EL PLAN DE AZTLÁN

Reassessments such as that of Armando Rendon led to a growing sense of Chicano self-identity. Political movements were not far behind. The First Chicano National Conference, held in Denver in 1969, produced “El Plan de Aztlan,” a call for political action and race pride.

EL PLAN ESPÍRITUAL DE AZTLÁN

In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage but also of the brutal “gringo” invasion of our territories, we, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlan from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth and consecrating the determination of our people of the sun, declare that the call of our blood is our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny.

We are free and sovereign to determine those tasks which are justly called for by our house, our land, the sweat of our brows, and by our hearts. Aztlan belongs to those who plant the seeds, water the fields, and gather the crops and not to the foreign Europeans. We do not recognize capricious frontiers on the bronze continent.

Brotherhood unites us, and love for our brothers makes us a people whose time has come and who struggle against the foreigner “gabacho” who exploits our riches and destroys our culture. With our heart in our hands and our hands in the soil, we declare the independence of our mestizo nation. We are a bronze people with a bronze culture. Before the world, before all of North America, before all our brothers in the bronze continent, we are a nation, we are a union of free pueblos, we are Aztlan.

Por La Raza todo. Fuera de La Raza nada.

PROGRAM

El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan sets the theme that the Chicanos (La Raza de Bronze) must use their nationalism as the key or common denominator for mass mobilization and organization. Once we are committed to the idea and philosophy of El Plan de Aztlan, we can only conclude that social, economic, cultural, and political independence is the only road to total liberation from oppression, exploitation, and racism. Our struggle then must be for the control of our barrios, campos, pueblos, lands, our economy, our culture, and our political life. El Plan commits all levels of Chicano society—the barrio, the campo, the ranchero, the writer, the teacher, the worker, the professional—to La Causa.

Nationalism

Nationalism as the key to organization transcends all religious, political, class, and economic factions or boundaries. Nationalism is the common denominator that all members of La Raza can agree upon.

Organizational Goals

1. UNITY in the thinking of our people concerning the barrios, the pueblo, the campo, the land, the poor, the middle class, the professional—all committed to the liberation of La Raza.

2. ECONOMY: economic control of our lives and our communities can only come about by driving the exploiter out of our communities, our
pueblos, and our lands by controlling and developing our own talents, sweat, and resources. . . .

3. EDUCATION must be relative to our people, i.e., history, culture, bilingual education, contributions, etc. Community control of our schools, our teachers, our administrators, our counselors, and our programs.

4. SELF-DEFENSE shall serve our people by providing the service necessary for a full life and their welfare on the basis of restitution, not handouts or beggar's crumbs. Restitution for past economic slavery, political exploitation, ethnic and cultural psychological destruction and denial of civil and human rights. Institution in our community which do not serve the people have no place in the community. The institutions belong to the people.

5.CULTURAL value of our people strengthen our identity and the moral backbone of the movement. Our culture unites and educates the family of La Raza towards liberation with one heart and one mind. We must insure that our writers, poets, musicians, and artists produce literature and art that is appealing to our people and relates to our revolutionary culture. Our cultural values of life, family, and home will serve as a powerful weapon to defeat the gringo dollar value system and encourage the process of love and brotherhood.

6. POLITICAL LIBERATION can only come through independent action on our part, since the two-party system is the same animal with two heads that feed from the same trough. Where we are a majority, we will control; where we are a minority, we will represent a pressure group; nationally, we will represent one party: La Familia de La Raza!

Action

1. Awareness and distribution of El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan. Presented at every meeting, demonstration, confrontation, courthouse, institution, administration, church, school, tree, building, car, and every place of human existence.

2. September 16, on the birthdate of Mexican Independence, a national walk-out by all Chicano of all colleges and schools to be sustained until the complete revision of the educational system: its policy makers, administration, its curriculum, and its personnel to meet the needs of our community.

3. Self-defense against the occupying forces of the oppressors at every school, every available man, woman, and child.


5. Economic program to drive the exploiters out of our community and a welding together of our people's combined resources to control their own production through cooperative effort.

6. Creation of an independent local, regional, and national political party. A nation autonomous and free—culturally, socially, economically, and politically—will make its own decisions on the usage of our lands, the taxation of our goods, the utilization of our bodies for war, the determination of justice (reward and punishment), and the profit of our sweat.

