

THE STRUGGLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

To Asians in Chinatown-Manilatown of San Francisco, the name "International Hotel" is synonymous with the Filipino's struggle, not only to keep a roof over their heads, but a broader struggle for self-determination, community control, and self-reliance.

The "hotel" is not in the sense of the 'usual' "hotel" with its connotation of a carpeted lodging place which provides entertainment, personal services, and public facilities for the well-pocketed traveler. International Hotel is a "people's" hotel built on sacrifice and toil; recently rebuilt on the love and repairing together of a badly damaged fire-burnt wing of the hotel by the tenants and student volunteers.

In July of 1969, the tenants of International Hotel, mostly elderly Filipino and Chinese single men or the newly admitted immigrants, began their fight against eviction by big business. The trend of expansion by skyscrapers, parking lots, and financial districts have pushed out powerless poor laborers, welfare people, indigents, and part-time menial workers from their own ethnic communities.

The Filipino Community in San Francisco, called "Manilatown" has been reduced from 10 blocks to a mere one bloc. Once an embarkment point for Filipinos, it was a thriving community of 10,000. Today, there are less than 1000. 130 of these people comprise the tenants of International Hotel. And International Hotel stands as a haven and home for the unhealed but visible, worn-out but proud, once-immigrant, now-survivors of the American way of "progress."

Young Filipino activists like Emil de Guzman, Cynthia and Becky Maglaya, have spoken to the Asian movement here giving a clear and revealing picture of ~~one aspect of the Filipino struggle~~ this struggle of the International Hotel. *Their appeal must be responded to.*

The International Hotel and its tenants are in jeopardy. By the end of June, the lease for the hotel will have expired. A one-man corporation by the name of Walter Shorenstein holds the key. His plans were to demolish the hotel that a more lucrative parking lot could be built. But losing 130 units of low-cost housing would destroy a community. These people would have no place to go. Besides, they do not desire to move. International Hotel and its sentimental surroundings of a 1-block community has been their life; a world they feel safe and secure; warmed by others like themselves. They want to stay. It is their HOME!

How can outsiders from the West Coast to the East Coast help? Moral and financial support is needed. Moreso, political pressure, pressure to force Shorenstein to negotiate with the tenants of the hotel for another lease. Shorenstein is also the financial back^{up} of Hubert Humphrey. Thus, Humphrey must be pressured into moving Shorenstein to meet the demands of the tenants. Humphrey must be confronted as he comes into each ethnic community.

Third World people, unite to save the International Hotel! If the hotel goes, "Manilatown" will also go. Manilatown has already been reduced to one block. Big Business will steam-roll over a whole people. It has happened over and over across America—through the Harlems, into El Barrio, and over sacred Indian lands. This is not just the struggle of the International Hotel, nor Manilatown alone! It is the struggle of all Third World Communities.

Contributions may be sent to: International Hotel, 848 Kearney Street, San Francisco, California. It is not just yesterday's address of a place for the migrant, immigrant elderly. It is a prized and exciting landmark for the future!

Your dollars and support letters to the Kearney Street address will be a needed reinforcement for the tenants to continue a people's struggle for survival. Giving will be your salute to those involved with International Hotel. And giving will be your involvement in their struggle, which is also the struggle of all Third World peoples!