



8TH FLOOR CHICANO HOUSE WHITE-WASHED

Since last year the UW administration has been working on the renovation of Terry Lander dormitories. But when mexicano students returned to 8th floor Lander, they found white, blank walls where before there had been black farmworker eagles painted all the way down the halls.

Gone too is a painting of La Cara de las Tres Culturas that was in front of the elevator. New students may not even know that these symbols of our struggle and our culture are missing.

HISTORY OF CHICANO HOUSE

Chicano House was won by the students in 1970. On September 16th, Mexican Independence Day, forty or fifty people occupied and barracaded themselves on 2nd Floor Lander. Students demanded a living area reflecting Mexican culture and Mexican food in the dining hall.

The University administration called in the police and the students fought for their demands. Many were arrested, some spent several days in jail.

The first year of Chicano House had an entire floor filled with Mexicanos, the majority from the Yakima Valley.

Chicano House served as an organizing place for the newly started student group, M.E.C.H.A. Each year new leadership was selected and tested at MECHA meeting on 8th Floor Lander.

EOP counselors recruited student to this living area as a way of maintaining solidarity for the first large enrollment of Mexicans in the 110 year history of the University of Washington.

MENUDO EVERYDAY

It was this political struggle that gave us Mexican entrees and tortillas every evening of the week, with frijoles y arroz as a basic staple. The señora that cooks

all this food, takes the weekend off so there is no Mexican food on Saturdays or Sundays. There is never any menudo, the food-service administration says, because it is too much trouble to make. The Aztlán Tavern (75th and Lake City NE) offers good menudo everyday.

In the Lander dining hall there is a mural depicting farmworkers, prisoners and how many mexicanos died in Vietnam. We must ask: & will this mural also be white-washed?

HIGH OFF THE HOG

Next to jalapeños, menudo is the life-blood of Mexican people. The main ingredient of menudo is tripe, the meat from the belly of a pig. Rich folk would not dream of eating tripe, so the butcher sells this lower part of the animal to the poor. This is where Blacks get the expression, "living high off the hog." Since Africans in the U.S. are mostly poor and working-class, they too have their pig's feet dish.

Oscar Zeta Acosta, in his novel, Revolt of the Cockroach People, has an example of food mixing with our struggle:

Like a disorderly army, the students and the Chicano Militants pick themselves up from the street and walk toward the sidewalk crowd behind the bullhorn. I am caught up with them. I march along, looking for Gilbert and Risco. A thousand young Chicanos and I are marching together away from Garfield. The cops remain behind.

"Viva Zapata!" through the bullhorn.

"¡Que Viva!" roars the crowd.

"Viva Pancho Villa!"

"¡Qué Viva!"

"Viva Cesar Chavez!"

"¡Qué Viva!"

"Viva Corky Gonzales!"

"¡Qué Viva!"

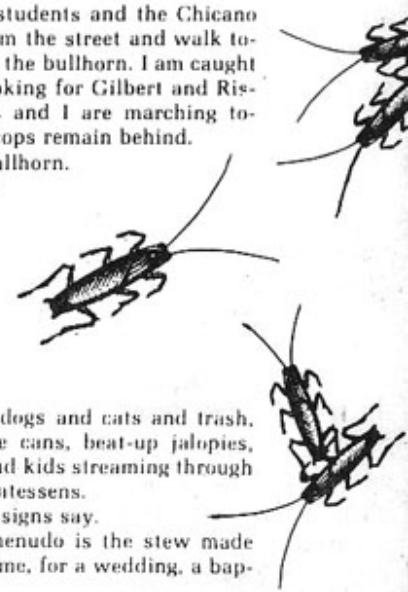
"Viva Reis Lopez Tijerina!"

"¡Qué Viva!"

We swell through streets of dogs and cats and trash, narrow jungle paths of garbage cans, beat-up jalopies, mudholes and dogshit. A thousand kids streaming through a barrio of palm trees and Mexicatessens.

"MENUUDO EVERYDAY," the signs say.

And then I remember that menudo is the stew made only on holidays, at Christmas time, for a wedding, a bap-



tism and on those days that the fathers have tripe, corn and lime for the morning-after hangovers. But here they make it everyday. It would make a good title for a short story. Not just on Saturday and Sunday, but everyday.

In the McMahon dining hall there are several mural designs. One is chican-indio and depicts the beginning of our history and the four seasons. There is also an Indian and African mural, both of which are unfinished. Will these also be white-washed? to reflect the recent drop in African, Mexican and Indian enrollment.

ANALYSIS: SUPERFICIAL CULTURE

Chicano House was moved from the 2nd Floor to 8th Floor in 1971. The walls were mechanically painted with red and green stripes to symbolize the Mexican flag. This was superficial culture being fed to us by the system. It is like the Taco Time cactus trying to make us feel Mexican while we buy U.S. food. We reject this totally and demand that we put our own murals. Chicano House should belong to mexicano students, but like a piñata without any candy inside, 8th Floor Lander has finally been broken open. Underneath the white-wash is the same racist university that does not want Mexicans or our culture.

Less and less mexicano students live on 8th Floor each quarter. Many are pushed out of school with big loans they can't pay or with no financial aid at all.

Others, if they make it through classes, move off 8th floor because of the excess of drugs, parties and beer. Chicano House was intended to be a cultural fortress for Mexican students, but it has only been another barrio, controlled by a university that was not made for us. But since we are here, they want to limit us, keep us oppressed and insure our failure.

NATIONAL TREND

The white-wash of murals is not just happening here. In Monterrey Park, California, our people lost a mural they had fought for and painted on the campus library.

It is important to know that la raza of Monterrey Park were able to get their mural by first getting a Chicano Studies committee on Chicano murals. Then Chicano Studies developed a class on Chicano murals.

Though there are several Mexican muralists in the Northwest, they have not been recognized or supported by El Centro de Estudios Chicanos at the University of Washington. Neither has Chicano Studies developed any classes at the University.



In fact, the best courses on Chicanos are taught under Romance Languages and Literature, not Chicano Studies! In this and future articles we propose to examine the reasons for this lack of development of Chicano Studies in the ten-year history of Mexican students at the University of Washington.

LA CARA DE LAS TRES CULTURAS

OTHER MURALS THE UNIVERSITY MAY NOT WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT

There is a huge concrete mural which is hidden high above eye-level on the 2nd Floor of Kane Hall. It was painted by the famous Mexican muralist, Pablo O'Higgins. El Centro de la Raza pressured and negotiated with the University to have it displayed at all. Because of the content, the University wanted to keep the mural in storage.

O'Higgins painted this mural during the 1930's when there was a strong communist movement among U.S. workers. The mural shows both men and women working and the struggle of Black people against racism. The mural shows the Soviet Union as the main leader against Nazism and the Soviet Constitution of the first workers' state.

El Centro de la Raza (2624 24th Ave. South, Seattle) celebrated its seventh year with a new mural and its walls are covered with paintings done by local mexicano high school students.

The erasing of our history of struggle at the University is not an accident, but part of a larger move to cut out Financial Aid, Chicano Studies and Chicano counseling programs. We must examine critically our history and not just try to keep what little we have, but resist attacks and prepare for future struggle.

