



A LOOK AT THE NEIGHBORHOODS

"It's an economic freeze out. They're going to be moved out. Rents are going to be raised, and we'll get better people in there."

— a real estate speculator

"It's certainly not poor, working people like me who are responsible for this mess. It must be the businessmen and politicians."

— a homeowner

in. In Haight-Asbury we heard a lot about some of the long-range effects of code-enforcement programs like RAP and found lots of people had strong feelings about "commercialization" of the Haight Street business district. In Haight-Fillmore we were able to talk to people so as to find out just what speculation is and how the real estate speculators "get away with murder." Then in the Hayes Valley the SAFE "crime prevention" program is a source of controversy.

We talked to over 100 people in our neighborhoods to find out what was going on. Not only did we ask them what was happening but we also questioned people about what was causing the changes.

We also gathered information from areas in which we didn't live but have been facing similar problems. Even though we weren't able to cover these areas in as much depth, we included them in the study. We felt that the history of the people who live there, and the housing problems they face help shed more light on the general housing scene of San Francisco.

We want to thank the many people in every neighborhood, who provided the facts, the experiences and the hope for more community control in the future. Thanks are also due to the Regional Young Adults Project and funding agencies who recognized the importance of getting this paper out to people.

We encourage people to let us know what they think about this paper. We would also appreciate any more information about the housing situation in the city. And, of course, corrections and differences of opinion are greatly welcomed.

People can respond to the paper through this address:

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detail of Mural by Haight-Asbury Murálistis

It seems that wherever you go people are talking about the drastic changes that are "coming down" on the neighborhoods. We started trying to find who and what was behind the steady increase of rents and property values; renovated buildings; for

sale signs; and exodus of black and other Third World people, especially families; out of the neighborhoods.

We were able to investigate certain districts in depth, because these are the neighborhoods we live

THE HAIGHT-ASHBURY

MERCHANTS OF THE HAIGHT

"Five years ago twenty-five stores were empty. But now businesses are opening daily. It's good business," stated the owner of Holcombe Jewelers, which has been located on Haight Street for over 45 years. In fact, for many years economic growth in the Haight Ashbury area was at a standstill. After the final passing of the Hippie era, the banks were unwilling to provide loans for such an "unsafe" area and many of the storefronts remained boarded shut. The exceptions were a few scattered grocery and liquor stores, a handful of family-run restaurants, the jeweler, two hardware stores, some antique dealers, dry cleaners and the bowling alley.

But this year, a Haight Street Annual Directory published by the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association lists over 115 businesses, about 50 of which have opened only in the last few years, including boutiques, restaurants and a disco bar. A few of the listings are of enterprises that could be classed as big business, or part of larger chain operations owned by corporations from outside the neighborhood, including JAX Records (one of four in Northern California), Fat Fong's West (whose owner has at least three other restaurants and a restaurant supply house), and the United California Bank. The area also boasts one large supermarket. But even Cala Foods is a bush-league compared to McDonald's.

And no other business has affected the area as much as the local McDonald's, with its key location where Haight meets Golden Gate Park. Big Mac is the eighth largest money making retail business in America. As a multi-national corporation it has now opened 3,800 fast food stores worldwide. As one executive stated, "We want to see those Golden Arches all over. That would make the people in the States very happy." But despite its phenomenal profits around the world, it has not been known to share the wealth here at home. Its Stanyan Street outlet alone, we heard, was their 13th largest profit-taker in the Western Hemisphere, but the corporation still tries to get as cheap labor as possible in San Francisco.

In fact, as soon as McDonald's popped up here, neighborhood people attacked it over such issues as non-union labor, commercialized "junk food", and excess litter problems. On opening day "Ronald" himself was hanged in effigy, and the word "poison" was found painted across the golden arches. McDonald's concession to environmentalists was a landscaped garden of real rather than plastic plants, and to appease the neighborhood they promised to hire local residents, including youth from the Paltenghi Youth Center. A worker at the Center told us, "We've been trying to find jobs for teenagers, especially for the summer. McDonald's said they would use fifty, hired a few, then weasled out."

To try and get the inside story on McDonald's in the Haight, we talked to a 22 year old black woman, Gayle Rodgers, who did get a job there. "I got the job by telling the manager I could beat him to a duel. After one week I would be able to flip burgers faster than he could. And I did, many times. I started out manufacturing quarter-pounders. That paid \$2.20 or \$2.10 an hour, whatever the minimum wage was then. By the time I was promoted to morning manager I was working 60 hours a week and making \$155 a week. But I needed the job, so I worked there a year and three months.

"It was mostly minorities working there, between the ages of 16 and 25, and recently mostly college students.

"Then there was an agreement between the police and McDonald's, as well as other Haight merchants, to try to get rid of certain elements on that end of the street. When the store first opened they'd come and haul people away for panhandling or loitering laws. Park Police Station has a special patrol that has Haight Street for a beat. I'd see them when they came in for breakfast.

"It serves the whole park. McDonald's just loves those tour buses when they pull in, lots of money. It's the start of big business coming to the Haight. Just the opposite of what the Haight used to mean."

Many of the new, smaller merchants hoped that McDonald's would be like a shot of adrenalin to the business climate in the Haight. That may be the reason the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association fought for years to help McDonald's get its permit to operate. Kent Story, a member of the Association and owner of the ETC, ETC. gift shop, talked to us about the goals of the group. Among the principal ones, he said, were getting the dog mess off the sidewalks and sweeping the "riffraff" off the streets.

The Improvement Association helped to clarify what its hopes were in a paper it presented to the Mayor in 1970. Their statement begins: "Overall plan for restoring the Haight Ashbury—improve buildings and other conditions to the point where responsible people can easily be attracted to Haight-Ashbury and, once here, will be happy to remain." They would like to see the Haight "upgraded", which may involve removal of a large section of the existing population and a change in the diverse racial mix of the Haight, but would pro-

vide, in their words, a "better economic mix" with "increased purchasing power". They urge members who own houses to "select the renter with the highest family income" because they feel "the poor need middle class success models with which to identify and imitate."

One Haight Ashbury community activist thinks otherwise: "Analysis of voting patterns reveals the Haight to be one of the City's most progressive neighborhoods. By greater than two-to-one margins, people here voted to repeal the death penalty, legalize marijuana, support street artists and provide childcare. Proposition T, district election of supervisors, received more votes here than anywhere else in the City. This shows the views and concerns of the Haight's progressive residents.

"Not so the Improvement Association. They opposed acquisition of the Straight Theater as a community cultural center. They tried to block permits for board and care homes in the neighborhood, which care for 'dependent people', complaining that they didn't think it was good to see people on the street with 'odd mannerisms'—the handicapped or mentally disabled. They complained that the Haight Ashbury Center for Alcohol Problems had too large a sign and was taking up valuable commercial space, and object to the Switchboard's presence on Haight Street. Several of its members

SOME RESIDENTS' OPINIONS:

ODIS COOK, lay leader at Hamilton Methodist Church

I've lived in this general area since 1943 when the Hunter's Point Naval Shipyards were big. I was drafted into the Navy. In 1943 there weren't hardly any blacks in San Francisco. When you saw a black face you were glad to see him. I lived in a building with four other men. We paid four-fifty each. Not \$450, \$4.50 a week. I worked my way up. Now I don't raise my rents any more than I have to. I'm a landlord and I sympathize with other landlords. Your costs and bills are going up. But the ones I don't sympathize with are the speculators. Because of them, the poor people are on the go.

The only thing that can stem this speculation is if private owners can borrow the money they need to fix their places up and keep their own property. I want to hold on—and not turn it over to the speculators.

MRS. MAUCISO, long time Waller Street resident

I've been in this neighborhood for 25 years. Yes, we were the first Filipinos to move into the area and people just looked at me from head to foot—they didn't know what we were. At the church even the Monseignor didn't know. Now we have a Filipino club right here in the neighborhood. And I know all my neighbors. I can tell when someone new moves in because it is a new face. I raised my children here after the war then I brought them back from the Philippines in 1952, and now my daughter has moved back and raises her own children here.

Our problem in the neighborhood is all the dogs you see on the street. In other parts of town it is cleaned up, because there are rich people there. But here people have to use their common sense instead.

IRMA, her daughter

We moved here when I was six. There's been a lot of changes. It was considered lower middle-class, whatever that means. You moved your way up and moved out to the Sunset. My mother rented to the first black to move onto the block over 15 years ago. We got a little flak from the neighbors, but she didn't even think about it. "That's my business. Nobody's going to tell me who to rent to."

I like to know my neighbors. Like the two guys next door: I think they're gay and that's fine. I want my kids exposed to that, too. It would sadden me if they became gay, because society wouldn't accept them, but maybe it will change. It's still a family neighborhood, too. There's a real good mixture, and I would hope the diversity of the area would continue. This is why we came back from New Hampshire. We want our children to know what it is to be Filipino.

GARAY, who lives in an upstairs flat.

I liked the neighborhood because the rents were low and it was culturally interesting. It's also the most racially mixed neighborhood I've seen in the City. But rising rents are a big problem for everyone. My roommate and I can still afford the rent, but the people downstairs who have two kids, pay the same amount that we do and have one less room. The main improvement I'd like to see is rent control. Or maybe abolishment of private property.

have bought commercial real estate on Haight Street. Their class interest is self-evident and self-serving, but fortunately doesn't represent the prevailing view in the neighborhood."

We stopped in at HACAP, the Center of Alcohol Problems, and talked to Ron Lynskey and Willa Jefferson-Stokes, who confirmed what we had heard. "Some of the merchants would like to see us gone, they've stated so several times. They think it draws the wrong kind of people. But we see the whole range of alcohol problems. From skid row types who need detoxification of a halfway house to the young women, young men, working people, very educated people. We get people from out in the Avenues, from Ashbury Heights, from the Western Addition. Our clientele is 40% women and also 65% White and 29% Black. The program grew out of the needs of the neighborhood."

One board and care facility for dependent residents, located on Haight Street, may be forced to vacate. Not for lack of a license, but due to the changing economic climate and fast-rising value of commercial property on the street. We visited this facility managed by a black woman, Mrs. Crawford. It was a home-like environment which allows the handicapped to participate in community life while still receiving the attention they need. Living proof that they don't have to be "put away". We were told that the building, with its 28 rooms and large storefront beneath was up for sale, reputedly for a half-million dollars. Rachel Armstrong, one of the day shift workers, told us, "There are 24 people who live here plus the staff. Some of our people can

SANDY DRAPER, who with her husband and two children live in the downstairs flat.

It's a block where people get to know each other. Like the old woman who lives next door. She doesn't go out much, but she calls me when she needs help. She knows she can. And I like the fact that Derek has kids on the block to play with.

We had a rent increase last year. But at least we have two salaries coming in now. That makes a big difference. We used to have lots of bills. We still have a lot of bills but now we can pay them on time. But we still aren't able to save because it all goes for food and rent and bills when you have kids. It's a splurge to want to go see a musical, like 'Raisin'.

MICHAEL, an ex-resident of Alamo Square [FACE area]

The place I lived in was a four story victorian with three separate flats. For twenty years it had been run as a boarding house by a black woman who was already elderly at the time. I moved in [with a group of gay men] in 1973. When the building was purchased by the present owner, Douglas Corbin, a white lawyer living in Martinez, her tenants were forced to move out of two of the flats, which were then renovated and re-rented at double the previous rate. When she died in 1975, the rest of her black boarders were required to move out, until the entire building was occupied by whites, and then he raised our rent again.

OLYMPIA JUST, a gay woman and art student at City College

They are trying to move low-income people out of the neighborhood, so it can become totally middle and upper-middle class. I feel the Haight definitely needed something, but the "bourgie" clothing and knick-knack stores are not my idea of what's needed. The people of a community should make the community, not some guy from the Bank of America who has not idea what the people of the Haight need or want.

KEVIN, one of 5 single people living commune-style on Waller Street

I came here because I was going to school and it's very centrally located for public transportation. I chose the Haight because it's one of the few places that has street life. Since I came, I've gotten into the Haight Switchboard as a volunteer. I'll continue, but we have to move because the rent is going up from \$325 to \$400. What they're doing is "boutiquing" Haight Street, and they want to get rid of hippies, which is what I consider myself.

WILLA JEFFERSON-STOKES, HACAP director

I don't see many families buying property. A lot of single people or couples without children, gay and straight, have the time and energy to buy and fix up old houses. A family has a lot more to consider. You're talking about maybe one person who is working and supporting three or four. With \$450 rent how far can they go? We'd much rather live in our own place. But look, there was a single-unit family dwelling around the corner that sold for \$185,000. What kind of people can afford that? I question if this is a move to get all the poor people out of San Francisco—it's so sky high.

move to the owner's place in Hayward, but I don't know where the rest of them will go. I'm not sure where I'll find work, either."

In the storefront below is Big Save Market #2, a Chinese grocery owned and operated by the Wong family for the past 15 years. If the building is sold they will end the business. Mr. Wong is supportive of his children's desire to go to college and do other things, and admitted that a small grocery is "a hard way to earn a living—seven days a week." His son pointed out that they could see the neighborhood changing: "Now it's more and more single people, and fewer families. It's professionals with a lot of money." And he added about the board and care home upstairs: "They don't have a lease but they've been here as long as we have. Very nice people and good tenants."

Other family owned businesses that have recently closed their doors after many years on the street were the Haight Bootery and Andy's Bakery, known affectionately in the neighborhood as the "Poroshki Palace". It was run by a Russian family until it lost its lease and closed several months back.

