

UC BERKELEY'S ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

50 YEARS OF GROWING PAINS & GAINS

L LING-CHI WANG

During the late 1960s, African American studies, Asian American studies, Chicano studies, and Native American studies programs were creating a lasting and profound impact on teaching and research in institutions of higher education across the nation, fundamentally changing how Americans understood their history and identity. Emerging at the time of the Civil Rights movement, anti-Vietnam War protests, and counter-culture movements, the beginning stages of these programs in 1969 were traumatic and painful: they were established by the university administration only after two months of militant protest and a lengthy—and at times, violent—strike, led by the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), a coalition of students of color.

What follows is a brief account of what Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley (UCB) and one of its four programs, Asian American Studies, encountered as new interdisciplinary fields of study being established at a leading research university that had systematically excluded minority experiences and their contributions from its teaching and research since its beginnings. Founding Ethnic Studies was a monumental and continuing project undertaken by a small handful of untrained but determined young scholars in a historic first step towards diversifying American studies in an institution of higher education in the U.S.

ASIAN AMERICAN POLITICAL ALLIANCE AND THE RISE OF THE ASIAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT

The historical convergence of two separate developments in the late 1960s—one on the UCB campus and the other in San Francisco Chinatown—helped generate what eventually became known as the Asian American movement and the establishment of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies in the fall of 1969. On campuses such as UCB and San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University or SF State), self-awareness and political consciousness among Asian American college students were on the rise, under the influence of the anti-war and African American Civil Rights movements. At around the same time, a parallel but different kind of political consciousness was also erupting: growing alienation and anger were brewing among the teenagers and young adults in San Francisco Chinatown, where they realized their community needs and problems were being ignored, and their personal and future growth was shut out by persistent racial isolation, discrimination, and failed leadership.

First, the awakening and active participation of Asian American students in the TWLF strikes at UCB and SF State shattered the popular stereotype of Asian Americans as the quiet, hard-working, docile, and subservient “model minority,” who, unlike other minorities, were willing and able to help themselves in spite of racial exclusion and discrimination. These students also began to understand the racial dimension of American involvement in the escalating

Asian Am
“East” is a



ASIAN-AMERICAN POLITICAL ALLIANCE

We Asian-Americans believe that American society has been, and still is, fundamentally a racist society, and that historically we have accommodated ourselves to this society in order to survive.

We Asian-Americans believe that heretofore we have been relating to white standards of acceptability, and affirm the right of self-definition and self-determination.

We Asian-Americans support all non-white liberation movements and believe that all minorities in order to be truly liberated must have complete control over the political, economic, and educational institutions within their respective communities.

We Asian-Americans oppose the imperialistic policies being pursued by the American government.

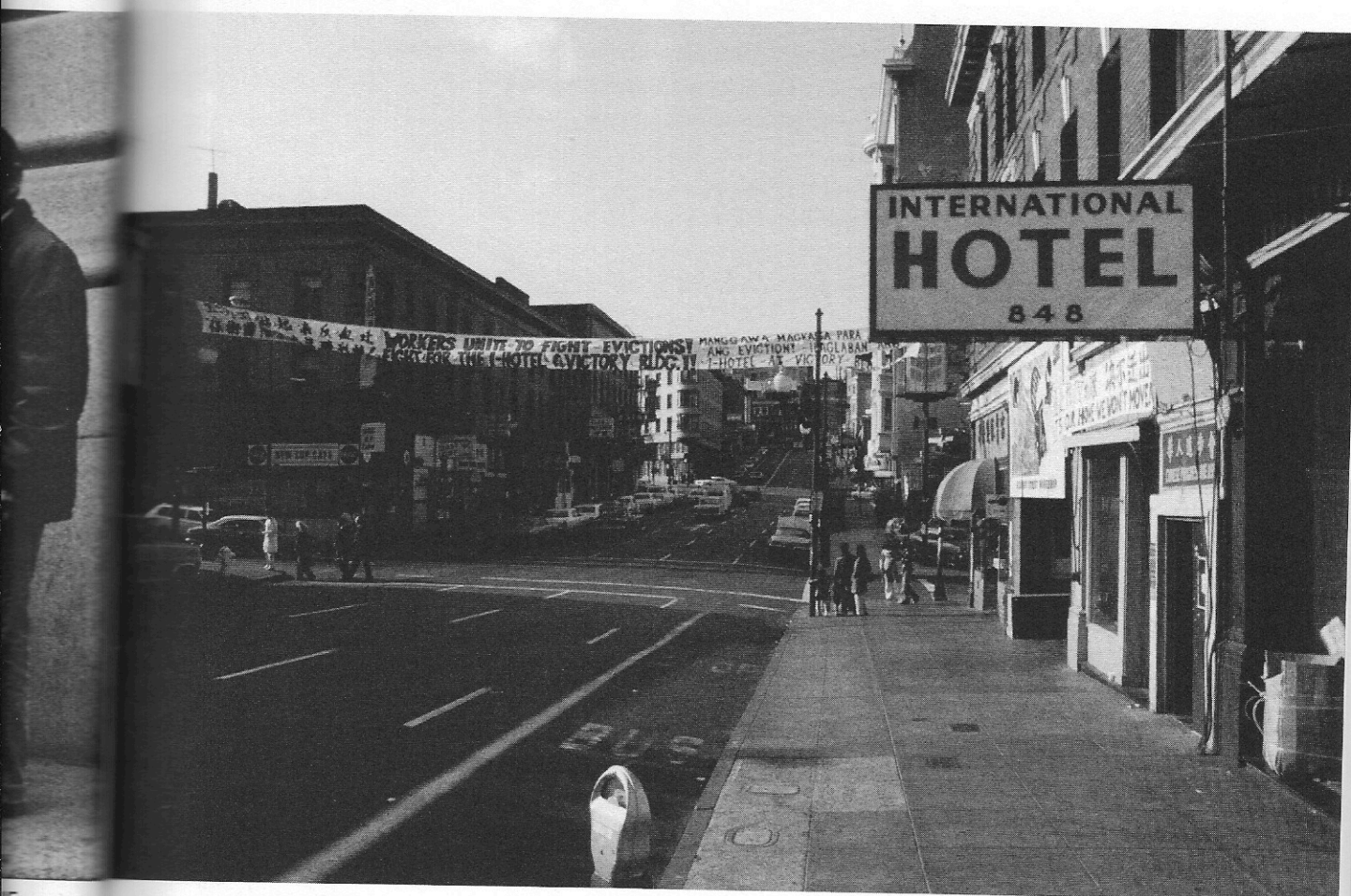
COURTESY OF ETHNIC STUDIES LIBRARY, UC BERKELEY

Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) statement of purpose, April 1968. The character "East" is adopted by AAPA.



