LEARN HOW ASIAN AMERICANS CAN FIGHT BACK AGAINST POLICE-GENERATED PROPAGANDA.
THE FOLLOWING CASE STUDY AND CONTEXT IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN 18 MILLION RISING, THE ASIAN AMERICAN DISINFORMATION TABLE, MEDIAJUSTICE AND THE XIN SHENG PROJECT IN ANALYZING POLICE-GENERATED PROPAGANDA, OR AS WE CALL IT, COTAGANDA AND ITS EFFECT ON ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES. THE FOLLOWING CASE STUDY UNDERTAKES AN ANALYSIS OF #STOPASIANHATE AND THE UNDERLYING THEMES OF ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND COPAGANDA THAT FUEL IT. THIS WORK IS A CONTINUATION OF MEDIAJUSTICE’S COPAGANDA CLAPBACK LEARNING SERIES.
WHAT
PANDEMIC ERA ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE AND #STOPASIANHATE NARRATIVES AND THEIR ROOTS IN CRIMINALIZATION, ANTI-BLACKNESS, AND ISLAMOPHOBIA.

REGION
THROUGHOUT UNITED STATES AS WELL AS ABROAD

DATE
APPROXIMATELY MARCH 2020 - PRESENT

TACTICS DEPLOYED
MEDIA REPORTS; VIRAL VIDEOS AND IMAGES; TESTIMONIALS/ANECDOtal STORIES; RALLIES AND PROTESTS; NARRATIVES STEEPED IN CRIMINAL LEGAL FRAMING

VULNERABILITIES EXPLOITED
PANDEMIC CRISIS  RACIAL WEDGE ISSUE  RACIAL SCAPEGOATING
WHAT IS THE STOP ASIAN HATE MOVEMENT?

The “Stop Asian Hate” movement emerged in response to increased incidents of anti-Asian racism, discrimination, and violence in the early 2020s, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic originated from Wuhan, China, and racist stereotypes around the cleanliness of Asian cities and Asian enclaves were a contributing factor in spurring an increase of harassment and assaults on Asian Americans and those of Asian descent worldwide.

Individual instances of violence propel #StopAsianHate narratives, such as the death of Vicha Ratanapakdee, an 84-year-old Thai man, in San Francisco in January 2021 and the 2021 Atlanta spa shootings catalyzed the movement due to the perpetrators’ seemingly race-motivated targets. Tactics of the “Stop Asian Hate” movement tend to focus on data-driven analyses of harassment or assaults and ensuring that such incidents are labeled as hate crimes.
WHO IS INCLUDED AND EXCLUDED? WHAT IS AAPI - OR ASIAN AMERICAN - AND WHO COUNTS?

WHAT ARE OUR DIFFERENT STAKES?

WHILE THE TERM “ASIAN AMERICAN” ORIGINALLY CAME FROM STUDENT ORGANIZERS YUJI ICHIOKA AND EMMA GEE AT UC BERKELEY TO DEFINE AN INTER-ETHNIC, PAN-ASIAN AND ANTI-IMPERIALIST POLITICAL GROUP, THE TERM TODAY COMMONLY DENOTES AMERICANS OF ASIAN ANCESTRY FROM EAST ASIA, SOUTHEAST ASIA, SOUTH ASIA, AND CENTRAL ASIA.

“AAPI” IS AN ACRONYM FOR ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS, AND INCLUDES ALL PEOPLE IN THE ASIAN AMERICAN UMBRELLA, WITH THE ADDITION OF PACIFIC ISLANDERS — INDIVIDUALS WITH ANCESTRY IN “HAWAII, GUAM, SAMOA, OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDS.”

