

TO STOP THE ATTACKS AGAINST RAZA IN ARIZONA AND THROUGHOUT OCCUPIED AMERICA...

Demands That We End Colonialism

By Pablo Aceves

Editor's Note: Pablo Aceves is a long time member of the Raza Press and Media Association and of Unión del Barrio. This commentary was written in January 15, 2012.

The recent ban on ethnic studies in Tucson public schools and the banning of books in this “so-called free society” (what a sick joke!) –show the true nature of US Imperialism

There should be no mistake to anyone involved the struggle for the defense and liberation of our gente, that this “new development” is nothing more than an attempt by White Power to not only continue to oppress us, but a concerted effort to break our spirits.

It is absolutely no coincidence that the attacks on Raza/Chicano Studies come on the heels of SB1070, the repressive state law that basically declared open season on Mexican/Indigenous people in the state of Arizona.

This fascist colonial system understands –much better than some of our “leaders” do– that colonialism-fascism cannot work, last, or be effective as long as there is any vestige of self-knowledge among the Indigenous/Mexicanos that we are indigenous to land and the rest of Occupied America. A people cannot be subjugated, no matter how oppressive a law or measure to militarize and terrorize them, if they have a clear idea of who they are, their history, and the injustices that have been done to them and that must be righted. If our people know who they are and where they come from –they won't be walking with “hat in hand”– but with raised fists!

If the masses have a true sense of ethnic solidarity with the struggles of oppressed people everywhere, our communities will rise up against this oppression and stand strong

with the banner of self-determination. Under national liberation and class struggle, the will kick the oppressors out of the barrios workplaces, and eventually off the land.

To stop this political consciousness from taking root, is what the most recent “law” is about. These reactionary forces are moving to destroy Raza Studies, padlock the doors of the department, and treat the whole subject like a radioactive, contaminated area.

The message that is being given to us is one that says: “You are being deported because you don't belong in your own land; only the Colonial State/System can define who you are; therefore you must take the oppression, the beatings, the profiling, the abuses, the killings, the checkpoints, the incarceration –like it or not.”

Take note that when the Zionist White Supremacist Tom Horne was arguing against teaching Raza Studies and banning books like Occupied America, he never once refuted what these books said. He never

said the US didn't invade Mexico and steal half of our land at the point of a gun. He never said the Arizona and Texas Rangers weren't leaders of lynch mobs (white settlers) armed to the teeth to steal the land and terrorize Raza and other indigenous nations. He never refuted any of this, he just said he “didn't want it taught.”

The recent the colonial state does not want Chicano Studies taught because they need to keep our youth confused and their spirits broken. Any effort that promotes critical thinking is opposed. This is why we witness the presence of a language among our community that accepts the term immigrants (when the real immigrants are the white settlers) and waving of “American flags” (symbols of white power) found everywhere you looked during the “immigrant rights” marches since 2006.



It is important to understand this context and what is really going on because there are all kinds of voices that are in the struggle and who have the best of intentions, but are missing the fundamental issues.

One of these is the academic voices that have defended Raza studies focusing on the fact that it improves the grades of students and to show that it is not a "threat" to society.

The fact is, that if Chicano/Raza Studies is doing its job –it should be a threat to colonialism and Imperialism. It should not be “watered down”. The White Power Structure or settler population will never be convinced that they are making a "good investment" by allowing us to learn our history, cultura, what we have in common with other Indigenous peoples, the rest of Latin America, and the World, and how to resist our oppression.

It is also a fact that in these "post modern" pragmatic days of activism in our communities and other oppressed communities as well, it is easy to see the struggle to defend Raza Studies and other forms of what "today's" activists, trivialize of the militant politics of the 1960s and 70s. These forces, in the main NGOs (non-government organizations), fail to understand because they would lose their funding and their perks.

The fact is, that defending the rights of people without raising the collective consciousness reduces any movement to begging. It can be militant begging, sit-in begging, begging with bullhorns, etc. –but as long as we ignore our history and treat ourselves as immigrants and decide to negotiate our existence with the Colonial Powers– it will be begging and nothing more than that.

Something must be said about the reliance on the courts and "legality." It is absurd to think that the struggle will be won in the colonial court system –the same courts that are rubber-stamping the war against us. We have to say that the law can be used as a “tactic”, but we have to understand that those in power make laws, and while the rich colonial capitalists are in power, their laws have no jurisdiction over a colonized people.

This is the crossroads our movimiento is at today and it comes down to what is happening in Tucson. We have not only the attack by the system which beats, kills, and deports us from our own land, but an assault that also includes censorship, denial of a meaningful education, and attacks on our humanity as well.

The solution or the way we can struggle is to defend the right of a people to know its own history and determine its own destiny in its own land. And the only way to do this is by building the type of revolutionary formation that is accountable to the masses of el pueblo mexicano/raza.

This means the working class, which is 95% of our community, cannot any longer depend on "temporary strategies" that are not tied to the ultimate goal: the total transformation of our reality. And we cannot any longer hide behind "the people are not ready and they're scared." The truth is that those who are scared are the "leaders" who want to have it both ways: to appear to struggle without risking anything. To quote Frederick Douglas "they want the ocean without the roar." We cannot continue to allow this "strategy" to unclench the fist of the masses of our people and stick a sombrero in it. We must take the discourse from "just don't hurt the kids" and Sheriff Joe, don't be mean” –to one that demands that the colonial system "get out of our community or else!"

The role of Raza Journalism is of the utmost importance in these times. Tactically this means not only continuing the struggle to keep Chicano/Raza Studies in the public schools, which are maintained by our taxes, but to also establish contending institutions, such as our own schools where Raza instructors can teach the true history of our gente at whatever venue whether paid or not. We have to create the conciencia of struggle at all levels and we have to be prepared to teach our history even when and if it becomes illegal to utter those words.

Raza Journalists must understand that unless we take a stand –our words won't just be illegal in Arizona but everywhere. Now is not the time to tone it down but to step up the heat and the intensity.

Que Viva La Raza and Que Viva Mexico (el Salvador, Guatemala, etc.) has to be screamed not only in the streets but in the pages of our publications so that we nurture and protect the seeds of struggle no matter what fascist attacks we face.

It is up to those of us who attempt to agitate, investigate, and chronicle our gente's history to be as passionate and as loud, and as uncompromising, as we can-now more than ever.

Que Viva Estudios Chicanos/RAZA
Abajo con la Censura y la Opresion
Que Viva la Raza
Venceremos