

THEM BAD CATS part II

In the 50's and early 60's, a lot of Japanese in L.A. were living in an area called the Westside. Many were clustered around the intersection of Crenshaw and Jefferson Blvd., which had small stores and markets owned and run by people from the neighborhood. It was a fairly poor area but since everyone knew each other, the community was tight. One brother recalls his experiences. "I grew up on the Westside. My family (eight of us) lived in a three bedroom house on Norton Ave. off Jefferson. All the homes in our neighborhood were small and built close together. So close that we used to jump from the roof of our garage to next door's roof and then to the garage in back on 12th Ave. But being close together was cool, because everyone knew each other, especially on my block. I remember we used to hang out a lot, bullshitting, fighting, playing baseball and football in the streets, smoking in someone's backyard. There was nothing better to do so it seemed a lot better to hang out rather than be cooped up inside the house."

But then in the early 60's, as people became more affluent, they started moving to the other side of the "tracks." There are some railroad tracks that run down Exposition Blvd. (see map) These tracks served as a dividing point, economically. On the north side (near Jefferson) the houses were small and close together, while the south side had bigger, newer houses with a lot more space. Both sides were still considered Westside but the slight difference in living conditions separated them. Hardly anyone would venture across these tracks because the neighborhoods were so different. Another brother who lived near Jefferson said, "We used to hang around the dairy (11th Ave. and Expo.) and wait for someone to come across the tracks. If anyone came, we would kick their ass." A lot of frustration by young people on the north side were taken out on the kids who were more well off and lived on the other side.

"Fighting was an everyday thing. We used to hang out, with nothing to do, so we'd go

looking for people to fight us," remembered another brother. But street fighting on the Westside and in other Asian neighborhoods was no new thing. There were Asian street gangs since the 40's and the *Constituents* was a big Westside gang in the early 50's. (see "Them Bad Cats," *Gidra*, January 1973).

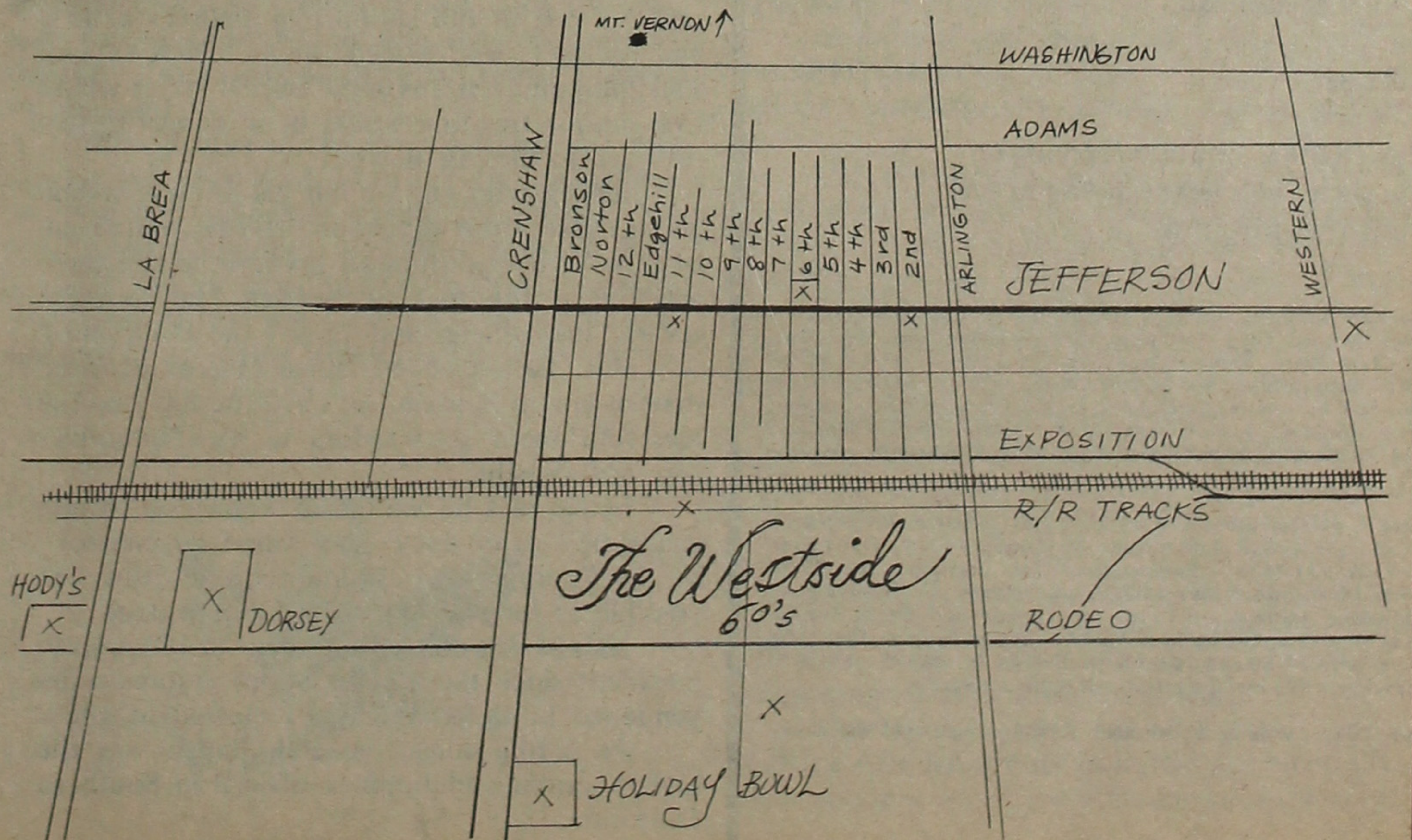
But by the 60's, there developed a certain pride in being able to fight and live in the Westside. Young people were proud to say, "I'm from the Westside." This pride was mainly due to a gang in the Westside that was baaaad. They fought anyone and everyone who would take them on. These "bad cats" called themselves the "Ministers."

This is the original way the Ministers started. "The Little Gents originated out of Mt. Vernon Junior High School. Now, this is what the problem was at Mt. Vernon—nobody messed with us except the older dudes. The younger guys, guys our own age, didn't want to fight us so we ended up fighting guys in high school and

older. The Little Gents already by then had a bad name. I mean, the whatsuznames came down looking for us—the Huns from Watts. And when they came down, there wasn't but three of us came out by the gate where they were at—the rest of them dudes turned around and split; no, they weren't gonna fight the Huns from Watts. But there was this brother, this Black cat, Maurice Enice (Mo). Mo, myself, and Suga went out the back gate. We walked on through, and we was cool, you understand. Hold your shit, you know. We walked on through, got around the corner and we was gone! (laughter). Shit, they would have busted our asses! They must've been the biggest mother-fuckers I ever laid eyes on! Them dudes looked about 80 years old and here we was in junior high school and they wanted to fight us.

"So the Little Gents broke up, and we went to high school. When we got there we decided to start up the club again. We met over at Henry Kato's place and we're trying to think of a name,

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Have you ever found yourself mulling over all the things that have happened and are happening around you? Students getting shot and killed on campuses, or people rioting in the streets, or men strolling around the moon, or that empty lot across the street that isn't empty any more, or a waitress running after a customer that didn't pay his bill? And in your profound day dreaming did you ever feel like *things* were getting completely out of control but you couldn't do anything about it because everything seemed to be moving so fast you didn't know what to do? And when you did try in your own clumsy way to grab hold of the reins in an effort to get your shit together all that could be said was, "it's flaky man." Not always the best criticism for your spirit but you console yourself with the fact that you did try. But it's really not like the criticism was ill intended. On the contrary, criticism and the discipline to criticize is needed to overcome an abundance of problems and struggles. But in a society that tends to promote states of insensitivity and pessimism, it's hard to imagine that these attitudes have manifested themselves in our attitudes, judgements and criticisms. How and to what extent cannot be easily determined, but it's something all of us should be critically aware of for no one is immune.

But the major problem in our attempt to become free and united is that we must come in direct contact with something that is very vague, abstract and unpredictable; but at the same time, can be very clear, understandable and quite predictable—I'm talking about *people*—something most of us aren't used to dealing with on a level that involves integrity, honesty and trust—a level which we must be able to communicate on if we ever hope to grab the reins with any hope of success. The power is there is all of us wish to claim it.

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plus all kinds of other carrying on and such...but what can you expect from a staff like this:

Gidra Staff: Doug Aihara, Linda Fujikawa, Merilynne Hamano, Bruce Iwasaki, Glen Kazahaya, Mitchell Matsumura, Mike Murase, Teri Nitta, Tracy Okida, Alan Takemoto, Steve Tatsu-kawa, Dean Toji, Evelyn Yoshimura. Contributors: David Cho, Jeff Furumura, Linda Iwataki, Patti Iwataki, Duane Kubo, David Monkawa, Amy Murakami, Chris Murakami, Roy Nakano, Mike Nakayama, Tom Okabe, H. K. Omori, Alan Ota, Candice Ota.

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On The Scene

PILIPINO ARTS FESTIVAL

Sulu Unlimited will be sponsoring its second annual week-long Pilipino Cultural Arts Festival the last week in June at the Inner City Cultural Center, 1615 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles.

The Festival will include Pilipino folk and contemporary art, exhibits, folk dance, choral music, plays and poetry.

Anyone who would like to participate or have materials for exhibit, should call Juan Lotero at 387-1161 immediately.

SHELTERED WORKSHOP

P-G-, born in Canton, China 53 years ago, has been hospitalized at Camarillo for 38 of the last 40 years. He has no living relatives and, because of his language handicap, is isolated in his ward.

18 months ago he was released to Mr. and Mrs. Chee at the House of Happiness, a board and care home for the emotionally disabled. Since then his life is very much changed.

When he became involved with the Sheltered Workshop a year ago, he was working at less than 50% of the production standard of a non-handicapped worker. Now he is producing at over 70%. But more importantly is the fact that he takes the bus to work, smiles often, and has social interaction with his co-workers.

P-G- is an example of the crying need for a rehabilitation facility equipped to meet the needs of the Asian community...one which is sensitive to language needs, cultural differences, etc.

The Oriental Service Center Sheltered Workshop is an attempt to meet some of these needs. Because of recent government cutbacks the time is coming when it will be necessary to ask for the community's support. Will it be there?

PHILIPPINES CONSUL ASKS U.S. ASYLUM

The acting Consul General of the Philippines in Los Angeles asked for political asylum in the United States on May 18 to protest the "dictatorial policies" of President Ferdinand Marcos.

Ruperto Baliao, 47, in the government service for 25 years, signed his name in his own blood to a document defecting from the Philippine government and accused President Marcos of being a "new Hitler."

Baliao was accompanied by Hermie Rotea, 42, a reporter for the Manila Daily News, who said he was in full support of Baliao's actions and, in fact, was named on a "black list" of 150 Philippine citizens in the United States whose lives and/or freedom would be in danger if they returned to their homeland.

Baliao, who said he felt his life was in danger because of his defection, said he waited until now to declare himself because he felt there was some possibility that President Marcos might reverse his policies and "free" the Philippines.

But, Baliao added, since Marcos declared martial law in September, 1972, he felt that the reestablishment of freedom in the Philippines was not possible.

Baliao said he wanted the return of "American-type" democracy—not American control—in the Philippines, but doubted that this was possible as long as Marcos was in control.

Marcos was elected president in 1955, sixth president since the United States granted independence in 1946, and was reelected in 1969.

As acting consul general, Baliao was the highest ranking Philippines official in Southern California.

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CONFERENCE II

The second National Asian American Studies Conference will be held on July 6th, 7th, and 8th on the campus of California State University, San Jose. The theme of the conference, "Asian American Studies: Tool of Control or Tool of Change," was selected in order to focus attention upon the future of Asian American Studies.

The conference is being sponsored by Asian American Studies programs at different California colleges and universities. The guest speakers, panels, and different workshops will be addressing themselves to specific areas of concern in the field of Asian American Studies. Conference workshops will cover areas such as Asian women, the role of Asian American Studies in the community, student organizations, the formation of a national coordinating organization, curriculum, teaching methods and secondary education. The conference planners are anticipating about 600 participants from all over the country representing almost all of the Asian American programs now in existence.

People interested in attending the conference should send their name, address, phone number (include area code) and if they will need overnight lodging. Fees are \$2.00 for students, senior citizens and community service organizations and \$5.00 for faculty and all others. Checks should be made payable to "Asian American Studies Conference II."

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT JOB PLACEMENT OPENS IN GARDENA

"Everyday of the work-week we receive 6000 job listings through the HRD computer," Kerry Doi moved to the edge of his seat as he spoke. "There is a daily update and deletion of jobs as they arise and are filled." Doi flipped on the microfilm viewer and immediately the screen was filled with hundreds of jobs.

"We offer all types of jobs from professional levels such as engineers and accountants to unskilled labor like dishwashers, and everything in between." Doi turned a knob on the viewer and hundreds of other jobs slid by. "We receive current openings from all areas in Los Angeles County so a prospective client can find the type of work he wants, in the location that is most suitable...and its all on these microfilm index cards."

Doi opened the machine and removed a card with the South Bay job listing on it and slid in a Hollywood card; more jobs floated by. "We haven't been open too long so people aren't actually aware of us yet. We haven't reached our full potential yet... But we are a state agency and open to the public and most important, our services are free... This is really a trippy machine, huh?" Doi twisted and turned the knob and the jobs spiraled, loop-a-loped and spun around the screen.

"Like I said, we have every type of job with the exception of civil service and construction jobs, but if qualified people come in looking for jobs in those areas we can refer them to people to talk to." Doi put in a microfilm card for the downtown area and flashed through the listings. "We're suppose to service the entire LA County area but I would recommend that people living in the central city areas contact the job placement service at the SAAY office (Phone number-628-0057). We work together a lot of the time and through us SAAY gets a lot of HRD job listings."

Just then a middle-aged grey-haired man walked by the open office door, Doi pointed toward him, "That was John King, he works out of this HRD outpost station also. He's one of the best job placement officers the Human Resource Development program has."

Doi flipped off the machine and refiled the the cards, "We're open Monday through Friday from nine to five. Either myself or Mr. King will be willing to help anyone searching for a job."

For further job placement information or assistance contact: Kerry Doi or John King at the Gardena Multi-Activity Center, 1730 Gardena Blvd., Gardena, California 90247 or call 324-6900.