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE LOUIE, WEI MIN SHE
AND ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER PHOTOGRAPHS,
ETHNIC STUDIES LIBRARY, UC BERKELEY

*International Hotel tenant delegation to
San Francisco City Hall. Pictured: Yee Tung,
Frankie Delos Reyes, Claudio Domingo,
Anacleto Moniz, and others.*



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE LOUIE, WEI MIN SHE
AND ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER PHOTOGRAPHS,
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Banner across Kearny Street: "Workers Unite to Fight Evictions! Fight for the I-Hotel and Victory Building!" The Victory Building was a single room occupancy building with mainly Chinese tenants. It was located next to the I-Hotel. Both properties were purchased by 4-Seas Investments who proceeded with eviction orders. The banner was hung illegally by the Workers Committee to Fight for the I-Hotel & Victory Building. It was removed by the City and replaced by protestors multiple times.

asian experience / yellow identity

From: Asian Students of Chinese Students Club and Nisei Students Club
509-600 Eschelman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, 94720, 642-4216

Bring this, your invitation, to the
1st Asian Experience in America, Sat.
Jan. 11, 1969, 9:00am-4:30pm Pauley
Ballroom, ASUC Building UC Berkeley.

theasianexperienceinamerica/identifiedyellowqueriesqueuesfriends theasianexperience/yellowidentity

False religions delude
the land with a cease-
less clamor.
I would strike the bar-
barian tribes but the
time comes not,
When will the great roc
rise and southward soar?
Long have I waited the
wind of his ten-thousand
mile wings.
Date Masemune 1567-1636

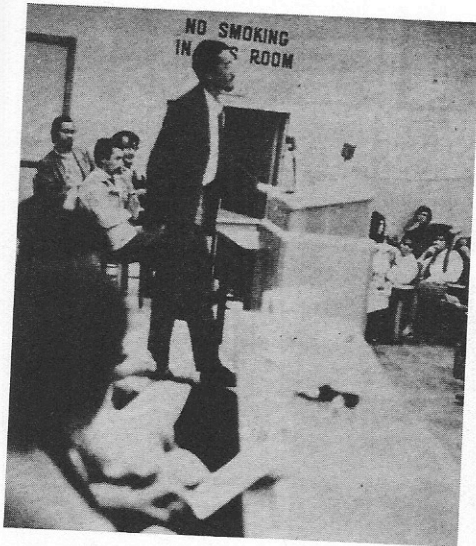
Get out of my road and
allow me to plant these
bamboos, Mr. Toad
Miura Chora 1729-1780

Where, before me, are the
ages that have gone?
And where, behind me, are
the coming generations?
I think of heaven and earth
without limit, without end,
And I am alone and my tears
fall down.
Chen Tzu-ang 661-702

the asian flu in america, blackheads all;
gardeners, cooks, laundrymen and toshiro
mifune; the golden race, america the beau-
tiful, glittering ghettos, second class
citizens with visiting rights; chinatown,
manilatown, little tokyo relocated concen-
trated, beautification, hallelujah chris-
tian colonies; submissive females, passive
males, mellow yellows, that strong silent
type; run run shaw, made in japan, p.r. 95
%; japanophiles, sinophiles, you likee
chop suey, chop chop, me no savee; white
paper, brown paper, yellow paper, black
paper, red paper, if i were god i'd make
everybody white; third world liberation
front, all men are brothers, love is a
many splendored thing, black eyed blondes;
we all live in a yellow submarine, anti-
queue law, call me yellow, no vietnamese
ever called me a nigger, let's call a
spade a spade, a jap a jap; buddhaheads
transcendental meditation, jesus is a comin
so get yourself ready for a hard day's
night; reparations for the opium wars,
christianity the whole world over, the
asians get what they deserve, they breed
like rabbits anyways; that fat jap, that
skinny chink, chinatown my chinatown, my
little houseboy, sayonara suzie wong;
Free University for Chinatown Kids, Unin-
corporated

ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER ARCHIVES

An invitation to the "Yellow Symposium," held on January 11, 1969. Sponsored by the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA), Chinese Students Club (CSC) and the Nisei Students Club (NSC), the conference was widely attended and concluded with a resolution in full support of the TWLF Strike at SF State. Also, more AAPA chapters were organized with many local Asian American organizations becoming AAPA chapters.



Yuji Ichioka speaks in UC Berkeley's first Asian American Studies class called Asian Studies 100X, "Introduction to the Asian Experience in the U.S."



AAPA NEWSPAPER 1969

and genocidal war in an Asian country, Vietnam. American GIs were sent there to turn the country into a killing field and, in the process, they themselves also became the casualties of the same war.

