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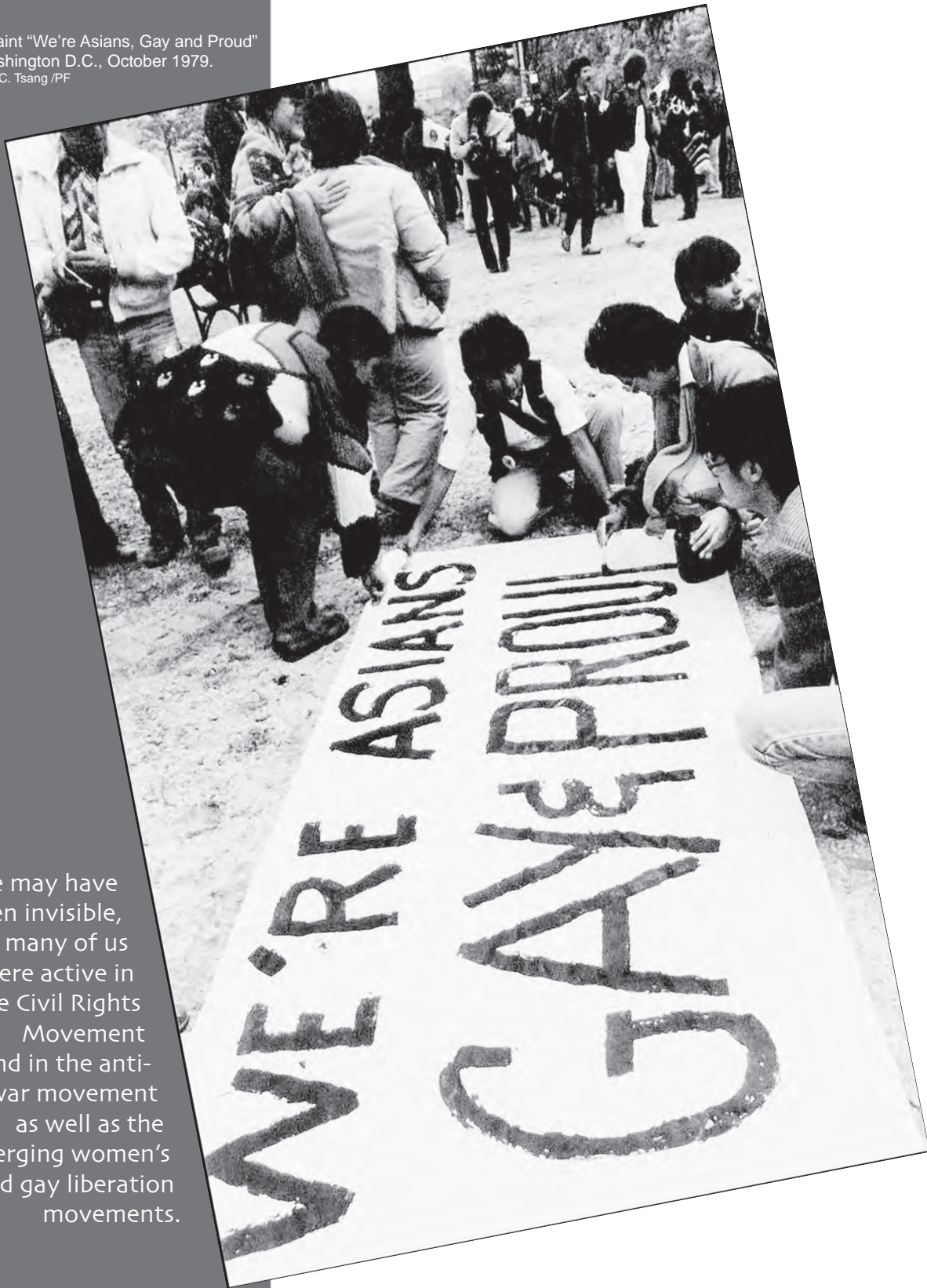
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Marchers paint "We're Asians, Gay and Proud" banner, Washington D.C., October 1979.
© 1979, Daniel C. Tsang /PF



