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National Chicano Social Science Association Newsletter, Spring 1975

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APPENDIX VI

NATIONAL CHICANO SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER AUSTIN, TEXAS (Spring 1975)

With apologies to all for our tardiness we place before you the latest issue of the National Chicano Social Science Newsletter. This issue incorporates material from previous newsletters and summaries written by participants in the 1974 National Conference held at the University of California at Irvine.

BACKGROUND OF THE ASSOCIATION

For those unfamiliar with the Association we are reprinting the following excerpts from the first association newsletter.

At the annual meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association held in San Antonio, Texas, in March, 1972, representatives of the various existing Chicano caucuses formed the National Caucus of Chicano Social Scientists. A Steering Committee for the Caucus was appointed comprised of representatives from the various existing Chicano disciplinary organizations for the purpose of planning the first national meeting of the Caucus. The Steering Committee was chaired by Jaime Sena Rivera. It was decided in San Antonio that the purpose of the Las Vegas conference was to begin organizing a more formal organization to replace the ad hoc National Caucus.

The Las Vegas Conference

The Conference was attended by approximately fifty Chicano social scientists. Although the conference was national in scope, the majority of those attending were from Southwestern area colleges and universities. It was assumed that a truly national representation was not possible due to difficulties in securing travel funds. The various disciplines were fairly

equitably represented. Most of the delegates were faculty and graduate students and several undergraduate students also participated. The thrust of the conference discussions focused on the nature and direction of Chicano social science, and the structure and purpose of the proposed Association. There were several key themes which had general consensus among the delegates. These themes reflected dissatisfaction with traditional social science and concern for the question of the role of the Chicano social scientist.

The Purposes of a Chicano Social Science Association

Participants at the conference mentioned a wide variety of purposes which could be served by a Chicano Science Association. Among these are:

1. Establishing communication among Chicano scholars across geographical and disciplinary boundaries.
2. Encouraging the development of new social theories and models, in keeping with the direction outlined above.
3. Facilitating the recruitment of Chicanos into all levels of social science institutions.
4. Acting to increase the flow of funds to research undertaken by Chicanos particularly as that research contributes to the goals and direction of the Association.

The Structure of the Proposed Association

Some of the liveliest discussion at the meeting concerned the structure of the Association. During these discussions a decision emerged to break with the traditional form of organization of professional associations and to attempt an innovative structure more in keeping with the philosophy and direction of a new social science as laid out at the Las Vegas conference.

In keeping with the interdisciplinary orientation, it was decided to abandon the idea of membership via disciplinary organizations (the various caucuses, etc.). Rather, membership in the national organization will be based on participation in interdisciplinary local or sub-regional collective research units. In keeping with their action orientation, these units will be referred to as *focos*.

The *focos* are envisioned as small enough to allow regular interaction among its members, since such interaction is seen as essential in maintaining a high level of interest and participation. A high level of participation, in turn, is necessary if such organizations are to develop and implement vigorous projects combining action and research at the local level.

The foco is thus seen as the real driving force of the association, and the center of activity for its members. The foco is to be the source of initiative and the focus of power. The local research/action projects developed by the focos should correspond to local conditions and to the interests of its members, integrating existing research wherever possible. Hopefully there will be a great diversity among the projects undertaken, with the various focos learning from the experiences and activities of others. Eventually there should develop direct working relationships among adjoining focos, based on overlapping interests.

The internal structure of the foco is left for each foco to determine, in keeping with the general tone and direction of the Association. It may be that within each foco there will be a number of sub-groups or task forces organized around common interests.

At the national level, there is to be a coordinating committee composed of delegates from the focos. The purpose of this group is to act as an information link among the focos, as by seeing to the publication of a regular newsletter; to make arrangements for national conferences; and to act as a general coordinating body. It is not seen as a locus of power or major initiative in the association, but as a channel for the energies of the focos.

An annual national conference will be part of the association. Presentations at this annual meeting are to be initiated by the various focos, and will reflect the activities and research of their members.

THE IRVINE CONFERENCE

On May 10, 1974 some one hundred persons gathered at the University of California for the second annual conference. The different focos organized panels and workshops on topics of central concern to Chicano social scientists. At the time of this writing we do not have all of the expected abstracts of panels and papers. Nevertheless we would like to present those that were made available to us.

Report on Panel I. Action Research: Community Control

This panel began at 11 a.m. and ended at 1 p.m. There were about forty people in attendance. There had been three presentations scheduled, but because of a late cancellation only two papers were given.

