

Strikers Claim "Sell Out"

HOTEL STRIKE ENDS



San Francisco's 27-day hotel strike ended Tuesday, August 12, with a contract obtained and ratified through undemocratic means, and which the strikers felt compromised their most important demands.

"Sell out" was the sentiment of many as the contract was "ratified" by a vote of 1,823 out of 3,000 strikers who were present at Wednesday's voting. The remaining 3,000 of the 6,000 member Hotel, Restaurant and Bartenders Local 2 were not represented in what one observer considered "a highly irregular voting procedure." Many strikers were not allowed entry into the voting premises while a good 70 percent of the workforce being immigrants were effectively excluded from registering their sentiments because the contract was not translated into their native languages. (Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish-speaking workers fill the lowest paying jobs of the hotel industry).

DEMANDS

While union officials claim that they negotiated higher raises of 33.5 percent over three years for maids and other lower paid positions, the strikers noted that whatever pay increases were obtained have been undermined by the other terms of the contract. Others noted that when added up, the terms of the new contract are not much different from the old.

Wages—the strikers originally de-

manded a 58 percent increase of non-tip workers over three years. They were instead granted 33.5 percent. Tipped workers received 26.5 to 29 percent increases.

Nettie Bustamante, a Filipina worker at St. Francis Hotel, said that the original wage hike demand was based on anticipated inflation rates and the prevailing wages of hospital maids "who receive higher pay but do less work than we do." The union's attempts, therefore, to make the 33.5 percent pay increase appear generous, is highly deceptive.

Sick leave and vacation benefits—the union originally asked for three additional sick leave days for a total of eight days per year. The demand was dropped leaving workers with no sick-leave benefits.

Room quotas—the union wanted strict limits on the number of rooms assigned maids to clean per day, and overtime pay if the quota is not met within eight hours. For class A hotels, it set 15 rooms per day. For class B and C hotels, it set 15 or less. The contract provides a reduction by one room per day, but gives no guarantees that maids may forego cleaning rooms if the assignments take more than eight hours.

UNDEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE

The much-watered down terms of the new contract were obtained largely through the collusion of the Local and International Union officials and the hotels managements. Hanley, Local 2

president Charles Lamb, and International organizer Sirabella, met with the Hotel Employers Association in Los Angeles over the weekend to negotiate the settlement. The meeting took place without the consent and participation of the union's Negotiating Committee representing the rank and file. Rationalizing the sell-out terms of the contract, Hanley said that in his talks with the hotel managements, they were prepared to "stick it out" (i.e. starve out or replace the striking workers). He further claimed that the strikers could barely survive on a \$50 per week strike subsidy.

More likely, Hanley's concerns reflected a wavering on the part of the international to assist its local. Local 2 reportedly owes the international union \$300,000 in back dues; a sum large enough to give its mother union second thoughts about backing the strike to the end.

Reflecting widespread disaffection with the union's handling of the negotiations, Gloria Penangay said: "It was a sell out; why was the meeting held secretly in L.A.? If they met here, we could have had a demonstration." Pinangay is among the underpaid maids who were most willing to stay out on strike in comparison to the foodservice workers. Noting, however, the political victory achieved by the strikers, Pinangay said, "We won in the sense that we exposed our working conditions to the public." □

FWC To Address Immigrant Rights Issues

By JESSICA ORDONA
AK Correspondent

SAN FRANCISCO—"We would like to propose that immigrant rights be a central focus for the 1980 convention," suggested Mae Oliva from the Bay Area Task Force for the Defense of Filipino Immigrant Rights (BATF). The proposal was made to the Preparatory Committee of the Far West Convention (FWC) on July 23 at St. Anthony's Hall.

The formal presentation on the history of attacks on immigrants delivered by Attorney Bill Tamayo of the National Task Force, was enthusiastically applauded by the members of the Preparatory Committee. An educational discussion on national chauvinism followed Tamayo's presentation.

Tamayo explained that "national chauvinism is a sense of national superiority that exists in the U.S. society. It is an attitude and an outlook toward national groups like Filipinos, Chinese, etc. as inferior. National chauvinism is manifested in immigration restrictions, anti-alien laws, culturally-biased licensure exams and 'no Tagalog' policies that face Filipinos."