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Slicing Silence: Asian Progressives Come Out

Daniel C. Tsang

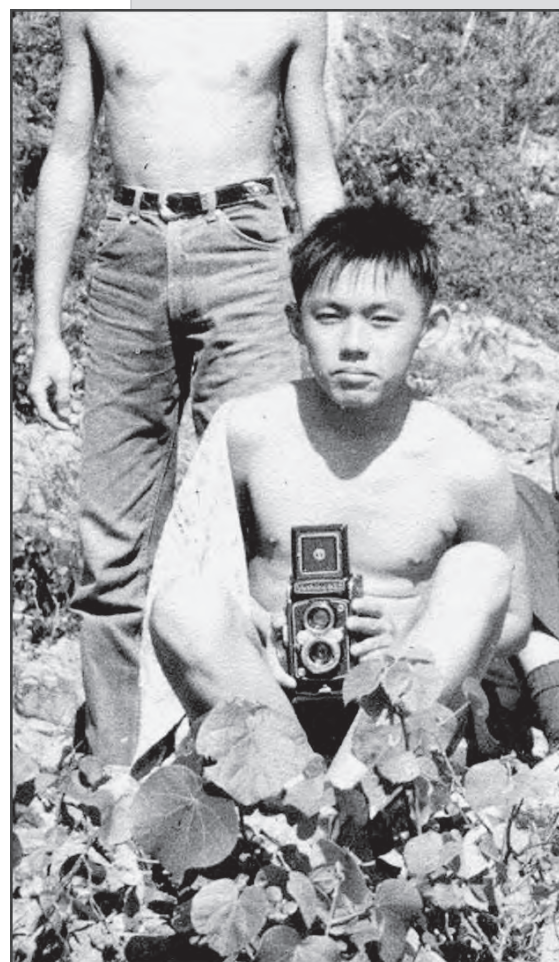
Several decades later, it's hard to imagine a period where queer Asians were largely invisible. These days, queer Asian Americans regularly march in gay parades, and in large urban enclaves such as Los Angeles, routinely gather en masse at dance clubs celebrating gay Asian pride. How did that situation change? In this essay, I'll look back at the pre- and post-Stonewall periods and at some of the conditions that led gay Asians in North America to begin organizing publicly.

To be sure, the politics three decades ago were different. It was the period of the Vietnam War, student protests, racial uprisings, and the stirrings of the women's and gay liberation movements. American society was in turmoil, with street protests and marches. Anti-establishment ideas were in the air; the old, established order had to be overthrown. In short, the sixties had spilled over into the seventies.

Stonewall in 1969 had been where gay and trans-vestite barflies had fought back against the police raiding the Stonewall Inn in Manhattan. But queer Asians did not just erupt from Stonewall, nor did they appear from nowhere. We may have been invisible, but many of us were active in the Civil Rights Movement and in the anti-war movement as well as the emerging women's and gay liberation movements.

One such person was Kiyoshi Kuromiya, later to become a well-known AIDS activist.¹ Born in an "internment" camp (Heart Mountain, Wyoming) in 1943, he grew up as a homosexual youngster in Los

It was the period of the Vietnam War, student protests, racial uprisings, and the stirrings of the women's and gay liberation movements. . . . Anti-establishment ideas were in the air; the old, established order had to be overthrown.



Dan Tsang at beach,
Tai Po Tsai, Hong Kong, 1963.
Photographer unknown/Daniel C. Tsang/PF

the Movement and the Moment

Kiyoshi noted the racism prevalent then, saying he was often kicked out of Gay Activist Alliance meetings when he spoke out against racism.



Kiyoshi Kuromiya, Spirit of Stonewall March, New York City.
© 1994, Daniel C. Tsang /PF

Angeles during the McCarthy era, easily seducing older men, as he later told me.

