

**IWK BLACK PANTHER**  
**GR [X] PROJ: ASIAN POWER**

**10**

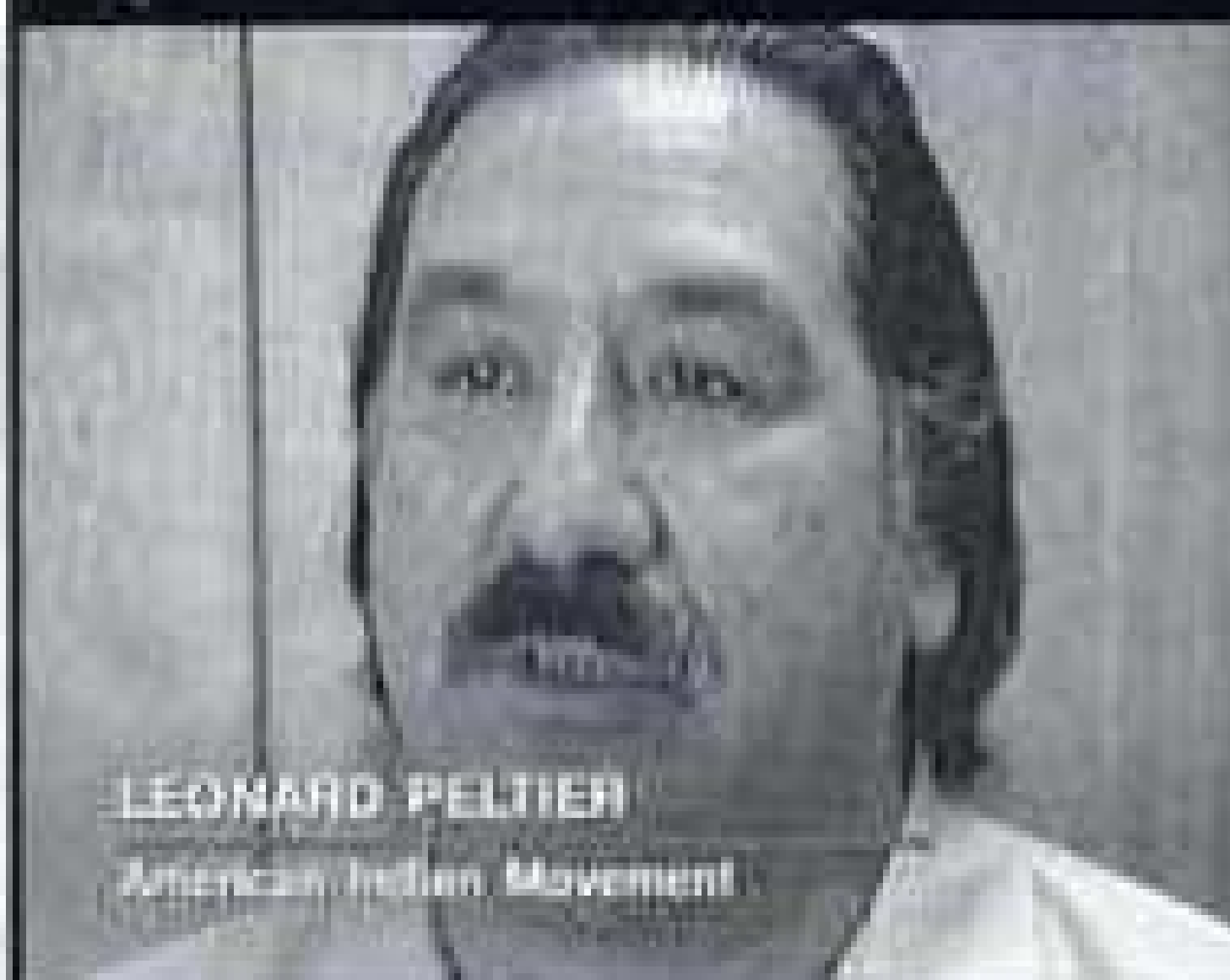
Right: Lee Lew-Lee is for the proletariat, but he looks like a million bucks. (Photo, MW) Video images were liberated from his video, *All Power to the People! The Black Panther Part and Beyond*. Below: Lew-Lee chills in Oregon (Photo courtesy of Lee Lew-Lee)



**GORDON PARKS**  
*Life Magazine Photo Journalist (69-70)*



**KATHLEEN CLEAVER**  
*Black Panther Party Central Committee (67-71)*



**LEONARD PELTIER**  
*American Indian Movement*



**DR. MICHAEL McCARTY**  
*Black Panther Party (68-71) Acupuncture Doctor*



**SAFIYA ALSTON BUKHARI**  
*Black Panther Party (69-71) BIA (72-74)*



# YELLOW PANTHER

Mao 5	X 2	Ché 0	MLK 3

**BY ANY MEANS  
 LEE LEW-LEE**  
 by Martin Wong



**LEE LEW-LEE** is a Chinese-Jamaican who would rather talk about how his grandparents were scholars in China than say what it was like to interview Geronimo Pratt, Leonard Peltier, and Mumia Abu-Jamal in prison.

Likewise, he would rather recount how the I War Kuen and Young Lords teamed up to resuscitate New York's Gueveneur Hospital than describe meetings with Jackie Robinson, Haile Selassie, and the Dalai Lama. After several lengthy discussions with Eric and me, the LA-based filmmaker took me to his secret book source and provided more contacts than I'll ever be able to dial. Lee's humble, generous, and playful personality belies the fact that he belonged to radical Asian Power groups as well as the Black Panther Party, and is a fierce revolutionary to this day.

### KING COMMIE

I had a scholarship to go to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine choir school. When I was in the eighth grade, Dr. King came and gave his first anti-war speech, I was one of three students chosen to meet him and he was very kind. Then he sat opposite me in the cathedral. He was staring at me. At first I thought I was imagining it. Then I looked around and noticed that I was the only person of color up in the choir on that side of the cathedral. When he gave the sermon, he began talking about the Vietnam War.



Basically he asked, "How can we ask for civil rights in this country when we deny other people their human rights?" That was a profound statement in 1967. The whole cathedral was silent, and then in about 30 seconds there were 5,000 people crying. I've never seen 5,000 people cry again, even to this day.

I thought to myself, "This is a dangerous thing to say; they're going to kill him." And of course, a year and two months later, he was killed. I think it was a month after the sermon that he

nize, to bring all these different groups together. I would tell the IWK what the Panthers were doing in Harlem and what the Young Lords were doing in East Harlem. I spent a lot of time with the Young Lords.

The IWK was like the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and the Red Guards. It was a Maoist organization run by two engineers from Mainland China, Yu Han and Yu Man. They were the best ideologists because they were here in the United States doing graduate work. They

I knew the Red Book better than anybody. I spent two years reading it. I also read Marx, Stalin, and Hegel. In the Panther Party there was really very little time to read. The Panthers were basically a daily grind.

There were no part-time Panthers. You couldn't just join. You had six months on probation, gradually getting initiated deeper and deeper into the party. The things I remember the most clearly were the different programs we had, especially the breakfast program and anti-drug program.

## The IWK or the Red Guard would defend the Asian community if the racists wanted to take people of Asian descent to concentration camps.

offered himself as a peace candidate to stop the Vietnam War. In fact, the day after the sermon, all the New York newspapers labelled him, "King Commie," and you could see the campaign to demonize him.

When Dr. King died, I was in school in upstate New York. I saw the reaction of the white kids there and the reaction of the people in the community. There was a riot. I dropped out of school and joined the movement. I'd already been going to movement things for a year and a half before that, but after Dr. King was killed, I joined the Ahmed Evans Defense Committee. Ahmed Evans was a political prisoner in Milwaukee, a brother in the ghetto who dared shoot back at the Klan. So we got together a defense committee.

### ASIAN-AMERICAN ACTION

When I was 16, I joined the Asian Americans for Action (AAA) in the end of 1968 and the I War Kuen (IWK) in 1969. When I was going back and forth from school I would go to meetings. It was not uncommon to belong to more than one organization.

Taking a cue from Yuri Kochiyama and being a multi-racial person, I tried to help people orga-

decided that these poor kids in Chinatown didn't know how to organize, so we studied the Red Book a lot.

On the East Coast, we knew about Alex Hing and the Red Guards. The IWK was patterned after the Red Guards. It was one-upsmanship. They were the Red Guards. But what was the IWK? The Boxer Rebellion. You can't get better than that. The movements were very connected. The real problem was that we didn't have fax machines. We sent letters, but many times the letters were intercepted, so people got in airplanes.

### THE PANTHER DAILY GRIND

I started becoming involved with the Panther Party in June 1969, when I dropped out of school. I got closer and closer to the Panther Party and joined in December 1969. When I joined the Panther Party, I talked to Athena Shakur and Bashir Saunders. I told Bashir I had been in these other organizations and could I be a contact between the Harlem Branch of the Panther Party and the IWK and AAA. For a little while, I tried to do that, but I got totally subsumed by all the things I had to do with the Panther Party.

We had a health complex in the South Bronx on Boston Road. We had free clothing, a free food program, all these things. Most importantly, we went door-to-door, organizing strikes, things like that from 5 o'clock in the morning.

The Panthers stopped wearing the black beret and leather jacket in the end of 1968. People think that went on and on, and it didn't. We stopped that because it made it easy for people to infiltrate. That all stopped before the Panther 21, I think. I came in after the Panther 21.

The good thing about the Panther Party was that it brought the idea of socialism. Let's look at this (Mao's) revolutionary ideology from China and bring it into the African context. And then take it into the American context, understanding that we are colonized as people of color in the ghettos of America. Chinatown is a ghetto. IWK said the same thing.

So we began to look at neocolonialism, Marxism, Ho Chi Minh, and these different ideologies and how to bring them together in the context of the United States. For example, if Mao had his barefoot doctors, we would have our barefoot doctors and our health centers. We didn't believe in Western anything, so if you were going to be a barefoot doctor, you were

## FISTS OF RIGHTEOUS HARMONY by Martin Wong

With the Western powers jamming their collective tongues down China's throat and the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty shackling up in the Forbidden City in 1895, a secret society of patriots formed and called themselves *I War Kuen*—the *Fists of Righteous Harmony*. This group of red-turban-wearing martial artists became known to foreigners as the Boxers.

The IWK's initial goal was to run the Ch'ings and the Westerners out of China, but the Empress Dowager convinced them to focus on the gweilo influence. Christian missionaries, Chinese converts, and foreigners in general were sought out and beaten down by the Boxers, who cast magic spells to protect themselves from bullets and gain support from spirit soldiers.

Foreign diplomats and businesspeople fended off attacks for two months after the Boxers took over Peking. When the Empress Dowager's promise to dispel the rebellion proved empty, the Imperialist forces of Europe and America proceeded to crush both the Boxers and the Ch'ing rulers. Then they pillaged the capital city and created an economic and political gang-bang that would last until the Communists seized control of China after World War II.

The Boxers' skin wasn't bulletproof and their actions weren't exactly harmonious. They tended to be xenophobic and reactionary. But the IWK's cause was righteous and the activists in New York's Chinatown named themselves after them.





Panther on the talkie borrowed from *The Vanguard*.

**IWK BLACK PANTHER**  
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going to learn acupuncture. If Mao had his People's Revolutionary Army, we would have our People's Revolutionary Army in the sense that the Panther Party would defend the black community against the racists. The IWK or the Red Guard would defend the Asian community if the racists wanted to take people of Asian descent to concentration camps. That was a real threat back then.

There was a lot of training. We learned how to break down rifles and guns. We learned military strategy. For example, what did Mao mean when he said that "force had to be 2-to-1?" You cannot win a shoot-out if you have less than a 2-to-1 advantage. You have to understand what a fire zone is, how to apply what Mao said in *Selected Military Writings* to the actual reality if you have to fight in the ghetto, and how to make Molotov cocktails.

#### HARLEM VS. CHINATOWN

One of the differences between the African community and the Asian community was that the IWK couldn't just come out and walk down the street. If you came out all the time and did a lot of propoganda, you would get into some very seri-

ous fights. A lot of people were very skilled in martial arts and at the time, the KMT was very strong in New York's Chinatown. They controlled all the family associations and they would send goons to beat you up, like the Flying Dragons, White Shadows, and people like that.

