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Between 'Blight' and a New World:
Urban Renewal, Political Mobilization, and
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This paper examines political mobilization around urban renewal in San Francisco's Japantown (*Nihonmachi* or J-town) during the post-World War II era. Its assessment of the efforts of the Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction (CANE) – a largely Japanese American, grassroots organization that opposed the city's redevelopment plan – demonstrates the centrality of space to the political mobilization of people of color. CANE's mobilization was not merely a politics of the local, fought building by building and block-by-block. Rather, CANE sought to organize at larger scales, for example, by procuring international allies. In addition to illustrating the scalar strategies adopted by community organizers, this case study offers lessons for understanding the relationship between urban renewal and racism, property, and the liberal capitalist state, specifically under conditions of geo-economic and geopolitical crisis.

"Either poverty must use democracy to destroy the power of property, or property, in fear of poverty, will destroy democracy."

Colonel Thomas Rainborough, Leveller[1]
1647

Thomas Rainborough's Tears

I begin my paper with this often-evoked, mid-17th century epigraph by radical Leveller Thomas Rainborough not merely because I have a fascination with the English Revolution but also because I believe that if Rainborough had lived to see urban renewal in San Francisco during the mid 20th century, he may indeed have shed tears at the triumph of property enshrined through the redevelopment process, one that leveled, in this case, communities of color and white, working-class neighborhoods.[2] Moreover, I make this connection because the two time periods share elements of crisis, state sponsored expropriation, an expansion of property rights, and political mobilization by the socially *and* spatially differentiated in opposition to these changes – in other words, the "dreaming" of a 'world turned upside down.'[3] In this paper, I present the case of post-Second World War urban renewal and social movements in San

[1] I first saw this quote in Ruth Gilmore's (1993) essay "Terror Austerity Race Gender Excess Theater." I have since seen it mentioned in Linebaugh (2003a, 2003b) and Linebaugh and Rediker (2000). The Levellers were active during the English Revolution and their membership represented a wide range of interests: at their most radical, the True Levellers advocated abolition of slavery, opposed the enclosure of the commons, and were centrally concerned with issues of poverty (Hill 1975).

[2] The phrase 'triumph of property' is drawn from W.E.B. Du Bois' (1935) *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* where he uses 'dictatorship of property' to describe the defeat of Reconstruction at the hands of Northern capital and a resurgent Southern plantocracy –- a united front sealed through the aegis of racism. Du Bois (1935) also utilizes the metaphor of weeping in this magisterial work when he concludes his chapter entitled "Counter-Revolution of Property" stating, "God wept; but that mattered little to an unbelieving age; what mattered most was that the world wept and still is weeping and blind with tears and blood. For there began to rise in America in 1876 a new capitalism and a new enslavement of labor" (634).

[3] Please see Christopher Hill's (1975) *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* and also the music of Billy Bragg, Leon Rosselson, and Chumbawamba.

Francisco's Western Addition district to discuss both this expropriation and the response to it. In particular, I am concerned with what opposition to urban renewal tells us about the importance of space and spatial scale to the social movements of marginalized groups as well as what it tells us about historical and present day opposition to dispossession in all of its forms.

Although my dissertation examines political mobilization around urban renewal in the Western Addition's Japanese American Japantown *and* African American Fillmore District, I limit the focus of this paper to urban renewal in Japantown (*Nihonmachi* or J-town) and I focus on one organization, the Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction (CANE), a largely Japanese American, grassroots organization that opposed urban renewal.[4] Since one cannot talk about CANE's mobilization separately from the process and planning of urban renewal, I begin with a brief discussion of the urban renewal plan and the related discourse of 'urban blight' and then offer an examination of CANE and its mobilization. I analyze both this mobilization and the redevelopment plan with respect to geographer Neil Smith's (1992) work on spatial scale.[5] I conclude by suggesting some of the implications of my study for social movements research, for racial formation theory (particularly with respect to racial positioning), and for studies on the relationship between property, race, and the state under conditions of crisis.

Unlike the city of Oakland, space is not just 'there.' Instead, space is produced relationally and dialectically through struggle or contestation in terms of spatial scale (Lefebvre 1991, Smith 1992). Thus, CANE's mobilization was not merely a politics of the local, fought

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[4] It must be noted that J-town residents referred to their neighborhood as *Nihonjin-machi* or 'Japanese-persons town.' Laguerre (2000) indicates that the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency imposed 'Nihonmachi.' The politics of place naming will be explored in my dissertation.

[5] Smith (1992) draws from Henri Lefebvre's (1991) work on the social construction or production of space, where space is both a product of social relations (particularly those related to capitalism and the role of the state) and also productive of these relations. Smith (1992) theorizes scale as a way to *represent* seemingly different kinds of spaces, a language for spatial differentiation, as well as a means by which and through which space is *produced* in an interconnected dialectical fashion, i.e., through struggle/contestation. To this end, Smith (1992) proposes a non-prescriptive, interlinked scalar typology, which includes the following levels: body, home, community, city, region, nation, and global. Other geographers have extended this work to consider the "ontological status of scale," representations of scale, and the "politics of producing scale" (Herod and Wright 2002, 5-13).

building by building, block by block – though certainly the San Francisco Redevelopment

Agency (RDA or SFRA) and other pro-renewal advocates attempted to confine this resistance

materially and ideologically to the local. Rather CANE's actions as well as its ideological

organizing frameworks were occasionally directed at targets beyond the 'local'; in other words,

