

for social justice and liberation...

SAVE OUR BARRIOS COALITION HOLDS RETREAT

On March 13, 2011, the Save Our Barrios Coalition (SOBC) held an organizational retreat at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Hall in National City (CA). Founded in November of 2009, the SOBC is one of the few Raza groups that ties “Gentrification” to the over all struggles for social justice and liberation of oppressed communities. It works to expose the politicians and government agencies who are in the pockets of the rich-greedy capitalists and large development corporations that make billions in profits out of destruction [Gentrification] of people’s culture, forced evictions, and demolition of historic communities.

As a means by which to strengthen the work of the SOBC, the retreat had several objectives:

- To inform, educate ourselves, and find solutions, to the process of Gentrification that is being force upon communities throughout the United States.
- To discuss points/principles of Unity of the SOBC.
- To elect coalition officers (coordinator, secretary, etc.)
- To create of plan of activities for the year 2011.

The five-hour retreat began with presentations by Georgette Gomez (Environmental Health Coalition) and Ricardo Delgado (Architect). Both provided excellent information that will help the SOBC to be better informed –and therefore make better decisions as we struggle to save our barrios/community from the destruction being disguised and sold to us as “redevelopment”.

After the presentations, the retreat moved to a discussion on the “Points of Unity” for the SOBC. The points covered areas spanning from economic independence for working class communities, affordable childcare centers, union jobs... –to the residents’ right to decide the architectural design of the community. The “Community Bill of Rights” will serve as guide for the work and positions that the SOBC will take in the future. It is a Bill of Rights that promotes unity without losing sight that the main goal of the SOBC is to struggle against the destruction of working class communities and force dislocation of residents.

Another outcome of the SOBC retreat was the election of a new Mesa Directive (officers). The election of the Mesa was of particular importance to the SOBC as organization is critical to holding productive meetings and carrying-on consistent work. Organization is necessary to keeping the group from falling into a style of work that is haphazard and inconsistent –which is not only ineffective– but turns people off and thus in the long run is counter productive to community struggle.

Finally, a “Plan of Action” for the rest of the year of 2011 was developed. The plan includes mass community meetings, walk through the Barrio, cultural fair, and the creation of community gardens; the goal being to unite and raise the political consciousness of as many people as possible to the tricks and lies of the rich corporations and their flunkies (agencies and politicians) who are out to destroy working class communities

The retreat was successful as it succeeded in meeting its objectives. Its convening demonstrated a commitment and seriousness to the struggle against gentrification. The retreat represented one of the few gatherings where those in attendance stood for the well-being and interests of the working class and poor communities –the main victims of gentrification.



“JOIN US IN FORMING A GRASSROOTS LIBERATION EFFORT TO STOP GREEDY CAPITALISM IN ITS TRACKS!”

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