

University (known today as the University of Texas at El Paso) and Antioch College, she worked as a librarian in Austin until 1968. Two years later, together with her husband, Juan Coterá, she was one of the founders of Jacinto Treviño College (now defunct) in Mercedes, Texas, which specialized in preparing teachers for bilingual education programs. By then, Coterá was heavily involved in the Chicano movement and had enough support to run for public office as a member of LRUP, where she joined Rosie Castro and Virginia Músqiz as one of an influential group of women in the party leadership.⁷¹ María L. Hernández (1896-1986), a community activist since the twenties, and an LRUP stalwart, served as her mentor. A dedicated feminista, Coterá helped found the Texas Women's Political Caucus in 1973, and a year later, she set up a nonprofit Chicana Research and Learning Center in Austin, an umbrella organization that encouraged and helped fund projects aimed at empowering minority women. Her publications on feminism have gained universal acclaim, making Marta Coterá one of the leading educators involved in the Chicana movement.

Chicanas like Coterá and Elizabeth ("Betita") Martínez were active in championing all the causes Chicanos espoused, but their focus was consistently on women's issues. These included welfare rights, child care, sexual discrimination in employment, abortion, and birth control. Throughout the seventies, they were also adamant in their opposition to involuntary sterilization programs that victimized poor minority women. In colleges, their main contribution was the establishment of Chicana studies classes beginning in 1968 and Chicana studies programs shortly thereafter. These feminist programs were rapidly adopted by institutions of higher learning throughout the Southwest. Their most notable success was in California, the stronghold of Chicana feminism, where Anna Nieto-Gómez, Gracia Molina de Pick, and Corinna Sánchez led the way in their foundation. But in the early seventies, the Chicana movement was only in its infancy. Ultimately, it was to survive the hard years ahead much better than the Chicano movement.

THE DECLINE OF CHICANISMO

The heterogeneous nature of the movement, given the community it represented, was inevitable, but problems were bound to surface. It proved very difficult to get organizations and individuals to lay aside their specific agendas for the common welfare. The growing rift between Chicanos and Chicanas was only the most glaring example. Even *within* organizations, personal squabbles worked against unity. The same factionalism that characterized LRUP was evident in the Brown Berets and MAPA. The authorities were only too happy to encourage this state of affairs. One well-informed scholar states, "Police provocation to commit not only violent acts but more frequently counterproductive actions was a fact; and