To be in the Panther Party in Harlem was much easier because they had much greater community support. You didn't have to worry about going down the street and being beaten up so much as having cops trying to kill you. Mao said, "To be effective you have to be like a fish among the people." The Panther Party was much more effective in grass-roots organizing than the IWK.

The truth is that the historic conditions did not exist at the time in Chinatowns in the United States. The United States was at war with Vietnam and here we were walking around supporting the Viet Cong. They didn't allow any Asian Americans to become citizens in 1965, and a lot of people wanted to become American citizens. A lot of people considered us to be communists and traitors. Of course, the more somebody calls you a communist, the more you want to become one.

#### INTERNATIONALISTS

The Black Panther Party had a political and a military wing, as did any socialist revolutionary organization of the time period. The Panther Party followed the same command structure of the liberation movements overseas. The Panther Party, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the I Wor Kuen, the Red Guard, the Young Lords, the Brown Berets, the White Panther Party, the Young Patriots—all these organizations saw themselves as part of a worldwide youth revolution. The Panther Party in particular sent people to the Middle East and to socialist countries like Cuba for training in military affairs, guerrilla warfare, and other things. This occurred around 1970. You began to see quite a few people going overseas to be trained in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Palestine, and Ireland. At that point, people were preparing for guerrilla war. Our idea was always to have a mass struggle and to organize as many people as possible to guard what we now call human rights.

Every city in the country had what they called a "Red Squad." Chicago, New York, Los Angeles—their intelligence units used to spy on anybody who was against the war in Vietnam, anyone who was talking about civil rights, affirmative action, union organizing, or student unions. It is estimated that the CIA actually had spied upon 24,000 Americans and opened 30 million pieces of mail during that time period. There was good reason to be paranoid. Sometimes people were actually assassinated.

#### GOING UNDERGROUND

We had a song: "Hold your heads high/Panthers marching by/We won't take no jive/Not from a regular 45/Free Huey, free Bobby/Goddamn, we gotta free Eldridge." All they had to do was arrest our leaders and the whole thing fell apart. Cult of personality was the worst thing, and it destroyed the movement. We mustn't have hero worship again.

I quit the Black Panther Party in 1970 when all the slaughter started to happen in Harlem. I went underground. Hearing the stories of how my grandmother, my grandfather, my mother, and my aunt survived the Japanese Occupation taught me a lot about how to survive. It's a sad reality when you're in your own country and you haven't broken any laws. I didn't kill anybody, I didn't

## THREE TAPES THE HARD WAY by Eric Nakamura

Here are a few tapes to get you into the mindset of revolution to fight back against your oppressors. Sure, there are tons of tapes out there that might represent fighting back, but this is a great little collection that ranges from the foke and funky to the hard and real.

**BLACK GESTAPO** Approx. 90 min. Director Lee Frost. No name recognition on this tape like *Dolemite* or *Shaft*, but you do get a Blaxploited view at how power gets corrupted. A black man, Rod Perry as General Ahmed, wants to start a Watts black army and he gets it going, but then it splinters off in a bad angle. The People's Army Group square off with cheesy white racketeers who have the gambling, prostitution, and drug market cornered. The army takes over with violence and gets too fat, they get a training compound with swarms of big-breasted white women and are living like Idi Amin. General Ahmed gets word of this and it's up to him to set everything straight. Meanwhile the whiteys get driven out of town. With gun battles, freebie breast shots, pimp slaps, and militant uniforms, shit goes off in this film. There aren't exactly any Black Panthers in this film, but it's a satire on how local armies get started.

**THE FBI WAR ON BLACK AMERICA** 60 min. This documentary by Denis Mueller and Deb Ellis has great select footage from Malcolm X, MLK, and some Black Panthers. It traces the COINTELPRO, the FBI, police, and the KKK who were out to destroy the black revolutionary movement by killing the young and outspoken Fred Hampton, X, and MLK, among many others. With interviews with Kathleen Cleaver, FBI testimony, Huey P. Newton, Geronimo Pratt, H. Rap Brown, and Adam Clayton Powell, this film is heavy on the Panthers. Although it clocks in a bit too short, it gives you an idea of what really happened.