Tamayo elaborated that the NTF has been able to study the problem and has found that the historical roots of national chauvinism and racism go as far back as the beginning of American capitalist growth in the 17th century. Tamayo stressed that "the Filipino community should understand the basis of racism and national chauvinism in order to see how minorities, and in particular immigrants, get placed on the lower rung of the economic ladder in society."

"That is why the FWC should try to take up this question in our convention," said Emil de Guzman, chairperson of the Preparatory Committee. Luisa Blue, co-coordinator added, "I think we will all learn a great deal and be able to apply our theme, '1980's Decade of Action' if we better understand the attitudes in this society and the material conditions we face."

Jasmin Sison, member of the publicity/media committee stated, "I think that addressing immigrant rights in our convention is very important given the size of the third wave immigrants in our community. I would like to understand national chauvinism more, also in relation to second and third wave Filipinos, as well as second generation Filipino-American like myself."

The Preparatory Committee unanimously agreed to the proposal of the BATF. They further discussed how the program committee should develop the issue in all aspects of the convention. "This is how we can build the progressive Filipino community," said Raddy Cadorna of the finance committee. We must educate and organize for our rights as immigrants." □

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION

Task Force Educates Around Immigrant Rights

By JESSICA ORDONA
AK Correspondent

SAN FRANCISCO—"The Filipino community today must struggle to assert their rights, that is what the BATF stands for," stated Noni Espiritu, co-coordinator of the Bay Area Task Force for the Defense of Filipino Immigrant Rights (BATF).

"Our organization must study the conditions that face Filipinos in their fight for democratic rights," explained Nonie as she opened up the BATF meeting held at the Dimas Alang House last Sunday, August 3.

The seminar-meeting was organized with the objective of understanding the Filipino community's experiences with racial and national discrimination.

Bill Tamayo, of the National Task Force (NTF) and attorney at the Asian Law Caucus lead a presentation with Lillian Galedo, also a member of the NTF staff. Both explained that "Filipinos encounter many problems because they are seen as people who come from a country that is inferior by American standards, and therefore, the people are also inferior. This is what we call national chauvinism."

Galedo further explained that "this is also true for people who come from the Latin American countries, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. It is because there is a social bias in America that thinks American culture, language and standard of living are superior."

Tamayo added that "at the same time, Filipinos tend to rate America high on the list of advanced civilizations because of our colonial mentality. Oftentimes it is forgotten that immigrants, the people from many nations who were the impetus and main labor force, built American industries and institutions."

Nonie Espiritu stressed, "Filipinos therefore, have to struggle against their colonial mentality in order to deal with the national chauvinism that we encounter as new-comers here."

SEMINAR HAS POSITIVE RESULTS

The BATF, many of whom are senior citizens, engaged in a group discussion around problems of colonial mentality and national chauvinism.

BATF members then discussed the situation of petition gathering to fight the INS harassment of elderly Filipino SSI recipients. Through actual experiences, many were confronted with remarks such as "Isn't this against the government? Won't it give us a bad image and hurt the funding for our community programs?"

Monica Abello, a BATF member,

reported that "what is important is our democratic rights. This is what the government must insure. Petitions help us make the government accountable to the people that is supposed to serve."

Another important point of discussion was whether Filipinos should comply with speaking "English only" on the job, even among Filipino co-workers.

The group report given by Mr. Ambrosio Soriano felt that "it is our right to use our native language. We should not be repressed and denied freedom of speech. We should not accept English only because we have our language too. On the job we know when and how to express ourselves. We should be allowed to work on our job without language restrictions."

"At the same time, the Filipino community is conservative," said Mr. Mauricio Onia. "In our group discussion we agreed that Filipinos oftentimes tell us 'don't rock the boat or don't bite the hand that feeds you.' But the conditions of Filipinos is that we must fight discrimination."

Mae Oliva, another BATF member, added, "Educating the community is key to building our community. Indeed, it is difficult because our community is conservative. There is some for because we are new immigrants, and moreover, for those who have been here for a long time there is resistance to change. Nevertheless, we have to bring our community together to fight for our rights."

The positive outcome of the group discussion culminated in implementing a plan to send a BATF delegation to the upcoming Far West Convention to be held at the Civic Center on August 29, 30, and 31.

To ensure the success of the Immigration and Immigrant Rights workshop and to make the defense of Filipino immigrant rights an important thrust in the whole convention, the BATF launched a registration drive. All interested people are urged to sign up for the Far West Convention.

