

The document below derives from the panel on Chicanismo in the Americas held November 17, 2018, during the conference commemorating the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights hearing, which occurred 50 years ago in San Antonio, Texas.

Drafted by Armando Rendón as a working document, it reflects as faithfully as possible the comments and general sense of speakers and participants on the panel* that a blueprint is needed for us to address unresolved issues of the past 50 years, confront new concerns of today, and employ new strategies to deal with evolving changes that are sure to arise over the next 50 years.

Fifty years ago, at the height of the Chicano Movement, would have been the ideal period to look ahead to the next 50 years and to establish an oversight committee, so to speak, to lay a framework for addressing issues then current and what might lie ahead. Diverse interests, limited financial and communications resources, and geographic distances among the various parts of the movement made it virtually impossible to organize and develop a long-term plan in the 1970s.

However, the communications media we now have at hand facilitate meetings via audio or video conference calling, and the exchange of documents and ideas in moments. We also now have the experience and training of a variety of activists, scholars and experts in pertinent fields to draw upon for practical advice, research skills, writing and communicating capabilities that were unknown 50 years ago.

The blueprint is intended to allow for input and enhancement from all parties who commit to serving as part of a drafting committee, working title: The Next 50 Years Committee. How to organize the committee, how it and the various working groups would relate to each other among many other details would be part of the follow up discussion.

The draft should eventually evolve into a working document that smaller, focused groups of activists and experts can discuss and convert into action, setting timetables and deadlines as appropriate, maybe in increments of one, five or ten years, culminating at the end of the next half century.

In other words, the drafting committee's task is to improve on the model blueprint and then distribute and promote its use as a plan of action. This latest draft can be shared as widely as anyone wishes.

The concept requires that at least one person commit to taking a lead role on a particular issue and recruit/join others of like interest to evolve a more detailed action plan (part of the overall blueprint). Minimally, each group should also commit to aligning with updating the drafting Committee on its progress. The blueprint contains specific issues, but is not exclusive of other concerns which may not be listed or have yet to arise.

Suggestions for additional issues should be submitted to the drafting committee as the project in order to incorporate them into a “master” document. Of course, meetings can take place in person or via electronic means. Rendón commits to serving on the drafting committee if it becomes viable and continuing as the editor of the blueprint as long as he’s needed.

The draft follows, for your consideration:

BLUEPRINT FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS (Working Title)

DRAFT

First Draft November 26, 2018

Revised December 27, 2018

Revised January 31, 2019

A half a century has passed since the height of action and attention raised nationally by the Chicano Movement, a social justice activism driven by the realization among Mexican Americans of the racist and discriminatory treatment they had suffered at least since the birth of their ethnicity, their status as a “nationality,” with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February, 2, 1848. That document concluded the hostilities brought on by the U.S. invasion of Mexico two years earlier, but the cessation of conflicts quickly evolved into a concerted and relentless campaign to deny to the Mexicans who remained behind the new border any of the rights and privileges otherwise guaranteed by the Treaty.

The Treaty is the most important document to the past and the future of Mexican Americans, because not only does it mark the origin of our ethnicity but it remains a living document due to the essential human rights it contains, rights which have been affirmed under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in San Francisco in 1945, and regionally for the Americas in the Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man adopted by the Organization of American States in Bogotá in 1948. Important decisions have reaffirmed land grant ownership and common land uses, as well as religious rights asserted by American Indian tribes, using the Treaty as precedent.

By these expressions of the rights that pertain to each person because of their nature as human beings, we Mexican Americans assert our right to be recognized as a people under the guidelines of international jurisprudence and the traditions of the world’s nations from time immemorial.

With this understanding in mind, we first present our grievances as the Mexican Americans of the United States of America:

Whereas, the government of the United States has failed to ensure and provide the basic protections guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and

Whereas, the private institutions and the political bodies of the States of the Union have historically denied equal protections and equal access to achieving equality of educational, economic and political opportunity, and

Whereas, the existence of individuals and organizations have been allowed to proliferate whose sole purpose, under the banner of white supremacy and white nationalism, is to maintain control of the institutions of government and withhold from us the rights all Americans should be able to exercise, and

