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Reimagining the Mexican Revolution in the United Farm Workers'
El Malcriado (1965-1966)

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts

in

Art History, Theory, and Criticism

by

Julia Fernandez

Committee in charge:

Professor Mariana Razo Wardwell, Chair
Professor William Norman Bryson
Professor Grant Kester
Professor Shelley Streeby

2018

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University of California San Diego

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Reimagining the Mexican Revolution in the United Farm Workers'
El Malcriado (1965-1966)

by

Julia Fernandez

Master of Arts in Art History, Theory, and Criticism

University of California San Diego, 2018

Professor Mariana Razo Wardwell, Chair

This thesis is a historical and visual analysis of the United Farm Workers' (UFW) newspaper *El Malcriado* and their reimagination of the Mexican Revolution narrative to visualize the farm worker movement in the U.S. The UFW newspaper was launched during the origins of the Delano Grape Strike in 1965 to galvanize the masses. Artwork by the Mexican printing collective Taller de Gráfica Popular (TGP), photography from the Mexican Revolution, and caricatures by Chicano artists Andrew "Andy" Zermeño communicated the goals of the union through allegory, symbolism,

and satire. The first two volumes of *El Malcriado* reproduced prints from the 1940s by the TGP on the cover, which served as revolutionary allegories to visualize a transnational struggle that connected the UFW labor movement and agribusiness in the U.S. with the history of pre-colonial Mexico, Mexican Revolution, and hacienda system. Photography of Mexican generals Emiliano Zapata and Francisco “Pancho” Villa were used as symbols of revolution and leadership, but especially with Zapata, as a symbol for land rights and agrarian justice. Andy Zermeño used caricature and satire to visualize the unjust conditions and power dynamics of the farm worker, foreman, and farm owner—characters that would later be performed under the productions of playwright Luis Valdez by the farm workers themselves. I argue that the radical reimaginings of the Mexican Revolution on the pages of *El Malcriado* empower the farm workers to visualize their movement during the pivotal era of the Delano Grape Strike and identify not only their cultural origins, but also their connection with a larger global agrarian struggle and fight for workers’ rights.

Introduction

The United Farm Workers (UFW) from Delano, California led by Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, among others, gained wide public attention in 1965 with the Delano Grape Strike. The UFW was created from two organizations, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), a predominantly Mexican-American labor union, and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), a mainly Filipino labor union. The Delano Grape Strike began on September 7, 1965, when about 1500 Filipino farmworkers from AWOC went on strike against the grape growers in the fields. When growers began using Mexican and Mexican-American workers to break the strike, Larry Itliong from AWOC met with Cesar Chavez from the NFWA, so they could come together and join their strike. Chavez, originally resisted, but on September 16, 1965, the NFWA decided to join in the strike. On March 17, 1966, Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, and playwright Luis Valdez spelled out the UFW's goals for the strike as well as the identity of the union in *El Plan de Delano* in an issue of *El Malcriado*, a newspaper for the farmworker community in California's Central Valley—an essential medium to communicate activities, concerns, and union updates for the UFW.

The plan set out six proposals on how the UFW intended to end injustices for the farmworkers. First, they declared their cause a social movement and a nonviolent fight for social justice. Secondly, they sought the support of the government. Thirdly, the UFW proclaimed the support of the Church as they declared *La Virgen de Guadalupe*

the “Patroness of the Mexican people.”¹ In their fourth proposal, they acknowledged their suffering from injustices and stated that they were willing to endure more suffering to win their cause. Fifth, the UFW explained that although the union was compromised mainly of people of Mexican descent, there had to be a unity among all oppressed minorities. In their last and sixth proposal, the UFW declared themselves “sons of the Mexican Revolution, a revolution of the poor seeking bread and justice.”² The final two points in *El Plan de Delano* are especially significant to contextualize the UFW’s use of TGP prints on the covers of the first volume of *El Malcriado*. The plan asserts that the farm worker struggle in the U.S. must be in solidarity with all oppressed people, and they situate themselves as descendants of Mexican revolutionaries, imagining that their struggle is inheritably tied to Mexico’s past. The UFW expressed this idea visually by using post-revolutionary Mexican graphic artworks by El Taller de Gráfica Popular on the cover of *El Malcriado* beginning in the third issue with a print of revolutionaries coming together in song (figure 1). As the union was building support for the strike and creating its own identity for its members and the community, the newspaper was a medium to reach a large audience. Photographs from the Mexican Revolution, particularly of general Emiliano Zapata, also predominated in the newspaper, as well as artwork by UFW artist Andrew “Andy” Zermeño, who satirized the power dynamics of the farmworker, foreman, and grower. I argue that the inclusion of TGP prints, images of Zapata, and cartoons by Zermeño in the UFW newspaper not only helped identify themselves as a union and community during the pivotal period of the Delano Grape

¹ Cesar Chavez, “The Plan of Delano,” *An Organizer’s Tale: Speeches* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), p. 13.

² *Ibid*, 14.

Strike, but also historically connected them to a larger global conversation utilizing populist, graphic work for emancipatory means. In my historic and visual analysis, I compare the goals and visual strategies of the original TGP prints in Mexico to the UFW reproductions, focusing on the use of allegory by the TGP to help the UFW build their movement through four themes—solidarity among oppressed people, indigeneity, labor abuse, and a patriarchal ancestral relationship with the Mexican Revolution. I analyze both the history and the myth of Zapata, and its influence on the reimagination of Zapata’s image and representation for the farmworkers. I argue that the UFW utilize both the TGP reproductions and images of Zapata to represent a global agrarian and worker struggle. Furthermore, in the final chapter, UFW’s own artist Andrew “Andy” Zermeño creates original images to visualize the injustices of the farmworkers. I argue that Zermeño’s image continue the conversation about class struggle and populist uprising from both the TGP prints and images of the Mexican Revolution. The images in the UFW newspaper continue a transnational legacy of radical printmaking used to represent the present moment.

