GIDRA

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Next Month:

Special Issue on
LITTLE TOKYO
REDEVELOPMENT

Dear Dad,

From Your Sansei Daughter

The following letter was written for her father by an eighteen year old sister. She is a student at California State University, Long Beach.

Dear Dad,

It's so hard to begin communication with a person you've not communicated with for the past eighteen years. But with this letter I will try to express to you my awakened feelings of my Japanese culture and my new understanding of my race of people. This may come as a surprise to you, since for many years you've tried to pass on the beauty and importance of my heritage to me and I've continued to reject it. This letter may be even more surprising because this is the first time I've ever written to you and tried to see things with you eye to eye.

I've often wondered why we couldn't talk honestly with each other and why I was so hesitant to ask you about anything. I've often wondered why you think the way you do and why our conversations tended to be so one-sided, your side. Through my studies of the Japanese in America, which I am doing for my Asian American studies class, I am beginning to understand why this "gap" has always existed between you and me.

I have found that family relations within Japanese American families are very similar to ours. Openness and expressions of love are rare, and discipline and respect are very much demanded. Why are these the common characteristics of many Japanese American families?

I've often wondered why we couldn't talk honestly with each other and why I was so hesitant to ask you about anything.

It mostly stems from the fact that the parents of these families, the Nisei, were brought up under these same conditions. Also that their family units, as a whole, experienced many hardships in their lives.

Many of your feelings and attitudes in life are closely related with experiences of your past. The ways of your parents, or course, could affect your ways as well. Their thoughts, their actions and their beliefs may be perpetuated by you or changed by you depending on which you felt were important.

Your parents, like so many other Issei, first immigrated to America with hopes of making their fortunes. They planned to accumulate as much money as possible, then return to Japan to buy land and live on it comfortably. When they arrived here they found menial jobs as farm hands and hard laborers. They believed their stay here would only be temporary so they did their work, seldom complaining about the terrible working conditions and withstood the discrimination against them. After a long time at these jobs, their dreams of accumulating wealth and returning to the mother country faded away. They realized they were stuck in America and here they were to raise their children and make a new life for themselves.

By the time the Issei were able to settle down and have children, many were well along in their years. This resulted in a big age gap between the parent and child which may partially account for the lack of communication and understanding between these two generations.

Since you were not in the habit of openly expressing yourself to your parents, you never encouraged openness between the members of our family.

A few times I did try to tell you how I felt about something and the usual reply I got from you was, "You kids don't know anything about life like I do. You never had to experience the hardships I had, so stop complaining."

It's true Dad, I never did have to work hard on a farm, I never had to worry about financial matters. You gave me all the material things I needed. But a growing child needs more than material things. She needs someone to talk to, someone who will listen and try to understand her. Never have you opened up to me and expressed your feelings, and I, in turn, never opened up to you.

I did try to tell you how I felt about something and the usual reply I got from you was, "You kids don't know anything about life..."

You did mention your life on the farm a lot though. You'd tell me how you would have to get up at five in the morning, work on the farm till seven, and then walk to school, five miles away, through rain, snow and shine. I never thought any of it was true until I began my research for my Asian American class. I now realize the truth in this story, which is common to other Nisei as well. I also see why this recollection of your past is a favorite. You probably feel I lack the drive and determination to get ahead because my life is so easy. You would tell me this story to motivate me to get a good education so I may get a good job and continue living as I am accustomed.

You worked hard and studied a lot to pull

(Continued on Page 4)

In every issue of *Gidra*, someone on the staff writes what we call a "blurb" in mini-type, usually describing the trials and tribulations of working on a progressive Asian American news-magazine with its limited resources. This is one such blurb, and not unlike the others, is being composed on the typewriter in the eleventh hour.

In the past, some blurbs have served as outlets for frustration felt by various members of the staff; others have been desperate pleas, asking for response and feedback from our readers. Some were used to communicate that which failed to be communicated among the people on the staff during the process of putting out the paper. Still others were used to encourage discussion of assorted political ideologies and principles.

Most of the time, the responsibility of writing the blurb is placed on the "coordinators" for the particular month. (In an attempt to resist the tendency of developing a hierarchy within the staff, we instituted a system of rotating monthly "coordinators" who usually work in teams of twos or threes.)

This month, what we would like to convey is our love for and belief in what we are doing. And the love, respect and commitment toward each other that comes only from a close working relationship for an extended period of time. When *Gidra* was founded over four years ago, most of us were students; none, strangely, were journalism majors or had significant experience in working with a newspaper. Many people have come and gone, each contributing *something* to make *Gidra* what it is today. By our last count, we've had over two hundred people work on the *Gidra* staff at different times in our four year history. For the past three years, we have had a relatively stable group of about twenty people.

The staff is composed of people of diverse backgrounds, personal interests and occupational orientations. We have: an accountant, a social worker, a bank teller, a gas station attendant, a travel agent, community workers, factory workers, teachers and students among others. Some are studying film-making, music, psychology, law, education, and art.

Despite the diversity, the differences, all of us have found something in common: the need to change the very fabric of this society's values. At times we rant and rave about various theories and methods by which change will come. We are sailing rough seas. Yet, it is times like now; late at night, when individual bickerings are laid aside, for we realize that by only working together and loving, trusting one another will we reach our final goal. Most of all it is love for people that will see us through.

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GIDRA

ON THE SCENE

Law Caucus Rejects JACL Bid

The Asian Law Caucus, Inc., has recently received an offer of a $2,500 contract for services from the Japanese American Citizens League.

In view of the events that led up to this offer and of current community developments involving JACL, we feel that we must not only refuse to accept this contract but also make known our reasons for this refusal. What follows is a position paper deliniating the history leading up to our non-acceptance of JACL's contract.

The Asian Law Caucus, Inc., is an organization composed of attorneys, law students and paralegal workers dedicated to providing legal services to the Asian-American communities in the Bay Area. As an alternative to the traditional law firm, we accept fees from those able to pay to subsidize the cases of those who can neither afford nor find legal assistance elsewhere.

We began accepting cases in January of 1971. Since we realized that funding was necessary for survival, we began exploring various methods and sources of funding, and since the Japanese American Citizens' League claimed to be an advocate of Japanese Americans and, more recently, Asian American interests, they seemed a logical and obvious source. On May 7, 1972, a proposal for the creation of a "JACL Legal Unit" with the Law Caucus as the pilot program was presented by the Bay Area Chapter before the Northern-California Western-Nevada District Council (NCWNDC) which adopted and forwarded a resolution based on the proposal with a funding limit of $30,000 to the National Convention in Washington, D.C.

At the convention, a resolution was passed which appropriated $5,000 to a "JACL Legal Unit," which was, in effect, an affirmation by JACL of the concept of free and low-cost legal services which our group had initiated. The resolution which was passed was virtually word-for-word the resolution which the Bay Area Chapter had submitted on our behalf at the NCWNDC.

Thereafter, we made inquiries to various JACL officials as to the dispensation of the grant but received several conflicting responses. Several JACL officials told us that no money existed within JACL to follow through with the appropriation. In the meantime, Raymond Uno, then JACL Legal Counsel, began advocating the creation of a JACL legal arm in words and in concept similar to the proposal which we had submitted months earlier.

Frustrated by the conflicting responses we received and by JACL's attempt to build its own legal arm on the proposal we had composed, we approached the NCWNDC with the original proposal for re-ratification. The NCWNDC unanimously approved a resolution appropriating $2,500 to the Asian Law Caucus, Inc. and another $2,500 contingent upon approval of a progress report. The National JACL's Executive Committee's approval was still required and on March 10, 1973, the Board agreed to allocate the $2,500 to our organization on the conditions that Mr. David Ushio, National JACL Executive Director, work out a contract with us to provide services to JACL and that a public statement be issued disassociating this grant from the National Conventions' appropriation.

After having discussed the terms of the $2,500 allocation with Mr. Ushio and discovering that he would have us undertake legal research and other work for JACL, and having in mind our past relationship to the leadership of JACL, we are compelled to refuse their offer of a contract for services and the $2,500 based on the following grounds:

—JACL's leadership has failed to support the mandate of its members who approved the idea of a legal unit as proposed by the Bay Area Chapter at the National Convention. JACL has further ignored the Northern-California Western-Nevada District Council recommendation that $2,500 be immediately allocated to the Asian Law Caucus, Inc., *without conditions, contracts or other reservations.*

—JACL's Executive Board proposed a contract with us for the $2,500. We believe our proposal was endorsed because of the services we were rendering; we do not feel that JACL's Executive Board should now change an unconditional endorsement into a contract whereby we would be required to provide services to JACL, specifically for their own credit.

—In view of our struggle to obtain funds allocated to us, and in view of JACL's legal proposals, we feel that a serious breach of trust has occurred which cannot be mended simply by a grant of money.

—JACL's leadership has extracted ideas from our original proposal and has attempted to pawn those ideas off as JACL initiated. Further, they have submitted their own proposals for the establishment of a legal unit to funding sources in direct competition with our proposal in an attempt to capitalize on the idea of community service.

—We believe that JACL should support the efforts of existing Asian American community groups rather than attempt to create their own service organizations in a vacuum.

Only through a sincere change in direction by JACL's leadership can we consider a workable relationship. We respect the fact that many individuals within JACL have given us their support and strength, but until we can witness a change in direction, methods and sincerity among members of the National JACL leadership, we cannot move toward a formal relationship.

—The Asian Law Caucus, Inc.
Oakland, California

Maravilla

Los Angeles–"If somebody wants to hang me, I don't tell him, 'Don't hang me now, come back in two years and hang me,' I don't want him to hang me at all!"

So spoke Arthur Montoya, president of the East L.A. Maravilla-Belvedere Property Owners Association, a homeowners' group. The residents of the area fough off a Master Plan proposal in 1965. Now, a "hanging" is once again threatening.

Another Master Plan is being considered for adoption by the County Board of Supervisors' Regional Planning Commission. The proposed Plan comes with the built-in menace of community-destroying redevelopment.

Rosalind Munoz warns about the Master Plans developed by both the city and County of Los Angeles. "Where does the Chicano fit into this scheme? He doesn't. All this redevelopment has been and is projected right on top of what is already an almost ideal urban setting for the Chicano." Here, Munoz is refering to the cultural coherence of East L.A. as a community, rather than to its economic condition.

Political Geography: East L.A. is only three to four miles east from both Little Tokyo and Chinatown.

At a recent meeting of the Maravilla-Belvedere Park Property Owners Association, as Vice-President Roy Disney said, "We are never going to be able to let down our guard until we've made them back away."

Pineapple White

The following is an abstract of Jon Shirota's play adapted from the novel. The play will be produced by the East-West Players this fall and presented at their theater at 4424 Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles.

Pineapple White. For Jiro Saki, the elderly Japanese-Hawaiian gardener, the news that his son had married a haole (Caucasian) girl came as a great disappointment. Even though Mitsuo had been educated on the mainland and had fought as an American during the war, his father had hoped he would honor his cultural heritage and take a Japanese girl for his bride.

For the widowed Mrs. Satterfield, the memory was still fresh, the pain of loss still an everyday reality. Less than five years had passed since that fateful day she had received the news that her only son, Edward, had fallen in action against the Japanese on Tawara. But now the bereaved Mrs. Satterfield was being forced to accept yet another cruel reality–the marriage of her only daugher to a poor Japanese American student by whom she was pregnant.

In the tradition of the old country, the humble yet proud Jiro leaves his Waipahu plantation and journeys to Los Angeles, hopeful of living out his years in contentment with his son's family. But from the moment the retired widower gets off the plane at the bustling metropolitan airport, he meets with a bewildering medley of adventures, both comic and tragic, that combine to compose an intimate and moving portrait of one man's efforts to salvage some meaning and dignity from life as he finds himself growing old in a world he doesn't understand.

Agbayani Village Being Built

On March 4th, a successful meeting was held between Cesar Chavez and the leading organizers of Agbayani Village project, the union's first retirement housing for elderly farm workers. The blueprints and construction plans are completed. The building permits are OK'd and an anchor crew of several people have committed themselves to work the project to its completion. George Salinas, a veteran at this type of project, will be the construction supervisor. It is expected that construction will be completed by early spring 1974.

The idea for a retirement village has been around in the union for a long time. About three years ago, the union forced some of the Big Grape Growers in the Delano area to sign into their contracts a few cents a box of grapes picked by the farmworker to go into a union housing fund. Of course, since then, the Growers have either stopped paying into the fund in violation of the contracts or have begun to try to get "legally" out of their contracts. Despite these difficulties, the union has decided to pledge about $250,000 from union funds to build the Agbayani Village.

Pablo Agbayani was a Pilipino striker who died on the strike lines during the beginning of the UFWOC struggle. The village will be named in his honor and other militant farm workers in the union who have no real means to support themselves other than their social security pensions.

The village will give priority to the most needy and activist retired union farmworkers in the Delano area. At this particualr time, that means mostly the single, retired Pinoys.

Volunteer crews on a Monday-to-Friday basis and crews on a weekend basis will be needed. This will be tightly co-ordinated so as to minimize any unnecessary confusion. Some of the guidelines are: 1) the minimum commitment will be two weeks, *preferred*; 2) at any one time there will be no more than 20 people in the volunteer crew (from both the northern and southern California areas); 3) volunteers will be provided sleeping space and meals (bring sleeping bags); 4) volunteers are encouraged to constitute themselves into groups and decide on a crew boss *prior* to coming to Delano (crew leaders should be preferably people with some past construction experience); 5) volunteers are to attend an orientation session prior to going to Delano to work. Orientation will cover a brief summary of the UFWOC history, activities, present struggles, and a small session on the use of carpentry tools.

A co-ordinating committee from Northern and Southern California will work closely with Delano and crews will be sent through this body. For more information and/or applications (a brief application has to be filled out and applicants will be screened by the co-ordinating committee) write:

c/o Carson Community Center (E)
404 East Carson Street
Carson, California 90745

Decline of Rising Sun

It was in the tenth grade when I started getting into dances and parties pretty heavily. At that time the fronts were going out but longer hair wasn't quite in. Also, one of the hippest things around was the rising sun flag. It was very frustrating trying to get one. You would have to go to all the army surplus stores and ask all your friends where they were. When I was really relating to that symbol, I felt proud to be a Japanese American. I felt good to be separated from everyone else. When I'd go to school and have one drawn on the cover of my *Pee-Chee*, I felt pretty good.

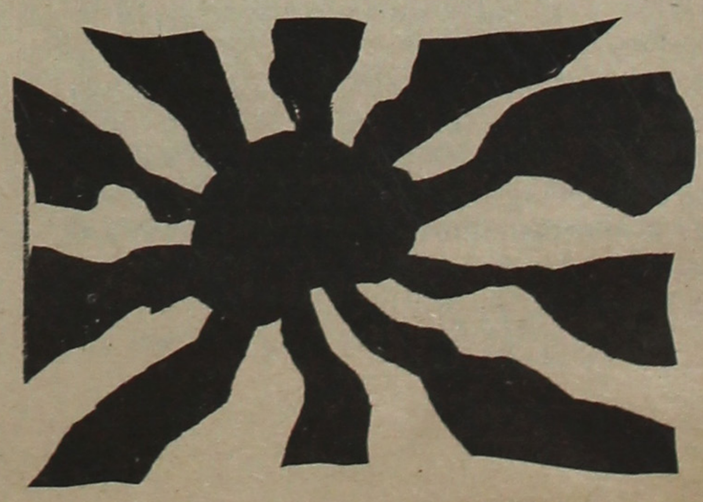
About two years later, I started relating to the movement. One day while I was in the Yellow Brotherhood House walking around with a rising sun pin on my shirt, a brother and a sister asked me if I knew what it meant. As far as the flag's history goes, I didn't, and so they told me.

They told me about the thousands of Asian sisters and brothers (in Asia) that the Japanese militarists killed before and during World War II and of all the land that was ripped off in the name of that flag.

They blew my mind. I wondered why I did not know this before. I tried to tell a few of my friends about the flag. A few rejected the idea but most of them listened and thought and usually stopped relating to it.

There's always a need to be proud of what you are, but there's a whole lotta of other ways in which we could show that. The rising sun flag was an early attempt to relate to being Asian... or at least being a Japanese American, but that's really lame now since most of our sisters and brothers don't relate to it at all.

––Anonymous



A Letter to Dad

(Continued from Page 1)

yourself away from your rough life. Now you're a civil engineer, Dad. You make good money and own a beautiful home. I can see what an important part education has played in your life and I understand why you've always stressed school and good grades to me. I read a book where one Nisei says, "Hard work is essential in the building of character. The Japanese kids had to do hard work which gave them the drive to succeed." It sounds like something you'd say Dad!

But another thing which you must come to understand is that values are changing. Although education is still highly valued to my generation, I feel many of us are not hoping to become big businessmen; instead becoming *people*

But another thing which you must come to understand is that values are changing.

who can help other people. I feel I don't need a lot of money or high status. I just want to find a happiness that is right for me and live my life that way.

I feel the main reason you want me to have high status is so that people will look at me and say, "She's made it." You are very concerned that I should not be shamed by my relatives and friends my amounting to what you would call nothing. But what other people think isn't important to me. I know it is typical of Japanese people to be very concerned about what others will think. *Hazukashi*, or "others will laugh at you," is a norm of social control which is centered on "others." A feeling of shame, a feeling that one might embarrass oneself in front of others, are expressions of this culutral value. This fear of being laughed at is deeply embedded in their consciousness. This is what has made the Japanese people so conforming and so easily assimilated in America.

I know you and your family had to go through a lot of ridicule trying to become accustomed to the American way of life. It's hard adjusting to any new place when you are different in some way, physical or otherwise, from the

It's hard adjusting to a new place when you are different in some way, physical or otherwise, from the majority of the people.

majority of people. It probably really hurt you inside to have to bear all that discrimination and ridicule and it's not something easily forgotten.

