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Black Berets for Justice

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BLACK BERETS FOR JUSTICE

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Social Science

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Arturo Villarreal

May, 1991

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ABSTRACT

BLACK BERETS FOR JUSTICE

by Arturo Villarreal

This thesis addresses the topic of the Black Berets for Justice, a paramilitary group of Chicanos deeply involved in the Chicano movement. Although emphasis is on the Chicano movement as it occurred in San Jose, California, the activities of the Black Berets on a national level are also discussed.

Using the interview method, this study examines the lives of four individuals who were instrumental in the founding and organizing of the Black Berets. It details their backgrounds, their initial involvement with the Berets, and their struggles, conflicts, and accomplishments as participants in the organization.

The interviews reveal that the Black Berets played a role in many of the advances made by the Chicano movement; however, their goals were not achieved without much risk and great sacrifice on the part of the dedicated members of the organization and their families.

*This thesis is dedicated to the Black Berets, the Chicano Movement,
Danny Trevino, Ruben Salazar, Robert Matthews, Mama Lula,
and my daughter, January Nicole Villarreal*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I decided to write this thesis because I was part of the Chicano movement. Although my role was a minor one, I did participate in certain rallies and demonstrations in Del Rio, Texas, and San Jose, California.

My interest in the Chicano movement was rekindled as a student at San Jose City College and San Jose State University from 1981 through 1988. The majority of my work was in Chicano Studies and Anthropology.

Through good fortune, I met and established friendships with some of the key participants in the Chicano movement in San Jose, California. I am referring to Henry Dominguez and Chemo Candelaria, both of whom were leaders of the Black Berets.

The Chicano movement became manifest in the late 1960s throughout the United States, especially in the Southwest, in a land that once belonged to Mexico. However, the Chicano's struggle for justice did not begin in the late 1960s; it began with the taking of what is now known as the Southwestern United States during the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 (Acuna, 1981: 3). This land, the mythical homeland of the Aztecas, was called Aztlan (Meier and Rivera, 1981: 28). The Chicanos constitute a significant population, and they have contributed immensely to this country. Yet, to this day, many Americans neither understand nor appreciate the struggles and contributions of Chicanos. To gain

a better understanding of what they did and why they did it, we must look into the lives of some of the people who participated in the Chicano movement.

Except for the Chicano Oral History Project being carried out at San Jose State University, there has been no extensive ~~research~~ into the Chicano movement in San Jose, California. This is ironic, considering the size of the Chicano population and the struggles, achievements, and influences of "El Movimiento," as it is known by Chicanos.

As a direct result of "El Movimiento," the first Mexican-American Graduate Studies Department in the nation was implemented at San Jose State University. Also, the first Chicano Graduate Commencement Ceremonies and the Extended Opportunities Program Services (EOPS) began at San Jose State University. Many Chicano political groups and organizations emerged, all of which had an influence on the Chicano movement throughout the Southwestern United States.

Many groups and individuals were at the forefront of "El Movimiento." I have chosen to focus on the San Jose chapter of the Black Berets (BB) because it was the first Black Beret organization in the country and was a primary force in the Chicano movement in San Jose, California. To my knowledge, the history and motivation of this very influential group have never been documented.

Finally, it is not the intent of this thesis to stand as a definitive study of the Black Berets or of the Chicano movement in San Jose. The hope is that it will, by contributing to a better understanding and appreciation of this particular period in Chicano history, provoke even further study by others in the future.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop information on both the social and political influences that affected the Chicano community in San Jose, California, during the course of the Chicano movement. The emphasis of this study is on the Black Beret organization's origins as well as its manifestations in "El Movimiento."

Justification of the Study

The Chicano periodical index, which covers articles on Chicanos and their activities from 1968 through 1989, does not include any titles on the Chicano movement in San Jose, California. The data in the index may be used by researchers and scholars to establish a clearer picture of the accomplishments, concerns, and history of the Chicano community.

Definitions and Their Origins

"Chicano" is a controversial term made popular by activists in the 1960s referring to Mexican-Americans, especially those who demonstrate a militant pride in their ethnicity. The term derives from the word "Mexicano," by elision to Xicano (with the X pronounced in the Nahuatl as S/sh), and then to the current spelling, Chicano. In the late nineteenth century, it was a pejorative term used by upper-class mexicans to refer to their lower-class counterparts. The term was adopted with pride by young Mexican-Americans during the 1960s (Meier and Rivera 1981: 83-84).

Martinez (1979: 23) says that the emotionalism surrounding the origin and meaning of the term "Chicano" can perhaps be moderated if we can document the use of this designation by "viejitos" at the time

of their youth and during the course of their lives. Numerous interviews conducted in El Paso, Texas, so far reveal that by 1900 poor people of Mexican extraction, particularly the immigrants, knew of and used this label among themselves. Barrio residents understood the term simply as a contraction for "Mexicano." To many, "Chicano" represented esteem, empathy, and recognition of common antecedents. Middle-class persons (a small minority in most "Mexican-American" communities before 1940) also used the word, but only in reference to those who were beneath them socially.

Acuna (1981: 350) states that Chicano idealists of the 1960s launched a crusade for identity. In the early part of the decade, many activists succeeded in popularizing the term "Mexican"-American in lieu of "Spanish"-American and "Latin"-American, which whites considered more acceptable than "Mexican." The latter was offensive to a large portion of the Anglo community, and many of the local restaurants, to help Anglos digest their food, labeled tamales, enchiladas, etc., as "Spanish." In the latter part of the 1960s, youths went one step further and attempted to identify themselves as "Chicanos," an old term which many Mexican-Americans had difficulty accepting because most older Mexicanos viewed it as pejorative. Nevertheless, largely because of the zeal and energy of the activists, the term took root.

According to Meier and Rivera (1981: 239) "El Movimiento," literally "the movement," is a vaguely defined, amorphous concept to cover all the activities of Chicanos in their effort to achieve ethnic consciousness and separate identity. It is used especially in reference to such activities since World War II and embraces a wide variety of

political, social, and economic ideologies from the extreme left to the right. It includes such disparate elements as the student demonstrations of the 1960s, the Chicano literary and artistic explosion, and the United Farm Workers' strikes against grape and lettuce growers.

The Chicano movement exemplifies the potential force existing within the Mexican-American community to improve itself and its position in American society. More than an economic and political rights campaign, the Chicano movement is also an assertion by Chicanos that they are an important entity in the United States which, through its culture and heritage, has contributed significantly to American life and culture.

The Black Berets, a somewhat nationalistic, paramilitary youth group, emerged in the Chicano movement of the 1960s. The organization developed both in California and in New Mexico. Based, at least in part, on ideas from the Black Panthers, the Berets, like the Panthers, were the "shock troops" for the movement. They were also involved in various community service projects (Meier and Rivera, 1981: 44-45).

Committed by their laws to keep informed of political and social issues affecting Chicanos, the Black Berets usually attended meetings or events that concerned the Chicano community. By presenting an example of disciplined and dedicated life based on principles of brotherhood, they hoped to unite the community and ensure that Chicanos were treated justly. With goals of justice and dignity for Chicanos, the Black Berets was founded in California in the late 1960s, not as a student organization, but as a brotherhood of Chicanos with a regional structure of chapters. The Black Berets arose as a militant but, allegedly, nonviolent organization (Meier and Rivera, 1972: 253).

It aroused some fear in Anglo-Americans that a Chicano group would counter oppression in the United States with its own violence. Law enforcement authorities believed that the Black Berets were capable of inspiring violent action in other groups.

Police and Sheriff's deputies raided the Black Berets, infiltrated their ranks, labeled and slandered them, and even encouraged counter groups to attack members of the Berets. The objective was to destroy the organization and invalidate its membership in the eyes of both the Anglo and the Chicano communities.

Review of the Literature

Chicano Movement Literature

The vast majority of the material concerning the Chicano movement emphasizes its leaders. Much has been written about Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers, Reies Lopez Tijerina and the Land Grants of New Mexico, Jose Angel Guttierrez and La Raza Unida Party in Texas, and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales and his Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado. There is also much written about certain events like the Chicano Moratorium in East Los Angeles, California, where Ruben Salazar was killed.

Not much has been written about the Chicano movement as it occurred in San Jose, California. During the time of the Chicano movement in San Jose, the Black Berets printed a magazine titled *La Palabra* (1971-1973), which included such topics as racism, discrimination, and police brutality, as well as other issues as they pertained to the Chicano community. The Chicano Student Movement (MECHA) at San Jose

State University published a newsletter *¡Que Tal!* (1970-1972) which dealt with such issues as lack of Chicano representation on campus, the formation of EOPS, as well as issues that faced the Chicano community in general.

The *San Jose Mercury News* and the now defunct *San Jose Sun* also covered aspects of the Chicano movement, but often in a very superficial or biased manner.

Chicanos and the Police (1979) is a study that organizes and interprets events that occurred in San Jose from 1969 to 1971. It documents attitudes of Chicanos toward police and of police officers toward the community.

Aztlan (1970-1982), a Chicano journal of the Social Sciences and Arts, deals with a wide variety of issues. There is much written on the politics of the Chicano in general. For example, Adalijza Sosa Riddell addresses the issue of Chicanos and El Movimiento. Raymond A. Rocco discusses the issue of the role of power and authenticity in the Chicano movement. There are many other contributions from such noted authors as Carlos Munoz, Jr., Mario Barrera, Tomas Almaguer, Armando Navarro, and Juan Gomez Quinones, to name only a few.

In his book titled *Ando Sangrando (I Am Bleeding)* (1972), Dr. Armando morales addresses the issue of Chicano and police conflict during the beginning of the Chicano movement period. Particular emphasis is on the East Los Angeles area of California.

Camarillo's *Chicanos in California* (1984) is a history of Mexican-Americans in California and includes a chapter on the rise of the Chicano movement.

Munoz's *Chicano Militancy in California: A Quest for Identity and Power* (1974) begins with the premise that whereas the 1960s was the decade of protest the 1970s and 1980s would be the time for the quest of Chicano identity and power.

Thompson's *Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan* (1971) chronicles the East Los Angeles Chicano Moratorium as well as the murder of Ruben Salazar, the prominent "Mexican-American" columnist for the *Los Angeles Times* and News Director for Bilingual KMEX-TV.

The United Farm Workers publish their own paper, *El Malcriado*, which addresses the plight of the farm workers. In 1982, they published a special edition which was a chronology of historical events during their twenty years of vision, struggle, and achievement. *A War of Words: Chicano Protest in the 1960's and 1970's* (1985) addresses the issue of Chicano rhetoric. It deals specifically with the rhetoric of Reies Lopez Tijerina, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez, Jose Angel Guttierrez, and Cesar Chavez.

The journal *El Grito* (1970-1973) was published by the Black Berets of New Mexico. It dealt mainly with local state issues affecting the Chicano communities in New Mexico. *Racism in California: A Reader in the History of Oppression* (1972) chronicles the history of racism in California beginning with the first contact between Indians and Whites to the present. The book includes chapters on Blacks, Asians, and Mexicans.

Occupied America (1981) is a history of Chicanos. It devotes a couple of chapters to the Chicano movement and its leaders. *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (1979) begins with

the conquest and colonization period to the present. Barrera favors a variety of structural discrimination theories called "colonial theory." This tradition shares with others a neglect of the class dimension in American society. Armando Rendo's *Chicano Manifesto* (1971) tells of the history and aspirations of the second largest minority in America.

Chicano Power: The Emergence of Mexican America by Tony Castro (1974) shows how Chicanos finally turned against the miserable housing, meager job opportunities, and inadequate schools that have been their lot in this country and launched one of the most noticeable and successful protest movements of the 1960s. *La Causa Política: A Chicano Politics Reader* (1974) begins with the foundations of Chicano politics. In the first chapter, Garcia speaks of the socio-historical base, individual (psychological) base, and organizational base. In the following chapters, he discusses recognition, politics, collective welfare benefits, and preferments and secondary benefits. The final chapter, titled "Non-conventional Politics," includes the politics of separatism, radicalism, and violence.

In his book *Mexican American Movements and Leaders* (1976), Carlos Larralde's purpose is to demonstrate that the Chicano/Raza Movement had roots in the activity and initiative of men and women of Mexican heritage for over a century. Identified are four different movements and twenty-one leaders among the Mexican-Americans from 1846 to the present. Lengthy biographical sketches with photographs are arranged in chronological order under each movement.

Youth, Identity and Power (1989) is a study of the origins and development of Chicano radicalism in America by Carlos Munoz. He traces

the emergence of Chicano student activism in the 1930s and its initial challenge to the dominant racial and class ideologies of the time. Munoz concludes with an account of Chicano politics in the 1980s.

Life History Literature

Use of the life history method in anthropological research has been common practice since the 1920s. During this early period, the emphasis was placed on description. In 1908, A. L. Kroeber first used life history as an anthropological tool in an article titled "Ethnology of the Gros Ventre." This work included three war narratives.

In 1926, Paul Radin wrote *Crashing Thunder: The Autobiography of an American Indian*. During the first period, emphasis was placed on analysis and interpretation of data, and the focus was on the individual as opposed to groups. During the second period, anthropologists addressed such issues as the use of the narrator's native language whenever possible, interpretation of native languages, clear fieldwork objectives, and reliability of life history information.

It was during the third period, which began in the mid-1950s, that the development of life history research by anthropologists was used to illustrate culture and for literary aims. It was used to illuminate stages of cultural change, portray aspects of culture not usually portrayed by other means, to communicate something not otherwise communicated, or to exemplify deviants and unusual cases (1980: 24).

Chicano Oral History

The earliest and perhaps most important published contribution to Chicano oral history thus far is the book by the famous Mexican

anthropologist Manuel Gamio. In *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story* (1931), Gamio left us with an outstanding collection of fifty-seven autobiographical statements regarding the immigrant experience of the 1910s and 1920s.

Oscar Lewis blazed a new methodological trail with the tape recorder as he portrayed life among contemporary rural and urban Mexicans in the following works: *The Children of Sanchez* (1961); *Pedro Martinez: A Mexican Peasant and His Family* (1964); and *A Death in the Sanchez Family* (1969).

Americo Paredes' *With a Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and It's Hero* (1958) supplements newspaper reports and court records with the recollections of many Mexican-Americans in reviewing the adventures of folk-hero Gregorio Cortez and the lives of other Chicanos in the lower Rio Grande Valley during the early twentieth century.

Several contemporary authors have gathered data from native respondents in their efforts to document recent events within the Chicano movement. Included in the works on Cesar Chavez and the farm workers' struggle are: Eugene Nelson's *Huelga* (1966), a view of the strikers' side of the first 100 days of the Delano strike; John G. Dunne's *Delano: The Story of the California Grape Strike* (1967), an eyewitness account of the strike by a journalist; Peter Matthieson's *Sal Si Puedes: Cesar Chavez and the American Revolution* (1969), which gives heavy emphasis to Chavez and his role in the labor unionization effort; and Jacques Levy's *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa* (1975), Chavez' life history reconstructed from a collection of interviews, speeches, and writings.

On the land grants movement and its principal personality, Reies Lopez Tijerina, Richard Gardner's *Grito* (1970) and Peter Nabakou's *Tijerina and the Courthouse Raid* (1969) both contain accounts by persons close to the events in Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico.

Among the contributions of other authors, the writings of Ernesto Galarza, Raul Morin, and Stan Steiner may be cited. Galarza bases his *Strangers in Our Fields* (1956), a study of *braceros* (Mexican laborers under contract exploitation in the United States), on data gathered from extensive conversations with workers in Arizona and California in the mid-1950s. In *Among the Valiant* (1966), Morin has incorporated interviews with other data to relate the experiences of Chicanos in World War II and the Korean conflict. Steiner's *La Raza: The Mexican Americans* (1969) makes extensive use of interviews to give us an impressionistic contemporary and historical survey of Chicanos. In *Soldados: Chicanos in Vietnam* (1989), Trujillo interviews a number of Vietnam veterans from his hometown of Corcoran, California, and documents the racism, discrimination, high mortality rate, and disproportionate amount of Chicanos in Vietnam as well as on the front lines during the war.

Martinez' "Chicano Oral History: Status and Prospects" (1979) states that results of a survey conducted in 1974-1975 in conjunction with his study reveal that a number of oral history programs are specializing in Chicano, or include this ethnic group as a principle component of their activities.

Three projects were identified in colleges in California, six in Texas, one in Utah, two in New Mexico, and one in Colorado. Presently, there are more oral history programs that pertain to Chicanos. One such

study if being done at San Jose State University (SJSU). Dr. Jose Carrasco, Dr. Mauro Chavez, and Mr. Jeff Paul team-teach this oral history course which is part of a larger project sponsored by the Mexican American Studies Program and the SJSU Chicano Library Resource Center there. The project focuses on the Chicano movement as it occurred in Santa Clara County during the mid-1960s through the 1970s. The interviews of dozens of former leaders representing different Chicano organizations are being supplemented by newspaper clippings, photographs, and personal notes and memorabilia of these leaders.

Methodology

Participant-Observer Technique

In *Untouchable: An Indian Life History*, James Freeman states: "The unique contribution of a life history is that it helps the reader to understand the abstract principles of behavioral science as reflected in the lived experience of the narrator. A life history at its best transforms the lifeless abstractions of behavioral science into vivid personal accounts" (1979: 396). Ethnography offers one of the best ways to understand the complex features of modern life.

The life history taken with the participant-observer technique is used as the backbone of the research method. The participant-observer technique is essential in the collecting of data for purposes of understanding other people's reality and to describe these realities in terms they themselves assign. Kluckhohn (Mandelbaum, 1973: 178) states that the life history has advantages for studies of social change, as clues to implicit themes, as documentation on roles, as demonstrations of

socialization and enculturation as an understanding of personality, as a means toward understanding variations within a society, and also of seeing the "common humanity" among peoples. This life history study adds a dimension that is not found in historical accounts or in statistical records. According to Kluckhohn, the personal approach enables us to experience the events through the narrators' own stories. Hence, the participation-observation approach gives a depth of detail and a breadth of insight that is otherwise not available.

Whether it was inadvertent or deliberate, my role as an insider affected the data immensely. I am a Chicano who was a participant in the Chicano movement, and am personally familiar with other participants involved in the Chicano movement in San Jose. Because of this, I have tried to remain as objective as possible. To this end, the interviews contained in this thesis are submitted in a verbatim format to ensure a true reflection of the emotional and linguistic character of each interviewee's responses.

Selection of the Narrators

When selecting a narrator, the anthropologist considers individually the problem he has chosen and the diversities in social status, occupation, age, sex, and experiences of potential narrators. Attention must be paid to representativeness and to the person's being an "articulate, willing, and verbal informant" (Mead and Metraux, 1953: 41).

The task of selecting narrators was quite easy. I had known both Chemo Candelaria and Henry Dominguez for many years. I knew of their involvement with the Black Berets. There was no doubt in my mind that they would be articulate, willing, and verbal informants.

The first person contacted was Chemo Candelaria. I had met him in the early 1980s. However, I had first seen him at a Chicano rally at Raza Park in the mid-1970s. I talked with him during the 1980s when I would see him at certain Chicano events. I obtained his phone number from a mutual friend and called him. I asked him if he would agree to participate as an interviewee for this study; he accepted. It was only logical that I ask him, since Mr. Candelaria was both a founder and leader of the Black Berets.

When we spoke on the phone, he mentioned his wife, Thereza, as a possible participant in the interviews. Thereza was one of the secretaries for the Black Berets. We agreed it would be beneficial to include Thereza because her contribution could also provide a woman's perspective of the organization's activities.

I met Henry Dominguez in the late 1970s. I contacted him in June 1988. When I asked Henry if he would participate, he immediately accepted. He then suggested that I also interview his brother, Jesse. Both Henry and Jesse were leaders of the Black Berets.

The Interview Process

The interview process is the most direct method for learning a person's emotions, judgments, attitudes, and motivations. However, location and number of people present can affect the interview.

On July 20, 1988, I interviewed Chemo and Thereza Candelaria. This interview and those that followed took place in their home just outside of Morgan Hill. The interviews began at 10:00 A.M. and went on until 8:00 P.M. We did take a few short breaks during this time. The interviews were of a very informal nature.

Interviews were tape recorded and notes were taken as the participants spoke. Chemo and Thereza are articulate speakers who were willing to speak at length; I found that I did not have to ask too many questions. Most of my questions were geared toward names, dates, locations, and things of that sort.

The interviews with the Dominguez brothers began on August 7, 1988, and continued for three consecutive Sundays. Each interview lasted approximately three to four hours. The interviews were held at Henry's home in East San Jose. I tape recorded all interviews and took notes to supplement the recordings. As with the Candelarias, the interviews with the Dominguez brothers were of a very informal nature.

Because I had known and been on friendly terms with the interviewees for many years, the interviews went very smoothly. Not only were we acquainted, we also shared similar views regarding Chicanos and the Chicano movement in general.

There was no feeling-out process or period of getting to know each other; we already did. This allowed for fewer questions and longer responses. All four of the interviewees expressed the view that they had wanted to tell, or write, their stories of what had happened for a long time.

When the interviews began, it was as if they were storytellers and I was the audience. I had planned on asking more questions, but there was almost no need to do so, except to clarify some major points, dates, names, and places.

For the most part, the interviewees' stories were flowing so well that I felt that if I were to interrupt them I would be doing the

wrong thing. I did not want to interrupt their train of thought. Their enthusiasm while telling their stories was so apparent, that I tried to keep questions to a minimum, unless I really felt there was a need for clarification. Many of the questions I had intended to ask were answered in the process of the interviewees' narrations.

The questions I did ask were open ended. They allowed the interviewees to expound on their own ideas and experiences.

After the interview process, the interviewees expressed satisfaction with the way in which the interviews were conducted, and stated that they looked forward to seeing the results of this work in print.

Further information on the narrators will be presented in Chapters III and IV which contain verbatim accounts of the interviews.

Scientific Standards

Objectivity

Objectivity involves reporting without prejudice. Some guidelines for checking the objectivity of one's own reporting are necessary. Reporting verbatim accounts of what was said in context was one of my goals in this study.

Reliability

Reliability of information collected in ethnography must be checked. I relied on supplementary sources for verifiability of the reports given by the interviewees. Among the sources used were books, newspaper articles, and clippings that can be found in the Chicano Library at San Jose State University. In addition, the information given by the Candelarias and the Dominguez brothers regarding the background

and activities of the Black Beret organization was cross-referenced for continuity.

According to Mead and Metraux (1953: 44), "each informant is a representative of his culture when his sex, family history, intelligence, type of experience in and outside of his culture and his relationship to the anthropologist are taken into account." The interviews presented here are valid and representative because they provide an in-depth account of the lives of these people during their involvement in the Chicano movement.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

This chapter will provide a brief history of the Chicano movement in order to give you, the reader, an idea of what took place throughout the Southwestern United States during this time. When this study focuses on what happened in San Jose, California, it will put the study in proper perspective with relation to what was occurring throughout the Southwest.

The 1960s was a decade of change which might occur two or three times during a century and has a profound transformative effect on society. The 1960s were marked, above all, by public discontent organized into protest movements.

The 1960s movements legitimated dissent itself. The use of mass demonstrations and civil disobedience was perceived as effective. The gains achieved in the 1960s stimulated a backlash.

Movements that occurred in the 1960s included the Black movement, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Women's movement, and the Anti-War movement (Freeman, 1983).

During the 1960s and early 1970s, Mexican-Americans joined Blacks, women, and other disadvantaged groups in demanding their share of the American dream. Chicano leaders emerged as representatives to articulate the frustrations and demands of many of their people (Hammerback, Jensen, and Guttierrez, 1985).

Acuna (1981) states that, in the Chicano movement, Cesar Chavez was the only leader of national prominence who had a large organization. His organization was a trade union that promoted the interests of a specific group (i.e., farm workers) rather than Chicanos as a whole. The entire Chicano leadership pattern, in fact, closely resembled the pattern of the Mexican Revolution, where revolutionary juntas and local leaders emerged. These leaders took care of their home bases and were supported by their own followers. Cesar Chavez, Reies Lopez Tijerina, Jose Angel Guttierrez, and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales all adhered to this basic pattern, inspiring intense loyalty among their followers. What finally triggered the Chicano movement in the 1960s was the economic problem. It was only one of many problems facing Mexican-Americans in the Southwest, but it was by far the most volatile (Acuna, 1981).

No one showed the economic plight of the Chicano more effectively than the hundreds of thousands of Mexican-American farm workers (Castro, 1974). Even in the 1960s, job security for farm workers was unheard of and fringe benefits were few. Housing often amounted to no more than shacks without electricity or plumbing.

In 1962, these farm workers, under the leadership of Cesar Chavez, formed the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), which eventually became known as the United Farm Workers (UFW) in 1966. The headquarters of the UFW was located in Delano, California. The UFW was involved in countless strikes, protests, boycotts, and marches against certain grape and lettuce growers. Viewing the strike as part of a national movement for greater social justice rather than a simple labor dispute, Chavez skillfully appealed to America's sentiment of fairness. He presented

the strikes as "la causa," the cause, based on two principles: non-violence and national liberal support (Meier, 1988). Although the UFW was a labor union, it had great psychological impact on Chicanos. Chavez had strong philosophical foundations extracted from Ghandi and Martin Luther King (Meier, 1988).

Meier (1988) states that Tijerina, who, along with his followers, created the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Grants), with the goal of returning pueblo common lands to the heirs of original grantees, claimed to have 20,000 followers by 1966. He led a group of them on a sixty-mile march from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to the capitol at Santa Fe where they made their demands to Governor Jack Campbell. Tijerina also headed an occupation of part of Kit Carson National Forest which he declared to be the Republic of Rio Chama.

In June 1967, the arrest of Alianza members led to a dramatic confrontation at the Tierra Amarilla courthouse when they attempted to make a citizen's arrest of the district attorney. Two people were wounded and Tijerina was eventually jailed.

Reies Lopez Tijerina later branched out to attend the National Conference for New Politics in Chicago, Illinois, and in 1968 he had a leading role in the Poor People's March on Washington, D.C. (Meier and Rivera, 1981: 345).

In Denver, in the mid-1960s, Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzalez emerged as a central leader in the Chicano movement and founded the urban civil rights and cultural movement called "Crusade for Justice" (Meier and Rivera, 1981: 345). "Corky," a proponent of Chicano nationalism, organized and supported walkouts, demonstrations against police brutality,

and mass demonstrations against the war in Vietnam. He also helped in legal cases on behalf of Chicanos. In 1968, along with Tijerina, he led a contingent of Chicanos in the Poor People's March on Washington, D.C.

Perhaps the most important contribution of "Corky" Gonzalez to the Chicano movement was the institution of Chicano youth liberation conferences that focused on and defined the goals of Chicano youth. Gonzalez developed ideas of Chicano self-determination and nationalism and launched the Colorado Raza Unida Party in 1970.

Jose Angel Guttierrez was born and raised in Crystal City, Texas. While a student at St. Marys, he and other students organized the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) as an agency to bring about social change (Meier and Rivera, 1981: 223-24). Guttierrez was the first president of the organization. Two years later, he began to put into effect his ideas about organizing Chicanos to achieve economic and political power. In the spring of 1970, after a Chicano school walkout, he led a group of Mexican-Americans in creating a political organization, La Raza Unida, for the coming city elections. As a result, he and two other Chicano candidates were elected to the City Council, and Guttierrez won a place on the School Board, eventually being elected Board Chairman. The new School Board, under his leadership, drastically modified the city schools, introducing innovative bicultural and bilingual programs (Meier, 1988).

In the Chicano movement, Cesar Chavez was the only leader of national prominence who had a large organization, and his organization, as previously mentioned, was a trade union that promoted the interests

of a specific interest group rather than the Chicanos as a whole (Acuna, 1981).

