

CAAV

VOICE

Newsletter of the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence

Organizing Communities to Fight Police Brutality



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The Racial Justice Committee

Fighting Police Brutality

The Racial Justice Committee (RJC), formed in Spring 1996, brings new fire to what has been CAAAV's core work for the past decade. RJC combines community organizing and leadership development with activism, coalition-building, and policy analysis to take on institutional violence in one of its worst forms: police brutality.

Rampant police brutality—unrecognized by state institutions and law enforcement agencies—represents the most visible form of violence perpetrated against Asian communities in New York City. Government agents have consistently sanctioned everything from verbal harassment to murder of Asian people by its "peace officers." For this reason and because many if not most of the Asian victims of police abuse are immigrants or working class, CAAAV sees police brutality not as isolated incidents perpetrated by racist/sexist cops, but as existing on a continuum enforced by institutionalized racism and oppression.

From Case-by-case Advocacy To Collective Organizing

The Racial Justice Committee jettisons CAAAV's traditional case-by-case advocacy. Despite CAAAV's success at bringing public attention to instances of police brutality and the victories of getting falsified criminal charges against police brutality victims dropped, CAAAV had been frustrated for some time with the case-by-case "service" approach to victim advocacy.

When police brutality "victims" came to CAAAV for help, CAAAV staff and active members worked with them on their cases, developing knowledge of the criminal justice system as well as skills in media relations, organizing rallies, running petition drives, and more. But after their cases were resolved, there was no structure for individuals' further contact with CAAAV. In the meantime, police brutality continued as usual.

With the new RJC approach, committee members focus on community organizing through working collectively with communities, particularly individuals who have been victims of police brutality.

Former "victims," using skills they have developed working on their own cases, become advocates for new cases. They are able to use and develop skills like talking to the media, writing press releases, and conducting publicity for rallies. They provide mutual support and leadership through working together. And through their work, they develop their analyses as to the causes and contributing factors of police brutality.

RJC's first meetings included a large assembly of active CAAAV members as well as recent victims of police abuse. After a few meetings, RJC members came up with three main initiatives: 1) advocating for victims and continuing to keep constant pressure on the New York Police Department and the District Attorney's office; 2) organizing Racial Justice Day together with the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights; and 3) working in coalition with other community organizations to get a Congressional hearing on police brutality.



Photograph: Lillian Lee



Immigrant Asian Women Become Community Leaders

RJC was formed as the Yong Xin Huang case drew to a close. Huang, a 16-year-old Chinese youth, was shot in the back of the head and killed at point-blank range by NYPD Officer Steven Mizrahi in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn.

Yong Xin's sisters, Joyce and Qing Lan, became active in the campaign to bring their younger brother's killer to justice. Now, they also work on newer cases, providing emotional and moral support, organizational experience, and help with translation.

Other women, victims of police brutality themselves, have increasingly become vocal participants and integral decision-makers within RJC and have furthered RJC's goal of developing how we see anti-Asian violence, in order to better understand and show how sexism can be a part of racial violence. Susan Chan, for example, remains with CAAAV long after her case has been fought. Throughout her trial, she had garnered community support, and with the help of CAAAV formed the autonomous Coalition for the Advancement of Police Accountability (CAPA) in south Brooklyn.

According to Susan, "Through CAAAV I met the other women. With the Coalition, we already are busy with full-time jobs. We had articles in Chinese newspapers, with our phone number. Several people called. Also through Chinese radio, we gave information to the Chinese community."

Other members of RJC include Kni Fang Lo and Ngan Oi Lee, who, like Susan Chan, are Chinese women who have recently been brutalized by the police in south Brooklyn. Many CAAAV members do not speak Cantonese, and some of the women speak little English. Fortunately, Tracy Tang, a CAAAV summer intern, Joyce and Qing Lan Huang, as well as Susan Chan have acted as helpful translators and facilitators.

RJC Mobilizes

On June 2, 1996, in conjunction with CAPA, RJC organized a town hall meeting in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn to educate local Chinese residents on police abuse

and victims' rights. The forum, which received support from religious leaders who lent church space, drew a predominantly Chinese audience, including a number of victims who showed great enthusiasm and interest in challenging police brutality. CAAAV and CAPA provided legal advice and presented mock educational skits.

Momentum increased visibly after two new cases entered the committee's agenda in late summer:

- In July, WC, a Chinese man, was assaulted and wrongfully arrested by an officer from Chinatown's 5th Precinct.
- Around the same time, a group of Chinese male youth were harassed by police from the same precinct. One of them, JW, was detained and later brutalized by an officer (see "Local Incidents").

In response to these cases, RJC organized a rally in front of the 5th Precinct on September 15th, 1996. A delegation of committee members and victims met with Commanding Officer Thomas Chan later that day. His hostile reaction and the general attitude of 5th Precinct police officers generated more energy and anger from RJC members and the community.

At a post-rally dinner at the Hnang family house, members of RJC held a follow-up meeting. The energy level was high, now that the victim members of RJC had a visible nemesis—Deputy Inspector Thomas Chan—to contend with. Moreover, members appeared more confident, now that they were dealing directly with a police precinct within the Chinese community, as well as the Chinese press, and seemed more confident working within their own community.