Whereas, as a people, we seek to preserve and share certain values which, although they might not make us unique among the community of nations, together they exemplify values which manifest our nature as a people: our respect for elders, our love and dedication to our children, our peculiar facility as a bilingual-speaking community, our cultural traditions in music, the arts, and food, our acceptance of the role as stewards of the earth, and our loyalty to our country shown by the willingness of our men and women to fight side by side with other Americans in defense of the country in conflicts dating back to the Civil War, and

Whereas, we must break free from the present-day dependency on entities of government and strive to overcome the efforts by persons and groups in American society who seek to oppress us as a people, we must avoid the tendencies of human institutions to take on characteristics of the oppressor and to lose sight of our frailties by continually re-examining our motivations and allegiance to the principles of democracy and individual freedom, social justice and fair play throughout our community, and

Whereas, because we recognize the need to commit our lives and resources to addressing and resolving concerns which relate to our identity and essence as an indigenous-hispanic nation of Mexican (mestizo) heritage,

Therefore,

We commit ourselves to the following plan of action as a guide and blueprint for the next 50 years to address the inequities and lack of recognition which have suppressed our development as a people and as full-fledged citizens of the United States of America.

The timeline for achieving certain goals will differ for each area of concern or interest, but ultimately we Mexican Americans will have perfected our identity, will have forged protections of our cultural values and traditions, and become full-fledged citizens of the Americas.

GENERAL AREAS OF CONCERN

The concept driving the blueprint is that we look beyond broad issues such as education, health, human rights, employment, wealth distribution, political involvement, the environment and so on, and look at concerns which affect Mexican Americans (as well as other indigenous-hispanic groups) where we should apply our own worldview and traditions to address, improve, or resolve. With the next 50 years in mind, we should think broadly and long-term, even beyond immediate issues, as we began to do during the anniversary U.S. Civil Rights Commission conference in November 2019.

Please review the draft list of issues that follow for an idea of what the blueprint envisions. A recommended format is provided addressing certain issues which pertain to Mexican Americans, for example, advancing our literature and arts, forming alliances with other indigenous tribes in the U.S.A. and the rest of the southern continent, and creating a process for us to name ourselves as an aspect of preserving our identity. The blueprint is open to suggestions and even more specific areas for action.

- Education: Creating or applying new pedagogies at the family level emphasizing our cultural values and traditions
 - Stewardship of the earth: Involvement in addressing climate change
 - Keeping Alive The Chicano Movement and Chicanismo
 - Self-Governance: Development of Community Organizations to address concerns specific to Chicanan barrios and our community as a whole
 - Full political participation: develop programs to increase political awareness and activism from childhood years, reviving “civics” classes
 - International relations: form a working group on the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to study and arrive at applying it to current Chicanan concerns
 - Alliance with all American Indian tribes: charge a commission to research the indigeneity of Mexican Americans and to recommend ways we can approach other indigenous peoples to join forces in mutual cultural and social action
 - Building relations with other indigenous-mestizo peoples of the Americas
 - Forming collaborations with other indigenous-hispanic ethnic groups in the U.S.: create closer bonds through regional and national discussions toward greater interaction and mutual support on common goals
 - Address the growing social and health concerns due to an aging population: study and recommend culturally relevant approaches to improving the health and means of treating our Chicanan elders
 - Other
-

- Other
-

NOTE: these issues are addressed below in sample formats, which can serve as starting points for in-depth development and adaptation of these and other issues.

PRESERVING OUR IDENTITY AS AN INDIGENOUS-HISPANIC (MESTIZO) PEOPLE

Submitted by Armando Rendón

Since the 1970s, we have been labeled as “Hispanic” or “Latino” by agencies of the federal government. The only name we have bestowed upon ourselves is Chicano. The word has origins, according to some sources, in the early 1900s as a shortened version of Mechicano—it may have been born in song or on the railroad lines or in the fields. The sense of a unique identity entailed in the name, Chicano, is what gave the Chicano Movement its essence as a radical departure from the past but imbued with the past. It is the reason that the philosophy behind Chicanismo continues to thrive because it is still evolving; it should be renewed continually through a process of small encounters each year leading up to national symposia every five years. The Chicano Movement is still very much alive and can only survive by adapting to evolutionary changes in human understanding.

We should adopt a process of *concientización*, whereby groups made up of community activists, scholars in various disciplines, political leaders and professionals in business, health, philosophy, writers and artists, and so on examine the principles of Chicanismo and revitalize its relevance by reaching out to barrios and enclaves of our people throughout the country. The nature of these encounters should become fields of study in our schools that incorporate elders/teachers of the barrio reaching out to youth/students.

