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ADELANTE!

MEXICO SOLIDARITY & CHICANO LIBERATION



ANNEXATION: How the U.S. Became A Superpower

- 1 What is Liberation Road?
- 3 The U.S. Annexation of Mexico's Northern Territories

Poetry by
Joe Navarro &
Bill Gallegos

Booklet 3 in an English & Spanish series from

Liberation Road/El Camino Para La Liberación

What is Liberation Road?

Liberation Road is a nationwide revolutionary political organization working to achieve a socialist United States. We are multi-racial and multi-generational, organizing around issues that affect the lives of working and oppressed people. One of our principal goals is to build unity among like-minded socialist organizations and individuals so that we can more effectively face the current challenge from the racist right-wing and neo-fascist social movement, led by Donald Trump, even as we work for a truly fundamental transformation of our society.

We live in a country where economic and political control of our lives resides with a small handful of multi-billionaires, nearly all of whom are white men. This tiny cabal determines,

through their massive influence over who gets elected to office — who gets to vote, whether women have control over their own bodies, whether people of color can be massively incarcerated or even gunned down with impunity by the police, and how the tremendous wealth produced by US workers will be used.

Doctor Martin Luther King correctly characterized US capitalist society in his 1968 speech at Riverside Church as the “greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.” Today the United States has over one thousand military bases abroad, causing violence, death and destruction in the Middle East and Africa, while supporting Israel’s genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza. The US ruling elite continue to expand the trillion-dollar military

“**We are multi-racial and multi-generational, organizing around issues that affect the lives of working and oppressed people.**”



**LIBERATION
ROAD**
EL CAMINO PARA LA LIBERACIÓN

“Over the past 150+ years the U.S. has continued to plunder Mexico’s resources & super-exploit its labor, in Mexico itself, and in the sweatshops of our own nation.”

budget. This even as millions of our people go hungry, lack housing, and our schools, hospitals, and necessary social services remain horrendously under-funded. All while they maintain their addiction to the fossil fuels which absolutely threatens the existence of all life on our planet.

Liberation Road firmly believes that none of this is inevitable or without alternative. We are working to achieve a socialist society — one based on three basic principles: genuine democracy, true equality for all races and nationalities, genders, and abilities, and an economy based on people’s needs not profit, with control of that economy in the hands of working people and their allies. We believe that to achieve socialism we must build the broadest possible unity from all the various sectors of our society, that we must be internationalist and support all peoples and nations who desire genuine independence and sovereignty. We must center the fight against racism and national oppression as the best path to unite our multi-racial working class and to develop the one alliance that can defeat our capitalist oppressors — that of the working class movement and the liberation movements of oppressed people of color.

As one important expression of our internationalism Liberation Road initiated the Mexico Solidarity Project (MSP) as a vehicle for building unity between the vibrant social movements in Mexico and our struggles here in the US. Mexico and the US share a

nearly 2,000-mile border. We also share a tortured history dating back to the 1840’s when the US annexed nearly half of Mexico’s territory, and began the systematic oppression of its conquered Indigenous and Mexican residents. Over the past 150+ years the US has continued to plunder Mexico’s resources and super-exploit its labor, in Mexico itself, and in the sweatshops of our own nation.

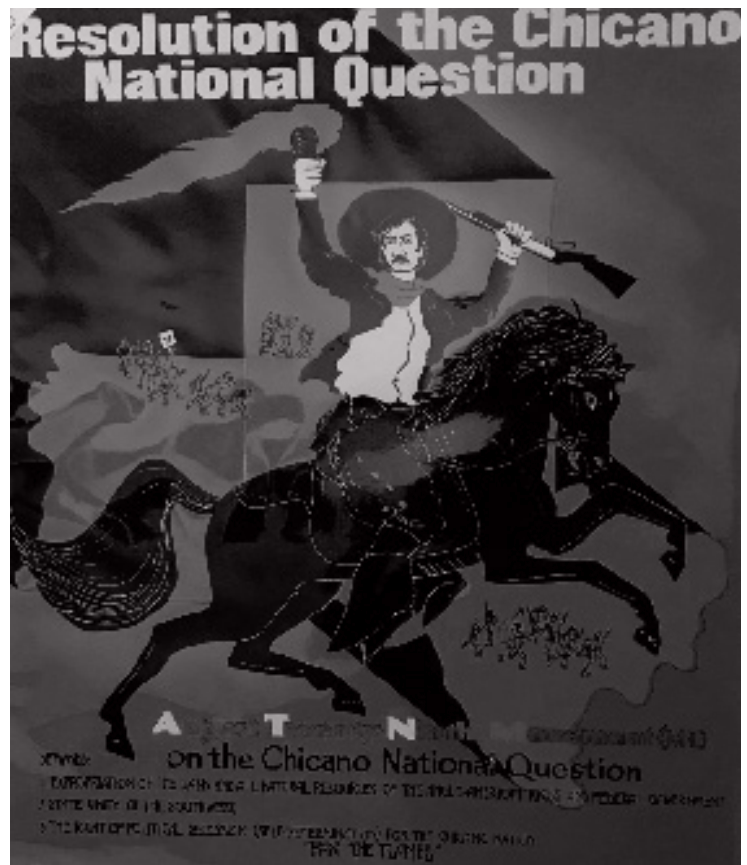
Mexico is now in an exciting period that they call the 4th Transformation, a comprehensive project of social and economic justice led by the government of the Morena Party and Mexican President Andre Manuel Lopez Obrador. We believe that if we can help to build strong ties across our borders we can provide critical support for the Mexican people, and gain an important ally for our effort to transform our society. Towards that end we must say: Si Se Puede! ■

