

The Sentinel

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Two new books make the scene in the nPod

By Vanessa Anthony (aka MC Nix-a-lot)

Two new history books are making some noise in the nPod, stirring up local interest. Whether it focuses on your 'hood or is just causing some serious discussion, these two tomes are what's being talked about in our own backyard...

Viva La Raza: A History of Chicano Identity and Resistance

On the heels of the one-year anniversary of the Fresh Del Monte raid and renewed discussions on immigration, workers' rights, and continuing criticism of Immigration and Customs Enforcement handling of raids comes Viva La Raza.

The book was published by Freedom Socialist Party's imprint, Red Letter Press. Pacific Northwest author Megan Cornish partnered with Yolanda Alaniz to explore the circuitous history of Chicano/a cultural identity, and the exploitation of Latin-American workers in the U.S.

To get you up to speed, Cornish and Alaniz take a few chapters to explain who the word Chicano/a reflects: A Chicano/a, they state, is a [U.S. citizen or resident of Mexican heritage] who has spent the majority of their life residing and working in the U.S and ... identif[ies] as being a part of this country.

From there, the pair introduces the concepts of Marxist socialism, nationhood, racism, sexism and classism and how all of these concepts tie together to the oppression of Chicanos. The history section culminates with the Chicano/a movement here in the U.S. and the inclusion of women's, gay and lesbian's liberation movements as well.

Though written from a socialist viewpoint, the historical perspective this book provides and the picture it paints is a poignant one for an election year during which the Latino vote is being courted.

In light of last year's raid at Fresh Del Monte, North Portland's highly charged Cesar Chavez street-renaming debate and the racial tension that these events activated in our community, this thing has teeth locally too.

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