For more information about the BATF contact Noni Espiritu:

861-4476

or Lorette Tamayo:

673-1720

For registration to the FWC with the BATF delegation contact Monica Abello:

387-8200

Reduced fees for Senior Citizens are available at \$15.00 which includes seven meals, all convention materials and admission to the Saturday evening cultural presentation.

Clip and Mail to:

FILIPINO PEOPLE'S FAR WEST CONVENTION
163 Hearst Avenue, San Francisco, California 94131

☐ Below is my filled-out Pre-registration Form. Enclosed is my check for \$_____. I look forward to the success of the FWC.

WORKSHOPS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nurses and Medical Workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Racism and Affirmative Action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labor and Union Organizing | <input type="checkbox"/> Government Propositions and Cutbacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth and Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Art and Culture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Progressive Community Organizing | <input type="checkbox"/> Philippines Today |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration and Immigrant Rights | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizens | |

Pre-Registration Fees: Overnight Accommodations include Friday and Saturday night accommodations, 7 meals, Convention materials, and passes to all Convention events.

☐ Commuter—\$20 ☐ Overnight—\$40 ☐ Senior Citizens—\$15

Name _____

Address _____

Organization _____ Phone _____

At S.F. General Hospital:

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES "ENGLISH ONLY" POLICY

By NONIE ESPIRITU
AK Correspondent

SAN FRANCISCO—"An 'English-only' policy is premised on the assumption that English is a superior language, superior to all other languages spoken in this country—a country of immigrants, a country built by immigrants.

"This is the essence of America's national chauvinism towards minority and immigrant communities, a very good example of the anti-alien hysteria sweeping this country today," testified Teresita Paredes of the Bay Area Task Force for the Defense of Filipino Immigrant Rights (BATF). The testimony was delivered at a public hearing conducted by the Civil Service Commission Committee on Affirmative Action last July 28.

The Committee's proposal to the public was a "city-wide policy allowing use of languages other than English during the performance of one's duties."

MASSIVE PROTEST AT SFGH

The furor over an "English only" policy started at the San Francisco General Hospital last June where such a policy was instituted at the Personnel Department, directed mainly at Filipino employees.

Bilingual employees—clerks, nurses, hospital aides, and technicians—immediately organized protest actions, culminating in a "speak out protest" where all throughout the hospital, Tagalog, Spanish, Chinese, and other minority

languages were spoken the entire day. As a result, the language policy was rescinded immediately.

On July 28, a month after the "speak out protest," a hearing, led by Louis Hop Lee and Del Portillo heard 21 speakers, which included the Bay Area Task Force for the Defense of Filipino Immigrants (BATF), Asian Law Caucus, Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), Chinese for Affirmative Action, the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP), and other bilingual service groups. All the speakers registered strong protest against the proposed language policy. They charged the policy to be repressive, chauvinist, and not a valid argument for job efficiency and "social propriety."

Counter to this, an official from the San Francisco Controller's office spoke in favor of an "English only" policy.

As of press time, no decision had been made despite the demand from the community groups for an early decision given the controversy and uproar in the different communities on the issue.

In an interview with the AK, the BATF stated that this "no Tagalog" policy is a clear example of national chauvinism. They stated that as an organization, they will continue to fight these issues and educate the Filipino community to their rights as immigrants. They also stated that they intend to discuss these issues at the forthcoming Far West Convention where they will be conducting a workshop on immigrant rights.

3,000 March in Solidarity With Hotel Strikers

By BOY LOPEZ
AK Correspondent

SAN FRANCISCO—August 2 was marked as Labor Solidarity March in support of the Hotel and Restaurant and Bartenders Union Local 2 strike. Over 3,000 marchers gathered at the Union Square composed of Trade Unionists, Local 2 members and various organizations of San Francisco, protesting the Hotel Employers Association's position of not taking a serious move to resolve the strike.

Solidarity speeches were given by the unions, civic and community leaders. As one of the trade unionists expressed, "This is not only a strike of Local 2 but a strike of San Francisco."

