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150W: Matriarchs of TWLF* Ethnic Studies: A look into the history of the matriarchs of the Department of Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley

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150W: Matriarchs of TWLF* Ethnic Studies

A look into the history of the matriarchs of the Department of Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley

by Jacquelyn Serrano



University of California, Berkeley, Chicano Studies Program records, CS ARC 2009/1, Carton 1, Folder 15, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.

The Third World Liberation Front*

October 3, 2020, marked the 150th anniversary of the UC Regents' unanimous approval of a resolution by Regent Samuel F. Butterworth: "That young ladies be admitted into the University on equal terms in all respects with young men." Although the first women were admitted to the university in 1872, the UC was still a long way from ensuring access and equity for all students. Students of color, in particular, ignited a movement for a relevant curriculum as a result of racism and inadequate education surrounding ethnic histories. Ninety-six years later, in 1968, a coalition of minority student groups banded together to fight for a Third World College; united as the Third World Liberation Front, Black women, Indigenous women, and women of color played a pivotal role. In 1969, the longest strike in student history birthed the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

In commemoration of the 150 years of women at UC Berkeley, I had the honor of interviewing some of the original women involved with the 1969 Third World Liberation Front at UC Berkeley, including LaNada War Jack, Clementina Duron,

Estella Quintanilla, Nina Genera, Maria Elena Ramirez, Victoria Wong, Lea Ybarra, and Theresa Loya Asturias. Our zoom meeting was filled with joyous laughter, recollections of bonds shared, and the struggles that brought them together. It felt like sitting at brunch with a table of wise aunties. As a recent grad of the Ethnic Studies department, I learned the general history of the TWLF, but there was little information detailing the unique experiences of the women from the movement. Our long conversation touched on questions I have held for years. Did their struggles as women of color in the 60s look like the struggles we face today? What did their day-to-day routines during the strike look like? How have they carried this piece of history with them for the past 51 years?

The TWLF of 1968-69 was assembled during a period of intense socio-political unrest. High political tension around the world reverberated back to the different racialized groups of the university and they used this energy to transform the landscape of academia for historically marginalized people. In 1968, minority enrollment was at 9%. This would increase to 20% by 1973. According to the Academic Senate, "a mere 2.8 and 1.3 percent of Berkeley undergraduates in 1968 were, respectively, Black and Hispanic." Estella Quintanilla says there were somewhere around 60-100 Chicanos on campus at the time of the strikes and around 14 Asian students. Compassion and solidarity attracted thousands of students and community members of many backgrounds to the Third World Liberation Front, making it the longest student strike in history.

THE POLITICS OF THE STRIKE

... SELF-DETERMINATION ...

The fundamental issue of this strike is the right of Third World people to determine the structure and content of the Third World programs on this campus. Although the Administration has granted some of the demands, it has insisted on maintaining control over Third World programs. Third World people have been allowed to play only an advisory role in the decision-making process. Thus, if the Administration disagrees with the type of program that is proposed (e.g., if it is too radical), it will reject that program. We of the Third World feel that we have the right to be able to decide for ourselves what courses and faculty are relevant to our lives. We don't need to be told what to think or how to do it; we are capable of determining on our own what kind of education we want and need. We must have the right to determine our own destiny!

Time and time again, the administration has proven that its interests are not the same as ours and that it cannot be trusted to implement the kind of programs that is relevant to us. We decided that we had made a mistake in relying on the Administrators to grant us the power of self-determination. We recognize that the racist power structure does not give up power willingly. Rights are not given; they must be won. We of the Third World now stand together in the fight for educational freedom in this racist society.

Racism as exemplified in the policies and structure of the university is not just a product of the consciousness of individual man or groups of individuals. Rather, individual or institutional racism flows from a system, capitalism, which profits and perpetuates it. To expose the racist nature of the university, we must explain and defend the principle which cannot only smash racism, but in the long run through revolutionary struggle the system itself. That principle is our right to self-determination in all aspects of our lives, from education to the place of work.

The right of Third World People to self-determination is a central part of the world-wide conflict against imperialism. That principle is as important to Berkeley as it is to the revolutionary struggle of the peoples in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Flowing from that principle, THIRD WORLD PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN DEMANDS, THEIR OWN STRATEGIES, AND THEIR OWN TACTICS.

OOOOOO

8

... NOT PATERNALISM !! ...

Typical of the Administration's perversion of self-determination as the primary issue within the demand for a Third World College, was the establishment of a Committee on Ethnic Studies formulated by Ivan Knight and headed by George A. DeVos.

In step One of the proposal, only Third World faculty are to be on the planning committee for the Third World College. Third World students and community are thus excluded from developing the college and making it relevant to their needs. Third World faculty alone cannot decide the kind of college which Third World students want and need; the students must be able to determine the quality of their education.

The "relevant channels" to which these proposals will be forwarded as Step Two are the regular administrative and faculty channels. In this step, the Third World faculty are excluded from the decision-making process; they have become ex-officio (non-voting) advisers. TWLF can accept no less than the reversal of this traditional approach. The Third World Implementing Committee must have decision-making powers and the committee making up the "relevant channels" must act only in an advisory capacity.

Thus, the DeVos report is no more than the usual paternalistic approach to satisfying the needs of Third World people. The whole tone of the report is typically liberal, completely misinterpreting the TWLF demand for self-determination. Like liberals, the Committee wants to do things for other people, while the TWLF wants to do things for itself.

Similarly, the Academic Senate's resolution of March 4 in support of the establishment of an Interim Ethnic Studies Department failed to deal with the issue of self-determination. The Senate entirely avoided the demands of an Implementing Committee and community involvement. The TWLF is demanding that the Implementing Committee be composed of Third World faculty, students and community people. We also believe that the Third World College must be an integral part of the program of the College. The Administration disputes both of these positions.

The faculty's skillful avoidance of the major issues of the strike reveals the weakness of their position. The faculty is not willing to move to implement their support for a Third World College; they do not even specify a date by which the temporary Department of Ethnic Studies would be established. We cannot depend upon the faculty to help us win our demands; they do not have the will or the power to establish a Third World College.

The vote of the Academic Senate, though, does represent a major advance for the faculty, who have now given approval for the TWLF demand for an autonomous Third World College. The passing of this resolution makes it clear that Chancellor Heyns is the main obstacle to the establishment of the Third World College.

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 Comparative Ethnic Studies Archives, UC Berkeley
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The TWLF was initiated by San Francisco State University in the Spring of 1968 and was heavily inspired by the Black Panther Party of which many Black Student Union Members were members. UC Berkeley's Afro-American Student Union (AASU) released their statement demanding a Black Studies Program. Their proposal stated:

"We demand a program of 'BLACK STUDIES', a program which will be of, by, and for black people. We demand that we be educated realistically... If the university is not prepared to educate us in such a way that our education may be relative to our lives, then we ask that the university prepare itself to do so immediately." (See the Black Studies Proposal in full [here](#).)