Second, people in Chinatown, young and old, felt trapped in overcrowded, dilapidated, and unsanitary quarters; an endless cycle of poverty; and widespread labor abuse in sweatshops and restaurants. While the newly enacted 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (Hart-Cellar Act) immediately repealed the legacy of Chinese exclusion and opened the doors for separated families finally to be united, the conditions of Chinatown went from bad to worse. Since most of the new immigrants were poor and non-English-speaking, they had to settle in already crowded and run-down housing in the Chinatowns of San Francisco and Oakland, with little or no social support network. Compounding these problems, thousands of non-English-speaking children entered the ill-prepared and rigidly-run San Francisco public schools, alienated and dropping out. And yet, no one, including the Chinatown establishment and City Hall, seemed willing and able to step in and take the lead in addressing these mounting problems. These conditions felt increasingly like a time-bomb, ready to explode at any moment. These unfolding horror stories stirred the conscience of college students as never before and prompted them to raise questions about their own responsibilities to their communities in the absence of relief and political leadership.

During this time, in May 1968, two UCB students, Japanese American Yuji Ichioka and Chinese American Emma Gee, convened the first informal gathering by word-of-mouth in a Berkeley apartment at 2005 Hearst Street, to discuss local and national issues affecting them as Asians. It was at this meeting that all of the unsettling personal, social, cultural, and political concerns became crystal clear for the participants, who reached the consensus that they must act collectively in order to change the conditions of Asian people on campus and in society. Thus, the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) was born on the UCB campus, the first Asian American political organization in the nation. Members chose to name their organization beyond the national origin of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino ethnicities. They pointedly rejected the prevailing use of the term "Oriental," which they considered derogatory,

dehumanizing, and racist. Instead, they created the term "Asian American" to identify themselves. It was a defiant self-designation for a new collective identity and a shared destiny. Thus was born an Asian American political moment in the U.S.

At about the same time in February 1968, the problems in San Francisco's Chinatown burst open as Chinatown youth spoke angrily, loudly, and clearly at a town hall meeting at the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA). The youth spokesperson, George Woo, denounced the community leadership and government for their indifference and negligence. Woo demanded prompt action and warned of impending outbreaks of social disorder like the riots sweeping across the country. A seed was planted. It was not until August 17 that sustained organizing began. On that day, a forum on Chinatown problems, sponsored and organized by the Summer Youth Program, an anti-poverty summer program, was held in the basement of Cumberland Chinese Presbyterian Church. For the first time, college students from AAPA, Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA) at SF State, and other organizations around the Bay Area met to learn about the myriad of problems in Chinatown and discuss what needed to be done about them. With prior planning, the all-day session ended with the students joining forces with a newly formed group, Concerned Chinese for Action and Change (CCAC), made up of young Chinese American professionals led by attorney Gordon J. Lau; together, they embarked on a provocative and noisy march down Grant Avenue during the height of Chinatown's tourist season. The march ended with a mass rally in historic Portsmouth Square in the heart of Chinatown. Speaker after speaker denounced slumlords, sweatshop operators, greedy restaurant owners, the deplorable conditions in Chinatown, racism, and City Hall.

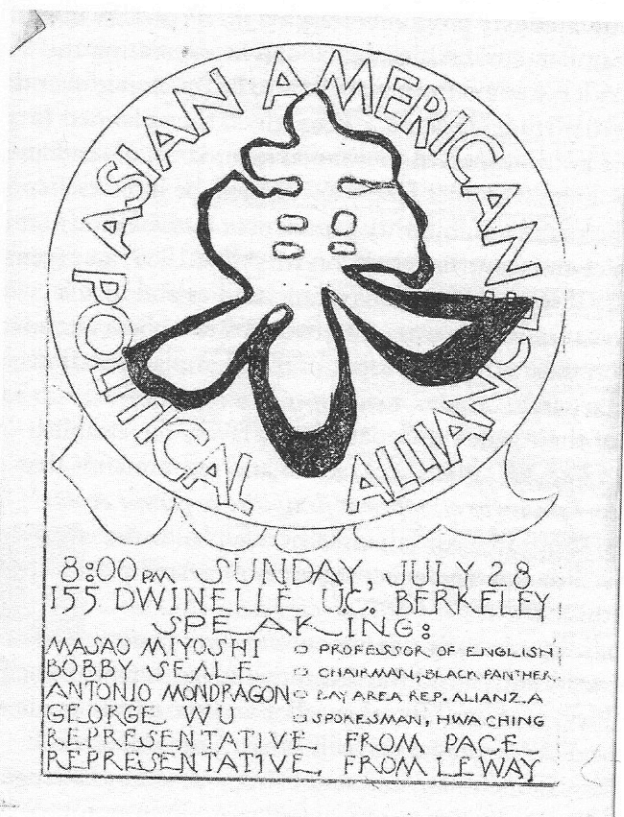
The Saturday demonstration was unprecedented and its impact reverberated in Chinatown and across the Bay Area. Mainstream media covered the rare public airing of Chinatown's problems, deeming the sight of militant Asian Americans loudly condemning racism and discrimination as unbecoming of the "model minority." Airing one's dirty laundry in public was considered shocking, shameful, and disgraceful by the Chinatown establishment. The Chinese Six Companies, formally known as Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, quickly issued a rare "manifesto," castigating the demonstrators as "outside agitators" and "undesirable immigrants." Regardless, that day bridged the chasm between campus and community; college students and community activists found unity in purpose, courage, and power.

At the end of the summer, students returned to their campuses and started mobilizing their participation in various protest events and community service projects. In Berkeley, subgroups of Asian students came together to plan a day-long symposium entitled the "Yellow Symposium." Hundreds of college and high school students from around the country attended presentations on the history of Asians in the U.S. and community issues by scholars and community leaders. They also heard an emotionally charged report about the on-going TWLF Strike at SF State by Penny Nakatsu. Professor Paul Takagi of Criminology and the Board of Educational Development (BED) agreed to sponsor an "experimental" class on Asian American history in January 1969. Four graduate students were recruited to work as teaching assistants—Richard Aoki of Social Welfare, Alan Fong of Anthropology, Bing Thom of Architecture, and myself, L. Ling-chi Wang of Near Eastern Studies—and led the class with the help of several guest speakers from the community. None of the four TAs had knowledge about or experience with the subject matter. Nevertheless, they taught the class with a strong instinct and shared conviction that Asian American Studies must be created, and that the community urgently needed it. The course was officially labeled Asian Studies 100X, "Introduction to the Asian Experience in the U.S." The "X" stood for "experimental." About 120 students enrolled in the Winter Quarter course off campus in solidarity with the ongoing TWLF Strike on campus.