BAY AREA CANTONESE LANGUAGE NEWS PROGRAM

The first Bay Area Cantonese language television news program, sponsored by the Chinese Media Committee, will debut soon. Coverage of the half-hour weekly will include Chinatown activities, Bay Area local news, national and international news, and an in-depth Chinatown community feature. At present, negotiations are being conducted with Channel 20 and Channel 9's "Open Studio Television." Exact air-time will be announced in the near future.

This program will need volunteer support in the following areas: News reporting, script writing, producing/directing, co-ordinating, art work, translation and cameramen. All positions are open for training.

The Chinatown community is especially encouraged to support this program. Journalism students and those particularly interested in community work are urged to apply. Contact Chris Yee of the Chinese Media Committee at (415) 398-8212 for interviews.

PILIPINO YOUTH SERVICES FORMED

Can you guess the approximate figure of the Pilipino population within the central city area of Los Angeles? Since 1950 there has been a population increase of 200% which brings the total number today of approximately 30,000 Pilipino residents. The area in which the majority reside, is specifically bounded by Sunset Boulevard on the north, Figueroa on the east, Olympic Boulevard on the south, and Vermont Avenue to the west. The central point where most activities are planned and organized is at the intersection of Temple Street and Belmont Avenue.

With this increase in population comes a concurrent rise in social, economic, and educational needs. Problems among Pilipino youth—unemployment, truancy, drug-abuse, drop-outs, and gangs increasingly plague this community. Constructive action must be taken to alleviate the youth and the community of these pressing conditions.

In an effort to combat the difficulties a "samahan" of concerned Pilipinos from social service agencies and community volunteers have banded together and formed Pilipino Youth Services (P.Y.S.). The interaction activities of P.Y.S. are scheduled basketball and volleyball games for the youth. Eskrima, a Pilipino form of self-defense is also under training. In addition, other educational, recreational, and cultural workshops are in the planning and development stages.

Presently, a group of volunteers from the community are offering para-professional counseling, information, and referral through a help channel known as "Pilipino Helpline." The Helpline is a community service for the Pilipino community, with special emphasis upon problems and needs of the youth. The hours are from 7:00 to 11:00 P.M., Wednesday through Sunday at 483-2215. An interested and concerned listener will be awaiting your call.

The members of P.Y.S. would like to invite you to become an active member through involvement with community services or interaction activities. Perhaps this would be an opportunity to become better acquainted with the community and its people.

APPLICANTS SOUGHT

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is seeking an individual to design and direct an Asian American Program in Washington, D.C. similar to those previously done on Blacks and Chicanos. Research and analytical writing expertise is required as the study involves heavy documentation. The Commission has set no specific deadline and will recruit until a qualified person is hired.

For more information, contact: Mr. Martin Sloan, Asst. Staff Director for Programs and Policy Review, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Room 400, 1121 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20425, phone (202) 254-6622.

THE QUESTION OF AMNESTY

As the whirlpool of Watergate surged in Washington, D.C., 200 people representing anti-war and pro-amnesty groups gathered in the nation's capital on May 4-5 to form the National Universal and Unconditional Amnesty Coalition (NUAAC). Although the delegates came from organizations as diverse as the churches, the American Civil Liberties Union and militant veterans, exile and G.I. movement groups, all were committed to two basic principles: *universal and unconditional amnesty for war resisters and the need for a broad, mass based coalition to bring the demand for amnesty to the American people.*

With all the fanfare and patriotic tear jerking surrounding the few hundred returning P.O.W.'s, the vast majority of the country seems to have forgotten about the 70,000-100,000 deserters and draft resisters currently in exile in currently underground in the United States hoping to evade criminal prosecution. More than 500,000 G.I.'s have received discharges under less than honorable conditions—most as a result of individual opposition to the war or racism in the application of military justice. Thousands more are still imprisoned in military stockades and brigades or civilian prisons as a result of their war resistance activities. And many thousands of criminal indictments and fugitive warrants continue to be processed each year by the Justice Department for persons politically or morally opposed to the war.

Third World and working class G.I.'s were the people who suffered most of the casualties during the war and who once again represented the overwhelming majority of the persons oppressed by Nixon's "no amnesty" position.

Most of the one million war resisters requiring amnesty come from poor economic backgrounds and thus had never received information about legal forms of resistance (college deferments, legal remedies, conscientious objector status) which were readily available to the well to do. This group has always been the cannon fodder of any war. They have traditionally regarded the military as a way out of their oppressive economic situation and as a way to help their families.

Entering the military was seen as one more way of survival among a dismal set of choices. After induction, they came to realize that the military not only did not provide these opportunities, but because of traditional military class and racial discrimination, in fact, relegated them to that group which would take the most risk and be most likely to be killed or wounded in action. For them desertion or resistance came to be simply a matter of life or death.

The demand for universal and unconditional amnesty cannot exclude any of the four major categories of war resisters: deserters, G.I.'s who have received less than honorable discharges, draft evaders and those currently underground, in prison or facing criminal charges for anti-war activities. The amnesty issue must be seen as integrally related to the Indochina war and that even after American planes have stopped bombing Cambodia and Laos the war will not be over until all war resisters are amnestied. Any limited form of amnesty must be opposed.

"The people of the United States will not accept the additional sacrifices of one million war resisters regardless of how 'expendable' Nixon feels them to be. And the feet of the people will soon be heard in the streets once again—pounding out the call for a final end to the war in Indochina."—Alan Miller, Pacific News Service



ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL WEEK

During the first week in April, the Asian American Students and Curriculum Committee of Pasadena, Muir, and Blair High Schools presented their first annual Asian American Cultural Week. Approximately 150 students attended the five day event which included speakers Warren Furutani and John Estrella, a panel from the Asian Women's Center, several dance and Martial arts demonstrations, a presentation of the play "SPOOS" by the East-West Players, the film "Sanjuro", an art and photo exhibit, and performances by Asian rock bands Hiroshima and Streetflower.

It was hoped that the cultural week would arouse a feeling of Asian unity and pride with anticipated broadening of the program's scope toward students of the elementary and junior high school levels.

The Asian American Students and Curriculum Committee have also developed an Asian Mini-Course outside the regular school curriculum during the last year with sessions on Asian American identity, history, and community conditions. Presently, a film program and a music concert are in the planning stage.

WIFE OF FORMER BEATLE GRANTED CUSTODY OF CHILD

Yoko Ono, wife of former Beatle John Lennon, won permanent custody of her child in a hearing in Houston, reported the Los Angeles Times on May 16, although the child is still missing. The daughter, Kyoko, is by a previous marriage to documentary film maker Anthony Cox. He disappeared with the girl in December, 1971, after refusing to produce Kyoko for a visit with Mrs. Lennon. And that presents a problem. Lennon has been fighting a deportation order since March after he was refused permanent residence in the United States because of a 1968 hashish conviction in England.

GUN AFFICIONADOS UP IN ARMS

Israel has unveiled a new assault rifle—the "Galil," designed to replace everything from light mortars to bottle openers, the New York Times reported April 14.

Its manufacturers say the rifle is better than the standard personal weapon used by the Arab armies, the Soviet-designed Ak-47, and compares favorably with any assault rifle produced anywhere.

The Galil, named for its designer, Israel Galili, was demonstrated to newsmen one day after Israel commandos raided guerrilla centers in Beirut.

But the defense Ministry said it had not yet been battle-tested, indicating the rifle was not used on the mission.

Michael Schor, director general of the Government's military industries, said the Galil had been shown to military attaches of several countries, including the United States. The price in quantities is \$150 apiece.

Schor said the Galil will eventually replace most of the weapons used by the Israeli foot soldier, including the well-known Uzi submachine gun.

The nine-pound weapon which discharges with slight recoil is equipped with a collapsible bipod and stock and is instantly convertible from an automatic weapon to an assault weapon. The Galil can also fire anti-tank and anti-personnel rockets, two-inch mortars, smoke or signal flares, and may be used by either a left-handed or right-handed marksman.

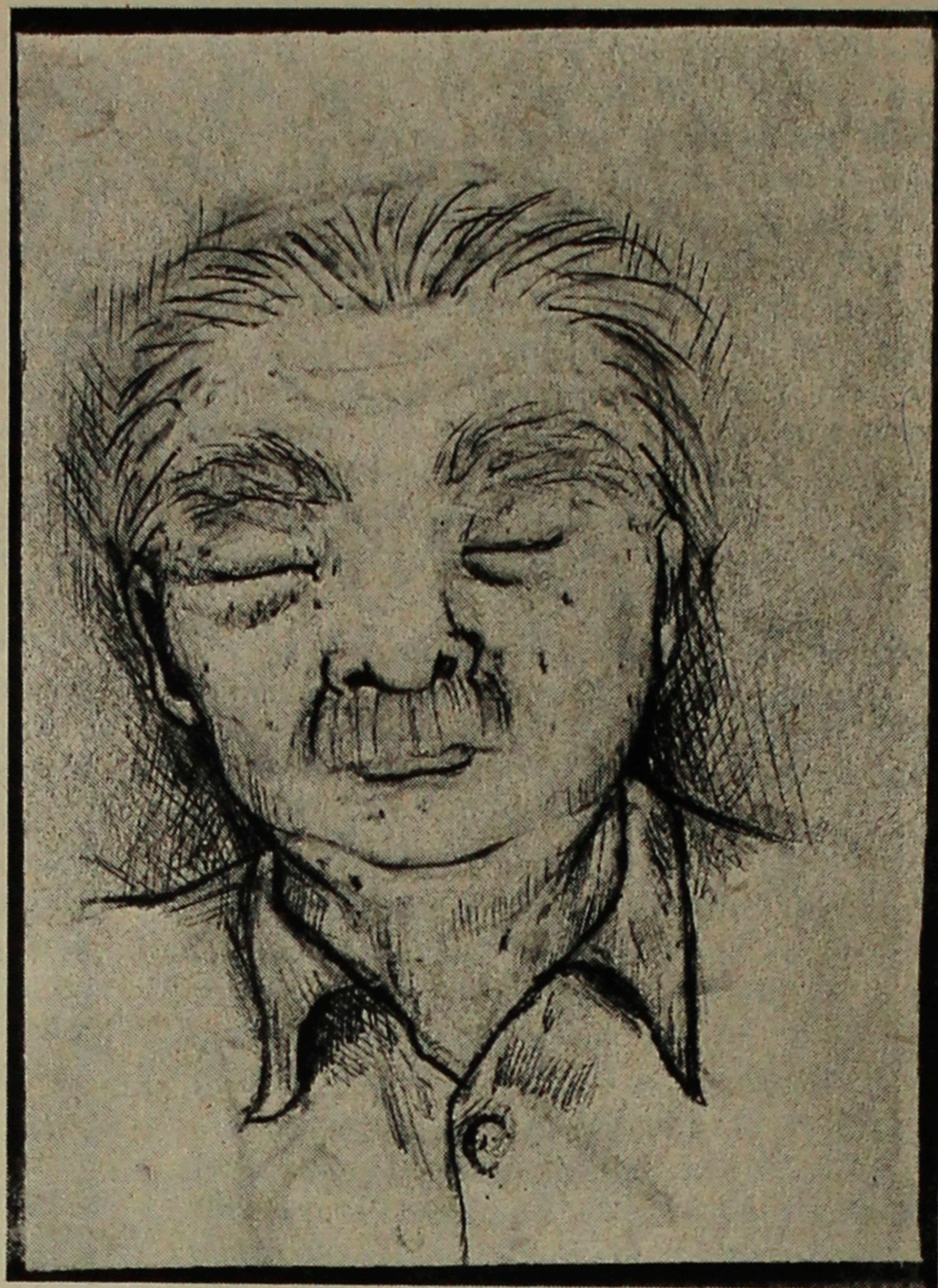
Gas released during firing keeps the mechanism clean of mud, water and sand. The weapon can be dismantled for field cleaning in six seconds.

It fires 5.56-mm. bullets—like the United States' M-16—at 650 rounds a minute. The effective range is about 600 yards. The maximum range is more than 1,000 yards.

The bipod is outfitted with wire clippers and the rifle has a built-in bottle opener so that field soldiers won't use ammunition magazines.

Grand father

“he left
nothing
behind
except
me and
my mom”



Several years ago, my grandfather went to live in Japan. But he was an Issei—he had lived and worked in America for fifty years. He liked Welch's grape jelly and all his children were here. He wanted to come back.

Last year my grandfather needed \$3500 for medical care. The Japanese government would not give it to him because he was a U.S. citizen.

He came to the United States to get Medicare. All he got was a bureaucratic run around.

He asked his children for the \$3500. They said they didn't have it. One son is a space engineer—he's going to Europe this summer. The other son is a pharmacist—he bought his daughter a pony. My mother didn't have any money in her name. Tradition said that the sons in the family should take care of it.

My grandfather used to run hotels in the main streets of Chicago. When I was small, I couldn't even breathe in them because they smelled so bad. Before the war, my grandfather had a fruitstand in L.A. During the war, they sharecropped in Utah—my grandfather, my mother, and her nine other brothers and sisters. They cooked rice over a wood fire. My grandmother died in childbirth there—and my grandfather grew thin.

All I remember is a down home man who tried to survive in this America. His children survived too—but they have forgotten him. They have no time for him—all they have is money. His children told him to go back to Japan and sell his house to get the money for his medical care. He said goodbye to all his grandchildren and returned to Japan.

My grandfather died on April 15 this year. He wanted to be buried next to his wife in Evergreen Cemetery, L.A. He left nothing behind except me and my mom. My father said: “all grandpa really wanted was to communicate with his children.”

Life goes on. We try to forget. We try to move on. But there's still time to listen—to learn from the old ones who have so much to teach us. Our lifeblood. Our heritage. Grandfather.

INFLATION IN JAPAN

“I often wonder if I am still a member of this country. What is the significance of government or the meaning of the word ‘nation’ for those who don't even own one square yard of property?”

TOKYO: Skyrocketing food prices, soaring rents, consumer discontent, and the expectation of worse to come—it could be the story of any American city. But in fact it is Japan. According to a United Nations' survey, Tokyo is today the world's most expensive city to live in, with prices almost twenty percent higher than in New York. And like their American counterparts, Japanese consumers are being forced to tighten their belts.