The university rejected the proposal. The regents of the university later approved a "watered-down version of the Black Studies Program; completely deleting any self-determination which was the guiding principle of our strike," says Victoria Wong. Other minority groups on campus heard the demands of the AASU and showed their solidarity and support by going on strike united as the TWLF on January 21st, 1969. The [student groups](#) involved were the Asian American Political Alliance (APPA), Mexican American Student Confederation (MASC), and Native American Students United. Together they formed a multiethnic coalition united by a shared ideological goal of decolonizing their education to address the historical trauma and oppression perpetrated by the racism of western civilization. They strove to create a space for Third World People within the hegemonic terrain of higher education– the Third World College. After many months of striking and pushback from the administration, the TWLF compromised with the University to establish the Department of Ethnic Studies. It housed the programs of African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Chicano Studies, and Native American Studies. Eventually, these programs expanded and African American Studies branched out into a separate department. Asian American Studies became Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies and Chicano Studies became Chicano/a and Latino Studies.

Below are the stories of some of the women that were at the vanguard of that historic struggle.

[Click for a list of TWLF resources.](#)

[Click here to view the interview materials via Calisphere](#)

LaNada War Jack



LaNada War Jack on Alcatraz in 1970 (Photo Credit: Bill Wingell)

LaNada War Jack was born on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Bingham County, Idaho in 1947. She enrolled at UC Berkeley in January of 1968 as the first Native American student in the university's history. She took on many leadership roles during her undergraduate career, including recruiting 12 other Native Students to enroll in the school. Together, along with 2 additional Native students on campus, they formed the Native American Students United* group in January '69. NASU joined the Third World Liberation Front shortly after the other student groups with War Jack as their chair and representative among the TWLF leaders in the Central Committee. She was also a partial member of the Mexican American Student Confederation. War Jack was the only woman among her co-leaders in the strike and was well respected by all TWLF members. In particular, she spent a lot of her time with Manuel Delgado and Ysidro Macias, co-leaders of MASC. War Jack and the other interviewees recall that the men were very protective of her and ensured she was always well informed and given advance notice of the current happenings of the strike.

"They kind of just pulled me around to make sure I was there. If there was any kind of dispute or anything at all they'd say, 'Well, I think that we need to have one of the original people of this country; [LaNada] needs to have her place and we want to know what LaNada has to say.' I mean they would make sure that it was central, all to me you know (laughs). So you know, nobody could really take over, of having the voice or anything. They wanted to know what I thought and in a way, it kind of took away the competition among them because they had to recognize me first."

When asked to describe her role, War Jack explained that because she was new to TWLF's political group environment, she would listen to what everyone had to say during meetings and participate in voting on the group's next move. She says the following about what it was like being the only woman among the chair holders of the TWLF representatives:

"I just had to be there; have a physical presence to show that Native Americans were there and as the only female, then they knew Native Americans were there. All the other groups, maybe they had three or four people representing their groups, but there was just me. So, it was fairly easy to be a part of it because everybody else knew so much more than I did. We were just new into everything but we wanted to support the department and of course, we wanted to have our contact with our community."

Estella Quintanilla recounts that the Chicanos were very concerned about LaNada and the men (Delgado and Macias) being targeted. At the time of the strikes, War Jack was a single mother living in the University Village. She would have to arrange for a babysitter for her son and would wait to get picked up by someone to bring her to the TWLF meetings on campus. At times, she would get picked up by Ysidro and Manuel and they would drive around at night to discuss their next course of action. On February 27th, 1969, War Jack along with Delgado and Macias were arrested during a peaceful protest turned violent by the national guard.

War Jack recalls that CBS was planning on doing a special about the TWLF strikes. "We all had to go to the ASUC president's place to meet up with one of those affiliations [sic] and I had my son with me. They were playing with him and throwing him around and I guess we weren't able to make the cut because they were trying to make us out as these hostile Third World Liberation Front leaders and here they were playing with babies. And we were all laughing and you know getting along and we didn't present the kind of picture that they wanted to present about these really hard Third World people of color, that we were all hostile and everything."

When asked what the legacy of the TWLF is for her today, War Jack states,

"Just acknowledging that that's the strength that we have and our potential that we still can use and that's working together with all people of color because that's what really frightened our colonial system, the fact that we all got together. I think we still have that potential and that's what I'm left with; is that we can still do it if we need to."

Shortly after War Jack's involvement in the TWLF, she helped to organize the Occupation of Alcatraz in 1969. After graduating from UC Berkeley, she attended Antioch School of Law in Washington D.C and participated in the takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs office in 1972. War Jack carried out a two-year term on the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation of Idaho Tribal Council. She gained certification in permaculture from the Permaculture Institute at Tagari Garden Farm in 1979 and received her master's degree a few years later in public administration and a Ph.D. in political science at Boise State University. War Jack currently holds the title of Distinguished Professor at BSU where she teaches Law and Tribal Government.

* The student group had undergone a few name changes, but we will refer to it as NASU for now.

(See this newspaper article detailing LaNada's life shortly after the strikes ended.)



Left to right, Charles Brown, of the Afro-American Students Union; Ysidro Macias, of the Mexican-American Student Confederation; LaNada War Jack, of Native American Students United; and Stan Kadani, of the Asian American Political Alliance, walking down Bancroft Way. (Chicano Studies Program Records, Ethnic Studies Library, UC Berkeley, CS ARC 2009/1, Carton 1, Folder 14.)

Victoria Wong



Victoria Wong during her time living in Chicago.

Victoria Wong (also known as Vicci Wong) grew up in Salinas, CA, and came from a farmworker family. When her parents lost their farm in Salinas, Wong worked in the fields starting at the age of 11. While she was in junior high, she co-founded the Salinas chapter of the farmworkers union with Lillian Fabros Bando. A mere 7 miles away was Fort Ord, the largest US Army base at the time and a shipping point to Vietnam. Her proximity to the base motivated Wong to get involved in the peace movement and stopping the draft. Additionally, Wong founded Salinas Vietnam Summer and worked with the California Rural Legal Assistance to support Monterey County migrant workers.

"I want folks to know we '60s activists led a colorful life not just in being Third World warriors. Much of it was full of laughter, music, art, magical moments of joyful and intense struggle and collaboration. I for one while a full-time student at Cal and working several part-time jobs, along with auditing classes just to hear interesting professors whose subjects weren't part of my approved curriculum. [I] also was going to all kinds of demonstrations around the Bay Area--from antiwar to supporting the Richmond oil workers strike."

Wong entered UC Berkeley at the age of 17 in the fall of 1966. During her time at the university, she switched her major several times before ending her studies in Spring 1970. Wong attempted to graduate with an "Individual Major" in Asian Studies because neither the Ethnic Studies, Asian Studies, or Asian American Studies departments had been established yet. Many administrators were against the

development of Ethnic Studies and for decades after its inception, students fought for the department's security.

"UCB refused my request, so I appealed and had to meet with the then temporary Dean of the College of Letters & Science who controlled my major. That was now UCB Chancellor Carol Christ, who coldly and quickly turned me down in a few minutes. She had notoriously been against the TWLF Strike and said ES/AS was 'irrelevant' and didn't see any need for ES outside of what was then being taught under L&S via the separate History et al Depts. She said that with a straight face, even though more money and resources were being spent on things like her specialty, "Victorian literature" than in what this Victoria Wong was studying for--freedom from oppressive and exploitative white colonialism as aggrandized by the very Victorian imperialists Christ represents. So, my actual UCB graduation year was delayed to 1971 and cites "Comparative Literature" instead, as that was my minor at the time."

While at UC Berkeley, Wong co-founded the Asian American Political Alliance. During our interview, she recounts that AAPA originated the concept and term "Asian American" in May of 1968 when a name to describe the shared socio-political experience of Asian people living in the United States did not previously exist. There were various turbulent political movements occurring at the time including the Anti-Vietnam War Movement, the Black Power Movement through the Black Panther Party, and the United Farm Workers Movement. The vibrant energy of activism made its way to campus and motivated students to pursue their right to relevant education.

AAPA was among the first student groups to unite with the African American Student Union when they submitted their proposal for a Black Studies Department. The University and Chancellor Heyns rejected the BSU proposal in 1968 and attempted to implement a "watered-down version" of the proposal that eliminated any means of self-determination for Black Studies. "That was the guiding principle of our movement", says Wong. In response, they officially went on strike on January 22nd united as the Third World Liberation Front.

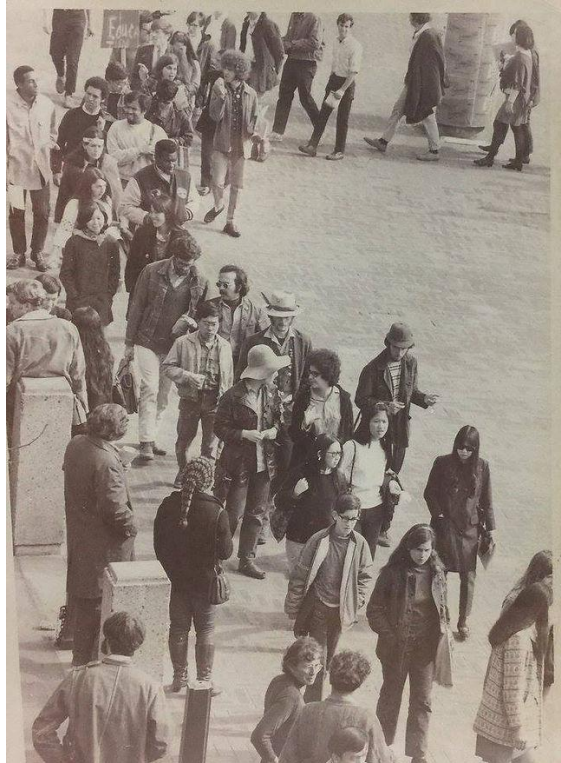
Wong adds, "It doesn't matter how big or small you start because everything important starts small. We were a minority of minorities." She explains that there were very few Asian students on the UC campus, to begin with. There were even fewer students willing to join AAPA, and much less would support the strike. Wong would spend time at Sather Gate daily to pass out flyers to "anyone that looked Third World" to get them to join the strike.

While describing her experience as a woman in the Asian American Political Alliance, Wong explains that AAPA worked towards "propping up their men". They were cognizant of the stereotype that Asian men were "wimps" and so they strove to rework that narrative. To reframe their representation, they placed their men in more leadership roles while simultaneously combatting the possibility of chauvinism. Whereas they could have had a woman representative in the TWLF Central Committee, they ultimately chose to have a man represent their group. Behind the scenes, AAPA women made sure they were up and ready to send the men to the front of the protest line at 6 AM. Afterward, the members of the group would spend time in the Asian communities in the surrounding areas such as Chinatown in Oakland where they would share information about TWLF and recruit new members. AAPA had nightly meetings where they would vote and discuss their next steps in a democratic fashion. According to Wong, the TWLF at UC Berkeley was collective in their leadership and shared representation in a horizontal fashion. They were as equal as they could be in their solidarity.

Wong says she felt the most liberated she had felt in her life. Though the general public had a malicious perception of the TWLF, she recalls the members being joyful and truly appreciating their time with one another. The women of AAPA and the women of AASU spent their mornings coming up with chants and dances together for their picket line. "We had so much fun together, and learning from each other and it was just liberating. The whole experience was the freedom we had never felt before. And I really have to say, I did not feel any kind of real macho superiority addressed to us. It definitely did not happen within AAPA, I can say that; cause [sic] we women were really strong in AAPA and spoke out."

"Foremost in our minds was liberating our communities," Wong explains that members had to let go of their egos when it came to participating in protests because Chancellor Heyns declared immediate suspension for anyone involved in the strikes following his cancelation of mass rallies on campus.

"That's why we actually did the snake thing. We adapted what they gave us because they disallowed any mass activity. If you had two people of color getting together you could be suspended. I mean that's how scared they were of people of color getting together. They didn't even do that during the Free Speech Movement! ... They did not come down on them the same way they came down on people of color getting together."



A TWLF serpentine march on the UC Berkeley campus. Image from the Ethnic Studies Library at UC Berkeley.

Wong is referencing the infamous serpentine marches, a tactic AAPA adopted from the Vietnam War's guerrilla warfare and the Japanese student movement. This strategy included protestors breaking up into small, fast-moving mobile groups that didn't fall under Heyn's classification of a "mass rally". "We let them know, there was not going to be any haven for racism on this campus."

When the national guard arrived on campus, Wong says, "Every police force from Oakland to Marin, everywhere were welcomed in and it became an armed military camp. The weather report every day was teargas and mace. That was what you had to dress for if you dared to go on campus." The Tact squad used mace against the protestors; this was the first time the chemical agent had been used in the country. Afterward, the climate towards the movement changed. Other student groups and professors acknowledged the unjust force and resistance used against the TWLF and decided to support the coalition. Ultimately, despite their demands for a Third World College, they compromised for the Department of Ethnic Studies and their demands for an Asian Studies Department turned into Asian American Studies Department which later evolved into Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies.



Victoria Wong performing with Repeat Offenders at Mabuhay Gardens, aka Fab Mab, on Broadway SF.

Wong's involvement in community and organizing is vast. She founded and was the director of the Asian Film Festival 1969, the first of its kind in the world, which continued into the early 1970s. The profits from the festival went entirely to various Asian American Community groups. Upon graduating, Wong moved to SF Chinatown to work with the Asian Community Center (ACC) and I-Hotel. She organized restaurant, immigrant, electronics, clerical, and garment workers. She organized the first garment worker-owned cooperative in the world: Chinatown Co-op. She co-founded the May 4th Singers, the first Asian American anti-imperialist cultural group, the first Chinatown Workers Festival, and the Workers Chorus. Additionally, she wrote, directed, and acted in many theatrical skits for various causes. Wong held various positions at community newspapers and radical magazines including reporter, editor, and researcher. She moved to Chicago as an editor for the United Front Press and later got involved in progressive cultural work in the Midwest with the Chi-Town Fightin' Machine. She was the lead singer for Thunder Road and toured with Rock Against Racism USA in the late 1970s. When her San Francisco band Repeat Offenders won City Arts' 1st Demo Tape of the Year for "Somoza is Dead" and "So Long, Susie Wong", she moved back to the Bay Area. Wong is the author of several publications such as Wei Min Bao, Pacific Imperialism Notebook, A Pictorial History of Chinese Working People, Stand Up: An Archive Collection of the Bay Area Asian American Movement 1968-1974, and Pacific Basin Reports: The Global Struggle for Oil.

