

# COMMEMORATION OF THE HISTORIC AUGUST 29TH, 1970 MARCH AGAINST THE WAR AND SELF-DETERMINATION AT HOME

By Ernesto Bustillos  
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Forty years ago, on August 29th 1970, close to thirty thousand Chicano-Mexicanos and supporters, marched through the streets of East Los Angeles protesting and calling of an immediate halt (moratorium) to the U.S. imperialist war in Vietnam and for Raza rights here at home. At a rally at the end of the march, held at Laguna Park (today Salazar Park), the peaceful demonstrators –men, women, and children –were ambushed and brutally attacked by hundreds of cowardly L.A. Sheriffs and police. La Raza defended themselves by throwing rocks and bottles, and burning police cars. During the day-long police assault, three Raza were killed (journalist Ruben Salazar, Brown Beret Lyn Ward, and Angel Diaz), dozens were injured, and hundreds arrested.

## ORGANIZED BY THE MOST ADVANCE FORCES AT THAT PERIOD OF HISTORY

The August 29th March of 1970, or the “Chicano Moratorium” as it is historically known, was organized and supported by a coalition of groups that included the most militant and active during that period of our people’s history. A coalition that consisted of the Brown Berets, La Raza Unida Party, MEChA, Crusade For Justice, and many more organizations. The coalition also expressed the most advance political at that time; a line that was anti-imperialist, class conscious, and Raza self-determination oriented.

Unión del Barrio, founded by veterans of organizations such as the Brown Berets, MEChA, and La Raza Unida Party, has deep ties to the August 29th 1970 Moratorium March. It forms part of our organization’s legacy, which today we continue to uphold. In fact, Unión del Barrio is part of the historical continuation of the ideol-

ogy and struggles waged during a period (late 1960s and early 70s) in our history that we call the “Chicano Power Movement”.

Nineteen years later, the Unión del Barrio was also central to the “reestablishment” of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee (NCCM) in 1989. The NCCM’s objective was to commemorate the “20th Anniversary” of August 29th in 1990 and to bring together those forces that still upheld Raza self-determination and “rebuilt” the movement that had been destroyed by the various U.S. police agencies in 1975.

## THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Today, 40 years later, as is evident by the Nazi-racism openly attacking Raza in Arizona and as the U.S. wages imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we understand that the need for “organized” struggle continues (la lucha continua!). For this reason Unión del Barrio upholds the statement, “It is on

the 40th anniversary of this historical march that the political and ideological struggles of the 1960s and 1970s are more relevant today than ever.” (See, “40th Anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium March of August 29, 1970”, *Guerrilleros de La Pluma*, Journal of the Raza Press and Media Association, Summer 2010).

To commemorate the August 29th March and to organize our community to fight back against the racist-fascist violence that is coming down throughout the United States (Occupied America), Unión del Barrio sponsored a “unity and struggle” forum on Thursday, August 26, 2010. The forum, held at the Centro Cultural de La Raza consisted of a panel of speakers, film, and dialogue.

## UPHOLDING THE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY AND ORGANIZATION

Over 70 people, both young and old, attended the forum. In a show of unity, the National Chicano Moratorium Committee, Brown Berets de Aztlán, Raza Press and Media Association (RPMA), SDSU MEChA, and the Raza Rights Coalition endorsed the forum. Also, several members of A.R.E. (Association of Raza Educators) brought their students and forces working with the APSC (African People’s Solidarity Committee) were present.

The forum had several objectives:

- To commemorate one of the most important days in the history of our movement,
- Keep legacy of the Chicano Movement alive
- Learn how this period of struggle is connected to us today and Raza Liberation.
- Use the lessons from the past to enable us to

**Raza Si! Guerra No!**  
Commemorative Forum  
Speakers, Film, And Poster Exhibition

ON THE HISTORIC  
**AUGUST 29, 1970**  
**NATIONAL CHICANO MORATORIUM MARCH**

• Pablo Aceves (Panelist, Unión del Barrio)  
• Jaime Cruz (Panelist, Chairperson National Chicano Moratorium Committee)  
• Judy de Los Santos (forum facilitator, Unión del Barrio)  
• David Risco (Panelist, Brown Berets de Aztlán)

**Centro Cultural de La Raza**  
2004 Park Blvd  
San Diego, California  
**Thurs 6 to 8 PM**  
**Aug 26, 2010**

Endorsed By: National Chicano Moratorium Committee, National Brown Berets de Aztlán, Raza Press and Media Association (RPMA), and the Raza Rights Coalition



Chicano Moratorium Forum. Centro Cultural de La Raza. August 26th, 2010. San Diego, Califaztlán

# UNIÓN DEL BARRIO HAS DEEP TIES TO THE AUGUST 29TH 1970 MORATORIUM MARCH

better struggle today and in the future.