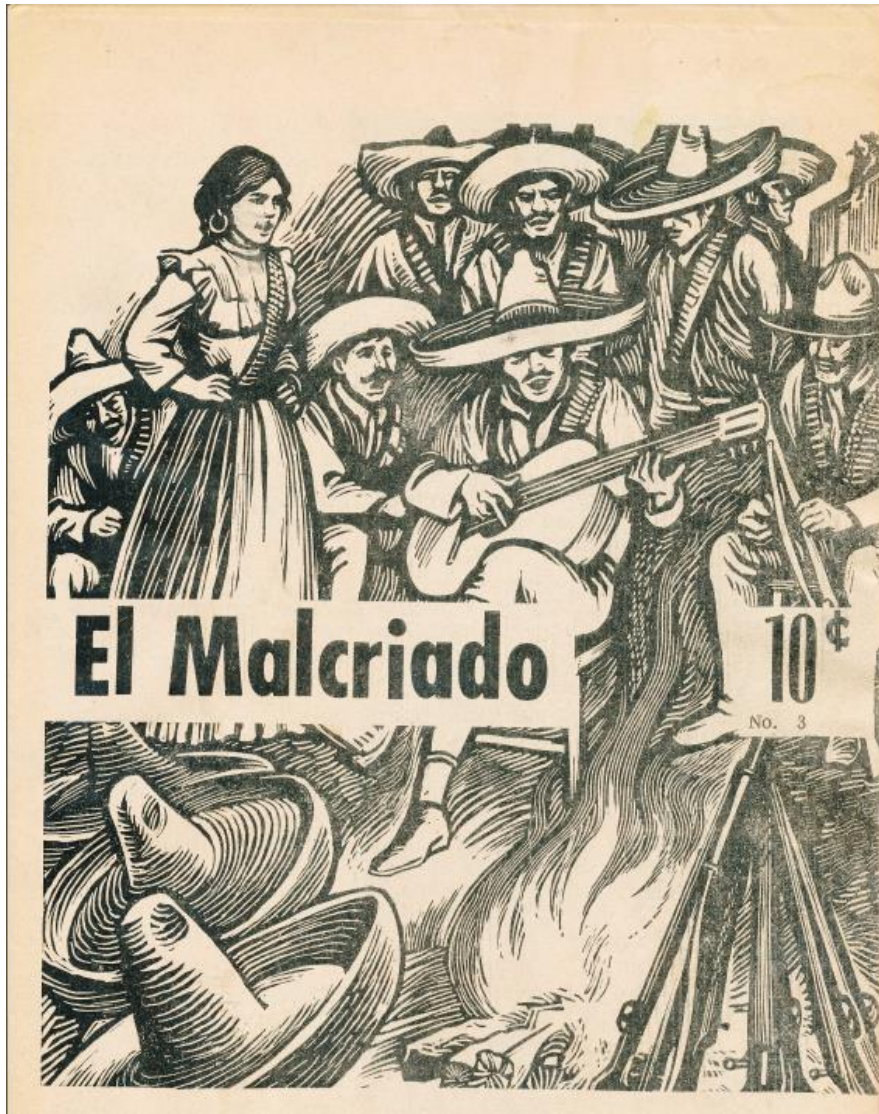


Figure 1: *El Malcriado*, issue no. 3, 1965, (original print artist and title unidentified),
Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State
University.

Chapter 1

Mexico's Taller de Gráfica Popular in *El Malcriado*

El Malcriado was founded as a bilingual newspaper for the farm workers by Cesar Chavez in late 1964, and later edited by labor activist Bill Esher from 1965 to 1967.³ Doug Adair, UFW member and co-editor of *El Malcriado*, explains, “The name ‘El Malcriado’ was reportedly taken from a radical newspaper produced in Mexico in the Revolutionary Period (c. 1910?) (or possibly, a Southern California publication of the 1920s-1930s?).”⁴ Adair also remembers that the early issues of the newspaper “drew a link between the farm worker’s struggle for justice in the U.S.A. and the peasant struggle for justice in the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920),” and furthermore:

“Chavez and Esher were enthusiastic admirers of revolutionary art that came out of the Mexican Revolution, and woodcuts and pen-and-ink art began gracing covers of the paper... There were many folks in Delano in 1965 who had personal experience with the revolution and its aftermath, and with the serfdom and pre-revolutionary hacienda system which they could compare to the system of California agribusiness.”⁵

In fact, in an issue from May 5th, 1966, on the second page of *El Malcriado*, the editors asked readers to submit stories about their family members who have fought in the revolution (figure 2).⁶ The UFW were building a narrative that connected the farm

³ Doug Adair, “El Malcriado, ‘The Voice of the Farmworker,’ Origins, 1964-1965,” March 16, 2009, UFW archives, <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/billEsher.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *El Malcriado*, no. 35, (Delano: El Taller Gráfica, May 5, 1966), 2.

workers to a Mexican history during a time of heightened discrimination against and activism by Mexican-Americans. The Mexican Revolution was especially significant to the farm workers because it resulted in the immigration of many Mexicans to the U.S. The images that resulted from the revolution in Mexico, especially those by the TGP, reflected the process of revolution, as well as the creation of a new national identity in Mexico around agrarian reforms and deliberate inclusion of indigenous populations into the historical narrative.

"We Want To Buy More Slaves"

GROWERS DEMAND BRACEROS AGAIN

The growers have started their yearly screaming for braceros. Asparagus, tomato, and strawberry growers have all started yelling, "Braceros, Si! Better Wages, No!" Like a broken record they chant the same old slogans: "Rotting crops," "No one else will work for us." But Congressional hearings last year and this year have exposed the cynical lying and hypocrisy of this vicious and brutal breed of growers, the worst in the state. Here are the facts:

It was proved that those who yelled for braceros the loudest were paying the worst wages in the state. Most workers were paid \$1.11 or less in asparagus in 1964. In 1965 it was \$1.21--the highest it has ever been. Braceros keep the wages low. Asparagus growers want 2500 braceros as a starter.

Tomato growers made a great noise last year about "not enough braceros." But they actually harvested the biggest crop in history, with the highest yields and biggest profits ever. Les Heringer, President of the California Tomato Growers, has gotten thousands of braceros in the past. When asked if he would pay higher wages this year, or recognize the union, he said, "I would never sit down at the bargain table with Cesar Chavez." "They are not the kind of people we would want to deal with," he said. (When asked about the Catholic Church and others trying to help farm workers, he said that, "They are out to stir up the Mexicans here as they did with the Negroes in the South.")

The Farm Workers Association promises California farm workers that it will use all its strength to prevent Mexican "braceros" from coming here and taking away our jobs. And we will make asparagus growers pay decent wages. Then they will get all the help they need.

El Malcriado Published every two weeks in Spanish and English by Farm Worker Press, Inc., P. O. Box 1666, Delano, Calif. Office of publication--1214 Gleason, Delano, Calif. Second class postage paid at Delano, Calif. Permit application pending. To subscribe at \$1 a year write Box 1666, Delano, Calif. This issue to number #35 dated 5-5-66.



COVER: PANCHO VILLA

Did you or any of your relatives serve in the Mexican Revolution? Do you remember any of the great generals, Villa or Zapata, coming to your town when you were young? Write to us about it... (See "New Contest", page 23).

Figure 2: *El Malcriado*, issue no. 35, page 2, May 5, 1966,

Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

The post-revolutionary art of El Taller de Gráfica Popular (TGP), produced over twenty years after the end of the Mexican Revolution, expressed the significance of agrarian revolution in Mexico's past, present, and future. Artists Leopoldo Mendez, Pablo O'Higgins, and Luis Arenal founded the TGP as a printing collective in Mexico in 1937. It was meant to "connect [the TGP's] graphic art with the immediate problems of Mexico...but also international affairs, such as the struggles for national liberation in other countries."⁷ TGP prints were characterized by their social and political themes, as well as their particular style. The style was graphic, black and white, with an emphasis on lines, as well as the positive and negative space produced by the cuts and the placement of ink on the woodblock, linoleum block, or stone, depending on the process—often lithography or woodcuts. The style was graphic and harsh. The cutting out process added to the energy behind the subject of the artworks. The subjects ranged from avant-garde abstract figures to realist arrangements, resembling photomontages. These images were ideal for newsprint. The contrast of the black ink on the light surface made the images stand out and meant they could be easily read. The lack of color forces the viewer to focus in on the subject matter. The TGP prints reproduced on the covers of *El Malcriado* included scenes of revolution, solidarity, indigeneity, labor, and motherhood, among others.

Several of the reproductions were taken from a series titled *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana (Prints of the Mexican Revolution)*, which was completed in 1946 and included eighty-five linocuts. This particular series traveled in the U.S., so it is

⁷ Deborah Caplow, *Leopoldo Méndez: Revolutionary Art and the Mexican Print*, quote by Pablo O'Higgins (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 124.

possible that the editors of *El Malcriado* came across these particular prints. The editors of the newspaper showed evidence of a background in the history of this art. The second page of *El Malcriado* usually explained the print on the cover, sometimes describing the artist's background, the subject matter of the artwork, or its connection to the farmworkers in the U.S. The series from *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana* included images focused on the Mexican Revolution. Another TGP series that was included in *El Malcriado* was *Estampas de Yucatán* from 1945.