As bulldozers plow through miles of rice paddies daily to make way for factories and subdivided housing tracts, prices have been steadily climbing at a record pace. By mid-March the consumer price index was up 10.4% over the same period last year. The wholesale price index which reflects changes to come in the consumer prices has increased by an astonishing 25% annually since last November.

Normal Japanese are hurting worst when it comes to the basics of daily living here—like soybeans, tuna, housing, and most of all, land.

A staple in the diet of most Japanese is tofu, a soft, nourishing soybean derivative. There was a slight shortage in soybean production last year. Speculators bought up huge quantities of beans and held them off the market, causing a three-fold increase in price. Even special imports from the U.S. and the People's Republic of China are not likely to ease the situation.

The prices of other basics have also been surging upwards. A half-pint of milk, which cost 9 cents in 1968 and 13 cents a year ago, now sells for 16 cents. Wool and woolen yarns have gone up two and a half times during the past year. Tuna prices have reached the point where raw fish, a common delicacy, is becoming a luxury instead of daily fare.

Costs of service industries have also been shooting up. When you go for a haircut in Japan you get the works: shampoo, shave, scalp massage, razor cut. Fifteen years ago the whole blissful, hour-long experience would have cost you around 35 cents. Today you pay three and a half dollars.

Train fares, bus fares, and telephone charges have all been hiked. To take an extreme example, an hour-long local telephone call cost a mere 3 cents in February. Now it costs 53 cents. The big losers there, of course, are the new breed of Japanese lovers who spend their evenings whispering in each others' ears, separated spatially, as is felt only proper here, but connected electronically.

Especially dangerous is the upward price spiral in Japan's basic construction material, wood. In 1972 prices of lumber and lumber products rose an incredible 59 percent. Typically effected is the Naramura family which is planning to build a new wooden house, a rather small one by American standards. Unfortunately for them, the contractor delayed construction for one year. As a result, instead of building a \$17,000 house in 1972, they will build exactly the same house for \$25,000 in 1973.

The most remarkable inflationary trend in this small island nation, however, is the soaring price of land. Ever since Prime Minister Tanaka announced his plan for relocating Japan's industrial centers, a wild wave of land speculation has taken place. Those with money to invest are driving the price of a plot of earth to unbelievable levels in both countryside and city.

Three years ago a 75 by 120 foot lot (if you

could find one in a Tokyo residential district) would have cost around \$400,000. Today it would cost over \$600,000. This kind of land price to the average-income Japanese amounts to a virtual denial of the right to own land.

As Japanese as tea gardens is the longing to own one's own home and plot of land, a longing reaching back deep into Japan's rural past. The heartfelt frustration of the average-income Japanese, helpless in the face of skyrocketing land prices, is well expressed in the letter of a forty-eight year-old housewife to the Mainichi newspaper:

“I have been dreaming of having my own home. However, I now have no hopes of having a house for the rest of my life due to the ceaseless inflation of land prices.

“I often wonder if I am still a member of this country. What is the significance of government or the meaning of the word ‘nation’ for those who don't even own one square yard of property? Probably we don't own land because we are not smart in business, but I strongly believe that it is politics' fault that people must work without any pleasure for more than ten years just to own a small piece of land. Thus, calls for patriotism and national defense by the top people leave us hollow and indifferent.

“I can't be indifferent, however, to the alarm that if there is a revolution in Japan, it will probably result from the land price issue. And if it occurs, I feel deep in my heart that I would willingly participate in it.”

—Martha Winnacker

—Pacific News Service
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Ex-gang members, Russell Valparaiso and Vic Shibata, working in the community.

Continued from Page 1

and started thumbing through a history book. We found the words 'Prime Ministers.' Eventually, the 'Prime' was dropped, and it just went to Ministers. We was fighting a lot then...."
—Gary Asamura.

The first Ministers, "them baad cats" from Dorsey High—the Westside—came together in 1959-60. Many members are gone—dead, doing time, or just "gone"—but four of the original Ministers came down to the *Gidra* office in January of this year to talk; Gary Asamura, Ats Sasaki, Art Ishii, and Victor Shibata. There was no "interview" arranged—we recorded only their conversation. Very few questions were asked by the *Gidra* staff members present. We didn't even know beforehand who was going to show up; the only contact made was with Victor Shibata, who assured us that he'd "try to get some of the dudes down there." He did.

"...Well, where I was raised at...I mean, it was a two-room house is what we lived in...One room consisted of the bathroom, the other was the kitchen and everything else in it. It was righteously a slum is what it was. I mean, I'm not trying to overemphasize that I was poor—but I was poor. My folks were poor."

Gary Asamura, one of the original members of the Ministers I, is twenty-seven years old.

"I come from Hawaii. I was raised on a waterfront neighborhood. It looks kinda like a little New York..."

"...My life, I would say, was mostly influenced by my old man. See, my old man...well my mother graduated from college when she was 18 years old. I mean, my old lady was heavy, I know she was smart. But my old man graduated from the third grade. You know, that's as far as he got. My old man ran the streets then, and he fought a lot. He spent five years in the federal penitentiary there. And my uncles, two of them had to leave Hawaii because the police were lookin' for them and wanted to stick them in there, too. I had two more uncles and all they did was fight too. So I was more or less raised in a family that fights. My mother's side of the

family doesn't fight. But her family lived on... on one side of the town, and we lived on the waterfront side of the town. And in that neighborhood, you had to fight. You *learned* how to fight."

In the words of a fellow Minister member, "Gary, man, that dude—he was *always* poor—I mean, *poor!*"

His family moved from their waterfront home in the Kahako area in Hawaii to Los Angeles when Gary was eight years old. "In '54, my mother decided, well, you know—this thing is just *too* bad. Me and my brother was gonna end up gettin' messed up too. So she decided we should go move to L.A., you know, go over to the mainland. She said that there's more opportunities for me and my brother there. So we came out here and we lived with my cousin. We just didn't have enough money, you know, to rent a place at that time. And about three months later, we moved into that place on Second Avenue and Jefferson. And that was a hole in the wall..."

"Like all through grammar school, I delivered newspapers at three in the morning. That's what my schedule consisted of when I was still in grammar school. I'd get up at three o'clock in the morning and deliver my newspapers, come home, take a bath, go to school, come home, and deliver papers in the evening. My old man couldn't get a job that paid good money. You know, I loved my old man but he just couldn't pull down no dough. And my mother, she had an education, and she was heavy, but, well, she'll tell you today that the white people, they just didn't give her a chance. So she couldn't get a good job either. My mother was a waitress, and pulled down I think \$1.00 an hour as a waitress. And my old man, he was makin' less than my mother. So me and my brother would deliver newspapers to help pay for the rent."

Throughout the four hour talk, a definite relationship between the economic environment in which one grew up and the values one accumulated and internalized was made clear. The concept of neighborhoods could be then, as they could be now, economically defined. Sometimes, though not in all cases, the (economic) separa-

tion between "neighborhoods" had actual "borders," for example, the railroad tracks mentioned earlier. If you lived on the side of "the tracks" where your friends and family were secure, you grew up with values reflecting that life style, with a special emphasis on school success and the acquisition of academic skills. But, on "the other side of the tracks," it was different. Instead of learning what two and two was, "you learned how to fight." A reputation was built and reinforced, and respect earned, not by how well you performed in school, but by how well you could fight.

In a sense, fighting was a manifestation of the frustration created by their economic condition, and their attitudes and values reflect a types of 'class consciousness.'

This 'class consciousness' was expressed many times by the four members of the Ministers present at the interview. It was reflected both in the make-up of the gang and the relationship between members of the Ministers. Like Gary, many of the Ministers grew up poor, or grew up in economically poor neighborhoods. Most, but not all of the members, lived in the same neighborhood—the Westside. As a group and as friends they went through a "whole lotta shit" together—good shit, and bad shit. Through these commonalities of neighborhoods (both territorial and economic) and experiences, there developed a true sense of brotherhood and unity, which took concrete form when the group fought. As one brother recalls, "if one of us went down, we all went down..." These attitudes and street values will be explored next month in Part III of "Them Bad Cats." But moving on....

In a society where success is defined in bourgeois terms (i.e. accumulation of material wealth) and where individual competition for that "success" is reinforced in and out of school, and in and out of the home, frustration will appear if that goal becomes unattainable. This is just common sense. If "success" is defined exclusively in terms of getting A's and B's on a report card or making big money, how's a person going to feel if he doesn't have either? Frustrated. On the Westside, this frustration expressed itself through fighting, and the formation of gangs. As Victor noted, "I think some of it is, like, economic conditions, 'cause we was a lot poorer, you know, and if you ain't got too much money, the only thing to do was run around..."

Ats Sasaki talks about what it was like when he was growing up (following excerpt taken from unedited transcription):

Ats: I'm a little older than these guys...about a year or two (laughter). I'm about two years older than Gary...

Gary: You a lie! Shit! (laughter)

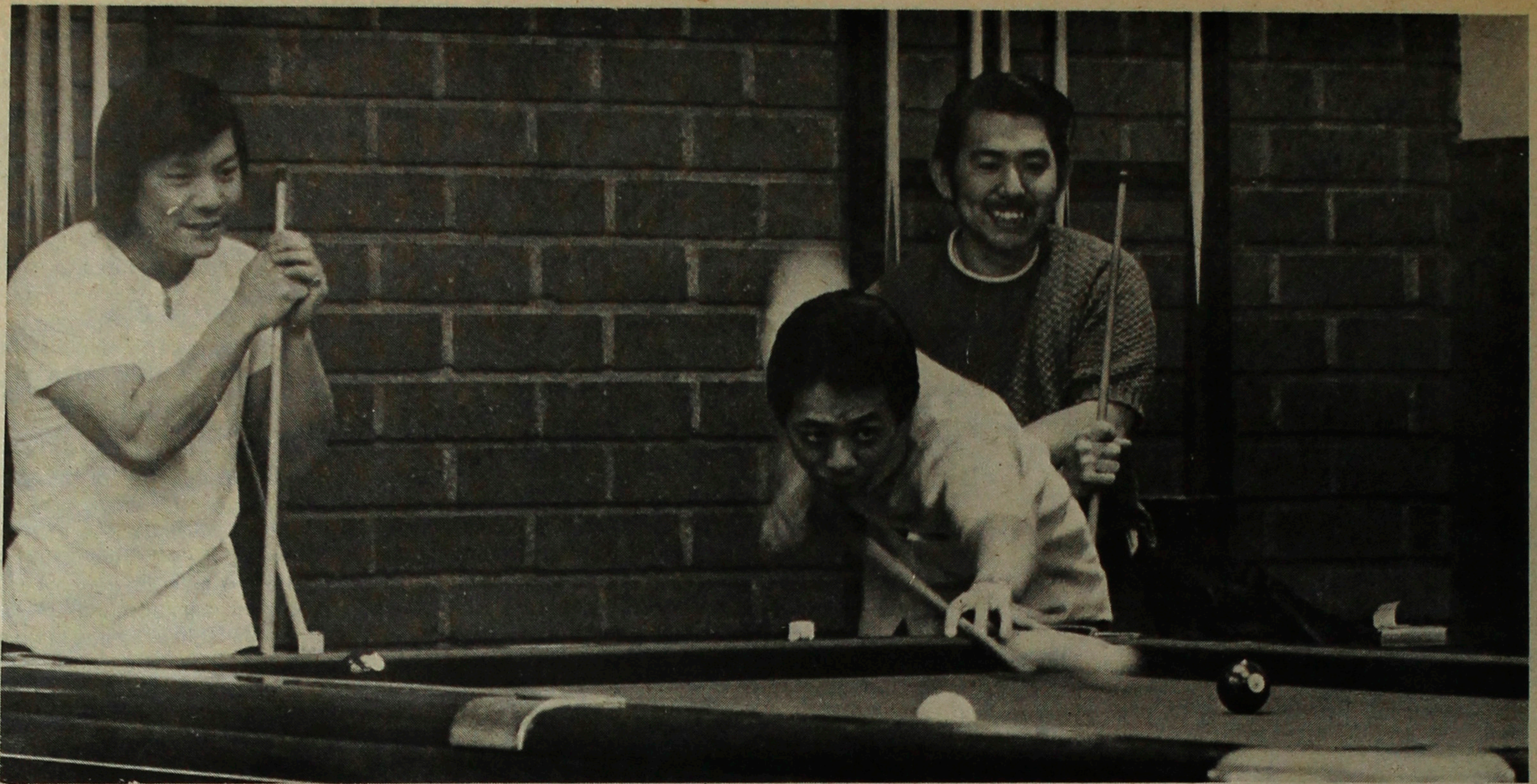
Ats: But I guess my life started *out* fucked up, 'cuz unlike these guys I was born in camp, you know. Born in Tule Lake where they had all the 'Buddhahead Rejects' that wanted to go back to Japan, she-it! Yeah, man, that was a trip!

But you know, right after camp, my parents divorced. 'Course I was a small kid, didn't know what was happening at the time. And then, there was a funny thing that happened: three of us, my brother and my two sisters went to live with my mother, and I, all by my lonesome, went to live with my father, you know. My father took me in. And then I got raised up north in the Sacramento Valley area, in all these little hick towns, and Sacramento itself.

When I was young, we led a shitty life. I mean we was poor. We used to live in railroad cars, you know? There used to be, like, a central kitchen...and the Indians, the Indian people used to live next to us. They were poor too. They'd be out there rustling cattle and splittin' it with all the poor Buddhaheads. I was really raggedy when I was younger, you know, poor-wise.

And then after a while, we stayed out in the country for a long time. Then my daddy figured it'd be better if I go live in the city, you know... to get an education. And that didn't help me much, neither, cuz I...even when I was young, I thought the educational system was fucked up. You know, I couldn't understand it. I just could not relate to it. Even though I didn't do bad in school, it wasn't like I was failing, I just couldn't relate to the teachers. So even at an early age—like in the second or third grade—I was telling my teachers to go get fucked. I mean, literally,

Continued



Gary Asamura, Art Ishii and Ats Sasaki, ex-Ministers, shooting it out at Holiday Bowl, Westside L.A.

to go get fucked. I wouldn't go to school. A truant officer would always drag me back to school. I always thought the system was screwed up bad, you know.

On top of that, I always saw a lot of prejudices, you know. Like after the war, up north, there were a lot of Japanese people, and there were a lot of white. And they just didn't forget the war. I was young, and at the time, I just didn't realize what was going on. I just didn't dig on being called a "Jap" and getting beat up all the time. I guess from there I started getting tougher, started getting mean.

