

SPONSORED BY THE HIROSHIMA-NAGASAKI DAY COALITION

## INITIATED BY THE ASIAN AMERICAN CAUCUS FOR DISARMAMENT

(Introduction, to be written by the Hiroshima - Nagasaki Coalition)

The march will start at the former potter's field and public gallows, now known as Washington Square Park. In 1894, unionized stonecutters rallied in the park to protest the use of stone prepared by convict labor from Sing Sing Prison in the construction of NYU buildings. After the Seventh Regiment was ordered to "disperse the crowd," seven workers were killed.

After a seven year struggle ending in 1964, an attempt by Robert Moses and other city planners to run a highway through the park was defeated. The folksong protests of 1961 brought to an end the practice of police harassment of folksingers.

The "A" Club, dedicated to suffragism and social reform, met at 1 Fifth Avenue in the 1910's. One of its member<sup>6</sup>, Frances Perkins, later became Secretary of Labor under FDR.

One block from the park, at 29 Washington Place, is the building which housed the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, where 146 workers, mostly young women, died in a fire on March 25, 1911. Unsafe working conditions and management's decision to lock the doors to prevent visits from union organizers were the direct cause of the tragedy.

The Astor Place Riots of May 10, 1849, saw Americans (mostly Irish) riot against taunts from British nationalists. Historian Edward Ellis says that it was the "worst theatre riot in the history of the world." The Seventh Regiment fired directly into the crowd; 29 died and over 150 were wounded.

The headquarters of District Council 65, now of the UAW, are located at 13 Astor Place. The building is administered by the Tom Mooney Associates, who are named for the labor organizer who was framed and imprisoned for bombing the 1916 San Francisco Preparedness Day Parade, which had been planned to help develop war hysteria in a population that initially opposed US entry into World War I.



Cooper Union has been the site of speeches by many distinguished agitators, such as Frederick Douglass, Victoria Woodhull, Red Cloud, James Connolly and Abraham Lincoln. On March 20, 1883, the world's largest memorial service was organized to mark the death of Karl Marx by the Cigarmakers' Union, and was supported by socialists, anarchists, Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, Single Taxers, and workers of different nationalities. Cooper Union was also the birthplace of the NAACP in 1909

The Great Eight Hour Day March of 1871 from 14th Street to City Hall crossed our route at 4th Avenue. Marching under banners demanding "Eight Hours of Work, Eight Hours for Rest, Eight Hours for What We Will," 25,000 working people slogged through the mire left by heavy morning rains.

On St. Mark's Place we pass the Francisco Ferrer Center, an anarchist school.....1909 get address

On January 13, 1874, with unemployment mounting and increasing numbers of working people facing hunger and eviction, a massive demonstration took place at Tompkins Square. A young cigarmaker, Sam Gompers, later recalled that "mounted police charged the crowd on Eighth Street, riding them down and attacking men, women and children without discrimination. It was an orgy of brutality...The attacks of the police kept up all day long - where the police saw a group of poorly dressed persons standing or moving together... The next few days disclosed revolting stories of police brutality inflicted on the sick, the lame, the innocent bystander. Mounted police and guards had repeatedly charged down crowded avenues and streets. A reign of terror gripped that section of the city." To this day I cannot think of that wild scene without my blood surging in indignation at the brutality of the police that day. They justified their policy by the charge that Communism was rearing its head."

Here our route turns south to 6th Street, skirting a thriving Ukrainian neighborhood, and then east to Avenue D. At the south end of Avenue D is the site of the first of many massacres of American Indians committed by the Dutch settlers. Then known as Corlaer's Hook, the site is now occupied by the Vladeck Houses. For the first 16 years of settlement, the Dutch behaved relatively well. Then, Governor Kieft tried to impose a tax of corn, furs and wampum on his Indian neighbors. The Indians resisted and explained that "he had come to live among them uninvited, and now wanted them to supply him



maize for nothing." The Indians were unwilling to be servants or wage-laborers for the ~~money-hungry~~ <sup>and profit</sup> Europeans, and showed scant interest in the European notions of private property. Governor Kieft ordered an attack on the sleeping Indian community at Corlaer's Hook at midnight, February 25, 1643. Men, women, and children were murdered, their bodies mutilated. The same night, an even bloodier massacre took place in Pavonia (now Jersey City). The heads of 80 Indians were brought to Fort Amsterdam, where Dutch were reported to have played kickball with them in the street.

At 266 Henry Street are the Henry Street Settlement Houses, founded in 1895 by Lillian Wald, organizer of the visiting nurse service and public health advocate. The housing project on Avenue D, north of East Houston Street, is named in her honor. Henry Street Settlement Arts for Living Center is visible at 466 Grand Street.

Willet Place is named for Mariunus Willet, who in 1775 helped seize British arms for use by American Revolutionaries. During the 5 year period that New York City was the capitol of the US government, Willet helped negotiate the extremely important 1790 Treaty of New York with the Creek Confederacy. To the 30 Creek diplomats who travelled to the new capitol, this treaty opened the possibility that the aggressive, expansionist tendencies of the new nation could somehow be curbed.

At 275 East Broadway we pass the former residence of labor lawyer and Socialist Party activist, Meyer London, who was first elected to the US Congress in 1915. P.S. 2 in Chinatown is named in his honor.

At 175 East Broadway we pass the Forward Building, with its reliefs of Marx and Engels, the longtime home of the Jewish Daily Forward. Founded in 1897, it was for years the largest Yiddish language daily newspaper in the world and, under Abe Cahan, was the most influential socialist newspaper in New York City.

Abolitionists met at Chatham Street Chapel in 1833 and formed an anti-slavery society, in spite of the unsympathetic mob milling outside.

At 1 East Broadway, we pass the home of Asian Americans for Equality (AFE), which was founded in 1974 around the Confucius Plaza struggles involving housing, gentrification, and police brutality. One of its early victories occurred in May 1974, when Chinese Americans fought for and won 24 construction jobs in alliance with Harlem Fightback.



City Hall Park was the site of the so-called "Bread Riots" on February 13, 1837, organized in response to the general financial crisis and the increase in the price of flour from \$6 to \$15 a barrel. <sup>Over 6,000 responded to</sup> Placards announced, "All friends of Humanity, determined to resist Monopolists and Extortionists are invited to attend, rain or shine. Bread, Meat, Rent, Fuel - the voice of the people shall be heard." ~~Over 6,000 people attended.~~  
(Chinatown History Project)

Written by the Asian American Caucus for Disarmament and the New York City Chapter of Science for the People, with special thanks to Gene and Tobey Glickman for use of their soon to be published Manhattan Red Pages, a Radical Tourist Guide