The Historical and Political Significance of the U.S. Annexation of Mexico's Northern Territories

Bill Gallegos

Liberation Road

This article is based on my presentation given at a “Solidarity with the People of México” event September, 2019 in Los Angeles. In several respects this presentation is a critique of the US left, including the socialist left, that has ignored the importance of the 1848 annexation of México’s northern territories. This failure to analyze the significance of annexation for US economic and political development, the under-development of México, and the evolution of an oppressed Chicano Nation within US borders remains a strategic weakness of our movement. Most organizations in the US left, including communist and “new communist organizations” paid little or no theoretical attention to these matters, or – in the case of Chicanos and Mexicans in the US – narrowed the question primarily to an immigrant rights issue, or an even more narrowly-defined labor issue. Current events in México and at the US border have forced the question onto the political landscape, and yet the left has been largely unable to offer leadership or a coherent response to both the Trump Administration’s ethnic cleansing campaign, or to the new progressive political developments in México with the election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador and the Morena Party.



Poster from the '70's by the August Twenty Ninth Movement (ATM) presenting their position and literature on the Chicano National Question

“ Unless we understand and focus on the strategic significance of the interlocking histories and connections between the peoples in the geographic areas that were once Mexican, and now are part of the U.S., we will not win.”



Native American indigenous cultures map by Paul Mirocha via ancient-origins.net

This new piece from Liberation Road is our latest contribution to the US left and progressive movements in our organization’s efforts to define a strategy toward achieving socialism. It is connected to earlier contributions from our predecessor organizations: Fan the Flames, The Struggle for Chicano Liberation, and The Sunbelt Strategy and Chicano Liberation. It highlights the importance of our struggle to dismantle US imperialism and support the struggle of the nearly 40 million Chicanas and Chicanos in the US; to grasp the strategic importance of linking that struggle with left and progressive social movements in México; and to deepen our Sunbelt Strategy analysis of several years ago. This strategy is rooted among not only the Chicano-Mexicano people in the Southwestern US, but with the more than 25 million African Americans in the US South. The Sunbelt is also home to the largest Indigenous populations within US borders, as well as the largest concentrations of Asian Pacific Islanders, and large concentrations of white workers.

Foundational to this history are the original peoples that populated the hemisphere thousands of years before 1492, before the origins of a Mexican state, before the US annexation of Northern México. Resisting the hundreds of years of extermination campaigns by Spain, by México, by the United States of America that decimated their populations, native peoples have always fought back. Their long memories and knowledge of their ancestors’



Mural of Emiliano Zapata on Federalismo Avenue, Guadalajara, Mexico.

histories are the foundation of their tradition of resistance, and of their dignity.

Unless we understand and focus on the strategic significance of the interlocking histories and connections between the peoples in the geographic areas that were once Mexican and now are part of the US, we will not win.

U.S. Expropriation of Mexican Land 1845 - 1848

There is an important series of events in U.S. history that receives very little attention as to its tremendous historical and

contemporary significance: the annexation of México's northern territories by the United States, beginning with the Mexican state of Texas in 1845, and virtually half of México after a short, unjust and inglorious war, ratified in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. These territories include the states of Nuevo México, Nevada, Arizona, California, Texas, Utah, and western Colorado.

The first phase was the genocide of Native peoples and the seizure of their lands and resources, clearing the way for European settlement. The second was the importation and exploitation of

Africans as slave labor to kick-start the US capitalist economy. And the third phase that laid the basis for eventual US global hegemony was the defeat of México in the Mexican-American War of 1846 – 1848 and the subjugation of Mexicans in the Southwestern United States.

