

Philip Abbott Luce:

I now want to introduce Luis Miguel Valdez, who will give a short statement on behalf of the Mexican-American students who were on the trip. (Students applaud).

Luis Miguel Valdez:

There are two of us, Luis Miguel Valdez and Roberto Rubalcava. And I'd just like to point out that we're from San Jose, California, which is the hometown of Albert Alvarez, Jr. who was shot down in Vietnam.

Speaker 16:

Where are you from?

Luis Miguel Valdez:

San Jose.

Speaker 17:

San Jose.

Luis Miguel Valdez:

This is a statement of Mexican-American students. The Mexican in the United States has been and continues to be no less a victim of American imperialism than his impoverished brothers of Latin America. In the word to the second declaration of Havana, tell him of misery, futile exploitation, illiteracy, starvation, wages, and he will tell you that you speak of Texas. Tell him of unemployment, the policy of repression against the workers, discrimination, oppression by the oligarchies, and he will tell you that you speak of California. Tell him of U.S. domination in Latin America, and he will tell you that he knows that shark and what he devours because he has lived in its very entrails.

The history of the American Southwest provides a brutal panorama of nascent imperialism. The uninformed need only look to Fidel Castro's address of July 26, 1964 in Santiago de Cuba which we had the honor to witness and in which he said, "Mexico is the country robbed of half of its territory by the United States." Mexico is the country that has suffered in its flesh and in its blood from the claws of imperialism. Between 1838 and 1853 to be more exact, the North Americans stole 949,808 square miles of land unimaginably rich in agriculture, oil, and mineral resources and gave the Mexican government, which had no choice in the matter, a mere \$25 million dollars. This territory is now occupied by the states of Texas, Nevada, Utah, California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado. This same territory has spawned Barry Goldwater and Lyndon B. Johnson, who are representative of the white population that squatted on the land and usurped it acre by acre with the full support of their government.

In addition to the land, the native population of Mexicans and Indians also passed into Yankee hands. Saved from actual slavery by one of the provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, these natives nonetheless became the vassal victims of merciless exploitation, and in the case of the Indians, of utter annihilation. It was in the Southwest the systematic genocide of the American Indian reached its ultimate stage with the deliberate campaign of the U.S. cavalry. There, emaciated and exhausted, wasted by war, starvation, and flight, the last warriors made their final desperate stand in the 1870s, only to have their survivors herded into reservations like animals.

A few, as in the case of New Mexico, escaped annihilation by mixing with the Mexicans, but even that was not much of an escape. The Mexicans, or rather the Mexican-Americans, were now citizens of the United States and thus immediately accessible for legal exploitation. Betrayed by the upper classes who married off their daughter to as many gringos as they could find, the Mexican-American peasants became subject to new masters. As the hard knuckled Yankee farmer divided up the old latifundias [inaudible], the peasants were stripped of the comparative protection of feudalism without escaping the evils of peonage.

Utilizing these peasants was a perfect source for cheap stoop labor. Yankee farmers became agricultural industrialists and instituted the monopolies that today exist throughout the Southwest. The Mexican by contrast was left to his own fate, without a government, without representation, without hope. Squalor, poverty, starvation, abysmal illiteracy, discrimination, and migrant labor are his wages in America. During the last hundred years since the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-speaking leaders have been constantly deported to Mexico. Most of his English-speaking leaders are not leaders at all. Americanized beyond recall, they neither understand or care about the basic Mexican-American population which has an identity of its own.

As sons of Mexican manual laborers in California, we have traveled to revolutionary Cuba in defiance of the travel ban in order to emphasize the historical and cultural unanimity of the Latin American peoples. Having no real leaders of our own, we accept Fidel Castro. We believe the example of Cuba will inevitably bring socialist revolution to the whole of Latin America. After a two-month visit to Cuba, we can now see why the U.S. government has put a travel ban on Cuba. It is because the social problems characteristic of Latin America are being solved there.

This is the first Latin American country to provide free education for its mass population. This is the first Latin American country that is feeding all of its people and providing work for them. This is the first Latin American country whose leadership is solely dedicated to the solving of social crimes committed by imperialism upon an underdeveloped country, and at the same time not interested in personal wealth.

We two members of the Mexican-American community present the following points in the form of a declaration. One, that Cuba as an example of social revolution for all of Latin America; two, that we support the position of Mexico in keeping relations with Cuba in spite of U.S. intimidation via the UOAS; three, that the international position of Cuba and the voice of Fidel Castro are making clear to the whole world the social crimes committed in Latin America by U.S. imperialism, and at the same time is making clear the solution to those social crimes, social revolution. We support Fidel Castro as the voice of Latin America declaring to the world with dignity that social justice must be given to Latin America. As Mexican-American citizens of the U.S., we petition the United States government to stop immediately its aggressive policy in Cuba and to allow our brothers in Latin America to choose their own course in solving their social problems. Thank you.

End Part Three – [00:05:42:88]