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Unraveling La Causa: The Chicano/a Movement

Miriam Martinez
Butler University

Maialen Rueda
Butler University

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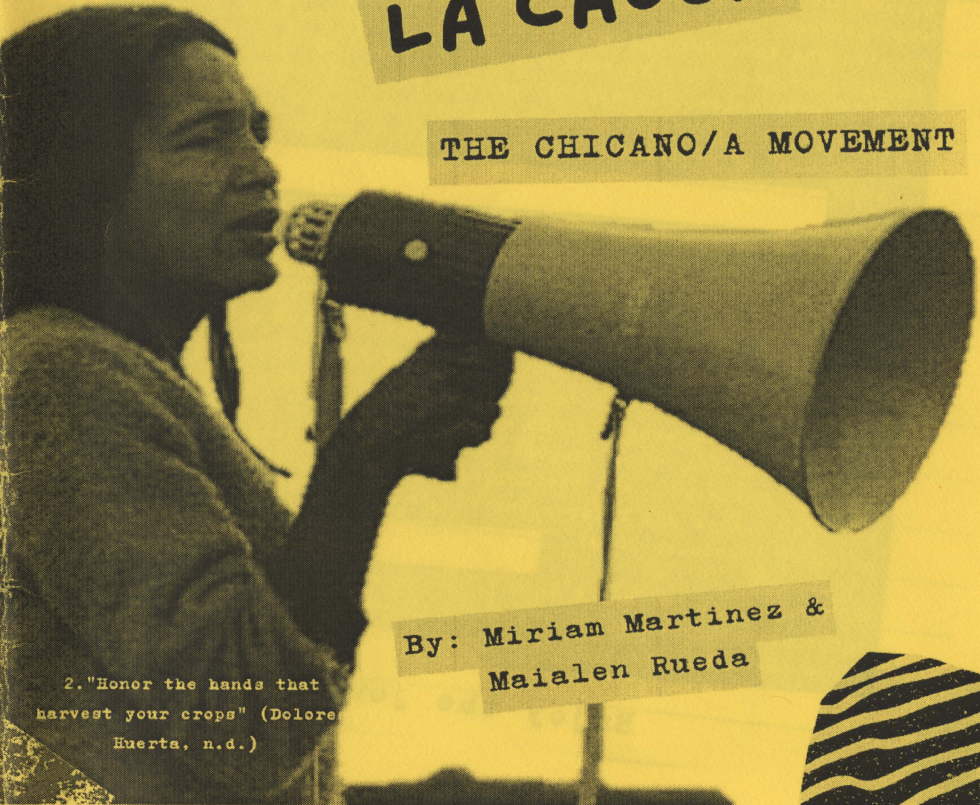
1. "Chicano Moratorium" (Rodriguez 1970)



UNRAVELING

LA CAUSA

THE CHICANO/A MOVEMENT



2. "Honor the hands that harvest your crops" (Dolores Huerta, n.d.)

By: Miriam Martinez & Maialen Rueda





WELCOME READER!

Are you ready to open all the doors of knowledge? Do you want to know more about the social movements of the Latinx community? If your answer is yes, this is your zine. Please continue reading.

From here, we will tackle the Chicano and Chicana social movement more profoundly. But first, what do you know about this social justice movement? If your answer is little, nothing or never heard of it, we think you should read the following information.

The Chicano/a Movement, also known as El Movimiento or La Causa, was created in the 1960s by Mexican Americans. Surely you are wondering why the term "Chicano/a"? Don't worry, we have the answer. They adopted the term Chicano and Chicana, which had previously been a racial slur, to refer to themselves and, thus, end the stereotype and wear it with pride (Gonzales 2019). The first to publicly use it was activist Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales in his 1967 poem 'I am Joaquin/Yo soy Joaquin' to best describe the identities of the community (Lopez 2001).

