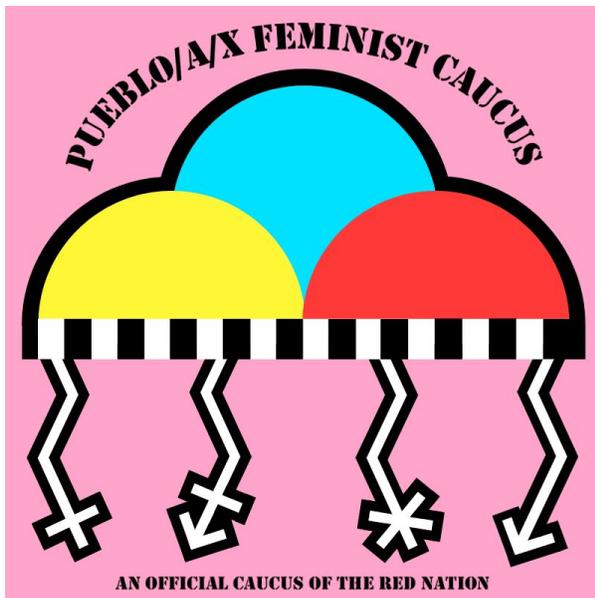


# The Pueblo/a/x Feminist Caucus

An Official Caucus of The Red Nation



Manifesto (2019)

## Key Terms and Definitions

1. settler colonialism – the ongoing process of non-Native settlers occupying Native land, demanding their world views, morals, and economies be followed, while attempting to erase, assimilate, and replace the original inhabitants.
2. heteropatriarchy – the societal structure in which cisgendered-heterosexual men possess the most amount of control and power compared to womxn and queer people, who are disempowered by the system.
3. imperialism – policy, action, and ongoing process of extending power over foreign land and people, often with the violent intent to control their affairs.
4. capitalism – an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state/people, exchange relies on currency, overall system relies on individualistic thought and competition, places profit before people.
5. queer – unspecific non-heterosexual identity/subjectivity, cannot fully describe Indigenous perspectives of gender/sexuality.
6. Two-Spirit – contemporary pan-Indigenous term for non-binary/queer individuals, unspecific.
7. neoliberalism – hyper-capitalism; deregulation of the market, free-market capitalism alongside liberal agendas to erase race and homogenize queerness.
8. decolonization – the action and practice of dismantling harmful structures of power, reclaiming previous subjectivities, and envisioning a future built on previous and current understandings of compassion, relation, and accountability.
9. Indigenous feminisms – intersectional theory and practice of decolonial feminism that directly challenges settler colonialism, capitalism, and Western conceptions of “gender” and “sexuality.”
10. Lateral violence – For Indigenous People, lateral violence is an abusive cycle perpetrated by a first hand abusive experience from within their community. Its roots lie in factors like colonization, oppression, intergenerational trauma and the ongoing experiences of racism and discrimination.

11. Toxic traditionalism – The distortion of tradition through tactics of colonization, and keeping those traditions simply because they have become traditions.

\*Some terms and definitions first appeared in the ‘Settler Sexuality on Stolen Land’ zine created by Ké Infoshop in Tségháhoodzání, Dinétah (Window Rock, AZ)

### **Pueblo/a/x Feminist Caucus (PFC) manifesto**

The PFC is an official caucus of The Red Nation as of February 2019. The PFC first formed for “Pueblo Feminism Rising,” a panel during Gallup Pride 2018, and then for “Mapping a Pueblo Feminist Movement,” a panel during the American Indian Studies Association Conference in February 2019. The PFC was nationally recognized for this panel by Congresswoman Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) during the 2019 State of the Indian Nations Address.

We are feminists committed to the liberation and uplifting of all Pueblx People. However, we center womxn, LGBTQ2S+, and gender non-conforming relatives. We also emphasize that Pueblx Feminism is for everyone, including men. Settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and misogyny impact all colonized people. The wellbeing of Pueblo men and their liberation from settler notions of “masculinity” is essential to the work we do. All notions of liberation are in accordance with Pueblo/a/x core values and oral and written history. The PFC absolutely does not seek to uproot, change, or diminish the sacred and ceremonial practices that have been in place since time immemorial, and prior to colonization. The PFC recognizes, honors, and seeks to uphold the mannerisms of our elders and traditional ways of knowing, passing on, and receiving knowledge as we work towards collective liberation for all.

