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Unión del Barrio

Political  
Program

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# The Political Program of Unión del Barrio: **A PROGRAM FOR POLITICAL DIRECTION, CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING, AND LIBERATION STRUGGLE**

## Introduction

**H**istorically, Unión del Barrio has been among the few Raza organizations that actively attempts to stay ahead of ever-changing local, national, and world conditions as they relate to our communities within the current borders of the United States. Though we have evolved over time, we remain committed to the fundamental objective of winning the complete liberation of all Raza, from Chile to Alaska, as well as supporting struggles for self-determination of the world's oppressed peoples and nations.

We are La Raza, the people of these lands, and we reject and challenge any and all manifestations of colonial, imperialist, and neoliberal oppression. Our use of the term "La Raza" is understood as meaning "the people", and encompasses the entire population of "Nuestra América". It is a progressive term that unites our cultural, ethnic, gender, and racial diversity with the common aspirations of indigenous and Latin American nations. Used together, La Raza of Nuestra América represents our transcontinental unity as a people sharing a similar political condition, culture, history, and class interest. The struggle of Unión del Barrio is one part of an indigenous

resistance across North and South America, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, with politically imposed borders that primarily serve the interests of an international capitalist elite currently led by United States imperialism.

Unión del Barrio is a revolutionary organization of disciplined and honest individuals committed to advancing the science, strategy, and organizational structure necessary to overturn our oppression towards the liberation of México and Nuestra América. What remains is our long-range task of building a party capable of winning recognition from the majority of La Raza, who accept our efforts as representative of a path to a better future. We work tirelessly to unify the collective power of raza workers, women, educators, students, barrio youth, indigenous communities, and prisoners into a single strong and sustainable social movement for self-determination.

One of the principal shortcomings of our movement during the "Chicano Power" period, roughly from 1965 to 1975, was the absence of a coherent ideology. This political weakness made organizations and individual activists susceptible to self-serving interpretations of our struggle.

Debates framed the movement as one for “civil rights”, as an auxiliary to white workers, or based only on developing an identity within the United States. Deeper questions and challenges to the movement went unanswered by the political programs of the time, and this ideological frailty hindered organizational consolidation, and led to the burn-out, drop-out, or sell-out of many strong activists. Furthermore, this made our movement more susceptible to state sponsored infiltration and repression.

We live in a time where change is constant, crisis is permanent, and nothing is static. Opportunists argue that the most pressing struggle is to accommodate and assimilate to change as defined to us by United States imperialism. For Unión del Barrio it has not been a simple matter of “adapting” our principles to current conditions, but holding fast to our political program which illuminates the enduring principles of revolutionary struggle. While exploitation, neocolonialism, and imperialist aggression continue to exist, our priority is to expand our work, sharpen our ideology, and further consolidate Unión del Barrio as a revolutionary organization. This is what we have done since our formation, and what we will continue to do as part of the liberation struggle in México and Nuestra América – this is our contribution to the worldwide struggle to end the subjugation, and repression of the vast majority of people on the planet earth.

Since our founding in 1981, Unión del Barrio has understood the need for a political program capable of guiding our movement. For this reason, we have expanded, refined, and enriched our political program, bringing us closer to building a vanguard party necessary to assume a leading role as part of the liberation struggle of México and Nuestra América. One of Unión del Barrio’s principle contributions to the Chicano movement has been the development of an ideology that speaks to the immediate needs of our communities. With this political program we address the realities of La Raza, and provide a vision for the urgent defense of our rights and interests within the present boundaries of the United States. Furthermore, this political program embraces and advances our connection to the rest of Latin America, as well as defines our relationship to all oppressed and colonized peoples on this planet.

In a revolutionary organization, effective collective action comes from a cohesive ideology, and subsequently requires a political program capable of guiding our organizational efforts towards freedom and self-determination. This political program represents our principles of unity, the anchor of our theory and practice, and serves as a guide for organizational leadership, structures, and members involved in day-to-day struggle.

