

## masa bulletin

IN CALIFORNIA, where just a few years ago American Studies was essentially unknown, there are now a gang of majors, courses and programs. They vary enormously: at the University of California at Irvine, American Studies is part of a comparative cultures program which sounds intriguing. At some of the state colleges, the major has been introduced because of a state law requiring education majors to show an academic concentration. Too little thought, it seems to me, has been devoted to making such programs cohere. Many education majors transfer in from junior colleges, and must squeeze in American Studies "majors" on top of education requirements in the two years remaining. In my experience, they arrive almost totally untrained, and, since they have not even a smattering of courses dealing with the United States, are not really ready for "synthetic" American Studies work. High-grade counseling on the junior college level would help immensely by steering them into courses which would be of use in this later American Studies work. Most told me they heard of American Studies only after they arrived at the college campus in their third year.

Specialized and flexible American Studies programs tailored to the sort of teaching they plan to do would help, also. Let a student who plans to teach history in a ghetto school build a major of minority group studies, sociology, ethnic history, and so forth. The California colleges have deceptively solid faculties, but lines of communication seem undeveloped: the good nineteenth-century intellectual historian tends not to know the nineteenth-century ideas man in English. Lively students told to "inventory" the faculty resources available to them and to suggest coherent programs could help not only themselves but their schools, which badly need the sorts or personal and professional ties we at state universities take for granted. At present, a few American Studies majors "luck out": planning to major in history, English, sociology or some other field relevant to American

Studies, they arrive better prepared, discover American Studies and graduate enthusiastic about their major. It shouldn't be a matter of luck. And since the California system is huge and by necessity bureaucratic, there is only a limited amount that faculty can do to make a student's college experience more coherent: counselling of the formal sort is largely perfunctory. Student unrest in that state is partly the result of student frustration with a system too big to comprehend—too big, indeed, to comprehend itself. A constructive American Studies student organization devoted to frank and early counselling could work wonders, and intelligent American Studies departments would find it a boon to their own planning and curriculum development.

Hopeful signs in the junior colleges of that state: here and there, good American Studies men such as Ed Kregel at El Camino College have set up imaginative American Studies courses, and report good results. Student carry-over into the senior colleges could establish the lines of communication needed to get things together.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, long a slumbering giant so far as American Studies is concerned, is rumbling with creative ideas, among them American Studies for teachers, the American Studies major tailored to the student's career plans. More on this as Lincoln develops its plans.

HIDING IN MEXICO on a Fulbright, your editor is joyously out of touch with the day-to-day operations of the journal. A rather sentimental letter from Ms. Mary Jane Harmon points out that this is the last issue with which she is to be associated: now a Master's student completing her course work in the department, Mary Jane has been a student assistant of one sort or another for six years, the last several as Graduate Editorial Assistant. Six years is half the life

(continued on page 210)

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(continued from page 4)

of *American Studies* to date! *American Studies* involves its Graduate Editorial Assistant in all aspects of scholarly journal publication, from dealing with contributors to production, promotion, grant-chasing and proofreading. Tenure alone would suggest her current capacity, but Mary Jane has more than experience on her side: she's bright, sensitive and hard-working. Hopefully she'll turn out to be wrong about this being her last issue: we expect to see good articles from her once the degree is in her pocket and she's off teaching somewhere.

HER LETTER says also, "I feel that we should give a special note of thanks to Charles Chatfield, guest editor for this issue. He has worked harder and more diligently than any other guest editor I have had contact with. I think that the general excellence of this issue can be attributed to his ideas, suggestions and groundwork. . . . [He has made] my job much easier and more enjoyable." My own dealings with Professor Chatfield before I left Lawrence last June confirm her judgment; *American Studies* is indebted to its guest.

AFTER YEARS of shuttling business matters back and forth between Lawrence

and our Executive Secretary's office, we have decided to centralize. From now on, both editorial and business matters can be transacted through *American Studies*, 1135 Maine Street, Lawrence, Kansas 66044.

OUR SPECIAL ISSUES work splendidly in the classroom, and can be adopted as textbooks in the usual way. With our business office now located in the same place as the editorial office, we fill orders fast: bundles of "Perceptions of Black America" (XI, 2) or "Peace Movements in America" (XIII, 1) generally hit the mail the day we receive the bookstore order.

APPLICATIONS for senior Fulbright-Hays awards for lecturing and research during 1973-1974 in over 75 foreign countries will be accepted in the spring of 1972. American Studies people who are U.S. citizens and have college teaching experience are invited to complete a simple registration form, available from: Senior Fulbright-Hays Program, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C., 20418. Registrants will receive the detailed announcement of available awards as soon as it is issued.