I still remember an incident that happened to me when we first moved to Montebello, a predominantly Chicano area, from Culver City, a predominantly Japanese area. I was walking down the street and a bunch of white kids saw me and sang out, "Ching-chong Chinaman" and pulled back the corners of their eyes. I was so embarrassed that all I could do was run home. I was almost in tears when I told Mom how I hated this area and wanted to move back to Culver City.

I've found that being ridiculed can do two things to a person. It can make him lose confidence in himself or it can give him more determination to change himself so he won't be ridiculed. In our case it made us more determined to change, to become like the whites, so that we would be more easily accepted.

I knew moving back to Culver City was impossible and that in order to avoid being made fun of because of my slanty eyes, I would try to become more white so that everyone would

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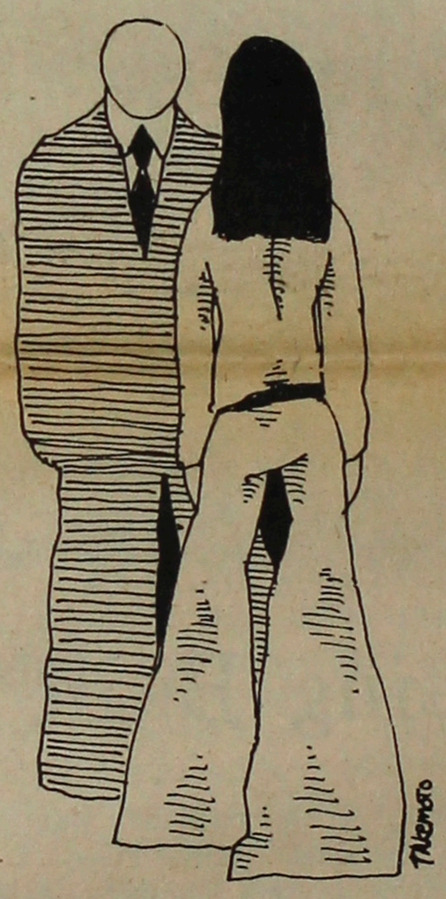
like me. I experienced this pressure to change from my peer groups in elementary school. I wanted friends, I wanted to belong. I couldn't change my physical features so I began to reject all that you taught me on how a "good Japanese girl" should be. I always used to have to wear oxford shoes and neat little "Sunday school dresses" to school. I persuaded Mom to buy me a pair of black leather boots and a hip hugger skirt. I wanted my hair long like my friend Lupe so I refused to have my hair cut into a neat bowl-shape. I made my friends but none were Japanese, especially the ones that wore oxfords! Although these new friends were more outspoken in class, my shy and quiet character



remained in me. I wanted to act a little more "rowdy" too; I just couldn't bring myself around to speaking out. You always told me that I should be good and quiet and never talk back to the teacher. I feared you would find out if I did, so this was one value of yours which I continued to retain.

By my high school years I was beginning to realize that life wasn't being like your friends

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and belonging. I began doing things I thought I would personally be interested in. I joined clubs, ran for offices and met many new people. With their enthusiasm and encouragement I began to open up and give my opinions.

Being actively involved in these clubs I was obliged to attend their various activities, meetings, dances, group discussions, parties, etc. Sometimes this would be three times a week, and then football games on Friday nights. Even though you previously encouraged extracurricular activities, when it came to full time involvement you said, "You go out too much, you're running wild with your Mexican friends." You'd also say my grades were dropping when they weren't and that I never helped around the house anymore.

I can understand now why you believed I went out too much and I see why your attitude is more anti-social. It relates back to your environment during crucial personality development years.

You always told me that I should be good and quiet and never talk back to the teacher.

There was little stimulus to be found in a tar paper covered group of barracks set in the desert. None of the normal peer group activities—parties, cliques, dances, sports, dates—could take place in a *natural* manner or in customary places. How was a person to learn the techniques of interacting with others under such conditions?

Also because of your farm life you had to spend a lot of time at home helping your parents so that your family would have a source of income. Then during any free time you studied as hard as you could so you could get out of your rut someday. You also tried to get the most out of your education because you knew your parents were sacrificing so much to give it to you. You always had that feeling of obligation toward them.

Sometimes I feel this way toward you and Mom. I know you have sacrificed so much to give me what I have, and I really feel like I owe you something, although these things were given to me out of love. Would loving you back be enough? No, I don't think so because love has never been given freely in our family and to give love now does not seem sufficient. Would conforming to your ways be enough? No, because I would then be denying myself the right to be myself and seek happiness. I've often thought about how happy you would be if I was a "good Japanese girl" with a nice Japanese boyfriend. At one time I even thought that I should try to please you and find a Japanese boyfriend because you have done so much for me. But that thought just comes and goes because I never found a Japanese boy with whom I was happy

You also tried to get the most out of your education because you knew your parents were sacrificing so much to give it to you. You always had that feeling of obligation.

It wasn't because I "scared them off" as you say, but up to now I never really gave them a fair chance, and I will explain to you why this was.

At high school I met many people of different races, religions, and personalities. Many had "trips (ideas about life, I guess you could say)" I liked and many had trips I just couldn't get behind.

Most of the Orientals I met tended to hang around with only each other. They all had similar ideas and the girls seemed to giggle a lot.

I did try to get to know these Japanese girls and talked with them several times, but I had a hard time relating to their ideas. For example, as an outside activity, these girls went to Rodger Young dances and other Asian-oriented activities. I'm not saying these dances weren't fun, it just wasn't something I liked to do. It's not that I don't enjoy dancing either, I just couldn't get behind going to some dance hall with a bunch of giggling girls and standing around

waiting to get "picked up" by some fine-looking guy, or watch the other girls pick up on someone else. . This isn't my idea of a good time.

I have made acquaintances with many of the Japanese boys at high school and of the ones I met, a few were of what you can call the "perpetuating the Japanese stereotype" personality; quiet, studious and shy. The others were the more rowdy, outspoken Rodger Young types.

You asked me why I never go out with Japanese boys? Well, of the ones I chanced to meet, the quiet ones never asked me out and if you can remember I did go out a few times with rowdy ones. All they seemed to talk about was the next dance, getting drunk, or their new car. To tell you the truth I just wasn't too interested in those subjects and I didn't want to go out with them anymore. So that is the reason why. And the more you continued to tell me about how all Japanese boys are the best kind, that they're intelligent, polite, clean boys and the more you told me to go out with only them, the more I rejected all Japanese people, myself as Japanese, and you.

I just couldn't get behind going to some dance hall with a bunch of giggling girls and standing around waiting to get "picked up" by some fine-looking guy, or watch the other girls pick up on someone else.

So against your will, and in spite of your threats I continued to associate with races other than my own.

I see how wrong I was in believing that the Japanese youth were either "Roger Young types" or "bookworm types." From my few acquaintences at school I was judging a whole race of people. As soon as I met any new Japanese faces I would classify them as one of these types. I never got to know what they were really like. Do you see the harm of stereotype and prejudice?

With the help of my Asian American studies class I can honestly say I've realized it's

I never got to know what they were really like. Do you see the harm of stereotype and prejudice?

harm and I am overcoming that sense of prejudice which existed in me. I never felt prejudice toward Americans of other ancestries though; only Japanese. Dee (my sister) and I got off on the subject of prejudice against Japanese!" I agreed with her, but we did realize how this feeling came about not only within us but in our brother and sisters as well.

We've all grown up among various ethnic groups. We've had friends and boyfriends of many different races. To us everyone is the same, no one is better or worse. That's the way it should be. When we started going out with people of different races you immediately told us they were no good people and they would get us in trouble. You told us Japanese are the best and we should go out with them and only them. But we see no difference, and as we did continue to go out with different racial groups you tried harder and stricter methods of getting us back to our culture. We would get scolded and punished unreasonably for things like talking to our Chicano friends on the phone. You'd say, "You are Japanese and should have Japanese friends." Because of our Japanese blood we were being punished and confined, so all of us rejected it completely.

Besides helping me overcome my feelings of prejudice, my Asian class has opened my mind to many other Asian thoughts and causes. All this time Asians have been going through many more changes in adjusting to American life. Many things are happening today that are affecting Asians in America that I was not aware of. I was never aware of how close I was to losing my culture, I was never aware of my identity and I never felt a sense of unity with all Asian peoples until I took this class.

I remember gearing myself to think "pro-Asian" was hard at first. It's always hard to accept a change in thinking when you have to

All this time Asians have been going through many more changes in adjusting to American life.

admit your previous thoughts were unjustified and when you just have to let down a little self-pride. When I first walked into the class and

noticed everyone was of Asian descent I felt strangely uncomfortable. Why? Because I thought I was surrounded by "Rodger Young soches" and "bookworm Japanese."

My instructor, Mike Murase, talked with the class and later asked a few questions on why we took the class and what we would like to cover. He was met with silence and blank stares which made me more uncomfortable. It wasn't because we were totally without opinions but rather we were accustomed to not speaking up in classroom situations. Mike pointed this fact out to us saying that Asians are stereotyped as quiet, and many ways have fulfilled the stereotype. It never even occured to me that I was

He was met with silence and blank stares which made me more uncomfortable.

stereotyped, I never thought Japanese were discriminated against anymore. I was one of those who thought the Japanese have really "made it" in America.

But I've become more conscious of the struggles and problems of our people in the big white-oriented society. The white Americans say the Japanese have made it. They hold us up as examples to other minorities. They speak of our success in assimilating into their society, but it really isn't much of a success when you must give up your cultural identity and become "white." What we have succeeded in doing is adopting white values and attitudes. First we had to reach the standards set by the dominant white American society before we were able to assimilate or even be considered good enough to become an American.

But I've become more conscious of the struggles and problems of our people in the big white-oriented society.

Many Sansei, like myself, have left the comfort of their homes to try and find their true selves, persons who do not feel stifled by their parents upbringing. After leaving our homes, we are apt to grow even further away from our culture. No longer did I have to hear *koto* (a Japanese instrument) music on Sunday, no longer did I hear your few Japanese words used on me, no longer did I have any of Mom's good *okazu* (Japanese meal). At first I thought I had finally gotten away from all the "Japaneseness," and I thought it would be good for a change. But it wasn't long before I was calling up Mom and asking for her *okazu* recipe or asking how to make rice. Moving out on my own had a reverse effect on me. I gained a greater desire to obtain the culture for myself and retain it.

As I became more aware of the dominant white values in me I became more aware of them in many of my Asian brothers and sisters as well. On the whole I'd say many of us are more American than Asian. But I'm also more aware of the efforts being made by many Sansei and other Asian American people to regain the old culture and build a new one which is a mixture of our heritage from Asia and our experience in America.

I think if more young Asian Americans had the opportunity to reeducate themselves in an Asian American studies class as I have, the continuance of the culture will not become more difficult but instead more natural and more easily accepted by the succeeding generation. You probably felt you had failed in passing on the culture to me but you need not feel

As I became more aware of the dominant white values in me I became more aware of them in many of my Asian brothers and sisters.

that way any longer. I am very determined to see my children growing up with knowledge of the traditions and beauty of the Japanese culture and the Asian American experience. It will not be something forced on them, but introduced to them in a way which they will find desirable and natural. It will be part of their life as it should be.

If your heart feels a little lighter and you are able to see me as a wiser and better person after reading this letter, then I have accomplished what I had hoped in writing this letter. It is kind of late in life, but we have to start taking steps in opening up and expressing ourselves to each other. We have to start communicating and understanding what goes on in each other's minds. If we don't, life will fade away and there will be nothing left to pass on.

This cultural awakening of mine, this new understanding of my people, this greater appreciation of my heritage, I feel is very important to me. I feel the news of this is important to you as well, so I pass it on to you with love.

Your Sansei daughter—
Peggy Miyasaki

GARDENA

Part One: A Saga Of Youth, Drugs And Middle Class Misery

In the Los Angeles area there are several Asian American communities; some large, some well known, some infamous. Japanese are found concentrated in Little Tokyo, "the Westside," East LA-Monterey Park, West Los Angeles, and Gardena.

Gardena is the largest of these concentrations and perhaps the most complex. Its population ranges from conservative corporate businessmen to freaked-out Asian hippies. It is "middle class" as many communities in American society are labeled. Yet it is not without its own problems and surely, not isolated from the rest of the world. In the following two-part article, the city and citizens of Gardena will be studied. Much of the data was compiled with the assistance and cooperation of people in city government positions and various community service organizations.

In this first installment, the historical development of the city and the Japanese American community will be discussed. The present day conditions and problems will be exposed. Hopefully, a better insight of the character of the city and its people will be produced. And the monolithic image of Gardena, California, be broken down.

There was nothing for miles. Nothing but marshes, swamps and grazing land. Mostly grazing land though, for the shallow valley had rich fertile soil. Vaqueros and cowboys from the large ranchos of Dominguez, Amestoy, Ducazau, and Rosecrans would ride the range checking the herds and boundary markers and, at night, the men would gather around the campfire, talk over the day, talk about women and tell tales of Spanish Califronia. Black Bart, the 'Cisco Kid and all that kind of stuff. And they would get drunk. Bombed. Plastered.

It was on a night such as this that the shallow valley received its name. A campfire was roaring, bottles banging around and a wild card game was in session. A vaquero named Jose and a cowboy named Cassidy were the last two in the game...

"Okay Jose, wha' cha got in yer hand?" Cassidy grinned as he looked at his hand.

"Un momento, vato," Jose sang out, "Why don't we up the bet a little bit.. to make it more interesting...heh?"

"Shore partner..." Cassidy answered as he rubbed his beard, "...lemme see here...you ain't got no more money and I ain't got none either.. so what will we wager?"

"Hummmm...ah, how 'bout this... thee winner of the game will have this whole *pinche* valley named after him." Jose took a long swig of tequila as he finished his idea.

"Shore partner...that's all right with me," Cassidy peeked at his cards again then threw them down saying, "Pair o' kings, pair o' jacks."

Jose took another long hard shot of tequila, winced, then showed his hand, "four aces, amigo."

Cassidy grabbed the tequila from Jose and said, "Well, this here valley is now named after you...Jose Gardena Valley!" And that's how Gardena valley was named. Honest. After Jose Gardena, the best poker player in California.

Well...that version is at least as accurate as any of the two or three versions sweeping around city hall these days. One says a "Mr. Harris" named the area Gardena in 1887 because it was such a lovely garden spot. Another says Nettie Thompson, who was the daughter of a man who bought a subdivision of land in the area, named it Gardena because of the wild flowers present which she mistook for Gardenias. Now which story are you going to believe; mine or theirs? Anyhow there is a Cassidy street in Gardena today, nice guy that Jose.

*** *** *** ***

September 11, 1930 finds the three rural communities of Gardena Valley, Moneta and Strawberry Park incorporated as the City of Gardena. The vaqueros and cowboys have been replaced by farmers, many of whom are Japanese. Los Angeles is still far to the north and Gardena is a quiet area. No freeways, no smog, no endless housing tracts remind the citizens of urban life. The fields are covered with strawberries and those "cute little Japanese farmers." Yet it is the depression years and many Japanese families have to work as a whole in order to "see things through." The Protestant ethic of hard work and honest living was drilled into many Nisei who had to assist their Issei parents on the farms or at the store and still go to school. It was upon this hard work ethic that the Japanese community in Gardena solidified. Small vegetable farms, nurseries and family stores became the foundation of the Japanese American culture in Gardena as the infrastructure of the city developed.

During World War II the citizens of Japanese descent were "evacuated" into the infamous concentration camps along with the 100,000 other Japanese Americans on the West Coast. Sentiment toward the Japanese among the Gardena whites was divided. For example, the city council removed the names of seventeen Japanese servicemen from the municipal honor roll because "they represented the enemy." There were also scattered incidents of broken windows in Japanese homes and businesses. On the other hand, many whites who had literally grown up with Japanese neighbors displayed sympathy toward the Japanese predicament and were outwardly angry at the government for producing such a situation. Yet nothing was actually done for it was a time of mass hysteria. Thus between 1942 to 1945 there were no Japanese in Gardena. After the war and the incarceration, many Japanese returned to Gardena to once again build their community, and all seemed to be forgiven and forgotten.

Until the late nineteen fifties the Japanese American population in Gardena was noticeable but stable. And the city was comfortable with this. The Asians gave Gardena the appearance of integration and the fact that a small Chicano community also resided within the city limits strengthened this image. The blacks were still many miles to the north and the problems of big city blight were unheard of or at least pretty well ignored.

In the late nineteen fifties "the move" began. Hundreds of Japanese American families from the depths of East L.A. and the flatlands of the westside began pouring into Gardena. Huge tracts of homes began filling with Asians

A "G-Town" Lowrider on the streets

Entrance to Gardena High School

who were climbing into the middle class of American society. Gardena represented their most immediate dreams and aspirations. Gardena meant a new home, a new chance, better schools and all the other benefits of suburbia. The Japanese became the model minority within this setting. They were among those who had "made it."

This "model minority" image continued. Many young Sansei were constantly winning academic and athletic praise at Gardena High. Their Nisei parents had become solid businessmen and also established themselves as community leaders. Community recognition and respect was sought and in many appearances it was won. Yet outside appearances can be misleading. True, many Asians in this time period were moving up the economic ladder. Moving out of the miseries of inner city working class ghettoes and into a promise of middle class security. This was to be the last rung on the ladder as far as Japanese Americans were concerned. They settled into lower-middle management positions and became the white collar working class. The gnomes of ownership.

The large influx of Japanese Americans also had other effects. A certain arrogance developed among the Japanese in Gardena. Many believed the image of the model minority which had been cast upon them. They had made it through hard work, made it into the middle class and into white neighborhoods. No more Westside or East L.A. bullshit. This is middle class Gardena!