Several other businesses a block away have also had lease problems recently. They are three minority-owned business on the block that has recently been painted and renamed Haight Victoria Corner: Delaney's Barbershop, Benedetti's Liquors and Stanze Peterson Dance Company, and two of these are no longer in the building. The owner, William Sepatis of Sausalito, has plans to convert most of the block into a stylish shopping mall. In line with the trend of converting the street to more highly commercial enterprises, Mr. Sepatis raised the rent on Peterson's performing arts studio, and forced him out of the building.

We talked to the modern and African dance instructor in his new location on Haight near Fillmore, and he recalled: "Sepatis came by one day with his mother and some other people. He was showing them the place with its great feature, the hardwood dance floor we had installed. 'Oh yes, the floor. I put this in for the dancers, you know.' That was the first day I heard anything about my leaving. Then he raised my rent from \$225 to \$850, plus he asked for another deposit of \$1,300 and he wanted me to pay half of his taxes. Ten days before the old lease expired he gave us 15 days to get out." When Sepatis next came by he found the dance company carefully prying up the expensive hardwood floor and carrying it in pieces to a truck. "I reminded him that I had put in the floor and he should check out the written agreements with the old owner. Up until the time we took it and the door with us, he thought it was his."

Mr. Eng, of Benedetti's, another victim of rent increases in Sepatis' complex, told us: "Our lease ran out. Then they wanted to triple our rent, but still without a new lease. I think they just want to make a fast buck. We finally found another place across the street. It took a lot of money to fix the place up, but it's bigger and will be cheaper than what they want there. It's crazy. This isn't Union Street!"

Obviously most of the Haight's residents don't want to live or shop on Union Street, and couldn't afford to. Luckily, many of the smaller businesses are also run by local residents who have the interests of the community at heart. Like Ken, one of the owners of All You Knead, a new cafe, who told us he wants to make his place an enjoyable place to work, "not charging exorbitant prices but making a living." He believes business can be run collectively and get involved in community concerns. But the "new economic climate" of Union Streetization, including the large outside interests moving in on Haight Street, are attempting to be attractive to more affluent potential newcomers. Low income people in the Haight and smaller local businesses and services begin to be alienated in the community that they have played a major part in building.

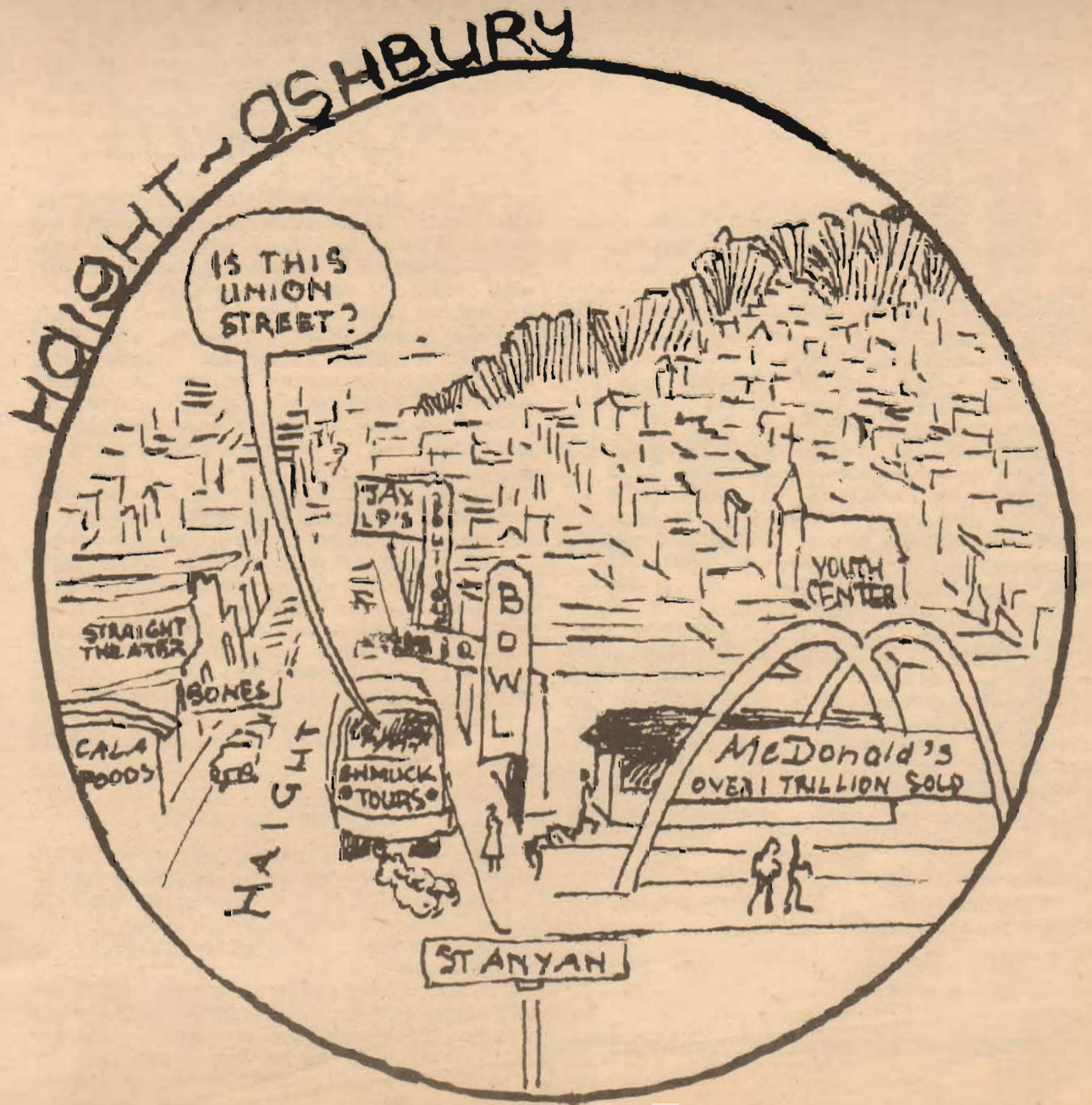
AND THE HOUSING PICTURE

Along with the recent "upgrading" of Haight Street there have also been very noticeable changes called "improvements" to the neighborhood's housing.

The '06 earthquake and fire drove homeless people to the tent camps of Golden Gate Park and then to find homes in the untouched Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. Local historian Jay Bail notes that "A neighborhood which had been settled in a fashionable, upper middle class gentility was now deluged" with a moderate income and largely European influx of people. After World War II, Black, Latin and Filipino residents moved to the Haight neighborhood, adding diversity to its solidly working class character. The Fifties and Sixties further added to the process of the Haight becoming a very mixed neighborhood, with many races and cultures, families and singles, gay and straight, hip and square, kids and older people all represented.

But recent trends in housing, especially the astronomical rents that everyone we met was concerned about, appear to have the effect of changing the unique and diverse character of the Haight. This dramatic increase in rent raises the question: Can the people in the Haight afford to pay more rent if that is what comes along with "improved housing"?

A 1971 housing survey of a typical section of the Haight (conducted by the Urban Life Institute of S.F.) pointed out that 87% of the people sampled at



that time were renters, while only 13% owned the buildings they lived in. The survey went on to state: "The most striking characteristic found is that the tenants pay between 45% and 48% of their income for rent. Any tenant paying more than 25% of her/his income for rent is thought, by housing experts, to be paying an excessive amount." It concluded that although the vast majority of tenants would like to see improvements in their buildings they could not manage any higher rents, since they were already paying more than they could afford.

The question of improvement of the housing stock came up first, and most notably, when the City government proposed to upgrade whole blocks of the Upper Ashbury at once. But this was only the most recent chapter in the history of redevelopment plans in the Haight. Almost nobody wants a repeat of what happened in the Western Addition, where entire neighborhoods were leveled to the ground. Nor did people like the "Urban Design Plan" unveiled by the Planning Department in 1970. This plan called for highrises in the Haight and along the Mission Street BART corridor. Many people felt this "development" was designed to displace poor and Third World people, and Haight residents joined together to fight it. By April 1972 this coalition effort was successful and highrise construction was prevented.

Yet downtown and real estate interests still felt the Haight with a more subtle form of "people removal"—mandatory code compliance. This type of program had already been used in Alamo Square, Duboce Triangle and Buena Vista Heights, resulting in extensive dislocations of poorer tenants, rising land values and increased speculation by private real estate interests. The city's new campaign, RAP (Rehabilitation Assistance Program) designated the Upper Haight as a target area (with a recommendation to extend it to the Lower Haight upon completion). This program requires that all buildings in a given area be brought up to the City's stringent housing code. Efforts to include effective rent control and relocation assistance were knocked out by the Board of Supervisors. Such a program presents real difficulties both to low-income property owners and tenants, and would cause massive rent increases when owners passed on the cost of expensive code compliance to the tenants.

Even before implemented, its effects are felt. To put it simply, rents zoom up. A young couple we talked to on upper Clayton Street put it this way: "The rents are going up incredibly. Last week there was a place available in this building but it got taken. I couldn't believe it. Our rent is \$350 for two bedrooms and that's high. But this one had been raised to \$395 and it's only one bedroom. I wanted to tell the woman how much we were paying, but..."

And Downey Street, one block over, is a good

example of a block with a large percentage of people who own their own homes. Although not as stylish as Clayton Street, it has a nice neighborhood feeling with kids playing on the street and neighbors that know each other. A young married couple told us, "We own our house. Half or two-thirds of the block do, White and Black. It's mostly single units. We're considered by these higher income neighboring streets like Clayton to be the 'ghetto' of the Upper Ashbury because it is mostly working-class families, not well-to-do. Residents here are split on whether they like the RAP program or not. Some look forward to the low-cost loans [6%]. But the more we hear about it, the less we like it."

Anna Darden, president of the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council had other comments about the program: "RAP was supposed to be for 'deteriorating areas' but that's not how it has been used. Why is RAP being put into areas that are already getting prettied up? There are big problems with it. First, the bureaucratic nature and administrative expenses which alone will cost \$9 million to city taxpayers, plus \$10-20 million worth of loans bought with city bonds from the Bank of America. But the biggest problem is tenant relocation. What we need instead would be a phased city-wide voluntary program that maintains the character of each specific neighborhood rather than disrupting it." We might add that the City government apparently likes the RAP program not because it provides better housing to residents, but because it will raise the tax base so that more taxes can be collected from the neighborhood.

The designation of the Upper Haight as a RAP area was a promise that it would become a "better" neighborhood. Although there is still a court suit trying to block implementation of the RAP program there, it has already had very concrete effects on surrounding areas, too. This could be called a "ripple effect" and involves independent real estate speculators taking advantage of the government-sponsored mandatory code enforcement program. Like vultures, they begin to descend on an area, swooping up as many cheap properties as they can. (For detailed explanation of how they operate, see Haight-Fillmore section).

FIRST THE FAMILIES AND MINORITIES...

Higher rents have set a trend in which low income families, in particular, are the first to be pushed out, in favor of single people. This preference is due mainly to economic reasons—by living in groups of two or more and pooling their income, even poor singles can pay more rent than the average family.

The effects of these changes are being recognized by many people in the Haight. A black apartment manager who was part of the movement for school integration and decent housing in the Haight many years ago, put it this way. "Rents are driving



This typical Victorian house probably sold for \$15,000 in the 1940's. From 1970 to the present, it could easily jump from thirty to ninety and even up to \$120,000. Rents and property taxes go up accordingly.

poor and minorities out of this district. Look around, how many Blacks do you see? You don't see hippies here anymore, either. You've got middle class white people moving in. Many people I know are moving as far as Oakland. I want to hold on and not turn it over to the speculators."

This trend was confirmed by Dee Thomas and Tom Anderson, who work at Paltenghih Youth Center, next to Hamilton Methodist Church. "The Center serves Haight Ashbury low income families. Our program is 95% black, and is losing kids. Many families are moving out and lots of kids that were getting help for drugs and social rehab trips are moving away. At first the black community moved to Hunter's Point, but now that's full. Next Oakland, which offers lower cost housing and a more open door community than the Haight Ashbury. San Francisco is rapidly becoming for professional types, those making at least \$15,000 and welfare and poorer people are being pushed out."

Property owners are also feeling the squeeze. We asked a woman who lives on Waller Street and teaches Sunday School at Gethsemene Pentecostal Church how things were going for homeowners: "Trying to own would be more like it. You never own anything in California, you just pay the notes to the bank. Property tax alone is over \$600 for this building. And the insurance, I don't know how much that's gone up. And not a week passes that I don't get a call or receive a letter that someone wants to buy my house. But where am I going to live? I can't afford \$300 for rent. I don't even talk to them."

... AND THEN THE SINGLES

However, as rents and values continue to increase still further, low and moderate income single people are finding that they may not be able to afford living in the neighborhood either.

Many are wondering what can be done, and some have been forced to move. Ron Lynskey told us the story on the place he had moved out of. "I was paying \$135 for a one-bedroom on Clayton. It was bought by people from out of state and the rent went up to \$200 before they made any improvements. I moved out because I couldn't afford more than I was paying. These people purchased it from a speculator, Jim Clausen, who bought it four or five years ago for \$40,000 and held onto it until it sold for \$175,000."

