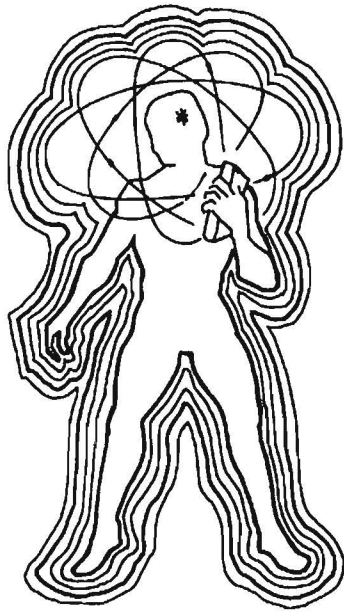


# ÉPOCA

THE NATIONAL CONCILIO FOR CHICANO STUDIES JOURNAL



*Roberto Sanchez*



# RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

by Dr. Julian Samora and Dr. Ernesto Galarza

The academic establishment, like every other institution in American society which is being affected by the dramatic trends of ethnic relations, is being forced to clarify and define its role toward the Mexican-American community. An undertow of longpent frustration among Mexican-Americans has reached the universities and colleges. In the wake of protests and confrontations new and urgent issues have been raised on the campus relating to cultural survival, academic opportunity, information resources, intellectual skills and training and placement of personnel.

As of this date the institutions of higher learning stand in danger of being overwhelmed both by the qualitative change in their role with respect to the Mexican-American community and by the quantitative burden of literally thousands of new students at all levels, who are seeking and demanding answers to these issues. An avalanche has descended on academia from this quarter of American society, and the academicians are hardly aware of it as yet. What is presently a crisis may turn into a disaster if the inadequacies of the established are not grasped.

Briefly described the situation is about like this:

The ethnic insurgence has created a militant student sector in the Mexican-American community. On many campuses they number in the hundreds, kept in motion by aggressive cadres. Their appearance has been sudden, their affect shocking. Administrators have given ground more out of panic and consternation than out of depth of understanding of what is going on in ethnic universes they have so long ignored and neglected. The students are on campus making new demands that may seem strident and impulsive to some but that have a core of profound significance for the future of the ethnic groups and for American society as a whole. Administrators have improvised responses to student pressure, some with the aim of gaining time to take a more significant reading of the future, in order that its demands on the present may be better understood.

From a practical point of view these demands may be viewed in eight categories: (1) The expansion of training programs for graduate students that can offer academic courses and field work leading to

advanced degrees; (2) the planning of research by Master's and Ph.D. candidates; (3) the compilation of a much greater variety of readings for undergraduates in ethnic studies courses; (4) the adaption of some of these readings to the academic need of the EOP — type of student; (5) the facilitation of inservice assistance to the numerous personnel that has been hastily recruited to teach such courses and to administer ethnic studies departments; (6) the encouragement and support of advanced research and writing by Mexican-Americans or other which will support and stimulate the whole of the intellectual effort of the Mexican-American community; (7) the preparation of teachers and counselors for the elementary and secondary levels who will prepare students for these programs; and (8) identifying research topics and scholarly activity relevant to curriculum development and teaching.

Some additional comments may be made on each of these categories:

1. Graduate Training. Amid the clamor for ethnic studies centering on the Mexican-American little emphasis has been placed on the role of the scholar. Any campus

that pretends to have an ongoing ethnic studies program without one or more scholars on campus to shape and guide it cannot be said to be doing its job very seriously in this area. There are few universities that can meet this requirement today. The reason is that the Mexican-American scholars now doing creative research in this field are few, the small number itself being a symptom of neglect over the past fifty years. The situation is improving but not rapidly enough. This handful of scholars should be regarded as a training cadre of a new generation of social scientists able to multiply itself at a rate fast enough to give the whole of the Mexican-American community in the United States adequate intellectual support.

2. Research planning. The choice of subjects for a thesis or dissertation must, of course, lie with the candidate himself. But candidates should be helped to choose with a lively sense of relevance to (a) current state of documentation in the area of the proposed study, (b) the availability of useful contacts in the field into which research will lead, (c) access to continuous counseling from a senior advisor and (d) possible relevance to some fundamental area of ignorance presently blocking the progress of the Mexican-American community. These basic considerations are pointed out because in the past they have all too often been ignored by advisors or counselors who merely launched a graduate student into research without navigational equipment. In this way the campus has unloaded on others a responsibility which belongs exclusively to a mature scholar.
3. Readings. At the present time undergraduate courses in Mexican-American studies are severely handicapped by the paucity of reading materials. There has been a spate of bibliographies, all of them relying on the same limited stock of out-of-prints, monographs and manuals. In these bibliographies there is uniformly missing the critical

annotation that could flesh out the thin body of writings in this field. As a result, a very few works which commend themselves for their content and method are used in a variety of courses, doing duty many times over because there are no intermediate writings to fill the large gap between them. While the scholarship referred to in paragraph one, above, is in the making, it is possible to conceive a plan of compilations, reproductions, exchange and distribution that would add materially if provisionally to the working resources of instructors and students in the Mexican-American ethnic studies at the undergraduate level.

