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### Author

Rodriguez, Elvia

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Covering the Chicano Movement: Examining Chicano Activism  
Through Chicano, American, African American, and Spanish-  
Language Periodicals, 1965-1973

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Elvia Rodriguez

December 2013

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Clifford Trafzer, Chairperson

Dr. Rebecca Kugel

Dr. Anthony Macias

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The Dissertation of Elvia Rodriguez is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Covering the Chicano Movement: Examining Chicano Activism  
Through Chicano, American, African American, and Spanish-  
Language Periodicals, 1965-1973

by

Elvia Rodriguez

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in History  
University of California, Riverside, December 2013  
Dr. Clifford Trafzer, Chairperson

From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, people of Mexican descent mobilized in pursuit for civil rights. This activism was the Chicano Movement. In California, the Movement's major campaigns consisted of the Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers' struggles for labor rights; the 1968 school blow-outs, coordinated by Chicano students in Los Angeles protesting a broken educational system; and the National Chicano Moratorium, led by Rosalio Muñoz, which opposed Chicanos' participation in the Vietnam War. To keep abreast of developments and further the Movement's agenda, Chicanos established their own periodicals. Activists also maintained Chicano publications were needed because the mainstream press was racist and did not

accurately depict the Movement. This claim opened a research path to examine how other periodicals covered the Chicano Movement in California. This study examines how Chicano activism was reported in the Chicano, African American, and Spanish language presses as well as local and national American publications. Looking at the Movement through these distinct lenses sheds light on the unique position people of Mexican ancestry hold in the United States -a people suspended between two cultures- and how other ethnic groups understood/or misunderstood the Chicano community.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction..... 1

Chapter 1..... 15

Chapter 2..... 62

Chapter 3..... 101

Chapter 4..... 159

Chapter 5..... 189

Chapter 6..... 218

Bibliography..... 246

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 .....	77
Figure 2 .....	79
Figure 3. ....	81
Figure 4. ....	82
Figure 5. ....	155
Figure 6. ....	156

## **Introduction**

Newspapers are logical sources to turn to when examining the past. Newspapers are usually accessible and one expects a certain level of objectivity that ideally translates to accurate depictions of historical events. Scholars investigating the Chicano Movement have also used newspapers in their research. But it is not enough to gather information from a particular document, that source must also be understood on its own terms to truly understand what it is saying. Chicano publications for instance were very different from those in the mainstream press. Chicanos established their own periodicals with the intent of keeping Movement participants informed but also to mobilize people. Activists also maintained Chicano publications were needed because the mainstream press was racist and did not accurately depict the Movement. This contention then opened a research path to examine how non-Movement periodicals addressed Chicano activism in California. This study looks at the Movement as it was reported in the Chicano, African American, and Spanish language presses as well as local and national American publications. Looking at the Movement through these

distinct sources not only presents the history of Chicano civil rights, but also addresses how this unique community was understood, or misunderstood.

It has been said defining what is a "Chicano" is as difficult to describe as the soul. In its most basic meaning a Chicano is an American of Mexican ancestry, but that one word—"Chicano"—signified a much more elaborate identity. The term "Chicano" was empowering. It fostered a strong and proud identity and raised political consciousness. To many people, rejecting the designation of "Mexican American" was like breaking off the shackles of oppression and discrimination, they refused to accept a status as a conquered and subjugated people. Rather than assimilating to American society, Chicanos developed their own culture, one honoring their indigenous heritage. Though Chicanos felt a strong connection to their past, they also demanded the rights and opportunities they were entitled to as United States citizens. Though born on American soil, people of Mexican descent, like many other minorities, were discriminated against and often denied political representation, an adequate education, and gainful employment. Through activism (largely civil, but

at times also militant), Chicanos campaigned for justice and a better tomorrow.

The Chicano Movement was not the first time people of Mexican ancestry sought equality in the American socioeconomic structure. Mexican American activism in the first half of the twentieth century largely consisted of assimilation campaigns and reform through the political system. The Mexican American generation believed they would be accepted as citizens if they immersed themselves in American culture. Latinos' Americanization efforts ultimately failed and more often than not continued to be treated as second class citizens politically, economically, and in society in general. When the sons and daughters of these Mexican Americans came of age, they too wanted change, but unlike their forerunners these youngsters sought reform on their own terms not by trying to integrate to the system that only rejected them. Chicanos perceived Mexican Americans as conformist and conservative and wanted nothing to do with that type of activism.

The social activism Chicanos undertook was as complex as their identity and varied drastically from campaigns undertaken by Mexican Americans before them. Rather than looking at the Chicano Movement as a single undertaking, it

may be better understood as a conglomeration of causes. From the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, Chicanos mobilized in pursuit for civil rights.<sup>1</sup> The geography of the Movement was concentrated in the American Southwest. Chicanos were active in urban centers from Los Angeles to Denver and in rural settings like Delano, California and Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico. The diversity in the Movement's geography mirrored the diversity of interests and agendas of *la causa*. The campaigns of the Chicano Movement included the pursuit of political representation and therefore Chicanos created political parties such as *La Raza Unida Party*. In the San Joaquin Valley, César Chávez and United Farm Workers boycotted and marched to secure better working conditions for farmworkers. In New Mexico, Reies López Tijerina led the land grant movement in efforts of regaining land Chicanos believed they rightfully owned. The Crusade for Justice led by Corky Gonzales focused on ending discrimination against Chicanos in Denver and organized conferences attended by Latino youths throughout the Southwest. Other Movement activists sought educational

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<sup>1</sup> A note on terminology: I will use "*la causa*" (the cause), "the Movement," "el movimiento" as synonyms for the Chicano Movement. I will use the terms "Chicano/Chicana," "Latino," and "Hispanic" interchangeably. "Mexican American" will generally be reserved for people of Mexican ancestry who were more conservative compared to Chicanos and/or were of an older generation.

reform and thus organized school walk-outs, known as blowouts, Southern California and the established student organizations, such as *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán* (MEChA), on college campuses. Other organizations included the militant Brown Berets that fought to end police brutality in the *barrios* of East L.A.. Still, other Chicanos came together to protest the high casualty rates of Hispanic servicemen in the war in Vietnam and organized the Chicano Moratorium Committee. In this study, I will concentrate on the Movement as it unfolded in California. More specifically, on Cesar Chavez's unionizing campaigns, the 1968 school walkouts in Los Angeles and the National Chicano Moratorium march on August 29, 1970. These campaigns are among the most iconic in the Movement.

Although Chicanos fought for distinct causes, one of the unifying themes in the Movement was activists' desire to reap the benefits of American society; political participation, economic opportunities, and equality. Chicanos wanted to reform the system that treated them as second class citizens. That objective however, went hand-in-hand with another Movement principle; cultural recognition. In other words, Chicanos wanted to opportunities and rights that came with American

citizenship, since they were American, but wanted to retain the connection to their ancestors' bronze culture.

Arguably, Chicanos gravitated to the glory of indigenous civilizations to regain some of the pride taken from them by the white establishment. They preferred to see themselves as descendants of great and noble warriors, and powerful Mesoamerican civilizations over the notion that they were a conquered people in the United States.

However, their cultural ties to Mexico and the country's geographic proximity to the United States complicated Chicanos' acceptance to American society. Consequently, other Americans usually considered people of Mexican ancestry, even if they were legal citizens, outsiders.

Part of Chicanos' connection to their *mestizo* past was the concept of *Aztlán*. "Rooted in the past, *Aztlán* was a vision for the future."<sup>2</sup> Geographically, *Aztlán* occupied the states encompassing the American Southwest. According to Chicanos, this was the land their ancestors occupied before moving south where they later established the Aztec empire. It was also, *la raza* argued, the land the United

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<sup>2</sup> Lee Bebout, *Mythohistorical Interventions: The Chicano Movement and its Legacies*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 77. See also Rafael Perez-Torres, "Refiguring Aztlán," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 22, no. 2 (1997).



States stole from Mexico in the Mexican-American War. In the twentieth century, Chicanos claimed the territory Mexico lost in 1848 as their own. *Aztlan* also became a cultural and political tool to mobilize Chicanos. The press was another key tool in Chicano activism.

The many groups of the Movement stayed informed about each other's activities in part through the newspapers of the Chicano Press. The collaborate nature of the Chicano press allowed publications to reprint each other's stories resulting in larger readership. In a time before 24-hour news channels and the internet's instantaneous delivery of information, a newspaper in Delano reporting on a strike in Texas may have been one of the few, if not the only way, a person would have known about these events. Similarly, feminists in Los Angeles could draw from stories printed by like-minded women in New Mexico. Chicano periodicals certainly raised awareness about the Movement, but they also narrowed the distance between the citizens of *Aztlan*.

Chicano History is often subdivided into the following political generations: The Immigrant Generation (1910-1930), The Mexican American Generation (1930-1965), and The Chicano Generation (1965-1975). I will focus on the Chicano generation in this work, but will also briefly discuss the

Mexican American generation as juxtaposition to Chicano activism. While the general periodization is set from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, the organization of this study is by publication type rather than chronologically. Each chapter is devoted to a specific sort of periodical; Chicano papers, publications based in Los Angeles, national magazines, and back to Movement sources but this time looking at Chicanas' contributions.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the Movement's major campaigns and leaders. Although the focus of this work is on activism in California, I review the Movement to highlight the contribution of other campaigns and the Movement's diversity. Delving into the history of Chicano civil rights also helps gauge the content and focus of Chicano papers.

Chapter 2 addresses the publications that came from Chicanos themselves. Hundreds of periodicals emerged in the course of the Movement. They were prolific throughout California, but reached places as far removed from *Aztlan* as Wisconsin. There was variation between Chicano papers themselves, reflecting the diverse causes of the Movement. Some were entirely independent while others were associated with colleges or specific Chicano organizations. The

Chicano periodicals examined here are *El Malcriado*, *La Causa*, and *La Raza*. *El Malcriado* was the United Farm Workers' publication based in Delano, California. *El Malcriado* was very much a tool of the union and its content seldom deviated from issues that affected farmworkers. The Brown Berets in Los Angeles produced *La Causa*. This paper represents the more radical branch of Chicano activism. Also based in the City of Angels, *La Raza* reported on a wide-range of Chicano matters. *La Raza* developed into one of the longest running and more sophisticated magazines of the entire Chicano press. *La Raza* was an independent publication, where *El Malcriado* and *La Causa* existed to serve their specific organizations. Limited resources and inexperienced staff made publishing on a regular basis challenging for some publications, but Chicanos' commitment to the cause propelled the papers forward. These publications lacked objectivity, but they never pretended to be impartial. The papers Chicanos wrote had the clear purpose of promoting and advancing the Movement.

Chapter 3 consists of examining newspapers based in Los Angeles. Since much of the Movement took place in Southern California this work examines the major publications from the city's largest communities; *Los*

*Angeles Times* representing the establishment or white press, the African American community's leading paper was the *Los Angeles Sentinel* and *La Opinión* was the premier newspaper for Mexican Americans. *La Opinión* and the *Sentinel* are also sources scholars have not always analyzed when researching the Movement. While stories in the *Sentinel* were few and far between they were well written and African Americans sympathized with the Chicanos' cause because they too encountered discrimination in the Golden State. African Americans understood Chicanos, but overall were not overly concerned with the Movement.

The *Times* and *La Opinión* published more extensively on the Movement than did the *Sentinel*. Reports on the Movement found in the *Los Angeles Times* were usually informative and objective. But the *Los Angeles Times* was not always concerned with Latinos' affairs. In the 1960s the *Times* was refashioned under the leadership of Otis Chandler and the modernized paper expanded to cover the Chicano community. The paper also benefited from Ruben Salazar's contributions. The legendary Latino reporter wrote on the struggles of *barrio* people and his work became like a bridge between Hispanic Angelenos and the rest of the city. Chicanos at times argued that the mainstream

media was racist and distorted Movement news, but that was not the case with the *Los Angeles Times*. *La Opinión* on the other hand was highly critical of Chicano activism.

*La Opinión* was established in 1926 by Ignacio E. Lozano. The paper has the distinction of being the longest running, continuously published Spanish-language daily in the United States. Lozano's paper became a favorite among Los Angeles Mexican American community. The paper's reports on the Chicano Movement, however, were often dismissive of activists' efforts. *La Opinión* was more attuned to Mexican American's outlook than to Chicanos. *La Opinión* displayed the disparity between Mexican American and Chicano activism. Although they were of the same ethnic group, their tactics for reform varied and at times, created generational rifts.

Having examined Movement events in the local press, Chapter 4 then looks magazines with national audiences. Only a few national magazines also reported on Chicanos. *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, *LIFE* were among the national publications that did reported on the Chicano Movement. But the coverage was extremely limited. Less than a dozen articles on the Movement appeared in these magazines in over a decade of Chicano activism. Chicanos often argued

American society marginalized them and the scarcity of stories in national magazines would certainly support that argument. The absence of Chicanos on the pages of national periodicals suggested the American public largely overlooked *la raza's* activism. Hunter S. Thompson wrote about the National Chicano Moratorium for *Rolling Stone*. Hunter S. Thompson was one of the counter-culture's icons. His article "Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan" masterfully captured Chicanos' frustrations with Los Angeles' power structure in the months following the Chicano Moratorium. At the time it appeared, Thompson's report was the lengthiest piece *Rolling Stone* had published. The familiarity Thompson established between his subject and readers was largely missing in *Time* and *LIFE*. These renowned magazines —chose for this work because they were established and highly respect publications— covered Chavez's United Farm Workers and produced reports ranging from aloof to mild-engagement.

Chapter 5 deals with women's writings and returns to Chicano sources, but the publications in this chapter are examined with the specific purpose of capturing females' experience in the Movement. While activists in the Chicano Movement sought to eliminate discrimination and oppression

for *la raza*, sexism was present in many Chicano organizations and many Chicanas encountered inequality in the way of *machismo*. Tired of the sexist treatment women began to publish articles to encourage Chicanas to challenge *machismo* in the Movement and in the family. *El Grito del Norte*, *Regeneración*, and *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* showcased the writing of Chicanas. Women primarily wrote about the limitations they encountered within the Movement and the family and argued that education was a major outlet for Chicanas to improve their lives. These papers reveal that women's activism was burdened by sexism in the Movement, but in spite of this hardship Chicanas remained committed to the cause.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the Chicano, American, African American, and Spanish-language periodicals surveyed. Scrutinizing the Movement's coverage in these assorted periodicals allows scholars to gain a better understanding of the Movement's print culture which has been so widely used to reconstruct the Chicano past. This study also aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of Chicano and Chicana activism.

This investigation employs specific terminology: I will use "*la causa*" (the cause), "the Movement," "el

movimiento" as synonyms for the Chicano Movement. The terms "Chicano/Chicana," "Latino," and "Hispanic" will be used interchangeably. "Mexican American" will generally be reserved for people of Mexican ancestry who were more conservative compared to Chicanos and/or were of an older generation. The distinction is made because individuals who identified as Chicanos were more confrontational and boisterous in their desire for socio-economic change than Mexican Americans who generally wanted improvements to come by working through the system. *Aztlan* is also used on occasion to describe the American Southwest. In terms of newspapers, I use "institutional papers" to describe publications that served only one specific Chicano organization. "Independent papers" refer to publications that covered all Movement occurrences. *Aztlan* is also used on occasion to describe the American Southwest.



## Chapter 1

### History of the Movement

The Chicano Movement was comprised of disparate activities throughout the Southwest. From roughly 1965 to 1975, activism took place in both rural and urban settings. In California, the Movement consisted of Cesar Chavez's farm labor union, the militant Brown Berets, school walkouts in Los Angeles, and the Chicano antiwar rally known as the Moratorium. The Movement's best known campaigns outside of the Golden State included Corky Gonzales' Crusade for Justice in Denver, *La Raza Unida* Party, and Reies López Tijerina's land-grants alliance in New Mexico. Although most Chicano leaders supported one another, by in large each campaign took place independently. Unfortunately, one of the things Movement groups did have in common was the limited success they achieved. Though activists were passionate about their causes most Movement objectives were unmet and those that were, did not last long. The Chicano Movement however was not a complete loss, it brought attention to the struggles of one of the nation's largest populations. Possibly for

the first time, Chicanos were politically and culturally visible.

One of the first people to challenge the status quo for the good of Latinos was Cesar Chavez. Before Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta arrived in the dusty grape fields of Delano no one believed farmworkers could successfully organize. There was plenty of labor legislation in the United States, little applied to farmworker. The National Labor Relations Act itself excluded field laborers. But after lengthy struggles, farmworker established a union, obtained wage increases, benefits, and some measure of job security. With these gains, Chavez, Huerta, and the U.F.W. succeeded where so many others failed or not cared enough to make things different.

Whether it came from his mother's advice, his faith, or personal experiences, Cesar Chavez always had a clear sense of right and wrong and unwavering determination to stand up to injustices. The second child of Librado and Juana Chavez, Cesar came into the world on March 31, 1927 in the desert town of Yuma, Arizona. His parents owned a ranch and ran a general store. Librado even served as the

postmaster.<sup>3</sup> The Great Depression however radically altered the lives of the Chavez family. The Dust Bowl that ravaged much of the Southwest made it nearly impossible for Librado and his family to make money. Unable to pay the taxes on the property, the county took possession of it. After losing the ranch, the family headed to California in search of work. The Chavezs moved throughout the Golden State following whatever jobs the crops provided.

Moving to California and the family's itinerant lifestyle deeply affected Chavez. To Cesar the move West felt like he lost his freedom. No longer having a home of their own, the family stayed in bug-infested rooms, shacks, and tents where, as Chavez put, he slept "between the dirt and the sky."<sup>4</sup> All the moving also altered the children's education opportunities. Chavez attended over 30 schools and dropped out completely by the eighth grade. The future union leader admitted he did not care for school especially since many institutions he attended were segregated and teachers punished students for speaking Spanish.<sup>5</sup> As a

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<sup>3</sup> Jacques E. Levy, *Autobiography of La Causa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>5</sup> John C. Hammerback, *The Rhetorical Career of Cesar Chavez* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 13.

young adult, Chavez remained employed in back-breaking jobs. His life however took a radical turn while living in San Jose, California. It was there that Chavez met Fred Ross and became involved with the Community Service Organization (CSO). The CSO mobilized and organized people to get communities politically engaged.

Chavez's career organizing began with some hesitation. Chavez avoided Ross and resisted his multiple recruitment attempts. After some insistence Cesar agreed to hear Ross out and was a changed man thereafter. Chavez spent all his free time working for the CSO and learning how to organize people. His work with Ross eventually took Chavez to Southern where he remained until 1962 when he headed to Delano. Throughout his years with the CSO Cesar never lost sight of organizing farmworkers, he petitioned his employer for assistance to build a farm labor union, but they did not commit to the idea. From his first house meeting in San Jose Cesar committed himself to help the downtrodden and in spite of some initial setbacks, he did not give up on *la causa*. In Delano, Chavez and United Farm Workers not only took on the difficult task of organizing workers, but they also challenged Agri-business giants that

not only controlled the fields but also held considerable influence in Sacramento.

Farmworkers were among the most exploited laborers in the state, and the Bracero Program augmented their hardships. Cesar first learned of the difficulties the Bracero program presented to fieldworkers when he arrived in Oxnard, California. Growers (wealth ranch owners) greatly benefited from the labor of newly arrived Mexican workers, but American residents who previously tended the crops saw their already limited opportunities diminish if not entirely disappear. Migrant workers who toiled in the Golden State prior to and during the Depression were suddenly out of work since farm owners could easily import workers from Mexico and pay them much less. Cesar described the Bracero program as "a vicious racket of the grossest order."<sup>6</sup> The union's stance against imported labor (especially one meant to undercut farmworkers' wages) has at times cast the labor organization as anti-immigrant. However, it was really the negative impact outsiders had on wages and the growers' exploitation of foreign workers that union members opposed.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 130.

Once Chavez's efforts got underway, he recruited all the help he could get. His family was closely involved in most union activities. Cesar's wife, Helen, kept the books for the organization's credit union while his brothers and cousins helped in membership recruitment and day-to-day operations. Union leaders drove up and down the Central Valley talking to people about improving working conditions. Often time new recruits were asked not to discuss the emerging group because Chavez and company did not want growers to find out about and thwart their organizing efforts. Slowly membership in the union increased and in 1965 the U.F.W. engaged in its first strike. It took place in Wasco, California (a small town just south of Delano) at a rose grafting facility. Grafters did not report to work and soon management agreed to raise wages. As membership in the union grew so did the group's campaigns. The next U.F.W. boycotts targeted Schenley farms and DiGiorgio Corporation, one of the wealthiest companies in the Valley. By 1967, employees at both companies voted to be represented by United Farm Workers.

One of the union's biggest triumphs came on July 29, 1970. That summer day saw twenty-six ranch owners signed

contracts with Chavez's organization. Among the ranchers was John Guimara who vowed he would never sign with Chavez and tried every dirty trick in the book (including rigging elections, using other companies union labels to sell their fruit, and firing people who supported unionization) to prevent his workers from joining the union. The contracts encompassed nearly all the table grape growers in Delano and gave benefits to about 7,000 farmworkers. The agreement granted workers pay increases, provided some benefits, and called for responsible pesticide use (e.g.: not spraying poisons while worker were in the fields). The deal with the grape growers came after a five year struggle which included strikes and a hugely popular national boycott. Many of the union's contracts expired before the 1980s and few were later re-signed. Over time the union's influence declined and today, workers in Delano are largely unorganized, but they do still have many of the benefits the U.F.W. won in the 70s.

The union's victories were due in part to Dolores Huerta's negotiation skills. Chavez recruited Dolores when he decided to leave the CSO. Huerta was a gifted organizer and seemingly destined to serve her community. She was born in New Mexico but move to Stockton, California after

her parents divorced. Unlike Cesar, Huerta had a more middle-class upbringing; her mother owned her own business and Dolores even attended college. As a child she was a Girl Scout and helped establish a social club for her peers. After finishing her education, Dolores worked as a school teacher and wanted to help the destitute students in her class, but she realized being in the classroom limited the amount of people she could help. Though it was a risk to her and her family, Huerta left the security of her teaching job and began working with Fred Ross and the CSO. From 1955 to the early 1960s Huerta gained valuable experience organizing with the CSO. Her work in the organization also led to her working relationship with Chavez. When he floated the idea of organizing farmworkers, Dolores once again left a comfortable job and relocated to California's Central Valley.

Life in Delano was not easy for the union founders. The Huerta and Chavez families mostly lived off the charitable donations poor farmworkers gave them. In spite of the difficult start, the union was successful and Huerta was instrumental in many of the group's victories. U.F.W.'s demands and achievements however also brought undue criticism on Dolores. She recalled being judged for



spending more time working than at home with her children (when the union started she had seven kids, four more came later). Huerta could not escape the trapping to her gender when it came to family, but as a leader to *campesinos*, being a woman was not an issue, she explained there was "no reaction from the farm workers to my role as a woman within the union. They will appreciate anybody who will come help them."<sup>7</sup> The union helped a lot. In 2012, President Barack Obama awarded Huerta the Presidential Medal of Freedom. At the award ceremony President Obama thanked the union leader for being gracious when he told her he "had stolen her slogan, 'Si se puede' (yes we can)." "Knowing her I'm pleased she let me off easy because *Dolores does not play*" added the President.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Huerta meant business. Whether it was sitting at the negotiation table, traveling in support of the grape boycott, or standing up to teamsters to prevent the transportation of non-union fruit, Dolores gave the workers and union her all. Her legacy in the union and in the Chicano Movement as well is that of a leader. Within the U.F.W. she may have been a valuable

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<sup>7</sup> Mario T. Garcia, *Dolores Huerta Reader* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 166.

<sup>8</sup> CSPAN telecast of the Presidential Medal of Freedom awards ceremony, May 2012.

asset not burdened by pre-designated gender roles, but seen from any other angle, Huerta's experience and role as a leader is exceptional.

Another unique feature of the farmworkers' union was its pacifist tactics. One of the hallmarks of Chavez's activism was non-violence. Inspired by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Chavez insisted all union campaigns be peaceful. He believed violence was a shortcut to victory and would ultimately cause more harm than good. The farmworkers' commitment was at times tested by growers who often had armed guards at the picket lines. Dolores herself was once thrown off a loading dock, but although union members were sometimes the victims of violence Chavez taught them not to retaliate. Aside from the believing in the principle behind nonviolence, farmworkers would do themselves a disservice by engaging in violent acts. There were times when workers suggested hurting growers' personnel or setting fire to fields. These actions of course would demonize the union and cost it public support. Fasting was another pacifist tactic Chavez employed. The union president usually ended his fasts celebrating a Catholic mass and had communion be the first thing his body received. Since most farmworkers were Catholic it was not

uncommon to see images of the Virgin of Guadalupe in many union events. This was certainly the case when members marched from Delano to Sacramento, California. Echoing the Mexican tradition of pilgrimages, in 1966 farmworkers headed to the state capitol to bring attention to their cause. All through the nearly 300 mile trek, marchers sang, prayed, and held a standard of the Virgin Mother. U.F.W. always wanted their actions to be driven by morality and justice.

Starting in 1965, farmworkers picketed, boycotted, and executed strikes against powerful growers. For ages, ranchers treated the men and women who harvested the fields as little more than slaves. Chavez himself experienced the exploitation firsthand and was relentless in realizing in his objectives of improving these people's lives.

Ultimately, United Farm Workers earned people toiling in the field some financial benefits but certainly also had a great impact in restoring workers' dignity. To the ever-humble union leaders, the struggle had always been for the good of the people.

While Chavez and United Farm Workers represented Movement activity in California's rural areas, The Brown Berets, Los Angeles schools' walkouts, and the National

Chicano Moratorium accounted for urban activism. The Brown Berets was one of the Movement's most intriguing organizations. At first glance the group seems militant and radical, but digging deeper, the Berets were committed to furthering *la causa*. Initially, the group did a lot to help Chicanos, but as the Movement progressed it seems the Berets focused more on self-aggrandizement and less on serving the people. Headed by David Sanchez, the Berets began as a single group in East L.A. and grew to be a national organization. In 1972, Sanchez called for the Berets to disband, but many local branches continued even after he stepped down as head.

The origins of the Berets are also unique. The radical group stemmed from a youth leadership conference sponsored by the Los Angeles County Human Rights Commission in 1966, when a group of young men and women established a community service organization which they called, Young Citizens for Community Action. Members included David Sanchez, Moctesuma Esparza, Ralph Ramirez, Rachel Ochoa, George Licon, John Ortiz, and Vickie Castro who served as president ran the organization. Some of the individuals involved in Community Action worked for Julian Nava's campaign as he sought a seat in the Los Angeles County

School Board. In 1967 David Sanchez was elected president of the Mayor's Youth Committee. According to the announcement in the Church of the Epiphany's newsletter, at seventeen years old, Sanchez already exhibited "interest and good ability in community organization."<sup>9</sup> In a very prophetic observation, the newsletter ended its report noting, "the citizens of [Los Angeles] will be hearing much from David in the future."<sup>10</sup> The like-minded Chicanos gathered to discuss the challenges facing their community, chief among them lack of educational opportunities and abuses/harassment at the hands of law enforcement officials. Later the organization went as Young Chicanos for Community Action (YCCA). By 1968, YCCA entered a new phase, and took a more militant stance. The youths identified themselves as the Brown Berets and functioned like a paramilitary unit in the *barrio*.

The organization was also aided by the Church of the Epiphany, a local Episcopal parish headed by Father John

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<sup>9</sup> Church of the Epiphany Newsletter, February 1967, Church of the Epiphany Collection, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, Los Angeles, CA.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Luce.<sup>11</sup> The financial support provided by the church allowed the young activists to set up a meeting place for its members, *La Piranya* coffeehouse. The coffeehouse welcomed artists, poets and civil rights activists, including Reies Tijerina, Cesar Chavez and Stokely Carmichael. It also served as an office for the YCCA. *La Piranya* was a productive space for the young Chicanos, but it also drew the attention of local law enforcement officials. Gloria Arellanes, the Berets Minister of Correspondence and Finance, recalled officers from the Sheriff's Department monitoring the coffeehouse, flashing bright lights through the windows while members held meetings.<sup>12</sup> Carlos Montes (who became a minister in the Brown Berets) claimed,

The police went at it -every night, every night, every night... anybody under eighteen would be picked up and held for six hours before they would release them, and they would tell their parents not to allow their kids to go [to *La Piranya*] because they were Communists, they were dope pushers, they were addicts.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Luce and his Church of the Epiphany played a role in many of the Movement's most significant events including Cesar's unionizing, the L.A. School blowouts, the establishment of the Brown Berets and with the Chicano Moratorium.

<sup>12</sup> Gloria Arellanes, interview by author, taped recording, El Monte, CA., 17 June 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Ian Haney López, *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2003), 181.

The group's café did not stay open very long, "Plagued by inadequate licensing, curfew violations, insufficient funds and 'police harassment,' La Piranya closed on March 3, 1968, three days before the East Los Angeles High School walkouts."<sup>14</sup>

The Berets had a very specific idea on the type of member they wanted in their group. According to Marguerite Marin, "Prior to formal acceptance into the organization, the Brown Berets carefully screened each recruit. The leadership carefully scrutinized the recruit's personal background and previous organizational experience."<sup>15</sup> The Berets were not a gang and rather sought to rehabilitate Chicanos who had previously run into trouble. As one of their recruitment ads in *La Causa* noted, the Berets wanted to transform "bato loco[s]" (crazy guys) into "revolutionists."<sup>16</sup> Recruits pledged absolute loyalty to the organization and committed to its hierarchy and disciplined structure. The organization set codes of conduct to maintain discipline among its members. The

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<sup>14</sup> Ruben Salazar, "Brown Berets Hail 'La Raza' and Scorn the Establishment," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1969.

<sup>15</sup> Marguerite Marin, *Social Protest in an Urban Barrio: A Study of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1974* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 148.

<sup>16</sup> "Revolutionists", *La Causa*, April 1971 pg. 10-11.

rules included Berets be courteous to everyone in the *barrio*, members were not to drink, to treat women in a respectful manner. In addition to the written rules, the young Chicanos promoted discipline through military-style drills. The organization quickly expanded and chapters were established throughout the Southwest. Over sixty branches emerged, most throughout California. The Los Angeles chapter however remained the controlling body of the national organization.

The signature look of the members consisted of a Khaki uniform and a yellow patch displaying a pair of rifles over a cross fastened to their brown berets. David Sanchez explained the meaning behind the now iconic cap, "Brown symbolizes the color of the Chicano's skin, we believe that brown is beautiful. The beret symbolized guerrilla warfare."<sup>17</sup> The Berets' rhetoric exalted masculinity. They wanted to serve, observe, and protect the community, and men were called upon to do the job.

As part of serving the community, the Berets opened a free clinic in East L.A. and Sanchez chose Gloria Arellanes to be the clinic's administrator. The Ford Foundation,

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<sup>17</sup> Marin, *Social Protest in an Urban Barrio*, 146.