The print titled *Mother and Child* originally made by Elizabeth Catlett in 1944 was reproduced in *El Malcriado* in their 18th issue, depicting a black mother and child (figure 3). Catlett was an African American artist who left the U.S. and relocated to Mexico to join the TGP in 1946 due to heightened government surveillance and scrutiny of political artists in the U.S. She had been living in New York previously, but as scholar Rebecca Schreiber states, “left in part because she believed that the New York art scene offered no opportunities for a black woman.”⁸ While in New York, she met some artists from the TGP, and found their artwork intriguing due to the “immediacy and accessibility of printmaking [which] allowed the Taller artists to address current events.”⁹ She “incorporate[d] techniques employed by artists at the Taller de Gráfica Popular into her work, but their art also strengthened her interest in portraying both history and contemporary life of African Americans in the United States.”¹⁰ The print shown on the 18th issue of *El Malcriado* depicts a Black Madonna

⁸ Rebecca Mina Schreiber, *Cold War exiles in Mexico U.S. dissidents and the culture of critical resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 37.

⁹ *Ibid*, 38.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 35.

and child, a religious description used by Doug Adair.¹¹ However, the image is not overtly religious, and could in fact be any mother and child—hence the general title. Like the previous print discussed, this print uses the lithographic technique, allowing for an intimacy with the subject matter. The method allows for subtle tonal gradations of color, which creates a sculptural effect. Catlett is known for abstracting images of figures of African-American women in wood and stone sculptures. This particular subject matter of an interlaced mother and child was common among her work—a symbol of unity and protection. The second page of *El Malcriado* describes this print (figure 5), stating: “While the artist, Elizabeth Catlett, paints in the manner of the Mexican Graphic Art we use in *El Malcriado*, she is not Mexican. She is a negro, born in Washington, D.C., and communicates through her art the dignity of all oppressed people.” The UFW realized the transnationalism of Catlett’s art, as their description of *Mother and Child* echoed their statements in *El Plan de Delano*: a need for unity among all oppressed minorities. The image of a mother and child depicts a maternal protective figure, through a transnational relationship among all oppressed people.

¹¹ Doug Adair, “*El Malcriado*, ‘The Voice of the Farmworker,’ Origins, 1964-1965,” March 16, 2009, UFW archives, <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/billEsher.pdf>.

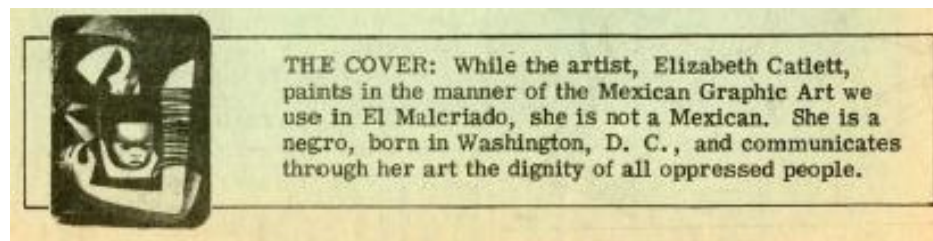
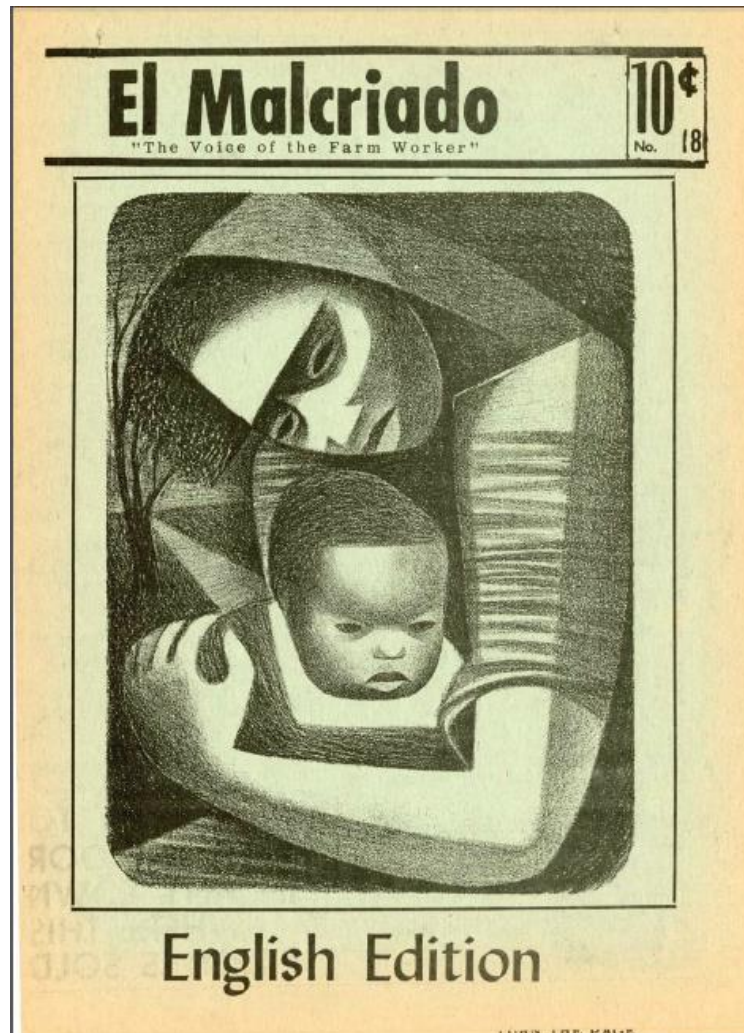


Figure 3: *El Malcriado*, issue no. 18, 1965, cover art: *Mother and Child* originally made by Elizabeth Catlett in 1944, front cover and page 2 description, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

Alfredo Zalce's prints of the Maya of the Yucatan depict the subject of dignified labor expressed through indigenous subject matter. The print titled *Henequén (Agave) Worker/Cortador de Sisal* made by Zalce for a series titled *Estampas de Yucatán* in 1945 was reproduced in *El Malcriado* in their sixth issue (figure 4). This particular series intended to "present the Maya as a dignified and contained people existing in harmony with their environment."¹² The idealization, and perhaps oversimplification, of the Maya and the use of this print in the UFW's newspaper intend to show the dignity of working the land, where struggles faced by the farmworkers are replaced with harmonious work. An image like this reminds the viewer of a simpler time where working the land meant working for one's own subsistence, rather as labor force for an *hacendado* (rancher or landowner) in Mexico or large farming corporation in the U.S. Such a utopic vision seems very extreme, especially for farmworkers in the U.S., who are not fighting for land rights or any claims to the land, but instead for better working conditions.

¹² Exhibition label, *Portfolio Cover for Estampas de Yucatán*, published by La Estampa Mexicana, 1946, Exhibition, *What May Come: The Taller de Gráfica Popular and the Mexican Political Print*, July 4-October 12, 2014, Galleries 124–127, <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/222729>.