In 1966, the Young Citizens for Community Action (UCCA) in Los Angeles, California, evolved into the Brown Berets (Meier and Rivera, 1981: 58-59). In early 1967, the Mexican-American Student Association (MASA) was organized at Los Angeles City College. On May 13, 1967, Chicano students met at Loyola University and founded the United Mexican-American Students (UMAS). By 1967 these Chicano student organizations had spread throughout the country. In northern California, many Chicano student groups called themselves the Mexican-American Student Confederacion (MASC) (Meier and Rivera, 1981). The southern groups focused on the community; the northern groups focused on universal themes. The main priority of these groups was recruitment, but they were also involved with campus politics and with participating in numerous anti-war rallies (Acuna, 1981).

On any college campus with a half-dozen Chicano students, the school administrators were pressed to establish a Mexican-American Studies (MAS) program and to admit more Chicano students. The first program to be established was at Los Angeles State College in the fall of 1968. The first Mexican-American Graduate Studies (MAGS) program was implemented at San Jose State University in 1968. The administration made many promises but gave minimal assistance and support. Hostile faculties were allowed to badger inexperienced students in pseudo-democratic faculty committees, and instructors in the program were rarely granted tenure. From the beginning, the majority of the programs had been set up to fail. The frustration of dealing with petty and bullying

administrators added to the students' disillusionment and increased their alienation from the system. Most programs at other campuses were not institutionalized, and when budget cuts were forced on the colleges and universities, administrators cut Chicano Studies programs as expendable. From the beginning, these programs were doomed by ethnocentric and racist bureaucrats.

In East Los Angeles, confrontations between Chicanos and police increased as the Los Angeles Police Department attempted to clamp down in order to discourage a Mexican "Watts." When the Chicano community began its massive mobilization, the police solution to the growing unrest was a military one, and military solutions involved subversion, provocation, and extensive use of the secret police and spies (Acuna, 1981). During these years, the CIA, the FBI, and the local law enforcement agencies became more paranoid. According to Acuna, police provoked militants, investigated the personal lives of ordinary citizens, and kept files on those they considered to be suspect or subversive. This action was not limited to the Los Angeles area; this kind of police action took place throughout the Southwest.

In San Jose, Danny Trevino, a Chicano, was shot to death while sitting in his car with his girlfriend. Police said they thought he was reaching for a weapon; he was not. During this period, dozens of Chicanos were harassed, beaten, and murdered because of their affiliation with the Chicano movement.

Between 1970 and 1971 there were three riots in East Los Angeles. The first of these occurred on January 1, 1970, and involved a crowd of approximately 5,000 people who were celebrating the New Year.

Morales (1974) states that the second riot occurred on August 29, 1970. Approximately 20,000 people attended the National Chicano Moratorium march, an event organized by Rosalio Munoz, former UCLA student body president, and supported in near unanimity by Mexican-American organizations throughout the Southwest. The Moratorium was held to protest America's involvement in the war in Southeast Asia and to decry the high percentage of Mexican-American battle casualties, both wounded and killed in action (Meier and Rivera, 1981). The leaders of the Moratorium urged young Mexican-Americans to resist military service abroad in favor of fighting for social justice at home. The Moratorium committee had kept the police fully informed of its intentions and program and provided monitors to accompany the marchers and maintain order. After the march, Chicanos gathered at Laguna Park where, eventually, they were attacked by overreacting police. About 400 people were arrested, a few dozen were injured, and a few Chicanos were killed (Meier and Rivera, 1981).

Conflict between police and Chicano communities was rampant. Deputies at Laguna Park shot at a Chicano when he, allegedly, ran a blockade; his car hit a telephone pole and he was electrocuted. A tear-gas cannister exploded in a trash can, killing a fifteen-year-old boy. The most controversial of all the deaths was that of Ruben Salazar. Ruben Salazar was shot in the head with a tear-gas projectile; he died immediately. He was shot while drinking beer in the Silver Dollar bar. Police said they were looking for a man with a rifle. Salazar was a reporter for KMEX-TV and for the *Los Angeles Times*. He had been told by authorities on more than one occasion to tone down his stories. He had also claimed that he had been threatened by Police Chief Ed Davis.

Following Salazar's death, Laguna Park was renamed Ruben Salazar Park in his honor.

The third riot occurred on September 16, 1970. A peaceful Mexican Independence Day parade ended in violence when police attacked the crowd of marchers as they reached the end of the parade route. Eyewitnesses stated that police officers broke into apartments, destroying furniture and beating occupants. The press condemned the marchers.

During this time, there was a cultural revolution taking place in the barrios of the Southwest. Poets emerged, expressing the sentiments of the people. Among these poets were "Corky" Gonzalez, Alurista, Abelardo, Jose and Malaquias Montoya, and others. Muralists in the revolutionary tradition of Diego Rivera, Siguieros, and Orozco came forth and painted their works on the walls of the barrios. Murals have been characterized by the "team" approach, i.e., an art director working with a group of artists and/or community residents. Mural artists have also solicited community input as a guide to the relevance of a given theme and its articulation (Goldman; Ybarra-Frausto, 1985).

Teatro (theater) began with Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino and the United Farm Workers, but soon spread throughout the Southwest. In San Jose, Adrian Vargas started El Teatro de la Gente and Felix Alvarez opened El Teatro de los Pobres. The skits performed in the teatros ranged from exposing the conditions of farm workers to anti-war themes.

By 1975, or even earlier, the Chicano political movement was changing course. Rifts opened in the alliance among students, urban workers, and farm workers. The fraternal, unified community of the early period began to fragment as more Chicanos entered the middle class,

attained professional or business status, and established a stake in the status quo. Simultaneously, a schism opened between artists who chose to continue serving the still largely working-class Mexican population and those who were beginning to enter the mainstream art world of elitist museums, private galleries, and collectors. In 1980, artist Malaquias Montoya sounded an admonishing note about the co-optation of Chicano art and the transformation of its focus from "liberation" to "validation." The schism was not unique to the visual arts; similar tendencies were noted by observers in other areas of Chicano culture. The term that surfaced was "commercialization," whether within the private art (and film) market or within the public and corporate funding sectors. For several years, the National Endowment for the Arts has promoted seminars for artists on marketing strategies with the aim of developing a "small business" mentality among artists and artists' groups. Simultaneously, funding sources have been drying up, or have increasingly been directed toward "establishment" cultural institutions.

The Chicano movement began optimistically. Some Chicanos frequently referred to themselves as "sleeping giants." Optimism turned to disillusionment, then to bitterness as the Democratic Party continued to exploit Chicanos by gerrymandering, excluding them from government participation, and ignoring their needs. They were victimized by poverty and an inequitable criminal justice system. By the 1970s, it was clear that even the small gains made by the Chicano community were checked by those in power to keep Chicanos in their place and were, therefore, illusory (Acuna, 1981).

Today, La Raza Unida Party is dead, and the reason is not difficult to find. The party has followed the traditional trajectory of other

third-party movements in the Chicano community. The youth in MAYO who were in the forefront of La Raza Unida Party have been co-opted, elected, and recruited by other political movements. The issues raised by La Raza Unida Party, such as bilingual education, permanent voter registration, Chicano studies programs, bilingual ballots, community control of barrio institutions, and equal opportunity for Chicanos, have all been incorporated into actual programs. These once radical demands are today moderate, ongoing activities.

Hammerback states that many of the activists from La Raza Unida Party are now major officials of major parties (Hammerback, Jensen, and Guttierrez, 1985). Other former members occupy visible and powerful positions as public officials in Congress, state governments, court houses, and city halls. The process of catering to the Chicano voters as an interest group because of their growing electoral strength is the irreversible legacy of La Raza Unida Party.

Garcia (1989) states that although Chicano history possesses its particular characteristics and should be appreciated for them, it should also be interpreted as part of the larger history of the United States. The history of this country is a complex and heterogeneous one, composed of many and varied experiences, and Chicanos form one aspect of it. Segmented by history, class, race, ethnicity, gender, and culture, this country is a vast panorama of humanity.

Furthermore, Garcia states that we must understand these profound ethnic and demographic differences and seek to learn from history what they will mean in a new ethnic era in this country. Yet, to benefit from these lessons, we must approach this history with an understanding of

its complexity and with the perspective that rather than being a foreign and alien experience, the history of Chicanos, as well as that of other ethnic groups, is in fact an authentic American experience.

CHAPTER III

INTERVIEW WITH CHEMO AND THEREZA CANDELARIA

Chemo Candelaria is a spiritual leader in the Indio-Chicano communities of which he is a part. He is married to Thereza Candelaria, a well respected member of her community. Chema and Thereza and their children live in the city of San Martin, which is located just south of Morgan Hill, California.

Chemo founded the Black Berets and was a very charismatic leader. He begins the interview by discussing his Mexican and American Indian heritage. He emphasizes that his grandparents and great-grandparents were involved in working with the United States Government.

Among the many things Chemo mentions are his farm working background, the extremely poor socioeconomic conditions associated with his youth, the discrimination he encountered in the educational system and from the police, and the conditions in East San Jose in general. He mentions that all of this led to organization of the Chicanos on the East Side and, eventually, to formation of the Black Berets.

Thereza then offers some insight into her initial relationship with Chemo and discusses the role women played in the Berets and the role of the police in the destruction of the Black Berets and the Chicano movement.

During the interviews with Chemo and Thereza Candelaria and the Dominguez brothers, several themes became apparent: the spiritual dimension

that was woven into everything; the interweaving of personal lives and the history of the movement; the lack of a plan and direction with regard to the formation of the Black Berets; the impact of the police in the destruction of the organization, whether by design or by accident; and the personal impact of the police on the lives of the individuals.

Since some terms used by the interviewees may not be familiar to the reader, a brief glossary is provided following Chapter VI.

ARTURO: Chemo, would you please talk about your background and the events leading into the formation of the Black Berets?

CHEMO: I would like to first begin with my ancestral background, which is of native American descent. Alvina Madrid, child of Ysidro Madrid and Vilda Tafoya from San Ysidro, New Mexico [was my grandmother]. My grandfather, whom she married, Martin Candelaria, was born in 1892, also from New Mexico. You will see that in the old 1885 census of Santa Barbara in the state of New Mexico, my great-grandparents were registered in 1885 and they were also natives of New Mexico. You see, they say here, "Indians of New Mexico." You notice that Pibal and then Faria Baca, which was my great-grandparents; my grandparents are also from the United States of America. So the reason I am saying this is because in speaking of oral history and research and my understanding of our culture, now when we started in the movement in those years we knew that we were from here, but yet we were treated as second-class citizens. We couldn't identify with the reservation native Americans, but in the oral history of my family, Martin Candelaria during the wars, of my great-grandmother, who was involved in that time of history, was in the Pueblo Revolt. This would be my grandfather's mother. And how did we come

about in our name Candelaria not being our true name but being baptized under the Catholic rule and being adopted by Spaniards and how we came to speak Spanish and becoming influenced with the dominant society of the times? By 1885 already the wars were calming down, but the Apaches in the Southwest were struggling to as far as 1910 and 1920. You still had Chief Geronimo. In 1850 there was no Arizona. It was all the Territory of New Mexico.

In searching for my family and in finding out, I was always proud that I could always say, "Hey, I follow a generation of movement people struggling, fighting." My grandfather was a warrior. His stories of his father were even greater the influence and what came about up to the point of 1958, '59, and the '60s, the '70s up to the '80s, to the present, so why would a people be still after a historical participation in the development of this country still be as second-class citizens when the relatives were governors, when the relatives were bailiffs, and chiefs of police? I'm reading some records from Texas now where one on my mother's side was one of the border patrol in those times of the War Department. My grandfather was part of, at that time, the secret society, in New Mexico, the secret society. I think it was the beginning of the FBI. These names are very historical to our people, and in my youth, in my arrogance, [I was] not aware of these things. And as I grew older, . . . my frustration, and even my hate towards a class of people, years ago my speech would be "a la chingada you damn gringos," or nearly every other word was a four-letter word because of my anger at the times. In those years, we must recognize that we were barely coming out of the 1950s, when we were experiencing the immigration

—what would you call that time of the bracero program. We were from Sal Si Puedes. We were about the second or third generation of old Jackson Kings, which started back in the '30s, and we were migrant workers. We worked in the fields.

ARTURO: Did you do a lot of traveling?

CHEMO: We traveled. For myself, I remember in my youth we were living in Tracy, I think it was in Tracy or Sacramento somewhere. We lived in a barn. We were still long-hairs, what they called us at that time, "brancos." I guess some people would call us "rasquatches" or things like that or "Mexicans" or "greasers." These were the terms that were used at that time. When we lived in Tracy, back in the '40s, we were very young, we lived in a barn. Our bedroom was made of hay stacked on top of each other and my bed was a hay bed and we had an army cot. We used to follow up and down the state of California the crops that were the tomato and the chicharo. My mother was very popular because she was the "chicharo queen" because she could pick more chicharo than anybody, and I was there because we used to cut the cotton bags and double them up so instead of carrying a 100-pound bag, we'd be carrying a 175 bag or 200, and by 3 o'clock that afternoon we'd be through because we'd be making our \$30 or \$25. So this was the kind of atmosphere at that time, and my grandfather was a contrator and my Tio Martin, Jr., was a contractor also and that enabled us to travel up and down the state.

And so many people would come to my grandfather's place in San Jose. This was at 13680 Silver Avenue and there was a lot of opportunity for us to come and counsel with my grandfather and talk about the old days. And I used to spy on him, and I used to listen to them and they

would say, "Do you see how we are getting ripped off, and do you see how they are using us?" And they would say, "That's OK," and they'd be sitting there talking. And these were the old-timers, and these people were made up of people from Mexico, Oholone people; every once in a while maybe you'd see a black person. They'd come in there and go through the ranchitos where we used to hang out. As we grew, we began to see the destruction of our economic base, which was working in the fields. The East Side was not annexed to San Jose yet, so we were in a sort of unincorporated area, and in this I believe that the involvement for myself became apparent because we began seeing that no longer did the youths have any jobs, where in those days the youths would go cut apricots, and nothing was being created to occupy the youth. I was in Evergreen at one time; this was after the "War on Poverty" came in. We had already formalized, and this you can find in the old newspaper, the *East Side Sun*. You'd find it probably in the library.

The East Side Boys Club

We had organized—I believe this was about 1958, '57—we had organized the East Side Boys Club; there was a triangle on our T shirts called the East Side Boys Club. At that time, the club was organized at 222 South Jackson. Sister Bravo was still there and Father McDonald, who later on was made a saint. In those years, in Sal Si Puedes, there was a rumor that a freeway was going to come through there. And people said, "It isn't going to happen." As we find years later, it did happen, but it did not go as far . . . but it did kill, or destroy Sal Si Puedes. And this divided the families as it went on, as we got older and people started dying and going on. And this is where I had my start in the

old Sal Si Puedes. As I was telling you, one time, after the War on Poverty Program came after 1962, or '64, in President Johnson's Administration, I was enabled to work with Dr. Cummings, Jose Martinez, Al Pinon, Leo Covarubios. I think it was called the Area Service Center, at the same address I was telling you, 222 South Jackson. So our idea was to create a shop to fix cars, to have tools, and to organize ourselves. There was also a lot of help from the community. Well, when I was in Evergreen, I don't remember the girl's name, but she was an old Oholone person, and we were going up to Evergreen trying to see if we could find any poverty, anything. As we were going by, we see this officer of the Immigration, the patrol, and there was this pregnant lady and he is cussing her out. He is pushing her around, so I jumped out of the car and approached him and asked him what was going on. And right away, he jumped on me because we weren't supposed to know anything. To him, we were just another Mexican, another foreigner. This was the mentality at that time. We weren't educated. I was a big hero because I had an eighth-grade education. That's how big it was, big time, gee, that's how good it was. So he threw her in the paddy wagon. And I began to inform myself; it was not easy. "Chemo, don't get involved, that's none of your business, don't get involved!" It got to the point where I had a little junk yard in my backyard on the ranch there, which is now Mervyn's and a shopping center. It doesn't even exist any more, you know. I had a little junk yard and we used to meet. We used to go sell junk cars and cooper and what not. And a federal marshal comes in. The pressures started coming in. I didn't understand this at the time. They said, "Where are you hiding the Mexicans?" Well, I wasn't hiding no

Mexicans, you know, and then I started finding out about "coyotes" and all this other stuff. And then there was a threat: "You keep on doing this, you're going to be sent to Mexico." How naive I was! But then I got scared and I said, "Gee, you're going to send me to Mexico?" And, as I'm telling you, here I am a citizen you know, but the fears and the repression and the oppression of the people of this time. So we began to organize. I was paid by the War on Poverty Program to organize Gilroy, Morgan Hill, Sunnyvale. And I traveled; I was traveling and seeing many things and getting new ideas and what not. By 1965 you had the Vista volunteers and you had the Salisburys and you had Joe Salisbury and Ruth Small, and then you had our club, which was the East Side Boys Club. Now the original members was Billy Dennison, a French-Canadian Indian, born here, and his mom was a French-Canadian Indian. And you had Johnny Martinez and Rosa—I can't think of Rosa's last name—the Cervantez, Oholones. You had Yaquis, you had Mexicanos, and it began to grow. At that time, there were only two minority police officers. There was Danny Hernandez and Ernie Vasquez, who has since died. Now, I don't know if Ernie Vasquez is a relation to the old descendants of California, but these are the people that we had started off with. These were the elders, these were the old people. What got me angry was when we were working with the East Side Boys Club, . . . we had a basketball court developed there on Treemont for the kids because, apparently, the Jackson Kings on the East Side was pretty rugged. You can imagine the East Side, the only little town right there within acres and acres was Sal Si Puedes. It was two blocks long and then next to it was another barrio about a block long. Around it was nothing but

fields, cow pastures and fields, and we used to chase the rabbits. The deer would come all the way to the ranch, the coyote would come from the East Foothills. So there was not that much development at that time. And as the people keep finding out that we have rights as citizens, as natives here, we begin to stand up for this. What we didn't like were that the East Side Boys Club years later you go to San Jose and you find that the East Side Boys Club and those who got credit were not even Danny Hernandez from the San Jose PD or Ernie Vasquez or less, us. It was Judge James and Judge Brown who years later became Boys Ranch and this kind of thing. Politics, you know. So at that time they were afraid to move in on Sal Si Puedes because we were long-hairs. We were " Broncos." We were from the mountains. We were not so civilized as they interpreted it. We were still practicing our "curanderismo," our old stuff, or whatever they called us. Well, when the Español or the European called us "Chicanaises," which I believe now, after so many years, Chicanaises was a short form of Chicano. Yeah, I'm proud to be a Chicano, so what! Chicanaises was a term used by the Españoles towards your peons, towards your Indian peoples. Chepa was an old Oholone. Her whole body was covered with tatoos. And the stories there at that time— Oh, she was a fighter! And here we were tough, we were in those times, "pachucos." But this lady, old as she was, she would chase us with her broom, and the funny thing was that in that area I remember that the gang . . . there was a rumor that if you went down to the Farmer's Market, which does not exist now, and break in, and you can get the beer and have a party. So we went to steal the beer, and when we got there the Farmer's Market was already hep. So we really lapped it up, but we got

a bunch of fruit and vegetables and we had three boxes each, and we're walking from the fields toward Treemont and Jackson. We're walking from Story Road where the old Italian Cultural Center used to be, and we're getting tired and all you could see all the way was a big line of boxes. So these were the people that I imagine were my influences at that time. And so, going back to the War on Poverty Program, and those who were involved in it, I can't remember all the people involved—Sartanos, who at that time were part of the Guadalupanos, Asociados de los Guadalupanos de la Colonia de Sal Si Puedes, or something like that. And the people were still Indian people, people would still identify, like Don Pedro Aquilar, who was married to Doña Maria. Doña Maria was from Mexico, an Indian from Mexico—she is still alive—and Don Pedro Cervantez was a Mexican Indian from San Diego. The Rodriguezes, the Cervantezes, and I think there was a family there from as far as Columbia who lived there and so, prior to this, apparently, it must have been a Portuguese place, though, before the history of this time. So in the talks of the Asociaciones that were in existence at that time, there was a lot of need of how to fix up—now I'm talking of times when Sal Si Puedes or Summer Street had no—it was all dirt roads.

ARTURO: Where did Sal Si Puedes get its name?

CHEMO: A lot of people said Sal Si Puedes was named because the Jackson Kings are going to get you. No, Sal Si Puedes was because there was a hole there, and every time it rained people would get stuck, so "Sal Si Puedes" ("Come out if you can"). So we break away from the Jackson Kings and then . . . breaking up the gang at that time, and, oh, there's a lot of stories of those times. But that's another story,

but this is historic and was part of it. In fact, Valentine, who was a notorious bank robber, was from Sal Si Puedes. Cesar Chavez lived in the Sal Si Puedes area. So many people came out that were very progressive and brought change about and the betterment of the people of this community. Jose, The Councilman.

ARTURO: When did the Beret's come to being?

CHEMO: A lot of progressive people came from there [Sal Si Puedes]. So we come to the year now that we no longer wanted to be Jackson Kings, we no longer wanted to be East Side Boys Club, and Fred Hersh and Jose Martinez and Sophie Mendoza and some of the local people—I can't remember all their names—we began to say, "Let's organize." United People Arriba. Now United People Arriba were a council of people of this area made up of many different people. I would imagine this was around 1965. Now in that time when the guys—when we broke away from United People Arriba and we thought they were not very progressive—we want action, we want to go, we want to do things, we started the Berets, which was Black Berets for Justice. As time grew, we were known as Black Berets por la Justicia. We began feeling that there was a need for community because, in the discussions of that time, the people were saying: I know one thing, I got my grandpa's pickup—the red pickup, and we started cleaning people's yards for free, and we just asked them to give us gas money. At one point, we used to come over to Gilroy and get gallons—those black gallons—and buy the milk for 50¢—raw milk for 50¢. We would cut it in half and make two gallons out of it, and we'd only ask the people to give us 10¢ so that we could cover for our gas, and they would get the bottles, and that's what we were doing. Now

this is around that time, too; this is under the Berets. The original intent of the Berets was to clean up our community and to deal with different situations. Then, all of a sudden, when they built Piedmont High School, hey man, they're going into the Raza, the barrio, and taking our kids at 4 o'clock in the morning and getting them to school and leaving them at 7 o'clock when the school doesn't open up until 8. And all these rich kids around here are being brought in at 8 o'clock and the bussing and the situation of bussing, and this is around the time when they were trying to desegregate and what not. So we got involved with that and started putting out walkers. This is where you hear years later the school walkout so that we could start formulating Chicano student unions. This was the outcome of that.

Branching Out on a National Level

ARTURO: When did you start hooking up with other groups?

CHEMO: As we developed in that level, we find out there's MAYO and we find out there's other groups organizing—Los Angeles, Texas, Nuevo Mexico. Now, already, the League for United Latin Citizens developed. MAPA began to start. I don't have too much identification of that time because it was different from what we were looking for. As years go by, then, we find out that La Raza Unida was organized. We had some contact with them. We did certain things that we politically could not understand, but we said, "OK, maybe you know more about political things." Then the Berets—one time we used to march up and down the streets with out colors and we used to march to the CYA march, with a little drag of the foot and we used to have cadence, 1, 2, 3, you know. "I'm proud to be a you know." And we used to have had 30 marchers up

and down the streets with our colors and our military fatigues and black berets and our black T shirts. And, in time, it became a popular thing. So then New Mexico comes in this. Now we are already beginning to develop through "Corky" Gonzalez the youth clubs, and we said, "Hey, we have got to develop." Now this is where the sign of the Mestizo became the Spanish and the Indian which became the . . . the Chicano. And there were a lot of representatives through the Crusade of Justice. By this time we meet the Puerto Ricans, the Kings of Chicago; we also meet the Young Lords. The Young Lords were wearing those Smokey the Bear hats, and we said, "Hey, the berets." Now the Panthers were also going pretty strong also. So we were to meet. And there were articles of the old movement where we—Luis Vinegra, Joel, Billy Dennison, Rosa, Johnny Martinez, and others that I cannot recall—began to get involved and we are right in the middle of the Panther Party in Oakland, rapping our jive. You know what I mean—we've got to work together; we've got to bring these changes about. We're being exploited. At that time our language was very short because, I mean, we didn't know the words like oppression and psychological genocide. And now all of a sudden the black people start coming in. They're talking Huey Newton and Malcolm X and Tijerina. And all of a sudden we hear about Che Guevara, who was very impressive in our minds. Here is a man who really is bringing change. Our impression was not whether he was bringing Communism or Socialism or anything. Our impression was that all of a sudden we heard that he was kicking out prostitution and gambling. Wow, this is good, so our spirits grow and we start growing. Now we are moving into Sunnyvale, we are moving into Gilroy, and we are moving into New Mexico; we are moving into Arizona, to the Guadalupe Reservation. And a lot of people don't

realize that this movie "Billy Jack" is actually a true story, but it's a Hollywood version. But that was one of the very first survival schools for me and I believe it was in the Sandia Reservation. I've lost that material that I had, the documentation of that. As we grow, a lot of kids are wearing black berets now. One of the kids called me up and said, "The police beat me up and how come you haven't been to the meetings? The cops beat me up, and busted my ribs." "What do you mean?" Now, I'll go back to the East Side Boys Club and we realize how we got used to propagate a program that we had nothing to do with later on for political coming up. And the statement is in the *Sun* newspaper; that's when I first used the word "pig" and I should never said that because after that I had nothing but problems, you know. And I had already been beat up. People don't realize that I was taken to the police department at that time and all the gangs was still there and they took me in because I would not snitch on one of my old gang members, because the turf law say, "You don't snitch!" And you know we lived that old school. Even the elders would protect us. Even when we would go steal from them, the ranchers who had money, they would come and knock on the door and say, "Look how I got this Santo for you. Look, it's worth \$25, and you give me \$10." The old people would say, "You don't think I don't know what you're doing. You stole it. I'm going to call the police. I'll give you \$5." So these people would still kind of back us up, because we were that "bronco." The church at that time was at Guadalupe. Brother Victor—they were trying to civilize us. They'd teach us catechism, and Sister Bravo, she's still alive by the way, and they used to put us on the second balcony. Well, lots of times we would just go and find the girls to go talk to the girls. Well, we used to jump out the window

and escape, and we'd be real sneaky. We wouldn't go back through the window, but we'd come back and wait for the Sister to go out because she'd go to communion or she'd go up to the front and so we'd sneak in like we were there all the time. I'm sure she knew, but Sister Bravo used to give food to the people at that time, the commodities. This is where the beginning of the Berets came about.

ARTURO: Who were the original members?

CHEMO: Well, the original members were, like I say, Billy Dennison, Milton Lopez, Junior Lopez, Johnny Martinez, Quero Vallejos, Carlitos, my brother, Peter Aguilar, Rosa, the Lugos, were the originals. Then from there comes Luis Vinegra, Joel Vinegra, and Danny Arroyo from Soledad. They joined the chapter in Soledad because that's where my family's from; so did I. And then from there came Jesse Dominguez. Then the white people wanted to join us, but we said, "No, we don't want any white people." So they started what we find out later as being the Students for a Democratic Society. By this time, we had already the Tongs in San Francisco. By this time, we have members of the Black Panther party. By this time, we have met with the Black people's religious group—from the Muslims. By this time, we had already met with the Puerto Ricans. We had met with the different cultural groups. And then Henry Dominguez comes in. After Henry, we had the Junior Berets. And then we organized the People's Legal Defense. These people are now pretty "up there," and this was at the time that Jim McAtee was still a priest. Alan P. Parker, who was later chief counsel for the Senate Subcommittee in Washington, D.C. And now McAtee [who] is now a human relations commissioner was also involved in it.

ARTURO: Do you mean McAttee was a Beret?

