

# ALL POWER TO THE SANYA LIBERATION LEAGUE

When the representatives of the Black Panther Party were in Tokyo, we had the opportunity to speak to members of the Sanya Liberation League. The following article is a brief report of our discussion with them. Hopefully, in the future we will be able to translate some of their materials from Japanese and present the ideas and history of their struggle to our readers first hand.

The people in this ghetto are all Japanese. They are there because most of them were second and third sons of peasant families. When their fathers died, the land was given to the first son which is the custom in Japan. And the only way the sons who did not inherit the land could make a living was by going to Tokyo to become workers in the factories, or in the offices. In the case of the people living in Sanya, most of them came to Tokyo, but could find no steady work so they had to resort to getting construction jobs and working on a day to day basis. Of course, because of the weather, (rain, etc.) they are unemployed most of the year.

The workers in Sanya face discrimination and social degradation in many ways as severe as the oppression that the Black people in the United States face. Black people are discriminated against

supposedly on the basis of color, but we know that the slaves from Africa were not brought here because they were Black. They were brought here because the plantation owners were able to make huge profits off of the labor stolen from the slaves at the point of the whip. The people of Sanya are Japanese and they look like everybody else in Japan. When they go to work, though, they do wear special clothes and they do get dirty. They can't get on the subways that they themselves built without being scorned and snickered at by the other passengers. If they look for work in an area other than construction, they are discriminated against when they give their address. On top of all this, the Sanya workers are exploited twice as much as regular salaried workers. To get a job, they usually have to go to a job broker who loads them up on trucks very early in the morning and takes them to where the jobs are. (The workers line up along the street at about 4-30 a.m. where the buses come by and pick them up.) And, of course, the brokers take 10-15% of the workers checks. The average check is about 2,000-2,500 yen a day. (\$6.00-\$7.50 per day). Because of the social degradation and discrimination, it is very difficult for Sanya workers to find a wife. About 10% of the 12,000 workers in Sanya have wives or families



ROBERTA AND BIG MAN AT SANRIZUKA RALLY

with them. The rest are forced to live in loneliness. Usually, even their own families reject their sons once they've lived in Sanya--they see them as a disgrace to the family.

"WE BUILT THE BIG 1964 OLYMPIC STADIUM, AND NOW WE WISH WE COULD TEAR IT DOWN." Sanya Liberation League

To fight the brokers and the rampant police brutality in their community, the Sanya Liberation League was organized in March of 1968. In June of that year, the League led an attack on the local police station. The fighting lasted for a period of about 2 weeks before the pigs could bring the situation under "control". And in order for them to do so, they had to bring in riot pigs (Kido Tai) from all over Tokyo to quell the resistance. These sort of uprisings have been happening every year for the last several years, but last year was the first time that they had any kind of organized leadership and a set of demands (getting rid of the brokers, and opposition to the presence and repressive measures of the pigs in their neighborhoods).

The workers of Sanya constructed the enormous Tokyo Olympic Stadium, and they worked on the construction of the fastest train in the world. And now they see that the things that they have created are being used by the

imperialists. The trains of Japan carry American military equipment and fuel for planes going to Vietnam. The airports can be used



EARLY IN THE MORNING IN SANYA AND A TYPICAL DAY OF OPPRESSION



PANTHERS WITH SANYA WORKERS



THE SANYA DISTRICT IN TOKYO

by the American military machine any time it wants to use it. During the Tet offensive, the Tokyo airport was practically turned into a military airport. It was very difficult, if not impossible for civilians to catch their flights since the American military was monopolizing the Japanese skies. The Sanya Liberation League says, "We constructed them, and now we want to tear them down because of what they stand for."

The Sanya Liberation League relates to serving the people. Since most of the men do not have families, they have set up a kind of cooperative restaurant where the workers can get their meals for lower prices. And in a lot of ways, they become like one big family finding strength in one another. They have discussions about how to fight the brokers and the Japanese pigs. And they are trying to coordinate their activities with the progressive activities in other parts of Tokyo. If there could be many actions in Tokyo at the same time, the pigs forces would have to spread themselves thinner. The Sanya workers are most militant in battle and most determined in struggle, because they figure they have nothing to lose.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

ROBERTA ALEXANDER  
BLACK PANTHER DADDY



A PIG, - IS A PIG.