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## Review of *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*. Laura Pulido. Reviewed by Cheryl A. Hyde.

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our civilization, undertaken by a very interesting and likeable person, who is hoping, as he puts it, to come upon a moment "of improvisational jazz when shared musical structure explodes into insight and emotion (p. 204)." However, such moments, in jazz or ethnography, don't just happen by accident. Serious jazz musicians don't just jam, they also "shed," which means practice a lot in the woodshed.

Robert D. Leighninger, Jr.  
Arizona State University

Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006. \$29.95 paperback.

In her intelligent, creative and highly readable study, Laura Pulido demonstrates the value of a comparative analysis that respects the complex dynamics of organizing within and across race and class enough to convey not only the strengths and benefits, but also the limitations and pitfalls of such collective action. This work can be read on a number of levels—a study of racial identity mobilization, a history of the New Left, a narrative of indigenous leadership development, or a testimony to the dramatic potency of radical analyses of societal inequities. Through whatever lens it is read, Pulido has made an elegant and vital addition to our understanding of multicultural social change efforts.

The core theoretical framework for this study, as explicated in Part I, is collective racial identity formation, specifically how a racial/ethnic group comes to realize and then act on its common interests, how that group negotiates class differences and gender relations, and how that group chooses to work with other disenfranchised populations (if at all). In tracing the development of radical Third World organizing in greater Los Angeles, Pulido focuses on the Black Panther Party (BPP), El Centro de Accion Social y Autonomo (CASA), and East Wind (Japanese American collective). In the early chapters, Pulido provides the historical, economic and geographic contexts for the comparative case studies, noting that the different ways in

which Black, Asian and Latino/a were treated in the housing or labor markets not only shaped the collective racial identity, but also contributed to the politicization of that identity. This, she argues, is a critical phase in the distillation of a radical Third World analysis and she draws effectively from Freire's work as well as that of Marxist-Leninist scholars and activists.

In Part II, she turns attention to the different trajectories of her specific case study organizations and attendant communities. Her narratives, built on interviews, original documents (such as manifestos, posters, event reports) and various first person accounts, are rich in detail. Those familiar with the social protests of the 1960s may well remember the excitement and danger of this time. Those not acquainted with the political organizing of this period perhaps will understand why the 1960s were viewed as a revolutionary era, even if at times misguided. This is not a romantic rendering of the time; rather Pulido's account serves as a reminder of how graphic and brutal the context, and consequences, of radical politics could be. And yet, there is palpable excitement that practically leaps from the pages—an excitement largely absent from the comparably paler progressive politics of today.

Pulido traces the formation of the Third World Left, specifically the movement organizations, the emergence and coalescence of the ideology, the efforts at building solidarity across the various racial/ethnic groups, and the gendered relations within the movement. Throughout, she weaves in her own research with various theoretical works and historical accounts mostly from social movement literature. Pulido concludes with a somewhat cautionary chapter on the current state of activism, specifically radical activism with particular attention to race, class and gender.

Some may assume that Pulido's work has limited applicability, since she is so focused on the dynamics of Los Angeles organizing. While the particulars might be of a regional nature, the lessons are not. First, Latino/a, Asian and Black identity-based movements can be found in the East, Midwest and South. These campaigns also struggled with internal dynamics of class, gender and nationality, as well as external, cross-race and class coalitions. Pulido makes an important contribution to the larger story of organizing through the U.S. Students

of collective action will learn much in terms of issue framing, strategic development, and movement building.

Second, regardless of the uniqueness of L.A. social activism, the way in which Pulido examines the complex intersections of race, class, nationality and gender is noteworthy. She is able to balance the narratives of each racial/ethnic group with an overarching account of the sometime fractitious interplay between the groups. Pulido clearly respects and admires the accomplishments of each group, and at the same time is able to critique their short-comings, especially those that result from too rigid an adherence to racial identity politics. This is most clearly seen in her chapter "Patriarchy and Revolution: Gender Relations in the Third World Left," in which she deftly notes the promises and problems of the feminist movement from a Third World perspective, as well as the ways in which many Third World women struggled to be taken seriously by their male comrades. This activist duality for Third World women simultaneously results from the new opportunities suggested by the women's movement and the racism of the women's movement juxtaposed with the immediacy of the struggle by their racial/ethnic movement and the sexism within that movement. As a minor complaint, I wish she had been clearer about her methodology and source acquisition.

I hope this book receives a wide reading. Pulido does an extraordinary job disentangling the conceptual and historical complexities. Those concerned with a radical vision of social justice can learn much, and be inspired by, the accounts set forth in this work. Given the present state of the world, Pulido reminds us how different the world could be and how some courageous communities fought for that vision of social justice against great odds. That they weren't completely successful does not diminish their efforts; instead, it places the burden on us to sustain that dream.

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