Cheap Labor

Schools and public facilities (including “whites only” restrictions in theaters and restaurants). He also conducted language and citizenship classes and voter registration drives. A key tactic was the “house meeting,” in which volunteers used their personal networks to recruit others. Frustrated that the CSO was unwilling to organize farm workers, Chávez resigned in March 1962 and moved to Delano, California, to found the NFWA.

The NFWA focused on cooperative shopping, burial insurance, and a credit union. By 1965 there were several thousand members in the Delano area. In the summer of 1965, Chávez recruited student volunteers who had been involved in the southern civil rights movement and several clergy to organize rent strikes and school discrimination protests. Like Chávez, they were paid five dollars per week plus room and board. In September 1965, Filipino members of the AWOC called a strike in the Delano table-grape harvest. The NFWA joined the strike, with strong support among the workers, but the growers refused to negotiate, hiring immigrant workers as replacements. Chávez called for a boycott against Schenley Industries, a liquor conglomerate with a small grape ranch, and he organized a 340-mile march on the state capital to publicize the boycott. Media coverage of the boycott led Schenley to sign the first agricultural union contract. The next target was DiGiorgio Corporation, an agribusiness giant with vulnerable grocery trade labels, which agreed to a union recognition election that the union won. The NFWA and AWOC then merged to form the UFWOC (AFL-CIO).

The UFWOC next organized a table-grape strike, which received broad support, but was broken by immigrant workers, many of whom were undocumented. In fact, in the grape harvest, well over half of the labor force was undocumented. Mounting a three-year grape boycott energized by Chávez’ twenty-five-day fast, farm workers picketed grocery stores across the country. This cut national grape sales by more than a third and closed off foreign exports, leading to an industry-wide contract in August 1970. Strikes and a boycott against iceberg lettuce, however, failed to produce contracts. Lettuce was harder to target. Growers confused the issue by signing “sweet-heart” contracts with the Teamsters, and they intimidated workers with violence. Chávez decided to support state collective-bargaining legislation to allow workers to be able to vote for their union of choice, leading to the Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA) of 1975, which created secret ballot elections and negotiations in the state of California. The UFWA won most of the elections, and by 1980 it had more than 45,000 members. In 1983 Governor George Deukemiejian closed down the ALRA Board, and subsequent legislation weakened its authority, undermining many of the UFWA contracts. In 1986 Chávez kicked off a third grape boycott, focusing this time on the issue of pesticide use, which was a major health hazard to workers as well as to consumers of grapes. After Chávez’s death in 1993, the UFWA signed new contracts under more favorable political conditions.

Chávez’ tactical brilliance and commitment to La Causa (the cause) were extraordinary. Recognizing the organizational and political difficulties in agricultural strikes, he focused on boycotts and protests, including hunger strikes that enlisted broader community support. Countering frustrations that might lead to strike violence and recurrent violent attacks against strikers, he conducted three major fasts all framed in terms of religious penance and claims for worker dignity. In addition to appealing to the moral identity between workers and growers, his fasts called for personal sacrifice and discipline, which energized workers and garnered broader community support. Chávez died on April 23, 1993, in San Luis, Arizona.

See Also Day Laborers, Latino; Farmworkers; Immigrant Domestic Workers; Undocumented Workers; United Farm Workers Union.

Bibliography


J. Craig Jenkins

Cheap Labor

See Labor, Cheap.

Chicana Feminism

Chicana feminism emerged in the 1960s out of the gender inequalities Chicanas experienced during their active participation in the Chicano civil rights...
movement. Although women supported the struggle for racial and class equality, Chicana feminists challenged the existing patterns of male-domination within the Chicano movement, as well as its ideology of cultural nationalism. An ideology of cultural nationalism among racial and ethnic groups, such as Chicano activists during this historical period, extolled an exaggerated sense of cultural pride as a source of political mobilization and exclusionary collective identity. They demanded, therefore, that Chicanos integrate a gender analysis into their political ideology. Such demands resulted in serious internal political turmoil within the movement and spurred the rise of a generation of Chicana activists, whose writings, organizations, and protest activities remain a testament to feminist struggles.