In the striving for middle class securities many families were caught up in middle class miseries. Whole new sets of goals and aspirations popped up. Instead of a color TV it was two color TVs and a stereo. Instead of a new car, it was hard to decide what kind of car to get for the wife and the kid. "Buy on Credit," "No money down" and "low monthly payments" became the slogans of Japanese American rat racers who had to "keep up with the Kobatas." The Protestant ethic from the 1930s was revitalized again. Japanese had to be number one in everything. Ichiban. They had the greenest lawns, and their kids were always so well mannered and got such good grades. Parents sadistically pressured their children to be top achievers in school. And on the campus of Gardena High the influx of Japanese was creating a legend.

*** *** ***

Gardena High, 1964. Lowriders and "hoddies" cruise around the campus with tape decks blasting Round Robin, the Miracles and the Supremes. The baad cats are organized into a multitude of "car clubs"; the Aladdins, the Elegants, the Barons, the Bedouins, the Gents, the Latin Saints, the Jesters and the list goes on and on. The campus has taken on the appearance of a cosmopolitan city. All the California stereotypes are here, the surfer, the greaser, the biker, the Chicano, the black and the Asian.

Yet despite everything else Gardena High is known as a "buddhahead school." The student body officers, the prettiest girls, the baddest dudes, the most outstanding students are almost always Japanese. And the arrogance present in the community is also repeated at school. The Asians always seem to be in competition with everyone else. Try to get the best grades, try to be the best basketball player, try to score on the foxiest girl or the baddest dude. Wear the flashiest clothes, have the newest car, know the latest dances. Be hip. Be cool.

These are the suburban L.A. Sansei. The "rich Gardena kids." Products of an environment which is almost too comfortable. Secure and apathetic to the point that they have even forgotten all the work and sacrifice their parents made to get them where they were. Numb to the outside world, protected by an educational establishment which lets them "have some slack."

The educational system in Gardena is average. By average I mean, the average student is "average" on a national scale. Yet in comparison to the rest of the L.A. City School District, which Gardena is a part of, the Gardena student rating is below the national average...does that make any sense? The reading tests scores placed Gardena High right in the middle of the national scale. Yet on the elementary level we find Gardena grammar schools such as: 135th Street, Gardena Elementary, and Amestoy (among others) scoring below the national average. Upon closer investigation we find that these elementary schools have a high percentage of minority students in their enrollment. In the L.A. school system it seems to be true, in most cases, that the race you belong to determines the quality of the education you will receive. Along the same line, at Gardena High, a tracking system is employed. Black and Chicano students are shuffled over to the shop and homemaking classes while white and Asian students take the academic and creative arts classes. This institutionalized racism balances out to an "average" educational level being attained. But it is not true that every Gardena child is getting even an average education. The tracking system has other effects. As mentioned, Gardena High is an "integrated campus" with its enrollment comprised of approximately 40% white, 25% Asian, 20% black and 15% Chicano. Yet less than 50% of the graduates go on to college and most of those that do are white or Asian.

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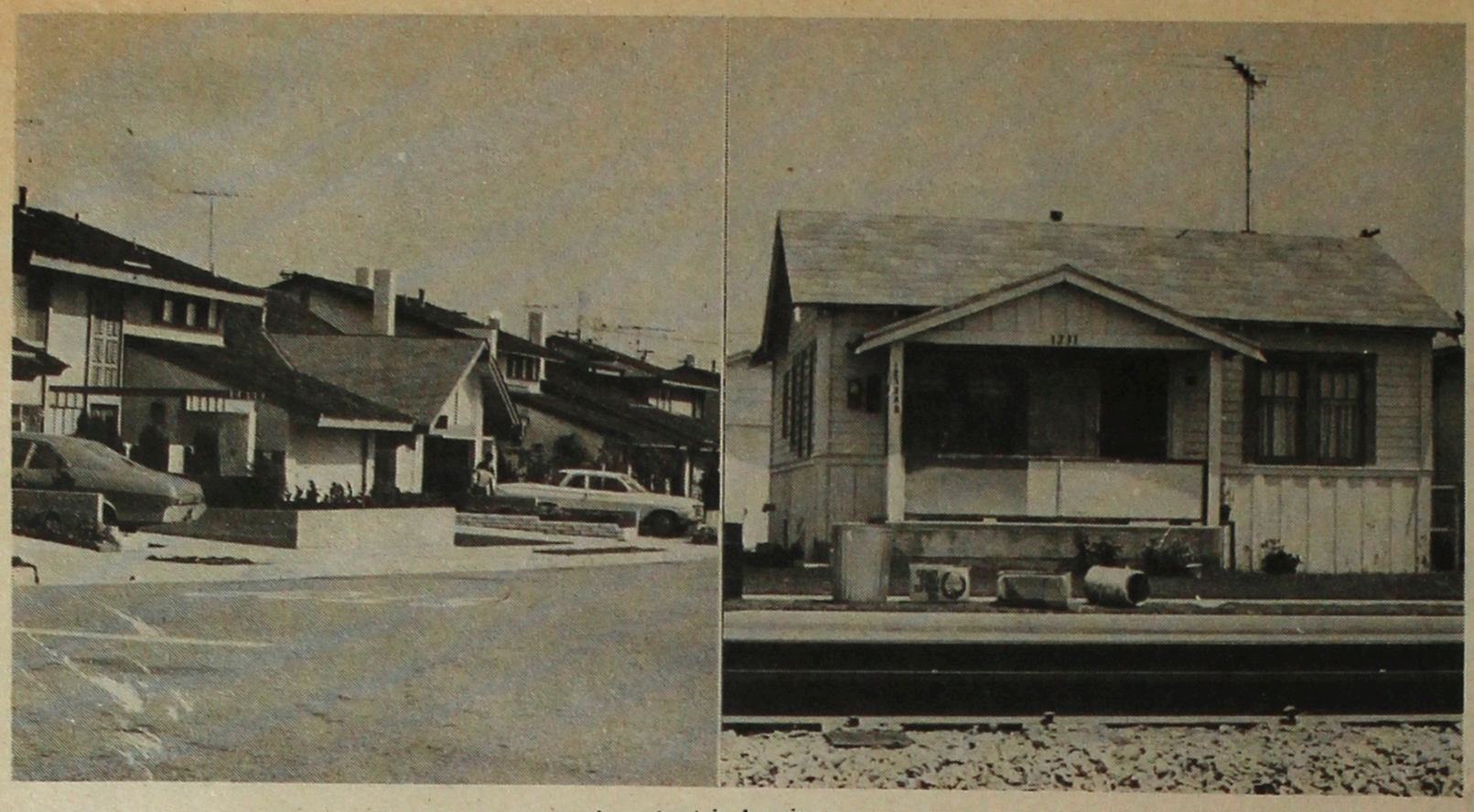
By 1968 the scene in Gardena is changing. "The move" is tapering off. Monterey Park is now "the place to live" as far as Asians in L.A. are concerned. Still in Gardena, the Japanese population comprises a quarter of the total population. And while "the move" had been taking place the Los Angeles black ghetto has also been growing and pushing its boundaries southward and westward to the point where it came right up to and across the boundaries of Gardena. Along with this, Chicano immigrants settled in Gardena in large numbers to take jobs in the numerous factories and sweatshops which had sprung up.

Whites, particularly on the north end of the city began running scared before the approaching black move into Gardena. Real estate firms used "block busting" tactics to force whites to sell cheap and in turn the firms sold homes to hard working blacks at a huge profit. In 1971 an unincorporated area north of the city was annexed by Gardena. This was the Hollypark neighborhood; where some of the most blatant block-busting scare tactics were being used. Leaflets passed to white residents

Asian influence is everywhere

A few of the poker-clubs in the town



A contrast in housing

warned of a lower property value and deteriorating schools when "those outsiders move into the neighborhood." And the tactics had worked, for by the year of annexation the Hollypark area was 75% black. With the addition of Hollypark to Gardena the population was approximately 40% Third World: Asian, Black, and Chicano.

Meanwhile the problems of the "big city" which often seemed remote to Gardena were springing up right in the town. The crime rate accelerated as a result of the highly mobile population and the failure of the police department to maintain proper community relations. From 1966 to 1971 the crime rate increased 33%. From 1966 to 1969 the number of adult and juvenile arrests rose from 1059 to 1895 a year. In 1971 it had reached 2392 arrests per year for all felony and misdemeanor offenses. That year the largest increases occurred in robbery: increase 133%, burglary: increase 73%, illegal entry: increase 342%, and narcotics: increase 112%. In juvenile arrests alone there was over a 300% increase between 1966-1971. The number of "oriental arrests" doubled between those same years. As of today there is no evidence that this trend has been reversed.

In the mid-1960s large amounts of narcotics began flowing into the city. The availability of barbiturates rose at an alarming rate. The pushers often zeroed in on the Asian youths because it was well known that they always had some spending money on them or they could easily get it. Legend has it that in the late 1960s at Gardena High anyone wanting to score dope need only go to the nearest restroom.

One of the most difficult situations in Gardena is that of drugs or drug abuse. In order to understand this situation we must understand the changes which the youth, and in this case Asian youth, underwent in the late 1960s.

As I said, by 1968, the scene in Gardena is changing. Asian youth are "tuning in and turning on" in enormous numbers. No more Motown sound come blasting over the tape decks, now Gardena is immersed in the world of psychedelia. Slacks and skirts are replaced by faded levis. "Fronts" and teased hairstyles are nowhere to be seen. Long hair appears out of nowhere. And along with all these outtrappings of the counterculture there is drugs. Drugs of all kinds, in all amounts are everywhere. The drug overdose or O.D. becomes a too common occurrence. Fatal O.D.s occur in increasing rates and when they do, friends and relatives would cry, parents would be embarrassed, yet the drug abuse would continue on. The city was petrified but little was or could be done about the situation. Little, except to ignore it and when it "hit home," keep it quiet. Thus, the situation deteriorated rapidly. The middle class dream of Gardena had become a psychological ghetto from which one could not escape. The pressure to achieve, achieve, achieve took its toll among Asian youth who were rebelling against the materialist values of their parents and against the hard work ethic which the youth could sense was basically and fundamentally inapplicable to their generation of Japanese Americans. Gardena was the end of the line; this was all they could ever hope for... They had their cars, their stereos and their split-level homes, yet deep inside their souls came the realization that they had not really "made it." The dream was a disillusionment. For thousands of Sanseis the only escape was through drugs. Turn on. Expand your mind!

In 1970, the Gardena Police Department reported eight suicide attempts among Japanese. Of the eight, seven were due to drug overdoses. These are only the cases which were reported to anyone. In addition, the Gardena Memorial Hospital reports up to ten drug overdoses every week of the year and the Office of Youth and Community Services reported an average of five emergency calls per week pertaining to drug abuse and overdoses. In all reported cases at least 50% are Asians. Remember these are only the reported cases. Community workers often speak out on this situation. One sansei worker recently told this writer, "Things appear quiet nowadays and that's because things are *kept* quiet, especially the ones involving Asian people. We never hear of those except in rare cases or fatalities because the narcotics people keep it filed away and the families involved keep it hush-hush too. But the drugs are out there. Nothing really changed much since the sixties, it's just that the people strung out usually keep it quiet. They're too hip these days...playing it cool all the time.

Yes, the youth in Gardena had reached a stage of "hip sophistication." They know they can "do" any drug around as long as they could keep cool about it.

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The 1970s finds Gardena with a population of nearly 50,000 in a land area of less than six square miles. The urban sprawl of the Los Angeles basin literally consumes Gardena. To the north and the east are the black communities of South L.A. (Watts) and Compton. To the south and the west are white middle class Torrance and working class Lawndale. Gardena itself is fairly well integrated as a whole but close investigation finds the blacks on the north side of the city and most Chicanos in the east-central district. The Asians are scattered pretty evenly but large concentrations occur in the central and southern areas of the city. The west end of Gardena is predominately white.

The Asian American population totals over 10,000. A vast majority of this figure are American born Japanese but there are also Chinese and Pilipino in noticable numbers. Yet Gardena has the dubious honor of having the largest concentration of Japanese on the mainland of the U.S. The medium income is $11,713 which places these families solidly in the economic middle class. 8.8% of the population is below the poverty level mark of $4,000 while 29.4% of the people have an annual income of over $15,000 per year.

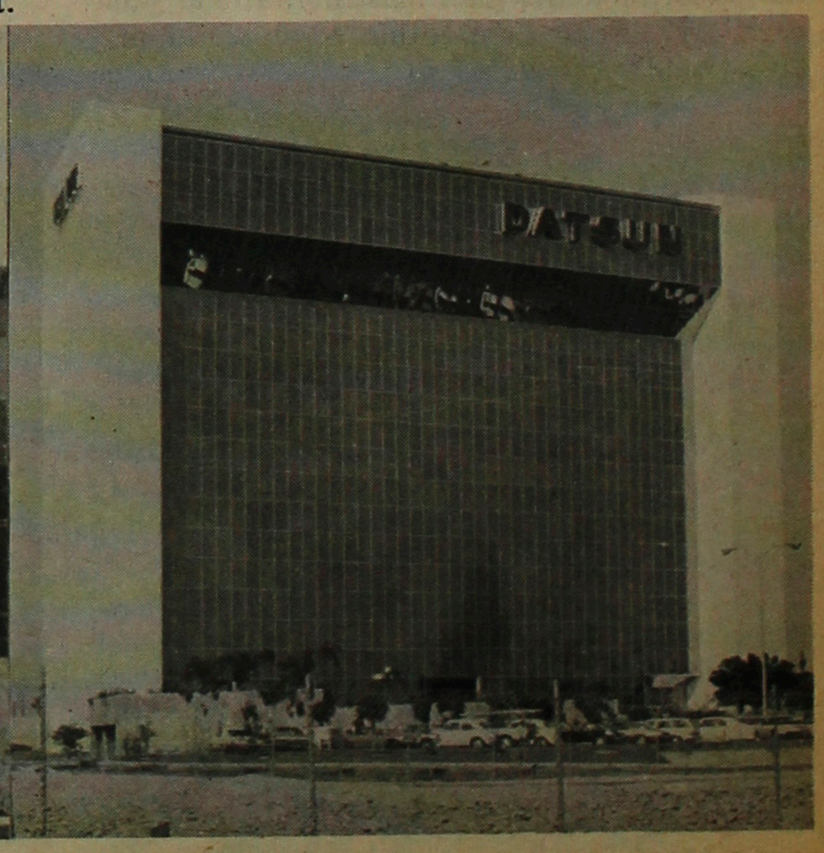
Might as well get more "hard data" out of the way. Most of the dwelling units are single resident homes. 55.8% of the population owns or rents one unit structures. While 39.6% of the people live in apartments. The remainder of the population is crowded into trailer parks and "other accomodations." Nearly 8% of the population exists in over-crowded, substandard housing. But much of the housing appears to be new, mainly because construction in the fifties and sixties was that of large housing tracts. The 1970's finds property value rising so the trend is towards the construction of more apartment complexes. Yet many areas of Gardena contain homes which were built before the city was incorporated.

The 1970's has also seen a new phenomenon in Gardena; the invasion of the Japanese capitalist. Huge Japanese corporations: Nissan Motors, Sony, Bank of Tokyo, Sumitomo, Honda, Mitsubishi and others have opened up large offices and factories in Gardean. Japanese industrialists have immigrated by special permit and settle in Gardena. Why Gardena? Because of its large Japanese population and its proximity to LA which would make it not only convenient but also socially comfortable. The city looks with pride toward the modern office buildings which these corporations have constructed. The city pride is very narrow minded in the face of Japanese imperialism, working hand-in-hand with American capitalists. Of course, money is the motive.

Thus today Gardena is far from the perfect middle class community many dreamt it would be. Drug abuse among the youth is still a serious problem. The large number of alienated youth is a problem in itself. The rest of the population suffers from a daily routine which is typically mdidle calss; the 8:00-to-5:00 job, the bills, the frustrations and the apathy. Add to this the uncertain intentions of the large Japanese corporations and the shaky American economic situation and there is no middle class paradise, only middle class miseries.

In a following article this writer will take a look at how the Japanese American community is confronting many of the conditions and problems in Gardena. From historical roots dating back to 1968, overviews will be presented of various community "movement" groups which have and are serving the needs of the people in Gardena.

—Steve Tatsukawa



Family businesses are often near large corporations.

THEM BAD CATS

PAST IMAGES OF ASIAN AMERICAN STREET GANGS PART III

Last month, in Part II of "Them Baad Cats," we continued our documentation of the Asian American street gangs with the formation of the Ministers (See Gidra, *June, 1973). Four members of the original club, Ministers I, Victor Shibata, Gary Asamura, Art Ishii and Ats Sasaki, shared their experiences with the* Gidra *Staff in a taped interview in January of this year.*

Since publication of last month's continuation of the "Them Baad Cats" series, we (the authors) have received criticisms from some of our readers regarding the map appearing on page one in that issue. The map shows an area bordered on the north by Washington Boulevard, the south by Rodeo Road, on the west by La Brea Boulevard, and bordered on the east by Western Avenue. The area indicated is labeled "The Westside." In actuality, "The Westside" encompasses a much larger part of Los Angeles than the map indicated. The small portion of the Westside included in the map is mainly the area which Gary, Ats, Art and Victor refered to in the interview. We apologize for this inadvertent deception.

In the same vein, in no way do we mean to imply that the Ministers were the one and only Asian American street gang around during this time (the early 60's). There were other Asian American street gangs which existed in other Asian American communities outside of the Westside, but it is safe to say that the Ministers was the largest. In our study of the Ministers, and the personal views of four prominent members, we can hopefully learn more about one aspect of Asian American history which has not been explored.