Finally, as I got older, maybe about ten years old, maybe eleven, I got busted. We got busted breaking into a hardware store and ripping off a bunch of guns.

One of the primary functions of the Ministers was to fight, although Ats placed it in a slightly different context, "...like the Ministers fought a lot, that was the big thing, you know. But I really didn't join the Ministers to get their help, cuz like in my neighborhood we had a whole lot. But I dug these guys, you know, I really liked Gary and all these guys and we had a lot of fun together. It was more like a social activity to me. And fighting was a part of the social activity."

Warlords

As in all organizations, the Ministers had a structure. And, adhering to the timeless adage, "form follows function" and visa versa, the structure of the Ministers was designed for fighting. At its peak, the Ministers numbered over 100 strong. "Then the club started getting big, so then we decided, well, we going to break it up into groups. So we ended up with six presidents in the Ministers," explained Gary. Each president had a warlord; that warlord acted also as a bodyguard. That one warlord is supposedly supposed to start the fight. Let's say, suppose we don't have the time to designate a gang fight...Now, if it's a gang fight, all the presidents will get together and decide are we going to fight. And if they decide yes, we're going to fight, all six have to be in favor of the fight, if not all six, then whichever is in favor of it, those groups will go. The rest of them will stay back. You see, this was originally the by-laws which we had when we started the club. Now, each president was responsible for a certain amount of people, you know? Say you're at a dance and a fight breaks out right then, and say not all presidents have met. Let's say only one president was there. If he says we'll fight, then the warlord will go up and start it. And as soon as it starts, everyone else gets into it. And it didn't matter *who* you hit, as long as it wasn't one of us. And, it didn't

matter *what* you hit them with, as long as you got them down.

"You see, the idea is to win. I mean, let's face it, when you fight, you gotta fight to win. You can't fight to lose. So when you fight, you fight whichever way you can, you bite, scratch, spit, you know...take it from there, you know...whatever you got...shoot'em if you can. But, I mean, this is the way it was originally set-up to be done."

Some problems arose, however.

Ats: "Yeah, but it didn't work out that way..."

Gary: "Yeah, it didn't work out that way because, what happened was, some guys would have some dudes in their group who only followed certain people, you see...."

Vic: "...the only time we had a council was when we fought the Devastators."

Although internal problems, like the individualism just mentioned, made the structure of the club unworkable, it didn't stop the fighting between members of the Ministers and other clubs or club members. In an area called "J-Flats," around Silverlake on the other side of town (see map), there was a club called the Black Juans (see *Gidra*, "Them Bad Cats" Part I, January 73). During the formation of the Ministers, the Black Juans were in their fourth and last generation—the Midget Black Juans. Like the Ministers, the Midget Black Juans was a predominantly Asian street gang. All four generations of Black Juans were generally associated with "the Eastside." Art Ishii and Ats were both from the J-Flats area, Black Juan territory.

Art: "Like in '61 and '62, we probably changed the whole concept of what was Eastside and Westside because before the Black Juans were allies more with the Eastside. They were considered Eastside...But then we changed all that man, when we started running out here with the Ministers. We got hassled a little bit by the Black Juans for running with the Westside."

Ats: "Yeah, from the older dudes..."

Art: See, 'cuz them older dudes had usually been allies with the Eastside.

Ats: On top of that, they didn't like Gary! (laughter)

Art: Yeah, a whole bunch of people wanted to get next to Gary.

Ats: Dudes I used to know, like Clyde and them dudes wanted to kick Gary's ass. I said, wait a minute man, he's in the same club I am! Only thing that saved our ass was we all knew them dudes, you know, like we grew up with them suckers, so they didn't fuck with us."

But the Ministers fucked with a whole lot of people. They took on everyone; Black, Chicano, Asian and white gangs. It didn't matter

who they were; if they wanted to fight, the Ministers were game. This led to an intensification of the regional rivalry (Eastside vs. Westside) that had been going on since the 50's. Black and Chicano gangs, who usually fought alone, started to fight alongside the Buddha Bandits (Eastside Asian gang) against the Ministers. Everyone wanted to get the Ministers.

They talked about some of the incidents they got into.

Art: We had the first Asian gang fight in the history of Marshall.

Ats: You remember that day, we fought in front of the school...remember that teacher—who was that teacher talkin' about "you guys better cut this out!"—ha!ha!...dude's layin' on the ground 'n he's talkin' about "cut this out..."—it cracked me up man.

Vic: That was a funny one, I mean. That whole day.

Ats: I didn't think it was funny. I remember I tried to kick somebody and broke my toe (laughter). Remember that? Shit! I go hobblin' back...

Vic: Why did we go up there?

Art: I'd been kicked outta Belmont.

Ats: You 'n Hong Kong.

Art: Nah, Hong Kong didn't have nothin to do with it...

Ats: Yes he did! You know, Hong Kong, he called us up so me and my brother went up there and called them fools (Shindans) out—and that's when everybody jumped on the bus and split.

Art: Yeah, that's how it started. The three of us fell out to Marshall and called out about fifteen of the *Shindans*. And they, man, they booked up on us—they split. Well, you know, him (Ats) and his brother, man, together they weighed about 600 pounds (laughter) and with me it was a total of about 650 (laughter). But, uh, I was the only dude from J-Flats, man, that ran with the Westside that was goin' to Marshall, man, and they (Shindans) was hassling me everyday. And that's why at that Ministers' meeting we all said "Fuck it, man, we gonna go down there and take care of business."

Ats: Yeah that's right, cuz we'd all got together that day.

Gary: There were so many dudes going we stole eight cars to get down there (laughter).

Vic: Yeah, and switched one on the way.

Gary: Um humph—

Vic: Yeah, remember we pulled a car over and he had three two's on there so we ripped the three deuces off and ripped another car off.

Gary: See, that's how I got to meet cats from his (Ats') neighborhood. I used to run with Bruce and then I met these cats and then I met Sumi and thru Sumi, thru Ats' sister, I met him.

Art: But the only way we all (Art) met Gary was he wanted to fight every one of us. You

know, like at Burlington with Ats—and then when I went to L.A. High School, you know, when I got put out of Marshall, then when I was at L.A. I met Gary. He came up to me in front of the school, wanted some chump change... You know that ol' thing back in '62.

Gary: Yeah... "Gimme some money!" "I ain't got none!" "Make some motherfucker!" (laughter).

Art: Gary had about... you was probably with him too, man (Victor) he had about twenty people with him, man.

Gary: Yeah, that was the day we was gonna jump "Roach." I remember, wasn't it?... no? That wasn't the day?... No, Roach was there... but didn't have nothing to do with him. That day we was actually up there after Phillip Lew.

Art: Massa, Bruce was up there fighting Phillip Lew behind Midtown that day, right?

Gary: Yeah.

Art: But then, the only thing that saved us was that Ramsey was with us.

Vic: I thought Massa and Phillip Lew had a fight at school?

Gary: They did—it started at school, but they finished it at Midtown. See, Massa got hung up trying to get his shirt off and so we all jumped on Phillip that day for that. And then Massa said he wanted to lock ass with him heads up, you know, so that was at Midtown before they had San Vicente in there—they used to have that little gully there. Them two went on in there and ol' Massa cleaned house, baby...

Ats: Who made 'em shake hands?

Art: Gary!... Motherfucker damned near killed him and Gary tells him to shake hands.

Ats: Gary got the nerve to tell him to shake hands after beatin' the motherfucker to death 'n tellin' him, "Yeah, that's enough—he ain't dead yet!"... shit. (laughter).

Gary: You know what's strange man, like when we were running the streets, everything looks up—you go from the shoulders, you go for what you know. And, shit, as we started gettin' older, the guns started coming out—but they came out of necessity. Like most cats didn't want to fight us with fists no more they wanted us use guns against us. And we'd come out there—... like we fought in West Los Angeles—that was when Ats was in Jail I think... we fought out there, and about 175 of us went to jail for that. Now—we fought. But they had the tire irons and the knives. We fought with our hands. But we still cleaned house. We fought Maravilla that day.

Staff: What year was that?

Vic: '62

Art: Oh, then it was after Shatto?

Ats: Yeah, it was after Shatto, cuz I was—

Vic: What, Stoner?

Gary: Yeah, Stoner Street.

Vic: Then it was before Shatto.

Gary: Nah, it was after Shatto cuz Ats and them was in jail, Kenny had been in jail.

Ats: Yeah, all of us was in jail.

Art: Yeah, Shatto happened in September, or late August ('62)—and then within a couple of weeks everyone got busted, and I joined the service in September.

Vic: That's right.

Ats: That's when the club (Ministers) broke up, 'member? Cuz we had that meeting—two three days later—when we said let's break up the club.

Gary: Had to break it up. Everybody was goin' to jail and there wasn't enough people left on the streets.

Vic: There was nobody left.

Gary: I mean, they did us good. They took em all, slowly, one at a time.

Staff: What happened there at Shatto—was that with the Bandits?

Art: Yeah, that was the Bandits, the Buddha Bandits, and Aliso Village.

Vic: See, we had a meeting with Mits at my house, cuz—remember at the warehouse he pulled that shotgun out and shot that shotgun in the air?

Ats: That's the night you started the shit that almost got me blown away!

Gary: No, that's the night we almost fought the Businessmen.

Ats: Yeah! That's the night! Victor went walking up to some cat and said "What time is it?" and the dude said "one o'clock"... it was one o'clock alright! but...



Old gang members and friends jiving around.

Vic: No, no, see... we had gotten into something in the bathroom earlier...

Ats: Yeah, well, see I didn't know that!

Vic: Yeah...

Ats: All I remember is hearing you say "You motherfuckin' lie—it ain't one o'clock!" and I'm sittin up there—"Victor! What chu mean?"... shit.

Vic: Yeah, well, see—he was gonna take out my sister. (laughter).

Gary: Victor got in an argument with the dude—we got outside. And Victor was yelling, "Fuck you sonofabitches from the Eastside!" See, the Businessmen was originally going to help us with South Park. But what happened was, Vic said that, and the Businessmen considered themselves Eastside. Not South, not South-Central. So they joined the other cats from the Eastside, and the Eastside didn't want to fight!... But the Businessmen did! So we ended up gettin ready to go with them and I got hit with a bottle standing there, and we was getting ready to fight... and then that policeman shot that gun.

Ats: Right... that pig, that security guard...

Gary: And that stopped it.

Vic: Well, then, what did it?

Gary: And it all started—when you... when Satoshi came out to take Nancy out—you told the dude "No, you ain't takin my sister out! Come around the backyard!" And he came around the backyard, and all of us was sittin there. And Victor said, "You ain't takin my sister out unless you can get by all of us." Shit, and we used to all go down to Victor's house, too—hell, there must've been about 50-60 people back there sittin in the yard, and in the living room. Victor told the dude to come on around, the dude came around and looked like a damn fool. But it started almost around then. As far as, you know—when we started fightin heavy with the Eastside.

Staff: Were the Businessmen mostly black?

Gary: It was completely black. See, the Businessmen is what you would call, more or less, you know, where the Crips come from now. It's all by around Jefferson and Fremont (high schools)—all around there.

Vic: Oh! I remember, now! It was like, before the Shatto thing, this brother, Eiji—this dude named Eiji—we were all at Hody's.

Ats: Yeah!

Vic: And we were all sittin in the car, remember? And we were all lookin back at these sisters that were in this other car that was behind us. And then, they (Eiji) were parked in the last row with the trunk open. Remember how you used to always park back there with the trunk open? And he walked by, and he says, "Are you lookin at me?"

Ats: Nah, he got busted!...

Vic: No—he was asking—he came up to the car... and asked "Are you lookin at me? Well, we're gonna get you like we got Dennis Fuji!" Cuz remember they jacked Dennis Fuji up at Aeronautical?

Ats: I don't remember...

Art: Yeah! Cuz, see, I was parked next to Ats and he came between our cars and told Ats he didn't like the way he was lookin at him and...

Ats: And I was with Goodlow...

Vic: Yeah! I was in the car!

Ats: Oh, you was in the car? Cuz. I was with Goodlow and...

Vic: Yeah, and then we started runnin down, well, what are eyes for?, you know—we were lookin back there—what's an eye for?

Ats: Right!

Vic: And we started gettin into this ridiculous talk...

Ats: And then he said he was gonna kill me...

Vic: Yeah, right! And then we followed him out that night.

Ats: Yeah, I said I ain't gonna get killed like that.

Vic: Right, and that's when the shit started... between Buddha Bandits and us.

Ats: Yeah, cuz we fucked him up so bad... You know Arlington and Exposition, up here?

Staff: Um humph...

Ats: We got all our cars, he was in one car, we was behind him. And so all of a sudden, just when we got to Arlington and Expo—one of our cars speeded up in front of him—two to the side of him—and one stayed in back of him, and we all braked so the motherfucker couldn't go nowhere...

Art: Right up on the railroad tracks...

Gary: There wasn't just one car behind him—there was 15 cars lined up behind us...

Ats: Yeah, well, okay, everybody came out of Hody's. And soon as he parked, we all jumped out and commenced to kickin his ass—cuz we left Eiji out there, he was still layin out on Arlington and Expo when we split.

Art: He was knocked out!...

Ats: Yeah, he was out. And Ingrid was with him, and I was trying to kick Ingrid's ass. There was this girl Ingrid runnin with him—named Ingrid—and I hated her with a passion. I wanted to fire on her, man—I turned around, and she was down on Western, man, before I could blink an eye! Man... got to steppin with them high heels!...

Whatever the reason, the Eastside/Westside rivalry between the Buddha Bandits and the Ministers came to a head in 1962. In the parking lot of Shatto Bowl (see map) in September of that year, the two gangs had a shoot-out.

Gary and Ats were both busted and spent two years in jail for that. Victor and Art went into the service. Like they said, "Everybody was goin' to jail and there wasn't enough people left out on the streets." So the Ministers broke up.

Eleven years have passed since the Ministers dissolved; but for Gary, Ats, Art, and Victor, although each have gone separate ways, there still remains a strong sense of brotherhood, a feeling developed through their experiences together on the streets.

"None of us ever ran out on each other."

"Yeah, we was calling each other brother back then, before it became cool to say that."

"I know that if I was in a jam at three in the morning, I know I could call any one of these dudes and they'd come."