Speaking were Pablo Aceves, longtime and a leading member of Unión del Barrio and former coordinator of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee; Jaime Cruz, current coordinator of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee and key organizer of this year's 40th commemoration march of August 29th, which was held in East L.A.; Irene Mena, recognized as the "honorary mother" of the Brown Berets, member of the Chicano Mexicano Prison Project (CMPP), and participant of the historic August 29th, 1970, march; and David Rico leading member of the Brown Berets de Aztlán and also a participant of the historic August 29th of 1970, march. The forum moderator was Judy de los Santos-Abundis, a leading member and organizer for Unión del Barrio.

The forum began with an introduction from Compañera Judy and the documentary, *20 Years y Que?* The film documented the 20th Anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium, which raised issues (such as police brutality, racism, lack of Chicano/Raza Studies, etc.) that are relevant today.

## CHICANO POWER MEANS SELF-DETERMINATION

The first speaker was Compañero David Rico, a movement activist with one of the longest trajectories of struggle for Raza liberation, stretching a span of over 40 years. He has been the person most responsible for keeping alive the legacy of the Brown Berets; David Rico was also



*Irene Mena, Brown Berets de Aztlán and Chicano Mexicano Prison Project (CMPP)*

key to the take over, in San Diego, of Chicano Park, Chicano Clinic and Cultural de La Raza; and was an active participant of the original Chicano Moratorium March of 1970. Compa David gave a hard-hitting and inspirational presentation on what "Chicano Power" was and continues to be: self-determination. Those in attendance gave

a thunderous applause and loud response for his repeated calls for "*Chicano Power!*"

Compañero Jaime Cruz, who has been with the NCMC for since it's re-establishment in 1990, and coordinator for more than 10 years, spoke on the need to continue to resist and struggle for self-determination and urged everyone to attend the march that was to take place that weekend.

## IRENE MENA: INSPIRATION TO ALL

Recognize for her long history and unwavering militant and commitment to Raza Liberation, Compañera Irene Mena introduced herself as: "I am known as the Mother of the Brown Berets, but now, more and more, I am becoming the grandmother of the Brown Berets. I have three generations of family in the Brown Berets. I have been involved in many actions related to Chicano Power and Chicano Liberation for the last 40 years and I am proud of it." She continued, "I have heard people complain that there is nothing happening nowadays; that the movement is dead. Well my reply is that you think nothing is happening or no one is doing anything, because you aren't doing anything. Everyone has to get involved if we expect things to change." Her presentation at the forum was a living testament to the essence of "what Chicanismo" was and did at the height of the Chicano Power Movement of the late 60s and early 70s.

## THE LIBERATION OF VIETNAM AND AZTLÁN!

Compañero Pablo Aceves, a long time member of Unión del Barrio, summed up his

presentation by explaining that, "The Chicano Moratorium was an action that united us to oppose not only the 'war' in Vietnam and



*Judy de Los Santos-Abundis, Jaime Cruz, David Rico, and Pablo Aceves*

bring 'home the troops', but it was an act of solidarity and unity with the struggle of the people of Vietnam for their liberation and unification, under socialism, of their homeland.

Moreover, the Chicano Moratorium also called for our liberation and stood against all forms oppression that Raza was facing here, in our barrios, 'en nuestra tierra'; a situation that continues to exist today. Unión del Barrio believes that we need to create a revolutionary organization that is not reformist, but one that calls for total liberation and our—and the world's—transformation in relationship to the means of production."



*David Rico, Brown Berets de Aztlán, and Pablo Aceves, Unión del Barrio.*

The constant and enthusiasm clapping of those at the forum indicated that speakers were able to get across the message of unity, organization, and the importance of learning from our past. Those in attendance united with the forum's declaration

that the struggle for liberation is not over and that now more than ever, we must fight for the rights of our communities.

## VENCEREMOS!

*Editor's Note: The key organizers of the forum were Unión del Barrio-Base Celia Sanchez's members Ernesto Bustillos, Judy de Los Santos-Abundis, Cathy Espitia, Tobias Hernandez, Isabel Peña, and David Rodriguez. Fotos by Benjamin Prado.*