Susan Chan noted recently, "Most Asians won't fight back. Maybe it's the language problem. They are too quiet. Silence is not golden. You have to stand up for rights I'd like the police to know that the Asians will fight back."

RJC is currently planning a Defense Campaign for JW, who is presently awaiting trial on wrongful charges (see "Local Incidents"). The campaign includes organizing more community forums like the town hall meeting in south Brooklyn and a series of informative skits and presentations to gain public support and awareness for JW's case.

Coalition Building: Racial Justice Day 1997

Another goal of RJC is to play a greater and more visible role in the third annual Racial Justice Day march and rally organized by the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights (NCPRR), in order to strengthen CAAAV's coalition work with Black and Latino organizations who are combating racially-motivated police violence against their communities.

Though Asian participation in Racial Justice Day was limited last year, this year RJC is determined to bring out a much larger, more visible Asian contingent. Too often, discussions of racist police brutality leave anti-Asian violence out of the picture. Asian presence on Racial Justice Day—which was first organized by NCPRR in 1995 to commemorate the police killing of Manuel Mayi—will add an analysis of racial violence against the Asian community to the agenda.

Policy and Advocacy Work

RJC has established a growing database of police brutality cases. The database will help CAAAV to educate communities, public officials, and the broader public about the prevalence and severity of anti-Asian violence.

It is also researching campaign donations made by the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA) throughout the past decade to District Attorney's offices in New York City. CAAAV has long contended that the PBA and the judicial system work together to keep police officers immune from criminal prosecution. Statistics like these will help prove our point.

RJC is working with other community organizations to gain a Congressional hearing on police brutality. CAAAV believes that anti-police brutality work must happen on a number of levels. To be effective, CAAAV must remain firmly grounded in work with Asian immigrant communities, who are the primary targets of anti-Asian violence. At the same time, police brutality is an institution that demands attention and solution on a national level as well. CAAAV believes that to be effective, policy work must grow directly out of direct contact with community needs and experiences.

Local Incidents



Illustrations: Debi Ray-Chaudhuri

Chinatown, July 1996: NYPD Officers Beat Up Chinatown Youth

On July 19, 1996, 13 Chinese youth were harassed by 5th Precinct police in Chinatown. One of them, Kanog Lu, was severely brutalized while detained at the police station. Kanog Lu and his friends were hanging out at Sara-Roosevelt Park when officers from the 5th Precinct approached them, searched them with no probable cause, then shoved them out of the park. When two of the youth tried to note the officers' badge numbers, one officer yelled, "You want my number? You want my fucking number?" then arrested them. As a group of youth were walking away, another officer (badge #53) yelled, "You want my fucking number too!" He then slammed one of the youth's head against the police car five times and punched him in the crotch. The officers arrested him also and the 3 arrested youth were charged with "littering." Later that night, Kanog Lu and his friends encountered more officers from the 5th Precinct who followed them in their car. One officer (badge # 31669) got out of the car, pushed Kanog from the back and said, "Walk faster!" When Kanog turned around to stop the officer from pushing him, the officer handcuffed Kanog, slammed his head against a newsstand, then maced him. While Kanog was detained at 5th Precinct, another officer, who had taken off his badge, slammed Kanog's head against a wall numerous

times. Kanog suffered serious head injuries and faces wrongful criminal charges as a result of the incident.

In response to a rally in front of the 5th Precinct by Chinese police brutality victims on September 15, Deputy Inspector Thomas Chan of the 5th Precinct wrongfully defamed Kanog Lu as a "gang member" to undermine the community's efforts to raise awareness around police brutality. When members of the Coalition for the Advancement of Police Accountability (CAPA) and the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence met with Thomas Chan and confronted him about his irresponsible characterization of Kanog Lu in the Chinese newspapers, Chan failed to provide any evidence on which to base his statement. Lu faces a trial in December; CAPA and CAAAV are mounting a defense campaign for Kanog Lu.

Chinatown, July 1996: Chinese Man Calls Police for Help — and They Beat Him

On July 27, 1996, around 11 a.m., WC was wrongfully arrested and brutalized by officers of the 5th Precinct on Grand Street in Chinatown. WC and a newsstand vendor called on the police to mediate a verbal argument after WC tried to return a defective telephone card he had bought from the vendor who refused to give him a refund. Three officers from the 5th Precinct arrived at the scene, but instead of listening to what happened or trying to mediate, they ordered WC to

leave. When WC tried to explain that he needed either a new card or a refund, one of the officers (badge #19633) said "Fuck this Chinese guy," and pushed him away. WC said, "Why do you fight me? Don't touch me!" The officer and his partner responded by pushing WC against the police car and slamming his head against the car. When the officers saw that WC's head was bleeding, they immediately shoved him into the police car and called a supervisor, who arrived at the scene and took WC to the 5th Precinct. At the Precinct, WC was denied translations. WC was sent to central booking, where he was held two days. He again asked for translation services, but was repeatedly denied. WC was wrongfully charged with disorderly conduct.

CAA AV conducted a witness search and found 10 witnesses who saw the incident but are afraid to testify because they fear retaliation from the police. Two witnesses have bravely stepped forward to testify.

