

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

JOSE “CHA CHA” JIMENEZ

activist, organizer

“For us, it was simple. It was not anything theoretical. It was just like what we saw at Lincoln Park. Other people came to take over the neighborhood and the U.S. did the same thing in Puerto Rico. The whole issue of housing displacement, then, served as a way to explain the issue of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico and vice versa.”

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Background Information

Born August 8, 1948 in Caguas, Puerto Rico

Jiménez arrived as a baby in New York City with his family in 1949 and two years later moved to Chicago. His family lived on the Near North Side, also known as La Clark, one of the first two Puerto Rican neighborhoods in Chicago.¹ Jiménez did not attend college and instead dedicated his life to political advocacy for Puerto Ricans and neighboring Latino/a residents.

Jiménez's Resistance

During the 1960s, Chicago's urban renewal program called for the movement of Puerto Ricans out of Lincoln Park. This was set to be yet another displacement campaign after their previous relocation for the construction of a university campus annexation. The mostly Puerto Rican gang, Young Lords, organized to respond to the White street gang youth around Lincoln Park and to assert protection and respect.² In 1968, Jiménez moved to disassociate himself from the growing drug and gang culture. He then established the Young Lords Organization (YLO), which focused on advocating for civil and human rights for Puerto Ricans and other Latinx residents. YLO in Chicago and nearby cities fought against police brutality and racism to empower the growing Latinx population through education and protests.³

Achievements

In 1969, Jiménez created the Rainbow Coalition, which connected other Latinx and Black political organizations together in the fight against systemic inequalities rooted in White supremacy.⁴ Jiménez realized, as a group, they were stronger as one entity advocating for the same rights than trying to accomplish individual demands.

¹ Jose Cha Cha Jimenez. (13 July 2018). Retrieved from <https://alchetron.com/Jose-Cha-Cha-Jimenez>

² Jose (Cha-Cha) Jimenez. National Young Lords. Retrieved from http://nationalyounglords.com/?page_id=15

³ Jose Cha Cha Jimenez. (13 July 2018). Retrieved from <https://alchetron.com/Jose-Cha-Cha-Jimenez>

⁴ FightBack!NEWS Staff. (Interviewer) & Jiménez, J. (Interviewee). (2019). Interview with Jose “Cha Cha” Jiménez on original Rainbow Coalition. [Interview transcript]. Retrieved from FightBack!NEWS website: <http://www.fightbacknews.org/2019/7/1/interview-jose-cha-cha-jimenez-original-rainbow-coalition>