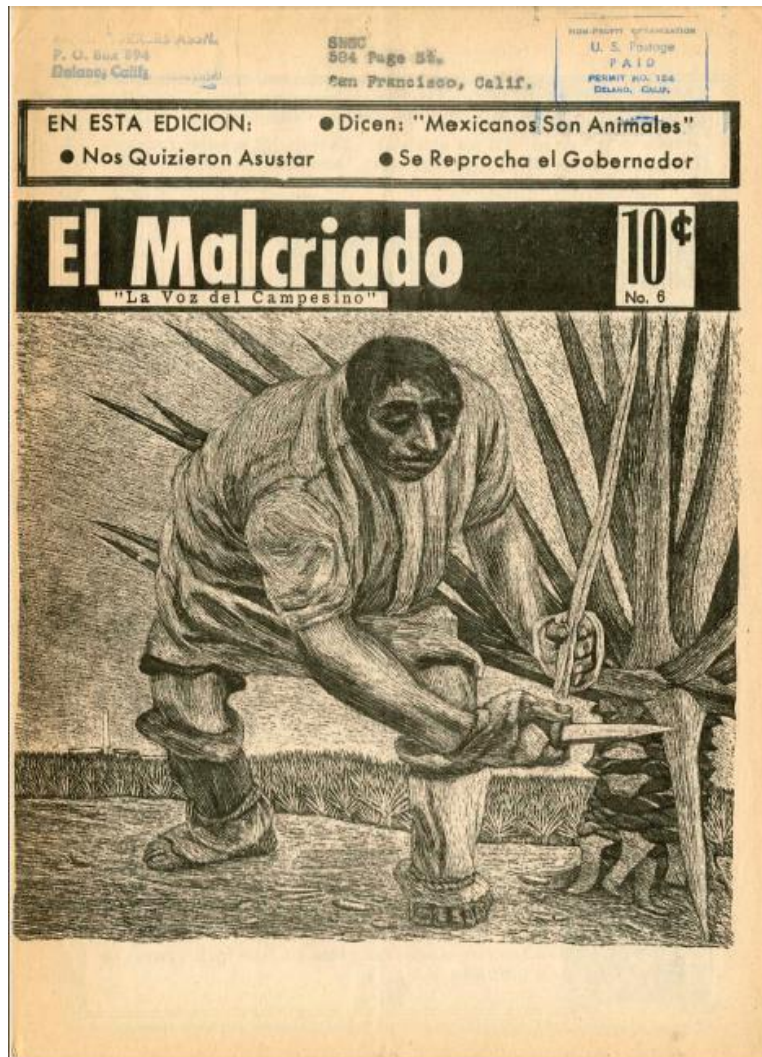


Figure 4: El Malcriado, issue no. 6, 1965, cover art: *Henequén (Agave) Worker/Cortador de Sisal* originally by Alfredo Zalce for a series titled *Estampas de Yucatán*, 1945, front cover and page 2 description, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

Las Acordadas (The Remembered) by Jesus Escobedo, made in 1947 for the series *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, was reproduced by the UFW on the cover of their thirty-eighth issue of *El Malcriado* (figure 5). Unlike the previous two prints discussed that were made using the lithograph method, which creates softer and finer details, this print was produced using the woodcut method. Woodcuts produce harsh lines and contrasting shapes, creating very expressive works. The method enhances the subject matter of harsh labor conditions and abuse of workers by the cruel landowner. The image focuses on two male figures bound by their hands and neck, pulled by the landowner on horseback. The male figures, although we do not see their faces, are of differing ages—the man on the left is larger and older, perhaps the father, and the man or boy on the right is smaller and younger, perhaps the son. The two male figures seem to be father and son since there is a woman, perhaps the mother, and very young child that attempt to hold on to the male figures as the landowner ruthlessly drags them away. In the distance, there is a scene of more men being dragged away, dehumanized and nothing more than brute labor. Therefore, the foreground image personalizes the narrative somewhat, although the figures are unidentified. The print allows the UFW to identify with a continual labor struggle, one that existed in their ancestral homeland of Mexico. Once the farmworkers face their own injustices, then they could plan on their liberation and resistance to their current labor situation; thus, the following issue of *El Malcriado* exhibited the image of liberation through revolution.

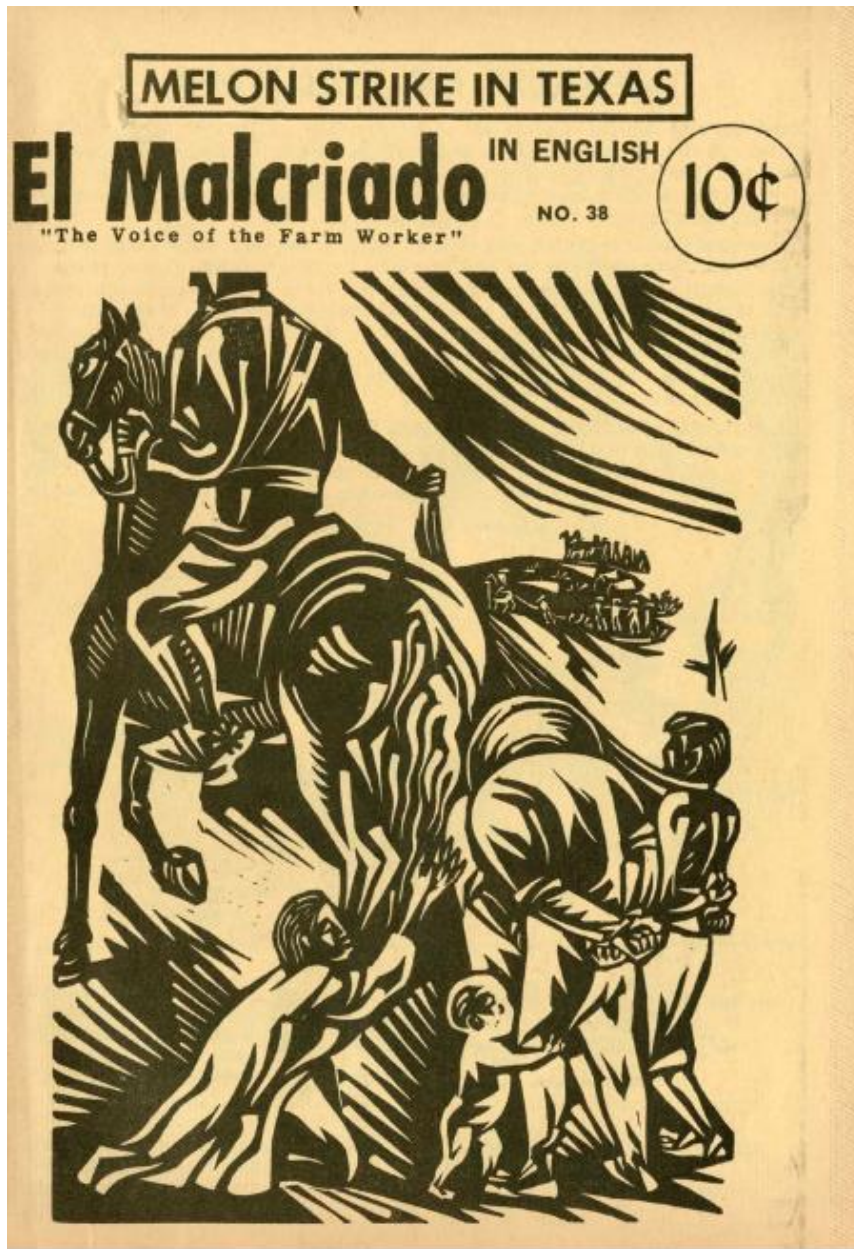


Figure 5: *El Malcriado*, issue no. 38, June 16, 1966, cover art: *Las Acordadas (The Remembered)* originally by Jesus Escobedo made in 1947, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

The cover of *El Malcriado*, published on June 30, 1966, reproduced the print by Fernando Castro Pacheco titled *Carrillo Puerto, simbolo de la revolución del suoreste* (*Carrillo Puerto, Symbol of the Southeastern Revolution*) originally made in 1947 (figure 6). This woodcut again produces harsh and dramatic lines, which are representative of the subject matter. There is extreme repetition of images and shapes to enhance the vision of the masses coming together in unified protest. The raising of fists and tools or weapons of the workers echoes the raising of the revolutionary flag of Carrillo Puerto, who leads the people. The print depicts a revolution lead by Carrillo Puerto, a socialist who fought for land reform for the indigenous Mayan people of Yucatan.¹³ This image contrasts with the idealistic image by Alfredo Zalce of the Yucatan Maya, discussed earlier. Pacheco depicts Puerto holding a flag with the words “Tierra y Libertad” (Land and Liberty), a phrase originating from Ricardo Flores Magon and popularized by Emiliano Zapata. The flag and Puerto himself become the revolutionary masses. The groups of Mayan laborers become one solid mass or force. The repeated figures add to the growing solidarity of the workers. If the previous print showed the injustice of the workers, this print showed the result and reaction of the laborers against the unjust treatment of the workers by the powerful landowners. This print becomes a call to action for the United Farm Workers. The print was produced three months after the declaration in the Plan de Delano, and represents a culmination of agrarian imaginary that is finally leading to action and hopes for actual change within the lives of the farmworkers.

