

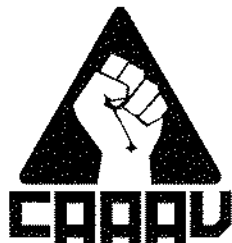
# CARRAV VOICE

v10no4 . Fall 2000

**SPECIAL ISSUE WOMEN, RACE, AND WORK**



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CAAUV VOICE **FALL 2000**

WOMEN, RACE, AND WORK

# EDITORS' NOTE

Along with a principled commitment to justice, change is one of the few constants in organizing at CAAUV. This should be quite noticeable from this issue of the CAAUV Voice. Though we have not published in a while, it has not been for lack of activity. Indeed, as you read this issue of the Voice, you will read about change.

In the Voice, we have expanded to 20 pages and implemented a complete redesign, courtesy of theBRM. Our expansion has allowed us to give more in-depth analysis of issues related to our organizing. It has also given us more space for detailed descriptions of CAAUV's core work in the "Community Organizing" section.

This special issue on "Women, Race, and Work" focuses on the interconnectedness of race, gender and class in the experiences of poor and low-income Asians in the U.S. Both of the features, on Southeast Asian Women and Welfare, and Dignity and the Domestic Sweatshop cover the ways in which Asian women have been affected by racist immigration and welfare laws within the context of an ever-expanding global capitalism. These features, as well as the community organizing articles, describe how Filipina domestic workers, Southeast Asian women and youth, and Chinatown youth and vendors have been building community and challenging violent state and corporate practices.

As usual, we welcome your comments and donations as we prepare for our next big issue, which will celebrate CAAUV's 15th anniversary in 2001.

In Struggle,

The Editors

# v10no4

**FALL 2000**

Organizing Asian Communities  
MASTHEAD

#### EDITORS

Tomio Geron  
Ai-jen Poo

#### CREATIVE

theBRM

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Sophany Ang  
Jane Bai  
Borann Hearn  
Phatta Houth  
Buntha Khoeuth  
Hyun Lee  
tshle Park  
Ai-jen Poo  
Brother Joel Magatón Reyes, SJ  
Chaiti Sen  
Eric Tang

#### STAFF

Jane Bai  
Hyun Lee  
Ai-jen Poo  
Eric Tong  
Carolyn H. de Leon

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kazu Iijima  
Mini Liu  
Richie Perez  
Bob Wing  
Haeyoung Yoon

#### INTERNS

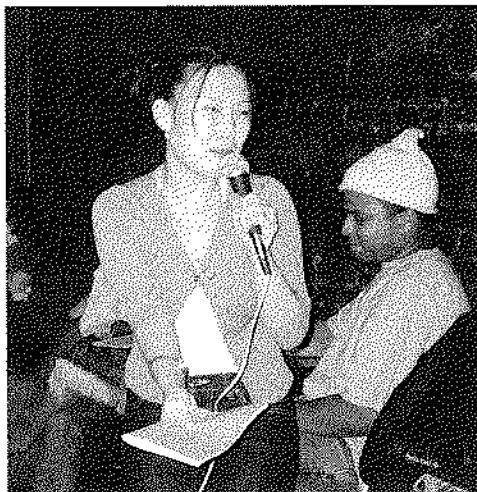
Gulnohar Alam (Summer 2000)  
Chhaya Chhoum (Fall 1999)  
Rom Chy (Summer 2000)  
Liz Kaufman (Summer 2000)  
Binh Ly (Fall 1999 - Fall 2000)  
FenZhen Nie (Summer 2000)  
Lorie Pilotin (Summer - Fall 2000)  
Thout Tong (Winter - Fall 2000)  
Susan Top (Fall 1999)  
Peuo Tuy (Summer 2000)  
Samlath Tuy (Fall 1999 - Fall 2000)

#### EMAIL ADDRESSES:

General: [justice@caaav.org](mailto:justice@caaav.org)  
Youth Leadership Project:  
[ylp@caaav.org](mailto:ylp@caaav.org)  
Chinatown Justice Project:  
[cjp@caaav.org](mailto:cjp@caaav.org)  
Women Workers Project:  
[wwp@caaav.org](mailto:wwp@caaav.org)



62%: Richie Perez (top) and Ishle Park



# 62%

62% represents the official documented percentage of people of color in NYC (an obvious undercount). On December 16, 1999 CAAAV, National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights and Malcolm X Grassroots Movement organized a joint fundraiser which celebrated our majority presence, at the same time as it emphasized the need for multi-racial solidarity in struggles for justice. People of color are the clear majority of the City's population, yet lack power and access to resources, and continue to endure the most oppressive living and working conditions. 62% also celebrated Richie Perez's (life-long Puerto Rican activist and mentor of the movement) birthday. Ishle Park, Sarah Jones and Mariposa performed with DJ's Tany Touch, and Kuttin Kandi and Roli Rho of the 5th Platoon.



## NEW WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT STAFF

In October 2000, CAAAV welcomed Carolyn H. de Leon as the new staff Program Coordinator for Women Workers Project. Born and raised in the Philippines, where she was a youth activist, Carol has worked abroad as a nanny since 1987. Carol has been an active member of the Women Workers Project Organizing Committee for two years, and has played a leadership role in the domestic worker organizing project from the beginning. Carol has been a member of the Strategizing Committee and is part of the Management Team which will oversee CAAAV's move to the Bronx. Carol told the Voice, "This is a new phase in my life," and she hopes, "one day we will really make a change in the lives of immigrant women working in the domestic setting." CAAAV welcomes Carol with excitement and confidence.



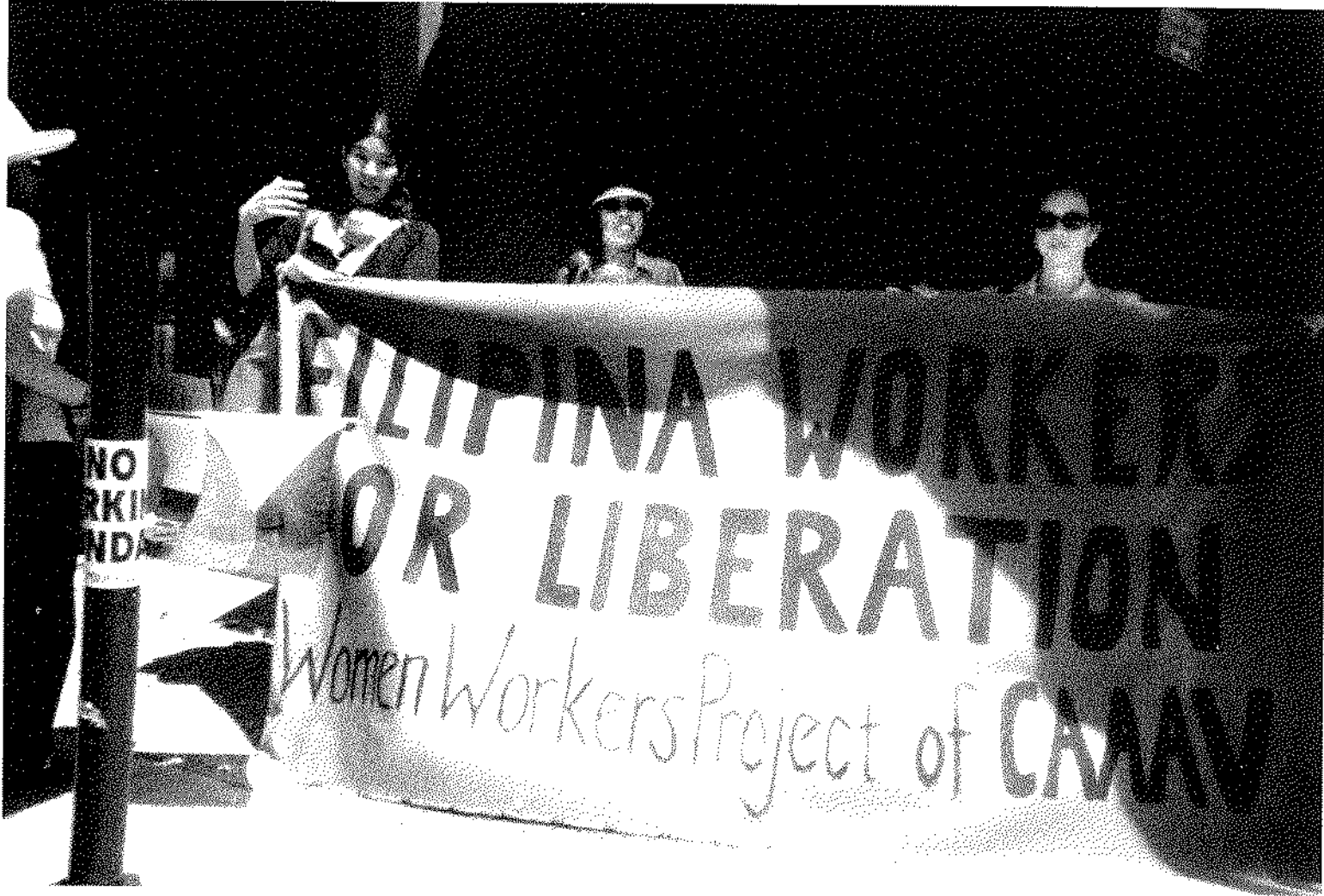
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FEATURE . WOMEN, RACE, AND WORK

# DIGNITY AND THE DOMESTIC SWEATSHOP

## ASIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S LABOR

In New York City, Asian immigrant women have essentially one option in the labor market: the sweatshop. The New York City sweatshop takes many forms: garment factory, restaurant, nail salon, laundry, and the home. All these work-sites share certain characteristics: no regulation, harsh surveillance, low wages, long hours and threats of physical and sexual violence. Conditions in these sweatshops are linked to those faced by women laboring in Third World Free Trade Zones, the very conditions driving many to migrate to the U.S. Asian and other Third World women are literally the ground level upon which New York City's economic boom is being built. On the ground floor and in the basements of the immaculate buildings lining the Upper East and West Sides of Manhattan, "servants quarters"--a line of cell-like rooms--house women from countries such as Ecuador, Trinidad, and the Philippines. These women clean and care for the children of the wealthy families who live above.



As New York's wealthy elite grows in size and income, so do in-home service industries that cater to the business class. Grocery delivery services, exclusive gyms, gourmet markets, nail salons, new gourmet restaurants, and indoor children's gyms are reflective of the trend. Domestic workers are integral to the business class consumption of these new luxuries. In addition to cleaning, and providing security and childcare, domestic workers shop, wait for deliveries, drop off and pick up dry cleaning, escort the children to gym classes. They are then left to feed and bathe children as the parents go to the gym, enjoy the opera, get their nails done, and travel abroad. While taking care of the most important elements of their employers' lives--families and homes--domestic workers are still paid less than their employers spend on one pair of shoes.

Not only do labor enforcement agencies turn a blind eye to abuses in the domestic work industry, many laws which serve to pro-

tect workers rights specifically exclude domestic workers. Domestic workers are excluded from the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) which grants workers the right to organize. Laws that protect workers from discrimination only regulate workplaces with fifteen workers or more. These exclusions reflect a system that explicitly disregards and renders invisible what is seen as "women's labor."

#### IMMIGRATION LAWS

Migrant domestic workers from Asia come to the U.S. on a number of different employment-based visas including B1, A3, and G5. Every year over 200,000 B1s are issued for temporary non-citizen workers and U.S. citizens based in foreign countries. In the U.S., B1 visa holders are mostly either corporate executives here to work temporarily, or their "bound" domestic workers. Regardless of employment conditions, the moment a domestic worker with a B1 visa leaves her employer, she becomes undocumented--a situation that leads to widespread exploitation.

As has been noted by the Campaign for Migrant Domestic Workers Rights in Washington D.C., A3 and G5 visa holders are domestics whose employers work for the World Bank, IMF or other international institutions. A3 and G5 visas also bind workers to their employers. In addition, these employers hold diplomatic immunity, making it nearly impossible for workers to seek justice against their abusive employers. The Campaign has documented a general pattern of abuse where workers worked under slavery-like conditions for their diplomat employers. These visa policies, which keep migrant domestic workers in a state of indentured servitude, are only a few examples in a range of anti-immigrant policies and practices.

The vast majority of domestic workers in New York City are undocumented. 1996 Immigration Reform erased nearly all opportunities for adjustment of status and subject those who are eligible to bars of up to ten years. Workers must return to their home



countries to begin a process of adjustment, however, most will not have the resources to return. Employers use the false promise of sponsorship to trap workers in abusive conditions for years, threatening them with incarceration or deportation if they leave or challenge the exploitative relationship. Such fear prevents undocumented women in the domestic sector from accessing the few protections available. And while they are often the victims of crimes and exploitation, under the current legal system, it is the workers who are criminalized. Thus, the task of finding work in order to survive and send money home is fraught with danger: the danger of physical and mental abuse; the danger of imprisonment; and the danger of deportation.

#### **WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT**

Women Workers Project (WWP) organizes Asian immigrant women who are working in informal service industries in New York City. WWP has been focusing on organizing Asian domestic workers who are predominantly from the Philippines. Like many undocumented migrant workers, Filipina domestic workers are in high demand, as their flexible and domestic labor serves the needs of an expanding new urban elite. As a proletariat, they are central to the new global wealth. Thus, they also play a central role in challenging new forms of labor exploitation in the global economy as well as immigration legislation that attacks the immigrant poor.

While the experiences of Filipina domestic workers are manifestations of relatively recent economic trends, the domestic industry itself

is at least as old as the notion. Since the advent of slavery, Black women have been forced to assume domestic labor. This legacy carried forth into the 20th Century, as Black women were forced into domestic work as their only option for wage labor. Today, the domestic work industry is dominated by undocumented women from the Third World whose skills developed in their home countries do not match the jobs available to them here. Domestic work remains one of the few options for wage labor available for women of color. And despite its centrality to the operations of all elements of the New York City economy, domestic labor is respected little more than it has been in the past.

WWP's mission is to collectively create conditions for Asian domestic workers to gain control over their labor and living conditions. Specifically, WWP members seek to build cooperatives, develop alternative health care programs for undocumented working women, engage in campaigns which will challenge racist and sexist immigration and labor policy, provide peer advocacy, and build community among all Asian women workers who labor in the informal sector.

#### **CAMPAIGN FOR A STANDARD CONTRACT**

Currently in New York City, employers alone set the terms of domestic work. In the end of 1999, WWP members identified an urgent need to bring workers together across communities to discuss shared goals and objectives to build power for workers throughout the industry. From that point on, WWP began laying the groundwork for an industry-wide

campaign for a standard contract. WWP then drafted a model contract and series of guidelines for employers. With these documents, WWP members conducted regular outreach to workers throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn, and organized monthly meetings to strategize about the campaign. Workers who participated in this process identified three main goals: 1) Respect and recognition for domestic workers; 2) An industry-wide standard; and 3) Multi-racial unity among workers. A multi-racial steering committee of domestic workers has been constituted to provide the leadership for the campaign, and as of September 2000, a general membership base of over 150 workers has been developed. Currently campaign members are in the process of developing training curricula, conducting surveys of their peers on working conditions, and researching both enforcement strategies and possible legislative initiatives on the City and State level, to achieve these goals.

While the conditions facing immigrant domestic workers point to some of the worst forms of labor exploitation that the "new wealth" has to offer, they also point to the potential power of domestic workers as an organized force. Indeed, if domestic workers are adequately supported by the broader labor movement, they can disrupt business-as-usual for the global corporate elite in places where these employers are highly vulnerable: the private/domestic sphere. Thus, domestic worker organizing opens up new possibilities both within U.S. borders and beyond.

The following Standard Employment Contract for Domestic Workers was developed with the Greater New York City Area Human Resources Project, Department of Social Services, in the summer of 1990. It is the result of discussions on domestic workers' concerns. The contract is a guide for workers to negotiate terms and conditions of work with new employers. It is not intended to be a contract for the general public, but to represent the minimum standards for working conditions in the domestic industry.

### STANDARD EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

This contract is made between \_\_\_\_\_ (the employer) and \_\_\_\_\_ (the worker) on \_\_\_\_\_, and has the following terms:

1. The worker shall be employed for a minimum of one year commencing on \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The worker shall work at employer's residence at \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The worker (shall, shall not) reside at the employer's residence. State below the number of persons to be served on a regular basis:  
\_\_\_\_\_ adult  
\_\_\_\_\_ minors (between 5-18) \_\_\_\_\_ minors (below 5)  
\_\_\_\_\_ expecting babies. \_\_\_\_\_ persons requiring constant care or attention.
4. Description of persons requiring constant attention: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. If hired as a full-time babysitter or nanny, responsibilities include and are limited to:
  - a) Taking care of baby/ child;
  - b) Feeding breakfast lunch and dinner;
  - c) Helping to clean up after the child;
  - d) Keeping child/baby's play area tidy;
  - e) Arranging play-dates and any other activities
  - f) Accompanying child/baby to occasional or emergency doctor's visit or pharmacy.
  - g) Any additional responsibilities to be agreed to by both parties and specified below.
  - h) \_\_\_\_\_
  - i) \_\_\_\_\_
6. If hired as a full-time housekeeper, responsibilities include and are limited to:
  - a) General housekeeping: dusting, sweeping, mopping or vacuuming, cleaning bathroom and kitchen, laundry, and bedding.
  - b) Cooking \_\_\_\_\_ meals \_\_\_\_\_ times per week.
  - c) Any additional responsibilities to be agreed to by both parties and specified below:
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Worker shall perform a minimum of eight hours work per day. Worker shall be compensated time and a half for every hour worked exceeding eight hours.
8. The worker shall not take up, and shall not be required by the employer to take up any other employment with any other person.
9. Employer shall pay worker \_\_\_\_\_ per week, not including overtime.
10. Worker shall receive her/his weekly wages every \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Employer shall pay a penalty of \_\_\_\_\_ for every day that the worker's wages are paid late.
12. Employer shall provide a receipt for the payment of wages and food allowance, and worker shall acknowledge receipt of this amount under her/his signature.
13. Worker is entitled to an hour lunch break.
14. Employers who live on the outskirts of New York City or in the suburbs shall cover the cost of transportation to and from work. For live-in workers, this shall cover transportation to and from place of choice during days off. Employers who live in New York City shall pay for taxi fare home if live-out worker is working past 9:30 pm.
15. Employer should compensate worker for two weeks vacation annually and all seven nationally observed holidays including:
  - a) New Year's Day
  - b) President's Day
  - c) Memorial Day
  - d) Independence Day
  - e) Thanksgiving Day
  - f) Labor Day
  - g) Christmas Day
16. Any time an employer takes a vacation with or without the domestic worker, employer shall pay the worker wages for the duration of the vacation. Workers should be notified at least two weeks in advance of such vacations, and workers should be compensated for all overtime hours while on vacation with employer.
17. For live-in domestic workers, employer shall provide suitable and furnished accommodation and food free of charge, if no food is provided, a food allowance of \_\_\_\_\_ shall be paid to worker. The worker shall have free access to phones (for local calls) and mail. If this access is not permitted, employer shall pay for an additional private phone line and post office box. In addition, she/he will only work between the hours of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and should expect complete privacy outside the specified work times.
18. When the worker is ill, or suffers personal injury, whether or not it is attributable to her or his employment, the employer shall provide free medical treatment to the worker. Free medical treatment includes maintenance in the hospital and emergency dental treatment. In addition, employer should pay for regular annual check-up by a general medical practitioner.
19. Either party may terminate this contract by giving three weeks notice in writing or three week's wages in lieu of notice.
20. If the employer terminates this contract, two weeks severance pay will be paid to the worker, in addition to one week's wages for every year that the worker has worked for the employer.
21. Should both parties agree to enter into a new contract, employer should increase the wages of worker by at least 10%.
22. In the event of the death of the worker, employer shall pay for the remains and personal property of the worker to be transported to family or friends.

Signed by the Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Employer)

Signed by the Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Worker)

In the presence of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Witness)



Caaav Voice  
**FALL 2000**

Organizing Asian Communities  
**FEATURE . WOMEN, RACE, AND WORK**



OCCUPANCY  
BY MORE THAN  
PERSONS  
IS DANGEROUS  
AND UNLAWFUL

SERVE THE  
PEOPLE



# SOUTHEAST ASIAN WOMEN AND WELFARE RIGHTS

When the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)—or welfare "reform" — was passed in 1996, its most immediate and vulnerable targets were immigrants receiving welfare, particularly those from the Third World. Among its key provisions are: the removal of Food Stamps to immigrants and the end to the cash assistance program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) by 2002. For the Southeast Asian refugee community of the Northwest Bronx, these changes were a pending disaster. Since their first arrival to the U.S. in the early to mid-1980s, refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos have maintained the highest welfare dependency rates of any race or ethnic group in the U.S. Although PRWORA stipulated that refugees were exempt from the impending cuts, virtually all Southeast Asians had already been reclassified as "permanent residents," and are therefore fully subject to welfare reform measures.



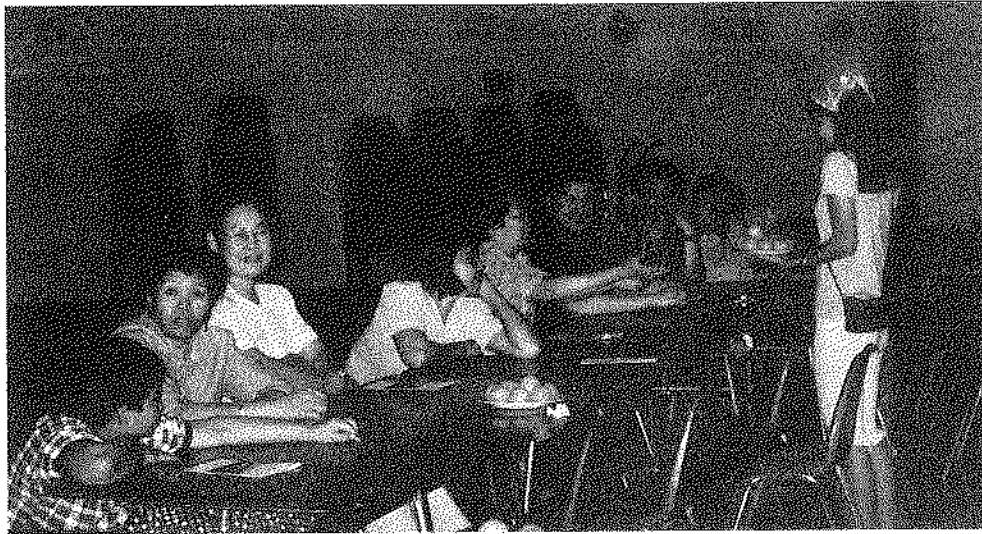
CAAAV's community study (conducted in 1997 and 1998) found that nearly 80% of Bronx Southeast Asians were receiving some form of public assistance. Within this population, Southeast Asian women represented 90% of those listed as "heads of household." The passage of PRWORA disproportionately targets women, particularly single mothers. PRWORA has also emboldened city officials to place more Southeast Asian women into the Work Experience Program (WEP) or "workfare," which forces welfare participants to labor in formerly unionized jobs in exchange for their benefits. As so-called "trainees," WEP workers are paid far below the minimum wage, and have not been protected by labor laws (this has since been challenged by a federal ruling but the ruling has yet to be enforced).

## DAILY RICE

The passage of PRWORA pointed CAAAV's Youth Leadership Program (YLP) of the Southeast Asian community of the Bronx in the direction of welfare rights organizing, as many YLP youth organizers witnessed firsthand the impact of welfare reform on their

families. In the months following the passage of PRWORA, YLP organizers joined city-wide coalition efforts aimed at protecting Food Stamp benefits for immigrant mothers and children. With pressure coming from communities, modest concessions were made by state officials, and it was decided that Food Stamp benefits were to be continued for immigrants under the age of 18, and over 65.

Nevertheless, immigrant children were regularly being illegally removed from Food Stamps. Welfare recipients were thus forced to file for "fair hearings." Yet no training or translation was provided to recipients for these hearings. As such, YLP decided to develop a "Know Your Rights" training and advocacy program for Khmer (Cambodian)-speaking and Vietnamese-speaking recipients that educated recipients on the new laws. At times, the information was enough for a recipient to win back benefits; at other times, youth organizers accompanied the welfare recipient, acting as both advocate and translator. Over 90% of the more than 30 fair hearings that were advocated by YLP resulted in the successful reissuing of Food Stamps. The



success of YLP's Food Stamp and advocacy program has allowed it to develop a membership of welfare recipients who have formed a welfare rights agenda called "Daily Rice."

Despite its self-righteous claims of moving poor people from dependency to dignified work, welfare reform measures are only meant to push more women and children into low-wage work (i.e., "working poverty"). This is evident in the fact that since welfare reform took hold in New York City, a record number of Southeast Asian women and young people have taken-up down-graded manufacturing work in New Jersey factories as a means of supplementing their lost benefits. The long-term goal of Daily Rice is to stop this downward spiral into working poverty by ensuring that benefits continue past the 2002 time limit. YLP believes that benefits must be maintained and even augmented for those who are unable to work at a full-time job, for those who have been denied access to livable wage employment, and for those who are care givers. Towards this long-term goal, YLP is working in coalition with several local and national organizations. Indeed, it will take a city-wide and national movement to turn back welfare reform.

#### TITLE VI VIOLATIONS

Although Title VI complaints are usually filed by those reporting racial and sexual discrimination at the workplace, YLP believes that WEP programs that consistently designate the least desired assignments to immigrants who cannot communicate with supervisors are also in violation of Title VI. A Title VI violation also includes a pattern and practice of harassing even Southeast Asian work force workers when full-time job openings become available at the workplace. The Title VI complaint is based on YLP's belief that WEP as an ostensibly educational program denies Southeast Asian women access to education because supervisors can barely communicate with Southeast Asian workers.

In the short term, YLP-led organizing efforts are underway to protect the civil rights of those who are currently surviving welfare reform. As federal changes took hold in New York City, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani took the reforms further by violating the civil rights of thousands of women of color in order to reduce the city's welfare rolls at a record pace. In Washington Heights, for example, welfare applications were flat-out denied to poor Latinas. And in the Bronx, Southeast Asian women were cut off from benefits without any explanation or recourse, as welfare centers would deny them federally-mandated translation access. These tactics reveal that the "successful" implementation of welfare reform is contingent on how far local city officials can push racial, gender, and anti-immigrant discrimination. YLP has spent the greater part of 2000 agitating at local welfare centers that are engaged in these practices, culminating in YLP's community takeover of a local center on August 23 (see page 14).

#### FAIR WORK

For many of the Southeast Asian women on welfare, the key issue is not only the preservation of existing benefits such as Food Stamps, but the unreasonable workfare assignments that they are compelled to take up in exchange for their cash assistance benefits. The majority of Southeast Asian WEP workers are assigned to cleaning parks, janitorial work in city offices, and street sanitation work. These jobs require back-breaking labor at far below the minimum wage, with no benefits, and are often dangerous. YLP has organized workfare workers, helping them to file complaints for violations of Fair Labor Standards (minimum wage and hours) and Occupational Safety and Health standards (workplace conditions).

But the goal is not to reform workfare. YLP seeks to abolish it. Workfare is a forced work program where less than 5 percent of its participants move into a full-time job with a livable wage. In the Bronx, only one Southeast Asian has moved from workfare to a paying job. It is simply a punitive program aimed at driving people from welfare through demoralization and degradation. Here, reforms would be meaningless. Having organized a core of

workfare participants — many of whom are the mothers of YLP organizers — YLP has developed "Fair Work," a campaign that seeks to expose each Southeast Asian WEP case as a civil rights violation. Because virtually all Southeast Asians in WEP are limited-English proficient (LEP) and there are no Southeast Asian language-speaking supervisors in the system, Asian WEP participants are, across the board, being denied "equal access to education" as mandated by the Civil Rights Act of 1965. This discrimination is underscored by the fact that 99 percent of Asian WEP workers are never offered job placement. At the risk of losing its federal funding the city must make a corrective measure, its only tenable option — both fiscally and politically — is to move LEP participants into vocational programs taught in the participants' first language. This is one key effort in the broader movement to dismantle workfare — brick by brick.

