



Chicanismo: The Forging of a Militant Ethos among Mexican Americans

Ignacio M. García

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During the 1960s and '70s, Mexican Americans began to agitate for social and political change. From their diverse activities and agendas there emerged a new political consciousness. Emphasizing race and class within the context of an oppressive society, this militant ethos would become the unifying theme for groups involved in a myriad of causes. Chicanismo, as it came to be known, marked a transformation in the way Mexican Americans thought about themselves, enabling them for the first time to see themselves as a community with a past and a present. In *Chicanismo*, the first intellectual history of the Chicano Movement and the militant ethos that emerged from it, Ignacio Garcia traces the development of the philosophical strains that guided the movement. First, Mexican Americans came to believe that the liberal agenda that had promised education and equality had failed them, leading them toward separatism. Second, they saw a need to reinterpret the past as it related to their own history, leading them to discovered their legacy of struggle. Third, Mexican American activists, intellectuals, and artists affirmed a renewed pride in their ethnicity and class status. Finally, this new philosophy-Chicanismo-was politicized through the struggles of the Chicano organizations that promoted it as they faced resistance or external attacks. Although the idea of Chicanismo would eventually unravel, its ideological strains remain important even today. Combining research and personal knowledge of people, events, organizations, and political/cultural rhetoric, along with a synthesis of scholarship from a variety of fields, Chicanismo provides a unique, multidimensional view of the Chicano Movement.

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