United Way, and Campaign for Human Development helped finance the clinic.<sup>18</sup> Arellanes recalled the clinic serving a very real need for Los Angeles' Mexican and Mexican-American community, as many people did not seek medical treatment at city or county facilities for fear of being deported. In addition to medical attention the clinic conducted immunization drives in the barrio and raised awareness about STDs and birth control in high schools. The men in the Berets did not know how to run the clinic because they rarely worked in it. On the contrary, Arellanes explained that men partied in the building at night and would at times leave the facilities messy which the women would have to clean the next day. Arellanes remained at the helm of the clinic until late 1969 when a rift between members led to her departure from the Berets.

The YCCA that precede them, as well as the Berets themselves had female members and openly recruited women. And unlike many other groups in the Movement, the Berets leadership included a Chicana. The group's code of conduct also explicitly stipulated that women were to be respect. The rhetoric however was often disregarded in practice.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 155.

Arellanes spoke to her fellow ministers in the Berets about women's treatment but nothing was done to resolve the matter. Eventually sexism became a major problem in the groups and as she explained it, "things were falling apart."<sup>19</sup> Finally, Arellanes threatened to leave the Berets and take all the women with her if the machismo did not stop. It did not stop and Gloria, along with many other members left the Brown Berets. The women who broke away started an organization of their own in 1970. The organization was called *Las Adelitas de Aztlan*. *Adelitas* were women who had followed their men to war during the Mexican Revolution. Chicanas adopted the name which not only represented women's strength, but it also drew connections to Mexican culture. Though there were many dissatisfied Chicanas participating in the movement, *Las Adelitas* never really gained enough momentum to get off the ground.

In 1972 members of the Berets staged a brief "takeover" of Santa Catalina Island. The group's justification was that the islands technically belonged to Mexico, at least according to their interpretation of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Neither the American or

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Mexican governments gave the Berets' actions any mind. The takeover largely consisted of Berets camping out in the island. After a few weeks, authorities returned the protestors to the mainland and charged them with trespassing effectively ending the Berets' occupation.

Law enforcement posed a major problem for the Berets. The L.A.P.D. placed informants in the organization and according to some Berets, these officials encouraged criminal activity that could later be used against the group. One such incident took place at the Baltimore Hotel. Ronald Regan was speaking at the Baltimore and in protest some Beret members started fires in the premises. Six Chicanos were arrested but argued they were not responsible for all the damage. It was later discovered a Beret member present at the hotel was actually a police officer and the Chicanos maintained the officer prompted encouraged the vandalism. As the Movement went on law enforcement agencies, from L.A.P.D. to the F.B.I., continued to monitor the Berets. The constant police presence coupled with the increased violence in Movement events concerned Sanchez. In the fall of 1972 the Beret leader disbanded the organization. Sanchez also cited members' poor attitudes and lack of discipline as another

reason to end the Berets. Other members however did not think believe Sanchez's justifications, but believed he disbanded because his power was being challenged. Some chapters remained active in spite of Sanchez's departure.

In the four year period they existed, the Brown Berets did not ask for change, they demanded it. The organization that began at city hall and developed in a church reimagined itself as the shock troops of the Chicano Movement. They were radical and took an aggressive stance in their pursuit of civil rights. Like most other organizations, some of their pursuits were successful, while others were not. Ultimately increased violence and police infiltrations deteriorated the Berets unity and strength.

In the Movement's heyday, the Brown Berets were also instrumental in Los Angeles' school walkouts and National Chicano Moratorium. School for most Chicano students in Los Angeles was far from educational. For the students who did not drop out, classes were little more than vocational training. Teachers even punished students who spoke Spanish. Dissatisfaction among Chicanos reached its peak in 1968 when "approximately 15,000 students walked out of classes from Woodrow Wilson, Garfield, Abraham Lincoln,

Theodore Roosevelt, Belmont, Venice and Jefferson High Schools”<sup>20</sup> The young men and women protesting wanted bilingual education, a curriculum that was more culturally relevant, more Hispanic faculty members, and more guidance towards higher education.

Leaving classes and heading to the streets however was risky, especially with the police presents. Organizers thus recruited members of the Brown Berets to protect the students. Berets literally placed themselves between the youngsters and the police. Many people however accused the radical group of manipulating the students into walking out of class. Moreover, since authorities could not take legal action against minors, several Berets were charged with conspiracy to disturb the peace. Eventually prosecutors dropped the charges and no one was punished for the walkouts. Beret members however were not the only ones charged in the walkout conspiracy.

Sal Castro, one of the few Chicano teachers at Lincoln High helped students organize the walkouts and Castro was targeted. The charges of course resulted in Castro being

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<sup>20</sup> Kelley Simpson, “East L.A. Blowouts: Walking Out for Justice in the Classrooms.”<http://www.kcet.org/social/departures/landofsunshine/highland-park/east-la-blowout-walking-out-for-justice-in-the-classrooms.html>. Accessed July 18, 2013.

released from his job. Like with the Berets, Castro was not prosecuted, and thanks to petitions and protests by Chicano parents and students, he was also able to return to teaching. In late March, students met with the Los Angeles Board of Education. Board members were seemingly sympathetic and "agree with 99% of student demands, yet [could] not follow through citing lack of funding."<sup>21</sup> When all was said and done, the students' objectives went unmet, but the walkouts did propel other Chicanos to activism in the Movement.

After the walkouts Chicano Angelenos became more engaged in the Movement and in 1970 thousands of people took to the streets of East L.A. to protest the war in Vietnam. The antiwar rally was known as the National Chicano Moratorium. The march that gathered so many people and garnered so much attention began with one person, Rosalio Muñoz. Aside from his stint as U.C.L.A. student body president Munoz was not particularly inclined towards social activism. But all that changed when he received a draft letter. As Muñoz could have easily gotten out of his expected military service, but as he explained, he knew that if he applied for a draft deferment another Chicano

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

would just be put in his place.<sup>22</sup> Muñoz believed his middle-class upbringing disqualified him from taking action in the Movement, but the draft notice, made him realize there was something he could do for Chicanos. While the Movement was addressing many injustices and the Vietnam War had taken many Chicano lives, Muñoz did not see the Hispanic community protesting the War and he thought his refusal to enlist could serve as the impetus for a Chicano anti-war movement.

On September 16, 1969 Muñoz was expected to be inducted to the military, but upon reporting to the draft board he was informed his induction was delayed. From that moment on Muñoz and his long-time friend Ramses Noriega traveled the Southwest raising awareness about the war in Vietnam and staging protest marches called moratoriums. Muñoz and Noriega established the National Chicano Moratorium Committee. The Committee was tasked with organizing the largest moratorium march, scheduled for August 29, 1970. Unlike previous marches which had been local in scope, the August 29 demonstration aimed to bring Chicanos from all over the country together in Los Angeles.

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<sup>22</sup> Rosalio Muñoz, interview by author, taped recording, Los Angeles, CA., August 8, 2012.

Muñoz also invited Brown Beret leader David Sanchez to be his co-chair. Beret members also helped organize housing accommodations for participants coming in from out of town and volunteered to be peace-keepers along the march-route.

When August 29 came around all the arrangements for a peaceful demonstration had been made and doubled checked. But the Moratorium did not unfold as planned and by the end of the night thousands laid injured, businesses were looted and set ablaze, and worse of all people had lost their lives. The march hit a wrong turn when Chicanos and Los Angeles sheriff deputies clashed. The first altercation occurred at a liquor store, a few blocks away from the march, when the clerk called the police thinking customers were leaving without paying. Before long, deputies dressed in full riot-gear arrived to the park where the marchers gathered and attacked with tear gas and their batons. The day's most tragic event occurred at a bar where *L.A. Times* reporter Ruben Salazar sat enjoying a beer after covering the Moratorium. Deputies, claiming to be answering to a report of an armed man hiding-out at the Silver Dollar bar, shot into the building and killed Salazar. Any life lost is mourned, but in his distinguished career, Salazar served as a mediator between Chicano and American society. His



work also shed light on the plight of Chicanos. Salazar's death was devastating to Chicanos and the Movement as a whole.

The Movement outside of California included Corky Gonzales' Crusade for Justice and La Raza Unida Party challenging traditional politics and exalting ethnic pride, and Reies López Tijerina's Federal fighting to land reform in New Mexico. In Colorado, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales and his Crusade for Justice also worked to improve the lives of Chicanos. Gonzales' approach consisted of introducing a new idea of who Chicanos were, "It can be said, in truth, that the Crusade, and Gonzales specifically, have instilled the Chicano revolt with much of its spirit and ideology."<sup>23</sup> Gonzales strongly advocated ethnic pride and Chicano self-determination. Crusade member, Ernesto Vigil, maintains that rather than following Cesar Chavez's or Martin Luther King's pacifist model, Gonzales' "nationalist politics and sentiments were closer to those of...Malcolm X."<sup>24</sup> Gonzales and the Crusade for Justice were among the strongest proponents of Chicano Nationalism, which in essence was the

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<sup>23</sup> Armando B. Rendon, *Chicano Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 167.

<sup>24</sup> Ernesto B. Vigil, *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government's War on Dissent* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 10.

convergence of social revolution and cultural identity. According to Corky, Chicano nationalism was "the key or common denominator for mass mobilization and organization."<sup>25</sup> As a leader in the Movement, successfully tapped into that common denominator and amassed a following throughout the Southwest. His contributions to Chicano civil rights however began in his hometown, Denver, Colorado.

The youngest child of Indalesia and Federico Gonzales, Rodolfo was born in June 1928. The Gonzales family earned a living as migrant workers, following the crops across Colorado's fields. In spite of the family's itinerant lifestyle, Corky earned his high school diploma at the age of sixteen. He briefly enrolled in college, but was unable to cover the costs and dropped out after his first semester. The origin of Gonzales famous moniker can be traced to being "a precocious youngster who earned his nickname when an uncle mused that he was 'always popping off, like a cork.'"<sup>26</sup> The gutsy attitude served him well in many of his occupations later in life.

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<sup>25</sup> Rendon, *Chicano Manifesto*, 168.

<sup>26</sup> "Rodolfo Gonzales, 76; Prizefighter, Poet and Fervent Chicano Activist," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 2005.

Gonzales held several and varied jobs before emerging as a leader in the Chicano Movement. The Denver native found success in boxing. He won the National and International Amateur Championships. As a professional, Corky won over 60 fights and was ranked third in the world featherweight division.<sup>27</sup> Following his retirement from boxing Corky opened a tavern which he operated until 1958. His entrepreneurial venture continued with a bail bonds business.

According to Armando Rendon, the bonds business allowed Corky to finance a "barrio newspaper called *Viva*, the first of its kind in the city."<sup>28</sup> By 1968, *El Gallo* was up and running and like *Viva*, the newspaper Gonzales backed in the late 1950s, *El Gallo* was geared towards the Chicano community and promoted itself as *la voz de la justicia*, the voice of justice. Like many Chicano papers, its staff members were mostly volunteers. The publication was the Crusade's main informational tool and for \$2.50 subscribers received twelve issues. In an advertisement for subscriptions readers were told that "The publication of a

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<sup>27</sup> Christine Marin, *A spokesman of the Mexican American Movement: Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales and the fight for Chicano Liberation, 1966-1972* (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1977), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Rendon, *Chicano Manifesto*, 167.

revolutionary paper is equal to the taking of a city."<sup>29</sup> Much of the paper's content was dedicated to Crusade news and the oppression of Chicanos in Colorado. Though its focus was largely on organizational and local matters, the publication also included Movement stories from all over *Aztlan*, and on occasion international stories related to third-world people. *El Gallo's* masthead featured a rooster (*gallo* being the Spanish word for rooster) and a serpent which was stylized similarly to the feathered serpents of pre-Columbian Mexican art. Other visuals, such as photographs, drawings, and Mesoamerican designs were also common in *El Gallo's* pages. *El Gallo* was published on a regular basis for over a decade.

Turning his attention to politics, Corky ran for Denver City Council, but was narrowly defeated. Despite the loss Gonzales involvement with the Democratic Party continued and eventually headed Colorado's Viva Kennedy campaign. Gonzales spent the first half of the 1960s working with several political agencies:

In 1963 he worked as an agent for the Summit Fidelity and Surety Company of Colorado. Corky was later director of Denver's Neighborhood Youth Corp (NYC). The NYC was funded by the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). In 1965

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<sup>29</sup> "Subscribe," *El Gallo*, March 1969.

Gonzales was made the chairman of the board of the War on Poverty in Denver...By the following year...he was on the Steering Committee of the Anti-Poverty Program for the Southwest, on the national board of Jobs For Progress, on the community board of the Job Opportunity Center, and president of the National Citizens Committee for Relations.<sup>30</sup>

Corky's involvement with OEO-related programs concluded while heading the Neighborhood Youth Corp. He left the position having been accused by a local newspaper of showing favoritism to Latinos over African Americans and whites. Frustrated with the politics and the inefficiency of the two-party system, Gonzales left the Democratic Party. His withdrawal from traditional politics allowed Gonzales to pursue new ways to help the Chicano community.

In 1963, the former boxer formed an organization called *Los Voluntarios* (the volunteers). The group worked to gain more political opportunities for Chicanos and stop police brutality against *la raza*. *Los Voluntarios* also picketed the *Rocky Mountain News* newspaper when Corky was accused of discriminating against African Americans and whites while heading the Anti-Poverty Program. After his departure from the Democratic Party, Gonzales converted *Los Voluntarios* to the Crusade for Justice. Officially

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<sup>30</sup> Marin, *A Spokesman of the Mexican American Movement*, 3.

established in 1966, the Crusade for Justice became the nucleus of Chicano activism in Colorado. According to Vigil, Gonzales was the "sole founder" and "undisputed leader" of the organization.<sup>31</sup> Members of the Crusade for Justice took on nearly every issue that affected Chicanos in Colorado: lack of jobs, adequate housing, political participation, and with particular focus on police harassment and education reform.

Like other Chicanos, Corky thought American schools robbed Mexican-American children of their linguistic and cultural heritage, therefore the Crusaders established a school. *Escuela Tlatelolco* opened its doors in 1970 to 300 students Kindergarten through the twelfth grade.<sup>32</sup>

*Tlatelolco* allowed students to retain and take pride in their ethnic traditions. The school served students until the mid-1990s, although by 1980 it only offered elementary

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<sup>31</sup> Vigil, *The Crusade for Justice*, 3.

In *Chicano Politics: Reality & Promise 1940-1990*, Juan Gómez Quiñones offers a different take on Cory's organizations, describing the Crusade as having a "social base was comprised of approximately thirty working-class families, and it was directed by an executive board concentrating on civil rights activity, discrimination in the schools, police brutality, and cultural programs... The Crusade for Justice advocated cultural consciousness and the creation of a society based on humanism rather than competition, it was oriented toward "La Familia" and self-determination." *Chicano Politics: Reality & Promise 1940-1990*, 113.

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Aguilera, "A Family Tradition Empowers Kids to Learn Cultural Pride," *Denver Post*, July 20, 2008.

grade levels and in 1982 it was no longer working in conjunction with the Crusade.

The Crusade's efforts largely centered in Colorado but in 1967 Gonzales published his epic poem, "I am Joaquin" and became known throughout the country. It also catapulted Gonzales to the top level of leadership in the Chicano Movement. "I am Joaquin" became one of the most significant works to emerge from *el movimiento*. Gonzales' ode reached past the Rocky Mountains and struck the hearts and minds of Chicanos throughout the Southwest. As California Poet Laureate, Juan Felipe Herrera explained, "Every little barrio newspaper from Albuquerque to Berkeley published it. People slapped mimeographed copies up on walls and telephone poles."<sup>33</sup>

The poem opened detailing the despair many Chicanos felt: "Yo soy Joaquin/ lost in a world of confusion/ caught up in the whirl of a gringo society/ confused by the rules/ scorned by attitudes/ suppressed by manipulation, and destroyed by modern society..."<sup>34</sup> In Gonzales' narrative, the American social order left Hispanics defeated and

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<sup>33</sup> "Rodolfo Gonzales, 76; Prizefighter, Poet and Fervent Chicano Activist," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Rodolfo Corky Gonzales, "I am Joaquin"  
<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/latinos/joaquin.htm>

neglected, but he wanted his verses to empower Chicanos. Instead of accepting their role as second-class citizens, Corky urged Chicanos to take pride in their cultural heritage and resist the system's brutal oppression. He explained the emerging shift,

In a country that has wiped out All my history/  
Stifled all my pride/For all the glory of my  
Raza/To be sentenced to despair./Here I  
stand/Poor in money/Arrogant with pride/Bold with  
machismo/Rich in courage/And/Wealthy in spirit  
and faith./The Treaty of Hidalgo has been  
broken/And is but another treacherous promise./  
My land is lost/And stolen/My culture has been  
raped.<sup>35</sup>

To further ethnic pride and in keeping with Chicano nationalism's tenant of linking *la raza* in the United States with Mexico's past, Gonzales also referenced several historical figures in the poem:

I am Cuauhtémoc, proud and noble/ leader of men,  
king of an empire civilized/ beyond the dreams of  
the gachupín [Spaniard] Cortés.../ I am the Maya  
prince./ I am Nezahualcóyotl, great leader of the  
Chichimecas.../ I was part in blood and spirit of  
that courageous village priest/ Hidalgo who...rang  
the bell of independence.../ I fought and died for  
Don Benito Juarez, guardian of the Constitution.../  
I rode with Pancho Villa/ crude and warm, a  
tornado at full strength/ nourished and inspired  
by the passion and the fire of all his earthy  
people./ I am Emiliano Zapata...

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



These Mexican men represented and/or fought for causes – cultural recognition, political representation, and land rights– that resonated with Chicanos. The poem closed with a call to fight, not just for the oneself, but also for later generations, “I am Joaquin/I must fight/ and win this struggle/ for my sons.../ The odds are great/ But my spirit is strong/ I SHALL ENDURE!/ I WILL ENDURE!”<sup>36</sup> “I am Joaquin” did not sugar-coat the struggle ahead. The poem reminded readers it would be a difficult fight, but also assured them they were strong enough to take on that challenge. Gonzales also strengthened his people by painting Chicanos in an entirely different light than they were accustomed. America’s usual portrayal of Mexicans was that of a lazy (such as the man with the giant *sombrero* taking a nap) or uneducated person, but Corky depicted *la raza* as capable and courageous. It is no surprise then that Chicanos turned to Gonzales for guidance in the Movement.

Corky’s leadership and the promotion of cultural consciousness and self-determination also continued to develop through the Crusade’s youth conferences. Gonzales recognized the potential of young people and the need to

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

bring together activists who were engaged in disparate campaigns, therefore, the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conferences gathered Chicanos from all over the Southwest to discuss unity and participation in the Movement. The first national conference took place from March 27 to 31, 1969 and focused on "social revolution" and "cultural identity."<sup>37</sup> The issues concerning social revolution included,

Organizational techniques, Chicano politics and philosophies, methods of self-defense against the police, and the organizing of protests and demonstrations. In the cultural identity sessions, workshops centered around... Chicano poetry, Chicano art and literature, Chicano Movement newspapers, and music.<sup>38</sup>

The conference's themes were encapsulated in what became one of the Movement's most enduring and renowned texts, *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán* ("Spiritual Plan of Aztlán").

The illustrious Chicano poet, Alberto "Alurista" Urista, composed *El Plan's* famous preamble, while Gonzales authored the document's body. Alurista's preamble denounced gringo oppression, encouraged Chicano brotherhood, and fostered the independence of *Aztlán*. The

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<sup>37</sup> Marin, *A Spokesman of the Mexican American Movement*, 12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

preamble also sought to redefine the identity of Mexican American people. The poet reminded Chicanos of their indigenous heritage and their role as "civilizers" in the American continent. Rather than being an exploited people, Alurista cast Chicanos as a new people who were free and held the power to control their destiny. Like "I am Joaquin," the plan's preamble encouraged Chicanos to mobilize.

Gonzales also discussed Chicano unity, sovereignty, and activism. *El Plan* outlined organizational goals and the actions by which to execute the goals. Similar to the Crusade's objectives, the plan called for Chicano control over their lands, economy, culture, and political participation. As Gonzalez put it, "El Plan commits all levels of Chicano society...to *La Causa*" in order to achieve "liberation from oppression, exploitation, and racism."<sup>39</sup> Further echoing the Crusaders' ideas, Chicano nationalism was identified as *la raza's* unifying force. It was stated in *El Plan* that nationalism "transcends all religious, political, class, and economic factions or boundaries. Nationalism is the common denominator that all members of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 35.

La Raza can agree upon."<sup>40</sup> Corky maintained, embracing and celebrating Chicano identity would bridge the gap between people fighting for land rights in New Mexico to individuals staging walk-outs from schools and everyone in between.

The first course of action towards Chicano liberation was to disseminate *El Plan*. To do so, Gonzales asked that the document be "Presented at every meeting, demonstration, confrontation, courthouse, institution, administration, church, school, tree, building, car, and every place of human existence."<sup>41</sup> The mass distribution was made possible, in part, through Chicano newspapers which readily printed the document making it available to readers and other publications. Gonzales' goals also included economic independence, education curriculum relevant to Chicanos, cultural awareness, and community service in way of institutional assistance and community self-defense. Another important goal outlined in *El Plan* was political liberation, more specifically, the development of political party for *la raza*. Having been involved in mainstream politics, Gonzales was disillusioned and frustrated with

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 37.

the two party system, which he believed did nothing of worth for Chicanos. Gonzales and other participants would revisit this particular objective during the third liberation conference.

The proposal's strong emphasis on Chicano self-determination also marked the departure from Mexican-American's assimilationist politics.<sup>42</sup> Through the course of the Movement, *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán* served as a blueprint for Chicano activism, but the Crusade for Justice, was one of the few organizations that had any success in implementing it.

The second Chicano Youth Liberation conference began on March 25 and lasted until March 29, 1970. The meeting's primary objectives were to "call for the re-establishment of the nation of Aztlán, the formation of an independent Chicano political party, and [to confirm participation in the] national Chicano Moratorium against the war in Vietnam."<sup>43</sup> The political party became *La Raza Unida Party* (L.R.U.P.). While the conference established the party, it was by no means entirely worked out. In fact, the rift

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<sup>42</sup> Juan Gómez Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), 123.

<sup>43</sup> Marin, *A Spokesman of the Mexican American Movement*, 16.

between leaders from Texas and Colorado that would later divide the party manifested itself at the Denver conference. Aside from the political organization, participants also agreed to attend the National Chicano Moratorium. The conference helped garner support for the August 29 rally as youngsters made arrangements to visit L.A. and circulated antiwar petitions.<sup>44</sup>

The third Chicano Liberation Conference, held in the summer of 1971, focused on building up support for *La Raza Unida* Party. The Party was established on January 1970 in Texas by Jose Angel Gutierrez and Mario Compean. The party's objective was to elect Chicanos to political office under an independent platform. Gutierrez had had success in Crystal City Texas and wanted to expand the party nationally. Uniting with already established Movement leaders like Corky Gonzalez and was a step in that direction. During the Chicano Youth Conference, aside from endorsing only their own candidates, it was decided that the *La Raza Unida* would not support any candidates from the Republican or Democratic parties. L.R.U.P. also expanded to other states in the Southwest after the conference. The Party met a few more times over the next. In September

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<sup>44</sup> Vigil, *The Crusade for Justice*, 125.

1972 the national convention was held in El Paso, where Rodolfo Gonzales lost the party's chairmanship to Jose Angel Gutierrez of Texas.

Though the Gonzales and his associates participated in many positive campaigns, they still garnered the authorities' attention. Like many other organizations in the Movement, the Crusade for Justice was harassed by the police and monitored by the F.B.I.. The Bureau paid special attention to the Youth Conferences. Members of the Crusade also accused law enforcement officials of criminal conduct like abuse of power. Though Crusade members and Denver law enforcement officials had a long history, one of the most dramatic altercations occurred in March 1973. The Chicano-Police clash included a shootout, dozens of arrests, bombing of Crusade apartments, and death of twenty year old Luis Martinez. What began with members gathering for a party developed into a gunfight with Denver officers which ended with nearly twenty people injured. Corky claimed the explosion of the build was caused by a grenade launched by the police. Crusade members also believed the entire incident was back by the F.B.I. who

recruited Denver PD to execute the plan.<sup>45</sup> The violence of that March day changed Gonzales' organization. In addition to eroding relations between Chicanos and the police, if not the entire Denver community, many parents withdrew their children from the Crusade's school and some members left the group.

By the time the shooting and bombing occurred, the Movement was beginning to wane, yet the Crusade remained active for nearly another decade. Corky was instrumental in the development of the national *Raza Unida* Party. The Crusade's Youth Conferences also served to unite the Movement participants. Gonzales' greatest contribution to the Movement however was Chicano nationalism. The rhetoric of ethnic pride prompted Chicanos to mobilize.

While Cory and Gutierrez worked on helping Chicanos in cities, Reies López Tijerina was one of the Movement's most popular and charismatic leaders. He was occasionally an outlaw, a preacher, but always fearless, and very controversial. One of ten children born to Antonio and Herlinda, Reies came into the world on September 21, 1926 in a modest home near Fall City, Texas. Herlinda died when

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 256.



Reies was six years old.<sup>46</sup> Like many children of migrant workers, he received little formal education. As journalist Peter Nabokov explained, Tijerina attended "roughly twenty rural schoolhouses near labor camps, equaling about six months of grade school."<sup>47</sup> Though his educational opportunities as a child were limited the man who was later known as "King Tiger" never lost interest in learning. One of the things that interested Tijerina was religion.

At the age of eighteen, Tijerina "enrolled at the Assembly of God Bible Institute in Ysleta, Texas."<sup>48</sup> Although Reies did not formally graduate he continued his ministry as a traveling preacher. He and his family journeyed throughout the Southwest. The Tijerinas' life on the road was far from comfortable and the patriarch claimed to have given away all his worldly possessions to the less fortunate on more than one occasion. But in spite of his deep faith, Tijerina became disillusioned with organized

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<sup>46</sup> Reies López Tijerina, "La Lucha Por La Tierra," Riverside, California, March 29, 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Nabokov, *Tijerina and the Courthouse Raid* (Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1970), 197.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

religion. Trying to escape the temptation and evil of the world, Reies and number of his followers purchased land in the Arizona desert. Tijerina, along with Manuel Mata, Rodolfo Marez, Juan Reyna, Vicente Martinez, Francisco Flores, Simon Serna, and Luis Moreno pooled their money to buy the property.<sup>49</sup> The residents, who Tijerina labeled "Heralds of Peace," made subterranean homes and constructed a church. They called their new community *Valle de Paz* (Valley of Peace).

The would-be-utopia, however, did not last long. Outside forces by and large brought down the community. Local teens frequently vandalized the *Valle*. In his memoir, Tijerina claims that white teenagers destroyed homes and burned the schoolhouse to the ground.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the Department of Education threatened the Heralds of Peace with jail time if they did not enroll their children in school. The parents did not want their children in American schools which they believed corrupted children and separate them from their Hispanic culture. In the spring of 1956 Valley of Peace was also damaged by a flood. The

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<sup>49</sup> Reies López Tijerina, *They Called Me "King Tiger": My Struggle for the Land and Our Rights* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2000), 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

flood destroyed the Tijerina's home but Reies was in California at the time. Tijerina returned to New Mexico, but the conditions at Valley of Peace forced the remaining families to temporarily stay in Colorado where they could work and earn money.

Tijerina also took a trip to Mexico in the last months of 1956. The Heralds of Peace returned to Arizona in January of 1957 and were met with continued pressure from the state's Department of Education. As Tijerina and his followers saw it their options were to enroll their children in an educational system they despised or leave the community. Most parents decided to leave Valley of Peace and headed to New Mexico. The potential-paradise was completely extinguished when Tijerina ran into trouble with the law. The Valley's founder was charged with grand theft but the case was thrown out for lack of evidence. Reies however stayed in law enforcement's radar and was implicated in his brother's attempted jailbreak. Tijerina posted a \$1000 bail and was released but instead of standing trial he fled Arizona. He knew skipping court meant losing Valley of Peace, but as the King Tiger put it,

"The residents of the Valley of Peace voted to lose the land and save my life."<sup>51</sup>

It was also during the decline of Valley of Peace that a vision came to Reies. The vision, or "super-dream" as Tijerina called it concluded in an elderly man handing Tijerina a silver key and tasked with reigning over vast lands.<sup>52</sup> In sharing and recollecting his dream Reies thought back of the people in Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico. Accompanied by a few Heralds of Peace, Tijerina visited them in the summer of 1956. The New Mexicans told their visitors about land grants lost over the years and the injustices Hispanos suffered at the hands of white Americans. Wanting to help those who lost their lands, Reies headed to Mexico where he spent three months researching laws. The trip to Mexico made Tijerina more determined to take on land rights issues in Tierra Amarilla. His legal troubles in Arizona however hampered his efforts.

Having ran out the statute of limitations in Arizona, by 1963 Tijerina found himself back in New Mexico where he founded the *Alianza Federal de Mercedes* (The Federal Land-

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 6.

grant Alliance). The organization's mission was to regain the property of heirs of land grants given to settlers/residents of New Mexico by the Spanish Crown and Mexican government. Spanish Americans claimed their land was taken by the United States government and as well as American individuals. The U.S. Forest Service had also restricted the use of land in New Mexico by prohibiting livestock grazing in areas previously used communally. Hispanic New Mexicans were among the most negatively affected by these measures. The loss of land often cost people their livelihoods. Members of the *Alianza* tried to fight for these people's land.

Initially, Tijerina and his colleagues sought to regain the land through legal action, public meetings, and demonstrations. However, going through the system amounted to nothing and no land was awarded to claimants. The *Alianza's* efforts eventually clashed with authorities. In early June 1967, Tijerina and his followers raided the courthouse in Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico. The raid was intended to free members who had been arrested on June 3 following an *Alianza* meeting. The King Tiger and other Alliance members broke into the courthouse, locked up court personnel, exchanged gunfire with officers and took two

individuals hostage in their escape. The National Guard, and law enforcement officials from every level descended on Tierra Amarilla in pursue of Tijerina and the other raiders.

After nearly a week on the run, Reies turned himself in and chose to represent himself in court. The Tiger spent less than two months in jail and was eventually acquitted of the crimes in Tierra Amarilla. However charges at the federal level later resulted in a two-year prison sentence to Tijerina. A tearful Tijerina recalled that while incarcerated, officials gave him and the other inmates a green serum which he believed served as a paralyzing agent.<sup>53</sup> After his release from prison Tijerina was forbidden to associating with Alianza members or hold office in the organization for five years. With the absence of the King Tiger, the *Alianza's* activities and influence faded. The organization lacked funds and direction and eventually folded. Tijerina return to the *Alianza's* land right issue either. Tijerina returned to prison in 1974, again on charges from the 1967 raid, but

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<sup>53</sup> Reies López Tijerina, "La Lucha Por La Tierra," Public talk, Riverside, California, March 29, 2012.

was released after a few months. In the decades after the Movement, Tijerina lived in both Mexico and the Southwest. He participated in speaking engagements all over the United States, but his deteriorating health began to limit his appearances. Tijerina's career and tactics in the Movement were somewhat unorthodox, but similar to other Chicano leaders, his activism was always in pursuit of justice.

Seeing the injustice against *la raza*, leaders in the Chicano Movement dared challenged the status quo, even when the odds were stacked against them. Unfortunately, most of the groups' modest gains disappeared shortly after the Movement died down. While the expressed goals of Movement organizations may not have been met, what was achieved in the 1960s and 1970s can be best seen as stepping stones. This is especially true in terms of political involvement and societal participation. Today, Americans of Mexican ancestry are impacting election outcomes like never before and have more access to educational and employment opportunities. The Movement's legacy then continues to impact *la raza*.

## Chapter 2

### Chicano Periodicals

The print media of the Movement was an integral part of Chicanos' activism. The papers functioned as information outlets, but also aimed to mobilize Chicanos. Movement reporters also argued the mainstream press was racist and could not be trusted, therefore Chicanos needed their own publications. Many activists heeded the call and a multitude of papers emerged during the Chicano Movement. Some served specific groups while other papers operated as independent publications covering the entire Movement.

While newspapers geared towards Latinos were prolific in the 1960s and 1970s, the press had been an important tool for Spanish-speaking people in the United States since the nineteenth century. Clint C. Wilson and Felix Gutierrez explain that the first Latino paper in the United States was *El Misisipi*, established in New Orleans in 1808.<sup>54</sup> The newspaper printed articles in both Spanish and English and included stories borrowed from other periodicals. Much later, Chicano periodicals utilized those two features. But, unlike Chicano papers, *El*

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<sup>54</sup> Clint C. Wilson II and Felix Gutierrez, *Minorities and the Media* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1985), 175.



*Misisipi* was a business venture, with a quarter of its space devoted to advertisements.<sup>55</sup>

By the 1850s Spanish-language newspapers were also running in Los Angeles, California. *El Clamor Público* and *La Crónica* were among the more popular publications in the City of Angeles. Historian Griswold del Castillo described *El Clamor Público* and *La Crónica* as "representative of [the] Californio press."<sup>56</sup> A press which served a community caught between two very distinct cultures, the traditional Mexican, and modern American. Del Castillo also maintained, "The Spanish language press increased Mexican Americans' solidarity by reporting common experiences of persecution and discrimination."<sup>57</sup> Consequently, newspapers helped Spanish-speaking people generate a new ethnic consciousness, one contingent on retaining traditions mixed with efforts to adapt to new norms and ways in one's own homeland.

Another facet derived from the nineteenth century press was ethnic terminology. Del Castillo traced Chicanos' widely-used term, "*la raza*," to the old *barrio's*

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 125.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 127.

press. He explained that "*la raza*" was used to define Mexican Americans' new identity in racial terms. When the United States took control of Mexico's territory in the West, Spanish-speaking people became foreigners in their land. They were not Americans, but they were also only on the margin of Mexican culture, thus, "La Raza emerged as the single most important symbol of ethnic pride and identification" for Mexican Americans.<sup>58</sup>

A century later, people of Mexican descent tried to assimilate to American life, at times sacrificing their ethnic traditions in the process. Although Mexican Americans were citizens of the United States and attempted to live according to norms of American culture, their ethnicity often relegated them to second-class citizens status. A generation later, Chicanos used the exclusion from American society as an impetus for change. Chicanos' activism took on a myriad of issues in different regions of the country, including labor and land rights, as well as police brutality and educational reform. Chicano organizations emerged throughout the Southwest, many of which established their own publications, largely as a

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 134.

counter to the mainstream press and to spread the message of *la causa*.

The boom in Chicano print culture resulted in the creation of the Chicano Press Association (C.P.A.). In 1969, editors of Chicano newspapers established the Press Association to share the Movement's news and activities.<sup>59</sup> According to journalist, Francisco J. Lewels, the C.P.A.'s goal was to "serve as the voice of the emerging Mexican-American civil rights movement."<sup>60</sup> Lewels further stated that Chicano periodicals lacked objectivity, were self-financed, and bilingual. The Chicano press also aimed to provide an alternative to periodicals produced by the mainstream media. The C.P.A. maintained that Chicanos needed their own publications because the "establishment's" press was racist, and distorted news about *la raza*.<sup>61</sup> Contrary to typical newspaper practices, Chicano editors generally did not publish their papers for financial gain or had large budgets. Rather, Movement publications largely supported themselves through donations and modest

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<sup>59</sup> F. Arturo Rosales, *Chicano: The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1996), 201.

<sup>60</sup> Francisco J. Lewels, Jr., *The Uses of the Media by the Chicano Movement* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 65.

<sup>61</sup> "Let's Use Our Press!," *El Grito del Norte*, July 5, 1970.

subscription fees. Additionally, articles sometimes appeared in both English and Spanish to be as inclusive as possible. Ultimately, the Press Association operated more as a casual confederation rather than as a formal or specialized organization. Nevertheless, the C.P.A. did develop a communications network that spanned the Southwest and enabled publications to reach wider audiences.

The publications of the Chicano Movement can generally be seen in two categories; organizational and independent. Organizational papers functioned as instruments of the group that published them (e.g. United Farm Workers' *El Malcriado*, or the Brown Berets' *La Causa*), with most of the stories pertaining to the group's agenda, events, and members. They also carried news about other happenings in the Movement, but to a lesser extent than independent papers. Independent papers (e.g. *La Raza* in Los Angeles or *El Grito del Norte* in New Mexico) published diverse stories on any and all Chicano activities throughout Aztlan. The papers ranged from simple, unrefined pages to sophisticated formats rivaling national, mainstream magazines. All Chicano papers however shared the trait of being completely committed to serving *la raza*.

*El Malcriado* was the publication of Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers, one of the Chicano Movement's most important organizations. In Spanish, "malcriado" translates to an ill-bred or misbehaved child. Chavez chose this name for the newspaper to capture the farmworker's refusal to submit to the will of the Agribusiness power structure. The paper's slogan was "La Voz del Campesino" (the farmworker's voice).<sup>62</sup> Bill Esher was at the head of the paper from its creation in 1965 to 1967. Aside from a brief hiatus from mid-1967 to early 1968, *El Malcriado* ran for more than ten years. Initially, a new edition appeared every two weeks, but by the 1970s it was published monthly. Producing the paper however was no easy task, as LeRoy Chatfield, an associate of Cesar's, brilliantly put it:

In a movement crisis-to-crisis situation, the unrelenting pressure of deadlines, the primitive tools available to create and layout the copy, dealing with a printer a hundred miles removed from the scene [U.F.W. headquarters were in Delano, California while the paper was printed in Fresno because Chavez wanted to use a unionized print-shop];... publishing in two languages, Spanish and English, the lack of money to pay for even the essentials, the inevitable questions of editorial control and content -all drove a series

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<sup>62</sup> Note on terminology: the Spanish word "campesino" will be used interchangeably with its English translation "farmworker."

of editors to the brink. Looking back, it is amazing the *El Malcriado* lasted as long as it did.<sup>63</sup>

At its peak, "The paper had a circulation of over 10,000 copies."<sup>64</sup>

*El Malcriado*, naturally, was devoted to news about the union and farmworkers. In its early days the paper was also essential to building up the U.F.W.'s membership. *El Malcriado* was very thorough in reporting all the happenings of any given crusade. When Chavez and Dolores Huerta established the union, few people believed it would succeed thus each contract they signed and election won was defying the odds. When the union triumphed over the Schenley Corporation the paper related the news as achieving the improbable. The article noted the union's demands were:

Routine conditions for industry but revolutionary for farm workers... No worker will be fired without just cause. And most important, the FWA [later the U.F.W.] strikers will elect their own leaders who will sit down as equals with the Schenley bosses and negotiate wages and working conditions... For the first time in history, Mexican-American farm workers have demanded [to]

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<sup>63</sup> LeRoy Chatfield, "El Malcriado- La Voz del Campesino." Available from <http://farmworkermovement.com/U.F.W.archives/55555.pdf>. Accessed July 13, 2013.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

be treated with dignity and respect, and [their] demands [were] met.<sup>65</sup>

Though the union was jubilant with the Schenley win the article closed asking if the DiGiorgio corporation was next.

Getting the union into DiGiorgio was perhaps one of the most difficult fights Chavez and Huerta endured. DiGiorgio was one of the largest and wealthiest fruit corporations in the state, it also staunchly refused to let their workers unionize. Consequently, the Delano union launched a nation-wide boycott of DiGiorgio products. After months of unscrupulous tactics (including fraudulent elections) and insincere negotiations DiGiorgio allowed its employees to vote for union representation. The 1343 to 19 results meant a victory for the United Farm Workers which *El Malcriado* reported with one word "Ganamos" (We won).<sup>66</sup> The win strengthened the union and made workers optimistic. As it did with its report on Schenley *El Malcriado* looked to the next company as it celebrated the current triumph. In reporting about boycotts, strikes, or union victories the publication usually indicated that there was still work

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<sup>65</sup> "Victory in the Grape Strike," *El Malcriado*, April 21, 1966.

<sup>66</sup> Front page, *El Malcriado*, September 9, 1966.

to be done.<sup>67</sup> That particular trait revealed that the union, never resting on its laurels, was always looking ahead to the next campaign.

The next labor rights drive focused primarily on the largest table grape grower in the world, Giumarra Vineyards Corporation. The union however changed its original strategy of unionizing one company at a time and instead pursued contracts with nearly every ranch in Delano. On July 29, 1970 twenty-six ranchers, collapsing under the pressure of the union's strike, signed contracts with Chavez. *El Malcriado's* cover was simply the sheet with all the growers' names, but it was a powerful sight considering many bosses swore they would never come to terms with the union. The signatures represented years of sacrifices by union representatives and *campesinos*. The paper quoted Chavez speech at the meeting, "this event justifies the belief of so many people, that through non-violent action across the world, that social justice can be gained."<sup>68</sup> The contract effectively enabled over 7,000 workers to be represented by United Farm Workers. The agreement with the

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<sup>67</sup> *El Malcriado*, April 21, 1966; *El Malcriado* September 9, 1966; *El Malcriado*, August 16, 1967; August 1, 1970.

<sup>68</sup> "Huelga," *El Malcriado*, August 1, 1970.



growers was an unprecedented accomplishment for the union, but as mentioned in Chavez's speech the means —non-violent tactics— by which it was achieved was a triumph in and of itself.

A significant element of Chavez's activism was his commitment to non-violence. The farmworkers' leader was confident that peaceful protests garnered greater gains than violent attacks. The pages of *El Malcriado* often reminded readers of this strategy.<sup>69</sup> Chavez believed educating workers about non-violent tactics was key to successful organizing. The logic behind it was that if destructive acts were not an option people would have to develop other methods by which to enact change. Chavez also thought violence was counterproductive as it had more negative outcomes than positive achievement. The paper related that it was not always easy to get people to follow the doctrine of non-violence but Chavez never relented on that strategy.

In addition to the unionizing ventures, *El Malcriado* also gave attention to immigration issues, namely to the exploitation of Mexican workers. One of the difficulties

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<sup>69</sup> *El Malcriado*, April 21, 1966; *El Malcriado* April 1, 1968; *El Malcriado* April 15, 1970, 11.; *El Malcriado*, December 15, 1970; *El Malcriado* February 9, 1973.

United Farm Workers faced was the surplus of cheap labor for growers. Though the Bracero program officially ended in 1964, the remnants still presented a problem for Chavez and the union. They opposed growers importing workers from Mexico as it made it difficult to gain wage increases if there was a plentiful supply of workers willing to accept substandard pay. In May 1966 *El Malcriado* reported on the Salina's Strawberries company bringing in braceros to replace the American workers who quit due to the inadequate salaries they received. According to the story, Governor Pat Brown approved the Mexican workers coming to California. The article called the Bracero program criminal as it was detrimental to both Mexicans and American workers. Native *campesinos* lost their jobs and at times the chance to improve working conditions and pay.

Mexicans however also received a raw deal,

Since Mexican Braceros [were] glad to get jobs at any wage, the growers [treated] them like animals. And if the braceros complain they [were] shipped back to Mexico. The growers can deduct from wages, pocket social security payments, and cheat the bracero 1000 ways.<sup>70</sup>

The paper also took issue with the Governor himself noting, "When Governor Brown says he wants to help farm workers,

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<sup>70</sup> "Brown Buys Braceros," *El Malcriado*, May 19, 1966.

and then smuggles in braceros, *El Malcriado* says that he is a liar, a traitor to the Mexican-Americans and farm workers who voted for him."<sup>71</sup> While Brown and other politicians had at times been sympathetic to Chavez and his cause, the union did not hesitate to call out political leaders when they affected the farmworkers crusade.

United Farm Workers has at times been criticized for being anti-Mexicans and against immigration, this and other articles on the matter revealed that the union did not oppose Mexicans but did object to growers using scabs during strikes and to the exploitation of immigrants for cheap labor which of course hurt the union and its members. The union always tried to make it-self as strong as possible and use people where they would do the most good. Such was certainly the case with women.

United Farm Workers was welcoming of women and was one of the few Movement organizations to have a female in a leadership position, that being Dolores Huerta as Vice President (who largely served as top contract negotiator) and co-founder of the union. In July 1970, *El Malcriado* ran a feature with the headline "A Woman's Place Is...On

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 6.

The Picket Line!"<sup>72</sup> The article highlighted women's motivations and contributions to the union's strikes. Women who labored in the fields rose before the sun came up and worked long hard days in the hot sun or tormenting freezes of the Central Valley, better pay and treatment was certainly merited so they boycotted to try to secure these basic rights. The women also picketed for their family's future saying, "We're making this sacrifice so they [the growers] will pay us so we can educate our children...if we win this fight then we can give our children what they need."<sup>73</sup> Mothers wanted to keep their children out of the fields and see them prosper and supporting the union would get them closer to that goal. The article pointed out that despite the difficulties they faced, women did not give up and always put up a spirited fight. No doubt the article served the dual purpose of thanking women and revitalizing union members.

*El Malcriado* also showcased women in "From the Fields to the Picket line: Huelga Women and the Boycott."<sup>74</sup> The piece profiled Jessica Gove, Carolina Vasquez, and Peggy

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<sup>72</sup> "A Woman's Place Is...On the Picket Line," *El Malcriado*, Vol 4 no. 2, July 1970.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>74</sup> "From the Fields to the Picket Line," *El Malcriado*, August 15, 1970.

McGivern who in essence devoted their lives to the union. Govea was an activist in Canada, while Vasquez left California to boycott the sale of non-union grapes in Connecticut, and McGivern, a white nurse from New York, left her home to organize in Salinas, California and provided medical attention to workers. The women overlooked the difficulties of being away from home in traditional occupations because the union's work was personally rewarding to each of them, but more importantly they believed in the greater good Chavez was trying to accomplish. Although *El Malcriado* did not print many articles exclusively about women when it did it portrayed women as valuable members of the union. There were women in most, if not all, Movement groups, but United Farm Workers was one of the few that did not limit women's activism or the positions they could hold within the organization. That is not to say that United Farm Workers was free of sexism, it was not, but it was one of the more egalitarian in the Chicano Movement.<sup>75</sup>

Though the newspaper's staff was talented and skilled at presenting succinct articles, *El Malcriado* also employed

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<sup>75</sup> Barbara Carrasco, interview by author, taped recording, Los Angeles, CA., April 11, 2012.

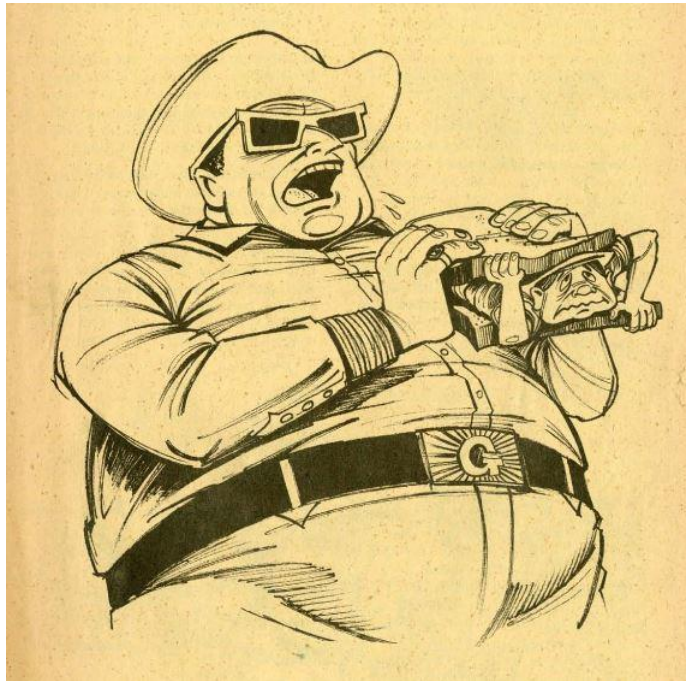
the age-old tactic of using cartoons, especially in satire, to tell or add to a news story. Given the educational background of some farmworkers it is likely that the illustrations also intended to reach low-literacy populations. The publication's cartoons consisted of Don Sotaco, the humble farm work; Don Coyote, the unscrupulous contractor (or supervisor); and the overweight tyrannical boss/grower called *El Patroncito*. The artist behind the characters was Andrew "Andy" Zermeno. The vignettes depicted the farmworkers' struggles and triumphs.

*El Patroncito* was often portrayed strolling through life at the expense of Don Sotaco and other *campesinos*. In one of the paper's early issues, *El Patroncito* and Don Coyote ride in a rickshaw pulled by Don Sotaco.<sup>76</sup> The boss, enjoying a cigar, is carried forward by the effort and sweat of the poor worker. Adding more stress on Don Sotaco, Don Coyote had his whip out ready to strike. Readers also saw *El Patroncito* relaxing in a hammock as *campesinos* toiled beneath him. In another illustration, *El Patroncito* was getting fat off a sandwich made of Don

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<sup>76</sup> *El Malcriado*, June 2, 1966.

Sotaco.<sup>77</sup> The boss' gluttony symbolized the growers' greed. The message of growers enriching themselves at the expense of workers was glaringly obvious to any reader of *El Malcriado*.



**Figure 1 Growers' gluttony satire. Source: *El Malcriado* June 2, 1966.**

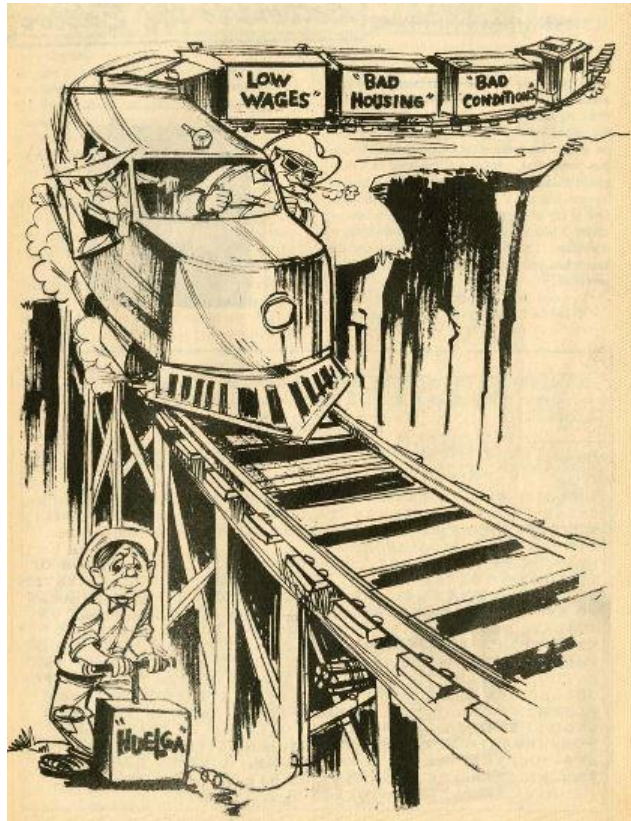
The union, however, also empowered Don Sotaco and allowed him to stand up to Don Coyote and *El Patroncito*. In one instance a cartoon is captioned "Yesterday and Today," on the top of the page, the "Yesterday" scenario, Don Sotaco was chased by his bosses, but with the strike he

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<sup>77</sup> Front page, *El Malcriado* June 2, 1966.

put an end to the pursue. Armed with a picket sign, Don Sotaco stopped Don Coyote and *El Patroncito* cold in their tracks. The "Today" scene then depicted a strong and assertive Don Sotaco. This confidence was also evident in a drawing featuring the farmworker about to blow up a train track where *El Patroncito's* locomotive was headed. The overweight grower and his shifty contractor sat at the controls of the train which carried "Low Wages," "Bad Housing," and "Bad Conditions." The dynamite detonator box was labeled "Huelga (strike)" thus Don Sotaco intended to use the union's power (represented by dynamite) to obliterate low wages and poor working conditions.





**Figure 2 Don Sotaco. *El Malcriado* September 9, 1966.**

While United Farm Workers was certainly an asset to the Don Sotacos of the world, not all members were beneficial to the union. In November 1970, *El Malcriado* used a cartoon to alert supporters of weak union members.<sup>78</sup> The paper criticized individuals who simply joined the union to reap the benefits but did not fulfill their membership responsibilities. The picture's caption particularly urged members not to add "fuel to anti-union

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<sup>78</sup> *El Malcriado*, November 15, 1970.

propaganda."<sup>79</sup> The argument was that one inconsiderate member made sustaining the union more difficult on the sincere members thus the graphic showed Don Sotaco and his friends nearly collapsing as they held up *El Patroncito* who sat gorging at the table of "grower propaganda."<sup>80</sup> *El Malcriado* obviously worried about the union's stability. United Farm Workers understood every triumph and year in existence was defying the odds, its success was always in peril and did not want to put itself in a vulnerable position.

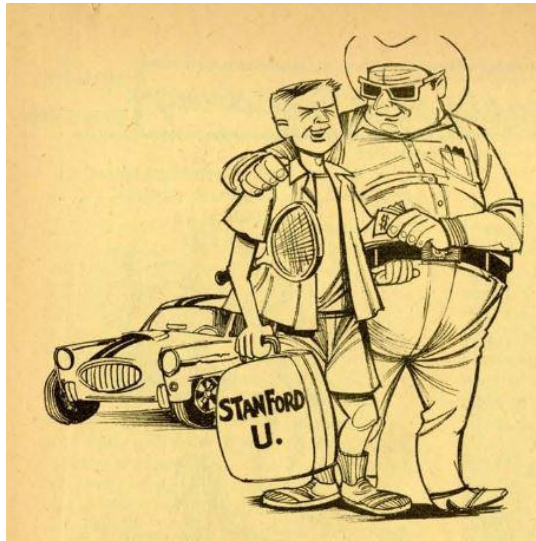
The U.F.W.'s paper primary focus was labor rights, but one of Zermeno's most poignant sketches dealt with the draft. Appearing in *El Malcriado* number 41, the cartoon contrasted how Don Sotaco and *El Patroncito* responded to their sons being asked to serve in the Vietnam War. *El Patroncito*, being a man of means, sent his son off to college to avoid the military. The young man also happily received a handful of money and a sports car. He was dressed in shorts and held a tennis racket indicative of a leisurely lifestyle. Don Sotaco's son on the other hand could not avoid the draft. The poor *campesino* bid his son

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 13.

farewell at the bus stop, both modestly dressed with patches on their clothes. The solemn expressions on their face illustrated their helplessness. The graphics also signified that farmworker disadvantages were not limited to financial matters alone.



**Figure 3 El Patroncito and son. Source: *El Malcriado* June 1966.**



**Figure 4 Don Sotaco and his son. Source: *El Malcriado* June 1966.**

The saying "a picture is worth 1,000 words" was certainly true with Zermeno's cartoons. The characters depicted real people's personality traits so accurately they evoked strong and immediate reactions. Farmworkers faced many difficulties but could be encouraged by Don Sotaco's fortune changing thanks to the union. The drawings were also useful in keeping readers informed through a succinct mode.

*El Malcriado* was certainly a publication meant to serve its parent organization. The newspaper certainly kept readers abreast of the union's campaigns, but mirroring Chavez's mission to help those in need, *El Malcriado* was also used to ask the community for donations

and assistance for the less fortunate. Farmworkers made very little money and could seldom afford little more than the basics, yet they did what they could for one another. During strikes or in the winter months when work was particularly scarce, the paper asked people to send in whatever they could in order to help others who had nothing at all. Poor *campesinos*, like the union in its early days, at times got by solely on donations. Like many organizational papers, the United Farm Workers publication reflected the group's core values. More than being a source of information, *El Malcriado* and its charitable efforts truly changed people's lives.

Like *El Malcriado*, *La Causa* was also an organizational newspaper, it was the communications organ of the Brown Berets. In sharp contrast to United Farm Workers, the Brown Berets were radical. The Brown Berets fashioned themselves into a paramilitary unit meant to protect Chicanos. They dressed in khaki uniforms, preformed discipline drills, and their motto was "Serve, Observe, and Protect." The stories in *La Causa* dealt with helping the Chicano community, revolutions/revolutionary actions, and promoting the Movement and *la raza*. Readers could also

find conduct guidelines for members and recruitment messages.

The first issue of *La Causa* appeared on May 23, 1969. Its objectives were to provide news for a "more aware community... and [to illustrate] the many injustices against the Chicano by the Anglo establishment."<sup>81</sup> The editorial staff consisted of Brown Berets' Prime Minister David Sanchez, Gloria Arellanes (Minister of Finance and Correspondence), Cristo Cebada, Grace and Hilda Reyes, and Jesus Ceballos. Arellanes explained Chicanas in the organization usually did the bulk of the work concerning *La Causa's* publication. Arellanes added that after the Beret's free clinic closed for the night (usually around 10:00 pm) several women met and put the paper together.<sup>82</sup> Chicanas determined the layout, did most of the graphics and wrote some of the stories, though men contributed articles as well. The articles and designs were not as polished as other Chicano papers, but what it lacked in neatness, it made up for in passion.

The Berets were extremely committed to the Movement and operated with the objective of helping all Chicanos.

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<sup>81</sup> *La Causa*, May 23, 1969.

<sup>82</sup> Arellanes, interview.

*La Causa* promoted the services the Beret's offered their community. The militant Chicanos sponsored free breakfast programs, provided draft counseling, and opened a free clinic in East L.A.. The clinic was staffed by volunteers and was supplied by other medical agencies throughout Southern California. The facility was also opened late into the night to accommodate people's work schedules.<sup>83</sup> But their radical rhetoric, at times, overshadowed the group's good intentions.

The Brown Berets militant mentality placed the United States into the role of the enemy. They also maintained they would achieve change "BY ALL MEANS NECESSARY." In an undated issue of the paper there was a picture of two Brown Berets (a man and a woman) the man armed with a rifle had his foot over a pig ( pig of course being a popular slang word for a policeman), the caption read: The Day Is Coming. Articles in *La Causa* also detailed the United States' exploitations abroad. In December 1969, the Berets printed an article recounting America's involvement in South America. The report told of the United States, with the help of the C.I.A., deposing Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala. *La Causa* suggested Chicanos and the "brown people of South

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<sup>83</sup> "Serving the People," *La Causa*, December 16, 1969.

America were one in the same" as the U.S. was exploiting both for cheap goods and labor.<sup>84</sup> The paper also denounced American imperialism for the violence it spawned in Vietnam, Cuba, Korea, and even in the *barrios* of East Los Angeles.<sup>85</sup>

With the Movement slowing down, in the summer of 1971 the Berets set out on "La Caravana de la Reconquista" a planned march throughout the Southwest to draw attention to the plight of the Chicanos everywhere. *La Causa* reported the event as "a caravan to reconquer our rights to be treated like people, and not like second-class citizens."<sup>86</sup> Hoping to generate more activism, the march also meant to inform and unite all Chicanos. The Berets marched, but caravan did not reach the level of success organizers hoped for. The rebelliousness reached a new level in August 1972 when several members of the Berets occupied Santa Catalina Island. The group maintained the island was the rightful property of Mexico as stipulated in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The occupation was also intended to be a protest

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<sup>84</sup> "Violence and Revolution," *La Causa*, April 1970.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>86</sup> "La Caravana de la Reconquista is Coming," *La Causa*, Date not provided.



against the American government for its "deplorable" treatment of people of Mexican descent and to highlight the need for land for Mexican nationals and Native Americans.<sup>87</sup> The occupation ended unceremoniously with the authorities citing the Berets for trespassing and returning them to California.

The takeover at Catalina was among the last campaigns the Berets undertook, but in its heyday the group's "revolution" needed soldiers and the Berets often used *La Causa* to recruit new members. The young militants also promoted the Brown Berets Student Organization (B.B.S.O.) at local high schools. According to the newspaper, the B.B.S.O. was for serious and disciplined students who wanted change now and were committed to the Movement. The recruitment pitch closed by urging students to "get up and remove the chains of slavery, only then would [they] have a life of freedom."<sup>88</sup> In addition to students, the Brown Berets also enlisted hoodlums, known in the *barrio* as *batos locos*. The *batos locos* (literally translating to crazy guys) largely included men who had checkered-pasts, for

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<sup>87</sup> *La Causa*, "Los Brown Berets Occupy La Isla de Catalina" September 16, 1972, 1.

<sup>88</sup> Grace Reyes, "Brown Berets Student Organization," *La Causa*, May 23, 1969, 2.

instance criminal records, history of substance abuse, and alike. Rather than letting the guys continue on the path of self-destruction, the Berets sought to rehabilitate the *batos* and turn them into faithful soldiers for the Chicano cause. The Berets invited men and women to join the group and "be part of being proud."<sup>89</sup> The Chicano unit was open to both men and women.

While in terms of recruitment an ideology the Brown Berets accepted Chicanas, *La Causa* seldom devoted space to women's issues. The Berets' Minister of Finance and Correspondence, Gloria Arellanes, explained women did not write about sexism in *La Causa* because to do so opened women to be judged as traitors to the Movement.<sup>90</sup> One of the few articles that did appear on the paper was "Genocide on the Chicano Family" written by "Concerned Chicanas."<sup>91</sup> The story denounced the "genocidal plans of this fascist government."<sup>92</sup> According to the author, the American government introduced contraceptives, planned-parenthood programs, and abortions to eradicate *la raza*. The article

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<sup>89</sup> *La Causa*, December 16, 1969.

<sup>90</sup> Arellanes, interview.

<sup>91</sup> "Genocide on the Chicano Family," *La Causa*, Date not provided.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

argued that family planning agencies and doctors tried to brain-wash Chicanas into not having babies to destroy the Chicano family. The story also stated, "Chicanas using the pill [were] the white mans' guinea pig."<sup>93</sup> While forced sterilizations on Chicanas unfortunately did happen in California throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the article presented sterilizations and birth control methods as deliberate attack to the Latino community. This article was extreme in its message but also dangerous as it disregarded other sexual health concerns for women, such as the spread of venereal diseases. Although the author claimed to be a concerned Chicana, in the long run, her article likely did more harm than good to her sisters and her people. Rather than bringing awareness about real issues, the article perpetuated ignorance.

The pages of *La Causa* shed light on the complexities and contrasts of the Brown Berets organization. The Berets' span was far reaching, indicative by its membership including everyone from high school students to ex-convicts. The group's activities, ranging from offering free health care in East L.A. to invading Santa Catalina,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

also spoke to its varied nature. The myriad of deeds and diverse membership were linked under the rhetoric of ethnic pride and change. It seems however that over time the Berets became less interested in community service and more devoted to radical endeavors which were ultimately fruitless.

Unlike *El Malcriado* and *La Causa*, *La Raza* was not associated with a particular Movement organization. *La Raza* was an independent publication. Like other Chicano papers, its objective was also to disseminate information concerning Latinos. *La Raza* began as a newspaper – distributed throughout Los Angeles– in 1967. Two years after its inception, *La Raza* changed to a magazine format. The periodical was produced with the assistance of the Church of the Epiphany (located in Lincoln Heights, California) and Eleazar Risco served as editor. Risco was a Cuban immigrant who helped Cesar Chavez's organizing efforts, and later became an Episcopal priest.<sup>94</sup> Risco recalled the need for Chicano publications, "One of the things we discerned was that there was no communication between the barrios... The only communication available was

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<sup>94</sup> Rocio Zamora, *A Cleansing Fire: The Rise of the Chicano Movement and the Church of the Epiphany*, (Chicano Research Center Publication), 23.

the one between the newspapers and they only represented society's prejudices."<sup>95</sup> In many ways, *La Raza* was produced for the people and by the people. Youngsters active in the Church distributed the papers throughout the city and ordinary citizens contributed to *La Raza's* content. Risco and his staff encouraged people from the community to share their news and life experiences and often even had the people themselves type their stories to be printed as article in the paper.<sup>96</sup> However, by the 1970s this practice was largely discontinued and replaced by more conventional news articles.

*La Raza* reported on all matters pertaining to the Movement, including happenings outside California. Other regular features included letters to the editor as well as stories and letters from Chicano inmates. Though it was a Chicano periodical, *La Raza* also dealt with Native American history and activism, and international news.

One of the first sections in every issue of *La Raza* was the letters to the editor. Like many other publications, *La Raza* printed letters from its readers, but unlike other periodicals *La Raza* also published "Hate

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

Letters." Most of the hate letters were unreservedly racist. Some of the messages likened Mexicans to animals, others used derogatory names, such as "Bean Heads" and "Half-Breeds." The intelligence of Mexicans was also attacked. Some of the letters went as far as advocating violence and made threats about killing Hispanic people. Another peculiar aspect of the letters was the reference to "Mexicans." That is to say, that the writers seldom made the distinction between Mexicans and Chicanos. In fact, one of the letters warns *La Raza* readers to "behave" lest they should be "ship [sic] back to Mexico."<sup>97</sup> Although the hate letters represented a small sample size of the general public, they certainly illustrated that white people did not see Chicanos as American and were very much perceived as foreigners. There was no distinction between Chicanos who were actual American citizens and Mexican nationals who were not.

Though many comments were appalling, the letters from supporters were very positive and heartfelt. Readers expressed their gratitude for *La Raza's* efforts. They felt it was a publication they could relate to and was doing a great service to the Chicano community. The people who

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<sup>97</sup> "Hate Letters," *La Raza*, Date not provided.

wrote in often noted that they passed on the magazine to a friend or relative or that an acquaintance was also interested in the publication. These letters illustrate the network Chicano papers ran through, their popularity was due in large part to word of mouth. The letters also shed light on the type of audiences *La Raza* reached. While the greater majority of readers were Latino, the magazine also had Jewish, Native American, and white readers. *La Raza* also made it far past Los Angeles, as letters came from all over the state and as far away as Texas, Kansas, and New York.

*La Raza's* main focus was of course the activism of Chicanos but it also printed stories about other minority groups and international affairs. It was not uncommon for *La Raza* to report on the Native American Movement. Most of the time, the Chicano magazine reprinted articles from other sources, but kept its readers informed about matters like Native American groups protesting the display of sacred objects in museums, the police attacking the Puyallup tribe in Washington, and the occupation of Alcatraz. Chicano understood oh too well what it meant to be marginalized in one's ancestral home and always

supported and showed solidarity with their fellow activists.

In terms of international news, *La Raza* looked at developments in communist nations. The war in Vietnam was of course a concern since the conflict directly affected Chicanos who died at disproportionate numbers in a war most people in the Movement considered imperialist aggression. The publication also printed information on Cuba and hailed their revolution as triumphant. *La Raza* sent two of its staff member to the island, though impressed with the egalitarian society, the reporters also acknowledged there was still work to be done and things to be sorted out (housing, industrial development, etc.) in Fidel Castro's country. *La Raza* also reported on the social unrest in Mexico, particularly students protesting against the government. The international reports served as reminders of activism. The news from abroad suggested Chicano activists were not alone in their desire for change.

At home, Movement participants focused on educational reform and combating police brutality. *La Raza* seldom passed up an opportunity to report on police brutality. The magazine often used the word "pig" in discussing police officers. Due to the harassment Chicanos suffered at the



hands of law enforcement, *La Raza* characterized East L.A. as a police state. The publication also felt the police was responsible for a "Chicano Genocide" and called on people to protest against the cops' brutally. On January 31, 1971 people in Los Angeles did march, objecting to the police disregard of Chicanos, the rally however ended in violent clashes between Chicanos and cops. To *La Raza* it seemed no one was safe from the sanctioned abuses on Chicanos, not even children. During the school strikes, known as the walk-outs, in which young Chicanos staged mass exoduses from classes at Garfield, Lincoln, and Roosevelt High Schools to protest the schools' discriminatory practices and poor educational system, officers did not hesitate to assault teens.

High school students coordinated the walk-outs Garfield, Lincoln, and Roosevelt, but college students also protested the state's academic system and treatment of Chicano students. Education reform was important to the barrio and *La Raza* gave voice to students' demands. Most parents and students wanted to end English-only education and instead have bilingual instruction. Chicano youths also wanted curriculum that was relevant to them, i.e. inclusion of ethnic studies or Mexican American history.

Students were also frustrated by the shortage of Latino teachers and administrators. They felt no one represented Chicanos at the decision-making level. As the Movement progressed, some educational gains were achieved, namely at colleges and universities with the establishment of Chicano studies programs.

Another matter La Raza dedicated a great deal of attention to was the Chicano Moratorium. One of the most significant events of the entire Movement was the National Chicano Moratorium march on August 29, 1970. Moratorium organizers spent months planning the event and holding smaller protests throughout the state leading up to the National march. Rosalio Munoz (former UCLA student body president), David Sanchez (Prime Minister of the Brown Berets), and Robert Elias served as co-chairmen of the Moratorium committee. The planning committee filed all the necessary permits with the city and set up the locations. Demonstrators began at Belvedere Park in the morning marched down Whittier Boulevard and gathered at Laguna Park where they were supposed to enjoy speeches, music, theatrical performance, and alike. Brown Berets and hundreds of other volunteers took on the task of keeping the peace along the route by stopping disorderly conduct.

Brown Berets also helped secure lodging for the thousands of participants who came in from out of town. The warm Saturday morning saw over 20, 000 participants march in protest of the war in Vietnam, but as people settled at Laguna Park all hell broke loose. Almost without warning L.A. Sheriff's deputies surrounded the park grounds and attacked demonstrators, Chicanos retaliated, rocks and bottles were launched at officers and before long hundreds lay injured and tear-gas filled the sky. *La Raza* called the violence at Moratorium "the police riot." It was after all the sheriff's deputies and L.A.P.D. officers who arrived at the park dressed in full riot gear. As the day went on, the chaos spread to businesses on Whittier, looting and fires resulted in over a million dollars in property damage. But the greatest loss of the day happened a few blocks away from the park at the Silver Dollar Café where *L.A. Times* reporter, Ruben Salazar was killed by sheriff's deputy Thomas Wilson.

The magazine ran a special issue devoted to the Moratorium. Its front cover was a picture of a sheriff's deputy holding up a gun to the crowd inside the Silver Dollar Café. The photograph was taken by *La Raza* staff member, Raul Ruiz, who as fate would have it was just

outside the Silver Dollar and captured the events that led to Ruben Salazar's death. The issue was dedicated to Salazar, Angel Diaz, and Lyn Ward who as the editor's stated, "Died unjustly." *La Raza* asserted that Ruben was murdered and that the Sheriff's department covered it up and lied about the killings during the coroner's inquest.<sup>98</sup> *La Raza* particularly took issue with the Sheriff's department's inconsistent and incredulous accounts of the shootings that led to Salazar's death. Like many other Chicanos, the publication could not make sense of Deputy Wilson using a missile-like projectile —which struck Salazar in the head and killed him— to pacify the situation at the Café. The way Chicanos saw it, Wilson was either grossly negligent and misused a very powerful weapon or he killed the Mexican-American reporter outright. Whatever the case was, Deputy Wilson was never punished for Salazar's death. The attacks at Laguna Park and the shooting at the Silver Dollar also strained an already weak relationship between Chicanos and officers in Los Angeles.

Aside from reporting on Salazar's death, *La Raza* also printed an article accusing the mass media of missing the importance of the Moratorium march. The reporter noted

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<sup>98</sup> *La Raza* (Special Issue), date not provided.

that the demonstration was the largest anti-war protest in the United States coordinated by a minority group, yet the establishment media covered it only as a riot. According to the paper, calling the day's events just a riot diminished the planning efforts by the Moratorium committee and more importantly failed to recognize the event's intention of publicizing the high casualty rates of Chicanos in Indochina. The press was also criticized for saying "outside agitators stirred up trouble" on August 29. Chicanos adamantly denied starting the clashes at Laguna Park, but blaming outside agitators implied the Moratorium organizers and supporters were "mindless dupes" who could be manipulated by others.<sup>99</sup> The magazine further argued that though the clashes at the rally erupted suddenly, the violence was really indicative of greater issues the Chicano community faced day in and day out, such as a failed educational system, poor housing, unemployment, and lack of political representation.

*La Raza* developed into a well-designed publication that covered a myriad of topics, both on and outside of the Chicano Movement. Its coverage however always had information that benefitted Chicanos. Unlike *La Raza*, *La*

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<sup>99</sup> *La Raza*, Special Issue, 1970.

*Causa* and *El Malcriado* were very much products of their organizations, echoing the rhetoric and values of its leaders. Whether autonomous or connected to specific group, Chicano publications were very successful in disseminating information on the Movement's multiple causes. The examination of these sources also reveals that through the Chicano Press Association and word of mouth advertisement, periodicals reached readers far beyond the publications' home market. Moreover, Chicano papers proved to be integral to the Movement by offering news other media outlets did not report and by generating support for *la causa*.

Chicano papers however were also highly critical of the coverage the Movement received in English-language publications. They claimed the mainstream press distorted news about *la raza*. While some papers may have, that was not true of all American publications. In fact, some of the best, most unbiased articles on Movement campaigns appeared in the mainstream press.

### Chapter 3

#### Los Angeles' Newspapers

Los Angeles has always been a diverse city, and for nearly every ethnic group that called the City of Angels home there was a newspaper representing that group's point of view. This chapter examines how the Movement was covered in the English-language mainstream *Los Angeles Times*, the African American community's *Los Angeles Sentinel*, and the Spanish-language *La Opinion*.

The *L.A. Times* published thousands of articles on the Chicano Movement. The emergence of the Movement occurred shortly after the *Times* underwent a radical transformation led by Otis Chandler. Chandler's family controlled the paper since 1882, but initially it was used more for personal gain and boosterism for the city than as a trustworthy source for news. Historian Mario T. Garcia described the *Los Angeles Times* under Harrison Gray Otis (Chandler's great-grandfather) as,

A mediocre, highly partisan Republican newspaper. During its early years, it was noted for its anti-labor views. It helped to organize the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, whose goal was to keep Los Angeles a nonunion city.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ruben Salazar, *Border Correspondent: Selected Writings, 1955-*

It was not until the 1950s, with Norman Chandler, that the paper began to change and gained some national legitimacy. When Otis Chandler took the reins of the *Times* in 1960 he set out to modernize the paper, in content, scope, and staff. Chandler expanded the *Times* coverage from largely political occurrences in Southern California to all sectors of society, even opening foreign bureaus. He also hired new personnel and raised wages. By 1965, Chandler's objectives had been largely met and the *Wall Street Journal* reported,

The [L.A.] *Times* has been converted from a newspaper of dubious reputation to one of the more respected and complete papers in the country . . . . Otis has also beefed up news coverage, both in quality and quantity, and, largely, under his aegis, the paper has shucked its traditional image as a spokesman for arch-conservatism.<sup>101</sup>

Another radical change in the *Times* was its stance on labor unions, "The paper's antipathy toward organized labor was historic and deep... But Chandler wanted more nuanced, balanced coverage of issues in the *Times*."<sup>102</sup> One of the

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1970 (Berkeley: University of California Press), 8.

<sup>101</sup> Marshall Berges, *The Life and Times of Los Angeles: A Newspaper, A Family, and A City* (New York: Atheneum, 1984), 112.

<sup>102</sup> Jon Thurber, "Harry Bernstein, 83; Veteran Labor Reporter for The Times," *Los Angeles Times*, May 04, 2006.



papers first labor reporters was Harry Bernstein, who joined the paper in 1962, "coming two years after Otis Chandler took the reins as publisher, the hiring of Bernstein to report about labor issues was considered remarkable" given the paper's track record with union coverage.<sup>103</sup> It was Bernstein who wrote the majority of the article on United Farm Workers.

Although Delano was over one hundred miles from Los Angeles, and coverage on farmworkers was not usually a focus of the newspaper, Chavez's union received extensive exposure in the *Times*. The reports were generally timely and detailed. As is to be expected, the articles dealt with developments in the union's activities. Readers learned about the farmworkers' boycotts and negotiations, as well as union triumphs. One such article hit the newsstands on July 30, 1970.

On July 29, 1970, United Farm Workers achieved one of its largest victories by coming to terms with nearly thirty grape growers from the Central Valley. "Labor peace came to the Delano vineyards" is how the *L.A. Times* staff

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

writer, Bill Boyarsky, described the agreement.<sup>104</sup> After a lengthy, international boycott, ranchers agreed to pay workers \$1.80 an hour (a 15 cent raise), restrict pesticide use, and provide moderate benefits.<sup>105</sup> Although the union had won other contracts, this one was considerable in numbers and gains. It benefited nearly eight thousand workers, and represented nearly half of the state's table grape industry.

Chandler's paper also highlighted the magnitude of the union's achievement noting, "It was a historic moment in labor relations history, the biggest victory so far of union's attempts to organize farm workers."<sup>106</sup> Chavez, Dolores Huerta, and their associates succeeded in unionizing farmworkers when so many others failed and the July contract represented the organization's strength and growing influence. As Boyarsky reported, growers conceded "that the signing of the contract is a sign of eventual union victory in the fight to unionize farm workers

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<sup>104</sup> Bill Boyarsky, "Handshakes Seal Pact Ending Grape Boycott," *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1970.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

throughout the country."<sup>107</sup> Cesar cited persistence as key to the union's success, "we said we are going to stay with it if it takes a lifetime."<sup>108</sup> Though the U.F.W. achieved unimaginable success during the Chicano Movement it was also constantly warding off enemies and potential setbacks.

One of the biggest threats to the farmworkers' union was strikebreakers and one of the growers' main sources of scabs was Mexico. Chavez and other Chicano organizations, such as the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), strongly objected to Mexican workers filling the jobs strikers left.<sup>109</sup> The *campesinos'* leader argued growers used immigrants, especially undocumented individuals, to dilute wages. The low pay hurt the union and its members, but it also led to the exploitation of foreign workers themselves. According to the *Times*, Chavez tried to unionize workers in Mexico. Ruben Salazar, who wrote the article for the L.A. paper, reported Chavez went to Mexico "to confer with Mexican labor leaders on how Mexican farm laborers might be organized so their poverty will not be taken advantage of when they cross the border to work on

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Jack Jones, "Mexican-American Group Objects to Use of 'Wetbacks,'" *Los Angeles Times*, August 29, 1967.

American farms."<sup>110</sup> Salazar added the union leader hoped to set up American-style unions in Mexico. While organizing Mexican workers may have had positive effects on both sides of the border, the plan was "highly unrealistic" and did not come to fruition.

Not everyone saw Chavez and his achievements in a positive light. On August 12, 1970, two weeks after the union's historic contract with the Valley's grape growers was signed, conservative pundit, William F. Buckley Jr. asked *Times* readers to "meditate on the means through which [United Farm Workers] succeeded in winning and the consequences of their victory."<sup>111</sup> Buckley argued that supporters of the grape boycott acted on sympathy rather than on economic logic and that Chavez "succeeded in intimidating everybody... not to buy California grapes."<sup>112</sup> Buckley added that the pay increases for workers translated to higher prices for consumers, which meant fewer grapes would be sold, which in turn resulted in diminished demand for the fruit and that would then lead cuts in the

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<sup>110</sup> Ruben Salazar, "Chavez Confers With Mexico Labor Leaders," *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1966.

<sup>111</sup> William F. Buckley Jr., "Cesar Chavez' Victory," *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 1970.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

workforce. Buckley also questioned why higher wages were awarded since Mexican workers willingly accepted the salaries growers' offered. The conservative writer made it seem as if Chavez and the union *forced* workers to petition for better compensation, and seemed to blame the activists for interfering with the free market. Buckley appeared more preoccupied with the cost of grapes and who would consume them than with the benefits farmworkers received. Rather than welcoming organized workers earning a better living, Buckley seemed upset with the union's effect on the economy.

The union was also criticized for its suspected Communist ties. That is to say, United Farm Workers was not immune to accusations of Communist infiltration.<sup>113</sup> During the 1966 Senate committee hearings concerning California labor laws, Albert J. Lima, west coast director of the Communist Party of Northern California was called to testify. Chavez perceived Lima's presence at the hearings as a ploy to link farmworkers and Communists, and accused the committee of red baiting. Lima himself asserted he was not involved in Chavez's unionizing efforts. According to

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<sup>113</sup> Harry Bernstein, "Communism Called 'Dead Issue' in Delano Dispute," *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1966; Ray Zeman, "Reds Accused of Role Win Delano Grape Strike," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1967.

Lima, the committee's attempt to involve the Communist Party with United Farm Workers (National Farm Workers Association) was "a crude effort" to derail farmworkers from securing "economic justice."<sup>114</sup> Similarly, other union leaders resented committee members using Communism to distract from the topic of labor law.

*Times* writer Ray Zeman also wrote about Communism and the union. He reported the findings of a California Legislative committee's study on communism and the farmworkers' movement. According to the "15<sup>th</sup> report of the Senate fact-finding subcommittee on un-American activities," United Farm Workers was infiltrated by Communists and subversives as early as 1965, but Communists did not direct the union, nor was Chavez a party member.<sup>115</sup> The fact-finding report also questioned why the union's legal counsel was associated with the Communist Party. Zeman also claimed migrant farmworkers were especially susceptible to Communist propaganda given their economic needs. It was suggested that Reds targeted field-hands appealing to their condition as exploited workers. Chavez

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<sup>114</sup> Harry Bernstein, "Communism Called 'Dead Issue' in Delano Dispute," *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1966.

<sup>115</sup> Ray Zeman, "Reds Accused of Role Win Delano Grape Strike," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1967.

of course vehemently denied any Communist influence in the union. For nearly the entire duration of the Chicano Movement, the union had to contend with red-baiting.

Aside from reporting on the difficulties the union encountered, the *Los Angeles Times* also reported its strategies. More specifically, the *Times* wrote on Cesar's commitment to non-violence.<sup>116</sup> Writing about Chavez's latest fast, Harry Bernstein delved into the leader's peaceful activism. Bernstein suggested Chavez emphatically advocated non-violence to counter Reies López Tijerina's aggressive tactics (such as the courthouse raid shootout and hostage taking situation). The farmworkers' leader maintained his followers could not "build a strong union and bring dignity to farm workers based on violence."<sup>117</sup> The article also revealed farmworkers did not always agree with Chavez's stance, especially when they were threatened with firearms and/or assaulted by growers' security guards. Bernstein also noted that Chavez had "drawn the hatred and perhaps fear of more growers around the country than any

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<sup>116</sup> Harry Bernstein, "Farm Union Leader Chavez Fasts to Support Nonviolence," *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 1968.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

other union leader in modern times."<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, Chavez remained committed to non-violence because he believed violence was a "short-cut to victory" that would ultimately derail the union's cause. The *Times'* reports on Chavez's pacifism were strikingly similar to articles found in *El Malcriado*. In fact, a lot of the coverage in Chandler's paper could have been interchangeable with reports from the U.F.W.'s publication.

As the Chicano Movement grew, so too did its coverage in the *L.A. Times*. Stories taking place in Los Angeles were especially prolific. In the opening weeks of March 1968 Chicano students shed light on their subpar educational system in L.A. schools by staging mass protests known as walkouts. As the name implies, students walked out of their classrooms during instruction demanding greater attention to their academic needs. The young Chicanos wanted their schools' to better guide and represent them. To do so, they asked for curriculum that included topics on Mexican American history, bilingual education, and more diversity among faculty members.

The *L.A. Times'* coverage of the walkouts was somewhat prophetic as it questioned if the student demonstrations

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.



were the beginning of greater action from the Chicano community in the *barrrios*. One of the reports identified "Brown Power" as the key to the recent demonstrations.<sup>119</sup> The paper saw the walkouts as a potential watershed moment for Chicanos, noting the educational demands could be the factor that unified the entire Latino population in Los Angeles. The *Times* also placed the walkouts along the same activism lines as Cesar Chavez and Reies López Tijerina. While most of the articles in Chandler's papers seemed understanding of the students' grievances, some also dealt with the opinion that the walkouts was the wrong way to bring attention to an educational cause.

One the walkouts biggest critic was state superintendent Max Rafferty. The *Times* informed its readers that Rafferty wanted students who partook in the walkouts to be punished. The paper did not state the type of punishment Rafferty had in mind. It was however clear that the superintendent disapproved of the protest. Rafferty argued that the students broke the law by leaving the classroom and ought to be castigated. Adding insult to injury, he explained nothing should disrupt instruction time, even for "a single minute, and our racial minority

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<sup>119</sup> "Student Walkouts," *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1968.

children are the ones needing time the most."<sup>120</sup> Another critic called the walkouts a "monster."<sup>121</sup> The reporter, unlike Rafferty, seemed to understand the trouble East L.A. schools were in -dropout rates close to 50%, unprepared students- but rather than allowing kids to leave class he suggested the problems be addressed "by teachers, parents, and students and by local, federal, and state officials."<sup>122</sup>

Contrary to Rafferty's wishes, most students were not punished for participating in the walkouts. There were however thirteen people blamed for rousing the students and officially charged with conspiracy to disturb the peace.<sup>123</sup> The *Times* often referred to the accused as "militant." One of the thirteen men was Sal Castro, a social studies teacher at Lincoln High. Castro was a sort of mentor to Chicano students and thus was accused of inciting the kids to leave their classes. Being arrested and charged resulted in Castro getting fired. The other twelve did not

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<sup>120</sup> "School Boycotts Not the Answer," *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1968.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> "Two of 13 Indicted in School Walkouts Arrested in East" *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1968; "ACLU Suit Seeks to Prevent Prosecution of 13 Militants," *Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1968 ; "East Side Still Plagued With Hangover From School Boycott," *Los Angeles Times*, September 15, 1968.

work for any of the high schools but were active in the Movement, including several members of the Brown Berets and even *La Raza* editor Eliazar Risco. Their bail was originally set at \$10,000 but was later lowered to about \$250. The newspaper reported that prosecutors found enough evidence to charge the thirteen since the findings convinced official the walkouts were planned outside of the school by non-students. The *Times* even reported searches at the Brown Berets headquarters turned up sketches of homemade weapons such as car mines and Molotov cocktails.<sup>124</sup> The findings were curious since the entire walkout campaign was geared to be completely nonviolent. People from the *barrio* saw case as a witch-hunt. Chicano attorney Oscar Acosta and the American Civil Liberties Union represented the thirteen defendants and after a few months the charges were all dismissed. The Board of Education however refused to reinstate Castro. After sustained protesting by the Chicano community (consisting primarily of Parents and their children picketing at Board of Education meeting) the educator eventually returned to the classroom.

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<sup>124</sup> "Bail Reduced for 9 in Walkouts at 4 Schools," *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 1968.

While Chicanos were able to restore Castro's job, they were not successful in obtaining the demands outlined during the walkouts. Students petitioned for and were granted a special meeting with the Board of Education in which Chicanos' ideas would be heard. The youths wanted their culture and language to be present in their schools' curriculum and personnel. They also wanted basic improvements to educational process, for example, reviews/evaluations of teachers with high dropout rates. Though the members of the Board claimed to understand the students concerns, none of the Chicanos' requests were implemented.

Aside from reporting on Movement events, the Los Angeles Times also paid attention to Chicano organizations. The *Times* covered the Brown Berets almost since the group's inception. Sometimes, the articles dealt with the Berets participation in Movement activities, such as the walkouts and Chicano Moratorium, other instances the militant organization was the sole focus of reports. One of the first articles the Times printed on the Berets was written by renowned journalist, Ruben Salazar. The Brown Berets became one of the most controversial organizations of the Chicano Movement. Salazar reported on the polemic group in

the piece entitled "Brown Berets Hail 'La Raza' and Scorn the Establishment."<sup>125</sup> Readers were firstly introduced to Berets' Prime Minister, David Sanchez. Salazar noted Sanchez came from a "lower middle-class home" and prior to heading the paramilitary group he "was president of Mayor Sam Yorty's Advisory Commission on Youth."<sup>126</sup> Salazar also quoted Sanchez as saying the Berets "especially admired Cesar Chavez (the farm labor leader) for his advocacy of nonviolence," but the *Times* reporter quickly contrasted the statement to one of the points in the Berets manual which indicated they would try to effect change "by any and all means necessary."<sup>127</sup> Seemingly, the Berets were as contradictory as its leader. At times the Berets were extremely attentive to their community case in point; serving as human shields to protect young students from the police during the 1968 school walkouts or operating a free clinic for Chicanos in East L.A.. Other times the group behaved badly, for instance in 1969 members set fire to

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<sup>125</sup> Ruben Salazar, "Brown Berets Hail 'La Raza' and Scorn the Establishment," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1969.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

parts of the Baltimore Hotel while Governor Ronald Reagan spoke on the premises.

Salazar also discussed the fact that law enforcement infiltrated the Berets. It was not uncommon for the L.A.P.D. and even FBI agents to spy on Chicano activists. The Berets claimed the undercover officer pushed them toward criminal activities. According to Salazar, the Berets' ethnic nationalism was what concerned the public most. The Berets however did not pay too much attention to public opinion, Sanchez maintained his group's "only concern [was] Chicanos," and did not "care what the white establishment or press thought of the organization."<sup>128</sup> Salazar's article revealed the multifarious activism of the Brown Berets. The Chicanos certainly had a radical side but they also had a sincere desire to improve their community.

As time went on however, the Berets actions seemed to lack any merit. In late August 1972 the Berets invaded Santa Catalina Island. According to the *Times*, the Berets decided to occupy the island because it rightfully belonged

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

to Mexico.<sup>129</sup> Twenty five members camped out in the island for three weeks before they were asked to leave. The newspaper reported the incident with the headline: "Judge Asks Berets to Leave--They Do."<sup>130</sup> The publication seemed surprised that the Berets obeyed and left without incident. The Catalina occupation was indicative of the group's decline. Their campaigns were no longer done in service of the community and were becoming ineffective as an organization.

In November 1972 Berets' Prime Minister, David Sanchez announced he was disbanding the organization.<sup>131</sup> According to Sanchez the Berets image was damaged by law enforcement officials. Rather than being seen as a unit protecting Chicanos, by the early 1970s many people only saw the Berets as dangerous militants. Sanchez also cited "Hippie-ism" as a cause for the Berets decline.<sup>132</sup> The group who previously thrived on structure and obedience became undisciplined. This was particularly evident in regards to

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<sup>129</sup> "'Occupation' of Catalina Ends in Peculiar Way," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1972.

<sup>130</sup> "Judge Asks Berets to Leave--They Do," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1972

<sup>131</sup> "Brown Berets Leader Quits," *Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 1972.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

Sanchez leadership. Members who once followed Sanchez blindly decided to continue several chapters without him.

Whether it was addressing the militant Brown Berets in Los Angeles or Cesar Chavez's union in Delano the *Los Angeles Times* devoted plenty of ink to the Movement, but the coverage of Chicanos' activism the *Times* was also distinct from that of any other periodical. The coverage differed because the *Times* had Ruben Salazar on staff. Being at the epicenter of the action with a reporter who could truly understand the subject matter resulted in insightful stories that brought non-Latino readers closer to the Spanish-speaking world. Salazar's articles read like the story was told by someone in the middle of it looking out, instead of a person peeking into the action from the margins. To Los Angeles' Hispanic public, Salazar gave a voice to Chicanos in the mainstream press. Thus, the internal perspective he provided and his utmost professionalism made Salazar's absences in the press all the more pronounced.

As a devoted journalist and recently appointed news director for L.A.'s top Spanish-language television station, Salazar was out covering the National Chicano Moratorium the day he died. The anti-war demonstration did



not go entirely as planned. It was supposed to be an orderly march. No one was supposed to get hurt, let alone die. But people did, Ruben Salazar, Lynn Ward and Angel Diaz. After his death, Ruben became a martyr for the Chicano Movement, but it is important to note that he was not a Movement activist. He was however, according to attorney Oscar Zeta Acosta, "the only Chicano in East L.A...that the cops were really afraid of.. He wasn't really with us, but at least he was interested."<sup>133</sup> The tragic events on August 29, 1970 made the date infamous in the history of the Movement.

Salazar's career began in El Paso, Texas, where he grew up. He was born in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico on March 3, 1928 to Luz and Salvador Salazar.<sup>134</sup> The Salazars relocated from Ciudad Juárez to El Paso in 1928 when Ruben was only eight months old. Salazar became an American citizen and served in the Army from 1950 to 1952.<sup>135</sup> After his military service, Ruben attended Texas Western College (now University of Texas, El Paso) where he majored in journalism and contributed to the school's newspaper. He

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<sup>133</sup> Hunter S. Thompson, "Strange Rumbings in Aztlan," *Rolling Stone*, April 29, 1971, 35-36.

<sup>134</sup> [http://www.elpasotimes.com/ci\\_15928350](http://www.elpasotimes.com/ci_15928350)

<sup>135</sup> Salazar, *Border Correspondent*, 6.

graduated in 1954 and soon after went to work for *El Paso Herald-Post*.

While at the *El Paso Herald-Post*, Ruben was assigned the "police and Juárez beats."<sup>136</sup> On more than one occasion Salazar went undercover to expose the city's criminal elements and shed light on the lives of Chicanos. In 1955, he investigated the border-town's drug trade and accessibility of narcotics. One year later, prompted by the plea of one of his readers, Salazar reported on the production of home-made liquor in the barrios of South El Paso.<sup>137</sup> Historian Mario T. Garcia described Salazar's articles as "poignant expressions of the plight of the inhabitants of [the] Chicano underworld. They achieve an intense social realism, a kind of muckraking social reformism."<sup>138</sup> Salazar's reports also caught the attention of the *Federal Bureau of Investigation* (F.B.I.), who continued to monitor him up to his death.

Salazar left Texas for California in the late 1950s. He spent some time in Northerner California and by 1959 he

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>137</sup> Ruben Salazar, "Speakeasies Sell 'Atomic' Booze in South El Paso," *El Paso Herald-Post*, July 3, 1956.

