

Education for the People: The Third World Student Movement at San Francisco State
College and City College of New York

Dissertation

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Abstract

When did the 1960s end? Scholarly opinion holds that the spirit, energy and optimism that characterize the decade succumbed to infighting and fragmentation as the decade came to a close in 1968. My dissertation challenges this assertion by examining two influential and understudied student movements at San Francisco State College and City College of New York in 1968 and 1969. Often overlooked in favor of student protests that occurred on elite Ivy League campuses, these protests were characterized by multiracial coalitions that challenged the Eurocentric curriculum and lack of diversity at their colleges. These protests were watershed moments in higher education, and they brought about the creation of ethnic studies and the increased acceptance of students of color. In addition, the philosophy, tactics, and rhetoric espoused by these students contributed to the creation of a Third World Left, which included these students and their allies, as well as other activists of color. The activism of the Third World Left continued into the 1970s and became an important site in the continuation of radical politics, thus belying the notion that “the sixties” ended in declension in 1968.

This dissertation will show that when diverse sites of activism are explored, rather than solely the white New Left, many movements outlasted the end of the 1960s, including many groups that were spawned as a result of the Third World student movement. This dissertation foregrounds the processes of coalition building among

activists of color, as well as the rhetoric and philosophy developed by these students. By examining the many archival sources such as artifacts and documents from the strike, as well as interviews and oral histories with the activists, in addition to the sparse secondary sources that exist about the protests, I will argue for the seminal role of the Third World student movement in this period.

Dedication

For my mom,
who never stops teaching,
and never stops learning.

Acknowledgments

There comes a time in the life of every passion project that, for the sake of sanity and growth, it must be declared “finished.” For this much beloved project of mine, that time is now. Were it not for sanity and growth, I would continue to labor over the ideas, arguments, and individuals contained in these pages. In declaring this dissertation finished, I must also declare my debt to the following people. I hope that I have acknowledged them in much more meaningful ways, but it bears repeating that without the help of the following people, this project would not be “finished.”

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List of Abbreviations

AAPA	Asian American Political Alliance
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AFROTC	Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
AIM	American Indian Movement
AS	Associated Students
BHE	Board of Higher Education
BOE	Board of Education
BPP	Black Panther Party
BPRSC	Black and Puerto Rican Student Community
BSU	Black Students Union
CAD	Council of Academic Deans
CAP	Community Action Program
CCNY	City College of New York
CIP	Community Involvement Program
CUNY	City University of New York
EC	Experimental College
EOP	Equal Opportunity Program

HUAC	House Un-American Activities Committee
ICSA	Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action
IPC	Instructional Policy Committee
IWK	I Wor Kuen
LASO	Latin American Students Organization
MASC	Mexican American Students Confederation
MEChA	Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán
NASO	Native American Students Organization
NCCPV	National Committee on the Causes and Prevention of Violence
NDEA	National Defense Education Act
NOI	Nation of Islam
NSA	Negro Students Association
OS	Onyx Society
OSPAAL	Organization of Solidarity of the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America
PACE	Philippine American Collegiate Endeavor
PL	Progressive Labor Party
PREP	Puerto Ricans for Educational Progress
PRISA	Puerto Rican Student Association
PRSM	Puerto Rican Students Movement
PRSU	Puerto Rican Student Union
RGP	Red Guard Party
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
RYM	Revolutionary Youth Movement

SCAN	Student Council of American Natives
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SEEK	Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge
SFPD	San Francisco Police Department
SFSC	San Francisco State College
SNCC	Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee
TP	Tutorial Project
TWLF	Third World Liberation Front
UC	University of California
UFT	United Federation of Teachers
UPR	University of Puerto Rico
YLP/YLO	Young Lords Party/Young Lords Organization

Introduction

Nineteen sixty-eight is a year that transcends its role as marker of time. It is more than the sum of its months, weeks and days. 1968 is an idea. Like September 11th is more than the eleventh day of the ninth month, 1968 carries more meaning than can possibly be contained within its temporal definition. Much of the emphasis placed on 1968 as a transcendent year is due to the sheer amount of consensus-shattering events that occurred that year. From the Tet Offensive in Vietnam that shook the confidence of a nation of observers, to the assassinations of two prominent men who offered hope to those whose confidence had long since evaporated. From the urban rebellions, to the election of law and order's greatest proponent, Richard Nixon, 1968 is all of these things, and more.

However, 1968 is not *everything* that people claim it is. For instance, there is a large body of literature, scholarly and popular, which claims that 1968 marks the death of "the sixties," by which they mean the end of the era of participatory democracy, direct action protest, and the idealistic pursuit of a better world. Ironically, the very people who make this claim are the people who waged these protests in the 1960s. Todd Gitlin is the most widely referenced adherent to this view of the sixties because of his pronouncement that the sixties began with "years of hope," but degenerated into "days of rage" by 1968. He laments the rise of "separatist" movements among splinter groups of nonwhite,

feminist, and other “interest groups.” This view is largely predicated on his role inside the white New Left, which began with the Port Huron Statement and the founding of Students for a Democratic Society in 1962, but ended with the rise of the Weather Underground Organization that advocated for the immediate, violent overthrow of the United States Government.¹

Former white leftists of the sixties are not solely responsible for viewing the sixties as an implosion, however. A conservative backlash against the advances made in the “culture wars” became institutionalized under two decades of (nearly uninterrupted) Republican leadership in the seventies and eighties. Not only did politicians attempt to dismantle the efforts of sixties activists, but scholars and intellectuals also challenged the validity of the social movements that brought feminism, gay liberation, affirmative action, ethnic studies, welfare rights, environmentalism, and myriad other issues to the attention of the public.² The combination of political and intellectual backlash, as well as the opinion of the activists themselves that they failed to overhaul social institutions, has left the legacy of the sixties in limbo for forty years.

However, a new trend in the historiography of the sixties has led to the reassessment of 1968 as the year of decline and fragmentation. What I will call the “declension thesis” has been challenged by scholars who demonstrate that much of the focus on 1968 as the downfall of the New Left has been a narrow preoccupation with a

¹ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995).

² Some sources that are representative of the conservative scholarly backlash are: Dinesh D’Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Gender on Campus*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1990); Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today’s Students*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); and Peter Collier and David Horowitz, eds., *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the Sixties*, (New York: Summit Books, 1989).

movement of middle class white male activists. Once the notion of “the sixties” is expanded to include groups other than the predominantly white New Left, a counter-trend emerges that de-centers the year 1968 as the pivot point between “years of hope” (or “the good sixties”) and “days of rage” (or “the bad sixties”). Within the nonwhite Left, 1968 actually marks a point of departure for a new era of activism that continued well into the 1970s. And unlike Gitlin’s pessimistic view of this activism as a “separatist” impulse, these groups actually forged strong coalitions. Scholars such as Max Elbaum, Laura Pulido, Jeffrey Ogbar, and Jason Ferreira have explored the proliferation of nonwhite activism in this period, and many have espoused the rhetoric of these activists in labeling them the Third World Left.³

This dissertation enters into the conversation about the sixties by exploring two separate instances in which nonwhite students not only formed strong coalitions among each other, but also gained important concessions for their communities. At San Francisco State College (SFSC) and City College of New York (CCNY), students of color joined together to demand that their colleges accept more nonwhite students and that they offer a course of study that incorporates the histories and cultures of all the world’s people. These demands launched protests and strikes that engulfed these campuses and brought the problems of American higher education to the forefront of public consciousness. These events occurred in 1968 and 1969, and they influenced activism that continued into the seventies and is still felt today, over forty years later.

³ Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che*, (New York: Verso Press, 2002); Jason Ferreira, “All Power to the People: A Comparative History of Third World Radicalism in San Francisco, 1968-1974, PhD Dissertation, (Department of Ethnic Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 2003); Jeffrey Ogbar, “Rainbow Radicalism: The Rise of Radical Ethnic Nationalism,” in Peniel Joseph, ed. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*, (New York: Routledge, 2006); Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radicalism in Los Angeles*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

Thus, I reject the idea that the 1960s imploded, and I reject the idea that the rise of militant organizations of nonwhite activists was inherently a move toward separatism.

The strikes at SFSC and CCNY both evinced the creation of a radical Third World Left that espoused a revolutionary philosophy and the protests shared similar demands regarding the creation of ethnic studies and the increase in nonwhite enrollment. The development of multiracial coalitions, influenced by the same revolutionary, anti-imperialist philosophers, made SFSC and CCNY apt for comparison as a route to understanding the processes of coalition building and political education that create activists and organizations. In each individual circumstance, the students' protests were shaped by the local political context, but also by the global movements for self-determination on the part of decolonizing countries. By tracing the development of these strikes in two locations separated by thousands of miles, it is possible to see the concurrent development of a revolutionary nationalist philosophy. In each instance, the espousal of this philosophy, and the embrace of the tactics of self-defense and confrontation that accompanied it, disrupted the debate about civil rights and gradual integration of American institutions. The results were mixed, and there were differences as well as similarities, but by using these two strikes to explore the history of ethnic studies and open admission, I reveal the "new mood" of late sixties nonwhite activism and the embrace of a Third World identity.

Despite their role in ushering in the discipline of ethnic studies and demonstrating the utility of affirmative action in higher education, the strikes at SFSC and CCNY are not widely known outside of the slim historiography about the Third World Left. A major reason for this is the fact that these are not elite universities like University of

California at Berkeley, or Columbia, or Cornell, or Yale where other student protests gained a high profile in the 1960s. SFSC and CCNY, while having long traditions of academic excellence, were considered lesser public colleges where families of little means could send their children to receive professional and occupational instruction. The fact that these schools catered to a lower socio-economic profile of students is a major factor in their absence from the historical record, but it is also a fundamental reason why they experienced such controversy.

By the late nineteen sixties, San Francisco State and City College of New York were two of the largest urban colleges in the country. San Francisco State was a part of the California State College system, the largest public system of higher education in the country. City College was part of the City University of New York, the largest municipal system of public higher education at the time. Within their larger systems, SFSC and CCNY had differing histories and reputations, but both represented the pinnacle of public higher education in the country. Their status as public institutions meant that they had a mission to serve the people of their states, and this mission had been historically interpreted by public colleges as the acceptance and training of the youth of the state for professions and occupations, as well as a solid liberal arts education. As the demand for public higher education increased in the years following World War II, these two institutions revealed, to varying degrees, their inability to equitably achieve this mission. Despite the fact that both schools resided in diverse urban locations, they both had dismal rates of acceptance for nonwhite students.

For a time, it appeared that these colleges could justify their disconnect with the communities they served by espousing meritocratic standards and demonstrating the

academic excellence of their alumni. However, by the late sixties, it became increasingly difficult to justify the lack of ethnic and racial diversity on their campuses. It became clear that as admissions standards increased, diversity suffered. The problem of inadequate education of nonwhite populations was a plague of public education since its beginnings. The Supreme Court decision of 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which called for the desegregation of public schools “with all deliberate speed,” was a galvanizing symbol of discrimination, but an ineffectual antidote for the malady. Fifteen years later, the court-focused liberalism of the southern civil rights movement had faded away in the face of increasingly militant demands of urban populations of color. In the late 1960s, the ire of these populations turned toward gaining access to the system of public higher education.

Thus, in the eyes of this new generation of activists, the failures of liberalism would have to be overcome by embracing a radical new philosophy and set of tactics. While these two events mirror one another in many ways, there is no evidence that shows that students at the two colleges were collaborating on theories or tactics. What, then, accounts for the striking similarities of the two movements? I argue that these students were “communicating” through the circulation of theories and knowledge that drew on the same source base, namely the ideologies of Black Power and decolonization.

Many scholars have recognized the development of a Third World ideology among activists of color in the late 1960s in the maneuverings of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the creation of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP). SNCC had been an interracial organizing presence in the South since the early sit-ins in 1960, but this was the era in which leaders of the group began to restrict

the activities of white members. In 1966 Stokely Carmichael took the reigns of SNCC and delineated the new philosophy of “Black Power” and espoused self-defense rather than nonviolence as the main tactic of the group. At the same time, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale were building on their experiences in the Soul Student organization at Merritt College in Oakland, and developing an organization designed to combat the police brutality and violent repression in their community. They adopted the black panther as the symbol of their group, which for them meant Black Power and the right to self-defense.

Students of color at SFSC and CCNY were deeply influenced by Carmichael, Seale and Newton and the galvanizing notion of Black Power. These young activists also studied philosophies of anti-colonialism from around the world. They borrowed heavily from the growing cacophony of global movements for decolonization and anti-imperialism, including the works of Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, Amilcar Cabral and Mao Tse-tung. In studying these philosophies based on global self-determination, students cultivated a platform that united the nonwhite people of the world. In building a coalition of nonwhite people, they embraced the term *Third World* and used it as a political identity to show solidarity and become a majority population of color.

In addition, these students refuted the idea of fractious nationalism that pitted ethnic and racial minorities against one another. Thus, they rejected the narrow focus on individual ethnicities, and eschewed cultural nationalism.⁴ Instead, they self-identified as

⁴ Terry Collins, a black student at SFSC, had this to say about cultural nationalism in the movement: “It was the era of the bourgeois cultural nationalism, a stage of evolution that all black students involved in the movement move through, but must shake quickly. Bourgeois cultural nationalism is destructive to the individual and the organization because one uses “blackness” as a criterion and uses this rationale as an excuse not to fight the real enemy when the struggle becomes more intense.” *Black Fire* 24 October 1969.

Third World people and chose to see their struggle for self-determination as an *internationalist*, revolutionary position. Thus, I use the terms revolutionary inter/nationalism and Third World internationalism interchangeably to describe their ideology, which I define as an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist critique that united all subjugated people of color around the world. This philosophy borrowed heavily from the textual sources at the foundation of their political education and study of revolutionary figures like Mao and Che.

In borrowing rhetoric and theory from decolonization movements, however, these students appeared to be appropriating violent revolutionary tactics for use on their campuses. This is undoubtedly another factor in the silence of the larger historical record surrounding these events. Even though these students did not advocate preemptive violence, their use of guerrilla warfare tactics, adapted from decolonization movements, has resulted in their movements being shrouded in accusations of violence against people and destruction of property. This inaccurate legacy has obscured the emphasis on access, relevancy, and self-determination that the students fought to secure at their colleges. Instead of addressing these events as origins of a unique discipline or the advent of open enrollment, histories of this era focus on the supposed violence of the students of color.

While my effort thus far has been to explain my argument, which is that the Third World student movement and the creation of the Third World Left disprove the declension thesis by demonstrating positive developments in the late sixties, I must also recognize the complicated opinion of the students themselves regarding the legacy of their movement. When their long and contentious battles with school administrators and Trustees were over, students had been forced to negotiate on some of their more strident

demands regarding access, relevancy and self-determination. Their failure to overhaul the system of higher education and initiate a new era of revolutionary education to serve the people led many activists to consider their entire movement a failure.

Many of the secondary sources that exist on the topic of the Third World student movement are written by people who were participants, on either side, of the struggles. I have carefully evaluated these sparse sources to understand the feelings of regret and disappointment that are expressed by these students. While I still argue that the Third World student movement is a positive legacy of the 1960s that belies the emphasis on declension, I mitigate that by showing how higher education absorbed their movement, but rejected their philosophy. Thus, the present debates that exist over the merit of ethnic studies as a discipline are a direct ramification of the manner in which the field was adopted by the academy, though they are largely devoid of discussion about the origins of the discipline.

I also provide the larger context that these individuals did not have when they wrote their versions of events. After the student movement, the activists continued to explore the ramifications of American racism by focusing on the ways in which their access to a relevant education could change the status of their communities. In San Francisco and New York, students formed or joined organizations that adopted the theories and practices of the student movement, bringing a new racial militancy to address the problems of structural inequality throughout American society. By bridging the campus and the community, these students of color contributed to the development and persistence of Black Power, Yellow Power, Brown Power and Red Power movements, as well as the development of coalitions among one another. To gain insight

into this dimension and other facets of the third world student movement, I relied on archival sources at each institution, as well as transcripts of interviews conducted by a variety of scholars during and after the protests. By combining the scant and problematic secondary sources with my original research, I have properly contextualized these strikes as the formation of a new Third World Left and I have argued for significant, if complicated, legacies for these events.

This dissertation begins by exploring the context of San Francisco State in the 1960s, which includes a discussion of Bay Area radicalism and the development of Black Power organizations and their influence on students at SFSC. Chapter One discusses the formation of the Black Students Union and the Third World Liberation Front at SFSC, the first of their kind in the nation. This chapter provides the background for the development of the militant philosophies and tactics of the students, and their growing frustration with the slow pace of reform at SFSC. Chapter Two begins by exploring the politicization of the student movement, specifically events on SFSC's campus in the context of the 1968 elections. I then recount the five-month-long strike waged by the students of color, paying careful attention to their tactics, as well as their efforts at coalition building. Chapter Three describes the unique history of City College of New York from a tuition-free public academy to the "proletarian Harvard." I explore the complicated admissions procedures at CCNY and the growing disconnect between the campus and the surrounding community of Harlem. Chapter Four introduces the black and Puerto Rican coalition at CCNY and explores their philosophies and demands. I describe the takeover of the South Campus and political wrangling that led to the implementation of open admissions as opposed to the students' demand for affirmative

action. Chapter Five departs from the narrative to grapple with the contested legacies of these protests and the changes that they wrought in higher education. I conclude with an epilogue that attempts to understand the complicated dimensions of gender within the Third World Left.

Chapter One—A Deficit of History: Pre-Strike Events at San Francisco State College

“We are slaves and the only way to become free is to kill all the slavemasters. [This country needs] an old-fashioned black-brown-red-yellow-poor white revolution. That’s the only way we’re going to change things in the U.S....Political power comes from the barrel of a gun. If you want campus autonomy, if the students want to run the college, and the cracker administrators don’t go for it, then you control it with a gun.”

George Murray, 24 October 1968⁵

George Murray was not only the Minister of Education for the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1967, he was a graduate student and instructor in the English Department at San Francisco State College (SFSC).⁶ Murray was closely associated with the Black Students Union (BSU) on campus, and he embraced his dual role as community leader and student leader with a militancy that set the pace for his peers. Murray also served as a touchstone for debate within the halls of academia and the state house about the appropriate role for educators. In November of 1967, Murray was suspended as a student for his involvement, along with the BSU, in a physical attack on the campus newspaper staff over a racially charged editorial. His position as an instructor was in jeopardy as a result of this, but sympathetic President Dr. John Summerskill intervened and succeeded in saving Murray’s teaching appointment.

However, during the summer of 1968, Murray traveled to Cuba as part of an envoy of Third World activists. While there, he made speeches in which he criticized American imperialism and connected the African American freedom struggle with Third

⁵ George Murray, as quoted in William Orrick, *Shut it Down!: A College in Crisis*, (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 33.

⁶ While the school is currently identified as San Francisco State *University*, it was called San Francisco State *College* (SFSC) at the time of the strike, and will be referred to as such throughout.

World revolutions around the globe. In the context of a highly politicized election year, in which Richard Nixon's silent majority signaled a reactionary surge of conservatism across the country, Murray's position in the classrooms of SFSC caused considerable uproar within the state. Murray continued to incite controversy in the fall of 1968 when he publicly declared at a rally outside of a meeting of the Board of Trustees that "political power comes from the barrel of a gun," and thus African American students should arm themselves. President Robert Smith, bowing to pressure from conservative pundits and lawmakers, in particular Governor Ronald Reagan and the Board of Trustees of the State University system, suspended Murray, pending disciplinary procedures and the possibility of criminal charges. This occurred on 31 October 1968. On 6 November 1968, the Black Students Union (eventually joined by the Third World Liberation Front) called for a strike in support of ten demands, with the tenth demand being the reinstatement of George Murray.

The strike that ensued was the culmination of a long period of racial and ethnic tumult at SFSC. Ultimately the strike embraced fifteen demands put forth by the Black Students Union and the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), the majority of which revolved around the creation of an autonomous School of Ethnic Studies that would house several separate departments.⁷ These programs were embraced as a way to rectify the racial and ethnic biases that activists felt were institutionalized within academia. Furthermore, this goal illustrated the increasing acceptance of Black Power and Third World revolutionary ideologies within nonwhite activist groups in the United States. Taking their cues from the prevailing ideas of revolutionary nationalism, students of

⁷ For the full list of demands, see Appendix A.

color attacked the discriminatory pedagogical practices that they felt deprived them of a relevant education. As one future TWLF member put it, “there was an existing deficit in the way history brings us [knowledge]—there are subjects we weren’t taught.”⁸

To understand the events that unfolded at San Francisco State in the lead up and aftermath of the Murray incident and the subsequent Third World strike, this chapter delineates the direct precedents to these events in the five years before the strike.⁹ These events include the creation of the Black Students Union and the Third World Liberation front, as well as a series of confrontations between leftist and nonwhite students and faculty on the one hand, and conservative students, faculty, administrators, trustees, and political leaders in San Francisco and California on the other. The picture of the pre-strike context that emerges is one fraught with tension and antagonism, but also characterized by alliances and optimism. The succession of events in those years illuminate a pattern of increased expectations met with disappointment and defeat, which served to embolden the student population bent on change. While a series of issues ignited tensions during that period, from faculty grievances to anti-war demonstrations, the issue that managed to unite the disparate leftist factions was the cause of expanding nonwhite educational opportunities.

In uniting these factions, San Francisco State became the site of an important development in the arena of late 1960s activism. In this period other well-known radical groups such as the Black Panther Party (BPP), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Progressive Labor Party (PL) and others, struggled with infighting and the pressure of

⁸ P.N., as quoted in “‘On Strike!’ San Francisco State College Strike, 1968-69: The Role of Asian American Students,” *Amerasia Journal*, 15:1, 1989, 24.

⁹ The strike at SFSC will be referred to as the third world strike throughout.

government surveillance. Following the BPP purge in 1969 and the SDS schism in the same year, as well as the destructive efforts of COINTELPRO and other forms of government surveillance, contemporary observers and many historians of this period pronounced 1969 as the end of “the sixties.” Essentially, these examples suggest, and historians’ analyses of the period confirm, that the late 1960s was a period of declension and fragmentation, and the promise of radical change disintegrated with these organizations. However, the strike at SFSC demonstrates an alternative trajectory of this period. In creating the TWLF, students at SFSC formed a counter-trend within leftist activism, and in so doing contributed to the ascendancy of a vibrant Third World Left.

“Avis Paranoia”: The History of San Francisco State College

The institution that would eventually become San Francisco State was established in the 1860s as a teacher training college for female students. The population of California swelled over the course of the 19th century due to the Gold Rush, the Homestead Act and Manifest Destiny. In response to this increase in population there was a correspondent increase in the need for highly trained educators. This need for teachers resulted in the incorporation of several normal schools for teacher education, including San Francisco State Normal School in 1899. Shortly after the turn of the century, the institution began admitting male students, and by the 1930s a full liberal arts curriculum had been integrated.¹⁰

As a result of the rapid expansion of and investment in higher education in the United States following World War II, California’s major research institutions, such as University of California at Berkeley and University of California at Los Angeles

¹⁰ Orrick, 1-5.

benefited tremendously. Federal money infused these institutions with large amounts of subsidized student loan money and attracted many of the top students from the state. San Francisco State, however, did not receive as large a share of the federal money due to its lack of research facilities. Legislators in California, eager to capitalize on as much federal money as possible and manage the growing student populations on the many California campuses, looked toward reorganizing the colleges and universities under their jurisdiction. The resulting reorganization scheme offered a three-tiered system: the University of California campuses would reign as the prestigious flagships of the state, with the top 12.5% of all California high school students eligible for admission; the California State Colleges would accept the top third of all high school graduates; and the community colleges would be open for admission to all applicants.¹¹

In effect, the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education, in its efforts to combat inefficiency and accommodate as many students as possible, succeeded in dooming the state colleges to mediocrity. Unable to grant doctorates by stipulation of the Master Plan, the state colleges lost out on large federal grants under the NDEA because of their lack of research programs. While state college campuses continued to enroll increasingly large classes of students, and the resources of the college reasonably met their needs, the connotations of a state college education continued to haunt its member campuses. Faculty members struggled with heavy teaching loads, lack of research time or funds, low pay, and even pay cuts, in the 1960s. One faculty member remarked, “[t]here is an Avis (as in ‘we’re number two’) paranoia that permeates the state college

¹¹ Kuregiy Hekymara, “The Third World Movement and Its History in the San Francisco State College Strike of 1968-1969,” PhD Dissertation, (University of California, Berkeley, 1972), 13.

system.”¹² In addition, the centralized nature of the new Board of Trustees (also a creation of the state legislature) made petitions for funding a nightmare that proceeded at the slow pace befitting the vast bureaucracy.

The structure of the California State College System was another byproduct of the Master Plan, and the details are important to understand in the context of how the strike would eventually play out. The structure of the Board of Trustees was as follows: the governor of the state appointed sixteen trustees, each of whom served an eight year term, regardless of the political fate of the governor. The Governor served as President of the Board, and the Board was headed by the Chancellor, who was also a member. The Lieutenant Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Speaker of the State Assembly were also ex-officio members.¹³ The first chancellor was Buell Gallagher, who resigned after only six months, “reportedly frustrated and disillusioned by political and economic obstacles.”¹⁴ The second chancellor was picked straight from the top of San Francisco State’s hierarchy: President Glenn Dumke. Faculty members at SFSC were vehemently opposed to Dumke’s appointment as chancellor, as he had proved an unpopular president, especially among the left-leaning faculty. The faculty at SFSC, in addition to opposing Dumke, harbored a consistent skepticism toward the centralized authority of the trustees. A showdown between faculty and trustees in 1964 reached a crisis point, and culminated in the very public airing of faculty grievances.

¹² As quoted in Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 49. The quote refers to the advertising campaign of the rental car company Avis, in which they advertised their ranking as the second most popular rental car company, indicating that second place status made them try harder.

¹³ John Summerskill, *President Seven*, (New York: World Publishing Company, 1971), 157.

¹⁴ Summerskill, 7. Gallagher will show up again in this study, as President of the City College of New York (CCNY) during student protests for ethnic studies in 1969.

Robert Smith led the “faculty revolt” in opposition to the “zealous interest in the internal operations and management of the [campus],” as well as “the introduction of line-item budgeting [that]...strictly detailed the precise amount of money” that each separate function of the college would annually receive.¹⁵ In addition to these specific concerns, there was a general disappointment among faculty members over the shoehorning of the college into “a superficial concept of elite education inappropriate to a state college system.”¹⁶ The rigidity of the liberal arts curriculum and the funding of the colleges were the sole discretion of the trustees, leaving little opportunity for innovation among faculty and no flexibility to respond to local needs and concerns.¹⁷ Despite the visible chafing of faculty under this system, little attention was paid to their protests, and these same problems would hamstring future administrators who attempted to respond to the demands of students for change.

Following the appointment of Glenn Dumke to the Chancellor’s office, administrative representatives at SFSC set out on a nationwide search for the next president of their college. Dr. John Summerskill, a clinical psychologist, professor and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Cornell University was at the top of their list. Summerskill was a Canadian-born academic, known for his youth, good looks and left-leaning politics. He immediately incited controversy shortly after accepting the

¹⁵William Barlow and Peter Shapiro, *An End to Silence: The San Francisco State College Student Movement in the '60s*, (New York: Pegasus, 1971) 78. This was the same Robert Smith who would eventually become president just before the strike began in 1968, at the curious behest of the same Board of Trustees who he openly attacked during the “revolt.”

¹⁶ Robert Smith, Richard Axen and DeVere Pentony, *By Any Means Necessary: The Revolutionary Struggle at San Francisco State*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1970), 25.

¹⁷ Faculty at SFSC would ultimately join forces under the American Federation of Teachers and press the trustees for the power of collective bargaining. They also initiated a faculty strike at the same time as the third world strike. While the striking faculty members were supportive of the call for ethnic studies, their main focus was collective bargaining and organizing, thus their struggle will not be covered in depth.

presidency when he made a mocking remark about the recently elected Governor of California, Ronald Reagan, and his concern for education.¹⁸ To Summerskill's surprise, all California colleges required that meetings of administrators and faculty were open to the public, including the press, who published his off-the-cuff quip. Beyond his embarrassment for so quickly stepping into the political fray, Summerskill also lamented that this forced transparency "makes it extremely difficult to keep the problems of the college free from political discussion and political exploitation."¹⁹ As Summerskill attempted to navigate the hostile political waters of California, he found that political encroachment was inevitable as the problems at SFSC became all too public.

A further problem that Summerskill encountered as he joined the San Francisco State community was the drastic effect of the Master Plan on minority enrollment. As a result of the Master Plan and the restrictions on enrollment in the top two tiers, the rate of nonwhite enrollment decreased, while enrollment in the third tier (community colleges) increased dramatically. Community colleges accepted all applicants, and thus students who did not achieve the requisite rank in their high school class could attend one of these small campuses for two years, and then transfer to a four-year college or university. Thus, while enrollment at SFSC for African American students in the early sixties was near 12% of the student body, this number dropped by more than half to around 5% in the late sixties. This drop was indicative of the ways in which California's approach to public school education did not prepare all students equally for post-secondary schooling.

This was in large part due to the tracking system adopted by California public schools in the 1950s and 1960s, which effectively operated as a two-tiered approach to

¹⁸ Summerskill, 19.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

education, with college-bound students placed on a rigorous academic track, and the rest of the students placed on the vocational track. This system was incredibly hard to overcome, as it was initiated as early as the first grade. Obvious racial and class biases resulted in most poor and nonwhite students being placed on the vocational track, which left them woefully unprepared and uncompetitive in terms of the Master Plan.

Thus, when SFSC’s administration polled its student body as to their racial and ethnic backgrounds, the numbers exhibited less diversity when compared to the vibrant diversity of the city of San Francisco.

Ethnic/Racial Category	No. of students polled	Percent of each category	No. of people in San Francisco	Percent of population
American Indian	92	0.5%	2,900	0.4% (Indian)
Black	961	5.1%	96,078	13.4% (Negro)
Filipino	175	0.9%	24,694	3.5%
Mexican-American	425	2.2%	69,633	9.7% (Persons of Spanish origin or descent)
Oriental	1,449	7.6%	70,401	9.8% (Chinese + Japanese)
White	14,600	76.8%	511,186	71.4%
Other	1,239	6.5%	10,415	1.5%
No Response	80	0.4%	N/A	N/A
Total	19,021	100.00%	785,307	109.7%

Table 1: Ethnic and Racial Diversity of San Francisco City and College²⁰

²⁰ Hekymara, 140; US Census data, <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/counties/SanFranciscoCounty70.htm>. The 1970 census was the first to record data on “Persons of Spanish origin or descent” (later changed to Hispanic). People of Hispanic origin or descent are recorded separately from other racial and ethnic backgrounds, thus accounting for the extra 9.7%. Ethnic/Racial categories as they appeared in the original survey; census categories in parentheses where they differed.

As this table demonstrates, Asian Americans and African Americans made up the two largest indicated ethnic and racial groups on campus, as they did in the city of San Francisco as well. However, while Asian Americans were the largest ethnic group on campus, they trailed far behind African Americans as a portion of the overall population of San Francisco. Thus, African Americans were proportionally the most under-represented minority group at SFSC in the 1960s. The discrepancies between population percentage and student body representation of the multiple ethnic and racial groups on SFSC's campus would eventually form the foundation of their call for affirmative action as part of the strike.²¹

As the Bay Area experienced social change and the resultant tumult of the 1960s, many of SFSC's students joined the fray. They demonstrated against the actions of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). They marched to nearby San Quentin Prison to protest the death penalty. They sat-in against integration and headed south to participate in the civil rights movement. However, it was not these activities that would eventually distinguish SFSC from other college campuses throughout the country. Ultimately, it was the combination of racial and ethnic politics and the radicalization of activism in the late 1960s that would serve to catapult SFSC to the forefront of the struggle for ethnic studies.²²

“Integration isn't our scene”: The Emergence of the Black Students Union

²¹ Hekymara, 13. Hekymara also draws on family income research in his dissertation to show that 67% of families earning less than \$10,000 sent their children to public schools, and highlights this figure by indicating that over 90% of “Third World families” earned less than \$10,000 a year. Thus, it is safe to say that the vast majority of nonwhite families looked to state colleges for their children's educations.

²² Barlow and Shapiro, 36-49.

The Third World strike at SFSC marks the confluence of a series of events and developments within the late 1960s that served to usher in the twin phenomena of self-consciously political academic disciplines and the commitment of the university to affirmative action.²³ While these issues were raised in other locations, and some colleges and universities experimented with these programs, San Francisco State is undeniably the birthplace of ethnic studies. At SFSC the striking students demanded the creation of the School of Ethnic Studies; however, a major focus of the students, the media and the larger culture, centered on the notion of black studies.²⁴ Black studies was the first proposed discipline of its kind at SFSC, and calls for the new discipline inspired the later struggle of Third World students. The origin of the movement for black studies lies in the history of the Black Students Union at SFSC.

In 1963, San Francisco State College's African American students formed the Negro Students Association (NSA), later renamed the Black Students Union. The NSA formed in September, and was approved by the Associated Students' (the student government, which allocated funding) the following January. The first of its kind in the nation, the BSU was established as a student organization with direct ties to the community. BSU members were experienced community organizers who sought not

²³ By "self-consciously political academic disciplines" I mean courses of study that take into account nonwhite, non-male, and non-normative subjects and theories, i.e.: Ethnic Studies, Black Studies, GLBT Studies, Women's Studies, Disability Studies, etc. While all academic fields are shaped by politics (regardless of their claims of objectivity), these disciplines, emerging in the context of 1960s identity politics, adopted a self-conscious approach to their subjects.

The origin of the term affirmative action comes from the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the standard definition has come to be "positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and business from which they have been historically excluded." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/affirmative-action/> I use affirmative action throughout this dissertation to mean both the legal steps taken to create diversity and the general idea of addressing the lack of racial and ethnic diversity.

²⁴ Scholarly opinion of late confirms this emphasis on black studies as the pivotal idea of this era, with several new books and publications offering historical analysis of the creation of Black Studies. This discrepancy will be addressed in depth in Chapter Five.

only an education for career training, but also an outlet for continued activism. According to their constitution, the BSU was to “engage in projects which the membership considers to be in the interest of the Negro community; to engage in the study of Negro history and life; to foster the growth and dissemination of Negro cultural contributions.”²⁵ Thus, the BSU operated with the cooperation and support of the student government and held as their mission the cultivation of community through their connections to the university.

The BSU grew in popularity and found supporters among white classmates in its first years of existence, in part due to its association with the Experimental College (EC). The student government, under leftist leadership at the time, inaugurated the Experimental College in 1965 as an opportunity to expand upon the core curriculum of the college. The Experimental College operated as an alternative site for education in which student-initiated courses and events served the intellectual and activist pursuits of those who felt that mainstream curriculum did not satisfy their academic yearnings. Some of the courses taught under the auspices of the EC were as obscure as “Zen Basketball,” but this was also the space in which courses on black culture and history were first offered. The Experimental College immediately proved popular, with over 2,000 students supplementing their course work with electives offered concurrently with SFSC’s semesters in the 1966-1967 academic year.²⁶ The program was also widely remarked upon by critics and supporters outside of the university who disagreed on the merit of student-instructed courses. Nevertheless, the College was “probably the most highly publicized project of its kind in the modern history of higher education,” with

²⁵ Orrick, 78.

²⁶ SFSU’s Centennial History: Long Narrative of SF State, <http://www.sfsu.edu/~100years/history/long.htm>

Newsweek remarking in 1966 that this new “Do It Yourself U’ [was] the most promising attempt at student initiated reform.”²⁷

At the same time that the Experimental College took off, students at SFSC were also involved in the Tutorial Program that allowed for instruction of city school children by SFSC students. The Tutorial Program began in 1964 when a group of SFSC students began a project to work with kids from impoverished San Francisco neighborhoods. Their program was modeled after the teach-in tutorial programs initiated by Peter Countryman in the Northeast.²⁸ All of the founders of the program were white students, but all of the locations for the tutorial programs were in primarily nonwhite impoverished neighborhoods in San Francisco, such as the Latino Mission District, the black neighborhoods of Hunter’s Point and Fillmore/Western Addition, and Chinatown. While the tutorial program eschewed the models of traditional early childhood education and child psychology, the initiative was still very much in line with the prevailing attitude of white liberal activists and their ability to perform outreach in “the ghetto.”²⁹

²⁷ Smith, et al., 9.

Newsweek, 7 November 1966.

²⁸ For more information on Peter Countryman’s tutorial programs, see: Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

²⁹ Barlow and Shapiro, 51. The connotations of “ghetto outreach” extend as far back as the Progressive movement in the United States, and in the 1960s this outreach continued come in the form of various white “experts” who assessed, diagnosed, and attempted to alleviate the problems of poverty and racism. The 1960s differed slightly in that many of the experts were not social workers; rather they were sociologists, ethnographers or other social scientists. This focus on outreach culminated in President Johnson’s Great Society legislation, which included the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which was both a response to the urgency of urban poverty, as well as an effort of the Democratic Party to consolidate electoral support in major American cities. The legislation called for “maximum feasible participation” of the poor themselves, in order to avoid the appearance outright welfare. Thus, locally organized Community Action Programs (CAPs) emerged as the funding beneficiary, which were groups whose mission was to secure funding for social programs in their neighborhoods. The CAPs received funds directly from the federal government, in exchange for demonstrating an organized plan of action to distribute the funds to needy groups or individuals. In many cities this funding model allowed groups of activists to organize around a progressive cause and petition for funding. This drew much criticism from conservative politicians and citizens. The direct approach that the SFSC students espoused with the TP and the CIP is likely an effect of

The problems that the students encountered in the nonwhite neighborhoods were formidable. Unemployment for black residents was a staggering thirty percent, for Latino residents it was twenty percent, and for Chinatown it was fifteen percent. However, the actual employment crisis went far deeper than these numbers, as actual wages for the remainder of those who managed to find work were not enough to break the poverty line, which was \$4,000 at the time. Housing was substandard, often condemned or severely dilapidated and intensely overcrowded. In the Asian and Latino sections of the city, language barriers prevented many residents from avoiding housing or job exploitation. The redevelopment and consequent price inflation of nearby neighborhoods priced many of those families out of the vast majority of the city's middle class neighborhoods. Along with the substandard quality of life in those decrepit neighborhoods came inferior, overcrowded, and under funded public schools.³⁰ The students behind the Tutorial Program recognized this inequality and attempted to rectify it by supplementing classroom instruction with after school educational coaching and instruction.

A year-and-a-half into the Tutorial Program's existence Roger Alvarado joined the project as its coordinator. Alvarado was a Chicano student from the nearby suburb of Daly City, and a future TWLF member. At the time he assumed leadership, the program consisted of twelve centers scattered throughout the city, a few hundred volunteer tutors, and regular funding from AS coffers. Alvarado was thus the steward of a program that appeared to be highly successful. However, as he began to assess the goals and functions

this model of outreach. For more on the War on Poverty funding model, see: Daniel Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty*, (New York: The Free Press, 1969).

³⁰ Barlow and Shapiro, 149.

of the TP, it became clear that a purely educational goal was not going to solve many of the problems that inner city nonwhite students faced. Namely, the wretched conditions under which they lived undermined any benefit that tutoring could bring. Thus, a new program was created to focus on the living conditions and extenuating problems of the “ghetto.” The Community Initiative Program (CIP) began with a budget from the AS and turned their focus toward youth gang activity and housing problems. These two groups, the TP and the CIP worked in tandem to address the many problems of their surrounding urban environment, but the groups were plagued by the disconnect between their white volunteers and the nonwhite people they tried to reach.³¹ Ultimately, this disconnect was overcome when the TP dramatically changed course under the leadership of the BSU.

In 1966, the same year that the Black Panther Party formed in Oakland, these two SFSC initiatives were at the height of their popularity. The BSU at this time was under the leadership of James Garrett, who had been a field organizer with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the South and in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles.³² Twenty-four years old at the time, Garrett was a non-traditional student to a certain degree, but he was characteristic of many of the African American students at SFSC who had not taken traditional routes to college.³³ He joined SNCC in 1965, at the moment in which the organization was effectively restricting its white membership under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael, who popularized the notion of Black Power. Garrett was drawn to SNCC because of this new militancy and the possibility of an all-

³¹ Barlow and Shapiro, 69-72.

³² Garrett was not the first president of the newly re-named BSU—that was actually a female student, Marianna Waddy.

³³ The average age of students at SFSC was 25, which is somewhat older than at other traditional four-year colleges. Orrick, 4.

black community organizing effort. Of his time in SNCC, Garrett said, “I went [to L.A.] because I wanted to combat that kind of confusing notion that blacks and whites could be organized together. That had failed in Mississippi. It failed all over.” Garrett argued that integrated movements were failures because black activists wanted to organize around local, community-level issues “that are close to them.” Also, Garrett recognized that there were larger issues that were both political and *cultural*, and these issues had to be approached by “two separate cultures.”³⁴

Bringing this philosophy of separate cultures and organizing traditions to SFSC from SNCC, Garrett quickly ascended to the leadership of the NSA. He was influential in changing the name of the Negro Students Association to the Black Students Union, a semantic preference that illustrated the shift to Black Power within the organization. The name Black Students Union had been proposed alongside a second option, the Afro American Society. Garret remarked on this choice, saying “my notion was that you should push the question of union and that the whole notion of black was a redefinition.” The idea that the term *black* would be espoused and embraced as an identity was still new to the activist vanguard, and the vote was apparently close. Garrett, however, gave the ultimate credit for the name change to the two female initiators who pushed for the Black Students Union.³⁵ In addition to his leadership of the BSU, Garrett formulated and taught courses in the Experimental College and participated in the Tutorial Program, strengthening the ties between the BSU and these programs.

³⁴ Jimmy Garrett, interview with Austin Scott (by proxy), Records of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, series 57: Records Relating to the San Francisco State Investigation, box 13, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin Texas (hereafter LBJ Library), 3

³⁵ Ibid, 5. The two women are unnamed in this source, but are likely Marianna Waddy and Gloria Lowry.

Garrett had far-reaching visions for the BSU, and one of his first major efforts was to wrest control of the Tutorial Program away from the Associated Students, bringing it under the leadership of the BSU. His rationale was that tutorial programs aimed at nonwhite populations but carried out by predominantly white students were harmful to the educational development of the students. Garrett reasoned that “white people working with black students makes it that much more difficult for black kids to get positive images of themselves.”³⁶ Additionally, in 1966, the TP, with money from the Associated Students fund established a teen center in the predominantly black Fillmore district. This locale increased the identification of the BSU with the TP. Roger Alvarado left stewardship of the TP in Garrett’s hands, and moved on to work in the Mission District, a heavily Latino neighborhood.³⁷ Additionally, Chinese American students, operating as the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA) would eventually establish tutoring programs and a teen center in Chinatown.³⁸ Successful in the takeover of the Tutorial Project, Garrett seized the momentum of the early victory and took stock of the BSU membership. In his estimation, the BSU consisted of

Nationalists, who were mostly dominated by cultural aspects, who had mostly dominated the Negro Students Association. There were the sororities and fraternities, there were integrationists, the men who went out with white girls, girls who went out with white men...and then there were just students who were trying to be what white students are all around the country, just trying to go to school to be a good white person.³⁹

³⁶ Orrick, 85.

³⁷ While the BSU and TWLF expressed ideological ties with Marxist nations around the world, they did not, as a whole, adopt the economic practices of communism. Some individual members espoused variants of Marxism, including Roger Alvarado who spent much of the late sixties attempting to implement non-currency based exchanges through his “Chicken for a Dress” program in San Francisco. Roger Alvarado, comments delivered at “The Straight Story” panel at *Consciousness, Community, Liberation: Fulfilling the Promise of '68*, 30 October 2008, San Francisco State University.

³⁸ Barlow and Shapiro, 158.

³⁹ Orrick, 80.

In Garrett's understanding of his constituency, the cultural nationalists of the group were satisfied with nationalism as an "end in itself." The sorority sisters and fraternity brothers may have participated in the BSU but they were, according to Garrett, more interested in adopting and mimicking white values. The integrationists and interracial daters of the group also substituted white "values at the expense of their own" and sought miscegenation to a degree. The final members that he pointed out were likely the first casualties of Garrett's leadership—the "Uncle Toms" and "Handkerchief-Heads" just trying to get an education, placing no special importance on color or race. From the way he discussed them here—good "white" people—Garrett's disdain for the non-political black student is clear: for him, being a black student at SFSC in 1966 was about more than getting an education—it was about fighting for a relevant education.⁴⁰

Feeling that the majority of sympathetic black students on campus believed, as Professor DeVere Pentony observed, that "integration isn't our scene," Garrett sought a more strident approach.⁴¹ After familiarizing himself with these disparate groups within the BSU, he set about articulating a course of action for those who wished to remain with the organization as it navigated more militant waters. First among the activities of the reformed BSU was to scrutinize the curriculum offered at SFSC, "finding out what classes were racist [and] what teachers were racists."⁴² Furthermore, like its predecessor the NSA, the BSU drafted a constitution that called for the creation of a "syllabus committee" that would press for the introduction of Black History courses at SFSC.⁴³

⁴⁰ Hekymara, 59-60.

⁴¹ Orrick, 78.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 81.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 87.

Thus, while student activists at SFSC seemed content for a time to work within the prevailing institutions and seek reform, it would not continue to be a nonviolent struggle. This became clear in November of 1967 when the BSU stormed into the offices of the main student newspaper, trashed the place and physically attacked James Vazko, the paper's editor. President Summerskill suspended the black students and Vazko filed criminal charges against them. Vazko had previously headed the *Gater's* sports desk, and while in this position, he ridiculed Muhammad Ali, calling him Cassius Clay and mocking his conscientious objection to the military draft.⁴⁴ Vazko had also taken an outspoken stance against the BSU, the AS funded programs they controlled, and their leaders Jimmy Garrett and Marianna Waddy. BSU members arrived at the *Gater* offices that day with the intention of bringing "documentation" of the paper's racism, and hopefully persuading the paper's staff to give objective coverage of their activities on campus. Jimmy Garrett explained that, despite the fact that "Nobody went there to fight...[t]he fight was spontaneous," he admitted that, "the white boy said some things, and he got hit in the mouth." He went on to say, "He didn't get hurt, which is what he should have done," meaning that while the violence was spontaneous, it was justified.⁴⁵

Throughout 1967, the militant posturing of the BSU, according to one student, "had managed to effect a kind of subtle psychological intimidation of whites on campus," and the physical attack made that subtle intimidation seem overtly hostile.⁴⁶ Even though the BSU and the TWLF did not instigate further violence in the struggle for ethnic studies, their salvo may have opened the door to the aggressive counter-measures from

⁴⁴ Smith, et al., 22.

⁴⁵ Jimmy Garrett, interview with Austin Scott (by proxy), LBJ Library, 24. The subject of violence will be revisited in greater detail in the following chapter.

⁴⁶ Barlow and Shapiro, 113.

law enforcement officials. In the Bay Area, however, police and black residents already had violent encounters, especially in Oakland as the Black Panther Party policy of armed self-defense had precipitated a rise in armed police patrols in their neighborhood.⁴⁷ This often resulted in bloody clashes between police and Panthers. Just one week prior to the *Gater* incident, Huey Newton had delivered a lecture on campus about armed self-defense, and hours later he was involved in a shoot-out with police that ended with his arrest for murder of a police officer (and a bullet in his abdomen).⁴⁸

Thus, the specter of racial violence permeated the Bay Area, and the *Gater* incident, while tame in comparison, was a reminder of the violence that accompanied racial protest. Many contemporary observers saw the *Gater* incident as belonging alongside the urban riots and violent encounters between police and black militants that created sensational headlines in American newspapers in the late 1960s. These incidents were viewed in stark contrast to the supposed nonviolent orthodoxy of the southern civil rights movement—a tactic that was seen as irrelevant to the urban Black Power movement. However, the notion that armed self-defense was a peculiarly northern, urban phenomenon of the late 1960s is increasingly acknowledged as a fallacy by scholars of this era.⁴⁹ Thus, the physical attack on the newspaper editor, as well as the violent clash

⁴⁷ Allegations of racism were not only directed at the Bay Area police from the outside: a group of black police officers in San Francisco (who comprised just five percent of the force) alleged that the Police Officer's Association was "a bastion of racism." They formed their own organization in response to this perceived prejudice, Black Officers for Justice, which supported the striking students. Barlow and Shapiro, 147.

⁴⁸ Barlow and Shapiro, 127.

⁴⁹ For examples of such literature refuting the notion of nonviolence as an indigenous and pervasive ideology of the southern civil rights movement, see: Lance Hill, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt*, (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

that led to the shooting and imprisonment of Huey Newton must be properly contextualized within the contemporary attitudes toward violence, and competing notions of whose violence can be justified. This subject will be addressed in the following chapter as it relates to the ongoing police repression on campus during the strike.

During the *Gater* incident, a photographer for the paper happened to have a camera on hand when the BSU students entered the office, and his snapshots of the event served to sensationalize the news coverage, turning the skirmish into a serious and volatile issue. More than any other event in the years preceding the strike, the incident with the *Gater* staff revealed the deep-seated tensions that pushed more students into the strident Third World camp, as it simultaneously alienated many moderate allies. This rift would only continue to grow as issues of war and politics permeated nearly all forms of discourse on campus.

“A Vietnam might happen on this campus”: Campus and National Politics Collide

For students at SFSC in the late 1960s, it did not require tremendous effort to find examples of anti-Vietnam war demonstrations. Bay Area cities were major foci for anti-war activity, and college campuses provided not only the participants for this struggle, but often the venue as well. Students at SFSC joined the usual anti-war organizations like SDS. They protested in opposition to the campus recruiting stations for the ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) and Dow Chemical Company, which made napalm and Agent Orange, both chemical weapons used in Vietnam by the American military. In addition to these actions, students found a natural enemy in the draft board. A stipulation of the Vietnam-era Selective Service System required that colleges provide the draft board with the class rankings of all male students. While it is not entirely clear how that

information was to be used, most protestors at the time felt that a student with a high ranking would garner an exemption from the draft because of the perceived value that his academic accomplishments promised. Students around the country protested this policy, demanding that their colleges' administrations refuse to supply this information to the draft board.⁵⁰

While SFSC's campus had its series of battles, many students also joined off-campus protests as part of their opposition to the Vietnam War. In October of 1967, some SFSC students joined UC Berkeley students and other community activists in a weeklong series of nonviolent protests outside of the Oakland Induction Center. During the event, which was called Stop the Draft Week, the activists quickly strayed from the lip service they paid to non-violence, and the streets became filled with protestors clashing violently with police. As the SFSC students involved in this event returned to campus on 17 October, they seized the famed Speakers' Platform located in the center of campus outside of the Student Union, and berated the institution, the administration, and their fellow students for their complicity in the war in Vietnam. The Associated Students, meeting later that day, ignored their usual itinerary, and instead voted by overwhelming majority to dedicate a week of campus discussion to the issue of the war. The War Crisis Convocation, held in November 1967, gave students and faculty members a chance to air grievances and pronounce their opposition to the war. The Convocation was followed by a vote on a ballot of twenty-six issues related to the college's relationship to the "military-industrial complex." The ballot was open to the entire

⁵⁰ Smith, et al., 55-56.

academic community, and despite support for severing the university's ties to the war, no official change in policy resulted from the Convocation.⁵¹

As students and faculty members at SFSC and campuses around the country forged the politics of the New Left and embraced radical tactics in the pursuit of social change, a similar movement arose among conservative students. At San Francisco State College, the conservative backlash emerged in the student government elections of 1967, in which a coalition of right-leaning students won with a promise of ending university appeasement to radical groups. The "Shape Up" slate gathered the politically conservative members of the student body, including *Daily Gater* columnists Phil Garlington and Dave Richmond, as well as Bill Burnett and Steve Diaz. The slate was openly hostile to the AS budget allowances for student programs like the TP and the CIP, and their administration was narrowly focused on undermining the student activists. The new leaders also vowed to involve the state legislature, which oversaw the Board of Trustees of the California State University system, in the operations of the college by sending dispatches and liaisons to Sacramento. Ronald Reagan, Governor of California at the time (and therefore a member of the Board of Trustees), had made a name for himself by taking a hard line against political agitators and activists. As the student government and their supporters garnered the backing of the California legislature against racial militancy, a conflict over obscenity and censorship erupted that drew all factions into battle.⁵²

In addition to the groundbreaking programs of the Experimental College and the Tutorial Program, SFSC Associated Students also funded three separate student

⁵¹ Barlow and Shapiro, 109-111.

⁵² Smith et al., 14.

newspapers, all with widely varied perspectives and concepts. The most radical of the three was *Open Process*, which was part literary magazine, part avant-garde arts showcase, and part underground newspaper. The student editors of the paper consistently flirted with the boundaries of obscenity, challenging the “bourgeois sensibilities” of many students, faculty members, and administrators. In the spring of 1967 Summerskill had been forced to suspend the publication of *Open Process* after the editors published the “Summer Love Edition.” That edition featured a photograph of a nude torso of a woman with several articles devoted to the sexual revolution, which the editors argued was a very germane topic for their readership in San Francisco. Steve Diaz and Bill Burnett, both Shape Up slate members now in control of the student legislature and finances, made copies of the issue and sent it to every conservative politician and trustee in the state. Those in receipt of the mailing from these students incited an uproar over obscenity, making a cause célèbre of the issue. As Summerskill put it, “It tore into my world. Those sixteen pages, casually written by students, caused untold trouble for months.”⁵³

After striking a verbal agreement with the editors to avoid future obscenity, Summerskill allowed *Open Process* to continue publication. However, in December of 1967, Jefferson Poland, a contributor to the previously objectionable “Summer Love Edition” and constant source of controversy at San Francisco State, published a poem in *Open Process* that described male masturbation, accompanied by a picture of a nude male torso with a strategically placed bunch of grapes. Summerskill reacted swiftly and punitively, suspending Poland and the paper’s editor from the college, and ending *Open Process* for good. The *San Francisco Examiner*, a conservative-leaning daily paper that

⁵³ Summerskill, 98.

had previously incited vitriol over the first obscenity flap with *Open Process*, published an editorial praising Summerskill for his boldness in dealing with this issue. However, in what many conservative critics saw as yet another sign of chronic capitulation to the “trouble-makers,” Summerskill quickly reversed the suspension of the students. Summerskill had been contacted by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on behalf of the two students, who claimed they had been denied due process in their suspension. While he avoided a lawsuit by the ACLU, Summerskill could not prevent the further outcry and continued questioning of his leadership that ensued over the second obscenity crisis at SFSC.⁵⁴ After he lifted the suspension of the two students, the *Examiner* ran a second editorial that apologized for its lapse in judgment in praising Summerskill, and labeled him “the high priest of the cult of permissiveness.”⁵⁵

A further controversy in the debate over obscenity emerged when the BSU began claiming that the administration was racist for pardoning the white student editors but not the black students who had been involved in the *Daily Gater* incident. Thus, in the waning days of 1967, San Francisco State appeared to be headed toward a standoff between the multiple factions vying for legitimacy and reform. All of these groups (anti-war demonstrators, BSU, SDS, etc.) decided that Wednesday, 6 December 1967 would be the day of a general strike, in which students would join forces to voice their demands, which were clearly delineated by the students in advance of the strike. Firstly, the students wanted the suspensions of the BSU students involved in the *Daily Gater* incident to be lifted. Secondly, they demanded that students be allowed to control the campus publications *The Daily Gater*, *Phoenix*, and *Open Process*. Lastly, students called for an

⁵⁴ Summerskill, 124.

⁵⁵ Editorial, *The San Francisco Examiner*, December 1967.

end to “political harassment,” which was left undefined, but clearly gestured toward the increasing antagonism of the administration and trustees.⁵⁶

While all students who called for the strike supported these three demands, there was some wariness on the part of white demonstrators when Jimmy Garrett indicated that come 6 December, if the demands were not met, he would call for 5,000 community members to descend upon campus in protest. Exactly what these 5,000 people would do was anyone’s guess, and Garrett was not revealing his plan. The tenuous coalition between white and black students in the lead up to this strike and the general air of hostility on campus prompted Garrett to remark, “[a] Vietnam might happen on this campus.”⁵⁷

Their demands not having been met, on 6 December 1967, students gathered outside of the student union in the center of campus where they held a rally with various activists mounting the Speakers’ Platform and delineating the causes for the protest and calling for direct-action measures. The students marched to the Administration Building, which had been locked and vacated of all employees in anticipation of such an occurrence. Summerskill and his close advisors remained in his office, in addition to the press who congregated in the lobby of the building. Students, undeterred by the locked and vacant building, forced doors and windows open and representatives from all major factions of the day’s protestors occupied the building for several hours. In addition, BSU members were dispatched to various buildings around campus, and room-by-room disrupted classes and asked all students to walk out and join the strike. In light of this tactic, the administration decided to cancel all classes for the remainder of the day. As

⁵⁶ Barlow and Shapiro, 118-119.

⁵⁷ James Garrett, as quoted in Robert Smith, et al., 29.

more students spilled out of dorms and classrooms, the BSU introduced hundreds (rather than the thousands promised) of black high school students from around the city, ostensibly to demonstrate the BSU's stance that they should be allowed to matriculate regardless of the college's discriminatory admissions requirements. The students merged with the milling demonstrators and bystanders. Scuffles and destruction of property ensued as people clashed and tempers flared.⁵⁸

“Salem Revisited”: Summerskill on Trial

The events of 6 December 1967, which by all accounts stopped just short of turning into a full-scale riot, proved to be the greatest harbinger of events to come. Not only did the demands of the BSU create the platform for the interracial group of protestors, the tactic of dismissing classes and generating a “mill-in” proved to the BSU that a sit-in was not the only viable form of protest. Politicians from around the state and the country voiced their opinion that if Summerskill continued to pursue a policy of appeasement, then this “soft” approach to campus unrest would only ensure that activists become emboldened. Conservative observers opined that complicit professors should be fired, disruptive students should be suspended or expelled, and police should be on-hand to disperse crowds and maintain law and order.⁵⁹

Considerable criticism mounted when scenes of the student mobs roaming campus, smashing windows, and idly threatening further violence were played on the evening news. Community members and politicians throughout the state questioned Summerskill's judgment in not ordering a police crackdown. However, what these observers did not know was that several San Francisco Police Department officers had

⁵⁸ Barlow and Shapiro, 119; Smith, et al., 30.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 148.

accompanied Summerskill throughout the day, and they had consistently advised against mass police presence. Furthermore, Summerskill had ordered a direct phone line installed in his office that connected him to the police department, which was in response to student threats of jamming the switchboard to prevent police from being alerted.⁶⁰ Summerskill, along with his SFPD advisers, argued that the riot was avoided not *despite* police presence, but *because* there was no police presence.⁶¹

Unappeased by this information and enraged by the sensationalized news coverage of the day's events, the Board of Trustees called for an official evaluation of the leadership of President Summerskill under the auspices of the State Assembly Education Committee. The full investigation of the 6 December incident, including the inspection of damage to campus property and the testimony of the Chief of Police resulted in little evidence to support the state's case that Summerskill was an ineffective leader. Additionally, a vote of unanimous support from 800 faculty members further damaged their case. Regardless of this show of support, the trustees continued with a televised public hearing, or what one faculty member called their "inquisition," to interrogate Summerskill about the 6 December incident. Ronald Reagan used this opportunity to attend his very first meeting as President of the Board of Trustees, and his presence further reinforced the political nature of the debate over campus autonomy.

However, while Reagan and the trustees managed to score political points by exploiting the media coverage of the events, Summerskill was ultimately allowed to keep his job, pending further investigation of his "stewardship" by the trustees. At the same time that the trustees balked at firing Summerskill, they did manage to severely curtail his

⁶⁰ Ibid., 133.

⁶¹ Ibid., 144.

authority on campus. The trustees approved two resolutions that required any faculty member or student to be suspended immediately if he/she disrupts campus, and they allowed SFPD more discretion in containing campus violence. Students, faculty members, and many in the media were appalled as they watched the televised broadcast and subsequent re-airings of the trustee meeting. Herb Caen, a popular columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle* captured the sentiments of many when he suggested the title of the broadcast ought to be, “‘The Persecution and Symbolic Murder of Dr. John Summerskill by the Inmates of the Mental Hospital at Los Angeles, Under Direction of the Marquis de Rafferty,’ or ‘Salem Revisited.’”⁶²

Having survived the witch-hunt in the State Assembly and the Board of Trustees, Summerskill adjourned for the winter holiday. But his respite from campus turmoil would be brief. Upon returning to campus in the winter of 1968, Summerskill was again confronted by the radical left who resumed their protest of the Vietnam war, this aimed at the Air Force Reserve Office Training Corps (AFROTC). The AFROTC trained officers using SFSC resources, property, time and money. Members of the Associated Students managed to vote on an overwhelming referendum calling for Summerskill to end the AFROTC contract with SFSC on the basis of academic merit, rather than ideological opposition. Rather than divide liberal and conservative senators, the AS argued that the AFROTC did not require its students to pursue a coherent, rigorous academic course of study, thus diminishing their credibility as students of the university. In the ensuing

⁶² Ibid., 171.

months, white radicals on campus found allies in the anti-ROTC effort in the Black Students Union and eventually in the newly formed Third World Liberation Front.⁶³

With increasing oversight and encroachment by the Trustees, and more militant action by the campus activists, including the ultimatum regarding the AFROTC, John Summerskill found the middle path increasingly harder to navigate. In February of 1968, just after hearing that the trustee investigation had resulted in approval of his “stewardship,” Summerskill submitted his resignation, effective September 1968. The college attempted to regroup and move on, but the winter of 1968 proved to be the calm before the storm.

Uncle Toms, Uncle Sans, and Tio Tacos: The Third World Liberation Front⁶⁴

As a result of white radical and black student cooperation in the 6 December incident, students at SFSC used the period immediately following the protest to formulate strategies and build coalitions. Having secured a considerable majority in the student government, student activists now had control of the Associated Students funds, as well as the San Francisco Foundation, which oversaw the bookstore and cafeteria. With this clout, the students began to enact reform. The main student newspaper the *Daily Gater* dissolved its relationship with the journalism department, which forced the members of the Board of Publication to resign. The newly reconstituted Board was stocked with militant students, and they chose the former editor of *Open Process* to run the paper. Among the more frenetic activities they engaged in were the reallocation of all AS funds

⁶³ Smith, et al., 60.

⁶⁴ Uncle San and Tio Taco are synonymous with Uncle Tom.

to radical organizations, the creation of a bail fund for jailed protestors, and a library strike.⁶⁵

It was in this context that a new coalition of students emerged. The Third World Liberation Front was born from the spirit of optimism and possibility that the 6 December protests and the ensuing clout of radical students engendered on campus that winter. While Table 1 indicated the relatively low percentages of racial and ethnic minorities on campus, each demographic group represented in the survey had a corresponding student organization at SFSC. Each of these groups paid careful attention to the developments on campus as they unfolded around the increasing demands of the BSU for courses on black history and culture.⁶⁶ As they observed, they also planned—each group seized upon the idea of transforming the curriculum of SFSC to create relevant and meaningful educational opportunities. As the organizations plotted separately, they also reached out to one another, ultimately setting aside racial and ethnic differences and recognizing a shared plight and strength in numbers as they moved forward with the School of Ethnic Studies.

As discussed earlier, the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action formed in the fall of 1967 to challenge issues of racism and segregation within Chinatown. Under the early leadership of Mason Wong, the group adopted a four-pronged strategy: a research and publication body focused on Chinese history, language and culture; the youth tutorial program; counseling for future Chinese admittees to SFSC; and a center on Clay Street in

⁶⁵ Smith, et al., 41.

⁶⁶ The member organizations were: the Latin American Students Organization (LASO), the Mexican American Student Confederation (MASC), the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA), the Philippine American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE). All of these groups were formed in the 1967-1968 academic year.

the heart of Chinatown. ICSA's mission, to be carried out by its four wings, was essentially to encourage all Chinese to invest in the idea of an education relevant to the history and future of Chinese in America. While the stated goals of the group had always been to improve the lot of Chinese living in San Francisco, both young and old, student and non-student alike, friction with the older generation of Chinatown residents caused ICSA members to distance themselves from the community following their early activities. Fearful that internal dissent by "Uncle Sans" within the community would make their platform vulnerable, ICSA began focusing predominantly on student and youth related issues by 1968. When the ICSA was faced with the decision to join the TWLF, a schism emerged due to some members' reticence to ally with the BSU and their militant tactics and ideology. Ultimately, however, Wong led those favorable ICSA members into a strong alliance with the BSU and a pivotal role within the TWLF.⁶⁷

The student group eventually known as La Raza began as two separate groups: Mexican American Student Confederation (MASC) and Latin American Students Organization (LASO). The latter organization's name gestured toward a pan-ethnic identification, which was likely due to the fact that it was an organization for foreign-born Latin American students. Their members balked at radicalism of the TWLF, briefly parting ways with the new umbrella organization during a spring protest with SDS. For students in MASC (formerly El Renacimiento, or the rebirth), their ethnic identification

⁶⁷ Hekymara, 82. While other groups discussed here often made alliances with non-student groups in their racial or ethnic communities, no other group appears to have tried as hard as the ICSA to maintain a mutually respectful relationship with the elders of their community. Elders in Chinatown, suspicious that the ICSA members were actually Hwa Ching (or Wah Ching; a group of rebellious youth, usually young men from Hong Kong living in Chinatown), refused to support their initiatives and actively distanced themselves from the organization. William Wei argues that nominal support for the Chinese student activists came when parents and elders realized the goal was to gain admittance to university. William Wei, *The Asian American Movement*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 16.

was with Mexico, although the Latino population at SFSC was a heterogeneous mix of students from Mexico as well as Central and South America. Mexican American students in southern California in the late sixties formed *Chicano* Studies programs, which is a term that comes from the Aztec Nahuatl language and was used by Mexican American youth trying to reclaim their pre-Columbian past.⁶⁸

Students at SFSC, however, favored the name La Raza, which embraced their unique mestizo heritage, a result of the intermarriage of the European Spaniard and the Native American. In naming their new organization, the members explained the nomenclature as, “La Raza: The Race, the people—the new breed.”⁶⁹ While the name Chicano was specific to the Mexican American population, scholar Jason Ferreira argues that SFSC students specifically chose La Raza for their new organization because it brought together Latinos from all nations as well as Native Americans living in the United States.⁷⁰ Thus, their organization, and the department that they proposed during the strike, incorporated a pan-Latino outlook and curriculum, while still recognizing differing processes of racialization. Their emphasis on embracing a militant pan-ethnic “Brown Power” put them at odds with their parents’ generation and other conservative members of the community who proudly claimed a Mexican American identity. As La Raza pressed forward with their radical views on politics and identity, they brushed off the criticisms of the “Tio Tacos” of their community.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Interestingly, it appears as though La Raza members, in addition to celebrating the native side of their ancestry, also celebrated the conquest of Spain by the Moors in an effort to claim African heritage as well. Hekymara says of this idea, “However, because Moors were ‘miscegenated’ in Spain, La Raza students tended to look upon their ties with Blacks as ‘ideological’ rather than overtly racial.” Hekymara, 86.

⁶⁹ Hekymara, 85. Other Chicano organizations around this time also began referring to themselves as La Raza as a way to celebrate this heritage.

⁷⁰ Jason Ferreira, 280.

⁷¹ Hekymara, 86.

For La Raza students, like Native American students, it was the idea of internal colonization that originally spurred them toward activism. In conjunction with their focus on their Aztec ancestry, La Raza members argued that even though they had nominally achieved rights and freedoms as Americans, their Latin roots forced them to encounter racism and discrimination that prevented them from ever truly overcoming the colonial system instilled by Spain centuries before. Not until they were provided with an adequate education, both to impart their history as colonial subjects and to allow them to cultivate the skills and mindset necessary to overcome that legacy, would they truly become decolonized.⁷²

Like La Raza students, the Native American Student Organization (NASO) embraced the Fanonian idea of internal colonization to articulate their grievances within the city and the college of San Francisco. Given the history of Native Americans in North America (and specifically within the United States), the leap to Frantz Fanon seemed the most obvious for all of the groups who espoused his rhetoric in this period. NASO used this rhetoric to its benefit, highlighting the incredibly high rates of alcohol abuse, infant mortality, maternal mortality and suicide among Native Americans in the U.S. NASO members pointed to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and their continuing termination of tribal benefits (and reservations) as the main culprit for the ills that had befallen Native Americans. NASO members recognized that San Francisco, because of its proximity to several terminated reservations and its reputation for hedonism attracted many of the “lost” sons and daughters of Native American tribes. Residing in an urban area, the San Francisco Native American population lost many of their connections to

⁷² Ibid.

their traditional forms of knowledge and occupations. Thus, NASO proposed an educational program that would instruct these “lost sheep” in their history, culture, and languages, as well as many of the tools needed to aid the larger Native American population (economics, medicine, psychology, etc.).⁷³

For Filipino students at SFSC, the creation of their own group, the Philippine American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE), was in response to the predicament they felt as an ethnicity caught between Latino/Chicano identity and Asian identity. As Filipino students observed the ICSA and La Raza move forward with their ideas for the School of Ethnic Studies, they were internally torn over where they visualized themselves within the larger ethnic and racial web of students. In their mission statement they addressed this division, saying, “There are Pinoys [a nickname for Filipinos used amongst each other] who can relate to Asians and there are just as many who can easily relate to Chicanos and Latinos.”⁷⁴ While Filipinos in the Philippines are traditionally thought of as having Asian ancestry, many Filipinos in the United States felt strong ties to Latinos and Chicanos because of a shared colonial history and their similar experiences of racialization in the twentieth century. Scholar Yen Li Espiritu has discussed the “Filipino-Hispanic alliance,” saying, “As a result of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines, Filipinos share many cultural characteristics with Hispanic American groups.”⁷⁵ These cultural characteristics were similarly nurtured when Filipinos and Chicanos worked side-by-side in the agricultural industry in California, supporting one

⁷³ Ibid., 104.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 111.

⁷⁵ Yen Li Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 170.

another in the creation of the United Farm Workers in 1965.⁷⁶ Ultimately the Filipino Studies department was eventually housed in the Asian American division of the College of Ethnic Studies. Pat Salavar, founder of PACE, enthusiastically laid the groundwork for their department, even going so far as to contact President Marcos of the Philippines to request his support for the project.⁷⁷ Salavar recruited fellow leader Ron Quidachay by saying, “Are you Filipino? Then you’re in our organization.”⁷⁸

Another group whose members were active in the TWLF was the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA). When the TWLF formed in the spring of 1968, ICSA (and PACE) was the only existing group for Asian American students. The first AAPA began at Berkeley as a subgroup of the Peace and Freedom Party on campus, and the SFSC chapter was inaugurated shortly after in the fall of 1968, on the eve of the strike. One student familiar with the AAPA membership described them as “outcasts,” “proletariat types,” and “low rider Chinese and Japanese” students.⁷⁹ Thus, their image was somewhat of a contrast to that of the studious and focused ICSA members. However, as William Wei argues, AAPA members were some of the most vocal and militant Asian American students at SFSC in 1968.⁸⁰ Penny Nakatsu, described by the *Daily Gater* as the “spokesman” and “principal organizer” (alongside Stan Wong) of the AAPA, described their group as “the first attempt to bring together in one organization the entire

⁷⁶ See Matt Garcia, *A World of its Own: Race, Labor and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

⁷⁷ Hekymara, 111.

⁷⁸ Ron Quidachay, Comments delivered at “The Straight Story” panel at *Consciousness, Community, Liberation: Fulfilling the Promise of '68*, 30 October 2008, San Francisco State University.

⁷⁹ Reminiscences of Terry Collins, interview with Ronald Grele, 1984, Student Movements of the 1960s Project, Columbia University Oral History Office, Butler Library, (hereafter Columbia Oral History), 110. Wei, 19.

⁸⁰ Wei, 19.

Asian-American community.”⁸¹ Thus, the AAPA provided an organization for the many Japanese students on campus, and they stressed a pan-Asian identity and solidarity among their members.

While all of these groups formed under diverse auspices, they all shared many important similarities. Whether they began with an overtly political mission or rather a purely cultural agenda, the process of politicization over the 1967-1968 school year pushed all of these groups to a radicalized position. From goals centered on youth outreach, tutorial programs, arts and cultural initiatives or anti-poverty campaigns, these organizations ultimately found themselves embracing a fully politicized agenda, supported by militant tactics.⁸²

As they navigated more militant waters, students of color at SFSC began to articulate an ideology of interconnected world struggles on the part of nonwhite people. This idea that all nonwhite people exist as the victims of the western capitalist imperialist oppressor, often termed Third World Marxism, was a pervasive ideology of this period. One scholar says of this ideology, “It embraced the revolutionary nationalist impulses in communities of color, where Marxism, socialism and nationalism intermingled and overlapped...It pointed a way toward building a multiracial movement out of a badly segregated US left.”⁸³ In practice, Third World Marxists drew inspiration from socialist Asian countries and leaders like Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh. Terry Collins, a BSU member and active leader during the strike, said, “there was no such thing as not having [Mao’s] Red Book” on you at all times, indicating that TWLF members relied on Mao’s

⁸¹ *The Daily Gater*, 23 October 1968

⁸² Barlow and Shapiro, 157.

⁸³ Elbaum, 3.

theories as a foundation of their philosophy.⁸⁴ In a clear example of this connection, George Murray's infamous speech (which ultimately got him fired) included a popular quotation attributed to Mao, which was the notion that "political power comes from the barrel of a gun." In addition, James Garrett is quoted in 1966 as saying, "We have yet to win our freedom from white America. Our struggle is no different from that of the Vietnamese, who heroically resist the white oppressor."⁸⁵

A further strand of nonwhite militant thought that was prevalent throughout the country and within the BSU and TWLF was the idea of internal colonialism. Based largely on the work of Frantz Fanon, the notion that African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans, and others exist as colonized minorities within the United States became an incredibly popular and galvanizing theory in this period.⁸⁶ Fanon's theories of power relations between the colonizer and the colonized, the utility of violence in decolonization struggles, and the post-colonial racial order all contributed to the "internal colonial model" seized upon by militant activists in the 1960s. This model relies on an understanding of the nonwhite American as disenfranchised, oppressed, and subject to the ruling elite. The ideology of interconnectedness of the world's nonwhite populations would lead directly to the creation of the Third World Liberation Front under the guidance of Professor Juan Martinez. The following diagram illustrates the proposed organization of the TWLF:

⁸⁴ Reminiscences of Terry Collins, Columbia Oral History, 112. In this interview, Collins also says that Mao wrote a letter to the TWLF expressing his support for the strike.

⁸⁵ As quoted in Barlow and Shapiro, 91.

⁸⁶ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, [1961] 2004).

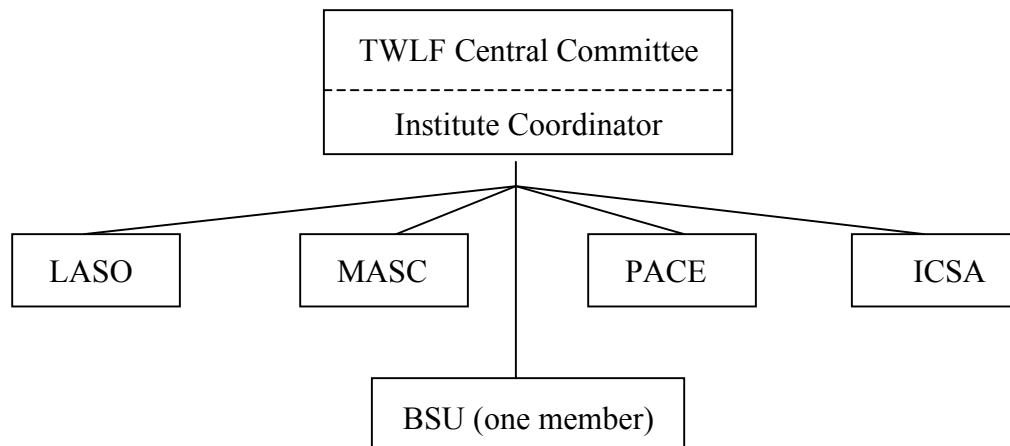


Figure 1 – Third World Liberation Front Structure⁸⁷

The organizational structure of the TWLF, as decided upon by the member organizations in the spring of 1968, would consist of a ten member central committee (the ruling body of the TWLF), with two members each from the main organizations, one member from the BSU, and the Institute Coordinator.

In March 1968 the newly formed TWLF “liberated” the office space of the YMCA on campus and rallied around the firing of Professor Martinez. Martinez was on a one-year contract, and he had been given assurances that his position would be renewed. He had left a tenure-track position at Arizona State to join the History Department at SFSC, thus when his contract was not renewed for the 1968-1969 school year, he was

⁸⁷ Hekymara, 151. Later in the spring of 1968, LASO briefly parted ways with the TWLF over tactical disagreements, specifically the militancy of the BSU. As discussed previously, MASC eventually changed their name to La Raza. I have left the original groups and names in this table to illustrate the working plans for the TWLF at the time of its inception. There is some disagreement among scholars and participants as to the role that NASO eventually played in the TWLF. From my research, I have concluded that NASO, as an organization, receded from the movement and did not play a part in the TWLF as the strike moved forward. However, individuals who had been members of NASO stayed active within the TWLF, most notably Hari Dillon. With no definitive account of the reasons for their disappearance, I can only assume that the few American Indian students at SFSC were busy channeling their activism toward the impending occupation of Alcatraz Island and the subsequent emergence of the American Indian Movement (AIM). Chapter Two will discuss how the TWLF was organized and operated during the strike.

clearly upset. Martinez suspected that this personnel decision was motivated by factors other than a lack of funding. Upon arriving at SFSC, History Department Chair Ray Kelch assigned Martinez to teach undergraduate survey courses, rather than the new Mexican American history courses that Martinez was under the impression he would be teaching. Kelch and Martinez clashed over this misunderstanding as well as Martinez's increasingly outspoken activism on campus.⁸⁸ Martinez and his devoted students charged the history department with racism after he was fired, and ultimately the TWLF would make one of their strike demands the rehiring of Professor Martinez.

From its early auspices of faculty retention, the TWLF moved on to coordinate its position on enrollment and curriculum issues, staking its claim as an ally of the BSU and an equally militant faction determined to enact change at SFSC. As the two groups moved toward a closer alliance early in 1968, Dr. Nathan Hare (recently hired to head the proposed Black Studies Department) described the tactic of the BSU (that the TWLF would wholeheartedly support) as one of "heightened contradictions," saying

For by heightening the contradictions, you prepare people for the confrontation, which must come when they are fully sensitized to their condition. Rushing into confrontations without having heightened contradictions contrarily cripples the confrontation.⁸⁹

Essentially, Hare was indicating that a confrontation was inevitable, but victory for the BSU (and by extension the TWLF) was not guaranteed unless the appropriate groundwork was laid. To properly set up the inevitable showdown, activists at SFSC used the spring of 1968 to raise the stakes and clearly delineate the contradictions between what they saw as a college befitting their needs and what SFSC had to offer.

⁸⁸ Barlow and Shapiro, 152. Martinez was not always a radical—his first book was a repudiation of Castro's regime and its autocratic socialism.

⁸⁹ Dr. Nathan Hare, as quoted in Umemoto.

Seeing the writing on the wall, Summerskill perhaps sought reconciliation as his legacy. As the college continued to entertain controversy throughout the spring of 1968, Summerskill became more and more receptive to conversation and negotiation with the campus activists. Summerskill's willingness to negotiate over these fundamental issues was tested in May of 1968 when the SDS initiated an anti-AFROTC demonstration. Having failed to secure Summerskill's pledge to cancel the ROTC contract at SFSC, and learning of a faculty vote supporting the retention of the ROTC, students moved forward with a sit-in of the Administration building.⁹⁰

SDS encouraged the BSU and the TWLF to join the demonstration and make their demands part of the protest. These two groups contemplated capitalizing on the success of campus radicals to push the fragile balance of student demands to the breaking point. The TWLF's first major confrontation came when they decided, with some reservations, to join the SDS anti-ROTC sit-in of the Administration Building (the BSU, feeling that this did not heighten contradictions, and wary of losing the concessions they had already gained, chose not to participate).⁹¹ The TWLF jockeyed for leadership of this high-profile demonstration with SDS for some time. While SDS unequivocally supported the demands of the TWLF, members of the latter organization were suspicious of an alliance with SDS, and were not fully supportive of the sit-in as a viable tactic.

Nevertheless, the two groups joined efforts, along with a large group of unaffiliated students. The TWLF added a further dimension to the anti-ROTC protest by including demands for 400 special admissions for minority students and the rehiring of Dr. Juan Martinez. The first blow to the strikers' platform was the news that the faculty

⁹⁰ Barlow and Shapiro, 127-135.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

had voted in favor of retaining the ROTC on campus. They went ahead with their sit-in of the Administration building, and they remained as occupiers until long after the rest of the campus was closed. Summerskill made the contentious decision to call for police back up when the students threatened to chain the doors of the building shut, preventing anyone from entering or leaving. Soon the SFPD Tactical Squad arrived and threatened to retake the building by force. Twenty-six students remained to submit to symbolic arrest. It seemed as though the token arrests would appease both sides in the meantime and the tense situation would subside for the night.⁹²

However, the situation escalated outside when thousands of supportive students stayed to watch as their arrested comrades were loaded into the paddy wagons. A lawyer for the students, Terrence Hallinan, somehow ended up on the receiving end of a policeman's riot stick and had his head split open. The observers saw their bloodied ally being pulled from the throng of protestors, and they reacted by throwing any manner of projectile they could find in the direction of the police. The police managed to extract themselves and the protestors in their custody and leave the scene fairly quickly. Eleven protestors were treated at hospitals for wounds sustained in the melee. The riot, along with photos and video of the violent clash, was the leading story on the evening news and in the newspapers the following morning.⁹³

Students sympathetic to the SDS and the TWLF were spurred into action by the violence and for the next week, students rallied and occupied the Administration building. During this time police raided buildings and arrested hundreds of participants. Several times throughout the week the SFPD Tactical Squad was called to the campus.

⁹² Ibid, 166.

⁹³ Ibid, 170.

The entire community of San Francisco tuned in to nightly newscasts and witnessed the unfolding events. Community members with ties to the activist students joined ongoing negotiations with Summerskill, attempting to broker a satisfactory conclusion and avoid further bloodshed. Ultimately, Summerskill was unable to budge on the SDS issue of the AFROTC, but he did suggest that a faculty-student referendum on the issue that could produce binding results for the college.

As for the TWLF demands, Summerskill eventually relented and agreed to admitting more nonwhite students, rehiring Juan Martinez, and allocating more teaching positions to account for the new nonwhite students. All of Summerskill's concessions required immediate and significant funding, which might have been supplied by the Educational Opportunity bill that sought funding for special admittees. That bill had recently passed in the state legislature; however, Governor Reagan, a staunch opponent of anything that smacked of affirmative action, slashed \$250,000 from the EOP budget by way of line-item veto.⁹⁴

Summerskill signed the agreement with the students and headed to the airport the next morning, bound for Ethiopia where he was interviewing for a job with the Ford Foundation. Reporters greeted him, asking for comment about his plans, but he declined to say whether he was resigning immediately or if he would fulfill the terms of his original resignation and stay through the summer. However, when Summerskill landed at JFK airport in New York City a few hours later on a layover, he was informed that the Board of Trustees considered his tenure as president complete. They had already

⁹⁴ Orrick, 27.

contacted Professor Robert Smith about becoming the next president of San Francisco State.⁹⁵

“The Same Old Treadmill of Conversation”: Status of Black Studies by Spring 1968

President Summerskill, despite his imminent departure, actually endeavored to honor some of his previous verbal agreements with the BSU. He began by accepting the BSU’s choice for coordinator of the inchoate black studies department, Dr. Nathan Hare, a controversial black scholar and activist. Dr. Hare’s arrival on campus was embraced as a significant victory by the BSU, and they hoped that he would be able to navigate and finesse the various bureaucratic obstacles to establishing a department. However, while Hare was an accomplished scholar and he had the nominal support of the necessary organizations on campus, even his single-minded devotion to making black studies happen could not overcome the mutual hostility that made the department so controversial.

Speaking after the strike was over, a black elected official in the Bay Area offered his take on the events at SFSC, saying,

I think it got to the point of strike because they [the students] had literally gone through 18 months of negotiations. I know that this is true because I was involved in certain parts of it.... And they really attempted to use democratic, legitimate avenues of redress and grievance and committee meetings and more meetings, and the strike came about because I think they [were] legitimately damned tired of promises that were broken, of extended negotiations that weren’t going anywhere, that didn’t seem to be productive. They got Nathan Hare on campus, which was one success, but then Nathan Hare was left for months without even a secretary.⁹⁶

As this quote demonstrates, the legitimate institutional consideration of ethnic studies did not truly begin until Nathan Hare was invited to campus in 1968, even though it was first

⁹⁵ Summerskill, 223.

⁹⁶ Orrick., 120.

introduced by the BSU in December 1966 at a meeting of the Council of Academic Deans (CAD). Met with lukewarm response, the proposed Black Studies Department floundered with neglect for years while students struggled to gain the audience and sympathy of the proper administrator. Hare and his black and Third World students were merely stuck on the “same old ‘treadmill of conversation’” that A. Cecil Williams, a black reverend from San Francisco who was involved with black students throughout the city, identified.⁹⁷

One of the first efforts at a unified curriculum in service to a Black Studies Department was the petitioning of the Administration by students who enrolled in courses in black history and culture that were offered through the Experimental College. These students received no credit for their work, and they attempted to negotiate with the college for recognition of their time spent in these courses. Administrators dismissed their requests. In March 1967, three months after the formal suggestion was first made, the Instructional Policy Committee (IPC, a curricular vetting group within the Academic Senate) voted unanimously in favor of a Black Studies Department.

Shortly after this, a group of faculty, students and members of the black community met informally at Dean Donald Garrity’s house to discuss black studies at SFSC.⁹⁸ Based on this conversation, Garrity, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, attended the next meeting of CAD in late May 1967 and proposed that the college pursue a department in this area. While the response of the Council was not overly hostile, the minutes reflect serious debate about the politics, ideology and relative merit of pursuing

⁹⁷ Ibid., 119.

⁹⁸ Garrity was a frequent target of the BSU and the radical students on campus for his conservatism and close relationship with the Board of Trustees.

this new field of study at San Francisco State. The discussion continued into the next meeting of CAD, at which the Deans adopted the following resolution:

San Francisco State College shall accept the judgment of a significant number of its students and faculty that the present curriculum does not adequately meet the needs of black students and other minority group students nor adequately confront and comprehend the history and present realities of the cultures and communities of Negro-Americans and other minority groups in the United States and the world. This college shall therefore seek the means necessary to meet those needs and to comprehend these realities. This college shall support fully whatever means are essential for the fulfillment of the intentions of this resolution.⁹⁹

While this platform did not address the method or means by which support could be secured for new curriculum, it was an earnest show of support for bringing much needed change to the racial dynamics on campus. The issue appeared to be gaining momentum and administrators were showing sympathy for an academic redress to the problems of inequality in San Francisco and on their campus.¹⁰⁰

That sympathy proved short lived, however, in the face of the increasingly militant actions of the BSU throughout the 1967-1968 school year. While the Deans continued to discuss black studies at their meetings, their enthusiasm for supporting black student-led initiatives waned in the face of the BSU's confrontational tactics. Not only did they balk at the thought of rewarding their behavior, but they also spent a considerable portion of their administrative time dealing with the fallout of the campus disturbances.¹⁰¹ Conversely, BSU members and other student activists began to be suspicious of the administration's "stall tactics" regarding black studies. Furthermore, the administration's response to the series of disturbances throughout 1967 and 1968 did

⁹⁹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 118.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 118.

not demonstrate a willingness to openly communicate or proactively work to resolve campus tensions. Thus, a credibility gap emerged on both sides of the issue, further forestalling any constructive action on the resolutions adopted by the CAD or the IPC.

The fundamental conflict was not that the two sides disagreed as to whether or not black studies or ethnics studies should be instituted. Rather, the majority of the administration was earnestly supportive of steps like adopting new curriculum. Colleagues and observers at the time spoke of John Summerskill and Robert Smith as sympathetic liberals who favored civil rights and worked for racial equality. For instance, A. Cecil Williams said of Summerskill, “[he] is a liberal man, and we need this kind of man in the educational system, and...we’ll get more from him than we will from, say, a person who’s conservative.”¹⁰² However liberal or sympathetic administrators were to the new agenda for civil rights on their campus, their ability to enact change on behalf of the protestors was ultimately in the hands of the trustees. Students were quickly becoming aware that no matter what committee, council, department or administrator they were referred to, nothing would be accomplished without the ultimate authority of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees, the Governor, the Superintendent, and conservative state politicians had clearly demonstrated that they would not take seriously the demands of radical students or their permissive administrators. The political invective directed at campus troublemakers proved to be a winning strategy for conservative politicians, and San Francisco State was fertile ground to be mined for those opposed to the changes underway in higher education.

Conclusion

¹⁰² Ibid., 119.

The final round of protests in the spring of 1968 demonstrated to the students of color that administrators, trustees, and the police were unable or unwilling to aggressively pursue a program of relevant education, but they were willing to fight student protests with force. As images of protestors, heads bloodied as they were dragged from buildings and beaten by batons, made their way into newspapers and hastily assembled pamphlets, the rhetoric of Third World revolutionaries sounded ominously relevant. The efforts of the students could not proceed with adherence to the nonviolent methods of previous protests—sit-ins and marches too easily lent themselves to brutal confrontations with police. For many of the students with ties to Bay Area inner cities, violent interactions were the only kind of interactions they had with police. The final lesson for students of color in the 1967-1968 school year, was that in this struggle of “heightened contradictions,” the tactics would have to be as drastic as the counter-measures promised to be.

Summerskill had managed to cobble together a fragile series of compromises before abruptly leaving office in May during the SDS/TWLF sit-in. These compromises were already under attack in the state house as apathy overtook the majority of the student population bound for their summer breaks. While Third World students took their activism to Bay Area communities, and George Murray traveled to Cuba, the nation continued to suffer the setbacks of the war, assassinations, and the dwindling credibility of its leaders. Students and faculty returning to SFSC’s campus in the fall of 1968 knew immediately that the controversy of the previous academic year had not waned during the summer stalemate. If anything, the efforts of the BSU and TWLF had redoubled in the intervening months as the programs that Summerskill had supported proved fruitless in

the face of institutional opposition and lack of funding. When George Murray captured the attention of the college, the state, and the nation for his views on race, violence, and education, the moment for action presented itself, and the students of SFSC seized upon it.

Chapter Two—“Victory is what we want. Not Notoriety”: The Third World Strike for Ethnic Studies

The lessons of the previous several years of tumult at SFSC had taught nonwhite students that even well meaning allies among the faculty were powerless to change the educational system on campus. Ultimately, the strike at San Francisco State did not occur because of opposing views on ethnic studies at the college: the administration had approved plans for a Department of Black Studies, and Nathan Hare and others were busy drafting course proposals that would be offered in the fall of 1969. Rather, the events at San Francisco State were part of a national debate over the nature of higher education and the shifting demographics of the student population. This pattern of failure on the part of local authority was proof that the system must be overhauled from top to bottom. The lofty goals of these students coupled with their tactics were ominous portents for the country at a time when revolutionary rhetoric and political violence were dominant themes of discourse.

As racial protest began to have a more pronounced presence in northern cities, incidents of violence between protestors and police became all too common. Media coverage of these events reflected the opinion of most white observers that a militant and wayward faction of an otherwise nonviolent movement for equality perpetrated the violence, and the police responded. In contrast, the urban minority population argued that they were frequent targets of a discriminatory police force that operated as the

repressive arm of the fundamentally racist society. This chapter will describe the elaborate political context of the strike and illustrate the ways in which the events at SFSC were both shaped by and in response to a national debate over race and violence.

The TWLF shared membership, tactics and rhetoric with the Black Panther Party, which was the group most associated with urban racial violence in the late 1960s. Thus, the TWLF at SFSC entered into this conversation by adopting the strategy of guerrilla insurgency and the revolutionary rhetoric of the Third World decolonization movement. Their insistence on heightening the contradictions between their reality and the fiction of American racial equality required dramatic standoffs between students and authority (in this case, the various law enforcement agencies that came to occupy campus). The decision to conduct their strike as a military operation was solely focused on attacking physical objects, and not people, but TWLF members consistently maintained a right to self-defense. They rarely submitted to symbolic arrests, favoring to fight back or retreat when approached by a police cordon. The strident militancy of the TWLF alienated some observers and potential allies. However, the blatant brutality of the police, the callous indifference of the Trustees, and the threat of violence by politicians forced the public to grapple with the issues of violence, self-defense and repression.

In addition to themes of violence, this chapter examines the mechanics of the protest to reveal the sophisticated philosophy and strategy that the strikers adopted. Third World students at SFSC carefully studied campus activism in its various iterations throughout the country, and they formulated a set of goals and strategies that set their struggle apart from the rest. They shirked the traditional sit-in tactic in favor of a frenetic assault on the functions of the college, bringing the campus to a screeching halt in order

to heighten the contradictions and make their case. They demanded that the college have open admissions for minority students and that these students have access to a relevant education in the history and culture of their ancestors. The diverse coalition challenged many to rethink their notions of minority activism and examine their assumptions about the role of higher education in American life. In so doing, their multiracial critique managed to uproot the received wisdom about nonwhite educational aptitude and the desire for assimilation. In addition, they offered a new paradigm of higher education that embraced self-determination and foregrounded racial identity as a critical category of epistemology.

President “Dog” Smith and George Murray

Following John Summerskill’s resignation, the Trustees appointed Robert Smith as the eighth president of San Francisco State College. Smith’s tenure in this office would prove to be the shortest to date—after less than six months as president of SFSC, Smith resigned amid protests, violence and political pressure from the Trustees and local, state and national politicians.¹⁰³ His time in office was marked by an escalation in tensions, and the eventual showdown over ethnic studies that began on his watch was likely inevitable by the time he became president. The events of the previous year on campus, combined with the state of race relations in the country and the political context of an election year proved to be the perfect storm. For politicians and the Board of Trustees, the issues at SFSC were easily exploited as campaign positions and partisan slogans in a racially charged election climate.

¹⁰³ Summerskill had previously held the office for the shortest tenure: two years (1966-1968).

The political dimensions of the strike at SFSC could be felt in local, state and national contests. In San Francisco, Mayor Joseph Alioto was not only a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, he was also a possible contender for the Democratic vice-presidential nomination. Alioto delivered the nominating speech for Hubert Humphrey and vigorously campaigned to be his number two. Part of his pitch to gain the nomination was his track record of exerting control over the dissonant voices in the city and keeping the peace between white and nonwhite factions. Thus, his hard line approach with the Black Panther Party and his directive to create a Tactical Squad within the San Francisco Police Department were political calculations that had as much to do with local issues as they did with national events. However, Alioto's ability to mitigate the racial unrest within the city suffered as a result of conditions created by these political calculations. Ultimately, he was unable to prevent the unrest from boiling over.¹⁰⁴

While Alioto tried to moderate his image in the context of the 1968 elections, Republican politicians within the state were seeking to scandalize California liberals, and thus their positions tended toward the extreme. Glenn Dumke maintained close ties to the Nixon campaign, and many suspected that he was seeking a cabinet position should the Republicans win the White House. Thus, his maneuverings throughout the election year had overt political connotations.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Max Rafferty, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, was campaigning for a US Senate seat as a Republican. Given his role in the educational system of California, his campaign was overwhelmingly focused on

¹⁰⁴ Barlow and Shapiro, 201.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 215. The position for which Dumke was purportedly being considered was no less than Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

condemning and quashing issues of student protest and campus unrest.¹⁰⁶ And, of course, there was Reagan's dark horse candidacy for the Republican nomination for president, which cast a significant glint of political campaign maneuverings on his already rhetorical war against leftist dissidents.

Filling the hastily vacated position of President at SFSC was thus a political calculation that the Trustees carefully weighed in the late spring of 1968. Eventually, the Trustees appointed Robert Smith as President, rather than Acting President or Interim President as they had originally hoped. As Smith recalls, he refused to accept anything less than a full, three-year appointment. This was not, however, because he had significant aspirations for the job. Rather, Smith saw the state of tensions on campus and he figured that any temporary president would be a lame duck from the first day he took office. Smith was not enthusiastic about being president, and he mentions the dissent within his household as his wife reminded him that accepting this term would mean sacrificing all research and personal plans that he had made for the future. However, the Trustees and their staff, as well as several faculty members at SFSC were relentless in their efforts to get Smith to accept their offer. Ultimately Smith convinced the Trustees to allow him to serve as full president for a term of three years, and he was appointed to the office on 30 May 1968.¹⁰⁷

The decision of the Trustees to tenaciously pursue a somewhat reluctant Robert Smith for the presidency is curious. Smith had gained an unfavorable reputation among the Trustees for his staunch opposition to the Board, and specifically Chancellor Dumke's increasing encroachment into campus affairs during the "faculty revolt" of

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 207.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, et al., 65.

1964. Rallying the cause of campus autonomy, Smith had engendered considerable animosity between himself and the governing body of the college. Upon hearing that he was being considered by the Board, Smith said, “I was convinced there was little danger of my selection by Chancellor Dumke in light of a history of interpersonal tension between us.”¹⁰⁸ And yet, the Board was so insistent that Smith become president that they negotiated a three-year contract with him, rather than the interim position of a few months that they had originally proposed. Smith’s outspoken stance against the Board and his reputation for social liberalism would not suggest that he was front runner for the Trustees as the leader of the campus that was increasingly a thorn in their side. Furthermore, the Board was desperate to appoint a “hard liner” who would bring the conservative credo of “law and order” to the campus. Smith writes, however, that under direct questioning from the Board about his willingness to take a hard line, he vacillated, and admitted that, “I was aware that they were worried about my disavowing a hard line.”¹⁰⁹ Smith, in his recollection of his appointment, does not account for this seemingly disjointed action by the Trustees, although he does allude to an issue that may well have been a significant factor in the Board’s decision.

A group of deans and faculty members at SFSC known as the Senate Executive Committee generated a list of three possible candidates for the position of interim president. They presented this confidential list to the Board, which then interviewed the candidate of their choice. The two names submitted by the committee that appeared alongside Smith are not known, but events that Smith recounts suggest that the committee was seriously considering a black candidate for the permanent position.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 70.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.,

As negotiations between Smith and the Trustees were underway, the Senate Executive Committee asked to meet with Smith about his insistence on the position being a three-year term. The meeting, as Smith retells it, occurred in the parking lot of the Hilton hotel (where the Trustees were meeting) “in a Volkswagen camper with the windows drawn.”¹¹⁰ The lone two members of the committee present were professors Urban Whitaker and S.I. Hayakawa (who would usurp the president’s office in a similarly questionable manner following Smith’s eventual demise), and they informed Smith that they were seriously considering proposing a black candidate for the permanent position.¹¹¹ This clandestine meeting was intended to persuade Smith to take an interim appointment so as to not interfere with their plan to promote the African American candidate. Smith declined their request. Later, after the Board of Trustees ultimately appointed Smith to a permanent position, the two liberal members of the Board (one of whom was the sole black member) told Smith that they had voted against his appointment because they were hopeful that a black candidate would be considered for the position.¹¹² After this conversation, Smith openly wondered if these two Trustees had been in conversation with Whitaker and Hayakawa.

While this discussion of promoting a black candidate to the presidency of SFSC may have been purely conjecture or simply the wishes of a few faculty members, it may offer an explanation for the puzzling appointment of Robert Smith. The Trustees apparently felt that Smith was the best candidate of the three names they were given by the faculty committee, even in light of his past record of defiance toward the Trustees.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 74.

¹¹¹ Hayakawa ultimately appointed Urban Whitaker as acting director of the College of Ethnic Studies following Hayakawa’s dismissal of Dr. Nathan Hare, the students’ choice for head of the college.

¹¹² Ibid., 79.

Perhaps the Board felt a priority in the interim was to appease the faculty and promote a liberal from their own ranks. Or perhaps, upon hearing the rumor that black candidate was under serious consideration by the Senate Executive Committee, the Trustees sought to stave off any political damage that such a symbolic appointment could have on the Republican coalition, under Reagan, that had invested so much of their reputation in keeping the lid on the campus race issue.

In addition to inheriting simmering campus racial tensions, Smith also assumed control of a budget that was operating at a deficit of \$750,000.¹¹³ This made implementing and funding the hastily assembled peace treaty between the previous president John Summerskill and the student protestors a difficult prospect. The college had submitted a funding request to the state in the form of the Educational Opportunity Bill, which would extend financial aid to the 400 special admittees accepted under the agreement brokered during the SDS/TWLF sit-in. The bill passed the state legislature, but was unceremoniously and unsurprisingly vetoed by Governor Reagan in the summer of 1968. Attempts to raise money from private donations and city funds were unsuccessful. President Smith was handed a break when out of the 428 special admissions granted, only 300 students actually enrolled under the new program in the fall of 1968. Still, with the deficit and the lack of new sources of funding, Smith was unable to guarantee the continuance of the program beyond the fall semester. Additionally, little support was offered to these new students, many of whom represented the lowest socio-economic strata of student at SFSC. While a significant victory had been achieved by the presence of 300 new students of color in the fall of 1968, the BSU and TWLF found that

¹¹³ Barlow and Shapiro, 196.

bureaucratic red tape and the lack of financial support was a crippling obstacle to implementing further stages of their plan for reforming higher education.¹¹⁴

Almost immediately after his appointment to office, Robert Smith was approached by the Black Students Union, who requested a series of sit-down meetings in order to hammer out an agreement about a Black Studies Department. For reasons that are unclear, Smith agreed, and for the first three months of his presidency, he would voluntarily submit to regular chastisements from the BSU. One black elected official from the Bay Area related in disbelief his knowledge of these meetings:

You can't believe the things that were said in those meetings. They'd open the meetings and they had everybody strategically placed. They wouldn't let the administrators sit with each other. They had a black cat between them. They were really just diabolic in their concept.... [T]hey wouldn't call him Dr. Smith, incidentally. It was part of the therapy that they refer to him as dog Smith.¹¹⁵

In July, August and September, Smith met with the BSU and ostensibly discussed when and how the college would begin to implement the plans for the Black Studies Department. The students also invited distinguished members of the surrounding black community to participate in these meetings, including Willie Brown who was a state assemblyman at the time. According to one account of a meeting that included several prominent community members, as well as Nathan Hare, BSU members, Deans from the college and President Smith, the major source of tension was a disagreement about process. Smith and the Deans wanted to obey the letter of the law in implementing the

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 197. A possible source of funding for the special admissions program (\$70,000) appeared to have been rejected by the Director of Student Financial Aid, Helen Bedesem, on the grounds that money earmarked for a specific population at the college violated federal anti-discrimination laws. In actuality, this money could have been accepted and administered in support of the special admissions program, but Bedesem did not consult the EOP or the administration before rejecting those funds. The eighth demand of the strike stipulated that "the slavemistress" Bedesem be fired and person of color be hired to direct the Financial Aid Office.

¹¹⁵ Orrick, 107.

department, while the students and community members repeated their concerns that such processes had yielded merely frustration and empty promises. Following the last of these fractious meetings, on 3 September 1968, one member of the BSU was quoted in the following week's *Daily Gater* as saying, "In the coming semester we will be engaged in revolutionary political activity."¹¹⁶

While Smith never managed to approximate Summerskill's level of diplomacy with the activists, he did show a desire to honor promises made when he hesitated after being ordered by the Trustees to fire George Murray in October of 1968. This event and the aftermath of Smith's reluctant decision to follow through with the Trustees' order, proved to be the final unraveling of the tenuous compromise between the administration of San Francisco State and the Board of Trustees. While California at the time was a conservative state, having recently elected Ronald Reagan to the Governor's office, San Francisco and the College were overwhelmingly and notoriously liberal. Faculty members at SFSC were waging their own battle with the Trustees over their right to collective bargaining, and the ideological divide made clear by this controversy showed a significant leftist majority among the professoriate. Thus, it made sense for the Trustees to attempt to keep the peace with the faculty and the surrounding community by appointing liberal presidents. And yet, the ability of the Trustees and the president to relate freely and fairly was often a casualty of this compromise. Thus, when Smith balked at firing George Murray, the Trustees abandoned *détente* with him and attempted to exert their authority directly into matters on campus.

