

'Official Spanish' Push

Let's look more seriously at movements that advocate taking back the Southwest

by Georgie Anne Geyer

Official English is one of the most controversial issues in America today, even though it simply stands for one more thing we thought did not need to be legislated: that English always has been and is the language of America.

The discussion of a related cultural issue, bilingual education, gets nastier by the day, as proponents stubbornly pro-claim what is essentially impossible: that children will learn English more quickly through speaking Spanish.

These issues, both of them very much with us in this presidential campaign, have taken on forms we could not have dreamed of only a few years ago. They are being used by radical Hispanic activist groups, particularly in California, to work determinedly toward:

(1) the imposition of "Official Spanish" and Southwestern Spanish culture as co-equal with English and American

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culture, and,

(2) moving out Americans who differ ideologically with them from the institutions in our society that would usually be the caretakers of civic America.

Let us create the conditions for the Mexican intifada.

[From a newsletter of the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan]

In case you don't believe me:

- *Voz Fronteriza*, or "Voice of the Frontier," a student publication of the University of California, one that is funded in part through mandatory student fees that the system has earmarked for "student groups," published this during the summer just before a meeting of immigration-control citizens in San Diego:

A large gathering of the most racist-fascist European-settlers will take place.... Their objective is eroding the democratic rights of the majority of people in occupied America.... The convention gives us, the targets, the colonized people, an opportunity to expose the fascist plans of this white

illegal settler population presently occupying Mexicano indigenous lands.

- The same article that came from a group called MECha, the initials for the Spanish for the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan, also said:

Every Mexicano must become an enemy of the colonial settler state. Genocidal attacks against us escalated with the English-only movement. The police are glorified armies of occupation.... This is our homeland.... Let us create conditions for the Mexican intifada.

Now, in case you need a new revolutionary dictionary, "occupied America" is the United States. The "colonized people" are these radicalized Mexican-Americans and related others. The "white illegal settler population" is made up of all white Americans, etc., etc., etc.

For years, I have been aware of these groups and of their "take the Southwest back" attitudes, but until now I did not take them very seriously. Now I do, because the more it is proven that "bilingual education" has failed, the more powerful its lobby becomes. The more Americans realize this country is being balkanized by their own carelessness, the more violent the groups supporting

separation are becoming. Even more, the activists, who first espouse linguistic separation and then physical separation, are now entrenched in the primary institutions, i.e., our schools and universities.

To cite one example, the standard college and high school text in the fashionable "Chicano Studies" classes in California schools and universities is *Occupied America*, by Professor Rodolfo Acuña of Cal State Northridge. In it, he states flatly that "Anglo control of Mexico's northwest territory is an occupation," and that "Chicanos are living in captivity."

Dr. Diana Hull, a respected behavioral scientist living in Santa Barbara and one of the few academics to analyze these

phenomena, has come up with some stunning findings. To understand the real agenda of these individuals and groups, she says, "You need to monitor school board meetings, as we do in Santa Barbara," where increasingly the traditional American civic training and historical thinking is being defeated and degraded.

"Language barriers are an obstacle to defecting," she went on. "It is the preservation of Spanish that is the real concern — not the learning of English." An "appealing counterculture had to be created" by these groups to counter the attractions of American culture, one that "conferred on Hispanics a superior entitlement to the benefits of American society and denigrated 'Anglos' as oppres-

sors and thieves."

Dr. Hull, [see the following article] who spent most of her career as clinical associate professor in the department of psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, uses a provocative term, "Official Spanish." She is saying that, when we talk about "Official English" and "bilingual education," we are really talking about something different from what we think.

We are talking about angry separatists, not weary assimilationists, about people who want to establish Spanish as a co-equal language for their own purposes and break this country down, using the cultural tools we have handed them.

The problem is that she is right. □

Ethno-nationalism, Aztlan and 'Official Spanish'

There's more to the movement than language

by Diana Hull

Proposition 187 was the first major obstacle in the onward march of revolutionary "Raza" rights groups, and it roused them to new heights of hostility and hysterical hyperbole.

Diana Hull, Ph.D., is a behavioral scientist trained in demography and epidemiology. As a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston she became interested in the health effects of immigration. She is co-founder and co-chair of the Santa Barbara County (CA) Immigration Reform Coalition.

Militant Chicanos have been threatening violent insurrection since the 1960s but, by 1994, MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund) had accomplished many of its goals through the courts and provided, at the same time, a quasi-respectable mantle for its ambitious irredentism.

