

CENTRE DAILY NEWS, 4-15-86

Feature/Commentary by reporter, Peter Lee

(headline) AAFE ACTS LIKE "CRAZY SHREW CURSING IN THE STREET"  
AROUSING BLIND PATRIOTISM & IRRATIONAL BEHAVIOR CANNOT CONVINCE THE PUBLIC  
NEVER CONSTRUCTIVE, ALWAYS DISRUPTIVE: OUR COMMUNITY'S MISFORTUNE

Two weeks ago, this newspaper knew that there would be conflicts at the Sunday hearing of the Manhattan Bridge Area Coalition because AAFE couldn't get Community Board 3's support to obstruct the Coalition from seeking to revise the Special District legislation with the City. According to AAFE's past "personality," they were bound to take some radical action. AAFE's show on Sunday far exceeded the community's tolerance, dangerously and ignorantly inciting blind patriotism in a way that makes people worry about the repercussions of AAFE's work.

AAFE's Sunday "disturbance" was totally beyond reason. They forced words into people's mouths and made irrational attacks in the style of "It's no crime to be revolutionary when you're fighting the system."\* Their stupidity was in trying to arouse blind patriotism.

Most ridiculously, AAFE dared to compare the revision of the Special District to the British and French Concession Areas, and accused Coalition people of being "running dogs" and "traitors." These are all acts of a "crazy shrew screaming in the street." The most regrettable thing was when AAFE's Shirley Yan cursed at Stan Mark for "being Chinese, but can't speak Chinese," calling him "pathetic." Then Agnes Poon said, "Why should a Chinese hearing be chaired by an American? Why is the hearing held in English?" etc. This shows AAFE can't use reasonable debate, but resorts to reckless attacks to confuse people.

It's very simple to respond to these accusations. Shirley Yan will regret what she said when she cools down. Is it a crime for Chinese people not to understand Chinese? If you really want to press this point, Shirley Yan's Chinese is not much better, and AAFE's Bill Chong doesn't understand Chinese, does he?

The Coalition knew the majority of people at the hearing would be Chinese, so they specifically invited Yuet Fung Ho to translate. Margaret Fung, Charles Lai, and Sam Sue all grew up in the U.S. and are not fluent in Chinese. If they speak in English, does that mean they're oppressing Chinese people?

In order to allow Chinese people to understand the contents of the revisions, the Coalition hired a translator from the Chinese press to translate the entire report into Chinese. AAFE never translated a research study by an NYU supporter of their lawsuit against the city, yet demanded insistently for people to support the lawsuit.

\*NOTE: slogan by the "Gang of Four" in China.



CENTRE DAILY NEWS, 4-15-86 (Commentary, p2)

Regarding charges of "running dogs" and "traitors," this shows that AAFE has gotten to the point where it can only resort to such low-down tactics.

To arouse chaos and blind patriotism so irrationally is very dangerous, especially given the complexity of Chinatown. For AAFE to act this way only confuses the issues and makes it impossible for people to understand the situation and assess right from wrong. This simply adds to divisions among community people.

If AAFE thinks they are right, they should struggle in principle, calmly lay out their views, and shouldn't deliberately cause chaos.

The Coalition has never attacked AAFE's lawsuit. AAFE should similarly respect the Coalition's efforts to fight for the community's welfare. Community Board 3's arguments regarding AAFE's seeking to obstruct the Coalition's revisions stated: "We shouldn't obstruct any organization from fighting for the community's welfare. If there are 100 different groups, as long as they're for the community, we shouldn't try to block them."

AAFE should stop being so arrogant. Ask AAFE, since the start of the SMBD, what concrete solutions have they raised? The Coalition worked for one year to research the proposed revisions. AAFE wants them to throw one year of hard work out the window -- is it fair?

AAFE's Community Housing Renovation Project Director, Kit-Wah Tom, once acknowledged that Chinatown needs a comprehensive housing plan which requires at least several years to complete. Can Chinatown wait while AAFE does its research and lawsuit? Chinatown residents still live in 100-year-old dilapidated houses, with garbage, rats, and cockroaches.

It goes without saying that AAFE and the Coalition are both for the community's welfare. Both sides should put aside excessive subjectivism and try their best to resolve their differences, then use their energies to hit out at the City, instead of fighting among ourselves. But after Sunday's incident, this hope might be too idealistic!