# Who We Are & What We Want

## Who We Are

### I. From Alaska to Chile – We Are One People Without Borders.

We see ourselves as descendents of indigenous people and heirs of an indigenous struggle against colonial domination. We hope to unite all oppressed people in Aztlán/México Ocupado, regardless of national origin and citizenship, to join the process of building a revolutionary, reunified, and socialist México, and ultimately advancing towards Simón Bolívar's dream of a unified continent.

Historically, within the borders of the United States, we have suffered under colonial oppression, isolation, and dehumanizing conditions. As a consequence, the need to struggle against these harsh realities led to the emergence of different terms used to identify ourselves. Mexican American, Latin American, Latino, Hispano, Raza, and Chicano, are examples of these identifiers. Terms such as "La Raza" and "Chicana/Chicano" have progressive connotations that were widely used during the Chicano Power movement. Even today, these terms are used by many in a positive and political fashion. We recognize the historical and political significance of these names, and will ourselves use them when appropriate or necessary. Nevertheless, as a revolutionary organization struggling within the current borders of the United States, we believe that national identifiers such as "Mexicana/Mexicano", "Salvadoreña/Salvadoreño",

"Chilena/Chileno", and collectively "La Raza", best cover the historical, geographic, and cultural range of our movement. We see our national identities as foundation of a unified continental identity covering all of Nuestra América.

We hold that the struggle of La Raza in Aztlán/México Ocupado is historically and geographically defined as an indigenous and Mexicano anti-colonial fight for land and socialism. However, we also recognize the colonial experiences of many of our gente in Aztlán/México Ocupado has impacted, over time, the social, political, and economic characteristics of La Raza. As an organization, we were born from of the Chicano Movement, but with a clear understanding that our fight did not begin in the 1960's. Since 1492 when Columbus set foot on these lands, indigenous people have resisted foreign occupiers. We see this resistance as the beginning of our movement, and today we continue to struggle for the liberation of Nuestra América. As Raza internationalists, we welcome all people who accept this political program into Unión del Barrio, including those that are not of Mexican descent. Following the example of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, we see it as the revolutionary duty of all freedom loving people to fight on the side of La Raza within the current borders of the United States.

### II. This is "Nuestra América" - We Are Indigenous Nations.

We recognize and uphold the right to self-determination of all indigenous nations of the Americas. Nuestra América has been subject to the genocidal violence, theft, and slavery imposed on us by European colonialism, United States imperialism, and global neoliberalism. We are bound by a common history, struggle, and destiny. The principled unification of our forces throughout Nuestra América will be necessary to overturn all manifestations of colonial, imperialist, and

neoliberal oppression. We understand that the liberation of La Raza within the current borders of the United States will, and must, be tied to the liberation of all indigenous people and Latin American nations.

The Mexicano people, as indigenous inhabitants of this continent and of what is presently called the southwest United States, constitute a colony of an illegal settler state that is essentially an extension of European colonialism.

The United States funded and directed the Anglo settler rebellion in Texas in 1836, which set the stage for the United States war of aggression of 1846 – 1848. This war resulted in the occupation of the northern half of México. Since then, millions of our people have fallen victim to racist Anglo settlers who exploit our labor, keep a disproportionate number of our people in prisons, stereotype us through the media, falsify our history, deny us a relevant/productive education, and militarize the border in order to keep out the very same people from which Aztlán/México Ocupado was stolen.

This, along with state terrorism (migra, police, etc), and the ever-increasing overt and violent expression of racism by reactionaries of the United States white nationalist population, are all characteristics and manifestations of colonialism. Unión del Barrio is cognizant of current neocolonialist tactics of the oppressor, which include the use of our own people against us. These are puppet lackeys, appointed or self-appointed, and financially backed by colonialism, whose primary role is to confuse the La Raza into thinking that we are making progress, and that we can actually achieve self-determination

within the existing system. This ploy is central to the classic colonizer tactic of divide and conquer. Instead of focusing our energy on overturning imperialism, this method pits us against opportunists of our own kind, and other oppressed nationalities, each struggling against the other for beggar's crumbs, petty concessions, and neocolonial positions.

