

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014

January 31, 1972

TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND NC MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is an internal report on the "Mi Raza Primero" conference held in Mukkegon, Michigan on January 22 and 23. Please share this information with Raza work directors.

Comradely,

*Mirta Vidal* (1)

Mirta Vidal  
YSA Chicano Liberation Work Director

*Antonio Camejo* (1)

Antonio Camejo  
for the SWP National Office

## REPORT ON MI RAZA PRIMERA CONFERENCE

On January 22-23 a conference sponsored by the Midwest Council of La Raza was held in Muskegon, Michigan. A joint YSA/SWP fraction was organized consisting of 17 comrades from New York, Chicago, Houston, Kansas City, Detroit, Denver and Gary, Indiana. The fraction included three Black comrades and one Japanese comrade who helped staff literature tables and observed the conference, as well as Ron Reosti, representing CoDEL, who was invited by the conference organizer to address a workshop about the suit for the bilingual ballot. Also working with the fraction was a Chicano sympathizer from Boston.

A few red-baiting incidents directed against the YSA during the course of the conference met with virtually no support. A motion presented in the student caucus meeting that all socialist literature be removed was overwhelmingly defeated. Later, remarks red-baiting the YSA made by the Brown Berets to the conference as a whole were ignored by the participants and repudiated by José Angel Gutiérrez, one of the keynote speakers, when he began his speech by referring favorably to an article in The Militant which he characterized as "a very good paper." In general, we were very well received and viewed as an integral part of the conference and principled supporters of La Raza Unida Party. In various workshops, LRUP supporters looked to YSAers and SWPers to help take on the Democrats present. Our success in defeating the red-baiting attempts set a good precedent which will aid us in fighting red-baiting in future Chicano conferences.

One of the most significant political developments at the conference was José Angel Gutiérrez's confirmation, both informally and in his speech (as quoted in The Militant) that both he and Mario Compeán favor the Texas Raza Unida Party supporting Chicano Democrats in the 1972 elections. It appears that they also favor not running for U.S. Senate, a race which would pit LRUP against liberal Democrat Ralph Yarborough. Whether these positions become the official positions of LRUP at their summer convention remains to be seen. However, the fact that two of the central leaders of LRUP agree on this, after disagreeing on the questions of running a state-wide ticket or simply running in a few counties (which would have had the "advantage" of avoiding this question), indicated that the most likely variant is that the party will adopt this perspective.

The Chicano liberation resolution and report adopted by the 1971 YSA convention and The Struggle for Chicano Liberation, the resolution adopted by the last SWP convention anticipated this problem and set forth our tasks. The following is from the section on "The development of Chicano parties" discussing the Texas LRUP:

The question of remaining independent of the capitalist parties and politicians is a decisive test facing the Raza Unida parties in Texas and elsewhere in the next period, especially as the 1972 presidential campaign approaches. We must

expect that Democratic Party politicians, assisted by the labor bureaucracy, reformists in the Chicano movement, and the Communist Party, will be putting increasing pressure on the Raza Unida parties to support liberal Democrats and the national Democratic ticket, or perhaps some form of 'New Politics.' Resisting this pressure will be essential to the continued development of the Raza Unida parties independent of the capitalist parties and based upon the Chicano people. The fact that some leaders of these parties have not unequivocally repudiated any support to the Democrats nationally, and have been attracted to the Democratic presidential hopeful McGovern, highlights this danger. We will be participating in the political debates on this question, emphasizing the need for an independent mass Chicano political party.

It will be important for us to continue to put forward our position on the Democratic Party question, explaining why any kind of support to Democrats will hurt the cause of independent Chicano political action. We will also want to develop truth-kit type material on Ralph Yarborough, Texas State Senator Joe Bernal, Bexar County Commissioner Al Pena and the Texas Democratic Party.

Literature tables were set up at the conference by the SWP Campaign, Pathfinder, the USLA Justice Committee, CoDEL, and the SMC. \$96 was sold in Pathfinder literature alone, including 194 of the various pamphlets on the Chicano movement. 62 copies of "Women: New Voice of La Raza - Chicanas Speak Out" were sold, reflecting a high degree of interest in this subject. In addition, we sold 130 Militants and obtained 30 Militant and 3 ISR subscriptions, 11 campaign endorsers and 20 endorsers of CoDEL. USLA made \$26 in sales and subscriptions and three people became sponsors. Contributions were also made to the SMC and CoDEL.

No other political tendencies on the left participated openly, sold their press or displayed their literature. Through our intervention Chicano activists in greater numbers now identify socialism with the YSA and SWP, and we have made valuable contacts in the Midwest for the first time.

The information in a previous report by Mirta Vidal and Lew Jones regarding the Midwest Council of La Raza was erroneous. This organization is not funded by the Ford Foundation.