Yet some view this kind of transformation as both beneficial and inevitable. A landlord who nine

months ago bought a six-unit apartment building on Ashbury Street looked at it this way. "This is a capitalistic society and everybody lives off of somebody. My business is to buy a building, fix it up, hopefully get 'better' tenants, sell it, and live off the profit. In terms of getting people who can pay more rent into the area, I like to feel I'm helping the neighborhood. I could hardly feel otherwise if I want to maintain any self-respect."

"It's inevitable that the Haight will become mostly white," he continued. "There just don't seem to be that many black people who can afford the higher rents. At the same time you have more and more white people wanting to move back into the City after having fled to all-white environments in the suburbs. How do I reconcile all of this? Well, I don't try. I fix a building up and charge as much as the traffic will bear."

These changes have been meeting resistance from some tenants whose security is threatened. One large apartment building of mostly single and gay tenants on that street took advantage of a very direct option. The residents of 625 Ashbury organized a tenants union in 1975 when the owner of the 16-unit building, Jack Holly of Skyline Realty, began a process of renovation by trying to evict several tenants. On the advice of a local tenants action group, they decided to deal with their landlord from a position of relative strength by collectively withholding their rents. They stopped the evictions and won the victory of verbal promises from their landlord. Then early this year the owner reneged on the agreement in order to put the building on the market for a 300% profit. When the old leases ran out, they were given rent increases. The tenants responded to suing the landlord, and the threat was sufficient to get them all new one-year leases at their old rate of rent.

The experience of Victor, another gay man who was looking for an apartment in that area, was also interesting. "I went with another gay man to a realty company that mostly handles housing in the Haight. We found an apartment we really like on Waller Street near Clayton and were led to believe we could have it, but when we called back the agent told us that he had decided that he should rent it to an engineer. Then he told us he had just the place for us in the Western Addition on Fulton Street, which was OK, but not where I wanted to live. Every time we called back, he tried to talk us into taking that place." After hearing several such stories, it became obvious that real estate companies seem to feel it is in their interest to maintain an influx of higher income professional people into the Haight, and to encourage lower and moderate income whites to move into the Western Addition, Fillmore and Hayes Valley.

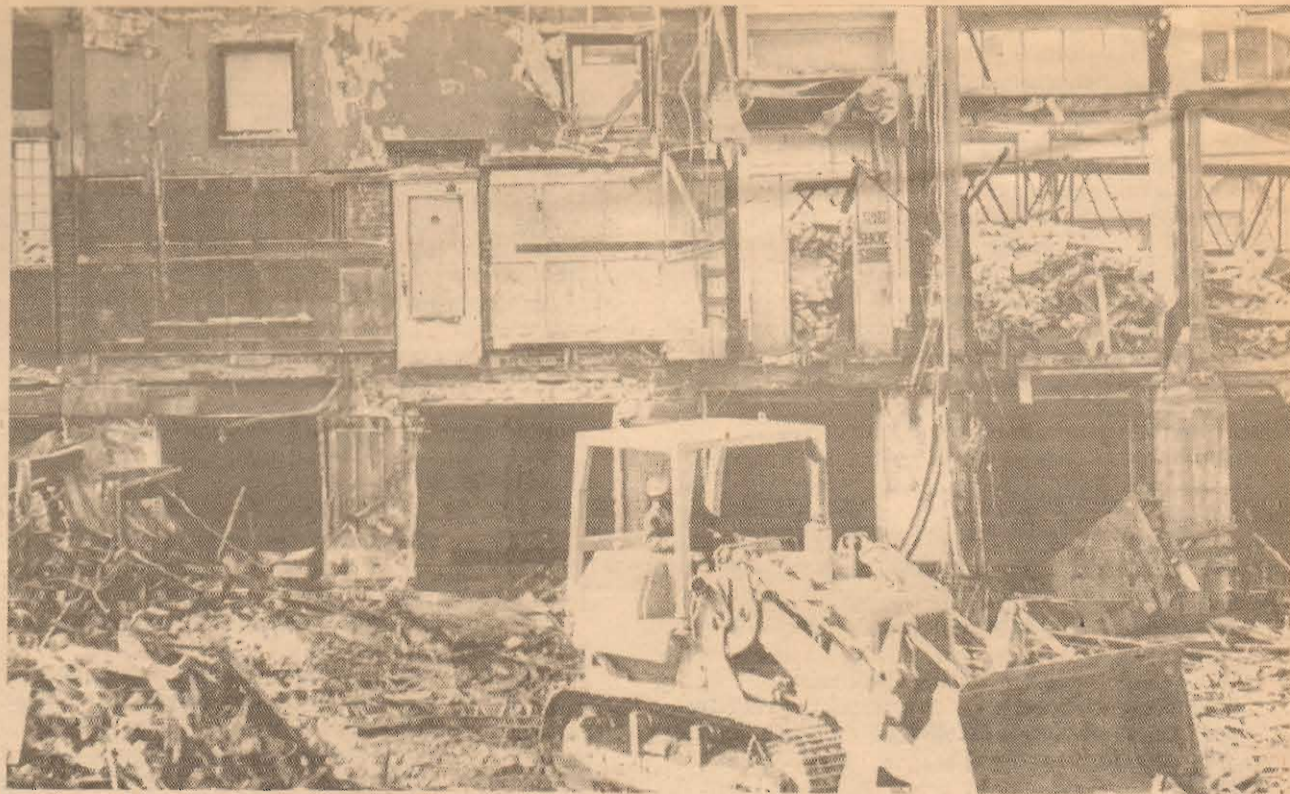
WESTERN ADDITION AND JAPANTOWN / NIHONMACHI

The Western Addition was originally planned as a middle class housing tract intended for speculation. Yet since it was one of the few areas spared by the 1906 earthquake and fire, there was a very active building period due to the devastation in surrounding areas. The emergency need for housing produced poorly arranged and small subdivided apartments.

Along with German, Jewish and Irish immigrants who settled in the Western Addition, it was here also that the Japanese developed their community.

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION

From the 1880's on, the Japanese were drawn into the United States because of a need for cheap labor. Many came from Hawaii where they had been exploited as workers in the sugar and pineapple fields. Japanese labor was used in migrant farm work, the fishing industries, the mines, and building the railroads. In the City itself, the Japanese were limited to working in low-paying jobs such as in restaurants, laundries, garment factories, or as domestics and gardeners.



The Japanese were also limited to living in certain areas not desired by whites. By the late 1930's the Western Addition was occupied by upwards of 10,000 Japanese. Nihonmachi (Japantown) was built around the Japanese Consulate, which offered some protection against racial and national abuse, and the Buddhist churches which helped to maintain cultural ties. Family-owned businesses, with small stores on the bottom level and residences on the top, dotted the area. These included small groceries, barber and shoe repair shops, restaurants, bars and pool halls which served the Japanese community.

The coming of World War II, however, had dramatic effects on the Japanese and their communities on the West Coast. With only three days notice, and having to sell many of their possessions for extremely low prices, they were coerced into concentration camps.

BLACKS ARRIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO

The war also brought striking changes in the racial makeup of San Francisco's labor force. The naval shipyards were crying for able bodied workers. Black men fought in the armed forces, but

often in segregated units. Thousands of others, often rural Southern blacks, were recruited for the first time for crucial work in war-related industry. Also at that time, women—white and black—joined "Rosie the Riveter" in the industrial labor pool. When the Southern blacks arrived in San Francisco they were housed in empty dwellings in the Fillmore District vacated by the Japanese, as well as in the old Navy barracks in Hunter's Point.

As the black community developed, the Fillmore came to symbolize the proud achievements of Black people in their fight against racism and economic exploitation. Up until the 60's it served as the City's black cultural hub as the community struggled to develop its own character, its soul. But with the end of the War came hard times, since the stoppage of wartime production led to massive layoffs of blacks as well as women workers.

Of course, by the end of the War, the U.S. military gained control of the Japanese Empire, thus expanding its "Pacific Rim" influence, a process which had been begun by Teddy Roosevelt around 1900 with U.S. takeovers of Hawaii and the Philippines. And with this control, American-based business interests could expand their markets for



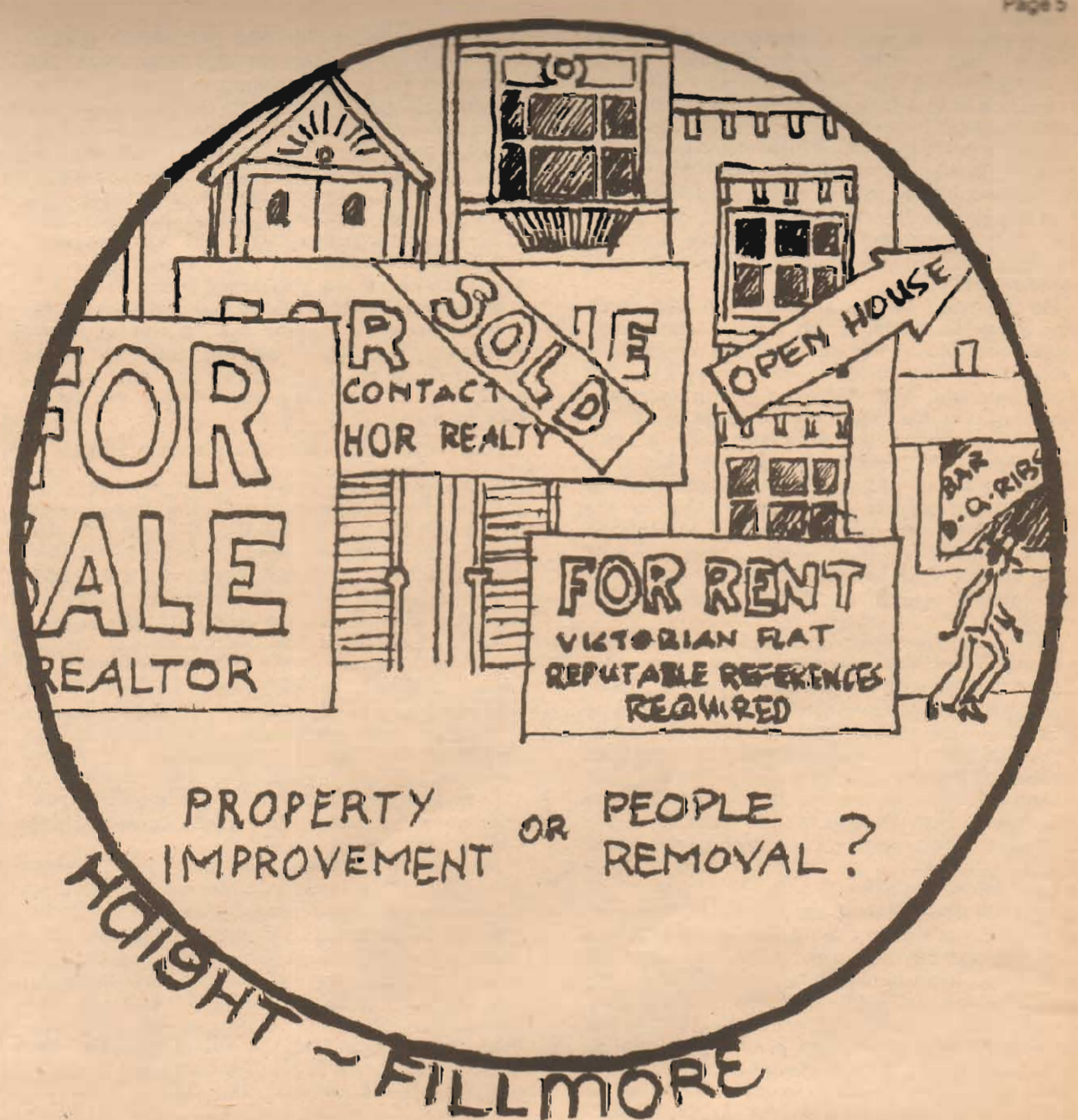
THE HAIGHT-FILLMORE

Down from the more fashionable Buena Vista Hill on the west and Alamo Square on the north lies the southernmost extension of the old Fillmore District. Usually known as the Haight-Fillmore, though some of the area's newer residents prefer to call it Mint Hill, the neighborhood covers about 30 square blocks. It contains many fine old Victorian buildings, making it especially attractive to those who relish this ornate architectural style. Residences are mingled with a variety of small businesses and churches. The main commercial zone along Haight Street is a varied scene of second hand shops and liquor stores, a few night clubs, soul food restaurants, studios for black artists, pool halls and other store-front businesses.

The Haight-Fillmore might be described as racially integrated. Though it is still a predominantly black community, many Asian people have lived there for some time and there is a rapidly growing white population. It is also a decidedly working class neighborhood. For years it has been an area of cheap rents and depressed land values. In fact, it has been one of the few neighborhoods in the City where housing has been available for low-income black families.

But anyone passing through the area today will immediately notice that a transformation is taking place. On the surface, what strikes the eye are the scaffolds and new paint jobs and the newly-planted ornamental trees. And on Haight Street many of the small businesses, including the well-known Hank's 500 Club, have been closed and boarded up. One side of the street is deserted while, on the other side, groups of people congregate outside of the few remaining establishments. The physical appearance of the buildings in the neighborhood is obviously being improved. However, not so obvious, especially to the outsider, are the underlying changes in economic and racial patterns which tend to be overshadowed by these cosmetic improvements. The numerous "For Sale" and "For Rent" signs indicate that lots of people are moving.

