



8 August 1985

Compañero/as:

Please find copies of a Critique of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (LRS/Liga) by La Unión del Barrio and La Liga's response to our critique. We are asking the recipients of this mailing to carefully read and critically analyze both statements. We of La Unión believe that this conflict is not an isolated matter, but rather is reflective of similar political problems that other honest and progressive Chicano (individuals and organizations) Nationalists have had with the LRS. This issue is fundamental to the principle of Chicano Nationalism; do the Chicano people have the universal right to define, develop and defend its own social, economic, political, and spiritual reality. Our organization holds that the Chicano nation must independently and organically self-determine its interests.

La Unión's decision to put forth this criticism came about after years of critical observation of the Liga's opportunistic practice and corrupt political line. Moreover this statement is a manifestation of a rumor and slander campaign instigated by members of the LRS against our organization. Between January and June of this year the LRS has accused us of redbaiting, of being narrow nationalists, racists, brown capitalists, and of physically intimidating certain individuals. By mid June the LRS had effectively created suspicion and distrust among Mechistas, and between Mechistas and La Unión. On June 29, we met with a latino contingent from the LRS in San Diego at their request. Having met a week previous with the San Diego MEChA Central--making clear our position on the LRS--we put forth our criticisms in an open and aboveboard manner to insure that the LRS clearly understood our criticism.

At this meeting we provided concrete examples and names of those people we knew were spreading rumors about La Unión which implicated at least one Ligista present. It is worthy to note that this person did not deny complicity. The Liga however, refused to disclose the sources of their criticism of La Unión. With regard to redbaiting, we made it perfectly clear that our criticism did not stem from them being communists, rather for them being very poor examples of communists. Finally, it is important to note that the latino contingent of the LRS did not once refute the concrete criticisms that we put forth, and have yet to do so.

La Unión del Barrio has taken up the task of challenging the chauvinism and ideological imperialism extant among the north american left. We, the Chicano/Mexicano people of Aztlan must define our own understanding of reality, free from external coercion, pressure, and influence. Under these terms alone, may we successfully achieve complete Chicano Liberation.

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR AZTLAN!  
U.S. OUT OF CENTRAL AMERICA!  
BOYCOTT THE HELL OUT OF COORS!  
ABAJO CON LA MIGRA!

Unión del Barrio  
San Diego, Califaztlan

**po box 8095 San Diego, Ca 92102**



June 12, 1985

POSITION STATEMENT

**SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE CHICANO MOVEMENT:  
A CRITIQUE OF THE LEAGUE FOR REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE**

In that we believe that our people's Self-Determination has historically been, and continues to be the foremost principle of the Chicano/Mexicano Movement, La Unión del Barrio hereby issues this statement regarding the activities of the League for Revolutionary Struggle (a.k.a. Liga or LRS) and other multi-national organizations who undermine the struggle of La Raza to bring about Chicano Self-Determination. Regardless of their rhetoric, these organizations have demonstrated that they neither believe or respect Chicano Self-Determination and, given the opportunity, would compromise the Chicano Movement for their self-serving priorities.

The Chicano Movement is essentially rooted in nationalist struggle for the liberation and autonomy of Aztlan. As progressive nationalists, we recognize and welcome support from other liberation struggles, however, the leadership of the Chicano Movement must be carried out by progressive and honest Chicanos. This statement is not an indictment of revolutionary platforms or the north american Left in general. Any labeling of this statement as such should be viewed as an attempt to confuse and diffuse the real issue which is Self-Determination for the Chicano Movement.

Following are five areas which demonstrate the counterproductive practices of the LRS that violate the principle of Self-Determination for the Chicano Movement:

1. The LRS is a multi-national formation whose majority membership is composed of non-Chicanos. Therefore the Liga has no right to assume leadership or to determine direction of the Chicano Nationalist Movement. This contradiction is best illustrated when Latino LRS members are planted in Chicano organizations with the intention of promoting the Liga agenda. When the LRS agenda is rejected, they often divisively create splinter groups. Chicano Self-Determination is not possible when Chicano Movement organizations cannot independently and democratically set ideological and political direction.

