GIDRA

TOWARD BAREFOOT JOURNALISM

By Mike Murase

This issue of *Gidra* will be the last issue of *Gidra*, at least for three months—probably longer and possibly forever.

It is difficult now to recall what happened during the five year life of *Gidra*, to write down all that has transpired in the Movement, our communities, the nation and the world. Yet, an explanation of why we decided to suspend publication seems to be in order. As well, some reflections, predictions and random thoughts are unavoidable.

It should be noted at the outset that what follows is not the collective statement by the entire staff, but is only a part of what I feel and see personally. While we as a staff agree on many things, we are by no means singular in our outlook toward change, neither are we always united in the methods. The fact that no blanket conformity exists has been a strength, I think, but there is a need for struggle between ideas of different kinds. In the past we haven't always settled questions of an ideological nature or controversial issues by the democratic method of discussion, of criticism, of persuasion and education. We have yet to examine many of our shortcomings in a systematic fashion, and worse, we have not always taken steps to correct those that we already recognize.

Dear Subscriber:

You are now holding in your hands the LAST ISSUE of *Gidra*. We have decided to suspend publication, at least for a while, so that we may evaluate the content, process and objectives of *Gidra* in light of changing conditions around us.

You will be receiving a note from us in the near future regarding the status of your subscription.

In closing, we would like to thank you for your generous support over the years. We look forward to serving you and working with you in the future.

With much love,
Gidra People

As it is taught, dust will accumulate if a room is not cleaned regularly, and our faces will get dirty if they are not washed regularly. *Gidra*, the paper and the staff, may also collect dust, and also need sweeping and washing. And the collective dust of *Gidra* has a way of piling up, so much so that we must stop all else to sweep and wash. Problems have a way of being cumulative and consumptive, so much so that only a comprehensive problem-solving approach can even begin to make a difference in what we do. It is time for self-appraisal and evaluation, not only as an organization, but for many of us, as individuals.

There is a shared feeling, a premonition if you will, that now is somehow a good time to sum up our experiences. We want to go on, continue publishing, but we need now to see how far we have come, so that we may be clear about where we are headed and how we will get there.

What is happening at *Gidra* is not unique to us alone. Many groups seem to be undergoing similar experiences. In Los Angeles, Yellow Brotherhood, a self-help group for youth on the Westside, and JACS-AI (Japanese American Community Services/Asian Involvement), a multi-service community office in Little Tokyo, both

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The first time one of these blurbs appeared, people on the staff suggested that it at least be printed in larger type. It was never done however, and so these brief messages have continued to rest here–unobtrusive, yet of some import.

They're usually the final things written–often by someone with eyes stinging for want of sleep three hours before we're due at the printers. They've also been a decent gauge of the internal mood of the staff each month, and as such have been suffused with frustration and weariness somewhat more often than gladness or even hope.

As this issue's lateness, thickness, and the page one story suggest, this could be our last blurb. So, some wave-of-the-hand remarks.

Without a doubt we get more feedback from out of town readers than our friends here in L.A. It never ceases to amaze us that Asians scattered in Florida or Colorado actually read us in order to glimpse what's happening; or that movement people in S.F. and N.Y.C. actually read some of it *carefully*. We guess we're surprised because here at home, many of our friends pick up a copy without a thought to paying, or don't read it, or don't like it. No mistake: we could never have survived without all the local people who bought, sold or wrote for *Gidra*. But in some ways, *Gidra* seems to be viewed, if not really outside the Asian movement, a bit on the fringes: a bit too much of a *newspaper*.

Putting aside all the important factors of age, class, education and ethnicity, this situation is probably inherent in the job itself.

From square one, Left political activity requires participation. Active engagement with people, events and consciousness is the signature of our movement. We've learned that only through practice–seeing and doing–can one truly attain knowledge. Eating (changing) the pear to taste (know) it and all that.

But the most visible aspect about doing a newspaper appears to go the other way. Instead of participating the way everybody else does, *Gidra*'s instincts also require the act of observation–recording, preserving, writing it down. On the surface this looks like non-participation. Even though people on the staff have been active individually and collectively in a wide range of other community-movement groups, our reflex to hustle articles and get stuff for the paper can inadvertently cause friction.

From our friends, we sometimes sense the uneasy feeling of being used: about merely being a source for some story; about having one's privacy invaded; about distrust in the adequacy of words to get it all out right. Another reason for less than full faith is that communicating the dimensions of human struggle through word and graphic approaches that experience with a kind of detachment not readily appreciable to those in the thick of it. Hence a suspicion about those who are "only writing about things."

Of course, this attitude is useless. The differences about doing, say, direct services and doing media have mostly been pitched in stale subjective dismissals. A more mature, long term view is overdue.

There is another type of distinction in paradoxic contrast to the ones mentioned. The products of many other organization-aggregates is often intangible: consciousness raising, a particular organizational form, a certain alliance, or a variety of service. The unit of time-social organization is the *meeting*.

At *Gidra*, we've never been very good at meeting; often they get spacy or our decisions aren't followed through anyway. We're better at working. Editing, or typesetting, or pasting up or handling subscriptions–this office is very task oriented. It is this concern with creating a concrete, on-a-deadline *product* which can create a distance from people out wrestling with the political elements of social *process*. Now this is a severe limitation on our part. We recognize it can lead to all manner of disasterous results and we've tried to be conscious of it. After all, we want our product to make changes too.

But we don't want to bring everybody down. There's certainly more linking *Gidra* with all the rest of the far flung folks out to make a new world than problems dividing us from them. And for it all, we've really enjoyed doing *Gidra*; it has fulfilled many needs for all of us here, we hope and believe it has for you too. Still, it's simply quite important for everyone, especially movement media people, to understand the very subtle relationship between movement and media.

Some final thoughts for those who care about this dilemma: What is involved in the politics of movement journalism? For example, should *Gidra* have tried to be more critical of different trends, organizations, or people in our young Asian movement? *Could* we have been? It would require a great deal more mutual objectivity, trust and courage. Analyzing much more deeply, say, Yellow Brotherhood, or the Women's Center, or AADAP, or Visual Communications or the Wounded Knee affair. Or particular people in leadership positions? Would that have helped communications, dialogue and growth–or only hindered it with subjectivity, acrimony and suspicion?

Like most of the meditations we've printed in this space, we've no definite answers. But we hope some people, perhaps inspired by our five year try, will one day deliver some of them for the benefit of all of us.

Gidra Staff, April, 1974: Doug Aihara, Linda Fujikawa, Jeff Furumura, Bruce Iwasaki, Glen Iwasaki, David Monkawa, Mike Murase, Alan Ota, Alan Takemoto, Steve Tatsukawa, Dean Toji, and Evelyn Yoshimura.

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Gidra was published monthly by Gidra, Inc., a non-profit corporation. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 18649, Los Angeles, California 90018. Our phone is (213) 734-7838. Back volumes: 1969: Not available; 1970: $10.00; 1971: $10.00; 1972: $5.00; 1973: $5.00. Printed in the U.S.A.

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ON THE SCENE

The Oil Issue

Listening to people in the gas lines, checking out the national opinion polls, we can conclude that most people don't believe that the source of the energy "crisis" is the Arab embargo, a natural shortage, or environmental actions. They rightly blame the Big Oil companies. So, instead of further exposing the "crisis", a solution will be proposed, the only possible alternative of lasting benefit to the public. Nationalizing of the oil industry is a must. Big Oil now holds the power to manipulate our life styles and hold us in its mercy.

The Oil Industry

The international oil industry has been controlled for decades by the "Seven Sisters." These are five U.S. corporations (Exxon, Texaco, Mobil, Standard of Calif., and Gulf) one British company (British Petroleum) and one Dutch-British firm (Royal Dutch Shell). The "Seven Sisters" control 47 percent of world tanker tonnage, 50 percent of the refining capacity, more than half the marketing network, and 81 percent of the output of the 11 principal oil exporting countries (excluding USSR and Canada). There is an intricate web of interconnections between these companies that destroy any illusions of competition. For instance, Aramco, the worlds largest oil production company, is jointly owned by Exxon, Texaco, Standard of Calif., Mobil, and Saudi Arabia

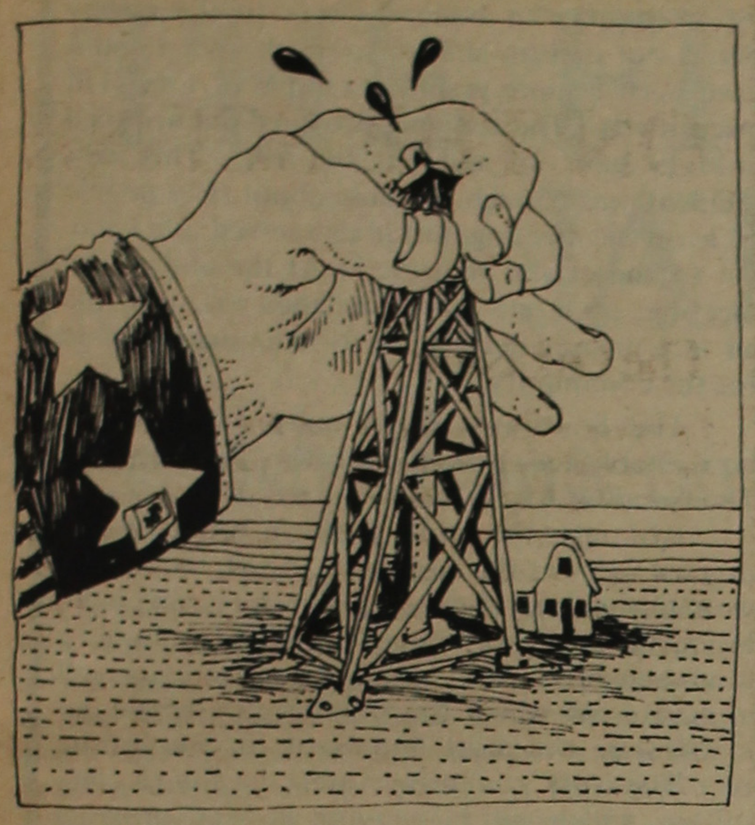
The oil industry in the U.S. is controlled by the "Big 8", the eight largest oil companies. They hold 64 percent of the known reserves, 51 percent of production, 58 percent of refining, and 55 percent of the marketing. Cooperation among these companies is the rule; joint operations are commonplace. They file joint bids with the government for drilling rights. The market place, gas stations, is the only area that there is an appearance of competition. The oil industry has been moving into other energy areas as well and now control them too. The top 25 oil companies hold 50 percent in the coal industry, 80 percent atomic, and 60 percent of the electric, this in addition to their control over oil and natural gas.

The Power of the Giants

For years , it has been said that if ever the independent oil companies were forced out, the price of gas would rise about 6 cents a gallon. Well, many independents have folded and others are in trouble and soon we can expect to be paying twice last year's price. The oil companies have the power to dictate its piece to us. What can we do? Can we rely on competition to keep the price down?

The oil companies are affecting our life styles. They've got us riding bicycles, staying home on weekends, planning vacations and trips around gas, and fuming in endless gas lines.

Big Oil exercises political power. We've been taught that our political system is democratic, but when we look close we find that the decision of who is going to be given the means to run for office is made by big money interests. This leads to the situation where most major offices are "owned" by financial interests. It's no wonder that Nixon is trying to mislead us about the "energy crisis." The oil industry gave $4,981,840 to his 1972 campaign. Some direct results of the political power of Big Oil are tax breaks, import quotas, drilling on public lands for private profit, and government agencies at its call. How much did you pay in taxes in 1971? Gulf paid 2.3 percent, Texaco 2.3 percent, and Standard of Calif. only 1.6 percent. The oil import quotas are designed to keep the prices up here, but unlike other tariffs and duties, the profit differential goes to the oil companies and not to the government. It's commonly assumed that U.S. diplomats in countries like Venezuela and the Arab nations act for oil interests, but



details are scarce. One instance of a government agency acting in Big Oil's interest is the CIA in 1951. Iran's Mohammed Mossadegh nationalized the oil industry. The CIA directed a coup that ousted Mossadegh and restored the oil holdings.

Nationalize

A nationalized industry is one that is publicly owned and operated. Ideally, the workers and the consumers would determine its policies. In the context of our political system (politicians and bureaucracies at the service of financial interests), a nationalized industry would not work to the full benefit of the public. But certainly, it would be better for us than having to deal with these giant private corporations seeking always to increase their profit margins.

We must build a movement for the nationalizing of not only the oil industry but others that have a great deal of effect on us such as Health, Communications, Public Utilities, and Transportation. Only a mass demand can bring about any lasting changes in the face of these powerful corporations that will spend hundreds of millions of dollars and do all in their power to resist such efforts. Already, our anger is being felt by some Senators (Kennedy, McGovern, Mondale, Metcalf, and Harte) who have co-sponsored a bill to establish a TVA-type* federal agency to produce oil. Such an operation would be partial remedy. It would have the effect of an independent, to somewhat hold down prices, but would not make the industry responsible to us. We must move for public ownership and public control.

–John Ohta

*Tennessee Valley Authority is a publicly owned power plant. It was created during the depression years at the demand of millions of Americans for work and public control. It is such a small part of the network of "public" utilities that are privately owned that its effect on the industry is around zero.

Pagkakaisa: Building Unity

During January of this year, some Pilipino youths had a meeting in a small Pilipino cafe near the corner of Beverly Blvd. and Union Ave. in Los Angeles. Many of these youths were formerly involved in gang activities such as shop lifting, purse snatching, joy riding, fighting with rival gangs, and getting loaded, in this predominantly Latino, Pilipino, and Black neighborhood. Many of these same youths, now in their teenage years, immigrated to Los Angeles from the Phillipines sometime during the past five years. They had come together to form an organization that would attempt to meet the needs of Pilipino youth in Los Angeles.

They talked in both Tagalog and English of redirecting themselves from gang activities into more constructive things that would improve their situation and the community as a whole. They talked of making a center for Pilipino youths as a beginning step. They saw the need of building a solid organization formed by Pilipino youths as the means of creating a center for Pilipino youths.

A few days later, there was a general meeting at a nearby Pilipino cultural arts studio where Pilipino youths from the neighborhood as well as representatives from the Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP), the Asian Women's Center, the Los Angeles County Asian Outreach Team, the Pilipino organizations at Los Angeles City College and Belmont High School, Sulu Unlimited, and Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP) had a discussion about forming an organization and planning a drop-in center with programs.

In the following weeks, more meetings were held. Suggestions for objectives, goals, and programs of the storefront were made. The suggestion of a core group to be responsible for overall coordination was also made and then accepted. It was explained that the core group is open to anyone who relates to the objectives and comes regularly to the core group meetings.

The goals are the following: "Organize alternatives for the youth that are positive and constructive; know our roots and history; help to serve the entire community; and learn what is happening in other communities. We need to re-educate the community about attitudes towards the youth." An art committee was formed from people of the general body to straighten up and paint the first floor, and a reconstruction committee was also made to section off the second floor into an office, library, and conference room. PAGKAKAISA was selected as a name by an overwhelming majority.

Almost immediately, work was started to convert the storefront into the PAGKAKAISA center. The art committee began to paint the entire front surface of the building as a Pilipino flag while the reconstruction committee was busy hammering wall frames into place on the second floor.

By March 2, there was a general meeting in the PAGKAKAISA center. Primarily Pilipino youths, there were people from the surrounding neighborhood and from as far away as Long Beach, Carson, and Orange County present. A fundraising committee, an office managers' committee, and a cultural arts committee were formed.

Over the next few weeks, a ping pong table and a stereo were donated to PAGKAKAISA; a pay telephone was installed; a film program began; the second floor construction and the interior painting were completed; a list of PAGKAKAISA rules were drawn up and exhibited on a large sign; and the core group began to meet.

There were also some negative things occuring. People were smoking dope and drinking booze around the vicinity of the PAGKAKAISA center, which was jeopardizing the existence and development of the center.

Finally in April, the police made some raids on the center without a search warrant and no probable cause to enter, since there have been neither arrests nor illegal activities occurring in the center.

It became clear that the police department was trying to intimidate the people in the PAGKAKAISA center–they even verbally announced their intention to close the place down. The police scare tactics have not worked. The PAGKAKAISA members know that intimidation is the police department's only weapon at this time.

People are beginning to understand the need for PAGKAKAISA house rules and are struggling to enforce them. They see the need to "consolidate the unity" (LAKAS ng PAGKAKAISA) and to educate themselves to insure victory on the people's side.

The strength of PAGKAKAISA has come from the community. For this reason, it was suggested to have an open house in May to familiarize the community with the center.

There is also a clear need to have some structured programs. Some suggestions have been job placements, counseling, work with the schools, court diversion, crafts, educationals (on history, etc.), and "street Tagalog" lessons. It was also decided that the drop-in center will be limited to the downstairs area because upstairs is to be used for an office space and a meeting place where serious business can be taken care of.

PAGKAKAISA is still developing and a long road of struggle lies ahead to implement the objectives and goals. At this time, the core group meets weekly, and the general membership meets every two weeks. A discussion group meets every week as well. There is much work to be done, especially now that the local police station has made PAGKAKAISA a prime target. This is a good thing because now PAGKAKAISA seriously has to unite with the whole community to overcome these kinds of obstacles.

LAKAS ng MASA, LAKAS ng PAGKAKAISA!!
MAKIBAKA!! HUWAG MATAKOT!!

Flower of the Dragon Blooms

Gardena – Grassroots organizing is not new to Gardena. There have been two attempts in the past to organize the youth of the Gardena–South Bay area. Come Together (1968–1970) and South Bay Asian Involvement (1970–1973) both tried, in their own ways, to bring about awareness and involvement to young Asians. Both, for various reasons, met with eventual failure and disbanded. Perhaps the third time is the charm, for now we have the Flower of the Dragon.

The name "Flower of the Dragon" represents an organization in search for Asian involvement within the community of Gardena. The group will focus on bringing about awareness and pride to all Asians in search of their identity. Hopefully, a sense of appreciation for human dignity to all individuals, irrespective of race, religion, occupation or age will develop from one's own understanding of their cultural group.

The group will be involved in social activities such as dances and creative workshops; field trips; the newsletter; presentations and discussion group activities; plus other areas that the group may wish to get involved in.

The Flower of the Dragon was originally developed by members of the Gardena Asian Outreach team which operates out of the Youth and Community Services Office. For more information call 327–0220.

Long March Harassed

Los Angeles – Police raided a Dump Nixon Coalition fundraising dance being held on the night of March 30 in what appears to be another case of harassment of Movement organizations. The police cited John Ohta and Karen Koonan for selling alcoholic beverages without a license.

Sources who witnessed the raid said it was obviously a set-up designed to harass the Long March, a well established radical educational center which provides newsreels, books and other reading materials, educational sessions, classes, printing services, and audio-visual equipment for much of the progressive political forces in L.A.

Earlier in the evening, two long-haired plainclothesmen had managed to get into the dance. They left and returned with an eight car force at about 12:15 p.m. Police entered the building and began making attempts at provocation, by making such statements as, "If you want to start something, go ahead. We're ready for it." The crowd remained cool, except for a few individuals, who were quickly restrained by the people around them. (One source speculated about these individuals, noting that they had been observed in similar situations before. The

source felt that possibly they were planted provacateurs.) The police then began making a check of ID's, but failed to find any minors. They then settled on the liquor license "violations" as their only charge.

The sponsors of the dance, the Dump Nixon Coalition, had attempted to obtain a one-day liquor selling permit, but were told that their application had come in "too late". A participant at the dance reports that, "The drinks were *not* being sold. It was regular Movement type thing – if you had the money, you just donated it, if didn't, it was okay. No one was told to pay."

Dumping on Nixon

The following is the text of a speech delivered by Tomi Ohta at the Dump Nixon Rally held in Los Angeles on April 27.

We've all come together today because we're mad and we're tired of being lied to and manipulated.

Some people here feel the solution to our present crisis lies in impeaching Nixon.

What we need to ask ourselves is whether Nixon is a rotten apple, or whether the barrel itself is rotten.

All of us agree that Nixon is a criminal and should be thrown out, then prosecuted.

But his worst crimes are not the "Watergate" acts of undermining his political opposition. His worst crimes are the attacks on our civil liberties, and the lining of his pockets and those of his superiors with our money. He has used the power of his position for the benefit of dairy, grain, and oil industries. We are robbed daily when we have to pay the outrageous prices.

Nixon has brought us closer to 1984 than even Joseph McCarthy. More of us are watched, listened to, harassed, intimidated, and written up than ever before. New laws daily erode our civil rights – no knock, the Rap Brown Act, search without cause.

We are equally concerned with Nixon's crimes which are not "impeachable." This includes his aggression in Indochina. It includes the legal violence carried out in our communities under the banner of "law and order." It includes the perfectly "legal" wage freeze which has kept worker's wages frozen under the 5.5% guideline while the cost of living has risen more than 12%, and while monopoly profits have risen more than 40-60%

Earlier I referred to the owners of the powerful industries as Nixon's "superiors."

Were they not in fact the ones who chose Nixon for the Presidency?

Where are the decisions made in our political system?

Is it at the polls – or way before a candidate is nominated?

Who determines which candidate will be given the financial means to run a campaign?

Nixon is not an isolated case. Other presidents before him have perpetrated immoral and illegal acts in the interests of big business. The C.I.A. staged a coup in Iran, to the benefit of Gulf Oil; in Guatemala, for the profits of United Fruit; in Brazil, to the pleasure of State Department policy makers; in Vietnam, for oil and tin interests; and in Chile, for IT&T.

We say that Nixon is not a case of a rotten apple. The barrel itself is decayed from corruption and inequality. It infects all the apples to some degree. This is not to condone the individual criminals. They must be firmly dealt with, but at the same time, a new framewrok must be found to replace the old.

Our fundamental demand is, and must remain, ever increasing democracy. But, today in the U.S., democracy is a hollow word. Political equality is impossible in the midst of monopoly capitalism. Concentration of economic power is inseparable from the concentration of political power. It is a tragic but unavoidable fact that the trend in our economic system of capitalism has been toward concentration, toward monopoly. This is not a case of a system gone wrong, but the logical development of the capitalist system.

We must find a solution to the ever increasing concentration of political power in the hands of the economically powerful, and the ever decreasing public participation in decision making.

This is the task that now faces us. To find that fundamental solution, we must work together. The solution to our crisis lies with us, the people. Those with a vested interest in this corrupt system would never want to really change it. They would fight with all their might to resist change.

The present crisis of our system makes this a crucial time. Depending on the unity we can forge, we can make gains toward democracy or further lose our civil rights.

Take a look around you at the people who are waging struggle. We have the Farah women: women who have won a victory after three long years.

We have the United Farmworkers, as our brother Phillip Vera Cruz has described, who have been leading an unceasing struggle for the rights of farm laborers and for all workers.

There are the truckers, the steel workers, the teachers, and the Los Angeles County employees.

All of these struggles bring to mind an old Chinese story I want to share with you. It's about an old man who grew tired of living in the shadow of a mountain. Wanting to feel the warmth of the sun, he set about, shovel in hand, to dig the mountain away. People who saw this would stop and say what a foolish old man he is to think he could remove a mountain. But the old man knew that the mountain couldn't get any larger, and that with the help of his sons and daughters, and their sons and daughters, that eventually the mountain would be removed.

We are the sons and daughters of the old man, and together we can change this system. We cannot stand passively by and allow those who created the crisis to patch it up. We believe the people make history.

UNITE TOGETHER TODAY TO DUMP NIXON!

UNITE TOGETHER TOMORROW TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM.

The Grassroots: Southwest Community Council

The first cries of distress arose late in 1973 from the Issei members of the Pioneer Club, in the Crenshaw-Jefferson district of Los Angeles (see *Gidra*, Dec. 1973). The elderly Japanese American residents of the area had been increasingly plagued by crimes such as purse-snatching, vandalism, robbery, and assault. Two meetings were held in November to inform L.A. city officials of the desperate situation and to ask them for help. Masamori Kojima of the Mayor's office and Lt. Hunt of the Southwest Division of the L.A.P.D. were met with first, and City Councilman David Cunningham two weeks later. Both meetings were highly unsatisfactory. The government officials responded to the complaints and requests of the poeple at the meetings with ludicrous proposals and evasions of responsibility. In the weeks that followed, nothing was done by the government, and it was clear that nothing *would* be done, unless the people themselves acted.

It took two months of preparations, numerous planning meetings, and a thorough door-to-door canvassing and leafletting effort of a forty block area. On April 7, a community meeting was held in the Sixth Avenue Elementary School auditorium. The audience of 150 local residents, about two-thirds Black and one-third Japanese Americans, with a few Whites and others, held a two-hour bi-lingual discussion about the local problems and their possible solutions. The meeting was filled with an earnest desire to work together, but somehow listless. But...midway through the afternoon's discussions, Councilman Cunningham appeared and caused a disruption by attempting to bully his way to the microphone out of turn and try to speak. What could have been a more graphic example of City Hall insensitivity? The audience drowned out his voice until he gave up and left the hall. This ugly incident was enough to cause about fifty people to leave the meeting, but it also served as a catalyst to those who remained. At the end of the meeting, over one hundred hands rose into the air in a unanimous vote to form an organization for the community.

The Southwest Community Council was now established, with the motto, "Working For The Good Of All."

Although the crime problem had been the original focus of the organizing effort, the Southwest Community Council's objectives cover the broader scope, generally, of self-help community improvement. Work committees were formed around areas which the Council as a whole decided were the most important to concentrate on. The work committees are: the *Youth* committee, which will be running an NYC program this summer; the *Big Sister* committee, which has activities for girls in their early teens and preteens; a *Senior Citizens' Concerns* committee; and a *Block Organizing* committee. There is also planned a *Child Care* committee to help set up co-operative child care programs in the community. In addition, there is an ad hoc *Steering* committee to coordinate the various work committees of the Community Council. The *Steering* committee is open to anyone who feels that they would like to participate. There will be an election for membership in the *Steering* committee, once the Council has been working long enough for members to be able to make an informed choice about who they would like to have serve in leadership positions.

The Southwest Community Council is organized in the neighborhood along both sides of Jefferson Blvd., between Crenshaw Blvd. and Arlington Ave. Everybody within the general vicinity is warmly welcomed to participate.

The Southwest Community Council will be holding an International Dinner get-together on July 14 at the Trinity Baptist Church. Watch for more information in the local media.

Omai Faatasi Storefront: Coming Together

Carson, Ca.– As a community organization for the Samoan people, Omai Faatasi, is in the process of organizing a storefront as a base of operations.

The site is located at 22022 So. Main St. in Carson. It is being developed to be used as a community center to serve the people in the Carson area. Many projects and services are already in operation at the storefront. These include: a food coop, an employment service, a tutorial project and a political study group among other activities

Manzanar: 1974

Manzanar, Ca.– On April 27, over 250 Asian Americans journeyed to this site of the old World War II concentration camp. This annual pilgrimage has been taking place since 1969.

This year the weather was dry, clear and warm as work teams spent the morning hours cleaning and refurbishing several areas within the old camp site.

In the afternoon, religious ceremonies were conducted and a host of speakers addressed the crowd at the famous Manzanar monument.

During the internment years, Manzanar was one of ten concentration camps constructed to confine Japanese Americans. It alone held over ten thousand people. The pilgrimage is held every year so that we may never forget this racist act and work to prevent similar actions from ever taking place again.

THE FINAL VENOMOUS JABBERWOCKY

Feverish Grunts on the Movement and The Word [Reading Time: 7 minutes]

I'll never get all my gripes and concerns out; venomous jabberwocky would spray all over. Unhealthy. Supposing this is our last shot though, the occasion demands propositions that are, if not in their haste, elegant, at least significant and true. One problem is in placing tentative thoughts on pages that themselves have the crinkle of finality.

Seeming cataracts have dimmed my political vision—the final paralysis of my adolescent senility; blind in one eye or the other, seldom seeing true depth, colors, or contours. Because: it is now very strenuous to pose the proper questions. To speak nothing of proper answers or attainable solutions.

I've been working on this newspaper almost four years now – writing earnestly the last two. The written word means something to me. A political work area in media implies a recognition of the ability to use words as tools, lenses, or traps. So, I want to meditate on the Asian American movement as I've seen it from my own toadstool in the well. And I want to consider it in terms of tradition, words and history.

Confession: I've not found the last year or so to hold much comfort. Indeed, one must ask whether or not there *is* an "Asian American movement," – all three component terms raising their own issues; later on that. All around, organizations have folded or are going through them changes, either of puberty or calcification. Fortunately, there are more optimistic souls who chide my easy-to-be-negativism. They may be right. Certainly there is promising evidence of old-new clusters digging into institutions or forging self-sustaining enterprises for permanence and growth. Also, signs of more creative horizons of study. But most would at least agree that we're in the midst of one long transitional period, and that it's still pretty dark outside.

Part of what bothers me are two views with which I disagree. One involves a reversion to antique certitudes of pre-1917 Lenin or truistic Mao; the imposition of pre-industrial theories of revolution on our own vastly different situation; and the conceptualizing of social class – and revolution itself – as "things" rather than processes.

The other, in its excesses, resembles a land oriented nationalism, imbued more with literary romance than realistic analysis.

Since these cavalier statements have probably made some of you madder than hell, I'll have to first apologize, and then point out that my contentions are tentative, and, if provable, must be done so at a later time, at more length, and with great caution. In fact, however, I don't believe such statements are really provable – certainly not in print in advance of the trial itself.

But what bothers me even more, are not these mental sets themselves, as the mode of thought that has set them loose. And that is the theme of this short, if pedantic sermon: the destruction of language.

False beliefs may be corrected. But imprecise conceptual tools only doom one to erecting new models leaky as the old. There are a couple of variations on this theme. The vulgar version goes, "words are intellectual bullshit." The more sophisticated but equally myopic view is, "the answer lies in the Words." That is, those who don't read, and those who read with blinders. Those who talk rhetoric, and those who force reality into a theoretical jar. Those who would test political reality by the high, and those who would measure it by the words of the prophets. The result is words meaning nothing, or words stripped of their meaning.

In any case, the result is an obvious failure of communication. Those who handily dismiss students, or label everybody else as petit-bourgeois, or lay guilt trips through intimidation, or airily announce there will always be two (and only two) lines, one of which will always be correct; are often the last to perceive the contradictions of their class background, job, workstyle or lifestyle. Those who see their own work area as somehow the most legitimate, will always be trapped in their shortrange vision.

Humble example. At a meeting with the Union of Vietnamese in the U.S., one Sansei posed some questions to the Union about the situation in Vietnam. The queries however came weighted down with all kinds of Marxist jargon. The Third Force in the South – with whom the PRG has forged some strong alliances – became the "bourgeois revolutionaries" who are not "fighting for socialism." One can go on. "Marxism-Leninism" and "Revolutionary Nationalism" for example, have had all practical meaning sucked out of them when they're used either as badges or brickbats.

This parroting of theory looks neither far nor in deep, and arises from an absence of both *historical* and *literary* consciouness. It engenders factions snugly wrapped in old illusions, paying little heed to what's happening in the country and the world. It decays language. If the movement grows at all, it does so in spite of such trends.

Boring rhetoric, incomprehensible position papers, dry leaflets, loose theories, are the results. Practitioners lose control of concepts, and instead become overwhelmed by labels. People neglect the precision of language (the requirement of poetry), and instead substitute a poetic result for a political program, Without a historical sense we wax ultra-left, fail to read historical circumstances, get discouraged when the action lulls, lose patience and perspective, and drop out. Without a literary sense, we blur action and symbol, reduce philosophy to slogans and people to abstractions, and fail to see what people are *really* like to discover how they'll change. Worse, absence of a literary consciousness hinders dialogue with people not yet in motion. How can we raise awareness when we can't even talk to those who don't share our assumptions?

I see part of our role as change agents as, ironically, to preserve history and language. That is, prevent the blocking out of consciousness of America's guilt in Vietnam, or of any other episodes from her genocidal past – including Asian American history. Preserving language means being precise and concrete; exposing Zieglerisms and other evasions by those in power; and appropriating words as socialist weapons by making our communication more participatory, collective, and real. Cant and rhetoric divide; analysis unifies.

A keener eye would reveal our myths for what they are – simplified explanations elevated to religious status. So, those who dismiss students as a class as agents of change, may be absolutely right. But they have to consider: that the traditional view of students as privileged elites does not account for vast changes in the Western political economies. Advanced capitalism since World War Two urgently requires educated labor. Thus, the training of technicians, managers, teachers and social workers proceeds at full speed, and, as we've seen, it proceeds with studied indifference to the personal needs and values of those being trained.

Those who cling to doctrinaire versions of Marxism-Leninism have to face the same changed events. That is, social classes are processes, or "happenings," and not static entities: the working class we see today is not the one we'll see tomorrow. Finally the Revolution is not a thing to be exclusively possessed in advance by backbiting sects who proclaim themselves cadre.

The same for those experimenting with national organizing. If the traditional structures seemed inadequate, the new issues involving land, colonies and nations must also be scrutinized with care. Yearning for the old neighborhood is nice poetry, but problematic psychology and dubious politics. Among the issues: visualizing one's constituency/community as a colony (a caste, outside the political economic structure, pushing in) is different from the usual conception of exploited workers (a class, at the bottom of the structure, pushing up). What kinds of altered strategies does such a distinction portend, if any?

"But is that true?" That's the question that should follow each of the last three paragraphs. The point is not that the opinions so off-handedly summed and critiqued above are necessarily wrong, but that their premises, logic, values, policies, means, and possibilities must be more scrupulously examined by more poeple.

E.G.: "Asian American Movement." A definition of Asian: In terms of anthropology? In terms of similar national histories? Similar causes and patterns of immigration? Common experiences in America? Convenience?

American: The American experience. How similar and different between east coast and west; or Eastside and Westside for that matter? 1870–1970?

Movement: Do we equate movements with the organizational forms which arise from them? (Bad thinking, I believe.) Is the movement for itself, or for others?

Questions, questions. Ifs, ifs. The point is that these questions, though more numerous than their answers, must be a great deal more focused and insistent. Otherwise, the answers, if they do arrive, will come back so bruised up that no one will forget the anguish attending their delivery, or remember the innocence at the time they were sought.

Now this is all very abstract – perhaps I too fall into the trap. Or others will say that such concerns are not important. Warm bodies – that's what counts. Maybe. But I suggest that finding answers and making changes requires posing questions and alternatives in ways that can be acted upon with a clear eye. I think for instance that it's time to de-emphasize the facile street rap and charismatic presence in favor of the clarity and style and rigors of written exposition. 1969 is over. Our new propositions must be more subtle, resilient and deep; they won't be things to go shout in the streets.

Despite the obstacles, our movement is strong and smart enough to free itself of past mystifications. We can still will into creation new ideas, styles and results. Perhaps at bottom, only our pride and our communion can help us face the grim prospects facing us: That things *must* happen. If they must, they *will*. Whether or not they *can*, is no matter. So much of human decency and human hope hangs in the balance that it may be absurd to begin counting the consequences.

—Bruce Iwasaki

A conversation with musician, June Okida Kuramoto.

Funk and Soul on the Koto

The Student Union on the CSULB campus always makes me feel lost for a moment upon entering. All the wood paneling, the rock music piped in all over, the pinball machines, the chalk boards in the toilets (for graffiti!), all come together to confuse me; it takes a few minutes to re-gain my cool and remember that I used to go to this school. Of course, that was a long four years ago, before the completion of the Student Union, during the last part of the 1960's when the students there, and on other campuses across the country, were getting together to change the isolated academic environment to become more geared to the lives of real people. Especially among minority students, there was much motion and growth, fighting for the right to learn about our own histories and contributions towards building this country, creating viable programs to get more Third World people into school (EOP), fighting for a minority-run Ethnic Studies curriculum to help us learn about and improve conditions in our respective communities, and to make the colleges and universities become responsive to the needs and lives of minority people in various communities. Within these communities at this time, there was a whole lot of motion and blossoming of groups of people coming together to begin dealing with the damage that racism and sexism had done; this damage took the forms of drug abuse, alienation, and just basic survival, in many cases. People were beginning to see the need to unite to deal with these problems--to begin solving them as a community because they were community, not individual problems.

It was in this environment that a band known then as *Jupiter and Beyond, Yellowstone, New Moon* and finally *Hiroshima*, began to first take place. The band was made up of Asian brothers from various communities around the LA area. During the four years that followed, many changes took place within the group. People left, other people came, and sisters joined the group. First Kathy Miller, then Nancy Matoba (alias *Atomic Nancy*), both added strong female focal points through their singing Then June Okida, a koto player with some fifteen years of traditional koto behind her, joined the group and began bringing the traditional Asian sound of koto to a young, Americanized Asian audience, as well as radically expanding the range of the koto to play more contemporary Asian-American sounds. But even in the light of these changes, the original idea that brought the group together, pretty much remained the same:

Hiroshima represents the search for truth, love, identity, expression and hope conveyed in the universal language of music. We believe man's search for consummate knowledge is ill spent if directed towards destruction (as in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima) and should be directed towards life, which is the reality of ultimate truth. We think of ourselves as the spirit of all people who have suffered the injustices and inhumanity of others. As Asian Americans, we relate to our music as the fusion of two different and diverse cultures. Through our music we strive to create and communicate those elements of our heritages that best express the reality of the lives of Asians in America. Our hope is to help develop the understanding that is necessary for peace and harmony in the world. We believe that this understanding is the real hope for all mankind.

--Nisei Week concert sponsored by the Amerasia Booksotre, 1973.

So here we are on March 23rd, 1974; a large part of the small *Gidra* staff makes it down to the CSULB Student Union for a benefit dance for the Long Beach Pioneer Project. The music is by *Kichi, Hot Rice, Tsaba*, and *Hiroshima*. As we make it through the ultra-modern Union to the multi-purpose room where the dance is being held, we begin to see familiar and new faces of Asians from LA, Gardena, Carson, Long Beach, Orange County, etc. moving towards the door of the dance. It's pretty crowded a good turn-out.

Hiroshima is the last to play, and as they set up, they give *Tsaba*, the preceeding band, well deserved praise for their set. The band members setting up are: Chris Kawaoka--bass, Randy Yamamoto--drums and vocals, Benny (Oz) Yee--electric piano and vocals, Dan Kuramoto--flute and sax, John Kuramoto--recorder and percussion, and finally, June Okida Kuramoto--koto.

They begin with an almost monotonous re-

corder solo, then slowly the other instruments join in. The outstanding thing about the song is that June is playing the koto (usually played with finger picks) with a fair-sized bow. The sound is a near drone, but as she grows accustomed to the motion and the power, she really starts getting into it. And, as the band gets into some of their regular songs, and some new stuff, the people there get into dancing.

* * *

The lights are on in the room, and the band is cleaning up and packing stuff away, looking sorta spaced.

"Hey Benny...that was a *far-out* set, man."

Smile.

"Yeah, man...June was really a *trip* with that bow."

His face becomes more serious. "Yeah, I'm not sure about that. It was kinda like raping the instrument. I don't know."

* * *

A day later, June is asked to comment on Benny's feeling about her bowing the koto. She replied:

Maybe where Oz was coming from about raping the instrument was that maybe he puts the koto above other instruments, you know, because it's 'different,' and it has its own beauty. But yet all instruments do. It shouldn't be like this is better than that. Whichever instrument, I believe that all instruments have to grow, just as much as I as a musician have to keep growing. When the koto originally came from China to Japan, it changed forms. It was made longer, and the bridges were added. In that way, it changed. and the technique also went through changes. All instruments have gone through changes to what they are now. It's evolution. That's how they grow. Just like musicians.

If anything, I've always been a purest about the koto until just recently when I felt the need to express myself more completely. I believe that traditional music is important because it is my roots, but now I've become more conscious of being Asian-American. This is reflected in my music, and also in my life.

Like when I was younger I felt more Japanese you know, partly because I have an Issei mother, and I know that I had a lot more exposure to Japanese culture than if my mom was Nisei. It seems that the Nisei really felt they had to be so Western, I guess because of the whole Camp experience. Whereas having an Issei mother seems to have brought more culture into my life. All those things she knows how to do, like Japanese tie-dye, flower arrangement, and one thing I'm really proud about is, I know how to put on Kimono with obi. But now, I've more or less gone beyond just being Japanese, and as the years passed, I felt more strongly about being Asian American. And in terms of music, I feel a need to express not only the Japanese roots, but also the whole experience of being Asian American. Like there's this heavy traditional Japanese music in me, and yet there's also this funk-soul thing in me, and I can't express that playing such a light, mellow-sounding instrument. That's where the bow comes in and helps express that other side of me.

Yeah, I can see that. That whole thing about needing to express the American as well as the Asian part of you. You call it funk-soul... what kinds of experiences do you remember in your life that affected you in a heavy way that you want to express through your music?

Well, when I first came to this country from Japan, and first started school here, I was about seventy-five percent Japanese and twenty-five percent American—especially in terms of speaking. First, we settled in Boyle Heights, and I attended Euclid Avenue school. I didn't know hardly any English. Then after about a year, we moved out to the Westside and I went to Virginia Road Elementary school. The teachers there were so impatient with my not knowing English, that...well, like in math I was a whiz, 'cause it doesn't take reading and writing to do it—it's all calculations and numbers. But whenever it came to history, the teacher would make me go paint, you know, 'cause Japanese are good artists and that whole trip. At the time I was really glad because I didn't have to do the class work and take the tests. I didn't realize what I was losing until I got to Junior High.

This kept on until junior high?

Yeah. By the time I started Mount Vernon, I didn't know what a preamble was...I didn't know what the Constitution was...not that those things are so important, but imagine going into the seventh grade and they're talking about it in class, and you're too embarrassed to ask what they meant, so I just kept quiet. I was too scared to speak because I knew I didn't know the answer and still felt weak about my English. I mean, no one likes to be embarrassed, especially at that age. But because I was Japanese, and was quiet in class, the teachers mostly passed me. I mean their images of Asians was like, "well, she couldn't be that dumb. Give her a C." Sometimes I even got B's or even A's like that. I think this whole thing had a lot to do with why I started ditching school. Not knowing anything, you get to a point where you say, "Well, shine it." And you know when you start ditching school, you usually don't ditch alone. And among my peers there was a lot of pressure to get into dope and fighting and like that. And I guess I was no exception, but to be honest, I never really dug the scene. I got into what I did mostly to feel a part of things. I guess, too, having something that I really dug, something that was mine and was a way of expressing myself like through the koto, I was able to get out of the whole scene. And that's why I feel musicians can be examples to a lot of young people. Music can help you to express yourself, and give you something to build pride in yourself. That's why it's really exciting for me to write and speak out like this. Before, I never really liked to say anything because I always felt I didn't know anything. But now I'm finding that being an Asian woman, and a musician I have to begin to speak out, for my own self-respect. I mean, I'm finding out that no one else is gonna do it or say it for me. And I guess playing in front of people has helped me to get over it too, you know, through playing music.

You've been playing the koto for a long time, haven't you?

Eighteen years. I started when I was seven.

Did you always find playing helped you to come out? Like how was it when you first started taking lessons?

I dug it. I really dug it. It was an instrument of my grandparents, and it was different; I mean no matter what, the instrument is very aesthetic, even in just its appearance. It was really nice, until I got into junior high school.

I went to Mount Vernon, and you know how everyone was really into the doo-wah groups, you know, the soul and stuff. And my friends would put me down. I mean I was into soul music then too, but I was also into koto music. I guess it's just like piano or other music lessons. I'm sure a lot of people in those days were embarrassed to say they were taking piano lessons. It was so "lame." In the same way I was embarrassed to say I was going to koto lessons. And the koto was even worse because you know how everyone wanted to be so American...you know, so white...

Or so black...

Yeah, or wherever you grew up. Yeah, during that time, junior high school through high school, it was such an embarrassing thing for me that I don't think any one of my friends knew I played. I mean I was trying to be cool and everything, and it was really unfortunate, but I was just too embarrassed to say anything. Like if I played somewhere, and saw someone I knew, I would almost cringe. Yeah, junior high was the hardest time. I used to ditch...

School?

No...well, yeah, school too, but that's something else. Ditch koto lessons. If I was among my friends, I didn't want to leave because I'd have to say, "Well, I gotta go now..." you know, and someone would come off with, "Where you going?" or "Man, she's so lame...she's gotta split now." You know how people get into all that.

So by the time I got into high school, I finally did quit for about a year. But I really missed it. I guess that's when I started realizing how much it meant to me. I mean in a lot of ways, it helped me to get through the bummer of grammar school and junior high. So I went back. And I guess that's when I really started going full on. By the time I graduated and started LACC, I started taking on more performances and jobs. One of them was playing at a night club. I'd play between the main attraction show: singers from Japan. And being an Asian American woman playing an instrument like the koto, the owner-manager would try and get me drunk and pick me up and try to take me home and that kinda stuff. It's that whole thing about there I was a koto player, wearing a kimono, and people just identified you with the geisha image.

I think a lot of Asian sisters can relate to the bag: shy, quiet, pleasing...

Right, and it's so hard to deal with. I remember I used to go home every night I worked there with diarrhea.

I thought you were going to say 'go home and cry.'

No, I would just be eating it all inside. But I think those kinds of experiences really made me realize what it is being a woman musician...you know what I mean?

Not just a woman musician...just plain being a woman.

Yeah. Like a sex symbol. And on the other hand, it's really tempting to play the part, 'cause you can make a lot of money and get known that way.

You mean on your symbol rather than your musical ability?

Right.

That must be pretty humiliating, though, for a musician.

Yeah. I mean here you are trying to get something across, something that's you, something that you work hard at and yet it doesn't mean shit because of all that sex symbol shit. That really hurts. And I think that's why there aren't as many women musicians around. I mean I know there are a lot of great musicians that are women, but they're not out there. And I think a lot of it has to do with the whole sex symbol trip. You can easily get discouraged if people can't get past that, it becomes really frustrating. I think another reason women musicians aren't out there is because of the conflicting roles you have to play.

For example, two women singers we had in the past did not stay with the band because they had to, at a certain point, make a decision between being really into their music, really out there in front, or maintaining their relationships with their men. I think not only the whole role confusion, but also it's hard for a lot of brothers to handle the sex symbol thing when it's your old lady.

Like for me, to be married and at the same time to be a musician creates a conflict in roles; being a musician forces me to be independent to a certain extent. Like you have to take on jobs - different kinds of jobs - just to survive, especially since Danny's a musician too, and there's no steady income. Plus you have to keep at it, you know, practicing, rehearsing,...but that causes conflict sometimes, like shining the housework or whatever I'm supposed to do as my role of a wife. But that's where I'm really fortunate because Danny is also a musician too, so he has empathy for a fellow musician as well as for me as a person. A great deal of my being a musician is because of him...he's always been supportive and encouraged me.

Whereas, I think a lot of women musicians haven't been as lucky, and that's why they're not out there. Because they find themselves in that sex symbol role and can't hack it, or they get confused about the roles they're forced to play, and they just pull back for the sake of their marriage, or their relationship, or because of their own feelings of insecurity.

Yeah, I can see that in the women that are 'out there' in music. I guess that whole area makes me think about Esther Phillips and her struggle with drugs, as well as other singers who aren't as famous. And also, I think about those sisters that have lost such struggles, like Billy Holiday, Janis Joplin, etc. But that makes me think about another thing...when you think about women in music, in most kinds of music, they're singers. I can't even...well, Alice Coltrane, and a new woman, Bobbi Humphrey, but they seem more the exception rather than the rule.

Speaking of Bobbi Humphrey, in her situation, being a woman is a kind of plus for her, I mean, she's an excellent flute player, but she's not as hot as some of the mainflow of jazz flute players. But yet because she's a woman, she's a little further than a man would be, given

the same talent. Do you know what I mean?

Maybe like, it adds to her 'act,' or makes her more saleable?

Yeah. Like there's no doubt that she has a total different sound, a sound of her own, and like I said, she's an excellent flute player, and you know it's her when you hear her, but it's just that separate from her music, with people treating you that way, I would see it or find it hard to give me support as a musician.

Yeah, that whole thing with advertising and selling an image...like ..

A gimmick. And for a musician, that's really off the wall.

Yeah. I guess that whole thing about being a musician in this society is pretty oppressive because of the whole selling mentality of the producers, plus there seems to be a real romantic myth...stereotype even, and therefore, most people, most people don't see musicians in the same light as other people who work at a skill for a living. I mean, I know I do that. When I heard there was a musician's union, it seemed so strange.

Well, have you heard about the musician's union? I mean what it's like? They don't give you shit. They just take about three percent out of every check you make. They must have the worst benefits of any union, they don't really find you jobs, the main thing they do is provide scale pay, but if they don't find you jobs and you're not working, what's scale pay? Another thing, if you are in the union, you can't play non-union gigs. If you get caught, you get fined or get your membership taken away or suspended. It's just a part of the whole bureaucracy in the music business.

Yeah, that's all pretty cold. I guess that's what you either really struggle to just survive, or work at some other kind of job like most musicians do, or you make it really big like a small handful do.

Yeah, so in order to survive, you take on regular jobs, or club gigs. Some people do mostly clubs. So some clubs are unionized, some clubs aren't. And if you're in the union, you can't work in the non-union clubs, and if you're in the non-union category the clubs pay you really shitty. Like this one brother I know, he used to work for fifty dollars a week, four or five hours a day, six nights a week. So that comes out to about thirty hours of work, getting paid fifty dollars. And that of course doesn't take into account the time spent rehearsing, and then your own personal practicing, that you always want to continue, being a musician. That's never included.

That's less than most non-union factory jobs around...

Yeah. Then them owners are always griping about their end and never think about the musician, and a lot of times if it weren't for the musicians the club might not have any business in the first place.

Yeah, I guess musicians are really victims of the music industry. They're made out to look like this really romantic image, living a life of luxury and excitement, but in many ways, they're getting pushed around like everyone else -but to get back a little, how else do you feel conflict about being a woman musician?

Another thing is that no one ever comes to tell me anything, in terms of response to the band. I get no feedback. You know, like people will usually go up to maybe Oz or Danny and say, "Wow, that was really out of sight," or more often they'll say, "Man, that was really a *far out* set..." The response is never to me. Sometimes I think it's because I'm a woman and there aren't many women musicians, so people just don't recognize, or even know how to relate to me.

Like a constant situation I am always in, being the only sister in a band with five brothers...in some ways, one against five. In all honesty, I couldn't say that they always treat me inferior, but there are many instances where I believe my being a woman makes a difference on how thay treat me and my ideas, suggestions, etc. There are times when I would give suggesttions or try to get an idea across and it would not be heard...almost a shine on. Maybe sometimes I come off the wall, but sometimes I feel I'm rejected because I am a woman so I feel I am outnumbered and feel I can't always forget.

So I go through all these insecurity periods, because no one says anything to me, so I get no support. I don't even get negative feedback so that I can change if it's wrong.

You mean like last night at Long Beach? I noticed that after you played with the bow, there was no response...

Yeah. But also, I think that happened because it was something new...something different. It's like when Hiroshima first started, people weren't really off on them because it was so different. You know, playing original music, and when the koto was added, that was something pretty new in the Asian American community at that time. Like now, we get a lot of requests to play, but even now when we do something different again, it seems no one knows what to say or how to react.

You still take koto lessons, don't you?

Illustration by D[illegible] Kuramoto

Yeah. From Mrs. Kudo.

How does she feel about you playing in the band, and doing things like bowing the koto?

Well, she knows I play in the band because I took her tapes of us before. She's given me suggestions on widening the variable sounds even more than I have. Mostly, she's really excited at seeing the musical growth in me from playing in the band; watching me really getting into music and going back to traditional music, as well as tripping out into other new things. She's really excited, I guess, just to see her student grow.

She's really too much. This brother from the East West Players was talking to me about how he's trying to get someone to produce a film idea he has, about an Asian American woman musician. I guess along the lines of Billie Holiday, and I thought of my teacher. Man, she's really come a long way, and really overcome a lot of heavy times. She's divorced, and has been teaching koto as a livelihood. She raised three boys, while giving a recital every year, teaching eighty-some students. One year she got really sick, and since that time more of us students have been helping her out with things. But I really feel that she's an artist that needs to be heard more. And yet, she's so into teaching and has so many students that she feels responsible to, that it's hard to even perform at all for her.

Would you encourage other sisters to get into music?

I can't really encourage sisters to be into music as I am because there really hasn't been any glamour, stars, and/or money...lots of frustration, depressions and work. But I'd like for them to keep it open if they really wanted, needed or love to get into music. It's just like any other jobs, women who are just as qualified and have the potentials as men...it should not be a closed door. I just don't want people to get misled in their thinking about musicians, but at the same time I don't want to discourage people to get into music on their own level.

Why do you think music is important to the Asian American community?

As a release to people. There definitely is a need for release and I believe music is a way. Playing at dances, concerts and clubs with the band has really shown me the need people feel for "partying" as an outlet. When dances and concerts are full and people are coming out, it really shows me that we need to get out, get together and forget about the working days. It's very natural to need to 'take a break' or 'take a vacation' to rejuvinate yourself to keep on; music provides this.

And maybe more important, music is essential to the cultural growth of the community. Music serves to unite people. That's why there's always music at community gatherings...there's a song or a band or chant or something musical. In fact, music is probably the most traditional art form from where people are unified. That's how stories and histories were passed along...by songs. Music was much more important in the past because it was how traditions and history was passed from family to family. Music also provides a sense of identity. That's why we have to not only listen to music, but create our own music, because a community that cannot create cannot grow.

--June Okida Kuramoto
with Evelyn Yoshimura

RAGA

Without leaving his door
He knows everything under heaven.
Without looking out of his window
He knows all the ways of heaven.
For the further one travels
The less one knows.
–Tao Te Ching, chapter 47

as a public service we would like the musicians to play an anthem before every ceremony or celebration that is representative to or relatable to the people of the cozmoz. how about ball games of any kind, eating and any act of love, moneymakers excluded.

Q: What can a rock band do for the movement?

A: Master, it gets people out of their houses.

Music may be life and it may be love and so, in a way, I suppose we all basically have the same thing to say. It's the way in which we choose to express ourselves that makes the difference. A long time ago a prophet hastily concluded that there was nothing new under the sun. In a literal way he was right. Since life is a journey between two points–the same two points for all of us–the journey becomes the heart of the matter. The way we choose to eventually arrive.

So how do we say what we have to say?

On turning a disadvantage into an advantage.

For example, the band will go through many changes–personnel, equipment and style–but the goal must remain constant: turning on other Asians as well as non-Asians through music. Music is the universal language.

They are all gooks raised in a white society. Even now there are whites who are really getting off on black music. It's only taken too long.

Can't relate
Lack of appreciation
Too far out
Too high

We still have to survive. It takes a certain amount of bucks to stay healthy and productive. We are trying to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

I see the band members homogenizing a lot. Which I think is outasite. Not like we're all alike, like we're mixed well and evenly throughout. The light with the dark. Yin-yang again.

It's group therapy. Individual efforts intertwining, competing and complementing. Group experience goes beyond the range of a single person. The band is much like a collective, though we don't share the same residence we are working together and depending on each other. We deal with each other on an abstract level–music. But whenever dealing with people on any level, the same problems always arise: failure to communicate, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, individual taste.

The "I am waiting for you" syndrome often takes place in a bomb shelter. All are sitting around with blank looks. None of them knows what to do next, or someone knows and is too shy or too afraid to say it, or everyone knows it and all are afraid to bring it up or it's understood.

The audience can and should judge the band on face value; that is, the here and now.

They don't know that your dog just got hit by a car or that you were here this afternoon rehearsing, spending six hours for a job that pays for an hour. People don't know you've got the flu or the jam you're doing is off the top of your head.

Ask us what it is or what it was and we will say you missed it.

an act of love being any revealing of the true self. acts of fear and of indifference will be covered in future announcements. at some. ahem. later. encyclopedia or chance encounter...

now, to begin, here's our national anthem:

HAIL freeland of all
the Sun Moon and other stars
working together
as part of the heart

love this place we're at
love the universe
striving together
to make it easy for all...

whatever the sky was, the boy discovered that he was just as close to it sitting on the rocks watching the waves roll in as he was on top of the highest peaks with the wind playing with him.

(for the further one travels
the less one knows.)

–Song Fong

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Muse

Mostly at night–one lamp late–no one looking,
We'd warily convene
Blank white page.
This time you win.
Neither my scrawled revisions nor idle lists,
Vain gazes into the glossy dustjackets
on my ample, unread shelves,
Nor drip grind coffee for an all night cup,
Could coax out a smile from you
Even for old times.

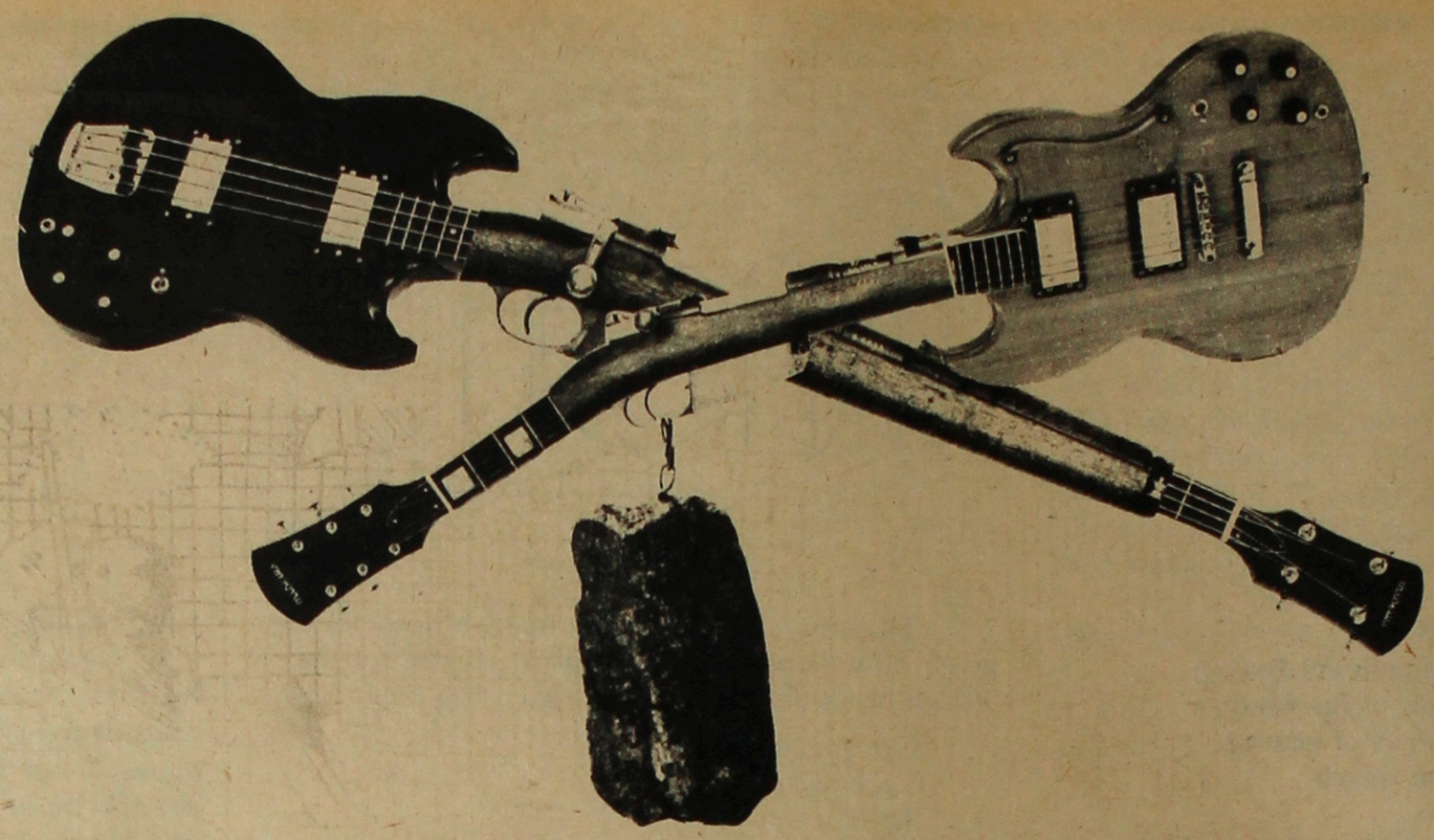
Fountain puns and style,
desire, dear,
kept me walking steady high,
usually...good for three months or so.
But then, soggy treading every time.
That first cautious embrace–
I should have warned you, yes?:
We'd soon get mud on our dress up shoes.

–Bruce Iwasaki

sandman

tigers crouched in the long grass
waiting
bearded angel smiles hanging
from their mouths
housing wicked sunshine softly
creeping through the marbled night
of chlorophyll eyes
unblinking
moving with the wind
silently
in secret thunderstorms
hissing on the thirsty pavement
and dissipating
in various random
unmeasured
dance
steps

–Laura Tokunaga



ROCK
We've just begun....

When word began to get around that *Gidra* was closing shop for awhile, and that their last issue would be a kind of review of the movement's achievements (and maybe also somewhat of a forecast), I began to think of writing an article about my specific experience as an Asian musician in the L.A. area over the past few years. For the longest time, I couldn't decide what I wanted to say about myself and some of the other musicians that I know. Finally, I began to realize that I had to view things from a broader historical perspective in order to give a truer account of the contemporary local Asian music scene.

There have been some very significant changes on the scene locally, and some of the changes that are occuring at this moment will not reveal their significance until perhaps much later. Some of the changes are very obvious–for instance, the growing (!) numbers of active Asian bands in the community. Some of the changes are not. For example, many Asian musicians are beginning to try and express something of their particular culture in their music.

The point I would like to try and make in this article is that, by and large, all these positive changes are a direct or indirect result of the positive changes the larger Asian movement has been responsible for. In my own case, I might have always had the desire to make music, but it was being involved with the movement that gave me the necessary direction and encouragement to make it happen. Sharing ideas and communicating with others in the movement helped to liberate me from many of the self-doubts, hang-ups, and general confusion in my head that existed primarily as a result of the pressure of stereotypes. The movement gave me pride in being Asian, and that in turn allowed me to begin to think about my potential as a real three-dimensional human being and not as some one-dimensional stereotype. I'm sure that there are many others who owe a debt of some sort to the movement (musicians included). Of course, true liberation will not be a reality until we are able to fulfill that potential, but we are *moving* in that direction.

At last count, there were presently a dozen or so active Asian bands in the L.A. area, whereas four years ago there were maybe just three or four. There are also many younger Asians whom I have met that are starting to get their "chops" (technique) together and who are very interested in playing music. The numbers aren't growing fast enough to speak in terms of a cultural revolution, but nevertheless, viewed from a historical perspective, there is a definite revolution (or evolution, if you like) taking place. A cultural movement has been born of the political movement. Without a doubt, the pace of this "cultural movement" will quicken as time goes on, as more musicians become involved, and as more and more of the younger brothers and sisters are exposed to the positive examples being set.

Indeed, some of the musicians I know feel that one of their prime tasks is to provide a positive example for others to follow, to help a younger brother whose life lacks direction. Beyond that, it is a very positive thing to anyone--not just those into music–to see a bunch of Asians on a stage working together to play music. And closely related to that idea is the concept of the Asian musician helping to fight perpetration of negative stereotypes. To see Asians on a stage communicating to an audience, maybe jumping up and down in excitement or singing a lovely melody, is enough to make the strongest racist wonder if he was wrong to think that all Asians are "quiet." Or that all Chinese know Kung-fu, etc.

I guess my point is that, had the movement not initiated us into thinking about our potential, there would not be all these Asian musicians running around now starting to think about freeing or stimulating the potential of other Asians as well as their own. Of course, depending on which band you listen to, you will hear different music because each person has different roots and different things to express. However, the more there are, the more total will be the expression by Asians of the Asian-American experience and culture.

What lies ahead for the local Asian musician? Basically there are some challenges and there are some encouraging developments that indicate we will be able to meet those challenges. The basic problem is that, while we really can't see beyond the present capitalistic system–that time is still in the future–we must somehow help that time to come about and simultaneously survive in the present. So, the question is, how do we survive within the system and at the same time help change come about (i.e., bring people together)?

