From Out of the Shadows

MEXICAN WOMEN IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

Vicki L. Ruiz

New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1998

to make way for Dodger Stadium. According to urban planner Victor Becerra, "Aside from displacing 7,500 people, destroying some 900 homes, and costing taxpayers approximately $5,000,000, the arrival of baseball to Los Angeles didn't change things much."[116] In 1960, the per capita income for Mexicans in the Southwest averaged "$968 compared to $2,047 for Anglos." Furthermore, the median years of schooling completed by Mexican workers in 1960 was only 7.1 years in comparison to 12.1 for Euro-Americans and 9.0 for "non-whites."[117] As part of global student movements of the late 1960s, Mexican American youth joined together to address continuing problems of discrimination, especially in education and political representation. They transformed a pejorative barrio term "Chicano" into a symbol of pride. "Chicano/a" implies a commitment social justice and social change.

Self-help, reciprocity, and commadrazgo are woven through the narratives of Mexican-American women. With pickets, baskets, and ballots, they created tapestries of resistance. Representing a range of ideologies from proletarian to seigneurial, they addressed injustice and served their communities. During the 1960s and 1970s, women in the Chicano Student Movement would draw on these legacies to form a Chicana generation that reclaimed, reinscribed, and transformed political and cultural subjectivities—with feminism as the contested *frontera*.

5

La Nueva Chicana: Women and the Movement

Rise Up! To Woman
Rise up! Rise up to life, to activity, to
the beauty of truly living; but rise up radiant
and powerful, beautiful with qualities, splendid
with virtues, strong with energies.[1]

THIS poem was written not during the heyday of the Chicano Movement, but in 1910 by Tejana socialist labor leader and political activist Sara Estela Ramírez.[2] She would not live to participate in El Primer Congreso Mexicanista held the following year. Ramírez's ideas, however, would resonate in the words of her compañeras. Composed of South Texas residents, this Congreso was the first civil rights assembly among Spanish-speaking people in the United States. With delegates representing community organizations and interests from both sides of the border, its platform addressed discrimination, land loss, and lynching. Women delegates, such as Jovita Idar, Soldedad Peña, and Hortensia Moncaya, spoke to the concerns of Tejanos and Mexicanos. Regarding education, Soledad Peña referred to "our duty . . . to educate woman; to instruct her and to . . . give her due respect." Out of this congress arose a women's organization, Liga Femenil Mexicanista, and for a short period two sisters Andrea and Teresa Villareal published a newspaper, *La Mujer Moderna*.[3]

As the poem shows, strands of feminist ideology or incipient feminist ideology can be located at various junctures in the history

of Mexican women in the United States. Feminism has taken many forms; however, this chapter focuses primarily on women's participation in the Chicano Student Movement "el movimiento" from 1968 to the present. The participation of "La Nueva Chicana" (to quote poet Viola Correa) in welfare rights, immigrant services and advocacy, sterilization suits, community organizations, La Raza Unida, campus activism, and literature has been reduced to a cursory discussion of sexism within the movimiento by the authors of the leading monographs on the Chicano Movement. Perhaps as frustrating, survey texts and relevant specialized monographs in U.S. Women's history overlook Chicana feminism.[4] Although scholars recognize the 1960s and 1970s as the era of the modern feminist movement, they have left Chicanas out of their stories. Countering these chilling silences, a growing body of scholarly studies and literary works offer eloquent testimonies of Chicana feminist thought inside and outside the academy. In this chapter, I will draw on them as well as archival materials and oral interviews to outline the ideological parameters of student politics and emphasize the ways in which women negotiated the terrains of nationalism and feminism, paying special attention to the iconography of the movimiento and the ways in which imagery from the Aztec world and the Mexican Revolution reinforced and challenged traditional notions of gender. The links between Marxism and feminism as well as debates over the double standard and intermarriage are examined. The chapter also discusses women's community organizing, the emergence of Chicana lesbian consciousness, and the call for third-world coalitions.

The titles of two recent publications illuminate a basic dialectical tension among Chicana feminists—*Building with Our Hands* and *Infinite Divisions*. This chapter offers a brief glimpse into the ways in which Chicanas have articulated a community-centered consciousness and a recognition of differences as they live amid the "swirls of cultural contradictions."[5] I would like to start with the development of one of the basic themes of Chicana feminism, a premise expressed by Tejana activist Rosie Castro. "We have practiced a different kind of leadership, a leadership that empowers *others*, not a hierarchical kind of leadership." Elizabeth (Betita) Martínez echoed, "The leadership that empowers others is the leadership we need."[6]

Over fifty years ago, Luisa Moreno and Josefina Fierro de Bright provided this type of leadership. The second California convention of El Congreso de Pueblos de Hablan Española, held in

December 1939, passed a prescient resolution with regard to working-class women. A portion follows:

> Whereas: The Mexican woman, who for centuries had suffered oppression, has the responsibility for raising her children and for caring for the home, and even that of earning a livelihood of herself and her family, and since in this country, she suffers a double discrimination as a woman and as a Mexican.
>
> Be It Resolved: That the Congress carry out a program of . . . education of the Mexican woman, concerning home problems . . . that it [a Women's Committee] support and work for women's equality, so that she may receive equal wages, enjoy the same rights as men in social, economic, and civil liberties, and use her vote for the defense of the Mexican and Spanish American people, and of American democracy.[7]

As I related in an earlier book, the women rank and file of UCAPAWA gained heightened self-esteem along with an awareness of gender issues as the result of union activism. Sociologist Myra Marx Ferree has argued that women wage earners "are significantly more feminist" than housewives and that "the effect of employment is to place women into a social context which encourages feminist ideas."[8] Consistent with Ferree's findings, women labor activists, while perhaps not political feminists, certainly appeared attuned to sex discrimination within the canneries. Luisa Moreno recalled that during World War II in "Cal San negotiations a woman . . . member of the negotiating committee remarked: 'Females includes the whole animal kingdom. We want to be referred [to] as WOMEN. That remained henceforth in every contract."[9] In addition, southern California cannery workers demanded management-financed day care and an end to the piece-rate scale. UCAPAWA's women members, in general, developed a job-oriented feminism; that is, they sought equality with men regarding pay and seniority *and* they demanded benefits that specifically addressed women's needs, such as maternity leave and day care.[10]

For some women, such as Julia Luna Mount, UCAPAWA served as a stepping-stone to life-long involvement in labor and civil rights issues. As a teenager, Julia Luna began working at Cal San and joined in the Workers' Alliance. She served as a rank-and-file leader during the 1939 Cal San strike and took part in El Congreso. She later left food processing to earn higher wages at McDonnell-Douglas, but was forced to quit because of unrelenting

sexual harassment. She married George Mount, an organizer for the United Auto Workers, and continued her activist path. After World War II, she led union drives among Los Angeles hospital workers. In addition, she and her sister, Celia, both former cannery workers, were active in Asociación Nacional México-Americana (ANMA), a civil rights organization that emerged from the labor movement during the 1950s. Julia Luna Mount has run for political office several times under the banner of the Peace and Freedom Party. She was also well known in the southern California nuclear freeze movement.[11]