CHEMO: Jim McAttee was an honorary Beret. And so, from there, then came La Confederacion de la Raza Unida, which was a coalition of all the different organizations that were struggling for social change. By that time, Fred Hirsch had started organizing the Joe Salisburys and all those other people—the one that just had a baby, Shirley Trevino, who was going to college at the University of Santa Clara at that time was very young; she was involved with the community alert patrol. And then Joe—and the one that we don't like very much, the one that thinks she is all medicine woman—Esmerelda, who is married to Joe. They started the free breakfast program there. We had started the Project Unidos in San Antonio School. So we wanted that school to be called something like "Pancho Villa" or an Indian name—I forget what the Indian name [was]—Geronimo, or something like that—we wanted to be identified. They called it San Antonio. Bob Bird was the active person in it. The guy who died, what was his name? The big, heavy-set who died of a heart attack—well, there was a brother there, I can't remember what—he was very instrumental in promoting the cultural program and more integration in minority peoples and promoting educational programs. We said, "We need an East Side Community Center." This is where the community center and things like that came about—a swimming pool and things like that—and this is where the church used to be, which was an old vacant lot. We got involved in that.

So that came about. And then we started formulating community gardens, which was the first one was 24th and Alum Rock, right behind the library. And then Henry started working on the community gardens right there in Lee Madsen. And we had asked the city to give us \$10,000,

but we were too radical, too militant—I don't know what happened, probably politics were there. Besides being involved with the city politics and discovering . . . like the killing of Danny Trevino, find out about the discrepancies within the police department, not only on brutality, not only that there was a lot of evidence which the committees delivered. One time I remember that they took the cameras and the tape recorders and ran them down. This is the kind of experiences that we were going through.

ARTURO: Tell me a little more about Danny Trevino.

CHEMO: OK. What happened with Danny Trevino? . . . I think we should get more into that because he kept all the records. But, apparently, we got a call—I think I was in jail at the time—and so Danny Trevino was at the Zarape. There was a question of heroin. Well, he had made a threat that he had a knife in the barn and he said, "Well, I have . . . permission to put you guys away," something to that effect, but by the time he got home, and then his girlfriend, . . . I've forgotten her name . . . came to us and sought our support. He was shot. So, apparently, the rumor was that there was an inside heroin or drug kind of situation there. We were threatened "hands off" and this is where a lot of our problems began, discrediting and so on and so forth. We were told to lay off, to pull back, pull out.

Danny Trevino was not involved with us. We might have had contact with him, but we had contact with the community. A lot of people knew us. We were popular. We were big, you know, through our membership we had contact with many people. We had a membership that wouldn't quit!

ARTURO: What do you think the membership was at that time?

CHEMO: Well, one time that, during the Fiesta de la Rosas, a big shot from the San Jose PD came over to our offices and said that the reason that they tried to discredit me at the Fiesta de la Rosas was that I had about 10,000 people following me. So I don't know how true that is. But we did have quite a bit of people, active people. Was a small amount; I think at some of our meetings we had anywhere from 100 to 200 people at a time.

ARTURO: What was the year that the Berets began?

CHEMO: The Berets were from 1959. So, when we went to New Mexico, we met with the Brown Berets and Black Berets of our affiliation, OK. Because these people were affiliated with us. There was a group of Berets that were not affiliated with us. And I think that the difference was that we were more country and more long-hairs and "rancheritos," more "rasquatches." And then you have the other Berets that were more "citicized." We were still more "bronco." And so we had a meeting in New Mexico around 1974, and so it was decided that we would take off our colors because, you know, we had Ricardo Chavez Ortiz, who hijacked an airplane from New Mexico to LA, and we were blamed for that, and my cousin in the Hayward Police Department was looking for the Chief of Police there, and apparently my cousin was blamed for that, and so a lot of pressure was coming in and a lot of our membership was being directed left and right. Plus, a lot of personal strife was coming down. At night, the police department would come and flash the light over our households checking us out. We had at that time el Parke de la Paz Park. This was during the Community Monitors. The dream there was that we wanted to put "jacalitos" by the river, we cleaned up the river and people donated the rocks. Sheriff Geary was very instrumental in Federacion

de la Raza Unida. We had also moved in on that park. The reason we moved in on the park was because a murder had apparently happened. We had moved in as peace keepers and so, then, we tried to develop what we could. Then they called us in to the fairgrounds. What could we develop? So then we developed the Community Monitorial Services there, and we developed an emergency drug abuse clinic. We would rap with the guys about the drugs, we would confiscate drugs and flush them down the toilet, trying to sober them up. It was kind of funny because when we were called on in those years the police were on horses and they would be hitting people left and right, people of all colors and, you know, people were getting up-tight—there was too much violence, and people didn't want to move where they were supposed to go, and so we moved in on that and we had radios and we . . . in fact, I think our radio station was KY 1030. And we had radios and we had nicknames and so the peace was pretty relevant and what we did is we got the hard core community people—the grass root people. We said, "Let's organize and find a way to develop peace." Prior to that, I remember an incident of Chief Ray Blackmore lent us some radios that we could use for Fiesta de la Rosas. They had spent \$10,000 for that parade and there was need for housing. There was nothing happening on the East Side. And what made me feel bad was that they had Junipero Serra and an Indian peon in a flag and that's what they wanted to do and that's one of the things that pissed me off, besides the \$10,000 that was needed in the community. At the Fiesta de la Rosas we were called in, I think because they had already begun to be formulated.

Jenny Rodriguez was active at that time because she was my secretary and she had come out with the idea, talking about how can we get

our people together to develop and we started throwing the idea out and Ernestina Garcia picked it up and went with it. A very powerful lady and strong. So we got called in and, hey, they're going to have a parade, let's protest. So what was happening, from my point of view, was that we're standing on the edge of the parade protesting with our cards and one of the policemen had stepped on one of the ladies' foot—deliberately—on a motorcycle—and she came out and then, all of a sudden, people started going through the street, and before we knew it there was violence. And what came out of that was, supposedly, Sal Candelaria, the ringleader, which was my name.

I was the ringleader, and so they took this opportunity—and you remember back about that big shot policeman what came to my office in the Monitor days—and said there were five policemen officers that had to discredit me because we were growing too fast. I didn't know these things had happened. Well, anyway, there was—what was his name, he became a preacher and he is in prison now—remember, a short guy—he had a head operation and he almost died and by that time I was the first one arrested so I remember there was an Asian looking person taking a picture and one of the cops was waving an arm and I said, "Stop taking a picture," and I hit him. I still feel bad about it because I don't know what he was doing, if he was in the police department or what, or if he was a good guy or a bad guy. So some of the differences at that time was that the Mexicanos, the charros, and the charros had apparently started taking firecrackers and throwing firecrackers on the ground and somebody thought it was a shot and a lot of crazy things happened. At one point, I blamed just the total police department, but after trying to be fair and trying to see. It's hard to see, but I think it was the

times. And so I was sent to Agnews State Hospital for "speaking Spanish and English incoherently." There was a Flores in there who helped me, and I want to thank him because he really did. The doctor didn't know what to do, but the police were saying that I was very violent and they were throwing things at me to make me mad. And I remember the doctor saying, "Well, this man doesn't seem violent to me." So they went into their little room, and before I knew it one guy who was a worker there, he gave me a cup this big, full of thorazine. And so, as we go into the hall, they told me to take this medicine and Flores said, "Don't take that. Throw it out." So he took me to the fountain and I dumped some of it and I remember taking some of it and, finally, I passed out. And they had me in a room with wire and everything, and all my clothes were taken from me, and a mattress or a blanket in a small room. And I remember thinking, "I'll push the window open and I'll run out." But then I said to myself, "I'd better not do that because then they'll say I'm really crazy for running around naked." And then, before I knew it, Dr. Latner was saying, "Sal, Sal." Jim McAtee was still Father McAtee of the Chicano priests association. So he kind of does a diversion and then Dr. Latner comes out and puts me in the back of the seat if I remember right. Now, some of this I remember basically a little bit because we talked about it. I was still out of it because of the drug thorazine. It was a red liquid. So then he hides me and I went to court, and I was still bugged out for I don't know how long. And this was one of the things that happened and thereafter the politics that happened, and other political leaders took that position, and I just stayed back here. So I was never able to express my feelings or, if I did, it was other avenues that were not very important. That was the Fiesta de la Rosas.

And that was about 1968, '69, and so from there I had barely come back from the Poor Peoples Campaign right after they killed Martin Luther King. And that's where I met Jesse Jackson. I already knew "Corky." You recall there was this group of people who wanted to paint the White House red. Well, yours truly—it was me. "Corky"'s daughter and I don't remember all the people that were there—Taco and some of the Berets out of LA--and I remember I still have a picture around here somewhere, 1969.

ARTURO: Was that the first chapter?

CHEMO: The Berets, the East Side members.

ARTURO: Is that the original chapter?

CHEMO: From my calculation, yes. It is before I went to the hospital, because we had gone to meet with LA people and I think it was Luis Valdez from the Teatro was there and David Sanchez, and when I got out of prison, Dave Sanchez came and talked to me and I remember telling him I was in there for pleurisy of the lungs, and he said, "How about that guy that's always causing trouble and this and that because we set up a little funeral down there?" "Well, it was me." I would say that apparently it looks as if we were the original Berets. From there, you know the Cinco Centavos from Stockton, and then other groups started to organize themselves, so there was a lot of growth in the Berets.

ARTURO: When do you say the Berets formed?

CHEMO: East San Jose, probably around 1959, 1960. We were still calling ourselves Jackson Kings, I guess. We started wearing berets. It started way back. Then we started struggling. One of the things that we were experiencing in the police department was, for example,

when a minority would get arrested, if he didn't have bail, he had to stay all that time. These were the issues that were happening at the time. So, then, through efforts of organization, we had the Own Recognition Program. People charged with felonies, but it turned out that it was just misdemeanors. So that program came. Jesse Dominguez was working in the juvenile with the youth program and the OT [out temporary] was a program that was developed through the berets. The Community Monitoring Services were in the Beret's efforts. The Community Gardens was one of the efforts. The Chicano Student Unions was one of the efforts of the Berets. We were involved with the City College. At that time, I think the organization was called there MASC [Mexican Affairs and Student Confederation], and we got involved with them. So to get more education for the minority peoples to have the right to go into schools, and then we moved into San Jose State College for the EOP programs. Again, we did not get much credit on that because we were too militant and the more educated people had . . . in fact, Luis Vinegra was one of the students in San Jose State College at that time. So, a lot of times I think we were brought down because of our being in there, trying to take over and things like that. It seems we got rubbed out on a lot of things, and those people who got credit for it got credit for it, and we never did get any credit.

ARTURO: Was it because you were more "left"—more, what is the word, more militaristic?

CHEMO: I don't know what left or right really is. I think we were the angry bunch, so people were saying we were the charismatics, the go-getters, the front line. When they used to ask me for my

occupation, I would say "revolutionary." I was very proud of that. We took care of business. We were the ones being called upon when all else failed. We did the dirty work, and we took care of business, and we were for real. We were ready to give up our lives. We got shot, we got threatened, we went to prison. We weren't organized crime. We weren't dealing dope, we weren't doing things like that. We were defiant, we were radicals in the sense that when we would be involved in San Jose—the "modern society"—in San Jose we used to take over Model City, things like that. Where are our people, how come our people are not here making decisions, how come? We would always be demanding, we would be asking "Why, Why?" You must understand that most of us were not of the so-called "higher educated." We were from the farms, we were long-hairs, we were "broncos," we were never in our lives that we had been part of this. In fact, everything like that was fearful to us. We come from a culture, we had a culture, we had a base, and we were always threatened. Like the joke says, "We are the people that your parents warned you about." I really believe now, as I grow older, I think we were the true "warriors." Some of us in the evolution of time maybe got lost in our drugs and our alcohol and prison. But because we were so ahead of time and we had pointed out to our community that these things were coming about. That incident of the freeway. You say, "What do you mean?" I've seen the map. It was dated 2000—projected time. I've seen that with my own eyes. It was brought to my attention. They would call us. Santa Clara called us something about a little kid that a man was selling drugs to. We were there to take care of our people. Remember the family that called us in by Silverdale, the police came

and brutalized the people inside the house. The Medinas, they called us. We were there. So, every time we went out, we were always under scrutiny, under surveillance because we were active. We were an action group. In fact, we used to tell the people, "We are action, we are not a social group." And then my wife, Thereza, who was hired as a secretary. I yield to her now, and she can remember things.

ARTURO: First of all, Thereza, I wonder if you would like to give a little brief background about yourself, tell whatever you would like to say, and then maybe lead into your involvement with the Berets?

THEREZA: Well, I didn't know too much about the Chicano movement. I grew up on the East Coast. My step-father was in the service, drilling, so I wasn't . . . so what I know about the movement happened in Puerto Rico, because my step-father was a Puerto Rican. So I started hearing about the Independence Party over there and I started hearing it on TV. A young man over there started telling me about the Independence Party and telling me how the young men over there were being taken to the Vietnam War. And he was telling me that Puerto Rico was not a state and the United States was not helping them economically that much. But yet it was taking their young men to the army to be killed like that. And that is how I heard about the movement was Mexicans, because my mother was telling me I was Mexican. And I wondered how I could be Mexican if I wasn't born there. Neither were her parents born in Mexico. But at that time I took my mom's word for it. So that's the first time I started knowing anything about a movement, when we were in Puerto Rico. And then we came back over there. When I came to California, my

grandmother helped me get out here. So I went into San Jose and I heard a little more about it through my aunts because they were involved in the Chicano movement. My Tia Aurora and Tia Thereza, the one who was talking to me about Safeway, because of the grapes.

ARTURO: What year was that?

THEREZA: 1969; I remember seeing my peers, going out on the picket line, and she was educating me a little bit on that. At that time, I started living in Fresno with my grandmother and I became involved in the MECHA group down there, and MECHA was just a little thing from school. And I participated there as far as the school to let us have Chicano studies so we could learn more about our Chicano heritage. And that's when I learned that I wasn't a Mexican, that I was Chicano, because we were born here and our parents were born here, and their parents were born here, so we were from here. So she gave us an explanation about the Spanish coming over here and conquering us—Indian people—and because the conquistadors came in and raped the Indian women and that child became a Chicano. And we were those children. And MECHA brought out a little more about that. And I remember going to demonstrations, also on walks. I left, then I came back to San Jose after I went to school, and I graduated and I came back. And I didn't know what I was going to do, so my Tia Aurora was the one who told me about Sal Candaleria. I didn't know what direction my life was going to take or what I was going to do. So she said, "Why don't you get involved? Why don't you join this organization?" Then a group called . . . the first meeting I ever went to. It was held in Gilroy.

ARTURO: What year was this?

THEREZA: That was 1970, the summer of 1970. She took me over there and I met Chino Vasquez. And I met Lino Covarrubios and a lot of people that she had known in the Confederacion because she was very active in it. So, after that meeting, I was becoming interested and asking a lot more questions about what was going on. So that's when she mentioned Sal's name and she wanted me to get involved in the Berets. She said, "This man is really involved and the leader right now and could educate you on what's going on." Because she wanted to motivate me, she wanted me to do something. And she didn't want me to just get off on drugs. She said, in fact, "there's going to be a rally this Saturday"; and that was before the LA Moratorium in August. And she took me to that rally so I could hear him [Sal] there and "see if you're interested or not." I hadn't even seen him—yes, the march—we started at the church and then I remember seeing him running back and forth and I was just watching him and then I was watching all the other guys, Milton and Steve, and I remember him having a discussion with Father Anthony Soto there.

Then we started marching and we went to St. James Park, right down in the middle of San Jose. And then I started hearing him talk. I don't really remember what he was talking about. All I remember is that he was inspiring me and I was just listening and listening, and as I was listening, it was like all this energy was coming to me and I was getting up and I was telling myself, "Why is this man talking up there?" And I can see the people really getting up and he was really yelling and screaming out there—and loud—and he, he was "fucking" them—every other word was an "F" word. I said, "Who is this man?" and my tia said, "This is the man I want to introduce you to." And I said right

away, "I want to meet him." I want to know who this guy is. I didn't get to meet him that time, right there, because he was organizing people to go to the LA Moratorium and my tia and I had already said, "Yeah, we were going to go." And they were making out the schedule of buses that were going out of San Jose. So we had planned on going, but for some reason we didn't realize they were going the following weekend. So, after all that rioting happening in LA, he came back and the people that were there came back the following Saturday. Now this happened one Saturday, the next Saturday the LA Moratorium, and after the LA Moratorium that's when they killed Ruben Salazar. So people were really upset and they wanted to do something about it. So we all went back to the rally down in St. James Park and the people were angrier than before. They were really upset with what was going on. So I can still hear him when it was his turn to get up. There were a number of speakers that day, but everybody was waiting for him to talk. That was like, *now* what are we going to do? And it was up to Sal Candelaria as to what direction the people were going to go. So once he got up and he started talking, it was like everybody got motivated again.

People were starting to take off to the San Jose Police Department. I was ready to go, too, but my tia grabbed me and she said, "No, no, we're not going to go to that one, because what happened in LA, that could very well happen here in San Jose, and Sal's mad right now." That's how much she wanted me to get involved, you know . . . So I didn't get to go to that, but I read about it and heard about it later, how they went down there to the San Jose Police Department and they broke the windows and stuff. And, of course, Sal was the guy blamed for that—

taking the people down there. And after I had met Sal and I talked to him, it wasn't the way the news media had put it out. So then, a couple of weeks later, my aunt told me to see him because she had talked to him previously and he needed a secretary, and I was good with shorthand and writing and bookkeeping and all that stuff, and I was looking for a job. So he was looking for a secretary. I remember calling him, and the way I was taught was I called him Mr. Candelaria. I was really formal with him, and I remember him on the phone making hamburgers and he said, "No, no don't call me Mister. My name's Sal Candelaria." So I was explaining to him that I needed a job and if he was willing to have me apply for the position, and all that. We agreed to get together, and he came and picked me up next morning.

I remember he had this woman with him—that her children were in Juvenile Hall, so she needed his help in trying to get them out. That was my first time being out with him, and this lady going out with him trying to get her kids out. Which he did. That afternoon he was able to help her get them out. It was strange, because after that, a couple of nights after I met him and rode around with this lady who was talking to me about the movement, I was walking this other young man to my other tia's house, about a mile from my tia's house, and we were talking, and the next thing I knew there was some person behind us and he had a green field jacket on and he was a black man. The guy kept talking to me but, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed this man coming up behind us when we crossed the street, and he got closer to us, and I started getting nervous and walking faster. Then, all of a sudden he yelled out for us to stop, and we didn't stop, we just kept going. So the next

thing I knew there was a real loud noise and something burning in my elbow. I just screamed out and I grabbed my elbow, and my friend told me to run to my tia's house, go tell them what was going on. And as I turned around, I saw him scuffling with the man. So then I took off running and I got to the house and I was banging on the door and screaming, said that something had happened. And, naturally, my tia thought it was the man I was with—because he came right after I did. In my panic, I couldn't tell them it wasn't him, because they automatically thought he was trying to attack me. I said, "No, it wasn't him, it was some man. I don't know what happened, but he did something, and I didn't know what it was." And the next thing I knew I passed out, and when I woke up I was in the hospital. And I had been shot in the elbow. I remember their taking it out, and then the FBI came in, and the police came in, and they were asking me what had happened. So I explained the best I could, and then then the FBI man goes, "Well, you know Sal Candelaria?" And I thought, "Strange, what has that got to do with it?" And I said, "Yeah, I just met him." And he said, "Well, don't you think that maybe he could have hired the guy to shoot you?" And I said, "Why would he do that when I just met him?" And he goes, "You don't know Sal Candelaria! He could do things like that." It freaked me out at the time, because here I'd just met him. And I said, "Well, I don't know him that well." They saw him in the waiting room, you know. They saw him. And they right away called him in and they asked me about him and, of course, I didn't know anything about him. So, after that, I kind of hesitated about going out with him any more or helping him out, because I barely got in and then I got shot. And they were trying to

say maybe he hired the guy, for whatever reason. So it was after about two weeks time before I got the nerve again to go back and try talking to him. And I explained to him what they had told me, that is, what the FBI had asked me about him. They even put a thing in the papers saying that I was a militant and I was freaking out. Here I had just met the man, and here I was already labeled as a militant. So, then, I explained to him what the FMI had done, so it was obvious they were after him and were trying to pin something on him.

When I came in, it was just the Berets. They were fighting different issues about discrimination, police brutality, and I remember going to different rallies, different marches, and then right after that is when people really started the Peoples Legal Defense; that's when I could actually say I was a part of organizing something. And it was Peoples Legal Defnese, the office on 24th and Santa Clara where, when our people went to jail and needed the OR Program—to get released on their own recognizance, as they didn't have any money to get out and, of course, our people didn't have lawyers. All they had was public defenders and stuff, which half the time wasn't really good. So we got students from the college—San Jose College—that were being lawyers, to come and help the people try to get good attorneys and stuff.

CHEMO: This is when we realized that we had a need to be educated so that we could have more lawyers to come and defend the people, and this was the issue because we still didn't want non-Indians and we had to hire Concy Bokum and the judge—I'd better not mention his name—and we began to realize this importance because we didn't have that education to defend, and that's when they were changing the law that

we couldn't go over there and represent our people and interpret for them or whatever needed to be taped.

We found that Concy Bokum was one of the last people who was in the book of Unamerican Activities, and she was a beautiful person. She worked hard. And Casa Legal started right after that. The difference there was that we were trying to be more people-orientated as opposed to a business kind of situation. So that's when that went off that way. Then Angela Davis called up, and the Panther Party. The Panther Party and that big-shot attorney from . . . Melvin Belli, I think it was, where the inmates in the prison are trying to formulate a council inside the prison. So, then, I get called in on it and it was called the Prison Manifesto. I don't remember what year that was. So that's when I get Miguel Molano, Miguel Morales, Ruben Reyna.

Around that time I told them, "Look, I don't have that much experience of prison life, but can you handle the prisoners' Pinto Association? . . . outside in the streets?" From there, then, was the development of the Inside Inmates. And Angela Davis, they came more into focus, and it says "To hell with the leader of the Brown Berets." I was never the leader of the Brown Berets. I was the leader of the Black Berets for Social Justice. One of the things that we had—in order to join our organization you could be Mexican, you could be Puerto Rican, you could be any minority, but you had to identify *Indian*. That was one of our rules. Your see, that's what Chicanos were, but we lost it, so that's when the Hispanics came in. Hispanics to us, at the time, were the ones who turned coat, who were indifferent to the progressive people of Cuba, the revolutionaries, not only in Cuba. People don't realize

that at that time Genaro Vasquez and others were already in Sierra Maestras in Mexico organizing to create—now these were Indian people, these were people from the mountains—and we were financing some of that stuff through our efforts. The DQU was happening. We were trying to promote that interest so that we would have an Indian Chicano school to teach our culture of indigenous preponderance. Now this is 16, 17 years ago. I didn't want to interject, but I'm glad. You forgot to tell about the flowers they took away from me [laughter]. When I went to the hospital, there was a saint there—they had put the flowers there so I didn't know what to get her so I grabbed the flowers.

ARTURO: I was wondering if you could elaborate a little more on the women. Some of the names, the roles, and so on.

THEREZA: As far as the women, I remember Chemo took me into Aztlan in the Santa Cruz Mountains. And it was really different up there. And, naturally, I had never lived like that, but I enjoyed it and I liked it and I fitted in really well. And the women would go up there. Carmen Perez would go up there and Esther . . . with her five children; at the time that I met her she had five kids already. Our friend Debo Rodriguez also. And I remember going up there and it was really different because it wasn't like the men do this and the women do this. It wasn't like that. All of us went in. If a hole had to be dug, we all dig. When breakfast or lunch had to be done, it wasn't, well, the women do this. However, it worked out. Some of the women would go fix the dinner or the men would go do it, or half and half. It was never a discussion on it. Everything just came out. And a lot of the arguments we had . . . I remember one time Mujeres de Aztlan came out—a group. We were

kind of offended. The Berets group were kind of offended because these were city women and all they wore were mini skirts and high heels and, you know, their waves and their makeup. And here we are. We have a rancho going . . . and if you saw us, we have our field jackets on, our fatigue pants on, and our boots on, and we were trained. Then you started seeing the difference. You know now who is a mujer or not. But, it was just known throughout that when you go up there, you go up there to get trained, and you train to take care of your people; when the chips are falling, you know whether you're a man or woman, but you are there to protect your people and take care of them. And we were also trained, being in the city, to learn how to put on our hot pants, our mini skirts, our high heels, but at the same time remember who we are. And we were taught that you don't fight over the men, you don't fight between the men, you try to avoid all that hassle and you try to keep unity between the men and the women.

CHEMO: In fact, we had a code book . . . your dress code and how to . . . in every street corner. You are like the precision of a clock. People looking for hope. You are an instrument of hope.

THEREZA: We weren't allowed to take drugs either. Not when you are out as a Beret. Because people would see that and whatever reflected on that one individual would reflect on the whole organization.

CHEMO: Not only that. We were the first group to train women in self-defense. This is why the Adelitas had called us up from Los Angeles and they wanted to start a Black Berets. But we said, "No." Rosa said, "We want to start the Adelitas and break away because these guys are too chauvinistic." And we said, "Hey, we don't want to touch

that because, if you start wearing black berets, there is going to be a feud." And they said, "What should we call them?" And we said, "Maybe Adelitas. Call yourselves like that." So there was one discrepancy. One of our men did not let the women be decision makers. And this is where we had three of La Junta, which was a secret society within the organization. We had two women and three men, so they had a voice in the decision making. But they weren't into what we see today. They were trained. They were trained in self-defense, they were trained not only in self-defense, but they were trained in the Sal Alinsky theory of political community organizations which we used to have the schools teach back then . . . remember that? I used to break it down: brainstorming; how to identify the power; how to organize; what to organize; what direction was to be taken.

THEREZA: And we would allow different organizations to go up there who would ask to have their meetings up there. And we would all be up there and we would discuss different issues . . . like the Pinto Association, . . .

CHEMO: The historical meeting of the Association of the Inmates.

ARTURO: What year was this?

CHEMO: I don't know, late '60s, early '70s . . .

THEREZA: The '70s, because I was there when it happened. I think '71.

CHEMO: So tell them what happened when the cop came up.

THEREZA: Well, toward the end, we were losing Aztlan, and it wasn't so much because we were losing, although we realized the importance of drugs and alcohol and that, because we were partying at the

time. We were kind of getting frustrated. It was kind of coming to the end and everybody was starting to drink, not out publicly but in our own little group. We were losing our rancho and plus the guy who was letting us use it was starting to come down on us, too, on making payments and stuff like that. Since we hadn't done a written agreement with him. He started taking advantage of it because the handshake thing was that we could stay there as long as we paid once a month and we had an option to buy. And, in the end, he started reneging on that and saying no, that we never did and receipts were never done, you know, and all this. We just took their word of mouth, and we respected his word and he respected our word. And we were paying money every month to pay for the land. And because no receipts were kept on our part or his part either. And that's how we learned the importance of documentation and receipts and all that. He started sending the police up there. So, I remember one incident toward the end was that Chemo had gone down to buy some stuff and my cousin and I had stayed up there to take care of it. So we were cleaning up and taking care of the place, this one cop had come up there. He drove up and I was pregnant with my older daughter—and that was 1972—and he came up and wanted to know where everybody was at. And I said, "Everybody, this is it. All that's here." And he said, "Where's the whole group? We know that there's a whole bunch of you militants up here." And I was feeding the chickens at the time, . . . and my cousin was there. And he said, "I know there's more people up here than right now." And I said, "No, this is it, my husband and me and my cousin. This is family." Then he said, "I want to look around." So he grabbed my cousin and he took him up to the porch.

