

American Nation, Paul Boyer, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2005.

[954-956]

The Chicano Movement

Stirrings of Protest

Like the African American civil rights movement and the women's movement, the Mexican American struggle to secure equal rights became a powerful political force during the 1960s. Almost 4 million Mexican Americans lived in the United States in 1960, with more than 3.4 million living in southwestern states. They were among the poorest and least-educated people in the country. Although 80 percent of Mexican Americans lived in cities, it was the actions of California farm workers that initially inspired many Mexican Americans to activism.

A model for the movement. Migrant agricultural workers, many of them Mexican Americans, received low wages for backbreaking labor. In September 1965 a group of Filipino workers went on strike in Delano, California, in the San Joaquin Valley. They refused to harvest grapes until they received a pay increase. Other migrant workers, including Mexican Americans, soon joined the strike.

When the Filipino workers struck, leaders of a union called the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) were faced with a dilemma. A few months earlier they had won a labor dispute with rose growers, but this strike promised to be much more difficult to win. Led by Cesar Chavez, NFWA leaders decided to join the strike.

Born in Yuma, Arizona, in 1927, Cesar Chavez was the son of Mexican American farmers. After losing their land during the Great Depression, Chavez's family became migrant workers. During his childhood Chavez attended nearly 30 different schools. The Chavez family repeatedly experienced discrimination in their travels searching for work. Looking back on his childhood, Chavez recalled, "There were lots of racist remarks that still hurt my ears when I think of them."

Chavez was strongly influenced by his parents, particularly his mother, who often assisted fellow migrant workers. He remembered, "We were migrants but we were a service center. We did all kinds of work for people." After serving in the navy during World War II, Chavez moved to San Jose, California. He became involved in the Community Service Organization (CSO), where he learned community-organizing techniques. Father Donald McDonnell, a Catholic priest, taught Chavez that labor unions could be a powerful force for social change.

Chavez wanted to organize migrant agricultural workers.

When this project did not receive support from the CSO, he left the organization. With help from former CSO workers Dolores Huerta and Gil Padilla, Chavez founded the NFWA. His wife, Helen, ran the credit union they had created to assist the workers. By 1965 the NFWA claimed some 1,700 members.

History Makers Speak. "People started talking about how unfair... the growers were... and why we needed to fight back. And then, so Cesar gets up and he's this little guy... very soft spoken. I say, 'That's Cesar?' You know, I wasn't very impressed... but the more he talked, the more I thought that not only could we fight, but we could win." – Eliseo Medina, quoted in *Chicano!*, by F. Arturo Resales

Strike and boycott. On September 16, 1965, Mexican Independence Day, Chavez asked a gathering of NFWA members to join the Filipino strikers. Eliseo Medina was then a 19-year-old worker. He later recalled the union meeting.

After NFWA members voted to strike, Chavez and other leaders collected donations of money and food to support the striking workers. The union also constructed a medical clinic and operated a gas station for its members. As Chavez explained, "We are a union of have-nots. So we must satisfy basic needs before other things." Chavez realized that a strike alone would not win the union any concessions. He therefore adopted other strategies used in the civil rights movement to gain support. In 1966, to encourage

public sympathy for the strike, Chavez conducted a 300-mile march to Sacramento, the capital of California. When Chavez called for a nationwide boycott of grapes, consumers responded enthusiastically. An estimated 17 million Americans refused to buy grapes. The resulting economic pressure forced grape growers to negotiate a settlement.

Known as La Huelga, the Delano grape strike lasted until 1970, when the last of the grape growers signed new contracts with the union. During that time the NFWA merged with another union, eventually forming the United Farm Workers (UFW). The UFW was not exclusively a Mexican American organization and included many non-Hispanic members. However, its accomplishments and Chavez's leadership inspired many Mexican Americans to fight discrimination in their lives. The union's symbol, a black Aztec eagle, came to represent the Mexican American civil rights movement that developed during the late 1960s. Cesar Chavez led many similar strikes before his death in 1993.

Mexican American Activism

Cesar Chavez became nationally known during the late 1960s. He was respected for his tireless efforts and his commitment to nonviolent protest. Senator Robert Kennedy of New York hailed Chavez as "one of the heroic figures of our time." Other Mexican American activists during the 1960s used tactics different from those of Chavez and the UFW.

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The Religious Spirit

THE IDEAL OF NONVIOLENCE

Most religions consider life to be sacred and have strict standards against the use of violence. During the early 1900s Mohandas K. Gandhi used the idea of nonviolence taken from Hinduism to oppose British rule in India. Martin Luther King Jr. and other African American civil rights activists followed Gandhi's example. They were also influenced by Christian teachings to use nonviolent tactics in their struggle for equal rights.

Cesar Chavez also believed that nonviolence was the best way to bring about social change. Chavez was a deeply religious man. He once declared, "For me, Christianity happens to be a natural source of faith." He maintained that Jesus Christ "was extremely radical, and he was for social change." Chavez drew strength from his Catholic faith. He also studied Gandhi, whom he called "the most perfect man, not including Christ." Chavez noted, "Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence, it really forces us to think, really forces us to work hard. But it has power. It attracts the support of the people."

***The American Nation*, Paul Boyer, FL: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1998.**

[714]

Competition for migrant work. Even before the Dust Bowl refugees started arriving, Mexican Americans had been having a hard time finding work in the West. Like African Americans, Mexican Americans often found themselves the victims of discrimination in many New Deal programs. For example, although the CCC did not segregate Mexican Americans, some complained that they were harassed by camp officials, denied clothing, and assigned to kitchen duty more often than non-Hispanics.

Many families continued to seek what little work they could find as migrant farm laborers. A 1935 California survey found that the average income of Mexican American families had fallen below \$300 a year. Cesar Chavez, who later became a noted labor leader, recalled growing up in a depression-era migrant family:

“When we moved to California, we would work after school. Sometimes we wouldn't go. "Following the crops," we missed much school. Trying to get enough money to stay alive the following winter, the whole family picking apricots, walnuts, prunes. We were taken advantage of quite a bit by the labor contractor and the crew pusher.”

[850-851]

OTHERS INSPIRED BY THE MOVEMENT

King's tragic death and the divisions within the civil rights movement during the 1960s sometimes obscure the movement's gains. It also inspired other groups, such as Mexican Americans and American Indians, to demand better treatment. During the 1960s a group that would become the United Farm Workers (UFW), led by Cesar Chavez, began to organize Western migrant workers, most of whom were Mexican Americans, to win better wages and working conditions. In 1965 Chavez called a strike of California grape pickers and launched a nationwide boycott of grapes picked by nonunion workers. By 1970 the UFW had won most of its demands.

As in the African American civil rights movement, many younger members of the Mexican American movement began demanding more radical action. Young Mexican American college students organized the Chicano movement, which emphasized pride in Mexican culture and heritage. Such pride was reflected in the numerous Mexican American political parties that sprang up around the country, most notably La Raza Unida ("the united race"), founded in 1970.

Some American Indians organized into the Red Power movement, which demanded, among other things, that the U.S. government pay tribes for lands that had been taken from them illegally. In 1968 three Minnesota Chippe was organized the American Indian Movement (AIM), which would become the major force in the Red Power movement during the 1970s (see Chapter 31).

In 1969 a group of Red Power advocates occupied the abandoned federal prison on Alcatraz Island near San Francisco. The protesters offered to buy the island from the government with beads and cloth—the same price paid by the Dutch for Manhattan Island. The occupation of Alcatraz lasted for many months, until federal authorities finally removed the protesters by force.

All these movements emphasized ethnic pride and group loyalty. Popular culture in the 1950s had promoted the message that to be truly "American" meant to be white and middle class. In the 1960s, African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians and other groups insisted that the meaning of American must expand to include all citizens equally, not just one favored group.

The rise of these movements also raised a central question: Could oppressed groups discover their own identities and promote their own interests yet at the same time retain a sense of citizenship and belonging to the larger American society? This important question still confronts us today.

■ The civil rights movement inspired other groups, such as Mexican Americans and

American Indians, to fight for their rights.

The American Nation, James West Davidson and Michael B. Stoff, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.

[865-867]

The Latino Drive for Equality

By the end of the 1970s, more than 10 million Latinos lived in the United States. Like African Americans, women, and other minorities, Latinos worked for equal rights. **Mexican Americans** Mexican Americans are the largest group of Latinos living in the United States. From 1960 to 1980, the greatest number of immigrants to the United States came from Mexico.

Many Mexican Americans lived and worked in cities. Many more labored as migrant workers who traveled from farm to farm looking for work. Low wages and harsh working conditions made life difficult for them. Discrimination made things worse. Mexican Americans were often barred from better-paying jobs and from better neighborhoods. Few schools offered programs for those whose first language was Spanish. Migrants moved so often that it was hard for their children to attend school regularly.

Puerto Rican Americans Latinos in the eastern United States often came from Puerto Rico. In the 1950s, thousands left Puerto Rico in search of work in the United States. Many took jobs in the factories of New York City, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. Some went to Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco. Puerto Ricans also faced discrimination in housing and jobs wherever they settled.

Cuban Americans A third group of Latinos came in two waves from Cuba. Between 1959 and 1962, some 200,000 people fled to southern Florida when Fidel Castro set up a communist government in Cuba. These immigrants were often middle class and well educated. They adapted quickly to their new home. A second wave of immigrants came in 1980 after Castro allowed thousands of people to leave the island. Most of the new refugees were unskilled. They had a hard time making a living.

As their numbers grew, Cuban Americans became a force in southern Florida. Miami took on a new look. Shop windows displayed signs in Spanish. Cuban restaurants and shops opened. Cubans published Spanish-language newspapers and operated radio and television stations. Cuban American politicians were soon elected.

Latinos Organize In the 1960s, new Latino organizations sought change. Cesar Chavez formed a union of migrant workers, the United Farm Workers. When farm owners refused to talk to the union, Chavez called for a nationwide boycott of farm products. In the end, the owners recognized the union, and workers won higher wages.

By the mid-1960s, Latinos began to publicly take pride in their history and culture. Mexican Americans called themselves Chicanos, a name that comes from the Spanish word *Mexicano*.

Latino groups also registered voters and made sure that voting laws were enforced. These new voters helped to elect more Latino officials to represent their interests.

One result of these efforts was the Voting Rights Act of 1975. It required areas with many non-English-speaking citizens to hold bilingual elections. Bilingual means in two languages. In a bilingual election, information is provided in more than one language. With a ballot that was written in Spanish, it was easier for Latinos to vote.

The Bilingual Education Acts of 1968 and 1973 promoted bilingual programs in public schools with Spanish-speaking and Asian students.

***The American Nation*, James West Davidson and Michael B. Stoff, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.**

[727-728]

Mexican Americans Face Discrimination

By the 1930s, Mexican Americans lived and worked in cities around the country. A large number, however, were farm workers in the Southwest and West. There, they faced discrimination in education, jobs, and at the polls.

In good times, employers had encouraged Mexicans to move north and take jobs in factories or on farms. When the depression struck, many Americans wanted the government to force Mexicans out of the country. More than 400,000 Mexicans were rounded up and sent to Mexico. Some were citizens who had been born in the United States.

Mexican Americans who stayed in the United States tried to provide a good education for their children. Mexicans, however, had to attend poorly equipped "Mexican schools." Local school boards admitted that if Mexican American children were well educated, farmers would lose their supply of cheap labor.

"We Don't Serve Mexicans Here"

UP CLOSE

Many Mexican American children seldom attended school. They were too busy helping their families try to earn a living. Cesar Chavez was one such child.

From landowner to migrant worker. One day when he was six years old, Cesar helped his family pile their belongings onto a wagon. The Chavezes had lived in the North Gila Valley of Arizona for two generations. Cesar had grown up on the land his father inherited from his father. Now they were leaving.

From the hushed talk of his parents, Cesar learned that the bank had refused to approve loans for the Chavez family. Years later, Chavez explained: "It so happened that the president of the bank... wanted our land."

For two years, Cesar and his family lived in another, smaller house. Then they were forced to move again. This time, they climbed into a secondhand car and headed west to California. There, they became migrant workers, moving from farm to farm to harvest crops. Cesar found "following the crops" a strange life. He missed his old home:

"We had been poor, but we knew every night there was a bed there, and that this was our room. There was a kitchen. It was... a settled life, and we had chickens and hogs, eggs and all those things. But that all of a sudden changed."

Life on the road. As migrants, the family carried everything they owned in their car. They never stayed anywhere long. Once they lived under a bridge near a dry creek. In 8 years, Cesar attended 37 schools. Often, he had to miss school to work in the fields.

The growers paid low wages. Sometimes, the entire family brought in only \$5 for an entire week's work. If Cesar's father went on strike for better pay, the growers forced the family to move on.

A painful encounter. Cesar suffered from the prejudice of white Americans. One day, the family stopped for coffee in a small California town. "White Trade Only," read a sign outside the restaurant. Cesar's father could read, but he did not understand the sign. He entered the restaurant. "We don't serve Mexicans here. Get out of here," snarled a young waitress.

"I'm sure for the rest of her life, she never thought of it again," Cesar later said. "But every time we thought of it, it hurt us."

As you will read in Chapter 28, Cesar Chavez went on to found a union, the United Farm Workers of America, to represent migrant workers. The union fought for higher wages and better working conditions. Chavez never forgot his early experiences:

"Some people put this out of their minds and forget it. I don't. I don't want to forget it. I don't want it to take the best of me, but... this is

what happened. This is the truth, you know. History.”

[817-819]

The Spirit of Reform Spreads

Jessie Lopez de la Cruz had been a farm worker all her life. She grew up picking lettuce on her hands and knees and thinning row after row of beets under a hot sun. Then, in 1962, a knock on her door changed her life. She recalled,

“There were three men. One of them was Cesar Chavez.... The next thing I knew, they were sitting around our table talking about a union.... Cesar said, 'The women have to be involved.' So I sat up straight and said to myself, 'That's what I want!'”

Lopez became active in the farm workers' union led by Cesar Chavez. Like many other Latinos, she began to demand better conditions for her people. As the spirit of reform spread during the 1960s, Latinos, Native Americans, and women struggled to win equal rights.

Spanish-speaking Americans

By the end of the 1970s, more than 10 million Latinos lived in the United States. Latinos are Spanish-speaking people from the countries of Latin America, including Mexico, Central and South America, and many islands of the Caribbean.

Puerto Ricans. Most Latinos in the eastern United States trace their origins to Puerto Rico. As you recall, Puerto Ricans became American citizens in 1917. Since 1898, Puerto Rico had been governed by the United States. In 1952, the island became a self-governing commonwealth. This gave the people more say over their own affairs. Many Puerto Ricans were happy to remain a commonwealth under United States protection. Others called for full independence.

In the 1950s, thousands of people left Puerto Rico in search of work. Many took jobs in the garment factories of New York City, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. Others settled in cities such as Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco.

Puerto Ricans did not have an easy time on the mainland. Many faced discrimination in housing and jobs. In response, Puerto Ricans formed groups to help their communities and to fight for equal treatment.

One result of these efforts was the Voting Rights Act of 1975. This law required areas with large numbers of non-English-speaking citizens to hold bilingual elections. Bilingual means in two languages. In a bilingual election, information is provided in more than one language. As a result, it was easier for Latinos to vote.

Other important laws were the Bilingual Education Acts of 1968 and 1973. These laws promoted bilingual programs in public schools with Spanish-speaking and Asian students.

