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TO ALL BRANCH ORGANIZERS AND NC MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Attached is an informational report on recent developments in the Chicano movement in California by Antonio Camejo. This report is for internal use only. The extra copies should be shared with comrades involved in this area of work. The report was received January 26.

Comradely,

*Joel Britton*_{sc}

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National Office

INTERNAL REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LA RAZA UNIDA PARTY
IN OAKLAND AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

by Antonio Camejo

On November 13, 1970 about 60 Chicanos from northern California met to discuss the possibility of forming a Raza Unida Party in this state. The meeting was built by word of mouth only but was very well attended in terms of representation. There were key activists from Oakland, Berkeley, Hayward, Union City, San José, Richmond, Palo Alto, and Sacramento. The meeting was initiated by Victor Acosta and other independents in Oakland, Hayward and Union City who have followed the development of the RUP in Texas and Colorado and who have been influenced by The Militant and our literature on independent political action.

The groups represented at the meeting included: U.C. MECHA (Movement of Chicano Students of Aztlan); FRENTE (de liberación del Pueblo), a break-off from MECHA in Berkeley; the Chicano Student Union (CSU) at Merritt College; MECHA, Palo Alto (Stanford University); Black Berets por la Justicia, San José (although a split-off from the Brown Berets there its leadership has actively helped build the antiwar movement through the Chicano Moratorium in the Bay Area); Centro de La Raza, Cal State; La Raza Unida, a Chicano group in Union City; and other MECHA chapters.

Conspicuous by their absence were such ultraleft formations as the Chicano Revolutionary Party (CRP). The discussion which took place was initiated by a talk by Carlos Buerra, National President of MAYO from Texas. Guerra ran down some of the accomplishments of the RUP in Texas and interpreted their slogan "Todos Diferentes, Todos Unidos" (All of us different, all of us united) as meaning that La Raza Unida Party is non-exclusive, i.e., it accepts into membership Raza of varying political outlooks. This was very well received and set a healthy tone for discussion with no red-baiting of any of our comrades. Both Frobén Lozada and myself were accepted as legitimate members of a future RUP. After much discussion on the nature of the RUP it was decided that each area should go back and organize local meetings to formulate a program to present at a second northern California meeting to be held in Union City, December 11.

OAKLAND CHAPTER

The First Oakland area meeting was held on Sunday, November 22. There were over 50 people present at the end of the meeting, but 100 attended at least part of the meeting. The Democratic Party sent some of their hacks to attempt to steer the RUP gathering back into capitalist politics. There was also representation from the G.I.

Forum (a moderate Mexican American veterans group) and MAPA (Mexican American Political Association -- pro-Democratic Party Chicano group) who were in favor of breaking with the Democratic Party. The meeting was very broad, including key Chicano activists in the Ron Dellums campaign. After much discussion in which the Democrats urged that the RUP should not define its relationship to either of the two capitalist parties, but instead leave room for "coalitions," etc., the following motion was passed: "La Raza Unida Party will not support any candidate of the Democratic, or Republican Party or any individual who supports these parties." That motion passed 50 to 7 with only one abstention. Four working committees were formed. A minor attempt at red-baiting by the Democrats during the meeting was very vigorously put down by independents and therefore went no further. The attitude of most members of the LRUP is very good on the question of non-exclusion although they generally don't understand why Frobén, Fernando and myself are "still" members of the SWP or YSA now that there is LRUP, i.e., another vehicle for us. It is precisely by clearly explaining the multi-national and socialist vanguard character of the SWP and YSA that we will win over and recruit the most serious militants of the LRUP.

All of the working committees functioned in preparation for the second northern California RUP meeting. The platform and program committee drafted and prepared a preamble and platform. The section dealing with women was not merely a result of Carmen Alegría's work, but a reflection of real involvement by many women in the party. The election research committee had registrars trained by the city of Oakland and together with Stockton and Union City have already registered over 1,000 Chicanos into the party. At this rate, the party would have no problem getting the required 70,000 signatures to be on the ballot by 1972.

The discussion on running candidates reflected a very healthy attitude toward electoral politics. Members wanted to discuss the general program of the party first before deciding on the tactic of running in the upcoming municipal elections. There is a generally clear understanding of the educational character of an electoral campaign in the Berkeley-Oakland area. There were some illusions for a while about the possibility of "winning" in District 5 in the East Oakland area which is about 20 per cent Chicano and Latino by running well-known community types, but none of these candidates panned out. One priest who was approached and was interested in running was ordered to decline by his Bishop.

SECOND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA MEETING -- UNION CITY

The LRUP meeting in Union City on December 11, 1970 was far beyond our most optimistic expectations. At the peak of the meeting there were 450 people. There was representation

from Roseville (a suburb near Sacramento), Sacramento, Stockton, San José, Union City, Berkeley, Oakland, Palo Alto, Richmond and Hayward. A complete cross-section of the Chicano community was present. The Oakland RUP chapter was clearly the best prepared of all those present. A voter registration table was staffed by Oakland people (leaving Ricardo Romo [PFP 1970 candidate for governor in California] no way out but to register in the LRUP) and copies of the platform and preamble as well as bumper stickers were available for everyone. Tony Riós (a former comrade with whom we have so far maintained a relationship of friendly collaboration) reported from the elections committee on all the legal requirements to participate in the Oakland municipal elections and on registering voters. Victor Acosta read the preamble and the platform to the gathering and Carmen Alegría presented the women's preamble and platform.