Cultural and "language rights"¹ had already been won and anyone seeking to cross the border illegally, whether apprehended or not, could eventually gain entry.² Every day thousands of Mexicans enter our country at will, and in numbers grossly undercounted by federal authorities. Los Angeles is the second largest Mexican city in the world and Hispanics will soon be a majority in California.

After Proposition 187 passed, Hispanic leaders met in January of 1995 on the campus of the University of California at Riverside. At that meeting Art Torres, now State Chair of the California Democratic Committee,³ declared that Proposition 187 was “*the last gasp of white America;*” and Hermann Baca, founder of the Committee on Chicano Rights, reassured the audience that “historically we are going to win — and take our place as rightful owners of this land.”

The task of indoctrinating Hispanic youth for their role in a United States, *sin fronteras* (without borders) where they are in control, is the mission of MEChA (*Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan*). Their message is broadcast defiantly from hundreds of institutions of secondary and higher education, and nowhere else are Chicano takeover plans expressed more bluntly or brutally.

MEChA's description of the San Diego Republican Convention in *Voz Fronteriza*, their student publication at the University of California, San Diego, combines a stale Marxist style and “Raza” audacity:

In August of 1996, a large gathering of the most racist/fascist European settlers will take place in San Diego, California. Their objective is eroding the democratic rights of the majority of people in occupied America (United States) and supporting the present U. S. policy leading to the genocide and deportation of the Mexicano, African and other oppressed peoples. The convention gives us — the targets, the colonized people — an opportunity to expose the fascist plans of this white illegal settler population, presently occupying Mexicano indigenous lands.

Every Mexicano must become an enemy of the colonial settler state. Genocidal attacks against us escalated with the English-only movement. The police are glorified armies of occupation. The English-speaking settlers are trying to completely marginalize us by denying us a cultural and historical understanding of who we are — and the concentration camps are ready to [be used] against us. This is our homeland. We must create the revolutionary clandestine formations that will defend our people and

lead to our ultimate national liberation struggle and the socialist reunification of Mexico. Let us create the conditions for the Mexican intifada.

According to the University of California, this is sham leftist rhetoric from a tiny group of harmless radical students, testing the limits of free speech and flexing their muscles. We are left to wonder what lethal mix of moral cowardice and dismissive arrogance blocks the “politically correct” university administration from shutting off this “hate” speech, even when it apes the Hizballah of Lebanon.

Like Hizballah and Hamas, MEChA talks of “stolen lands” and is proudly linked to at least a hundred “carbon copy” groups, outside of academia, but with affiliates in most of the immigrant-impacted states. Travis Morales, leader of La Resistencia — with branches in Houston, San Francisco and San Diego — is allied with the “Revolutionary Communist Party.” Morales claims the U.S. government murders Chinese and Haitians at sea and operates “concentration camps” for immigrants.

Anthony Uetzca Murillo, of “Partido Libertad de la Gente” calls for the “socialist reunification of Mexico — to fight for and obtain, by any and all means — the land, liberty and national sovereignty, stolen by the United States government between 1836 and 1838. We do not,” he says, “abide by or respect laws that perpetuate the cultural or linguistic ‘genocide’ of La Raza, which are deliberate acts of war against the Mexican people.”

The common theme is that securing the border is the same as ethnic cleansing — that the “AmeriKKKan” government is like the Nazi regime, that the INS is the same as the Gestapo, that prisons are like concentration camps and secure I.D.s are the equivalent of numbers tattooed on the East European Jews.

A consortium of well-financed groups has been “talking this talk” since the 1960s, but the real question is “where has it gotten them?”

The answer is that in combination with MALDEF's money and legal team, and the Ford Foundation's anti-assimilationist agenda, it has gotten them very, very far indeed. They have big money with which to plead oppression in the courts, the *machismo* to use intimidation, and the shrewdness to employ deception where the stakes

are highest. Their grand plan for “Official Spanish,” as a co-equal language with English, is artfully concealed under the banner of “bilingualism,” and they want the arguments to stay focused on its efficacy.

Chicano politicians insist that bilingualism promotes a transition to fluency in English, when virtually all the research proves overwhelmingly that this is untrue. What bilingualism does is maintain language barriers that keep groups apart. They are an *obstacle to defecting* and that is precisely the point. MALDEF’s mission has always been to strengthen Hispanic group identity and discourage assimilation. So debates about bilingual education are not what they seem. It is the preservation of Spanish that is the real agenda — not the learning of English.