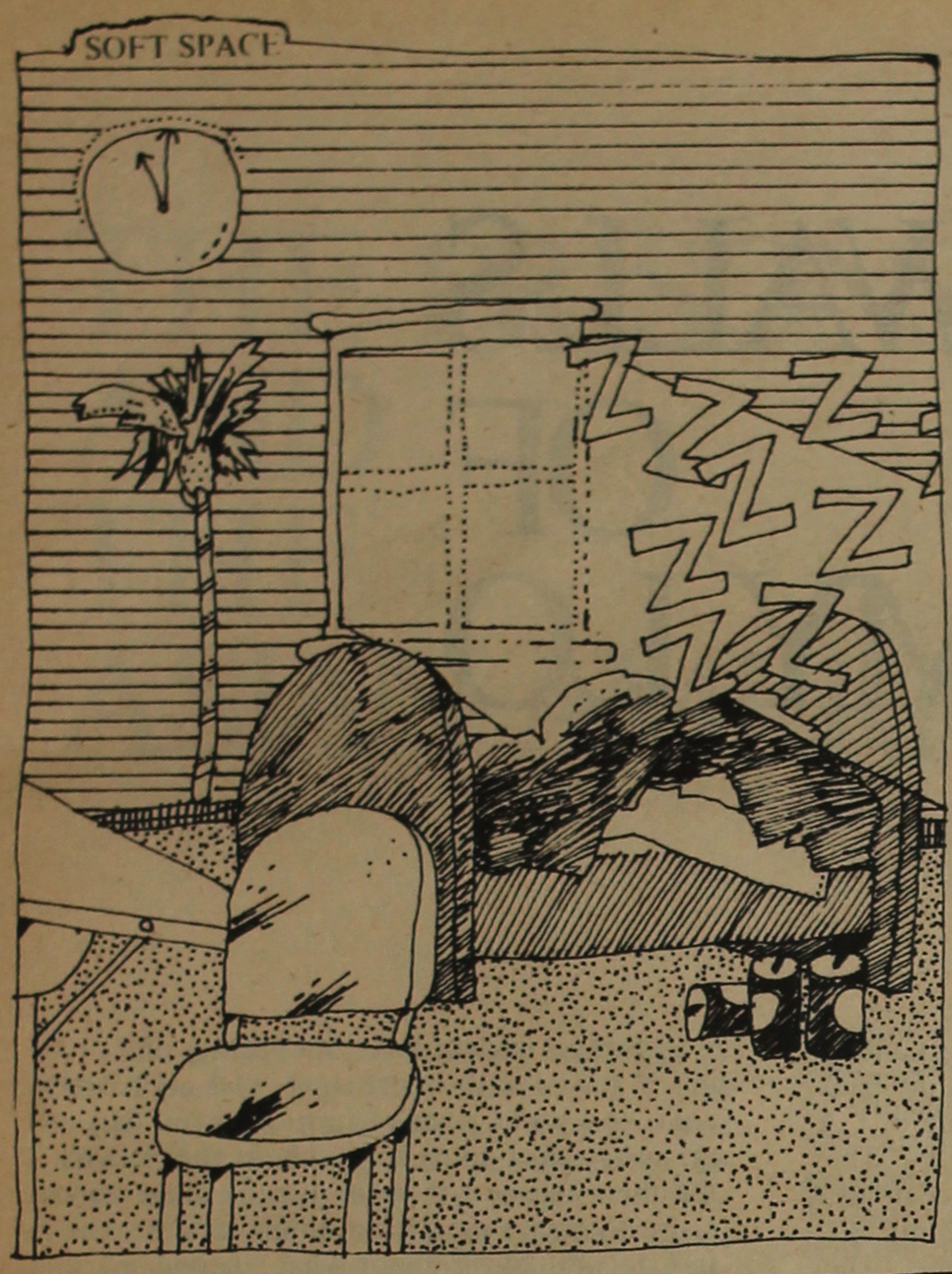
There is, incidentally, a very similar question facing most all movement groups and services in general. We would like to avoid working a 40-hour week in order to survive. Ideally, you should be able to put all your time and energy into something that is meaningful and be able to survive off of it too. But it takes so much money just to survive...and services such as those the Asian Women's Center provides require much more money besides. Where can that money come from? Likewise, any band will run into enormous expenses on good musical equipment. A six piece band could very easily have $6,000 invested, or roughly $1,000 a man! And that is just the *initial* investment.

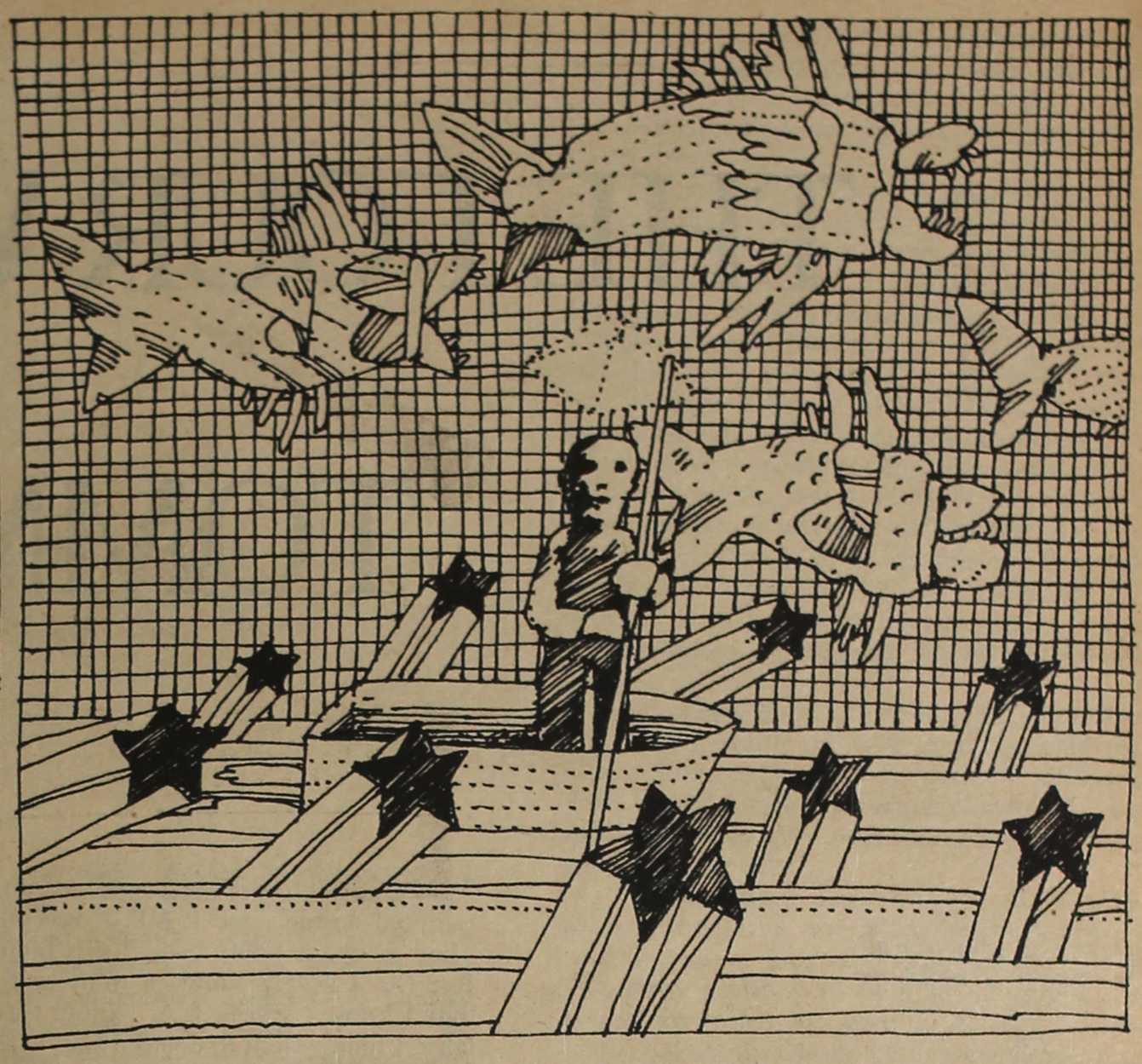
But there are many encouraging things to point to as well. Most of them are recent developments. For instance, my particular band (Kichi) practices at the Yellow Brotherhood house where there are many younger brothers hanging around. At first they didn't appear too interested in what we were doing. But now, whenever we take a break (from practice) we usually come back inside and find them sitting at the drums or at the piano, and really trying to play...not just fooling around. Another encouraging thing is that one group of Asians, Chris and JoAnn, have actually made an album. Even though (at the time of this writing at least) they are no longer together, their album remains as a landmark. There are also some local community bands that will most likely make some albums soon.

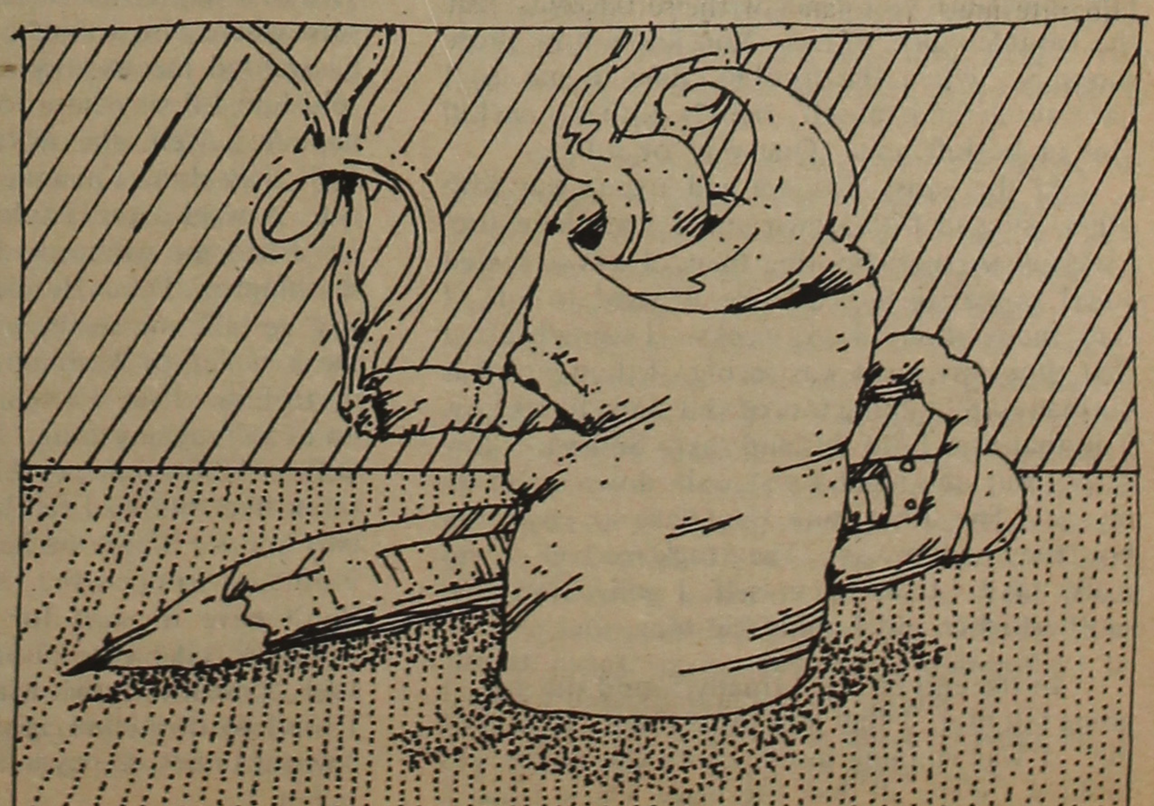
But perhaps the most encouraging thing is that, not only are the numbers of musicians increasing, but also the communication between them. By communication I mean the sharing of ideas and ideals, as well as frustrations. "Jam sessions" where musicians in different bands (or those not yet in a band) can get together on a very casual basis and play and talk seem to be happening more frequently now than ever before. These informal gatherings are vital because they give us the opportunity to stimulate and encourage each other. You might look at it as a pooling of strength.

The one comment that I have heard most often is "There is so much to learn!" And not only about music, but about the relationship(s) of music to social change (in the particular context of America) as well. Really, there must be endless questions that have to be answered: How does the Asian musician relate to the Asian community, on what level should he fight for change (should he fight the big record companies or instead try and take advantage of their distribution to get his message outside the community), how can music help bring people together and at the same time heighten their political consciousness to create the desire for change? And so on. But the learning process has definitely begun. It must–and will–continue until the answers are found.

–Peter Hata







by Glen Iwasaki

THE FOUR WALLS OF TOMMY LO

TIME

There's no time to wait
No time to sit and hope.
The time is now.
for
Brother and sister
Mother and father
Yellow men, black men, white men
and all men to come together
Time is running out
For tomorrow may be too late.

First, I want to just talk about myself. I came to U.S. in February 12, 1968. I was live with my people when I first came. I went to school. But I was too old to go to junior high. If I go to high school, I can't catch up my class. So I lie to my people that I go to school everyday. But I didn't go. I went to work everyday, 'cause some of my Chinese friends find me a job. I was real poor. So I didn't ask my people for any money 'cause my people was real poor too. So after while, I live with my friend. Sometime I going home to see my mom. At that time I don't know what I doing. I guess I like to be more freedom with my friend. Everyday fucking around, smoke weed, drink. Sometime sleep in the car. Go to school, see girl. All kind the shit.

End of '69. I was joined the gang in L.A. Chinatown. Soon as I joined the gang I thought I was a big man now. Everyday, like a monkey—jump over there, jump over here. You know, we like to show off, go eat for free, movies free, drunk is free too. They never ask for I.D. So I was doing the same thing I used to. But this is worse than before. When I doing something, I don't think before I do, and I don't know what's okay, what's going to happen to me anyway. You know when you was young, if someone call you, "Hey kid, come over here." How do you feel when the people call you funny name? Call me kid. 'Cause a lot the people don't like other people call him kid. But sometime you don't want no trouble. But the trouble come to me. You know how those gangs is. When the trouble come to me, so I have to defend myself, right? Either you kill him or he kill you. One way or other.

In the early '70s we had a gang war with other gang in Chinatown and I was there too. I see my partner shooting then. I was so scared and I was drive the car. We all went to S.F. I stay there about 4, 5, weeks. I come back at that time—my head was so big. I thought I was big man, sure, talking lots of shit, talk about how I do that how I did this and that. So I was a low rider. But one night I was walk down street by myself. The other gang, they have six guys. Oh boy, they kick my ass. They fuck me bad I was really mad. I say to myself, I going find that motherfucker and I going kill him.

In the end of '71, I finally found the guy. I going kill him. I stab him three times. He didn't die. I was running away 'cause the police was looking for me all over the place 'cause I had a A.D.W. (assault with a deadly weapon) and attempted murder, and L.A.P.D. was on my back. They want me really bad. I was hiding in L.A. But the L.A.P.D. think I went to S.F. They didn't know I still in L.A. About three months later, I finally went to Boston, stay with my partner. They find me a job and everything. They take care me really good.

But something happen in Chinese New Year '72. My partner call me up from New York. He say he got in some trouble with New York gang from Chinatown. So me and some other partner that night carry our gun and drive a car to New York, see what's happening there. When I got there, I see all my partners carry gun and knife, we look just like a little army. So we sent to this place to talk to them. One of my aprtners, he pull a gun out and said, "Hold up there. You put your hand on your head." So they put their hand on their head. So he tells me to hold the gun and he says, he is going to search them. Then he walked by each one and just stab them one time. He stabbed seven people. Oh boy, he's got a cold heart. My partner scared the shit out of me. So I have to run away again. I don't know where to go now. My partner said he is going to Washington, D.C. He asked do I want to go. I was thinking to go with him would be nothing but trouble so I tell him I'm not going. So he say take care of yourself.

So I went back to Boston, got all my shit together. Then I went to Chicago the next day. I went to Chicago Chinatown. I was looking for my partner. I couldn't find him. I stay there about three days because I didn't know anybody. At that time I don't know what to do; I'm lost so I call my mom, can I come back. She told me no. She want me to go to Kansas to my uncle's place 'cause he had a Chinese restaurant in Kansas City. So I told my mom, okay. Next day, I get my shit together and fly over there. He picked me up at the airport. In the afternoon I went down to his place. But shit, his place is dirty and SHIT. And he have a big family, nine people. The first day I was there, I told him I was going somewhere else tomorrow. He asked me why, he wanted me to stay and work for him. So I told him I'd stay here for a week, and see what happen. Well, the next day I went to work. Boy, they think I'm a machine. I worked my ass off. A week later, I told my uncle I have to go. He asked me where, so I told him I'm going to Washington, D.C. He didn't say nothing. Next day he take me to the airport. He went to buy me a ticket to Washington, D.C. 'cause I might lie to him. I say I'm going to Washington, D.C. So I can't say anything. 'Cause the next flight to D.C. is 12:00 p.m., to L.A. is 11:00 a.m., somethink like that so I tell him we have to wait for two hours. 'Cause he has to go back to work at 9:30 a.m. to open the restaurant I tell him you don't have to wait for me, you have a lot of things to take care of at the restaurant. So he said, good luck now. I say, I will. Soon, he left. I went to the ticket agency, said, man, I bought a wrong ticket, so pay a little more to get an L.A. ticket.

So I get back in L.A. My brother picked me up. I stayed with my partner. All my partners come to see me, what's happening man, they ask me, what am I going to do about the A.D.W. I tell them the best thing is to get a good lawyer, 'cause they save me a lot of money. So I went to talk to my lawyer about what's happening that night and everything. My lawyer talked to me first, let me call the F.B.I. and L.A.P.D. see if they have a warrant out for me or not, so he call the F.B.I. and L.A.P.D. They called and say they don't have a warrant out for me. My lawyer told me, hey, You're free they don't want you. *At that time I don't believe that.* I was so happy. I'm free. I'm free. I say to myself, I'm going to cool down. I'd find me a job working and I'm not going to fuck up anymore, so I met a girl, we was going all right for three to four months.

In the summer of '72, a lot of my partners call me up, say some people from New York were looking for me and my other partner. So soon they call me. I drive down there to see who's looking for me. Soon I see him. I say, how *the* hell he know I'm from L.A. I say *all right*, so I went down there, just fucking around, go to bar, drink...About 3:00 p.m. I was a little drunk. Later on, the people from New York went inside the bar, the way they want to talk to us. We were outside the parking lot. So me and my other partner went in there to talk to them. So when they talk, I was sit on the side. They talked really low and hot. So I talked too. I asked why you shoot my partner. All kind of shit. So I see the partner had a gun in his hand. So...

One week later I got sent to prison. First time doing time. It was real hard for me 'cause my old lady is gonna have baby soon. And other thing we have been together very long, that's was made me worry. And I say to myself, what the hell I going here. I have family to take care of. I was trying real hard. But it didn't come through. So what come I say what you have to pay. Feel sorry, it's too late, it's already happened. Just do your time and get out. The other reason is my old lady. If I don't have her, I could run away again. I say how long can I run if they find me when I'm real old. That time I don't even want to think about. That's what I tell her now. I don't want to talk to her right now. I've lost everything. Since I've been in jail, I've learned lots of things, like how to take the problem and be a man, talk like a man. Like before when I was young, I don't think that kind of shit. 'Cause I never do any time before. Like I say, if you don't learn a lesson you never will know. Right now, if I got some other people I don't have to fight to settle down. I can use my mind. I can talk it over. Better than I gonna kill you or kick your ass. That kind is both shit. But some time you have to, you know what I mean. I mean in here, you do. Out there, if you don't look for trouble, nothing will happen to you. Right now, I have good plan. I can make some money, and if I can help the A.J.C., I'll be better too.

—Tommy Lo

THE PRISONS AND THE ASIAN AMERICAN

The previous story probably reads like *In Cold Blood* or *West Side Story* to a lot of people. That's the problem. We have been made to fear, publicize and romanticize the 'deviant' elements, anything but realize. It's like being on one end of a see-saw – where things are going good depending on which end of the see-saw happens to be up at the time.

Always smiling, Tommy is warm, friendly and open; he wanted to share his nineteen year life with the Asian community. Like he said, he's trying to learn how to "use his mind" and get a better grasp of English, so he constantly asks for help in correcting his sentences; in fact, the original story was dotted with blanks which were words that he couldn't think of at the time. But, like he said, there's no time to sit around *and* wait.

His story is not designed to evoke sympathy; pity isn't necessary, if anything, it's an overbearing attitude. Everybody in the joint has enough sad stories. Nor is it an attempt to preach or shock. It just presents an objective picture of conditions behind going to the joint and the feelings and changes behind it.

The moods and attitudes inside the joint are changing; small, tell-tale signs give us a little incentive with which to measure our growth and 'progress.' Recently, a brother was scheduled to come out the day before a joint visitation was to take place by Joint Communications. We saw him on the streets and were glad for him.

"I wanted to stay for another day, but they wouldn't let me."

"What'd you want to do *that* for?"

"Oh, I didn't want to miss the meeting."

"If being a free thinker, a 'for real person' and doing my own thing means that I'll spend a majority of my life behind these four walls of correction, either I'll have to make the necessary changes in my life style or the community will have to change some of their narrow-minded, old fashioned rules before...I can remain 'on the streets.'

–T. Saito, Tehachapi, March 1974

It had always seemed that the rebellious lived that 'for real' life and the student was a sterile person. Especially to someone who was Asian, someone breaking out of the whole achievement and quiet thing was exciting and daring. He (and usually it was a he, because it seemed a *she* who broke out of her Asian stereotype would have to do it in different ways) was a symbol of strength because he proved by existence that there could be another alternative to the drabness of successful, normal establishment life. He was on top of a reverse hierarchy which said that he was so good because he was so *bad*.

There seem to be two levels at which people realte to prison, from the outside. Firstly, most of us are emotionally affected by the prisons; pictures of people behind bars do powerful things to our freedom-oriented heads, and a gut level understanding of imprisonment evokes a fear and curiousity that makes it easy to stereotype the joint. Secondly, it has been looked on as a place of strength and rebellion. The easiest identifiable body of rebellion is in prison, when we look at where the thoughts of Malcolm X, George Jackson, Ho Chi Minh solidified. And so, we find the prison movement being an integral part of progressive movements. A look through past issues of *Gidra*, or any progressive paper will have some contribution from or about the joints, factual, emotional and largely rhetorical.

Perhaps it is then appropriate to stop and look at the trends of 'lumpen proletariat' and the prison movement. We'll try to approach this dialectically, first from the viewpoint of the movement, particularly, the Asian movement.

I. A History of Reactions

In the late 1700's, imprisonment in America was only for pre-trial detention or short jail terms. Instead, capital punishment, dismemberment, banishment, flogging, monetary fines or public humiliation in the stocks were means of punishment. The transformation of imprisonment as a usual method of dealing with deviate people was "a product of the complex economic, political, intellectual, social and humanitarian changes that pervaded 19th century life." *(Struggle for Justice,* Hill and Wang). Revolution against indiscriminate capital punishment forced the development of alternative measures. And so, in the beginning, abandoned ships were used; in fact, one prison hulk was swept ashore during a storm near San Francisco; at that point, a prison was built. Today it is called San Quentin.

Businesses developed and the Industrial Revolution created a need for cheap labor. Prison now has a function, and comes close to what we see today. Convicts become an asset as well as a liability: Convict labor enabled penal institutions to break even or show a profit until business and union pressures stopped it as 'unfair competition.'

Along with the economic advantages were the developing concepts of democracy and the inalienable rights of men. Democratic theory and rule by majority allows for the fact that there will have to be some deviance; obviously, a systematic means will have to be developed in order to deal with that deviance. Thus, the criminal can be reformed as well as punished. The Quakers of Pennsylvania developed solitary confinement in order to quarantine the prisoner from other prisoners and therefore encourage his meditation, reflection and penitance. Today, this takes place in the form of the "hole." Utilitarians believed that idleness was the root of evil and labor was the best therapy. Convict labor was also accepted in prisons, for not only was it rehabilitative, it was practical. The concept of prison labor still exists today in the form of furniture, clothing, dairy, license plate and other industries.

The latter 19th century and early 20th century sees the decline of prison as a place of hard labor. Social and behaviorial sciences were developing and criminals were viewed as distinct biological, psychological or socio-cultural types. Man is thought of as influenced by social or psychological forces beyond his control and needs extra help. So rehabilitation gives the prisoner the understanding and guidance that he can't get on his own.

In terms of California, whose prison system is supposed to be more progressive than anywhere else in the United States, rehabilitation involves three main factors: individualization, indeterminacy and discretionary power. *Individualization* focuses attention away from the law violation itself and gives ti to the law-breaker. The prisoner is just a different type of person and his infraction is merely proof. Therefore each person needs a special trestment to make rehabilitation possible...which leads us to *indeterminate sentencing* whereby one is released only after he is 'cured' of his problem. This only yields more power to the people making decisions such as judges, district attorneys, prison administrators, paroleboard members and parole officers.

As rehabilitation methods fail to produce satisfactory results (i.e. 60% or higher recidivism rate), different means are deemed necessary. With rehabilitation, one wants control of a persons's attitude; with psychosurgery one can control a person's mind.

Psychosurgery has always existed in the form of lobotomy, which has been described as 'swishing an ice pick around behind the eyeballs to destroy portions of the brain's frontal lobes.' Mental control is also used in the form of tranquilizers and other drugs. But psychosurgery can, when developed, yield the most effective, total means of control. Presently its perfection is being attempted at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute at the proposed Center for the Study of Reduction of Violence. According to the Brain Proposal of 1971, state hospitals such as Atascadero and Vacaville and all correctional facilities are to be used for the development of treatment. It goes on to say "through these studies, a connection between the abnormalities and violence may be determined and techniques developed for controlling such behavior."

Studying the methods of control of lumpen people or people who break the law reflects on the development of societal control throughout this country on a more subtle level. In the joints, we have evolved from control of the physical body (stockades), to control of labor produced (utilitarian theory) to control of the criminal's moral (reform) to control of attitudes (rehabilitation) to control of the mind. In the country, we look back at the non-violent approaches of the early '60's civil rights movements which turned out of frustration into the violent rebellions in Watts, Attica, Berkeley, Kent State, Jackson State, Isle Vista and we see initial methods of control being physical in the calling out of the national guard and police forces. Over a period of time, a parallel 'control' process has occurred in the rationale of the country up to the point where the future can be predictable in the following quote by Dr. Franklin Ervin, who is working at UCLA's neuropsychiatric institute *(Journal of American Medical Association).*

"...if slum conditions alone determine and initiated riots, why are the vast majority of slum dwellers able to resist the temptations of unrestrained violence? ...we need intensive research and clinical studies of the individuals committing the violence. The goal of such studies would be to pinpoint, diagnose and treat these people with low violence threshholds before they contribute to further tragedies."

The obvious factor to consider in this quote is racism. Whereas violence was being used everyday by whites in Vietnam, or, on another level, by whites during the tide of demonstrations occuring at Kent State or Jackson State, Third World people, or "slum dwellers" are the primary target of control. Dr. Sweet, Dr. Ervin's collaborator, writes further,"The proponents of urban disorders seem to be the people most likely to suffer from organic brain disease." Violence by slum dwellers, like violence by those in the joints is considered senseless violence. Going a step further, society views those in the joints as exhibiting deviant behavior; perhaps Third World people as a whole are considered as deviants from the majority of society.

We've been talking in terms of white societal views of street people in prison; now let's talk in terms of street people. The initial strength of

synonymous with imprisonment. George Jackson is murdered, Angela Davis is at the height of controversy, people are marching for Attica.

Hardcore over-extends itself; some people develop tremendously and become stable. But for many it was just an interesting interlude in their lives. Many of the brothers in Hardcore are now in the joints—i.e., Tehachapi, California Rehabilitation Center, California Institute for Men. Hardcore develops a branch—Asian Joint Communications. Initially much is done in terms of written communication, especially, by the sisters, out of the needs of the brothers on the inside to be "in touch with the opposite sex."

The ideas of Asian identity are talked about and quickly accepted by the brothers who come from Asian communities and more gradually by others who may have related to whites, blacks or Chicanos. But no one can help but notice the momentum. Group visitations to the joints are set up to mutually revolutionize one another. As one brother says, "The brothers on the inside knew what was happening as far as oppression. When the outside people came in, they just had the words for it." Groups on the inside were organized, and the goals are, 1) ethnic identity, 2) ethnic pride, 3) communication with outside groups and 4) openness to alternative lifestyles. Brothers on the inside are overwhelmed by the sudden spirit.

One brother describes Pat Sumi coming to Tehachapi, March 1971: "Towards the end of the night, an Asian sister was called up to speak to the people. This sister was only about five-foot two and maybe weighed one-hundred pounds – almost a doll in size. When this beautiful sister spoke, the giant came out of her – the giant of life and the fight for freedom. She spoke of the struggle and the great need for all the brothers in the joints' pig pens to be on the outside. She let them know the struggle is hard and sometimes calls upon your life for the people...black, brown, red, yellow, white..."

Afterwards...

After the emotionalism subsides, the suspicions and bewilderment become apparent. Some brothers pick up the rap quickly. Others are practical and wait to see what benefits could be derived; still others are suspicious and withhold feelings until they can check out "this thing."

Naturally, most simply have two goals while inside: to get out and to communicate with women. With indeterminate sentencing and discretionary power, brothers are forced to play the games the parole board wants them to play. Thus, relating to one's culture is an advantage.

"Sexism" was a word that excited many a meeting. Sisters started protesting the love letters they got when the brothers got down to the realities of communication. The line between being overly-sympathetic and being a bitch was thin. At the same time, brothers on the inside could not quite understand what seemed to be an attack on their egos.

Politicization takes strange manifestations. One brother writes to a New York Asian political paper that he's serving a murder sentence as the result of a draft evasion case. Another tells of how he was asked that his name be used on a list of political prisoners because they needed an Asian name to make it "Third World." Another still tells of how a university class project was to visit the Asian group on the inside continuously. When the quarter ended; so did many of the visits.

'72–'73. Brothers are coming out of the joint; this and those sexist letters cause many sisters to drop out of AJC. But the persistence and dedication of certain brothers and other outreach is undertaken. Students contribute much to Joint Communications; outreach is done to Hawaiians in the joint and JC sees Koreans, Guamanians, Pilipino, Chinese, and Japanese passing through; more outreach is done at the California Institute for Women. Tours are set up for the joints in order to increase communications and awareness; NYC, the UCLA Asian Women's class, go through the joints.

The need for more structured means of dealing with the joints is felt; eventually, after incorporation, and independence from the JACS office, a house is obtained. More and more structured means of dealing with the drug problem develop as familiarity with detox procedures, prison and court administrators and parole officers increases.

Federal funding has done quite a bit to divert people's energies. In general, drug abuse programs and half-way houses have increased in the last few years with Narcotics Prevention Program, Crisis Center, Bridgeback, Tuuem Est to name a few. For Joint Communications it has been a constant readjustment to the advantages of solving people's survival needs and the disadvantages of distribution, bureaucracy, pettiness which disrupts collectivity.

A move towards education is expressed by this brother's feelings; "I think everybody's on the drawing board. I've seen a lot of organizations going down the tubes because they weren't able to rise above the rhetoric, but somewhere else leadership sprung up and you find energy in other forms; people are still fighting the dope scene."

"People found it was necessary to develop skills to get things going and to really understand the rhetoric. The dope movement isn't stagnant; it's not sleeping at all. But it was realized there was a certain amount of need for the empirical knowledge by going back through the educational system and taking from it whatever you can to further your own causes."

A great wave of practicality is taking place. In the joints, people have always been practical but now even more so. Besides the fact of there being less Asians in the joints, Asian groups get more difficult to organize because many won't go for the old lines or try to see new ones. On the outside, more emphasis is being placed on preventative measures, i.e. dealing with drugs, changing that enviroment and less in the joint. On the drug level, changes in attitude have taken place. Dope fiends have come and will come together because they are dope fiends. Channeling the dope fiend into community work isn't the absolute answer. *Some just weren't made* for it; in fact, the stigma of having to do "community work" can be more harmful at times. Somebody saying "struggle with it" just doesn't have the same old abacadabra effect it used to. Not it isn't a good concept, but all the conditions that made a person miserable and frustrated remain as obvious as ever. The problem goes much deeper.

Conclusion

Take the case of moving a cup on a table.

When Aristotle tried to explain the phenomenon of force, he concluded that in order to move that cup, one must always use force, otherwise it will stop. 2000 years later, Newton found what is now the law of inertia and corrected the original theory. An object at rest will stay at rest because of equal and opposite forces acting on it. And an object in motion will stay in motion provided it was in idealized conditions. That is, the cup would move forever provided there were no forces of friction acting on it.

Thus, one could look at the same phenomenon in two ways, one being an obvious explanation and the other, requiring further knowledge of other conditions.

American society has much in common with Aristotle—at least in terms of an obvious explanation to a problem. The easy answer for deviance is lack of forced rehabilitation, in whatever form. So one isolates and segregates, in other words, does not deal with the basic problem. By using imprisonment in fact, it's difficult to see how things could be otherwise. It is believed that without rehabilitation there would be anarchy; so one sees superstructures of cement, an army of guards and the cost per person of reform school being higher than the cost of going to Harvard. (L.A. *Times*, 13 September 1972).

A more truthful answer is difficult to see, but much simpler in the long run. The important thing to consider is "idealized conditions," which are very difficult to see, or even imagine in this environment. But under idealized conditions, there is no reason for anything not to move as anything else would move. Dealing with forces that impede the occurrence of ideal conditions is one focus of progressive movements and making people aware of what could lie in the future is another.

—Judy Chu

civil rights movements and the growing ideology that the system is only made up of people who are in it, and that they can change that system, sparks movements. The prison movement, different ethnic movements, students movements, are all reflective of dissatisfaction with the conditions of existing institutions. The definition of deviant behavior, reserved formerly for law-breakers, extend to many who can somehow relate to oppression. Let's look in particular at the conditions of the Asian movement in Los Angeles and the role of lumpen people. (The words, street, lumpen, etc., are adjectives that I'm using because I cannot think of better ones.)

II. Gaining Movement Momentum

The '60s saw the formation of Asian gangs, Wah Chings, Lee-ways, the Constituents, Tiny Black Juans. A common feeling of rebellion brought these brothers together. Unity means that you fought with one another against others; ideology was an informal oath of loyalty to help one another as brothers.

In 1969, one of the first groups in the movement formed. Consisting mostly of Japanese Americans from the Westside and Eastside, Asian American Hardcore came together out of a general recognition that Third World people were being controlled and that they had to try to get back that control. And so, people were supposed to keep one another from getting loaded while at the same time relate to one another as ghetto Asians with similar problems of the quiet and problem-free stereotype. With high ideals and much energy, many projects were proposed on this latter phase of "helping one another as brothers." The enemy (the Man, the Pig) was identified, and the rebellion crystallized (Fight Imperialism and all its running dogs!). Like a spark of energy, the momentum and noise brought people together to check out all the noise and feelings. In fact, it's said Hardcore numbered over a hundred at one time.

Perhaps it's because the street people were a symbol of rebellion, and therefore of strength, that much of the initial impetus of the early fragile and vulnerable movement came from street people. Perhaps it was because they were supposed to know what oppression was all about. Whatever the reason, the movement has had a definite street influence about it. There is an easy transition of concepts of loyalty to the group, which tended to include paranoia of outside people. There is male-female macho. There are certain respected qualified proven people whose criticisms were heard and acted upon. The word "heavy" comes into prominence, the "heavy person" being the experienced male, and at times, female, who has it together, who can rap that talk, who can kick that ass. But now, ass kicking takes the form of rallies, demonstrations, rap sessions. Energy is dissipated now in constructive fighting instead of gang fighting, but the memory of kicking ass lingers on.

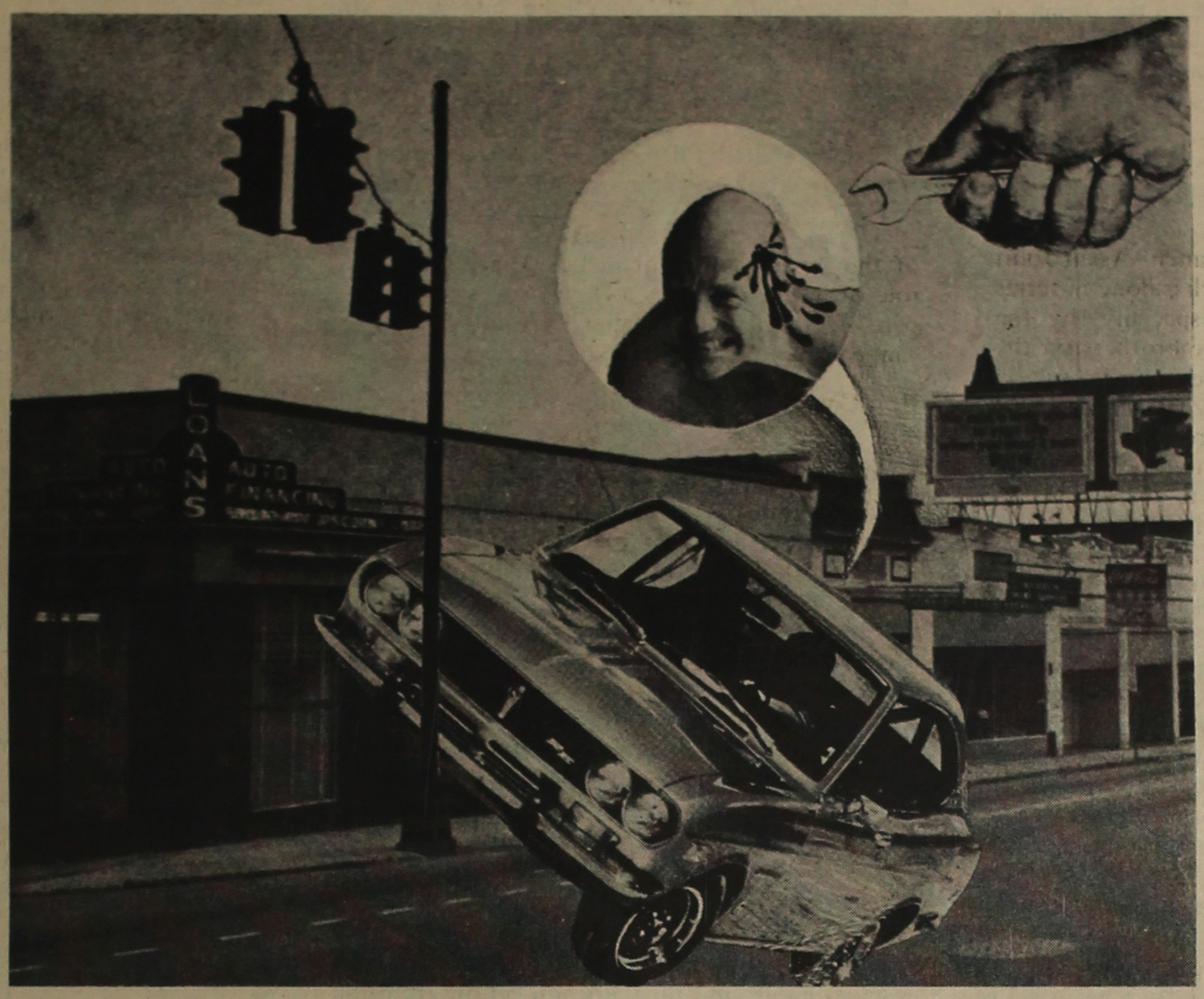
From the outset, the conditions of formation tended to exclude females, college students, and other ethnic groups. Patty Iwataki, in *Gidra*, June 1973, reflects, "For many, the image of the movement was largely shaped by brothers. Being 'lumpen' was an automatic 'in' before, if you were a brother." Sisters would have to develop a kind of uncharacteristic strength or be heard or in order to feel they were really contributing, and not just being social entertainment for the brothers when they weren't doing the heavy stuff. College students weren't supposed to be able to feel what street brothers did; they weren't supposed to understand. Charges of opportunism by some movement people mutually estranged feelings. In-group/out-group excluded other ethnic groups who began to work in their own communities, rather than in an all-encompassing movement. Questions of commitment and genuine feeling are reflected in the following declaration:

"For you on the staff who are pseudo-communists, socialists, revolutionaries, etc., we have a saying up here, 'If you play, you gotta pay.' To you who are dedicated to this movement, be prepared for whatever comes down. If any of you end up in the pen, please walk in with your head up and be proud of your golden color."

—T. Saito, Tehachapi, March 1970

Developments in the Joints

In late '70 and early '71, revolution is



THE HITCH HIKE

He drove west through the scattering Sunday traffic. Final exam anxiety was building inside of his stomach as he checked his watch and made a mental note of how much time he had before the library facilities on campus would close. Five to seven hours, he figured, depending on whether they closed at ten or midnight. His mind began to whirl with classes, schedules, papers, professors, midterms and graduation. He reflected silently on the fact that he had come all this way, grammar school to college and now graduate school, and it still came down to tests and grades. Performance and evaluation. Acceptance and rejection. No matter what anybody said, everything else was bullshit. Even here, he mused, in the midst of the movement for "relevant education", the same cycles seemed to go on relentlessly, endlessly.

Red light.

He almost didn't see it. He pulled to a stop, instinctively reaching for the sun visor in a futile attempt to block the orange glow of the sunset which blended into the traffic lights and obscured his vision. At this time of the day, he remembered, the light seemed to wash away every color and every contrast until the sun went down. Avoiding the brightness, his eyes shifted to the right side of the boulevard and, just as the light turned green, he noticed a figure standing near the curb on the nest block.

She was a motionless silhouette, a shadowy outline, illuminated by the burning backdrop. The wind from the passing traffic was blowing her hair up into a fiery halo. He leaned forward, accelerating across the intersection, his reflexes anticipating the shift. Second. Third. She loomed into focus like an apparition, slowly taking on form and detail as he pulled up and stopped in front of her.

He rolled down the window on the passenger side, smiled up at her and motioned up the street, silently offering her a ride. She, in turn, studied him for a second, took a quick look around and got in. She closed her door and watched him without returning his smile.

"How far you going, mister?"

Her voice sounded vaguely adolescent, like some freshman on the first day of school, yet detached, like someone talking to a cab driver.

"Westwood. I go to school there."

"That right?"

"Yeah. UCLA." "Are you a student?"

"No," she answered, her tone of voice irritatingly uninterested.

He checked the traffic moving past him and quickly pulled into its stream, stealing a glance at his passenger as she unbuttoned her coat. She looked smaller now than she had looked standing out on the curb. She had black hair and a dark complexion with contrasting eyes that darted about furtively, almost fearfully. He focused again on the cars moving around him, the rearview mirrors and the speedometer. He glanced over again and was startled to see her staring back at him. Just for a moment, he sensed what seemed like a smoldering fury fading from her expression as she turned away self-consciously.

Now they were both nervous. He fumbled with the dashboard and finally succeeded in turning on the radio.

"Where do you want me to drop you off?", he asked, as he lowered the volume a little.

"Uh, where do you turn?"

"I have to turn on Westwood Boulevard, then I go north over to the campus."

She didn't answer. She seemed to be thinking about something, weighing the situation in her mind. Then she turned and confronted him.

"Do you want a date tonight, mister?"

He answered by staring back at her, puzzled by the proposition.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Look, I need some bread. I need it right away. Tonight. If you've got twenty dollars and a place we can go, you've got yourself a date. Now, what do you say?" She blurted the words out nervously.

He wasn't quite ready for this. He looked her over for a moment, the temptation floating through his mind, past schedules, books, classes and libraries, and finally into his wallet. He reached for his back pocket as he mentally catalogued his resources: credit cards, student disco nt cards, parking permit, concert tickets and ten dollars.

Ten dollars.

"Sorry. I don't have enough money. All I have is ten and some change." He paused. "But, if you don't mind my saying so, you'd be well worth it if I had it."

She broke into a smile.

"Well, at least you're not a cop," she sighed as she reached into her purse, rummaging around as though looking for something small. "But maybe we can still do some business. Do you smoke?"

He answered her ambiguous question with another puzzled look.

"You know, get loaded, stone," she explained.

"Oh yeah. Why?"

She lit up a joint which she produced from her purse, took a deep hit, checked around, then without looking at him, passed it across the seat. He accepted it deftly and, in accordance with the time-honored clandestine ritual, waited for a few seconds before lifting it to smoke.

"Ten dollars a lid," she quoted. "They're a little light but this stuff will kick your ass. Watch, take another hit."

He took an extra deep drag and held it down, returning the partially-consumed joint to his passenger. Out before him the street lights had come on and the sun was slipping down between the buildings, reappearing less and less as he drove. He switched on his headlights and flipped the sun visor back up.

"Don't you ever stop hustling?" he asked.

She stopped smiling and, without answering, glared back at him. He glanced at her for a second, then looked back through the windshield. He thought he detected a trace of something besides anger in her expression, something like pain, a dadness maybe, but from somewhere else. He regretted his tone of voice.

"I'm sorry I said it like that." He spoke softly. "It just seems like everything you talk about gets down to selling me something. Look, I'm just a student. I barely have enough to make it myself. I don't doubt that you need the money, but I just don't have it."

She leaned back and sighed as she looked away from him. Then she took another hit, exhaling slowly while she spoke.

"I don't want you to freak out at what

I'm going to tell you because I figure it's my problem. I have to get out of this town, out of the state. The police are supposed to be looking for me because I broke probation. I already got enough for myself, but I need to get enough for my girlfriend. A hundred bucks. That'll do it. As soon as we rustle up that much more, we'll split for New York and try to get a new start."

"Why New York?"

"It's a big place. The biggest. We can get set up there. Plus, they won't be looking for me on the other end of the country." She took another long, deep drag from the now-dwindling roach and passed it to him with her fingernails. He accepted it with a short hit before casually dispatching it out the wind wing and into th street.

"Uh, if it's not too personal, could I ask you why you're on probation?"

The question touched her off. Out of the corner of his eye, he watched the muscles in her jaw go rigid as though responding to some latent hatred. She spoke through her teeth like a boxer.

"I'm on probation because I'm a runaway. I got sent to Juvenile Hall because I kept running away. The judge said he'd let me go home if I promised not to do it again. Everybody gets into it, the social workers, police, probation, everybody. They told me I'd have to go to a foster home. If I couldn't make it at home, it was either that or the Hall. Can you imagine that? What did they expect me to do? As soon as I got home from court, I split again. I've been on the streets ever since."

"Was it that bad at home?"

"I couldn't take it. My parents didn't dig it because my girlfriend is black. That was their biggest hang-up. When they found out I was having an affair with her, the thing that really made them uptight was that she was black. It made them uptight was that she was black. It was weird. They kept yelling about her color like it was some big thing. They talked just like I had been caught making it with a gu . They just couldn't relate to it."

He was confused.

"Hold it. I thought... How were you going to, uh, make it with me? Didn't I just get propositioned a little while ago?

She started smiling again.

"If you would have come up with the money, I'd have given you your money's worth. I've had more guys than you can imagine. But that's got nothing to do with my girlfriend. I've got a whole different thing with her. She's my lover. Everything I feel is for her. Nobody else, just her." Her voice was growing gentler as she spoke. "You should see us when we're together. It's like anything could happen around us and it would be okay. And it's because we know each other so well. Even when it gets bad and we're you know, pissed off, screaming at each other, I still know that it's right and that I belong there. The hostility in her voice was slowly giving way to tenderness as she paused to think for a moment before adding: "She's even younger than me, but she knows what's happening. She says that being gay is just like having the wrong paint job. You might as well forget about getting in with the straights. They'll be down on you just like the whites. So now, we live by our own rules."

Something was stirring inside of him. He thought it might be sympathy but it felt more like guilt. It distracted him uncomfortably as, slowly, his perception began to shift. Outside, the red tail lights blinked back at him like stereo lights. He could feel the euphoria rising.

"What happens if you get caught?" he asked. By now he was more than just curious.

"I don't know. I'm not going back. No way. No Juvenile Hall. No foster home. No nothing. And, especially, I'm not going home. I split before and, if they give me the chance, I'll split again." The belligerence was returning to her voice.

"What about your parents?"

She thought about it for a few moments, then spoke bitterly.

"To my parents, all I am is fifty bucks more from the county once a month. Even my probation officer is hip to their game. He keeps telling me to lay dead until I turn eighteen. Not me. I'm not staying one extra minute."

Underneath the resentment, he felt he could hear something soft, something vulnerable, still hiding from an old betrayal. He looked over at her for a second then, keeping one hand on the wheel, drew out his wallet.

"That stuff is pretty good. I'll take a lid."

She smiled a little shyly as she accepted the money, handing him a small baggie of dubious weight and volume.

"Look, kid, I can see why you need the money. But with all those heavy troubles, it's going to be even worse if you get yourself busted. What you're into is pretty risky, dealing, hooking, street hustling. You shouldn't have to go back, but I don't see how you're going to make it this way. I wish there was something I could do to help you out. I just don't have any money." He meant it. If nothing else, he had to admire her spirit. She was almost free, a fugitive escaping from the system. But she wasn't out yet.

"Is there anything I can do?", he offered.

She studied him carefully as he drove.

"You really mean that? I mean you're not just bullshitting, are you?" she asked.

"No. I really want to help. I mean, if there's anything I can do..."

She started looking up at the street signs, getting her bearings as she formulated her plan.

"Look," she said slowly, "Where's Beverly Hills? Isn't it around here someplace?"

"It's back that way," he said as he pointed north. "Why?"

"That's it," she said, "Beverly Hills! All we have to do is find one of those rich dudes wandering around up there and get his attention somehow. You can walk up to him, you know, ask him for some directions, or maybe a match. All you have to do is start him tripping so he doesn't notice me coming up behind him. I can bust him over the head, get his wallet and we can be gone before he ever figures out what happened."

The words stunned him. His mouth dropped open before he could even talk. "Are you kidding?" he asked incredulously. "You're talking about knocking some guy over the head for his money. Don't you know what could happen? Christ, you could kill the guy."

"Sure, it's a big risk, but don't you realize how much money they carry around? They're just walking around up there with all that bread. It's like they're asking for it. Look, I've done this before. I know how to do it so he just gets a bump."

He couldn't believe she was saying all this. "You'd better forget it," he said, "I can't help you with something like that."

"Well, if you don't want me to hit somebody, how about a woman?"

"What do you mean?"

"A woman, you know, the same thing except nobody gets hurt. You just distract her long enough for me to get her purse. I'll just grab it and run. It won't be as much money, but it's cleaner, safer."

"No," he shot back angrily, "You're talking about robbing somebody.. That's crazy. Don't you realize how wrong that is?"

She returned his vehemence like a slap. "What's so goddamn wrong about it? How much do you think a hundred bucks means to one of them? To me it's everything. It's my ticket out of here. It means freedom, a new start for me and my girlfriend. All I'm asking for is one fat wallet. They can afford that much. Half the chumps who live in that neighborhood got there by ripping somebody else off. Wrong? That's crap.. Anybody whose got that much money is taking his chances out on the street, just like me."

Her words went ringing up through his brain like some evil revelation. He strained for a moment, searching for the words that would strike back, but there was nothing. Something inside of him was staggering backwards even as he struggled with his senses to regain control. He was unable to answer, unable to satisfy even his own moral system. He sensed that, in her own way and from what she knew, she was right. It was useless to argue when they were so far beyond each other's points of reference. He understood at least that much. Realities and relationships were altered by the need for survival outside the system. There was nothing he could say—and nothing he could do. He simply wasn't there yet, nor could he say what he would or would not do if he was. He just wasn't there, even if she was

"I figure you'll do what you have to," he said finally, "But I don't have to help you."

She leaned back in her seat, silently staring at him. Then, turning to look out of her window, she spoke as though to no one in particular, "I didn't think you'd help."

Years later, he would remember the way she said that to him, wondering why, after so much time had passed, the tensions that arose between them that night remained so unresolved. It was that same tension, quiet and unsettling, that descended between them as he drove into Westwood.

He felt the uneasiness in his stomach begin to lift as the rage between them diminished. Outside, the dark night was lit only by neon, street lights and traffic. Through it all, he could see Westwood Boulevard about a block ahead of him, approaching like an apocalypse.

When he broke the silence, his voice had lost its emotion.

"That'll be Westwood up ahead."

He pulled slowly over to the curb and stopped a little short of the corner. He watched the cars crossing the intersection for a few signals before he spoke again.

"I wish you luck," he said quietly, "I hope you make it."

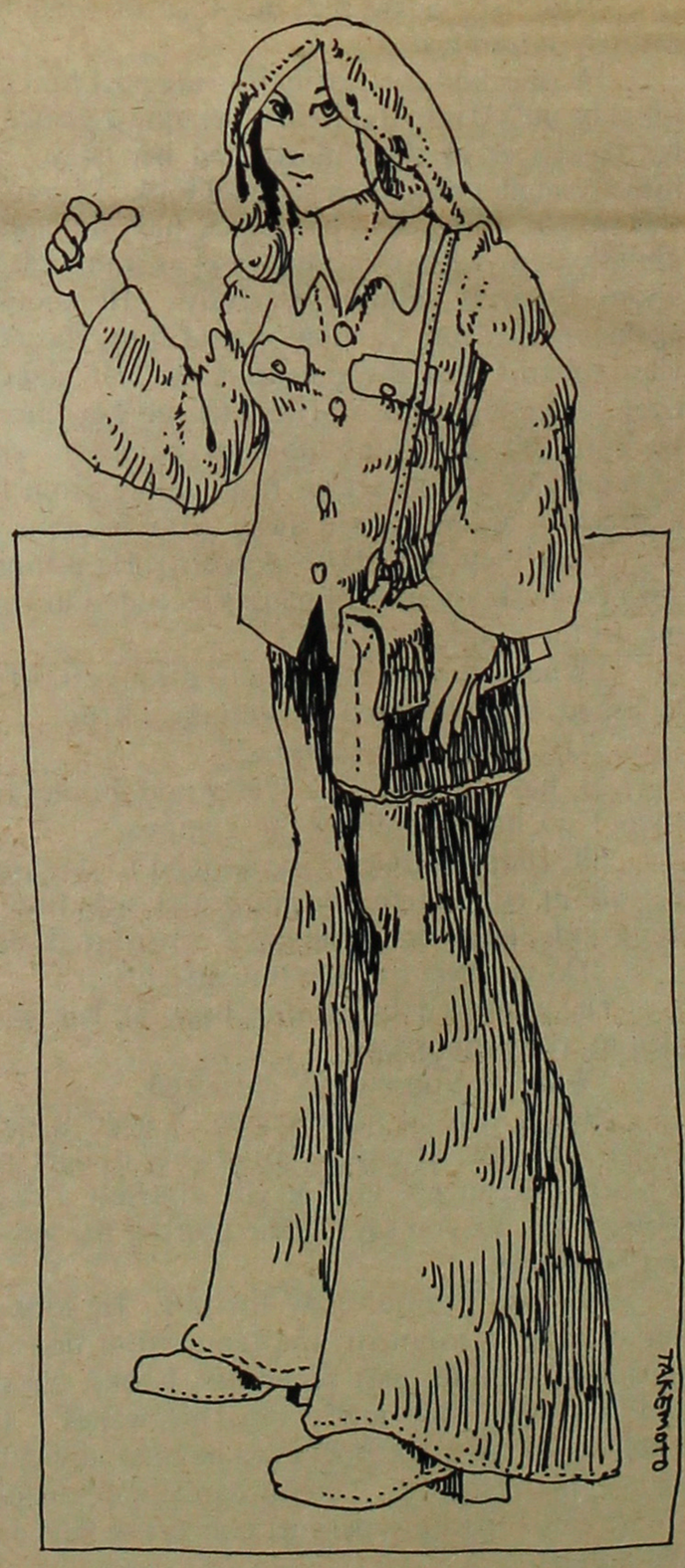
She buttoned her coat slowly, deliberately, as though thinking about what to say to him. She watched him for a long moment, then, lowering her gaze, she spoke softly.

"I know you won't say anything." She hesitated as though she wanted to say something else. Then she just shrugged.

"Thanks for the ride, mister."

She opened the door and climbed out.

As he pulled away, he saw her wave to him and, as he turned the corner, he could see her strolling up towards the intersection watching the cars as they passed her by.



—Mike Yamamoto

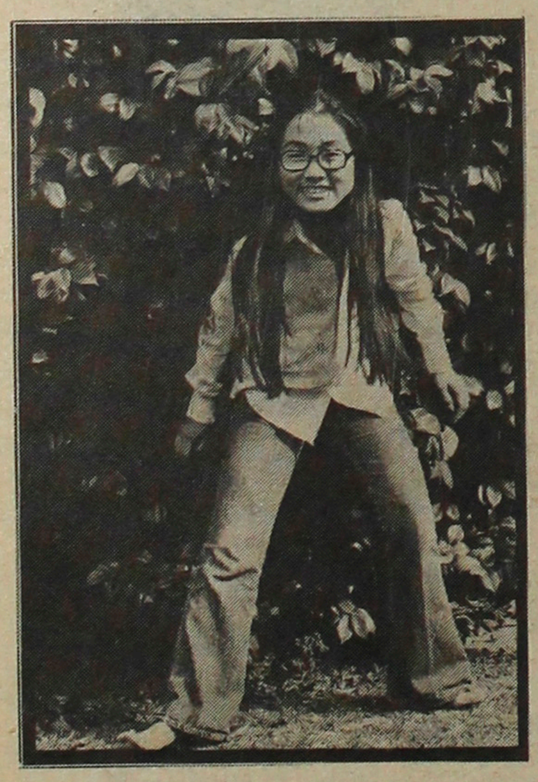
'SHOTS

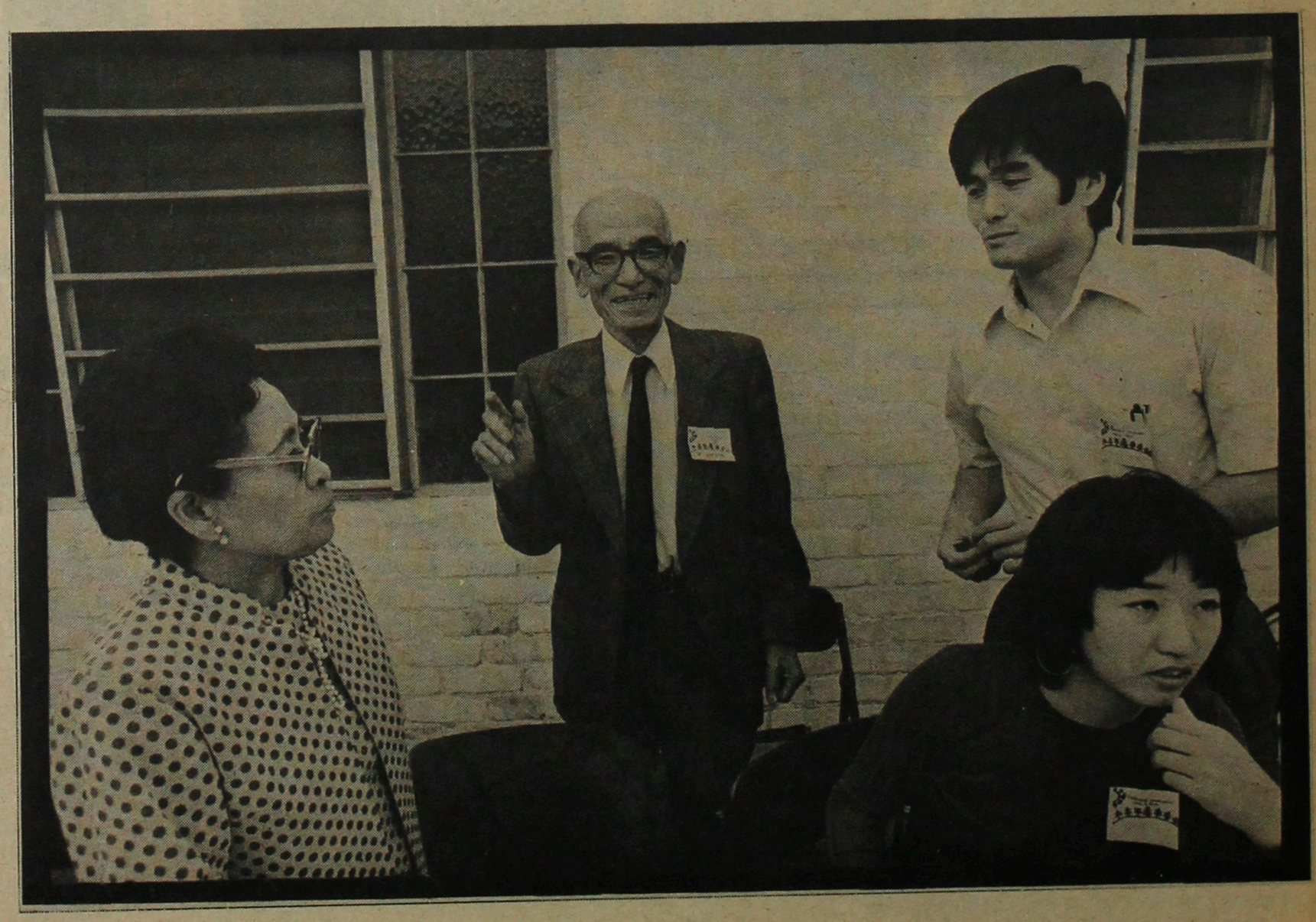
Hi! My name is Alan Ohashi. Myself and Eddie Ikuta have been photographing the Asian American experience for several years, and now and then we've been asked to contribute our work to the pages of GIDRA.

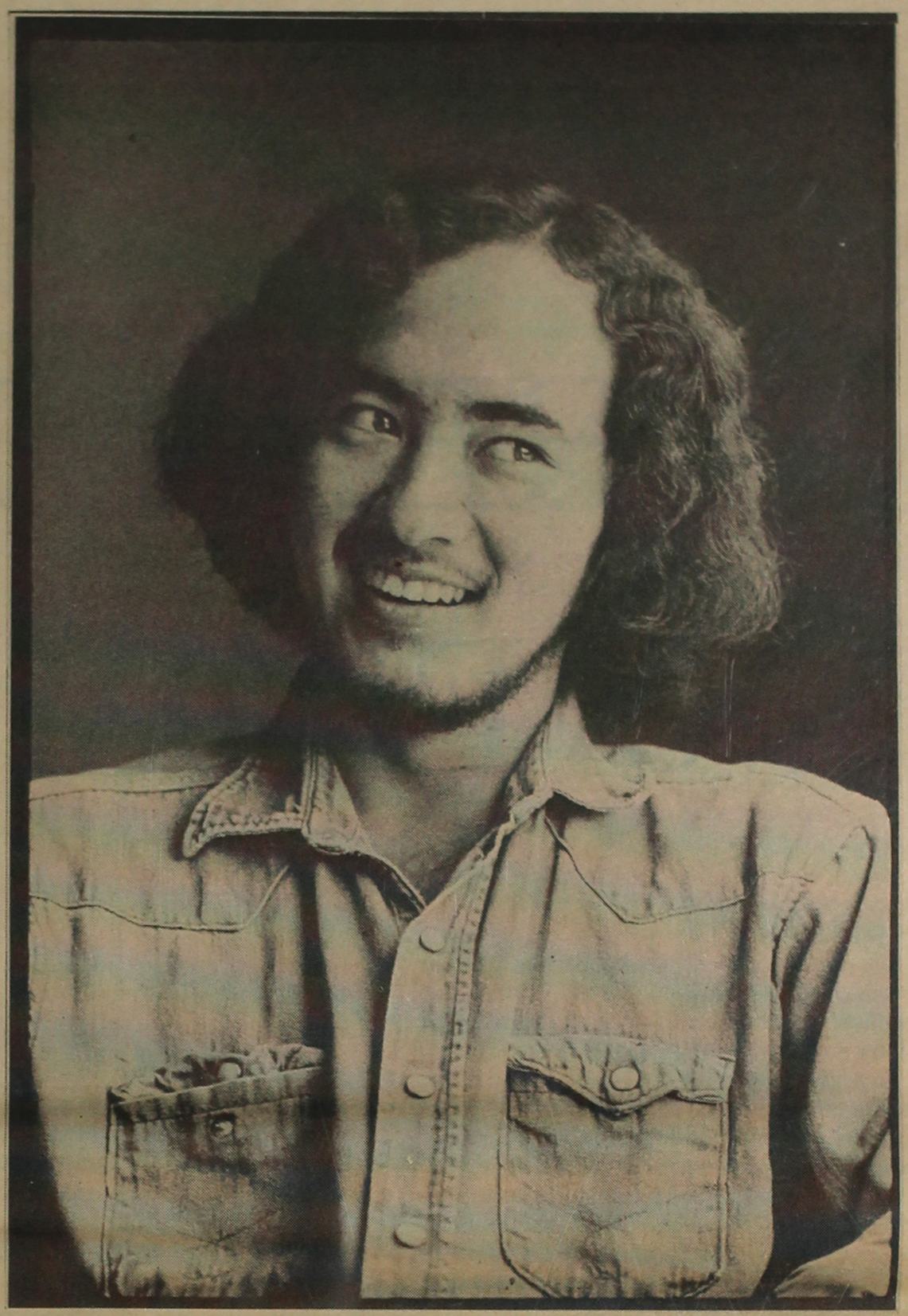
In the past our contributions to GIDRA have been in the way of rather anonymous coverage of marches, demonstrations, flower trips and pilgrimages; any event that we as concerned photographers felt was of relevant interest to others.

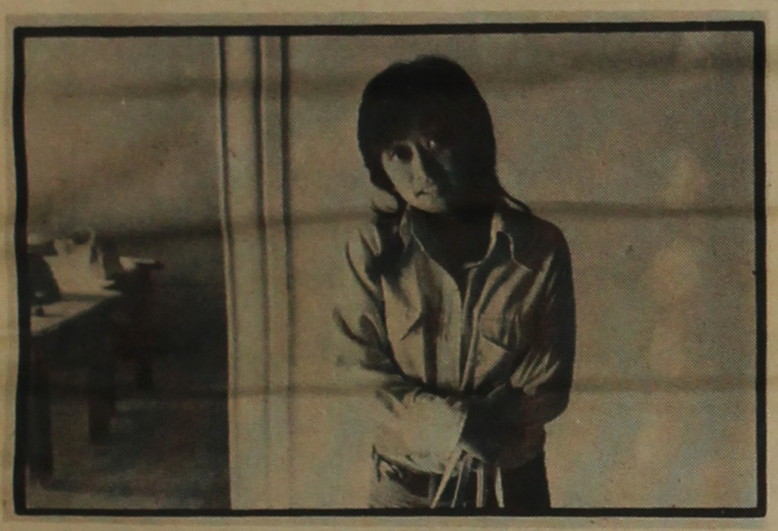
Both Eddie and I have felt that this anonymity has at times led to an impersonality on both the part of the photographer and the photographs.

In these pages we've brought together photographs that we like; photos we've chosen for their composition, mood, quality of light, personality. Look at them for what they are: SHOTS.









'SHOTS

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This piece is being done because the cat that's writing it is confused. The problems of the Japanese American sector of the movement seem huge, with the fragmentation of the different project groups and the resultant unclarity as to where we are going. What I have tried to do is to summarize talks with a number of people and also tried to summarize from a broad perspective the forces that work on us. It is emphasized that they, the thoughts, come from a limited perspective. These thoughts were written down because, this seemed to be the fastest and easiest way to share them and get feedback.