¹¹⁶ Dirkan Karagueuzian, *Blow It Up!: The Black Student Revolt at San Francisco State and the Emergence of Dr. Hayakawa*, (Boston: Gambit Incorporated, 1971), 83.

Born into poverty in San Francisco, George Mason Murray was the oldest son of a Baptist minister. Murray enrolled at SFSC in 1965 in an effort to gain an education and help provide for his twelve brothers and sisters. An English major, Murray made excellent grades and participated in the Tutorial Program, eventually becoming its first black director. Even though Murray grew up in a staunchly Baptist home, he was politically attracted to the Nation of Islam at this time in his life.¹¹⁷ While he flirted with the Black Muslim faith, Murray became a member of the BSU, and eventually he joined the ranks of the Black Panther Party (BPP). Shortly after allying himself with the BPP, Murray was appointed to the position of Minister of Education and he quickly became an outspoken representative of the party. Chosen as a member of the BPP envoy to attend the Organization of Solidarity of the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL) in Cuba in the summer of 1968, Murray gave an incendiary speech that ultimately contributed to his dismissal from teaching duties at SFSC.¹¹⁸ Murray is quoted during this speech as saying, "Our freedom will come as soon as we create a few more Vietnams, Cubas, and Detroits," and, "Every time a Vietnamese guerilla knocks out a U.S. soldier, that means one less aggressor against those who fight for freedom in the U.S."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ According to an interview with BSU member Terry Collins in 1984, Murray had become a born-again Christian at that time.

¹¹⁸ Barlow and Shapiro, 206-207. The OSPAAL held its first conference in Havana in January of 1966. 152 delegates attended the event from 82 countries. The purpose of the organization was to develop a source of political strength among socialist countries that did not derive its power or legitimacy from the Soviet Union. Their focus was decolonization and anti-imperialism, and they supported these efforts through the coordination of aid and other materiel. According to one proponent, "It is thus an international weapon of nationalist revolutionaries." They saw the US as a major enemy in this venture. The organization was also referred to as the Tricontinental Congress. For more on this, see: John Gerassi, ed., *The Coming of the New International: A Revolutionary Anthology*, (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1971). Gerassi was a professor at SFSC, and an ally of the radical student organizations until his firing in 1968.

¹¹⁹ Barlow and Shapiro, 207.

At the same time that Murray was drawing attention to the racial politics at San Francisco State through his publicized speeches in Cuba, his fellow Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver was inciting controversy across the bay at UC Berkeley. Cleaver had proposed a series of lectures that he would deliver as part of UC Berkeley's Experimental College (modeled after the SF State example). The student-initiated lectures were designed by Cleaver for a course entitled "Social Analysis 139X: Dehumanization and Regeneration in the American Social Order." Rafferty, Reagan and many other public officials decried the proposed course and threatened to intervene to prevent Cleaver from delivering the lectures. Their threat to intervene with the wildly popular Experimental College program set off a series of protests that culminated in late October with mass student arrests and police barricades on Berkeley's campus. Ultimately the course was reduced to one lecture by Cleaver, with no academic credit for students.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, Murray continued to use his position within the BPP to make himself into a leading spokesperson for the organization. Upon returning to the United States from Cuba, Murray gave speeches in late October encouraging students of color to be militant in their demands for racial equality and relevant education. As his strident message made its way into newspapers, the negative publicity created a valuable political opportunity for conservative politicians within the state. Dumke and the Trustees called on President Smith to immediately remove Murray from his position within the English Department. Smith was reluctant to fuel the Republican campaign machine by handing them a publicity stunt. He said, "I thought the Murray-Cleaver dispute across the state was about two-thirds tied to the November elections, and I wasn't about to throw another

¹²⁰ Ibid., 212.

catalyst in the city when it looked really threatening.”¹²¹ Smith decided against taking immediate action, and instead pursued the appropriate channels within the college. Peter Shapiro, a white activist at SFSC during the strike, later suggested that Smith’s decision was based on the fact that he identified with Murray’s impoverished upbringing. Shapiro said, “Smith was a sharecropper’s son from [Oklahoma]...he was always very proud of the fact that when he got the ultimatum to suspend Murray from the Chancellor, he refused to do it.”¹²² For their part, the BSU also tried to downplay the Murray situation so that it would not overshadow the nine demands they were planning to publicize during a strike on 6 November.

Dissatisfied with Smith’s refusal to dismiss Murray, and clearly irked at the loss of a potential political grandstand moment, Dumke did away with pretenses of campus autonomy and flatly ordered Smith to fire Murray. Unwilling to be a pawn in Dumke’s political campaign, Smith went public with the Chancellor’s demand and held a press conference stating his belief that the dismissal was unprecedented in its circumvention of traditional personnel procedures. He asked Dumke to meet with him to discuss a mutually agreeable conclusion. When Dumke failed to respond to Smith’s request, he had no recourse but to suspend Murray, pending disciplinary hearings.¹²³

Smith expressed his disagreement with this action, stating in a press release that he does “not believe that this abrupt manner of handling this situation contributes to the solution of a complex problem.” He went on to directly address the political dimensions

¹²¹ Ibid., 216.

¹²² Reminiscences of Peter Shapiro, interview conducted by Ronald Grele, Student Movements of the 1960s Project, Columbia University Oral History Office, Butler Library, 65.

¹²³ Robert Smith, Statement, 31 October, 1968, Robert Smith Folder, San Francisco State College Strike Collection, Special Collections and Archives, J. Paul Leonard Library, California State University San Francisco. (Hereafter SF State Strike Special Collection.)

of Dumke's move, saying, "The continuing statewide controversy over the matter has complicated the disciplinary process already under way."¹²⁴ Smith then wrote a four-page letter to Dumke, summarizing the recent achievements of the college, and then detailing the hardships that prevented further progress. One of the obstacles to solving the current crisis that Smith identified was the unnecessary focus on George Murray. Smith argued that the media focus on issues like Murray allowed those individuals to dominate public discourse, incite controversy, and distract the college from trying to remedy the causes of racial unrest. Smith says, "The failure of our generation in higher education is largely one of using an elephant gun to shoot sparrows and a sling shot to shoot elephants."¹²⁵ The lopsided focus that distracts time, attention and desperately needed resources from trying to reform the college was, according to Smith, a failure of tactical approach. Smith suggested methods to solve the elephantine problems of social upheaval that threatened the mission of higher education at SFSU, among them diverting resources to funding special admissions and outreach programs. Dumke's position remained unchanged regarding Murray, and he declined to allocate additional resources to the college. Following Murray's dismissal, the BSU, which had already made strike preparations and developed a list of demands, added a tenth strike directive: Reinstate George Murray.¹²⁶

"What happens when there are enough fleas on a dog?": The War of the Flea

Prior to the beginning of the strike, the BSU had announced their list of ten demands and widely publicized their intention to strike on behalf of these demands.

¹²⁴ Robert Smith, Statement 1 November 1968, Robert Smith Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

¹²⁵ Robert Smith, Letter to Glenn Dumke, 1 November 1968, Robert Smith Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

¹²⁶ Barlow and Shapiro, 217.

Their list included demands for the creation of a Black Studies Department and a College of Ethnic Studies that would have ample staff selected by the students. They also demanded that all black students who applied be accepted, and that all striking students receive amnesty. There were several other demands, all of which amounted to an effort to wrest control over their education away from the administration.

After the BSU announced their demands, Robert Smith responded to them by publicizing the progress of the Black Studies initiative and other efforts at racial and ethnic parity. He admitted that this “response still does not meet the pressing needs” and he continued, saying,

As a result, frustration and disappointments have provided opportunity for those who desire the destruction of the programs or of the college itself to make demands which cannot be met so that tactics of confrontation politics can be brought into action. Despite the hopes of some that this action would “radicalize” the students and further the student “revolution,” the probable results of such tactics would more likely bring the college to a temporary halt and in so doing to invite the forces of reaction to prevent the college from playing an effective role battling to advance the cause of truth and justice.¹²⁷

Implicit in this statement is Smith’s belief that his administration would be able to pacify the activists by working within the structure of the college. He firmly believed that the students could be swayed by evidence that the administration was diligently working to implement Black Studies. What Smith failed to realize was that “the cause of truth and justice” in this instance was not for the college to bequeath. The “radicalized” black and Third World students were not employing their “tactics of confrontation” *despite* the possibility of bringing the college to a halt; they were counting on closing the campus

¹²⁷ Robert Smith, “On the Record,” 4 November 1968, SF State Strike Special Collection.

down. The time for patience and negotiation had passed, and the students had a strong coalition, a clear message, and a strategy for success.

Plans for the strike had been in the works for months, and the activists had developed a sophisticated philosophy and a detailed strategy for finally implementing a Department of Black Studies on campus. The detailed documents that Smith presented in an attempt to illustrate the college's due diligence in bringing black studies to SFSC showed years of deliberation on the proposed department.¹²⁸ This documentation became easy fodder for the activists who held it up as evidence that even after years of effort, nothing tangible in the way of a Black Studies Department had materialized. Nathan Hare was quoted in the *Daily Gater* on the eve of the strike as saying, "We're only a paper department," and the lackluster track record in turning that department into brick and mortar indicated that only drastic and direct action could remedy the situation.¹²⁹ That drastic action proved to be a battle strategy borrowed from Cuban revolutionaries, by way of journalist Robert Taber's eyewitness account of their struggle in his work *The War of the Flea*.¹³⁰

Published in 1965, Taber's book examines the history of guerrilla warfare around the world, explaining its goals and strategies, and evaluating its successes and failures. Taber insists, in his firsthand knowledge of Cuba and his analysis of other insurgent revolutions, that guerilla warfare is not a tactic employable by any army willing to learn its contours. Guerilla warfare is, rather, the byproduct of a specific set of circumstances,

¹²⁸ One of Smith's efforts at appeasing the activists, or at least demonstrating a concerted effort to appease them, was a point-by-point response to the ten demands. I have reproduced this rebuttal in Appendix B.

¹²⁹ *The Daily Gater*, 5 November 1968, 1.

¹³⁰ Robert Taber, *The War of The Flea: A Study of Guerilla Warfare Theory and Practice*, (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1965).

and the guerilla warrior is “a political partisan, an armed civilian whose principle weapon is not his rifle or machete, but his relationship to the community, the nation, in and for which he fights.”¹³¹ While much of Taber’s book explores the military maneuverings and political and economic strategies employed by guerilla warriors, his notion that the strongest weapon is a firm tie to the community was a compelling statement for the activists at SFSC. The clear and unmistakable difference between their struggle and that of the Cuban revolutionaries was that the objective of the BSU and the TWLF was never to kill, wound or otherwise inflict bodily harm on the police, the administrators or the Trustees. However, they did employ a militaristic strategy to conquer the systemic opposition to their educational aspirations.

Military service, training or exposure was a common link among BSU and TWLF members at SFSC. Mason Wong and Alfred Wong, both members of the Inter-collegiate Chinese for Social Action, and Terry Collins and Nesbit “Crutch” Crutchfield of the BSU had all served in the United States military. Crutchfield resigned from the Air Force in objection to the war in Vietnam, and Collins pursued a brief career in draft counseling for African American men wanting to avoid service in Vietnam. One member of the coalition, Pat Salavar of the Philippine American Collegiate Endeavor, served two years in jail for draft dodging. Thus, while most who had a background in the military disavowed the draft and the war in Vietnam, they came to SFSC with significant training and experience in military procedures.¹³²

¹³¹ Taber, 18.

¹³² Information about strikers’ backgrounds comes mostly from comments delivered at the conference commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the strike, “*Consciousness, Community, Liberation: Fulfilling the Promise of ’68*,” 29 October-1 November 2008, San Francisco State University. Terry Collins and

While their war on campus could not be won through gun battles, they adopted the rhetoric and mindset of warfare in their effort to reform higher education. On the eve of the strike, Stokely Carmichael visited the BSU and delivered an inspirational and highly controversial speech (the speech was controversial in content, but also in the fact that white students were not allowed in the audience, despite their allegiance and commitment to the strike). In the speech, Carmichael delineated the dimensions of the struggle to implement ethnic studies and he stressed the importance of the guerilla tactics. He said,

We're not talking about a tomorrow battle. We're talking about prolonged warfare. Warfare—psychological, political and otherwise. It means military...If you fall into the mistakes of other students by seizing a building for the sake of seizing a building, you have plunged your movement down one more time. Victory is what we want. Not notoriety....So we must begin to understand we're talking about prolonged struggle.¹³³

While members of the BSU and TWLF had participated in sit-ins, they were unconvinced of this as a viable protest tactic. The physical occupation of space, while it may have dramatized the grievance, did not heighten contradictions, and it too easily led to arrest, or worse, indifference. It was, to the black and Third World students at SFSC, a tired tactic of white leftists that had little to do with the struggle for relevancy and autonomy. Having just witnessed the SDS occupation of buildings on Columbia's campus, Carmichael remarked, "You read about Mark Rudd....Yeah, he's sho 'nuff [sic] bad. But he ain't got nothing to show for his badness." In the prolonged struggle for a relevant

other BSU members were simultaneously members of the Black Panther Party, and thus their militaristic approach to the strike is likely also a product of this milieu.

¹³³ John H. Bunzel, "'War of the Flea' at San Francisco State," *The New York Times Magazine*, 9 November 1969, SM28.

education, “[white students] have the luxury of being militant or radical or revolutionary. For us, it is a necessity.”¹³⁴

On the day the strike began, BSU chairman Benny Stewart assembled the black and Third World students for another round of instruction in the tactics of guerilla warfare. While Carmichael had prepared the students for “prolonged war,” Stewart focused on the war of the flea, giving specific examples of how to disrupt campus and avoid capture.

Taking over buildings, holding it for two or three days, and then the thing is dead. Most of your leaders are ripped off and thrown in jail, or the masses are thrown in jail, and there’s no one to lead them. From our analysis of this, we think we have developed a technique to deal with this for a prolonged struggle. We call it the war of the flea...What does the flea do? He bites, sucks blood from the dog, the dog bites. What happens when there are enough fleas on a dog? What will he do? He moves. He moves away....We are the majority and the pigs cannot be everywhere, everyplace all the time. And where they are not, we are....You must begin to wear them down....Toilets are stopped up. Pipes is [sic] out. Water in the bathroom is just runnin’ all over the place. Smoke is comin’ out the bathroom....We should fight the racist administration on our grounds from now on, where we can win.¹³⁵

Stewart reproduces Taber’s most visually appealing metaphor of the dog beset by fleas to illustrate the method of the strike. Taber describes the dog as, “too weakened—in military terms, overextended; in political terms, too unpopular; in economic terms, too expensive—to defend himself.”¹³⁶ In addition to creating pandemonium and confusion, the strikers would also roam from classroom to classroom, disrupting those in session and demanding to know the loyalties of the students and professors who were not abiding by the strike. While administrators managed the “fleas,” the BSU heeded Carmichael’s

¹³⁴ Orrick, 104.

¹³⁵ Smith, et al., 145.

¹³⁶ Taber, 28.

observation that, “It is easy to die for one’s people. It is much more difficult to live, to work, and to kill for them.”¹³⁷ Armed with their guerrilla tactics, their revolutionary rhetoric, and their commitment to prolonged struggle, the TWLF waged the war of the flea for five months in the pursuit of their goal of a relevant education.

“On strike! Shut it down!”: The Strike Begins, 6 November-26 November

During the last week of October, as the Murray situation gained publicity and angered the entire college community, SFSC was approaching the anniversary of the *Gater* incident in which members of the BSU engaged in a physical altercation with the editorial staff of the campus newspaper. Wednesday, 6 November 1968 would mark a year since the fight that was a significant factor in the seemingly continuous tumult and disruption that had plagued SFSC. Having already devised a list of demands and wedded to the war of the flea as their battle strategy, the BSU chose that anniversary as the start of their campaign to heighten contradictions and bring about educational reform at SFSC. A further aim of the strike, that Terry Collins identified, was the need to test the will and resolve of the black students at SF State. Collins indicated that many black students were not convinced of the legitimate authority of the BSU leadership. Thus, Collins and others called for the strike to gauge the support of the black students, which was a tactic that they borrowed directly from the Algerian struggle as depicted in “The Battle of Algiers.”¹³⁸

Another important facet of the strike in inaugurating the nonwhite student movement at SFSC is its careful timing: 6 November was the day after the national

¹³⁷ Bunzel, “War of the Flea.”

¹³⁸ Terry Collins, interview with Ronald Grele, Student Movements of the 1960s Project, Columbia University Oral History Office, Butler Library, 49.

elections. In addition to a momentous presidential contest, several local contests had direct bearing on the paradigm of higher education in California. The most important of such statewide contests was that involving State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Max Rafferty, who was running for the US Senate seat as a Republican. Rafferty defeated the incumbent Republican in the primary, and he now faced Democrat Alan Cranston in the general election. BSU member Terry Collins recalls that members of Cranston's staff contacted the BSU and requested that they hold off on any major protests regarding their ten demands until after 5 November, fearing that such unrest would sway the public toward Rafferty's conservatism. Collins indicates that he and the BSU were sympathetic to the Cranston campaign and they were certainly no fans of Rafferty, so they waited until Wednesday 6 November to initiate the strike.¹³⁹ In addition, the contentious and fragmenting presidential election, in which Republican Richard Nixon won by a slim margin, likely reconfirmed their belief that racial progress was going to require their collective commitment and the use of drastic tactics to become reality.

Shortly after the BSU announced the strike on 6 November, the TWLF joined the strike and added five of their own demands to the original ten. There is much overlap in the fifteen demands, but taken together, they constituted the non-negotiable position of the united Third World Liberation Front. Essentially, the demands called for ethnic studies and open enrollment for students of color, in addition to some specific requests regarding the allocation of funds and faculty positions. In order to rededicate the groups to the centralized organizational structure that had been decided on the previous spring (as outlined in Chapter 1, Figure 1), they revisited the Central Committee idea. This

¹³⁹ Reminiscences of Terry Collins, 50.

format was centralized to streamline decision-making, but democratic to maintain flexibility and responsiveness. The Central Committee was restructured on the eve of the strike to reflect a strengthened coalition between the member organizations. The Central Committee became a recognizable cohort on campus, as they assumed not only leadership roles during the strike, but also public relations and tactical command positions. As Ron Quidachay, TWLF Central Committee representative from PACE remarked, “We debated, but rarely took an [up or down] vote. Decisions were reached by consensus of the entire group.”¹⁴⁰

The Third World Liberation Front and the Black Students Union, following their consolidation of leadership within the Central Committee, had now become indistinguishable from one another as organizations. The strike directives that came from the Central Committee were referred to as the orders of the TWLF, and the strike was immediately referred to as the Third World strike. Even though strike leaders recall that the TWLF was run like the military, with orders coming from the Central Committee, Sharon Martinas, a strike participant, recalled that she “saw [the Central Committee] as an organizer, rather than leadership.” While decisions may ultimately have been democratically achieved and universally obeyed, the Central Committee members do not gloss over the disagreements they shared. Alfred Wong remembered that, “as individuals, we had to deal with racism among each other,” and Roger Alvarado gestured toward this internal strife between LASO and La Raza when he said, “the La Raza community was resentful of other Latinos in Central America.” Some of the dissention came as a result of the complications that foreign-born students faced with their

¹⁴⁰ Ron Quidachay, Comments delivered at “The Straight Story” panel at *Consciousness, Community, Liberation: Fulfilling the Promise of '68*, 30 October 2008, San Francisco State University.

immigration status after being suspended from the college or arrested for their participation in the strike.¹⁴¹ However, despite the struggles that emerged as the TWLF members coalesced around the strike, Nesbit Crutchfield said it “was hard as hell, but now we see each other as family.” As the strike gained traction in its early days, George Murray commented during a press conference that, “This is the first time in this country that barriers have been dissolved between black, brown and yellow people.”¹⁴²

The Central Committee embodied that statement, and embraced white participation in the strike as well. A group of white activists including SDS, the Peace and Freedom Party, Experimental College Students, and others formed the Strike Support Committee to support the efforts of the TWLF.¹⁴³ The alliance was tenuous, as TWLF members often spoke openly of their disdain for the sense of entitlement apparent in white student protests. Additionally, they felt that a true coalition with white activists was not feasible because protest was a luxury for them, while it was an imperative for students of color. White students were likewise torn over their participation, as many were pacifists who disagreed with the militant tactics and rhetoric of the TWLF. As one Strike Support Committee member said,

We support the blacks despite the fact that we disagree with some of their demands and some of their tactics. What is really important is for the

¹⁴¹ These fears were realized when TWLF member Jack Alexis, who was integral to the negotiations discussed later in this chapter, was deported to his native West Indies following his repeated arrests as part of the strike.

¹⁴² Barlow and Shapiro, 227; “The Straight Story,” 30 October 2008.

¹⁴³ The leftist white contingent at SFSC was experiencing internecine power struggles much like those experienced by white radicals at the national level and in chapters around the country. The main organizations were SDS, the Progressive Labor Party, and the Worker-Student Alliance, which often shared members, but claimed to have starkly different platforms. Todd Gitlin, national leader of SDS, articulated a white radical critique of imperialism that turned the attention of many SDS members to the plight of the third world. Gitlin wrote approvingly of the SFSC strike at the time, calling it “a didactic morality play with a cast of thousands.” Unknown Author, Untitled Dissertation, n.d., SDS Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

black students to create their own sense of identity. By supporting them and not imposing ourselves into the leadership positions, we foster the creation of that identity, the fulfillment of their immediate needs, and our own concerns with the larger issues at stake.¹⁴⁴

Thus, the white strike supporters recognized the ultimate goal of black empowerment vis-à-vis a relevant education at SFSC; however, they had some reservations over the tactics. White radicals at SFSC were committed to confronting racism and being the support network for the students of color. However, no matter their dedication, they were inevitably removed from the project of heightening contradictions and alienated by the internationalism of Third World solidarity. Yet, they were an integral part of the strike, and they embody what TWLF member Hari Dillon meant when he reflected that, “Our nationalism was an affirmation of ourselves, not a negation of others. Our nationalism was aimed at white racism, not white people.”¹⁴⁵ Despite their reservations over some goals and tactics, they nevertheless submitted to the authority of the TWLF Central Committee as a principled stand against racism.

Most of the white activists at SFSC, if they were affiliated with a political organization, were members of SDS; however, there were also active chapters of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) and the Progressive Labor Party (PL). In addition to white student members, these organizations also counted several students of color among their membership, including Hari Dillon and Bridges Randall, who were both members of

¹⁴⁴ James McEvoy and Abraham Miller, “On Strike... Shut It Down,” in *Black Power and Student Rebellion*, James McEvoy and Abraham Miller, eds., (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1969), 27.

¹⁴⁵ Hari Dillon, as quoted by John Levin, “San Francisco State Strike, 1968-69;” 1 hr., 29 mins., 3 sec.; *Shaping San Francisco Talks*, streaming, http://www.shapingsf.org/shapingSF_audio.html (accessed 18 November 2009). Levin indicated that Dillon’s comments were delivered as part of an event marking the 20th anniversary of the strike. For more on the complexities of white-black alliances in activism, see: Stefan M. Bradley, *Harlem Vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

the PL. While the BSU and TWLF were open to forging tentative alliances with SDS members and other white activists, they maintained a skeptical stance toward PL members. While the PL had once been a popular and influential organization in the New Left, their rigid orthodoxy and outspoken repudiation of black nationalism had left them with few allies on the left by the late 1960s.¹⁴⁶ Terry Collins mentioned the conflict between Bridges Randall being in PL and also in BSU, which was a conflict of interest that Collins and his fellow BSU members only overlooked because, “Randall would fight. He would get up and fight. He would fight for us...And he was black.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, Dillon and Randall were members of TWLF and BSU respectively, but their association with PL made their fellow students of color view them as slightly outside the fold.

The Strike Support Committee opened the first day of the strike by carpet-bombing the campus with leaflets announcing the strike and its demands, and they followed that informational effort with a rally at noon and a march to the Administration Building. While they demonstrated outside of President Smith’s office, they drew the attention of the administration away from the actual opening salvo of the strike: TWLF members had been deployed throughout the college’s classroom buildings to interrupt and dismiss classes in session. They also set small fires in garbage cans and attempted to disrupt the normal functioning of the college as much as possible. Students, many receiving knowledge of the actions of the TWLF second-hand, began to panic at the news of roving bands of Third World students forcefully dismissing classes and setting fires. They complained to Smith, who in turn panicked and called the police. Together Smith, his administrators and the police dismissed classes for the rest of the day and shut the

¹⁴⁶ Elbaum, 63-64.

¹⁴⁷ Reminiscences of Terry Collins, Columbia Oral History, 109.

campus down to prevent further incidents and stem the panic.¹⁴⁸ The strike, inasmuch as it was designed to disrupt classes and heighten contradictions through its demands, was successful on its first day.

The second day of the strike began much as the first one had, with white students handing out literature and a noon rally at the Speaker's Platform. This time the rally was conducted by the TWLF, and they sought to educate the hundreds of onlookers as to the tactics and the purpose of the strike. As the large assemblage made their way to the Administration Building to elicit a response to the fifteen demands, a foreign-exchange student from Africa detonated a small homemade bomb in the Education Building. Unrelated to the Third World strike by all accounts, the explosion added a further dimension of panic to the actions underway at SFSC, and it likely contributed to the fifty percent attendance rate the next day, Friday 8 November. The striking students encountered heavier police presence on Friday, but they continued to successfully elude the officers who were befuddled by their hit-and-run tactics of disrupting classes and setting small fires inside and outside of campus buildings. President Smith was now leaning heavily on the police presence as a method of keeping the college open and classes in session. After a three-day weekend, the college resumed business on Tuesday 12 November with an unprecedented arsenal of combat-ready police staged on and off campus.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Barlow and Shapiro, 223-224.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 224-226. A large squadron of riot-ready officers occupied a southern parking lot, which was closest to the quad and the Speaker's Platform at the center of campus. In addition, the now notorious SFPD Tactical Squad quietly took up residence in the gymnasium boiler room, even closer to the quad in the event of a mass disturbance requiring immediate police presence. In constant communication with these two camps was a police helicopter that monotonously circled the campus, on the lookout for potential riots. And lastly, a cadre of armed, plainclothes officers milled about in the buildings, cafeteria, library and

The TWLF recognized the increased police presence, and fearing violent repression, agreed to slightly alter their strategy of attempting to shut the college down. On Tuesday morning they continued to disrupt classes, but instead of demanding that everyone vacate and cease instruction, they offered to lead teach-ins about the strike and their objectives as an alternative to the scheduled lessons of the day. They would only enter a room if a majority of the students in a given classroom voted in favor of a teach-in.¹⁵⁰

Thus, the police had no reason to intervene and crackdown, and the TWLF was able to continue to prevent the college from operating normally. White students participating in the strike also led demonstrations at the Speaker's Platform and conducted their own teach-ins for students in public areas around campus. The first day of mass police presence ended peacefully, without incident. The following day would take a decidedly different turn.

On Wednesday, 13 November, the students continued their teach-ins amid the threat of a violent crackdown by police stationed in large numbers around campus. At noon, a press conference assembled outside of the ply-board hut that the BSU and TWLF used as their headquarters. As members of the Central Committee, surrounded by dozens of strikers, gave statements to the press, word that one cameraman had been roughed up by a BSU member sent rumors swirling through campus. These rumors eventually reached the Tac Squad who were ensconced in the gymnasium boiler room a short distance away. The decision was made to advance on the press conference, and soon the

quad, attempting to covertly gather information about the TWLF's plans and tactics, and also ready to intervene in spontaneous violent outbreaks.

¹⁵⁰ McEvoy and Miller, 38.

Tac Squad was dispersing the crowd and beating back many of the striking students. The attack triggered a crowd, which moved en masse toward the Tac Squad, which was now outnumbered. The Tac Squad regrouped and squared off with the protestors on the quad, adjacent to the Speaker's Platform. The situation appeared to be headed to a violent engagement as lines of students and police edged closer to one another. Soon, however, a group of faculty members calling themselves the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee intervened by placing themselves as a human barrier between the students and the police.¹⁵¹ Terry Collins remembered being moved by the faculty's display of solidarity, saying, "I started crying. I said, 'Man, this is way out.'"¹⁵² The police retreated and left campus. Several students were treated for injuries sustained in the initial raid on the headquarters.

Smith, sensing that the violence by the police would force the protestors to step-up their tactics, announced that he was canceling classes for the remainder of the day, and perhaps the week, until campus could be reopened under safer circumstances. This decision predictably set off a publicity war between state politicians who alternately condemned Smith for his capitulation to the radicals or praised him for his ability to diffuse a volatile situation. Jesse Unruh, Speaker of the State Assembly and likely Democratic candidate to oppose Reagan in the 1970 gubernatorial election, immediately joined the fray and demanded that Reagan force Smith to reopen the college. Reagan, refusing to be one-upped by his Democratic adversary, vowed to reopen the campus "by

¹⁵¹ Barlow and Shapiro, 227-228. The Ad Hoc Faculty Committee had formed the previous Friday in response to the beginning of the strike. They were sympathetic to the strikers and disappointed in Smith's inability to negotiate with the students or stand up to the Trustees. Ultimately the Ad Hoc Committee would refuse to conduct classes, instead favoring a series of convocations in order to entertain the demands of the strikers and seek a solution to the underlying problems. When Smith resigned and Hayakawa assumed the presidency, the striking professors joined forces with the AFT and declared their own strike, in sympathy with the TWLF, but in the pursuit of their own right to collective bargaining.

¹⁵² Reminiscences of Terry Collins, Columbia Oral History, 53.

any means necessary,” even suggesting that the National Guard or Federal Troops would be on hand to make this happen. Reagan was widely and famously quoted as saying he would keep campus open “at the point of a bayonet” if necessary. Thus, the political wrangling that made SFSC a pawn in the political debates of the state succeeded in casting a media spotlight onto the campus. In response, the Trustees called an emergency meeting at the LA offices for Monday 18 November.¹⁵³

While the college remained closed for the end of the second week of the strike, disparate factions of the campus community prepared to testify in front of the Board of Trustees on the following Monday. The faculty and student contingents testified to the fact that the strike represented legitimate grievances, and until the root causes of racial discrimination were addressed in American colleges, the problems would persist. The Trustees dismissed the testimony of both groups as being unrepresentative of the majority of their constituents. Finally, Smith and his advisors attempted to explain their rationale for closing campus, but members of the Board argued that such action was complicity with the strikers and they demanded that the college be reopened.¹⁵⁴

In addition to dismissing the testimony of faculty and students as being “unrepresentative,” and demanding that Smith reopen campus, the Trustees also weighed in on the tenets of the strike. Nearly all of the Trustees let it be known that they were opposed to the idea of ethnic studies, perhaps not aware that the college was already on its way to establishing a Department of Black Studies before the strike began. According to at least one trustee, the very idea of black studies was racist because there were no “white studies” and because the courses were to be taught only by black professors and

¹⁵³ Barlow and Shapiro, 229.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 230.

attended only by black students. Reagan himself weighed in on this issue by saying that he also disagreed with the notion of Black Studies and he was vehemently opposed to any semblance of capitulation with the radical protestors. He claimed “I know I speak for 98 per cent of the Negro community which wants no part of the Black Students’ Union when I condemn them for their tactics of violence and disruption.”¹⁵⁵ In near complete agreement amongst each other, the Trustees voted to approve a three part resolution regarding the situation at SFSC: First, the college was to be reopened by Wednesday 20 November; second, all students and faculty members found to be breaking the law or disrupting campus would be disciplined immediately; and third, no strike demands would be entertained until order was restored.¹⁵⁶

Smith was now caught between the will of the Trustees to open the campus by any means necessary on Wednesday, and the will of the faculty and students who were not only sympathetic to the strikers, but also now adamantly opposed to the Trustees after being rebuffed at the meeting.¹⁵⁷ Smith was unwilling to defy the order of the Trustees, and he demanded that the college open for classes on Wednesday. Students and faculty vowed to flex their collective muscle by refusing to teach or attend classes, thus exposing Smith’s vulnerability vis-à-vis the ultimate authority of the Trustees. Instead of classes, sympathetic faculty and students held convocations throughout the day in order to air

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 234.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 236.

¹⁵⁷ Students in the AS and others involved in campus programs like the Tutorial Project had another reason to be resentful of the Trustees as well. Title V of the State Education Code dealt with the state colleges’ “auxiliary organizations” such as the TP, CIP, AS, SF State Foundation, and other student-run organizations. In the fall of 1968, the Trustees revised Title V, bringing those organizations under their fiscal and managerial control. The Trustees now had executive control over the content, scope, and direction of all student-run organizations, including veto power. This revision essentially ended the reign of SF State as the avant-garde of student ingenuity by curtailing the TP, the CIP and the Experimental College, among other programs.

grievances and attempt to resolve the strike demands. Smith now found himself in an impossible position. His critics on the left would continue their disruptions of the campus and boycott the convocations until classes were cancelled. His critics on the right, including his bosses at the Board of Trustees, were unwilling to yield to the disruptions by closing the campus. Thus, after much contemplation, he ordered that classes be resumed, but also agreed to attend the convocation and participate.¹⁵⁸

Thus, on Wednesday 20 November, a large congregation of faculty and students, including the TWLF, and President Smith gathered in the campus's largest auditorium to open the convocation and discuss the issues of the day. The TWLF, however, refused to allow the convocations to continue on the following day as long as Smith refused to cancel classes. After attempting to explain his reasoning as to why he felt classes should continue, Smith finally said he flat out refused to defy the Trustees' order. Upon hearing this, the TWLF led a line of protestors out of the auditorium as they loudly chanted, "On strike! Shut it down!"¹⁵⁹

The marching protestors swarmed in and out of classrooms that were still conducting classes, demanding that they cease instruction. Plainclothes policemen stationed in buildings throughout campus attempted to arrest the protestors, which triggered a series of brawls in the hallways. One policeman fired a warning shot over the heads of the protestors as he attempted to drag a suspect out to arrest him. The gunshot sent the students scrambling for cover and racing out of the building claiming the police had opened fire on them. The combat-ready riot police stationed in the parking lot across

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 239.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 242.

the street and the Tac Squad advanced onto the campus, violently dispersing crowds as they moved.¹⁶⁰

Smith observed the chaos and ultimately decided that violence could not be contained as long as he insisted on keeping the college open. He ordered all classes on the following day, Friday 22 November, be cancelled and he called on deans and department heads to convene meetings in order to plan and strategize for convocations the following week. The TWLF, satisfied with these signs of progress, participated in convocation strategy meetings with the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee in order to ensure that their fifteen demands would be at the center of the discussion. Those present at the meetings decided upon three days of convocations the following week, leading up to the four-day weekend for the Thanksgiving holiday. A further arrangement was made to have a local television station, KQED, broadcast the convocations to live audiences in classrooms around campus and to televisions around the city.¹⁶¹

President Smith would not be present at the next convocation on Monday 25 November, however. He had been summoned to Los Angeles for the Trustee meeting the next day, and he and his campus were at the top of their agenda. As the convocations began in earnest on Monday morning, there was a sense of deflation about the proceedings, as the students recognized the futility of discussing the bedrock issues of racism at their college, while Reagan and the Trustees were blinded by their own political agendas. In addition, the students were resigned to the fact that Smith was not only

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 243.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 244.

impotent and unwilling to take a bold stand, he was likely as good as done by the time he showed up in L.A.¹⁶²

On the morning of Tuesday 26 November, the TWLF again made a good faith attempt at the convocations, but when they showed up, they were hit with the news that nearly all of their members had been suspended from the college. The surprise suspensions, ordered by Smith's administration, were in keeping with the second stipulation of the Trustees' 18 November resolution, that all those disrupting campus be swiftly disciplined. The TWLF members saw this as a duplicitous act, and unsure of the continued meaningfulness of the convocations, they abruptly withdrew, effectively ending the convocation period of the strike.¹⁶³

At roughly the same time that the TWLF was withdrawing from the convocations, President Smith was submitting to harsh interrogation by the Trustees over his decision to defy their order and cancel classes. As he listened to the Trustees leveling accusations of capitulation and ordering that the campus be kept open at all costs, Smith could see the writing on the wall, and he announced that he was stepping down as President of SFSC. He claims that his decision to resign abruptly and with little comment was a calculated maneuver that avoided giving either the Trustees or the students a martyred figure to rally around. When news of Smith's resignation reached SFSC later that afternoon, the campus was eerily quiet, more a ghost town than an urban college campus. It was, however, the chaos and the violence of the previous week that would come to signify

¹⁶² Ibid., 245.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

SFSC in the coming weeks and months, and not the eerie calm of that Tuesday afternoon.¹⁶⁴

“I’m not white and I’m not black.”: Enter President S.I. Hayakawa, 26 November-13 December

By the time Robert Smith resigned, the Trustees and politicians who advocated for a hard line with the protestors had succeeded in painting Smith as a weak, capitulating, bleeding-heart liberal. In Smith’s estimation, the Trustees wanted a President “who could watch the ebb and flow of 1,000 police and 3,000 demonstrators on the verge of assaulting each other, and with pleasure assume responsibility for the scene *while the police controlled it.*”¹⁶⁵ The Trustees’ choice to replace Smith was just such a figure. Dr. S. I. Hayakawa—selected by the Board of Trustees in a move that circumvented the Senate Executive Committee whose responsibility it was to vet and recommend presidential candidates—was notoriously conservative and steadfastly anti-student movement.¹⁶⁶ His arrival in the president’s office indicated that the Trustees had no interest in placating the student protestors; however, it did signal that they were interested in protecting the administration from accusations of racism—as an Asian American, Hayakawa was thought to be immune from such a charge. Furthermore, the appointment of Hayakawa ensured that race relations at SFSU would deteriorate before they could be mended.

¹⁶⁴ Smith, et al., 201.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 196. Emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁶ As discussed previously, Hayakawa was a member of the SEC when Robert Smith became president, and he retained his position on the committee when Smith resigned. When tapped by the Trustees, Hayakawa chose not to defer to the committee, and instead he accepted their offer without consultation with his colleagues—a decision that angered many SEC members.

Samuel Ichiyé Hayakawa was born in Vancouver in 1906, and later became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1954.¹⁶⁷ His father and mother were Japanese immigrants who held low-paying, menial jobs throughout Hayakawa's childhood, a fate that he escaped by being tenacious in his pursuit of education. Hayakawa's impoverished background and subsequent rise to success through self-reliance and education made a compelling fable that Hayakawa often invoked in order to demonstrate the illegitimacy of the Third World strikers. His self-image was based on a naively color-blind assumption that his achievements were a product of an egalitarian America in which racial or ethnic distinctions were irrelevant. He rejected the notion of group identity based on shared ethnicity and refused to participate in the Asian student organizations and events on campus at SFSC.¹⁶⁸

Politically, Hayakawa appeared to be a contradiction in the late 1960s. He considered himself a "liberal democrat" but a contemporary observer found him to be a "political Rip Van Winkle, uttering the clichés of yesterday's progressives as if they were daringly contemporary and original insights."¹⁶⁹ Hayakawa detested the openly Leftist sympathies of Bay Area academics. The Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964 drew him out of isolation from the campus intellectual community, and he made a reputation as a staunch opponent of student radicalism. In 1967 when conservative faculty members organized in opposition to the War Crisis Convocation and the student

¹⁶⁷ Daryl Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 66. This source provides an excellent and extended treatment of Hayakawa's ideologies concerning race, ethnicity and politics.

¹⁶⁸ Daryl Maeda, "S. I. Hayakawa: Asian American Radicalism and the Dilemma of American Liberalism," in Clark Davis and David Iglar, eds., *The Human Tradition in California*, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002), 196.

¹⁶⁹ Barlow and Shapiro, 252.

unrest on campus, Hayakawa became a spokesman and mentor for their organization, the Faculty Renaissance Group.

Hayakawa's simplistic understandings of race also present a contradiction. He was behind the failed effort to force Robert Smith to accept a temporary appointment to President in order to buy time and build support for a black candidate for a permanent appointment. He was also known for his oft-invoked tales of living with "Negroes" on the south side of Chicago and befriending Duke Ellington and Mahalia Jackson when he wrote a jazz column for the *Chicago Defender*. Hayakawa was, according to scholar Daryl Maeda, a "quintessentially liberal public intellectual who consistently advocated racial equality." However, Maeda argues that by the time he became president at SFSC in the fall of 1968, he was "opposed to radical students committed to gaining racial justice via black, brown, red, and yellow power." Hayakawa's shift from mainstream liberal to conservative illustrates a larger cultural shift, which Maeda contends developed along racial issues as the "power movements" of the late 1960s alienated moderates.¹⁷⁰ In an interview on ABC News that aired on 3 December 1968, Hayakawa elaborated on his views regarding civil rights and black militants, saying,

I discovered the civil rights movement long before most current white liberals discovered it... White people who now have not gone through [my experiences with black people], who have simply discovered, say, the anguish of the Negro through television and newspaper and magazines in the last few years, in a way, get a distorted picture of the whole thing. They seem to think that these militants speak for the entire Negro public. And actually, they speak for only a small part of it. The militants are an important part of the Negro public, but think of the number of people that we're not hearing from. The people with steady jobs, the people going to school, getting their training, people in industry.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 195.

¹⁷¹ "Student Unrest at SF State College and S.I. Hayakawa," Video Clip, 3 December 1968, [www.youtube.com, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYeCIaVGM9E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYeCIaVGM9E) (accessed 11 November 2009).

Hayakawa went on to lament the lack of media coverage of the non-militant black population with which he was familiar, saying that when a black person “wins an essay prize or gets a big scholarship or research grant” he is overlooked in favor of the “black madman, screaming obscenities in a slum.” In drawing this distinction within the black population between the hard working, churchgoing Negro and the “black madman,” Hayakawa arrived at the conclusion that the Third World students were unrepresentative of the black community, and their demands were illegitimate.¹⁷²

As a result of his self-identification with non-militant African Americans, Hayakawa, upon accepting the position of president, offered his services as an intermediary, saying, “In a profound sense, I stand in the middle. I’m not white and I’m not black. I’m appealing to my Oriental friends that I might be a channel to bring black and white together.”¹⁷³ The Third World strikers rejected his offer to serve as moderator, and instead issued a propaganda poster that featured a photograph of Hayakawa under the caption: Wanted. The poster then offered a satirical dossier, listing aliases (“Paper Puppet, Bootlicker, Ruling Class Lackey, Flower Child”), crimes (“Enforcing racist corporate policies...sending armed thugs to attack, brutalize and maim students...[suspending] civil liberties”), physical description (“frequently drapes himself in aromatic flowers, reportedly to counteract the smell of his bloody hands”), as well as his association with “a world wide gang of crooks, murderers and confidence men.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² After Hayakawa’s tenure as President of SFSC ended in 1973, he went on to serve one term as a United States Senator from California. Elected as a Republican in 1977, Hayakawa is best remembered for pushing legislation to adopt English as the official language of the United States. After leaving the Senate in 1983, Hayakawa founded the political lobbying group U.S. English, Inc., which continues to fight for the English-only legislation today.

¹⁷³ Maeda, *Chains of Babylon*, 55.

¹⁷⁴ “Wanted: Sam I. Hayakawa,” S.I. Hayakawa folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

In addition to their satirical efforts to distance themselves from Hayakawa's simplistic racial assumptions, the students also invited well known and highly respected black community members to refute the claim that they were a fringe movement of "black madmen." People like Ron Dellums (Berkeley City Councilman at the time, currently mayor of Oakland), Willie Brown (State Assemblyman at the time, former mayor of San Francisco), Dr. Carlton Goodlett (publisher of the *Sun-Reporter* newspaper) and the Reverend Cecil Williams of Glide Methodist church came to campus and addressed the students, marched with the strikers and even submitted to arrest throughout the strike. It was not only their public association with the Third World strikers that these men lent to the effort; they also passionately defended the goals and tactics of the students, which were deemed by Hayakawa and others to be beyond the limits of acceptable protest behavior. Dr. Goodlett, for instance, said,

The TWLF's [sic] in this country are saying to the power structure and to their supporters in the adult segment of their respective communities that violence in the national struggle for liberation is probably justifiable... And if violence is to be our lot then I say that the insensitive establishment that caused Martin Luther King to die with a broken heart are the provocateurs of violence and we are in the whirlwind of a 15-year period of not responding to nonviolent petition.¹⁷⁵

Dr. Goodlett's enunciation justifying the tactical approach of the TWLF was not new to those who had listened to the strike rhetoric for months. But for those who came to the issue of violence in the student struggle through someone like Dr. Goodlett, it was a bold statement, and one that caused many people to confront a shifting paradigm of racial protest. Dr. Goodlett and others explained to their moderate audiences that peaceful petition had failed to produce results at SFSC for students of color, and furthermore, their

¹⁷⁵ Orrick., 99.

new tactic did not require violence, but it required self-defense when police came to campus armed to the hilt.

Scholars have successfully disproved the notion that the civil rights movement was entirely nonviolent by drawing attention to groups like the Deacons for Defense or individuals like Robert F. Williams.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, most scholars would agree that nonviolence as a tactic derived its utility from the violence that it elicited from the white racists. Thus, it is erroneous to suggest that armed self-defense and the eschewing of the popular tactic of nonviolence represented a stark contrast to previous movements for racial equality. The Black Panther Party was notorious for flaunting their possession of firearms at all times, and their investment in the idea of armed self-defense made them synonymous with the urban racial violence that marked this period in American history. However, it is important to recognize that much of the violence, both on campus and off, in the Bay Area in the late 1960s was instigated by the “legitimate” violence of the police. The fact that Hayakawa (and Summerskill and Smith) relied so heavily on police presence throughout the unrest at SFSC underscores this fact, as does Reagan’s insistence that he would keep campus open “at the point of a bayonet.”

In light of his attitude that he was racially enlightened, Hayakawa maintained a stance of detached amusement toward the strike, and he held that it was “largely unnecessary—almost comically inappropriate in light of the realities. The fact is that America is not a racist society in principle and only partially a racist society in fact.”¹⁷⁷ According to his assessment, the BSU and TWLF had not done their homework in order to prove that their proposals would be effective. Once they had provided convincing

¹⁷⁶ See Chapter One, note 43 for a discussion of sources on armed self-defense.

¹⁷⁷ Statement, 20 November 1968, S.I. Hayakawa folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

evidence that ethnic studies was necessary and sufficient, the funding, which was plentiful, would be forthcoming.¹⁷⁸

Personally, Hayakawa alluded to his feeling that black studies was more legitimate than other ethnic studies because while Asian Americans, for instance, had their history and culture intact, black history had been completely erased by the experience of racial slavery. Hayakawa's hierarchical assessment of the racial and ethnic minorities at SFSC missed completely the ideology behind the TWLF and it gestured toward the problematic notion of Asian Americans being the "model minority" who could assimilate into American society more easily than African Americans.¹⁷⁹ Hayakawa, in a fundamental way, illustrated the shift from integrationist mainstream civil rights when his moderate tokenism (as evidenced in the failed attempt to nominate an African American candidate for president following Summerskill's resignation) is juxtaposed with the TWLF and their version of identity politics. He refused to base his identity on his racial background, preferring the melting pot mentality, while the TWLF faction refused to allow their ethnic identity to be diluted or downplayed in the pursuit of higher education. Alternately paternalistic and reactionary towards the strikers,

¹⁷⁸ Hayakawa goes on in this statement to say that there is plenty of money to fund ethnic studies and "so much more," but the necessity of such a project is unproven. He referenced offers of funding he had received from local and national philanthropists, whose only stipulation to their unsolicited generosity was that the strike end immediately. One of these offers came from W. Clement Stone, a self-styled Horatio Alger figure who made his fortune selling insurance and writing self-help books. A close friend of Hayakawa's since his Chicago days, Stone is infamous for contributing over \$10 million to Nixon's election campaigns, thus cited as a major factor for campaign finance reform. Stone also lent Hayakawa the advice and expertise of his Public Relations agent Mike Teilmann, who was likely behind many of Hayakawa's successful publicity stunts.

¹⁷⁹ Maeda, *The Human Tradition in California*, 202.

Hayakawa's administration came to be legendary for its ruthless effort to quash the student rebellion by any means necessary.¹⁸⁰

The ruthlessness of Hayakawa's approach to the problems at SFSC was made abundantly clear at a press conference held in advance of his first day as president following the elongated Thanksgiving break. On Saturday 30 November, Hayakawa addressed the press. He lamented the opposing sides of the strike who were "grunting and heaving" at one another "like bulls with locked horns." He went on to declare a "state of emergency" on campus and decreed several new rules. As of Monday, 2 December, the Speaker's Platform was closed; sound equipment such as microphones and speakers were forbidden on campus; faculty who refused to teach their courses would be suspended; students who disrupted campus would be suspended; and swift trials and sentencing would be underway for those suspended. Hayakawa said, "When I speak of a state of emergency, I mean not that due process will be bypassed or ignored, but only that it will be accelerated."¹⁸¹ In practice, this series of proclamations approached martial law as they were enforced solely by the presence and brute force of the amassed resources of various state law enforcement organizations. State lawmakers like Reagan, who had bemoaned the lack of backbone among college administrators in the nation, lauded Hayakawa's playbook.

The publicity that the press conference provided and the tone it conveyed set the stage for a public relations battle that Hayakawa masterminded, and in which he prevailed temporarily. The first effort at public relations involved encouraging those

¹⁸⁰ For more of Hayakawa's views on assimilation and Japanese as the model minority, see: Maeda, *Chains of Babylon*, especially Chapter Two, "Down With Hayakawa!": Assimilation vs. Third World Solidarity at San Francisco State College."

¹⁸¹ Press Statement, 30 November 1968, S. I. Hayakawa Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

opposed to the strike to identify themselves by sporting a royal blue armband.¹⁸²

Hayakawa was hopeful that this show of sympathy with him and his efforts would reveal to the public a “silent majority” of the faculty and student body. He beseeched those sympathetic to his cause, saying, “What we have to gain is the restoration of the free and exciting atmosphere of intellectual, cultural, political and sartorial diversity that have always characterized San Francisco. What we have to lose is the college itself.”¹⁸³ The “us vs. them” mentality and the dire circumstances that Hayakawa advertised through the blue armband effort belie the actual nuanced reality of his own position on the strike, as well as the students who sported the armband. One student who wore an armband, interviewed at the beginning of the strike, said that he had no objection to the fifteen demands, but rather he disagreed with the tactics and the disruption of his “right to learn.”¹⁸⁴ The armband effort ultimately backfired as a dismally low number of students partook in the PR stunt, and it was easily parodied by those involved with the strike. Not to be dissuaded, however, Hayakawa’s next publicity feat proved to have a lasting impact, not only on the faculty and students who witnessed it in person, but on the public who witnessed it on television that night.

On the morning of 2 December, a small cadre of students, heeding Hayakawa’s decree against sound equipment on campus, chose to park a sound truck just beyond the edge of campus property. They used their amplified voices to encourage students to

¹⁸² According to Hayakawa’s statement on 30 November, the symbolism of the blue armband was four-fold: racial equality, social justice, non-violence, and the resumption of education.