However, we must go back in time to understand the movement better. During World War II, and the Post Mexican Revolution, many Mexican immigrants crossed the US border (Neil 2014). In 1960, following the pattern of African American Communities, in the light of increasing discrimination against the Mexican population, the dire working conditions, low salaries, and the lack of rights, Mexican Americans initiated their campaign to improve their socioeconomic conditions, as well as gain the status of US citizens with full recognition of their rights (Gonzales 2019). Moreover, a key organization that transpired under El Movimiento was the United Farm Workers (UFW) labor union led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, two prominent figures in this movement (Gonzales 2019).

We'll stop now. We don't want to overwhelm our reader with so much information either. If you've come this far, we hope you keep reading since now comes the best part.

Enjoy the journey!



Important Questions

Q WHAT WAS THE CHICANO/A MOVEMENT? X

- > HOW DID THE MOVEMENT EMERGE?**
- > WHAT WERE SOME GROUPS INVOLVED?**
- > WHO WERE SOME PROMINENT LEADERS?**
- > WHAT LED TO THE DECLINE?**
- > HOW DID THE MOVEMENT IMPACT CHANGE?**
- > WHY SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT THIS MOVEMENT?**

**C'mon, turn the page! We know
you want the answers!**



3. "Youthful United Farm Workers of America supporter from Texas" (López, circa 1973)

"No Statue of Liberty ever greeted our arrival in this country...we did not, in fact, come to the United States at all. The United States came to us".

-Luis Valdez

(Goodreads n.d.)

Emergence and grassroots

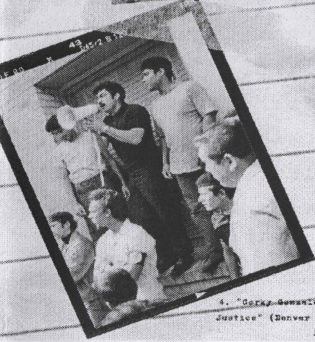


We see you have continued reading, interesting... Are you intrigued to know the answers to the questions mentioned earlier? We knew it! We hope that among our pages you will find answers to all of them.

For any social movement, the seed of injustice, unfavorable conditions or oppression must emerge to lead the movement to its dawn, and the Chicano movement would not be an exception.

According to Marxist theories, the predominant capitalism system was the seed of a stage of oppression for the Chicano working class, who wanted to reform the social structure of the United States to obtain recognition as human beings with civil rights. For example, Oscar Lewis studied persistent poverty in Mexican families. This community was left to be dependent and powerless (Lewis 1959). Moreover, the movement's grassroots emerged from everyday forms of resistance, and they reached multiple waves of protests throughout the national territory. Small acts of protest against oppressors and local mobilization of community groups were the first forms the movement used to organize in order to deal with their social conditions and to target political and economic elites.

But, if you are wondering if these massive protests and marches were enough to sustain the movement, you are right. Coalitions and seeking help and support from others was the key. The movement was greatly influenced by the Black struggle, as African Americans also battled with racial inequality and lack of power and representation. The main coalitions were Chicano students' movement, Chicana feminist movement and the Brown Berets.



5. "Chicanos at Rally in Los Angeles" (Penton 1970)

4. "Cesar, Geronimo and the Grange of Justice" (Denver Post via Getty Images 1969)

6. "Activist Mary Perez is Roughly Handled by School Administrator" (La Mesa Staff circa 1968)

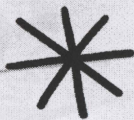
COALITIONS

BROWN BERETS

Displaying their signature berets, the Brown Berets played a significant role in the Chicano Movement. Drawing similarities to the Black Panther Party, this teenage-led organization rejected assimilation into European American society and stood against the Vietnam War and police brutality (Barajas & Martinez 2020). With over 55 chapters throughout the United States, this group demanded better education as they were also involved in the massive school walkouts.

CHICANA FEMINIST MOVEMENT

In a male-dominated movement, the Chicana Movement was formed to fight alongside their male counterparts, but also fight for gender equality. Many times, female activists were behind the scenes, so they wanted to change that. Chicanas established protests and groups, such as Adelitas de Aztlán, centered around education, police brutality, the grape boycott, and other community concerns (Regua 2012). Through collective action, Chicana activists "committed themselves to the community and were determined to eliminate gender, class, and racial discrimination while balancing activism, feminism, and familial responsibilities," (Regua 2012: 147).