¹³ Felipe Carrillo Puerto, https://web.archive.org/web/20120122075046/http://www.redesc.ilce.edu.mx/redescolar/publicaciones/publico_quepaso/carrillo_puerto.htm, last updated fall of 2000.

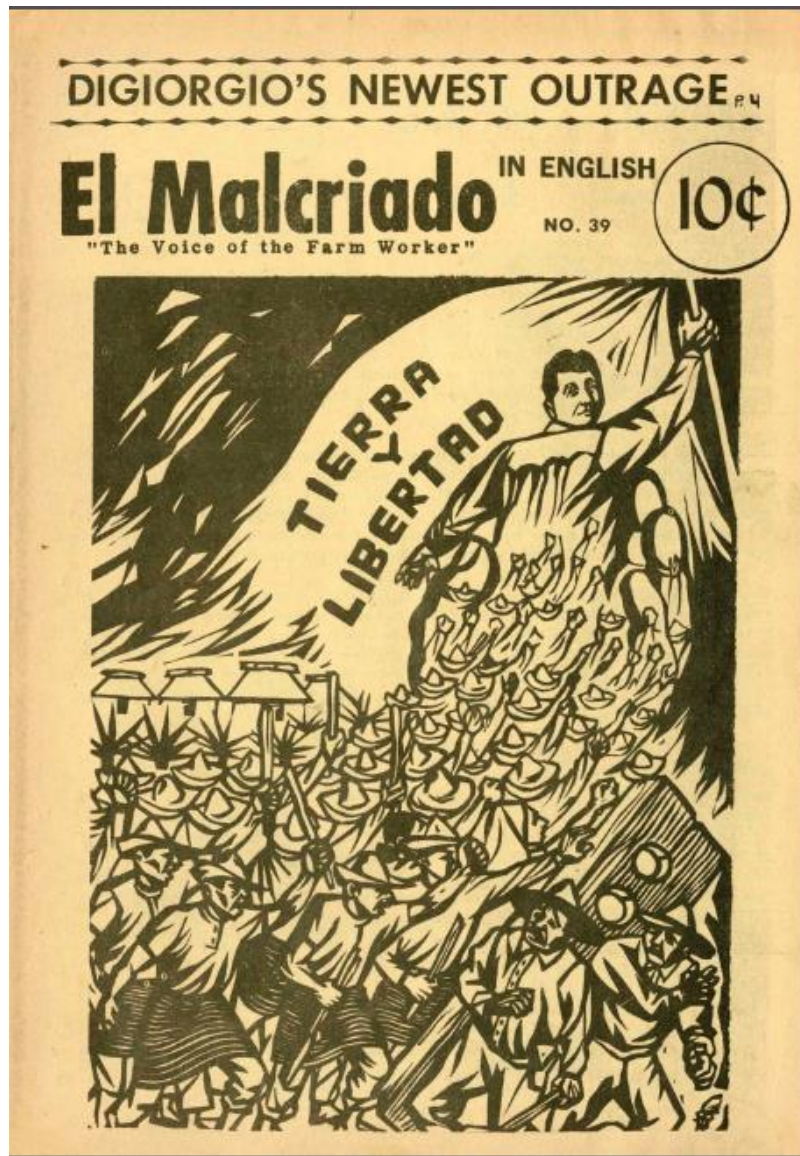


Figure 6: El Malcriado, issue no. 39, June 30, 1966, cover art: *Carrillo Puerto, simbolo de la revolución del suoreste (Carrillo Puerto, Symbol of the Southeastern Revolution)* originally made in 1947 by Fernando Castro Pacheco, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

Chapter 2

“Sons of the Mexican Revolution”

The thick, black mustache, the wide-brimmed hat, the crossed cartridge belts, the Maderista general’s sash, the gun, and the sword—an iconic image of Emiliano Zapata, Mexican Revolution general (figure 7). Since the image’s production in 1911, it held a deliberate communicative power. Zapata came from south-central Mexico, in the state of Morelos. His family was of mestizo origin with both Nahuatl and Spanish ancestry. In 1910, he became the general of the revolution and fought for agrarian reform, which was detailed in his *Plan de Ayala*. Zapata’s *Plan de Ayala* was announced on November 25, 1911 in Ayala, Morelos, Mexico and accused the recently elected president Francisco Madero of betraying the revolution’s agrarian reforms. The plan called for the dismissal of Madero, while demanding new land reforms.¹⁴ Zapata fought for the rights of the indigenous people to have access to land and water, instead of being taken over by hacendados, or the predominantly Spanish or Hispanic owners of the haciendas or large estates. After fighting for the preservation of rural life for over 8 years, Zapata was killed on April 10, 1919, after being ambushed by soldiers of Venustiano Carranza in the hacienda Chinameca.¹⁵

¹⁴ John Womack, “El Plan de Ayala,” *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1969), pp. 400-404.

¹⁵ Samuel Brunk, “Remembering Emiliano Zapata: Three Moments in the Posthumous Career of the Martyr of Chinameca,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 78, no. 3 (1998): 458, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2518332> (accessed November 25, 2013)

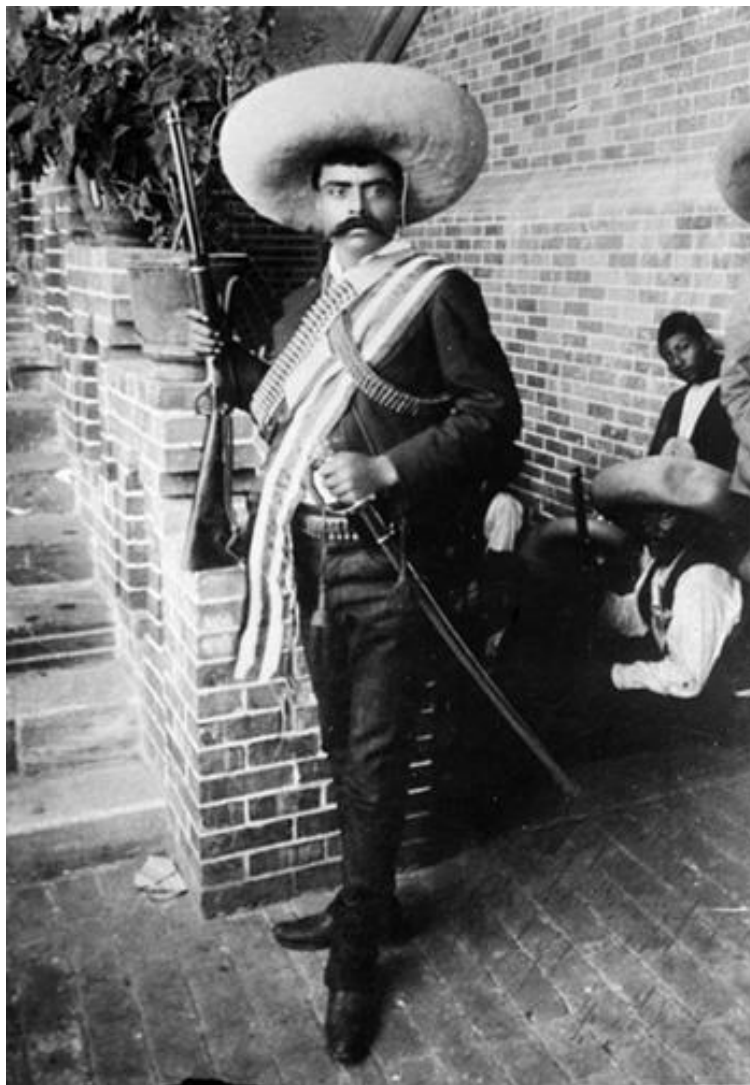


Figure 7: Image of Emiliano Zapata, photograph credited to Hugo Brehme, ca.

June 1911, Casasola Collection.

