

Statements by Jose Angel Gutierrez
San Antonio Evening News
April 11, 1969
Reporter Kemper Diehl

MAYO LEADER WARNS OF VIOLENCE, RIOTING

Statement made by Mexican Youth Organization: (MAYO)

April 10, 1969

“MAYO has found that both federal and religious programs aimed at social change do not meet the needs of the Mexicanos of this state. Further we find that the vicious cultural genocide being inflicted upon La Raza by gringos and their institutions not only severely damage our human dignity but also make it impossible for La Raza to develop its right of self-determination. For these reasons, top priority is given to identifying and exposing the gringo. We also promote the social welfare of Mexicanos through education designed to enlarge the capabilities of indigenous leaders. We hope to secure our human and civil rights to eliminate bigotry and racism, to lessen the tensions in our barrios and combat the deterioration of our communities. Our organization, largely comprised of youth, is committed to effecting meaningful social change. Social change that will enable La Raza to become masters of their destiny, owners of their resources, both human and natural, and a culturally and spiritually separate people from the gringo. Only through this program, we of MAYO see the possibility of surviving this century as a free and complete family of Mexicanos. We will not try to assimilate into this gringo society in Texas nor will we encourage anyone else to do so. Rather MAYO once again asked of friends here and across the nation to assist us in our actions. We intend to become free as a people in order to enjoy the abundance of our country and share it with those less fortunate. MAYO will not engage in controversy with fellow Mexicanos regardless of how unfounded and vindictive their accusations may be. We realize that the effects of cultural genocide takes many forms some Mexicanos will become psychologically castrated, others will become demagogues and gringos as well as others will come together, resist and eliminate the gringo. We will be with the latter.”

Mario Compean, Committee of Barrio Betterment

Norman Guerrero, University of the Barrio

Juan Rocha, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund

Jose Angel Gutierrez, Staff Investigator and Community Involvement Specialist for Mexican American Legal Defense Fund

Comments made by Gutierrez during news conference after statement was presented to the media

Reporter: What is your definition of a gringo?

Gutierrez: A person or an institution who has a certain policy or program or attitudes that reflect bigotry, racism, discord and prejudice and violence.

Reporter: Are the majority of Anglo-Americans gringos?

Gutierrez: According to the Kerner report, we could say yes to that answer. The majority of the ones here in this state are gringos.

Reporter: What was meant by the phrase eliminate the gringos in the MAYO statement?

Gutierrez: You can eliminate an individual in various ways. You can certainly kill him, but that is not our intent at the moment. You can remove the basis of support that he operates from, be it economic, political, or social. That is what we intend to do.

Reporter: If nothing else works you are going to kill all the gringos?

Gutierrez: We will have to find out if nothing else will work.

Reporter: And then you are going to kill us all?

Gutierrez: If it doesn't work. I would like to add to you that if you label yourself a gringo then you are one of the enemy.

Reporter: Are you a gringo because you have showed racial animosity toward Anglo Americans.

Gutierrez: I do not accept the premise that I display racial animosity. I don't think I have. I think I am identifying the problem and attempting to point out what the problem is.

Reporter: Can you say that “some of my best friends are Anglos”?

Gutierrez: That is a racist statement. I would not be that derogatory or condescending. I would say that a lot of people are friends of mine and some of them are Anglos.

Reporter: Does the MAYO group seek a separate society?

Gutierrez: I did not mention society. I said culturally and spiritually we are distinct and we don't wish to be any part of this racist society. We have something beautiful to begin with. I want to emphasize that the MAYO aim is to resist any further cultural genocide.

Reporter: Does MAYO identify with the people of Mexico in its aims?

Gutierrez: If they share the same values, yes. We are different from the Mexicans in Mexico in that we have been able to develop and adapt to the local situation here and as a consequence we have modified many of our value systems.

Reporter: If worse comes to worst, will you kill gringos?

Gutierrez: If worse comes to worst, and we have to resort to that means, it would be self defense.

Reporter: Do you hate gringos?

Gutierrez: Yes I do.

Reporter: Is there a time limit as to when it might be determined that worst had come to worst?

Gutierrez: Well, I can only make a personal decision. If the attacks on my person and my property continue as they have been doing then it will only be a matter of a few years. Last year part of my property in Crystal City was burned. Two months ago my home was burned in Crystal City. In 1963 I was kidnapped and coerced, or attempted to be coerced, by gringo elements. In the whole attempt to create an organization and movement, I have been abused and misused by a lot of people. If this continues, within a few years I will no longer try to work with anybody.

Reporter: Why have 500,000 Mexican nationals immigrated to the U.S. in the last 15 years despite the charges of the misery and degradation they faced?

Gutierrez: Maybe they don't know any better. You will find about an equal number going back.

Reporter: Who might be called the “white hats” and “black hats” in your view?

Gutierrez: In gringos, there is nobody wearing white hats. They are all a bunch of animals. Anglos who have open minds and a genuine interest in resolving the conflict and ills of the community will receive cooperation from MAYO. All they have to do is declare themselves.