

respect for his cultural and ethnic heritage. Unsure of himself, he seeks assimilation as a way out of his "degraded" social status. Consequently, he remains politically ineffective. In contrast, *Chicanismo* reflects self-respect and pride in one's ethnic and cultural background. Thus, the Chicano acts with confidence and with a range of alternatives in the political world. He is capable of developing an effective ideology through action.

Mexican Americans must be viewed as potential Chicanos. *Chicanismo* is flexible enough to relate to the varying levels of consciousness within *La Raza*.³ Regional variations must always be kept in mind as well as the different levels of development, composition, maturity, achievement, and experience in political action. Cultural nationalism is a means of total Chicano liberation.

There are definite advantages to cultural nationalism, but no inherent limitations. A Chicano ideology, especially as it involves cultural nationalism, should be positively phrased in the form of propositions to the Movement. *Chicanismo* is a concept that integrates self-awareness with cultural identity, a necessary step in developing political consciousness. As such, it serves as a basis for political action, flexible enough to include the possibility of coalitions. The related concept of *La Raza* provides an internationalist scope of *Chicanismo*, and *La Raza Cósmica*⁴ furnishes a philosophical precedent. Within this framework, the Third World Concept merits consideration. . . .

Campus Organizing: Notes on MECHA

. . . MECHA is a first step to tying the student groups throughout the Southwest into a vibrant and responsive network of activists who will respond as a unit to oppression and racism and will work in harmony when initiating and carrying out campaigns of liberation for our people.

As of present, wherever one travels throughout the Southwest, one finds that there are different levels of awareness on different campuses. The student movement is to a large degree a political movement and as such must not elicit from our people the negative

³*La Raza*, literally "the Race," was a term used by Chicano activists to mean all Mexican people on both sides of the border.

⁴*La Raza Cósmica*, "the Cosmic Race," referred to a belief that the special history of Mexicans, with roots in the New and Old Worlds, gave them a unique destiny.

responses that we have experienced so often in the past in relation to politics, and often with good reason. To this end, then, we must redefine politics for our people to be a means of liberation. The political sophistication of our Raza must be raised so that they do not fall prey to apologists and *vendidos* [sellouts] whose whole interest is their personal career or fortune. In addition, the student movement is more than a political movement, it is cultural and social as well. The spirit of MECHA must be one of "hermandad" [brotherhood] and cultural awareness. The ethic of profit and competition, of greed and intolerance, which the Anglo society offers must be replaced by our ancestral communalism and love for beauty and justice. MECHA must bring to the mind of every young Chicano that the liberation of his people from prejudice and oppression is in his hands and this responsibility is greater than personal achievement and more meaningful than degrees, especially if they are earned at the expense of his identity and cultural integrity.

MECHA, then, is more than a name; it is a spirit of unity, of brotherhood, and a resolve to undertake a struggle for liberation in a society where justice is but a word. MECHA is a means to an end. . . .

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INDIANS OF ALL TRIBES

Proclamation

November 1969

In November 1969, a coalition of veteran activists and students attending the new Native American studies programs at San Francisco State University and Berkeley took over the unused federal prison on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. Like other spectacular protests, the occupation of Alcatraz derived energy from considerable media attention, which stimulated support from whites. For instance, the rock band Creedence

Reprinted in Alvin M. Josephy Jr., Joane Nagel, and Troy Johnson, eds., *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 40-43.

Clearwater Revival donated a boat to bring supplies to the island. The following proclamation of the island's seizure mocked the status of Native American reservations under the Bureau of Indian Affairs and asserted a utopian vision of cultural rebirth. The occupation itself became chaotic and finally collapsed in June 1971. The vision survived, however, and inspired an ongoing renaissance of American Indian culture.

To the Great White Father and All His People:

We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery.

We wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with the Caucasian inhabitants of this land, and hereby offer the following treaty:

We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four dollars (\$24) in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the white man's purchase of a similar island about 300 years ago. We know that \$24 in trade goods for these 16 acres is more than was paid when Manhattan Island was sold, but we know that land values have risen over the years. Our offer of \$1.24 per acre is greater than the 47 cents per acre the white men are now paying the California Indians for their land.

We will give to the inhabitants of this island a portion of that land for their own, to be held in trust by the American Indian Government—for as long as the sun shall rise and the rivers go down to the sea—to be administered by the Bureau of Caucasian Affairs (BCA). We will further guide the inhabitants in the proper way of living. We will offer them our religion, our education, our life-ways, in order to help them achieve our level of civilization and thus raise them and all their white brothers up from their savage and unhappy state. We offer this treaty in good faith and wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with all white men.