An early activist in the Civil Rights Movement, he participated in restaurant sit-ins on Route 40 in Maryland at establishments that refused to serve blacks. Meeting Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1963, he would later become a family friend, caring for King children, Martin and Dexter, at the King home after their father was assassinated in 1968. Kiyoshi had worked with King in Selma and Montgomery. In 1965, he himself had been hospitalized with head injuries suffered at the hands of the Montgomery sheriff while leading a group of black high school students on a voter registration protest at the state capitol. He also participated in anti-war protests during that period, becoming one of the 12,000 arrestees in 1972 when anti-war protestors attempted to shut down Washington, D.C.

Kiyoshi became publicly active in homosexual causes before Stonewall. In 1965, he was one of a dozen participants at the first homosexual rights demonstration at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. And in 1970 he spoke on homosexual rights before the Black Panther Party's Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Interviewed for Arthur Dong's *Outrage 69* (part one of the documentary series, "A Question of Equality," which aired on PBS in 1995), Kiyoshi noted the racism prevalent then, saying he was often kicked out of Gay Activist Alliance meetings when he spoke out against racism. As a radical, he also noted that the earlier activists—called homophiles—were "well-dressed midde-aged" (perhaps he meant middle-class) folks with whom he had little in common, not someone he wanted to "party with."²

Kiyoshi's distaste for the establishment—gay or straight—sustained his struggle to the end. Although he had gone to an Ivy League school (University of Pennsylvania), he identified with those who struggled every day to survive in an increasingly hostile society. In 1996, when I interviewed him on my KUCI radio show, *Subversity* (www.kuci.org/~dtsang) about his fight against the Communications Decency Act (CDA), I regret not asking him about his earlier history of activism. In the late 1970s through the mid-1980s, I had lived in Philadelphia, but we only occasionally ran into each other. The

last time I saw him was at a gay march in New York City in the early 1990s. I recall marching along some of the hundred blocks or so from Greenwich Village to Central Park with him; although in theory I was in better health than he, he outpaced me and disappeared into the bushes in the park, while I collapsed on the lawn out of exhaustion.

Another early pioneer was Merle Woo, openly lesbian and socialist. As she has written:

The Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war movement gave inspiration to the student movements of the sixties, and then there were the modern women's movement and the post-Stonewall lesbian/gay movement. I am one of the beneficiaries of these movements: I have gotten an education to affirm not only who I am, an Asian American lesbian woman, but I also got support in terms of physical survival—I got work because of these movements.³

Around the same time, Kitty Tsui was coming out. Kitty, who like me was born in Hong Kong, but spent part of her youth in England, arrived in the U.S. in 1968. As she would later recall, when she came out at age 21 in San Francisco in the early 1970s, “the faces that surrounded me were white.” She sought visibility: “As an Asian American lesbian I am unrepresented, omitted, silenced and invisible. I write to fight erasure, to demand a voice, to become visible, to reclaim my history. I write to turn on the light.”⁴ She would become a strong proponent of talking and writing about sex.

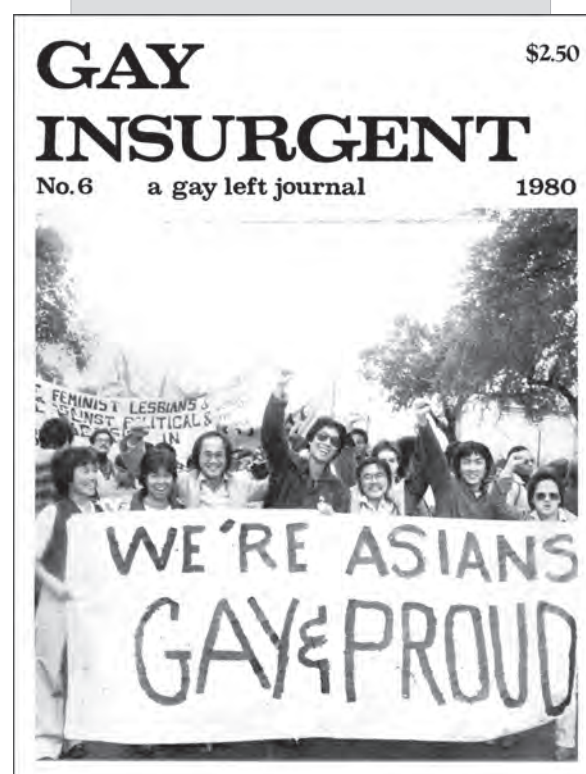
In 1971, an Asian American progressive women's publication was already proclaiming that “gay women must also have the right to self-definition”:

Lesbianism can be seen as revolutionary in that it is a challenge to the basic assumptions of the present system, representing an alternative life style.