Brooklyn, May 1996: Chinese Woman Calls Police to Mediate Landlord-Tenant Dispute—and Gets Maced and Beaten by NYPD

On May 27, 1996, KFL and MYL were abused and wrongfully arrested by officers of the 61st Precinct. During a landlord-tenant dispute, KFL, and her friend MYL (who had come to aid KFL by translating) called on the police 3 times

to mediate. Each time the police arrived at the scene, they refused to hear KFL and MYL's side of the story, although it was they who had called the police.

When KFL and MYL tried to explain their side of the story, one officer tried to push KFL out of her own home. MYL took pictures of the officer's action, but when the officer saw her, he told her to shut up, called her a "Chinese animal," and handcuffed her. He screamed, "Bitch, you want it this way? [You] try to take pictures of me? You Chinese animals come to Brooklyn and take all the houses!" He then pushed MYL to the floor, sprayed her with mace and twisted her arm behind her back. KFL and MYL were then arrested and taken to the police station.

While at the 61st Precinct, one officer continued to call MYL and KFL "bitches." He told them to take out their money and confiscated it, saying, "This is drug money—we'll keep it." MYL was given a desk appearance ticket for disorderly conduct and released after a few hours. MYL, however, was further detained at the Precinct, where an officer took an extra mug shot of her and said he will keep it in his pocket to show all the police officers in New York so that they will all know her. Another officer shouted at MYL, "I am the one who maced you. My badge number is 11066. What are you gonna do about it!" Because of the pain that the mace was causing her, MYL was taken to the hospital where she stayed for more than 12 hours, then was wrongfully booked for attacking an officer and transferred to central booking where she remained for two more days.

While KFL's charge has been dis-

missed and she plans to file a civil suit against the city of NY, MYL still faces pending charges. Both women have joined the Coalition for the Advancement of Police Accountability and led a rally against police brutality in front of 5th Precinct in the summer.

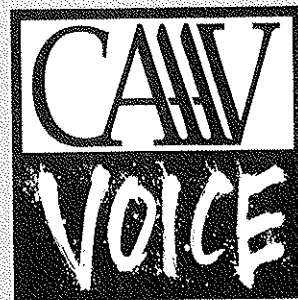
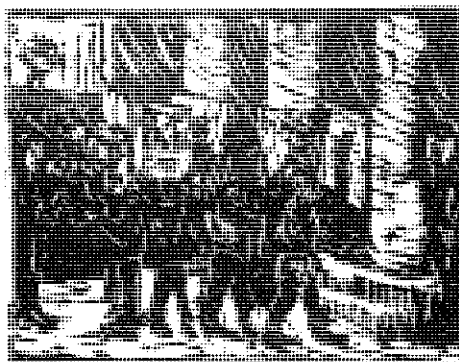
Chelsea, September 1996: South Asian Deli Owner Faces Racial Harassment

MS has been operating the Eat Again Deli—a deli frequented by South Asian cab drivers—for the past 2 years, and has been the target of racial harassment by a woman known to MS only by her first name, Doris. Doris is a local resident, who has in the past threatened MS and his partner that she will "Close down [MS's] deli because [she doesn't] like Indians." On one occasion, Doris threw dog feces into MS's deli.

Doris has also filed frivolous complaints about MS's deli to numerous city agencies—including the local police, the Sanitation Department, the Health Department, the Agriculture and Markets Department—and to the local community board as well as to MS's landlord. All of the agencies—some after thorough investigation of MS's deli—have not found anything to corroborate Doris's complaints.

In September 1996, as a result of Doris's numerous complaints, the Buildings Department inspected MS's deli, and concluded that the awning outside his store is too large. The Buildings Department ordered that MS change the awning. According to MS, the same awning hung above the store for years even before he bought the store. Also, the local police have come to MS's deli on numerous occasions, upon receiving false reports about a gunman on his premises. MS suspects the false calls to the police are yet another design of Doris to further harass him.

CAA AV helped MS in gathering petitions from patrons of his deli and other local residents in support of him, and attended a community board meeting to notify board members of the harassment.



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Repeat Offenders: Police Brutality Continues in Chinatown

Police violence in Asian communities continues to escalate, yet many people still do not know—cannot believe—that police brutality is a problem Asians face. The mainstream media, which plays a big role in forming public opinion, would rather showcase Asians as a passive, quietly-ascending-the-ladder-to-success model minority, than as people who face racial and economic injustice and have a long history of fighting against systemic problems. When it does witness mass acts of resistance, the mainstream media never fails to be amazed. With each incident of police brutality against a person of Asian descent, at every rally or public forum, the media never ceases to ask, “Is this a new trend?” and reports on our struggles as a novelty—as if the movement against police violence had never existed in Asian communities.