The Ministers, which originated out of Dorsey High School, numbered well over 100 at its peak. It had a definite structure and leadership hierarchy which proved unworkable for various reasons (see Part II). In 1962, close to three years after its start, the members of Ministers I decided to disband. A shoot-out had occurred between the Buddha Bandits, a rival Eastside Asian gang, and the Ministers in late August of that year, and at a club meeting three days later, the Ministers officially broke up. By mid-September, as Victor put it, "There was nobody left." As a result of the shoot-out with the Bandits, and a police list of members supplied by an informer, the club membership was decimated by police arrests. Gary and Ats spent two years in jail, Victor and Art "chose" to enter the service (Art noted, "...yeah, you get pretty patriotic when you've got a jail sentence staring at you.")

Eleven years later, what's come of it all? That's what the Gidra *Staff asked the four of them, and here's what they talked about. (The following exerpt is taken from a four and a half hour conversation with Art Ishii, Gary Asamura, Victor Shibata and Ats Sasaka.*

ART: You know, when I look back and try to find out what good came out of all this (I think we talked about this before)—like with the Movement, you see a lot of dudes walking the street, looking like street people, trying to talk like street people, ain't never been in a fight before, never been in the joint. These dudes call you 'brothers.' They don't know you. They ain't done shit for you, not sure if you gonna do shit for them. I think, like all of us that was in this shit together—fighting back to back—ain't none of us run out on no one. Now, that's brotherhood. And when you talk about "Hey, brother" —that's your brother because he was ready to go down with you. Probably every one of us...I know Ats and me stood alone many a time, and ain't none of us run out on each other. And back in those days, it wasn't even cool to talk about 'brothers' and 'sisters.' That's why I see a lot of shit right now, people calling each other 'brothers'...it'd be outta sight if they really meant it, but I really don't get those vibes from a lot of these people.

GARY: Yeah, it's like what I told Victor one

(Continued on next page)

WHILE YOU WERE WORKING

The thing that happens when you work in an office or factory where everybody got one special-type job to do is this: You're the packer, and this other dude who's the dispatcher are all supposed to be part of a big team, right. Ok, let's say the dispatcher fucks up one day about filling orders or something like that. So the boss shits a brick and starts to get on everyone's case, but the "big team" points at the dispatcher and says, "It's not my responsibility, I did what I was supposed to do, don't jump on my ass, get him and leave me alone, etc."

Now, let's take this way or style of thinking ("It ain't my problem, I'm trying to look out for myself.") and see what it's about. One thing's for sure, you know damn well that habits of thinking just like habits you got with your hands stay with you all the time and shows up in everything you do. That way of thinking I'm talking about is a way of separating you from the dispatcher cuz he fucked up. You draw a big yellow line like in a supermarket parking lot and say, "This is your place, and got nothing to do with me." It's the way of separating things that are happening instead of connecting them together.

If you and others like you are walking down the street, and the man hassles you, and your peers say, "Nope, I got nothin' to do with him," how would you feel?

The dudes who own and run the place you work at know that the best way to get more land and cars for themselves is to keep you and the guy working next to you from getting together. In fact the less you care about the people you work with, the better it is for the boss.

One way to keep you jumping at each other is, by offering a reward, let's say two-bits more an hour. All you gotta do is show the bossman how much you care about him and the company. Show him how good you learned to play his game. Now, with that raise you're gonna get a faster car, but for some reason the people you worked with before don't seem too friendly no more. The buddhaheads from Japan and the white dudes in the office, at least, notice you now.

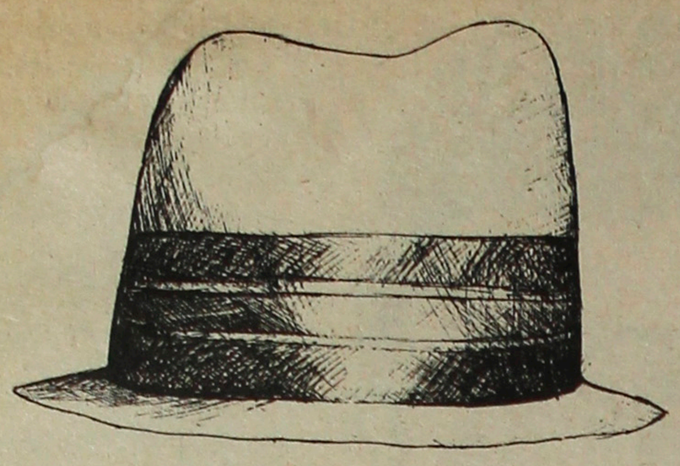
There isn't nothing wrong with wanting a faster car or better stereo-system than the one you got now, its something to do, something to make bread for, especially when you think that you're not creative or artistic. Here we come to the biggest hunk of bullshit that school and the system in general have fooled us into believing.

We say to ourselves, "I don't get ideas about writing or painting or anything else, and even if I did, my hands don't have the ability to shape a piece of clay to match up with the idea in my head. In all of the shit that teachers used to tell us that was supposed to be "art," there's this same basic thing going on—which is matching up what we got inside (idea) with something on the outside (pen and paper, sounds, clay, whatever) the thing that's supposed to be art.

What the teachers left out is this, you can have something on the outside (clay, a building, a country, whatever) then by finding out about it, match up the inside, (an idea in your head) and the outside. It's the same fucking creative thing that's going on. The folks at school left it out for a good reason. What if you got too nosy and found out about school or where you work at or this country. What would happen is you'd find out why it's best for the people who run the place you work at, that you be kept not very curious. Why do you think they never taught you American history? Because you'd blow their game: how to keep you and your peers at work from getting together by fighting over the bone. When you know who's fucking with your head, you know who your enemies are and you'll start to look for ways to get back at them.

There's a real cute gimmick that's used to stop you from getting your head together. It's called "split the person." Here's how it works, the white folks and Asians who try to be white keep harpin' about—you're Chinese, or Japanese or some shit like that and then at school and work you get reminded of the same thing. On the other hand, you're American, the thing to do is go to school and learn that rap. After all, if you can't understand them subjects that "brainy people" read, you're dumb. So are you Asian or are you American? Is what you're pressured into wasting your time thinking about it? Horseshit. An Asian American is a whole different trip from being pegged as Oriental or American. Don't let 'em split you up like that, when you got a separate brain in each hand, how can you ever get your shit and bring everything together.

by David Monkawa



THEM BAD CATS

(Continued from preceding page)

time: Revolution is cool, but I'm not gonna get out there and start shootin' and have a whole bunch of motherfuckers say "I'm with you brother," and turn the corner and find out I'm with myself. It's not the idea that everybody is like that. It's just that I don't know the great majority of them. I mean, you go to jail enough, and you learn not to trust nobody. If you've been there enough, you gonna learn. The idea is, you gotta know people. If you know people, you won't get fucked. Even a dude who is suppose to be doing things righteously for you—don't trust him, not no farther than you can see him.

ATS: The whole thing is that I got brothers and sisters. And I could sit up and argue with my sisters...argue with my brothers—righteously get into a bad beef. But after the thing is over, you still dig each other. You could wake up the next morning and...hey, that's still my sister, that's still my brother.

But I had some bad experiences, especially when I was up there at that JACS (Japanese American Community Services-Asian Involvement) office. I don't know if it was the JACS people, but just the office up there on Weller Street. I didn't agree with people...I was a dirty son-of-a-bitch, just 'cause I didn't agree with them. To me, that wasn't right.

ART: It's even more ridiculous than that. When Victor worked up there at the JACL office, across the hall was the JACS office. There was all kinds of young people there. Like I said, they'd be dressing like street people, talking shit. The thing is, I'm off the streets now. So, periodically—maybe once a week—I'd go by and visit Victor to eat lunch or something. And, I'd fall down the hallway, with all these so-called street people watching. You know, these 'cool' motherfuckers. They callin' everyone in the hallway 'brother.' I come down there and they ain't sayin' shit 'cause I got a tie on. And I've seen dudes: you go up to them and say "what's happening," and they look at that tie—they don't look at you. They ain't even gonna return with "what's happening." I could see these same motherfuckers Saturday night—I'd be dressed like them and all of a sudden, I'm their 'brother.' I can't dig that. To me, I knew where they were coming from. I didn't look like them at the time during working hours, so I couldn't be their 'brother.' They didn't even know me, didn't know my name, didn't know if I was a pig or whether I was cool. It's kind of pathetic because this so-called street person wasn't gonna give me a chance. For one thing, I don't think he's authorized to prejudge me like that, unless he could take care of business...

ATS: You know, I guess it was like Gary was saying: the thing was, that we could really count on each other.

ART: Yeah, right now we all have careers, our lifestyles have changed. Some of us have families. But there is that one thing that is really rewarding: I *know* if I was in Houston, Texas...or in Los Angeles...if my shit was bad, they knew about it, they'd be there. And, I can't say that about any other group of people. People consider other people their friends. But then, they're only friends to a certain extent. I *know* that if I was in an accident at four o'clock in the morning, I could pick up the phone and call any one of these dudes and they'd be there.

There is absolutely no doubt in any of our minds. You know we've been through so much shit together, damn near all got killed together. I think we pretty much proved our loyalty and friendship to each other.

VICTOR: Friendship isn't something that just happens overnight. Friendship is an experience. I think it's really showing now with Movement people. A lot of people I met three, four years ago when Y.B. first started [1968] was talkin' some really heavy shit at the time...talkin' about 'armed struggle' and such...and I thought, yeah, it's you and us to the end, we'd all go down together. But a lot of people have changed. It seems as though they've changed to become a contradiction to what they said they were gonna do. The only way you find out where someone is really coming from is if you live with the person, not physically, but, you know, you grow up with the person. I look at a lot of Movement friends that I have now. A lot of them don't have their old friends that they grew up with.

I think that within the Movement, people really need to sit down and think. If you're gonna commit your life to making a change in this country, that doesn't mean just working on a program, it's like checking your whole life out—and how you relate to people. Because if you talk about serving the people, it's not just *serving* them, it's like "we're in this together." And you could tell that kind of sincerity when you talk to people. A lot of people within the Movement, they're not really sincere; you know they talk shit. But then what's behind all that—is there somebody that's really serious about what they're doing. The heaviest criticism I've been getting of people within the Movement is what Art brought up...that, "hey, I didn't really feel that I was welcome."

GARY: That's true in a way Vic ... but you know, I look at it this way too: I mean I blame a lot of it on myself and Art and Ats and guys like us. Because ... I thought about it, and I see a lot of dudes, they talk a bunch of shit—but, I look at all the points. I know myself. Ats, I don't have to say so much about, but Art and me ... I think this is where it comes from. I'm unfriendly as hell, I ain't gonna lie about it. If I don't know the motherfucker, that's it. I ain't got nothing to do with you. If we look at a motherfucker and we feel that he ain't shit, the way I see it, what's the fuckin' sense in trying to make friends with a rum-dum. But, this is us. This is the way we were raised...

Like myself, I've watched Russell Valparaiso (See "Them Bad Cats," Gidra, January, 1973). Now Russell, to me...I admire the dude. I wish I had his personality 'cuz Russell's a friendly dude. Righteously, where he's comin' from is where it should be. I mean he'll never shine you on. He's always got something good to say.

ART: Well, Russell's an exception you know.

GARY: The cat's beautiful.

ART: Yeah, he's really good people. But Gary and me, and maybe this would apply to Ats, we're not really that receptive to a lot of people.

GARY: Victor is (receptive). He's all right. He's changed.

ART: Well yeah, Victor is...

GARY: He used to be *shitty!* (laughter) But he's changed. (laughter)

ART: But, like Ats 'n Gary 'n me, we're not that receptive to a lot of the people that Victor and Russell come in contact with. And, that's where I agree with Gary. Russell's got a hell of a good attitude, man, for a dude that's been through all the shit he's been through. We're from the same neighborhood. I didn't know Russell real good in high school cuz he was just fixin' to leave high school when I was gettin' in. But I'm gonna tell you, when I went to Belmont, that was one of the most *evil* dudes that I've ever seen or met in my life! *UN*friendly! He was a Black Juan, and he was gonna *stay* a Black Juan. He was gonna *prove* that he was bad. And that's why I was real shocked, man ... when the dude came out and got back on the set as a righteously friendly dude, man. It was really out-of-sight to see that. I haven't even been to jail, man ... but I wish I could have come out with half that good an attitude. You know, cuz I don't got a trusting attitude, I ain't receptive to no motherfucker.

GARY: You know, it's different. You (Art) and Vic came out of the service ... and like Ats will tell you, we came out of jail. And when *I* came out of jail, I hated everybody. Including you and Victor and anybody else that wasn't around. It's not that you all did me wrong. But I went in there and I got beat up for eleven days straight. And shit, you get beat up for eleven days straight, you say fuck everybody. Your thinking goes warped. I said, "I'm in this motherfucker, and I'm getting my fuckin' head beat ... every fuckin' night. Where the fuck is everybody at! I ain't gettin' no motherfuckin' help!" But it relates to me in a way with everyone, "I ain't gettin' no motherfuckin' help, people don't give a fuck about me so why the fuck should I give a fuck about anybody." I came home with a shitty attitude.

You know, I got beat up by the bulls (prison guards), man. I jump on a guard, and I whooped him. So they beat me up for five days in solitary. I jumped on another guard in solitary, and beat him up, and they threw me in the hole for eleven days, and that's where I righteously got my ass kicked. You know, and when you come out of the hole, man, they put you up in front of that board: there's three sergeants, and the dude sez, "You're in maximum security. You wanna go to a minimum compound? You go to a minimum compound, you can't fight no more, period. Or you comin' back to this hole, and we kick your ass again. Now, do you wanna get out of maximum." I sez, "You motherfuckin' right I wanna get outta maximum." The dude sez, "Well you gonna fight anymore?" I told the motherfucker like it was, "Ain't no way in the world I'm fightin' anymore." But I was fighting again, though.

The inmates, I'm not scared of fightin'. The bulls, you got to be scared to fight them because they handcuff you when they fight you. They won't even give you a chance. And if they don't handcuff you, they fight you five-on-one. And so you come home and hate everything and everybody. I mean, I didn't see nobody when I first came home, and was on a motherfuckin' night job. I was mopping floors, cuz that was the only job I could get. Motherfuckers wouldn't give me a job except for one dude. He righteously helped me out. Dude by the name of Richard Akita. My mother went and asked the cat, she almost damn near begged him, "Would you give my son a job, so he could come home." So the dude says, "All right, but he ain't got nothing but a janitor's job." And when you in jail, you don't give a fuck what kind of job it is ... just as long as you come home...

ATS: I guess when I came out of the joint, I hated everybody too. I had a bitter attitude. My thing was really bitter because of the time involved.

You know, it's a lonely place in there. I mean, there was twelve-hundred people in the institution I was in, but you a lonely motherfucker. And, nobody would write, man. Margaret Niisato was the only person that would write to me regularly. The only other person was Charlotte Tsuboi. She wrote all the time. And, I was only thirty miles from L.A.

GARY: Don't blame me, I was in jail. (laughter)

ATS: Art wrote to me, and he was in Japan and Texas. This motherfucker, Victor, wrote to me and I almost got locked up. (laughter)

VICTOR: You should be glad you even got a letter. (laughter)

ATS: All these motherfuckers, they cussin' up a storm in these letters...and the man's talkin' about, "What kind of madman writing these letters!" (laughter)...I sez "Now, wait a minute, man!"—sheit...

Many of their ideas and concepts of brotherhood, trust, and the movement can be labeled 'macho,' narrow, restrictive, and backward. But they must be seen as products of their (street gang) experience. Their unprincipled sense of brotherhood, for example, is a direct result of their collective experience on the street. As Art put it, "You know, we've been through so much shit together—damn near all got killed together—I think we've pretty much proved our loyalty and friendship to each other." For these ex-Ministers, brotherhood has a 'real' meaning; and 'real' for them is defined according to street values, i.e. everything really 'real' will come down sooner or later to whether you'll fight for it. "That's your brother because he was ready to go down with you," "I don't think he's authorized to pre-judge like that unless he could take care of business," reflect this attitude. Proof of a person's sincerity is based upon that

person's willingness to back up his works with action.

Gary brings up the word trust a number of times, and tells us how his idea of trust was shaped by his experiences in jail. "I went in there, and I got beat up for eleven days straight. And shit, you get beat up for eleven days straight, and shit, you say fuck everybody." "I mean you go to jail evough, and you learn not to trust nobody..." Gary himself realizes that this is a narrow view and admits that people like himself are partly to blame for being "unfriendly as hell." The values he learned from his involvement with the Ministers, and from the time he spent in the joint, often leads him to make (what would appear to many other people as) harsh generalizations, especially about the Sansei, or third generation Japanese American youth. More than once during the interview, Gary expressed hsi feeling that "most of the Sansei are rum-dums—maybe not all of em, but about 85 percent of the Sansei are a bunch of rum-dums. They ain't shit." He explains, "This is the way I feel. Most people that come from the streets, and let's say, eventually make it past the dope stage, the fighting stage, and jail...they look back at all these motherfuckers gettin' loaded and, I'm pretty sure they look at it the same way I do. 'You motherfuckin' assholes—I feel like spittin' on you. Your momma and daddy, they got money, they take good care of you, and you ain't shit. You a mutherfucker that's what you is." This disrespect and contempt for "rum-dums" stems from the street definition of what 'real' respect is. Gary related this illustration to help us understand more clearly.