<sup>138</sup> Salazar, *Border Correspondent*, 7.

was working for the *Los Angeles Times*. Between 1959 and 1965, Salazar focused on the concerns of, and protests by, Mexican Americans in the pre-Chicano movement years. Although these protests were not framed in the militant terms of the later *movimiento*, they revealed the origins of both the problems and the issues to be taken up by the Chicano generation.<sup>139</sup>

But before he covered the Movement, Salazar served as a foreign correspondent. His first assignment abroad was in the Dominican Republic. The journalist was tasked with reporting the United States' military intervention in the Caribbean nation's civil war. Following his stint in the Dominican Republic, the *L.A. Times* sent Salazar to Vietnam. In the course of the year that Ruben spent in Southeast Asia the reporter's attitude towards the war shifted from being supportive to objecting to the conflict, calling it an "immoral war."<sup>140</sup> While in Vietnam the F.B.I. again took notice of Salazar after he wrote an article the Bureau deemed controversial. In 1966 Salazar was appointed to cover the news from Latin America. This was Salazar's

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>140</sup> Enrique Hank López , "Ruben Salazar Death Silences a Leading Voice of Reason," *Los Angeles Times*, September 6, 1970.

third foreign correspondent assignment in two years, but this time, he was appointed bureau chief and the whole family relocated with him to Mexico City.<sup>141</sup>

Towards the end of his stay in Mexico, Salazar's reports focused on student protests and the XIX Summer Olympics. Capitalizing on the attention received for hosting the 1968 games, Mexicans (mostly students) staged demonstrations rebuking the government's repression and lack of true democracy. In addition to the student movement receiving publicity at an international scale, the P.R.I. government was put in a lose-lose situation. If the government allowed the manifestations to continue, Mexico would be seen in an unfavorable light- as a near dictatorship. If the P.R.I. tried to suppress the demonstrations the country's civil rights would be questioned and having a history of using troops to put down demonstrations, any violent altercations could discourage visitors from attending the Olympics.<sup>142</sup>

Salazar reported that on the night of October 2, 1968, "About 10,000 persons attended the anti-government rally at the plaza of the Three Cultures which is overlooked by the

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<sup>141</sup> Salazar, *Border Correspondent*, 23.

<sup>142</sup> Ruben Salazar, *Los Angeles Times*, "Students Peril Mexico Image Before Olympics," August 18, 1968.

Foreign Ministry and the city's largest apartment complex, the *Tlatelolco* housing project."<sup>143</sup> Violent clashes ensued between soldiers, police, and demonstrators in what came to be known as the *Tlatelolco* Massacre. The march was planned as a peaceful protest but escalated to bloodshed,

As the rally was ending the gun battles erupted between troops, surrounding the area in dozens of armored cars, and snipers in the apartment buildings. Troops opened up with machine guns on the snipers and persons in the square fled screaming for cover. The troops said the snipers opened fire first... Gen. Marcelino Garcia Barragan, the defense secretary, said he had orders to crush the student uprising at any cost.<sup>144</sup>

The number of casualties remains unknown and the *Tlatelolco* Massacre still stands as a symbol of PRI oppression.

Salazar returned to the United States in late 1968 shortly after the events at *Tlatelolco*. The Times recalled Salazar to the States to cover "the accelerating tensions in the Chicano communities in Los Angeles and throughout the Southwest."<sup>145</sup>

In the short time he spent writing about the Movement Salazar presented a balanced depiction of the Chicano

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<sup>143</sup> Ruben Salazar, "Students, Army Troops Battle in Mexico City," *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 1968.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Salazar, *Border Correspondent*, 25.

world. Salazar believed it was of utmost importance for the press to inform the public about the plight of Chicanos. Enrique Hank López , a distinguished writer and close friend of Salazar's, recounted his friend's request to a group of colleagues to bring attention to people of Mexican ancestry,

We come to you as the voice of reason... And we ask you-almost beg you-to help us inform *this nation about the tragic plight of 8 million invisible Chicanos* whose lives often parallel those of black people. There is much bitterness in our Mexican-American communities...an ever-increasing bitterness against school systems that psychologically mutilate the Chicano child, against certain police..., against local and federal governments that apparently respond to violence. Consequently, there are some Chicanos who have concluded that we must have a Watts-type riot to catch your attention- to force the establishment to pay heed. We prayerfully hope this wont happen... We hope that reason will finally prevail, that you leaders of the national media will help us push for the kinds of governmental reforms and changes in public attitudes that will help better the lot of the much-ignored Chicano.

In Los Angeles, Ruben Salazar tried to achieve this goal. He captured the nuances of Chicano people by reporting on their identity, their problems, and their activism. One of the reporter's most famous columns, "Who Is a Chicano? And What Is It the Chicanos Want?," touched upon these themes. Many people outside the Hispanic community saw all Spanish-

speaking people as the being the same, simply classified as "Mexican." In California "Mexican," "Mexican American," and "Chicano" were all distinct identities. The word "Chicano" was, and to some extent continues to be, a loaded term, it is charged and difficult to define. In "Who Is a Chicano? And What Is It the Chicanos Want?" Salazar explained, "The word Chicano is as difficult to define as "soul."<sup>146</sup> Printed in the *Times*' February 6, 1970 issue, Salazar masterfully discussed the complicated relationship between politics and ethnicity that made up a big part of Chicano identity. Salazar explained "Chicano" was a term of intense pride. Chicanos saw themselves as the sons and daughters of the great Aztec and Mayan civilizations, but the reality in the United States was that,

Mexican-Americans [had] to live with the stinging fact that the word Mexican is the synonym for inferior in many parts of the Southwest... Mexican-Americans, though indigenous to the Southwest, [were] on the lowest rung scholastically, economically, socially and politically. Chicanos [felt] cheated. They [wanted] to effect change. Now.<sup>147</sup>

Being a Chicano was then "an act of defiance" against an oppressive system and perhaps even a way to dissociate from

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<sup>146</sup> Ruben Salazar, "Who Is a Chicano? And What Is It the Chicanos Want?," *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 1970.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

the stereotypes and difficulties Mexican Americans faced. Ultimately, the journalist believed "Chicanos, then, [were] merely fighting to become "Americans." Yes, but with a Chicano outlook."<sup>148</sup> That is to say, Chicanos wanted to be treated as citizens, not as foreigners. Salazar's article outlined for readers the differences that existed among the many residents of East L.A. that to outsiders would all appear to be the same.

A week after the *Times* printed "Who Is a Chicano?" Salazar again addressed the difficulties that came with being a person of Mexican ancestry in the United States. Salazar explained that there was a massive gap between the United States and Mexico, though geographically close, they were worlds apart when it came to knowing one another. Mexicans —once the reality that the U.S. was not the land of milk and honey set in— saw the United States as a thief who took half of their country in an unfair war. Americans on the other hand, at least "those who [knew] only the shady aspects of the border towns [thought] of Mexico as a place where they [could] enjoy doing what is not allowed at

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.



home."<sup>149</sup> These misconceptions, according to Salazar, then left Mexican Americans in a precarious position. Mexican Americans did not fully fit in or were accepted in the country they were born and called home due to the cultural connection that still existed with the land of their ancestors. Answering Americans who questioned Latinos' inability to assimilate, Salazar argued,

Mexico [was] very much in evidence to the Southwest's eight million or so Mexican-Americans. This [made] it difficult for the Mexican-Americans to think of Mexico in the abstract as, for instance, Irish-Americans might think of Ireland. The problems of Mexico [were] and will remain relevant to the Mexican-American. Relations between Mexico and the United States [affected] the Mexican-American in the Southwest materially and emotionally...<sup>150</sup>

The hostilities between the neighboring nations coupled with their admiration and fondness for both Mexican and American cultures left Mexican Americans "tormented by the pull of two distinct cultures."<sup>151</sup>

Salazar's skill for writing on complex issues was again seen in his piece on the biculturalism of *la raza*.

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<sup>149</sup> Ruben Salazar, "A Mexican-American Hyphen," *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 1970.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

Salazar also demonstrated that the self-proclaimed Chicano had a lot against him/her. Chicanos suffered all the discrimination that came with being Mexican but seldom reaped the benefits of American citizenship. Generally whites perceived Chicanos as uneducated, immoral hoodlums, while Mexicans and conservative Mexican Americans, thought of the word "Chicano" as a derogatory term, having connotations of criminal activity. Furthermore, traditionalist Latinos chose to distance themselves from Chicano activists whom they saw as little more than rabble-rousers. Salazar's stories detailed the intricacies of the Movement and the people affected by it and made the *Los Angeles Times* better for it. On August 29, 1970 the paper lost a talented reporter, but more significantly, activists lost "one of the city's leading spokesmen for Chicano rights."<sup>152</sup>

His death was a devastating blow to the community. The circumstances relating to the intrepid journalist's passing however made his death all the more distressing. As the Moratorium rally went on Salazar and his colleagues decided to go into a bar for a beer before leaving the

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<sup>152</sup> Charles T. Powers, "One Dead, 40 Hurt in East L.A. Riot," *Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 1970.

event. As the reporters relaxed inside the Silver Dollar Cafe, outside the day's peace broke. The unrest at the Moratorium began at an overcrowded liquor store along the march-route. Suspecting customers were stealing, the store clerk called the police. Shortly after their arrival, the police and the crowd began fighting. A few blocks from the liquor store the sheriff's department responded to a call of armed men hiding out at the Silver Dollar Café. One of the deputies, Thomas Wilson, fired a 10-inch projectile into the bar striking Salazar in the head. The *Times* later reported the "bullet-like missile" used by Wilson came with specific instruction "not to be used as an anti-personnel weapon... [or for] crowd control."<sup>153</sup> Salazar's body remained on the floor of the Silver Dollar for hours since deputies refused to go in and prohibited others from entering the establishment. Deputies maintained they did not have masks to protect themselves from the smoke that filled the Silver Dollar and claimed they did not enter for fear of being ambushed.

At the time, and to a lesser extent today, people subscribed to conspiracy theories which held law

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<sup>153</sup> Jerry Cohen, "Pierces Barricades: Fatal Gas Missile Not Intended For Riot-Control Use," *Los Angeles Times*, September 1, 1970.

enforcement agencies responsible for Ruben's death. A few of Salazar's stories criticized the city's officers so people believed the L.A.P.D. and Sheriff's office murdered the journalist to stop the negative publicity on their agencies. The consequent actions of L.A.'s law enforcement officials fueled peoples' suspicions about Salazar's death. Agencies gave multiple and varied accounts of the events on August 29. The department also refused to release its files on Salazar. In fact, many of the documents were not available to the public until 2012. Rather than having a traditional investigation, the reporter's death was handles as a coroner's inquest. The inquest was meant to determine intent, if the assailant had malicious motives (aka, foul play involved) then criminal charges and lawsuits could be filed. For nearly three weeks, the inquest proceedings were televised around the clock and after more than 60 witnesses testified, ultimately what became the lengthiest and costliest coroners' investigation in county history (at the time) resulted in a split verdict. Most Angelenos, especially Chicanos, saw the inquest as a complete farce asking the wrong people wrong questions that never resulted in satisfactory answers regarding Salazar's murder. The *L.A. Times'* reports routinely criticized the inquest for

failing to answer the very serious questions surrounding the Silver Dollar shooting. Shortly after the coroner's investigation ended, the L.A. paper not only slammed the inquest it also accused the Sheriff's Department of lacking transparency stating,

the inquest did not bring out -because the Sheriff's Department resisted bringing out- whether Thomas Wilson was acting within the limits of his standing orders when he fired the projectile. The inquest did not bring out - because the Sheriff's Department resisted bringing out- what the deputy's standing orders were...<sup>154</sup>

The Sheriff's Department refused to acknowledge any wrong doing and no one was punished for the tragedy on August 29. KMEX, the television station where Ruben worked, even contacted J. Edgar Hoover requesting the F.B.I. look into Salazar's death. The Bureau declined to investigate concluding that "no useful purpose would be served other than offsetting any possible criticism of the USA."<sup>155</sup>

Ruben Salazar's life ended on August 29, 1970, his work and spirit did not. Salazar became a martyr in the Chicano Movement. In particular, the reporter's death was

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<sup>154</sup> "Salazar Facts Still Unknown," *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1970.

<sup>155</sup> Los Angeles Times F.B.I. documents, <http://documents.latimes.com/salazar-kmex-requests-investigation/>

used by Chicanos to garner support in their fight against police brutality. Moreover, *la causa* gained more participants, as people were moved to action in light of the newsman's passing. Salazar may not have been an activist in the Movement, but in a significant way his writing and persona did further Chicanos' objectives.

With Salazar's work, the *L.A. Times* captured Chicanos' voices. The paper's recent changes allowed for fair and detailed coverage of all the Movement's campaigns and organizations. Though *Times* however remained a white, mainstream press outlet it was in no way disparaging of Chicanos quest for civil rights.

Chicanos' struggles for rights briefly overlapped with African Americans' Civil Rights Movement. So how would coverage of the Movement look like in African American publications? I examined the *Los Angeles Sentinel* to find out. The *Sentinel* began serving Southern California's African American community in 1933. The paper was founded by Leon Washington Jr. who migrated to Southern California from Kansas in 1928. Washington, also known as "Wash," was described as "an elegant man. A gentle man and he was a gentleman. He had a flair for living and he was one of the most stylish men in the city and to top off all of this, he

had class. "Wash" was a man among men."<sup>156</sup> Upon his arrival, the future publisher briefly worked for the *California News* and independently circulated an advertisement newsletter.<sup>157</sup> Washington then went to work for Los Angeles' premier African American newspaper, Charlotta Bass' *California Eagle*. He stayed at the *California Eagle* for eighteen months, leaving to start his own publication. *The Los Angeles Sentinel* quickly rose to prominence, rivaling the *Eagle* itself. Historian Douglas Flamming characterized the paper as, "heavy with real news presented in a professional format—easily the most sophisticated Race paper ever offered to the community."<sup>158</sup> Washington "was very concerned about the plight of Blacks in Los Angeles and used the power of the press to spotlight and fight discrimination and other acts of racial injustice."<sup>159</sup>

In 1940, Leon Washington married Ruth Brummell, one of newspaper's photographers. Ruth was also born in Kansas, but spent part of her childhood in Tennessee and

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<sup>156</sup> "Happy Birthday, Chief," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 12, 1984.

<sup>157</sup> Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 302.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>159</sup> "Legends of the Past," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, December 9, 2004.

Colorado.<sup>160</sup> After migrating to Southern California, Brummell enrolled in the Metropolitan Business School and continued taking business classes as she had done in her teenage years.<sup>161</sup> Ruth Washington then established a successful photography studio, but left her business in the late 1940s to manage *The Sentinel*. Leon Washington suffered "a string of health problems, which culminated in a stroke. This health scare forced him to appoint his wife as an assistant publisher, and business manager for the paper."<sup>162</sup> An editorial appearing in *The Sentinel* stated that "Prior to his illness 1949, Leon H. Washington Jr. personally published and handled ALL operations of the *Los Angeles Sentinel*."<sup>163</sup> Ruth continued to play an important role in the publication until her passing in 1990. Aside from her professional ventures, Mrs. Washington was dedicated to improving her community. She counseled gang

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<sup>160</sup> Libby Clark, "A tribute to Ruth Washington: Publisher, Los Angeles Sentinel," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, August 22, 2001.

<sup>161</sup> Yussuf J. Simmonds, "Legends of the Past," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, December 16, 2004.

<sup>162</sup> <http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aaw/washington-jr-leon-h-1907-1974>

<sup>163</sup> *Los Angeles Sentinel*, September 3, 1970.



members, fund-raised for the YMCA, and co-founded of the Black Women's Forum.<sup>164</sup>

As the years passed, *The Sentinel* became an institution in Los Angeles and Washington's reputation grew. Nearly forty years after its establishment, the *Los Angeles Sentinel* could boast about being "ONE OF THE LARGEST NEGRO-OWNED NEWSPAPER IN THE NATION [sic: caps used by paper]." Not only did he report the news, he shaped and influenced the community as well, "This city heard his voice...The people learned to listen and there are few political figures...who did not seek his counsel at one time or another."<sup>165</sup> The Washingtons continued in control of *The Sentinel* with Leon serving as president of the corporation and Ruth as vice president and treasurer until the 1980s. Morgan M. Moten, the paper's attorney, was the final member of the board of directors. Moten held the position of secretary.

Continuing to addressing the socio-political matters facing its readers, the publication's slogan changed from its initial, "Don't spend your money where you can't work"

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<sup>164</sup> Clark, "A tribute to Ruth Washington," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, August 22, 2001.

<sup>165</sup> "Happy Birthday, Chief," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 12, 1984.

to "Education Will Lead to Truth." In addition to political and community occurrences, the paper featured sections on entertainment, sports, religion (highlighting church events and clergymen). Washington's publication also devoted some pages to women. Edited by Jessie Mae Brown, the "For and about Women" segment generally reported on social events (such as luncheons and balls) and women's clubs and fundraisers. On occasion stories with a national scope concerning African American women appeared in other sections of the *Sentinel*. The newspaper reported on almost every aspect of African American society, but with the exception of major national stories or significant incidents in Los Angeles rarely delved into matters outside this community.

Coverage of the Chicano Movement was certainly sparse in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*. From 1968 to 1970 -during the school walkouts and the Chicano Moratorium, arguably two of the most important *raza* events to take place in L.A. - less than a dozen articles on the Movement appeared in Washington's newspaper. The articles on Chicanos that were printed were never found on the front page and were often editorials. Mervyn Dymally (who served as Lieutenant Governor of California from 1975-79 and was later elected

to the U.S. House of Representatives) and Booker Griffin penned most of the stories on the Hispanic community. Carefully chosen words, insightful explanations of the days' problems, and optimism were constants in Griffin's column.

In the spring of 1968 Chicano youths staged school walkouts (also known as blow-outs) in several L.A. high schools. Protesting limited curriculums, racist practices and the rundown facilities, thousands of students coordinated strikes walked out of classes in Garfield, Lincoln, Roosevelt High and other. African American students from Jefferson High also boycotted their institution demanding culturally relevant instruction and having a Black principal and counselor. The Jefferson High boycott made the front page of the *Los Angeles Sentinel* on March 14, 1968. The first mention of the Chicano walkouts came further in the issue in an opinion poll. Police Chief, Thomas Reddin stated "outside agitators" influenced the school protests, the *Sentinel's* poll then asked the community: "Are the school demonstrations genuine or are they the product of outside agitators?"<sup>166</sup> The public

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<sup>166</sup> Chuck Porter, "Public Opinion Poll," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, March 14, 1968.

overwhelmingly rejected the Chief Reddin's premise and believed the demonstrations were genuine. One of the responders believed the students' actions were "of the highest integrity...[because] today's youths are active and concern about their future."<sup>167</sup> The poll indicated that Black Angelenos agreed with the students, rather than looking at them as militant radicals or puppets of communist agents as the establishment did.

*Sentinel* columnist, Booker Griffin also sided with the students and saw the positives in their actions. His article, "Crisis in Education: 'Jungle Schools' Come Home to Roost," discussed the validity of the students' protests.<sup>168</sup> Griffin argued that young people at Jefferson, Garfield, Lincoln, and Roosevelt had every right to protest and in fact was democratic to do so as they were victims of intolerance and neglect. The reporter further explained L.A. schools were in a crisis of their own doing as teachers, administrators, and the Board of Education itself had failed to meet the needs of minority students. Griffin goes as far as to call the Los Angeles Board of Education

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Booker Griffin, "Crisis in Education," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, March 14, 1968. In the article Griffin discussed the activities of both African American and Chicano students.

"a super monster whose very foundation strangles the hopes and aspirations of young people of the ghetto and the barrio."<sup>169</sup> He also had harsh words for politicians who tried to use the school demonstrations to get publicity. The story closes with an appeal to public official to work alongside students and resolve the very real crisis at hand.

The city however was not as responsible or receptive as Griffins had hoped and as a result of the school demonstrations, and charged thirteen Chicanos with conspiracy to disrupt the peace. Fearful of negative consequences and precedent the trial could set, the Mervyn Dymally decided to write a letter to District Attorney, Evelle Younger (who later served as Attorney General of California) and sheared it with *Sentinel* readers in his column, "Sacramento Report." At the time the story was published, Dymally was a state senator. "In the six years that I have been a legislature I can think of few issues which have disturbed me so much as this recent activity by your office" wrote Dymally, adding that even more disturbing than the charges on the Chicanos was the fact

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

that walkouts had actually not happened earlier.<sup>170</sup> Dymally was surprised demonstrations had not happened before given the L.A. schools' deplorable practices of putting Latino students in classes for the mentally retarded and in vocational tracts (rather than college preparation courses) due to the students' language barriers. Harshly criticizing the D.A., the *Sentinel* staffer suggested Younger should have charged the school system instead of the young protestors. Similar to Griffin's rebuke of the L.A. Board of Education, Dymally accused Young of starting "a movement to destroy the young articulate leadership of the Mexican-American community."<sup>171</sup> Siding with the people behind the walkouts and pointing out the counterproductive nature of the D.A.'s charges, Dymally argued,

The injustices that afflict our society are too grievous to be ignored, and it is the duty of every responsible citizen to protest. But you are teaching us that peaceful protest bears the same penalty as violent protest- a felony indictment. This lesson will be remembered in the black and brown communities, and it will do little to encourage compliance with the law and order, that, I believe, you and I truly desire.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Mervyn Dymally, "Civil Liberties and the Mexican Americans," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, June 20, 1968.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

All of the charges against the thirteen activists were eventually dropped, but as Dymally suggested the Chicano community would not forget the events and that other injustices could lead to more protests.

Two years after the walkouts, the Chicano Movement had grown and in addition to petitioning for educational reform, activists turned their attention to the Vietnam War. To protest the high casualties among Latinos, *la raza* organized a massive anti-war rally called the Chicano Moratorium. Over 20,000 Chicanos, coming from every corner of Southwest, took to the streets on August 29, 1970. What began as a peaceful march descended into utter chaos by day's end as L.A. Sheriff's deputies clashed with Chicanos, leaving hundreds injured, over a million dollars in property damage to looted business along Whittier Boulevard, and three fatalities, including renowned journalist Ruben Salazar.

The Moratorium rally was not publicized in the *Sentinel's* community calendar or mentioned anywhere else in the publication in weeks leading up to the event. The *Los Angeles Sentinel's* first issue after the Chicano demonstration dedicated a few articles to events that transpired on August 29, but none in the front page. The

first article on the anti-war march was in *The Sentinel's* editorials and opinions section. The writer urged cool-heads to prevail. Reason should prevail to avoid further violence, the author argued, but also to properly deal with the problems that confronted Chicanos and African Americans in Los Angeles. The issues Mexican Americans faced were not unlike those in the Black community. The column alluded to the racism that existed in the city of Angeles and emphasized how the "city fathers" were quick to ignore the troubles that accompanied it.<sup>173</sup> The writer closed with, "Watts was holocaust enough to last a century[,]"" reminding readers that there had been violence in Los Angeles before and little was done to address the circumstances that led to the 1965 riot.<sup>174</sup> According to the editorial, more unrest, especially that centering on race relations, threatened to destroy the city's future.

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<sup>173</sup> "Don't Get Hot and Blow Your Cool" *Los Angeles Sentinel*, September 3, 1970.

<sup>174</sup> The six-day riot that occurred in Watts in 1965 was a demonstration of discontent by African-Americans in Los Angeles. The discontent that plagued Blacks stemmed largely from the lack of economic and educational opportunities and neglect by the system. The clashes in Watts were also a manifestation of Black Angelenos' frustration with police harassment. Property damaged caused by looting, arson, and general destruction was estimated at \$40 million. Arrests and reported injuries numbered in the thousands. The violence also resulted in 34 deaths, mostly of African-Americans.



Booker Griffin also mentioned the Watts Riot in his column. On September 3, 1970 Griffin wrote the article "Ghetto Events Teach Nothing; Now Barrio Explodes."<sup>175</sup> Drawing parallels between the disturbances in Watts in 1965 and those of the Chicano Moratorium, the reporter explained that seeing the clashes on August 29 was,

Like a bad dream or a hideous nightmare...Forms and figures recreated were so close to a personal reality that they were almost recognizable. Events and circumstances leading to the explosion in the barrio were a [replay] of events and circumstances leading up to the explosion in the ghetto.<sup>176</sup>

Much of the article focused on the causes behind the "rebellions" in Watts and East L.A.. Griffin identified the oppression and repression of minority youths —by and large at the hand of L.A.P.D.— as a root of the clashes. The *Sentinel* reporter maintained that people of color, especial young men, had no legitimate outlets to release their frustrations, consequently rioting became a release for deep seeded discontent. He further suggested that "If

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<sup>175</sup> Booker Griffin, "Ghetto Events Teach Nothing; Now Barrio Explodes," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, September 3, 1970.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

society would deal fairly and squarely with its problems riots would disappear."<sup>177</sup>

Griffin's article shed light on the appeal of Chicanos, noting that Chicanos "want what every other American wants...their fair share."<sup>178</sup> Discontent among minorities grew because they were kept from participating in society in a meaningful way. This was due in part because the powers at be turned a blind eye to the plight of African Americans and Chicanos. Five years had gone by since the riot in Watts and again Los Angeles' minorities found themselves in a struggle against the city's power structure (chief among them, law enforcement). In the eyes of the *Sentinel's* writer, the violence that erupted during the Moratorium could have been prevented before it ever happened. He sympathized with Chicanos because African Americans had or were experiencing the same things. Griffin maintained that rather than trying to improve the lives of minorities, leaders in Los Angeles, as well as individuals who ran the country, maintained a "systematic riot" on the residents of the ghettos and *barrios*. According to Griffin, the "slow, subtle, sanctioned

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

riot...[was] a system against oppressed people."<sup>179</sup> Ending on an optimistic tone Griffins shared with his readers his hope to see the day when riots will no longer occur because "there won't be enough disenchanted people to participate."<sup>180</sup>

Jim Cleaver's column, "Kleaver's Klippin's" also touched on the event of the Moratorium, but rather than discussing the rioting, it focused on Salazar's passing and the press. Cleaver, who later became editor of the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, expressed concern over the state of his profession. Seemingly, to Cleaver, Salazar's death highlighted the issues that threatened journalists, their rights, and journalism itself. He wrote,

It seems odd that all of a sudden the fact that a newsman is in imminent danger is of no consequence to police officers. In this case, it was the sheriffs' department that refused to either go in and bring Salazar out, according to a cameraman who was assigned along with Salazar to the scene, or allow anyone else to go in to bring him out. We stand in danger of being deprived of delivering the news to the general public when that news is unfavorable to the powers that be... The fear of retribution must be

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

removed and newsmen must be allowed to work without hindrance.<sup>181</sup>

The crisis at the Silver Dollar Café coupled with recent events ranging from denying *Sentinel* reporters access to public events to Vice President Spiro Agnew's attacks on the media led Cleaver to question the freedom of the press in Los Angeles. Citing the rare, though not unheard of tactic, of firing journalists who wrote unfavorably about the people in power, as well as law enforcement's failure to protect citizens, as in the case of Ruben Salazar, Cleaver suggests that not being backed by the law was a way to censor reporters. Cleaver also stressed the importance of conveying the truth to readers. He argued that "to do anything less than [report the truth was] pure and unadulterated prostitution."<sup>182</sup> He further cautioned that newsmen who were deceitful functioned merely as political puppets.<sup>183</sup> Cleaver saw the dissemination of information, more specifically accurate news, as essential to the prosperity of a community.

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

*The Sentinel's* coverage of the Chicano Movement, though scarce, was generally positive. In most instances, the journalists related the events happening in the Chicano community to issues that African Americans had also encountered. In the case of the Chicano walkouts, they were reported in the same vein as the African American student boycott at Jefferson High with Griffin and Dymally, showing the demonstrations stemmed from the same source; the L.A. education system and its disregard for minority students. As for the Moratorium, Griffin and Cleaver use the Watts Riots as their framework to communicate the news of the violence that ended the August 29 anti-war rally. Griffin expressed his immense frustration because as he saw it not much had changed in the city of Angeles for minorities in the five year span between Watts and the Chicano Moratorium. While these two populations could certainly understand the struggles of the other, they remained relatively detached from one another.

While distance between two ethnic groups is not surprising, disconnect between people of the same background is. Movement coverage in *La Opinion* reveals that such was the case with Los Angeles' Spanish-speaking population. All people of Mexican ancestry were obviously

aware of the Chicano Movement, but not everyone was an activist and not every person turned to Chicano publications for information. Nor were Chicano papers the only sources covering the Movement. One the Southland's most successful Spanish-language newspapers was *La Opinión*. I turned to this paper to see how the Movement was related to people of Mexican ancestry by a non-Chicano publication. If we employ the Movement's terminology, *La Opinión* would be a Mexican American publication, not a Chicano newspaper. That is to say, it was traditional and from an older generation. One of the few features *La Opinión* shared with Movement papers was its commitment to inform the people in their community.

On September 16, 1926, *La Opinión* began serving Los Angeles' Spanish-speaking population. The paper was owned and operated by Ignacio E. Lozano, who chose September 16 as the paper's inaugural date to commemorate Mexico's Independence Day. By the time *La Opinión* was launched, Lozano was a seasoned newspaperman as he had published *La Prensa* in San Antonio, Texas since 1913. According to America Rodriguez, Lozano's readers in Texas were generally, middle-class Mexicans, supporters of Porfirio Diaz's dictatorship, who left their native country due to

the Revolution.<sup>184</sup> *La Prensa's* appeal grew beyond San Antonio and by 1915 it had an annual circulation of 20,000 copies with clientele throughout the Lone-star state. Its success drove Lozano to establish *La Opinión*. The Los Angeles periodical also became very popular and was soon "distributed in Texas, New Mexico, Oregon, Kansans, Arizona, Utah, and Illinois, in addition to California" but unlike its sister paper, *La Opinión's* audience was working class people.<sup>185</sup>

By the late 1960s, Los Angeles was home to more than 700,000 Mexican Americans, so the Spanish language daily had a major market to serve. *La Opinión's* coverage of Movement events was usually wide-ranging, but conservative. In fact, the paper seldom used the word "Chicano" in its stories, opting to use the term "Mexican American" instead. The publication's conservative nature was evident in its coverage of the walkouts.

"Unrest at Four L.A. Schools" was splattered across the front page of *La Opinión* on March 7, 1968. The story on the walkouts noted that students were seemingly

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<sup>184</sup> America Rodriguez, *Making Latino News: Race, Language, Class* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999), 17.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

uncoordinated in their reasons for protesting and claimed youngsters left their classes for reasons ranging from protesting the schools rules and regulations to celebrating Crispus Attucks Day.<sup>186</sup> The paper never really delved into the students' real demands, which included having more Hispanic teachers and counselors, curriculum that included culturally relevant matters, and guidance to pursuit higher education. *La Opinión's* readers learned that students had been in good spirits until they encountered the police, whose patrol cars quickly became targets for bottles and other projectiles. Though students intended to leave the campus peacefully there were some altercations with law enforcement officers. To students the cops' intervention was a violation of their constitutional right to assemble. The article also reported that a "bearded lad" dressed in Brown Beret attire urged students to attend an assembly at a nearby park.<sup>187</sup> *La Opinión* failed to mention that the Brown Beret present at the schools served as security guards for the protesting schoolchildren and that the student-led striking committees planned to congregate at the park adjacent to Board of Education offices seeking an

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<sup>186</sup> "Disturbios en Cuatro Escuelas de L.A.," *La Opinión*, March 7, 1968.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*



audience with Board members. The demonstrators could not speak with Education Board officials on the first day of the walkouts and warned the class boycotts would continue until their demands were met.

