
EDITOR'S FOREWORD

With this issue, *LARR* begins its twenty-sixth year of publication. This anniversary also coincides with the appointment of Jon M. Tolman, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of New Mexico, as Associate Editor, replacing Enylton de Sá Rego, who left to join the faculty of the University of Michigan. We are most grateful to Professor de Sá Rego for his service to *LARR* and wish him well in his new position. Professor Tolman is a welcome replacement, and he will find our literary submissions a suitably challenging task.

The discriminating reader will notice also that the start of *LARR*'s second quarter-century has been marked by two changes in format. The volume number has been converted to arabic figures due to a lack of space for longer roman numerals on the spine of the cover. A more significant change is that notes will no longer be placed at the end of each article but at the bottom of each page. This improvement has been facilitated by computerization of the composition process. Readers who once spent time flipping back and forth between the text and endnotes of such famous note writers as Guillermo O'Donnell and the late Carlos Díaz Alejandro will now be able to savor asides at the bottom of the page. The editors, however, will do their utmost to see that *LARR* authors do not yield entirely to the seductive possibilities of real footnotes.

This step forward into the computer age is, of course, also a step backward to an era when composition was so inexpensive that Chicago-style footnotes were standard in academic publishing. The sense of déjà vu that this coincidence inspires can serve as a timely reminder that practices and institutions taken for granted, even those as straightforward as the conventions of academic publishing, may not endure. Publishing is being changed by more than computerization: buyouts, merg-

ers, bankruptcies, and other market-related phenomena are transforming its institutional character.

LARR itself remains in good condition, with a record paid circulation of over four thousand, a strong relationship with the healthy Latin American Studies Association, continuing institutional support from the University of New Mexico, and a dedicated staff. The same cannot be said of the general state of academic publishing in Latin American studies in the United States, however, or of publishing in any field of foreign area studies. The mortality rate of academic journals, especially new ones, is rising. Even more serious is the precipitous decline in the publication of research monographs in book form, a consequence of the same vicious circle of rising prices, declining markets, and bankrupt publishers that was experienced in Latin America following the debt crisis.

Academic research libraries are proving to be victims of the downward spiral and also contributors to it. As acquisition costs escalate beyond the means of collection budgets, libraries around the United States are canceling journal subscriptions and buying fewer books, selecting on a title-by-title basis rather than through blanket order plans. This approach in turn reduces the market for books, forcing publishers to raise unit prices. At the same time, the sharp decline in the value of the dollar in international currency markets amounts to a de facto budget cut of major dimensions for libraries that collect materials from foreign countries. These materials, essential to serious foreign area research, are increasingly difficult to obtain in the United States and often even more difficult to locate subsequently in the country of origin.

The institutional foundation of academic publishing on foreign areas in the United States, namely university-based foreign area studies programs, appears at first glance sufficiently strong and diverse to provide a safety net for academic publishing, despite current problems. The flagship programs of this type are the ninety-four university-based foreign area centers or consortia that receive federal recognition and funding under Title VI of the Higher Education Act. These foreign area centers, covering Asia, Africa, Canada, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, the Pacific, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and International Studies, probably represent the finest institutions of their kind in the world. The faculty associated with these centers generate much of the world's foreign area research. The foreign area collections of their university libraries support that research and provide a large part of the market for the publications that result.

Unfortunately, the survival of these foreign area centers cannot be taken for granted, despite their remarkable level of achievement. They are in large measure the product of Title VI of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and its predecessor, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which provided financial incentives and national prestige to those universities

willing to develop competitive foreign area programs. The cost of these programs has always vastly exceeded the federal support. Academic departments, which emphasize disciplinary priorities, tend to see interdisciplinary area studies as a kind of academic crabgrass stealing nutrients from their turf. Without Title VI incentives, many if not all institutions will succumb to departmental pressures, reducing or eliminating their investment in foreign area programs.

The Higher Education Act of 1986 expires this year. Unless Title VI is retained as part of the HEA reauthorization, federal support for foreign area studies will come to a sudden halt. The possibility of this draconian outcome cannot be discounted. A recent report by the Congressional Research Service went so far as to provide seven specific rationales for terminating Title VI, suggesting that it could be dropped entirely without harming the U.S. foreign area studies effort.

The actual outcome of a withdrawal of federal incentives to universities, when combined with other negative factors, is easy to predict. A nationwide downgrading or elimination of major foreign area programs would lead immediately to the collapse of employment opportunities for area specialists, lower student enrollments, further library cutbacks, and the virtual demise of academic publishing on foreign area topics.

Such a disastrous outcome can and should be avoided. It should be remembered that federal support for international education did not originate in the late 1950s from some act of bureaucratic benevolence or imperialistic investment. It was achieved by the same academic leadership that organized the foreign area studies movement in the United States. The institutions that are characteristic of Latin American studies today, such as SALALM, CLASP, LARR, and LASA, were all established in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the result of initiatives by Latin Americanists. All were scholars, but some were in universities (like Kal Silvert at Dartmouth and New York University), some in foundation posts (such as Bryce Wood at the Ford Foundation and the Social Science Research Council), and some in government jobs (for example, Howard Cline at the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress). Latin Americanists such as these, working with colleagues in other foreign area fields, succeeded in persuading the administrative and congressional leadership of the time that international education was too important to be left entirely to the whims of the academic marketplace. The immediate fruit of this effort was NDEA Title VI, while the longer-term result was the development of organized foreign area programs in many major U.S. universities.

The achievement represented by Title VI is obviously imperiled and must be defended in the Congress in the months ahead by area studies associations, foreign area centers, and universities. A strong case must be made for retaining current provisions of Title VI, including those that have yet to be funded, such as the authorizations allowing federal

support for the collection of foreign periodicals (Section 607) and for summer language institutes (Section 605). The primary obstacle to be overcome is, as might be expected, apathy. Area studies associations, foreign area centers, universities, and faculty are not very good at lobbying, generally sharing the assumption that someone else is doing the work.

The emergence of some new coalitions offers the opportunity for greater initiative from the academic community in facing the current challenges. Groups such as the Council of Title VI National Resource Center Directors (CNRC) and the National Council of Area Studies Associations (NCASA) may succeed in mobilizing their constituencies more effectively than in the past. In the end, the success of their efforts will depend on the ability to deliver well-timed and sufficiently numerous expressions of support for Title VI from the grass roots, in this case, the academic community.

Even if the effort to rescue Title VI succeeds, some will argue that this program is inadequate to meet the intellectual and educational challenges posed by a rapidly changing world order. The recent report of CAFLIS (the Coalition for the Advancement of Foreign Languages and International Studies) calls for redefining and enlarging the federal role in international education by establishing a national endowment for international education comparable to the National Endowment for the Humanities. This proposal is at least temporarily hostage to the Middle East crisis and the U.S. budget deficit. Such an initiative, however, is a reminder that the health of foreign area and international studies in the United States leaves much to be desired.

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