2. The LRS professes to support the creation of a sovereign socialist Aztlan, but conditionally claim that they will only allow us to secede when we have reached the correct level of revolutionary consciousness.<sup>2</sup> This paternalistic position mirrors the european imperialism that all indigenous peoples have been subjected to. We will self-determine our own future, and no non-Chicano or multi-national formation will determine for us when and if we are to be allowed to secede.

3. The multi-national Liga apparently has an internal policy regarding membership that constitutes both "open" and "secret" members. Open members are those who publicly claim LRS membership. Secret members are those who work to promote the Liga agenda but deny affiliation. LRS rationalization for this policy is that they possess a revolutionary line and therefore cannot risk full disclosure of their membership.<sup>3</sup> Under closer examination this practice allows the Liga to ideologically and politically dominate some areas of the Chicano Movement and other domestic de-colonization struggles. By not being upfront about their affiliation, they effectively use their<sup>4</sup> anonymity to manipulate the direction of honest Chicano organizations.

4. The LRS participates primarily through its secret members when dealing with organizations and coalitions that are rooted firmly in Chicano Nationalist struggle. More specifically in its relations with the Chicano community, the Liga often parrots Chicano Nationalist and cultural positions, hereby attempting to both<sup>5</sup> define the positions of the Chicano Movement and assume its leadership. In addition, the Liga concentrates on "cadre raiding" - a practice in which the LRS actively and purposely recruits (without clarifying actual Liga positions) individuals who are already involved in the Movimiento. This is a destructive policy since it robs the Movimiento of workers and burdens it with the task of rebuilding ranks.

5. The multi-national LRS practices planting its secret members within organizations it wishes to control or influence. This tactic both abuses the democratic processes of other organizations and facilitates the LRS to "piggyback" on issues. Therefore the Liga bypasses the difficult and critical<sup>6</sup> tasks of organizing and unorganized and base-building in the community.

The LRS contends that the Chicano Movimiento is a facet within a multi-national worker movement in the U.S. La Union del Barrio counters this contention with the reality that the Chicano Movement of Aztlan is both a grass-roots de-colonization movement and a working class movement. This movement will determine the future of Aztlan and our relationship to other struggles. Any group, regardless of political ideology, who attempts to obscure and deny that we have the full right to be a sovereign nation - denying us our humanity and indigenous birthright - commits an act as racist as the assault of european colonization.

The League for Revolutionary Struggle should not be permitted to further entrench itself in the Chicano Movement and divert our struggle

for liberation. Because we believe in Chicano Nationalism, La Unión del Barrio - in solidarity with our companeros of Aztlan - calls upon all honest progressive elements in the Chicano Movement to address and critically challenge all LRS involvement with the struggle for Chicano self-determination. La Unión del Barrio believes in the Nation of Aztlan, and that the creation of this nation is the most powerful contribution we can make towards the decolonization of our oppressed brothers and sisters of the Third World.

#### HISTORICAL SUMMATION OF THE LRS

In order to comprehend the character and practice of the LRS, we must have a basic understanding of their evolutionary process. Founded in 1979, the LRS is a multi-national formation which claims adherence to Marxist Leninist - Mao Zedong thought. A close analysis of Liga political practice reveals a confined adherence to the international politics of the People's Republic of China. This means that LRS positions reflect China's belief that the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union are the primary enemies of the "people of the world." This prioritization and focusing on international rivalries confuses and negates the importance of Third World liberation struggles. The LRS was the product of the merging of ATM (August 29th Movement - a Chicano organization), I Wor Kuen (an Asian/Chinese organization), some members of the Congress of African People, and some activists from the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society - primarily anglo middle-class young people).

