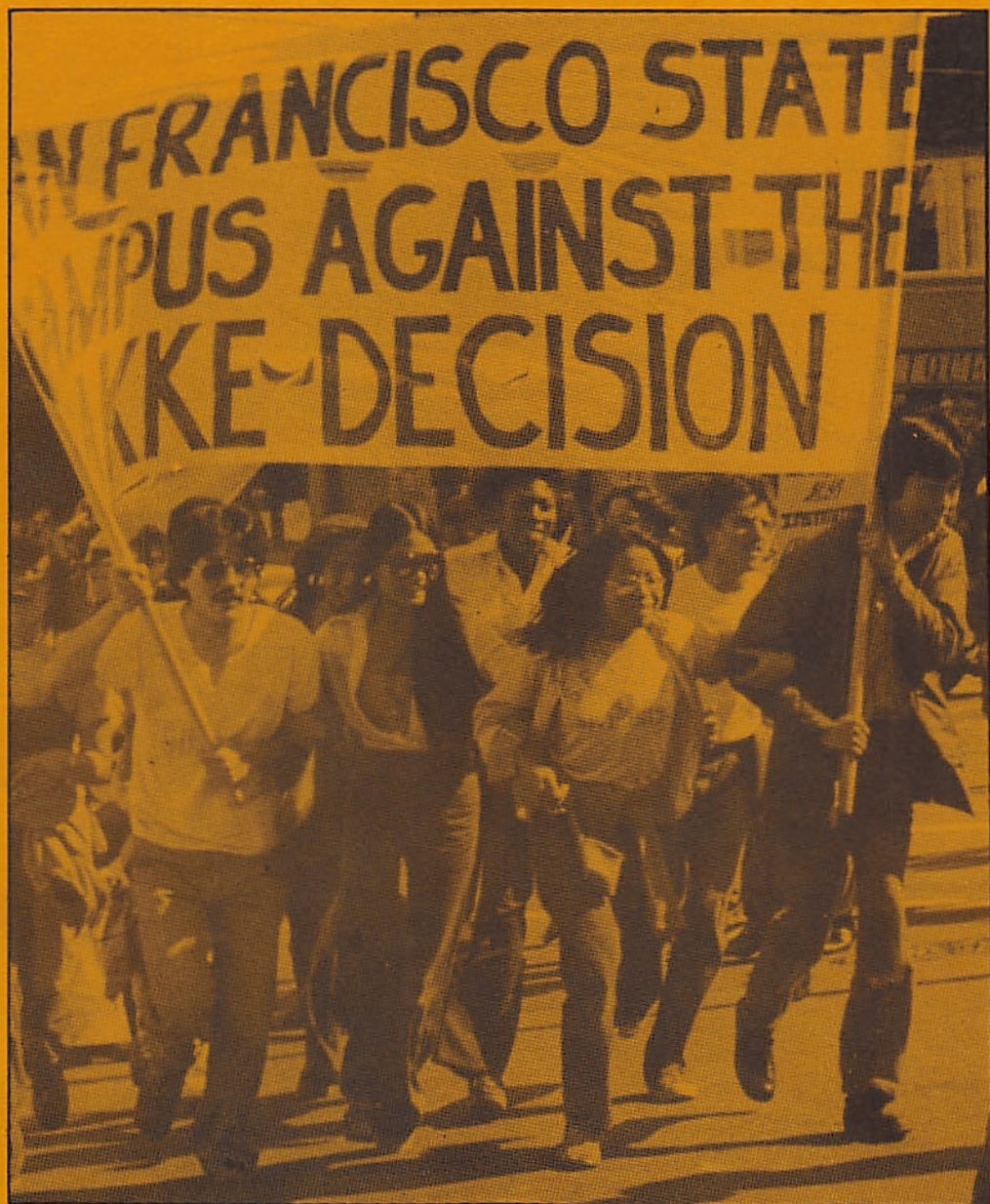


# **Asian/Pacific Students Unite!**



Selected articles reprinted from *UNITY* newspaper 25¢



*UNITY is a revolutionary newspaper published by the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist). With its comprehensive coverage of national news, the labor movement, the oppressed nationality peoples' struggles, international news, cultural reviews, sports, and more, UNITY strives to provide a broad overview of current events and issues in the revolutionary movement.*

*UNITY publishes two biweekly editions, in English/Spanish and English/Chinese. Each issue of the English/Chinese edition contains a special one-page Asian/Pacific Islander News Supplement which features additional articles on Asian student and community news, and special articles on Asian American art, culture, history and identity. Through these articles, interviews, and pieces of creative writing, we hope to inform, inspire and educate about the growing strength and unity of the Asian American movement.*

