

The CAAAV VOICE

Newsletter
of the
Committee
Against
Anti-Asian
Violence

191 East 3rd Street, New York, NY 10009
(212) 473-6485

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CAA AV
exposes
Marky
Mark,
Calvin
Klein
posterboy,
for his
racist
attacks in
1986 and
1988.
(see p.3)



M.I.A.=MURDERED IN AMERICA

HATE CRIMES AGAINST SOUTHEAST ASIANS

As the media periodically resurrects the issue of purported M.I.A.'s (Missing in Action) still alive in Southeast Asia, another legacy of the Vietnam War continues to haunt Asian America. Its victims are Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong people living in the United States and it takes the form of harassment, violence, and murder. Against a backdrop of lingering resentment over the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, hysteria over the M.I.A. issue, economic resentment, anti-immigrant sentiment, and Japan-bashing, Asian Americans across the nation have been targeted for violence and discrimination. Southeast Asian refugees have disproportionately suffered the brunt of these crimes. Although there are no official national statistics available, CAAAV's files show that nearly 40% of those murdered in the last ten years were Southeast Asian and, in one case, the victim — Jim Loo — was mistakenly identified as Vietnamese.

Local reports support this trend: Philadelphia's Asian Americans United report that Asians, only 2% of the population, consistently have been about 30% of all victims of hate crimes.

ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE: NATIONAL CASES & UPDATES

Vietnamese Immigrant Severely Beaten In Gay-Bashing

On January 9, in Laguna Beach, California, Loc Minh Truong, a slightly built 51-year old Vietnamese immigrant, was severely beaten by a group of white youths who had gone into a known cruising area "to beat up some fags." Eight teenagers, led by Jeff Michael Raines, a 6-foot-1, 200-lb. high school football player, smashed Truong's head against the rocks repeatedly. When police arrived, his face was so disfigured (with an eye detached from the socket) that they could not determine his race, let alone his identity. His jaw was wired shut for several weeks to help healing.

Raines and another youth were arrested for the beating. Raines has been charged with attempted murder and prosecutors are also looking into bringing hate crimes charges against him

(on the basis of sexual orientation, not race). The Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California is monitoring the case for the National Network Against Anti-Asian Violence.

Updates: Dr. Kaushal Sharan

In 1987 Dr. Sharan was left in a coma for a week after an assault with a baseball bat and then required months of rehabilitation for only partial recovery. Despite the brutality of the attack, his attackers, Mark Evangelista, Martin Riccardi and Thomas Kozak, were convicted only of assault and not attempted murder. In the face of community outrage and organizing, the three were tried for federal civil rights violations in January 1993. In Camden, New Jersey, the all-white jury acquitted the defendants on the charge of beating

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MEDIA *Offenses*

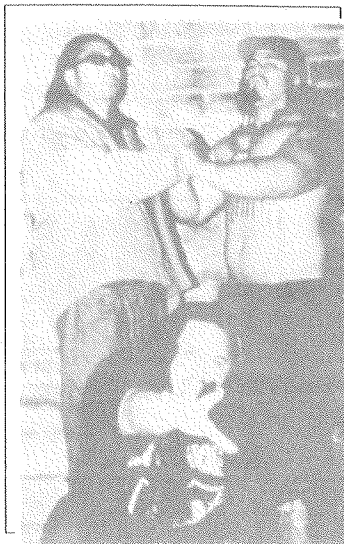
FALLING DOWN AND DOWN AND DOWN ...

In this year's bias-adventure film, *Falling Down*, Michael Douglas plays an "ordinary" white man who "snaps" one day and rampages through an L.A. populated with threatening people of color. His "adventures" — his baseball bat trashing of a Korean-run store while the owner cowers in the corner, his purposefully cruel murder of a Latino gang member, his friendship with an ex-marine neo-Nazi who harasses gays — are all played for laughs. In a clever and cynical attempt to avoid controversy, the film shows people of color as police as well as thugs, and tries to paint Douglas as a renegade and not a racist by avoiding portrayal of any direct

confrontations with African Americans and including a clear statement against skinheads. Thumbs down — a "must avoid."

SAMOAN RAP GROUP STONEWALLED BY TIME WARNER

Time Warner is trying to muzzle Boo-Yaa Tribe (see photo on right), a Samoan American rap group from southern California, by blocking the release of "Shoot 'Em Down." This track reflects the fury of the Samoan community over the police murders of Pouvi and Italie Tualalelei — brothers felled by 19 bullets to the backs and sides when police were called for a domestic disturbance. A deadlocked jury let Officer Skiles walk free, just three weeks after the outrageous



verdict in the Rodney King beating in L.A.

The group won't be silenced, promising to do an underground release if necessary. *"I didn't come here to be judged by the color of my skin, Boo-Yaa Tribe just went psycho 'cause they wouldn't let us in."* (from "Psycho Funk")

Boo-Yaa speaks to and for their people, especially the youth of their impoverished community. In "We Use to be Homies" they show the futility of gang violence, hoping their fans will learn from Boo-Yaa's own experiences.