Whether through *commadrazgo, mutualistas,* labor unions, or political organizing, some women recognized what they had in common as women. Tensions *between* women, however, form a second theme of Chicana feminist history. This dialectic, often expressed as a conflict between personal liberation or family first, had emerged well before the nationalist student movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Examples abound of both paths. In Texas, Sara Estela Ramírez had encouraged women to "Rise Up!" and María Hernández did, indeed, take action—in concert with her husband. In 1929, Hernández and her husband Pedro formed Orden Caballeros de America, a *mutualista* that provided social services to the barrio as well as served as a springboard to political organizing. An activist for over fifty years, she also participated in school desegregation cases and, as a senior citizen, was an advocate of La Raza Unida, the Chicano third party. Hernández believed strongly in women's familial responsibilities as she elaborated in an essay published in 1945. As noted by Cynthia Orozco, Hernández adhered to the idea that "the domestic sphere was maintained to be the foundation of society and mothers the authority figures who molded nations." María Hernández has also been characterized as "a strong feminist," who emphasized "the importance of family unity" and "the strength of men and women working together." Hernández herself described her husband has "enlightened, committed, and liberated in every way, and who has never done anything but to encourage her participation in the community."[12] This statement resonates among contemporary heterosexual Chicana feminists. The phrase "My boyfriend/husband—he really is a feminist" represents a mantra of justification and affirmation.[13]

The birth of the Chicano student movement occurred in 1967 as Mexican Americans formed their own organizations on college campuses. Their numbers were relatively small; one survey revealed that the *cumulative* undergraduate enrollment for seven

southwestern colleges included only 3,227 Mexican Americans (2,126 men, 1,101 women).[14] Yet, in May 1967, young adults gathered at Loyola University in Los Angeles and formed the United Mexican American Students (UMAS). In addition to holding fundraisers for the United Farm Workers and other community causes, this group sought to make alliances with local chapters of the Black Student Union (BSU) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). A year later, as a result of student pressure, the first Chicano Studies program was founded at California State University, Los Angeles.[15]

Activism was not limited to college campuses. A group of high school teens, including student council officers, circulated petitions urging the school board to take concrete measures to improve the quality of secondary education in East Los Angeles. Board members politely received the petitions and then discarded them. As a result, in March 1968, over 10,000 youngsters at five area schools (Roosevelt, Wilson, Lincoln, Garfield, and Belmont) walked out. Staging the largest student walkout in the history of the United States, the young leaders had now captured the attention of the board. They demanded a revised curriculum to include Mexican/Chicano history and culture; the recruitment of more Mexican-American teachers; an end to the tracking of Chicano students into vocational education; and the removal of racist teachers. They also desired smaller classes and upgraded libraries. Vicky Castro recalled that issues ranged "from better food all the way to . . . we want to go to college."[16] Another student who walked out, artist Patissi Valdez, succinctly related the attitude of her home economics teacher as an example of the lessons taught at her school:

> She would say . . . "You little Mexicans, you better learn and pay attention. This class is very important because . . . most of you are going to be cooking and cleaning for other people."[17]

Students, moreover, had few Mexican-American role models as "only 2.7 percent of the teachers . . . had Spanish surnames." One of these educators, Sal Castro, joined the protesters; he could not in good conscience remain inside the walls of Abraham Lincoln High School. Perhaps with a twinge of nostalgia, he remembered the walkouts (or blowouts) as: "Kids out in the streets with their heads held high. With dignity. It was beautiful to be a Chicano that day."[18]

The East Los Angeles "blowouts" lasted over a week. One *Los Angeles Times* reporter referred to the protests as "the birth of brown power." The media keyed in on banners carried by students: "Chicano Power," "Viva La Raza," and "Viva La Revolución."[19] The LAPD overreacted at Roosevelt and Belmont high schools, chasing and bludgeoning teens. Describing the scene, Mita Cuarón declared, "It didn't match the thing we were doing. We didn't commit a crime. We were protesting." The blowouts did initiate reform in Los Angeles schools. "We were very successful at informing the public about how serious the conditions were," reflected Paula Cristonomo. In fact, Senator Robert Kennedy met with the students and sent a telegram of support.[20] Walkouts in Mexican schools followed in such disparate cities as Denver, Phoenix, and San Antonio. Such militancy was not confined to the Southwest. Writer Ana Castillo, a native of Chicago, recalled her own adolescent activism. "I went downtown and rallied around City Hall along with hundreds of other youth screaming 'Viva La Raza' and 'Chicano Power!' until we were hoarse." Demonstrations also proliferated on college campuses. A coalition of students of color orchestrated the 1969 Third World Strike at Berkeley. Facing police batons and arrests, these students called for the creation of a third college dedicated to people of color and run by the community. A Department of Ethnic Studies on the Berkeley campus was the concrete result.[21]

In March 1969, Colorado community activist Corky Gonzales and the Crusade for Social Justice hosted the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference at Denver, Colorado. This conference offered a potent nationalist vision linking the Aztec past to a Chicano future. The concept of Aztlán as the mythic Aztec homeland reborn in a Chicano nation resonated among the audience, over 1,500 strong.[22] A former organizer with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Alabama, María Varela gave eloquent testimony to the transformative power of this gathering:

> "Conference" is a poor word to describe those five days. . . . It was in reality a fiesta: days of celebrating what sings in the blood of a people who, taught to believe they are ugly, discover the true beauty in their souls . . . Coca, Cola . . . Breck Shampoo, the Playboy Bunny, the Arrow Shirt man, the Marlboro heroes are lies. "We are beautiful . . ." [T]his affirmation grew into a *grito,* a roar among the people gathered in the auditorium.[23]

A month later at a youth conference at the University of California, Santa Barbara, from which MECHA (El Movimiento Estudantil Chicano de Aztlán) was officially launched, students stressed the importance of applying their education for the benefit of their communities.[24] Echoing that "man is never closer to his true self as when he is closer to his community," El Plan de Santa Barbara expounded that:

> *Chicanismo* draws its faith and strength from two main sources: from the just struggle of our people and from an objective analysis of our community's strategic needs. . . . Chicanos recognize the central importance of institutions of our higher learning to modern progress, in this case, to the development of our community.[25]