*This fall, UNITY is launching a special campaign to increase its circulation among students and to improve its coverage of the student movement. UNITY relies on readers and supporters to contribute articles and feedback to the paper. Campus correspondents from Hawaii to New York, and from Atlanta to Seattle contribute to the regular column, Students on the Move. UNITY is asking student readers to help build UNITY as an educational and organizing tool for the Asian American and revolutionary movement.*

*In this special pamphlet, UNITY is reprinting articles on the Asian student movement which reflect the diversity of issues being taken up by Asian students throughout the U.S.*

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### COVER PHOTO:

*Asian/Pacific students took to the streets by the hundreds to protest the Bakke decision. They formed a militant contingent in the October 15, 1977, demonstration in San Francisco. (UNITY photo)*

# Laney College students win back classes!

UNITY, Vol. 2, No. 8, April 20-May 3, 1979



**Students, teachers and other supporters in the struggle to save the Asian Studies program at Laney College, Oakland, California. (UNITY photo)**

*Students at Laney Community College in Oakland, California, have just won back classes that had been massively cut by the Peralta Board of Trustees. These cuts would have severely crippled Ethnic Studies and virtually eliminated Asian Studies. The struggle crystallized a fight Laney students have been waging over the past two years against cutbacks.*

*This is a rare victory these days when college administrations everywhere are trying to wipe out the gains of the 1960's student movement. Ethnic Studies, in particular, has been a main target of attack all across the country.*

*UNITY (and before that Getting Together) has covered struggles and has been active at Laney for years. As UNITY correspondents, we felt that all students could learn from the Laney Asian Studies struggle and apply the lessons at different campuses to bring still further victories.*

Our struggle this spring started on March 15, when over 40 teachers in the Peralta Community College District received layoff or hour-reduction notices. These were concentrated at two campuses serving mainly working class and minority people — Laney and Merritt Colleges. These are just the kind of schools that are suffering the worst attacks nationwide. The cuts would have hurt or eliminated many programs at Laney — journalism, foreign languages, media communications, nursing, machine shop, and of course Ethnic Studies, particularly Asian Studies.

The cuts sparked a massive spontaneous reaction among the students and staff, including such diverse groups as media arts students, Black Studies staff and the teachers union.

Third World student organizations and community people took up organizing a resistance campaign. These groups have gained much experience over the past two years in how to (and how not to) wage a struggle against cutbacks. For instance, this year they have taken up struggle for the campus child care center. Learning from past and ongoing struggles, the clubs formed a broad front which included students, teachers and community residents of many social strata.

#### **Defending Asian Studies**

The response to the cuts was deepest and broadest among Asian students, since Asian Studies is a very popular program at Laney. Even some U.C. Berkeley students come to Laney to take Asian Studies! The program started at Laney in 1970, and only

because Third World people fought for classes to teach about their history, struggles and culture.

The Asian Studies struggle became the sharpest of the anti-cutbacks struggles, and the Laney Asian/Pacific Student Union (APSU) took the lead in the resistance front. The APSU was able to organize and build broad support from people of all ages and nationalities, even drawing whole Asian Studies classes to APSU meetings.

Within the campus coalition, the Asian Studies struggle helped build multi-national unity. The APSU and the Black Student Union (BSU) brought out how the cuts particularly hurt minority students. Other Third World people defended Asian Studies because “it was just a matter of time” before other minority programs would receive the ax.

Students and community people showed a lot of imagination and energy in fighting for Asian Studies. The APSU organized a massive letter-writing and petition drive on campus, while others contacted the mass media. Beyond the campus, one woman circulated a petition at her family store in Chinatown, and an elderly student made a wall poster poem about the struggle, which he brush-painted in Chinese. His poem was published in many Chinatown papers, including the *Chinese Times* — the largest U.S.-based Chinese daily.

#### **Confronting the Board of Trustees**

The two sides of the struggle confronted each other sharply at the March 20 meeting



of the Peralta Board of Trustees. The APSU led a large Asian student contingent, and the meeting was packed with students, faculty and community supporters, including Chinese businessmen. The Mandarin language teacher challenged the board to go to the streets of Chinatown and ask about Asian Studies at Laney. "You'll see how well-known the program is and how much support there is!"

Speakers from the BSU, the Black Studies Department, teachers, and representatives of the Disabled Students all spoke up for Asian Studies, and linked it to the whole struggle against cutbacks.

