your name is Gonzalez or Rodriguez they don't know you, if he's from Texas, you're just a bunch of dirty Mexicans, if he's from New York, you're just a bunch of dirty Puerto Ricans, if he's from Florida, you're just a bunch of greasy Cubans, as far as the gringo is concerned. Our plight, our problems are all a common problem; they're the same. Wherever you go in the big cities, you will find that people from Latin America will always congregate in the same barrio--I don't care what they are, but they all congregate there because we have a common culture, we all have a common enemy, we all have a common problem, and we all have a common solution to the problem. Like I said before: Unity, to unite to do away with this problem. In unity there is strength. I feel that if we're going to talk about self-determination, black people helped to build this country, therefore black people have in a very real sense also suffered the same thing we have and they should have their self determination in their ghettos just as we should have our self determination in our barrios.

L.V. Now, what kinds of Chicanos and Chicanas are the Brown Berets looking for, to join the organization?

B.B. The kind that are willing to do more than just walk around and holler "Viva la Raza" 3 times a year. The kind that are willing and ready to learn about our struggle. The Brown Berets are for vatos who are ready to fight, literally. The Brown Beret is not for vatos who are going to tell a carnala look at me, I'm a Brown Beret, I'm a big macho, let's go out. That's nothing but jive. There has to be mutual respect between men and women. We want people who are willing to do more than just sit around and get - high, and talk about the placa, but never do anything about the placa. To do something to them you should pay them back for what they did to you and a little bit more to remember you by.

L.V. So how does a vato or a chick who wants to join the Brown Berets - how do they go about joining?

B.B. We have our meeting every Tuesday. They start between 7 and 7:30 at Neighborhood House. You're going to work maybe 2 or 3 months before you get your patch that designates who are Brown Berets and who are wearing Brown Berets. You are going to have to be willing to work and not be willing just to holler Viva La Raza and just show up when there is something you might get on T.V. for. We want people who will work 24 hours a day if needed.

We're gonna have to work hard to get where our people want to go. With the liberation of our people comes the defeat of the enemy.

La Verdad, September 1970,
Brown Berets, San Diego



Brown Berets de Aztlán

Proposition 187 is an obvious attack on our people! It is an attack by the government since it is strongly supported by governor Wilson. It is also an attack by the general public and racist, who are unconcern with the poor and most oppressed people of our land. This is clearly demonstrated by the numbers of people voting in favor of a proposal that would deny health care and education to our children, mothers, fathers, aunts, cousins, grandparents, brothers and sisters, even to the point of challenging Constitutional decisions against it. 187 also, again, demonstrates the continuous propaganda campaign that turn our own people against it self. This was evident by the numbers of Raza that voted in favor of 187.

We the Berets de Aztlán believe that if it's not, 187 it will be, a 357 bullet or some other number. it will be English only laws, or extra racist police and border patrol agents. And it will cause fewer jobs, lower wages with the attack on affirmative action ext... The traditional responses from, His-panic types, has been to count on a few elected officials who at times support certain issues that are important to us, however, their influence is limited. They can never fully represent us for the White power structure, with it's money and power will push them out of office, if they get to pro Raza. They can never, for instance, support abolishment of the Border Patrol. Another usual His-panic response is to ask La Raza to get out the vote.

We sometimes call this the, register to vote joke? The reason Raza do not vote are many, these include the fact that we are more concern with surviving day to day than trying to vote for something that we had nothing to do with putting on the ballot. Should we vote for candidates who do not represent us or our needs? Voting is like asking to get hit in the mouth by a steel bat or an iron bat. We do not advocate our Raza not to vote but only not to put all our faith into it. These and other mainstream answers have failed us. They failed us in the 1920's, the 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's. In fact since 1848 what has really changed, why would we put faith in them now?

We The Berets de Aztlán believe it's time for Resistance. We call for the following:

- 1. A series of Demonstrations in all our cities.*
- 2. A Boycott on all companies who support 187.*
- 3. Demand the end of the Border Patrol.*
- 4. A Series of Labor Strikes.*
- 5. A series of School Walkouts from Elementary to College.*
- 6. Re-call of Wilson "El Pee Wee Hitler" and Demand that he resign*
- 8. Prepare for the Federal Government approval of 187.*

Let's begin the process for Self Determination

From: "Brown Berets" <Brown-Berets@worldnet.att.net>
To: "La Raza Nueva" <Brown-Berets@worldnet.att.net>
Date: Tue, 23 Mar 1999 15:45:42 -0800
Subject: EDITORIAL HUMOR/"IT'S THE MEXICANS!"