Cuban Americans. Another major Latino group came from Cuba. After Fidel Castro set up a communist government in Cuba in 1959, more than 200,000 Cubans fled to the United States. (See page 805.) Most settled in southern Florida. Many were well educated and adapted quickly to their new home.

In 1980, a new wave of Cubans arrived when Castro allowed 125,000 people to leave the country. Again, many settled in southern Florida. The new refugees were unskilled workers who found it harder to make a living.

As their numbers grew, Cuban Americans became an important force in southern Florida. Miami—the city with the greatest number of Cuban immigrants—took on a new look. Shop windows displayed signs in Spanish. Cuban restaurants opened. Cubans published Spanish-language newspapers and operated radio and television stations.

Mexican Americans. Large numbers of Mexicans had been living in the Southwest when the United States annexed the region after the Mexican War. Mexicans continued to migrate to the area, especially after 1910.

From 1960 to 1980, the largest number of immigrants to the United States came from Mexico. By 1980, more than 8 million Mexicans had settled throughout the United States.

Mexican Americans Fight for Equality

Many Mexican Americans lived and worked in urban areas. Many others were migrant farm workers. They traveled from farm to farm, stopping wherever they were needed to plant or harvest crops. The pay was low, and working conditions were poor.

Problems of migrant workers. Migrants had little chance to get an education. Families moved often, and it was hard for children to attend school. Also, few schools offered programs for children whose first language was Spanish.

A government program that had begun in the 1940s resulted in special problems for Mexican American migrant workers. The program permitted employers to bring in temporary farm workers from Mexico. Braceros (bruh SER ohs), as these workers were called, worked for very low wages. As a result, they took away jobs from other migrant workers.

Forming a union. During the 1960s, many Mexican Americans worked for reform. For example, Cesar Chavez tried to help migrant farm workers by forming a union.

Chavez formed the National Farm Workers Association in 1962. He traveled 300,000 miles in six months to sign up members. When owners refused to talk to the union, Chavez used nonviolent tactics like those of Martin Luther King, Jr. He called for a nationwide boycott of grapes, lettuce, and other farm products. Slowly, the boycotts worked. Farm owners had to recognize the union, and workers won higher wages.

The struggle continues. Like blacks, Mexican Americans began to take increased pride in their history and culture. Some expressed this pride by calling themselves Chicanos, a name that comes from the Spanish word Mexicano.

Chicano groups actively supported the civil rights movement. They registered voters and made sure that voting laws were enforced. As a result, voters elected more Latino officials to represent their interests. With an increased role in government, Mexican Americans continued to press for better education and other reforms.

The American Pageant: A History of the Republic, 13th Ed., Advanced Placement Ed., David M. Kennedy, Lizabeth Cohen, and Thomas A. Bailey, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.

[1026-1027]

Beyond the Melting Pot

Thanks both to continued immigration and to their own high birthrate, Latinos were becoming an increasingly important minority (see "Makers of America: The Latinos," pp. 1024-1025). The United States by 2003 was home to about 39 million of them. They included some 26 million Chicanos, or Mexican Americans, mostly in the Southwest, as well as 3 million Puerto Ricans, chiefly in the Northeast, and more than 1 million Cubans in Florida (where it was jokingly said that Miami had become the most "Anglo" city in Latin America).

Flexing their political muscles, Latinos elected mayors of Miami, Denver, and San Antonio. After years of struggle, the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), headed by the soft-spoken and charismatic Cesar Chavez, succeeded in improving working conditions for the mostly Chicano "stoop laborers" who followed the cycle of planting and harvesting across the American West. Latino influence seemed likely to grow, as suggested by the increasing presence of Spanish-language ballots and television broadcasts. Latinos, newly confident and organized, became the nation's largest ethnic minority, outnumbering even African Americans, in 2003. Indeed by the early twenty-first century, the Chicano population of America's largest state, California, led the Anglo population, making the state a patchwork of minorities with no single ethnic majority. In 2003 most newborns in California were Latino, a powerful harbinger of the state's demographic future.

Asian Americans also made great strides. By the 1980s they were America's fastest-growing minority, and their numbers reached nearly 12 million by 2002. Once feared and hated as the "yellow peril" and consigned to the most menial and degrading jobs, citizens of Asian ancestry were now counted among the most prosperous Americans. The typical Asian American household enjoyed an income nearly 25 percent greater than that of the typical white household in 2003.

Indians, the original Americans, numbered some 2.4 million in the 2000 census. Half of them had left their reservations to live in cities. Meanwhile, unemployment and alcoholism had blighted reservation life. Many tribes took advantage of their special legal status as independent nations by opening bingo halls and gambling casinos for the general public on reservation lands, but the cycle of discrimination and poverty proved hard to break.

***The American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, 11th Ed., Thomas A. Bailey, David M. Kennedy, and Lizabeth Cohen, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.**

[1033, 1036]

Ethnic Pride

Thanks both to continued immigration and to their own high birthrate, Hispanic-Americans were becoming an increasingly important minority (see “Makers of America: The Latinos,” pp. 1034-1035). The United States by the 1990s was home to about 27 million Hispanics. They included some 17 million Chicanos, or Mexican-Americans, mostly in the Southwest, as well as nearly 3 million Puerto Ricans, chiefly in the Northeast, and about 1 million Cubans in Florida (where it was jokingly said that Miami had become the most “Anglo” city in Latin America).

Flexing their political muscles, Latinos elected mayors of Miami, Denver, and San Antonio. After years of struggle, the United Farmworkers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), headed by soft-spoken and charismatic Cesar Chavez, succeeded in improving work conditions for the mostly Chicano “stoop laborers” who followed the cycle of planting and harvesting across the American West. Hispanic influence seemed likely to grow, as suggested by the increasing presence of Spanish-language ballots and television broadcasts. Hispanic-Americans, newly confident and organized, might well become the nation’s largest ethnic minority, outnumbering even African-Americans, by the turn of the century. Indeed, predictions were that the Chicano population of America’s largest state, California, would equal the “Anglo” population by the year 2000, when there would no longer be as single ethnic majority in the state, only a patchwork of minorities.

Asian-Americans also made great strides. By the 1980s they were America’s fastest-growing minority. Their numbers nearly doubled in that decade alone, thanks to heavy immigration, and continued to swell in the 1990s. Once feared and hated as the “yellow peril” and relegated to the most menial and degrading jobs, citizens of Asian ancestry were now counted among the most prosperous and successful of Americans – a “model minority.” The typical Asian-American household enjoyed an income nearly 20 percent greater than that of the typical white household. In 1996 the voters of Washington elected the first Asian-American to serve as governor of a mainland American state.

Indians, the original Americans, shared in the general awakening of ethnic and cultural pride. The 1990 census counted some 1.5 million Native Americans, half of whom had left their reservations to live in cities. Meanwhile, unemployment and alcoholism had blighted reservation life. Many tribes tried to take advantage of their special legal status as independent nations by opening bingo halls and gambling casinos for white patrons on reservation lands, but the cycle of discrimination and poverty proved hard to break.

***The Americans*, Gerald A. Danzer, J. Jorge Klor de Alva, Larry S. Krieger, Louis E. Wilson, and Nancy Woloch, IL: McDougal Littell, 2005.**

[974-977]

Latinos and Native Americans Seek Equality

One American's Story

Jessie Lopez de la Cruz's life changed one night in 1962, when Cesar Chavez came to her home. Chavez, a Mexican-American farm worker, was trying to organize a union for California's mostly Spanish-speaking farm workers. Chavez said, "The women have to be involved. They're the ones working out in the fields with their husbands." Soon Jessie was in the fields, talking to farm workers about the union.

A PERSONAL VOICE JESSIE LOPEZ DE LA CRUZ

"Wherever I went to speak... I told them about... how we had no benefits, no minimum wage, nothing out in the fields -- no restrooms, nothing I said, 'Well! Do you think we should be putting up with this in this modern age? ... We can stand up! We can talk back! This country is very rich, and we want a share of the money those growers make [off] our sweat and our work by exploiting us and our children!'"

-- quoted in *Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change*

The efforts of Jessie Lopez de la Cruz were just part of a larger rights movement during the turbulent and revolutionary 1960s. As African Americans were fighting for civil rights, Latinos and Native Americans rose up to assert their own rights and improve their lives.

The Latino Presence Grows

Latinos, or Americans of Latin American descent, are a large and diverse group. During the 1960s, the Latino population in the United States grew from 3 million to more than 9 million. Today the Latino population includes people from several different areas, primarily Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Central America, and South America. Each of these groups has its own history, its own pattern of settlement in the United States, and its own set of economic, social, cultural, and political concerns.

LATINOS OF VARIED ORIGINS Mexican Americans, the largest Latino group, have lived mostly in the Southwest and California. This group includes descendants of the nearly 100,000 Mexicans who had lived in territories ceded by Mexico to the United States in 1848. Another million or so Mexicans came to the United States in the 1910s, following Mexico's revolution. Still others came as braceros, or temporary laborers, during the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1960s close to half a million Mexicans immigrated, most in search of better paying jobs.

Puerto Ricans began immigrating to the United States after the U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico in 1898. As of 1960, almost 900,000 Puerto Ricans were living in the continental United States, including almost half a million on New York City's West Side.

Large Cuban communities also formed in New York City and in Miami and New Jersey. This is because hundreds of thousands of Cubans, many of whom were academics and professionals, fled to the United States in 1959 to escape Fidel Castro's Communist rule. In addition, tens of thousands of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, and Colombians immigrated to the United States after the 1960s to escape civil war and chronic poverty.

Wherever they had settled, during the 1960s many Latinos encountered ethnic prejudice and discrimination in jobs and housing. Most lived in segregated barrios, or Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. The Latino jobless rate was nearly 50 percent higher than that of whites, as was the percentage of Latino families living in poverty.

Latinos Fight for Change

As the presence of Latinos in the United States grew, so too did their demand for

greater representation and better treatment. During the 1960s, Latinos demanded not only equal opportunity, but also a respect for their culture and heritage.

THE FARM WORKER MOVEMENT As Jessie Lopez de la Cruz explained, thousands working on California's fruit and vegetable farms did backbreaking work for little pay and few benefits. Cesar Chavez believed that farm workers had to unionize, that their strength would come from bargaining as a group. In 1962, Chavez and Dolores Huerta established the National Farm Workers Association. Four years later, this group merged with a Filipino agricultural union (also founded by Huerta) to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC).

Chavez and his fellow organizers insisted that California's large fruit and vegetable companies accept their union as the bargaining agent for the farm workers.

Chavez, like Martin Luther King, Jr., believed in nonviolence. In 1965, when California's grape growers refused to recognize the union, Chavez sent farm workers across the country to convince supermarkets and shoppers to boycott California grapes. Chavez then went on a three-week fast in which he lost 35 pounds. The efforts of Chavez and the farm workers eventually paid off. In 1970, Huerta negotiated a contract between the grape growers and the UFWOC. Union workers would finally be guaranteed higher wages and other benefits long denied them.

CULTURAL PRIDE The activities of the California farm workers helped to inspire other Latino "brown power" movements across the country. In New York, members of the Puerto Rican population began to demand that schools offer Spanish-speaking children classes taught in their own language as well as programs about their culture. In 1968, Congress enacted the Bilingual Education Act, which provided funds for schools to develop bilingual and cultural heritage programs for non-English-speaking children.

Young Mexican Americans started to call themselves Chicanos or Chicanas -- a shortened version of "Mexicanos" that expressed pride in their ethnic heritage. A Chicano community action group called the Brown Berets formed under the leadership of David Sanchez. In 1968, the Brown Berets organized walkouts in East Los Angeles high schools. About 15,000 Chicano students walked out of class demanding smaller classes, more Chicano teachers and administrators, and programs designed to reduce the high Latino dropout rate. Militant Mexican-American students also won the establishment of Chicano studies programs at colleges and universities.

POLITICAL POWER Latinos also organized politically during the 1960s. Some worked within the two-party system. For example, the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) helped elect Los Angeles politician Edward Roybal to the House of Representatives. During the 1960s, eight Hispanic Americans served in the House, and one Hispanic senator was elected Joseph Montoya of New Mexico.

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) had formed in 1929 to fight segregation and other forms of discrimination. In the 1940s and into the 1950s, LULAC had filed lawsuits to desegregate schools throughout the Southwest, and in 1954, they helped win Mexican Americans the right to serve on juries. In the 1960s, some LULAC education and jobs programs won funding as pilot programs in LBJ's Great Society.

Other Latinos, like Texan Jose Angel Gutierrez, sought to create an independent Latino political movement. In 1970, he established La Raza Unida (Mexican-Americans United). In the 1970s, La Raza Unida ran Latino candidates in five states and won races for mayor, as well as positions on school boards and city councils.

Still other Latinos took on a more confrontational tone. In 1963, one-time evangelical preacher Reies Tijerina founded the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Land Grants) to help reclaim U.S. land taken from Mexican landholders in the 19th century. He and his followers raided the Rio Arriba County Courthouse in Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico, in order to force authorities to recognize the plight of New Mexican small farmers. They were later arrested.

[976]

KEY PLAYER

CESAR CHAVEZ 1927-1993

Cesar Chavez spoke from experience when he said, "Many things in farm labor are terrible."

As a teenager, Chavez moved with his family from farm to farm, picking crops. "The worst crop was the olives," Chavez recalled. "The olives are so small you can never fill the bucket."

The seeds of protest grew early in Chavez. As a teenager, he once went to a theater that was segregated-whites on one side of the aisle and Mexicans on the other side. "I really hadn't thought much about what I was going to do, but I had to do something," Chavez recalled. The future union leader sat down in the whites-only section and stayed there until the police arrived and arrested him.

[1050]

GAINS FOR LATINOS Latinos became the fastest growing minority during the 1980s. By 1990, they constituted almost nine percent of the population, and demographers estimated that Latinos would soon outnumber African Americans as the nation's largest minority group. About two out of three Latinos were Mexican Americans, who lived mostly in the Southwest. A Puerto Rican community thrived in the Northeast, and a Cuban population was concentrated in Florida. Like African Americans, Latinos gained political power during the 1980s. Toney Anaya became governor of New Mexico, while Robert Martinez became governor of Florida. In August 1988, President Reagan appointed Lauro Cavazos as secretary of education. In 1990, President Bush named Dr. Antonia Coello Novello to the post of surgeon general.

Many Latinos supported bilingual education. They feared that abandoning Spanish would weaken their distinctive culture. In the words of Daniel Villanueva, a television executive, "We want to be here, but without losing our language and our culture. They are a richness, a treasure that we don't care to lose." The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and the 1975 amendment to the Voting Rights Act enabled Spanish speakers to attend school and vote in their own language, but by the mid-1980s opposition to bilingualism was rising. Critics argued that it slowed the rate at which Spanish-speaking people entered mainstream American life. They also feared that the nation would become split between English speakers and Spanish speakers.

***The Americans*, Gerald A. Danzer, J. Jorge Klor de Alva, Larry S. Krieger, Louis E. Wilson, and Nancy Woloch, IL: McDougal Littell, 2000.**

[920-923]

Latinos and Native Americans Seek Equality

ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

Jessie Lopez de la Cruz's life changed one night in 1962, when Cesar Chavez came to her home. Chavez, a Mexican-American farm worker, was trying to organize a union for California's mostly Spanish-speaking farm workers. Although Jessie's husband had been attending union meetings, Jessie had always stayed home. So she was surprised when Chavez sat down at her kitchen table and said, "The women have to be involved. They're the ones working out in the fields with their husbands. If you can take the women out to the fields, you can certainly take them to meetings." Jessie sat up straight and said to herself, "That's what I want!" Before long she was out in the fields, talking to farm workers about the union.