Everyone we interviewed in the Haight-Fillmore talked about two basic problems: displacement of black residents and sharp rent increases. "What I see a lot is young white people moving into places that black people have just moved out of," was how one four-year resident put it. Another called it "resident removal," and noted that the improve-



ments being made were not of any benefit to the people who used to live there. Rent increases of 50 to 100% are hitting families particularly hard, and black owners are also being tempted to sell their homes to take advantage of suddenly increased property values.

All of this was similar to what we found had been

happening in the Haight-Ashbury for the past 4 or 5 years. What was different was the speed, the extent and the intensity with which these changes have hit this area in recent months. Some of the factors that are causing these changes to occur are: bank financing policies; competition between whites, blacks and others for scarce housing; the return of young whites from the suburbs; the desire to own a Victorian house, and the migration of gay people to San Francisco. But the most critical factor we found was the rapid upsurge of real estate speculation.

It is really only a handful of speculators who are spearheading these changes. And some of their names will be familiar to anyone who has had to look for rental housing recently. Some of the names we heard were Paul Langley, David Finn, ex-officer of the Haight-Ashbury Improvement Association, Carl Lembi of Skyline Realty, David Held of Lampley Realty, Bill Keating, Don Lipper and Larkin McAlister.

HOW TO SPECULATE A WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Everyone knows that real estate agents can be instrumental in helping to promote a particular area for development. But just how do speculators operate? What are their plans and how are they able to pull them off? Why are these outsiders able to boost property values overnight, even though long-time residents have not? A little digging yielded some interesting answers. First, a housing shortage must exist. With a 1% - 4% vacancy rate (in many neighborhoods only 1% of all housing is up for rent at any given time), and because of its limited land, San Francisco certainly meets this requirement. Then the speculators look for areas in town where property values are low. It would do them no good to begin in an area like Pacific Heights where each building is already valued at \$1,000,000 since it is already too "priced," to use one of their phrases.

Once they have decided on a low income or rundown area, they begin buying buildings cheap. Then they make minor improvements, often giving the place a stylish paint job, and attempt to sell at a much higher price. But this won't work if it was only one stylish building on a block, so it is necessary for a number of units to be "appreciated" at the same time. The process is aimed at driving up the value of all surrounding properties. The speculators then take advantage of the trend they have begun: using their quickly growing capital to buy and sell properties rapidly, each time making a substantial profit. Often a house may be bought and sold several times in a few years before it reaches a maximum value.

In addition to receiving their commissions and using their own real estate broker licenses to get tax write-offs that aid their own property investments, real estate agents are also working with groups of private individuals in buying up whole blocks at a time for speculative purposes. A recent article in the San Francisco Bay Guardian interviewed a Mr. Donald Lipper, who has been investing in "slum properties" for the past 8 years.

phase covered both the black commercial district and the areas of concentrated black housing, and promised to displace some 50% of its population and demolish 70% of its dwelling units.

FIGHTING BACK

The community and its leaders had been fighting Redevelopment plans ever since they were presented. Even though Phase 1 was not able to develop significant resistance—probably due to the demoralizing effect of the concentration camp experience on the Japanese community—by late 1965 community people got together in the Western Addition and formed the Western Addition Community Association (WACO). This grass roots coalition quickly established itself as a thorn in the Redevelopment Agency's side. WACO prevented bulldozers from entering work sites and was then able to get a Federal Court order bringing all redevelopment work in the Fillmore to a halt until adequate provisions for relocating the people moved out, had been made. New guidelines called for an official community group to oversee all future plans.

So the Western Addition Project Area Committee (WAPAC) was established. Through it, relocation provisions were made with funding and office space provided by the Redevelopment Agency. While WAPAC was able to get a large proportion of the directorships within the new Area Committee, its militancy was eventually contained and attacks were thrown at it for being "bought off".

Recently, the Redevelopment Agency has agreed to stop its latest project, the "renovation" of all the single family buildings it owns in the Western Addition, and to stop all demolition of residential structures. This action came after WAPAC members occupied a Victorian house on Scott Street which the Redevelopment Agency had planned to restore and sell for \$85,000 or more. It also follows the actions of CANE (Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction) which was formed in 1973 to fight the destruction and dispersal of Japantown which has been picketing and refusing eviction of several buildings slated for demolition.

Certainly, the vacant land created by Redevelopment's demolition offers no promise for low income people, especially families. Emery Curtis, who recently completed an advisory study for the Redevelopment Agency, pointed out that all the proposals being submitted for what to do with the empty lots in the Western Addition were developers' plans to build apartments of \$250 studios, \$350 one-bedrooms, etc. This is indeed no solution for the many people who have been moved out by redevelopment.

goods, creating new jobs in the process.

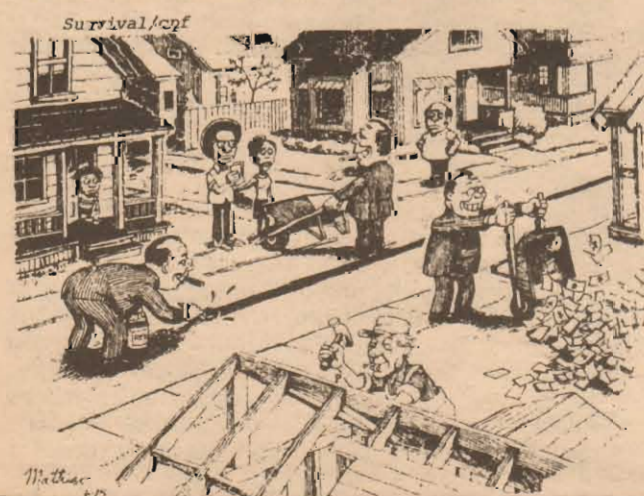
But white veterans returning were demanding jobs, and this set up competition with blacks for the limited number of new jobs created by the expanding peacetime economy. The government made its choice clear, with "Hire the Vet" propaganda campaigns throughout the country. Women, at the same time, were urged to return to more "lady-like" occupations as found, for example, in the kitchen. For blacks, who had added to the war effort when the opportunity arose, this meant being discarded and ignored when no longer needed. And its impact on the Western Addition's future economic outlook was strong.

Even by official statistics, unemployment in the Western Addition is nearly double that of the City as a whole. Income is only two-thirds that of the rest of the City.

REDEVELOPMENT STEPS IN

What was spared in the Western Addition by the 1906 Earthquake was largely leveled by redevelopment in the 1960's. The first phase of the Redevelopment Agency's project affected some blacks, but mainly centered on the returned Japanese Americans. Approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1966, it would eventually demolish everything within a 30 block area, displace 3,700 low-income households and replace them with luxury housing and commercial space. And the centerpiece of the project was the Japan Cultural and Trade Center, which provided a place for major corporations from Japan, and a tourist attraction for San Francisco.

But even as the buildings in the first phase were being demolished, the S.F. Redevelopment Agency secured approval for a second and much larger project surrounding the first area. The second



Lipper said that he and "a loose coalition of eleven friends" had recently purchased most of the buildings on the 500 block of Haight Street at Fillmore and that they expect to make very hefty profits there.

Another real estate agent/speculator talked with us at length, but did not want his name mentioned. He boasted, "Of course we aren't allowed to make guarantees, but for every \$2,000 you invest with me, in ten years you get \$50,000. We invest in houses and just keep turning them over every six to eight months."

He described for us in detail just how much money can be made. In an area around Alamo Square values were climbing fast. He buys a four-unit complex for \$110,000 by making only a \$17,000 down payment, with \$800 per month mortgage payments. He then pays this mortgage by raising the rent on three of the units from \$150 to \$300, while living in the fourth place himself, rent free. He puts in a total of \$1000 in improvements (\$800 for paint and carpets, plus another \$200 for the labor of "kids who need the dough" rather than paying union scale). In six months he will sell for \$165,000. Profit then will be \$55,000 on an original investment of \$18,000. Not bad for six months and no work.

Paying taxes on such profits might be a problem, but luckily for the speculators there are ways around that. Federal income tax on "capital gains" (such as the \$55,000 mentioned above) would come to a little more than \$6,250. But the real estate lobby, the same powerful association that pumped money into Berkeley this spring to defeat the rent-control initiative on the ballot, is also busy in Washington D.C. Federal tax laws now include a tax deferral on capital gains, which means that if a speculator sells a building but buys a more expensive one, he can put off paying taxes on his profit until after he sells the second building. Of course, if he keeps buying bigger and bigger buildings and then holds on to one huge one, the speculator can delay paying taxes indefinitely. This is referred to in real estate circles as "trading-up."

One other federal tax provision that favors speculators in used houses is the Depreciation Allowance. Going on the assumption that an old home will be worthless in a certain number of years, Uncle Sam allows owners to "write off" some of their income each year as losses. This can be done even though the actual value of the property is still going up and up. Another device employed by groups of cooperating speculators is the use of a third party buyer in complicated tax-saving maneuver. This accounts for the one-minute or one-day ownerships listed in the records at City Hall.

But a few "fixed up" houses or even one "nice block" will not attract the high income buyers these speculators need if they are surrounded by a ghetto. So once the process is begun, it is in the interests of the speculators to change the face of the entire neighborhood. The first step is to raise the rents above the level that the present occupants can pay. Mr. Lipper put it very bluntly: *It's an economic freeze out. Rents are going to be raised, and we'll get a better class of people in there.* Another speculator gave us his vision of what a better class of people would be. "San Francisco will become a WASP, middle class place. And it will look like Disneyland twenty years from now. You can see whole blocks that way now—all four color paint jobs and aunties with poodles."

This talkative speculator went on to tell us how he handled one building: *"First I cleared out the previous tenants, two black families. Then I put in improvements . . . and rent to whoever can afford it. I ask for job references, etc."* In the building he now lives in, he said, *"One of the tenants is a black*

woman. She's very nice and the welfare department sends me the check for \$300 each month. She thinks she's a high class nigger. Downstairs I've got two guys who both work. So there's a black woman, two fags, a couple and me."

While some higher-income black families may remain, the plan is obviously to turn the Haight-Fillmore into a largely white neighborhood. One white man we interviewed gave us this description of an encounter with a real estate agent showing him an apartment for rent: *"He gave us a pep talk about how safe the neighborhood was. He said that when they had first begun to buy buildings in the neighborhood six months ago, it was all black people on the streets. 'However, since then we've been evicting the undesirables and now I think you'll find it a pleasant place to live.'" He didn't take the place.*

SOMETHING GAINED, SOMETHING LOST

Many years ago houses in the area sold for \$15,000 or so. Until very recently the average value may have been around \$30,000. But now the price of a building may well jump to \$50,000 and then \$90,000 or more. Who is it that is willing and able to pay that kind of money for a place to live in? The desire to own an expensive Victorian has been a big draw on white buyers from wealthy parts of town or from the suburbs. This "Victorian Mystique" seems to appeal to young professionals—those who can afford to pay outrageously high prices to speculators in exchange for a neighborhood close to Downtown that has been "cleaned up". Even the name has been cleaned up, in an attempt to change the image of the neighborhood and the racial connotations of "Fillmore" to the very up-and-coming "Mint Hill".

However, black groups such as WAPAC (Western Addition Project Area Committee) have pointed out that many middle income black families would also like to purchase such homes, but they have found it very difficult to obtain financing. Could it be that the banks and other lending institutions define the term "preferred borrower" in a way that favors speculators and wealthy whites over local black residents? In fact, the role of the banks has been crucial in the past, in keeping the area depreciated and in lowering its value.

One way that banks contribute to the decline of an area is through a practice called "redlining", or drawing an invisible line around a neighborhood it has decided is "too risky for investment". This means that most people would find it very difficult to obtain financing for property located there and creates a situation of financial starvation. But along with setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy of that community's decline, it may open the way for future outside speculation.

One recent development is that two new Savings and Loan institutions are now trying to get federal approval to open in the very areas where speculation is going on fast and furious. Both of these, Continental at Market and Church, and Neighborhood S&L at Haight and Masonic, include rich backers who are known to be speculators in this area's housing market. Will their policies aid the process of speculation and its racist aspects of resident removal?

Many of the homes in the area have been owned by black families for years. "My family has stayed right together these years," was how one woman who owns a place on Walker Street described the extended family situation in her house, with the grandparents using one flat and the son's family in another. But the effects of speculation are being felt very strongly by single home owners, too. For one thing, their municipal property taxes are climbing fast.

It works this way. The assessed values of houses

on a block has averaged \$30,000. Buildings are assessed block by block and taxes to the city are paid according to surrounding values. So when a couple of the buildings on the block get speculated up to \$90 or \$100,000, the assessed value on the entire block will suddenly get boosted as if all buildings were worth that much, and all residents could afford it. These assessments are made every several years, so many single family owners may have some shocking surprises in store. And a family that paid only \$17,000 for a home some years ago may not be able to keep up with these zooming taxes and could be forced to sell.

A GAY INFLUX?

When we visited the new dance studio that Stanze Peterson has opened on Haight Street near Fillmore, he pointed out another potential problem he has heard about in talking with his new neighbors. Resentment towards gay people in the neighborhood could be on the upswing. While many residents like the improved physical changes that are coming about, there are questions about the changing make-up of the community.

It's a fact that many gay men are moving into the area. Because of harassment and discrimination in other parts of the country (the campaign against homosexuality in Miami is the most recent example), and San Francisco's reputation as a tolerant and very mixed city, many gay people move here. Most have little money when they arrive and will try to find low-paying, non-unionized jobs in the service field, as clerks, salespeople, busboys, waiters or work in gay-owned businesses. In terms of housing, the Tenderloin, the Mission District and Haight-Fillmore are more available and affordable than the now high-priced Castro, Noe Valley or upper Haight areas.