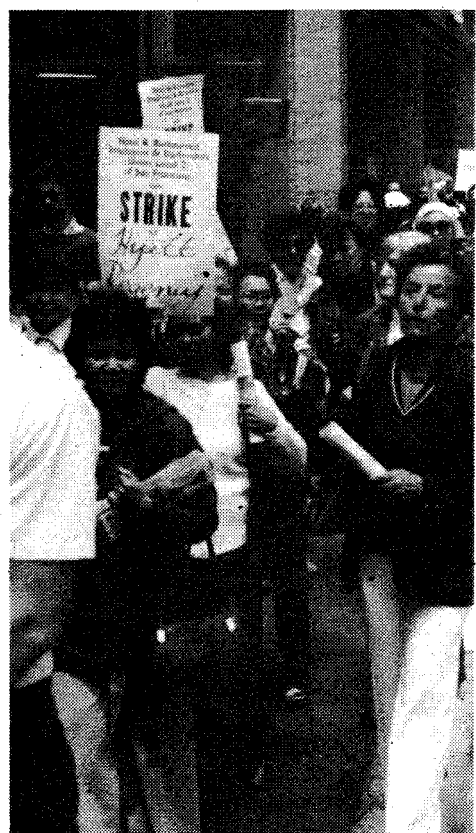
After the solidarity speeches, the march began and the chanting thundered through the Sir Francis Drake, the Hyatt Regency, the St. Francis, the Drake Wiltshire, the Chancellor, and the Pacific Plaza. The picketers in front of the hotels were greeted by chorused chantings "Put 'em down" and "Local 2 will win."

Shouting in front of every hotel, "Scabs go home," the marchers point to people watching inside the hotel.

Community support for the strike was clear as trolley car drivers continuously ring their bells as passengers shouted "carry on." People in the stores, shops and coffee shops came out to watch the marchers.

After a militant and lively march, the demonstrators went back to Union Square where supervisors Nancy Walker and Harry Britt spoke.

Also present were Walter Johnson of Retail 1100, Jim Ballard of the California Teachers Association, Jack Weintraub of Teamsters 85, Stan Smith of Building Trades, Jake Jacobs of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, Barbara



Gray of the Congress of Trade Union Women, and Coleen Wong of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Also participating in this day of solidarity were sister locals from Monterey, Salinas, San Jose, and Fresno. Other unions that joined the march were Longshoremen Locals 6, 10 and 34, IATSE Local 162, Office Workers Locals 3 and 29, SEIU Locals 87 and 400, Carpenters Local 483, Musicians Local 6, Yellow Cab Drivers United, United Auto Workers, Teamsters of a Democratic Union, and the Sign Painters Union.

The event gave more courage and strength to the picketers who were moved by this show of support. One enthusiastic picketer said of the march: "This is very inspiring."

SEATTLE REGION

Rent Control Benefits Majority of People

Elaine Ko specializes in low-income housing issues and legislation. She is presently staff director of the International District Housing Alliance and is working on Fair Rent Initiative 24. This is the second of a three-part series—Editor.

By ELAINE KO
AK Correspondent

Housing is a bread and butter issue. All Filipinos, immigrants, young or old, are either renters or own homes and with shrinking incomes to spread around, housing payments/rents take bigger slices from our incomes. No one can escape.

Here we will answer commonly asked questions about Rent Control—a law being proposed by citizens, tenants and housing activists in Seattle.

WHAT IS RENT CONTROL?

Rent control is a law which, if passed by Seattle voters this November, would stop unwarranted rent increases while at the same time allow landlords to pass on necessary cost increases.

HOW WILL IT AFFECT YOU?

If you're a tenant, you will get a rent "rollback" to what you were paying in July 1979 plus cost increases incurred from July 1979 to March 1981. From then on, your landlord can increase your rent once a year according to actual cost increases, if he/she so chooses. (This does not mean you will receive an automatic yearly increase.) If you are a homeowner, rent control will prohibit landlords from passing on new costs if the building was bought within the last three years, in effect, cutting back on speculation (quick buying and selling of property which drives up everyone's property taxes). Homeowners in Seattle just received property tax increases of

double and triple last July! Cause? Speculation by big developers.

HOW THEN ARE SMALL-SIZED LANDLORDS AFFECTED—THOSE WHO MAY OWN ONE OR TWO HOUSES OR APARTMENTS?

Skeptics feel that rent control is too harsh on the decent landlords. If you own four units or less and live in one of those units, you are exempt from rent control. Every other category will be under the rent control program for the simple reason that those very tenants who get hit hardest with \$100-300 rent increases live in all kinds of places, big and small apartments and detached homes throughout the entire city.

But more importantly, the rent con-

trol program is designed to allow small landlords to pass on necessary costs through higher rents. It is strictly designed to stop the Rent Gougers (usually big corporations and greedy speculative landlords), those who raise rents in unwieldy chunks of \$50, \$100 and up to \$300 per month.