CANE made efforts to organize at larger scales, such as procuring international allies. This

scalar strategy is what Neil Smith (1992) means by 'jumping scale' or what Joe Nevins (2004)

refers to as 'socializing a conflict' as opposed to attempts to 'privatize or individualize a

conflict,' i.e. 'dumping spatial scale.' One can view urban renewal as a struggle for the control

of property, of different conceptualizations of space and place (those of exchange-value versus

those of use-value), and of ideology at different but interrelated levels. I examine the production

of spatial scale not only in terms of struggle but also as it is historicized within a context of crisis

or rather several interrelated crises. [6] So, in a sense, my paper touches on different attempts on

the part of the state, capital, and movements to resolve crisis.[7]

A Vision, A Plan, and A Very Big Bulldozer

The Western Addition is located immediately to the west of the downtown business

district – bound to the north by California Street, to the south by Duboce Street and Market

Street, to the east by Van Ness Avenue, and to the west by Masonic Avenue. It was named the

Western Addition because it was the first subdivision constructed to the west of the downtown

San Francisco area. The district gradually developed communities of color following the 1906

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[6] By 'interrelated crises' I mean the following: 1) a discursive crisis, something that was manufactured, spun, or produced – a smokescreen created to divert attention, e.g., an 'urban crisis' or a 'racial crisis'; 2) a crisis of neighborhood destruction; 3) geoeconomic breakdowns in the operation of capitalism due to overproduction or overaccumulation, including economic downturn following the Second World War and again from the late 1960s through the 1980s; and 4) geopolitical challenges to the legitimacy of the state and/or the entire social order – in other words, a crisis of legitimization (see O'Connor 1973).

[7] See also the work of W.E.B Du Bois (1935), C.L.R. James (1963), Stuart Hall (1980, 1996), and Ruth Gilmore (1998/1999, 1999) on the messy resolution of crisis.

earthquake, which resulted in an influx of refugees from the downtown area, including Japanese American immigrants, and an exodus of the district's white, middle-class inhabitants as they escaped from both the destruction caused by the earthquake and their new neighbors.

At its largest, the Western Addition's Nihonmachi encompassed a 20-block area centered between Western and Octavia and Post and Pine.[8] The neighborhood flourished until the Second World War when FDR issued Executive Order 9066, which forced the evacuation of West Coast Japanese Americans from the Western Defense Zone into concentration camps. This emptied the neighborhood of its inhabitants, creating a sort of *volkloser Raum*, a peopleless space, not only in J-town but also along the entire West Coast (Agamben 1999).[9] These events facilitated the expansion of the smaller African American neighborhood centered along Fillmore Street, which grew between 1940 and 1950 from 2,144 to 14,888 residents (over a 700 percent increase) (Seigel 2000-2001). Most of these new residents were from the South, having traveled to San Francisco in search of war industry jobs (France 1962). After the war, some of the district's Japanese Americans returned in an attempt to salvage the shattered pieces of their lives, but within a few years, both the Japanese- and African American communities in the area confronted not only the post-war economic downturn but also urban renewal.

Urban renewal in the Western Addition was never just about the local reshaping of a neighborhood. To produce the Western Addition as *redeveloped* space required four key elements: 1) the Bay Area elite's envisioning and implementation of a plan to alter the entire region's political economy, population, and landscape; 2) the contracting of two major transnational developers, the Kintetsu Corporation and the National-Braemer Corporation, to

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[8] There were also Japanese communities located in Chinatown on Dupont Street (now called Grant Street) and in the South Gate neighborhood near the present day San Francisco Giants baseball stadium (Morozumi 1977).
[9] This German phrase was used by Hitler to refer to an Eastern Europe emptied of so-called subhumans or *untermenschen* (see Agamben 1999 for his analysis).

build the (hyper)orientalized Japan Center, the centerpiece development of the first phase of

urban renewal in the Western Addition; 3) direct federal government funding and its supporting

legal/institutional framework; and 4) an elaborate scalar discourse of 'urban blight' that equated

'blight' with urban crisis in racialized, gendered, and classed ways. The goal of all of these

measures was the production of a space that would ensure the continued accumulation of capital

at ever larger scales (the accumulation of post-war super profits), but the discursive/ideological

explanations themselves focused on racialized, classed, and gendered disorder operating at

smaller spatial scales. There was, in other words, an attempt to privatize or "individualize

disorder" (to use Allen Feldman's [1991] term) by formulating a 'racial project' linking the

material restructuring of space with justifying discourse that reduced scale in representing the

Western Addition as 'blighted' (Omi and Winant 1994, Gilmore 1998/1999, Nevins 2004).[10]

Post-Second World War urban renewal was imagineered in the final years of the war and

implemented over a period of four decades by a relatively select clique of spatial actors and

institutions operating at the municipal, Bay Area regional, national and transnational scales.[11]

Chief among these actors was the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, which Chester

Hartman (2002) describes as a semi-autonomous "super agency" (15). Headed by Justin Herman

from 1959-1971, the RDA was the local institutional actor in charge of the day-to-day business

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[10] This 'dumping' (as opposed to jumping) of spatial scale is the hallmark of the state's crisis manufacture and resolution seen for example in the case of urban renewal but also more recently in the visage of the crack addict, welfare mother, and irresponsible corporate CEO (Smith 1992, Gilmore 1998/1999). In these latter cases disorder has been individualized to an aberrant (oftentimes racialized and gendered) figure in order to deflect attention and/or to justify modern day crusades – something that Allen Feldman (1991, 109) trenchantly notes saying, "Arrest is the political art of individualizing disorder." I thank Ruthie Gilmore for making these points. I should add that the privatized manufacturing and resolution of crisis is not the sole preserve of the state: for example, the rise of gated communities or other forms of defensive homeownership – opting out by any other name – must be interpreted as a response to crisis by homeowners through the (neo)feudalistic scaling down of life – one that pivots on the axis of property (McKenzie 1994). What Davis (1992) refers to as 'forting up' and Gilroy (2000) calls 'encampment' augurs the ultimate trajectory of both the deification of property and the true meaning of the word 'security.' Finally 'dumping' scale buttresses the neoliberal policy of devolution, which purports to shift responsibility for social welfare provision from the federal government to states and localities (or even private industry) but in actuality results in net reductions in social spending and widespread (or socialized) immiseration. This, in turn, is rosily justified in the name of 'states rights,' sharing a cognate space with apologists for the Confederacy.

