



**Chicana/o
Communists and the
Fights for
Chicano Studies and
MEChA During the
1970s and 1980s**



**Dr. Eddie Bonilla,
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*Wednesday,
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4:00 - 5:30 PM

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“Chicano liberation for us would be won in the context of socialism” claimed former Chicano communist Bill Gallegos. During the Chicana/o movement of the 1960s and 1970s students and activists like Gallegos sought to create radical change to societal institutions such as higher education as seen in the fights for the creation of Chicano studies. Various ideologies including cultural nationalism nationalism were utilized by thousands but this presentation will examine the often ignored story of how some people moved towards Marxism and communism in order to fight for the self-determination and liberation of Chicana/os. This presentation asks why it was that people moved towards Marxism even during the global Cold War? Why have they been treated like outsiders to the Chicana/o movement by activists and scholars? And what happens when we place Chicana/o communists at the center of el movimiento?

This talk will explore how Chicana/o communists fought for resources such as the ability to be on hiring committees during the establishment of the countries first Chicano studies programs in the late 1970s and how they helped to expand of one of el movimiento’s lasting legacies, El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA). By focusing on the ideological approaches to organizing and the activism of Chicana/o communists I will show how the movement becomes more international, cross-ethnic, and cross-racial while telling us more about the origins of Chicano studies and MEChA.