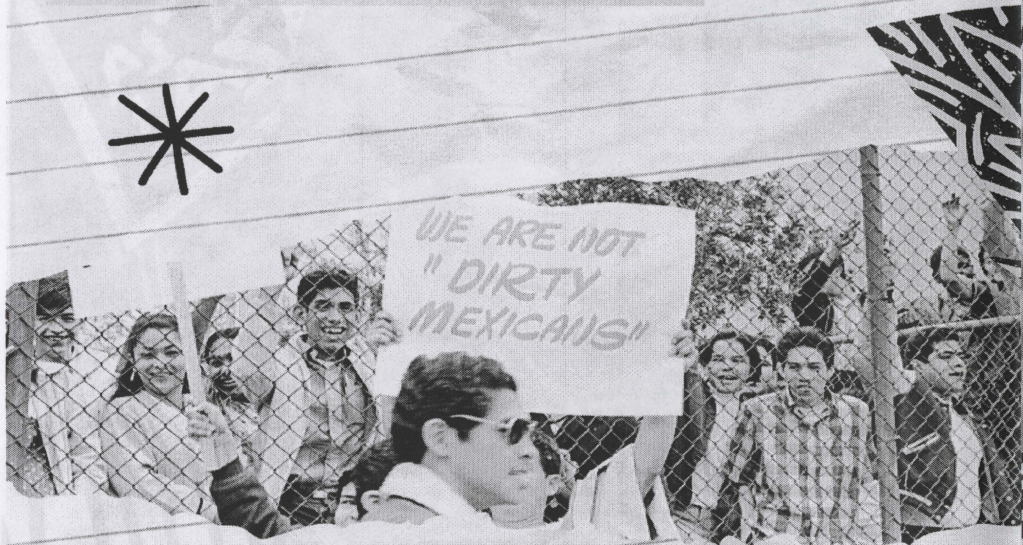
La Raza must live. And in
order for La Raza to live,
Chicanos must remember the
right of dying for La Raza and
the responsibility
for La Raza.

7. "Las Adelfas de
Aztlán" (Rodriguez 1969)

AVAYA

CHICANO STUDENT WALKOUTS

Chicano students played a pivotal role in El Movimiento. Student-led walkouts, including the Los Angeles blowouts, were formed due to the educational injustice that Mexican Americans students encountered in the 1960s-70s. Chicano students called for "educational equality in their communities by asking for better textbooks, more Chicano teachers in their schools, better educational services, and classes that related to their own Chicana history and culture" (Jackson, Newman & Price 2022). In addition, student organizations, such as the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) and United Mexican American Students (UMAS), were founded to push for change.



8. "Protests at Roosevelt High School" (Weber 1968)

"YOU CANNOT UNEDUCATE THE
PERSON WHO HAS LEARNED TO READ.
YOU CANNOT HUMILIATE THE PERSON
WHO FEELS PRIDE. YOU CANNOT
OPPRESS THE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT
AFRAID ANYMORE".

-CESAR CHAVEZ

(Youth for Human Rights, n.d.)



9. "During protest over apprehension of Spanish American in Denver bus bombing case" (Brook 1970)

10. "Dolores Huerta"
(Cifuentes 2020)

"THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION MEANS THAT PEOPLE CAN COME TOGETHER IN ORGANIZATION TO FIGHT FOR SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS THEY CONFRONT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. THE GREAT SOCIAL JUSTICE CHANGES IN OUR COUNTRY HAVE HAPPENED WHEN PEOPLE CAME TOGETHER, ORGANIZED, AND TOOK DIRECT ACTION. IT IS THIS RIGHT THAT SUSTAINS AND NURTURES OUR DEMOCRACY TODAY. THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, THE LABOR MOVEMENT, THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, AND THE EQUALITY MOVEMENT FOR OUR LGBT BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF THESE RIGHTS."