Lea Ybarra



Dr. Lea Ybarra

As a child, Dr. Lea Ybarra's family followed the harvest and moved between California and Texas before ultimately settling in Sanger, CA. She spent the rest of her younger years in the Fresno area. Ybarra was a talented student, staying in the top ranks of her classes throughout her K-12 career. Despite her academic excellence, she received mixed support from her teachers and school counselors. One counselor actually told her that, despite her good grades, she would never make it in college and refused to give her a college application. Despite this lack of support and discrimination from some, luckily there were other teachers who encouraged her to continue her education. This myriad of attitudes towards Ybarra stayed with her in both high school and college. She attended Fresno State College for two years and then transferred to UC Berkeley in January 1968, where she received her BA (1970), MA (1972), and Ph.D. (1997) in Sociology.

When thinking about current protests and the diversity of people at Black Lives Matter marches, Ybarra recalls a similarity in the diversity of TWLF strikes. She notes a great sense of unity and togetherness where people of different ethnic backgrounds, ages, and professions came together for the formation of the Third World College. During our conversation about gender roles among the members of the front, Ybarra noted that while she and other women encountered some chauvinism, they confronted it and did not let it stand. The women held strong roles and were an integral and important part of the movement. "In the struggle itself, I don't remember a lot of chauvinism because women, from day one, were involved in it. We were in leadership roles, we were involved in the planning meetings, strikes

and demonstrations." She reiterates that women were given respect because they earned it through their commitment and actions in the Third World Strike and other aspects of the movement.

Ybarra's details her participation on campus as the following,

"There were so many things going on at the same time - the strikes, the Vietnam war, the civil rights movement, the growing Chicano movement - and I participated in many ways. I was involved in planning meetings, campus demonstrations, boycotting of classes and in protest marches in both Berkeley and San Francisco. I remember clearly the day hundreds of us were gassed by police helicopters flying over the Berkeley campus and being surrounded by National Guard troops that blocked us from leaving. In addition to campus involvement, I would get up early and be at the Oakland Induction Center by 6 a.m. to counsel Chicanos about their rights for deferments during the Vietnam war."

Ybarra returned to Fresno during her summers and on weekends to work with the United Farmworkers of America who organized in fields around the Fresno area. She participated in boycotts, picketing, and worker organization. Ybarra and hundreds of other women were arrested and detained at Fresno County Jail for several weeks for picketing in the field.

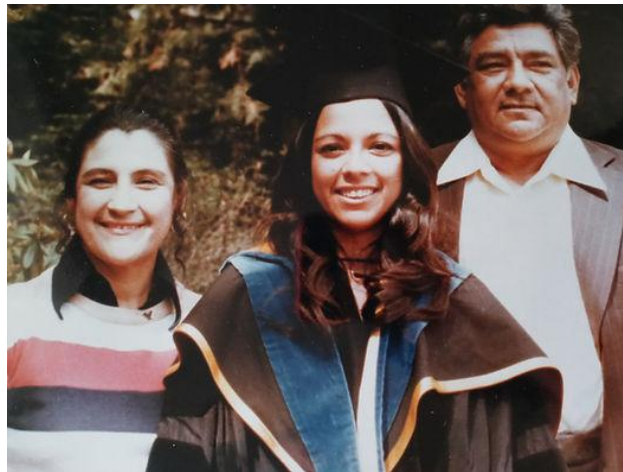


Image of Lea Ybarra with her mother and father (Ofelia and Tanis Ybarra) after receiving her PhD from UC Berkeley in 1977.

At UC Berkeley, tensions were high every single day because of the militarization of the campus. Peaceful protests were met with excessive force; police departments from all over the Bay Area were called in to subdue the demonstrations. Ybarra recounts the day her mother was visiting her on campus, officers tear-gassed

student protestors and those unaffiliated with the strike. Thousands of national guardsmen sent by Governor Ronald Reagan surrounded the campus and gassed any group of students regardless of their affiliation or actions. Ybarra remembers seeing some of the younger soldiers on campus appearing very nervous and shaking with their guns in hand as they stood guard against the students.

Of the relationships formed at the time of TWLF and anti-war organizing, Ybarra said, "It was a difficult time, but it was also a fun time. We made friendships that have lasted more than 50 years. It wasn't just that we knew each other but that we were involved in the same struggle together and we had the same idealism." Many of the participants of the original strike continued to work with their communities in the years following. They felt a need to be involved.

"Regardless of how people define the 60's, and what happened at Berkeley and other campuses, we believed we could make a positive difference in society and I think that has always stayed with us. Even to this day, 50 years later and we're no longer the 19/20-year-olds at the Berkeley campus, we still work towards making a difference in our lives and in our communities."

Ybarra explains that the students graduating in 1970 with their bachelor's degrees did not receive a graduation ceremony. The campus administration learned of student plans to disrupt the ceremony at the Greek Stadium. University officials thought there was "too great a chance of disruption and violence" with the TWLF and Anti-Vietnam War protests going on and decided to cancel the graduation ceremony that year. Twenty-five years later, Ybarra and other Chicano activists from her time were invited to the 1995 U.C. Berkeley Chicano graduation. Ybarra was the class speaker, representing the students who did not receive a graduation in 1970, and the keynote speaker for the 1995 class was singer and activist Ruben Blades. "We had a great and memorable time and will always appreciate the Chicano Graduation committee thinking of us and giving us a graduation ceremony!"

After her time at UC Berkeley, Ybarra returned to Fresno and secured a faculty position in La Raza Studies at CSUF, where she then went on to organize it into a Department of Chicano and Latin American Studies. She became Assistant to the President of CSU Fresno where she dealt with racist attitudes from the white secretaries. Ybarra had dealt with racism from white women before. In regards to the Women's Liberation movement, Ybarra said in an interview with Rocío Solís Hernández that it did not matter, "how many Ph.D.'s we [Chicanas] have, we're still grape pickers to them, and they don't think they have to listen to us... the assumption

that there's a natural alliance between white women and minority women" is not always correct. In our 150W interview, Ybarra said,

"Oftentimes, we are told that we're not feminists as much as others, but we've always been strong feminists as Chicanas. We believe, of course, in our liberation but I think that the difference between us and a lot of white feminists is that we have always thought of our community as well. We weren't just fighting for better jobs or better education for us as women. We were fighting for our children, for our entire community to progress. That's important because some people may think that if you're fighting for your whole community, and not just women's rights, you're not really a strong feminist. We can be both and that is our feminism, to ensure that when we fight for ourselves we are fighting for everyone in our community to progress as well."

She imparts the following, "Regardless of how my generation in the '60s is often depicted as flower children, etc., one thing that is certain is that we were a generation who truly believed we could make a positive difference in creating a better society." Since her days at Berkeley, Ybarra has held many impressive leadership positions, undertaken research projects, published several written works, made presentations throughout the world, and remained active in her community. She has raised millions of dollars for scholarship opportunities for Latino and other underrepresented students.

Most recently, she has held the title of Executive Director of the Center for Talented Youth and Associate Dean at Johns Hopkins University. She has received many awards, including: the Johns Hopkins University Diversity Leadership Award (2004), Top 100 Most Influential Hispanics in the U.S (2005), the Hispanic Heroes Award (2008), and the Promete Foundation Award from Spain for Recognition of International Work with Children (2007) . Among her published works are Vietnam Veteranos: Chicanos Recall the War and Americanos: Latino Life in the U.S. with Edward James Olmos.

Resources featuring Lea Ybarra:

[Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States \[3rd ed.\]](#)

[The Origins and History of the Chicano Movement by Roberto Rodriguez](#)

[CHICANA MOVEMENTS: FRESNO CHICANA WRITINGS, IDENTITY, AND ACTIVISM, 1965-1975 by Rocío Solís Hernández](#)

[Reading Latina/o Images: Interrogating Americanos by Bernadette Marie Calafell & Fernando P. Delgado](#)

Evangelina (Nina) Michel Genera



Evangelina Michel Genera, known to family and friends as Nina, was born in El Paso, Texas and moved to Sacramento at the age of 12, when her father's work transferred him. She was recruited to UC Berkeley in the Fall quarter of 1969, following the tumultuous period in American history known as the Third World Strike. As a result of the agreement reached by the University and the TWLF student protestors who preceded her that Fall, not only did the agreement include the development of an Ethnic Studies Department, but, additionally, opened up the floodgates of the University to diversify its student body by accepting 400 new 'minority' students (100 slots for each ethnic group), including financial aid through the Educational Opportunity Program. Nina came to Berkeley by way of Sacramento City College and UC Davis, where Francisco Hernandez, a TWLFFer, was recruiting Chicano students in the summer of 69, mostly from the Sacramento Valley and participants in the MiniCorps Summer Program, to fill those slots. Nina's parents were of Mexican descent. Her father worked for Southern Pacific as a railroad worker, and her mom

was a domestic worker who took her 4 kids out to the tomato fields every summer to make money for school clothes. Her father being a traditionalist, would not let Nina leave home without being married. Nina and Fernando Genera, her boyfriend at the time, married quickly, so they could both transfer to Berkeley. At first, Nina thought she was the only one whose parents were so strict, but when they moved to the married student housing at Albany Village, they encountered other Chicano newlyweds who had to do the same, in order to become Cal students.



Nina Genera and husband of 52 years, Fernando Genera.

Coming to Berkeley was a life changing transformation for Nina. The TWLFers embraced the new students and as a united front, continued to ensure that the Third World College would become a reality. The first professors/lecturers of the Ethnic Studies Department were either graduate students or 'minority' staff members who were already working at the University in other departments, some of them with degrees, from the various student services departments. Professors had to assemble their own course readers from more appropriate articles, since published works from their own ethnic scholars were scarce.

The struggles between the University and the Ethnic Studies Programs never ceased, but as students grateful for the courageous TWLFers, who put their lives on the line, most of the newbies continued in the struggle. Additionally, in that academic year, '69-70, there was no shortage of protests, all centered around social justice and liberation issues. The Vietnam War was raging (Genera co-authored *Chicanos and the War* with Lea Ybarra, developed Chicano Draft Help, counseled draftees, and performed in *Chicana Teatro*), the US bombed Cambodia (protests closed the University, Genera attended International Indo-Chinese Women's Conference in Vancouver), the United Farmworkers were fighting for their human rights, (many of the Third World students came from these agricultural valleys and

protested at valley farms), and the fight for prisoners rights was brewing (inception of the Chicano Studies Vacaville Project where Chicano Studies courses were taught to inmates). Nina remembers that her education in her senior year at Berkeley was literally a University Without Walls because students closed down the University in the Spring quarter, 1970, over the bombing of Cambodia. Progressive professors continued holding classes off campus, teaching students how to engage in civil disobedience. Nina acknowledges, "this was the birth of my peaceful form of political protests, which I engaged in for the rest of my academic and professional life, and the engagement of camaraderie, a lifetime of comadrazga, with Lea, Maria, Clementina, Estella, Myrtha Chabran (department chair and professor '71-73) and Velia Garcia, especially since we all became educators."

Nina remembers Velia fondly. "She was the first professional Chicana role model I had ever encountered. She was the first lecturer who taught Chicanos and the Criminal Justice System and I became the Teacher Assistant for her class once I was in graduate school, and then she asked me to become the first Chicano Studies Advisor." Estella Quintanilla adds that Garcia was the only woman assisting the men in the development of the Ethnic Studies Department during its early years.

Although the handful of Chicano students who graduated in the Spring of 1970 were unable to cross the stage because of the University closure, Nina continued to graduate school in Sociology (Lea Ybarra and Nina Genera were the first Chicana graduate students to be accepted into their PhD program.) Working as the Chicano Studies Advisor gave Nina a new perspective and she decided to simultaneously work on a Masters in Counseling at CSU Hayward. After receiving both Masters in Sociology and Counseling (1973), Nina spent the next 34 years working as a college counselor and professor, her last 31 years at Ohlone College in Fremont, and in advocacy in her local community. In 1993, Nina completed her doctorate degree in International and Multicultural Education at University of San Francisco.

Nina says, "All the education I got at Berkeley was outside the walls of a classroom. My fellow comrades in all the struggles and protests, gave me the confidence and tools to engage in a lifetime of advocacy for the poor, disenfranchised and young students who mirrored my beginnings. Had it not been for the infamous TWLFers, MASCerros and MEChistAs, I wouldn't be the person I am today. Most of us who were at Berkeley in the last years of the '60's and early '70's, went on to work in East Oakland and were responsible for starting many of the Chicano agencies that are still in existence.

I've always tried to instill empathy, love of friendships, and caring for the vulnerable to my students, my sons and now my 3 grandchildren. And incidentally, the shotgun wedding has lasted 52 years."

To quote Mayan Tribal Elders, "We have only one Sun to shine upon us equally, one air that we breathe and gives us life, one water that we drink and becomes blood in our veins and we all live on Mother Earth. She feeds us, she holds us. Brothers and Sisters of all colors, together united in meditation to make conscious to those in power, no more war, no more contaminating bombs, no more death. Together we can make a difference."

And that we have.

In Lak'ech Ala K'in."

Clementina Duron



Clementina Duron was born and raised in Salinas, California. She received her BA at UC Berkeley in 1971 and received a Masters in Education from Stanford and Harvard. Clementina worked for 15 years as a teacher and another 15 years as a principal in elementary and middle schools in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco Unified School Districts. Duron worked with parents to create the first charter school in Oakland in 1993. She became certified in Albany's CERT and has worked to help her community with emergency preparedness.

During Duron's time at UC Berkeley, she lived in an affordable co-op on Berkeley Northside where she says she was "probably one of the only people of color there." She was invited to a MASC meeting in January of 1969 by Ysidro Macias where they discussed the TWLF's plan of action. She describes her role as being a "foot soldier" for the coalition.

"Just really doing the everyday necessary stuff to show the solidarity; like, being available at 8 o'clock in the morning at the Chicano Center on Channing right near Telegraph to either pick up fliers or to get, you know, the posters... and be ready to be on picket line starting at 8 o'clock in the morning. Usually in front of Sproul or at the corner of Bancroft and Telegraph is sometimes where we started to pass out leaflets or flyers to students coming on, asking them to respect our picket line."



Clementina Duron [right] pictured protesting with students.

Duron participated in the TWLF's famous serpentine marches that would run across campus and through buildings and active classrooms. At times, she would give speeches to students at the co-ops to update them on the current happenings of the strike.