1974-75 ATM was founded by the merger of the August 29th Collective of Los Angeles (a committee that once was part of La Raza Unida Party and some former Brown Berets); the East Bay Collective (also once part of La Raza Unida Party); and the Albuquerque Collective (basically a Marxist study group).

1975-78 A major focus of ATM during this time period consisted of an ongoing struggle between themselves and CASA (Centro de Accion Social Autonoma) over who would "lead" the Chicano student movement - using MEChA conferences as their primary battlefield. In an effort to control the student movement, both groups resorted to the development of student front groups: CASA developed CEP (Comite Estudiantil del Pueblo) while ATM developed both MER (Movimiento Estudiantil Revolucionario) and FRA (Frente Revolucionario de Aztlan). This struggle for hegemony of the student movement resulted in constant infighting at conferences; confrontations on some campuses (UCSB, Cal State L.A., and East L.A. College); and the embitterment, confusion, and burnout of many young Chicanos who consequently dropped out of the Movimiento.

In 1975, a conflict arose between the United Farmworkers Union and ATM which led to the expulsion of ATM from UFW activities.

During the Anti-Bakke demonstrations, a bitter struggle between CASA and ATM caused a division in the MEChA state-wide movement which led to the creation of two Anti-Bakke coalitions, thus weakening the movement against the racist Bakke court decision.

In 1977, a MEChA position paper detailed the intrusive and divisive role ATM played in the Chilili and struggle in New Mexico.

After the demise of CASA, ATM (which soon afterwards became LRS) emerged as an influential non-student organization involved in MEChA conferences and organizing.

1978-80 ATM - now the multi-national LRS - appears to make control of the MEChA movement a priority. All Califas statewide and nationwide MEChA conferences are influenced by the Liga; in fact, conference speakers, workshop panelists and resolutions reflect the Liga line.

During this time, the LRS becomes involved in the anti-draft movement and, consequently, their tactics are denounced in a position paper published by the participating, primarily anglo groups from Santa Barbara (1980).

In 1980, during the crucial planning stages for the 10th commemoration of the Chicano Moratorium, Liga involvement resulted in a split among the coalescing organizations. According to the San Diego Chicano Moratorium Committee and delegates from the Riverside contingent, the Liga attempted to undemocratically control the agenda of the committee by demanding agenda control, stacking meetings, walking out of meetings, and threatening dismantlement of the event since they (LRS) controlled the event permits. These unprincipled actions resulted in the formation of two separate Moratorium committees, essentially making shambles of the commemoration of one of the most important events in the struggle for Chicano Self-Determination.

1981-84 Reports on disruptive Liga involvement in the anti-apartheid movement on the UCSD campus (April - May 1985) are put forth by on-campus organizers.

The Liga provides free subscriptions to their newspaper "Unity" at MEChA conferences, thus flooding Mechistas with LRS propaganda.

At a Partido de La Raza Unida Summit, Mechistas from UCLA and Berkeley denounce LRS involvement in the MEChA movement.

The African People's Socialist Party also denounces the Liga in their publication "The Burning Spear."

In San Diego, the LRS causes a divisive disruption of CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) when a Liga member attempts to join the local executive committee.

After La Unión del Barrio makes known their criticisms of Liga positions and tactics, LRS members accuse the Union of rumor-mongering, slander, red-baiting, of being brown capitalists and narrow nationalists, thus creating suspicion between Union activists and elements of San Diego County MEChA's.

#### LA UNIÓN DEL BARRIO

La Unión del Barrio was founded in August 1981, by veteran Chicano grass-roots activists whose organizational and ideological roots were derived from the Brown Berets, MEChA, La Raza Unida Party, United Farmworkers Union, MAPA, Chicano Park Steering Committee, and the Committee on Chicano Rights. Our mission is to halt the colonization

of our Gente by promoting our true history, culture, and movement; establishing Chicano/Mexicano control of our community's social, political, and economic institutions; focusing and addressing those Barrio-related concerns and issues felt by our Gente; and dedicating ourselves to the concerns, education, and organization of our youth.