We've shown the media that we don't want to hear from wannabe rappers, like white, convicted racist Marky Mark. It's time for the Boo-Yaa Tribe. Δ

INCIDENTS & UPDATES...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sharan to intimidate him and other Asians living in Jersey City. However, the jury deadlocked on the second charge of assaulting Sharan for the purpose of preventing him from "walking on the streets and sidewalks" of the city. Federal prosecutors are beginning a retrial of the second charge on April 21. The case has been monitored by the National Support Committee for Dr. Sharan, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and local South Asian community groups. Local support is needed. Contact Rita Sethi of the National Support Committee, through CAAAV.

Konerak Sintasomphone

Sintasomphone was the 14-year-old Laotian boy abducted and killed by infamous cannibal serial killer, Jeffrey Dahmer, in Milwaukee. Joseph Balcerzak and Joseph Gabrish, the two Milwaukee police officers who returned Konerak to Dahmer's apartment that fatal night, lost their appeal to be

reinstated to the police force on November 29.

Luyen Phan Nguyen

Nguyen, a 17-year old Vietnamese American student, was beaten to death last August in Coral Springs, Florida. Bradley Mills, the first defendant to be tried, was found guilty of second-degree murder and has been sentenced to fifty years in prison. The other six defendants go to trial March 29.

McCreesh Playground Incident

In August 1991, a white youth, David Reilly, was killed in a fight between Asians and whites at the McCreesh Playground in Philadelphia. The incident came on the heels of sustained racial harassment of Asians in the mostly working class community. Asian residents reported daily acts of intimidation by white neighbors. The fight started when the white youths threatened the Asians with racial insults and weapons, and told them to leave the playground.

The police, white community, and

media immediately embarked on a racist campaign. The police swept the neighborhood, arresting random Southeast Asian males and detaining them without due process. The community and the media played up the stereotype of vicious Asian gangsters preying on innocent white victims. The district attorney, Lynn Abraham, whose office previously refused to act on the racist murder of Cambodian Heng Lim, fed the hysteria by calling for the death penalty and speaking of an insidious Asian conspiracy. Finally, seven Vietnamese youths were accused in the murder and tried. Three were convicted of third-degree murder, receiving sentences between 7 and 30 years. Three others were convicted of assault and conspiracy. A seventh, detained illegally for more than a year, in flagrant disregard for state law (requiring release of a detainee on nominal bail after more than 180 days awaiting trial), was finally acquitted on February 1993. For more information, please contact the Asian Americans United of Philadelphia at (215) 925-1538. Δ

CAUGHT WITH HIS PANTS DOWN – MARKY MARK CAVES IN TO CAAAV

Marky Mark, the rapper and Calvin Klein underwear model who has literally made a career out of baring his pecks and grabbing his crotch, now finds himself a target of a different sort of attention. In February, the CAAAV stickering campaign to expose Marky Mark's sordid past of violence against people of color quickly snowballed into a nationwide media blitz.

For those who may not be familiar with the rapper/model, Marky Mark (aka Mark Wahlberg) was twice involved in bias acts against people of color. In 1986, he was arrested and charged with hurling stones and racial epithets at black elementary school children in Dorchester, MA. He escaped prosecution by agreeing instead to a restraining order against more racist attacks. In 1988, again in Dorchester, he was charged with three counts of battery and assault and three counts of civil rights violation after he admitted to verbally and physically assaulting two Vietnamese men. Again he plea-bargained to a lesser charge – violating the 1986 restraining order. He received a two-year sentence, but eventually served only 45 days.

Central to the campaign were the 1500 neon orange bumper-size stickers, declaring "*Marky Mark: CONVICTED RACIST,*" which CAAAV members plastered all over New York City, especially on the ubiquitous Calvin Klein underwear ads featuring Marky Mark. In addition, CAAAV organized a press conference for February 18 at Times Square to demand an apology from Marky Mark, and to highlight CAAAV's main message against anti-Asian violence. Marky Mark's manager Dick Scott, in a desperate attempt at damage control, began negotiations with

CAAAV two days before the press conference.

Marky Mark finally agreed to a statement that was largely written by

the media toward anti-Asian violence, CAAAV succeeded not only in forcing Marky Mark to apologize for his racist acts, but also in keeping the spotlight on

During the assault, Marky Mark shouted "Vietnam fucking shit". After his arrest, he called the two men "slant-eyed gooks" and admitted hitting "the gook in the head with a stick".

CAAAV. Read at the press conference by Scott, it includes an admission of guilt by Marky Mark and an apology for his racist acts. In addition, there is an explicit declaration that "Asian Pacific Americans, African Americans and all people have the right to live free of violence and harassment." The statement ends with an appeal to young people not to do what he did, and Mark's agreement to do a public service announcement denouncing bigotry.