The moderators, Gerald Master and Mario Barrera, began the panel with a brief introduction. They explained the format for the panel and introduced participants, and gave some background on the concepts of action research and community control.

The first paper was given by Hisauro Garza of UC Berkeley. Since abstracts of the papers are appended to this report, we will not attempt to outline them here. Briefly, Hisauro analyzed the political takeover of Crystal City, Texas, from a colonial perspective, and attempted to assess to what extent the takeover and subsequent events there could be described as a process of decolonization.

The second paper was given by Robert Aguallo and Adalijiza Sosa Riddell of UC Davis. They described the political takeover by Chicanos of Parlier, California in 1972, and analyzed it as a case of study of political change. They were concerned to determine whether taking over institutions had in fact resulted in a change in the policies vis-a-vis Chicanos which those institutions were following.

A question and answer and general discussion period followed the presentations, and several important topics were brought up at this time. There were some questions about the concept of decolonization and whether it had been defined sufficiently clearly to be used as a concept to guide research. There was also a discussion of the limitations of Chicano community control, with the opinion being expressed by some that political control in these towns was circumscribed by the lack of economic control on the part of Chicanos. Another topic that came up had to do with whether the struggle for community control could be related to the class struggle. One fear that was expressed in this connection was that the attempt to create a political vehicle out of the entire Chicano community without regard to class could lead to the creation of a new Chicano elite to replace the old Anglo elite, thus modifying but not basically challenging the underlying structure of exploitation based on class.

Finally, there was a good discussion on the relationship of these research projects to further political action. The question was raised as to whether the results of the studies would be diffused to the affected communities and to other communities where they might have an impact on the political process.

On the whole, our feeling was that the panel was useful and that it stimulated discussion of several key issues of Chicano research and political action. Within the given time period, two papers were certainly enough--three would have allowed little time for discussion.

Report of Workshop II. Alternative Institutions

This workshop addressed itself to following sets of questions: How viable are efforts at establishing alternative institutions; are they in fact alternative; what new bodies of knowledge reflecting our cultural experience can we utilize in expanding our learning processes; to what extent can modern technology be controlled and utilized as a resource for

community needs; can we change its direction from social control to service delivery?

Gilbert Gonzales from U.C. Irvine addressing himself to the question of alternative education developed the thesis that alternative models of education are only alternatives since they exist harmoniously within the social order. The real task is understanding the sociological function of education in broader society. He proposed that fundamental social change will be the agent of educational change and that alternative institutions must be viewed from within that context.

Tomás Atencio from La Academia de la Nueva Raza in New Mexico examined the assumptions of our educational system as learning and knowledge transferred from an active end of the system to be deposited at the receiving end of the conduit. He proposed this to be in fact a "cycle of ignorance." He proposes instead a philosophy of dialectical tension involving deliberate action following thought and reflection akin in respects to the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire. He cites oral history, folklore, art and personal history as a basis for a new synthesis of knowledge that can break through dehumanizing institutions and provide a well-spring of learning based on our own experience. This process is aimed at directing change in social, political and economic structures.

Teresa Jimenez of Washington presented an analysis of the possibilities of computer technology as used and developed in the Northwest by Chicano communities. She projected the uses of computer systems especially for medical maintenance and documentation and suggested possible uses in other areas by Chicano researchers. The question of how this information can be used, by whom, and for what purposes was explored. Especially the area of social control of communities vs. delivery of needed community services.

Report on Workshop III. Working Class Analysis and the Chicano

Four working papers were presented in this workshop. The first was by Ricardo Romo on "Mexican Workers in Los Angeles, 1917-1930: A Study in Mobility" (see Abstract below). The second by Victor Nelson Cisneros on "The Participation of Chicanos in the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America, 1937-1950," followed by Laura Arroyo, "The Chicana Worker." The last presentation was by Rosalinda M. Gonzalez on "The Development of a Correct Analysis on the Situation of Working Class Women in the United States, Particularly Chicanas" (see Abstract below). Brief commentary was provided by Juan Gómez-Quiñones. Although all presentations touched on some aspect of the general topic of the workshop, each offered an important contribution to the developing dialogue on the question of why working class analysis is important to the proper interpretation of the Chicano Experience.