Through our continued efforts in advocacy, the sponsorship of Barrio Forums and conferences, the continuation and expansion of the Coors Boycott, our work to end Barrio violence, developing community defense marches and actions, publishing a newsletter, continuing our Central America and African (Black) solidarity work, and working to build Chicano/Mexicano community and organizational unity, La Unión del Barrio strives to bring the day of Aztlan's self-determination that much closer.

TIERRA Y LIBERTAD  
UNIÓN DEL BARRIO  
JUNE, 1985  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFAS  
AZTLAN

## END-NOTES

1. See Statements on the Founding of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Lenist), United States, Getting Together, 1978. p. 2. The Liga makes no secret of its ideological position regarding the primacy of the class question over the national question. See also, League of Revolutionary Struggle, Forward: Journal of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, No. 2. August 1979, p. 9. The Liga sees itself as a higher form of struggle and dismisses the Chicano Nationalist struggle as reformist and or revisionist. They paternalistically say that they will "...win over and recruit the most advanced elements from that (Chicano) struggle to become communists." They further argue that "A systematic and patient carrying out of these tasks will help communists to win, during the course of the long struggle, the leadership (emphasis added) of the Chicano revolutionary movement." The infantile north american Left has historically attempted to subvert the domestic de-colonization struggle of the Chicano people in order that Chicanos accept the "proletarian revolution" as well as their benevolent leadership. It is apparent that the Liga and the north american Left are privately concerned about the descendants of conquered Mexico liberating themselves from domestic colonialism as well as the ideological imperialism of the north american Left.
2. *ibid.*, p. 94. The Liga states that "Upholding the right of self-determination does not presuppose communist support for secession or any other specific exercise of the right. Communists decide on their position taking into account the overall conditions of the proletarian struggle and how secession or whatever other form of the right would affect this struggle. In other words, the right of self-determination, as with all democratic demands, is subordinate to the general cause of the proletariat." The Liga fails to accurately analyze the Chicano liberation struggle as have others among the north american left. The Liga either fails or refuses to see the revolutionary nature of the Chicano Nationalist Movement. The form of nationalism we speak of is revolutionary nationalism. Since the basis for capitalist development in the Southwest was the exploitation of Chicano/Indio land and labor, it follows that the largest most oppressed group of workers liberate themselves from domestic colonial domination. The Liga does not

recognize that Chicano revolutionary nationalism is the force that will destroy monopoly capitalism and imperialism in Aztlan.

3. While we are well aware of the risks and vulnerability of the Movimiento to infiltration by the colonial authorities, we are also aware of the single most effective security force that we have to defend against such infiltration is an organized base in the Chicano community. However, we nor any other Chicano Nationalist organization who is familiar with the history of La Liga is aware of a Chicano grassroots Liga base anywhere. This organizational shallowness would explain the insidiousness of La Liga and provide them with the need to rationalize about their undisclosed membership when questioned. Moreover, La Liga would have us believe that their security precautions override political considerations of honesty and respect for the political maturity of the Chicano Nationalist Movement.
4. Given this argument, it should be clear that La Liga possesses a predetermined and misguided view of the Chicano Nationalist struggle and how they will win over "advanced" elements in the Chicano Movement to be communists, (it is doubtful whether La Liga knows what a communist is). For what reason, other than to use these so-called advanced elements to facilitate Liga hegemony in specific sectors of the Chicano Movement. La Liga would have us believe that this practice is not antithetical to the natural process of Chicano Self-Determination.
5. Unión del Barrio members have over the years observed this process especially among not-so-advanced Ligistas--from East Los Angeles College, Rio Hondo College, and San Jose City College--operating ostensibly as Mechistas at the Statewide and national MEChA conferences.
6. See Statements on the Founding of the League of Revolutionary Struggle, 1978. This pamphlet is saturated with generalizations regarding Liga political work. See especially page 116, where the ATM and IWK assume credit for the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition with no mention of the California statewide MEChA which created the ABDC.