Whether one views the Chicano Student Movement as a political quest or as a nationalist struggle, one cannot subsume its identity under the rubric of "Me, too." Although there were a few connections to African-American civil rights groups, with SNCC veterans Betita Martínez and María Varela bringing their organizing skills and experiences to the Southwest, the Chicano Movement was very much its own entity with its own genesis. However, in U.S. history textbooks, Mexicans are typically relegated to the end of the book and pictured as either followers of Cesar Chávez or student activists emulating African Americans. It was not that they wanted a piece of the "American pie," they wanted the freedom to bake their own pan dulce.[26]

Situating one's politics, indeed one's very life, toward community empowerment was a given among Chicano student activists. Forging bonds of community with one another and, most important, with the worlds they literally or metaphorically left behind crossed ideological borders as they created diffuse and at times competing organizations. Whether one assumed the mantle of cultural nationalism (working only for Chicanos) or longed for third-world liberation, sustaining connections to a world outside the university proved crucial. Students led food drives for the United Farm Workers; protested the Vietnam War; offered tutorial programs for barrio youth; organized for immigrant rights, volunteered for La Raza Unida, the Chicano third party; established health clinics; and launched Chicano Studies programs.[27] Success was measured in terms of social justice, not material wealth.

Aztec motifs dominated the iconography of the Chicano Stu-

dent Movement. Young militants adopted Aztec imagery and heritage as their own. The image of the "warrior" struck a cord with "its ferociously macho imagery." While noting that the idea of a Brown nation (or Aztlán) offered a "taste of self-respect," long-time community activist Betita Martínez argues that "merely as a symbol the concept of *Aztlán* encourages the association of machismo with domination."[28]

What roles could women play in this hagiography of a pre-Columbian past? Think about representations of Aztec life that you have seen: the familiar murals in Mexican restaurants and calendar art. Light-complected women dressed in translucent gowns held in the arms of muscular bronze men arrayed in gold and feathers. The spectacular mural at the El Cerezo Restaurant in El Paso, Texas, serves an example. Against the backdrop of mountain scenery, an Aztec warrior bends his head in sorrow over a supine vestal virgin. This feminine icon (dead, no less) can hardly be construed as an empowering symbol for Chicanas.

Worse yet are traditional notions of La Malinche. Born of Aztec nobility, La Malinche (Malintzin Tenépal) was sold by her mother into a state of slavery at the age of eight. Six years later, she was given to Hernán Cortés who soon made use of her linguistic and diplomatic skills. La Malinche would also bear him a son. Viewed as a traitor to her people, La Malinche remains "the Mexican Eve." In this vein, Carlos Fuentes argues that Mexican women are twice cursed—they bear both the sin of Eve and the sin of La Malinche.[29] Today in Mexico the term Malinchismo means selling out to foreigners. A popular Mexican ballad of the mid-1970s bore the title "The Curse of La Malinche." A excerpt follows:

> The curse of offering foreigners
> Our faith, our culture,
> Our bread, our money,
> Remains with us.
>
> . . .
>
> Oh, curse of Malinche!
> Sickness of the present
> When will you leave my country
> When will you free my people?[30]

Given these symbolic meanings, one of the first tasks Chicana feminists faced was that of revising the image of La Malinche. Adelaida Del Castillo's pathbreaking 1977 article provided a new perspective by considering Malinche's captivity, her age, and most important her conversion to Christianity. What emerges from Del Castillo's account is a gifted young linguist who lived on the margins and made decisions within the borders of her world.[31] Lucha Corpi offers a sympathetic and tragic portrait of Malinche in "Marina Mother."

> They made her of the softest clay
> and dried under the rays of the tropical sun.
> With the blood of a tender lamb
> her name was written by the elders
> on the bark of that tree
> as old as they.
>
> Steeped in tradition, mystic
> and mute she was sold—
> from hand to hand, night to night,
> denied and desecrated, waiting for the dawn
> and for the owl's song
> that would never come;
> her womb sacked of its fruit,
> her soul thinned to a handful of dust.
>
> You no longer loved her, the elders denied her,
> and the child who cried out to her "mamá!"
> grew up and called her "whore."[32]

Other Chicana writers envision Malintzin as a role model. Cordelia Candelaria considers her "a prototypical Chicana feminist," a woman of "intelligence, initiative . . . and leadership." With similar intent, poet Carmen Tafolla casts her as a woman who dared to dream.[33]

In this way, picking up the pen for Chicanas became a "political act." As poet Naomi Quiñonez explained, "With poetry, I could encourage, reaffirm, and mirror efforts toward social change. I wrote poetry while at antiwar rallies, during class discussions about capitalism, at Cinco de Mayo celebrations . . . and at Santana concerts." Quiñonez considered herself a cultural worker as she planned poetry readings at barrio community centers, parks, and churches as well as on college campuses.[34] Women also founded and edited newspapers—*El Grito* (Betita Martínez); *Encuentro Feminil* (Adelaida del Castillo and Ana Nieto Gómez); *Regeneración* (Francisca Flores); and *El Chicano* (Gloria Macias Harri-

son). Through their writings, Chicanas problematized and challenged prescribed gender roles at home (familial oligarchy); at school (the home economics track); and at meetings (the clean-up committee).[35]

From the early days of the student movement, women were not always satisfied with the rhetoric and praxis of their compañeros, but those who called for the introduction of women's issues on the collective agenda or for an end to gender-specific tasks (e. g., typing, cooking, cleaning up) were labeled "Women's Libbers" or "*agringadas*," and open ridicule had a chilling effect. At the 1969 Denver youth conference, after considerable discussion in the women's workshop, a Chicana facilitator reported to the conference as a whole: "It was the consensus of the group that the Chicana woman does not want to be liberated." "I felt this as quite a blow," penned conference participant Enriqueta Longauex y Vasquez soon after the event. "Then I understood why the statement had been made and I realized that going along with the feelings of the men at the convention was probably the best thing to do at the time."[36] Sonia López reported that some coeds proved reluctant to join campus Chicana organizations, like Hijas de Cuauhtemoc at Cal State, Long Beach, for fear of being labeled or rejected by men. In the words of Francisca Flores, "Women must learn to say what they think and feel, and free to state it without apologizing or prefacing every statement to reassure men that they are not competing with them."[37]

By 1971, in Houston, Texas, at La Conferencia de Mujeres Por La Raza, the first national Chicana conference, women spoke out with a distinctly feminist platform. The resolutions called for "free legal abortions and birth control in the Chicano community be provided and controlled by Chicanas." In addition, they called for higher education, for acknowledgment of the Catholic Church as an instrument of oppression, for companionate equalitarian marriage ("Marriage-Chicana Style"), and for child care arrangements to ensure women's involvement in the movement. Of the 600 women who attended the conference, as many as one-half disagreed with such radical resolutions and walked out. They believed that in-house problems should not overshadow community concerns. ["Our enemy is the gavacho not the macho."][38]