Illustration: Jee Mee Kim

Media suffers amnesia

The media response was much the same 20 years ago when 15,000 Asian Americans protested against police brutality in 1975. When Peter Yew, a 27-year-old engineer, was arrested and beaten both inside and outside Chinatown's 5th Precinct after innocently witnessing a traffic accident, Chinese- and other Asian Americans organized a massive protest in response to Yew's treatment. 15,000 people, mostly Chinese Americans, joined together and attended a demonstration at City Hall on May 19, 1975. Afterwards, more than 2,000 people blocked traffic on East Broadway for over four hours. The mainstream media marveled at the demonstrations. The New York Post recognized a new "spirit of militancy in Chinatown"—a change from the old perception of the "introverted" model minority community. Indeed, the mainstream media seems to suffer from bouts of willful amnesia when it comes to the history of Asian American activism—militant and direct.

A legacy of police brutality

Police violence and the fight against it are nothing new in Asian communities. After the beating of Peter Yew, two subsequent incidents continued to draw attention to police brutality in Chinatown. In June 1975, four Chinese youth in a car were harassed by the police. After a spontaneous demonstration in front of the 5th Precinct, police beat protesters, injuring ten people. Two years later, Pei Wah Chang, a 44-year-old mother of four who had come to Chinatown to shop, was abused by an NYPD officer after a traffic dispute. The officer pulled Chang's hair, threw her to the ground, and pushed his knee in her back until she fainted. When her husband protested, the officer pulled a gun to Mr. Chang's chest. Mrs. Chang spent the night in jail after being treated in the hospital, and was booked on charges of assault and disorderly conduct. A demonstration on September 28, 1977 drew nearly 400 people who braved a cold rain to demand that

charges against Chang be dropped and that the officers be indicted. Eventually Mrs. Chang's charges were dropped, but as often is the case today, the guilty officers were never punished.

When protesters demanded the ouster of the 5th Precinct commanding officer in response to these incidents, Captain Edward McCabe was quick to deny that police brutality was a problem and explained the protests as a result of "some resentment [in the community] because of gambling arrests" Instead of addressing community concerns through internal investigations, McCabe evoked the popular stereotype of Chinatown as a lawless gambling den, criminalizing community members in order to delegitimize their protests for justice and in order to uphold the "Blue Wall of Silence."

Cosmetic changes as brutality continues

This strategy of abiding the veritable crime of police abuse by evoking "criminal elements" in the community is used to this day. Today, however, this strategy is carried out by Asian cops who have climbed the career ladder of the NYPD. In 1996, more than 20 years later, the 5th Precinct has gone through some cosmetic changes. It has a visibly increased number of Chinese American officers and a Chinese American community relations officer, and the commanding officer is Deputy Inspector Thomas Chan, the 2nd highest ranking Chinese American in New York City law enforcement. But this precinct is essentially no different than it was 20 years ago. Police violence continues to plague Chinatown and the 5th Precinct's tactics in responding to allegations of police misconduct has not changed.

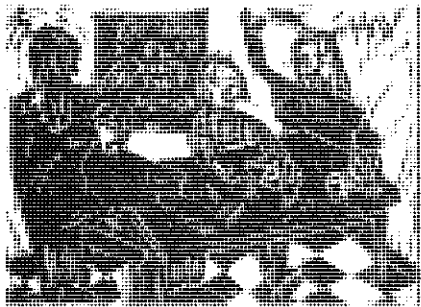
On September 15 1996, CAAAV held a demonstration in front of the 5th Precinct to protest the treatment of "WC" and the 13 Chinatown youths who were brutalized by 5th Precinct police officers this past summer (see "Local Incidents"). Thomas Chan, who was informed about the demonstration as

well as the complaints, chose not to be present at the precinct to address community concerns. Instead, he attended the San Genaro festival in Little Italy during the demonstration. He did, however, speak with Chinese newspaper reporters after the demonstration, and wrongfully defamed one of the youth who were abused by his officers as a "gang member" and denounced CAAAV as an organization that "supports gangs." Like McCabe, Chan criminalized the protesters by evoking racist stereotypes rather than addressing the community's concerns. One thing that has changed in the last 20 years is that white racists like McCabe have been replaced by Chinese American officers who do the dirty work for them: their faces cover up the racism inherent in the NYPD.

Strikingly, all the incidents, then and now, took place on the street, in public places. Despite the fact that all incidents occurred in plain view, no officer has ever been prosecuted, demonstrating the lack of respect the police as well as the judicial system feels for Chinatown residents who are often working class immigrants. Chinatown was formed as a response to the hostile, racist American society that the Chinese encountered upon their arrival to the U.S. Believing themselves hidden from the mainstream public eye, police officers enter the community and abuse its members.

Despite the fact that the 5th Precinct now has a Chinese commanding officer, Tommy Chan has done nothing to solve the problem of police brutality in Chinatown. It is clear that none of the cosmetic solutions—such as a Chinese commanding officer, "community liaisons," or a token increase of Asian Americans on the force—is enough to address the problem of state-sanctioned violence against Asians in Chinatown, or any other communities of color in New York City. Asian American resistance and organizing against police brutality has had a long history. Especially today, with rising anti-immigrant sentiment, Giuliani's racist policies, and increasing reports of police abuse, we need to continue ever more militantly to root out police violence from our communities.