**CHICANA FEMINIST WRITINGS**

Beginning in the early 1960s and through the 1980s, the writings by Adelaida Del Castillo, Marta Cotera, Francisca Flores, Dorinda Moreno, Anna Nieto Gomez, Bernice Rincon, Enriqueta Longeaux y Vasquez, and others reveal the tensions and contradictions that they were experiencing as women of color participating in both a nationalist movement and the larger American society. Chicana feminists struggled to gain social equality and put an end to sexist and racist oppression. Like black and Asian-American feminists, Chicana feminists struggled to gain equal status in a male-dominated movement. Their writings addressed a variety of specific concerns, including educational inequalities, occupational segregation, poverty, lack of adequate child care, welfare rights, prison reform, health care, and reforms in the legal system. They also supported the right of women to control their own bodies and mobilized around the struggle for reproductive rights. Chicanas believed that feminism involved more than an analysis of gender because, as women of color, they were affected by both race and class in their everyday lives. Chicana feminism, as a social movement to improve the position of Chicanas in American society, represented a struggle that was both nationalist and feminist.

Chicana feminists engaged in a wide range of activities that stand as landmarks in the development of their movement. Throughout the Southwest, Chicanas developed their own feminist publication outlets. Founded in the early 1970s by Francisca Flores, the journal *Regeneracion* (Regeneration) became one of the most influential Chicana publications during the late 1960s and through the 1970s. It contained essays, editorials, poetry, short stories, and feature stories written about and by Chicanas. In 1971, students at California State University at Long Beach started a newspaper. With Anna Nieto Gomez and Adelaida Del Castillo serving as the founding editors, *Hijas de Cuauhtemoc* (Daughters of Cuauhtemoc), provided additional forums for Chicanas to discuss their experiences with male domination, racism, and classism. Although the newspaper only ran a few issues, its coverage of the social and economic marginalization of Chicanas in American society, and of the perpetuation of historical and contemporary stereotypes of Chicanas, provide critical documents of this period. In 1973 the newspaper developed into the feminist journal *Encuentro Femenil* (Women’s Encounter) but stopped publication within two years.

Enriqueta Longeaux y Vasquez and Elizabeth Martinez, both from New Mexico, edited the newspaper *El Grito del Norte* (The Cry of the North) from 1968 to 1973. It published many articles, some written by the editors, that shaped the course of Chicana feminism. In 1973 Dorinda Moreno edited *La Mujer en Pie de Lucha* (Women Ready for Struggle), an anthology of Chicana feminist writings. She also founded the San Francisco newspaper *La Razón Mestiza* (The Mestiza Cause) in 1974. In 1977 Marta Cotera, a Chicana feminist from Texas, published her very influential *Chicana Feminist*, a collection of her political essays and speeches.

Chicana artists depicted their feminist ideology in literature, poetry, art, and theater. The creative writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, Ana Castillo, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Sandra Cisneros, Pat Mora, Cherrie Moraga, Bernice Zamora, and others portray various aspects of Chicana feminism. Yolanda López’s art symbolizes the struggles of Chicanas and the development of a feminist consciousness.

By the late 1970s a small group of Chicanas entered the academy in a variety of disciplines and continued a Chicana feminist discourse within academic publishing outlets. Melville’s *Twice a Minority* (1980) and Magdalena Mora’s and Adelaida R. Del Castillo’s *Mexican Women in the United States* (1980) remain classic anthologies that document the struggles of Chicanas. Chicana feminist writings contain common threads. They called for a critique of Chicano cultural nationalism, an examination of patriarchal relations, an end to sexist stereotypes of Chicanas, and the need for Chicanas to engage in consciousness-raising activities and collective political mobilization.