As revolutionary women seeking the liberation of all women, we support a united front with our sisters against all arbitrary and rhetorical social standards.⁵

“During that time, however,” Russell C. Leong has written, “Asian American activists who were lesbian or gay often did not reveal their sexual preferences. Unlike those who could make opposition to the heterosexual world as the

Cover of *Gay Insurgent*.
© *Gay Insurgent* (Summer 1980)/Daniel C. Tsang/PF



I write to fight
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I write to
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Kitty Tsui

the Movement and the Moment

For Asian and Pacific lesbians and gays, politicization involved confronting white racism, whether in heterosexual mainstream or gay and lesbian institutions. It involved a worldview that included the Asian community and the history of Asians in the United States and the Americas.



Fist breaking chain.
Artist unknown/*Pink Triangle* (Gay liberation magazine in Chinese), reprinted in *Gay Insurgent* (Summer 1980)/Daniel C. Tsang/PF

center of their political identity, activist Gil Mangaoang had a more complex understanding of his situation in the 1960s and 1970s. As a community worker involved in activities around social justice for Filipinos in the United States, and in the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines, he chose to keep his homosexuality hidden in order not to jeopardize his organizing efforts.”⁶

Eventually, in 1975, Gil did come out: “When I decided to come out in KDP,⁷ I felt liberated and knew that I could be myself with these comrades with whom I had worked closely over the years on many political issues. Although there was not explicit support for my lifestyle, there was no opposition to it.” He describes one incident in which he took a fellow activist into the bedroom for an “intimate get-acquainted session” at a KDP meeting: “Needless to say, the other members were somewhat outraged by our behavior but didn’t know how to ‘politely intervene.’”⁸ Gil felt it necessary, as do many newly empowered gay activists, to act outrageously to challenge straight uptightness. After all, why hide one’s affections?

Russell, who himself would later come out, continued: “As a gay man of color, his [Gil’s] situation was problematic. In the 1970s there were few gay organizations that were not dominated by white males. . . . For Asian and Pacific lesbians and gays, politicization involved confronting white racism, whether in heterosexual mainstream or gay and lesbian institutions. It involved a worldview that included the Asian community and the history of Asians in the United States and the Americas. Factors such as colonization and the relationship of Asian Americans to Third World struggles in Central America, Southern Africa, Southeast Asia, China and Cuba had to be considered.”⁹

Even if we wanted to connect with each other, our numbers were small; it was hard to find each other. There was no internet then, definitely no AOL Instant Messenger or ICQ, nor the myriad websites that now offer same-sex personals for the click of a mouse. Radicalized by the Vietnam War (I questioned why Asians should be fighting other Asians for an imperialist power), many like myself found it logical for us to be active in progressive causes, yet we were bothered by the homophobia that held sway, and the heterosexist assumptions and imperative that seemed operative.

Many of the sectarian left groups, for example, were explicitly homophobic. For example, the Revolutionary Union, which took Mao Tse-tung as its hero, openly disparaged homosexuals; we were thought not capable of being radicals. (To see whether the position of its successor group has changed, see the Revolutionary Communist Party's website: www.rwor.org/rwor.org/a/v21/1020-029/1028/prog.htm.) I myself admired the Black Panther's Huey Newton, when, prior to the People's Convention in Philadelphia, in 1970, he suggested that homosexuals could be even more radical than straights.¹⁰ Kiyoshi had attended that conference, speaking out in support of homosexual rights.

In fact, the conjoining of the two identities—gay and Asian—was not yet conceivable for too many people, in the period immediately after Stonewall, at least publicly. While of course, personally, I knew I was gay and Asian, there was no critical mass of others similarly inclined for an organized group of gay Asians to be created—yet.