The Houston conference, however, did place feminism very visibly on the movement table. Chicano leaders either pretended it didn't exist or dismissed women's concerns. Corky González openly admitted he did not want Chicanas to become like the "frigid

gringa."[39] He also issued a dire warning about the hidden *traditional* power of women:

> A woman who influences her old man only under the covers or when they are talking over the table, and when he goes in—if it's a bad idea—and argues for that, because he's strong enough to carry it through, is doing a disservice to *La Causa*.[40]

These attitudes could also be found in movement songs. In "The Female of Aztlán," women were told that "their responsibility is to love, work, pray, and help . . . the male is the leader, he is iron, not mush."[41] Ramón Gutiérrez accurately suggests that men "initially regarded the feminist critique as an assault on their Mexican cultural past, on their power, and by implication their virility." In fairness, some Chicanos envisioned themselves as placing women on bronze pedestals as Chicana queens or Aztec princesses.[42] The heartfelt (but inept) poem "Mi Amor" echoes familiar pedestal themes found in Mexican serenades sung a century ago. Two stanzas should suffice:

> To my eyes
> A Chicana is an exotic queen,
> She radiates a glow of exquisite
> sheen.
> . . .
> She has style, she has class,
> and she is aware,
> That her beauty is exceptional,
> So she walks tall and proud,
> never forgetting
> That her beauty is traditional.[43]

Whether queen for a day or maid for a week, many Chicanas chafed at images or roles that placed them in the category of "traditional" helpmate.

In various venues from *Encuentro Femenil* to *Mademoiselle*, Chicanas passionately articulated their frustrations as women within the movement. "A lot of women were finding themselves unfulfilled in being just relegated to this position of beast of burden." They also questioned the double standard and blew the whistle on men who used political rhetoric for sexual conquest ["the guys that radicalize her off her pants"].[44] Feminists also problema-

tized the madonna/whore dichotomy in Latino culture, considering it a holdover of colonialism. As one woman stated, "And if you're active in Raza Unida, you're suspected of being la mujer mala and in order to prove you're not, you have to live the life of a nun."[45] Ramón Gutiérrez would find within this Chicana feminist discourse a common thread, "a story that was rooted in the politicization of the body."[46]

Adelaida del Castillo succinctly declared that "Chicana feminism . . . recognized the worth and potentials of all women."[47] Chicanas, however, deliberately distanced themselves from Euro-American feminists. The pivotal anthology *This Bridge Called My Back,* edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, is replete with painful, searing tales of encounters between feminists of color and Anglo liberationists. Native American/Chicana writer Chrystos observed: "The lies, pretensions, the snobbery and cliquishness, the racism. . . . The terrifying & useless struggle to be accepted. . . . I left the women's movement utterly drained."[48] Perhaps the objectification of their racial subjectivities—the exotic othering of their experiences galled women of color the most. Jo Carrillo's poem "And Take Your Pictures with You" encapsulates resistance to such objectification. A portion follows:

> Our white sisters
> radical friends
> love to own pictures of us
> sitting at a factory machine
> wielding a machete
> in our bright bandanas
> . . .
> And when our white sisters
> radical friends see us
> in the flesh
> not as a picture they own,
> they are not quite as sure
> if
> they like us as much.
> We're not as happy as we look
> on
> their
> wall.[49]

Chicanas recoiled against the middle-class orientation of liberal feminists: the anti-male rhetoric of radicals; and the condescending, dismissive attitudes expressed by both.[50] Conflicts over gender or race, personal liberation or family first, did not stop the development of Chicana feminism. Caught between "maternal" and "paternal" movements, Ana Nieto Gómez declared:

> The Chicana feminist has been cautioned to wait to fight for her cause at a later time for fearing of dividing the Chicano movement. Also it has been recommended that she must melt into the melting pot of femaleness rather than divide the women's movement.[51]

At first these attitudes divided Chicanas themselves into two camps: feminists and loyalists. The loyalists believed that one should "stand by your man" and "have babies por la causa." They argued that Chicanas who needed "an identity" were *"vendidas"* or *"falsas."* Firing back, Nieto Gómez laid out the following scenario. "A girl may find that an open avenue to temporary status and distinction is to sleep with a noted 'Heavy.' . . . This is the traditional 'back door' open to all ambitious women."[52]

And then a third image also emerged—"La Adelita" or the *soldadera.* The idea of a strong, courageous woman garbed in the iconography of the Mexican Revolution was not a threatening image to Chicano nationalists; it implied that the woman fights beside her man and cares for his needs. Women in the Brown Berets, especially, were seen as contemporary *soldaderas.* Norma Cantú posits that Chicano nationalists did not embrace the more historically exact representation of the *soldadera* as a solider in her own right, but instead clung to the popular stereotype perpetuated by the Mexican cinema in which "Pedro Armendariz rides into the next battle [as] Dolores del Rio follows—on foot."[53]

But women, too, embraced this icon. The *soldadera* embodied a conflicted middle ground between loyalist and feminist, one that could be fiercely independent, yet strongly male-identified. The newspaper *El Rebozo* from San Antonio, Texas, "was written by women, put on by women, distributed by women, and was undertaken for the purpose of uniting our people to work for La Causa."[54] Yet even the name *El Rebozo* literally and figuratively wraps Chicana consciousness within the bosom of the *soldadera.* As the editors explained:

> El Rebozo—the traditional garment of the Mexican woman, with its many uses, symbolizes the three roles of the Chicana, portraying her as "la señorita," feminine yet humble; as "la revolu-

cionaria," ready to fight for "La Causa," and finally portraying the role of "La Madre" radiant with life.[55]

In a poem "Youth Mirror," Ana Nieto Gómez reminded Chicanas of Mexican women warriors, Juana Galla and Petra Ruiz, revolutionary commanders who had led both men and women. Nieto Gómez endeavored to link historical action with Chicana liberation.[56]

Feminists, however, frequently found themselves isolated as individuals. Referring to women's participation in La Raza Unida, Marta Cotera noted the costs involved for women who seemed too outspoken on gender issues. To stay in the Party, Cotera related, "These women must retreat into more conservative stands, and in effect, retreat from certain activities that deal specifically with the special social needs of women." If one dropped the mask of agreeability, there were consequences. Indeed, Ana Nieto Gómez would be silenced as she faced physical threats and was later fired from her position in Chicano Studies at California State University, Northridge. The "gender objectification" inherent in cultural nationalist ideology had painful, concrete manifestations for women, such as Nieto Gómez, who openly articulated a Chicana feminist vision. As literary theorist Angie Chabram-Dernersesian would later write, "Chicanas were denied cultural authenticity and independent self-affirmation."[57]

At times biting their lips, most Chicana feminists chose to remain involved in the Movimiento. Rhetorically, some contended that feminism was not divisive. During the early 1970s, Ana Nieto Gómez somewhat idealistically for the times wrote that the "feminist movement is a unified front made up of both men and women—a feminist can be a man as well as a woman—it is a group of people which advocates the end of women's oppression." Considering Chicana feminism as "part of the Chicano Movement," Adelaida del Castillo stated that "we have to work together in order to save ourselves. . . . As Chicanos we have the responsibility to look after each other."[58] Meanwhile, many feminists chose to focus their activities on women's concerns, such as defending the rights of welfare mothers and protesting the forced sterilizations of poor women. They created their own organizations, such as Comisión Femenil Mexicana and the Chicana Action Service Center. Feminists could be found at every pivotal event and in every major movement organization from the Chicana Moratorium to La Raza Unida to CASA.