The annexation of México's northern lands, largely through military aggression (labeled by Ulysses S. Grant as "imperialist" and opposed by then Congressman Abraham Lincoln) had three major outcomes:

1. It enabled the United States

“ If México’s northern territories not been seized, the U.S. might well have become a second or third-rate power like Spain or France, but hardly the super-power of today.”

of America to become the dominant capitalist superpower in the world.

The United States spread its reach from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast, as it proclaimed was its God-given right (Manifest Destiny), thereby allowing for a vast expansion of the Anglo population as primarily settler colonists of the newly-acquired territories. The US war against México was motivated primarily by the Southern US slaveocracy, which hungrily sought new territories for its plantation economy

and the lucrative slave trade.

If México’s northern territories not been seized, the United States might well have become a second or third-rate power like Spain or France, but hardly the super-power of today. Through this annexation, the United States acquired some of the most fertile agricultural lands in the world, lands also rich in oil, coal, uranium, gold, silver, copper and other mineral deposits.

Profoundly important for its ascension to a global powerhouse, the USA acquired maritime access to trade and resource extraction along the entire Pacific Rim. Otherwise, it would not have controlled ports on the Pacific.

2. It subordinated México to US interests

Before the US war of aggression against México, the two nations were roughly co-equal in size. México owned the gateways to the Pacific, and the rich natural resources necessary for capitalist development.

Due largely to the loss of its northern territories, México effectively became a neo-colony of the US, a dependent nation of the Global South. The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 ratified this historic theft. México now was confronted with a nearly 2000-mile imposed border with a militarily superior power. The movement of people from one side to the other became restricted.

Before the war with the US, México had won its independence from Spain only 25 years prior,



Map of Mexico, pre-1847



Detail of Diego Rivera's "History of Mexico" depicts Emiliano Zapata and other leaders carrying the Zapatista slogan "Land and Liberty" 1935

in 1821. Its first black president (ours not until 2008!), Vicente Guerrero, abolished slavery in 1829. While México has had its own internal struggles and may have had conservative politics dominate even without US interference, it certainly would have been a more sovereign nation less prone to US meddling.

3. The Annexation of México's northern territories led to the evolution of a new oppressed nationality: the Chicano/Mexicano people.

The Chicano/Mexicano people

have evolved as a distinct and oppressed nationality, separated for generations from their homeland (although family ties have always been maintained). The white-supremacist capitalist class prevented them from assimilating as equals with the dominant European majority and thereby from enjoying the rights and freedoms accorded to whites.

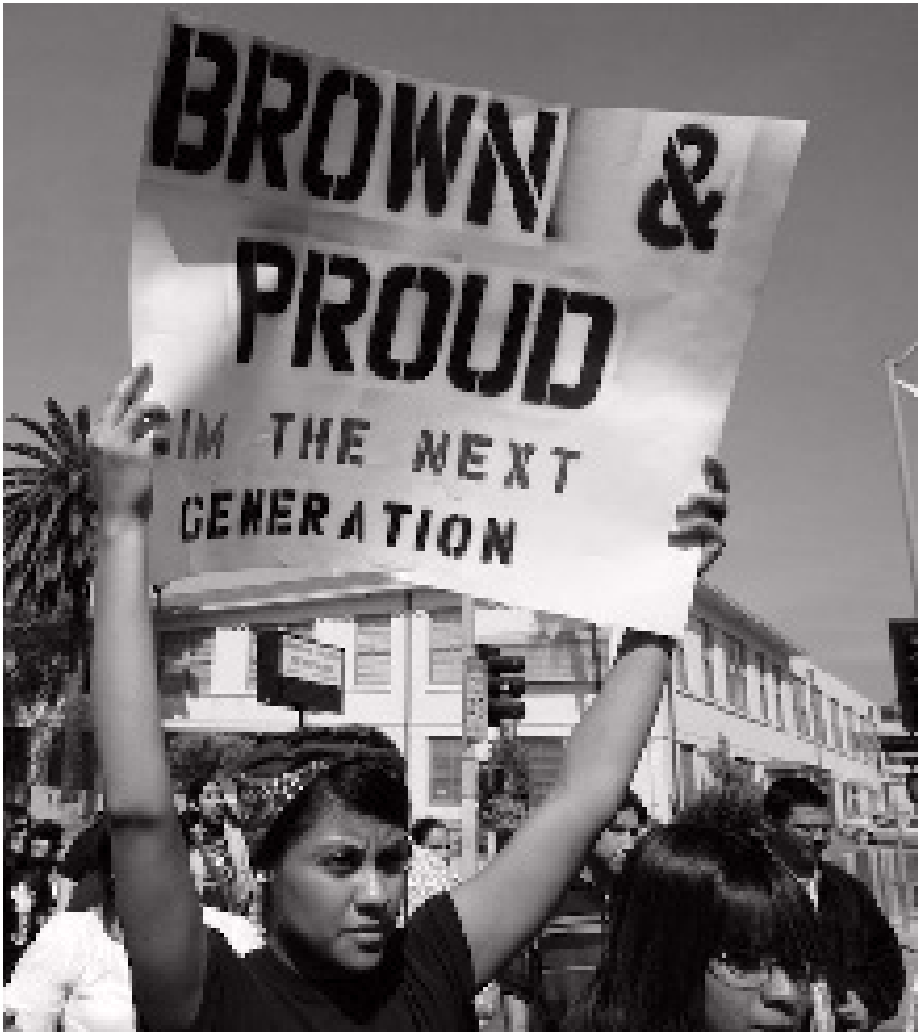
Following annexation, the United States consolidated its conquest through a policy of terrorism, bribery, and trickery. While the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo promised that existing landowners in what became US

