

Reflections on the Chicano Political Caucus held in San Jose, April 21-23, 1972

by Professor Carlos Penichet

The attendance at the Chicano Political Caucus swelled to around 1,000 for the principle meeting, although many of the people there had not been invited. The planners of the conference had excluded large segments of the Chicano population. Invitations had been sent, principally to bureaucrats in state and federal government, teachers, and many professional and para-professionals throughout the country. Thus, before the convention convened, there was a great deal of disgruntlement in many sectors of the Chicano movement and community, since the vast majority of the Mexican-American population are workers. Some of those feelings had been expressed by the Raza Unida organizers from San Jose, who had pushed for a boycott at the statewide Raza Unida conference two weeks before, and eventually boycotted on their own. There was no general plan of opposition to the conference, and many thought that the schism which has divided the urban and rural Chicano because of the Dixon-Arnett bill, would become the central topic of debate. As it turned out, the issue never surfaced as a principle point of contention.

Instead, the focus of the meeting was that all Chicano elements should recognize La Raza Unida as the best organizational base for political action. Not everyone there agreed, and although any semblance of order and procedure was on the verge of collapse on a couple of tense occasions, the majority clearly endorsed the concept of Raza Unida. When Bert Corona was named chairman of the meeting and the convention was transferred to the community on the Eastside of San Jose, the convention took form. Several resolutions and platforms which earlier had been passed were now finalized.

There are three general conclusions which can be drawn from the Caucus. First, broader recognition of Raza Unida as the base for organization is coming about with the endorsement of the convention. Many middle-class Chicano sectors have been very suspicious of Raza Unida, and have viewed the party as a sectarian group which will ultimately prove its own ineffectuality. The Raza Unida concept is becoming more credible, and the impetus for it, as the only alternative to the two-party system is growing. What form the party will eventually take is not known, and must be resolved in the coming months. And the form and tactics it develops will determine its success in the future.

Second, the organizations which are now moving to the forefront of the Mexican American movement, are those which have made the transition from rhetorical, convention-calling, self-annointed "spokesmen" for the Chicanos, to organizations which function on a day-to-day basis at the grass-roots level, providing services to the community and organizing effective political lobbies. In the past, Chicano organizations have operated on an issue-oriented basis, utilizing most of their time calling meetings and conventions, to take on the establishment, but neglecting to actively sustain organizational efforts in the communities. Their legitimization, then, was effected through the media and governmental agencies, and not by an organizational base through the people. This curious paradox is now coming to an end.

Third, organizations which have been considered for some time as marginal in terms of ideology and commitment, composed essentially of middle-class Chicanos who are viewed as easily accomodating, made the tactical blunder of condemning Raza Unida, revealing their true position, which had been an open question before. Thus, any appearance of legitimization they had before in the community will collapse, marking the beginning of their demise.

Despite the negative image that the media has given to the caucus, creating the impression that it turned out to be an anarchistic, chaotic meeting, it remains that a major contradiction between those who pretend to represent the Chicano, and those who really do, has been resolved, and a platform which is broadly and soundly conceived has been approved. Now efforts to extract concessions from candidates on the basis of the platform should begin. It would have been premature to endorse any candidate or party prior to the adoption of a platform and a clear understanding of where the candidate stood on the Chicano vis-a-vis the platform.

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Rationale:

In order to keep the momentum and the fund-raising aspects of each chapter alive we felt this guideline was necessary.

RESOLVED THAT:

5. LRUP speakers from outside the state should be required to split their fee on a percentage basis with Califas' LRUP.  
Defeated 8 no's, 4 yes'

Rationale:

We felt this would create a feud over money with the framework of LRUP. Further, we have our speakers to bring in money to the Califas LRUP and that we need to develop these speakers. 8 no's, 4 yes'.

6. That a speaker's bureau be established to identify and develop our own representatives for Calif. L.R.U.P. and that only speakers belonging to the speaker's bureau have authority to represent L.R.U.P. of Calif.
7. That this workshop on finance actually initiate a fund raising for the state, that this project be a symposium of L.R.U.P. put together by the speaker's bureau, that this symposium be presented at every college implemented before September 1972.
8. The money raised from this symposium be set aside for a state fund, this fund will be administered by a joint committee to be appointed by the Northern Southern California Central Committees.  
Defeated- 24 no's, 11 yes'

IMPORTANT: RESOLUTIONS #5 & #8 WERE DEFEATED.

LA RAZA UNIDA STATE WIDE

FINANCE WORKSHOP  
MAX MENDOZA, CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED THAT:

1. Finance Committee in each chapter devoted strictly to fundraising. Unanimous.

Rationale

Each chapter should be responsible for their own fund-raising. Fundraising is such an important activity we felt it requires a group of people to concentrate on it exclusively for maximum results.

RESOLVED THAT:

2. Each chapter be assessed \$5.00 per month as dues to be turned in to the Southern, Northern and Central and Steering Committees respectively. Unanimous.  
Amendment: Beginning May 1, 1972.