GARY: The object is, when you fight, you win. If you don't win, the next time you see him, you try again, and you try again, and you keep on trying until you've gained that man's respect. You may get beat up forty times, who gives a damn? The idea is you make sure you let this man know that every time you see him you gonna fight him. I think there was one cat, he was from the Eastside. His name was Neil. Neil's got a lot of heart. Him, Mako, and Terry Kuwahara—those are the only three that I righteously respect from the Eastside. Neil's from Japan. Neil came down here and fought Yoshio. That was the biggest mistake he ever made. He went down to Yoshio's liquor store, and told him, "Yoshio, I want to fight you." Yoshio said, "Okay, you sit over there and wait 'til I close the store." The dude went over there and sat down. Yoshio closed the store, and they went in the back to fight. Yoshio beat the dude up, washed him up, and sent him home. The dude came back the next day, "Yoshio, I want to fight again." Okay, sit over there and wait 'till two o'clock, when I close up." They did that for seven times. On the seventh day, Yoshio said, "Hey man, you cool..." Yoshio could whoop the dude, but he thought, "Hey man, this motherfucker's ignorant—he more ignorant than I am. He ain't got no brains." That's how I learned to respect Neil. There's certain people that you learn to respect because they're not scared.

What makes these attitudes and values backwards, or at least appear to be so is that they create/promote disunity among people, in their particular case, people of color. A fighting spirit, a strong uniting sense of brotherhood, and a willingness to support words and beliefs with action, are all characteristics which the Asian American movement is trying to promote (in different ways and styles). Where does the difference lie? The Ministers used these values to fight against other gangs, other poor people of color who had organized themselves into fighting units for the same reasons, because they experienced the same frustration, felt the same anger. They fought among themselves, and used up their energy in being baad, being 'cool' instead of directing their energies towards changing the conditions which were the root causes for their frustration and anger in the first place. Art talks about how when "Victor and I went in the service ...that's when you suddenly realize that you was fightin' Black, Chicanos, and Asians. I got in the service, man, I wasn't in there for a day and already I was a "Jap," I was a "gook," I was a "slant-eye." Suddenly, there was no more Ministers. There was no more Black Juans. And I was the only motherfuckin Jap in the whole squadron." And Victor adds that, "When people really see what's happening, you know, really see how clear it is, who the enemy is, and when they understand it's that motherfucker who's oppressing you, then I think they'll stand up and die for what they believe in. I believe if people are pushed to that point, where it becomes a matter of surviving or prostituting your principles, it'll happen."

During the years following the dissolution of the club in 1962, Ministers II and Ministers III formed. They patterned themselves after the original club, emphasizing fighting, but by 1968 drugs and getting loaded became more popular with the members. So, six years after they had gone their separate ways, Ats, Gary, Art, and Victor came together again—this time in a community organization called Yellow Brotherhood, which directed itself towards getting young people off drugs.

ART: The Brotherhood was composed of street people. Not just regular street people, but Asian street people. And these were some strong brothers. When you talk about togetherness, the Yellow Brotherhood had togetherness. It was obvious that we had the greatest amount of respect for each other.

ATS: And, we had some *hell* of a battle among the older guys. When we disagreed, all we would do is yell and cuss and call each other motherfuckers, "I'm quittin' this organization!" We'd sit there and argue and don't get nothing accomplished. Be mad as a motherfucker. But you know, the next day all us older cats would come back, preachin' the same shit, and telling the motherfuckers to get together. And, that's what I dug about the group, 'cause I could sit up there and cuss Victor out and talk to him for hours, cussin' and yelling and screamin' and ready to fight. But, the next day, when push comes to shove, we were together again, like it was no big thing.

What really impressed me about the YB was when they were playing volleyball. All these thugs, fifty of them, sittin' out there playing *volleyball—a sissy's game.* They *thought* it was a sissy's game until they couldn't figure out how to play it by the rules. One of the younger dudes, I think it was Richard Wong, came up to me and said, "I can't believe it, I really can't believe it! All these thugs, and here they are playing *volleyball*, instead of fightin' and gettin' loaded." Just couldn't believe it...

VIC: In a lot of ways, I think we should've let them fight. 'Cause it seems that when we broke up the gangs on the Westside, that was the end of any type of aggression by Asians. Like at Dorsey, they had some shit come up between the Asians and the Blacks. They were ready to get that shit on. And that's when Warren and us went down there, rapped to the people and squashed it. 'Cause what we thought was the problem was that they was fightin' and what we wanted to do was break up the gangs and quit this gang fightin.' Get them back into school and get 'em off drugs. But we really didn't have an overview. At the time we thought the problem was fightin'.

The formation of the Yellow Brotherhood broke up the last Westside Asian gang, and it was no coincidence that at the time (1968) the Asian community around Jefferson had begun dispersing to a large degree. There were a few families left—but most had moved to the other side of Exposition Boulevard, or to Monterey Park, Baldwin Hills, or to other higher economic class neighborhoods. The fighting, the hanging out on the streets by young Asians in the Westside were and are being replaced by new cars, stylin' clothes and other aspects of the "American Dream."

This is not to say that fighting and gangs are the alternative. A whole lot of Asian people are dead, in jail, or strung out. There was a lot of negative macho trips taken out on each other. But on the other hand, the strong ties of brotherhood, trust, and unity developed on the street is something that must be recognized. Also the 'fighting spirit,'—the energy and willingness to stand up and fight back against the problems in this society has to be rega ned for people to push for change in this country. Middle-class aspirations, prevalent in young people today, are not the answer.

"I think in a way it's good they don't have Asian gangs, but I'll tell you what I'd like to see," says Gary, "not so much an Asian gang but, like I want to see everyone make it, but in the process of making it, I want the mutherfuckers to lock ass with anybody—don't take shit from nobody. I don't know how—maybe you could have a program for fightin'." Ats also talked about how, "Fighting is an important part. I mean, I still wouldn't take no shit from nobody. I'll fight if I got to. But fighting to me is like everyday fighting. People got to get together within themselves to stand up to all the pressures of today. To me, a lot of people, Asian people, don't have that anymore. I mean, they go out there and cop this plea everytime. I mean, fuckin society's against me—they may be against you, but you sure not gonna settle it by crying about it. You gotta get off your ass and do something."

These four ex-Ministers have been fighting since they were kids. "Go for what you know" was what they lived by. Today they face a different kind of fight—a battle to survive in a decaying society.

And that isn't any different from the rest of us.

—Jeff Furumura, Tom Okabe, and Roy Nakano.

At a Yellow Brotherhood meeting—Willie Fujinami, Richard Wong, and Art Ishii.

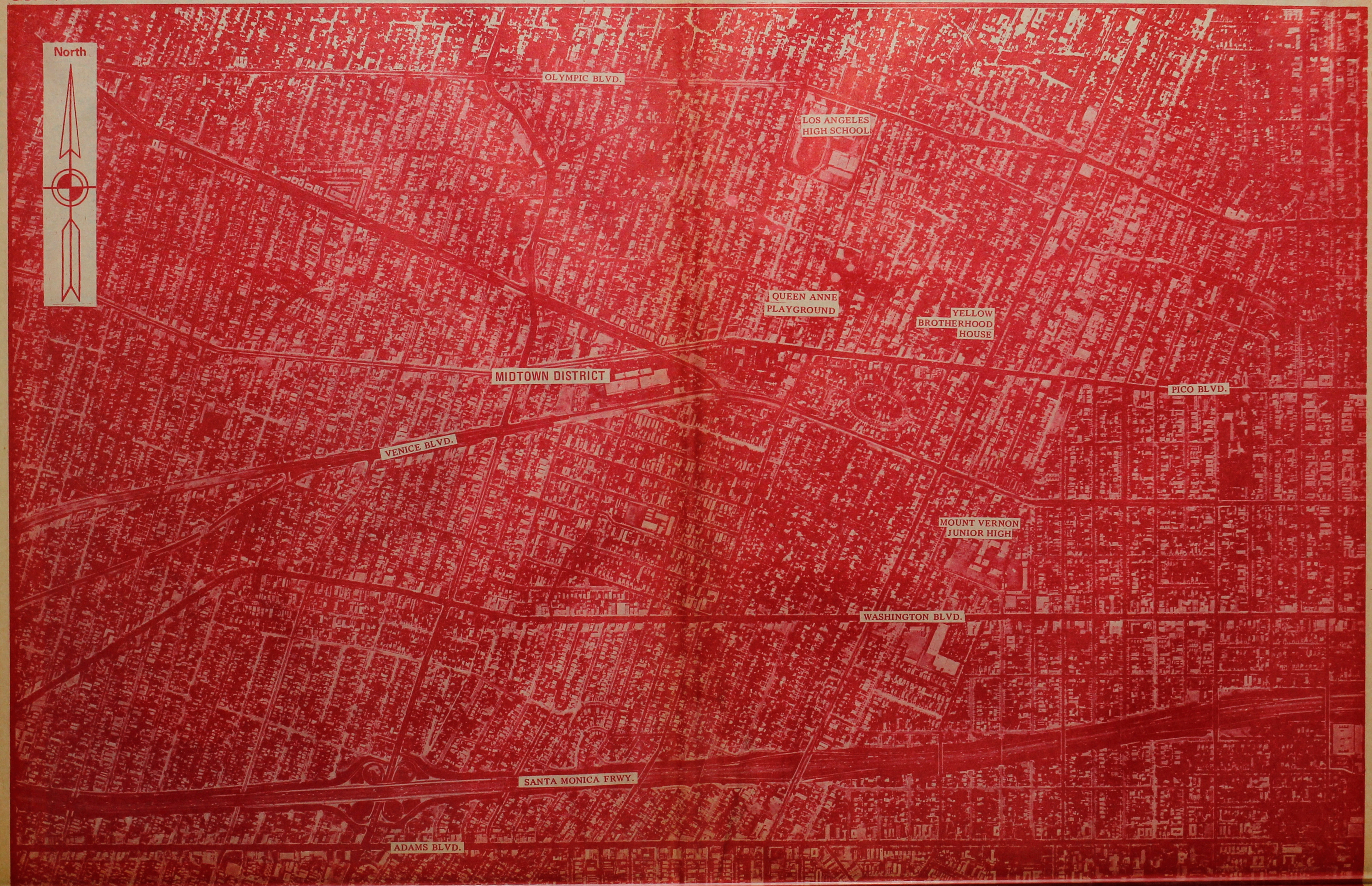

North
OLYMPIC BLVD.
LOS ANGELES HIGH SCHOOL
QUEEN ANNE PLAYGROUND
YELLOW BROTHERHOOD HOUSE
MIDTOWN DISTRICT
PICO BLVD.
VENICE BLVD.
MOUNT VERNON JUNIOR HIGH
WASHINGTON BLVD.
SANTA MONICA FRWY.
ADAMS BLVD.

Photo date: October 6, 1969

"THE WESTSIDE" – Los Angeles, California

Scale: 1" = 1000'

WATERGATE:
Conspiracy & Control

David Levine
New York Review

Posing the Questions.

I wonder why so often, when people first hear what we Lefties have to say, they get turned off? Starting with the premise that what our constituency perceives—not merely what we intend—is the crucial result, two observations:

The first is the movement's carefully perfected arrogance, described by Patti Iwataki last month (see *Gidra,* June, 1973, p. 11). Increasingly conspicuous lately are movement people (friends, mind you) who act as if the world's main problem was their own credibility as "revolutionaries," who count on their hands those whose revolutionary status they recognize or reject, and apparently believe that one does or does not qualify by the glib opinions or grim poses one can muster. A sorry state.

Second, is what initially appears to be our simplistic world view, particularly when describing the system, process, men and institutions of the Empire. Vague references to "The Man," or "Chuck," present a loose, rhetoric-worn image of our outlook of society and only drive away skeptics who might otherwise join in.

I'm not sure what we can do about the first problem save to lay the cards on the table, gambling we'll eventually read this elitism for the big bluff hand it is.

As for the second though, I'll try here to begin an unorthodox (but not original) discussion on the structure of the ruling class, and what tensions seem to be surfacing, particularly in regard to Watergate. From this scandal, famous left-wing media like *Time* magazine and CBS have bestowed upon we ordinary citizens the biggest piece of the government-in-action iceberg our worn mittens have yet poked at. Cold truth. Yet it remains an opaque one; that is, the full meaning crystallized in Watergate is yet to be understood.

Summary.

Preview: What I will argue in this article is the following.

There are two unequal summits to the American power structure. Both capitalist, thence: expansionist, imperialist, racist, militarist. On general principles they are united, but on certain issues, deeply at odds. We will call them the *Yankees* and the *Cowboys,* based on Michael Locker's theory and Carl Oglesby's formulation. The last ten years have placed them in deeper contradiction; their squabbles affect everything from meat and gasoline prices to the war, and also the movement's options in prolonging their antagonism, thus to weaken their power. I think Nixon is being offered up as a sacrifice. And, kicking and screaming as only Nixon can (thus the uncertainty about how all this will end), he is more the Yankee's victim than the Cowboy's martyr to save them both: U.S. capitalism as a whole.

White History.

If this seems like fantasy or paranoia, we need to trace the dual progression of white America and U.S. capitalism. Dust off your history books.

Before 1776, the Southern plantation elite controlled colonial affairs and tried to hold back the mainly Northern movement toward independence. It seized power at the 1789 Constitutional Convention, established Washington, D.C. in what was then the South, and ran the country from then on. Meanwhile the Yankee industrialist had to tolerate its rule. The Southern agrarian, consuming but not producing industrial goods, wanted lower prices and therefore drove the tariff down further each year. The Yankee on the other hand, needed a high tariff wall to protect his developing industrial base against a more advanced Europe.

Due to its slave mode of production which, ironically, was at once vicious and inefficient (the necessity of close supervision, inability to accomodate new technology, relative inflexibility in the labor force) the Southern agrarian economy declined in relation to the irresistible rise of the industrial North. The result was the Civil War, which reversed the positions and gave the Yankee the command he has since kept.

The Yankee's story—corporate growth in power and wealth due to the unspeakable oppression of generations of workers—is well known.

Meanwhile, the defeated Southerner moved west upon the plains, mixed political blood with the frontier democrat, commited in his conquests red, brown and yellow genocide, and emerged as—John Wayne. Seeking economic and political security from the hated Eastern banks, he may be called the Cowboy.

Both Cowboy and Yankee agree that commercial expansion is vital for their interests. But they differ in their priorities.

Yankee: prevailing political disposition, the classic corporate liberal. He wants free trade and favors hegemonic rather than coercive social problem solving. Key words: "rationality" and "progress." Cowboy: present politics, hard right—militarist, protectionist. For them, say: "Law" and "order."

Yankee: larger and richer, they are the ruling class proper. Their power is centered in the big Eastern banks and the multinational corporations. Think of Rockefeller, Kennedy, Javits, Lodge, the Ford Foundation, the Bilderberg Group, Chase Manhattan Bank, the Irving Trust, Harvard.

Cowboys: smaller, newer, less bound together. Mushroomed after World War Two in the Cold War solution to capitalism's booms

The Amazing Battle Between the Yankees and the Cowboys & How Come Nixon's on the Carpet

and busts. A *national* bourgeoisie as opposed to the international Yankees. Their power is in Tulsa-Houston-New Orleans (non-Rockefeller) oil; cattle and grains (i.e., the big farmers clumped around Wichita and St. Louis); real estate (Dade County Florida, Hawaii); and aerospace (the military industrial complex) in Huntsville, Dallas, Phoenix and Los Angeles. Think of Nixon, Connally, Reagan, L.B.J., Litton, Las Vegas, Miami Beach, the Teamsters, the University of Southern California.

Note the political diversity of both groups. Both have representation in the two major parties. In fact, what traditionally occurs in national politics is a coalition of the two, with the Cowboys assigned the vice-presidency in both parties.

One analyst has pictured the Yankee with a lot more eggs in a lot more baskets scattered all around the globe. Still, the Yankee basically faces across the Atlantic; most of his chips stacked in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. His chief requirement is to maintain the security and integration of Western Europe by means of the Alliance, NATO, and the universal dollar. Vietnam and Asia (save Japan, which for the Yankee, floats just off Manhattan) lie beyond. He would have been happy to win in Southeast Asia, but the requirements of a stable North Atlantic economy deemed the volatile Orient a problematic investment.

The Cowboy, with less eggs, faces Westward and concentrates his baskets across the Pacific Lake. As Oglesby puts it, since he can't get into Europe or Latin America due to his Yankee rival; and because of his old dreams of opening China (the cotton trade); and indeed of Manifest Destiny itself—the Cowboy determines: Asia must be had—and with no essential subtlety either.