We must bring an end to the use of Hispanic or Latino by forging our own name, building on how we perceive our own identity, and how our language and history can guide us in arriving at a name, which proves acceptable to all indigenous-hispanic people regardless of politics, gender or language, as long as it is derived organically and logically from our nature, history and worldview.

Step 1: Call to Chicanos (my placeholder for a possible name) willing to commit time and resources to form a planning working group, conduct a series of small conferences around the country dedicated to arriving at the recommendation of a name, or names, within a set timeframe.

Step 2: The working group would set a timeline for convening a first gathering (including in person and using phone/video facilities) to launch an effort to ensure a diversity of members, set dates for further meetings, and initiate guidelines for a national inquiry.

Step 3: The working group would set a deadline for deciding on a name, although it would most likely arrive at two or three optional names for people to consider. The main duty of the group would be to recommend one name and publicize it for broader consideration and, hopefully, acceptance.

Step 4: Submit the name by which to identify us Indigenous-Hispanic Americans to the U.S. Census Bureau for inclusion in the 2030 Census.

FORMING ALLIANCES WITH OTHER INDIAN TRIBES UNDER THE TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

(Some background: In the 1980s and 1990s, I participated in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo project that was launched by the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), a non-governmental organization (NGO) made up of American Indian tribes, provided legal counsel to an indigenous Xicano organization on human rights and international law issues, have belonged to a men's Chicano-Indio spiritual group, and witnessed the recognition of Chicanos as American Indians by other Indian tribes, notably the Hopi, the Navajo and the Tohono O'odham. In 1985, as a legal counsel to the IITC, I presented an intervention (statement) at the UN Commission on Human Rights annual conference in Geneva asserting that Proposition 187 that had passed as a referendum on the 1984 California ballot was in violation of international laws and treaties, including the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. At the fifth annual international conference hosted by the International University in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in August 2018, I pointed out to an audience of scholars from various disciplines assembled around the theme: Latin America: Traditions and Globalization, that for Latin America, let alone Mexico, to evolve as a major player in the phenomenon called globalization, it should not ignore, but rather embrace con un gran abrazo, the 40 million indigenous-hispanic Americans of Mexican heritage who have survived generations of cultural abuse, attempted genocide, and discrimination, stronger than ever.)

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo should be declared a living human rights document, providing human rights protections to persons of indigenous-hispanic (mestizo) background in the United States of America as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, globally by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in San Francisco in 1945 and regionally in the Americas by the Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man adopted by the Organization of American States in Bogotá in 1948.

The Treaty recognizes the people of indigenous-hispanic origin as an ethnic group authorized by treaty to have international standing with the U.S. Government and the community of nations, and thus serves as a formal link with other treaty based tribes.

The Treaty can serve as the basis for seeking a wide variety of reparations to compensate the descendants of the Mexican population of the territories which were annexed by the U.S.A. as a result of this monumental land grab and the subsequent violation of the rights of the Mexican population who are still protected under the Treaty.

We shall seek to establish formal alliances with the other Native American peoples in the U.S.A. and beyond into the rest of the Americas. We Mexican Americans/Chicanos are an indigenous-hispanic tribe, that is, of mestizo origin. We number upwards of 40 million persons, another probable 10 million persons of undocumented status, for a total population of 50 million. According to the U.S. Census, the American Indian and Alaska Native population made up about 2.0 percent of the total population in 2016; by 2060, the percentage will rise to 2.4 percent. There were 567 federally recognized Indian tribes in 2016.

Over the next few decades, the Chicanos can become one with the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Our goals are mostly the same, respect for and preservation of our culture and language, access to educational opportunities, the full benefits of decent employment and proper health care, and so on.

The Chicanos, the Mexica, Mexican Americans, whatever we decide to call ourselves cannot only form these alliances, in unity with our Mexican familiares, but eventually become a contributing force in turning this country of our birth, and of choice for many of us, into a multicultural and multilingual nation meriting recognition among the community of nations.