**BROTHERHOOD OF DEATH** 85 min. Director Bill Berry. No city folks here. *Brotherhood of Death* starts off with black Vietnam War soldiers who come back and end up in the South. A local black woman gets raped, her boyfriend gets beat





even commit any felonies. But I had to go underground. I continued living. I went to college and everything. It was a futile reality, though. You realize that you're not going to change the system from within it.

### ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

I had been a photographer before I was in the Black Panther Party. I set it aside for the party, because they didn't want a photographer coming off the streets. It was kind of suspicious. I picked it up again because of Gordon Parks' book, *Choice of Weapon*. Later, I became friends with Gordon. I credit him with saving my life, actually. He gave me direction. When you're in the mode of revolution and you're thinking that you're going to kill the enemy, and then you find that there's a way to change society without having to kill people, that's quite liberating.

The film, *All Power to the People*, is an organizing tool to help people in the black community say, "Look, Asians are not your enemy." Originally, in the film we wanted to have one part about the Asian movement, one part about the Latino movement, one part about the African movement... but the mandate we got from German TV was to do the Panther Party, so we had to focus on that. But we still tried in the context of the film to make people see the much bigger picture. I'm not advocating that we overthrow our government, but I think in the future this system will collapse on its own. People ought to be aware and ready to replace it in the future.

### ORIGINAL GUERRILLAS

People turn on the TV today and see Bobby Seale selling barbecued spare ribs. They don't realize that 30 years ago he wasn't selling barbecued spare ribs. They look at Geronimo Pratt and think, "Oh, he's OG." He's beyond OG. OG ain't shit. He's an old guerrilla, that's what he is. The youth has nobody from our generation in the mainstream that's telling the truth. Jesse Jackson has sold out. All these other so-called leaders you see on TV—Sharpton, Young, even Farrakhan—they're all bought out. They're not going to give you an hour on TV to talk about them. It costs \$400,000 an hour. It's misinformation. Propaganda, communication, and public opinion—that's how they run the media. They make people think the '60s were a time of free love, free this, free that, *Steal This Book*, and Abbie Hoffman. Abbie Hoffman and Yippies were clowns. The real revolutionaries were hardcore revolutionaries who got killed on a daily basis.

When Timothy Leary said, "Tune in, turn on, drop out," most of us didn't agree with him, either. Leary worked for the government at Harvard, doing LSD experiments on people. The more serious revolutionaries didn't do heroin, cocaine, or any drugs at all. Anybody who did drugs, we expelled. The Panther Party was anti-drugs. The Panther Party, the Young Lords, and maybe the IWK on the East Coast used to go out, grab the drug dealers,

and beat the crap out of them. If one came back, you'd go get a gun, put it to the guy's head, and say, "If you come back here, you're fucked." And the cops had a program going in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles because drugs were coming in through the military. They found out in the Vietnam War that a lot of brothers came back and said that drugs were being sent in body bags to the ghettos. We realized drugs were a way they were destroying the revolution.

### THE WAY TO SURVIVE

I am insignificant. And I don't pretend to speak for the entire movement, but I can speak honestly about those that I knew. We were willing to sacrifice our own lives if need be for our fellow human beings and our people in the ghetto who might even hate us. Everybody was 17, 18, 20—nobody thought they'd live to be 30. Everybody thought they would be dead. I think for the 21st century, Maoism isn't going to make it. Marxism and Leninism aren't going to make it. People are going to have to make a new kind of ethic. Malcolm said, "Think for yourself." You don't need anybody to tell you what to do. Malcolm never saw a fax machine or the internet. This stuff is new. Think in a new way. Organize in a new way. That's the way to survive.

Lee Lew-Lee's two-hour documentary, *All Power to the People! The Black Panther Party and Beyond* can be purchased for \$30.00 from Electronic News Group, PO Box 86209, LA, CA, 90086. Lee is currently working on *Downwinders*, a new documentary about nuclear pollution.



up, and the three white perpetrators walk around strutting. The ex-soldiers decide that going to the church and talking about it is no longer good enough. Alongside the funky music score, they fight back and beat the shit out of one of the men. But after the nice local sheriff gets murdered by the Klan while investigating the murder of a black man, the locals get organized to fight back and beat the shit out of the Klan, and they do it with force and brains. I'm not sure if Black Panthers were plentiful in the South, but this brotherhood was solid enough to take care of The Man.