Community Organizing



Youth Leadership Project Summer Program a Success

After months of planning, preparation, and outreach, the Youth Leadership Project (YLP)'s Summer Program proved a rewarding success. The ten Southeast Asian youths in Fordham, the Bronx, whom CAAAV hired for the eight-week program, successfully completed the intensive leadership and community organizing training provided by CAAAV. Training included topics such as Asian American History, Environmental Justice, Conflict Resolution, and the meaning of "community." At the same time, the YLP youths implemented a four-week tutoring program for children in the community.

On August 17, the youths planned and organized a community event and fundraiser featuring Cambodian and Vietnamese dance and fashion presentations, singing, and homemade food. For this event, titled "Monsoon: The Rise of Southeast Asian Youth," the YLP youth outreached to their community, and got many other youths to participate in the planning and production of the program.

YLP ended the Summer Program by identifying an issue—housing—which they believe is in the most urgent need for organizing around in the Southeast Asian community in the Bronx. Five of the youths hired by CAAAV, along with other youth volunteers, have developed a workplan for the Fall and Winter to address the housing conditions faced by Southeast Asians. The youth also held a teach-in on the impact of recent welfare and immigration legislation. [Next issue: A special focus on YLP]

KCOC Sponsors Events On Sexuality In The Korean American Community

In July 1996, CAAAV's Korean Community Organizing Committee (KCOC) organized a workshop in Flushing on homophobia in the Korean community. Designed for organizers in the Korean American community, the workshop opened discussion on the importance of the struggle against heterosexism for organizers who may approach issues primarily on the basis of racial discrimination and/or economic oppression. The event was highly successful and well attended. Participants echoed each other in calls for more forums....

Then, on November 2, 1996, KCOC co-sponsored an event with Korean gay organization **Chinkusai** and **Audre Lorde Project**. The forum was held at the Manhattan offices of the Korean American Association (HanInHwe), and included clips from professional video documentaries on issues facing lesbian, gay, and transgendered people in Korea, as well as a panel presentation and discussion period. Panelists included Joo Hyun Kang, Executive Director of Audre Lorde Project;

Professor Pauline Park; and Korean gay/lesbian activists from Chicago. Their presentations combined personal accounts of experiences as lesbian, gay, and transgendered Korean Americans, as well as political discussion on heterosexism, homophobia, and gay-bashing within the Korean community in New York. Kang stressed the fact that this event was largely in response to an incident in October in which Korean gay men were severely beaten by Korean men in Koreatown, Manhattan. The completely bilingual event drew a large crowd spanning the 1st-, 1.5-, and 2nd generations.

PCP Holds Workshop for Filipina Domestic Workers

Last June CAAAV's Southeast Asian Organizing Committee founded the Philippine Community Project (PCP) to explore the organizing possibilities within the Philippine community in New York City as well as Jersey City, NJ. Jersey City has the largest enclave of Filipinos on the East Coast—20,000 according to the 1990 U.S. Census.

After initial meetings with domestic workers, a disturbing picture of workers marginalized by gender, race, immigration status, and workplace isolation emerged. Already there are advocates in the Filipina domestic worker community who have assisted other workers through their own time and resources. These worker advocates are the best evidence of the domestic workers' desire for self-empowerment, and they expressed interest in working with PCP members at this initial stage to continue and expand their work. PCP will work together with domestic workers to find means to guarantee workplace rights, support, and empowerment.

Illustration: Debi Roy-Chaudhuri

National Watch

Former U.S. Military Serviceman Convicted in Slayings of Asian Wives

A Former U.S. Army Master Sergeant, Jack Wayne Reeves, was convicted on August 19, 1996 in Meridian, Texas, of murdering his Filipina bride, Emilita Reeves. Already convicted in January of killing a former wife, Myong, who was Korean, Reeves was sentenced to 99 years in prison. Emilita (Villa) Reeves, from Basak,

Cebu, who married Jack Reeves after meeting him through a mail-order catalog introduction service, disappeared in 1994 shortly after sending a letter telling relatives she would leave her husband because he was abusing her. Police found her remains near Lake Whitney, the same place where Myong Reeves died in 1986 in what Jack Reeves claimed was an accidental drowning.

The family of Myong (Chong) Reeves, whom Jack Reeves married in the 1970s in South Korea where he was stationed, viewed the death of Myong Reeves with suspicion. No autopsy was performed because the body was cremated. Police

who investigated her death said he boasted about his "exploits with Korean women."

Sharon Reeves, his second wife, died of a shotgun wound to the chest in 1978. Her death was ruled a suicide until last year, during the investigation of Emilita Reeves's disappearance. Sharon Reeves's body was exhumed and found to be inconsistent with suicide. Jack Reeves was then charged and convicted of her murder.

Although all such marriages are not abusive, the crimes of Jack Reeves are part of a pattern of abuse and violence experienced by many Asian women who marry white American men, often former military servicemen.