Police Chief Thomas Reddin also believed the walkouts would continue and lead to greater violence. Reddin was also convinced "professional agitators" incited the students to protest and that the school strikes were not spontaneous acts.<sup>188</sup> The suggestion that the students who participated in the walkouts were under the influence of outside agitators was a topic that arose several times in *La Opinión*. In addition quoting Chief Reddin on the matter, the Lozano's editorials also reverberated the outside agitators theory. One piece mentioned outsiders "surreptitiously" distributed militant literature to rile up youngster.<sup>189</sup>

The commentaries also admonished students for the methods they used to bring attention to their cause. The writer mentioned students could have presented their grievances in an orderly manner through the proper

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<sup>188</sup> "Reddin Espera Mas Desordenes de Estudiantes," *La Opinión*, March 8, 1968.

<sup>189</sup> "Los Disturbios Estudiantiles," *La Opinión*, March 9, 1968.

channels. *La Opinión* neglected the fact that students had indeed gone to the L.A. Board of Education with their demands but saw no changes and therefore decide to boycott the schools. Another point raised in the editorials was that many students successfully resisted bad influences and in fact stayed in their classrooms during the demonstrations. The implication being that the good boys and girls did not fall prey to outsiders. Expanding on the point, the author questioned how students seeking better educations chose leaving school as their form of protest. The editorials also asked parents to exert greater control over their children who could get hurt or put others in harm's way by taking part in dangerous demonstrations.

The newspaper also encouraged parents to become more engaged in their community so that adults may be the ones fighting for educational reform and take away the responsibility from young impressionable minds. In general, *La Opinión's* coverage of the school walkouts was dismissive of students' efforts. Although education has always been important in the Latino community, and they were right in asking parents to take a greater role in improving schools, *La Opinión* seemed to be relieved more than anything else when the student protests ended.

*La Opinión's* coverage of the Chicano Moratorium devoted very little attention to the war protests and largely consisted of reporting on Ruben Salazar's death. The little that was said regarding the Moratorium march was that it had been peaceful until the altercation at the liquor store that set off the clashes between Latinos and Sheriffs' officers and that tear gas was used to disperse the crowd gathered at Laguna Park. The daily suggested that the Sheriff Deputies reacted to the crowd because participant launched objects at the officers. It was also noted that members of the Brown Berets operated as security guards during the march and when the fighting ensued, Sheriff's personnel broke through the line Berets made by linking arms. *La Opinión* reported that Police Chief Edward Davis stated his department always had and always would support the right of citizens to protest peacefully.<sup>190</sup> The paper almost seemed uninterested in clashes on August 29, but did focus on the loss of their fellow journalist.

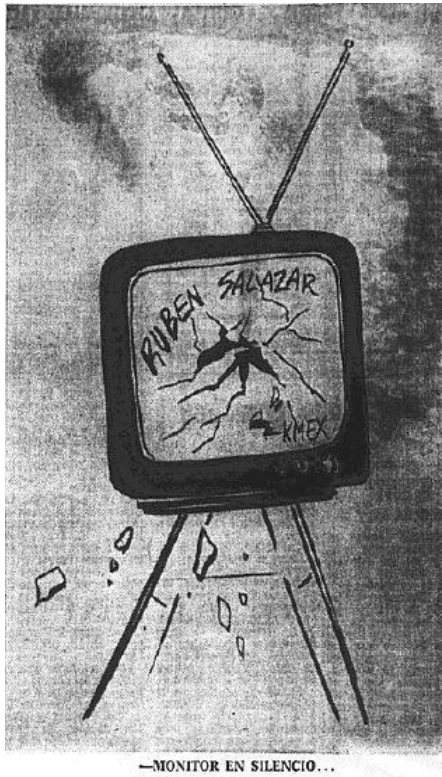
*La Opinión* lamented Salazar's passing because he was a talented colleague. The paper described Salazar as an award-winning journalist whose work was a link between the East L.A. *barrios* and the rest of society in Los Angeles.

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<sup>190</sup> "Declaracion del Jefe de Policia Davis," *La Opinión*, August 31, 1970.

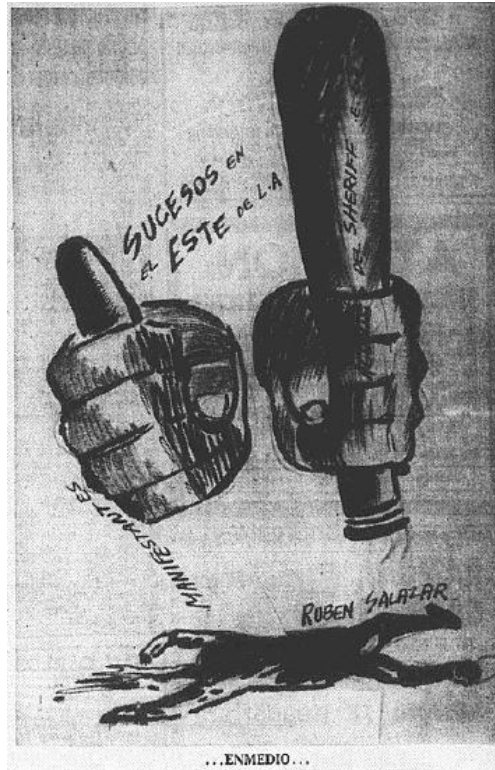
For over a week the Spanish-language periodical ran reports on Salazar, most of them eulogizing him or providing readers details on the journalist's funeral.

*La Opinión* also ran a series of editorials on Salazar's death. The commentaries all noted the fine journalistic work Salazar had done, but the pieces also acknowledge the void the *L.A. Times* reporter left. According to *La Opinión*, no one could relate the experiences of Mexican Americans to the general public the way Salazar did. Salazar's passing was also depicted in two sketches of *La Opinión's* "Graphic Editorial." One cartoon simply showed a television with a cracked screen, it was captioned "Monitor en Silencio (Silent Monitor)." Seemingly, Latinos would no longer have a person speaking about their issues to the larger public.



**Figure 5 "Monitor en Silencio." Source: *La Opinion* September 2, 1970.**

The next day a drawing with the caption "Enmedio (in between)" hit the newsstands, the graphic showed Ruben's body between two clenched fists, one representing demonstrators, the other was the Sheriff's Department. Salazar was caught in the crossfire of the two forces on August 29, 1970.



**Figure 6 "Enmedio." Source: *La Opinión*, September 3, 1970.**

*La Opinión* again addressed the role of the Sheriff's department in Salazar's death in its editorial on the coroner's inquest verdict. The editorial questioned the proper procedure to use tear gas projectiles like the one that killed Salazar. *La Opinión* also expressed its dissatisfaction with the inquest and its failure to answer simple questions about the shooting at the Silver Dollar. The paper maintained the public had the right to have answers to the incident that cost the Mexican American

community such a valuable citizen. Asking for details about the deputies' actions during the Moratorium rally was about as close as *La Opinión* came to confronting the establishment.

In contrast to Chicano publications, *La Opinión* did not see Salazar's death as a murder. The paper was extremely displeased by the event but saw it more as an unfortunate accident. In its other articles on the Movement, the Lozanos' paper seemed detached from the activists' grievances. It is true that newspapers ought to exercise objectivity in their coverage, but *La Opinión's* reports read so far removed from Chicanos' mentality, almost as if they were talking about an entirely unrelated population. *La Opinión* certainly aimed to inform Los Angeles' Spanish-speaking population, but it was a publication that leaned closer to the beliefs of the existing power structure and status quo than towards the ideals of the Chicano Movement.

News on the Chicano Movement was presented in very distinct ways in Los Angeles' most popular presses. The stories in the *L. A. Times* completely counter Chicano papers' claims that American papers were racist and inaccurate. The *Times* reported on Movement activities

objectively and when something disparaging was printed it was more often than not attributed to a particular individual rather than the opinion of the entire paper. The *Times'* coverage was also occasionally reflective of the Chicano community because Ruben Salazar presented their voice and experiences in his writing. L.A.'s leading Spanish-language newspaper on the other hand sometimes published erroneous information about the Movement and at times presented activists as little more troublemakers. Coverage of the Chicano struggle was not extensive in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, perhaps representative of the distance that existed between the African American and Hispanic communities. The material that did appear in the *Sentinel* however was largely sympathetic towards Chicanos and drew parallels between the two groups' civil rights struggles. These publications centered in California where much of the Movement was taking place. Their attention to the Movement ranged from extensive to sparse. National publications, in spite of their resources and influence, only had scant coverage of the Chicano Movement.



## Chapter 4

### National Publications

Aside from local coverage a few national publications dealt with the Chicano Movement, including *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, and *LIFE*. The reports in these publications however were few and far between. *Time* and *LIFE* were national publications and yet little attention was paid to Movement, further reinforcing Chicanos' argument of being a group ignored and excluded from mainstream society. *Rolling Stone* on the other hand was a music magazine so it cannot be faulted for not writing extensively on civil rights struggles. On the contrary, the fact that it did print news on the Movement is surprising and speaks to its penchant for the counter-culture.

In 1971, the legendary music magazine ran "Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan" by Hunter S. Thompson. Thompson is perhaps best known as the irreverent outlaw journalist who rode with the Hell's Angeles and went on a massive drug trip immortalized in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. But Thompson was also innovative and a voice for the counter-culture. His writing not only helped *Rolling Stone* ascend to prominence, it also changed the American literary

landscape. Thompson biographer, William McKeen, once wrote that "Thompson's work stands as a vital chronicle of a turbulent time in American history. In the end, his may be the truest telling of the story of the 1960s and 1970s."<sup>191</sup>

Hunter Stockton Thompson was born on July 18, 1937 in Louisville, Kentucky. Hunter's first experience with newspapers came when he was in the fourth grade and worked as a staff writer for his friend's neighborhood paper the *Southern Star*.<sup>192</sup> The children's paper featured stories about trips, pets, and local sports. Thompson, never shying away from self-promotion, "earned his first byline at age eleven, in a sports story featuring himself and his heroics as a forward on his basketball team."<sup>193</sup> As a teenager, the future writer also joined two of Louisville's most prestigious institutions, the Castlewood Athletic Club and the Athenaeum Literary Association. But not all was fun and games.

Hunter was often in altercations with other boys and with his father's passing his home-life became a constant

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<sup>191</sup> Beef Torrey and Kevin Simonson, *Conversations with Hunter S. Thompson* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), xiii.

<sup>192</sup> William McKeen, *Outlaw Journalist: The Life and Times of Hunter S. Thompson* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 8.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

battle with his mother, who had taken up drinking. Hunter did everything from stealing from a collection box to staging a kidnapping as a prank. His pranks however reached a new level when he and a couple friends robbed a group of teens. Thompson was sentenced to sixty days in jail, while his accomplices, who were sons of prominent attorneys, were let go with a fine and probation.<sup>194</sup> Hunter served thirty days of the sixty day sentence, getting the other month off for good behavior. But the judge in the case warned that,

Until Hunter was twenty-one, he would be allowed to breathe but not much else in Louisville, Kentucky. Hunter got a job driving a truck for a furniture store and almost immediately backed the truck through a showroom window. The cops showed up and Hunter decided it was time to begin his military career.<sup>195</sup>

Thompson's service in the Air Force began in the 1955 and ended in November 1957. The man who challenged authority most of his adult life did not fit in well, but found a way —largely by drinking and writing— to get through his military service. After basic training and a brief stay in Illinois, Hunter was stationed in the Eglin Air Force Base located in the Florida panhandle. There he

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 21.

wrote a sports column for the base's newspaper, the *Command Courier*. After his Honorable Discharge, Thompson worked for several newspapers including the *New York Herald Tribune*, *National Observer*, and *El Sportive* from Puerto Rico. By the mid-1960s Hunter was living in San Francisco. In 1965, Thompson agreed to write an article about the infamous Hell's Angeles motorcycle gang for Carey McWilliams' *the Nation*. The article was tremendously popular and soon book offers poured in.

*Hell's Angels: The Strange and Terrible Saga of the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs* was published by Random House in 1967. The book's success catapulted Thompson to fame. Without a doubt the book's subject matter was appealing to the public, but Hunter's unique and innovative writing style also contributed the book's popularity. This new form of reporting came to be known as Gonzo journalism, an approach in which a journalist immersed him/herself into the subjects' world and reports from a personal perspective rather than as an outsider looking in with detached objectivity. Gonzo journalism is in some ways similar to what is now known as embedded journalism. Though the term Gonzo journalism has at times been denigrated and dismissed as no more than profanity-laced rants, the truth was at the

core of Thompsons works. Beef Torrey and Kevin Simonson note,

Some critics accused [Hunter] of making the stories up as he went along —an assertion that he vehemently denies: "Truth is easier. And weirder. And funnier... You can't fall back on a story you made up, because then you start to wonder if it is good or funny or right... The only way I can get away with the gonzo thing is by telling the truth."<sup>196</sup>

Thompson's unorthodox reporting methods and writing style also earned him the title "outlaw journalist." Ironically, Thompson's primary career objective was to be a writer and initially only took reporting assignments to make ends meet. However his writing style seemed to be a perfect match for the then, up-and-coming *Rolling Stone*. Hunter's first story for *Rolling Stone* was published in October 1970. The article detailed his campaign for Sherriff of Aspen Colorado. Running on the Freak Power ticket, Thompson narrowly lost his bid, but though he did not win the election he did get story out of the race. Hunter contributed to the magazine off and on until the 1990s. *Rolling Stone's* founder Jann Wenner edited every article Thompson wrote for the magazine. Had he not,

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<sup>196</sup> Torrey, *Conversations with Hunter S. Thompson*, xiii.

Wenner explained, Thompson would not finish his assignments.<sup>197</sup>

Eight months after black smoke filled the air over Whittier Boulevard *Rolling Stone's* issue number 81 hit the newsstands. A young Michael Jackson appeared on the cover and only two stories were promoted; one for the article on Jackson and the other "Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan" by Hunter S. Thompson. At the time, "Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan" was the lengthiest article printed by the magazine. The narrative of the Moratorium in the *Rolling Stone* article is pro-Chicano. According to William McKeen, Chicano attorney Oscar Zeta Acosta prompted Hunter to write about Salazar's death. Acosta, who was an old friend of Thompson's, was convinced Ruben Salazar was murdered and wanted Thompson to expose the culprits and the conspiracy behind the *Times'* reporter's death.<sup>198</sup> The Gonzo writer was disturbed by the idea that Salazar's death was a deliberate by the L.A.P.D. or Sheriff's office. In talking with Acosta and reading articles about the Salazar case, Thompson did not want to believe that the police would

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<sup>197</sup> Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone: The Essential Writing of Hunter S. Thompson* (Simon & Schuster, 2012), x.

<sup>198</sup> McKeen, *Outlaw Journalist*, 157.

orchestrate the murder of a journalist, because aside from Salazar's tragic death, the implication that the authorities targeted members of the press was grim. By the time his story appeared in the pages of *Rolling Stone*, Thompson no longer thought the policemen in Los Angeles intentionally killed Salazar. In unraveling the events surrounding Salazar's death, "Strange Rumbblings" also outlined the state of the Chicano Movement in the *barrio* and the troubled relations between Chicanos and Los Angeles' law enforcement agencies.

The article opened,

The+ Murder + and Resurrection of Ruben Salazar  
by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department +  
Savage Polarization & the Making of a Martyr +  
Bad News for the Mexican-American + Worse News  
for the Pig + And Now the New Chicano + Riding a  
Grim New Wave + The Rise of the Batos Locos +  
Brown Power and a Fistful of Reds + Rude Politics  
in the Barrio + Which Side Are You On + Brother?  
+ There Is No More middleground + No Place to  
Hide on Whittier Boulevard + No Refuge from the  
Helicopters + No Hope in the Courts + No Peace  
with the Man + No Leverage Anywhere + and No  
Light at the End of This Tunnel + Nada + [sic]<sup>199</sup>

The frenzied prolog captured the at times tumultuous activism coming from the *barrio*. Thompson's take on the

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<sup>199</sup> Hunter S. Thompson, "Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan," *Rolling Stone*, April 29, 1971.

status of Movement revealed the complexities of Chicanos' fight for civil rights.

In regard to Salazar, Thompson discussed Mexican-American journalist in two ways; what the Chicano Movement gained and what it lost with Ruben's death. The most publicized fatality of the Moratorium march (if not the entire *movimiento*) not only highlighted Chicanos' difficulties with the L.A.P.D. and Sheriff's office, it also gave the Movement a martyr and thus Ruben Salazar was resurrected. And resurrected as a Chicano, for it was only after his death that Salazar became an important figure in *la causa*. While living, Salazar involvement in the Chicano Movement consisted of reporting on the events and people of *Aztlan*. As explained by Thompson, "When [Ruben] went out to cover the rally that August afternoon he was still a 'Mexican-American journalist.' But by the time his body was carried out of the Silver Dollar, he was a stone Chicano martyr."<sup>200</sup> Latinos of all ages, backgrounds, and political orientations lamented Salazar's death. His name became a battle cry for activists throughout the Southwest. In rallies and campaigns, Movement leaders urged Chicanos to carry on the spirit of Ruben Salazar and expose police

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 33.



brutality and lack of job and educational opportunities for Hispanic. Thompson also maintained that Salazar's tragic death translated into increased support for the Movement. He noted,

"Middle-aged housewives who had never thought of themselves as anything but lame-status 'Mexican-Americans' ...suddenly found themselves shouting 'Viva La Raza' *in public*. And their husbands - ... [the] most expendable cadres in the Great Gabacho economic machine - were... calling themselves Chicanos."<sup>201</sup>

Salazar's murder shined a bright light on the matters Chicanos were protesting. The added attention to the issues made it more difficult for the Mexican Americans generation, who often perceived young Movement participants as radical or trouble makers, to ignore the activists' clamor. Although Salazar's passing brought more people into the Chicano ranks, his departure also cost the Movement.

Oscar Acosta told Thompson that "Losing Ruben was a goddamn disaster for the Movement... He wasn't really with us, but at least he was interested."<sup>202</sup> Without question, on August 29<sup>th</sup> Chicanos lost a trusted ally in the

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

mainstream press. Organizers of the Chicano Moratorium believed Salazar was "the man who could tell [their] story to the nation and the world."<sup>203</sup> He earned the respect of *la raza*. Salazar's news reports and articles did not specifically advocate the Movement's agenda, but he felt it was necessary to report on the issues affecting the Hispanic community. As news director at KMEX (Los Angeles' channel 34 and top Spanish-language television station) his impact was instantaneous. Logistically, the dissemination of information through channel 34's coverage of the Movement helped mobilize Chicanos throughout Los Angeles. Ruben's stories also presented glimpses into the world of Chicanos, he was a bridge between Mexican and American cultures.

But soon after the Silver Dollar shooting, Chicanos' presence in the airwaves diminished. According to Thompson, "the station's Anglo ownership moved swiftly to regain control of the leaderless news operation."<sup>204</sup> Touching upon the American media's attitude towards Hispanic activities, Thompson added that "No other TV station in L.A. was interested in any kind of Chicano news

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 36.

except riots." Without Salazar words, many Americans would not have known about the struggle for civil rights happening in the Southland and the individuals fighting for those rights would have had a more difficult time getting their message out.

Salazar position was also unique because he thrived in an era when Mexican and Mexican-American journalists were far and few between. Ruben was not only successful, he was also daring and took on controversial issues, including the problem of police brutality. According to Thompson, "His coverage of police activities made the East Los Angeles Sheriff's department so unhappy that they soon found themselves in a sort of running private argument with this man Salazar... who refused to be reasonable."<sup>205</sup> Since he had reported on the hostility between cops and Latinos, many people believed Salazar's death at the hands of law enforcement was a way to silence him.

Thompson, however, believed the L.A. Sheriff's department could not have deliberately murdered the Mexican reporter, simply because the agency and its personnel were too incompetent. He wrote,

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 33.

Ruben Salazar couldn't possibly have been the victim of a conscious, high-level cop conspiracy to get rid of him by staging an "accidental death." The incredible tale of half-mad stupidity and dangerous incompetence on every level of the law enforcement establishment was perhaps the most valuable thing to come out of the inquest. Nobody who heard that testimony could believe that the Los Angeles County sheriffs [sic] department is capable of pulling off a delicate job like killing a newsman on purpose.<sup>206</sup>

In Thompson's point of view, the explanations for the shootings at Silver Dollar given by L.A. law officials made them appear about as competent as Keystone Kops. The officers could not keep their story straight and the versions they released to the public were completely refuted by multiple eyewitnesses and photographic evidence. The first account from the Sheriffs' office was that the *Times* reporter was killed by "errant gunfire" during the chaos that ensued at the Moratorium. Later they explained Salazar died during the shooting while sheriff's deputies responded to reports of an armed individual hiding at the Silver Dollar. As Thompson put it, "The official version of the Salazar killing was so crude and illogical – even after revisions – that not even the sheriff seemed

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 35.

surprised when it began to fall apart."<sup>207</sup> Equally damning was the actions by law enforcement on August 29<sup>th</sup>,

In the middle of a terrible riot... at least a dozen deputies from the elite Special Enforcement Bureau (read TAC Squad) are instantly available in response to an "anonymous report" that "a man with a gun" is holed up, for some reason, in an otherwise quiet cafe more than ten blocks away from the vortex of the actual rioting. They swoop down on the place and confront several men trying to leave. They threaten to kill these men – but make no attempt to either arrest or search them – and force them all back inside. Then they use a bullhorn to warn everybody inside to come out with their hands up. And then, almost instantly after giving the warning, they fire – through the open front door of the place and from a distance of no more than 10 feet – two high-powered tear gas projectiles designed "for use against barricaded criminals" and capable of piercing a one-inch pine board at 300 feet.<sup>208</sup>

On the day of the Moratorium the Silver Dollar's entrance was covered with only curtains, so shooting a weapon designed to penetrate solid structures, from close range, was clearly excessive. The deputies made mistake after mistake. Many Chicanos were convinced the officers' deeds were not mistakes at all, but rather were calculated actions. The *Rolling Stone* writer, on the other hand, deduced that "The malignant reality of Ruben Salazar's

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 34.

death is that he was murdered by angry cops for no reason at all."<sup>209</sup>

Though the ineptitude and malice displayed by deputies and police officers was disturbing, to Thompson the alternative may have been more so. He explained,

If this was true [that the police had deliberately gone out on the streets and killed a reporter who'd been giving them trouble], it meant the ante was being upped drastically. When the cops declare open season on journalists, when they feel free to declare any scene of 'unlawful protest' a free fire zone, that will be a very ugly day – and not just for journalists.<sup>210</sup>

Many Chicanos already felt they were already living in that ugly day. Los Angeles' Mexican American community had long dealt with police brutality and harassment and the violence during the Moratorium stood as a prime example.

Moratorium organizers wanted their event to meet all the city requirements and submitted the necessary paperwork for the rally. They also recruited dozens of volunteers to work as monitors to keep the peace along the designated route. But despite organizers' best efforts, officer and marchers clashed. Deputies descended upon the crowd. Without warning officers detonated tear gas canisters and assaulted Chicanos who had gathered at Laguna

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 32.

Park. Describing the pandemonium that ensued, Hunter penned,

The crowd fled in panic and anger, inflaming hundreds of young spectators who ran the few blocks to Whittier Boulevard and began trashing every store in sight. Several buildings were burned to the ground; damage was estimated at somewhere around a million dollars.<sup>211</sup>

As the dust of the scrimmage settled, Sheriff Peter Pitchess "praised his deputies for the skillful zeal they displayed in restoring order to the area within two and a half hours, 'thus averting a major holocaust of much greater proportions.'"<sup>212</sup> Thompson also wrote Pitchess and Los Angeles Police Chief Edward Davis blamed the violence of the Moratorium on outside agitators, people who, they claimed, came in from out of state with the intention of inciting violence during the march. The L.A.P.D. Chief and Sheriff even insinuated that the Movement was infiltrated by Communists agents.

Thompson's article mentioned cops and Chicanos once again collided on January 31, 1971, during a rally to protest police brutality. Like in the Moratorium march,

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

"organizers took great care to make sure the thing would be peaceful."<sup>213</sup> According to Thompson,

The word went out all over the barrio that "this one [rally] has to be cool – no riot, no violence." A truce was arranged with the East L.A. sheriff's department; the cops agreed to "keep a low profile,"... The rally was peaceful – all the way to the end. But then, when fighting broke out between a handful of Chicanos and jittery cops, nearly a thousand young *batos locos* reacted by making a frontal assault on the cop headquarters with rocks, bottles, clubs, bricks and everything else they could find. The cops withstood the attack for about an hour, then swarmed out of the place with a stunning show of force that included firing deadly buckshot balls out of 12-gauge shotguns straight into the crowd. The attackers fled through the backstreets to Whittier Boulevard, and trashed the street again... After two hours of street warfare, the toll was one dead, 303 serious injuries and a little less than a half million dollars' worth of damage – including 78 burned and battered police cars. The entire L.A. power structure was outraged. And the Chicano Moratorium Committee was aghast. The rally's main organizer – 24-year-old Rosalio Munoz, a former president of the UCLA student body – was so shocked by the outburst that he reluctantly agreed – with the sheriff – that any further mass rallies would be too dangerous.<sup>214</sup>

In Thompson's eyes, the violence during the January rally, showcased the rise of the *bato loco* as much as it did the tension between law enforcement and Chicanos noting that in

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.



the months following the Moratorium, "the Chicano community has been harshly sundered by a completely new kind of polarization... [a split] between student-type militants and this whole new breed of super- militant street crazies."<sup>215</sup>

The Gonzo reporter explained that support for the Movement grew after August 29, but in other camps, differences, if not outright factions, also developed. The emergence of the Chicano Movement created a divide among the Mexican-descent population, generally involving generation gaps and at times separation along class lines. The Chicano generation aggressively pushed for civil rights, while conservative Mexican Americans tried to work within the system and continued to follow the path of acculturation. Individuals who identified as Chicanos were usually students and young up-and-comers. Mexican Americans on the other hand were older and in some cases, more affluent. In "Strange Rumbblings" readers learn that terminology demarcated these differences, "The term 'Mexican-American' fell massively out of favor... It suddenly came to mean 'Uncle Tom.' Or, in the argot of East L.A. -

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 33.

'Tio Taco.'"<sup>216</sup> As Thompson stated there was no more middle-ground, one either identified as Chicano or as Mexican-American. But within the ranks of Chicanos there were also more radical individuals who often had a "you are either with us or against us" mentality. Thompson categorized these youngsters as "*batos locos*" or crazy guys, also described as "'street crazies,' teenage wildmen [sic] who... [are] very young, very hostile, and when you get them excited they are likely to do almost anything..."<sup>217</sup> Though these so-called crazies were extremely passionate about the Movement they were also volatile and defiant. "The original student activist had been militant, but also reasonable – in their own eyes, if not in the eyes of the law. But the *batos locos* never even pretended to be reasonable... They had no program; only violence and vengeance..." Thompson wrote.<sup>218</sup> Echoing Oscar Acosta's sentiments on the matter, Thompson concluded the *batos*

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

*locos* could have been an asset to *la causa*, but rather became a detriment on account of their rebellious ways.<sup>219</sup>

Such it would seem was the case with the Brown Berets. Most Chicano leaders feared the young street-crazies could not be organized, but Thompson failed to mention, perhaps because he simply did not know, that the Brown Berets' had for long encouraged *batos locos* to join their ranks. In most of the Berets' papers men with police records and criminal pasts were encouraged to join the Chicano militants. The Berets attempted to reform these troubled youngsters and turn them into productive activists. No doubt there were some success stories of *batos* becoming committed Berets, but a year after "Strange Rumbblings" appeared, the Brown Berets disbanded, largely due to internal strife. David Sanchez, the Berets' leader at the time, cited members' lack of discipline as a cause for the organization's disbandment.

Thompson however only wrote on the divide between traditional activists and the "street crazies," leaving out

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<sup>219</sup>On converting "batos locos" to radicalized revolutionaries, see Ernesto Chavez, "Birth of a New Symbol: The Brown Berets' Gendered Chicano National Imaginary," in Joe Austin and Michael Willard, eds., *Generations of Youth: Youth Cultures and History in 20<sup>th</sup>-century America* (1998).

one of the major rifts in the Movement, the separation along gender lines. Thompson pointed to hostility, impulsiveness, and political ignorance as forces that divided Chicano activists and *batos locos*. Sexism had the same effect between Chicano leaders and Chicanas. By the spring of 1971, when "Strange Rumblings" hit the newsstands, Chicanas had branched off and started their own organizations because their issues were being ignored in traditional Movement politics. Many women in the Los Angeles chapter of the Brown Berets, for example, walked away from the organizations and founded *Las Adelita de Aztlan*. Likewise, the Chicanas in *Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* had split from the male-dominated student movement to further women's rights. Aside from this omission "Strange Rumblings" painted an accurate and complex picture of the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles.

No reader responses to "Strange Rumblings in Aztlan" were published in *Rolling Stone*. Although *Rolling Stone* never published responses to Thompson's piece, a *raza* paper did offer one. John Ortiz, who was an associate editor of *Regeneración*, addressed Thompson's take on the events transpiring in *Aztlan*. At best Ortiz seemed to find "Strange Rumblings" acceptable, at worse he implied

Thompson was profiting from Chicanos. He noted, "La Raza will write the real story. Thompson...will merely capitalize on it."<sup>220</sup> His reaction to the *Rolling Stone* story was largely mixed, but Ortiz did credit Thompson for exposing the "bureaucratic fallacy of the Salazar inquest" and presenting the complexities of Movement participants, namely the divide between *batos locos* and student activists.<sup>221</sup> The *Regeneración* editor also stated that "To the rest of the world, Aztlan remains a myth" seemingly failing to recognize that Thompson's report was informing the general public about Chicanos, their activism, and even their conceptual homeland, *Aztlan*.<sup>222</sup> Ortiz further argued that Thompson's article only dealt with the tip of the iceberg, and that it was only the beginning of la raza's crusade. Ortiz also included an "afterthought" in which he confessed that that was the first issue of *Rolling Stone* he had ever read and wondered what "possessed them to produce an article of value."<sup>223</sup> Ortiz's comment gave the impression that he did not think too highly of the

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<sup>220</sup> John Ortiz, "Reactions to Hunter S. Thompson's 'Rumblings in Aztlan,'" *Regeneracion*, 22.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

magazine. If in fact Ortiz had not read *Rolling Stone* before the number 81 issue, his assessment of the magazine seems dismissive and unfounded. Moreover, *Rolling Stone* had become an important publication in American culture and Hunter's story revealed Chicanos' activism to a national audience.