OTHER SIMILAR ACRONYMS INCLUDE API, AANHPI AND APIDA. THE USAGE AND APPLICATION OF TERMS HAVE MIXED REACTIONS, AS PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCE A SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT SET OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRUGGLES THAN ASIAN AMERICANS, AND THE USE OF THE TERM “AAPI” CAN RESULT IN ERASURE WHEN THERE IS NO MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OR LEADERSHIP BY PACIFIC ISLANDERS. EVEN WITHIN THE SAME ETHNIC GROUP, ASIAN AMERICANS FACE DIFFERENT STRUGGLES BASED ON CASTE, RELIGION, COLORISM, AND CLASS.
WHAT COUNTS AS “HATE”

The U.S. Department of Justice shares that, “A hate crime must include both “hate” and a “crime.” That is, hate crimes must fit the criminal legal system’s own definitions of crime as well as law enforcement’s determination that the crime was committed out of bias “against people or groups with specific characteristics that are defined by the law.”

We refuse to rely on law enforcement to tell us what does and does not count as racism in a legal system that is structurally rooted in racism, settler colonialism, and slavery.

Stop Asian Hate’s focus on individual attacks and the legal system has resulted in overlooking systemic harm against our communities –
— the kind of harm that is often legal and perpetrated by the state itself. Anti-Asian racism and violence have come in many forms throughout history:

- U.S imperialist wars and colonization across Asia, from the Korean War to the colonization of the Philippines, to the Vietnam War, which led to mass death and displacement.

- The absence of Asian American history in school curricula, which erases both our historic struggles against racism, as well as our contributions to the shaping of this settler-colonial country.

- Xenophobic policies from the Chinese exclusion act to Japanese American incarceration during World War II, which have reinforced the notion that Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners.

- The detention and deportation of Southeast Asian immigrants and refugees by ICE, which separates families and contributes to mass incarceration.

- The surveillance, deportation, and incarceration of South and West Asians and Muslims during a wave of Islamophobic policing and war-making in the post-9/11 era.

- Exploitative and imperialist economic policies and trade agreements, which contribute to Asian labor exploitation and resource extraction for the benefit of the global North.

- Lack of universal healthcare, housing, and other social services that would combat the widest wealth gap of any racial group in the US.8
Asian Americans and Anti-Blackness

Asian and Black communities have a long relationship in the United States, with many examples of both solidarity and tension. Historical examples of the former include the Black Panther Party opposing the Vietnam War, Asian American activists' work in abolition and Black liberation, such as Grace Lee Boggs and Yuri Kochiyama, the Third World Liberation Front, and more. However, anti-Blackness and white supremacist frameworks have fueled Asian American advocacy for more carceral solutions that ultimately harm all communities of color.

Throughout the history of the United States, many Asian American communities have upheld white supremacy by rejecting Black solidarity and instead advocating for their own visibility in white-beneficial spaces and policies. Interests that focus on Asian American assimilation are often used to divide communities of color, and especially against Black communities. For instance, the model minority myth, or the stereotype that certain ethnic or racial minority groups, particularly Asian Americans, are uniformly successful, well-assimilated, and politically quiet, is leveraged to separate them from Black Americans’ political mobilization and centuries of economic suppression.

Other examples include anti-affirmative action positions that decrease educational access for other communities, or positions that promote increased policing as a response to anti-Asian violence.

COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN A GROWING TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY, THEIR LEVERAGE OF DIGITAL FOOTPRINTS, AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ALLOWED FOR THE ACCELERATION OF ALL-ENCOMPASSING DRAGNET SURVEILLANCE, JUSTIFIED UNDER THE GUISE OF NATIONAL SECURITY.

IN THE YEARS AFTER, SURVEILLANCE OF COMMUNITY ENCLAVES THAT INCLUDED COMMUNITY CENTERS, BUSINESSES, AND RELIGIOUS CENTERS SUCH AS MOSQUES SKYROCKETED.
ANTI-BLACKNESS WITHIN ASIAN COMMUNITIES & THE LIMITS OF #STOPASIANHATE:

THE XIN SHĒNG PROJECT, FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE WECHAT PROJECT, COMBATS MIS/DISINFORMATION FOR AND POLITICIZES THE CHINESE DIASPORA ON WECHAT AND BEYOND. THEIR BILINGUAL CONTENT CROSSES THE LANGUAGE, GENERATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND INFORMATIONAL BARRIERS WITHIN THE CHINESE DIASPORIC COMMUNITY.

