



**For Immediate Release**

July 8, 1992

Contact: Shirley Lung (718) 575 -4322

JoAnn Lum (212) 619 - 7979

**Asian Americans March for Economic Justice at Two Federal  
Projects near Chinatown on Thursday, July 9th**

The Asian American Union for Political Action (AAUPA) joins the Chinatown community tomorrow in a march to demand a fair share of jobs and contracts from the construction of two federal buildings near Chinatown. Demonstrators will leave from Canal and Mott Streets at 10 a.m. to march to a rally at Foley Square.

For over two years government officials and the private developers of these sites have made empty promises to Chinatown workers, businesses and residents that the development will produce jobs and contracts for the community. To date, one construction site has hired one Chinese worker out of a total workforce of 169 while the other site has not hired a single Chinese worker. Of a total of 142 project contracts awarded, only 5 have gone to Asian-owned businesses. Even though the combined worth of these government projects is over \$500 million, Chinatown workers and businesses are not getting a fair share of the economic benefits.

This kind of exclusion and discrimination has long kept Chinese workers in low paying jobs in the restaurant and garment industries. It is a desperate reality that Chinese workers labor for wages that are spiralling down, frequently for 12-hour days. Sometimes workers do not even get paid, and few enjoy job security or fringe benefits. The media portrays Chinese and other Asians as workers who labor willingly as cheap labor to drive down wages and job conditions. This portrayal has fueled hostility from other workers toward Chinese workers.

Yet, Chinese workers stay in sweatshop jobs not because they like to work cheap but because they have nowhere else to go. They are excluded access to higher paying jobs that offer better opportunities. For example, they are told that there are not enough construction jobs or that

**Asian  
American  
Union  
for  
Political  
Action**

they should join the union to access these jobs. When they contact the unions, they again confront racism and exclusion.

The refusal of the government and private developers of the two federal office buildings to recognize the legitimate demands of the Chinatown community for jobs and contracts mirrors the exclusion faced by Chinese workers in the 1800's. Both government and private developers were willing to admit Chinese immigrants to labor on the railroads for poor wages and under bad conditions. However, when the economy deteriorated, the Chinese were scapegoated as cheap labor, denied jobs, and eventually were barred by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 from entering the U.S. One hundred and ten years later, Chinese workers are still being denied economic and racial justice.

AAUPA and other Asian Americans join the Chinatown community in saying Chinese workers are not second-class citizens, nor cheap labor. We demand our fair share of economic justice from the two construction projects that are located minutes away from our community. AAUPA supports the demands that:

- 60 per cent of all project jobs go to people of color:
  - 30 per cent to the Chinese community
  - 30 per cent to Latinos and African Americans
- 30 per cent of all project contracts go to Chinatown businesses

We will no longer tolerate discrimination and exclusion, nor economic injustice. AAUPA will continue to join efforts with the Asian American community as well as other communities to ensure that the federal government creates more decent jobs for Chinese and other workers of color.

**JOIN THE CAMPAIGN FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE AT  
FOLEY SQUARE!**