On the basis of his study, Ricardo Romo concluded that the United States is not an open society since mobility for Chicano workers was found to be highly restricted. According to Romo, white ethnics in Boston during the historical period had better entry level jobs than second or third generation Mexican workers in Los Angeles. The thesis which undergirded Romo's study is that racism is the most important factor in understanding the economic exploitation of Chicano workers. On the basis of his case study of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA), Victor Nelson Cisneros' conclusions paralleled those of Romo's. According to Cisneros, Chicanos in the UCAPAWA during the period of 1937-1950 were largely victimized by Anglo-union leadership.

The third presentation by Laura Arroyo touched on what is rapidly becoming another important question in the Chicano movement: the woman question. On the basis of a quantitative analysis of the female workforce in the United States based on 1970 census data, Arroyo's findings indicated Chicanas are the most exploited workers in the service and other industries. The presentation by Rosalinda Gonzalez also touched on the woman question. According to Gonzalez, the situation of Chicano workers cannot be properly interpreted unless it is done within the context of dialectical and historical materialism. As the only working paper from a Marxist perspective it made possible a stimulating dialogue amongst both the members of the workshop and those in the audience.

In conclusion, the workshop was successful and productive in that the presentations in collective terms raised research questions of serious import to the Chicano struggle. As a whole, the working papers are indicative of the kind of critical research young Chicano and Chicana scholars are pursuing which is aimed at advancing the level of consciousness and understanding of the nature of Chicano oppression in the United States.

Report on Panel IV. Internationalism and the Border

Because of conflicts of schedule among potential participants, only one paper was given at this panel. Victor Nelson Cisneros and Guillermo Flores moderated and offered brief comments on the paper.

Raul Fernandez of U.C. Irvine presented the paper on the Border Industrialization Program along the U.S.-Mexican border. According to him, the program was ostensibly designed to solve the problems of unemployment on the Mexican side of the border. Basically, the program involved making use of U.S. tariff schedules to industrialize the border on the Mexican side. The program did not achieve its goals of significantly reducing existing unemployment. According to Fernandez, the Border Industrialization Program represents one aspect of an attempt

by American business to make the Mexican economy more dependent on the American economy.

Victor Nelson Cisneros made the point that most studies of the Border Industrialization Program have looked only at the impact on Mexican workers and have not dealt with the effects of the program on the Chicanos in the U.S.

There was a discussion period after the presentation, but the participants seemed to have some difficulty in focusing in on the topic of the session. The panel would have been strengthened through the presentation of additional material on the topic of internationalism and the border.

On the last day of the conference some of the participants came together as a whole to discuss the association and its plans for the future. The following is a report of that session.

Report on the Sunday Session

The morning and afternoon sessions were run together because of time pressures. There were about 25 people present, and the session began around 10:30 a.m.

The first part of the meeting was taken up with reports from the active focos. Reynaldo Macías and Luis Arroyo reported for the Southern California foco. They gave a background on the origins of the foco. Its roots go back to a study that was done on the incorporation of East Los Angeles as a city, which led the study's participants to think in terms of organizing projects that combined research and action. The 1973 CSSA conference in Las Vegas, New Mexico gave further impetus to such organizing, and a group of people was brought together at UCLA to discuss a research project centered on Los Angeles County. This group, which included participants from San Diego and Irvine as well as L.A., eventually became the Southern California foco. It includes faculty and students from several disciplines and three U.C. campuses. Its activities for 1974 consisted of (1) presentations on their work-in-progress by the members of the foco, so that all would become familiar with the work and approach of each, and (2) organizing the 1974 annual conference of the Association. The agenda for the rest of 1974 is to continue searching for common themes, and if possible to define one or more collective activities in which the members would participate.

Tomás Almaguer reported for the Northern California foco. The foco there consists so far of graduate students in the Sociology Department of UC Berkeley, but they plan to expand their scope. Up to now the foco has been used as a forum for the members to present and examine their work, and they are now reaching the stage of defining concrete cooperative projects. At this point Ron de la Cruz and Nina Genera described a project that they are elaborating in the Bay Area. It involves the creation of an alternative community project for

young Chicanos and Chicanas involving delinquency, and is based on the premise that existing institutions do more harm than good. The chief problems which Ron and Nina are addressing at this point are those of combining theory and practice and of finding resources to carry out their project without being coopted by established institutions.

Ray Burrola reported on Association activities in northern Colorado and on his attempts to build a foco there. He has concentrated on disseminating information, and during the last year an Institute on Oral History and Folklore was held at Colorado State University and co-sponsored by the Association. The Institute was also used as a vehicle for exploring the possibility of coalescing a foco in that area. Some 25 people attended, and there was some hesitancy expressed on the basis of people already being overcommitted in their present activities. Ray plans to continue his efforts there, and wants to establish a long-term oral history and folklore project that could serve as one expression of Association activities in northern Colorado.