In 1967, Alicia Escalante began to organize welfare mothers in

East Los Angeles. On public assistance herself, Escalante sought to create a safe Chicana space for both mutual support and political action. Through the meetings of what would become the Chicana Welfare Rights Organization, she nurtured "a non-threatening environment where women felt comfortable enough to talk about the private issues one only revealed with family members or comadres." Comparing notes on pregnancy (or the lack thereof), some came to the painful realization that they had been sterilized while giving birth at the USC/Los Angeles County Medical Center.[59]

With the assistance of Comisión Femenil Mexicana, an organization founded by young Chicana professionals, twelve women sterilized at the hospital filed suit. They were represented by two attorneys from the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice, one of whom was Antonia Hernández, a Comisión member fresh out of law school at UCLA. Her Comisión amiga Ana Nieto Gómez would later recall in an interview with historian Virginia Espino that doctors "thought they were throwing . . . in a free service. They saw themselves as agents of the public, saving taxpayers money." During the trial in 1978, anthropologist Carlos Velez Ibañez testified that he had found ample evidence of eugenics-infused attitudes among area doctors, including some listed on the Medical Center staff. He related an informant's tale of how Mexicans were denied pain killers until they had signed the consent form for a tubal ligation.[60] Detailing the specifics of the case in a law review article, Antonia Hernández wrote:

> All of the victims or near victims belonged to a racial minority, were poor, and could readily understand the English language. Most were approached for sterilization surgery while under the duress of labor, drugged, and confined. All of them entered the Medical Center without any intent of becoming sterilized, and all were persistently solicited for the operation. Many of the women encountered doctors and nurses who were openly hostile to them because of their ethnicity or poverty status.[61]

In *Madrigal v. Quilligan* (1978), Judge Jesse Curtis ruled in favor of the defendants; that is, in favor of the Medical Center and its doctors. Judge Curtis believed that the sterilizations had resulted from miscommunication rather than malice and encouraged physicians to explain more carefully the consequences of a tubal ligation to Mexicana immigrants. In the words of his decision, "One can sympathize with them for their inability to communicate clearly, but one can hardly blame the doctors for relying on those indicia of

consent which appeared unequivocal on their face and which are in constant use at the Medical Center."[62] It had taken a great deal of courage for the twelve Mexicanas to come forward and tell their stories. The judge, however, ignored their voices and relied instead on an "ideology of cultural differences" that absolved the physicians of "the legal and moral responsibility for their actions." Although the women had lost in a court of law, the adverse publicity generated from the case and a series of investigative articles appearing in the *Los Angeles Times* prompted the Medical Center to revisit its policies and procedures with regard to informed consent.[63]

Feminist commitment to community took other forms as well. Founded by Comisión Femenil member Francisca Flores, the Chicana Action Service Center in East Los Angeles was "one of the first antipoverty agencies exclusively serving barrio women." The center offered job training and placement with 50 percent of its clients single mothers under thirty. Emphasizing the importance of its programs, Ana Nieto Gómez wrote: "The low retention of Chicanas in the secondary schools, 70% dropout before the tenth grade inadvertently fails to make available to the Chicana even the traditionally oriented feminine curriculum, i.e., typing, business, English, shorthand." She further indicated that Chicanas who dropped out of college found themselves "at the same door step" as their sisters who left high school.[64] Age discrimination plagued center graduates over the age of thirty-five. Yolanda Nava asserted that 41 percent could not find employment. Even government training projects were closed to them because their placement would seem "improbable."[65]

Now an institution in southern California, the Chicana Action Service Center has helped thousands of women secure jobs and pioneered the development of placement networks with corporations and nonprofit agencies. An early industrial advisory board for the center represented a "class" bridge between Chicana professionals and their barrio sisters. For instance, Carmen Olguin of Pacific Telephone and Sally Martínez of Southern California Edison offered frequent career planning and job interview workshops.[66] Delivering direct services, lobbying lawmakers, and conducting policy-oriented research, Comisíon members returned to their communities with their education. Their legacy endures.

Chicanas joined with their compañeros in protesting the Vietnam War. These activists were only were only too cognizant of the impact of the war on the lives of their kin and neighbors. Between

1961 and 1969, Mexican Americans in the Southwest represented 10 to 12 percent of the population but accounted for almost 20 percent of the casualities. Feminist scholar and poet Adaljiza Sosa Riddell wrote that "too many" Chicano veterans came home "wrapped como enchiladas in red, white, and blue."[67] Roosevelt High student and blowout activist Tanya Luna Mount (daughter of George and Julia Luna Mount) summed up the feelings of many by linking education in the barrio and the war in Vietnam. "Do you know why they [the Board of Education] has no money for us? Because of a war in Vietnam 10,000 miles away, that is killing Mexican-American boys—and for WHAT? We can't read, but we can die! Why?"[68]

During the Chicano Moratorium (August 29, 1970), women and children were fired on by police as they attended a peaceful protest rally in Laguna Park in East Los Angeles, a rally attended by over 20,000 people. In the aftermath of this "riot," a Los Angeles County deputy shot tear gas through a curtain hanging in the doorway of the Silver Dollar Bar. An unexploded tear gas canister killed K-MEX reporter and *Los Angeles Times* columnist Rubén Salazar as he sat in the bar having a beer and, no doubt, discussing the violence that had just transpired in the park. A televised inquest ruled Salazar's death an accident. The Chicano Moratorium shook the student movement to its core—sixty people had been wounded and three Chicanos, including Salazar, lost their lives. Remember that the Chicano Moratorium occurred only a few months after the killings at Kent State. Many Chicanos felt a mixture of moral outrage, anger, and disbelief. Moctezuma Esparza poignantly recalled, "It was a tremendous blow. Because we lost a certain heart, we lost a certain innocence of our ideals." He continued, "That we could engage the country . . . through the Bill of Rights, through the ideals that the country was supposedly founded on and that we could be killed."[69]