Romo supporters announced his presence urging everyone to give him a standing ovation, which almost everyone did. Romo then proceeded to give a 30 minute talk, although he was neither on the agenda nor had he attended any previous meeting of the party. He attempted to counterpose a "militant, vanguard party" to one which is all-inclusive and involves large numbers of people. He tended to project an ultraleft Panther type organization in opposition to the program and perspective of the Oakland party. He advocated a four point program for the party: (1) land reform; (2) the language (that's all he said, "the language"); (3) self-determination; (4) internationalism (i.e., as opposed to "nationalism"). He made such a disjointed presentation that his opposition to the Oakland program was not that clear to everyone and so his speech didn't have much effect one way or another. His position, however, on breaking with the Democratic Party stood out very clearly for all to see. He opposed the motion of the Oakland RUP which was to break with both parties. He said it was "unnecessary." Some ultralefts and what were possibly some Stalinists from San José (older Chicanos) attempted to cut across the motion by red-baiting and including the SWP in the list of parties that should not be supported by LRUP.

We were prepared to have to accept the following proposal: "LRUP will not support the candidates of any other political party other than those of LRUP." At that moment in the debate we felt it better to ram the break with the Democratic Party down the throats of the Stalinists rather than have the meeting dissipated with a long explanation of the short-comings of such a statement. Victor Acosta, however, saved the day by pointing out that such a policy position would make it impossible to make alliances with other groups such as an independent Black political party and that alliances would be necessary in the struggle. That turned the tide and the anti-Democratic and Republican Parties motion was adopted 113 to 6. The vote was taken late in

the meeting and many people had left during the debate between the reformists and those healthy independents and ourselves who opted for a break with the two party system. The vote nevertheless was a great victory over the reformists who will now have to fight up hill to overturn that decision. The large size of the meeting and the victory were boosts to the building of the party in Oakland.

The next northern California meeting is now scheduled for the weekend of February 20 in Stockton, California. José Angel Gutierrez is planning to attend. The Oakland chapter is planning to put out a newspaper which will combine the magazine published at Merritt called Rasca Tripas (gut scratcher) and the former newspaper Bronze. The first issue was planned by Florencio Medina, a likely candidate in the coming elections and whose brother Bruno Medina ran for sherriff on the LRUP ticket in Colorado. Medina announced at a meeting that the first issue would contain several reprints from The Militant on Texas and Colorado. The reprinting of Militant articles by Raza papers all over the country is an indication of the standing The Militant has developed among Chicano activists. At the Union City meeting we sold over 40 Militants simply by placing them on a table with a cup asking a ten cent donation for the papers (they were back issues). The 40 were all paid for! The issues had special coverage on Texas and the interview with Corky

So far at meetings, the organized ultralefts have been completely absent. There has been almost no participation from the Mission District in San Francisco. The Chicano Revolutionary Party (CRP) has become more active in the recent period in East Oakland, the Chicano barrio. Being a carbon copy of the Black Panthers, the BPP apparently financed the first issue of their new newspaper "La Chispa" (The Spark). They have generally stayed away from LRUP meetings.

LOS ANGELES

Tony Rios reported at the last Oakland RUP meeting that an initial meeting of over 200 people met in East Los Angeles to discuss forming LRUP there. The L.A. people, according to Rios have asked Oakland to send down representatives to their next meeting on January 29. Bob Elias of the Chicano Moratorium is one of the people working on the meeting. The Oakland chapter is planning to take as many people as possible down there with platforms, etc., and then on to San Diego where another organizing meeting is being held. The speed with which chapters are being organized all around the state is quite impressive. What the politics of these different RUP's will be is another question, however, that will be decided by the relationship of forces and the quality of leadership in each area.

It is clear that pressure is being brought to bear on such pro-Democratic Party reformists as Cesar Chavez. A

statement was recently released signed by him that reflects this pressure even though it stops short of supporting the idea of a Chicano party. Here is Chavez's statement:

Message to our Raza brothers of Mexican descent

Register TODAY to VOTE intelligently in governmental, local, statewide and national elections in order to elect our RAZA brothers -- for an improvement in our deplorable economic situation and our housing, for jobs and fair salaries, and for equal education for our RAZA. We will only be able to solve this through a COLLECTIVE VOTE in UNITY for "LA RAZA UNIDA."

VIVA LA HUELGA!!!

VIVA LA CAUSA!!!

This statement will make it easier for LRUP to approach the ranks of the farm workers and boycott movements.

We are projecting a state-wide intervention in the Stockton convention in February.