At the press conference, CAAAV kept the focus on anti-Asian violence through our opening statement, which put Marky Mark's racist attacks in the context of the countless victims of anti-Asian violence who don't get any press. Our press information and fliers to passersby carried the same message. For the photo-op minded media, we had Marky Mark's lifesize image flanked by tombstones commemorating those Asians who have died in racist attacks. The campaign against Marky Mark was a success on many fronts. Considering the vast resources of the Marky Mark people, and the general indifference of

the serious issue of anti-Asian violence. In addition, the campaign was an opportunity to join forces with other groups, such as the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, that are combatting other forms of bias violence. Finally, this campaign put public figures on notice that they will be held accountable for racist statements and acts against the Asian American community. Δ

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ORGANIZING ASIAN

SOUTHEAST ASIANS IN THE BRONX

On March 11, over one hundred-fifty Khmer and Vietnamese residents of the Bronx confronted the District 11 Transit Police, the 46th and the 52nd Police Precincts about police neglect and lack of accountability to their communities. This was a result of CAAAV's work in a community crime prevention program that began this winter at the St. Rita's Asian Center, a refugee service agency located in the Fordham area of the Bronx. Since February, CAAAV's members and staff have been conducting workshops on the problems specific to these two communities in the context of the current and historical waves of violence and crime against Asian Pacific Islander communities. In the workshops, we emphasized that we have civil and human rights which no one should violate just because we are immigrants or Asians. Finally, we worked jointly with the residents and the St. Rita's staff in developing solutions to the problems specific to the two communities.

During the workshops, Khmer and Vietnamese residents poured out their frustration over their situation. Many have been victimized by civilians who target them because they are Asians. However, they were particularly confused and angered by the police, who have not only failed to help them combat crime, but have also been contemptuous and abusive towards their communities.

One common complaint from the residents is that the police often do not

respond to 911 calls even after repeated pleas for help. Some recalled incidents where the police refused to take a report despite the requests of the victims. Several people complained that the police often listened only to the perpetrators, taking their story — and side — instead. Finally, more than a few mentioned incidents of police brutality, when police roughed them up, handcuffed them, and dragged them into the precinct where they were slapped with baseless charges.

In the lively exchange at the March 11 meeting, residents let the police know their concerns about crime and their complaints about police irresponsibility and abuse. They demanded that the

the demands, and to begin to decrease the overall problem of Asian-targeted violence and crime.

WOODSIDE, QUEENS

As the next step in our organizing efforts at the Woodside Housing Projects in Queens (see *CAAAV Voice*, Fall 1992), CAAAV is working to establish adult English classes. The Chinese tenants, 10 to 15 percent of the Woodside Projects' population, has been targeted for crime and harassment. Last year, CAAAV's work with the Chinese tenants to demand greater accountability from the police and the housing management resulted, for instance, in the assignment of a Chinese police officer to the area. In follow-up interviews and a meeting earlier this year, tenants reported that the level of crime had been greatly reduced.

Some of the tenants and CAAAV realized that relying upon the police was not a real solution. In fact, it could increase tensions between the Chinese and other non-Chinese tenants, who have been somewhat alienated from each other up to now. The success of the Chinese tenants (most of whom only recently moved to Woodside) in securing stronger police protection might foster among the African American tenants (who have faced crime and police irresponsibility for the twenty plus years they have lived there) a feeling that the police favor the Chinese against blacks.

In this context, the English classes are critical, because they will help the tenants to become an integral part of the Woodside community. On a practical level the classes are useful in arming the



Vietnamese and Khmer residents of the Bronx faced the police at a meeting on March 11 held by CAAAV and the St. Rita's Asian Center.

police recruit Khmer and Vietnamese speaking staff or officers and issue precinct memoranda requiring greater police sensitivity and responsiveness towards the Southeast Asian residents. CAAAV plans to conduct sensitivity training for police officers whose jurisdiction covers Khmer and Vietnamese residents. We will also continue to work with these two communities and the St. Rita's Asian Center to ensure police compliance to

COMMUNITIES IN NYC

Chinese tenants with the verbal ability to fend off victimizers and to request help. The learning of English will help to decrease the isolation of Chinese tenants within Woodside, which contributes to their being targeted for crime. In addition, the classes would encourage a greater sense of solidarity among Chinese tenants by providing a meeting place where they can share feelings and ideas regarding their well-being, living environment, and place in the Woodside community.

It is important that these classes be conducted in the community itself. CAAHV and the tenants are organizing to secure a room at the Woodside Community Center, which is not usually open when most Chinese tenants can attend class. We need help both in organizing and teaching English. If you are interested, contact Kwong at CAAHV.

THE LEASE DRIVERS COALITION

The Lease Drivers Coalition continues to push for the rights of taxi cab drivers, many of whom are immigrants from South Asia. Our efforts have met with both enthusiasm from drivers and ire from those who exploit them – from the Taxi and Limosine Commission to the NYPD to the owners of various garages. Through the wide distribution of our own newsletter, *In the Driver's Seat*, and multilingual flyers in Urdu, Hindi and English at garages, gas stations, and restaurants where drivers congregate, we have promoted the interests of drivers. The LDC has succeeded in winning a public hearing in City Council concerning the safety of drivers. We advocate a one-way radio safety system connecting drivers directly with the police as a realistic preventative measure against robberies and murders on the job.