SIXTH SUN EMAIL:

This item highlights that immigration reform is nothing more than cover for preventing another class of Non-White Americans full access to civil rights under the Constitution with amusing perceptions. The same hysteria occurred during the Black civil rights movements of the 60's and 70's that were leveled to near extermination in the 80's and 90's, as the current mass imprisonment of Black Americans demonstrate. Vote, unify, build businesses, secure your rights with a Never Again to Prop 187 pogroms.

NEWSWIRE:
EDITORIAL HUMOR/"IT'S THE MEXICANS!"

March 20, 1999

Not a single coca leaf is grown in Mexico. Thus, not a single milligram of cocaine comes from Mexico. The largest cash crop in California and Hawaii is marijuana, dwarfing the few pounds brought in from Mexico. The "Golden Triangle" of Burma, Thailand and Laos, plus the valleys and fields of Afghanistan, Iran, Lebanon and Turkey produce 95% of the world's heroin, the same heroin pumping through the veins of America's junkies.

But, these facts aren't bandied about in the media or spoken by our politicians. They're too busy attacking Mexico with blame for the drug epidemic in the United States.

It's the Mexicans. It's their fault that 75% of booked jail inmates in the county jail have drugs in their system. It's their fault that drugs flow freely in the prison system of America. It's their fault that San Francisco Police and before that the elite Los Angeles Sheriff's narcotics squad have been sent to prison or are being tried for dealing in narcotics.

The Mexicans are responsible for every single White middle-class doper in suburbia, for every broken marriage caused by cocaine addiction and poison; the Mexicans are responsible for every crack cocaine and heroin junkie roaming the inner-city streets of Major City, USA. The Mexicans are responsible for the billions of dollars paid to street dealers and comfortable suburban "facilitators" for the tons of drugs used everyday in the U.S.

The Mexicans gather up every penny paid for the nickel and dime bags and

convert them into tens, twenties and hundred dollar bills. They then centralize collections, deposit the funds in banks and move the money to Mexico and on to Colombia, Bolivia and Peru. The Mexicans do all this because they control the police, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), every bank in the country and every street dealing drug pusher -- the Mexicans do this all, for they are all powerful.

In your dreams!

It's not the Mexicans that are all powerful, it's the money, the drug money. How many American public servants, politicians and civil service people, have gone to jail in recent years for corruption, bribery and other high crimes and misdemeanors? In 1994, Martin Gross writes that the total was almost three thousand. How many were for accepting drug money?

How is it that tons of drugs make their way from the border to cities like Minneapolis, Fargo, Montpelier, Albany, Portland, Maine and Portland, Oregon, Grand Rapids, Anchorage and Spokane without being detected by the police, the DEA and the FBI? How is it that dealers operate openly in every city in the country without much interference from local police? How is it that invariably the highest grossing drug dealers are White and operate in the suburbs and on college campuses, not Black and in the inner-cities? How is it that tons of drugs make their way into the state and federal prisons of the country without interference from prison guards?

Must be the all-powerful Mexicans. Ask Pat Buchanan, ask Congressman Duncan Hunter or Congressman James Traficante, or Senator Jesse Helms, they'll tell you -- it's the Mexicans. Ask Rush Limbaugh, Oliver North, Gordon Liddy and all the other ill-informed talk show hosts -- it's the Mexicans.

Of course, there's all the attendant crime associated with drugs that must be blamed on the Mexicans, the welfare and unemployment, the loss of jobs in the Rust Belt, the American divorce rate, the illegitimacy rates of Puerto Ricans, Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites, white collar crime, drunkenness and drunk driving, the murder rate and all the bad checks in the country to be blamed on the Mexicans.

Additionally, there's all the manufacturing defects in American industry, e coli bacteria in hamburgers, automobile recalls, the choking Chicago Cubs, hurricanes, tornadoes and the Northridge Earthquake to blame on the Mexicans, as well.

