

**Chinese-American
Workers:
Past and Present**

**– an Anthology of
GETTING
TOGETHER**

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Introduction

Chinese-American Workers: Past and Present is an anthology of articles presenting some aspects of the day to day lives of Chinese working people in the United States. The Staff of GETTING TOGETHER presents this perspective because Chinese workers, along with other workers, have contributed to building the wealth of America with their sweat and labor. They, like other non-white workers, are the ones who have been affected most by the problems of American society. They have a long history similar to that of other working people, one of resistance to exploitation. We believe that along with other workers they will continue to fight for their rights as workers and take part in leading the struggle for a better life.

The articles in this book are divided into five general sections: History, Present Conditions, Women, Youth, and Culture. GETTING TOGETHER hopes the book will provide some insight into questions such as: Why did Chinese people come to this country? Why have the Chinese working people continued to labor here in spite of hardships and suffering, exploitation and discrimination?

The articles in this anthology are taken from the pages of GETTING TOGETHER, a progressive bi-lingual Chinese-American newspaper published in San Francisco. GETTING TOGETHER was founded in January, 1970 by members of I Wor Kuen, an Asian-American revolutionary organization. Since then, many progressive Asian-Americans have joined the staff and contributed to the development of GETTING TOGETHER. The paper aims at presenting information about the situation of Asian people in America, as well as about other oppressed people in this country and around the world.

We hope this anthology will reach many sympathetic and progressive people in the U.S. We believe that this volume will contribute to a better understanding of the Chinese-American experience and help promote the unity of all working people to gain justice and freedom.

THE STAFF OF GETTING TOGETHER

1.

Chinese-American History

In order to fully understand the history of Chinese-American workers, one must examine it within the general context of the U.S. economy and society. Their history in this country can not be separated from the history and development of capitalism in the U.S.

Thus, it must include study of the numerous struggles between the American ruling class, be it in the form of plantation owners, big businessmen, or the U.S. government; and the American workers, particularly Black slaves, poor immigrants, and contract laborers.

The articles in this section present various aspects of the history of Chinese-American workers. The "Survey of History (1850's-1880's)" describes the exploitation and racial oppression which the Chinese faced during the development of the American economy in the 19th century. "Account of KMT Fascism" is a personal experience under Chiang Kai-shek's KMT dictatorship, a regime which had the support of the U.S. in pre-1949 China and now in Taiwan. This describes the experience of many recent immigrants before they came to this country. Finally, there are personal accounts of several Chinese workers who struggled against oppression in the interests of fellow workers. Contrary to popular myth, Chinese workers in America have agitated, protested, and struggled in their desire to be free and equal.

Chinese-American History

1850-1880

Although there are recorded cases of Chinese who emigrated to the U.S. in the late 1790's and early 1800's, the number remained a handful until the mid-nineteenth century. These pioneer immigrants were mainly crewman who were stranded in America and men and women brought in as domestics by American merchants.

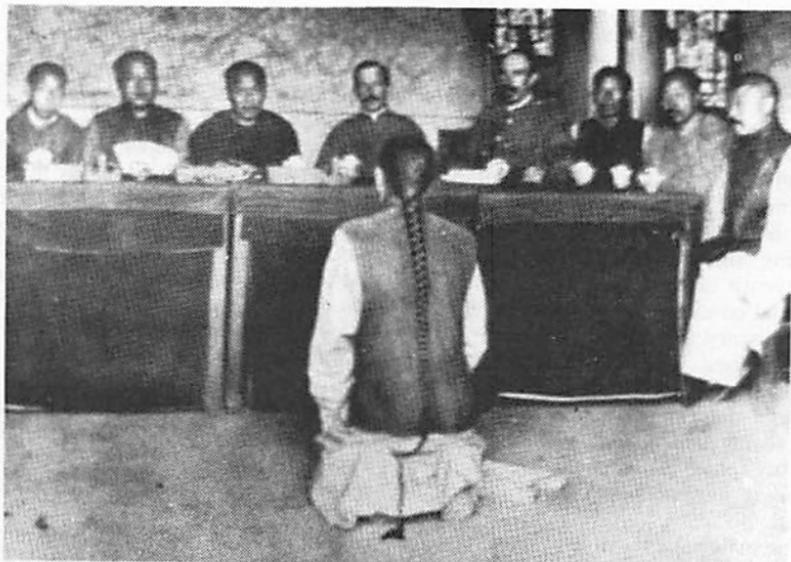
The first major influx of immigrants from China occurred in the mid-1800's. Approximately 2,700 Chinese arrived in America between 1849 and 1851¹. The number jumped to 20,000 by 1852, a five-fold increase in one year.² From then on the number of immigrants fluctuated according to both the demands of the American capitalist class and the intensity of anti-Chinese sentiments.

There are two main reasons why many Chinese chose to leave their country in the mid-nineteenth century. The first and more fundamental one is the rapid disintegration of the Chinese economy in the 1800's. China's moribund feudal economy had, by the nineteenth century, reached a saturation point. The concentration of landownership (aided by an increasingly corrupt government machinery) threw large numbers of self-sufficient peasants into subsistence tenantry; thus bringing about widespread poverty and chaos in the Chinese countryside. This disintegration of the Chinese economy was further hastened by the growing corruption and ineptness of the Manchu regime, a major population explosion and a series of natural disasters.

The second factor that helped pave the way for Chinese immigration was the role that Western imperialism played in China at the time. In contrast to the stage of development in China, the major Western nations had, by the second quarter of the nineteenth century, successfully developed a capitalist economy and were looking frantically overseas for virgin territory to exploit and markets to dump their excess goods.

The British capitalists, the leading imperialists at the time, had already sunk their teeth into both the African and Asian continents and had already begun their plunder and exploitation. Other Western nations soon followed suit, and thus the scramble for colonies began in the nineteenth century. There had been repeated attempts by the imperialist nations to colonize parts of China, but it was not until 1842 that they were able to make any major inroads. 1842 was the year that Britain emerged victorious from the Opium War. Defeat in this decisive war forced the much debilitated Manchu regime to open up the floodgates for foreign exploitation. Unequal Treaties followed in the wake of the Opium War and China was soon reduced to a semi-colony.

Imperialist control hastened the final demise of the already moribund Manchu dynasty. It weakened both the military and administrative power of the Manchus. The Manchu bureaucracy and military, although weakened significantly by the mid 19th century, stepped up the political repression in both the cities and the countryside. Intense political repression, coupled with widespread poverty provided



"Boxer" being tried by Imperialists.

the material situation that led many poor peasants to emigrate from their country. Contrary to Western assumptions, Chinese emigrants during the time were not exercising "free will" in their search for "gold mountain." Many were sold by their creditors as contract labor for foreign firms, while others were simply faced with death from starvation if they remained at home.

What triggered off mass emigration to America in the early 1850's was the California goldrush. The majority of emigrants came from Kwangtung, the main seacoast province through which foreign merchants carried on trade. The reason why more people emigrated from Kwangtung was because it was only in this one province that an efficient "credit-ticket" system was set up between local comprador brokerage firms and American companies. This "credit-ticket" system was a modified form of slave trade. Comprador brokers operated from Kwangtung and Hong Kong to actively recruit able-bodied men for overseas firms that needed to maintain a surplus labor pool to depress wages. Passage to America was advanced by the brokers with the guarantee that it would be paid back within a specified period of time. What actually resulted was a system of contract labor whereby the broker and the American companies collaborated to exploit the immigrant to the utmost. Passage rates were set so high that the immigrant usually had to work for a few years in order to pay off the broker.

In addition to this "credit-ticket" system there was a thriving coolie trade operating. The "coolies" were recruited by "crimps" (gangsters hired by brokerage firms) from among prisoners taken in clan fights, from among people who had been kidnapped, from among people heavily in debt whose only recourse was to sell themselves.³ "Coolies" were forced to sign contracts, selling their labor for a period of years. These contracts were in turn sold to overseas firms in need of cheap labor. the "coolies" were then transported from China under conditions similar to those existing during the days of the black slave trade. Many died in ships from disease and hunger while those who managed to live through the perils of the journey were met with sadistic slave masters who worked them mercilessly.

THE RISE OF CORPORATE CAPITALISM

To search for an answer to the question of why the Chinese emigrant was never accepted into the "boiling pot" of American society, we must look at the material circumstances that surrounded the early Chinese emigrant upon his arrival in America. That is, although cultural and political factors played a significant role in shaping the fate of the Chinese-American emigrant in the latter part of the nineteenth century, we must, in the final analysis, probe deeper into the concrete material conditions—the existing relations of production—in order to understand the early history of Chinese-Americans. Theories that attempt to explain the role of the early Chinese emigrant in America as the result of purely political pressures or of cultural confrontations forget the basic condition of man's existence; that the material determines the mental. Thus, in any society, it is the economic structure that shapes man's basic outlook. Ideas, attitudes and perspectives do not "fall from the sky" nor can ideas generated in one epoch be transmitted to a materially different one without adulteration. Ideas, then, ultimately reflect man's material being.

The material conditions that influenced the fate of the early Chinese emigrant the most was the rise of corporate capitalism in California in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1850 the economic structure of the eastern United States had already developed from corporate capitalism to the early stages of monopoly capitalism. Artisans, craft trades, and small-scale businesses had long since been replaced by socialized labor and big corporate enterprises. The days of competition and of individual entrepreneurship were gone forever on the Eastern seaboard.

The West, however, was still virgin territory in the mid-nineteenth century. California was especially alluring to both artisans and skilled laborers on the East Coast who had been displaced and to the new immigrant who wanted to start afresh in the New World. The Gold Rush in California was the major impetus that led to mass migration from the East.

From approximately 1849 to 1858 California's economy was almost completely built around the gold trade. Clusters of towns, shops and communication lines grew up around major mining sites. Up until 1853 most white miners were so-called "miner-prospectors" who worked the mines with rudimentary equipment such as picks and shovels. After 1853 company mining quickly superceded "independent mining." With much more sophisticated mining techniques such as the sluice and hydraulic methods, the costs per unit of raw materials handled were greatly reduced. Thus, with the ascendancy of company mining, the "prospector," or independent miner became obsolete. With the disappearance of the prospector miner, small shops catering to his needs were similarly swept aside by larger-combines that could better serve the demands of the company mines.

A similar development took place in other sectors of the California economy a decade later. In the cities small-scale industries and skilled artisans were rapidly displaced by the rise of large manufacturing firms and corporations. In agriculture the transition from subsistence farming to company farming was not as drastic as it was in the areas of mining and manufacturing. This was because California's agricultural development was, from the start, oriented towards the markets of cities and towns. It was, in other words, a business enterprise from the very beginning.

By the late 1860's the majority of white Californians, the prospector miner, the artisan, the small manufacturer, and small shopkeeper, had all been dislocated and tossed out onto the labor pool and received into the welcoming arms of the corporate capitalists who had been eagerly awaiting this opportunity. For the dislocated, the transition was a very jolting one. He had been reduced from a

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self-sufficient and independent producer to a wage laborer whose very livelihood was in the hands of the corporate capitalists. There was much resistance to this degradation in the initial years and the frustration and despair of the dislocated appeared in many forms, one of which was racism directed towards the Chinese immigrant.



Chinese panning for gold—1850's.

THE CHINESE WORKER IN EARLY CALIFORNIA ECONOMY

Before 1852 there was just an estimated 2,700 Chinese immigrants in the United States, most of whom were settled in California.⁴ Most of these earliest immigrants became contract-laborers in corporate mines. They did not attract much attention initially but by the end of 1852, 20,000 Chinese had arrived in America and response to the Chinese immigrant on the part of white miners changed from mere curiosity to mounting hostility.

The first attempt at organizing opposition to the Chinese worker took place at the anti-Chinese conference held at Atchinson's Bar in Yuba County in 1852. The conference was mainly attended by white "prospector-miners" with a sprinkling of politicians and small businessmen. Reports issued by the Conference reflect clearly the different class interests that were at play. The white miners and small businessmen were the most vehemently anti-Chinese. Fear of the Chinese as competitors was loudly expressed by the white miners in highly defamatory language, but the frequent mention of "dependence on water companies" and "intrusion of company mining" point to a deeper, although less clearly articulated fear.⁵ This was the fear of displacement by corporate capital, a threat that was much more real than that posed by the Chinese immigrant. However, the intrusion of corporate capital was so overwhelming and incomprehensible that the white miners chose a much more conspicuous and vulnerable target, the Chinese immigrant.

This hostility was expressed in racist terms of Anglo-Saxon superiority. The typical attitude of the white miners towards the Chinese immigrant is captured in this paragraph by "Zack," in an article that appeared in the *Shasta Courier* in 1853:

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"After the American miner with that spirit of courageous enterprise so peculiarly his own, at the cost of the thousands of dollars, has explored the wild mountainous and savage regions where a Chinaman dare not set foot . . . after he has settled down to work with a partial feeling of security, in the hope of realizing at least some reward for his years of suffering and privation – what must be his feelings to find himself suddenly surrounded and hemmed in on every side, by a motley swarm of semi-barbarians, eager to grasp the spoils."⁶

Anti-Chinese sentiments soon went far beyond mere verbal denunciations. After the first anti-Chinese convention, subsequent anti-Chinese meetings were held with the specific purpose of organizing vigilante groups to drive Chinese mine workers away. These mass meetings led to waves of expulsion accompanied by burning, beating and shooting of Chinese mine workers. Anti-Chinese sentiments were at such a rabid pitch in the 1850's that many Chinese were just simply shot or beaten to death on sight.

On the political front, miners delegations were formed to pressure the state legislature into passing anti-Chinese laws. The most infamous of these early laws directed against Chinese was the "foreign miners' tax." The tax went up from \$3 per month in 1852 to \$8 per month in 1858 and finally was fixed at \$4 per month as the legislature soon found that taxes that were too exorbitant just served to drive the Chinese miners home; thus depriving the state of one of the most important sources of revenue.⁷ The collectors of the foreign miners tax were, in reality, licensed killers who hunted down Chinese mine workers irregardless of whether or not they had already paid the tax. Those who simply could not pay were summarily shot by the tax collector with the full sanction of the law.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CENTRAL PACIFIC

Attacks against Chinese mine workers subsided towards the late 1850s as white independent miners started leaving the mines en masse. Finally realizing that they did not have a chance against corporate-owned mines, they left for the cities in search of employment as wage laborers. Chinese mine workers too left the mines soon after the exodus of the white miners for the low level of output of even corporate mining reduced the demand for labor. Some Chinese miners drifted into towns and cities while others searched for employment in the farming areas. However, the vast majority were recruited by the Central Pacific Railroad for the almost superhuman task of constructing the Western portion of America's first transcontinental railroad.

Railroad construction dominated California's economy in the late '60s and the early '70s and was, during this period, the single largest employer of labor. Chinese labor was especially sought after in the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. White workers, mostly ex-miners, were tried and found to be "unreliable, lazy and hard to supervise."⁸ The Chinese were given the most strenuous and arduous tasks, forced to work longer hours and were paid much less than white workers. Chinese workers labored twelve hours a day, received \$26 per month and had to pay for their own lodging and food while white workers worked an average of eight hours per day, and received \$36 per month plus board.⁹ In other words, labor costs for white workers were 64% to 90% higher than for the Chinese worker.

As for the division of labor between Chinese and white workers, the former were given such dangerous tasks as drilling and blasting in wicker baskets dangling over the side of cliffs, blacking tunnels and working 12-hour shifts in underground

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Railroad workers—1860's.

passages. The latter, on the other hand, performed much lighter tasks such as laying tracks after the Chinese worker had finished blasting a path. A striking description of the life of the Chinese miners during the harsh winters in the Sierras appeared in the *Sacramento Union* on December 28, 1866:

"The portals of the summit tunnel were buried under fantastic drifts, the Chinese encampments were snowed under. The Chinese dug chimneys and air shafts, lived by lantern light. They tunneled in from the camps to reach the bore of the tunnel itself, and the work continued, although materials now had to be lowered forty feet or more by steam hoist from the surface of the snow, and the waste from the digging taken out in the same way."¹⁰

Many Chinese workers died during the two winters spent in the Sierra Nevadas. Blizzards, snow slides and simple overexposure took many lives. Testifying before a Federal Investigating Committee many years later, Strobridge, one of the main contractors of the Central Pacific, said this about the disasters in the Sierras:

"The snowslides carried away our camps and we lost a good many men in these slides; many of them we did not find until the next season when the snow melted."¹¹

Despite the overwhelming odds against a successful strike by Chinese railroad workers at the time, they did manage to organize a strike in June 1867. On that day approximately 6,000 Chinese workers stayed away from work unless their demands for a raise in pay, the reduction of the work day to ten hours in the open and eight hours in the tunnel, were met.¹² The leaflet circulated by the Chinese workers said: "Eight hours a day good for white men, all the same good for Chinamen."¹³ Although the Chinese workers remained peaceful throughout the strike, they remained adamant until they were forced to resume work through sheer hunger. Charles Crocker later described the way he handled the strike in these words: "These men stayed in their camps; that is they would come out and walk around, but not a

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word was said, nothing was done; no violence was perpetrated along the whole line. I stopped the provisions on them, stopped the butchers from butchering and used such coercive measures."¹⁴

There are no written accounts of the strike by the Chinese workers themselves, but the fact that they actually did succeed in organizing themselves in face of the hostility of fellow white workers and the knowledge that management would not hesitate to resort to the most ruthless measures, indicate their strength and determination. This specific strike, as well as other strikes by Chinese workers at the time, completely disprove the popular bourgeois theory that the Chinese are by nature passive and compliant. These strikes prove that Chinese workers did respond to oppressive economic conditions militantly and that when they did it was always amidst overwhelming odds.

The role that the Chinese workers played in the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad throws light upon the nature of the capitalist system in general and of the specific phase of economic development that the Western United States was undergoing in particular. In the 1860's and early 70's, the Western United States,



White brutality against Chinese.

especially California, was undergoing transformation from an uncultivated, virgin territory into an important industrial and agricultural base. Before the transformation could take place a basic communications network had to be established and large-scale land reclamation had to take place. These projects could not have been undertaken without a large pool of labor and would not have been initiated unless the capitalist developer could be assured of a handsome profit. Thus, the capitalist wanted a surplus labor pool so that wages could be depressed as much as possible. Ex-Chinese miners and other Chinese brought in through the contract labor system provided an excellent source of labor. The Chinese worker, no longer able to eke out an existence from mining, and driven from place to place by dislocated white workers who found him a perfect scapegoat, had no choice but to accept anything that would afford subsistence. The capitalist jumped to profit from this situation. Chinese workers provided the surplus labor that was needed so that he could make fat profits. At the same time the capitalist-developer could mollify white



White brutality against Chinese.

workers by giving them more desirable jobs and higher pay than what the Chinese workers received. This soon became a favorite tactic of the American capitalist; using desperate Third World workers to keep the wages down and profits rolling, while creating a white labor aristocracy (reinforced by racism) so that class tensions would be lessened.

It is only within the above context that one can understand why anti-Chinese laws met with so much opposition on the national level before the 1880's. Behind the facade of the "enlightened American aristocracy" lurked the naked self interest of the national capitalist class. Congress and the Federal courts were not opposed to proposals for anti-Chinese legislation submitted by state legislatures on the professed grounds of "freedom, liberty, and equality," but because the two institutions were controlled by the very class (the national capitalists) that profited the most off of Chinese labor.

The capitalist tactic of using Chinese workers to perform the most odious tasks for subsistence wages while consciously building a white labor aristocracy emerged clearly in the case of the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. This was bluntly admitted by Charles A. Crocker, the general manager of the Central Pacific at the time, in a report of the "Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration":

"Question: State what, in your judgment, is the effect upon white labor, whether they (the Chinese) have the effect to deprive white man of employment, or have had that effect at any time?

"Answer: I think they afford white men labor. I think that their presence here affords the white man a more elevated class of labor. As I said before, if you should drive these 75,000 Chinamen off you would take 75,000 white men from an elevated class of work and put them down to doing a low class of labor that the Chinamen are now doing, and instead of elevating you would degrade white labor to that extent."¹⁵

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IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD

After the Central Pacific Railroad was constructed, California was quickly integrated into the national economy. Small craft trades and family-size sweat shops were swept away by corporations; big capital simply swallowed small capital. As a result, the labor pool soon swelled with the dislocated; independent producers turned wage laborers plus discharged railroad workers. Massive migration from a depressed East in the 1870's compounded the plight of the working class in California. Two subsequent events further aggravated the problem of surplus labor in California. The first was the depression of 1876. The factors that triggered off the depression were a severe drought, the death of thousands of cattle and a sharp dip in the output of the mines. As a result of the depression farmers and miners were added to the ranks of the unemployed in the urban areas. The second event that further contributed to the swelling of the labor pool was a drastic decline in the output of the Comstock-Lode mining region which led to plummeting stockrates.¹⁶ Those that were hit the hardest by this crash were the small merchants, clerks and shopkeepers who had invested much of their savings in the Comstock-Lode mines.¹⁷

By the end of the 1870's there were masses of unemployed clustered in major urban centers in California. Many were self-sufficient producers turned wage laborers. Out of frustration they turned to the Chinese as a scapegoat.

WHITE WORKERS VS. THE CHINESE WORKERS

Like the white worker, many Chinese workers drifted into the cities after the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad. Others wandered into rural areas and sought work as farmhands. By 1870 the Chinese population in agricultural areas had increased immensely. In Sacramento the Chinese population tripled between 1860 and 1870, in San Joaquin it jumped from 139 to 2000 in the ten year period, in Santa Clara it grew from 22 to 2,695 during the period and in Yolo County the number of Chinese grew from 6 to 600.¹⁸ The mass employment of Chinese workers in agricultural work at this time brought about a decisive upswing in production; it was only after Chinese labor was available that orchards and farmland in the Western United States were cultivated extensively. In the urban areas where Chinese workers went they were hired in large numbers in various manufacturing industries such as shoe, cigar, textiles, etc. It is important to note here that the four manufacturing industries in which Chinese workers were most heavily employed, the tobacco, shoe and woolen, were all industries that met intense competition from Eastern firms that were able to produce at much more profitable costs. Because of Eastern competition, the wages in these industries were necessarily depressed and the margin of profit very low. Thus, contrary to popular belief, Chinese workers themselves did not depress wages in the manufacturing industries; the low wages in these industries were the natural result of capitalist competition at the point in which small, local industries were gradually being eased out by national industries that had the backing of the national capitalist class. By the early 1870's Chinese workers were actively sought after by both corporate farm owners and managers of industries. This was because the Chinese had, through their work on the railroad, developed a reputation for being industrious and persevering.

Anti-Chinese attacks on the part of a sector of the white working class took place simultaneously in the rural and urban areas of the nation. In California where the Chinese comprised 75% of the rural work force in the 1870's (mostly farmhands) vigilante groups were formed among white farm workers for the specific purpose of driving the Chinese out of the farms. In Grass Valley, Colusa and the Lava Beds

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Chinese quarters were burned down. In Chico, five Chinese tenant farmers were shot to death and their bodies burned.

In the major cities of the West, especially San Francisco, attempts were made by white workers to form anti-Chinese organizations. The most notorious of these was the Workingman's Party. Formed in 1879 by a group of dislocated skilled workers and other unemployed white workers, it organized many anti-Chinese riots and succeeded in forcing many anti-Chinese legislations through the California legislature.

As for the role that organized labor played at the time, there were many internal divisions within the American Federation of Labor in regard to the Chinese workers. There were many shades of opinion, but on the whole it was the top leadership of the A.F. of L. (the executive committee) that stood vehemently against organizing Chinese workers and was the most rabid in propagating anti-Chinese propaganda. On the other hand, the position of many locals toward Chinese workers ranged from support of the A.F. of L. leadership's position, to confusion, and to the outright rejection of the leadership's decision. The reason why the union leadership was so venomous in attacking Chinese workers at the time is aptly summed up by Philip Foner in *The History of the Labor Movement in the United States*:

"That the A.F. of L. leaders should have been the most active agent in channeling the thinking of American workers away from more basic problems into anti-Chinese agitation is not surprising when we bear in mind that this was precisely the period when these leaders developed the whole strategy of class-collaboration. That the anti-Chinese agitation was part of this strategy is clearly revealed in the pamphlet by Gompers and Gutstadt, 'Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion.'"¹⁹

In the 1908 edition of the pamphlet, "Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion," there was a clear call for class collaboration by the union leadership. The union between labor and capital, according to the A.F. of L., was impossible unless the Chinese were excluded:

"The increasing recurrence of strikes in modern times must have convinced everyone that their recent settlement is nothing more than a truce. It is not a permanent industrial peace. The new organization of capital and labor now necessary to bring about lasting peace and harmony between those engaged in production will require greater sympathy, greater trust and confidence, and a clearer mutual understanding between the employers and the employed. Any such new organization will require closer union to be formed between them. These requirements can never be fulfilled between the individuals of races so alien to one another as ourselves and the Chinese. The Chinese are only capable of working under the present unsatisfactory system. All progress, then, to an improved organization of capital and labor would be arrested."²⁰

Anti-Chinese sentiments were so intense in the late 1870's and early 1880's that there were invariably daily marches by the white unemployed to establishments where many Chinese worked. These were very often violent marches; Chinese dwellings would be burned along the road and any Chinese person seen on the streets by the marchers would be beaten up. Under such intense pressure many capitalists agreed to discharge the Chinese. For many, this meant a big cut in profits, sometimes leading to the closing of the establishment.

Not only were the capitalists forced, by the 1870's, to forego some profits so as to save the capitalist system, but their "legal representatives," the politicians, were also

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ready to pass major Chinese exclusion legislation. By the late 1870s, the vicissitudes of the capitalist economy had created such widespread unemployment that the working class was desperate and was a potential threat to the very existence of capitalism. Although the white working man was still, at the time, attacking just a scapegoat, and was unable to grasp the fact that the basic root of the problem was the capitalist economic structure, the capitalist class was already taking precautions to make sure that the white working class will not recognize its real enemy. Thus, it was within this background that the first Chinese exclusion act was passed in 1882. This was the first national attempt by the capitalist class to appease the anti-Chinese sector of the white working class. This bill, however, just added fuel to the wrath of the anti-Chinese working man toward the Chinese and diverted the issue even further away from the main contradiction – the conflict between the capitalist system and the interest of the working class.