In part III (next month) Gary, Ats, Art, and Victor talk about brotherhood, unity, and trust and what that means to them.

by Jeff Furumura, Tom Okabe
and Roy Nakano

IN SUPPORT OF THE KNEE



Asian people have lived on reservations called concentration camps. They have also seen their relatives shot on TV in old war movies and in the news of Vietnam. Our children also die of drug overdoses and share prison cells with Indian, Black, and Chicano people. We have our President Theiu's in Vietnam, as they have their Wilson's of Pine Ridge—puppets of the U.S. government. Western "civilization" has tried to bury both our cultures—this "civilization" which says, "the only good Indian is a dead Indian," and "you don't have a Chinaman's chance." These people have killed our people with their bullets and atom bombs, but they cannot kill our spirit. They have created a new unity among us because we want the same things—self determination and sovereignty for our people, here and overseas. We support the Oglala Nation in their struggle for we know if the original people of America cannot free the land, nobody else can.

We know there are segments of our community who have "moved up in the world" and want to forget Manzanar, Gila, and our other concentration camps. But we want the Indian people to know that there are Asian people who will never be able to "move up in the world", who will never forget, and who's heart and body is with those at Wounded Knee.

—Statement by Asian Caucus in Support of Wounded Knee

We were already aware of the struggle at Wounded Knee when we received the call from the Native Americans in South Dakota. They were calling all people of color to come and show physical support to help break the blockade that was set up by the U.S. government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Council.

In many ways we felt that the news media was not giving an even adequate description of the conditions inside Wounded Knee. We felt it was necessary to know exactly what was actually happening at "the Knee".

Upon the arrival of the Asian Contingent in Rapid City, South Dakota on April 18th, we saw the results of the B.I.A. brutality against the Native Americans. The B.I.A. police was attempting to suppress support for Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation through physical intimidation. Information concerning the Knee was, of course, being withheld by the U.S. government. With this knowledge our feelings grew more intense that the need to show physical support was very important.

The only thing the U.S. government was pushing out through the media was that a group of "Indian militants" were making trouble. But the real facts, we learned, was that the Native American people were fighting to get their land back—to rebuild their nation. They were also fighting against forced assimilation into a white culture which is contradictory to their own.

Native American people in Wounded Knee and outside have stated that the area was a war zone and that it was a war between two nations. The U.S. forces there clearly prove that the U.S. also regarded this as a war. There were between 300 and 500 U.S. Marshalls there plus the F.B.I.

B.I.A. police, two units of the National Guard and the 82nd Airborne was also ready to move on the Knee. The armaments and technology employed at Wounded Knee was also impressive—50 Armored Personnel Carriers (APC's), M-16's, CS-boric gas, military helicopters, heat sensors, infra-red equipment, grenade launchers, and sub-machine guns. The federal forces were firing between 20,000 and 40,000 rounds a night into the Knee during most the 71 day war.

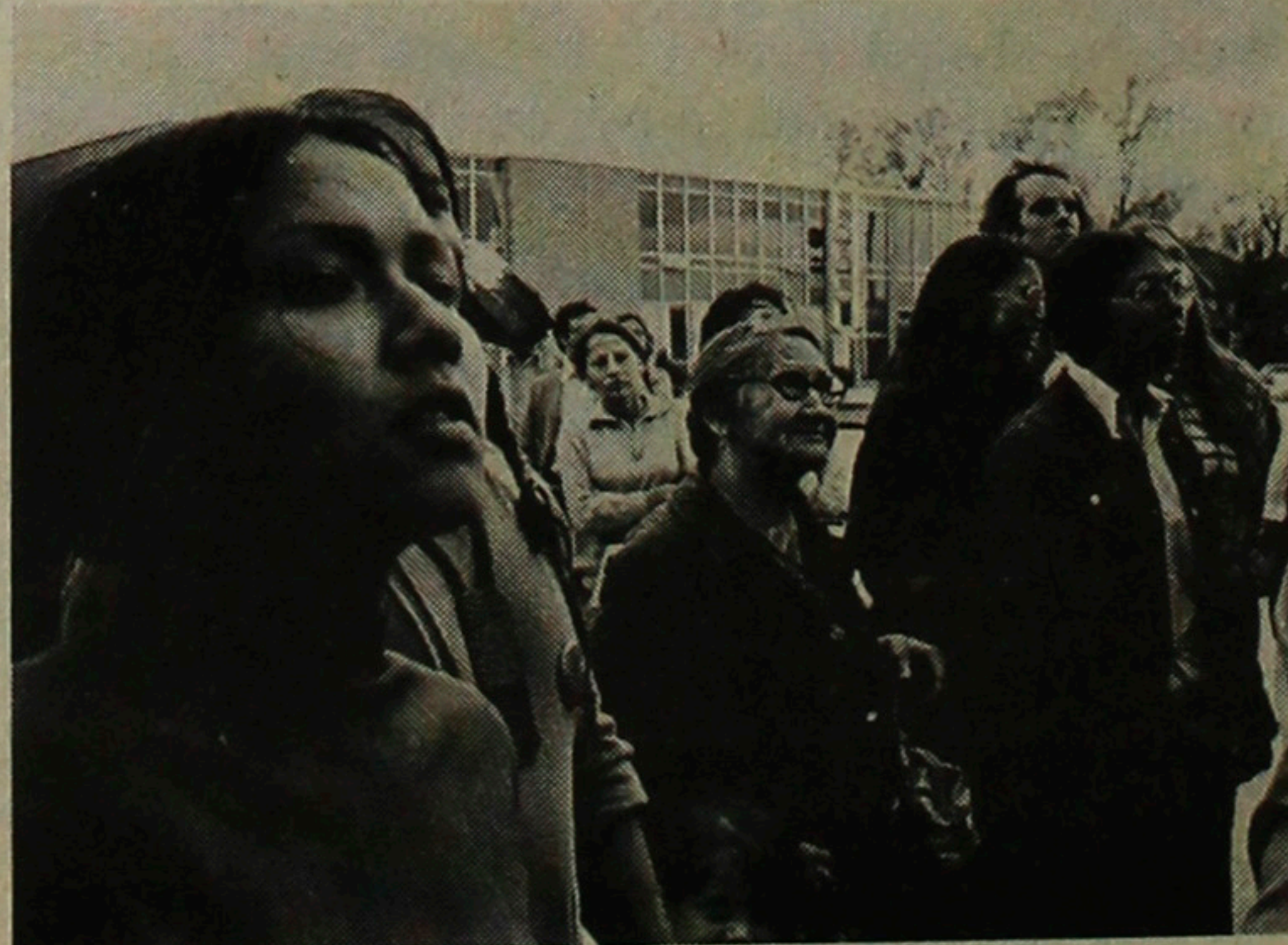
The One Hundred Mile March

On April 22 (Easter Sunday) at Crow Dog's Paradise on the Rosebud Reservation a total of one hundred and fifty people—Blacks, Chicanos, American Indians, whites, and Asians started out on a one-hundred mile march to Wounded Knee. There were fourteen Asians—Chinese and Japanese community workers and students—from the L.A. area in the march. The purpose of the one hundred mile march was to pick up more people along the way and hopefully have enough people to break the blockade by the time we got to the Pine Ridge Reservation.

A majority of the people in the march seemed to be pacifists. During the whole time of the march there were infiltrators present. Each night of the march we set up security in anticipation of trouble from B.I.A. people and white vigilante groups. The trouble never materialized.

On the second day of the march, April 23, we decided to visit a town called Parmalee on the Rosebud Reservation. We decided to make this visit because it would be the last friendly stop before we got to hostile Bennett County. When we arrived at Parmalee where most of the residents are Sioux, the people came out of their homes, stores, and churches to greet us. There were men, women, and children of all ages waving their hands and coming up to talk to us. They let us know how much they appreciated our coming to show support for their people at the Knee. That night we set up camp near the border between Rose bud and Bennett County, still on the Rosebud side. The temperature dropped to 28 degrees that night and it was raining like hell.

The next morning, April 24, Chief Fool's Crow (one of the top traditional leaders of the Oglala Sioux people) came to the campsite to welcome us to come to his place near Kyle on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Chief Fool's Crow was not comfortable with English so his secretary



Total Community Support

did most of the talking. He talked about the Oglala Sioux traditions and history. One statement that he made that really had an impact on all of us was: "all over the world there's a war going on between rich and poor people."

Later that day we crossed over to Bennett County which is white and very hostile towards Native Americans.

The next morning April 25 some of us went back to Parmalee to phone in our report to L.A., while the rest of the Asian Contingent was still with the march. When we returned we saw the marchers coming back towards us in cars and in the U-Haul truck which carried our gear and food. We learned later that there had been a confrontation—that the marchers were stopped by a roadblock set up by about fifty armed B.I.A. police, F.B.I. agents, and white vigilantes. They almost outnumbered the marchers who were unarmed and on a non-violent march. It was decided to make a withdrawal back to Crow Dog's place.

On Wednesday night some of the people tried to make it to Fool's Crow's place near Kyle on the Pine Ridge Reservation. About sixty-eight of them were busted on unlawful assembly charges, and were taken to the Pine Ridge jail which is located near the Nebraska border. During the same time some of the B.I.A. police went into Chief Fool's Crow's place and arrested people there.

By Sunday, April 29, there were about 125 people at Crow Dog's Paradise. The plan now was to caravan with the funeral procession for Lawrence Lamont, the second brother killed at Wounded Knee, from Rapid City to Chief Fool's Crow's. Because of communications mix-ups we were never able to join the procession. We returned to the Communications Center in Rapid City, which was the clearinghouse for information on the situation at Wounded Knee. There, we talked with some of the Native Americans who were in leadership and shared our experiences and our analysis of the situation regarding outside support. We then returned to Crow Dog's Paradise to share our feelings with some of the people we had grown to love and trust there and to inform them of our decision to return home. Before we returned, one Native brother who is becoming a medicine man performed a ceremony to protect us on the return trip home, and gave us some medicine to be buried in our land.

The following is a taped interview with one of the Asian sisters from Los Angeles who went to Wounded Knee to support the Native American struggle. She was stationed at the Wounded Knee Communication Center in Rapid City up through the last days of the conflict and was able to rap with the Native Americans who came out of Wounded Knee.

"There were supportive groups from all over the country at Wounded Knee. Blacks, Browns—alot of Chicanos, old people, young people, professionals, and students.

One story that really stuck in my mind was this Black sister. She's eighteen—from Alabama she's little. She packed 47 pounds of ammunition on her back into Wounded Knee. She was in there for three weeks, then came back out. The

Indian people inside Wounded Knee were really freaked out. They said, "We haven't seen a Black person in so long, what is this?" So I asked her why she came all this way by herself from Alabama and all. She said that in the old times when her people used to escape from slavery, the Indian people would take them in and feed them and help them to escape. She said if they can do that for my people, I can give my life for their struggle.

Q: What about the Asian Contingent?

"Oh yeah, we made a big hit! The reports that people inside Wounded Knee had were that there were 50 Asians from Los Angeles there. 50! There were only 14! The people inside Wounded Knee thought that we were from the People's Republic of China. They thought this whole international thing came down!

There was also this Chicana sister who I met. She's about 20. She works in a sewing factory and left the factory to come. As I talked to her, she sounded like she had a lot of political background so I asked her and she said: Yeah, my father's like that but my mother doesn't like us to be involved so half the family gets into real political things and the other half doesn't. She said her mother heard the Wounded Knee thing on TV and said: "Well, I guess one of us in the family will be representing us there." She didn't tell her mother. There was no exchange. It was just understood. She just went in her room, packed, and left. She was one of the most solid people there.

All the people who came out were really positive. Everyone is going back to the reservations to start an AIM chapter or something. Everybody was from different tribes—I don't even remember the names of all the tribes, but everyone tells the same story about what's going on at the reservations—every one of them! All of them are like Pine Ridge if not worse. And they all said they're going to handle the problems in the same/similar way!

The one crucial thing when it came down to it in the very end was food. When the food got really low they were eating oatmeal for breakfast, lunch, and dinner—no sugar. Beans and rice—that's all they had. People really got on each other's nerves and would say: "Somebody got a spoonful of beans more than I did." People who were doing bunker duties or were on the roving patrol, which was twelve hours long at night, towards the end—couldn't keep it up. They got cut down to ten hour, eight hour, six hour shifts—that's all they could do.

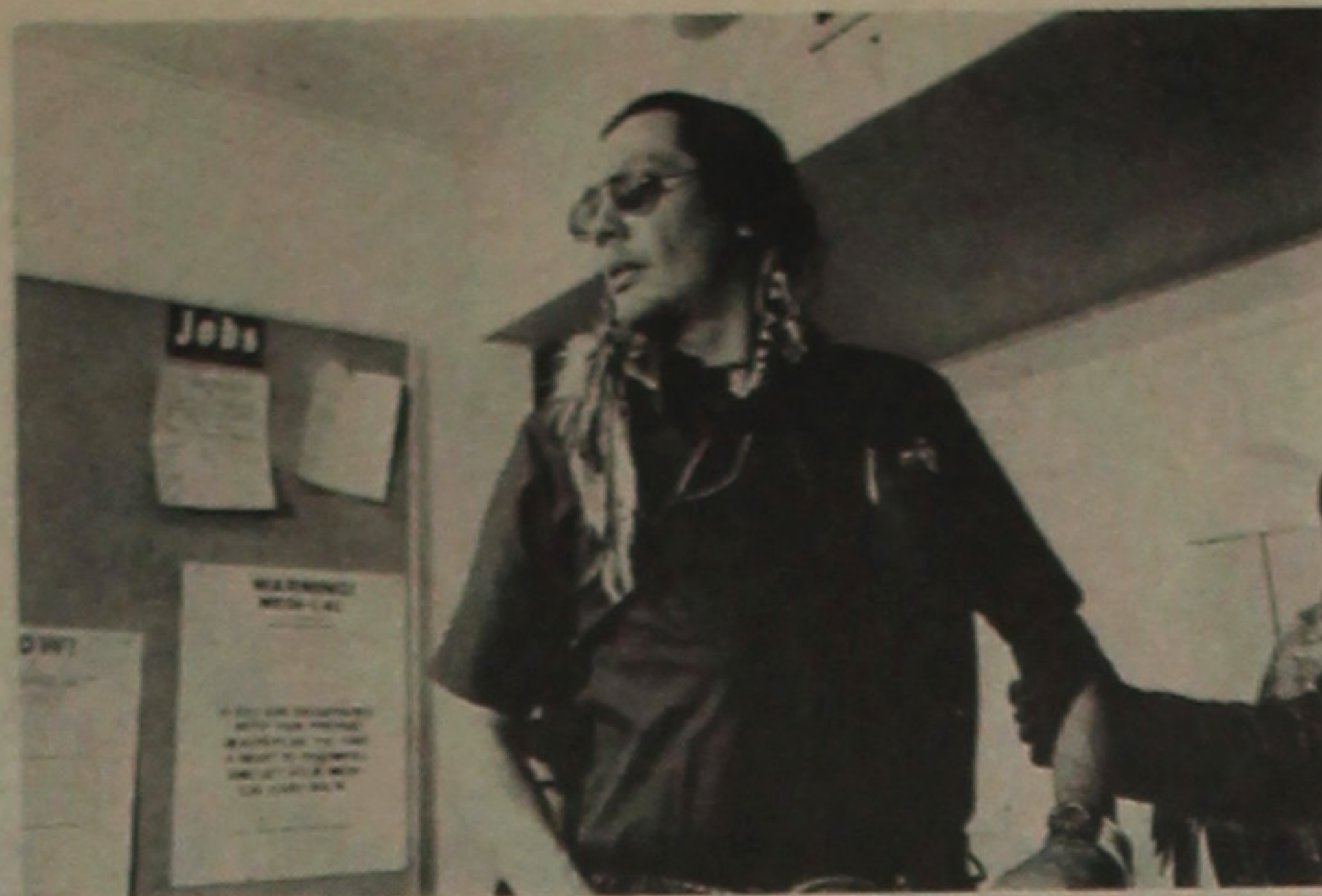
There's a street in Wounded Knee, right now, that's paved with prunes, from an airdrop. Everything split apart because it wasn't packed well enough.

