

EDITOR'S CORNER

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ETHNIC STUDIES LEADERSHIP?

NAIES and its journal, *Explorations in Ethnic Studies*, from their inception have tried to address the question of leadership within Ethnic Studies. A quick survey from a national perspective leaves one with a fear that no one is providing much in the way of leadership. The same situation seems to prevail at the state and local levels. Yet, more and more prominence is given to the multiethnic makeup and experience of American society. There is an obvious inconsistency involved in this situation. Why is there no national policy on ethnic studies or on the crucial issues facing American society generated by interethnic/racial conflict?

True, the Ethnic Heritage Studies Program under H.E.W. has been in existence for several years, and the program has a National Advisory Council; however, the resources provided have been so minimal that beyond awarding relatively small grants to a small number of applicants (sixty-five for fiscal year 1979), the program has done very little in the way of providing leadership or guidance. There are only three professional journals devoted specifically to ethnic studies. The number of colleges and universities with ethnic studies programs remains small and generally uncoordinated.

By comparison, the Canadian government appears as a shining star in the North. A Minister of State for Multiculturalism, within the Department of the Secretary of State, provides a focal point for leadership. The Canadian government's official policy of multiculturalism gives reality to an increased awareness and appreciation of the ethnic plurality of Canadian society. The publications program of the multiculturalism program far surpasses anything done in the United States.

NAIES as an organization is in a unique position to have a positive impact in providing leadership. Members need to take every opportunity presented to lobby in behalf of ethnic studies. The organization needs to develop a stand or position paper on what must be done in ethnic studies. The demographic reality of American society demands that we do more to promote ethnic studies as a viable tool of increased understanding. The American experience clearly indicates ethnic groups have the will to exist and to preserve their cultural values and heritages. The myth of the melting pot needs to be given up once and for all time.