DESPITE ITS PROGRESSIVE VENEER, THE STOP ASIAN HATE MOVEMENT FREQUENTLY FEEDS INTO RIGHT-WING IDEOLOGY AND IS DOMINATED BY ANTI-BLACK AND CARCERAL POLITICS. SCROLLING THROUGH THE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS DEDICATED TO THE "PUBLIC SAFETY" OF ASIAN PEOPLE PROVIDES IMMEDIATE EVIDENCE OF THE RAMPANT ANTI-BLACKNESS, MISOGYNY, AND ABLEISM OF THE MOVEMENT. THESE REACTIONARY ATTITUDES ARE ALSO DEMONSTRATED BY THE EXPLICITLY CARCERAL SOLUTIONS TO "ASIAN HATE" PROPOSED BY PROMINENT NON-BLACK ASIAN CELEBRITIES.
IN THE EXAMPLE TO THE LEFT, TWO ASIAN CELEBRITIES PUT OUT A BOUNTY FOR THE ARREST OF A BLACK MAN WHO PUSHED AN ELDER AFTER SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE OF THE PUSH WENT VIRAL. UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE VICTIM WAS ASIAN, BOTH CELEBRITIES USED THE ATTACK TO CALL FOR THE INCARCERATION OF THE BLACK MAN AS A SOLUTION TO ANTI-ASIAN HATE. THE VICTIM WAS ACTUALLY A LATINO MAN NAMED GILBERT DIAZ.

THE STOP ASIAN HATE CAMPAIGN FRAMES "ASIAN HATE" AS A RECENT PHENOMENON WITHIN THE US THAT BEGAN WITH THE MEDICAL SCAPEGOATING OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. HOWEVER, THE UPTICK IN VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIANS TRACES BACK TO AN INCREASE IN SINOPHOBIC SENTIMENT THAT PRE-DATES THE 1875 PAGE LAW. STOP ASIAN HATE CONCEPTUALIZES "ASIAN HATE" AS AN ABSTRACT HATRED OF ASIANS THAT IS PERPETRATED BY WHITE AND BLACK PEOPLE. THIS FRAMEWORK MISSES THE SPECIFICITY OF SINOPHOBIA AND IMPERIALISM, WHICH HAVE PROVIDED THE IMPETUS FOR COLONIAL VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIANS THROUGHOUT HISTORY.
STOP ASIAN HATE USES THE FRAMEWORK AND LANGUAGE OF HATE CRIMES, WHICH IS ALREADY LOADED WITH ANTI-BLACK STEREOTYPES AND CALLS FOR INCREASED POLICING AND INCARCERATION. THAT’S WHY CARCERAL SOLUTIONS TO "ASIAN HATE" WERE THE FIRST TO BE PROPOSED BY THE LEADERS OF THE MOVEMENT, AND WHY SURVEILLANCE UNDER THE GUISE OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION HAS RECEIVED SO MUCH SUPPORT FROM ITS PROONENTS. THE MYTH THAT BLACK PEOPLE COMMIT THE MAJORITY OF "ANTI-ASIAN HATE CRIMES" HAS BEEN PROPAGATED THROUGHOUT ASIAN COMMUNITIES UNDER THE HASHTAG #STOPASIANHATE.

STOP ASIAN HATE USES REACTIONARY, ANTI-BLACK TACTICS LIKE THE LANGUAGE OF HATE CRIMES, VIRAL CIRCULATION OF SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE WITHOUT FACT CHECKS, AND ASSOCIATING BLACKNESS WITH CRIMINALITY TO ELICIT EMOTIONAL REACTIONS IN ITS TARGET AUDIENCE: DEPOLITICIZED BUT CONCERNED ASIAN AMERICANS WHO HAVE NOTICED THE RECENT INCREASE IN PUBLIC HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIANS, BUT LACK POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. STOP ASIAN HATE HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN EMOTIONALLY ACTIVATING THIS AUDIENCE, BUT HAS FAILED TO ACTUALLY ORGANIZE, EDUCATE, AND MEET THE MATERIAL NEEDS OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITIES IT OSTensibly SERVES.