FORGING ALLIANCES WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE AMERICAS

Submitted by Armando Rendón

An indisputable truth that arose from the artistic roots of the Chicano Movement and then became a principle of Chicanismo was our link as indigenous-hispanic people to our ancient native roots in all the Americas, Aztecan, Mayan, Incan, and specifically the Mexica, the *raiz* word from which Chicano is derived. However, we failed to recognize and strengthen our blood ties to the indigenous peoples of the Southwest, such as the Comanche, the Apache, the Coahuiltecos, the Kickapoo, etc., who are our relatives, our ancestors, among the very people whose blood we share, in some cases their direct descendants. Some of us reclaimed our descent over the years, either acknowledging tribal lines which had been forgotten or denied, or learning through DNA analysis of our link to specific tribes.

Having lost a half century when greater attachments could have been forged with other Indian peoples, we must now formally and actively seek out alliances and working relationships with Indian country, which connotes all of the United States of America. This will entail a long-term process—long lost relatives often take time to make amends for being away so long and to create bonds of culture, language, and traditions where they have not existed for generations.

The bonding will need to include learning our common history of resistance as peoples treated as conquered by the Anglo society, exchanging knowledge about our values and beliefs, sharing the sense of guardianship for the Earth Mother that we hold in common, and forging alliances to achieve mutually beneficial goals of social justice, political representation and certain rights under international law such as treaty rights and national sovereignty.

This would not be a one-sided venture, because for decades certain individuals and organizations have been collaborating with each other to recognize the fundamental indigeneity of Chicanos and to raise awareness of the need for unity among indigenous peoples in the U.S. We need to bring about a greater realization of our indigeneity and our blood relationship to American Indian tribes through education, social and cultural exchanges and community building. The Mexican Americans, we believe, can become within the next half century full members of the family of indigenous nations within the U.S.A and the Americas.

Step 1: Have the Next 50 Years Committee authorize a commission to expand and forge ties with the rest of the indigenous peoples in the U.S.

Step 2: Call for others to join the Commission.

Step 3: Set a target date for an initial meeting to set out procedures, short-term and long-term goals and objectives, a timetable, and address logistical needs.

Step 4: Convene the first meeting using Internet media.

Step 5: After one year, report on the initial findings and progress to the Committee.

Step 6: Initiate during this first year contacts with indigenous peoples in Mexico as a starting point for stronger relationships.

Step 7: Work with existing organizations such as the IITC, AIM-West, and the AIGIN to make initial contacts and lay the groundwork for more specific collaborations through discussion, literature, and the arts.

Three additional areas proposed for inclusion in the blueprint:

CHICANISMO AS A WORLDVIEW

Chicanismo should become a formal area of study in various disciplines including philosophy, history, psychology, sociology among others toward the goal of being officially designated as a distinct culture within the USA. Scholars already working in these fields should devote research and writing to enhance our knowledge and appreciation for Chicanismo, this integral but largely ignored worldview within the broader American society.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AND INNOVATION

The cultural, linguistic, economic, political and other contributions of the Chicano people to the U.S.A. should become integral components of public school curricula in all the publicly funded schools nationwide.

Scholars, researchers and practitioners focused on the education of Chicana youth should be recognized for the vital nature of their work in advancing Chicanismo, preserving and imparting cultural and social values, improving scholastic attainment and completion of educational and vocations goals.

CHICANAN LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Chicanan literature should be given its rightful place as an integral part of American literature rather than a sub-genre of U.S. writing or offspring of Latin American writings.

Mestizo writers could form an alliance nationwide to bring greater attention to the works of mestizo authors, poets and essayists.

We should strive to establish an open access depository for our writings in every genre.

Chicanans should encourage, support and promote our community's writers.

We should strive to enhance the literacy levels among our communities and make literature and the arts available in barrios and rural areas as well as in major urban centers.

Artists in music, dance, the fine arts should be recognized as vital to the development of the Chicanan culture and celebrated and promoted in every way possible.

Submitted by Armando Rendón

February 2, 2019

**Panel members included James Barrera, Mario Compean, Martha Coter, Jose Angel Gutierrez, Carlos Hernandez, Ignacio Perez, Armando Rendón, and Angela Valenzuela.*

The key questions follow. Attach a copy of this page or copy and paste into an email to Armando Rendón, armandobrendon@gmail.com

Do I accept the draft as a working document and commit myself to developing the concept and recruiting others to the effort? Yes _____ No _____

If you have a specific interest among the issues listed, or wish to recommend one or more other issues, please note here: