



## Activism and Resistance in the 1990s

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THE STATE OF ASIAN AMERICA is the second entry in South End Press's Race and Resistance series, following a volume that focused on Native American issues. Eighteen essays are presented here, in three sections: part 1, "Riots, Roses, and Racism: Some Burning Issues in the 1990s"; part 2, "Where Are You From? When Are You Going Back? Exploring Race and Identity"; and part 3, "The Heat Is On: Asian Americans on the Road to Empowerment." In addition, the collection includes a foreword by playwright and screenwriter David Henry Hwang, an introduction by editor Karin Aguilar-San Juan, and an afterword by M. Annette Jaimes, who edited the first volume in the series.

The strength of the volume lies in the range of issues addressed. In the first essay Glenn Omatsu chronicles and analyzes Asian American activism from the 1960's to the 1990's, while in the concluding essay Lane Ryo Hirabayashi and Marilyn C. Alquizola evaluate the evolution of Asian American Studies over roughly the same period, suggesting that scholars need to restore "the field's original critical, counterhegemonic stance." It is appropriate that these two essays bracket the collection, for one of the intentions of this volume is to trace links between subjects that are often considered in isolation from one another. Activism and academic work do not take place in separate universes. Thus within this single volume essays on labor organizing, domestic violence, and the arts keep company. This boundary-crossing is matched by a range in ethnic perspective, representing the diversity within the Asian American community: Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Southeast Asian.

If the contributors are diverse in one respect, in another they are not. Most appear to share a narrowly circumscribed set of ideological assumptions. Few show a willingness to consider how the issues they address are seen from other viewpoints—not necessarily to modify their own views or to open the way for dialogue, though that might occur, but even to make their arguments more persuasive. (There are exceptions, notably David Mura's "A Shift in Power, a Sea Change in the Arts: Asian American Constructions.") Nonetheless, for a challenging report from an influential segment of the Asian American community, read THE STATE OF ASIAN AMERICA from cover to cover.

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