The second part of the meeting was devoted to a general evaluation of the progress of the Association and of the conference. With regard to the conference, the opinion was expressed that the papers should be more formally prepared and that there should be a prepared commentary. There was a feeling that the panel topics were good in that they closely related research activities to concrete social problems and political action rather than being abstracted from their social context. Some people also felt that more time should be allowed in the panels for discussion and that there should be some mechanism for interrelating the topics covered and for arriving at conclusions and future directions based on the presentations.

The delegation from the University of Texas at Austin volunteered to host the 1975 annual conference, a suggestion which was approved with enthusiasm.

With regards to the newsletter of the Association, the opinion was expressed that it should be used to report on the projects which the various focos had undertaken, as a way of informing the rest of the Association members. It was felt that we should continue the practice of having the newsletters put out by the focos on a revolving basis.

Guillermo Flores led a discussion on research directions and priorities, indicating his feelings on these matters. He listed as priorities research projects on the class struggle as it affects Chicanos and as it relates to nationalism, and on the political economy of the Southwest. He suggested that the latter topic should be placed in historical perspective going back to before the Mexican-American War, and that it should include how Chicanos have organized historically in response to the changing conditions of their oppression. José Limón emphasized in this connection the need to study the

conceptual and cultural dimension of the Chicano experience, and to relate cultural factors to the structural dimensions which Guillermo described. Thus he felt that high priority should be given to the study of how the Chicano cultural system has reacted to changing structural conditions as a means of defense against oppression.

A discussion followed on the financing of the Association. One proposal that was discussed was that of attempting to secure funds from the Ford Foundation to support the activities of the Association in the coming year, and particularly the 1975 conference. This proposal was eventually tabled after some reservations were expressed that accepting funds from the Ford Foundation might be cooptative. The incoming Coordinating Committee was charged with exploring alternative means of generating resources for the Association.

A new coordinating committee was chosen for the coming year. Its members are:

Ray Burrola, Colorado State University
 Hisauro Garza, Berkeley
 Danny Moreno, Irvine
 Tobias Duran, New Mexico
 Pedro Castillo, Yale
 David Montejano, Berkeley
 Nina Genera, Berkeley
 Laura Arroyo, UCLA
 Rey Macías, UCLA
 José Limón, Texas
 Belinda Herrera, Texas

The current regional focos and their contact persons are:

Northern Colorado

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 Fort Collins, Colorado

Southern California

Rey Macías
 Aztlán Publications
 University of California, Los Angeles
 Los Angeles, California

Mario Barrera
 Department of Political Science
 University of California
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Carlos Muñoz
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 University of California
 Irvine, California

Northern California

Tomás Almaguer
Department of Sociology
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Guillermo Flores
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Stanford University
Stanford, California

Pacific Northwest Area

Teresa de Shepro
Department of Political Science
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Texas

Belinda Herrera
Center for Mexican-American Studies
University of Texas
Austin, Texas

THE AUSTIN MEETINGS, APRIL 11-12, 1975

The University of Texas at Austin Foco is preparing for the third annual conference which is now scheduled for April 11-12, 1975. It will be held at the Joe C. Thompson Conference Center on the University of Texas campus and is being co-sponsored by the Center for Mexican-American Studies. We have allowed for enough rooms and time to accommodate a large number of panels. (Each panel is being allowed a maximum of two hours.) As agreed during last year's conference, it is our expectation that each individual foco is putting together its own panel. We would like to publish the entire program for the conference including panel titles, individual paper titles and readers in the next newsletter which will appear at the of February. We are asking each individual foco to send us a full description of its panel by no later than February 21, 1975. We are also especially asking any individuals who may wish to organize an independent panel on some aspect of the social sciences and the Chicano to also send us their proposed panel program by the February 21st deadline.

With this newsletter we are also sending you reservation forms for the Villa Capri Motel which is within easy walking distance of the conference site. We encourage you to take advantage of this facility since it will make our task of coordination that much easier. It should be clearly understood that each participant is responsible for his/her own expenses for the conference.

PUBLICATIONS

At the last national meeting it was agreed that the papers presented at future conferences should be finished pieces rather than working papers. We need to emphasize this point, because we have distinct hopes of publishing the conference proceedings. During the conference the coordinating committee will meet to formalize this procedure.

Should there be any problems or questions please contact:

José Limón
Armando Gutierrez
Belinda Herrera