The last week when things got really heavy (with the federal marshalls firing 20-40,000 rounds of ammunition on to Wounded Knee every night—resulting in the death of two Native Americans) all the warriors said: "You women go back to the church, we'll protect you, we'll have the arms." All the women rose up and said "No!" They said: "If we're going to die, we want to die with honor too. What is it going to be if you guys get shot and we're unarmed back in the church? They can just come in and shoot us down." They had a big struggle session and finally the women got to be out in the bunkers with the guns.

A lot of people didn't have guns and never shot or used weapons before but they said they learned fast!

One of the white guys who was inside Wounded Knee, at the beginning, refused to shoot. He knew how to shoot, he had hunted before. But as things went on and he saw what the feds were doing to the Indian people, he became one of the best warriors around. I guess a lot of things changed people's minds.

One thing that came out on TV and in the Rapid City papers was this white church (by the way, there were seven churches in this small area) which was all shot up inside with bullet holes. The media showed some gold cross that had 42 bullet holes in it and said the AIM people shot it and used the church for target practice. But all the people who came out from inside Woun-



Russell Means

ded Knee said they didn't even have enough ammunition to shoot back at the pigs! (Frank Clearwater, one of the Native Americans was killed by federal marshalls while sitting inside the church). Yet the TV and newspapers really played up the church being shot up.

They did burn down this house of a reverend and his wife. The reason they did this was when they got there they found tons of food that was being accumulated for years by these church people—food that was supposed to be going to the Indians and never went to any Indians. So when they left they just burned the whole house down.

Q: What was the whole process of disarmament, ending the conflict at Wounded Knee?

Well, from what I know, they (Native Americans) had three days to come out before they were supposed to surrender all the arms. Wednesday was the deadline—then, they (the government) moved it to Tuesday but by Sunday night people were already coming out of Wounded Knee to the Communication Center in Rapid City...Monday night they were coming in. They sent all the warriors and out of state people out first. The feds expected a large number to be turned over to them, but who's going to do that? They just trucked out at night. So on the Tuesday deadline, a little over one hundred people turned themselves over to the feds. At the check points, most of the people, after their pictures and fingerprints were taken, were let go. A few, fifteen, who had warrants on them were taken to jail.

There's supposed to be bullets all over the ground at Wounded Knee. When people came out they had bullets for chokers, bracelets, and souvenirs. All the guns that were left in Wounded Knee were rusted...because they were from the museum.

One of the ones who agreed to be arrested as part of the agreement was Carter Camp, one of the top leaders in Wounded Knee. He was supposed to be one of the good guys. He didn't go into the bunkers until the very end but when he did the people related to him a whole lot—whereas some of the other leaders...the people kinda made fun of them because they had to teach them all the Indian dances and traditions. (Carter Camp is out on bail now though.)

Q: You mean, so all the rest of the 200 odd people inside Wounded Knee got out even though they were surrounded by 500 federal marshalls, 50 armored personnel carriers, search lights, etc.? I don't see how they could have done it because 40 acres is really a small area and they (federal marshalls) were using every technique they use in Vietnam to keep the people in and still they got out! I think that really shows people's creativity.



Truck 'in to the Knee

Yeah. They said they would come out in little groups.

The people who came out of Wounded Knee were really nice, mellow people too. Right away they started pitching in to help with the duties at the Communication Center. It must be different to fight a people's war than a war like Vietnam where people are forced to go fight.

There's this girl, she's 17, she and her girlfriend were at Wounded Knee for 58 days. When they came out they were hanging around the Communication Center and I was hanging around there too. I would be talking to them...and like about the second or third day she finally said to me: "what kind of Indian are you anyway?"—because I was trying to do those kung-fu exercises. "I'm not an Indian!" I had to explain the whole thing. They couldn't tell!

There was this Indian sister at the Communication Center. She didn't say anything to me at first because their way is like our way...that is, not to gush over strangers. Around the second or third day, however, we passed each other in the hall and without saying anything, she took something out so that I could see—my eyes popped out—it was a red book (*Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*). She just said one thing: "this is my bible." After that everything was on a real basic level—no words, we just smiled at each other. She was an Indian from South Dakota who was going to a BIA school, but who still was reading the same stuff we are.

And for people who keep asking us for some kind of justification for what we're doing...who say we're not concentrating on our own communities but are going somewhere else to fight someone else's battles...we would like to express the feeling that the Asian community tend to become narrow—even among the movement people working within the community. We try to build some kind of security blanket—woven by ourselves and insulating us from any outsiders. It is like the old Chinese saying that goes: If you climb into the horn of a water buffalo, at the end it just gets narrower and narrower. So it just seems like a good idea to try and spread out our world and our people.

Asians in Solidarity with Wounded Knee will continue educational and fundraising activities in the Asian American communities.

Since the Native Americans will be facing long legal battles ahead, we would like to continue to support their struggle by raising funds for their legal defense. We know that long political trials have been used to drain the resources of Third World leaders and their communities and we also know that only thru mutual support we will be able to continue.

Funds will also be used for expenses incurred by Asians from Los Angeles who represented us at Wounded Knee; and for expenses incurred by the Asians in Solidarity with Wounded Knee in our efforts to educate ourselves and others in the community i.e. operational expenses—paper, office supplies, slides, etc.

We are encouraging all people and groups to participate in fundraising efforts by:

—Contributing funds directly
*checks can be made out to:
Asians for Wounded Knee

—Organizing fundraising activities
*pancake breakfasts, film programs, raffle tickets, posters, dances, whatever your imagination can come up with!

For more information and coordination of fundraising efforts, please contact:

Henry Omori c/o Asian Women's Center
722 S. Oxford Ave. L.A. 90005
3871347

Stan Yamashiro c/o Asian American Studies
Cal State 2256469

A REVIEW OF FORTUNE MAGAZINE

There are some 200,000 industrial corporations in the United States. Day in and day out they obsessively grind away, buying low and selling high in perennial business fashion, extracting what they can from us at both ends of our dual roles as workers and consumers. Within the circle of common interest, they bash, batter and pummel each other as well. The condition at the heights of this ongoing fratricidal race is published yearly in *Fortune* magazine, of Time, Inc., as the "Fortune 500," a compilation of the five hundred leading industrial corporations, based on total gross sales, in America.

Why this annual parade of champions? The outward motives for making this display are the usefulness of the information to stock market speculators and the newsworthy nature of the performance of the supercorporations. But these motives are inadequate explanations of the reasons for publishing the "Fortune 500." The serious speculator can get more detailed and timely information elsewhere, and the trading of the "500" makes up only a small part of the total trading of all stocks. Investigating the aspect of newsworthiness of the "Fortune 500" yields a more satisfying answer.

The treatment of something as news confers upon it great public qualities. Simply to be chosen as newsworthy, and therefore presented as news, marks a situation as important. The manner of presentation loads that situation and its actors with covertly placed judgements of value. The directly stated judgements about it make those values tangible ideas readily available as consciously usable social tools.

The "Fortune 500" is an awesome image of power and wealth. The sales of one hundred forty individual companies tower at over a billion dollars for 1972. The combined sales of the 500 comes to \$557 billion. Combined profits of close to twenty-eight billion dollars float lose from the economic boil to the pockets of those in ownership, solely for the reason of ownership. Never mind the madness, waste, and human torture inherent in the process, a mere glimpse of these lucrative exploits must be a compelling heart-throbber for both old believer and avaricious novice alike. Forget what the products are for, or how they're made and sold, and at whatever cost of resources, natural environment, and human life, the seductive greedsong can suck every rat straight to his broker's office or management training. A supposition is this—anything

that big has got to be valid, normal, and healthily everlasting.

But, the last paragraph in the 500 article is this: "The 500 largest industrials now account for about 65 percent of the sales, and three-quarters of the profits and employment, of all U.S. industrial corporations."

Do I detect a sense of guilt in this admission of the extent of economic concentration? The tone is so carefully nonchalant and the placement of the paragraph so hopefully vestigial that perhaps it would not be out of place to suggest that despite the enthusiastic rush on the part of some to join, that capitalism has become the love that dares not speak its name?

A coyly informative article translates the fiscal condition of the United States government into terms more comprehensible to the businessman consciousness: by treating its financial data as those of just another, albeit extraordinary corporation. The article is entitled, "*An Annual Report for the Federal Government*." Another corporation. It is a grim metaphor of the immanent relationship between American capital and the American national state.

Businessmen need a certain amount of information, accurate to a certain extent, in order to run their economic machine. The countervailing force to this need is the necessity of maintaining a belief in virtue and soundness of the machine itself.

So, even though the opening sentence of the 500 article gushes with, "the U.S. economy had a great year in 1972," Lawrence A. Mayer, a *Fortune* editor takes strong disagreement. He asks, "Are corporations making enough profits?"

The clarification of his question is buried in an ideologically aggressive paragraph. First he takes an irritated jab at the "vehement critics of capitalism, an abundant tribe these days." Then he says, "The real question has to do with the basic economic-social function of profits, which is to encourage (and to some extent provide) a flow of investment sufficient to sustain the healthy growth of the economy." Well, shit, the basic economic-social function of profits in this society is to provide a huge flow of unmerited and unearned wealth to a small and powerful class of people. The "healthy growth of the economy" and therefore the role profits play in it, are merely instrumental in continuing and in-

creasing that unfair flow.

Within the confines of this system, profits do play the part ascribed to them by Mayer. With a corrected perspective, his views can now be considered.

In current inflated dollars, corporate profits have grown stupendously. But, measured by constant dollars (that is, in terms of actual buying power), profits have grown much more gradually, actually at less than half of what the inflated dollars indicate. Furthermore, when compared against the growth of total corporate sales, profits have steadily declined from the high reached in the late 1940's down to the lowest point since the recession of 1938.

As can be clearly seen, profits have been and apparently will continue to become less and less adequate in encouraging the healthy growth

It is in assigning the blame for this decline that Mayer's ideological Jolly Roger is hoisted highest. Instead of recognizing that the ailment is rooted inherently in the basic premises and practices of capitalism, points to other factors as the sources of the trouble. He says that the foreign trade deficit is a cause (neglecting to mention that capitalist-wrought inflation at home and the enormous military cost of maintaining an overseas empire cause the deficit). He says that the outlays for water, air, and noise pollution and employee safety are causes (neglecting to mention that these are expenditures for basic human needs and rights). And, most of all, he says, "the increase in labor's share of the pie" is a cause (neglecting to mention that all economic wealth is a creation of labor).

We have just seen a case of how the propagandizing process works. First, *Fortune* diagnoses a very real problem, that corporate profits are growing progressively less adequate to sustain healthy economic growth. The responsibility for this decline and the obstacle to its solution clearly lies in the existing economic form, i.e., American monopoly capitalism. But, the magazine chooses to blame other elements in the society, thereby avoiding a solution, for even though the economy is in dire trouble, it is still outrageously beneficial to a precious powerful few. They'll do it every time.

—Dean Toji

MAY I SAY SOMETHING?

a critical look at the movement

The quotes within this article were transcribed from a tape of a meeting of the Women's Group, of which the principal writer, Ms. Patricia Iwataki, is a member. The Women's Group consists of women from various parts of Los Angeles working in many different areas within the movement. The quotes have been included as illustrations of the criticisms brought out by Ms. Iwataki.

"Yeah, like I can remember that study group I was in...like a lot of rhetoric going on and stuff...like who could be heavier than who...kind of thing...I remember really feeling intimidated...a lot of us felt like we couldn't ask questions or we would be shot down...or like we were always made to feel like study group should be number one priority...like 'where are your priorities?' and because I guess I was pretty unsure about what I was doing...and getting into that was pretty important to me at the time... I remember we were always asking...why wasn't a certain person here...the last two weeks...what kind of excuse did we have...and my father was really sick in the hospital...and stuff...so this one time I chose to go to the study group...that night he died...and I felt kinda...well I was just on the verge of feeling really guilty you know, and I felt people in the study group were not really understanding of what I was going through... Before this...just coming into L.A. was really a time consuming thing and I felt like I should be home instead...other times I had just stayed home...so I felt those kinds of criticisms coming down on me...so when this happened, I just brought it up...you know, 'you guys are talking about what the movement is and what revolution is...that it's really made up of people and its people that are relating to each other...but if its like a meeting comes before...people...then I really question...or I really criticize, what this is all about.'"