At our bi-weekly meetings with

drivers, we have discussed many other issues – health insurance for drivers, geography and English classes for drivers who are new to the city, a regular WBAI radio program for cab drivers' concerns, TLC abuses of power, organizing against the increase in lease prices likely to accompany the increase in subway and cab fares, and the danger of anti-Muslim feeling generated by the racist coverage of the World Trade Center bombing. In addition, we are trying to expand our outreach to the broader South Asian community by leafletting and distributing our petition on the safety campaign at mosques, temples and shopping districts. If you are interested in working on these important issues, please contact Kwong at CAAHV.

SEWARD PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Last November, CAAHV and the Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS (APICHA) began a series of workshops at the Seward Park High School with Chinese ESL students. Discrimination against Asians and immigrants, the roots and manifestations of racist violence, and sexuality were the primary issues of the discussions. CAAHV staff and members facilitated two of the four-part series of workshops for nine different groups of students.

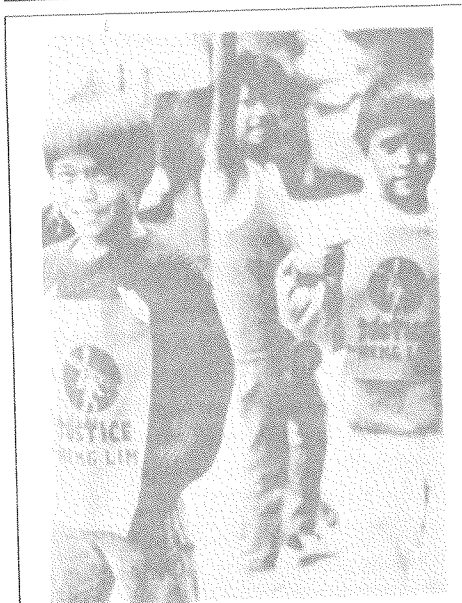
Students, most of whom recently immigrated from China or Hong Kong over the past two years, discussed the problems and hostility they face at school. They described the constant harassment by other students who jumped them in the hallways, shook them down for money, and taunted,



CAAHV and LDC members protesting against the owner of Susan's Maintenance for his unfair firing and beating of his employees.

pushed and shoved them in and near school. They explained that they receive no support from the school when they are in trouble and that they often receive little sympathy from their parents who may not be aware of the level of the hatred and violence they face. Several students commented that when they tell their parents about being attacked or harassed, they are often reprimanded and told to be quiet and stay out of trouble.

By the end of the workshops in January, the students and facilitators discussed possibilities of follow-up which would involve organizing students to work toward school staff accountability, implementing sensitivity training for teachers and the administration, and organizing dialogues between students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Δ



Cambodian youths at demonstration against police insensitivity and the racially-motivated killing of Heng Lim.

M.I.A...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Although Asians comprise only 3% of Boston's population, they were reportedly 26% of all hate crimes victims in 1987. Violence forced many families to move out of Dorchester in 1983 and 1987. In Revere, six cases of arson left hundreds of Cambodians homeless, injured, and traumatized. An unrelenting campaign of violence also resulted in the death of one man, Bun Vong. In Lowell, a 13-year old Cambodian boy, Vandy Phorng, was pushed into a canal lock by an 11-year old white boy and drowned.

There are several reasons why so many hate crime victims are Southeast Asians. The main reason is socio-economic. Many Asian-bashers have justified their attacks by complaining that many Southeast Asians live on welfare, as if this is an entitlement that they don't deserve. In reality, they have been forced to live in poverty after arriving as penniless refugees, scarred by the traumas of the war. They have been unable to rebuild their lives because of poor educational background and language and cultural barriers.

Paradoxically, Southeast Asians have also been targeted by whites, African Americans, and Latinos, who resent the supposed economic

advancements made by Asian Americans (the "model minority" myth). Perceiving Asians as a monolithic group, many erroneously believe that Southeast Asians are doing better than native-born Americans, ignoring their actual living conditions.

Many Americans have never accepted the outcome of the Vietnam War and the notion persists that the United States was forced to withdraw before it could "finish the job." This non-acceptance of the American defeat in Vietnam plays a large part in the hostility directed towards Southeast Asians. During most of 1992, the issue of mythical American servicemen still surviving in Vietnam occupied many front pages. While much has been made of the tragedy of 2,265 missing American servicemen, the fact that 300,000 Vietnamese soldiers are also missing is rarely acknowledged. In the presidential campaign, then-candidate Bill Clinton seized on the M.I.A. issue and announced that his administration would not normalize relations with Hanoi until all American soldiers were accounted for.

No case illustrates these feelings of anger more than the killing of Jim Ming Hai Loo in 1989. Loo, a Chinese American waiter and student, and six Vietnamese friends were harassed by two white brothers, Robert and Lloyd Piche, in a pool hall in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Piches, known to have neo-Nazi sympathies, yelled, "Our brother went to Vietnam and didn't come back", and "We had enough of you gooks in Vietnam and we are gonna finish you all tonight." (The Piches did not have a brother who served in Vietnam).

The media plays a large role in propagating misconceptions and distorting the truth. Not only does it whip up hysteria over the issue of the M.I.A.'s through the news, but also through movies, where the war is fought over and over again. In such movies as *Rambo*, *Uncommon Valor*, and *Missing in Action*, the public's thirst for the defeat of the Asian enemy is satisfied. In movies such as *Deer Hunter*, Americans are portrayed as victims of the war — and by extension, the inhumane Vietnamese, the "gook."