A PERSONAL VOICE

Wherever I went to speak... I told them about... how we had no benefits, no minimum wage, nothing out in the fields-no restrooms, nothing. I'd ask people how they felt about these many years they had been working out in the fields... They would say, "I was working for so-and-so, and when I complained about something that happened there, I was fired." I said, "Well! Do you think we should be putting up with this in this modern age?... We can stand up! We can talk back!... This country is very rich, and we want a share of the money those growers make [off] our sweat and our work by exploiting us and our children!"

JESSIE LOPEZ DE LA CRUZ, quoted in *Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change*

The efforts of Jessie Lopez de la Cruz were just one part of a larger Latino movement during the turbulent and revolutionary decade of the 1960s. As African Americans fought for their civil rights, Latinos and Native Americans also rose up to assert their rights, preserve their cultures, and improve their lives.

The Latino Presence Grows

Spanish-speaking Americans, or Latinos, have always been a large and diverse group. The country's Latino population includes people from several different areas: Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, other Caribbean islands, Central America, and South America. Because these groups all trace their roots back to Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, people often group them together. However, each Latino group has its own history, its own pattern of settlement in the United States, and its own set of economic, social, cultural, and political concerns. During the 1960s, the Latino presence in the United States greatly increased. In the span of a decade, the Latino population grew from 3 million to more than 9 million.

During this time, the number of Mexicans settling in the United States rose. Mexican Americans, who have always made up the largest Latino group in the United States, once lived mostly in the Southwest and California. Some were the descendants of the nearly 100,000 Mexicans who had lived in territories ceded by Mexico to the United States after the war with Mexico in 1848. Others were the children and grandchildren of the million or so Mexicans who settled in the United States in the decade following Mexico's 1910 revolution. Still others came more recently into the United States as *braceros*, or temporary laborers, during the 1940s and 1950s.

About a million Puerto Ricans have lived in the United States since the 1960s. Most have settled in the Northeast, with about 600,000 in New York City alone. Lacking the needed skills and education, many Puerto Ricans had trouble finding work and getting ahead.

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans fled to the United States after the revolutionary

leader Fidel Castro overthrew Cuba's dictator, Fulgencio Batista, in 1959. Most settled in or near Miami, turning that Florida city into a boom town. Large Cuban communities also formed in New York City and New Jersey. Many Cubans who fled to the United States were academics and professionals escaping Castro's Communist rule.

In addition, tens of thousands of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, and Colombians immigrated to the United States after the 1960s to escape civil war and chronic poverty.

Wherever they settled, during the 1960s many Latinos encountered ethnic prejudice and discrimination in jobs and housing. Most lived in segregated barrios, or neighborhoods. The Latino jobless rate was nearly 50 percent higher than that of whites, as was the percentage of families living in poverty. The majority of Latinos found jobs only on the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder. "We are first in janitors," said Senator Joseph Montoya of New Mexico, but "last in equal opportunity."

Latinos Fight for Change

As the presence of Latinos in the United States grew, so too did their cries for greater representation and better treatment. During the 1960s, Latinos demanded not only equal opportunity, but also a respect for their culture and heritage.

THE FARM WORKER MOVEMENT As Jessie Lopez de la Cruz stressed in her emotional speech, thousands of Mexican Americans working on California's fruit and vegetable farms found themselves subjected to long hours of backbreaking work for little pay and few benefits. Cesar Chavez believed that the only way to improve conditions for farm workers was to unionize them, so that they could bargain as one large group for improved conditions and better treatment. In 1962, Chavez, along with Dolores Huerta, established the National Farm Workers Association. Four years later, Chavez merged this group with another union to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC).

Chavez and his fellow organizers insisted that California's large fruit and vegetable companies accept their union as the bargaining agent for the farm workers. In 1965, when California's grape growers refused to recognize the union, Chavez launched a nationwide boycott of the companies' grapes. Chavez, like Martin Luther King, Jr., believed in nonviolence to achieve his goals. His strategy was to win, through peaceful means, American public support for La Causa, or the cause of social and economic justice for farm workers.

The union sent farm workers across North America to convince supermarkets and shoppers not to buy California grapes. To call further attention to the workers' plight, Chavez, in 1968, went on a three week fast in which he lost 35 pounds. He ended his fast by taking communion with Senator Robert F. Kennedy. The efforts of the farm workers eventually paid off. Faced with growing financial losses and a deteriorating public image, the grape growers finally signed contracts with the UFWOC in 1970. The new contracts guaranteed union workers higher wages and other benefits long denied them. "The boycott of grapes was the most near-perfect of nonviolent struggles," said Chavez afterward. It "demonstrated to the whole country, the whole world, what people can do by nonviolent action."

CULTURAL PRIDE The activities of the California farm workers helped to inspire other Latino "brown power" movements across the country. In New York, Puerto Ricans began to demand that schools offer Spanish-speaking children classes taught in their own language as well as programs on their culture. In 1968, Congress addressed the need for bilingual education by enacting the Bilingual Education Act. The act provided funds for schools to develop bilingual and cultural heritage programs for non-English-speaking children.

Young Mexican Americans started to call themselves Chicanos or Chicanas -- a shortening of "Mexicanos" that expressed pride in their ethnic heritage. Many Chicanos worked for educational reform. In 1968, about 15,000 Chicano high school students in

Los Angeles walked out of class in student strikes. Their demands included smaller classes, more Chicano teachers and administrators, and programs designed to reduce the high Latino dropout rate. At colleges and universities, militant Mexican-American students increasingly won the establishment of Chicano studies programs.

POLITICAL POWER Latinos also began organizing politically during the 1960s. Some worked within the two-party system to win support for Latino issues and candidates. For example, the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), which sponsored candidates, registered and educated voters and lobbied for legislation that benefited the Latino community. In 1962, MAPA helped elect Los Angeles politician Edward Roybal to the House of Representatives. Roybal was the second Mexican American to serve in Congress. Henry Gonzalez, elected to the House of Representatives from Texas in 1961, was the first.

Others sought to create an independent Latino political movement. That was the dream of Texan Jose Angel Guti6rrez, who established La Raza Unida (the United People Party) in 1970. In the 1970s, La Raza Unida ran Latino candidates in five states and won positions on school boards and city councils, as well as several races for mayor.

Still other Latinos took on a more confrontational tone. Reies Tijerina, a one-time evangelical preacher, argued that the United States had stolen some of the Latinos' land. In 1967, Tijerina founded the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Land Grants) to help reclaim U.S. land taken from Mexican landholders in die 19th century.

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KEY PLAYER

CESAR CHAVEZ 1927-1993

Cesar Chavez spoke from experience when he said, "Many things in farm labor are terrible." As a teenager, Chavez moved with his family from farm to farm, picking such crops as grapes, apricots, and olives. "The worst crop was the olives," Chavez recalled, "the olives are so small you can never fill the bucket."

The seeds of protest grew early in Chavez, and one incident in particular seemed to signal his eventual climb to a life of activism. As a teenager, Chavez once went to see a movie, only to find that the theater was segregated-whites on one side of the aisle and Mexicans on the other side. "I really hadn't thought much about what I was going to do but I had to do something," Chavez recalled. The future union leader sat down in the whites-only section and stayed there until the police arrived and arrested him.

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The Fight for Rights Continues

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Latino farm workers still suffered from low pay, unhealthy conditions, and high unemployment, but increasing numbers of Latinos held professional and technical positions. Latino music and salsa dancing gained widespread popularity, and writers such as Sandra Cisneros and Oscar Hijuelos won literary awards for their books. Latino architecture and crafts-such as adobe houses, walled courtyards, and vivid woven rugs-became popular elements of American style. Latino foods such as tapas, fajitas, tacos, jalapeno peppers, and jicama quickly found their way into mainstream American

diets.

Many Latinos supported bilingual education. Some feared that abandoning Spanish would weaken their distinct culture. In the words of Daniel Villanueva, a television executive, "We want to be here, but without losing our language and our culture. They are a richness, a treasure that we don't care to lose." The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1975 enabled Spanish speakers to go to school and vote in their own language, but by the mid-1980s, opposition to bilingualism was rising in some quarters. Critics argued that it slowed the rate at which Spanish-speaking people entered mainstream American life. They also feared that the nation would become split between English speakers and non-English speakers.

***American Odyssey: The 20th Century and Beyond*, Gary B. Nash, NY: Glencore, 2004**

[722]

Voices of Protest

1966: GRAPE GROWERS AND WORKERS MEET

Picking grapes in the California fields was hot, dirty, difficult work. When thirsty, workers had to go for their own water, costing them valuable picking time. To remedy such conditions, a new union, the United Farm Workers (UFW), headed by Cesar Chavez, sent its best negotiator to talk with the ranch owner.

Cofounder of the UFW with Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta was a tough negotiator. She demanded protective clothing for the workers and a pollution-reduction device for the tractors. She insisted that each crew receive a can of drinking water. She demanded better wages for the grape pickers.

"Sister, it sounds to me like you're asking for the moon for these people," said one of the rancher's lawyers.

"Brother, I'm not asking for the moon for the farmworkers. All we want is just a little ray of sunshine for them." Huerta replied.

Huerta and her fellow Mexican Americans, like members of other minority groups, followed the civil rights movement with great interest. They hoped the time was right for them to achieve progress in their own struggle for equality.

Meanwhile, the nation itself faced social turbulence that turned into a social revolution. White, middle-class women began questioning their traditional role in society. Many young people began to reject the values of their parents. Some attempted to establish their own culture, a counterculture to the one they had known before.

[733]

Hispanic Americans Organize

1966: SUPPORT GROWS NATIONWIDE FOR UFW

DURING THE LATE 1960s IT WAS A SCENE REPEATED IN MANY SUPERMARKETS AND NEIGHBORHOOD GROCERY STORES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. Grapes were on sale—green and purple, luscious, full of juice, appealing to the sight and to the taste. If you were doing the family shopping, you might be tempted to reach for a bunch—until you remembered what you had seen on TV or read in the newspapers about the California grape industry. The industry's problems were reaching consumers. Some grocers even posted this sign above the fruit as a reminder:

Notice: California Grape Boycott United Farm Workers led by Cesar Chavez are calling for a boycott of California table grapes.... It is this grocer's current policy to inform consumers of the boycott request so that each consumer can make his or her own purchase decision. It's your decision -- to boycott or not. — Table grape boycott notice, 1966

Shoppers did decide, and many put the grapes back into the bin. By appealing to the nation's consumers, Cesar Chavez, founder of the United Farm Workers (UFW) of America, gained the support he needed to win recognition of his union among California farm owners. The union used the new strategy of a nationwide boycott alongside the more familiar tactics of strikes, pickets, and demonstrations. Chavez would use it successfully again, when bargaining with the owners of vineyards and lettuce fields.

[734-737]

Recent Hispanic American History

Diverse Yet Similar

Look at a map of the United States. Read out the names of places in the Southwest and Southeast: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Santa Fe, San Antonio, Rio Grande, Ponce de Leon Bay. These names all suggest the long history of Hispanic culture in North America. From the first explorers in the 1500s to the most recent immigrants, Hispanic Americans have added a distinctive element to the language and culture of the United

States.

The term Hispanic American refers to those Americans who have come, or are descended from others who came, from Spanish-speaking lands such as Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. Hispanic Americans are the fastest-growing minority in the country. From 3 million in 1960, the Hispanic population rose to 15 million in 1980 and approximately 30.3 million in 1998. As many feminists began to demand their rights in the 1960s and 1970s, many Hispanic Americans did as well. Both groups were characterized by diversity: their members came from many different places and had varying interests.

Similarities and Differences

Regardless of their country of origin, Hispanic Americans shared a Spanish ancestry that included, among other things, practice of the Catholic religion and strong ties with the extended family—an individual's grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and brothers and sisters. Economic and social pressures also forced many urban Hispanic Americans to live in mostly Spanish-speaking neighborhoods, or barrios.

In other ways, Hispanic Americans were and are a diverse group, coming to the United States for differing reasons and at differing times. As a result, their goals and concerns have historically varied.

Five Major Groups

Hispanic Americans may be divided into five major subgroups: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans Cuban Americans, those from Central America, and those from South America. Each group has its own history and settlement pattern.

Many Mexican Americans were grandchildren or great grandchildren of the 1 million people who fled Mexico in the 20 years following Mexico's 1910 revolution. Others traced their origins to families who lived in Mexican territories that were incorporated into the United States after the Mexican War. Others first came to this country as braceros, farmworkers who were issued temporary work permits by the United States government during World War II and after. Still others were undocumented immigrants—people who lacked legal papers for residing in the United States. Many Mexican Americans maintained ties with relatives and friends in Mexico through frequent visits or moves back and forth.

Because Puerto Rico is a possession of the United States, Puerto Ricans may enter this country as citizens. After World War II, 1 out of every 6 Puerto Ricans came to the mainland in search of economic opportunity. In the 1960s, of the 1 million Puerto Ricans in the United States, 600,000 lived in New York City, often working at low-paying jobs.

Cubans began arriving in this country in large numbers after Fidel Castro took over Cuba in 1959. One great migration began after the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, when 3,000 people a week arrived for several months. A second migration took place between 1965 and 1970, when 368,000 Cubans immigrated to the United States. In 1980, 130,000 Cubans left their homes for this country in what is known as the Mariel Boatlift. Although most Cuban Americans settled in and around Miami, large Cuban communities also grew up in New York City and in New Jersey. Many of these immigrants left Cuba for political, not economic, reasons and had little difficulty reestablishing themselves.

Two other groups of Hispanic Americans are those with roots in Central America and South America. Civil war caused tens of thousands of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans to seek asylum here. Economic changes and chronic poverty led many of South Americans to enter this country. The largest number of these are from Colombia. More than 100,000 Colombians immigrated between 1966 and 1979. Most settled in New York City, Miami, and Los Angeles.

Hispanic Americans Respond

Hispanic Americans Organize

While the numbers of Hispanic Americans increased dramatically during the 1960s

and 1970s, their development as a political force occurred more slowly. Because of the Hispanic Americans' diversity, it was difficult for any one leader to unite all the segments into a single force.

Political Issues

For Hispanic Americans, as for other minorities, a major political issue was representation, which would result from electing to public office people to represent their views. In some border towns such as El Paso, Texas, Hispanic American voters outnumbered other voters two to one, but few Hispanic American candidates were nominated or elected to office. Gerrymandering in other cities, such as Los Angeles, helped to keep Hispanic Americans from massing their votes. Gradually, with changes such as reapportionment, a few Hispanic American candidates were elected. For example, in 1961 voters in San Antonio, Texas, elected Democrat Henry B. Gonzalez to the House of Representatives. In 1964 Texans elected E. "Kika" de la Garza to represent the Lower Rio Grande Valley in the House.

Gradually, Hispanic Americans began to organize politically. La Raza Unida, which translates roughly as "the people united," resulted from an effort to organize a national political party that would unite the sometimes divided Hispanic American elements. Jose Angel Gutierrez, a 25-year-old Texan, formed the party early in 1970 to give Mexican Americans political control over some 20 southern Texas counties in which they made up the majority of the population. In September of that year, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez, an activist and poet from Colorado, formed the Colorado La Raza Unida. Two years later a national convention drew 3,000 Chicanos, the ethnic label adopted by many Mexican Americans.