This attempted summary is also being written in the hope that interest can be generated in having a conference or series of conferences in L.A. this year. The bringing together of movement people seems to be a primary concern with many people I have talked to and appears to be needed now more than ever.

What I have tried to do is take: A. International trends; B. National (U.S.) trends; C. Asian Movement in a time perspective from 1968 to 1974. I would like to emphasize that this is written from a Japanese-American perspective and is an observation of the Japanese section of the Asian Movement in L.A.

A. International trends.

In the international arena there are four main trends in the world today. They are:

1. The collusion and struggle-rivalry between advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe (common market countries), Japan and the U.S. The U.S.-Japan rivalry can be seen in the rising racism in the U.S. towards Japanese and Japanese-Americans. Examples are the "Buy American" campaigns, the garment workers union posters about the runaway shops and just recently the attack by some racist U.S. ecologists on the Japanese whaling industry, and the effects of that attack on Japanese-Americans.

2. The struggle between different social systems. The capitalist countries against the socialist countries. The struggles of Vietnam and Korea represented by the socialist North with its cooperative, collectivized political, economic social systems, and the U.S. intervention on behalf of ',freedom and democracy" in both Southern dictatorships.

3. The national liberation struggle of the Third World, the underdeveloped, the so called "poor countries" of the people of color in Asia, Africa and Latin America, against the old colonial and new imperial power of the U.S. and other advanced industrial capitalist countries. This struggle is for human dignity, equality, national independence and control over one's own destiny and resources without outside intervention. Prime examples are: Victory-Guinea-Bissau, In-contest-Philippines, and the overthrow of existing democratically chosen governments –Chile, Guatemala and Indonesia.

4. The struggle of the working people of the world for dignity-equality and some power over their own lives and the things they produce. This struggle is generally directed toward the owners within their respective countries. Examples are the farm workers' struggle and the recently won Farah pants co. struggle to name a few.

Of the four fundamental struggles in the world today, because of the multi-racial, multi-national composition of the advanced capital U.S., the last two appear to have the strongest effect on we who live here.

B. National trends

1. National liberation trend within the U.S. It was during the 60s that black and Third World people in their thrust for dignity and equality tested white America to see if the principles in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights were for real. The crucial question of integration-assimilation of people of color by Anglo American white people was turned down; while all so called integration and affirmative action plans were smoke screens which did not deal with real justice From this point on, a national liberation trend was clearly demonstrated by the concept of a black nation by the Muslims and other black groups. The Crusade for Justice's National Chicano Youth Conference held in Denver put forward the Brown Nation of Aztlan. The rise of Red Nations exemplied by the magnificent attempt at nation building at Wounded Knee.

A multi-ethnic Asian Nation?

2. Working class trend. The other main trend is based on the development of workers consciousness in America's working people. However in the late 60s, this trend was st.ll restricted to the intellectuals, the student movement. The student movement and the general rebellion of white youth was a result of the rising consciousness of the white youth of their own oppression and of their future which was in question. Therefore we saw many white students in the civil rights struggle; however there were many, many more who opted out for personal liberation and anarchistic rebellion. The oppression felt by the youth was channeled into two paths. One was social change dealing with such things as the free speech movement, anti-draft, etc. The other was the escape thing exemplified by Leary and the acid culture, commune experiences and the youth culture in general: "change yourself" without dealing with the oppressive social system.

This was the environment that surrounded us.

C. Asian-Japanese scene in L.A.

In the pre-1968 scene two trends could be seen.

1. The identity trip: As Third World people in the U.S. started becoming proud of who they were, and began understanding their contributions and position in history, the Asians began to question their own position, heritage and legacy in this country. After all, we were not white, black, brown or red. This was mainly a student and young people's thing.

2. In the community the rising consciousness and the ability to speak out against racism and other oppression began to move people in a direction to do something for our people. Especially when problem conditions were discovered and we had them too.

1968-69: In '68, Asians were spread out all over. Activists were doing their thing in the counter-culture or youth culture, participating in the struggles of other Third World and poor peoples. There was also a rising consciousness of problems in the different Asian communities.

So we see the two trends exemplified by: The first Asian American conference in Southern California held in '68 whose theme was "I am curious yellow?" The other trend is seen by the development of the Pioneer Project to work with and help the Issei.

It appears that this period, 1968-1969, seemed to be a gestation period in the developing Asian Movement. This gestation took the two trends, Identity and Serve The People, and merged them into a general call to the youth of our communities. The general call seemed to state: We are people with no identity except the white man's and the only place and ways you could find your identity was to Serve the People in our respective communities.

Therefore this period saw activists from diverse areas and life experiences coming together and united by the general line of fulfilling one's identity by Serving The People. It must also be recognized that our movement owes much to other Third World organizations such as the Black Panther Party, Brown Berets, Red Guard Party, Young Lords Organization and Party, and other examples during this period.

1970-72: This period was the time of development and proliferation. In Jan. of 1970, our L.A. Japanese Movement consisted of: 1) Yellow Brotherhood, 2) Asian American Hard Core, 3) JACS-Asian Involvement (just opened), 4) Pioneer Project, 5) Pioneer Center, 6) *Gidra*,

and Asian student organizations. Many of these organizations were called Asian but many of the participants were Japanese American, and they had a decidedly Japanese American character.

It was in this period that attempts were made to centralize most of the organizations and programs, but these failed. The failure was probably due to our individualism and not understanding where we were going or what we were doing.

It was also in this period that the first beginnings of a political understanding of the nature of the beast was thrust upon the movement. Examples are the UCLA strike, the Noguchi trial and the Manuel letter 155 (a "welfare reform" measure that threatened to throw many of our Issei into the streets). This assault on the people also showed that we had to study and begin to understand the beast in order to fight for our survival.

By the end of '72, great strides had been made in developing programs and organizations. '72 had also brought a more sophisticated political understanding of capitalism and imperialism and how our lives were affected by them.

1973-74: At this point in our history, Federal and outside funds had also made their impact on the movement. In fact, funded programs have become a dominant force in our community. The community movement had not done badly in terms of getting "our fair share," although much more work needs to be done and the question of responsibility to whom must be clarified. Following is a list of outside funded programs and organizations. Those listed under "I" are those programs that are directly funded and are not part of a larger institution. Those listed under "II" are a part of a larger institution.

I. 1. Asian American Drug Abuse Program
2. Asian Women's Center
3. Asian Joint Communications
4. Japanese American Sightless Institute
5. Asian American Rehabilitation Center
6. Services for Asian American Youth
7. Oriental Service Center
8. Long Beach Int. Women's Service Center
9. Asian American Mental Health Training Center
10. AAMH Federation.

II. 1. Gardena Youth and Community Services
2. L.A. Co. Asian American Service Center
3. Asian American Education Commission
4. Asian American Studies Centers
   a. Long Beach
   b. UCLA
5. Dept. of Public Social Services Asian Relations Un.
6. Educational Opportunities Program
   a. Long Beach
   b. Cal State Los Angeles
   c. UCLA
7. Research
   a. HEW (barriers to service)
   b. CRI (MH centers)
   c. UCLA
      (i) Delphi
      (ii) AA ed.
8. Outposts
   a. Dept. of Public Social Services
   b. Social Security

Although these funds have created confusion, other work goes on. In the community movement, two general trends are seen today. These two trends are: 1) Community-nation building—the coming together and the reconcentration of people to build survival-self defense institutions in definite geographic areas, e.g., Westside and Boyle Heights, 2) Workers' orientation—the move to integrate oneself into the work force and to develop worker consciousness and organization with the understanding that workers produce all that we have and are today.

Although these are the fundamental trends in the movement, many questions must be answered about our personal lives also. Some questions raised are: 1) How do we adjust our lives to a regular job and still carry on movement work? 2) After we get married, how do we adjust our lives? Especially difficult is, what is the new relationship's movement content? 3) How does child-rearing fit into the movement? These questions must be answered after the question of political unity is settled. For if there is no political unity and the question of the future of the movement is not resolved, what kind of future can we have?

In an overview then, it would appear as if we have come full circle (spiral?) back to 1968. That is, there are many activists, most pretty much fragmented into their own projects and organizations going on their own way. However, there are many questions being raised in what seems to be general confusion. The fact that JACS-AI, *Gidra* and Yellow Brotherhood are going through particularly stressful situations and reorganizations, seems to bear this out.

In summary then, the general call of Identity through Serve the People has run its course. A furious development of institution building has taken place with a deeper understanding of the political nature of the work ahead. Like the U.S. Movement as a whole, the L.A. Japanese movement has raised questions basic to our growth. Can we continue to grow as independent projects, programs and organizations without some coming together and can we continue without another general call that will politically unite us in a manner that makes sense in our lives?

Proletarian greetings
All power to the people

—Mo Nishida

Ode to our partners.

It wasn't too long ago
that we met at a dance
Remember the crowd at Rogers?
All those people stylin'...
all those bad dudes checking out the foxy chicks
as they walked into the head
all those foxy chicks scoping on some
bad buddhahead dude standing by the bar
I saw you come in through the door as
I walked out
I said to myself – jus' another cute face
in a crowd
When you asked me to dance
I smiled to myself thinking "this dude thinks
I'm all rite!"
After the dance we talked – exchanged
names – cities – schools –
All the usual bullshit that goes on at
dances –
Then you jus' kinda split and it was cool
But we got together again at the end of
the night – you pretended to like me –
you promised to call – come over – take me out –
and me, fool of all fools believed
such a heavy line.
you made me see that guys can be
so chickenshit
I saw you a week after handing
down the same jive to another girl

So now when I go to dances –
I smile when somebody asks my name
I laugh when somebody asks for my
phone number – I flick off any guy
that reminds me of you –
It's too bad I have to feel like
this.
I only hope that other girls don't fall
for your lines because they are only lines.
Keep on brother – soon we'll
all be informed and one day some
chick will "pretend" to like you
"pretend" I repeat "pretend"

Love,
Would you believe
Name – City – Phone No
(Unknown?)

Yeah sister,
we could dig it – we catch where you comin' from,
being here in,
well, you know, the Apple!
We know shits got to move
thangs got to be done.
We know your main man.
Jose.
We tight with Jack Daniels,
Wild Turkey,
and sometimes Carvorsier,
but we don't be high all the time
cuz we know the struggle
be like a mountain
that people gots to climb.
And sometimes it be hard
and the price we pay is sacrifice
even with our lives.
Cuz our love for the people is so great
sometimes our tools be
guns, chains and knives!
Good, good sister,
next time you be into Jose
tell him him there are two brothers
in sweet harmony
three thousand miles away.

Marc/Tien
de
Harlem,NY
—c/s—

A whistling brick
Explodes the windshield
As the passing whisper of feet
Rustles the air.

It passed over the blue platoons
Flowing beneath carnival lights
Like a star above the bearded brother
Pounding among the dancers
His drums.

Like a floating tide over hard, flat, sand
The heave and crash
The pounding heart
To the beat of the drums at night
It comes...

—Anon.

cc Ain't I a Woman

The man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over puddles, or gives me the best place—and ain't I a woman? Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me—and ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have born thirteen children and seen most of 'em sold into slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me—and ain't I a woman?

—Sojourner Truth

There has been much written from a dialectical and historical materialist analysis of the roots of oppression of women. More and more people are beginning to understand that "the woman question is a class question." And we hear a whole lot of talk (sometimes more than practice) about sisterhood and the importance of women. Since the woman question has become a rather safe controversy (even the bourgeoise media has been capitalizing off it—not to mention "You've come a long way, baby"), it felt like we were beginning to lose sight of the real meaning and importance behind the woman's struggle, or losing sight of a *concrete* understanding.

Women, especially Asian and other third world women, experience numerous levels of oppression. Once we deal with a major contradiction, another appears. But, like physical exercise, we come back stronger each time.

Through 1970-72, drug abuse was a major battle many Asian women in L.A. were fighting. The war against drugs hasn't yet been won, but some have conquered it and are working and sharing their experiences with others.

This article will try to take a different approach to understanding the woman question, by sharing with the readers the concrete experiences of two Asian women who fell into and survived this lifestyle around the use of drugs.

When you were going to school did you relate mostly to Asians?

I hung around with all Asians in grammar school and that's where I learned I was different. They were the "A" students, and I wasn't up with them. That's when I started getting alienated. Then all of us went to the same junior high and I just didn't hang around with them anymore. I started hanging around with blacks and Asians. Around the end of junior high, it was just blacks. Really felt kind of inferior or something, really alienated. I ran with blacks till the end of junior high and high school.

How did the Asians relate to you?

Well, they would treat me a little different like "Poor Reiko, she has such a hard time." They always had more money than I did. Exchanging really expensive gifts with each other, and I could never do that...and they never gave me anything, so—yeah, it was a money thing, too.

What about you, Cindy?

I didn't go to school with any Asians. I grew up in Hawaii, then we moved down here. I mean, I went to a different school every year through grammar school and they were almost all white. Or I lived in Colorado, there's hardly any Asians in Colorado. I never thought in terms of people being different or that I was different because I was never around people that looked like me, so I didn't think about it. I just thought whenever you're new in school they treat you different and at least I'm not getting my ass kicked or something like that.

Do you feel it changed your personality going from school to school?

Yeah, I used to have dreams like I'd be walking home from school and the whole block would be gone, the house, the whole block, and I wouldn't do nothing. It got to the point where after a while I'd quit trying to get close friends because I was going to leave. It's sad when you have to leave close friends. And I just started to run with my brother.

Why did you have to move so much?

My dad's health, he was an insurance man. We didn't settle down in one place until I was in junior high. And by that time it was like every one or two years, "Well, here we go" and I felt that I should be packing. That still happens, a period of time goes by and if I'm still in the same place I get this urge of "Shit, I gotta get going." It's always been like that.

When did you first start getting into a drug lifestyle—in junior high?

I was a good student and all that stuff. Yeah, I barely made it, but I got those grades. Then I started fucking up when my dad died. The whole situation at home changed. Before I had to ask my dad if I wanted to do anything, and all of a sudden he was gone and it was hard for my mom to assume both the role of mother and father. She was always used to being in the background. So there was no communication in my family. I knew what I had to do because my mom was going to school to get her teaching credential plus she had to work 'cuz my dad had just started his business and when he died, it went bankrupt and we had to pay off all those debts. We just finished paying them off two years ago.

When my mom was in school my sister was in kindergarten and I was in the 9th grade, and I wasn't into anything. We have a lot of relatives and they mean well, but they're real fuck-ups. I mean, they got on my mom's case about "you don't have enough discipline, blah, blah, blah." They used to give us all these hand-me-down clothes, so I was always wearing hand-me-downs. But that didn't bother me too much, 'cuz I was living in Echo Park and no one really "flashes" in Echo Park. Then it was a whole thing where relatives would come over and say to my brother, "Oh, you're the man of the family, now you have to take care of the family." And that put him through changes 'cuz he was only in the 7th grade! It started making him get really macho, and it made me even more withdrawn 'cuz I figured, ' well, I don't have any power." I was the oldest one but it was a thing of I couldn't tell anyone in the family what to do, but I had to make sure they didn't fuck up because if they did—I would get in trouble for letting them do it. Right? But you can't tell someone "don't do it" and then not be able to hit 'em or something. Little kids don't listen if you tell them something, and sometimes you got to get on their case. And I wasn't allowed to do that.

Then my grades started getting real bad. I felt I couldn't stand school and I want to get out of school, I just wanted to go away from this whole thing. I mean, I couldn't handle it. In high school we moved to Silver Lake. About two blocks away is YTS, Boys Republic. So all those boys used to walk by our house going to school and I got to meet them because I walked to school down the same street. They'd always be talking about getting loaded on the weekends, I didn't know what they were talking about. Pretty soon they'd let me go with them. But they would never let me get loaded. I would just sit and watch them 'cuz "girls weren't sposed to do that." It was the whole thing of it's cool for them, but not for me.

One day, I went to my girlfriend's house and I opened the medicine cabinet and I saw ..."Wow, that's what they've been taking. I want to see what it's like." So the first time I started getting loaded was from my girlfriend's mother's medicine cabinet, 'cuz those guys would never give us anything. That was about in the 11th grade and I started getting loaded bad. In the 12th grade my brother got busted for grass but nothing happened to him 'cuz at that time my uncle Charlie was a pig. He took him to juvenile hall but he never got booked or anything. But he said "Watch out who you're running with." But we were hanging around together, a lot of our friends were mutual and we went places together. So we just went uh-huh, uh-huh.

When I was a senior, I couldn't stand it anymore, 'cuz my grades were really bad and my brothers and sister were really smart and *got* really good grades. My brother's a real hustler, like. He was out selling papers and had money. Then he started lightweight dealing and he *always* had money. So I went to my mom and said, "Can I get a job?" But she said, "Well, you have to stay home and watch the kids, you have to clean up the house." Then I'd say I want to go out on the weekend. And she'd say, "Are you going with your brother, if you're not you have to be back by 11:30." And I said, "But I'm in the 12th grade, man." So she'd say, "Okay, by 12." No one was coming home at 12 o'clock but me. So I used to come home fucked up. I figured, screw you, man, I'm going to prove that I can get just as fucked up before 12.

I moved out of my house the last year and I moved out to Bellflower. I had a girlfriend whose parents my mom knew so she let me move out there. There weren't any Asians except three of us in the whole school and there were no black or Chicanos, they were all low-riders—you know, surfers. My first day of school they asked me, "Are you a foreign student?" Shit! And everybody was calling me Tokyo Rose. I mean, who in the hell were they talking about. But I felt that they were putting me down, even though I couldn't explain it, and I really started getting loaded.

When I finally graduated high school, I moved up to Sunset. I just used to hang around with white people by then, 'cuz all my life it had been white people. And I started hanging out in Hollywood. That was when hippies first came in, and love-ins and things like that. I thought far-out, this is cool. It was just like when the movement first started...a feeling of togetherness and people caring. It was like "we're all going to be together and make peace and love in the world and everything." But that got to be really funky. What it turned into was speed freaks, pigs, and everything else. So all that changed. I was away from home two years.

I didn't get into speed, I didn't like it. My

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whole thing was to escape, so I dug reds a lot. I couldn't fall asleep at night, so I'd take reds. I'd be crashed out on the floor from reds and all my friends were speed freaks, so they'd be running around the house like crazy. One time this guy shot me up with reds. And so I started shooting reds 'cuz it was such a flash, like shuuup and you're like this (falls out). And when I got fucked up there was never a mellow. I learned that I don't get mellow, I get fucked up! And I was always getting fucked up. And since I was the only Asian up in Hollywood, I was always getting busted. Whether I was loaded or into it it was "Well, we're going to pick you up later so it might as well be now than later. They'd hold me at a detaining station and tell my friends I was in Juvenile Hall. And then they'd let me out after the weekend was over. Two days later it was the same thing. That's when I first started thinking, "Wow, I am different. I am an Asian, and people notice me."

I went to get a job with Narcotics Information Service. When I got off the bus, this guy came up to me and said, "Do you want some reds?" so I went to the interview loaded. But I got the job. And I kept fucking up in between 'cuz I was never really clean. A lot of times I wouldn't go to Asian American Hard Core because of people's attitudes. It was like if you grew up with blacks or chicanos or asians it was cool...but if you grew up with whites you were a banana no matter what you do. And I really had a hard time trying to understand what they were trying to tell me. I always felt put down and defensive. 'Cuz whoever heard of J-Flats, if you were from J-Flats, who were you? I mean, everybody was into "I'm from Eastside, I'm from Westside. You know, that whole trip. And I didn't even know what they were talking about. I really had a hard time, 'cause I wanted to learn, but I had a hard time relating to what was being told to me. I seemed like I had to accept it, but people themselves didn't understand what they were telling me.

So that was my first experience with Hard Core. It was really strange 'cuz the first meeting I went to was at Linda D's house. And she had cats, man...and those cats had kittens. I'm allergic to cats and kittens. I had planned to go to the meeting and really be together. They were talking about how people were coming loaded to the meeting. But by then my eyes started to water. When I'm around cats I itch and my nose runs...so I just was sniffing and scratching and doing all these numbers. And people started looking at me and saying "*And people shouldn't be coming to the meetings loaded.*" And I was going, "Uh hoh, it's the cats!" I mean wow, it was my first meeting and everybody was telling me I was coming loaded to the meetings. But I stayed with them 'cuz I didn't know where else to go, I was supposed to be working on a drug program, but I didn't know what drug programs were. They were always telling me about crisis intervention and stuff, and I was thinking "Shit, no one helped me or my friends when I was down and out."

But I guess it was like Reiko was saying, everytime I'd get busted I'd be by myself, but all of a sudden, there were people there behind you. I remember people were always there.

A lot of time I think it has changed...I may be wrong. But before, I think people did it because they gave a shit. Now it's because It's your job.

Reiko, when I was going to junior high, all my friends were getting $5 a week allowance and $5 for every "A," and I was getting 50 cents a week, so I felt I had to steal to get the things I wanted. Did you go through that?

Yeah, I got allowance, but every year, the kids would get new clothes, a new wardrobe. (Summer clothes, fall clothes, Easter clothes, Christmas clothes, etc.) And I guess that's one of the first things I did wrong...stealing, shoplifting a whole lot. Then came cutting school to do that. I'd spend the whole day going from store to store.

Were you pretty good at it after a while?

Oh yeah. I think I used to get more than everybody else combined when we went. That's when they were all looking for "three Asian girls with red hair." They told us, "We've been looking for you girls for a long time."

When you got busted were you in junior high?

They didn't catch me, they caught Holly. They caught Holly and she told. But that just started the whole thing of ditching school. so by the time I got to high school, by the second year they wouldn't let me back in because they said I cut so much it wasn't like I was really enrolled. So I never went back to school. That's when I was fifteen. They said to get back in school, I had to bring my parents down. And I said, "No way! I'm not going to tell them." I was really scared. I mean, I had to be pretty scared to leave home because of that. That's mainly why I left home that day. I just split home and never went back.

So where did you stay?

Oh, in the back of cars, sleeping in cars. And I got a job the first week I was gone from home. The first money we got, me and my girlfriend got a motel room. We stayed in a motel until she went home, and I got married. It seemed like the best way out.

When did you start getting into dope and heavy stuff?

Well I married a black and stayed with him for ten years, and during all those years you know, I thought I loved him and he still loves me. He put me in a role where "women are supposed to do this"—and that was a whole bunch of shit—"men can do all this other stuff." He was really fucking me over. But I never thought about it then. I thought well, he's young, he married young so he's got to get it out of his system. He said it was all right for him to go out and party and stay our late or even all night, but it's not right for me to do it. I'm supposed to stay at home and watch the kids and take care of the house.

In our fifth year of marriage he started dropping reds, but he never told me. I just know he'd go off crazy sometimes and start beating me for no reason. I didn't find out til two years later that he was taking reds. But I never knew it and he never got strung out, but he'd just go off on my head, beat me and everything. It wasn't until the ninth year of our marriage that I started taking whites because I found I had to really keep working cuz he wasn't working. I had to work and work. And after we got divorced I kept on taking whites, then I started taking reds, too.

At the time it was really great, you know. You come home from work and you take reds and you forget everything, you know. No problems, no nothing. And after the experience I had with him I didn't want to have nothing to do with men. I didn't want to get involved with men and I thought that reds were the only things I wanted to relate to. So I avoided men. Guys were always asking me out and I always made excuses and just started getting loaded every night...by myself. I'd definitely make it by myself. If I knew I was going to get pretty fucked up then I just would not answer the phone, not answer the door and get *fucked up*, you know, loaded as I wanted to. The kids would be at my mother-in-law's or with a babysitter. But every night when I was getting loaded I wouldn't get to the point where the kids would notice, I mean I think I maintained pretty good. The thing I really liked about it was I was able to go to sleep...just pass on out. If I laid in bed I could think about a million things that were wrong and I didn't want to do that. Tripping on my boyfriends, relating to somebody, problems I was having being alone with the kids...I hated that so I took reds to really knock out. And I did that. I held that one job for five years straight. I had the money so I could always get reds. And I had no problems for five years. I never thought about being strung out or anything.

And then it got real heavy, because I did start relating to this guy who was black and was into drinking really heavy and he'd want me to run around the town every night, but I was working. I couldn't hold down my job and keep that up too. So instead of putting him down, I quit my job...which was the wrong thing to do because then I just went all the way into reds—since I didn't have a job. That's when the roof finally fell in—I got evicted, my kids had to go over to my mother-in-law's and I just went on from there. I got all the way into dope and I started moving with different girlfriends. Most of the girls that I lived with were into some kind of drugs. One girl I lived with didn't have any income except welfare, and I didn't have anything so I started selling a lot of dope, giving a lot of card games. The card games were actually our major source of income, for an everyday thing. We, the house, cut the cards every night. It went on from 8 at night to 9 in the morning and seven days a week.

How much were you making off of that?

Gee, I don't know. As soon as we got it, it had to go for food or bills. We never could sit down and figure out each night how much we got. We just spent it on whatever we needed or just got more dope. At the card games, the people would buy dope. They'd sit down, get their cards, and say, "get me a lid,get me a bag of reds."

It got so heavy that I started to buy a lot of dope on consignment. My connection was a pretty straight dude with me cuz he was giving me a lot of stuff on credit and I'd just pay him when I sold it. So whenever he ran into trouble, I'd try to help him out if I could. One of the problems one time was not having enough grass to sell. And I had thought that I had a contact for forty kilos of grass so we went out to get it, but we were just set up for a robbery. They shot him, and they shot me and took our money. And all the time I was conscious, I was telling myself, "You know, you asked for it, you did wrong and you're going to pay for it." And I knew I wasn't going to make it. I mean, I had accepted that I was shot and dying in the car. And that they would be better off without a mother like me. I just really put myself all the way down.

But once I got out of the hospital, I was into drugs again. I mean, every little pay and, "Oooh, I need a red, give me some reds." My husband was taking care of me even though we weren't together. He helped me quite a bit. He wouldn't let me have any drugs but I managed to get a hold of them. I think that was what mainly prolonged my recovery. I was getting loaded and I knew I was really weak, but I was still dropping them...I had no money, no way to work cuz I was shot, and no place to really live. I was moving from place to place. I got shot in '70 and I think between '70 and '71 I must have moved twenty times. And this was all during the time when I couldn't even talk and county aid would only give me General Relief, they wouldn't even give ATD (Aid for the Totally Disabled). The social worker I had was really fucked up. I couldn't work cuz I was shot and she wouldn't give me ATD. And so I was only getting $118 a month and there was no way I could live off of that, so I really started getting loaded.

Right before I was shot I heard about Asian American Hardcore. I had met some guy that told me about Hardcore. In fact, one of them helped me get a job. I thought they were really crazy people because they were talking about drug abuse and I noticed that I went to one place where they met and they were all loaded. I mean they were all on the nod. But they were talking about Hardcore you know, and it just totally confused the hell out of me.

Because the blacks I associated with never got strung out, never got fucked up, they all took drugs but they never got strung out or fucked up. At one of our last few card games, word got out to some Asians and then they came—and they were fucked up and I thought, "Wow, what is this." I'd known some people that were on heroin, but they'd never fall out like that. At that time I was relating to reds, they would say, "Gee you Japanese chicks sure do like reds, huh. You Asians really sure do like them pills." And when I thought about it, that was right! The girls were just consuming those pills, the blacks they were just selling them and they drop now and then.

So anyway, they kept after me about joining Hardcore, but I thought they were crazy. I mean I didn't know what drug abuse or all the shit was about. So I just avoided them but after a while I got to know that they were there to help. I had been busted so many times and they started going to court with me. And I thought that was pretty far out, cuz all of the other times I had to go alone every step: trial, preliminary, sentencing. And these guys said they would go. I got to know that whenever I needed help I could call them. Like that time that my kids got into the car accident out in San Bernardino, I just called them and they were at my door in fifteen minutes to take me out there. And I thought, "these people are really cool," but I thought that they were a little weird too. I don't know if I would have ever joined Hardcore except the point came where I was really down and out and no place else to move to, no money, so I just called up Hardcore and said, "well, I don't have any place to go," and they hold me to come over and I went over. I really didn't get into that lifestyle of everyone living together, it was kind of shocking. But I thought it was really far out, it was the first time in my life that I felt that people were really digging on people, that people were really helping each other. And it was the first time I had ever seen anything like that. It was really a good feeling being together and all doing the same thing.

And I just wish that was something that the movement hadn't lost. Cuz I think that's gone. I really feel that's gone, but at the time when I first got into it, I thought it was really great.

Did you notice this starting to happen when federal funds began flooding our community or a lot of paid positions became available?

Well, I went through those changes even at a center where I was working with a sister that I really dug on. And I felt that I had to make it clear that I'm not here because there's "supposed" to be sisterhood or there's "supposed" to be brotherhood or because I'm getting paid. It seems like organizations changed from wanting to give, but it's cuz you have to.

And then it's hard when you're dealing with people's feelings because jobs restrict you, restrict what you're doing. Like if you're with a person till 5 a.m. they still expect you to report in at 9 the next morning. And you start thinking it's not a matter of humans, but a matter of keeping a schedule.

We used to all share with each other: our knowledge and what we're going through...we used to share it all. But now there's not any sharing there's just telling. You know, like, "I'm telling you to do this and you better do it cuz I'm higher." There's no more, "I care for you because you're another person,"—there's no exchanges anymore.

Yeah I used to feel that pretty heavy too. You know how people always talk about getting together and everything. But I always felt alienated or something because I was always stuck in the office to answer the phones, take care of the office, deal with the board of directors, and things like that.

Yeah, you remember that skit that you and E— did about the movement? That has not changed at all! Like four years ago, "Right on, sister, type this up," Well it's the same thing here! It hasn't changed, it's the same people. The same people saw the skit four years ago.

When women's liberation first came about I couldn't relate to it cuz it was all about make up and clothes. And I said forget it, it wasn't that important to me. But as far as your working conditions or how much you're paid...like my mom has full responsibility but she gets paid less than the men. That means more to me than make up or clothes or whether you do wear a bra or don't. That type of shit is very irrelevant.

What kind of changes would you like to see in the movement?

I don't know, it's like I'm really outside still. I'm just really hesitant. I mean it's not like I don't agree with what's been said...it's more like the difference of what's being said, and what's being done. Like how people treat each other in the movement even! It's really fucked up sometimes. You know like, "I know more than you cuz I've read these books and I can spout more words than you. You know, so don't be telling me anything." And it's like they assume you're on the same level as they are...or should be.

But one thing I felt really good about was the International Women's Day Celebration. I know you apologized for being disorganized, but I felt really good about it cuz even though I wasn't a part of any of the planning or anything, people let me help out.

Let you—we were begging you.

You know, it wasn't just closed were people who had gone to the meetings were gonna run everything, but you were very open to people.

That's cuz sisterhood is powerful. Reiko, do you feel like you're outside of the movement?

Yeah, and I feel like I'm getting farther and farther away. It may have a lot to do with... brothers, you know. Because it seems like, well, I have a hard time relating to brothers and I noticed that from the beginning when I was in Hardcore we used to always rap together. But as time went by...you know, I don't think I've changed, I think they have. Like their attitudes are different. They don't have time to rap with you, or to do stuff with you, everybody has meetings or something. That's one of the things that I think has affected the movement. It's not so much federal funds but at that time I think that there was only a few things going on, and all of a sudden a hundred million different things started coming out and everybody got so heavy into everything that that caused a lot of alienation from the movement. I just really have a hard time relating to people, especially brothers, that are really heavy into the movement. I get that same feeling as I did in grammar school with those Asian sisters like, "Oh poor thing, you have such a hard time."

Why do you think it's with brothers more than sisters? Because when you think about it, sisters are the backbone of the movement.

Yeah, I think that sisters do just as much work, but it seems to me that they're always there. Or the sisters I know are always there. Whether it's a little problem or a large problem, they're always there...to listen or whatever it takes, they're open to it, you know. Whereas brothers don't have time...they're too busy.

Yeah, I feel that sisters have a common bond with each other...and I feel that with a lot of sisters. But there was a time when some of the brothers were getting on my case for being really close with certain sisters, but not everybody. And that used to blow my mind because I'd try to make friends and reach out...but you're just not real tight *with everybody—they weren't. Even at a collective I was living in I was told to hang around more with Seiko. And I mean, I liked her, and we got along, but we enjoyed different things, different trips.*

Cindy. Yeah, just because someone's Asian everybody expects you to love them. I mean, people are different. They have different interests.

Reiko. Well, that's funny because Seiko told me that she liked you and the other sisters in the house, but it was the brothers that gave her the cold feeling.

Cindy. Yeah, and I didn't get to know for a long time cuz you were in that little cubicle with all the machines and there was no room for someone to sit down and rap with you. And it seemed like people would always try to tell you what to do. When I was at the office, I guess cuz of my job, they let me come with them, but it was always, "Don't say nothing." It was like if they went to a speaking engagement and someone was too loaded to speak then they would tell me to fill in at the last minute...and I didn't even know what they had planned to talk about.

. . .

This isn't a women's lib success story with a happy ending where women triumph over men and live happily ever after. It's real life, where some things still remain unresolved, but the contradictions are pointed out and people are willing to struggle on.

—Linda Iwataki

Poem

Sister
Para Nuestra Hermanas

Have you seen the revolutionary sister
Rapping to the masses of the poor
She talks about revolution—change
She talks about redistributing wealth
to all

She reads Mao & Marx/ Che & Lenin
She's for real
She believes in what she does

She loves you
She loves her people

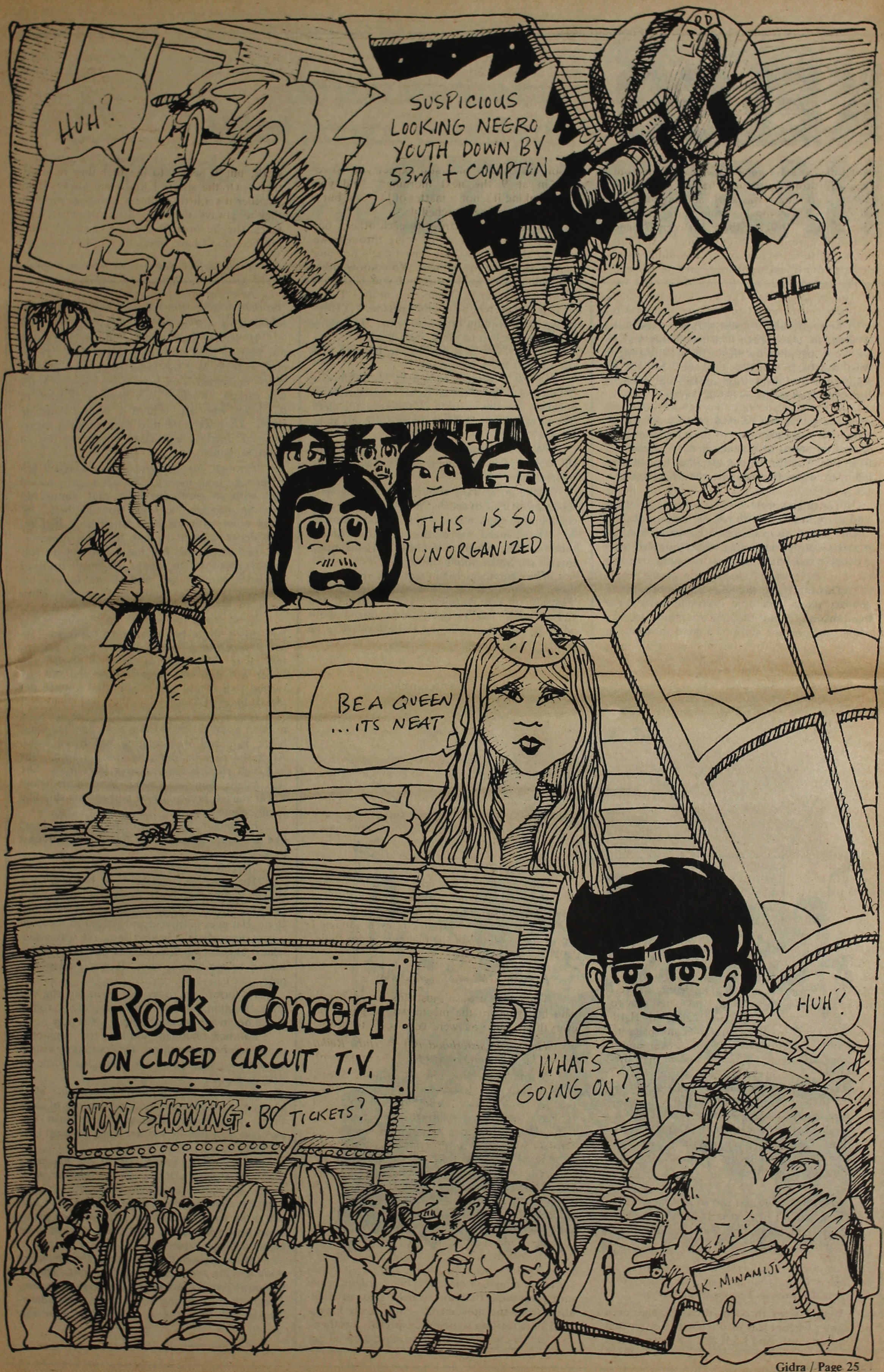
She sleeps little / works hard
Sometimes her eyes show it
She tries to hide it / she smiles

She's friendly / loves children
She talks with the junkies
And understands

She's a woman
And she loves.

She'll die
Loving you

I understand you want to lay her.


HUH?
SUSPICIOUS LOOKING NEGRO YOUTH DOWN BY 53rd + COMPTON
P.D.
THIS IS SO UNORGANIZED
BE A QUEEN ...ITS NEAT
Rock Concert
ON CLOSED CIRCUIT T.V.
NOW SHOWING: BO
TICKETS?
WHATS GOING ON?
HUH!
K. MINAMIJI

KELSO HASHIMOTO

Kelso Hashimoto was sitting on the toilet reading the classifieds. The newspaper was on the floor between his feet. He was reading it with his back hunched over and his elbows resting on his knees. He looked up when he heard an interruption in the next room.

The phone had started to ring. It was an especially awkward moment since he was caught also in the midst of his line of duty. Kelso had to decide whether to cut off what he had started or to follow through with the whole show.

The ringing seemed to be getting louder and and more intense. With several sections of 2-ply tissues balled up in his hand, he sat looking upwards towards the ceiling while trying to make a decisive and final choice. It was hard.

This might, he thought, be one of those legendary phone calls that everyone waits for at one time in life. But then, he continued on, how often can someone get into a good, healthy, relaxing and fulfilling brown-and-out? The phone persisted. He had to think. Quick.

Jeepers, creepers, he said to himself. The call seemed more important.

It was a woman named Lydia Laidlaw at Occidental Life. She had Kelso Hashimoto's application for the position of full-time file clerk. Was he still interested in coming down for an interview?

"Yes, that sounds wonderful," Kelso said. He was told to come in before two. Kelso thanked her.

Make no mistake about this. He may have spoken with a bit of saccharin flavoring, but after eighteen job applications – this was not sarcasm.

He changed his clothes quickly with no time to reflect whether or not destiny had made this his particular phone calling.

The Number Nine bus was Eastbound down Jefferson Boulevard traveling through the Westside of Los Angeles. It was half-full and Kelso had a window seat. He thought about what he would say during the interview as he was looking out at his neighborhood.

It was around noon as the bus stopped just past La Brea to pick up an old man. At the curb in front of a small electronic parts plant, a shiny, embossed, aluminum-sided catering truck was parked. Workers were lined up in front of its driver who was behind a small collapsible table. They were standing there holding soggy-steamed burritos and large plastic bottles of Tahitian punch.

Through the window, Kelso watched the driver take their money. He was a sandy-haired man with an enormous belly that almost hid the coin changer that hung from his belt He stood erect with his head tilted back slightly. Confidence seemed to reek from his presence. His right hand was holding a bill and his left was reaching for some change. He moved his head a quarter turn to spit out of the side of his mouth. It was a windy day and the saliva stuck to his face.

Kelso could feel something. Sitting beside him was a white bag containing his lunch. He had stopped at a Taco-Bell to get an enchirito two tacos. The cover of the small plastic container with hot sauce came unfastened and had started to leak into a small pool that reached the seat of his pants.

Just as Kelso looked up from the mess, he noticed a girl get on at Crenshaw. She had long, black hair and was wearing well-fitted jeans. After she paid her fare, he saw her face. She had high cheekbones and very large eyes. She was Asian. She was young. And immediately Kelso started thinking that perhaps his ship had finally come to port.

He caught the corner of her eye. And just like in a song, it seemed like this girl was taking a look at him.

"Hi," Kelso said.

The graceful movements of her legs were slowly gliding her body down the aisle. Not breaking stride, she casually turned in his direction. Her eyes narrowed and started to focus on a spot immediately behind him. It was somewhere about two feet outside the bus. Kelso turned to see who it was. It was a telephone pole.

He looked up to see her again but she was gone. He didn't want to turn completely around to see her in the back of the bus. Not now.

He had stopped thinking of romantic, ocean-going clipper ships. He could only visualize a slow barge, going upstream, loaded down with garbage.

Kelso watched the other passengers. Most everyone seemed to be studying the tops of their shoes. Kelso looked down at his gray Hush Puppies and, just like in another song, he went into a dream.

It was New Year's Day at his *Ba-chan's* house on Hillcrest Drive. All the relatives were there. Beside the aluminum Christmas tree was a buffet. *Sashimi*, fried chicken from the Colonel, *sushi*, *onigiri* and potato salad were on plates covering a white table cloth that was on three adjacent bridge tables.

All of Kelso's uncles were in the breakfast nook playing seven card, high-low split. The little cousins were running in and out of the house. The aunts were sitting in the living room admiring the new twenty-one inch SONY Trinitron

Mister Hashimoto, do you like to work with other people? What do you usually do in your spare time? What do you see yourself doing in, say, five years? Mister Hashimoto, oh, Mister Hashimoto?

that Uncle Shig had given to Kelso's grandparents. *Ba-chan* was in the kitchen. Her husband, Kelso's grandfather, was in the back room watching his own television. The aunts were chattering about one of the cousins who was a student at a local high school. They seemed to think she had somehow gotten in trouble.

For a moment, everything continued normally as Kelso made his entrance. He walked into the living room and started saying hello to everyone. Kelso glanced down and remembered that he forgot to put on his clothes before coming over. He was standing there naked.

In order not to seem too self-consicous, he lit up a cigarette, sat down on the sofa and casually crossed his legs. He started to talk about his job interview.

His Auntie Helen was the first one to notice. Then his little cousins started to hold their mouths. The poker game came to a halt. Heads looked up.

Kelso braced himself for the reaction by covering his ears. But there was silence. No one said a word.

Then it came by surprise. He was bombarded with *onigiri*—large packed rice balls. Everyone was throwing them at him. He tried to dodge them. But it was useless.

Then he noticed that each rice ball contained *umeboshi*—little pickled plums with dark pits. The red juice from these plums were leaving noticeable stains. Kelso looked down and saw that he was covered with red blotches over his entire body.

When he looked up, his Aunt Alice threw a fastball to his temple. He was stunned by the impact. He went to his knees.

What seemed like a sheet of rain slowly dropped across his line of vision The scene started to slow down. Then Kelso heard the bus stop for a signal.

Kelso looked around and saw that the bus was starting to get crowded now. He thought about how the next few people who came aborad would probably have to stand.

The personnel office of the Occidental Life Insurance Company was crowded too. No one was standing but out of the thirty chairs in the waiting room, only three were empty.

Kelso left his name with the receptionist, sat down and began to grow nervous. There were no magazines to read. He had already seen too much of the tops of his shoes. He wanted to smoke.

There were only two ashtrays in the room. The closest was about twenty feet away. It was of the standing, metal variety. Kelso saw a vacant chair near it. He stood up and walked over to the ashtray, which he carried to the vacant seat.

He was now sitting next to the only other Asian in the room. He was of about the same age and Kelso couldn't help but notice that the pores around the nose of the other Asian must have secreted a tremendous amount of oil. It reflected dramatically from the florescent lights overhead.

Having taken a long, relaxing hit off of his cigarette, Kelso looked down from the ceiling and noticed that the other Asian was now staring at him.

Kelso nodded his head in a casual hello that wasn't acknowledged. The other Asian spoke abruptly.

"I'll make you a deal," he said. "I'll give you a minute to smoke, if you give me time to breathe."

Kelso looked at him, then turned away quickly as he put the cigarette out in the ashtray.

He wanted to tell this other Asian that maybe he could use an air pollution device over his smart mouth. But Kelso was distracted. He remembered that he forgot his lunch on the bus.

Before he came in the room, he had noticed some vending machines in the outer hall. Kelso was hungry. He thought about getting a candy bar.

He stood up again and was going through his pockets, as if searching for some change, while approaching the door out.

As Kelso walked past the vending machines and entered the elevator which went down to the ground floor, he was listening to the Muzak that played an old love song which he didn't recognize.

Music was flowing through his head while he was laying in bed the next day. When the phone rang, he just stared at the ceiling. For a while he thought about the trip he made the day before but now he had other things on his mind.

He was trying to remember a melody that stuck to the dry part of his tongue. The tune came out finally in a flat monotone. Kelso stopped, embarassed with himself.

Then he worked on the words which he tried to get in the right order. For a moment he was lost. Then it was getting clearer. The idea stood out even it if wasn't exactly like in the song.

Nice, he thought to himself. He didn't want to say the words out loud.

He was loved for what he was—not the person he wanted to be.

Kelso thought about it some more.

Nobody said it to him. He heard it on the radio.

—Alan Ota

PEOPLE: We're all human

A look at movement standards

You ever get close enough to someone where you can talk candidly about your ups and downs and know that they care? Or while driving let someone cut in front of you and have them wave to you in appreciation? Or an old friend dropping by "just to say hello?" Good Feelings, huh?

On the other hand, have you ever felt alone with no one to share your feelings with? Or worked hard to help someone and all he shows is a gross neglect of your efforts? Or get shined on by people you thought were your friends? Life has its funny twists.

Over four years ago, I began drifting into the *Gidra* office doing bits and pieces of work, and for some unexplainable reason, I felt good about the people I was working with. I've been with it ever since.

But in those four years the staff has been called many bad things by other movement groups: a clique of intellectual elitists, snobbish, insensitive, weird, crazy (the last two especially, depending on who you knew). I'm sure that some of the criticisms had their foundation, but the problem has never been in finding things to fault. We're all eyes when it comes to that, Where we stub our toes, stare at the wall and stutter a lot is you-know-when. Finding problems to answer is easy. Finding answers to problems isn't.

Many times in my life, the amount of problems and hassles going on seemed to outweigh the number of positive comments and reinforcements ten-fold. Do you know the feeling? What happened to all that brotherhood and sisterhood I heard talk of? It shows itself in funny ways.

And it wasn't too long ago when I was really down on my parents, believing that they were really being insensitive to my needs. And out of that belief grew a general disrespect. I believe I know better than that now. They tried to help in the best way they knew how. I received their support with ingratitude and inexhaustible contempt. I threw the book at them. I was, in short, a fool. I saw their double standards clearly. I was blind to mine. There was no awareness of my shortcomings because I was sooo right and they were sooo wrong. I had to win. Can you see the evil in my ways? It's not pretty. My parents deserved much better.

But I've seen this attitude in many people. (Takes one to know one, I guess.) Yes, in movement people, too. We get so caught up in our self-righteousness that the path to which we seek unity and friendship becomes very narrow and shallow. Who wins then? If no one is perfect, then everyone has their shortcomings. Improving on them involves much time, effort and conscientiousness. If that makes sense, I see no reason for any of us to become impatient and intolerant of another's failures, faults, and beliefs. But it happens constantly, and the sad part is either no one is aware of it at the time or no one cares. It's seldom on the agenda.

I understand only that patience and the need to understand one another is a full time commitment . No less, maybe more. It takes constant practice and awareness. It's not something you use just every so often when the time seems right. It's not something you do and expect praise or support for (though it certainly helps to know that someone appreciates your efforts). And for the moment, it's not something to expect out of very many people.

Last year when the Storefront broke up, I couldn't understand why. Many good people worked there, and from the outside looking in, the program seemed relevant and workable. Later, I learned that a major reason for the lack of people's spirit to struggle came from constant friction between a Marxist-Leninist doctrine and a Third World concept. Since then, my need to run it down and enforce political theory has dropped considerably.

We live in a society filled with thousands of different cultural backgrounds, experiences and beliefs. More than any other. We also face the most sophisticated, intelligent and dangerous forces ever to confront the working class. To bring together such a wide spectrum of people to overthrow such a ruling class will take much more than an academic knowledge of the "isms" (i.e., capitalism, collectivism, socialism). Much more.

Not to underplay the importance of under standing the "isms", the knowledge is certainly needed, but again, not to the point where we reach a love it or leave it attitude. It's not hard.

I can offer no instant plan, or theory, or structure or formula to build that "good feeling" which I believe is needed to continue the struggle. The examples mentioned at the beginning of the article are fleeting and small, but positive all the same. Spirit and enthusiasm is built on many levels and there is something to be learned from just about everyone. Remember that and maybe an understanding can someday be reached.

In the meantime, the *Gidra* staff has decided to suspend publication, allowing two months for problems familiar to us all. I look at it as another important learning stage for the staff. I'm sure we'll be back. Till then, hang in there. It's not a lost cause

—Doug Aihara

I Believe

Your song runs free
Easing through times of changes
Soft and slow
I believed
I believe
to give with joy
to give with pain
to give to give
I gave to you
You gave to me
it was easy.
I believe
there was love with joy
void of pain and suffering
but is there not a greater love
to be found only through pain and suffering
we were not ready.
I believe
there is/will be joy—pain
there is/will be struggle—understanding
there is/will be friends
to lean on
to find strength from:
Your song runs free
Easing through times of changes
Soft and slow
I believe
I have found
a friend.

—doug—

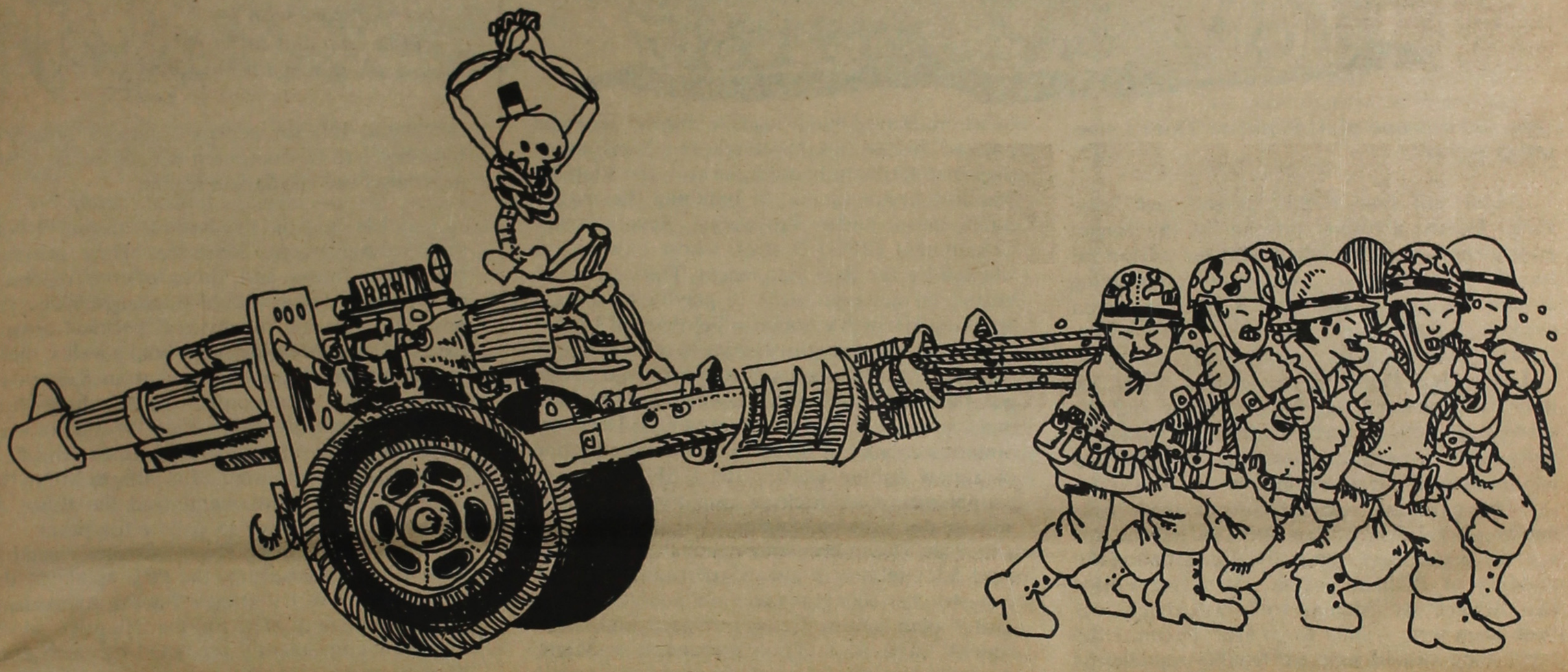
The City

Crowded lines wait patiently
to pay on the other end
and I wonder why
the price is never too high
and
long hair grows longer
a sign of change
to those riding easy
on clouds to the motherland
where life's blood is not free
and
flashing lights dance to the beat
of spinning wheels
racing to save time
that isn't theirs
and
the silver bird roars high
above numbered rooftops
of the jungle that grows far below
the eyes of the rich man
and
the child looks up
to flimsy dreams
born from battered down hopes
of a search for a better day
and
friends become foes
in the name of love
and
friends become foes
in the name of love
while
a young man sings
the answer
is blowing in the wind
and
a lost man cries
help
in the city.

—doug—

There's a Tunnel at the End of the Tunnel

The War Drags On



Tom Hayden's article below, lifted from *Rolling Stone*, 28 February 1974, eloquently asserts a very crucial fact: The War in Vietnam is not over. It is not over because of Nguyen Van Thieu and those he represents. Furthermore, Thieu's sole support and power come from the vast money and technology of the United States, without which his regime would crumble.

It is thus important to briefly study (1) the conditions in Saigon; (2) the present situation in the liberated areas under the Provisional Revolutionary Government; (3) and in the North.

Saigon.

A secret report issued by a mission of the World Bank detailing the grim economic situation in the Saigon-controlled areas of South Vietnam:

–Economic growth in the past two years has been very small, "if not negative."

–Per capita income has remained at the 1960 level, while last year alone inflation soared by 60 percent and living standards fell considerably.

–The South still needs to import 300,000 tons of rice per year (it exported over a million tons in 1939).

–Nearly half of all those who are employed are in services rather than production, and 25 percent of the potential work force is unemployed.

–About 50 percent of the Saigon budget goes for the military and police (this does not count direct U.S. military aid). *(International Bulletin)*

In Saigon, the streets are noisy, congested and dirty. As one writer noted, barbed wire has become an architectural feature, integrated with the city landscape. It is no wonder that Thieu resorts to torturing and imprisoning hundreds of thousands, and constant identification checks on every street corner. He has to protect himself and the clique of wealth in Saigon who live in plush, barbed wire enclosed villas, and travel by chauffered limousines. He has to protect himself from the rest of the population who currently subsist without enough food, shelter, clothing or employment.

PRG Zone.

Contrast that with the PRG zones in the South. The first thing one notices about both the liberated areas and the North, as distinguished from the Saigon controlled areas, is the knowledge about the Paris Peace Agreements. In Saigon, mere discussion about the Agreements is prohibited; in the PRG zones, everyone knows every provision of the accords and waits for their implementation.

Even after the unprecedented U.S. bombing destruction in 1972, reconstruction in the PRG areas is very impressive. For example the city of Dong Ha weathered the equivalent of six Hiroshima-type atomic bombs in six months. People returned to their land, to find buildings leveled, foilage destroyed, their tools, plows, and cattle, blown up and burned. One year later, the major roads have been repaired, bus service and motor boats transport people, and there is an active commercial harbor. The people have built a permanent two-way bridge, a bookstore, small department store, a restaurant, a medical dispensary, lots of temporary housing, a bustling market stocked with a wide range of fish, pork, chicken, vegetables, staples and manufactured goods. There's even an ice cream factory. Dong Ha has a 150-bed hospital to deal with the American legacy of VD, as well as typhus, smallpox, tetanus and polio. There are still problems of course. Chemical defoliation has severely hampered farming, and rats are still a problem. Unexploded U.S. anti-personnel bombs are a very dangerous hazard. But as one PRG spokesman said: "Our people's lives were distorted. Step by step, we are trying to restore a normal life and integrate people back into a Vietnamese way of life by pursuing a policy of national reconstruction and concord." (*International Bulletin*)

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

North Vietnam.

The North is also rebuilding. The dikes and dams bombed by American planes have been repaired, communications networks are back to normal. schools have re-opened, housing construction has begun, and factories and hospitals have started operating, though at reduced capacity. Cultural life has surfaced too: A full circus toured Hanoi, complete with clowns, magicians and trained bears, playing to 1500 people a night.

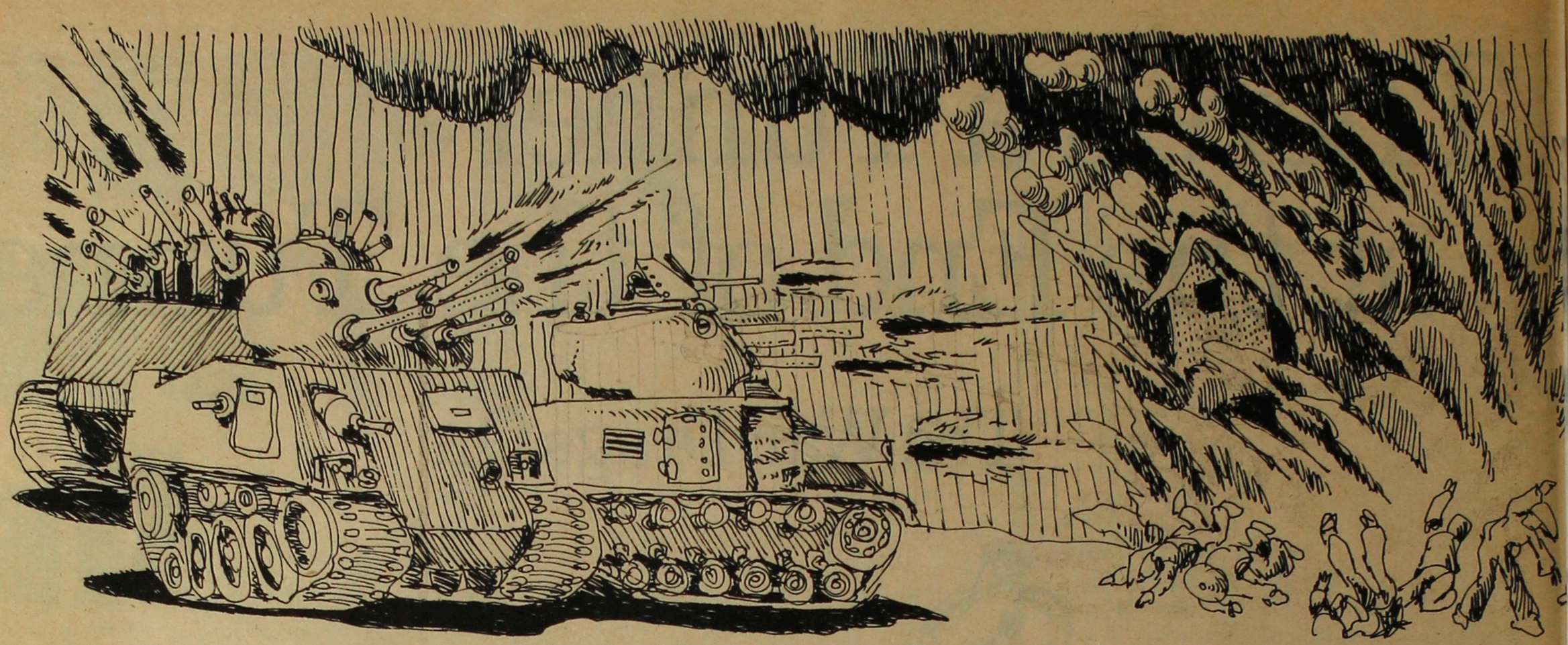
As the head of the Union of Vietnamese journalists observed, the people are optimistic, though he spoke frankly to American visitors about problems ahead. "We must become accustomed to large-scale production and leave behind all the old values of feudalism and colonialism. There are also problems of individualism, but not so serious as in your country where people in an apartment building don't know each other."

The greatest problem is the threat of renewed bombing. People remember the war they have fought the last thirty-two years. They expect Nixon to honor his commitment to Article 21 of the Peace Agreement to pay reparations, and they are determined that Vietnam must one day be reunited, as stipulated in Article 1.

One glimpses the future in Vietnam when comparing conditions in Hanoi with those in Saigon. Jayne Werner, in *The Guardian* (24 Mar 74), gives some telling examples. There is Saigon's congested poverty compared to Hanoi's stable simplicity. In the South, rice costs twice as much, so that up to a third of a worker's wage pays for his family's rice; in the Northern city, rationing assures an adequate monthly supply. Saigon's currency has been devalued eight times in one year; in Hanoi, inflation is virtually unknown–a chicken costs today about what it did in 1965. In the North, housing costs one percent of a person's income; it costs at least 10 times that or more in Saigon. Although taxes are steep in both cities, Hanoi's inhabitants enjoy free medical care and education, both very costly in Thieu's Saigon. The revealing tale of two cities.

It is in this light that we must consider the

Gidra / Page 29



type and amount of U.S. aid to Thieu's staggering regime: **–B.I.**

Last fall Jane Fonda, myself and Jean-Pierre Debris, a former prisoner of the Saigon government, went to lunch with the editors of the Washington *Post*. We were campaigning around the country against U.S. involvement in continued horrors in Indochina. Over an exquisite lunch with servants treading quietly in and out, Jean-Pierre recounted his arrest for publicly protesting the Saigon regime and the subsequent acts of torture which he both witnessed and experienced during his two years as an inmate of Chi Hoa prison.

We expected sympathy from these eminently liberal men of the *Post*. After all, this was the paper most responsible for initiating the undoing of Richard Nixon. Managing Editor Ben Bradlee sat listening to us attentively. If these men were willing to go after Nixon, I figured, they should have no trouble repudiating the likes of Thieu or Cambodia's Lon Nol.

There was only a single disquieting note. At one point the editorial-page director, Philip Geyelin, mused about Thieu: "Well, it's not so easy to pull the rug from under a wartime ally." Why, I asked. How can you abandon a war without abandoning the dictatorial machinery used to perpetuate that war? Geyelin didn't seem to hold his view very strongly, the point passed, dessert was served.

So while the *Post* continues to go after Nixon, and opposes renewed US bombing, it has editorialized *for* continuing aid to Thieu and Lon Nol. No concern for the Saigon prisoners has been forthcoming.

The thought that crossed my mind at the luncheon keeps coming back, making greater sense with time: *Difficult and important as it is, it may turn out easier to impeach Richard Nixon than to cut aid to Nguyen Van Thieu.*

And, one year after the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement on March 2nd, 1973, the war is still with us.

* * *

That it *is* a war, an old war in new form, is impossible to deny after many months of wishful past-tense references.

In Cambodia, where the Sihanouk-led Khmer Rouge controls 75% of the territory (according to Adm Thomas Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, in recent congressional testimony), a guerrilla offensive is being carried to the outskirts of Phnom Penh. To block the offensive, the U.S. Congress (with the editorial approval of the Washington *Post*) granted in December a tripling of the original $180-million military-aid request of the White House.

In South Vietnam, more than 50,000 people were killed in fighting in 1973–higher than any rate except during the 1968 and 1972 offensives and about ten times the number killed in the more publicized Middle East war of October. In December Thieu declared there would be no general election in South Vietnam as called for by the Paris ceasefire agreement, then changed the Saigon constitution to allow himself a third term. Even within this tightly-rigged assembly, this latter act was met by outraged objections from the more than 50 legislators, some of whom shaved their heads in shame. Then he ordered his troops to attack the Vietcong in their own territory because, he said, the Vietnam War had begun again. In bombing the mainly rural zones under Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) control, whose existence is allowed by the Paris Agreement, Thieu has committed an act equivalent in gravity to the US bombing of North Vietnam in February of 1965.

While regularly threatening to resume bombing, the U.S. already has sent military aid to Saigon far exceeding the "piece for piece" replacement permitted in the Agreement. The most ominous escalation is the planned introduction of a new fighter-bomber, the F-5E, as part of a supplemental-aid package sought by our Saigon ambassador Graham Martin.

The December congressional decision to send $3.5 billion in aid–85 percent of it military–to its client regimes in Indochina was higher than aid to Israel, our next highest recipient. The $1.7 billion earmarked to Saigon supports the third largest air force and fourth largest army in the world!

An extraordinary police state, combining the most sadistic passions with the most advanced technology, is being erected in Saigon. By comparison with the much-publicizedrepression in the Soviet Union, South Vietnam is the bottom of hell. Estimates of the number of political prisoners–who should have been released in accordance with the Paris Agreement–range from 100,000 (Amnesty International) to 200,000 (Committee to Reform the Prisons of South Vietnam, a Catholic organization based in Paris). The U.S. and Thieu deny the existence of these prisoners. Compare those figures with the estimated 10,000 political prisoners in the Soviet Union, a country ten times larger than South Vietnam. And while Solzhenitsyn commands front-page attention in the Western press, there is no similar regard for Saigon authors who decried the "death of our culture" in a letter addressed to world opinion on November 21st of last year.