On February 5th, following the attack of peaceful protestors by plainclothes officers, Governor Ronald Reagan declared a state of extreme emergency to encourage Highway Patrol officers to assemble on campus. During the subsequent protests, officers attacked and beat anyone in the vicinity of the protest and used teargas and mace against protestors beginning on February 19th. It was the first time chemical agents were been used against students. The conflict between cops and gatherers spread out onto Bancroft and Telegraph. According to Duron, the teargas affected everyone on campus indiscriminately. The secretary's union joined the strike shortly after the gas attacks and wrote letters to officials stating the force used against the students was unjust. "That was how, on the way, we started picking up allies little by little throughout the strikes." Duron goes on to explain that once white people on campus were affected by police violence, professors began to take action. On February 27th, Gov. Ronald Reagan called the National Guard to campus in an attempt to intimidate the TWLF protestors. Duron recalls them setting up and

staying behind the co-ops on the north side of campus. When it came time to vote on whether or not to implement a Third World College, Duron recalls, "The academic senate really didn't have a lot of choice because some of our subversives had gone the night before and had put glue on their seats!"

When asked to reflect on the impacts of being a member of the TWLF, Duron says they were forced to become leaders. Their experiences in the strike helped them to make their way in their respective fields of work and that same strength stayed with them throughout their lives.

"We may not realize this but we obviously had an impact that we never had dreamt about or thought about when we were struggling day-to-day on the picket lines. The fact that ethnic studies is just a very powerful movement and it's something that we have to continue fighting for today because just like in the past, today the forces that are against ethnic studies are so powerful and want to destroy it. That's why we, us elders, continue the struggle today."

Most recently, Duron was involved with the Ethnic Studies model curriculum movement in Sacramento, pushing to make ES courses a requirement for students in California. The model curriculum was finally adopted in March 2021.

Estella Quintanilla



Estella Quintanilla grew up in Brentwood, a small agricultural town in Contra Costa County, about 45 miles from Berkeley. Her parents emigrated from Mexico and brought up their family in Brentwood. Quintanilla was the first of her siblings to attend college. She enrolled at UC Berkeley at the age of 18 and left home in 1968.

Quintanilla was initially introduced to political activism through her father who was active in organizing and picketing with farmworkers as part of the United Farm Workers Movement. As a new freshman at Berkeley, Quintanilla says she sought out "La Raza". She moved in with another Chicana Beatrice Lara, whom she described as "fiery and militant" making it easy for her to get involved with politics on campus. Naturally, they were both drawn to the Mexican American Student Confederation who regularly worked with and was in support of the Farm Workers Movement.

"Upon arriving in Berkeley, I was very surprised to learn that there were less than 100 Mexican and Latino students in attendance at UC Berkeley. That was one reason that motivated me to join the TWLF strike in my second quarter. After the TWLF strike, I took my first course on Chicano history and it was the first time I had ever had a Mexican or Chicano instructor."

Quintanilla's father, however, was concerned about his daughter's safety and talked to the MASC members about placing her in the student group's office away from their more "heavy-duty activism". Regardless of his concerns for her physical safety, he wanted Quintanilla involved on campus and said to her, "No one's going to take it away from you. No one gave you anything and no one's going to take your education

because no one gave it to you, so do it." Quintanilla's office duties included sitting at the desk and taking messages as they came in. She recalls the male leadership occasionally coming into the office space and being able to hear "loud discussions" among them. Despite any internal conflict that may have arisen, MASC members understood the importance of unity and managed disagreements privately away from the public eye and even from the rest of the group.

According to Quintanilla, the male leaders in MASC were older by about 8-10 years. Despite the age and gender difference, she acknowledges they were respectful and cognizant of the women in the student group as their partners in the struggle. Quintanilla describes them as having been more worldly, urban, and experienced in activism and other movements whereas some of the younger members of the group came from rural backgrounds without as much experience. The general environment Quintanilla detailed appears to be the very energy that fostered the care and community that the TWLF has been infamous for. Unity among the groups necessitated unity within each cohort to function well as a whole. TWLF members knew that their struggle was a shared one between themselves, the other ethnic groups, and their communities and gender was not a dividing factor.

When asked how the community around the TWLF was formed, Quintanilla recalls there being around 60-100 Chicano students on campus. "You had to do something. It's not just 'why are we the privileged ones, why are we here and not 'why are we here alone?' So that was one way. I mean, we were on the lookout for each other." Quintanilla recalls there were a few places where Chicano students would gather to discuss the happenings of the strike or any potential meetings that were going to happen. The financial aid office or the EOP office are examples of places where they would have to pick up their monthly checks and could convene. "After the TWLF strike, I took my first course on Chicano history and it was the first time I had ever had a Mexican or Chicano instructor." Quintanilla describes the urgency felt at the lack of Chicano students on campus. "That alone is going to make us move or do something, you know? To organize or to get together." In regards to those that did not join them, she states, "It was intense when we ran into a person of color who wasn't supporting the strike."



University of California, Berkeley, Chicano Studies Program records, CS ARC 2009/1, Carton 1, Folder 15, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Quintanilla woke up extra early to join AAPA for their 8 A.M serpentine marches around campus to accommodate her yearning to participate in direct action. She recalls one day in particular when students picketed at Sather Gate, “blue meanies” were called in to use aggressive reinforcement. The officers indiscriminately targeted people and white students that were crossing the picket line ended up getting attacked along with the TWLF picketers. The following day, Quintanilla recalls even more people joining their picket lines.

Quintanilla graduated with a BA from UC Berkeley in 1972 and completed an MA in Education and a teaching credential by 1976. For 32 years, she worked as an educator and school site/district administrator focusing on providing educational equity to the underprivileged.

Maria Elena Ramirez



Photo of Maria Elena Ramirez sitting by Strawberry Creek. Image provided by Maria E. Ramirez.

Maria E. Ramirez is of Chicana, Puerto-Rican, and Apache descent. She attended Chabot College and was involved in its student movement to establish relevant studies for students of color in the late 1960's. Chicano walkouts at the high school level and college protests reverberated across multiple campuses, serving as a wake-up call to better serve the minority populations on campus. "At Chabot, it was Black and Chicano students demanding our history be taught, hire counselors, and commitment to recruit from our communities. The Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam war, and the Farm Workers struggle were affecting the consciousness of race and justice."

"Although we were few in numbers on college campuses at that time, when we gathered with administrations, they saw families, not just students; a community basically historically ignored. My mother always supported me as the first in my family to go to college." Relatives including younger siblings, as well as the Raza students at Cal State Hayward (currently Cal State East Bay), came out to support the protestors and vice versa. Ramirez was first radicalized during a meeting with the newly formed Chicano Student Union where farmworkers came by to address their need for support. "This was my first and strongest reaction to the worthiness of why we stood up for inclusion for our community. They told us about the need to support

their strike for better wages, for clean drinking water, bathrooms in the fields, and to end child labor. They also told us they were glad we were in college and wanted us to do well, but not to forget them, those that work the land and sought basic human dignity for their labor."

"That was the seed for me, that took root in my lifelong commitment to social justice, that gave my life purpose and connection." Ramirez shares that the first time she was called a "communist" was on the picket line for the Farmworkers Grape Boycott. "Our protests seemed so peaceful compared to what we saw explode at SF state in terms of the violence leveled at students leading the Third World strike there." To Ramirez, UC Berkeley set the precedent for organizing due to the tight-knit solidarity of the Black, Asian, Chicano, and Native American students of the TWLF. They all recognized the need to put aside "divide and conquer" and align against their common oppressor. "Their vision for Self Determination and a Third World College, centering our voices in the truth-telling of the formation of the United States as an empire, and being in solidarity with the struggles around the world in name of Self Determination was very appealing to me because I wanted to be more globally aware as well. The war centered on the Vietnamese as the enemy, the biggest "Communists" at that time. I wanted to know, understand how and why, and who were the people of Indochina, defeating all foreign occupiers, including the US, especially since we were being labeled Communist threat on the home front."