Another pressing political issue concerned the *bracero* program. In periods of labor shortage such as occurred during World War II, American growers pressed the United States government to allow farm laborers to enter on temporary, restricted permits. Although Mexico disliked the program, fearing that the workers would face ethnic discrimination, it reluctantly consented to accept it. The program was scrapped in 1965 when Mexican Americans complained about the poor working conditions that the workers suffered.

The plight of the undocumented immigrant and the related problem of controlling the United States-Mexico border were other troublesome issues. Poverty in Mexico was the source of much illegal immigration. No one really could be sure how many people had crossed over the 2,000-mile (3,218-km) border without proper documents.

The journey to the United States was a difficult and dangerous one for these undocumented immigrants. They were vulnerable to exploitation by "coyotes," the often unscrupulous guides who charged huge sums of money for transporting the immigrants across the border. Coyotes frequently robbed the immigrants and sometimes abandoned them in the wilderness. Immigrants who reached the United States then faced exploitation by employers. Because they were here illegally, they had no place to turn for protection and often worked under poor conditions for little pay.

Other challenges awaited undocumented immigrants once they reached this country. Communities generally provided education and emergency health care to anyone who needed it, but undocumented immigrants were often denied other social services, such as unemployment insurance and food stamps, even though most of them paid taxes. In addition, families in need often would not apply for aid for fear of being deported—that is, sent back to their native land.

Undocumented immigrants were not the only ones who suffered. Many Hispanic Americans who were in this country legally faced discrimination from employers as the federal government's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) pressured businesses not to hire undocumented immigrants. Many employers, in order to avoid attracting the attention of the INS, simply stopped hiring people of color or those with Hispanic-sounding names, regardless of the workers' legal status.

Economic Issues

Among minorities, economic subjects such as wages and working conditions were not easily distinguished from broader political and social issues. Cesar Chavez believed that they all must be treated as a single issue.

Partly as a result of Chavez's leadership, farmworkers became unionized for the first time. Chavez, a soft-spoken, patient man, has been called a "quiet explosion." Much of his work centered on the grape-growing area around Delano, in California's San Joaquin Valley. There he faced bitter opposition from the growers as well as from the Teamsters Union, which had received permission from the growers to represent the workers even though the workers had not been consulted.

In his union work, Chavez followed the nonviolent philosophy of India's Mohandas K. Gandhi and our own country's Martin Luther King, Jr. Chavez explains:

If someone commits violence against us, it is much better if we can not to react against the violence, but to react in such a way as to get closer to our goal. People don't like to see a nonviolent movement subjected to violence.... That's the key point we have going for us.... By some strange chemistry, every time the opposition commits an unjust act against our hopes and aspirations, we get ten fold paid back in benefits. – Cesar Chavez, *Labor Leaders in America*, 1987

Realizing the limits of his resources in Delano, Chavez hit upon the idea of organizing national and international boycotts of farm products. He first used the boycott tactic when negotiating with the growers of table grapes. He then later called successfully for boycotts of wine grapes and of lettuce.

Social and Cultural Issues

All Hispanic Americans share some social and cultural problems. As people of color, most have been subject to some degree to the pervasive racial and ethnic prejudices in United States society.

Social reforms brought about through the civil rights movement did not immediately benefit Hispanic Americans. Hispanic Americans were regarded as white, and therefore they did not receive many of the legal protections granted other minorities. Not until 1970 did a federal district court rule that Mexican Americans constituted an "identifiable ethnic minority with a pattern of discrimination."

In the 1970s bilingualism, the use of two languages, became a center of stormy controversy. The proponents of bilingualism claimed that educating children in their native tongue as well as in English was the only way to ensure that minority students would receive an education equal to that of English-speaking classmates. Those who objected to bilingualism felt it delayed the successful assimilation, or incorporation, of minorities into the mainstream of society. Some opponents argued that the United States would become a bilingual country.

In 1968 the Bilingual Education Act had provided federal assistance to school districts for developing bilingual education programs. In 1974 the legal issues were decided in favor of bilingual education, when the Supreme Court ruled that schools had to meet the needs of those children who had a limited knowledge of English. Nevertheless, the issues of bilingualism and assimilation remain contentious ones in communities across the nation.

***American Odyssey: The United States in the Twentieth Century*, Gary B. Nash, NY: Glencore, 1997**

[722]

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Similarities and Differences

Regardless of their country of origin, Hispanic Americans shared the Spanish language and culture and a strong loyalty to family and community. The majority were Roman Catholic. They maintained close ties with their extended families, which included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins as well as parents, brothers, and sisters. Economic and social pressures forced many urban Hispanic Americans to live in mostly Hispanic neighborhoods, or barrios.

In other ways Hispanic Americans were and are a diverse group. The successful Cuban American banker in Miami, the Puerto Rican teenager in New York City's South Bronx, and the Mexican American field-worker in California's San Joaquin Valley all faced different political and economic issues.

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Because Puerto Rico is a possession of the United States, Puerto Ricans may enter this country as citizens. After World War II, 1 out of every 6 Puerto Ricans came to this country seeking economic opportunities not available in Puerto Rico. In the 1960s, of the 1 million Puerto Ricans in the United States, 600,000 lived in New York City. Most were unskilled, poorly educated, and stuck in low-paying jobs.

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Two other groups of Hispanic Americans are those with roots in Central America and South America. Civil war caused tens of thousands of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and

Nicaraguans to seek asylum here. Economic changes and chronic poverty led many of South Americans to enter this country. The largest number of these are from Colombia. More than 100,000 Colombians immigrated between 1966 and 1979. Most settled in New York City, Miami, and Los Angeles.

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Another pressing political issue concerned the bracero program. In periods of labor shortage such as occurred during World War II, American growers pressed the United States government to allow farm laborers to enter on temporary, restricted permits. Although Mexico disliked the program, fearing that the workers would face ethnic discrimination, it reluctantly consented to accept it. The program was scrapped in 1965 when Mexican Americans complained about the poor working conditions that the workers suffered.

The plight of the undocumented immigrant and the related problem of controlling the United States-Mexico border were other troublesome issues. Poverty in Mexico was the source of much illegal immigration. No one really could be sure how many people had crossed over the 2,000-mile (3,218-km) border without proper documents.

The journey to the United States was a difficult and dangerous one for these undocumented immigrants. They were vulnerable to exploitation-first by "coyotes," often unscrupulous guides who demanded large sums of money for transporting the immigrants across the border. Coyotes frequently robbed the immigrants, sometimes abandoning them in the wilderness. Immigrants who successfully reached the United States also often faced exploitation-by employers. Because the workers were in the country illegally, they had no place to turn for protection, and they were often forced to work under poor conditions for little pay.

Other challenges awaited undocumented immigrants once they reached this country. Communities generally provided education and emergency health care to anyone who needed it, but undocumented immigrants were often denied other social services, such as unemployment insurance and food stamps, even though most of them paid taxes. In

addition, families in need often would not apply for aid for fear of being deported-that is, sent back to their native land.

Undocumented immigrants were not the only ones who suffered. Many Hispanic Americans who were in this country legally faced discrimination from employers as the federal government's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) pressured businesses not to hire undocumented immigrants. Many employers, in order to avoid attracting the attention of the INS, simply stopped hiring people of color or those with Hispanic-sounding names, regardless of the workers' legal status.

Economic Issues

Among minorities, economic subjects such as wages and working conditions were not easily distinguished from broader political and social issues. Cesar Chavez believed that they all must be treated as a single issue.

Partly as a result of Chavez's leadership, farmworkers became unionized for the first time. Chavez, a soft-spoken, patient man, has been called a "quiet explosion." Much of his work centered on the grape-growing area around Delano, in California's San Joaquin Valley. There he faced bitter opposition from the growers as well as from the Teamsters Union, which had received permission from the growers to represent the workers even though the workers had not been consulted.

In his union work, Chavez followed the nonviolent philosophy of India's Mohandas K. Gandhi and our own country's Martin Luther King, Jr. Chavez explains:

If someone commits violence against us, it is much better-if we can-not to react against the violence, but to react in such a way as to get closer to our goal. People don't like to see a nonviolent movement subjected to violence.... That's the key point we have going for us.... By some strange chemistry, every time the opposition commits an unjust act against our hopes and aspirations, we get ten fold paid back in benefits. -- Cesar Chavez, *Labor Leaders in America*, 1987

Realizing the limits of his resources in Delano, Chavez hit upon the idea of organizing national and international boycotts of farm products. He first used the boycott tactic when negotiating with the growers of table grapes. He then later called successfully for boycotts of wine grapes and of lettuce.

Social and Cultural Issues

All Hispanic Americans share some social and cultural problems. As people of color, most have been subject to some degree to the pervasive racial and ethnic prejudices in United States society.

Social reforms brought about through the civil rights movement did not immediately benefit Hispanic Americans. Hispanic Americans were regarded as white, and therefore they did not receive many of the legal protections granted other minorities. Not until 1970 did a federal district court rule that Mexican Americans constituted an "identifiable ethnic minority with a pattern of discrimination."

In the 1970s bilingualism, the use of two languages, became a center of stormy controversy. The proponents of bilingualism claimed that educating children in their native tongue as well as in English was the only way to ensure that minority students would receive an education equal to that of English-speaking classmates. Those who objected to bilingualism felt it delayed the successful assimilation, or incorporation, of minorities into the mainstream of society. A small group of opponents expressed fears that the United States would become a bilingual country.

In 1968 the Bilingual Education Act had provided federal assistance to school districts for developing bilingual education programs. In 1974 the legal issues were decided in favor of bilingual education, when the Supreme Court ruled that schools had to meet the needs of those children who had a limited knowledge of English. Nevertheless, the issues of bilingualism and assimilation remain contentious ones in communities across the nation.

A History of the United States, Daniel J. Boorstin and Brooks Mather Kelley, NJ: Peason-Prentice Hall, 2005

[864-867]

Spanish-speaking peoples

After women and blacks, the largest group to organize for equal rights in the 1960s and 1970s was the Spanish-speaking people, whom the census bureau called Hispanics. They had come from many places and at many times. Some of their ancestors came to America with the Spanish conquerors in the century after Columbus, and their families had lived here for more than 400 years. Others emigrated to the mainland United States from Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean islands, as well as from Latin American countries.

The Mexican Americans. Nearly two-thirds of all Spanish-speaking people in the United States are Mexican Americans. They are both the newest of the new immigrants and the oldest of the old. The ancestors of many of them settled in the Southwest and California in the 1600s and 1700s (p. 29). Those early settlers were followed by millions of others. By 1990 there were over 13 million Mexican Americans in the United States and thousands more were entering the country every year. By far the largest number of them have continued to settle where their first settlements lay—in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. Their language and their culture give a special rich flavor to the food and shape the music, the architecture, and the literature in the whole region.

Many Mexican Americans are descended from the intermarriage of Spanish and Indian peoples. They proudly trace their heritage back to the great Aztec and Mayan civilizations. They generally call themselves by a variety of names: Mexican or Mexicano, Mexican American, Chicano (a form of Mexicano), Hispano, Latino, mestizo, and sometimes just La Raza (meaning "the people"). Mexican Americans are largely Roman Catholic, with strong family ties, and they cling to the Spanish language.

Although originally a rural people, now, like the whole nation, they are mainly urban. Fully 80 percent have settled together in city neighborhoods, which they call barrios.

From the very beginning the differences of religion, language, skin color, and culture between the Mexican Americans and white Americans (whom they call "Anglos" or "gringos") created conflicts. Each group tended to think its own way of doing things was better. But in most areas Anglos were the majority, in control of government, courts, and schools. Mexican Americans were often discriminated against. Great numbers of them ended up in low-paying jobs where no training was needed.

The rise of a "Brown Power" movement. The Mexican Americans organized to voice their needs. Their first civil rights group, founded in 1929, was the League of United Latin American Citizens. The thousands of veterans who had fought in World War II formed the Mexican G.I. Forum. Then, in the tumultuous 1960s, Mexicans began to speak out more loudly.

During the 1960s there developed a Chicano or "Brown Power" movement. Among its most outspoken leaders was the feisty Reies Lopez Tijerina, or El Tigre. Born in Texas, he led a fight in New Mexico for the return of the lands he said the Anglos had stolen from the first Spanish-speaking settlers. But many of the conservative Mexican Americans, like Senator Joseph Montoya of New Mexico, disapproved of Tijerina's radical program. And instead of "Chicano," which some of the young had begun to use as a symbol of pride, they preferred to be simply Americans.

Another high-spirited leader was Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales of Colorado. He was a former prizefighter and once director of a war-on-poverty youth program. In 1965 his Crusade for Justice in Denver began to build Chicano pride by providing jobs and social services in Chicano communities.

Organizing farm laborers. Many Mexicans and Mexican Americans worked as poorly

paid farm laborers. Some of these braceros (a Spanish word meaning laborers) came north under contracts to work in the fields. Others entered the country illegally by slipping across the long and difficult-to-patrol border between Mexico and the United States. They were disparagingly called "wetbacks" because some of them swam or waded across the Rio Grande.

Farm workers had always been the most difficult laborers to organize into a union. Since they came to work only for a season, and were spread across the countryside, it was hard to bring them together for meetings. But the shrewd and eloquent Caesar Chavez decided to try. He had worked as a farm laborer himself. In 1962 he began to organize the migrant laborers -- brown, white, and black -- into a union. In 1965, when 900 Filipino grape pickers in another union went out on strike, Chavez's union decided to go out, too. The following year, the two unions merged to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

Chavez, like Martin Luther King, Jr., believed in nonviolence. He stuck to his principles through the long, painful years of the strike against the owners of the vineyards in Delano, California. This dedication won him public support from church groups, from other unions, and from political leaders like Robert F. Kennedy.

A brilliant publicist, Chavez organized an effective nationwide boycott of California grapes. When some of his followers resorted to violence, he protested by fasting for 25 days -- and badly injured his health. But nonviolence prevailed. Finally, the opposition of the vineyard owners started to crumble. In 1970, after five years, many of them signed with Chavez's union. He had actually organized farm laborers into a union and won better pay and working conditions for them. Chavez had done what seemed impossible.

Chavez himself stayed out of politics, but other Mexican Americans won high office. Both New Mexico and Arizona have elected Mexican American governors. Other Mexican Americans have been chosen for the Senate and the House, or to be mayors of large cities, like Henry Cisneros of San Antonio, Texas, and Federico Pefia in Denver, Colorado. A Mexican American woman, Romana A. Banuelos, was named by President Nixon to be Treasurer of the United States. President Reagan appointed Lauro F. Cavazos as his Secretary of Education.

President George Bush retained Cavazos and also appointed Manuel Lujan, Jr., Secretary of the Interior, and Antonia C. Novello, Surgeon General. After Bill Clinton was elected President in 1992, he appointed Federico Pefia as his Secretary of Transportation and Henry Cisneros as his Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Puerto Rico and the Puerto Ricans. The Puerto Ricans were different from most other Hispanics because all of them were citizens of the United States before they arrived on the mainland. The special relationship between Puerto Rico and the rest of the United States allowed them to go back and forth to their home island at will.