The photographer of the original iconic image of Zapata, which has been reproduced countless of times throughout Latin America and beyond, is still an enigma for scholars within the past few years. Among them, in his 2012 book *Photographing the Mexican Revolution: Commitments, Testimonies, Icons*, John Mraz points out that the general public often believed that most of the photographs of the Mexican Revolution were taken by the Casasola family, but they were actually produced by various photographers, including those who worked under the Casasolas. In the famous portrait of Zapata in Cuernavaca, Mraz credits the image to Hugo Brehme, a German-born Mexican photographer, due to its great quality. Agreeing that the photograph was taken by Brehme, Mraz believes that if Zapata let an “outsider... get that close to the fearsome warrior [it] reinforces the idea of Zapata’s concern for constructing his own image; he may have felt that someone from another country would be more neutral than the capital’s photojournalists, and that the image would also reach eyes outside of Mexico.”¹⁶ The photograph definitely was able to reach an expansive audience, but was the image really neutral? Mraz quotes Marion Gautreau when describing that, “Both the Zapatistas and their leader were objects of a systematic stigmatizing: the publications invariably underlined the ferocity and barbarity of the southerners, without ever mentioning their agrarian ideals or vindicating the nature of their struggle.”¹⁷ The press during this time often categorized Zapata iconographically as a bandit.¹⁸ Therefore, perhaps Zapata was trying to move away from his “bandit” image when

¹⁶ John Mraz, *Photographing the Mexican Revolution: Commitments, Testimonies, Icons* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 234.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

commissioning his foreign photographer, but still, the image was not neutral. In fact, the image moved far from the visual territory of the bandit, and into an extreme professionalism. The firm and deliberate stance, the confident gaze, and the military accouterments all visually describe Zapata's role as a revolutionary general. In addition to the gun, cross cartridges, and sword, he wears a Maderista sash, signifying his support of Francisco Madero, who was instrumental in starting the revolution. The photograph was taken in June of 1911, five months before Zapata accused Madero of not fully complying with the agrarian reforms in *El Plan de Ayala*. Thus, the visual symbols in Zapata's photograph signified power and authority. The origins of the image dealt with issues of authentication; that is, Zapata wanted to authenticate his position of power.

When studying the role of Zapata's image during the Chicano Movement, various scholars highlight his *mestizaje* as an important symbol for Chicanos to decolonize their history—or more generally, the use of symbolic figures so Mexican-Americans could find a sense of cultural identity in the U.S. Holly Barnet-Sanchez defines "*mestizaje*, and its corollary, *indigenismo*— the theory and practice of privileging ancient indigenous civilizations and traditions in the national foundation imaginary."¹⁹ It was important for Chicanos to find pride in their Mexican heritage, and specifically their indigenous ancestry during a time of heightened racial and ethnic discrimination. Rafael Perez-Torres argues, "More than political figures, these heroes of revolution and independence are icons associated with nation, place, and a sense of

¹⁹ Holly Barnet-Sanchez, "Radical Mestizaje in Chicano/s Murals," *Mexican Muralism: A Critical History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 243.

belonging.”²⁰ However, often during the patriarchal Chicano Movement, the symbols centered on figures of men. As stated in their goals in the *Plan de Delano*, the farmworkers described themselves as “sons of the Mexican Revolution,” since a predominant number of union members were Mexican immigrants, but also to connect their fight with a global revolutionary and agrarian struggle. In this case, the legacy of the Mexican Revolution aligned both culturally and politically with the farmworkers. The use of imagery by the farmworkers also influenced Chicano artists of the era. Tere Romo explains, “Chicano artists chose to utilize their art-making to further the formation of cultural identity and political unity.”²¹ Although there were several women involved in the union, and was co-founded by Dolores Huerta, the image of Zapata symbolized more than machismo and masculinity, but his myth of an agrarian and populist leader.

The UFW sustained a myth of Zapata by reiterating that they are the descendants of the Mexican Revolution. Several issues of the UFW newspaper *El Malcriado* exhibited themes from the Mexican Revolution. On an issue from May 5th, 1966, on the second page of the newspaper, *El Malcriado* asked readers to submit stories about their ancestors who fought in the revolution.²² Furthermore, in a letter by Ramiro Mendez, a United Farm Worker, responded to a controversy over the use of the images of Zapata and Francisco “Pancho” Villa, another Mexican revolutionary general. The UFW were accused in an issue of *La Opinión*, the largest Spanish-language

²⁰ Rafael Perez-Torres, “Remapping Chicano Expressive Culture,” *Just Another Poster?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 152.

²¹ Tere Romo, “Points of Convergence: The Iconography of the Chicano Poster,” *Just Another Poster?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 92.

²² *El Malcriado*, no. 35, (Delano: El Taller Grafica, May, 5, 1966), 2.

newspaper in the United States, of “mocking” the “authentic Mexican” images of Zapata and Villa by using them in their cause. Mendez responded back by writing to *La Opinión*, explaining that not only were they not mocking their images, but that the UFW had every right to utilize these images because much of the UFW was comprised of direct descendants of Zapata and Villa. Again, like in the Plan of Delano, the UFW described themselves as a continuation of the Mexican revolutionary ideals. For the UFW, the Mexican Revolution was significant for its agrarian reforms and for its empowerment of the poor, working classes of Mexico. Zapata, as their leader, was a mythical, revolutionary, and ancestral figure for the UFW.

In their print shop in Delano, California, *El Taller Gráfico*, the UFW produced their newspaper *El Malcriado*, as well as posters, buttons, stickers, comics, and other memorabilia with the image of Mexican Revolution general Emiliano Zapata (figure 8). Brehme’s photograph of Zapata appears on both the button and the poster. Zapata’s image first appeared on the cover of *El Malcriado* on February 12, 1966 (figure 9). On the second page, it read:

“When men like Emiliano Zapata are born, men who with their courageous lives change history, they give us a vision of what a man may be, we all know the life of this great man, how he began with nothing and how he led the campesinos of Mexico in their fight for social justice. He gives us a vision of how valiant a man may be.”

The image of Zapata on these works is shown from the waist up, highlighting symbols of militancy with the inclusion of his weapon and military regalia. However, in another issue of the newspaper the same image is stamped on a page with the description “Firm,

but Non-Violent” under the image, referring to the UFW’s stance on non-violence as stated in the *Plan de Delano* (figure 10). Therefore, the UFW’s version of the image serves their goals and not necessarily that of the Mexican Revolution or Zapata himself. The works also carry a performative aspect, as they are meant to be carried, displayed, or mass-produced to the public. That is, they visualize the goals of the movement and carry their own agency, rather than being peripheral objects to the movement.

Zapata Buttons!

(actual size)

VIVA LA CAUSA 50¢

BOYCOTT GRAPES HUELGA

HUELGA DELANO big, beautiful black on FLUORESCENT RED \$1.00 each

EMILIANO ZAPATA, HERO OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION, NOW ON A HUELGA BUTTON!

Viva La Causa Button \$1/ea.; 5/\$3.75 *Viva La Causa*, Zapata button, 50¢

Huelga Delano Button \$1/ea.; 5/\$3.75 *Boycott Grapes*, Zapata button, 50¢

El Taller Gráfico

VIVA LA REVOLUCION #PV

VIVA LA REVOLUCION #EZ

The two heroes of the Mexican Revolution ride together again! Both posters \$2.50

HUELGA RECORDS

Figure 8: *El Malcriado*, advertisements from 1973, El Taller Gráfico, Source: Walter P.

Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University



Figure 9: *El Malcriado*, Zapata cover from February 12, 1966, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University



Figure 10: *El Malcriado*, ca. 1970s, El Taller Gráfico, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University

In later issues, artists for the UFW turned the myth and history of Zapata into comic strips in their newspaper as pedagogical tools and as a medium to reimagine the myth of Zapata using image and text. The comic in the issue of *El Malcriado* from July 13, 1978 narrates the story of a young Zapata and the origins of his radicalization (figure 11). It begins with an image at the top left corner of a colonial-looking man, presumably, the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortez, about to kill an indigenous man, perhaps Cuauhtemoc, one of the last Aztec leaders. The image accompanied with text states that for ages there has been oppression, misery, and privileges, which could have only one result: the revolution. The comic reveals early class tensions in Zapata's life, which are meant to mimic the struggles of the farmworkers and the power dynamic under the powerful U.S. agribusiness. In the top center of the comic, there is Zapata's iconic mustache, glare and hat, with the head of Porfirio Diaz looming over him. The main storyline consists of *hacendados*, or wealthy Spanish or Hispanic landowners, coming in, armed and on horses, demanding that the *campesinos*, or farmworkers, leave the land. The comic ends with a young Zapata as a boy listening to his father's conversation about the poor farmworkers who were treated unfairly. The very last image shows the young boy riding away with his father, with a thought bubble describing his hope for vengeance. This comic is only one of several, which retell the story of Zapata to educate and inspire the farmworkers and future generations. The UFW's use of text and image became a pedagogical tool to inform the public of Zapata's myth and legacy.

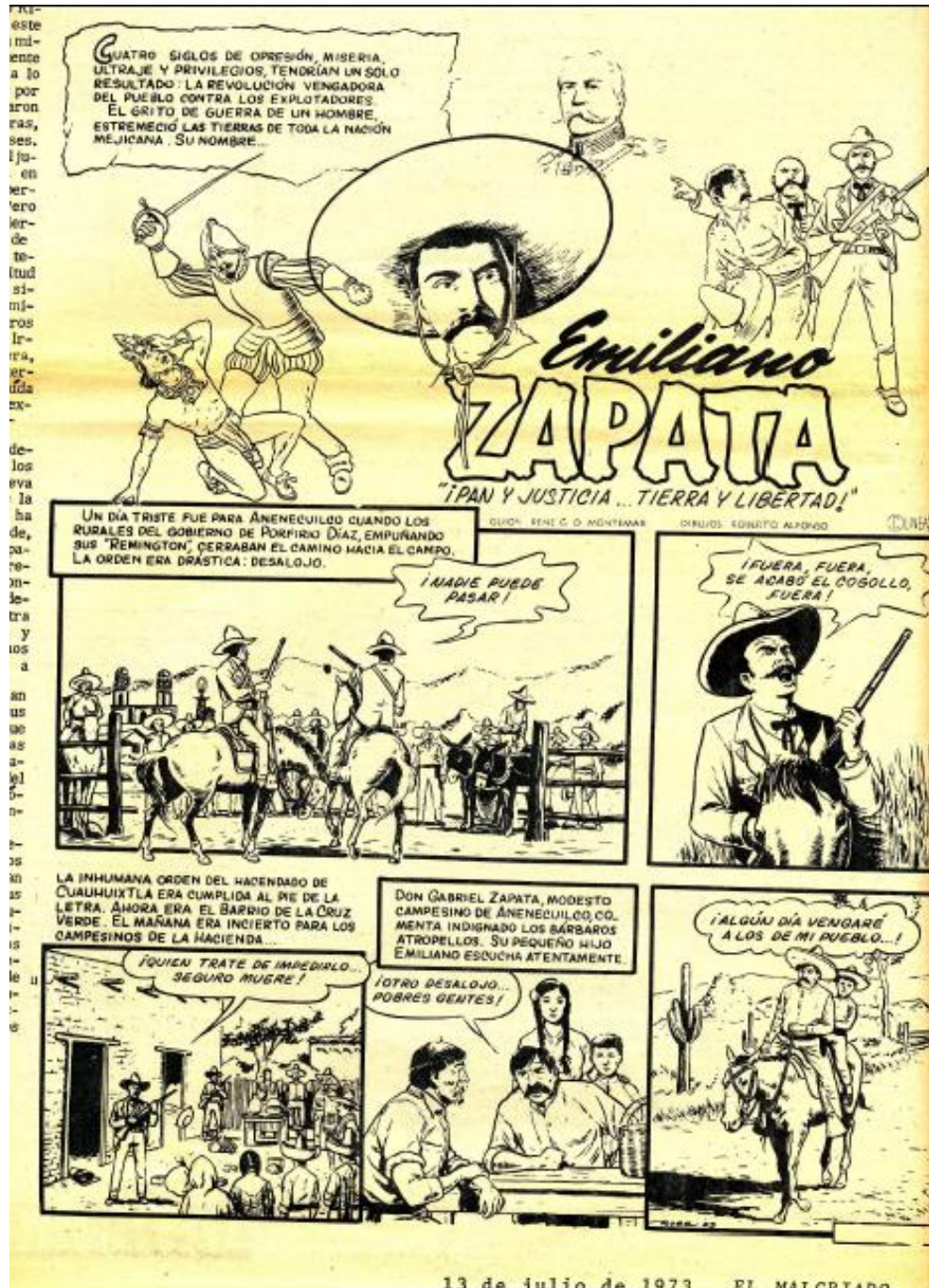


Figure 11: *El Malcriado*, July 13, 1973, El Taller Gráfico, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University

Chapter 3

Don Sotaco, Don Coyote, and El Patroncito

Andrew “Andy” Zermeño was a young Chicano artist whose family worked as farm workers in Delano and San Jose. Cesar Chavez spoke highly of Zermeño before *El Malcriado*’s origins, and was invited to join the newspaper staff as soon as it began in 1965.²³ Following the tradition of popular satirical artists, Zermeño used humor and caricatures to visualize the present moment. His characters from his satirical comic were introduced within the first few issues of *El Malcriado*, and presented the unfair power dynamics within U.S. agribusiness, as well as the goals for the union. The characters included: ‘Don Sotaco,’ who was a short, and initially weak and abused, farm worker; ‘Don Coyote’ the labor contractor and foreman, who was portrayed as tall and thin, and in service to the boss (figure 12); and ‘Patroncito,’ the Big Boss, overweight and lazy, often with a big hat, big cigar, boots, and sun glasses.²⁴ The comics depicted the Big Boss as satirically victimized, complaining that the workers do not work hard enough, protest too much, and always blame the boss for their own misfortunes (figure 13). In a later issue of the newspaper, a comic by Zermeño summarizes the relationship of the three characters, depicting the role of each through their labor—or lack thereof (figure 14). In this image, Don Sotaco wears a “bit,” usually meant for horses, and visibly struggles to pull the weight of the foreman and “Big Boss.”

²³ Doug Adair and Bill Esher, “Origins of El Malcriado,” March 16, 2009, <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/billEsher.pdf>

²⁴ Doug Adair, “El Malcriado, 1965-66, Bill Esher, Editor,” July 12, 2009, <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/elmalcriado2.pdf>.