We had already heard that real estate agencies were encouraging white gays to move to the Haight-Fillmore and Hayes Valley neighborhood. What became clear was that these new tenants were desired by landlords not because they are gay, but simply because they are white. In short, they are being used by the speculators in two ways. First, to pay higher rents. Two or more singles, gay or straight, can better afford to stand the cost of rising rents than can families with children. Second, they can be used during times of change, when speculators are trying to raise property values in the whole neighborhood by manipulating its racial composition. If this causes tensions in the neighborhood, it is of little concern to the speculators, but can be of great concern to the renters.

Several gay men we talked to in the neighborhood told us they felt caught in the middle. One stated, *"I'm aware of what's going on. We all need cheap places to live. As a gay man, San Francisco is one of the few places in the country that is open minded. I know it's a terrible situation, but if I didn't rent this flat, someone else would."*

A gay black man who lives near Duboce Park explained to us: *"I was attracted to this neighborhood because of its mixture—there were Blacks, Filipinos, Latinos, Whites, families, Gays and Straights. It was one of those kinds of places which are inspiring because they make me know that different people can live together. In the last six months, however, I've become concerned about the fate of the neighborhood. I have strong fears that it's on the way to becoming mainly White, male and Gay. It looks like the new landlords are using poor Gays to blockbust, then much wealthier people get funnelled in."*

He went on to tell us that when he and his roommate moved into their flat on Walker Street two years ago the building was owned by a black woman and the rent was \$185. Since then they have had a succession of three different gay landlords,



San Francisco, with its reputation for tolerance and diversity, has attracted many gay people from other parts of the country that are more repressive in their attitudes toward homosexuality. The successful campaign by right-wing forces in Miami that repealed civil rights legislation was only the most recent example. Police harassment, loss of jobs or housing, family disapproval, and physical attacks experienced by gay people in small towns and in less liberal cities had led, in the last ten years, to San Francisco becoming a sort of "mecca" for gay people.

And within San Francisco itself, neighborhoods with a visible large gay presence have developed. This has come about out of gay peoples' need to feel good about themselves and from the concept

that there is safety in numbers. So, just as it has been for many immigrant groups, the City has become home to a large gay population.

As with any new arrival, the need for employment and affordable housing become key concerns. In many instances, the desire for housing in neighborhoods with a large visible gay presence has been easily exploited by real estate interests and absentee landlords who decide to demand high rents. For example, in areas like Castro/Eureka Valley rents have risen so fast that gay people who do not have a lot of money are now finding it difficult to rent in that area. Because they are gay, they would often not be accepted in suburban or middle class neighborhoods.

Recently, this has played into the hands of real estate profiteers who are "referring" gay people in need of housing to low rent minority neighborhoods. With the shortage of housing in San Francisco, gay people find themselves in competition with other people especially Third World families who also seek decent, reasonably-priced housing. This situation is often the underlining cause of tension and hostility between gay people and their neighbors.

It should be realized that the gay population is different from oppressed ethnic and racial minorities in several important ways. For one thing, its members cross all class and racial lines, and so face very different degrees of discrimination or security. And, in fact, there is class, sex and racial discrimination within gay institutions. Also, gay peoples' oppression, much like that of women, comes from social standards that have strict and

A GAY MECCCA?



and each has raised the rent. The latest owner informed them that he intends to "fix up" their apartment and raise the rent to \$400 as soon as their lease is up. They are planning to move out.

"One thing I have learned from all this is that there are gay landlords who are out to rip you off just as there are straight ones. In fact, they often try to con you with this number that we're all gay brothers." And he summed it up this way: "The sick thing about this housing speculation is that it supposedly improves the neighborhood but actually destroys its character."

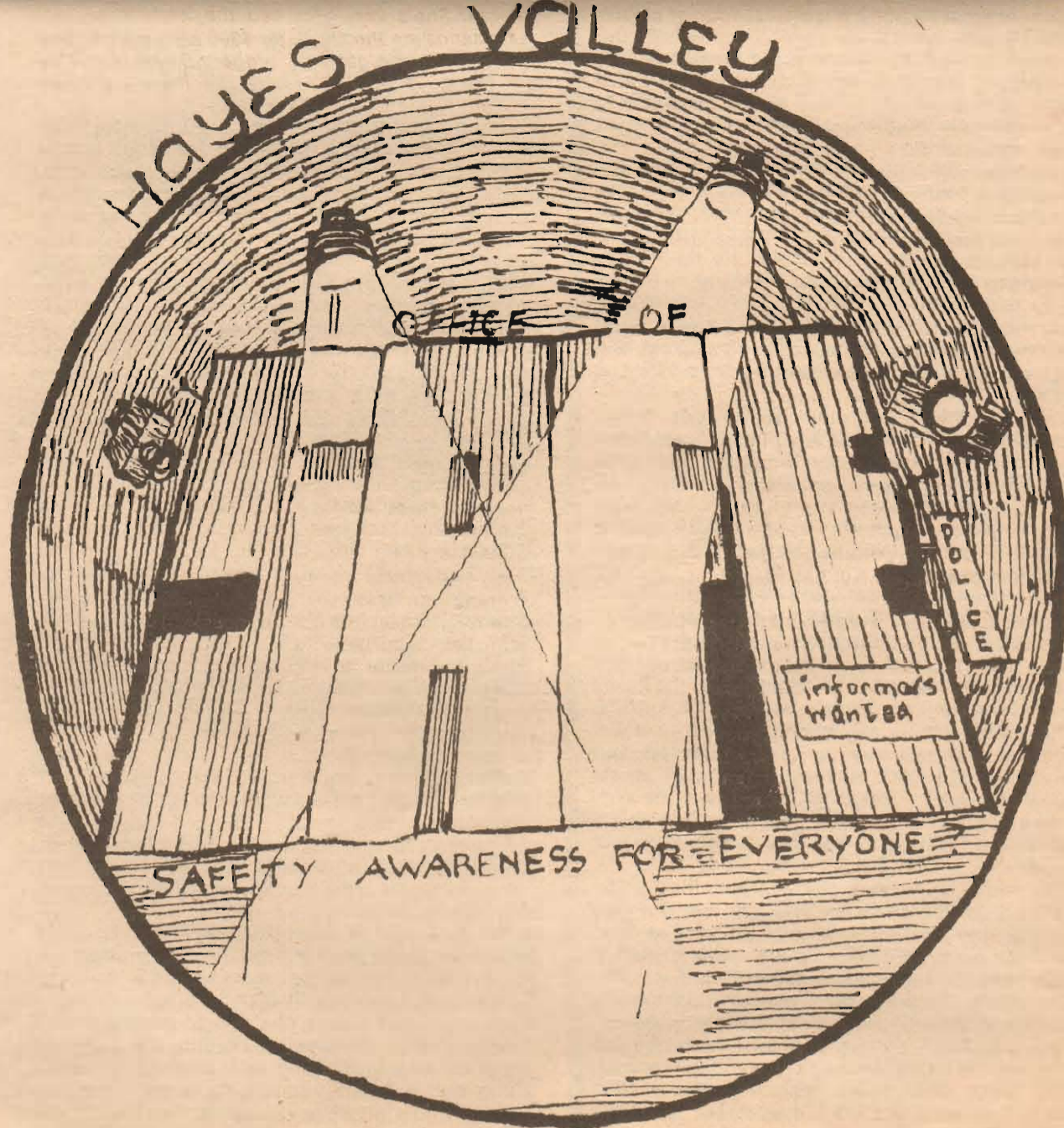
THE POLICE CONNECTION

But raising rents, evictions and selective rental policies are not the only ways to clear a certain group of people out of a neighborhood. The power of the police can also be used. Many of the people we interviewed had noticed an increased amount of police surveillance in the area in recent months, especially on the Haight Street blocks on either side of Fillmore. According to the speculator we have already quoted extensively: "The people planning to buy on that corner knew it would be hard. But they had it planned out before a single building was ever bought. One way is to buy property and get rid of all the people. Another is to harass places until they close down. You notice a lot of vacant stores, businesses forced out, pool halls and little shops. The only one left was the Sportsman's Club and that burned down. Now that everyone is just out on the street, the cops will have to do something. They can't avoid it like before."

The street scene at that corner grew substantially following the demolition of the old Fillmore neighborhood, one black resident told us. A number of local self-help and social service agencies have been started by residents of the Haight-Fillmore, but it is obvious that nothing short of massive funding to attack the real problems of unemployment, drug and alcohol overuse can get to the root of the problem. The money coming into the Haight-Fillmore isn't aimed at that, but at fast-buck real estate transactions.

Nevertheless, it is money that speaks, and the police appear to be listening. According to our speculator, one police Captain told him: "The police like to have all those people, the criminal element, congregated in one place. As a matter of fact, one of the police chiefs suggested moving them all to another neighborhood—Hayes Valley."

But when we went to investigate the Hayes Valley area, a half-mile away, we found some of the same problems.



around the perimeter. On Tuesday nights, the sounds coming out of a storefront church include gospel singing, tambourines and exclamations of devotion.

On any given evening, there is a group at Dottie's Stardust Lounge, in this case devoted to jazz. The owner is Dottie Ivory, a jazz and blues singer known around the Bay Area. There are people hanging out on the street, and some corners are occupied by prostitutes. But many people don't walk around Hayes Valley after dark. The feel of the street can vary greatly from night to night. From quiet and deserted to crackling with voices, bottles breaking and sometimes gunshots.

Crime in the Hayes Valley is a concern of many residents here. People of the neighborhood have an honest concern about theft or destruction of the property or possessions which they have worked hard to get. Violence and threats of violence increase fear and threaten the survival of the neighborhood as a community.

A look at a local hangout makes it clear that the pressures on the community are having their effects. The Executive Coffee Shop, known locally as Otto and Lucy's, gives the visitor a good idea of the neighborhood. It is a small, circular room with a

horse-shoe shaped counter, conducive to conversation among the people in the area. On any given morning, many of the "regulars" drop by. This might include figures like Jackson, a black man in his 50's. He is a union member who has been active in labor struggles. "I used to be active in bucking the bosses," he recalls. Construction workers in the area frequent the coffee shop a lot. Older people and transients spend time there as well.

Otto and Lucy run the place by themselves. Otto also moonlights as a night janitor to help the restaurant get going and to bring his mother over from Romania. He describes the general depression in the Hayes Valley as a "sign of the times everywhere. Socially, economically it's a dog-eat-dog situation. There have been five suicides in this neighborhood in the last two months—just among my customers."

Some cannot afford to leave the neighborhood because of higher rents or property costs elsewhere. Others are attached to it after having lived here for some time. Crime control and prevention are, therefore, seen as major problems.

Thus, it is not surprising that the Hayes Valley Community Association reopened its new office in conjunction with a new organization called SAFE

HAYES VALLEY

Hayes Valley today is a low-income district full of shabbily elegant houses and a few trees. There are lots of kids playing in front of the houses and people just sitting on their steps, talking and visiting. Many of the stores are run by people who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time. The second-hand shops on the 500 block of Hayes Street sell furniture, appliances or old records, rarely an antique item, and the proprietors will bargain with customers over a piece.

The Neighborhood Baptist Church and two storefront churches are a dominant part of the cultural life of Hayes Valley. On a Sunday morning in front of the Baptist Church there is the scene of twenty or so people dressed up and visiting in the sun. Older women are talking in one group, young men and women in another, and children playing

distinct sex roles for males and females.

The main difference between the City's new "gay community" and the homosexual population that has resided in San Francisco since the days of the Gold Rush, is the greater degree of openness today. But even from the beginning of the City's history, there had been some homosexuals who were not invisible. They were known as dykes or drag queens, but have been referred to by a variety of other names as well. By the 1870's a religious revival movement led to more restrictive laws against any number of "sins and abominations", including homosexuality. After the 1906 earthquake the Barbary Coast area, with its bars, whorehouses and dens of iniquity, was left standing. Most of the "respectable" parts of town, on the other hand, were demolished. Fundamentalist fanatics were particularly upset by this twist of fate.

Over the years different parts of town were frequented by gays: the Embarcadero, the Tenderloin and Market Street during the World War II years, Union Street, North Beach and Haight Ashbury later. But "there were no actual gay neighborhoods before" according to long-time resident Jose, who was the first openly gay San Franciscan to run for public office, and later received the honorary title of Empress I of San Francisco. He described to us the legal jeopardy that gays were in during the "40's and 50's": "Gay people met in the parks or the streets or in bars, but they weren't gay bars. You just had to play it cool. Because there were arrests, as many as 500 each month. Each person had to pay lawyers, court costs

to the judge, a fine and bail. Figure that over 12 months, times five in six years. You tell me—someone was making a lot of money."

During those years, the Truman era of Cold War politics and McCarthyism had a chilling effect on all nonconformist behavior and all liberal-to-radical targets. Nevertheless, early forms of gay civil rights organizations were active in the Fifties, such as the Society for Individual Rights (SIR), Daughters of Bilitis, and the Mattachine Society, which met with guards posted at the door to protect members from discovery.

But out of the experiences of the many gay people who had been working within and learning the lessons of the massive political movements of the 60's (Civil Rights and Black Liberation, Anti-war and Women's Movements), came the development of a militant movement of their own. The event that triggered this happened in New York in 1969. Conducting a routine raid on a popular gay bar, the Stonewall Inn, "New York's Finest" were met with an unexpected response. Starting with lesbians, Black and Puerto Rican queens, gay people from all over the area battled with the police in the streets for several nights in a row. Bricks were used, along with a new sense of "gay pride", and as a switch, the cops were themselves locked into the bar.