So far, YLP's most successful tactic in the Fair Work campaign has been the "Take Your Daughters to WEP" project. A play on the middle class "Take Your Daughters to Work" effort aimed at promoting the image of women working at "respectable" jobs, YLP organizers went to "work" with their mothers who labor in the WEP program. Equipped with video cameras, they documented work conditions of their parents. Supervisors were both irate, dumbstruck, and embarrassed by these youth who only wanted to "know what their mothers do for a living." The video footage was used for a report and documentary film on Asians and welfare in New York City (see page 14 for more info.)

As the new year approaches, YLP seeks to step up its efforts with Daily Rice and Fair Work. Its hope is that constant and vigilant actions aimed at exposing the race, gender, and anti-immigrant discrimination in the welfare state become a new paradigm for fighting welfare reform. Sharing this vision are several allied groups in New York City: Make the Road by Walking, the 5th Avenue Committee, and Community Voices Heard. Meanwhile, on the national front, the Grassroots Organizing for Welfare Leadership, is attempting to pull together a national campaign focusing on these very same forms of discrimination.

# POEMS

BY YLP ORGANIZERS AND VOLUNTEERS

## "UNTITLED"

By Buntha Khoeuth

I hate doing Bow\*  
But I have no choice  
I have to help out  
my family and not  
think about what I  
want and put my  
family first  
It's an embarrassment  
when people ask what  
your parents do for a living.  
I just say I don't know  
and its none of your bees-wax

\* "Bow" is a word used by Cambodians  
for garment work done at home.

## "IT'S SO HARD IN THIS WORLD"

by Sophany Ang

I want to live with myself,  
and so I want to let everybody  
else know I've been through a lot in this world  
You shouldn't judge me because  
I'm a Khmer girl  
It's tough for me to go to school  
It's enough for me to be this tall  
It's so hard in school  
If people could just know what I been through

## "UNTITLED"

By Borann Heam

My mother told us that she left Cambodia because there wasn't enough food for me and my brother. She left her homeland for the chance of reaching America in 1981. It was a long journey that could never be forgotten. First, we reached the Thai camp. We lived there for 3 years in silence, fearing the soldiers would torture us if we left the house at the wrong time. We did, however manage to pass the Thai camp and into the Philippines. There, I started going to school, learning English because the Philippines was a colony of America. In 1989, we reached America in the Bronx.

We moved in an apartment that same year. Our first job was to do bow. That was all we could find. I did bow for about 10 years. What I hate most is cheap labor. People always worked hard for a little amount of money. I enjoy working with the community and helping the next generation. I look forward to a safe Asian community with jobs for everyone. And I look forward to it now.

I admire my cheap-laboring mother. This is why I wonder where her dreams goes, for the world always gets in her way. Maybe, it's because she can't speak English. This is why she gave birth to me. She pointed up my picture and blocked the ties they told to me. But the less I ever gave her was the most she ever knew. And what's the point in trying, she's not relating anyway.

## "UNTITLED"

by Phalla Houth

Hey, whatsup. I'm Ata, a Cambodian kid who live in the Bronx. There's not that much stuff about me, cause if I explain it will take days. But I could let you know a little about me. I like to meet new people, making new friend, my favorite thing is to play video game. I'm a nice person.

My family came here when I was young so I don't really know that much about why they came here (to America). But from what I heard is that my family came here to escape from a land that was beautiful and peaceful until there was a war and people fighting their own people. I don't really think much about that cause what is the past is the past.

I live in a 3 bedroom apartment and my family is big. I got 2 sister and 4 brother and myself we just move there. Before I live in a block that I grew up and I miss that block very much. My family we get along well, But I hardly talk to my parent, cause they my parent. Cause I don't be home much of the time.

About my friend there's a lot to say. I hang out with a lot of friend. We been through hard time to good time. They are like my second family. We do stuff together, a lot of stuff.

Each day I do the same thing. What I mean by that is there's nothing to do that much night and day. It like the older you get it gets bored.

Thing I hate is that you know how people talk (old people) behind each other back. And what the community is facing.

I never realize what kind of stuff I enjoy because I always thought I'm no good at anything. Until I was intro to Y.L.P. I enjoy work there and meet new friends.

The only thing I look forward to is to have a good job that I could support my family. And try to make a difference in the lives of the community. What I mean is, I don't want my kid to grow up the same way that I did.



# COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

►► CAAAV VOICES PAGE 17-20



[ABOVE] MARCH 20, 2000, RUBY BILIANI HOLDS A TOWN HALL MEETING IN CHINATOWN AND FAILS TO PROVIDE TRANSLATION FOR CHINATOWN STREET VENDORS WHO PREPARE TO TESTIFY ABOUT RACISM, SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF CITY CODES, AND THE WIDESPREAD DISPLACEMENT OF CHINESE VENDORS UNDER THE BUREAUNT ADMINISTRATION. [LEFT] CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT YOUTH ORGANIZERS JOIN ASIAN AMERICANS UNITED IN PHILADELPHIA TO PROTEST THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION AND THE MAYOR'S PROPOSAL TO BUILD A BASEBALL STADIUM IN PHILADELPHIA'S CHINATOWN.

## ► CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT

The Chinatown Justice Project (CJP), formerly known as the Racial Justice Committee, entered 2000 with the goal of building a community-wide association of low-income residents in Chinatown that will protect Chinatown from gentrification and displacement, protect low income housing, determine how public space is used and promote environmental justice. It is employing a two-pronged strategy: 1. building the leadership of low income tenants and bilingual young people in the community to organize; and 2. organizing street vendors to claim Chinatown's streets for working people in the community.

CJP began the Chinatown Community Youth Program in the Fall of 1999. To raise public awareness on gentrification, the youth conducted surveys at employment agencies and parks, then the youth organized a press conference to release a report on the impact of gentrification on Chinatown's low-income residents. The key contribution that CJP hopes to make in the broader anti-gentrification movement is to emphasize the racism inherent to gentrification.

As their first organizing project, the youth collected surveys from tenants who live in buildings owned by a landlord who is notorious for

buying property in gentrifying neighborhoods, renovating, displacing low-income tenants of color, then renting to wealthy white tenants for double or triple the rent. Surveys in his buildings reveal that, whereas white tenants live in newly renovated buildings with fresh paint and well-lit hallways (paying as much as \$2800 a month in rent), just across the street, in buildings owned by the same landlord, low-income Chinese and Latino immigrant families face broken mailboxes, exposed wiring, holes in the staircase, and daily harassment and threats of eviction from the landlord's law firms. On the last day of the Summer program, the youth brought out a dozen tenants for a first tenants association meeting, where they presented the results of the surveys and facilitated a discussion on the need to unite. As James Baldwin once said, "urban renewal is negro removal." So too, today's "return" of the expanding white professional class to the city has systematically removed working-class tenants of color through a combination of threats, harassment, buy-outs, and by refusing to rehabilitate units with immigrant tenants.