On the other hand, the media ignores

the issue of anti-Asian violence, and the racist motivation behind crimes is downplayed. When a crazed gunman, Patrick Purdy, obsessed with the Vietnam War, killed five Southeast Asian school children in Stockton, California in 1989, the news media ignored the racist motivation behind the killing.

There are also disturbing trends of neglect or misconduct by judicial and law enforcement institutions. In Philadelphia, for example, both the police and the district attorney's office betrayed a double standard in two cases involving Asians. In the first case, a Cambodian man, Heng Lim, was beaten to death with a piece of lumber by a white man. Instead of searching for the killer, police detained the family for several hours and denied medical attention Heng Lim and his severely injured father-in-law. The district attorney's office did not file charges. Finally, five weeks later, due to pressure from Asian Americans United of Philadelphia, the district attorney arrested the killer.

By contrast, in the McCreesh Playground case, a white youth was killed during a fight between Vietnamese youths and white youths. The fight had been precipitated by repeated incidents of harassment and assaults against the Vietnamese community. The police and the D.A.'s office conducted a massive sweep of the Southeast Asian community. With no regard to their civil rights or due process, many young men were arrested and detained. Some were detained for months before any charges were filed.

Under the guise of fighting organized gangs, the San Jose (CA) and Orange County (CA) police departments have been keeping mug shot books of Southeast Asian males who have not committed any crime. This practice is a clear violation of their constitutional rights and has been challenged by local Asian American groups.

It is crucial that Asian American activists speak out and organize against the wave of violence, the neglect by the media, and the failure of the American justice system to respond. It is imperative that the Vietnam War and the war against Southeast Asians be put to an end. Δ

Oriental: Their Word, Not Ours

Ching Chong Chinaman, chink, gook, zipperhead, jap, nip, yellow monkey, dothead, chink-a-moto, — Asian Americans have been victimized by these obviously offensive and derogatory racial slurs. But what about the term *Oriental*? Why is *Oriental* accepted and used by some, but offensive and derogatory to others? To understand the racist nature of the term *Oriental*, some background information is needed. Where did *Oriental* come from? Who originally used it and for what purpose? What are the implications of this term today?

The word *Oriental* as originally conceived and used by Europeans, referred to a place and culture east of Europe, known today as the modern Arab world. However, when most Americans conceptualize *Oriental* they make associations with China, Japan, and occasionally Korea. But while Americans and Europeans may think of different geographic locations and peoples when using the word *Oriental*, the images and connotations of the term remain the same. *Oriental* conjures up images of exoticism, mystery, inscrutability, inexplicability, inferiority, strangeness, weirdness, the foreign and the sinister. As Edward W. Said so aptly puts it in his book *Orientalism*, "There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power." The truth of Said's comments was most obviously manifested during the second half of this century in the wars waged by the imperialistic United States government in Korea and Vietnam. Besides these overt acts of American aggression, countless other covert acts can be cited. Prime examples include the infiltration of American hegemony into Cambodia,

Indonesia, and the Philippines in the form of unequal trade agreements, military presence, and CIA-funded death squads.

The word *Oriental* is used by most Americans to describe a people, place and culture that are considered inferior. Anything "Oriental" is considered the "Other," that which does not belong and can never be considered part of the more "superior" American culture. While this may seem an extreme view, the term



does manifest itself in subtle and insidious ways. Take for example, "Oriental" rugs, "Oriental" lamps and "Oriental" food; these things are considered exotic, curious, strange, weird, etc., by the vast majority of people in the United States. "Oriental" products are aberrations from the "normal" experiences of the "average American" and are rarely considered anything more than curiosities or adventures in experimentation. Following this line of thinking, when a person applies the term *Oriental* to a woman or a man, a girl or a boy, rather than a lamp or a rug, the connotations of "otherness" are not suddenly lost.

During the late 1960s — in the milieu of the Civil Rights, Third World peoples and anti-Vietnam War movements — people who traced their ancestry to the Asian continent began to question the term *Oriental* as it applied to them — Asians in America. They began to develop an increasing consciousness of their role in American society and realized that *Oriental* was a racist, Eurocentric term that was used to label them as perpetual foreigners and to exclude them from equal participation in American society. On the road to claiming the power of self-determination, a group of California college students in the late 1960s decided to name themselves *Asian Americans*. These students recognized that language is a tool of power and that the system created and controlled by white, wealthy, heterosexual men — because they traditionally have had the most power — controls the meaning of words. By rejecting *Oriental* and all of its racist connotations and creating the term *Asian American*, Asians in America were able to redefine themselves on their own terms. In choosing *Asian American* these students asserted their Asianness, but more importantly they claimed their Americanness.

Through many years of struggle, Asian Americans have worked to make their self-proclaimed name known to the general public. *Asian American*, far from being used solely on college campuses, has been gaining wider acceptance and is now the term used by the government, as evidenced in the 1990 census questionnaire. While the increased use of *Asian American* is a good sign of progress for Asians in America, the recalcitrance of *Oriental* is a disturbing reminder of continued inequality.