As arrogant and racist as they are, the board showed they are really paper tigers when confronted with the masses of people. Eleven days after the board meeting, they cancelled almost all the layoff letters. The coalition won back all the Ethnic Studies instructors' jobs and reversed over 75% of the layoffs district-wide. In putting up such a hard fight for Asian Studies, we showed the trustees they would have a tough time implementing their cuts. They saw they had no choice but to back down.

Even with this victory, Laney students are pushing to have *all* the layoffs taken back. As one of the students said, "We don't just want to keep what we have, we want to expand the programs!"

### Lessons to share

In building a broad, multinational struggle against national oppression on campus, we can't underestimate the role of the mass student organizations like the APSU, the BSU and the LASU (Latin Ame-

rican Student Union). The APSU was able to play a leading role and the BSU a strong supporting role because both clubs are involved in day-to-day work to build deep and broad roots and credibility among the students, the campus community and the community at large. This is different than the "get-rich-quick" schemes promoted in the clubs by certain opportunists, who downplay the day-to-day work of the student organizations.

It was proven in practice that the Asian Studies struggle — if given correct leadership and a lot of hard work — could rally a broad united front of different nationalities, strata of people, and groups to fight for common goals. The coalitions that are built must rely on broad, mass student and community participation and struggle to achieve its goals. They must be the kind of force that can put words into practice and show people what they stand for concretely.

\* \* \*

We hope that other revolutionary and progressive students can learn from our struggle and win victories on their own campuses. Laney students are committed to defend and expand the gains of the 1960's! □

# APSU's successful conference Asian/Pacific students on the move!

UNITY, Vol. 1, No. 4, November 17-30, 1978



*The second West Coast conference of the Asian/Pacific Student Union is another example of the advances in the Asian and Pacific student movement. (UNITY Photo)*

**Sacramento** — The Asian/Pacific Islander student movement took a big step forward when the Asian/Pacific Student Union (APSU) held its first working conference on October 28-29 here. Asian and Pacific student organizations from over 40 high schools and colleges in California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Hawaii came together to sum up the work of APSU since its founding last April, to renew and build ties, and map out the plans for the 1978-1979 school year.

Over the past year, the Asian/Pacific

student movement on the West Coast made a significant breakthrough with the formation of the APSU. Instead of being isolated on a particular campus or working as individuals, the APSU was able to unite many campuses into a strong organization with common perspectives to guide their work.

The APSU initiated an Asian History Month campaign last spring to educate Asian/Pacific students about the Bakke decision in the context of their Asian American history, and to bring hundreds to the May 13, 1978, anti-Bakke demonstration in



San Francisco. Since then, the APSU has formed Asian women's groups, art collectives, and sponsored numerous history field trips and workshops to help build Asian/Pacific student organizations.

United around the themes, "Advance the Spirit of the Third World Strikes" and "Build the Asian/Pacific Student Movement," the conference sought to address the key issues and concerns that Asian and Pacific students face as national minorities.

Statements of support were given by the Sacramento MEChA Central, the U.C. Davis Asian Law Students Association, and a Brown University student who is a member of the East Coast Asian Student Union.

#### **Asian/Pacific education campaign**

The struggle for educational programs and services for Asian/Pacific students on campus was targetted as a key issue. Programs established 10 years ago in the Third World strikes continue to face opposition from school administrations. The Bakke decision and Proposition 13 have added fuel to cutbacks on these programs. The conference unanimously adopted a campaign to defend and improve these past gains in education.

Campuses shared various examples and lessons from their own experiences. This year, schools like Loyola-Miramount University established their first Asian American course, and the program at the University of Hawaii achieved permanent status. Suggestions on how to carry out this campaign included starting resource centers on Asian/Pacific culture and history, petition-

ing for more classes and organizing defense against attacks on Ethnic Studies and services like tutoring and peer counseling.

#### **Lively workshops**

Several workshops were organized to give concrete leadership to developing APSU as a broad mass organization, and set the major campaigns for the whole network.

The women's workshop discussed the history of Asian/Pacific women in the U.S. and recommended that regional APSU women's groups be set up and more resources on Asian/Pacific women be developed. In the workshop on youth, high-school and college students shared their experiences and ideas on the relevance of high-school education, family conflict, identity and entrance into college. There was enthusiastic support for the proposed Asian/Pacific Youth Conference now scheduled for December in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Art and Culture workshop discussed the importance of using traditional and progressive art forms, and defining the role artists should play in media to project an accurate picture of Asian/Pacific peoples. Participants in this workshop also painted a mural on the spot! It depicted the theme of learning Asian American history.