Staff Changes

CAAAY Welcomes Executive Director



CAAAY welcomes Jane Songes-Rai as its new Executive Director. Jane has been one of CAAAY's most active members for the past three years. Her vision, energy, creativity, and commitment have been a steady source of inspiration to other members, while her exemplary leadership and organizing skills have helped get several new projects off the ground. Throughout, Jane's critical thinking, energy, and organizational abilities have set standards for CAAAY work. Jane was a founding member of the Southeast Asian Organizing Collective, the Youth Leadership Project, and the Women Workers Committee. She was appointed to the Board of Directors in 1994, where she has been active in fundraising and personnel development. As a Steering Committee member, she has often opened the organization to outside staff and guests. Jane has also participated extensively in CAAAY activities, from fundraising events to educational forums to community rallies, where her leadership and follow-through have proven invaluable on countless occasions. Besides her work with CAAAY, Jane has a number of other community and professional experiences. She comes to us from a position as

Academic Program Coordinator for the Asian American Studies Program at New York University. She has served as a board member at the New York Asian Women's Center and is an advocate at St. Luke's Rape Crisis Intervention Program. She has taught courses in Asian American Studies at NYU, Hunter, and Bard College. CAAAY welcomes Jane as a staff member with enthusiasm and confidence.

Farewell to Anamya

After serving two years as CAAAY's first Executive Director, Anamya Bhattacharjee left in November to depart for India, where she plans to work with grassroots women's organizations. Combining steady guidance with a commitment to collective process, Anamya led CAAAY to grow on all levels. Anamya's political and organizational leadership enabled CAAAY to develop a more systematic approach to its work and an institutionalized and regularized process of political discussion and decision-making by active members. Anamya was a backbone member, participating in all aspects of CAAAY's work. Her professionalism brought focus and efficiency to the organization while her spirit and commitment to social and economic justice kept CAAAY united in countless struggles. We shall miss her as we bid her warm, fond, farewell, wish her the best in her work in India, and look forward to her return to New York City.



Photograph: Lilian Lee

CAAAY in Solidarity

Second Mumia Walkathon Raises Awareness and Funds

The Asian Ad Hoc Committee for Mumia, the Coalition to Free Mumia Abu Jamal, ProLibertad, and the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence sponsored the Second Annual Walkathon for Mumia on September 14, 1996. The event was held to raise awareness and money for the celebrated case of Mumia Abu Jamal, a former member of the Black Panther Party who was framed for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer in 1982. He is currently on Death Row. The walkathon also commemorated the 1971 massacre of prisoners in Attica.

The march covered parts of Harlem, including el barrio and the Columbia University area. In the opening speech, Espe Martel of ProLibertad stressed the importance of active resistance in a time of right-wing dominance; Al-Jundi of the Attica Brothers connected the repression that took place in Attica with the continued resistance

of political prisoners. Poongmul drummers from the Center for Korean American Culture and a Japanese saxophonist lead the march while a spirited, diverse contingent of walkers passed out leaflets along the route, chanting slogans and talking to spectators.

After the two hour walk, marchers returned to the Harlem State Office Building, where speakers from the four organizations gave brief speeches relating to Mumia and similar struggles within their communities.

The \$1000 raised from the event will be used to further support work on the free Mumia campaign. As of September 18, 1996, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court reopened Mumia's case, with Mumia's attorney, Leonard Weinglass, trying to introduce the testimony of witness Veronica Jones. The people await the decision.

CAAAY Joins Coordinadora Immigrants Rights March

On October 12, 1996, CAAAY members joined thousands of activists in Washington D.C. for Coordinadora, an Immigrants Rights March organized by a national coalition of Latino and other organizations. The streets were flooded with people who had come

from across the country supporting seven main demands, including an end to affirmative action cutbacks, substantial minimum-wage increases, amnesty for undocumented immigrants, and repeals of recent anti-immigrant legislation. According to some sources, the projected turnout was 100,000.

As immigrant communities struggle to proactively address the legislative assault on immigrants (most recently the devastating provisions of the Welfare Reform Law), the October 12 March was a necessary action, but clearly only one step. The Latino community made a powerful, unified statement against the hostile climate. Many have identified this march as the first nationwide mobilization of multi-national Latino communities. Asian, African, and other non-Latino immigrant community members were relatively few. There was, however, a strong New York City presence from Latino and other communities of color, including CAAAY, SAKHI for South Asian Women, the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, and Latino Workers Center. CAAAY was present to show solidarity with the other marchers and support for the demands. CAAAY members also visited the AIDS Memorial Quilt in front of the Capitol.

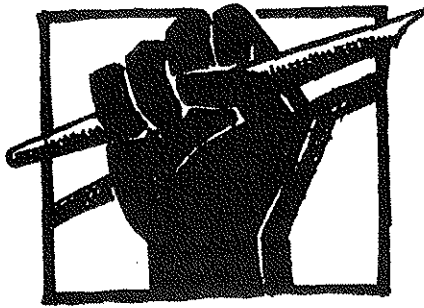


Illustration: Jee Mee Kim

Asians and Affirmative Action: Our Fight

People of color—particularly the poor—are under siege. Therefore, it is no accident that affirmative action is under attack. In California there is no longer affirmative action in admissions, employment and contracting in the University of California system. In November Proposition 209 (the so-called “California Civil Rights Initiative”) passed, potentially ending affirmative action for the entire state. On a national level, the Clinton Administration wants to “mend” affirmative action—no doubt the same way it “reformed” welfare. The Supreme Court has signaled its hostility to the principles of affirmative action in a number of recent decisions including those having an impact on the number of people of color in the United States Congress. We are under siege.