Since the original conception of the term *Asian American*, the Asian population in the United States has

CAMPAIGNS FOR JUSTICE

ASIAN AND LATINO WORKERS BATTLE SHINWA RESTAURANT

In February, while Mayor Dinkins visited Japan seeking Japanese investment for New York City, an ugly protracted labor/management struggle involving immigrant workers and intransigent racist managers and owners of a Japanese restaurant continued to fester in his own backyard.

For three years, Asian and Latino workers — waiters/waitresses, kitchen help and busboys — struggled against discriminatory labor practices, racism, and management's failure to pay back wages and tips at the Shinwa Restaurant, a subsidiary of a Japanese multinational corporation. Managers of this upscale restaurant located on 51st Street just off Fifth Avenue, deducted 17% to 45% of the tips from the immigrant workers while permitting white bartenders to retain 100% of theirs.

When these workers — Chinese, Honduran, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, and Mexican immigrants — came together to assert their rights and organize a union, they were harassed physically and psychologically. Their shifts and salaries were cut back. To date, over \$200,000 in salary and tips were docked from the workers. Daily picket lines in rain, snow and summer heat, sit-ins, letter writing campaigns, petitions, and attempts to negotiate with the managers have all proved fruitless. Shinwa's corporate backing enables it to continue the business and to hire lawyers to combat the complaints issued by the Labor Department and National Labor Relations Board against the restaurant.

In a change of tactics, Shinwa closed about four months ago for a brief period. It reopened under the claim of "new management" (but with the original owners). Only those workers who were "loyal" to them were rehired.

The struggle continues. Although most of the workers have had to seek other employment to support their

families, their determination to right the ongoing wrongs at Shinwa is manifested by the continued picketing of the restaurant. This struggle is unique in that workers of such diverse nationalities remain united in organizing against a powerful corporate entity.

Call the Shinwa Support Committee at the Lower East Side Workers Center, (212) 473-3936, to help with the picket line or other support work.

CHINATOWN CALLS FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE AT FOLEY SQUARE

Last summer, the Campaign for Economic Justice at Foley Square (see *CAAAY Voice*, Fall 1992) mobilized thousands from the Chinatown community, Asian Americans, and other people of color in two major marches to Foley Square to protest the exclusion of Chinese American workers from the \$500 million federal projects being constructed in the Chinatown area.

Since the marches, many Chinese construction workers and a few contractors have been given jobs, but on a one-by-one basis and without an overall commitment to the community. Two thousand jobs are at stake and the Chinese community, through the Campaign, insists that 30% of the jobs and contracts should be prioritized for Chinatown. Thus far, the projects' developers, contractors, and government coordinators have refused to recognize the justice of this demand.

The Chinese Staff & Workers' Association, a leading organizer of the Campaign, has involved young Asian Americans in community education on the streets and in Chinatown factories, and in organizing forums on the issues of racism and economic exploitation. Discussions, which included the screening of Downtown Community TV's documentary about the Campaign, "The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1992," were held at New York University, Sarah

Lawrence, Hunter College, Brooklyn College, Baruch, the Asian American Arts Centre, and Downtown Community TV. More are planned at Columbia and other locations.

For more information, call the Chinese Staff & Workers Association at (212) 619-7979.

GARMENT WORKERS FIGHT FOR UNPAID WAGES

The plight of garment factory workers, predominantly immigrant women of color who often work 14-hour shifts at \$2 to \$3 an hour in dangerously unhealthy environments, is further exacerbated by the outrageous practice of withholding their wages by unscrupulous factory owners. With the alarming increase of these cases in recent years, these women — mostly non-English-speaking Chinese, Latino and Malaysian immigrants — have been fighting back by organizing themselves. In 1991 their efforts inspired the Chinese Staff & Workers Association to form the Campaign Against the Nonpayment of Wages, which has mobilized community support at rallies and filed complaints with the federal and New York State Departments of Labor.

Currently, the Campaign has targeted the owner of the Swanky Fashions/'90s Fashions factory Thomas Tam. Since 1991, he owes wages totaling \$50,000 to 13 women. One woman in her 60's had worked at Swanky Fashions for two years at wages averaging less than \$2 an hour. To avoid paying the workers, Tam abruptly closed Swanky Fashions. Using a familiar tactic, Tam then opened another factory a few blocks away and hired new workers.

The women picketed Tam's new factory and filed complaints with New York's Department of Labor and other government agencies. These agencies, however, are notoriously lax in enforcing the law regarding withheld wages, and

CINCINNATI REDNECK OWNER SUSPENDED

This April the 1993 baseball season officially opens. But one person who will be conspicuously absent from the action on and off the baseball diamond is Marge Schott, principal owner and president of the Cincinnati Reds. She won't be around because she was given a one year suspension from baseball for making racial and ethnic slurs. She was also fined \$25,000 and ordered to participate in "multi-cultural training sessions."