We feel that this so-called Alcatraz Island is more than suitable for an Indian Reservation, as determined by the white man's own standards. By this we mean that this place resembles most Indian reservations, in that:

1. It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation.
2. It has no fresh running water.
3. It has inadequate sanitation facilities.
4. There are no oil or mineral rights.

5. There is no industry so unemployment is great.
6. There are no health care facilities.
7. The soil is rocky and non-productive; and the land does not support game.
8. There are no educational facilities.
9. The population has always exceeded the land base.
10. The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others.

Further, it would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.

Use to Be Made of Alcatraz Island

What use will be made of this land?

Since the San Francisco Indian Center burned down, there is no place for Indians to assemble and carry on our tribal life here in the white man's city. Therefore, we plan to develop on this island several Indian institutes:

1. A Center for Native American Studies will be developed which will train our young people in the best of our native cultural arts and sciences, as well as educate them to the skills and knowledge relevant to improve the lives and spirits of all Indian peoples. Attached to this center will be traveling universities, managed by Indians, which will go to the Indian Reservations in order to learn the traditional values from the people, which are now absent in the Caucasian higher educational system.
2. An American Indian Spiritual center will be developed which will practice our ancient tribal religious ceremonies and medicine. Our cultural arts will be featured and our young people trained in music, dance, and medicine.
3. An Indian center of Ecology will be built which will train and support our young people in scientific research and practice in order to restore our lands and waters to their pure and natural state. We will seek to de-pollute the air and the water of the Bay Area. We will seek to restore fish and animal life, and to revitalize sea life which has been threatened by the white man's way. Facilities will be developed to desalt sea water for human use.

4. A Great Indian Training School will be developed to teach our peoples how to make a living in the world, improve our standards of living, and end hunger and unemployment among all our peoples. This training school will include a center for Indian arts and crafts, and an Indian Restaurant serving native foods and training Indians in culinary arts. This center will display Indian arts and offer the Indian foods of all tribes to the public, so they all may know of the beauty and spirit of the traditional Indian ways.

5. Some of the present buildings will be taken over to develop an American Indian Museum, which will depict our native foods and other cultural contributions we have given to all the world. Another part of the Museum will present some of the things the white man has given to the Indians, in return for the land and the life he took: disease, alcohol, poverty, and cultural decimation (as symbolized by old tin cans, barbed wire, rubber tires, plastic containers, etc.). Part of the museum will remain a dungeon, to symbolize both Indian captives who were incarcerated for challenging white authority, and those who were imprisoned on reservations. The Museum will show the noble and the tragic events of Indian history, including the broken treaties, the documentary of the Trail of Tears, the Massacre of Wounded Knee, as well as the victory over Yellow-Hair Custer and his army.

In the name of all Indians, therefore, we re-claim this island for Indian nations, for all these reasons. We feel this claim is just and proper, and that this land should rightfully be granted to us for as long as the rivers shall run and the sun shall shine.

GAY ACTIVISTS ALLIANCE

Preamble to Constitution

December 1969

New York's Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) single-handedly made gay people a force in liberal politics in New York City and then nationwide. It developed strategies that were widely emulated, combining militant actions with a pragmatic agenda of getting antidiscrimination provisions protecting gays into the city's municipal code. The GAA constitution emphasizes its single-issue stance: to unite all homosexuals around a civil rights campaign without requiring or even permitting any other political positions to be discussed. Earlier homophile groups, such as the Mattachine Society, had emphasized respectability and disdained those parts of the gay community (such as drag queens) that heterosexuals most disliked. By contrast, the GAA emphatically welcomed all, regardless of their appearance or sexual preference.

The Gay Activists Alliance is a militant (though nonviolent) homosexual civil rights organization. Membership is open to all persons—male or female, young or old, homosexual and heterosexual—who agree with the purposes of the organization and who are prepared to devote time to their implementation.

GAA is exclusively devoted to the liberation of homosexuals and avoids involvement in any program of action not obviously relevant to homosexuals. Although individual members of GAA are involved in many different social causes, the organization as such is a one-issue organization. GAA adopted this policy in order to win the support of large numbers of homosexuals—regardless of differences in social perspective—and to avoid internal political dispute. This policy is written into the GAA constitution.

GAA is a structured organization. It has officers and committees,

Reprinted in Donn Teal, *The Gay Militants: How Gay Liberation Began in America, 1969–1971* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971; repr., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 110–11.