## PAT SUMI MET THE NORTH VIETNAMESE GENERAL

Pat Sumi was one of the individuals we wanted to interview for this article. But as we were getting our editorial minds up-to-date, Pat passed away, stricken with cancer. According to Lee Lew-Lee, she wanted a copy of the photograph of the delegation to Asia before she passed away. Eldridge Cleaver, who had the neg, never made a copy for her. This image you see above was liberated from Cleaver's book, *Soul on Ice*.

Pat grew up in East LA, admittedly a model Asian getting good grades and, to quote Mao, "a frog at the bottom of a well." She traveled throughout the US to get a glimpse of how life really worked outside of her home. She went to Africa in 1965 and learned that the people there have elements in common with Asians. After college, she traveled to the South, where she saw poverty and racism firsthand. This is where she realized that her life was going to change. After attending grad school, Sumi moved back West and joined a hippie commune in 1967.

Later, she helped set up a coffeehouse near Camp Pendleton in San Diego to talk to GIs about what the heck they were doing and what was going on. "When you start messing with the troops, you're messing with the power that The Man has to control most of the so-called 'free world,'" said Sumi in a 1971 *Gidra* interview. Her group helped organize the Movement for Democratic Military, which sounds like an oxymoron. Although she admits that they did some good, they also messed some soldiers' minds up. In recognition of her work, Sumi was invited to join the Anti-Imperialist People's Delegation on their trip to North Korea, North Vietnam, and China. (Alex Hing, who joined the delegation as a member of the Red Guard Party, talks about the trip on page 79.)

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Clockwise from left: Richard Aoki decked out in full Panther gear (Photo by Nikki Araki), I-Hotel eviction notice burning with Steve Louie taking a photo in the right bottom corner (Photo courtesy of José), I-Hotel protesters including bespectacled Harvey Dong on far left (Photo courtesy of Steve Louie)



# BERKELEY AND BEYOND



Mao	X	Ché	MLK
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## A GANG OF FOUR

by Martin Wong

Photo: MW



## A ton of e-mails and phone calls led me to the Asian-owned, movement-rooted Eastwind Books shop on Shattuck Street in Berkeley.

That's where I met with Richard Aoki (charter member and Field Marshal of the Black Panthers and spokesperson of UC Berkeley's Asian American Political Alliance), Harvey Dong (worker and tenant organizer), Steve Louie (member of Wei Chi Min and worker organizer), and Vicci Wong (a founding member of UC Berkeley's AAPA, involved with SNCC, and worker organizer). Eastwind was too small for all of us, so we procured a corner booth at a nearby Burger King. It was weird to talk to a bunch of political radicals in a corporate death-burger joint, but sometimes the most dangerous place is the safest place.

### PART I: STEVE LOUIE

"The Asian Movement was tremendously liberating," says Steve Louie, sifting through his collection of slides, prints, and radical newspapers from the early 1970s.

The third-generation ABC first became involved with Asian activism in 1969 when he was studying sociology at Occidental College in Los Angeles. When he received a scholarship for independent study, he used it to travel the Bay Area, Boston, New York, and across the country where "groups were coming up like weeds."

He settled in San Francisco, where he made contacts during his travels. At this time, the International Hotel was a center of Asian American activism, with elderly Filipinos and Chinese living in the upper stories and community groups renting out the basement.

Louie joined the Wei Min She, an anti-imperialist and pro-worker group whose name can be translated into "Organization for the People." Louie

explains, "We were trying to organize people to take things into their own hands and become politically conscious."

Unionizing the Lee Mah electronics and Jung Sai garment workers was one of the group's big struggles. Both battles ended bitterly when the electronics owners struck a deal with the union and fired the workers and the garment workers walked out and Jung Sai went out of business.

When the Vietnam War ended, so did WMS. "As the war started to wind down in 1972, the more politically aware groups began to embrace more revolutionary ideals. Struggling against the war and understanding the nature of the enemy caused a lot of us to gravitate toward Marxism and find inspiration from Mao. That's the direction I went in."

### PART 2: RICHARD AOKI

By the time Richard Aoki involved himself with Asian American activism, he had been active in three political movements: