Richmond's WALL OF HATE

By Betty Cauldwell

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mrs. Cauldwell has been a resident of Richmond since 1960. She worked as a waitress. She has been following closely the activities of BART and the Richmond City Council.

Richmond is a town uneasy in its sleep, a town where the black man works employment and the white man seeks protection from the black man. A town whose municipal mayor weeps that there are racial barriers in Richmond, then acts to build a physical wall between the races. A town whose political machine weeps a philosophy of human justice yet is eager to fence the Negro neighborhoods out of downtown Richmond. A town whose police department pretends to a lack of prejudice, yet on Friday and Saturday nights, when white high school students "drag the main" up and down MacDonald Avenue Negro students who dare to join the party are told to get off MacDonald Avenue and stay off.

The Richmond Wall was not conceived by accident but is in the hunt of all possible rapid transit systems. In 1962 the citizens of Richmond voted for a progressive, elevated rapid transit system that was to run along Hoffman Boulevard.

Small white pressure groups, seeing their chance to effect an even greater segregation in Richmond, went to work on the city officials and the councilmen they felt they had placed in office. The details of the Richmond Wall were plotted over gin cocktails, revised and polished at secret meetings long before they were heard on the floor of the city council.

In 1964 the Richmond City Council, without informing the business owners on Ohio Avenue, used their imperial vote to change the location and type of rapid transit system. They then went to BART and asked that the train be run on ground level tracks in Richmond. BART refused. The city authorities went back to BART a second time. Without knowing the men to be placed on BART, the Richmond officials offered to move the Richmond station from Sixth Street to Seventh thereby shortening the line 300 blocks and saving BART this...

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Not worried about their work, don't have to worry about opening the book and turning the pages." "We (Mexicans in Oakland) are living in a cage," Mr. Baker cited the fact that the city council has done nothing for five years for minorities and now Oakland has an ex-serviceman for its mayor. The council voted unanimously to keep out Sad Ali Alny, but they would not approve a civil rights review board. The board that exists is really the police. He asked the question, "If you knew your brother, your own, had done something wrong, would you expose the police." He asked the question, "If you knew your brother, your own, had done something wrong, would you expose the police." Mr. Robert Treuhaft, an Oakland attorney, was the second speaker to address the commission on police community relations: "There exists in Oakland today a serious crue of confidence in public authority," he said. The chief of police from 1949 to 1959 was Lester J. Divine. While he was chief we received an average of one report a month of cases involving police brutality, beating, arresting, and other misconduct. Abuse during Divine's administration were so widespread that an assembly committee held a three-day hearing in Oakland on police brutality. QUIET DEPUTY "Divine was succeeded by Wyman Vernon, a quiet deputy so unknown about whom very little was known. The quality of Vernon's short tenure is remarkably instructive because it shows how honest and fearless administration from the top can transform the character of a police department." "Vernon was succeeded in 1959 by Chief Tootman. The Tootman approach to police-citizen relations was quite different. He supports a crack-down policy backed the police down the line and reduced all criticism as undeserved. "The idea of improving the public's image was to invite minorities to ride around with police patrol cars, to show how difficult it was their work and how well they did it. This gives about as true a picture as having politicians to inspect prison conditions on Sundays from five to five. During Tootman's tenure (1959-1966) the old abuses crept back and community relations have deteriorated accordingly. "Where do we stand now?" The lawyer's short case serves as an instructive illustration. "Our public officials continue to be blind to the problems that threaten to shake this community," Mr. Treuhaft continued. "They are as intransigent, new as they were. Mayor Willard Storrer supposedly reminded minority group leaders that he was responsible not to the public but to the so-called majority." "The attitude of the city of Oakland toward the needs, demands, and legitimate aspirations of the Negro people is one of hostility. This hostility is ob- presented through a harsh and overbearing police department. The Oakland police department is being used to keep Negroes in their place. The place that Negroes are in now in this city is intolerable and unbearable. Therefore, one thing that all Negroes in this city agree on is that the status quo cannot continue. Since the Oakland police are being used as front troops to hold down this revolution, they and the Negro community are not a coalition. The third speaker, Armando Tapia and Rodriguez, opened his testimony in Spanish to demonstrate how "It's a fact that no police and how are not able to deflect themselves even verbally. He called for: 1. Better understanding for those who do not speak English. 2. Opportunities for people who are not necessarily destined to qualify for a Public Defender. 3. Exposure of ticket quotas not up by city police and highway patrols and issued as directives from the department. Police are told to place their cars in areas of high concentration of Mexican-Americans and Negroes to fill their quotas. Mr. Rodriguez then cited that there were 617 police in Oakland and only two who speak Spanish. No effort has been made to hire any more. AMERICAN BROTHEL Following Mr. Rodriguez John George, chairman of the board of directors of the police affairs committee addressed the commission. "Oakland to an American brothel?" he said, "Because in this city Negroes see everyday the presentation of the fundamental principles of American democracy.

"The city subscribers to the philosophy of 'Let them labor, so long as they live.'" INTERNAL AFFAIRS "The Oakland Police Affairs section has been cited by the Harvard Law Review for denying him his civil rights." said Mr. Robert Treuhaft. The aggrieved person must submit his complaint in detail so he may testify personally before a special engine may be oil without the right to have the special engine's findings, not only of the final determination in his case.

"The procedures of the Oak­land police department are the same. The police have a family of people to take a criminal deposition of victim of police brutality. Under these procedures while the Oakland police department denounced the criminal deposition of the victim of police brutality, the victim was not allowed to take the statement of the police officer involved. This is preposterous. If you can come of it and no good has come through these procedures of the Oakland police department. The Communist party in the United States pointed out to Chief Preston however that any case of misconduct was disregarded by the police department and called for minority representation in the police department to take any qualified position.

"Preston admitted there were some minorities, but cited the lack of numbers of interested minorities. According to the "Intelligent section" he said it only deals with organized crime.

"I am convinced we have one of the best police forces in the country," Police Captain Palmer Stinson said, "Only all critical people are from the radical琳k. Charges of police brutality and the complaints of his case, he police review board heard," he...