But unlike the case of the Soviet Union, *we* are responsible for the grief of Saigon. U.S. advisers are in every prison, part of the 25,000 Americans still in South Vietnam. American firms continue to profit from the war. Tiger cages have been constructed by a Houston-based firm. Smith & Wesson sends the handcuffs. Computer Science Corporation provides the computers for the Saigon police to keep efficient files on *11.5 million* people, the entire adult population.

Our culture has produced a new kind of terrifying American presence for Vietnam: the administrator of torture.

Aside from everything else, these measures are futile. Our side is not and never has been a match for the other side in Vietnam. In the first six months after the Peace Agreement was signed, the PRG and their North Vietnamese allies were satisfied to build up their zones in the South, defend them against Thieu's intrusions, and mount a *political* struggle–inside South Vietnam and in the forums of world opinion–for the implementation of the Agreement. They concentrated especially on the provisions which permit refugees to return home, prisoners to be released, assured democratic rights and call for general e ections organized by a body to be composed equally of the PRG, neutralists and the Saigon regime.

It has been in the *interest* of the PRG to see the Agreement honored. They are sure that their forces and those of the repressed neutralists together would outweigh Thieu and pro-U.S. elements in any real political competition. It has been *illegal* to hold a public meeting about the Peace Agreement in Saigon–indeed, in that mind-control utopia, the history of American involvement since 1960 is not even taught in public-school history courses. But U.S. journalists have reported PRG villages where the people virtually have memorized the Peace Agreement as a charter to follow for peace.

In October, after Thieu had amply demonstrated his intransigence, the PRG escalated the military level of its struggle for the Agreement. They denied any plan for the offensive which was being conveniently predicted by the Nixon-Kissinger team as Congress decided on aid appropriations. But the PRG began a military campaign to "punish" or counterattack against acts of aggression. Saigon outposts in the countryside were overrun several times; Saigon's biggest airfield, at Bien Hoa, was rocketed; and the oil storage facilities at Nha Be were blown up. Thus, the less it appeared that the Peace Agreement would be peacefully implemented, the more the PRG has added military pressure to its strategy.

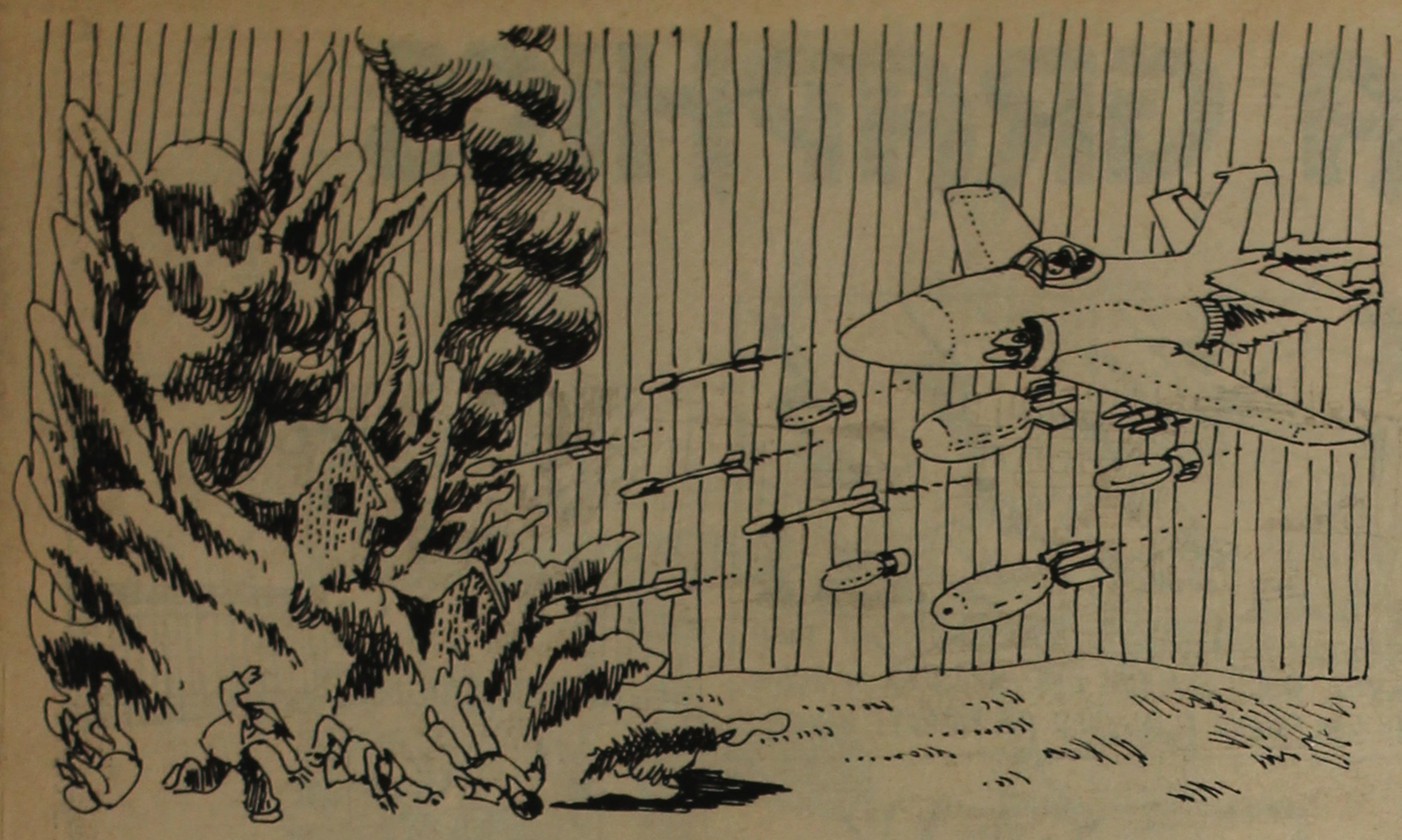
Kissinger's grand move for peace has clearly failed. There is a tunnel at the end of the tunnel. The next Vietnam has turned out to be Vietnam. Kissinger's Vietnamese adversaries have not been satisfied with the U.S. troop withdrawal and the end of bombing. Kissinger's luring of Russia and China towards detente and away from supporting revolution is not deterring Hanoi and the PRG. They have as many weapons and ready troops in the South as ever, according to American intelligence reports. And as a visitor this winter:

> While we appreciate all the aid we receive, some countries that have been giving us aid believe the war is over. If the enemy begins a new war, those countries which are in detente with Washington will be put in a position where they have to give us aid again. Our fight has sacred significance in the revolutionary world. If we are attacked again, and they don't come to our aid, they can't be called revolutionary. And being revolutionary is too important for them. They will give us aid.

In the Kissinger strategy, that leaves one finally
final card: counting on the silence of the people of the United States. The numbing of the American people is an essential part of U.S. foreign policy; and if we can be numb or blind in the face of these glaring injustices, what atrocities can we not adjust to?

*** *** ***

In late October, 200 peace activists met in Germantown, Ohio, to consider new ways to stop this war. Organized by the Indochina Peace Campaign, a broad range of people came from



all corners of America: Quakers, members of the War Resisters League, antiwar Vietnam Veterans. At the end, a New York *Times* correspondent, dressed casually for the occasion, was wandering among the delegates asking questions. I wasn't particularly friendly, and he asked me why.

"How has the conference gone? Were you satisfied?"

"Well, you've been going around the corridors asking people, so you must know we think it was positive."

"Yes, everyone I've talked to so far says so."

"But I bet the *Times* told you to write this up as a last-gasp of the peace movement."

"Well, actually, as a matter of fact, you're right, they did, sort of."

"And I'll bet the article you've gotten doesn't appear."

It didn't. But there *is* effective organization, even if we no longer have the benefit of the media spotlight of the Sixties. In 1973 such quiet combined efforts helped force Congress to stop the B-52 bombing of Cambodia and outlaw any further direct U.S. intervention without congressional approval. Grassroots pressure resulted in a ban on any funds for Saigon police and prisons from the Foreign Aid Appropriations Bill, and there is a good prospect that similar bans can be applied to all other appropriation bills involving Indochina. Aid to Indochina, while still an outrageous amount, was cut by nearly half from Nixon's original request. More immediately, movement protests have led to the release, as a concession, of prominent neutralist Ngo Ba Thanh.

The Campaign is in twenty-five states, doing local organizing to keep Indochina alive in American minds and a pressing matter on the agenda of Congress. A lobbying effort, the Coalition to Stop Funding, has been formed in Washington. An Indochina Peace Pledge is being circulated for elected officials to sign, demanding no further direct U.S. intervention, the honoring of the Peace Agreement's provisions, and a cut-off of aid for Saigon police and prisons.

* * *

"Can you tell us what happened to Rennie Davis?"

His face was puzzled, a little embarrassed, this North Vietnamese representative I met in Paris in October. Having known Rennie for years as a dedicated activist, he was plainly sorry about his conversion to another, and reactionary voice from Asia, the Guru Maharaj Ji. What was happening to the movement?

I fumbled for a brief answer. "Rennie's not crazy, though he's become more fanatical, and he's not an agent, though the government must appreciate his new calling. He thinks an inner peace is everything; he's gone from being an activist trying to change social conditions to a spiritualist with an escapist solution. Now he calls your suffering and ours an illusion to simply transcend."

The Vietnamese friend smiled, nodded. In his 60s, a veteran of nearly a half-century of revolution, he'd fondly known Rennie and myself since 1967, watched us gradually grow. Now he said finally, "In our country, we are used to things going forward, religious people becoming political, trying to change things. But in America, almost anything can happen. People there do not understand long struggle, step-by-step struggle."

Another PRG spokesman was feeling the same way. When I first met him eight years ago, I was 25 and could not have imagined that the peace movement I was entering would continue on through the Seventies. That man's first English words in 1965, said with a pleased look, were "SDS, SDS." Now those letters are in the wastebasket of sectarianism and, seeing him once again in 1973, he said the Vietnamese still hope Americans will take an interest in the struggle. If interest has slackened, he said, it is because Americans are confused about indirect intervention after years of defining the war in terms of bombing and U.S. combat troops. It is also because "the concept of long struggle is difficult to understand for our friends in the West. The rhythm of your cities, your economies, affects the mentality."

Some of us burn out in a year. This is the tenth year since I first protested the war. But in the year I was born, 1939, today's North Vietnamese negotiator, Le Duc Tho, was already in prison under the French colonialists, writing angry poems.

Seen across time, the peace movement has come a long way, but only with time. In the years immediately after the Geneva Agreement of 1954, there was no peace movement at all to oppose the violations of the Eisenhower administration. Today millions around the world attach "sacred significance" to Indochina. In 1964, there were only two senators with the guts to oppose the Tonkin Gulf resolution which led to American bombing. Today three-fourths Many a hawk has turned dove, and not a few became defendants on trial for their new beliefs. The duty of opposing the new war will be taken up. With time and pain, we grow.

How much the rice must suffer
under the pestle!
But after the pounding it
comes out white like cotton.
The same thing often happens to
men in this world;
Misfortune's workshop turns them
into polished jade.
—Ho Chi Minh, 1942

—Tom Hayden

Indochina Peace Campaign, 181 Pier, Santa Monica, California 90405

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6 May 1974:

Extra Vietnam aid of $266 million was rejected by the Senate, 43-38.

Senators spurned a plan their Armed Services Committee has approved whereby $266 million of arms already sent to the South would have been charged against earlier years, thus permitting additional spending this fiscal year. The committee and the full House had turned down Nixon's request for an increase of $474 million in the current year's ceiling on Vietnam military aid, which is $1.1 billion.

"With time and pain, we grow."

Twelve Thoughts on Becoming Extinct

1. *it is only*
   my birth in new york
   my parents' birth in california
   my grandparents' birth in japan
   that makes me japanese and american.

2. *throughbred*
   i used to say
   in prideful response
   to "what are you?"

3. *the battle of the species*
   begins with the origins.
   not even realizing
   the strong overcame the weak
   the adapting outlived the helpless.

4. *melting*
   to lose distinct form
   to blend dissolve
   as clouds
   as sugar in the mouth.

5. *marry your own kind.*
   parents ignore their children
   for marrying white.
   until there is a child.

6. *a world dripping*
   with people.
   society may dictate it
   accidents do happen
   death used to outnumber life.
   but now tell me why
   i ought to procreate.

7. *i was almost convinced.*
   because of my love for a man
   and his love for children.
   maybe i could be open
   to the idea
   again.

8. *procreate to perpetuate a race*
   isn't that
   sort of cold?

9. *outmarrying is approaching*
   100%
   among japanese-americans.
   within a generation or two
   that race as we know it
   may cease to exist.

10. *extinguished.*
    quenched.
    no longer living or active.

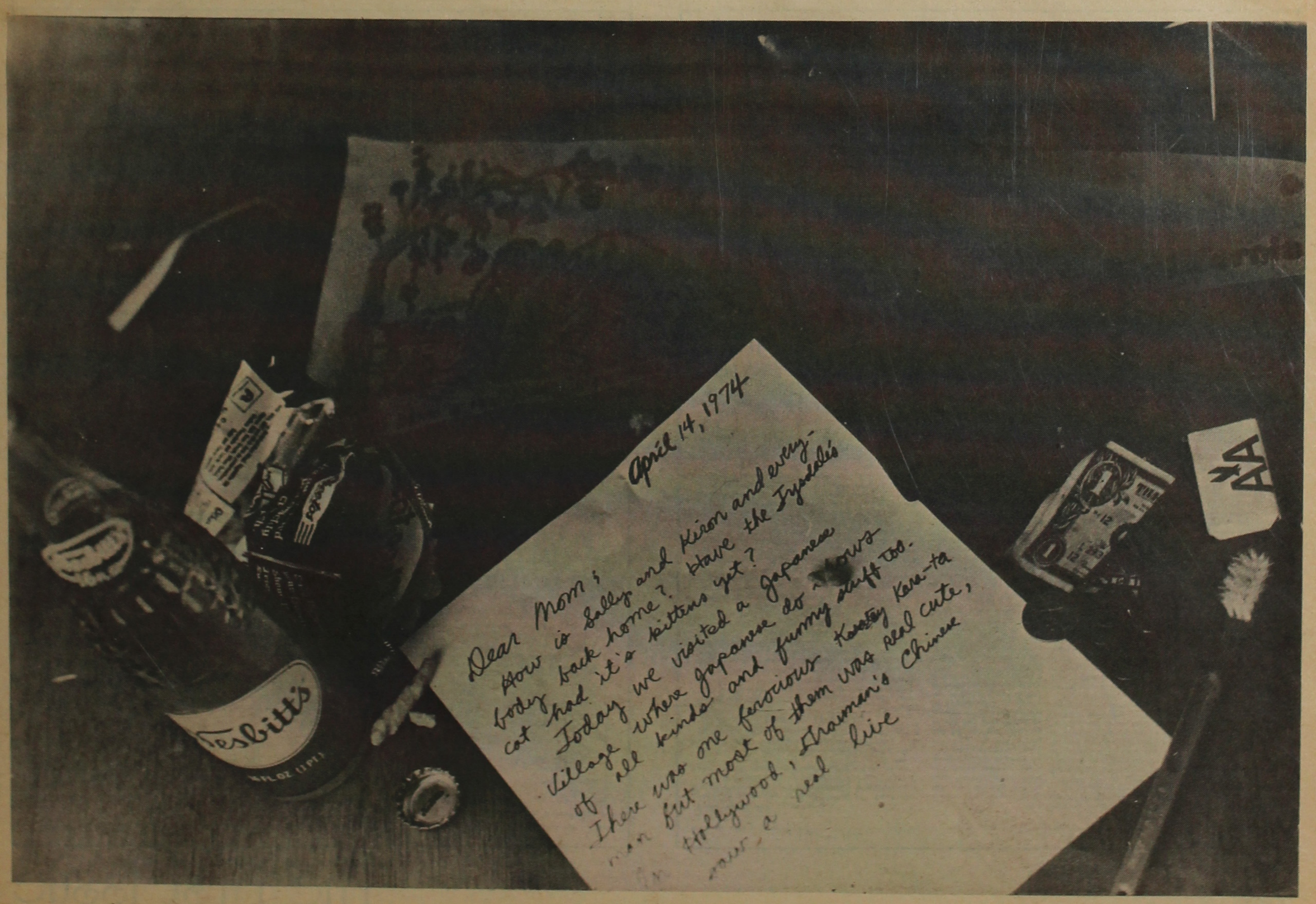
11. *i saw you from the bus.*
    i leapt with recognition.
    only to remember my race.

12. *i know*
    how the dodo bird felt
    searching for its 1/16 identity
    in a pigeon.

—Marsha Takayanagi

GIDRA GRAPHICS

WHEN I WAS A KID, I DID THINGS LIKE...
EXERT ENERGY
EAT EVERYTHING
PLAYED
SLEEP
WATCH T.V.
MAKE PICTURES
NOW THAT I'M OLDER I CAN ALSO MEET STRANGE PEOPLE, MAKE LOVE AND VISIT EXOTIC Places and stuff like that
LATER I CAN MAKE MONEY AND GIVE IT TO SOMEBODY ELSE
STILL LATER I CAN GO TO HEAVEN


April 14, 1974
Dear Mom;
How is Sally and Kieron and every-body back home? Have the Ingalls cat had it's kittens yet?
Today we visited a Japanese village where Japanese do things
of all kinds and funny stuff too.
There was one ferocious
man but most of them was Real cute,
Hollywood; Hiromen's Kara-ta
ever a real live Chinese
Tasbitt's

TOWARD BAREFOOT JOURNALISM

(Continued from page 1)

organized soon after the birth of *Gidra*, are now in the process of evaluating their programs and face critical periods in their development. Other organizations are confronted with pessimism and confusion within their own ranks. The Movement seems to be in a period of reflection and repose, though some important political work is quietly being carried out all the while.

For us at *Gidra*, what we face isn't a phenomenon that hit us broadside without warning. It is something we had lived with for at least three years, and something that was anticipated from the very beginning of our involvement. In point of fact, *Gidra* has never been without problems of major proportions. Even in 1969, our first year of existence, we faced organizational problems with disproportionate work distribution, not to speak of uneven political and personal development.

More recently, for several months now, the process of putting out the paper—the tedious routine of investigating, writing, editing, typesetting, layout, mailing—had become mechanical, individualized and alienating. Fewer people came to the office to do the work each month. Attendance at staff meetings became irregular. At one meeting not long ago, there were only four of us. With only a handful of people working long hours, deadlines passed without histrionics, the "press runs" (originally one week periods set aside each month for actual production of the paper) became longer and longer. Tasks began to consume more of our time and drain people of energy. Morale and discipline plummetted.

So, after this Fifth Anniversary Issue, we will concentrate our efforts on summing up and developing new approaches to creating a vehicle for communication/expression/education that will truly be relevant to and meaningful for people.

The staff will be meeting twice weekly in the months to come, and plan to get together with various community organizations to invite feedback and suggestions. We will also be thinking of ways to keep our subscribers informed of our progress during the evaluation and planning period.

There is still the possibility that *Gidra* will be revived. On the other hand, *Gidra* may never "hit the streets" again in its present format. Some alternatives to be discussed include weekly or bi-weekly newspaper with more emphasis on community events and issues; a series of educational pamphlets dealing with specific issues, concepts or themes; an anthology of literature relating to Asian Americans or a compendium of past *Gidra* articles and other works; and an Asian American Movement news service. The scope of each of these ideas may be local, statewide or national. It may become truly Asian American in perspective or more decidedly Japanese American in focus. One thing has become clear: *Gidra* cannot go on unchanged. It *will* change, but the direction and the ultimate quality of that change must be consciously and methodically discussed. And that change will depend on the future composition of the staff and that staff's perceptions about what people need.

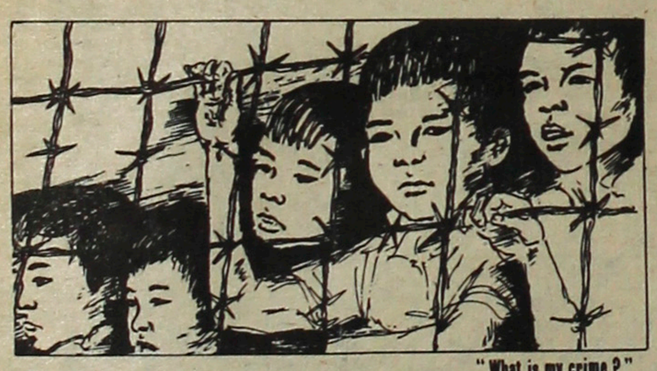
A new staff may take shape in different ways, too. With the present staff as a nucleus, others interested in media/communication/propaganda may be recruited. The possibility of a merger between *Gidra* and another progressive media group or community newspaper cannot be ruled out. Or, *Gidra*, as an entity, may be dissolved, so that individuals from *Gidra* and others can have a new beginning, on an equal footing, in a totally different venture, including a new name, new structure and new format. In short, many things can be done, but hopefully, they will be accomplished by design rather than by default or accident.

Before we get too wrapped up in the prospects, I think it worthwhile to retrace briefly our five year history. The story has been told before but...

On the campus of UCLA on the afternoon of February 5, 1969, five students—Dinora Gil, Laura Ho, Tracy Okida, Colin Watanabe and I—met with the administration of the school to discuss the possibility of starting a community-oriented publication which would reflect the sentiments and ideas of the students and the communities from which we came. The rationale was simple: Like the rationale for ethnic studies, we argued that an institution of higher learning has the responsibility of teaching its students not only the ideas of the dominant society but the ideas of the many cultures and many histories that make up America as well. We explained to the administration that a forum for discussion of socially relevant topics as well as a vehicle for creative expression was urgently needed in the Asian American community. It was to be an educational experience, we said. The administration didn't buy it, but stood firm on its own proposal to publish a scholarly sociological journal to insure that a university-sponsored publication would not mar the delicate image of the university.

Later, as we sat and talked in the office at Campbell Hall, someone suggested, "Why not start our own paper?" Good idea. But how do we do that? We decided that if each of us contributed $100, it would be more than enough to get started. So it was that five of us, students who had no practical experience in journalism, or for that matter, in anything else, gave birth to the idea that was to become *Gidra*.

Tracy Okida, who had a penchant for being where he wasn't, dragged out the name *Gidra* from deep within his nepenthean cerebrum. He



"What is my crime ?"

Gidra

Vol. I No. 1 — *Los Angeles, Calif.* — April, 1969

A COMMENTARY ON THE NOGUCHI FIRING

By S. Hayashi

In the wake of the recent firing of Dr. Thomas Noguchi as county coroner, many of the inadequacies of county government have come to light.

Editorials by the Long Beach Press Telegram and radio station KFWB have come out against the unorthodox and overbearing manner in which Dr. Noguchi was ousted.

Racial bias has been charged by Noguchi's wife and Bill Mayer of the Press Telegram writes that racial discrimination permeates the county promotional system.

Unusual to Say the Least

The handling of the Noguchi case has been unusual to say the least. He was suspended upon withdrawing his resignation, with no chance to answer the charges. The suspension was based almost entirely on the accusations of L.S. Hollinger, county chief administrative officer.

So, who does the County Board of Supervisors appoint to investigate, report, and recommend action? Mr. Hollinger—the very man who lodged the accusations in the first place.

We wonder why Hollinger can exert such influence on the Board of Supervisors; how can he accuse on the one hand and then be expected to conduct an unbiased investigation, and recommend appropriate action?

The county supervisors unanimously suspended Noguchi, and later unanimously fired him. All of this was done on the basis of accusations, investigations, reports, and recommendations of one man—Lindon S. Hollinger.

The charges are mental instability and excessive use of pills. The former will be difficult to prove and the latter does not appear to be a justification for the firing.

These things are compounded by the fact that the Board offered another county position at an equal salary to this mentally unstable pill addict.

Racism ?

Bill Mayer, writing in the Long Beach Press Telegram, points out that the only other non-caucasian is head of a county office. Robert Z. Hardon, a black man, is chief of building services, that is, he is in charge of the janitors. In Mayer's words:

"The county brass can be expected to deny that prejudice had anything to do with the case. Most of them insist that they despise bigots. But it is a fact that, aside from the head janitor, no non-caucasion, black or yellow, not even one with Spanish speaking forebears, holds any important post in the hierarchy."

Ellen Endo of the Rafu Shimpo and Hiro Hishiki of the Kashu Mainichi have chosen to ignore the racial issue in the case of Dr. Noguchi. But how can one ignore it when it appears to permeate the entire system?

Dr. Noguchi has good credentials; his office has been praised for an outstanding job in Senator Robert Kennedy's assassination; he passed the county's six-month probationary period without objection. He has worked extra hours, and even aided the county by taking his own equipment and library to the laboratory. But he was fired.

No Enryo!!

The dispute appears to be a personality conflict between Noguchi and Hollinger, with Hollinger obviously the more influential. Overtones of racial discrimination are evident and cannot be ignored.

Noguchi has chosen not to "enryo." He has decided to fight for what he thinks is right. And in taking this stand he has bolstered the Asian community by showing that yellow people do not always roll over and play dead.

With the implications of racial discrimination and the influence of L.S. Hollinger, the county supervisors must know they are on the spot. They are the accuser and the burden of proof rests with them.

THE THIRD WORLD

A Response to Oppression

"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable."

—John F. Kennedy

By Kanji

Recently a different kind of organization has appeared on many college campuses. Afro-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Asian-Americans, American Indians, and other people of color have come together to form what have come to be called "Third World" organizations.

At Berkeley and at San Francisco State, an organization known as the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) is trying to "create programs that are responsive to the needs of people of color." Student strikes, violence, both by police and striking students, and mass arrests have marked this struggle for "self-determination."

What is the Third World Liberation Front and what does it hope to accomplish?

The Right of Self Determination

The late Frantz Fanon, whose writings have been the source of much of the ideology of the Third World movement, used the term to describe the economically oppressed, colonial countries of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. This concept of oppressed and exploited peoples is echoed by TWLF.

"Essentially the TWLF is saying that oppressed peoples repudiate the military-industrial complex," writes Dr. Juan Martinez in the Peninsula Observer, a Palo Alto newspaper. "We will not be educated and trained to sustain, rationalize, or justify an expansionist, capitalist, imperialist society. The TWLF identifies with the economically, politically, and militarily exploited and oppressed peoples throughout the world, whom the U.S. uses and from whom American 'minorities' descend. The peoples of Africa, Asia, and America are our relatives. They want and need their economic independence."

The focus of the TWLF struggle is the eradication of institutionalized racism. The "Third World College," a program to be administered by Third World people, is a major demand of the TWLF at both campuses. The exercise of self-determination in this case, the administration of the Third World College is viewed as a necessary step in ending institutionalized racism. An editorial in the TWLF newspaper states, "It is most obvious that we should control all programs which will affect the lives of people in our communities. We do not need non-Third World people to do it for us; we are capable of doing it ourselves. We reject the paternalism of the condescending, patronizing non-Third World people who would control the destinies of the Third World people."

End Racism and Exploitation

TWLF believes that basic changes in the socio-economic structure of this country will have to take place if racism is to be totally eliminated. "Individual or institutional racism flows from a system, capitalism, which profits and perpetrates it," states a TWLF editorial. It goes on to say that the right to self-determination in all aspects of our lives is the principle which can 'smash' not only racism but the system itself.

Another immediate goal is the elimination of existing situations where Third World people are "exploited," exploitation being defined as the practice of profiting at the expense of another. The Third World believes that all forms of exploitation, whether perpetrated by whites or non-whites, must be dealt with. As one Asian member explained, "when we find people in our own community exploiting their own people, we will come down hard on these people."

Whites in the Third World

"Ideally, the Third World includes all oppressed peoples of the world," declared a member of Berkeley TWLF. "Third World is a state of mind, an attitude toward oppression, rather than a color of skin."

Richard Aoki of the TWLF Central Committee, Berkeley, used the following incident to describe the "Third World mentality." "The pigs (police) charged. I saw a Chicano brother go down. His head was split open by a pig baton. A white medic jumped

(Continued on page 4)

☆GIDRA STAFF

CHESTER.....Room Barfer
COLIN.....Caterpillar
DINORA.....Human Being
JAMES.....Immigrant
LAURA.....Apprentice Revolutionary
MIKE.....Aquarius Dawning
SEIGO.....Everyday Person
TRACY.....Kidwhosin'tdumb

HAT, MO, MOCH & TASH.....Cudgels

Published monthly by the Gidra Staff, 1157 Muirfield Road, Los Angeles, California 90019

GIDRA

Truth is not always pretty, not in this world.

We try hard to keep from hearing about the feelings, concerns, and problems of fellow human beings when it disturbs us, when it makes us feel uneasy.

And too often it is position and power that determine who is heard.

This is why GIDRA was created.

GIDRA is dedicated to truth. The honest expression of feeling or opinion, be it profound or profane, innocuous or insulting, from wretched or well-off -- that is GIDRA.

GIDRA is TRUTH.

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YELLOW PROSTITUTION

By Dinora Gil

At a time when people of color are getting together to free themselves from oppressive attitudes and institutions, it is particularly paradoxical and ludicrous that we should be blind to, and subsequently accept an even more sinister form of oppression existing in our own beds.

It is sinister because neither the oppressor nor the oppressed seem to be aware of it, nor do they seem to care. To get right to the point, I am speaking of the subjugation of the female of the species. This is obvious to those who care to look at the divorce laws (which are based on the need to protect the helpless female), job opportunities, pay scales, and educational expectations for women also reflect this subjugation.

The role of women in this society is that of a subservient supporter of the fragile male ego. The derisive male laugh in response to this only serves to support my contention. Isn't it bad enough to have Black stereotypes, Brown stereotypes, and Oriental stereotypes? Must we also have female stereotypes? We are told that we are emotional and addle-brained. Is our place only in the home?

Boxes

In particular, I would like to address the Yellow female. This paragon of "femininity" has excelled in being sweet, docile, servile, and vacuous. It is not enough that we must "kow tow" to the Yellow male ego, but we must do this by aping the Madison Avenue and Hollywood version of White femininity. All the peroxide, foam rubber, and scotch-tape will not transform you into what you are not. If Revlon came out with a rack to stretch legs--guess who would be the first to use it? You will always be inferior if you strive to become that which you can never be.

Whether this is a conditioned desire to be white, or a desperate

(Continued on page 4)

My Sad People

How sad Yellow Brother
you must be,
born so small and loving—
tiny hands reaching...
Just to grasp... just to have a warmth
... just to hear, "I love you, you are mine."
And who will love you, sad Yellow Brother...
... sad little brother of mine.

How sad Yellow Sister
you will be,
to learn that you are mute—
pretty voice longing...
Just to speak... just to sing a song
... just to say, "I love you, you are mine."
And who will love you, sad Yellow Sister...
... sad little sister of mine.

How sad my family
we should be,
to be so short in thinking
young men dying...
Just to free... just to give us life
... just to prove, "I love you, you are mine."
And who will love them my Yellow Family...
... sad Yellow Family of mine.

How sad my people...
we needn't be!
be strong and join the marching
we all are fighting...
Just to BE... just to have our way
... just to be proud of our heritage
To be together and love all mankind—
And who will love you, my Yellow People
... sad Yellow People of mine...

Who will love you, my sad Yellow People?
"I love you, you are mine."

Hanami

P.S. ...but you piss me off one Hell of a lot...!

YELLOW
BROTHERHOOD PLANS CAR WASH...

Los Angeles-

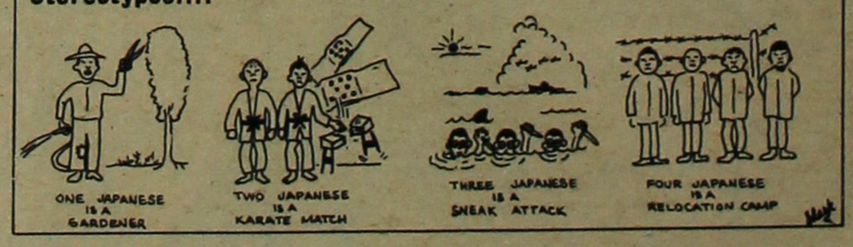
"Dope, fighting, and drop-outs! These are the very real problems that face a significant portion of Oriental youth today," stated a member of the Yellow Brotherhood, an organization of young men that is actively doing its part to alleviate the problem of delinquency and crime. He continued, "We find most Oriental adults refuse to believe that these anti-social behaviors exist in their sons and daughters. Our conservative estimate is that 75 per cent of high school and junior high school boys are using or have used marijuana or drugs at one time or another. And fighting is wide-spread. We are not talking of the normal fighting of every youth but of gang fights. How many of you remember the big clash between Eastside gangs and Westside gangs that took place several years ago? How many of you remember the guys that got busted for dropping pills, getting

(Continued on page 4)

All signed articles represent the opinion of the author. All unsigned articles reflect the opinions of the GIDRA staff.

All letters and articles sent to GIDRA must be signed. However, your name will be withheld, if you so request. Send all correspondence to GIDRA, 1157 Muirfield Road, Los Angeles, California, 90019.

Stereotypes....



The First Issue

also had a way of making most politicians look amateurish when it came to impromptu speeches. One day not long ago, he walked into the office and soliloquized:

"And that is how it probably happened for me, unless it happened the same way elsewhere. That is how I became involved with it and that is why I stayed. I'm glad you asked me this, because this is a very tricky question and one that is intimately connected with the answer in more ways than I can truthfully say I know about. After all, it started a long time ago and it's pretty hard to judge distances; it could be really close."

He paused for about four days, then continued:

"Now that I think about it, I would never have known Gidra *if I were someone else instead of me, or even just someone else with better ears too. I would even go far as to say that I am positive that such would have been the case if it happened. And it did, which is better than nothing at all, and I think we all want something better with all the different kinds of ways we ask and search for it."*

Then, somebody walked up to him and asked, "How did you get involved in *Gidra*, Tracy?"

Spaaacy!! But a very sensitive artist and poet, Tracy was at his best when he escaped the conventions of prose:

How sad Yellow Brother
you must be,
born so small and loving–
tiny hands reaching...
Just to grasp...just to have a warmth
...just to hear, "I love you, you are mine."
And who will love you, sad Yellow Brother...
...sad little brother of mine.

How sad Yellow Sister
you will be,
to learn that you are mute–
pretty voice longing...
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...sad little sister of mine.

How sad my family
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young men dying...
Just to free...just to give us life
...just to prove, "I love you, you are mine."
And who will love them my Yellow Family...
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How sad my people...
we needn't be!
be strong and join the marching
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Just to be...just to have our way
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To be together and love all mankind–
And who will love you, my Yellow People
...sad Yellow People of mine...

Who will love you, my Yellow People?
"I love you, you are mine."

P.S. ...but you piss me off one hell of a lot...!

Now, Tracy works with "Good Impressions," (213) 628-1807, a printing and graphics enterprise conceived by him and a couple of others.

Tracy finds young readers. (1971) J. Furumura

Colin Watanabe recalls that day when we started *Gidra*, and the months he spent on the staff:

"I've found that many people have great ideas, but that's about all. When it comes down to acting out their convictions, something happens to them. *Gidra*, as a radical departure from what's been done by Asian American youth in the past, may help to break the mental hangups that prevent more people from doing the things they believe in. It's a tribute to the determination, not the ability, of people."

Within days of our decision, the Asian American Studies Center office, where all of us worked as volunteers, had been converted into a small production room for the first issue of *Gidra*. New members joined the staff–Seigo Hayashi, Carol Hatanaka, James Okazaki, Carol Mochizuki and others.

As articles filtered in, arguments arose as to how contributions should be edited, if at all. The conflict arose again in the selection of an appropriate editorial. These were the indications of a philosophical dispute that was to eventually result in a permanent split in the original group. However, work went on through days and nights despite classes, grades and ill health. And on the night of March 31, 1969, the maiden issue of *Gidra* rolled off the presses, a modest four-page tabloid that had consumed the full energies of ten people for over a week.

The following month, the number of pages doubled as we covered the JACL (Japanese American Citizens League) convention held at Disneyland. There was a demonstration by young Asian Americans in which we took part to renounce S.I. Hayakawa's assumed leadership of the Asian American people. In the convention, the keynote speaker Hayakawa denounced *Gidra* as "errant nonsense" and "the work of childish Sanseis."

It was also during this time that the infant *Gidra* was being welcomed as a vital force by local ethnic vernaculars as reviews of our first issue were published in the *Kashu Mainichi*, the

(Continued on page 36)

Necessary But Not Sufficient

YELLOW POWER!

By Larry Kubota

"Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blow, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

Frederick Douglas

In Los Angeles in 1871, a mob of a thousand persons marched into the Chinese section, seized victims, overpowered the officers of the law and hanged at least 22 Chinese men, women, and children. No attempt was made to bring these people to justice.

Asian American history is filled with innumerable racist incidents. Some are overt, such as the one given above. Others are covert—psychological oppression educational deprivation, and economic exploitation—and are equally destructive.

Looking back into the past, it is incredible that we have taken so long to confront this problem of racism. We are relegated to second-class citizenship, and adding insult upon injury, we are told to be thankful for our blessings.

We tried only the tactic of adaptation. We responded to our treatment with an "Oriental" smile and a polite "thank you."

Asian Pride

Today, however, is the dawn of a new era. We have finally reached the limits of our tolerance and have begun to explore a new alternative. Asian Americans have rediscovered their spirit and pride and are becoming a force to be reckoned with. In San Francisco, San Mateo, Los Angeles, and elsewhere, yellow people are fighting side by side with other Third World people for reform in society, and in particular, the educational system.

This is a new role for the Asian American. It is a rejection of the passive Oriental stereotype and symbolizes the birth of a new Asian—one who will recognize and deal with injustices. The shout of Yellow Power, symbolic of our new direction, is reverberating in the quiet corridors of the Asian community.

"Asian parents push their children to 'make it,' not realizing that when the process is complete, children may reject their parents."

Yellow Power is symbolic of the type of rapid social change occurring today which no group or individual can ignore. It is apparent, however, that many of us do not understand the meaning of Yellow Power and its relationship to the changes currently taking place in American Society.

Yellow Power means that we as Asian Americans are seeking greater control over the direction of our lives. It also expresses a determination to effect constructive changes in the larger society. It is not a call for Asians to move out of the mainstream of American life, but instead it says that we should be able to dictate some of the terms of entry into that mainstream.

"Yellow Power is a call for Asian Americans to end the silence that has condemned us to suffer in this racist society."

- U.S.A., 1942: 110,000 Japanese-Americans are imprisoned in concentration camps without trial.
- U. S. Congress, 1945: Oklahoma Congressman Jed Johnson proposes mass sterilization of the Japanese in the concentration camps.
- Los Angeles, 1969: The Council of Oriental Organizations is ousted from a meeting of the Concerned Citizens for Community Colleges—the Los Angeles version of the White Citizen's Council. The reason given for the ouster is that the Oriental community is "politically irrelevant."

The foregoing clearly illustrait the outrageous and frequently violent acts perpetrated against Asian-Americans by this so-called democratic society. It should be remembered that in America, all people of color have suffered as much or more. The condition of people of color in America is one of helplessness and powerlessness.

Yellow Power is a call to reject our past and present condition of powerlessness. When we attain a position of power in this society, we can have more control over our lives and begin to determine our own destiny. This is the second reason for Yellow Power.

White-washed Asians

Traditionally, yellow people have spent a great deal of time observing the behavior and mannerisms of white people. We have tried to act like them, speak like them, look like them, and be like them in every way. We have even been willing to sacrifice family relationships to emulate whites. For example, Asian parents push their children to "make it," not realizing that when the process is complete, children may reject their parents. The children feel ashamed of their parents because their parents do not measure up to the white standards that they have been told to hold supreme.

It is time we understood that white people cannot be taken as models. More than anyone else, it is they who are in dire need of reevaluating their standards and values. It is they who have been guilty of bigotry and hypocrisy. It is they who have created a country where racism is rampant.

The white youth of today are learning that George Washington, the father of our country, was a slave owner. They are ashamed as they watch the heroes of their fathers on television killing Indians, enslaving Black men, colonializing Brown men, and demeaning Yellow men, all in an effort to sustain the myth of White supremacy.

We must recognize, as Eldridge Cleaver suggests, that it is among the White youth of the world that the greatest change is taking place. It is they who feel the pain of finding their inherited heroes turned into villians. In the world revolution now under way, the heroes are no longer people who are white. Today the heroes are Eldridge Cleaver, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Mao Tse Tung, Che Guevara.

Some have asked why do we need Yellow Power? There are three basic reasons. First, Yellow Power must develop for the self-preservation of yellow people in America. Second, it must develop so that we can determine our own destiny. And third, it must develop so that Asian Americans can contribute to the creation of a truly humanistic society.

To answer the question regarding the necessity of Yellow Power for our self-preservation, let us review a few events in our history, some of which are cited by Dr. Harry H. L. Kitano in his book, The Japanese in the United States:

- Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1885: 28 Chinese are murdered, their homes destroyed and their belongings scattered, because the Chinese were perceived as economic threats.

(Continued on page 4)

CENTER AT UCLA

Chancellor Charles E. Young is establishing an institute for the study of American Cultures at UCLA. Joaquin Acosta, assistant to Vice Chancellor of University Relations and Public Programs Paul O. Proehl, who is coordinating the project, agreed that this is being done because of the demands of Third World students for programs at San Francisco State, Berkeley, and at other colleges in California.

"Institute" and "Center" are terms used by the University for programs to facilitate faculty research. According to Chancellor Young, the American Cultures Institute will differ in the following ways: Students can also do research, student and "community" people sit on the Executive Steering Committee, which determines center policy, and community action programs will be undertaken.

At this time there are four centers in the Institute--the Afro-American, Asian-American, Mexican-American, and American Indian centers.

Dr. Harry H. L. Kitano, associate professor of Social Welfare at UCLA, is serving as the acting interim director of the Asian Center. According to Dr. Kitano the Center will direct itself to three broad areas of interest--faculty and student research, community service programs, and curriculum reform and development.

Two projects are already underway in the Asian Center. A tutorial project, staffed by student volunteers, is operating at Castelar Street Elementary School in Chinatown and at Nora Sterry Elementary School in West Los Angeles. A survey of existing courses and student attitudes toward Asian American studies is planned.

Many problems lie ahead for the Asian American Studies Center. The Executive Steering Committee, whose responsibility it is to "determine policy and establish priorities," has only recently been constituted. The final composition of eight students, four faculty, and four "community" people was arrived at only with "great difficulty," according to a student who wishes to remain anonymous.

One thing is certain. The Asian American Studies Center will ultimately serve the interests of that group that makes the deepest committment to it.

CALENDAR *april*

Apr. 2&4-UCLA OMEGA SIGMA TAU Spring rush events.

Apr. 4,5,6-EASTER SYMPOSIUM AT SAN JOSE. Third World Conference sponsored by San Jose AAPA. Bring sleeping bags, $3.

Apr. 5-BROTHERHOOD CARWASH 8-5pm. Centenary Methodist Church, Normandie & 35th.

Thru Apr. 6-ORIENTAL AMERICAN EXHIBIT, 4334 Degnan Blvd. 294-3766 Wed-Sun 1-7.

Apr. 9-ASIAN WOMEN'S WORKSHOP, 7:30pm. 11263 Mississippi Ave. 477-3397.

Apr. 12-PIONEER PROJECT RUMMAGE SALE to raise funds for Issei field trips. Roadium Drive-In, Redondo Beach Blvd btwn Van Ness & Crenshaw, 8 am to 4 pm

Apr. 14-Los Angeles AAPA Mtg. 7:30 pm at Center for Social Action, 681 34th Street, LA.

Apr. 24-Japanese American Volleyball Association: Meeting of team captains; 7 pm, Rm 2412, Student Union, UCLA.

Apr. 27-"The Image of the Oriental American from Within and Without," a workshop, sponsored by Oriental Concern Race Relations Committee, at International Institute, 453 So Boyle Ave, LA, 1 pm.

Calendar entries must be submitted by 20th of each month for inclusion in the Calendar for the following month.

YELLOW POWER (from page 3)

As we become self-sufficient, we will be able to contribute to the Third World concept of a society based upon humanistic goals and that requires the liberation of all people of color.

Yellow Power must become a revolutionary force and align itself with the oppressed people of the Third World. Only by changing society in total can Asians and other alienated people survive and determine their own destinies.

However, there is one thing that must never be forgotten: Yellow Power must not be used to obtain a larger piece of an "action" that is degrading and unhumanistic. In a land that preaches democracy but practices oligarchy and where people are separated into a favored "establishment" and a culturally deprived and alienated mass, fundamental changes in the social order are called for.

Yellow Power is a call for all Asian Americans to end the silence that has condemned us to suffer in this racist society and to unite with our Black, Brown, and Red brothers of the Third World for survival, self-determination, and the creation of a more humanistic society.

We must search our souls for the flame of the Asian warriors who fought for their people and their pride without fear of death. In the words of one such warrior, "Let the enemy touch your skin and you cut into his flesh; let him cut into your flesh and you pierce into his bones; let him pierce into your bone and you take his life."

Prostitution

(Continued from page 2)

attempt to attain male approval, it is nothing more than Yellow Prostitution.

Dildoes

This is not to ignore the oppressive role of the Oriental male. Perhaps he has been conditioned by racist America to dream of the blond, blue-eyed chick. Perhaps he is bitter over his castration by White society; he is haunted by the stereotype of the "quiet, passive, impotent" Oriental. Perhaps the Oriental male is so insecure that he has to have his own "nigger" — the Oriental female. Yet no matter how much we, as Yellow females, allow him to degrade, discriminate and mold our social expectations, it will not help him fight prejudice, discrimination, and degradation in a White society. Being sweet or shy will not help you or your people find freedom from economic and psychological oppression in a white society. Peroxided hair and scotch-taped eyes will not make Yellow pride.

Brotherhood Car Wash

(Continued from page 2)

loaded, and stealing? How many of you find it easier to forget? Well, it still goes on today, and we can't forget. We came from the same environment that these so-called "juvenile delinquents" and "societal deviants" are in right now, where dope and fighting are commonplace. We know what it's like, and we're trying to help because we believe!"

Youth Center

The Yellow Brotherhood is conducting a fund raising campaign to establish a Youth Center in the Crenshaw Area that will serve adolescents in the community. Tentative plans are being formulated to include recreational facilities and reading rooms.

The Brotherhood will devote their time on the weekends this month for their initial fund raising project—a series of car washes. The first of these will be held on April 5 (Saturday), from 8 am to 5 pm at Centenary Methodist Church at Normandie Avenue and 35th Street in Los Angeles. Subsequent days will be announced in the future.

A spokesman of the Brotherhood stated, "Your money is helping us build a center that we can call our own. It will be a center that we will be responsible for, and can have pride in. It will be free from the authority that so many youths fight. Discipline and control will be every individual's responsibility. We need the financial and moral support of the entire community to realize our goals," he appealed.

For tickets or more information about the car washes, contact GIDRA by mail.

THE THIRD WORLD

(Continued from page 1)

in. He kept the pigs from beating on the brother and stopped them from dragging him by the legs to the wagon. He stayed until help arrived. That white medic has the Third World mentality."

However, many Third World people realize that the situation facing a white person is considerably different from that facing a person of color. A member of TWLF explains, "White radicals can afford to play the game...they always have the option of leaving. Colorful people have no such choice. They can never forget their color... The white radical can cut his hair and shave his beard off. What can the colorful person do?"

"White is Right"

Another factor makes close cooperation between whites and non-whites difficult. Many people involved in the Third World movement feel that whites suffer from a "white is right" complex. "It's a natural consequence of living in a society that favors whites," explained an Asian American professor at Berkeley. "All their lives whites are told that they are superior in every way. The colorful person is constantly pictured as not being as good or as smart or as capable," added a young lady. The results of this "conditioning" are evident when whites and non-whites attempt to work together. White strikers have been known to ignore the orders of non-white strike monitors. A condescending attitude of "well, it's your show, but I think I could do it better" sometimes seems to pervade meetings where whites are present.

Despite the difficulties, there is optimism about eventual white participation in the Third World movement. A member of Berkeley Asian American Political Alliance sums it up, "Colorful people, because of their obvious oppression, have reached a certain level of consciousness. Later, when white people, who are slower because they suffer less severe and obvious oppression, reach a similar level of consciousness, there should be a place for them in the Third World."

On Violence

A striking white faculty member at Berkeley said about violence, "Physical violence is the mildest form of violence." A member of TWLF added, "440 per cent more black students drop out or are kicked out of our schools. The average life expectancy for American Indians is 44 years. That is real violence.

It is unfortunate that violence is sometimes the only course open, for many of the institutions of this country do not seem to respond to certain segments of our society. As Warren Furutani, formerly a student at the College of San Mateo, now attending San Jose State, explained, "When we righteously go out and do something wrong or when the administration or the people in power think that we are doing something wrong, what can they do? First thing they do, they pick up the phone and call the police, or if it's bigger than that, they call the national guard and they come down and oppress us and stomp us. But what can we do if we feel that the administration and the people in power are doing injustices to us. Have you ever tried to call the police and tell them to come and take away the administrator of your school?"

Our society seems to use a double standard when judging the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of violence. As a young man asked, "Why do people in this country condone the violence of the police and the army in Viet Nam but condemn the violence of Third World peoples who have no recourse?"

"The Stuggle has just begun..."

Now, at San Francisco State, approximately 600 arrests later, and at Berkeley, after 166 arrests, relative calm has returned to the campuses. But TWLF leaders warn that the struggle has just begun.

The commitment to the struggle runs deep. Many individuals have put their careers and their lives on the line for a cause that should concern all of us. In the words of an arrested College of San Mateo student, "The reason we're in jail, the reason we have made a stand, is because we have made a commitment--not only to our own people, but to Third World peoples, and we are willing to stand up against the injustices and the indignities that have been shown to all people of color throughout the history of America,... (and perhaps someday) what those hypocritical slave owners in the beginning of this nation wrote on that scrawed parchment will someday come true--that all of us will be equal, that all of us can walk this land with our heads high."

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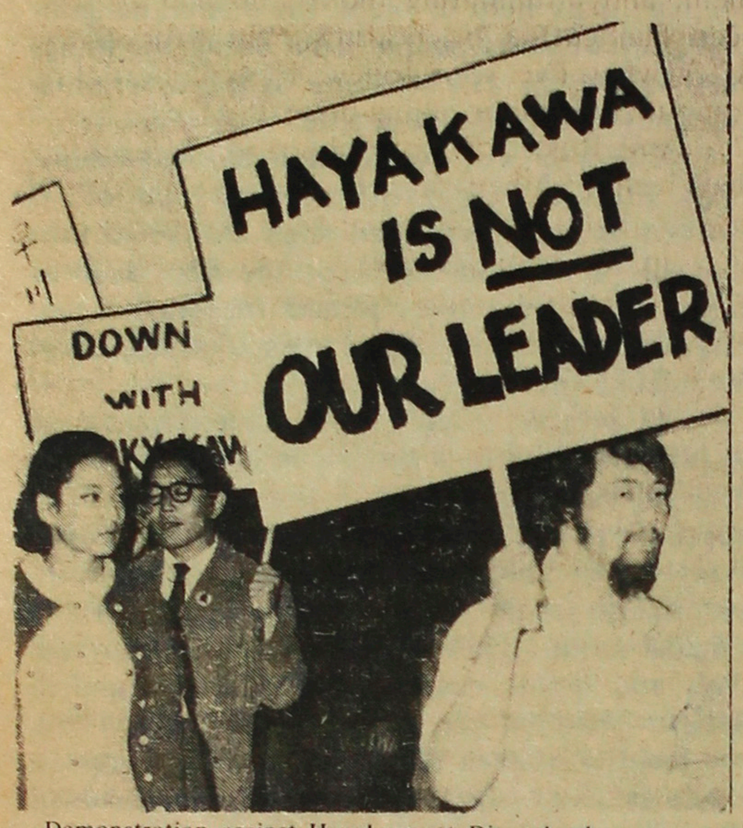
One year	$ 2.50	1157 Muirfield Road
Two years	$ 4.00	Los Angeles, CA 90019

April, 1969

TOWARD BAREFOOT JOURNALISM

(Continued from page 35)



Demonstration against Hayakawa at Disneyland. (April, 1969) M. Murase

now-defunct *Crossroads*, and the JACL-sponsored *Pacific Citizen*.

Wimp Hiroto of *Crossroads* described *Gidra* as "self-expression, hope and action," and quoted our first editorial in his column, which read in part as follows:

"Truth is not always pretty, not in this world. We try hard to keep from hearing about the feelings, concerns, and problems of fellow human beings when it disturbs us, when it makes us feel uneasy. And too often it is position and power that determines who is heard. This is why Gidra *was created.* Gidra *is dedicated to truth. The honest expression of feelings or opinions, be it profound or profane, innocuous or insulting, from wretched or well-off—that is* Gidra."

Kats Kunitsugu of the *Kashu Mainichi* welcomed "the emergence of *Gidra* ..and we appeal to those of our generation, their parents, to read it with close attention and an open mind. Don't be turned off by the excesses that come from youthful zeal or the four-letter words which makes us uncomfortable or bravado that often rides roughshod over finer points." Of late, Kats and *Kashu* have been more critical of *Gidra*, perhaps forgetting the appeal she made to my mom and dad.

Tracy had written a fictional short story about Vietnam under a pseudonym, Nam Am Songh. At the next staff meeting, we discussed the story and the use of a by-line that could mislead our readers into believing the author to be Vietnamese. So, in the following issue, Tracy wrote an apology, commenting that "...it is wrong for someone other than a Vietnamese, or a reporter in Vietnam, to write from the perspective I had. My sincere apology and pledge to continue to struggle with my incorrect ideas and ways."

Kats reacted through her column, "I read (the apology) with some horror—horror, because it seemed to illustrate the kind of thought control that Marxist-oriented organizations feel they have a right to exercise. The last phrase bothered me, because it sounded as though *she* were knuckling under to someone else telling *her* what were 'correct' and 'incorrect' ways of thinking." Honest, Kats, we only lashed him a hundred times, and another thing, Tracy is actually a full grown man.

Rafu Shimpo, the nation's largest Japanese American daily published in Los Angeles, and its English section editor Ellen Endo, was curiously silent until the third issue aroused her to recognize the existence of *Gidra*. And at that, the first official correspondence came from her attorney stating in part, "Please be advised of our representation of Miss Ellen Endo, in connection with her claim against you for libel and slander." The alleged libel appeared in the June, 1969 issue in our editorial about the press coverage of the month-long hearing concerning Los Angeles County Coroner Thomas T. Noguchi's dismissal by the Board of Supervisors for suspect reasons. Since we had attended the hearing ourselves, we became aware that *Rafu Shimpo* had been using wire services and other inaccurate accounts rather than in-person coverage. Ellen also implied in her column that those who support Noguchi, who subsequently was exonerated, would soon be "wiping eggs off their faces." And she asked, "How do you like your eggs—scrambled or poached?" Our editorial reply was that "we will take it scrambled, Ellen, just like your head." And in return we inquired, "What's the matter Ellen, is three blocks too far to walk for the truth?"

In another incident worth noting, the *Rafu* accounts of anti-war activities that took place during the Nisei Week festivities in 1972 contained numerous inaccuracies and distortions.

Gidra (and I) have long been critical of the perspective Ellen Endo represented in her role as a journalist, especially with reference to reporting of community events. But there is another side to this story. In the past year or so, Ellen has transformed *Rafu Shimpo* (English section) into a socially relevant, reliable source of community news, and has brought to the public's attention many local and national issues of concern to all of us. Through her weekly columns, she also keeps us informed of concerns of segments of the community we often

Van Troi Anti-Imperialist Youth Brigade at the Nisei Week parade burning the militarist "rising sun" flag. (August, 1972) A. Ohashi

overlook. In some measure, I believe that what we set out to do with *Gidra* has partially been accomplished by Ellen and *Rafu Shimpo*. Ahh, yes. How the times have changed.

Within months since the inception of the paper, we were to lose three key members of our staff. As the paper demanded more attention, some questioned whether it was becoming an end in itself. They argued that direct involvement and organizing were more important than the production of a newspaper. Others of us felt that through *Gidra*, we could organize and promote community involvement. The time came for a choice to be made, and the outcome was that Dinora, Laura and Suzi Wong, who had joined the staff in May, decided to work on organizing students at UCLA.

In the months that followed, the efforts of these three culminated in the formation of the Asian Radical Movement (ARM) at UCLA. In November, 1969, all three were arrested during a sit-in demonstration to back demands for the rehiring of a black cafeteria worker and for an improvement in the conditions of all campus workers. As a result of the arrests, and subsequent convictions, all three received suspended jail sentences and probationary status. They have, for the most part, been politically dormant since then. Now, Laura is an assistant editor for Eyewitness News and Dinora will be entering medical school at UC Davis in the fall, while Suzi is working on her PhD in comparative literature at the University of Indiana.

For those who remained with *Gidra*, there was much work to be done. New offices on Jefferson Boulevard on the Westside were rented and refurbished. *Gidra* was incorporated as a non-profit corporation. In this rebuilding period a number of others joined the staff. Warren Furutani, perhaps known for more significant contributions to the Movement, became our first regular columnist. Julia Aihara and Amy Murakami contributed by working long hours. Amy reorganized the subscription and mailing system that had perplexed us for years. They are both teachers now, hoping to set up an alternative school some day. Vivian Matsushige, who now works at the Asian American Studies Center, and Laura Shiozaki and Naomi Uyeda, former UCLA students, also contributed their time and energies.

Ivan Ohta and Danny Matsumura were the first staff members without college backgrounds. Ivan was a student at Roosevelt High on the Eastside where he was involved in a movement for students' rights. Danny, a former member of the Yellow Brotherhood and a high school dropout, brought with him a new perspective "from the streets" which contributed to the milieu in a unique way. He shared with us his perceptions of things while he worked on tasks the rest of us were unwilling to undertake.

During the first year, *Gidra* gradually changed its focus from the campus to the community, from Asian identity to Asian unity, and from "what happened" to "what can we do." Despite our efforts to be informative and relevant, there were those who disagreed with the views and disregarded the value of *Gidra*.

A Chinese woman in Los Angeles called *Gidra* "atrocious," and intimated that the quality of the newspaper can only improve when "some of you staff members (who are) SDS members and gangsters depart."

And apparently, the paper circulated beyond the Asian community. We got a letter from "a happy white mother," which is exerpted below:

"I don't no what is wrong with you poor minority groups. As a white mother Im awfully proud of it. Sorry you poor minority dont appreciate your color. Its a shame you have to feel so unsuperior.

"I surely cant see for the like of me why you have to have such a thilthy mind. I can see why you are all in such a fix. Now take the black man why hasnt he been able to get anywhere on his own. He had a land of his own. His own black brothers sold them as slaves. Also China. Also Japan. Its only been in the last twenty years that they have been able to come out there ancient ways. Take the Mexican they have

Gidra Staff members working on the paper. C. Watanabe

more resources then we do in America and yet they havent been able to do anything on there own.

"You can use your nasty little four letter words if you want to. Because boy Im glad Im white I wouldnt want to be your color it must be awful to be what you are, that you have to go so low that you have to use nasty words to express your selfs your naughty nasty thilthy little people and I pity your kind."

No comment.

Meanwhile, back at the office, while the structural and mechanical problems were being attended to, the vitally important areas of interpersonal relationships and leadership development had been neglected. Seigo recounts, "The history of *Gidra* clearly shows a problem that plagues not just us but the entire Movement–a shortage of manpower. The blame for this problem is usually placed on people outside the Movement. They are too lazy or apathetic to get involved, so the argument runs."

There were definite indications that certain policies within the organization inhibited growth and development of people within it. The shortage of people power was just a manifestation of a deeper problem. Structurally, *Gidra* was gradually becoming more like traditional newspapers. Art Kunkin's answer to the same problem at the *L.A. Free Press* was to install a time clock and assign role titles to the staff, and that spelled the eventual qualitative downfall of the *Freep*. Seigo explained further that at *Gidra* "certain people had assumed decision making powers and members of this informal hierarchy used various ploys, consciously or unconsciously, to maintain their power that prevented the development of new leadership."

In May of 1970, in an effort to break down that hierarchy and to develop new leadership as well as social equality within the staff, it was decided that high ranking members of the hierarchy, the veterans on the staff, would not participate in the decision making process or the production of the May issue. What emerged as a by-product of that decision was a new concept of *Gidra* as a visual experience.

Alan Ota, who had been on the staff for several months, assumed the responsibility of coordinating and almost single-handedly put out the paper with a new, well-integrated and creative format that added a new dimension to *Gidra*. The experiment to tear down the hierarchy was only qualifiedly successful, if you can call it that: instead of three people, four of us began to make decisions about the paper which others merely "rubber stamped."

Alan, a veteran of many different colleges and an ex-president of the Nisei Trojan Club, settled at UCLA in the graduate school of theater arts for the next three years, but spent most of his waking hours at the *Gidra* office, editing, keeping books, and doing the wearisome but indispensable "shit work." The many organizational aspects of the paper demanded close scrutiny and undivided attention, and Alan was right there on top of things. Now Alan, at twenty-eight, is the oldest member of the staff. He was a graphic designer until five days ago but he quit his job to work on the paper more.

Also, during the month of May, the Asian American Student Alliance (later called the Asian Strike Committee) at UCLA led a general student strike to protest the bombing of Cambodia and the chain of events that followed: The shooting of four students at Kent State, the killing of two students at Jackson State, and the "police riot" on the UCLA campus.

On Tuesday, May 5, 1970, many Asian students were on campus and witnessed first hand, some for the first time, the indiscriminate sweep of the campus, the arrests and the brutalities committed by the Los Angeles Police Department.

Jeanne Nishimura will never forget that day. "I was sitting on the cement watching people getting pushed into Dickson's lawn by the pigs. They were forced to go in that direction by the pigs. Then some people started running toward us. The pigs were rushing them, pushing people who didn't move out of their way. We had to run too, and hop a cement wall about six feet high. A fellow behind me was pushed head first by the pigs. His head started bleeding on the side and he couldn't get up. Pigs were rushing at people, chasing them like animals. It seemed to me that they had no reason to charge at people. Another incident. I saw a young guy who didn't do a thing to the pigs but a cop clubbed him on the neck."

Amy Murakami added, "I thought the police was supposed to serve and protect people, but they were picking out people and attacking them, and intimidating those who had already been handcuffed by beating them with sticks. After what I've seen today, I don't have any compunction about calling them pigs."

And Russell Kubota observed, "The thing that really bothers me, besides the beating I saw, is that I can't imagine what American soldiers in Vietnam are doing to the Vietnamese when I see policemen beat the shit out of us. At least we can run home, but the Vietnamese can't go anywhere."

On that day, Steve Tatsukawa, a junior at UCLA, was trapped and beaten by three officers, then handcuffed and dragged away at a run to a police van. And when Colin went to see about Steve's condition, he was grabbed and clubbed by four policemen who arrested him.

With the *Gidra* office serving as the community outpost, the Asian Strike Committee carried on community educationals and leafletting to inform our community about the events that took place at UCLA, Kent State and Jackson State and the issues related to the war in Indochina.

By late May, the *Gidra* staff was drained of energy after a hectic month, and many of us spent the next couple of weeks cramming for finals. As a result, the June issue never came out, the only time in the five years that we failed to publish an issue. The following month, we came out with an issue and called it the June/July issue.

Soon after that though, prospects for *Gidra* brightened considerably as many of the leaders from the Asian Strike Committee joined the staff, among them Duane Kubo, Russell Kubota,

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Pat Sumi addresses Asian Strike Committee rallyaat UCLA. (May, 1970) M. Murase

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Steve Tatsukawa, Linda Fujikawa, Bruce Iwasaki, Jeff Furumura and Candi Ota.

But it was also a time when some people moved on to do other things. Colin, who had played a key role in almost every aspect of *Gidra*, dropped out and moved to Berkeley where he later became the director of Asian American studies. Now, Colin is putting to use his post-graduate training in engineering in his work with a Nobel prize winning physicist.

Carol Hatanaka and Seigo Hayashi, who had provided stability and warmth in a conflict laden environment, also moved on. Carol is now an active participant of the Joint Counseling Center and JACS-AI. The former student body president and homecoming queen from Washington High also teaches at the juvenile hall and the Creative Workshop. Seigo, at one time the youngest black belt in judo in the country, is an administrator for the Asian American Drug Abuse Program and also serves on the board of Asian Rehabilitation Services.

Carol recalls her experience with *Gidra*, "For me, *Gidra* was one method of trying to create a new world where poverty, hunger and racism are no longer permitted to exist, and where children, untouched by the ugliness of this world, can run free and beautiful. By writing about all that is happening, and by presenting a variety of opinions, some type of awareness has to emerge. I felt that, once confronted with what's really going on, people no longer would be able to ignore the conditions surrounding and engulfing us. I know I'm idealistic and I guess I always will be...I have to be."