SOLIDARITY!



ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER ARCHIVES (ABOVE AND BELOW)



Above left, Richard Aoki of the Asian American Political Alliance, Charles Brown of the Afro-American Student Union, and Manuel Delgado of the Mexican American Student Confederation join hands in solidarity as part of the Third World Liberation Front at UC Berkeley.

Above right, Richard Aoki, an early member of the Black Panthers, was arrested in 1969 for strike activities at the Bancroft Way and Telegraph Avenue intersection.

At left, a July 28, 1968, community panel announcement featuring speakers from the Black Panthers, Alianza, Hwa Ching, Philippine American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE) and Leway, a Chinatown self-help youth organization.

TWLF STRIKE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES

The Asian American Studies Program at UCB was born out of collective demands for an autonomous Third World College made by the TWLF. The coalition included representatives of the Afro-American Student Union (AASU), Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA), Native American Student Union (NASU), and Mexican-American Student Confederation (MASC). As oppressed minorities in the U.S., the groups pledged to stand united with each other, an act of multiracial solidarity unprecedented in the history of the U.S. When demands and negotiations for an autonomous Third World College fell through, the TWLF at UCB, like their counterparts at SF State, also called for a strike that began in mid-January and ended in early March 1969. The strike was disruptive and, at times, violent. The campus was occupied by the National Guard, State Highway Patrol, County Sheriff, and Berkeley City Police. Many students were hurt and arrested during this turbulent time.

The TWLF declared in fliers distributed on campus: "We recognize that the racist power structure does not give us power willingly. . . . We of the Third World now stand together in the fight for educational freedom in this racist society." The core principle advanced by the TWLF was the right of self-determination: to establish an autonomous Department of Ethnic Studies with the power to shape its own curriculum and appoint its own faculty.

The TWLF Strike resulted in the establishment of an *interim* Ethnic Studies Department in fall 1969 with four autonomous programs. The intent of the *interim* status, as stipulated by the Academic Senate, was to leave open flexibility to evolve gradually the department into a college with four departments and undergraduate and graduate programs—each with its own faculty, curriculum, administration, and budget. Student strikers also demanded incorporating the principle of "educational relevance"—the TWLF wanted the curriculum to be "meaningful and useful to the communities" from which minority students came, and to which they planned to return to serve upon graduation. While the TWLF respected traditional boundaries of academic disciplines, they also insisted that the new Ethnic Studies Department must be interdisciplinary rather than compartmentalized in their study of minority experiences in the U.S.

After nearly two months of intense conflict and campus debate, on March 4, 1969, an urgent meeting of the Academic Senate convened to discuss the merit of ethnic studies and how it should be established. Faculty attendance was record-breaking, with over 500 members attending. Chancellor Roger Heyns pledged his commitment to the formation and implementation of an Ethnic Studies Department with four separate programs in it.

"It is the sense of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate that it favors the establishment of an Ethnic Studies Department *reporting directly to the chancellor* and recommends that early appointment of its chairman. *Its structure should be of sufficient flexibility to permit evolution into a College,*" read the resolution that was introduced. "The Division applauds the efforts already being made by its committees in this direction and encourages all interested parties to cooperate with them and the chancellor in this effort."

The resolution passed by a vote of 550 to 5. The virtually unanimous vote was historic and reflective of the faculty's strong, if not anxious, desire to end the disruptive strike, establish the department, and return the campus to "business as usual." The chancellor and the senate made a promise that ended a painful strike and the TWLF gained partially what it had demanded. Landing on the Normandy beach on D-Day was one thing; winning Europe was the challenge ahead.

CLASH OF VISIONS AND PRINCIPLES

The very existence of Ethnic Studies at UCB immediately generated strong resistance from its inception. Who should determine the contents of the Ethnic Studies curriculum and the qualifications of its faculty? Since the founding vision, mission and principles of TWLF were fundamentally at odds with the established academic policies and practices, how should the inevitable conflicts in values and standards between Ethnic Studies, on the one hand, and the chancellor and the entrenched Senate, on the other hand, be negotiated and arbitrated? The decision-making power on budget, faculty hiring, and curriculum rested exclusively in the hands of the administration and Faculty Senate, who knew next to nothing about the field of ethnic studies about to be created. How much freedom and flexibility should the new and inexperienced department be granted to recommend faculty appointments and submit course proposals?

Clashes between the Ethnic Studies Department and the administration and Senate were inevitable, frequent, and intense in the early years. Once the TWLF Strike was over, the side with power almost always prevailed. Only rarely did the powerless win in daily battles. When conditions in the department became intolerable, students decided to use their collective power and disrupt business-as-usual through protest marches, building occupations, and hunger strikes to force the University to take their grievances and demands seriously through negotiations and compromises.

At UCB, every department is expected to be competitive with its peer institutions in the U.S. and across the world. Six independent reviews of the Ethnic Studies Department have been conducted over the past fifty years and are important records of conflicts and compromises between the department and the University. From these reviews and their recommendations, we can see clearly the clash between the TWLF principles, and the traditional policies, values, and standards of the University. Furthermore, the University used these reviews to steadily erode the TWLF principles which Ethnic Studies and its programs sought to maintain, in order to bring them into full compliance with university norms and values and assimilate them into the academic mainstream. Struggling for incremental progress, and fighting for its integrity and survival, is the story of Ethnic Studies. It would be wrong to deny significant gains made over the past fifty years and equally wrong to proclaim the TWLF mission accomplished. As we shall see, the vision and promise remain elusive and the future of Ethnic Studies uncertain still. The remainder of this essay outlines the history of Asian American Studies in the context of the development of Ethnic Studies at UCB.