Strategically, we must create the conditions to bring about the liberation of Nuestra América. Our collective power within the United States will be a leading force overturning United States interventionism in Latin America. We understand that not a single neocolonial government could survive without funding and military training from the United States. Therefore, Unión del Barrio promotes the unity and involvement of our organization in efforts to democratize México and Nuestra América. The politics of La Raza living in the occupied territories should concentrate on organizing towards achieving independent political power inside the belly of the beast, while uniting with progressive forces in México and Nuestra América.

### **III. Ours is a National Liberation Movement Rooted in Class Struggle - We are Raza Internationalists.**

**T**he struggle of Unión del Barrio is first and foremost against national oppression, for complete independence and freedom from oppressor nations – this best describes the political focus of our movement. Historically, nationalism has consistently emerged as a leading factor in unifying oppressed people to combat the source and symptoms of colonial oppression. Like all political movements, Mexicano nationalism has gone through a process of evolution and change in response to the conditions of our oppression.

For over 150 years of United States imperialism and colonialism, it has been the politics of nationalism that have united Mexicanas and Mexicanos as one nation in our struggle against terror, poverty, and other forms of oppression. The basic elements and historical commonalities of a nation are what bind us together

as a people - culture, economic realities, geography, oppression, and struggle.

We fully understand that nationalism can lead to reactionary positions and race politics, particularly nationalism within an oppressor nation, for example Nazism and fascism. We also understand, that nationalism within the oppressed nation is, generally speaking, a progressive development, and an effective weapon in the struggle for liberation. Furthermore, it is the most progressive elements within nationalism that Unión del Barrio upholds.

We call this “Revolutionary Nationalism” - an ideology that calls for the establishment of a socialist society - the collective social, economic, and political development of the Mexicano people, based on our historical, cultural,

and present conditions and realities. A socialist society is in contradiction to capitalism, which is a system where a small, rich ruling class controls the wealth and power of a nation. Revolutionary Nationalism demands a complete transformation of the social, economic, and political institutions that presently form the basis of our oppression. It is Revolutionary Nationalism that we define as a struggle for the total transformation of our lives - from a colonized and dependent people, to a life and future of a truly liberated and sovereign nation in the world community.

We recognize that our struggle is intrinsically linked, through history and practice, to the movements of oppressed and colonized people throughout Nuestra América. We believe therefore, that the term “Raza Internationalism” best describes our political relationship to the rest of Nuestra América, and the world. Our obligation as we strive to build a revolutionary party is to recognize the right of all oppressed people to self-determination - to uphold the principle of continental emancipation as embodied in the Bolivarian Revolution, and put forth by Cuauhtémoc, Túpac Amaru, Simón Bolívar, Jose Martí, Ricardo Flores Magón, Valentina Ramirez, Augusto Cesar Sandino, Farabundo Martí, Louisa Moreno, Celia Sánchez, Ernesto Ché Guevara, Magdalena Mora, and other raza patriots. We will carry

forth the struggle on all fronts to bring about a democratic and socialist unified Indigenous - Raza América.

Our continent’s history parallels and intersects with the experiences of Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Our histories are burdened by our common experience suffering under conquest, slavery, exploitation, and military intervention, as well as a shared challenge to win freedom. It is our duty to recognize these ties and our common enemies, and support all peoples struggling for self-determination and against imperialism.

However, we caution those active in our movement not to fall into the trap of opting for the safe, liberal and abstract struggle against imperialism elsewhere, while refusing to unite against its manifestations here within Aztlán/México Ocupado. Although our liberation is prioritized, we must still support and commit resources to aid those nations who fight for decolonization, against all forms of foreign aggression, and for the right of non-intervention. The most powerful contribution we can make to the struggles of our sisters and brothers of Africa, Asia, and Oceania is the creation of reunified revolutionary socialist México and Nuestra América. Thus, Unión del Barrio upholds the principle of “Raza Internationalism” as a fundamental principle of our ideological unity.