How does Watergate relate? A breach between the two wings of the ruling class. The information on foreign policy is important because historically, the conflict of the Eastern establishment vs. the Southern coalition has been greatest when considering the U.S. involvement in Asia. A cursory review:

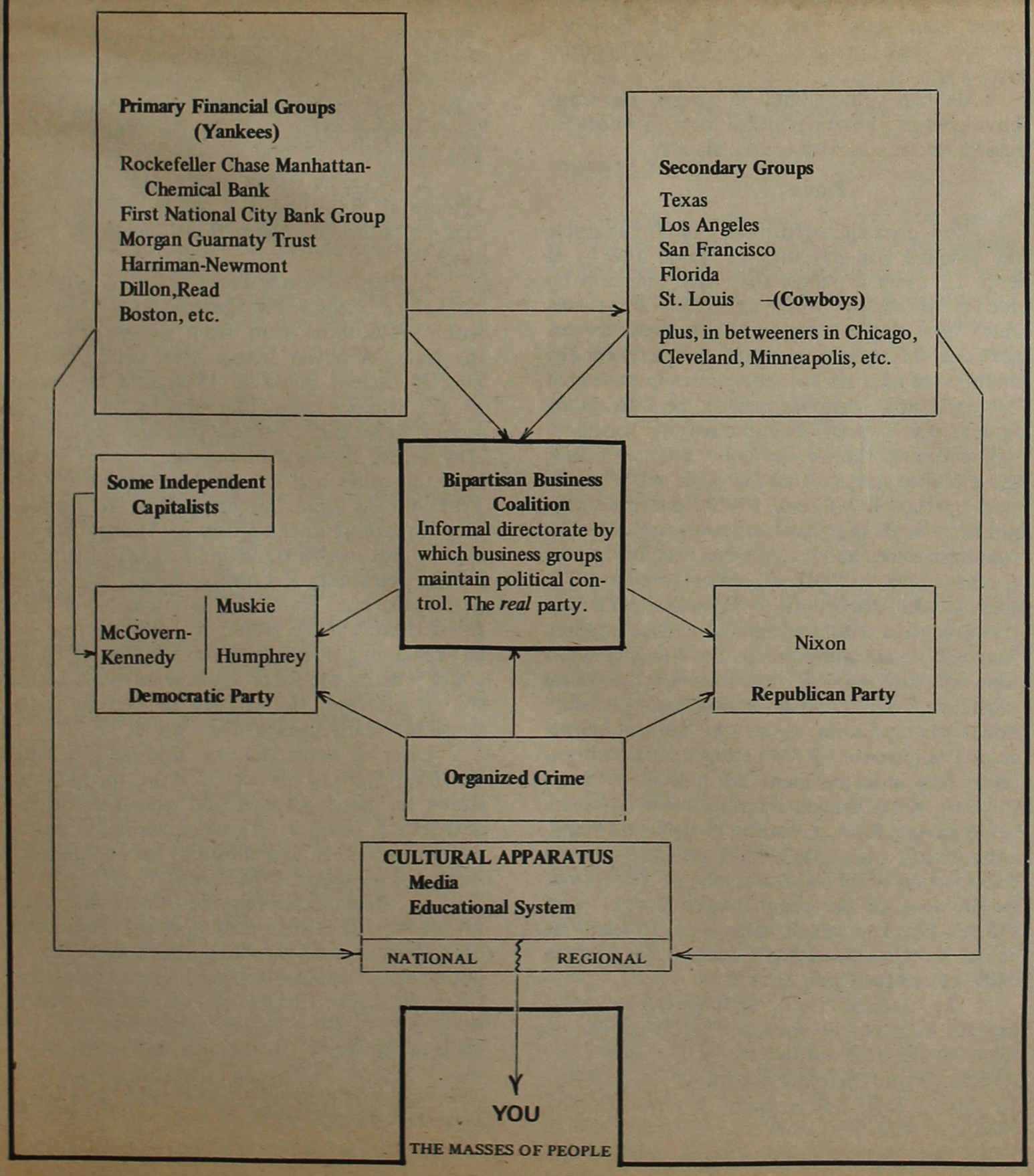
1947. Truman, apparently with Yankee Acheson behind the scenes, commences the Asian Cold War. The Truman Doctrine's concrete results are entry into Korea and solid support for the French colonialists in Indochina.

1960. Kennedy barely wins out and timidly holds the past together with sociological scotch tape. That is, CIA and green berets for short runs; New Deal for the long pass.

Summer '63. Gaining confidence, JFK begins edging leftward, embattling his own cowboys: Johnson and Rusk on the decline. McNamara struggling with the Joint Chiefs. Bobby bucking the intelligence networks. Changes: Laotian accords in '62; hints at thaws with China, USSR, maybe even Cuba; a reassessment of Diem; a hint at a new policy on Vietnam toward a political settlement; and discussion of lessening the tax breaks for the Houston oil men. Early November, Diem assassinated, no regrets from the White House.

Economic Political Structure of the U.S. Bourgeoisie
[Adapted from NACLA Report, Vol. 6, no. 8, October 1972]

Arrows indicate lines of power between various institutions.



Cowboy Coup

November '63. In effect, a coup d'etat. Dallas shots bring Cowboy authority to the executive branch: Johnson, Rusk and McCone (the CIA hard right) reborn. Simplified: the ruling class Yankees lose executive power to the Cowboys who are now the governing class.

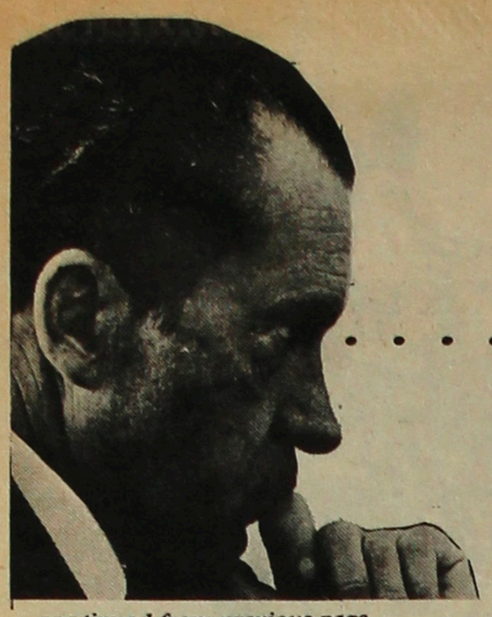
Throughout '64. Johnson plays it cool, makes no waves, plays Yankee to a "realigned" Republican party (i.e., Cowboys in full control of the G.O.P.; Rockefeller and old Eastern money, out). Johnson wins heavy. Immediately after elections he dons his old boots to ride the range again, and the Asian war quickly becomes Cowboyized. The corporate liberals are purged from State: Kattenberg, Forestal, Truehart, Roger Hilsman, even wiley arch-Yankee Averell Harriman.

But the Vietnamese revolution will not be stopped; the war gets wider and deeper. Protests and resistance mount. Meanwhile, the inner cities' signature is written in August flames.

Comes 1968. In February: the Tet offensive—Johnson's military illusions are demolished. In March: the gold outflow crisis—his financial illusions, ditto. He cannot govern. The Yankees wake up. No doubt some late night conferences in certain Georgetown mansions, some long distance calls to Zurich. Then thoroughbred Yankee heavyweights, Harriman, Clark Clifford and Cyrus Vance swagger into town. Thinking: "The policies of this Cowboy impostor don't serve the most basic Yankee interests; they don't even work on their own terms." Gathering their forces together they heave Yankeedom's immense club and lay it on Johnson straight.

Next morning it seems: Johnson abdicates; willing tool Bobby seems on his way up; McNamara packs off for the World Bank to

continued on next page...



. . . . . Nixon is Being Dumped Because the

... continued from previous page

patch up the money crisis; Harriman and Vance named as Paris negotiators; Clifford takes control of everything at Defense. Yankees have the bases loaded in their home stadium.

RFK, the charisma kid, seems unbeatable until his political murder in Los Angeles. Once again the Cowboy right takes control, and another Southwesterner gains the White House by way of a Yankee's assassination. Our famous Nixon.

War Planes Drifter

Nixon's first term momentarily fooled some right wingers even though his every move was in their interests. Through the domestic repression, poverty program cuts, wage freeze, and the plums for big business, Nixon kept shiny his sheriff's star. Facing U.S. defeat in Indochina, he dragged out the full four years, mauling the countryside with Cambodia, Laos, mining, and the worst bombing ever—all to justify the Yankee-Kissinger political agreement that could have been had a decade before.

Still, the China trip fooled William F. Buckley and angered some of the rich textile barons; suddenly here was Nixon looking like a left Yankee. (Like Johnson did in '64.) China's motives we need not touch on here, but I argued last August (in an article on Japan) that this was a trick (probably) holding nuclear consequences (possibly). Who knows, if Watergate had not intervened, what Tonkin Gulf-deceit Nixon was preparing to missile launch on the Chinese people? But enough. Cowboy interests were finally pacified, earning Nixon a second term, and a freer rein.

Cowboy Power

Let's pause and look at this sunbelt *nouveau riche* who surround Nixon and whose names pop up now in so many courtroom depositions. Of course not all of Nixon's advisors and contributors represent the Southern Coalition, but their *relative* ascendency in national politics in recent years has been remarkable. They are more loosely knit than Eastern power, and "whether because of the newness of their position, their frontier heritage, or their lack of old-school ties, they tend to be without particular concerns about the niceties of business ethics and morals, and therefore to be connected more than earlier money thought wise with shady speculations, political influence peddling, corrupt unions, and even organized crime." (Kirkpatrick Sale, *New York Review*).

(Nixon himself has been involved with the mob since he was elected district attorney of Whittier in 1940. For instance he intervened in behalf of mobster Bugsy Siegel who was then strongarming payoffs from both management and unions in Hollywood during the war. Siegel avoided prosecution. Mickey Cohen lent at least $25,000 to Nixon's campaign in '47.)

The following inventory comes from Sale's article.

Three out of Nixon's four original "super cabinet" people (excluding Kissinger) were from Cowboy country: Roy Ash (Litton, Calif. millionaire, defense contractor); John Erlichman (Calif. lawyer); and H. R. Haldeman (Calif. PR man). In the cabinet: Armstrong (Texas Republican), Brinegar (Union Oil), F. Dent (South Carolina textile millionaire), Kleindienst (Goldwater crony), and Weinberger (former Reagan aide). Four of Nixon's five Supreme Court nominees have been Southern conservatives. Key appointments to the Republican National Committee are deep into Southern oil and Western cattle.

A few others: Press secretary Ziegler (Disneyland), Budget manager Malek (South Carolina tool manufacturer), Education Commissioner Ottina (Calif. defense industry), Communications Director Herb Klein (Copley Press, Calif.), Deputy Defense Secretary Clements (Texas oil millionaire), Assistant Agriculture Secretary Long (Bank of America).

Among the President's few friends all but a couple new-money Easterners are from the Southern rim. C. Arnholt Smith (San Diego, more details on him later), Herb Kalmbach (L.A. lawyer), Murray Chotiner (Calif. lawyer) and top Cowboy John Connally. The closest of all is Bebe Rebozo who, during World War Two, through some questionable loans and cashing in of stolen stocks, went from being a Florida gas station operator (while gas was being rationed) to a wheeling dealing millionaire.

Of course, Nixon's last campaign got plenty from the old money East. Richard Mellon Scaife (Gulf oil among others) gave a million dollars. And those with Yankee defense contracts like Arthur Watson of IBM ($303,000) and Saul Steinberg of Leasco (quarter of a million) gave heavy too. But looming strength from the Cowboys is in evidence. Contributions from domestic oil donors like Kent Smith, J. Paul Getty, John J. Shaheen, Elisha Walker and others brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars each. The list of Southern rim computer companies, textile firms, tool manufacturers, real estate interests, entertainment conglomerates, and right wing unions (the Seafarers and the Teamsters gave $100,000 each) continues on and on.

Enough with redundant figures. The Cowboys exist as a potent political force in whose interests Nixon acts with brazen alacrity.

Prices

How does this affect us? Take for example the gasoline you pay for. It's higher now by at least 12 cents a gallon than last year and no decline in sight. What are Nixon's policies here? You don't have to be paranoid to suspect that his actions constitute payoffs for the millions of dollars oil companies contributed last year. Now, there may indeed be a dwindling fuel supply; if America's extravagant consumption continues, there's sure to be. But as for now, the evidence suggests that the crisis has been created by the oil interests, both Eastern internationalists and the Cowboy independents. The Administration has proposed cancelling import quotas which will allow greater foreign oil to come in—directly benefiting the worldly Yankee. However, fees will be charged on these imports. This will be advantageous to the Cowboy oilers who will also be given millions for "technical assistance." Oil companies will also get additional tax subsidies above the current depreciation allowance. By creating a crisis atmosphere (the industry spent $3 million in PR on this last year) the oil interests want to create panic buying, force relaxation of pollution standards, justify high prices, and pressure for the construction of the Alaskan pipe line. (Cowboys, led by Interior Secretary Rogers Morton want the Alaskan line which delivers oil to the West coast; Yankees favor the Canadian Line which ends around the Great Lakes).

The Federal Trade Commission is studying antitrust action because the oil companies seem to have "contributed in a major way" to the current gasoline shortage. (L.A. *Times*, 12 May '73). But gauging the wealth and power of the petroleum interests, and noting FTC past performances, there's little hope through this channel.

Consider now your meat prices. There were some "natural" accidents which brought it on. Crop destroying floods in the East and Midwest. Then, a corn blight raised the price of feed for livestock. (Due to errors by the Agriculture Dept., a high yield variety of corn was sown without testing for its blight resistance). After a Russian crop failure, the U.S. sold $1.2 billion worth of grain to the Soviet Union, cutting into U.S. supplies.

Most important though was Nixon's wooing of the world-market farmers of the Plains states during the election. Heading off South Dakota's McGovern, Federal subsidies to keep land out of production skyrocketed by a billion dollars in one year (to $4.1 billion) and food production dropped by 2 percent. (*Time*, 9 April '73). Therefore: you're eating soybean casserole and walking everywhere so the Cowboys can get rich on a millionaire's welfare program.

Yankee Intervention, Two Reasons

We see now how the Yankees and Cowboys developed, what their differences are, and what the latest Cowboy administration has brought us. But "so what?" you ask. Watergate is ordinary, if large scale, political corruption. Why create elaborate theories? Two answers—(a) Nixon's personal ambitions, and (b) the economic crisis.

Indulge one moment your suspicions, paranoia, and what you *really* know, and put all sorts of pieces together.

1. The indisputable fact about the Presidency the last three decades has been deceit—less constrained and more naked each time. Hiroshima, Bay of Pigs, Gulf of Tonkin, Indochina, the ghettoes, barrios and reservations, the cities, the press, the congress, the Democratic Party—each stage a *less* threatening target for widening repression for the White House. What next?

2. Revealed some years ago: the think tankers at Rand made a study on the feasibility of cancelling the national elections. What else?

3. What we know about Nixon. A gambler: He helped finance his Congressional campaign with $15,000 he won from poker games in the Navy. A power driver: After being rejected by the Eastern banks in 1960, and his defeat in '62, Nixon knew that staying in Whittier would keep him a small potatoes politician. Why would he want to run for mayor? Seeing how the other half lives, Nixon moved to New York, joined John Mitchell's firm, to become very important to the cream of Yankee finance capital. But in this transition he learned another lesson: remaining a Cowboy keeps one a perpetual also-ran. He knew he could never be a full-fledged Yankee either: it would destroy his last remaining power base and the Eastern snobs could jettison the joker anytime anyway. Lights started blinking. He will try to become indispensible to both groups—for a while.

Later as suspected, we find he is a loyal Cowboy. Starting his second term, the gambler shows his hand. Cabinet and executive firings, cutbacks in poverty programs, continued political repressiveness, and subsidies for the military industrial complex. Who benefits?

4. How much can the American public tolerate when led up in gradual steps? Escalation of the war—even to genocidal dimensions—breeds numbness. Cynicism to government corruption when Watergate first broke—resulted in apathy. Even the Pentagon Papers proved too thick to read—no uproar. The people can be deceived. The J. Walter Thompson advertising firm is in the innermost ring of power. Who buys, who sells?

5. Orchestrate some bonanzas; make real

Yankee Capitalists Want to Go About Their Business...

public issues out of tissue. The POWs, the bicentennial, the moonshots, and Billy Graham Christianity (Key 73). Gain trust. Then: A riot? An assassination? After Wallace, who?

Scenario.

Go ahead, you can doubt me, but what do Watergate and the Pentagon Papers tell us but that the government sees its own people as a subversive force, and that the people must therefore be robbed, spied upon, lied to, at every turn? What else besides that we should be as suspicious of this government as possible.

Nixon therefore, with his rising crescendo against the press makes them cautious. With his phoney Vietnam settlement and tricky trips he seduces the electorate. The gambler waits to pounce...is "four more years"—enough?

An imaginary adviser, standing on Nixon's shoulder, whispers into his open ear:

"Try this one Dick: Plant a bomb at the Republican convention, provoke some riots, discover evidence among Democrats, intensify public fears, declare martial law, round up radicals, cow the media, cancel the elections, establish—'temporarily my fellow Americans'—a benign Fascist dictatorship."

"Too much? At least, Dick, explore the options. Let's see what the Democratic files look like. We should be able to burn them bad enough (can't keep up all these assassinations), force some public outrage, smash their party, change the Constitution, and stay in power another 8 to twelve years. If we botch it, we'll make the usual pay off, eliminate some pawns (Mrs. Hunt's airplane crash) and the Secretary *will* disavow any knowledge of the actions."

Take your pick.

But the Yankees didn't go for it. They've enjoyed power for a hundred years now so why risk it? Besides, they don't think the American people are Fascists yet. Manipulable yes, but not bad people. As long as they keep buying their products.

So the Yankees waited until after the elections—McGovern being some kind of kook they didn't want to mess with. Three quarters of all we know about Watergate now was known in October, but somehow people didn't care. Now that Yankee media carries it on the cover, it's an issue, and the Cowboy plan is in retreat.

If the scenario seems too bizarre, behold: the rational Yankee not only headed off an attack from his Right, he also didn't want one from the Left. The second answer: the present economic situation.

The situation is terrible—for ordinary working/unable to work people—even now for the capitalist. In 1968, the roots of the Yankee/Cowboy conflict over the Asian war were economic. The Yankee saw:

—a Vietnamese victory at some indeterminant but inevitable future.

—the rise of China despite U.S. thunder.

—the decay in relations with Japan and thus the emergence of a China—Japan alliance, at least economically.

In 1973 these situations still obtain, but there's more. Look around.

—European-American relations are steadily cooling despite the so-called "Year of Europe." Productivity of key European nations has risen at a higher rate than the U.S.; therefore they want some compromises and resist American attempts to use military leverage for trade concessions. In short, European nationalism.

Focusing domestically:

—4.2 million people looking for work—a 5 percent unemployment figure which appears solid.

—the Dow Jones industrials have been on a five-month slide; below 900 the beginning of June.

—the dollar is weak and gold in London is a record $118.75 an ounce and rising.

—inflation and interest rates continue to rise.

—The American Exchange is trading 40 percent below 1972; the 549 member firms of the New York Stock exchange collectively lost $75 million in the year's first quarter—a catastrophe for a Wall Street Yankee.

—The number of stock holders in the U.S. has declined for the first time since the N.Y.S.E. started keeping track in 1952.

