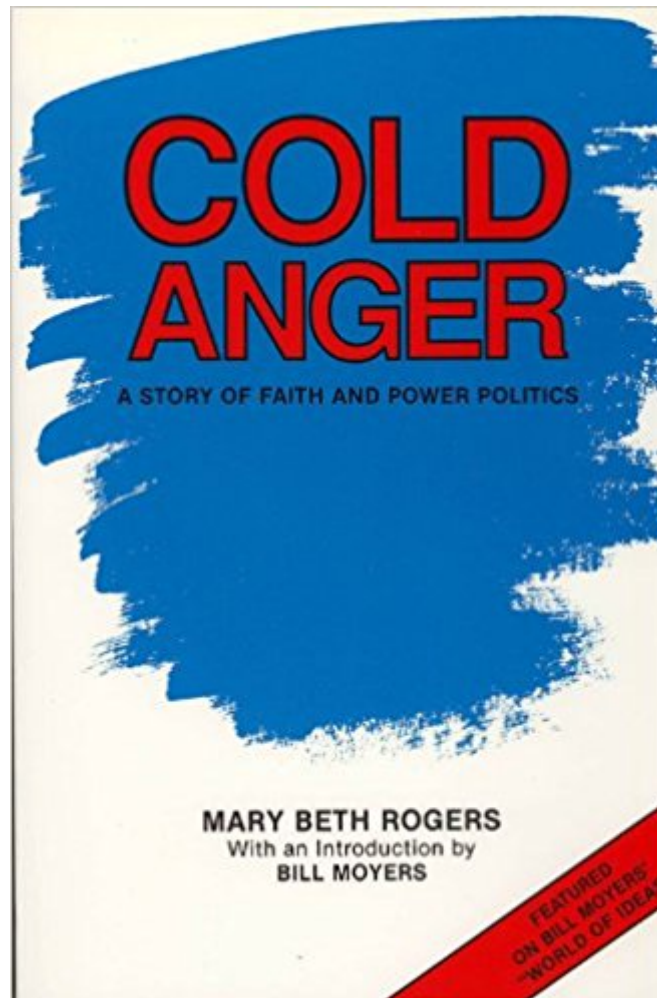




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Cold Anger: A Story Of Faith And Power Politics



Synopsis

"Cold Anger is an important book about the empowerment of working-class communities through church-based social activism. Such activism is certainly not new, but the conscious merger of community organizing tactics with religious beliefs may be. The organizing approach comes from Aul Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundations (IAF). . . . The book is structured around the political life of Ernesto Cortes, Jr., the lead IAF organizer who has earned recognition as one of the most powerful individuals in Texas (and who has been featured on Bill Moyers' "World of Ideas"). . . . Cortes fashioned a hard-ball Alinsky approach onto the natural organizing ground of church-based communities. The experiment began in San Antonio . . . and was successful in the transformation of San Antonio politics. Such dramatic success . . . led to similar efforts in Houston, Fort Worth, El Paso, the Rio Grande Valley, Phoenix, Los Angeles, and New York, to mention only a few sites. Expansion beyond San Antonio meant organizing among Protestant churches, among African American and white, and among middle-class communities. In short, these organizing efforts have transcended the particularistic limits of religion, ethnicity, and class while maintaining a church base and sense of spiritual mission. . . . Rogers's clearly written book will be of great value to the scholar, student, and layperson interested in urban politics, ethnic relations, social movements, or church activism." Southwestern Historical Quarterly

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *Cold Anger*, Mary Beth Rogers examines how the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), a network of church-based organizations, transforms the faith, religious beliefs, and values of disenfranchised, resigned, and politically powerless people into powerful public action that benefits the entire community. At the same time Rogers also reveals how not only the poor and working class have unwittingly given away their political power, but how white, upper-middle-class citizens have also consented to having power taken away from them in their benign trust of elected public officials. The "cold anger" of the title is "not one based on sour resentments or a false sense of entitlement," but rather, "an anger that seethes at the injustices of life and transforms itself into a compassion for those hurt by life." Anger for Ernesto Cortes, co-founder of the IAF, and the people he organizes is "an emotion of hope-not of despair." Rogers tells the story of how Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS), the first IAF-inspired organization of congregations, used that cold anger to move the city of San Antonio to spend more than \$500 million for West Side improvements, including storm sewer systems that virtually ended flooding there. Through research actions, COPS members "exploded the myth most of them had accepted for years-that the city in its wisdom would take care of them in good time." "We weren't looking for any handouts," according to one COPS member. "We're taxpayers and we found out our tax money wasn't working for us." "The concept we're trying to develop is one of community, communal responsibility," says Cortes. "The work we do is about power and about building power and teaching people how to organize around their own interests, how to be effective.

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