El Plan de Aztlan is the plan of liberation!
VI. Free, legal abortions and birth control for the Chicano community, controlled by Chicanas. As Chicanas we have the right to control our own bodies.

VII. Make use of church centers, neighborhood centers and any other place available.

“Liberate your mind and the body will follow…”

“A quitarnos todos nuestros complejos sexuales para tener una vida mejor y feliz” (Let’s cast off all our sexual complexes to have a better and happier life) . . .

RELIGION
I. Recognize the Plan de Aztlan.
II. Take over already existing Church resources for community use, i.e., health, Chicano awareness—public information of its resources, etc.
III. Oppose any institutionalized religion.
IV. Revolutionary change of Catholic Church or for it to get out of the way.
V. Establish communication with the barrio and implement programs of awareness to the Chicano movement.

THE TALE OF THE RAZA
[CÉSAR CHÁVEZ AND THE FARM WORKERS' MOVEMENT]

Luis Valdez

Probably no movement among Latinos received more national attention than the struggle by César Chávez and the National Farm Workers' Association (NFWA) to organize the migrant farm workers. Calling for a nationwide boycott of California grapes and a march from Delano, in California's Central Valley, to the state capitol in Sacramento—among other actions—Chávez and the NFWA combined issues of race and labor relations into a single movement. Chicano author Luis Valdez assessed the larger impact of this struggle for La Raza (The Race), as well as for the workers.

The revolt in Delano is more than a labor struggle. Mexican grape pickers did not march 300 miles to Sacramento, carrying the standard of the Virgen de Guadalupe, merely to dramatize economic grievances. Beyond unionization, beyond politics, there is the desire of a New World race to reconcile the conflicts of its 500-year-old history. La Raza is trying to find its place in the sun it once worshipped as a Supreme Being.

La Raza, the race, is the Mexican people. Sentimental and cynical, fierce and docile, faithful and treacherous, individualistic and herd-following, in love with life and obsessed with death, the personality of the raza encompasses all the complexity of our history. The conquest of Mexico was no conquest at all. It shattered our ancient Indian universe, but more of it was left above ground than beans and tortillas. Below the foundations of our Spanish culture, we still sense the ruins of an entirely different civilization.

Most of us know we are not European simply by looking in a mirror—the shape of the eyes, the curve of the nose, the color of skin, the texture of hair; these things belong to another time, another people. Together with a million little stubborn mannerisms, beliefs, myths, superstitions, words, thoughts—things not so easily detected—they fill our Spanish life with Indian contradictions. It is not enough to say we suffer an identity crisis, because that crisis has been our way of life for the last five centuries . . .

Although he sometimes reminds one of Benito Juarez, César is our first real Mexican-American leader. Used to hybrid forms, the raza includes all Mexicans; even hyphenated Mexican-Americans; but divergent histories are slowly making the raza in the United States different from the raza in Mexico. We who were born here missed out on the chief legacy of the Revolution: the chance to forge a nation true to all the forces that have molded us, to be one people. Now we must seek our own destiny, and Delano is only the beginning of our active search. For the last hundred years our revolutionary progress has not only been frustrated, it has been totally suppressed. This is a society largely hostile to our cultural values. There is no poetry about the United States. No depth, no faith, no allowance for human contrariness. No soul, no mariachi, no chili sauce, no pulque, no mysticism, no chingaderas . . .

The pilgrimage to Sacramento was no mere publicity trick. The raza has a tradition of migrations, starting from the legend of the founding of Mexico. Nezahualcoyotl, a great Indian leader, advised his primitive Chichimecas, forerunners of the Aztecs, to begin a march to the south. In that march, he prophesied, the children would age and the old would die, but their grandchildren would come to a great lake. In that lake they would find an eagle devouring a serpent, and on that spot, they would begin to build a great nation. The nation was Aztec Mexico, and the eagle and the serpent are the symbols of the patria. They are emblazoned on the Mexican flag, which the marchers took to Sacramento with pride.

Then there is the other type of migration. When the migrant farm laborer followed the crops, he was only reacting to the way he saw the American raza: no unity, no representation, no roots. The pilgrimage was a truly religious act, a rejection of our past in this country and a symbol of our unity and new