It is no accident that in California, where people of color will soon be a statistical majority, a ferocious campaign to deny us political and economic power is being waged. Anti-Asian as well as anti-Latino sentiment is expressed in initiatives like Proposition 187 which deny basic health and education services to poor immigrant communities. Anti-Asian violence in that state is rampant with the anti-Asian incidents up 80% in Southern California alone. One only need recall the images of a truckload of Latinos being mercilessly beaten on the roadside after being stopped by the highway patrol, or the televised killing of Hong Il Kim by police in the parking lot of a minimal, or the brutal stabbing death of Thien Minh Ly at the hands of a white supremacist who was looking to “kill a Jap.” We are under siege.

It is also no accident that the attack on affirmative action is coming at a time when “welfare reform” is the new political buzzword to strip away all hope for the poor and particularly for their children. And it’s no accident that hidden within “welfare reform” are the most vicious attacks against immigrants in recent memory—denying Supplemental Security Income and basic human services such as health care. We are under siege.

What is more distressing is that some Asians have allowed themselves to be used to perpetuate this attack by trumpeting that affirmative action somehow does not serve Asians and is thus, discriminatory. To be used as a “model minority mascot” in this way is more than distressing. In this time of crisis it is disgusting. First, as a factual matter they are wrong—the major gains made by Asians certainly in the professions has been through the climate engendered, if not the direct result, of affirmative action. In San Francisco, for example, after a court-ordered affirmative action plan the number of Asian Pacific firefighters went from four to 174. Secondly, Asians do concretely suffer directly from racial discrimination. For example, in San Francisco Asian contractors in the late 1980s while constituting 20% of the construction contractors received less than 1% of the city’s overall contracts.

But even if Asians received no benefit from affirmative action, the fight must be ours. We must fight for it because it is part of the fight against the same racial climate that fosters anti-Asian violence, the same racial climate that seeks to disenfranchise and impoverish immigrants, the same racial climate that allows Senator Alphonse D’Amato to mock Judge Ito’s racial background. We are all under siege and those Asians who perpetuate it should know that they are no brother or sister of mine—and of yours—regardless of race.

— Chris Iijima

Assault on Public Universities

On November 18, students from around the state met on the SUNY-Binghamton campus to strategize against increasing institutional violence on public universities.

This meeting came in the wake of last month’s police riot on the Binghamton campus. When a broad coalition of students at Binghamton attempted to enter an illegally-closed meeting to protest the dissolution of the student position of Vice President for Multicultural Affairs, public safety officers panicked and began to pepper-spray and assault them. Several students were hospitalized. In reaction, students have held rallies and teach-ins across campus and recently staged a week-long takeover of the administration building to denounce the university’s violence and demand accountability for those responsible.

Such acts of physical violence against students must be seen in the context of ever-growing budget cuts against public education. Students are bracing for even more brutal attacks in 1997. Universities will again be targeted for budget reductions in order to fill in the expected revenue gaps from the third (and most profound) phase of Governor Pataki’s tax cuts. However, unlike last year, there are no statewide elections and politicians are less likely to be restrained in their attempt to destroy the public sector. With parallel cuts in federal spending for jobs, health care, and welfare, any state reductions will have devastating consequences for many students.

Budget cuts will have a disproportionate impact on the CUNY system, which serves a student body that is majority people of color and one-half women (28,000 of whom are on welfare). Cutbacks in ESL and remedial classes will especially affect non-native students, who will comprise over half of next year’s incoming class. According to the chair of the Faculty Senate, CUNY has already decided to fire 800 faculty in anticipation of state budget cuts. Instead of teachers, CUNY will hire more than 400 new security guards. With schools like Binghamton and City College seriously considering proposals to arm their campus security officers, public universities will begin to look more and more like Riker’s Island and other penal institutions where the majority of inmates are of color (prisons are the fastest growing industry in New York and other states).

— John Choe

The opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily represent CAAAV’s position. Voice readers are encouraged to submit pieces for consideration.

Struggles For Justice

Judge Acquits Cop in Killing of Anthony Baez

It was an innocent game of touch football among the Baez brothers in front of their parents' home on the night of December 22, 1994. The ball accidentally bounced on the roofs of two patrol cars parked nearby. The result: Anthony Baez was killed.

When the ball hit the patrol car, Officer Francis X. Livoti was enraged. He stormed out of the car, berated the brothers, and arrested the youngest Baez brother, David. When Anthony protested the arrest, Livoti seized him in an illegal chokehold and asphyxiated him to death.

Calling this incident "unnecessary and avoidable," Acting Justice Gerald Sheindlin of the State Supreme Court increased the injustice by acquitting Livoti in a non-jury trial on October 7, 1996, even after chastising him for his "rude, confrontational attitude and raw disrespect." In the face of the uproar that his decision created—not only in the Latino community which had been demonstrating against police brutality and for Livoti's conviction for two years, but also in judicial circles—Judge Sheindlin stated that the prosecution had not proved that choking was the cause of death and that Mr. Baez, an asthmatic, had suffered a fatal asthma attack during the struggle with Livoti.