Chinatown's street vendors continue to resist displacement and tight

for their right to remain on public sidewalks. In December 1999, Mayor Giuliani's Street Vendor Review Panel voted to close more New York City streets to curtail vending. In response, CJP organized a city-wide vendors meeting, followed by a demonstration at City Hall to publicize vendors' opposition to the restrictions. Before the restrictions went into effect, CJP negotiated with the police for alternative spots for the Chinatown vendors facing displacement.

As Chinatown, with its proximity to SoHo and the Financial District, becomes gentrified, local merchants have also come under fire. In March 2000, officers from the NYPD, Consumer Affairs, Department of Health, Buildings Department, Environment Control Board, and the Department of Sanitation conducted a multi-agency sting operation on Mott Street. In two days, they issued over 200 summonses to store-owners for displays of fish and other merchandise that extend into the sidewalk and do not conform to the cultural order required for buildings in the "Special Little Italy District". In response, CAAAV joined members of the Chinatown Vendors Association, as well as Mott Street merchants, to pack a local Community Board hearing and protest the police action. Meanwhile, Giuliani announced that all street vendors and fish merchants should be driven out of Chinatown and moved to an indoor market on the edge of Chinatown. Angered by his comments, vendors and merchants from Mott Street disrupted the Mayor's Town Hall Meeting the following week, where six were arrested for criticizing his policies.

## ▶ ANTI-POLICE BRUTALITY TASK FORCE



APRIL 17, 2000 IN THE WAKE OF THE DIALLO VERDICT, THE ANTI-POLICE BRUTALITY TASK FORCE OF CAAAV ORGANIZED AN ASIAN STUDENT SPEAK OUT ON POLICE BRUTALITY AT WINTER COLLEGE.

## CHINATOWN YOUTH & RESIDENTS JOIN HARLEM MARCH vs GENTRIFICATION

On Saturday, October 20th, young adults and residents of Chinatown joined hundreds of others, including advocates, union leaders, and community activists in Harlem to protest gentrification which is characterized by a destroying communities of homes and jobs, loss of wide unimpeded sidewalks, and loss of low cost housing in New York City.

The city-wide demonstration was called by the Citywide Tenants Coalition, which demands affordable housing for the poor, and support for local businesses in gentrifying neighborhoods. CAAAV organized a contingent from Chinatown. Protesters gathered in Mount Morris Park at 124th Street and 11th Avenue and marched across 109th Street, the heart of Harlem.

In a speech addressed to the demonstrators, Sun Liza, a graduate of Seaman Park High School and member of CAAAV, said, "In Chinatown, many things are changing because of gentrification. Home and home gardens are being pulled out. And internet companies are moving in. All the street vendors are being kicked out. And the police keep giving unfair tickets to local businesses to shut them down. The new landlords try to force tenants who have been living in Chinatown for many years. As a result, low income immigrants who live in

Chinatown lose their work opportunities and living skills.

Young Yong, a Chinatown resident, was also struck at the demonstration. He described his fight against the landlord who is trying to displace him. He spoke and Latin immigrants are working to provide a safe working housing in the vicinity. "The landlord wants us out, but it's our home. We are beginning to fight back. We will never leave. We introduced to a cheering crowd, joined by his neighbors who also attended the march. Mr. Yong urged only minority people of color to fight for decent and affordable housing for all poor people.

CAAAV organizers explained that the loss of affordable housing, jobs, and local businesses, such as Chinatown, is part of a city-wide pattern of gentrification, destroying communities of color, especially women. During the march, protesters stopped at 125th Street to protest Harlem USA, a multi-complex shopping center, recently built with \$1.6 billion in government loans and subsidies from the Dept. of Metropolitan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ). Inside this complex, the regulators of the UMEZ are being explained. Helma, policy of the Harlem Tenants Council, "Why should our tax dollars subsidize these stores, while small businesses are being driven out of Harlem with

no subsidies than the UMEZ? The UMEZ guarantee that Harlem USA will create jobs for Harlem residents, but critics emphasize point out that they are not union jobs that pay minimum wage with no benefits according to the model standards. Harlem residents have spoken in large numbers that \$100,000 can afford \$70 for a monthly house started by the park. Once again, Harlem USA.

Helma, policy of the Harlem Tenants Council and the Citywide Tenants Coalition says, "The Harlem Administration has been moving in 125th Street to the ground and other activities to high corporations, increasing the value of New Jersey. This is not giving time for workers poor are being forced out of their homes throughout the city, many are displaced up living arrangements, shelter or into the street.

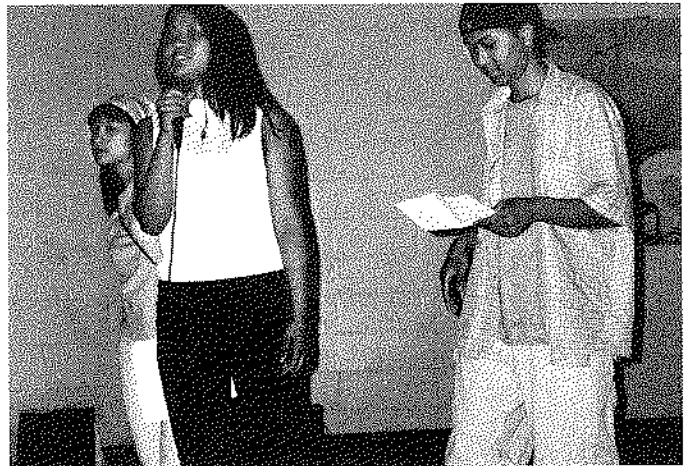
In a state of support union leaders, policy of the Dept. of Community Work and Affordable Housing in New York City, Black, Latino, and Asian residents have testimony about atrocious and evicting conditions waged by gentrifying landlords. The Citywide Tenants Coalition says it hopes today's demonstration will be a catalyst for a wide coalition building to demand the city-wide level of gentrification.

## ▶ YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

Building on its work in welfare organizing (see feature, page 8), the summer of 2000 was a time to mobilize the community towards action. Stepping up its door-to-door organizing, youth organizers built their Welfare union membership to 88 families. They also wrote a report titled "Eating Welfare: Asian Immigrants and Welfare Deform in NYC." Finally, they began filming and producing a video documentary—also titled "Eating Welfare"—about Southeast Asians, welfare, and poverty in the Bronx. To get a copy of the report and video, contact Eric Tang, etang@caaav.org.

The biggest accomplishment in Summer 2000 was an action on August 23 which ended in the shut-down of a major welfare center in the North Bronx. Following a press conference where they released their report, the youth organizers marched with over 80 community members and allied organizations to the Fordham welfare center, the center that serves many Asians. The youth then led a take-over of the administrative wing of the center. They shut down business, demanding that the director of the center come out of her office and meet with representatives. After a near two-hour stand off, which included the youth organizers standing firm in the face of police, the director agreed to a meeting. As one youth organizer put it, "we had control from beginning to end." The next steps in the campaign include con-

tinued monitoring at local centers to ensure that civil rights abuses do not continue. In the long run, YLP will also work in coalition with local and national coalitions like Grassroots Organizing for Welfare Leadership (GROWL) to end workfare in exchange for a "real jobs" program now being considered by City Hall; and to ensure that welfare benefits are continued in 2002. ■■■■■



**[BELOW]** ON AUGUST 23, 2000 YLP YOUTH ORGANIZERS AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS TAKE OVER THE FORDHAM WELFARE CENTER IN THE BRONX. THEY DEMAND AN END TO CIVIL RIGHTS ABUSES AND THE RESTORATION OF BENEFITS.