—For the Yankee capitalist, perhaps worst of all: A recession due late this year.

Crisis in the Empire. The Yankees, who want neither scarcity riots and strikes, nor a police state to infringe on their oh so progressive, rational, corporate liberalism, huddle once again. The big stick again comes out of the closet and they lay it down hard.

Nixon is being battered. His speeches and statements are forced and hollow; his aides are turning on him because he can't protect them any longer. Richard's closest friends are also feeling the heat so he'll get the message. Besides Mitchell's and Stan's indictments, best friend C. Arnholt Smith has been charged with securities law violations by the Securities and Exchange Commission (S.E.C.). The Internal Revenue Service is also investigating him. Bradford Cook has resigned as chairman of the S.E.C.—the Yankees reasserting what has always been their turf. Cook held office only 74 days before it was revealed that he deleted a reference to an unreported $200,000 Nixon campaign contribution from fugitive Robert Vesco in an S.E.C. complaint. Lately, Nixon's acquisition of San Clemente has been seriously questioned, and a host of other scandals pop up everyday. They're not being made up; they've always been there. They're simply being exposed now.

Nixon's Choices.

Watergate represents Nixon's lost gamble. Is it his last? What of the future? Impeachment, resignation, or Yankeeization of the Administration. Given Nixon's instincts, it's hard to tell. Impeachment would be embarassing; he'll resign before that. (A sympathy stirring heart attack, thinks Truman Capote). He has no defense and besides, all his old ties with West Coast mobsters will come out in public. (Think of Tricia's tears.) Even the right wing *National Review* is considering whether ousting Nixon is the only way to save the Republicans for 1976. In the papers meanwhile, Agnew (as opposed to Connally) is being cast as cleaner and more palatable everyday. Some switch. The Yankees may want to give him seven years in the White House as long as he behaves himself (though some Yankees obviously don't trust him that far). If so, remember Spiro, comes from Maryland, the same state as Congressman William O. Mills who committed suicide over his small role in accepting unreported money. Perhaps a message. (Still, Spiro may not heed it and blow his shot.)

An alternative to resignation is keeping Nixon on, but with a major shift in policy and staff toward the Yankee interests. One can imagine Rockefeller, Percy, Lodge, and Javits filling some key roles if not direct positions. But it all depends how much the Easterners trust this wild Cowboy—they thought Johnson was difficult. There are three more years left to the term, not six months like 1968.

Nixon is being dumped because the Yankee capitalists want to go about their business without stirring the hoodwinked American people. They'll blame one man rather than let anyone question the system. They don't want to expose the realities of U.S. capitalism; they mask it over liberally: an image of a democratic superstructure of law by popular consent, instead of a dictatorial infrastructure of class rule by force.

What should we do? At the minimum, stay informed. Currently the movement is stalled and stymied, one result of our lefter-than-thou sermons and our pie in the sky theology which in turn, results from ignoring what's happening in the country and the world. Consider two of countless incalculable options:

Repression.

1. Nixon, cornered, may lash out. Focusing all the powers of shlock he's used since Checkers, and all the powers of genocide he's used on Hanoi, he may still try to panic the people back into line. A hint at his plan: the argument of National Security. To establish a unified base of support he might justify attacks on several targets: the Vietnamese, China, the internal Third World colonies. The movement should prepare its defenses.

Realignment.

2. The opposite—Nixon gives in to the Yankee demands. This unleashes the curious logic of *realignment* among the bourgeoisie. Traditionally, the Democrats and Republicans have had less differences with each other than within their own parties. That is, both developed Cowboy conservative/Yankee liberal coalitions. But beginning in 1964, and culminating with Nixon, the Republicans have increasingly served the Cowboys. Wishy washy McGovern failed to realign the more tightly knit Democratic party in November, even though the conservative Democrats had no power at the convention.

Possible now however is the long-awaited liberal to liberal, conservative to conservative shift in the party system—i.e., Yankee demos and Cowboy G.O.P. This theory is not new (Port Huron, 1962) but its fruition has until now never been forthcoming. This polarization to parties will only reflect the economic realities of the coalitions. Therefore: Realignment, as Oglesby wrote in '68, means that "one major party will have slipped the grasp of the ruling corporate elite." A climactic rift in the power structure. The movement should prepare its attack.

For both I may be wrong. Yankee power may not be as in control of events as I style it and some good arguments can be made for this. Just five months ago, liberalism, which so totally controls Brazil and Iran, was humiliated and helpless before RMN, who turned aside its every frenzied move. Also, the Yankee conservatives (yes, both groups have their factions)—can they really be happy with the public's new consciousness now of governmental crimes—ones they managed to get away with? Still, I think the former was partly disguise, and the latter predicts how they'll focus on the man, not the system. Yankeedom is no monolithic kingdom, but its collective world view has enough weight to push fate pretty far down the road.

Have we any power at all? In all of this it doesn't seem to immediately matter. The sheep don't care whether the old fat wolf or the young lean wolf is to do them in. Still though we possess neither the knowledge as to which pole the chickens will come to roost upon, nor the means to force the choice, we've simply got to keep our heads up. If the movement can sustain relevent analysis, education, and action from now, we'll turn off less new ears and maybe set the stage for achieving some new and needed forward progress.

—Bruce Iwasaki

Sources: Carl Oglesby in *Ramparts*, Oct. 71 and Nov. 72; *Guardian*, April 1968. Kirkpatrick Sale, *New York Review*, 3 May 1973. Ira Sohn

Experiences Part 2

They had told me
that this was going to be
an experience.
An experience
that might change
my perspective of realism.
So I prepared myself
for this change
because I believed them.
I believed them
because I saw their
honesty and sincerity
shine in their words
and happy faces.
Yes, I came as I was.
I was tired of trying to
"make the grade" or of
"knowing the score."
Tired enough to lose my
"school spirit" and "alma mater."
Tired of memorizing the
lines of Albert Einstein,
Charles Darwin, or
William Shakespere.
I was tired of society and all
of it's vanity.

Mitchell Matsumura

To Steve:

You asked that I change,
You demanded that I be different,
But what is it about me, my love,
    that brought us together yesterday?

I tried to change,
I tried to be different,
But what is it about me, my love,
    that keeps us together today?

I didn't change,
I am not different,
But what is it about me, my love,
    that will bind us together forever?

—Deni Ishii

Jail for the Yellow Man

Four men enter jail,
    all wearing a frown
Each stepping inside,
    each looking around,
"What it is Brother?"
    "sit on down,"
The "White man" smiles
    sitting down
The "Black man" smiles,
    grabbing a spot.
"What it is Brother?"
    "join on in,"
The "Brown man" smiles,
    joining on in
The "Yellow man" enters,
    looking for "His,"
He has no "brother,"
    so "what it is?"
Sitting off to one side,
    in the dirt and grime,
Yes by himself
    he'll do his time!

—Lane Tomota (YTS)

people's poems

Brother, speak to me
    bleak eyes say nothing
    to their virgin ears.

Your father
    is dead
Your mother
    loves two great men.
Awaken the dormant dragon, brother
    for I am dying.

Drink the wine
    of the living
Drink the tears
    of the dying
Drink the blood
    of the dead
Drink in the name of peace
    Let it fill your mouths
    Let it stream over your lips
    Let it stain the earth for which we
        kill
        to conquer

Brother, speak to me
    bleak eyes say nothing
    to their virgin ears.

We have marched
We have seen the brightness of Sun
We have seen the empty bushels
    in Autumn Harvest
We have divided our hearts
    with a wall of brick
And we have united a foreign continent
    with rails of steel.
Arise, great dragon
    for I am dying.

Sing your song of joy
Drink your wine of life
Dance until your limbs collapse.
But not here.
Please,
    not here.

Brother, speak to me
    bleak eyes say nothing
    to their virgin ears.

Lincoln Chu

Wind Song

Yesterdays were the days of yes
Now are the days of no.
Vine hands that have no roots,
In streets of man made stone,
Seek the brown earth buried
In the ashes of ancestors;
Men once the color of the land
Before the east wind blew.

The east wind came
With the living ghosts
In dead faces, as pale as the
Whiteness of their sails
On the seas of a transpiring calm,
Settling on the land
Like a slow plague,
Planting the seeds of stone.

Oh, for a west wind
Or a raging sea
To have swept the waters clear.
Or that a north wind
With an icy arm
Had crushed that ship of fate.

To blame the winds
To blame the sea
To blame the ashes....

The dead have left a legacy:

Days past are buried
Too deep for resurrection
By the whims of fools.

L.A. Rag
(21 years in the parade)

first, are you our sort of person?
are you guaranteed
for a lifetime of scrape-and-bow
with a smile between your teeth,
eyes blank as rusted coins,
heart closed like a water-squeezed

stone—
do you think you qualify?

here's a little book of pointers,
our private way of how
to make it easy on yourself:
    1) honest and hardworking,
    2) law-abiding
    and 3) clean,
simply follow the instructions;
fold yourself into the requisite positions,
pushing your fingers down your throat
to stop the bloody bile of words
                words—

like so—
you'll do just fine.

thousand-wired city,
the color of a sick old moon
strangling in the iron of its own umbilicus,

let me put your eyes out:
where they made a star
there will be two holes.
your breasts are raw and angry
where the bones burn through,
twin reflections of my silence-wounded people.

now, down on your sticky knees
with your broken mouth and its leaping tongue,
I'll try your fear and honor

and meet the red shout of morning
with my own.

Laura Tokunaga
12/1/71

Youth Fight for Summer Employment

Asian youth meet at Chinatown Teen Post to go to City Hall...

Early in May, Asian organizations in Los Angeles began their third year of planning for N.Y.C., Neighborhood Youth Corps. N.Y.C. was a federally funded summer youth employment program for low income youth, ages 14-18. Developed as part of the War on Poverty thrust in the aftermath of the Watts riots, the N.Y.C. program was designed to "keep youth off the streets" by giving them the opportunity to work within community projects in their own communities.

This year, President Nixon has frozen the funds allocated for the N.Y.C. program. Instead in Los Angeles, the City Council allocated $3.1 million for a summer youth employment program for low income youth. Early in May, we were told that approximately 3,700 youth would be employed by community agencies and 2,000 by City Departments, such as Water and Power, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Police Department, etc.

Since that time, however, a new resolution passed by the City Council stipulated that the City Departments would have priority over community agencies in filling requests for summer youth employment slots. They also stipulated that slots not used by City Departments were to be allocated *equally* among the fifteen councilmatic districts in Los Angeles rather than according to districts with the highest concentrations of poor in the city. In the discussion of this resolution, the City Council stated that N.Y.C. programs run through community agencies in the past had often proved to be "radical" or had discredited the City government. They also pointed out that the City was using city taxpayers money this time and that the City needed alot of work done--such as improving the streets, cleaning police cars, office work within City Hall, etc. By the beginning of June, then, this action resulted in 3900 summer youth employment slots being allocated to City Departments and 2,000 slots being allocated to all community agencies in Los Angeles. There were a total of 10,000 slots requested by community agencies. The Asian community alone asked for 571 slots for Pilipinos, Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans. To make things worse, the 2,000 slots for community agencies, when broken down equally among 15 councilmatic districts, came out to only 130 slots per district for all Black, Brown, Asian, and Indian low income people. Since most Asians still live in districts with high concentrations of Blacks and Chicanos, we realized that we would just be fighting amongst ourselves for a few crumbs.

In response to this situation, on June 18, 400 youth from the Black, Chicano, Asian, and Indian communities packed the City Council Chambers to appeal for more slots for community agencies and for more slots for districts with high concentrations of poor. The issue was denied hearing, the City Council adjourned, and walked out right in front of 400 youth who had come out from thier communities to express their concerns before "their" elected officials. The Councilmen said, "Come back tomorrow". We did! This time with more people!

On June 19, about 600 youth and community workers again packed the City Council Chambers—this time at a Board of Grants hearing (special committee of the City Council). At this meeting, Councilman Snyder and Lindsey, responding to community pressure and probably their own political ambitions, presented a resolution before the Board of Grants which stated:

—that the final recruitment date for Summer Youth Employment Program be extended to June 27, 1973 after which date those districts that were unable to fill their slots with poverty youth would return their slots to districts with higher concentrations of poverty youth. (One of the Councilmen in a rich white district Westwood has already returned 300 slots for this reason.)

—that the returned slots be given to community agencies and not to City Departments.

—that an additional $500,000 be taken from an Emergency Reserve Fund under the control of the City Council and be allocated to the Summer Youth Employment program—creating 1,295 more job slots for community agencies.

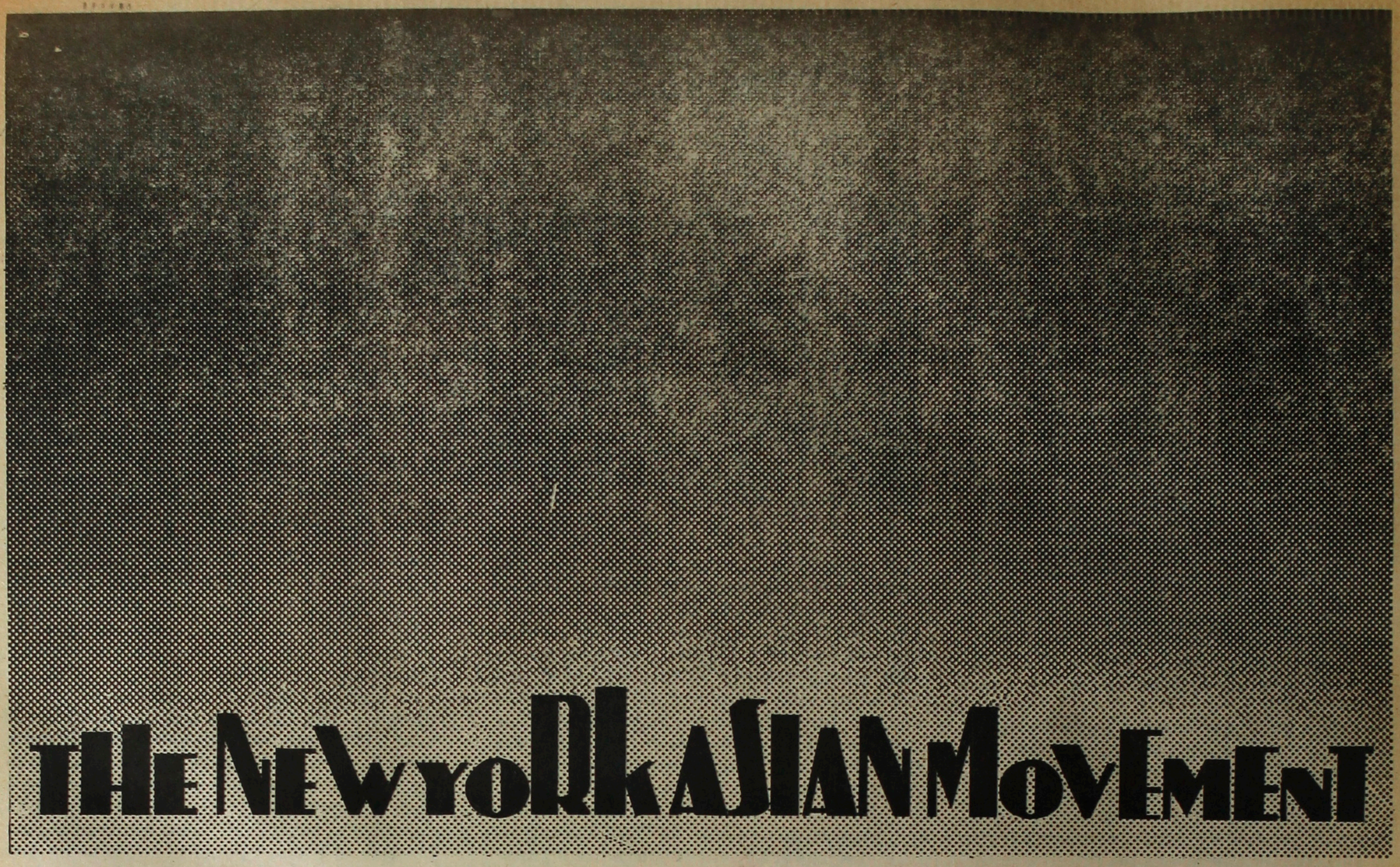
The Board of Grants recommended that the resolution be passed and brought up before the entire City Council for final approval during the last week in June.

We'll have to see and report in next issue what happens from here. It is possible that the councilmen from the rich white districts will still oppose the resolution because it will mean less slots for them and less favors for their constituents. On the other hand, the presence of 600 youth in the City Council chambers made the point clear that it would be a long hot summer if something is not done.

Although most of us understand that the passage of the resolution and the allocation of even 2,000 more slots will not necessarily mean that the tremendous needs of low income minority youth will begin to be met, but we do see that the mobilization of youth and the entire community behind this issue has been a clear example of people's power in action and a first step in building consciousness among youth about what this system is. Organized pressure from united Third World communities brought the quiet and efficient cogs of city machinery to a grinding halt. Usual tactics used by the government to divide our forces were not effective this time. For example, on June 18, the Asians were given hints that we had in fact gotten all the slots we requested for our community agencies. In many ways, we saw this as a people's victory in that Asians had put on enough pressure to get what we wanted. At the same time, we realized that since Asians had played a key role in organizing behind this issue, it was also a tactic to pacify us so that we would not continue to fight for the whole. We realized that if rumors spread that Asians got proportionately more slots than other Third World people, it would be the young people themselves who would have to deal with the bad feelings on the part of other Third World youth in the streets and in the schools. As Asians, then we reaffirmed our commitment to continue to fight along side of other Third World people to get more slots for everyone. So, on June 19, Chinese, Japanese, Pilipino, Samoan, and Korean youth joined with other Third World people at the City Council Chambers.