SUMMARY

Both the white working class and the Chinese workers who emigrated to America in the late nineteenth century were victims of capitalism. The rise of corporate capitalism on the West Coast in the mid-19th century led to the dislocation of many independent producers. Moreover, the instability of a capitalist economy (the frequency of depressions, gluts, etc.) compounded the plight of the working class to the point that his very existence was threatened. Thus, the pressures of life under capitalism created much frustration and despair among the working class. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the frustration of the white workingman was channeled into hatred for the Chinese worker. This was because the Chinese worker (because he saw himself as a contract laborer in America who would soon return home), was more willing to grit his teeth and bear the oppression of the capitalists, was more readily used by the capitalist in his pursuit of bigger profits. In other words, the capitalists were playing one race of workers against another so that wages would be depressed as much as possible. Thus, the Chinese worker was sandwiched in between two forces: white workers who used him as a scapegoat and the capitalist who exploited him to the utmost. By the late 1870's the capitalists, threatened with the potential destruction of capitalism itself attempted to appease the white workingman by discharging Chinese workers. This is why, after 1880 many Chinese workers began to congregate in small enclaves in cities and were no longer found as workers in the basic industries. Many set up small-scale, subsistence operations such as family laundries and restaurants while others sought work in the service sector of the economy.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1 *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration* (44th Congress, 2nd Session, 1876-1877, Senate Report 689), 1196.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau with Eve Pell, *To Serve the Devil*, Vol. 2, Vintage Books, 1971, p. 77.
- 4 *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration* (44th Congress, 2nd Session, 1876-1877, Senate Report 689), 1196.
- 5 Sir Henry Huntley, *California; its gold and its population* (London, 1856), pp. 250-255; *Alta*, May 15, 1852.
- 6 *Shasta Courier*, 1853 in Brett and Victor Nee, *Chinese American History*, (a chapter in a book that has not yet been published).
- 7 Saxton, Alexander, *The Indispensable Enemy* Univ. of Calif. Press, 1971, p. 56.
- 8 *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration* (44th Congress, 2nd Session, 1876-1877, Senate Report 689), 616-617.
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- 10 Pacific Railway Commission, U2577-2579 in Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, Univ. of Calif. Press, 1971.
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- 14 *Report of Special Committee*, 669.
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- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 18 10th U.S. census (1880), p. 382; 12th U.S. census (1900), p. 11; in *A History of the Chinese in California*, Thomas Chinn, ed., publ. by Chinese Historical Society of America, 1969.
- 19 Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. II: The Policies and Practices of the American Federation of Labor, 1900-1909, p. 273.
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Guo Bok

Guo Bok came from a very poor peasant family in Kwantung Province and after the 1911 Revolution which threw out the Manchus from the Chinese throne, Guo Bok left home to go to the city. But one year later he left for Singapore, where he stayed for two years, working as a cook, carpenter, laborer, coal burner, and laundry worker.

In 1915, he began his life as a seaman, being at that time 35 years old. For years he slaved on board passenger and freight ships that sailed around the world. All his fellow workers were Chinese, but the officers and owners of the ships were always British. The work was hard and lonely. During these years he never stayed in one place long enough to be comfortable. All Guo Bok did to spend time was to hang around the docks and seamen halls waiting for the next job.

Finally in 1923, he decided to stay in NYC. Ever since then he has never left America, in fact, during these fifty years, he hasn't even been outside of the NYC area. Guo Bok said that in 1915, when he first arrived in America, the U.S. government welcomed Chinese sailors with open arms, because the U.S. was at war and needed seamen. However, in 1923, the war was over, and once again the U.S. tried to prevent Chinese from entering the U.S. Guo Bok said that it was clear that all the U.S. wanted to do was to use the sweat and blood of the Chinese for its own purposes. But when the crisis was over, the government tried to kick out all those Chinese who had entered during the early 1920's, but most like Guo Bok out-smarted the government and evaded being deported.

But now Guo Bok was faced with getting a job; and the only job he could get was dishwashing. Although he has worked at other jobs temporarily, he has been a dishwasher almost his entire life. A strong, intelligent and hardy man, Guo Bok has had to slave his entire life simply to survive in this racist, exploitative society.

We asked Guo Bok about his opinions and memories about certain subjects. The white people, Guo Bok says, do clearly oppress the Chinese people, but there are good and bad white people. He himself admits that he has never felt any oppression from white people, for when he does meet a bad one he just beats him up. We must add that Guo Bok is a master in the martial arts. Guo Bok is a firm believer in self-defense.

Guo Bok has very strong opinions about the U.S. government as well. "This government is just a bunch of crooks," as he said. It just ignores the rights of the Chinese people. He gave example after example of where Chinese businesses were robbed or Chinese people held-up and beaten, and the police and courts would do nothing for the Chinese. The police would always come around to the restaurants trying to get a free dinner but when there was a robbery, there wouldn't be a pig in sight.

Guo Bok then went on to talk about the tongs. He said that both Hip Sing and On Leong wanted him to join their organizations, but he refused. He said that the tongs terrorize and extort money from the people in Chinatown. They hire killers to carry out contracts on people. He remembers one case where On Leong put a \$10,000 contract out on the treasurer of Hip Sing. The victim's own son carried out the contract, killing his own father!! Of course, the son was never arrested, but moved

out of Chinatown into the suburbs.

He recalled some of the contact he has had in the past with the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA). During the Depression, everyone was struggling to survive. Chinese and other Third World people had a particularly hard time earning any money. Guo Bok was thrown out of work and was forced to sell newspapers in the subway. The white attendants allowed him to sell in the station, but a CCBA officer came along and called the pigs on him and had him thrown out of the subway so he couldn't sell his papers! Guo Bok clearly understands that pigs come in all colors.

Guo Bok feels that Chinag Kai-Shek sold out his country to the American imperialists. Because of the deals he made with the American imperialists, he is not strong and independent. If Chairman Mao Tse-Tung and the Chinese Communist Party had not stood firm against the attempts to divide China by the imperialists, China would be fragmented today. As Guo Bok puts it: "If it had not been white dogs!" Guo Bok added, however, that Chairman Mao was the only leader and that it was all of the Chinese people who finally stood up and enabled to resist aggression.

Lastly, we asked him, "From your experience, what do you advise us to do to achieve freedom and true democracy?" His reply was immediate, "I cannot tell you what to do, you must decide for yourself." He added, however, "There have been many times when Chinese people have stood up and resisted oppression. They are always called communists. But of course they should be called communists because only communists have the courage to stand up and be strong!"

Account of KMT Fascism

Throughout Chinese history there have been exemplary men and women who have suffered incredible hardship from tyranny with courage and steadfastness. Chou Hsien is such a man. He lives and works in San Francisco. He walks and works among us. The struggle and pains of his exemplary life serves as an inspiration to us all.

There is an old Chinese saying, "the tragedy of an individual and of his country are related." Looking at myself, I have scars all over my body left over from torture. I think of severe tortures and slave labor; and of my relatives who are far apart, and of those friends who are victimized. If I say I am one of the victims of the triple persecution by American imperialism, Japanese militarism and the fascism of Chiang Kai-shek's traitorous clique, this should not be seen as an expression of my own self-pity.

During those days in pre-liberation China, too many Chinese people died. The anti-Communist U.S. Senator, James Eastland, recently quoted statistics of the number of Chinese people who died in those days to condemn the people's revolution in China. I was lucky to have suffered less compared to those who lost their lives. And because my life was fortunately saved, I have the opportunity now to use my personal experience to explain how the Chinese people have been victimized.

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

MY EARLY LIFE

My home town was in Szechuan province, a small village by the Yangtse River. My family were peasants.

In 1943 I was only fourteen years old. The war between the Chinese people and the Japanese invaders had reached its highest point. The troops of the Kuomintang were kidnapping people everywhere to perform physical labor and to become soldiers in their army. I wasn't even sure how they got me. In the first place, I didn't object much, because I thought that being a soldier to fight the imperialist invaders and to protect the motherland was a righteous thing to do. But after I got into the Kuomintang, I found out that it was not like that at all. The Kuomintang troops seldom fought the enemies. For example, the brigade I was enlisted in never fought the Japanese at all. All that this brigade did was to exploit the people by taking their money and food and by occupying the peasants' houses and raping the village women. Sometimes for petty reasons they even killed unarmed people. After six months of stretching my patience, I took a big risk and escaped from this sinful



People digging through garbage heap in search for food in feudal China.

military life. I ran away.

At first I planned to go home, but the message came to me from my village saying that the military authority had already sentenced my whole lifetime to be spent in jail, and had also put my father under arrest. I didn't dare to go home, so I went to Chungking. Chungking was a big city, much easier to hide in. There I saw the Kuomintang elite enjoying their fancy life. They were making a lot of money from the war situation, while I myself couldn't even find a job. Sometimes I sold

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newspapers; other times I had to beg for food to survive. I became a beggar.

In 1945, the Second World War ended. The Japanese militarists surrendered. But the Chinese people could not enjoy peace. China got into the civil war. This civil war was started by Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang regime, which was encouraged by large amounts of American aid and support. The troops, airplanes, and cannons of the U.S. were all used directly in this war which slaughtered many Chinese people. People all over the country were forced into a frightening environment.

STARVATION UNDER THE KMT

In 1946, I changed my name and fled to Nanking, the capital of the Kuomintang. I found a temporary labor job at the Chungwa radio parts factory and got a salary of some five to six hundred silver dollars each month. But before long the Kuomintang regime "adjusted" the currency by force. The five to six hundred dollars monthly wage became wasted paper all of a sudden.

People all over the country became completely penniless. You couldn't even buy any food with your money. Large numbers of hungry people rushed down to the food warehouse of the Kuomintang and to those merchants who were hoarding large amounts of food. They tried to seize the food by force. This was the famous national anti-hunger movement. Being one of the hungry people, I was, of course, not willing to sit there and be starved to death. We all understood that our people's food had been robbed by the Kuomintang and by those evil businessmen who were under the Kuomintang's protection. Hungry and angry, I joined with the masses together to seize the food. We had a large group which ran down the Chuchiang road. In Nanking city there was a big food store with tons of food, but the Kuomintang had already sent over a thousand troops and police there to wait for us. They shot at us like crazy. Several hundred hungry people were killed right there. The rest of them were almost all arrested and killed afterwards. I fortunately escaped from it. I escaped all the way to Shanghai, but I was still starved. I thought of how China was such a large country, but how there wasn't even a place to fit myself into. Almost starved to death at the time, I saw an advertisement by coincidence. It said that General Sun Li-jen was starting a new army officers' training academy. Trying to recruit students, it mentioned about twelve privileges they would receive. At that time all I wanted was not to be starved to death. As to the rest, I didn't care too much. Since there was a place to provide free food and lodging, I immediately went to put my name in.

On January 12, 1948, we were shipped to Kowhsun, Taiwan, to get "training." To my surprise, the so-called new army officers' training academy was a trap. The moment we got shipped to Taiwan, we were collectively placed under extreme surveillance. We were locked into the Chuting camp behind the railway station of Tainan city. They set up machine guns and heavy troops all around just in case we might try to escape. Then they announced to us that they had already re-organized us, "the future officers," into the "fourth preparing soldier team." Any of us who did not want to be re-organized were put into canvas bags and dumped into the Pacific Ocean.

This was the famous "new army" of the Kuomintang. The reason why this new army was "new" was because all the weapons were newly supplied by the U.S., and the system of training was also the American "new" system. All the training we had was focused on how to massacre the Chinese people. I was so frightened and angry that I ran away again with some of the comrades.

I headed towards Taipei. But because of language problems all of us escapees could make no contacts with relatives and friends in the local area. We were eventually captured by the garrison command. We were arrested and because we had

a record of exile, we were all labeled as the "Commie bandit spies." The way in which the Kuomintang treated the "Commie bandit spies" has been famous for its cruelty. Their principle is "Rather kill ten thousand by mistake, than to risk letting one go."

KMT TORTURE

On September 16, 1948, my case was taken over by the secret agent department of the Kuomintang—the Security Bureau. Early that morning a team of soldiers bound up my whole body and threw me into an underground jail. That was really the "hell on earth." A small cell of twelve square feet had twenty-nine prisoners in it, from a two-year-old baby to a seventy-year-old man; from college professors to illiterate people who could not even write their own name. They were all like me, being charged as "Commie bandit spies." The minute I got thrown into that dungeon, they took everything away from me and shaved my head. All I had left was a pair of red shorts and a number, 19XX. Everything, including my name, no longer existed.

In this jail all the prisoners would have to be "questioned" by the most inhumane torture imaginable. Everyone got wounded, from tortures applied all over the body. When they were sent back to their cell after being tortured most of them had almost lost their consciousness. I, of course, was no exception. What we ate every day was a bowl of salt water—nothing else. The cell-mates wouldn't even dare to talk to one another for fear of being listened to by the guards.

This situation continued for three months. I finally became ill. I caught a serious infection in my intestines. But there were no medical facilities in the jail. When they saw me, I was about to die. It was only then that they sent me to the hospital of the National Defense Medical College. In the hospital they sent two fully-armed soldiers, holding guns, to watch me beside my bed. Both my hands were handcuffed to the bed twenty-four hours a day. I stayed in the hospital like that for about a month. My illness was finally barely cured. Then I was sent back to that jail again.

They started even crueller tortures then. They forced red hot pepper soup down my nose into my lungs. They tied up my thumbs and hung my body in the air. And this time getting beaten was like a privilege to me. This went on for two whole months. They couldn't get any useful information from my mouth. Suddenly one night I was brought to see a military judge. He announced a death sentence, and ordered that it be carried out immediately. I was brought to the famous "Ma Chang Ding," the famous place where political prisoners were executed in Taipei. A gun was pointed at my back. I heard the fire of the gun. I thought I had been killed, but I didn't fall. This was a fake execution. The purpose of these fake executions is to take advantage of the person's broken spirit just before they die. Sometimes at this moment people will tell everything including incriminating information about themselves. After they found the fake execution was in vain, I was sent to the single cell. The so-called single cell is something similar to the tiger cage that the South Vietnamese fascist agents use to jail their political prisoners. I was locked in the "tiger cage" for four months.

In 1949, China was liberated. Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang regime was exiled to Taiwan. In order to reinforce their control and slavery over the people in Taiwan, they increased their terrorism towards the people. Large numbers of the people all became "political criminals." Lots of arrests were made, and lots of people were killed. In this year I was sent to the jail of the Military Justice Department of the Military Ministry on Shanghai Road, Taipei. That jail could hold three thousand prisoners, and was frequently full. When the killings started, frequently there would be twenty to thirty new people locked into the same room with me. Sometimes

when I woke up in the morning, there were only three or four who remained. The rest of them, of course, were taken away at night and shot. Among those who were killed were old men, young women, young men and children. They insisted on not collaborating with the corrupt government of the Kuomintang and death became the only conclusion. I had opportunities to build up very deep friendships with many of them. But these friendships were constantly being taken away when my friends departed from this world.

"FIRE-BURNED ISLAND"

I spent three years in that jail. Then I was shipped to a wild island off shore of Pingtung for hard labor reform. This island was the one that was later called "Fire-burned Island" (also called the Green Island, and Huo Shao Tao). Four hundred of us were the first group of political prisoners to arrive on that island. At that time there was nothing on the island. Every day we were ordered to go to the seaside and to carry back stones. Then we were ordered to use those stones to build up the jailhouse and high walls to lock ourselves in. They organized us into the "New Life Team." Those among us who were to be tortured or punished by death for petty reasons would be buried on the hillside. That hill was named "New Life Cemetery." And we, the so-called "New Lives" were waiting there day by day, step by step, for our lives to move from the "New Life Team" to the "New Life Cemetery."

After spending a year and three months there for unclear reasons, I was unexpectedly sent back to Taipei. In the Spring of 1954, I was sent to the public elementary school of Neihu, the suburb of Taipei. At that time the school was used by the intelligence authorities as a temporary "concentration camp." The Korean War had ended. Some of the people from the Chinese volunteer army were unfortunately captured and were handed to the Kuomintang regime by the American military. All those who refused to come to Taiwan were immediately killed. The rest of the people were too scared to say a thing. And they were all taken to Taiwan. They were locked into these concentration camps to be reformed and brainwashed. The Kuomintang constantly picked out the un-reformable ones and killed them. That left a limited number of them who got too scared to say a word. They were called "Righteously anti-Communist models." The Kuomintang used them for anti-Communist propaganda. I happen to have eye-witnessed this part of Taiwan's dirty, stinking history because I was locked up together with them and was brainwashed and "reformed" with them. Some of them were wounded and were not given any medical care and were still forced to do hard labor. Every day, besides hard labor, we would have to read the Three People's Principles which were "revised" by Chiang Kai-shek.

After half a year I was sent to the military jail in Hsintian, suburban Taipei. There again I was ordered to move stones and bricks to build up this new jail house to lock myself up in. After the jail house was built, I was sent to dig a coal mine.

In 1956, intelligence authorities decided that my "thought" had already been "corrected." I was released.

LIBERATION OF TAIWAN

I walked out of that "hell on earth" with extreme anger and sadness in my heart. I did not feel any happiness in regaining my "freedom." I knew that from now on every move I made would be closely watched by the agents. As a matter of fact, with Taiwan under the tyranny of the Kuomintang, everyone has been watched by all sorts of secret agents, police and their lackeys, to different degrees. If one word

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or one thing is said or done carelessly, then one is in danger of being thrown in jail, and humiliated to death.

Freedom in Taiwan does not exist at all. The difference between inside and outside the jail is only a matter of degree. Realistically speaking, Taiwan as a whole is a large prison, under the rule of a small number of the Kuomintang reactionaries and their lackeys who collaborate with American and Japanese imperialism and militarism. Everyone is a "political prisoner," being sentenced to that prison for a lifetime. For the cause of those forty million people and also for brothers and sisters who were cruelly murdered by the Kuomintang, I swear I will struggle for Taiwan to be liberated. Yes, only by liberating Taiwan will it be possible to break down the doors of those jails, and return freedom to everyone.

My Awakening

In 1949, I was drafted by force by the 75th Battalion of the KMT in Chu Chou, Hunan, and followed my unit all the way through Hunan, Kiangsi, Fukien, Kwantung and retreated "into the sea" at Swatow. Along the way, the KMT grabbed people for conscripts. So everywhere we went, the people ran and hid, especially in places like Mei Hsien, Hsing Ning, Tung Hsing, Chien Yang. In Kwantung, in village after village, all the young men were taken. Among them were father and sons, uncles and in-laws, followed by whole flocks of orphans and women, yelling and crying after them. These are scenes I will never forget in my life.

The U.S. ships sent us over to Kao Shiung. Before we landed, they changed the course and sent us over to the Cho-san Islands off the shore of Chekiang. In 1950, the KMT retreated to Taiwan taking all the men with them under bayonets. All of us who were taken by the KMT terrorist tactics were indoctrinated with hatred of communism to get Chinese to kill each other. Because of the occupation of the 7th Fleet in Taiwan, we were completely sealed off from hearing anything from our own relatives on the mainland.

Some died of worries. Some committed suicide, some murdered their officers before they killed themselves. Some were jailed in the military prisons or mental hospitals, and the most defiant were put under maximum security. Some veterans became tramps, hanging out in the streets. I especially hated these atrocities. But since Taiwan is surrounded by the sea, there was no way to get out of the Devil's palm.

To enforce the long-term war policy of the Republic of China (Taiwan), the United States stepped up the training of KMT medics. In 1951, they set up a doctor's assistants' class. They recruited students from the intellectual youths that they had forced into the Army. In 1953, I graduated from one of these classes and was sent to work in the military hospitals. Two years afterwards, I passed the entrance exam of the National Defense Medical College. After graduation in 1959, I returned to the military hospitals to work. Following the Army, I worked in Taipei, Taichung, Tainan, Kaoshung, Pingtung, Chilung, I Lan, where I treated poor people. I deeply understood the lack of medical care for my worker-peasant countrymen,

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and the pain and oppression in their lives.

After years of U.S. indoctrination, I had the disease of fear of the “commies” although I had never seen a communist in my life and had never read communist books. As life on Taiwan was not very satisfying, I tried in every way and finally succeeded in coming to what Taiwan propaganda machines had always called “heaven on earth”—North America.



KMT general.

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After three years, through social practice, I finally awakened. I began to pay attention to objective reports about the mainland from Western news agencies. Very often I would go to Toronto to see the documentary films about the Chinese mainland (People's Republic of China), and I came to the recognition that the politics of what the Chinese Communist Party stands for is to get rid of foreigner's oppression and to build an independent New China. Since this policy meets with the opposition of the corrupt traitors, the KMT, that is why the struggle between the Chinese Communists and the KMT lasted for 38 years.

To further my understanding, I finally had the courage to go to Ottawa to pay a visit to the people in the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. They all look simple and healthy. Their attitude was kind and earnest. They were not at all snobbish. I was warmly received. They were just as friendly as my hometown relatives from 20 years back. Not a bit scary. They were very concerned about me, and encouraged me to study hard, work hard, to be "free from arrogance and rashness," to respect the local traditions and to be friendly with people. At that point my illness was completely cured.

Today I think about my classmates in the Taiwan Army, all the people that were being drafted by the KMT. Their youthful days faded in the terrors of war. For thousands of years, the Chinese people had a tradition of caring for the family. For 22 years, the people on Taiwan (mainlanders forced to evacuate to Taiwan) have longed day and night to see their relatives in the People's Republic of China.

Germany was partitioned as punishment for initiating an aggressive war, but China was attacked and we suffered as a result. Why split up our territory and cause our innocent brothers, sisters, and relatives to be dispersed? Also, the great masses of the poor people on Taiwan continue to suffer pain and hardship under the double oppression of the U.S. and the KMT. How many intellectuals from Taiwan have, rather than be enslaved, left their homeland, going to every corner of the world to live a homeless life?

I was extremely delighted and grateful for the lenient policy on Taiwan that Premier Chou En Lai announced in Peking this year. It was humane and reasonable. The vast majority of KMT members, including my teachers, my fellow classmates, my superiors and my friends, are innocent like myself. We were dragged into the whirlpool of war and national calamities. As for the countrymen from Taiwan province, and the younger generation, they had nothing to do with the "cold war." The overseas Chinese are all patriotic, although a small portion have erroneous thinking. The members of Taiwan Independence Movement and the die-hards of the KMT are being poisoned by U.S. propaganda, and have contracted the disease of fearing communism. The patients hopefully are curable.

Chinese of this generation, having fully experienced the suffering of war, now see the dawn of reunification. Countrymen within and without, strive to have this day become an early reality.

Alaska Cannery Workers

Before World War II there were 400-500 Chinese from San Francisco who worked in the "fish shops." For those who don't know too much of what a fish shop is all about, first let me say a few words.

"Fish shops" are actually production plants for the fish industry. The plant is where we clean, wash, can, cook, and label the salmon caught by the fishermen so that they will be ready for the market.

"The big company" at the time (Alaska Packer Association) hired not only Chinese, but also whites, Mexicans, Japanese, and Filipinos. Most workers were non-white, because this was a seasonal job and it was harder for non-whites to find jobs and "the big company" gave only very low pay.

"The big company" contacted 3 or 5 shop owners in Chinatown whom we called "shop heads" to recruit Chinese workers. The company also bought Chinese foodstuffs from these "shop heads" because the Chinese workers had to eat rice. Most of the fish shop workers began in April and ended in July. Only one or two went on till October. In between seasons, some Chinese workers worked in restaurants, laundries, or in other types of work. A lot more were unemployed in between seasons and life became very difficult. Sometimes, the "shop head" would be kind enough to give you a pack of rice, two cans of salt fish on credit, all to be deducted from the salary during work seasons.

The plant was near river tributaries in the countryside, far away from the city in Alaska. Every year when the busy season began, labor and management had to get prepared. They transported large quantities of sheet metal to Alaska to make cans with and stocked up food for hundreds and thousands of people for 3 to 4 months. Workers had to bring their own clothes, blankets, and other stuff. Berths for workers in the voyage were in terrible conditions, and there was nothing – no entertainment, no studies – on the ships, except gambling dens run by "shop heads." That was a very corrupt thing, of course.

In Alaska, the first few weeks were spent in making cans with machines owned by the company. The next 30 days were for canning the fish. In these 30 days, work was really tense. Sometimes you worked for 12 to 16 hours a day. Finally, 3 weeks were spent in putting on labels.

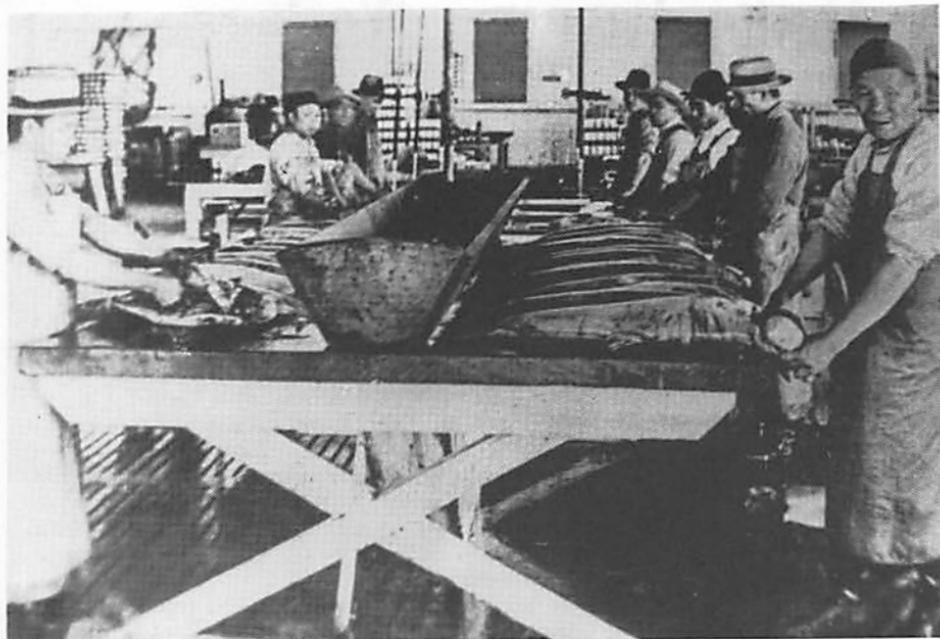
Even if you fell sick during work sessions the shop head still forced you to work. The so-called "doctor" the company provided was so inexperienced that many workers who got sick received little treatment. More than a few died as a result.

In 1936, there was a unified strike in San Francisco. After persistent, hard struggle, the cannery workers won great victories! At that time, the fish shop workers recognized that only through unity can they fight to obtain reasonable working conditions. The progressive fish shop workers initiated and organized the first union shop called Alaska Cannery Workers Union CIO. They gathered together most of the fish workers and organized them into units to go down to the docks to picket in order to prevent the fish shop boats from loading. They were supported by the longshoremen who respected and agreed not to cross the picket line to load the cargo for the company.

The fish shop company knew the workers were united which was the last thing they liked to see. Eventually they gave in and negotiated with the new union to sign the work contract demanded by the workers.

In 1937, the foundation of the union was established. It had yet to be popularized among the workers. Sso Yang Shun who was originally a union member

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Cannery workers.

worked together with Fan Chia-chan, a member of the International Longshoremen's Union. They went to Alaska to work and organize. In 1938, Yang was elected union secretary. Of the three vice presidents, Yang was one, a Japanese and a Filipino were among the others. The fish shop union worked for the welfare of its members, and was widely acclaimed by every Chinese.

When the war with Japan started, the West Coast and Alaska became the Front line. The fish shop company saw that the fish shop union was strong so it folded up the company and moved it to Seattle. The workers' movement in Seattle was not strong enough to effectively boycott the big company from managing there. Besides, some of those who had joined the worker's movement went into the army and engaged in the anti-fascist war. That was how the history of the fish shop union ended.

My Personal Account of the History of Chinese Workers in the US

The California Chinese Workers' Mutual Aid Association was formed in a period of upheavals in the world. The United States was experiencing an economic crisis. Roosevelt was elected president, and initiated the New Deal. In Europe, Hitler massacred the Jews and invaded the neighboring countries. Mussolini was oppressing the Italian people and invading Africa. In Asia, Japan invaded China hoping in vain to build the "Great Eastern Co-Prosperity Sphere". In China, the traitor Chiang Kai-shek and his clique maintained a non-resident policy towards Japan, and used its full force to fight the Chinese Communist Party whose policy was to drive out the Japanese invaders. In the United States, a certain organization in San Francisco proclaimed that it worked for the welfare of the overseas Chinese night and day, but the people felt that it was not doing anything to oppose the anti-Chinese laws.

