

## Jing Fong Picket Update #1

### Week Ending March 16, 1995

We have been picketing Jing Fong Restaurant on a regular basis since February 14th. The pickets are comprised of construction, garment and restaurant workers and supporters from various communities. Our pickets began having an effect almost immediately. In the first week, Deng Xiao Peng's daughter was scheduled to attend a banquet organized by her supporters. Because of our presence, the banquet was canceled, leaving Jing Fong with 80 empty tables! Since then, many more banquets have been canceled.

The management has become even more oppressive towards the workers inside. They forced workers to sign blank pieces of paper, leaving the content to be filled in later. They also made workers produce immigration papers. These measures are intended to give management more leverage to intimidate any workers from openly supporting and joining us.

Publicly, management has not refuted any one of our claims about their slave labor practices. To the contrary, they have confirmed these claims in the media and justified their practices by repeating the lie that it is inherent in Chinese culture for workers to be docile and accepting of authority, no matter how brutal. They also insist that slave labor practices are necessary for businesses to thrive, that they are creating employment. Both claims, of course, are untrue. By attempting to undercut their competition and maximize profit through drastic price-cutting measures, Jing Fong is creating an inhospitable atmosphere for other restaurants to compete. Also, by making one person work 70+ hours a week, doing the work of two people, Jing Fong is actually helping to create unemployment.

The Chinese press has been largely biased towards management. One newspaper went so far as to accuse us of paying "foreign mercenaries" \$50.00 to staff our picket line. The story was accompanied by a photograph focusing on African-American and Latino supporters on our first day of picketing. Such crass appeals to ethnic chauvinism are racist, divisive and libelous. We continue to encourage working people from all communities to unite with us.

As we go into our fifth week, management has made no sincere efforts to negotiate. They even organized a counter-demonstration outside their restaurant on Friday, March 10th. The picket was headed mainly by management with kitchen staff members, most of whom were hiding their faces. With the exception of one waiter, the wait staff did not participate. In another repressive measure, management has been keeping lists with the names of those who refuse to stand on their picket line.

We mobilized for a large demonstration on Sunday, March 12th. This date commemorates the first anniversary of the Silver Palace victory and re-affirms our commitment to bury slave labor in the Chinese communities. Over 200 people rallied in support of the rights of working people to legal and humane working conditions. They included Asian, Latino and African-American workers, and members of community organizations and civil rights groups such as the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), Latino Workers'

Center, Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAUV), Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, the Workplace Project and the Center for Korean American Culture. We were met with a counter-demonstration of about 50 people. Once again, it was mainly staffed by Jing Fong management and kitchen staff. The others were people who do business with Jing Fong, e.g., meat suppliers, and their families.

At the demonstration, we brought out a coffin to symbolize the death of slave labor. In the Chinese community, a coffin is a symbol of bad luck and death. In response, the counter-demo brought out a large mirror to reflect the coffin back upon us. They obviously do not understand that we are not marshaling metaphysical forces to attack their restaurant. We are using the coffin's potent symbolism to represent our political goals; our strength comes from organizing the very real forces in the community.

At the picket on Wednesday, March 15, one of our supporters was physically attacked. She was photographing the counter-demo when they threw things at her and attempted to grab her. They also threatened to kill her. This is yet another example of Jing Fong management's disregard for basic human decency.

As part of our outreach campaign, we have arranged several speaking engagements. If you would like to help organize a speaking engagement at your school, community center, union hall or place of worship, see below.

This is a listing for the next few weeks:

March 22	Hunter College Hunter West 1732	68 St. & Lexington Ave.	1:00PM
March 28	NYU Law School	-----	4:00PM
April 3	Fordham Law	-----	please call for info
April 4	Yale	-----	please call for info
April 5	Brooklyn Law Room TBA	250 Joralemon	5:00PM

We must continue to make the message loud and clear: we will not tolerate slave labor practices in Jing Fong Restaurant or anywhere else in the Chinese communities!

**For more information, call Chinese Staff & Worker's Association at (212) 619-7979 and ask for Alex Fong or Kwong Hui.**