In this effort Chicano politicians have a major ally in the U.S. Department of Education, whose policies encourage ethnic separatism and the blurring of sovereignty. Their La Frontera program envisions U.S.- Mexico integration in a “borderland” region created by NAFTA. This project of the Southwest Educational Laboratory in Austin, Texas, bolsters the agendas of MALDEF and MEChA by opposing the assimilation of minorities by “mainstream societies.”

But “mainstream” Californians are sure to pass the next state voucher initiative, soon to be on the ballot again. A stepped-up flight to private schools will surely follow as public education becomes the most prominent of the many once-treasured institutions to be fatally damaged by the crush of too many immigrants coming too fast.

After the loss of our schools, the territorial, cultural and linguistic revolution that massive immigration brings can no longer be thought of as temporary dislocation that precedes assimilation.

“Official Spanish” has already fared better than “Official English” — even though the bill making English the language of government passed the U.S. House on August 1st. Modest as the bill was, congressional opponents called it dangerous, unnecessary, anti-immigrant, unconstitutional, a violation of equal protection, the new Berlin Wall and mean-spirited.

But the most curious thing about the discussion was that every member of Congress who spoke, on both sides of the debate — Democrats and Republicans — fell all over each other to declare

that they, themselves, were only one generation removed from the glorious immigrant story. They tried to outdo each other in competing for whose relatives had arrived more recently. If any of our representatives were fourth or fifth generation Americans, you can be sure they kept it secret because none was courageous enough to admit it.

It used to be that immigrants would say how grateful they were to be in the United States and that made it easier to welcome them. Our culture was admired then and our proprietary interest in the preservation of English was taken for granted.

Appreciating the Spanish language and its literature is different by far from “Official Spanish,” which is one leg of a three-legged stool called

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“ethno-nationalism.” The other supports are cultural separatism and ever-increasing numbers of people in your particular ethnic subgroup.

Being able to continue their population growth through immigration is essential for Hispanics, now firmly on their way to taking power through the ballot or other means. But for the “Raza” groups, taking control will be meaningless if they become, in the end, English-speaking, assimilated, Mexican-Americans.⁴

So, in addition to numerical superiority, a fierce ethnic identity is essential and the vehicle to accomplish that is Chicano Studies. Since American culture is so seductive, equally seductive lures were invented to counter its influence, i.e. a manufactured history that conferred upon Hispanics, not just an equal, but a superior entitlement to the benefits of American society and one that denigrated Anglos as oppressors and thieves, who stole lands that rightfully belonged to Hispanics.

This new history teaches that the glorious empires of the Aztec, the Olmec and the Maya

were more accomplished civilizations than our own — an approach identical to that of racist Professor Leonard Jeffries⁵ who invented a black history that he incorporated into the City College of New York's African Studies curriculum.

MEChA declares:

*Columbus did not discover America. We of Cem-Anahuac, the one world in Nahuatl, were the most advanced societies known to man — beyond the comprehension of supposedly civilized Europe.*⁶

This is the central message to young Hispanics — that they are the true indigenous people of the Southwestern United States — renamed Aztlan, a land that includes California, Texas, Arizona, New

“Where the number of immigrants reaches a certain critical mass, American culture is gradually disappearing.”

Mexico, Colorado and parts of Washington state.⁷

Professor Rudolpho Acuna, of California State University at Northridge, the fiery author of *Occupied America*, the standard college and high school text in Chicano Studies, writes that “Anglo control of Mexico's northwest territory is an occupation” and that “Chicanos are not able to obtain justice because they are controlled and living in captivity.”

Now, these statements are not the ravings of a radical student club like MEChA. These ideas are the organizing ethos of the whole Chicano Studies enterprise and are taught in the high schools. At the college level, Chicano Studies departments offer a variety of subjects that have been given the “Chicano treatment.” At most universities these offerings take up pages in the catalog of courses.

This separate and parallel curriculum has gone virtually unchallenged by the university establishment, which pacifies ethnic activists by agreeing to their demands and then walls them off in segregated departments. Firmly ensconced, Chicano Studies faculty work closely with MEChA (which means the “fuse” in Spanish) and support,

and likely encourage, their threatening and anti-Anglo propaganda.

In 1996, several members of our immigration reform group (Santa Barbara County Immigration Reform Coalition) challenged the content of a high school Chicano studies text at a school board meeting. The Chicano activist community came out in force, physically “rushed” the podium before the police were called and then circulated a recall petition for the school board member who put the item on the agenda.