"So, I transferred to Berkeley, and I don't mean I applied for transfer, I didn't even know how that worked. I just relocated there and got a job. Because TWLF was so student and community-oriented, I was welcomed and involved with community projects that resulted directly from the Strike until I officially transferred. I met Nina Genera and Lea Ybarra at the Vacaville Prison Project. I was present for the opening of Casa Joaquin Murrieta, got to know staff and students, attended marches against ROTC on campus, against the war, and against the invasion of Cambodia; I was teargassed numerous times, I volunteered with Frente de Liberation in the Fruitvale community, I met and worked with Teatro Trieste, and continued to use Teatro to communicate our struggle."

According to Ramirez, there was a positive energy, "a 'gusto' for working for change, Power to the People, uniting in solidarity both locally, nationally and globally. In general, the women that I knew were deeply committed and loved the work and challenges. We weren't just cooking, we cooked up opportunities to contribute to the struggle. We took on so many organizing tasks with the goal of always bringing along others, opening doors, and pushing so our communities would benefit. If there was a contradiction, it was that it was easy to push for change, for a better life, to

serve La familia out there, the big picture, rather than deal with our individual contradictions. How many of us had internalized the hurts, the wounds of being inferiorized, terrorized, perpetuating colonization generationally? But that did change once there were some gains, programs established, priorities shifted and focus opened up to addressing deep internal divisions and the need for healing, decolonizing, and dismantling harmful patriarchy within continues.”

No event sealed the need for external Third World sisterhood in the struggle for Self Determination for Ramirez more than attending and performing at the Indochinese Peace Conference in Vancouver, Canada in 1971, exactly 50 years ago. Along with her now lifelong comadres, Lea Ybarra, and Nina Genera, they formed an all-woman Teatro group to educate on Draft Counseling. This anti-war support was for Chicanos who were over-represented in the armed forces (and in prisons, as the three women witnessed through the Vacaville Prison Project) and under-represented on college campuses. Many of the women had family members who were in Vietnam. “Our hearts and minds were equally affected seeing daily horror of war not only on our soldiers but seeing Vietnamese children, elders, women, young people, shot, bombed, killed, homes and villages, burned, crying, in a land of basically, farm working people, was not lost on us as we watched our TVs. Most notably, back then they showed all the bodies coming home, and the hospitals with wounded and maimed young soldiers. I mention this because this was not done the whole 20 years of the war in Afghanistan; it was purposely kept from the public at home.”

The Indochinese Peace Conference sent an all-women delegation from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos to meet with anti-war, women in the U.S, the majority of whom were women of color. “I later learned from a friend, Lee Maracle, that an unrecognized sponsor and support in the making of this conference was the role of First Nations women of Canada. They helped to provide the location, provisions, and hospitality for the 3-day conference, so I am acknowledging this with gratitude.”

“These Indochinese women were physically little, and yet they swept us away with their immense love and humanity, love for their land, their people, against endless foreign occupation, including US imperialism. Their ability to have joy and laughter and yet experience profound wartime traumas including the sharing of a film showing American planes dropping the lethal chemical defoliant, Agent Orange on their lush countryside.

We witnessed its horrific impacts on the land, and the birth defects on their babies, and their warnings to us on its impacts on our soldiers exposed to its deadly toxicity. The long-term effects of cancers, birth defects directly linked to Dioxin (Agent

Orange) continue there in Vietnam and in the lives of our Vietnam vets, and their families all these years after the war supposedly ended. That film struck a deep chord in all women there. Seeing environmental war on land and on Mothers and their children and future generations cemented in many of our minds that the biggest purveyor of unspeakable violence in the world at that time came from, as Martin Luther King stated, our own government. Also, and most importantly, these women provided a vivid example of women and Liberation so much more relatable than the middle class, privileged white women lib movement here in the US."

Ramirez was deeply involved with community issues. She joined the Free Los Siete Organization and moved to the San Francisco Mission District. She became part of an extraordinary community organization that mobilized and shed light on the historical inequities of the criminal justice system towards Black and brown communities. This was exemplified in this particular case: 7 young Latino men charged with the murder of a policeman, all facing the death penalty. The Black Panther Party provided not only their full solidarity but assisted in multiple ways, even providing legal counsel culminating in the acquittal of the 7 young Latino men. Not unlike today's climate, this was practically unheard of at the time. "So although my education resumed later, and I retired as a community college counselor, I am still involved with the community, across generations, still using the arts, still learning and growing. My learned advice, especially to women, is to prioritize your education and self-care. "Our energy is rebalancing our Earth.", and still waiting for the implementation of a full out interdisciplinary Third World College at UCB, the proven antidote to academia's systemic White Supremacy."

Over the years, while working as a counselor, Ramirez developed her own one-woman storytelling performance using Teatro and has traveled all over the world to perform and share her stories. Most recently, she has performed for the World Indigenous People Conference on Education in Toronto, Canada. In 2019, she was given an alumni award at the Honoring Muxeres in Arts & Performance Latina Luncheon. Ramirez is the author of *La Mujer Indigena Her Story, B.C. (Before the Conquest)* (1996), *La Mujer: Re-Emergence of La Mujer in the Sixth-Sun Era* (1997), and wrote the article "Indigenous Roots of Women's Rights". Below are some poems Ramirez has written.

La Mujer

LA MUJER INDIGENA HER STORY, B.C. (Before the Conquest)

by Maria Elena Rameriz

Nothing has so captured the despised, dehumanized status of la mujer indigena, as effectively as the recent videotaped beating by two Riverside Sheriff's deputies of Alicia Soltero Vasquez, whose main crime was coming norte to work. The response from the white community would have been greater if a dog was beaten, instead of a brown woman. Here, before the world, we all saw these men acting out your basic outline of domestic violence, pulling the woman by her hair, kicking and beating her, all the time yelling at her as well, except, this wasn't her husband, or boyfriend, the perpetrators were the ones we are supposed to call to stop the violence. Just like most cases of domestic violence, the man blames the woman, it was her fault, que no? Pues, so it is with Alicia, it was her fault, cause she's an illegal alien, so she deserved what she got. In this case, it goes beyond domestic violence because of the racism and sexism, the scapegoating of immigrants, and all the hysteria that crosses all social and economic lines to justify the beating. Alicia is not accepting the blame in this case and she is taking a stand to stop the violence against immigrants.

In my mind, Alicia personifies the struggle that we, as indigenous/mestiza women are striving to reclaim, namely our true legacy of respect and honor. La Raza was born of Indian women and yet what do we know of how indigenous women were treated before the European invasion. As a colonized people, we have been robbed of more than our lands, we have been educated in the school system which teaches us that Indian women were nothing more than "squaws", beasts of

burden, inferior to men, mistreated brutally at every level and in every way by Indian men. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As Native-American scholar, Paula Gunn Allen so forcefully documents in her writings, "...for millennia American-Indians have based their social systems, however diverse, on ritual, spirit-centered, woman-focused world-views. In many tribes, the nurturing male constitutes the ideal adult model for boys while the decisive, self-directing females is the ideal model to which girls aspire. Among gynocratic or gynocentric tribal peoples, the welfare of the young is paramount, the complementary nature of all life forms is stressed, and the centrality of powerful women to social well-being is unquestioned."

