

Chavez, Militants

Editor of The Bee — Sir: Recently an item of significant importance occurred within the Mexican-American movement. Cesar Chavez, the nonviolent leader of the United Farm Workers Union, publicly supported the Chicano students at Fresno State College in their fight to retain their La Raza Studies instructors. This is significant because Chavez has steadfastly refused to endorse any other political group, or any political candidate, for any issues except opposition to the Vietnam war.

To many it must seem a paradox that a man whose name is mentioned simultaneously with Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi in the nonviolent struggle of the poor should support the so-called "militants." But there is no paradox in the mind of the Huelgista, the farm union members. This is because Huelgistas and Chicano students have marched together, boycotted stores together, shouted together on the farm picket lines and have even gone to jail together. That is why the union by unanimous vote directed Cesar to support the students.

This alliance is significant because it is intellectual and spiritual. There exists a true affinity between the two groups. The purpose of La Raza Studies is to serve the Mexican-American community in the valley. The alliance of the Chicano students and the Huelgistas is evidence of the success of the style of La Raza Studies at Fresno State. This style was chosen by Chicano students.

It is important to understand the La Raza Studies staff did not create the Chicano students. The Chicano students came first. It was they who fought for their program and then recruited and screened prospective instructors. Finally, it was the students who recommended to the college that Eliezer Risco be selected to head the program.

It may seem illogical and even revolutionary for students to select their own instructors. The students demanded this right based on the reasoning that for too long and with too little success the wealthy have been telling the poor what their problems are. La Raza Studies is the poor's educational program. One concept in La Raza Studies is that the wealthy are in fact the problem of the poor. Huelgistas accept this concept. Karl Falk cannot.

Cesar Chavez is very careful not to make a statement unless he is certain performance will follow, albeit require years to occur. His decision to support the Chicano students publicly was based on his judgment that the student fight for an educational program relevant to their people will continue until achieved. Mexican-Americans can look forward to a persistent, dynamic and constructive movement sparked by the Huelgista-Chicano alliance.

ALBERTO NIETO.

Clavis.