The Annexation of México's northern territories led to the evolution of a new oppressed nationality: the Chicano/Mexicano people. ”

Untitled

Where did I come from? You ask.
I came from a great civilization,
a people who knew what day it was while
the rest of the world did not
I came from a people who knew
where the earth fit in relation to the universe
I came from a civilization
of great art and advanced culture
a people with advance mathematics
and structures which were symmetrical to the sun
I came from a great civilization
which has survived brutal conquests
I have survived forced bastardization
at the point of a sword
I came from a civilization
that fought for independence from three foreign nations
in one century alone!
I have survived a bloody annexation
and to this day I maintain my identity
against pressure to become assimilated
I came from a civilization
which has been here
since the beginning of time
I am the heir to the traditions of
Cuauhtémoc, Benito Juárez, Emiliano Zapata
and Emma Tenayuca!
I am indigenous to this land!
and now, I hear the voices of stupidity,
whose narrow national chauvinistic words
come passing through their ignorant lips,
as they tell me, to go back, where I came from

Joe Navarro
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“Ninety percent of the 37 million Chicano people in the U.S reside in the historic pre-annexation areas...”

Mexicano/Chicano Resistance Across Borders

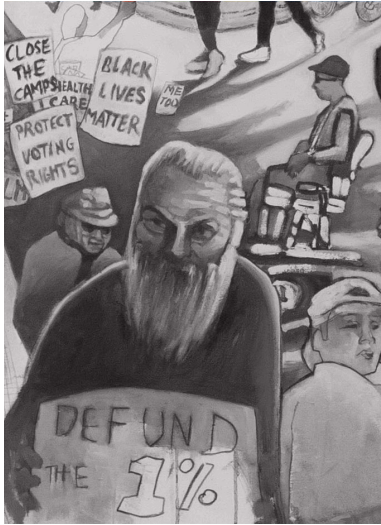
Ninety percent of the 37 million Chicano population in the US reside in the historic pre-annexation areas: Texas, California, Arizona, Nuevo México, and Colorado. Over the last several decades they have been joined by significant numbers of immigrants and refugees from Central America, who often live in the same neighborhoods, send their children to the same public schools, work in many of the same low-wage jobs, and suffer from the same structures of oppression as their Chicano sisters and brothers. These geographic areas of historic Chicano concentration are the Chicano homeland, *la patria, la nación*. With our blood, sweat, and tears, Chicano labor has built much of this area’s economy, its agricultural system, its transportation, **continued on page 12**

territories would not lose ownership of their land, those promises were not kept. Mexicans were stripped of their assets: 525,000 square miles (1,359,744 square kilometers) of land were taken through force, murder, trickery. The lack of assets and basic rights created a subordinate racialized group whose main option was to become a cheap labor force for the new white-owned agricultural enterprises.

Ensuing laws and practices institutionalized inequalities for the Chicano people. These included the denial of their language and culture, residential segregation, inferior public education (like

African Americans, they also had to sue to gain admission to white-only schools), racist credit and banking systems, police and state repression, denial of voting rights, job discrimination, and so on. Today, these basic structures remain in place and maintain inequality for Chicanos in all realms of US economic, political, cultural, and social life.

Because of the early abolition of slavery in México and the right of Mexican women to own land, something not allowed in the US at that time, Blacks and women also lost rights due to annexation and suffered greater oppression than they would have in México.