Rationale:

We felt \$5.00 is reasonable at this time and it doesn't create a hardship for any one chapter.  
Amendment: Payable to the closest C.C., but until area C.C.'s formed, payable to L.A. C.C. and the Northern California Steering Committee.

RESOLVED THAT:

3. That a Central State-wide Committee not be established at this time and that the present South, North and Central Committees be continued. Unanimous.

Rationale:

We felt we needed help from the communications workshop before establishing such a widespread committee. There is a general lack of funds on all levels and chapters already pay dues to their respective central committees. It was felt that to require additional dues to a state-wide committee would disrupt the present working relationships and over-burden the chapters financially.

RESOLVED THAT:

4. Each chapter will have a fund-raising function at least once every 90 days. This is strictly a guideline to be followed at the complete discretion of each chapter. Passed - 4 no's.



La Raza Unida Party State Conference  
Resolutions passed in Political Workshop

14. To present for the agenda the formulating of a platform at the next convention.  
Amendment-That the platform be primary at the next convention
15. That a conscious effort to involve women of La Raza in the leadership and decision-making positions and the term women of La Raza be used.
16. That the term used state-wide and official wording be La Raza.
17. That the women have an equal and integral role in the theory and practice of L.R.U.P. and that this role not be restricted to the traditional role.
18. That the women be given time to caucus before the workshops in order to be able to attend and participate in those workshops; to be put on the next agenda.
19. That L.R.U.P. make efforts state-wide to take over a city politically and in all aspects.  
Amendment-That an investigation of cities to be taken over be implemented.
20. That L.R.U.P. support all political prisoners

LA RAZA UNIDA PARTY STATE CONFERENCE  
San Jose April 8, 9, 1972

Resolutions passed in Political Workshop

1. That La Raza Unida will offer an alternative to the two party system and will not endorse candidates from any other political party.
2. That La Raza Unida Party begin statewide to initiate legal action to eliminate discriminatory election laws.
3. That we all return to our different Regions and run candidates, vote on issues and/or write in candidates.
4. That each Region handle its own Regional M.A.P.A. organization as it sees fit and that the Chicano Political caucus to be held in San Jose be boycotted.
5. That no endorsement or support for any other candidates be given in the primary or general elections as they will be used as a political education tool to expose the other parties and identify the issues.
6. That the general elections be used as a tool to maintain Registration.
7. That organizing committees begin an organizing drive into rural areas to register farmworkers, especially people in rural labor organizing.
8. That the organizing committees make an effort in their political education to expose and analyze the causes and effects of the illegal and deportation problems; these causes being the imperialistic and economic exploitation of Mexico by the U.S. which then uses deportations as a divisive tactic.
9. That LRUP be opposed to the U.S. governments use of deportations of our people in order to deceive workers and campesinos into thinking that Mexicanos are solely responsible for scab labor and thus pitting us against one another.
10. That LRUP develop a mass state political base of La Raza.
11. That a state-wide convention be held for the purpose of incorporating L.R.U. P in California and that it be put on the Agenda of workshops for the next convention.
12. Propose that a statewide convention be held in Los Angeles.  
Amendment-Reccomend to general assemble that Los Angeles host next statewide convention July 1st and 2nd.
13. That L.R.U. P. oppose the Dixon Arnett Law (tabled until July), oppose the E.O. P. Budget cuts, and take an anti War stand in South-east Asia.  
Amendment-that support be given to the State-wide demonstrations against cutbacks.

LA RAZA UNIDA PARTY  
CALIFORNIA STATE-WIDE CONFERENCE  
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA  
APRIL 8 & 9, 1972

LABOR & DEPORTATION  
VICENTE GONZALES, CHAIRMAN

1. Any agency, Federal State, County, or City utilizing government subsidies and contracts must institute Affirmative Action Programs with yearly goals and quotas in hiring, promoting, training para La Raza, mujeres y hombres, so that goals are met the work force should reflect the percent of Raza population of the State, County or City, regardless of political affiliations.

2. All Raza, citizen and not citizen, will be protected from intimidation from his employer and any institution whn he wants to join in the stuggle against exploitation. They shall receive equal wages and benefits.

The "no position on deportations, passed 14-8" was nullified in favor of the position taken in the political strategy & tactics workshop.

3. PRIVATE INDUSTRY AND EL CAMPO

- a. Community review boards made up of workers will determine Affirmative Action Program.
- b. Chapters shuld assist Raza in unions and workbers organizations.
- c. LRUP will organize non-union Raza.
- d. LRUP will organize unemployed Raza.
- e. Raza must organize Raza caucus in urions.
- f. Disband Wage Control Board
- g. Equal pay for equal work, mujeres y hombres.
- h. Equal pay for equal work, equal rights for women, job and benefits.
  1. open up fields of employment to women:
  2. Women must be able to collect disability on maternity leaves.
- i. Guaranteed minimum income and benefits.
- j. Guaranteed jobs and living wages..
- k. NLRB stop harassment and intimidation of UFWOC.
- l. All workers' activies, meetings, etc., be bi-lingual.