[ABOVE AND BOTTOM RIGHT] JUNE 6. WWP MARCHES AT THE PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE DOWN FIFTH AVENUE

## ▶ WOMEN WORKER'S PROJECT

Women Workers Project (also known as Kalayaan at Pagkakaisa ng mga Manggagawang Pilipina) started the year 2000 with a vision for industry-wide transformation, to provide domestic workers New York City-wide with a sense of unity and community, and to put employers and labor regulators on notice: domestic workers are organized and ready for action.

Led by predominantly Filipina domestic workers, WWP began researching the possibility of initiating a city-wide campaign for a standard contract for all domestic workers. The industry continues to grow as a result of the wealth accumulated in New York City in the recent economic boom, yet conditions are increasingly informal and harsh (see Feature, page 4). The contract provides a standard format for workers to negotiate conditions with their employers, and links workers together as a workforce. It also provides a model for workers entering the industry who often endure the harshest conditions.

After drafting a model contract, WWP members began concentrated outreach to workers

from all communities, particularly the Caribbean community, which predominates the industry in most areas of the City. Over two thousand contracts have been distributed to workers for feedback, and since Spring 2000, WWP has hosted numerous multi-racial meetings and discussions about the contract. A multi-racial working group of immigrant domestic workers, including many WWP members is forming to provide the leadership for this campaign for an industry-wide standard.

In order to create more visibility, support and respect for immigrant domestic labor both in the Asian community and society at large, WWP recognized the urgent need for documentation of the work, the concerns, the conditions, and experiences. For a clearer picture of the conditions facing workers in all segments of the industry, WWP members are conducting an unprecedented survey of domestic workers' working conditions for a report to be released by 2001 in conjunction with the campaign for a standard contract.

Through the campaign, WWP has diversified its Asian membership to include workers



from Tibet, Nepal and Malaysia. In addition to the standard contract, WWP members attend general meetings, work on Justice Clinic (peer advocacy) cases of employer abuse, legalization for undocumented immigrants and other immigration related issues, and participate in various organizers' trainings. ■■■■

# STRUGGLES FOR JUSTICE



FEB 26, 2000. PEOPLE'S JUSTICE 2000 (A COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION NETWORK OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS LED BY NEW YORK CITY COALITION AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY) ORGANIZED A MASS ACTION WHERE THOUSANDS OF NEW YORKERS EXPRESSED THEIR OUTRAGE AT THE ACQUITTAL OF NYPD OFFICERS ROSS, SANDRA, MURPHY, HOMELON IN THE AMADOU DIALLO SHOOTER TRIAL. PROTESTS LASTED OVER NINE HOURS RUNNING DOWN FIFTH AVENUE AND SPREADING OUT ALL OVER THE DOWNTOWN AREA. MORE THAN 20 PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED FOR ACTS OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE.

## THE DAY AFTER THE VERDICT BY ISHLE PARK

I rode the 6 train down past Diallo's old stop,  
past Westchester, Soundview, Third Avenue,  
125th, to 42nd st., brimming with worker ant activists,  
police in riot gear, lopped with shiny round helmets  
like the Lego toy cops, glass shields cloaking  
pasty, bored expressions.

Under a sea of resonant shouts, black waltels raised like dark waves looming,  
I wonder about what brought us here, young college revolutionaries,  
people from NMASS, Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence,  
part-time program assistants and poets like me.

It's easy to get cynical, in a well mannered mob  
sit back smugly, wondering, why is that too David here? why am I really,  
a small Korean girl from Queens..but I remember this:  
a hush, those long, slurred seconds

in front of the TV, Kaitly Tong on court steps  
stating not guilty, close-ups of cops' crying, relieved faces,  
votive candles melting in front of a crumbled building  
how its so easy, too easy  
to kill a man at the threshold of his apartment  
(and I repeat apartment because if he lived in a two story house  
on a free-lined street in Queens this would be a different story)

to leave his body bullet-ridden with NYPD insecurities  
how easy it is for DT's in their 3-antennaed maroon Chevy

to arrest my brother, suspected of being a Chinese gangster,  
draped on peeling green benches of Broadway park  
This is how it starts, one small look, a shove, raised list, tommy stick

Diallo was not killed by one man alone  
the cause of his death supported by a silent legion of New Yorkers  
scared of loud train rides, ominous black grattili, precise  
bullets and glinting knives they believe are searching out their skin  
Who is seeking whose skin?  
Who is hunting whose skin?

I chew the names of the dead in my mouth like unholy communion:  
\_Amadou Diallo Malcolm Ferguson Patrick Dorismond Tysheen  
Bourne Andre Fields Yong Xin Huang Anthony Baez..

It is almost as if we are being tested:  
How many slain strangers can we afford to love?  
With each murder they try to numb us to the point where we don't care anymore,  
where we can't afford it, but that is their tragic mistake:  
cuz when you already have nothing, it's easy to give all you've got

And if we, imperfect, scared, prone to apathy or inaction  
can make this one commitment to protest police brutality,  
a thousand pallbearers without coffins gathered here at the streets round City Hall,  
the camera will capture our bodies gathered here as festimony to this love,  
thick, dark, welling like a dying man's blood.



# APRIL 16 DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE IMF AND WORLD BANK

Third World Within (TWW) is a NYC-based multi-racial, people of color-led mobilization which joined in the April 16th protests at the IMF and World Bank annual meetings in Washington D.C. Earlier, in November 1999, protesters shut down the WTO meetings in Seattle to expose the impact of globalization. The Seattle action's sheer numbers and creative tactics gave rise to significant enthusiasm on the part of many activists. However, many activists and organizers of color based in the U.S. were critical of the lack of people of color leadership and participation.

TWW mobilized two buses of activists and organizers who confront diverse issues impacting poor and working-class people of color within the U.S. and globally. When we arrived, it was

not surprising that we found ourselves in a sea of white. Marching behind our long, vertical banners which read: "Third World Within, Stop the World Bank, IMF Death Trap," Black and Latino youth from the South Bronx, Vietnamese and Cambodian youth from the Northwest Bronx, Bangladeshi and Filipina migrant workers, and other organizers of color, drew a sharp contrast with what seemed more like an outdoor fair than a militant protest. Immediately uncomfortable in the context of the organized rally, TWW led a spontaneous march through the streets of Washington D.C., shouting the chants of the struggles of our communities, "Anti-Asian, Latino, Black, IMF-World Bank: Watch Your Back!"