**ORGANIZING THE MOVEMENT**

Chicana feminists established autonomous woman-centered organizations that would facilitate their protest activities. In 1969, a group of Chicana university students started *Las Hijas de Cuauhtemoc* (Daughters of Cuauhtemoc), which served as a consciousness-raising organization, a clearinghouse of resources for Chicana students, and a basis
for other feminist activities. The group started their own newspaper two years later and named the newspaper after their group. The Comisión Femenil Mexicana National (CFMN, or National Mexican Women’s Commission) was founded in 1970 as a result of a resolution written by a group of Chicanas at the National Chicano Issues Conference. They founded an organization, run by and for Chicanas, that addressed their concerns. The CFMN set up the Chicana Service Action Center, a Los Angeles–based community social services center that focused on job training. Dorinda Moreno formed Concilio Mujeres (Women’s Council), a women’s support group based at San Francisco State University.

Chicana feminists mobilized their efforts by organizing local, regional, and national conferences to address their concerns. Having experienced marginalization and direct antifeminist attacks at many Chicano conferences, Chicana feminists adopted the strategy of organizing their own autonomous conferences. Organized in the early 1970s were the Chicana Regional Conference in Los Angeles, the First National Chicana Conference in Houston, the UCLA Chicana Curriculum Workshop and the Chicana Identity Conference at the University of Houston. These gatherings mobilized Chicanas and deepened their feminism.

At the academic level, an increasing number of Chicana feminists focused their collective effort on continuing the feminist legacy inherited from the early 1970s. In June 1982 a group of Chicana academics in Northern California organized a national feminist organization called Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS, or Women Activists in Letters and Social Change) in order to build a support network for Chicana professors, undergraduates, graduate students, and community activists. The organization’s major goal was to fight against the race, class, and gender oppression facing Chicanas in institutions of higher education. In addition, MALCS aimed to bridge the gap between academic work and the Chicano community.

During the 1982 conference of the National Association for Chicano Studies (NACS), a panel organized by Mujeres en Marcha (Women on the Move), a feminist group from the University of California at Berkeley, discussed the legitimacy of a Chicana feminist movement and the need to struggle against patriarchy. In 1983 Chicanas in NACS formed a Chicana Caucus, whose first political demand was that the organizers for the 1984 conference adopt the theme, “Voces de la Mujer,” (Voices of Women). The conference plenary session featured Chicana feminists who addressed sexism in the organization and the community. Their presentations were collected in one of the key anthologies of Chicana feminism: Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender (1984).

**DISSENT IN THE CHICANO MOVEMENT**

Not all women who participated in the Chicano movement supported Chicana feminism. Some saw themselves as “loyalists” who believed that the Chicano movement did not have to deal with sexual inequities because both Chicano men and Chicano women experienced racial oppression. A common view among loyalists was that if men oppressed women, it was not the men’s fault but rather that of the larger society. Even if gender oppression existed, the loyalists maintained that this type of inequality would best be resolved internally within the movement. They denounced the formation of a separate Chicana feminist movement on the grounds that it was politically divisive and would undermine the unity of the Chicano movement. Loyalists viewed racism as the most important issue within the Chicano movement. In a political climate that already viewed feminist ideology with suspicion, Chicana feminist lesbians came under even more attacks than other feminists. A cultural nationalist ideology that perpetuated stereotypical images of Chicanas as “good wives and good mothers” found it difficult to accept a Chicana feminist lesbian movement advocated by writers and activists such as Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa.

**JOINING WITH OTHERS**

Chicana feminists considered the possibility of forming coalitions with white feminists after their attempts to work within the Chicano movement were suppressed. Because white feminists were themselves struggling against sexism, building coalitions with them was seen as an alternative strategy for Chicana feminists. Several issues made such coalition building difficult, however. Chicana feminists criticized white feminists for only addressing gender oppression in explaining the life circumstances of women. Chicana feminists believed that the white feminist movement overlooked the effects of racial and class oppression experienced by Chicanas and other women of color. They criticized white feminists who believed that a general women’s movement would be able to overcome racial and class differences among women, interpreting this as a failure to deal with the issues of racism and classism. Without the incorporation of an analysis of racial and class oppression to explain their experiences, Chicana feminists believed that such a coalition would be problematic. Chicana feminists also viewed the white feminist movement as a middle-class movement, while they viewed their struggle as a working-class movement.

Chicana feminism went beyond the limits of an exclusively racial theory of oppression embedded in Chicano cultural nationalism. Through their political mobilization, writings, conferences, and organizations, Chicanas built an autonomous feminist movement. Since its early beginnings...
in the 1960s, Chicana feminism has followed a trajectory that has combined political activism and academic research, usually rejecting the separation of the two. While the militant politics of protest have ended, Chicana feminism continues in the early twenty-first century, using different venues and strategies to struggle against race, gender, class, and sexual-orientation inequalities.

SEE ALSO African Feminisms; Black Feminism in Brazil; Black Feminism in the United Kingdom; Black Feminism in the United States; Feminism and Race.

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CHICANO MOVEMENT

The Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s provides a window into the construction of race in the United States. Never a unified entity, the Chicano insurgency was instead a series of events and actions waged by organizations that used cultural nationalism and Marxist-Leninist ideas to press their demands. Among these organizations were the Brown Berets, the National Chicano Moratorium Committee, the Crusade for Justice, the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA), La Raza Unida Party (LRUP), and the Centro de Acción Social Autónomo (Autonomous Center for Social Action, commonly known as CASA). The all used the common anti-American political language of Chicanismo, which gave them the semblance of a mutual identity and experience. Another notion that the groups shared was the idea that Chicanos were an internal colony of the United States.

Perhaps the most celebrated of the Chicano movement organizations was the Brown Berets, a paramilitary group similar in outlook and style to the Black Panthers. The group was founded in 1966 under the leadership of David Sánchez, a high school student in Los Angeles. The Berets espoused a militant outlook, if not substantively at least symbolically, and they soon captured the imagination of Chicano youth throughout Los Angeles and the Southwest. For the next six years the Berets would be present at, and take an active role in, demonstrations and protests in the Los Angeles area, including the 1968 high school “bloo-outs,” in which Chicano students walked out of school to protest unequal conditions. Their struggle also incorporated the protests against the Vietnam War and police brutality staged by the Chicano Moratorium Committee from 1969 through 1971. These actions proved short-lived, but they ensured that the Brown Berets would become a sensation in the ethnic Mexican community. Before their demise in 1973, they established the East Los Angeles Free Clinic, which still exists. Ultimately, the Brown Berets were more concerned with symbolic gestures to bring to light Chicanos’ unequal living and working conditions. Nevertheless they inspired the ethnic Mexican community to fight for empowerment and strive to change the status quo.

The fight for empowerment and the quest to change the status quo were also undertaken by the Crusade for Justice, a Denver-based organization founded by a former boxer turned community activist, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, in 1965. Unlike the Berets, the Crusade for Justice believed in substantive change, and they imagined a community that would be guided by a strong adherence to Mexican culture, which would manifest itself through the building of institutions. To that end, the Crusade operated a school named Tlatelolco: La Plaza de las Tres Culturas. At its height, Tlatelolco had 200 preschool to college-age students. The Crusade also ran a curio shop, a bookstore, and a social center.

Like the Brown Berets, the Crusade protested police brutality and was concerned with young ethnic Mexicans, as was evident when it sponsored the 1969 National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, which is notable for issuing El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan (The Spiritual Plan of Aztlan), which called for Chicano separatism in the face of white oppression. This became the blueprint for Chicano student activism in the years to come. The plan also called for the establishment of a nationwide Mexican-American student movement based in high schools and college campuses, which would be spearheaded by local chapters of the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA). In addition, the conference issued calls for a Mexican-American anti–Vietnam War effort and...