Tactics:

- a. Individual actions: Boycotts, Strikes, Strike Support, build LRUP Caucus within unions.
- b. Legal pursuit of injustices.
- c. Political leverage and build conscius.
- d. Public exposure: Picket, Demonstration, Media (T.V., radio, etc. )

4. All unions should reflect in training, apprenticeship programs and in their work-force, the percentage of Raza population of California in implemented. La Raza Unida Party must work for removing all barriers keeping Raza from belonging to unions, be they in policy, testing, or other obstacles.

Tactics and Leverage

- a. form Raza work coalitions in existing unions.
- b. initiate voter registration drives in order to unite and form a power block and thus institute changes.
- c. legal action- challenging any discrimination activity

5. All deportation and immigration hearings and meetings (pulic or private) and laws must have policy decision level Raza input and be bilingual and bi-cultural.

6. L.R.U.P. to investigate Senator Dymally's resolution about workers becoming voting citizens after 5 years of employment. Lrup should make an input so that the resolution meets the full needs of allRaza.

LA RAZA UNIDA  
STATE-WIDE CONFERENCE:  
April 8, 9, 1972

ORGANIZATION AND UNITY WORKSHOP

RESOLUTION #1

La Raza Unida Party is to organize LA RAZA in the State of California.

RESOLUTION #2

La Raza Unida Party is not to organize solely for political elections, but to also emphasize the economic and social endeavors reflecting the needs of each specific barrio, area, and state.

RESOLUTION #3

Organizing Committees:

Each organizing committee of La Raza Unida Party should have representatives of the issues of concern to the community.

Organization of Local Organizing Committees:

Each organizing committee is to have three (3) components:

1. Deputy registrars with quotas to met, the number of which is to be decided independently by each chapter.
2. Political Education: Weekly meetings to follow registration as an attempt to build a main political base.
3. Service projects - to serve the community. For example, where relevant: free income tax service, free breakfast programs, legal assistance, combat police harassment, free movies.
4. Each organizing committee should have a permanent office. Communication: a recommendation - All permanent offices should leave their address or send them to a center - a communication office. (See Communication Workshop.)

RESOLUTION #4

On Political Education:

Political Education should expose the problems facing the community as not being solved by the Democratic and/or Republican Party or any other party. (Amendment from the floor.)

Political Education is to discuss the oppressive conditions as they relate to workers, welfare recipients, students, unemployed, deported, veterans, etc.

Political Education is to be practiced internally within the organizing committee.

RESOLUTION #5

That there be established Central Committees in San Diego; Santa Barbara; San Jose; Sacramento; Los Angeles; and San Bernardino.

Duties of Central Committee:

1. Information should be established between these Central Committees.
2. Action campaigns and registration.
3. Screen candidates in each election.
4. Investigate general policies.
5. Each Central Committee is to have at least one meeting per month.
6. Recognize and approve each new chapter.

RESOLUTION #6

That the Central Committees meet at least four (4) times a year.

COMMUNICATIONS (INTERNAL & EXTERNAL) WORKSHOP  
CHAIRMAN - RIVERA, DAVID

THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL WAS FORMULATED IN THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP.

PROPOSAL  
INTERNAL

I. There should be three communication centers in the California La Raza Unida Party.

- A. These communication centers should be in (1) San Jose, (2) Los Angeles, (3) San Diego.
- B. There should be individual organizing committees that exist within these three communication centers. (These communication centers will function like central committees with reps, from different areas: i.e., Los Angeles, Central Committee - East Los Angeles, La Puente, Rosemead, etc.).

II. Monthly Reports

- A. Each individual organizing committee is to make monthly reports to their Central Committee Office.
- B. These three Central Committees will mail each other their monthly reports.
- C. The Central Committees will present these outlines to their individual organizing committees.
- D. The organizing committees are responsible for relaying these reports to the communities they work in.

III. Press Release (Monday)

- A. San Jose representative(s) to give press release. amendment: All chapters to give press release simultaneously
- B. This press release will reflect the consensus of the conference delegates. Amendment: to be written by the 5 workshop chairmen.
- C. Each representative organizing committee is responsible for reissuing the San Jose press release to their communities.

IV. All literature must be printed in Spanish and English.

V. Communication Committee

- A. Each central committee must have a communications committee
- B. At least one person in this committee must be bi-lingual.
- C. One member must be the correspondence secretary.

VI. State Conferences

- A. La Raza Unida Party of California will have state conferences at least bi-annually (twice a year).
- B. Where there is a need for political development, it will have highest priority in determining conference locations.

EXTERNAL

I. National Communications

- A. That La Raza Unida Party Communications Centers correspond with representatives of La Raza Unida Party on a national level.
- B. Possibility of a national La Raza Unida Party conference to be explored.

II. Monthly Reports

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- B. Each individual organizing committee is to make monthly reports to their central committee
- C. One member must be bi-lingual.