Reports from the Bakke Decision/Jarvis-Gann workshop included a skit based on the historic 1968 San Francisco State Third World Strike. Endorsement for the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition's National Week of Resistance and ideas for educational programs and Third World



Strike Commemorations were put forth.

In the Asian American Studies workshop, a speaker active in the 1968-69 Third World strikes described the decisive role that Asian and other Third World student organizations played in initiating and building Ethnic Studies. This workshop recommended improving the quality of resources on Pacific Islander history and culture.

The Community workshop reviewed the role students have played in supporting community struggles, and affirmed APSU's stand of strengthening campus-community relations and giving mutual support.

#### Expansion of APSU and national linkup proposal

Since last year, APSU has steadily grown — new campuses are joining, member organizations are expanding and contact has been made with schools in every part of the U.S. In discussing the expansion of APSU, and its role in the Asian/Pacific student movement, the general body adopted a proposal to improve communications within and between existing regionals; three new areas — Hawaii, the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest — also resolved to form APSU regionals by this coming spring.

The general body agreed to propose a national linkup of East and West Coast Asian/Pacific student organizations, which will be sent to the East Coast Asian Student Union (ECASU) for further discussion and development. This proposal involves establishing center campuses on both coasts responsible for collecting and dis-

tributing news and resources, an exchange tour of both coasts in the spring and a national founding conference to take place at a later date.

The APSU conference was a success, giving orientation and direction to the day-

to-day functioning of the many Asian/Pacific student organizations present. It united them around a single campaign that will raise the level of Asian/Pacific education, and initiated plans for establishing new regionals and proposing a national

linkup. With the potential and enthusiasm unleashed in those two days, undoubtedly the Asian/Pacific student movement will make significant strides in the peric ahead. □

## Student pilgrimage to Agbayani Village

UNITY, Vol. 2, No. 18, September 7-20, 1979



Delano, CA — On August 25, Asian students from San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego traveled to Agbayani Village to learn more about the history and struggles of Pilipino farm workers. The trip was part of the West Coast Asian Pacific Student Union's (APSU) summer Pilipino history project.

Over 50 people, including retired farm workers and students, attended the program. The APSU speech described how Agbayani Village — the 59-unit senior citizen housing project for Pilipino farm workers — was built.

From 1972 to 1975, more than 2,000 volunteers, including students from the San Francisco Bay Area Asian Student Unions, community activists and others, spent days, weeks, and months on work brigades to build the Village.

The Village is named in honor of a Pilipino striking farm worker, Paolo Agbayani, who died of a heart attack while on a United Farm Workers picket line in 1967. As one *manong* (elderly Pilipino) said, "We should all commemorate Paolo Agbayani. He died for the people."



# Boston Asian students plan summer projects

UNITY, Vol. 2, No. 8, May 4-17, 1979

*Editor's Note: Asian American students have historically taken a keen interest in preserving and furthering Asian American culture. Their activism has brought them to participate in many Asian community programs and struggles. These have been important aspects of the Asian student movement. UNITY recently asked Asian students in the Cambridge/Boston area to write us about their work in the Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW) and the tutorial program of the Chinatown People's Progressive Association (CPPA), both in Boston Chinatown. Many Asian students plan to get involved in these and similar summer projects.*

**Boston** — We are Asian students from colleges in the Boston area. This past year, some of us worked with the Asian American Resource Workshop and the Chinatown People's Progressive Association tutorial program. Working in these areas helped broaden our perspective about Chinatown and the Asian movement. We think that as students we learned a lot and also made contributions. We plan to participate in the Workshop and CPPA activities this summer.

## Asian American Resource Workshop

The Resource Workshop is a group that promotes Asian American history and culture through photography, slide shows, films and art. It put out an Asian American



*This page from the AARW calendar depicts a Korean festival parade in Los Angeles. The calendar also contains major historical dates in Asian American history.*

calendar called "130 Years of Oppression and Resistance." It also taught an Asian American history class at Quincy community school near Chinatown.

This past year, some of us worked with the Workshop in developing a photo display on the history of Boston Chinatown for the East Coast Asian Student Union (ECASU) Asian American History Week.

Students have also used Workshop resources like slide shows and films for campus programs.