As women, we particularly identify with our Mother Earth. We recognize that the Earth is life.

Ms. Allen further explains that the physical and cultural genocide of indigenous tribes was mostly about patriarchal fears of the European invaders who could not tolerate peoples who allowed women to occupy prominent positions and decision-making capacity at every level of society. "The colonizers saw (and rightly) that as long as women held unquestioned power of such magnitude, attempts at total con-

quest of the continents were bound to fail. In the centuries since the first attempts at colonization in the early 1500's, the invaders have exerted every effort to remove Indian women from every position of authority, to obliterate all records pertaining to gynocratic social systems, and to ensure that no American and few American Indians would remember that gynocracy was the primary social order of Indian America prior to 1800."

There is no doubt that the 500+ years of genocide and brutality have taken a toll on the descendants of Las Americas, much of the violence is now internalized within our communities, whether it is called domestic violence, or gang violence. For example, many eighteenth and nineteenth century Indians and non-Indian reporters alike commented on Indian men's intolerance of rape, many contended that rape didn't exist among Indian nations previous to white contact. That reality is hard to comprehend nowadays, when one out of three women are raped, according to current FBI statistics. Regardless, the violence must stop. We must find a way to rebuild relationships, families, communities, and nations. In closing, I would like to share with you some key resolutions from the Women's Commission of the Indigenous Alliance of the Americas on 500 years of Resistance, July, 1990:

As women, we particularly identify with our Mother Earth. We recognize that the Earth is life. We must

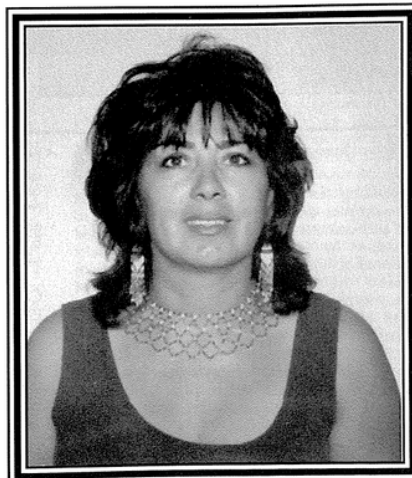
respect ourselves as women so identified. This Mother Earth is the only one that we have: we must respect her, care for her, love her. In every country people are destroying and violating our Mother Earth. She is dying, so we, the people are dying. We take our responsibility seriously. We defend the Earth.

The response from the white community would have been greater if a dog was beaten, instead of a brown woman.

The invasion of a non-indigenous value system has negatively changed the relationship between women and men in the home, and the role of women in our communities and nations. We have all been victims of this oppressive system, of western vices, of addictions, of the violence of a system that is anti-life. We recognize that our primary responsibility is to

reestablish our Indigenous identity in order to unite as women and men in a new way. To lose our identity is to lose the equilibrium of nature, in which there has always been a balance between the masculine and the feminine.

We must reclaim our traditional values, our Indigenous ways of organizing ourselves, of conducting ourselves as communities. Before the arrival of western values, women occupied half of the cosmos. In order to reestablish balance in our homes and in order to realize the self-determination and liberation of our oppressed peoples, women and men must participate equally in accordance with the traditional values of our Indigenous Nations.



RESISTANCE RAP
BY MARIA E. RAMIREZ

Hey! Do you remember the guy that started the lie back in 1492?
His name was Christopher Columbus, and they say he discovered us?
If the truth were told, that vato came for gold,
Cut off our hands, and stole our lands.
Now, don't forget our genocide.
They claimed Manifest Destiny was on their side.
Our Gente just didn't know,
The lengths the invaders would go
To quench their greed, and their wanton need
For lots of Money, Money, Money,
And the results have been anything but funny
In 500 years, all our worst fears, have come to be.
Ecological disaster, it's a reality!
And yet, we must fight for what's right.
And keep our objectives in sight.
Throughout these 500 years of resistance
We have struggled to maintain our persistence.
For our way of Life
Without war and strife.
Respect for Mother Earth
And our Rebirth.
As a people and a Nation
There's no stopping our Reclamation.
Now, many will hotly disagree.
Since they really don't want to see
The ills of their sick society.
Oh, they prefer to live a big lie
So we become the bad guy.
But soon their bubbles will burst
And it's none for the worst
if it means saving Mother Earth, by giving birth.
Here's to a new day, when united we'll say
"Resistance is insistence on our very existence,
Resistance is insistence on our planet's existence"

TIME TO DE-COLONIZE YOUR MIND
BY MARIA E. RAMIREZ

It's time to De-Colonize your mind
We've been Mis-Educated for so long
Many of our youth think going to college is wrong
If they're proud of being bright
They get accused of "Acting White".
It's time to re-focus all this energy
In order to fulfill the 6th Sun Prophecy.
So if you are a seeker of knowledge
Then one way is completing college
It's not a "White" Thing
It's the "Right" Thing
Now some of the kids don't want to hear that, I know
But I'm here to tell you, you really should go

In ancient times upon this land
Our Indigenous ancestors had an Education Plan.
"Respect for all People and the Natural World"
Were parental instructions for each boy and girl.
Self-Discipline and Self-Knowledge was the key
To fulfilling each individual's destiny.

Education for every child was free
In fact, it was compulsory.
That is, up until the 16th Century
That's when the Conquistadors came from Spain
Causing destruction, upheaval and pain.
Enslaving our bodies and our minds
Re-writing our history.
Leaving us with a "colonized mentality".
Today you can see the results of these lies
Our precious youth are dropping out of school like flies.

The achievements of so-called darker nations have all been denied
In order to foster a form of white pride.
But the truth shall set us all free
Bottom line, it's a necessity.
The science of Mathematics, Logic, and Astronomy
Of Philosophy, Physics, and Chemistry
Were all discovered by non-white people, you see.
The art of letters, music and poetry
Drama, painting and sculpture too,
Discovered by people of color - it's true!
The use of metals, principles of mechanics, even Architecture
Discovered or invented by people now called "inferior".
The high ideals of American freedom and democracy
Thank the foremothers and forefathers of the Iroquois Confederacy.
So whether you're Black, Brown, Yellow, Red or White
A good education is a human right.
Getting back on track is no big mystery
You start by re-claiming your true history.
De-colonize your mind
Let the light shine from within
Seeking wisdom is where you begin.

Theresa Loya Asturias



Below is an interview I (Jacquelyn Serrano) conducted with Theresa Loya Asturias. Member of the TWLF of 1969 and member of the Mexican American Student Confederation.

Scope/Content: In this oral history interview, conducted by Jacquelyn Serrano as part of the UC Berkeley 150W campaign, Theresa Loya Asturias, a member of the Third World Liberation Front, describes her memories and experiences organizing the Third World Liberation Front student strike which led to the creation of Ethnic Studies and African American Studies at UC Berkeley.

<https://calisphere.org/item/b97152f1-3a73-49f5-89f8-3074853555a2/>