-DOLORES HUERTA
(DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION)

Key leaders




Cesar Chavez & Dolores Huerta

Cesar Chavez was a third-generation Mexican American and a U.S Navy veteran, who spent time working in his family's farm since a young age (Foley 2014). Born in a small mining town in New Mexico, Dolores Huerta was influenced by her activist parents to advocate for change (Dolores Huerta Foundation). Their determination and experiences influenced them to create the National Farm Workers Association (later known as the United Farm Workers Union). In collaboration with Filipino-American organizer Larry Itliong, Chavez and Huerta participated in the Delano Grape Strike (Carrillo 2020).

Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales

Boxer, poet and activist Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales called for change in urban communities and for young people. Known as a radical leader, Gonzales was involved in politics in his hometown of Denver, in which he was a coordinator for Viva Kennedy Clubs. served in a variety of War on Poverty programs and would later find La Crusada Para La Justicia (Gonzalez 2019). In his 1967 poem 'I am Joaquin/Yo soy Joaquin', he coined the term "Chicano" which would inspire the name of the social justice movement.



Dear reader, have you noticed the message that the leaders wanted to convey? What they say is so powerful; I hope it made you reflect. If not, read it again. They really are worth stopping for a few seconds. Well, let's continue with our journey.

DECLINE

Unfortunately, after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the movement deteriorated over time. If you are wondering why, we are not gonna lie to you. It is not a big mystery. Despite significant victories, internal ideological conflicts and ramifications, such as the student activism or the Chicanas' post-modernist feminism, rose as counterpoints of the movement, since their concerns were not totally addressed (Montoya and Stavans 2016). It was obvious, right? Well, maybe not.

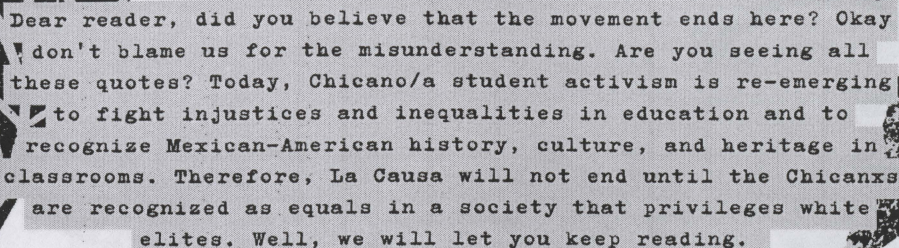
We must admit that there is another reason, as this may be more unexpected. Since 1990, there have been several vacancies in leadership, which meant for the Latinx community, which has always had symbols, national heroes, or icons to follow, an absence of faith and confidence in the movement. In addition, the most relevant figures of the movement lost momentum since national attention turned away (Montoya and Stavans 2016).