The island of Puerto Rico had been visited by Columbus in 1493, even before any Spaniards had come to mainland America. When Columbus arrived, the Arawak Indians were already there. During the colonial period the island was settled by Spaniards and by black slaves imported from Africa. The land and the climate were ideal for raising sugar cane. And from the sugar was made the famous Puerto Rican rum. In 1898, after the Spanish-American War, the United States took over the island.

One of FDR's braintrusts, Rexford G. Tugwell, was sent to Puerto Rico as governor in 1941. There he and Luis Munoz Marin, a poetic and inspiring Puerto Rican political leader, produced "Operation Bootstrap." It was a program to improve agriculture and attract industry to the island. In 1948 Munoz Marin became the island's first popularly elected governor. He led the way toward a special "Commonwealth" status for Puerto Rico within the United States. The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was proclaimed on July 25, 1952. The following years showed how the resourcefulness and intelligence of

people might make up for the lack of other natural resources.

Under the ingenious "Commonwealth" plan, Puerto Rico became an independent, self-governing state in voluntary association with the United States. Puerto Rico is represented in Congress by a resident commissioner who can speak but has no vote, except in committees. Puerto Ricans do not pay federal income tax on money earned in Puerto Rico, and they do not vote in national elections. By 1970, with the aid of "Operation Bootstrap," Puerto Rico had the highest per capita income and the best standard of living in Latin America. Still, Puerto Rican incomes were low compared to those in the mainland United States.

After World War II when the population grew rapidly, producing widespread unemployment, thousands of Puerto Ricans moved to the mainland. The emigration slowed in the 1970s, but by the late 1980s more than 2 million Puerto Ricans were living in the continental United States. About one-half lived in New York City, where many worked in the garment trades. The city now held more than twice as many Puerto Ricans as the island capital of San Juan. They were citizens, but in other ways they suffered many of the problems of earlier immigrants. Since they spoke another language, they felt strange and they formed their own neighborhoods where the signs were in Spanish. Strangers, without the advantages of money or education, they, too, joined the American quest for equal opportunity.

Many Puerto Ricans were not satisfied. Some resorted to violence to try to win independence so that Puerto Rico could be a separate nation. Others wanted Puerto Rico to become a state in the Union. Still, in election after election the majority of Puerto Ricans voted to keep the unusual Commonwealth status. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico, with its delightful tropical beaches and its Spanish-American flavor, became a favorite vacation spot for thousands from the mainland. And Puerto Ricans, such as opera singers Martina Arroyo and Justino Diaz, guitarist Jose Feliciano, violinist Jose Figueroa, and actors Jose Ferrer, Rita Moreno, Chita Rivera, Raul Julia, and Hector Elizondo, were enriching the culture of the United States.

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The Cubans who came to the United States in the first years after Castro's takeover were generally well educated, and over two-thirds were trained for white-collar jobs. Hardworking and ambitious, some of them soon rose to head banks and businesses. Large sections of Miami became almost as Cuban as Havana itself.

This first wave of refugees was joined in 1980 by more than 100,000 Cubans who fled when Castro suddenly allowed dissatisfied citizens to leave. These new migrants were called "Marielitos" because they had come to the United States in a massive flotilla of boats that shuttled between the Cuban harbor of Mariel and Key West in Florida. These migrants, too, worked hard, built businesses, and often prospered. Once again the United States was a haven and a land of new opportunity.

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[860-865]

Spanish-speaking peoples

During these years of civil rights movements, other groups organized for equal rights. After women and blacks, the largest such group was the Spanish-speaking people, whom the census bureau called Hispanics. Their population was growing at a rate five times faster than non-Hispanics. Demographers predicted that they would be the largest minority in the United States by the year 2000.

They had come from many places and at many times. Some of their ancestors came to America with the Spanish conquerors in the century after Columbus, and their families had lived here for more than 400 years. Others emigrated to the mainland United States from Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean islands, as well as from Latin American countries.

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Cavazos as his Secretary of Education. President George Bush retained him and also appointed Manuel Lujan, Jr., Secretary of the Interior, and Antonia C. Novello, Surgeon General. Mexican Americans were playing an ever-larger role in state and national politics as the United States entered the 1990s.

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Making America: A History of the United States, 4th Ed., Carol Berkin, Christopher L. Miller, Robert W. Cherny, and James L. Gormly, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006 [924-925]

Individual Choices

CESAR CHAVEZ

Cesar Chavez organized the first successful farm workers' union in America in 1962, the National Farm Workers Association. Choosing to confront opponents by using the nonviolent tactics of the civil rights movement, Chavez sought to give power and dignity to Mexican American workers. Bob Fitch/Black Star.

Cesar Chavez

"Viva la huelga!" With these words, in September 1965, Cesar Chavez began the strike (huelga) against the grape growers in California's Central Valley. Although a new organization, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) mobilized more than 2,700 workers and activists, carrying red banners bearing the black thunderbird, to picket vineyards and encourage other workers not to pick grapes. It was the beginning of a five-year effort to force California agribusiness to pay higher wages, provide better working conditions, and give workers some control over their employment.

Chavez knew what it meant to be a migrant worker, to be trapped at the bottom of the economic and social ladder-without choices. "The work is backbreaking, it is temporary, and it still leaves us almost at the bottom, standing ahead only of even more destitute farm workers in other states." The "whole fight if you're poor, and if you're a minority group," Chavez believed, "is economic power." But the strike was about more than wages-the average farm laborer in 1965 earned ' about \$1,350 a year. It was La Causa Para La Raza (literally, "the cause for the race"). La Causa, initially associated with Chavez's effort to organize farm workers, soon became linked to the broader effort to promote Hispanic and Latino lives.

Chavez also knew what it meant to have little control over one's life. During the Depression he had watched his family evicted from their Arizona farm. His parents had moved to California and become migrant workers, never able to break the cycle of poverty. Cesar Chavez dropped out of school after the eighth grade to work in the fields. Education, instead of being an escape route from poverty, was, Chavez recalled, a "nightmare." He had attended thirty-seven different schools, a succession of classes ruled over by Anglo teachers who had little concern about the unique problems of Spanish-speaking migrant children. "When we spoke Spanish," Chavez remembered, "the teacher swooped down on us. I remember the ruler whistling through the air as its edge came down sharply across my knuckles." In 1962, after serving in the navy and working to mobilize poor Mexican American communities for the Community Service Organization, Chavez decided to form a farm workers' union. With no funds, while his wife, Helen, continued to work in the fields, he drove up and down the San Joaquin Valley in central California, talking to workers in the fields. He asked about their work conditions, aspirations, and thoughts about a union. When asked about strikes, he replied, "Not right -__ away, but eventually." Within six months he had recruited three hundred members and formed the National Farm Workers Association. From the beginning the goal was to create a different type of union, one that spoke to the total needs of the Latino farm worker community. At their opening convention, the union agreed on a red background flag with black eagle on a white circle as a symbol for the union and La Causa.

Created in 1962 with no contracts or credibility with growers, the new union sought to supply other services to its growing membership. It provided a credit union, insurance, and a wide range of other services. "We help to get a guy a driver's license," stated Chavez, and "help... with such problems as translation from Spanish to English, securing welfare and other benefits." As membership increased and the growers ignored

the demands for improved wages, and working conditions did not improve, pressure grew to strike. In 1965, a strike was called, and workers left the fields. Growers brought in other workers to harvest the grapes. Immediately the strike became bitter and violent. Workers and union leaders were jailed and attacked while on the picket lines. Recognizing their lack of power and visibility, Chavez decided to try and enlist a wider audience. "Alone," he explained, "the farm workers have no economic power, but with the help of the public they can develop the economic power to counter that of the growers."

To gain more power and support Chavez organized marches throughout the state, went on hunger strikes-one fast lasting nearly a month-and asked consumers to boycott nonunion-picked grapes. "Our best hope is the boycott," he said. Boycotting was something that anyone could do; it required no walking in marches or on picket lines, and it did not require giving money to the union. Chavez concluded that it was a "most effective weapon." Responding to the union's tactics, one growers' association announced: "We will not sell out the American consumer or our workers to Chavez."

The strike lasted five years, but Chavez's energy and persistence, along with marches and an effective boycott, finally produced results. Indeed, the boycott had been a powerful tool, and by 1970, when the strike ended, an estimated 12 percent of the public had refused to buy nonunion grapes, and many grape growers had gone out of business. In return for a union promise not to strike, growers agreed to higher wages, some health benefits, and improved conditions at work including providing portable toilets and restricting the use of pesticides, including DDT. California and the Environmental Protection Agency began to restrict the use of DDT in agricultural products in 1970. However, a total ban on DDT was not implemented in California until 1973, with a total ban by the federal government coming in 1974.

The success of the grape strike soon faded as the United Farm Workers Union launched a strike against lettuce growers in 1979, fought a rival union (the Teamsters), experienced internal conflicts, and lost public support. Membership in the union dropped from 100,000 members to less than 20,000 by the end of the 1980s. But in 1996, the United Farm Workers finally won their seventeen-year lettuce strike, and under the leadership of Arturo Rodriquez, Chavez's son-in-law, saw their membership and influence begin to return.

Cesar Chavez died in 1993, knowing that the struggle for economic, social, and political equality would not be easy or won overnight. "The work for social change and against social injustice," he said, "is never ended."

[929-931]

The Emergence of La Causa

The roots of La Causa, as the farm workers' movement came to be called, preceded the 1960s. In the 1920s and 1930s, Latino activists had attempted to organize Mexican American workers in the fields and factories. With varying degrees of success, organizations such as the League of Latin American Citizens and the American GI Forum turned to the government and the court system to gain political, economic, and social legitimacy. Still, Hispanics and Latinos remained a largely ignored minority mired near society's lowest levels of income and education (see Table 29.1). Kennedy's candidacy, however, brought hope. Kennedy had initiated the "Viva Kennedy" movement to mobilize the Hispanic, especially the Mexican American, vote. This resulted in new organizations, like the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASO), that worked to increase Hispanic political representation and recognition of Hispanic issues.

Initially expectant, Hispanic leaders soon were disappointed. The Kennedy administration named few Hispanics to government positions and seemed little interested in listening to their voices or promoting their civil rights. Johnson was seen as more of an "amigo." He quickly gained praise for appointing several prominent

Mexican Americans to the administration and for guaranteeing that programs established under the War on Poverty and the Great Society reached into Hispanic communities. The praise became muted by 1966, however, as many Mexican Americans believed they were still being ignored, particularly in the West and Southwest. There, federal agencies appeared to defer to local and state governments that frequently opposed increased Mexican American political power and activism. Despite being the largest minority in the western states (see Map 29.1), they were still, according to one Mexican American leader, the "invisible minority."

Encouraged by Kennedy and Johnson, but unwilling to wait for Anglo politics or the federal government, many Mexican Americans turned to more direct action. For many the beginning of the "revolution" came in 1963 when the Mexican American majority in Crystal City, Texas, toppled the established Anglo political machine and elected an all-Mexican American slate to the city council. Despite claims that they were Communists who wanted to create a "little Cuba" in South Texas, Crystal City was the product of a growing grassroots militancy among Mexican Americans, especially among young adults, who called themselves Chicanos. They stressed pride in their heritage and Latino culture and called for resistance to the dictates of Anglo society.

By the mid-1960s, many Latinos were becoming more visible. In the urban Northeast, the Puerto Rican population had increased to about a million. At the same time, however, especially in New York City, economic opportunities declined as manufacturing jobs, especially in the garment industry, relocated. The Puerto Rican Forum attempted to coordinate federal grants and to find jobs, while the more militant Young Lords organized younger Puerto Ricans in Chicago and New York with an emphasis on their island culture and Hispanic heritage.

In the West, similar actions were taking place. In Colorado, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales formed the Crusade for Justice in 1965 to work for social justice for Mexican Americans, to integrate Colorado's schools, and to foster pride in the Mexican heritage. In New Mexico, Reies Lopez Tijerina demanded that Mexican Americans be allowed to enjoy the rights, including land grants, promised under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (which had ended the Mexican War in 1848) and to that end formed the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (the Federal Alliance of Land Grants). The nationalistic Brown Berets, formed in Los Angeles in 1967, expressed a militant view that rejected assimilation into the Anglo world: "We're not in the melting pot.... Chicanos don't melt."

For most Mexican Americans, however, it was education, jobs, and wages -- not assimilation or land grievances -- that were key issues. They argued that discrimination and segregation still barred their children from a decent education; school districts needed to provide better educational opportunities for Hispanics and to offer programs that would meet special needs of Hispanic students, including bilingual education. Raul Ruiz mobilized Mexican American students in Los Angeles in 1967: "If you are a student you should be angry! You should demand! You should protest! You should organize for a better education! This is your right!" He called for students to walk out of class if schools did not meet their demands. "Walkouts" spread in California and Texas.

In November 1968, Mexican American students walked out of the high school in the small South Texas school district of Edcouch-Elsa. The activists demanded dignity, respect, and an end to "blatant discrimination," including corporal punishment -- paddling -- for speaking Spanish outside Spanish class. The school board blamed "outside agitators" and suspended more than 150 students. But as in other school districts, the protests brought results. The Edcouch-Elsa school district implemented Mexican American studies and bilingual programs, hired more Mexican American teachers and counselors, and created programs to meet the peculiar needs of migrant farm worker children, who moved from one school to another during picking season. In 1968, as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, bilingual education in public schools was approved. It required and provided funds for schools to meet the

"special educational needs" of students with limited English-speaking ability. The act, which expired in 2002, aided education not only for those speaking Spanish but also for those speaking other languages-minorities for whom the dominant language spoken in the home was not English.

Cries for dignity, better working conditions, and a living wage were also heard in the fields, where many of the poorest Mexican Americans worked as laborers. Trapped at the bottom of the occupational ladder, not covered by Social Security or minimum wage and labor laws, unskilled and uneducated farm laborers -- nearly one-third of all Mexican Americans -- toiled long hours for little wages under often deplorable conditions. Drawing from a traditional base of farm worker organizations, especially in Texas and California, in 1962 Cesar Chavez created the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) in the fields of central California. Chavez's union gained national recognition three years later when he called a strike against the grape growers. The union demanded a wage of \$1.40 an hour and asked the public to buy only union-picked grapes. After five years, the strike and the nationwide boycott forced most of the major growers to accept unionization and to improve wages and working conditions. Chavez emerged as a national figure promoting La Causa, not only for farm workers but for all Latinos and other exploited minorities. Eventually, California and other states passed legislation to recognize farm workers' unions and to improve the wages and conditions of work for field workers, but agricultural workers, especially migrants, remain among the lowest-paid workers in the nation.

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Individual Voices

Examining a Primary Source

Striking Grape Workers Proclaim Their Goals

In 1965 Cesar Chavez called a strike of the National Farm Workers Association against the grape growers in Delano, California. When traditional labor protests such as picket lines failed to work, he moved to mobilize public opinion. He fasted, held parades and rallies, and called on consumers to buy only union-picked grapes. This document, which appeared in the NFWA newspaper, *El Malcriado* ("The Unruly One") in May 1969, was printed in Spanish and English to rally those supporting la huelga, the strike, and to explain in revolutionary terms the efforts of the strikers. The strike was settled in 1970.

We the striking grape workers of California join... with consumers across the continent in planning the steps that lie ahead on the road to our liberation....