This is a living document. If at any time it is determined that this manifesto comes into conflict with revolutionary struggle and/or Pueblo core values,

they may be suspended or revised based on a vote by members of the caucus.

## **Who is The Red Nation?**

The Red Nation is a grassroots organization of Native and non-Native activists, educators, students, and community organizers dedicated to building a widespread movement for the liberation of Native peoples, and all colonized peoples, from capitalism and colonialism. We center Native political agendas and struggles through direct action, advocacy, mobilization, and education. We formed in 2014 to address the marginalization and invisibility of Native struggles within mainstream social justice organizing, and to foreground the targeted destruction and violence towards Native life and land.

## **The purpose of PFC**

The PFC serves as a political caucus within The Red Nation. We operate in accordance with The Red Nation's Principles of Unity and Pueblo cultural core values. Our purpose is to create a movement that specifically addresses the distinct ways heteropatriarchy, colonialism, individualism, capitalism, racism, ableism, and weaponized religion have manifested in Pueblo communities. We do this through organizing that includes historical research and analysis, community education, and mobilizing direct action and advocacy.

All of the institutions named are those which seek to eliminate us completely, so we call for their abolition. While Pueblo/a/x feminism is unique in having resulted from specific political, cultural, and religious structures imposed by the colonization and occupation by Spanish, Mexican, and US governments, the Pueblo/a/x feminist movement is also realized as belonging to and aligning with traditions of Indigenous feminisms, woman of color feminisms, Black feminist traditions, Marxist feminism, Third World feminisms, and Indigenista theory. We understand the politics of this caucus as rooted in the revolutionary feminist traditions that have long served colonized peoples. We seek to build broad struggle

among all colonized people but center Pueblo people in acknowledgment that the misogynistic violence stemming from a distortion of history leads our communities to adopt the institutions of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and weaponized religion as “traditional”. This creates particularly hostile conditions for Pueblo Femmes, LBGTQ2+, and gender non-conforming people. We aim to organize and educate all those seeking freedom from the violence of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, settler colonialism, white supremacy, etc. and strive toward truly honoring traditional Pueblo governance structures by restoring a balance of power among all genders that enables collaborative and cooperative development of a life-affirming world for ourselves and all our relations of the Earth. We look beyond the constraints of neoliberalism, and instead look towards the pre-colonial structures of governance and economics that fundamentally oppose capitalism in all its manifestations. We work in this caucus to dismantle toxic systems and build power, infrastructure, and community, to turn back the tides of destruction that diminish our sacred way of life as Pueblo/a/x people.

### **What does Pueblo/a/x mean?**

With our feminist politics in mind, we contest the term “Pueblo” that has been imposed upon us by Spanish colonial settlers to describe a vast number of Nations with distinct languages and cultural values. As we encourage the use of our own terms for our Nations and linguistic groups, we understand that “Pueblo” has been adopted and embraced by our nations, communities, and individuals in referring to ourselves as a collective people. We seek to challenge the masculinized term “Pueblo” by taking into consideration the use of the feminine term “Puebla” as used by our relatives in various regions throughout Mexico. We also seek to consider making the term void of gendering as is seen with the terms “Chicanx/Latinx/Filipinx”. Currently, many other movements seek to de-gender Latin languages that are typically “gendered languages”. This is a step toward deconstructing the gender binary and ensuring the language we use is always inclusive of our gender non-conforming relatives. We include the word “feminist” in the title of our caucus to indicate our mission to create a Pueblo liberation movement that must be inherently

feminist in nature, meaning it must center Femmes, LBGTQ2+, and gender non-conforming people to be liberatory at all.