Figure 12: *El Malcriado*, issues no. 1(left) and 2 (right), volume 1, 1965, El Taller Gráfico/Farmworker Press, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University



Figure 13: *El Malcriado*, ca. 1960s, El Taller Gráfico/Farmworker Press, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State

University



Figure 14: *El Malcriado*, ca. 1960s, El Taller Gráfico/Farmworker Press, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State

University

The comics were also meant to spur personal agency within the farmworkers by showing the lack of reliability on governmental figures. In another Zermeño comic, “The Government” is symbolized as a white-collared blindfolded man playing a game of chess with the Big Boss, using Don Sotaco as one of the pawns in the game (figure 15). Doug Adair, *El Malcriado* editor, describes that the government was “often portrayed as blind to the plight of the farm workers, or as willingly manipulated by the growers to serve their purpose and power.”²⁵ Furthermore, Adair remembers another satirical comic by Zermeño that details the capitalist pursuits of the government. He describes: “Don Sotaco’ and his wife visit the University of California at Davis, where government-funded mad scientists are not only developing machines to replace farm workers, but are also genetically modifying humans to produce separate strains of farm workers, extra short ones to cut lettuce, tall ones to pick dates.”²⁶ Although Don Sotaco is shown as weak and subservient at first, later he is depicted strong, fighting against the smear monster, growers, and ultra-conservatives—as labeled in the image—, with the help of justice and the National Farm Workers Association (figure 16).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

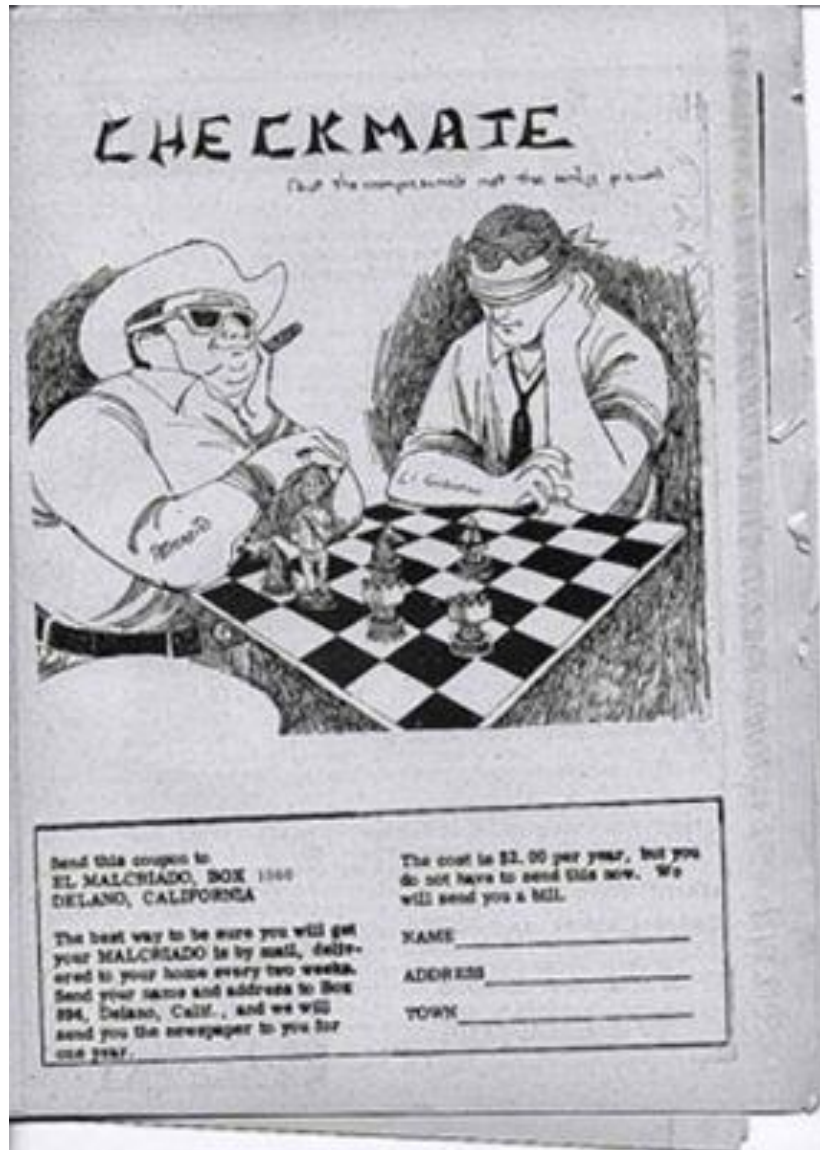


Figure 15: *El Malcriado*, ca. 1960s, El Taller Gráfico/Farmworker Press, Source:
Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State
University

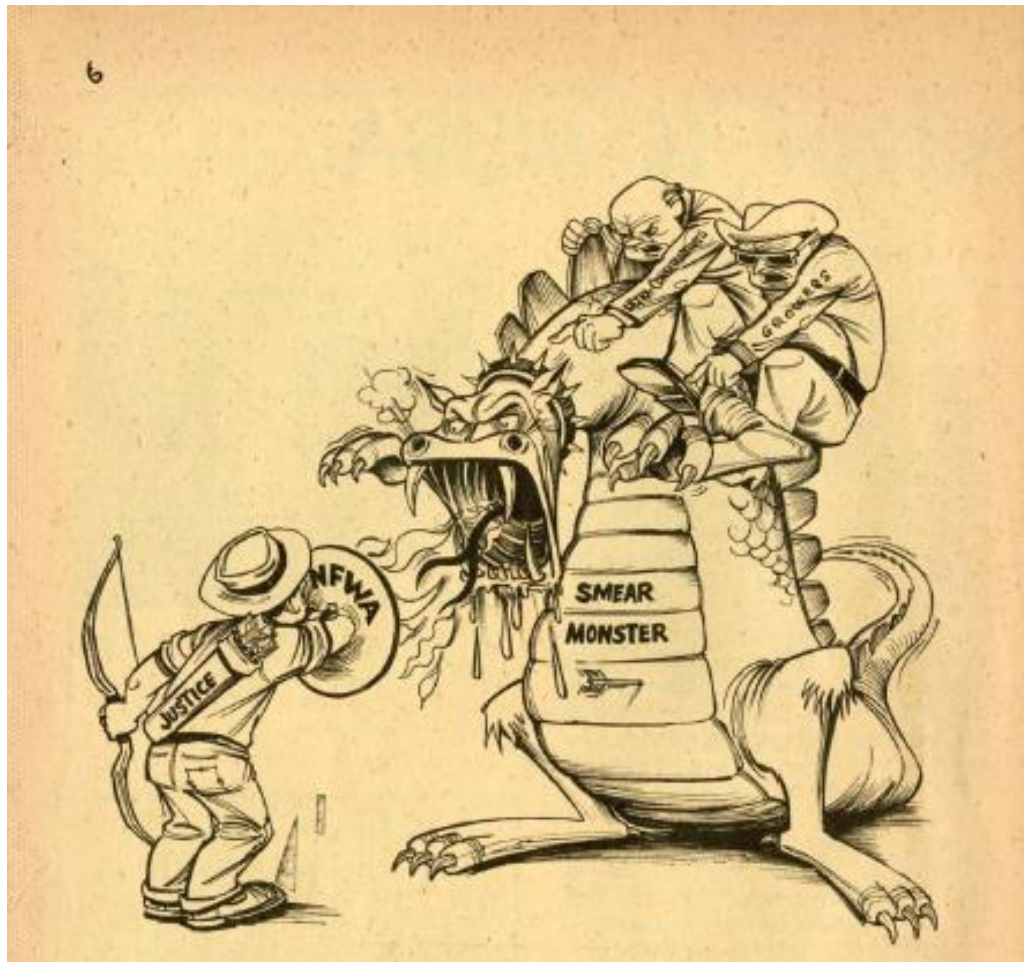


Figure 16: *El Malcriado*, ca. 1960s, El Taller Gráfico/Farmworker Press, Source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University

Conclusion

As farmworkers of predominant Mexican descent, and within a time of a heightened Chicano Movement demanding civil rights, the UFW saw their injustices in the U.S. tied to a longer historical struggle for labor and land rights. However, the UFW had no claims to the land that they were toiling over, so it was not land that they were asking for, but simply a union contract to be able to fight for basic human rights, such as livable wages, adequate rest periods with water and shade, eliminate the spraying of pesticides on farmworkers, and other fundamental requests. The connections that the UFW saw with the Mexican Revolution and the post-revolutionary art were the struggles faced by the poor and working classes. The UFW envisioned an agrarian imaginary drawn up upon the connection to the land, but especially to the dispossessed and maltreated workers. The agrarian imaginary arises from a larger transnational history of dispossession from indigenous lands, colonization, and brutality, but imagines a future through revolution, subsistence, and solidarity among all people.

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