In celebration of the Stonewall Rebellion, the Gay Freedom Parade is held annually. This year over 250,000 people marched to show their support for gay rights, and the crowd included many political groups and individual supporters who are not gay. Many gay people also joined the march out

to the judge, a fine and bail. Figure that over twelve months, times five or six years. You tell me of an awareness that San Francisco is not exempt from anti-gay prejudice, as shown by an increase in violence following the Miami campaign that led to the stabbing murder of Robert Hillsborough. And Jeanne Jullion recently watched the courts take away her children for no other reason than her homosexuality. The march was led by a large women's contingent, and an alliance of Third World, Lesbian and progressive gay male organizations that formed the "Stonewall Coalition". Members of the coalition maintain that along with actively fighting for the rights of gay people, a unified attack against all causes of oppression must be waged.

However, there are gay people who prefer to focus political activities on the single issue of "gay rights", and seek to portray to the public their image of gay people as respectable, All-American white males. This is especially appealing to "establishment types", such as bar owners, landlords, gay publishers and businessmen who cater primarily to a gay clientele. "Estimates of San Francisco gay business people put the gross receipts from that city's 130 gay bars at about 14 million yearly," which proves that such a "gay lifestyle" pays off for some people.

Yet more and more gay people are beginning to realize that problems such as employment and housing go beyond a "gay" solution. For them, working with other people facing similar problems is the best long-range approach.

CHINATOWN / MANILATOWN

CHINESE HISTORY

The Gold Rush was the beginning of large scale immigration to California for many different immigrant groups: Yankees and Europeans, South Americans and Asians. The Chinese name for California, Gum Suhan, meant "land of abundance", but when the thousands of Chinese were brought to Gold Mountain, they found that a sharp color line was already drawn.

The white '49ers saw themselves as independent producers, pioneers in the "true" American spirit. Actually this group was made up of both Yankees and European newcomers (Irish, German) who had been traditional enemies on the East Coast, but in California they usually resolved their own differences to join forces against "the Others".

The "others" were the Native American Indians, the Chinese, the Chileans and Mexicans, who were all excluded from owning mining claims, often by the use of vigilantes. Chinese were allowed to stay in the mining camps only if they restricted themselves to menial and so-called "women's" work. In this way the role of the Chinese laundryman and stereotyped racist myths of the "passive coolie" came about.

But it soon became clear that from the very beginning it was not the white independent miners, but the financiers and merchants of San Francisco who were to be the real power in the new State. Big Business was soon hiring the miners as wage laborers in their modern hydraulic mines in California and Comstock, Nevada. The big crunch in the labor market came when two of the industrialists (Leland Stanford and Charles Crocker) contracted with the federal government to build the western wing of the Transatlantic Railroad. But white workers demanded high wages and a guarantee of safe working conditions.

So Stanford and Crocker got Congress to pass the Burlingame Treaty with China, which permitted mass immigration of male workers under the contract labor system. Chinese by the thousands were shipped to California under conditions similar to the slave ships that carried Africans to the South, and over 30% of the Chinese died on the way. Those who arrived provided most of the labor that built the railroad, working in gangs at murderous speed to cut the railroad line through the Sierra at the height of winter. When it was finished, Southern Pacific owned hundreds of thousands of miles of free land on both sides of the tracks, and had opened the way for trade with New England factories and a giant agricultural industry in California that could ship nationwide.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINATOWN

The brokers in this contract labor trade, the Chinese Six Companies, were wealthy Chinese merchants who had connections with businessmen in China. They soon became the major political force in San Francisco's growing Chinatown. The Six Companies served two functions: for the employers it guaranteed the obedience of the workers (who had to work off the high price of their passage); and for the Chinese it provided a cultural link to the homeland and social protection from a hostile white population.

Chinatown was to become densely populated partly because it was illegal for a Chinese person to own property anywhere else in San Francisco until 1948. And today with two to three thousand immigrants (mainly from Hong Kong) arriving each year, Chinatown continues to have the highest population density and lowest vacancy rate of any area in the city.

For many residents, especially senior citizens, living outside the Chinese-speaking district would

be extremely difficult. (Approximately 70% of the people living in Chinatown do not speak English). But aside from the Ping Yuen and 990 Pacific Projects, little new housing has become available.

Instead, money is invested into exploiting Chinatown's image as a major tourist attraction through enterprises like the new Holiday Inn on Kearny Street. These new buildings replace valuable housing and worsen the already overcrowded living conditions in Chinatown. Besides, as the writer Laurinda Quong points out, "Tourists who eat and shop in Chinatown fail to see that there is a community underneath where people struggle to live and work."

Symbolically, the new Holiday Inn looks like a visitor from Downtown. Its bridge across Kearny Street allows its guests to get from the Hotel to the parking lot without stepping on the street. Unfortunately, it also blocks out the sun from the children's playground in Portsmouth Square below.

Today, with the decline of the Chiang-Kai Shek government in China, the Six Companies have been losing power. Young people whose families were able to move away from Chinatown have returned with educational skills and a desire to change conditions in their community. Local self-help organizations, community controlled health clinics, and militant political groups have developed. Products from the Peoples' Republic of China and literature from the socialist home country are now openly available.

FILIPINO IMMIGRATION

In the early 1900's Filipinos were brought to Hawaii by the sugar and pineapple company owners to work the plantations, often in competition with Japanese workers on strike there. They also came to the Pacific Northwest as salmon packers and the valleys of California as migrant farm workers. (Later Filipinos were to be among the first to organize and fight in the United Farmworkers Union's drive against the agribusiness industry).

Manilatown developed in an area of transient hotels which provided convenient housing for Filipino migrant workers. During the 1920's it grew into a flourishing community of over 10,000 people that occupied at least ten square blocks between Chinatown and some of the area now contained in the financial district. Then from 1924 until 1945 the Chinatown and Manilatown district was kept almost exclusively a "bachelors' society" by a law that forbade women from China and the Philippines from entering the country.

With the end of World War II, came another wave of Filipino immigration. During the War the Japanese had invaded and occupied the Philippine Islands. Filipinos who joined the U.S. armed forces to fight against the Japanese were granted U.S. citizenship. After the War many of these veterans returned to the islands, got married, and immigrated to this country.

Since 1965, at least 25,000 people a year have been leaving the Philippines and arriving here (Filipino immigration is second only to that of Mexico). The martial-law rule of the Marcos regime has provided an "excellent investment climate" for American corporations by making the Philippine economy subservient to U.S. business interests. (This continues a pattern set since the Spanish-American War through which the United States gained control of the Islands). The huge profits of these multinational corporations have been made at the expense of the Filipino people. Unions and strikes are now illegal. Workers face incredibly low wages, poor working conditions, and high unemployment.

This economic situation and the repressive dictatorship of Marcos convinces people to leave the Philippines and their hopes for a better life for themselves and their relatives back home draws them here. Unfortunately, some Americans believe the newspaper propaganda that "alien" Filipinos and Mexicans are responsible for our unemployment here at home, when they are really victims of it, both there and here in the United States. Forgotten, is the fact that U.S. corporations increase unemployment here when they move factories to other countries in order to "run away" from paying union wages and taxes here at home.

THE LAST BLOCK IN MANILATOWN

The affectionate term "manong" is used by Filipinos for the respected male elders of the community, who often worked their whole lifetimes in the fields and canneries of California. Many of them are fighting for their right to continue living in low-rent International Hotel, which stands on the last block that remains of old Manilatown. The rest was eaten away by the advance of Downtown highrises like the Transamerica Pyramid and the Bank of America's World Headquarters.

After nine years of fighting four eviction attempts, an arson-caused fire that took the lives of three tenants, and a change of corporate ownership from Alioto associate Milton Meyer to a rich Thailand based investment corporation, the Hotel still stands, and its tenants continue fighting for it. They have rallied wide support from every neighborhood of the city where the right to low cost housing has become a crucial concern. The tenants' tactic of demanding that the City use its powers of eminent domain to buy the hotel for the residents is a reversal of the way "eminent domain" has been used in the past in the interests of Big Business, and deserves the support of all San Franciscans.

(Safety Awareness For Everyone). This new safety-in-the-neighborhood program is one of many similar projects begun by the Law Enforcement Assistance Agency (LEAA). The LEAA turns out to be a federal agency begun in 1968 as one response to the urban riots erupting at that time in ghettos across the country.

However, LEAA is oriented to approaching crime mainly as a cause of social problems rather than viewing crime as a symptom that social problems exist. This orientation results in part from the fact that LEAA allocates or withholds its funding to supervisory state agencies that are made up mostly (46%) of representatives of the criminal justice system. Thus, the agency sees itself as a means of influencing, unifying and coordinating policies and programs for local police departments, courts and prisons.

With the SAFE program LEAA hopes to get regular citizens involved in the criminal justice system. SAFE tries to teach people "how to best identify a suspicious person." Its efforts are further directed at getting residents to "report suspicious activities in the neighborhood." (For this reason it is labeled by many residents as the SNITCH program.)

But who makes the decisions as to who are "suspicious persons"? And what are suspicious activities? At a meeting of the Hayes Valley Community Association, a panel consisting of police officials (many of them high up in the hierarchy of the Police Department) and local officials of both the SAFE program and HVCA sat in front. The rest of the audience was made up of property owners and managers. The black churches had a few representatives present, but aside from them, the audience was 95% white, and appeared to be more affluent than most people in the neighborhood in general.

The major topic of conversation was the "undesirables" on the street (prostitutes and drunks), and the high crime rate. Many property owners fear that prostitution will scare away potential "nice" tenants from the neighborhood. Their attitude was to urge the police to help solve the crime problem by arresting more prostitutes. However, two members of the audience argued to recognition of prostitutes as also being victims of the economic crisis. No prostitutes were present to discuss their side of this issue, nor would they likely have been welcomed.

Furthermore, a group made up of people with an economic interest in the neighborhood tends not to consider the race and class bias behind crime and law enforcement. The "SAFE" group was only talking about one kind of crime—the kind some poor people are often involved in due to limited employment opportunities. But aside from selling drugs, prostitution or gambling, there are also "white collar" crimes and they are rarely if ever prosecuted. The local prostitute's well-to-do customer who drives in from Pacific Heights, or the shady real estate speculator can also be seen as criminals. And everyone knows that crimes like Watergate occur at many levels. Yet these and "Big Business" crimes carry little if any stigma or punishment. But programs like SAFE make sure that Third World and poor people are forced to disproportionately carry the stigma of being labeled as "suspicious characters".

Rather than providing assistance to the neighborhood to deal effectively with the causes of misbehavior or criminal activities, SAFE only seeks the residents' help in "getting criminals off your block and out of your area." Thus the root causes of crime such as unemployment or underemployment are largely ignored.

At least one member of the Hayes Valley Community Association expressed doubts about the effectiveness of SAFE's program. He specifically mentioned that their merchandise identification program (which has residents inscribe ID numbers on the back of televisions, etc.) seemed a rather silly and minor thing for an \$8 million program since a professional thief can easily remove these ID numbers. He also pointed out that the local SAFE director makes \$18,500 a year, their area coordinator will earn \$13,500, and that the SAFE program seemed to go out of its way to find "well-to-do Third World people to front these positions."

The orientation of crime prevention programs such as SAFE are of benefit to the speculator's quest for large and quick profit. After everyone's focus has been channeled onto certain people stereotyped as "criminal elements", a speculator can come into the neighborhood and get away with tremendous rent increases while displacing people of low income. Some residents may become willing to go along with higher rents as a necessary ill effect of pushing out the "riffraff" and bringing in "a better class of people". Thus resident removal and higher rents and property values become accepted as necessary to the process of "neighborhood improvement".

Understandably, real estate interests generally have favored crime prevention programs which stress getting "suspicious characters" out of the neighborhood over programs designed to provide poor people with alternatives to committing or returning to crime. No wonder that a San Francisco Supervisor like John Barbagelata (owner of a large real estate business) has pushed to have a job development provision taken out of a crime prevention program.

THE MISSION

The area that is now San Francisco was originally the land of the Costanoan people, Native Americans. In 1769 the Spanish mounted an expedition to establish missions and forts the length of California, to ensure their control of the land. By 1776 the Presidio and Mission Dolores were dedicated by the Spaniards as the first buildings of the new city. The native people fled to the Bay's "other coast" (Contra Costa), and it was a year before the first three returned to be baptized.

Most of the Indians who were to live in the area and work for the missionaries were killed by white man's diseases to which they had no immunity. A Russian immigrant wrote this about the native people: "After several months spent in the missions, they usually begin to grow fretful and thin and they constantly gazed with sadness at the mountains which they could see in the distance." By 1800 there were less than 300 Indians left in San Francisco.

In 1821 Mexico gained independence from Spain. But by 1848 over half of its land, including all that is now Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California, was taken from Mexico as part of the United States' continued expansion of its control over the continent. Promises that land grants of the former Mexican citizens would be respected turned out to be hollow, just like guarantees made by the U.S. government in treaties with Native American nations. The full extent of the loss suffered by the Mexican "Californos" became clear when in the same year gold was discovered, and the population of California rose from 1,000 to 34,000.