## **IV. Dialectical and Historical Materialism Form the Basis of Our Strategies and Tactics.**

**W**e are a working class people, and from our labor all wealth is generated. We base our ideology, and the process of its evolution, on the material historical basis of all things and situations, as well as the material conditions within which our people find ourselves. Dialectical and Historical Materialism are essential to understanding our current reality, as well as forming strategies and tactics for our liberation.

A people’s capacity to create and reproduce our means of existence through the development of knowledge, technology, culture, economic activity, and governments

to serve our collective interests is the driving force of human dignity.

All social progress and meaningful development are a direct result of working class struggle. As such, in a world where opposites and contradictions are constantly affecting and influencing each other, we believe in the leading role of workers to transform our conditions of life. We must be dialectical in our approach to political work, strive to constantly evolve and balance our theory and practice, and meet the challenges posed to us by colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism.

# What We Want

## I. Self-Determination, Liberation, and a Unified Nuestra América.

**W**e are determined to decolonize our people. The means to this end is the advancement of self-determination, which can best be defined as collectively determining our history; economically controlling our destiny; controlling our social development by self-determining our culture, education and language; independently developing the content and direction of our political orientation; and controlling the political institutions that make the laws that govern us.

We recognize the indigenous peoples of Nuestra América as social actors and subjects of history. We demand the self-determination of indigenous identities, cultures, spiritualities, customs, and languages on par with all national entities and interests. More precisely, these rights include the following: Self-affirmation as the right to proclaim existence, and be recognized as such;

Self-definition as the right to determine who is a part of the group and define territorial limits; Self-organization as the right to develop and enforce laws parallel to the broader laws of the nation state; and Self-government as the right to define and administer political affairs parallel to the broader procedures of the nation state.

We seek to advance the liberation and reunification of México under a revolutionary government, immediately accountable to the people. Furthermore, this government must be committed to the liberation and unification of Nuestra América, and in permanent solidarity with all oppressed people throughout the world. We struggle to never again have our resources usurped by United States imperialism, and seek to integrate into regional, continental, and international trade agreements that benefit the masses of La Raza.

## II. Participatory Democracy and Socialism.

**W**e strive to overturn the current bourgeois definition of democracy as being exclusively limited to electoral procedure. Ours is a participatory democracy that transcends narrow concepts of citizenship and imposed political borders. We actively reject any and all governments, laws, national borders, and definitions of citizenship that deny us full enjoyment of our human and democratic rights.

We want freedom of communication and information. Control of knowledge and information is one of the keys to maintaining effective control over a colonized people. Through the domination of all means of transferring knowledge and ideas such as schools, newspapers, television, radio, etc., colonial institutions dictate and manipulate the ways of thinking and acting among raza. Without understanding our true history, culture, and identity as La Raza, self-determination is impossible. This is why Unión del Barrio considers one of the most pressing tasks confronting our movement is making people aware of the basis of our oppression, to develop national, continental and international consciousness, and through this consciousness concretize a revolutionary

process to the masses.

We seek social and economic justice, and defend the collective interests of the poor and working people of Nuestra América. Fundamental to our independence is the development of an economic and social order that will see the masses of La Raza as owners of the product of our labor, and exercising collective control of the economy. We are victims of the common enemies of all working people in the world – capitalism and imperialism. It is for this reason that Unión del Barrio recognizes itself as a socialist organization, fighting for the liberation of our lands, our class interests, and on the side of all oppressed peoples. Under a unified and socialist Nuestra América we must share the human, intellectual, scientific, military, medical, and natural resources of the nations of our continent, and raise the quality of life for all people. We seek to advance political unity among the international working class, and will never unite with bourgeois, capitalist, neo-colonialists, who actively unite with imperialism, exploit their own people, and choose to advance their individual self-interest over the interests of all others.

### III. The Absolute and Unequivocal Liberation of Women.

**F**undamental to any revolutionary organization and conscious social movement is the absolute economic, political and cultural equality between men and women. The subjugation of raza women is a major part of the overall oppression of our people under capitalism and imperialism. There exists a more intense oppression of raza women - exploited and repressed not only by class and race, but also by gender. True liberation cannot take place until all sectors of La Raza are free.