And he told my cousin as they entered the house, "If there's anybody behind a bush or behind a tree and figuring they're going to do something to me, you're going to be the first one to get shot at." And that freaked my cousin out, because we were trying to get him to go out there and get away from all the drugs and everything. And he was doing OK, and then with the cop coming in, it kind of freaked him out. So my cousin showed him around and so did I and I told him, "This is all that is happening here." Of course, we had all our posters up . . . but I told him, "this is all that is here right now. A family-orientated thing here." And he said, "Well, I heard there is training and stuff." And I said, "No, there's nothing like that up here. This is what there is." And then he started taking pictures—pictures of me holding the chickens and the ducks. And there was really nothing up there that he could say that there was anything military going on. So then he stayed and he said, "Well, I'm coming back and I'm bringing the Sheriffs, and you people have to get out of here"; so he started saying that the landlord wanted us to get out, get out as soon as possible and because of the militancy and all this and that. So, by that time, Chemo came back after the guy had left and my cousin was still kind of freaked out. So he told me to go back down there.

ARTURO: What types of weapons did you have?

CHEMO: We had a 22 single shot and a 32 snub-nosed revolver; that's all we had up there at the time.

THEREZA: And that was for hunting purposes. That wasn't for just shooting, because none of us were allowed to go out there and just shoot just on our own, you know. But he did make it a point, saying

that they were coming back and if force had to be used, it was going to be used to remove the people that were there. So, in other words, he was challenging us. So that's when Chemo came out and told me to go down and call the guys up to tell them. So when I went down, I had to go out and look for everybody all over the place and gather them all together. And it was kind of funny because half of the guys were bombed or something, and half of them were wasted and stuff. So, by the time I got them all together to go up there, it was a pretty rowdy bunch. And I was very leery about the guys that were going because it didn't look like they could handle it. And here the cops were going to go up there and use all these drastic measures, and you should see the guys that we were sending up there. They were hard core, but they had just partied, you know. But it was like they snapped out of it. They snapped out of whatever they were in to and they knew that business had to be taken care of, and they had to be straight. So they all got in the cars and stuff and they took off and went up there. So, meantime, while they were up there, I had called a couple of people from Santa Cruz and I had also gotten hold of Shirley Trevino and people from Casa Legal to get ready in case something happened up there. We didn't hear anything on that day, so we waited and waited and we were by the phones, keeping in touch with Santa Cruz to see if they had heard anything, and over here and San Bernardino County and Santa Clara County. Toward the evening, a friend of ours, Andres, and I took off to go and see them, and just when we were going up, they were coming down, so apparently they never showed up.

The Showdown

CHEMO: It was rather comical. We were going to defend the land. The guys came up with all kinds of weapons. We're ready. Here comes "high noon." They're supposed to come at high noon and come and kill us, and this is all going through our minds and we are ready to die. And, finally, the guys got there and the guns weren't there. We waited and I thought, "Oh my God, we've only got a 22 and a 32 to defend our lives. We don't know what to do." Now, again, these were hard core guys and bouncers in different bars. These hard core guys to take care of business. I remember sitting down and I must have wrote a page and a half—a love letter to Mom if I die. I got all mushy. I'm thinking I'm going to die. You know, that's how heavy it was on us psychologically. So, finally, the guys show up and just me and Carlos up there, waiting. So Carlos says, "I want to go." And I said, "Well, Carlitos, you're in it. There's no way that you can go and leave me alone. You get the single shot and I'll get the revolver and we'll defend our lives." And, you know, it was for real. Whether it was happening in our minds or whatever, but because of what we had experienced. So we waited. Well, a cache of guns came up. I'm talking about 12-inch shotguns built in 18 something. I'm talking about 30-30 barrel, way back in the 1800s. Well, the guy that was to bring the ammunition never showed up. We're saying, "You go over there and if they start coming in, it's a one-shot in the air and blah, blah. It was funny, because one of the worst, meanest, toughest guys—and he's hung over now—so he falls asleep! One of the guys falls asleep that's supposed to be guarding, and it's one shot if somebody's coming—if the cops, the man's coming. And he

falls asleep and he's leanign on a rock and the shotgun goes off. Boom! And so another guy—we assigned him with a gun—this is the guy that's bad, take care of business, and the whole bit. He throws his gun into the bushes. He takes off running to the mountains! [Laughter] We're sitting there and nothing had happened. I tell a joke, you know, I told them I concocted the whole story, "Yeah, we were surrounded, and they came in with helicopters, and wow! And what happened? We had only one shot. We all died." It was so comical that we can laugh at it. But, at that particular time, we were all scared. We were scared because we didn't know what was going to happen. We already knew that the FBI was trying to discredit the Berets. We already knew that a lot of our objectives were being discredited and we were bring rubbed out little by little. And by that time I think Guero had been shot by somebody else, which was an involvement with a police officer who was one of our friends. So you see, we had associates within—we were organized. And we had different affiliations with different associations which called us when things were going to happen. We didn't know this, though. It was the time. People don't realize that in those times, if I were to have an education and learn how to defend us, I wouldn't be as black-balled as I am today. This is why it is important that these things come out. Because, even looking at it and the experiences that we had in the movement at that time, and remember that we were involved in the movement—not just Chicanos—we were involved in the movement—the fish-ing rights, we were involved with land grant rights, with Reies Lopez Tijerina. In fact, up there in Ranchito de Aztlan we hid Baltazar Martinez, who was involved with the Tierra Amarilla raid.

Now, at the time they were looking for him, he was hiding up there. What's his name came down from Mexico, one I mentioned before, the one that was in the mountains setting up camps up there—Genaro Vasquez, who ended up dead. He was shot. They said it was a car accident. But his whole car was full of bullets. These were the things that we were living under. And then, all of a sudden, Ricardo Chavez Ortiz decides to "borrow" the jet liner to create the awareness of the oppression and repression. And the guy wasn't even noted. So these are the kind of experiences that were going on at that time. And there was a man named Chief Red Shirt, or something; he was an older man when we were in Washington and trying to create the consciousness of our fishing rights and the treaties and what not, but we were not so aware of that. These things were just coming because we knew of them. It's not like today that everything is all technical and legal. We were just gut. We were just saying, "Hey, something has just got to stop!" And so, in Ranchito Sierra de Aztlán land, we had to move out and lose it. And Raymond was our head man there. Raymond Escodero, who still lives in San Martín. And he and his family, Esther and the women's involvement. They were right there in the front line with us. They never failed us. They were there. They were with us. We didn't argue. That was one of our rules. In fact, one of the rules was "You may not agree with what I'm telling you, but if one of the captains told you to do something, you didn't have a chance to argue. You had to do what he gave you that order. If he was wrong, you had a chance later on to clarify what you didn't agree with." So if it got to the Junta—like if you were a bad member—and it got to the Junta . . . maybe one or two guys got to the

Junta. And nobody knew what the Junta was, except for those who were. The Junta was the main guys who kept the order in there. But, as we grew, we find out that we've got so many people. We had so many people who said, "Oh, yeah, he was a Beret." We had people who weren't even Berets, who stood there taking credit of certain things that we knew had happened, that might have been semi-legal or defiant, and they're . . . and how we say, "now we know who you are. We know what you're doing." And I don't believe that the masses, or the public, really realized and recognized what these people in the Berets that were sincere and clean at heart were willing to give up for the people. And I am saying not just Chicanos. I'm saying not just Mexicans, not just Puerto Ricans. I'm saying Indians, native American people, because as you listen, the concept of Chicano was "indigena," the roots; this was the whole thing about teaching our culture. In Aztlan we were starting to make adobe and all these things. The Raza de Paz Park, which we were engulfed by, we were only supposed to have a small group. We ended up with 600 to 1000 at times every Sunday. But everybody was partying—getting drunk, toking up. I'm not putting myself above it, because we partied, too. But, at the same time, not when we were there. We were straight there. And if you look at La Raza Park, you begin to see how we began to try to influence the Indian thing. But we couldn't get it out—not from the concept—beyond the pachuco, beyond the zoot suiter. And the cultural groups at that time were folklorico, still not going beyond to the indigena . . . from the original intent of the organization. And it grew and it grew—the chapter at Tijuana. They later decided to form a chapter at Tijuana, and they raised the bus fare from, I believe it was 10 cents,

to 25 cents. And that's when the burning of the bushes came. This was beyond our control. That was their area. That was what they were doing, what they thought was needed. When the chapter in New Mexico . . . the individual decides, I get the call. "Oh, it's you guys." So, as the . . . grew larger and bigger, like, Rito Chacon from New Mexico was the first man in New Mexico to stand up and say, "There is violence in Antonio in the prisons against the minority people, against the Indian people, the Chicano people, the Mexican people, or the minority peoples." There was a set-up there. He was set up and, as far as I know, I don't know what happened to him. In the Ranchito de Sierra Aztlán, we were able to conclude our dream there. So, at that time, we had already built up a sweat lodge or "temescal," so we were already conscious, we were already [trying] to establish a culture. We used to have night meetings around the fire, and we used to drum and tried to sing songs, trying to remember the little bit that we were able to retain in the cultural sense. But, again, at that time it was too early. So, coming back again to the Confederación de la Raza Unida, I had suggested at one of the board meetings we need to bring the American Indian movement in. So, American Indian movement, which came out around 1974, after the Wounded Knee incident, . . . we get called and I already know George Martin and I already know the other brothers involved in California Indian people, we get called in to Point Conception and there's an incident going on there. So I see the battle that we're having in the cities. So we then went to Margaret Carlson's; we were called in to Margaret Carlson's in the Klamath Falls issue, in the land dispute there. Then we were called over to Oregon, where the government tried to take the land away from

Chief Chiloqua and his family. And, from there, one thing led to another. The other one person that was involved at that time . . . in later years we find he's a Lakota brother and his name is Gray Buffalo. And then the Indian youth formulate the sun dance. Dennis Banks comes in. We laugh because I have a picture of Dennis Banks when he first came into California [begins to show pictures]—this is in 1970—this is one of yo soy Chicano. These are just little things that I have been able to hold on to. Here is the Raza de Paz Park (?). And already you see the Indios here, where we begin to promote the culture. We then make peace with the charros. The charros come in here. You began to see this—here I am giving instructions and you can see where the park begins to get developed. These are some of the art as we are trying to bring in. This was psychedelic. We didn't really like that. I remember it was kind of controversial because we wanted it more indigenous and we were supposed to develop all that. And these are some of the pictures of the old guys. This is a Filipino delegation. This is one of the parties at the house. Here's where I get kicked in Washington, D.C., in 1968. You see, here's the pictures in the White House, and this is a picture of the Fiesta de la Rosas. This is when we merged with the Berets at Stockton, I think it was. Here is Los Siete. This is a rally in the park. This is Henry Dominguez talking at that walk that Thereza was talking about—Thereza before I knew her—you see how young she was. If you look at the flag, look what the flag says. It says "Justice, Liberty, Land and Culture." That was our whole objective; that was all we wanted. This is one of the Elders, who was 50 at the time. here's one of the grandmothers with the Berets, Mrs. Lopez (?). Dennis Banks,

when he had a short haircut. A lot of people don't know that we were part of all that. Here's Rev. Cecil Williams from Oakland. We used to do those rallies. Here is Lee Brightman. The old drum. Here we are again in Washington, D.C., in '68. And here we are surrounded by the National Guard when we were struggling for the rights in the Poor People's Campaign. That's where I met Jesse Jackson. This—Viva la Raza—you can see that's my daughter, my oldest daughter, who's now 24 or 25. This is when Junior Lopez died. Joey died in a car accident. This is one of the rap sessions that we used to have in the old Guadalupe Church Hall. This is the old Filipino delegation, where we had a gathering. Now they were talking about what was going on in the Philippine Islands in those years, 1973. This is Jenny Rodriguez, one of the earlier secretaries. She gave a lot. Lalo, her husband, I don't know if he's still alive or not. This is Andres and Shirley Trevino in her youth. And this is Henry took on a pilgrimage—January '82. I've lost a lot of this documentation. And this is when I played Santa Claus in one of the schools. I guess it was a Mexican Theater on 24th Street in Alum Rock. Well, one time they let us use the whole thing and we gave a free show and we gave candy and gifts to the kids. These are the kinds of things that we did at that time. So a lot of people—the militants and all that—that was something that was a very becoming thing. Like today, they say "Oh, they're terrorists." So anyone who denounces the terrorists . . . This is Sal, and this is my father, a full-blooded. This is my daughter. I don't know what the dates [are], but you can see here are some of the old-timers, like here's the drum. This is some of the inmates. This is my little brother—in prison . . .

The Indian culture group there. We began to involve ourselves because we see that the Native American, or American Indian, movement is propagating our interests—the land, the sovereignty, the culture, the traditional culture, the respect to our elders, etc., etc. We are going to retain the language. We were going to make a poster out of this, but no, it's too big. At that time, we didn't want too much publicity. We never did get that much publicity. This some of the old clan. This is my grandma. This is an article that the *San Jose Mercury News* wanted to write about—being a holy man, and the culture, and the tradition. To many people, the movement has stopped; but to many of us, the movement has never stopped. And I think that people like my companion—19 years now going together—who has stuck and has worked hard not only in California, but Arizona and New Mexico, South Dakota, Washington, Oregon, DQU. All these things have been created and developed. Not necessarily leadership, but at least being there to create. So, as we grew now, we began to realize the problems of alcohol and drugs. So now we're saying to memberships, "Hey, you cannot be an alcoholic, you cannot be a drug addict. No, we don't want that." Here's an encampment that we had—these are some of the cultural programs that have been developed or participant of. This is the San martin camp where we were trying to develop a cultural center. This is when we got it. You should have seen it afterward, when it was fixed up. This is the kitchen area, this is the living area, this is the outside, back yard—we made a pond there. This is one of the original members of the TENA Council, Lone Wolf. Here we are in the dirt lodge. Isn't that beautiful? I want to show you how we built all that—the long house—a place to fix cars and a cultural

center. So, now that I've moved back to California, and trying to get back into it, it's very difficult. For whatever reasons—whether there were mistakes or whether they were incorrect—I'm not paranoid, . . . cause I'm not sorry for what I did. Nobody handed me a book that this was the right way to do it. We must be able to remember what the '60s were, how they were and what the fears were and why people reacted as they did. When you experienced things like that, like when we got shot at the fairgrounds in the back of the head, and my wife and companion were shot. When you see the bullets flying all over, when they killed Ruben Salazar, you think, people say, "Why are you spiritual?" I was always spiritual. I think my wife would say so. Mom, tell them about when you first met me and I would go out praying.

THEREZA: When I first met him, everybody started calling Chemo a Holy Roller. They were really surprised that he was praying and all that. I remember when I first met him, that is where he would go every morning. He always went outside and every time he got the chance he would read the Bible. But he would always go outside in the morning and he would say a prayer and stay outside. And at first I didn't ask him what he was doing, but after a while I caught on that he was going out there to go praying, and would sit out there and would stand out there and look at the sky a while. And he would pray like that. Then I started getting wise, but nobody knew that was what he did. I was the only one, because I would see him do that every morning. And then every once in a while I would see him read the Bible. But I wouldn't get into it. But he would always do that. He was always spiritual. It wasn't something he did, just jump on the band wagon. He was always

playing. Anything he did, and any decision making he had to do, he would always go out and pray or read the Bible when he made those decisions. So, when he had to make one, that's what he would do.

ARTURO: Would you elaborate a little more on the downfall of the Berets?

CHEMO: Right before we started, we were growing in power and we were trying to get away. There were things like—I remember they had told Henry that I was going to kill him, that I had a contract out on him. Things like that, that were not even true, that were meant to divide us. Remember, the people all around us being arrested. Why don't you tell him about Velasquez right before I took off—at the house. I was already getting frustrated. Mr. "Big G"—I won't say his name—but we used to call him "Big G." And as I was taking pictures of how the police were in there and how they would arrest people coming to the park, which was part of their job. But, apparently, they made a statement that I was taking pictures of the police, or I was showing what they were doing. But one cop up there, one police officer, said to shove the camera up my ass and called Thereza a bitch. So I got angry and I got out of the park, and I went up to the first police . . . and I had a roll of paper in my hand . . . Finally, I went to a couple of them and I knew he was Italian or something and I was so mad I said, "Capich, capich," in Italian. Understand, I don't give a shit who you are, but you don't mess with our women. You don't go around . . . And I was going like this to him. So I went back into the park, and we were talking about arresting me. So I said, "I have to go make a telephone call to one of our people, to Sheriff Geary." And he said, "Well, go home, we have a warrant for your arrest."

THEREZA: For inciting a riot.

CHEMO: But no riot ever occurred. But, if you had been there at La Raza Park, it never failed. There were always things going on. You know, "Ah, they're doing this." You're talking about 1000 or so people every Sunday; 600 to 1000 people, something happens, Boom, Boom. So we're trying to handle that, too. But, it was very difficult for us because of our manpower and, you know, because of our structure. So, anyway, we finally get home.

THEREZA: That was on a Sunday. Now, on the following day, on a Monday, I don't know what had happened between Chemo and I, but we were having a disagreement, and I remember going to the Monitor's office, and he had been on the phone and he was trying to arrange something with Sheriff Geary about the warrant; he was trying to arrange it so he didn't have to have the cops come out there to really pick him up. Anyway, he was trying to let him know that there was a warrant being issued out, and he could come in before the warrant was issued and get bailed out, without the Sheriff's Department going out there and making a big scene and everything. Anyway, I didn't know that was going on and that he was taking care of it. So I left the Monitor's office kind of upset. And I remember going by a store near the house, and I remember when I went there I saw this group of cops just hanging out there—there was a whole bunch—they just looked too many, so I just passed them by and when I came out of the store, I kind of looked at them again and, as I looked at them, it was the same cops that were always by the park. And it struck me funny. I said, "Well, why are these cops here if they are the ones at the park, that district over there, and it's Monday,

what are they doing out in this area?" By the time I got home, he had driven up and he was telling me he was trying to look for me. And the next thing we knew, someone was banging at the door so hard. And we asked what it was, and he said it was the San Jose Police Department. He told me to answer it, so I went to the door and I kind of opened it like this, but I didn't open the whole door, and I asked him what he wanted. And he said there was a warrant out for Sal Candelaria and they wanted to get him. And I said, "I need to see the warrant first." So he said, "You don't need to see no warrant, we're going to get him anyway." But I said, "You can't come in here." So I don't know what happened. As we were talking . . . one of the police yelled, "He's running out the back, he's running out the back." So all of them just headed towards the back, and when I turned around there was a whole bunch of them. We were surrounded. I got around to the back; they had him and they turned him around and they threw him up against the house and they handcuffed him . . . in the driveway, like this. They had a gun to his head. Henry couldn't move, and these guys couldn't move inside the car because they were surrounded.

CHEMO: So, this is how they broke us up. Eventually, I became a political exile. When I came back, I tried to make a speech talking about the pollution of the water, talking about the pollution of Mother Earth, talking about our Brother . . . and our pollution of the air. In fact, one person said, "You're talking about pollutions, but you are smoking a cigarette." So, when I came back a couple of weeks later, I thought what I should have told him, "But the difference is, there's a lot of difference between someone shooting me and my putting a gun

to my head and taking my own life." So, I finally came back to court and what the medicine man said, "Everything's going to be all right." It turned out to be all right. I go to court, I'm waiting and I'm going through exchanges (?) and they say that I'm exonerated. I didn't know what the word "exonerated" meant! So I went to the hall. "What does that mean?" "What'll I do?" "Go back into the court room?" I stayed there till 5 o'clock, just to hear them say they'd dropped everything. Fine, but a couple of weeks later I get picked up again. For non-support. My first wife was already dead five years ago. So then we found out later that it was a whole set-up thing. See, a lot of things we didn't realize was that we had been into the Watergate investigation. We didn't know that we had connections like that. We were just talking and we had the King Albert Plan—we found out how they were going to make the communities one way so that they could have enclaves of snitches—so that the people would never rise. How the schools in the ghettos were going to be built so that, if any insurgency should happen, they would be made into holding areas. So we started circulating this, and we said, "Wow, this can't be true." So I find a need for spiritual help. This is beyond us. That power and the fears, and then all of a sudden I'm sitting praying and not saying about . . . not causing any waves. This is the culture I picked up here and there. I learned a little bit and now that I got more from my grandfather, eight children, grandchildren, I realize I really don't know anything. Now what we're trying to do is learn the language and trying to keep that cultural thing, the spiritual things. We're seeing the epidemic of drugs and alcohol, the Aids situation. My companion, in one of the elders' conferences, she warned

me that the elder women, the native people, were saying when they went to the polls, when they brought that . . . they changed. So now, all of a sudden, the women are going to have differences. They are going to be struggling and they're going to be suffering a lot harder. Especially the city women. My grandfather, when I was a youth, when I was a little kid, I remember he said, "When the battle of the sexes comes, there will be a change." Could that the liberation and the struggle the men and the women have now in our society? When man converts into woman, when my grandfather told me that I thought he was talking about homosexuals. And then, all of a sudden, [Christine] Jorgenson comes along. When I look back to my life—and we couldn't even build a fire in the backyard—when a fire has always been a part of our culture. In those times, when the people had candles—candles, in Santa Clara County!—they were cited for fire ordinances. What happened to the freedom of religion when people walked all the way from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., and what we got out of it was a Freedom of Religion Act. The 1978. When this country was founded on the freedom of religion! All of these things. And you look around and you wonder, and I can't put myself above it. I'm just as guilty. The only difference is that I didn't drop the bomb on Hiroshima. I didn't go to Vietnam and kill people in the masses. I didn't make that decision. I'm not trying to rank the Vietnam vets either, because here is a million men—even though I was opposed to the Vietnam War—in Vietnam, but nonetheless, the warriors come back and how are they treated? We are giving more to those people than they are giving to the vets. Agent Orange, all these things. And all I'm saying is "Why?" So I go back to what I'm telling you about in 1885 and before

that; 1948, and before that. Are we not part of this mess? And I still think those things. I think "Why are we in this I/me syndrome? What happened to the us and the we, the unity and the one nation?" I said, "Don't leave me alone anymore." Let's handle it spiritually. Not hallemujah and you're going to go to hell and I'm perfect. But spiritually. So we can feel good with what we are, that we can do research, so we can find our roots, so we can show who we really are. Why not be able to practice our culture? Isn't this what liberation is about? Is my sister going to be liberated because of a women's liberation concept? Like one sister was saying, "Well, look, you're against liberation." I'm not against liberation. When you sit there saying, "I'm liberated," because all of a sudden you've got a directorship job making bombs that are killing people in Nicaragua and Guatemala, or any place in the world, that is not liberation. All you have is the very same thing that you have been struggling against. So the Chicano, the Indian, or all these that have made it, so I no longer say that if a white man who is making pressures on me and putting me in jail or brutalizing me—but I have a Chicano, an Indian, a white man beating up on me now. Not me, you know, but the people. Still, that repression is still there. You see you're not discriminating in English anymore. You're using another language, but you're still doing the same thing. So, all of a sudden, you've got a good-paying job running computers, but what are those computers used for? To suppress more people? And why should anybody who's gone to college and become a doctor go back to the ghetto where the people can't pay him anyway? So, naturally, he's going to go get the \$40,000 job, or whatever they make. Why should a minority attorney go back to

the reservation, or to the ghetto, or the barrio, or go back to the guilt trips, the BMW's? I don't know. I have some ideas. When you're sitting there and a Nixon, our leader of our country, is ripping off, is killing people. When the director of the CIA becomes vice president of the United States, known to be involved in covert activities like drugs, and we go to our children and say, "Don't be like that." And here is our leader doing this. When we read about a woman who made love with a senator twenty years ago and all of a sudden now is suing because she was violated. But, for twenty years, she's been doing it! When we go out there and we're paying all this back to all the Asian people. No wrong intended or racism intended, but when they're sitting there and giving them thousands and thousands of dollars . . . when I feel it was not right for them to be put into concentration camps as American citizens, I suggest that I was wrong. But what about our native people here in the reservations? Because it's a business. The war in Vietnam was nothing more than to control the rice and all the industries that they had, but the people didn't benefit from it. The warriors out there—did they benefit from it? And I think that in a future time, people like us—I'll be grateful to my Creator and I know that in my own family I have war heros from World War I, II, Korea. I think that in future time people like us, after all the smoke clears, will find . . . But it takes time to bring a change. I think we'll have some. There has been change, but, as opposed to what some senior citizens say, "What if you were in Russia?" But I don't live in Russia. Even in Russia they're killing 100,000 Indians a day, but does that justify killing one Indian here? And what is more painful, psychological genocide or physical, or both?

Or discrediting? Or blackballing? I could never get a good job, I know that. I don't know what's in my record. I'm even afraid to write to the FBI to get my papers, information. Because I'd hate to see what they've got in it, knowing that these things happened—five letters that tried to discredit me. I can just imagine! When I used to read the newspapers, they never asked me my opinion. Now, some of these Chicanos that are sitting there real pretty in the colleges, when they talk about Chicano history, they don't let me in there. Who are they? I'm a citizen of this country and I will believe, and I do believe, that when the president of the United States asks me my opinion as an American Indian (?). I'm not going to send my kids to Russia tomorrow, or Mexico, or any place . . . Maybe. But we . . . be here another hundred years, another thousand years, but not if that water is polluted with chemicals. I might pee on it. I might even throw a beer can in it, which is not right, I've learned, but at the same time I'm not dumping nuclear waste. And we need energy, and they justify this nuclear energy, but where are they putting all this nuclear waste? There must be another alternative. We're destroying the rain forests. But too many people are too busy getting their \$40,000 job. But how much power do these groups have? I wanted to put up a bumper sticker: "Fight Organized Crime"—insurance company. Look at it! It's a protection racket. That's organized crime. Look at the homeless. Say what you want to say, that they're stupid, arrogant, they they're bigoted, that they're crazy. Say what you want to say. Oh, they want to live that way. Stop putting up signs that we can't camp on the parks. Stop putting fences on the freeways so that we can park on the side if that's what we choose to do. And all of this money

that was ripped off -where did it go? Go to the 5 and 10¢ store and rip off a Coca Cola or rip off a loaf of bread, and how much time do you get? What the Berets attempted to do—at the worst opinion of us. Right on, brother, if you want to be a big corporate lawyer, right on if you want to be a politician or president of the United States, man, more power to you. But how about some of us who would just like to raise our chickens, don't we have rights, too? You have a right to raise chickens. But I can't afford the feed. I can't afford the payment of the land. So you don't have to call me a nigger or a spick or Redman or savage to discriminate against me. You can do it economically. You can do it in other ways—discredit me. I was afraid of what I believed in or what we were struggling for. I still believe the same things. The only thing is that in the annals of history they're going to dig newspaper articles, they're going to dig all this other garbage that the political powers had to be able to give (?) the community at the time. But more people are getting hep to them. A lot of people—middle-class people—are beginning to recognize and realize what the '60s [was about]. How they used the newspapers, how they used other methods to persuade so they could justify the murder of a president, the breaking in of Watergate. An illegal act, so they could justify their criminal activity in South America with the drug pushers. Whether it's true or not, I don't know that, but just from what I see of their influence. So, in this story that I'm giving you, this big, general story, . . . but I've tried to hold on to my culture, whether some of it is being modernized, so that I can be what my ancestors were once. I have a right to be happy, I have a right to smile, I have a right to my peoples. I believe in

this. Even though I may not understand their tribal rituals, I realize that they have a right to be themselves, whether you call yourself an Apache or a Chicano. If you're hispanic, you're Spanish, then go to Spain and do your damn thing. That does not mean to say that there is not any Indian people that have Spanish blood in them, or French, or Irish. But when are we going to go to our other point, the bare part when there is so much that we can get in to.