During this past off-season several former employees of the Cincinnati Reds organization charged that Schott had made numerous racist remarks and religious slurs. She was quoted as

referring to her star players, Eric Davis and Dave Parker, as a "million dollar nigger" and a "dumb nigger." And she was accused of saying in a conference call, "I'd rather have a trained monkey working for me than a nigger." Others who have worked for her claim that she had referred to Martin Luther King Day as "Nigger Day," that she owns a Nazi swastika (which Schott admits she keeps as "memorabilia") and has repeatedly used the term "Japs" when talking about Japanese people.

Schott has insisted that she is not a racist; but in her deposition given to the Major League Executive Council, she reluctantly confessed that she may have made some of those racist remarks. However, she qualified her admission by stating, "If and when I've used them it was only kidding." She added that they were merely "joke terms."

Not many people have found

Schott's remarks amusing. In fact, she has received angry denunciations and calls for her resignation from organizations such as the NAACP, the American Jewish Congress, and the Japanese American Citizens League. The JACL was particularly incensed because Schott continued to use the terms "Japs"



even after of a note from their organization explaining that the term "Jap" is offensive to Japanese Americans

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CAMPAIGNS...

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the law itself poses little threat to employers. It is only a misdemeanor violation with minimal penalties, rather than a felony with prison terms and heavy fines.

The Campaign directs its fire not only at factory owners but also the large clothing manufacturers who contract for factory piece work at rock-bottom bids. Reaping huge profits on the backs of workers, these manufacturers are directly responsible for the sweatshop conditions in the factories. When manufacturers contract factories which violate the minimum-wage provision of the labor law, they are guilty of selling "hot goods".

In this case, Swanky Fashions' primary contractor is CET Fashions, Inc., which sells dresses under the Kate Warner label. This February the Campaign organized a militant picket line and press conference in front of CET Fashions near Times Square. It attracted many spectators and workers on their lunch hour. Hundreds of flyers were

distributed, accusing CET of selling "hot goods" and listing the Swanky Fashions workers' demands: full back wages, immediate action by the state and federal Departments of Labor, and a full investigation of the labor rights violations by both Tam and CET.

The courage and militant organizing efforts of immigrant women garment workers paid off in two cases last fall. Forty-four workers at the Wai Chang Fashions factory were instrumental in convicting the owner, Stanley Chang, who withheld \$80,000 in back wages. He was sentenced to nine months in prison. This case marked the first time that a factory owner was imprisoned for withholding wages in New York. The women are now preparing a civil case to recoup their wages. Through their perseverance, twenty workers at Affirmed Fashions also succeeded in forcing their employer to make payments totaling \$20,000 owed them.

Anyone wishing to support these women and the Campaign Against Nonpayment of Wages should contact the Chinese Staff & Workers' Association, (212) 619-7979.

DAVID WONG UPDATE

Since the beginning of February the David Wong Support Committee, in conjunction with Asian student organizations from Hunter College, Columbia University and New York University Law School, have sponsored four successful benefits. They also co-sponsored a benefit with Art in General, an art gallery in Tribeca.

Each benefit featured a multi-cultural and multi-racial array of talented performers — poets, musicians, dancers, actors and actresses, comedians, jugglers, and singers.

All monies that have been collected are being used to defray David Wong's legal expenses.

The Committee welcomes volunteers and is in dire need of funds. Send donations, made payable to the David Wong Support Committee, to 545 West 126th Street, #3B, New York, NY 10027. To volunteer, call (212) 926-7412. Δ

MALCOLM X: DOES HE HAVE RELEVANCE FOR ASIAN AMERICANS?

by Yuri Kochiyama

Malcolm's life and what he did with it, rising from the muck of enforced poverty to international recognition, is primarily a message to his own people—Black people in America, Africa, and the diaspora. The significance of his feat in life is truly a lesson to prove that one can transcend adversity, hate, and lies. Through struggle, he became a symbol of fearlessness against powerful enemies, of commitment to fighting racism in this society, and of motivation to seek truth. Thus, his life and his message have relevance to Asian Americans as well as all people.

Though much has been written about Malcolm in hundreds of articles, newspapers, magazines, and especially since the release of Spike Lee's film, books that have dissected and analyzed every facet of Malcolm's very complex and fascinating life, still very little has been written about his relationships and views of people outside the Black community, particularly with Asians.

Our family was quite fortunate to learn firsthand of Malcolm's internationalist perspective when he accepted an invitation to come to our house and meet with a group of hibakushas—Japanese atomic bomb survivors. He graciously took the time to meet them at a very dangerous period of his life, when he had recently broken from the ranks of the Nation of Islam.

On learning that the hibakushas had gone to the World's Worst Fair in Harlem, Malcolm thanked them for choosing to come to Harlem to see the reality of life in Harlem rather than attending the World's Fair in Flushing Meadow, which was a major attraction at the time. The hibakushas saw what life in some parts of Harlem was like: garbage piled up because the city was not picking it up regularly; toilets that would not flush, bath tubs that were clogged in run down apartments, and overall living conditions that were subhuman.

Malcolm told the hibakushas, "You were bombed and have physical scars. We also have been bombed and you saw some of the scars in our neighborhood. We are constantly hit by bombs of racism—which is just as devastating." The meeting between Malcolm and the hibakushas had a profound effect on all who were there.