[11] Imagineered is from Charles Rutheiser's (1996) *Imagineering Atlanta*. He borrows this term not surprisingly from Walt Disney.

of planning, building condemnation, eviction, and demolition whose powers included the ability to issue bonds, purchase land, control large sums of federal funding, and exercise eminent domain. However, the RDA operated closely with and in many cases took its lead from private developers, Bay Area business elites, and city government officials who operated through organizations like the Bay Area Council (BAC), Blyth-Zellerbach Committee (B-Z Committee), and San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal (SPUR).[12] Thus urban renewal was advanced by a close collaboration of public and corporate interests, who, as early as the final years of WWII, began commissioning strategic plans that identified neighborhoods for redevelopment.

This master plan for urban renewal was guided by two imperatives: regional planning and specialization within the Bay Area, and making the most of the U.S. conquest of Japan – also known as the "Pacific Rim strategy." Starting with the Metropolitan Defense Committee (MDC) in 1944, Bay Area economic interests emphasized greater regional coordination and planning with sub-regional specialization of economic functions. For example, the South Bay (Silicon Valley) was envisioned as the post-war center of aerospace and electronics and San Francisco importantly was seen as the hub for both tourism and business, and administrative and legal services (what today is called finance, insurance, and real estate [FIRE] services) (Hartman 2002). As a consequence of this shifting economy, housing for the employees of this new economy had to be constructed.[13] Seven neighborhoods, including the Western Addition, were targeted by pro-redevelopment advocates for urban renewal because their proximity to the civic center made them 'ideal' locations for this projected new luxury apartment and condominium

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[12] The membership of these three organizations was largely corporate, including officers and board members from companies like the Zellerbach Corporation, Hewlett-Packard, Standard Oil, PG&E, Bechtel, and Pacific Telegraph and Telephone. Although SPUR, the BAC, and the B-Z Committee promoted pet projects, e.g. the BAC was a major proponent of BART and SPUR was the 'official' citizens advisory committee on urban renewal, their interests were so intimately intertwined that they even shared members (Hartman 2002). So, in a way, redevelopment was a family affair.
[13] Put another way, *lebensraum* had to be created.

housing, and their existing populations, largely people of color and/or white working-class, became a 'problem' that would require an 'appropriate remedy.'[14]

The Pacific Rim strategy, or what I like to refer to as a 'Reorientation toward the Orient,' was the Bay Area elite's attempt to resurrect the old orientalist dream of capturing the riches of the Pacific Rim.[15] The essential question was how would the Bay Area elite take advantage of the U.S. conquest of Japan – How would they profit from Pacific Rim hegemony? It was this strategy that informed and molded the construction of the Japan Center. The proposed 'Manhattanization' of the downtown area and the repositioning of the Bay Area within the changed global political economy were twin efforts on the part of capital and the state to 'jump scale' beyond regulatory and/or geographic boundaries (Smith 1992); capital's jumping of scale, of course, is not new – another notable example being imperialism.

Of critical importance to urban renewal was the federal government's creation and funding of the urban renewal program through the 1949 Omnibus Housing Act, which underwrote two-thirds of the costs of these projects. It is equally imperative to note that, during this period, urban renewal was not the only federally funded program that attempted widespread socio-spatial engineering. The lion's share of effort and funds went into highway and road construction and the Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) insuring of mortgages, almost exclusively in new suburbs. One cannot separate urban renewal from the complementary

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[14] These areas included the 1) Golden Gateway, which is site of the present day Embarcadero Center and former site of a thriving farmer's market, now being spectrally reproduced with the renovation of the Ferry Building; 2) the South of Market Area, which was cleared for the Yerba Buena and Moscone Centers; 3) Chinatown, largely untouched by wide scale redevelopment; 4) the Western Addition; 5) the Bayview/Hunter's Point and Indian Basin area, which is now being threatened with gentrification because of the construction of the Mission Bay biotechnology research park (what Paul Gilroy [2000] might refer to as an expansion of the nanopolitical 'frontier'); and 7) Diamond Heights. Earlier studies by redevelopment boosters had also targeted the Mission District, but this neighborhood escaped redevelopment until the 1990s when it became the frontline for gentrification struggles between dot.com barons and the neighborhood's largely Latino population. One should note that Diamond Heights was a previously undeveloped hillside area and because the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was able to declare it 'blighted,' this area became an official urban renewal site. The renewal of Diamond Heights demonstrates the confluence of moneyed and propertied interests behind redevelopment, an ironic indicator that the language of 'urban blight' did not merely describe objective conditions on the ground.
[15] Silk, tea, spice, and everything nice, that's what the dreams of little orientalists are made of (see Said 1979).

programs that promoted suburbanization.[16] In other words, redevelopment and suburbanization

should both be viewed as part of the same massive, subsidized redistribution of land, resources,

and people that occurred at the zenith of the Keynesian welfare state's influence (Gilmore

1998/1999).[17] This state sanctioned process exacerbated socio-spatial cleavages and facilitated or

solidified the institutionalized intergenerational transfer of white privilege as property wealth

(Harris 1993, Oliver and Shapiro 1995, Pulido 2000).