The culture and identity movement is particularly important to us, because Asian students are scattered throughout the East Coast, and many of us want to meet more Asians and learn more about Asian American history and our culture. ECASU just sponsored a successful Asian Culture Week in April, with events on over seven campuses. Culture has also been a theme at the big Asian student conferences, like the Asian Student Unity conference at Princeton last spring and the Asian American conference at Amherst last month.

Groups like the Resource Workshop are vehicles to understand and express the Asian American experience. The Workshop is unique as it is the only group in this area with Asian American resources. Through this kind of work, we can deepen our understanding of the past and present conditions of Asians in the U.S. We're not only learning about and maintaining our cultural heritage, but also developing it further to express and reflect our experience as Asian Americans. We also think that it's important to connect art and culture work to the struggles to improve the lives of people in the Asian communities, and political action against racism and oppression. For example, the Workshop is planning to picket the movie *Deer Hunter*, because of its racist portrayal of Vietnamese people.

Students are thinking of participating in various Workshop activities this summer. We are thinking of painting a big mural about the struggles of Asian people. The

Workshop is also planning summer workshops on photography, silkscreen and music. The music workshop will be led by an Asian American musician who is a member of the Sojourners. We'll also be working with the Workshop to develop more photo and slide resources for ECASU's work next fall.

### **Chinatown People's Progressive Association**

Last year some of us worked in the Chinatown People's Progressive Association tutorial program. The program was started two years ago. CPPA is a progressive mass organization in Boston Chinatown, which has serve-the-people programs, participates in community struggles and does support and educational work about People's China.

We help tutor elementary and junior high school kids every Saturday morning. We tutor all subjects and also help the junior high kids prepare for tests they have to take to get into the high school they want. We also take the kids on trips and spend time talking together. We try to give them new perspectives, opening a new world they don't see in Chinatown.

Some of the students working in the tutorial program come through the Community Service Committee of the Harvard Asian American Alliance (AAA is part of the ECASU network). There are Asian Americans, foreign students and foreign-born Asian students. Through our work in the tutoring program, we can use our skills to help the community. The program is also important in helping Asian students learn



about and from the community. Students can get to know the community as more than just a place to go eat. You see Chinatown from the perspective of the people who live there.

In the tutorial program we are trying to "serve the people" and put into practice what Chairman Mao said about students and youth integrating with the masses. Through working in CPPA's tutorial program, we've also learned about other issues and struggles CPPA is involved in, such as normalization of relations with China, and the struggle against Tufts Medical Center which is trying to tear down Chinatown.

CPPA plans to continue the tutorial

program through the summer. We plan to take the kids on more outings. CPPA may also have English or Cantonese language classes, and is encouraging students to participate, either as students or teachers.

\* \* \*

We'd say that getting students involved in Asian community and culture projects is a vital part of the Asian student movement. It concretely helps to build unity among different sectors and ages of Asian peoples, and strengthens the Asian movement overall. We're looking forward to the summer programs, and hope that other Asian students will also take up this kind of activity. □

### ECASU launches Chol Soo Lee support campaign

## Asian American Coffeehouse — a cultural experience

*UNITY*, Vol. 2, No. 17,  
Aug. 24–Sept. 6, 1979

**Boston** — On August 4, over 50 people — including Blacks, whites, Asian Americans and Asian foreign students, attended the "Asian American Coffeehouse," an evening cultural program held at Harvard-Radcliffe University. It was sponsored by the East Coast Asian Student Union (ECASU) and the Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW), an art and cul-



*Students and community workers dance the "tankobushi," a Japanese coal miners' dance, at the Asian American Coffeehouse on August 4. (UNITY photo)*

ture workshop in Boston's Chinatown.

One part of the program was devoted to educating people about Chol Soo Lee, a Korean immigrant youth imprisoned on California's death row. The ECASU speaker pointed out that Lee was framed for a San Francisco Chinatown murder in 1975, and later sentenced to death for a self-defense killing of a Nazi prison gang member.

The racist persecution he has endured and the national oppression he has faced as a Korean immigrant are experiences shared by other Asians on the East Coast. His conviction and sentencing has brought wide protest in Korean and other Asian communities from coast to coast.

After performing the "Ballad of Chol Soo Lee," ECASU members appealed to people to support the ECASU petition demanding freedom for Chol Soo Lee. At the event, the petition was used in conjunction with informational tables carrying leaflets, posters and copies of the record of the Chol Soo Lee song.

Other parts of the program also made an impression on the audience. Through songs like "Profits Enslave the World," adapted from a poem by Pilipino farm worker organizer Philip Vera Cruz, and "We Are the Children," and poems, many people learned about the conditions in the Asian communities. They agreed with the message of unity between students, workers, immigrants and women.