FRIDAY FUJIMOTO

JIRO AND FRITZ



THE NEW YORK ASIAN MOVEMENT

New York City..Damp, cold subways, tall buildings, crowded living conditions, the rich next to the poor.....What seems like all of humanity pouring together in the largest city in the U.S. .....

In the midst of this concrete alienating environment....people reach out to each other to survive and move toward change, to be a part of a living, growing Asian movement.

Asian Americans for Action: How It All Began

Asian Americans for Action was born on a park bench during the lunch hours of two Nisei women, close friends of long standing who shared common interests and beliefs. And as they munched on homemade sandwiches, they talked of many things—and chief among them were the war in Southeast Asia (they were early protestors), the black movement, and the campus uprisings. But one theme kept recurring—the lack of some kind of Asian organization to which their college-age children could relate. Only among the blacks was the "identity" problem explored in depth at the time, and the two mothers deplored the absence of concern about Asian identity among Asians.

Since meetings and organizing were not particularly their 'bag,' they were hesitant about taking any positive steps toward this end. But the urgency remained. Finally, with the encouragement of their children, they decided to seriously attempt the task of gathering together as many Asians as possible who shared their concern. They set a target date for the first meeting—Sunday, April 6, 1969. And began telephone calls to friends, contacts, and at every peace action they attended, cornered any Asian they saw, taking down names and addresses. They hoped for the best.

Sunday, April 6th, dawned clear and bright, a beautiful spring day, which augered well—for about 15 Asians of Japanese and Chinese ancestry, young and old, mostly strangers to one another, gathered together to initiate what was eventually to evolve into the begining of an Asian movement in New York City.

AAA drew in Asians from both the black and white movements (mostly college students) who strongly felt the need for an Asian political organization, and initiated activities around the issues of Okinawa and the U.S.—Japan Security Treaty; U.S. Imperialism in the Pacific Rim; the war in Vietnam, and J. Edgar Hoover's racist slurs against Chinese Americans.

In one of their first newsletters in 1969, AAA points to what was perhaps, the most important part of their early movement period:

> "we have worked, played, and struggled together as political Asians—so long alienated from one another; and we have grown together, personally and politically—young and old, Chinese, Japanese, Celonese, and Indian, nisei and sansei, Juk-hak (foreign-born Chinese) and Juk-sing (American-born Chinese)..."

Thus, the foundation was laid for the basic ties which still exist (not without pain and struggle) within the movement of Asians today.

Exodus of Young People Out of AAA

About the same time, a group of college students (many of whom were still members of community, began trying to serve people's needs in New York Chinatown through education and recreation; medical and draft counseling programs; and demonstrations held around the community control of schools and an end to the indignity of tourist buses in Chinatown.

By early 1970, many of the young people in AAA, most of whom were Chinese, became increasingly involved in Chinatown. They felt an impelling need for a Chinatown-based organization which would be more disciplined and ideologically oriented toward Marx-Lenin-Maoism. They formed *I Wor Kuen*, to which all but a few of the younger members of AAA initially belonged.

Cf. article on N.Y. Asian Movement by Merilynne Hamano in the March issue.
"A few corrections on the Article on the Washington, D.C. demonstration:

1. Work and leadership for demonstration was collective effort of many different individuals and organizations, each contributing invaluably to the effort of the whole.

2. The new organization formed after the demonstration was an attempt by various sisters and brothers to find a more effective way to carry on anti-imperialist struggles. Whether we provide direction or leadership to Asian movement can only be answered by time and out practice. Our hope is that we can make a positive contribution to the work that other organizations are doing." From the Asians in the Spirit of the Indochinese.

I Wor Kuen continued some of the community programs already established and began reaching out to the youth gangs in Chinatown.

Soon after, some other Asian young people, calling themselves Chickens Come Home to Roost, took over an abandoned storefront, along with several thousand other people who were "squating"—taking over abandoned buildings scheduled for urban renewal. The storefront was transformed into an Asian Drop-In Center. Many of these people continued work around antiwar and anti-imperialist issues and together with AAA, sponsored events such as the first successful Hiroshima-Nagasaki Day March and Rally in the Asian community.

AAA: Present-Day Goals Defined

After the exodus of young people, AAA was comprised of mostly older people who were frankly "strung out" by the youthful pace evidenced in the ambitious series of first year activities. They debated whether to continue the organization. At the final decisive meeting, a young Asian American sister, who had just returned from a visit to North Vietnam and North Korea, urged the weary oldsters, who were feeling somewhat dejected and abandoned, to struggle on. A unanimous vote followed, assuring the continuance of AAA. Perhaps the following quotation best expresses its subsequent history and present day goals:

> "We are presently largely a group of Nisei who feel we can contribute in some small way to the Asian Movement by sharing our past experience...who believe that not only the voice of the young should be heard but that it is of utmost urgency today for ALL Asians to participate in determining our collective futures."

The existence of a politically conscious, active, sophisticated group of *nisei* helps give much needed political leadership and a depth to the movement. I hope this can happen in other places soon too. Something very good happens to you when a gray haired Nisei woman, sitting with you in an antiwar demonstration meeting gives you pointers on how to prepare for tear gas attack!

A Year of Growth For the New York Asian Movement

Years later, people in the New York Asian Movement agree that "it has been an incredibly good year"...there has been growth in numbers,

ever close contact among ethnic groups, the development of a wide range of new programs, and further dialogue and struggle over ideological differences.

Third World Unity

The coming together of the Asian movement with other Third World anti-imperialist groups was really significant. Some examples are Black, Brown, Red and Asian Solidarity Day with Indo-Chinese People (an all day conference on August 19th); the march, 5,000 strong, of Third World People and Workers Against the War through Harlem and the Barrio on November 4; and in the Third World picket line protesting the ILGWU (International Ladies Garment Workers Union) "Made in Japan" ad. This ad manipulated racial antagonism to urge people to buy American.

The Opening of the United Asian Communities Center

After the City confiscated the building occupied by Chickens Come Home to Roost, the need for a place for people to gather was sorely felt. Finally, on December 10, 1972, three hundred Asians celebrated the opening of a new place: the United Asian Communities Center. Reflecting the broad kind of unity of ethnic groups and age found in the early AAA, the Center promises to be one of the main meeting places of the Asian movement in New York. Organizations meeting on a regular basis at the Center (in addition to the committee responsible for the Center as a whole) are: Asian Americans for Action; Asians on the Alert (watchdog for racist slurs in the media); Asian Coalition; Support Committe for a Democratic Philippines; American Indian Community House; and Sansei Workshop. The Center will be offering classes in art, English as a Second Language, and yoga; workshops on income tax and visa information; counseling, tutoring, and babysitting.

Reaching Out to the Japanese American Community

The Japanese American community in New York is a little different from that of Los Angeles. There is a large concentration of Japanese nationals—many of whom have come with the influx of Japanese businesses to America—but there are only 2,000 Japanese Americans in New York, most of whom are dispersed so there is no geographic community as in L.A.(e.g. Westside, Boyle Heights, Gardena, etc.). Despite this, there has been work going on among Japanese Americans in the form of: the sansei workshop, a rap group on identity for junior and senior high school youth; educational presentations sponsored by Asian Americans for Action at the Buddhist and Christian churches; and contacts with Japanese and Japanese American organizations (such as the Niko Niko Club, JACL, etc.)

Beginnings Among Koreans in New York

Two righteous Korean comrades in the Asian Coalition have been working on a Korean publication called *Insight* which receives poems, articles, and photos from Koreans all over the U.S. There are approximately 110,000 Koreans in the U.S. with about 40,000 in L.A. alone (with a plane full of new people arriving each week). They have been trying to get Korean young people together in New York and New Jersey. And they have also been concerned about educating other Asians and Third World people about the reunification of Korea (North and South). About 400 Koreans demonstrated recently in Washington D.C. at an anti-Park Chung Hee (puppet dictator of the South) Rally.

More on Amerasian Culture

Basement Workshop, located in Chinatown, has many different kinds of programs: 1) distribution for *Yellow Pearl*, planning for a stateside exhibition of the *Yellow Pearl* collection (photos, sketchings, slides, paintings), 2) *Bridge* Magazine—a magazine on Asian Americans produced by a group of young, Asian professionals in various fields, 3) Community Planning Section (continuation of efforts of Chinese urban planners who carried on a study of the housing, health, educational needs of residents of Chinatown, 4) Asian American Resource Center books, newspapers, dissertations, etc., 5) Asian American Creative Arts Workshop, perhaps the most dynamic section of Basement, complete with classes in Chinese, Japanese and modern dance; band practices, a photography workshop; as well as children's projects: storytelling project, coloring book for Chinese children. People at Basement are also conducting an Oral History Project to get the life stories of old people in Chinatown. The Basement Workshop, taking up a whole floor of a building, appeared to be a "hang out" for about fifty Asian American college age young people some of whom have been involved in organizing around Asian American Studies on the college campuses. There was a whole lot of energy in the Basement.

Asian Tactical Theatre (AT&T)

In a short-lived but dramatic life, Asian Tactical Theatre was a group of about fifteen to twenty Asians who formed a theatre group portraying the problems and experiences of Asian Americans in a creative form. There has also been the formation of one Asian women's group, and two Asian men's groups to deal with sexism; also, to build more communication and sharing of problems among women and among men in the movement.

A Lot Happening in New York Chinatown

New York Chinatown has several hundreds of thousands of Chinese immigrants—many of whom have come within the last five years. Tuberculosis is commonplace. Living conditions are really bad—at the place I was staying there was no heat during the day in weather of ten degrees below (or less?) and yet the rents are outrageously high.

Youth Gangs in Chinatown

While I was in New York, there had been a shoot out among Chinese gang members at a party in New Jersey. A symptom of the oppressive conditions in Chinatown has been the rise of youth gangs.

These gangs were originally formed in self-defense against gangs of Italians and Puerto Ricans who came into Chinatown looking for trouble. Along with the growth of the general population in Chinatown, gangs have also grown. With the doubling of the population since 1960, the gangs are mainly made up of foreign born Chinese brothers (although there are sisters who hang around with the gangs who have problems like unwanted pregnancies, running away from home, etc.), beginning at ages thirteen and fourteen. These gangs now control their own "territories" in Chinatown. They are often used by the KMT, the Chinese Benevolent Associations, and other reactionary forces in Chinatown to protect gambling, prostitution, and the drug traffic. In exchange, they get food, money and a place to hang out.

Like gangs here in L.A., however, we understand that they are a product of an environment ladened with poverty, lack of adequate bi-lingual education, recreational facilities, etc. The reality for most of these youths in Chinatown is that they are unable to relate to this country because of language and cultural barriers and are growing up having to have some of the same contradictions many sansei have to face, e.g. not

continued

understanding the conflict between American and Chinese values and traditions (like the Asian family structure); seeing only white models on TV (the John Wayne syndrome); seeing their mothers and fathers constantly working in humiliating jobs just to survive. The effect of the environment on the psychological development of human beings is reflected in the drawings of very young children in New York's Chinatown community—when asked to draw their impressions of Hong Kong and America, they drew pictures of battleships and Mickey Mouse.

I had a chance to visit two youth centers in Chinatown, These centers were for young people in junior and senior high school. One center, "Project Reach", was run by second generation Chinese Americans and provided a program of counseling, tutoring, activities like sports, music, rap groups, sex education, parent communication, and political education. This project was working with one of the youth gangs (at this point, it is hard to get different youth gangs under the same roof.) The other program was Third World—blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chinese—and was called "horizon." It had several facilities including a therapeutic community for heroin addicts. Both centers, however, were federally or state funded and saw themselves limited in terms of direct involvement in political activity/action. One of the most exciting programs which was being developed in Chinatown was the "Street Academy"—an alternative school for high school dropouts or those on the verge of dropping out. The "Street Academy" would provide all the necessary training as in regular school (math, science, etc.) and then some... i.e. counseling, political education.

Chinatown Food Co-op

Every Saturday, about 150 families from the community (around six to eight people per family) enjoy the services of the Chinatown Food Co-op. The Co-op is the result of the efforts of foreign students from Hong Kong and Taiwan, Japanese and Chinese Americans. These people decided to develop a program based on a real concept of cooperation. There are thirty workers in the Co-op ranging in age from junior high school to elderly—many of whom are also recipients of the Co-op.

In addition to this, there are the beginnings of a Chinatown Health Clinic and a legal services program. There was also a big struggle over community control of the local hospital—Goveneur Hospital, which resulted in the hiring of several progressive, community-minded people into decision-making positions; the hiring of more Chinese (bi-lingual) hospital workers; and the dissimination of a bi-lingual newsletter.

I Wor Kuen

I Wor Kuen is still operating a community-drop in center with film programs, a newspaper, recreational facilities, but as an organization, it has changed its emphasis from services (they merged their medical program with the Chinatown Health Clinic) and their work with young gang members, and are now trying to develop a base among working people in Chinatown.

A sister in IWK observed that the reactionary forces in Chinatown (like the KMT), formerly separated and competitive, have now formed a single reactionary block in direct reaction to their (IWK's) influence and presence. She saw the need for all progressive forces to also get together to further isolate the reactionary forces in the eyes of the community. The beginnings of communication and coordination could be seen in the formation of the Chinatown Committee to Support the Nine Point Peace Plan.

The Tiao Yu Tai Movement

During my visit, I had the chance to learn more about the Tiao Yu Tai Movement. Many Chinese foreign students who are concerned with the reunification of Taiwan with Mainland China originally mobilized around the issue of the Tiao Yu Tai Islands. These islands off the coast of Mainland China are rich in oil resources. The students organized a demonstration in Washington, D.C. on April 10, 1972 with about 2,500 people on attendance. The Tiao Yu Tai Movement is now focusing on Taiwan. Their position is that Taiwan is virtually a neo-colony of the U.S. There are now hundreds of serious and dedicated activists in the Tiao Yu Tai Movement on campuses all over the country. They put out a bi-weekly newspaper (in Chinese) and a magazine monthly, to raise some of these issues among other Chinese foreign students in the U.S. These students number into the ten to twenty thousands.

Unity of Asians in America

Living in the Chinatown community for ten days was really an experience for me. For the first time I realized, beyond the level of rhetoric, what it means to say that there's all kinds of different people with different kinds of cultures and experiences in what we call the Asian Movement and the Asian Community. It was the first time I had close contact with Chinese foreign students and I began to realize to what extent my experience was really L.A. Japanese American. And yet, the experience reinforced my understanding that we are still all Asian. When I was living in Chinatown, I'd always be bumping into people who would start talking to me in Chinese—at which point I'd explain that I was Japanese. I didn't experience hostility to this fact. I did feel, however, for the first time what it felt like to be one of the only Japanese among Chinese and I flashed on the need to be more conscious of our Japanese chauvinism in L.A. where we are working in many groups which are Asian, but predominantly Japanese. Also, I felt the need to build closer communications, coordination and support among the various ethnic communities.

Seeing the basis of Asian unity does not mean glossing over the real differences that do exist among the various ethnic groups; but it does mean that the total Asian movement has a depth and scope which reflects the diversity of Asian people in America.

Bringing It Home

There seems to be a whole lot happening in the New York Asian movement but just as it is for us, its just the beginning. Have you ever thought about all the things happening in L.A.? It blows your mind when you know none of it was going on five years ago. There's a movement on and it's growing every day.

But sometimes we get bogged down in our daily work and feel that our projects are ends in themselves—if they are going well, we feel good; if they're not, we feel bad—but somehow it feels good to know that we are part of and tied into something that is of a much wider scope—nationally and internationally.

Although we couldn't say, at this point, that the broad range of programs going on in New York or in L.A. are under one political banner—but we do know that we are definitely all part of one political process—the process of liberation for Asians and other Third World people in America. This process links us in L.A. to all other Asians and other Third World people in this country and throughout the world. And within this process we will be working in our respective geographical areas, according to our own particular conditions and perspectives.

Different movements in different cities will be strong in different areas of work but we all support and complement each other and can learn a great deal from each other. To realize that there are Asian sisters and brothers 3,000 miles away who are essentially coming from the same politics, motiviations and love for our people and are going over the same problems and questions of ideology, how to organize, how to make change—all gives us more strength to know that we will win.

—Merilynne Hamano

what's happening...

JULY 1973

June 30	*Gidra* dance
July 1	Movement forum 2-5p.m. at Resthaven Community Mental Health Center 765 W. College St.
	7 point peace plan of PRG presented in Paris in 1971
	People Need People pot luck picnic at Elysian Park 1–7p.m. at Lot 6 given by Joint Communications and brothers from the Joint. Music, speakers.
July 2	NYC program starts
	Nguyen Tahi Bin assasinated while attempting to divert 747 to Hanoi
July 4	LA Pilipino Coronation Dance at the Paladium with Barkada
July 5	Pilipino Educational at PYC, 3–5p.m. 834-1530
July 6–8	San Jose Asian American Conference, Calif State Univ, San Jose
July 7	Amerasia Bookstore Grand opening 338 2nd St. 10a.m.
	WLA Asian Festival
	Wounded Knee fund raiser, MAC 1730 W. Gardena at 8p.m. for info contact 327-0225
July 12	Pilipino Eduational
July 14	"Day of the Lotus" all Asian Cultural Festival at Echo Park 10a.m.–10p.m. free admission; food & art-crafts
July 16	Happy Birthday ITA!!!
July 17	Ho Chi Minh elected President of Republic of South Vietnam
July 19	Pilipino Educational
July 21	Creative Workshop bike rally
July 22	San Fernando YBA car wash at SF Buddhist Church 9450 Remick, Pacoima
July 23	Pilipino Youth Conference at Oak Grove, for info call 879-3576
July 26	Diem refuses to hold national elections in 1956
July 28–29	WLA Buddhist Church Obon Carnival
	WW1 begins 1914

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