Another national publication to report on Moratorium was *Time* magazine, though its 400 word article pales in comparison to Thompson's 15,000 plus words for *Rolling Stone*. In content and with the title "The Chicano Riot" the story largely placed the blame of the day's violence on *la raza*. The story stated sheriff deputies descended on Whittier Boulevard, which they did, however the fact that the deputies were ones who detonated "eye-searing"<sup>224</sup> gas grenades was left out, as was any reference of law enforcement official clubbing Moratorium participants and endangered men, women, and children. A more serious fallacy in the article was labeling Ruben Salazar as a "militant" journalist. While it is true that at times Salazar's columns dealt with racism and that some "Mexican Americans looked to Salazar as their... interpreter to the

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<sup>224</sup> "The Chicano Riot," *Time*, September 7, 1970.

Anglos" he was in no way an active participant in the Chicano Movement, let alone militant.<sup>225</sup> Salazar was an accomplished journalist who covered the Movement, as with all his other assignments, with interest and objectivity. Though the *Time's* story contained some omissions and inaccuracies, it was right in predicting that "Salazar's death, added to that growing hostile spirit [among activists], could touch off angry additional waves of Chicano unrest in the East Los Angeles barrio."<sup>226</sup> In January 1971, marches to protest police brutality in Los Angeles ended in violent altercations between cops and Chicanos. With the exception of reports on Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers' strikes, *Time* did not devote too much ink to covering the Chicano Movement.

On July 4, 1969, Cesar Chavez was on the cover of *Time* magazine. The headline read: "The Grapes of Wrath, 1969: Mexican-Americans on the March."<sup>227</sup> The story outlined the farmworkers' campaign for labor rights and the nation's reaction to the grape boycotts. Chavez was characterized as a "magnetic champion and the country's most prominent

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> "The Little Strike That Grew To La Causa," *Time*, July 4, 1969.

Mexican-American leader ...a onetime grape picker who combines a mystical mien with peasant earthiness. La causa is Chavez's whole life."<sup>228</sup> *Time's* report also pointed out a farmworkers movement was unorthodox in the history of labor. United Farm Workers was unique because farmworkers had never been organized, their leader was quiet and altruistic, and they did not use violent tactics in their activism. Though the Delano group captured the attention of the American public, *Time* revealed that politicians did not respond as kindly,

Governor Ronald Reagan calls the strike and boycott 'immoral' and 'attempted blackmail.' Senator George Murphy terms the movement 'dishonest.' The Nixon Administration has seemed ambivalent, putting forward legislation that would ostensibly give farm workers organization rights, but would also limit their use of strikes and boycotts. The Pentagon substantially increased its [non-union] grape orders for mess-hall tables...<sup>229</sup>

The article also discussed Chicanos' growing activism, suggesting that Chavez's work would extend beyond the fields, "what happens to Chavez's farm workers will be an omen, for good or ill, of the Mexican-American's future.

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.



If he can succeed in that difficult and uncertain battle, he will doubtless try to expand the movement beyond the vineyards into the entire Mexican-American community."<sup>230</sup> In time, Chavez and his union won benefits for workers in Delano. The victories by United Farm Workers inspired Chicanos throughout the country and throughout the years, Chavez however remained focused on workers' rights for much of his career.

The news story also noted that a new militancy was emerging in the Hispanic community. This new radicalism was primarily rooted with leaders like David Sanchez of the Brown Berets, Reies López Tijerina, and Corky Gonzalez. Though *Time* did recognize the leadership of men, it failed to credit Dolores Huerta's work in the farmworkers movement. The piece described Huerta as Chavez's "tiny, tough assistant..."<sup>231</sup> Huerta was relegated to the role of "assistant" instead of her proper position as union vice president.

The article's author also made a curious point about the growers Chavez and the union tried to negotiate with. The magazine noted,

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 18.

The growers of Delano are difficult to cast as villains. Many are self-made men, Yugoslavs and Italians who came to the valley between 1900 and 1940 with nothing and worked hard to amass enough capital to practice the grape-growing arts they learned in Europe. Most of the Delano spreads are family enterprises, and many of them have had rough going. Costs have risen sharply over the past decade, and grape prices have now begun to decline.

The comment was made even though the story acknowledged that

field work remained one of the most unpleasant of human occupations. It demanded long hours of back-breaking labor, often in choking dust amid insects and under a flaming sun...the seasonal and sporadic nature of the work kept total income far below the poverty level... There was no job security... If they are migrants, the workers must frequently live in fetid shacks without light or plumbing...<sup>232</sup>

It was true that most ranches in Delano were family business. It was also true that when the *Time* article appeared California's agriculture industry made profits in the billions! DiGiorgio Corporation (one of the union's most challenging adversaries) made \$232 million in sales in one year.<sup>233</sup> Seemingly, the reporter missed the growers' glaring wrongdoings, like refusing to grant the most basic of labor rights —clean drinking water, breaks, bathroom at

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>233</sup> "Cesar Chavez - The Shy Mobilizer of American Farmworkers," *LIFE*, April 29, 1966, 94.

the job site, not getting fired for missing work due to illness— and keeping their workers in abject poverty while making millions in revenue.

While the union likely benefitted from the attention provided by a national publication, the few stories on the Movement that appeared in *Time* seemed to be reported with a tone of suspicion. The words read almost as if Chicanos' activism was not an expression of legitimate grievances. Moreover, the forces that oppressed *la raza* (be it the police in Los Angeles or growers in the Central Valley) were downplayed and their deeds minimized. The articles in the magazine seemed to find no issue with the status quo.

Like in *Time*, *LIFE's* coverage of the Chicano Movement was sparse, but in contrast to *Time*, *LIFE's* coverage was more objective. *LIFE* hit the newsstands in 1936, by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it was a reputable publication with a circulation of about eight million copies. In a five year span (from 1965 to 1970) the magazine published one article of substance concerning Chicano civil rights. The article was "Cesar Chavez - The Shy Mobilizer of American

Farmworkers."<sup>234</sup> Capturing the union's monumental achievement, the piece proclaimed,

Top labor leaders were looking with amazement at the ragtag California organization called the National Farm Workers Association, which in a few weeks has shown the potential for becoming the first effective union in the history of the country's 360,000 migratory farmworkers.<sup>235</sup>

Other unionizing attempts had been made in California but none succeeded like Chavez did. The union gave farmworkers long overdue gains, but it also impacted the state's giant fruit corporations who had previously enjoyed nearly unlimited power and profits. Therefore, one of the National Farm Workers Association (N.F.W.A.) primary objectives was to change the fact that "Almost all decisions about where and when a person worked, how he and his family lived and how much rest he got were made unilaterally by the grower."<sup>236</sup>

The story suggested that the union's success was predicted in part on Chavez's low-key leadership style. The union leader was described as "quiet, introspective...far from the popular notion of the emotional Latin political

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

leader haranguing the mob with forensic oratory."<sup>237</sup>

Moreover, Chavez admired Gandhi and Martin Luther King and followed their organizing tactics, so *LIFE* concluded that Chavez's modesty and mild demeanor was ideal to guide farmworkers who were tired of authoritative and belligerent bosses pushing them around. Without question, Chavez was a great leader, however the magazine mistakenly reported he "singlehandedly founded the N.F.W.A."<sup>238</sup> This statement is inaccurate and dismissive of others' contributions to the union, especially Gil Padilla and Dolores Huerta who helped Cesar organize from the very beginning. Huerta herself was one of the union's most successful negotiators. Aside from that error, the article in *LIFE* beautifully captured the farmworkers' struggles and efforts, as well as Chavez's calm yet unwavering personality. While the magazine seldom covered Latinos' civil rights campaigns when it did it did so objectively and in an engaging manner.

National publications barely covered the Chicano Movement. The scarcity indicates that people of Mexican ancestry were not in the national consciousness. The tone in the stories that did make it to print ranged from aloof

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

to sympathetic. Arguably, *Time* and *LIFE*, being more conventional publications, dedicated attention to Cesar Chavez and United Farm Workers because it fit in the nation's tradition of fighting for labor rights. The counter-culture oriented *Rolling Stone* on the other hand gravitated to a story about disrupting the establishment (i.e. the anti-war rally that was the Chicano Moratorium).

## Chapter 5

### Chicanas' Writings

Chicanos used newspaper to further the Movement's agenda. Similarly, Chicanas turned to the press to bring attention to women's concerns and aspirations. More specifically, women took to writing hoping to challenge gender discrimination in the Movement and in the Mexican culture. The articles that appeared in the pages of *El Grito del Norte*, *La Raza*, *Regeneración* and *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* were written by and/or echoed the concerns of Chicanas.

Although Chicanas were deeply committed to the *la causa*, at times they found themselves excluded or in secondary positions as many of the ideological tenets and operational modes of the Movement were male-oriented. Chicano nationalism, for example, was one of the rhetorical engines of the Movement, though it promoted ethnic pride and unity among *la raza*, as historian Ernesto Chavez has written, Chicano nationalism "as it emerged, privileged

males and marginalized females."<sup>239</sup> Chicano nationalism presented males and masculinity as the means towards the liberation of Chicano people. Consequently, this rhetoric allowed machismo to have a place in the Movement. Moreover, male activists argued women had to be submissive, chaste, and self-sacrificing for the good of Chicano families and the Movement.

From the beginning of the Movement, women were as active as the men. They organized, marched, cleaned, wrote and did everything needed for *la causa*, yet, women in the Movement, seldom held leadership roles. Discontent grew among Chicanas as the men in the Movement failed to credit women for their work or give women's issues attention. Being held back on account of their gender, however, was not an unfamiliar occurrence for Chicanas. At home, Chicanas were also expected to unquestioningly obey men. Additionally, women of Mexican descent had a lengthy and rocky history with *machismo*.

Not all women tolerated the status quo and *machismo* or accepted a subordinate position in the Movement. But Chicanas who spoke out against sexism and advocated for

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<sup>239</sup> Ernesto Chávez, "*Mi Raza Primero!*" (*My people first!*): *Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 43.



women's rights were often accused, by both men and other women, of being troublesome and divisive. It is important to note that most Chicanas did not want to leave the Movement, they wanted a place within it where they would be acknowledged.

Women's challenge to *machismo* also resulted in the development of Chicana feminism. Chicana feminists, or *feministas* as they called themselves, introduced new ideas of liberation for the Movement and for women. Chicana feminism recognized that women of Mexican ancestry, as did other women of color, suffered from the dual oppression of racism and sexism. Chicano people were already fighting to end racism, feminists, wanted to use the Movement to bring about gender equality as well. As Gloria Arellanes explained, in an odd way sexism "gave birth to Chicana identity."<sup>240</sup> According to Alma Garcia, Chicana feminism aimed to redefine women's role within the family, society, and the Movement.<sup>241</sup> *Feministas* did not want to be confined solely to prescribed gender roles of having children and caring for the home. They also promoted sisterhood and encouraged women to get an education and take part in

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<sup>240</sup> Arellanes, interview.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

society outside of family roles. These were some of the issues Chicanas discussed in their writings. Periodicals were a popular form of communication in the Movement, and women used newspapers and magazines to contest sexism and give Chicanas a voice within the Movement.

Elizabeth "Betita" Martinez, Beverly Axelrod (Reies López Tijerina's lawyer), Enriqueta Vasquez and their associated saw the need for a Chicano paper in New Mexico. Their vision materialized in 1968 with *El Grito del Norte*. Based in Española, New Mexico, *El Grito* remained in circulation until the summer of 1973. By the end of its run it had become a sophisticated Movement paper in terms of design and content. In an article for the *Monthly Review*, Martinez noted that newspaper was a "pro-socialist" publication.<sup>242</sup> With an image of an armed Mexican revolutionary soldier by its masthead, *El Grito's* purpose was to serve the Chicano community of Northern New Mexico. More specifically, the newspaper aimed to "advance the cause of justice for the poor people and to help preserve

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<sup>242</sup> Elizabeth Martinez, "A View From New Mexico: Recollections of the *Movimiento Left*," *Monthly Review* 54, No. 3 Available from <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0702martinez.html>.

the rich cultural heritage of La Raza in this area."<sup>243</sup> Moreover, the paper's editorial staff declared, "*El Grito del Norte* will not be afraid to print the truth about anybody or anything."<sup>244</sup> The staff remained true to its word and dedicated to *la causa* to the very end. When the paper was ended its operation they declared, "We may suspend publication but we are not suspending our commitment to *la gente* and to revolutionary change."<sup>245</sup>

Though it was primarily geared towards Latinos, the paper also published stories about Native Americans and third-world people, particularly those in Communist nations. The New Mexico publication was very sympathetic towards the women of Indo-China, who like Chicano mothers were losing their sons and husbands in the Vietnam War. Often, particularly in regards to the War, *El Grito's* tone was anti-American and staunchly anti-imperialist.

The newspaper printed articles in both English and Spanish. In some issues the English and Spanish language articles appeared side by side, other times writers used both languages in a single article. According to *El Grito*,

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<sup>243</sup> *El Grito del Norte*, January 1969.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>245</sup> "El Grito to Suspend," *El Grito del Norte*, July-August, 1973.

the primary reason for making the publication bilingual was that Spanish was a part of Chicanos' cultural heritage and "to deny a people their heritage is one of the major tools of oppression."<sup>246</sup> *El Grito* also included cautionary and folk tales that subscribers could read to their children.

One of *El Grito's* most prominent contributors was Enriqueta Vasquez. Vasquez was born in Colorado in 1930. Her parents were migrant farm-workers from Mexico.<sup>247</sup> Growing up, Vasquez was a victim of racial discrimination. Her life experiences and revolutionary spirit later manifested themselves in her column, "*Despierten Hermanos!*" (Awaken, Brothers and Sisters!). Though Vasquez wrote on an array of topics, she was a great proponent of gender equality. Explaining that she was one to the first people to write about Chicanas' issues, Vasquez recalled that initially her articles made her more enemies than friends.<sup>248</sup> Moreover, Vasquez's writings reveal the emergence of a Chicana feminist consciousness. Dionne Espinoza, explained that, "despite the positioning of

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Enriqueta Vasquez, *Enriqueta Vasquez and the Chicano Movement: Writings From El Grito Del Norte* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2006), xix.

<sup>248</sup> Enriqueta Vasquez, interview by author, taped recording, Riverside, CA., December 10, 2010.

Chicanas at the bottom of race, class, and gender hierarchies, [Vasquez] refused to construct Chicanas as victims."<sup>249</sup>

In the 1969 Denver Youth Conference, the women's caucus declared, "Chicanas [did] not want to be liberated." Vasquez's article, "The Women of La Raza," was a response to the caucus' statement. Vasquez revealed,

It [the caucus' statement] was quite a blow. I could have cried.. I understood why the statement was made...and I realized that going along with the feelings of the men at the convention was perhaps the best thing to do at the time.<sup>250</sup>

Vasquez explained that the Chicana had always been strong, but often had to curb her actions according to what men dictated. Vasquez added, "the woman has been stereotyped as a servant to the man and the Raza has come to accept this as a great TRADITION [sic]."<sup>251</sup> Vasquez, however, did not want to see this "tradition" continue. The columnist explained that before the Spanish conquest, indigenous women were strong and independent and in order to ensure the survival of *la raza* Chicanas had to once again take on

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<sup>249</sup> Vasquez, *Enriqueta Vasquez and the Chicano Movement*, 111.

<sup>250</sup> Enriqueta Vasquez, "The Women of La Raza," *El Grito Del Norte*, July 6, 1969.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

the role of a strong woman. In Vasquez's words, "We women must learn to function again like full humans, as did our ancestors... Let's look around and see where we can give most and where we are needed. And plunge right into action."<sup>252</sup> In her call for action, Vasquez exalted and empowered women, while delicately suggesting that repressive "traditions" like machismo ought to be eliminated. Her article sought to encourage Chicanas without alienating men or causing rifts between the sexes.

Nearly a year after the publication of "The Women of La Raza," Vasquez again dedicated her column to women. On the April 29, 1970 edition of "*Despierten Hermanos!*," Vasquez related the resolution adopted by women attending the second annual Chicano Youth Conference. Vasquez explained that Mexican Americans were becoming more aware and that "with this awakening, the woman of La Raza [stirred] to join hands in the molding of our people, in the cultivating of our culture."<sup>253</sup> The resolution from the Chicanas' workshop placed a special emphasis on the family, more specifically, on *la Familia de Aztlan* (the Chicano

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Enriqueta Vasquez, "*Despierten Hermanos!*," *El Grito Del Norte*, April 29, 1970.

family).<sup>254</sup> The opening statement of the resolution was that, "CHICANA WOMEN RESOLVE NOT TO SEPARATE BUT TO STRENGTHEN AZTLAN, THE FAMILY OF LA RAZA!"<sup>255</sup> Women wanted to restructure and redefine the family unit. To have a united family, women would no longer have the sole responsibility of taking care of the home and raising the children. According to the resolution, raising and nurturing the family should be a joint venture between both parents.

The resolution further specified that women had to be educated to develop a revolutionary consciousness. Education would also allow Chicanas to "free themselves as inferior beings."<sup>256</sup> Educating women was vital because they needed to participate in the struggle for Chicanos' civil rights. The resolution meant to achieve a symbiosis between women and the family. In other words, a strong family would produce strong women and strong women would produce strong families. The resolution echoed the message

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<sup>254</sup> Aztlan was the mythical birthplace of the Aztecs. Geographically, Aztlan was located in modern-day Northern Mexico and Southwestern United States.

<sup>255</sup> Enriqueta Vasquez, "Despierten Hermanos!," *El Grito Del Norte*, April, 29, 1970.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

Vasquez tried to convey to her readers regarding Chicanas being valuable assets to the Movement.

In her third year as a writer for *El Grito del Norte*, Vasquez delivered one of her most poignant columns, "¡Soy Chicana Primero! [I am Chicana First!]." The article addressed Chicanas' view on Women's Liberation. Vasquez explained Chicanas were completely invested in the Chicano Movement and wanted "to be a Chicana *primero* (first)" therefore Chicanas did not "feel comfortable" participating in the Women's Liberation Movement.<sup>257</sup> She added that Chicanas should be informed about Women's Liberation, but that it was not Chicanas' "business...to identify with the white women's liberation movement as a home-base."<sup>258</sup> Additionally, Vasquez believed Women's Liberation was only relevant to "gringo" society and Chicanas would not ally themselves with the Anglos who oppressed them.<sup>259</sup> Most Chicanas saw the Women's Liberation Movement as a white, middle-class movement that did not concern itself with the day-to-day issues of working class people, particularly,

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<sup>257</sup> Enriqueta Vasquez, "¡Soy Chicana Primero!," *El Grito Del Norte*, April 26, 1971.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.



struggles against poverty. In Vasquez' viewpoint, white women were fighting to be part of the establishment, but Chicanas were outside the system fighting for issues that affected her whole community.<sup>260</sup> Moreover, Chicanas who interacted with white feminists at times met discrimination and saw white women as an extension of the political and economic structures that privileged white Americans and discriminated against ethnic minorities. Vasquez cautioned that, "If the Chicana chooses to go with white women's liberation, she has chosen to alienate herself from her people...Her strength is lost to her people."<sup>261</sup>

Another reason Chicanas rejected Women's Liberation was that Mexican Americans wanted to liberate their entire community, not just a specific gender. According to Vasquez, the Chicano Movement was expressing the grievances of an entire people and Chicanos wanted to build a society of their own that accommodated everyone's needs: men, women, young, and old. Chicanas were also fearful that joining the Women's liberation campaign would create division within the Chicano Movement.

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<sup>260</sup> Vasquez, interview.

<sup>261</sup> Enriqueta Vasquez, "¡Soy Chicana Primero!," *El Grito Del Norte*, April 26, 1971, 14.

Chicanas perceived unity to be vital to the success of the Movement. Unity and women's role in the Movement were the themes addressed in the article "Thinking About Who We Are" by Valentina Valdez. The article ran in *El Grito del Norte* special issue dedicated entirely to the Chicana. "I feel women are a very important asset to the [Chicano] movement" wrote Valdez.<sup>262</sup> The author argued that as mothers, Chicanas had the right to demonstrate or protest in order to provide better futures for their children. Valdez believed women should be active participants in Chicanos' civil rights struggles, but she maintained that ideally, men and women would work side by side, as equals. As she explained, "We need everyone in this movement, we cannot afford to have our enemy divide us—men against women."<sup>263</sup>

However, Chicana feminism, unintentionally, created divisions within the Movement and the very community they belonged to, and wanted to improve, often rejected Chicana feminists. Chicana feminists realized true liberation for Chicanos would come only with the elimination of gender

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<sup>262</sup> Valentina Valdez, "Thinking About Who We Are," *El Grito Del Norte*, June 5, 1971.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

discrimination, but not all Movement participants welcomed these ideas or wanted to do away with the status quo that privileged male. Chicanos also felt feminism was an Anglo-Saxon concept and although Chicana feminism differed from second-wave feminism promoted by white women, Chicanos and "loyalist" Chicanas (women who did not agree with feminism) branded Hispanic women who espoused feminist ideas as sellouts and traitors to *la causa*. To curb the backlash and exclusion Chicana feminists stressed that they wanted rights for both men and women. And in an ironic turn, the men claiming Chicanas split the movement created rifts themselves, by driving feminist women away. Even so, Chicanas continued to fight for an equal place within the Movement, the family, and society.

The pages of *La Raza* magazine also documented women's involvement in the Movement and their claim to equality. Like *El Grito del Norte*, *La Raza* intended to be an alternative to the mainstream media. Accompanied by a photograph of a young woman, dark-hair flowing down her shoulders, behind her a poster of the revolutionary icon, Che Guevara, *La Raza* printed an article reporting on the

Chicana Regional Conference held May 8, 1971.<sup>264</sup> The unidentified author framed the Chicano Movement as a revolution and examined women's involvement in it. The author explained that women did not hold many leadership positions within the organizations of the Chicano Movement because cultural norms dictated that women were subordinate to men.<sup>265</sup> To counter the notion of female inferiority, the author, asserted that this erroneous perception of women was counter-revolutionary, and detrimental to the Movement in that it magnified gender divisions. According to the author, one of the negative consequences of the inequality that existed between men and women was that it hindered "the political development of both the Chicana and the Chicano."<sup>266</sup> Furthermore, due to sexism a "great number of Chicanas, becoming increasingly frustrated by not being accepted as equals by the Chicanos, [were] leaving organizations, forming their own caucuses, and even giving up the *movimiento*."<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> "Chicana Regional Conference" *La Raza*, Vol 1. No. 6, 1969.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

In addition to outlining the consequences of sexism in the movement, the author also shed light on the oppression of Mexican American men. Many Chicanas believed men were the "victim[s] of the constant reinforcement of sexual stereotypes which [were] perpetuated by the educational system, the media, and even *la cultura mexicana* (the Mexican culture)." <sup>268</sup> Chicanas expected Chicanos to recognize that men were also oppressed and should therefore not alienate women. The author suggested that the perpetuation of sexist stereotypes were intended to keep the Chicano Movement divided. Consequently, Chicanas' oppressor was the system and not Chicanos. To make the revolution succeeded, both men and women had to unite to defeat the socio-economic system that oppressed the Chicano people.

The call for unity between men and women in the Chicano Movement was not new by the time *La Raza* published this article, but the author did frame the discourse in a new way. By employing the terminology of revolution, the writer imbued the Chicano Movement with an air of militancy. Portraying men as victims of oppression was another novel quality in the article. Seemingly, the

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

author intended to create solidarity between Chicanos and Chicanas by bring attention to their shared subordinate status.

The oppression of Chicanas was also a prominent theme in the articles of *Regeneración*. *Regeneración's* predecessor was *La Carta Editorial*, which had been in print as a newsletter or newspaper since 1963. In 1970, *Carta Editorial* changed its format and became the magazine *Regeneración*.<sup>269</sup> *Regeneración* translates to "regeneration." Thus, the publication's title gave readers the idea of growth, a cultural rebirth. The cover of the first issue also echoed these themes. The cover was a sketch of a fetus developing within a tree, instead of a womb.

Francisca Flores, long-time activist in the Chicano community, served as the editor of *Regeneración*.<sup>270</sup> In addition to its news reports, the pages of *Regeneración* included poems, artwork, and editorials. The magazine was printed and distributed in Los Angeles and published articles in both English and Spanish. According to Flores, *Regeneración* intended to "serve LA RAZA by dealing with the

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<sup>269</sup> *Regeneración* was named after Ricardo Flores Magon's Spanish-language anarchist journal published by the Magon brothers from 1910-1918.

<sup>270</sup> Alma M. Garcia, *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

issues, problems and perspectives as sharply and as critically as it possibly can."<sup>271</sup> Additionally, "placing the interest of La Causa foremost, *REGENERACIÓN* will also serve all men and women of goodwill as a resource for understanding and cooperation."<sup>272</sup>

One of the issues Chicanas wrote about in *Regeneración* was the family. To some Chicanas the family was a source of repression, while other women felt empowered by the family. Some women believed their roles as mothers and wives made them fit to participate in the struggle for civil rights. In an article published in *Regeneración*, Enriqueta "Henri" Chavez explained that mothers were vital to Chicanos' reform efforts. As she saw it, mothers were educators and cultural awareness among the younger generation was good for the movement. Additionally, Chavez maintained that Chicanas could participate in *el movimiento* and at the same time "continue being good mothers and good wives, because in the strength of the family lies the strength of the movement."<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Francisca Flores, "Editorial," *Regeneración*, Vol. 1. No. 1, 1970.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Henri Chavez, "The Chicana," *Regeneración*, Vol. 1 No. 10, 1971.

In another article from *Regeneración*, Bernice Rincon described the roles assigned to men and women and presented an entirely contrasting view of the Chicano family. Most women were sheltered and rarely given the same freedoms or opportunities males enjoyed. Additionally, women were supposed to obey the men in their family. According to Rincon, "The father wields almost unlimited power within the home...and he is obeyed unquestioningly by his wife and children, especially the girls."<sup>274</sup> Rincon goes on to say, "the role of the Mexican woman is one of subordination. 'She is expected to be submissive, faithful, devoted, and respectful to her husband.'"<sup>275</sup> The authors of these two articles had divergent views regarding the family and women's role in it, but they both indicated that women did not intend to be domineering or take over men's roles. Chicanas wanted to be equal partners in the struggle for civil rights and believed their participation strengthened, not weakened, the Movement.

In her 1973 article entitled "Equality," Francisca Flores also addressed women's role in the family and in el

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<sup>274</sup> Bernice Rincon, "La Chicana: Her Role in the Past and Her Search for a New Role in the Future," *Regeneración*, Vol. 1 No. 10, 1971.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.



*movimiento*. Movement organizations often replicated the structure of the Chicano family, consequently men took decision-making positions while placing women in subordinate roles. Flores challenged machismo within the Movement, stating, "No one can swear commitment to win liberation and at the same time subjugate part of the movement."<sup>276</sup> Flores also outlined one of the major reasons Women's Liberation was incompatible with Chicanas' ideas of liberation. She noted that while Mexican and Chicana women wanted to end gender discrimination their primary focus was liberation for the entire family.<sup>277</sup> Flores stressed that liberation for the whole family included the end of Chicanas having subservient roles within the family and in the Movement.

Having grown tired of holding secondary positions within the Movement, many Chicanas established their own organizations. Flores explained Chicanas desire to form their own organizations in these terms,

Women, like any minority, have personal problems which many do not feel can be, or will be, discussed in general meetings of men. Women must have an avenue open to them to deal with these

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<sup>276</sup> Francisca Flores, "Equality," *Regeneración*, Vol. 2 No. 3 (1973).

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

issues so they can project them for support of the whole movement of *La Causa*.<sup>278</sup>

It is important to note that the all-women organizations did not oppose or intend to work outside the Movement. Rather they sought to integrate women's concerns into the quest for Chicano civil rights. *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional* (more commonly known *Comisión Femenil*) was a female organization active in the Chicano Movement. *Comisión Femenil* came into existence at the National Mexican American Issues Conference held in Sacramento, California on October 11, 1970. Francisca Flores used the pages of *Regeneración* to inform readers about the new organization. She stated that *Comisión's* objective was "to terminate exclusion of female leadership in the Chicano/Mexican movement."<sup>279</sup> The organization intended to represent women within the Movement, form coalitions with other women's organizations and movements, and to disseminate news and information about *la causa*.<sup>280</sup> The creation of all-women's groups was also a sign of Chicana feminism, as feminists at times left established

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<sup>278</sup> Francisca Flores, "What is Reality?" *Regeneración*, Vol. 1 No. 10, 1971.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

organizations to form groups within the Movement in which they could promote their agenda and beliefs. Another step in the evolution of Chicana feminism occurred a year after the establishment of *Comisión Femenil* with the issuing of *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*.

Unlike, *El Grito del Norte*, *La Raza*, and *Regeneración*, *Hijas* was specifically written for Chicanas. Although the paper only produced three issues its impact on Chicanas was significant. Maylei Blackwell argues, "the publication of *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* heralded a critical moment in the development of Chicana feminist theories and practices. This publication was among the first in the nation dedicated to a Chicana feminist vision, marking a gendered shift in the print culture of the Chicano Movement."<sup>281</sup> The Chicana paper was produced at California State University, Long Beach and its staff including Corinne Sanchez, Marta López , Sylvia Castillo, and Anna Nieto-Gomez. Nieto-Gomez, along with Enriqueta Vasquez of *El Grito del Norte* are considered to be two of the most important figures in the development of Chicana feminism. Vasquez's seminal

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<sup>281</sup> Maylei Blackwell, *Chicana Power: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

report on the women's caucus at the Denver Youth Conference actually appeared on the first volume of *Hijas*.

For her part, Anna Nieto-Gomez was one of the primary contributors to *Hijas*, as well as a member of the paper's editorial staff. Two important articles by Nieto-Gomez appeared in the paper's first issue; "Empieza la Revolucion Verdadera (The Real Revolution Begins)" and "Chicana Identify." "Empieza la Revolucion Verdadera" was a poem challenging the current state of the Movement. In discussing machismo and women being denied a voice in the Movement and kept from leadership positions, she wrote: "...Rigid boundaries of roles do not move/They make us separate/They make us fewer...." Critiquing the omission of Chicanas' input on Movement and men failing to acknowledge women's issues Nieto-Gomez added: "...seek the knowledge of all women/And seek the knowledge of all men/Now bring them together/Make them a union/Then we shall see the strength of La Raza/Then we shall see the success of El Movimiento..."<sup>282</sup> This verse again highlights Chicanas' desire to be full participants *within* the Movement and their belief that the complete acceptance of both sexes

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<sup>282</sup> Anna Nieto-Gomez, "Empieza la Revolucion Verdadera," *Hijas de Cuauhtemoc*, Vol. 1, No. 1.

would allow *la raza* to achieve their goals. Anna closed her poem with "First,/Humanity and freedom between men and women/Only then/ Empieza la revolución verdadera (The Real Revolution Beings). Here she echoed the sentiment of her fellow Chicana writers, suggesting that the revolution of the Chicano Movement was not complete if women were excluded.

