Foreword

Armando Navarro has made a major contribution to the scholarship on the Chicano Movement (*el movimiento*) with this book-length study of the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO). As is the case with a number of studies of *el movimiento*, Navarro's work (originally done two decades ago) remained buried in the library stacks, touched only by emerging and established scholars. In Navarro's perspective and analysis, MAYO was the vanguard of *el movimiento* in Texas. It is nevertheless remarkable that although several works were published previously on *el movimiento* in Texas, no book-length study of MAYO's presence in Chicana/o history appeared before Navarro's work.

Prof. Navarro has produced a study rich in historical detail. He presents a synthesis of the historical forces and antecedents that provided the context for the emergence of both *el movimiento* and the Chicano youth movement. His use of the concepts of exogenous and endogenous antagonisms provides an analytical framework that locates the emergence of both movements in the biography of Chicana/o oppression and domination at the hands of the U.S. institutional apparatus and society, which became deeply entrenched during the century that preceded their emergence. His case study of MAYO, moreover, provides even richer historical detail that captures a deep understanding of this era in Chicana/o political and social history in Texas.

The MAYO activists very consciously and deliberately set out to build the ideological and power base to empower the Chicano people. They immersed themselves intensely and meticulously in the task and struggle to "liberate" Chicanas and Chicanos in Texas from over a century of oppression and domination at the hands of what they called the "gringo" system. The issue of how successful MAYO was in accomplishing this goal, as is the case with La Raza Unida party in Texas, will remain an open question for some time

to come. Nonetheless, what is certain is that both MAYO and, subsequently, La Raza Unida were unique and potent forces that forced Texas to make the transition from a primitive state, in terms of its political and cultural development, to a more open civilized society in which Chicanos/as enjoy more political freedom and participation. However, it would be naive, at best, for me to claim that Chicano/as in Texas and in the nation are not still bound by the chains of oppression. One has only to look at the rampant racism that has reemerged in the 1980s and 1990s and the high rates of educational failure and poverty that pervade the Chicana/o communities throughout the land, as Navarro suggests in the epilogue, to realize the falseness of such a claim.

Navarro has produced a valuable study in another sense. Its rich historical detail has tremendous value for both scholars and the younger Chicana/o generations. It is a valuable resource especially for today's Chicana/o youth because it provides an excellent means for them to develop a historical knowledge base of the generation that preceded them. For most of the past fifteen years, the forces that have sought to erase our Chicana/o identity, our identity as a people (and thus some of the important accomplishments of *el movimiento*), have been quite successful. We have in our midst individuals, youths and adults, who trot the Chicano/a landscape calling themselves "Hispanics" and speaking of their "Hispanic" Raza. This sad state of affairs derives, in part, from the mainstream media, politicians, and government officials. It emanates also from some of "our" leaders and scholars who find it too easy to willingly traverse the path of political and material expediency. Thus, Navarro's book will allow some of our "elders" who left *el movimiento* to recapture their historical memory and, perhaps, even return home. In the past two or three years, moreover, the emergence of a new generation of Chicana/o warriors has become increasingly visible, particularly in the Midwest and in California. Navarro poses to them the challenge of picking up where their elders left off and continuing the struggle for Chicano/a liberation. Venceremos!

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