Finally, urban renewal in San Francisco was marked by a significant *transnational*

element. In addition to assuming a strategic orientation toward the Pacific Rim, city officials

hired the National-Braemer Corporation and the Kintetsu Corporation to be the primary

developers of the Japantown Center – the centerpiece development in the first half of the

Western Addition's renewal (A-1), which included a luxury hotel, the Miyako, a Japanese

Consulate, a peace pagoda (which was designed in Japan and built in the Bay Area), and a

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[16] Nor can one detach suburbanization and urban renewal from processes of uneven development and segregation at the nexus of the state, capital, and property relationship (Smith 1990).

[17] Further research needs to be conducted on the relationship between urban renewal and suburbanization. Both of which privileged the importance or sanctity of modernist planning. See Hirsh (1983) on housing projects and Scott (1998) for an analysis of planning and the state. Additionally, while urban renewal is a program associated with the height of the Keynesian welfare state, it ended as a federal program during the 1970s when the welfare state was experiencing severe crisis, resulting in the welfare state's restructuring as a 'crisis state' (Negri 1988). This case study of the Western Addition, then, is an opportunity to investigate the production of space during a period of capitalist *and* state crisis (Gilmore 1998/199). 'What happened on the ground,' so to speak, is an indicator of how this crisis was resolved, and by no means do I mean to imply that this resolution was either complete or tidy. Few remain unscathed. In examining the urban renewal process, we can draw insight from Du Bois's (1935) *Black Reconstruction in America* to examine the linkage among property, crisis, and the state. Simply put, urban renewal was a situation, like post-Civil War Reconstruction, where the resolution of crisis was marked by the triumph of the "dictatorship of property" united in part through the aegis of racism and the state (595).

Japanese Trade and Cultural Center (JTCC).[18] The JTCC symbolized and served as an

encapsulated space for San Francisco's trade orientation toward the Pacific Rim, and the entire

center itself was designed as a space of tourism, a sight/site for voyeuristic experiencing of

things Japanese. Urban renewal advocates, in fact, promoted the Japan Center as a 'sure-fire'

hotspot for tourism like Chinatown, which had become a major tourism site since the late 19th

century. The original plans included showrooms to display the latest wares of Japanese

corporations like Nissan and Sony, staff dressed in Japanese-style outfits, and the architecture

was garishly and perhaps ironically (faux) Japanese for the architect was Japanese American.

Significantly, the fact that international corporations received the bid to develop an 'authentic'

site of Japaneseness foregrounds the issue of transnational capitalism and its ability to reshape

physical and conceived spaces by commodifying and, in this case, (hyper)orientalizing them.[19]

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[18] A similar Chinese Cultural and Trade Center (CCTC) was built in Chinatown as part of urban renewal. In contrast to redevelopment in the Western Addition, urban renewal in Chinatown was largely limited to the CCTC and the construction of a hotel and parking structure. Instead private developers, as in the case of the International Hotel with the Milton Meyer Corporation and then Four Seas International, carried out the majority of real estate speculation and development in Chinatown and the adjacent Manilatown area – although this was not as extensive or destructive as in areas targeted for urban renewal. The difference in redevelopment outcomes in Chinatown, Manilatown, and Japantown was most likely due to the fact that tourism in San Francisco was a key element in the post-war master plan, and because Chinatown was the orientalist tourist attraction par excellence, it was not designated for large-scale demolition like the A-1 area. Manilatown, which historically ran for ten blocks along Kearny Street, was not so fortunate and, in fact, is no longer in existence. I should note that the differential impact of redevelopment (or the uneven production of San Francisco as redeveloped space) is also witnessed between the Western Addition's Japantown and Fillmore District. Further research needs to be conducted on this topic, but one can speculate that this variation was due in part to the intersection between differential racialization and the urban renewal process. In other words, the spaces and perhaps even the communities were valued and racialized either as 'worthy' of renewal or of removal. Residents in both districts were evicted in large numbers but only spaces in J-town were commodified. This is a spatialized example of Claire Kim's (1999) racial triangulation model where groups and spaces are valorized relative to each other in terms of race and 'foreignness.'

[19] Most of the businesses within the JTCC failed within five years of their 1968 opening, an ironic counterpoint to the entire redevelopment enterprise. Today, the businesses within the Center and certainly within J-town are increasingly owned by non-Japanese, mostly Korean and Chinese, but then and again J-town has always been 'multicultural.'

"The Widow, The Widower, The Bachelor, and The Working Girl": Blight and Its Discourses

An analysis of the discourse that was employed to justify urban renewal reveals how space is metaphorically produced, particularly in terms of scale. As stated earlier in the paper, this discourse hinged upon the designation of 'urban blight,' which was necessary for procuring federal funding and which worked rhetorically by portraying 'blighted' conditions (the spaces and inhabitants) as an epidemic or crisis. Although reports by the RDA and the San Francisco Planning Commission (SFPC) make some reference to 'blight' endangering property values and/or investment, more often than not the threat of 'blight' (as measured, for example, by the concentration of condemned housing, numbers of delinquents, and frequency of crime) was rendered as a spatialized danger to the city, the community, and/or the family. For example, in many reports and in local newspaper articles, blighted areas were described as diseased parts of a larger urban body whose potentially terminal effects could only be ameliorated through the palliative of battlefield surgery, i.e. amputation and cauterization.[20] Blighted areas were also depicted as breeding grounds for 'poor citizenship,' which constituted a danger to the larger urban and democratic community.