¹⁸³ Statement, 30 November 1968, S.I. Hayakawa Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

¹⁸⁴ McEvoy and Miller, 34. McEvoy and Miller were professors in the Sociology Department at University of California, Davis who traveled to SFSC for two days in early December 1968 to interview students and observe the strike for a research project on student conflict and the effects of authoritarian administrations. In their interviews, they found that this student’s opinion was representative of many non-striking students. Furthermore, they found that students understood the strikers’ motives and sensed that such action was justified and inevitable.

abstain from attending classes and join the picket line. Hayakawa was sitting in his office and upon hearing the students over the truck's PA system, became incensed at the flagrant taunting of his new regulations. He immediately headed toward the protest, and upon reaching the sound truck, he climbed on top and began pulling the cords out of the speakers and disconnecting the microphone. Students swarmed around him, trying to pull him from the roof. He shouted repeatedly, "Don't touch me! I'm the President of this college!" and "Get the hell out of here!" with his signature tam-o'-shanter hat affixed to the top of his head.¹⁸⁵ According to TWLF activists, the strikers who assembled the sound truck protest did so without the knowledge or approval of the Central Committee. The protestors in this incident were mostly PL and YSA members, according to Terry Collins, and the skepticism with which the students of color viewed these organizations soon turned to disdain. The effect of their stunt likely had a negligible effect in turning students away, but it did have the unintended effect of making Hayakawa into a folk hero.¹⁸⁶

Hayakawa's entrance disrupted what had been a formula of news coverage of such events: students rally and demand change, while administrators condemn but do not prevent peaceful protest. That Monday night, however, the public saw a different narrative unfold on the news. Even though Hayakawa would go on to make questionable decisions and errors in judgment as the strike progressed, the image that survived in the minds of many contemporary viewers is that of Hayakawa, atop the sound truck, declaring his hard line approach to the Third World strikers. Speaking about his actions after the strike was over, Hayakawa claimed it was a spontaneous reaction, saying, "That

¹⁸⁵ Barlow and Shapiro, 256.

¹⁸⁶ Reminiscences of Terry Collins, Columbia Oral History, 63.

was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me—that sound truck incident. It just suddenly, you know, placed the kind of power in my hands that I don't know how I would have gotten if I had wanted it.”¹⁸⁷ Indeed, Hayakawa could now count households across the state and the country among his supporters, as well as politicians and Trustees who approved of his methods and were confident in his ability to break the strike.¹⁸⁸

Later that Monday, a group of strikers illegally staged a rally on campus and were subsequently forcefully removed from campus by the Tac Squad. The SFPD, recognizing that the strikers would not simply obey the order against rallies, made it their primary objective the following day to prevent large rallies from forming. The noon rally took on a pallor of trepidation as black community leaders addressed an assembled crowd of over two thousand strikers and strike-supporters. As promised, the Tac Squad began dispersing the crowd with their batons, sending several students to the hospital to be treated for their wounds before they were booked at the police station and charged with various crimes.¹⁸⁹ After the strikers dispersed and police and medics cleared the scene, Hayakawa spoke to reporters and uttered one of his famous quips that endeared him to legions of observers: “This has been the most exciting day of my life since my tenth birthday when I rode a roller coaster for the first time!”¹⁹⁰

For the next two weeks, the strike followed the same basic formula. Striking students, most of whom were suspended from classes and faced criminal arrest warrants authorized by Hayakawa, gathered near campus and around noon they marched to the Speaker's Platform, delivered speeches, excited the crowd, led a march, and then

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 258.

¹⁸⁸ Bob Hope telegraphed Hayakawa to say, “All the world is behind you.” Smith, et al., 251.

¹⁸⁹ Barlow and Shapiro, 263.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 264.

scrambled to avoid the encroaching throng of police. Thousands of students were joined by hundreds of community members who came to campus every day to participate in the demonstrations.¹⁹¹ The demonstrations showed little sign of flagging, even after Hayakawa excitedly announced on the campus public address system on Friday 6 December that a significant “breakthrough” had been made in ongoing strike negotiations. Few strikers even bothered to listen to the details of the supposed breakthrough because they were aware that any “negotiations” taking place were not on their behalf. They had refused to even entertain the idea of coming to the bargaining table until classes had been called off and campus was closed. Furthermore, the TWLF was resigned to the fact that Hayakawa and the local administration had little authority to initiate the sweeping reforms that they demanded. Until the Trustees could be involved in the strike resolution, the TWLF paid little heed to Hayakawa’s “breakthrough.”¹⁹² Four months later, when the TWLF finally relented to discussing their demands with the administration, the resolution they brokered was nearly identical to the offer made on 6 December.¹⁹³ Following the TWLF’s dismissal of this “breakthrough” Hayakawa felt comfortable telling the demonstrators that their continuance of the strike was the sole obstacle to implementing ethnic studies.

One hundred and twenty eight students were arrested in those two weeks, which surpassed the previous totals, but paled in comparison to the mass arrests that were to

¹⁹¹ Members of the community who came to campus to participate included people from all backgrounds, but a special effort was made to recruit high schools students from the Bay Area; prominent black, Latino and Asian individuals; as well as students from nearby colleges and universities.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 271.

¹⁹³ Further secret negotiations were conducted between administrative representatives and one member of the BSU, acting without the consent of the TWLF, but with the assumption that he could act on their behalf and convince them of the agreement when it had been reached. When news of these meetings became public, they were abandoned and the BSU member was denounced. Orrick, 68.

follow the winter holiday break. Hayakawa steadfastly refused to close the campus. He refused to accept his administration's own estimation that attendance was down by fifty percent (AFT members estimated more like eighty percent), and when faced with these figures during an interview on the local PBS station, Hayakawa stormed off the set, leaving the journalists stranded in the middle of a live broadcast. However, after two straight weeks of mass demonstrations of nearly five thousand students and community members, Hayakawa made the decision to close campus early for the winter holiday break, sending students home on Friday 13 December rather than 20 December as the official academic calendar advertised. As he announced his decision over the public address system, he ended by wishing the assembled crowd a "Merry Christmas."¹⁹⁴

War of Attrition: 6 January-5 March

Hayakawa welcomed students back to the campus on Monday 6 January following the extended three week winter vacation by announcing that the campus emergency regulations were still in effect, and that "rallies, parades, be-ins, hootnannies, hoedowns, shivaries, and other public events likely to disturb the studios in their reading and reflection are hereby forbidden on the central campus."¹⁹⁵ Hayakawa was also bolstered by Reagan's continued threat to use "the point of a bayonet" to enforce the open campus policy, as well as Police Chief Cahill's authorization of expanded police presence from neighboring counties. The continued deployment of mass police power incurred a hefty price tag for the City and County of San Francisco and the state of

¹⁹⁴ Barlow and Shapiro, 274.

¹⁹⁵ Memo "TO: Faculty, Students, and Staff of San Francisco State College," 4 January 1968, S.I. Hayakawa Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

California: by the new year the strike had already cost \$186,000.¹⁹⁶ The incongruence of the city and state's full financial commitment to breaking the strike while telling strikers that their demands could not be met due to lack of funding was a hypocrisy not lost on those involved.

During the winter break, the local AFT had received a strike sanction from the Labor Council and they proceeded to picket the campus beginning Monday 6 January. While the alliance with the TWLF strikers was tenuous and the AFT members refused to participate in the war of the flea, the confluence of the two protest movements formed a picket line that nearly encircled the perimeter of campus. However, after the first few days, the novelty of the picket line wore off for the TWLF contingent, as they felt it lost sight of the guerrilla tactics that had made the strike so successful in its early days. Trying to introduce variations into the picketing routine, Third World students demonstrated in large groups on campus to draw the police, and then dodged them as they made their way off campus. They also tried to make the picket line an actual human barrier by physically preventing any non-striking students from getting on campus. On Wednesday 8 January, after several skirmishes between strikers and students attempting to attend class, a unit of mounted police charged the militant picketers to break up their barrier. In addition to these efforts, students introduced stink bombs into the ventilation systems of the Science Building and Library forcing evacuations; they planted nails in the faculty parking lots causing a number of flat tires; they deliberately clogged toilets around campus; and they thwarted the operation of the library by checking out and

¹⁹⁶ Smith, et al., 246-282.

immediately returning stacks of books, choking the front desk and creating days of back logged books.¹⁹⁷

At this time, the State Assembly was actively debating several bills designed to crackdown on the strike at SFSC by making the crime of campus disturbance a felony, thereby keeping the arrested strikers in prison where they would be unable to lead or participate. In addition, the California Attorney General issued a strike injunction through the local superior court judge to enjoin the AFT from striking or picketing. Hayakawa felt confident that these new legal efforts would hasten the end of the strike at SFSC. However, the effect of the strike had spread beyond that isolated campus, and now other California college campuses experienced AFT mobilization and the formation of black and Third World student groups. Sensing a loss of momentum in the post-break strike effort, TWLF members lauded the spread of the movement and took pride in seeing their efforts duplicated across the state. In addition to supporting burgeoning Third World strikes on other campuses, TWLF members recommitted their efforts to mass demonstrations other than simply picketing the perimeter of campus.¹⁹⁸

To break the monotony of the picket line, the TWLF called for a resumed mass demonstration effort and planned to stage the first of many rallies on campus on Thursday 23 January. They couched their return to mass demonstrations in the rhetoric of “participatory democracy,” which was part of an effort to strengthen ties with the AFT

¹⁹⁷ Barlow and Shapiro, 284.

¹⁹⁸ Smith, et al., 284. University of California at Berkeley students formed a group called the Third World Liberation Front and initiated a strike that very closely followed the playbook of the original TWLF at SFSC. Scholars and historians often favor the UC Berkeley protest over the strike at SFSC in studies of nonwhite student protest. This is likely due to the fact that UC Berkeley has a greater reputation for student activism before and after the late 1960s. Daryl Maeda assesses this lopsided focus, saying, “The failure of historians to properly evaluate the significance of the strike at San Francisco State and other less prestigious institutions of higher learning speaks to an implicit elitism that continues to color campus activism as white and middle-class.” More on this in Chapter Five.

in order to present a united front. The two factions of the strike were torn over the issue of tactics: AFT members “couldn’t even conceive of imitating the guerilla tactics.” Thus, the two sides agreed on a mass rally as a compromise, although “the TWLF would resort to other tactics whenever they deemed it appropriate.”¹⁹⁹

On that Thursday, around 500 students, supporters and onlookers gathered at the center of campus, and listened to speeches emanating from the Speaker’s Platform. As they had been countless time before, the strikers were exhorted by the public address system to cease and disperse their illegal rally. They were threatened with arrest and reminded that there were no “innocent bystanders.” Ignoring the threats of the administration, the strikers continued their rally for ten minutes, when they began to notice that a phalanx of police were quickly encircling the crowd of protestors. The group was surrounded and they were faced with the reality that their defiant demonstration had been a set up. The police officers maintained a tight perimeter on the group, breaking ranks only to allow a dozen students to be escorted into paddy wagons that then delivered the students to the Hall of Justice and made the return trip for their next cargo. At the end of the day, 453 people had been arrested—more in a single day than in the previous three months since the strike began.²⁰⁰

The impending start of the spring semester at SFSC proved to be a catalyst in bringing the AFT and the Trustees to the table to discuss the terms of the professors’ contracts. The animosity between striking and non-striking faculty, as well as the negative public opinion of the AFT strike led the striking faculty to agree to a lackluster

¹⁹⁹ Barlow and Shapiro, 289. This dynamic of distinctly different tactics between the labor union strikers of the AFT and the third world strikers of the TWLF is illustrative of the “good sixties/bad sixties” paradigm postulated by Max Elbaum and discussed in the introduction to this dissertation.

²⁰⁰ Orrick, 64.

settlement that offered little gains for their prolonged struggle. While they took solace in their role as the first collective bargaining body to form on behalf of California college professors, it was a “bitter pill to swallow after such wrenching personal sacrifices and such visions of grand success.”²⁰¹ On Wednesday 5 March 1969, faculty members narrowly voted in favor of ending the strike. They returned to their classrooms, having gained little, and most significantly, having failed to help bring about a peaceful resolution to the student strike.

Conclusion: Settlement of the Fifteen Demands, 9 March-20 March

In agreeing to a shaky alliance with the faculty in January, the TWLF sacrificed the strong momentum of their guerrilla tactics in exchange for the promise of the faculty that the school would cease to operate without them. With the ultimate goal of preventing the college from operating, the TWLF accepted the overly optimistic projections of the AFT regarding the effect their absence would have. As faculty and students continued to cross the combined AFT-TWLF picket line, the strength of the two groups was slowly siphoned. And when the AFT faculty members returned to their classrooms, they further stymied the students’ efforts to close the school down. The “bitter pill” that the AFT was forced to swallow for their effort did not bode well for the Third World strike settlement. The results of a California opinion poll also showed that the sentiments of the public were overwhelmingly against the strikers, with 72% agreeing that those students who challenged the rules of the college should be kicked out. The poll

²⁰¹ Smith et al., 292.

also revealed that there was little support for the concept of expanding admissions at SFSC, with only 7% strongly in favor and 67% strongly opposed.²⁰²

The day after the results of this poll were made public in the local newspaper, a student member of the BSU, Tim Peebles, was severely wounded when a bomb he intended to detonate in a building on campus prematurely exploded in his hands. Police found more powerful explosives in a suitcase nearby. While there had been several thwarted bomb attempts on campus prior to this incident, they were never traced to the TWLF, and the group disavowed such incidents. In this instance, Peebles was known to be a member of the BSU. While the organization never claimed responsibility for Peebles's actions, Benny Stewart did show sympathy for Peebles, calling him "the innocent victim of the racist, oppressive society."²⁰³ Peebles's actions resulted in further alienation of conservative and moderate students and pushed members of the TWLF and its supporters to be vocally critical of such violence. Hayakawa also managed to cut off the financial resources of the striking students by freezing their Associated Student funding under pretense of accounting irregularities. Hayakawa went further, decreeing that no student arrested in demonstrations related to the strike would be able to secure a work-study opportunity through the Education Opportunity Program (EOP). This program was a major source of funding for many of the Third World students on campus who were dependent on that work to pay for school bills, not to mention legal bills related to repeated arrests.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Ibid., 301-302.

²⁰³ Ibid., 303.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 304.

Hayakawa's calculated maneuverings ultimately afforded him the upper hand when negotiations between the TWLF and the administration finally came about in the week following the resolution of the AFT strike. However, in a strange twist, the five-person negotiating committee comprised of faculty and deans—to whom Hayakawa delegated full authority to negotiate—ended up being significantly skewed toward a liberal and sympathetic view of the strike. As a result, “they pressed for an innovative, viable ethnic studies program and for compromises, not victories and defeats.”²⁰⁵ The administration's so-called Select Committee had the benefit of an ally who had worked tirelessly on behalf of the City of San Francisco and Mayor Alioto to bring the strike to a conclusion. Bishop Mark Hurley had been appointed by Alioto to serve on the Citizen's Committee to advise and assist with the strike issues, and he had forged a bond with some of the TWLF Central Committee members. When the TWLF finally accepted the reality that their demands would have to be negotiated before their entire movement became irrelevant, they turned to Bishop Hurley as a conduit to the bargaining table.²⁰⁶

On Sunday 9 March, Jack Alexis of the TWLF phoned Bishop Hurley and indicated that the group was interested in discussing a resolution to their strike. Hurley made the decision to reach out to George Murray, who was presently in jail serving a sentence for a weapons possession charge unrelated to the strike. Murray agreed to facilitate a meeting of the Central Committee and Hayakawa's Select Committee, which occurred at the jail on Wednesday 12 March. Murray instructed the Central Committee members present to void the demand that he be reinstated, given his prison sentence, and

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 307.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 309.

to seek a settlement on the other demands. The Select Committee, encouraged by their progress, moved forward with their negotiations.²⁰⁷

Hayakawa, however, was unhappy with the willingness of his Select Committee to compromise with the militant students. While he wanted a resolution to the strike and he was at least sympathetic to the idea of Black Studies, he wanted the TWLF to suffer defeat and to have their failure send a message to militant students. Ultimately, he wanted a moderate racial group to emerge that would seek reform instead of revolution, and work to build an ethnic studies department that would conform to the conservative academic standards of other disciplines.²⁰⁸ However, under the delegated powers held by the Select Committee, negotiations managed to reach mutually agreeable terms on every issue except for amnesty. As a result, most students involved in civil trials ended up receiving long terms of probation or hefty fines, and several even served prison sentences.²⁰⁹

On Thursday 20 March, the Select Committee members and the Central Committee members signed off on the settlement, ending the strike and setting the stage for the implementation of the first College of Ethnic Studies in the country. There was a final dotted line added by the typist to the bottom of the document for President Hayakawa to sign the resolution. He refused.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 311.

²⁰⁸ Hayakawa had fired Nathan Hare as Chair of the Department of Black Studies and suspended him as professor pending a disciplinary hearing after Hare interrupted Hayakawa's address to the faculty at the start of the new semester in February. Hayakawa was likely relieved to have Hare out of the Chair position so that he might have the opportunity to replace him with someone who represented more moderate views on black studies.

²⁰⁹ Orrick, 169.

Interlude

Following the resolution of the strike demands at San Francisco State in March of 1969, the college attempted to move forward with implementing their brokered agreement and leave the turbulent and violent strike in the past. Arguments and disagreements between President Hayakawa and the remaining students prevented an entirely smooth implementation process, which will be discussed further in Chapter Five. Despite these obstacles, SFSC became the first college in the country to adopt such a comprehensive program of ethnic studies that occupied a separate College within the University. As the ink dried on their 20 March resolution, however, a similar protest was stirring on the opposite coast among African American and Puerto Rican students at City College of New York.

They were mounting a challenge to the Eurocentric curriculum and lack of diversity among the student body at their school, and the rhetoric, strategy and goals of their protest had much in common with the strike in San Francisco. These similarities have to do with the fact that the student activists were drawing on the same source base for their revolutionary philosophy, as well as the fact that the highly publicized strike at SFSC was likely an inspiration to the CCNY students. However, the strike in New York City differed from San Francisco in ways that are due, among many reasons, to the different context of local politics, the differing processes of racialization, and the unique

blend of their coalition. The next two chapters of this dissertation will examine the strike at CCNY and explore the local context in which it was fostered.

Chapter Three—"Small White Island, Vast Black Sea": Expanding the Mandate of the
Free Academy

"Here, the golden key of learning,
 Freely, we bestow on all;
Youthful hearts, for knowledge burning,
 Crowd about our friendly hall.
Learn to prize the glorious blessing,
 Offered to you in this place,
Ye, our fondest trust possessing,
 Future hope of Freedom's race."²¹⁰

In 1969, students at City College of New York protested against their college in support of five demands, using the tactics of strike, occupation, confrontation, and sabotage. The students were demanding significant changes to the structure of the university, and their tactics represented a militancy that was recognized among a new generation of nonwhite activists. The defiant militancy of the students at City College disrupted the triumphant narrative of postwar educational opportunity and posed a direct challenge to liberal reforms directed at gradual integration that had been embraced around the country. These students of color sought an education as a way of correcting the racial biases that left black and Puerto Rican people perpetually poor and ignored. They demanded that the racial composition of the city's colleges reflect the diversity of

²¹⁰ "Ode, Composed for the occasion by a Lady of New York: Knowledge for the People," Addresses Delivered Upon the Occasion of the Opening of the Free Academy, 27 January 1849, Published by the Authority of the Board of Education of the City and County of New York, (New York: WM. C. Bryant & Co. Printers, 1849), 25.

the city's high schools, and furthermore, they demanded an education relevant to their experiences as people of color.

As this chapter will demonstrate, the push for expanded admissions and ethnic studies at City College fundamentally realigned the population of New York City. Old coalitions were dismantled and racial categories were revealed as mutable. At the same time as the traditional power structure of the city faltered, a new coalition emerged to claim a space in the public dialogue. This coalition consisted of black, Puerto Rican, Asian and other nonwhite immigrant and native-born New Yorkers. The focus of their struggle became the educational system of the city, which disproportionately failed to educate students of color, and thus failed to prepare them for entrance to the city's municipal colleges. The coalition was ultimately successful in securing expanded admissions, ethnic studies, bilingual education, community control of schools, and other issues vital to their educational platform. This chapter will delineate the context of higher education in New York City and analyze the disparity of educational opportunity that led to the lopsided gains of white students over students of color. This disparity had resounding significance on the campus of City College in Harlem, which by mid-century was a "small white island [in a] vast black sea."²¹¹

Over one hundred and fifty years ago, the largest urban college system began with a single building and a few hundred students. The idea was to expand the educational horizons for the city's denizens beyond those opportunities provided by private and parochial colleges. For its first century of existence, the City University was heralded as

²¹¹ Conrad M. Dyer, "Protest and the politics of open admissions: The impact of the Black and Puerto Rican students' community (of City College)," PhD Dissertation, (City University of New York, Department of Political Science, 1990), 62. This quote comes from the title of a special edition of City College's student newspaper *The Campus* that was published in 1968

the “proletarian Harvard” for this vision of high quality universal higher education.

However, high barriers to entry at City College meant that the school only managed to serve a small and exclusive segment of the city’s young people. Furthermore, throughout the course of the twentieth century, City College went from serving a mostly Irish Protestant student body, to a student population that was nearly eighty percent Jewish.

New York City’s demographics have been in a constant state of flux since the seventeenth century when it was a cosmopolitan center of trade and finance. In the modern era, the period just prior to the start of the twentieth century tens of millions of immigrants passed through Ellis Island’s immigration processing center in the New York Harbor. While most of those who arrived through Ellis Island in this period did not stay behind in New York City, the five boroughs saw a net increase of almost one million residents between 1890 and 1900. Most of these new residents were from Southern and Eastern Europe, including a significant number of Jewish immigrants. The steady pace of immigration and the changing country of origin meant that the city remained diverse. It also meant that the racial hierarchy was always subject to revision based on the relative characteristics of the newcomers. Those who had previously been seen as irredeemably foreign, were assimilable after a generation or two, and they were replaced with a new other.²¹² The new Jewish population of New York City grasped at the opportunity offered by City College to overcome the discrimination against their ethno-religious background and achieve success through education.

²¹² Historians and scholars have examined this phenomenon of “cycling immigrants” and racialization in depth. A problematic early attempt at addressing this in New York City is Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer’s *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963). For some more recent examples, see: Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, (New York: Verso Press, 1991).

However, the post-World War II years in New York City brought another significant demographic change that had immediate consequences for city residents and City College students. The second great migration of African Americans to northern cities following the Second World War effectively tripled their numbers in New York City alone, going from 450,000 in 1940 to 1,100,000 in 1960, and 1,700,000 in 1970. While the city had been home to a large African American presence since the Harlem Renaissance, this increase en masse interrupted the racial status quo and ultimately redrew the racial lines of the city. Also occurring in the post-war era was a wave of Puerto Rican migration that exponentially increased their numbers in the city, going from 70,000 to nearly one million residents in New York City by 1970, effectively giving New York the largest population of Puerto Ricans outside of the island.²¹³ However, these new immigrants were not welcomed into neighborhoods and institutions with the same degree of success as previous generations of immigrants had been.

Because of residential racial segregation, the demographic disbursement of these new minorities within the City of New York resulted in large pockets of black and Puerto Rican residents in Harlem and the Bronx, as well as a select few locales in Brooklyn. Harlem, a neighborhood north of Central Park in Manhattan, had been a predominantly African American neighborhood since the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. The Bronx, the northernmost of the five boroughs, had been a white working class neighborhood until it transitioned to a majority black and Latino neighborhood during the 1960s. Across the East River from Manhattan, African American and Latino residents were

²¹³ James Traub, *City on a Hill: Testing the American Dream at City College*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994) 44.

forming enclaves in middle and working class neighborhoods in the borough of Brooklyn.

Friction between these new residents and the previous white ethnic and Jewish populations in these neighborhoods grew as black and Latino New Yorkers became an increasing presence. In Brooklyn, the simmering tensions resulted in a struggle over the public schools, which will be discussed later in this chapter. For Harlem residents, the proximity to two exalted institutions of higher learning—City College and Columbia University—only served to reinforce the racial hierarchy of their surroundings. One young African American resident of Harlem, Bruce Hare, frequently passed by the hilltop campus of City College, situated like a “white citadel” overlooking Harlem. One day he remembered asking his grandfather, “Who’s up there?” His grandfather replied, “The smart people.”²¹⁴

In 1968 a protest over the placement of a new gymnasium for Columbia University revealed the barrier that existed between the educationally deprived Harlem residents and the privileged white college students in their midst. The administration at Columbia proposed a building plan that would construct a new gymnasium adjacent to their current campus in Morningside Park. The park was a popular recreational spot for the African American residents of the neighborhood, and the proposed construction appeared to them as an insensitive usurpation of their public space. The “Gym Crow” plan as student protestors called it, touched off a series of demonstrations that included white student activists (mostly Students for a Democratic Society members) and Columbia’s small minority of black students.

²¹⁴ Traub, 45.

However, the protests were not a racially harmonious assault on gentrification; the white students and the African American students were split about their proper roles in the movement and the ultimate goal of the protest. African American students were wary of white students' participation, and suspicious of their motives and tactics. Mark Rudd, leader of the SDS chapter at Columbia, quoted black radicals but seemed unwilling to submit to black students leaders when it came to sit-ins and occupations of campus buildings. African American students were not persuaded that white students were deeply committed to opposing the gym and to combating racial injustice in all its forms. Eventually, the students were successful in preventing the gymnasium from being built in Morningside Park and the New Left celebrates the event as a triumph of the student movement. However, the gym protests revealed the racial animosities that existed beneath the surface of progressive activism in the 1960s.²¹⁵ One year later, the protests at City College reintroduced these tensions in Harlem, and the neighborhood and its colleges would never be the same.

Educating “the children of the whole people”: The College of the City of New York

Created in 1847, City College, then called the Free Academy, was part of the answer to the question of what to do with the children of the vastly expanding immigrant population. Many of America's immigrants settled in New York City and tried to eke out an existence for themselves and their families as laborers in the city's vibrant industrial sectors. Between 1840 and 1850, the census shows a 78% increase in the population of the five boroughs of New York City, going from 391,000 to 696,000. And yet, while the

²¹⁵ For more on the Columbia protests in 1968, see: Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*; Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World*, (New York: Random House, 2004), and Stefan M. Bradley, *Harlem Vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

commercial capital of the United States found its ranks swelling exponentially, New York City had little to offer in terms of education for the new masses. There was no public high school, let alone a public college or university. Formal public schooling ended around the seventh grade, and the two private universities (Columbia and the University of the City of New York, or New York University) had a combined enrollment of 245 students in the mid-nineteenth century.²¹⁶ One of New York City's champions of higher education and a founder of the Free Academy, Townsend Harris, is quoted as saying, "This truth would induce the stranger to suppose that we despised education."²¹⁷

Harris was a wealthy merchant and a member of the New York intelligentsia—a status he achieved only by becoming an autodidact. His dedication to securing a free college for all New Yorkers stemmed from being a self-taught intellectual, and as newly elected President of the New York City Board of Education in 1846, he worked to enact this vision.²¹⁸ He and his fellow reformers drafted a proposal for a Free Academy that would be supported by money from a state literature fund as well as taxpayer funds, but which remained free of tuition. The proposal was overwhelmingly approved by statewide referendum in the summer of 1847, and the Free Academy opened its doors at the corner of 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue (at the time, the northernmost edge of developed space in Manhattan) in the winter of 1849. The Academy's President Horace Webster, in welcoming the first class of 149 students, said of the Free Academy,

²¹⁶ Columbia and NYU catered almost exclusively to the highest tier of Protestant metropolitan New York families. Willis Rudy, *The College of the City of New York: A History, 1847-1947*, (New York: The City College Press, Inc., 1949), 10-11.

²¹⁷ Traub, 21.

²¹⁸ Rudy, 10.

The experiment is to be tried, whether the highest education can be given to the masses; whether the children of the whole people can be educated; and whether an institution of learning, of the highest grade, can be successfully controlled by the popular will, not by the privileged few but by the privileged many.²¹⁹

The sense that the Free Academy was an experiment in the education of the masses was a popular theme in the early days of the institution. Posters and fliers urging support for the referendum touted a “Free Academy for the Poor Man’s Children.”²²⁰ At a time when a high school education was not yet mandatory for a successful career, the notion that a family in poverty should send their son (the Normal College for women was not opened until 1870) to university for a liberal arts education was not a universally acknowledged priority. This is perhaps why the first class accepted to the Free Academy in 1849 consisted of 143 students who were mostly children of native-born Protestants who occupied the skilled and trade classes (the new middle class) of New York City.²²¹

While the early appeal to the “poor man’s children” was not entirely convincing, the college continued to attract young men of the new middle classes. Not all of these students completed a degree, however. Many came to benefit from one or two years of training, either in classic liberal arts curriculum (literature, science, math, etc.) or the mechanical course, which was a predecessor to modern engineering. Because there was no formalized system of secondary education, many students came to the Free Academy with little preparation beyond the required completion of grammar school and they found

²¹⁹ David E. Lavin, Richard D. Alba, and Richard A. Silberstein, *Right Versus Privilege: The Open-Admissions Experiment at the City University of New York*, (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 2.

²²⁰ Sandra Shoiock Roff, Anthony M. Cucchiara, and Barbara J. Dunlap, *From the Free Academy to CUNY: Illustrating Public Higher Education in New York City, 1847-1997*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 6.

²²¹ *Ibid.* In 1870, following a public controversy surrounding the policy of accepting only public school pupils to the Free Academy, the college began accepting students from the city’s various private and parochial schools, though the vast majority of those who attended came from the public school system.

the rigorous course of study beyond their academic aptitude. Initially the trustees tried to make up for this by requiring oral and written entrance exams and a universal first-year education in basic college skills.²²²

Despite early attrition concerns and the imposition of admissions standards, the college entered its fifth decade of existence with a new name: the College of the City of New York (informally City College). In the last decade of the nineteenth century, City College faced an immediate need for more space, having surpassed the 400-student capacity at the 23rd Street location. Thus, in 1895, the city purchased two blocks of property in present-day Harlem, and after several years of construction, the first classes at the new campus began in the fall of 1907. The increased matriculation rates were no doubt due to the widely publicized successes of City College graduates, as well as the increasing availability of public secondary education in the city. This development relied on the creation of the Normal College for teacher education in 1870. Essentially the female alternative to the all-male City College, the Normal College (later renamed Hunter College in 1914) trained teachers for the expanding public education system in New York City. The curriculum at the Normal College was not designed to be a full liberal arts education, but rather a supplement to a grammar school education. The first classes admitted to the school were required to complete a mere five months of education

²²² Lavin, et al, 2. This basic college skills course was similar to the remedial education program that was later instituted for students who enrolled in programs designed to correct the racial imbalance at CUNY schools. These programs drew fire from conservative educators, alumni, and others who felt that these remedial programs were detracting from the historically high academic achievements of City College students.

before graduating with a certificate and a license to teach. A few decades later, in 1908, Normal College became a full liberal arts college with degree-granting abilities.²²³

Within a couple of short decades, the consolidated Board of Education that oversaw the business of the two colleges (referred to jointly as the College of the City of New York) found that demand was still exceeding physical space, especially for residents of the outer boroughs. Evening courses in select subject areas had been offered at high schools in Brooklyn since 1917 and Queens since 1924, but by the late twenties, enrollment had far exceeded the capacity of their facilities. A short time later Brooklyn College opened its doors in 1936, followed by Queens College the next year, to both men and women as full degree-granting liberal arts institutions. At Brooklyn and Queens Colleges, men and women enrolled in different “divisions” but shared one campus—a bold step toward coeducation at a time when City College only allowed women to attend evening classes for the business programs not offered at Hunter College.²²⁴

The complications inherent in maintaining separate classes and facilities for the education of men and women were further exacerbated when Hunter opened a second campus in the Bronx (later re-named Lehman College). The opening of this campus coincided with the American entry into World War II, and the campus reverted to a training facility for female service members in the Navy (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, or WAVES) and the Coast Guard (SPARS, which is an acronym for the Coast Guard Motto “Semper Paratus, Always Ready). Despite originally having been intended as a second all-female campus of Hunter College, the GI Bill led to increased demand for higher education by veterans. Therefore, the Lehman campus became

²²³ Roff, et al., 22-33.

²²⁴ Ibid, 24.

coeducational in the same way that Brooklyn and Queens Colleges had male and female students who enrolled in separate courses. It would take American involvement in another war, this time Korea in 1950, for true coeducation to take root in New York City's colleges. Fearful that day classes at City would go under-enrolled with soldiers away at war, a new arrangement essentially allowed for men and women to matriculate in even numbers at City College and the Bronx campus of Hunter College. For the first time, women were allowed access to the full liberal arts and sciences curriculum offered in the day courses at City College. The original Hunter College campus in Manhattan remained female-only until 1964.²²⁵

Thus, in the immediate post-war era, the campuses of the College of the City of New York had expanded to four of the five boroughs, bringing tuition-free coeducational liberal arts curriculum to New Yorkers of all backgrounds. While admissions standards remained relatively high, freshman classes continued to grow, and graduation rates began to catch up with matriculation rates. With the advent of the community college system in New York State in the 1950s, the city was able to offer Associates of Arts degrees and technical training to thousands more students. Additionally, many of these students transitioned to the four-year degree programs at the senior colleges. America at mid-century was in a period of flux, especially for cities like New York where manufacturing jobs were rapidly losing ground to business and professional jobs that required training and degrees. The colleges in the city kept pace, but barely.²²⁶

The post-war period also saw the creation of large-scale suburban developments like Long Island's Levittown, which drew white urbanites out of the city at the same time

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Lavin, et al., 3.

that New York broke ground on its statewide four-year university system (State University of New York, or SUNY). With the economic boom of the 1950s and the simultaneous anxieties of the Cold War, a premium placed on higher education raised the profile of the public university throughout the United States. As the campuses of New York City's colleges struggled to compete with SUNY and private colleges, the city around them began to change rapidly. White flight left behind blighted and abandoned neighborhoods with under-funded public schools and civil services. Soon, the city was welcoming hundreds of thousands of African American migrants from the South, as well as nearly equal numbers of Puerto Rican immigrants. The commitment of the college to educate "the children of the whole people" was tested when the child was no longer the recognizable and familiar immigrant of decades past.

"The nicest discrimination": Self-Assessment and the Creation of CUNY

As opportunities for public higher education in New York City expanded throughout the early twentieth century, the nature of the system remained ad hoc and loosely centralized. In 1944 the legislature of the state of New York intervened and appointed a commission to study the collected colleges in New York City. The result of this study, the Strayer Report (named for George Strayer, the head of the committee), discussed the myriad problems of the college system and made several recommendations to alleviate those problems and raise the standards of efficiency and achievement. The course of action laid out in the Strayer Report, however, would go unheeded for fifteen years, during which time the problems only continued to grow and become more pervasive.

In addition to recommendations for updating facilities and expanding degree opportunities, the Strayer Report diagnosed the fundamental problem at the heart of the city's public college system: how to maintain the commitment to educate "the children of the whole people" while keeping tuition free and standards high. The report emphasized that, "A democratic society needs more than just an intellectual elite...A large group of liberally educated persons is not a luxury, but a necessity in a democracy."²²⁷ By tying the success of the nation as a solvent democracy to the ability of the masses to obtain an education, Strayer and his colleagues anticipated the postwar notion of higher education as civic responsibility. To this end the report called for the acceptance of a much larger percentage of New York City's public high school graduates. The obvious obstacle to this expansive acceptance program was funding, which the Strayer Report recommended should come from increased state investment. While the legislature was responsible for the committee and the content of its report, the gears of government were slow to turn in response to this recommendation.²²⁸

When the city's colleges again turned to the kind of self-assessment that led to the Strayer Report, the situation had become more serious. In 1960 the combined campuses admitted just 13% of the city's high school graduates, which amounted to 8,563 students.²²⁹ Each campus operated their admissions according the space and ability of the staff and faculty to accommodate the students. The resources, both human and physical, were already stretched to their maximum capacity. And yet, the colleges fell short of the mission to expand education beyond an elite minority. Thus, throughout 1960 and 1961,

²²⁷ Roff, 112.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

the State Board of Education took steps to consolidate the leadership of New York City's colleges and commit state resources to expanding facilities and recruiting more staff and faculty.

In April of 1961, governor Nelson Rockefeller signed into law a bill that created the consolidated City University of New York (CUNY) under the jurisdiction of the Board of Higher Education (BHE). Following this new joint effort, in September 1962 the BHE dedicated itself to an ambitious \$400 million expansion project in which new campuses, mostly two-year junior colleges, were built and new colleges were added to old campuses. In theory, this new effort at expansion would lead to increased inclusiveness, which would in turn rededicate the city's public colleges to the mission of opportunity for all. Yet, within a few short years, CUNY became an epicenter in the protracted struggle for educational equality and opportunity. To understand why the CUNY expansion project of the early 1960s failed to achieve satisfactory levels of inclusiveness, it is necessary to examine the proletarian image of its original mission.²³⁰

City College was seen and celebrated as an educational institution of the masses; however, by the mid-twentieth century it had attained an elite pedigree that alumni and boosters publicly and zealously guarded. As one scholar noted, "By the 1960s City's rigorous standards had come to seem like a perpetuation of privilege for the well educated, rather than a commitment to egalitarianism."²³¹ By imposing stringent entrance requirements, another scholar argued that City College *predicted* achievement rather than *improved* achievement among the masses.²³² By mid-century, the "proletarian

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Traub, 10.

²³² Lavin, et al., 3.

Harvard” had the distinction of producing three future Nobel laureates as well as graduating the most students who went on to achieve doctorates.²³³ By favoring selective admissions, City College maintained its prestige and acted as a talent scout for business and industry in the greater New York City area. Those high achievers who showed promise were selected and trained to staff the growing industrial management and business sectors of the economy, while those who were not pre-ordained to rise to the middle class remained perpetually uneducated and unskilled.

The elite status of City College was a function of its admissions requirements, which remained stringent throughout its first century of existence. In its early years, the admissions standards were consistent with its meritocratic view of selecting only the high achievers and living up to its nickname as the “proletarian Harvard.” From its founding in 1847 until the turn of the twentieth century, City College required all applicants to take an entrance exam, and only those who passed in the highest percentile of that year’s aspirants were granted admission. In remarks made during the opening ceremony of the Free Academy in 1849, the President of the Board of Education, said, “Merit is to be the test of admission, and hereafter, when the number to be admitted at each examination shall be limited in advance, it will be necessary to exercise the nicest discrimination.”²³⁴ In order to ensure that the “nicest discrimination” was executed, the applicants were assigned a number that allowed examiners to judge them anonymously.

Beginning in 1900, with the growth of public secondary education, City College dropped the entrance exam and instead began offering admission to any student who

²³³ Traub, 11. City College now boasts nine Nobel laureates among its graduates (twelve for CUNY as a whole).

²³⁴ Robert Kelly, Esq., Addresses Delivered Upon the Occasion of the Opening of the Free Academy, 10.

graduated from one of the city's high schools. This remained a fairly small group of students, as high school diplomas were scarcely necessary for much of the work force in the early twentieth century. However, by 1924 the number of students graduating from high school and seeking to further their education at City College became significant enough that a further requirement was added that the graduate must have maintained a grade-point average (GPA) of 72 (or a letter grade of "C"). Furthermore, because New York City public schools offered a tracking system similar to that of California's, the student must have been on the academic track, as opposed to the vocational track. As new CUNY campuses emerged throughout the first half of the twentieth century, it was this admissions standard that acted as the gatekeeper for all branches.²³⁵

By the early 1960s, the serious flaws inherent in these protocols were clearly demonstrated in the enrollment data. Beginning in the 1880s, with the surge of immigration from Eastern Europe, the city's ranks of poor Jewish residents grew exponentially. What some scholars have termed the Jewish "penchant" for education resulted in an influx of Jewish students matriculating at City College, beginning at the turn of the century and culminating at mid-century. As scholar Sherry Gorelick said, if it were not for City College, "the Jewish 'passion for education' might have remained an unrequited love" in the United States.²³⁶ Another scholar noted that the composition of City College had changed from "predominantly white Protestant middle-class to 75

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Sherry Gorelick, *City College and the Jewish Poor: Education in New York, 1880-1924*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1981), 6. Gorelick remarks that despite the classical foundation of City College curriculum, it was not pre-ordained to be a non-denominational haven for Jews as attendance at Chapel was mandatory until 1904. In addition, she says, after 1904, City College remained "secular in form and Protestant in culture." (138)

percent Russian Jewish, mostly poor.²³⁷ Thus, by 1905 four out of every five students at City College were Jewish, and in the 1960s, the margin remained high at two out of every three.²³⁸ The following table demonstrates the further breakdown of City College students by race, class, and ethnicity.

School Year	Roman Catholic	Black	Jewish	Other	Family income < 10,000	Father < diploma or less
1966-67	33%	2%	59%	6%	60%	70%

Table 2: Demographic Breakdown of City College Students²³⁹

The demographic breakdown of CUNY campuses in the period just prior to the advent of open admissions testifies to the ways in which the prestige of the college rested on a solidly white student body. While the children of skilled laborers and professionals had been the dominant demographic in the college’s early days, the new century had brought more unskilled laborers into the city, and their children flocked to City College.²⁴⁰

Because of the realities of the changing demographics within the city, it became starkly clear to the BHE that they must be more proactive in selecting and recruiting a student body that reflected the diversity of New York City. A series of Master Plans,

²³⁷ Vanessa Pascual, Untitled Chapter in *Latino Higher Education*, Box 137, Folder 2, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Archives of the Puerto Rican Diaspora, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, CUNY (henceforth Centro Archives).

²³⁸ Traub, 43.

²³⁹ Jack E. Rossman, Helen S. Astin, Alexander S. Astin, and Elaine H. El-Khawas, *Open Admissions at City University of New York: An Analysis of the First Year*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 36. This data is from an American Council on Education survey that analyzed two senior colleges and one junior college. While the data is reported without identifying which school it is from, these numbers (from “College B,” a senior college) are statistically similar to numbers reported elsewhere for City College. See: Dyer and Traub for comparison.

²⁴⁰ Traub, 33. In 1944, the Strayer Report concluded that nearly all of the students came from first generation immigrant families who occupied “lower income groups,” and “[a]s many as 40 percent of the fathers would classify as unskilled laborers, on relief, unemployed, not living with the family, or deceased.”

modeled on the California example, offered blueprints for expanding CUNY, and eventually achieving racial and ethnic parity with the population of the city. In 1962, CUNY's Holy Plan offered an expansion scheme that would require significant capital, but would accommodate a 30% increase in attendance. The first proposed CUNY Master Plan, issued in 1964, incorporated many of the Holy Plan's recommendations, and it went through several iterations, with revisions and updates added yearly. In 1965 the plan altered the admissions requirements to deal with the influx of applicants and to formally stratify the varying academic standards between the four-year campuses (senior colleges) and the two-year campuses (junior colleges).²⁴¹ Those who had criticized the perpetuation of privilege within CUNY were told to take solace in the promise of junior colleges to redress the lack of access to public higher education for students in New York City.

Thus, while the Master Plan continued to seek ways to accommodate the increased interest in CUNY's campuses, the BHE attempted to insulate the four-year schools like City College and protect their prestige by embracing tokenism and offering the junior colleges as an alternative. These critics were not appeased, however, and the college once again revised the Master Plan in 1966, this time proposing "100%

²⁴¹ The Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, *Master Plan for the City University of New York*, (New York, NY, 1964). The new standards began by increasing the requisite GPA for admission to both senior and junior colleges, which went from 72 to 80 and 75, respectively. The plan also called for the formal separation of junior colleges into those offering academic courses and those offering vocational courses. Academic junior colleges required a GPA of 75 and the possibility of transfer to a senior college, while vocational junior college accepted students with a GPA of at least 70, but transfer to senior colleges was not offered. Furthermore, regardless of whether a student sought admission to an academic or vocational junior college, their course of study in high school must have been the academic track, and not the vocational track. And any student with a GPA less than 70 need not apply to any CUNY campus

admissions” for high school graduates in New York City by 1975.²⁴² While this promise may have been a sufficient palliative for those who objected to CUNY’s elitism, the intervening years brought new accusations of racial bias against CUNY’s admissions policies. Beyond its insular status, CUNY now stood as an example of the stark color line that separated white and privileged from nonwhite and poor in New York City. Ultimately the “100% admissions” promise of 1966 would be altered significantly and radically by students of color who were spurred toward activism by a series of events in the late 1960s. The controversy that erupted in Brooklyn 1968 over local control of a nearly all-black school district had a significant impact on the course of open admissions and ethnic studies at City College.

“The missing pages of black culture”: The Ocean Hill-Brownsville Protests

The coalition of students and community leaders who were active in the struggle with the college were no doubt aware of the recent controversy surrounding a school district in Brooklyn. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools had, the previous spring, become the site of a protracted battle between the locally elected school board and the city-wide teacher’s union, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). In New York City, a power struggle between two radical teacher’s unions had recently given way to the centralization of teacher representation in the UFT.²⁴³ While labor unions had long been

²⁴² The specifics of this plan are as follows: admission to senior colleges would be offered to the top 25% of all high school graduates; the next 40% of high school graduates would be offered junior college admission; the next ten percent would be allowed to enroll in “college discovery programs,” and the remaining students would be offered admission to an “education skills center.” The Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, *Second Interim Revision of the 1964 Master Plan for the City University of New York*, (New York: NY, June 1966), viii.

²⁴³ For more on the history of unionization among New York City teachers, see: Celia Lewis Zitron, *The New York City Teachers Union, 1916-1964: A Story of Educational and Social Commitment*, (New York: Humanities Press, 1968). Zitron details the long history of unionization among teachers in New York City, beginning in 1916 with the Teachers Union. The Teachers Union lasted until the United Federation of

strongholds of leftist radicalism, the UFT soon found itself fielding accusations of racism and reactionary politics by the members of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school board.²⁴⁴

In 1968, Ocean Hill-Brownsville was at least 95% nonwhite, having undergone a period of tremendous population change in the previous ten years. In the 1950s, the Brooklyn neighborhood was a middle-class white enclave, home to many families who were supported by the expanding white-collar employment sector in the city. However, as black southerners began to relocate north during the Great Migration of the post-war years, the affordable housing opportunities of outer-borough neighborhoods like Bedford-Stuyvesant, Flatbush and Ocean Hill-Brownsville began to give way to their increasing numbers. White residents, motivated by fear and racial animosity, moved to neighborhoods that appeared less welcoming to black residents. It was intercity white flight; moves were closer geographically, but no less stark than the suburban model in their search for racial separatism.²⁴⁵

In 1967, the centralized Board of Education (BOE) of the City of New York began an experiment in community control of the public schools. In response to the widely held belief that the city's schools were failing to educate poor and nonwhite students, the BOE attempted to grant oversight to locally elected school boards in

Teachers won the contract with the Department of Education to represent the city's thousands of teachers in the early 1960s. Zitron also describes the continued efforts on the part of the Teacher's Union to reform and improve "ghetto schools," beginning in 1935 with the Harlem Committee. The conflict that occurred between the UFT and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville parents represented a break from a long tradition of mutual cooperation on the issue of improving schools in low-income and predominantly black neighborhoods.

²⁴⁴ Jerald Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

²⁴⁵ Podair, 18.

particularly struggling districts.²⁴⁶ Ocean Hill-Brownsville's district qualified for a local board under this experimental plan, and the board quickly set about attempting to transform the school and increase the accountability of the school to the board. Parents in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district approached their duties on the board with a determined attitude and an acute consciousness of the ways in which race factored into their children's poor education. They were vigorous and holistic in their assaults on the school system, including the curriculum that ignored black history and culture. One African American educator in Ocean Hill-Brownsville said he was concerned "with supplying the missing pages of black culture."²⁴⁷

Perhaps the BOE had not anticipated the zeal with which the local board members would grab the reins and attempt to steer the wayward schools. Or perhaps they underestimated the amount of problems that an oversight board would immediately diagnose and attempt to remedy. Whatever the BOE expected, they were apparently unprepared for the hands-on approach that the Ocean Hill-Brownsville board employed upon its formation in the fall of 1967. The BOE and the local UFT chapter spent the duration of the 1967-1968 school year at constant loggerheads with the local board, attempting to define and circumscribe the extent of the board's powers. Where the board

²⁴⁶ This move toward local or community control is likely an outgrowth of the city's embrace of the War on Poverty model of urban funding. See Chapter One, footnote 25 for more on this.

²⁴⁷ Podair, 67. There is a history that predates the Ocean Hill-Brownsville debate concerning the critique of textbooks and other curriculum used by New York City. In 1950 the Teachers Union published and disseminated a booklet called, "Bias and Prejudice in Textbooks in Use in the New York City Schools." The booklet came out of the Harlem Committee, which analyzed the texts and found a strong presence of bias, including sections that "condoned" slavery, ignored slave revolts, justified segregation and the Ku Klux Klan, and generally took a dismissive attitude toward any nonwhite, non-American population or culture. Of this, Zitron says it demonstrated "the depth of unconscious, ingrained attitudes which made it possible for liberal writers to be guilty of the kind of statements which were quoted in the pamphlet." Zitron, 103-104. The texts were slowly phased out of use, but some objectionable titles were still in use in 1968 when Zitron published her book.

wanted executive control over issues such as curriculum and personnel decisions, the BOE and the UFT bristled at the usurpation of such fundamental decisions.²⁴⁸

The confrontation that erupted when the local school board fired eighteen members of the teaching staff in May of 1968 polarized teachers and parents within the city. The UFT, which had always thought of itself as a liberal (if not radical) ally of New York's downtrodden and dispossessed, particularly the black and Latino residents, found itself on the conservative side of a race debate. Some members who were still ideologically aligned with the UFT's more radical predecessors, crossed the battle line and supported the local board, as well as the parents and students of Ocean Hill-Brownsville. Those who chose not to support the community board based their argument on the fact that they had struggled for decades to gain the right to organize all of the city's teachers in order to protect them from the behemoth of the BOE's bureaucracy. One of the most dearly-held rights of the UFT, in its eternal struggle with the BOE, was the right of tenure and job security—a right that the local board had usurped and exercised without due process when they sent termination letters to eighteen faculty members. In response, the teachers orchestrated a series of strikes that crippled the school system in the early days of the 1968-1969 school year.²⁴⁹

In addition to squaring off over personnel decisions, the battle that ensued exposed the shallowness of the self-congratulatory mantra of New York City: that of its cosmopolitan, liberal, pluralistic, racially harmonious exceptionalism. For the black and Latino populations who were excluded from much of the prosperity and opportunity of the city, the school debate revealed long-simmering resentments. Another revelation of

²⁴⁸ Podair, 72.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

the strike, that historian Jerald Podair identifies, is the squaring off of two diametrically opposed values systems, with white values of individualism, competition and materialism (particularly prevalent, Podair argues, in New York City) juxtaposed with black values of mutuality, cooperation and community.²⁵⁰ While it is overly simplistic to describe these values as intrinsic and essential to white or black identity, they provide a useful lens through which to view the struggle at Ocean Hill-Brownsville. Furthermore, the efforts of students of color at CUNY to exercise more control over their opportunities in higher education can be viewed through the same lens.

A further element of the struggle between the UFT and the community school board concerns the idea that the UFT was mostly populated by liberals who were, in general, sympathetic to victims of racism. This notion no doubt comes from the reality that UFT membership and leadership were historically and presently controlled by Jewish educators. The Jewish New Yorkers in question were active in labor struggles and were no strangers to racism, which made them aware of its existence and impact within the city. The coupling of liberal and Jewish was not a stretch for New Yorkers in the 1960s, and it was, more often than not, an accurate assumption. Many Jewish liberals from the northeast were central to the civil rights activities of Freedom Summer in 1964, and in the national press, as well as the national consciousness, liberal Jews were seen as devoted allies in the struggle against racism. However, in the case of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville

²⁵⁰ Podair, 65. Podair indicates that his analysis of these attributes is based on his readings of black intellectuals' critiques of the white middle class in the 1960s.

controversy, as well as in the struggle for open admissions, Jews often found themselves on the opposite side of the debate from the African American and Latino protestors.²⁵¹

Many scholars have recognized this era as an historic turn of events, one that demonstrates the failure of pluralism to overcome tribalism, ultimately resulting in an all-out struggle for resources among the various ethnic or racial groups. This is a refrain that is invoked to explain the collapse of 1960s coalition politics, especially among left-leaning groups like SDS and organizations associated with the civil rights movement.²⁵²

Podair describes the realignment of political and ethnic groups in the late 1960s as the moment of Jewish acceptance of a “white” identity, at least in New York City. This is both the moment where Jews begin to identify as white, and also the moment in which they are accepted by whites into the culture. Whereas, before the battle at Ocean Hill-Brownsville Jews had been another nonwhite, non-Christian group coexisting in the city and competing for resources, they were now welcomed into the white fold. The obvious impetus for this conversion is the rallying of white citizens in opposition to what they perceived as a much more fierce and threatening black population.²⁵³

Scholars such as George Lipsitz have identified a possessive investment in whiteness, whereby racism is construed not simply as a reactionary hatred of the other, but as an instinct to protect the myriad benefits bestowed on whites. For Jewish New

²⁵¹ For more on role of Jewish activists in the Civil Rights Movement, see: Debra L. Schwartz, *Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement*, (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Raymond Mohl, *South of the South: Jewish Activists in the Civil Rights Movement in Miami*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2004). For more on black-Jewish relations, see, Jane Anna Gordon, *Why They Couldn't Wait: A Critique of the Black-Jewish Conflict over Community Control in Ocean Hill-Brownsville (1967-1971)*, (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001) and Jack Salzman and Cornel West, eds., *Struggles in the Promised Land: Toward a history of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

²⁵² See Chapter One, 5.