4. Adaptation. Even after some enrichment of the present bibliography is accomplished, there would still be the problem of adapting some of the readings to the academic skills of hundreds of EOP students now enrolled in ethnic studies. These skills are, understandably, quite limited. This, too, is a symptom and an indictment of educational starvation of the Mexican-American youth in the past, of a tracking system which eventually shunts these youth to a siding of the main line of America. In fact instructors are now making such adaptations of texts too advanced technically for many EOP students to grasp easily. But they are doing this at the expense of counseling time and reading which the instructors might themselves be doing. The American academic complex of lectures, assigned readings, and term papers hinges upon reading and writing abilities which these young people have to become acquainted with playing by ear. To write a simpler score of the few basic treatises now in print does not mean a lowering of standards but simply of keeping them from sinking as they learn to swim.
5. In-service training. The academic rush into Mexican-American studies has created an enormous strain on the limited intellectual manpower of colleges and universities, con-

ditions being normal. But they have not been normal. Students, impelled by mixed expectations of academic opportunity but also by ethnic pride have not only demanded teachers but Mexican-American or Chicano teachers. The result was that the bottom of the barrel was reached instantly. Some of the few good teachers there were in this field of studies have been enticed into administration. Most of the new personnel hired for actual classroom teaching find themselves hurtled into courses planning, curriculum design, preparation of lectures, crash reading and counseling with little if any previous academic experience. It is to this front-line sector that in-service help should be addressed, to take the form that most quickly and effectively responds to the pressures in which it finds itself.

6. Advanced research. The Mexican-Americans who are researching and writing and publishing are now so few they might be counted on the fingers of one hand. What they produce in the next ten years will be in a sense a model or a stimulus or a goal or an example to the entire intellectual effort of the national Mexican-American community. It is not a question of formal standards and fulfillment of requirements decorated with ivy and crowned by a degree. It is the far deeper question of mastery of the most effective intellectual tools that present American society has and the use of those tools by craftsmen whose product must be reckoned with by that society. These very few scholars are themselves presently under pressure to fulfill a dozen roles, at the risk of neglecting their principal one.
7. Teacher and counselor training. It is quite clear, to anyone who surveys the present educational system of America, that new Mexican-American leadership is required in the elementary schools. Teaching and counseling by Mexican-American personnel proceed within the presuppositions and conformities of the stratified curriculum,

that is, the curriculum that guarantees the continued stratification of Mexican-American youth at the lowest levels of economic opportunity and social fulfillment in the America of today. These teachers and counselors are themselves the product of the pedagogical shortcomings of the teacher training institutions. Once on the job they must either avoid the issues that so patently disturb the emotional balance of the students or run the risks of single-handed criticism. To this level of educational service resources must be directed and machinery created — the level at which the creative mind is started on its course toward creative studentship and scholarship.

8. Educational research. Behind humanistic teaching and counseling and underpinning them is the direction and quality of research in education. In the teachers colleges and graduate schools of education Mexican-American students face narrow choices when the time comes for them to do serious research for a degree. The esoteric, the minutely brilliant, the theoretically vested, the whimsically challenging, the safely professional — these are some of the presuppositions of present-day educational research which command the full time and all the energies of the Mexican-American academic elite in pedagogy. Meantime, back in the classroom, deleterious practices continue that delay the educational growth of the Mexican-American child. Promising new programs for their benefit soon run into reefs that might have been avoided if research kept rhythm and pace to examine and report on the real results of such programs. Education research into these obscure areas of teaching and administration should be encouraged.

In each of these areas some leading questions arise:

(1) Graduate training:

- What recognized professional personnel is available now to

direct such training?

