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The Bandit as Revolutionary Hero

By Wayne Lutton

Afro-centric education — the attempt to foist a largely fictitious African-American history upon us — has its counterpart among our residents of Mexican descent. Chicano-activists have not gone so far as to claim that virtually every advance in philosophy, mathematics, physics, and science was the work of Latinos, but they do argue that Latino culture would have flowered magnificently had it not been for the baleful influence of European whites who settled the south-western part of the North American continent in the mid-19th century.

Gringo Justice, by Alfredo Mirandé, is representative of "Chicano-centrism." Widely used as a text in college courses in Chicano Studies and Minority Awareness, the author's thesis is that Chicanos are an exploited people who have been labeled as banditos and criminals by a white colonial system. "Gringos" are "oppressors" who "find it necessary to distort history so that it will conform to and justify the socially created order."

Mr. Mirandé, who has been a professor of sociology at the University of California at Riverside, traces the history Chicano-white legal relations since the end of the Mexican-American War. [Few recall today — and this book does not remind us — that it was Mexico that opened hostilities in 1848. At the time, British and French military observers expected Mexico to win, and the outcome was as much a sur-prise to them as it was to the warhawks in Mexico City.] The author, larding his prose with Marxist jargon, sees banditry as a form of social protest and "a response to the decline of a feudal society and the imposition of capitalism." Lawbreaking, in his view, is nothing less than noble resistance to Gringo oppression.

In his chapter, "Vigilantes, Bandits, and Revolutionaries," Mr. Mirandé portrays a number of Mexican outlaws who operated in the California and New Mexico territories as ideologically-motivated heroes. Tiburcio Vasquez of Monterey, who was hanged in 1875 after a quarter-century career of horse thieving and cattle rustling, turned to crime, students are informed, out of a concern for the protection of Mexican womanhood. Oddly, it was Rosario Leiva, a spurned mistress and wife of his first lieutenant, who played the key role in his capture and prosecution.

Another of Professor Mirandé's heroes is Joaquin Murieta, dubbed "the Robin Hood of the West." In a two-year spree, Murieta attacked white miners and ranchers in the Sonora area. Legend has it that this outburst was prompted by seeing his girl-friend ravished before his very eyes by a gang of white claim jumpers. In fact, he shot her after she deserted him for a white settler named Baker. Murieta was killed by California Rangers on July 24, 1853, and his pickled head was part of a museum collection that fell victim to the San Francisco earthquake of 1906.

In February, 1915, a Texas sheriff arrested a Mexican national by the name of Basilio Ramos, and uncovered an insurrection blueprint called *El Plan de San Diego* — something Mr. Mirandé

calls "an important document that articulated the numerous grievances of the ... [Hispanic] population in South Texas." *El Plan* called for a general uprising by non-whites, to be launched on February 20, 1915. A "liberation army" of Mexicans, blacks, Japanese (!), and Indians was to win independence from "Yankee Tyranny." Every white male over the age of 16 was to be executed, as well as all "traitors" who cooperated with the Anglo enemy."

The objective of *El Plan* was the creation of racial homelands: a black nation in the southeastern United States, a new Mexican republic in the five southwestern states, and an Indian nation based on ancestral lands. What the Japanese were to get for their efforts remains unclear. Mirandé regrets that "historians and other scholars have tended to minimize the importance of *El Plan*, or to dismiss it as a wild, unrealistic scheme."

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Turning to the present, Mirandé charges that "wanton killing" of Chicanos by the Border Patrol and local American police forces is "endemic" and that "atrocities have been committed...with relative impunity." These brutal acts remain unspecified and

undocumented. In fact, attacks by Mexicans against the Border Patrol and police throughout the Southwest are increasingly common.

The author reports that the U.S.-Mexico border now resembles a "war zone" in many sectors, especially those where illegal aliens trying to enter this country are robbed, raped, assaulted, and killed. What he fails to point out is that the perpetrators of these crimes are almost without exception other Mexican nationals or members of cross-border Latino gangs. Contrary to the impression Mirandé tries to create, immigrants are not being preyed upon by white Americans.

Mr. Mirandé informs his reader that Chicanos, like blacks, view law enforcement officers as "agents of lawlessness, injustice, and abuse." While he admits that Chicano gangs are heavily involved in America's urban drug trade, Mr. Mirandé hastens to add that Chicano crime is, in the final analysis, the result of "a clash between conflicting and competing cultures and worldviews." In the sense that traditional Western European-American culture does not countenance drug taking, public drunkenness, and territorial gang warfare, he is right.

Gringo Justice is about as far removed from neutral, academic scholarship as it is possible to get. Yet it was written with the help of a Rockefeller Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, a grant from the University of California at Riverside, a federal National Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship, and support from the Stanford Center for Chicano Research. Mr. Mirandé also acknowledges financial assistance from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), which is a tax-exempt organization liberally supported by the Ford Foundation. Moreover, the book is published by the Notre Dame Press, one of the premier Catholic university presses in the world.

This book is one of the most popular texts in the courses on "Minority Cultures" that are proliferating as required subjects on our college campuses. *Gringo Justice* serves as a sober reminder of the direction and success enjoyed by the campaign to support "diversity," "inclusion," and all the other excuses for anti-European-American propaganda. ■