NON-BLACK ASIANS STRUGGLE TO UNPACK THEIR PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE ANTI-BLACKNESS BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE IDENTITY FRAMEWORKS THAT EMPHASIZE PROXIMITY TO WHITENESS OR A MARGINALIZED ETHNIC IDENTITY, RATHER THAN THE SYSTEMIC ADVANTAGES OF NON-BLACKNESS. HAVING ETHNIC PRIDE OR SECURITY IN OUR OWN IDENTITIES DOES NOT REQUIRE DENIAL OF OUR STAKE IN GLOBAL ANTI-BLACKNESS. COMBATING THE ANTI-BLACKNESS IN OUR DIASPORAS AND HOMELANDS DOES NOT NEGATE OUR STRUGGLES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION.
ANTI-BLACKNESS. COMBATING THE ANTI-BLACKNESS IN OUR DIASPORAS AND HOMELANDS DOES NOT NEGATE OUR STRUGGLES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION.

ANTI-BLACK SENTIMENT AND MISINFORMATION WITHIN THE STOP ASIAN HATE MOVEMENT FREQUENTLY SERVE AS A PIPELINE TO REACTIONARY POLITICS. DEPOLITICIZED ASIANS ARE ACTIVATED BY THESE HEADLINES AND VIRAL VIDEOS, BUT LACK A SYSTEMIC UNDERSTANDING AND CROSS-RACIAL SOLIDARITY. AS A RESULT, THE FEAR AND MISPLACED ANGER OF OUR COMMUNITY ARE CHANNELED INTO INDIVIDUALISM, EXISTING BIASES AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE AND WOMEN, AND CARCERAL SOLUTIONS THAT THE STATE WANTS US TO SUPPORT SO THAT IT CAN PROFIT OFF OF OUR "PROTECTION" IN THE FORM OF MILITARIZATION AND POLICE TASK FORCES THAT DEEPEN AMERICAN FASCISM.

MANY ASIANS ON THE LEFT WILL ALLOW ANTI-BLACKNESS, TRANSMISOGYNY, ABLEISM, AND OTHER FORMS OF BIGOTRY TO FLOURISH WITHIN A MOVEMENT SO LONG AS THEIR PERSONAL INTERESTS ARE BEING CENTERED. THIS GUARANTEES THE FAILURE OF THE MOVEMENT AND SHOULD NEVER BE ACCEPTED AS A "STRATEGY" FOR SHORT-TERM ACCESS TO SOCIAL CAPITAL, MEDIA ATTENTION, OR RESOURCES FROM THE STATE. ANTI-BLACKNESS AND CARCERALITY INCREASE OUR DEPENDENCE ON THE WHITE SUPREMACIST AND IMPERIALIST STATE. ON THE OTHER HAND, CROSS-RACIAL SOLIDARITY AND COALITIONAL POLITICS BUILD CAPACITY AND STRENGTH IN A COMMUNITY.
WE CANNOT HOPE TO BUILD A LIBERATORY MOVEMENT WITHOUT ADDRESSING OUR OWN COMMUNITY’S ANTI-BLACKNESS.

+ REJECT THE MYTH THAT BLACK PEOPLE ARE INHERENTLY VIOLENT OR RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAJORITY OF ATTACKS ON ASIANS. IN REALITY, 75% OF VIOLENT ATTACKS ON ASIAN AMERICANS WERE COMMITTED BY WHITE PEOPLE.

+ DON’T LET STOP ASIAN HATE AND CARCERAL FRAMEWORKS DictATE THE IDEOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIANS, WHICH IS ROOTED IN THE HISTORY OF WESTERN IMPERIALISM, ANTI-COMMUNISM, AND CAPITALISM.

+ REJECT THE NOTION THAT POLICE MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER. POLICE EXIST TO PROTECT PRIVATE PROPERTY AND WHITE SUPREMACY, NOT MARGINALIZED PEOPLE.¹³
ASIAN AMERICANS AND COPAGANDA

WHAT ARE CULTURAL VIEWS ON POLICING WITHIN THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE MEDIA AND POLICE IN YOUR CITY?