We have a culture, whether another Indian agrees with that or not. They might not agree with this particular culture, but if you look at the annals, the history that has been retained, the eagle feather, the dances, all the rituals, the sweat lodge, the roots. It's like building a car. At first, they traveled 25 miles an hour, at one point they only went 45 miles an hour, then, all of a sudden, they went from 65 to 85, wow!, then, all of a sudden, it went up to 120, all of a sudden, 200. How far are we going to push this so-called progress? Until we destroy ourselves? Is that progress? Kill all the deer, kill all the snakes . . . kill everything. Already they are talking about how we should not live over a certain age. So maybe back in the '60s, when I was talking about human rights, that wasn't so wrong. We should see what we are creating. I'm not against progress, but if we can invent something that betters our society, right on. But how can progress be when you've got bombs that can destroy the world over and over, when it's causing psychological effect on our children. How long is it going to last? That's why everybody is living fast. Nobody cares. What are we doing psychologically for ourselves. Where's this nuclear [waste] going to end up, in our drinking system? Go to Fresno. This is in Fresno,

California, not some place that we don't know about. So maybe one of the consequences of the Chicano movement was the need to be world conscious. How many color televisions can we have in our home? How many cars can we have in our garage? Maybe two. But you know how many these people have, maybe ten cars. When you see houses that have acres and acres of land, big old mansions, six bedroom house, and one person lives in it. I don't know, because anybody can quote something back at me. But it's a struggle for us figuring out a solution of how we can better, get rid of, this greed. We push our kids to grow up—14, 15, or 16, and then when we get old we want to be like you guys. Insanity! As I get older, yes, I do want Utopia. That's right, I do want Utopia. I want a place where people can be healthy. I want a place where people can be happy, a place where people can feel good about themselves. I want a place where we can go fishing, catch fish, and there will be enough fish for everybody. I want a place where we can have a good time. not because we're drunk or on drugs or hallocinogenics, but because we're feeling good about what we want to do, want to be. Not to hurt somebody else, not to destroy somebody else.

I've been in the Chicano movement since I can remember. All of a sudden, I'm excluded. You're still a Chicano, you're still with us. What is an Indian? Well, Chicanos are Indians, too. Why, then are you saying that Dennis Banks excluded you? Well, you didn't say Chicanos. What's he supposed to say, Lakota. Was he supposed to say Apache? Was he supposed to say Navajo? He'd be there all day. If you're an Indian, no matter what you call yourself, you're an Indian. So you would have gone. But you see, this is what the effects of breaking the

spirit is. They had to break our spirit. That's why "Those Indians, they're diggers, they're greasers, oh, they don't know what they're doing. And then, to boot, they give other Indian people to rank us, so they will fight other Indian people. Divide and conquer. Actually, in reality, we should be creating that beauty, and that harmony, and that feeling of our spiritual selves. It has nothing to do with "Halleluja, you're going to hell and I'm better," because it doesn't, and it has nothing to do with ranking Catholic or Protestant church. No. But why—not until 1978—did they pass a law that we could practice our religion in a country that was founded in that way. Why? Why now? After the lands had been taken, after the destroying, the shame, the embarrassing, the annihilation of our languages, the annihilation of our culture. And the little bit that we have been able to retain—not being ashamed to sing these songs, trying to find them, trying to remember our elders, trying to find them. Now we have to prove that we are Indian? All these things, they are part of the mechanism of destruction of the Indian peoples, or the indigenous or the sovereign people of this land. So that the only thing that we have now—and like my brother said, you wait. And I want you to take notice, and I want you to make a statement on that tape that you brought of how you feel. And you will see that what we are telling you is true, as we see it, as we feel it, as we're experiencing it. And we don't want anyone to jeopardize that, because we want to be truthful to you. And we are imperfect, and we do make mistakes, but we still want to be able to create what is ours, rightfully ours. Whether somebody says, "Ah, you are a Mexican, you're a Hispanic, or you're a foreign alien, or you don't know." But it's that feeling

that we know. It is that place that we know. It is when we walk out of the lodges or ceremony and we see these spirits out there sitting. And when you sit there and we sing a song—I wish we had the words, I wish we had the instruments. In fact, we'll get them and we'll show you. Go get the clappers and the whistles. And when you are sitting there like this and you have been praying and you call the spirit, and then all of a sudden you feel the presence of something. Those are the spirit. So these things, my brother, these things, that's what we're doing. We're not trying to overthrow the government, we're not trying to be sacrilegious to any religion, we don't want to be. We're not trying to do anything but feel good in our hearts, be happy, bring our culture to the best way we can. So that when you leave this grounds you'll feel good in your heart. You'll feel happy. What is wrong with that? Isn't that a constitutional right? Whether people may judge and say, "He doesn't know anything." I know that, but there is others who might, and we'll go find them—as long as we don't try to compete and try to be better than one another. We try to live a good life, try to keep away from the drugs and the alcohol. We see this. We see what's happening to our family—our own. We're not above it. We see this. We see the homeless. My brother, Marvin—his family is sleeping in a car. My brother here is sleeping in a garage. Why? Why have we just finished giving so much money to some people because of what they did back in World War II? They don't stop to think what they did to us. Not that we want the money, necessarily. But we want the truth. That's what we are saying. We are not trying to cut anybody down, we are not trying to rank anyone. We just want to feel good in our hearts and be happy.

CHAPTER IV

INTERVIEW WITH HENRY AND JESSE DOMINGUEZ

Henry Dominguez is a long-time community activist. He is involved with El Teatro de los Pobres, a Chicano theater group founded by Felix Alvarez, which addresses issues relevant to the Chicano movement.

Henry is married and the father of eighteen children! He still resides in East San Jose.

During the interview, Henry discusses how his decision to join the Black Berets was greatly influenced by his brother Jesse and also by Chemo Candelaria, and how he eventually assumed a leadership position in the Black Beret organization. Among the issues Henry raises are those of organization of the Chicano community, problems with drugs and alcohol, discrimination against minorities, police harassment of those involved in the Chicano movement, and barrio warfare.

Jesse Dominguez, like his brother Henry, has long been active in community affairs. He is a divorced father of one child.

Jesse was a leader in the Black Berets. During the interview, he covers many of the same areas discussed previously by the other three interviewees. These include warfare among the barrios, issues related to drug and alcohol abuse, and community involvement in the Chicano movement. Of particular interest is the account Jesse gives of the extent of his beating and harassment by the police, specifically the incident that took place in front of his family.

Both Henry and Jesse Dominguez were important and influential figures in the Chicano movement in San Jose.

ARTURO: Henry, would you please give us a little background about yourself and lead into your involvement in the Berets?

HENRY: I was born here in San Jose in 1943. We were farm workers. My parents were Apache and Yaqui Indians. My mom was eighteen years old when she married dad. He was already in his forties. He was already a veteran. he took care of a lot of my uncles. So, finally, when he married mom, I was his first-born. I was born on San Jose Avenue. So he kept on working in the fields. I loved working out in the fields. I was always in races with the competitors, seeing who made more bucks, who picked more prunes. Sabes? Nothing but orchards and fields . . . so that is what I was exposed to. I started seeing the differences between the way they treated the Anglos and the way they treated Chicanos. I started seeing a lot of the discrimination—in schools, in everything. As a matter of fact, I had a teacher that detained me in the third grade—kept me back. I remember that exposure as far as discrimination. In the campos, there was always those feelings that we belonged in the labor and all that. There were seven [of us]—five sisters and two brothers. Most of us continued to be raised in the campos. I lived in San Jose, East Side and West Side. But most of my family were from the West Side. As a teenager, I joined and I belonged to a car club called Road Escorts. We conflicted with the Jackson Kings on the East Side. They had a bigger group. Every time they would come to the East Side, we would get into a hassle. The only time we could get along was when we would go out there and pick

prunes or apricots. No matter, East side or West Side, or wherever you were, right there you were together. When we went back to the barrio, "Hey, man, you're from that barrio." Most of the time in those days, Norte, or that area, would be neutral territory. The Norte would be neutral territory. You know where Garner Center is? That area, there, where Barrio Horseshoe is today.

As time went by, I started getting into trouble with the law, when my Dad and my Mom got separated and divorced. I've always believed that divorce, a conflict between the family breaking up, hurt any kind of a movement. That's the worst dissension, when the family breaks up. Regardless of who's right or wrong, if your father and mother were separated, you felt that God betrayed you. . . . I was stupid, but I think maybe losing the respect from your parents is a bitter situation.

So, I rebelled, stayed up late, partied and . . . sniffing. As a matter of fact, I did some time for that. After the divorce, my Mom moved down south, to a place called Colton. And there, there's more barrios, more hard core in the identity of your turf than here in San Jose. There you really were isolated. I learned a lot about the barrio, and I was part of a group there, in order to survive. Over there, they expected you to pass certain tests of trust or tests of courage. I spent some time in YA. But, I always felt you couldn't make any changes in the system. Because I didn't see any resource anyway that could make a change. As far as any Mexican thing that I knew, they were all up in parties. The clubs—the Mexican clubs that were out there—the only thing they could organize was parades. I wasn't interested in anything political as far as any Chicano thing was involved, at that moment.

I did see one thing at la Pinta; that was in '64. I noticed these vatos, they really got together; they were like a group that were tired of seeing kids get punked. Tired of seeing Chicanos get punked. You guys would go out there and . . . finally, I said, "That's cool, man." So they got together and they formed a concilio. And they were also concerned about the relation, because you were from the Norte, and you were from the Sur. But the idea started off about punking. but there was this feeling of "Hey, we're Chicanos, and we should stick together, man. I don't care what barrio you're from. We should find some way to stick together. It's not right, these young kids that are being punked." But it wasn't enough for me to talk. At that time I was just barely surviving, but I moved from that area. It was hard to say "no." I think that's the difference of San Jose really being part of a lot of movements, because it was less hard core emphasis on barrio—barrio turf—than it is in LA or San Bernardino. Down there, it really gets territorial. In a small town there were four areas that were fighting. Just on one street. I didn't want that. So I went back to San Jose. At least there you have barrios, but it isn't that bad. You can still go to a bar—on the East Side—or you can go to bars on the West Side. I think that's why there was more of a movement here. So I came back to San Jose and I was working in the canneries. . . . Some of my associates were into drugs heavy.

ARTURO: How did you get involved in the Berets?

HENRY: In 1970--the last of '69—I was divorced. I used to live on the East Side, and my Carnal would come over there and say, "Hey, come and join the Black Berets." And he would tell me what was going on in

the Berets and the Fiesta de las Rosas. And I said, "You're just putting Raza down. You are just starting pleitos and riots." I was just reading the papers and when they talked about Chicanos, all they talked about is they're starting riots. So anything that I was aware of the Chicano movement—where else could I read about it? There was no place. The only thing back in the barrios was the parade and the queen, and food—the commercials. Any political issues, there were none, so I didn't get any exposure. I would just go to work. At that time I had five kids. When I did get divorced—this was when I was trying to figure out what am I going to do with my life? My whole schedule is different. And my brother—he was bringing literature, materials. After a while he was bringing papers that—we can't find—in the *Mercury News*. Some of the materials were in contradiction with what the *Mercury News* was saying. And what was that paper—the *Sun*. Then the Chicano newspaper, *El Mundo*, talked a little about what was going on. *El Mundo* . . . and there was a newspaper out here, I think it was coming out of City College. The *Machete*. It was *Que Tal* and *El Gallo* from "Corky" in Denver. I had to go and meet this guy, Chemo. Then when I saw in the *Sun*—the Black Berets and the whole thing, I had to go meet him and find out about it. My brother thought I would just be wasting my time. He thought I could contribute something to the movement. I had lost my family and felt kind of scared. I would have a new family. This was in 1970, the last of 1970. It was the same year that I got divorced.

After I spoke with Chemo, for hours, and he was talking about everything that I was reading about. I think, because of the down feeling that I had, there was a feeling where my dignity was down. It's

hard when you get separated, a divorce—you're not taking care of business. It's the same thing I had when my mon and dad got separated, a loneliness, and the same thing happened to me. So the movimiento was kind of like a woman, like a marriage or a union, a feeling of hope in the air. I'd do certain things that were not selfish . . . the Berets were coming from the same place, all runaways and . . . the homeless, situations trying to get out [of] drugs. And I think that helped us to gain a feeling of self-respect, feeling good in your heart. And I think that's what kept me in there.

Spiritual Walk

ARTURO: Today is a special day, is it not?

HENRY: Today, August 7, it's eight years today when we went on that march on August 29, the spiritual walk to LA, starting August 7. It started at Story and King. Yes. Seven years today. A year later, we took off on a spiritual walk from San Jose to Mexico City. The spiritual walk in preparation for the LA Moratorium in LA with Ruben Salazar, and we're trying to bring a lot of unity by going to each barrio in San Jose all the way down to Morgan Hill, Gilroy. In fact, one of the biggest barrios there was Oxnard, in Ventura. We're trying to bring about unity, because we want to get to Ruben Salazar Park without no hassles, or any complications, and you got to remember the year 1980, that's when they started up gangs. In '81, because of what happened, Oscar Romero, El Salvador . . . we're talking about peace, unity of Chicanos all the way from San Jose to Mexico City, sabes? Twice we carried the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe. So what? A coincidence concerning the date.

ARTURO: Jesse Dominguez, would you say a little about your personal background before we actually get into your direct involvement with the Black Berets?

JESSE: I started getting involved in the movement in 1969. At that time, I was subjected to different kinds of harassment and didn't know how to go about it. Some cops used unnecessary force on me. My brother kept me out of drugs. In San Bernardino where me and my brother were raised—I used to go down to a gang over there called the Protectors. I stole, I got into whatever kids at that age got into—15, 16. I went to YA twice. But I was a little bit different because I never got into drugs. I was curious, I smoked, but I never got into heavy drugs. I saw a lot of my friends get into leathernecking—I guess that's what kept me away from it. I lost some of my friends. I saw the barrio warfare in San Bernardino. One of my best friends was killed when I was 16 years old. My brother was locked up at the time. We used to have a lot of hassles with one barrio. They come out shooting at us and they killed my friend. He was the only son of the family. When I seen the mother at the funeral, wondering why her son had to die . . . I only know that he did. Again, I started getting involved in barrio warfare a little bit. My ex-wife—we had a normal married life for a while. Then I met a guy who knew Sal Candelaria. We had just got evicted out of our house—my wife and our daughter. And Sal, Chemo, sits and talks to me. So he wanted to make sure that he worked with me on the problems going on. So I started going with him to rap sessions, and he started teaching me how to rap, started talking about the problems going on. Like I said before, I didn't know how to deal with them. One of

the guys introduced me to the Black Berets. At that time, the Black Berets also had people who could not expose themselves. We had Berets who would be in the front lines and some in the background. But they were Berets. And this one Beret who was in the background at the time took me under his wing. He started working with me. Before I met Juan Barrientos, I was involved in the movement only just about a month or two, and at that time the Chicanos in Santa Clara County were upset because there was a celebration that Santa Clara or San Jose would celebrate here—La Fiesta de las Rosas, . . . was where Spain conquered Mexico. Yet San Jose was trying to pass it as a Chicano celebration, and the Chicanos in San Jose were upset about it because we didn't see the Fiesta de las Rosas as a celebration, and they went to the mayor, Ron James, and Chief of Police Ray Blackmore and told them that this was not a date to celebrate. They were answered a couple of times at City Hall by a Task Squad. When I joined, we were picketing in front of the Civic Auditorium where the celebration was just before the parade, and when we were there, cops were going over and harassing us. That was June 1, 1969, a date that will live with me. At one point, they shot tear gas at us. That was about two days before the actual parade. We got some Berets from San Jose, Berets from Gilroy, Salinas, . . . Oakland, from Hayward. We had quite a few Berets that day. We had about 500 people. We weren't going to stop the parade. What we did, we spent the last days making banners and picket signs exposing what the parade really was about. It wasn't a Chicano celebration. It was Spaniards celebrating the conquest of Mexico. We [were concerned] for the security of the people. We kept our people back and stood in the front lines

waiting for the parade to start. About this time, the Task Squad—the Police Department got the Task Squad in and they lined one officer on a one-to-one basis. We were lined up all the way from 1st and Santa Clara to maybe San Fernando and 1st. We had Berets on each side of the street and the cops lined one-to-one. At that time, I had been in the movement for maybe about two or three weeks and it was all new to me. When the parade started, we said, "We're not going to stop it." We would walk with it. At that time, there were just 500 community concerned Mexicanos, and mothers, daughters, fathers, and grandfathers, people that were very concerned. What happened, when the parade started, we were getting ready to walk with them. I'm not really sure what set it off, but all of a sudden people went wild and so did the cops, and they started busting heads. Sal Candelaria was yelling in Spanish and in English both for the people to calm down and back off. The cops went up to Sal and they grabbed him and started beating him up. They said he was crazy because he was yelling in Spanish and English—"incoherently" is what they said. They choked me and forced me into the patrol wagon. I seen a woman get beat up by two cops. This one guy, Ruben Flores, was running by me and they grabbed him by the collar and about four cops were beating him up. This one woman, Adam Escotas' godmother, . . . Adam Escotas was also arrested because, at that time, he was leader of the Santa Clara chapter. Someone grabbed a chair and hit the officer and threw him off the motorcycle. It was a natural riot. There was a guy who had nothing to do with us—he didn't even know what was going on—he didn't have nothing to do with the group, with a Beret, nothing. There was his brother and his two sons, and he picked up a picket sign

and turned it around. When he turned it around, there were about four officers who were beating him up. And that's how crazy it got. The cops went wild and they were beating up people who had nothing to do with us. They made it look like we were there as terrorists trying to destroy what was happening. I don't know what set it off, but I do know that many people were hurt, and officers were hurt, too. But what was even sadder, Lorne Greene was there, and what he did, he offered to pay the tab. He empathized with the charros who were in the parade. Lorne Greene offered them money, and the charros took it. At that time, the redneck racist—and I don't like talking about dead people—but he put up the money for the charros to walk over us. Lorne Greene said we should not live in this country; we ought to go back to Mexico where we belonged.

ARTURO: Sounds like a racist to me.

JESSE: That's what hurt us, too. A lot of people didn't know what was going on. They saw the charros coming up to us, too, and they figured we were just a bunch of trouble-makers. The charros were sold out to Lorne Greene.

The Birth of El Confederacion

ARTURO: At this time, I would like to say that Henry Dominguez is also here, and he is welcome to join in at any time.

JESSE: That night, after we took our beating, we went over to Guadalupe Church to lick our wounds. And that's when there was the birth of La Confederacion de la Raza Unida, the organization that has grown more and more. It was a brother organization that was formed by 80 or 90 organizations. In roundabout ways, it did us a favor, because it brought more people in. Even though the people did not understand what

was going on, they saw what brutality the law enforcement did, so Blackmore's efforts to discredit us . . .

The first president of [Confederacion de la Raza Unida] was a guy named Jack Ibarra, and, at that time, that's when we started having meetings once a month. We were sending representatives and that was a new start in the Chicano movement here in San Jose. It gave it a big kick. The students at San Jose State were very strong at that time, and they had some very strong people at San Jose State, and City College was very strong at that time. The students were deep into the community; there was no barrier between the students and the community. And Blackmore, Lorne Greene, and Ron James, their efforts and the press, to discredit us, made us stronger. At that time, we got involved in more things. We started having Black Berets meetings. After Sal went to Vacaville, the ones that took over the Berets at that time [were] myself, a guy named Luis Vinegra, and Tommy Martinez. We had formed a group in the Berets. I was made Minister of Communications and, at that time, I started traveling from one end of California to the other, and started building up chapters. At that time, we used to go to Vacaville to keep Sal informed. About six months later, after Sal got out, [Sal was in about nine months] at Vacaville, I had just got back and I was living in a house, me and my ex-wife, and the girl had run away, and we picked her up and tried to keep her off the street. That's when I got kind of involved in working with runaways. What happened at that time was my ex-wife started giving me a lot of threats—that I'd better back off or something was going to happen to me.

The Police and the Raid on Jesse's Home

JESSE: One day I came home and me and my ex-wife and our daughter—I have a daughter who's autistically retarded—right now she's twenty years old, and it hurts that she can't talk in a conversation. My daughter, at that time she could walk and everything, but she didn't know what was going on. We were living off of Santa Clara Street, now it's called the Latin Village, between two stores. At that time, there was a big store, Alum Rock Market—we used to live across the street from there—and our house was set back about half a block from the main street. A tight friend of mine had given me a shotgun for my birthday, and the crazy guy sawed it off. It was more for my ex-wife, Lupe, to use, and I was traveling a lot and she was alone at home a lot. And she was using the bathroom at that time, and when she turned around, there was someone looking at her from the window of the bathroom. She came out and told me that someone was looking in the bathroom. I grabbed the shotgun and went around the house. And I didn't see anybody; but less than a minute after I walked inside . . . didn't even have time to put the shotgun back, there was a knock on the door. It took at least a good two to three minutes if you are walking fast, five minutes slow, to walk from the main street to our house. OK, there was a driveway about 50 yards from the main street. And I open the door and there's a cop aiming a gun at my head. And he said, "All right, Dominguez, come out with that gun!" And there's a knock on the window and there's another cop right there at the window. "Put that gun on the floor or I blow your face away!" So the one at the window told me not to touch it, and the one at the door told me, "If you don't give me that gun right away,

I'm going to blow your head off!" When we first got home that day, someone had broken into our house and had left some "reds" on the counter. And they went into our room and there was some marijuana thrown on our bed. When we got there we didn't have any time to pick it up. So it's still on the counter and the bed. My ex-wife was still in the bathroom at that time. And my daughter got up and she's holding on to my leg. And if they had missed me by about half an inch, I would have been a dead man. So I told the cop, "Look man, if you want to blow me away, for God's sake man, let me get my daughter out of the way." So, by that time, the cops said, "OK, we got a Black Beret here begging." And I said, "Look, man, I'll come out, but save my daughter. I'll beg, but please don't harm my daughter." The cop said, "Would you get on your knees?" And the other cop said, "Would you get on your knees? Now beg." And they thought it was funny. And they come into my house and they looked at the "reds," shining them on. This is what is the funny part about it. They were shining them on as if they were vitamin pills. They come in my house and the look at the grass and they shine it on like it was tobacco. Then they go over there and they get the shotgun—sawed off, so it's an illegal weapon. They get the shotgun and they tell me it's an illegal weapon, and they took the shotgun. They didn't arrest me. They took the shotgun and said, "All right, Dominguez, we're looking for a runaway girl," and they look in the house and they don't find her there, and they said: "We got a report that you had a runaway hidden." And they left. They didn't even arrest me. A few days later, two different cops came with a warrant for my arrest for the shotgun. I was given a year's probation.

ARTURO: Was it necessary to carry arms?

HENRY: We would defend ourselves. At that time, we felt that having guns—and we knew how to use them—was important. Not that we were out there looking for trouble, but we were not going to run away from it. What happened was that every time there was an incident going on, they would constantly harass us. It was search us down, search our cars. They kept us in court for a lot of possessions of firearms. That became one of the biggest issues around us—our having arms. A lot of harassment was done in our homes.

The Psycho Ward and Jail Beatings

JESSE: This was the first time in their history that the Chicanos had ever protested a war. But one of the trips that I went on, I went to Santa Barbara, and I was arrested over there. What happened, they were having a celebration for a guy. And I got lost and I was arrested by the cops. When the cops pulled me over, they asked me what I was doing in Santa Barbara. And I had the misfortune of being around Santa Barbara—two weeks before I got there, they had just finished killing a narco in that area—or two narcos. So the cops were pretty hot and tired at that time, and two of their men had been killed. So here comes a militant from out of town. So what they told me was, they gave me three hours to get out of Santa Barbara. They searched me down and they took my address book—all my phone numbers and everything. I didn't know how to get hold of any people in town. I tried to get hold of my ex-wife and at that time she wasn't home. So I walked around Santa Barbara until about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. I didn't know where I was. I fell asleep in this pool hall. The same two cops

found me, and they took me to the hospital. First, they woke me up and said, "Dominguez, what's the matter with you? We think you are on drugs." I told them I wasn't on drugs. "I'm tired." I had some beers and I had been drinking, but that's it. They take me to the hopsital. I woke up and, all of a sudden, they put me in the psycho ward of General Hospital in Santa Barbara, and I'm there for three days. My wife at that time got wind of it and she [came] out to Santa Barbara to get me out. But the doctors said, "There's nothing wrong with you. There's no reason for you to be here. The ones that should be here are the cops that brought you here. If they don't pick you up by 3 o'clock in the afternoon, I'm going to cut you loose." But somebody must have got hold of the cops, and they took me to jail in Santa Barbara. They told them that I was being charged with being under the influence of drugs. The doctor himself said that I wasn't on drugs. They put me in a cell, and the first night that I'm there, the redneck cop walked in with two other officers about 1 o'clock in the morning and they pulled me off my bunk and they grabbed the mattress and started kicking my ass. This cell had about six other cells and three other guys in there, and they are beating on me. This went on for about three days. Every night. They told me that I'd better face to the flag the way they wanted and to salute to the flag. I'm not against the flag. I'm one of the first persons to stand by it, but . . . You know, "Liberty and justice for all," not just us. They beat me up for it. That night again they went over it, but this time there was this Hells Angel there. He had just come in. The only guy that started to help me out. He said, "Hey, man, what you guys doing?" They told him to shut up and go back to sleep. He jumped in and started whamming, and got two of the cops.

People's Legal Defense

ARTURO: Who was your legal counsel?

HENRY: We'd just opened up a legal office, not too long ago, because of police brutalities going on. And we took it to the community. A lot of the liberal lawyers, Casa Legal, said: "We'll train you in how to take documentation and how to investigate . . . people talk to you. The lawyers would like to talk to you as well. So we'll represent [you] in court and what we're going to do is have an outlet. We're going to raise funds for an office . . ." And that's when Peoples Legal Defense came out, in 1970. It was just before the August 29 Moratorium. Of course, my brother was involved with part of that investigation. We went against law enforcement. We were going to use their tools. We were going to use the courts to expose police brutality. We had lawyers like Ted Smith, Frank Cass, Concey Bokum. Public defenders that were sensitive, Legal Aid. At that time, [it was] a little bit more active than now. They had to be careful now; they had to use discretion. It wasn't just the Black Berets now, but the lawyers. And we also had some liberal politicians, and some of them wanted to know what happened in Santa Barbara.

JESSE: When I was going through these beatings, I used to write letters to my ex-wife and they would tear them up and laugh. When I went to court, my lawyer was the Public Defender [and] Santa Barbara was against me. When I went to court, they said my bail was \$625. My mother and my ex-wife went down there and raised enough hell to get the Public Defender and the judge to let me out of there for \$150. But I went through six days of beatings. My mother didn't recognize me. "Is

that my son with all those bruises?" When I went to court the first time, this is what the lawyer told me: "Look, you plead guilty to drunk and disorderly, and we'll give you two years' probation." My wife said, "No. You had my husband in there for 'under the influence of drugs.' Try him for that." And my mother, too. "You try my son for drugs. My son don't take drugs." The Public Defender got mad. We went back about a month later and he said, "Look, I've got another offer. The DA is saying, 'you plead guilty to drunk and we'll waive your probation for time served.'" And my mother and my wife were against it. "No, man, you arrested him for drugs. You try him for that." The Public Defender was mad. "What's wrong with you people? You got a good offer. What's wrong with it?" My mother said, "You beat up my son and you got him arrested unjustly. I want him tried for that." So the Public Defender said, "Well, we'll have to come back in three weeks." We come back in three weeks, and he tells me, "Look, Dominguez, this is the best I can do. If you plead guilty to drunk, credit for time served, just six months' probation. No time. OK?" But no, we're not taking it. My wife says, "You arrested my husband for 'under the influence [of drugs].' You try him for that." Oh my, by this time the Public Defender was real mad. He goes to the Chambers and he comes back an hour later and he says, "Look man, I've had it with you people. You plead guilty for being drunk, no probation, no time, just get out of here." Well, at that time we talked it over and said, "OK." So we went back to court. That's when we realized that they must have known what a mistake they made. How many times has a court made that kind of a deal?