Small-sized landlords can request annual rent increases plus special adjustment increases every year. If a landlord hasn't raised rents consistently over past years and he/she wants an increase to "catch up," this will be seriously considered by the appointed Board.

IS THERE ANY ALTERNATIVE TO RENT CONTROL?

Let's separate the big from the small

FLASH! Filipino elderly lead in a gala march of 150 to present 31,700 petition signatures to the city placing Fair Rent Initiative 24 on the ballot in November. This initiative secured the most signatures in the history of Seattle—14,000 more than was required. Media and marching band accompanied the event. □



Community Demands New Election of Board:

Cutback Threatens Senior Citizen Center

A recommendation to withhold funding from the International Drop-In Center (IDIC) has generated widespread concern in the Seattle Filipino community. Some 40 Filipinos protested the recommendation at the hearing on Project proposals before the Community Development Block Grant Panel last August 6 at the Langston Hughes Center.

IDIC, which is funded by the City, received a negative evaluation from the City's Department of Human Resources. Of the 43 items of performance by IDIC, 20 items were found satisfactory and 11 items unsatisfactory and 11 items need improvement.

WHAT IS THE IDIC?

Formed in 1971, the IDIC was the first social service agency primarily designed to meet the needs of the elderly of the International District. Prior to the inception of the IDIC, the only work being conducted with the elderly were by medical and religious workers such as Evangeline Domingo, Father Manuel Ocanan and Norma Berona. It was primarily through the efforts of Ms. Berona that the IDIC was conceived and formed, through the assistance of Nemesio Domingo. Berona was able to locate and secure the site of the first IDIC. Berona was also instrumental in recruiting many Filipino students from the University of

Washington and youth in the Filipino community to support the IDIC. It was these students who were able to carry the IDIC during its early formative years. With their help the IDIC was able to provide social, recreational and legal or medical referral services.

As a result of its success in providing services, the IDIC secured its first grant from the United Methodist Church. Eventually, a project director was hired in the summer of 1972.

Over the next two years, the activities and services increased significantly. At one point, the IDIC had over 12 staff people to service the clientele.

In recent years, however, there has been a sharp decline in the center's services and the personnel has been reduced to a skeleton staff.

Mrs. Zenaida Guerzon, a former staff member of the IDIC has witnessed the rise and decline of the IDIC. Guerzon, who served as Arts and Crafts Manager in 1973 until her eventual resignation said: "I became frustrated. Things were not being managed right. So I eventually resigned." Despite some frustrations and difficulties, Guerzon has remained active in the IDIC as a volunteer and as a Policy Board member. Guerzon is a key figure in the present efforts to resolve the problems of the IDIC. "I think that despite the problems, it is important for us to work to maintain the IDIC as social service for the elderly of the Inter-

national District (ID)."

RASANAN PRESSURED TO RESIGN

In the process of the controversial evaluation, IDIC Director Ben Rasanan submitted his resignation to the IDIC Policy Board. "According to the mayor's office, certain people have written in, stating that they don't like me. I really don't know the basis. They say I'm not holding meetings; that I should be more active." In an interview, Rasanan stated that he "was pressured to resign, but I am willing to do anything to save the IDIC." Rasanan has been director of the IDIC for at least five years.

Zenaida Guerzon has these comments in regards to the Policy Board: "I was not surprised because I've heard complaints about the deficiencies of the center. I think part of the problem was due to the weaknesses of the Policy Board. There was no regular meetings, etc. Hence the staff was not fully performing its duties."

The IDIC directorship is a staff position appointed by its policy board. As such, it is entrusted with carrying on the day-to-day administration of the center. The Policy Board has overall responsibility of regularly evaluating and monitoring the program and makes recommendations to the City.

Mrs. Asuncion de la Cruz, another board member who is connected with the city's nutrition program pointed out

that, "I am not happy with the IDIC at this point. There should be more programs other than the nutrition like nurses clinic, outings and dances for the elderly, etc." Mrs. de la Cruz hopes that the IDIC continues to get support from the City. "My main concern at this point is for us to obtain funding. We, as a community, should unite our efforts around this," she said.

GENERAL ELECTION FOR BOARD DEMANDED

One of the provisions of the IDIC constitution and bylaws is that the Policy Board be democratically elected by the constituencies which is the community at large. The temporary board was formed in a July 26th meeting. Guerzon stated that "The community should elect a strong board that can come regularly to monthly meetings and be able to effectively monitor the services."