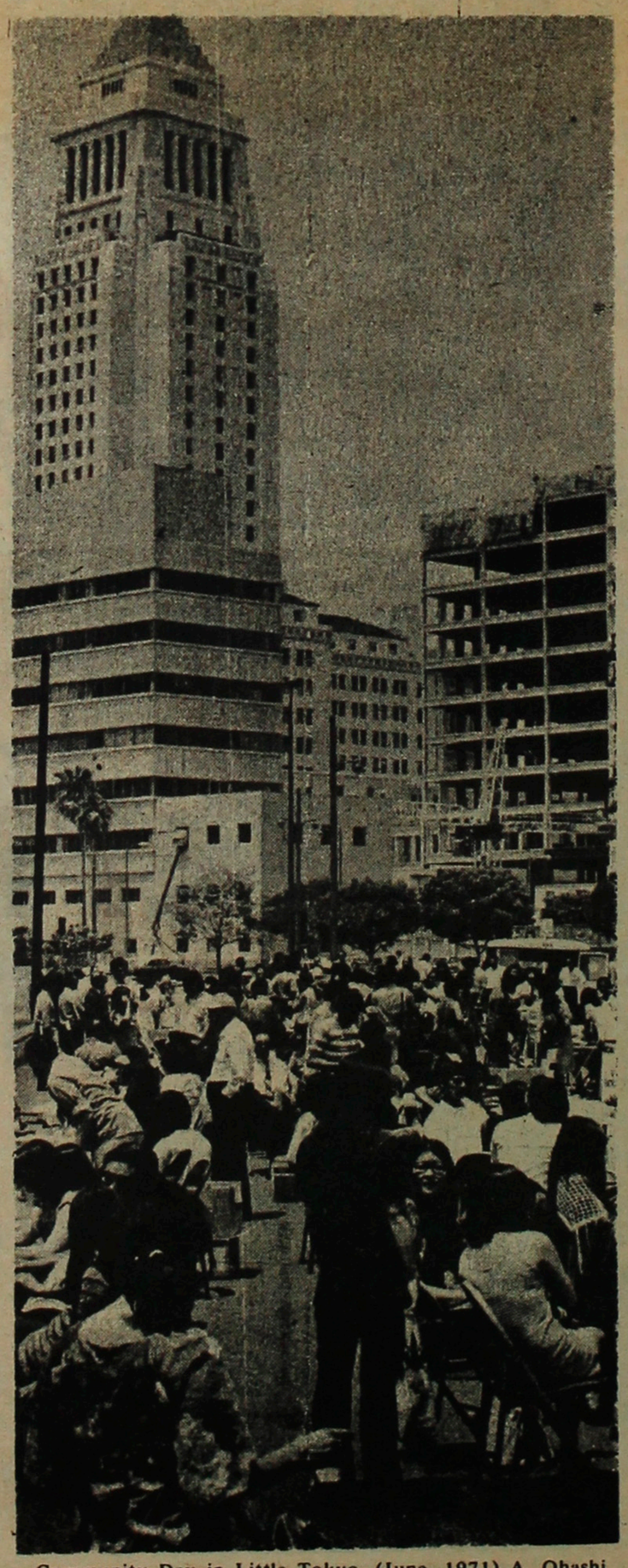
The turnover of the staff was actually fast and furious by the end of 1970. Evelyn Yoshimura, formerly an instructor of Asian American studies at Cal State Long Beach and active in other community organizations, joined the staff. Doug Aihara, Jane Morimoto and Jeanne Nishimura joined soon after, and along with the rest of us formed a nucleus that built a cohesive staff over the next three years.

After a tumultuous two years—a period in which over two hundred people came to *Gidra* to contribute their time and talents, and at the end of which most eventually moved on to do other things—the staff began to solidify, but many of the problems remained unresolved and many hardships were yet to come.

We concentrated on developing an awareness of our own history, a sensitivity and identification with our community, and an intrenational perspective. Pat Sumi, who had traveled to North Korea, China, North Vietnam, and other parts of Asia, had a tremendous impact on us as she taught us to become more aware of developments throughout the world. She challanged us, encouraged us, and defied us. I remember that we were sometimes in awe of her, sometimes angry at her, and sometimes just glad she was around. In retrospect, her presence was felt long after she moved up north. Now, Pat is teaching the Asian women's class at San Francisco State.

In 1971, we began publishing a series of issues focusing on specific themes beginning in January with the Women's Issue produced under the guidance of fifteen Asian women. Their editorial comment was clear and bold: "We as Asian women have united in opposition to this society which has reduced women to economic and psychological servitude, and Third World women and men to racist, dehumanizing stereotypes." They emphatically rejected notions prevalent among some circles of women that men are the oppressors and stated their intention to "oppose the capitalist system, resist the racist images imposed on both ourselves and our brothers, and struggle with our brothers against male chauvanism (so that we can) join in constructing new definitions for self-determination in the revolutionary society."

Children at Coliseum Street School. (June, 1969) M. Murase



Community Day in Little Tokyo. (June, 1971) A. Ohashi

Subsequent issues highlighted Street People, the Middle Generation, Youth and Children, just to name a few. The idea of focusing on a theme each month was later abandoned in order to have a wider coverage of events and personalities within each issue.

The Neighborhood Youth Corp (NYC) program was set up by the federal government after the 1965 Watts rebellion to keep the inner city youth occupied during the hot summer months. (Remember when the Magnificent Montague used to exhort, "Burn, baby, burn..." ?) During the summer of 1971, *Gidra* "employed" three youth through the NYC program. So, Minako Kawahira, Glenn Oshima and Scott Nagatani were promising not to riot that summer while top officials were pilfering a mere $2.7 million from the program funds. High administrative costs.

And more people joined the staff too: Tom Okabe, Lloyd Tanaka, Kyoko Shibasaki, Teri Nitta and Tomo Hisamoto. Tomo, only fourteen at the time, wanted to be a *Ninja* (a spy during the samurai days in Japan who is said to have perfected the "art of invisibility") but he talked too loudly to be unnoticed and was too clumsy to be mercurial. He dropped out of Dorsey High in the tenth grade, complaining that school was irrelevant. It wasn't that he resisted learning; he was always searching for new knowledge. He is still very inquisitive, and likes to talk, in fact so much so that some people say he talks too much. But he listens too, and asks questions. He is endowed with a wealth of knowledge on a wide range of things that most people know nothing about. One of the things Tomo did best was to remember where small but important items in the office were. Out office got pretty messy sometimes, and in the heat of the press run, we would misplace scissors, articles, checkbooks, and things like that, and Tomo would know where everything was. Most people talk about parts of his anatomy that are big: his mouth and his feet. But Tomo has a heart to match.

In July we took a major step to correct an internal problem that had perplexed us for two years. In order to break down that old hierarchy again, and so that we can develop leadership and organizational qualities among all, a system of rotating monthly "coordinators" was set up. The first two people to take on that responsibility were Doug Aihara and Jeff Furumura. They directed the entire operation of the staff and organized the contents of the July issue. We have worked with the system of coordinators ever since.

Along with structural changes, the purpose of *Gidra* was reiterated in the July 1971 editorial:

"We of the Gidra *Staff firmly believe that an exchange of ideas among all segments of the Asian community as well as the community-at-large is essential to understanding the conditions that exist in our society. Further, we feel that communication of ideas and ideologies relevant to all people is the precursor to the resolution of problems and of social change.*

"In the future, Gidra *will reaffirm its goal of striving to bring people together by emphasizing issues of concern to all people. Also,* Gidra *will endeavor to report events, personalities, organizations, and social conditions interpretively and analytically."*

We had faced a dilemma regarding the contents of the paper. Some of our readers, not insignificant in number or in the substance of their criticism, were saying that we were too one-sided—entirely too negative in our interpretation of history and altogether too subjective in our analysis of current conditions. These people expressed a desire to see articles with a more tolerant and hopeful outlook which serves as an affirmation of all that is good in people. They argued, "People can't relate to something that jumps out at you every month to remind you how messed up society is and how fucked up you are. Besides, what can they do about it?"

Partially in response to such criticisms, but mostly because we wanted to change ourselves, we consciously struggled to eliminate acrimonious rhetoric and to present constructive alternatives for our readers. What resulted in the ensuing months was a hodge-podge of do-it-yourself ideas that included recipes for ethnic foods, directions for a vegetable garden, tips on how to buy a used car, and instructions for sewing your own pants, and shirts, and hats. There were suggestions for pasting up protest posters and hints on how to get into contact with community groups. We even had a detailed description of how you can fix your own toilet.

Jeff Furumura, a soft-spoken teacher's aide, who spends long hours perfecting the art of Kung Fu, conveys very political ideas in his "down home" style:

"Let's imagine you come down with the flu. Alluvasudden, your temperature shoots up to 104, you can't climb out of bed, you begin babbling incoherent gibberish but between sentences, your mind flashes: '...better see a doctor...' So, there you are at the doctor's office, in the waiting room, seeing Dark Clouds... 'I've probably got a type of bronchial pneumonia, maybe with rheumatic fever...my hair is going to fall out soon, then my legs will give way, and then I'll go deaf. If I'm lucky, they'll be able to save my eyesight...' In a quick minute, the examination is over—you await the diagnosis. "You have a cold. Drink a lot of water, some aspirin and stay in bed." "Oh." And before you're completely well, there's a $20.00 doctor bill sitting in your mailbox.

"This happens a lot: when your car makes funny noises, when the sink doesn't work right, or when we don't feel good. We rely to a sometimes ridiculous extent on professionalism. As a result, we oftentimes pay for simple adjustments, remedies, and repairs that we ourselves could have been capable of performing—if only we had known how to do it."

And Jeff sums it up, *"It's all part of building self-reliance, and in the process, creating our own alternatives. By breaking down those mystical exaggerations concerning who is able to fix this, who is qualified to operate that, we can learn to do a lot of those things ourselves."*

Yes, and we can teach each other. Of course, in a highly technological society like ours we must rely on those with specialized skills for some things, but we tried to emphasize that there is an alternative to the price-gouging and profiteering that goes on. All the skills and knowledge within society ought to be shared for the benefit of people. Hopefully, we can get to a point where Jeff helps me fix my toilet and I help him build a desk, each learning from the other and asking no more than what we need in return.

Not surprisingly, there were other readers who wanted *Gidra* to be more persuasive and more direct in explicating our "politics" and scowled at the "how-to-do" articles, labeling them petty boojiwah or calling them imitations of white hippie counterculture.

We tried to present the progressive viewpoint in a principled way, but our response was to publish a wide range of perspectives in a variety of styles, writing about many issues and activities. The paper's diversity of perspectives stems from our varied attempts at defining ourselves. We tried to extend the role *Gidra* plays in the ongoing revolution both through collective policy decisions and our personal interactions. Therefore there is much more freedom than consistency in our pages. As we continue to generate alternatives, make choices, and learn from the past, our practice will inevitably be more free than consistent. To borrow the words of Che Guevara: "Every revolution always incorporates elements of very different tendencies, which nevertheless coincide in action and the revolution's most immediate tasks."

Anyway, other changes were taking place with some members of the staff as they coughed up their "first and last" on a big house on Western and plunged into a collective living experience. Many of our friends began to call the place "The *Gidra* House" even though the people who

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Anti-war demonstration in San Francisco. (December, 1969) R. Okamura

San Francisco Chinatown. (March, 1970) G. Hayashi

Dancing at CINCIP (September, 1970) M. Murase

GIDRA PEOPLE: From left to right: Jeff Furum
Glen Iwasaki, Dean

ura, Linda Fujikawa, Evelyn Yoshimura, Bruce Iwasaki, Alan Ota, Alan Takemoto,
Toji, Steve Tatsukawa, Doug Aihara, David Monkawa, Carrie Furuya, Mike Murase.

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lived there painstakingly explained that it was a misnomer. The house had many residents and visitors before it dissolved last summer, but that's another story.

In the spring of 1972, *Gidra* learned of an opportunity to send a representative to the People's Republic of China. There were many enthusiastic volunteers, but after the excitement subsided we began to discuss not "who wanted to go" but "who should go" as our delegate. We wanted to select someone who would be able to absorb as much as possible about socialism in practice in a short period of time. The perceptions of one person, we knew, would be limited, but how a person interprets what she/he observes is largely determined by the experience and political development that that person has. More than being able to grow personally from such experience, as all of us can, the person had to be able to transmit that experience to people upon return to our community. To convey the *total* experience of seeing, doing and feeling something so alien to us as revolutionary China, and to translate that experience to our situation in America would not be easy.

After hours of discussion, we selected Evelyn Yoshimura to represent us because of her many qualities. She is perceptive, tactful and articulate. She relates well with a variety of people, and she has the rare ability to break down abstractions into concrete, day-to-day terms.

Evelyn returned in the fall and gave presentations and informal talks on China with many community groups, and shared her experiences by writing articles about her trip. What we learned through her about China was an important element of our political development and understanding of socialism at work.

Through 1972, we were undergoing more changes, but the most significant was that we began a study group of our own. At our first meeting on April 7, we talked about what we wanted to learn from the study. Evelyn wanted the answer to the question, "How does *Gidra* fit into the overall Movement?" Bruce Iwasaki hungered for "facts–concrete knowledge of concepts like 'imperialism'–some kind of objective body of knowledge." Steve said that "our lifestyles and behavioral patterns are expressions of our ideologies. I want to see how I fit into *Gidra* and the Movement." And so it went.

Doug Aihara, who grew up in Montebello and was an Eagle Scout in the 379 Koyasan troop, asked, "How do we move people to action?" Doug had often talked about wanting to make *Gidra* more accessible to people and about wanting to rid the Movement of its seeming exclusivity. He discussed new ideas and concepts with his mom, his boss and with practically anybody he could find to talk with. Tirelessly, he pursued the answers, and tried to get other people involved. When people came to visit the office, Doug would show them around, patiently explaining the procedures we go through each month. With his warm, friendly and generous way of relating to people, maybe he had the answer to his own question, all along. Now, he's getting into music more, but during the day he is the office manager at Nari's Cosmetics.

Asian American contingent marching down Wilshire Boulevard as part of nation-wide demonstration against the war. (April 22, 1972) M. Murase

Finally a study group was organized and here's what we came up with: We would set up study for six week sessions, having a recess and evaluation after each session, and with rotating chairpersons, and a permanent meeting day, time and place. The study was divided into three parts:

(1) The Objective Conditions–Racism, Sexism, Capitalism, Imperialism...and alienation, inequality and irrationality ...which engenders avarice, individualism, intolerance, irresponsibility, negative self-image and pessimism. We wanted to study Asian American and Third World histories, the War, the institutions in our society, the state of the Movement, etc.

(2) The Goals–Humanism, Socialism...? The examples of the Vietnamese, the People's Republic. ...collectivity, self-respect, self-reliance, self-determination, self-discipline, self-defense.

(3) How to Get from One to the Other. Step by step....

Naturally, it broke down into more manageable sub-categories but that's the rough idea. We read political pamphlets, newspapers, introductory readers, and some "classics." We used different techniques: discussion, investigation, role-playing, autobiographical histories, criticism/self-criticism.

During those days, there was a definite feeling that we were becoming a tighter group, but not all of that can be attributed to political study. In fact, so much of it is not related to *Gidra* tasks or programs at all. As students, our hours were flexible. Most of us went to the office in the late afternoons and evenings, many times just to see our friends. We sat around in the office for hours, sometimes all night, working at a leisurely pace and talking and sharing and learning from each other. We used to go out to eat so often that it had become a custom that became known to friends who would drop by the office just to go out to eat with us late at night: Mago's, Lucy's, Tommy's, Leo's, Fatburger, Johnny's, and always Holiday Bowl. During more standard hours there were Walt's, Angelo's, Tenri, Bungo, Ho Sai Kai, and Chin's right across the street.

We learned to have fun together and enjoy each other's company. We shared in adversity and in joy. That's what kept the group together for so long. We learned through a long and arduous process to be...sort of a family. We supported each other and criticized each other. The difficult times that we endured together made us stronger. It seemed that for most of us, offering criticisms in a loving way was a difficult thing to do, and it was equally painful to freely accept them. This hesitation to give and accept criticism is an artificial by-product of a society that keeps people out of touch with their own feelings and afraid to communicate them to others. So many stones beside so many glass houses. Undoing this requires struggle, but too often we have chosen not to risk 'hurt feelings' or 'bad vibes' and settled for an unprincipled peace within the staff. In order to effectively accomplish the goal we have set for ourselves, I believe that there must *necessarily* be times when we question and criticize each other, *even* at the risk of creating tension and anxiety temporarily. A thorough and continuous ideological struggle is a prerequisite to building trust, understanding and love for one another as sisters and brothers.

Steve Tatsukawa, who made his mother very happy when he got perfect attendance at Henry Clay Junior High School, personifies someone who is able to relate to people. In the four years that he's been with *Gidra*, he has

Gidra Staff member Evelyn Yoshimura with a PLA soldier in China. (July, 1972) AAYTD photo.

never demonstrated anger toward people, and is endowed with the ability to make people laugh and to make them feel good. Steve says that when people think of revolution, they conceive of it as being the equivalent of political upheaval. "In essence they are correct in their assumptions, for revolution does mean political upheaval or change or overthrow or substitution," he agrees, but adds, "but it means much, much more." He explains further:

"No revolution has ever succeeded unless it was carried through by people with total revolutionary intent. Today in America, this type of person is now emerging. The foundations of American culture have been rejected by many: the materialism, the profit-motive, the competition, the basis of western culture as we know it.

"The importance of the situation lies in the fact that we are witnessing an old culture dying and a new culture being shaped. This is a rare occurence in history. And we, the movement people have the responsibility of shaping the new way of life. It will be shaped not by writing or talking or thinking about it. The new way of life will come about by living it. Live the Revolution!"

The creative mind of Steve Tatsukawa has played a vital role in the growth of *Gidra*, and it is probably true that "a new type of person will emerge," if only more of us were like Steve.

Again when summer rolled around, we had NYC youth work with us, only in 1972, we had *fifteen* high school students coming down to the office every afternoon and most evenings. Because the program was so hastily organized, we had set up limited training sessions. Many of the NYC people who had extra time worked with Yellow Brotherhood. They also led a group of two hundred youth to the streets of Little Tokyo during Nisei Week to demonstrate their opposition to the war in Vietnam under the banner of the Van Troi Anti-Imperialist Youth Brigade.

But not all youth in our communities were being politicized or given support as the editorial from that month attests:

"Many Gidra *articles have been written in strong opposition to war—to the waste of lives and resources, the atrocities, and the weaponry. We say that we want peace, and we say that we are willing to fight for it. Many of our articles have also reflected serious skepticism about the effectiveness of rallies and demonstrations, not only against the war, but also concerning other social/political injustices. Many of us have participated in these demonstrations, and at those times have stressed nonviolence although we have often felt the urge to take more militant actions. But most of the work done in the name of the Movement is aimed at positive alternatives, meaningful changes, and not alienating the community. We often confuse our understanding of the need for a "fighting spirit" to carry out a protracted struggle with our feelings of wanting quick action and fast changes. We often feel frustrated and begin to have doubts about our effectiveness in bringing about the desired changes, or in reaching the community with our intentions.*

"Meanwhile, back in the streets, many sisters and brothers are busily, energetically, and resolutely going about fighting among themselves, or carrying on with some other forms of self-destruction. Beginning with negative self-images, sisters and brothers become apathetic and unproductive, drop reds and take other drugs, slash their own wrists, and attempt many other forms of suicide. If only the energy spent by these sisters and brothers could be turned from negative, self-destructive violence into a positive fighting spirit directed at the sources of common problems...

"What we see in the streets of our communities is often a grim reality seemingly unreached and unaffected by our Movement. When sisters and brothers get fucked up on drugs, fight each other, steal from each other, and slander each other uncaringly—all of this happening in an environment of community apathy—what we are seeing is community self-destruction. What we are seeing is a force, in and of itself, that is counter to the Movement, counter to the revolution; so are the problems and symptoms stemming from this society and its values which we oppose. This problem can no longer be shined on to be dealt with in reactionary fashions, or to be dealt with by the "humanism" of the Movement (our sensitivity, openness and warmth) when it is so often overshadowed by our frustrations and confusions. This problem requires heavy thought and courage to be solved within the framework of building the aims of the Movement."

People dancing at the park to celebrate a "community union," (1972) M. Murase

A young Asian sister, Clara, was one of the more than 60 to die of drug overdose in our community within the last four years. The numbers reflect only the cases known to *Gidra;* there are probably many more. What could have prevented those deaths? How do we prevent future drug-related deaths? We still grope clumsily for answers, hoping that we are in some way filling a need and that what we are doing will bring all of us closer together as we begin to share very personal feelings and experiences through the paper.

...

"Clara,

Now, I sit and think quietly of you. Before, I sat and spoke loudly of you. Now, there is nobody there. I can just see you waiting for me at work. Even if I were depressed, I would look at your smile and it would make me feel good. I expect to see you there, but you won't be, and I'm sorry. I always thought of you as a lucky girl, no problems, just live life as it comes. I was wrong. I should have realized everybody has porblems. Why did you have to do it? Why?

I wish I was there. I'm sorry I wasn't. Clara, don't you see? We loved you. I loved you I cared about you. I wish you had more people to open up to. Maybe then some of it would have been all right. You had all of us, but it's too late. I wish you would have waited... Why Clara....

Ivy.

(May, 1972)

It was too late for Clara, but we hoped that this letter and other expressions of love can make a difference for future Claras.

In the pages of *Gidra*, we condemned the use of some drugs, not because they were drugs, but because they were killers of human beings. It is not unlike denouncing other killers of people—war, poverty and hunger. We are *not* against the users of drugs, we are against the conditions that force people to seek self-destructive alternatives. We are against manufacturers of drugs like Eli Lilly Company, a multi-national corporation, that cannot account for the distribution of 40 percent of their seco-barbitols. We are

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Tourists and residents of Little Tokyo. (March, 1973) A. Ohashi

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against the black-marketeers who pour the drugs into our communities in order to pacify and kill us.

Drugs have been an integral part of the culture of America, and so has it been with those who want to change America. One drug is replaced by another. Many on the staff smoke marijuana, and some have tried other drugs, but we have had a policy of "no possession or use" in the office ever since we began. And that policy has been scowled at, ridiculed and sometimes violated by some. Some have argued that "to smoke (marijuana) or drink (beer) in the office seems to be an activity geared not to escape reality but, in fact, to be right in the center of reality." More recently, those on the staff who hold this view drafted a "*Gidra* Free Dope and Booze Act." Seven members signed and posted the bill in the office, and without further discussion with other members of the staff, have been smoking in the office with impunity. So much for collective decisions and democracy.

At the end of 1972, we almost didn't make it. Two days before the scheduled press date for the December issue, when there were only a few articles turned in, we were seriously considering skipping that month. We decided, however, to go ahead because we felt a responsibility to our readers. It was two weeks late in getting out, but volume four was completed.

Early in 1973, artists David Monkawa, Dean Toji and Glen Iwasaki joined Alan "Batman" Takemoto (who had been on the staff since April 1972) to make up the most talented group of Asian American illustrators to be on any one staff. All of them had been serious artists in the traditional sense, but they struggled with their former conceptions of Art and became a vital force within *Gidra* as they began writing and participating in other staff functions.

David talked about art in America, and what he is trying to accomplish:

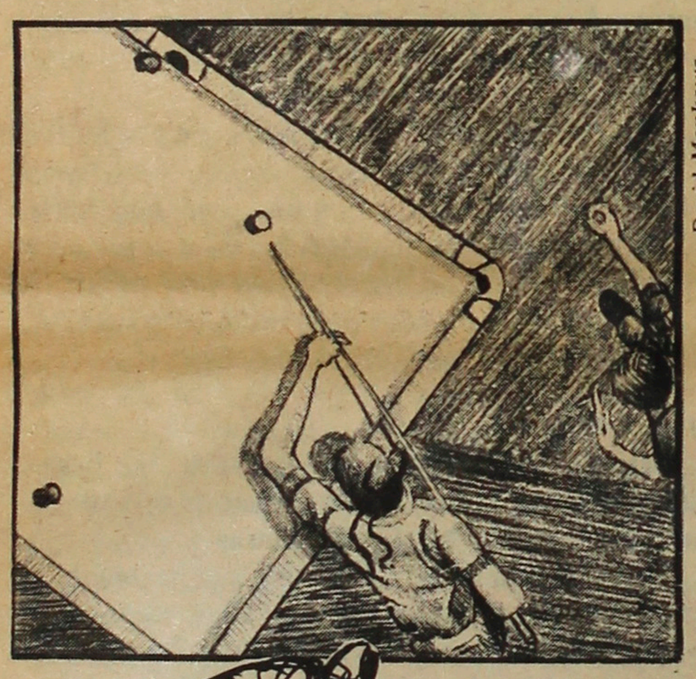
"In America, popularized art in the media neutralizes and dulls the senses, instead of trying to sharpen them. Comic books are not meant for you to think too much because people might start getting too aware of what's really happening. Then the boat begins to rock. But the point is we shouldn't let ourselves be strayed by entertainment that deals with mysticism or takes you on supernatural trips. Or by entertainment that drains you of your mental energy by seducing you into watching unrealistic and romanticized movies about pseudo-revolutions, personal relationships or anything else.

"Sure, we like to entertain too, but we'd like to do much more than that. We want to free our minds at the same time you free yours by developing them through looking at comics, movies, books and television with a critical eye; that is, asking ourselves "how" the thing we're viewing is supposed to be judged. Is it trying to communicate a certain feeling, a political idea, a message about life or a depiction about how a particular person thinks? Whatever it's trying to communicate, does it do it in a way that shows care and thought or haphazardness? Is the medium in which the artist works the best medium for what he or she is trying to say."

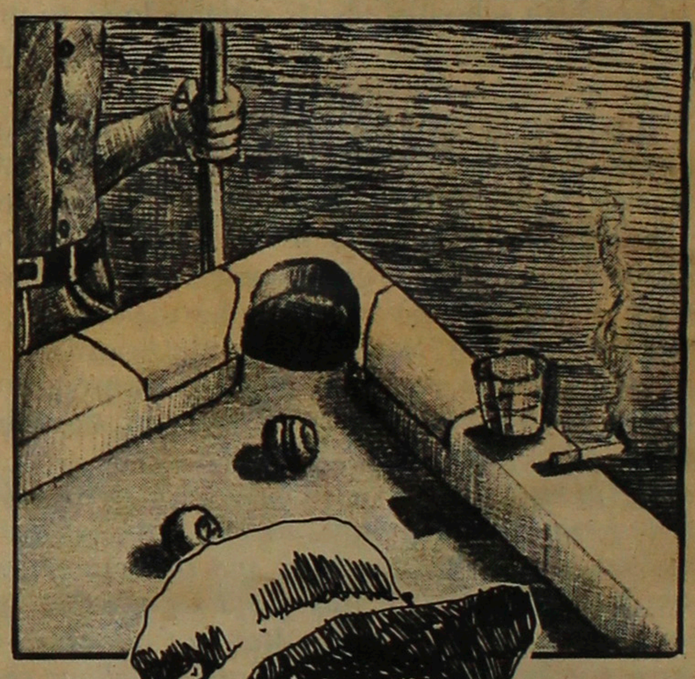
Even in high school, David questioned the way all of us were conditioned by rituals that were imposed on us. As a Sunday school teacher at Centenary Methodist, he discussed with his eighth grade students the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance. He was asked to leave by the church hierarchy.

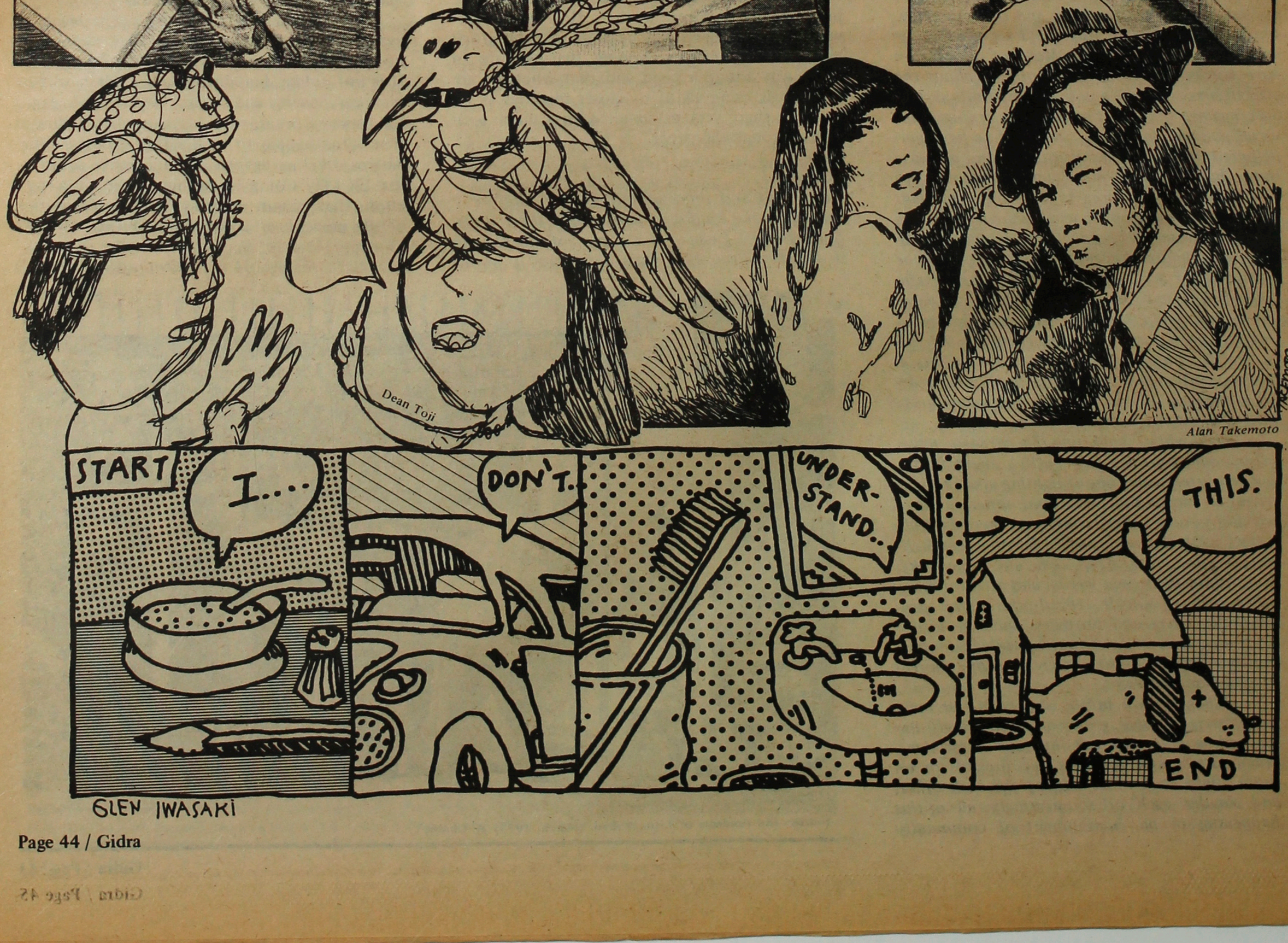
When Dean first started coming down to the office, he was abrasive and autocratic. "Batman" protested, "Hey, you can't boss me around; I've been here longer than you have!" You see, when Dean was little, he was very shy, and he never did much with groups. He once sent away to the Archie Fan Club to be a reporter, but they never wrote back. When he was in high school, he got into rock 'n roll and read a lot of books about total and all encompassing "ways of being," but his real passion in life was art. When Dean discovered *Gidra* he found a way of combining his love of art, search for a "way of being," and a chance to create changes in a society that had alienated him earlier.

Many personal changes were to take place during 1973 for many on the staff. The process and content of the paper were greatly influenced



David Monkawa





Dean Toji

Alan Takemoto

Participants at the Fourth Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage rally around signs of ten World War II concentration camps. (April 14, 1973) E. Ikuta

by those changes in our lives. Most of us were already involved with other community organizations and "work areas": Creative Workshop, Little Tokyo Anti-Eviction Task Force, Yellow Brotherhood, Joint Counseling Center, Asian Women's Center, Amerasia Bookstore, Asian Law Collective, just to name a few. Changes in personal relationships and living situations also had an impact. Many of us were forced to readjust priorities as we took on full-time "straight gigs." The three students: Bruce and I were studying law. Linda Fujikawa was becoming increasingly involved at UCLA's school of social welfare, and in the area of casework.

In her youth, Linda was a cheerleader for the Gardena High Mohicans, and she loved to watch TV, especially one program. She always wanted to do something after the voice-over announced "There are eight million stories in the Naked City...and this has been one of them." She knew about the millions of Americans who were neglected, disenchanted and disenfranchised, and she wanted to do something to change their lives.

A pragmatic and dedicated person, Linda wanted to be effective in what she did, and not just adopt the superficial embellishments of a radical. She once commented:

"In the movement's revolutionary fervor to forge a new lifestyle free of materialistic hang-ups we often try very hard to discard any traces of our recent petty bourgeois existence. A good case in point is in the clothing we wear. In fact, we often find ourselves in contradiction when we buy jeans and work shirts rather than wear our now-dated but perfectly wearable pin-striped ivy league shirt or that hot pink princess line dress. Nevertheless, the movement among Asian American people is relatively recent and for that reason, although realizing clothes are not and should not be important, they still often are."

Another symptom of that "revolutionary fervor" was our unwillingness/inability to deal with the realities of our economic condition. I have not commented on it much so far, but it isn't because I was not mindful of it; the problem of money has been a constant source of concern and apprehension for the staff. When we were students, it was easier because we did not have to worry about many of the financial responsibilities that troubled others, but concerns about "paying our bills" and economically surviving soon became real enough.

In our five year history, no one received a single payroll check from *Gidra*. We tried to think of ways in which "survival needs" and our work at *Gidra* could be integrated, but because we had to work at other places in the meantime, we weren't able to become financially self-sufficient, at least not enough to have salaries for the staff. A vicious cycle.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the many generous contributors who believed in us—our subscribers and advertisers, our friends and our parents—and the Asian American Studies Center at UCLA who, from time to time, subsidized us, and GCYP, who gave us a grant. But in the final analysis, we weren't able to meet the financial burden of rising costs, both in our own bills and *Gidra's*. Yet we know even now, that there is a way to build and sustain a self-sufficient alternative media, and that someday we will do it, as changes keep happening within us and around us.

The ever-changing conditions call for deeper analysis, new strategies and greater resolve. And we need to understand the present, not as a static and isolated instant, but as a flowing moment in history.

Bruce Iwasaki, the proud son of a produce man and a Phi Beta Kappa from UCLA, is often not seen walking out of stores with a handful of books. He once wanted to be the Asian American Shakespeare, but now he is more concerned with change, and the lack of change. The disciplined and principled in-house expert on Vietnam deliberated in his usual analytical and long-winded way:

*"From my limited, absent-minded perspective (L.A., Japanese American, male, "student"), it's hard to say how the Asian movement has progressed except to be simply older, larger and different. It probably has less per capita macho trips than three years ago, less gut level chaos than two years ago, less tripping on and stumbling over new personal-political relationships than last year. Things seem to be condensing, settling (collectives, study groups) even as they are beginning (Women's Center) or restructuring (everybody). And though most individuals are less spread out--without, as one friend said, the urge to attend every movement meeting around—groups, projects, and organizations also get isolated. Even among friends, it's hard to keep abreast if you're in different work areas. (*Gidra *hasn't always been much help on this I'm afraid; we all share in that blame). With this happening it is no wonder that coalitions so far have been precarious structures: either dissolving as they spread, coalescing no new minds, or never seeing day.*

"Our hand-waving sort of communications

(Continued on page 46)

Police harassment of youth in Chinatown, Los Angeles. (July, 1972) B. Chin

TOWARD BAREFOOT JOURNALISM

(Continued from page 45)

is, I trust, temporary for now. Somehow I figure some structural networks will evolve to remedy that. What concerns me much more is the communication over time. I mean this: Many people who come into the movement now don't think of themselves as stepping into any historical train of events–any movement–at all. Programs, platforms and people are givens. Proof that this occurs is demonstrated by people still having to go through any one of a variety of movement syndromes (macho, over-extension, elitism, etc.). And on every hand there's still the rhetoric. Maybe all these rites of passage are necessary; I don't know. But with our expanding sense of numbers, consciousness, and possibilities, comes an enlarged responsibility too. That is, the responsibility for preserving the movement's past, its sequence of ideas, its different experiences, its changing spirit. Many of us know as little about where we've come from in five years as we do about the Nisei Progressives in the '40s or the Issei socialist labor organizers of the '30s. We don't need scrapbooks. But we somehow need to institutionalize the lessons we learn. Allow for an expanding of consciousness instead of the diminution of consciousness which comes every political generation every eight months or so. I don't know what the mechanism will look like. I don't even know whether it's bound within our will or our karma. That such humble prerequisites seem like such lofty goals shows how far away is our political horizon. But without a sense of past how can we have a set of plans? And without plans how will we determine if that horizon heralds the New Day, or more neon?"

The advances in political theory, as in other fields, belong to a long historical process whose links are connecting, adding up, molding and constantly perfecting themselves. We, therefore, need to interpret history, understand its dynamics, predict the future. Then the world must not only be analyzed, it must be transformed. In that light, *Gidra* becomes not only the chroniclers of events, but the makers of history as well.

During the last five years–a long time, yet really so short–we have learned slowly, and sometimes painfully, to do things that had been totally alien to us before, to become aware of ourselves and others, and to look at the conditions around us in ways very different from the traditional view. Often, we were called upon to do things that made us feel uncomfortable at first: participating in marches and demonstrations, speaking before large audiences, appearing on radio and television programs, selling the paper, and sharing with each other some of our deepest feelings and most private thoughts.

Yet, there is always the feeling that we haven't done enough, that we haven't ourselves become the kind of people we want to be.

What follow is meant neither as a pep talk nor a "get-your-shit-together" speech; just some feelings I wish to share with my friends in the Movement.

Because the need for institutional changes seems so urgent, we often forget that structural changes alone would not create the kind of world we hope for, that there is also a need to look deep into *our own* souls to expel undesirable attitudes we have artlessly inherited.

We need to remind ourselves of how our patterns of morality, our behavior, our aspirations, our fears, our education, the very way we think, are all conditioned by the prevailing assumptions of a society that regards highly such values as competition, individualism, materialism and expansion. We live in a social climate in which property and possession of property plays an important role in our lives. Most people still believe that it is through wealth and the accumulation of possessions that we find our fulfillment. To an extraordinary extent, one's possessions are used as the measure of one's own worth as a human being. "I own a four bedroom house in Encino, a *Porche 911-S*, and a *Mackintosh* amp and tuner with a *Thorens* turntable and *JBL* speakers. What do *you* have?" someone might say, with his nose in the air. The notion is so deeply embedded in us that, for a moment, we envy him, or even believe that he *is* somehow "better" than us. (The flip side of the same coin, however, is that many "straight" people believe that the Movement is composed of disgruntled rejects who tried to "make it" in the system, but couldn't.) Is one who keeps time on an *Omega Chronometer* more aware of the passing of time than a brother who looks up at the clock on the wall? Is one who promenades in his *Gucci* casuals more in step with humanity than a brother who marches in *Thom McCann* buckle boots? Is one who emanates the scent of *Chanel No. 19* (2 ozs., $60) sweeter or more pure of heart than a sister who casts off the effluvium of a garment factory? We know better.

But if we know better, we should know better, as well, that for all of us, a long and complex process taught us that the life of a single person is worth a million times more than all the property of the richest man on earth. *We* learned it. And are we now going to tell the four winds that the rest of the people cannot learn also? Too often, we look at others and say, "You must change your ways: you are individualistic, irresponsible, apathetic and greedy." Then we walk away in disgust muttering, "He will never change," all the while concealing our own shortcomings. We become impatient when others fail to see the world in a way we would like them to see it. We view the future with fatalism and separate people into either the children of working class or counter-revolutionaries, either students or community workers, either progressives or pigs.

When we see both sides of a particular issue, we are being dialectical; when other people do the same, they are being wishy-washy or liberal. When we cling to some notion that we have, we are being principled; when they do, they are being stubborn or dogmatic. When we indulge in leisurely activity, it is called personal liberation; and when others do, it is called apathy or laziness. When we long for some material possessions, we are only seeking survival needs; when others want something, they are exhibiting their bourgeois tendencies. Such fatuous distinctions are not only too simplistic, but they are damaging because they are not true, and there is nothing which educates people more than letting them know that we are all human beings.

It often happens that objectively people need a certain change, but subjectively they are not yet conscious of the need, not yet willing or determined to make the change. Yet, we try to impose on people the changes *we* fancy they need rather than what they actually need. Can we afford, now, after five years, and in this time of crisis, to spend more time organizing just the hundreds of "ten of us" who are already in or sympathetic to the Movement?

Our most urgent task is to build a strong united base, I would think. Then, we must educate with love and understanding; we must be modest and prudent. Such an undertaking necessarily means we must also be willing to learn from people. Can we begin to erase old concepts and strategies to draw closer and closer to the People? Yes...easy to say, hard to do. It is true that we have worked with people before; but too often, we have not shown enough love, we have not been persuasive enough, we have turned non-antagonistic differences into antagonistic relationships. We have done it at *Gidra*, both in our pages and in the office. Everybody has done it.

There is much more that I would like to write about, but Steve (this month's coordinator) told me the last day to submit this article was two weeks ago, so I must hold in abeyance the rest of it, hoping that there will soon be another medium of expression. (I feel now like I'll soon be losing my own voice.) I would like to remind people who are interested in media/communication/propaganda that you are invited to participate in the process of evaluating and planning. We also encourage others throughout the country to start their own newspapers and magazines, if they are so inclined; we would like to help if we can.

As we continue to struggle, what needs remembering now is the richness and vitality of this total experience called *Gidra*, which is much more than just a newspaper. It has been an experience in sharing–in giving and receiving–in a sisterly and brotherly atmosphere. It has meant a chance to actively work for something we really believe in. It has meant a chance to express ourselves in a variety of ways. It has been a lesson in humility and perserverance. It has meant working with people who care about people, and genuinely feeling the strength that can only come out of collective experience.

But, what a struggle!

With much love,
Mike Murase

GIDRA GIDRA GIDRA GIDRA GIDRA GIDRA GIDRA GIDRA

What Gidra Means To Me

Writing and politics—things that mean a lot to me—have been shaped by this experience; Gidra has refashioned my words and world. Hording magazines for future articles, squeezing stories from the casual remarks of friends, walking into situations—too romantically—like a paranoid reporter.

And all these fussy people around! Scraps and smoke all over, staffers high and eating, yet the paper comes out. Laughing all night.
—B.I.

...It means belching up the delightful aftertaste of a Lucy's number twenty-six at four-thirteen in the morning of the 4th day of the 2nd week of inadvertant celibacy, trying to keep your eyes open long enough so you can type out another mistake, being startled back into consciousness (by a frighteningly convincing Akita dog imitation) just long enough to realize you'll miss another day of 'work'—but heaving a thankful sigh....
—J.F.

It means climbing a mountain with sixteen crazed laughing mongols following a stream going to the source only to tire and separate turning back to camp and to smile when in the distance hearing, "Nala, up here!"
—A.O.

(Going home and noticing the office really smells, like stale cigarette smoke, newsprint, must—and realizing that YOU smell like that now, too.)

It means a warm, but tough link between the world I see and the world that could be.
—E.Y.

"Let's go eat!"
(in unison) "All right!"
"Where do you wanna go?"
(repeat three times)
"I dunno."
(pause).
—S.T.

People coming and going, trying to do together what we each cannot do alone, hoping to change our lives and taking a (small) part in reshaping the world...knowing how hard it really is, but knowing too that it can be done.
—M.M.

If you're Asian and like to write, do graphics, and generally have a tendency to make products, but don't really know how that could be part of a revolutionary movement, Gidra is an agency for involvement. Sure as hell you can't even get into the front office of the Guardian. It's also one of the few sources around for non-movement and movement people who live out of town to even know about such a thing as the Asian movement in Los Angeles.

But it seems like we're folding, so we're gonna have meetings to arrive at a collective analysis of what happened and about where people are exactly at.
—D.M.

I like pictures w/ words.
Gidra has words
I have pictures.
—G.I.

Missed deadlines, frantic writing, typing, etc., all nighters, silliness, politics, friendship, 2412, spacy meetings, 10 extra lbs., frustration, reward, growing awareness, liberalism, criticism, attempts to change but never quite making it. Wish it could go on forever?...Wish I wasn't so sentimental...Shit. Wish I could compress 4 years into 2 sentences...Gonna miss it.
—L.F.

a training school for shakespearean actors
(midnight madness)
gerard manley hopkins recited in tandem
five-year-old clouds of amoebic smoke lurking in
the corners of the ceiling
and
sunflower seed shells
EVERYWHERE
—L.T.

And now that you have read some of these things you'll notice extreme neurotic fixations. It's because everyone here is crazy —except for me. I'm the only sane one. So it is my duty to put everything in their proper perspectives. Gidra is not going out to eat somewhere, or sunflower seeds everywhere, or hiking around in the middle of nowhere. Gidra is people. Gidra is family. It's that simple. Any sane person could see that.
—D.A.

It means:
The main trend in the world today is entropy.
—D.T.

An "Old Staffer" Reflects

I first became involved with *Gidra* in about January of 1969 while in my senior year at UCLA. I guess that started a whole lot of changes in my life.

Before then, I was a happy-go-lucky type of person. I was uninvolved and unconcerned and spent a lot of time in bars and at parties. I bounced around a whole bunch of colleges, was a veteran, and generally had a good time.

I'm not quite sure how I got recruited at *Gidra*. I know Colin Watanabe kept after me to help out because I had some journalism background. Well, I finally began spending a lot of time at the Asian American Studies Center at UCLA and with the *Gidra* people.

I guess what really hooked me was the issue about Dr. Noguchi, the L.A. County Coroner, who was being fired at the time. I researched the case and it looked like there were very real indications of racial discrimination and political vendettas. I stayed with *Gidra* because of a growing relationship and committment to other *Gidra* staffers as well as the fact that I wanted some of the truth to be presented to the people. I was reading the major newspapers as well as attending the Noguchi hearings. I couldn't believe the bias in news presented by the major papers in reportin the hearings.

I felt then that there was great need to present the other side of issues so that people would have a better chance to get a grasp on the truth. We decided that *Gidra* would be a forum for the expression of ideas within the Asian American context.

I stayed with *Gidra* a little over a year. A lot of things happened that first year. We had a staff split and we set some precedents, or at least attempted to set them. We decided that *Gidra* belonged to whoever was there and working on it. We also decided that existing hierarchies as they developed would periodically give way to new blood. In this way we hoped to have a continuous influx of new ideas, continued interest and motivation. It also came about that no key members would leave until someone else knew their jobs.

Gidra was important to me but I phased out sometime after the first anniversary issue. The reason I left is that my priorities were changing. I was in graduate school at the time and it became more and more important to me to develop some expertise in the area of rehabilitation and counseling. I became more involved in counseling activities and less involved with *Gidra*.

I think *Gidra* was an important process of growth for me. It brought me more in touch with the concerns and needs of Asian Americans in this country Though my primary interest at this time is in rehabilitation and counseling, I do recognize the need for specific Asian rehabilitation services and I have focused much of my recent time in these areas.

In looking at the status of *Gidra* now, I feel a sense of loss in the fact that it is suspending operations. It looks to me like much of the staff is getting burnt out and survival needs are beginning to take their toll. It must really be hard for a person to put in an eight hour work day and then go work on *Gidra*. When we were all students, personal economics did not mean much.

I feel that *Gidra* is and has been a vital voice in the expression of new ideas and a great motivation for community involvement.

Mike Murase asked me what I would do if I were still on the staff. I think the first thing I would do is attempt to develop some kind of economic stability for *Gidra*. If that means selling ads, pushing subscriptions, or whatever, I feel that *Gidra* should at least attempt to provide for some of the survival needs of its staff.

I know that there would be a lot of "flak" if *Gidra* were to move into a capitalistic type of venture. Despite the resistance, I feel that if it is necessary to ensure its own survival, it should be done. A whisper is better than no voice at all.

I would attempt to gear *Gidra* towards a wider based population. I feel very strongly that revolutionary ideas can be presented in a more objective manner and in such a way that it would appeal to a person's basic humanity.

I also feel that there should be active recruitment of new people. I feel that new blood, new ideas, and new enthusiasms can breathe new life into *Gidra*. I don't know if any of the ideas will work, but I do feel that there are a lot of people who care about its continued existence. *Gidra* was born in the beginning of the Asian American movement. Does its death mean the end of the movement? I hope not.
—Seigo Hayashi

HAWAII'S PLANTATION STRIKES

ON STRIKE! SHUT IT DOWN!

The main trend today in Hawaii's political economy is not the importation of labor, but rather the export of capital—the crisis of the runaway shop in sugar and pine, the closing down of sugar and pine operations in Hawaii and their relocation in countries like the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and Iran.

For Hawaii, the runaway shop crisis is significant for several reasons. Historically, the sugar and pine workers played a key role in the early unionization drives and in the accompanying fight for the democratic rights of oppressed national groups. The exploitation of these same workers also laid the economic basis for the wealth and expansion of Hawaii's largest multinational corporations.

Today, 16,000 sugar and pine workers face layoffs as a result of the impending closing of plantations, mills and canneries over the next decade. Thousands of acres of prime agricultural land will be ripped off, taken from productive, agricultural use and converted to tourist developments and various types of real estate speculation. If successful in sugar and pine, the bosses will use the threat of runaway shops as a weapon to blackmail workers and unions in other industries into sacrificing or minimizing economic demands.

The First Strikes

The first big strike was fought in 1909. It involved Japanese workers organized into the Higher Wage Association. The main issues of the strike were wages, better housing and a grievance committee to protect jobs. Though the strike was defeated, some of the demands were met months later.

The Great Strike of 1920 marked the first time that Japanese and Filipino workers united against the bosses. However, this strike too, was defeated, the main tools of the bosses being racism, intimidation, and persecution of the strike weakened the ranks of the workers and the strike was smashed after several months.

In 1924, Filipino workers once again organized a strike which began on Oahu and spread to the other islands. This strike was marked by increased violence by the bosses. On the island of Kauai, a three-day riot broke out which left 16 strikers and four policemen dead. Finally, the arrest, prosecution, and exile of the Filipino leadership broke the strike. Still, some of the strike's aims were later met, at least partially.

It was not until 1944, with a new upsurge of rank and file militancy guided by the Communist Party, that agricultural workers in Hawaii began to achieve great strides in their battle against the pine and sugar oligarchy. Within a period of four years unionism swept like a prairie fire through the fields where sugar and pine workers toiled. From 1944 to 1947 the International Longshoremen's Union (ILWU) grew from a small union with 900 members in the islands, power in Hawaii's politics, with a membership of 30,000.

On two separate occasions, in response to imperialism and anti-communism, Hawaii's workers went out on political strikes. In 1950, a Korean sugar worker from Oahu gave a courageous and moving speech calling upon his union comrades to condemn U.S. imperialist aggression in Korea. When the union adopted this position, Harry Bridges was jailed for speaking out against the Korean War and calling for peace. Following this, political demonstrations swept Hawaii as plantation workers and dockworkers walked off their jobs in a series of one-day work stoppages to protest the persecution of their leadership.

Then, in August, 1951, Jack Hall, the Regional Director for the ILWU, and six other persons were arrested under the so-called *Smith Act* on charges of conspiring to spread communism. Political demonstrations again swept the plantations and docks. Upon the conviction of the "Hawaii Seven" more political work-stoppages and general strikes occurred.

Present Situation

Today 16,000 people work in sugar and pine, out of a work force of about 340,000. Thousands of other jobs are also indirectly dependent upon sugar and pine.

Hawaii's Big Five corporations, along with Del Monte, still dominate the sugar and pineapple industries. The Big Five, who for years prior to WWII ruled the islands in an oligarchic fashion have today expanded into diverse multi-national corporations. These companies, originally factoring agents providing essential services to the plantation owners, eventually consolidated over 90 percent of the sugar and pine industry under their control. Today these companies have begun to close down their plantation operations in Hawaii and are moving lock, stock and barrel to countries where they are able to exploit foreign workers, paying as little as 8 cents to 11 cents an hour for field workers.

Though a general reduction of workers in agriculture has been going on for the last two decades—through mergers, consolidation and mechanization—the present crisis brought about by the runaway shops is a recent development.

In pineapple, Dole and Del Monte claim that forcing competition is forcing them to shut down Hawaii operations and seek out countries where they can lower their production costs. Yet a quick look at the facts shows that the three largest "foreign competitors" are the Philippines, Taiwan and Malaysia. Dole and Del Monte own 99.8 percent of the Philippines operations, the biggest of the three and the only one that produces high quality fruit.

In sugar, despite a decrease in acreage under cultivation the consolidation of plantations combined with additional labor-saving equipment is leading to increased production. The price for raw sugar has soared in the last two years. The 1972 price for raw sugar was around $180 per ton; today it stands at over $420 per ton.

Building Struggle To Stop Runaway Shops.

As the recent sugar and pineapple strikes began, progressive and revolutionary forces in Hawaii began to mobilize support for the struggle of Hawaii's agricultural workers. Their main activities up to this time have been rallying support for the striking workers and beginning a broader educational program explaining the runaway shop crisis. The main force in this work has come from the Runaway Shop Task Force of the Labor-Community Alliance, a labor support organization based in Honolulu and composed of workers, trade union people, and students.

On April 11th, L-CA joined with other community groups, trade union, and student groups to organize a mass picketing support demonstration in front of the gates of the Dole Can Plant and the Dole Cannery. Over 200 people attended, ranging from workers and union officials to students and welfare rights people.

The Strike

On April 7, after months of fruitless negotiations, some 6,000 pine workers walked off their jobs and joined the 9,000 sugar workers who had been on strike since March 9. This marked the first time in Hawaii's history that there has been a simultaneous strike in both sugar and pine.

The demands of the two strikes were similar: job security (protection against lay-offs, close-downs, and the runaway shop); 40 cents an hour wage increases in each year of the two-year contract; Cost of Living Allowances to keep up with inflation; increased monthly pension benefits, severance allowances, and improved medical and dental plans.

Union negotiators had surprised many observers in February, after an overwhelming strike vote in both sugar and pine, by dropping the key "no lay-off" demand and reducing many other demands. The union even worked several weeks without a contract when the bosses refused to extend it. More surprising, perhaps, was when the strikes came, they were selective or partial efforts.

Settlement Terms

The dual strike did not last much longer than two weeks. On April 23, the six-week sugar strike officially ended after more than 90 percent of the sugar workers voted to accept the contract terms. They gained 35 cents an hour in 1974 and another 40 cent an hour wage hike. The sugar workers also won improvements in sick leave, vacation, night shift pay, medical and dental plans, and disability. Their pension payments will also be boosted.

The workers did not win their cost-of-living allowance demand, and on job security, after scrapping the no lay-off demand, the union negotiators were able to extract pledges from each of the 16 sugar companies that they will not "terminate sugar operations or begin to terminate" them at least until January 31, 1976. This pledge, however, does not cover *mergers,* in which case the companies can lay off workers, but they have agreed to lay off the most senior employees first, but with no severance pay.

Pine workers fared less well, gaining 50 cents an hour in wage increases over two years, but winning no agreement or pledges against terminations or shut-downs. They did win a severance allowance, and increased the pension rate. Pine workers overwhelmingly ratified the new contract.

Compared to what other Hawaii unions have won recently, these ILWU gains are impressive. But they should be seen in perspective. Sugar prices and profits have more than doubled in the last two years. The workers' productivity has increased several times over in just a few years because of technology. Inflation has already eaten up most of the wage increases won, and the cost-of-living allowance demand was given up. Hawaii has just about the highest cost-of-living in the nation. The job security clauses and no-termination agreement in sugar are "nothing new", as one long-time worker noted, and are short-termed. Considering what workers need to keep up with inflation and the power they need to halt the bosses' runaway schemes, the settlements were clearly not enough and too narrowly arrived at.

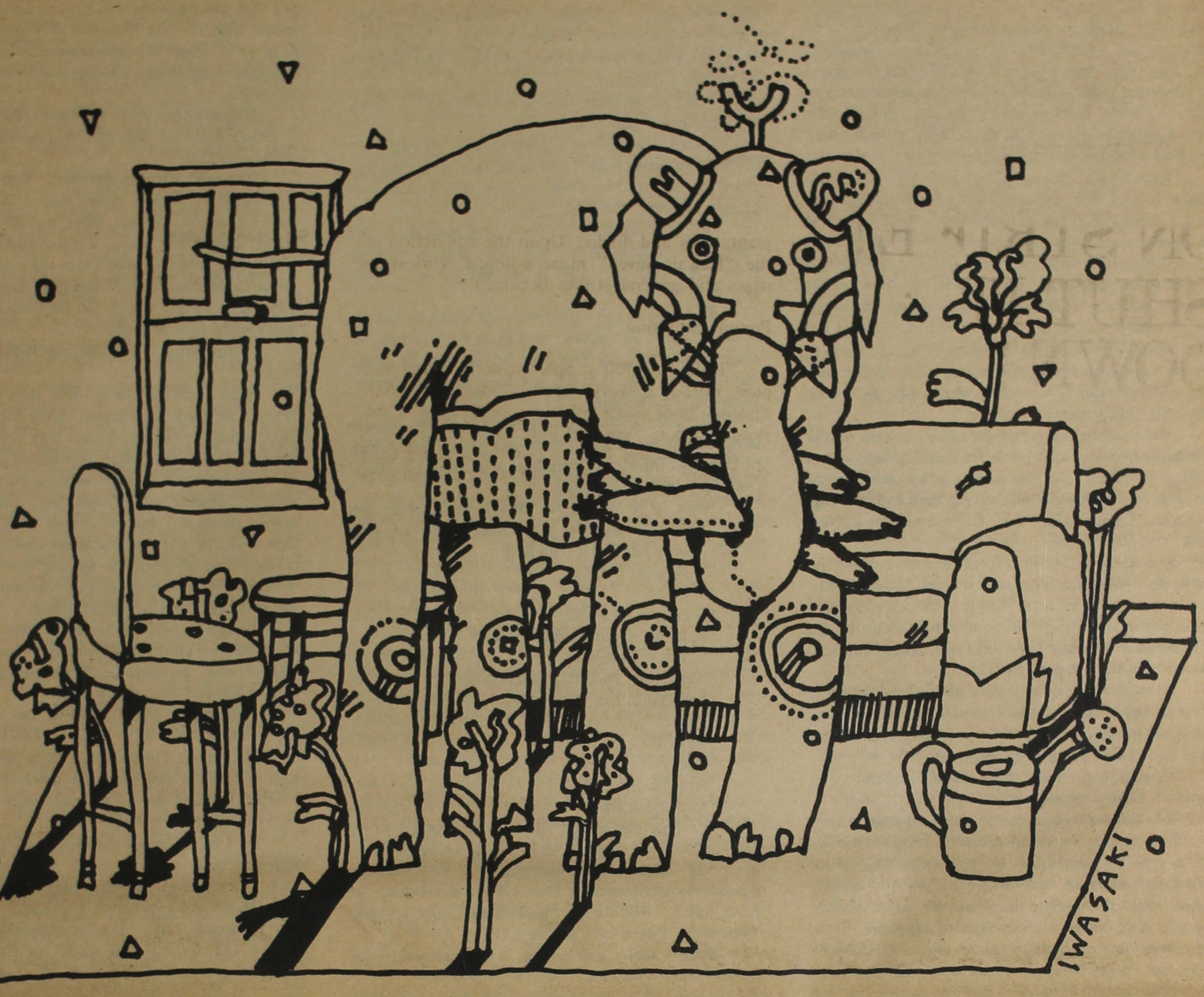
Though in fact the struggles involved all of Hawaii's people and workers, little was done by the union's leadership to alert, inform or mobilize other sections of the people to support and understand this crucial struggle. So this vital confrontation was kept fairly tame, and confined to strictly economic and trade union channels, and was prevented from becoming very political or really educational for most of Hawaii's people.

Nevertheless, the sugar and pine workers are justifiable proud of their solidarity and discipline, and the strength of their strike. Many are also aware of the strike's drawbacks and the limit- even harder in two years to win real no lay-off guarantees and cost-of-living adjustments, and a greater voice in the future of Hawaii's land, agriculture and economy.

The main problem is that as of yet no strong rank-and-file movement has surfaced to give leadership to such a struggle. It will only be with the development of such a rank-and-file movement that a real fight can be waged. Among the ranks of sugar and pine workers there are many militant workers, both old-timers and younger workers who continue to carry forward the militancy which so strongly characterized the earlier days of organizing and struggle.

The immediate task then is to develop a program and strategy which will help build and guide the struggle to stop the runaway shops in Hawaii—a struggle which necessarily raises the political question of who rules Hawaii, the people or the corporations.

—Edited from *The Guardian,* Hawaii Bureau.



CRUISING ON PERUVIAN FLAKE

In Seach Of Truth And Soul On The West Coast

Author's note: In America, human experience manifests itself differently according to various factors. Lifestyles develop within boundaries determined by economics, political climate, racial background and vague time-space influences.

Asian Americans, as a group, experience a distinct lifestyle and though varied in direction and outlook, the ultimate end is usually the same. Our progress and/or confinement in America is due to many outside influences which are, at the moment, beyond our control. Still our people struggle on and fight back. Methods of resistance cover a wide speetrum and rebellion shapes up in different forms.

Author's Forewarning: To all narcotic officers, vice squads, federal agents, law enforcement task forces, and reactionary elements, I must say that the entire content of this story is fictional; a complete fabrication by a dangerously warped mind. It is a pure fantasy trip. Nothing is true...besides, I've changed all the names.

By Steve Tatsukawa

The old, sad-eyed black man behind the cash register stares at us, open mouthed, as we pile our "supplies" on the counter. Two bottles of cheap strawberry wine, two six packs of Colt 45 (tall cans) and a potent fifth of tequila...to keep us warm on cold nights.

"Will that be all?" the old man says as he rings up our bill.

"Give me a pack of Kools," I reply as I draw out my wallet.

"You youngbloods going to a party or something this early?" asks the old man as he pushes our bag full of supplies toward us.

My companion, Bobby, smiles as he picks up the bag and slowly replies, "Man, we are the party."

The sun is casting a warm yellow sheen over the landscape as we exit the liquor store. Flocks of black children run about freely over the sidewalks. A gang of older teenagers strut pass in fearsome formation, stepping in time to the soul music blasting out of a radio one is carrying. Nearby jobless men sit in a shoe shine stand giving us a studied glance. We are in the West Adams district; part of the immense black ghetto of Los Angeles: a ghetto which spreads from the downtown area through West Adams, the Crenshaw district and right up to the Jewish neighborhoods of the Fairfax district on the west. The ghetto also spreads south... eventually to its heart in Watts, and beyond to Willowbrook and Compton twelve miles away.

At the curb is our ride–a blue '64 Chevelle. Traffic on Western Avenue flows by as we pull away from the sidewalk. The street is lined with small bars, pawn shops, soul food cafes and liquor stores–a typical L.A. ghetto street.

Just before we hit the freeway we stop at a gas station to tank up. A young Chicano steps out to serve us. He's bleary-eyed and obviously in a euphoric state.

"Say man," the Chicano says as he wipes the windshield," you Buddhaheads ever try any Angel dust?" He smiles then whispers, "I've been smoking some Angel dust cause my boss ain't here. Not that I'm afraid of him or anything but I need this gig and sometimes he can be a real drag, you know. But, man this Angel dust is some baad shit." He looks over his shoulder then whispers again, "Man, I'm really fucked up."

I reply, "Yeah, I tried some of that stuff before. I heard it rots out your brain cells."

The Chicano stares at me for a second then says, "Well shit, what good are brain cells if you can't get high?" Then he reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a thin joint. "Here man, try this shit...don't worry about no rotten brain cells; just get high. But don't tell no one I gave you that." He hands us the joint.

Bobby puts the joint in his jacket pocket as we start the car, "Thanks bro." The Chicano waves then weaves back into the garage.

We swing back onto Western Ave. then jump on the freeway heading out of town–outta the L.A. smog basin, blowing joints, blasting rock music over the tape deck and cruising along the slow lane, heading eventually–hopefully–to the big apple, New York City.

"You know..." Bobby is having one of his brainstorms as we ride the Ventura Freeway out of Los Angeles County, "You know, man, uh...," Bobby

uses the phrase "you know" a lot, "we could score a lotta free meals by just going into restaurants and sneaking out, you know...without paying, you know? Oh, and then...man we could rip off a suction pump or something somewhere and syphon gas outta cars, you know?" Bobby leans forward in his seat talking to the windshield as he explains his plan, "Man, we don't have to spend a fucking cent on this trip!"

I can't help being caught up in Bobby's diabolical plan so I turn to him and say, "That's badd man...give me five." Bobby slaps my outstretched hand and in doing so causes me to sway over the lane markers. A honk comes from behind as I curve back into the slow lane. A car with Arizona license plates rushes by us and at the steering wheel a fat man wearing a cowboy shirt stares at me coldly. I pick up a can of Colt 45 which I had been sipping from and cordially tip it in his direction. He just smiles and shakes his head as he drives past. The old beer can is something the middle generation can really understand.

We're rolling north first disecting the path of the mid-September sun as it plows through the dry skies of Central California. The plan calls for us to head up along the west coast through California, Oregon and Washington...then Canada...after that...East, somehow to New York.

The whole continent, except for a sliver along the California rim was a big question mark in our minds. Yes, a big question mark for two L.A. Buddhahead freaks exploding through North America's vital innards; on some sort of vague trip, perhaps a magical mystery tour or even the ultimate lowride.

A couple nights before, while cruising the Westside-Gardena axis in L.A., I had even mentioned to Bobby, "Man you just have to realize that people are gonna think we're crazy...that way you can maintain."

"Yeah...that's what L.A. does to people, you know." Bobby agreed.

But now, as we cruise up the California coast I am thinking that we might really be crazy. Here we are: two longhaired Asians, early twenties, out of school, out of work and out on the streets, definite hippie material; heading into territory where slanted eyes are more rare than double-headed dinosaurs. Yeah, everything is suddenly clear to me. We must be crazy cause we're living on the wrong side of the planet. Shit yeah...we must be crazy to think we can zig-zag back and forth over the Canadian border with a kilo of marijuana hidden in our door panel. A kilo whose destination is the big apple. This is maddness!

Friends had warned me about the border crossing. "They'll search you to thee gills. Oh they don't mind you going into the country but when you try to cross back into the U.S. it gets pretty weird. Not as bad as the Mexican border...but then nothing is as bad as the Mexican border." Shit. And it wasn't just the weed either, we also carried along a respectable stash of psychedellics and a surprising amount of cocaine, uppers and, of course, the booze.