We have been farm workers for hundreds of years and pioneers for seven. Mexicans, Filipinos, Africans, and others, our ancestors were among those who founded this land and tamed its wilderness. But we are still pilgrims on this land, and we are pioneers who blaze a trail out of the wilderness of hunger and deprivation.... If this road we chart leads to the rights and reforms we demand, if it leads to just wages, humane working conditions, protection from the misuse of pesticides, and to the fundamental right of collective bargaining, if it changes the social order that relegates us to the bottom reaches of society, then in our wake will follow thousands of American farm workers.... Our example will make them free. But if our road does not bring us victory and social change, it will not be because... our resolve is too weak, but only because our bodies are mortal and our journey hard. For we are in the midst of a great social movement, and we will not stop struggling 'til we die, or win!

We have been farm workers for hundreds of years and strikers for four. It was four years ago that we threw down our plowshares and pruning hooks. These Biblical symbols of peace and tranquility to us represent too many lifetimes of unprotesting submission to a degrading social system that allows us no dignity, no comfort, no peace.... So we went and stood tall outside the vineyards where we had stooped for years. But the tailors of national labor legislation left us naked... our picket lines crippled by

injunctions and harassed by growers; our strike was broken by imported scabs; our overtures to our employers were ignored. Yet we knew the day must come when they would talk to us as equals.

We have been farm workers for hundreds of years and boycotters for two. We did not choose the grape boycott, but we had chosen to leave our peonage, poverty, and despair behind. Though our first bid for freedom, the strike, was weakened, we would not turn back. The boycott was the only way forward the growers left to us. We called upon our fellow men and were answered by consumers who said -- as all men of conscience must -- that they would no longer allow their tables to be subsidized by our sweat and our sorrow. They shunned the grapes, fruit of our affliction.

... The grapes grow sweet and heavy on the vines, but they will have to wait while we reach out first for our freedom. The time is ripe for our liberation.

Making America: A History of the United States, 2nd Ed., Carol Berkin, Christopher L. Miller, Robert W. Cherny, and James L. Gormly, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999 [963-967]

The Emergence of Chicano Power

In the 1960s, Mexican Americans also organized to assert their social and political rights. As the 1960s began, despite postwar efforts by organizations like the League of Latin American Citizens and the G.I. Forum (see page 880), Mexican Americans were largely an invisible minority (see Map 31.3). Outside the Southwest, few Americans were aware of or concerned with their place in American society. Prevailing stereotypes portrayed them as docile, if not lazy, and ridiculed them as poorly educated, unskilled people who spoke English badly. Statistically, Mexican Americans were near society's lowest levels of income and education.

The New Frontier and the Great Society revived hopes, and Latino organizations began to pressure American society to recognize the needs of the Latino population. In 1963, the Mexican-American majority in Crystal City, Texas, stunned the region by toppling the established Anglo political machine and electing an all Mexican-American slate to the city council. Many Mexican Americans viewed the Crystal City vote as a revolutionary act, the beginning of the end of political and social segregation. Across south Texas, Mexican Americans banded together to form El Partido Raza Unida (the United People party) to spread the political "revolution" throughout Texas. The passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and Johnson's War on Poverty added more impetus. In Colorado in 1965, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales formed the Crusade for Justice to work for social justice for Mexican Americans, to integrate Colorado's schools, and to foster pride in Mexican heritage. In New Mexico, Reies Lopez Tijerina demanded that Mexican Americans enjoy the rights, including land grants, promised under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (which ended the Mexican-American War in 1848) and formed the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (the Federal Alliance of Land Grants).

Throughout the Southwest, the activism of Mexican Americans frightened supporters of the status quo. Texas governor Dolph Briscoe typified conservative sentiment when he denounced the La Raza Unida movement, saying the "Communist" La Raza Unida aimed to create a "little Cuba" in south Texas.

Briscoe was wrong. The Mexican-American movement was a local one, born of poverty and oppressive segregation. Reflecting the grassroots character of the movement was the important role that youths played. Many Mexican-American teens and young adults adopted the term Chicano to stress their unwillingness to accept the dictates of Anglo society and to distinguish themselves from accommodationist, often middle-class Mexican Americans. Although many Mexican Americans disapproved, the term Chicano was soon applied to Mexican Americans who promoted their heritage and rights. In schools, Chicanos demanded better teachers, support systems, integration, and Mexican-American (Latino) studies programs. During the 1967-1968 academic year, Raul Ruiz mobilized Mexican-American students in Los Angeles: "If you are a student you should be angry! You should demand! You should protest! You should organize for a better education! This is your right!" He called for students to walk out of class and picket schools that did not meet demands. Others fought similar battles.

In the small south Texas towns of Edcouch and Elsa, where the average education level for Mexican Americans was 3.5 years of schooling, Mexican-American students walked out of the high school in November 1968. They demanded dignity, respect, and an end to "blatant discrimination/" including corporal punishment-paddling-for speaking Spanish on school grounds outside of Spanish class. The school board blamed "outside agitators" and suspended more than 150 students. But, like other districts, including Los Angeles, Edcouch and Elsa implemented Mexican-American studies and bilingual programs, hired more Mexican-American teachers and counselors, and

adopted programs to meet the special needs of migrant farm worker children who moved from one school to another during picking season. In New York and Chicago, school districts were implementing changes to reflect demands of Puerto Rican students as well. By the 1970s, calls for bilingual education had become an important educational reform focus for the Latino community.

Schools were not the only targets of increased Latino activism. The Great Society provided opportunities for community-oriented activism within Latino communities. In San Jose, California, moderate Mexican Americans revived a Festival of the Roses to highlight Mexican culture and the community. In New York, the Puerto Rican Forum served as a coordinator for numerous organizations created to combat the socioeconomic problems of the community. As in the African-American civil rights movement, divisions existed: many young Latino leaders adopted a nationalistic and militant position. Los Angeles witnessed the birth of the Brown Berets in 1967, and the Puerto Rican Young Lords mobilized Latino populations in Chicago and New York. Each group rejected assimilation into the Anglo world. "We're not in the melting pot.... Chicanos don't melt," stated one Brown Beret.

As their population grew, Mexican Americans and other Latinos sought more political power and community control. In Los Angeles, where the Latino population climbed from less than 10 percent in 1960 to more than 33 percent by 1990, the combination of better organization, redistricting, and the 1975 Voting Rights Act—which protected and expanded the voting rights of Latinos, Indians, and Asian Americans, and required bilingual ballots -- produced increased political representation at the state and city levels. Both the Democratic and Republican parties reached out to Hispanic leaders, wooing the growing Latino vote. By 1987, Latinos were serving as mayors in sixty-seven cities, and Los Angeles elected its first Mexican American in twenty years to the city council. In 1981, Henry Cisneros was elected mayor of San Antonio and Federico Pena mayor of Denver. Both joined President Bill Clinton's cabinet in 1993.

Latino workers also continued to organize to gain respect and better working conditions. Drawing from a traditional base of worker organizations, Mexican-American workers formed unions to promote their interests. In Texas and throughout the Southwest, Mexican-American women sought to unionize the garment industry, especially along the border with Mexico. In 1972, Mexican-American workers in El Paso struck Farah Incorporated and, after a two-year struggle and boycott, gained recognition for their union. Also attracting attention were attempts by Cesar Chavez and others to unionize agricultural workers.

During the 1960s, nearly one-third of all Mexican Americans worked at stoop labor in the fields -- picking perishable crops -- and were deprived of education and decent housing, wages, and healthcare. Trapped at the bottom of the occupational ladder, not covered by minimum-wage or labor laws, unskilled and uneducated farm laborers were ignored by society and all levels of government. Addressing these problems, Chavez created the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) in 1962. When Chavez called a strike against the grape growers of central California in 1965, NFWA had seventeen hundred members. He demanded a wage of \$1.40 an hour and asked the public to buy only union-picked grapes. The boycott and strike continued for five years until most of the major growers accepted unionization and agreed to improve wages and working conditions. In 1975, California passed a law requiring growers to recognize and bargain with farm worker unions. Chavez emerged as a national figure promoting "La Causa" not only for farm workers but for all Latinos and other minorities. The "whole fight, if you're poor, and if you're a minority group," Chavez argued, "is economic power.

Jessie Lopez de la Cruz was among those inspired by Chavez. Working most of her life as a migrant in the fields, she became the first woman organizer for the NFWA, seeking to improve the economic and social conditions among Latinos-and Latinas (see Individual Choices: Jessie Lopez de la Cruz). Despite many economic and political

success stories, however, the majority of Latinos have not achieved social or economic equality. There have been some economic gains-the number of Latino households making \$50,000 grew 234 percent between 1972 and 1984. But the Mexican-American population as a whole remains one of the poorest minorities in the United States (see Table 31.1). "Often the father works two jobs and the mother one," recounted one researcher, "and they just can't make ends meet." Lack of economic success also impacts on education. Lacking job prospects, Latino children have scant incentive to stay in high school. The Hispanic dropout rate was 45 percent nationwide in 1990, exceeding rates for blacks and whites. Nowhere is this fact more obvious than among agricultural workers.

[965]

Cesar Chavez organized the first successful farm workers union in America in 1961, the United Farm Workers Association. Choosing to confront opponents by using the nonviolent tactics of the Civil Rights movement, Chavez sought to give power and dignity to Mexican-American workers. Bob Fitch/Black Star.

[966-967]

La Causa

Jessie Lopez de la Cruz had always been a farm worker. As a child in the 1920s, she worked alongside her family in the fields of central California, picking prunes off the ground for \$4 a ton. By the time she was in her teens, she was pulling 100-pound bags of picked cotton behind her 95-pound frame, lifting them, and dumping them in a bin for weighing. Married in her teens, she at first accepted the traditional role of wife in a Mexican family-"the women couldn't do anything" without permission, she observed later. But gradually she expanded her role and freedoms, including learning how to drive a car.

Economic necessity required entire families to work in the fields, and for Jessie de la Cruz, as wife and mother, life continued in the fields. "We always went where... the women and the men were going to work because if it were just the men... we wouldn't earn enough to support a family." Infant children did not alter the pattern. "I started taking Ray with me," she recalled, "when he wasn't a year old yet. I'd carry one of those wash tubs and put it under a vine and sit him in it.... I would move the tub... as we worked." Work in the fields, especially with a short-handled hoe, was exhausting, but like most picker wives, she knew that her workday did not end in the fields. Returning home, she was expected to keep the house, cook, and care for the children.

In 1962, Jessie Lopez de la Cruz made a choice that not only changed her life but also helped to change the lives of many others. Cesar Chavez had just started the National Farm Workers Association and was recruiting members. He shocked many men when he argued that women should participate fully in union activities. Jessie agreed. Women worked in the fields as well as men, and in many cases their working conditions were worse than those of men. Sexual harassment was common, and bathrooms were always a problem. Frequently there were none. This forced women to wait as long as ten hours, until they could go home and have privacy. Jessie Lopez de la Cruz and her husband joined the union. Chavez's organization, however, was more than just a union interested in getting better pay and working conditions for farm workers. It was also a movement, "La Causa," that stressed pride and dignity, political and self awareness, and demanded respect and equality for all Latinos, not just men.

"Women can no longer be taken for granted -- that we're just not going to stay home and do the cooking and cleaning," Jessie Lopez de la Cruz told other women farm workers. "It's way past the time when our husbands could say 'You stay home!... You have to do as I say'." She convinced other women to attend union meetings and express their concerns. Quickly, she rose from the rank and file to become the first woman organizer in the fields. In her activities, she merged union messages with feminist language-providing one of the bases of the Chicana movement. She urged others to

break old patterns: "You know we're not back in the 20s. We can stand up! We can talk back...we want a share of the money... [made] of our sweat and our work."

Like all organizers, she faced opposition from the growers, who frequently attacked union organizers and those picketing the fields during strikes. During a strike in Kern County, growers sprayed picketers with pesticides. She also faced opposition from male farm workers. Men, she stated, "gave us the most trouble.... They were for the union, but they were not taking orders from women." Still, she and others continued their efforts. Eventually, some growers agreed to sign contracts, and some men agreed to be led by women.

Jessie Lopez de la Cruz's union activities and support for La Causa made her aware of larger issues that affected families and women. She worked for the inclusion of Latina women on school and community service boards. She pressured school boards to consider the needs of Latino children, especially those of migrant farm workers. She fought for bilingual education and social services for poor families, including access to food stamps for farm workers. Because of her emergence as a spokesperson for women and the poor, Jessie Lopez de la Cruz was selected to be a member of the California Commission on Women.

But despite some successful outcomes, the expectations of Latina women -- living within a traditional machismo culture and being poor -- remain largely unchanged. Chicano historian Rodolfo Acuna argues that although the "Chicana" represents half of the Chicano population, she remains part of a nearly "invisible" minority.

Nation of Nations: A Narrative History of the American Republic, 5th Ed., James West Davidson, William E. Gienapp, Christine Leigh Heyrman, Mark H. Lytle, and Michael B. Stoff, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2005

[1021]

Unlike his rival Eugene McCarthy, Robert Kennedy (left) felt comfortable reaching out to minorities and blue-collar workers. In March 1968, Kennedy traveled to California to join Mexican American labor activist Cezar Chavez (right), who was leading a hunger strike in support of a farm workers' union (see page 1031).

[1030-1032]

The New Identity Politics

During the 1968 campaign Richard Nixon had noticed a placard carried by a hopeful voter-"Bring Us Together." That phrase became his campaign theme. Yet in the divisive atmosphere of the 1960s, unity was an elusive goal. George Wallace had attracted a large bloc of voters fed up with protest and social unrest. If Nixon could add those discontented southerners and blue-collar workers to his traditional base of Republicans, his enlarged silent majority could easily return him to the White House in 1972.

Nixon's effort to create among his followers the sense that they held the moral high ground played off a growing unease over the divided nature of American society. To the silent majority, it seemed as if the consensus of the 1950s was increasingly being ripped apart. In their campaign for civil rights, African Americans very often insisted that because they had not been treated equally, they therefore necessarily belonged to a separate, oppressed group. In the 1960s activists took pride in proclaiming black power or even, like the Nation of Islam, embracing a doctrine of separation. Latinos, American Indians, Asian Americans, feminists, and gay Americans all applied much of the same critique to their own situations. Out of this increased pride in each group's distinctive values and characteristics came a new political and social assertiveness. Whereas before, Latino civil rights groups such as LULAC and World War II veterans in the American GI Forum had sought assimilation into American society, now minorities began to forge identities in opposition to the prevailing culture.

Latino Activism

Part of the increased visibility of minorities resulted from a new wave of immigration from Mexico and Puerto Rico after World War II. That wave was augmented by Cubans, after the 1959 revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power. Historical, cultural, ethnic, and geographic differences made it difficult to develop a common political agenda among Latinos. Still, some activists did seek greater unity.

After World War II a weak island economy and the lure of prosperity on the mainland brought more than a million Puerto Ricans into New York City. As citizens of the United States, they could move freely to the mainland and back home again. That dual consciousness discouraged many from establishing deep roots stateside. Equally important, the newcomers were startled to discover that, whatever their status at home, on the mainland they were subject to racial discrimination and most often segregated into urban slums. In 1964 approximately half of all recent immigrants lived below the poverty level, according to the Puerto Rican Forum. Their unemployment was three times greater than for whites and 50 percent higher than for blacks. Light-skinned migrants escaped those conditions by blending into the middle class as "Latin Americans." The Puerto Rican community thereby lost some of the leadership it needed to assert its political rights.