Often this discourse was directed at the scale of the family. Many of the social indicators that were used to measure 'blight' focused on the absence of or threats to healthy heteronormative families in 'blighted' areas. For example, a San Francisco City Planning Commission (1945) report explains, "Blighted districts and slums encourage delinquency. They are known as the breeding places of crime. Buildings do provide shelter, but they can rarely be called homes. They are overcrowded, lack space and facilities for normal family life [sic]" (n.p.). Tellingly, the inhabitants of the Western Addition are referred to in another SFPC (1965)

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[20] Many local newspapers had a vested interest in urban renewal (Hartman 2002).

report as both "unrelated individuals – the widow, the widower, the bachelor, and the working girl [and]…Negro and Mexican-American…immigrants" (45). Thus, inhabitants of 'blighted' areas suffered from a dearth of sunshine, lawns, parks, and pets and a surplus of disease, delinquency, and skin pigmentation/melatonin. Bluntly put, the threat to the heteronormative family was portrayed as both a racial and a mobile menace. At any rate, left unchallenged by the state, these conditions and individuals posed a serious danger to so-called 'normal' children and families, especially to those of the workers in the new post-war economy.

What this discourse manufactured was nothing less than an urban crisis, which was also a racial crisis (Sugrue 1996). It conflated 'disorderly' individuals and 'disordered' spaces and was accomplished through a strategic and discursive deployment of spatial scale. Besides justifying a renewal, this scalar discourse performed a triple erasure by privatizing disorder or dumping scale. First, in the most immediate sense, this language deflected attention away from the destruction and dislocation that would be wrought by this intervention. Second, it hid the moneyed and propertied interests behind urban renewal. Third, like late 20th century welfare reform's targeting of the 'undeserving' poor, i.e. so-called welfare queens, the crisis-filled discourse of 'blight' depicted neighborhoods themselves as undeserving, blaming these spaces and their residents for existing housing conditions, thereby masking the historical factors that created very real declining housing conditions. Put another way, this decontextualized language worked to erase both the history of segregation and the material basis undergirding the property relationship. Both were (and continue to be) secured by a state sanctioned phalanx of racist policies and practices, which operated at multiple levels to fabricate the conditions that became

named 'blight.' [21] These policies and practices include, for example, everyday racist violence/terror (thuggery), restrictive covenants, redlining, homeowner associations, and even the earliest expropriation of the land through conquest and genocide.

As a critical aside, it must be noted that the individualizing of disorder into racialized and gendered archetypes/tropes, like the gang member, crack addict, welfare queen, terrorist, or irresponsible corporate CEO, [22] is not a mere rhetorical play, but rather has had very material and lethal effects. By utilizing the language of crisis and war, this discourse has in most cases legitimized late 20th century dismantling of the Keynesian welfare state through the evisceration of social welfare programs and resulted in the socialization of misery and the concomitant expansion of state repression at ever larger scales. Thus, it should come as no surprise that the rhetoric of war has been deployed to combat so-called drug epidemics or out of control youth gangs because, as Randolph Bourne once noted, "War is the health of the state."

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[21] Make no mistake; housing and building conditions in the Western Addition were declining. But the specific history of segregation in the Western Addition, including restrictive covenants and the practices of realtors and lenders, which limited the housing options of people of color and thereby made them vulnerable to landlord exploitation and neglect, was erased by this language of 'blight.' One should note that conditions in the Western Addition were made all the more acute by the impact of World War II, specifically the evacuation of Japanese residents, influx of war-time industry employees into an already tight housing market, and the municipal government's inability to maintain physical infrastructure all placed incredible strains on existing housing.

[22] These are not *facile* stereotypes but weaponized smokescreens whose deployment, more often than not, has deadly consequences. The first four are marked by a greater degree of lethality for the targeted vulnerable populations (Gilmore 2002), while the latter elides the even more grotesque, systemic predations of neo-liberal capitalism – however, I would certainly argue that the CEO trumps all in the matter of felonious quality, although not in jail time served. After all as the old saying goes:

The law locks up the man or woman
That steals the goose from off the common,
But lets the greater felon loose,
That steals the common from the goose.

I thank Iain Boal (2004, 394) for this.

'To Stop the Destruction and Dispersal of the Japanese Community': Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction

Redevelopment in the Western Addition occurred in two phases, encompassing different sections of the district, A-1 and A-2. The first phase, A-1, lasted from 1953 to 1966 and covered a 28 block, 108 acre area bound by Post, Franklin, Eddy, and Broderick.[23] It included the widening of the Geary Expressway into eight lanes, which linked the middle-class residential Richmond District with the downtown area. To reiterate, this phase of the project was governed by a policy of total clearance, i.e. eviction and then demolition, resulting in the displacement of 8,000 residents, 1,500 of whom were Japanese American, and the destruction of 6,000 low-rent housing units (Seigel 2000/2001, 21). Only 2,014 new housing units were built in the A-1 area with 686 of these designated for low- to moderate-income tenants (ibid.). Despite this widespread destruction, organized resistance against urban renewal was relatively muted during this phase of the project. In part, the slowed formation of resistance was due to a 'common sense,' high-modernist belief that redevelopment would result in the 'improvement' of neighborhoods (Scott 1998).[24] Additionally, resistance was forestalled because of the institutional hubris of urban renewal proponents, including the lack of public outreach or education on the part of SPUR and the RDA (both ostensibly public entities) to the area's residents and the limited (legal, institutional, and financial) means that residents had to appeal or negotiate their eviction and demolition notices.

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[23] The majority of this clearance occurred in the first three years of Justin Herman's tenure at the RDA (1959-1961) (Seigel 2000/2001).

[24] Community leaders like Dr. Carleton Goodlett of the NAACP supported redevelopment. As noted earlier, 'blighted' conditions did 'exist' – although not for the reasons that pro-redevelopment forces highlighted. (See Scott 1998, 10-12.) If anything, this consensus on 'improvement' points to the existence of a Gramscian historical bloc constructed around the 'Manhattanization of San Francisco, which both promoted and was bolstered by common sense understandings of what was modern, what was 'blighted' and who should be enfranchised within the new redeveloped order (Hall 1980, Hall 1996, McGovern 1998).