I am a "movement" person. For too long I have had some criticisms that I have kept to myself...hoping, perhaps, we would all come to some similar conclusions, or that some group would print "the word" and run it down and I would be relieved of such responsibility to make my say. But I find myself, now, compelled by the experience of my own doubts and reservations as a part of a movement to dispell the fears and insecurities I hold and to share them with others. They may experience my same frustrations and sometimes embarrassment at the painful truth of our shortcomings.

First, I criticize the movement for political elitism. Too many times, in our active pursuit to gain more knowledge and share new ideas, we alienated ourselves from the very crowds with which we were anxious to share such knowledge. Forgetting often, our own process of development, how it often took months, and perhaps, years to become open to Marxism or socialist thought, we proceeded to make demands on community individuals to transform immediately and to develop new ways. We tend to forget that the process of politicalization for many developed over a period of months, or even years, that stemmed from an intense "love-your-fellow-man" environment, and that such humanitarian processes are necessary first steps for politicalization. We have often been quick to judge, quick to categorize. Perhaps most dangerously, we have tended to pride ourselves as being somehow in-

herently "better" than those not sharing our belief, or those incapable, because of understandable ignorance or circumstance, to fully be aware of our concerns.

Secondly, the movement has been small-group minded. It is the custom of "movement" people to cut off old ties, to stay within an environment which is relatively reinforcing and secure. This was understandable and vital during our early stages of development. For survival, early groups had to rely on such traditional forms of reinforcement to prevent being crushed or divided. We are, as mentioned previously however, at a different point in struggle. The question now is not "do we rely strongly on each other to survive?" but rather, "how can we expand and grow in order to continue being relevant and effective?"

"I talked to a few people that have been in the movement for a while. They noticed at dances and stuff that it's usually the same group that talks to each other and does things together... especially for a person coming in...really seems like we're turning a lot of people off."

This small-group-mindedness directly relates to a third failure on the part of many movement people—the failure to associate, relate and establish ties with individuals in the larger community. We build internal study groups, internal political living units, internal work groups—all important for the process of political development yet all, vulnerable to seeing those in "straight" roles and traditional responsibilities as somehow not fully committed or totally available for "intensifying the struggle." (Note also this tends to have a "self-fulfilling prophesy" effect on those outside, being judged. It is often heard that individuals feel "not ready" for collectives or feel unsure they are of "movement status").

One-shot, One-rap Speech Makers

Lack of familiarity and close contact can lead to the fourth criticism of the movement—the tendency for simplistic answers to complex and process-oriented questions. Because our style of organizing has taken the usual form of very visible traditional methods of organizing (i.e. demonstrations, teach-ins, etc.), to most people in our community we are not familiar faces, but one-shot, one-rap speech makers. For lack of sufficient understanding and critical analysis on our parts, answers become highly theoretical and too often, simplistic in form. If this tendency is changing, as are some of the others, we have only begun to examine our patterns.

Fifthly, we face another contradiction which originally, at heart, was one reason why some people were attracted to movement ideology. Being opposed to dress and physical appearance rating in importance over people's minds and feelings was one aspect that attracted those who could not compete, or did not want to compete with the socially aspiring "stylers." Wearing suits or field jackets, dresses or jeans should not serve as an indication of an individual's awareness. We have often criticized sisters or brothers, before even knowing how they see life, how they feel about society, for the clothes they wear... even while we continue to buy new jeans and workshirts to fit the correct image.

"...like myself when I first came into the

movement...you know, it was really hard for me, especially because there was a certain way of thinking. I mean, you never had any political education, or any consciousness at all, but being curious...The movement...had a certain way of looking at how you dressed or just the way you looked...It was like really feeling you can't be accepted, you know, because you didn't come from the same place."

For many, the image of the movement was largely shaped by brothers. As was mentioned previously, being "lumpen" was an automatic "in" before, if you were a brother. Specific details reinforced these images of the "early movement" environment.

"...like the 'flying squad' were all brothers... big brothers...and the sisters were put in the center of the lines. They weren't even on the outside of the sidewalk. We were on the inside, and then, in the inside of the lines..."

"I remember all the brothers would wear those little, round hats...what do you call them? ...Yeh, those maroon berets with the red stars... They are supposed to signify that you worked with 'Serve The People' programs..."

Images, however, were not only created by brothers who appeared strong and self-determining. We still hear many sisters comment on how they are somehow different from the sisters that they see in the movement.

"The women just seemed really kind of hard—and I felt, 'I don't ever think I could ever be that strong'."

Finally, we are prone to being side-tracked, to forgetting the long process of transforming our meaningless lives to lives of importance and dignity. We are often too impatient for changes. We are unclear as to supporting those who may be important and necessary in helping our struggle. With a single goal in mind, we have tended to narrowly define "progressive" as one image, one lifestyle. We are at a point now in our development where we should be more capable of acknowledging and supporting diversity in our struggle for change in this society.

The time for confrontation, hardline politics, is passing slowly into a new period calling for sincere, sensitive dedication and perseverance. We must be careful not to be afraid of taking risks or initiating new relationships. We belong to a movement that must introduce bold, sensitive, humane politics that can only destroy the cold, meaningless existence that surrounds us now. Ours is a movement that can create a rich, exciting future. Revolution is now—within all of us, within all the personal, very subjective experiences of our lives. The hope, the strength, of our struggle lies in our ability to acknowledge our shortcomings and change. Now is the time to take on such responsibility... and truly attempt meaningful change in our society.

—Patricia Iwataki

"...We still have shortcomings, and this too, must be affirmed as a fact. We should not affirm everything, but only what is correct; at the same time, we should not negate everything, but only what is wrong."

Selected Readings From the Works of Mao Tse-tung, 65, p. 506

Hi Gidra,

You people put out a great paper each month. I really look forward to receiving each month's Gidra now that I subscribe. I think my brother is glad too that I have my own subscription, since I no longer have to sponge his copies off everytime I visit him in the bay area.

This last weekend, a group of us from Monterey and the bay area were down in L.A. (gee! L.A. sure is a BIG CITY!!) I think we spent more time being lost than anything else...but we did manage somehow to find ourselves in Little Tokyo...and for a couple hours we walked around ... buying manju, visiting the Amerasia Bookstore and stuff. But as in such cases, time runs short and we were on the road, heading back home—seven hours on the road in the early morning really tires one out, but the time we spent in L.A. made the trip worth it.

Think I wasted enuff of your time...so til later—take care...be happi!

Just—

Stephanie Kawata

“DEAR GIDRA”

Dear Staff and Readers of *Gidra*:

Hoping this letter finds all in the best of health in the year of the Ox. First of all, I want to request the staff of *Gidra* to please forward me the price of a year's subscription to your honorable newspaper. If you will, please, also, reproduce this letter in your next issue, much appreciation. I've been reading some of the other Asian newspapers; "New Dawn", and "Getting Together" from San Francisco. Their newspapers are very good; they deal with our common problems on a worldwide historic basis but, I must confess that your newspaper really interests me to the upmost because I can identify with the street level, grass roots of what's happening. Anyway I've been at this prison for four months and none of the fellow Asians here are receiving *Gidra*.

Within these past four months in this year of the Ox, over eight Asians have enrolled in this school of higher learning (PRISON). They have been spread out into the California Department of Correction's system. A few are at Soledad North (3) and a few at the Duel Vocational Center (4). If you brothers happen to read this letter, "Just be cool and hang in there." Yeah, and there might be some more of us coming up. I am sure all of you have been reading about the recent bank robberies in San Francisco. How about the twenty-seven guns that five people were arrested with? Anyway, I kick back in my pad and trip on these happenings and I wonder: "What is really happening? What do my people got to say about all of this? What does *Gidra* got to say about the Southern California Asian communities?"

As far as what we are doing here in Vacaville, we have a group called "Asian Study Group." We meet once a week on Mondays to study about our history and roots. Presently we are on the topic of Hawaii. After this we will go into Japanese, Chinese, and so forth. We would welcome anybody that wishes to attend to give speeches, lectures, personal experiences, or just to sit and listen. We have coffee and sometimes cake (when we can get it) at each of our meetings. If you come in, you don't have to say anything, just kick back and dig on it. Also at this time we are welcoming any letters.

In closing, I want to quote from one of the older brothers here: "Is what you are saying a fact?" In other words, let's quit jiving. Also in closing, in commemoration of Miriam Geli and Edmond Lai, a sister and a brother who was close to all in the San Francisco area, and one more brother, Tyrone Won, we would like to say that their spirits live within us.

Douglas Hom
Vacaville State Prison

To anyone and everyone at *Gidra*:

I received your postcard the other day informing me of the expiration of my sister's subscription. I hope you take what I have to say objectively. Here's my story.

When I received my first issue, the newspaper was at its tops, but your newspaper has become less interesting with every issue. I must admit that there was some very good issues in between.

In my family there are three persons who read it: my sister, brother and I. In your last issue, the one dealing with the method of repairing a toilet bowl, was quite dull. My brother looked through it and that was that. My sister read the article on the fashion show and so did I. Nothing else was read.

You say your newspaper is informative and I say no! It has become less of it. I want your newspaper to be more personal. For example: (1) how about sending some of your writers to other populated Oriental communities and describing them; (2) how about coming to New York's Chinatown and describe that. I sincerely like that because I like to hear about it through an unbiased person who doesn't live here. Describe its people. Are they articulate, stuck up, friendly or what?

Your staff writes about the bombing of Hiroshima which is history and I do know it. If it was a little article which has a purpose of reminding us of the tragic event, then it wouldn't be so bad. Your articles on Vietnam I don't want to hear. They may be my people of flesh and blood, but they are thousands of miles away. It's impersonal because I don't know them and the reverse holds true also. The examples that I gave are more personal and on my level which I can relate to.

I sincerely hope you receive my point of view. This letter is addressed to everyone and anyone so I hope everyone will read it and give me a reply. You can't promise me that you'll change, but if you can I'll re-subscribe. If you can convince me that I'm wrong or you're right, I'll re-subscribe. This is the first time I became personal with you so be personal with me. I hope to receive more than one letter from your staff or if not at least receive in one letter the views of several persons.

I hope you took it objectively for I meant it to be that way. Take it easy!

Lewis Suhu
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Lewis,

Thanks for caring enough to write to us offering some very good criticisms. It's always nice to hear from our readers. We find it very helpful to know what you, a reader, want to see in *Gidra*. Your suggestions about making the paper a more personal one is good. Those of us on the staff have had many discussions on what we can do to create just the kind of newspaper you are describing. Believe it or not, we want to make it more personal and more relevant to our readers. We realize that, all too often, we fall short of the goals we set for the paper, but we'll keep on keeping on...with a little help from our friends.

You question why we write about "history" and about things that happen thousands of miles away. All through school, taking a lot of history courses, I wondered, "Why do I have to know all this history?" It wasn't until I went to Okinawa a couple of years ago that I realized that what we do today—what all the people in the world do now—is influenced by what's already happened, and in turn, what we do now will someday become history and affect our future. In Okinawa, I saw that Hiroshima is not just history when I saw huge U.S. military installations that housed enough nuclear weapons to kill 1.1 billion people in Asia: 5500 times the people killed at Hiroshima. Those nuclear explosives are stored there at this very moment!

On the same trip, I met a North Vietnamese official in Tokyo. We spent only a few days together, but we found that we like many of the same things. Despite the fact that I was a citizen of the country that was bombing his homeland and mining the harbors and killing millions of his countrymen, he said, "Please tell the American people that we are not enemies. We think of them with warmest regards." Now, we are thousands of miles apart. Yet, I know that he is thinking of us with warmth.

I don't think it's a question of being right or wrong but people have differing perspectives on what is personal and what is relevant. That is not meant to negate what you have written, but just to illustrate those different perceptions. Thanks again for writing and hope you renew...

Mike Murase
Gidra Staff



KOTO LESSONS, ANYONE?

Madame June Okida is offering lessons in the ancient Japanese art of *koto* (see Madame June in photo above) in sunny East L.A. If you are interested, just call 262-2327.

asian women

144 PAGES of articles, short stories, poems, photos, interviews and artwork by Asian women. Includes Issei picture brides...Chinatown pioneer women...the family...the Indochina Women's Conference...politics...identity...an annotated bibliography.

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The Co-conspirator: Death of the Whit Rabbit

*Do not hide behind your face; I know
You lie there, raging, seething,
Fuming...cursing your lost soul's impotence
From within your silver showcase.
We are comrades, you and I, we are
Reflections of one another.
Come...raise a brick within your hand
And shatter your self created image;
Only in the shower of splintered glass
Can kings and courts be overthrown.
Red blood lines your temples, mine, too;
This baptism of blood makes us one,
A contract of communion.*

*Sad Alice weeps a bitter tear
And waves our just lost innocence
In a self righteous filled reproach.*

*Time heals no wounds, our wounds lie
On our head. Hands bound, we ride
To the market square; merchants
Crown us with their rotten wares and
Hail the chief executioner, his sharp ax
Shining in the sun to cast a glare
Of false morality and gay spectacle.*

Mel Funakoshi

POETRY for the PEOPLE

Experiences: Part 1

*They had told me
that this was going to be
an experience.
An experience
that might change
my perspective of imagination.
So I prepared myself
for this change
because I believed them.
I did not prepare
my style of clothes
or anything external,
I came as I was.
I was too young to have known
the life of "you rang"
or "bongo rock."
Too young to have tripped
to "flowers" or "beads."
Too young to have known
the lives of Allen Ginsberg,
Bob Dylan, or George Harrison.
I was only 13
when the Doors and Jefferson Airplane
came to jam in L.A.*

Mitchell Matsumura

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.*

—Mel Funakoshi
Waimanalo, Hawaii

Waking / Sleeping

to awaken with the hot strategy of another mouth
turned the color of raisons with
the sourness of menthols sliding left then right
and left through a numbed slab

to see a higheel concisely lodged between the tufts
of a dotted field of blankets one eye
then the other flickering open like bubbles
bursting intensely
with both hands smears his faces into an array
of pastel blotches he stretches and hears
the spine crackle like brittle flies on sills when touched.

to fall backwards head in transit
a glimpses of the ceiling a flex of the stomach
then downward the black smudge of hair dissolves
in the pillows crater like a clump of sod thrown
in running water.

D. Monkawa

I don't know you
Even though you claim to know me
I really wish I could talk to you and straighten
this whole mess out
You hate me more than hell can tell
And wish you could kick my ass in

For the time I walked in the head...
For the time I gave you a hard look...
For the time I dated your unclaimed guy...