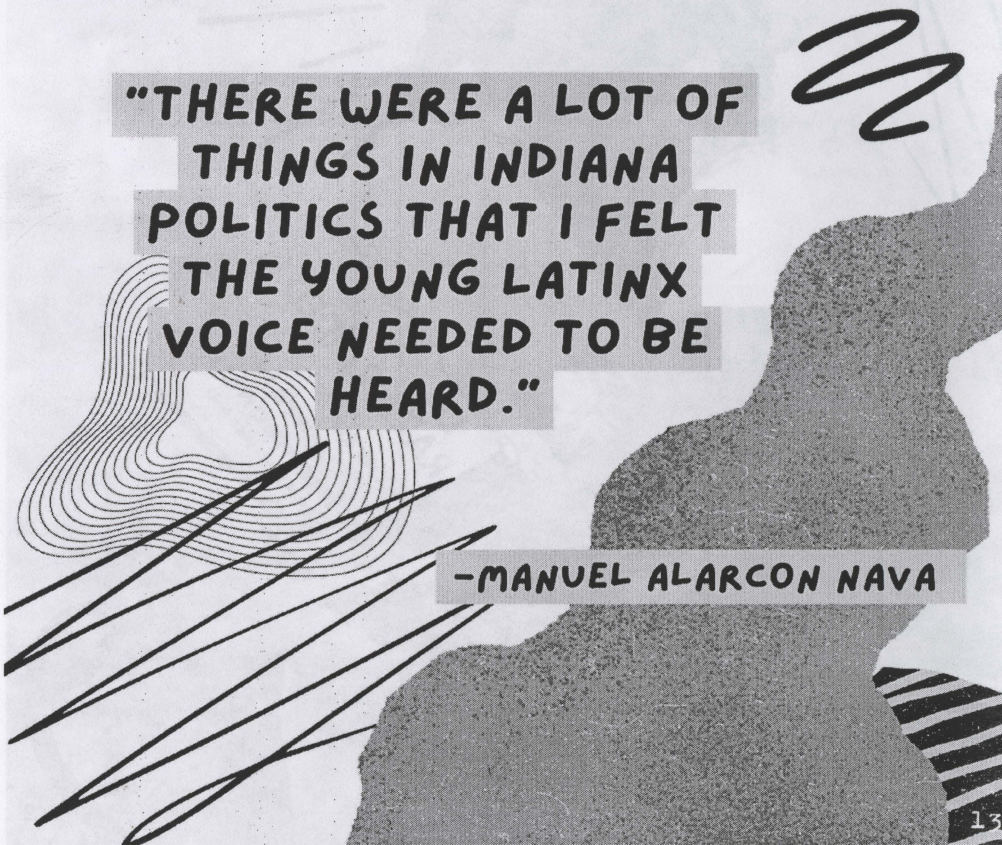
13. "Chicano Marchers" (Ballis 1968)

14. "A Little Girl Hands Out Copies of La Raza at the 1968 Poor People's Campaign for Economic Justice in Washington" (Varela 1968)





Dear reader, did you believe that the movement ends here? Okay, don't blame us for the misunderstanding. Are you seeing all these quotes? Today, Chicano/a student activism is re-emerging to fight injustices and inequalities in education and to recognize Mexican-American history, culture, and heritage in classrooms. Therefore, La Causa will not end until the Chicaxs are recognized as equals in a society that privileges white elites. Well, we will let you keep reading.



"THERE WERE A LOT OF THINGS IN INDIANA POLITICS THAT I FELT THE YOUNG LATINX VOICE NEEDED TO BE HEARD."

-MANUEL ALARCON NAVA

Interview w/ Manuel Alarcon Nava

A note from Miriam:

I had the opportunity to interview former Vice President of League of United Latin Citizens (LULAC) Young Adults Indy, Manuel Alarcon Nava. Similar to the Chicano Movement, LULAC advocates for voter rights, citizenship awareness, better education and political representation. Originally from Acapulco, Mexico, Manuel is a current senior at Butler University and president of Butler's Latinx Student Union. Along with his friend Daniela Cervantes, they founded and established a LULAC Young Adults council here in Indianapolis in 2021. "I felt that specifically in Indianapolis, there wasn't really an organization that helped mobilize Latinx youth, in terms of political advocacy," Alarcon-Nava stated, "That really motivated me because at that time, there were a lot of things in Indiana politics that I felt the young Latinx voice needed to be heard." The concept of the good news opportunity model is represented here, as it describes the importance of resources, such as networks, and political opportunities (Almeida 2019).

As Vice President, Manuel helped create several events, such as bringing in a speaker from the Immigrant Welcome Center and collaborating with a local high school to provide COVID-19 vaccines to the Latinx Community. When asked what sparked his involvement, Manuel shared his experience working as a field fellow in a Congress campaign. With being undocumented, Manuel is ineligible to vote, so he was going out and speaking to others the importance of voting. In addition, he has been involved with La Plaza, the oldest organization in Indianapolis that advocates for the Latinx community. Manuel has hosted Census events and created a Census video in Spanish to educate people the importance of the Census.