Those members of the TWW contingent who

were participating in a demonstration for the first time felt empowered by the fact that they were marching with other people of color. For several of them, their very presence in the U.S. was a result of the devastating impact of World Bank and IMF policies in their home countries. Making sure that it was not just a token in the "new protest movement," TWW had a precise statement to deliver: the struggle between those in the Third World and those who subsist in the Third World within the U.S. are fundamentally linked.

**NOTE: THIS ACTIVITY WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF APPLIED RESEARCH CENTER, FUNDING EXCHANGE, NORTH STAR FUND, AND THE SOLIDAGO FOUNDATION.**



THIRD WORLD WITHIN, A MOBILIZATION OF PEOPLE OF COLOR ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVISTS AGAINST GLOBALIZATION, JOINED THE PROTESTS IN WASHINGTON D.C. AGAINST THE WORLD BANK AND IMF.

## THIRD WORLD WITHIN STATEMENT:

As communities of color continue to organize for justice in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and on the streets of New York City, they are constantly reminded of the global forces which contribute to their local situations. For instance, the Asian woman who labors in a Brooklyn sweatshop, turning out hundreds of Calvin Klein shirts, is told to work faster because the "demand" from the Hong Kong sweatshop, where the exact same shirt is being produced by another Asian woman, is delayed. Or take the African American youth from northern Manhattan, whose only choice of employment is the Old Navy Department Store on 125th Street. Here, she labors for minimum wage and no benefits, complaints of Old Navy's multinational shareholders. Her labor pains are managed by the very same global corporate powers that profit from the super-exploitation of peoples in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Indeed, Harlem, El Barrio, and Chinatown can be thought of as Free Trade Zones in their own right.

Similarly, those in the United States who do not fit within the new economic agenda are quickly led into the Bush Industrial Complex. There are countless connections that we can and must draw between people of color in the United States and the abuses carried out by global economic institutions and multinationals, workers and create a new global violence against the people of the Third World. The relationship of people of color in Third World peoples within the United States - both men and women - is the new wave of protest against the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank.

[SIGNED:] Andolan / Asians for Mumia / Audre Lorde Project / Black Radical Congress-United NY / CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities / Center for Immigrant Families / David Wong Support Committee / Desis Rising Up and Moving / Malcolm X Grassroots Movement / National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights / Nodotdol for Korean Community Development / South Asians Against Police Brutality and Racism / Youth Force

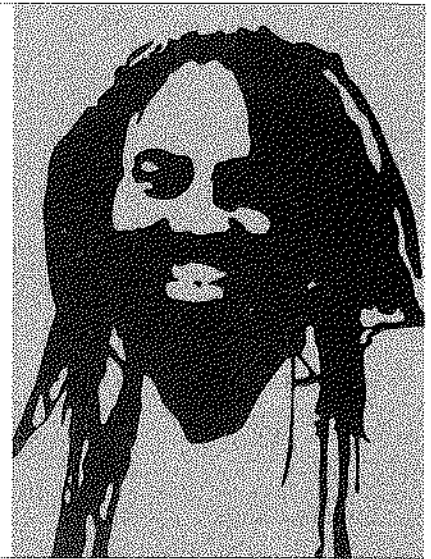
## ASIANS FOR MUMIA/JERICHO By Chaiti Sen

Asians for Mumia/Jericho is a group that specifically tries to gather support for Mumia among diverse sections of the Asian Pacific Islander community. In Mumia's case, we see elements of all other political struggles of the API community—racism and police brutality, a reactionary media, and violations of civil "rights." We see Mumia's case as an attempt to silence his voice, a voice that has continually exposed injustice and government corruption.

Soon, a federal court will begin a hearing to decide whether to give Mumia a new trial or to let the old trial stand. This is the last chance for Mumia's lawyers to present new evidence. The urgency is that this is really a life and death situation that has ramifications for the

whole political climate of the United States in the years to come. Asians for Mumia will be hitting the streets of Philadelphia the first day of that federal hearing. As soon as we know the exact date, we could have less than a week to mobilize, yet our voices are needed to send a strong message to the courts, the police, the city government, and the people of Philadelphia: We will not let Mumia die. We will win, and ultimately, we will beat back these attacks on our communities.

For those who are not familiar with Mumia's case, check out [www.j4mumia.org](http://www.j4mumia.org). For more info about Asians for Mumia, e-mail [asiansformumia@excite.com](mailto:asiansformumia@excite.com).



## ANDOLAN ORGANIZING SOUTH ASIAN WORKERS



## THE CAMPAIGN FOR UNCONDITIONAL AMNESTY

Brother Joel Magellan Reyes, SJ

Current immigration law denies basic human rights to undocumented immigrants and maintains a constant violent threat of deportation or imprisonment. The U.S. purposely keeps immigrants undocumented, saving the expense of services—such as healthcare, education, housing, and recreation—to which all workers should be entitled.

The National Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty aims to organize in order to demand that the U.S. respect the rights of workers of all races, regardless of immigration status. The coalition has organized numerous mass demonstrations in Washington, D.C. and cities nationwide. The struggle for an unconditional general amnesty is a struggle for our right to be legal residents and to receive all of the benefits of a worker who is also a U.S. citizen. The goal is to change U.S. immigration laws which destroys the life of many immigrants.

MAY 14, 2000 ANDOLAN ORGANIZING SOUTH ASIAN WORKERS AND SUPPORTERS DEMONSTRATES IN FRONT OF A DOMESTIC EMPLOYER'S HOME IN QUEENS. ANDOLAN ORGANIZES SOUTH ASIANS WHO ARE EXPLOITED AND LOW-WAGE WORKERS IN NEW YORK CITY FOR RESPECT AND JUSTICE.





## VIEQUES

MAY 5, 2000 TIMES SQUARE DEMONSTRATION IN RESPONSE TO THE REMOVAL OF DEMONSTRATORS IN VIEQUES. PUERTO RICAN WHO HAVE BEEN DEMANDING AN END TO THE U.S. NAVY PRESENCE AND HEADQUARTERS ON THE ISLAND WHICH HAS RESULTED IN WIDESPREAD ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION, AND THE SENSELESS DEATH OF A RESIDENT OF THE ISLAND.





# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE



Years after having outgrown our office on Third Street in the Lower East Side, CAAAV plans to expand. This move is more than more office space. CAAAV plans to purchase an abandoned convent located in the Southeast Asian community of the Bronx as its permanent home. Gentrification and widespread displacement of poor and low-income people of color from their neighborhoods throughout New York City has forced CAAAV members to think hard about securing permanent space for the community and for future organizers, the generations to come. In finding the space, CAAAV found a unique opportunity to add a physical dimension to the institution-building in Asian immigrant communities it has been engaged in for nearly fifteen years. In addition, at a time when Asians in the U.S. and abroad are

seen as the economic miracle, the junior partner, and the model minority, CAAAV's work continues to expose and challenge the pervasive reality of poverty in Asian immigrant communities in the U.S. The new space provides a center of gravity in New York City for research, analysis, documentation and organizing around Asian poverty and broader justice struggles.

However, the purchase is a big financial risk for CAAAV. Without the contributions of our supporters, CAAAV will be faced with an enormous debt. Now is the time to support CAAAV with your donation to the purchase of a new home for Asian movement organizing.

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