

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been a long time coming. It began as an idea batted among good friends, and has survived repeated employment difficulties, serious illness, and the deaths of parents and a close colleague. There were many times during the past few years when we questioned the sanity of devoting so much time and mental energy to a project that promised no material rewards or advancement. However, through it all, the two of us believed it was important to develop a way to speak seriously about the history of popular culture and politics that avoided the pitfall of academic obscurantism while at the same time refraining from the excessive enthusiasm so often encountered among those who write about popular culture. We hope the reader will agree that we have been at least partly successful. We also hope that the variety of voices and approaches collected in this volume will encourage others to reach across disciplinary and national boundaries and join us in this important scholarly endeavor.

Many people helped us keep this project on track. We are both deeply grateful for the assistance and support given by Clay Morgan, Peggy Gifford, and Dana Foote of State University of New York Press. Larry Bennett wishes to acknowledge the encouragement of his colleagues Michael Budde, Larry Grossberg, and Harry Wray. Nor would he have risked writing about the things he enjoys so much without the comradeship of fellow enthusiasts Richard DeCordova, Michael Hannon, Lisa Milam, Reece Pendleton, and the singular Gwyn Friend. Ronald Edsforth wishes to thank Robert Asher, Bruce Nelson, Richard Oestreicher, Nelson Lichtenstein, and Maurine Weiner Greenwald for friendship and support, and the History Faculty at MIT for providing the kind of positive work environment he hasn't known since graduate school. He also acknowledges his good friends Ralph Lombreglia and Kate Bernhardt who gave him a home away from home and constant intellectual stimulation during the last year of this project. And, of course, for her sustaining love and encouragement through some very trying times, he thanks Joanne Devine; she is simply the best.

Finally, the editors wish to dedicate this book to Howard Abramowitz, who died before it could be completed. Howard was

the kind of activist teacher-scholar that drew so many students of the 1960s into the academic professions. As a young man, he fought the United States Army all the way to the Supreme Court in a case that in 1958 won freedom for all veterans from McCarthyite persecution for political affiliations prior to enlistment. Howard's lively imagination, good humor, and always active sense of justice made him an exemplary colleague. We miss him.

Ronald Edsforth
Larry Bennett