In the summer of 1937, the Salmon Cannery Workers returned from work in Alaska at the end of the fishing season and formed a Chinese workers organization to unite Chinese workers and to work toward mutual aid. They received support from many other Chinese workers after they returned to San Francisco. Laundry workers, sewing factory workers, and restaurant workers joined the organization one after the other. The founders of the organization were greatly encouraged under these circumstances. The organization was named the California Chinese Workers' Mutual Aid Association. A place was rented at 947 Stockton for the association. A big initiation meeting was called. Later on, officers were elected at a membership meeting. All the officers that served the different terms regarded the consolidating and developing of the organization's duties and mobilizing to save China as their top priorities.

At that time, the Japanese imperialists were purchasing iron from the United States to ship back to Japan for military equipment to kill the Chinese people. The officers of the Chinese Workers' Mutual Aid Association passed a motion to take action against this move. A picket was formed. The first day, only 28 people were there. But the dockyard workers went on strike, responding to the call of the picket. All the newspapers in San Francisco reported this as a front page headline. The next day it rained heavily, but over a thousand people came to join the picket line on their own. Some progressive American people picketed side by side with the Chinese people. The lieutenant governor of California, Peterson, spoke in front of the dockyard in support of the picket, and the halting of Japan's imperialist invasion of China. This shocked the world. The California Chinese Workers' Mutual Aid Association received the praises of both the Chinese and the American people. Later, the association picketed in front of the Japanese Embassy in San Francisco many times, demanding an end to the invasion of China. This kind of friendship within international brotherhood and the spirit of sympathy was comparable to the spirit of the fighters in China.

The Mutual Aid Association often held discussion meetings to study the current events. It published the pamphlet, "Mutual Aid," to widen anti-Japanese propaganda. It also introduced workers' education to the overseas Chinese people. Anti-Japanese literature was in great demand at that time. The seamen brought Chairman Mao's "On Protracted War," "On New Democracy," and Tung Pi-wu's "Journal of the Liberated Areas." The workers put out money to form a mutual aid publisher, and reprinted literature such as these in great numbers to satisfy the needs of the overseas Chinese people.

WAR OF RESISTANCE

In early 1940, the political situation in China deteriorated. The hard core reactionaries used all kinds of schemes and treachery to cripple the strength of the people fighting the Japanese. The sad Southern Anhwei incident broke out. The counter undercurrent in the political situation of China at that time not only aroused the worries of comrades in China and overseas, but also the concern of peace-loving people of the world who were sympathetic to China's war of resistance. The Association felt that to give in, the war would be a shameless act of reactionaries, a concrete move towards damaging the resistance and crippling the people's strength. The wheel of history forever rolls forward.



1949 October 1st Celebration in San Francisco's Chinatown.

The reactionaries wanted to pull it backwards, but this was a wasted effort. The Association, after many discussions, decided to pull out from the U.S. Overseas Chinese United Committee to Save the Country by Donations, to express dissent. The Association centralized its force to call for unity, in fighting for the ultimate victory of the Japanese resistance war. Not long after, they responded to the call of Madame Sun Yat-sen, donated over \$900,000 U.S. and sent it to Madame Sun to be used as medical fees for the guerrilla fighters. At that time, the Chinese workers in America earned only \$50.00 to \$60.00 a month. It was a great achievement to obtain that sum.

After the resistance war was won, Chiang Kai-shek started a countermeasure to sell out the country by treacherous means. First he laid the foundations for a civil war by tearing up the political agreement. During that time, the association unceasingly sent out telegrams to call for unity, urging the KMT to cooperate to build the country together. In the summer of 1946, the Chiang clique of traitors

ignored the sufferings of the people and finally started the all-phase civil war against the liberated areas. At that time, Chiang's army had superior U.S.-made weapons, and three to four million soldiers. But in less than three years, the whole country was liberated. This showed that the members of the Chinese Workers' Mutual Aid Association were with the main current and had insights into the future.

On October 9, 1949, the Association rented the auditorium of the T'ung-yuan tsung-hui and celebrated the forming of the People's Republic of China. Many people attended the celebration. But not long after the celebration began, some fifty hoodlums sent by the KMT agents swarmed in, tore up the national flag and beat up the guests. The membership of the Association upheld the principle of peaceful settlement. With super patience, they did not fight back. The barbarous, cruel, and inhumane actions blocked the way of achieving unity and well being in the overseas Chinese community. The Association made a serious announcement, fully exposed the hoodlums and the treacherous force behind them to all the overseas Chinese and the progressive American people.

The Chinese Workers' Mutual Aid Association lasted sixteen years before it was dissolved under persecution. The overseas Chinese people would never forget the history of the Association. In the past twenty years, a lot of changes have taken place in the U.S. workers' movement. American reactionaries have gained the upper hand for quite a period of time, resulting in their controlling workers' unions that were once progressive. But the broad masses of the laboring people are becoming more politically conscious day by day. On the whole, the movement has progressed. The bus boy's strike in Ruby Palace in San Francisco several months ago and the one at Nam Yuen Restaurant a month ago were both victorious. The question is very simple: if one is right, many would support, if one is wrong, few would support. When workers are united, they are an invincible force. The restaurant owners faced up to the reality and adopted an intelligent settlement. Their actions are appreciated by the overseas Chinese people.

2.

Present Workers' Conditions

Today, like immigrants of other nationalities, many Chinese people continue to leave Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other parts of the world to come to the U.S. in search of a better life. Yet once they arrive, racial and language barriers force thousands of Chinese to seek work in restaurants, garment factories, and other service industries in and around the overcrowded Chinese communities. They must endure long hours, low wages, and very poor working conditions, without even the minimal protection that unionization could provide.

Other Chinese men and women are trying to find work outside of Chinatown's limited job market. A few are becoming professionals, but the majority are finding only low-paid, tedious jobs in American corporations, factories, institutions, and government agencies. Similar to many other non-white workers, they face discrimination and closed doors to better paying jobs. They continue to be used as a surplus labor pool for the American economy, and are, therefore, constantly threatened with unemployment.

The Chinese workers' living conditions also reflect their economic position in American Society in the kind of health care, housing, education, and recreation available to them.

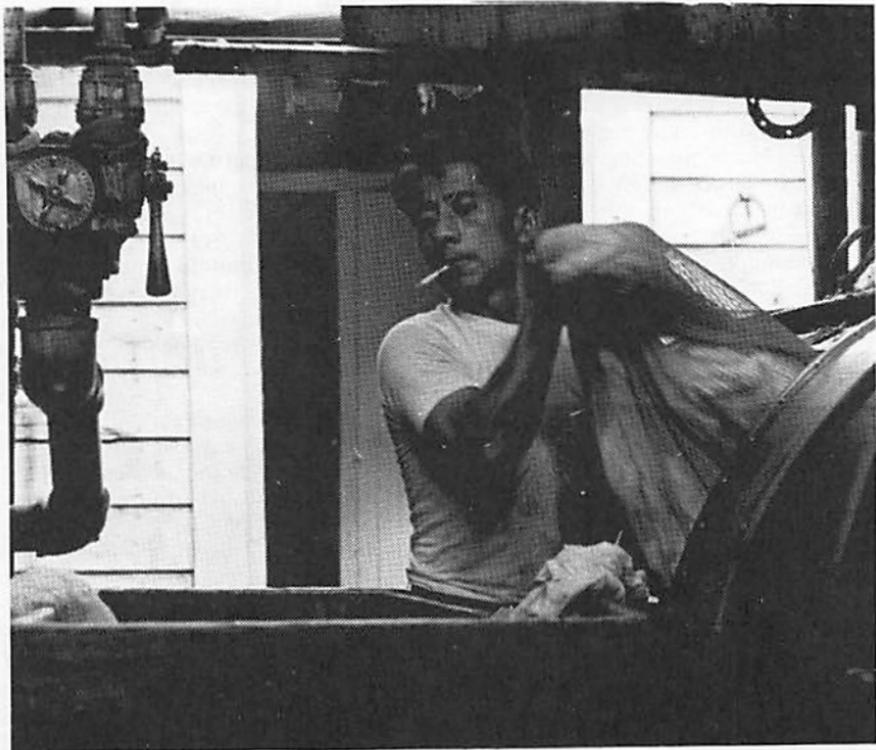
The articles in this section were selected to present a diverse picture of some of the experiences and viewpoints of Chinese workers today with a special emphasis on Chinese immigrant workers. Each of the articles tries to analyze the problems facing Chinese workers, and each concludes with a call for unity and strength to overcome their oppressive conditions.

A Life of Struggle, The Bitter Sadness

Chinese in this country have had to work in laundries for a long time. When our forefathers came over here looking for gold, and some were made to work on the railroads in the West, they found that there weren't too many jobs or occupations open for Chinese people. So our forefathers were made to take jobs as servants, such as restaurant workers, house boys, and laundry workers.

Many Chinese today are still working at these jobs. My father for instance is a laundry worker. For over fifty years now he has been in this country, working in his laundry. He has to work twelve hours each day in his shop and the way business is now, we make just enough money to support the family. The store is old and we have to pay high rent for it. I guess that many landlords take advantage of old people who still own these laundries because of the fact that they do not speak English. Like I remember the time when my father's store was evicted and my father couldn't do much. So he was out of work for a whole year.

And that's the same thing they are trying to do in the Chinatown area near our office but the people have set up a We Won't Move campaign which we support. And they're going to win because we are not going to let the oppressive Telephone Company fuck us over again!



Things I Saw and Heard When I Worked in the Restaurant

Translated from Chinese

Among the many things we wanted to do when my colleagues and I first came to the U.S. in the second half of 1962, the most urgent one was to look for jobs. One day, a friend from the same hometown took us to New Jersey for an interview.

The first time we were there, the lady in the office asked, "Do you speak English? What type of work can you do?" We replied that we couldn't speak English, but told her the type of work we could do. She gave us a stare and then she told us we could become dishwashers and kitchen helpers. After settling work schedules and salaries, we went back to the meadow outside the dormitory, and started to discuss who should do what. We also discussed how to prepare ourselves for the job. Everyone then was looking forward to working and ready to "work and endure hardship."

The first morning when each of us started in his assigned area, some white guys came in, checking us out like strangers. I walked up to them and politely asked them their names, and how we should get started. They answered that they did not know. We all had the feeling that they had no reason to treat us so cold. At this time, a countryman came in who directed us to work. Since he had worked there many years and the boss liked his work, he was put in charge of running things. From then on, we asked him about the U.S. when we got time during breaks every day. Usually he would sigh and say, "There is too much discrimination against us Chinese everywhere we go. Like those white guys, they always look down on me, constantly trying different ways to insult me. On one occasion this was particularly obvious. When I was promoted, they said how could a Chinese be placed in a position higher than theirs. Actually, how can he say that anything the Chinese do will not be as good as they do? I feel some of them close their eyes and blindly talk." As time went on, we saw more; we heard more; we all developed a common feeling that everywhere in the U.S. there is discrimination, contradiction.

Anger comes from deep under each one of our hearts! People from any country in any other country, as long as he has a conscience, and has his nationalistic feeling, he will stand up and speak out when his people's rights are infringed upon, when the people are being exploited, oppressed, insulted, discriminated against, and suppressed.

We Chinese here have been treated this way, just like many other people. If we think that a country which claims itself civilized and built on freedom, democracy, and equality, can we not, then, say a few words for the Chinese people from our conscience?

When the great seventies arrived, people from all over the world were struggling for independence, democracy, and freedom. This is the crucial moment when the Chinese people are pushing history forward, announcing that this is the great age of revolution. Great socialist motherland, center of people's revolution in the world, the hearts of tens of thousands of revolutionaries are with you. They all look toward Peking, capital of the People's Republic of China, beacon that shines the way to go forward, that lights up our hearts, that lights up dark corners in the world, and points out the way to our revolution!

Fellow brothers, stand up! Hide no pain in your heart, speak it out! Why not say something? Now is the age of world revolution! We should speak out all our sufferings!

Interview—Account of Injured Chinese Restaunt Worker

Since capitalism places the accumulation of wealth as the highest goal in this society, it is no surprise that job safety and medical care for workers plays a distant second fiddle to business profits. Despite the technological achievements in the United States, workers' welfare in these fields is terribly deficient. Every year, industrial accidents take a toll of 15,000 lives, and many more are injured.

Chinese workers are also victims of this carnage. The majority of Chinese workers do not belong to any unions. When they have injuries, they have no one to turn to. Even when they do belong to a union, it often doesn't do much since the union is not under the control of the rank-and-file. Thus, when Chinese and other workers are injured on the job, they are often sacrificed through legal maneuvers to the almighty dollar. The following interview with a Chinese woman worker is a good example.

Could you describe the accident you had at work?

It happened on March 16, 2 p.m., on the job. I work at a restaurant in Manhattan. There was a sudden crash of a big pot of spaghetti water. The boiling water spilled all over the right side and front of my body. At that moment, my employer saw the accident, and he came over to tell me to just "go back home and change your dress." He rushed me home, not concerned with my injury at all. Actually I get off work at 2 p.m., and this was on my own time. But my boss wanted me to work until 3 p.m., an extra hour without pay. Even then at 2:00 after I had lost all feeling in the right side of my body, he wanted me to come back to work.

So I took the train home, and on the train my body was getting hotter and hotter. I almost fainted on that train, it was so hot. I stopped at a store and bought some burn ointment. When I got home, the skin on my body was already blistering. I fainted in bed at 8 p.m., and when I got up my body was full of blistering and skin was peeling off.

The second day I went back to work, and my boss and another girl discussed whether they should call a union doctor. They called up and made an appointment with this union doctor, who was not a specialist in this field at all. The doctor only gave me some ointments, not any internal medicine. And then he went on vacation, leaving a small girl in his office to act as a doctor in his place. This girl was the one who actually treated me.

What did the boss do to help you?

From the beginning the boss tried to tell me that my injury was not serious, wouldn't agree to let me take days off work. He was trying to conceal the real facts in my case.

Why was he trying to conceal the facts?

To receive Workmen's Compensation from the union you have to prove you were disabled from work for at least seven days. The boss made me come to work even though I was in no condition to work, and could just stand around. The union doctor did not even make himself available to see or treat me during those first weeks, so he would not have to sign proof of serious injury and treatment over those

PRESENT WORKER'S CONDITIONS

seven days. So I think this was a whole legal trick. These people were just trying to save money for themselves. They bluff you, the boss says, "Just change your dress." They let you stand at work although you can't do any physical work because you are in pain: they think your life is just like an ant's, and to die is a small thing since this world is overpopulated anyway. They want to save money, not save your life.

Why did you decide to report this case now?

I recently filed a compensation claim. The union doctor discharged me as soon as he found out. I have seen other doctors since then, and found out that I need to have therapeutic treatment, and will have muscular pains for a year. I have had fevers, permanent internal injuries and permanent skin damage.

When I was first injured and needed care I had to accept whatever care I could get, no matter how bad this union doctor treated me. How could I reject the union doctor's care when my life was at stake? You have to take care of yourself first. But now I have recovered and am strong enough to question back, expose the legal tricks of my boss. I demand repayment for these injuries and injustices.

Restaurant Workers Unite!

"Hey Charlie!" Many waiters in the restaurant face this kind of degrading and insulting treatment towards the Chinese people by the white racists. Facing this situation, a few waiters who have become numb respond without feeling bad about it. But more waiters slash back, showing their true anger towards their customers directly.

In fact, Chinese people working in restaurants trying to earn a living don't live such an easy life as some would fancy. Only those who want to be enslaved, those who lose their racial identity would write books on something like, "To be a waiter in restaurants in the U.S. is better than working in any kind of job in Hong Kong." Or like some writer who writes about his experience as a waiter in the restaurant, which is nothing but a "history of a slave," would say that life is satisfying. Most of us workers in the restaurant, after going through the experience, haven't we got the same feeling of having our stomachs filled with bitter water? The case of insulting Chinese people which we just talked about is the most common example. Other than this, how many more cases of injustices do we face at work?

Restaurant workers, cooks, handy men, dishwashers, or waiters have to work heavily for twelve or thirteen hours each day. Long hours of laboring like this is not something most people could stand. What is more, this involves a whole lot of detailed work in the restaurant. The twelve to thirteen hours of work is passed in running around doing minor things, so that we don't even have time to sit down for a cup of tea or a meal. This is specially bad during "dinner hours," when the room is packed, the boss is feeling good, while workers are having a hard time. Waiters rush back and forth to the kitchen, in between customers. Kitchen workers keep preparing food, non-stop according to the announcement of orders by waiters for three to four hours straight. After the rush hours are over, we are faced with all kinds of odd jobs that are left behind till closing time, when we can really get relieved. But by then we are all exhausted and ready to hit the sack. Late at night, we drag our lonely and heavy steps home. Many times we'll find it hard to sleep even

lying in bed after being overworked.

So we work with sleepy eyes, sleep with a working mind, on and on. Whatever spirited life there is, whatever pastime and sports, it is not for us restaurant workers. Public holidays are not for us. We get a break, one day in a week. But we have to make good use of that day to mind things at home, or to have a good sleep, or to catch up with the discrepancy of the last six long days. Although most people think of hard-working it out for fifteen or twenty years, then going back to Hong Kong or our homeland, how many fifteen or twenty years are there for one person? Twenty years of laboring!

We don't want to encourage people to have fun all the time, or encourage people to climb up high to stay on top of other people, to live the decadent life by exploiting others. Anyway, this kind of working system has got to change. The time of Chinese people to be put down by others has long passed. We must unite, get organized, form our workers union. Through the power of the masses, through the union to fight for workers benefits!

Working in a Packing House

Last summer I took a job at a fruit packing house in Sanger, a small California town 10 miles from Fresno. At that time Fresno wages were \$1.25 to \$1.65 an hour. This job paid \$2.00 an hour. I took it hoping to earn a bit more money.

Sanger is almost a classical working town. The main street, Academy, runs through the town. All the streets parallel to it are numbered, and all the ones that cut across it named after the alphabets. A railroad track runs parallel to Academy, behind most of the packing houses. The town is situated at the foot of the Sierra Nevadas, and is surrounded by vineyards and orchards on all sides. The majority of the population is Chicano. Whites are a minority here. Also this is the town with the largest number of second-hand cars that I've seen.

In June, the first month I worked there, work was slow. Due to the cool weather in May, the peaches did not ripen in time. I, together with around fifty other women workers who manned the giant monster machine, worked an average of four hours every other day. I hardly earned anything the whole month.

Then July came; the temperature rose to a constant high of 105° to 112°F. The peaches ripened all at the same time. We worked 10 hours a day, Monday through Saturday. There are four types of jobs for women in every packing house: that of a forelady, fruit grader, fruit packer, and box stamper. All workers, except the foreladies, man the giant machine. At one end freshly picked fruit is dumped in and at the other end fruit comes out graded, packed, boxed, and stamped at an average speed of 15 boxes a minute, according to my estimation. The machine is highly automated. Workers only do the part that the machine cannot do. The job of box stamping is a beginner's job for it is unskilled. All the worker does is stand close to the end of the line, and stamp the boxes with the company's name as they come on the conveyor belts. One worker takes care of 2 belts. This means that one worker stamps an average of 12,000 boxes a day.

Fruit grading means dumping out bad fruit as they come on a conveyor belt. It is not as easy as it sounds, for graders have to learn to tell a "sun-tanned" plum from a good one, a scarred one from a scratched one, while there are hundreds of fruit on the belt. And they can't throw out one more or less either, for there are foreladies at both ends of the line checking what remained on the belt and what was thrown out.

A fruit packer's job is a skilled job. A packer packs fruit in boxes according to size. A fast packer makes a bit more money for the company pays an extra 12 cents for every box a worker packs over the quota of 14 boxes an hour. Workers work their heads off for that extra 12 cents a box.

NO TIME LEFT

There were four foreladies at the packing house I worked at. All of them were white. Their job is to keep a close watch on all the workers to make sure they work as hard as the company wants them to. Workers have to ask their permission to go to the bathroom when the machine is in motion. Workers are usually (not always) given a 10 minute break every two hours. Lunch hour is one hour, supper hour is one hour. So for a 10-hour working day a worker actually has to spend 12 hours at the plant, under over 105°F heat, the only cooling device being a large tube that blows out warm air that run over two-thirds of the positions where workers stand.

Let's allow a worker one hour a day on transportation to work and eight hours of sleep, plus 12 hours at the plant, would make 21 hours out of 24. Workers still have to shower, cook for their families, and take care of their children. Sometimes they don't shower even though they are drenched with sweat; they dive into bed the minute they hit home, for they have to stand on their feet as long as they work. The machine is not built so workers can sit down and man it. The fruit comes on different types of conveyor belts. Grading belts rotate the fruit as they go. This strains your eyes out. Also it is very easy to get dizzy or pass out coupled with that heat. Workers are constantly moving their arms whether they grade or pack fruit or stamp boxes.

One fellow worker—15 years old—once asked me, "Do you feel like somebody had beaten you up each morning when you wake up?" I said, "Yeah." Workers get sick on the line very often. One day six women got sick and had to go home. I got sick three times out of the two and a half months that I worked there. It is bad to get sick for then you have to go home early and you don't get paid for the time you miss.

The time-clocks they have are army clocks with 100 minutes to an hour. They pay your last hour of the day by the quarter which means that if you work 25 min. on a regular clock they pay you for 15 min. Workers learn after a while that the company time is very precious time. The 10 minute breaks are on company time that's why they give you 10 minutes and no more even though the California State law says 15. It takes a worker 2 minutes to walk to the place where she can sit; 5 minutes to get in a bathroom because there are so few, and that leaves her about 3 minutes to sit down at each break.

Any work time after 8 hours a day is overtime. Workers get paid time and a half, i.e. \$3.00 an hour. Workers do not get breaks while they are working overtime. Also, the mechanic always speeds up the machine so the fruit will get packed sooner and the workers get less overtime pay. It is no joke when he does that. For a machine can go faster even after eight hours a day, but people can't. Whenever he does that, he always alerts the foreladies and they in turn intensify supervision. At about the ninth hour you feel like you can't take it no more. You keep going so you can keep the job.

SURVIVAL TACTICS

I learned survival tactics to combat the 105°F heat from my fellow workers. You go to the bathroom during breaks, wash off your face and arms with cold water, then get a paper towel, wet it and wrap it around your neck and go back to work with it on. At first I wouldn't do it. I was a college student taking a summer job, I didn't want to "sink so low." After a week or so in that heat, I gave in. The mechanic requested the company to build an air-conditioned lunch room above the ladies' room but it was rejected by the management.

51% of the plant's shares are owned by one white family, that has never set eyes on the packing house, and live in Beverly Hills, L.A. and owns property in Wyoming and Florida. 24½% is owned by the field manager and other 24½% by the sales manager. The field manager is in charge of the packing house's field labor force which is all male fruit pickers. The sales manager stays in the plant's air-conditioned office all the time.

The summer before I worked there, the field workers went on strike, picketing outside the plant under the leadership of Caesar Chavez, head of the United Farm Workers' Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO. I learned this from a fellow worker, whose father, brothers, brothers-in-law and uncles all work for this same packing house in the fields. Prior to the strike, the field workers were given no breaks, not even lunch breaks, unlike the plant workers. They had to take turns to eat lunch in the field right under the burning sun. Sometimes they were forced to work 7 days a week when the fruits ripened fast. Fruits are considered more important by the company than men. And the checks were ALWAYS short. The two managers were messing with them. You can't really know how it feels until it happens to you.

Workers in the plant got short checks every week, too. Every week I heard about 3 or 4 cases; there were a lot I did not hear about. Most workers do not complain for fear of losing their job. One time we were given no overtime pay, a Mexican woman took it to the forelady and she was later assigned the job of stamping boxes which was a great insult to her as she was one of the plant's top-speed packers. One time my check was short for \$2.50. It was the first time I found out how it felt. It wasn't the \$2.50 that I missed, but the injustice done to me, the super-exploitation when honest work is not paid for. I went into the office and asked the secretary to straighten it out. She gave me what she gave the others, that the computer takes care of all the pay checks and that maybe the computer made a mistake and that I had to talk to Mr. so and so the next morning. Workers who talked to this Mr. so and so all got yelled at and only one worker that I know retrieved the money due her, and that was because her husband was a foreman in the fields.

Back to the 1970 strike. Caesar Chavez stormed into the office demanding to see the boss with the workers' demands in hand. One of the managers came out to meet the crowd. "He made a long speech saying that the company is all for the workers and blah blah . . . like a Bobby Kennedy," my fellow worker said. The workers won a victory. After the strike, two workers at the plant, mother and daughter, whose last name is also Chavez (which is not an uncommon name) were constantly harassed by the foreladies who thought that they were related to Caesar Chavez.

Towards the end of the summer one worker asked me if I was going to go back to school. I mumbled something about not liking school no more. She got very concerned and said, "I think you should go back to school, so you don't have to pack fruit all your life." Quite a few of them asked me about the workers in the country I came from, and were very concerned over their getting even lower wages and working in even worse conditions. They advised me that in that case I should stay in this country and work. These were my fellow workers.

The Best or the Worst

We have to make a living in order to live. In a capitalist country, in order to make a living, we have to earn money. There are many ways of earning money, some use their brains, some, labor. We the people of Chinatown, mostly rely on labor. The white people, brains. That's why we suffer while they live in comfort.

There is a program in Chinatown called "The Best Home Economic Plan" whose purpose is to provide training for Chinese women over 40 years old to be domestics. It is true that one had to make a living to help out the family. But the point is, what is the motive of this program? Who are the people running it? Why do they want to train us to be domestics and not other professions? It is true that we have to work, but we should not be somebody's willing slave just for a few dollars. Chiang Kai-Shek's "Best Government Plan" is exactly being a willing slave to American foreign aid for the past few decades. Is there any difference between Chiang's policy and this "Best Plan" in Chinatown?

If being a domestic is the best profession, then there can be no worse ones in the world. If you are not convinced, go ask any elderly Chinese people and you'll find out. I used to have a neighbor in the village who told me, "White people always call you 'boy' no matter how old you are, even white kids, 5 or 6 years old call you that." He also said, "One time, I was busy working on the ground floor. My white boss rang the bell for me on the third floor. I rushed to the third floor only to find out that he wanted a box of matches which he knew was in the room next to his. He just wanted the pleasure of making me run up the stairs. At that time, I was about 40, not too old. But it was still quite a task running up and down those stairs." This is a story I heard twenty years ago; there are many more that I've forgotten.

Recently in a rare occasion, Mr. Ng related to me his experience in working as a domestic when he was a kid. He worked for a rich white family who had three servants. Mr. Ng was the only Chinese. Whenever they wanted the outside pane of the windows washed, they had Mr. Ng do it. This is a dangerous task, as one had to get the top half of one's body outside the windows to do it. One time he almost fell out the window.

Another time, his white boss' daughter didn't go to school because she was sick. Mr. Ng didn't expect her to be in her room so he went in as usual to do the daily cleaning. This girl accused him of entering her room. She would not listen to his explanation and even slapped him in the face. Mr. Ng only went away and busied himself with other work. That night his boss came home, scolded Mr. Ng and then fired him. There are many cases of Chinese domestics getting fired on baseless accusations.

We have had enough from the white people. I really don't understand why a program is being set up specifically to train people in Chinatown to be slaves. Why should we serve the white people and not the other way around?

The answer seems to be obvious: because white people are rich and we are poor. But why are white people rich? Where do they get their money? This answer is obvious: they exploit the minorities within their own country; and rob other countries of their resources. In other words, they get their money by very base means. White people even boast about whites being the superior race and Third World people inferior. Therefore, it is logical that Third World people should serve them.

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

Who are the people setting up this "Best Home Economic Plan"? They are the YWCA, New Comers Service Center, and other government agencies, we should be aware that the YWCA is a propagand machine for the church and that the New Comers Center is the church's new recruiting center. Their aim is to enslave us, to tempt us to sacrifice our national dignity with the bait of as low a wage as \$2.00 an hour.