As one concerned Filipino pointed out: "The effort to rectify the IDIC is important because the implications are severe. What is at stake is the services to low-income elderly citizens." He believes that key in re-establishing the IDIC is the leadership that the Policy Board can provide. "Unless we have a policy board that is accountable to the needs and concerns of the elderly constituency, we will never save the IDIC." □

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION

Community Holds Forum on Bi-lingual Education

LOS ANGELES—A symposium on Bilingual Education was held on July 18, 1980 at the FACLA Center to educate the Filipino community on the need for such a program.

A panel composed of Filipino-American educators discussed different aspects of the bilingual program in the Los Angeles Unified School District, from its legislative history to present issues and problems faced by the program. The symposium was sponsored by the Filipino Community of Los Angeles (FACLA) and the Filipino-American Educators Association (FAEA).

WHAT IS BILINGUAL EDUCATION?

Bilingual education is a compensatory program to allow children with no-English or limited-English speaking backgrounds to be educated in their own native language (e.g., Spanish, Filipino, etc.) while in the process of learning English and to instill pride in themselves and in their culture. Such a program evolved out of the civil rights movement when minority communities became conscious of their rights and demanded equality in jobs, education, etc. For immigrant groups, one of the means for achieving equal education for their children was through bilingual education.

One of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the U.S. today come from the Philippines with the majority settling in the State of California. In the Philippine public school system, English is not taught until the 4th grade. Filipino immigrant children, therefore, between the ages of 5-9 would encounter language problems in the U.S. school setting. Bilingual education would provide a transition for these children until they are better versed in the English language. Mrs. Dolly Anthony, a panelist in the symposium, stated that "English is learned more efficiently and comprehensively through bilingual education, especially for new immigrants."

Los Angeles has the highest number of Filipino immigrants in any city in the U.S. In the Los Angeles Unified School



Filipino educators stress need for bilingual program

District, there are 7,576 Filipino pupils enrolled. Out of this, 223 have been classified as non-English speaking (NES) and 926 as limited-English speaking (LES). In spite of this number, there is only one school, the Hawaiian Elementary School in Wilmington, which offers a bilingual program. Such programs are state-funded. The Hawaiian Elementary School has recently received word that funds are being cut off and the program is essentially being scrapped.

To illustrate how a bilingual program benefits these children, two teachers from the Hawaiian Elementary School gave a demonstration on how the program is conducted, using the 40 attendees as the "class". Participants were "taught" to form simple sentences in both Filipino and English such as "Ito ay lapis" (This is a pencil) and sensory distinction, e.g., "matamis" (sweet) or "maalat" (salty) using aids such as sugar and salt to more concretely illustrate this. The participants enjoyed this demonstration and agreed that the program does provide a meaningful education for their children. However, with such a good program, why

was only one school out of the many that have Filipino pupils being funded? This then led to a discussion on current issues and problems facing the program.

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

Mrs. Visitacion Bayan, Commissioner of the Asian-American Education of the Board of Education gave a rundown on the problems they, as educators, are encountering in demanding the School District to provide such programs in the schools with significant number of Filipino pupils. A survey was done at the Rosemont Elementary School to find out the parents' attitude towards bilingual education and Mrs. Bayan remarked that "most of the parents reacted indifferently towards the program. They said, 'We do not want our children to learn Filipino, we want them to learn English.'" This indifference is a manifestation of the parents' lack of understanding as to what bilingual education is.

Another problem the educators are facing is that while there are 245 certified

Filipino teachers in the district, providing a good 30:1 ratio between Filipino pupils/teachers, these educators are assigned in areas where there are hardly any Filipinos. One teacher in the audience reinforced this fact by stating that "at Ramona Elementary School, there are 313 Filipino pupils but no Filipino teachers, and when an opening came, I immediately applied but my application was rejected and I was sent to another school in the San Fernando Valley where there are no Filipino pupils."

But the most pressing problem the educators are facing is the Board of Education's response towards the demand for bilingual education. Despite the given facts of a good number of Filipino children who need and would benefit from this type of program, the Board of Education has not responded adequately to that need. Instead, the educators who are fighting very hard for this program are made to feel that "they just want jobs." Mrs. Antony reiterated the need for community involvement in debunking this attitude of the Board and in demanding the Board to create, fund, and maintain such programs in the LA Unified School District.