Disillusioned with the Vietnam War and Democratic Party promises, many Chicano activists called for the creation of their own third party. La Raza Unida (LRU) brought together politically engaged women across generations from María Hernández and Julia Luna Mount to Virginia Musquíz and Martha Cotera. Borne out of the high school walkouts in Crystal City, Texas, La Raza Unida became a political force in South Texas. With the prohibition of the poll tax, many small town Tejanos were eager to vote and the grassroots Chicano party captured their imagination and their hopes. In 1970, LRU candidates swept fifteen of the sixteen local races in

Crystal City, winning seats on the school board and the city council. Buoyed by local victories, LRU ran a slate for state office in 1972. The party, furthermore, spread outside the Long Star State with strong showings in California and Colorado.[70]

Founded by José and Luz Gutiérrez, Virginia Musquíz, and others, La Raza Unida became a vehicle for political self-determination, especially in South Texas. Tejanas played very visible roles and several were elected to local office. Luz Gutiérrez asserted that women made their position clear early on. "We actually had to walk in to one of the meetings . . . and said, 'Hey we don't want to be the tamale makers and . . . the busy bees. We really want to be part of the decision-making process.'" Women also organized a separate caucus within La Raza Unida (Mujeres Por La Raza) to promote women's leadership on their own terms and not in the shadows of LRU men. Acknowledging both empowerment and sexism within its ranks, Martha Cotera also acknowledged LRU's nationalist overlay. "When women came into the party, they fell under the greater context of la familia de la raza."[71] Indeed, La Raza Unida represented the zenith of cultural nationalism. Historian Ernesto Chávez refers to LRU activism in Los Angeles as an "attempt to create Aztlán through the ballot box." Seeking to bridge the academy and the community, Chicano college students provided the volunteer labor necessary to construct a base for California's La Raza Unida Party. At a Chicano politics conference in northern California, Isabel Hernández railed against armchair activists. "It's going to take a lot of work if we're going to make a political party," she stated. "We have to stop the exploitation, we have to have personal contact with people in the *barrio,* not sitting up in the colleges . . . talking about revolution, but we also have to go to the *barrio* and tell people where it's at."[72]

Although the party would fade by the mid-1970s, sociologist Tatcho Mendiola contends that La Raza Unida "introduced to the American public a brand new generation of leadership." As the result of the many threads of community organizing, including LRU, "Within twenty years, there would be almost five thousand Latino elected officials in the United States. Half would come from Texas."[73]

Within a few years, cultural nationalism as the single, sustaining ideology waned and in its place emerged a renewed emphasis on building class-based coalitions with Mexicanos, Latinos, and at times third-world peoples. El Centro de Acción Autonoma-Hermandad General de Trabajadores (CASA) saw beyond the borders of Aztlán. Founded in 1968 by long-time civil rights activists Bert Corona and Chole Alatorre, CASA provided legal and social services for undocumented Mexicano/Latino immigrants. CASA, like El Congreso, believed in the rights of immigrants to work in the United States, join labor unions, and raise their families without fear. The historical link between the two organizations was not just ideological. At the age of twenty-one, Bert Corona had been a leader in El Congreso's youth division. David Gutiérrez refers to CASA as "the first Chicano-era organization to explore systematically the significance of the relationship between immigration, Chicano ethnicity, and the status of Mexican Americans in the United States."[74]

With an influx of student volunteers, CASA also conducted research on the contributions and exploitation of immigrants and lobbied against proposed anti-immigrant legislation. In 1975, Corona departed, turning over the reins to (in his words) "the young turks." Graduate students, undergraduates, and young professionals launched an ambitious agenda for what they considered a new and improved CASA. In addition to running the service center, they would educate the public through their newspaper, *Sin Fronteras,* organize workers into trade unions, and fortify themselves through research and study groups, openly Marxist in orientation. Corona would later remark that these leaders did not have the patience or experience necessary to build a constituency among Mexicano/Chicano workers. "They somehow believed that the workers would come on their own. . . . They thought the people would be attracted by the political line, by the rhetoric, and by the glamour."[75] Beset by problems that ranged from FBI surveillance to personal in-fighting, CASA disintegrated over the course of 1977 and 1978. Its slogans live on in the cadenced voices of contemporary Chicano/Chicana activists: "Obreros Unidos, Jamás Serán Vencidos" ["The Workers United Shall Never Be Defeated"] and "Somos Un Pueblo Sin Fronteras" [We Are One People Without Borders].[76]

CASA compañera, Magdalena Mora, provided a model of Chicana activism. A graduate student in history at UCLA, she not only wrote about trade union struggles but participated in them. She organized Mexicana/Chicana cannery workers in Richmond, California, at Tolteca Foods. As her professor Juan Gómez-Quiñones stated, "Ella hizo historia" [She made history]. Mora was also on the editorial staff of *Sin Fronteras.* An activist since her UMAS days

as a high school student in San Jose, she died in 1981 of a brain tumor at the age of twenty-nine. Rudy Acuña eulogized her as a "beautiful fanatic" and "a movement person." In the words of Devra Weber, "Magdalena was a fighter. She saw and understood the potential in people. This motivated her political work and her struggle for a society in which that potential could be realized."[77] The informal credo of the Chicano student movement was to return to your community after your college education to help your people. Magdalena Mora never left.

Women in CASA were both inspired and frustrated. CASA could be considered "the signifier of Marxist thought in the Chicano Movement"; and perhaps, not surprisingly, women still had to fight for leadership roles. As Victor Becerra explained, "Women were not given positions of leadership; they took them." Considering themselves the revolutionary vanguard, CASA leaders required an all-encompassing commitment on the part of its members. People left school; people left jobs; their lives totally revolved around the organization. In some instances, even choice of dating partners was not an individual decision. Women did assume very visible public roles in CASA—as examples, Kathy Ledesma Ochoa and Isabel Rodríguez Chávez served as editors of *Sin Fronteras*. Chicanas in CASA, however, were expected to bear the brunt of "women's work" in planning fundraisers, selling tickets, and preparing food. The double standard prevailed. Hired by the ILGWU as an organizer, Patricia Vellanoweth discovered she was pregnant. Her compañeros berated her. "[Y]ou're supposed to be organizing, how could you get pregnant?" No one uttered a word to her husband.[78] Feminism did not appear on the collective agenda, although a few Chicanas openly identified themselves as feminists. Gender politics notwithstanding, involvement in CASA as organizers, writers, and service providers made an indelible imprint on their lives; many former Casistas remain active in advocacy efforts for immigrants. In the words of historian Marisela Chávez: "These women lived, breathed, and worked the movement."[79]

Surprisingly personal decisions, such as dating, marriage, and sexuality, became movement concerns whether one identified with cultural nationalism or Marxism or a some sort of combination or an in-between political space. The whole issue of interracial dating and marriage became hotly debated. In 1971, Velia García Hancock argued against this mixing on political grounds. It was not a question of "mingling of the bloods" given the nature of Mexican

mestizaje, but rather that "intermarriage results in a weakening of ties and declining sense of responsibility and commitment to La Raza." These types of wholesale generalizations did little to promote communication. Love cannot be legislated. Furthermore, did marriage within La Raza always guarantee commitment to community empowerment? Many chroniclers and fighters for social justice, including slain journalist Rubén Salazar and poet/scholar/activist Adaljiza Sosa Riddell, intermarried. Marta Cotera addressed this issue in her 1977 collection of essays, *The Chicana Feminist*. "You have to be mature enough to respect people's choices. An individual who doesn't have freedom of choice cannot be liberated."[80]

From the earliest days of the Chicano Movement to current campus life, student activism has consistently included support for the United Farm Workers, an organization attracting volunteers representing diverse political orientations ranging from liberal to nationalist to Marxist. As we will see in the following chapter, Cesar Chávez and Dolores Huerta began to organize farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley in 1962. During the grape boycotts of the late 1960s and 1970s, the UFW was the most visible Chicano-identified organization, one that stressed a *mestizaje* of nationalism and coalition-building. Young people, whom David Gutiérrez refers to as "a multiethnic horde of idealistic . . . student volunteers," not only organized campus support groups but served in the fields. Many devoted their summers (and some dedicated a year or more) to the UFW as health workers, legal interns, boycott coordinators, media specialists, as well as organizers.[81]

In keeping with the spirit of El Plan de Santa Barbara, Chicano Studies departments encouraged undergraduate engagement with local issues. Teaching about the experiences of Mexicans in the United States was more than a classroom endeavor; experiential education became an essential component of a Chicano Studies curriculum. Internships with community-based organizations as part of field studies programs enabled young people to forge for themselves the links between the academy and the community.[82] Chicano Studies also provided a safe space, a home for Chicana and Chicano students, most of whom were first-generation college bound. In the poem "University Avenue," Pat Mora encourages undergraduates to draw on their cultural beliefs—"*cuentos* whisper lessons *en español*"—in coping with new terrain and new challenges.[83]

The problems faced by young women in MECHA or CASA during the 1970s continue to mark the development of Chicana feminism. Tugs-of-war persist over ideology, organizations, and gender relations. Some women turned to poetry as a means of articulating their opposition to machismo. In the classic "Machismo Is Part of Our Culture," Marcela Christine Lucero-Trujillo offered a look at the double standard:

> Hey, Chicano bossman
> don't tell me that machismo is part of our culture
> if you sleep
> and marry W.A.S.P
> You constantly remind me,
> me, your Chicana employee
> that machi-machi-machismo
> is part of our culture.
> I'm conditioned, you say,
> to bearing machismo
> which you only learned
> day before yesterday.
> At home you're no patrón
> your liberated gabacha
> has gotcha where
> she wants ya.
>
> . . .
>
> Chicanismo through osmosis
> acquired in good does
> remind you
> to remind me
> that machi-machi-machismo
> is part of our culture.[84]

Chicana heterosexual undergraduates and graduate students perceived themselves as caught in a double bind in terms of suitable marriage partners among their compañeros. On one hand, many of their peers married white women and, in the minds of some Chicanos, these women were not Chicana enough—higher education had assimilated them to the point of no return. Noted Chicana scholar María Eugenia Matute-Bianchi recalled how in graduate school at Stanford a Chicano compañero had referred to her as "damaged and acculturated" because she desired a Ph.D.

Similar remarks could still be heard when I attended Stanford during the years 1977 to 1982. I recall the posturing of one graduate student who boasted that he never dated "college girls." "When I want a real woman, I go to the barrio in East San Jose and pick up a high school girl." He seemed genuinely taken aback when his remarks were challenged by the Chicanas who were within earshot.[85]

Claiming public space can be intertwined with sexuality. Chicana lesbians often found themselves isolated from Chicanos and heterosexual Chicanas. Referring to lesbians, in general, the following passage taken from the 1990 introduction to *Unequal Sisters* certainly speaks to Chicana lived experiences. "[L]esbians have struggled to create their own identities and to build their own communities in the midst of the most hostile environments. Carving a sense of sexual self amid such oppression was a courageous act of preservation, both personally and politically."[86] As Cherríe Moraga revealed, "My lesbianism is the avenue through which I have learned the most about silence and oppression."[87] In whisper campaigns and outright verbal assaults, Chicana lesbians were labeled *vendidas,* Malinches, and feminists. According to Alma García, "Feminists were labelled lesbians, and lesbians as feminists." At a Chicano activists' reunion, an organized conference held in San Antonio in 1989, a "joke" about Chicana lesbians found its way into the program.[88] Tejana literary critic María C. González poignantly recalled her own personal journey:

> I, too had been a product of a world that saw homosexuality as an immoral disease. My studies in feminism prepared me to accept my own lesbianism and also gave me an intellectual context for understanding my own resistance and fears about it.[89]

The works of Chicana lesbian writers Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, Emma Pérez, Ana Castillo, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Carla Trujillo, and many others bring out the pain and isolation, but, as important, their joys, self-respect, courage, and dignity. A sampling of this rich literature includes Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* and Cherríe Moraga's *Loving in the War Years.* The following four edited collections provide powerful testimonies of individual and collective struggles and affirmations: *This Bridge Called My Back; Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras; Compañeras: Latina Lesbians;* and *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About.* Equally important, these anthologies elucidate health is-

sues, mixed race relationships, color consciousness, language, sexuality, self-representation, and historical constructions.[90] As critical works in feminist thought, *Bridge* and *Haciendo Caras* center the voices of lesbians of color as they dialogue with one another and the reader. Gloria Anzaldúa, furthermore, articulates a distinct lesbian fusion of private worlds and public spaces.

> As a *mestiza* I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are mine because I am every woman's sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is the queer of me in all races.)[91]

The stories of Mexicana/Chicana lesbians have only begun to be told. At the University of Arizona, Yolanda Chávez Levya founded the first Latina lesbian archive. Alice Hom writes of "creating sites of resistance" among lesbians of color and her dissertation focuses on political coalitions that have been forged by lesbians in New York and Los Angeles.[92] These grass-roots networks offer hope in terms of building viable coalitions among women of color. Many more comparative studies are needed to bring together the voices of Latinas, indigenous women, Asian Americans, and African Americans, all women who live on the borderlands.