"Chicana Identify" addressed the precarious position women found themselves in when participating in the Movement. Nieto-Gomez highlighted the fact that Chicanas were not allowed to realize their full potential within *la causa*. If a woman did voice her dissatisfaction or tried to "initiate a new role for herself in a Chicano organization she receives an undercurrent that her activities are threatening the unity of the organization."<sup>283</sup> Nieto-Gomez herself experienced a great deal of harassment while a member of M.E.Ch.A.. And after the first issue of *Hijas* came out, the paper was met with so much hostility that her critics hung Nieto-Gomez in effigy. Men's go-to response to a woman who wanted to do more than clean and do clerical work, was to label her a

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<sup>283</sup> Anna Nieto-Gomez, "Chicana Identify," *Hijas de Cuauhtemoc*, Vol. 1, No. 1.

traitor and/ or a "Women's Libber." Chicanas were then faced with the option of keeping quiet and having resentment build up in them, walk away from the Movement, or face the ridicule and even exclusion from the cause "she would die for."<sup>284</sup> Having no viable solution, Anna suggested a new alternative for Chicanas: find each other, communicate, and unite with like-minded individuals. She closed by saying, "Let your spirits not die...Chicanas tienen el derecho del movimient (you have a right to the Movement)."<sup>285</sup> Nieto-Gomez empowered Chicanas by giving them options and courage, and a new outlet to continue their activism. Though not all women turned to Chicana feminism, those who did found it a safer place because of *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*.

In the pages of *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*, readers also learn about the role of Chicanas in the family, more specifically, the forces that kept women in a lower status than men. The articles reveal a triumvirate of oppression stemming from Mexican culture, consisting of the family, the church, and lack of education. Though other women had written about the family and religion, the articles in

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

*Hijas* had a stronger tone against these institutions. Many Chicanas, particularly *feministas*, perceived the institution of family and religion (namely Catholicism) as counterproductive to women. According to *Hijas*, the Mexican family restricted women's influence to the home, and even there men had the final say. The Church, like the family, set strict standards of morality for women. Morals—modeled after the ever-sacrificing Virgin Mary— which sought to control women's sexuality and make them devoted to her family and faith. Leticia Hernandez described the norms set for women as part of a "cultural lag." Hernandez added that, "Chicanas are playing a role which has been handed down through the centuries, and this role must change with *el movimiento*."<sup>286</sup>

Family has always been an important institution in the Latino culture and in fact family was often used in the rhetoric of the Movement, the "Chicano family" was exulted. But Chicana feminists' concept of family, or what a Chicano family should be, differed from that of men and traditional women. Chicanas wanted to redefine paternal roles to be more egalitarian and make household responsibilities less

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<sup>286</sup> Leticia Hernandez, "Letter From Leticia," *Hijas de Cuauhtemoc*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 9.

burdensome on women. In essence, Chicanas wanted to be equal partners with men, just as in the Movement.

Family matters and education were also closely linked. According to feminist writers in the *Hijas* staff, women's subordinate position within the family was perpetuated by a lack of education. Since previous generations expected women to be little more than wives and mothers, educating Chicana was not always a priority or even encouraged. But Chicanas had a different mindset and pursued academic ventures, not only for their own benefit, but also for the good of their entire community. Chicanas wanted to change the family in part through education. Everyone agreed that women functioned as conduits of culture and knowledge, and as feminists saw it, it was only fitting that mothers be educated and a full member of society in order to pass down the proper values to their children and truly improve the lives of all Chicano people.

It was also important for Chicanas to seek higher educational levels so they could break away from "the Anglo system of injustice."<sup>287</sup> But as Cindy Honesto, informed her readers, the transition to campus life could be challenging

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<sup>287</sup> Cindy Honesto, "Chicana on Campus," *Hijas de Cuauhtemoc*, Vol. 1, No. 3.



for some Chicanas. Honesto wrote that coming from poor public schools was an immediate disadvantage for women in college, but even if they could make the grade, Chicanas had to confront an entirely new world outside academia as well. Because there were socio-economic gaps and other Chicano students were so few and far between, minorities felt alienated from the rest of the student population. Another obstacle Chicana students encountered was keeping up with her studies and her home life. Honesto claimed that women were made to feel guilty when they did not have the time to help with chores at home.<sup>288</sup> In spite of the many difficulties Latinas could face in higher education, Honesto argued that it was worth it because education allowed them to "stop playing a subservient role."<sup>289</sup>

In the short time *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* was in operation it tried to show Chicanas their importance in Movement. The paper also wanted to "encourage all Chicanas to begin to express their ideas in as many ways as possible." The articles empowered its readers by discussing issues that affected Chicanas while active in *la causa*, but also in their future. The work of Anna Nieto-Gomez and her

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

colleagues certainly produced a space where Chicanas could share their successes and concern, but more importantly, *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* let Chicanas participate in the Movement in their own term.

In its founding document the Chicano Press Association maintained that "The C.P.A. supports the struggle against exploitation and all forms of oppression with the goal of building a new society in which human dignity, justice and brotherhood will prevail."<sup>290</sup> Chicana activists also wanted to end oppression and create a new society, one in which women had the same rights and opportunities as men. Women utilized the Movement's print media to champion this and other causes. The articles in *El Grito del Norte*, *La Raza*, *Regeneración* and *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* reveal that Chicanas redefined women's role within the family, society, and the Movement. While Chicana feminists encountered difficulties in *la causa* they continued to protest because they understood total liberation for Chicanos had to include gender equality. But in addition to external changes women in the Movement also wanted to improve themselves by becoming more educated. The writers discussed above, placed an emphasis on education because it afforded women greater

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<sup>290</sup> Rosales, *Chicano!*, 210.

participation in society. By joining institutions of higher education and fighting for curriculum relevant to their people, women contributed to one of the most enduring legacies of the Movement, the establishment of Chicano Studies programs in campuses across the country. The words Chicanas shared in Movement papers gave birth to the field of Chicano Studies.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

The most popular stories across all publications dealt with Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers and the National Chicano Moratorium, arguably, the most iconic events of Chicano activism in the Golden State. National, as well as a variety of regional publications always covered these two subjects. The quality and coverage of the Movement varied from source to source. African American and national publications did not dedicate too much space to the Movement illustrating that Chicanos indeed figured as outsiders in the national consciousness. Local papers, like the *L.A. Times* and *La Opinion* published extensively on *la raza*, but their coverage was quite different from one another. The Anglo owned and operated *L.A. Times* displayed a great deal of objectivity, while *La Opinion* which was the city's leading Spanish-language daily was not always in favor of Chicanos. For their part, Chicano newspapers always sided with participants since the publications operated to serve the Movement. Women in the Movement also turned to the press to express their aspirations and

ideals. Chicanas who became tired of sexism used the pen in hopes of spreading their message of gender equality.

The emergence of the Chicano Movement in the mid-1960s gave rise to a plethora of Chicano publications. Chicano papers served primarily to disseminate news about the Movement and the community, but unlike traditional news-outlets, these publications also intended to mobilize Chicanos. Thus, the Movement's print media became an integral part of Chicanos' activism. As organs of the Movement, these papers were seldom objective. Nor did they pretend to be impartial. Often, the men and women of the Chicano press saw their work as a counterweight to the mainstream media. They argued, the little attention the Movement did receive in popular publications was biased and inaccurate, hence the need for periodicals produced by Chicanos themselves.

Though many papers began as little more than brief and unpolished pamphlets, some later developed into sophisticated publications and had relatively lengthy runs. Movement papers subsisted largely on donations and subscription fees since they did not sell ad space. Chicanos did not want to compromise their vision for the sake of advertisers' wishes and therefore opted to miss out

on a major revenue source. First and far most these papers aimed to serve the Movement and *la raza*. Some publications—what I call institutional papers—were associated with specific groups and reported almost exclusively on the happenings of those organizations. The United Farm Workers' *El Malcriado* and the Brown Berets' *La Causa* are prime examples of institutional papers. Other papers operated as independent publications covering the entire Movement. *La Raza*, for example, was an independent paper (one of the best in the Chicano press too), which printed on all Movement campaigns as well as national and international affairs.

Turning to the pages of *El Malcriado* readers learned about the strikes in Delano and the hardships farmworkers throughout California dealt with. In addition to providing material about the union and its activities, *El Malcriado* also printed cautionary information meant to be helpful to workers, such as violence prevention. The United Farm Workers' paper became one of the longest running in the Movement and like many other Chicano publications it printed in both Spanish and English. But unlike its counterparts, *El Malcriado* seldom reprinted articles from

other Chicano sources. Its focus was exclusively on the farmworkers' cause.

The Brown Berets' *La Causa* was similarly focused on its own organization. *La Causa* promoted the Berets' community service efforts (like their free clinic and meal distributions in the *barrio*) and served as a major recruiting tool for the group. The Brown Beret's publication was not as sophisticated as other Movement papers as its format remained simple, its content extremely biased, and it was sporadically printed. *La Causa* however is helpful in tracing the rise and decline of the Berets. The articles in the final editions, for example, reveal that the Berets' activities were diverging from their initial commitment to community service to more fruitless ventures, like the occupation of Catalina Island. The Brown Berets, like their newspaper, were short-lived but remained while they lasted managed to secure a prominent place in the Movement and its print culture.

*La Raza* magazine was also one of the most popular publications of the Chicano press. From its establishment it strived to be a quality publication. *La Raza* made it clear that its purpose was to serve Chicanos and their efforts for civil rights. The magazine covered all

Movement campaigns, but since it was based in Los Angeles, news from Southern California were especially prevalent. One of *La Raza* most significant journalistic contribution was its reports on the Chicano Moratorium and Ruben Salazar's death. Amazingly, staff members found themselves outside the Silver Dollar café just as deputies shot into the bar eventually firing the projectile that took Salazar's life. *La Raza* had eyewitness evidence to one of the major events in the entire Chicano Movement. Whether it was to huge incidents like the ones on August 29 or more routine occurrences, *La Raza* covered it all exceptionally well. The magazine has become an invaluable source for historians.

Movement papers illustrate the diversity of Chicano campaigns for civil rights. Periodicals, like Movement organizations, varied in scope and configuration. Although they focused on distinct issues, at its core serving *la raza* remained a common objective for all Chicano papers and groups. Unlike their mainstream counterparts, Movement periodicals did not operate as business ventures, rather, they were a tool for the cause. This in turn translated to Chicano newspapers and magazines being decidedly in favor of activists and therefore biased in their coverage.



Latino editors however defended their partiality by claiming their papers served as counterweights to American periodicals. Chicanos argued the English-language publications distorted news about *la raza* and therefore could not be trusted. An examination of English language periodicals, however, reveals most of Los Angeles' newspapers were relatively unbiased.

Most of the Movement's California campaigns took place in Los Angeles and the city's papers reported on it, to varying degrees. Some publications, such as the *Los Angeles Times* and *La Opinion*, provided extensive coverage on the Movement, while the *Los Angeles Sentinel* only scarcely published stories on Chicanos. Looking at the stories in these papers sheds light on how Americans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans interpreted Chicano activism.

The coverage of the Movement in the *Los Angeles Times* was largely impartial and wide-ranging. Had events occurred ten years earlier this would not have been so. Otis Chandler's leadership led to great changes in the *Los Angeles Times*, including more coverage on Latin American affairs abroad and Mexican Americans throughout the American Southwest, particularly in the Golden State.

Whether it was in the Delano countryside with Cesar Chavez, or on Whittier Boulevard with Rosalio Muñoz, the *Los Angeles Times* paid great attention to the Movement. Moreover, the coverage on Chicanos was, more often than not, objective and informative.

Chandler's paper also benefited from the work of Ruben Salazar. The Mexican-born journalist essentially served as a cultural mediator who showed American society the struggles of Chicanos and the complexities of Chicano identity. To Movement activists, Salazar was the only man who could be trusted with *la raza's* stories. Though Ruben was never an activist himself, his articles did publicize the Movement, thus benefiting *la causa*. The journalist's untimely death while covering the Chicano Moratorium, one of the Movement's most significant events, was a tragic loss to his employers as well as the Chicano community. Moreover, given the curious nature of his death, to many Chicanos, the Salazar case remains unsolved. Ruben Salazar became the Chicano Movement's martyr. Today, his work remains as highly regarded as it was when it first hit the newsstands and is a widely used source for scholars.

The *Los Angeles Sentinel* however has seldom, if ever, been used to examine the Movement in California. The

*Sentinel* was the leading publication of the African American community in Los Angeles, but also had a substantial readership throughout the West. In addition to outstanding journalists, the paper's staff also included political figures and influential Angelenos. My expectation was that since African Americans also undertook their own civil rights campaigns, the Chicano Movement would receive ample coverage. It was surprising that the *Sentinel* devoted such little attention to Chicanos in any capacity. Moreover, many Movement events took place in Los Angeles itself, therefore occurrences in the city would not have been unknown or irrelevant to African Americans. The events that the *Sentinel* did report on, more often than not, dealt with situations that mirrored occurrences in L.A.'s Black community.

One such commonality was the participation of African American and Chicano students in school protests, known as walkouts. The school protests developed almost simultaneously among minority youths in Los Angeles. Both groups felt alienated by their current educational system and wanted changes that included teachers and staff from their respective ethnicity, improved campuses and greater resources, as well as better academic counseling. Chicanos

also wanted bilingual education and course content that related to their cultural heritage. But where Black students succeeded in bringing diversity to their school's staff, ultimately not much changed in institutions attended by Hispanics. One of the things that did come out of the walkouts however was the arrest of thirteen Chicanos. Through Mervyn Dymally's article, the *Sentinel* addressed the arrests and rebuked the city's District Attorney, Evelle Younger, for charging the activists. The columnist accused Younger of persecuting leaders of the Chicano community. Moreover, Dymally supported the walkout participants because he agreed that the L.A. schools had a long history of failing students of color.

Unfortunately, violence with Los Angeles law enforcement was another experience both African Americans and Chicanos encountered. The disturbances during the August 29, 1970 Chicano Moratorium echoed the violence that erupted in Watts in 1965. In both incidents, clashes with police in ethnic neighborhoods ended in looting, arson, and fatalities. Nearly every article in the African American newspaper referenced the Watts Riots when discussing the Moratorium. Booker Griffin's piece on the Moratorium was perhaps the most poignant story concerning Chicanos to

appear in the *Sentinel*. Griffin lamented the poor race relations that gave way to the Watts Riots and the clashes at the Moratorium. The journalist believed the violence in 1970 could have been prevented had leaders in Los Angeles adequately responded to the issues—chief among them police harassment and lack of economic opportunities—African Americans protested against five years earlier. *Sentinel* reporters often used their stories on Chicanos to express their dissatisfaction with white city leaders' treatment of minorities. While Movement stories were uncommon in the African American press, the material that did appear was succinct and unbiased.

Unlike in the *Sentinel*, Movement stories were prevalent in Los Angeles' premier Spanish-language newspapers, *La Opinion*. In 1926, Ignacio Lozano—who was a successful publisher in Texas—introduced *La Opinion* and Hispanic Angelenos quickly took it. The publication's popularity grew beyond California and by the 1930s was also distributed to states throughout the Southwest. The news coverage in Lozano's paper tended to lean towards the conservative side. *La Opinion* truly became a reflection of the Mexican American generation. Consequently, *La Opinion's* treatment of the Movement was generally critical

of activists. The paper even abstained from using the word "Chicano," generally using "Mexican American" to describe Movement participants.

There seemed to be a disconnect, if not outright antagonism, between Chicano activists and the paper's conservative journalists and editors. In reports of the 1968 school walkouts, for example, the paper sided with the authorities. The paper's staff opposed the students' actions. The protest against a poor educational system by young Chicanos was reported as little more than aimless upheaval. Following suit on the police chief's claim, *La Opinion* accused the students who decided to walkout of being under the influence of outside agitators. By and large, the paper did not recognize the students' efforts as legitimate protest over real concerns.

Similarly, *La Opinion* spent very little ink discussing the motives behind National Chicano Moratorium march. Rather than carrying a story focusing on the anti-war protest (at the time being the largest march against the Vietnam War by Chicanos), the paper briefly informed its readers about the police's response to the liquor store, and the altercations between the demonstrators and Sheriff Deputies at Laguna Park. When recounting the clashes,

however, *La Opinion* suggested the officers attacked Chicanos in reaction to marchers provoking them by throwing rocks and bottles. Though the periodical's reports on the Moratorium itself were scant, Ruben Salazar's death was extensively covered.

*La Opinion* published articles of every length and nature on the journalist tragic passing. Not only was his loss felt as person and colleague, but also as a community's voice. Like many Chicanos, the conservative paper believed Salazar and his work with the *L.A. Times* and Channel 34 offered a link between Latinos and the general public. *La Opinion* recognized that the slayed journalist discussed not only the Movement, but also communicated the experience of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in L.A. to the rest of the city and in so doing brought attention to an otherwise frequently neglected community. That attention ended on August 29, 1970 and *La Opinion* lamented it and understood the loss.

The Spanish-language daily was also disillusioned with the woefully inadequate inquest that investigated Salazar's death. The greatly flawed examination and the subsequent verdict, which essentially cleared law enforcement officer of any wrongdoing, marked one of the few times *La Opinion*

opposed the powers that be. The paper was critical of the inquest's ineffective probe and the Sheriff Deputies' actions at the Silver Dollar Café.

The Movement's coverage in *La Opinion* reveals that not all Latinos supported Chicanos' activism. Conservative Mexican Americans wanted equality too, but disagreed with the tactics employed by Chicanos in their efforts to achieve it. It is interesting that the newspaper from the Mexican American community seemed more hostile towards Chicano activists than white and African American publications. African American journalist did not devote much attention to the Movement, but when they did they wrote empathetically as Black Angelenos experienced many of the same difficulties as Chicanos. For their part, the *Los Angeles Times* covered *la causa* in great detail and fairness. Moreover, the *Times* proved to be a publication that did not fit Chicanos perception that the establishment press was all racist.

Reports on the Chicano Movement also appeared in a few national publications, including *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, and *LIFE*. The coverage however was scant. *Rolling Stone* was a music magazine which had only recently launched so it is surprising that it did address Chicanos' civil rights



struggles. *Time* and *LIFE* on the other hand were major and highly regarded publications which had documented national life for decades, yet less than a dozen stories about Chicanos appeared on their pages in the duration of the Movement. The lack of attention in national magazines supported Chicanos' claims that they were marginalized from mainstream society.

Chicanos' outsider status no doubt appealed to Hunter S. Thompson, one of the preeminent writers of the counter-culture. In 1971, *Rolling Stone* published Thompson's "Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan." Using the National Chicano Moratorium march as a launching point, the Gonzo reporter told his readers of the Movement in Los Angeles. Thompson recounted the violence that erupted in the Moratorium and the tragic death of Ruben Salazar. The exceptional article also examined Chicanos' relations with the L.A.P.D. and Sheriff's officers, and the composition of Movement participants. As the Movement progressed, antagonism between Chicanos and L.A. law officials only grew. Perhaps one of the strongest statements in Thompson's article was Oscar Z. Acosta's assertion that the police harassment on residents of East L.A. indicated that people of Mexican ancestry were not considered true American citizens.

Instead, the authorities saw Chicanos as strangers who had to be monitored. Chicano activists constantly tried to counter that marginalization.

Without question Salazar's killing and the ensuing inquest figured as one of the greatest point of contention between people of Mexican descent and L.A. officers. Adding insult to injury, the official investigation into the shootings at the Silver Dollar was poorly carried out and raised more questions than it answered. Moreover, no one was punished for the journalist's death though evidence demonstrated that Sheriff's officers fired missile-like projectiles into the bar that infamous summer day. As Thompson noted, Salazar's untimely and suspicious death led many people in Los Angeles to believe the city's peace officers murdered the *Times* reporter to silence him. In the course of his investigation, Hunter S. Thompson concluded the death of Ruben Salazar was dumb-luck for law enforcement rather than a well-plotted assassination as many Angelenos believed. Thompson reasoned the law enforcement agencies were too inept to orchestrate the murder of such a respected figure. The Gonzo journalist also understood the disturbing implications of the power structure purposely killing a member of the media.

Salazar's untimely demise was extraordinarily costly for the Chicano community. With Salazar's passing much of the mainstream press was devoid of a Latino perspective. Thompson rightly noted that the Mexican journalist became a martyr in the Movement. Although Salazar's contributions were irreplaceable, his death did have the unintended benefit of generating more support for Chicanos. The deaths and violence on August 29, was a wake-up call for many men and women who had not been involved in the Movement.

*Rolling Stone* readers learned that older Mexican Americans tended to lean towards tradition and conservatism. Moreover, people of that generation often opposed Chicanos on account that the activists were defiant of the system. The Moratorium rally however changed people's minds and some Mexican Americans began to back the Movement. Initially, college students and other young people were at the forefront of the Movement, but by the early 1970s Chicanos' militancy increased. "Strange Rumblings in Aztlan" depicted the more belligerent factions in *la causa* by highlighting the participation of *batos locos* or "crazy guys." Thompson maintained the crazy guys commonly had checkered pasts and were prone to violence.

Their propensity for violence made them a detriment to the Movement.

Thompson experienced the uneasiness between Chicanos and white America first hand. Although his entire life and career had been a series revolts against the establishment, to Chicanos Thompson was still a member of the mainstream press. Chicanos stopped talking when he came into a room, even when accompanied by his good friend Acosta. Hunter made it clear that he was completely an outsider looking in when it came to the subject of the Chicano Movement. The Gonzo journalist was accustomed to becoming fully emerged in the culture he was writing about, but many Chicanos remained distrustful and shut him out. Even so, his account gave readers a detailed picture of activism in the L.A. *barrios*. Thompson nicely recounted the complexities of the Chicano Movement and the experiences of people in city of Angeles.

Like *Rolling Stone*, *Time* also wrote about the Moratorium. Unlike Thompson's article, the piece in *Time* was brief, focused solely on the violence of the rally and for the most part blamed Chicanos for the upheaval. Latino demonstrators did participate in the clashes, but the *Time* coverage made it seem as if they were the instigators and

police's hands were clean. *Time* also left out the deputies' role in Ruben Salazar's death. The story noted Salazar's body was found at the Silver Dollar, but failed to mention a Sheriff's deputy fired the barricade-busting projectile that killed him. The magazine was also mistaken when it categorized Salazar as a militant. While Ruben spent the last years of his career covering Latinos in Los Angeles, he was in no way militant or a participant in the Chicano Movement. One of the things *Time* did get right was that Cesar Chavez's victories in Delano fueled Chicano activism.

Both *Time* and *LIFE* covered farmworkers' unionization efforts. The articles were published three years apart but hit on many of the same points. Framed as a struggle for workers' rights, the U.F.W.'s activism was seen as unthreatening by most of the American public. Both publications also delved into Chavez's leadership style. The union president was depicted as somewhat shy and quiet, a sharp contrast to other Chicano leaders. *Time* and *LIFE* also reported on Chavez's nonviolent approach to socio-economic reform. His stance on nonviolence separated him from other Chicano leaders not just in tactics but also in rhetoric. The more peaceful approach divorced activists in

Delano from the hyper-masculine rhetoric of the Movement. The magazines captured how the nonviolent strategy contributed to the union's success. The magazines referenced Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. as Chavez's role models. He certainly admired these men and their desire for peace, but the union's nonviolent approach was also a pragmatic measure. Chavez and other U.F.W. leaders understood violent clashes would be fruitless and detrimental to the organization. Chavez knew impoverished workers would surely lose any arms race against growers. They also feared the escalation of violence could lead to deaths if workers tried to fight growers with weapons and vandalism. The peaceful protest strategy also helped garner a great deal of support from people in all levels of society.

One glaring oversight in the articles concerned Dolores Huerta's role in United Farm Workers. The magazines failed to acknowledge Huerta's position as union vice president and top contract negotiator. Rather, *Time* identified her only as Chavez's assistant, while *LIFE* made no mention of her at all. The error could be a reflection of the times when most women did not hold leadership roles in social movements. It is a shame more attention was not

given to Dolores since her activism shattered the social convention (which was particularly strong in the Latino culture) that women followed orders, not gave them.

*Time* and *LIFE* did not give much attention to the Chicano Movement. The lack of coverage resulted in few Americans being informed about the intricacies of the Movement. The few stories that did appear in these national publications mentioned Chicanos' activism in Delano and East L.A., but did not capture the sense that Latinos found themselves in a larger campaign to fight for equality. The articles recounted the dire situations farmworkers were in but did not connect that to most Chicanos feeling they were treated as second class citizens. In its stories, *Time* even seemed to ignore the power structure's oppression of Chicanos.

The American print media reported on two of the Movement's major events, United Farm Workers organizing and the National Chicano Moratorium, however the exposure was limited. The Movement's coverage in national magazines, or rather lack thereof, suggests the American public was not really concerned with Latinos' grievances. *La raza* felt their exclusion in the national press was an extension of their marginalization in society. The stories' content

also revealed Chicanos' relegation to lower levels of the socio-economic ladder; they were exploited and impoverished workers and victims of police harassment.

Few economic opportunities and harassment were some of the issues tackled by Chicano activists, but as the Movement progressed Chicanas added sexism to the list of grievances. However, not everyone in Aztlan agreed with the charge raised by women and rifts occurred. Like other Movement participants, Chicanas also used the press to further their ideas and objectives. The publications Chicanas employed to disseminate their messages varied in scope and format. *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* and *Regeneración* were based in Southern California, whereas New Mexico was home to *El Grito del Norte*. While *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* was a Chicana paper, *Regeneración* and *El Grito del Norte* were not exclusively women's magazines, they were general Movement publications. *Regeneración* and *El Grito* however did have women as editors and staff members which can in part account for the strong female voice in their issues. These papers also had lengthy runs and were among the finest publications in the entire Chicano press as well. In contrast, *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* was short-lived (only publishing three volumes) and had a rudimentary layout.



Despite their differences in style and duration, neither publication lacked substance.

The articles in *Regeneración*, *El Grito*, and *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* revealed that women wanted to have the same opportunities in the Movement and in society as did men. If the Movement was a hard-fought struggle it was more so for women. Chicanas, like Chicanos had to contend with racism in society and the lack of opportunities that came with being relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Chicanas however also had to contend with sexism, which made added to their fight during the Movement. As gender discrimination and the dismissal of women's issues became more prevalent within the Movement, Chicanas' writings increased. Chicanas' articles focused on women's activism in the Movement and the development of Chicana feminism. Chicana feminism centered on the idea that women's roles within the Movement and the family had to be redefined to have greater equality between men and women. Other major themes in their articles included family, and education. These institutions nurtured Chicanas but also stifled them. *Feministas* (as Chicana feminists called themselves) believed this was due in part to Mexican culture itself, specifically *machismo*, which

complicated familial expectations and hindered women's opportunities outside the home.

Women who took to the press expressed their frustration with *machismo*, at home and in the Movement. Often fathers, brothers, husbands, and/or Movement leaders expected women of Mexican heritage to submissively obey their orders, and placed Chicanas in subordinate roles solely due to their gender. Often, Chicanos referred to the entire community as a family. Activists called each other brothers and sisters, but like heads of households in real families, there was no mistaking that men were in charge. This framework was difficult for Chicanas. In many organizations, women had to do most of the cleaning, organizing, and clerical work while men gave commands and speeches. In other words, Chicanas' participation in the Movement was accepted so long as it remained within the parameters of prescribed gender roles. Even on college campuses where people should have been more progressive and forward-thinking Chicanas who challenged gender discrimination encountered a great deal of hostility. In essence, even in their efforts for liberation, women were oppressed. Chicanas wrote of the frustrating position men in the Movement placed them in: either women complied with

what Chicanos wanted or faced exclusion. Activists (men and women alike) ostracized Chicanas who spoke-out against *machismo*. Before long, Chicanas accused of introducing feminists ideas to the Movement were labeled as disloyal and traitors to their cause and their people. The articles in *El Grito del Norte* and *Regeneración* often touched on the issue of sexism and disunity within the Movement. These periodicals discussed the unintentional rifts feminist issues created among *la raza*. Chicanas never meant to be divisive; when they expressed their hope for gender equality they saw it as an extension of the Movement's agenda for liberation of all Chicano people. Chicanas argued liberation and social justice was supposed to be for all people, not just for men. The aggravation women felt was palpable in the pages of Movement papers.

Aside from Movement organizations, Chicanas also encountered sexism within their own family. Several articles written by women discussed how the family kept Chicanas down. Women of Mexican ancestry grew up being told to obey men. Over-protective males did not allow their wives, sisters, or daughters to have much of a life outside the home or church. According to tradition and family expectations, the best path for women was the one

that led them to become dedicated wives and mothers. Female activists even encountered criticism for participating in the Movement for allegedly neglecting their families while doing so. However, Chicanas also learned to use the framework of the family to their advantage. They argued that their position as mothers — responsible for raising the next generation of Chicanos and fostering cultural values— entitled them to play an important part in the Movement. It could not be denied that women were vital to survival and success of the family and by extending their roles in the home to the Movement Chicanas bolster their activism.

Often, Chicanas civil rights activism began while they were students. Like other social movements in the 1960s and 1970s, campuses were hotbeds for protest and reform efforts, and that was certainly true for Chicanos in California. But like the family, educational pursuits were not without challenges. People in the Chicano community had few academic opportunities or career prospects, but conditions were even more difficult for women. Chicanas who contributed to Movement publications frequently addressed the educational and employment limitations society placed on women. Many activists believed education

offered a way to counteract the disadvantages Chicanas faced. *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* was a huge proponent of education. With many of its writers being college students, it is no surprise the paper encouraged women to pursue higher education. However, getting to college and succeeding was not always easy for Chicanas.

Teachers and staff in *barrio* schools seldom saw women of *la raza* as college material so instead of preparing them for higher education, they directed the students who had not already dropped-out to pursue vocational training. According to articles in *Hijas*, even if Chicanas did make it to college they then encountered challenges that came with being unfamiliar with such an institution. Inadequate grade schools left people unprepared for higher level courses which then translated to poor grades. Furthermore, at times, family members did not support girls' academic ventures, preferring instead that they marry and raise a family. Although school presented some difficulties, Chicanas continuously used the press to promote education. Women writers understood education provided women with options and opportunities for advancement they would not find in the *barrio*.

Chicanas utilized periodicals to question and challenge the status quo which confined them in gender and cultural expectations. Women's articles referenced sexism (or *machismo*) as a cultural confine that hindered women's development in the family unit and their activism in *la causa*. Chicanas, especially *feministas*, truly advocated the ideals of freedom and equality of the Movement. Whether it was argued in the context of participation in the Movement, the family, or in educational aspirations, Chicana writers called for equality. It is lamentable more Chicanos did not embrace women as equal partners in the Movement, had they done so perhaps more could have been achieved. Instead, the men who discriminated against Chicanas added to the oppression of their own community and hampered the Movement itself by alienating participants. Women's contributions to the press also demonstrated the incredible strength Chicana activists possessed. There were women who walked away from the Movement due to sexism, but many stayed and fought, remaining ever committed to liberating *la raza*. It was perhaps because the yoke weighed so heavily on them that they had such great determination to cast it off and improve the lives of *all* Chicanos.

Chicano publications are one of the best sources scholars have for learning about the Movement. In this digital age we can turn to technology to conserve these documents and at the same time make them more widely available. As the Hispanic population in the United States continues to grow in numbers and influence, the story of Chicanos will be sought after and the writings of activists tell part of that story and thus ought to be preserved. But the Movement did not exist in a vacuum and therefore should be studied through non-Chicano sources as well. By doing so, we get a better picture of this very complex group of people and their multifaceted and complicated struggle for civil rights.

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