The idea of an office store front became hard to deal with, especially since . . . just before the Moratorium, and the Chicano

Moratorium was big. The real purpose was they wanted to detain, harass, arrest the leadership of Chicanos . . . to come together. It was all set up; it wasn't just the LA cops. It was international, a conspiracy of different law enforcements. The FBI was involved. To think that with "Corky" Gonzalez the leadership that was being planted to be down there—the Brown Berets, Sanchez, Tijerina, and all these different people in leadership. They had to find some way, because it was too dangerous to have that many Chicanos, the biggest Chicano barrio in the United States, to protest the biggest issue, which was [the] Vietnam War. So that's the reason why this network, and it was being exposed in the community in some of the Chicano newspapers, that this was what was happening. We don't say that you guys are communists, or you guys are just paranoid; and, of course, they were putting a lot of labels, because it was a pattern. Why are they so concerned about us Chicano organizations? And, of course, the idea of the colors became symbolic, because the Black Berets—because the idea of black means liberation. And, of course, we took the symbol of Che Guevara, the Black Berets. The Brown Berets were the symbol of the brown of our skin. But having that symbol—all that conflict that was going on with the idea of Latin American countries—revolutionary symbols. And we had to figure out some way of communicating as well as to get together. That's why they had to harass different people, especially in those days. We were the second-largest barrio and, of course, the only militancy group that existed was the Black Berets. But as far as organization, as far as leadership . . . then, of course, the harassment of Chemo Candelaria. Hey, man, the Chicanos are standing up. the Chicanos are standing up

for their rights. We were standing up against being killed; we were standing up against being sent to go fight. We were standing up against police brutality. To hear that became threatening, because they always said that even though there was a lot of division between us--in the prisons, the idea behind the Chicano Mafia and Norteños was too big. They promoted prisons as well as on the outside. Jesse wasn't the only one that was being affected by that. It was being talked about in areas around the country. But, at the same time, we realized that we had poor documentation, we can't just go ahead, train and go out on maneuvers. At that time, we had 72 acres at Aztlan. We'd go out there in fatigues. Our regular thing was levis, army fatigues, and Black Berets. Luis Vinegra, and Ed, and his brother, Joel. He would train us in martial arts. "We've got to have some discipline. No booze, drugs. We've got to get our heads together and talk about leadership, organization, discipline."

JESSE: Daniel Serrano was the one supposed to be in charge of discipline. If you messed up, you had to deal with Daniel, who was a Black Belt. If you went to a function, [you] were allowed to party a little bit.

I'm not a hypocrite. We'd socialize at parties. We got drunk several times. There were times to socialize and times to be straight. There were times when discipline played a big part in who we were. When we're dealing with a lot of young people, like in Denver, Colorado. We went to Denver, and we were representing San Jose, and we had to keep that [in mind]. And we were representing not only San Jose but other chapters in California. And there were about 15 or 20 who went down. The Vinegra brothers, Daniel, and me and my wife, and it got so bad that

—those chapters that were messing up—we kind of had to cover for them. My ex-wife was very involved and, along with someone's two daughters, [was] getting some of the girls to relieve some of the guys who were on security . . . there was a four-day conference. My wife almost got killed in Colorado because a helicopter went over the Crusade for Justice and they started shooting at us. And it got to a point where we couldn't prove it was the cops who were shooting at us. And my wife was up on the roof of the Crusade [with] Corky's niece, or the daughter. And it was snowing and she slipped on the snow and they were holding on to her, my ex-wife, and they were shooting at her from the helicopter. I was downstairs and some of the guys ran up, Luis and his brother and some other guys, [and] started shooting at the helicopter. These are just some of the things that happened, because [many] incidents like this were happening. That's why the discipline was so important. We did party, but it was behind [closed] doors, when it was the time and the place to do it. One incident was a time when me and my brother, Carmen Perez, and Ruben, and Johnny Garcia—we had gone to the office. That's when they beat up Rita and jumped me and my daughter. Remember? It was close to Christmas, I remember that we were Christmas shopping.

ARTURO: Could you elaborate on this?

JESSE: My daughter and I had gone Christmas shopping. Some people came up and they started beating up my sister and my daughter and they dumped her off the curb like she was a package of garbage. And one of the neighbors . . . was good enough to go over and grab my daughter and take her in the house.

HENRY: We got wind of it, and Sal Wasn't home, and we got a shotgun to go and take care of it. We were at 24th and Santa Clara,

you know, where that cleaners is? Right next to the cleaners we had our office and Peoples Legal Defense. It was a set-up. They followed us, and the lights of the van were not bright enough, and that's why they stopped us. No sooner had they started searching—"Get everybody out of the van!" Then they went straight down and got the shotgun. They put us all on the ground and put a shotgun to our head. We were set up. So that's another . . . "So you've got lawyers . . ." Here we are giving our services to the community where they wouldn't have to spend most of the time. So that would drain our resources and, of course, discredit us in the community.

JESSE: They dropped all of the charges on me and the other three, and they went after him. They dropped all the charges except for you [Henry]. They wanted him bad. He was the director of the Legal Defense. He was the one that organized the Legal Defense—him and Sal. My brother, Henry, was the one that organized the lawyers. He got lawyers from all over different places. The cops weren't too happy about that. So, when we got arrested, they could have got a conviction on all of us, but they dropped the charges on all of us, and went after him. They went after him with everything they had.

HENRY: Why wasn't I convicted and charged with the original purpose of the stopping? That even made it worse. I was thinking of staying overnight, because that's where I lived—at the office. They were always trying to get us to react. Get us mad. Stupid reasons to be detained. But they were trying to slow us down because they really felt threatened. Because, at the same time we were doing that, there was an organization called Community Alert Patrol. We were also part

of it . . . at the old Guadalupe Church . . . Fred Hirsh, Tony Estremera, Sophie Mendoza, Chemo, and Shirley Trevino. We had walkies, two-way radios. What these people did was go around and would know when all these functions were going to take place. And they would actually be there at that party; make a list—people of Legal Defense. They would call up and they would be down there with two-way radios and home base was Guadalupe Church and MacDonald Hall. There would be about four or five cars out in front, cameras, cassettes. With having a store front, and having the Community Patrol there . . . the lawyers that they had were close to the ones that we had. We have to hit the core. And, of course, our relations with the Confederacion de la Raza Unida, Mujeres de Aztlan—Shirley Trevino, Ernestina Garcia, Montana, Delia Alvarez—we had ties with them. They were educated. They were professionals—teachers, counselors. They were afraid to take them on, because they had people behind them. They would be at meetings, man . . . if they did pick on an issue, because they were fighting for the issues of our kids, with the school issue, discrimination of school districts, discrimination of doctors, or the idea of women being battered or beaten up and nobody doing anything about it. So they were one of the most powerful, and of course a lot of them became part of our organization, like Shirley Trevino, Rachel Silva, Ernestina Garcia, became one of the most powerful influences of the race because they were just as militant in a different sort of sense of form, because Shirley Trevino worked for Cass Legal. Garcia being president of Confederacion. Rachel Silva—her husband used to be chairman of MACSA and, of course, she was actively involved with welfare rides, with a lot of issues. So this is the reason

we had backup. We weren't just in there by ourselves—we had backup from the community. For instance, the militancy approach or the idea of having protesters: we would be looking at on whatever issue we were fighting when, at the same time, we worked together. The "Man," was willing to deal with them, but didn't want to deal with the Berets.

There's one group I want to mention—actually we've been talking about it—this is when we actually started moving; '69, '70, '71, '72, '73, '74.

JESSE: One other group I want to talk about—the unions in the prisons. At that time, '73, '74, these guys, they had organized; they were well organized, the Pinto Union. They were taking on the Familia and the Mafia. These guys were even taking them on—not so much violently, but they were talking and taking them on in the sense of rapping. They were able to keep it down [violence] between the Chicanos. They were talking about "What do you mean, Norte and Sur? We all come from the same place." And at that time one of the things that we had very tight with was the blacks. We were very close with the Black Panthers. When the Chicanos here were fighting the blacks, we were even able to get some of the pastors from Oakland and myself, my brother, and Sal—Sal brought in one of the guys from Oakland and he told the Chicanos, he talked to the Chicanos, "What's your problem, man? Hey, you are a nigger yourself, man, and you're talking about wetbacks, why you're just as wet as we are man. What's the matter with you guys?" The most beautiful part was when the leaders of the blacks and the leaders of the Chicanos got together. We sat down and it wasn't just in uniting the Raza, the direction of the violence that was going in the racial way between the Chicanos and the blacks.

HENRY: We're talking about awareness, cultural awareness, and at the same time the "Man" is doing it to all of us. We live in the same barrio, the same ghetto. And we've got the same landlord, we've got the same cops, the same prisons, the same discrimination. We're still placed in the same category of cheap labor, slave labor. That's where we have something in common. And, of course, that's one of the things we're talking about. We're nationalist; we're not racist. There's a difference of philosophy. There's a difference between false pride and dignity. We're not expecting you to support the movement and jump into it. We're talking about fighting in a different sense. We're talking about people's legal awareness; we're also talking about setting up half-way houses, to be able to work together and not to fear each other. The "Man" makes you fear the people, and the people, at the same time, are paranoid against anybody dealing with the "Man."

So, lawyers made them courageous. At that point, they became important in the Chicano movement, because who else would get involved in the Pintos? Ninety percent of the blacks, for instance. Who else knows about slavery? Who else knows about the ghettos or the idea of being locked up? So, that's why the influence that we have with the Pintos. Besides fighting the police, the legal, we're talking also about within ourselves. It came to the point where we said: "Hey, man, don't deal drugs!" It became heavy, really important, because right at that time we were right on target. And, of course, especially in '72, [the trouble] at the Fairgrounds went on.

The Fairgrounds and the Monitors

HENRY: The Sheriffs were going on horses and riding all over people. They were doing "sweeps." The "carney" people would go out there and have rubber things stuck in the stuffed animals and they would beat up the Chicanos. And who are they going to arrest? The carneys? Half of the time those guys were bikers and real nazi redneck types. Those carney people were always together, but they were always thinking they were too *chingones*. And they were ripping off people. We used to call them gyp joints. So, one year, in '72, there were over 500, 600 arrests. We had a hidden camera, guys hidden in the bushes, and the cops were chasing after this guy taking pictures of the cops. They were taking the camera away from him because he was taking pictures of the way the cops were beating people up at the Fairgrounds. So what happened in '73, we were going to boycott it, boycott the Fairgrounds.

The Fairgrounds got scared—the county and the board of directors. Robert Couch was the Chairman of the Board of the Fairgrounds. He was worried, concerned because the Chicanos were going to boycott the Fairgrounds. "Hey, man, we're going to lose money." So they came out there talking about, "What can we do?" They were really worried that time. We said, "We need some kind of monitors, somebody that can deal between, communicate with, the Chicanos down there." Great, they're going to take on this monitor program. But this is what we want, we want 100 monitors. And we want a first-aid clinic. Why a clinic? Well, when you bust a kid. We want volunteers, doctors, nurses there, and we'll go ahead and have beds, cots there and take care of them. So this way you don't have to bust them. At the same time, we also want some legal

people at the precinct, at the Fairgrounds, that is. There's a lot of Chicanos being beat up right there. No more "sweeps." We're going to get the Fairgrounds laid out, so many monitors at this carney area, so many monitors in the front area, and we want golf carts. Finally, he says, the counselor says, "I don't know how many shifts it's going to take, how that's going to be." When the Sheriff heard the Black Berets were going to be monitors for the Fairground, he panicked—they [all] panicked. They got mad. They got pissed off. "That's one of our biggest money makers. And 30 percent of the population go there." The Sheriff was looking at us dagger-eyed.

The first meeting we had, big long table, there was about ten of us on one side, and all Sheriff's men on the other side—dagger-eyes, man. We had hard-core blacks, whites, and Chicanos. We had bikers, George Gabon. We went to different training [centers]. Where are we going to find these people? You're going to find them in training places, right? We got tired of all these things going on in fairgrounds. We wanted to do something about it. Right now, we're not going to be doing a cop's job. We aren't going to arrest nobody, that isn't our role. We're not going to be snitching. If we see people out there going to get into a fight, just go ahead and stop it, before the cops come in. The cops are going to go ahead and arrest. We're talking about . . . we don't want to see people get arrested. So let's see about going to the prevention part of it. You know most pleitos start out with them arguing about it. Of course, it's important that we have communications. So our communications—we back each other up, we'll be able to stop it. We've got to be in certain areas of fairgrounds where the fights take

place. Where is it usually? You see them get together behind the bathroom, right? It's also hidden, kind of because the cops can't see right away. Another place is over by the Trolley Cars. We will be in these areas. Besides having a home base, we have how many stations? About ten?

We had seven, we have the drug clinic, and then we have five out in the areas. Now, at home base, we start out with six people; at how much, \$2.50 an hour? Something like that. Then we're going to work from 6 to closing time. We have our own codes. City-manned radios they have at county is the ones that we use, so we had pretty good walkie-talkies. Now we would also have somebody stationed at the precinct of the Sheriff. And, of course, the Sheriff didn't like that. Then we had a staff of nurses. But then we had a certain doctor—I think they were part of the Confederacion. Anyway, we had some nurses who would come, and we would have monitors who would take care of people that were stoned, or people that would get beat up from a fight. We didn't want to see no more arrests. And, of course, we're talking about ahead of time preventing—not waiting until after it happens. And we had a better position—dealing with the prevention—than the Sheriff, because the Sheriff had to be called into it—not when the fight went down, after the fight.

JESSE: There's a lot of difference between us and the Guardian Angels. The Guardian Angels—New York may be good for them, but I don't think California is the place for the Guardian Angels. There's a great difference between us. If somebody was blowing it at the fair, we did not get involved. We didn't make arrests. We didn't get involved or

interfere. We were not even close to what the Guardian Angels would have done. The Angels turn around and arrest people, citizen's arrest. We did not arrest nobody.

HENRY: We had what you call a three-stage method of stopping a pleito. The first people that approached . . . two guys that are arguing. One person get in between them talking. That's the first stage. The second stage we did with the instigator. Then we have the third stage, and that's with the crowd. Get them away from the crowd. Get the crowd away, because when there's a lot of people there it tends to get going fast. So the Monitors knew what they had to do to stop a conflict. And, of course, if you have a Monitor dealing with these two guys, the one that was trying to promote it or backing up the other guy and asking "Go ahead" or . . . because there's always an instigator. There's always somebody there that somehow pushes you. "Hey, I'm going to back you up." So we have the second stage to deal with the instigator. . . . that are fighting, the Monitors are taking the crowd that way, the other Monitor is talking with the instigator or promoter or back-up guy, then most of the time they stop fighting. Because you put the flame out. You took the sparks out. You took the things that keep a fight [going]. We know, because we know what it is to be in pleitos. And these things work. We stopped the stage. Even though those that want to, keep going at it. But by that time he was separated from his backup, and at the same time, he wasn't in any danger. So that used to work. And, of course, we became more effective than the cops because the cop would have to come in after there was blood. He would have to come in after there was a complaint, somebody being hurt. Or it was

at the point where somebody already made the first hit. So nobody was ready to walk away from it any more. As long as nobody got hit, you got a chance to walk away from it. We were doing it in a way where you could walk away with dignity, and nobody would sound like they backed out. The difference between walking away from a fight and/or feeling that you . . . or were put in the position of a coward. Instead, we give a chance to get both of them to really look at what they were arguing about. And are there really reasons to go ahead and get everyone in big trouble. Especially, if he says, "The cops are right here. And if we don't stop it here fast, they are going to go ahead and move in." At the same time, what is accomplished? Will you go ahead and throw a first punch and then get arrested? Don't you want to use the money you have in your pocket to go ahead and take a girl to the fair instead of having to pay for a fight? We got them to go ahead and call it a truce. Back at the Fairgrounds—I'm talking about the gyp joints—we also looked at what promoted people to get into pleitos. The carney people complain about Chicanos go in there stealing the stuffed animals, starting . . . with them. But at the same time, the promoters like gyp joints, where you don't have a chance to win at the games. They were impossible to win. They were cheating people. You had so much invested in those things that, before you know it, after you put in 40, 50 bucks. They were, well . . . like going into a gambling joint and being cheated, like a crooked roulette. So we started pointing out these things to the Fairground. They said, "You are here to stop fights, mediators, not to go ahead and tell us how to run our concessions." Bullshit, man! That's what started some of the [fights]. Get to the origin of why people

get into [fights]. What is it that starts these conflicts? This place became a battleground for us. We knew we were eventually going to battle the same ones that were paying out checks. Especially when you start talking about naming certain cops. We were talking about making recommendations not only about the gyp joints that was causing the conflict, but also certain cops here that have a reputation.

JESSE: A lot of the cops were moving out of the area because Henry had contact with Sam McCorquedale, and McCorquedale liked Henry a lot and he backed us up a lot. Another guy that backed us up a lot was James Gerry, the Sheriff. Not only did the Monitors become real active at the fair, they were very active in the streets, and that's where a lot of the people started really relating with the Monitors. Every time we went to parties, the Monitors were there. And it got to the point where we were able—the San Jose Police Department and the Sheriffs never liked each other, OK. But it got to the point where the cops would turn around calling the deputies a bunch of sissies. Some of the Police Department was accusing the Sheriffs of catering to us, and the Sheriffs didn't like that. And what got the cops pissed off was the mayor started backing us up, Janet Hayes. She didn't back us up all the way, we still had problems with her, but remember she started being kind of flexible. So they made a recommendation that they cut the Riot Squad of the San Jose PD in half. She made that recommendation. Then they started picking us up for any little thing, remember? They were going so far as walking into our homes to harass us.

HENRY: But the Chicanos are no longer fighting. All of a sudden there is a stage where the functions where the majority hang out, they're

monitoring themselves, policing themselves. They take care of themselves. The biggest function they used to have in La Raza Park that became a big thing—besides the Fairgrounds here—that opened up the doors. After the Fairgrounds started, there was another thing that was going is the congregations at the La Raza de Paz Park. Different areas. First, it was like downtown San Antonio and Kings. 237. It used to Capitol Park, Kelley Park. Finally, one of the parks, Hellyar, the cops would come in there and sweep them out. So when we started coming out, that started changing things. That first year, one Sheriff came out there and started coming down on me. "Who do you think you are?" Because they wanted us to tell everybody to get out of there and for us to also go back to our stations. They were waiting for the cops to come up. And, of course, they were pissed off because we did not back away so they could go ahead and do their sweeps. There was a big constant battle there. The first time that happened, there was complaints—that some Sheriff was there. But the Sheriff [was] in so many complaints they were having, even the County Directors said, "Who's promoting what and who's really violent here?" We knew that we had to be cool, and it wasn't easy to keep our own people from blowing it. That was the thing—we had some good leadership, good leadership. We would play out our roles as we approached those guys. They didn't want to give in on a lot of things. They would be approached by the law enforcement, saying you can't give them that much leeway. Then, at the same time, no longer were there negative reports piling in. How can we justify all this time saying "The Berets this and the Berets that." Now the media are saying, "These guys are good, they are doing good for the community. And they

are getting paid by the County. How can we have this? These guys are being painted as heroes. Here we had over 500 arrests in '72, and now all of a sudden in one year there's only 10?" All of a sudden, they have to be careful how they arrest. They have to be careful because they have to be processed. There are Chicanos watching on—how they will be interrogated, how they will be in handcuffs. Man, this looks like the community patrol. The same ones in the community patrol are the ones they have right next to us. They will be constantly harassed. And then we have what you call "a drug war." We have those little carts—golf carts. Somebody would be stoned and we would take them to the drug clinic. What happened is that the cops and the Monitors would get them inside the carts and go take them down there. The cops would try to arrest them. One would be pulling one way and the Monitors the other. "No, he's mine." The guys don't know what is going on. It's one of those things where there's a war between the Sheriffs wanting to take the guys in, while the Monitors are holding on to the guy. And you would have someone stoned on drugs running to make it to the Monitors' office. The office was in one of the corners of the Fairgrounds—that would be the east-side section of it where the school is. OK, there's an old, historical building there. So that became the Monitors' office, that became the sanctuary. Sometimes when the cops were chasing them, these guys would run to see if they could make it to the Monitors' office. And sometimes they [the cops] would try to go in there and take somebody, and everybody would trip. Finally, the Sheriff says, "Don't go into that place unless you're following a felony. If a guy has a gun go in there, but don't go after drunks in the clinic." So not only did the

sanction of our place [work], but the cops couldn't just go in there like that. And also the golf carts: at first we had only three, then we kept going up—four, five. They had only about four or five. It was one of those things that really got to them. Finally, the Fairgrounds brought us a lot of recognition, a lot of credibility in our own community as well as the community at large. At last we're getting good articles.

We kept logs. Some of the Chicanos were ex-Vietnam veterans, all organized. We listened. And not only was it by ear, but we learned, and we got better. And we had a few people—there were constantly conflicts. There were rumors that we were junior cops. We got rid of that element. Instead of coming down on us, help us. We're talking about keeping Chicanos from being arrested. They say we're being used. I think it's the other way around; I think we're using them. Eventually they're going to faze this thing out. No matter how you look at it, the playground is going to go on. We've got some leverage. It kept going up in negotiations, so much for each Monitor for so many hours. And we also negotiated for our supplies, the medical supplies, and also for the party after. We would have a gig after the thing was over. We told the Monitors: "We don't want no party, no drunks, nobody coming stoned, nobody carrying guns, knives. We want everybody to come disciplined. That's why the last thing we're going to [do is] celebrate." They let us use the place, a couple of kegs of beer, music.

One of the things that we kept stressing at the Fairgrounds for the Monitors was that we weren't supposed to get stoned, we weren't supposed to party, we weren't supposed to be drinking while we were working. And at the last, we were actually going to have a function. The

Fairgrounds would foot that part of the budget, and they would allocate a place for us to have it. The catering people that were there at the Fairgrounds, they would go ahead and get us food and beer and music. I think the Fairgrounds really got us accepted throughout the community.

Raza de la Paz Park

ARTURO: How did Raza de la Paz Park come about?

HENRY: The articles we used to get, we had a lot of support from the community. Out of that grew the Monitors' office, Raza de la Paz Park. The County started negotiating. We told them we wanted a culture park at Raza Park. They changed it from Sycamore Park to, officially, Raza de la Paz Park. Right now, to this day, it's named like that. We got diagrams. Chemo got this guy to do \$2,000 architect design, a theater, different murals in the center, a kids playground. As a matter of fact, they got the kids playground. Then the Chicanos that were working for the park—when they found out it was going to be a Chicanos park, they felt good. Every Sunday, by the thousands, Chicanos would congregate there—'73, '74, '75, '76. And, at the same time that was going on, of course, we were having the Fairgrounds. The Monitors became known. They were also respected. I'm not saying that there were no screwups. We had screwups; they lacked discipline. But, in the overall, there was respeto. They knew we weren't going to take sides when stopping a fight. The hard times we had at the Fairgrounds were mostly with the cops. The carney people, most of the people there, were really stoned. But, as far as our own people—people saw real positive things there. At that moment, you might say that everything that we wanted we used to get. Money from foundations for development, appeals for community

gardens. Money from CET for positions. They knew we were doing something good out there. And then we went on to serve families who were going to have a wedding or going to have a dance, celebration. And, before you know it, Ernestina Garcia was president of the Confederacion; right away she would say, "We don't need any San Jose PD here—we've got our own security. Our Berets will take care of it." And we were given our recognition. Including [from] some of the organizations that criticized us a lot—MACSA, GI Forum—after a while members of that would give us something special. Some of the members started recognizing, because they saw that we were recruiting Monitors from the agency that they were part of, like CET. The Monitors worked for CET, or Operation SER. We were getting students from MECHA. The turning point was that the Sheriff would be pressured. There was this cop that they called Tiano, Sheriff. They used to park up there and the cops would come down. What happened was that the PD would go down there and say, "Let's go over and arrest those people, they're drinking, minors drinking." We weren't more concerned about the minors than the drugs and the fights. How in the world are you going to prevent the minors' drinking? We've got to concentrate on two things: heavy drugs (the PCP's) and the pleitos [fights]. And in time, most of the fights were stopped in time. So nothing got out of hand—but it was there. We didn't let any fights get out of hand because we were constantly there. Even some of the big ones that could have gotten really heavy. We got backed up by the people that were there. A lot of times the three-stage method was really useful: separate those that are fighting from the instigators or the crowd. We'd take them to the side—sometimes we'd take them out there and they knew,

and their backup knew, that the Monitors were not going to take sides. That was an important key—that we stay neutral. We set that out at the very beginning of the Fairgrounds, the very beginning of La Raza Park, wherever place that we monitored; we have to stay neutral or the Monitors won't function. We would then become a group where we're going to be confronted, because we took sides on an issue. Even when you knew very well that the person was wrong. We're going to have to point that out that's not right. At the same time, we cannot take sides. [An incident that] took place in La Raza Park is that this guy, Tiano—he was like Goliath, he went out there and he called Thereza Candelaria a bitch. They were harassing somebody over there. We were passing out leaflets about PCP. Every week we'd pass out some fliers—we had a boycott of PCP. So Chemo went like this to Tiano [gesture]. I don't know that he hit him . . . so, when that happened the cops started going around like they were going to take Chemo. So the rumor went around the park—they are going to take Chemo. "Oh, it's him!" That time, the cops were trying to get him. Something went down. They wanted to bust Chemo because he was supposed to have struck an officer. So we knew it was set up. But they didn't want it to go down in the park. The SJPD used to bust them just as they were coming out of the park. So, this time, they followed us. They followed me and Chemo. They followed us to his house. And, sure enough, the cops were right behind. They started going around, sticking guns to us. They ended up busting him. They kept us from following. So what happened is that they took him for a ride. I think they took him over to . . . San Pedro . . . I think over there where that coffee thing is, Folger's Coffee. The cop said, "Let's blow

this guy away." Me and Thereza were trying to get McAtee and get the word out. Where is he at? You know that cop that used to always go after Chemo? Anyway, this one cop always had it in for Chemo. Bad! He was part of the Squad; he was the one that was in the car. So after they took him in, then it was my turn. Then they got at me for failing to disperse. The other side of the park they were arresting Chicanos. And I think their plan was to divide us, to get us to go from La Raza Park to where the lake was. So, while that harassment was going on there, we started separating part of the Monitors to . . . which we were in no way in control of that area. In the first place, we couldn't control it because the cops were down there. All we could really do was to observe. We had no real monitor function, but just to observe. As we were trying to observe, they said, "You guys don't monitor officials . . . over here at this side of the park—over there's your place." We just continued watching them. What really started doing it—what got us going—and I think what really hurt us—it was right after Chemo had to do some time for that. They sent him to Elmwood. They killed a Chicano named Danny Trevino. That night, the witness whose name was Tiny Duarte, we knew her quite a bit from this after-hours place that I used to monitor. I was a bouncer. Before the Danny Trevino thing, back in '73, after they closed it down, we were all sleeping on the pool tables. All of a sudden, "The cops are coming! They're going to do up there with guns and everything. We need reinforcements." We thought they are going to take Aztlan away from us. And we have to go ahead and back them up. First the guys got up there. But we didn't have any bullets. We had quetes but no bullets. Somebody finally went down and bought some bullets.