LA MORATORIA CHICANA—

UN INCENDIO QUE NUNCA MUERE

Bill Gallegos September 1991



Waves crashing through the streets of a hot and smoggy barrio.
Thunder/thunder ... pounding along the shoreline of poverty. La Playa de Opresión.
Raza Si! Guerra No! / Raza Si! Guerra No! / Raza Si! Guerra No!
An ancient sound; a holy sound: un grito por la paz.

We will die for you no more. Our blood will no longer flow for bankers and crooks.
Our flesh will never again rot for pitiful dreams of stolen wealth.
We will continue to die; but we will die in a noble way ... we will die fighting you.

25,000 of us say, "Hell no. We Won't Go!"
But we will stay
And fight you.
We will sacrifice our youth/La Primavera, to fight you;
To build on your ruins something beautiful,
Untouched by your corruption.

Raza Si! Guerra No! Raza Si! Guerra No! Raza Si! Guerra No!
A new prayer / a new song / a new poem / a new dream.....
For our homeland / nuestra gente / nuestra Nación.



Don't call me wetback.
 Don't talk about Spics, beaners, and dirty Mexicans.
 Don't tell me about "my place".
 This is our place / our barrio / our colonia / our comunidad;
 Racist / earth-destroyer/dying boss of a dying empire.
 You better watch yourself here.

25.000 in a Moratorium Against Your War.
 We will fight you/To the Death:
 the toilers / seekers of knowledge / creators of Art /
 The youthful future of our people / experienced teacher of past generations ...
 ALL, ALL: WE WILL ALL FIGHT YOU!
 Nuestra Guerra es Aqui! Nuestra Guerra Es Aqui! Aqui estamos y no nos vamos.

You attack.
 2000 cops sent to kill us.
 Mindless, they shoot / kill / maim / burn / march on the dignity of our jefitos.
 Yes, you did murder four of our sons: Salazar, Ward, Diaz, and Montag
 But look how they rise from the grave!
 Watch their faces in the thousands who throw stones through your cowardice;
 Who torch your ragged inhumanity.

Can you see their somber warning as they live again?
 Can't you see the outlines of their souls
 In the flames which raise bold tongues to heaven?

The Moratorium / La Moratoria: the fire that will never die.



Details from "Signs of the Times"
 painting by Victoria Hamlin

tation, energy, and manufacturing infrastructures.

But oppression breeds resistance! Chicano resistance is comprehensive and ubiquitous: union organizing and strikes, armed struggle, broad and diverse cultural forms (Spanish language press, media, art, music, teatro, etc.), legal challenges, grassroots fights for economic and educational inclusion, for immigrant rights, and for environmental and gender justice. Today, resistance has also taken the form of electoral organizing.

As a result, Chicanos have become a major force in the electoral arena. On the one hand they are wooed by politicians. But on the other, the ruling class has stepped up efforts to restrict our vote through gerrymandering and voter suppression laws, especially in states like Texas and Arizona where we are fast becoming a majority. The backlash is worse than that: the racist right wing, sometimes referred to as the New Confederacy, has, under Donald Trump, unleashed an ethnic cleansing campaign against our people, a campaign that has incarcerated hundreds of thousands, includes the imprisonment and death of children, massive family separation, growing rates of deportation. These measures have fomented a pervasive atmosphere of fear in Chicano barrios – and have sparked organizing efforts in defense of our brothers and sisters.

The ferocity of the attacks serves to prove that Chicanos pose an existential threat to the US em-

pire. We are not only a young, growing and dynamic population, but are connected by a thousand ties – historical, familial, cultural, economic, ideological – to the dynamic and growing social movements in México. All this makes more clearly evident the necessity to unify the Chicano movement and to raise once again our program for national rights to land, self-government, and control of our economy. The long history of US interference in México and its oppression of Mexicanos/Chicanos in the US makes clear the strategic importance of building solidarity with the people of México whose fates have been connected to those on the Northern side of the border. Together, we can be a mighty force.

Solidarity with the people of México is a central element of our internationalist strategy to build unity among all oppressed and working peoples of the US and beyond. Imposed borders, artificial lines in the sand, cannot stop us. We can build opposition to US interference in México, open space for México to exercise its sovereignty, and remove barriers between peoples with the same historical roots. In our striving to end imperialism, working people can construct societies that are just, egalitarian, peaceful, and genuinely democratic, in which no nationality or gender is privileged, that live in close connection and harmony with Mother Earth, and most especially that are Sin Fronteras. ¡Si Se Puede! ■

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edited by
Bill Gallegos
Meizhu Lui
Carl Davidson

Spanish edition edited and translated by
Bruce Hobson

original art contributed by
Victoria Hamlin

designed by
Lucy Clarke

COVER IMAGE:
"Woman with a flag"
by Tina Modotti
1928

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