WHAT ARE DOMINANT NARRATIVES IN MEDIA AND ETHNIC MEDIA ABOUT POLICING?

WHAT ARE LOCAL TV NEWS AND RADIO AND ONLINE OUTLETS IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT ARE THEIR POLITICAL LEANINGS?

WHO ARE DOMINANT INFLUENCERS ON NARRATIVES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS!
CREATE THE CONTAINER FOR INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS ON ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND COPAGANDA IN THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

TALK WITH PEOPLE IN YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT THE CASE STUDY AND USE THE QUESTIONS IN THIS GUIDE TO LEAD THE CONVERSATION.

WHEN YOU SEE A STORY ABOUT CRIME ASK YOURSELF:
DOES THIS ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF HARM?

WHEN YOU SEE A STORY ABOUT SMALL THEFT, SUCH AS STEALING FROM A DRUG STORE, LOOK AT THE LANGUAGE PEOPLE USE THAT IS OFTEN RACIALIZED AND CLASSED.

KEEP TELLING YOUR STORIES.
WE MUST PRESERVE THE ARCHIVE OF RADICAL AND LEFTIST ASIAN AMERICAN CHANGEMAKERS. KEEP ORGANIZING AND KEEP SHARING WHAT YOU LEARN.

FOLLOW ON THE GROUND COVERAGE AND SHARE INFORMATION FROM TRUSTED JOURNALISTS.

REIMAGINE ALTERNATIVE FUTURES.
LET'S COLLECTIVELY ENVISION AND BUILD COMMUNITY CARE TO KEEP US SAFE INSTEAD OF SUSTAINING STATE VIOLENCE SYSTEMS THAT FURTHER HARM US AND OTHER COMMUNITIES OF COLOR.

TALK WITH PEOPLE IN YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT THE CASE STUDY AND USE THE QUESTIONS IN THIS GUIDE TO LEAD THE CONVERSATION.

BE CRITICAL OF CRIME STATISTICS.
THERE IS OVERINFLATION OF CRIME STATISTICS AND OVERSATURATION OF STORIES RELATED TO INTERPERSONAL HARM IN THE MEDIA. THIS IS OFTEN BECAUSE WHEN CORPORATIONS MESS UP, THEY PAY FINES AND SWEEP IT UNDER THE RUG.

PREBUNK THE COPAGANDA.
THIS MEANS HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS BEFORE THE COPAGANDA EVEN STARTS. HOW ARE YOU CRITICAL OF THE STRUCTURES OF POLICING IN YOUR COMMUNITY RIGHT NOW, AND HOW CAN YOU START THE CONVERSATION?
ADDITIONAL READINGS:

**VIRAL IMAGES SHOW PEOPLE OF COLOR AS ANTI-ASIAN PERPETRATORS. THAT MISSES THE BIG PICTURE.**
BY KIMMY YAM

**MEMES AS VIGILANTISM: THE MULTI-RACIAL RIGHT AND ANTI-BLACK RACISM**
BY MEME WAR WEEKLY OF THE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL CHANGE RESEARCH PROJECT

**HOW NOT TO THINK LIKE A COP, WITH NAOMI MURAKAWA**
BY TIME TO SAY GOODBYE PODCAST
HTTPS://GOODBYE.SUBSTACK.COM/P/HOW-NOT-TO-THINK-LIKE-A-COP-WITH-DETAILS

**WHY OVER 85 ASIAN AMERICAN, LGBTQ GROUPS OPPOSED THE ANTI-ASIAN HATE CRIMES BILL**
BY KIMMY YAM

**POLICING THE BORDERS OF ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE**
BY MARK TSENG-PUTTERMAN
HTTPS://ROARMAG.ORG/ESSAYS/ANTI-ASIAN-RACISM-AMERICAN-IMPERIALISM

**HOW TO PROTECT MASSAGE WORKERS**
BY ELENA SHIH
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**THE FACT OF NON-BLACKNESS: ON CLAIRE JEAN KIM’S “ASIAN AMERICANS IN AN ANTI-BLACK WORLD”**
BY MARK TSENG-PUTTERMAN
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