Chinese sisters, do not fall into this trap! Think well for the sake of our national dignity. We would rather be poor than be other people's slaves. Why is it that China has stood up in as short a period of time as twenty years? And gained the respect of other countries in the world?

It is because China would rather rely on her own efforts than to accept other countries' "foreign aid." Because Chairman Mao could see through the plot behind the "foreign aids," that's why he firmly refused.

Please think more carefully; after your children grow up what would they feel when the white people tell them "your mother is my maid"? They probably won't blame you for doing it, but they'd be ashamed all their lives. Also the white man would have more time to think up other ways to enslave us when we do their housework for them. You would have less time to spend with your children. Weigh the alternatives: low wages or your children's future. Please consider it more carefully.

Know our friends, know our enemies! We must struggle to spend more time to educate the next generation. Tell them how the white man ill treats us Chinese people; how Christianity poisons and enslaves us. We have to make it known to the whole younger generation so they can stand up; only then can we have true peace and happiness for the world.

Strike Scared Emporium

On August 14, members of the Department Store Employees Local 1100 and Retail Store Employees Local 410 voted overwhelmingly to ratify a three-year contract, thus ending a 28-day strike against the Emporium Market St. and Stonestown stores. Major aspects of the contract were a minimum of 20 cents an hour increases for each of the three years, double pay on Sunday, and an additional holiday on each employee's birthday. On the issue of having complete union membership, the Emporium and the union will send out a joint letter concerning union membership and the union will have an office in the store. But since non-union members, who number only 150, still do not have to join the union, little was gained on this issue.

The militancy of the strikers, however, and particularly the August 8 sit-in demonstration, prevented the Emporium from going too far in trying to oust the union completely, and return to non-union days.

The following is an interview with an Asian picket captain of Local 1100.

Question: What do you think about the agreement?

Answer: It's honorable. It's a lot more than what we bargained for. It's a lot

more than what the Emporium offered in the beginning. I think it will work out to the best interests of everybody involved.

Q: What happened on Tuesday?

A: We called for a general sit-in on Tuesday and we stressed the fact that it was to be a peaceful demonstration, no violence involved, no vandalism, no theft, or anything like that, because that's one thing that we did not want – to go against the law. So we had the ad-hoc committee, representatives of all major labor unions in the Bay Area. They led the way down in the march of 1500 people from here to Market Street and at that time when we reached the store we formed a massive picket line and at a given signal about 12 we went in and sat down. At first it was agreed that we would go in and sit down all day if we had to. Well, we proved our point the first time we went in. We went in, we sat down, the store said no.

Q: Store couldn't do anything?

A: No, because everything was legal.

Q: Were there chants inside and things like that?

A: No, in the beginning our point was to go in there and be quiet, sit down, and if anybody asked you, you were there protecting your job. If anybody needed assistance, like customers wanted out, we were to help them out; we weren't to keep anybody in the store forcibly or anything like that. We had planned some chants but by that time the Emporium had agreed to resume full negotiations, so we pulled out, proving our point.

Q: You mean that during the time the people were sitting in there the Emporium decided then to agree to some negotiations?

A: Yes, I would say that up until the sit-in demonstration, as far as meetings and negotiations were concerned, they were far and few between but right after this demonstration we had five continuous days of negotiations and we finally reached an agreement.

Q: So you think that the demonstration inside the store was like a turning point: it scared the Emporium?

A: Definitely. It showed the Emporium that their workers were getting more radical and more determined. They were getting tired of all this waiting and it also showed them that the unions in the Bay Area really meant business. As Jim Herman of the Longshoremen local says, "An injury to one is an injury to all." And as it turned out it would seem that the Emporium, whose parent company is Broadway-Hale, that the issue involved was the unions. If this union, Local 1100, had lost the strike, then all across the nation, all other unions would lose all sort of strength or power. So that's why the ad-hoc committee stood and threw its full weight behind us, so the demonstration had to be a good turning point.

Q: How was the spirit in the demonstration?

A: Fantastic. At first, before the meeting was called here, as I saw the people filing in, I saw all these old people, all these old ladies, and I looked at them and I said to myself, "No way, they're not going to go for this." It's not often you're going to get a fifty or sixty-year-old lady to go in the store and sit down. But then I started to talk to other committee members, and I started thinking these people have gone through the same thing, years and years and years of just frustration of being classified as a number and being treated as a number. I thought these are the same people who voted to go out on strike, they're going to go for this. When we took the vote on it, it was overwhelmingly to go in there and sit down and show them. In fact they stood up, they cheered, and they stomped their feet. They meant business.

Q: So you think that people learned a lot about taking militant actions to win a strike?

A: Definitely. It united the people and it went to show them that we'll have no more of this pacifism at work when we go back. If an executive does something to you – before they used to just keep inside themselves and do nothing about it – but this time they're united; they're just going to jump right back, no fear. So that's a big factor. We've all learned a lot because for a lot of us this is only our first strike. And for being a first strike, I would say that it went off very well as far as organization and carrying the whole thing out.

Story of an “Illegal” Immigrant Worker

This morning I received a phone call. The call was made from the Immigration Department in New York. What happened was that my friend, Chan, was picked up by Immigrations, and locked up on the 15th floor. Later on, I went to see him.

It was 12:30 in the afternoon, at the time when they were having lunch. I saw the people there waiting on a long line for their food to be dispensed from the kitchen. I could see clearly—there were about 200 people inside, including 6 Asians. One of them was my friend, Chan. There were 8 tables in the cafeteria, facing the kitchen. I also saw that their food consisted of black coffee and bread.

Chan told me there were Puerto Ricans, Greeks, Mexicans, Argentinians, and also Danes inside. Some of them have been locked in there for more than a year because they didn't have bail money. Some of these people worked as janitors or kitchen helpers inside the penitentiary, making \$2 a day. Just enough to keep them supplied with cigarettes.

From the looks on their faces, they seem to feel a lot of pain inside. I heard that sometimes they feel pain from the outside, too . . . from being beaten. There were thirteen guards in the penitentiary. Very often, they made use of their clubs. There was a black guy who looked at me with a kind gaze, and made a motion with his hands indicating that he wanted a cigarette.

They went to bed at 9:00 in the evening. 200 of them all inside a big room. They slept in bunk beds. They got up at 6:00 in the morning. Chan told me the first morning he got up, he put his coat on the bed and went to wash up. When he got back the coat was gone. Later on, a Puerto Rican told him that a white guard had taken it and thrown it in the garbage can.

I talked with Chan for about 20 minutes, and then a white guard came over and asked me to leave. Then Chan gave him a dollar. He took it, and told us, “It's all right, go ahead a talk.”

Chan had been a seaman from Taiwan. He had borrowed \$7,000 Taiwan money to get a position on the Gin Shan Line from Taiwan. He was a helmsman. Four months ago, he came to New York. He came out with his friends to Chinatown. He tried to look for a job in a restaurant. Later on, he was referred by someone and started working in a Chinese restaurant in New Jersey. During the job interview, he was told that he would make \$120 for a six-day week, working 10 hours a day. So after his ship left New York, he started to work there. The boss had him work 12 hours a day, and he reluctantly accepted it.

After two weeks' work, he asked the boss for his salary so that he could send it home to his family. The boss only paid him \$85. He wondered about it, and asked

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the boss why it was that he only got \$85 when he was supposed to get \$120, according to their agreement at the time of the interview. This son-of-a-bitch answered him, "You don't have to take it."

The next day he left the place and starting working in another restaurant for the next 24 days. He had been working in four different restaurants during his four month stay. Every restaurant where he worked, he got about the same kind of treatment. Twelve hours a day is awfully painful, especially with the boss at every restaurant looking down on him.

Chan was picked up on the 23rd of November by the Immigration officials. Some of his friends were preparing to raise some money for him to get a lawyer and pay the bill. Yet Chan refused. What he thought was very simple: "The type of society in Chinatown, New York, and the Taiwan society are about the same. The type of Chinese boss in New York and bosses in Taiwan are the same bureaucrats, exploiting us workers. It will not make any difference if I go back to Taiwan, and my mother, my wife, and my kids will not have to worry about me."

We are very worried about what kind of life Chan will lead in Taiwan.

Chinese Seaman Killed— Hospital Negligence

Q: Can you tell us why Mr. L. went to the hospital in the first place?

Mr. W: My friend is a seaman. His illness began when he was on his ship. When his ship docked in the U.S. he decided to see a doctor here. On Sunday, July 23, we went to the Chinatown Health Clinic at 48 Henry Street where the doctor told him that he had a hyperthyroid condition, and the growth on his neck needed further tests and medication, so they referred him to Bellevue Hospital.

On Wednesday, he went to Bellevue. The doctor there said his condition was bad and told him to come back the next day. He went back on Thursday. He was examined by three doctors who all agreed that his thyroid condition required hospitalization. I asked the doctors if he had cancer or if he was going to die. The doctor reassured me in writing that *his sickness was not critical* and that he would be fine with 3 to 4 weeks of hospital care. But I don't understand English, so they had to find a Chinese nurse to translate for me.

Q: When did you visit Mr. L. next?

W: I informed Mr. L.'s brother that the doctors did not consider the case critical. Although his brother was very concerned, he could not go to the hospital because he could not take time off from the restaurant. We decided to go together to visit Mr. L. on Sunday, his brother's only day off.

Q: How did you find out that Mr. L.'s condition became critical?

W: On Saturday morning I received a telegram saying that Mr. L. was in critical condition and that I should come right away to Bellevue Hospital to see him. I had to spend hours looking around for somebody to translate the telegram for me. I finally got to the hospital that afternoon.

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

When I went to see Mr. L., he looked like he was dying. His breathing, blood pressure, and heart beat were all plugged into machines. He looked like he was dead! He had been walking and OK the day before, so I immediately began asking the nurse, why? Why is he dying like this? They couldn't understand me and I had to find a nurse to translate again. The nurse informed me that I would have to talk to the head of the department to find out what happened to Mr. L.

Q: Did the doctor explain why Mr. L. was suddenly dying?

W: He said according to what the other doctors told him, the patient was having heart trouble on Friday, July 28th. The doctor in charge prescribed a drug called Lidocaine. The normal dosage for this drug is 50 to 100 mg, *but by mistake 1,000 mg of Lidocaine was given!* The drug stopped Mr. L's heart completely, causing massive brain damage. They transferred Mr. L. to the special heart ward after the overdose.

The doctors said that even with medicines and machines, Mr. L. had little chance of surviving, and even if he did live, he would never recover – he would be almost like a vegetable. L's brother and I were crying in disbelief. We were angry at the hospital's grossly irresponsible mistake. The doctor said that he understood how we felt but nothing could be done about it. Of course, the mistake was already done, the patient was already dying. What else could the doctor say?

Q: Did they let you see the medical records?

W: No. In fact, on Monday morning, the hospital called my home to tell me to *pay the bill*. Why should I pay the hospital for the murder of my friend?

Q: So how did Mr. L. die?

W: We had given the hospital permission to perform a tracheotomy operation, which means making a slit-opening in his throat, to make his breathing easier. Mr. L. died Monday night, 1 hour and 45 minutes after this operation. But if not for the drug overdose, he never would have needed this operation.

Q: Did you have any other problems dealing with the hospital during this time?

W: Yes. I want to say that the attitude of the head of the department was really cold and arrogant. We asked him again about the whole incident, and he said in a disgusted tone, "I explained all of that on Saturday with a translator." He should not be the one to get angry—we should be. He thinks he was wasting his time, but he should give more time to taking care of the patients correctly.

And this incident was not only troublesome during those five days. After Mr. L. died, the hospital gave us trouble in getting back Mr. L's belongings. They couldn't find his records; they couldn't find his clothing; they couldn't find his possessions. After two days of running around the hospital from department to department, we finally located his things and took them out.

Q: How do you look at American hospitals now?

W: The way I look at the medical system and the doctors in this country is that they are corrupt and they kill people. People who are poor, people who can't speak English. They make mistakes with people's lives, killing them. And it is all legal, and they can say, "I am sorry, I understand what you are going through" after it is too late. They can go on making money, killing more people, while Chinese people, poor people, get the sickness, the bills, and the funerals to attend. The U.S. government killed my friend Mr. L. who had only been in this country for 16 days – this country of gold and democracy which he had heard so much about in Hong Kong. I think that the only way to deal with this system is if

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Chinese people begin to unite and fight back against a system that is out to kill and exploit all colored and poor people for its own benefit.

Boyhood to a Rude Awakening

“What was it like in Chinatown when you grew up?” asked a young lady richly endowed with intelligence, beauty, and fired with a rare enthusiasm to serve the people. My reply would be that it was a time filled with tears and laughter, of fun and work, of adventures—real and imagined— and all the time oblivious of an adult world and a thing called the Depression.

BOYHOOD

Boyhood in Chinatown was a time when a dime took you to the wild West on weekends with Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard, or Bob Steele. It was joining in the mischiefs of Our Gang and their dog with the painted monocle. It was Rin Tin Tin, Laurel and Hardy, W.C. Fields, Will Rogers, and of course, Shirley Temple.

With a nickel, a boy could eat his fill of chow mein, or peppered abalone, or french fries with catsup on a cold night.

Even a penny went a long way. It could get you a postcard picture of everybody's hero, Colonel Lindbergh and his Spirit of St. Louis.

NEWSPAPER DELIVERY

But it was not all fun. We kids had to work for our spending money. Some were delivering the Call-Bulletin, which sold for three cents on the street. Some were shining shoes for a nickel a pair. And if you were paid a dime, the man was sure to be your favorite and steady customer.

Hard times were not without its laughter. Kids would laugh all the way to the waterfront knowing that on the piers they would be welcomed to the mountains of potatoes and onions entirely free. And fish markets were also generous with their fish. We would bring them home by the buckets and hang them up to dry on the fire escape.

And at Christmastime, we would make the rounds of the churches to get presents and candies. We didn't have radio or television, or the affluence of the kids nowadays, but what a boyhood. And just a dime could do such wonders in the good old days!

And yet, the past should only be remembered, and not in which to linger long—for the onslaught of time is merciless. We are forced to face the reality of a world where people must fight, and fight hard, for a place in the sun.

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

What follows are object lessons hopefully to be learned and profited by the upcoming generation of breadwinners:

In a U.S. Government agency recently, two Black Americans and one white American applied for a job in the finance department. The Black Americans had the seniority and the ability to qualify for the position, but neither were chosen. The fact that the white American's father is an officer in the same agency helped to no small extent in her selection, however much it may be denied. How else do you explain the rapid advancement of a newcomer in an organization? Civil rights and equal opportunity in employment had been recognized for many years, yet the ugly head of discrimination still persists to show its presence. Whenever there is a job opening, an announcement is passed among the workers or posted on the bulletin board in order to make it look legal, but in all probability, the candidate has already been chosen by the powers that be. Indeed, doors are always opened to those who have the right complexion.

FACTS OF LIFE

If the upcoming generation of breadwinners of the Third World have high hopes of fair employment and unbiased selection in advancement, they would do well to erase them from their mind or else the result could cripple their outlook for life. Once there was a fellow who applied over thirty-five times for job openings, and everytime the same answer came back: "You are qualified, but not considered." Such are the facts of life. Unless you know someone of authority or influence, all the education in the world would be of no avail. There is no doubt that we shall have to bear this double cross—the cross of race and cross of color—for some time to come.

Christianity in Chinatown

Translated from Chinese

After reading Shan's article in the March 20th issue of the Berkeley Dispatch, one is bestirred with indignation—for it voices one's heartfelt sentiments and those of ordinary overseas Chinese. Articles of criticism are common, but provocative ones are rare. Tang Shan's attack on the Christian Church in Chinatown must be considered an originality. Even the news media of Hong Kong and Taiwan dared not criticize the Christian Church in the slightest. The news media of Chinatown speaks only for the wealthy. Who would dare speak up for the poor? There is no place in the entire world where one can find as many organizations as in Chinatown. Yet, how many are there that look after the rights and benefits of the poor? But for a few thousand dollars of remuneration, so-called social workers even had to resort to fist fights!

How does one explain the phenomenon of an abundance of social workers but with no results. Because we have two large and strong opposing forces. The first is

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the well-known Chinese Six Companies, and the second is unbeknownst to the public—the Christian Church. The banners of both are: "To serve the people." However, they are meant to serve the wealthy, and not the poor. Previously, the opposing force of the Six Companies was the greatest. Even now they are still engaged in a last ditch fight. But their power is in decline.

What's left standing in our way is the Christian Church. She will always be the shackles of Time. She will always be the obstructionist of China. She may be likened to a snake—externally gentle but its obstruction capability is great. No matter how progressive an organization, once it is infiltrated by Christians, it changes from a ferocious lion into a crawling worm. Christians are imperialists. They are an organization of race extremists. Over 270 years ago, a Chinese priest named Lee accused the hierarchy of the Church of discrimination against China.

DISCRIMINATION

Martin Luther King, the Black minister, publicly accused white ministers of discrimination against the Black people (read his writings from prison). Throughout history Christianity has taught the colored people to serve and to obey the white people. The Papacy of Catholicism and the highest authority of the Christian Church will forever be the domain of the white people. The yearly contribution of each church to the mother church is more than \$2,000. The amount of the Catholic Churches exceeds even this figure! In addition to taxes to the government, church members must support this group of pigs. The annual salary of the church leader alone is \$25,000 (this was revealed by a minister 6 or 7 years ago). The rest of the hierarchy are variously paid 10 to 20 thousand. Ministers are paid from \$500 to \$800 in addition to incomes from marriage or funeral services—plus rent-free housing.

All these expenses of the church are shouldered by members of the church under the glorified name of donation to "God." In reality, it is to support the white pigs. There are more than 10 churches in Chinatown. Every year 20 to 30 thousands of dollars are contributed to their mother churches. From the pockets of the poor this money is cheated for contribution to the mother churches. This is the Christian Church's way to "serve the people." In comparing Buddhism's "the rich giving to the poor," Christianity's "the poor giving to the rich," must necessarily be considered lower by three levels.

The association of this writer with the churches of Chinatown extends more than a decade. Although unwilling to be baptized, yet he participated in all their activities, thus acquiring a rather good understanding of all facets of the church. The experiences acquired are these: its theory of Christianity is imperialistic. Its administration is capitalistic. In the beginning, upon entering the church, many smiling faces and extending arms welcome you. As time passes, many stern faces and determined hands come for your money. Besides contributions to "God," there are donations of various kinds. An elderly lady in telling me these things said: "Naturally, it is impossible not to pay." Small amounts would only invite looks of disdain from church members.

ROBS CHILDREN

The Church not only robs the elderly, even children are not excused. Children attending Sunday School must also donate their spending money. There is an expression that goes like this: "When a monk steals chickens, he has no preference

of their sizes." Over a thousand years, this has been the policy of the churches, and the principle has never changed. The most customary role of the churches is that of a "philanthropist." This kind of role wins friends most easily. And it is one the path of friendship that they plot to submerge you in water (baptism). At that time, it is like being addicted to opium. Some people are drowned into insensitivity—to continue service to the white man (the Pope or Church leader). These "philanthropists" are dispersed everywhere for the purpose of winning still more church members. This has the same effect as addicts inviting beginners to free smokes. The purpose is to win more companions. If we do not expose the evil plot of Christianity, we will never be able to rise up. We will forever be the white man's slave.

Arise Brothers and Sisters!

Translated letter from a Chinese Seaman

Arise Brothers and Sisters:

Forward

The wheels of history ceaselessly roll forward. Each day of human civilization is forever new. The people are searching for a beautiful future, an ideal society.

The Past

Brothers: What ideals did we have when we left our families, boarding ships for a living? The ideal of a calm and beautiful life. But reality smashed our beautiful dream.

We lived in slavery, oppression, and degradation—over the thunderous oceans, in the bitter cold, and under the scorching heat we were under the constant discrimination and oppression of the exploiters. Upon the slightest display of discontent we would be subjected to discharge at any given time, not to mention bad recommendations and deduction of pay. Moreover, the days of unemployment were sad and depressing. Even if a job could be found, it would cost a lot of money, for the go-between would extort us. Ah! Our hard earned fruits of labor. How they all disappeared.

The Present

Ocean after ocean, mountain over mountain, we came to this land of the United States, looking forward to a living that might come closer to our ideal. Reality soon shattered our beautiful dream.

The U.S. government harassed us seamen incessantly, using deportation and expulsion. Worse still, the U.S. immigration office charged us of being communists or being the fifth column of Red China.

Why did they put out such statements? Did they base it on facts or on their opinion and judgement? How could we accept such accusations?

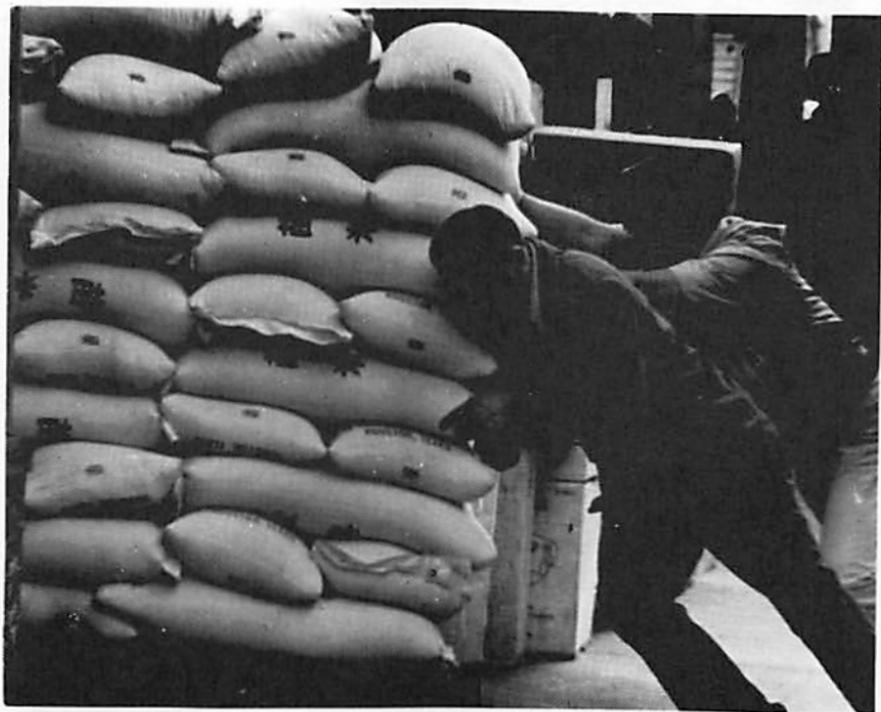
PRESENT WORKER'S CONDITIONS

Our Goal

For our own good we must unite. Solidarity is our strength, and with strength we shall succeed in obtaining what is rightfully ours: freedom, democracy and equality.

Out of curiosity I came to the U.S. in 1962. When I was in Hong Kong, I had heard about the wonderfulness of the U.S. from the pro-American factions. Let's just talk about the problems of the seamen. We've traveled over a thousand seas to end up here in the U.S. But the U.S. government uses many illegal methods to give us trouble. Let's just ask them how did the white man get over to the Americas? You are really just and legal! Your constitution talks about "freedom, democracy, equality" for all the people. Why should there be such differentiation between the races?

Freedom: Why don't we have freedom of choice? Your government advocates helping the poor and the troubled all over the world. But why is it that when we Chinese seamen come over after traveling and much hardship and ask for residence, you just totally ignore it, using all kinds of illegal ways to deport many people.



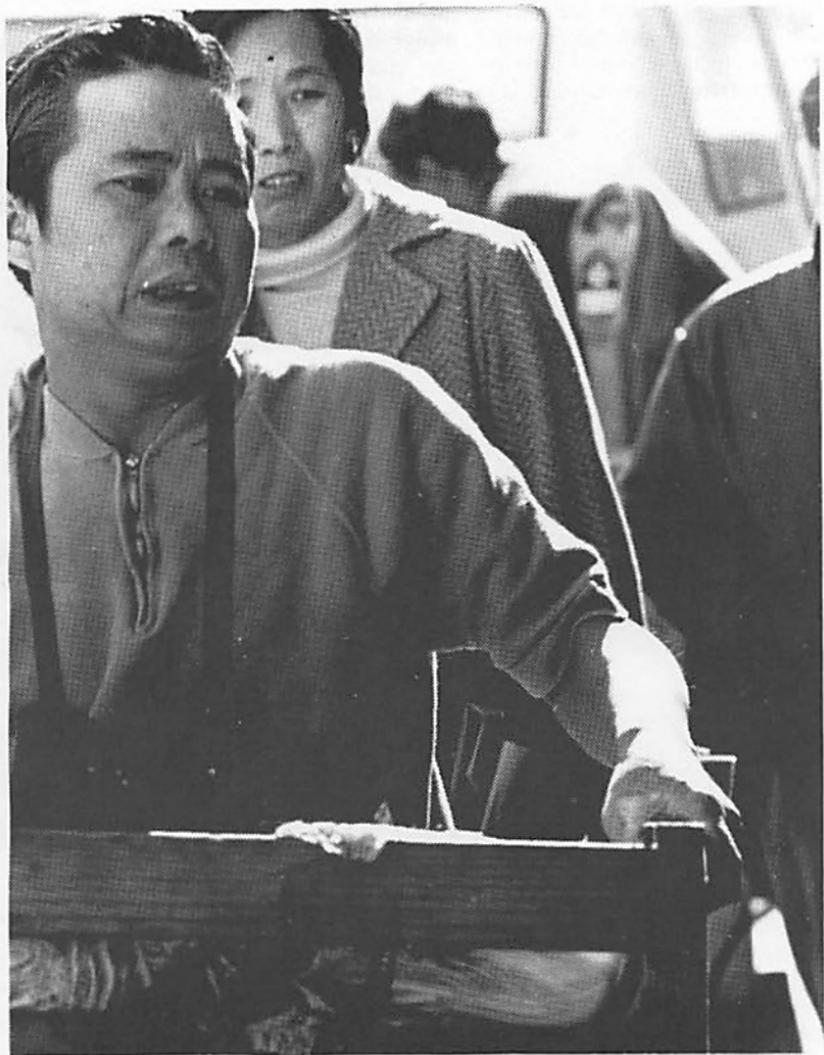
Democracy: The U.S. government's FBI (they are sometimes called gestapo or undercover agents) often break in through windows, with no rationalization nor evidence. They threaten us at gun point, break things at random, and then finish with one line: "It's O.K." Moreover, immigration and police departments are certainly not lacking in people who are out to grab whatever they can, including bribes. Maybe this is what is meant by "democracy" in a "democratic nation?"

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

Equality: Are blacks, yellows and whites treated alike? Why are there differences between whites and colored in some schools, government offices, and even in constitutional rights. Racial and provincial discriminations: where is the so-called law which upholds equality?

No wonder many have concluded: the only American is a rich American. Whatever happened to the freedom, the democracy, the equality and all the basic rights of the poor people?

Inevitably, more and more progressive people will be fighting for freedom, democracy, equality, peace, and independence. For a common goal, thousands and thousands of awakened people are advancing persistently, resolutely, and tirelessly forward. Arise, all you people who refuse to be enslaved!



3.

Working Women

Similar to American society, Chinese traditional culture dictates that women are inferior to men and that the woman's position is in the home, bearing and raising the children. Here in America too, Chinese women are often pressured by traditional customs to marry young and raise a family. Because their place is considered to be in the home, they are generally discouraged from participating in any cultural, social or political activities. Yet, at the same time in taking care of the family, they have developed concern for others and, therefore, a growing interest in broader social problems.