Chicana lesbians have painfully articulated the oppression they have experienced at the hands of heterosexual Chicanas. Carla Trujillo has railed against "the controlling forces of compulsory heterosexuality." At the 1989 MALCS workshop on feminism, when Chicana lesbians spoke out against the stifling heterosexism in the audience, members of the workshop seemed more interested in making men more sensitive than in examining their own attitudes and values. "Feminism is not about men washing dishes." Emma Pérez reveals the need for "safe" spaces. "So call me a separatist, but to me this is not about separatism. It is about survival."[93]

Since the days of the Chicano Student Movement, Chicana feminists have experienced fissures along the fault lines of sexuality, class, region, and acculturation. In *To Split a Human*, Carmen Tafolla has warned compañeras against competing for coveted spots in the hierarchy of oppression:

> Don't play. "Will the Real Chicana Stand Up?" Much as we have heard different groups compete for 'charter membership' in the Most Oppressed Club . . . Mujer Sufrida ranks, and Double Minority Bingo, we must admit that membership dues must be continuously paid. . . . It is irrelevant to try to justify how "Chicana" we are or to criticize others for being "Anglicized."[94]

Coming to terms with divisions in order to move forward as a collective remains both a dream and a challenge.

In 1982, Chicana undergraduates, graduate students, and professors gathered at the campus of the University of California, Davis, to form Mujeres Activas En Letras Y Cambio Social (MALCS). Called together by Adaljiza Sosa Riddell, chair of Chicano Studies at Davis, this small group of women, many from Sacramento and the Bay Area, joined together to form a feminist organization with a collective vision and responsibility to Chicanas in the academy and the community.[95] A portion of the MALCS declaration follows:

> The scarcity of Chicanas in institutions of higher education requires that we join together to identify our common problems, to support each other, and to define collective solutions. Our purpose is to fight the race, class, and gender oppression we have experienced in the universities. Further we reject the separation of academic scholarship and community involvement. Our research strives to bridge the gap between intellectual work and active commitment to our communities. . . . We declare our commitment to seek social, economic, and political change through our work and collective action.[96]

Today MALCS is the most influential and largest Chicana/Latina academic organization. It has convened annual conferences and publishes a working paper series and most recently a journal, *Chicana Critical Issues*. MALCS has also served as an important feminist mentoring network for faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduates.

"A leadership that empowers others" continues to the present. Student activism has translated into community activism. In southern California alone, many women exemplify the credo of giving back to your community. Judy Baca is an internationally renowned muralist whose work brings Chicano history to life. María Elena Durazo is the current president of the Hotel Workers' Union in Los Angeles and Gloria Romero, an associate professor at Cal State Los Angeles, spearheaded a campaign for citizen review of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. She was recently elected as

a trustee for the Los Angeles Community College District. A blowout activist in 1968, Vicky Castro now serves on the Los Angeles County School Board and attorney Antonia Hernández heads the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), arguably the most influential civil rights organization west of the Mississippi. Furthermore, Gloria Molina is the first Latina elected to the LA County Board of Supervisors.

But if the list of Chicana activists goes on across the West and Midwest, so do the battles for respect, recognition, and justice. In 1989, the UCLA Film and Television Department funded and screened a student film entitled "Animal Attraction" that depicted a "Mexicana/Chicana having sexual intercourse with a donkey." When Professor Gloria Romero and her friends voiced their objections at the screening, the film students booed them and one poured wine all over Romero. The campus police arrived—to arrest Romero. The southern California MALCS chapter staged a protest and in a letter to the chair of film and television, the *mujeres* demanded an investigation into the procedures through which such a film was funded; to match the funds given to the production with a grant to MALCS for its summer institute to be held at UCLA the following year; to support "a collaborate relationship" with the Chicano Research Center; and to admit more Chicanas into the film and television graduate program. MALCS also called for the creation of a Chicano Studies Department with a strong Chicana/Latina research component.[97] Addressing the department's Euro-American woman chair, they ended their letter as follows:

> Our voice is one which is frequently excluded through various discursive practices which honor a male/centered vision and policy, be it Anglo or Chicano. We hope you respond to our requests given that you refused to speak to our chapter representative yesterday. . . . We are the daughters of Guadalupe, Tenepal, and Adelita. We are the active women (professors, staff and students) for social change. We demand action now![98]

Such language resonates with the rhetoric of the Chicano Movement and summarizes the importance of reclaiming a distinctly Chicana heritage, of linking the past with the present.

The last three decades have witnessed the emergence of distinct Chicana feminist identities: collectively and individually. The

road has not been easy. As scholar/activist Teresa Córdova has so eloquently stated, "Chicana feminists have struggled to find their voices—have struggled to be heard. Our struggle continues, but our silence is forever broken."[99]

Chicanas share a topography of multiple identities, and definitions of Chicana feminism remain contested. Instead of feminism per se, Ana Castillo calls for a *mestiza* consciousness or *Xicanisma,* an uncompromising commitment to social justice rooted in a woman-centered, indigenous past. Again with her global vision, Anzaldúa's construction of "the new *mestiza*" encompasses all women of color. In the preface to *Making Face, Making Soul,* she holds out a message of hope. "We are continuing in the direction of honoring others' ways, of sharing knowledge and personal power through writing (art) and activism, of injecting into our cultures new ways, feminist ways, mestiza ways."[100]

Bringing to their sociological study of Chicana feminism their experiences as student and community organizers, Beatríz Pesquera and Denise Segura divide Chicana feminists on college campuses during the 1980s into three distinct categories: Chicana Liberal Feminist, Cultural Nationalist Feminist, and Chicana Insurgent Feminist. "Chicana liberal feminism centers on women's desire to enhance the well-being of the Chicano community, with a special emphasis on improving the status of women." Cultural nationalists continue to see their lives as part of "the great family of Chicanos" or a feminism defined within traditional familial norms. Insurgent feminists take the intersections of race, class, gender, and power into consideration.[101] As one of their informants so cogently related:

> Chicana feminism means the struggle to obtain self-determination for all Chicanas, in particular that Chicanas can choose their own life course without contending with the pressure of racism, sexism, and poverty. It means working to overcome oppression, institutional and individual. Chicana feminism is much more than the slogan: "the personal is political"; it represents a collective effort for dignity and respect.[102]

Chicana feminism also represents a commitment to community. "Feminism is necessary for liberation," Tejana historian Cynthia Orozco has so powerfully stated. "We must move beyond the barriers that the university seeks to maintain between a privileged

sector and the mass of exploited and oppressed Mexicans. Sexism has no geographical barriers . . . nor should feminism stay in the college setting. Feminism belongs in the community." In the words of Gloria Anzaldúa, "Basta de gritar contra el viento—toda palabra es ruido si no está acompañada de acción" ["Enough shouting against the wind—all words are noise if not accompanied with action"].[103]

Figure 27 For over seventy years, Jesusita Torres (left) tilled a livelihood as a farm and nursery worker in southern California. Courtesy of Jesusita Torres.