²⁵³ Podair, 6.

Yorkers, the instinct was to protect their access to education, which allowed access to some benefits of whiteness. Thus, the intractable attitude of many Jews toward CUNY's admissions standards and the control of the city's schools can be seen as a possessive investment in the egalitarian path to self-advancement.²⁵⁴ Many of the professors and leaders within the education and labor organizations in New York City were Jewish graduates of CUNY (specifically City College). Their success and their self-identity were largely predicated on the notion that they were born to poor immigrants who were the victims of racism and discrimination; yet, they were able to advance in life as a result of the meritocratic standards at CUNY that guaranteed an education to anyone who worked hard enough to gain admission. Additionally, Jews had historically been discriminated against at America's Ivy League schools, which led them to schools like City College. African Americans and Latinos charged the Jews who defended CUNY with elitism and a failure to understand the shortcomings of meritocracy in New York City in the 1960s.

The critique of CUNY's admissions standards that was proffered by the student activists and their allies pointed towards its complicity in maintaining systemic racism. Meritocratic admissions standards are a byproduct of competition and individualism (which Podair identifies as white values), whereby a student who achieves higher scores on standardized assessments edges out a student who receives lesser marks. While such standards seem unbiased and fair, the system is open to flaws in design and execution. The assessments that provide the data for admissions decisions are not without their biases, and the preparation of students for such assessments is not equal or uniform. In

²⁵⁴ George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

New York City, school districts that were predominantly black and Latino, and overwhelmingly poor, lagged behind in GPA and standardized test scores, and failed to send any significant cohort of their students on to higher education. Because of the low performance of many of these schools, scholar Allen Ballard argued, “high school records and SAT scores are simply indices of the victimization of Black youth by their educational and social environments and therefore tell us nothing of the potential for academic growth of a particular Black student.”²⁵⁵

Ballard conducted a study of the city’s high schools to demonstrate the disparity between white success and black and Puerto Rican failure. The following table demonstrates his findings (based on figures from the 1968-1969 school year) using three tiers of schools, ranked by the percentage of black and Puerto Rican students at each school.

	% black or Puerto Rican students	% GPA below 70	% GPA above 80
Tier 1	9	21	47
Tier 2	23	34	28
Tier 3	58	42	13

Table 3: Black and Puerto Rican Students’ Grade Point Averages²⁵⁶

This table illustrates the inverse relationship between the percentage of nonwhite students and the relative grade point average. As the number of black and Puerto Rican students at each school increases, the average GPA decreases to the point that only 13% of students in the third tier would be eligible for acceptance to CUNY. Thus, for CUNY to

²⁵⁵ Allen Ballard, *The Education of Black Folk: The Afro-American Struggle for Knowledge in White America*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), 96.

²⁵⁶ Ballard, 102.

use such criteria as their sole data set in determining admissions allows for the possibility that meritocracy is not an infallible system and it often operates to keep poor and nonwhite people from advancing.

However, this was not an easy problem to remedy, especially when not everyone involved was convinced that such racial disparities were problematic. In 1973 City College professor of linguistics Louis Heller published his account of the City College struggle over open admissions and ethnic studies. In this work, *Death of the American University*, Heller was dismissive of the students and critical of their efforts, saying,

The absurdity of calling City College racist is—or should be—patent to anyone who knows the history of the institution, which was founded explicitly so that the children of the rich and the poor would sit together in the same classroom, with no distinctions of race, color, religion, or creed.²⁵⁷

The falsehood, however, was not that City College was perpetually immune to racism, but that its founding mantra of equal access to higher education was fairly enforced. Heller does not comment on this nuance in his interpretation of the mission to “educate the children of the whole people,” but his position on the inherent *non*-racism of meritocracy is representative of the views of the majority of faculty and administrators at the time.

In nineteen sixty-eight, parents and community members at Ocean Hill-Brownsville attacked the front end of the public education equation by taking control of the system that trained their students in order to give them a better education. In 1969,

²⁵⁷ Louis G. Heller, *The Death of the American University: With Special Reference to the Collapse of City College of New York*, (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1973), 22. Dr. Heller’s views on what does and does not constitute racism are further explained in a footnote later in the book: when defending the interim president at CCNY, Dr. Joseph Copeland, from student accusations of racism, Heller said, “Proof of this point [that Copeland was not racist] appears in the fact that Dr. Copeland and his wife had adopted a number of children, including one who was black and two who were oriental in background.” Ibid, 99.

students at CUNY, along with parents and community members, attacked the back end of the equation by challenging the admissions criteria that ignored the problems that plagued New York City's black and Latino school districts. Much as had been the case in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville scenario, the predominantly Jewish faculty at CUNY campuses rejected the notion that special circumstances should be allowed for in the pursuit of equality for black and Latino students. The alliance of the liberal Jewish community with the "law and order" population of New York City proved to be a formidable opponent for the students at CUNY who wished to see a viable alternative to the meritocracy. And the loss of their powerful allies in the Jewish intellectual community meant that black and Puerto Rican students were now on the opposing side of a stark color line. Their response was not to retreat into isolation and protect their token gains; rather these individuals united around the *identity of color* and forged a new coalition of nonwhite solidarity.

"Special Matriculants": SEEK & College Discovery

In 1965, black and Puerto Rican legislators and some members of the black press began to publicly lobby the BHE to allow students of their constituencies to have equal access to the taxpayer funded colleges that failed to enroll a significant number of students of color. Within the NY State Assembly, the inchoate Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus began pressuring the Speaker of the Assembly Anthony Travia to adopt proactive measures to include students of color at CUNY schools. At the national level, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., a U.S. representative whose district included Harlem, and who had himself attended City College, also championed the cause. In 1964 an editorial in the New York *Amsterdam News* satirically commented, "Now this bunch of

intellectuals acts as if it believes that God himself should not be allowed to sit in a classroom at CCNY or Hunter unless he presents an affidavit showing he is white and able to meet the I.Q. tests laid down on this earth by the Board of Higher Education.”²⁵⁸

In response, the State Legislature and the BHE introduced two new pre-baccalaureate, remedial programs through which “five hundred ‘special matriculants’ would be selected” and admitted.²⁵⁹ College Discovery became operational at the junior colleges in 1964, and the Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) program at the senior colleges followed shortly behind in 1966 (first at City College, and then at the rest of the senior college campuses).²⁶⁰ They provided remedial classes to prepare students for the rigors of mainstream college courses. The “pre-bac” students were considered non-matriculating while they completed their remedial training, and once satisfactory progress had been made, they were fully matriculated into the CUNY campus that they attended.

These programs were specifically geared toward responding to the growing criticism that CUNY excluded students of color through their elitist admissions standards. As a result, in its initial iteration, College Discovery drew its special matriculants from areas and schools that served significant populations of black and Latino students. SEEK culled its first class of students from the Harlem neighborhood immediately surrounding

²⁵⁸ Ballard, 121. Sheila Gordon, in her analysis of the post-war changes at CUNY, hints at the possibility that Republican state legislators from “upstate” pushed for the increased acceptance of racial and ethnic minorities as a way to divide the Jewish and black populations of the city and diffuse their power as a united front. Shelia Gordon, “The Transformation of the City University of New York, 1945-1970,” PhD Dissertation, Department of History, Columbia University, 1975.

²⁵⁹ Marshak, 11.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

City College, which was heavily black and Puerto Rican.²⁶¹ The programs were wildly popular, but necessarily small in their first years, as CUNY was already experiencing a space crunch that required “Operation Shoehorn” to find creative ways to make space for the baby boom influx.²⁶² The program was innovative and represented a significant stride toward admitting that there was a systemic disparity in the college preparation received by white and nonwhite students. The stipend that accompanied entrance into the pre-baccalaureate program made it an attractive option for many poor students who aspired to a college education. Shortly after the pilot program began, a sense of resounding success encouraged the State of New York to adopt a state-wide pre-baccalaureate program, modeled nearly verbatim from the SEEK example.²⁶³

The use of a remedial preparation course to allow students who underperformed in high school to reach the minimum qualifications seemed imprudent to many who pointed to the disparity in having two separate admissions standards. Critics of compensatory education came from both the right and the left. Those opposed to a pre-baccalaureate plan on the right saw it as a compromise intended to open the door to affirmative action, and many feared the plan would dilute the prestige of CUNY. Critics on the left feared that a remedial education would ghettoize the new students within the

²⁶¹ Shelia Gordon (199) indicated that the State Assembly bill authorizing SEEK used geography rather than income level as the criteria for admission to SEEK. The geographical areas targeted by SEEK would be designated “poverty areas” as determined by the city’s “antipoverty operations board.” Gordon says that while the net effect was likely the same for potential SEEK students, the use of geographical criteria reinforced the political constituencies of the politicians in the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus who pushed for the program. Today the SEEK program uses family income level to determine admissions.

²⁶² Gordon, 178.

²⁶³ Marshak, 12.

college and this mark of inferiority would prevent them from receiving the same quality education.²⁶⁴

The seeming success of the SEEK and College Discovery programs at CUNY in the mid 1960s meant that they would not only persist as a remedy for the racial bias in admissions standards, but they would also continue to expand. In the senior colleges, SEEK initially accepted 105 students; within two years 1,500 students had entered four-year CUNY schools in the pre-baccalaureate route. At City College specifically, 600 SEEK students attended in 1968, a number that the administration hoped to double by 1975. Black students represented 4.2% of the fully matriculated City College population, and Puerto Rican students were 4.9%. When considering SEEK population of City College along with the traditional student body, black students jumped to 28% of the college's students, and Puerto Ricans were 8.4%. These numbers reveal the success of the SEEK program when they are compared to the pre-1965 percentages, which one scholar termed "statistically speaking...close to being insignificant."²⁶⁵ SEEK and College Discovery expanded, and hundreds of students who would have previously been barred from entrance took advantage of the chance to earn a degree. However, SEEK and College Discovery were not cure-alls for the problems endured by students of color in New York City, and the flaws of the inchoate programs soon became apparent.

²⁶⁴ Ballard, 102. Many critics of this remedial program failed to realize that early in City College's history, remedial pre-matriculation courses were required for many students who were simply unable to gain the academic background in the public secondary schools of New York City. Thus, it had been a longstanding policy of CUNY that students who, by one standard or another, deserved to avail themselves of a public education, should be offered the chance to catch-up to their peers who received a superior education prior to college. Of course, the situation of the college and the status of the remedial student vis-à-vis his or her peers was a much different story in 1968 than it had been in 1908. In addition, it was a widespread practice throughout the country that colleges would waive certain entrance requirements for athletes.

²⁶⁵ Dyer, 64. Between 1960 and 1965, City College graduated 17,613 baccalaureate students, or about 3,000 each year. Thirty-three African American students graduated each year on average, for a total of 195.

In addition to the ad hoc and piecemeal nature of the programs in their first years, the locations of the courses were often in undesirable buildings, basement classrooms or in altogether off-campus sites. Students had little opportunity for socialization among the traditional students on their campuses and their inferior accommodations did not inspire confidence in the programs. Faculty hired to teach remedial courses were often unprepared and less qualified than the tenured professors of general admission departments. In addition, their status within the college was often vague, as the courses they taught were not credit granting, and thus their progress toward promotion and tenure was stymied. For the students, the lack of credit hours for remedial courses meant that they were unable to participate in many facets of campus life, such as student government and athletics.²⁶⁶

Despite the vocal objection of SEEK students to these drawbacks, the BHE went ahead with implementing the pre-baccalaureate programs on the other senior college campuses in the fall of 1968. The ideal way to expand SEEK would have been to replicate the successful aspects and work to improve the facets that were recognized as failures. However, the expansion of SEEK managed to do neither, and actually added new problems to the already struggling program. At Queens College, the failure to address the alienation felt by SEEK students at City College resulted in the disastrous decision to locate the SEEK facilities entirely off campus. The BHE responded quickly, replacing the Queens College SEEK leader and recommending ways to integrate the SEEK students immediately and effectively. However, the damage to SEEK's reputation had been done, and the resulting move toward centralizing SEEK operations throughout

²⁶⁶ Ballard, 121.

CUNY gave the dissatisfied students a forum to share grievances and coordinate resistance.²⁶⁷

In the fall of 1968, the BHE purchased a property on the Upper East Side of Manhattan called the Alamac Hotel. The hotel became the site of the new centralized SEEK operation center and dormitory. Students, up to three hundred at a time, occupied the hotel's dorm rooms and classrooms. They received a few semesters of remedial education at the center, and then entered the CUNY campus of their choice. As Conrad Dyer indicates, the Alamac Hotel idea came from the dominant sociological theory of the 1960s that was espoused by scholars: the pathology of the ghetto. By removing the SEEK students from their pathologically damaging surroundings in Harlem, the Bronx, Brooklyn and other ghetto areas, they would be able to accomplish more scholastically.²⁶⁸ James Traub commented on the incongruous nature of this liberal reform measure amidst growing black antipathy:

The SEEK program was precisely the kind of reform that liberals throughout CUNY had been hoping for—generous, but modest, incremental and non-threatening. Theirs was the consensual, optimistic liberalism born of America's postwar dominance and shaped by the civil rights struggle. This form of liberalism was about to go into eclipse. In New York and elsewhere a new race consciousness was beginning to tear at the civil rights consensus.²⁶⁹

The naively misguided and optimistic thinking that led to the centralization of SEEK and the creation of the Alamac dormitory also had the unintended effect of creating a network of communication among the SEEK students. They were now sharing information and experiences, as well as critiquing the tokenism of SEEK and formulating a unified

²⁶⁷ Dyer, 69. The first SEEK counselor at Queens College was actually a probation officer, which attests to the kind of student that administrators assumed they were dealing with in the SEEK program.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 76-77.

²⁶⁹ Traub, 47.

political outlook. They were frustrated with their marginalized location within the university, and they were eager for an issue around which their new coalition could mobilize.

Beyond the sense of frustration that the pilot programs engendered among their students, the general consensus of the academic community of New York City was that SEEK and College Discovery served purely symbolic purposes. Not only did they make “no real dent in increasing the minority presence in the University,” they also failed to “come to grips with the consequences of the postwar baby boom,” which would introduce vastly larger graduating classes in the city’s high schools.²⁷⁰ This increase in eligible students seeking admission to CUNY could not be matched with increased acceptance unless the college committed to a significant and systematic expansion plan. Thus, the BHE began searching for alternatives to the tokenism of College Discovery and SEEK.

In 1966, the Chancellor of CUNY, Albert Bowker, introduced a plan that called for “100% admission” by 1975. This commitment, first included an interim revision to the 1964 Master Plan, and then officially adopted by the new 1968 Master Plan, offered a highly stratified admissions policy that would guarantee acceptance to a CUNY campus for all graduates of New York City’s high schools.²⁷¹ Bowker’s proposal was ambitious and earnest in its efforts to include more of the city’s young people in the opportunities of higher education. However, it failed to account for the impatience and growing hostility

²⁷⁰ David Lavin, Richard Alba and Richard Silberstein, *Right Versus Privilege: The Open Admissions Experiment at City University of New York*, (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 6.

²⁷¹ The plan was as follows: The first tier would include the top quarter of graduates and offer them admission to a senior college; the second tier would include the top two-thirds, who would qualify for entrance to a junior college (the top half of this tier would be eligible to transfer to a senior college, and the bottom half would be eligible for vocational courses); SEEK would be expanded to accept 6% of high school graduates, and College Discovery would be expanded to 4%; the remaining students who were not eligible for the previous options could avail themselves of the “educational skills centers” that provided vocational training. Lavin, et al., 7.

that many of students of color felt toward the gradual pace of inclusion at CUNY. As Bowker himself acknowledged in his introduction to the 1968 Master Plan, “Change, however well anticipated has a way of making the most forward looking plans obsolete. This plan is not likely to be an exception.”²⁷² Indeed, this plan would ultimately be trumped by the far more immediate and inclusive vision of admissions demanded by the black and Puerto Rican activists in the spring of 1969.

“Positive Discrimination”: Student Activism at City College

During the 1960s, much like students at SF State and colleges around the country, City College students cultivated a counter-culture, relying on critiques of the generational gap and mainstream culture. The bulk of their energies in this critique were directed at the war in Vietnam, and City College students welcomed a chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) to their campus in order galvanize their anti-war sympathies. In 1966, these students turned their anti-war sentiments toward their own campus and criticized the presence of military and defense recruiters, as well as the ROTC and the use of class rankings in draft decisions. In November of that year, a referendum on campus showed a divide between students and faculty on the issue, with the students voting nearly two-to-one to block the release of class rankings, while the faculty narrowly voted to continue the program. Rankled by the paternalistic approach of the faculty regarding the life-and-death issue of being drafted for active duty in Vietnam, the students began a series of protests and sit-ins to dramatize their opposition to the Selective Service. Administrators at City College and the BHE continued to enforce the status quo, drawing the continued ire of the students. The vigorous focus of the student

²⁷² The Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, *Master Plan for the City University of New York*, (New York, NY, 1968).

protests on ROTC and the Selective Service dissipated the following summer, 1967, when the draft board discontinued the use of class rankings in deferment decisions.²⁷³

While SDS was a significant organizing presence among college students in New York City and City College in particular, the latter campus was also host to a chapter of the W.E.B. DuBois Club. This group was a national leftist organization that began in San Francisco in 1964, organizing around issues related to the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement. The group was interracial and espoused some Marxist views, but maintained a focus on tackling political issues like disenfranchisement, the draft, and “college democracy,” by which they meant student representation in campus decision-making bodies.²⁷⁴

A third radical student organization that emerged at City College in the 1960s was a counter-culture organization called the City College Commune. Started in 1967 in opposition to a hastily assembled expansion plan on campus, the Commune was chiefly concerned with aesthetics and quality of life on campus. As its founder, Ron McGuire explained, “We...saw [the proposed construction] as an issue of aesthetics and of life style. We wanted to have green space on the campus.”²⁷⁵ The City College chapter of SDS was also opposed to the construction project, but they objected to it on the basis of the lack of student input into the plan. Regardless of their ideological reasoning, many activists from these organizations protested throughout the 1967-1968 school year, resulting in a series of mass arrests.

²⁷³ Dyer, 50.

²⁷⁴ Dyer, 51. Just as many SDS chapters held disparate views, the individual chapters of the DuBois Club occupied varied positions on the ideological spectrum, with some espousing explicitly Marxist views.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 52. The construction project was a byproduct of the 1966 Master Plan, which called for the acceptance of 5,000 new freshman to CUNY in the fall of 1967, 1,000 of which would become students at City College. The construction plan called for a series of temporary huts to be constructed, which required the elimination of several centuries-old trees.

The “site six” protests, as they were called after the name used for the proposed construction site, are important in the lead-up to the 1969 protests for many precedents that they set, as well as many issues that they raised. The use of police force to disrupt student protest was seen as an overreaction by many professors and community members. However, the following fall, at least 170 students were arrested when the city’s Tactical Squad disrupted a sit-in that honored a draft deserter on campus. The Tac Squad responded at the behest of City College President Buell Gallagher. This is the same Buell Gallagher who was hired as the first Chancellor of the newly consolidated California State College Board of Trustees in 1961. He became president at City College in 1952, then resigned in 1961 to take the California job. However, after only six months on the job out west, Gallagher stepped aside and returned to CCNY and resumed the presidency.

Prior to his stint at City College, Gallagher had been the president of the all-black Talladega College in Alabama in 1933, and he had been a participant in marches during the southern civil rights movement. Gallagher’s reputation as a sympathetic liberal, friendly to civil rights and racial equality did not, however, make him immune to challenges from the leftist students at City College. In fact, many liberal professors also decried his actions in relying on the Tac Squad, including one who said, “it was clearly established that the president would not call the police until he had exhausted all the available resources.”²⁷⁶ However, Gallagher responded by denying that this understanding existed, and defending his right to use the police whenever he deemed appropriate. Gallagher continued to rely on police presence to maintain order at City College throughout the strike and occupation in 1969. His inability to translate his stated

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 56.

sympathy for the students of color and their demands into actionable policy for the college will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

The site six protests and the fallout of the arrests had the effect of driving a wedge between the defenders and beneficiaries of the fledgling SEEK program, and the white protestors who prevented the construction of new buildings, which SEEK students assumed (incorrectly) would be new space for their growing numbers. The black and Puerto Rican students at City College “interpreted opposition to the huts as an act of racism.” Commune members, surprised by this accusation, countered that they were actually “exploited by conservative elements of the faculty who were fearful of changes on the campus.” They argued that their opposition was aesthetic and not intended to thwart the acceptance of future nonwhite students; however, in preventing the huts from being built, their crusade was hijacked by conservative faculty members who opposed the presence of SEEK students at City College.²⁷⁷ While white radical students on campus would continue to build relationships and alliances with the students of color, the latter remained wary of a full partnership. Ultimately, the Commune continued to focus on ROTC and campus recruiting issues, leaving the proposed expansion project behind. They were eventually eclipsed by a coalition of other leftist students that formed in the spring of 1968 to fight for the continuance of SEEK in the face of threatened cutbacks.

Following the successful introduction of SEEK at City College in 1965, the BHE decided that it would adopt the program at Baruch and Hunter College by 1969. However, facing a drastic budget reduction in New York, President Gallagher announced that total enrollment, including SEEK, would be reduced in the 1968-1969 academic

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 53. Dyer does not mention what the makeshift huts would have housed, but he is clear in refuting the claim that they were to be used for new SEEK classrooms.

year. This decision set off a series of protests aimed at Gallagher and other unsympathetic administration and faculty members, as well as the state legislature in Albany. The protestors sought to protect and expand SEEK, as well as see the college adopt a “positive discrimination” policy to integrate City College. They also called for the creation of a panel of outside experts to advise the college on the development of curriculum in black and Puerto Rican history and culture.²⁷⁸ Eventually the budget of City College restored some money to the SEEK program and 1968 saw the addition of 125 new students to the City College SEEK program. The prospect of “positive discrimination” was left out of these discussions, but it would soon return to the debate.²⁷⁹

By the time the fall semester arrived, the leftist coalition, comprised primarily of the DuBois Society and SDS, had settled on the project of building an alliance with black and Puerto Rican students on campus. This involved reaching out to their campus groups, as well as outlining their own organizations’ views on race relations on campus. This culminated in the circulation of a petition in the late fall of 1968, which was titled “End Racism at CCNY.” The petition included a lengthy critique of the newly revised Master Plan and the structural inequality built into its tiered system of admissions. The document also included a list of six demands directed at Gallagher and the BHE, which the DuBois Club proposed as their remedy to the command asserted in the title of the petition. The demands essentially called for the proportional representation of racial and

²⁷⁸ At some point Gallagher hired Dr. Wilfred Cartey, a scholar from Columbia University, to research and develop a proposal for future programs in ethnic studies. In early 1969 Cartey submitted his proposal and his idea for a School of Regional and Community Affairs that housed several departments of ethnic studies formed the basis of the negotiated agreement following the student occupation of City College. This was not adopted by the college, however, as they favored individual programs and departments as opposed to a separate school.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

ethnic minorities in the CUNY student body as well as an increase in SEEK matriculants; the physical expansion of CUNY to accommodate new students and the allocation of a stipend to those who could otherwise not afford to attend; faculty and student control of the college; and lastly, the introduction of new curriculum designed to highlight the history and culture of the black and Puerto Rican population (including the requirement that these new courses as well as Spanish be mandatory for education majors). By reviving and including the call for ethnic studies in their demands, the DuBois Club petition represented the first time that an effort at revising the admissions policies at CUNY also included a gesture toward ethnic studies; following this petition, the two issues remained linked throughout the struggle at City College. Over 1600 students signed the petition and it surprisingly garnered the support of the “establishment oriented” student government.²⁸⁰

The enthusiastic embrace of this petition galvanized the student Left in support of the continued project of equitable racial representation on the campus of City College. While it is perhaps overstating the influence that the white activists had on the black and Puerto Rican students, as well as understating the years of organizing and activism within these communities, the DuBois petition had a significant impact on the future course of ethnic studies at City College. The list of demands that the students of color submitted to President Gallagher four months later was similar to, although significantly more militant than, the list circulated by the DuBois Club. The petition also had the effect of pivoting the leftist student population of City College away from a singular anti-war focus, and toward the effort to rectify the racial imbalance in population and curriculum. While this

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 57.

petition dropped “positive discrimination” in favor of “proportional representation,” the implication that whites benefited from a admissions policy like CUNY’s remained.²⁸¹ Their acknowledgement of their own privilege helped to move the debate for open admissions to the forefront of campus politics. However, the Black and Puerto Rican students ultimately waged the battle that overturned the legacy of white privilege at CUNY.

Despite the fact that many students of color directly benefited from SEEK and College Discovery, they were still ambivalent about the slow pace of inclusion that the programs offered. The “special matriculants” of SEEK and College Discovery ultimately used their position within the university to challenge the very apparatus through which they were granted admission, while at the same time they fought for its continued existence amid the threat of cutbacks. Over the course of the first few years that these remedial programs were offered, they attracted talented and politically aware students from around New York City. The programs grew and eventually became centralized, bringing hundreds of new students into the municipal colleges. As the students arrived on campus, their camaraderie with their fellow SEEK and College Discovery members produced activist coalitions who sought an end to tokenism and a drastic reversal of the hallowed admissions policies of CUNY. As Allen Ballard noted, their commitment was due to their sense of “moral obligation to increase the accessibility of college to their brethren” who were not selected for SEEK.²⁸²

As SEEK at CCNY grew to a sizable amount of 600 students in 1968, they began to organize themselves as students of color. This was not a foreign process to these

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ballard, 124.

students who very likely came from a tradition of activism within their communities, neighborhoods and families. As such, many African American students migrated to the existing black student group the Onyx Society (OS). The Onyx Society was founded at CCNY in 1966 and became an extremely popular organization, “probably the largest club on campus” with over 200 members. The OS was founded as an interracial organization, but any platforms it may have pursued as an integrated organization were not significant enough for it to remain interracial beyond its early years. The OS had several committees through which it carried out its mission, including a committee that recruited black students from nearby predominantly black high schools. They also had a social committee, an orientation committee for incoming black students, and a committee that organized and hosted meetings and lectures about African American history and culture.²⁸³

The Onyx Society, in its founding days, was mostly populated by regular admittees, meaning those students who qualified for admission through the traditional route. As one founder said of these early days, “Onyx was once only a social organization.” This statement indicates that by the time the SEEK program had been established at City College and its effects were being felt, the black population was undergoing a shift in identity and outlook. The influx of more militant SEEK students exposed a pernicious classism when they clashed with the traditional black students, who observed that, “the ghetto as it were [sic] had invaded.” The SEEK students, for their part, were quoted as saying, “these niggers are bourgeois!”²⁸⁴ Ultimately, the race consciousness and a desire to cultivate a decidedly non-middle class identity pushed the

²⁸³ Dyer, 65.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, 66-69.

“bourgeois” African American students out of Onyx, and the political mission took center stage. The nurturing of the Onyx Society’s radicalism occurred mainly throughout 1968, and will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

For the Puerto Rican students at City College in 1968, no such organization existed to advocate and organize on their behalf. Puerto Ricans were increasingly attending City College in large numbers thanks to SEEK, and these students sought a space of their own within the university. Some Puerto Ricans, like Iris Morales, had migrated toward the Onyx Society when they first began attending City College, but they were soon eager to create a Puerto Rican organization. The first inklings of collective Puerto Rican identity among college students were short-lived, rather apolitical groups. CUNY students who had previously participated in the ASPIRA program formed a group that went by the name Puerto Rican Student Movement (PRSM) in 1966. ASPIRA was a program that sought to empower Puerto Rican public school students and encourage them to stay in school and graduate. Thus, PRSM had an educational focus, but it was “liberal if not non-political,” and its mission “clashed with the rising level of Puerto Rican militancy” among CUNY students in the late 1960s.²⁸⁵ PRSM folded shortly after its inception, with some members continuing to pursue electoral politics on behalf of Puerto Ricans. A second group that attempted to organize Puerto Rican college students in the city was a collective of students from Ivy League and similar elite universities who

²⁸⁵ The Puerto Rican Student Union, “History of the Puerto Rican Student Movement,” Box 173, Folder 4, 4 Centro Archives. ASPIRA ultimately joined forces with the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, and together they brought a lawsuit against the city of New York in 1972. They were successful in the suit, securing a “Consent Decree” that stipulated that any public school student in New York City who was not able to comprehend English language instruction could receive a bilingual education. The right to a bilingual education was a concern that the Puerto Rican student activists incorporated into their demands at City College in 1969, and it was a major plank of the ASPIRA platform from its inception in 1961. Thus, it is likely that many of the students who eventually formed the more radical Puerto Rican student organizations at City College were former APSIRA students.

recruited other students from “El Barrio.” Puerto Ricans for Educational Progress (PREP), as they called themselves, had little impact on their CUNY counterparts who were fighting for a spot in a tuition-free municipal college. While these early groups urged Puerto Rican students toward socialization, “in general [they] did not develop politically oriented programs.”²⁸⁶ It was only after these moderate student groups came and went that the more militant Puerto Rican students at CUNY organized themselves as the Puerto Rican Student Association, and those efforts will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Conclusion

For much of the twentieth century, City College existed simultaneously as a myth of egalitarianism and a beacon of exclusivity. When the campus relocated to Harlem in 1907, this dichotomy was not apparent; however, as the city’s demographics changed rapidly in the post-war period, City College became a “small white island [in a] vast black sea.”²⁸⁷ The statistics on admissions exposed the college’s fundamental inability to educate all of the city’s children, and they belied the persistent myth of its equality of access to higher education. And yet, as a result of this very exclusivity, City College had nurtured a highly successful cohort of alumni who zealously defended the college’s elitism and high barrier to entrance. Common wisdom of the time suggested that students who could not meet that burden of academic aptitude should pursue a vocation, gain remedial education, or try their luck at the increasingly available junior colleges. The City University of New York proposed these remedies and relied on each in turn to solve

²⁸⁶ The Puerto Rican Student Union, “History of the Puerto Rican Student Movement,” Box 173, Folder 4, Centro Archives.

²⁸⁷ No author, “Small White Island, Vast Black Sea,” *The Campus*, 3 March 1968.

the problem of access to higher education in New York City. However, rather than solve the problem or appease those seeking admission, these token gestures galvanized the students and spurred them toward action.

During 1968, black and Puerto Rican students underwent a period of expansion and evolution, emerging later in the year as a joint coalition of militant activists. Many of these students and the scholars who have studied them place significant emphasis on the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968 as an impetus toward their radicalization. In addition, the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district incident led to a citywide reckoning with the nature of pluralistic education in New York City. Parents and students across the city demanded an education that fulfilled the needs of students who did not share a Eurocentric history or culture. The notion that these citizens should have an active role to play in the public educational system of the city developed into a political rallying cry for the nonwhite community of New York. This and other events incited the new, special matriculants at City College toward formulating a joint platform of activism within the university that sought to formalize their gains and urge further advances in admissions opportunities for students of color in the city. The resulting coalition of black and Puerto Rican students began to organize and strategize for expanding admissions and making their education relevant.

Ultimately, when the members of this coalition staged their first joint effort early in 1969, they introduced an astute political philosophy that they developed in studying movements for liberation and revolution around the world. They began to refer to themselves as a “New World Coalition” or a “Third World Community,” and their style and rhetoric indicated a new militancy. Their analysis of the lack of access at City

College was based as much on their experience in the Columbia Gym incident and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville strike, as it was on their study of Marxism and the tactics of guerrilla warfare. The struggle that ensued over access and relevancy in higher education pitted a new vanguard of nonwhite militancy against the old guard of liberal egalitarianism. The polarizing effects of the fight tore coalitions asunder and ushered in a new model of educational organization—one that did away with exclusivity and elitism in favor of inclusiveness and opportunity.

Chapter Four—Let Everybody In: The Takeover at City College

“The only question in my mind was, ‘How can we save City College?’ And the only answer was, ‘Hell, let everybody in.’”

Deputy Chancellor Seymour Hyman, 8 May 1969

In 1968 the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, under Chancellor Buell Gallagher, announced that beginning in 1975, every student who graduated from a high school in New York City would be guaranteed admission to a campus of CUNY. The Board adopted this proposal in its 1968 Master Plan, and the seven years in the interim were to be devoted to the physical expansion of the campuses and the careful planning of the new open enrollment procedure. In the fall of 1975, CUNY would become the largest urban public university to adopt open enrollment and give the opportunity of higher education to all of its residents. Despite the misgivings of many of CUNY’s most prominent alumni and faculty members, the prospect of “100% admissions” was destined to take effect in 1975.

However, before that version of open enrollment became reality, a newly formed coalition of students of color intervened and demanded a different vision of an “open” university. These students came from the black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods of the Bronx, Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and other areas that were commonly referred to as “the ghettos” of New York City in the late 1960s. Their idea of expanding opportunities in higher education included the notion that the university itself should be opened up—

that students and community members adjacent to the campuses of the university should be active participants in shaping the curriculum and the mandates of the school. They articulated a desire to see their own lives and histories and cultures reflected in the research and teaching initiatives of the university. And along with these fundamental functions of the new urban university, these students demanded that the student body resemble, in number and in kind, the diversity of the city's youth.

To see that their vision of the new urban university be adopted, these students waged a campaign at City College of New York in the fall of 1968 and spring of 1969. They carefully set about forming a coalition, establishing leadership, studying the philosophies of Third World struggles for self-determination, formulating an intricate strategy, and articulating their demands. In the process they usurped the institutional momentum toward open enrollment, and changed the dialogue surrounding the role of the urban university. Their vision of admissions, which targeted the most neglected and educationally deprived neighborhoods in order to have the greatest net effect on nonwhite enrollment, ultimately failed to garner the support of the Board of Higher Education. Instead of yielding to the students' carefully delineated plan of increasing nonwhite enrollment, the Board acted to mitigate the appearance of affirmative action-style quotas, and moved the implementation date of open admissions ahead five years.

Because the 1968 Master Plan for CUNY demonstrated the commitment of the university to a program of open admissions, the unrest at City College in 1969 seems to have merely sped up the inevitable. However, what this version of events fails to emphasize is the ways in which the student activism surrounding admissions changed the dialogue from a liberal agenda of integration and gradualism, to a much more radical

interpretation of open admissions. The students at City College were attempting to advance the idea of educational equality beyond the stale debates of the civil rights movement. They introduced a radical new framework of inclusive higher education and a new discipline that tackled the sense of alienation and discrimination that produced profound inequality in American colleges, and by extension, American society. As one student who was active in this struggle reflected,

This movement in numbers through the University [coincided] with the generation of mass struggle in our communities and the open crisis of the American political and educational systems. This concert of events promised us an opportunity to create new structures shaped by struggle, action and the possibility of collective education and politicization.²⁸⁸

This new concept of higher education threatened to dismantle the structure and centralized control of CUNY, as well as its reputation as the “proletarian Harvard,” and its deep investment in the idea of meritocracy. Thus, the Board of Higher Education intervened, and was forced to save the idea of the university as the official arbiter of standards and achievement before that role was usurped and subverted by the radical vision of the students of color.

“Don’t charge a tank with rocks”: The Ideology of the Student Movement

By the spring of 1968, the black and Puerto Rican students at City College were beginning to organize themselves around community and educational issues. The black student group the Onyx Society had evolved from a purely apolitical organization into an activist coalition that operated through several committees in and around the Harlem neighborhood. Their members were mostly SEEK students who rejected the previous “bourgeois” black student population at City College. Their political and ideological

²⁸⁸ *Notes on a Log*, Centro Archives, Box 166, Folder 4 (also in Box 177, Folder 3).

foundation veered toward black nationalism and they espoused the rhetoric of Third World liberation struggles as they defined their space at City College. For City College's Puerto Rican students, their political evolution was slower in taking root. Several attempts at organizing Puerto Rican students around apolitical platforms had recently failed at City College, but the number of Puerto Rican students continued to increase.²⁸⁹ While many Puerto Rican students originally joined the Onyx Society in order to become connected to the activist community and build on the camaraderie of their SEEK experience, they eventually formed their own campus group.

The new face of Puerto Rican student organizing at City College was “an ever increasing tide of militancy tempered with a clearer political understanding of imperialism.” These students took their cues not from their Puerto Rican predecessors on campus, but rather from the “rising militancy of the Black movement for self-determination,” the “establishment of a socialist society in Cuba,” and “the increasing militancy of the student movement in Puerto Rico.”²⁹⁰ In emulating the Black Power movement's emphasis on nationalism, the Cuban example of socialism and the Puerto Rican movement for autonomy and self-determination, the Puerto Rican students cultivated an outlook that is ideologically similar to that of students at San Francisco State. While the students of color at these two institutions may have never formally shared ideas on political education, they both arrived at similar theoretical foundations.

²⁸⁹ In addition to the examples of aborted attempts at organizing Puerto Rican students mentioned in Chapter Three, there was also the Sociedad Pedro Albizu Campos, which consisted mostly of SUNY Old Westbury, Queens College, and Columbia University students. This group, which took its name from a famous Puerto Rican politician who fought for independence, was mostly a study group, and not necessarily an action-oriented group, although many of its members were later among the first to join the Young Lords Party.

²⁹⁰ The Puerto Rican Student Union, “History of the Puerto Rican Student Movement,” Centro Archives, Box 173, Folder 4, 4-5.

As will be discussed later, both groups used the same texts, theories, ideas and figures to develop their political philosophy, ultimately arriving at a concept of Third World internationalism.

Specifically, in the case of the student movement in Puerto Rico, the combination of anti-ROTC protests and anti-imperialism resonated for students at City College. In 1968 at the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico students fought the presence of the ROTC on their campus, and they were met with violent repression. Puerto Rican Students throughout CUNY held solidarity rallies and raised money for their counterparts, marking “the first time that large numbers of Puerto Rican students in New York City united around a politically oriented movement.”²⁹¹ This mass outpouring of support for their friends, relatives and compatriots in Puerto Rico also led to the adamant and sustained call for Puerto Rican Studies as a way of understanding and analyzing the historical, political and cultural connections between Puerto Rico and the United States. Students wanted to be able to learn for themselves, but they also sought to integrate the long history of United States occupation and colonial possession of Puerto Rico, beginning with the Spanish-American War in 1898. Thus, as a way to contextualize the Puerto Rican diaspora and to fight for Puerto Rican independence, students organized at City College.

The first group to form around this new activist platform was the Puerto Rican Student Association (PRISA), which came together in the fall of 1968.²⁹² The founding

²⁹¹ Ibid, 5.

²⁹² The acronym is also at times referred to as standing for Puerto Rican Institute for Student Action. There is also a reference the original name of the organization being “Azabache,” which is the name of a rock used in a Puerto Rican tradition wherein the rock is placed around the neck of a newborn baby in order ward off the “evil eye.” The reference includes the symbolism of the name azabache being used to ward

students were Henry Arce, Iris Morales and Pablo Cruz, who met and formed a bond while residents at the Alamac Hotel dorm. The founding of the group was noted in an article in the *New York Times*, which reported that “Sixty Puerto Rican students have formed a new club...to try to make the curriculum more relevant for Puerto Rican students.” The article went on to quote one member as saying the club “will probably form a coalition with the Onyx Society...to get action for Puerto Rican students.”²⁹³ These students brought a political consciousness with them, which strengthened and coalesced around their increased presence and visibility at City College. The militant political ideology that they cultivated within PRISA did ultimately lead to a coalition with the Onyx Society at City College, as well as the formation of the Puerto Rican response to the Black Panthers, the Young Lords Party (YLP).²⁹⁴

At the same time that the Puerto Rican students were articulating a new militancy with PRISA, the Onyx Society was also moving forward with their new radical ideology and demonstrating their newfound strength on campus. Most activists who reflect on the growing militancy within the black student population in 1968 mark the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. as the pivotal moment in that evolution. The assassination coincided with City College’s spring break, and as one student, Robert Feaster, acknowledged, “Spring Break took place [and] when we came back...people had afros,

off the evil eye or the hostile attitude of white students toward Puerto Rican students at City College. Dyer, 63.

²⁹³ Author unknown, No title, *New York Times*, 22 November 1968, 53.

²⁹⁴ For more on the history of the Young Lords Party in New York City, see: Miguel Melendez, *We Took the Streets: Fighting for Latino Rights with the Young Lords*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003); Jennifer Nelson, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*, (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Darrel Enck-Wanzer, “Trashing the System: Social Movement, Intersectional Rhetoric, and Collective Agency in the Young Lords Organization’s Garbage Offensive,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Vol. 92, No. 2, 174-201; Andrés Torres, and José E. Velázquez, eds., *The Puerto Rican Movement: Voices from the Diaspora*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

people had a lot of militant ideas I think spurred on by that incident.”²⁹⁵ While major riots erupted in cities like Baltimore and Washington D.C., Harlem and areas of Brooklyn also saw moderate riot activity following the assassination, and many of the black students at City College were involved with and aware of those spontaneous outbursts.²⁹⁶

In addition, white students with SDS at City College staged a rally on campus following a memorial service convened by President Gallagher, in which they called on students to “Support Black Liberation [and] Fight Racism at CCNY.” The flier advertising this strike reads, “At the same time that the City College Administration is holding a memorial service, they admit only a token number of Black students and refuse to teach the history of the Black people.”²⁹⁷ While SDS and the Onyx Society did not form a coalition at this time, both groups began to turn their sights almost exclusively on admissions and curriculum issues beginning in the spring of 1968.

Following the galvanizing event of King’s assassination in April of 1968, the black activists on campus were seeking new ways to build on the residual energy and enthusiasm that remained after that tragic event. The Onyx Society had, by now, developed a reputation for radicalism at City College, and they were recognized as the foremost activist organization on campus. Fliers from the organization during this period demonstrate their mobilization efforts in support of issues like the Poor People’s

²⁹⁵ Interview with Sekou Sundiata, 3, Miscellaneous Folder, Legacy of Struggle Collection, Box 1, Special Collections and Archives, Morris Raphael Cohen Library, The City College of New York (hereafter City College Archives). At the time of the interview, in 1989, Robert Feaster had changed his name to Sekou Sundiata, and is thus referred to by that name in this interview.

²⁹⁶ Max Elbaum notes that 131 urban rebellions erupted in 1968, with “most but not all in the days after the assassination of Martin Luther King.” Elbaum goes on to quote the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which estimated that nearly one in every five black citizens in the area affected by the rebellion participated in the uprisings. Elbaum, 21.

²⁹⁷ “Support Black Liberation” Flier, SDS Folder, Vertical File, Five Demands Conflict Collection, City College Archives.

Campaign, a devastating fire in a local Harlem housing project, the campus violence at South Carolina State College, and the Vietnam War.²⁹⁸ Soon, an alliance began to form between the Onyx Society and PRISA, which was mainly based on many factors.

Among the main reasons that black and Puerto Ricans joined together at this particular time was the shared SEEK experience, and in many cases, familiarity with one another from the Alamac Hotel days. In addition, Puerto Rican students commented on their admiration of the Black Power movement as inspiration, saying, “Inspired by the fighting example of Black people, we struggled for open admissions, Puerto Studies, Bilingual programs, SEEK and many other programs.”²⁹⁹ This connection was fostered in the close quarters of New York City neighborhoods in which Black and Puerto Rican areas were located adjacent to one another, notably Harlem and Spanish Harlem in Manhattan. Residents of these neighborhoods went to the same schools and patronized many of the same businesses and institutions, creating a familiarity and camaraderie among black and Puerto Ricans, as well as other Latino populations.

The comparable experience of race and racism for black and Latino residents in New York City is a well-studied phenomenon from this period. Scholar Fred Opie has written extensively about the relationships—political, cultural, social, familial—that developed between black and Latino communities throughout the twentieth century.³⁰⁰ Additionally, activists at the time were commenting on these alliances, illustrating the

²⁹⁸ Onyx Society Folder, Vertical File, Five Demands Conflict Collection, City College Archives.

²⁹⁹ Rafael Gonzales, “The Role of Students, Faculty and Directors in Puerto Rican Studies,” Box 168, Folder 6, Centro Archives.

³⁰⁰ Frederick Douglass Opie, “Eating, Dancing, and Courting in New York Black and Latino Relations, 1930-1970,” *Journal of Social History*, 42:1.

strong ties that had been developed between these two groups. Josephine Nieves, a Puerto Rican professor at Brooklyn College during this period said,

for many among this Puerto Rican generation the search for a liberating education is closely linked to the parallel struggles of the Black and Chicano people. Their experience of black culture has been direct and intimate and constitutes a vital strand in an emergent amalgam of criollo and ghetto lifeways with an aesthetic all its own.³⁰¹

This sentiment of a shared experience of racism and the formation of a new hybridized “ghetto culture” was a significant factor in the eventual coalition between black and Puerto Rican students. One student commented on the alliance at CCNY by saying that, “Black and Puerto Rican people have for years struggled together in our communities against the oppressive elements [...] it was not surprising that we would continue that struggle once we had stepped foot inside the gates of these education institutions.” This student goes on to say that they were in “the same boat” and they came together to protest their conditions as subjugated minorities.³⁰²

The merging of the black and Puerto Rican students organization was not seamless, nor was it a top-down effort: many individuals from both groups held differing opinions about the utility of coalitional politics, or the proper way of organizing. However, by the end of the fall 1968 semester, the apparatus was in place through which these groups exerted their influence on college politics. The organizing unit that emerged to direct the activities of the black and Puerto Rican students was called the Committee of Ten. It was officially a new committee of the Onyx Society, which, as discussed in

³⁰¹ Josephine Nieves, “A Proposal for a Center for Puerto Rican Studies and Research at the City University Graduate Center,” Box 70, Folder 3, Centro Archives.

³⁰² “Relationship of Puerto Rican Studies and Other Ethnic Studies,” Box 168, Folder 6, Centro Archives.

Chapter Three, operated through loosely affiliated committees. The title and structure of the Committee of Ten came about, recalls one student involved with the group, after

a couple of fellows had just got through seeing the “Battle of Algiers”...[and] came into the school...and suggested the formation of cells similar to [the film]. The cells would be comprised of ten people...but the ten in one cell would be unknown to the ten in the other.³⁰³

The men referenced in this quote were, according to the scholar who conducted the interview from which the quote is taken, Rick Reed, Serge Mullery and Charles Powell.

The film “Battle of Algiers” is a verité-style film that depicts the Algerian battle for independence against the French colonial army. This film was viewed widely in the United States by leftist groups, especially Third World activists (including the TWLF and BSU at San Francisco State), who found it inspirational in its depiction of anti-colonial violence.

In addition to being the ideological and visionary leaders of the early formation of the joint organization, Mullery, Reed, and Powell continued to lead the strike and the occupation the following spring. Their cell theory (or, as they were also referred to later, “families”) caught on with the wider activist community on campus. Because the membership or particular organizing theme of each cell was kept secret, it is impossible to know the names of people involved at every level of the Committee.³⁰⁴ This is, perhaps, the intended effect, as many leftist groups were wary of infiltration by government spies such as President Nixon’s Counter-Intelligence Program

³⁰³ Dyer, 83.

³⁰⁴ The black and Puerto Rican students were sometimes referred to as the Black and Puerto Rican Student Community (BPRSC). This was solely an informal title, however, that was coined by the media to refer to the larger coalition. Because that term does not refer to an organization, I have chosen to use the term “Committee of Ten” to refer to the student organization that led and mobilized during the strike and occupation period. While many students were “members” of particular committees and subcommittees of the Committee of Ten, few are known for sure beyond those mentioned in this chapter.

(COINTELPRO), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Ultimately, the Committee of Ten usurped the prominent role of the Onyx Society, so much so that one student familiar with the organization said, “I’m not quite sure when Onyx disappeared...it just faded away.”³⁰⁵

While the Committee of Ten owed its name and philosophy to the Algerian independence struggle as related in the “Battle of Algiers,” the members were widely influenced by other works of revolution, liberation, and intellectual justification for armed struggle. They delved into the literature of the Third World, finding inspiration in distant wars and local figures. As one member said,

The first decision of the Committee was to educate itself...we began to read...books I’d never heard of...*Wretched of the Earth*, *The Black Anglo Saxons*, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*...we viewed the “Battle of Algiers” a few times...we read Che Guevara...Stokely Carmichael... but ...Malcolm was the central figure in our thinking.³⁰⁶

Despite this student’s insistence that Malcolm X provided the main basis of their ideology, he and others were much more apt to quote Che Guevara on guerilla warfare, notably, “Don’t charge a tank with rocks.” And while they clearly internalized the notion that armed self-defense was justified, they did not make a show of arming themselves. Rather, they pursued the hit-and-run tactics that were also on display at San Francisco State at this time.

Concurrent with the development of the Committee of Ten and their strategy, the Onyx Society decided to challenge the sensibilities of City College by hosting a rally and making their political philosophy known. The previous October, the Onyx Society hosted notorious Black Power activist H. Rap Brown on campus in a rally that was closed

³⁰⁵ Dyer, 85.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 86.

to white attendees. His presence and the controversial nature of the event led to an attempt at corralling the Onyx Society, as the Student Council revoked their privileges and funding as punishment. Following this attempt, nearly 300 members of the Onyx Society showed up at the next meeting of the Student Council and made clear that they would not stand for the censorship of their platform, and they managed to reverse the sanctions.³⁰⁷ In December of 1968, they invited H. Rap Brown for an encore, along with Stokely Carmichael, Kathleen Cleaver, Miriam Makeba, and several activists from Ocean Hill-Brownsville. They addressed a crowd that was stirring with new plans for direct and militant action, and they numbered several hundred strong. Carmichael, addressing the packed hall advised, “A black militant is an angry black man who is angry at white folk for keeping him out of the system.”³⁰⁸ While not his most eloquent observation about black militancy, Carmichael’s sentiment that anger arises from discrimination and exclusion was a portent of the struggle about to be waged on behalf of angry students of color who wanted access to higher education.

Their structure and philosophy were soon channeled in the direction of challenging the structure of the university, and by the end of 1968 and the close of the fall semester, the Committee of Ten had formulated a five-stage strategy to carry out this effort. They would first petition the administration with their demands, followed by a temporary occupation of the Administration Building, then a quick strike with hit-and-run tactics, and then the lock-up of a strategic area and finally, an occupation of the South Campus. Their goal was to spread these activities out over the course of spring semester, with the first stage—petition—scheduled for early in 1969.

³⁰⁷ Dyer, 68.

³⁰⁸ *The Campus*, 5 December 1968.

“Black was in!”: Building a Third World Coalition

In January of 1969, the student government elections posed an excellent opportunity for the new coalition of students of color and their white allies to make their strength and presence known. Students from Onyx, PRISA and SDS formed a slate of candidates who called themselves the New World Coalition and they ran for office at City College. This alliance proved to be popular among the students, and it strengthened the coalition of activist students as they moved forward with articulating their demands.

After their show of force in the student elections, the coalition began to implement the five-stage strategy by deciding on a single list of demands to present to President Gallagher. The demands that they eventually introduced differed somewhat from the demands that the DuBois Club had proffered back in November of 1968, and it is important to note those differences here to highlight the philosophy of the student activists. Throughout the summer and fall of 1968, the Onyx Society’s more militant faction had been at work crafting a mission statement for the future of black students at City College. When the Onyx Society allied with PRISA in the fall, they worked jointly on this statement, and the vision changed to reflect their combined input. As Robert Feaster noted, “We were indignant that the Dubois Society was circulating those kinds of demands which really articulated our interests, and that we had not moved on them ourselves.”³⁰⁹ Thus, when the Dubois Society circulated their petition in November, the Committee of Ten supported the demands, but they took that document and revised it to reflect their coalition’s vision and strategy for reforming City College. The two documents are compared below:

³⁰⁹ Interview with Sekou Sundiata, 7, Miscellaneous Folder, Legacy of Struggle Collection, Box 1, City College Archives.