The ethnic composition of the Mission District has changed often since those days. In addition to the first families, Mexicans and Chileans, there have been influxes of working class Irish and Italians, and small pockets of other European groups. And since World War II the Mission District has had another large influx of Spanish-

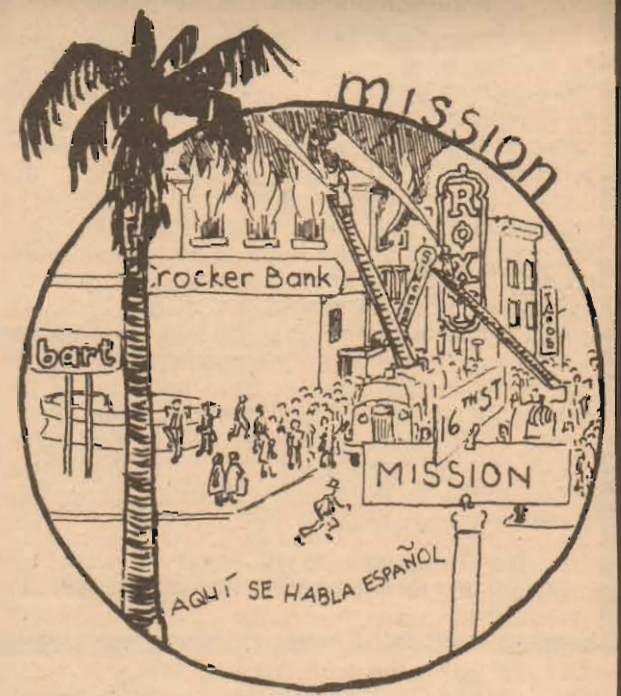
speaking people. The Latino population of the Mission rose from 11% in 1950 to 45% by 1970. It still continues to rise. Although some of these residents are Chicanos, or Mexican-Americans who have lived in California many generations, the vast majority are first-generation immigrants from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Peru, Honduras and other countries of the Americas. Many left countries plagued by astronomical inflation rates, lack of jobs, and military dictatorships. Since they arrived with the belief that the United States was truly the land of opportunity, many were unprepared for the discrimination they found in jobs, education and housing. In response, organizations have been formed that are active both in Mission District community affairs and in struggling for the rights of the Spanish-speaking populations. There has also been an upsurge of pride and cultural awareness as shown, for instance, in the well-known murals of the Mission. The many small stores and restaurants that provide food and products from Latin American countries also serve the needs of the Latino community.

But since the arrival of the BART line that cuts straight through the neighborhood, housing in the Mission has come under increasing control by real estate developers and speculators. Community activists claimed from the beginning that Downtown wanted to turn the Mission District into a higher income residential area for middle management and junior-executive types, and that BART would help this happen. The building of the BART stations at 16th and 24th Streets did cause a boost in property values, forced out some small businesses, and caused housing speculation to ripple out from the direct vicinity of the two stations. Another pressure on the Mission District has been the large influx of blacks, Filipinos, gays, and single white people in search of low cost apartments to rent, or buildings to buy. In fact, after much of the South of Market and Western Addition areas were redeveloped into oblivion, the Mission contained some of the few low-rent areas left in the City.

Recently another very direct form of "urban renewal" has been happening in the 16th and Valencia area, a neighborhood that contains many low-income hotels. Over a two-year period, 133 fires have occurred in this area, many of them definitely cases of arson. As these old buildings burn down, opportunities for property being acquired by speculators go up.

But residents and organizations in the Mission are showing that something can be done to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood. Since the amount of people who own their own homes in the Mission is only 5%, compared to 33% citywide, one plan adopted by the Mission Planning Council on Bryant Street is to help residents buy their own homes. Since many people can't afford the high cost of homes, joint partnerships and cooperative buying is being aided by the group. They hold forums on how to buy and maintain homes at low cost, and are pressuring the financing institutions to live up to promises made to help local people buy their own places.

Another good example of what can be done was the recent fight to stop the evictions at the Julian Hotel near 16th and Valencia. Some years ago the Julian Hotel building had been converted from four units into 18 small rooms that rented for about \$30 a month each. Recently the place was bought by a



nursing home entrepreneur who planned to charge over \$300 per bed, and to kick out all the current residents.

The battle to stop this move was won by neighbors organizing and various community groups each adding their expertise to the effort. The fire department and building inspectors were called in to check the building out. EL TECOLOTE, a progressive Mission District newspaper, provided news coverage. Mission Legal Defense handled the court affairs, and even the Mission Neighborhood Health Center got involved, by providing help to some of the residents with alcohol problems. One of the organizers gave us this evaluation of the victory: "Direct action by the community seems to be the most effective way to go. The courts only provide a delaying tactic. It's really war. Unfortunately there's still no large-scale anti-eviction movement at work. What we really need is a union of all the neighborhood groups and block clubs."

One such club has organized itself on the other side of the Mission, in the Bernal Heights neighborhood. About 325 people signed a petition and over 80 showed up at a meeting of the Board of Permit Appeals to stop a set of 30 new houses from being built on a narrow block of Elsie Street. The area houses a very mixed variety of neighbors, but none of them are the kind of people that can afford the \$100,000 single unit houses that developer Arthur Michaels and Homestead Savings backers want to erect. The neighbors have called for a halt to any new building until they themselves come up with an overall plan for what they want in the neighborhood. They stress that they're not anti-development, but want to make sure it is in the interests of the community, including consideration of "racial and socio-economic compatibility", not in the interests of profiteering developers. With district elections of supervisors just around the corner, it will be interesting to see how many politicians and candidates relate to issues like the ones raised here in the Mission.



SOUTH OF MARKET AND THE TENDERLOIN

Since the Gold Rush of the 1850's the South of Market area has provided employment, shelter and services for a large population of workers. Miners spent their winter months there, then sailors, lumbermen, railroad workers and other seasonal laborers came to live between jobs or to look for work in the small factories and warehouses which had been built side-by-side with the hotels, saloons, stores, theaters, brothels, and missions which catered to poor and working people.

Around the turn of the century, while the West was being divided up into commercial empires and the Pacific region "opened up" for transoceanic trade, European and Asian immigrants began arriving in increasing numbers. After the 1906 earthquake the whole area was rebuilt, including over 140 new hotels and lodging houses. An entertainment zone developed along Third Street, and Howard Street, with its numerous employment agencies, became known as the "Slave Market". World War II brought thousands of defense workers and military personnel into the area. By the 1950's single males represented 72% of the South of Market population, and many were retirees living on small, fixed incomes.

But today this large reserve of blue collar workers is no longer needed by the corporate interests that run the city of San Francisco. They do not fit into the new master plan for the city which calls for more office buildings, tourists facilities, and parking lots in the downtown area. Consequently, in recent years over 4,000 people were displaced from their homes in the area to make room for the ten-block Yerba Buena redevelopment project; and the South of Market community, along with its 100 years of working class history, was

largely destroyed.

The Yerba Buena project was first proposed in 1954 by Ben Swig, owner of a number of valuable downtown properties (including the Fairmont and St. Francis Hotels), and a Democratic Party bigwig — he called it his "San Francisco Prosperity Plan". Following some initial opposition to his plan, Mr. Swig helped form the S.F. Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR), whose purpose is to encourage "citizen support" for urban renewal. The plain fact is that SPUR is nothing

more than a front group for the city's Chamber of Commerce and the major corporations headquartered in San Francisco. Standard Oil, Southern Pacific, Transamerica Corporation, DeL Monte, Bechtel Corporation, PT & T, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Crocker Citizens and many other well known multi-nationals all send top executives to direct SPUR's activities.

While SPUR is primarily concerned with obtaining land for skyscraper construction, they are simultaneously planning other changes in the city which will help meet their need for a new labor force to work in their new buildings, as indicated in their "Prologue for Action":

"If S.F. decides to compete effectively with other cities for 'clean' industries and new corporate power, its population will move closer to 'standard White Anglo-Saxon Protestant' characteristics. . . Economically and socially, the population will tend to range from lower middle class through lower upper class. Selection of a population's composition might be undemocratic. Influence on it, however, is legal and desirable. . . A workable though changing balance of economic levels, social types, age levels, and other factors must be maintained. Influence on these factors should be exerted in many ways—for example, changing the quality of housing, schools, and job opportunities." In other words, poor people, racial minorities, senior citizens and various "social types" will not be needed in the San Francisco of tomorrow and their presence in the city's population must be significantly reduced. And the way to get rid of an undesired population is very simple: take away their homes and their jobs and they will have to leave.



South of Market and the Tenderloin

The Yerba Buena project did not go unopposed by the residents who were about to be uprooted. The cry of "Grey Power" was first heard spreading through the low-income hotels and in 1969 a group called Tenants and Owners in Opposition to Redevelopment (TOOR) was organized to fight the Redevelopment Agency. Since they considered it impossible to stop the project altogether, their struggle focused on the issue of decent relocation housing. In 1973, as a result of a court suit brought by TOOR, the SFRA agreed to provide over 2,000 low-rent housing units after the residents moved out. To date, however, neither the new housing nor the Yerba Buena complex have been built. So, although a partial victory was won in court, those whose homes were destroyed had to find other places to live. Some were forced to take higher priced rooms in the already crowded Tenderloin District a few blocks away.

In the Tenderloin today about 70% of the residents live in hotel rooms and almost half are

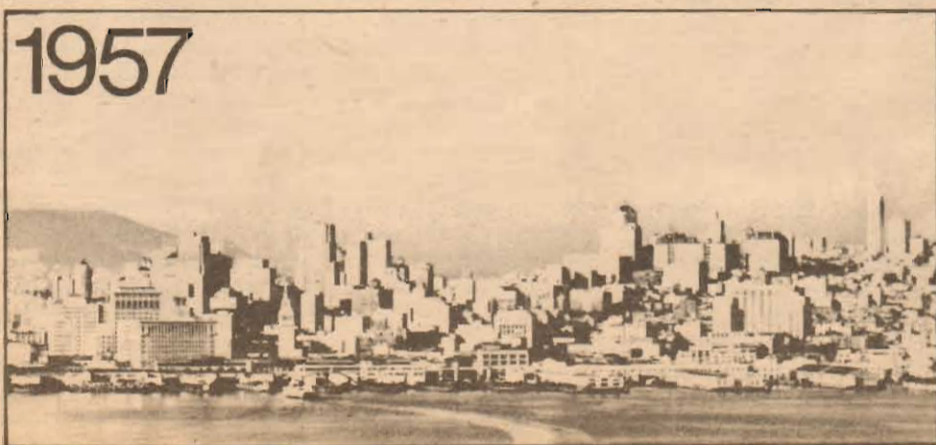
over 60 years of age. The rest are mostly young and often transient newcomers to the City. Rents are high compared to the low incomes which most residents receive, and most of the buildings are badly run down and in need of repair. Crime is also a serious problem. And the City has done little to relieve the problems of the elderly or marginally employed younger residents. But last year, when large amounts of federal money became available for "crime fighting" programs, the Board of Supervisors suddenly remembered the "poor old folks" in the Tenderloin who had long been complaining of unsafe conditions. Conveniently, an anti-crime program also fits into the City's plan to "clean up" downtown for the benefit of the tourist trade and the major department stores. What better way than to use the issue of crime and the elderly?

The hitch was that the city couldn't get funds for expanded police spending until there was a federal housing program in the area. So the Tenderloin was

proposed as a RAP area (See Haight-Ashbury section). At a conference called at the Hilton Hotel, neighborhood residents were invited to come for punch and cookies and tell RAP officials about their problems. Many remembered what had happened to the South of Market or had seen the effects of code enforcement in other areas, and the Senior Center came prepared to make some demands: that there be no removal of elderly people, that subsidies or rent control be guaranteed, and that adequate plumbing, heating and locks be installed in each room. Frances Brown, a member of the Center, noted that "when asked what safeguards they could assure us about our housing needs, like evictions or rent increases or where people will stay while their home is being renovated, they didn't have anything to say... Judging from other areas, crime fighting and RAP programs in the Tenderloin as they are presently carried out, will mean that the area will eventually be made safe and attractive for people with money and that poor people, both young and old alike, will have to move out.

TO CONCLUDE WITH ... DOWNTOWN

1957



1973



San Francisco skyline photographed from the same position on the bay

Going from neighborhood to neighborhood, it became clearer that similar problems in each one: rents and taxes going up, people being forced to stretch their budgets or move out entirely, real estate interests finding a bonanza. Each of the neighborhoods is also unique and has its own particular set of problems, be it commercialization, enforced housing code programs like RAP, real estate speculation, or the use of one group against another. We have also learned that these same problems have been happening in other cities around the United States: in the Adams-Morgan section of Washington, D.C., the South End of Boston, the Park Slope district of Brooklyn, Queen's Village in Philadelphia and in Venice, California. In all these places, higher income Whites are returning to sections of the inner city and in the process they are displacing lower income and Third World residents.

In our study it also became clear that housing and employment are directly connected—the first is a basic need generally met by having the second. What this means is that the average citizen in the neighborhood is caught in a vicious circle. There is a squeeze: Real estate interests are in the business of getting as much as they possibly can for housing from owner or renter; and employers make more

profit by paying less for wages. And, of course, this is nothing new—business always looks for higher profit. But in an economic crisis such as is facing American cities, business has found ways to increase and use both the housing shortage and high unemployment to its own advantage.