- On what campuses are these persons presently located and would they be available for cooperative work, particularly to direct field work of students in training?
- What institutions are now prepared to offer graduate courses in this or related fields?
- What institution is presently willing and able to accept responsibility for creating a model for such training?
- What should be the goals, as to numbers of graduates to be trained in the next five years?
- How can students who have already initiated their studies and who are in danger of dropping out for financial reasons be helped?
- How can basic research be related to the central concerns of the Mexican-American community?
- How does the academic establishment keep itself accurately and sympathetically informed about what is most troubling to dissipate, by thoroughly dependable work, those areas of public ignorance that prevent the community from coping with the pressure that are breaking it apart? Who decides what is central concern? How can relevant research be transplanted into public education quickly and effectively?
- How should such research be distributed between historical and projective studies?
- Whose enlightenment do historical studies serve, other than those of the historical fraternity itself? Do projective studies with an evident contemporary relevance find encouragement or opposition or opposition in the general community?
- How can the specialized research as to Mexican-Americans be maintained in rigorous contact with the

highest demands of intellectual production of the various disciplines of the academy?

- Does narrow ethnic scholarship have a career future on the campus? Of what does the intellectual apprenticeship consist for a young scholar who is strongly oriented toward ethnic studies?
- What would be the approximate cost of a program of graduate training for the next five years?
- How is this funding to be provided?

(2) Research planning:

- How can a mutual exchange of information on current research be established and maintained?
- Is it possible and desirable to relate research to the questions and issues raised by current programs of community organization and action?
- What is the character of the present "involvement" of the university with community organization? Do the traditional forms of community organization, as they have been applied to Mexican-Americans, show positive or negative effects? Is a drastic reappraisal needed, of the traditional view of the community as merely a pool of raw data designed to soothe their thirsts and not those of the community itself?
- Is it desirable to identify the holdings of various institutions which are available for advanced academic work?
- Is coordinated research planning desirable, and if adequately funded would it introduce some logical connection with the significant dynamic trends in the Mexican-American community?
- Is there some kind of specialization among various universities whose areas of service are peculiar or particular in some way? Are these universities prepared at this stage for research that may be

in some manner useful to the national community? If universities are looking to special areas of interest, are they cooperatively considering the major social trends of the nation that effect the Mexican-American minority?

(3) Readings for undergraduate courses:

- What historical documents are available for reprinting as source reading?
- How can publishers be encouraged to reprint materials that are mainly of academic interest?
- How can modern copying and duplicating techniques be applied to distribute the available materials more widely?
- What type of bibliographic service would best meet the needs of those who are teaching ethnic courses?
- Is there need for a current reference and information service available to college and university instructors?
- How can creative and informative writing be stimulated at this level by competent authors if they are made aware of the types of writing that are needed?

(4) Adapted readings:

- What are the special requirements as to readings for students with less-than-standard academic preparations?
- Can the preparation of such readings be assigned to competent authors?

(5) In-service assistance:

- Would it be useful to provide recurrent seminars for instructors to deal with both content and methodology of ethnic studies?
- Should there be a traveling circuit of lecturers to provide stimulus to the regular campus schedule of ethnic courses?
- Where ethnic studies are in formative stages would a consulting service be helpful?

(6) Advanced writing and research:

- Who are the writers and scholars presently engaged in independent work?
- Is their work likely to serve as a model and stimulus in all the other sectors of intellectual work in the Mexican-American community?
- What should be done to support this type of research and writing?
- Once such writing is completed is the academic establishment interested in adapting for information and use by all sectors of the Mexican-American community?

(7) The preparation of teachers and counsellors for the elementary and secondary levels who will feed students into these programs:

- Is there need for in-service training for such personnel?
- What institutions and persons are preparing materials at this level?
- Should an "Upward Bound" type of program be established?
- What should teacher-training institutions be doing in this regard as they provide personnel for the elementary and secondary schools?
- How are school Boards to be reeducated to perceive the needs of the ethnic community?

(8) Research topics and scholarly activities:

- What is available in the Humanities - art, music, literature (novels, poetry, drama) - that is useful to these programs?
- Can the Chicano Art Association be recruited to disseminate information?
- What new research is being conducted in the social sciences - sociology, economics, history, political science, psychology - and how can this be used?
- Can the Chicano Press Association be helpful in reviewing the new material?

-- What topics for research should have the highest priorities?

- a) Demographic studies - e.g. the 1970 Census, or
- b) urban problems in the *barrios* and *colonias*, e.g., housing, education, welfare, police, discrimination in employment, etc., or
- c) rural problems - e.g., migratory labor, as well as others in (b) above, or
- d) international problems:
  - Immigration
  - Illegal entrants
  - Commuters
  - Border industrialization
- e) the Mexican-American family, or
- f) internal (U.S.) migration, or
- g) bi-lingual education, or
- h) political participation of the Mexican-American and his influence, or
- i) the Chicano Movement in its various dimensions

These questions are asked in a particular framework and answers are not supplied because we feel that the participants at the three Institutes are more likely to express the best answers, since they are faced daily with both the demands and the needs, while working within their programs.