THE COLLINS REVIEW

Chancellor Albert Bowker appointed Professor O'Neil Ray Collins of Botany to chair the first review committee of the Ethnic Studies Department, from 1969 to 1973. Constant struggles occurred with the UC administration over the level of budget and resource allocation; and the Academic Senate over curricula, course approval, and the degree programs. Campus administration took advantage of the inexperienced faculty and staff and erected bureaucratic obstacles at every turn.

Fortunately, student, staff, and faculty commitment to the project and its founding principles provided guidance and helped overcome the many obstacles. The enrollment in Fall Quarter of 1969, for example, was 990 in 34 courses. During Winter Quarter of 1970, enrollment grew to 1,579 in 51 courses; in Spring Quarter, 1,927 in 67 courses. A total of 4,496 students enrolled in Ethnic Studies courses in the first year, which was a far cry from the administration's exag-

geratedly low projection of 200 students. Most of the early courses fell into three broad categories: service courses (reading, writing and community languages); history and identity; and community issues, all of which were aligned with the TWLF principles. But ES faculty were all part-time lecturers and its curricula rather unstable.

The Collins Committee report came out in 1973. Using long-established academic criteria to judge the department's performance, the report was supportive but critical. Its major recommendations, not surprisingly, were clearly aimed at undermining the founding principles of Ethnic Studies:

1. Strip the power of the faculty to recommend faculty appointments,
2. Separate each ethnic program as an independent department and move each separately into the College of Letters & Science (L&S),
3. Reduce, or eliminate, the community studies component of the curriculum, especially in Asian American Studies, and
4. Remove students from participating in the decision-making process.

All of these recommendations challenged the department's founding principles of autonomy, educational relevance, and solidarity among racial minorities. Sensing the handwriting on the wall, the Ethnic Studies faculty unanimously voted on October 1, 1973 to reject the committee's recommendations on the grounds that they would severely undermine the development of the department and its programs. The administration made no official response. Instead, it took the review's recommendations and quietly worked through various Senate committees.

DEPARTURE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Our first crisis erupted in December 1973 when a faction of the African American Studies faculty decided to use the Collins report to work secretly to split from Ethnic Studies and move the program into the Division of Social Sciences in L&S as its own department. The major reason for this move, according to internal documents, was to gain "intellectual legitimacy" on campus and "credibility" among students. Chancellor Albert Bowker aided and abetted the move, effective July 1, 1974, although procedures for, and approval of, the transfer were incomplete. The abrupt departure of African American Studies from Ethnic Studies was a mortal blow to the solidarity among the four programs since the TWLF strike and precipitated the most serious existential crisis since the department's founding.

Could the Department and the remaining three programs survive without African American Studies? What about the College of Third World Studies? The departure of African American Studies left the other programs paralyzed and distrustful of each other, the budget decimated, and leadership and power dismantled. Both Ethnic Studies faculty and students were left angry and uncertain of their future. The faculty denounced the decision and students demonstrated against the move, calling for a boycott of African American Studies classes. The boycott fizzled after two years. During the boycott, the administration assured the faculty not to worry about decreases in course enrollment; they should instead spend their time doing research.

After the initial shock and outrage, the faculty, staff, and students of the remaining three programs eventually came together for a postmortem and response. A task force, under the leadership of Ronald Takaki of Asian American Studies, was appointed to rethink the future of the department and remaining three programs, develop a long-range plan for its renewal, and work out an effective counter-strategy for its survival and growth. It became clear that the principle of solidarity had no substance and there was no integration in administration, curricula,

and faculty among the programs. A few months of intense soul-searching and planning led to a plan to reorganize the department's administration and curricula, and to share faculty.

The task force recommended a sweeping strategic plan to move incrementally towards a college, as promised by the University in 1969, and to help new faculty achieve tenure. This plan included a new series of courses on the comparative experiences of racial minorities, and most importantly, the creation of a new undergraduate comparative ethnic studies curriculum and degree program. All full-time faculty must take part in teaching these new comparative courses. In short, these reform measures provided substance and teeth to the principle of solidarity that was absent since the department began.

From 1975 to 1983, the department steadily grew. All the new courses and four degree programs gained permanent approval. However, the department conceded to the virtual elimination of community studies from its curriculum and capitulated to UC-established criteria for gaining faculty tenure. As a result, the faculty make-up changed significantly and the commitment to its founding principles was placed on the backburner.

Unfortunately, these new department reforms pitted academic interests against community ones within each program. For example, in 1976 and 1977, a painful political struggle within Asian American Studies erupted publicly between Asian American students and faculty. Some of the new faculty being hired knew little about the founding principles and mission of Ethnic Studies and had little or no ties to its communities. In fact, by early 1980, other than a few select faculty with long personal ties to and projects in the community, both the department and programs eventually ceased to have any institutional or structural links with the communities out of which the field of ethnic studies had emerged and to which it owed its existence. There was a trade-off between gains and losses.

Before we proceed to the next period, we need to pause briefly to mention a looming issue which occurred on the UCB campus in the 1980s that foreshadowed a larger issue involving Asian American admissions into competitive research universities in the twenty-first century. The arrival of the baby-boomers in colleges and universities also signaled the arrival of highly motivated and competitive Asian Americans. UCB, as a prestigious public research university, was the first choice for many Asian Americans because it welcomed them at a time when it was acceptable for comparable private and public institutions to exclude them. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Asian American enrollment skyrocketed rapidly at a time when the research universities were under mounting pressure to admit minority students who had been historically discriminated against. The Office of Admissions decided to slow down Asian American admissions by secretly changing several admissions criteria and procedures targeting Asian American applicants in the entering class of 1984 without public knowledge and authorization. That decision precipitously caused a huge drop of 21 percent among Asian Americans between 1983 and 1984.