As the numbers of displaced residents increased without RDA efforts either to relocate them or to rebuild below-market rate housing, resistance against urban renewal began to coalesce further.[25]   Yet even this incipient organizing was somewhat precluded by the RDA's politicking; for example, the RDA made verbal and political concessions to groups in the A-1 area, promising reforms for the second phase, A-2, which began haltingly in 1966. These concessions importantly included the creation of citizen review groups, the appointment of community leaders to these groups, and even the pledging of physical sites in redeveloped areas to oppositional groups and/or leaders for their own development.[26] The effect of these efforts was to divide oppositional groups and/or create factions within communities. In this sense, one can argue that these efforts, much like the Keynesian welfare state's attempt to broker peace between labor and capital during the 1930s, were designed to reformulate or incorporate (i.e. center) the resistance of oppositional groups within the redevelopment process itself (Negri 1988).[27]

The A-2 phase was a massive 70 block, 277 acre project, which surrounded A-1. Although A-2 began officially in 1966, demolition and construction was delayed due to a lawsuit by the largely African American Western Addition Community Organization (WACO) (Hartman 2002). As of 2002 A-2 is still an ongoing RDA project but the majority of its effects were felt during the 1970s and early 1980s – as many as 13,500 residents were displaced, 4,522 households removed, and 5,000 low-rent units destroyed. A paltry 181 new low-income housing units were built in the A-2 area and an additional 1,145 businesses, largely family run and community oriented, were removed (Seigel 2000/2001, 21-24). In J-town, A-2 affected the area bound by Post, Laguna, Sutter, and Webster.

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[25] The absence of anti-redevelopment groups and/or leadership does not mean that redevelopment was unopposed at some scale. This should also not be interpreted to mean that resistance is always and only organized in movements nor should it mean that resistance takes shape in a single form (see specifically the work of James Scott [1990] and Robin Kelley [1996] on infrapolitics).
[26] Examples include the granting of a lot in the Western Addition to the ILWU for their new headquarters, the appointment of the Western Addition Community Organization's (WACO) co-founder, Hannibal Williams, to an RDA commission, and the hiring of Wilbur Hamilton, a former WACO member, as SFRA director in 1977 (Hartman 2002).
[27] It goes without saying that urban renewal must be seen as a Keynesian welfare state policy.

It was during the A-2 phase and within this context of continued neighborhood dislocation and dispersal that CANE formed in 1973. An examination of both the organization's political actions as well as its representational and ideological strategies shows that CANE's politics were more than a politics of the local. There were moments when CANE was able to broaden its struggle and jump scale.

CANE's composition reflects its scalar strategy. Its multi-class membership was comprised of college students, leftist activists (many of whom were affiliated with the older J-town Collective),[28] small business owners, residents (mostly renters), and social service providers (Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction 1975, Omatsu 1994, Tasaki 2000, Geron 2003). Put another way, CANE was a 'mass organization' whose composition represented the full panoply of the groups within the Asian American Movement (Tasaki 2000, Geron 2003). The majority of its members were Japanese American men and women, largely *Sansei* (3rd generation) but also some *Nisei* (2nd generation) and *Issei* (1st generation), and significantly CANE's membership included a few Chinese- and African American residents and storeowners from the Western Addition. Although CANE's leadership was mostly *Sansei*, at various times it was similarly *multiracial* and *multiethnic*.[29] CANE's multigenerational membership facilitated its 1980s grassroots organizing through the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRR) to gain redress and reparations for the internment experience, which was made possible, in part, by the intergenerational sharing of stories about the experience, i.e. talk-story (Omatsu 1994; Geron 2003).[30]

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[28] I thank Richard Wada for pointing out this fact after I mistakenly referred to the collective as the 'Japantown Collective.' I should also note that, although leftists were members of CANE, not all of CANE's members were Marxist-Leninist-Maoists.
[29] This diversity is a function of the Western Addition's syncretic history as a segregated neighborhood. At any rate, studying CANE offers possibilities for examining multiracial coalition formation.
[30] I thank Michael Omi for reminding me of this point during one of many conversations.

As a grassroots organization influenced by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Power Movement, ideologically CANE interpreted urban renewal in terms of class struggle and the worldview of internal colonialism. Its activists argued that redevelopment represented the interests of property and corporate capital (both Bay Area and transnational). To this end, they attacked the RDA and the Kintetsu Corporation, maintaining that urban renewal would result in the destruction of J-town as a community of residents and small businesses, leaving a commodified, Japanese-themed amusement park, a tourist trap, which they satirically referred to *Kintetsu-Town* – sort of a multicultural, 'ornamental' version of Disneyland without fast rides or animatronic singing pirates. They also directed their class critique at the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC), which was the RDA's designated local community representative. Specifically CANE argued that NCDC did not represent the interests of J-town's residents because NCDC's membership was restricted to propertied landholders and business owners who could afford to purchase voting shares. Thus CANE understood and critiqued the goals of the redevelopment master plan, making the case that it was driven by corporate imperative and recognizing that redevelopment's commodification of space maximized exchange-values – the 'highest and best use of the land' – to the detriment of the use-values that were important to residents, such as the existence of a vibrant community; this is what Lefebvre (1991) means when he contrasts spaces of exchange-value (the space of the technocrat) and spaces of use-value (social space). Instead of condominiums and luxury apartments housing the employees of San Francisco's service oriented, post-war economy, CANE called for two things: 1) a halt to the destruction of J-town and the dispersal of its residents; and 2) the construction of below-market rate housing and

affordable commercial space for small businesses. They advocated nothing less than the preservation of a Japanese American community.