We had received a lot of suggestions as to how we should hide out stuff. "Man you cats should just drive across the border in reverse and fake 'em out." Or, "Why don't you cats get a big weather balloon and fill it with helium and put your kilo in there and then tie it to the roof of your car with a string about fifty feet long. Then go driving up to the border and if they start to hassle you just cut the string." (What, cut the string! Shit no!) Or, "You dudes should build a big old catapult about a hundred yards from the fucking border and then just shoot your shit across." Or, "Man, you guys should just be wide open about the whole thing and drive up to the border smashed outta your skulls and get the border guards stoned too. Then take their picture (for evidence)." Anyway...

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One of the challenges of travelling is finding a place to crash for the night. For us, the options were clear: 1) We could sleep in the car even though it was beginning to smell like sweaty gym socks; 2) we could sleep on a park bench or some similar offering but risk being exposed to all sorts of wild creatures on both four and two legs; and 3) we could look up an old college friend of mine named Mikiyo Sakai who was now living in Pacific Grove. After a few minutes of thoughtful contemplation we opted for the third choice.

So as the sun plunges into the cold ocean water, Bobby and I find ourselves pulling into Pacific Grove, California on the Monterey Peninsula. Pacific Grove's one claim to fame is the fact that it is thee breeding ground for monarch butterflies. This means, I assume, if you're a monarch butterfly then, Pacific Grove is a pretty swinging place to be. Anyhow, with only a little difficulty we are able to locate Mikiyo's pad; a modest single story wood structure whose lawn is clipped at an even two foot height. We walk up to the front door. Knock once, knock again. Wait. Knock a third time. A white longhair male answers. Now wait-a-minute, is this the right place? This couldn't be but yeah, it has to be.

"Oh, hi...uh, does...uh Mikiyo live here? I asked, trying to peek into the door.

"Yeah, but Mikiyo's sleeping now. You'll have to see him later, man," and with that the white cat shuts the door on these two hardy souls who have just blasted up Hwy. 101 from L.A.

"Uh..." I stand on the front steps speaking to the closed door in front of me. "Uh...we're Mikiyo's friends from L.A.. Uh, we came to see Mikiyo; we're from L.A."

The door opens. The white cat sticks his shaggy head out again, and smiles. And again I try to peek inside. "Well," says the white cat, "if you guys are all the way up from L.A. then I'll just have to wake him up. Come on in." We enter.

The white cat turns out to be "Rick." He pounds unmercifully on Mikiyo's door and yells, "Hey Prince of Darkness, there's two friends of yours out here. They came up from L.A. to see ya."

While we're waiting for Mikiyo we stand around feeling a bit like elephants in a flower garden—engaging in ridiculously small talk with Rick.

"You guys from L.A., huh?"

"Yeah."

"Gonna be here long?"

"Nah...we're just passing through."

"Where ya headed?"

"Well...New York City...eventually."

"New York, huh?"

"Yeah."

"wow."

"Yeah."

"New York's a trip."

"Yeah...that's what we heard."

But time passes and within what seemed to be only a few short hours, Mikiyo finally comes walking out of his bedroom in what appears to be a cocaine-induced burst of energy; wide eyed and traveling at good speed. We do the "soul shake" then I begin, "Who's the Prince of Darkness?"

Mikiyo smiles and replies, "Hey fuck you cocksucker. How you been?"

I reply, "I'm surviving man. Oh this is my friend Bobby."

"How's it Bobby?" Mikiyo and Bobby do the soul shake.

"Everything is everything," Bobby grins.

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Mikiyo was stumbling out of a chemistry lab at a small California state college when I first met him. He had just blown up the lab. Nothing major—only a small explosion, which knocked him silly (and caused nine hundred dollars damage). The explosion culminated four months of work in which time Mikiyo had been building a clandestine acid factory on campus. It would have been a first; cranking out LSD with the state indirectly covering the cost and supplying the equipment and raw stock.

I had been sitting right outside the lab smoking some Nepalese hash. The explosion knocked the burning chunk of hash out of my pipe (which pissed me off). The lab door opened and following a gush of smoke and chemical stench came Mikiyo.

"Fucking bunsen burner," he cried out as smoke hoovered about his head.

I stood up as well as I could and faced him, "Hey man...you made me drop my hash, man. That ain't too cool, man." I surprised myself at my self-restraint. The hashish had been part of a long awaited sample of an up coming shipment into the area.

"Fuck hash!" Mikiyo shouted as he rubbed his eyes, "Hash ain't gonna save the human race. Acid is the only way. And now I gotta start all over again. Just because of the fucking bunsen burner."

With the aid of a large joint I was able to calm Mikiyo down a bit and he explained his scheme. He wanted to produce and distribute LSD on a grand scale. In his words, "I wanna outdeal the honkies. I wanna turn on everyone. I don't give a shit about making bread...I wanna make a revolution through psychedelics." The plan sounded reasonable to me.

For the next year and a half we spent every weekend getting to know people operating other acid labs. From Venice to Laguna Beach the word spread that two Asian freaks were willing to distribute any "quality acid" that was produced. Week nights we spent dealing chemicals...we sold it, traded it and, most of the time, gave it away to wired-out, over-amped crazies in the Harbor area of L.A.

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Bobby and I finally unload our sleeping bags and as I kick off my shoes Mikiyo is snorting in the first of several lines of coke lying out on a glass plate in front of him. He passes the plate around and the conversation continues with Mikiyo making weird snorting sounds as he speaks.

"(snort) Ahhh man...hey (snort) do you guys know if there's a lot of reds in L.A. (snort)? Mikiyo asks rather nonchalantly.

I answer with the question, "You mean the kind you drop?" Mikiyo nods, then I continue, "Yeah there's reds all over the place, but we ain't into that scene. It gets too heavy, if you know what I mean."

"Shit," Mikiyo stares into space as he talks, "I'm gonna move down to L.A. and deal downers. Shit, you know in some places reds sell for a buck a hit. Man, I could make a lot of bread."

"What happened to the psychedelic revolution?" I ask.

Mikiyo pauses for a while then softly answers, "People are stupid you know. They don't know a good thing when they see it. I guess they just weren't ready for acid. They misused it, you know, got into the giggly teenybopper day trips without ever understanding what acid represented. People don't deserve acid...they deserve downers." Mikiyo thinks over his line of logic then adds, "But if the time seems right then I'm gonna explode acid all over the fucking scene...just like the old days. And you're gonna help me right?" He stares at me, wild-eyed for a long silent period.

Before I could answer Rick interrupts, "Say you know that one Morning Glory seed is equal to one microgram of acid. So all you gotta do is eat about four hundred of 'em and you get spaced out.

I lean back trying to digest this most recent information, "No shit, Morning Glory seeds, huh?"

Rick nods conclusively, "Yup and they're legal too...or else the pigs never pay much attention to 'em. I ate six hundred the last time and next time I'm gonna do in about eight hundred."

As I recall, about fourteen hours passed, we gave Mikiyo's stash a pretty good run through smoking: grass (Vietnamese), Hashish (Lebanonese), peyote buttons (Hopi) and swallowing a teeny-tiny chunk of pure San Franciscan LSD. The accompanying conversation weaved and dodged with what ever drug was in command of our heads and bodies. We talked about how there weren't any more real hippies, the Sunset Strip, the San Francisco Oracle, ethnic studies, drugs, rock and roll, basketball, and the most recent Monterey Jazz Festival, at which Mikiyo had tried to bribe the gate guards into letting him through without a ticket in exchange for a handful of joints. My cheeks were becoming painful because of the permanent smile which had been created by the various drugs I had ingested. I knew the acid was the main culprit. A psychedelic smile can creep up on you then plaster itself to your face like a blood leech. Anyway, Mikiyo wasn't successful in his attempt to bribe the guards.

"I should have used smack," he concludes laying out some more cocaine.

"Yeah," Bobby nods, "the pigs are big smack freaks, you know."

Rick looks up from a dark corner and adds, "You keep your needles away from me you bunch of slave drivers."

"Yeah," Mikiyo looks at Rick then to me and Bobby, "but I gotta go to work now, so you guys rest up and help yourself to some eats and if I don't see you by the time you split...you guys take it easy."

We all shake hands again without thinking it odd that the "host" was leaving and the guests were staying.

"Yeah you take care of yourself too." I reply as Mikiyo leaves the house then I ask, "Hey where do you work anyhow?"

Mikiyo yells back from beside his 1961 Plymouth Valiant, "I got a gig pumping gas in Monterey...It's screwed but I survive. Have a good trip, man."

"Yeah, we will, don't worry. I'll send you a postcard. Take it easy."

"Will do, man. Easy." And with that Mikiyo's car starts up and drives off into the rising sun...on the wrong side of the street.

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In less than six hours after we left Pacific Grove Bobby and I find ourselves (smashed on acid) in the lobby of the Winterland Arena in San Francisco. It is Friday night and the Grateful Dead are back in their home town to do their thing. All the colorful, spaced out "Dead freaks" have turned out and Bobby and I stand dazed and confused watching them flow pass us. This isn't the glitter crowd; these are the original hippie freaks. It is as though someone had re-created a gypsy carnival in the middle of San Francisco. We are still standing in the lobby, waiting for the anonymous lead off band to clear the stage for the Dead's first set, when we see Ron.

Ron is originally from L.A., the Westside, but recently he had taken up a hobby which he called "traveling." It consisted of spending one stoned out weekend after another in various "spots of interest" up and down the California coast. This weekend he had pulled into San Francisco and wound up at the Dead gig half blind from Kentucky bourbon and speeding around like a motherfucker. The sounds of the lead off band drifts out of the arena into the lobby, it seems to be good tight rock/boogie and Ron is hopping and bopping through the lobby to the beat of the music. He bumps right into me; I see it coming but couldn't move in time, in fact, I have a hard time believing I am not hallucinating the whole incident.

Ron looks at us and shouts, "Saaay...what you dudes doing up here?"

Bobby explains, "We're on our way to New York, man. We're just stopping off in Frisco to catch our breath, you know."

"Yeah, I hear ya, man. That's what I'm doin' too." Ron grins, then continues, "say...uh, look why don't I join you cats on the New York thing?"

Though surprised, I answer, "That's cool with me but we're splitting tomorrow."

Ron didn't answer immediately, instead he pulls a match book cover and scribbles an address on it. "Here, man. This is where I'm crashing, it's near Chinatown. Come and pick me up whenever you decide to split." Before I could continue the conversation a young Asian girl walks up next to Ron and takes his arm. It looks like she has wrapped her body in a sheet of very sheer gauze. Yes, very sheer guaze which almost disappeared under the backlighting of the lobby. Ron smiles at her then said to me, "Well, I'll catch you two later. Remember don't forget to pick me up." With that Ron and the girl dance into the arena.

Shortly thereafter (maybe about three hours later) the Dead are burning through their set and Bobby and I are bouncing and shaking to the rhythm along with the rest of the crowd. Out of nowhere, two concert security men come by carrying a limp figure between them. It is Ron. He is on his way to the hospital to have his stomach pumped. We later found out he had guzzled down a fifth of Wild Turkey and then promptly vomited violently as he passed out. As he is being carried past he lifts his head and hoarsely whispers, "Man, this is a baad party!" He slumps over again then surprisingly looks up quickly and added, "Don't forget to pick me up tomorrow." Again he slumps over and is hauled toward the door with his feet dragging on the ground.

The concert ends as the sun is coming up over Oakland. We leave the arena and stand around for a while watching the battle weary rock and roll crowd head home. I turn to Bobby as the crowd thins out and say, "Let's get a bite to eat then go over to this address Ron gave me."

As it turns out it is past noon by the time we finally begin looking for Ron's address. We spend the morning hours shooting pin ball as the acid slowly wore off. Then we both take a short nap in Golden Gate Park and are rudely awaken by panhandler/wino who trips over Bobby then me as we are sleeping on the grass.

"Oh...sorry...I didn't see ya," slurs the wino.

"Ahhh, that's all right," I answer.

"You mean you ain't gonna beat me up?" asks the wino brushing himself off.

"Naw man...we ain't gonna beat you up," I reply getting up from the grass.

"Can you spare me some change? I haven't eaten anything in two days and I'm mighty hungry," the wino begs.

"No, man we can't spare anything," Bobby answers getting back on his feet, "except this." Bobby then reaches into his coat and brings out a small plastic box. Out of the box he pulls a hit of clear window paine acid and gives it to the wino. "Here man...eat that and you won't worry about being hungry for a while." We both get back into the car leaving the wino standing on the lawn staring at the LSD in his hand.

We arrive in Chinatown shortly after noon. The narrow streets are clogged with venders, small children, elderly people and supplemented by smells and sounds in the atmosphere. We drive down Grnat Ave. looking for the address which Ron had given us. Eventually our search takes us across Broadway and into the North Beach night club area. And finally, this is where we find Ron's address. It is an apartment above the Kit-Kat Club (which features "The Carnal Carnival of Sex"). We walk up the stairway when I notice there is no apartment number on the match cover.

"Hey Bobby...that dude didn't write down his apartment number." Upon hearing this Bobby begins walking through the apartment building yelling Ron's name (of course I joined him). We cover four floors yelling "Hey Ronnie," "Hey Ron, open up." Then finally on the fifth floor a door opens; it's Ron.

"What the fuck you two yelling about?" Ron moans as he holds the door open for us. "People are gonna think Asians ain't got no manners!"

"Sorry, man," Bobby explains, "but you didn't write down your apartment number and we had to find ya some way, you know."

"Alright...alright," Ron says as we walk into the kitchen and sit down around a small table.

"Who's pad is this?" I ask looking around the room.

"Remember that chick I was with last night at the gig? This is her boyfriend's pad but he's out working right now...I don't think he likes me but the chick makes him let me stay here," Ron explains.

"Well, we're ready to split man," I announce.

"How much dope you guys got on you?" Ron asks with a squinted eye.

"We got enough for the trip," I reply.

"Some grass and some other stuff," Bobby adds.

"Well...I got some weed too, and I just scored some hash and I got a little acid but it probably won't last long." Ron smiles then continues, "How you guys gonna get to New York?"

"Up to Vancouver then across Canada to Winnepeg then back into the U.S. and east from there," Bobby explains in a matter of fact tone of voice.

I continue, "Yeah then around the Great Lakes and Chicago. Then back into Canada to Montreal and maybe Quebec then back into the U.S. again straight to New York City."

"Shit how many times you guys gonna cross the fucking border?" Ron asks.

"At least four times," I answer.

"Shit, you know they might hassle you at the border don't you," Ron warns.

"Yeah, but we got the stuff hidden pretty good."

"It's never hidden good enough." Ron concludes grimly. Then silence; spending time in prison for international dope smuggling is quite a sobering thought.

Ron has a good size hunk of Peruvian Flake cocaine. He cuts off a corner and crushes it into powder with his knife. We snort a few lines a piece and the conversation takes off again but on another tangent, definitely drug induced.

"Man, when we get to New York we ought to sell your car and go to Europe." Ron grins at me as he speaks. "Then we could spend the winter there skiing and traveling. Either that or go to Alaska or Nepal." Ron always has big plans constantly going through his head.

"Shit, why don't we just drive down to Peru and score some cocaine then sell it and go around the whole fuckin world." I ask, trying my hardest to be real sarcastic.

Naturally, Ron answers, "That sounds good, too."

Then Bobby jumps in, "Man, we gotta make it to New York first. And I'm not sure the ride is gonna hold itself together all that way."

"How you guys coming back?" Ron asks.

"Well down to Washington D.C. then it's up in the air, but we'd like to check out some of the South and Southwest," I explain.

Ron shakes his head and says, "There ain't nothing down there that interests me. Cause there's nothing but rednecks down there and I ain't interested in no rednecks trying to tar and feather me!" Again there is silence; it's not our fault we're gooks but then the rednecks don't understand that. Some more coke sends us off into another dialogue.

"Well I only got about forty dollars on me. You think I can make it to New York and back to LA on forty bucks?" Ron asks.

"Fuck no," we answer in unison.

"How much money do you dudes have?" Ron asks sarcastically.

"Well," I explain, "I got about a hundred bucks."

"And I got eighty-five," smiles Bobby.

"Wow, regular tycoons," Ron smirks, then finishes with, "at least we got us a pretty decent stash."

"Yup," I reply, "dope can see you through times of no money better than money can see you through times of no dope."

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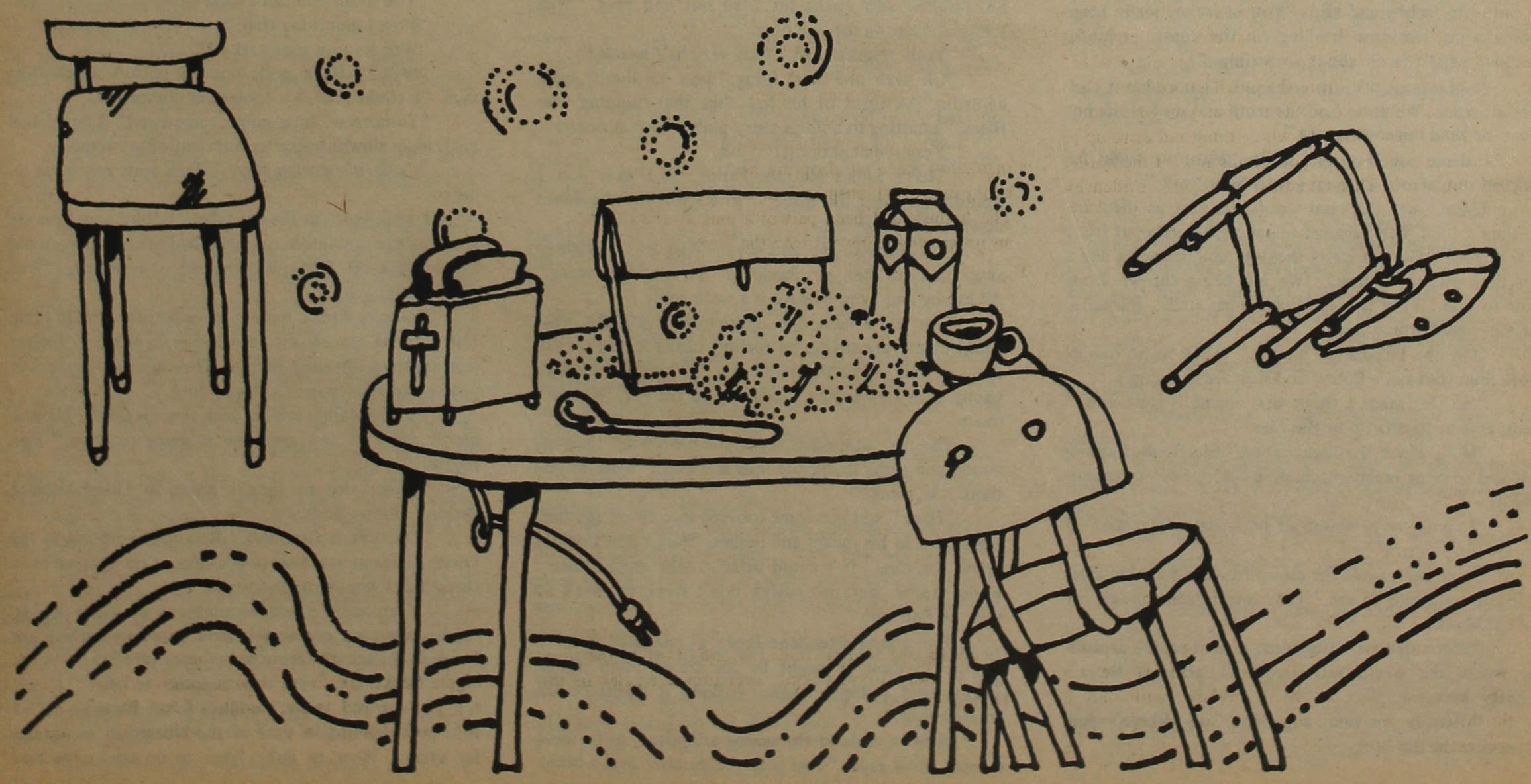
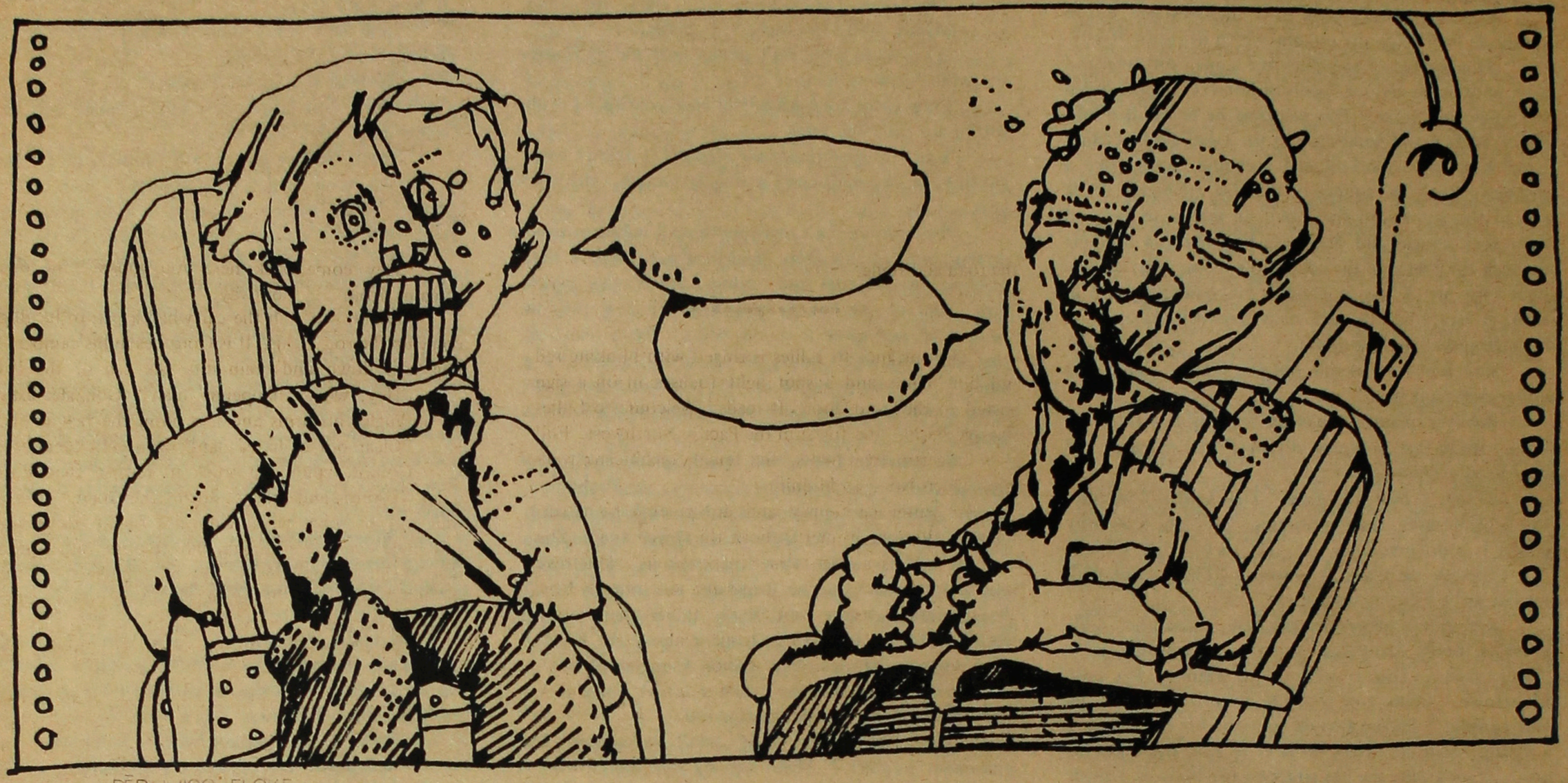
We stop at a gas station in downtown San Francisco, drop some acid in the restroom and rip off six quarts of oil on the way out. Then watching the trees bob and weave through acid eyes; we all sit back and enjoy the cruise. What is to become the regular seating arrangement goes something like this: I am the main driver and keep a pocket full of joints and uppers on me; Bobby takes the front passenger seat and is in charge of





PERUVIAN FLAKE

keeping music going in the tape deck and old Ron has the rear seat to himself along with most of the booze. In the glove compartment is our stash (which Bobby periodically checks to see if everything is all right). And still hidden in the door panel is the kilo of marijuana.

We spend a week snaking up the west coast; many times lost so bad that nearly all hope of seeing civilization had vanished. But, if I recall correctly, we passed through numerous "spots of interest." In Mendicino, California, Ron, in a fit of drunken fury threw a wine bottle through the front windshield of a parked police car. The driver was having a cup of coffee at the time so luckily we got away. At the California/Oregon border we stocked up on booze; nearly filling the back seat with bottles and cans of various potency and, although cramped, Ron didn't complain. At Coos Bay, Oregon, Bobby traded some acid for some mescaline capsules and in Eugene, I traded most of the mescaline for some tickets to the UCLA/Oregon football game (which Ron traded, at the gate, for some psilosybin and a fifth of Jack Daniels). In Portland, Oregon we "found" three slightly used typewriters which we traded for a fifth of I.W. Harper, five lids of Panama Red and a chrome plated .357 Magnum. In a small hamlet south of Olympia, Washington, Ron (again, in a drunken fury) threw the chrome-plated .357 Magnum through the front window of a police station...again, we got away.

Still, we keep driving. It was as though we are in pursuit of some ever-evasive object. We are about sixty miles south of Seattle, I am still at the wheel, Bobby has just exchanged an Allman Brothers tape for some Stevie Wonder, and Ron is crashed out in the back; I turn to Bobby and said, "You know we really been doing some fearsome trashing up the coast. I kinda wonder what it's all about sometimes."

Bobby grins, "Truth and soul! That's what it's all about, man! We gotta find the truth and soul of life before the final burnout comes."

I shake my head and smile, "Man, we might be burned out before we even get to New York."

Those are the fatal words, for just as they are spoken a loud metal against metal crash bursts out from the engine. The car starts shaking and bouncing like a chicken without a head. We are being thrown from side to side. Then it stops and the car stalls. Silence... and an ugly burning smell.

"Oh oh...I think we blew it," I say to no one in particular (but hope Bobby and Ron are listening.).

"No shit man...I think that engine is gone now." Ron says as he sits up in the rear.

"Man, where the fuck are we," asks Bobby looking around to some pretty astounding countryside surrounding us.

"I think we're about an hour out of Seattle," I say sadly.

We all get out of the car and look under the hood. "It looks all right to me," I say, wiping some grease off of the block.

"You stupid ass! The inside of that engine probably looks like World War Two took place in there," shouts Ron.

"What do you think happened?" asks Bobby while checking the dip stick.

"It don't really matter what happened...the thing is we ain't got a ride anymore. And we can't even get to Seattle let alone New York," complains Ron.

We're standing at the side of the highway looking down at the engine when a sheriff's car slips up behind us. Oh oh this is it, I think, the car is so dirty with drugs that we'll be lucky to get a life sentence.

The sheriff slowly gets out of his car and slowly says, "You boys want me to push you to the gas station in Lacey?"

We all look at each other then Ron asks, "where's Lacey?"

The sheriff slowly looks up at Ron then replies, "You're in it."

We all look around. There were a cluster of buildings off in the distance. It looks like a general store, maybe a couple of small shops, a cafe and some mobile homes plus, distinctly in the distance, a gas station.

"So this is Lacey," Bobby asks spreading his arms apart.

"Yup," says the sheriff, "and we take pride in our crime free environment." Then after pausing to give Ron a glance he adds, "and we're always willing to assist tourists in trouble.

"Do you think someone can fix the car over there?" Ron asks politely.

"Don't know," replies the sheriff adjusting his wide brim smokey-the-bear hat, "but it's better than sitting here."

We all get back in the car and the sheriff slowly walks back to his ride and slowly pushes us into "downtown" Lacey. At the gas station the sheriff rolls down his window and sticks his head out and says, "Well that's all I can do for you boys."

"Yeah, thanks, man," I say very half heartedly.

"Oh yeah one more thing," says the sheriff again adjusting the brim of his hat, "see that building over there?" pointing to a single story pink stucco structure.

"Yeah, what about it?" I ask.

"That's Lillies Massage Parlor. If I were you, I wouldn't go near the place." And with that he drives slowly off into the sun.

Ron turns to me and says, "Well let's straighten away the car then go check out the massage parlor." All Bobby and I can manage is a weak smile.

Two white men, one about twenty and the other about ninety are sitting on rocking chairs in the gas station. I walk up to them and say, "I think something's wrong with our engine," pointing to the car, "it won't move."

The two attendants study me for a while then the young one turns to the old man and asks, "What do you think it is, Hank?"

"Hank" spit out some tobacco into an oil can then leans back in his rocker and replies, "Well I don't rightly know for sure. If I could listen to the engine then I would know...but the engine don't work so that's no way to find out."

The young attendant looks at me then back to Hank, "I think it might be the transmission, Hank. That's what I think, Hank. I think it might be the transmission."

Hank squints at the young attendant, spits more tobacco then says, "You gotta be dumber that a blind jack ass boy! This boy, here," pointing to me, "just said the engine don't start. Now if it was the transmission you'd still get some action outta the engine."

"Well, what do you think, Hank?" the young attendant asks rocking quickly back and forth in his chair.

"Well..." Hank says, spitting some tobacco (and missing the can), "like I said, I can't rightly tell without the engine running, and the engine don't work, so there's no way to find out fer sure."

Not wanting to wait for the climax of the drama unfolding before me I interrupt, "Is there anything you can do about the car?"

"Well, I can't rightly tell you yes or no," says Hank

"Say what?" I ask.

"What?" Hank asks back.

"Say what," I ask again.

"Where you from boy?" Hank asks cautiously.

"L.A."

"Oh...yeah I been to Los Angeles once. There's a whole lot of pretty girls down there," says Hank.

"Oh yeah?" says the young attendant rocking back and forth fiercely.

"Yup," shouts Hank, "I was down there in 1926... no it was 1927. Yup, all kinds of pretty girls down there."

I scratch my head then ask, "Uh...about the car...do you think you can find out what's wrong?"

Hank looks back up at me, spits some tobacco again then says, "Well like I said I can't rightly tell you yes or no because to find out what's wrong with the engine I gotta listen to the engine and you keep telling me that it don't work so there ain't much else I can do."

"You mean you can't fix it?"

"Now I didn't say that."

"Well are you gonna fix it?"

"Well..." Hank pulls out his pocket watch then says, "I could give it a look over tomorrow."

"Tomorrow...how come tomorrow?" I could feel my temper slowly trying to burst out of my temples.

"Cause it's closing time," Hank spits out some tobacco.

I walk back to the car where Bobby and Ron are speaking to a young Chicano who had driven up in an old camper pick-up. Ron questions me as I approach. "Well what did they say?"

I answer with a wide-eyed expression, "Man them cats must be spaced out on wood grain alcohol. I never seen anything like them before. They say they gotta wait until tomorrow cause it's closing time."

"Oh man, what kind of hick town is this?! The sun hasn't even set and everyone is going to sleep," Ron moans.

"Either that or they're going to Lillies Massage Parlor," Bobby adds.

"Oh, this is Gonzales," Ron says pointing to the young Chicano standing beside him. "He says we're in the redneck capital of the world."

"Yeah man," Gonzales smiles as we shake hands, "these cats ain't gonna help you dudes unless you got hundred dollar bills falling out of your pockets."

"Well, what are we suppose to do?" I ask.

"Fuck if I know," bellows Ron. We drift off into a post-psychedelic gaze at the blue-green mountains far away. What to do? What to do about the car?

What to do about the rednecks? What to do about ourselves? 'What to do' had lost it's meaning.

"You know," begins Bobby thoughtfully, "I'm game to try to hitch to New York. It shouldn't take too long, you know."

"Oh yeah, man," Ron says sarcastically, "we're gonna hitch across the country carrying all that weed and over a hundred hits of acid, and who knows how much coke and hash and other shit we got on us."

"Not to mention all that booze," I add.

Gonzales breaks in with, "Man, you guys know how to travel," and has a look of serious respect on his face.

"We try to enjoy our work," replies Ron calmly.

"You cats can crash with me if you want to," Gonzales offers, "but it'll be really crowded."

Bobby tilts his head and asks, "You live in Lacey?"

"Well kinda," Gonzales answers, "I live in there." He points proudly to his battered camper.

"No shit," Ron smiles at the camper. It is a 1948 Ford pick-up which looked as if some drunken air force pilot had hit it with napalm.

"Yeah man," Gonzales shakes his head up and down as he speaks, "I got a job picking apples on a ranch just outside of town. I'm on my dinner break right now. I was heading back to work when I saw you guys." He pauses then proudly adds, "I used to know a Chinese dude in Seattle."

We all nod our heads in silence.

"Well..." Ron breaks in as he glances around the landscape, "I think I'd like to get outta here...maybe make it up to Seattle."

"Hey," shouts Bobby snapping his fingers on one hand and reaching for his wallet with the other, "I got this contact in Seattle."

"You do?" Ron, Gonzales and myself answer in unison.

"Well kinda," Bobby says sheepishly. "I don't really know the dude but I was passed his name and address right before we split L.A. I forgot all about it." Bobby lifts a tattered paper from his wallet and reads it, "Let's see, it's Alex and Kenny Murakami in Seattle and here's the street and the phone."

"Well, give them a call," I say and after doing so "give five" to Ron's outstretched palm.

Bobby strolls into a phone booth near the front of our dead car and closes the door behind him. He grins at us through the glass then sticks in some coins, dials, opens the phone booth door and says, "I need another quarter."

Ron hands him some more coins. Bobby smiles and again closes the glass door. He turns away from us and bends over the receiver. In a short while he appears to be carrying on a very animated conversation with some unknown party on the other end. After about ten minutes Bobby steps out of the booth smiling like crazy.

"What happened?" Ron asks rubbing his bearded chin.

Bobby, still grinning, throws his arms out and says, "Everything's cool, man. They sound like good brothers, man. They said they can pick us up around nine tonight. We gotta meet them at the on-ramp to the highway." Bobby finishes grinning then asks, "What time is it right now?"

None of us have a watch. Then I remember Hank in the gas station had a pocket watch. "I'll go ask these dudes what time it is," motioning toward the two figures still in the rocking chairs.

"Good luck," Gonzales smiles.

I walk back into the station building and yell, "Any of you characters know what the fucking time it is?"

They both look shocked. A foul-mouthed gook is confronting them. Oh horror. Oh nightmare to end all nightmares. Hank stops rocking and slowly lifts his watch out of his pocket. He never takes his eyes off of me as he holds the watch up so I could read the face. It's five-thirty.

"Well...uh...eyes shore is much obliged to y'all, masta." I mock-drawl then spin around and do the "Temptation Walk" out of the door. I could see it now, at Hank's dinner table, telling his wife how he wants to move out to the "country" cause some drug-crazed gook-nigger-hippie nearly killed him at work.

"We got a three and a half hour wait," I say as I near the boys around the dead car.

"Oh no...it's after five...shit. I gotta get back to work," Gonzales says as he suddenly dashes off to his camper. He returns carrying a six pack of beer. "Here you dudes might as well kill these off while you're waiting. I get off of work around nine so I might see you again then."

"Thanks bro," Bobby says taking the beer out of Gonzales' hands.

We spend the next two hours sitting in and on top of the dead car drinking the beer, some of our own booze (the I.W. Harper), smoking joints and cursing the racism in the world. We listen to the stereo tapes, playing all the black soul music we have at top volume for the benefit of the Lacey citizenry. When the sun is firmly set behind distant mountains, Ron asks, "Man, ain't there nothing to do in this fucking redneck town?"

I smile and joke, "There's always Lillies Massage Parlor."

We all look over at the pink stucco building down the road and smile.

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The entrance to Lillies is ringed with blinking red and blue lights and a spot light focuses in on a sign posted to the front door. It reads: Welcome to Lillies Massage Parlor—the finest in the Pacific Northwest. Full body fingertip treatments. Six female technicans available. Open Noon to Midnite.

We enter cautiously and are greeted by a surprisingly stunning brunette about thirty years old. She is sitting behind a glass-topped desk through which we notice her extremely hot hot pants and long shapely legs.

She smiles as we walk up to the desk and boldly says, "You fellows like to get going early, don't you?" We all smile not knowing exactly how to reply. "You're not from around here are you fellows?" the receptionist continues as she pushes forward some sort of hotel register book.

"No, we're just passing through from L.A." Bobby replies softly.

"Well..." the receptionist beams, "I hope you all enjoy your stay here. We operate just like some of the better parlors in L.A. I used to work at the Tiger Den Massage in Hollywood." She pauses, looks up at us then says, "You'll all have to sign this register. The rooms are private and the girls are very friendly. Uh...it'll be fifteen dollars...in advance."

We each pay our dues somewhat reluctantly, sign the register and wait for the next move. The receptionist picks up our greenbacks and says, "Excuse me a second. I have to put this in the safety deposit box. I'll be right back."

Our mouths sag open as the receptionist stands up. She is tall and the platform shoes she is wearing makes her tower over us. She is wearing a very brief halter top which, in addition to her hot pants, gives us a very good sampling of her eye-opening anatomy. Stepping into an adjacent room with our money, she closes the door, only to reappear within a minute.

She stands before us with her hands on her hips and with a suddenly husky/sexy voice she says, "Follow me...I'll take you over to the introduction room."

We follow closely behind the receptionist eyeing the curvature of her backside critically. Excellent material, I think, examining her hot pants carefully.

She walks to a door near the rear of the building, opens it slightly, revealing another short hallway and another door at the far end. Then she says, "Right in there through that door is the introduction room. Make yourself at home. The girls will be by shortly." She winks at us then starts wiggling back toward the front lobby.

Closing the first door behind us, we walk down the hallway and step through the second door. All of a sudden, we find ourselves in a partially enclosed courtyard. We look around then at each other. Ron steps back to the door...it's locked.

"A fucking burn," Bobby yells as we all begin running to the front of the building. As we get to the front parking lot we notice two police cars sitting near the entrance. We slow to a deliberate walk.

The front door is open. The receptionist is standing in the lobby talking to a pair of police officers, both of whom resemble the one we had met earlier in the day right down to the smokey-the-bear hats. As we appear in the doorway the receptionist cries out, "There they are! These are the ones!"

Before we know it the two pole-lease dudes are standing right in front of us. One—fat, tall and mean-looking—growls, "You boys better come down to the station with us. We'd like to talk to you."

We all back step. Bobby yells, "Shit, man we didn't do nothing! She burned us for fifteen bucks apiece!" pointing at the receptionist.

The fat, tall, mean looking pole-lease man shakes his head and slowly explains, "Lilly here says you boys came in here and...uh, exposed yourselves in an indecent manner." In the background Lilly smiles innocently.

"No man, that's jive!" I yell, almost in a state of shock.

"Where you boys from?" the second officer, a slimmer version of the first, asks.

"L.A.," I reply briskly.

"Look, we don't like you L.A. punks coming up here and causing all kinds of trouble," warns the first officer.

"Man, we haven't done shit!" insists Ron.

"Hey Herb," the first officer says to the second, "Let's take there punks into the station. We're wasting our time here."

The two pole-lease men start toward us. Suddenly, Ron pushes a plastic plant in their path. We fly out of the door and down the street toward our dead car.

"Hey come back here you gooks!" he officer screams from the doorway.

We almost reach the car when a pair of headlights come up the road at us. It is Gonzales in his camper. We flag him down and cram into the cab of the truck.

"Hey, what's happenin' man?" Gonzales asks us he untangles his arms and legs from the rest of us.

"Clear out of here, man!" Ron yells breathlessly.

Gonzales puts the truck in reverse then does a quick U-turn and blasts down the road. We are well out of town when Gonzales finally slows down and pulls over. We explain the situation and Gonzales says,"Yeah, Lillies always rips off strangers. I think the cops get a cut. They won't hassle you anymore—if you leave town."

"What a mind-fuck this town is!" Bobby complains.

"I say lets split now. I ain't lettin' them redneck pigs take me down to the station. I ain't that hard up for a bloody nose," says Ron.

"Hey, aren't them dudes from Seattle suppose to meet us at the highway around nine?" I ask seeking a possible escape route from the hell-hole we have fallen into.

"Yeah, let's do it!" Bobby replies.

Gonzales drives us back to the dead car where we quietly and quickly lift out our dope, booze and sleeping bags.

"We'll have to come back for the rest of the shit later," I say as I jump into Gonzales' truck with the others.

"Yeah, no one will mess with it. People are too lame around here," Gonzales explains as he starts up the truck.

"I don't know about that...I feel pretty lame now," Ron admits while softly pounding the dashboard.

At the highway on-ramp we pull over to the side of the road. We wait in silence (which is broken periodically by Ron, burping in the direction of the town.)

Within a half an hour a dusty '65 Mustang pulls up and stops across the street from us. Two longhaired Asians are inside. Noticing this, Ron, Bobby and myself step out of the camper and cross the road.

As we approach the Mustang, a window rolls down and a grinning face says,"Are you the cats from L.A.?"

"Yeah," answers Bobby,"I'm the guy who spoke to you on the phone. You're the Murakami brothers right?"

"You got it man. I'm Kenny and this is Alex," says the younger looking one. We all introduce ourselves while manipulating our hands through the "soul shake." Then we walk back to Gonzales who is warming up his truck and smiling.

"Hey brother...if we ever cross paths again we gotta get down and party some,"I say to a nodding Gonzales. Ron and Bobby step up and give him joints and a couple bottles of wine.

Gonzales flashes a clenched fist salute and says, "You dudes take it easy." Then he drives off, back toward Lacey.

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We all settle down into the back seat of the car as it heads toward Seattle. Alex is driving. He apprears to be in his mid-twenties and possesses a prominent Van Dyke. Kenny, is maybe three years younger than his brother and wears a wide brim hat over his flowing hair. He looks over the rear of the front passenger seat, checking us out and after awhile asks,"You guys wanna smoke a hash-oil joint?"

We breathe easy at last, nodding our heads like pistons.

"Man, you cats picked an off-the-wall spot to break down," Kenny smiles as he passes the joint back to Ron and blows smoke in my face.

"That fucking town," Ron says as he exhales, "I'm gonna come back some day and blow it up, then burn it down."

"How about raping that Lilly girl while we're at it it?" I add and smile

The urban lights multiply endlessly as we near Seattle. New York seems very very far away at the moment. In fact, even old L.A. seems to be only a series of faint memories. The ultimate lowride; our Asian renagade rampage and pilgrimage show has bogged down.

PERUVIAN FLAKE

Through hash-heavy eyes we silently watch the lights of Seattle explode around us. Seattle, the Queen of the Pacific Northwest; home of the Sonics, Boeing Aircraft, Jimi Hendrix. And little did we know, we were entering the most boisterous port city on the West Coast of the United States.

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Everything is black as I wake up. I slowly feel my eyes to make sure they're open (and they are). Oh no, I can't see a thing! I'm blind; I've lost my vision! Oh whoa is me; I can't see a damn thing!

Then I remember I'm in a small closet like room in the basement of the house which the Murakami brothers are renting. It's pitch black in the windowless hole. I grope about for the light cord and as I pull it, a bare bulb brusts forth blinding me with a naked white light. Oh shit, I'm blind again! I've damaged my eyes beyond repair!

My pupils dialate back to normal as I look around the moist green walls of the basement. Seattle...what a trip! What the hell am I doing in Seattle?

I crumble back onto the mattress and sigh heavily as I recall the events of the previous week—spent in Seattle. That fucking redneck town and that dumb Lillie broad is gonna get it. It's all their fault.

The first day we had spent getting stoned and discussing what we should do. It would have been easy to have left the dead car in Lacey. But Ron reminded Bobby and myself that our New York kilo was still tucked behind the door panels. We only had about a quarter pound of weed with us so, definitely another excursion to Lacey was in order. Being stranded without a car is one thing, but being without dope is a whole different problem.

With drug-altered optimism we also decided to try to get the car running again. We figured it would take maybe a week or ten days to get the car on the road.

All we had to do was fix the engine.

"Do you know anything about cars?" Ron asked me after hitting some coke lines.

"Yeah, man," I smiled, "I can change the oil, the spark plugs and...uh, I can change the tires."

"Fuck," Ron grumbled as he turned to Bobby asking the same question.

Bobby answered (with coke falling from his nose), "Me? Shit yeah! I had a gig pumping gas once and sometimes I use to lube cars on the rack."

"Oh fuck," Ron growled.

"How about you? Are you some kind of ace mechanic or something?" Bobby asked Ron with sharp sarcasism.

Ron sat back in his chair and smiled then replied, "Man, I watched a dude replace his engine once. It's a bitch but it can be done."

Early the next morning, in a rented pickup, the three of us drove back to Lacey. We hooked the dead car to the rear of the truck and hauled it back into Seattle.

As we entered the driveway to the Murakami pad, Kenny Murakami looked down at us from an open second story window and yelled:

"You cats think you can get that piece of shit back together?"

"Shit yeah," I yelled back, "We all worked on cars before! This ain't shit! Man, we'll have this baby running by the end of the week."

"Hey that's cool. Maybe me and Alex can get together a going away party for you cats."

"Just make sure you got a lot of dope and booze," Ron warned.

"And a lot of women," I added.

"Yeah! A lot of women!" Bobby confirmed.

* * *

Now one week has passed. The car is still in the garage, mostly in several scattered disassembled piles of greasy parts. And here I am stumbling around a dark, dank basement with my eyes dialating like crazy. I climb up the long creaking stairway out of the basement and in to the living room. Ron, Bobby and the two Murakami brothers are watching a college football game on television. The musty smell of marijuana floats around the house.

I intercept the pipe of weed as it circles the room then after a few good puffs I shout,"Hey man, where's the party?"

Bobby turns to me and hoarsely whispers,"Hey man don't bother these dudes (pointing to the two Murakamis.) We turned them on to some window pane a little while ago and I think they're really locked into the football game."

I glance at the two brothers and in doing so catch Kenny's eyes. He grins at me madly, points at the TV set and shakes his head up and down and side to side. "What it is, brother!" he yells at me, holding out his palm.

"What it is, Kenny...what it is!" I answer as we slap hands.

Kenny is glowing like any normal acid freak would. He stares at me, smiling and nodding his head then says, "Levels of serotonin increase in the brain when on LSD! Facts back that up! Hard facts, no jive shit! Sandoz lab experiments! Cellular structure is similar to psilocybin! Induces dreams and emotional preparation for sleep!"

Brother Alex slaps Kenny on the head with the weed pipe,"Hey shut up fool! This is the fourth down and three, man!"

Kenny glares at his brother for a moment, puzzled, then states,"Yes, there is no denying the truth! Theorists claim a link between this chemical (pointing to his head) and the inducement of dreams. Dreams were studied at the Sandoz labs. On acid and off!"

I interrupt Kenny before he can ramble on any further,"Say, man...did you know that you can get stoned on Morning Glory seeds?" I pause for the dramatic effects,"All you gotta do is eat about seven or eight thousand of them."

Alex twirls around again,"Hey man, it's first and ten! And how the hell is some cat suppose to cram eight thousand Morning Glory seeds into his bod? He stares at me blankly,"Do you know how big Morning Glory seeds are?"

I am dumbfounded. I had never consciously seen a Morning Glory seed. I assumed they were smaller than a breadbox and bigger than a hit of orange sunshine.

By midnight there are only seven people at our "going away party": Kenny, Alex, Bobby, Ron, myself, and two brothers named Gary Kawata and Fred Sada. Obviously, there aren't any women, but there is a good supply of grass, hash and booze. Also (obviously) the seven of us are pretty stoned. At one point during the celebration Ron turns to Kenny and vomits at his feet then says:

"Man, this is some fucked up going away party!" Ron pauses to wipe his chin,"I know you can throw a better party then this, man!"Another pause to puff on a circulating joint,"I'll tell you what we'll do man; me and the other dudes will pretend that we're still working on the car and that way you can throw some more going parties for us, it'll delay our travel a bit but I'm sure the other dudes won't mind. We're always willing to help a brother get his shit together."

While Ron is talking to Kenny, Bobby and myself fall into a rap with Gary and Fred. As it turns out, they are university students, however they are first and primarily street people. Also, they seem somewhat delighted at our situation with the car.

"Hey man, why don't me and Freddy take you cats on a tour of Seattle?" Gary suggests while Freddy nods enthusiastically in the background.

"Well sure man...that sounds good to me!" I agree (while Bobby nods enthusiastically in the background.)

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In a short time the whole party shifts from the Murakami pad to Gary Kawata's 1952 Studebaker (with a custom sunroof). Kenny, Alex, Bobby and myself are packed in the rear seat. Ron sits between Gary and Freddy (who is standing on the seat looking out through the open sunroof.)

We cruise an area known as "Beacon Hill" which, according to Fred, is Thee Asian Community, as far as Seattle is concerned.

As joints shoot about the car, Fred keeps up a continuous narrative pointing out sights and sounds of Beacon Hill.

"Yeah, most of the Asian kids on Beacon Hill go to Franklin High. It's mostly Asian and black with a few poor white kids." Fred pauses to give a Nazi salute to the campus as we pass by. "Yeah, there was a lot of fighting between black and Asian kids to see who was the baddest."

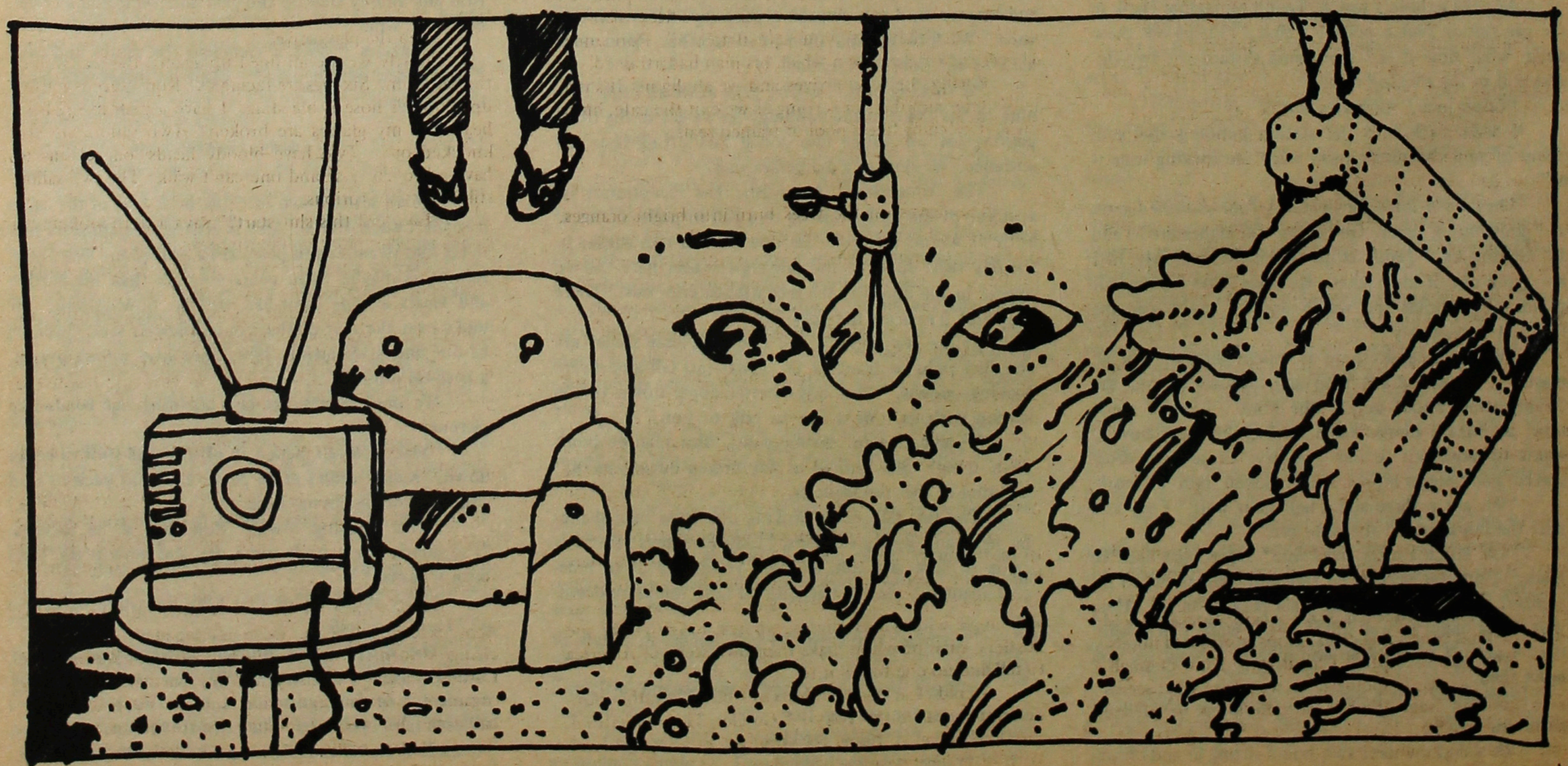
"Yeah, you know back at my old high school in L.A.,"Bobby interrupts,"there were a lot of fights between Asian and black gangs but..."

"Hey man, this ain't L.A. This is Seattle!" Freddy looks down from his perch at Bobby. "You tell me about LA when we're in LA not when I'm telling you about Seattle."

The driver, Gary then says,"Ahh man, Freddy, lighten up on these cats. You know, these LA dudes ain't got no manners." He looks at me and Bobby in the rear seat, smiles then adds, "But they sure got some good smoke with them."

"Hey, just drive man, and don't bogart no joints." Ron warns Gary.

"Anyway, where was I?" Fred thinks aloud as he resumes his position through the sunroof, "Oh yeah, the fights...Well,shit we ain't even near the school now. I might as well tell you about something else that we can see, you know, kind of like visual aids, ha!" Fred waves his arms out wide at Beacon Hill and boldly shouts, "Yes sir, Freddy Sada Guided Tours, right this way! Over to your left and my right and also on your right which is my left we have the wonderful community of Beacon Hill; Seattle's Asian Ghetto! And if you'll look quickly to your left you'll see an alley cat prepared to attack this very vehicle which you are now sitting in. And over to your left, over there is the old Marine Hospital where they use to treat junkies coming back from 'Nam. And as we zoom around this corner, whoa, shit, take it easy Gary, right over here ladies and gentlemen we have, I believe, yes, there on your right and my left is a



Beacon Hill wino. Hey wino, want some hard stuff?" Fred holds up a bottle of booze and points to it.

"Hey calm down man," Gary looks up at Freddy and in doing so causes the car to swerve back and forth over the center line of the road.

Fred looks down at the pack in the back seat and says,"This motherfucker tells me to calm down, then he goes coo-coo with his driving. Shit I'm surprised we didn't end up on the god-damn sidewalk."

At that moment Gary, looking in his rear view mirror, emits a telltale, "Oh shit."

"What's wrong?" Ron asks.

"The pigs are flashing lights behind me." Gary says still looking at the rear view mirror.

"The pigs!" Fred looks behind him and then quickly ducks back down through the sun roof into his seat. It is panic time in the car.

"Here eat this shit!"

"All that?"

"I already ate two joints."

"You eat it man, I gotta talk to the pigs."

"Fuck, this shit does down hard."

"Now everyone be cool...don't blow it, I'm going to pull over, over here."

Gary pulls the car over to the curb. A white Seattle police car pulls up behind us with its light flashing madly. Two police officers step out. Both are holding long heavy duty flashlights as they walk up one on each side of the car. Gary rolls down his window and smiles at the cops as they draw alongside the door. A tall lanky cop with red curly hair showing beneath his cap leans into the driver's window and shines his light around the interior of the car, then he says, "Hello boys."

"Hello office-fur-sir. What seems to be happening?" Gary says trying his best to sound innocent of any charge whatsoever.

The cop explains, "I pulled you over because you seemed to be having some problem with your driving." He stares directly at Gary.

"Who me?" Gary asks as he blinks his eyes.

"You want to step out here, please." commands the cop.

"But office-fur sir, me and my partners here were just going to get some hanger-burgies. I mean, hangerburgers." Gary explains as he steps out of the car.

"How much you been drinking?"

"Ahh man, I aint't been drinking nothing."

While this is going on the other cop has requested the rest of us to also step out of the car. With the exception of Gary, we are all lined up against the wall of a record shop.

The second cop, (who can be considered a candidate for "shortest cop in the world) raises his voice at us,"*All right all of you*...get out some identification."

Our ID's are checked and we are all frisked down. Luckily we have already eaten and drunk all the incriminating evidence (which amounted to eleven joints and a little less than a pint of Johnny Walker.)

Then the lecture: "All right, you boys got away lucky this time," says the tall cop, "but next time you may not be so lucky." He pauses to stare at us all, "Now I don't have to tell you that marijuana is not legal in this..."

"Then don't tell us nothing man!" It is Gary. I hope he knows what he's doing.

The tall cop adjusts his holster belt and yells, "Look, gook, don't push me!"

Gary continues, "I know how you jive dudes operate! You take winos and junkies down to the station, tie 'em up and kick the shit out of them for kicks!"

The cop steps toward Gary, "Hey shut up, gook!"

Gary is defiant, "Who's gonna shut me up, pig?"

Suddenly the pig punches Gary in the face. Gary staggers back bringing up his fists. The short cop steps between the two before any punches are traded and shouts to the tall cop,"Anderson, back off...back off."

Anderson (the tall cop) is flaming, "Someday, gook, it's gonna be just you and me!" He points at Gary with one hand on his billy club.

The short cop has to pull the tall one back toward the squad car. Once inside the car the short cop yells at us, "You gooks keep out of our path cause the next time we see you, you aren't going to get away so lucky."

At that the car starts up and spped away.

"Them fuckin' pigs," Gary grumbles as he rubs his face. "I wish I had my piece with me."

Fred nonchalantly mentions, "See, that's how Seattle pigs are. Chicken shit! They're always pushing around brothers and then split before anyone can do anything. It's the only way they can control the streets. By being chicken shit!"

* * *

We slowly reassemble ourselves in the car and ride down from the Beacon Hill area toward the center part of Seattle. Eventually we end up in Seattle's small Chinatown. It is comprised of four square blocks of old brick buildings containing cafes, shops, stores and hotels.

"Well, this is Seattle's Chinatown. Kind of small, huh?" Gary seems to apologize as we cruise what seems to be the main drag. It's late, so only a few people are still on the streets. I feel strangely secure and comfortable within it's boundaries."

Fred points toward a cafe in the middle of the block, "park near here. We'll go in there alright? It's pretty cheap and really good."

The car is parked and we're walking up to the cafe in the middle of the block. A young attractive blonde woman is standing near the curb in front of the cafe wearing a long maxi coat. As we approach the entrance she casually parts her coat and reveals a small slice of a very well formed thigh. A hooker. We all walk right pass her and are going into the building when Gary turns to me and says aloud, "See, that's how messed up Asians are in Seattle. Our Chinatown doesn't even have Asian hookers. All these cats want down here is some white leg."

"Yeah," Freddy adds, "Even at school it's like that; all the Asians after white leg and all the whites after Asian leg. Man, it's all fucked up." Then Freddy gives the hooker one last smiling glance as we walk into the cafe.

We take a booth at the rear of the cafe. A middle aged Chinese waiter appears out of nowhere, as they always do, and waits, pencil in hand, for our order.

"Uh lemme see...what's good?" Ron asks as he searches the menu.

Gary is quick to reply, "Man after you cats been on the road so long, all the way from L.A. any Asian food should be good to you."

Gary spoke the truth. My body, I'm sure, needs rice or else it doesn't obey me and I had been missing rice in the amount I was accustom to ever since we left L.A.

"Alright then, order." Ron says as he put down the menu.

Gary takes over, "We'll have tomato beef chow mein, sweet and sour pork, egg foo yung, the brocoli, won ton and seven bowls of rice.

"Want some soup, We got good soup." the waiter announces.

"Oh yeah, give us the egg flower soup," Gary finishes and hands the menu to the waiter.

"Want to try some almond duck?" the waiter continues.

Gary looks around the table and not noticing any go-ahead signs he says, "Naw, we have enough."

"Ah go ahead an try some almond duck. It's real good too," the waiter continued.

"No, I don't think so. Not this time," Gary replied.

"How about some lobster; real good this time of year." The waiter must have been a used car salesman during some point in his past.

"No, we have enough." Gary's smile is slowly disappearing.

"Ah go ahead, you all big men and need good food. Try the lobster, O.K.?"

"Man, I said no!" Gary's fuse is getting shorter and shorter and the waiter finally seems to sense this and concludeds with:

"Ok I'll get you this," he says hitting his pencil to his order pad, "but if you want something more then tell me." We all nod as he walks away.

Gary then addresses the whole group, "Man I thought that cat was going to sell me the whole resturant."

"Shit I bet he found a dead duck somewhere and is trying to get rid of it." Freddy grins.

Bobby continues, "Yeah, and it probably had some lobster in it's beak."

"Man next time we come in here," Ron says, "and he starts telling us what to eat, we should just eat and don't pay. 'Want some almond duck?' Sure I'll eat your funky duck. 'Want some lobster?' Sure, man pile it on and when the check comes we just say, 'Hey man, we didn't order that shit...you gave it to us!" Ron smiles at the level of perfection which his plan had attained.

Finally the food arrives and we all dig in. It's two hours later and the sun is rising as we exit the cafe, burping and belching like a pool of trained seals.

* * *

The leaves on the trees burn into bright oranges, reds and yellows as Fall set upon Seattle. Progress on the car is minimum. Little problems often hold up work for days. A missing bolt, a cracked nut or a broken wire and almost anything else we could use as an excuse from work is our ticket out of the Murakami garage and into the streets of Seattle.

We rapidly tire of the student ghetto which the Murakami pad is in the midst of. It is the same scene that is found near UCLA, Yale, Ohio State and all the rest... and we know that bullshit too well. Beer bars, pizza parlors, movie houses, bookstores, frat pads and all the other accessories of a college community hold absolutely nothing new for us.

Eventually we find ourselves exploring the water front skid row district. In and out of small cafes, dark bars, gaudy penny arcades and pool halls, we rapidly receive an eyeful of the Seattle which no one talks about. We mingle with winos, pimps, whores, tough punks and hustlers; each of whom have their own story of America to tell and no one to tell it to.

A cold clear night finds us in front of a rather nondescript bar called the Tokyo A Go Go. This is a natural, we think, a bit of home for strangers in a strange land. With little hesitation we stumble in.

A young Asian woman is dancing on a stage behind the bar as we take a table near the rear. She isn't completely nude but the amount of clothes she is wearing could have easily fit into my shirt pocket. Me eyes are riveted to the undulating area immediately below her navel. Out of nowhere another Asian woman, wearing a sequined bikini, approaches the table.

"Hi guys, what'll it be?" she smiles brightly and bends way over as she wipes the table. I, personally, am prepared to catch any part of her body which might suddenly break out of the bikini and fall on the table.

"Got any Tequila?" Ron asks.

"Tequila?" she smiles back.

"Yeah, you know, tequila." Bobby smiles as he makes pouring/drinking motions with his hands.

"Oh yes, I think so," the girl blinks then continues, "How do you want it?"

"In a bottle...a big bottle." Ron replies seriously.

After the quart of tequila arrives and is doled out, we sit back, enjoying our drinks, and look around the bar. There are six girls, all Asian, in brief bikinis walking around the place serving about two dozen customers. We are the only Asian customers; the rest are white, and tough looking. Probably dock workers, I think as i also notice a group of eight sailors sitting around a nearby table. They seem pretty drunk and are laughing, cussing and grabbing or pinching the waitresses as they pass by.

We drink more tequila and slyly hit up some cocaine (to give us stamina). Another Asian girl begins dancing seductively on the stage. Almost immediately the sailors begin howling and whistling at her movements.

Ron looks over at the sailors and says to us (rather loudly), "Man them white pop-eye dudes ain't got no manners!"

The sailors become quiet and stare in our direction. Ron continues, "Shit, I remember when I was in the Army, we use to kick the shit out of them pop-eye dudes!" He glances in their direction and adds, "Then we'd go fuck their mamas!"

The sailors look at each other then together they stand up and stroll over to our table. One of the larger more burly sailors says, "You gooks are full of shit! I don't take no shit from no gooks!"

It's quiet. Here we are three drunken buddhaheads surrounded by eight salty sailors. The tension in the atmosphere is unbearable.

"Now wait a minute," Bobby begins, "we were just kidding, you know, jiving around! Why don't you cats join us for a drink?" Bobby picks up the half full bottle of tequila then suddenly jumps up and smashes it over the head of the burly sailor.

Ron jumps up with his chair and knocks down another. Three sailors pounce on me (of all people) and pin me to the floor, punch me in the face and try to break my arms off. Ron comes up with a chair leg and begins methodically beating the heads of the sailors on top of me. Two sailors grab him from behind; one holds and one punches him in the face. Bobby comes running up with another chair and is intercepted by yet another sailor whom Bobby smashes in the face with the chair. I manage to squirm loose from the sailors on me and run to a pool table at the back of the bar. As the trio of sailors approach, I begin firing pool balls at them. I bean one as the other two chase me around the table. I grab a cue stick and destroy it against the leg of one pursuer. As he falls the remaining sailor grabs a stick and starts coming at me...swinging.

Meanwhile, Bobby has managed to knock down a sailor and has straddled him beating the sailor's face into bloody pulp. Ron is finally knocked to the ground and two sailors start kicking him about the head and midsection.

Then the pigs arrive.

Shortly we are all lined up against the rear wall of the bar room. Six pigs are facing us. Ron's face is puffed up, Bobby's nose is bleeding. I have a gash in my forehead and my glasses are broken. Two sailors are still knocked out. Two have bloody heads, one claims to have a broken nose and one can't walk. The two sailors still in tact are furious.