The drop immediately caught the attention of Asian American faculty and community members. A high-profile community group, the Asian American Task Force on University Admissions (AATFUA), was organized to deal with the administration. Judges Lillian K. Sing of San Francisco and Ken Kawaichi of Alameda county co-chaired the task force. After five years of acrimonious legislative hearings, state auditing, and faculty investigations that uncovered wrongdoing, Chancellor Ira Michael Heyman reversed the changes and apologized publicly in 1989. In 1990, Chang-lin Tien was appointed Chancellor of UCB, the first Asian American to head a research university. The admissions issue attracted national attention and added a new dimension to the ongoing national debate on affirmative action, even though AATFUA was concerned only with the unfair treatment between whites and Asians and strongly supported affirmative action.

THE BRINNER REVIEW

In stark contrast to the Collins report, the second external review, led by Professor William Brinner of Near Eastern Studies in August 6, 1980, found that the Department and its four programs (Asian American Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, and the newly established undergraduate Comparative Ethnic Studies) had become strong, stable, and comparable to other departments on campus. The review also noted that Ethnic Studies and its programs had become a valuable intellectual asset to the campus, which by then had become increasingly racially diverse.

The Brinner Committee found the Department deserving of greater institutional respect and support, including additional faculty positions, the establishment of a Ph.D. program in Comparative Ethnic Studies, and a better and more spacious library facility. In a surprising but welcome move, the committee recommended the creation of a new Division of Ethnic Studies in L&S, into which all the Ethnic Studies programs would be housed. In return for moving its programs into L&S under the new Division, the review committee urged the administration to increase the power, prestige, and autonomy of Ethnic Studies by granting all of its programs departmental status.

The new Division, headed by a dean, would have five departments: Afro-American Studies, Asian American Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, and Comparative Ethnic Studies. The recommendation in effect called for the reunification of African American Studies with Ethnic Studies under the new Division, thus making Ethnic Studies equal in rank with the other four sister Divisions: Social Science, Humanities, Physical Science, and Biological Science. If the recommendations were to be accepted by the UC administration, it would move Ethnic Studies one step closer to becoming a college, the original vision of the TWLFF.

Initially, the administration enthusiastically embraced the report and foresaw the important role Ethnic Studies would play in the changing student demographics. However, the leadership of the largely conservative Faculty Senate responded negatively. It moved swiftly to discredit the Brinner report by appointing an *ad hoc* Executive Committee to review the review. The *ad hoc* committee chose to ignore the Brinner report and its recommendations on May 27, 1981. Instead, the new committee proposed the further breakup of the Department by urging each program to separately become a department and move into the Division of Social Sciences. It also opposed giving additional faculty positions and more space to the overcrowded Ethnic Studies library.

The Faculty Senate's negative response did not deter the Ethnic Studies Department from using the Brinner Committee recommendations as a road map for new initiatives. Professor Barbara Christian and I, as chairs of African American Studies and Ethnic Studies, initiated our first joint faculty meeting in six years. Two concrete cooperative projects were established: co-sponsorship of the first Ph.D. degree program and a proposal to establish a campus-wide Ethnic Studies breadth requirement for all undergraduates. Through this joint effort, the first cohort of seven graduate students entered the Ph.D. program in 1985.

The Ethnic Studies breadth requirement proposal faced stiff political challenges, going through two years of intense campus scrutiny. A Special Senate Committee on Education and Ethnicity was appointed to study the proposal. After two years of extensive campus-wide meetings and negotiations, the University reached a compromise on May 28, 1989: a new breadth requirement for all undergraduate students called "American Cultures." The new requirement aimed to teach students about how the U.S. was a country made up of Native Americans and immigrants from all continents, nations, and cultures of the world—all of whom contributed to the creation of a new and unique nation. In short, the requirement called

for new understandings of new American identity and history and the diversification of the curriculum across disciplines. Since its institutionalization, no less than 400 courses have been certified across the campus. By far it has been one of the most profound curricular innovations in American higher education and an enduring contribution ES can be proud of.

STRUGGLE AND SURVIVAL

In April 1989, a small but influential group of mostly senior faculty, in uncharacteristically blunt language, circulated a paper on campus denouncing the administration's support of diversity programs such as affirmative action, Ethnic Studies, American Cultures, and Women's Studies. They claimed that such programs existed at the expense of "educational and scholarly standards." What really troubled these aging white senior faculty was the rapid demographic shift from a predominantly white to a predominantly minority student body. These minority students considered the University, its faculty, and curricula out of touch with the experiences and intellectual interests of post-World War II baby-boomers and post-1965 immigrants from Asia and Latin America. Under the leadership of Chancellor Ira Heyman, the enrollment in all four Ethnic Studies programs grew rapidly as minorities became the majority within the undergraduate population, a result of the effectiveness of the University's affirmative action program. The racial and gender mix of the UCB faculty had likewise changed, though not fast enough. The white male faculty felt increasingly marginalized, sensed a loss of power and control of *their* institution, and decided to openly resist the change. Needless to say, they remained securely in control of both the administration and the faculty senate.

In 1991, Ethnic Studies once again came under review by another external committee. It was co-chaired by Professors Carol Stack of Education and Gwen Kirkpatrick of Spanish and Portuguese. In May 1992, the committee gave the Department a favorable evaluation and recommended additional faculty positions, an organized research unit (ORU), and a new facility for its library. However, it backed away from the Brinner recommendation of an L&S Division of Ethnic Studies. The Department also found itself caught between a rock and a hard place. Ethnic Studies obviously needed more faculty and financial resources at a time when it also faced a 10 percent mandatory budget cut caused by the 1990 recession. On July 28, 1994, Provost and Dean of the College of Letters & Science Carol Christ decided to move Ethnic Studies which had been located in the Office of the Chancellor since 1969 into the L&S Division of Social Sciences to become a downsized Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies, and consolidated the management and staffing of all of its programs. In effect, Ethnic Studies found its original four programs severely weakened and in the process, its autonomy and identities. She even hosted a lavish reception at the Faculty Club to welcome Ethnic Studies into the embrace of L&S. The faculty was left with two options: resist or surrender. They opted for the latter. With that, the TWLF dream of a college was dashed—the Faculty Senate's historic promise broken and its future vulnerable and uncertain. It is no wonder that the faculty and staff were left demoralized.