A key component of this politics of community included CANE's framing of urban renewal as analogous to the internment experience, which carried deep resonance for Japanese Americans. Put another way, by equating eviction with evacuation, urban renewal was framed as a community threat akin to the WWII internment. One should note that this argument was made at a time when the Japanese American community was still attempting to recover from the trauma of the internment experience.[31] This appeal to a sense of collective experience was effective because collective memory makes up part of what French theorist Henri Lefebvre (1991) refers to as social space or the lived space of the everyday (collective memory in place), a central element in the spatiality of social movement mobilization around use-values.

In part, CANE's class critique was also informed by the ideology of internal colonialism. While not all of CANE's members adhered to this worldview, the internationalist, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist aspects of internal colonialism resonated with activists at the time.[32] Internal colonialism interpreted ethnic enclave formation as the product of racism and colonialism, and in this sense, it was a direct challenge to the hegemony of assimilationist theory. Japantowns were understood as physical manifestations of these colonial relationships. Through this analogy, activists made conceptual *and* political linkages between their struggles and those of Third

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[31] As an aside, in Foucaultian terms, the internment can be viewed as a biopolitical experiment in assimilation. Although not without elements of coercion and violence, what Foucault would describe as a display of power governed by 'sovereign power,' the internment can be viewed as biopolitical, where biopower is marked by the diffuse exercise of power directed at and through the creation of populations that are measured and 'cared' for. While it is true that some interned Japanese Americans were kept for prisoner exchange, they were also being 'protected.' More insidiously they were caged to provide access into the mind of the 'enemy,' i.e. they were subjects in an experiment in democracy-building designed to make more perfect citizens – i.e., the power "to make assimilate and to let live" (Agamben 1999).

[32] In a sense my argument counters William Wei's (1993) history of the Asian American movement, which dismisses both internal colonialism and the continued importance of the Asian American left. His account neglects the significance of urban renewal struggles to the Asian American movement. See Omatsu (1994) for a differing treatment and Harvey Dong's (2002) dissertation for a critique of Wei and for an analysis of the I-Hotel struggle. See also Ruth Gilmore (1999) for a study of Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (Mothers ROC), whose mobilization versus the imprisoning of African American young males is informed by Third World women's activism.

World liberation. More broadly speaking, this ideology facilitated the formation of ties of solidarity between its adherents and other subordinated groups in the U.S., perhaps contributing to CANE's multiracial composition. Significantly, internal colonialism promoted community-based organizing because of its emphasis on self-determination, solidarity, and autonomy (all of which were vital conceptions to the formation of an oppositional social space [Lefebvre 1991]) (Kim 2002). In the interests of promoting community control, activists returned to enclaves in an attempt to redress 'brain drain' from their communities, i.e. they drew parallels between the exodus of college trained individuals from the enclave and what was occurring with the developing world's 'best and the brightest.' Within this context, the struggle for autonomy should be viewed in terms of its global historical significance rather than being limited exclusively to the enclave. Part of the liberal capitalist state's crisis of legitimacy during the late 1960s and 1970s was a social political challenge by marginalized groups in opposition to both the state and also established entities, like labor unions, which had become incorporated into the Keynesian welfare state (Negri 1988).

Elements of this ideology informed CANE's tactics at the neighborhood level, which included educating residents, assisting with relocation of residents and small businesses, targeting municipal government with lobbying, direct action, and civil disobedience, and engaging in mass actions. Importantly CANE's oppositional and autonomous vision of community and of development facilitated the formation of wider connections beyond the neighborhood: for example, members spoke in front of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; got a resolution passed at the 1974 National Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) meeting that condemned redevelopment; assisted with the I-Hotel struggle in San Francisco; and shared information and organizing strategies with contemporaneous anti-redevelopment movements in

Los Angeles, Seattle, and Honolulu.[33] CANE also made contacts and shared support networks with Japanese farmers resisting the expansion of Narita Airport outside Tokyo. It would be wrong to ignore the internationalist influence of internal colonialism and argue that this last connection was made possible entirely through ethnicity. These linkages are examples of attempts to jump spatial scale. They demonstrate a refusal to confine political action exclusively to the scale of the neighborhood or city and a recognition that the proponents behind urban renewal were similarly operating at multiple scales.

Ultimately CANE did not stop urban renewal in the Western Addition. If anything redevelopment stopped because of policy shifts in the 1970s under the Nixon Administration, which changed both the nature of federal urban policy and the methods used to fund these projects.[34] CANE was successful, however, in delaying and stopping some demolitions, in relocating some residents and businesses, in helping change the terms of redevelopment, and in assisting with the establishment of both limited low-rent housing through the Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) and also a cultural center, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC). CANE's eventual transition from an anti-redevelopment organization to a civil rights organization, the Japanese Community Progressive Association (JCPA), whose activities included organizing the grassroots campaign for redress and reparations for the Japanese internment and assisting with Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition presidential campaigns, must be seen as attempts to rearticulate struggle at larger scales through practice and discursive strategies.

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[33] Struggles were particularly acute in Los Angeles, where the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization (LTPRO) mobilized against a similar redevelopment effort, i.e. Pacific Rim strategy and transnational developer (Geron 2003). Mobilization in Seattle was in opposition to the renewal of the 'International District' and in Hawaii the resistance was directed against the expansion of tourist hotels. CANE had extensive exchanges with members of LTPRO. Eventually the two organizations shared a newsletter.

[34] The change in funding was from direct federal funding of urban renewal programs to a block grant program indirectly administered by local redevelopment agencies.