"How did this shit start?" says a stern looking pig with a revolver pointing right into my belly.

"They started it." One of the Asian waitresses speaks up as she points to the sailors.

"What about them?" the pig asks pointing at Bobby, Ron and myself with his gun.

"They were just defending themselves and the girls here. These sailors always come in here and hassle the girls. It's about time someone did something!" the waitress explains.

"She's lying her head off!" shouts one of the bleeding sailors.

"Shut up!" screams a pig,"you sailor boys are coming down to the station with us. We'll have the shore patrol take care of you." The pig turns toward us and questions,"And you guys...what are you doing here? Where are you from?"

Bobby still a bit woosey from the drinks and the fight explains,"Ahhhh...we're all Japanese foreign exchange students. We go to the University of Washington. I study nuclear chemistry and my partners here study organic engineering and space biology. We play basketball too. We weren't looking for trouble or anything. But if it was reported to anyone that we got in this fight, then we would have to leave the country and go back to Japan. Do you know what kind of reperc-

sions that would have on international relations? Japan would lose face and have to get revenge. That's how World War Two started, you know!?"

The pigs and the sailors stare at us open mouthed. To them, Bobby's story is too ridiculous to be anything but the truth. The pig with the gun speaks up:

"All right, you guys better leave here now and don't come back if you want to stay in the country."

We stagger out of the bar and onto the streets. While waiting for a late night bus, we all laugh over the whole scene in the bar; the lame sailors, the dumb pigs, and the foxy Asian sisters. I throw up on a fire hydrant, Ron breaks a street lamp with a rock and Bobby crashes out on the bus bench. When the bus finally arrives we hop aboard and head back toward the Murakami pad.

****

It is exactly six weeks after our "arrival" into Seattle when we finally get the car running again. We bring Kenny and Alex on one of our first test cruises through the city. The tape deck still works fine. As we zip up and down Seattle streets we blast long unheard-of cuts from the Allman Brothers, the Dead, and the Byrds. It's a good feeling to be mobile again.

To celebrate the occasion (and supplement our dope) the Murakami's bring a bottle of wine along for the cruise. Joints float around the car in massive quantities, and the sound level of the tape deck constantly creeps upward. The car is running again! Everything is now set for our next move...out of Seattle!

"So, you cats planning on splitting soon?" Kenny asks as he fires up another joint in the back seat.

"You better believe it, baby!" I exclaim.

"Shit, yeah!" Ron continues, "I've had it with Seattle and the whole fucking state of Washington. Shit, we spent half our time fighting with rednecks and pigs. This is suppose to be a vacation; so we could do some traveling."

"Where you cats headed next?" Alex asks as he pours the wine down his throat.

Ron answers, "I think we should head up the Alaskan Highway to Fairbanks and rip off a jeep so we can go hunt grizzly bears."

"What about New York?" Kenny asks as he lift the wine bottle to his lips.

"New York who?" I answer. I know New York is out of the question. We are almost broke and already have started bagging up the New York kilo to sell as lids as soon as possible. Also the car, though running, is a variable factor. It could blow up again at any time. And now it is late November; the mountains to the East are covered with a heavy coat of snow. We had been out of LA for over two months altogether, on the road and in Seattle.

Still there is the question: What's next?

"I think we ought to keep pushing on further," I admit as I hit a joint.

"Yeah, Alaska!" Ron restates.

"Well, I don't know about Alaska. But I sure would like to split form here soon...not that I have anything against Seattle or anything."

"You know," begins Bobby, "Canada would be nice."

"I'm hip man," I say, "Canada should definitely be the next stop for us."

Ron whips out a vial of coke and asks, "After that can we go to Alaska?"

****

The gray sky leaks a light rain as we close in on the Canadian border. Bobby, being anxious to try out the new engine, is blasting up the highway. The acid is coming on strong. It makes the road look like a mad river rushing at us. The sense of speed is overwhelming.

Then I notice the speedometer. Ninety-five miles per hour! I motion Ron's attention to it. He becomes wide-eyed and taps Bobby on the shoulder.

"Uh, watch your speed, Bobby," Ron reminds him from the rear seat. The sound of Ron's voice is drowned by a combination of Santana in stereo, the engine, and the wind screaming through an open window.

"What he say?" Bobby looks at me with one of his half-serious, half-worried, stoned-out-of-his-mind expressions.

"Huh?" I am broken away from the trance of the drugs and the music. "Oh...uh," looking back at Ron then the speedometer, I slowly explain, "It takes about... oh, five hundred miles let's say, to break in the engine so, well I mean, you got to go slow, kind of, like under sixty or something like that, until the engine is sure of itself, you dig?" I could only hope I am making sense and that Bobby understands enough of my verbal garbage to know what I mean.

Bobby couldn't hear a thing. Yet he instinctively decellerates to an even sixty.

"That's better, man," Ron shouts in Bobby's ear, "You know we gotta take it easy on the car if we're going to take it up the Alaskan Highway."

"Hey man," I say, turning to Ron, "We have to get across the border first."

"Well we might end up back in Seattle if Bobby doesn't keep his big feet off the gas pedal," warns Ron.

"Hey, give me some slack!" Bobby begs to Ron Then he turns to me and asks, "Is that dope in the door hidden good enough?"

"Hell, if I know," I admit, "I ain't no international drug smuggler."

"Well, that's what we'll get busted for if they find it." Bobby says as he looks at the door panel near his seat.

"What are we suppose to do...throw it out on the highway?" I ask trying to ooze sarcasm (and failing).

Ron answers, "No man, we're suppose to smoke it."

As the car locks itself into a steady cruise up the road, a shy sun begins breaking through the cloud layer. We all sit back and let the road, the music, the drugs, and the visuals sweep us along. We are in a dream; a film-like fantasy...and it's very nice. It is a stone cruise.

****

"US – Canadian Border: 4mi." the sign reads. If the information we had received back in L.A. was correct then crossing into Canada would be rather sticky. "They'll search you to the gills," the warning still echoes in my mind as I pull over to the side of the road. I know we have smoked the last of our marijuana (except for the New York kilo) during the ride to this very spot. Now, in my mind, our task is clear. We would have to "kill off" the rest of our stash before we got any closer to the border inspection station. I explain my thoughts to Bobby and Ron. There is a short silence then Bobby says, "Here's the rest of the acid." He hands both Ron and myself three hits of window pane LSD apiece. He continues, "and here's a hit of psilosybin for each of you good little boys." Then smiling, he concludes, "This is kinda like that Halloween tricks or treats bullshit."

"I'm hip," I laugh. Then I give Ron and Bobby each two white tabs of amphetamines and hold up a giant capsule of mescaline powder, "This will have to be divided up three ways." I break open the capsule and pour one-third of the powder into each of the three waiting palms (including mine.)

Ron looks at all the exotic drugs in his hand then reaches into his shirt pocket and retrives a small glass vial containing the last remaints of the Peruvian Flake rock. He holds up the vial and asks, "Uh...I don't suppose you dudes would like to do in a last line of coke, would you?"

I grab the vial from Ron's hand and before he can vocalize any protest I roll up a dollar bill and start snorting at the coke. With the "freeze" reaching into the center of my head I pass the vial to Bobby. Bobby takes two enormous hits then passes the vial back to Ron.

Ron looks down at the ramains in the vial and says, "Thanks a lot, pals." But he takes his last hits and having finished that he stares hungrily at the awesome display of narcotics in the palm of his hand.

"Happy trails, boys," I toast as I gobble up my fistfull of chemicals.

"Well...I'm going out to lunch," Bobby announces as he eats his drugs.

Ron sits back in his seat and pops one tablet after another down his throat like popcorn. Then he licks the the mescaline powder off his palm and breaks into a wide smile. His "what's for desert?" line is obliterated by the simultaneous sounds of the car starting and the tape deck being turned on full blast.

It is back on the road and then in what seems to be only a few short minutes, the line of border inspection booths looms up before us. The lighting in combination with the drizzling rain gives it an ultra-artificial appearance. It looks like the set of some low-budget science fiction flick.

The customs official on the Canadian side of the border is a middle-aged man who looks as though he was once a member of some big city pole-lease department. As I approach the border gate, I see the inspector adjust his glasses and stare stiffly at my car. He waves for me to stop. I halt the car, turn down the tape deck and roll down the window as the inspector strolls up, sticks his head into the car along with a flashlight which he shines in my face.

"Hello," says the inspector in what seems to be a "now-I-got-you" tone. I nod at him politely and I could feel Bobby and Ron grinning in his direction. "Are you all US citizens?" he asks.

We all answer yes and then he asks me, "Where do you live?"

"Why I live in the beautiful city of Los Angeles, California officer, " I answer then smile.

The inspector stares at me for a moment, probably thinking how he would like to knock my teeth out. Then he shines the light into Bobby's face, "and you, where are you from?"

Bobby looks directly into the light beam and answers, "Oh, me? Uh...yeah,uh, I'm from Los Angeles too, man.

"What about you?" the inspector asks Ron while swinging the light into the back of the car.

"L.A."

"What?"

"L-A!"

The inspector stares at Ron for a few moments then says, "Oh...how long do you plan to be in Canada?"

"Until Sunday, officer," I answer with sugar-sweet politeness.

He gives me another hard look then asks, "May I look in your trunk?"

"Sure," I reply confidently as I step out of the car and walk to the rear to unlick the trunk.

Once the trunk is opened the inspector stands back and gazes at the paraphernalia which we are carrying. Everything from an unused coleman stove and sweaty sleeping bags to a crateful of broken engine parts and greasy tools is pushing at the sides of the trunk.

"Hummm," the inspector sighs as he closes the trunk, "mind if I look around inside the car?"

"Oh go right ahead, officer," I say as I feel the first twinges of psychedelic takeover surge through my body.

The inspector walks to the door on the passenger side and says, "You fellows want to step out for a second while I look around inside?" to Ron and Bobby.

The pair step out into the open and Ron whispers hoarsely to Bobby, "Fuck, it's cold." The inspector glares at Ron then begins his "inspection."

He busys himself climbing back and forth between the front and rear seats. With a flashlight in one hand he brushes the carpets with the other. He checks under the seats, in the glove compartment and the top of the dashboard. I'm hoping he doesn't find our kilo behind the door panels. That would be it. "Up-the-river" time for us. Then he stops for a second as he shines a light on what appears to be a "clean" section of carpet below the front passenger seat. He bends down and picks something up and folds his fist over it. Then he climbs out of the car and says, "You fellows want to pull your car around next to the building so I can check the trunk.

We all climb back into the car to move it. "Shit, what did that cat find?" Ron asks as he stares at the inspector who is now waiting in front of the border inspection station.

"Don't know...I couldn't see what he got." I say as I guide the car next to the building entrance.

"It wasn't no joint or roach cause I saw the spot where he put the light and there wasn't no joint there," Bobby says conclusively.

Ron sits forward in the back seat and moans, "It was probably a seed...a fucking seed," then adds, "Now them pigs are gonna rip apart the car looking for more dope."

I stop the car near a sign which reads Canadian Customs and Immigration Building. The inspector stands in the doorway and says, "You fellows want to step in here and bring some identification with you."

As we walk into the building I notice the inspector handing a woman clerk "something", but what it *is*, is not apparent. Probably a "Fucking seed."

We stroll into the "Customs and Identification Room" and up to a long counter. Another inspector appears behind the counter. This one is also middle aged and is developing an enormous "beer belly." That is his most outstanding feature. The rest of him looks like kaki colored jello. The woman clerk who is relatively young and attractive walks up beside the beer belly and stares at us blankly. The first inspector stands behind us and says loudly:

"Alright, you fellows want to empty yer pockets and put the contents on the desk."

Ron unveils a cork screw, a few coins, a book of matches, a torn up (and expired) California driver's license, a knife and an alligator clip.

Bobby pulls out some coins, a few green backs, three books of matches, a comb, a pair of dice, a tattered wallet and a coke spoon.

I bring out my wallet, flip it open to reveal my driver's license then I dump onto the desk: some coins, a comb, a New York subway token, a knife, two books of matches, a greasy handkerchief, a parking ticket, my car keys and a packet of zig-zags.

The woman and the man behind the desk finger thourgh our somewhat suspicious looking belongings. The agent behind us then says, "You fellows want to take off your coats and your shoes."

We silently peel off our coats. I watch the lady behind the counter search through our belongings as I definitely feel the chemicals we had dropped starting to activate themselves inside of me. Then I look beyond the two agents in front of me, around the room behind them. A large autographed photo of Nixon is hanging next to a copy of the Canadian Declaration of Independence which is, in turn, hanging next to a poster which says: "Possession, Cultivation, Transportation and Sale of the following drugs is illegal in the Dominion of Canada." Then it listed: "Marijuana, hashish, opium, cocaine, heroin, Lyseric Acid (LSD)" on and on it rambled, "Mescaline, peyote, bla, bla, bla, baking powder, cod liver oil, evaporated milk." The poster gains ridiculous proportions from the "new perspective" the chemicals are giving me. My mouth spreads into a grin. Say What! I can't be grinning at a time like this. Oh shit, I can't stop grinning. Oh man, this is stupid just to think about it. God damn, I can't stop grinning.

I turn around still grinning and notice Ron and Bobby both in their barefeet. Ron is being frisked by the first inspector. Bobby is sitting on a bench as the agent who was behind the desk is now looking in his boots. When I realize I have my grinning under control I also realize that Bobby is grinning as he sits on the

bench swinging his barefeet and looking at the inspector stick his hand down his smelly boots. Ron is still standing up being patted down when I notice he has his eyes closed and a smile on his lips. I start grinning again. God damnit I gotta quit this stupid grinning. It's stupid that's what it is.

My grinning stops immediately as the first inspector steps toward me and says, "You wanna grab your things and come out to the car with me?"

"Aren't you gonna search me?" I asked feeling left out.

"Is that necessary?" the inspector asks with a raised eyebrow.

"Uh...no I was just wondering," I say as I walk toward the door. But when Bobby and Ron start to walk out the inspector turns and says, "You two can wait in here."

The woman inspector/clerk holds the door for me and I wink at her on the way out. Still only a blank stare in return. I am convinced "they" had taken this poor innocent young lady, carved out her soul and mental capabilities, leaving her a shell-shocked zombie office worker. And I am next.

Outside it's cold. Arctic wind currents give the breeze an icy sharp cut. I wish I could get into the car and smoke a joint and listen to some tapes. The Grateful Dead would be nice.

"Can you open your trunk again?" the inspector asks pointing to the rear of my car.

"Sure...Yeah," I walk stiffly back to the rear of the car fighting my teeth's urge to clatter off the cold. Yet I am pleased by the way I am maintaining my cool. I am sure someone has moved the trunk lock but I finally get the lid open. The inspector begins unloading everything. Out comes our sleeping bags, our duffle bags, our tool kit, our flat spare tire and everything else we carry in the trunk. Out comes everything we own onto the damp cold cement.

My attention is momentarily attracted by a sign about twenty feet away which reads: "This placque marks the US/Canadian International Friendship Border." I give serious thought to making a dash for the border line it in case some long-forgotten dope is dug out of my trunk. Yeah, I could just run over the border and then the inspectors couldn't touch me. I could make weird faces at them and cut farts in their direction and they wouldn't be able to do a thing.

Meanwhile the "beer belly inspector" steps outside and then into my car. He is looking everywhere; under the dashboard he crawls, peeking into the tape deck, searching through the glove compartment. I walk over to the driver's door to see more closely exactly what, if anything, the beer belly is digging up. Just as I look in the car the inspector pulls two roach clips from the glove compartment. "What do you use these for?" the inspector asks looking up at me.

"Oh those things? Well...uh...I use them to smoke cigarettes with. We all roll our own cigarettes, you know. Trying to cut down our smoking." The inspector seems to ignore my statement as he sticks the two clips into his coat pocket.

I walk back to the rear of the car where the first inspector is checking every possible container we have. I stand watching him finger through my dirty socks then ask, "Mind if I roll a cigarette? We all roll our own cigarettes, you know."

"Go ahead," the inspector answers as he continues his search. So, I walk back to the driver's door and notice the beer belly is now digging through my tobacco tin with his snotty old fingers. After he's done with that particular search I retrive the tin and while I'm rolling a cigarette, Bobby comes bopping and grinning out of the building.

"They said I could come out and roll a cigarette." Bobby says loudly for the benefit of the two inspectors now staring at him.

"Sure, man," I reply while keeping an eye on the inspectors.

"How's it going?" Bobby whispers.

"I'm surprised these dudes haven't looked up our assholes," I whisper back to Bobby as he rolls an enormous cigarette. Just then the beer belly climbs out of the car and walks to the front to pop open the hood. He peers into the engine compartment shining his flash light around in a definite random fashion. He lifts off the air intake and checks the filter. Then he looks in the radiator opening. I want to ask him to check the oil, instead I say nothing as another thought provoked grin breaks out on my face. Bobby zig-zags back into the building puffing on a cigarette which closely resembles the Goodyear blimp. I walk back to the rear of the car. There the first inspector is standing knee deep in the junk we've been hauling around.

"You been traveling around a lot?" the inspector asks me as he looks through our empty food chest.

"Yeah, since the middle of September."

"I see you've been to New York," the inspector comments.

Now how did this dude know we were going to New York? I figured that the only way he could possibly know is through mind reading. Mind reading! The punk inspector must be able to read minds like an open book. We're doomed I think as I answer, "No...uh, we were heading to New York but the car broke down in Seattle and we got kind of stuck there for a while."

"How did you get these subway tokens?" the inspector asks as he holds out a couple of coins in his hand.

"Well those things are kind of a gift or a going away present from some buddies of mine in L.A. It's a long story but if you have the time I can explain how they got them. You see, it was back during the..."

"I don't have the time," the inspector interrupts.

After what seems to be a couple of hours the search ends with no tangible results. By this time I am stoned out of my skull and not exactly sure of what had transpired. I try to put everything concerning the situation in order in my head. Lemme see now, these guys are trying to rip out my soul, burn up my brain and turn me into a zombie office worker and they can read my mind, but we already got rid of the you-know-what so they can't possibly bust us for anything, and even if they try all I have to do is run across the border which is just twenty feet away and I'll be safe.

The two inspectors, looking thoroughly exhausted, head back into the building. One of them, I couldn't really tell them apart any longer, but one of them turns around and says to me, "We can go back inside now."

Shit, I think to myself, you pigs can go inside anytime you want but me...yeah, me ...I gotta stand out here in the middle of this space station all night so you pigs can brainwash me! And...and when that's done you jive pigs say 'Yeah boy, let's go down to the station.' Well, I say fuck that shit! I ain't going down to no station in outer space! I'm going back inside the building here where Bobby and Ron are probably being forced to eat botulism cultures! I'm going to bust them out and I sure ain't gonna let you dudes mess with my mind. It's my mind and no one cuts it out, hell no!

Pleased with my level of rational thinking, I boldly re-enter the customs and immigration building. I feel like a tiger just captured in the jungle or a fallen tree or something just as poetic. I know that I am in control of my mind and that's all that matters. I am prepared for the worst.

The examination room or whatever it is called, is buzzing with pure electricity. The fluorescent lamps whipping across the ceiling are ten, twenty times brighter than usual. And the white light has been replaced by an ugly green tint. The walls have changed position; some are farther away now and others have been moved closer. Somehow we have fallen into a trap constructed by the Brain Police. The Brain Police! Yes, the Brain Police now have us in their clutches. I think of fighting to the death. I got to keep my head covered lest they cut off my brain from my body. "I'm hip to you jive dudes," I curse under my breath, "you greasy blood-sucking slime. Fuck the Brain Police! I'm hip to your evil ways. Man, I ain't stupid. I know when you pigs are trying to brainwash a cat. But I ain't saying nothing...nothing!" I walk over to the bench where Ron and Bobby are sprawled out, staring into space and grinning like a pair of Cheshire cats. The Brain Police must have already done a job on these two I think. I brace myself...and look for a possible escape route. The only person near the exit is the woman clerk. I can quickly overpower her (and maybe rape her too just to teach her a lesson) (or at least, try to bring some life back into her eyes).

Just before I am to spring into action the beer belly dude says, "Okay, you fellows can leave now." Then he pulls the roach clips from his pocket and turns to the first inspector and says, "What shall I do with these?"

I am watching them like a sun-crazed hawk, mad thoughts are flooding my head. Hey man those are my fucking roach clips, I think, you jive dudes better give them back to me or I'm calling the pigs on you! Then we'll fight it out in court...All I know is you fascists ain't getting my roach clips! I'll sue you for everything you got! The course of legal action flashes through my brain as the first inspector asks the beer belly:

"Is there any residue on them?"

"Yeah," answers the agent as he rubs his belly full of beer, "but only a little and it's not fresh."

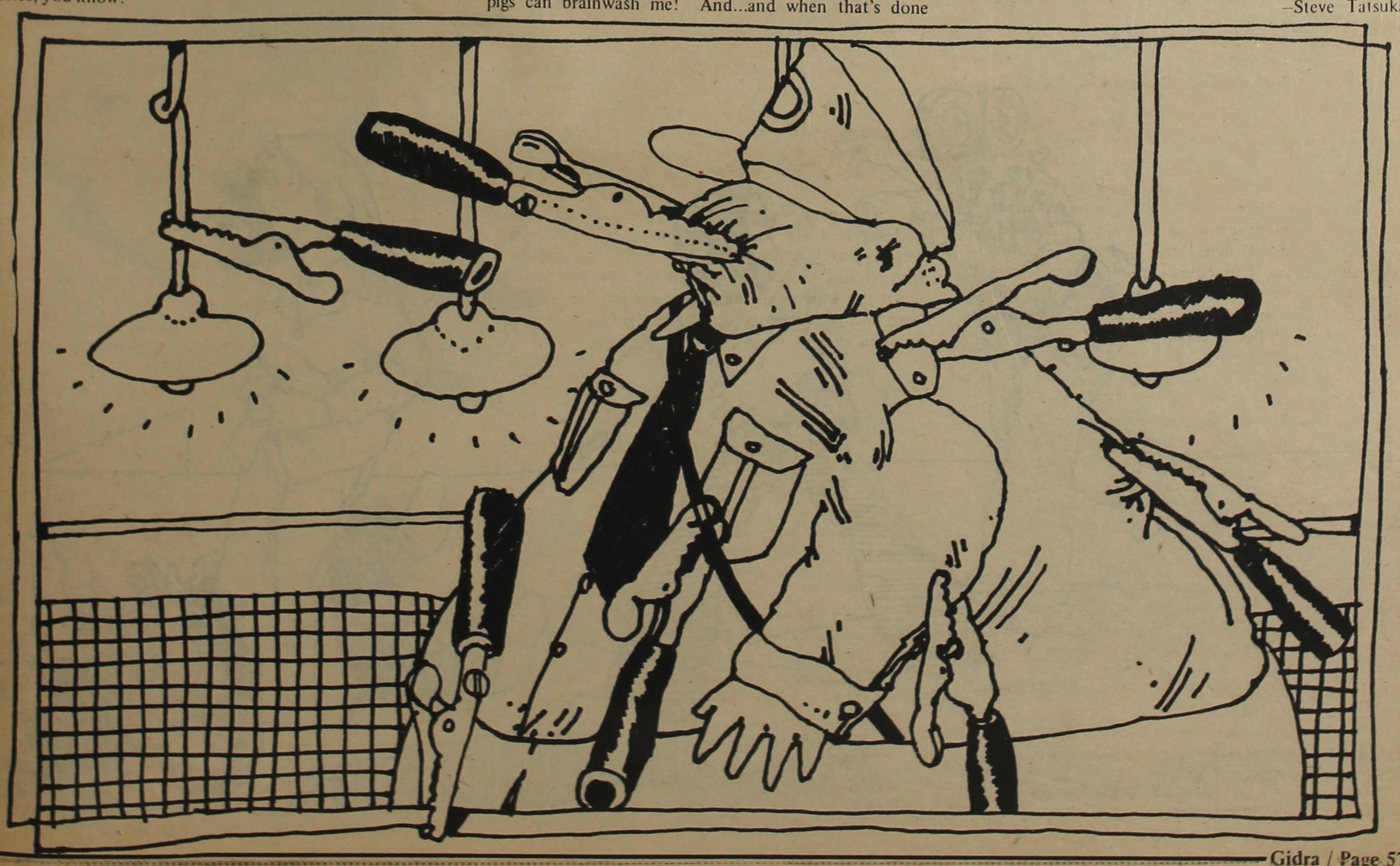
"Ahhh, give them back," the first inspector resigns.

The beer belly hands the clips back to me and warns, "Don't smoke your cigarettes down so short...it's bad for your health."

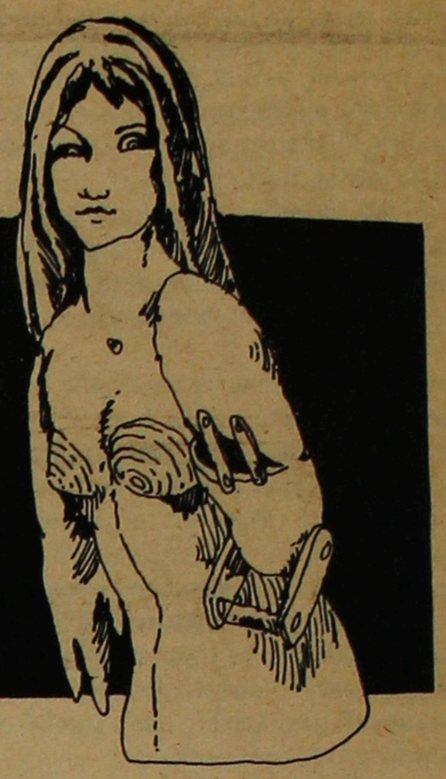
I manage a nod as Bobby breaks into a wide grin and Ron leads the way back to the car. We better clear out while we can, I think, these lunatics could change their minds at any moment.

So, it's back on the road again. Leaving the space station far behind, we head into the vast darkness of the night... dazed and confused.

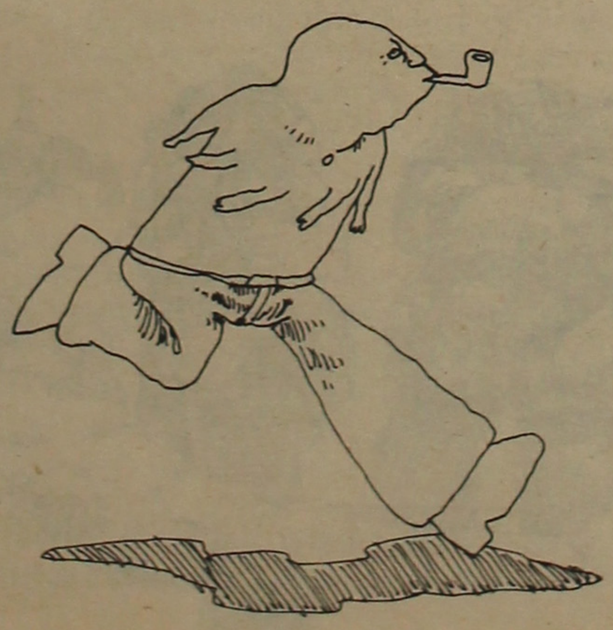
—Steve Tatsukawa



DRAWINGS BY ALAN TAKEMOTO



North Vietnamese MIG 19 strafing San Bernadino



"Running down," OUR...

COLONIZED MENTALITY

The coming of the Japanese was preceded by fifty years of racism and exploitation of Chinese labor. Our people were used to displace the ageing Chinese workers already here, or to lower their wages, and we fell for the divide and rule game by thinking we were different. We were also seen as a threat to white labor, which had a history of racist practices on the West Coast. The "yellow peril" racism that was directed toward the Chinese was directed towards us, also.

The need to justify the Western imperialist invasion of the lands of the people of color lead to white supremacist ideologies such as "the whiteman's burden" and Anglo-Saxon "superiority". This, in combination with the economic competition of non-white labor, created the tense and racist atmosphere in the U.S. between white workers and non-white workers. (It is interesting to note that though there has always been this racist attitude of white workers toward us, nothing came of it in a significant institutionalized way until the interests of the monopolists and big business were threatened. The threat to white land ownership and its reaction, the Alien Land Laws, were not passed until the white workers got the backing of larger economic interests.)

The "Yellow Peril"

The impact of Western imperialism and the advent of capitalist economies destroyed the feudal agrarian societies of Asia. The only way for Japan to escape the foreign domination other Asian nations were subjected to was for it to rapidly industrialize itself, and the Japanese ruling class chose to carry out a transition to capitalism as the way to accomplish this task. An essential ingredient in the transition, and one of its most cruel human consequences, was the tearing apart of the peasants from their land. For these farmers who were forced off their land, two alternatives were open. One was to stay in the motherland, as most did, and become the future working class and poor of their rapidly urbanizing country. The other alternative was to emigrate in the hopes of finding better economic opportunities elsewhere.

Meanwhile in the U.S., the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism had been consolidated during the Civil War. These new monopolists maintained their dominance over workers by employing the strategy of divide and rule; pitting one group of laborers against another, and fostering racism as a basic element in their strategy. As far as they were concerned, the labor supply available to the U.S. internally was inadequate. They needed more labor in order to keep white laborers in line, and they greedily turned to Asia as an ideal source of cheap labor for these purposes.

This exclusion from the white American mainstream was institutionalized by the anti-picture bride laws, housing covenants, anti-citizenship laws, alien land laws, job discrimination (even a college degree could not get you a job that wasn't menial), anti-miscegenation (intermarriage) laws, the Gentleman's Agreement (segregated schools in Northern California), and many others, and finally, the anti-immigration law of 1924 that finally stopped the inflow of our people. What this exclusion did to our people and all foreign-born people of color in this country was to deny us an identity with this country. We each literally had to identify with our mother countries in order to keep our sanity.

The results of this identification with the respective mother countries was to divide Third World peoples. The further divisions of people of color, and Asians, and Japanese Americans can be attributed to: 1.) The rise of Japanese imperialism and militarism, which many Japanese in America identified with, and the ensuing response of other Asians, which was negative towards us as a result. 2.) The emphasis on the wage differential and upward mobility in the jobs open to us. For example, the wages and opportunities in Hawaii were ranked downwards through the Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, then Pilipinos, in that order. The same occurred on the mainland, producing conditions such as separated labor camps.

Therefore, although all people of color had the same experience in America, we all thought we were different from each other, better or worse, and less human than whites. What we became during the period from the beginning of immigration in the 1800's, until the 1950's, then, were isolated colonies of different nationalities, living in the same areas and working together, but not trusting or interacting with each other on a community to community level.

Our response to this all pervasive racism was to form ghettoes for our survival, enclaves that were essentially smaller models of Japanese life in Japan – within the U.S. The turth of this statement can be seen by looking at the ethics and cultural characteristics of our people in the era leading up to the Second World War.

What we shall do is look at *Giri* and *Ninjo* during this period. For simplicity and clarity we will take *giri* as duty, such as: Loyalty to community leaders and country, to the employer, to the father and eldest son, etc. For *ninjo*, we will look for humanitarian response on the part of our people such as: Social welfare institutions, practices and a fighting spirit/response to exploitation, human degradation and racism. The principle characteristics of the Japanese community is a stratified society made up of professionals (lawyers, doctors, etc.), businessmen, labor contractors, farmers and laborers. The former being at the top and the laborers being at the bottom, although the laborers were the most numerous and were responsible for producing and bringing hard cash into the community.

The Issei

This micro-society was characterized by its human services, such as the Shonien Childrens Home, which was started around 1912 by Mr. Joy Kusumoto, the Kenjinkais (prefectural associations), similar geographic associations set up in this new country, and other supportive services. These human services were not profit oriented, and were accomplished in a way which preserved the dignity of our people. During the Depression, our people used their agricultural surplus to feed thousands in soup lines.

Another characteristic of our people was their fighting spirit against exploitation, human degradation, and racism. This can be seen in legal battles and grassroots movements to fight discriminatory legislation and finding ways to combat this racism and economic exploitation by the people themselves. An example of this was when the Alien Land Laws were passed, the response of the community was to form corporations around Nisei children to farm the land. Other examples are the labor struggles of our people in agriculture. Pilipinos and Japanese in Hawaii, Chicanos and Japanese in Oxnard, California, fought for the right to organize and be treated as human beings rather than as beasts of burden.

The principle characteristics of our Issei at this period in our history is a balance between duty, honor, and humanism, and fighting spirit. But the cultural imperialism of the WASP ethic takes its toll, due to intense and overt racism. Also, the knowledge of the treatment of the Chinese, exemplified by the mass killing of Chinese in Los Angeles around 1869, had to have a dampening effect on our fighting spirit and humanity.

But the development of a colonized mentailty was not severe in our pioneers, for they had an identity. Though it may not have been an "American" identity, they knew who they knew who they were. The beginnings of our colonized mentality can be seen to result from the extreme isolation of our community, and our inferior position in the overall class structure, which made us *feel* inferior, and which in turn made many us wnat to be like the white man.

Around the 1920's the bulk of the Nisei began to be born into the community. The Japanese American family is a particular product of the immigration experience, an abberation from the traditional Japanese family. The traditional Japanese family is the extended family, which means that it is made up of usually at least three generations under one roof. However, when the Nisei arrive, the family structure of the immigrant family is nuclear, with only two generations, the parents and the children.

This family structure seemed harsh to most Nisei. The hardships of this period put particular stress on the family. The dominant role and position of the father was magnified by the absence of the softening effect of grandparents on the rearing of the Nisei child. In Japanese society, it is the grandparents that dote on and baby the children, look after them, and probably, spoil them.

The community at this point is still very tight socially. The community knew each other and each other's business so that everyone knew everything about each other. It was this atmosphere that many Nisei found oppressive, but it was this very same atmosphere that taught the Nisei what being Japanese meant in terms of values, duties, honor to the family name, community (*haji*–shame), and all those other cultural mores that were not necessarily orally transmitted, but were learned by living and by watching others.

It was also within this mini-society that our grandparents sought and gave help to each other. Many problems were solved within the community. Although some were not, if the community felt that they could not handle or the offense was too great (i.e., an interracial or interethnic marriage), the people would be ostracized by the community. Some examples again of *ninjo* are the Shonien Home for Children, the allocation of survival needs (food, clothes, etc.) with those less fortunate, especially during the Depression, by the different Japanese groupings. Another example of aid was the Tokyo Club, a large, West Coast, Japanese gambling syndicate that fed and gave money to many of our destitute laborers during hard times.

An educational revolution was unfolding in Japan, and young people were getting better educations. This happened at the turn of the century, after many of our first wave Issei had grown up and immigrated to the U.S., so many of the men had a minimum education. Since immigration of women to the U.S. came later than that of men, our grandmothers had a higher level of education on the whole. This was another factor shaping our community. Exactly what the effect this had on us is unknown, but could it be that the very high educational expectations of our community were a result?

Another characteristic of our mini-society was the overwhelming number of single men in our community. This was due to their extreme exploitation as laborers, which deprived them of enough wealth to either return to Japan, or to call over a wife through the "picture bride" mechanism. The hopelessness of the marriage situation, especially after the exclusion act of 1924, had detrimental effects on the community, in the forms of gambling, drinking, prostitution, etc.

Class Characteristics of the Family

As was stated earlier, the community was essentially split into two classes–one of which lived off the laborers, and the laborers themselves. The businessmen, professionals, labor contractors, small merchants, and farmers who owned and leased land were able to get married. The laborers who were lucky or persevered enough to save money to get married soon left the ranks. But a vast majority could not get married. All these men who had no choice but to stay on the farm trail were put down by the rest of the Japanese American community for their rough lifestyle. The story of their existence was rarely transmitted, for they had no descendants to tell it to. Therefore, we Sansei and Nisei essentially come from the more fortunate people in our community. This is not to say we come from the rich, because as a whole our community was not wealthy–but the poor were *po*.

Neither Fish Nor Fowl

When the Nisei enter school, they are met with attitudes from intolerance and abuse to semi-tolerance. The atmosphere is racist and exclusionary. We take to studying and struggling hard for acceptance by the Anglo community, but we really don't know who we are. The community's overwhelming loyalties are to Japan, but we are American citizens.

We aren't treated as citizens. We don't feel like citizens. Why? Is it because of the harsh struggle to survive? Is it because of the community's Japan orientation? Or is it because we don't know of our history and contributions to this country? Most of the historical works dealing with our accomplishments are written in Japanese and therefore are not passed to the Nisei. As a result, we do not feel roots in this country and instead feel like visitors and really don't know how to view ourselves.

Colonized Mentality-Mixed Emotions

So here we are. We live in two worlds. At home and socially, we are Japanese; in school we learn to accept WASP values and norms. The racism against us makes us feel uneasy about our heritage and society. We feel ambivalent, uneasy, we are taught at school that our people's culture and lifestyle are inferior, and that we are not acceptable or assimilable because of our Japanese characteristics. Yet we are proud of our parents and our culture. What to do? We are also taught that this is a democracy founded on justice and equality and if we try hard, don't make waves, pick up and learn WASP values and norms, we may become invisible enough to make it.

The Push

In the Far East a storm is brewing. The two dominant imperialisms of Japan and the U.S. are ready to go at it over China. The anti-Japanese propaganda is stepped up. "They" can't tell the difference between "them" and "us." We feel that our Japanese heritage is very detrimental to us.

Pearl Harbor! The "sneaky Japs" have "stabbed the U.S. in the back." We are definitely going to prove our loyalty to the U.S. How? By trying to assimilate and prove that we are 200% American. Some of us even begin to hate ourselves, our people, and our communities. Of course this way of thinking does not represent all of us, for after all we are a community of people–some even denounce this country. However, to aspire to be accepted by white America is our overwhelming response.

Concentration Camps

We are put into camp. We are scared, angry, overwhelmed. We don't know what to do. Our leaders are swooped up by the FBI right after the war starts. The new community leaders (JACL) tell us to cooperate, we mostly do. However, some fight back by going to court and some try to go underground amongst Asian friends.

Barbed wire, armed guards–and we didn't do a thing except to be born of Japanese parents! Our people are shot, there are popular uprisings called "riots" against these injustices and other abuses. We're even more scared and angry. There exists a popular belief that we were all gung ho in camp. This is untrue. There were many beliefs in camp. The concepts of *giri* and *ninjo* are still with us. *Ninjo* is shown by the supplies sent into camp by people in Japan. It is also manifested in those people who participated in the "riots" because of the injustices perpetrated.

Japan Orientation

Many of our people were educated in Japan, including most of our Issei and some of the Nisei, called Kibei. The Kibei as a whole were looked down upon by the American educated Nisei, because they were considered too Japanese. Many of their reactions were due to this division in the community and the racism of the whole country toward us. If we look at *giri* from the eyes of a person who has been discriminated against and who feels the only place that will accept him is Japan, then this orientation makes sense. Within the "Japan orientation" there are two main trends. One is loyalty and duty to the Emperor and government of Japan; this is essentially a militarist outlook. The other is more compassionate and deals with a sense of loss due to the war and what will happen to the people of Japan.

U.S. Orientation

For the U.S. oriented, *giri* takes on the understanding that we are U.S. citizens and must do what we can to show our loyalty to this country. Many Issei also tell this to their children. Within this orientation there are two main currents. One is to prove your citizenship and loyalty to American Democracy by supporting without reservation the government of the U.S. This stand was exemplified by the JACL and those members of left wing political organizations (CP-USA) who saw the struggle as a fight between fascism and democracy. Another trend was represented by those who accepted their citizenship and the principles that the constitution was founded on and in effect said, "Hell no, we won't go! As long as we are in concentration camps." This group which we see by checking those who said yes/yes to the loyalty questionnaire and still refused to be drafted, these amounted to 17% to 20% of the draftees in all the camps.

An Overview

This period in our historical development is one of mixed emotions and conflict. Duty and human compassion merge, disintegrate, conflict and are distorted. Until a time comes when our peoples and community can talk about the concentration camp period without suppressing their emotions, we will not be able to get a clear picture of the toll that was levied on our people by this racist and economically exploitative act. What we do know of this period is that the white man and his government were omnipotent and we couldn't do a thing about our treatment. And in turn, created a feeling of helplessness that made inroads into our compassion and our ability to fight back.

On the other hand, the Nisei are liberated from the authoritarian position of their fathers. The family structure is irrevocably weakened. The Nisei is favored over the Issei in camp activities, Japan and all things Japanese are discredited and things and ways American are praised and raised to a doctrine: We must be American–White American.

The War Ends

The war ends. In Amache, bombers are used to drop leaflets (in English) telling us the war is over. Many of us move back to the West Coast, close to our homes before the war. Times are rough, we live in trailer camps, church hostels, anywhere we can sleep. The hostility is high, we catch hell coming and going.

An Insight

For many of us, we say that camps were for our own good, that the people would have attacked us. What it seems is that we have our time sequence mixed up. Before the war and just after Pearl Harbor there were some instances of violence, but not on any large scale or in an organized way. However the incidents that we all heard and talk about happened when we came back from camp, not before.

Home Again: 1945-1950
Resettlement: The Coming of the Sansei

The period from 1945 to about 1950 is the period of our resettlement and fighting back. This is also the period in which the bulk of the Sansei make their appearance in the community. War Babies. The community uses much of their old organizational structures to tide us over in this period. Internally the old structures work to resettle, find jobs, homes and to help each other.

It is also in this period that the JACL starts the whole series of civil rights actions that overturns much of the legal and institutional racist acts upon the Japanese in America. This legal battle is waged on the state and federal level and culminates in 1952 with the right of Japanese aliens to citizenship. A criticism of this period and the JACL is that it is too ethno-centric, that is too Japanese oriented, however this can be understood in terms of our historical experience. This is not to say that we will follow suit again, but we will learn from our short comings and correct them in the future. Which means when we fight for ourselves, we must keep other Third World people in mind and incorporate them in our struggles and join them in their struggles.

The 1945-1950 period also sees the final destruction of the Japanese American economic land base. Most of the land that the small farmers owned were sold by the state for back taxes and were called "Escheat Cases." Therefore the rip off came *after* the war, not before or during. Only the really large farmers were able to withstand this last assault on our economic base.

Foreign Policy

During this period two inter-related and complementary movements are launched by the U.S. ruling class: the Cold War and the McCarthy Era. The Cold War was directed against the "communist threat" outside the boundaries of the U.S. In 1949, China had swung irrevocably over to people's power and socialism. When the Korean War breaks out, the U.S. felt the need for a strong, industrialized, capitalist ally in Asia to blunt the impact of the People's China, Korea, and Vietnam. To this economic imperative we can thank the revival of the Japanese *Zaibatsu* (monopoly capital) and Japan's re-emergence as a world power. It is this cornerstone and American military contracts that start the rise of Japanese imperialism-militarism. Today Japan is seen as a threat and an ally again.

McCarthyism

The effect of the Cold War and the Korean War has two significant consequences on our community in the U.S. The first effect is that we are no longer "little yellow bastards" but now, "little brown men from Asia." The other effect is a consequence of the need to revitalize the war industries, coupled with Korea, shows the lack of trained technical personnel in relation to Russia (i.e. the Sputnik). A large technical pool resides in the Asian and Japanese communities, we have an educational achievement record that is an asset. This asset is needed by big business, and because our economic base has been destroyed we are no longer a threat. Job discrimination breaks down, opportunities open up, the likes of which we have never before seen.

The Community

The community in this period is mobilizing and organizing to deal with the new conditions. The overriding ethic is to survive and be American. However, before the consolidation of the community can be affected to the new post war conditions, the economic bonds are shattered and its the start of every man for himself, which is the American way of doing things.

This era also sees the resurgence of gang activities in the community. Pre-war gangs now reappear and new gangs appear, the ghetto is re-established. As the mid-50's approach, the community appears to have stabilized to a degree. The social services re-establish themselves and the civil right sactivities are still going on.

Impact

This era can be remembered for several momentous events. The McCarthy era puts the community through changes about its post war organizational forms and their Japanese orientation. McCarthy "un-American activities" committee puts a cold front on all organizations and activities that don't have an "American" heritage. The need to be acceptable to white America is greater now than ever.

The chance comes when the Nisei is liberated from the economic bondage of a feudalistic Japanese American community: We are on our way. Many of us go back to school again. We *can* be acceptable to white America.

Assimilation: 1955-1965

From 1955 to 1960, we see the Nisei venturing into whole new areas of employment. With the new affluence, new housing is sought outside of the ghettoes. We are rebuffed time and time again, but we fight on as individuals, sometimes as groups. By the early 1960's most of the covenants are withdrawn. Therefore by the mid-60's, those who have the finances begin their move. We are in like Flynn. Free at last. Free at last.

Other Effects

This period also sees other effects on the community. The social services begin to deteriorate and are all but gone by the end of this period. The Japanese Chamber of Commerce has a part-time worker and that's about it. There is some Nisei activity in the human services and we see the quick rise and fall of the Japanese American Youth, Inc., Shonien being taken over by the Nisei and the establishment of the Japanese American Community Services (JACS). Later in this period the three organizations merge into one organization, that is JACS. However, soon after the amalgamation the organization goes inactive, not to be revived unitl 1970, and at the initiative of Sansei activists. Civil rights activities are pushed by young local progressive Nisei on behalf of Blacks and Chicanos. This is a hard time. There is much resentment on the part of the community. "Why should we help them? They didn't do anything for us." This movement is smashed by red baiting and calling everyone a communist. The interesting thing here is that the progressive Nisei were fighting for the civil rights of others, not for themselves.

On the other side, Sansei gang activity

reaches an apex around the late 50's and early 60's. There are killings and the community freaks out. But does not ask why.

Community - Ghetto - Gangs

There are also drugs in the community already in the late 50's and early 60's but they are not a common occurance although readily available. The gangs are numerous and spread out all over LA basin. They range from socially-oriented groups to out and out street gangs with a strong identity to a certain area or turf. Examples of this are the Seinans (1940's to 1950's), Constituents (1950's), Ministers (1960's), from the westside. The eastside with the Koshakos, Buddha Bandits, J-Flats with the Black Juans, and the Taul Bldg. Boys, Exclusive 20, the Esquires, all in Little Tokyo.

The End of An Era

The gangs represent a cohesive force in the community. They also represent a definite ghetto mentality which gave an identity of its members. The gangs also resented the community's only force that could defend the community on notice and create respect among other peoples. With the thrust for assimilation land marked by the opening of employment opportunities in the mid-50's and the opening of housing in the early 60's, the ghetto mentality finally gives way around 1965 with the last of the Ministers III on the westside.

Out Whiting the Whites

The move to the suburbs that started in 1960 is accelerated in the late 60's. The community is dissolving into a loose conglomeration of social contacts, nothing more. The wide spread belief that "we have it made," and "we take care of our own," has its effect. The human services break down. The community's ability to fight back is lowered to a point never dreamed of, but it is never stomped out. The community is characterized by nuclear families with some social relations that date back to their ghetto experience.

The Effects—on the Sansei

The move to the suburbs has unseen effects on the Sansei. The Nisei, essentially a ghetto-rat, is now in white suburbia. They must play the game, but most of their social relationships are still with Japanese. Therefore their existence is still a carryover of their prewar experience. This means that their social relationships are still in a Japanese context, and their work, like their educational experience, is in a white context exists. Their whole being is placed in a white context. The problems they confront are hardly understood by their parents. Who are we? What are we? What have we accomplished? How are we going to relate to the rest of the world and this country's minorities? These are some of the questions being raised.

Some of the outright effects are disinterest in schools, inability to relate to other people or themselves in a healthy way, no social context in which to carry on their experimentation, powerlessness, and last but not least, drug abuse.

Overview

The residue of shame of being Japanese and being in camp push us violently toward trying to be what we consider as being white Americans. We don't know anything of our past accomplishments in this country and we are stereotyped by schools, media and public. We, the Sansei, grow up thinking we are white, but somehow, most of us don't quite make it. And we don't know why. Is it because we are personally messed up – is it us? Is it that we are overly sensitive to seemingly innocent remarks? Are we really good, studious and quiet? How come we are scared of other Asians in public? What is our future? Only together, as a community, can we begin to answer these questions.

–JACS Philosophy Writing Team

Balikbayan

Young Filipinos by the thousands
Took the boat in Steerage Class
And dreamed above the ocean
The wealth they could amass:

Or diplomas of highest merit
That would give joy and pride
To all their people in the barrios
Whose schooling was denied.

For either way would suit the purpose:
To be rich, or be wise;
Inspire oppressed colonial people
To wake up now and rise.

So they, like playful steers together,
Were shipped to USA,
But trapped in Ghettoes where their vision
Had faded then away.

Since then, it was a bitter struggle
With firm but opposite views:
Some hoped for the American Dream;
Most sick with that false news.

Time with its mysterious magic
Turned youth into old age:
Whatever such an awful process
Brought all to final stage.

The old Pinoys too long exploited
Got hell in Promised Land;
Their hope for justice and freedom
Was just for the Grandstand.

Social Security or Pension
So little to live on,
But in the far side of the ocean
Was born Balikbayan.

It would be good to go for visit,
Renew the family ties,
But not support the Dictatorship
That ruled with dirty lies.

The foreign capital invested,
Expanded, taken root
In troubled Philippine soil
Made Marcos rocked the boat.

That Little Dictator, F. Marcos,
Took Gold for Human Right
Because American Big Business
Backed him up for the fight.

Balikbayan lured back pensioners
To bring their money home;
The Millionaires coveted dollars,
While the poor were in gloom.

Democracy and Peace he boasted
To make by Martial Law
Was just too silly for a Windbag
To say for it won't go.

The Issue was not really Marcos,
For he was just a fool;
Th System made him joined the crooks
As an effective tool.

Balikbayan, good on the surface,
Was evil in intent;
It covered up practiced corruption
Led by the President?

–Philip V. Vera Cruz

Crashing Through

Crashing through
billowing mountains
of towering
crashing thoughts
into a billowing
brew of
pointed arrows,
crashing through.

–Anon. Sansei

Abortion

When we walked outside at sunset
a tenement was burning to the ground
water tore bricks from the walls
and ashes fell in my hair
I wore your big goosedown jacket
and hugged my sleeves watching
from behind a playground fence
the rampant light

–Mei Berssenbrugge
(copyright 1973)

We shall all of us rise up and flutter off
like paper in the wind, like Wendy scattering
bread, like shrieking gulls aloft. We'll
circle and break apart like ice floes
In Ogunquit. And settles, not settle
get down *in the cracks*
like blasphemous horntoads and sprout
the way blood flows and hair down.

–Mei Berssenbrugge
(copyright 1973)

Liberation

People came, came from East, following the
setting sun.
People came, came from West, looking into the
morning sun light.
People came, came from North, riding on the
whispering cold north wind.
People came, came from South, listening to the
songs of migrating birds.
People came, came to unite, from four directions.
People came, came with one thought.
Purification.
People came, came to struggle, for there
is no other life, except for the
New Nation.

–John Tanaka

garuda

if there is clear light
you will seek it,
flower made of fire
and the sky:
wind and unkind weather
have no power to destroy you,
bird of paradise.

thick stems raise you
from the earth that gives you shelter,
silent leaves conceal
the strength you rest upon:
the pleasure of my eyes
has no power to control you
yet you spend time,
watching me realize

that you linger for a moment
to be near me
though the stars call
for the colors of your company:
foreign spaces
have no power to compel you,
bird of paradise.

if there is clear light
we will find it,
in our hearts,
the center where mystery lies:
perfect love
is the power that unbinds you,
bird of paradise.

–Laura Tokunaga

A LETTER TO A COMMUNITY WORKER

A long-time community worker on both coasts, Shin'ya Ono, once wrote in Gidra:

"We see the many ways in which the individual and his or her social setting are interconnected.

Mental illness and obstacles to mental health in the Japanese community cannot be understood as individual defects, failures, or pathologies. Instead, they must be seen as products of the social and historical experience that we as a community of oppressed people have gone through, both in peasant, semi-feudal Japan, and in captialist, racist America."

The following letter is one which was received by Shin'ya and in turn, given to the pages of Gidra. *It clearly depicts the depths of mental problems in the Asian American community.*

To Brother Shin'ya Ono.

This list of my mother's problems throughout her life may aid you in helping her.

1.) Grandfather lost about 300 acres in a flood. Two brothers and one sister died while she was a teenager.

2.) Father and Mother were first cousins, which may have biological effects on the children, since two brothers are hard of hearing, and one brother also had a nervous breakdown. She feels it is "*bachi*."

3.) My father doesn't show any affection towards my mother. He is worried about her but doesn't know *how* to be "nice." For instance: 1. He can't say please or thank you. 2. Doesn't hold her hand. 3. Says things about her to make her feel "small," but doesn't realize it. 4. Brings his troubles from work to home and takes it out on the family. 5. Feels my mother is too "dumb" to do things and shelters her too much. 6. My dad is unsocial and won't take her out to see her friends. He says he doesn't have time. But he won't let her learn how to drive, since he feels that she is too "slow."

Both my mother and father do not have an open mind about the "outside world." This may be because my mom was mothered by her grandmother, and because she was hard of hearing she had a rough time dealing with people. She only attended school up till the sixth grade. My father's father was a divorcee. My dad always had to work and do the "dirty work" while his brothers studied. And even at meals he got the least or the worst. Maybe that's why he takes it out on my mom. Also my mother was the first girl he dated, and even that was for only about two months, so he really didn't know how to have a meaningful relationship with a person of the opposite sex.

4.) Throughout her school years she felt inferior because of her hearing and people would make fun of her because of it.

5.) Since the early part of her marriage, they fought. Within the first month of marriage my dad gave her a black eye.

6.) They had a small market but a partner ran out with the money and they went bankrupt.

7.) Throughout the marriage my dad took out other women. The most embarrassing affair was with a girl he took out from her factory. Everyone would tease her about it without exactly saying it before and after she knew. Other times he would come home late with lipstick on his collar and deny anything. He'd come with other girls' phone numbers in his pants. And bring home pictures, too. *Many times* my mom would threaten to kill herself by sticking a big kitchen knife in front of him and would go into *hysterics* but he acted like he couldn't see. When she'd lock him out of the house he would hit her afterwards. He never bought my mother *anything*, but my dad almost walked out of the house with a mink stole for a girl he felt "sorry" for. And that really made my mom feel hurt. I know because I saw these things. My dad used to take all her paychecks and give her only enough money for only bus fare while he spent the rest on his "girls."

8.) They almost went through a divorce.

9.) They had a house, twelve-unit apartment and savings, and built a quarter-million dollars worth of apartments, but lost it. The first reason was that their contractor was a Japanese who lied about being able to get a second loan so we could build the apartments, plus he ordered extra material so he could use it for building his own apartments. Most of the tenants didn't pay their rent. My folks let them go for two or three months but they would sneak out. They eventually lost the apartments to the bank, and we became managers. Even then they lost that because someone (a tenant) said we weren't cleaning up enough so the bank gave these people the managers job.

10.) "The Kids' faults."

Number one brother caused my mother to worry by coming home late, and was very sarcastic. I acted rowdy and she didn't like my appearance when I was about 16-18. When I was 16, I got caught for Grand Theft, Auto, and had a probation officer. It was in the newspaper and really shamed my mother.

Before I went into the service in '69, I used to get thrown out of the house all the time because I'd come home late. My curfew was 12:00, but at 19 I thought that was too much. After I went into the service, she used to cry all the time, I think because she felt bad for having told me to get out and don't come back, before I was into the service. While I was gone, my other brother used to sleep and stay at his girlfriend's house. He'd come home *only* to change and get his books. My parents would worry but he'd ignore it.

11.) She suffered a nervous breakdown (her first) while I was in the service.

12.) She had her second nervous breakdown a year later. At this time, our house was being robbed every week by a neighbor's kid. Our house was also broken into by a gang.

13.) Her third and present nervous breakdown. Causes:

Stayed *alone* by herself at nights for about two months until 10:30 when my brother and father would come home from work She said she had heard noises in houses, and concluded it was spirits, then it lead to being her father and God. During this time a Jehovah's Witness came around and preached to her about Jehovah and gave her a book to read. During those two months I think she just read the book and became a religious fanatic. She said Jehovah is the God for Asians. I think she is so wrapped up in him because he brings her new hope for a better life. It was the first time I really saw her read a book and I think she was amazed in its "truths." God gave her a reason for existence and was someone she could talk to.

Another cause – My brother went to visit her at her sewing factory. He has really long hair. When he came in everyone just stopped working. Some people teasingly went up to him and said he looked like a girl, but they were actually making fun of him. She took it too seriously and acted funny at work, talking about *Kamisama*. I don't know which came first, the voices or my brother's incident.

14.) What is happening now:

A.) She believes *Kamisama* – God, her father-in-law, her father and her dead brothers and sisters are here in the house all the time; B.) They talk only to her and not to us; C.) She says she really saw a "ball of fire" but maybe she got that from Jehovah's book, I don't know; D.) She serves them regular sized meals and won't let us eat until they eat first. After she feeds them she might throw it away before we can eat it. E.) She talks to them almost every minute she is awake; F.) She believes they helped her to hear better; G.) She washes the dishes almost all day and night; H.) She believes they sleep here and makes the bed for them in the living room; I.) Also very important is the idea of someone taking a picture of her and making money. I think she is confused about this since her 2nd nervous breakdown stemmed from having our house broken into every week by a neighbor child, and once, many stuff was stolen by a gang of Chicanos. Later when the articles were recovered she went to the police station to get the stuff and had her picture taken. Later she was embarrassed for being pictured with "stolen goods." Oh yes I forgot to mention her 2nd nervous breakdown was brought about by her seeing a gigantic field rat at the door. At that time she believed the robberies was a curse. And when the rat came, she really believed it. Since her father was born in the year of the rat, she thought it was he who came to talk or protect her. This strengthened her ideas in spirits.

J.) When she talks to spirits they always tell her what to do or not to do. She is trying to cook differently improving each meal. She thinks this is because of God's idea of how to cook. In fact whenever we ask her a question she consults God first. K.) About 4 months ago they found a few mice around the house. This may have brought up the idea of her father again.

Shin'ya, I have to go to Canada. If you call my father into counseling please make sure to tell him to be more affectionate because she really feels unloved and that we will be getting *rid* of her by taking her to the hospital. One thing that would make her feel good is if he would kiss her, even on the cheek. I know he doesn't because I tried to make him and my mom asked him and he refused to. I think because he is too embarrassed.

Shin'ya, I really used to blame my dad for a lot of things but I've changed my mind a bit. During the past few years I've worked for same bosses. Part of the reason he fooled around is because of the pressure from work. The produce field is a political game. If you don't drink, play horses, gamble, play with girls, you aren't part of the boys and you'll never get ahead. If you're not part of the boys you'll get stuck on the late shift and they'll really "fuck you up." I know because I've seen too much of it. They have a union but if you speak up they'll find some way to fire you or put more pressure on you. So my dad won't really get to spend his days off with my mom. For his days off will usually be when he's working.

As for my mom, well, in order to survive she'll have to work in a sewing factory. With the same fucked up type of people. Since there seems to be mostly Chicanos she'll always feel the pressure she felt at all the other factories.

Life seems sort of sad until they retire. So please try to make my dad see what he is doing to my mom. And through more love and understanding of each other they can make life more meaningful.

I know this paper is not organized but I've tried to put most of the things I saw wrong over my past whole life.

If something should happen to me on the trip, tell them I loved both of them a lot more than they realize.

Name Withheld

THIRD WORLD PEOPLE: Shoulder to Shoulder

A Historical Basis for Third World Unity

Dear Gidra *Friends:*

I have heard from rumors that Gidra *may stop publishing after the fifth anniversary issue. I hope this really isn't so.* Gidra *has always had an important place as a source of information, articles, and ideas for our movement, and I hope that it will continue to be so for many years to come.*

You asked if I could contribute something to the anniversary issue. Enclosed is a copy of the speech I delivered at the Third World People's Solidarity Conference at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan on Thursday evening, February 21, 1974. The main speakers at the Conference included Angela Davis, National Committee Against Racial and Political Repression; Clyde Bellecourt, National Director of the American Indian Movement; Ramsey Muniz, La Raza Unida Party in Texas; and myself.

In a way, the speech is a summary of much of my thinking these days on the question of the Third World unity in the U.S. I firmly believe that there is a real historical, social, and political basis for that unity. It is not something metaphysical, but something which can help us to clarify the bases for unity of all the American people against our real enemy — the ruling class.

There is much else which needs to be written, but I want to study and work for a while longer and consolidate my thinking before I make any published statements. Perhaps soon, we will publish an Asian American women's reader based on our experiences at the S.F. State Asian American Women's Class. In the meantime, I hope Gidra *will stay together and that we will be able to publish some things together in the future.*

With much affection,
Pat Sumi

130 years ago, when the first Chinese laborers arrived on the West Coast, America was still a young agricultural country. The outmoded system of slavery still flourished in the Southern plantations, the industrial cities of Chicago, Detroit, and the Ohio River Valley were still small farm towns, 60 percent of the non-slave working people lived on small farms, and the University of Michigan was still less than thirty years old.

130 years ago, the nations of Asia — China, Japan, Korea, and the Phillipines — groaned under the weight of decaying feudalism and European imperialist penetration.

And 130 years ago, two relatively unknown political economists named Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels served notice to a skeptical but soon to be revolutionary Europe, that capitalism would soon be swept away by the combined might of the world's peoples.

In those 130 years, America has grown up to astonish the world with a current gross national output annually of over one trillion dollars. America has also become the most powerful and brutal country in the world with political, economic, and military interests spread over half the globe.

But in the last 130 years, the peoples of the world have not been standing still. Since those early days when the *Communist Manifesto* raised eyebrows all over Europe, one-third of the world's peoples are now busy building socialism — building a society free from the exploitation of human beings by other human beings; one-third of the world's peoples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are rising up for the liberation of their nations from imperialism and colonialism of all kinds; and one-third of the world's people in the advanced capitalist countries are struggling to put a final end to their exploitation and oppression.

We Asian American peolpe have not remained apart from this great era of historical change. 130 years ago when imperialist penetration and decaying feudalism crushed the Chinese people in a double vise, we fled our homeland to look for a better life. In the late 1880's when big European and American imperialist powers jealously nutured an incipient Japanese capitalism as a valued ally in subjugating China and Korea, the Japanese people, especially in the peasantry, found that the primary accumulation of capital was to be squeezed from their labor, we fled our homeland in search of a better life. In the early 1900's when the old Spanish masters of the Phillipines gave way to the new U.S. masters and thousands of peasants were herded into sugar and rubber plantations, we fled our homeland to look for a better life.

What made us leave our homelands? What brought us Asian American people to the United States? It was none other than the great 19th century dynamic of imperialism and colonialism

— an imperialism and colonialism fueled by the African slave trade, the robbery of Latin America, and the confiscation of Native American land. Therefore, from the very beginning, our existence as Asian American people was conditioned by the very same social and historical factors which conditioned the lives of other Third World peoples in this country.

The Civil War settled the future of the United States. From the 1860's, the U.S. would develop as a national industrial state, not as a backward, plantation economy dependent on slave labor. Its economic and political epicenter would be in the Northeast. At that time, we Asian Americans, already in the U.S. by the thousands, began to add our sweat and blood to a land already wet with the tears of other Third World people. We helped build the railroads, thereby making the nationally integrated growth of industry and commerce possible. We fueled the machines and factories with minerals dug from the earth. We fed the people by inventing new methods of agriculture. From the 1880's we planted sugar and pineapple in Hawaii. From the 1900's we picked and canned the rich crops of the West. We harvested the strawberries and asparagus. We fished and canned the salmon of Alaska and the tuna of San Pedro. We sewed America's clothes and we cleaned America's houses. Indeed, we truly learned the truth of the word "kuli" — bitter strength — strength to build immense wealth and bitter because that wealth was appropriated by a handful of rich.

In addition to the hard work, miserable conditions, and low wages — the features of exploitation we shared with all working people in this country — we Asian Americans have been doubly exploited, lynched, persecuted, and driven out of town because our skin was the brown of the earth and the gold of the sun we worked in. To our exploitation as working people was added the double exploitation of being working people of color.

In the era before World War I, at the same time when Jim Crow laws forced skilled black craftsmen and small farmers into being unskilled and poorly paid wage laborers, we Asian Americans also found ourselves hemmed in by laws designed to prevent us from being anything but poorly paid, unskilled laborers. The Foreign Miner's Tax, the Laundry Tax, the Alien Land Laws prevented us from owning our own land and opening our own business, thereby ensuring we would remain unskilled labor. Legally, we were classified the same as Indians and blacks, unable to testify in court against whites and unable to marry whites. From the anti-Chinese riots in the 1870's and 80's which killed hundreds of Asian men, women and children, to the anti-miscegenation laws of the 1930's; from the incarceration of Japanese American citizens in military concentration camps during World War II to the murder of Filipino farm labor organizers in the 1970's, we Asian Americans have known the wrath of racism and the brutality of exploitation together.

Since World War II, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Korean immigrants have once again been driven from their homes as their countries' economies have collapsed from the sheer weight of American imperialist exploitation. We Asian American immigrants find ourselves living in the same squalid living conditions and working at the same menial jobs as our chicano and latino immigrant brothers and sisters. Unable to speak English, without job training programs, we are the cooks, janitors, bedpan cleaners, gardeners, and factory workers of today.

In short, since we first came to this country 130 years ago, every facet of our lives has been conditioned by and is part of the larger national and international dynamics of capitalism and imperialism, the very same dynamics which condition the lives of other Third World people in America.

But the world is changing. In a world brought together by imperialist brutality and exploitation, the people of the world are standing up, working in a common struggle for a new kind of owrld free from exploitation and where the dignity and heroism of the ordinary working people at last takes its rightful and lofty place in the chronicles of the human race. It is a struggle to free all the immense industrial and creative potential already created by the common labor of people all over the world to be used by the people rather than by a handful of exploiters.