The administration was well aware of a number of senior faculty fast approaching retirement age when the decision was made to force Ethnic Studies and its programs into the Division of Social Science in L&S. The first wave of retirements had already started: Ronald Takaki, Mario Barrera, Carlos Munoz, Jr., Margarita Melville, and Gerald Vizenor. Not too far behind was the second cohort made up of myself, Elaine Kim, Sau-ling Wong, Norma Alarcón, Alex Saragoza, Beatriz Manz, and Patricia Hilton. The first wave hit Chicano Studies the hardest, while the second hurt mostly Asian American Studies. Time and attrition were on the side of the administration, if the intention was to slowly weaken Ethnic Studies and its programs.

In response to the lack of classes offered by Chicano Studies in Spring 1999, a group of mainly Chicanos and others, including Asian Americans, whites, and African Americans, without prior warning, occupied the entrance to Barrows Hall, which housed the offices of Ethnic Studies and its programs, on the afternoon of April 14, 1999. Soon, they were joined by students from other programs and Ethnic Studies graduate students, who also challenged the dwindling number of faculty. To these students, the administration was letting Ethnic Studies die by way of attrition.

The students sent Chancellor Robert Berdahl a set of demands in support of Ethnic Studies and other issues affecting campus climate and minority student life. Among the demands were:

1. Increased funding for Ethnic Studies and each of the programs within Ethnic Studies, while maintaining respect for the autonomy of each Ethnic Studies program,
2. Admission of more underrepresented minority students,
3. An Ethnic Studies Research Center,
4. A multicultural student center,
5. Student participation in the decision-making process in Ethnic Studies programs, and
6. No punishment of students arrested for their civil disobedience protests

The chancellor, however, refused to meet with the student protestors as long as the occupation persisted. After a ten-hour occupation, with several students being injured, the police arrested and cited 43 students.

As the chair of Ethnic Studies, I had consistently expressed my concerns regarding the steady decline of its faculty strength and course offerings. In fact, in the budget statement I submitted to the administration the year prior, I warned of the eventual demise of the department if the budget cuts persisted and the positions of retired faculty were left vacant. I therefore had no hesitation in supporting the legitimate protest and demands of the students. Within an hour of the occupation, I addressed the protesters and expressed my full support of their demands. Subsequently, I issued a long statement endorsed by the Ethnic Studies faculty. Separately, the African American Studies faculty also announced their support of the demands.

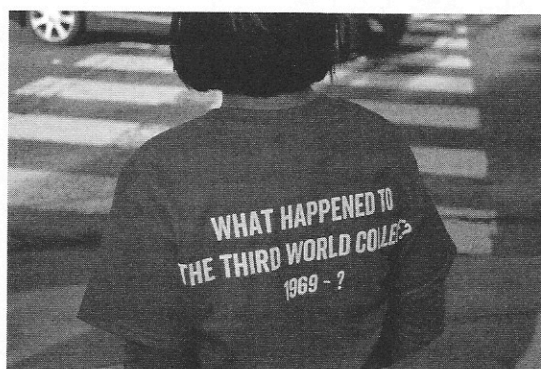
On April 29, 1999, the student protest expanded into a hunger strike in front of the chancellor's office at California Hall, beginning at midnight. Three days into the hunger strike, a mysterious flyer surfaced in front of California Hall after midnight, claiming that "Chairman Wang no longer supports the hunger strike" and that "he urges the students to end the strike." I was stunned and deeply hurt by the false flyer, and immediately concluded it was a Nixonian "political dirty trick," instigated by someone in the administration whose sole purpose was to provoke division between students and faculty, and among the faculty. The next morning, I angrily confronted the chancellor. In response, he apologized but offered no explanation. Later that same day, he called me to apologize again. But again, no explanation.

After five days of the hunger strike and orderly protest, the chancellor decided to remove the striking students in a surprise pre-dawn police sweep. The police moved in and arrested 80 students, tore down their tents, and removed all of their posters, banners, and picket signs. The arrested students were taken to the Alameda County Jail in Santa Rita, where many of the 1969 striking students were also incarcerated.

To the surprise of the administration, in an impressive demonstration of multiracial and multidisciplinary solidarity, several hundred students from departments and schools across the campus turned up to protest and volunteered to be arrested the next night. When interviewed,



PHOTO BY HARVEY DONG



Commemorating TWLF 50th at UC Berkeley, undergraduate Joanne Yi with t-shirt imprinted: "What Happened to Asian American Studies?" spoke about the need to fight against the cutbacks to the program. Imprinted on the back of the t-shirt: "What Happened to the Third World College," pointing out that the struggle at UC Berkeley is incomplete.