We were not going to let it happen. Somebody went up to . . . Salinas or Gilroy Police Department and said, "We're waiting for you and we're not going to let you take the land." I don't think the cops were too happy . . . but at the same time Thereza and one of the lawyers that were trying to stop the injunction or eviction . . . Thereza [was] the head of security . . . Aztlan . . . it was 73 acres in the Santa Cruz mountains. I remember we were situated in different areas, thinking, "We're going to die here." [They laugh.] But I'm not ready yet, man. Carney—he's mean, bad—he said, "I'm going to back up you guys." He was always going to back us up. His gun went off. Everybody's shooting at this rock over there. . . . It was during the hour the cops were to get there, it was close. Everybody was trigger-happy. [Laughter.]

ANDRES TOBAEZ: It was a good place . . . recreation for kids, low-income families. They would go out there. . . . We'd provide the food, a place to sleep. There were horses, chickens, ducks, geese. So when the kids went out there, they would enjoy it. About 50 sleeping bags, for three days or so.

ARTURO: How long were you guys there at Aztlan?

ANDRES: I think it was about five years.

ARTURO: Was this in the 1970s?

HENRY: No, we got it sooner than that. As a matter of fact, Chino Vasquez and some of the people from Morgan Hill were really involved at the time trying to develop. I think we started '67, '68. Chino Vasquez was very influential. We had a Black Beret chapter. Jesse Ponce was the head of the Morgan Hill Black Berets and the main advisor; the main person that dealt with the land, or the redevelopment, or the farm workers was Chino Vasquez and the Soza family.

ARTURO: He was in the Berets?

HENRY: He was an unofficial Beret. He helped both the Brown Berets in Gilroy as well as the Black Berets in Morgan Hill. You might say he was like a resource for the Black Berets, along with a guy named Ray Escodero, but so was Jesse Ponce. Chino got involved in DQU. He was always getting labor and materials for developing the land.

That's when I first met Dennis Banks and Russell Means. We were pulling security. We came to it. They were talking about how they were going to work out the distributing of the food. We also worked closely with AIM [American Indian Movement] because AIM had a chapter here in San Jose. At that time it was George Martin. George Martin and I were close. He was the one that talked with me concerning the trust with AIM. As far as anyone you could trust here, any organization, it was the Berets. He was in liaison that put in a word that the Berets would be open and trusted. He connected us with the Indian movement. We sent food. We sent reinforcements. We talked with "Corky." He sent a lot of reinforcements, money, people for [those] in need. As a matter of fact, when the Chicanos marched on Denver, Colorado, we would get resources to San Jose Indian Center, that was part of AIM, they were supplying for Wounded Knee. It wasn't until '74 we . . . had the Monitors' office.

The Killing of Danny Trevino

HENRY: In '75, when they killed Danny Trevino—the killing of an unarmed Chicano—it became a real hot one for us. That time we had help from Ted Smith, the lawyer. The next day, we sent all kinds of Berets to protect his girl. . . . Two cops shooting down an unarmed

man for disturbing the peace. They thought he had a gun—that's why they shot him point blank. He went down like that. The amount of alcohol in that guy—not to mention the whole idea behind the . . . he was in no condition to blow away. She [Danny's girl] became a very important witness. We had a big rally—a big rally! Look at the people that came to that rally. "Corky" Gonzales, Dennis Banks, Cesar Chavez, John Trudell [AIM], Bellcourt Brothers [AIM]. That place was packed! Right after we had the demonstration at St. James Park, and speakers in support of Danny Trevino, the thing was not over. Everybody found out about it. So we called them to come. We had 5,000, a lot of people, the park was full. That was in '75. After that, we invited . . . to talk about it. A committee called "The Cops Committee" was formed. We used to have meetings there at the MASCA. I became part of the Cops Committee. As a matter of fact, I even took law enforcement classes, just so I could get more insight on the procedures. Jose Villa became the chairman. We kept a log for everything. But I felt, too, that MASCA was too conservative. There were two more investigations finding out why Lt. Don Edwards was disturbing the peace. His family were cops. He was also a cop. His brothers were cops in San Bernardino, including his father. Find out he was working for a bartender for Joe, the owner of Roca, Casa Blanca, and Zarape, along with a guy named Bob Mercado, a bouncer. The guys were angry [with] Danny. And Danny Trevino was a runner. He would run. What happened? He burned them! He would go to Fresno in his pickup truck with baled hay and bring Carga with them into Los Angeles. Tiny went with him once. What Danny came across were cops in the take, they were being paid. And the money was being sent

to an account at the Boccard Community Bank. They don't have to change hands. The guys that were dealing with drogas never had to meet the cops. So the word got out he was to pick up Tiny and split. My guess is that [he] was going to leave Becky Trevino—their marriage was shaky. By that time, when he went down there, his intention was [to] get rid of her. In '76, by this time we found out where he used to hang out. There used to be a park—at Alameda and . . . 71 . . . Sambo's Restaurant . . . bar. Don Edwards used to hang out at that bar. Don Edwards, the cop that shot Danny Trevino. The police let him down. He got stuck on coke. He got suspension. The head of the Narcotics Bureau.

After [the death of] Danny Trevino, the cops completely dropped any more dialogue with the Monitors. All the way to the influence with the County, the supervisors, and the directors of the Fairgrounds. The . . . Fairgrounds don't want any negotiating any more. They don't need those Monitors and more. They served their purpose—"Get them out!" They're going after us! That's what we told you in the very beginning. So they're not so concerned for their people; they're concerned with trying to go after us. Finally, they made so many threats against us that it got so we knew that they were going to come down hard on us, and soon. "I would suggest that you guys lay low," they told us. There was too much fighting around us. Anyway, we needed some backup. Not to mention that we were at the lowest point ourselves.

PCP Capital of the World

HENRY: PCP came in, and that hurt us. I don't know if it was a conspiracy because, after the LA Moratorium, San Jose becomes the PCP capital of the world. I say right now it was planted. Some was sent

to Hayward, it was planted by the "Man." The Army was experimenting with acid, so they experimented on the students who protested in the Vietnam War. In the beginning, everybody was out there . . . and, in one year, everybody is out there taking acid. And here you are liberal, making some changes. I feel PCP is a conspiracy. It was like somebody pulled a switch, somebody spiked the punch. And yet, in reality, marijuana is used in medicine, it is used for stress, like Valium, it is used for a sedative. It has a value in arthritis. There's value in using it, and you can also abuse it. Like wine, you can use it and abuse it. What a coincidence that rocket fuel, these bad weeds that are coming in being sprinkled with PCP. And when did this happen? When we were at our highest peak.

ARTURO: What year was this?

HENRY: '73, '74, '75. '73 is when we started moving. The credibility that we had with our own people. The Confederacion, we were their favorite organization. Close, very close-knit. And, of course, recognition. I think we just got too much power.

ARTURO: Jesse, what is your recollection of this time?

JESSE: We were talking about when the Monitors were first born, and when we worked at the Fairgrounds. We were talking about how the Monitors were born and how the Berets had changed from the Black Berets to the Community Monitors. One of the things I think my brother mentioned is that we were getting a lot of pressure about that time, '73. One of the things I would like to point out, the Monitors themselves was an organization that was not just for Raza. It was a mixture of blacks, Anglos, Puerto Ricans, what have you. And it was an organization of different organizations that came into the Monitors. When

the Monitors first formed, besides different groups like the Pintos, the Mujeres de Aztlan, La Confederacion, CET people. One of the things we did at that time was to form a Council, which was a Council of five to seven people, representing the leadership of the Monitors. Very many of the philosophies were the same as the Berets. We went in there to serve and protect the people. We had good times and parties. We did not party when we were working. We were not there to act like cops. We were not there to take on the law. We were there to stop violence. We took on one of the biggest tasks that the Berets, the Monitors, or any organization had ever took from '73 to '76. We took on the boycott—of trying to get rid of KJ, PCP, or whatever else you want to call it. We, at that time, when we took on the boycott, we got a lot of flak, we got a lot of feedback, good and bad. A lot of pushers were mad at us because we were taking on the task of boycotting PCP. We were confronted by many users. One of the things we used to tell them was, "Understand, we are *not* attacking the individual using it." As a matter of fact, we were not attacking the pushers themselves. We were attacking the drug itself. We weren't attacking *you*, we were attacking what you were *doing*. You were selling poison to the gente, to young kids, and young kids in grammar schools. That's what we were attacking. Not the individuals, but the drug itself. And we were telling people, "This is the most dangerous drug in the whole United States, the whole world, for that matter, that has ever existed." Because of the drug, many people were not just losing their lives, not just becoming a vegetable, but also becoming abuse victims. They were being raped, robbed, beat up, made into vegetables for the rest of their lives. They also robbed

the people of their dignity, their pride, their humanistic values. No longer were they acting like the people that they would normally act. We had cases where an individual, a woman, tried to drown her own baby when she was on PCP, because she visioned her baby becoming a demon right before her eyes under the influence of PCP. Another incident, where another woman tried to beat her newborn baby to death because she visioned him growing into a man right before her very eyes. We had another incident where a man, a young man, raped his own mother under the influence of PCP. We also had an incident where a man had intercourse with a dog, high on PCP. Incidents were brothers tried to kill brothers, fathers trying to kill their own sons. Women were being gang-raped because of drugs. Then and now, right to this day, PCP has been one of the worst drugs that has ever offended the human race.

HENRY: This hurt the Chicano movement. This was also a peak for the conditions for the different organizations to come together—the Confederacion, the Monitors. We saw that this was different; it seemed like somebody spiked the punch. Somebody went out there and messed with the high. Under the disguise of the weed, this PCP that was given to you put together, and in certain areas, that was concentrated on what was Chicano barrios. And we got so frightened that this started to divide us within us, outside, people we were working with, and before you know it, there was horrible, horrible things that they were doing to one another. Flyers like these started coming out, we were using buttons, posters that were emphasizing the point, using culture. We went to Adrian Vargas and got the man that put on teatros. We played a different role part, like what happened in school, what happened in

families; different things that were presenting, different cases that we made into a script, became a play. We took it out in the schools, different places. And we started realizing that our movement was geared toward the urgency of trying to attack a drug, with somebody saying they were going to attack that pusher, the enemy. But we said, "No, we have to target a different approach."

ARTURO: Were you guys the first to combat KJ?

HENRY: Yes, we were, because this was the capital of the area. And they're still publicizing that. I don't know, there isn't one part of PCP on the East Side for treatment, as far as prevention, but we're trying to get the people to help us get it out. We're trying to make the pusher unpopular. Instead of saying "Let's go after him," the people are telling him, "Hey, we don't want that here in our party, we don't want that in our park, we don't want this here in our concert or our dance." They, themselves, were going out there and confirming that, "Hey, we don't want this!" We didn't want to martyr them either. And, before you know it, it became a clash between one group and another. He had his clientele and they became the ones that were fighting against him. Because we were like the cop. We ourselves are going to do something about it. At the same time, we knew there was another piece of support. People said, "Hey, man, . . . look at that man. That's a gold mine. There are thousands of Chicanos around the park. Imagine if I sell a couple of grand on Sunday, that's a bunch that day." And some of these guys were coming out with brand new cars, buying clothes. They were rolling in money. So that's another factor that we're dealing with. It became a business venture for some of those guys. It wasn't so much

because they were experienced and had a track record of being pushers. They decided there was a gold mine there. It was hurting us. Before you know it, even among our own ranks, we're involved [in] or affected by it. We couldn't get them to cooperate. There's no way that you get any kind of organization.

JESSE: But, again, there's one thing I'd like to point out. We weren't attacking the individual. What we were doing, we were using the peer pressure to turn around an attack on what they were selling, the drug itself. And at that point, like my brother mentioned, we were using peer pressure to turn around and outlaw the drug, turn people off. The people themselves would turn around and tell them, "Hey, man, we don't need the drug." Some of the pushers used to come up to us and say, "Hey, what's your trip, man? It's a money bank." And we used to tell them, "There are different ways of making money. You don't make money by the misfortunes of other people. Don't continue with what you're doing. We've got nothing against you personally. Personally, you're OK, but you're selling poison to the people. And that's what we're going to outlaw. And as long as you are going to sell it to our people, then we are going to try to outlaw you and what you're doing." Many of the guys we did reach. We did reach people. We lost people. We lost people within our ranks. It came out even. We lost people, we gained people. A lot of the heavy pushers that we had became some of our main supporters. Some of them even went as far . . . if they dealt they made a point of not being around us or hiding the fact, because of the respect they got from us. It got to the point where we turned around and said, "If you're going to continue selling your drug,

then we will come after you." It got to the point where many of the pushers did support us. Maybe they still weren't pushing. We gained a lot of their respect. To this day, many of the people that we knew were pushing would come up to us and say, "Why don't you guys have the Monitors again? We need them. The PCP has gotten out of hand." It isn't just PCP these days . . . it's crack. And they asked us to come back. It's hard; we don't have the clientele, the means, the people, the spiritual strength that we had back in '73, '74, '75, '76. We're trying to revive that again. But it's hard. We lost a lot in the process. It's hard . . . we used to have the support of Sheriff Gerry, Dan McCorquedale, Cortese. It got to the point where Janet Gray Hayes was a supporter of the Monitors. They believed in what we were doing.

ARTURO: When the Monitors were at their strongest, how many members were there?

JESSE: The first year, which was '73, we had over a hundred members. In '74, again, we still had over a hundred. [In] '75, '76, we had about 90 to 95. Then, in '76, we started feeling the heat of our downfall because people that worked with us at the Fair[grounds] weren't actually members. The Fair[grounds] became more of a job than it did an organization. We had to go out in the barrio and recruit.

ARTURO: Jesse was just talking about '76, the last year at the Fairgrounds.

HENRY: There's something that happened at that time. We took on the police shooting of Danny Trevino. Danny Trevino was also a very

important one that brought a lot of unity into the movement—Dennis Banks, Russell Means, the Bettencourts.

ARTURO: What year was this?

JESSE: That was in '75.

ARTURO: Was this the first time that the Berets and members of the Indian movement got together?

JESSE: They brought a unifying force. We were having our meetings there at the Guadalupe Church. A lot of people were really strong in our support. Confederacion, the MACSA was supplying us with resources. Somehow we felt that it was . . . a method of getting together, but at the same time we realized, too, that it was like downplaying it, too. Some of the strategies that we had were not all that hot. Without mentioning names . . . I felt that some would be ill advised. When they had the Grand Jury hearing on some of the things, . . . but then we had a big march on at St. James Park, and the park got full with people. We marched one time from St. James Park all the way to City Hall. City Hall got panicked. But, after a while, we were being advised by the system [that] the Grand Jury wanted to do something about it, businessmen, internal affairs—they were going to go ahead. And they kind of gave the impression—I got the impression, too—members of the Cops Committee was doing their talking, negotiating with the Mayor, the City Manager, Chief of Police . . . trying to kind of downplay the thing. Let's see if the system can handle the thing without continued pushing for the ousting or the persecution of . . . in other words, we were persecuting the cop.

But somehow, after a while it seemed like, for instance, Ted Smith, one of the lawyers who was also representing one of the witnesses to the killing, . . . you know the documents were being stolen from the office, we started getting bomb threats, documents were being taken from us. We started getting pressure a lot. The negotiation for the monitoring of the Fairgrounds and at the park started going down badly, because they said, "You are not really trying to work with us, resolve things, communications between building a bridge with the law enforcement, you're coming after one of ours." "Wait a minute, you killed one of our people, an unarmed Chicano!" And they saw that as . . . they got behind the bandwagon and tried to protect one [of] the cops that killed [Danny Trevino].

And the recognition of the Monitors . . . later on [as an] organization that was innocent. They started backing away from the Monitors. One of our monitors has one of their cops up there as a victim, for the community. So as they started pulling back, they started down-playing us. They're putting bad stuff out there on us. When we were out there monitoring at the Fairgrounds, . . . they were harassing us, making it difficult for us to operate. No longer was the hierarchy of the Sheriff holding back their gung-ho Sheriffs. They were letting them go. They didn't like the idea of Casa Legal or some of the neighbors being there at the substation at the Fairground because they knew they were observing any police brutality. It became where, "You guys are anti-police."

And, of course, there were certain things that made the organization—as long as you were working within that system, the Monitors

at the Fairgrounds, the Monitors at La Raza Park, there was a give and take. But we still realized that we were working within the system. They started, like, kind of pulling away. Kind of, like, taking our resources, making it more difficult for us to operate. Many of the cops wanted to break that relationship anyway. They were kind of stuck to a point, "How did we get stuck." The PD was putting pressure on the Sheriff that you guys are a bunch of sissies. How come you don't go into the park and arrest all those Chicanos that are out there drinking and all that. The Monitors, the Berets, are putting you in a position where you can't go down there and enforce the law. You tell me that *they* have authority? They have police authority? And the Sheriffs were saying, "Gerry, a politician, he doesn't give us the authority. He's backing them up." Of course, being an elected official, the Sheriff says, "It isn't good for me to have to go out there and beat up some heads because you're going to beat up a lot of innocent people." Now they didn't like the idea, because Chemo set up a good relationship with Sheriff Gerry. And, of course, they didn't like that. As far as they knew, the reputation of Sal Candelaria—a militant, a radical—and this is the way they wanted to paint him. Being president of the Conferedacion, being leader of the Monitors, that had prestige with the community as well as the establishment—community. They didn't like that; they were scared. "You've got to bring this organization down." So they provoked him; they picked on his wife in public. There was a guy named Tiano, supposed to be like the Goliath of the Sheriffs, and he went out there and started badmouthing Thereza. Thereza was taking names of some of the cops that were out there harassing. So, when he was out there

badmouthing her, Chemo had a roll of newspaper in his fist. He didn't really hit the guy—"Have more respect for our women." They didn't take Chemo in then, they waited. When the [march at the] park was over, we were headed towards the house where we used to live. The whole house got surrounded. They got him. And they tried to block us out from following to where they were taking him. As a matter of fact, that was one of the things—they went after the leadership. My sister got arrested. I got arrested. It was one of those things where tension was built up in the locations. And, of course, Danny Trevino was one of the big ones, that was kind of like the main one. After the threats, Chemo received some information that it was going to be pretty hot. We realized that within our ranks there was a lot of division. So then we went for backup. And, at that time, there was a lot of publicity . . . with the American Indian movement, and Dennis Banks, the DQU, the Chicano Indian University. They started getting scared. We approached Dennis Banks. He heard about us. We met—Chemo met him during the Patty Hearst thing. Then one of the guys that was here when they had that mass at City College, Lee Polanco, was one of the Chicanos that was involved in the Indian movement at that time—he had a real close connection because he was a sun dancer at DQU. That's when we had the drug abuse clinic at the Monitors' office—went to Sacramento to negotiate for some funds for the Monitors. And it was the same time they were having the sun dances at DQU. So we started going there. When we saw that ceremonial, we were feeling good. "There's something different out here." We were really moved by the sun dance, by the way the ceremonial seemed to rub off. And we asked him—explained the situation

that was happening. Dennis felt that he would back us up. But we would also give him support and backup. One of the support backups was when the occupation up at Blue Creek . . . the situation that was happening down there. And ourselves, we went down there and a couple of Monitors and Berets, and we supported him on that issue. And at a time we came up with a matter of life and death. Without going into details, we developed a closeness, a trust. Dennis Banks was saying, "Go ahead and back up Sal, Henry, and the Berets, Monitors" was one thing, but within his own ranks, they had trust. At the same time, AIM was going through a hardship, too, with infiltration. The movement in '75, '76 was going through a lot of changes. They were going through a lot of dissension, and they kind of, like, had to reinforce their own troops. Because before they committed themselves to any issue, especially when it came down to supporting somebody in a matter of . . . we are dealing with the idea of protection. So that unity, that trust developed and, before you know it, both of us are fledged to dance. As we were there at DQU, we started reading books on it. We were saying, "Hey, man, we're Indian!" We started searching our own roots.

ARTURO: What year was this?

HENRY: '75, '76, '77 . . . and, of course, we made that pledge and we started learning more about some of the Indian ceremonials, and similarities of us, "We're Chicano; we've got some of those ceremonials, those herbs. We can do some of this stuff. We're Indian, not Hispanic, not Español, we're Indian." That became important, because it gave us strong feelings towards what was our culture. One of the things that Dennis wanted to stress was land. Owning land, and the vision of having

land—hearing how the land was ripped off. We really started to focus more and realize that there is a strong movement here; a strong significance. But I never left the whole meaning behind of the concept of Christianity. As far as I'm concerned, I felt that the movement of church groups was also important. And where I connected it was to Cesar Chavez . . . especially when we would have the church, the mass—the mass outside—not in the building. We would march from Guadalupe to the campos and have the mass right there in the field. It was unorthodox. To me, I was turned on. I was turned [on] by that way of looking at it. But, because the religion was connected to the Indian, that was the part that I really focused on. When I came back, Chemo got more . . . he had always been involved with Curandismo. He would have a cabinet of different herbs, a remedy for this, and measures for that. He would always have some kind of remedies for people. And Chemo's really fascinated. He went into it more. I was fascinated with the sun dance, but I saw the connection more with the sun dance, piercing, the idea of birth. And, at that time, my wife was going through a whole ordeal of . . . they were trying to sterilize her because she had so many kids. The whole meaning behind our relationship just seemed to grow. Finally, the tightness and closeness she had with the family and because of so many children. At that same time, Johnny and Joe Martinez, the guys said, "You know what, things aren't going so hot. They are saying that you guys deserted, left them. They don't understand the idea of your dance." I don't think it was so much . . . I think it was "Hey, we're stuck in the barrio. We can't just go up to the mountains like you guys. We're in the barrio—we can't just leave like that." Somehow, I was

too. I couldn't leave the barrio—because I was connected to the barrio. Even though I enjoy myself in the mountains, I can do with both. Before I came back, there was a commitment that I did. It was to have the longest walk. There was a commitment to walk all the way from DQU all the way to Washington, D.C. I think that pledge . . . we were committed. Dennis Banks said, "You are Indians. Chicanos are also Indians, the Navajos, the Sioux. You are part of indigenous. And you'd better be going to Chicanos, particularly to Colorado." And right now, he wanted to see that unity on that walk. "You and I," he said, "I'll be there before you." Of course he was. He'd hang around with anybody—black, white, yellow—and he'd use all the resources. He *was* there. he'd use our phone. He'd send somebody ahead of time. And, of course, it became really important meaning to me—that longest walk—especially when I seen "Corky" up there, and I seen the support he gave to the American Indian movement. And 3000 (?) Chicanos marching on Denver in Colorado—Black Berets. The picture. In fact, it's inside that thing about . . . depot . . . the Black Berets, "Corky," marching in support of the Wounded Knee. So when we were out there, I met Herman Vaca that was fighting for the rights of immigrants, and "Corky" called him "the Pancho Villa of today." And already we were at Pueblo; we went up to go see "Corky." And "Corky" kind of liked that: "Hang in there, Chicanos on their longest walk, but you guys get out of hand in there . . . You know what Chicanos are. Don't quit! Be sure they don't get cockeyed or stoned. Don't screw around because you guys are representing the Chicano tribes. Because we're part of the walk." And, of course, "Corky" at that moment was using a lot of resources. He brought us food, bedding.

He sent us representatives from the Crusade for Justics to go on that walk. He was the Chicano movement, the Brown Berets. We were having a hard time in Colorado—a hard time. If it wasn't for "Corky" and the Brown Berets in Colorado, the longest walk would have had bad times. He made it possible for us. The same thing when we went into Kansas. So that walk, looking back at it . . . we need a spiritual walk. Because at that time—this was in '79—when we came back, things were not going too well around here. There was no movement. And then, what was really coming around in '79 was that we . . . a lot of things about gangs, kidnaps—and there was so much emphasis on division, get behind martyrlogy—that before we know it, how about our going on a walk. What is the spiritual significance. And we decided to walk from the East Side to the West Side. That was on March 24, 1979—Oh, actually March 23. We marched from Arroyo Park over here on McKee and King all the way to . . . Garner Clinic—Carner Center. It was beautiful! Barrios from all over came. There was over 500 raza; Herman Vaca came down. We had priests from everywhere—Father Moriority, Father Richard Garcia, Father Mateo . . . and these four representatives; we had the mass right there in the field. So we went out and had the mass right there. We had the Black Berets, the girls in the Black Berets, emphasizing unity. The miracle brought (?) people together . . . to keep us together. It was time for the momentum to start moving and spiritually, we have to stop the gang warfare that is starting to build up in the barrios. We're talking about different education, housing. But, the main emphasis we're talking about [is] spiritual unity. That's what we're emphasizing. This was 1979.

JESSE: I'd like to say a little bit more about the year. Like my brother [was] saying about the walk. I want to talk a bit about what was going on. Going back about three years—my brother and Sal Candelaria were both forced into exile. What came out of that was—because the Monitors were so effective, there was a move to disperse the Monitors. They started arresting out membership. The cops were making us over-react to some of the things we were doing. The San Jose PD wasn't too happy with the fact that the Sheriff was cooperating with us, so what they were doing was that they were challenging the Sheriff by saying that we were into extortion, that we were terrorists, that we were vigilantes. Even the media started picking up on it and the credibility that we had built up started going down the drain. We started getting threats. At one time, it got to the point that my brother went to the office and just before he went into it and they [said] they were going to blow up the Monitors' office. At that time, we were on the corner of 34th and Santa Clara Street. We started losing membership. We went from 90 members to, maybe, 30. The tension got so bad that we were even bickering within ourselves. That's how bad it got. We got to the point where we had to sit down in a council and turn around and take three or four steps back to try to figure out what we were doing so bad that we were even attacking each other. After that, we started trying to pick up the pieces. But we didn't have a chance to really pick them up, because Sal was—how shall I say?—one of the cops instigated him to a confrontation by insulting his lady vocally, by calling her a tramp, and Sal started to react. The cops turned around. They didn't only arrest my sister, but they twisted her arm to get me and my brother to

react. And Henry reacted, and he told the cops, "Hey, what the hell are you doing? You got my sister." And instead of the cops backing off, they grabbed him and arrested him. At that time, there was rumors going around saying that as soon as they got my brother and Sal in jail, they were going to kill them. So, at that time, Henry and Sal did the only thing they felt was right at that time—they both left the state, and they both went to Oregon in exile. Henry was into exile for nearly a year. And Sal was into it for over a year. That was from '76 almost to '78. Then Henry started coming back to San Jose, back and forth. They went up to DQ and they stayed out of San Jose. Both of them started returning more or less around '78. But within that time the little bit of Monitors that I had left—I would say that I had, and this is probably over-exaggerating—I had maybe 18 people and I doubt if I had that many.

ARTURO: So Jesse, during the time Henry and Chemo were in exile, you were in charge of only 18 people?

JESSE: I got together with Gustavo Arrias and he started, like, helping me, picking up the pieces a little bit. And we rebuilt it about that time. At that time, my brother came back, and when he came back, that's when we started going on the longest walk. I started the walk, but Henry sent me back and told me, "You know, little brother, you've got to go back and you've got to support us any way you can. You've got to give me support I need in San Jose." I came back and, along with guys like Gustavo Arrias, Johnny Martinez, Vincente Zavala, and a few others that were left behind, we started talking to some of the youth. We started seeing barrios develop in San Jose. What we did is we got

a group of kids. We needed security for our demonstrations. We got a bunch of high school kids and they did such a good job; that's where we got all of the group called Youth Getting Together.