DuBois Society Demands, Nov. 1968	Committee of Ten Demands, Feb. 1969
Proportionate admissions	Proportionate admissions
Black, Puerto Rican, and Labor History offerings, and a requirement of Education majors to take these courses as well as Spanish classes	Black and Puerto Rican History offerings, and a requirement of Education majors to take these courses as well as Spanish classes.
Expand SEEK by a factor of 4 and build new senior colleges to accommodate (2 separate demands)	Separate orientation for Black and Puerto Rican freshmen and student input and oversight in SEEK (2 separate demands)
Student, faculty, and community control of university	A School of Black and Puerto Rican Studies controlled by student, faculty and community members
Stipends for poor students	

Table 4: Comparison of Demands³¹⁰

Not only do the demands that the students ultimately submitted to President Gallagher differ from the DuBois Society, they also differ in important ways from previous drafts of their own. The most notable difference is the call for a separate school of Black and Puerto Rican Studies. While the Dubois Society included a demand for student, faculty, and community oversight, the nature of this school was intended to be entirely separate and autonomous. In addition, the students not only wanted expanded access via SEEK, they wanted to assume operation of the program. The Committee of Ten demands illustrate a significant shift toward institutionalizing community control of education and using that control to institute a dramatic revision of the nature of the urban university.

Later in March of 1969, the Onyx Society published a newsletter that delineated the current state of the demands and significantly, this list included a couple of important revisions to the demands. In the first demand, the newsletter used the term “Third World

³¹⁰ I have arranged the lists to juxtapose the demands that most closely relate to one another, although they are not perfect matches beyond the first two. The full text and justifications for the Committee of Ten’s demands has been reproduced in Appendix C.

Studies” in the title of the new college that they proposed, as opposed the previously favored terminology of Black and Puerto Rican Studies. This illustrates the shift that the students underwent following their intense study of Third World activism and decolonization movements following the formation of the Committee of Ten. It also demonstrates the new “color consciousness” that permeated their thinking in this period of their organizing. As Puerto Rican activist Henry Arce reflected, the notion of a shared Third World identity helped to establish a common ground and a common identity among the students of color. He explained,

Puerto Ricans come in all colors—from very black to very light. At this time Blacks had just begun to embrace the concept of being Black, ... “don’t call me Negro, call me Black” regardless of whether you were light-skinned or dark—Black was in! Many of the Blacks were too zealous in their belief in Blackness to accept that that was not going to help us work together. Many Blacks would look at us (light-skinned Puerto Ricans) and think we were white, when in fact we were Puerto Ricans.³¹¹

As a way of avoiding the racial markers and emphasis on differences among one another, the black and Puerto Rican students in the Committee espoused the label Third World for their political platform and for their self-identity. The term Third World resonated with their new embrace of the theories and tactics of decolonization and socialist revolution throughout the developing world. While the New World Coalition indicated that they were willing to work with their white allies, the Committee of Ten also consistently and consciously prevented the white students from participating in many of the activities of the following months.

The second change that was reflected in the newsletter version of the demands circulated in March was the language regarding the number and type of student that

³¹¹ Dyer, 96.

should be represented on campus. The first version (which was presented to President Gallagher) called for the proportional representation of the number of black and Puerto Rican students in the city's high schools. However, the revised language in the March newsletter included "Asians" as a desired ethnicity to be represented in the new admissions system. Because there were very few Asian students at City College, and because this language rarely appeared in the subsequent rallies or negotiations, it is likely that the revision was mostly symbolic and was an outgrowth of the Committee's study period, which included works on Mao and Vietnam. The desire to build a coalition of people of color very likely included the effort to recruit Asians, but the reality remained that City College had very few Asians students, and Harlem had very few Asian residents. Furthermore, the students ultimately refined their strategy for increasing diversity on campus by using the formula of an economics professor that would have done little to enable more Asian enrollment at City College.³¹²

Professor of Economics Alfred Conrad was responsible for developing a statistical model that would help these students to effectively target their admissions strategy to achieve the greatest possible increase in black and Puerto Rican matriculation. The students involved in drafting this proposal were likely to have been SEEK students, but they were not overwhelmingly favorable to that model of remediation. However, they knew that the college was willing to embrace SEEK, which targeted poor neighborhoods, thus the students and Conrad developed a plan that drew on their own experiences

³¹² Asian students enrollment at any single campus of CUNY did not exceed 2.5% in this period (1967-1969), and total enrollment was slightly above 1% of the entire CUNY population. Angelo Dispenzieri, Seymour Giniger, Yvonne M. Tormes, Jerry Chase, and Stanley Bernknopf, "Characteristics of the College Discovery Program Students: 1968 Entering Class Compared With 1964-1967 Entering Classes," City University of New York: Research and Information Unit, 31 July 1969.

growing up in the Bronx and Harlem. These were the neighborhoods that had the highest concentration of black and Puerto Rican residents, and they had the lowest performing high schools in the city. Having recently witnessed the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district take on the problems faced by similar schools, the suggestion was made that the new admissions policy focus on recruiting directly from these high schools.³¹³

With the help of Conrad and his statistical model, the students formulated a plan that would place college preparatory programs within the targeted high schools. Students from City College would staff and run the programs, building rapport and camaraderie with the high school students, and providing instruction in basic college skills. The preparation would be intense and would be designed to improve skills enough that the students could bypass any further remediation. As one SEEK administrator said of this proposal, “they were just asking to increase enrollment—they were very sensitive to the issue of unpreparedness [sic] and were not asking for indiscriminate entrance.”³¹⁴ Thus, it is apparent from scrutinizing the actual plan put forward in the students’ demands, that they were proposing an admissions policy that was anything but open. In surveys of students who had been active in the protests throughout CUNY at this time, the responses did not indicate support for “open admissions” but rather for “increased diversity” and an end to racism and discrimination.³¹⁵ Eventually this demand became the sticking point in negotiations that resolved the strike demands; however, it was modified slightly—actually expanded—and ultimately it was amenable to the negotiation committee during

³¹³ Dyer, 102. Alfred Conrad had a reputation of being at the forefront of a new school of economics, called cliometrics, which applied theoretical analysis to large bodies of raw economic data. He had previously taught at Harvard University where he co-authored *The Economics of Slavery* (Chicago: Adline Publishing Co., 1964) with John Meyer. He was married to poet Adrienne Rich, who was also a professor at City College beginning in 1968, until their separation and his subsequent suicide in 1970.

³¹⁴ Dyer, 103.

³¹⁵ Survey Responses, Centro Archives, Box 174, Folders 1-3.

the resolution. It was not, however, the plan of open admissions that was ultimately instituted. Before they were able to secure negotiations, however, the students had to implement their strategy and earn the right to argue for their vision of public higher education.

“We planned this like clockwork”: The Takeover Begins

When the Committee of Ten was finally ready to present their newly minted demands to City College President Buell Gallagher on Thursday 6 February 1969, they held a mass rally at the student center on campus and formally revealed the demands to the students who assembled. The general scope of the demands was not new to the student body, as they were essentially the platform upon which the New World Coalition based their election campaign in January. In addition to publicizing their demands and generating wider support for their agenda, the Committee of Ten was also tasked with introducing themselves as leaders of the black and Puerto Rican students. While the Onyx Society and PRISA had been active in the development of the Committee and the goals and philosophy of the organization, the wider student community was largely unaware of this organizing activity. Thus, Serge Mullery introduced himself and the rest of the Committee and described the cell organizational structure, and encouraged the students to get involved by forming their own cell or joining an existing one. After the recruitment and publicity part of the demonstration, the Committee and their new acolytes marched to the administration and presented the list.³¹⁶

Gallagher was not in his office (reportedly because he was on vacation) but the students delivered the five demands despite his absence. The students gave him and the

³¹⁶ *Tech News*, 6 February 1969.

administration one week to respond to the list. Their ultimatum was a way to give a sense of urgency to the issue, as the previous Dubois Club list presented to the City College administration had been unanswered for the previous two months. They also had a built-in publicity follow-up to their 6 February “coming out” rally by preemptively announcing a second rally to occur exactly one week later on 13 February. Even though they gave Gallagher one week to respond, the timing of the second rally indicated the assumption on the part of the student activists that the administration would fail to respond. In this event, the students would be able to capitalize on the administration’s lack of engagement in pressing campus issues, and their subsequent disruptions and protests would be somewhat more justifiable. Their keen interest in a show of force is also demonstrated by the fact that they were presenting demands to a president who was on vacation at the time. Their careful plans to use the presumed disinterest of the administration against them were ultimately foiled, however, when Gallagher actually issued a response to the demands.

Gallagher attempted to defuse the earnestness and enthusiasm for the 13 February rally by showing up and fully cooperating with the theatrical nature of the event. He joined the Committee of Ten leaders in addressing the assembled crowd of hundreds of students and agreed to answer the demands one-by-one, reading from prepared statements. He began by saying, “You will find my answer affirmative throughout...On not one of the five demands can anyone leave here and say they’ve gotten a ‘no’ answer.” On the first and fifth demand for a separate school of ethnic studies and requirements for Education majors, Gallagher referenced a forthcoming report by Dr. Wilfred Cartey that would outline proposed programs in these areas. The results of this study, Gallagher

assured the students, would be enacted, although he did not explain how Cartey's proposal would compare with the students' demand for a separate, autonomous school of ethnic studies. Gallagher also made sure to emphasize that the Cartey study was undertaken "prior to the issuance of this demand." On the second and third demands regarding a separate orientation for students of color and increased student input from SEEK, Gallagher indicated that such input and engagement is entirely within the students' own control, and he welcomed such participation.³¹⁷

The fourth demand proved to be Gallagher's least convincing response, and his lackluster effort in assuaging the students' concerns in the area of admissions likely led to his undoing. Gallagher opened by mistakenly saying, "The entering students in the City University as of September 1968 already reflected the racial composition of the graduating class of late June." His rationale for this obviously false statement is unclear, but he followed this by saying that regardless of the Master Plan or the students' proposal, the budget crisis in the state of New York would effectively cut all enrollments in half. He then said, "Even within that restricted admissions number, the ethnic balance will be maintained; but this is no answer. The real answer can be found only at City Hall and in Albany. No one should be excluded from CUNY for lack of money."³¹⁸ This response frustrated the students in attendance that day. He ended these obtuse responses by saying, "I am so completely committed to the whole thrust of these demands," and

³¹⁷ Jonathan Penzer, *Observation Post*, 6 February 1969. Gallagher also issued an official communiqué from his office that elaborated on his "affirmative" answers. This document essentially invited the students to provide input and participate in planning for the eventual adoption of the five demands. It reads as a carefully worded effort to remain non-committal but appear supportive. This response to the demands has been reproduced in Appendix D.

³¹⁸ "Where Does CCNY Stand on the 'Five Demands?'" Buell Gallagher, 18 April 1969, Five Demands Conflict Collection, Box 4, City College Archives. This version of Gallagher's statement was reprinted and disseminated in anticipation of the students' well-publicized strike on 22 April 1969.

that he will work to implement all five demands as long students “support, not obstruct, my efforts.” His contradictory, blame shifting, evasive and non-committal responses to all five demands created a potent atmosphere of discontent. One student shouted, “Did you say yes?” but Gallagher stuck to his “affirmative” line of dialogue, and shortly left the rally and returned to his office.³¹⁹

The students were not placated by Gallagher’s moderate approach. Instead, they were infuriated and emboldened. The student newspaper *The Observation Post* reported that within a half hour, the students had marched to the administration building and forced its occupants out. They trashed offices and posted their demands throughout the halls. They also placed signs reading, “Free Huey! Che Guevara-Malcolm X University!” on the walls, advertising their alignment with Marxism and internationalism and their goal of remaking the university in their own image. The students left within a few hours, but not before a sizeable group of conservative students had engaged in minor scuffles with some occupants outside of the building. The specter of an occupation combined with the low-level violence was a foreboding sign for administrators who were keenly aware of the potential for such protests to escalate quickly, based on the experience of their neighbors at Columbia University. The students were intent on planting the fear of such potential in the minds of the college community by saying to the campus reporter, “we can shut this college down if we want to. We’ll be back if necessary.”³²⁰

The Committee of Ten had managed to accomplish the first two stages in the five-stage strategy with its first strike: petition and occupation. The next step called for the

³¹⁹ *Observation Post*, 14 February 1969.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

use of hit-and-run tactics à la the War of the Flea. The students wasted no time in implementing this stage, and they opened the following week with a series of coordinated attacks on Monday 17 February. They set small fires in buildings to activate smoke alarms and vacate the classrooms and offices. Then they vandalized the buildings by smashing glass windows and display cases, splattering paint on walls, clocks and other surfaces, and causing damage and general chaos. The group who carried out the action was described as “a group of black and white young men and women,” although no individual member was positively identified by onlookers or administrators.³²¹ Mullery said of the coordinated activities, “We planned this like clockwork. We had rehearsed it and walked through it...Our intention was to do no physical harm, and by the time they opened the doors, we were gone.”³²² The effort was a success according to Mullery and the rest of the Committee of Ten. Their immediate next step, however, was put on hold while students joined protests to save CUNY from the drastic budget cuts proposed by the city and state of New York.

In response the proposed cuts to the city and state allocations to CUNY campuses, Gallagher introduced a budget for City College that significantly diminished the SEEK program and proposed an overall reduction of the incoming freshman class by 20%. The drastic actions were immediately met with resistance by students and faculty who resented the cutbacks, especially the lopsided burden shouldered by the SEEK program, which would be reduced by half. Students attended rallies in Albany and at City Hall in Manhattan to protest the ominous cuts. Eventually student enthusiasm for these protests waned, as they realized that the City College administrators were using their outpouring

³²¹ *Tech News*, 19 February 1969.

³²² Dyer, 109.

of support in an elaborate game of brinksmanship with the state. The State of New York had previously tried to bring CUNY under the control of the SUNY system, but they were rebuffed by the BHE, which refused to give up their autonomy as a unique municipal university system. However, as the need for more funding became apparent, the State of New York offered financial support in exchange for more oversight of the university. While the student activists much preferred that the city remain in control of CUNY, their first concern was the budget of City College that threatened to significantly diminish the number of nonwhite students granted admission. Upon realizing that the rallies were not likely to address this issue, the City College activists regrouped around the continuation of stage three and the eventual implementation of stages four and five.³²³

“This is no one day thing!”: The Takeover Becomes an Occupation

The budget cut protests consumed the debate over CUNY for the month of March 1969. By the time the Committee of Ten was ready to refocus the energy of the student body toward the five demands, it was April and the end of the term was rapidly approaching. The overwhelming sense of frustration with President Gallagher’s noncommittal answer of “affirmative” to the five demands remained simmering beneath the surface of the students’ budget protests. In order to harness this frustration and demonstrate its widespread presence among the student body, the Committee of Ten decided upon a boycott of classes at City College, which they announced a week ahead of its intended start date of Monday 21 April 1969. The public announcement led to a frantic effort by Gallagher to clarify his affirmation of the demands in an effort to

³²³ Dyer, 112.

forestall a mass demonstration on campus. On 16 April, he called for a meeting in the campus auditorium with the leaders of the black and Puerto Rican student community.

President Gallagher's memorandum to the students announcing the meeting stated, "Since the year is fast drawing to a close, I want to restate and clarify my position in language which can be better understood." The clear intent of the meeting, therefore, was to rectify the damage done when Gallagher attempted to take a middle-of-the-road position. He was now tasked with making a strong show of support, but not promising more than the college was willing to commit. He reiterated his commitment "to the whole thrust of [the] demands," and demonstrated his support for the notion of more diversity and relevancy at City College. However, he still had to prove to the restless students that he was willing to commit the college to a proactive agenda for implementing these changes. Gallagher again delineated the administrative response to each demand, but again, the students found his appeasement disingenuous, and questioned why he had not taken their concerns into consideration and adapted his responses since February.³²⁴

Thus, despite the fact that Gallagher and the administration supported the five demands, the students remained unconvinced of their earnestness and felt that the slow, piecemeal pace of the response fell short. They continued with their plan to boycott classes, and beginning on Monday 21 April, several hundred City College students were joined by hundreds more local high school students in a mass rally near the library. They renamed the area "Liberation Hill" and began a march that wound through classroom buildings and attempted to disrupt and dismiss those classes that were already in session.

³²⁴ Ibid., 114-115.

As they went, they chanted a refrain familiar to the SF State protestors, “On strike! Shut it down!”³²⁵ The procession was effective in recruiting students from classrooms, and by the time the strikers arrived at the administration building to hold a mock trial of Gallagher, their numbers were estimated at 1500. As they amassed at the administration building, reporters for a campus newspaper marveled that their numbers had doubled as they marched, and that the demonstrators were actually mostly white students. This show of support by the white students indicated that the disturbance was not a fringe movement that could be appeased by “administrative bullshit.”³²⁶

The more than one thousand students who gathered at the administration building were zealous in their condemnation of Gallagher. Their mock trial found him guilty of the crimes of ignoring the needs of the black and Puerto Rican students. He was burned in effigy amidst cries of, “Time to pick up the gun; the revolution has come.”³²⁷ Clearly, Gallagher’s attempt at appeasement was far too little and far too late to derail the eager students and their plans for revolutionary action at City College. Rick Reed addressed the crowd after the mock trial and said, “this is no one day thing, we made our point for today...see you tomorrow.”³²⁸ The following day, 22 April 1969, the Committee of Ten and other black and Puerto Rican students began a prolonged occupation of the South Campus area of City College. While Reed and Mullery would later deny that this was their plan for that day of protest, occupation was part of the original five-stage strategy. They contended, however, that the events of 22 April were supposed to be brief in order

³²⁵ The verbatim repetition of the SFSC strike refrain is the strongest evidence to suggest that activists were in communication with one another; however, the persistent media coverage of the SFSC protest may also account for CCNY students’ knowledge of their slogans.

³²⁶ *Tech News*, 18 April 1969.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ *The Campus*, 22 April 1969.

to test their vulnerabilities and gauge the response of the university. It is likely that the prolonged occupation was planned for a later date, given that they had made no arrangements for provisions like food and shelter, and they had not alerted the media.

Regardless of the intended timing of the occupation, about thirty-five students arrived at South Campus early that morning with the purpose of removing the existing locks and placing their own padlocks on the gates around the area. They managed to defuse a potential controversy with the black and Latino security guards on duty by appealing to their shared plight. As Tom Soto recalls, the students pleaded, saying, “Brothers, you know that the struggle we’re waging...for more Black and more Latin students...is your struggle. It’s the struggle of your children.”³²⁹ Eventually the security guards relented, allowing the students to proceed with the lockout.³³⁰ By eight o’clock, the students had managed to lock themselves in and they assembled at the main entrance.

Students began to arrive at South Campus for their morning courses, and found that they were locked out. White students began to protest the lockout and as their numbers grew, they engaged with the black and Puerto Rican students on the other side of the fence. The occupiers told them to bring their concerns to the administration. The police arrived and while their first instinct was to remove the students’ locks from the gates, it quickly became clear that opening the gates would lead to a violent confrontation between the parties on either side. Thus, Gallagher made the determination to cancel classes on South Campus that day and allow the protest to continue. Once it became clear to the occupiers that they were not going to be forcefully removed from the area,

³²⁹ Tom Soto, Participant Transcription, 4, Miscellaneous Folder, Legacy of Struggle Collection, Box 1, City College Archives. Emphasis in original.

³³⁰ Fearful that they had cost these guards their jobs, the students made sixth non-negotiable demand: immunity for the guards who were on duty that day.

they reportedly made the decision to remain in occupation for as long as they were able. As one student said, “the take-over was on.”³³¹

By that evening, the students began to feel the full weight of the decision to remain as occupiers on campus. Logistically, they were in need of basic provisions like food, water and shelter. The surrounding community of Harlem was quick to help in this effort, bringing provisions at regular intervals and organizing food and blanket drives. Charles Powell remembered, “All of a sudden, people began to start coming up with food and blankets and other things,” and their basic needs were met. Additionally, students and members of the community volunteered to provide around-the-clock security patrols to protect the students from police encroachment. Student Barbara Justice, who became the female head of security, described their duties, saying, “we had a cadre of people who were well disciplined, who were responsible for checking who came on and off campus.”³³²

Of utmost importance to the protest, however, was the need to formulate a plan of action that would capitalize on the occupation and aid in the achievement of their five demands. The obvious utility of the occupation to that end was the amount of publicity it generated. News outlets from around the country began to train their cameras and microphones at South Campus. The students took this opportunity to rename South Campus the University of Harlem, and they regularly held rallies and invited speakers of

³³¹ Dyer, 118.

³³² Barbara Justice, Participants Transcription, 13, Legacy of Struggle Collection, Box 1, City College Archives. The students were vigilant about controlling access to their ranks within the gates, especially to the media; however, they were shocked to find a few days into the occupation that a black undercover police officer had infiltrated their protest. He was roughed up and interrogated by the security detail, causing heightened tensions between the protestors and the police department.

note such as Kathleen Cleaver, James Forman, Betty Shabazz and Harlem Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.³³³

White students who were sympathetic to the occupation were allowed to provide support and attend protests, but they were not invited beyond the locked gates of South Campus. In fact, the white students held a sympathy protest and occupied Klapper Hall on the North Campus. However, the students of color attempted to distance themselves from this occupation because of the behavior of the white activists. Henry Arce complained that “they just left everything dirty and a mess...like this was pure rebellion.” He went on to say that their platforms never really aligned because, for the students on South Campus, the protest was “a question of family, a question of home, a question of warmth, a question of love and desire.”³³⁴ During this phase of the protest, the destructive actions of the white students in Klapper Hall brought negative publicity, which threatened to become indistinguishable from the South Campus activity.

In addition to providing widespread publicity for their cause, the occupation of the South Campus area gave community members unprecedented access to City College. The campus that had once been the “white citadel” on the hill was now a location of fervent black and Puerto Rican activity and a space of empowerment. The students acknowledged that they “opened this campus for the first time to people who lived a block away and who had never walked into a building here.” This moment was seized upon not only as a protest, but as a collective act of self-governance: activists held daily

³³³ Unknown speaker, Participant Transcription, Legacy of Struggle Collection, City College Archives. James Small, a student at the time, mentioned his surprise that Malcolm X’s sister brought “bags and bags of groceries” to the occupiers, even though the black Muslim community of Harlem traditionally held conservative views regarding such struggles.

³³⁴ Henry Arce, Participant Transcription, Legacy of Struggle Collection, Box 1, City College Archives.

teach-ins for high school students and community members; medical students established a health clinic for those who attended the rallies; and nightly community meetings offered a chance for local residents to provide input and air grievances. They instituted “all kinds of political education classes on Black history, on Imperialism, on daycare for women, on women’s rights, on the African Liberation movement, on the Latin American Liberation Movements.” Dorothy Robinson, a student protester, said, “We worked. We educated. We organized. We attempted to [bridge] the gap between community and campus...we showed the people that an educational institution is supposed to be for the community.”³³⁵

Harlem had been the site of collective community action for years, and the immediate mobilization of those resources in response to the City College occupation demonstrates the importance of the students’ demands to the greater black and Puerto Rican struggle. The infrastructure that was in place to provide food, as well as mobilize teach-ins, assemble health clinics, and organize community meetings is due to the tradition of community control among activist groups. For instance, in Oakland the Black Panther Party organized the free breakfast programs, as well as pre-school and after school programs for the youth of the movement. And in New York, the Young Lord’s Organization would soon institute similar programs, in addition to a concentrated effort at bringing health services to Harlem’s Puerto Rican population.³³⁶ With the

³³⁵ Kadisha Delouche, Participant Transcript, Legacy of Struggle Collection, Box 1, City College Archives. Kadisha Delouche was known as Dorothy Robinson at the time of the strike in 1969. Emphasis in original.

³³⁶ For more on the Black Panther Party’s community organizations, see: Charles E. Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*, (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), especially JoNina M. Abron, “‘Serving the People’: The Survival Programs of the Black Panther Party”; David Hilliard, ed., *The Black Panther Party: Service to the People Programs*, (Oakland: The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation, 2008). For more on the Young Lord’s community programs, especially their focus on public health, see: Jennifer A. Nelson, “‘Abortions Under Community Control’: Feminism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Reproduction

support from the community and the discipline within the ranks of protestors, the students held the South Campus area, and positioned themselves to approach the bargaining table.

“[W]e weren’t negotiating—we were institution building”: Negotiations and Violence

For two full weeks, the pattern continued whereby up to two hundred students occupied the gated South Campus while other students and community members carried out a variety of organizing activities. The administration and the professoriate at City College remained cautious in their dealings with the occupation. On Wednesday 23 April, the day after the students locked the South Campus gates, faculty from the college convened and voted nearly unanimously to avoid the use of force in resolving the occupation (there was a single no vote). President Gallagher, meanwhile, pursued negotiations with the occupiers, and to that end, he ordered that all classes be cancelled while this process was underway. Many students and faculty members disagreed with Gallagher’s decision, and they openly defied his order by holding and attending classes the following week. These defiant members of the college community were predominantly from the engineering departments, which were considered to be among the most conservative elements on campus. Eventually, Gallagher was able to persuade the Dean of the Engineering Department to enforce his order, out of fear that botching the negotiation procedure could ignite a serious civil disturbance.³³⁷

Once the college was unanimously behind pursuing negotiations, the various sides (administration, faculty, students) assembled and approached the bargaining table. The

among New York City’s Young Lords,” *Journal of Women’s History* vol. 13, no. 1 (2001): 157-80. Nelson actually mentions one YLP member saying that they were influenced by the community control efforts of the public school parents and students.

³³⁷ Dyer, 123.

faculty contingent included a mix of old and new in their three-member panel: Arthur Bierman, Joseph Copeland, and Jay Shulman. Bierman and Copeland represented the elder professors who leaned toward the conservative side, and Shulman represented the newer, mostly adjunct professors, who had a great deal more sympathy for student activists on campus. In fact, Jay Shulman had been a founding member of Faculty for Action, a group that openly supported the five demands. The students were represented by three prominent leaders from the Committee of Ten: Rick Reed, Serge Mullery, and Charles Powell.³³⁸

Once the negotiations had been established, Gallagher made the decision not to resume classes at City College. The student contingent supported this decision, but they also refused to call off the occupation. Despite ongoing internal dissent among the faculty between conservative and liberal professors, the negotiations actually began in earnest at the end of the week. From interviews conducted with the negotiators following the settlement of the demands, it is clear that the negotiations, while intense, were actually amicable and professional. Professor Conrad, whose model of proportional representation had been adopted by the students, joined the negotiations to give testimony and offer support for his proposal. Other experts were called to do the same, and the optimism of the students and Professor Jay Shulman is evident in their interviews. Shulman said, “There were some wonderful, creative models that were built for the establishment of a first class Black and Hispanic college....So we weren’t negotiating—

³³⁸ Ibid. These three students were all black males. There does not seem to have been any friction or dissension among the student protestors regarding these three as the designated negotiators. Reed, Powell and Mullery were the originators of the third world philosophy and the Committee of Ten/cell organization theory, and thus their role as leaders within the movement was clearly defined. Several students remarked in interviews conducted in 1989 that the movement relied heavily on the democratic process of voting, and that the negotiators faithfully reported back to the masses after every session and were advised by the group on all matters.

we were institution building.”³³⁹ The talks were stalling, however, on the separate school for Third World Studies and the proportionate admissions policy.

While the negotiators continued to work at resolving those final two issues, the college was dealt an ultimatum. On the eighth day of the occupation, Tuesday 29 April, the court issued an injunction ordering the school be reopened on Monday 5 May or that Gallagher show cause why it should not be reopened. The injunction request was filed by “a group of fifteen liberal arts students and the Jewish Defense League.”³⁴⁰ A second court order was also in the works, this one having been filed by City Comptroller Mario Procaccino, who was challenging Mayor Lindsay in the 1969 mayoral election.³⁴¹ The common link between the Jewish Defense League and Procaccino is illustrative of the shift in identity and whiteness that was discussed previously in Chapter Three. City College Jewish students, professors, alumni and boosters viewed the five demands as an assault on meritocracy, and they found natural allies in conservative politicians who exhorted “law and order” and reviled leftist activism. The court orders were effective in

³³⁹ Ibid., 134-135. Emphasis in original.

³⁴⁰ The Jewish Defense League formed under the leadership of Rabbi Meir Kahane in New York City in 1968. They were not well known at the time that they filed this injunction, but they would eventually become a notoriously violent group who targeted anti-Semitism “by any means necessary,” and became an FBI-designated domestic terrorist organization.

³⁴¹ Mayor Lindsay narrowly won reelection in 1969 as a third party candidate. Because of his reputation for supporting civil rights and his refusal to espouse a hard line with black and Puerto Rican activists (especially in the school strikes and the City College occupation), Lindsay lost the Republican primary to a more conservative candidate. Procaccino, his Democratic challenger, was seen as a conservative Democrat, and he often invoked the rhetoric of the silent majority and law and order. He made little effort to court black or Latino votes; however, during an ill-conceived speech to a black audience, he made a legendary gaffe saying, “My heart is as black as yours.” He carried the votes of those New Yorkers who were reacting against the racial unrest, mainly the white working class ethnic voters like Italian, Irish and now Jewish residents. Lindsay, meanwhile, had the near universal support from the black and Latino populations, as well as support from middle class, educated white voters. For more on this, see: Jerald Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York*.

getting Gallagher to pressure the occupying students: on Monday 5 May he reopened the campus and he sent the police to deliver the order to the South Campus occupiers.³⁴²

Exactly two weeks after the students locked themselves inside the gates on Convent Avenue, they declared that the occupation was over. On the night of 5 May, they removed the padlocks from the gates and, despite having been removed by court order, began a triumphant march through Harlem. Joined by hundreds of community members, they marched and sang church spirituals and chanted slogans of the student movement.³⁴³ The negotiations that had previously stalled around the issue of quotas in admissions had now been scrapped entirely in light of the court orders and the resumption of classes. The Committee of Ten had implemented their five-stage strategy, but had failed to secure a total victory. Thus, before negotiations could be resumed, the committee members revisited their strategy and reintroduced step three: hit-and-run. Their goal was to force the campus to shut down once more so that the negotiations could continue without interruption or undue pressure.

After the triumphant march through Harlem following the two-week occupation of South Campus, the students' jubilant attitude revived the tactic of hit-and-run. They wasted no time going on the offensive and attempting to shut the campus down. Arriving on campus the following morning, Tuesday 6 May, the students were armed with bats and clubs, and they used physical force to intimidate students and disperse a crowd of conservative protesters. The conservative students retaliated with bats and golf clubs of their own, and a violent melee ensued. Almost immediately following this fight, Gallagher made the determination that the campus must be shut down to avoid further

³⁴² Dyer, 126.

³⁴³ *Observation Post*, 12 May 1969.

violence. However, the chaos of that day was not over yet. The black and Puerto Rican students got wind that some conservative students had taken a move straight from their playbook, and were barricading themselves in the South Campus area to protest the closing of the school. As the students of color made their way down to the barricade, a large contingent of police were on the move in the same direction. A second brawl erupted outside of the South Campus gate, and several students were later treated for injuries sustained in the fight.³⁴⁴

In the local and national press, this period of the protest—following the end of the occupation—was reported as being just one among many campus disturbances that erupted into violence. Nearly every day during the month of May 1969, the Associated Press (AP) published a story updating the public on the violent confrontations that were underway on campuses across the country, from New York to Florida to Michigan to California.³⁴⁵ In the local New York City press, the coverage of the violence on campus attempted to be even-handed in its recognition that white and nonwhite students were both antagonists in the protest. For instance, in a widely referenced incident, four black female students were among a group of students of color who were chased and pursued through campus by a white mob. As the fleeing students scrambled over a fence, two of the four female students were unable to climb over the locked gate before the white students arrived, pinning the girls against the gate. Seeing that the girls were pinned, many students climbed back over the gate and fought off their white pursuers. The event resulted in a brawl and attracted widespread attention. In the *New York Times*, journalist

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ An example of an AP story on this topic, which was picked up nationally, is “American U, Princeton Scene of New Disorders,” and the article quoted President Gallagher on the situation at City College. *The New York Times*, 24 April 1969.

Thomas Johnson reported on this incident, describing the whites as armed with hammers and quoting many black and Puerto Rican professors and administrators who testified to the white violence.³⁴⁶ However, as the unrest at City College spread to several other campuses within CUNY, the reports mainly focused on the students of color and their disruptive activities. In this unfolding narrative of violent confrontation, 8 May became a turning point.

Having determined that a full twenty-four hours was necessary for both sides to cool off following the near-riot conditions of Tuesday 6 May, Gallagher announced that classes would resume on Thursday, 8 May. On Thursday morning, the *New York Times* carried a statement by Gallagher explaining his reasoning for the closing the campus Wednesday and the anticipated police presence on Thursday. His statement explained, “To protect human life, we have sealed the campus after a series of serious assaults and fights....Police intervention was necessary to protect life and restore order.” Despite Gallagher’s insistence that police presence would bring “an atmosphere of peace and tranquility,” which would allow negotiations to resume, the black and Puerto Rican students would not negotiate until classes were cancelled and police were removed from campus.³⁴⁷ Thus, no plans were made to resume negotiations during the Wednesday hiatus, and the black and Puerto Rican students remained determined to shut the campus down as many days as were necessary to satisfy their preconditions for negotiations. On Thursday students of color and their white allies in SDS stepped up their war of the flea by setting small fires, slashing air ducts, and causing damage around campus. By noon, the escalating tensions again brought violence between the opposing groups of students,

³⁴⁶ Thomas Johnson, “Whites’ Attack at CCNY Cited,” *New York Times*, 10 May 1969.

³⁴⁷ “Text on CCNY Closing,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1969.

which in turn brought police charging onto campus. Several black students were arrested.³⁴⁸

Following the arrests, the situation appeared to be at somewhat of a lull because of the mass police presence. However, bystanders soon observed smoke billowing out of the windows of Aronow Auditorium, which was a wing of the century-old Finley Student Center on South Campus. Firefighters responded quickly, but as a result of the fire and their efforts to extinguish it, Aronow Auditorium lay in damp, smoldering ruins at the end of the day. As Deputy Chancellor of CUNY Seymour Hyman observed at an emergency meeting that night, “the only question in my mind was, ‘How can we save City College?’ And the only answer was, ‘Hell, let everybody in.’”³⁴⁹ The auditorium ultimately succumbed to the fire, making it a symbolic victim that the conservative students, faculty, and alumni could mourn. Soon, following Hyman’s reaction and the decision of the board to drastically alter their open admissions plan, those same conservatives were mourning the standards that they zealously defended.

The violence and the fire ultimately pushed President Gallagher to his breaking point. With the support of the faculty, he petitioned the BHE to allow him to close the campus until negotiations could resume and violence could be avoided. The BHE refused and on Friday 9 May, Gallagher submitted his resignation, effective immediately.³⁵⁰ In a statement announcing his resignation, Gallagher blamed the slow pace of reform, and he touched on the widespread malaise felt throughout American

³⁴⁸ *Observation Post*, 12 May 1969.

³⁴⁹ Ron McGuire, “4-22: Memories of April-May, 1969 @ CCNY,” www.AssataShakur.org, <http://www.assatashakur.org/forum/new-york-city/37759-4-22-memories-april-may-1969-ccny.html>, (accessed 4 March 2010)

³⁵⁰ Following Gallagher’s resignation, somebody named Herbert S. Robinson wrote to the editor to suggest S. I. Hayakawa fill the vacant position, “or, if that is not possible or practical, then, at least, a man like Dr. Hayakawa.” Letter to the Editor, *The New York Times*, 17 May 1969.

society, including the war in Vietnam and the increased violence in American cities. He said,

I could have wished that the pace of institutional change had kept ahead of rising expectations born of the civil rights movement, and that there had been a little more patience or compassion mixed with the justifiable rising anger of the poor and the black. But institutional inertia did not yield fast enough and the pressures of long-deferred hope left no room for careful and considered action.³⁵¹

Gallagher's statement reflects a belief that the clash was inevitable and the only way to mitigate the fallout was to step aside and let someone of a "different temperament" assume leadership. Over the weekend, an emergency meeting of the BHE chose Dr. Joseph Copeland, the conservative member of the negotiation panel, as the acting president.³⁵² Their choice signaled their desire to keep the campus open, as well as their interest in stymieing the negotiations over expanding admissions and a College of Third World Studies.

“[U]nrealistic faith in educational magic”: Resolution and Reaction

On Monday 12 May, Copeland addressed the Faculty Senate, students, community members, and the press. As expected, he announced his firm stance that the college would remain open and that police would be used to maintain order, and he made no mention of the resumption of negotiations. Upon delivering his comments, Copeland left the room, leaving the Faculty Senate in session. Soon, students and community members began delivering comments to the Senate, arguing for the necessity of continued negotiations by any means possible. Faculty members listened to these appeals

³⁵¹ Buell Gallagher Resignation Statement 10 May 1969, Five Demands Collection, Box 4, City College Archives.

³⁵² Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, 10 May 1969

and engaged in “long and sometimes passionate debate” about the optimal way to resume negotiations. Ultimately, Dean Robert Young, head of the SEEK program, introduced a resolution that called for simultaneous negotiations by the panel, as well as convocations for all other faculty and students. This plan required that police be removed from campus and that regular classes be cancelled for the duration of the negotiations. The resolution passed, and despite first dismissing the plan, Acting President Copeland ultimately supported the idea once the student activists consented to cease all protest activity while negotiations were underway. Thus, on Thursday 15 May, negotiations resumed after being interrupted by more than two weeks of chaos.³⁵³

Dean Young and Professor Bernard Bellush from the History Department were chosen as the faculty negotiators, and Rick Reed and Charles Powell continued in their role as the student negotiators.³⁵⁴ After meeting on Thursday 15 May to decide on the conditions and procedure for the negotiations, the panel met on Tuesday 19 May and began the official discussion about the remaining two demands.³⁵⁵ Professors Bellush and Young attested to the fact that they were startled by the clear vision and intellectual astuteness of the students. Young said, “You must understand, these students were

³⁵³ Dyer, 131-132. In a *New York Times* article on 16 May, writer Sylvan Fox reported that student protestors had disseminated a statement that was signed by all members of the original negotiating team, including Acting President Copeland, which indicated their agreement to keep the campus closed to expedite negotiations. Fox quoted Copeland explaining his apparent hypocrisy: “I was not then the president. Now I am.” Sylvan Fox, “CCNY Campus Quiet at White Protestors Call a Moratorium,” *New York Times*, 16 May 1969.

³⁵⁴ The stipulations of the second negotiations required only two members from the faculty and the students, and one administrative representative for a total of five members. Serge Mullery had previously been the third student negotiator, but he did not return for the second round. This is likely due to the fact that he had been suspended during the previous week of protests.

³⁵⁵ On 9 May, the BHE approved the stipulation that education majors be required to take courses in black and Puerto Rican history and that they receive training in the Spanish language. The changes proposed to strengthening oversight and orientation for the SEEK program were also under consideration by the BHE, which was searching for ways to reform SEEK in the aftermath of several complaints and much dissatisfaction with the program.

organized, they were deliberate, and sometimes—politically speaking—intimidating...” Bellush echoed this sentiment, and described feeling unprepared having to “face up to an organized grouping of students who feel they are right, who...are not acting in the role of subservient students.”³⁵⁶ In addition to the obvious preparation of the students, they were also able, as in the previous round of negotiations, to bring in outside people to testify to the need for a separate school and for a proportional admissions system.

After four days of marathon negotiations, the panel declared that they had reached a settlement, which they then presented to the Faculty Senate for approval. The negotiated resolution essentially adopted the students’ demands and stipulated in detail how they would be organized and enacted. The admissions question was resolved by proposing a two-tiered system that would allocate half of all admissions to a new system that incorporated most of Professor Conrad’s plan (the other half of admissions would remain competitive and merit-based).³⁵⁷ This would, in effect, be a “dual admissions” scenario rather than “open admissions” which was the term used in tandem with the 1968 Master Plan that called for “100% admissions.” This distinction is important to make considering the reaction from the press and the public to the negotiated agreement.

After staging a publicity-fueled campaign to raise the profile of campus racial issues, the increased attention paid to City College politics meant that the announcement of a settlement was met with widespread interest. Three days after reaching the agreement, the *New York Times* published an editorial that condemned the proposal’s “unrealistic faith in educational magic” and called it “reverse discrimination [that] would almost certainly turn City College into a de facto segregated, predominantly Negro and

³⁵⁶ Dyer, 133-134.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 135.

Puerto Rican institution.”³⁵⁸ Board of Higher Education members David Ashe and Renato Azzari, mayoral candidates Mario Procaccino, John Marchi, and Bronx borough president Herman Badillo, as well as Mayor Lindsay himself joined the chorus of dissent. Most of those who voiced opposition to the plan echoed the sentiment expressed in the *Times* editorial, specifically the use of “reverse discrimination” and “quotas.”³⁵⁹ The BHE also echoed the disapproval of such proposals in the minutes of the special executive session on 4 May 1969, saying that while “open enrollment” was its first priority, “This is not to be interpreted as meaning that the Board of Higher Education under any circumstances will accept a quota system based upon race or ethnic origin for the admission of students, which is in violation of Federal and State Laws.”³⁶⁰

In this context, the notion of considering race, ethnicity, class, location, or any other factor in determining access to City College was seen as “reverse discrimination,” and it conjured up rhetoric from salient debates over affirmative action.³⁶¹ For the *Times* and the other critics of the plan, dual admissions was an unacceptable compromise for these reasons. *Open* admissions, however, was technically “color blind” in its acceptance of any New York City high school graduate, and thus it appeared to accept a diverse pool of applicants. However, because the mechanism for open admissions (that was already a

³⁵⁸ Editorial, “Bad Bargain at City College,” *The New York Times*, 26 May 1969.

³⁵⁹ Dyer, 137.

³⁶⁰ Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, 4 May 1969.

³⁶¹ Affirmative Action as a Federal policy had existed since the Kennedy and Johnson administrations in the early 1960s; however, in 1969, President Nixon’s so-called “Philadelphia Plan” that would require labor unions working on Federal projects to hire a specific number of minority workers revived the emphasis on quotas. For more on this, see: Guian McKee, *The Problem of Jobs: Liberalism, Race, and Deindustrialization in Philadelphia*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), especially Chapter 7. For more on affirmative action in the 1960s, see: John David Skrentny, ed., *Color Lines: Affirmative Action, Immigration and Civil Rights Options for America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), especially Chapter 1, Thomas J. Sugrue, “Breaking Through: The Troubled Origins of Affirmative Action in the Workplace.”

part of the Master Plan for CUNY) was highly stratified, it would not admit as many students of color to City College or other senior colleges as would the dual admissions system. Students acknowledged the hidden drawback of *open* admissions, and one flier from this period declared that to “‘OPEN IT UP’—MEANS RACISM!” The flier was produced by the Harlem chapter of Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF), and it went on to explain that, “[to] open up CCNY as it stands now is a racist act—because it will remain closed, as it always has been, to the Black and Puerto Rican communities and white working class youth.”³⁶² Thus, the students who preferred the targeted admissions plan of the negotiated settlement saw the institutional shift toward open admissions, which shortly became the official stance of the BHE, as unfavorable.

In addition to the admissions plan in the settlement, the proposal also recommended that City College implement a School of Urban and Third World Studies that would have a dean and a “policy making council” consisting of students, faculty, and community members. The school would be structured based on a model put forth by Professor Wilfred Cartey, who had been tasked with researching and drawing up a proposal for such a college by President Gallagher the previous year. Cartey’s proposal had six areas of concentration: African Studies, Afro-American Studies, Community Studies, Caribbean Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, and Studies of other New World areas.³⁶³ The students of color greeted the settlement enthusiastically, and they declared their campaign a resounding victory.

³⁶² YAWF Flier, Five Demands Collection, Box 5, City College Archives.

³⁶³ Dyer, 137. Significantly, neither proposal made a genuine effort to include Asians as a category of concern. The Conrad proposal recruited students mainly from the Bronx and Harlem, which did not have significant populations of Asian residents. And the Cartey proposal made no mention of Asian Studies within the School of Urban and Third World Studies. Even though the students of color had consciously

Amid the din of reactionary dissent, the Faculty Senate met on 29 May to vote on the proposal. By a vote of 36 to 37 the proposals for the College of Urban and Third World Studies and proportional admissions were narrowly defeated. Over the next few days the Senate worked on a revised admissions policy, which essentially embraced the position held by Dr. Copeland during the first round of negotiations: an arbitrary number of students (in this case 300) from low performing high schools or high poverty areas would be admitted to City College regardless of GPA. This returned the debate on admissions to the tokenism of the past, it effectively erased the input and demands of the students, and it did not appease those who continued cry foul on the issue of quotas, thus satisfying nobody.

As the Faculty Senate at City College continued the debate in early June about the proper role that affirmative action played in admissions policy, the BHE quietly began to plot the next step in the unfolding drama. Beginning in early June, the Board had been meeting regularly in special sessions to hear statements and debate the merits of different admissions reform proposals. Amidst these meetings, on 18 June 1969, the Board disseminated a document to its members entitled, “Draft of a Proposed Board Statement.”³⁶⁴ This statement concluded that open admissions, as envisioned in the 1968 Master Plan, could not be put off until 1975, and that it must be instituted CUNY-wide in the fall of 1970. This draft led to the official statement of the Board at the 9 July 1969 meeting.

included “Asians” in their revised demands, it appeared to be of little concern once the process of negotiation was underway. More than simply a factor of oversight or exclusion, it is also possible that the students were solely concerned with City College, and that they assumed these resolutions would be adapted to other specific campuses where Asians were more of a presence, such as Queens College.

³⁶⁴ Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, 18 June 1969.

The minutes of this meeting include the full statement, which responds to each of the five demands of the City College students. As previously mentioned, the Board had agreed to the required courses for education students, and based on their inquiry into the SEEK orientation and oversight, they approved of instituting a version of these reforms. On the issue of a School of Third World Studies, the BHE proposed that each college be given the authority to institute a program or department, but as for the separate and autonomous school, they ruled

Black and Puerto Rican Studies shall not be organized as separate degree-granting schools within colleges until such time as the Board is satisfied that this is warranted by the attainment of such faculty and program strength as would deserve such status at any college within the university.³⁶⁵

By the next full meeting of the Board, on 23 July 1969, the vast majority of colleges within CUNY had submitted a proposal for such a department or program on their campus, including City College, whose proposal was for a Department of Urban and Ethnic Studies. While the Board approved these proposals, the students were let down by the notion that the autonomous school would be considered only at such time as the departments had proved their merit. However, it was also a significant victory in that they secured the commitment of the BHE to support these departments and programs, which could be organized and implemented as early as the fall of 1969.

The major portion of the Board statement was allotted to the issue of reforming the admissions policy of CUNY. The statement began by addressing the resolution adopted by the Faculty Senate at City College, saying, “[T]he question of increased enrollments is no longer one of how many students should be admitted, but rather

³⁶⁵ Minutes of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, 9 July 1969.

whether and how soon the resources adequate to meet our commitment to *all the people of our City* will be forthcoming.”³⁶⁶ Thus, they returned the discussion of admissions to the Master Plan proposal, rather than seriously considering the negotiated settlement that sought targeted admissions reform. The statement called for the immediate consideration of six objectives in updating the Master Plan for implementation in the fall of 1970, which included the goal of “ethnic integration of the colleges.” However, the Board also explicitly stated that the additional 300 students that the City College Faculty Senate had agreed to would *not* be accepted in the fall of 1969.³⁶⁷

While the Board made clear that they were not open to the idea of considering race and ethnicity in their revisions to the CUNY admissions policy, they also stipulated that an abstract goal of the process was the “ethnic integration of the colleges.” Thus, in moving to implement open admissions a full five years ahead of schedule, the BHE appears to have taken the recent unrest at City College into consideration. The changes that they instituted to the 1968 Master Plan attempted to make it more effective in correcting the racial and ethnic imbalances, especially in the senior colleges. Whereas the original plan would have granted senior college admission to a student who ranked in the top 25% of his or her own school, the new plan allowed for the top 50% of each high school to attend a senior college.³⁶⁸ Thus, the BHE did away with Professor Conrad’s

³⁶⁶ Statement of Policy by the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, 9 July 1969. Italics mine.

³⁶⁷ They blamed the lack of space at City College for this stipulation; however, in the same paragraph they also stated that the entire SEEK operation would be moved to the City College campus and they would be given an additional 100 allotments for SEEK freshmen.

³⁶⁸ Additionally, any student who did not place in the top 50% of his or her high school could be guaranteed admission to a junior college, and furthermore, SEEK and College Discovery would continue to operate on a financial-needs basis. The BHE’s plan also stipulated that a GPA of 80 or above still qualified a student for entrance into a senior college, although this criteria was essentially made moot by accepting the top 50% of all high school classes.

intricate statistical analysis of the city's black and Puerto Rican populations, and instead, it essentially "let everybody in."

Conclusion

In the intervening years since the student takeover of City College, the implementation of open admissions and the development of ethnic studies departments have become celebrated victories of the student movement. In an article commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of the South Campus occupation, Ron McGuire, who was a student activist at City College at that time, said the date marked "the beginning of the City College student strike led by Black and Puerto Rican students that won Open Admissions and established ethnic studies departments at all CUNY colleges."³⁶⁹ While the advent of open admissions and ethnic studies coincided with the culmination of the student movement at City College, this chapter has demonstrated that the policy of "[letting] everybody in" was not the students' objective. This fact was widely known in 1969, but with the passage of time, the activism and the outcome have merged into a triumphant narrative.

Wilfred Cartey undertook President Gallagher's commissioned study regarding ethnic studies before the students even issued their demand on the subject. And the 1968 Master Plan already laid the groundwork for expanding admissions beyond the elite minority to which City College had catered since its founding in 1847. The students knew of these developments. Their seizure of the campus in 1969 was an effort to force these proposals to be responsive to the people whom they purported to serve. They saw an opportunity to shape the processes and foundations of a new era of public higher

³⁶⁹ Ron McGuire, "4-22: Memories of April-May, 1969 @ CCNY."

education. They wished to incorporate their theories of Third World solidarity and activism into a new educational enterprise. In light of these goals, the students were largely unsuccessful in their protest. Despite negotiating an agreement favorable to their input at the conclusion of the takeover, the Board of Higher Education intervened and nullified that document.

In the face of increasing pressure by critics who charged that the negotiated agreement constituted reverse discrimination and the use of racial quotas, the stewards of CUNY acted to save the college by flinging its doors open. According to the Board, and to scholars who grapple with this outcome, it was the only feasible solution to the crisis. As scholar David Rosen explained, “If a ceiling were kept on admissions, and if the numbers of Blacks and Puerto Ricans were to be increased, then somebody would have to be squeezed out. This meant whites, mostly Jewish.” Rosen also quotes a source within the BHE as saying, “The University wouldn’t have been able to survive as an institution... Either you give the Blacks City College, or you go to open admissions.”³⁷⁰ These seemingly frank and pragmatic assessments of the situation at City College actually ignore the modesty of the proposal that the students put forth.

Their “dual admissions” program would have left at least fifty percent of City College’s competitive admissions system intact. The remaining fifty percent would have been given over to a carefully designed program that recruited from high schools where large percentages of black and Puerto Rican students were given intensive pre-collegiate instruction. This program would have tackled the problem of lack of preparation, and it

³⁷⁰ David Rosen, Seth Brunner, and Steve Fowler, “Open Admissions: The Promise and the Lie of Open Access to American Higher Education,” Study Commissioned by The Nebraska Curriculum Development Center, University of Nebraska, 1973.

would have helped to phase out a system of remediation that left neither students nor administrators satisfied. The proposal was a sophisticated strategy that acknowledged that the problem with the lack of diversity of City College was not solely a function of its admissions requirements: it was also a function of inadequate public schools. Furthermore, the introduction of a separate school of ethnic studies would have, according to the students, generated increased interest in and aspirations for higher education among nonwhite youths. The faculty-student-community controlled school that the students proposed included a plan to continue outreach to high school students in neighborhoods like Harlem and the Bronx.

However, amidst hyperbolic predictions like that published in the *New York Times* about “a de facto segregated, predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican institution,”³⁷¹ the Board of Higher Education chose the politically safe, color-neutral route of accelerating open admissions. At City College, and the rest of the senior colleges, students who would have qualified under the previous entrance requirements were still admitted; however, any student who ranked in the top 50% of his or her class was also guaranteed admission. City College saw a net increase of 700 additional students in the fall of 1970, and the percentage of black and Puerto Rican students nearly doubled. Despite the fact that all of these new students technically qualified for entrance to City College, the vast majority still needed remedial classes to transition to higher education.³⁷² Thus, the compensatory model of expanded admissions became the institutionalized remedy for the lack of diversity within CUNY.

³⁷¹ “Bad Bargain at City College.”

³⁷² Rosen, et al., 96. SEEK remained intact to allow students from specific underprivileged geographic areas to enroll in remedial courses.

The black and Puerto Rican students who waged a battle to change the notion of public higher education took solace in their increased numbers and the availability of ethnic studies courses in the college. While they did not gain the far-reaching reforms that they sought, and their momentum had been usurped, students of color still rallied around their small gains. They immediately developed proposals for ethnic studies departments, and on some campuses they petitioned for research institutes related to ethnic studies. The vibrancy of their activism remained rooted in the desire to see their lives and their communities reflected in their universities. One student activist who continued to work toward these reforms articulated the new struggle that they now needed to wage *within* the university:

For now we were attempting to remain in struggle with and in opposition to the University, while we were at once linked to it and within its boundaries. The organization and forms of struggle that we needed to create were to be judged, not by militancy and open conflict, but rather by our ability to sustain covert assaults, by our skill at maintaining political continuity and regeneration, by our powers to develop theoretical and practical alternatives to the University structure and its ideology, and finally, by our capacity to endure the tension filled contradictions inherent in our intellectual, political and historical placement.³⁷³

The takeovers and occupations were done. Having secured modest gains and won a place in the college, students of color were now tasked with defining their intellectual project and defending their place in higher education.

³⁷³ “Notes on a Log,” Centro Archives.

Chapter Five—Assigning a Legacy to the Third World Student Movement

“Puerto Rican Studies as a strictly academic program will probably survive as a token vestige of the 60’s. If it becomes this ‘animal,’ it should be destroyed by our people.”
Survey response from CUNY Puerto Rican alumnus, 1970.

By the summer of 1969, both San Francisco State and City College of New York had declared an end to the student disruptions regarding ethnic studies and admissions, and had begun implementing the brokered resolutions. As has been shown, the settlements at these two schools were highly political and controversial. However, both settlements seemed to be reasonably accepted by the students and administrators, even if each side had conceded more than they wanted. Both schools significantly revamped their admissions policies, and both embraced the immediate creation of departments of ethnic studies.³⁷⁴

At San Francisco State, the College of Ethnic Studies was officially established in the fall of 1969, although the first few semesters of its existence were marked by the same dynamics of students vs. administration. Hayakawa maintained strict oversight of the College and its Departments, and his handpicked temporary Dean of the College of Ethnic Studies, Urban Whitaker, a white liberal, did not appease the students in the college. After the black student newspaper *Black Fire* published some unflattering commentary about Hayakawa, he exercised his executive power to fire everyone in the department and start from scratch. Deans and professors in other colleges resigned in

³⁷⁴ For a breakdown of the settlements at each school, see Appendix E and Appendix F.

protest over Hayakawa's actions and attitude toward the College. The students were justifiably angered, and the unrest threatened to erupt into another strike. Members of the administration stepped in to try to prevent a second campus crisis, and with the approval of Hayakawa, the Council of Academic Deans nominated Dr. James Hirabayashi as the first permanent Dean of the College of Ethnic Studies.

Hirabayashi had been an Anthropology professor at San Francisco State since 1959, and was only the second *Nisei* (second generation Japanese American) professor after S.I. Hayakawa.³⁷⁵ In the years leading up to the strike, Hirabayashi was in Africa conducting field research for a new project, and when he returned from Africa in 1968, he was immediately confronted by the "new mood" of students, especially Asian American students. The newly formed SFSC chapter of the Asian American Political Alliance asked him to serve as their faculty advisor. In addition to advising the AAPA, Hirabayashi also sponsored Nathan Hare's first black studies course and joined the AFT. Thus, during the campus unrest, Hirabayashi had been a staunch ally of the TWLF, and had proven his loyalty to the movement, making him a foil to Hayakawa's reactionary politics and assimilationist rhetoric.

While City College did not achieve their goal of establishing a School of Third World Studies, they did secure the support of the Board of Higher Education in implementing departments or programs of ethnic studies. Because each campus within

³⁷⁵ All of the information in the section regarding James Hirabayashi comes from two separate oral interview videos and transcripts: "James Hirabayashi," Video Clips, 7 January 2004, Discover Nikkei.org <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/people/profiles/4/> (accessed 15 April 2010); "James Hirabayashi Interview," Video Clip, 4 July 2008, DenshoArchive.org, <http://archive.densho.org/Core/ArchiveItem.aspx?i=denshovh-hjim-02>. Hirabayashi was born and raised in Washington state, and after Pearl Harbor, his family was sent to Tule Lake Relocation Camp. His brother Gordon is famous for being tried and convicted in criminal court following his resistance to the forced relocation and the oppressive laws of the camps.

CUNY operated as a more-or-less discrete and autonomous unit, it was left to each individual campus to develop its own departments. At City College, a proposal for a Department of Urban and Ethnic Studies was sent to the Board of Higher Education for approval before the end of the summer of 1969. The department was established at CCNY in the fall of 1969, and then in 1971, that department was dissolved, and in its place, two separate departments of Black and Puerto Rican Studies were created.³⁷⁶

The push toward creating separate departments from the joint Urban and Ethnic Studies Department marks an interesting development for the notion of multiracial coalitions and for the viability of ethnic studies in the academy. In one account of the dissolution of the joint department in 1971, it was argued that, “The students feel quite strongly that the Puerto Rican courses that have been developed are just a mere concession to pressures,” and not a reflection of the students’ will. In this account, the blame is placed on an insensitive and racist administration that does not value Puerto Rican Studies as a valid area of scholarly study. The lack of interest or enthusiasm for the discipline left the students and faculty without a long-range plan and without stability, which they felt could be better provided in a separate department with a research institute attached.³⁷⁷

However, a second take on the development of separate departments offers an explanation that implicates the rise of divisive nationalist viewpoints among black and Puerto Rican students. In addition to blaming the administration’s tactics of divide and conquer, as well as the adverse effects of the continuing budget crises, this student

³⁷⁶ Basilio Serrano, “*¡Rifle, Cañón, y Escopeta!*”: A Chronicle of the Puerto Rican Student Union,” in Torres and Velázquez, 135.

³⁷⁷ Unknown author, “Background of Situation,” Box 168, Folder 3, Centro Archives.

reflects on the ways in which the unreflective and insulated analyses of many of the new ethnic studies classes encouraged a cultural nationalism to develop. For instance, the student says, “In many of our Puerto Rican history and culture courses analysis of social class is not taught and ethnic pride is sometimes stressed to the extreme.” The writer then says, “This kind of nationalism is not the Third World unity which we fought for in the 60’s and is a divisive tool which the administration [uses] against us.”³⁷⁸ Thus, the impetus toward separating Black and Puerto Rican Studies was a product of the unfortunate air of competition and self-promotion that resulted in separatist impulses. While the charge that the Third World student movement was designed to promote racial separatism is patently false, the pressures to succeed engendered a brand of cultural nationalism that the students had strenuously avoided during their struggles.

The new separate departments were formed in 1971, and because each separate department was autonomous, and funding for CUNY was small and diminishing, each new program faced severe logistical constraints. In addition to these obstacles, the argument has been made that the isolation of each department served to limit the development of ethnic studies as a thriving and collaborative discipline across all campuses of CUNY.³⁷⁹ Despite the diminished role that ethnic studies departments came to occupy, relative to the demands of the students, they still served to expand the presence of students and scholars of color on the many campuses of CUNY colleges.

Within a year, hundreds of schools across the country implemented similar changes, expanding their admissions policies to accept more nonwhite students and

³⁷⁸ Author Unkown, “Relationship of Puerto Rican Studies and Other Ethnic Studies,” Centro Archives, Box 168, Folder 6.

³⁷⁹ Pedro Caban, “Puerto Rican Studies: New Challenges and Patterns,” Guest Column in Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Newsletter, Fall 1985, Box 68, Folder 6, Centro Archives.

developing ethnic studies courses. While the decisions of these individual institutions may not have been solely informed by the events at SFSC and CCNY, the momentum behind ethnic studies and expanded admissions increased following the notoriety of these two campuses. But the question remained, and lingers to this day: were they successful?

At the time, opinion among the students involved in the campus protests was a mix of cautious optimism and disappointment. The months-long struggles had held out for non-negotiated conclusions in which higher education itself would be transformed. By this measure, they were unsuccessful in that they capitulated on some of their more strident and visionary demands. The university structure remained unchanged, although it would become more diverse in its curriculum and student body. They did not topple the system, but they expanded the definition of who it served. In some instances, the students admitted that they had accepted less than they demanded, but they pledged that the fight would continue within the university—the departments and colleges of ethnic studies had become the new battlegrounds of the struggle for educational relevancy and self-determination.³⁸⁰ However, debates about relevancy plague the discipline, and recent student protests over the inadequacy of ethnic studies departments, including hunger strikes and the formation of a new “twLF” at Berkeley in the late nineties, raise questions about the efficacy of struggling within the system.³⁸¹

In the intervening forty years, however, the sense of defeat among strike veterans has given way to a claim of victory for diversity and multiculturalism. Even though

³⁸⁰ For student opinion about the departments as the “new terrain” of the struggle, see Ferreira, 173.

³⁸¹ This acronym reflects the capitalization scheme preferred and adopted by the students at Berkeley. Other than Berkeley, students at Stanford, University of California, Riverside, Princeton, University of Texas, Austin, Columbia and many other schools have waged protests in the past thirty years over the nature and content of their ethnic studies departments and programs.

many people disagree about the merits of ethnic studies and affirmative action in the academy, ethnic studies and diversity initiatives remain intact at nearly every university in the country, especially public institutions. For this development, many veterans and scholars of the movement now declare the struggle a success. In this final chapter, I explore the reasons for this shift in perception and propose some legacies for the struggle that are outside of the debate about the relative merits of ethnic studies or affirmative action.

In order to evaluate the legacy of the protest movements at City College and San Francisco State, this chapter will explore the immediate effects of the protests, both on campus and off. I will examine the vision of ethnic studies as proposed by the students, paying special attention to the philosophical justifications and meticulous plans in the proposals. I will also examine the organizing traditions that emerged among activists of color following the formation of multiracial coalitions in New York City and San Francisco. By exploring the ways in which these student coalitions influenced future activism, I can attempt to locate further legacies of the strike outside of campus concerns. In addition, it is necessary to understand the nature of violence and militancy that students initiated on their campuses. This is one of the most controversial aspects of the founding of ethnic studies, and one that deserves to be analyzed in full. Lastly, I will offer an explanation for the narrow contemporary and historical focus on black students and Black Studies as the legitimate event of this struggle. I argue that it is impossible to understand the protests, their goals, or their legacies without properly contextualizing the multiracial effort.

“An inherently contradictory task”: Ethnic Studies in the Academy

This section will explore the intellectual justification for ethnic studies, within the context of the student coalitions of the 1960s that articulated a vision for the field. The proposals for departments, courses, institutes, mechanisms for organizing and the myriad other aspects of creating this new discipline are fertile sources for analyzing the original intent of ethnic studies. In exploring the intellectual origins of ethnic studies, I do not propose to settle any debate about its merits as it currently exists. Furthermore, I do not wish to trace its evolution as a discipline throughout the past forty years. Rather, I investigate the ways in which the proposals for ethnic studies were neutralized and augmented at the time. In so doing, I demonstrate the highly developed political sensibilities of the students represented a distinct vision of higher education that superceded quotas and tokenism. That vision failed to be realized when faced with the fears of the entrenched bureaucracy about reverse racism and racially motivated violence.

Despite the programmatic and logistical differences between ethnic studies at SFSC and CCNY, both campuses experienced similar obstacles as inchoate departments were formed. While the students included personnel considerations in their demands, and the settlements appeared to honor their wishes, a debate emerged among various factions as to what credentials adequately prepared an individual to teach in an ethnic studies department. Additionally, questions of budget allocations, physical space, degree requirements, course proposals, and all of the other minutiae involved in creating a new discipline and a new department were yet to be decided. Furthermore, the toll of the violent and contentious student protests had diminished the ranks of those most intently involved in the process—many of the key players had been arrested, suspended or fired by the time the fruits of their labor were being enacted.

In addition to all of the logistical issues that plagued the implementation of the settlements in 1969, there was the continued threat of budget cutbacks at the municipal, state, and federal levels that culminated in the economic crisis of the 1970s. Retrenchment and layoffs were the norm for public institutions during this period, and the shrinking budget made competition for limited resources a fierce enterprise. The fledgling ethnic studies departments were forced to compete for finite and shrinking resources alongside long-established disciplines and departments that had lists of distinguished and notable alumni. In addition, the spirit of camaraderie and coalition building that was fostered during the protest movements was also jeopardized when, for example, Asian Studies was forced to compete against La Raza Studies. At the same time that these departments were fighting for solvency within the university, they were also forced to defend their legitimacy as new intellectual fields of study.

These inauspicious beginnings for ethnic studies departments, coupled with the fact that the students felt they were forced to compromise some of their more principled demands in order to achieve a resolution, left many feeling as though the movement was a failure. One former activist lamented that, “We settled for Ethnic Studies, rather than Third World Studies,” when speaking about the Berkeley protests.³⁸² Activists felt as though they had done little to change the power structure of the university, and they watched as their vision for ethnic studies took on unintended dimensions as an integrated element of the university. One former student activist reflecting on the “inherently contradictory task” of establishing ethnic studies at CUNY said,

On an ideological level [ethnic studies] served to legitimate the urban university and to diffuse the intensity of student activism by directing it

³⁸² Myrtha Chabran, “Chicano Studies: The Barrio at the University,” Box 168, Folder 7, Centro Archives.

into the classroom. But on the social and political level, the departments were invariably propelled toward a troubled relationship with the University administration.³⁸³

Even in the case of the separate School of Ethnic Studies at SFSC, the notion of autonomy was virtually absent in these early stages as President Hayakawa attempted to maintain oversight after firing Dr. Nathan Hare as director. Despite the fact that many of their lesser demands were accepted and instituted, the failure to overhaul higher education left many feeling pessimistic at the resolution of the strike.

However, in the time that has lapsed, the strikes at SFSC and CCNY have come to be seen as watershed events in the history of higher education, and the changes wrought in the wake of these events are celebrated as great strides for civil rights. Despite the fact that the departments that exist today bear little resemblance to those originally proposed by the student coalitions in 1968, their mere presence has become an unquestioned boon to the cause of racial and ethnic equality. Opinion within academia, however, is still conflicted as to the intellectual validity of ethnic studies as a discipline. Many scholars lament the stifling effects of institutionalization on the more activist impulses of ethnic studies. Other scholars find the discipline devoid of intellectual rigor or a unique epistemological approach, and they accuse ethnic studies of being an agent of the American Left. Whether ethnic studies is seen as too political or not politically engaged enough, the current debates about its relative merits as a discipline are reminiscent of the controversy in which it emerged.

When Stokely Carmichael addressed the BSU on the eve of the strike at San Francisco State, he encouraged the students to prepare for a prolonged struggle using the

³⁸³ Caban, 7.

tactics of guerrilla war in order to gain “victory, not notoriety.” In defining what victory for this struggle, in part, would be, he said,

When you talk about black studies you talk about methodology and ideology, not just another subject. Not the same methodology the white man uses, but a different methodology to communicate to us. Different ideology means an ideology brooding in black nationalism. Not just adding black people to white history. That’s an insidious subterfuge.³⁸⁴

Carmichael urged the African American students at San Francisco State to avoid getting mired in the specifics of course content and the amount of black people represented in traditional college courses. Instead, he outlined a divergent methodological and ideological approach to higher education that was “brooding in black nationalism” and that turned their radical philosophy into an entirely new discipline.

Carmichael did not invent this new approach, however, and students of color at SFSC were already on their way to developing proposals for departments of ethnic studies that would embrace a new methodological discipline and a new ideological approach. For instance, the Intercollegiate Chinese Student Association (ICSA) articulated this new approach in their fall 1968 “Proposal for the Establishment of a Chinese Ethnic Studies Department.”³⁸⁵ The proposal begins by outlining the inadequacy of the current course offerings in Chinese-related studies (language, art, philosophy) and the detrimental push of existent American educational practices toward adopting materialistic middle class values. Importantly, this proposal laments the fact that the language department offers Mandarin instruction, and not the Cantonese dialect,

³⁸⁴Bunzel, “War of the Flea.” Bunzel includes long excerpts from Carmichael’s speech in order to disparage the “war of the flea” tactics. A slightly different version of these comments appear in the *Daily Gater*, which includes the following sentence: “When you are talking about Black Studies you are not talking about course content, you are talking about methodology and ideology.” *Daily Gater*, 5 November 1968.

³⁸⁵“Proposal for the Establishment of a Chinese Ethnic Studies Department,” ICSA Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

which was the language spoken by the majority (they estimate 83%) of Chinese in the United States. In a separate position paper, the ICSA revisits this issue, saying “a Chinese woman, living in the ghetto, who speaks Cantonese cannot explain to a scholar that she is dying of tuberculosis because she speaks a ‘street language,’ while the scholar mutters classical poetry in Mandarin.”³⁸⁶ Thus, the ICSA rejected the bourgeois notion that access to SFSC would train “scholars,” and instead embraced the “street language” and the mission to bring social services to the people of the Chinatown ghetto.

By redesigning the curriculum and suggesting several course areas, the ICSA demonstrated a methodology that blended “social-psychological concepts,” anthropological tenets, and theoretical approaches to understanding the context of Chinese in America. The courses were designed to allow the student to approach the hybridized cultures of Chinese and American, remaining skeptical of both, and working to bridge the divide. They referred to this as a project of addressing “acculturation and identity.”³⁸⁷ A major element of these courses involved hands-on work in learning the language of Chinatown and conducting fieldwork in the neighborhood in order to gain a greater understanding of the conditions and issues facing the residents.

The ICSA proposal is just one example of the departmental-level theorizing about the new ideological and methodological approach that ethnic studies would foster. As the TWLF moved forward in the fall of 1968 to pursue the College of Ethnic Studies, the focus shifted from outlining and justifying the department level proposals, to discussing the imperative for a self-contained college. In a document entitled “Third World

³⁸⁶ “Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action—Position Paper,” ICSA folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

Liberation Front: School of Ethnic Area Studies,” the students argue for the need for protracted study of the country’s nonwhite populations. The statement, which was distributed after the TWLF had joined the strike, states, “In every aspect from lectures to literature the educational facilities do not contain the information necessary to relate any facet [sic] of minority peoples’ history and/or culture.” They accuse the educational system of harboring “negligence and ignorance” that is on par with overt racism.³⁸⁸

In order to overcome this institutionalized bias, these students proposed to develop their own educational processes that focused on “their people’s background and present situation at the intra and international levels.” They suggested that a primary function of the college will be the “collection, organization and presentation...of all information relevant to the historical and contemporary positions of” people of color throughout the world. And in order to ensure that “the reoccurrence [sic] of education’s traditional distortion and representation of Third World people’s cultures and histories” does not happen, they call for the school to be “developed, implemented, and controlled by Third World people.” In outlining this proposed college, the students clearly heed Carmichael’s warning not to simply insert people of color into the traditional disciplines.³⁸⁹

In addition, by focusing on the aspects of the college that would unite all of the factions of the nonwhite population, the TWLF document, and a similar one that followed, elaborated on their willingness to use the college as a means to combat racism. In a pamphlet that appeared following the elongated winter break at SFSC, the TWLF

³⁸⁸ “Third World Liberation Front: School of Ethnic Area Studies,” TWLF Folder, SF State Strike Special Collections.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

discussed the political effort to separate educated people of color from their roots. However, they say, “We are only an extension of our community... We desire the type of education which will not separate educated third world people from the community they grew up in.” They also decried the effort to divide American minorities along ethnic and racial lines in order to pit one against another. To this, they responded, “The concept of the Third World embodies the idea of all the races working together to obtain benefits for all of the ethnic communities.” These position statements indicated that the third world students were not envisioning ethnic studies as being part of the traditional pursuits of occupational or professional preparation with which schools like SFSC had been primarily concerned.³⁹⁰

Instead, the TWLF articulated a course of study that would be essential in radicalizing new generations of youth, inducing them to forsake traditional professions and pursue political and community organizing in their neighborhoods. They were not striving to correct a numerical imbalance that allowed white students to achieve more lucrative careers. They were not trying to induce their fellow Latino or Asian community members to gain more education to pursue middle class leisure. Most importantly, they were “not interested in equality.” They rejected the notion that education was an equalizer, and that a college degree was a ticket to upward mobility. Rather, they embraced education as pathway to self-determination, “the right of a people to determine their own needs...and their own destiny.”³⁹¹

While students in the TWLF developed these sophisticated treatises on the role that education must play for nonwhite communities, their time and effort was soon

³⁹⁰ “STRIKE, By the Third World Liberation Front,” TWLF Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

channeled towards survival on campus as the strike continued week after week. When the strike was over and the students had secured the right to develop their departments and programs, they continued to refine this vision of self-determination and alternative epistemologies. In *Black Fire*, the BSU student newspaper affiliated with the new Black Studies Department, an editorial in October of 1969 elaborated on the benefits of an education in the College of Ethnic Studies. It reads, “Education should be a means of ending exploitation, building new understandings, and defining more clearly peoples’ goals and needs.” This definition of education is contrasted with the system of “miseducation” that the author identifies as the hegemonic form of instruction that systematically deprives people of color of any meaningful knowledge or development.³⁹²

A desirable education, in this equation, results in a cognitive shift toward “self-actualized survival,” which essentially means taking an activist approach to combating problems of race, ethnicity, and identity. Ethnic studies would, therefore, be a place where students could gain expertise in the issues afflicting their communities, as well as develop the tools to end that oppression. Terry Collins, a BSU and Central Committee member during the strike elaborated on this facet of ethnic studies as a place to foment revolutionary activity. He said that the BSU wanted black studies to contain “a Marxist analysis of our education... We was looking at it as an organizing tool.”³⁹³ The curriculum would thus be both an end and a means in the struggle against racism. Moreover, the curriculum would also be “a powerful force in the renovation and reconstruction of the entire system of education.”³⁹⁴ It is this concept of ethnic studies as

³⁹² “From Chicano Miseducation to Community/student Survival,” *Black Fire*, 24 October 1969, 3

³⁹³ The Reminiscences of Terry Collins, 82.

³⁹⁴ *Black Fire*, 24 October 1969.

both the antidote to racism, and the antidote to hegemonic epistemology that marks the early proposals for the new discipline.

At CCNY, the vision for departments and other programs in ethnic studies shared many similarities with the concepts of liberating education that circulated at SFSC. During the strike, students elaborated on the role of ethnic studies as a corrective to what SEEK professor of English Toni Cade Bambara called “the old Anglo-Saxon bag, the snobbism and racism” of the American intellectual tradition. Bambara argues that centuries of protecting this tradition took place in “the most sturdy of America’s cultural institutions—its universities.” Thus, to challenge the hegemonic cultural and intellectual traditions, the students needed to do far more than propose scattered courses within the existing structure of the college. Rather, they proposed a “counter college” that would “precipitate the cultural transformation” of higher education by introducing new forms of knowledge and new targets for advanced education. In fact, according to student Louis Rivera, it had never been their intention to have a degree associated with their proposed course of study.³⁹⁵

In addition to developing a new foundation for the study of non-hegemonic cultural and intellectual traditions, the students and their faculty allies also proposed a new paradigm for translating a relevant education to the community. This facet of the demand for ethnic studies mirrors the belief of San Francisco State activists who wanted to bring their education into the community. One student spoke of this factor, saying “We are students for four, five six, some of us for seven years, but we are Puerto Rican all our lives.” He went on to say that, “we must never romanticize the struggles in the

³⁹⁵ Dyer, 98.

communities and place them before the schools, saying those in the community are revolutionary and relevant and those in the schools are reformist and irrelevant.” The instinct to separate community and campus in this way was overcome, according to this student, by bringing the revolution to campus and making each site integral to the struggle.

In this vein, CCNY activists sought ways of incorporating the community knowledge and traditions into their classrooms, making the new educational enterprise truly collaborative and harnessing some of the more creative aspects of community organizing. To this end, Barbara spoke of

[tapping] the resources in our community and use as instructors those grandmothers, those on the corner hardheads, those students, those instructors, whoever happens to have the knowledge and expertise we desire, regardless of the number or absence of degrees, publications, titles, honors.³⁹⁶

This vision of transforming higher education into a non-elitist, community-based endeavor required that their demand be for an autonomous school that would be free from outside interference. When this demand could not be agreed upon, the transformative thrust of the students’ movement became tied to the institutional structure, and the notion of the “counter college” disappeared.

Following the Board of Higher Education’s directive of July 1969, the various campuses of CUNY designed ethnic studies departments for their individual colleges. After a couple years of making do with a Department of Urban and Ethnic Studies at CCNY, students developed alternative proposals for separate Departments of Black and Puerto Rican Studies. A proposal for a Department of Puerto Rican Studies that was circulated in 1971 included a ten-page document that laid out some of the controversial

³⁹⁶ Dyer, 99.

issues inherent in trying to institutionalize the student movement. The document begins by defining the three main goals of the department, namely “the provision of knowledge, the provision of a social philosophy, and the provision of an opportunity to test the first two in the real world.” After several pages of elaborating on the ways in which a department would sustain and achieve these goals, the focus shifts to anticipating objections to the philosophies, ideologies, and practices that were proposed. The document acknowledges “The dilemma (and danger) become immediately evident that as the department or its students move into conflict roles and conflict issues, the pressure [...] will increase to diminish and limit these activities.”³⁹⁷ Thus, the department founders were fully aware, perhaps due to experience by this time, of the ways in which their proposal to establish a radical new discipline and alter the notion of traditional pedagogy courted political repression.

To counter this anticipated backlash against their department, the drafters of this proposal suggested developing their curriculum in stages, “with the first being the most immediately feasible.”³⁹⁸ The Department of Puerto Rican Studies was adopted based on the proposal submitted to the CCNY administration and the BHE, and many new classes in Puerto Rican history, culture and politics were offered. However, within the first few years of the existence of ethnic studies at CUNY, the City of New York faced a severe budget crisis, and cutbacks across the city threatened many of the advances made within the university.

Hostos Community College in the Bronx, named after Eugenio María de Hostos, a Puerto Rican intellectual and independence activist, had been established in 1970 as the

³⁹⁷ “Department of Puerto Rican Studies,” Box 168, Folder 3, Centro Archives.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

first and only bilingual institution of higher education in the United States. However, because of budget cuts and the vulnerability of new and nontraditional educational programs, Hostos College became threatened with closure. This same pressure applied to Hostos forced new Puerto Rican Studies Departments to employ a calculus of self-preservation. Many of the more activist elements originally planned by these departments never came to fruition, in part because of the adverse political climate. During this same period, CUNY Puerto Rican educators came together to propose an Institute that would foster a broad research agenda in the area of Puerto Rican Studies. This Institute focused heavily on the theoretical implications of the discipline, and was grounded in the study of educational philosophers like Antonio Gramsci and Paolo Freire. The Institute, which later became the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (or Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños), attracted many talented educators and members of the Puerto Rican intellectual community. While the research institute never managed to (or perhaps never intended to) translate the theory into action, they did develop a highly successful and well-respected intellectual tradition in the field.

After the strike and the development and implementation of protests among Puerto Rican students at other campuses of CUNY, activists came together and formed a citywide Puerto Rican Students Union (PRSU). In a pamphlet made by the PRSU in the mid 1970s, the group lamented the fact that many of the Puerto Rican Studies programs in the city “had become an intellectual exercise on history and culture.”³⁹⁹ The pursuit of intellectualism for its own sake was, according to these students, a sign of the failure of Puerto Rican studies. In November of 1971, educators at Princeton University convened

³⁹⁹ “History of the PRSU,” Centro Archives, Box 173, Folder 4. The development of the PRSU and its relationship to the YLP will be discussed later in this chapter.

a conference to discuss the development of Puerto Rican Studies. Dissatisfied with the “sell-out” nature of the event and the educators’ focus on making Puerto Rican Studies into a “viable” discipline within the university, PRSU members staged a publicity event at the conference in order to refocus the discussion of Puerto Rican Studies.

PRSU’s list of thirteen “Resolutions and Guidelines” from the Princeton Conference delineates their vision of Puerto Rican Studies in the academy. They begin by stating that the discipline “should address [the] realization that only through the process of a revolutionary struggle can we bring about an end to our colonization.”⁴⁰⁰ By this they mean the end of the colonization of Puerto Ricans on the island, but also “the need for democratic rights in the U.S.”⁴⁰¹ In order to train for the revolutionary struggle within Puerto Rican Studies departments, “Courses should deal with [...] capitalism and its effect on the colonized people of the Third World; sexism and machismo; racism; individualism.”⁴⁰² Thus, PRSU members were trying to salvage the more radical elements of the push for ethnic studies, including the local and international struggle for political rights and recognition.

As this section has demonstrated, students pushed for a revision of higher education, including dismantling the elitism of academic standards, and challenging the very foundations of knowledge. They imagined ethnic studies as one front of the battle against the status quo, and they engaged in the process of remaking the university through autonomous schools. They avoided what Stokely Carmichael called the “insidious subterfuge” of simply accepting the structure of the university by petitioning

⁴⁰⁰ “Resolutions and Guidelines Presented at the Puerto Rican Conference at Princeton, on Nov. 4-5, 1971,” Box 68, Folder 7, Centro Archives.

⁴⁰¹ “History of the Puerto Rican Student Movement,” Box 173, Folder 4, Centro Archives.

⁴⁰² “Resolutions and Guidelines,” Centro Archives.

for new content. However, many students were dissatisfied with the ways in which their vision of ethnic studies disappeared when the field became institutionalized. As the CUNY student whose quote opened this chapter predicted, the enterprise survived, but little of its original intent was left intact.

Whether or not the current state of ethnic studies is lamentable is subject to considerable debate. There are doubtless individuals for whom this discipline has adequately captured the spirit in which it was intended, and there are those for whom its perceived accommodations to the academy have been welcome changes. Additionally, variation from campus to campus makes it difficult to generalize about the field as it exists today. This debate about ethnic studies, however, is often devoid of its proper history and context within the larger struggle for Third World self-determination. As this dissertation has shown, ethnic studies and open admissions, as they were enacted in the late 1960s and early 1970s, were triumphs for liberalism (not radicalism), which sought to stave off radical threats to the notion of academia and higher education. S.I. Hayakawa alludes to this when he says,

We have opened the doors just a little with special programs that serve hundreds while thousands are clamoring for education. I believe that we should open the gates fully, even at enormous expense, to provide educational opportunity at every level high schools, adult schools, junior colleges, State colleges and the universities for our entire minority and poor populations.

However, this kind of “open door” liberalism misses the whole thrust of the Third World student demands for relevancy and autonomy. Hayakawa makes clear the intent of this kind of blanket approach to education when he discusses the neutralizing effect that this policy would have on the radical students and their demands. He says,

If we are to end campus rebellion without destroying the educational institutions, we must redirect our energy. We must look beyond the day-to-day combat to the reasons underlying this deadly attack on higher education. We must learn to deal both with the dedicated revolutionary leaders and the unsolved problems that help them enlist followers.⁴⁰³

Thus, the main priority in responding to the educational crisis posed by the demands of the Third World students is to protect the educational institution and break the energy of the “dedicated revolutionary leaders.”

The effort to preserve the existing structure of higher education at all costs led to the accommodation of the demands, but not the philosophies, of the student protestors. Their legacy within the academy has thus become the hundreds of ethnic studies departments, programs and institutes at colleges and universities around the country. In some cases these programs offer the kind of sustained critique of systemic racism and the complicity of the university in that system that the Third World students, in part, hoped they could establish. However, the most radical iteration of ethnic studies—that of a university-sponsored training ground for the revolution—did not materialize. This is not to say, however, that the groundwork laid by the students at SFSC and CCNY in their quest for educational autonomy and relevancy, came to naught. The example they set in developing multiethnic coalitions was a significant factor in the emergent Third World organizing tradition that presented a vibrant counter-trend to the declension and fragmentation that characterized much of the rest of the American Left.

“Serve the People”: The Influence of Student Activism on the Third World Left

One of the major areas in which scholars attempting to complicate the declension thesis of the 1960s have focused their energies is the vibrancy of Third World organizing

⁴⁰³ SI Hayakawa Interview with Austin Scott, LBJ Library.

during the 1970s. Among these scholars, the proof that the sixties did not end in self-indulgent despair and fragmentation resides in the existence of organizations like the Young Lords, I Wor Kuen/The Red Guard, MEChA, and the persistence of the Black Panther Party.⁴⁰⁴ This has been a largely successful refutation of the good sixties/bad sixties dichotomy, and I argue that it further demonstrates the effectiveness and the widespread adoption of the coalitional politics of the nonwhite student movement. Thus, shifting the focus to the Third World Left in this period illuminates their embrace of certain philosophies or platforms that are in dialogue with the issues raised at SFSC and CCNY. Furthermore, this new form of protest emerging after the strikes illustrates that the idea of declension is inaccurate when these organizations, and not just SDS and the white Left, are considered.

Scholar Laura Pulido and others have examined the effect that the formation of the Third World Liberation Front and other multiracial coalitions had on radical politics among people of color. Pulido argues that after the struggle for and subsequent establishment of ethnic studies, activists “became familiar with coalition building, and, on the basis of that experience, gravitated toward an internationalist politics.”⁴⁰⁵ In her study of southern California Third World activism, Pulido traces on-campus student organizations that demanded ethnic studies to off-campus community based organizations that adopted internationalist platforms.

Likewise, scholar Jason Ferreira has shown how the radicalization of students and their allies during the Third World strike at San Francisco State contributed to the formation of multiracial coalitions in San Francisco. Ferreria states that, “The Third

⁴⁰⁴ See: Pulido, Elbaum and Ferreira for more.

⁴⁰⁵ Pulido, 82.

World Strike influenced countless young activists of color in the Bay Area... This new generation of activists [...] explicitly incorporated a “Third Worldist” perspective.”⁴⁰⁶

Max Elbaum takes up this argument in relation to Asian American activism in particular, saying, “The Third World strikes at Berkeley and San Francisco State were crucial in the evolution of Asian American radicalism, and after those battles many activists hooked up with or formed collectives to take up community organizing.”⁴⁰⁷ In New York City, there is a direct connection between the formation of a revolutionary internationalist organization and the student movement in the form of the Young Lords Party, which was founded by former City College students, and which officially incorporated the Puerto Rican Students Union as the student arm of the party.

This section demonstrates that the student-led multiracial coalitions at CCNY and SFSC contributed to the continuing vibrancy of the Third World Left. This is not a comprehensive view of such organizations or their ideological developments—such an undertaking has been approached by other scholars. My focus is on the organizations that were active in the period simultaneous to and just after the student protests, and which included a significant link to the student movement, usually in the form of an individual or individuals. However, some of the organizations I highlight were already in existence prior to the strike, and some were not staffed or peopled predominantly by students. In these cases, I stress the connection to the evolving Third World philosophy of the college protests, and how these organizations began to adopt and expand upon that ideology.

⁴⁰⁶ Ferreira, 27.

⁴⁰⁷ Elbaum, 77.

The pivotal role of student membership in the Oakland Black Panther Party is an important site of this connection between campus and community politics. Beginning in 1968 and continuing into 1969, people associated with the Black Panther Party, especially at the main headquarters in the Bay Area, began to raise concerns about the organization. As the party gained substantial membership and chapters opened in nearly every major city in the country, the original nucleus of leadership was facing serious challenges. Huey Newton had been arrested for his involvement in an exchange of gunfire in Oakland, which left one police officer dead, and Newton and another officer wounded. State repression and infiltration left many party members, especially those in the satellite chapters, wondering about the vulnerability of the party and its future. As the party struggled to maintain control of its message and assuage the fears of its members, the strike at SFSC provided a catalyst for reinvigorating the base.⁴⁰⁸

As discussed in Chapter Two, many of the members of the BSU at San Francisco State were also members of the BPP, including George Murray who was the Party's Minister of Education. According to BSU and BPP member Terry Collins, "Most of the Black Panthers came out of [San Francisco] State." And it was here that they turned when the party was facing a period of disarray. Collins says, "it was the Black Student Union, who after Huey was shot, helped put the Black Panther Party together again." He goes on to elaborate on this statement, saying that the BPP used the strike and the fervor among the African American community surrounding it as their base of operations. He said, "They come up there to raise money. You know, use the facilities of the Black

⁴⁰⁸ For a discussion of this period in BPP history, see: Essays in Part V of Charles Jones ed., *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*.

Student Union and everything else.”⁴⁰⁹ Thus, the reciprocal arrangement between the party and the student organization helped each to persevere during the strike and the precarious days of the BPP.

The Black Panther Party was a hugely influential group, both because of the politics and tactics it espoused, and because of the organizational structure that it imposed. Almost every other Third World activist group that emerged in this era mimicked their ten-point platform as a model for building an organization. Laura Pulido, in her work on the subject, compares the platforms of the Red Guard Party, the Brown Berets and the Young Lords to show their commonalities with the BPP platform.⁴¹⁰ Within the historiography on the linkages between the BPP and other groups, scholars are especially vocal about the connections between Asian and African American groups, individuals, and ideologies. Judy Wu has written about the phenomenon of “radical Orientalism,” through which she reveals African American activists’ fascination with “idealized depictions of revolutionary Asia,” which she argues, “assisted American activists in imagining the possibilities of new political identities and new ways of organizing society.”⁴¹¹ While African American activists looked toward revolutionary Asian countries, notably Vietnam, for inspiration, the tendency was equally strong for

⁴⁰⁹ Reminiscences of Terry Collins, 107.

⁴¹⁰ Pulido, 282n28.

⁴¹¹ Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, “Journeys for Peace and Liberation: Third World Internationalism and Radical Orientalism during the U.S. War in Vietnam,” *Pacific Historical Review*, 76:4, p. 579-580. See also: Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

In addition to demonstrating the ways in which Asian and African American activists cultivated coalitional politics and developed revolutionary internationalist philosophies in tandem with one another, many scholars also point to examples of individuals who embody this trend. For instance, Grace Lee Boggs is a Chinese American woman who married James Boggs, an African American labor activist and the two were active in racial protests. Another salient example is Yuri Kochiyama, an Asian American woman from southern California who was interned along with her family during World War II. Kochiyama later moved to Harlem and became active in Malcolm X’s Organization of Afro-American Unity, famously cradling his head in her lap as he lay dying from gunshot wounds.

Asian American activists to use Black Power as their blueprint. Among the commonly used examples to explore this phenomenon is Richard Aoki, who was a Japanese American man who joined the Oakland Black Panther Party and became a prominent member of the organization. In addition, scholars like Daryl Maeda have demonstrated that Black Power, especially black masculinity, had a strong influence on the origins of the “Yellow Power” movement.⁴¹²

In New York City in 1969, one such organization that espoused the Black Power philosophy for their own platform formed in the Chinatown neighborhood of Manhattan. This group called themselves I Wor Kuen (IWK), which refers the Boxer Uprising in China at the turn of the twentieth century. The name translates (roughly) to “Fists of Righteous Harmony,” and in their “12 Point Program and Platform” issued in 1969, they say, “We have tried the peaceful means of petition, courts, voting and even demonstrations.” The failure of these peaceful attempts had prompted them to now “[prepare] to defend our communities against oppression and for revolutionary armed war against the gangsters, businessmen, politicians, and police.” While the IWK was never known to be involved in any “revolutionary armed war” activities, they embraced the right to self-defense against those who they perceived as being violent with them.⁴¹³

Their philosophy of armed struggle against the oppressive forces of the state, as well as their twelve point platform and their lumpen appeal made clear their intentions to model the IWK after the Black Panther Party. Many of their points echoed BPP points, including the focus on self-determination, the freeing of political prisoners, and the

⁴¹² Daryl J. Maeda, “Black Panthers, Red Guards, and Chinamen: Constructing Asian American identity through Performing Blackness, 1969-1972,” *American Quarterly* 57:4 (December 2005).

⁴¹³ Jeffrey Ogbar, 209.

proposals for community initiatives like health care and child care. The IWK platform also includes several references to a philosophy that espouses Third World internationalism, especially point number three, which calls for, “Liberation of all third world peoples and other oppressed peoples.” In elaborating on this point, they discuss “Asian, Black, Brown, Red,” and even “Millions and millions of white people” who struggle for freedom against western imperial forces.⁴¹⁴

Also demonstrating a platform that is indebted to the multiracial student movement (and the BPP’s platform), the IWK’s sixth point calls for “an education that exposes the true history of western imperialism in Asia and around the world.” Max Elbaum notes that the IWK was predominantly made up of young Chinese Americans, who were likely students in one of New York City’s colleges. He also suggests that they were influenced by the YLP, which had a strong student contingent as well. While Asian American studies was nominally a part of the takeover at City College in 1969, it was not until the 1970s that students gained traction in their proposals for Asian American Studies programs at CUNY. Thus, the IWK demonstrates an east coast organization that emerged simultaneously with the student protests, and shared many commonalities in terms of tactics, rhetoric, and goals.⁴¹⁵

In San Francisco the Red Guard Party was the largest and most well known of the radical Asian organizations centered near Chinatown. In 1967, a group of Asian youths formed an organization that sought to remedy the preponderance of dropouts and street youth in the Asian community. The group called itself “Legitimate Way,” or Leway. After a connection was established with the Black Panther Party in San Francisco, Leway

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Elbaum, 77.

members were encouraged to form a more politically radical organization modeled after the BPP. Thus, the Red Guard Party (RGP) was born. The RGP included members of Leway, as well as former SFSC students like Alex Hing, and other members of the AAPA, ICSA, and hundreds of other Asian activists. The group adopted the dress, posture, and rhetorical style of the BPP, as well as the ten point party platform, which the RGP revised to reflect “Yellow Power” rather than Black Power. After only a couple of years as a Yellow Power vanguard organization in San Francisco, the RGP underwent a schism in 1971, with one segment of the group emerging to form a chapter of IWK. This group joined with the New York IWK, and the joint organization was then referred to as the National IWK.⁴¹⁶ This joint organization continued to operate as the radical Asian American front in the fight against racism and the struggle for self-determination, and they were instrumental in developing Asian Student Unions on college campuses.⁴¹⁷

For Filipino activists, the struggle for self-determination was strengthened by the protest and the forging of an activist vanguard in the Philippine American Collegiate Endeavor. Following the end of the strike, Filipino students and the community of Filipinos that lived in Manilatown in San Francisco united in opposition to the eviction of Filipino and Chinese manong, or elderly male residents, of the International Hotel. The nearly sixty residents of the hotel faced eviction by a corporate owner who wished to gentrify the area of Manilatown and greater Chinatown. According to Beverly Kordziel, a UC Berkeley student and Filipina activist, “Filipino-American, Japanese-American, and

⁴¹⁶ Other Asian American organizations that espoused similar tactics were Wei Min She, which was located in San Francisco’s Chinatown and East Wind, which was located in Los Angeles. East Wind is the larger and better known of these two, mostly because of its publication of the leading Asian radical periodical of the day, *Gidra*. For more, see: Pulido.

⁴¹⁷ Warren Mar, “From Pool Halls to Building Worker Organizations: Lessons for Today’s Activists,” in *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, (Los Angeles, California: UCLA Asian Studies Center Press, 2001), 43.

Chinese-American students picketed together” to save these tenants’ homes. In addition, Kordziel mentions that previously apolitical Filipino residents “were proud to help these elderly Filipino and Chinese men save their home.”⁴¹⁸ Harvey Dong, also a student activist and a participant in the hotel protests states that, “Student activists from SF State and UC Berkeley, pretty much offshoots of the Third World Liberation Front movements, united with the elderly Filipino and Chinese tenants” to fight the eviction.⁴¹⁹

Everyday these Asian American activists would picket in front of the I-Hotel, as it was called, or in front of the office of the owner of the hotel. They formed a multiethnic, multi-generational Collective that coordinated picket activity. Kordziel says, “The hotel was a hub where people from the Asian Movement met... The entire block was filled with other groups doing community work and reaching out to the people of Chinatown.”⁴²⁰ Thus, the I-Hotel protest was a catalyzing event, which gave students from UC Berkeley and SFSC the chance to continue their organizational development and build on the pan-Asian solidarity of the student strikes.

However, the unique location of Filipinos within the Asian American community both helped and hindered Third World solidarity. As Yen Li Espiritu has shown, Filipinos rejected the label “yellow,” and instead preferred to name themselves “brown Asians” at the first Asian American national conference in 1972. While the I-Hotel protest shows that Filipinos pursued pan-Asian alliances, Espiritu also acknowledges that the Hispanic-Filipino alliance is also site of coalitional possibilities for Filipinos. Jason

⁴¹⁸ Beverly Kordziel, “To Be a Part of the People: The International Hotel Collective,” in *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, 243.

⁴¹⁹ Harvey Dong, “Transforming Student Elites to Community Activists: A Legacy of Asian American Activism,” in *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, 190-191.

⁴²⁰ Kordziel, 244.

Ferreira, in his study of Third World activists, provides evidence that Filipino activists lent their support during the organizing campaign of a Latino group in San Francisco in 1969. Thus, the Filipino example provides evidence of the continuing efforts on the part of Third World groups to find spaces of solidarity and points of commonality in the formation of a multiracial Left.⁴²¹

The contested status of the Native American population of San Francisco State College within the TWLF is evidence of the larger politicization that they underwent in this period of the late sixties. The Native American Student Organization (NASO) was involved in the early formation of the TWLF, and they issued position statements detailing the status of Native Americans at SFSC and in the larger society. The main issues facing American Indians at this time was the termination of reservations and tribal benefits, and the resulting woes of homelessness, poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, health problems and myriad other ills. The NASO group, however, receded from the TWLF and the strike activity, and most scholars' accounts of the TWLF during the strike do not include their organization among the active members.⁴²²

Then, in April of 1969, closely following the settlement and the end of the strike, an editorial appeared in the student newspaper under the headline "American Indians begin to fight." The piece is written by members of a new student organization called Student Council of American Natives, or SCAN, and they identify themselves as "Urban

⁴²¹ Other examples of Filipino activism during this era include the Kalaayan Collective, which was a revolutionary organization in the Bay Area, with similar groups in New York and Chicago. These organizations mainly consisted of recent im/migrants from the Philippines who were critical of the Marcos regime and the pro-Moscow tendencies of the Philippine Communist Party. They promoted Marxist-Leninist thought and formed alliances with other Filipino organizations. The Collective dissolved in 1971 and members went on to form the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP), or the Union of Democratic Filipinos, who promoted anti-imperialism. For more, see Elbaum, 78.

⁴²² NASO Folder, San Francisco State Strike Collection.

Indians” who are concerned with the transition of the reservation Indian into mainstream American society. They reject the efforts of “government-assigned ‘specialists’” to impose their expertise on the Indian population, especially their efforts to supercede the knowledge offered by their people. In addition, the SCAN column invokes the wars of resistance fought between the Native American warrior and the United States government, saying that the warrior has “not weakened nor has he capitulated his noble awe-inspiring cultural heritage.” They close the piece by warning that “[a new] Dawn will bring forth a new struggle, a new battlefield and a new Native American Indian!”⁴²³

This article introducing the new Native American student group is important to understanding the trajectory of nonwhite leftist activism in this period for several reasons. Despite the fact that the Native American contingent did not join the strike at SFSC in an official capacity, individual members were active in the protest (like Hari Dillon), and they also appear to have absorbed the message of the strike. For one, the students are gesturing toward a “pan-Native” identity when they say “We are a proud and strong assortment of tribes with an equally strong sense of survival,” referring to ethnic and cultural diversity among their ranks. However, they close by invoking the singular warrior, who stands in for all (male) Indians when they write, “he has not weakened.” Thus, they are embracing the pan-ethnic politics of other Left organizations like La Raza groups and Asian American groups.⁴²⁴

In addition to demonstrating a united front as the “new Native American Indian,” SCAN also referenced a future “dawn” in which they would inaugurate a new struggle. This is certainly a reference to the occupation of Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco

⁴²³ *Daily Gater*, 21-22 April 1969.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

Bay, which began in the fall of 1969 and included the national organization, the American Indian Movement (AIM). Members of the TWLF have made recent references to the lack of Native Americans in their organization by pointing out that they were focused on planning the occupation of Alcatraz. This suggests that the American Indian students at SFSC viewed the protest at Alcatraz as their primary concern, and they decided to place less emphasis on the protest for ethnic studies.⁴²⁵

Laura Pulido's research on the Third World Left in Los Angeles further demonstrates that the main focus of Native American activists during this period was at the rural reservation sites, thus drawing much of their energy and organization away from urban centers. Pulido emphasizes the concrete reality of the American Indian population as a literal separate nation within the geographic borders of the United States, thus making their relationship with other Third World internationalist groups somewhat tense. However, despite the ideological divide over literal and symbolic nationalism, Pulido demonstrates instances in which the Black Panther Party and East Wind supported and participated in AIM activities.⁴²⁶ Within the Third World Left paradigm, Native Americans are considered to be somewhat tangential; however, their basic philosophies aligned with the general thrust of the ideology, even if their activism was not based in the urban centers where much of the action of the Third World Left occurred.

Prior to the formation of La Raza at SFSC, there was an active Chicano student movement throughout California and the rest of the West and Southwest of the United

⁴²⁵ Comments recorded at "The Straight Story," *Consciousness, Community, Liberation: Fulfilling the Promise of '68*.

⁴²⁶ Pulido, 5-6. Additionally, Terry Collins referenced training a group of Lakota Native Americans in activism and draft resistance prior to his enrollment at San Francisco State. Given what evidence I have gathered about Collins's background, this likely occurred in the Bay Area in the mid sixties, and not on Lakota territory in South Dakota.

States. Beginning with the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver in March of 1969, the Chicano student movement began to gain momentum, with a platform based on nationalism, broadly defined, and on the goal of Chicano Studies. Later in 1969, student activists again gathered to discuss their platform at UC Santa Barbara for the Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education. At Santa Barbara, the decision was made to drop all references to the term Mexico in their student groups' names, and instead adopt the pre-Columbian term Chicano. Thus, they left Santa Barbara with a new national organization called El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), or the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán.⁴²⁷

Because MEChA was for students of Mexican origin, its presence was not felt in San Francisco or New York City to the extent that it was in southern California, particularly Los Angeles. However, in the Bay Area, members of the SFSC Mexican American Student Confederation eventually adopted the term Chicano to refer to themselves and changed the name of their organization to La Raza. However, the term and the group La Raza also incorporated the Latin American Student Organization, whose members were mostly foreign-born students from Central and South American countries. As has been mentioned previously in this dissertation, most Latinos in the Bay Area in the late sixties were from Latin American countries other than Mexico. This meant that there was significant diversity among ethnicities and nationalities in the Mission district, the Latino commercial and residential neighborhood in San Francisco. By adopting the name La Raza for their group and for their new Department of La Raza Studies, the Latino students at SFSC were adopting a pan-ethnic identity much like other

⁴²⁷ Munoz, Jr., 102. For more on the politics behind the semantics, see Chapter One.

ethnic groups mentioned above. Within the community, pan-Latin activism built upon this foundation with the formation of Los Siete de la Raza in 1969.

