

**Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. "Let All Of Them Take Heed": Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981. Mexican American Monograph Series #11. (Austin: University of Texas Press) xix, 256 pp., \$25.00.**

It is well known among educational researchers that pervasive segregation of blacks and underrepresentation of Mexican Americans in higher education continues to this day, although these practices and policies violate federal law. A recent study by the Tomas Rivera Center for Policy Studies found that the state of Texas failed during the five years of its Equal Educational Opportunity Plan for Higher Education to eliminate the disparities in its system and improve the educational experiences of minorities. The structural dimensions of educational policy have a long and tumultuous history. Moreover, the notion that Mexican American parents care little for their children's education lingers in the social attitudes of most Americans and in particular, policymakers. This factor exists today, in part, because social science has ignored the educational experiences of Mexican American students and the response to these experiences by the community.

Guadalupe San Miguel, an associate professor in the Graduate School of Education and Department of Chicano Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has taken an important step toward rectifying this situation. In this study, San Miguel "looks at Mexican Americans as active agents in history and documents the manner in which they promoted education within their community over a period of fifty years." He addresses this quest by examining the functions of Mexican American organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in its struggle to increase educational opportunities for Mexican Americans in Texas. He also traces the work of the American G.I. Forum and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) in this particular struggle and the work of Dr. George I. Sanchez, among other notable individuals.

What makes this work of great importance to anyone concerned with understanding the experience of Mexican Americans both in and out of the educational arena is the use of primary sources. San Miguel also interviewed many of the participants who lived through this struggle and who continue to pursue this quest. The work makes it quite clear that much remains to be accomplished in the area of educational research. As a result, San Miguel is able to give insight as to the strategies utilized by these organizations to change the system and provide better opportunities for Mexican American students.

San Miguel states that the campaign had limited impact on public schools in Texas. For example, "They eliminated most of the exclusionary practices in education and increased their access to all levels of the educational system, especially to secondary and post secondary institutions." Nevertheless, by the 1980s, Mexican Americans were still

found in segregated schools and denied equal access to special education programs, all of which can be documented by the failure of the state of Texas to meet compliance with its own civil rights mandate.

One important factor in the limited success of the campaign for educational equality had to do with the “political impotence” of the Mexican American community in Texas and the Southwest in general. And this is the lesson to be learned: political power in the halls of policymaking as well as organized grassroots organizations will be necessary for successful social change. This struggle will be part of our lives for years to come.

—Carlos F. Ortega  
Sonoma State University

**James L. Sexton. *Campesino: The Diary of a Guatemalan Indian*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985) 448 pp., \$29.95.**

Often political violence in Guatemala is analyzed as if it were identical to political violence in other Central American countries. On account of the desire to simplify this political and economical reality in the public debate, there is a tendency to see the conflict as the result of the international rivalries between East and West. The literature of this conflict deals primarily with the view from government officials and the opinion of the representatives of the transnationals economically involved in the area.

In most accounts, a great emphasis is placed on the role that Cuba and Nicaragua have in the internal affairs of Guatemala and the need for U.S. direct or indirect intervention to bring about political and economic stability in the region, even when the highest church authorities have spoken loudly and clearly about the irreparable harm that military intervention is having on the Guatemalan Indian cultures.

What risks are there for the largest concentrated population of indigenous people in Central America, the 3.5 million Guatemalan Indians? How are their communities threatened and destroyed? These are some of the concerns of James L. Sexton and other ethnic studies scholars who appreciate the irreplaceable value of these indigenous cultures.

One of the most interesting books written about the Maya Indians of Guatemala, this fascinating work is unique in the sense that it is written in the form of a biography and presents the views of how all these conflicts affects those at the bottom. The book is narrated from an Indian perspective.