We recognize that sexism and male chauvinism are bourgeois traits that must be completely rejected and

overturned for any of us to win freedom. Subjugation of women is an integral part of the current socio-economic order imposed on our people, and we must actively combat sexism in all its forms and manifestations, both within our movement and throughout our communities. Revolutionary examples from people's struggles in Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, México, Nicaragua, and Vietnam educate us that women's liberation is an essential part of national and class liberation. Unión del Barrio insists that without the full participation and leadership of revolutionary women, there will be no victory in revolutionary struggle.

### IV. Environmental Emancipation.

**W**e defend the air, soil, and water of Nuestra América. The correct approach to the struggle against environmental degradation remains as the slogan of the Chicano Movement - "The Solution to Pollution is Revolution". Our indigenous ancestors understood the importance of a balance between humans and our environment. Environmental justice is a part of our struggle against colonialism, capitalism and imperialism.

One of the consequences of European conquest, colonization, and imperialism is the transformation the environment into a commodity to be exploited for increased returns. This has propelled the massive exploitation of our natural resources, and forms the historical basis of the current disequilibrium between humans and nature. Furthermore, neoliberalism is only capable of promoting the interests of transnational

corporations, and these have proven capable of destroying the planet in their insatiable quest for profit. As with every crisis born from capitalism and imperialism, capitalists reap wealth in direct proportion to environmental degradation, and poor people suffer from increasingly frequent catastrophic loss.

Only a continental revolutionary struggle can bring an end to the poisoning of the atmosphere, deforestation, contamination of the oceans, and the other causes of climate change. Only a socialist world economy can provide a socio-economic system where the accumulation of wealth is not the driving force of society, but instead prioritizes life with dignity and justice. Through the construction of a society that values all life, we must turn back the damage to the environment, and prevent the further destruction of our planet.

## V. A Revolutionary Party for Raza Liberation.

In political struggle, individualism is a bourgeois egotistical trait. We must raise the shortcomings and contradictions to those who profess being active in political work without accountability to an organization. Central to this point is the combating of liberalism, which in our movement represents itself as unprincipled and opportunistic struggle. Liberalism stems from selfishness, and places personal interests above the interests of the collective movement. Unión del Barrio upholds the importance of engaging in constructive criticism and self-criticism, as a way of identifying our weaknesses and shortcomings. We must adhere to the principle of collective decision-making within our party, and in our daily work. Only through this process can we achieve organizational, practical, and ideological unity.

It is of paramount importance that all raza liberation forces establish lines of communication and principled working relations. Without networking and coalitions we are wasting resources, duplicating work, and missing opportunities to effectively address pressing issues in a collective fashion, or from a position of strength. While raza organizations have different strategies and tactics, it is essential that we display the political maturity to put aside minor contradictions and work together. This is especially important when the attacks against our communities are of such intensity that our failure to respond collectively translates into more victories for our enemies and heightening the oppression of our people. Adherence to previously agreed upon principles of unity is especially important within coalition work. When it

is necessary to work with organizations representing other movements, the resulting coalition work must be based on concrete objectives, mutual respect, principled association, and recognition of each other's autonomy and right to determine the character and content of our own struggle.

Since unity building does require compromises, it is necessary for us and other revolutionary forces to approach any relationship with a clear, scientific understanding based on the facts that our fundamental goal is not for civil rights or mere reforms, but for an end to imperialism, and the advancement of raza self-determination.

Mexicanas and Mexicanos have been a majority population in numerous areas of Aztlán/México Ocupado for many years. Including raza from Central and South America, we total more than 50 million people within the current political borders of the United States. Yet, even with these numbers, our present political condition forces us to exist in a state of virtual powerlessness. As Revolutionary Nationalists and Raza Internationalists, it is our intention to free La Raza from terror and oppression, and therefore we must involve every progressive element of our community in the struggle for self-determination. Only with a well organized, mobilized, and politicized people, will we develop the power necessary to achieve liberation. A critical aspect of this point is the need to channel our people's energy and resources into a disciplined revolutionary party.

## ***¡Concentización, Organización, Acción, Liberación!***

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