However, during the trial, although three of the four officers who were witnesses testified that Anthony continued to struggle even after being subdued by Livoti, the fourth police officer, Daisy Boria, contradicted their testimony by indicating she did not see Mr. Baez resist arrest but found him handcuffed and motionless, face down on the sidewalk. Furthermore, Anthony's father, Ramon Baez, testified that he and his other sons saw Anthony go limp after the chokehold was applied. Officer Livoti has a record of 11 complaints against him for excessive force, including chokeholds, and is also facing trial on charges of choking and slapping a teenager in 1993.

U.S. Attorney in Manhattan Mary Jo White indicated her office will investigate the evidence to determine if Livoti should be charged with violating Mr. Baez's civil rights.

After the verdict, shocked members of the Latino community and the Baez family,

sitting in the courtroom, erupted in anger. Infuriated protesters demonstrated outside. "The evidence is there to indict Livoti, to bring him to trial, and to put him in jail," Richard Perez of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights said to the New York Times. "The judge was just looking for a way out, and the D.A. gave him a way out."

The stunned and grief-stricken family's hopes for some semblance of justice hang on the federal investigation and on the \$48 million civil suit filed against Livoti, the NYPD, and the City.

Latino Workers Center Fighting for Latino Immigrant Workers Rights

Latino immigrant workers are among the hardest hit by the savage legislative changes instituted in 1996—the Welfare Reform Act, the Counter-Terrorism Act, and the Immigration Law, responsible for a 50% rise in workplace raids conducted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the NYPD. Dire effects are already being felt by Latino immigrants and undocumented immigrants, according to the Latino Workers Center. For example, many Dominican immigrants who returned to the Dominican Republic to vote in this summer's election were prevented from re-entering the U.S., accused of minor crimes allegedly committed years ago; and numerous arrests are resulting from the INS's new crackdown on businesses employing Latino immigrants.

The Latino Workers Center is holding educational events throughout the city to provide workers with information about the changes and immigrant rights vis-à-vis the INS, and to initiate discussions about the need to organize on a community-wide basis to combat anti-immigrant policies.

Churches are playing an important role in this strategy. The Workers Center helped build an immigrants rights march in New York City on November 2, 1996, organized by a group of Catholic priests. Center representatives conduct workshop series at churches in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Manhattan, where participants are encouraged to develop workers' committees at their churches to continue educational programming and to organize against anti-immi-

grant attacks and workplace abuses.

The Workers Center continues its work around non-payment of wages, below-minimum wages, and unpaid overtime. It helped workers recoup more than \$30,000 in unpaid wages during the past six months. The Center's Labor Rights Clinic encourages worker clients to take a seven-week Labor Rights Training course, and 35 workers completed the training series with more than half becoming active Center workers.

More than 100 workers went to Washington, D.C., with the Workers Center to participate in the October 12, 1996 Immigrants Rights March. The Center is currently working with other Latino groups to develop a follow-up plan to the March, particularly around the demand for a second amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

Support Committee Holds Benefit Dinner for David Wong: A Chinese National Wrongly Convicted of Murder

The David Wong Support Committee held a benefit dinner on October 4, 1996 at the Silver Palace Restaurant in Chinatown. The event drew about 200 people, including community activists, lawyers, garment workers and students.

In 1984, David was convicted of robbery. Two years later, on March 12, 1986, he was accused of murdering a fellow inmate, Tyrone Julius. David was apprehended and accused of murder although he did not know Julius and was not even in the scene of the crime. Moreover, David did not receive a fair trial. "It's a miscarriage of justice on multiple accounts," said Deirdre Hamaguchi, a three year member of the committee. "A lot of Asian Americans can relate to the root cause, which boils down to racism."

Filmmaker Jamal Joseph orated a poem during the dinner that summarized David's struggle: "How long the rope? How short the hope? And many like our brother David believed the promise. And made the hard journey of an thousand dreams. Only to be lynched. Amerikkka. Amerikkka. Land of the greed. Home of the slave. Same circus. Different clown. Same fight. Different round. And in the end, the love you make is equal to the oppression you shake ..."

The dinner raised over \$1,000 and the proceeds will go to the Center for Constitutional Rights, which has taken David's case pro bono.

To contact David Wong, write him at Number 84A 5320, 135 State Street, PO Box 618, Auburn, NY 13024.

Make ways for Change

Join CAAAV in

Fighting racial violence and police brutality; demanding accountability from the criminal justice system

Organizing Asian immigrant cab drivers to challenge the racist and exploitative taxi industry in New York City

Empowering Asian immigrant women in marginalized labor industries

Developing youth leadership to organize in low-income and refugee Asian communities

Publishing the CAAAV Voice, a unique voice in the Asian American community *

Fund the Resistance.

Hard times demand real and material support! Your help will support CAAAV's organizing work, our office, our dedicated four-member staff, and our rising operating costs.

Support CAAAV today!

YES! I want to take a stand with CAAAV. Here is my tax-deductible contribution*:

\$1000 \$50
 \$250 \$25
 \$100 Other

Make your gift to CAAAV count twice: Many employers will match any donation you make to CAAAV—find out if your company has an employee matching gift program!

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*Donations may be acknowledged in future issues of the CAAAV Voice unless otherwise specified.



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