It's the Mexicans. It's their fault that healthy young White men stand on street corners with signs reading "Will work for food" and collect hundreds of dollars a day without working. It's their fault that healthy young White men stand outside my Burger King asking for spare change. It's the Mexicans.

It's always been the Mexicans, hasn't it?

No, actually it hasn't. It wasn't that long ago that it was the Cubans of Florida who were bringing in all the drugs from South America through Florida, Louisiana and Bill Clinton's Arkansas. Before that it was the Mafia and their French Connection in Marseilles and the Middle East and the Chinatown connection to the Golden Triangle.

The characters change from time to time, but the coca leaf still only grows in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia; the heroin still comes from Asia and the Middle East and the best marijuana still comes from Northern California and Hawaii. And, the dollars that pay for them still come from suburban, White middle-class America.

From: "Brown Berets" <Brown-Berets@worldnet.att.net>
To: "La Raza Nueva" <Brown-Berets@worldnet.att.net>
Date: Wed, 17 Mar 1999 19:59:41 -0800
Subject: POETIC LEGACY OUTLASTS PHYSICAL CONSTRAINT

SIXTH SUN EMAIL:

POETIC LEGACY OUTLASTS PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS:

(Reprinted for educational/non-commercial purposes)

Published Wednesday, March 17, 1999, in the San Jose Mercury News

BY JOE RODRIGUEZ
Mercury News Staff Columnist

HIS nickname is Corky, and he was the fiery poet laureate of the Chicano Movement. Rodolfo Gonzales came to San Jose last week for a quiet book-signing. Never mind that his epic poem is 32 years old. I'd say a lot of people were surprised he came at all.

"I thought he was dead," a friend of mine said.

Just like the Chicano Movement. Dead, buried and forgotten. At least by more than a few mistaken friends and foes of the struggle for Mexican-American civil rights and cultural identity.

He has a different message these days, though it's not really new anymore, and most of the time he doesn't have the strength to stand up and speak it for himself.

"We are talking about unity, the unity of the family, the first thing we have in our lives," Gonzales said in the gymnasium of the Mexican American Community Services Agency Youth Center in East San Jose. "We don't forget the grass-roots people, the vatos on the corner, the farmworkers in the fields, the people who work in factories. We have to unify, and we do that by each one of us being a spokesman."

It seems everyone, from the outspoken Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan to the Christian conservative Promise Keepers, is calling for self-reliance among families and communities. It's easy to say, hard to achieve and difficult to measure. At this point in the relatively young empowerment movement, we have mostly anecdotal inspirations.

Like Charly Trujillo. A veteran of the Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War, Trujillo started his own publishing house in San Jose that specializes in

Chicano literature.

``One of the things I learned from Corky was self-determination," Trujillo said. ``We have to create our own institutions."

Corky Gonzales needed help walking to the microphone. And then he spoke for only 13 minutes. Remembering is difficult for him. He suffered head injuries and memory loss in a 1986 car crash and disappeared from the public spotlight for eight years. His public engagements are limited and quiet, yet people turn out in the hundreds wherever he goes in the Southwest and West.

>From his base in Denver, the charismatic Gonzales used to travel to barrios, college campuses and protest rallies, thundering about police brutality, racism and Chicano unity. Today, at 71, his jet black hair has gone completely gray, his voice become a shadowy whisper.

Some of those who sought out Gonzales' signature were too young to remember his clashes with police and politicians or his confrontational style that differed so markedly with those of Cesar Chavez or Martin Luther King Jr. Or even that Gonzales was a featherweight boxer inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame.

``We've read so much about him," said Evangelina Torres, a senior at University of the California-Berkeley. ``My mother used to be in the movement, and when she hears I met Corky Gonzales tonight, she's going to think it's so cool."

And at the Youth Center gymnasium, people asked him to sign copies of his popular poem, ``Yo Soy Joaquin," which speaks eloquently of the history, desires and rights of Mexican-Americans and is required reading in Chicano history courses.

The man who once owned a powerful punch and commanding voice can barely sign his name. But he did, dozens of times, and chatted about the old days or the new agenda of self-determination.

His grandson Arturo Rodriguez often travels with Gonzales and speaks for him.

``A lot of people thought he died after the accident," Rodriguez told me. ``But once they see him again, they're reminded of the causes they fought for. And young Chicanos and Chicanas are inspired, because they sometimes don't know who they are, and he is part of their history."

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