

OVER

Asian Contingents Upset by

By Dexter Waugh

The National Peace Action Coalition had written into its plans for yesterday's march a mass demonstration of anti-war sentiment by Third World people.

Non-white minorities would parade near the front of the march in a solid, united bloc.

It didn't quite happen.

There were blacks, Chicanos, native Americans and Asian Americans scattered throughout the march; they numbered several hundred at the least, but their contingents were small.

The march got off to a good start. The pace was fast, and that was part of the problem. It passed the Third World assembly area ahead of schedule, before many Third Worlders had arrived.

18 Captains

Stephen Mehlert, a 20 year old Chinese-American who led the Asian contingent, focused on another problem that is an inherent handicap with any coalition that grows so large that it tries to speak and plan for all of its constituent parts.

He said Third World people felt they had been "used" by the white organizers of NPAC, and had decided late in the game to boycott the march.

"NPAC had 18 area captains for the march — none was Third World," said Mehlert. "All the walkie talkies were controlled by white people."

Mehlert also complained that NPAC was top-heavy with members of the Young Socialist Alliance.

"They injected politics into it, and a lot of the brothers just didn't buy it. I wish it was simply a peaceful march to end the war."

Chee said, "It's a war that produces manifestations like Lt. Calley, and My Lai; the type of psychological attitude, the racist attitude of Lt. Calley, who said that in

the context of the war all of us are subhumans, gooks, or Charlies."

Ray Okamura, chairman of the Bay Area Community Chapter of the Japanese

American Citizens League, fears that soldiers will bring this war - instilled attitude home with them.

"Two foreign students from Japan were traveling

Handling of March

There were groups of young Asian American students on various campuses, however, that had wanted to put a political spin on their participation. NPAC had originally handed Portsmouth Square in Chinatown to the Asians as an assembly point.

The student activists took a look at this and decided to merge with the Third World contingent which assembled at Hamilton Playground.

The walking distance was shorter, solidarity with other minorities would be demonstrated, and further, some of the Asian activists agreed with the "anti-imperialist" political tone of the Third World contingent.

Their force was felt, and Portsmouth Square was dumped as an assembly point. Milton Chee, a 31 year old Muni bus driver who helped organize the Asian contingent for NPAC, said he had hoped the Chinatown assembly point would attract people from the community to join the march.

Concept of Asians

The Asians who marched did appear to be in accord on one point. All of them interviewed said they felt their view of the war in Vietnam differs basically from that of their non-Asian colleagues.

"Look, it's Asians that they dropped the Bomb on in World War II," said one woman. "It's Asians who are being killed in Vietnam. If this were a war against Germans, I probably wouldn't be out here."

Nori Lafferty, an Oakland housewife and Nisei (second generation Japanese American) with two sons, phoned friends the night before to remind them to march. She said:

"It's the whole concept that Asians are lesser people. Asians are being killed in Vietnam, even Japanese-American soldiers who are called gooks over there."

through Georgia, and were set upon and beaten up by some white people. The people beat them up on the basis of, 'Look, there's those gooks again.'"

Apocryphal or true, the story is real to Okamura. "A of (my feeling) might be paranoia," he concedes, but the fear is real, too.

The young radical Ja-

panese - Americans who marched yesterday were not joined in significant numbers by their parents. Like middle-class citizens of many ethnic groups, including whites,

they have pursued a policy of quiet assimilation into society.

They may follow the activist students with their hearts and disagree with the noisy tactics, but all of them are wary of white prejudice. They recall being lumped with the enemy 30 years ago and hustled off to spend two years in a wartime relocation camp. For some of them, it was heir version of "Growing Up In America."