They wanted to wear black berets, this was going to be the Black Berets. And it was the Black Berets with a small chapter, or the young kids that were called Youth Getting Together. And from the ending of '78 to the beginning of '79, we formed an organization of Youth Getting Together under the Black Berets. And our membership began to increase [to] where we had maybe 60 or 70 members, 80 percent being high school [kids] and young adults. At that time, Gustavo Arrias was the main organizer—myself and him—but he was the main guy that got them together. At that time, we started getting the youth more involved in political things. And we started working with them very closely. They got to the point where they started trusting us a lot and they started telling us that barrios started developing. In '78 we started finding out that people came in from LA and started building their own barrios. Before we knew it, in the beginning of '79 we started seeing the barrios coming out of the woodwork. Young Chicanos were jumping young Chicanos and claiming turf. So myself, along with a handful of adults, we started trying to talk to some of these youths. At that time, my brother came back and we decided, in '79, we wanted to build up some kind of unity. So I started talking to my brother about a unity walk—a spiritual walk. And the concept of the walk was that we were walking for the love of the people, not the hate of an enemy. It was a unity walk. So we walked, as my brother mentioned, we walked from Plato Arroyo Park on McKee and King down to Horseshoe, which was on Virginia and Alma. The only

complication that we had, there was two Communist groups called SDS, Students for Democratic Society—or something like that—and another group. And they wanted to join the walk, but we told them no they couldn't, because it was a spiritual walk. So they said they were going to make it into a demonstration. But we said, "This is not a demonstration, it's a spiritual walk to bring unity within the barrios, unity within San Jose. We are not walking for hate, we're walking for the love of the people." And there was a big confrontation between us and them. Finally, we ended up reaching the place that we were going to. We had our rally and Henry at that time wanted to take it one step further. He told us about a run, 500 mile spiritual run, that would take place. Most of these teams were Indian, and Henry had gotten the OK from Dennis Banks. So we started talking with a lot of the youth and we formed this team. And there was a team of 10 or 11.

HENRY: There were 10. I have more pictures in the living room. The young ones were very arrogant, "We don't need that old man. He'll slow us down. We don't need a girl." They were really putting us down. That first day—125 miles non-stop—from DQU all the way to the San Luis Reservoir, and, believe it or not, we were the first ones to get to the San Luis Reservoir, and the Lakotas were only about ten feet behind us, then the Navajo. That night, no longer were the younger guys talking; they weren't putting down the girls. It inspired the younger crowd. And, before you know it, we are running for the love of our people, not out of hate. We're running as a spiritual team. The first part of the marathon run, which was the longest walk, walking from Sacramento to Washington, D.C. This is something that we can do, as far as support.

So that was done in '78. This one here is done to commemorate that walk. Dennis Banks and his team, DQU, Billy Mills, the Indian Olympic winner, was there. The Lakotas had theirs, the Navajos had theirs, the Deo Campos had theirs, so there were at least ten different tribes that came and brought their teams out there. Because we were going after some strong endurance—we're talking about suffering. Can you imagine through Highway 33—you know how hot it is in that area?—all the way to LA, that's 99—you know when you go through there in a car without an air conditioner. Can you imagine running in there, running in that heat there?

The coach we had, he was a keen community organizer. My wife was there. Well, the second day we started—this time we came in second place; now it was the Lakotas came in first and the Navajos came in third. The third day the Navajos came in first, the Lakotas came in second, and we came in third. They all made a collection then. And they got real close. They really found us strong. And, before you know it, they were really bucking for us . . . the eagle and the fist of unity . . . running an average of 100, 120 miles a day, no breaks in between. The morning came so quickly! They were up trying to rub down their cramps. I mean these guys were experienced—not only in long-distance running but about . . . I ran only one mile and my lungs were bursting. And the heat. . . . On the third day we finished [and] we were waiting for Billy Mills to get there. So the coach said, "The coaches are going to stay behind," and it was Bill Flores and Dennis Banks. "We're going to wait for Billy Mills' team. Why don't you guys go ahead and go into Bakersfield and shower up?" And we were ready to go. Finally, Barrios Unidos' team says, "No, man, stay with the coach." And I said, "We'll

wait." That really brought a message to the rest of us. And everybody said, "Well, I'll wait. If the Chicanos are going to wait, well I'm going to wait." Nobody went. Everybody stayed back there and waited and waited. . . . It was two hours, but they finally got there. After this, Dennis Banks says, "Leonard Peltier is locked up in Lompoc." So we decided that three teams that were in would be shuttled up to Lompoc and then would run up around there and then to Coalinga and Bakersfield, and we would go on running all the way through the valley. I said it would be longer—we have to go to 101. So we went with them. We got a chance—some of the teams . . . and Dennis Banks—they got a chance to go into the prison. Because the prisoners, they were running inside the prison. Finally, from there, we started to run, meet up with them. This time my son, Naiche, the heat and everything, he got a fever and went into convulsions—104, 105 fever. He started going into convulsions, and he was pale, and his eyes were rolling back, and he was vomiting and foaming from the mouth, and he was just shaking like that. And all of a sudden it shocked me. At that time, I was driving the bus. The run just stopped right there. Right at that time the runners just stopped right there. One of them wanted to know where the hospital was. All of a sudden, the emphasis was that they knew it was a time for a spiritual coming together because it was a crisis. The coach started getting the water that they were using for the runners and keeping the fever . . . down. It was important. They brought that fever down. They were running out of gas. We went over to the hospital emergency and we got there in time. And you should have seen those runners' eyes. You should have seen the tears in their eyes. They were strong prayers. We really

got together. They were holding hands, and were praying; they were singing. There was a strong presence of the spirit. The rest of the runners, when they heard what happened, the tone of the whole thing became an inspiration. These guys had received a lot of trophies from the different high schools, but this one really meant something. That run was a real strong point.

When we got back, that's when we had the Barrios Unidos Conference at Lincoln High School. So the whole gym of Lincoln High School was packed from the different barrios. And so, now, they came down to give us support, and when they saw the runners and what they did . . . and when they heard about the run and what inspired it, the Chicanos got together and they did it. One of the girls said a real heavy statement that there should be no fighting, there should be peace between barrios. So it became a real strong point. In '79. Because right after that, with having the March 24 walk—first one that we had, then a run, and then the Barrios Unidos thing. This, of course, kicked off where eventually we went on our second Chicanos spiritual walk.

JESSE: That's when we started hanging around Story and King, because a lot of the pleitos started happening around Story and King. At that time, we started talking with some of the other gente at the conference. We were out there—me and my Carnal—and a bunch of other people started going out to Story and King.

There were lawyers, fighting police brutality cases, and Rosa Herrera from the Human Relations Commission. At that time, when we were doing this, we started taking on the cops at Story and King because of the violence that was going on there. The violence started picking up

again, so we started talking about another walk. But before we got into that walk, we decided we had to build some kind of unity between us. So we had a walk in March.

HENRY: That's the one where the emphasis was on stopping barrio warfare and the emphasis was also about the draft and the emphasis was also on the idea of bring unity. Dennis Banks was there. He came to support us. A lot of the barrios—some of them had given their endorsement to putting their names on the leaflet. What was so beautiful about it—when they seen their names on the posters, a lot of them got inspired by it and they went back to the barrios. And they made their members walk. They told them, "OK, you guys are going to walk." Different youths started joining in and I think that's one of the few times that you could feel the real unity. When we got to La Raza Park, we started talking about unity . . . that we are now asking a representative of each barrio to get up there and speak. And a lot of different barrios came around and they took off their colors and they said, "I'm no longer claiming the turf area, I'm claiming San Jose." Barrios that hated each other, the Horseshoe, they hated Lomas or Palmas. They were sitting side by side and they started talking. There was a real unity strength there. It was strong. A lot of the youth after that—the following month—we decided, "let's have a walk with a rally behind this unity." So we called a unity walk from San Jose to LA and we walked for 24 days, and that's when we took some of the youth.

This is the flyer that we put out for that one. "Hey, we're commemorating the ten years of the LA Moratorium, you know, 1980." And, of course they think there's a problem here getting the barrios together;

well, LA was worse. So here there was a lot of rumors. So, they're saying, "Hey, man, we're going to Ruben Salazar park. Right now there's a lot of tension in the barrios. So how in the world are we going to go ahead and take Chicanos? So we kept stressing the importance of barrio unity. We had one here. This one's going all the way to LA. So we started. So we had the mass right there at Story and King—the same location we had for a walk to La Raza Park. This time we had it in the same place, but this time we're going all the way to LA. And, as you know, in 1980, Carter was talking about the draft, and here we're talking about the Chicano Moratorium. We're trying to get a good turnout to go to the barrios in LA and then we're going to go to Ruben Salazar park. So, to emphasize Chicano unity . . . we started off. And it mushroomed—Morgan Hill, Gilroy, you should see the hundreds of farm workers came and . . . It was bad. It was hot, too. Not in LA. It was beautiful. The mass right there in front of the place. So that helped us out. We got to Salinas. They had a keg of beer. It was hard for us to say no, it was so hot. "No beers, no guns, no drugs." We had to be clean. it's not because I'm not a beer drinker—it's because of our purpose. And they respected it. And they set things up for us to have showers. Twenty-four days it took. We were inside the auditorium of the church over there. It was right there in the center of the auditorium, and we had the songs, and they were taking a message of unity. So then we went to the barrios in LA. Right there in Maravilla. There's a wall right there. There were projects when I was there. But, apparently, they had knocked these projects down and all they had there was vacant lots. No sooner . . . about 25, 30 guys came up there . . . "What are

you guys doing in our barrio?" "This is a spiritual walk. We're emphasizing unity. The Chicano Moratorium is going to take place tomorrow. We want a chance to emphasize unity. We should be together. That Moratorium happened ten years ago. We were here with you." They weren't saying whether we were from San Jose or LA, but they were bashing all of us. "And there's going to be a commemoration tomorrow. There will be thousands and thousands of us. We ask that no . . . come down. We're asking for a truce for all around us, here as well as in the barrios all the way from San Jose." He said, ". . . you could walk that far, man? OK, you guys did all right." And you know, any other way of trying to bring a truce right there would have been nothing except that. And one of them puts it, "I think I'm watching over you, man. You aren't going to have no problems from us. We're going to pass the word out. We're going to spend all night to make sure there aren't no pleitos." And you know what? There was over 7,000 Chicanos there, and not one fight. Not one fight! Even though our committes at the Moratorium were divided, and there's always been the thing about the division between us and them, the concerned Chicano and the liberal Chicano or the too religious Chicano. It causes a lot of conflict. They let Chemo speak. Because of this . . . everything was just political. They didn't want to give any spiritual tones to it. It's like a fast. If you're fasting, it is a *personal* thing. It gave us personal strength, as well as some of those who didn't fast. It's one of the goals that touched us, too. It helped us keep going on the walk. What it did was helped set up a network between some of the groups that we lost here because people—just as we did on the longest walk—just as we did on the different walks—

it kind of like stressed: "Well, why are you doing this?" And we got a chance to talk, to communicate.

And most important is not just having the communications of network, but it is the way it is done. And the most kickoff inspiration, again, was the farmers' group. And it kind of brings up to date that it is the farm workers, again, that . . . it becomes a pattern. The farm workers, I think, would have died if it wasn't for that spiritual significance. So I would say that 1980 was a very important time to emphasize us to the community, because that's what downplayed the idea of barrios, because of what was perpetuated by the press, the media, the movie industry—"Boulevard Nights." . . . They were emphasizing the idea of gang warfare, that it was exciting. And, of course, as long as there is barrio warfare, there is no Chicano movement. That's why, since then, you haven't heard too much about barrio warfare. I think it's because of what took place back then.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATIONS

Mandelbaum's Perspective on Life Histories

For the purpose of organization, Mandelbaum's concept of dimensions, turnings, and adaptations (Mandelbaum, 1973) are used to analyze the events and incidents recorded in Chapters II through IV of this thesis. In *The Study of Life History: Gandhi*, Mandelbaum suggests that life history materials can be divided into "(a) the dimensions or aspects of a person's life; (2) the principal turnings and the life conditions between turnings; and (3) the person's characteristic means of adaptation" (pp. 177-80).

In his discussion of the dimensions or aspects of a person's life, Mandelbaum includes biological, cultural, social, and psychosocial factors. He says: "To these must be added the unique, individual aspect of each life that is a basic consideration in life history study" (p. 180).

Chemo discussed his cultural background in terms of being native American. He specifically referred to his grandparents and his great-grandparents as being registered in the 1885 census in the state of New Mexico. He described himself as being Indio-Chicano.

Chemo was brought up in a low-income household in the Sal Si Puedes barrio in East San Jose. He mentioned being a migrant farm worker

throughout his youth. He recalled how they would travel throughout the state picking tomatoes, chicharos, and other crops. They lived in a barn and slept on hay beds and army cots. The family earned \$25-\$30 per day.

Chemo related that his grandparents and great-grandparents had a history of involvement with politics in America. He mentioned his ancestors' participation in the Pueblo Revolt, the Secret Society of New Mexico, and the border patrol in Texas. He asked, "Why should out people, after a historical participation in this country still be as second-class citizens?" He recalled that many people would go to his grandfather's house to talk and seek counsel. They would talk about how they were "being ripped off . . . and how they were using us."

Thereza described herself as being Chicana. She was brought up on the East coast. Her step-father was Puerto Rican. She heard a lot about the Independence Party in Puerto Rico. She said, "Many men were being sent to Vietnam when Puerto Rico wasn't even a state in the United States."

Thereza moved to California in 1969. She learned of the Chicano movement through her aunts. She mentioned that as a student at Fresno State she got involved in MECHA and started participating in demonstrations for such things as Chicano Studies classes.

Thereza met Chemo at a Chicano rally. They discussed many issues relating to the Chicano movement. She eventually became a Secretary in the Black Berets.

Henry and Jesse's parents were Apache and Yaqui Indians. They also identified themselves as Chicanos. They related how they were

exposed to racial discrimination in school and on the farms where they worked as migrant laborers. Henry recalled that as a farm laborer he "started seeing the differences between the way they treated Anglos and the way they treated the Mexicanos" in the school system.

Jesse spoke about his involvement in gangs in San Bernardino. He mentioned how he began to see that it was a very negative situation in the barrio. A few of his friends were killed. He mentioned how a couple of different incidents took place where "cops used unnecessary force on me."

Henry began getting politicized around 1964. He noticed that the Pintos started uniting to defend themselves from getting "punked out" in prisons. They formed concilios. The thought of Chicanos uniting for a common goal was influential in his decision to become a Black Beret.

The Emergence

Originally, the organization was known as the Black Berets for Justice. Later, the group became known as the Black Berets por la Justicia. Many of the original members were active from around 1959; however, the Black Berets originated as a formal group in 1965.

The Berets originated in the East San Jose area known at that time as "Sal Si Puedes." Many of the original members were active in such groups as the East Side Boys Club. Some of these members broke away from the East Side Boys Club. Eventually, Chemo and some of the others also broke away from the United People Arriba organization, which they had joined after leaving the East Side Boys Club. Chemo did not consider these organizations progressive and, therefore, formed the Black

Berets for Justice, which, according to Chemo, was the first organization of its kind.

This event marked a major "turning" in Chemo's and the Original Black Beret members' lives: "A turning is accomplished when the person takes on a new set of roles, enters into fresh relations with a new set of people, and acquires a new self-conception . . . a turning may occur through a single event or experience, a 'turning point,' or it may be a gradual shift" (Mandelbaum, 1973: 181).

Among the original members of the organization were Billy Dennison, Milton Lopez, Junior Lopez, Johnny Martinez, Quero Vallejos, and the Lugos'—Carlos, Peter, Aquilar, and Rosa. In time, they were joined by Luis Vinegra, Joel Vinegra, Danny Arroyo, Andres Tobaez, Jesse and Henry Dominguez, Thereza Candelaria, and others.

For Henry, Jesse, and Thereza, a major turning point in their lives was when they joined the Berets. Joining the Black Berets was an experience which resulted in major adaptations for each of the three. They went from being individual members of their communities to being active members of a group organized to serve their communities. In the process, each assumed a huge responsibility.

Adaptations, when considered with turnings and dimensions, can be useful; "we can then look to the main opportunities and limitations that the person faced at each juncture and ask how and why the person adapted his behavior (or failed to do so) at this point, what he tried to change and what he tried to maintain" (Mandelbaum, 1973: 182).

With the conception of the Berets, the members made a strong commitment to the community and to each other. There were more meetings,

better organization. The rules and bylaws were established. Their uniform of military fatigues, black T-shirts, and black berets distinguished them from all other groups. The decision to wear black berets was greatly influenced by the image of Che Guevara.

The Issues

Chemo remembered that when they built Piedmont High School the Chicanos had to "wake [their] kids at 4 o'clock in the morning and get them to school and leave them at 7 o'clock when the school didn't open up until 8 o'clock. . . . All the rich kids were brought in at eight." He said they started putting out walkers concerning the busing, and that this later developed into the school walkouts for Chicano Student Unions. The Berets began establishing alliances with other groups. They became involved with such groups as the Mexican-American Student Confederation (MASC) at San Jose City College and San Jose State College, where they fought for the Extended Opportunities Program (EOP).

The Berets started addressing certain issues such as police brutality toward Chicanos. This eventually led to the formation of the Community Alert Patrol or Community Monitors who monitored police action on the East Side.

The Berets were also instrumental in setting up a Community Center and Community Gardens on the East Side.

Chemo and Henry formed the People's Legal Defense. They were instrumental in the development of the Own Recognizance (OR) system, which allowed people who were being held in jail the opportunity of being bailed out on the strength of their own recognizance. This was especially advantageous to the poor.

In 1969, the Berets experienced a major "turning." The Fiesta de las Rosas Parade became a very important issue. The parade was to highlight and glorify the Spanish achievements in and contributions to the city of San Jose. This did not go down well with Chicanos. Yet, as Jesse stated: "They were trying to pass it off as a Chicano celebration." The Berets, along with other Chicano groups and individuals, after repeated demands to call off the parade had filed, organized a protest that would coincide with the parade. "We got some Berets from Gilroy, Salinas, Oakland, and Hayward . . . we had about 500 people including non-Beret members."

Chemo recalled: "We were standing on the edge of the parade protesting with our cards and one of the policemen had stepped on one of the lady's foot—deliberately—on a motorcycle . . . before we knew it, there was violence."

According to Jesse, "Sal was yelling in Spanish and English both for the people to calm down and back off. The cops went up to Sal and they grabbed him and started beating him up. they said he was crazy because he was yelling in Spanish and English—incoherently. They choked me and forced me into the patrol wagon. I seen a woman get beat up by two cops. This one guy, Ruben Flores, was running by me and they grabbed him by the collar and about four cops were beating him up."

Chemo remembered: "I was taken to Agnews State Hospital for speaking Spanish and English incoherently." He recalled that he was drugged with thorazine and probably would have been left there indefinitely had it not been for a few people who recognized him and assisted him in his escape.

The Berets adapted very well, considering what they went through. They remained a cohesive, tight-knit group. In fact, one result of the demonstration was the birth of La Confederacion de La Raza Unida, which was an umbrella organization for all the Chicano organizations in the area at that time. Chemo eventually became the president of the Confederacion.

The Berets also helped to establish La Raza de la Paz Park, or La Raza Park, where hundreds of Chicanos and Chicanas and their families could gather and enjoy a park they could call their own. The Berets also monitored the Fairgrounds, where they helped to maintain the peace between the "carneys," the police, and la Raza.

On the statewide level, the Berets participated in the Chicano Moratorium in East Los Angeles in August, 1970. They began to form alliances with the American-Indian movement at DQU, an all Indian Chicano College near Davis, California. They also met with the Black Panther Party in Oakland to discuss issues pertaining to Chicanos and Blacks alike.

On the national level, the Berets formed an alliance with "Corky" Gonzales and the Crusade for Justice that took place in Denver, Colorado. They met with other Black Beret organizations in New Mexico. The Berets also participated in the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, D.C., in 1969.

On the international level, the Berets organized a march from San Jose, California, to Mexico City, Mexico, led by Henry Dominguez, during which they stressed the importance of barrio unity.

The Decline

The decline of the Black Berets was brought about by external factors. I am speaking specifically about the San Jose police.

Chemo and Jesse talked about how, during the Fiesta de las Rosas Parade, Chemo was taken to Agnews State Hospital, drugged with thorazine, and left there. Jesse talked about being beaten by the cops both then and on other occasions. He mentioned the time the police burst into his home and put a rifle to his head and threatened his life in front of his family.

Thereza told how, when she initially joined the Berets, an undercover cop followed her around, chased her, and eventually shot her. She related how the police came to her after she had been taken to the hospital and tried to place the blame on Chemo. They told her he was dangerous and capable of doing anything. Then a major turning occurred.

Chemo and Henry told of being forced into exile when threats were made on their lives by the San Jose Police Department. Police then started arresting some of the members of the Berets.

The media, another factor in the decline of the Black Berets, depicted them unfavorably and, for the most part, viewed them as they were portrayed by the police. Other, more conservative, groups were also unsupportive of the Berets.

All of these external factors led to internal conflicts between individual members of the Berets who feared for their lives and the lives of their families. These factors took their toll on the family members as well.

In essence, the breakup of the Berets was brought about by external factors (police, media, etc.) which caused internal conflicts (individuals, families, etc). Although the adaptation process eventually forced the Black Berets to disband as an organization, most of the individuals continue to be actively involved in their communities in one way or another.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Organizational and Motivational Strategies of the Black Berets

The Black Berets were organized in several distinctive ways to respond to conditions affecting the Chicano community. Among the many types of organizational strategies were: establishment of a youth movement; community involvement and empowerment to participate actively in the solution of barrio problems; building of local, regional, and national coalitions; use of nationalism; and the creation, education, and practice of Indio-Chicano identity and spirituality.

The organizational strategies used for the youth movement included the formation of the East Side Boys Club. This served as an outlet for barrio youth by allowing them to participate in extracurricular activities. The student walkouts at Roosevelt Junior High School were organized to fight segregation in the schools. The Black Berets also supported the Chicano student unions at San Jose City College and San Jose State University. The main goal of these student unions was to respond to racism and discriminatory practices, including underrepresentation of Chicano students, staff, and faculty, and to promote the idea of a Chicano Studies curriculum. The Junior Berets was composed of youth who supported the Black Berets but were too young to join the association. Another strategy regarding the youth movement was the

unification of gangs and barrio youth by means of spiritual walks, rallies, and conferences.

The youth were purposely included in the movement because (1) they were looked upon as the potential future leaders, (2) they had a wealth of energy and were enthusiastic about participating, (3) they were questioning, more bold, and less constrained, and (4) they were more militant.

The Berets organized around local barrio needs, using nonviolent but direct action. Initially, they began by distributing milk to needy families at low cost. They cleaned people's yards. Community gardens were set up to beautify the community. Monitors were established throughout the community to help curb police brutality on the East Side of San Jose. The OR (own recognizance) program was created to help low-income individuals to get released from jail at no cost. The Berets were also supportive of the People's Legal Defense Program, which assisted low-income families in the community with their legal problems. Emergency drug abuse clinics were set up to alleviate the problems caused by the use of PCP and other drugs, including alcohol. Work was also done with the Pinto Union (prisoners from local prisons).

Cultural education programs were conducted with Project Unidos at San Antonio Elementary School. Raza de la Paz Park was another project that the Berets were influential in establishing; this project provided the Chicanos with a place in which they could enjoy themselves. The Berets felt that organizing around community needs was essential if they wished to gain the support of the community and, eventually, become more effective in meeting those needs. They also felt they must

respond not only on an intellectual level but on an emotional level as well.

The Berets helped to build coalitions. Locally and regionally, they established ties with United People Arriba, Casa Legal, MECHA, MASC, the Committee for Chicano rights, and La Confederacion de la Raza Unida. Bonds were established with other Black Beret chapters, the Brown Berets, the LA Moratorium Committee, the United Farm Workers, the American Indian Movement, DQ University, and the Black Panther Party.

On the national level, they established ties with "Corky" Gonzales and the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado, the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, D.C., and Reies Lopez Tijerina and Tierra Amarilla in New Mexico. These organizational ties not only strengthened their local base, but also allowed them to support similar struggles in other areas. In return, they received both local and outside support for their cause.

On the issue of nationalism, the Berets became involved in the protest against the Fiesta de las Rosas parade. The organizers of the parade, who were not representative of the Chicano community, had initially intended the parade to represent the Chicano community. In reality, however, it glorified the Spanish, who were the conquerors of the indigenous populations of Mexico and parts of the southwestern United States. The protest was an affirmation of Chicanos as indigenous peoples and a negation of the Spanish as colonizers. The different cultural programs, events, and teatros also expressed the nationalism of the Chicanos. Another manifestation of the nationalism expressed by the Berets was their involvement with the Confederacion de la Raza Unida,

which served as an umbrella organization for Chicano groups throughout San Jose.

In his book, *La Causa Politica* (1974), Garcia details the Black Beret Organization from New Mexico's 12-point program and platform, which ran along the same lines as the San Jose chapter's program. Among the main points listed were (1) self-determination and liberation for all Chicanos in the United States of America, (2) self-determination for all Latinos and Third-World peoples, (3) community control of their institutions and land, and (4) true education in the Mestizo culture and the Spanish language.

Much was said about the issue of Indio-Chicano identity and spirituality throughout the interviews. In the book, *A Basic Call to Consciousness* (1977), the Hau De No Sau Nee (Iroquois Confederacy) regard spiritualism as the highest form of political consciousness. To this end, we see that the Black Berets adopted an Indian world-view toward land, water, air, humans, animals, plants, and, of course, The Great Spirit.

The Berets supported land struggles in Oregon and Tierra Amarilla. They supported the fight for fishing rights. The Berets worked with the American Indian Movement and DQ University, and eventually participated in the Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. They took part in drumming and singing. Both Chemo Candelaria and Henry Dominguez participated in the most sacred of these events, the Sun Dance. During the interviews, participation by the Black Berets in spiritual walks and runs was often mentioned. Obviously, the Black Berets used a variety of organizational strategies to empower Chicanos.

Conclusion

Among the principal legacies of the Chicano movement is the positive self-identity that the movement fostered among Chicanos. Such ethnic pride helped propel the demands for socioeconomic and political reform, and for liberation. Although the movement did not bring the sweeping changes some had envisioned, it did succeed in educating the general public about the Chicanos. It also significantly improved avenues of advancement in higher education, employment, and business, and brought about major civil rights gains. The Chicano movement reflected the aspirations and frustrations of the nation's second-largest minority and became a vehicle for advancing the cause of social justice.

One of the many things to be learned from the Black Berets is that for the Chicanos to be effective, they must organize around concrete local demands; they must be more responsive to oppression, both intellectually and emotionally.

It is necessary to see the Chicano movement as a spiritual, rather than a political, movement. One must learn to de-colonize one's thinking and way of life, and substitute, instead, an Indian way of life and spirituality.

Last, but certainly not least, the Black Berets have taught the Chicanos that they can empower themselves. There is no need to be dependent on the dominant societies, institutions, and mode of life.

GLOSSARY

A la chingada, The hell with it

Aztlan, Mythical homeland of the Aztecs, said to be in the Southwestern United States

barrio, neighborhood, ghetto

bronco(s), brute(s)

campo, camp

carga, heroin, drugs

carney, carnival worker

CET, Center for Employment Training, located in San Jose, California

charro(s), Mexican cowboy(s)

chicharo(s), pea(s)

chingones, big shots

concilio, council

Confederacion de la Raza Unida, Confederation of the United Race

de la paz, of the peace

DQU, Denadiwah Quetzalcoatl University, an Indian and Chicano College near Davis, California

drogas, drugs

el parke, the park

folklórico, folkloric

gente, people

grupo, group

indígena, indigenous

jacalitos, shacks

la junta, the meeting

la pinta, the joint (prison)

MACSA, Mexican-American Community Services Agency

MECHA, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (Chicano student group)

mestizo, mixed blood, Indian and Spanish

mujeres, women

norte, north

Norteños, from the North, Northerners

pachuco, bad dude

pleitos, fights

quetes, guns, rifles

rancherito, ranch

rasquatches, low life

respeto, respect

sabes, do you understand? do you know what I mean?

Sal Si Puedes, "Get Out If You Can" (barrio in East San Jose)

sur, south

veteranos, veterans

Zarape, a night club in San Jose

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