Call me chickenshit
Call me a bitch
Call me anything you feel like

But you and your partners could do me more
physical harm than mental harm

I'm not claiming to be "Miss Together" or
"Miss Sweet Ass" but kicking
my ass in won't solve anything

Shit, I wish I could talk to you
To make you understand
I don't give a damn about your guy
If he hadn't been such a *pride swollen pig*, he would've
been true to you and honest to me

He played us both chicken and to this we own
hostility and hate between us, sisters.

There will always be competition
There will always be hate
But there can be understanding too!

Don't you see
I don't care about your dude who did us both under
I don't give a shit if he hates me
He could go to hell for all I'm concerned

I meant nothing to him
He meant nothing to me

So please,
Be gentle and understanding with him
He needs someone who will forgive him
For he is confused as a child
Show him how much of a person you are by doing this

I guarantee you,
You're the one he loves,
Not me

And now...
After all this...

I hope you can understand
And truly forgive me...

I hope there still isn't hatred in your heart for me
I tried to explain,
I tried to make you understand

After all ... we are sisters ... together...
Together we search to find our place in this
white-washed world ... and
If there's hate existing between sisters ...
Asian sisters ... we shall never conquer the
White world, for there won't be unity
Asian Sister — I reach out to you —
Please do the same.

Asian Sister who cares

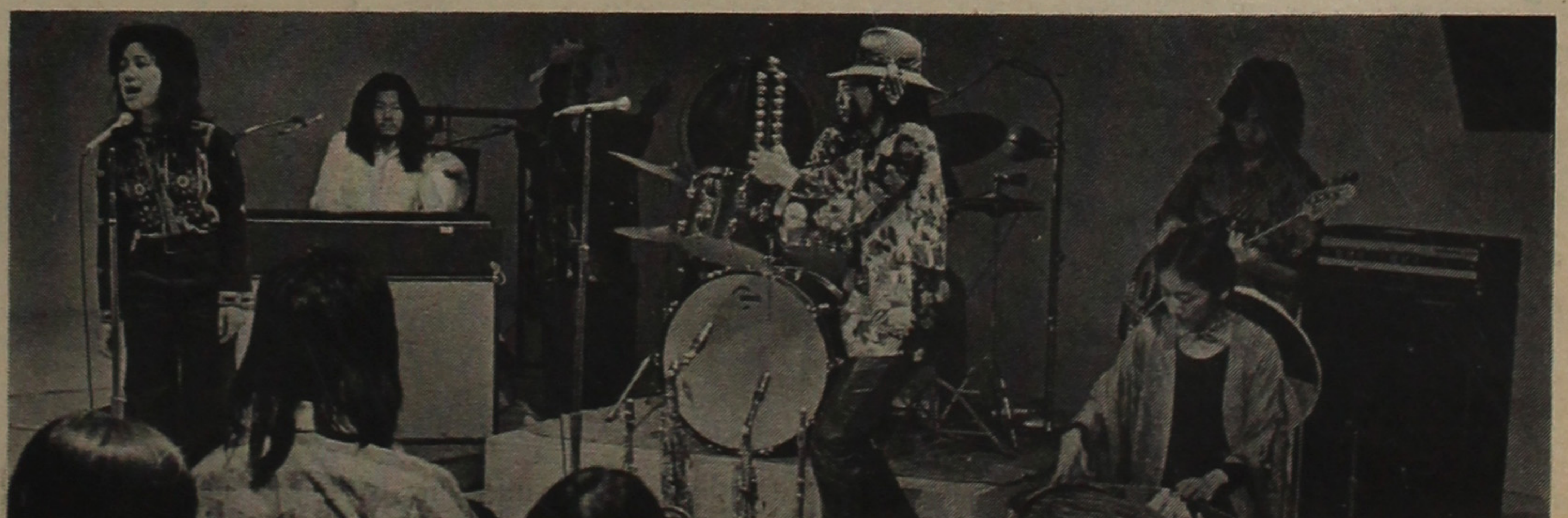
HIROSHIMA SEEKS LEAD SINGER (!)

Yes, sisters and brothers, we still haven't found a singer. Maybe it's you (we hope).

For your information, you have to be able to sing, be prepared to travel, and maybe starve a little with us.

Benefits include a possible recording contract and the epochal whirlwind of rock and roll life, as well as rubbing shoulders with the *hoi-peloi* likes of an Evelyn Yoshimura or even maybe a Steven Tatsukawa.

If you're interested please call 370-8949 as soon as possible. Thanks.



See & hear Hiroshima at the Rodger Young Ballroom on June 30, 1973.

(which by strange coincidence, just happens to be GIDRA's super-duper benefit gig, etc. et.al.)

What GIDRA Wants To Know Is "Can You
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WITH MUSIC BY

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hiroshima

june 30, 1973 9pm--2am

free flight

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 or go to the AMERASIA BOOKSTORE
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sun.

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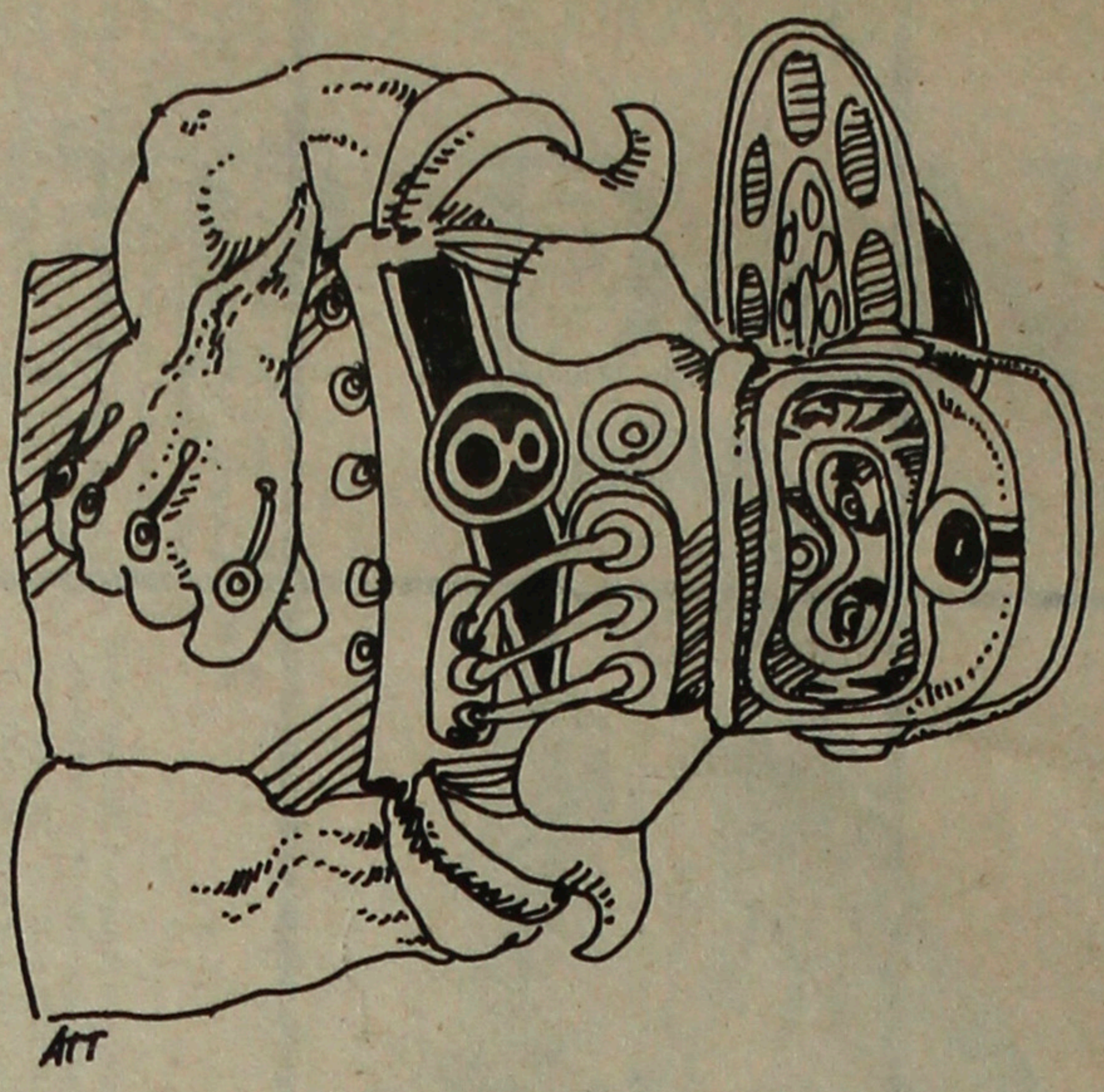
fri.

sat.

<p>3 Basketball game between the sisters of Chinatown Youth Council and the Asian Womens' Center and Womens' Group at Alpine Playground, Alpine and Yale Street in Chinatown.</p> <p>'Coffee Hour' at the Asian Womens' Center at 722 S. Oxford. Informal rap, refreshments, everyone is welcome.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>10 This and every Sunday there is medical counseling available at 125 Weller Street room 303 sponsored by the Medical Committee from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.</p>	<p>17 Wounded Knee benefit dance sponsored by SBAI, Gardena Youth Congress, at the Multi-activity Center at 1730 Gardena Blvd. at 8 p.m. to 1.</p> <p>Involved Together Asians are having a Box Lunch Sale to help maintain their community programs. For further info., call 477-0357 or fall by their center at 2002 Purdue in W.L.A. today.</p>	<p>24 Annual Carnival at the Senshin Buddhist Church at 1336 W. 36th Pl. from noon to 10 p.m. Games, food, prizes, fund and old friends.</p> <p>Sunday Night Community Educational at the Asian Womens' Center 722 S. Oxford on <i>Asian American Women 7:30 p.m.</i></p> <p>Newport-West: Gladys Knight and the Pips, B.B. King, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Mann, David Newman, Charles Mingus, Billy Paul at the Bowl (\$2.95 to 7.95).</p>
<p>may 29 Today through the 10th of June John Klemmer will be playing at the Lighthouse (in Hermosa). (Don't forget—every Wednesday night is <i>Ladies Nite</i>, which means all sisters get in free.</p>	<p>5 This and every Tuesday night there are study classes on Buddhism, 'sitting sessions' at 7:30 at Senshin Buddhist Church, 1336 W. 36th Pl.</p>	<p>12 Japanese American Drug Caucus meets at Senshin Buddhist Church at 7:30.</p> <p><i>Gidra</i> welcomes articles, poems, graphics, photos, anything for the July issue. And today is the deadline for same.</p>	<p>19 Newport-West: Dizzy Gillespie Quintet, Walter Bishop Jr.'s 4th Cycle at Los Angeles Southwest College at noon (free!).</p>	<p>26 Japanese American Drug Caucus will meet at Senshin Buddhist Church 1336 W. 36th Pl. at 7:30 p.m.</p>
<p>30 Gymnastics Team from the People's Republic of China at the L.A. Sports Arena</p>	<p>6 Today through the week marks the opening of the Xin Qiao Friendship Store - a community-oriented China native product store located at 971 Chungking Road in New Chinatown.</p>	<p>13 Parents' Group begins a new session. For info., call Kathy at 689-4413 or Herb at 626-8241.</p>	<p>20 Newport-West: Dizzy Gillespie, Harold Land Quintet at Will Rogers Memorial Park at noon (free!).</p> <p>Newport-West: Carmen McRae, Dave Brubeck Trio with Gerry Mulligan, Darius Brubeck Ensemble at Santa Monica Civic (\$5.50, 6.50, 7.50).</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>31 Koto concert featuring Japan's heavy-weight koto virtuoso-composer, namely, Shimichi Yuize at the Pasadena Art Museum 8 p.m. Tickets at Magic Radio and Bunkado in Little Tokyo.</p>	<p>7 One month from today (that's July 7th, 1973) marks the 2nd (yes, 2nd) Grand Opening of the Amerasia Bookstore at their new storefront at 388 (that's 388) East 2nd Street in the heart of Little Tokyo, California. Don't forget this one.</p>	<p>14 The Joint Counseling Center has counseling on social security information, legal matters. Also a counselor is available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-4. The Center's hours are 1-5.</p>	<p>21 Newport-West: Jim Hall Quartet at Janss Steps-UCLA at noon (free!).</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>1 Films on the People's Republic of China sponsored by the Chinatown TeenPost. For further info., call 626-8829.</p>	<p>8 For information on jobs, call 689-4413 and ask for Job Development on Tuesday from 10-2, 4-6; Wednesday from 10-2; Friday from 10-2.</p>	<p>15 Tomorrow, Amerasia Bookstore is having a new-storefront-warming, rent-raising party so they can re-open at their new location at 388 East 2nd Street, Little Tokyo, California. Refreshments, music, entertainment. See you there, starting at 10 a.m. Tomorrow.</p>	<p>22 Hot Meals Program at Union Church. For further info., call Kathy Higashioka at the Joint Counseling Center 626-2249.</p> <p>Annual Carnival at the Senshin Buddhist Church at 1336 W. 36th Pl. from 5 p.m. to midnight. Games, food, fun and old friends.</p> <p>Newport-West: Stevie Wonder, Staple Singers, Esther Phillips, Louis Bellson, Rahaan Roland Kirk with the Heritage Hall Band, Freddie Hubbard at the Bowl (\$2.95, 3.95, 4.95, 5.95, 6.96, 7.95).</p>	<p>29 Sigma's at USC & CSULB presents a benefit dance for the Asian American Tutorial Project. For further info., call 746-2536.</p>
<p>2 Ike & Tina Turner at the Long Beach Arena, 8 p.m.</p>	<p>9 Hot Meals Program at Union Church. For further info., call Kathy Higashioka at the Joint Counseling Center 626-2249.</p> <p>Annual Carnival at the Senshin Buddhist Church at 1336 W. 36th Pl. from 5 p.m. to midnight. Games, food, fun and old friends.</p> <p>Newport-West: Stevie Wonder, Staple Singers, Esther Phillips, Louis Bellson, Rahaan Roland Kirk with the Heritage Hall Band, Freddie Hubbard at the Bowl (\$2.95, 3.95, 4.95, 5.95, 6.96, 7.95).</p>	<p>16 "rise up dancing!"</p>	<p>23 "rise up dancing!"</p>	<p>30  see opposite page</p>

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GIDRA

JUNE 1973

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