

There is no neutrality

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STRUGGLESSESSIONS



Turning the Chicano Moratorium into lasting vengeance

To be Chicano in this U.S. is to be in a state of constant colonization, a violent redundancy.

Colonization is an ongoing process. But like anything with a beginning, it too has an end. The Chicano masses struggle for this very end.

But the revolutionary movement has been on a long bend in the road to national liberation and Communism. This – the historical task of revolution – is something that has been buried in the Chicano Nation's past. Some of these so-called Chicano leaders were nothing more than wolves in Mexica-sheep clothing.

We have been tricked into thinking the Chicano Movement ended at the end of the 1970s, that Chicanos are like some ancient dinosaurs that are acknowledged, even studied and praised, but are largely extinct, that their bones hang as relics in museums and the hallways of the universities. The cry for revolution has been substituted with the yawn of reform.

Toward the end of August all Chicanos across the country, especially in the Southwest Chicano national territory, take a moment to remember the Los Angeles Sheriff's opening fire on more than 30,000 protestors, brutalizing and even massacring Chicanos during the Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War on August 29, 1970 in East Los Angeles. The moratorium was meant to highlight the overrepresentation of Chicanos in the imperialist war against Vietnam. It's always been difficult to come to an agreed upon statistic of Chicanos, even Latinos in general, who were killed in Vietnam. The military, like the U.S. government in general, used to categorize Latino or Hispanics as white – a legacy of genocidal national annihilation that continues till this day. But according to a report by the late Chicano scholar Dr. Ralph Guzman Chicanos made up approximately 20 percent of the war's casualties while only making up about 10 percent of the country's population[1]. The Defense Manpower Data Center of the Office of the Secretary of Defense says there were only 348 "Hispanic one race" casualties, but that doesn't count the Latinos and Chicanos lumped into the 49,830 white casualties[2].

In the 70's in general, but particularly on August 29th, 1970, the U.S. imperialist state attempted to annihilate a growing national liberation and anti-imperialist movement.

The massacre produced the Chicano Moratorium Martyrs: Chicano journalist Ruben Salazar, and two Brown Beret youths, Lyn Ward and Angel Gilberto Diaz. The blood spilt would water and nurture the movement, helping to cleanse the reformism and pork chop nationalism from its ranks.

This date lives on as a dark and blood-drenched memory of a nation realizing itself, wide awake and organizing itself along national lines and in many cases among a proletarian class line. There must be a return to the latter but in the context of the former. Chicanos are not just a nationally oppressed people but our proletariat is exploited and the allied classes and sectors to the proletariat are oppressed as well.

The August 29, 1970 massacre is a historical marker. It marked the end of the era heavily influenced by the non-violent Civil Rights Movement from the prior decade, dominated by Cesar E. Chavez-style reformism, the Grape Boycott having ended that same year[3]. While strong currents of Chicano reformism continued, revolutionary Chicano leadership and organizations emerged such as the Black Berets, the August 29th Movement, some even carrying out armed actions against the state such as the Chicano Liberation Front[4].

But we return to the theme of the rise and the fall, the beginning and the end, the climax and crescendo. What happened to the revolutionary Chicano organizations? What happened to the calls for a liberated Aztlán? The blood of martyrs doesn't dry; it stays permanently wet in the soil. But the cancer of revisionism has obstructed the many lessons and our revolutionary legacy. We now remember Ruben Salazar as a journalist who focused on Chicano issues instead of his political stance that all writers must act in accordance with their conscious, that there is no neutrality; there is no supposed objectivity in covering stories. Without so many words, he was approaching a class analysis on the character of journalism, which says we must act, not simply write. And we are left wondering what would have been the Ruben Salazar of the revolutionary 1970s. Would he have traded in his notepad and pen for an automatic rifle and a copy of the "Selected Works" of Mao Zedong?

And what of Lyn Ward and Angel Gilberto Diaz? Would they have remained within the growing-capitulationist ranks of the Brown Berets under the treacherous leadership of David Sanchez? Or would they have deserted like many others to join the ranks of the August 29th Movement or the Chicano Liberation Front?

Martyrdom is a contradiction, like all things. One aspect is the broken heart – the tragedy of losing a beloved revolutionary, especially a young and promising one. The other aspect is the inversely proportional effect that it has on the revolutionary organization – the inevitable swelling of the ranks of the

organization and their renewed commitment to revolution. You can't have one without the other, and the latter is always primary.

The 70s were a time when the memories of “No Mexicans Allowed” signs hanging on storefronts and restaurants from only a couple decades ago was still painfully fresh. The 70s were a time when some Chicano elders even remembered the raid on Olvera Street in Downtown Los Angeles in 1931, forcing 400 Chicanos and Mexicans into dark and dirty vans and trains to be dumped across the border – the deportations wouldn't stop until 1936 with 2 million Mexicans and Chicanos removed from the U.S. The Chicano Nation's city landscape was literally altered by the mass removal:

Around one third of Los Angeles' Mexican population left the country, as did a third of Texas' Mexican-born population. Though both the state of California and the city of Los Angeles apologized for repatriation in the early 2000s, the deportations have largely faded from public memory.[5]

The 70s were a time when the memories of segregated schools for Mexican, Latino and Chicano children in the 1940s and 50s still stung like the first time they cried in childlike realization of their own colonization.