In this struggle, we Asian Americans have also shown that wherever there is oppression, there is resistance. From the 1880's on, we Asian American plantation workers in Hawaii have stood up in strike after strike to demand better pay and working conditions. In 1903 the first successful farm workers' strike in the history of California was led by Asian Americans. In 1906, the first meeting of Asian American women took place to discuss the role they should play in the people's struggle. From that time to this, we Asian Americans have discussed and organized to emancipate ourselves from the chains of exploitation and racism. We have

THE KOREAN PEOPLE

The following article is taken from the main text of a presentation made to Los Angeles Police Department officers at the Asian Community Service Center on March 12, 1974 by Sam Rhee of the Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP).

Historically Koreans were fused early into a separate, homogeneous race, independent of their neighbors, with traits distinctive from both Chinese and Japanese. For example, Koreans are considered on the average to be taller and more robust than most Orientals.

Throughout their long history, the Korean people have well preserved their culture in spite of foreign influences. Basic among them is their language. Koreans all speak, understand, and write the same language in the same way. In addition to what we say with our verbal language, we are constantly communicating our real feelings in our silent language - the language of behavior and culture. Another important aspect of our culture is the name. There are only 200 or so different family names. This is an important factor conducive to a spirit of national unity and solidarity, which has been especially characteristic of the Korean people for many centuries.

The latest population of South Korea was reported to be approximately 32 million people. According to a 1971 Korean government report, about 672,660 Koreans live overseas--595,241 in Japan and 51,649 in the U.S. account for most of them. During 1973, a reported 21,000 new immigrants came from Korea to the U.S. and half of those are said to be clustered around Southern California. It is estimated that a neighborhood of 50,000 Koreans are living in Los Angeles and its vicinity.

At this point I would like to mention a little bit about the Korean's way of living and their customs particularly in relation to Western culture. Whereas Western culture has been under the influence of Christianity, the Korean culture and their way of living has been molded by Buddhists and Confucian teachings like other Oriental cultures. Of course, the introduction of Christianity in the nineteenth century added a new dimension to the Korean culture. Yet, the underlying philosophy of the Korean people is still of a Buddhist and Confucian orientation.

Let me explain briefly the backbone of Confucian teachings. In short, his teaching was not a religious thought per se. Rather, it stressed the value of the human life in terms of social relations. "The Five Cardinal Principles" of relationships are the essence of his teachings.

"The Five Cardinal Principles" are:

1. Relation between the ruler and the subjects in terms of loyalty.
2. Relation between the parents and children in terms of coherency.
3. Relation between men and women in terms of distinction.
4. Relation between the young and old in terms of order.
5. Relation between friends in terms of faithfulness.

In this country as much as in their homeland of Korea, their way of living is based upon the Confucian teachings however, now with a Western perspective. "Loyalty" is transformed into the democratic concept and autonomy. Family "coherency" is somewhat loosened but strong family ties are still preserved among Korean families even in this country. The "distinction" between men and women is now interpreted as a "difference". However, domination of men over women is real in many aspects of living as is age in playing an important role in the Korean social structure. Of course, the order is not solely based on age alone. The Korean young people respect their elders because of both age and personal qualities.

Perhaps someone from a more traditional background would say that the Korean way of life in this country has drastically changed. We did not give up our cultural background. We are trying to incorporate or assimilate a new life but even in the process of the assimilation, the traditional Korean philosophy of life is our frame of reference.

We Koreans are often puzzled when we see an American couple who claim, "This is the husband's car," and that, "This is the wife's car," and so on. To a Korean, the wife's car is still the husband's car. Our father's house is "Our house."

Among Koreans, first names are used only between peers of the same sex. An older Korean man may feel humiliated if a younger person calls him by his first name. Continuing on the subject of names, the custom is now rare, but some Koreans still tend to avoid the use of the given name in addressing or referring to each other, except among very close friends. Thus, even people who know each other very well still employ the Korean equivalent of "Mister." Also usually Koreans put their last name first, first name last. But Koreans in this country write their names in the standard Western way. Thus, this may lead to confusion. The rule of thumb is to remember about 10 or 15 popular last names such as Lee, Kim, Park.

Before going on to discuss the specific problem areas, I would like to classify Koreans in the U.S. chronologically. There may be different opinions on the following breakdown.

1. Prior to 1945: The Koreans came to this country primarily because of political reasons. Until 1945 Korea had been under the Japanese Imperial Government for 36 years.
2. 1945-1960: Mainly church-related people such as ministers, those who had political and governmental affliation, and a few students.
3. 1960-1970: Mostly students and visitors, but most of them did not return to Korea.
4. 1970's: Immigrants, students, visitors with a dramatic increase in the number of the Korean population in the U.S.

The people who came to the U.S. prior to 1945 are now old and retired. There are not enough programs and facilities provided for them. Many of the poeple who came during 1945-1960 may not have as many problems. They seem to have adjusted relatively well. The second generation of these Koreans are encountering identity crises. The people who have the most serious problems are those who came to this country after 1960 with student visas or as visitors. Most of them were well educated in this country and/or Korea. Many have some money to start new careers, say, in business. The problem areas which they encounter most are:

1. Under employment
2. Unemployment
3. Failure in business
4. Acculturation/assimilation
5. Language barrier
6. Identity crises

De facto discrimination exists in the job market. With all their academic and practical qualifications, the prospects are far from rosy. Their language barriers disqualify them most of the time and is usually the stated reason. Whatever the case, their business failures are not only detrimental to their materialistic well-being, but also to their psychological and social well-being. Many Korean people in Los Angeles with these same or similar problems are living under substandard conditions and at this point the future is uncertain. With all these problems and hassles. What is going to happen in the future in the Korean community? We must all begin to work together on problems which face the Korean community as well as other Asian communities with the ability to face whatever comes.

Sam Rhee

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marched by the thousands to join unions; we have picketed and leafletted against imperialist wars, including Japanese imperialist aggression against the rest of Asia during World War II; we have joined demonstrations against the war in Vietnam. And now, increasingly, we have begun to realize the national and international implications of our struggle.

In the cannery strikes, we worked shoulder to shoulder with chicanos and whites. In the struggle for human dignity, we have worked shoulder to shoulder with blacks. In our struggle against illegal and inhumane incarceration in camps, we have stood shoulder to shoulder with our Native American brothers and sisters. At every turn, we Asian American people have stood up and made our voices part of the chorus of voices demanding equality and justice. At every turn, we have added our blood and our courage to the outpouring of the American people for a new society. At every turn, we have added our strength to the struggle of the American people for social and political mastery of the society and the immense wealth and industrial capability we have helped create through our labor.

We Asian American young people are finding great strength and courage for the trials ahead of us by understanding our heritage as part of the Third World working people. Who can fail to be moved by the quiet dignity of our mothers cooking, cleaning, and sewing to save money for our education? Who can fail to feel humble at the magic and stoic strength that brings forth food and flowers for the people's livelihood? Who can fail to be moved when an old Filipino farm worker in his 70's says that the most important lesson he has learned is that young people of all races must work together for the people's sake?

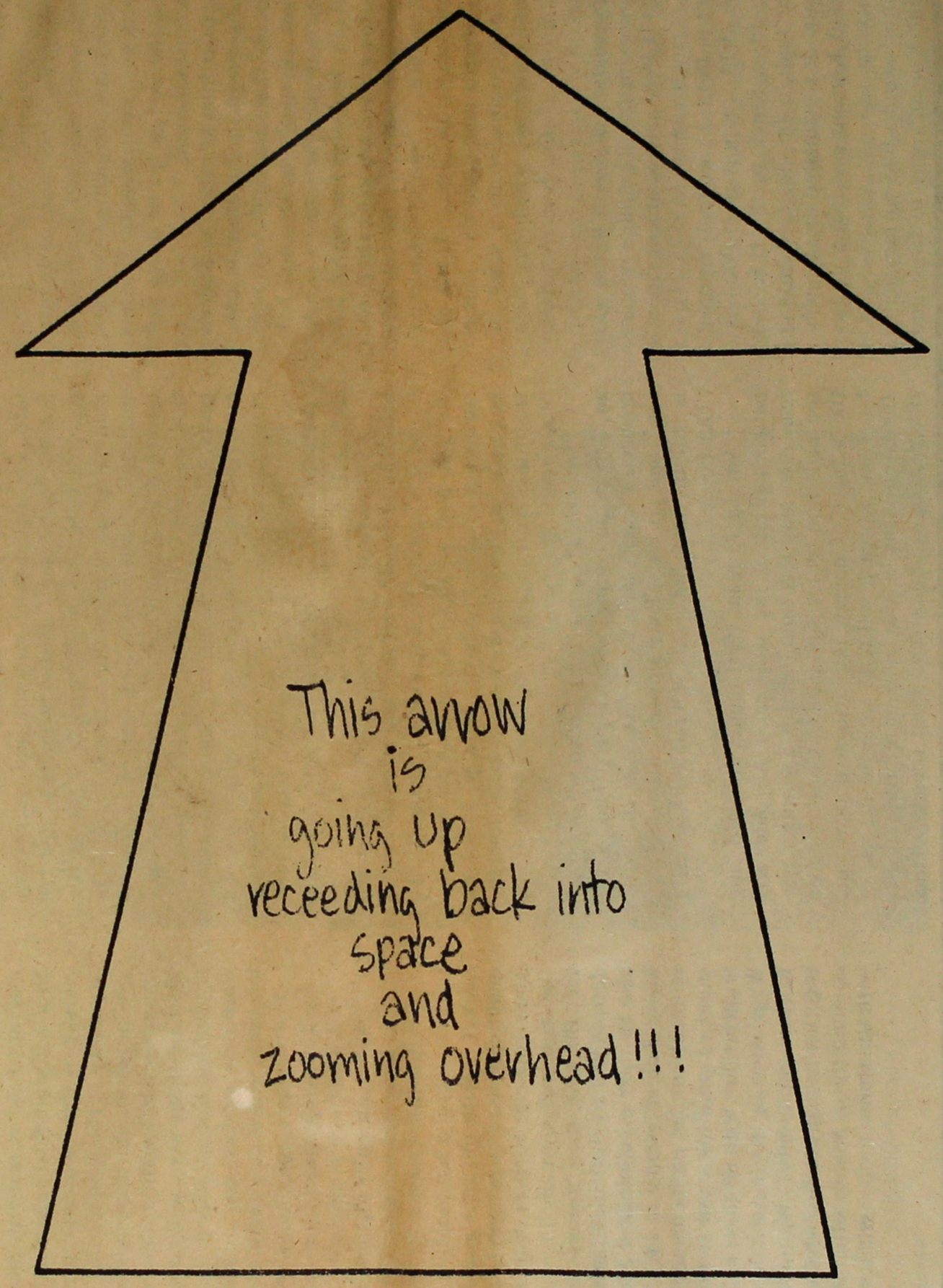
Our lives, along with the lives of all Third World peoples of the world have been conditioned by imperialism. Therefore, our struggles to liberate the Asian, African and Latin American peoples from imperialism. Our lives have been conditioned by racism. Therefore, our struggles as Asian Americans must be part of the struggle to end racism and win genuine equality for all people. And most of all, our lives as Asian Americans have been conditioned by the most brutal exploitation. Therefore, our struggle must be merged with the great world wide struggle against exploitation and for building a society free from exploitation.

The unity of Third World people in America: what does it mean for Asian Americans? It is a window to look back on the past and see ourselves as an integral part of America's transformation into a rich and powerful industrial state. It is a window to see ourselves as part of the long and glorious tradition of slave rebellions, workers' strikes, civil rights movements, and anti-imperialist struggles of the American people's history.

And most of all, the unity of Asian Americans with Third World people in America is the only door through which we can enter the future. The history of the past 130 years, 130 years of blood and sweat, teaches us that only through the unity of the poor and disenfranchised, only through the unity of the racially oppressed, only through the unity of the exploited, can people be victorious. 130 years ago, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels said that capitalism and imperialism would be overthrown by the might of the world's peoples. Today, all the world's peoples are learning that it is possible, that it is necessary, and that a glorious future awaits us at the end. We Asian American people are determined to be a part of that future.

We Asian, Black, Brown and Native American people are determined to end exploitation and become the masters of our society. We who are exploited and oppressed will build a future for our children such that our parents and grandparents hardly dared to dream of. The future is ours. Through unity we shall win!

Pat Sumi



1974 tshumayn

Cable television is super TV. Unlike ordinary television which is essentially an entertainment appliance, cable television can provide expanded educational, cultural, political and economic opportunities. The possibilities for two-way communication and information retrieval make cable, in its more futuristic projections, both a lifeline for a home communications center, as well as things the old science fiction movies anticipated.

These opportunities pose obstacles too, however, particularly for Third World communities. Already, though much of L.A. Chinatown is wired for cable, much of cable television is controlled by media monopolies. This paper outlines strategies and structures for involving Third World control of community cable TV. Its purpose is to provoke thought about ways to secure access to more people through emerging new technology.

We can't expect leaflets to do it forever.

History and Overview of Cable

Community Antenna Television (CATV) or cable television began in the early '50's as an auxiliary service for better reception of over-the-air broadcast signals. But if cable could only improve signal quality of existing broadcast signals for rural areas, it would not be the great technological innovation it is. Rather, the significance rests in the cable's ability to transmit a multitude of electronic signals, which allows it to provide up to forty channels of television, FM radio transmission, and an enormous stream of other informational data into any one signal target area. (The telephone, by contrast, with its ability to transmit thousands of two-way conversations, has a capability equal to only a fraction of that of cable.) Thus, there exists the potential for greater expansion of broadcast programming and services through cable; unlike the scarcity of quality broadcast frequencies, cable offers an abundance of programming channels.

Cable is quickly expanding throughout the country. As of 1970, Ralph Smith in the *Nation* article entitled "The Wired Nation" reported that over 2,321 cable systems were operating in the United States. Furthermore, there were 2,370 franchise applications for 1,300 towns. With a growth rate estimated at 20 to 25 percent, the cable industry has wired up some 4,400 communities serving 7 percent of the viewing population, or approximately 14 million viewers. Within the West, 10 year cable penetration is expected to reach 70 percent of the total TV homes. The cable industry, evidenced by its rapid rate of growth, is profitable business. The latest reports from the White House Office of Telecommunications foresees at least a decade of heavy capital investment, estimated by Chairman Clay T. Whitehead at $50 billion – before the cable industry reached the point where most households in all U.S. cities have cable television (*L.A. Times*, 17 Jan. 1974).

With such profits available, the invarible step is concentration of resources. Big companies buy out the smaller competitors. Howard Hughes and Jack Kent Cooke are well-known high rollers in this field. Ten companies control 52 percent of the cable industry: Teleprompter – 535,000 subscribers, Cox Cable Communications, Inc. – 197,000, American Television and Communications Corp. – 80,000, Viacom – 150,000, Tele-communications, Inc. – 141,000, Cypress Communications Corp. – 140,000. (Figures from Cable in the Cities, Charles Tate.) In addition, 50 percent of the cable industry is owned by other media producers. Broadcasters own 8 percent, telephone, advertising companies and motion picture companies own 6 percent.

The Uses of Cable

Given the monopoly that has been created around the cable, a major question arises as to what measures of regulation will ensure quality service and the public good? Given its technical capacity for increased programming and diversity of services, how will cable TV be used?

There are several possibilities for public services, including localized broadcasts of social welfare, governmental, and health information. These deal with the need to communicate rather than to profit from the by-products of communication.

For example, health service information could include: 1. *health care assistance*, 2. *preventive programming*, 3. *medical practice orientation*, and 4. *community health information*. Futhermore, current health service information, deadlines for Medicare applications, innoculation schedules, community health days, are all part of the government's health information outreach that could be transmitted via cable.

The example of health information as a public service can be repeated for many areas: education, consumer protection, legal advice, public safety. It is precisely because these communicated to and utilized by minority community residents that groups have been formed. To provide information and services that are denied the minority community through a history of institutional racism and societal neglect offers a great incentive for community involvement with cable.

Cable and the Ethnic Community

The ability of cable to program for a minority audience instead of a mass audience holds promise for service geared toward ethnic communities.

Charles Tate, editor of *Cable Television in the Cities*, spells out the community control perspective:

"Access is extremely important to minority communities, but it does not go far enough. Access alone will not provide the measure of control required over capital, labor and technology, to stimulate and sustain economic and social development of ghetto areas. Ownership and control must be achieved to meet this objective. A sizeable portion of the income and profits from CATV in the major cities will come from minority subscribers. Unless these systems are controlled by the communities served, the resources urgently needed for development will be lost."

For the community, cable represents perhaps the last chance to win control over some form of broadcast media that supplies information and opportunity for community residents. For example, of the approximately one hundred black soul music stations, only sixteen are black owned. Very little programming on television reflects the life and problems of ethnic communities. Outside of an

occasional public service program, there is no programming geared for the educational, cultural, social or political needs of the ethnic community. That need has been largely ignored and contributes to the sense of impotence and apathy in the community.

Using the Asian American community as a model, one sees the application of potentialities for an ethnic community cable operation. The Los Angeles Asian community consists of over 367,944 people according to the 1970 census.

The Los Angeles breakdown:

Persons of Japanese ancestry:	158,987
Persons of Chinese ancestry:	68,098
Persons of Pilipino ancestry:	52,859
Persons of Korean ancestry:	13,650
Persons of (Samoan, Thai) other ancestry:	74,250

The need for an ethnic cable program is evident from the alienation of Asian Americans from the mass media that barely recognizes their existence. Isolated by lack of representation in mass media by stereotypes maintained by the media, Asian Americans face a unique and insidious form of alienation-invisibility. The true portrayal of Asian Americans, their problems, lifestyles and culture has been neglected by the mass media that refuses to program for a minority interest. Yet the Asian community, like any community needs and supports media that speak to its situation. In Los Angeles, there are several Japanese American newspapers: *Rafu Shimpo*, *Kashu Mainichi*, *Pacific Citizen*, and *Gidra*. A subscription radio service, Homecast Broadcasting, brings Japanese language programming on education, entertainment and culture to homes and business. On the UHF channel 22, Japanese language programs constitute a 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. block on Sunday evenings. An all day Saturday Japanese language programming schedule has had sufficient enough support to affect shopping patterns of ethnic residents in Little Tokyo. Merchants account for decreased business on Saturday to the popularity of the channel 22 broadcasts. The point is that Asians do support ethnic media. Cable will allow the Asian community to have not only these present media resources, but additional local programming and services.*

Some of the services provided for inducement of cable subscription include, among others: 1. Continuing bilingual lessons, including video correspondence courses, and special education programs; 2. Health services consisting of preventive medical and dental information; 3. Legal and consumer services; and 4. Cultural and entertainment uses; 5. An informational retrieval bank of reference material that is made available from the public library to the home.

Even more than the financial feasibility or increased service of cable is the political and social implications of cable that makes community control of cable desirable.

Former FCC commissioner, Nicholas Johnson, summed up the impact of cable and minorities when he said, "Information is power. People will act if they are informed.... They used to say, 'the pen is mightier than the sword' in terms of revolution. And today that pen is represented in the video camera. That's power- more than anything else it is access to information and control of mass communications that is power."

If ethnic minorities are to make societal changes that will provide a more equitable, humane environment, we must have information and access to people. Together, a movement can be built. That movement must have a strong local, political base with which to confront the established powers in contesting franchises, establishing criteria for franchise review and winning community control of cable. A renewed sense of community pride and participation will further develop local leadership that will continue the community control movement.

Community Involvement in Regulation of Cable

Given the potential of socially useful public service of cable, community groups have ample incentive to participate in developing municipal franchises. Yet, numerous franchises have been granted without consulting any community groups. This should not be allowed to continue. Cable operators must be held accountable to the public. For the minority ethnic community, it is a vital step in determining how cable will contribute to the economic, social, political, and cultural development of the community. The key point, as Ralph Smith points out in "The Wired Nation," is that cable is a natural monopoly that provides essential service. It must be regulated as a public utility to monitor escalating rate increases and insure free and equal access.

The major issue of interest to community organizations concerns the allocation of public access channels, the right of the public to protest to the FCC about franchise terms before a cable system begins operation, and the power of the local community to shape and select the franchise.

In a letter from Dean Burch, ex-chairman of the FCC, the following provisions were included: The FCC would provide public access to cable by making at least one channel available to community groups free of charge. The time would be free, but the cost of programming is assumed by the user. Also, the cable operator would be required to maintain at least minimum production facilities for public use at a reasonable charge.

Local Control and Community Access

The major responsibility for cable franchising rests with the municipal government. It is at this level that the community group's involvement may be most influential. One program recommends creating an officially recognized independent watchdog agency to protect the public interest. Funds to operate it could come from a fixed income of from 2 to 5 percent on the cable operator's gross income. With broad representation from groups and interests, the board could hold public hearings to voice citizen complaints of service, develop experimental community programming, review quality of cable service, and recommend improvements.

Ideally, community responsiveness should be written into the cable franchise. Such provisions for public access and local origination written into franchise agreements are meant to insure deliverance of nonentertainment public services and an outlet for community expression.

Another avenue for guaranteeing the right of the public to hear controversial issues and receive public services via cable is regulation of cable as a "common carrier." Essentially, this move would separate ownership of cable from programming content. The strongest proponent of this strategy is the American Civil Liberties Union, which feels that since cable is a natural monopoly, the tendency for the investors to protect their profits through non-antagonistic "safe" programs on their local origination station overrules a larger need for diverse and controversial expression on cable. As a common carrier, the owner of the cable system must make his channels open in much the same way the telephone company makes its lines open. In either case, there is no control over the content transmitted.

Regardless of the status of common carrier or local program origination, the question still remains of what should local programming be? What are some of the objectives? How will it insure greater community expression?

There are several cases to look toward as models. One of the most experimental of the local programmers was the Dale City Television, a nonprofit community operated closed circuit channel which produced solely noncommercial local origination programs. As an isolated community 25 miles south of Washington D.C., Dale City found a great need for internal communication. Basically a housing tract development of 13,000 to 14,000 people, DCTV operated as a home television service to the residential community. The entire staff was nonprofessional and produced popular local programs. What was lacking in expertise was made up in community participation and energy. People of various talents: engineers, graphic artists, doctors; pooled together to produce one hour of weekly community programming. The news and public affairs sections produced interview programs on local issues like the community crisis following a disastrous fire, the poor quality of telephone service and local political campaigns. Other specials featured community music programs featuring local talent. In short, it was home spun local entertainment and news. Unfortunately, the poor quality of broadcast equipment and the volunteer staff prevented the program from growing. When financial burdens became overwhelming, the station closed.

Despite its failure, the Dale City experiment pointed out the positive virtues of this type of local programming. It offered the community an outlet for useful creative energy that involved citizens of all ages and backgrounds. It increased community spirit and brought greater participation in intercommunication.

Leasing Public Access to Cable

The major drawback to the public access channel is the public's lack of knowledge concerning it. Without an informed public, access will never become a forum of ideas or a platform for controversial ideas. Without publicity of its programs, it cannot compete with other media in the expression of opinion. And for public channels to be useful, they must have management and funding. The logical next step is *leased* access.

A major commitment distinguishes leased access from public access. The financial contract between the leasee and the cable operator sets the arrangement on a totally business orientation. Such a relationship exists between the Committee for Open Media and the San Jose Cable TV, who have agreed to provide a leased access channel for a nominal fee to be dedicated as the community channel.

The leased access arrangement would also seem to be an opportune one for ethnic minority programming. In place of occasional programming, the viewer would have a regularly scheduled series of programs and services tailored to his/her needs. The July/August 1972 issue of *Black Communicator* reports the successful operation of Channel 3 or Flint Cable TV, a Black owned and operated leased channel. Offering eight hours of programming oriented to Flint's black community, it reaches 15,000 subscribers, 4200 of whom are black. The programming consists of man-in-the-street interviews on problems in the ghetto, black community newscasts, and variety and talk shows. While the operator does not own the equipment, the lease arrangement with Flint Cable allows the small staff to produce programs.

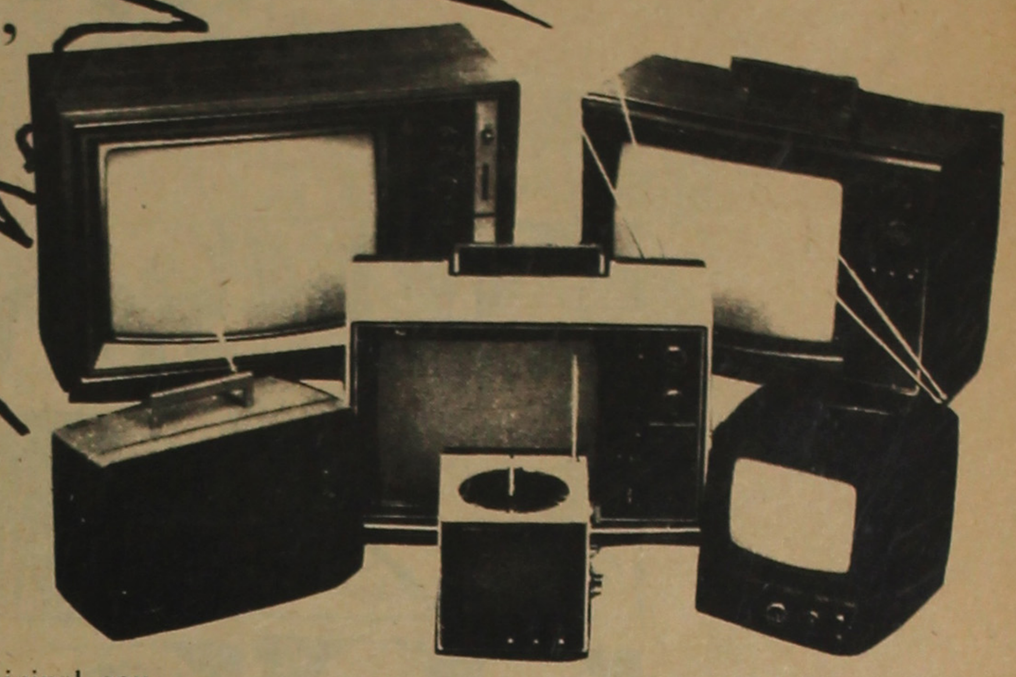
Recognizing the need for community involvement in cable franchising, Cox Cable company signed an agreement with a minority coalition granting leased access channels, equipment, minority hiring provisions and the possible creation of a training center. In return, the coalition agrees not to oppose the proposed merger of Cox Cable and American Television and Communications. This new system will be the second largest in the U.S.

The minority coalition consisting of the Black Panther Party, La Raza Unida, Mexican American Political Association, NAACP, United Filipino Association, Chinese Media Committee, the Community Service Organization of Bakersfield, Sacramento Area Cable Television Organization, and the Santa Cruz Community Service Television Project will be granted leased access to channel for $1.00 per-year for a period of five years. No minimum usage requirements will be made for the first two years so as not to stifle the experimental use of the channels in the formative years. Every year thereafter, the leasee collectively will be expected to utilize the channels for a minimum of 25 hours per week per channel.

Affirmative action in minority hiring is also part of the Cox agreement. Within two years minority employment should not be less than ten per cent of the total Cox employment.

However, while the agreement seems to weigh heavily in favor of the minority coalition, there is no attitude of altruism on the part of either party to the agreement. Tony Kline, attorney from Public Advocates, the law firm that counseled the minority coalition, stated, "Cable systems cannot expand into new communities if minority groups oppose their franchise applicants." Furthermore, a leased channel programmed by a particular minority group can attract as subscribers members of that group who might otherwise have no reason for becoming customers. Henry Harris, president of Cox Cable,

"SO YOU WANNA MAKE SOMETHIN' OUTTA VIT!!"



shared Kline's point of view. "If the groups use the channels in a responsible manner, it can help them and us." "A Spanish language program prepared for that particular group will help sales among that minority." (*Broadcasting*, 4 Dec.72)

So, though there are advantages to leased access, there are potential co-optative effects, too.

Ownership

There are various strategies and issues surrounding community control of cable, but the ultimate measure of control is ownership. For ethnic minorities or any community group,this tactic requires careful planning and large financial investment. Given the present state of the cable industry where the overwhelming majority of franchises are privately owned and operated for profit, any community-based operation becomes a precedent setter, Not only would it compete with the large commercial giants which are backed by Hughes Aircraft, Warner Communications, or Time-Life, Inc., but it would almost entail changing the very groundrules of granting franchises.

1. **Subscriber Cooperative.** Perhaps the earliest model of nonprofit ownership is the subscriber cooperative. In small towns neighbors banded to gether to share costs for the construction of the community antenna. Investing from $50 to $75, the subscriber group would secure the remainder of the funds through bank loans, and hire a management contract to run the cable system. One problem associated with this method of ownership is the exclusion of the lower income person from participation; among inner city residents, there is not enough capital to begin a subscribers cooperative.

2. **University Owned.** The more typical case of a noncommercial, nonprofit cable system at the University of Illinois at Vincennes, Ill. From a programming point of view, there are ample resources and experience to produce quality programming. Once again, though, the ITV systems often lack participation from the poor and ethnic communities.

3. **Consortium.** A subsequent step for nonprofit community cable systems is the consortium approach. Forming a coalition of universities, libraries, service and community groups, the local Chamber of Commerce and local foundations can be the beginning of the community cable system. While the consortium has representation from many community groups, deciding leadership roles and fixing mutual responsibilities developed as obstacles to the smooth operation of the cable system. Besides financial worries, the system must operate in the best manner possible considering the cumbersome administrative structure of the consortium.

4. **Municipal Government.** There are several advantages to the municipal ownership of cable besides the existing legal authority. Already equipped to handle construction of the system through municipal engineering and utility construction crews, the city could lower construction cost and time. An existing accounting system that bills other public utilities could perform the same service for cable subscribers.

However, the major advantage lies in basic financing of the system. As a municipal government, numerous low cost financing methods are available. While unlikely, the city may build the cable system or maintain its development through cash surpluses from other city utilities. Through tax assessments, general obligation bonds and revenue bonds, the municipal government may borrow money at lower rates than commercial groups though nonprofit community groups may sponsor revenue bonds through initiative measures.

Though there may exist definite advantages for municipal ownership, it would be unwise to treat cable like any other public utility. As a communications medium, cable requires a creative and business management that is attuned to the special nature of the medium. However, as a city owned system, it will be able to explore the possibility of hiring different management groups to service the special needs of minority communities. Through the creation of subdistricts within the franchise area, the city could encourage participation in operation of local systems within the community.

Another drawback of the municipal ownership model concerns governance of the municipally owned franchise. As minority members are usually underrepresented on the city government there exist few guarantees that the city would reallocate profits from the system for community developement. Without a watchdog agency to monitor use of profits and availability of access and general adherence to the franchise agreements, the minority community would be as non-involved as with other forms of ownership.

Structures for Community Control

Several models for community based cable systems can be postulated: (1) community profit, (2) community nonprofit, (3) combination community profit and nonprofit and (4) private turnkey ownership.

The *community profit* model entails establishment of a community development corporation that may be part of a church, community nonprofit corporation or charitable organization. The community group holds voting power over the profit corporation until it becomes self-sustaining. Profits would be redistributed as dividends to shareholders and to the community groups through contributions to a community trust fund, and also discounts on service charges. Sources of finances would include minority owned banking and finance institutions.

The *community nonprofit* model is basically the consortium idea. The primary attraction for contribution and participation is that everyone realizes that no one person will profit above the social-economic programs underwritten by the consortium. In addition, donations become tax write-offs.

The *combination community profit and nonprofit* model should strike a happy medium. While the nonprofit group is able to secure lower cost funding through foundation grants and other public sources, it can still hire a community profit making group to manage the system. In return, the nonprofit group receives a prorated share of the annual earnings.

The major problem in joint ownership is control over program content. While desiring to give the commercial partner his due share, the community group should strive to maintain program content control and provide the first option to buy out the partner. The key point is that the community group can and should establish the franchise requirements. Without the cooperation of the community group, the commercial operator would meet resistance. The joint ownership becomes a marriage of convenience that allows the commercial operator a smaller margin of profit while ideally allowing the community group to insure community access and public service programming.

A final model of *joint ownership* concerns *turn-key* construction. Under this model the community group hires an outside engineering and construction team to build the entire system. In return for a flat fee, the firm turns over the "key" to the new owner. While many communities are hard pressed to find sufficient capital to cover construction costs, the turn-key constructor is often willing to contribute from 30% to 50% of the costs in return for a pro-rated share of annual income.

The turn-key method has also been suggested for city ownership of cable. After construction of the system, the city would turn the system over to local groups. At the same time, a training center for minority employees could be established to insure eventual participation and control of franchises.

The community would set up the nonprofit company and develop the capacity to monitor the operations. It would also recruit employees for the system, aid in the establishment of indigenous business firms to service the system, and supervise the promotion of community residents into various management positions... all as preparation for complete ownership. The private operator would provide the technical know-how and capital to set up the operation. Since a large amount of the costs would already be absorbed by the city under the plan, the corporation would only have to pay back the cost of the cable. In any case, regardless of the private operator, the community would have been thoroughly involved and still benefit through its share of the revenue.

Summary

It is nearly impossible to determine at this time the best possible manner for community involvement and control of cable. Each process: community group regulation of cable, leased and public access, and finally ownership, has unique merits that will be fully borne out by the nature of the local community. Regardless of the models for community action, the basic point remains that without information decemination and organization, the community interest will be neglected. In spite of the claims of the commercial operator as a concerned community member, the best member, the best guarantee of quality community service is an aroused, educated and organized public.

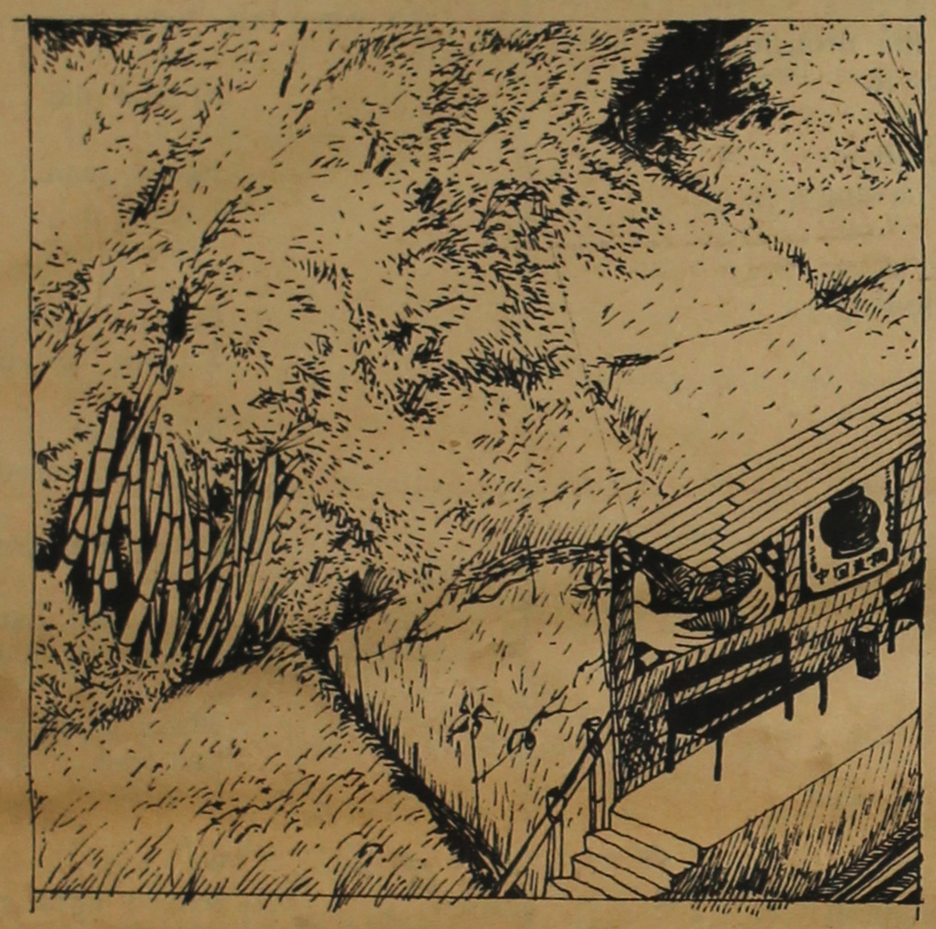
Cable communications is clearly too important an issue to leave in the hands of businessmen and politicians. When the future of an entire community is at stake, the entire community must be aware of the consequences and implications of new technology.

—Duane Kubo
and Eddie Wong

GIDRA GRAPHICS

ココカコーラ
ロッテリア
McDonald's
おみやげ
映画
パチンコ

大宮↔大宮



I tell you dad - they serve the best oriental food here!

AT THE STRONGHOLD

For Miles and Toti

Miles is so sufficient
he makes me
breakfast with a flick of his wrist—
little cakes
of oceans and islands.

Toti is into
stirring
mostly,
but if I ask him
he picks the burrs
off the tops of my socks.

Then they demonstrate
the adaptability
of scissors and cardboard,
making up games
that rule about life.

I give them
many-bladed knives,
little men in blue diving suits

and remember me.

There's a cool
Tlingit wind
blowing over
water all the way from Japan
blurring the surface
of my eyes,
the deeps
pulling me
down and in.

Up over Greensprings,
the pass, crash
of wheeled
cataracts
screaming logjams
into and out of
switchbacks
with a flick of fins.

Eyes. Brown
eyes of bottles,
squirrels
that never learn.

Count
self
lucky
to find a deer
by Pinehurst. Bless
you.
She
is the soul
of women among huckleberries,

soft, fine eyes

before the invasion,
the cry.

Lately, in the drought,
I am obsessed

by clouds, their
forming, knowing

them only as
dispersal flowing

over me
lately

in the drought.

K Falls ain't
got nothing
for me.

Unless I had a need
for gutters, for

official termination,

my brown eyes
welling over at the rim

brown spit
bottoms of bottles,

my brown spirit
slumped in some stirrups

at the terminal.

Hell, I'm not trying to do
nothing for nobody
but me,

my own cause,
my destiny

come round
to me.

I need my own
sense
shaped into place

in a strong body with
whole bones
with no

disease in the marrow,
the smolder of shrapnel.

Not even the need
for legend,
something

monumental to build on,
something

grand, just
my self,
my own scope and destiny,

so when my time comes, I can go

off and die

like a man.

Captain Jack,
I come to you

in respect,
out of a need

for communion.

I will not dance and sing
in your sacred cinders

where even today
the trail
is difficult to walk upon.

We, too,
walked upon this ground,
and though our
stronghold
was made for us,
to hold us in,

we, too,
heard the geese in the wind,
the wind in the tules

and dreamed
in our brown bodies

of peace and the good land,

of home.

And so I come to you,
Captain.

And if you were to meet me
on the difficult terrain
of a parking lot

you would extend your hand to
mine.

There is a mystery
how you survived

this desperate place
of edges and wind.

The commissioners were many.
They bled in the heat.

There were so few of you.
What did you eat?

There is no mystery.
Fat white ladies with small dogs
and weak husbands
are still on the track.

The lava bed
is a place to sleep.
Heat, rain, cracked
sweet cinders, the red
tule rope of resistance—

this is how we sing and survive—

the entire
one of us
gorged with the knowledge

of paved genocide
trying to find its way here.

Here, in this stronghold
I have hid my heart.

a battlement
strong at the marrow,
stored there

for when the time allows,

fists in the throat,
a volley
of words and rocks
in strong
boxes

back of the heart
behind mazed
trails spiraling

to my music,
where no one is allowed.

Here, in this stronghold,
I hide
myself
to myself,

deaf with my pulse
running through the walls

where my life is carved,

ancient signs
where the hurts happened,
the loves, the births,

all in calligraphy
that nothing but the blood

deciphers,
or cares

to be allowed

to this stronghold

where I show my heart.

"Question 27: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States, in combat duty, wherever ordered?"

No.

"Question 28: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and foreswear any form of allegiance to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?"

No.

Hirohito?
Him people
like you na me.
Me no go
Chinchinahtee.
Me go
Tule Lake.
Me stay
Carifonia.
Home.

All I wanted
was a place to live,

how we had always known.

women among huckleberries,
tules that teach
children of junipers, geese, and sky

All I wanted
was to fight to live,
to be left alone.

All I wanted
was a concession to dignity,
our own reservation.

All I wanted
was our own
defeat.

All I wanted
was to die.

looking into the eyes
of my children,
the gifted young

who wished me in women's clothes,

who silently called me
white and compromiser,

I see the *why*

I am
the renegade
I am,
the revolutionary
I will always be.

What land we had
we must have back again.
This is the stronghold,
the heart, the spirit
in the land, the heart.

This termination, this
extermination, this
compromise to survive.

The fenced-in barracks
still stand
beyond the ancient carvings
of Prisoner Rock.

The signs are right.
The spirit. The land.
We must have back again.

Those of us still alive
singing assimilation
with the flick of wrists,
thrive on the sick
blood of subjugation
here on this very land
where we died.

Captain Jack
will be hanged
tomorrow. "Instructions
to all persons
of Japanese ancestry..."

This is the stronghold,
the heart, the molten
flow solidified
blood of ancestors.

The blood of us
is the red tule rope.

What are you worth
in the eyes
of your sons?

The blood of us
is the red tule rope.

As our stay increases

summer into fall

the wounds and pain

fall from our feet

as we begin to know

the paths
of the stronghold,
the scars of battle
smooth places
to stand upon

as our stay

increases
to the span
of our life

as we begin to see
buttes and geese,
juniper and sky

as all clouds
form at Shasta
and return there.

Captain Jack,
father,

you teach us

to stand
to plant
our feet in the ground

you teach us

to stand
to raise
our eyes from the ground.

My sons,
you are beside me now.

No.
You will not be leaving
for Oklahoma.

No.
No one will take your photo
in front of barracks.
Yes.
We are willing to serve.

Yes.
We swear allegiance.

And if my old time is allowed,
I will go off into the hills
with the flute of my father
and sing the song
of geese in the wind
of wind among the tules
of the red tule rope
of blood that always flows
of clouds around Shasta
and listen, and grow
silent and still
in my own, in my own
wisdom and dignity

as a man.

Lawson Fusao Inada

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AGAPE FELLOWSHIP

the new Christian community

"This is the time of our lives,
Time we can feel ourselves become what we're meant to be.
Surely this is the time of our lives,
When we are one with God, you know we're the best we can be."

—a song chorus

This song reflects what some of us have been experiencing—the time of our lives—but it would be a transitory and fleeting experience if we were not always growing and fulfilling our needs as persons. I'd like to share with you how, over the past four years, belief in Christ, has been helping us to enjoy the times of our lives.

When you look back upon the history of Man or when you survey our current society with its varied ills, it wouldn't be difficult to perceive that the world is pretty screwed up. We live in what can be called a depersonal world, persons are treated as "things," not as persons with worth and dignity. Social structures and patterns of interaction are depersonalizing in almost every facet of our everyday life existence.

We are products of a depersonal world and culture. However, paradoxically and basically, I think all of us desire to be *interpersonal* beings rather than depersonal things. In order to achieve this, we must divest ourselves from the depersonalizing effects of culture, whether American or Asian, upon our view of ourselves. As long as my self-worth is contingent upon the approval of *depersonal others*, I will always be in an insecure position. Approval is a basic need and want, no matter how rebellious or independent we think we are. If this approval is in turn contingent upon how well I perform and how well I fulfill certain roles, then the approval will be conditional, relative and insecure in nature. In this insecure position, I can never really be free of other people's expectations of me, or my own stereotyped expectations for me, and my own defensive barriers and postures. It's tough to be me, to be a real person, when I'm trying to conform to live up to other roles or images. Consequently, I really give up my significance as a person; and in turn, I become depersonal.

Further, my relationships with others will likewise suffer. The effect of roles—of being masculine or feminine, an Asian, being nice or polite, being outspoken and radical, etc.—all of these somewhat defined role patterns can inhibit the real, spontaneous me. True, I may laugh and cut up with my friends or show my anger at times, yet many of the deep negative and especially the positive feelings that I have may never get past my fears and barriers because I don't want to be gurt. Stanford Lyman, in *The Asian in the West*, presents an apt description of how Niseis maintain such barriers in interpersonal encounters, keeping themselves, their egos, at a safe distance and depersonal.

It's hard to be personal and interpersonal in a world reinforcing me to be depersonalized. How can we get out of this vicious cycle? I can be personal and loving only as I am loved and experience love as a person—interpersonally and without conditions. This is *agape* love. *Agape* is a Greek work that means unconditional love, or love given purely for the sake of the other person. Can we experience this kind of love in our depersonal world? Perhaps, but I have experienced it only from belief in God—personal love from God to me. So have some others. Thus began Agape Fellowship four years ago. We were a collection of Asians, mostly Sansei college students, who were beginning to realize how such narrow role perceptions and cultural effects were so pervasive and pernicious in our lives. We began meeting in small groups to deal with life, how we function and feel particularly in our interpersonal relationships, who we are and where we were going, and how God related to our everyday lives—if at all. We met for about three hours every week in groups of about six people to share, to caringly confront, to bring out and identify these contaminating effects on personhood, the defenses and barriers within us. These were struggling and painful times, and yet so exciting because its results were growth as persons and freedom to let in and give more love to each other. It's been good. It has been the time of our lives?

A year ago, in March of 1973, we outlined a commitment to establish a Christian community—to join together, to be committed to each other as equals, to function in love and in truth, for a united purpose. To be involved *interpersonally* with each other in a loving spirit is something; to be *committed* with each other in a loving spirit is more! This was the concrete beginning of the bringing together of new transformed persons to form a new community.

Perhaps you may be thinking, "That's their bag, but I can experience love and life too, on my own." No doubt that you can and at times do, but is there certainty or assurance that what you're experiencing is the most you can have, that there isn't anything more? Truth, justice, love and purpose, these are tough to experience interpersonally in a depersonal world except for smatterings and exceptions. Probably the common experiences of our daily lives, especially in our capitalistic, success-oriented society, are more reflective of deceity and injustice, power play, subtle manipulations and self-concern. Even under a slogan such as "power to the people", is real revolution taking place in regards to how people treat each other? (An honest look at this question can be found in *Gidra*, June 1973, by Patricia Iwataki.) Can a person change or be changed internally in terms of how he or she functions merely be realizing his ethnic identity or by changing their social or political environment? Does "power to the people" give people self-worth and insure that "the people" know what is best or right for *all* the people? As minorities in the United States, we know that the people or at least the majority, can be quite wrong, especially when it comes to matters with respect to racial equality. Does history and mankind's track record warrant an inherent faith in the goodness of the people? I think not. As stated previously, I think an honest appraisal of man's history reveals only strife and conflict, camouflaged with sufficient examples and exceptions of "advances" to tantalize persons into thinking that people are progressing and are capable of inherently knowing and doing what is best. Talk about faith—it really takes a lot of faith to put all our marbles into this one bag.

Further, psychologist B.F. Skinner says people don't have real freedom or dignity. Human organisms lack the ability to make free choices because Skinner thinks everything we do is a function of conditioning and environment. He proposes we should honestly accept this as fact and just go on from that point. His context would be quite correct it seems to me, if there were no God. For without God, what basis have we to say that we have more worth or dignity than a programmed machine or any animal? If we are only a collection of chemical molecules reacting to stimuli from the environment, then Skinner's proposal to accept that fact and do the best we can would seem to be moot. Why do anything? Why not just do anything you want because nothing, no one, not even yourself, has any inherent or lasting menaing, significance or value. There would be no purposes, goals, or causes to live for. Objects and organisms can have inherent meaning or lasting significance only if the context is meaningful and thus gives the content meaning. A context can have meaning only if it is given meaning by the creator of the context and when it comes to life and humanity, that can come only from the creator of life—God. God created me in His image, to be Significant; and He loves me and treats me as a free person. He gives me real identity. He treats me as a person, in a personal way. I can be personal, and not depersonal.

We have been experiencing God's love in in our lives and realizing more personhood and identity for ourselves. As the depersonalization effects are rooted out, we are being revolutionized by Christ in our daily living and functioning. Jesus taught the truth, He lived the truth interpersonally, and He *is* the truth. He proves the veracity of His claims and identity as God by His resurrection from death to life (which is what Easter is all about). His resurrection is an historically documented fact, and that fact places Him as a higher authority of how to live than even Mao or Marx, Marcuse or McLuhan. Jesus was a complete revolutionary—He opposed the established system and suffered for it. Christains need to be revolutionized by Christ, freed from fear, guilt and anxiety, more ready to be a new person to live a new positive revolutionary life style in the community, and ready to go out and be willing to reach out to people in a total way. As Christ did and as He asks Christians to do, we must be reaching out to the total needs of man—physical, social, emotional, intellectual, psychological and spiritual—to the point of putting out our whole being to the total community, no matter what the cost. That is the purpose of the new Christian community; that is how the new Christian, the real Christian person must function. As we in Agape Fellowship continue to live together and work together with God as a community, we are hopeful (again, let me clearify, our hope is based on God's unlimited power, not on our own limited resources) that our Good Life will continue to grow and that we and others can continue to experience the time of our lives with more *agape* love.

We invite you to come and visit with us anytime. God has given us a very functional place to live: Our Agape Fellowship Center is at 332 S. Virgil Avenue, Los Angeles, CA. 90020, at the corner of Virgil and Geneva, near Wilshire and Vermont. We have small group meetings that are open to all, worship services on Sunday at 10 a.m. (dress comfortable), and other programs such as English Conversation classes, Fast for Food Program to provide funds for the hungry, individual counselling, and emergency live-in facilities. Please drop by any time and visit us or call at 387-7881. We will be glad to share more with you and enjoy having you share yourselves with us. Life, and especially the Good Life, needs to be shared!

—In love to you all,
Bill Watanabe

Lessons in Community Organizing

In the October 1973 issue of *Gidra* an article was written on a grassroots organization in an area bounded by Vermont, Hoover, Adams, and the Santa Monica Freeway. The organization, La Vecinded Unida/The United Neighborhood–Institute for Socio-Analysis (LVU/UN–ISA), was a non-racist, non-violent, democratically-run, self-supporting neighborbood "union." Some of the achievements of this community organization included: 1) having H.U.D. tear down a dangerous vacant house in the community; 2) closing a dangerous tunnel after having exerted pressure on the City Council; 3) starting a food co-op (Meat and vegetable) in the community; 4) getting clothing, car parts, and other merchandise at wholesale prices; 5) sponsoring a Candidates Night where the candidates for the community; 6) registering voters and successfully organizing a "bloc vote" for the candidate of the organization's choice–George Takei. (Takei overwhelmingly carried this 10th district election.) In addition, other community "problems" such as the need for traffic signs, a police foot patrol, and a troublesome half-way house were issues that members of LVU/UN–ISA were struggling with.

In closing the *Gidra* article the author, Dean Toji, stated: "...the course of LVN/UN–ISA is of great significance to those of us with 'movement' concerns. It *just* might help us to chart *our* future course." For a grassroots community organization barely six months old, the many accomplishments of LVN/UN–ISA could serve as an example of the potential power that poor and oppressed people could possess once they were organized. However, at the end of January 1974 the Institute for Socio-Analysis (ISA) ceased providing support and "disaffiliated" from this neighborhood organization. (Trained organizers from ISA were hired by the community in May 1973.) Due to complex circumstances and a series of events, the organizers of the community union had no other alternative but to disaffiliate or quit the organization.

As one of the organizers, I would like to briefly share with my Asian American brothers and sisters some of the more recent experiences and events within LVU/UN–ISA. Along with the aforementioned successes of the organization, there were also less successful experiences and problems– the "other side" of organizational work which must be pointed out, examined, scrutinized, and evaluated. These "other" events are equally valuable and are lessons from which we can all learn.

* * *

A "human organization," as termed by Warren Haggstrom, or what Saul Alinsky calls a "people's organization," was the particular model of organizing used in building LVU/UN–ISA. Both terms describe organizations of low-income people in which the basic purpose or goal attendant upon the organizing work is the transformation of a low-income community vicitmized by poverty and racism into one where the people themselves become active participants in the task of improving their community. Undergirding this goal is the premise that the poverty within any low-income community not only creates socio-economic disadvantages but also a sense of powerlessness within the people–a psychological bind that prevents epople from acting on their behalf, whether individually or collectively, in effecting an improvement of the status. What is necessary then, is the organization of people into a force for social change: organizing people to work and act together on common issues. Through this process people lose their sense of powerlessness as they, in fact, actually gain power. Power is gained when an organized community successfully confronts and gains significant concessions from slumlords, politicians, police, exploiting merchants, etc.

Although LVU-UN–ISA was engaged in many issues, not all of the organization's actions were successful. By the end of 1973 LVU-UN–ISA had gained a "reputation" for action and its power. Conversely, LVU-UN–ISA also became a threat to the local establishment which was now beginning to take its own actions against the organization.

Scene 1

Place: City Hall, in the corridor of Councilman Cunningham's office. A contingent of LVU-UN–ISA members and organizers has come to confront the councilman over his failure to help procure a police foot patrol for the community. Anger and frustration, built up after 2 deaths and numerous shootings within a period of two weeks, are unleashed upon the councilman. Cunningham's response, "All of us here know who is responsible for the violence – *You* have to turn in your guns; *you* have to report to the police your neighbors, sons, daughters, relatives, and friends who are gang members and responsible for the shootings...my hand is tied behind my back because you are unwilling to deal with your own problems. By "coincidence" the captain of the local police precinct "just happened" to be at this community confrontation with Cunningham (he was reportedly meeting with the councilman over the shootings) and reiterated Cunningham's position of the people's responsibility and obligation to become informants against those responsible for the violence– the Chicanos living in the community. (This community was multi-racial: Blacks, Chicanos, Asians, Anglos.)

Lesson 1: An organized community engaged in struggle is always confronted with enemies who employ divide-and-conquer tactics to isolate, discredit, and scapegoat segments of that community or organization to promote disunity and internal conflicts. Institutions such as government and law enforcement, which are supposed to represent and protect the interests of the people, spout the rhetoric but seldom act in the actual practice of serving the people. Divide-and-conquer is their primary defense mechanism, coupled with excuses made to legitimate their abdication of responsibility. "I can't do it, *you* have to do it; the Mexicans in your area are the cause of your problems."

Scene 2

Place: The Community. Another organizer and I are walking to the organization's headquarters. Unmarked police car...screeching brakes... a voice cries out: "Put your hands in the air." Two policemen emerge and separate us, search us, copy our I.D.'s and question us in front of LVU/UN–ISA members and other residents of the community. First question: "Do you belong to that organization which is leafletting the community?" Seeing that I was wearing the organization's button and carrying leaflets, what else could I say but "yes." Two nights later the other organizer has his home buzzed by the L.A.P.D. helicopter which flashes its search beam through his front window. That same night a third organizer and I both receive two phone calls in which the caller hangs up. Mere coincidence?"

Lesson 2: An organized community and individuals who threaten institutions and the status quo within an established societal structure are subject to harassment, surveillance, and repraisals by that society, para-military and intelligence apparatuses.

* * *

In working with a grassroots organization, the organizers must "build" and organization by: 1) increasing and maintaining its membership, 2) facilitating the organization's everyday functioning, 3) engaging the organization to successfully deal with as many issues as possible, and 4) most especially to keep the organization as democratically run as possible by encouraging and ensuring that all members are involved in the discussion, voting, and implementation of every action made by the organization. Unless many members are actually involved with the decision-making process, problems in implementation arise when any action is taken by the organization. Thus progress on issues becomes impaired. Furthermore, members become alienated from an organization which does not actively involve and engage its membership in full participatory roles. Hence, organizers have an explicit primary responsibility to the membership of the *total* community union; leaders and specific individual members are of secondary concern to the organizers.

Organizers are not only charged with creating a democratic "structure" within an organition, but also to maintain and protect it. Through this structure all members are treated equally and fairly. Without a democratic process, personal, arbitrary, and bureaucratic-like decisions may be made within a select circle (usually the "leaders"). Such decisions open up questions of fairness, responsiblity, opportunism, and cooptation. Within LVN/UN–ISA problems with "undemocratic" and opportunistic leaders emerged.

Scene 3

Place: A meeting of the Executive Committee of LVU/UN–ISA. The team leader of the organizing staff states: "The organizers from the Institute for Socio-Analysis will no longer be providing organizing assistance to La Vecindad Unida/The United Neighborhood due to the fact that the organization has not been democratically run. When organizers came into this community we stated that we would build an organization in which all community people would decide the course of the organization. However, the present leaders have not followed the principles in which this organization was fou .ded. They have failed to follow through with suggestions to resolve the present crisis. The leaders have also undermined the organization by closely working with politicians, the police, and other people without the consent of the people." (A documented list of charges is presented noting instances when the leaders secretly met with officials, ignored the votes of the people, were engaged in joint investigations with law enforcement officials against the organizers and certain members of the community.)

Although the above scene is sketchy it represents the culmination of a leadership crisis that had developed over the past few months– a crisis in which the only viable resolution was the disaffiliation of the organizers from the organization. To our knowledge, the leadership of the organization had been "bought off" or coopted by the politicians and police. By the end of January 1974 the leaders were secretly working with politicians and the police *against* the organization and the organizers. Within the organization itself, decisions were made by a select few, and decisions voted by the general membership were not upheld by the leaders.

La Vecindad Unida/The United Neighborhood–Institute for Socio-Analysis, although a short-lived organization, had succeeded in gaining community power (within certain limits)– the message was so clear that the local establishment *had* to respond by using tacites of divide-and-conquer, harassment and cooptation.

Jerry Wong

GIDRA THANKS

to the following people and organizations without whom there would have been no *GIDRA* at all. Thank you for the support.

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ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES–UC DAVIS
ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER–UCLA *(where it all began)*
BARKADA
ELLEN BEPP
MRS. CHIN *(in the cafe across the street)*
CHICAGO SEED
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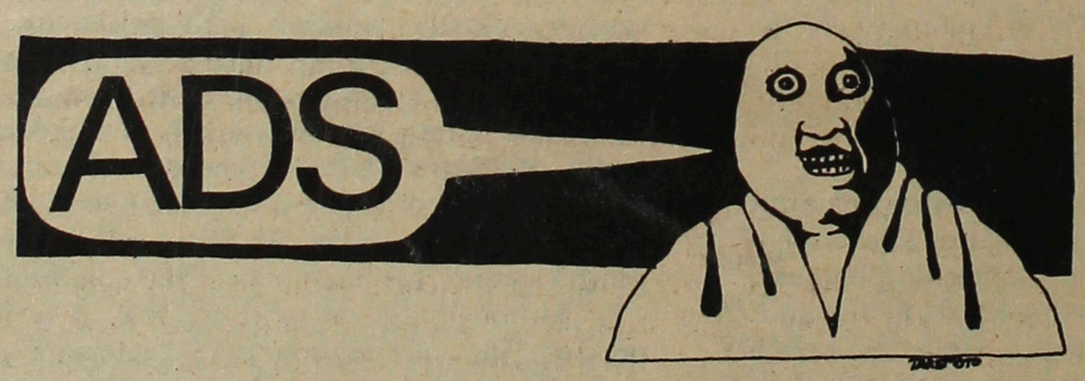

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In The Coming Months

MAY FIRST: May Day–Since 1890, an international holiday for workers. May 1 comemorates the struggles and victories of working people throughout the world. It marks the day when, in 1886, American working people staged massive strikes over the eight-hour workday, a move which stood in direct conflict with the intentions of the owning capitalists. Even today, there is no legislation enforcing the eight-hour workday. Happy holiday!

MAY FOURTH: 1919–May Fourth Movement in China, initiated by university students. 1961–Freedom Rides take place in Alabama and Mississippi in a drive to desegregate interstate bus transportation systems. 1970–Four Kent State University students shot to death during on-campus demonstration protesting U.S. invasion of Cambodia. Today–A community assembly at Alpine Recreation Center comemorating May 1st and May 4th, beginning at 7:30 p.m. with films (*The East Is Red*), songs, people, and other good stuff. *Also*–There's an Asian Women's Center Pap Clinic, today from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. Check it out and get yourself checked out, for free.

MAY FIFTH: Cinco de Mayo. 1818–Karl Marx' Birthday! 1970–"Pigs on campus!" at UCLA, and Stevie gets his head popped open and his ass thrown in jail. Today–Asian American Sports Day at the Intramural Athletic Field at UCLA, starts at noon. Tentative schedule: 12–2 p.m. is lunch (free beverages will be provided, but bring your own lunch), 2–3 p.m. Group 'Relays' (Pass The Orange, Wheelbarrow, Tug 'o war, Water Balloon Toss, and a "string thang"), 3–6 p.m.' Organized Team Sports (volleyball, football, softball, badmitten). All of this, free of charge. Sponsored by Asian American student organizations, and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. *Also*–This evening is the China Films & Raffle, for all of you who bought raffle tickets from the Asian American Travel Delegation–this one is for free! Or you can purchase tickets at the door for $1 and see recent films by Mr. Felix Greene on China, and *The Good Earth* (short version) [illegible] happens tonight at 7:30 p.m. at the Oriental Service Center, 12th and Flower. Be there!

MAY SIXTH: 1882–First Chinese Exclusion Act passed forbidding Chinese to become citizens. This was the first U.S. law to restrict the immigration of an entire nationality.

MAY SEVENTH: 1954–The French get their ass blasted at Dien Bien Phu.

MAY TENTH: 1869–Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, on which over 10,000 Chinese worked (Central Pacific line) tunneling through the Sierra Nevada and Rockies.

MAY ELEVENTH: Long Beach Pioneer Project Hanami (Wildflower Viewing). Call Asian American Studies Center, Long Beach for all the details at 498-4821.

MAY FOURTEENTH: 1970–Two Black students killed at Jackson State.

MAY FIFTEENTH: Tonight in the Multipurpose Room in the Student Union of Cal Sate Long Beach, KDP presents "Kilusan Two," a dance, from 9 to 1:30 a.m. Bids: $2, door: $2.50

MAY SEVENTEENTH: The Union of Vietnamese in the United States presents "Vietnam: For Independence and Freedom," a night of songs, skits, poetry, slides and dance of Vietnam. With guest speakers Jane Fonda, just returned from the DRV and PRG-zones in South Vietnam, and Alfonso Riate an ex-POW. Also, the film, *Price of Peace*, by Roger Pic. It's all going to happen Friday May 17, at Fritchman Auditorium, 2936 West 8th, at 8 p.m. Donation requested.

MAY NINETEENTH: 1890–Ho Chi Minh, 84th Birthday. 1925–Malcolm X, 49th Birthday.

MAY TWENTY-FIFTH: Pagakaisa (Unity) is having an open house at their storefront center located at 1619½ Beverly Blvd. Everybody come!

MAY TWENTY-SIXTH: African Liberation Day.

MAY TWENTY-EIGHTH: 1970–Laura Ho, among the original group of six who started *Gidra*, was given a one-year suspended jail sentence and two years probation, plus a $350 fine for charges stemming from the Asian Radical Movement (ARM) sit-in at UCLA, November 19. 1972–12 noon, Elysian Park, Lot 6, Mori Nishida and Kathy Nishimoto were married in a gala celebration a whole lotta people will not soon forget.

JUNE FIRST: 1843–Ex-slave Sojourner Truth begins organizing for abolition and women's rights. Today–Asian American Students' Association of Long Beach State presents "Out To Lunch" a picnic fund-raiser at Elysian Park, lot 9, from 10 a.m. until whenever. AASA is planning on selling box lunches for a reasonable price with chicken terriyaki, assorted vegetables, maybe a salad of some sort, rice, and a drink to wash it all down. The lunches will be advance-sale only, so give the Studies Center at Long Beach a call to find out where you can get your box lunch–498-4821.

JUNE SIXTH: Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of South Vietnam founded, 1969.

JUNE EIGHTH-NINTH: Long Beach/Harbor Community Center Carnival, 1766 Seabright in Long Beach, with booths, obon, fun and games. Goes all weekend starting from Friday evening. Proceeds go to the center.

JUNE TWELVETH: Philippine Independence Day, spotlighted by a historical presentation at Pagakaisa, featuring slide presentations, and skits on Philippine Martial Law. Program begins at 7:30 p.m. 1963–Medgar Evers, president of Mississippi chapter of the NAACP, assasinated.

JUNE SIXTEENTH: Father's Day.

JUNE TWENTY-FIRST: Today is the last day of public school.

JUNE TWENTY-SECOND: A Benefit Concert for "Good Impressions," a printing and graphics collective serving the Asian American community, featuring Chris & Joanne, Hiroshima, and some very special surprises. At the Embassy Auditorium, in the evening. For details, call Amerasia–680-2888, later on this month.

EVERY WEDNESDAY: Long Beach/Harbor Pioneer Project meetings, at the Long Beach Community Center, 1766 Seabright. Call 498-4821 for more information. Meetings start promptly at 8:00 p.m., or thereabouts.

EVERY THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH: Asian Families Outreach, a group that tries to meet the needs of women and their families, most of whom are international-interracial warbrides without husbands, at the Westside Neighborhood Center, 1372 Willow, in Long Beach. Give them a buzz at 595-1613 for more information. AFO's meetings begin at 7:30 in the evening.

ON EVERY THURSDAY: The Asian American Mental Health Federation, a national organization funded by NIMH, happen every Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. I heard from an inside source that the group is putting a call out for more community involvement. If you're interested, meet them at the Asian American Mental Health Training Center, 1300 W. Olympic Blvd., or give them a call at 385-1474.

AND ON EACH AND EVERY WEEKDAY: Services for Asian American Youth (SAAY), provides job counseling and referrals, between the hours of 9 ppm. and 12 noon, or you can call them at 628-0057 before 5 p.m.

THINGS TO WATCH FOR–RUMORS TO SPREAD: Summertime–Cincip is coming!

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