There is ample evidence that Chicano activists are linked in a national network. (For a partial list, see THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, Vol. VI, No. 4, Summer 1996.) Any threat to “Official Spanish,” Chicano Studies, or open immigration is fought with language and images appropriated from the holocaust. Our school board appearance generated volumes of mail to the newspapers. Not only Chicano Studies teachers, but principals and administrators, accused us of “book-burning” and wrote, “It's like Kristallnacht!”

The MEChA organization, the concept of Aztlan, and the term Chicano were all created in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Gregory Ochoa, a UCLA Professor, believes that the Chicano scheme called “El Plan de Aztlan” seriously envisions the forceful takeover of the Southwest United States. Although Aztlan is often referred to as a “mythical” state, it is also a rallying symbol that is intentionally ambiguous — a composite concept that is the very “heartbeat” of Hispanic ethno-nationalism.

It is grandiose to believe that the United States is too big, too strong or too rich to be destabilized. If the separatist threat is not recognized soon, the predictions of U.C. Berkeley's Mario Berrera will come true and the United States will be divided into ethnic autonomous regions.⁷

This has already happened in parts of the Permian Basin in Texas where Hispanics have become a numerical majority. Professor Colbert Rhodes lives and teaches there, tracking the changes that have taken place. Where the number of immigrants reaches a certain critical mass, American culture is gradually disappearing. Mexican-American school children now regard U.S. history, Rhodes says, as the white man's history, with no relevance for them, and multiculturalism has been replaced by an attitude

insisting that no common culture is possible or desirable. In classrooms in Midland, Texas, where Mexican origin students are a majority, pictures of presidents of Mexico hang on the walls. Little, if any, American culture remains.

So what we are doing is mindlessly promoting and reproducing in the United States all the conditions for ethnic-separatist conflict. Some Washington insiders acknowledge this privately. *Atlantic Monthly* contributor Benjamin Schwartz says that when ethnic conflicts surface in other parts of the world, the U.S. foreign policy community becomes extraordinarily anxious. It reminds them, he says, that the country is fragmenting in the same way and is likely to suffer the same fate.

If historian Barbara Tuchman were alive today, she would surely add one more chapter to her book, *The March of Folly*. In acquiescing to cultural suicide, promoted by an immigration policy opposed to our own self-interest — and this is Tuchman's definition of folly — we surely equal or exceed in blindness and conceit all the other examples she writes about.

John Adams said of Britain before the American revolution that “The pride and vanity of that nation is a delirium that perverts everything.” In our time, the United States thinks it is beyond the possibility of ruin — somehow magically insulated from the lessons of history.

“The American democracy is long-suffering and slow in rousing itself” wrote Scottish historian James Bryce in 1891, in *The American Commonwealth*. But it is past time to awaken because being too slow may be the same as being too late.

NOTES

¹ The most important “language rights” cases won by MALDEF were a federal Court of Appeals decision in

1974 in *Serna v. Portales Municipal School District* and *Gomez v. Illinois Board of Education*, in 1987. MALDEF also prevailed in the more recent *Vasquez v. San Jose Unified School District* case. Here, in addition to “language rights” the issues were the alleged unequal allocation of public school resources, unfair testing and tracking of students, and the elimination of the grouping of students by ability.

² From “Stemming the Tide: Assessing the Deterrent Effects of the Immigration Reform and Control Act,” Katherine M. Donato, Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey in *Demography*, Vol 29, No. 2, May 1992.

³ Former State Senator Art Torres resigned in May, 1996, from a firm administering a government minority assistance program. According to the Associated Press, based on internal Commerce Department documents, Torres received \$150,000 a year from these program funds and there was no evidence that Torres did the work for which he was paid. *Santa Barbara News Press*, September 7, 1996.

⁴ I am indebted to Professor Colbert Rhodes of the University of Texas of the Permian Basin for sharing his ideas and unpublished manuscripts reporting his research on cultural change in West Texas.

⁵ Chairman of Black Studies at CCNY, Jeffries claims that black Egyptians, not the Greeks, were responsible for the achievements of western society. Jeffries teaches that the ice age caused white genes to be deformed, while black genes were enhanced “by the value system of the sun.” From “Learning About the Sun and Ice with Dr. Jeffries,” *The Campus*, CCNY, April 26, 1988, p.13.

⁶ From a MEChA flyer originating at California State University at Northridge. From a collection of such material gathered by CCIR (California Coalition for Immigration Reform).

⁷ See “Beyond Aztlan: Ethnic Autonomy in Comparative Perspective,” by Mario Berrera, *Praeger*, New York, 1988.