After a lively exchange of ideas, the participants agreed that the priority in this issue is to educate the community on what bilingual-bicultural education is. A committee was formed to undertake this task and participants signed up to join the committee. Support for this endeavor was evidenced also at a FACLA meeting the next day when two community members were appointed by FACLA President Bert Mendoza to work actively in the committee representing the FACLA.

But all these efforts, by the educators and FACLA alone, will not bring a change in the Board's attitude, but rather, only with a strong community support can results be accomplished. As one participant put it, "Even if we have all these statistics and facts, if the parents and the community do not back us up, we cannot win in our demand for bilingual education." □

History of L.A. South Bay Area:

A Filipino Center is Born

The following article is the first part of a series on the history of the Filipino community of the Los Angeles-Harbor Area, or L.A. South Bay as it is also called. The area encompasses Wilmington, Carson, Long Beach, San Pedro, Gardena, and Torrance. Today, approximately 40,000 Filipinos live in this area and form a unity distinct of their counterparts in Los Angeles proper—Editor.

By FLORANTE IBANEZ (?)
AK Correspondent

WILMINGTON—"How can you [a Filipino] afford an expensive car like this?" the policeman asked Tino Lopez while he visited friends in Wilmington. That was just one of many confrontations with prejudice the young Filipinos of the Los Angeles Harbor Area faced. Yet, in spite of the racism and their meager wages, they struggled to build a community center in Wilmington, a suburb of Los Angeles.

The time was the 1930s and 40s. Many single Filipino men came to America with high hopes in search of the "American Dream." What they found instead was a country poverty stricken as a result of the Depression. Moreover,

they found themselves being targetted by the media as aliens taking away jobs from poor whites. Racist inferences of Filipinos having monkey-tails were carried over from the Philippine-American War of 1896.

Still, they came by the thousands, leaving family and friends to work the farmlands of Torrance and Gardena, the fish canneries of Long Beach, Wilmington, and Terminal Island. Few Filipino women followed them during those days. It was not considered proper.

While the Filipino cannery workers numbered only a few hundred, they formed the core of the growing L.A. Harbor Area Filipino community. Those who decided not to migrate with the crops or travel north for the Alaskan cannery season began to sink their roots in Long Beach, Wilmington, and San Pedro. Some intermarried with the Mexican community and raised families. A few married Caucasians despite the anti-miscegenation laws forbidding it.

Facing a growing social ostracization and prejudice from the majority of society, the dream of a Filipino community center started to take shape. Aproniano Eder was one of those dreamers. He and other cannery workers like Felix

Tapia and Tino Lopez saw the need for the growing Filipino community to have a hall to hold their weddings, baptisms, meetings, and other activities as well as a place that their children would eventually inherit.

Previously, they had a small three-story clubhouse, the Philippine Commonwealth Club on Terminal Island, where they shared their food and rent with their *kababayan* and rested after a hard day's work at the nearby canneries. But it was not a center that could accommodate the activities they envisioned.

With the outbreak of World War II, they had to postpone their dream as many of them enlisted to fight. They found, however, that their military duty was usually limited to the officers' quarters as cooks, stewards, or housekeepers. But their stay in the military did enable many to go back to the Philippines and bring wives to America. It was hard to find work but the canneries could always use them.

Finally, in 1946, a new organization was established, the Filipino Community of Los Angeles Harbor Area, founded by Aproniano Eder. In 1947, they filed their non-profit incorporation papers, but even with this formal status the

young organizations was not immune to the discrimination of the times. Up to the groundbreaking ceremonies in 1979, the fate of the Filipino center was still an uncertainty.

Though they had raised the money from the generosity of other Filipino clubs, individuals, and even some of the canneries, the realty office who sold them the lot also stipulated that all neighbors within a 300-yard radius had to approve the Filipino center. (In those days, the prejudice of your neighbors determined if you could buy land or own a home.) The officers themselves had to take on the responsibility of contacting all the affected residents. Fortunately, the neighborhood was somewhat ethnically mixed and the majority were agreeable.

The birth of the center also marked the forging of a strong united organization. That was quite an achievement given the strong regionalism so prevalent among Filipinos.

It was truly a center for all Filipinos to utilize, a place where one could hold their head up high and say "I helped build this with my sweat and blood. My children and theirs will inherit it when I am gone." □