Still, a shared island orientation preserved a strong group identity. By the 1960s the urban barrios had gained greater political consciousness, as groups such as Aspira adopted the strategies of civil rights activists and as organizations like the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus linked with other minority groups. The Cubans who arrived in the United States after 1959 -- some 350,000 over the course of the decade -- forged fewer

ties with other Latinos. Most settled around Miami. An unusually large number came from Cuba's professional, business, and government class and were racially white and politically conservative.

Mexican Americans, on the other hand, constituted the largest segment of Latinos. Until the 1940s most were farmers and farm laborers in Texas, New Mexico, and California. But during the 1950s, the process of mechanization had affected them just as it had southern blacks. By 1969 about 85 percent of Mexican Americans had settled in cities. With urbanization came a slow improvement of the range and quality of jobs they held. A body of skilled workers, middle-class professionals, and entrepreneurs emerged.

Yet Mexican agricultural workers continued to face abysmally low wages and harsh working conditions. Previous attempts to unionize them had failed partly because workers migrated from job to job and strikebreakers were easily imported. In 1963 a soft-spoken but determined farmworker, Cesar Chavez, recruited fellow organizers Gil Padilla and Dolores Huerta to make another attempt. Their efforts over the next several years led to the formation of the United Farm Workers (UFW) labor union.

Chavez, like Martin Luther King, proclaimed an ethic of nonviolence. Also like King, he was guided by a deep religious faith (Roman Catholicism in the case of Chavez and most Mexican American farmworkers). When the union's meager financial resources made it difficult to sustain a strike of Mexican and Filipino grape workers that began in the summer of 1966, Chavez rallied supporters for a 250-mile march on Sacramento. "Dr. King had been very successful" with such marches, he noted. Seeking additional leverage, the union looked to use consumers as an economic weapon by organizing a boycott of grapes in supermarkets across the nation. Combined with a 24-day hunger strike by Chavez—a technique borrowed from Gandhi—the boycott forced growers to negotiate contracts with the UFW beginning in 1970.

Chavez's movement was rooted in the traditional issues of labor organizing. But just as Martin Luther King found his nonviolent approach challenged by more radical activists, a new generation of Mexican Americans forged a more aggressive brand of identity politics. Many began calling themselves Chicanos. Like blacks, Chicanos saw themselves as a people whose culture had been taken from them. Their heritage had been rejected, their labor exploited, and their opportunity for advancement denied. Of Chavez's generation, Reies Lopez Tijerina attracted wide attention as a charismatic leader. His movement in northern New Mexico ("La Alianza") organized armed bands to occupy federal lands that Hispanics in the region had once used for grazing livestock. In Denver, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales laid out a blueprint for a separatist Chicano society, with public housing set aside for Chicanos and the development of economically independent barrios in which a new cultural pride could flourish. "We are a Bronze People with a Bronze Culture," declared Gonzales. "We are a Nation. We are a union of free pueblos. We are Aztlan."

Recruits to the new activism came from both college and high school students. Like other members of the baby boom generation, Mexican Americans attended college in increasing numbers. In addition, Lyndon Johnson's Educational Opportunity Programs (EOF), part of his war on poverty, brought thousands more Latinos onto college campuses, especially in California. By 1968 some 50 Mexican American student organizations on college campuses counted at least 2000 to 3000 members among their ranks. In Los Angeles that year thousands of Chicano high school students walked out to protest substandard educational conditions. Two years later the new ethnic militancy led to the formation of La Raza Unida (The Race United). This third-party movement sought to gain power in communities in which Chicanos were a majority and to extract concessions from the Democrats and Republicans. The more militant "Brown Berets" adopted the paramilitary tactics and radical rhetoric of the Black Panthers.

Nation of Nations: A Narrative History of the American Republic, 3rd Ed., James West Davidson, William E. Gienapp, Christine Leigh Heyrman, Mark H. Lytle, and Michael B. Stoff, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1998

[1121-1123]

"SILENT" MAJORITIES AND VOCAL MINORITIES

During the 1968 campaign Richard Nixon had noticed a placard carried by a hopeful voter-"Bring Us Together." That became his campaign theme. Yet of necessity political coalitions cannot bring everyone together. Their goal is simply to assemble a majority on Election Day. Nixon recognized that in the three-way race of 1968, his 43 percent did not add up to a majority. But when Wallaces vote was added, the total came to an impressive 60 percent. If Nixon could add discontented southerners and blue-collar workers to the traditional GOP base, he could win in 1972.

These groups resented much that the civil rights movement had done to overcome racial inequalities. To add to that resentment, the civil rights movement inspired other minorities to demand greater equality for themselves. Just as the civil rights campaign gave way to black power militancy, so, too, other minority activists adopted increasingly disruptive tactics to press their causes. Their new visibility was crucial to Nixon's attempt to form his own countermajority.

Latino Activism

Part of the increased visibility of minorities resulted from a new wave of immigration from Mexico and Puerto Rico after World War II. That wave was augmented by Cubans after the 1959 revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power. Historical, cultural, ethnic, and geographic differences made it difficult to develop a common political agenda among Latinos. Still, some activists did seek greater unity.

After World War II a weak island economy and the lure of prosperity on the mainland brought more than a million Puerto Ricans into New York City. As citizens of the United States, they could move freely to the mainland and back home again. That dual consciousness discouraged many from establishing deep roots stateside. Equally important, the newcomers were startled to discover that, whatever their status at home, on the mainland they were subject to racial discrimination and most often segregated into urban slums. In 1964 approximately half of all recent immigrants lived below the poverty level, according to the Puerto Rican Forum. Their unemployment was three times greater than for whites and 50 percent higher than for blacks. Light-skinned migrants escaped those conditions by blending into the middle class as "Latin Americans." The Puerto Rican community thereby lost some of the leadership it needed to assert its political rights.

Still, a shared island orientation preserved a strong group identity. By the 1960s, the urban barrios gained greater political consciousness as groups like "Aspira" adopted the strategies of civil rights activists and organizations like the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus created links with other minority groups. The Cubans who arrived in the United States after 1959 -- some 350,000 over the course of the decade -- forged fewer ties with other Latinos. Most settled around Miami. An unusually large number came from Cuba's professional, business, and government class and were racially white and politically conservative.

Mexican Americans, on the other hand, constituted the largest segment of Latinos. Until the 1940s most were farmers and farm laborers in Texas, New Mexico, and California. But during the 1950s, the process of mechanization had affected them, just as it had southern blacks. By 1969 about 85 percent of Mexican Americans had settled in cities. With urbanization came a slow improvement of the range and quality of jobs they held. A body of skilled workers, middle-class professionals, and entrepreneurs emerged.

In 1960, frustrated by years of neglect by major parties, Latino political leaders from

the region formed the Mexican American Political Association. MAPA declared its intent to be "proudly Mexican American, openly political, and necessarily bipartisan." By 1964 four Mexican Americans had been elected to Congress, but the growing activism across the nation altered traditional Hispanic approaches to politics. Younger Mexican Americans began to call themselves Chicanos. In 1965 Cesar Chavez gained national attention by his efforts to organize migrant laborers into the United Farm Workers. He led them in La Huelga -- The Strike -- which they supported with a national boycott of California lettuce and grapes.

By the late 1960s Mexican Americans had clearly established an ethnic consciousness and a movement. Like blacks, Chicanos saw themselves as a people whose culture had been taken from them. Their heritage had been rejected, their labor exploited, and their opportunity for advancement denied. The new ethnic militancy led to the formation of La Raza Unida (The Race United). This third-party movement sought to gain power in communities in which Chicanos were a majority and to extract concessions from the Democrats and Republicans. The more militant "Brown Berets" adopted the paramilitary tactics and radical rhetoric of the Black Panthers.

The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society, Brief 5th Ed., Gary B. Nash and Julie Roy Jeffrey, NY: Pearson-Longman, 2006

[873-876]

Latino Mobilization

Latinos, like women, profited from the example of blacks in their struggle for equality that came of age in the 1970s. Long denied equal access to the American dream, they became more vocal and confrontational as their numbers increased dramatically in the postwar years. In 1970, some 9 million residents of the United States declared they were of Spanish origin; in 1980, the figure was 14.6 million. But median household income remained less than three-fourths that of Anglos, and inferior education and political weakness reinforced social and cultural separation. Latinos comprised Puerto Ricans in the Northeast, Cubans in Florida, and Chicanos-Mexican Americans in the West and Southwest. Though "Hispanic" still remained an acceptable term, "Latino" was now more commonly used. Chicanos took the lead in the protest struggle, though all groups developed a heightened sense of solidarity as they began to assert their own rights.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Mexican Americans became more active politically, winning several seats in Congress. More important than political representation was direct action, which triumphed in the 1970s. Cesar Chavez, founder of the United Farm Workers, showed the way by organizing the migrant farm workers of the West, among the most exploited and ignored groups of laboring people in the country. Chavez concentrated on migrant Mexican field hands, who worked long hours for meager pay. By 1965, his organization had recruited 1,700 people and attracted volunteer help.

Latina women played an important part in the organizing effort. Dolores Huerta, a third-generation Mexican American, who became vice president of the United Farm Workers, observed how entire families were involved:

Excluding women, protecting them, keeping women at home, that's the middle-class way. Poor people's movements have always had whole families on the line, ready to move at a moment's notice, with more courage because that's all we had. It's a class not an ethnic thing.

Chavez first took on the grape growers of California. Calling the grape workers out on strike, the union demanded better pay and working conditions as well as recognition of the union. When the growers resisted, Chavez launched a nationwide consumer boycott of their products that was ultimately successful. Similar boycotts of lettuce and other products harvested by exploited labor also ended in success. In 1975, Chavez's long struggle for farmworkers won passage in California of a measure that required growers to bargain collectively with the elected representatives of the workers. Farmworkers now had achieved the legal basis for representation that could help bring higher wages and improved working conditions. And Chavez had become a national figure.

Meanwhile, Mexican Americans pressed for reform in other areas. In the West and Southwest, Mexican-American studies programs flourished. Colleges and universities offered degrees, gave Chicanos access to their own past, and provided a network linking students together and mobilizing them for political action.

Beginning in 1968, Mexican-American students began to protest conditions in secondary schools. They pointed to overcrowded and run-down institutions and to the 50 percent dropout rate that came from expulsion, transfer, or failure because students had never been taught to read. School walkouts took place in Colorado, Texas, and California and led to successful demands for Latino teachers, counselors, and courses as well as better facilities.

Other Latinos followed a more political path. In Texas, Jose Angel Gutierrez formed a citizens' organization that developed into the La Raza Unida political party and

successfully promoted Mexican-American candidates for political offices. Throughout the 1970s, it gained strength in the West and Southwest.

Among the new Chicano leaders was the charismatic Reies Lopez Tijerina, or "El Tigre." A preacher, he argued that the U.S. government had fraudulently deprived Chicanos of village lands. He formed an organization, La Alianza Federal de Mercedes (the Federal Alliance of Land Grants), which marched on the New Mexico state capital and occupied a number of national forests. Arrested, he stood trial and eventually served time in prison, where he became a symbol of political repression.

Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales was another such leader. He founded the Crusade for Justice to advance the Chicano cause through community organization. Like Tijerina, he was arrested for his part in a demonstration but was subsequently acquitted.

Latinos made a particular point of protesting the Vietnam War. Because the draft drew most heavily from the poorer segments of society, the Latino casualty rate was far higher than that of the population at large. In 1969, the National Chicano Moratorium Committee demonstrated against what it argued was a racial war, with black and brown Americans being used against their Third World compatriots.

Aware of the growing numbers and growing demands of Latinos, the Nixon administration sought to defuse their anger and win their support. Cuban-American refugees, strongly opposed to communism, shifted toward the Republican party, which they assumed was more likely eventually to intervene against Fidel Castro. Meanwhile, Nixon courted Chicanos by dangling political positions, government jobs, and promises of better programs for Mexican Americans. The effort paid off as Nixon received 31 percent of the Latino vote in 1972.

Despite occasional gains in the 1970s, Latinos from all groups faced continuing problems. Discrimination persisted in housing, education, and employment. Activists had laid the groundwork for a campaign for equal rights, but the struggle had just begun.

[896-897]

The Limited Commitment to Latino Rights

Latinos likewise faced continuing concerns in the 1980s and early 1990s as the commitment to reform eroded. The Latino population increased substantially as a result of immigration reform during the Great Society of the 1960s (see Chapter 28). In the 1980s, 47 percent of all legal American immigration came from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Many other immigrants arrived illegally. As the populations of Latin American nations soared and as economic conditions deteriorated, more and more people looked to the United States for relief. Many of the new arrivals were skilled workers or professionals, who still had to retool after arriving in the United States. But even more prevalent were laborers, service sector workers, and semiskilled employees, who needed the benefit of social services and counseling just as such assistance was being cut back. Spanish-speaking students often found it difficult to finish school. In 1987, 40 percent of all Latino high school students did not graduate, and only 31 percent of Latino seniors were enrolled in college-preparatory courses.

Like other groups, Latinos slowly extended their political gains. In the 1980s, Henry Cisneros became mayor of San Antonio and Federico Pena was elected mayor of Denver. In New Mexico, Governor Toney Anaya called himself the nation's highest elected Hispanic. The number of Latinos holding elective offices nationwide increased 3.5 percent between 1986 and 1987, and the number of Latina women in such offices increased 20 percent in that time. The number of Latino public officials nationwide increased 73 percent between 1985 and 1994, and Lauro Cavazos became the first Latino Cabinet official when he was appointed secretary of education in 1988.

Latino workers, however, continued to have a hard time in the employment market. Even as the nation's overall unemployment rate dropped, the rate for the 12 million

Latino workers barely budged and worsened in relation to the rate for African Americans.

The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society, 4th Ed., Gary B. Nash and Julie Roy Jeffrey, NY: Pearson-Longman, 1998

[1046-1050]

Latino Mobilization

Latinos, like women, profited from the example of blacks in the struggle for equality. Long denied equal access to the American dream, they became more vocal and confrontational as their numbers increased dramatically in the postwar years. In 1970, some 9 million residents of the United States declared they were of Spanish origin; in 1980, the figure was 14.6 million. But median household income remained less than three-fourths that of Anglos and inferior education and political weakness reinforced social and cultural separation. Latinos comprised Puerto Ricans in the Northeast, Cubans in Florida, Chicanos in California, and Tejanos in Texas. Chicanos took the lead in the protest struggle, though all groups developed a heightened sense of solidarity and group pride as they began to assert their own rights.

Early Efforts for Equality

The roots of the Latino struggle dated back to the World War II years. Chicanos established the American GI Forum because a Texas funeral home refused to bury a Mexican American casualty of World War II. When the group's protest led to a burial in Arlington National Cemetery, the possibilities of concerted action became clear. In the waning months of the war, a court case challenged Mexican American segregation in the schools. Gonzalo Mendez, an asparagus grower and a U.S. citizen who had lived in Orange County, California, for 25 years, filed suit to permit his children to attend the school reserved for Anglo Americans, which was far more attractive than the Mexican one to which they had been assigned. A federal district court upheld his claim in the spring of 1945, and two years later, the circuit court affirmed the original ruling. With the favorable decision, other communities filed similar suits and began to press for integration of their schools. Meanwhile, Mexican Americans returning from wartime service, where they had often been racially invisible, chafed under continuing discrimination at home.

A number of new organizations assisted in the struggle for equal rights. The Community Service Organization mobilized Chicanos against discrimination, as did the more radical Asociacion Nacional Mexico-Americana. And the League of United Latin American Citizens continued efforts to promote educational programs and other reforms.