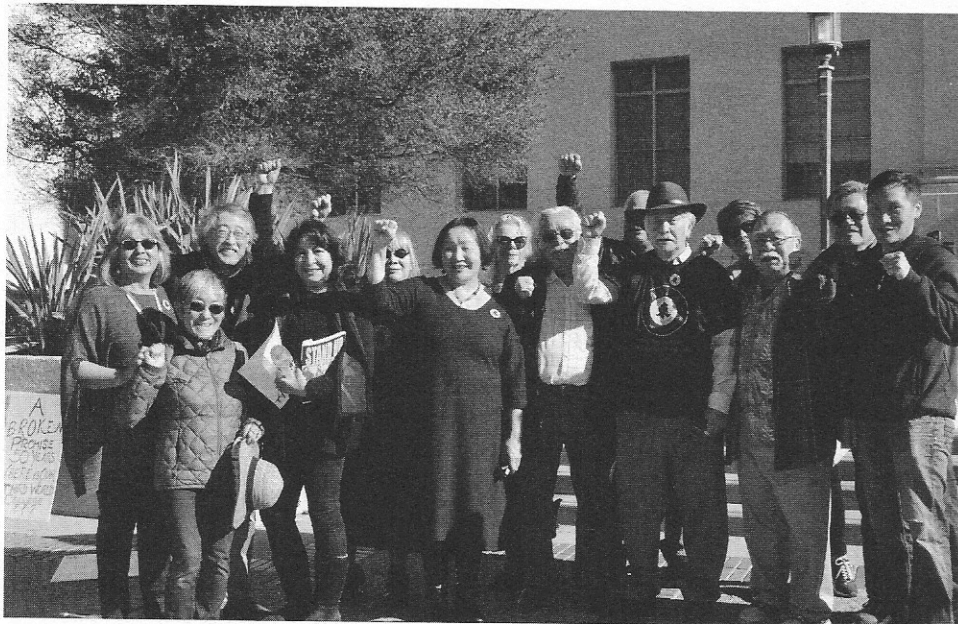
PHOTO BY HARVEY DONG

Aztec Dancers open the 50th Anniversary of the TWLF Strike at UC Berkeley.

the faculty of the other three Ethnic Studies programs, took on the task of unearthing their past, and restoring and revealing the hidden dynamism and creativity of their communities in the arts, sciences, and literature that have enriched American life. The program trained many scholars to become teachers in ethnic and Asian American studies in universities and colleges across the U.S. Their contributions fundamentally changed American studies and Americans' knowledge and understanding of Asian Americans.

For example, both Ron Takaki (*Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, 1989) and Sucheng Chan (*Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, 1991) wrote seminal books on the history of Asian America and books on Asian American subgroups; Chan also edited more than fifty books on various aspects of Asian American history and life through Temple University Press. Elaine Kim and Sau-ling Wong established Asian American literature as a vital component and subfield of American literature and uncovered American literature in Asian languages. L. Ling-chi Wang identified and pursued civil rights issues at home and transnational links of Asian America in the diaspora, and developed a paradigm for studying Asian American history and community issues. Loni Ding helped translate the past and emerging Asian American ideas into powerful images in videos and films. Michael Omi called attention to the importance of race in the study of American society, politics, and culture. Khatharya Um wrote the definitive book on the refugees from Cambodia and helped advance the rights and welfare of Cambodian and Southeast Asian Americans from and within Southeast Asia. America's knowledge and views of Asian Americans have changed significantly with the advent of Asian American Studies at UCB.

As the twentieth century reached its end, it was fitting for the Ethnic Studies Department



COURTESY OF HARVEY DONG

UC Berkeley 1969 TWLF representatives from the Afro-American Students Union (AASU), Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA), Mexican-American Students Confederation (MASC), and Native American Students Union (NASU) and others commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the TWLF strike and subsequent generations who continued the struggle. Pictured: Maria Ramirez, Betty Kano, Jeff Leong, LaNada War Jack, Vicci Wong, Jean Quan, Veronica Macias, Ysidro Martinez, Oliver Jones, Floyd Huen, Nina Genera, Steve Wong, Harvey Dong, Eddie Zheng.

Eddie Zheng, co-director of Asian Prisoners Support Committee, was a former San Quentin prison inmate who was inspired by ethnic studies while taking classes from Asian American student volunteers. He circulated a petition to demand that prisons teach ethnic studies and was punished for it by being sentenced to 11 months in solitary confinement.

to have the Brentano report help chart its future, and to ponder its role in ever-changing race relations on campus, in the U.S., and the world of the twenty-first century. The stunning election of gentlemanly, bright, and visionary Barack Obama, the first African American to become President of the United States, brought not just tears and jubilation, but high hopes that he would help usher in a new era of civility in all aspects of American life, and lead the nation towards the gradual elimination of racism—a cancer in American democracy.

That turned out not to be the case. Partisanship turned mean spirited and vulgar as Republicans who had the majority in both houses of the U.S. Congress and Republican appointees in the majority on the U.S. Supreme Court declared an all-out war on the Obama legacy and were determined to dismantle democratic institutions, one by one, by any means necessary. Political discourse turned personal, strident, and ugly, paving the way not just for the election of Donald Trump in 2016, but for the deepening of racial, gender, and class divides, and the rapid ascendancy or resurgence of racism, ultranationalism, and international isolationism. The bully pulpit of the presidency became the source of lies, fake news, and fabricated facts, as President Trump declared the free press and law enforcement agencies as “enemies of the people.” Sadly, “the law of the jungle” now governs the U.S. and dictates the U.S. approach to the international order.

In the face of such unprecedented and massive social and political upheavals, what has happened to the Ethnic Studies Department established fifty years ago to address issues of racial inequality and economic injustice? As the nation deals with pressing issues—such as Black Lives Matter, the rise of white nationalism and neo-Nazism, the #MeToo movement, mass deportation of immigrants, the Muslim ban, “The Wall,” immigrant children being separated from parents, massive voter suppression, trade wars, etc.—why are the voices and perspectives of ethnic studies so conspicuously missing in the national debates? Has the University been so successful in silencing and assimilating the department and its programs that they are no longer distinguishable from other departments in social sciences and humanities across the campus? What happened to the vision, founding principles, autonomous governance, relevant curriculum, students, and community engagements? Will Ethnic Studies and AAADS survive the onslaught of budget cuts, white nationalism, and ethnic cleansing? These are timely and sobering questions we must raise as we celebrate and reflect on our role in the University, the nation, and the world.

The fiftieth anniversary of Asian American Studies at UCB is indeed a time for celebration. We have reasons to take pride in the intellectual and political gains we have made over the past fifty years. But it is also a time for self-reflection, renewal, and recommitment. The TWLF founding principles and mission have served us well. Fifty years ago, we put our education and indeed, our lives and future, on the line not just to establish Ethnic Studies and its programs, but also to lay claim to our legitimate place in this institution and this country to obtain racial equality, justice, and peace. Now more than ever, our university, communities, nation, and world have never been more urgently in need of Asian American and ethnic studies’ voices, leadership, research, and engagement. The struggle that began fifty years ago must continue.