Following the arrest of several Latino youth in connection with the death of a San Francisco police officer, members of the Latino community organized a legal defense committee that also performed other services for people in their neighborhood. Los Siete de la Raza was co-founded in 1969 by Roger Alvarado who was a prominent member of the TWLF and a significant factor in the adoption of the name La Raza for the student organization at SFSC. Jason Ferreira likens Los Siete to organizations like the Black Panther Party due to their development of “Serve the People” programs and their focus on police brutality. Additionally, Ferreira demonstrates the cooperation among Los Siete and the BPP and the Red Guard Party, which evinces the active development of a Third World coalition in San Francisco.⁴²⁸

At City College of New York, following the strike and the establishment of ethnic studies departments, the Committee of Ten ceased to exist, as did many of the ad-hoc student organizational infrastructure that had existed during the occupation. While PRISA members continued to provide student input into campus issues, a new effort at organizing CCNY students across the city was underway. Late in 1969, Puerto Rican students at CUNY colleges and other institutions in and around New York City met to discuss the formation of a group called Unión Estudiantil Boricua, or the Puerto Rican Students Union (PRSU). CCNY students, in particular, were pivotal in the creation of

⁴²⁸ The Brown Berets were another Latino youth organization that formed in Los Angeles in the late sixties. They were modeled after the Black Panther Party in their militant style (members wore berets, sunglasses, bullet belts, and carried firearms) and in their party platforms. However, the Brown Berets vocally espoused cultural nationalism, which was an obstacle in forming strong coalitions with other organizations in the third world Left. For more on the Brown Berets, see: Munoz, Jr. and Pulido.

the PRSU, as one founding member recalled, “the number of CCNY students who had participated in the development of PRSU was substantial.” In addition, this individual claims that, “The PRSU chapter at CCNY was arguably the largest and most militant...[and this] chapter played an instrumental role in the development and growth of CCNY’s Department of Puerto Rican Studies.”⁴²⁹

The PRSU focused on several issues related to the present conditions of Puerto Ricans in the United States. In addition to addressing elements related to their status as students, PRSU members also cultivated a strong commitment to students in Puerto Rico. At the time, the student movement at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) was active in protesting US colonialism, especially the draft and the war in Vietnam. They were experiencing severe police repression, and PRSU members organized rallies in solidarity and to raise funds to support UPR students. Additionally, among the key tenets of their platform, they included the commitment to, “support the struggles of other minority-group members in the United States,” and also, “to support the struggles of the Third World.” Thus, they maintained a broad focus on issues concerning people of color at home and around the world. They also maintained a close relationship with the Puerto Rican radical organization the Young Lords Party.⁴³⁰

Founded in 1969, the New York chapter of the Young Lords Party operated as a community organizing group mainly in Harlem and the Bronx throughout the 1970s. They found their inspiration in the original Chicago organization known as the Young Lords, although they operated in a manner much more similar to the Black Panther Party.

⁴²⁹ Basilio Serrano, “*¡Rifle, Cañón, y Escopeta!*”: A Chronicle of the Puerto Rican Student Union,” in Torres and Velázquez., 135.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

They developed a thirteen point platform, modeled after the BPP, and their energies were mainly focused at reclaiming and forming community services for Puerto Rican people in New York City. They fought for employment, housing, health care and other social services. Their platform included some of the most progressive prohibitions on sexism for a revolutionary nationalist organization at the time, and a major focus of their organizing became ending forced sterilizations among Puerto Rican women and all women of color.⁴³¹ They also addressed Third World solidarity and Third World nationalism, by declaring, “All the colored and oppressed peoples of the world are one nation under oppression. No Puerto Rican Is Free Until All People Are Free!”⁴³²

At its inception, the PRSU was closely affiliated with the Young Lords. As discussed in Chapter Four, Iris Morales was a CCNY student and an early member of the YLP in New York City. In addition, many members of the PRSU were joint members of the YLP, and the student contingent was a major factor in one of the YLP’s early efforts in establishing the People’s Church in East Harlem. Beginning in 1972, however, the affiliation became formal, and the PRSU contingent officially joined the YLP. Subsequently, the YLP shifted their organizational focus from the United States to Puerto Rico, and they changed their name to the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization. Beginning at that time, the PRSU operated essentially as the student arm of the Young Lords Party, and as such, their platform and philosophy remained militant and community-focused.⁴³³

⁴³¹ See: Jennifer Nelson.

⁴³² Pulido, 282n28.

⁴³³ Serrano, 137.

As this section has demonstrated, the influence of the student movement on the wider Third World Left was immense. Students not only founded and joined organizations that espoused community-focused, internationalist, and revolutionary programs, their philosophies of coalition building among people of color also shaped the new phase of nonwhite leftist activism. While the Black Panther Party's "Serve the People" programs predated the Third World student movement, the rededication of the Third World Left to those fundamental issues is evident in the founding platforms of organizations like I Wor Kuen and the Young Lords. Many of the sentiments echoed in those platforms are the same issues that students at SFSC and CCNY were fighting to bring to their communities. In addition, the Third World Left in the 1970s is characterized by a revolutionary nationalism that espoused militancy and a "new mood" of activist tactics, many of which were on display during the student strikes. These tactics and their accompanying revolutionary rhetoric made these Third World Left organizations prime targets for government repression in the name of stopping "ghetto violence" and scoring political points. The nature of that violence and its legitimacy is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

"Violence is always felt by your oppressors": Justifiable Violence in Protest

The role of violence and armed self-defense in radical organizations of color have long and contested histories in American culture. From the slave rebellions of the antebellum period to the Black Power marches in the twentieth century, the specter of violent revolt has haunted much of the discussion about race in America. Because of the centrality and prominence of the black freedom struggle to the notion of race and diversity in the United States, the debate about justifiable violence is focused on the

African American population. However, during the late nineteen sixties, the global paradigm of decolonization lent a new framework through which Americans of all racial and ethnic background began to see their relationship vis-à-vis the power of the state. In order to understand the role that violence and self-defense played in the student movements and the rise of the Third World Left, I examine the legacy of the tactics of the civil rights movement and their influence on these later struggles.

Recent scholarship on the southern civil rights movement has established the fact that nonviolence was a popular tactic of protest, but it did not supplant the indigenous preference for armed self-defense. Similarly, scholars have also sought to destigmatize the Black Power movement as the unruly and iconoclastic offspring of the legitimate black struggle of the South by demonstrating that self-defense remained the preferred attitude for combating racism. In the first instance, scholars are attempting to complicate a narrow focus on nonviolence, and in the latter, scholars are tackling a pervasive myth of preemptive violence.

For many observers, the southern struggle's use of the tactic of nonviolent direct action was a brave and noble strategy, while the presence of armed black groups in the northern campaigns was a detrimental and counterproductive development. The fallacy in drawing this dichotomy, however, is not just that there were similar armed groups present in the southern movement, but also that there was widespread violence as well. The noble strategy of nonviolence relied on provoking violence from white racist citizens and the various arms of the state's law enforcement organizations, in order to solicit sympathy. However, in many cases, the violence of white racists did not have to be deliberately provoked.

In these instances, where white terrorism threatened African American activists and non-activists alike, the notion of self-defense was more widely accepted than has been traditionally acknowledged. In the South, organized self-defense groups like the Deacons for Defense existed alongside everyday citizens who exercised an informal right to self-preservation by arming themselves. In fact, as historian Hasan Jeffries argues, African American activists in Lowndes County, Alabama found nonviolence to be an unnecessarily dangerous tactic. Instead of inviting violence as part of a “moral crusade,” members of this community “believed that it was safer to let white people know, without too much fanfare, that they possessed guns and were not afraid to use them.”⁴³⁴ The gun-toting members of the civil rights movement were not seen as incompatible with the larger focus on the tenets of nonviolence, and many individuals were known to have concealed weapons at “nonviolent” rallies and other events.

In addition, in the northern context, self-defense was also an accepted notion, especially in communities with a large Nation of Islam (NOI) following. The adherents of NOI espoused the right to self-defense as part of a larger emphasis on black nationalism and self-determination.⁴³⁵ Malcolm X was the most well known spokesperson for this philosophy, as a member of the NOI and after his departure from that organization. According to scholar Jeffrey Ogbar, while the NOI officially disavowed guns by order of Elijah Muhammad, individual members were known to have carried firearms since the early sixties. Obviously, NOI members were in possession of guns or had easy access to them when they assassinated Malcolm X in 1965 with an arsenal of handguns and shotguns. Thus, the presence of violence is a central element to

⁴³⁴ Jeffries, 104.

⁴³⁵ Ogbar, 218 n. 2.

both milieus of the African American struggle, as white violence instigated by direct action tactics, and as the right to defend oneself from that violence.

However, by 1968, the perception of violence in the African American freedom struggle had changed. For several consecutive years in the 1960s, the nation's urban areas had erupted in violent rebellions, as African American citizens resisted violent police repression and racism. As described in Chapter Four, following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. by white supremacist James Earl Ray in Memphis in April of 1968, several major cities experienced riot activity. The increasing incidence of uprisings in urban areas in the mid and late 1960s contributed to the notion that black violence in the North represented a distinct shift in mood from the earlier events of the southern struggle. A. Cecil Williams, an elder of the San Francisco black community during the student strike, commented on this new mood. He said,

[The student activists] had tried everything that the white man taught them, and we [adult black leaders over 30] had tried it, and it didn't work. And we were now saying in fact that there are new moods and new tempos and new vibrations that we understand which are not understood in the academic community.⁴³⁶

The emergence and ascendance of the Black Panthers in particular, represented this new mindset within the black freedom struggle. When Huey Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland in 1966, they embraced the lumpenproletariat (underclass) and initially focused on combating police brutality within their communities in the Bay Area.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁶ Orrick, 72.

⁴³⁷ In addition to combating police brutality through armed self-defense and the questionable tactics of government infiltration (such as framing Panthers for shootings or murders), the BPP received negative publicity for several instances of violence within their own ranks and with other black organizations. This notion of "black on black" violence, such as the shootout between Los Angeles Panthers and the cultural

While the Black Power era certainly represented a shift in political philosophy and goals, the presence of violence alone does not mark a shift. Despite this fact, the undeniable focus of media coverage and political maneuverings regarding Black Power in general, and the protests at SFSC and CCNY in particular, became the regular violent interactions between police and people of color. Journalists and politicians almost always portrayed the violence as being instigated by African American hoodlums, and it was highlighted as a pattern of open and organized rebellion. Violence in the ghetto was described as both wanton and deliberate, making the threat to police officers and fellow citizens appear immediate and persistent.

The political philosophy of the activists at San Francisco State and City College of New York in 1968 was founded on the southern example of Robert F. Williams and the Deacons, and the northern iterations of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam alike. However, there was also a further layer to their philosophy that was modeled after the Black Panthers' focus on combating police brutality. The internationalism espoused by these activists drew on notoriously inflammatory rhetoric from Third World revolutionaries and philosophers like Mao Tse-tung, Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, and the Algerian National Liberation Front in their war of decolonization against the French. In embracing the anti-colonial, revolutionary rhetoric of these individuals and organizations, the student activists were drawing connections between their status as victims of state repression, and the colonized subjects of western imperial nations. Additionally, by 1968, students were making explicit connections between their status in the United States and the North Vietnamese people who resisted the American military in the war in

nationalist US organization in L.A., predicted much of the present-day debates over gang violence, which further exacerbates the image of rampant black violence.

Vietnam. The influence of these individuals and groups and their rhetoric on the student activists has been highlighted in the previous chapters, significantly in the case of George Murray, for whom the politicization of such rhetoric was a catalyst in the strike at SFSC.

At City College, students of color feared violent reprisals from white activists who had shown their willingness to engage in physical confrontation with the striking students. In response, the black and Puerto Rican students were vigilant about security and patrolling the area around the South Campus that was under occupation. The students and fellow members of the community formed highly organized security squads, and they took suspected infiltrators “into custody,” questioning them about their loyalties in order to determine if they were affiliated with the police. This paranoia was not actually misplaced. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the students were able to determine a few days into the takeover that an African American member of the NYPD had infiltrated their protest. Several members of the security detail took the officer into a classroom to interrogate him, and Tom Soto recalled, “We put a lamp over his head...like they do to us when they arrest us.”⁴³⁸ Ultimately the officer admitted to being with the NYPD, and the students released him after explaining to him that he was a traitor.

Later that night, the students reported that the officer and some of his African American colleagues who were all members of the Guardians, a group of black officers, pursued them, opening fire on them as they ran away. The students acknowledged that they were unarmed and eventually “had to then negotiate some sort of peace between this group of black cops and us.” The Guardians organization ostensibly existed in order to protect and promote the interests of African American law enforcement officers and

⁴³⁸ Tom Soto, Legacy of Struggle Folder, City College Archives.

citizens in New York City. It is reasonable to suggest that the officer who infiltrated the protest was simply carrying out the duties of his profession, having been given the opportunity to use his race as way to excel at his job. However, the officer's decision to seek retribution on the students who blew his cover, with the complicity of his fellow Guardians, suggests that there may have been animosity between the black members of the police force and the students of color who espoused militant tactics.

In addition to reporting that cops opened fire on them, Barbara Justice remembers an incident when "three carloads of Europeans" drove by the guards stationed at the St. Nicholas Terrace gate and fired shots. She said, "We had no guns to shoot back."⁴³⁹ Despite the fact that many students, especially those at SFSC, were members of groups like the BPP who made carrying firearms a priority (and despite the fact that George Murray was in jail on weapons charges at the end of the Third World strike), no student was known to carry a weapon other than a stick or a rock during the protests.

Similarly, while no TWLF member was charged with weapons possession (other than Tim Peebles who attempted to detonate a bomb late in the strike), violence was deemed such a salient factor in the student protests at San Francisco State that the Johnson Administration's National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (NCCPV) solicited a study of the strike for the Commission's report. Members of the NCCPV spent months observing the strike, gathering information and interviewing strike participants. They ultimately prepared a report, under the lead of William Orrick, which they submitted to the Commission in June of 1969. The purpose of the report was to identify the causes of the "tragic events" and "distressing episodes" at San Francisco

⁴³⁹ Barbara Justice, Legacy of Struggle Folder, City College Archives.

State, which was both a specific and isolated event, but also a means of gaining insight “into some of the causes of the ever-growing campus protests in the United States.”⁴⁴⁰

By making San Francisco State exemplary of the increasing campus-based unrest of the student movement, the researchers made an interesting choice. While Berkeley was far better known as the hotbed of the student movement in the Bay Area, the dimension of racial protest seen in the SF State example was largely absent at Berkeley.⁴⁴¹ Thus, in the context of the increasing racial violence in the urban North, the choice to study San Francisco State allowed the Commission to illuminate both campus unrest and inner-city uprisings.

The Orrick report’s sharp focus on the violence that occurred during the Third World strike at SFSC is an eminently useful text for understanding not only how a mainstream white audience perceived violence, but also how the activists themselves framed their tactics. As has been discussed throughout this dissertation, the activists at both schools formulated strategies that went beyond the provocation of outrage and the elicitation of media coverage because they were not relying on appealing to white observers for support. The earnest support of John Summerskill in San Francisco and Buell Gallagher in New York City had done little to advance the cause of expanding admissions and introducing ethnic studies to the satisfaction of the students. The symbolic struggle of white radical students around the country meant little to the students

⁴⁴⁰ Orrick, 2.

⁴⁴¹ Berkeley did have examples of racial protest, including the formation of a chapter of TWLF in 1969. However, the protests were largely orchestrated and populated by white radical students, as in the case of the Free Speech Movement in 1964 and the demonstrations for Eldridge Cleaver’s series of lectures in the Experimental College. The dimension of mass protest by predominantly nonwhite students, especially with the tactics of a third world guerrilla war, made SFSC unique.

at these schools for whom the prospect of inferior and inadequate education meant poverty, neglect, and violence on a daily basis.

It is this notion of the unrelenting violence of nonwhite existence that is perhaps the most poignant dimension of the students' defense of their strategy. In 1969 SNCC founding member and Georgia State Representative Julian Bond asked, "Is it not violent to condemn to death twice the proportion of black babies as white babies in their first year? Is it not violent to send twice the proportion of black men as white men to Vietnam every year?"⁴⁴² By highlighting the ways in which race operated to make black citizens, and all citizens of color, suffer disproportionate casualties in war and in poverty at home, Bond raises one element of the students' argument about violence. James Garrett, in an interview with one of the NCCPV researchers, elaborates on the paradigm of existential violence in the black experience:

Violence is teaching black students that they are citizens. Violence is teaching people that they can get a measure of justice in this country comparable to the kind of justice that John F. Kennedy would have gotten, had he lived, or that Ted Kennedy will get. Violence to me is teaching black people that all cultures are the same, which means that all cultures are white. Violence to me is teaching a student, a girl who is a drama major that [a white actress] is her real image and the person she should follow after as an actress, you know, rather than the African dances and the African drums.

Similarly, Tony Miranda, a Latina student at SFSC and member of the TWLF addresses this point, saying,

My definition of violence is quite different than what the newspapers say when they talk about violence...Look at the kind of violence we see in the school system where Third World people are systematically placed in second, third, or fourth tracks; the sociological violence of an institution

⁴⁴² Orrick, 73.

like the Welfare Department where people are subjugated to degrading questionnaires...⁴⁴³

While the notion that daily existence in poverty and racist environments was a significant element in the students' defense of their tactic, they also speak eloquently about the nature of violence at the hands of the police.

The TWLF at SFSC attempted to distinguish between incidental or unorganized violence that occurred spontaneously, and the organized violence of the SFPD. In a pamphlet prepared three months into the strike, they wrote, "property destruction, rock throwing or other isolated acts of what is termed violence...is unorganized violence and the responsibility for these acts can only be placed on the individuals who commit them." They go on to argue, however, that "600 policemen viciously and indiscriminately beating senseless anyone who gets in their way, with the endorsement and encouragement of the college administration and California political hierarchy, can only be termed organized violence." The dichotomy that the TWLF identifies in this paradigm gestures toward a larger discussion about the notion of the legitimate violence of the state, exercised through law enforcement agencies, and the illegitimate violence of those who resist the state.

In an article in *Black Fire* in May of 1969, African American student Pat Wilmot argues that those who espouse violence in all cases are as misguided as those who espouse nonviolence or passive resistance. He elaborates on the "need for violence" in response to the power structure that possesses "organized and systematized violence in the form of the army, the police and the national guard." For Wilmot, the correct relationship to violence is the espousal of revolutionary violence "directed strategically at

⁴⁴³ Orrick, 134-135.

the seizure of power.”⁴⁴⁴ For the students involved in these protests, state violence was exercised not only through law enforcement, but also through racist bureaucracies that denied them access to health, education and employment services. In this paradigm, the notion of legitimacy became irrelevant. As Jimmy Garrett described it, the object was to revisit that pressure on the state: “Violence is always felt by the people who oppress you, if you get your program right.” Thus, Garrett does not disavow the use of violence, but for him, “the program” was aimed at the oppressors.

As has been discussed, students at SFSC and CCNY who were active in the strikes, regardless of their racial or ethnic background, were radicalized by the theories of internationalism, especially the internal colonial model. In espousing this rhetoric and philosophy, the students articulated a sophisticated strategy regarding the justifiable use of violence. While their rhetoric used warfare to highlight the struggle, their aim was never to cause physical harm. However, because their rhetoric and their actions were significant counterpoints to the well-known use of nonviolence in the southern civil rights movement, they were accused of provoking a race war. Following years of uprisings in which police and members of predominantly black neighborhoods engaged in violent clashes, the protests at SFSC and CCNY inherited a legacy of racial violence. Thus, despite the fact that violence rarely occurred without the massive police presence on campus, and despite the fact that Ronald Reagan, as the governor of California, promised to keep campus open “at the point of a bayonet, if necessary,” the students became the aggressors in the minds of the public. This unjustified legacy of violence has obscured

⁴⁴⁴ Pat Wilmot, “Defining a Need for Violence,” *Black Fire*, 3 May 1969.

the origins of the Third World Left by denigrating the philosophies and tactics of these activists, and by attracting a disproportionately large focus on black students.

The Lopsided Focus on Black Students/Studies: Then and Now

At SFSC and CCNY, students of color other than African American students who formed ethnic organizations on their campus testified to the influence that Black Power had on their decision to organize themselves. This influence was characterized as a general philosophical example, as well as a specific motivation to pursue ethnic studies, as black students were the first to propose this curriculum and mobilize around this issue. The undeniable radicalizing influence of Black Power and the black protest movement on other groups of Americans is a major factor in the development of ethnic studies.⁴⁴⁵

Black studies naturally emerged prior to the notion of ethnic studies because of the existing networks of black activism on campuses in the United States.⁴⁴⁶ While the Black Studies Department at San Francisco State was technically approved by the fall of 1968, the process of designing and implementing that department frustrated the BSU to the point that they instituted the strike. When joined a few days later by the TWLF and their list of demands, the BSU merged leadership with other students of color. At CCNY, black students and Puerto Rican students had been members of the same organizations and they had a history of cooperating and organizing together on campus. It is evident that, while not always harmonious, the various members of the strike groups were equally important to the efforts of the protests.

⁴⁴⁵ Maeda, *American Quarterly*, 1082.

⁴⁴⁶ Black studies, of course, also has a long history within black intellectual circles. For more on this, see: Nathaniel Norment, Jr., *The African American Studies Reader*, (Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2001).

However, at the time, and still today, there is a disproportionate amount of attention paid to the black students, their demands, and their departments. There are many reasons for this discrepancy in focus, and understanding these issues is central to grasping why the development and persistence of ethnic studies has lately been embraced as a victory. The lopsided interest in black students at the time was a function of the fact that the African American freedom struggle had occupied the forefront of the American consciousness for two decades. This protest was just another aspect of the Black Power paradigm that was increasingly a topic of discussion. The continued focus of historians and scholars on black students, however, is far more complicated to divine.

While the strikes at SFSC and CCNY have begun to reclaim a place in the long history of both ethnic activism and the student movement, the dearth of secondary material on these protests reveals a generalized indifference to their contribution. Daryl Maeda argues that by ignoring the role that the strike at SFSC, specifically, played in nonwhite activism, scholars are revealing an inherent elitism. They are overlooking the events that occurred at lesser known state or city colleges in this period, and instead favoring the protests that rocked elite campuses like Berkeley, Cornell, Harvard and Columbia. By revealing this trend of indifference toward lesser schools, Maeda is also demonstrating that scholars are reinforcing the paradigm of the student movement as white and middle class.⁴⁴⁷ However, for scholars who do venture into student protests by activists of color, they focus on the association between black studies and Black Power to the exclusion of other racial or ethnic activism.

⁴⁴⁷ Maeda, 206, n. 13.

A recent spate of scholarly work on the topic of black studies has argued that the battle for educational relevancy was a fundamental platform of the Black Power movement. These works have demonstrated the ways in which the Black Power movement was far more diverse, syncretic, and flexible than originally assumed. Works by Fabio Rojas, Noliwe Rooks, and Devin Fergus also demonstrate the surprising degree to which black activists worked with the liberal establishment in order to reach their goals. Martha Biondi, in a recently published article (and presumably in her forthcoming monograph on the topic), has shown how black studies departments became the terrain on which the “transition” from civil rights to Black Power became fully realized.⁴⁴⁸ Each of these works marks the struggle at San Francisco State as the origin of black studies, and each inexplicably fails to frame this event as a significant moment of multiracial activism. Instead, the discipline of black studies is discussed as though it emerged as a solitary product of a narrow struggle by Black Power activists.

Presumably, these scholars do not set out to intentionally remove the multiracial coalitions at the heart of the development of ethnic studies. And yet, to focus solely on black studies in the context of these struggles is to willfully ignore the larger movement. These scholars cleave to the declension thesis, using black studies as a way of showing that much of the Black Power movement survived by being absorbed into mainstream liberalism, and the parts that remained separate ultimately self-destructed by the mid

⁴⁴⁸ Martha Biondi, “Student Protest, ‘Law and Order’ and the Origins of African American Studies in California,” in *Contested Democracy: Politics, Ideology and Race in American History*, eds. Manisha Sinha and Penny von Eschen, (New York: Columbus University Press, 2007); Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies.*; Noliwe M. Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics, 1965-1980*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

1970s. However, as a way of celebrating the idea of Black Power, these scholars adopt black studies as the noble legacy of that movement. For Rooks and Fergus, the focus on black studies to the exclusion of other ethnic studies is a function of their efforts to uncover evidence that Black Power accommodated the increasing interest of white liberalism as a way of raising funds. These relationships with liberals ultimately made for unsustainable arrangements as Black Power became co-opted and diminished by the influence of liberalism. For Rojas, the focus on institutional acceptance of black studies also gauges the success of the movement by its ability to attract mainstream patronage and support, even as it faltered within the university structure. Thus, Black Power succeeded, and the reward for that was obliteration by the academy.

In some ways, these works are trying to destigmatize Black Power by claiming a legitimate legacy for the movement. When the Black Panther Party shifted gears in the 1970s and pursued electoral politics, many scholars argue they invited their own irrelevancy by trying to reform the system instead of overthrow it.⁴⁴⁹ In relinquishing their status as revolutionary outsiders, they allowed the political establishment to co-opt their energy and tame their philosophy. However, by demonstrating Black Power adherents' ability to work within educational systems to achieve lasting change, these scholars are saving the movement from irrelevancy. This is likely a response to the “good sixties/bad sixties” historiography that portrays the latter part of the decade as a downward spiral of fragmentation and self-destruction. These scholars imply that the late sixties were not all bad—and black studies is proof of that.

⁴⁴⁹ For more on this, see: Charles Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party: Reconsidered*.

However, as has been demonstrated, Black Power activists were deeply troubled by the outcome of the strikes at SFSC and CCNY. By examining the actual proposals that they drafted, I have shown that their vision for ethnic studies was a far more collaborative, ambitious, and radical enterprise than that which exists today. These authors do not disregard the struggle to define and transform black studies that has plagued the discipline since its inception, but they do not qualify its existence by highlighting this disparity. By failing to truly understand what the activists were demanding, these works do not account for the multiracial nature of the struggle and its influence on the emergent Third World Left.

In Biondi's case, she inexplicably argues that the black students' focus on "relevancy" in education and a concerted effort to gain skills and experience to bring back to the community was a function of building a stronger black middle class. She posits that this regrettably ignored factor in the evolution of black protest remains largely unstudied because of the negative connotations of the violent struggle in which black studies emerged. Her study, then, is a corrective to this oversight, and she intends to reclaim the "neglected intellectualism of the black liberation movement" and the efforts of "a generation of black students who took bold steps to redesign structures of opportunity that would be pivotal in expanding the black middle class." Her argument about the militant black students and their "pivotal" contribution to the black middle class relies on interpreting the students' desires to gain an education in order to "uplift" their communities as an "ethos of community service" within the black community.

However, in divorcing the development of black studies from the multiracial movement in which it was fostered, Biondi makes a serious misstep in claiming middle

class aspirations for the student activists. These students' efforts to gain a relevant education in ethnic studies was not seen as a pathway to careers in social work or psychology or any other profession that Biondi would associate with middle class uplift. In fact, the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños articulated a core principle of their institute as, "The Centro strives to combat status-seeking and bureaucracy [and espouses] the rejection of careerism."⁴⁵⁰ In opposition to these considerations, these students professed a desire to gain a radicalizing education that would allow them to bring the revolution back to Chinatown or Harlem. As I have demonstrated through analyzing the emergent Third World Left in the period following the strike, almost every activist organization adopted "Serve the People" programs that focused on delivering concrete aid to neglected urban minorities. These efforts were not part of a pathway to a career, but rather a function of the radical platforms of these organizations. But that does not supply a triumphant legacy for a historical narrative because it introduces the complicated dimension of militant rhetoric. For Biondi, the complicated legacy of revolutionary rhetoric and violent confrontation obscures the triumph of middle class intellectualism, which is the noble outcome of the black student movement. By making black studies a triumph of a kinder, gentler middle class Black Power, Biondi sidesteps the declension thesis, but she misses entirely the multiracial, Third World coalition building.

In disagreeing with these works and their understanding of the origins of black studies, I do not mean to suggest that black studies actually represents a failure or that celebrating its accomplishments is unjustified. I do, however, intend to illuminate the fact that Black Power was not the only, or even the most salient political philosophy that

⁴⁵⁰ Origin and Development of Centro, Box 62, Folder 6, Centro Archives.

led to the creation of ethnic studies. Furthermore, by using black studies as a vehicle to save Black Power from irrelevancy, these scholars frame the late sixties and early seventies as a period of decline. Only by studying the origin of the discipline as a coalition of people of color, can one truly grasp the legacy and implications of the “new mood” of late sixties activism. Careful study of these origins reveals a counter-narrative—one that de-centers the role of white students and argues for the ascension of a Third World internationalist paradigm of activism.

Conclusion

A major focus of the activism of urban nonwhite populations in the late sixties and early seventies was increasing the responsiveness of public education to their community. This meant instituting local oversight, community involvement, relevant curriculum, and a targeted increase in diversity, both among instructors and students. While this effort grew out of a desire to see the faces of their communities reflected in their classrooms and in their textbooks, this movement to reform education did not fall along strictly racial lines. Black students sought an education in black history by black professors; however, they also supported the efforts of their Asian, Latino, Native American and other classmates. The multiracial focus of the Third World student movement persisted beyond the boundaries of campus, and the notion of interethnic solidarity contributed to a new Third World Left movement in the 1970s. In addition to bridging racial differences, activists also implemented new tactics that rejected the publicly celebrated nonviolent efforts of the southern civil rights movement. While marches, pickets, and sit-ins were employed on the campuses of SF State and City

College during the strike activities, they were not the preferred method for securing victory.

Rather, these students embraced a “new mood” of activism that rejected the perceived wisdom of the white Left and the stale tactics of the civil rights movement. In so doing, these students inaugurated a new era in American social and political life that had implications in many areas. They forced the country to confront the role that educational institutions play in perpetuating racism by failing to incorporate pluralistic visions, philosophies, histories, and cultures. In addition, the new Third World Left exposed the narrowness of the spectrum of American political opinion by forcing self-avowed liberals and the left-leaning academy to defend those institutions of higher education that enshrined an unflinchingly Eurocentric educational tradition. They heightened the contradictions between the promise of American liberalism and the realities of persistent racial discrimination. And they fostered the creation of a new cadre of leftist radicals whose Third World internationalist approach to global politics mounted a sustained challenge to the tired liberalism of the status quo.

These are important outcomes of this frequently overlooked chapter in American history. While the success of the Third World student movement may not have been the establishment of “counter colleges” that critiqued and dismantled the entrenched elitism and Eurocentrism of American institutions of higher education, they were not without their victories. It has taken forty years of hindsight to be able to frame the Third World student movement as a victory. In the intervening forty years, much has been said about the role of government repression, the element of self-defense, and the intrinsic value of diversity. For the students who first mounted a challenge to the notion that meritocracy

and canonical curriculum were bulletproof, the vagaries of that fight have obscured the focus for the past few decades. Now, however, conferences and retrospectives invite these former student activists to recount their efforts of building coalitions and sustaining movements, in order that they might inspire a new generation of activists to take up the cause. Thus, while the Third World student movement cannot claim unqualified victory, it can teach us about the nature of activism in the late 1960s, and the moment in which people of color in the United States buoyed a Left on the verge of irrelevancy.

In describing the protests at SFSC and CCNY, and arguing that they are fundamental to understanding the 1960s and the trajectory of nonwhite activism, I have entered into fertile territory. We continue to gain more nuanced explorations of activism among people of color, and our understanding of the Third World Left continues to be expanded. However, it is no longer sufficient to study these movements in isolation from one another; to do so is to perpetuate the competition and tendency toward hierarchical assessment that was engendered between different ethnic groups during the process of the institutionalization of ethnic studies.

Epilogue—Unfinished Business: Women in the Third World Left

Having told the story of the Third World student movement at SFSC and CCNY and demonstrated its influence on the creation of the Third World Left, it should be quite obvious that this dissertation lacks a rigorous analysis of gender within the movement. This is not to be taken as evidence that gender was not a significant factor in the strikes or in the Third World Left in general. On the contrary, the dynamics of gender in these areas were as significant as they were within American society at large in the 1960s, and indeed in the complicated relationship between revolutionary nationalism and masculinity. The decision to address these factors here should not be taken as an implicit assumption that gender is somehow a lesser concern, deserving only of an appendage to “the real story.” In the course of writing this dissertation, I made necessary but difficult decisions about the narrative I wanted to develop, given the time, resources and other constraints I had to work with. With that said, I would like to offer some closing thoughts on the gender dynamics of the Third World student movement, the Third World Left, and the influence of these movements on the development of Third World feminism.

In the popular imagination, Black Power ideology is defined by the specter of black men with guns, thrusting their declaration of manhood into the national consciousness. Despite the overwhelming association of Black Power with the

expression of black masculinity via the militancy of the movement, the turn towards radicalism among activists of color in the late 1960s also offered a liberating space for women. Empowerment for women of color was not an inevitable byproduct, however, and it was not won easily or cleanly. Furthermore, it was not the concern of all women of color within the Third World Left. However, for those women who participated in the student strikes at SFSC and CCNY, or who joined organizations like I Wor Kuen or the Young Lords Party, the rhetoric of self-determination was a potent force in developing a feminist consciousness.

Much has been said about the ignorance of the mainstream feminist movement of the 1960s in assuming that women's rights were universal, and that women of color grappled with the same limitations in their lives as middle class white women. Similarly, much has been said about the ignorance of the mainstream Black, Brown, Yellow, and Red Power movements in assuming that, "it was the consensus of the group that the Chicana does not want to be liberated."⁴⁵¹ However, neither of these paradigms explains the full scope of the situation that women of color faced within leftist politics in the 1960s.

Within the strikes at SFSC and CCNY women occupied leadership roles, but they also chafed at the gendered hierarchy that existed in the strike organizations, and was replicated in media coverage of the event. For instance, at SFSC, Marianna Waddy had been the leader of the BSU prior to the emergence of James Garrett as the vocal and militant leader in 1966. Similarly, Penny Nakatsu had been the first woman to head the newly formed SFSC chapter of the Asian American Political Alliance. There were

⁴⁵¹ Muñoz, Jr., 93.

female members of every organization, at all levels, both formally and informally. At CCNY, Iris Morales and Barbara Justice were two prominent women within the larger black and Puerto Rican student alliance, and Barbara Justice even played a role in organizing security teams during the occupation.

However, despite women's prominence, there has been a concerted effort lately for male members of the Third World student movement to apologize and atone for the machismo and sexism of the movement. For instance, at a conference commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the strike at SFSC, Jimmy Garrett ended his remarks on his role in the strike and in the BSU by saying that he regretted the way he treated women and his arrogance in assuming that he was superior to them.⁴⁵² In addition, at a commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the strike, Hari Dillon admitted that "sexism was rampant in our movement," and despite how many women were involved in the strike, not a single member of the Central Committee of the TWLF was female.⁴⁵³ And yet, at a panel for "Women in the Strike" at the fortieth anniversary commemoration, when asked about these women's relationship to the masculine militancy of the strike, one woman said that, "they were more ready to be deferential because they were happy to see their brothers step forward" and claim their manhood.⁴⁵⁴ Thus, it would be presumptuous to argue that sexism within the movement was universally acknowledged as a flaw or a failure.

However proud the women of the Third World Left were to see their male

⁴⁵² Jimmy Garrett, comments delivered at, "Brother and Sisters of the BSU," *Consciousness, Community and Liberation: Fulfilling the Promise of '68*, 29 October 2008.

⁴⁵³ Hari Dillon, "We Did Not Struggle In Vain," Hari Dillon Folder, SF State Strike Special Collection.

⁴⁵⁴ Ramona Tascoe, comments delivered at, "Women in the Strike," *Consciousness, Community and Liberation: Fulfilling the Promise of '68*, 30 October 2008.

counterparts claim their long-denied manhood, they also demonstrated that their womanhood was worth fighting for. As they joined the different organizations involved in building the Third World Left, these groups began to develop sophisticated platforms geared toward liberating women from the oppressive burdens of racism and classism, as well as sexism. The party platform of the Young Lords, for instance, included a call for “equality for women,” saying, “Machismo must be very revolutionary...not oppressive!”⁴⁵⁵ Similarly, organizations like the Black Panther Party continued to redefine their relationship to women and gender as the group progressed into the 1970s.⁴⁵⁶ Often the organizations of the Third World Left espoused revolutionary rhetoric in relation to gender, but the division of labor within the organization reinforced patriarchal gender relations.

However, as police and state repression increasingly targeted male members of the Third World Left, women were left behind to staff and run the organizations. This allowed the coalitions to begin to transition from the militarism of struggle and protest, toward a more community-centered activism. The hyper-masculinity gave way to a more nuanced and egalitarian approach to gender roles, even if women had always carried guns and continued to do so. With women remaining in the organizations, the focus shifted to establishing medical clinics and health care, ending forced sterilization, and continuing to serve the community through breakfast and after-school programs. The activism of women in these areas led to the creation of community-centered organizations designed

⁴⁵⁵ Laura Pulido, 283n28.

⁴⁵⁶ See: Tracye Matthews, “No One Ever Asks, What a Man’s Role in the Revolution Is’: Gender and the Politics of the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971,” and Angela Leblanc-Ernst, “The Most Qualified Person to Handle the Job’: Black Panther Party Women, 1966-1982,” both in Charles Jones, *The Black Panther Party: Reconsidered*.

to meet the specific needs of women and families during the financial crisis of the 1970s. The onset of stagflation and cuts in government spending were acutely felt in urban areas where women were taking on increasing responsibilities for the movement.⁴⁵⁷

Thus, groups like the National Welfare Rights Organization, the Third World Women's Alliance, the Asian Women's Center and others formed to respond the growing consciousness of women of color regarding their status in society. The first term used to describe the notion that women are subject to multiple forms of oppression was the term "double jeopardy," which then gave way to "triple oppression," and is now commonly referred to as "intersectionality." As women of color negotiated the terms of their lives as (often) poor women of color, their particular worldviews shaped an emergent ideology of Third World feminism that sought to liberate women of color from around the world. In this sense, then, the development of a feminist consciousness within the Third World student movement and the Third World Left, while flawed and imperfect, is a further expression of the revolutionary internationalism that these activists articulated in the late 1960s and into the 1970s.⁴⁵⁸

An important and often overlooked element of the development of this political consciousness at SFSC and CCNY in the 1960s is the surprising amount of female future poets and writers of color who were at these schools. Among them are Sonia Sanchez, Toni Cade Bambara, Nikki Giovanni, and Janice Mirikitani. All of these women contributed enormously to the development of a female voice of color in the arts, including Bambara whose 1970 anthology *The Black Woman* inspired a generation of

⁴⁵⁷ See: Jennifer Nelson, "Abortions Under Community Control."

⁴⁵⁸ Kimberly Springer, "Black Feminists Respond to Black Power Masculinism," in Peniel Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement*.

black women into lives of activism and feminism. Janice Mirikitani, likewise, wrote about being an Asian woman, and the conflicting roles that one must occupy in order to survive. Her words are an important testament to the influence that activism within the Third World Left had on her development of a Third World feminist consciousness:

*Fathers required me to
split my tongue
to learn the silent
graces
of womanhood
like sweeping
cobwebs from family relics.
and so i am gentle
to taste
that guilt for not being
‘what you should be’
and working harder/for/everything
and so i am gentle
to remember the ease
of instant omission
and the necessity for
assimilation
and so i am gentle
to forget hiroshima
to ignore Vietnam
to accept tule lake
to enjoy Chinatown.
o yes, daddy,
very gentle i am
when i clean my gun.⁴⁵⁹*

⁴⁵⁹ Janice Mirikitani, “Yea. She Knows.,” in *Amerasia*, 15:1, (1989), 222.

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Appendix A: Demands of the BSU & TWLF

Ten Demands of the Black Students Union:

1. That all Black Studies courses being taught through various departments be immediately part of the Black Studies Department and that all the instructors in this department receive full-time pay.
2. That Dr. Hare, Chairman of the Black Studies Department, receive a full-professorship and a comparable salary according to his qualifications.
3. That there be a Department of Black Studies which will grant a Bachelor's Degree in Black Studies; that the Black Studies Department chairman, faculty and staff have the sole power to hire faculty and control and determine the destiny of its department.
4. That all unused slots for Black Students from fall 1968 under the Special Admissions program be filled in Spring 1969.
5. That all Black students wishing so, be admitted in fall 1969.
6. That twenty (20) full-time teaching positions be allocated to the Department of Black Studies.
7. That Dr. Helen Bedesem be replaced from the position of Financial Aid Officer and that a Black person be hired to direct it; that Third World people have the power to determine how it will be administered.
8. That no disciplinary action will be administered in any way to any students, workers, teachers, or administrators during and after the strike as a consequence of their participation in the strike.
9. That the California State College Trustees not be allowed to dissolve any Black programs on or off the San Francisco State College campus.
10. That George Murray maintain his teaching position on campus for the 1968-69 academic year.

Five Demands of the Third World Liberation Front

1. That a School of Ethnic Studies for the ethnic groups involved in the Third World be set up with the students in each particular ethnic organization having the authority and control of the hiring and retention of any faculty member, director, or administrator, as well as the curriculum in a specific area study.
2. That 50 faculty positions be appropriated to the School of Ethnic Studies, 20 of which would be for the Black Studies program.
3. That, in the spring semester, the College fulfill its commitment to the non-white students in admitting those who apply.
4. That, in the fall of 1969, all applications of non-white students be accepted.
5. That George Murray and any other faculty person chosen by non-white people as their teacher be retained in their positions.

Appendix B: President Smith's Response to the BSU Demands

1. The first demand alludes to the more than twenty courses currently being offered through various regular departments. These courses were proposed by Dr. Nathan Hare, the acting chairman of the newly established Black Studies Department, and are presently staffed by personnel agreed upon by Dr. Hare and the respective departments. This is an interim arrangement while the curricular proposal submitted this fall by D. Hare moves through the required channels in the college and the Chancellor's Office. Although this proposal has already progressed through faculty committee consideration at unusual speed (in less than a month of this semester it has received the approval of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Instructional Policies Committee and is now ready for full Faculty Senate consideration), it cannot legally be implemented until the fall semester 1969 and then only if it has received the full approval at all levels. This means the courses in the new curriculum cannot be offered during this school year. It does not mean that the present interim arrangement referred to above cannot be modified by a joint catalog listing between the Black Studies Department and the other departments that have legal authority to offer courses in the several areas. Courses taught in the interim would continue to need the joint approval of the chairman of the Black Studies Department and the other departments and schools in question.

2. Dr. Hares salary is determined by his rank. His rank was mutually agreed upon by him and President Summerskill when Dr. Hare came to the college and the salary is commensurate with his rank. Promotion of a faculty member to another rank is the responsibility of the promotions committee. At this college there is no necessary relationship between the rank a faculty member holds and the administrative post to which he may be assigned. At the moment there are at least eight departmental chairmen and one associate dean who have not attained the rank of full professor.

3. There already is a Department of Black Studies. On August 2, 1968, the college submitted a request to the Trustees for approval to offer a B.A. program in Black Studies. The Trustees, in their meeting of October 23-24, 1968, voted to allow inclusion of the program in the Master Plan for San Francisco State College. This constituted permission to this college to consider a Black Studies major program. The college grants degrees, departments do not. The granting of a degree in Black Studies awaits the favorable consideration by the college and Office of the Chancellor. The rule at San Francisco State College is that departments enjoy a high degree of departmental autonomy, but their decisions are subject to review by the appropriate faculty bodies and administrative personnel. In addition, the college and its departments are legally responsible tot eh

Office of the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and the Legislature of the State of California.

4. The decision on filling the so-called “unused slots” in the Special Admissions Program for the academic year awaits resolution of the college budget deficit between the college and the Chancellor’s Office and favorable action on the college request for additional fund for the program from the State College System. The college effort to raise private funds in the city has not been successful in because of the turmoil on campus in May and subsequent unfavorable publicity this fall. Nonetheless, the President has made a preliminary request from one of the large foundations for one million dollars per year to help this and other critical programs along.

5. Admission to the various state colleges is regulated by legal provisions set by the Trustees of the California State Colleges and the Legislature of the State of California. The college presently is permitted by Trustee regulations to admit a certain number of students (4% of admissions or applications, depending on class level at entrance) who do not qualify under the normal requirements. To admit all who wished to enroll would require Trustee and legislative decision. The college feels that all people (qualified by current standards or by special considerations) who wish to attend college in this state should be permitted to do so. San Francisco State College is presently turning away more than 8,000 applicants per semester. It is apparent that San Francisco desperately needs additional collegiate opportunities, and the college will have a proposal to the community on this subject in the near future.

6. The allocation of full-time teaching positions at the college is governed by the number of full-time students allocated to the department under the College Maser Plan and the classification of courses in the curriculum. Four additional positions have already been promised to the new department once its program is approved. Additional positions would have await the further growth of the college or special budgetary allocations to provide additional support for faculty, graduate assistants, and operating funds once the curriculum is approved.

7. This demand will not be given serious consideration by the college. Largely through the efforts of Dr. Helen Bedesem, federal monies available to San Francisco State students have increased from \$250,000 in 1962 when she assumed the post of Director of Financial Aids to \$2.5 million today. Because of her efforts in communicating to state and federal legislators the needs of today’s students, such as increased grant money and new avenues of federal assistance, she has been asked to serve on national committees which are in a position to influence state and federal legislation. Her staff of 14 includes five representatives of the black, brown and oriental groups who serve as student assistants and in clerical and professional positions.

8. The college cannot make guarantees regarding disciplinary action before the behavior occurs. The college follows standards of due process in all disciplinary matters.

9. California State College Trustees have the legal authority to dissolve any program in the State Colleges. The dissolution of the Black Studies program would seem unlikely. The college would make every effort to protect this program if it continued to meet the felt needs of the student body and community.

10. The question of the relationship of George Murray to the college is under investigation by appropriate bodies.

Appendix C: Demands of the Black and Puerto Rican Students

1. The establishment of a separate school of Black and Puerto Rican Studies
2. A separate orientation for Black and Puerto Rican freshmen.
3. A voice for students in the setting of all guidelines for the SEEK program, including the hiring and firing of all personnel.
4. The racial composition of all entering classes should reflect the Black and Puerto Rican population of the New York City high schools.
5. Black and Puerto Rican history and the Spanish language should be a requirement for all education majors.

Appendix D: President Gallagher's Response to Demands

1. A separate school of black and Puerto Rican Studies:

If City College is open in September, there will be programs of Black and Puerto Rican Studies. Professor Wilfred Cartey was brought onto the faculty prior to the issuance of this demand, expressly to plan these studies. His report, shaped with student and faculty advice, is expected within two weeks. Pressure is both unnecessary and irrelevant.

2. A separate orientation program for black and Puerto Rican freshmen:

The existing programs of freshmen orientation are staffed by volunteer upperclassmen. If Black and Puerto Rican upperclassmen are ready to take their responsibility, the special freshman program can go forward at once.

3. A voice for SEEK students in the setting of guidelines for the SEEK program, including the hiring and firing of all personnel:

Here again, the ball is in the students' court. The moment that SEEK students are ready to participate, the Dean is more than ready to move.

4. The racial composition of all entering classes reflect the black and Puerto Rican population of the New York City High Schools:

The entering students in the City University as of September 1968 already reflected the racial composition of the graduating class of last June. This policy is approved by the B.H.E., embodied in the Master Plan, and approved by the Board of Regents. If the presently proposed budget for CUNY goes into effect for 1969-70, the numbers admitted will be cut in half—both for the regular freshmen and for SEEK. Even within that restricted admissions number, the ethnic balance will be maintained; but this is no answer. The real answer can be found only at City Hall and in Albany. No one should be excluded from CUNY for lack of money.

5. That black and Puerto Rican history and the Spanish language be a requirement for all Education majors:

Spanish will be required of all Education majors, effective September 1969. Courses in Black and Puerto Rican History are being planned for September 1970,

probably in a more comprehensive form than merely History. The exact content of these offerings, however, waits on the forthcoming report from Professor Cartey, even though the commitment is clear.

Appendix E: Settlement of the BSU & TWLF Demands

Ten Demands of the Black Students Union:

1. That all Black Studies courses being taught through various departments be immediately part of the Black Studies Department and that all the instructors in this department receive full-time pay.

All courses (except for two) were transferred; all full-time instructors received full-time pay

2. That Dr. Hare, Chairman of the Black Studies Department, receive a full-professorship and a comparable salary according to his qualifications.

Dr. Hare was not rehired; President Hayakawa appointed Professor Urban Whitaker who resigned after a year and Professor James Hirabayashi became first Dean of the College of Ethnic Studies.

3. That there be a Department of Black Studies which will grant a Bachelor's Degree in Black Studies; that the Black Studies Department chairman, faculty and staff have the sole power to hire faculty and control and determine the destiny of its department.

The Department was created and the BA degree granted; the faculty and staff had power commensurate with their colleagues in other departments; a community board was established for advising purposes.

4. That all unused slots for Black Students from fall 1968 under the Special Admissions program be filled in Spring 1969.

One hundred and twenty-eight E.O.P. students were admitted for the Spring 1969 semester.

5. That all Black students wishing so, be admitted in fall 1969.

The College agreed to "500 qualified nonwhite students," as well as 400 "special admittees;" the College admitted that alternative admissions criteria would be developed to "fulfill its educational responsibilities in an urban environment."

6. That twenty (20) full-time teaching positions be allocated to the Department of Black Studies.

12.3 positions were allocated to the Black Studies Department with the promise

that more would be allocated as resources allowed.

7. That Dr. Helen Bedesem be replaced from the position of Financial Aid Officer and that a Black person be hired to direct it; that Third World people have the power to determine how it will be administered.

Dr. Bedesem kept her position but a black administrator was appointed to a newly created position of "Associate Director of Financial Aid," where he oversaw the Work Study Program and helped black students who sought his services; a Spanish-speaking financial aid administrator served the same function for Latino students.

8. That no disciplinary action will be administered in any way to any students, workers, teachers, or administrators during and after the strike as a consequence of their participation in the strike.

President Hayakawa staunchly refused to grant amnesty to the students, and many were charged with misdemeanors and felonies in addition to college disciplinary proceedings.

9. That the California State College Trustees not be allowed to dissolve any Black programs on or off the San Francisco State College campus.

This resolution was not implemented.

10. That George Murray maintain his teaching position on campus for the 1968-69 academic year.

This resolution was not implemented.

Five Demands of the Third World Liberation Front

1. That a School of Ethnic Studies for the ethnic groups involved in the Third World be set up with the students in each particular ethnic organization having the authority and control of the hiring and retention of any faculty member, director, or administrator, as well as the curriculum in a specific area study.

The College of Ethnic Studies was established in the fall of 1969 and functioned as every other unit of the College; a community board was established for advising purposes.

2. That 50 faculty positions be appropriated to the School of Ethnic Studies, 20 of which would be for the Black Studies program.

The college received fewer than 50, but enough to staff each Department.

3. That, in the spring semester, the College fulfill its commitment to the non-white students in admitting those who apply.

See BSU Demand #4.

4. That, in the fall of 1969, all applications of non-white students be accepted.

See BSU Demand #5

5. That George Murray and any other faculty person chosen by non-white people as their teacher be retained in their positions.

This resolution was not implemented.

Appendix F: Settlement of the Black and Puerto Rican Students' Demands

1. The establishment of a separate school of Black and Puerto Rican Studies

The Board of Higher Education voided the settlement of the students and faculty that would have implemented Dr. Cartey's proposal for a School of Urban and Third World Studies; instead each unit of CUNY was allowed to establish separate departments.

2. A separate orientation for Black and Puerto Rican freshmen.

Students and faculty of color organized a separate orientation program.

3. A voice for students in the setting of all guidelines for the SEEK program, including the hiring and firing of all personnel.

SEEK students were given latitude to participate in the program.

4. The racial composition of all entering classes should reflect the Black and Puerto Rican population of the New York City high schools.

The Board of Higher Education augmented the 1968 Master Plan proposal for open admissions, the details of which are included in Chapter Three.

5. Black and Puerto Rican history and the Spanish language should be a requirement for all education majors.

This resolution was implemented.