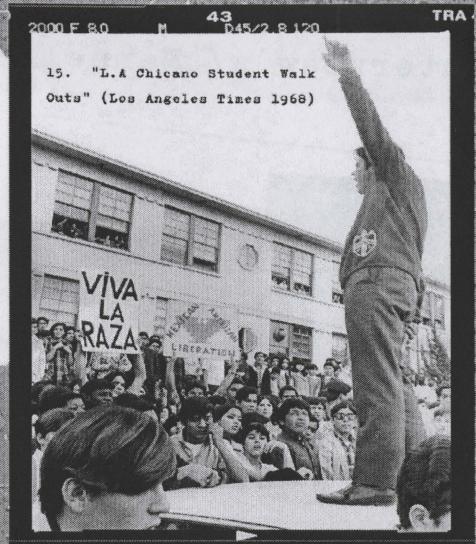
Participation matters. Manuel's involvement in the Latinx community truly demonstrates the significance of being passionate to give back. By interviewing him, it brings to light that change can happen, regardless of your age, your position, your citizenship status etc.



**"EDUCATION, NOT
ERADICATION".**

**-SLOGAN USED IN THE
EAST L.A. WALKOUTS**

16. "Showing students and community supporters outside of Roosevelt High School during walkouts (Weber 1968)"



**"THE STUDENTS
WALKING OUT WITH
THEIR HEADS HELD
HIGH, WITH DIGNITY,
IT WAS BEAUTIFUL TO
BE A CHICANO THAT
DAY".**

-SAL CASTRO

**EXTRACTED FROM THE DOCUMENTARY
"TAKING BACK THE SCHOOLS"**

(Galán 1995)

A note from Maialen:

I had the opportunity of collecting data after watching the "Taking Back the Schools" documentary directed by Héctor Galán (1995) and discussing it with four other people, all international students from completely different backgrounds, diverse economic and social contexts. We focused on the struggle of Chicano students to reform the United State education system. Mexican-American school segregation prevented Chicanos' intellectual development, who were subjected to continuous harassment and prohibitions for their identity and their native language. In addition, Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, which established the precedent of "separate but equal" education (McGuire 2010) was a step forward. However, this desegregation was ineffective as the authorities could avoid its compliance since its practical application will not be reported.

Erosion of student rights and state oppression, following the bad news model and the prognostic phase of framing (Almeida 2019), sustained a Chicano student mobilization. What started in a school in the state of California spread to other educational institutions in the state, as contagion theory explains, being a high school in East Los Angeles was the seed to spread a collective consciousness of change, where acting on behalf of your race, your roots and your people, was the motivation to take it to the streets.

Moreover, according to the new collective action model (Almeida 2019), we discuss the importance of mobilizing structures employing informal networks and external allies, which contributed to the Chicano movement and its student branch. Chicano students counted on the participation of Robert F. Kennedy in the social movement, as some students pointed out, which not only gave them visibility, but their voices began to be heard by the white elites who held seats in the government.

Finally, watching the documentary and discussing it with these four international friends, has made me realize that wherever we come from, our stories and experiences always have some connection points. As the five of us have concluded, we must all participate to see a change in today's social structures and systems.

Q HOW DID THE MOVEMENT IMPACT CHANGE? X

- > ECONOMIC CHANGES
- > SOCIAL CHANGES
- > EDUCATIONAL CHANGES
- > POLITICAL CHANGES

Although El Movimiento has declined throughout the years, we cannot forget to recognize the impacts this movement has had. Through advocacy and hardwork, working conditions improved for Mexican Americans. Education improved, as schools hired more Chicano teachers. Congress passed the Equal Opportunity Act of 1974, which "resulted in the implementation of more bilingual education programs in public schools" (Nittle 2020) . In addition, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund was established to protect the civil rights of the Latinx community. The Chicano Movement paved the way for Chicanos to be involved in politics, as more Mexican Americans served as elected officials. Overall, the movement created a space for Chicanos to celebrate their identity and culture in the United States.

Dear reader,

Thank you for reading our zine and for your interest in this social justice movement. We hope you enjoyed reading our pages and that we have awakened in you the curiosity to learn more about it. And never forget to be yourself and to not be ashamed of where you come from because your roots are the most important part of your identity.

¡VIVA LA RAZA! ¡VIVA LXS
CHICANXS!

Until next time..

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