In terms of additional legacies of urban renewal, redevelopment contributed to the dispersal of many but not all of J-town's residents (something that had already begun as a result of internment): the interesting thing is that, in the face of these changes, street fairs have become means to recreate Japanese American community – a dispersed community recreated partly through performance and nostalgia. Although Japantown was radically altered by urban renewal, enough Japanese residents remained in J-town, through the efforts of grassroots mobilizing and social service provider advocacy, that a Japanese community survived – one that worked, lived, and raised families in J-town and one that was able to re-appropriate some of these redeveloped spaces as community institutions, such as the J-town Bowling Alley, which has recently been the site of a closure struggle between the building's management company and community groups. This, in other words, is a testament to urban renewal's unresolved legacy – the continued struggle between social space and externally imposed attempts to maximize the spaces of exchange-value.[35]

Conclusion

Even though redevelopment in the Western Addition never became a *cause célèbre* akin to the I-Hotel, the importance of CANE's struggle against urban renewal lies less in the outcomes of its members' organizing – the relative success or lack of success in stopping renewal – than in how they organized, how they made sense of the urban renewal process, and how they understood the world. To emphasize success exclusively leads to the sort of scholarly inattention or even dismissal seen in Wei's (1993) flawed history of the Asian American Movement or Hartman's (2002) excellent history of the politics of property and development in

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[35] Another example of this unresolved legacy is the recent but unsuccessful attempts to build a Jazz Center in the Fillmore – another nod to a spectral past but filtered through a developer's gaze.

San Francisco. The stress, then, should be placed on CANE's spatial strategy, on their attempts to produce and mobilize around (social) space under conditions of crisis.

Clearly examining the spatiality of social movements has implications for social movement theory and for analysis and hopefully the practice of contemporary movements of the mundane and the revolutionary, at the level of the hiccup or the level of the apocalyptic. These struggles include the organizing of immigrant women sweatshop workers through workers' centers, like Asian Immigrant Women's Advocates (AIWA), or the anti-capitalist organizing of the Black Bloc. Furthermore, my study speaks to an important episode in the Asian American Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, when Asian Americans were involved in struggles over land, housing, social space, and the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre 1996).[36] It is important to realize that, though it is often times assumed in mainstream academic and political arguments that the Asian American community today is terribly middle-class and/or suburbanized, the older Asian American community was dispersed, dislocated, or just plain 'assimilated,' in part, through the effects of redevelopment programs. Moreover, these struggles for below-market rate housing have not disappeared – certainly not for many Asian American seniors and new immigrants.[37]

In addition to Asian American Studies and social movements literature, my study has implications for critical theories of race. Ruth Gilmore defines racism as "…the state-sanctioned and/or extra-legal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerabilities to premature death, in distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies (Gilmore 2002,

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[36] Beyond the historical significance of spatial struggles to the Asian American Movement, it is imperative that we begin a critical debate on spatial theory within Asian American Studies. Moreover, we must investigate the spatiality of Asian American pan-ethnic politics, which I would argue is directed primarily at the nation or is dismally aspatial. The question is how does either one of these approaches to space preclude certain groups and/or inform types of political action. Does it, for example, fully consider the implications of the suburbanization of many Asian Americans who benefit from the structured privilege of real property ownership and real estate speculation? In other words, because whiteness is structured into the very landscape of property ownership, what are the consequences of Asian Americans (or members of any community of color for that matter) profiting from the privilege of subsidized redistribution of land, resources, and people (Aoki 1993; 1997; Harris 1993; Lipsitz 1998; Pulido 2000)?

[37] See, for example, Diana Pei Wu, "From 'Moving Feels Like Home' to 'We Will Not Be Moved,'" ISSC Working Paper (forthcoming), which documents efforts by residents of Oakland, California's Chinatown, who were evicted from fifty units of low-income housing, to reclaim their homes.

261)." This study shows that urban renewal also functions as a form of state-sponsored, socio-spatial differentiation, one whose success depended on 'racial projects' that linked the state, capital, and the production of space to the deadly social construction of embodied difference. It is not enough to understand how groups are racialized in relation to each other, but one must also understand how this process is spatialized. One need only contrast the construction of the hyperorientalized Japan Center with the near Dresden-like devastation of the Fillmore District, which ultimately contributed to rise of Jim Jones' Peoples' Temple in the Western Addition and the 1978 Jonestown Massacre in Guyana (Hartman 2002). This is, as Stuart Hall (1992) puts it in a slightly different way than Gilmore, "the fatal coupling of difference and power."

Finally, this study has implications for how we theorize crisis and its resolution, particularly with respect to the state and property relations. Drawing from W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) on the undermining of post-Civil War Reconstruction at the hands of the 'dictatorship of property' and from Ruth Gilmore (1999) on anti-prison organizing by women of color, we can use the past (both distant and recent) to think through the crisis of the present. Both shed light on crises created not only by gentrification but also by neoliberal structural adjustment induced privatization and the related, never-ending funeral procession that masquerades as a war on terrorism. The latter, to paraphrase John Maynard Keynes and Toni Negri in a slightly different context, is nothing less than a 'party of catastrophe,' a 'hanging party,' whose true triumph is not one of the will but of creating a society of singular rapaciousness built and dependent on the Saturn-like devouring of its children. Thus, the work of Peter Linebaugh (2003a, 2003b) and Iain Boal (2004, forthcoming) can be linked to Thomas Rainborough's *tears* through examination of other historical, contemporary, and future struggles over the spaces of the everyday, of social space, which, in a more general way, is a historical tendency or aspiration against dispossession - at any spatial scale and no matter how mundane.

Though it appears that we are heading toward a twilight – somewhere beyond tragedy and farce – I hope that, by invoking this historical tendency, this aspiration, this dreaming, what I am pointing toward instead is the scream or rather the collective scream (chorus-like yet contrapuntal, full of refusal and irony), which has certainly sounded in the past, is sounding in the present, and may yet sound more clearly and more loudly than the scream/howl of the expropriators.

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