The economic situation of most immigrant Chinese families would not permit the women to remain in the home; they also have had to go to work to assist in supporting their families. In addition to carrying the responsibility of raising the children, they have become a part of the American labor force; they have found that American employment discriminates against women, especially non-white women. The majority of them have only been able to find jobs in low paying garment sweat shops where they must endure long hours and unhealthy working conditions. Whether at work or in the home, their problems and oppression as women are rooted in their position as a cheap labor pool.

Working women experience exploitation and deteriorating living conditions similar to working men, and, therefore, share a similar outlook as well. Chinese women, along with other women, are gradually becoming an active and powerful force in many of the struggles to gain their rights as workers, to gain equality for women, and to combat discrimination against non-white people.

The articles in this section address various aspects of their lives: their jobs, families and children. The articles depict their strong spirit of resistance to the oppression and exploitation they must face.

Women in Chinatown

The following article was written by an Asian sister who worked in the I Wor Kuen Free Health Clinic in New York. The article is based both on her experience as a child and adolescent growing up in New York Chinatown and on her contact with other working class women while working at the Clinic.

Women have been in a lower position than men in most societies for thousands of years. Women took the role of taking care of the home and raising the children while men took the role of doing most of the heavy labor and bringing home the food. This has continued right into present-day capitalist society because the rulers benefit by keeping women, half the population, in a position of near slavery. In *Goldflower's Story* (see back issues of *Getting Together*), Goldflower talked about how women in feudal China were bought like slaves for their husband's household, and then were forced to put in long hours in the fields. This is a lot like women's position here in Chinatown where women do all the household and child-raising work and at the same time have to hold down sweatshop jobs at rock bottom wages.

Through our Free Health Clinic we have come into contact with women who told us about the oppression that women face everyday. One woman we know told us her daily schedule. She gets up around 7 a.m. and feeds the family, she rushes the kids to school. Before, when the children were not old enough to go to school, she took them to the sweatshop, hoping there will be some work for her. On a long day, she'll work till lunch time and then run home to feed the kids lunch. Then she runs back to work till 3 p.m., picks up the kids, and takes them to Chinese school, after which she proceeds to work a couple more hours. Then she goes shopping, picks up the kids from Chinese school, goes home to cook dinner and to help the kids with their school work. She barely makes enough money to help clothe the children and to give them nickels and dimes to spend for snacks and school supplies, though her work is very hard and her hours are long. Even with both herself and her husband working, the family had to get food stamps to survive. She, and the many mothers like her in Chinatown, are obvious victims of a society that is based only on making money for the rich and not on serving the people's needs.

Another woman we know who has been bringing her child to I Wor Kuen for tutoring, told us about her home life. She is a quiet woman with many fears, especially of her husband's temper. One day she came in with a cast on her arm and we asked her what happened. She told us: "My husband comes home from work at 4 a.m. every night and gets me out of bed and beats me. I try to hide the ugly bruises from the children, but this time he came home from work drunk and hit me so hard that he broke my arm. I have thought of running away many times, but he says he'll follow me wherever I go and kill me if I leave him. I can't do anything about it. I just make the best of it for the children; they are all I have right now." Another woman told us that her husband even beats her in front of her family friends.

This is a common nightmare existence for many married women. Usually a man waits till after marriage before he starts beating his wife because that's when the society gives the go-ahead signal for men to take out their pressures on their wives.

WORKING WOMEN

Wife-beating is one of men's only socially acceptable outlets for their frustrations; it makes women the victims of men's everyday tensions resulting from working life in America. It is considered "normal social behavior" when women take the beatings and men get rid of tensions that build up from trying to make a living in this society.

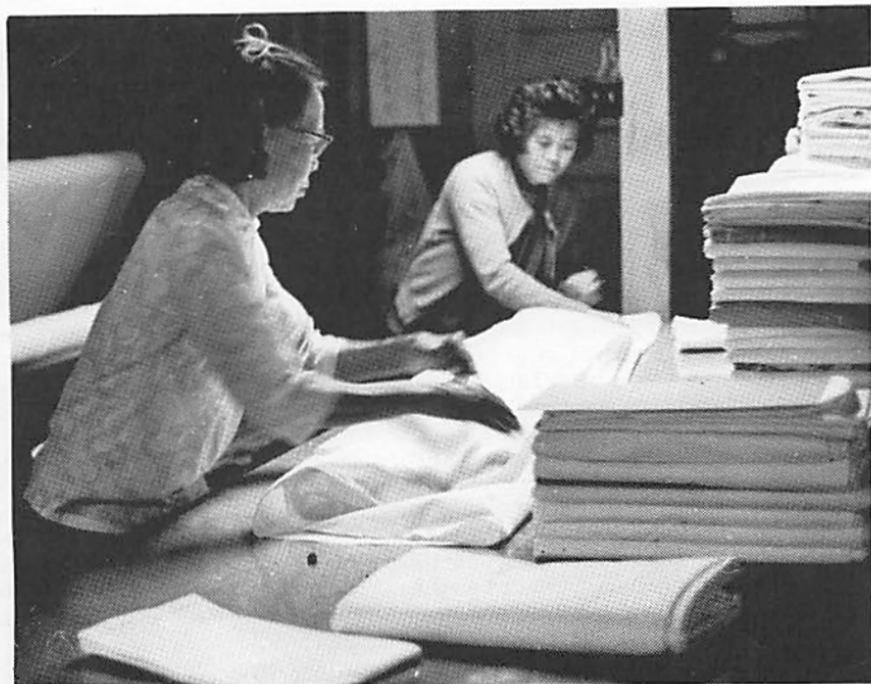
One friend of ours is 19 now and has two children already. She dropped out of high school to get married so as to get out of her parents' house. She wound up tied down to her own house and kids and had to cut herself off from her old friends and social life. She went to night school to get her high school diploma, and wanted to go on to college part time. But her husband told her that a wife's place is in the home.

One of the high school girls said: "My parents think the old way. They want me to get good grades in school, come home early and help around the house. That's all. My father is only happy when I am home all the time. But you should see my house; there's nothing to do there. So I come out or sneak out to Chinatown to hang around and meet my friends to see a movie or something. And now my parents say I am going bad. They say I don't listen to them anymore. But it's so hard for me to tell them I don't want to live in a cage all my life."

Another of our friends said, "I got a bad reputation in Chinatown. My parents' friends say I am wild because I go out with too many boys and hang around the streets with my friends. I don't see anything wrong with that. Even my boyfriend gives me the third degree whenever I want to go somewhere. I feel he has the right to do what he wants. I don't want him to feel trapped. But I think that girls should have the same rights as boys to do what we want."

We feel the need to change this urgent situation, by encouraging women to organize each other. We are half the population—we can shake the foundations of our oppression and do our part to reorder American society to meet the needs of all our people. We can begin by supporting other women through taking care of each other's welfare.





New York Schools

This article was written by a mother whose children are forced to attend a ghetto school in Chinatown where the teachers are completely unconcerned about the education of ghetto children. The article expresses deep anger at the American educational system. This is an almost literal translation from the original that was written in Chinese.

The school frequently summons me to meet with the principal and vice-principal. This enables me to directly observe their attitudes and methods of work. No matter whether the summons is from the principal or the teacher, it is always an act of relieving themselves of responsibilities. The purpose is to first let the parents know how naughty their children are; thus relieving the school or the teachers of any responsibilities if anything bad comes up later.

May I ask if it is true that everything that teachers do is correct? When they were studying to be teacher, did the textbooks tell them that the only ones the American educational system aims to teach are those who act and talk like rich kids? Can't

they forgive students who are poor and do not speak good English, instead of pretending that they do not exist, or furiously attacking them and shutting them up by the sidedoor of the school?

Several weeks ago, the teacher gave me a lecture saying that my son has not been doing his homework, and was getting very poor grades and that she is not going to let him go on to high school. I am very much depressed each time they lecture me, I ponder deeply about their method of teaching. How can these teachers who do not put in any effort into loving the children expect the children to get a correct development of their mind and heart? Don't they know that the salary they are pocketing is from the taxes that people pay out of hard work, and thus that they should seriously make the effort to find a good way of educating the children who are future pillars of the country?

American students are each generation worse than the one before. The students are not frightened by the severeness of the teacher. Just the opposite, students have turned the school they built into a dope-smoking den to repay them for their kind-hearted "education." Let me tell you: The American education system is crumbling.

—A New York mother.

International Children's Day

An Asian sister took the occasion of International Children's Day to write this article about the effect of the American educational system on working class Chinese. There are sections on "Chinese Schools," "Parent's Job Situation," "Building Alternatives," as well as a letter from a mother in Chinatown.

June 1st is International Children's Day. In some countries where they are building socialist societies, it is a day of celebration and joy. But here in the U.S. in Chinatown, because of the problems we face in this society, it is a day to think seriously of solutions and begin to act on them.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Here in Chinatown, children have to go to public schools. From the beginning, they are "tracked" supposedly according to how "smart" they are. But the way the city schools are set up, Chinese kids are off to a bad start. They are non-white in schools where most teachers are white and middle-class. And they are even worse off if they are immigrants and can't speak fluent English.

The public schools are run by strict and unreasonable discipline. Kids only see the principal and school big shots when they get into trouble. Some schools even have

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city cops patrolling the halls to make sure the students walk on the right side of the hall and have an official hall pass to go to the rest room.

They teach English, history, math and all the other courses. But they are more concerned about the student's attendance records than whether they are learning anything useful. After a while, a lot of kids get pretty sick of this treatment and flunk out or drop out. And the future for drop outs is bleak—the U.S. army, the streets of Chinatown, or if they're lucky, some low-paying job.

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Then there's the Chinese schools. They are either run by the CCBA or the local churches. They teach that the only China is Taiwan and that the leader of the Chinese people is Chiang Kai-Shek and the KMT. They teach that the U.S. is a land of opportunity. And they make the language classes boring and the homework a grind to finish.

Parents send their kids so they won't forget Chinese language and culture. Parents have nothing to say about what their kids learn and besides there are no alternative schools. So it seems better than no Chinese school at all.

Kids go to Chinese school because their parents send them and to meet friends and have a good time. It's a drag to have extra hours of Chinese school and Chinese homework tacked on to school work from the city schools. But at least it's a social place to be, even if the education is pretty meaningless.

BUILDING ALTERNATIVES

So we should face the problem of education, and start to plan real alternatives to this system. We can set up good Chinese schools that teach the true history of China, and teach Chinese language in a better way, with new books and new methods. We can run these schools with community participation; parents, youth and all interested people helping to teach and coordinate the activities to make it an effective education and not a waste of time.

PARENTS' JOB SITUATION

Meanwhile most parents are working hard to support the family. Most parents wind up in laundries, restaurants and sweatshops, getting pretty low pay for the long hours they spend. Especially for people who don't speak a lot of English or have special job training, these are the only jobs available.

In family laundries, the kids, even the younger ones, have to help out with the heavy work. Especially bundling and marking and sorting the clothes. Most families with a laundry cannot afford to hire outside help, so the kids go to work.

In the restaurants, there's no place for kids. So when fathers work 6 days a week just to make ends meet, they hardly ever even see the family.

Mothers who work in the sweatshops must find some way to care for the young children at least till they are old enough to go to school. They don't have time to think about what the kids learn in school. They have to think of the school as a day care center to take care of the children for a few hours a day. They sometimes are forced to take small children to the dusty, unhealthy conditions of the sweatshop because there's no place else to take care of them. They could never afford to pay a full-time babysitter with the wages they get for their work in the sweatshops.

So the contradictions between working to support the family and yet not being able to give the necessary time and attention to the children's upbringing puts a lot of pressure on the parents.

Letter from a Mother in Chinatown

June 1st is International Children's Day. All children should have a happy family and a good education. After they grow up they work in the society to help people and serve the country; therefore the family and social education is very important in their childhood. This point is something that parents should not neglect or ignore.

Youth in Chinatown form groups everywhere. From time to time, because of minor things, they get into fights and kill each other, and vengeance goes on forever. In the newspapers every day all they print is reports of these bloody incidents. Parents, after hearing this, do not try to understand their children's problems, but instead the children are punished. Under these circumstances they make their children run away from home and roam the streets.

Why is our youth doing these things? The reason is that we overseas Chinese face the racist attitude and language barrier living in a foreign land. It's difficult for us to find jobs and cope with our daily needs. That's why we resort to laundry and the restaurant business or become machine operators in the sweatshops. All these jobs have long hours and low pay. Because the family budget is too great, the parents usually have to work and leave the children at home with no one to care for them. That's why our children pick up bad social habit and become Westernized to the point that their own culture gets washed away. Their faces are Chinese but their action and language are all Western. How could our children not learn to be bad?

Many parents think their children are pretty much grown up. No need to worry too much about them. Just supply them with clothes, food and shelter and see this as fulfilling the parents' job. But they fail to recognize the children's lack of love and concern for the family and the family's failure to educate the children. This results in children leaving home, staying out and not going to school without the parents knowing it.

When the children do something wrong, the parents say they are failures. Some fathers even yell at the mothers for not carrying out her duties fully. Actually, the father is also responsible. So is society.

This matter has already developed to a desperate stage. Why don't we think of a remedy? Some parents say other people's children are the same. It's true youth in this area are in the same boat. We know they face bad circumstances, and when we parents are not concerned, it only gets worse. Because children are the masters of the future, we parents should solve this problem in any way to save our youth.

Garment Industry Exposed

The American garment industry has long been notorious for its exploitation of Chinese working women. Chinese women seeking employment in the United States from Hong Kong and Taiwan find that the only opportunities open here are operators for an industry which pays its workers by piecework. The rate of pay is as little as 1/10th to 1/20th the sales price of its garments! Women work 10 to 12 hours with no overtime pay; conditions of work are exhausting and unhealthy for these workers who also bear the burden of responsibility in their family. The American capitalist system survives by exploiting its workers in this way. And these Chinese working women suffer the greatest hardship, filling the unskilled labor force and facing racial discrimination on all levels—in job opportunities, in the unions, and in the whole fabric of their livelihood.

The potential strength of the garment workers in Chinatown uniting to organize their own labor force and eventually to control their workplaces is being recognized more and more. Recently the Federal government even had to step in to alleviate some of the oppressive conditions of work of the Chinese garment workers. Of course, this is only a temporary measure meant to buy off the power of the workers in initiating demands themselves. This has brought to the public the pressing issue of the right of garment workers, and the particular conditions which Chinese garment workers face in this country.

FEDERAL INVESTIGATION OF GARMENT INDUSTRY

On May 10, 1972, the Federal Department of Labor in New York City, accused 52 garment factories in Chinatown, while investigating 200 more, of "repeatedly failing to keep accurate wage and hour records of their employees, mainly women who have recently immigrated from Hong Kong and Taiwan." All the factories being investigated are Chinese-owned. At this time, factories owned by non-Chinese are not being investigated. The 52 factories were accused of having their employees work as much as 50 hours per week earning as little as 65 to 75 cents per hour. The Department of Labor report stated that the employees in Chinatown are one of the most exploited groups in the New York metropolitan area. The owners were accused of not keeping accurate records of overtime hours.

All the women in the sweatshops work overtime (10 hours average per day) out of necessity. Since piecework pay varies with each batch of new garments (ranging from 10 cents to \$1.50 per garment), to make enough money to support a family, a worker who gets paid ten cents per pants, would have to work more than just 8 hours and 5 days a week. Therefore, Chinese working women see working 10 hours per day, 6 days a week and sometimes on Sundays, as a regular work schedule. Recently the Department of Labor has stepped in, and is demanding that employers open their books, and repay workers for overtime accumulated in the past. However, this type of investigation is actually a front and a superficial one for the U.S. federal government. In actuality, they are suppressing the power of the women workers even more. HOW???

First of all, all these years, what has the government been doing if they say now that Chinese workers are the most exploited in New York City? Chinese women workers have been working for 6 days a week, 10 hours per day for so many years, it is not a new thing which just popped up recently. Most of the women did

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not keep records of the overtime hours that they worked because to them 10 hours a day was normal. For the employers, they especially did not keep track of the overtime of their workers—because it is not to their benefit. So where is the government going to get the past records of the women's overtime hours when there are no written records? Thus, effectively, the Chinese workers have no way to secure this overtime pay.

Secondly, where does the ILGWU come into all of this investigation? Local 2325 and Local 105 are both located in the Chinatown community, and most factory workers belong to either one. The federal minimum wage is \$1.60 and the New York State's minimum wage is \$1.85. But on the average Chinese women make 65 to 75 cents per hour. What has the union done to raise this rate and to see that the women workers at least get the minimum wage or else demand that the women get more money per piece of garment. When the women get paid 24 cents for a skirt that may take $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to $\frac{3}{4}$ hours to sew, and the retail price goes for \$7 or \$8, where does all the rest of the profit go? The money that should rightfully belong to the worker (who does all the work) is going to the employer's, the manufacturer's, and government's pocket. The local unions have the responsibilities to protect the basic necessity and rights of workers. However, from this kind of public investigation, the true face of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union is exposed as doing very little in actuality for the workers. It also shows the degree of collaboration between the U.S. government and the ILGWU in suppressing and exploiting Chinese working women.

Thirdly, as a result of this investigation, different lies are being told about Chinese working women. Printed in the *New York Times* of May 10th is a statement on the reasons for the concentration of Chinese workers in this industry. It said, "The Chinese immigrants . . . are filling a labor vacuum left by a comparatively high rate of retirement among older, more established workers in the garment industry." They also stated that the "needle trades are skilled trades which Chinese immigrants have acquired before and can readily fill the labor vacuum in the garment industry." In actuality, the majority of women going into this trade are unskilled. Most of the women are immigrants who cannot speak English, with no special skill or training in any field. They came to this country to make money and better living than in Hong Kong, but the only job that is readily available to them is the unskilled job of a machine operator in the sewing factory. They learn how to sew fast because it means livelihood of their kids and family. So to say that this is a desired field of work that the women like and look for is covering up the oppressive conditions of Chinese working people in this country. This kind of deception is intended to cover up the real nature of the capitalist system; the exploitation of the Chinese people and of all Third World people for cheap labor in order to feed its own interest. This policy of the U.S. government to exploit Third World working people is not limited to her own people here in the U.S. but it extends outside the boundaries of America. In places such as Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Puerto Rico, South America, and Africa using cheap labor to produce products and goods for the U.S. is a common practice.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

The fourth reason why the investigation is a front-off and a superficial investigation that oppresses Chinese women workers is that in response to the federal Department of Labor's investigation, the Chinese-owned factories are now meeting federal standards for work hours, opening from 9-5 Monday through Friday so employers do not have to pay overtime. What this actually does is worsen the situation for the women workers. Why??? Because there is still the low piecework pay of a few cents; there has been no raise in the wages or price rate per garment.

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But, instead, there has been a cutback in the number of hours that they could work, so that they make much less than what they were making before. One may say that working 8 hours is fair but now they have an even harder time living and supporting a family in this country. The federal investigation and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union are playing along in the same scheme to limit and suppress the potential power of the workers (which they see and realize) to demand their own basic rights and privileges in the future.

Recognizing and seeing through this scheme, fellow workers in the factory, whether working together in the same factory or not, should organize and rise up to defeat the liberal and false mask which both the union and the federal government have put on to exploit Chinese working women.



Interview with a Garment Factory Worker

Question: What is the general situation of sweatshops in San Francisco Chinatown?

Answer: I worked in a garment factory sweatshop in San Francisco Chinatown. From my own experience and from talking with my fellow workers in the garment factory, I found out a lot about the sweatshop situation. There are a lot of them up and down the block, probably at least one in every single block. Most of them are illegal in that they pay the workers lower than the minimum wage which is \$1.65 an hour. That is why they don't put up a sign outside the door saying that it's such and such a company.

How you can tell that inside is a sweatshop is usually it's a storefront, on the ground floor, either they have curtains all around the windows so you can't look inside or they paint the windows and the door is closed. But when you walk past it you can tell it's a sweatshop. The owners of the sweatshops, depending on how many they own, are in general part of the petit bourgeoisie of Chinatown.

Q: How do they become sweatshop owners?

A: Probably a lot of them started out being seamstresses. After like ten years, when they have saved up enough money and they have learned enough about the trade, they open up a sweatshop themselves. Not every person that works in a sweatshop can later on open up one themselves, though. Most of the people that work there work for the rest of their lives.

Q: How much do the workers get?

A: The workers are not paid by the hour, but on the piece rate, between \$6.00 and \$8.00 a dozen, which is 50 cents to 60 cents a piece. This is the standard price in San Francisco Chinatown. The workers sew on an average of a dozen a day, and that is from eight o'clock in the morning to six-thirty or seven at night.

Most of them take only half an hour to eat lunch. They eat lunch right there at the sweatshop, they either bring their lunch or cook something right there. When I said workers sew an average of a dozen a day, I meant the experienced workers. When I first worked there, I made five dresses in three days. For workers who have worked in this trade for five to seven years, some of them are super-fast, they make about two dozens a day, but that's only twelve dollars for like ten hours of work. How they get around paying the workers the minimum is by talking them into not using their social security number. The sweatshop owners have different ways of not reporting to the government.

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Q: What are the conditions in the sweatshop as far as health and safety go? Are there any regulations?

A: There are no regulations whatsoever. There is no sick pay. As far as safety goes, sewing machines are relatively safe and since most of the workers are experienced, there's not that much hazard. But one thing that affects your health is the lighting of the place. The lighting is so dim it really affects your eyes. Sewing is a very delicate task and when you have to bend over a sewing machine for like ten hours a day, your back hurts, your eyes hurt.

Q: Who are the workers and why would they take such low wages?

A: The garment workers in Chinatown are all immigrant women.

The immigrants are from Hong Kong. Most of them worked in the factories in Hong Kong. They came over here because the conditions in Hong Kong are too oppressive under the British colonial government, they came over and find themselves slaving away for the American capitalists.

Most of them are middle-aged. Some of them are young mothers. Most young immigrant women work as waitresses in the Chinatown restaurants where they make a little bit more.

The reason why they would take such low wages is because the American capitalist system has created this sweatshop system with the sole purpose of exploiting them and making the sweatshop system their only way of making a living. The big white corporations know that they can exploit Third World immigrants better than the American workers because of language barriers, so instead of hiring the Third World immigrants themselves, they piece out work to these small sweatshops in Third World communities, for example in the Mission and Chinatown, owned by the Third World shop owner who in turn would hire the immigrants to do the work.

These small sweatshop owners are not the enemy, they too are exploited by these big companies. They work in the sweatshop themselves, not as long hours, but they do the buttonholes, they sort out the materials delivered by the big companies. They just barely make it to be middle class or lower middle class. They receive a lot of pressure from the big companies too. They have to meet the deadlines and the quota in order to contract work and they in turn have to pressure the workers to work extra hours to get the work done. The big companies give the sweatshop owners something like \$1.00 a piece, the sweatshop owner gives 50 cents a piece and the big companies sell the finished product in big stores downtown for \$8.00 to \$10.00 a piece.

How I found out was that one time after I quit the sweatshop job, I got a job at Macy's downtown to do inventory work for twenty hours altogether. I was wandering around the store on my break and I saw these dresses that they sell which are the same material, the same pattern, as the ones I sew selling for \$8.00 to \$10.00 a piece. It's just super-exploitation.

A Credit to Your Race

WORKING WOMEN

The three evils that plague America are racism, economic oppression, and sexism. We see these forces oppress Third World people everyday, at work, on the streets, in schools, in the media, everywhere. Third World people face not only blatant forms of oppression, but also many hidden less noticeable forms. For three years I was employed as a worker in a S.F. financial district credit union. Being a Third World woman employed by this white financial institution, I developed a much clearer understanding of these oppressive forces. Here, complex and specialized techniques were utilized to keep Third World people down and women in their place.

While I was there, I was the only Third World person employed by this credit union. Being the nice Chinese girl that I was, they hardly expected me to understand and reject their oppressive system. When I started working, I noticed that no women ever rose to positions of management. Some women were employed there for eighteen years, and they never advanced to higher positions. It was very evident that these women had been oppressed for so long that they didn't even consider raising in position or learning to take leadership responsibility. Many women would say, "Only a man could handle a job like that, women just wouldn't know what to do." It was clear that they were carefully selected and hired by the bosses. I was hired because the boss enjoyed hiring nice, sweet and hardworking Chinese girls. "They always contribute so much to our office." This credit union would never hire Spanish-speaking women, nor did the union even interview Blacks. The reason for this will soon become evident.

One of the most oppressive tactics of this office was their loan application code system. We were instructed to make applications using a secret code to indicate various irrelevant qualities of the applicant. We were told to mark a circle around the Cases where people had long hair, "strange habits," or weird clothes were automatically considered bad risks to the union. A line through the word DATE indicated that the women looked pregnant. These two indicators are the only ways that the credit committee would know if the applicant is Black, a suspected bad risk, or a woman possibly about to leave her job. A pregnant woman is too much of a bother to deal with in collecting loan payments. Third World pregnant women are not even considered for a loan.

When code markings are indicated, the credit committee immediately goes over the application with a fine tooth comb. They demand thorough credit checks, thorough employer interviews, complete checks on personal references, and a check as to what the money will be used for. In most of these cases the applicant is required to furnish a co-signer for loans, and then, rarely applications over \$750.00. After one and a half weeks of this type of harassment, loan applications become rejected for one reason or another, or the applicant would finally become discouraged and decide to forget the whole business.

If the AMOUNT IN SAVINGS is circled, this indicates to the credit committee that this applicant is a typical white upper-middle class person. Management, upon seeing this, quickly approves these loans, and gets the money out quickly with no form of harassment.

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

Whenever Asians came in, they were labeled with a circle around the word DATE but with additional comments that this applicant is probably a good risk because "These people have good work records," "Chinese never give us any trouble, they're so well trained." "Why can't more people be like them?"

Again and again, Third World people are subjectively labeled. Third World people, especially Blacks, are kept in their place by not receiving any support or aid to pay off bills, doctor, and other medical costs, family expenses, taxes, and other day-to-day needs. People of the white middle class, however, are allowed and encouraged to buy an extra car, take European trips, build boats, redecorate their homes, and to send their sons off the high-cost colleges.

Once in a while, the office workers would realize how exploitative their jobs are, but because of employer intimidation the employee is quickly put down and reprimanded.

My last summer there was the worst. One other woman and myself tried to talk the other workers into striking for better pay, better advancement opportunities, and for stopping the discriminatory practices that we were forced to carry on. We all talked about these over coffee and lunch, and it caused a lot of internal struggle. Some women were fearful of losing their jobs; some women had defeatist attitudes; some women who were closer to the management threatened to inform on us. We won over some of the women during our conferences outside of the office and we decided to call a meeting with the management. The only problem was that when we came back to the office, the women refused to follow through. The bosses could feel some tension in the office, and quickly crushed any confrontations. They threatened and intimidated the workers beforehand by telling them that they weren't working efficiently enough, that they were coming in late too often, that they would have to work overtime if they didn't start thinking of the office first and themselves second.

I was caught not labeling applications, and my boss called me into his office. He demanded to know why a loan for \$1,500.00 was approved and that I had not indicated that the applicant was Black. I said that I felt that marking the application was irrelevant. When I pointed out that just as many white people had bad credit as anyone else, he threatened me "If the loan isn't paid back on time, you will have to take the responsibility of getting the money into this office." As I left, the boss looked at the application and analyzed the situation. He felt that because I was "young, idealistic, and sentimental" I could not realize that I was being economically harmful to the credit union. He also felt that I will sooner or later realize why the system works as it does. Yes, he was right, I do realize. Clearly the system demonstrates that it works to keep Third World workers and women oppressed and isolated.