While sharing the Asian American experience, the program also promoted multinational unity. Carlene Robinson, a Black vocalist, performed to the accom-

paniment of musicians from the AARW. She sang "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," a well-known Black spiritual, and "Song for Azania," a revolutionary song about the struggle of Azanian (South African) people for self-determination and against the interference of the two superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Thunderous applause broke out after each song.

The "Asian American Coffeehouse" evening was a huge success. For the Asian American Resource Workshop, the event was a catalyst for its fund raising drive. The AARW has been working all summer fixing up its new loft/studio in Boston's Chinatown, and has just completed construction of the music room. Soon, other parts of the AARW's stage, gallery and layout area will be finished.

The ECASU students also learned from the event. New music, poetry and readings were performed by many students, and it provided a great boost for ECASU's future cultural work as well as a good example of a collective effort by students, community artists and friends.

The Asian American Resource Workshop is located at 27 Beach Street, 3F, Boston, MA 02111. Please call (617) 426-5313 for more information. □

# L.A. Chinatown mural project — students and community win a victory

UNITY, Vol. 2, No. 18, September 7-20, 1979

*The Asian/Pacific Student Union (APSU) has been active all summer organizing students through educational workshops, a newsletter, and programs such as the APSU Art Collective. Many of the projects stress joint work between Asian students and Asian community groups.*

*The Chinatown Mural Project and the APSU Pilipino History Project are two examples of students integrating with the working masses and participating in community struggles.*

**Los Angeles** — The finishing touches are being placed on the first community mural in Chinatown. The 70-foot long brightly colored mural stands at the main entrance to Chinatown. It depicts the history of Chinese in America from the days of the early immigrants who labored in the mines, fields and railroads, to the faces of the present Chinatown community.

Over 15 artists including high school students, members of the Asian/Pacific Student Union's (APSU) Art Collective, the Chinatown Progressive Association (CPA) and the Citywide Mural Project completed the mural in 10 weeks.

As with other examples of "people's art," the finished mural has emerged out of struggle. Students and community activists gathered hundreds of signatures from small business people, Asian American studies



**Asian youths in front of their nearly completed mural in Los Angeles Chinatown. (UNITY photo)**

programs, community agencies, the National Association of Chinese Americans, and other individuals to get permission for use of the wall which is owned by the Los Angeles County.

## **CCBA blocks project**

Although there was wide support for the project, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), composed of



leaders of the Chinese family and village associations, blocked the project five weeks after it started. Through its influence as one of the funding sources for the Chinatown Service Center (CSC) which occupies the site of the mural, the CCBA called a halt to the mural project.

The CCBA objected to the mural because they claimed the sketch was “too militant and would offend tourists and community people.” They didn’t like the original mural plan which included a depiction of the 1871 Chinatown Massacre where 19 Chinese were hung by a racist mob. They thought that a contemporary scene showing garment and restaurant workers in old Chinatown was too dirty and old.

Some CCBA and board members suggested down-playing the scenes of historic oppression and focusing on “successful” images of the present and future Chinese community including images of the White House, a Chinese businessman boarding a jet plane, and even a Chinese astronaut.

### **Community rallies support**

But the youth took a firm and patient stand and explained why it was important to show the true history of Chinese people. They painted large character posters expressing their views in English and Chinese and hung them from the scaffolds.

Other youth in the workshop continued gathering signatures for a petition supporting the original sketch of the mural. Over 700 signatures were finally collected.

In the face of growing community support, and after some minor adjustments were made in the sketch, the CCBA agreed

to let the mural work continue.

Underlying the conflict over the mural was a political struggle between the new but growing progressive community forces and a few diehards in the CCBA. Some of the leaders in the CCBA continue to promote the status quo in Chinatown — the sweatshops, the oppressive working conditions, gambling and other criminal activities — and speak only of Chinatown’s “commercial prosperity.”

Through its business and political ties with the Kuomintang regime in Taiwan as well as its traditional “go-between” status with City Hall, the CCBA has historically tried to lord over Chinatown. But the community is changing with new organizations challenging those reactionary diehard leaders of the CCBA.

The struggle to save the mural project points out the important contributions youth can make to progressive struggles in the community. The new painting stands as a concrete symbol not only of Chinese American history, but also of the growing strength of the progressive forces in the Chinese community. □



**UNITY** newspaper with the . . .

# **Asian/Pacific Islanders** news supplement



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