But what is "our" government doing about this situation? Why are a few real estate and big business interests doing better than ever and paying a smaller proportion of taxes? Why can't the government seem to do anything meaningful about the spiral of higher property taxes, rising rents and evictions? At most, government plays a role of mediating. It sends in its experts to conduct hearings, and then sets up "programs" to appease those people who get screwed in the process. These include temporary one-year or summer job programs, property tax rebates or renter's credits, and, as worse comes to worse, more money for the Police Department.

Possibly this is because government disproportionately serves Big Business and vice versa. Downtown has used big campaign contributions to keep city officials nicely "in their pocket." Members of the Board of Supervisors depend heavily on their money (In the last two elections, the eleven incumbent supervisors received any-

where from 52% to 90% of their campaign contributions from large corporations and businesses). In exchange, City Hall has rubberstamped Big Business' "Urban Renewal" and development schemes in Western Addition, Yerba Buena, the Airport and the Embarcadero.

Another example helps to explain why property taxes are now going up. In San Francisco taxes on business property used to be higher than tax on residential property, but about 10 years ago they were "equalized". Downtown loves to tell San Francisco that what's good for business is good for the neighborhoods. But the recent transfer of the business tax onto property taxpayers makes it obvious just who picks up the tab. Yet in terms of police services delivered, police costs for protecting the property in the Downtown highrise district are at least ten times the cost for protecting the rest of the City.

Although Downtown corporations don't pay to the city any income tax on their large profits, they want a lot of control over what happens here. San Francisco began its development as a finance capital in the days of the Gold Rush. And with United States military and business expansion into the huge "Pacific Rim Area" (including Alaska, Panama Canal, Peru and Chile, Australia, South



Two views of the Financial District. Unlike the residents of the South of Market area [on the right] the tenants of the International Hotel [left] have been able to resist eviction and demolition.

Photos by Elean Ramirez

Pacific Islands and Philippines, Taiwan, Peoples' Republic of China, South Korea, Indonesia, India, Indochina and Japan), it has become the home base of multi-national corporations as well as the second largest financial center in the world.

San Francisco plays an important role in all this, but while Big Business wants San Francisco as its home base, it is much more committed to its investments in world commerce than it is to the interests of the people who live or work here.

To increase the efficiency of its operations here at home, Big Business has been dividing the Bay Area into specialized, co-ordinated economic zones. Chester Hartman, in his book *Yerba Buena*, describes this process: "*The Peninsula and South Bay area is the concentration for light manufacturing, electronics, and the aerospace industry; the East Bay is the locus for heavier industry, chemicals and petroleum, and also serves as the regional transportation hub; and San Francisco itself is the center for administration, finance, consulting and entertainment.*"

In San Francisco, for example, job opportunities in the crafts and building trades, laborers and other blue collar workers has been declining rapidly, down 34% from 1950 to 1970. To the contrary, employment for clerical workers is up 26% and that of professionals and technicians up 55% in the same period of time. Projected for the City is a labor pool of professional and semi-professional, often single, and white workers. But most importantly, Big Business needs a non-union workforce, one that is neither organized nor militant enough to challenge or slow down its plans. Thus, unionization of the huge clerical workforce downtown, largely female, or of the electronics industries in South Bay would be a serious threat. In addition, each election year has brought attacks by the Chamber of Commerce and City Hall against such established unions as the city employees and the crafts unions. The reputation of San Francisco as a "strong union town" since the General Strike of 1934 is being seriously undercut.

With this as background, what's happening in the neighborhoods makes more sense. Behind the speculation that is apparent on the block, is the invisible forces of high finance. Each of the changes we heard about in the neighborhoods can be traced back to Downtown's efforts to make our neighborhoods attractive to its choice of a labor pool for San Francisco. Justin Herman, ex-director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, let the racial implications behind these plans show through when he admitted, "*Even if it were theoretically possible to eliminate discrimination, Negroes still don't make enough money to live in San Francisco.*"

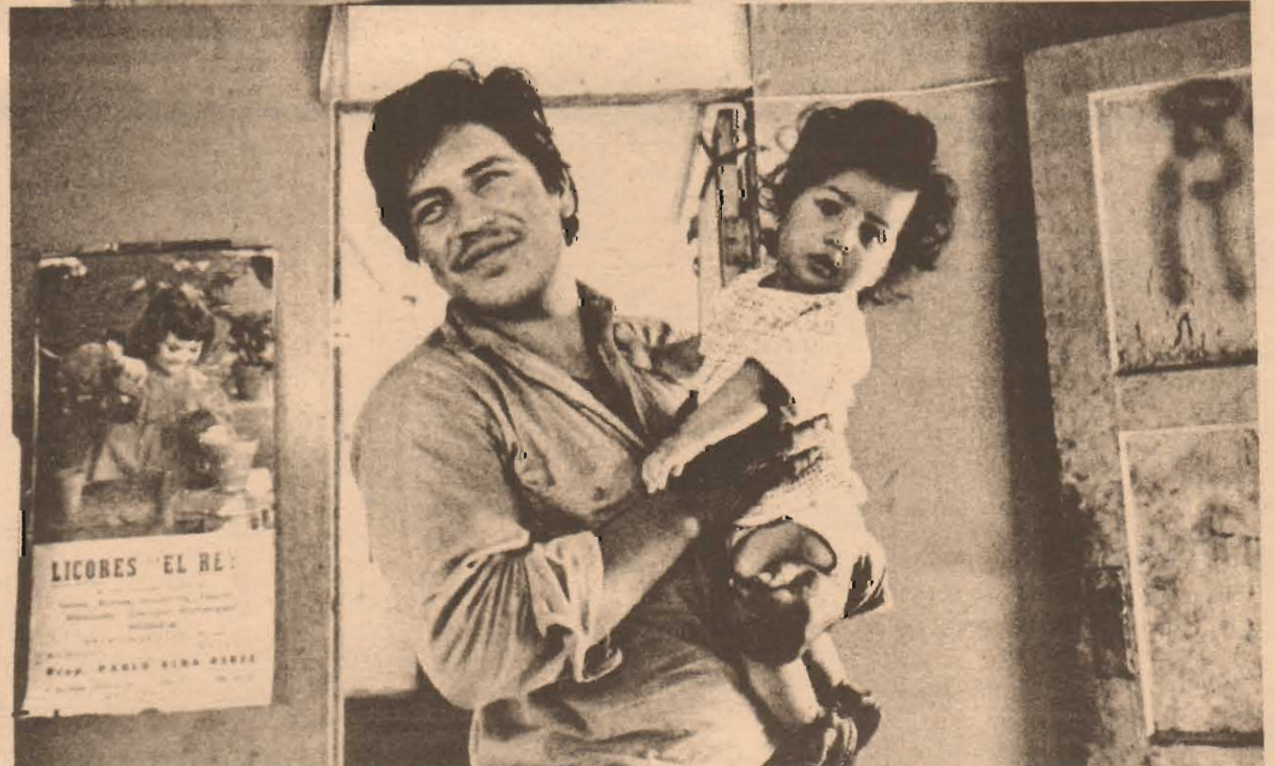
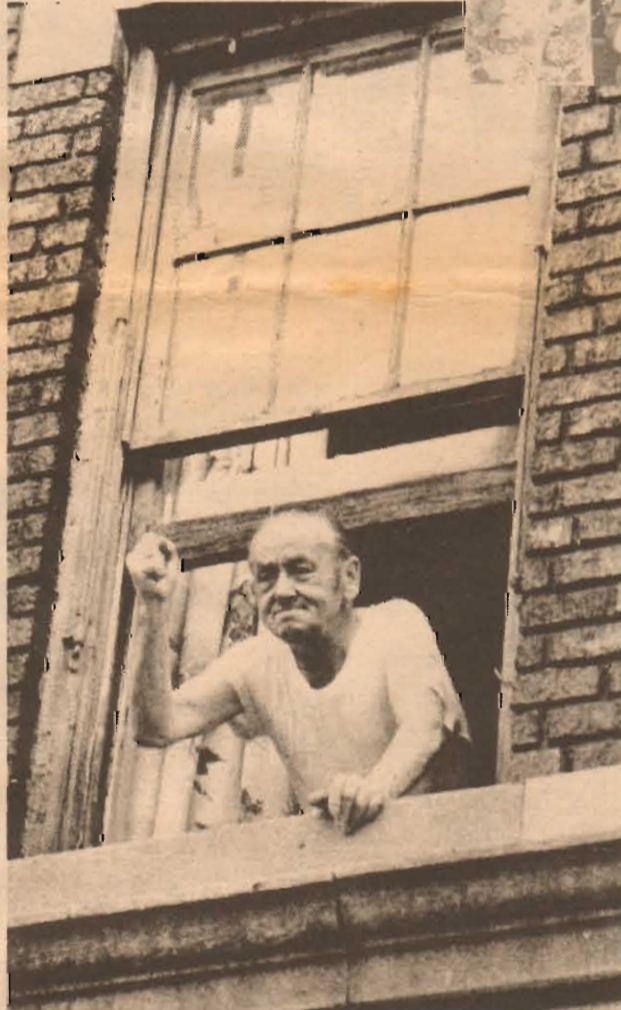
Most recently the International Hotel serves as a good example of Downtown spreading out in size and influence, and in the process clashing with the rights of elderly residents in the hotel. These are people who have worked all their lives and have no where else to go. This classic conflict and fight against eviction has drawn the admiration and attention of people in the City to the problem of decent housing that low income people can afford. Massive community support for these Chinese and Filipino tenants is letting Big Business know that San Franciscans don't think it can do anything it wants with our city, and is putting local politicians in a real bind. The lessons of this housing struggle can also be applied to many other neighborhoods where reasonably priced housing has also been disappearing.

Not only has Downtown been challenged by the International Hotel issue, but also by a potentially powerful new coalition. Neighborhoods as well as ethnic, racial, labor and progressive groups are joining together in a common goal, rather than fighting against each other—a situation which in the past has benefitted Downtown more than any of the neighborhoods or groups. This will establish a trend away from the only centers of power at present: from City Hall and Downtown, toward more community control.

Some changes that would definitely benefit renters and homeowners include: a very high transfer tax on real estate bought and sold by speculators in a short period of time; a program to make federal revenue-sharing money available as interest-free loans to anyone who wants to buy their own home; an end to R.A.P. and redevelopment schemes that reduce low income and family housing; lower assessment rates for homes and higher ones for banks, hotels, and other big businesses.

Since some of the causes of the problems of San Francisco come from outside the City, there is no guarantee that all of them can be solved here. But this could be the beginning of a new awakening of forces at the local level, and the possibility of cooperation between neighborhoods as well as the varied groups that are "feeling the squeeze" in San Francisco.

This would be a big advance for City residents and a real threat to Downtown.





AN EDITORIAL OPINION

YOU CAN...

do something about housing and other neighborhood problems! These are some groups to contact. This list is by no means complete, nor have these groups endorsed the contents of this paper and vice versa. Get involved in your community!

- Hunter's Point:** New Breed Community Development Corporation, 4902 Third Street 822-6860
- Mission:** Mission Planning Council, 2501 Bryant Street 824-1771
La Raza Centro de Informacion, 3174 24th Street 826-5855
Centro de Cambio, 3007 24th Street 285-8868
- South of Market:** Tenants & Owners Opposed to Redevelopment (TOOR), 177 Jessie 861-3024
Canon Kip Community Center, 705 Natoma 861-6601
- North of Market:** North of Market Senior Service Center, 121 Leavenworth, 885-2274
Legislative Council of Oldel Americans, 330 Ellis, 771-6300
- Western Addition:** Western Addition Project Area Committee (WAPAC), 1958 Sutter, 922-4026
Citizens Against Nihonmachi Eviction (CANE), 1858 Sutter, 921-8841
- Hayes Valley,** Neighborhood Foundation, 265 Laguna, 863-1341 (Kim)
- Haight-Fillmore:** Mint Hill/Haight-Fillmore Association 552-1121
- Duboce Triangle:** Duboce Triangle Association, 863-1472
- Haight-Ashbury:** Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council, 665-1680
San Francisco Tenants Union, 1539 Haight, 863-9191 or leave message at 387-7000
- Manilatown:** International Hotel Tenants Association, 848 Kearney, 982-4249
- Chinatown:** Chinatown Coalition for Better Housing, 781-0401
- Citywide:** Tenants Action Group, 626-0994
Northern California Alliance, 2448 A Mission Street, 648-2311
Third World Gay Caucus, 497-1488
S.F. Unemployment & Welfare Council, 863-7339, 552-0065
Bay Area Gay Liberation, 32 Page St., S.F. 94102

The people who researched and put together this report are gay women and men. We feel that the concerns and needs of gay people cannot be isolated from the concerns and needs of all other people. In San Francisco, gay people live in many different neighborhoods, alongside black, Latino, Filipino, Asian, Native American and working class white people. None of us can afford to let San Francisco become a place where one group can be used against another.

The housing difficulties that people are facing in each neighborhood provide an urgent opportunity for united action — against the speculator, be they gay or straight, who are trying to ruin our neighborhoods in the name of Progress; against the real estate interests and financial institutions; and against Downtown corporations who are trying to remake San Francisco in their own image.

This is a time for widespread organizing to bring together all the elements of our communities, for neighbors to get to know each other, and then to save our communities' vote for candidates who come out strong against special economic interests and profiteers.

It is an opportunity for gay people to continue to learn about the concerns and needs of their Third World and White neighbors, and to join with them. And for other groups to examine their feelings and become more open to gay people and to working with them on the problems that we all need to solve.

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