Interview with an Ex-Secretary

When I went to our community high school, I couldn't do a lot of the homework and study required for any type of professional occupation, so I took business education classes. From what I had heard, being an executive secretary working in a business firm was glamorous and exciting work. Secretarial jobs paid pretty good money and you would meet a lot of people.

My first secretarial job was with an insurance company. I found the job very boring but very easy work. It certainly was not an exciting job and I found myself doing only what my boss told me to do; type this, type that, clean this, clean that, do this, do that, etc. I would just sit there and get orders from him and then be expected to move on them quickly. I never had to think about anything very much except how to do the things I had been told to do.

My boss would emphasize that I look "pretty" and if I didn't dress and comb my hair to what he approved of, he would say very sarcastic things to me like "didn't you get up early enough to comb your hair?"

Businessmen who came into the office would remark, "how nice, you have an Oriental secretary, does she work well? I heard Chinese people work hard and don't complain much." It's true, I did my work well and didn't complain even though I would want to tell my boss and his friends to just shut up. There was nothing I could do because all he had to do was fire me and hire someone else to take my place and I really needed the money to support myself and my little girl.

So that my boss could build his ego and superiority to me and make me feel second rate to him, I had to always address him as "Sir" after everything I said to him. "Yes, Sir, No, Sir; here's your letter, Sir, etc." and if I forgot to say it, he would yell at me "Yes, SIR!!!"

As I worked more, I started to feel like a robot—a shorthand and typing machine. I did exactly what I was told to do. I wasn't able to contribute anything of my own except my skill. I wanted to feel useful but somehow I just felt like I couldn't have a thought or idea of my own, or that I was respected as a human person.

In the insurance business I would write letters to people telling them that they could not collect any insurance money, or collect a very little amount, because of this regulation or that regulation, even if they had been injured and needed the money that they'd been paying hundreds of dollars a year to be able to have when they needed it. With the work that I was doing, my boss was able to maintain important communications between the regional insurance offices all over the United States and the main office in Washington, D.C. He made business deals and handled important insurance claims that involved a lot of money through the letters that he would dictate to me and have me type up. All this work led the company and the few that own it on the road to richer and richer profits, while my pay check remained the same. I started to think that all the work my friends and I were doing was making a lot of money for the company while most of the time the bosses did very little work. They took two hour lunches and long breaks; my boss would take an hour off to cut his hair, do shopping for his wife, and had all the freedom to do what he pleased, while we had very regulated schedules. If we were late, we would get money taken off our checks.

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

WORKING FOR THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC

Later, when I worked at Southern Pacific Railway I began to realize even more how I was part of a machine which hired people to do all the work of running the railroad. I was typing many letters about what things go on what train to where; how many cars were needed on a particular trip, when it was supposed to leave and when it was supposed to arrive, etc. I found that the quicker I typed letters, the smoother and faster the company functioned and that I was selling my ability to take shorthand and to type well so that the owners of Southern Pacific Railway could make money.

The job was more interesting than working in the insurance company because I learned about how important the railroad system is to the economy of the country and that if the railroads shut down, it would really hurt the big corporations because nothing could be sent to places to be sold and they would lose all kinds of money. Almost everything we see and use day to day is transported by the railway system. If I had typed the letters incorrectly by changing the number of the train and its destination, it would really have screwed the railroad company who was to get the stuff. It was important for the company that I perform my duties correctly. I was paid good money, nearly \$600 a month, but I still felt that I was being used along with all the other employees to build a company over which we had no control or say so.

As business companies grow larger, they need more people to do the paper work such as keeping in touch with all the things that are happening in that company. For instance, as the company grows, no one person can be on top of the whole situation, so they break it down into areas of work which require things to be typed, filed, and books to be kept. Records have to be kept of past and present transactions, communications have to be written, mail has to be sorted out, letters have to be answered, and all kinds of other clerical work has to be done and kept up so that the people on top have a clear picture of the whole company so they know where, when and what decisions should be made about certain things and how to expand their company more. When they break people down into different types of jobs, they pay different people more or less depending on what they feel is more skilled work. When I was a secretary they paid me more than the typist although a lot of times the typist did more work than I did and her job was just as important to the company as my job. All clerical jobs are an important part of the company. They usually pay well so that people won't mind so much having to sell their skill and their manpower to a company which makes many times over what they pay their employees. No one should have to sell their labor for the aggrandizement of a handful of exploiters.

GI's and Asian Women

"G.I.'s and Asian Women" was reprinted from Liberation News Service.

The Army has found stereotypes of Asian women quite useful—especially since most GI's experience long, forced separations from women in boot camp.

BOOT CAMP BRAINWASH

"We had these classes we had to go to, taught by drill instructors, and every instructor would tell a joke before he began his class. It would always be a dirty joke usually having to do with prostitutes they had seen in Japan or in other parts of Asia while they were stationed overseas. The attitude of the Asian woman being a doll, a useful toy, or something to play with usually came out in these jokes, and how they were not quite as human as white women. For instance, a real common example was how the instructor would talk about how Asian women's vaginas weren't like white women's, but rather they were slanted, like their eyes. Some guys really believed this shit too. Like when you get overseas afterward, you look for things you remember from these jokes.'

The military gains from using the symbol of Asians just as it gains from using the words "gook," "slants," or "Communists." The image of a people with slanted vaginas enhances the feeling that Asians are other than human, and therefore much easier to kill. More than a few Vietnam veterans tell of incidents of GI's who spend time in combat; then during their R&R periods, suddenly and with no apparent provocation, will kill a Vietnamese civilian out of a paranoid concept of "gooks."

The view that Asian women are less than human helps perpetuate another myth—that of the white women "back home" being placed on a pedestal. (This is not to say that the white woman's position is to be envied. Her position on that pedestal is also an oppressive situation.)

RACISM AND MARRIAGE IN THE ARMY

An example of the "white woman on the pedestal" can be seen in the words of another Asian American GI's experiences in the army when he tried to marry a Vietnamese woman:

"I wanted to get married when I was in Vietnam, but they wouldn't let me. I didn't push it because of the feedback I got from the beginning. You have to go through this waiting time and they make you wait until after your rotation time. Like if you have five months before you're moved out, then they'll give you a waiting period of six months so they can get you out of there."

"Man, they said stuff like 'She's not an American so she wouldn't be able to handle it in the States.' They said, 'Okay, you think you want to marry her now, but that's because there are no round eyed chicks around.' They said that to me, you know, I'm an Asian too, but they said that to me. They'd always talk about round-eyed caucasian women. They'd say 'and once you get back you'll see all those blondes and stuff, and you'll look at your wife and she'll be this old farmer chick—this gook—and you'll want to get rid of her. You'll be embarrassed when you get back because she's Vietnamese.'"

ASIANS IN AMERICA

To most non-Asians in the U.S., there is little if any difference between Asian-Americans and Asians in other parts of the world. We Asian Americans are either lumped with Asians in the Third World and therefore considered foreigners or we are invisible. The GI who wanted to marry the Vietnamese girl experienced both. On the one hand, the Military, completely insensitive to the fact that he was an Asian, talked about the round-eyed women waiting back home. This same brother, upon entering basic training, was called a "gook" and was made to stand in front of his platoon as an example of "what the enemy (the Vietnamese) looked like."

U.S. ARMY vs. ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMEN

Asian American women are susceptible to the stereotypes that GI's have of women in Asia. An example of this is shown in the following story of still another Asian American in basic training.

"Before everybody crashed, the drill instructor comes through and checks to see that all footlockers are locked and that you have your wallet. So you stand on top of your locker at attention in your drawers and teeshirt and he comes around and yells at everyone and he'll punch a few people. And he always pickes somebody and he'll take their wallets and look at their pictures. I had some pictures of these Asian girls I went to high school with. He made comments like, 'This looks like this whore I knew back over there (Japan).' Then he took three or four pictures out of my wallet and kept them. I couldn't do anything about it. I didn't see them after that. That's when he saw the picture of my sister.

"After lights were out and everyone was supposed to be sleeping, he would bring a chair next to my bunk and act like he was my friend. After harrassing me all day, suddenly he's my friend. Then he started rapping about when he was in Japan and how he had this prostitute for awhile. He said her last name was the same as mine. Then he said 'What's your sister's name?' He knew I had an older sister and I guess he flashed back on his experience. Then he started harrassing me by saying my sister looked like his prostitute. He'd say, 'Yeah, that's her. That's the prosititue I had.'"

We must fight the mentality that keeps Suzy Wong, Madame Butterfly and gookism alive. The mentality that turns human beings into racist murdering soldiers also keeps Asian Americans from being able to live and feel like human beings in the U.S.

4.

Chinese Youth

For Chinese youth the problems of growing up in America are great. Those coming from overseas face language, cultural, and racial barriers. Though American born youth do not have a language problem and are more accustomed to American culture, racism still limits their possibilities for friendship, higher education, and better paying jobs.

Chinese young people must attend the public schools, where the educational system is very often inconsiderate of their cultural backgrounds, learning problems and interests. In these schools, they are usually "tracked" or trained for low-level clerical, service, or semi-skilled jobs in large American institutions and industries. In addition, many young Chinese begin to work part-time while they are still going to school, usually in small family businesses, or in restaurants or garment factories. For young men, the only alternative to this pre-determined future is to be drafted or to enlist in the U.S. Armed Services.

The following articles expose some of the varied problems facing young Chinese people in the years before they fully join the American work force and how these problems are deeply rooted in the American capitalist society. Although Chinese youths come from varied backgrounds, a common understanding of the problems of Chinese people in America and a willingness to work for change is slowly developing.

New York Police Harass Youth

Q: How were you arrested?

A: I was sitting on a bike and the cop stopped me for a spotcheck. My friend who owns the bike went upstairs for something. The cop took me to look for my friend. After my friend showed him the registration that should have been the end of that. But he also forced me to open my apartment door, which is illegal.

Q: How did he force you to open the door?

A: He twisted my arm behind my back.

Q: What happened in the apartment?

A: He saw a picture of Mao Tse-tung and arrested us for "interrogation" which is illegal. He didn't give us a reason why. Downstairs he threw me against the wall because he said he didn't like Communists. He brought me to the station. On the way he threatened to bring us to South St. for a beating. He also called us "Chinks." I almost blew my top when he said that.

Q: What happened at the station?

A: At the station, when I tried to talk to him reasonably, he threatened to close the door and give us a beating. He forced my friend to take off his glasses so it would be easier to give him a beating.

Q: What were you trying to talk to him about?

A: I was trying to find out what the charges were.

Q: Then what happened?

A: After signing a lot of papers, the cop let my friend go.

Q: Why did they make you stay?

A: The detective came down and told me to stay. He didn't tell me why. He isolated me for a whole hour and then put me in a lineup. The lineup had only two people which was very unfair. It's either him or me that's guilty. The guy identified me through a real small peephole which you can't hardly see. After that, they took my fingerprints without giving a reason. Before they sent me to night court for arraignment, they told me I was involved in an armed robbery.

Q: What happened in court?

A: I waited in a small room with about fifteen people. There was no room to sit. I leaned against the wall sleeping. Legal Aid came and told me about what store I robbed and what things I took which I never heard of. After court, I was sent to Rikers Island and stayed there for four hours and I wasn't fed for twelve hours. Since from when I was arrested to when I was released on bail, I wasn't fed. They also didn't let me make a phone call.

Q: Why? Didn't you know your rights?

A: I knew my rights. I asked them for it but they kept telling me to wait and never gave it to me. That's a violation of my rights.

Q: What happened to the charges?

A: The store owner who told the cop at the lineup that he was definitely sure I was the guy said that he was definitely sure I wasn't the guy in court.

These days, more and more brothers are getting busted on all sorts of trumped up charges. As the crimes rate rises, the police are getting more uptight. Nowadays, everyone from Nixon to the cop on the beat is shouting the slogan "law and order." In Chinatown, the newspapers, CCBA (Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association), and the Fifth Precinct talk about solving the "youth problem." Before, the police didn't care when Chinese people died on the streets, but now whenever

they see a Chinese they get uptight. They stop and pick up Chinese youth on the street for no reason. The police want to show how quickly they can solve the "youth problem" by locking up more of us.

We recognize incidents like what happened to the brothers in this interview happen because the police aren't interested in protecting the people and really carrying out justice. Instead, they serve the interests of the Nixons, the Rockefellers, and the CCBA's.

Los Angeles Police Harass Chinese Community

LOS ANGELES – Close to 100 residents, primarily youth, of the Los Angeles Chinese community held an emergency meeting on August 5 to discuss ways to handle a new wave of recent police harassment of that community. Since a shooting several weeks ago, over 15 additional policemen have been assigned to the L.A. Chinatown area and have carried out a series of racist and arbitrary actions against many in the community.

The following are from a statement from the L.A. Chinatown Youth Council and Teen Post describing several of these harassment incidents.

INCIDENTS

One incident was reported as follows:

This 18-year-old youth had been stopped about four times before this reported incident. Four policemen stopped the youth on Broadway and Alpine at 6:00 p.m. on August 1, and these statements were reported to have been said:

Officer: "Hey, chink, I told you to get out of Chinatown.

Youth: "I'm just going home."

The officer took the youth's wallet and found a legal rights leaflet telling the youth to take down the policeman's badge number if stopped on the street.

Officer: "If you want my badge number, I'll give it to you right in the mouth."

The officer wrote with his pen on the youth's chest.

Officer: "I don't want to see your fucking face in front of me again."

Another officer comes to the scene.

Other officer: "I don't want you to work at the Teen Post. I don't want to see you in Chinatown anymore, Chinaman!"

Another incident involved a teen post staff worker on August 1 at 8:30 p.m. This was the fifth time this 20-year-old youth was stopped.

Officer: "If I ever see you in Teen Post I'll get rid of you. And don't let me bump into you in Chinatown!"

Youth: "I work in Teen Post."

Officer: "I don't care. You better shut your mouth!"

The officer took the youth's picture and began searching the youth's coat.

Youth: "Show me a warrant. Do you have one?"

Officer: "Yes."

Youth: "May I see it?"

Officer: "Shut up. You better watch out!"

On August 2nd at 6:15 p.m., two 15-year-old NYC (Neighborhood Youth Corps) workers were approached by policemen near the Teen Post.

Officer: "You're the guys we're looking for."

Youth: "What guys?"

Officer: "Come here, boy! We saw you steal something!"

Youth: "What do you mean, I didn't steal anything."

Officer: "Let me see what you stole."

Policeman starts to search through the youth's pockets.

Youth: "Am I under arrest?"

Officer: "No."

Youth: "THEN WHY ARE YOU GOING INTO MY POCKETS?"

Officer: "You're under arrest!"

The youth was hand-cuffed and taken to the squad car where he was told to put his face on the car's hood. Then the officer yanked him up by his hair and put him into the patrol car. On the way down to the police station, the policemen made many racist remarks about the Chinese, and certain Chinese individuals who work at the Teen Post. Midway to the Police Station, the police officers decided to let the youth go since the police had no evidence that the youth had done anything wrong.

The Youth Council has sent an open letter to Edward Davis, Chief of Police of Los Angeles demanding an investigation of the police activities and that he attended an open community meeting to discuss this problem.

NATIONAL TREND

The recent events in L.A. are not unique. Throughout the country during the past year, there have been numerous newspaper articles on the question of youth gangs and crime in Chinese communities. The *New York Daily News* revived images of "tong wars in Chinatown's back alleyways." The *San Francisco Chronicle* described the growing Chinese "mafia" in the western U.S.

These articles have been used by Chinese reactionaries and U.S. government officials to increase their surveillance and control over the working masses of Chinese people. FBI, immigration, and other Federal agents have joined with local law agencies to swarm down on the Chinese communities, but they are doing nothing to solve the real problems. All this has been to the advantage of the local Chinese reactionaries who fear the loss of their power. It is a reflection, however, of the weakness of reactionaries when they must resort to such open means of intimidation.

Charles Evans Hughes High School

I am a student at Charles Evan Hughes which is a public high school in Manhattan. You probably never heard of it, but that doesn't matter because all public high schools are alike. They function in the fucked up way they do, they all look alike, all have the racist teachers who are apathetic to their students, and still have the same bullshit courses.

To begin with, I'm going to state the list of things I see wrong or which I certainly dislike in my particular school. Again while reading along, you may say to yourself: Right on! That's because the same crap is going on in your very own school. As said before, everything is alike, we're all in the same trap, i.e., the system.

I first would like to say something about the so-called guidance counselors. These people are supposed to have the judgment, knowledge and experience to guide us to our academic future. My experience or first encounter with them was really something. Out of nowhere I was called down to see the guidance counselor. (I think it is because of some bureaucratic rule that almost every student is called down at least once.) I must admit that she (my guidance counselor) was very polite and that our talk was very cordial, something like an afternoon tea chat. She introduced herself and asked me if I had any problems she'd always be ready to help. She also asked me about my family, how many brothers and sisters, etc. Boy, it was really boring and a waste of time.

These people and other people of "The Board" feed practically each and every student in high school useless and impractical subjects such as music, art appreciation, gym.

In gym, which is required every term, we (the students) must come prepared (shorts and sneakers) to have free play in most classes, or in other words, do anything we like. Half of the class just sits on the bleachers all period long. I am one of them.

Music, another forty-minute waste, is one more of those trifling subjects which is required once throughout your years of Jr. High School and High School. In music, the students are taught such antiquated sounds of times way behind from the present.

"WONDERFUL" TEACHERS

Last but certainly not least, I'd like to say something about our wonderful teachers. Some of these wonderful and knowledgeable teachers teach so damn fast it is sometimes hard for the students to keep up. I think the reason for this is that they couldn't give a damn for their student whatsoever. All they seem to worry about is that the student knows such and such formulas or who did this and who did that and they wouldn't care less if he or she dropped dead one foot outside the classroom. Such a statement has been said by one of my teachers. However, I think this holds true with all teachers in this school and many other schools. Another reason which might sustain this reasoning which I just stated in Hughes in particular is the bare fact that the majority of the school is black and the majority of the teachers are white. Also I know of such cases where the teacher favors one group of a nationality more than another. This pits racism and anger between the students.

All in all, all of these things come down to one monolithic structure of the schooling system. It is a system where student upon student vies for that home-grown pride of having their name on the honor roll or to come home with that piece of paper or card with all those phony 90s and what not. It is a system where the student loses his touch with reality the moment he steps inside the building. This is because the system does not help him (her) to cope with his (her) realities they know or to put it generally, life in the ghettos or elsewhere. Such is the reason for the large number of drop-outs and apathy of the student. Also, because of this, a number of students turn to drugs to fly away from their realities instead of facing them, resulting in a large number of deaths among teens due to O.D.'s. This is all because the system is too busy creating its unreal world of milk and honey around us. It wants to incorporate us into the capitalistic and imperialistic ways of the power structure. This has got to be stopped. However, since this schooling machine

has tried to be repaired over and over the only solution left it the overthrow of the system. Then can a new applicable school system be resolved of the people, by the people, for the people.



High School Students Unite!

Most of us go to high school because we are told that in order to get anywhere in this society you must have at least a high school diploma. We attend the same boring classes everyday because we hope to go to a good college and eventually get a decent job. We study and do homework so that we can have a better life than the ones our parents have. And for many of us, high school is an "opportunity" that exists here in the United States.

But school is not the golden key to success that we thought it was. The fact is that the great majority of Chinese will end up either in a lousy job or get drafted into the army or work in a laundry, restaurant, or sweatshop.

Chinese do not do well in school mainly because of poor English. Each year over 40% of the Chinese who take the English Regents in Seward Park flunk it. But what can you expect out of our brothers and sisters who have been here only a few short years and speak little if any English at all. How can someone get good grades when you must work after school to support your family? Furthermore, when there are teachers that really don't care about teaching the students, when there are policemen patrolling the halls, when the courses taught do not relate to our lives no wonder many students lose interest, cut classes and drop out of school.

For example, the history books do not tell us about the true history of Chinese people in this country. They do not mention that Chinese built the railroads and worked the mines—nor do they include the lynchings and brutal racist treatment our people have faced. The reason why most Chinese work in restaurants and laundries today is because we could get no jobs other than cooking other people's food and washing their clothes.

Tracking is another example of this. In school, students are divided into different "tracks," an academic track for college bound students and a "general" track with a poorer curriculum for others. Once you are placed in a lower track your future is decided for you. The chances are that you will be stuck in a dull shitwork job where you will be forced to accept low wages because there are many other unemployed people waiting to grab your place. Thus the tracking system in school cooperates with the owners of these establishments by providing a pool of willing labor for these employers.

Letter from a Hong Kong High School Student

Written by a working brother from the NY Chinatown community who recently arrived from Hong Kong.

After Chairman Mao made the statement, students in our patriotic school

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

followed the call, to express our resolute support to the anti-fascist struggle of the U.S. revolutionary workers, students, blacks and oppose actions like peaceful demonstrations of those who are for non-violence.

In order to further grasp Chairman Mao's statements, students from my class felt that we should publicize it to the countrymen in Hong Kong, so that they could understand why Chairman Mao made such a statement. We decided to publicize it through performing arts.

In the program of the performance, the organization assigned me to play the role of a reactionary. I was willing to play for the people, except I didn't like the role. On the one hand it is nothing good to hear about, on the other hand it is a must for that role in the play to oppress people. So although I agreed, I felt bad about it. Isn't it ridiculous, why couldn't I play another role? Why should it be me to play this evil role of reactionary!

Because of this kind of conflict I had, during the rehearsal period, I never felt I was enthusiastic at all. As the date of the performance drew near, the organization said that we didn't understand the roles of black people and reactionaries, and came to the conclusion that this was the reflection of the problem of whether politics or techniques are in command. We then studied Chairman Mao's work, and stepped up the thorough discussion on the content of the performance.

In one of the singing sections of the program, when black people were sold as slaves and suffered under the colonialists, the words in the song were so sad. It went like "carrying the coffin, singing the requiem, we'll walk over the U.S. with our fists holding tight, holding back our tears, and with fire of anger burning in our hearts, we resist, we struggle, we question, how many blacks were slaughtered!" After singing this, I began to understand a little bit of how U.S. imperialists invaded other nations, resorted to violence to annex territories from other nations to become her colonies, massively shipping black people to the U.S. in ships like jails.

Blacks came to the U.S. not for happiness, but to become slaves who will forever lose their freedom. They lived in dark days, no better than cattle or horses. They didn't have any rights. All they had was to be exploited and oppressed. This is how the black people lived in the U.S. Are they going to live like this all their lives for generations? No! We must tell the people about the slavery, inequality of blacks in the U.S. When I play the imperialist, I must expose his ugly face. The organization assigning me to play this role was giving me a great trust, and I must play it very well, and I must work hard on it.

CRITICISM, SELF-CRITICISM

Before the performance, we had a criticism self-criticism meeting. Everyone talked about how the imperialists extorted and oppressed the black people. When we talked about how these reactionaries completely lose their human instincts to ship blacks to the U.S. from Africa, some of my classmates started to sing:

I'm a black person, my motherland is Africa, Africa!
Africa! When is it going to be liberated. Africa! When is
it going to be liberated! . . .

With tears coming out of our eyes, we started to shout "Down with U.S. imperialism! Down with colonialism!" I bit my teeth lightly so that I could control my tears. Tears are but a tool to let out feelings. This is not what is needed. Action, that is the powerful counter-attack. My hatred all in my heart. U.S. imperialism, see how long you are going to make trouble.

I determined to play well for propaganda, make it a bullet to pierce through the heart of the U.S. imperialist; pierce through its chest. I must make a battle out of the performance, so it could forcefully support the revolutionary worker's, student's, and black's just struggle in the U.S. and for the liberation of the suffering of two-thirds of the world's people.

The battle started. We felt excited and classmates encouraged each other. They held my hands tight, and said, "Be resolute, fear no sacrifice, overcome every difficulty to win victory. Play well in this role for world revolution." Yes, I must expose, for the suffering people, the cruel face of colonialism and imperialism. I must win this battle.

Fighting began. With whip in hand, I slashed it harshly into my classmate who played the role of a black slave. I wanted to completely unmask the imperialists, show the true face of the dirty cunning beast. I hit, kicked, pushed, bumped, yelled at them to carry the heavy boxes of goods. The audience down the stage shouted: "Down with running dogs! Down with imperialism!" To shout was nothing, but it scared me. I almost lost my pace, because that was my first time on stage, and I lacked experience. On the other hand, when they called me "running dog," I felt unhappy. Basically, I'm not a running dog.

HEART IN CONFLICT

So, in the battle of act two, my heart was in conflict again. I didn't play this running dog with my heart in it. The audience was quiet and I felt good. But, when I went backstage after it was over, a student who played a black expressed bad feelings toward me, said I kicked his stomach, and wanted to get even with me after dismissal and before I went home. In a word, this brought back again the dark shadow of the idea that from the very beginning that I didn't want to play the role of the "running dogs." I tried to explain to him, but I could not utter a word. So I began to blame myself for playing the role. The student organizer understood the matter. He immediately called a discussion meeting, to talk about the problem of kicking people and being kicked. He said: "The performers here, we are classmates. Are there true reactionaries here? When they play that role who understands their pain? Who wants to whip his own class brother? Who wants to kick the body of his class brother? They have difficulties inside, and who is there to console them? On the other hand, those who get kicked don't look at the matter as being kicked by the imperialists. That is the work of colonial oppression, and exploitation, and it is not that of our class brother performing. Could we say that this is right?"

What he said expressed all that I wanted to say in my heart. Why should I hit, kick, this classmate? Could they understand me? I could not help but cry. And this classmate came over and shook my hands, saying, "I was wrong, please forgive me." And I cried even more. After summing up, I felt that I didn't live up to the requirements in the second act. My classmates actively gave me guidance. The audience called me "running dog" because I played well. They hoped that I gained the experience, substituting fear with daring, resolutely fighting the last battle.

The showing soon began. We shook hands, declared to fight the battle well, insisted to win victory, threw away selfishness, put all our hearts in performing. The encouragement made me really play it without being selfish. I walked out on the stage like I had everything. Right away, I was called "running dog." Some people in the audience even wanted to come up to the stage to teach this running dog a good lesson. We successfully, finished the last performance, won a good battle. Some classmates asked me: "If they really came up to teach you a lesson, what are you going to do?" I said: "This shows how excited and how angry the audience is. This is the best way to encourage me." And we all laughed.

Coming to the U.S. I understood how "beautiful" this country is. It is not real beauty, but the beauty of the evil. Stealing, robbing, mugging, murdering. This happens everyday, especially crime committed by the officials. It is just too common.

The U.S. revolutionary movement, just as Chairman Mao pointed out in the statement to support black people's movement in the U.S., must unite workers and students. Through struggle, the movement transformed from peaceful action to revolutionary action. This is a matter of course. This is an historical process.

Chairman Mao said: "Revolution is not inviting guests for dinner, not writing articles. . . . Revolution is a violent act, it is the violent action of one class overthrowing another class. The trend of the world today is towards revolution."

I must follow the teaching of Chairman Mao, stand on the side of the revolutionary people forever, integrate with the workers, resolutely support the revolutionary movement of workers, students, and the black people in the U.S.

Interview with a Brother from Hong Kong Kong

Q: How long have you been in the U.S.?

A: More than a year now.

Q: How old are you?

A: Twenty-two.

Q: Why did you come to the U.S.?

A: I thought I'd come here to make it rich.

Q: Couldn't you do that in Hong Kong?

A: I wouldn't be here if I could.

Q: What did you do in Hong Kong?

A: I worked in gambling joints.

Q: Did you make a lot of money there?

A: Quite a bit. But I used it all up by the end of the day. That kind of money is easy come, easy go. I worked there for three or four years, off and on.

Q: How did you start working there?

A: At first some important members in my village ran them.

Q: Originally, what kind of work were you doing? And why did you quit?

A: I had a job spray painting dolls. The place closed down. What can you do? They rented this place and couldn't keep it up. They were in the exporting business, and too many people are in that line of business. Regulations are very harsh and require a lot of detailed work, so a lot of times their productions were rejected. They couldn't compete with other small companies of the same type. And the small companies were gradually eaten up by the big plants. That's how big fish eat up small fish.

Q: Are there other regular jobs in Hong Kong available?

A: Yeah, things like odd jobs in textile factories. You work ten hours and the pay

CHINESE YOUTH

is not even enough to support your family. The price of goods and rent is so high in Hong Kong that even if you are single you might not be able to make ends meet. Those jobs even are not easy to find. In fact, too many people are out of work in Hong Kong. For example, if there's a job paying \$300 [H.K.] a month and you think the pay is too low, the minute you turn around and walk out, someone else will grab it.

Q: How long did you go to school?

A: Five years.

Q: Why did you drop out?

A: Because I played hooky too much. There are good courses in school and also completely useless ones. My classmates and I weren't interested. At first we just stayed home and slept. Later on, more and more kids quit. So we went to the pool halls, movies and tea houses. More and more quit – we were getting out of hand.

Q: Where did you get spending money?

A: Mom gave me \$1 to go to school every day. After I quit, I stole money from my grandmother. Later on, two of my friends went to Kowloon and took me with them from the New Territories where I lived. They had a group of friends and since then, we stayed together constantly, whatever they did, I did it too. For example, when they went to mug people for money, it wouldn't be right for me to let them go and bring back money for me. Everyone understood that.

Q: They belonged to Triad Societies?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they ever fight?

A: Of course. For everything. For territories, girls, even if we just didn't like someone's looks. There was no heaven or law to rule us.

Q: Were you ever injured?

A: Yes. In fights. Every minute I had to fight someone and had people jumping me. That's how we lived. Once I was wounded. A knife wound. That time, we understood it'd be a ten against ten fight. But our opponents had more than ten others hidden around the stadium where the fight was supposed to take place. It was dark, around midnight, and we couldn't see too well. First we tried to talk it over, but it broke into a fight. A fiasco. People had knives, files, crowbars, and bike chains. I got stabbed in the tangle.

Q: Did the police ever bother you for your fights?

A: Yeah, I was arrested four or five times. That time I was only seventeen or eighteen. Each time either my parents bailed me out or the big shots from my village pulled strings to get me out.

Q: So you were never in prison?

A: I was in reform school at eighteen. My family didn't get me out this time because I got in trouble so many times already. It was horrible in reform school. You either have your fists or a lot of friends to back you up – then you have power. If you belong to a Triad Society you are better off. So even some who weren't involved before became members by the time they got out. I had a brother who was there more than a month. He fought so much there that both his hands smelled of blood. Also, you have to call the guards "Sir." And they can beat you up anytime and in any way they want – till you pass out.

Q: What did you think of the U.S. when you were in Hong Kong?

A: I thought that the U.S. must be ten times better than Hong Kong. I saw movies and heard what people said. They all said it was a free, democratic, prosperous country. So everyone in Hong Kong dreamed of coming to the U.S. to make a living.

Q: What did you see here in the U.S.?

A: In the U.S. I saw fights in Chinatown. Everyone here is insecure and living under tension. People flock around Chinatown, and compared with Hong Kong, the

only difference here is they use guns.

Q: You said you wanted to get rich here. Did you?

A: Fuck no. I worked in restaurants and garment factories. My English is not good at all.

Q: Why do you think there's so much fighting in Chinatown?

A: I feel that people who came from Hong Kong can't make out here. So it comes to the same thing. They gather in groups and there are big shots directing things. Sometimes they give them a little money to attract them to do anything that's bad. And the things they do are countless.

Q: According to you, the U.S. is about the same as Hong Kong. Did you ever think of China.

A: Yes. I am Chinese. Ever since I was a kid, I liked China. But there are so many newspapers in Hong Kong that said China was like a black curtain, and that America and Europe were so good – they confused a lot of people.

“The Military is Really Falling Apart”

This is an interview with an Asian brother from Queens, New York, who served in the U.S. Navy and was stationed in Vietnam from late 1970 to early 1971.

Q: Why is the U.S. military there, how do the Vietnamese people feel about your presence in their country, and what do you think when you first learned you were being sent overseas?

A: First, the United States is there to protect United States interests and that's about it. As far as what the Vietnamese people think, that isn't a concern of the United States. We were told that we were there for the interests of the Vietnamese people, but after being there, we realized that we weren't there for their interests. *

Q: How do the Vietnamese people feel about your presence?

A: I don't know. I never came into contact with the Vietnamese people.

Q: What did you think when you were sent overseas?

A: As I slowly came to the realization that I was being sent over, I was totally confused and I didn't know which way to turn; it was just total confusion. The only thing I figured was that I might as well just go over and find out what's happening, you know. I just couldn't say no because once you do that, you get into a lot of trouble. One time I broke down and cried about it because I was trying to grab at something that wasn't there. I just didn't know what to do with myself and so I ended up going.

Q: Do you feel that the U.S. should be in Vietnam?

A: Definitely not. The United States does not belong there. Their reason is based on greed; they are killing the Vietnamese people and destroying their land so that they can take whatever they can from it. I'm not for that, I'm not that type of person. I just don't go into somebody's house to steal and kill for greed and say that I'm doing it for freedom or something.

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Q: The bombing in Laos started during the period you were over in Vietnam. Do you have any comments about that?

A: I found that we were bombing in Laos through the grapevine, so to speak. We were never officially told but the information just filtered through from the guys working in the control room. It just seemed very strange to me, because at that time, through the newspapers and official statements that I read, we weren't supposed to be bombing in Laos. The people back in the United States didn't even know until about a year later, I think.

Q: Were you usually told where the bombing was concentrated?

A: After our operation they would show us on closed circuit TV where the bombings took place. Usually the target would be a road and the aerial shot would show pot marks on the road. But on the other hand, once again through the grapevine, you would hear stories of guys just dropping bombs on villages. The excuse of the bombers would be like "I was dropping bombs on the road nearby the villages but somehow something went wrong with my release mechanism and the bombs didn't fall off till I was over the village" or they would say outright that it wasn't a village but that it looked like an ammunition dump. It's natural that these men aren't going to admit that they are doing it but when you are over there you know that they are doing it. There's no doubt about it.

Q: Did you ever hear the pilots talking or bragging about their missions?

A: I never heard the pilots talking about it personally. The reason is because the structure on the ship is like a class system and you just never get an opportunity to get close to the pilots. The pilots think that because they are officers and we are enlisted men, they are high up and we are inferior. They don't care whether we know anything or not because they think our function is to do the heavy work. These pilots, they won't talk about it, except through the grapevine, but you know that it's going on.

Q: Would you say there was much dissension between the officers and the enlisted men?

A: It's not organized dissension. What I mean by that is that although everybody hates the shit that's going on, the enlisted men are just not politically aware enough to know why the war is taking place. They just continue bitching and continue to accept it as the way it is. Everybody suffers in the army, but in Vietnam the suffering is worse because the class, or rank distinctions, are especially sharp. If a guy has just one more stripe over you, he acts like god. To give an example, there was a friend of mine who told us that once he said, "Fuck you!" to a guy who had only one stripe more than him and he ended up in the joint for seven days for "disrespect." The men are not happy. But you never hear people talking about organized opposition. If there were any politically conscious organizers, they'll probably be removed immediately.

It's really pathetic, for when I was over there, I knew that there was something that was definitely wrong, but I just didn't know how to put it all together. My mind was almost like a puzzle with pieces scattered all over. Being Asian I was probably more aware than the other men though. The men knew that something was wrong, but most of them were really ignorant. For instance, many didn't even know the difference between a North Vietnamese and a Vietcong. As far as the men on the ship were concerned, their presence in Vietnam was a job and they had to do it. The result of their work was death and destruction to the Vietnamese, but the guys could not figure out why all this was happening.

Q: Have your views on the war changed since you were discharged? If so, why and how?

A: Yes they have. They changed mainly due to my own efforts to find out what

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was going on. It was just like adding two and two. Take the situation of being there on a ship, bombing and meeting with no opposition. That in itself is enough to tell you obviously there isn't a strong enough military force to fight back. Then you start asking yourself, what do the Vietnamese have to sustain themselves? You began wondering just how such a small country has been able to survive the attack of America, the super-power. After that it was just a matter of sitting down to think. I don't think one needs so much concrete evidence, such as statistics, etc., to know what's going on. You need only have a very basic understanding of the war. For instance, the whole issue of atrocities. A lot of people refuse to believe that Americans can commit atrocities, but when you really think about all the things that Americans are doing to each other at home, it's not hard to imagine what they can do to the "enemy." Also, this war has been going on for nearly ten years and it certainly hasn't made America a safer place to live in. Looking at all this myself, I figured that the war was definitely wrong and that America has no right being in Vietnam.

Also, the fact that I am Asian helped me understand things faster. That is, having seen how white people react to Asians in America, it wasn't hard to realize that racism plays a large part in the war. My transformation took about a year and a half altogether.

Q: Do you have an analysis of the "New American Army"; the relaxation of codes and the concept of an all-volunteer army?

A: This "New American Army" thing came up because unlike before, men are leaving the military at a rapid rate. This is because the military does not offer anything spiritual. What they're doing to compensate for this is to create something that's more mentally satisfying.

For instance, when I was in Jacksonville, the guys lived in dormitory-like barracks. Three or four guys would share one room which had a lock on the door, a rug, and nice furniture. They got to the point where they rebuilt the chow hall, put in new paneling, piped in music, and put in a beer machine. They fixed up the enlisted men's hall and started to offer new kinds of entertainment. Before I left, I heard from an official source that they were even thinking of getting go-go girls to perform in the mess halls during lunch. They were obviously trying to make things more pleasing in a purely materialistic or physical sense. This is happening because the brass thinks that by offering sheer physical satisfaction, they can buy off the enlisted men. I'm sure it will work with some men, but I know this kind of tactic won't work with the overwhelming majority. It didn't work with me when I was down there, and most of the guys that I talked to said that it didn't do anything for them.

Just looking at the barracks you realize that the men still continue to vandalize the building - broken windows, etc. It was clear to me that by vandalizing, the men were venting their frustration and despair at the army.

The unrest and discontent existing in the military is also reflected in the use of drugs. The use of drugs was so rampant that it was ridiculous. I had men knocking at my door at 7:00 a.m. asking me if I wanted to buy any drugs.

The military is really falling apart. The few guys that I talked to said that things were getting worse. It's amazing how things even operate, because people were just outright negligent. The attempt to make the military service more tolerable has been futile. As for a volunteer army I'm sure they can do it. They have a volunteer navy now. But what will it be, it'll be just like how it is in the navy now. Things will be falling apart just the same.

Q: What about the relaxation of certain codes?

A: It's the same thing. By relaxing certain grooming codes, etc., they hope to

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make the military more tolerable. The problem about that is that men will soon start bitching about even the new codes. In other words, neither increasing material comfort or the relaxation of codes can satisfy the basic need that men need, which is a mental need. A need of real belonging.

In China, during the War of Resistance and the War of Liberation, there was real unity in the Red Army. Everyone suffered together and were united around a cause that they believed in fervently. In the U.S. military there is no feeling of unity. Everyone is out for himself. The appearance of orderliness is mainly for fear cause no one wants to get into trouble. It's not something that they want to do; it's not because they feel that what they're doing will benefit their country. They'll try to get away with as much as they can. When the brass finds out that these attempts at buying off the men are ineffective, they will resort to some very drastic measure. But the deterioration of the military is imminent. As long as the American government remains unchanged, there will never be real unity in the ranks of the military.

Sam Choy

The events detailed in this interview took place from June 1967 when Sam Choy first enlisted to May 1969 when Sam was released.

Q: How old are you, Sam?

A: Twenty.

Q: How old were you when you enlisted in the army?

A: About seventeen, I was a junior in high school.

Q: How come you enlisted?

A: Well, y'know, I didn't like school and they said the army would make a man out of you and give you a skill.

Q: How long was it before you were sent to Vietnam?

A. I didn't even know I was going to fight, I just wanted to leave and learn to be a man. They said they would teach me a skill.

Q: What happened?

A: First I went to "bootcamp" for six months. I was the only Asian in bootcamp. It wasn't too bad though. When we got the call to Vietnam one half the company didn't show up.

Q: A half? Whatever happened to them?

A: I don't know, I never found out.

Q: What happened when you first got to Vietnam?

A: We went over by plane. They took us to Orientation Camp to teach us about booby traps and weapons.

Q: Where were you stationed?

A: Duk Foi, that's a small supply post. I don't even know where that was, they never told us.

Q: What was your job?

A: I was with a combat unit, up next to the front lines. I was heavy equipment operator. They didn't want me to be on the front lines; they didn't trust me.

Q: Were you the only Asian in the unit?

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A: Yes.

Q: What kind of treatment did you receive?

A: Well, a couple of days after, the Viet Cong started shelling us. Then the other G.I.'s started making comments about me looking like the Viet Cong.

Q: How did you react?

A: I didn't do nothing. I was just doing a job.

Q: Did this treatment go on?

A: It went on and got worse. They asked me what I was doing on their side. I told them I was just doing a job. I didn't have any political awareness.

Q: When was this harassment the worst?

A: Right after the G.I.'s got back from patrol. They really gave it to me. They started asking me where I was born, where my parents were born, if I was a Communist. They even asked me what I thought about China. They thought I could turn traitor anytime.

Q: What kind of job did you have at the base?

A: They made me the cook. The mess sergeant was mean. He made me do all these things and kept bossing me around all the time. I couldn't take it anymore. One day I got so mad I threw a knife on the floor after he called me a chink. He ordered me to pick it up. I refused. He started yelling at me. I still refused. He kept yelling all kinds of remarks like slant-eyed chinaman, gook, chink, and he went on and on. I just got madder. So he went to get the staff sergeant. I went to get my rifle. I waited for them to come back and when they did they started to sweet talk me to give my rifle up. I said if you come closer, I'll shoot. I fired a warning shot and they froze. Then I left the tent and the corporal came after me. He tried to grab my rifle. I fired once and he froze, he was scared as hell. Then the M.P.'s came and I shot at them too. I had bad eyes, so I missed. By this time I was near the perimeter of the base and was thinking of joining the Viet Cong; at least they would trust me. But the M.P.'s sent for tanks and armored carriers to come after me, so I got caught.

Q: What happened then?

A: They beat me up and sent to the hospital for observation. They knew they were wrong but they put me up for court martial.

Q: Did you have any friends to help you out?

A: No, the only friends I had were the blacks. They couldn't do anything though. They were just regular G.I.'s and even if they did, they'd get in trouble. They used to protect me from the white G.I.'s when they picked on me, like I took showers only with the blacks for protection and because they were my friends.

Q: How long was it before the court martial?

A: They sent me to Long Binh stockade first, that's where all the G.I. dissenters were.

Q: How was it?

A: The place was bad. The conditions were unfit for animals. Everybody was in a cage. Most of the dissenters were black; they were there because they refused to fight anymore. The place was so bad they had a riot. It lasted all night and into the morning. The black G.I.'s were beating up the guards and smashing everything. They were getting back for all the treatment they had been given. The army had to surround the camp before it stopped.

Q: How long were you in Long Binh?

A: Four months. They were preparing my case.

Q: Where did your court martial take place?

A: Pleiku, Vietnam.

Q: Who were the judges?

A: They had a board of majors and colonels.

Q: How long was the court martial case?

A: Three hours.

Q: What did they charge you with?

A: Aggravated assault and culpable negligence.

Q: Did anybody know what was happening to you?

A: No, they censored all my mail. I couldn't even tell my parents.

Q: What happened next?

A: The army sentenced me to eighteen months of hard labor at Fort Leavenworth. There was a maximum sentence of seven years but they made a deal with me, if I pleaded guilty then I would only get eighteen months.

Q: What happened at Fort Leavenworth?

A: Fort Leavenworth is the worst place in the world. They beat me up every day, like a time clock. It makes me mad and sick to think about it. Right now, I don't want to think about it anymore.

Q: When did you get out?

A: I only served nine months. I kept quiet, so they discharged me.

Q: Is there anything else?

A: One thing, I want you to tell all the Chinese kids in Chinatown that the army made me sick, they made me so sick that I can't stand it.

Asian Brother Splits from Army

Ouyang Yot Sai was born in 1943 in Shanghai, and moved to Taiwan at an early age. In 1955, his family moved to the U.S. He was drafted in 1965 and sent to Vietnam. In May 1968 he fled the U.S. Army in Tokyo. He describes what led him to the present situation in Sweden in the following article. He is a brother who, knowing all the risks involved, could no longer participate in the U.S. destruction of Vietnam. Like Sam Choy (see GETTING TOGETHER, Vol. 1, No. 2), he recognized the injustice of the U.S. government and military in this war and set an example for all of us to follow, especially Asian brothers in the U.S. armed forces. This article was translated and summarized from THE SEVENTIES (April, 1971), a monthly magazine from Hong Kong.

Now over 200 U.S. ex-G.I.'s live in Sweden, though our ranks throughout the rest of the world are many times more. More are joining the ranks of "deserters" as the war continues. Before, they said that the U.S. was a new world, bringing hope to a lot of people who came here to build a new life. Their sons and grandsons now have no choice but to leave the U.S. because of the role they are forced to play in the U.S. army. I am one of those who left.

I arrived in Stockholm a half a year ago and am living in a new reporter's home. I want to start my story back in 1955, the year my family moved from Taiwan to the U.S. hoping to start a new life. Even now, my mind flashed to the packing — clothes, boxes all over my room. I was still very young, but I helped to pack things. I remember my two sisters put their dolls in the box and it took over a week to pack and say good-byes to everyone.

It was my first plane ride, and I was pretty excited. In two or three hours we were

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in Japan. We stayed over for four days waiting for the ship to go to the U.S. I was amazed by the size of the ship. But when the ship was on the vast ocean where water meets the sky, the big ship was very small, especially at the mercy of the waves. I still have some morose memories of this voyage.

We arrived in Seattle, Washington, on a snowy day – the first time I ever saw snow in winter. Everything looked different. We didn't know a word of English, and all the faces were new.

My father sent me to school. I was the only "alien." My younger brothers and sisters were in a different class. I felt very uncomfortable. After half a year, we moved to New York City, where my father had found a job. This time we took a train when we moved. I remember looking eagerly out the window at the changing scenery of America.

After I graduated high school, I was tired of metropolitan life, and went to Kentucky State University hoping that the change in the countryside would increase my learning while in school. But I was there only two years when I was drafted and sent to Fort Dix, in the fall of 1965.

Life in Berlin seemed o.k. But in the Fall of 1967, I was ordered to the battlefield of South Vietnam. Before I left for Vietnam, my commanders gave me one month leave to see my relatives in the U.S. I went home for the reunion, but the month flew by quickly. I left my family again on New Years Eve, 1967. Everyone else on the plane had military orders to go to Vietnam, even though this was not a military plane, but a chartered commercial plane. So though we were all leaving our homes, we could console each other with our common destinies.

As our destination grew near, the stewardess said, "You are now in Vietnam. We hope you will return to the U.S. next year. Good luck."

Once I was in South Vietnam, I was sent to the Mekong Delta area. Our tasks were called Flying Rat Patrols because we cruised around the Delta area searching out any kind of suspected "enemy." Ever since the first day of fighting in Vietnam, I witnessed a lot of inhumane crimes of this cruel war. Every day we killed South Vietnamese citizens and destroyed everything we could destroy including property and food of the kind peasants of South Vietnam eat.

HATE KILLING

I hated the killing and I am tired of it. And from this day to day work, I learned many things I never knew before. By this time, though, I got severely sick from my reactions to the killings. I was treated for four months in the Army Hospital in Vietnam. They hoped to send me back to the battlefield as soon as I recovered. But the Army doctors finally transferred me to a hospital in Tokyo for treatment. In those few weeks I decided to desert. I decided that all the U.S. crimes on the battlefield were the acts of madmen, and I could never return. But how could I get out and where could I go? At that time, I knew nothing. I was filled with insecurity and fear, but I went ahead with my plans to desert. I soon thought of the first step. On the pretense of going to the Post Office to pick up my mail, I bought a whole new set of civilian clothes. I returned to the hospital and planned for the next step. Finally, one evening, I sneaked into the shower room and changed to civilian clothes. No one was guarding the door to the hospital and it didn't look hard to walk out. If anyone had tried to stop me, I would have made a break for it and run for my life. But I got out with no trouble.

During the first week I stayed in Tokyo, I changed my hotel every day and paced the streets hoping someone would be able to help me. One day, a clerk at a hotel asked to see my passport. I talked my way out of this jam, but it left me nervous and uncomfortable.

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JAPANESE FRIENDS

Fortunately, I knew there were a lot of people in Japan who were against U.S. policy in Vietnam. So when I was pacing the streets, my goal was to find anti-Vietnam War leaflets. One day I got connections through a leaflet from Beiheiren (Citizens League in Search of Peace in Vietnam). On the day of our first secret meeting, I suddenly became suspicious, fearing that if something leaked out, all my hopes for the rest of my life would end. I got to the meeting place, a small cafe in Tokyo, a little early, and went for a nervous walk before sitting down to order fruit punch. I couldn't even taste it. But when one of them earnestly told me that they would help in any way they could, it relieved my tensions a little.

They took me to a Japanese named "F" whose family prepared a welcoming party for me. It was the first time I felt really happy. Hiding in "F"'s home, I read a lot every day. It wasn't a big house, but like most in Japan, Mr. and Mrs. "F" worked in the daytime and left their little daughter behind, who taught me to speak Japanese. I'll never forget her.

After staying there awhile, they moved me to another anti-war Japanese family's house on the outskirts of Tokyo. The host "H" and his family wholeheartedly welcomed me. It was safer here. I could go to the seashore for a walk when I wanted. I was looking forward to freedom in the future. Three weeks passed and it was the date set for me to leave Japan. I didn't learn of the detailed plan for leaving until two days before.

There were two deserters from the U.S. Marines who were going to travel with me. I'd been with "H"'s family for a month, and the night before departure, I thought of so many things that I couldn't sleep. Especially over how to express my gratitude to "H"'s family for taking care of me so well.

We took a car and a cab out of Tokyo. We drove through construction areas where the noise of machinery reminded me of being in a trench on the battlefield.

We boarded the ship and left Japan. We got off in the Soviet Union, and took a train to Moscow, then a plane to Sweden. When the plane landed in Stockholm, originally someone said there would be people there to pick us up at the airport, but no one came. Swedish customs asked us for our passports as usual, but we had none. They took us to the police station overnight. The anti-war group from Sweden came the next day to get us out.

I thought through the past and I felt that what I had done was right. The three of us were taken to the Stockholm Vietnam Committee and parted there. I was taken to the home of a Swedish doctor till I rented my own apartment. I spent my first three weeks at a doctor's house, and their family was very hospitable. We went sightseeing often. The Swedish scenery was beautiful.

I had \$300 when I first arrived. After paying living expenses, I soon used it up and applied for welfare. I got two months subsistence and tried hard to find a job. A Swedish film company was casting for a minor role. I got the part. I earned some money and decided to save up some while looking for a permanent job.

At the end of last year, the largest newspaper in Stockholm was looking for someone to do drawings on the theme of going to see the criminals and inmates of a psychiatric institute. There was a four-day deadline. By the third day I got inspired and finished by the fourth day.

I was longing for spring after the long, cold Swedish winter. I went to art school and spent all my time alone, painting. I didn't work while I was in school, and ran out of money.

Letter from Soledad Prison

We are reprinting parts of a letter from Michael Lee, a Chinese brother now imprisoned in Soledad, California.

"It has been expressed to me that the Asian movement is young. Yet has it been realized that the people of color have been struggling for decades? The first form of overt oppression (of Chinese) in this country can be dated back to the 1800s when the Chinese immigrants were imported to labor on the railroads and gold fields. They were exploited and discriminated against due to their ethnic (alien) origin, their incapability to communicate with the then-dominating racist whites, their illiteracy and standards of living (brought on by poverty, lack of proper housing, their whole situation as immigrants). During this same period or shortly after, the Japanese also felt the wrath of injustice and oppression, being forced to the extent of slavery! And now, in 1971, what do the Asian people have? Have we made it in racist America?

"In view of the present situation, Asian people have been labeled with a new stereotyped identification! We are now 'gooks,!! VC . . .' – all power to the National Liberation Front in Vietnam! Their resistance is so strong that this racist government had no alternative but to withdraw from Southeast Asia. But now they must take out their humiliating defeat on the Asian people here in racist America.

"The power which controls the institutions (like jails) is that of the 'state machine.' In their capacity as racist gods (California Department of Corrections), the life of the convict is in their hands. Being treated as sub-human animals brings a lot to mind. The struggle which is waged behind barbed-wire is highly concentrated in form, we have no arms to actually resist by force, but there is the power of the people! As shown once again, in the heroic attempt at Attica prison, once the progressive elements seize control along with the support of the people, they become a force that cannot really be contained. If the comrades had arms, freedom would have been theirs. But as was shown, the enemy was compelled to use force to totally destroy the motive force.

"The aggression spread by those imperialist paper tigers not only secures control over smaller nations, it also has seized control of the people here in racist America. We the people of the Third World must realize what the true meaning of revolution is, and that the power to destroy this racist pig lies in the people, that as long as the people remain stagnant, submissive and complacent, the enemy continues to grow, continues to infiltrate, continues to weaken our forces and continues to keep us divided! The myth of assimilation is the power structure's favorite weapon against Third World peoples. I ask, do we as Asians forget 1942-45, do we forget Hiroshima/Nagasaki, do we forget My Lai/Indochina. The myth of making it in racist America belongs to the annals of history. As Chairman Mao states: 'The people and the people alone are the motive force in making world history!' We the people must educate ourselves and the rest of the masses to the truth. That as long as there's domination of the ruling class over the oppressed class, the domination of man by man and things, inevitably we will be destroyed."

5.

Culture

Art, media, and literature reflect the conditions of life in a given society. In a class society of rich and poor, different art forms represent different class interests. In the U.S. the monopoly capitalists use advertisements, TV and radio commercials and programs, and movies to maintain the status quo and reinforce their value system. For example, the horrors of American life are shown as thrilling and exciting ("The Godfather"); or things such as love and happiness that should be close to us are distorted and placed beyond reality ("The Love Story"). This kind of "establishment" art attempts to gloss over the ills of society by involving people in things that are unrelated to their everyday lives.

On the other hand, art which is born out of the desire for change and shows the strength and contributions of poor and working people is progressive art which can be an integral part of the movements to build a better society for working people. The following collection by Chinese students and workers represents just a few examples of progressive art.

Follow Up on the *Red Detachment of Women*

You, stout like a pine tree!
Falling down, you rise up again.
You struggled and struggled,
Under stick and whip,
In the tears of your beloved!

You fell down,
Fist clenched.
Angrily, you protested,
Till the heart beats its last throb!

Oh, thunderstorm of Hai-nan Island.
Pierced through coconut grove
Cleansed the mountain peak of
the evils of the old world,
To welcome the red sun from the east!

Waking up from unconsciousness,
What did you see?
Hung Chan-Ching,
A hero of the people.

Scars on the laboring,
From darkness to darkness,
From cage to cage,
From the day you are born,
Living in desperation.

Daytime, she's in the devil's den,
At night, she only had nightmares.
Withstanding the lashes,
Getting used to the piercing wind.

Hunger following hunger,
Exhaustion compounded with pain.
Oh, daughter of poor peasants!
How heavy are the great mountains upon you!

You know only that you are a slave.
Your name fades in memory.
Years after years,
Forced to labor, labor . . .

CULTURE

But you know what hatred is,
Buried in the heart is the spark of rebellion,
To break the iron chains –
Dash out from the tiger cage!

Running into the coconut grove,
Running through the underbrush,
In the midst of darkness,
Where is the west, where is the east?

Nan Ba-tien's devil fangs stretch far.
You fell back into his palms!
Torture of any form upon
The sufferings of class sisters
Stirs up his boiling blood.

He wiped the blood on your arms,
Asked who beat you so brutally.
Where is your home?

Smash the iron chains,
Revolutionary flames are burning red.
Overthrow the old world.
Glaciers and ice-capped mountains must melt!

Turn over and be liberated,
Take up the gun, in action, and quick!
Up in the front is a revolutionary base area.
Enlist and get into the fight!

On your face that was clouded by worries,
The first smile appeared!
You bid farewell to your guide,
But don't you go in such a hurry.

The road will be barred with hardship and
difficulties
The way is not yet clear.
Do take these two dimes for use on the way.

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So many years,
It had been a harsh winter all your life.
And now, suddenly you stand in the sun,
Bathing in the east wind of class friendship.

Tears in your eyes, you took the dimes.
The feelings in it weigh heavy, heavy!
Oh, Wu Ching-hua,
How can your heart not beat like the waves!

You found the red flag, you saw
You saw the clear sky of the base area.
Take a sip of coconut juice.
Class feeling tastes strong!

Countless extended hands,
Countless concerned smiles.
Poor caring for the poor,
Workers and peasants embrace each other!

Class brothers and sisters!
We are all born poor.
We communicate with common language,
With common fate!
To overthrow the great mountains on top,
The red detachment of women went into action.

Forward, forward.
Following closely great teacher Mao Tse-Tung.

Solemnly, Wu Ching-Hua joined the revolution.
Brave in struggle,
Comrades in arms made her realize
All achievements for the world revolution.

Battle for defense took place in the mountains
The wary attacks of the enemy were pushed back
To cover for his comrades' maneuver,
He struggled unto the last minute!

The red army took Coconut Village,
Liberated the oppressed masses,
Executed Nan Ba-tien,
The fanned people hailed!



Scene from *Red Detachment of Women*



CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT

But our party representative, where is he?
Why is he missing?
The army cap he wore
Delivered the unfortunate news.

A patch of bright red stained on the big
green tree. Why?
The sturdy branches and thick leaves shivered
Why!

Ah, under this tree
Stood a revolutionary hero.
He had shattered the enemy's sinister scheme
And stood erect like Wu Chih Shan peak.

Our respected guide!
We'll remember your thought, your deeds
For the liberation of all mankind.
Yes, ever dashing into the flames!

The roaring waves of Hai-nan Island,
Thunders above the coconut grove
flashing across the sky. Hark, hark,
the Internationale singing
In praise of our hero.

Thinking of you, Hung Chan-Ching,
Hero nourished by Mao Tse-Tung thought.
Countless people joined the revolutionary rank
—and you live among their hearts!

On *Swan Lake*

by Fu

I have watched the ballet *Swan Lake* many times. Recently I once again watched it. This is a Russian film put out by Moscow's Great Theatre, the super ballet that the U.S.S.R. boasts to the world. After I watched it, a current of sad-angry emotion filled my chest. Like the undammed water of a river, it had to swiftly flow out.

In the history of Russian ballet, there is none more strange than the *Swan Lake*. Its staging has a secret and absurd atmosphere to it. Its content is composed of: the Prince, the Swan, the young girls, the convent, the hunter, the Sorcerer, the pitch-dark water of the lake, the ghostly tomb . . . in other words, it is the art of feudalism and capitalism. And the art of feudalism and capitalism serves the feudal and the capitalist class. Speaking from the viewpoint of revolutionary art, bourgeois works like the *Swan Lake*, no matter how it merited existence in that period of history, ultimately does not suit today's situation and the needs of the masses of people, and should long have been gotten rid of by the tide of the Cultural Revolution along with the outmoded and the corrupt. In this great era of the bright flame of the peoples' revolutions, the revolutionary art, the revolutionary opera, are the true needs. Why does the U.S.S.R. still propagate the corrupt feudalistic and capitalistic thought-emotion long unsuited for the world's trend? This is not the major point of this article, and I shall leave it for now.

What I would like to talk about now is scene II of *Swan Lake*, the part of the Sorcerer's dance. *Swan Lake* is composed of four scenes. Scene II describes the following: at the *Swan Lake*, a flock of swans dart across the lake, turn into a team of beautiful young girls, dancing around the hunters. The Prince and Odetta fall in love at first sight. The Sorcerer Von Rothbart intervened with his sorcery. Amidst all this the Prince danced by himself at one point. There are a few scenes of slow dancing by the couple. This skill is outstanding, and has a rather relaxing atmosphere to it. I have several times watched *Swan Lake* put out by the West, the scene describing the Sorcerer's dance is toned down as background dancing, thinly leading it on.

To much regret, the dancing experts of the U.S.S.R. are saying a lot more in their design of the Sorcerer. This does not allow to be overlooked. In this performance, it is as if the Sorcerer is the protagonist of *Swan Lake*. He is allowed to dance wildly and madly, overpowering the whole scene, the stage is made his kingdom, loud and rousing to the utmost degree. After watching it, what sad-angry emotion was I imbued, what spiritual suppression! From this performance, revised with extra efforts, we can see the U.S.S.R. putting corrupt bourgeois art on stage; we can see the intentions of the U.S.S.R.'s reviving capitalism; we can see the U.S.S.R. using artistic stage techniques to fool the people, to justify its foreign invasions, to satisfy her needs of subjugating the world, opposing revolution; we can smell the blood stained on the pointed anti-revolutionary knife of the U.S.S.R.'s socialist-imperialism from the Sorcerer's fierce, cruel jumps and jerks. The *Swan Lake* is not only the wilting flower of the old era, but the poisonous weed of the new.

This serves as a reminder: they mouth "humaneness" in order to suppress; they shout "peace" in order to invade; they put on the "national liberation" front in order to cut up other peoples' territories; they "attack" imperialism in order to expand their cooperation with imperialism, to fight for the world's dictatorship.

Even now they are still intimidating the people with the power of violence; they plant the flag of peace on the chariot of invasion, hoping in vain to be king and dictator, and to realize their illusions of the new Czar conquering the world. Thus they let out the signal in the Sorcerer's crazy jumps and jerks. But, whether it is the Sorcerer on the stage, or the Sorcerer in reality, he will ultimately be overthrown by the Russian proletariat and the revolutionary peoples. From a pitch-dark region, there rises the bright morning sun.

The bright rays of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought solemnly shine on the whole world, and have given birth to the artistic line that serves the proletariat and socialism, the model followed by revolutionary artists all over the world. The righteous will ultimately triumph over the evil. The U.S.S.R.'s present revisionist artistic line will be thrown in the dustbin of the world's proletarian revolutionary art.

I am only voicing my individual understanding and some immature thinking in this article. I hope more artistically inclined friends would write articles commenting and researching.

The Godfather

"The Godfather" opens with Don Vito, "Godfather" of the Corleone "Family," presiding over a plea for justice from one of his "godsons." At first the Don shows displeasure at this "godson" for not having shown any interest in the family 'til personal disaster has struck. The displeasure continues until the godson acknowledges his dereliction of Family duty and agrees to pledge his service once again. His request for vengeance against his daughter's molesters is then granted, the payment being the renewed recognition of the Don as his "Godfather." Thus, the Don first makes his appearance as the bestower of justice; the almighty God of the Corleone Family.

The next major scene is the wedding of the Don's daughter. The setting becomes clearer. It is America in the 1940s; the era of the hump-backed Ford sedans, the double-breasted suits and two-toned shoes. The wedding is a gala affair complete with an air of Sicilian festiveness. The character of the Don is further revealed. At the wedding he becomes more human; he is at once a powerful man and the doting head of the family.

The Don's two sons, Sonny and Michael, make their first appearance at the wedding. Sonny, already the Don's assistant, is brash and hot-headed while his younger brother Michael is depicted as an earnest young man who has not yet been involved in the Family's dealings. Fresh out of college and charged with adolescent charm, he is the Don's favorite.

As the wedding comes to a close, the focus switches to the business deals of the Family. A series of events take place rapidly, climaxing in the near-fatal shooting of the Don. This, and other shootings are explained by Tom Hagen, the Don's counselor, as "purely business." To safeguard the Don's life, Michael volunteers to kill both "The Turk" (the man whom the Family suspects was behind the attempt on the Don's life) and the New York City police captain who has been bought off by "The Turk." This act thus marks Michael's ascendancy in the Family.

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After Sonny's violent death on a highway, Michael returns from hiding and becomes the Don of the Corleone Family. Underneath the facade of naivete, Michael soon proves to be just as capable as his father in handling the Family's business. In contrast to Sonny's style of operation, Michael is composed, calculating and entirely impersonal. As such, he represents the rising trend in the Mafia; the trend towards the legitimization of its activities. The film comes to a grand finale when Michael successfully wipes out the heads of the five Families as his last underground act, before "going legitimate."

"The Godfather" is bourgeois art at its finest. It has successfully manipulated our emotions and blinded us to the real role that the Mafia has played in America. Killings are relegated to the realm of pure professionalism. Moreover, violence is executed with such finesse that we are made to relish its very act—we admired the ingenuity of the horsehead scene as well as the machine-gunning of Sonny. In addition to the glorification of violence, we are led to sympathize strongly with the Don and Michael, the two main protagonists. The wedding scene, the scenes of Michael with Appollinia, of the Don playing with his grandson are all designed to reveal the basic humanity of both. They are powerful and ruthless, but they are at the same time very vulnerable and human.

By thus depersonalizing violence on the one hand and humanizing its perpetrators on the other, Mario Puzo has successfully confused us. The objective role that the Mafia plays and its relation to the American system is never brought to light in "The Godfather." But instead we are made to view the Mafia from a very subjective perspective—the Mafia has become a grouping of Michaels and Don Vitos, of the fearful and yet the very human. All objectivity is lost, and the true significance of the Mafia hidden by the mantle of bourgeois art.

What then is the role of the Mafia and its implications? Perhaps it will become clearer if we examined this question from the angle of why the Mafia has been able to survive and flourish for over half a century. The Mafia has always and continues to subsist on gambling and dope operations, the two vices that the government has unceasingly condemned openly. Aside from the known fact that many government officials as well as politicians are intimately connected with the Mafia, what is the basic reason why it has been so easy for the ruling elite to collaborate with the Mafia?

The basic reason why the Mafia has been tolerated and even encouraged in many instances by the ruling class is because the Mafia has never challenged the basic assumptions of the American system. In fact, it even reinforces certain core values of capitalism. The Mafia is not a political grouping offering an alternative political-economic system. On the contrary, the Mafia, like the capitalist system, is deeply rooted in the steadfast pursuit of material gains. Like the capitalist, the Mafia mobster too regards killings as "purely business." Gangland wars are to the Mafia what imperialist wars (e.g. the Vietnam war) are to the capitalist. The difference is one of degree, not of basic intent.

The Mafia is the baby parasite that clings to the mother parasite of capitalism. Capitalism sucks the blood of the people and provides the socio-economic and political setting for its junior partner, the Mafia. Capitalism creates alienation, oppression and frustration; thus driving the people into the arms of the gambling and dope dens of the Mafia. Just as we will fight capitalism, we will fight all its junior partners when the time is ripe.

But Who Gets the Gold Medal for Humanity?

What's become of the Olympic's Game
Has it become a Circus for the Insane
Or is what is reported as insanity
Really the Crying Voice of Humanity
What's wrong that the world can't resort
To hiding behind two weeks of sports
Can't oppression give just a little slack
So that we can run two weeks of track
If you don't salute imperialism well
From these Games you get expelled
So tell me again "Nobody's politics is recognized"
Pimping harmony-giving Simonize
Make friends with a nation keeping slaves
What kind of friends you got anyway
The Third World don't got no amnesia
It got together-expelled Rhodesia
Eleven jocks from Israel are slain
Pointing fingers-But who's to blame
Black September really can't be condoned
But what they supposed to do when they got no home
But then again should they be condemned
For trying to expose what's happening to them
And for trying to free two hundred in chains
Brothers and Sisters might you have done the same
Some are crying tears for Israel
But those tears can't be for real
Don't you think it's about time
You shed some tears for Palestine
Shed your tears till you can't no more
For the millions of victims of the War
Of Aggression brought on by the Promised Land
Who stole what they got with their very own hands
And with the assistance of the U.S.A.
Fighting for demoneycy in every way
You shed tears for Vietnam at night
But can't you see it's all the same fight
For freedom, liberation, and humanity
Or is your mind duped by the bourgeoisie
The Olympic's Game is patting backs
Awarding ribbons for field and track
Everyone trying to keep dignity
But who gets the Gold Medal for Humanity? ? ?

Kung Fu—A Sweet Poison

The monthly television series *Kung-fu*, released by Warner Brothers, is a current Hollywood attempt to reap profits off of the current attention placed on China, ethnic studies and martial arts.

The series would be laughable if it were not for the dangerous ideas and implications it projects.

PLOT

KUNG-FU centers on the life of a young man named Caine, a half Chinese, half Caucasian who is highly trained in the skill of manual self defense — hence the title. He is an outlaw in the mid-19th century western United States, on the run because the Chinese imperial government wishes his head because of his slaying of a feudal prince in China. Wandering along from job to job, Caine adds a new "exotic" element to the T.V. western.

Although Caine constantly successfully defends himself from the attacks of racist cowboys who figure the Chinaman is an easy target, he is still portrayed as an inscrutable, that is, without emotion, semi-superhuman (he rarely eats, sleeps, or breathes deeply when at work or fighting). His entire existence seems to be either encountering provocative situations one after the other, or "flashing back" to his training days in China to recall various "words of wisdom" from his teachers in order to deal "correctly" with those tight spots.

DANGEROUS IDEAS

Although the image of Caine as an almost invincible fighter seems to be "progressive" compared to the various Chinese cooks and houseboys usually depicted on T.V., Caine's portrayal actually can lead us to extremely dangerous ideas and conclusions.

First, the semi-Confucian, semi-Taoist philosophy he lives by (he says to himself, "man is one with nature," "heaven and earth are one," "without contention there is no defeat or victory," etc.) is Hollywood's crude attempt to revive the feudal landlord philosophies of ancient China. The philosophies one associated with China such as Taoism or Confucianism were products of the corrupt and brutal ruling classes of old China which were meant to enslave the masses of Chinese people. Emphasizing for example, the importance of maintaining correct and stable social relationships (such as vassal to lord, son to father, etc.) Confucian ideology justified that the rulers remained on top and the masses of Chinese people stayed in poverty.

Taoism's "non-contention" philosophy was used to keep the masses of people passive. This should be contrasted with a contemporary Chinese slogan of "its right to rebel against injustice."

Rather than glorify the "deep wisdom" of Caine's philosophy, we must view it as a dangerous bait, luring us away from understanding and dealing with the current oppression and exploitation in the U.S.

Second, Caine, like most "heroes" from Hollywood studios is superhuman. In one episode, for example, he tames a wild horse by meditating. All of which leads us into an opiate dream of how we are to deal with our present situation. The implication from this program is that we should all become stoic kung-fu masters, and only then would we be physically and mentally prepared to deal with any *personal* crisis. This emphasis on individual self-cultivation leads Caine to take reactionary actions such as abandoning his fellow railroad workers on the verge of a mass strike against the

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bosses. Rather than participate in this organized action against social oppression he extracts himself from the struggle, leading us to believe that we too should be "above" the masses (or in Caine's eyes, the rabble). Like all bourgeois art, the message from KUNG-FU leads us away from the path of liberation, the path of unity and organization to struggle against the oppressor.

Third, KUNG-FU presents distorted images of Chinese society. The kung-fu temple where Caine was raised is pictured as a place abstracted from time and place. On the contrary, nineteenth century China was stirring with revolutionary fervor. The Taiping Rebellion in the 1860s involving tens of millions of people was a tremendous peasant uprising against the oppression they faced. The insurgents of the great Boxer Rebellion of 1900 challenged the imperialist invasion of China. The fighters (the Boxers, i.e., those with martial art skills) certainly do not fit the distorted image portrayed in KUNG-FU. Present day revolutionary China is a continuation of that historical trend and not the T.V. fantasy created to mislead us.

POISON

KUNG-FU's racist stereotyping is certainly unsettling but the deeper ideology and implications are in the long run more deceptive and treacherous. Like the current popularity of Black movies from Hollywood, KUNG-FU attempts to capitalize on the honest desire of millions of Third World people in the U.S. for self-dignity. But these Hollywood shows, based as they are on making profits, are like a sweet poison – once swallowed they offer no hope.

War and Peace

In the last few years, the leaders of Soviet Revisionism, such as Brezhnev and the likes, have tried to stir up war fervor with their boasts of "weapon superiority," and their threats of "acting first to eliminate the opposition," having in mind, no doubt, such tactics as sudden take-over and subsequent occupation of Czechoslovakia. Along with all this, films are being used to propagate and to pave the way for the expansionist policy of Socialist Imperialism.

I can still remember the Russian film (whose title I don't really care to recall I saw in last year's S.F. Film Festival. In that film there are sequences which overtly attempt to solicit the friendship of India. At those moments, I felt within me a very uncomfortable sense of premonition. And sure enough, shortly after that, we saw Soviet Revisionism making India its counterrevolutionary instrument of invasion in the cutting up of Pakistanian territory.

In the newly revised version of "War and Peace," Soviet Revisionist producers are out to sell us exactly such garbage. An earlier version of the same film dwelled lengthily on the ravages and horrors of war, emphasizing in the same breath the destruction of property and wealth brought on by wars and abrupt ending of love affairs in times of war. But this new version, besides dwelling on the cruelties of war, also puts forth a spirit of "patriotism." While the former version used the horrors of war to frighten people in other countries so that they would not dare to rebel and

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wage a struggle of resistance against the invasion of Soviet imperialism, the latter attempts to lure and entice the Russian masses into serving in the expansionist campaign of the Soviet Revisionist clique.

The Russian writers and filmmakers, as directed by the leaders of Soviet Revisionism, have launched into a search for some trace of patriotism in Tolstoy's work. The result is that Tolstoy and *War and Peace*, his literary masterpiece, are now drafted into the service of the Revisionist line.

This new film version of "War and Peace" is not at all faithful to the original novel. No doubt many among us have read the book before, and we cannot but protest this newly "revised" version. The author of the original work, Leo Tolstoy, who was a Russian intellectual and a literary figure, whose thinking was essentially humanist, with heavy traces of religion.

The theme of the novel *War and Peace* is the condemnation of war and the praise for peace. The entire book consists of 18 chapters in which the first chapter gives a detailed account of the background of Andrei Bolkonsky. Andrei is a Count, a military officer of the Russian aristocracy. In 1905 he puts on a uniform and marches onto the battlefield, but as Tolstoy clearly points out, it was to do battle in the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie and the landlord classes and to uphold and preserve the decadent, reactionary rule of the Tsar. There is no indication *whatsoever* that Andrei Bolkonsky serves the laboring masses of Russia.

But now in the film we find the Count Andrei, being praised to heavenly heights and portrayed as someone filled with some kind of patriotic spirit. This is quite different from what is found in the original novel itself. This is clearly a deviation from the views of Marx and Engels concerning the importance of upholding a proletarian line in literature and art.

Today, Soviet Revisionism continues to sell us its shameless advertisements. That brand of "patriotism" that the film "War and Peace" is trying to sell is none other than what Lenin has called "the prejudices of nationalism." In the renewed production of the film, the political goal is this: to infuse into the Russian masses and the Russian military ranks the narrow minded nationalism of revisionism, to obliterate all class content, and to pave the way for big nation chauvinism.

But the Russian people have sharp eyes, and the Russian military forces created by Stalin have a firm class stand. The glorious works of Lenin is a revolutionary truth that cannot be toppled or destroyed. The masses see things very clearly. In order to save Russia from the decadent path it is now following, the Russian people will certainly wage a political struggle to rid themselves of revisionism and to restore once more the Leninist traditions of building a truly proletarian state.

What the Soviet revisionist clique has done in putting out such counterrevolutionary and revisionist film is most outrageous, most disgusting, and most contemptible! We must thoroughly eradicate its poisonous venoms and give it our unrelenting criticism.

I Need to be as Strong as an Evergreen Pine

By a worker in S.F. Chinatown (translated from the original in Chinese)

As I pick up the pen from the desk by the window;
As I gaze in front of it, engaging in deep thought --
Ah! this instant -- the evening sunset;
Makes me think of the waves struggling for freedom in the midst of darkness.

I persevere to maintain the direction toward the noble ideal.
I should know what era this is that we are now in.
To live in such an era
My footsteps are on the road where time is marching forward.
Never again will I be pacing by the Swan Lake!
Never again will I be hesitating on the Old Mail Path!
Never again will I be knitting love dreams of Mermaids!
Never again will I be singing the song "Going Up to You-jo Pavilion!"

The raging flames of the People's Revolution is overpowering.
How could my heart not be surging?
I need to be as strong as the evergreen pine
To weather the extreme cold, and not be afraid of the torrential
Rain and violent wind!

Truth lights up the path for my action
Justice stirs my fighting spirit.
I summon the sincerity of my entire being
To send forth to the world the glorious ideal.
I shall use the glow within my heart
To open up screens of darkness which overladdens the earth.

I shall use my boundless courage
To bring about the melting of these humiliating days.
I shall use my whole-hearted zeal
To compose the score of the movement for the Seventies.
For the sake of a bright future
I delight in tempting myself to become even stronger.

A Poem for Harry

Sitting on his wooden chair
This man Harry he did dare
To open a newsvending stand
That took the side of his fellow man
Why did they bust Harry Wong
Tell me what did he do wrong

Selling progressive literature from the Motherland
Harry was doing what he can
To expose the untold factual truth
Of the lying U.S. media's tooth
So why did they bust Harry Wong
Tell me what did he do wrong

Harry dared to give a heck
To defy the fascist Chiang Kai-shek
In the S.F. Chinese community
That he wants to see free
So why did they bust Harry Wong
Tell me what did he do wrong

He wouldn't take oppression laying down
He ain't no man to crawl around
While U.S. imperialism is making trouble
For all the people throughout the world
So why did they bust Harry Wong
Tell me what did he do wrong

For this the police brutalized Harry
Thinking that he would get scarey
From serving the people heart and soul
But this man Harry is just too bold
They can't stop Harry Wong
He didn't do nothing wrong

For everyone throughout this land
Take your example from this man
To stand-up and make your fight
For the things you know are right
We need more Harry Wongs
He ain't done nothing wrong.



Harry Wong—The Newsvendor

On August 23, 1972, Harry Wong, a sidewalk news vendor was brutally beaten, choked and arrested by six San Francisco policemen on charges of: 1) battery on a police officer, 2) resisting arrest, 3) obstructing the sidewalk and 4) peddling without a license. Harry sells magazines and newspapers from the People's Republic of China and the Asian American Movement. He is a propagandizer of Mao Tse Tung Thought in the community. For this reason, Harry has become a target of the Kuomintang (KMT) reactionaries and the police. Before his arrest, Harry was attacked by KMT thugs and repeatedly threatened by the police.

Immediately after his arrest, the people of Chinatown rallied to Harry's defense. A Committee to Defend Harry Wong was organized. The Committee was composed of many progressive people who realized that only mass action against racist police attacks and political repression could rescue Harry from becoming a victim of the American legal system and the Chinatown reactionaries. Leaflets, petitions, and pamphlets were drafted and distributed. Mass meetings were held. Demonstrations were held at the District Attorney's office and the local police station. Because of these actions, the City was forced to drop all of their criminal charges against Harry and reduce them to a fine of \$10 for a municipal code violation.

The skit was written specifically for the outdoor October 1st Celebration (China's National Day) in San Francisco's Chinatown where hundreds of progressive and patriotic people gathered. The skit was an attempt to link the class struggle of the Chinese Revolution to the class struggle of Chinese people in America. The skit could not have been written were it not for the masses of people in Chinatown. A restaurant worker, also a member of the Defense Committee, suggested adding in the character of the KMT boss after he had read that the Chinese Six Companies had "donated" several hundred dollars to the Police Athletic League on the very same week Harry was attacked and arrested. The medium of pantomime was employed in the skit in order for both Chinese and English speaking people to understand it easily.

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THE NEWSVENDOR

CHARACTERS:

- 5 Community people (the real heroes)
- 1 Newsvendor
- 2 Tactical Squad cops
- 1 KMT boss

A wooden bench sits in the center of the stage.

Enter: Community people. They are feeble and bent over. Their bodies are wracked with illness. Youths are wandering about aimlessly.

Enter: Tac Squad, arm-in-arm with the KMT boss. The Tac Squad push the community people off stage to clear the way for the KMT boss, who lights up his cigar with a \$50 bill.

Enter: Newsvendor. Carrying a portrait of Chairman Mao and several of his works, he walks nonchalantly past the departing cops to display his goods on the bench. Exit all except newsvendor.

Enter: Community people. Still feeble, they gaze upon the works of Chairman Mao. In unison, they pick up the works. Slowly, they begin to transform themselves. Energy seems to flow from the works into their bodies. They begin to straighten up. Their wearied eyes begin to clear. They take a deep breath and flex their newly-found muscles, holding the works up in the air with their eyes fixed on the covers. The vendor, standing to the side, arms folded and smiling, walks over to join the community people as they form into a circle to study the works of Chairman Mao.

Enter: Tac Squad and the KMT boss. The KMT boss sees what the people are doing and orders the vendor arrested. He hands one cop a stack of bills, which he pulls from a roll taken from his pocket. The other cop quickly snatches the stack out of the hands of the first cop as the KMT boss puts the roll back into his pocket. The first cop asks the KMT boss to give him some more money. Frantic, the KMT boss begrudgingly offers up another stack. The two cops then attack the vendor as the KMT boss cheers them on. One pig clubs the vendor on the head, the other chokes him. As the Tac Squad start to drag the vendor off, the community people unite and seize hold of the vendor. A tug-of-war ensues until finally, the community people, united as one man, rise with a mighty force which forces the cops to release the vendor. Tac Squad cops and the KMT boss exit flying. Fists in the air and clutching the works of Chairman Mao to their bosoms, the community people and the vendor shout: "LONG LIVE CHAIRMAN MAO!"

CHINESE-AMERICAN WORKERS: PAST AND PRESENT



Song of the Oppressed

The song the *Internationale* is the song of workers around the world, and is known to more people than probably any other one song. From China to Africa to the United States, the *Internationale* represents the visions of working people of a world without a class of wealthy ruling over the masses of working people.

The words of the song were written by a French worker-poet, Eugene Pottier, who lived during the great late 19th century workers' upheavals in France. Another worker, Pierre Degeyter, put the words to music. The song was first performed in France in July, 1888 to a group of newspaper sellers. From that time on the *Internationale* has spread all over the world and has become "the battle clarion of the proletariat and workers of all countries."

THE INTERNATIONALE

Arise ye prisoners of starvation,

Arise ye wretched of the earth,

For justice thunders condemnation,

A better world's in birth.

No more tradition's chains shall bind us,

Arise ye slaves, no more in thrall,

The earth shall rise on new foundations,

We have been naught, we shall be all.

'Tis the final conflict,

Let each stand in his place,

The International Working Class

Shall be the human race.

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