## Six point program

1. The end of heteropatriarchal violence.

European settlement depended on the dissolving of Indigenous governance structures to assert authority. For this reason violence upon queer and feminine bodies was used as a primary tactic for the obliteration of Indigenous governance structures. Because Indigenous bodies stand in the way of access to the land and because women are seen as the producers of Native nations through the European heteropatriarchal lens, violence against women, particularly sexual violence, is used as a means of separating Native people from the land. Women and queer individuals, especially when in positions of power, become the biggest threat to settler projects of dispossession. Sexual violence is such an effective tool of conquest because of the overwhelming damage it inflicts upon families, lasting for generations, and instilling shame and humiliation that discourages any efforts to resist.

*We demand an end to the perpetuation of sexist, transphobic, and homophobic violence and machismo culture within our communities. We demand safety and respect for all Pueblo/a/x Women and LBGTQ2S+ individuals. We demand an end to all sexual abuse, physical abuse, spiritual abuse, and psychological abuse enacted upon all Pueblo/a/x people.*

2. The end of excommunication and disenrollment on the basis of blood quantum.

The infamous Indian killer Andrew Jackson suggested that the intermarriage between white settlers and Native women would result in the assimilation of Native peoples and thus the assimilation of Native lands into the United States. The idea that whiteness could somehow overpower or dilute Indigeneity on a biological level is what led to the creation of the blood quantum system, a system also crafted to place Indigenous people on an inevitable trajectory toward total disappearance. With the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, blood quantum laws were

applied to all Native nations and had to be met in order to maintain federal recognition. This required that all citizens of a Native nation meet the blood quantum criteria of at least 1/4th Indian blood. We know that our tribes depend on maintaining blood quantum to continue receiving federal benefits that are vital. However, continued participation in the eradication of our own nations will never be beneficial to our continuance as Pueblo people. Historically, practices such as the naming of infants, and various rites marking coming-of-age, determined belonging and citizenship for Native people. For Pueblo people specifically, matrilineal kinship structures determined affiliation.

*We demand an end to self-elimination via excommunication and disenrollment of Pueblo people on the basis of blood quantum. Blood quantum is contradictory to Pueblo notions of kinship/clanship/belonging and identity that are traditionally situated by matrilineality. We have long shared lineage with surrounding tribes prior to colonization; this did not diminish our ties to our nations. Ultimately, cultural participation and contributions to our families and community affirm belonging.*

3. We demand an end to the weaponization of religion and ‘toxic traditionalism.’

Critiques of traditionalism have already been articulated by Indigenous feminists. We are using the term “toxic traditionalism” to specifically describe stagnant values that have been woven into our culture as a result of colonialism and deliberate colonial tactics used to obstruct our way of life in order for us to submit to settler occupiers. We often keep those traditions simply because they have become traditions, not because they serve us and our core values.

We also look at “toxic traditionalism” as the distortion and weaponization of tradition and how we use those tactics on ourselves. We emphasize that toxic traditionalism does not apply to all traditions or the sacred and ceremonial. The normalization of sexist violence is often conflated with “tradition” and even accepted as unchangeable or even on par with Pueblo core values. The PFC seeks to provide counter-narratives to the

normalization of sexist violence citing the same core values and oral histories that are wielded against marginalized Pueblo people.

Toxic-traditionalism further erases women, LGBTQ2S+, and our gender non-conforming relatives by keeping them in submissive positions within our communities, and prioritizing the voices and opinions of only cisgender-heterosexual men. Toxic traditionalism aims to silence any opinions or views that are contradictory to it. Through toxic traditionalism and the weaponization of religion, some individuals in positions of power abuse certain aspects of traditional and sacred knowledge by keeping it to themselves and shaming those who don't or haven't had access to the same knowledge simply because they don't fit the cisgender-heterosexual male identity. This keeps an oppressive power imbalance in place.

*We demand an end to the use of toxic traditionalism and weaponized religion. We demand that the voices of our women, LGBTQ2S+, and gender non-conforming relatives be heard and their liberation be at the forefront of our liberation as Native peoples.*

4. The end of the exploitation of Pueblo culture and sacred knowledge/objects.

For generations, Pueblo people have been dependent upon the Indian art and tourism industry for basic income. Though the art and culture of Pueblo people should continue to be celebrated, these industries are notorious for their exploitative practices, from the theft of sacred objects to the divulging of sacred knowledge and the mistreatment of Native artisans. These industries profit off our labor while commodifying our culture, yet Pueblo people suffer from some of the worst rates of poverty, while the elite who consume Native art and control these industries live in luxury on Pueblo lands.