Advances, however, came slowly. In the late 1940s, many Chicanos sought official classification as Caucasian, hoping that the change would lead to better treatment. But even when the designation changed, their status did not. They still faced discrimination and police brutality, particularly in the cities with the largest Chicano populations.

Los Angeles, with its large number of Chicanos, was the scene of numerous unsavory racial episodes. In mid-1951, on receiving a complaint about a loud record player, police officers raided a baptismal gathering at the home of Simon Fuentes. Breaking into the house without a warrant, they assaulted the members of the party. In the "Bloody Christmas" case at the end of the year, officers removed seven Mexican Americans from jail cells and beat them severely.

Protests continued, yet in the 1950s, Chicano activism was fragmented. Some Mexican Americans considered their situation hopeless. While new and aggressive challenges appeared, fully effective mobilization had to wait for another day.

Cesar Chavez and the Politics of Confrontation

In the 1960s and 1970s, Mexican Americans became more active politically. In the election of 1960, Chicanos supported Kennedy, helping him win Texas, and began to see the benefits of such support. In 1961, Henry B. Gonzalez was elected to Congress from San Antonio. Three years later, Elizo ("Kika") de la Garza of Texas won election to the

House and Joseph Montoya of New Mexico went to the Senate. Chicanos were gaining a political voice.

More important than political representation, which came only slowly, was direct action. Cesar Chavez, founder of the United Farm Workers, proved what could be done by organizing one of the most exploited and ignored groups of laboring people in the country, the migrant farm workers of the West. Chavez, who came from a family whose members were "the first ones to leave the fields if anyone shouted 'Huelga!' which is Spanish for 'Strike!'" concentrated on migrant Mexican field hands, who worked long hours for meager pay. By 1965, his organization had recruited 1,700 people and was beginning to attract volunteer help.

Chavez first took on the grape growers of California. Calling the grape workers out on strike, the union demanded better pay and working conditions as well as recognition of the union. When the growers did not concede, Chavez launched a nationwide consumer boycott of their products. Although the Schenley Corporation and several wine companies came to terms, others held out. In 1966, the DiGiorgio Corporation agreed to permit a union election but then rigged the results. When California governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr., launched an investigation that resulted in another election, he became the first major political figure to support the long-powerless Chicano field hands. This time, the United Farm Workers won. Similar boycotts of lettuce and other products harvested by exploited labor also ended in success.

In 1975, Cesar Chavez's long struggle for farmworkers won passage in California of a measure that required growers to bargain collectively with the elected representatives of the workers. Farmworkers had never been covered by the National Labor Relations Board. Now they had achieved the legal basis for representation that could help bring higher wages and improved working conditions. And Chavez had become a national figure.

Meanwhile, Mexican Americans pressed for reform in other areas as well. In the West and Southwest, Mexican American studies programs flourished. In 1969, at least 50 were available in California alone. They offered degrees, built library collections, and gave Chicanos access to their own past. The campuses also provided a network linking students together and mobilizing them for political action.

Beginning in 1968, Mexican American students began to protest conditions in secondary schools. They pointed to overcrowded and rundown institutions and to the 50 percent dropout rate that came from expulsion, transfer, or failure because students had never been taught to read. In March 1968, some 10,000 Chicano students walked out of five high schools in Los Angeles. Their actions inspired other walkouts in Colorado, Texas, and other parts of California and led to successful demands for Hispanic teachers, counselors, and courses and better facilities.

At the same time, new organizations emerged. Young Citizens for Community Action, founded by teenager David Sanchez and four Chicanos in East Los Angeles, began as a service club to assist the neighborhood. Later the organization adopted a paramilitary stance and evolved into a defensive patrol, now known as Young Chicanos for Community Action, which tried to protect local residents. Its members became identified as the Brown Berets and formed chapters throughout the Midwest and Southwest.

Other Hispanics followed a more political path. In Texas, Jose Angel Gutierrez formed a citizens' organization which developed into the La Raza Unida political party and successfully promoted Mexican American candidates for political offices. Throughout the 1970s, it gained strength in the West and Southwest.

Among the new Chicano leaders was the charismatic Reis Lopez Tijerina, or "El Tigre." A preacher, he became interested in land-grant issues and argued that the United States government had fraudulently deprived Chicanos of village lands. He formed an organization, La Alianza Federal de Mercedes (the Federal Alliance of Land

Grants), which marched on the New Mexico state capital and occupied a number of national forests. Arrested, he stood trial and eventually served time in prison, where he became a symbol of political repression.

Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales was another such leader. A Golden Gloves boxing champion as a youth, he later served as a district captain for the Democratic party in Denver. He helped direct Denver poverty programs until he was fired for being overly zealous in his support of the Chicano community. Eloquently he described the despair many Chicanos felt:

I am Joaquin,
lost in a world of confusion,
caught up in the whirl of a gringo society,
confused by the rules,
scorned by attitudes,
suppressed by manipulation
and destroyed by modern society.

In 1966, Gonzales founded the Crusade for Justice to advance the Chicano cause through community organization. Like Tijerina, he was arrested for his part in a demonstration but was subsequently acquitted.

Latinos made a particular point of protesting against the Vietnam War. Because the draft drew most heavily from the poorer segments of society, the Hispanic casualty rate was far higher than that of the population at large. In 1969, the Brown Berets organized the National Chicano Moratorium Committee and staged antiwar demonstrations. They argued that this was a racial war, with black and brown Americans being used against their Third World compatriots. Some of the rallies ended in confrontations with the police. News reporter Rubén Salazar, active in exposing questionable police activity, was killed in one such episode in 1970, and his death brought renewed charges of police brutality.

Aware of the growing numbers and growing demands of Latinos, the Nixon administration sought to defuse their anger and win their support. Cuban American refugees, strongly opposed to communism, shifted toward the Republican party, which they assumed was more likely eventually to intervene against Fidel Castro. Meanwhile, Nixon courted Chicanos by dangling political positions, government jobs, and promises of better programs for Mexican Americans. The effort paid off: Nixon received 31 percent of the Hispanic vote in 1972. Rather than reward his Hispanic followers, however, the president moved to cut back the poverty program, begun under Johnson, that assisted many of them.

Despite occasional gains, Hispanics from all groups faced continuing problems. Discrimination persisted in housing, education and employment. Activists had laid the groundwork for a campaign for equal rights, but the struggle had just begun.

[1083-1084]

The Limited Commitment to Latino Rights

Latinos from all groups likewise faced continuing problems in the 1980s and 1990s as the commitment to reform eroded. Spanish-speaking students often found it difficult to move through the educational system. In 1987, fully 40 percent of all Latino high school students did not graduate. Only 31 percent of the Latino seniors were enrolled in college-preparatory courses. Latino students frequently received little help from guidance counselors. Anel Albarran, a Mexican immigrant who arrived in East Los Angeles when she was 11, applied to UCLA when a special high school teacher encouraged her and made sure that she received help in choosing the necessary courses. By contrast, her regular counselor asked her two months before graduation whether she had considered college: "All he had wanted to do during high school was give me my classes and get me out of the room."

College itself was another problem. Of those Latinos who went to college, 56 percent

attended community colleges. Graduation often proved difficult; fewer than 7 percent completed a course of study. When forced to take courses that had little connection to their background and less relevance to their lives, many students became frustrated and dropped out.

Like other groups, Latinos slowly extended their political gains. Henry Cisneros became mayor of San Antonio and Colorado state legislator Federico Pena was elected mayor of Denver. In New Mexico, Governor Toney Anaya called himself the nation's highest elected Hispanic. The number of Latinos holding elective offices nationwide increased 3.5 percent between 1986 and 1987, and the number of Latina women in such offices increased 20 percent in that time. Lauro Cavazos became U.S. Secretary of Education in 1988, while Henry Cisneros became Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and Federico Pena Secretary of Transportation in 1993.

Latino workers, however, continued to have a hard time in the employment market. As the nation's overall unemployment rate dropped in the mid-1990s, the rate for the 12 million Latino workers barely budged and worsened in relation to the rate for African Americans. Many found themselves suffering from outmoded skills and weaker educational backgrounds. They also experienced greater scrutiny than in the past. "They ask you for your Social Security card, your alien card," according to Efrain Castillo, a 43-year-old truck driver who had come to the United States from Mexico in the early 1970s. Discrimination seemed increasingly prevalent.

A People and a Nation: A History of the United States, 7th Ed., Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, David W. Blight, Howard P. Chudacoff, Fredrik Logevall, Beth Bailey, Thomas G. Paterson, and William M. Tuttle, Jr., MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005 [862-863]

MEXICAN AMERICAN ACTIVISM

In 1970, the nation's 9 million Mexican Americans (4.3 percent of America's total population) were heavily concentrated in the Southwest and California. Though these Americans were officially classified as white by the federal government -- all Hispanics were counted as white in the federal census -- discrimination against Mexican Americans in hiring, pay, housing, schools, and the courts was commonplace. In cities, poor Mexican Americans lived in rundown barrios. In rural areas, poverty was widespread. Almost half of Mexican Americans were functionally illiterate, and even among the young, high school drop-out rates were astronomical. By the 1970s, though growing numbers of Mexican Americans were middle class, almost one-quarter of Mexican American families remained below the poverty level. Especially dire was the plight of migrant farm workers.

The national Mexican American movement for social justice began with these migrant workers. From 1965 through 1970, labor organizers Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta led migrant workers, the majority of whom were of Mexican ancestry, in a strike (huelga) against large grape growers in California's San Joaquin valley. Chavez and the AFL-CIO-affiliated United Farm Workers (UFW) drew national attention to the working conditions of migrant laborers, who were paid as little as 10 cents an hour (the minimum wage in 1965 was \$1.25) and often housed by their employers in squalid conditions without running water or indoor toilets. A national consumer boycott of table grapes brought the growers to the bargaining table, and in 1970 the UFW won their fight for better wages and working conditions. The UFW's roots in the Mexican and Mexican American communities were critical to its success. The union resembled nineteenth-century Mexican mutualistas, or cooperative associations, as much as it did a traditional American labor union. Its members founded cooperative groceries, a Spanish-language newspaper, and a theater group; they called upon the Virgen de Guadalupe for assistance in their struggle.

CHICANO MOVEMENT

During the same period, more radical struggles were also beginning. In northern New Mexico, Reies Tijerina created the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Grants) to fight for the return of land the organization claimed belonged to local hispano villagers, whose ancestors had occupied the territory before it was claimed by the United States, under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In Denver, former boxer Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales drew Mexican American youth to his "Crusade for Justice"; more than one thousand young people gathered there for the National Chicano Liberation Youth Conference in 1969. They adopted a manifesto, *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan*, which condemned the "brutal 'Gringo' invasion of our territories" and declared "the Independence of our... Nation."

These young activists called for the liberation of "La Raza" (from "La Raza de Bronze," the brown people) from the oppressive force of American society and culture, not for equal rights through integration. They also rejected a hyphenated "Mexican-American" identity. The "Mexican American," they explained in *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan*, "lacks respect for his culture and ethnic heritage... [and] seeks assimilation as a way out of his 'degraded' social status." These young people called themselves "Chicanos" or "Chicanas" -- a term drawn from barrio slang and associated with pachucos (see page 750), the hip, rebellious, and sometimes criminal young men who symbolized much of what "respectable" Mexican Americans despised.

Many middle-class Mexican Americans and members of the older generations never

embraced the term ;"Chicano" or the separatist, cultural nationalist agenda of el movimiento. Throughout the 1970s, however, younger activists continued to seek "Brown Power" based on a separate and distinct Chicano/a culture. They succeeded in introducing Chicano studies into local high school and college curricula and in creating a strong and unifying sense of cultural identity for Mexican American youth. Some activists made clear political gains, as well, founding La Raza Unida (RUP), a Southwest-based political party that registered tens of thousands of voters and won several local elections. The Chicano movement was never as influential nationally as the African American civil rights movement or the Black Power movement. However, it did effectively challenge discrimination on the local level and created a basis for political action as the Mexican American (and broader Latino) population of the United States grew dramatically over the following decades.

A People and a Nation: A History of the United States, Brief 4th Ed., Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, Paul D. Escott, Howard P. Chudacoff, Thomas G. Paterson, William M. Tuttle, Jr., and William J. Brophy, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996

[652-653]

PEOPLE OF COLOR AND NEW IMMIGRANTS

Many people of color saw their economic fortunes decline during the 1970s and 1980s. Joblessness plagued blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics, as well as new immigrants. As a result of the sluggish economy, poverty was still a national problem in 1989, and African-Americans made up a disproportionate share of the poor. The overall poverty rate was 13 percent by 1980, but the rate among blacks was 33 percent and among Hispanics 26 percent, compared with 10 percent for whites. These figures had barely changed by the end of Reagan's presidency in 1989.

The weight of poverty fell most heavily on African-American children, almost half of whom lived below the poverty line in the 1980s. A 1981 Children's Defense Fund survey reported that black children in the United States were four times more likely than whites to be born into poverty, twice as likely to drop out of school before twelfth grade, five times as likely as white teenagers to be murdered, and three times as likely to be unemployed. Many of these children lived in families headed by single women who were forced to rely on welfare or earned meager incomes as domestic servants, laundresses, and kitchen helpers.

[654-655]

Hispanic-Americans

As Indians fought to regain old rights, Hispanic-Americans struggled to make a place for themselves. An influx of immigrants unequaled since the turn of the century, coupled with a high birthrate, made Hispanic peoples America's fastest-growing minority by the 1970s. Of the more than twenty million Hispanics living in the United States in the 1970s, eight million were Mexican-Americans concentrated in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Several million Puerto Ricans and Cubans clustered principally on the East Coast.

These officially acknowledged Hispanics were joined by millions of undocumented workers, or illegal aliens. Beginning in the mid-1960s, large numbers of poverty-stricken Mexicans began to cross the poorly guarded two-thousand-mile border. The movement north continued in the 1970s and 1980s. By 1990, one out of three Los Angelenos and Miamians was Hispanic, as was 20 percent of the population of San Diego, 48 percent of San Antonio, and 70 percent of El Paso.

Poverty awaited the new immigrants, as it had previous groups of newcomers. Like many earlier groups, Hispanics faced a language barrier. Most inner-city schools did not provide bilingual education for Spanish-speaking students. Finally, the larger the Hispanic population has become, the more widespread has been the discrimination.

Hispanic Cultural Pride

Most of these new Americans preferred their family-centered culture to Anglo culture and for that reason resisted assimilation. "We want to be here," explained Daniel Villanueva, a TV executive, "but without losing our language and our culture. They are a richness, a treasure that we don't care to lose."

Like other minorities, Hispanics wanted political power—"brown power." Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers was the first Hispanic interest group to gain national attention. The militant Brown Berets also attracted notice for their efforts to provide meals to preschoolers and courses in Chicago studies and consciousness raising to older students. And throughout the 1970s, the Mexican-American political party La Raza Unida was a potent force in the Southwest and East Los Angeles. Still, for the group that was becoming the nation's largest minority, Hispanics exercised a disproportionately small share of political power.

During the 1980s, Hispanic and Native Americans joined African-Americans in denouncing the Reagan administration. The League of United Latin American Citizens censured Reagan for his "very, very dismal record" in dealing with their problems, and the National Tribal Chairmen's Association charged that under Reagan "the delivery of services by federal agencies to Indians was in a shambles."