In Malcolm's last years, the U.S. was sending military advisors and specialists

to Vietnam. Although the anti-war movement had not quite begun to mobilize, Malcolm was aware of America's intention to begin sending troops there. Malcolm made the prophetic statement: "Vietnam is the struggle of all Third World nations—the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Progressive people here must protest American incursion into Vietnam and Southeast Asia." Sadly, he was not here as the anti-war movement developed and made its impact. But as with so many other issues, Malcolm was ahead of the times and was one of the first Black activists to take a stand against the war and to support the Vietnamese people in their struggle for national liberation.

Malcolm's keen insight seemed to target all the critical areas of concern. Malcolm's astuteness, political theorization, and principled thoughts were inspiring. He elucidated what might have been obscure into clarity.

Malcolm was a phenomenon created by the harsh and unjust realities of this society, who never lost sight of humanity's objectives which were also his own: truth, justice, human rights, self-defense and self-determination.

The answer to the question posed by the title of this article is crystal clear. Malcolm has relevance to anyone who wishes to struggle for a more just world for all. Δ

REDNECK BASEBALL OWNER...

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and that it has historically been used to dehumanize Asian people. The *New York Times* reported that Schott continued to use the slur "Japs" until Bill White, the president of the National League, ordered her to stop.

Marge Schott has called her suspension and the investigation into her past a "witch hunt" and a violation of her first amendment rights. But Jesse Jackson and many other civil rights leaders and athletes have replied that the problem is not limited to Marge Schott and her racist comments, but that the racism in baseball is a reflection of the institutional racism which permeates all of American society, on and off the playing fields.

Jackson has threatened to organize boycotts of Major League games if the issues of racism in sports are not adequately addressed and if significant changes are not made in the hiring policies of women and minorities, particularly in front office executive positions.

Jackson has joined forces with Native American activists in calling for teams using "Indian" names, logos and mascots to immediately desist from their use. Teams such as the Washington Redskins and the Atlanta Braves (and there are many many more!) continue to promote racial stereotypes and images which degrade and dehumanize Native American peoples. Δ

ORIENTAL...

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increased through both immigration and birth, and diversified as to countries of origin. With these changes new debates about naming our community have emerged, even as *Oriental* lingers on and *Asian American* gains wider acceptance. The growing new immigrant population, often with one foot still in the old country, identify more by nationality, or just as *Asians*. In addition, many Filipinos, Samoans and other Pacific Islanders are demanding a more inclusive term — *Asian/Pacific Islander*. As our community expands, we must continue to define ourselves in ways that are inclusive and empowering to all of us. Δ

* Farewell Milyoung *

In October of 1990, Milyoung Cho took on the challenge of becoming CAAAV's first staff person. She didn't have much to work with, such as an office or even a telephone, but Milyoung brought an organizer's most important resources: commitment and creativity. Over the next two and a half years, she led major campaigns for victims of anti-Asian violence, initiated community organizing projects, brought many new members into the organization,

conducted trainings and workshops, expanded CAAAV's visibility and ties to other groups, and also performed the myriad thankless tasks that keep an organization going.

CAAAY today in many ways reflects Milyoung's fierce sense of justice, and her dedication to working inclusively toward that goal. Milyoung, we wish you the best in your new life in San Francisco. Thank you for all that you gave and inspired in us.

CAAAY Board of Directors Welcomes Its New Members!

Tsuh Yang Chen is a longtime member of CAAAY who previously investigated bias incidents for the New York City Human Rights Commission. He is also active with GAPIMNY (Gay Asian Pacific Islander Men of New York). Tsuh Yang was elected by the membership at the January general membership meeting.

Taryn Higashi is a Program Associate at the New York Community Trust and was formerly an attorney with the Victim Services Agency. She was elected by the membership at the January general membership meeting.

Miliann Kang is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at New York University. She is active with the Korea Working Group locally and the Korean Church Coalition in Washington, D.C. and Korean Immigrant Women's Advocates in Los Angeles.

Val Kanuha is Deputy Director for Programs at Hunter College's Center on AIDS, Drugs, and Community Health. She has been active primarily on battered women's issues, and within the lesbian and gay community.

Rita Sethi is a housing attorney at Brooklyn Legal Services. She is a founding member of Indian Youth Against Racism (now known as YAR) and the National Support Committee for Dr. Kaushal Sharan, a beating victim of the so-called "dotbusters" in Jersey City in 1987.

The Board also wishes to recognize the tremendous contributions of Anu Advani, a founding member of the Board, who will remain active with the Lease Drivers Coalition and other membership activities. Thank you, Anu!



About 150 Asian Americans joined over 1000 people at the ambitious North Star conference, *Organizing for Social Change: Fighting Racism & the Politics of Division*, on February 27 & 28. CAAAY members helped organize 3 workshops - above is *It's An Asian Thing!*

Almost 20 CAAAY members trucked to Philadelphia last November 6 - 8 for the East Coast Coalition Against Anti-Asian Violence regional conference. CAAAY made presentations on how to educate about anti-Asian violence, documentation, and police brutality. On Sunday members participated in a poster of the U. Penn. campus with traffic signs "No Racism, Stop Anti-Asian Violence, 24 hrs - 7 days".