*We demand an end to the exploitation of Pueblo culture, people, and sacred objects. We demand that sacred items and objects be repatriated and that Native artist-laborers no longer be exploited.*

5. We demand an end to the glorification of the genocide of Pueblo people.

Pueblo people are constantly reminded of their genocide through revisionist history, colonial imagery, and celebrations that glorify our conquest by the Spanish crown and US empire. We have continually resisted the erasure of Pueblo resistance to conquest and fought to have our history accurately taught in educational institutions. Presently statues of Spanish and US colonizers are proudly displayed, our lands and sacred sites still bear names paying homage to conquest, and educational texts at all levels of schooling remain inaccurate, incomplete, or blatantly revised. These are not simply symbolic issues nor issues of representation, they reflect the very real ongoing climate of violence against Indigenous people.

*We demand that all racist imagery and celebrations of conquest and colonization be abolished. We demand an end to all narratives ignoring the ongoing violence against Pueblo people in all its forms. We call for the installation of an accurate Pueblo-driven curriculum to replace the revisionist history curriculum at all levels of public and private educational institutions. We demand that Pueblo students have access to cultural curriculum and language classes.*

6. We demand an end to land loss at the hands of corporate and settler interest.

Popular tourist sites such as Ojo Caliente hot springs, and the city of Los Alamos, sit atop some of the most sacred locations to Tewa people. Likewise, the development of resorts and campsites in the Jemez and Santa Fe mountains serve a primarily white upper-class base. Not only do popular tourism sites disrupt our relationship to the land by decreasing ancestral hunting and gathering grounds, the communities that are most impacted seldom see significant revenue from these tourist attractions. Los Alamos National Labs and the Presence of the jackpile uranium mine in Laguna Pueblo are some of the first sites of the nuclear industrial complex and continue the project of the militarization of Pueblo lands. Los Alamos is not only a tourist site, it is first and foremost a site of military occupation, and continues to exist as such. It is a disturbing irony that

among one of the holiest places in the Tewa world, the most deadly weapon in all of human history was created. The devastation of the nuclear bomb began not in Japan, but right here in New Mexico, with Pueblo people as its first victims who still suffer the long term health impacts of exposure to radioactivity.

*We demand an end to all projects of resource extraction, militarism, corporate plunder, and settler interests on Pueblo lands.*

## **Pueblo/a/x feminism is for everyone**

All Pueblo people suffer from the impacts of heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, settler colonial violence, resource extraction and the nightmare of capitalism. We are impacted collectively by these systems regardless of gender, sexuality, age, and enrollment status. It is our collective duty to care for and uplift each other by unlearning the ways we uphold these oppressive institutions, and educate ourselves about how we can actively dismantle them. Pueblx feminism is for everyone because it puts forth a new theory that can be used as a tool for liberation for all colonized people. By merging our struggle with those of the oppressed around the world, we gain the momentum and power needed to liberate not only Pueblo people but all our non-human relatives and sacred beings of the Earth. For our culture, traditions, languages, and lands to continue to exist, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, settler colonial violence, resource extraction, and capitalism must die.

## **PFC code of conduct**

At no time during any PFC meeting, event, or action do we condone speaking of things of a sacred, ceremonial, private, or sensitive matter. We encourage the sharing of traditional knowledge and wisdom within appropriate perimeters, as we understand that the nature of patriarchy in the Pueblos keeps a power imbalance by denying knowledge to femmes, queer folks and youth. However, we ask that everyone be aware of the matters they speak of and respect the spiritual boundaries of one another. We pride ourselves in following in the spirit of ethnographic refusal as a

part of our feminist praxis. We actively protect sensitive and sacred information by our refusal to engage in outside questioning that prompts us to speak about these topics.

At no time during a PFC meeting, event, or action do we condone speaking of things that do not consider the safety of PFC members and the potential impacts or consequences members may experience as a result of living/working/praying in environments permeated by heteropatriarchy, toxic masculinity, and violence. We ask that all members be conscientious of this at all times they are speaking on behalf of the PFC.