The history of Chicano national oppression is like watching the ocean's rising and falling tide and waves; it has been happening for a very long time and as sure as it began violently one day it will cease violently.

The New Communist Movement of the 1970s had its rises and its corresponding falls. It is the decade, or era, of a time of radicalism, rallying cries for national liberation, anti-imperialism, anti-revisionism.

But, now, what era are we in? Are we experiencing the wave crashing or rising? Or are we dead in the flat waters.

For an answer, one doesn't have to look any further than Los Angeles' many commemorative rallies, or lack thereof, for the anniversary of the Chicano

Moratorium, especially in Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles. Once every year in August, the masses are called upon by Chicano Movement sellouts like David Sanchez, former leadership of the original Brown Berets, or Chicano revisionist Carlos Montes and the reformist Centro CSO and the irrelevant “Marxist-Leninist” Freedom Road Socialist Organization – Fight Back.

Each year these self-appointed leaders get ready their Facebook accounts to post a remembering, a dipping into a bourgeois type of nostalgia (bourgeois because it evidently doesn't do anything to motivate them toward revolution), of the Chicano Movement and the Chicano Moratorium. The rhetoric is all there: Stop the Wars, Chicano Power, Denounce the Killings of Chicanos, Stop the RAIDS, No ICE, etc. It's an activist sloganeering formula set on annual repeat. The rallies are always exclusively performative, relying always mostly if not only on nostalgia – featuring former Brown Berets, some distant cousin of Cesar Chavez, or former leaders in the Chicano Movement who have traded in their cry for “Chicano Power!” and “Aztlán Libre!” instead for comfortable tenure at a university or self-reproducing insular acclaims.

All this while countless Chicanos and Latinos, through gentrification, lose their homes, are made homeless, are pushed outside the margins of their counties, all while more than 2 million undocumented immigrants have been deported, and continue with unwavering state savagery, all while the local police continue racking up deaths year in and year out – in Los Angeles County alone there have been 40 killings by the pigs in the last 12 months, 27 of which were either Latinos or Chicanos[6].

But, sure, go ahead and rent out the hall and set up your merch tables and pin up those iconic UFW eagle flags, a banner of the Mexica Tonatiuh, the huge black-and-white poster of the Chicano student Blowouts (the walkouts). Sell your Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa T-Shirts and Ruben Salazar poster prints. All proceeds go toward sustaining the “revolutionary” work we do, which means, after the revisionist jargon is deciphered, contributions to their 501©3 nonprofit.

What happened? The past is important, and we must consistently look upon it to draw correct lessons, but what about the present and the future? Where has the revolutionary Chicano visions gone? Who's hiding them? Or, rather, who is obstructing them?

It is the obligation of Chicanos, all Chicanos, but specifically Maoist Communist Chicanos to take that still-lit spark of the Chicano Moratorium and the movement in general and lightly blow at it, fan it until it grows back into its stronger state of a flame.

Chicanos should be realizing the fight against gentrification is part of the Chicano National Liberation Movement. Chicanos should be organizing defense units and patrols against ICE, for their undocumented immigrant brothers and sisters are an integral part of the Chicano Nation. Chicanos should be confronting fascists relentlessly as the foot soldiers of Great White Nation Chauvinism that they are. Chicanos should demand the elders and youth as well come out of the university classrooms and into the streets where the masses continue to resist, with or without them. Revolutionary Chicanos have a duty to lead all mass struggles and movements in the Chicano Nation, in solidarity and unison with other oppressed nations and the proletariat, in the construction of the three instruments of revolution which are necessary for Peoples War.

We have history on our side. We have the numerous lessons of the NCM. We know better than to liquidate the Chicano Nation thesis, like how the Centro de Acción Social Autónomo – Hermandad General de Trabajadores, the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional or Union de Barrio have.

We know better than to capitulate to electoralism like how the League of Revolutionary Struggle (which is where FRSO-FB would eventually be born from) that grew from the Chicano Mao Zedong Thought August 29th Movement.

But most importantly, in our current era, in the strategic offensive of world revolution as Chairman Gonzalo says, we now have been given the invincible weapon of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, principally Maoism. Chicanos must cherish this advancement in proletarian theory – both their national liberation as well as the proletarian revolution are sealed in guarantee with the development of Maoism.

There is no straight road or path for revolution, and indeed all the bends in the road and setbacks can be traced to the specific political line guiding a particular movement. Today’s Chicano Movement, existing in the countrywide Party building movement, existing in the era of Maoism where pre–Party collectives have begun to seriously take on the task of militarizing themselves and the masses, today’s Chicano Movement is set to be the most advanced it has ever been.

The wave of the Chicano Movement, like the U.S. Maoist Movement itself, is in the stage of constructing itself and the tide is still low but on the rise. The period of decline has ended. Now is the time we must seize the moment, reclaim the Chicano Movement from the revisionists and traitors and put it squarely inside the Maoist Communist Party building project.

[1] <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/05/opinion/soldiers-in-la-guerra.html>

[2] <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/vietnam-war/casualty-statistics#race>

[3] <https://ufw.org/research/history/ufw-history/>

[4] <http://www.notesfromaztlan.com/2014/04/16/the-chicano-liberation-front-1971/>

[5] Ibid.

[6] http://homicide.latimes.com/officer__involved/true

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