I had been born in Hong Kong to a Chinese father and a Chinese American mother (who was herself born and raised in Seattle). Attending an all-boys Anglican Anglo-Chinese secondary school, the elite Diocesan Boys School (where Sun Yat Sen once studied), I was an early homosexualist (Gore Vidal's preferred terminology), with lots of practice, starting from the tender, and not-so-innocent age of 13 or 14. And it wasn't just praxis, for I devoured Vidal's *The City and the Pillar* and other writings of homosexual authors (such as Jean Genet's *Querelle of Brest* and *Our Lady of the Flowers*) I found at the USIS Library and in the colonial public library system in Hong Kong.

I had no trouble seeing myself as both homosexual and Chinese.¹¹ Ironically I was using literature written by the imperialists to liberate myself. So by the time I arrived for college in the United States in 1967, I already was a full-fledged homosexual, enjoying same-sex sex with a fellow-Chinese boyfriend back in Hong Kong. I was 17 then, and in the naïveté of youth, thought I knew all about homosexual literature.

But isolated on a small college campus in San Bernardino County, California (at the University of Redlands), I only did occasional forays into Hollywood, hanging out by the Gold Cup (a restaurant where fellow teenaged homo-

Page from *Gay Insurgent* of Asian gay network meeting.

© 1979, Daniel Tsang (of Asian gay network meeting, 1979)/*Gay Insurgent* (Summer 1980)/Daniel C. Tsang/PF

3rd World Conference
WASHINGTON, D.C.
OCT. 12-15, 1979



when will the ignorance end?

**The Coming Together of
Asians, American Indians,
Latins, and Blacks.**

those who fear our visions will try to keep them silent and invisible. But the ignorance will end, when each of us is prepared to put ourselves upon the line to end it, within ourselves, and within our communities. That is real love, that is real power.

We stand as the last bulwark of humanity in an increasingly dehumanized and anti-human world. A search for acceptance—visibility that would mean never being ill to the need for genuine and far-reaching change. We must always ask ourselves, what kind of world do we really want to become a part of?

As lesbians and gay men, we have been the most despised, the most oppressed and the most spat upon people within our communities. AND we have survived. That survival is a testament to our strength. We have survived, and we have come together again to see that strength to implement a future; hopefully, a future that shall be free from the mistakes of our oppressors, as well as from our own. What we are doing here this weekend can help shape our tomorrow and a world.

We are going to have that best really around.

From *Off our backs* 5/10 (Nov. 1978), Courtesy of National Coalition of Black Gays.

Lesbian and Gay Asian Collective Formed

At the Third World Conference in October, 1979, a small group of Asian Americans/Canadians formed the Lesbian and Gay Asian Collective, in reality a loose network of lesbians and gay male activists from across the U.S. and Canada who share the common experience of being Asian in North America. There is as yet no agreed upon organizational structure, and no statement of principles to guide the group. But we all agreed that we wanted to reach out to the majority white gay movement, and to reach out to other Asian Americans and Asian Canadians. If you are both gay and of Asian heritage, please get in touch with us, by writing to P.O. Box 2337, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA.

If you live in the Boston area, contact: Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians, c/o Glad Day Bookshop, 17 Bromfield Street, Boston, MA 02108, or call (617) 542-0144.

In Toronto, Canada, the first gay Asian group has begun to meet. Write to Richard Pang, Box 8999, The Daily Press, PO Box 7289, Station A, Toronto M5W 1N3, Canada.

We publish below two speeches made during that historic weekend in October. The first, by Tsang Loy, was made last Saturday night, October 13, at a plenary session of the Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference, at Washington, DC's Harwood House. Her talk was met with great emotion and loud applause. The second speech, given by Margaret Noshiko Corwell, was given before some 100,000 demonstrators at next day's March on Washington. Her address reached thousands more via national public radio.



Asian gay network begins meeting, October 13, 1979, Wash., DC. Photograph by Daniel Tsang.

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the Movement and the Moment

Dan Tsang in school uniform outside
Diocesan Boys School, Kowloon, Hong Kong.
c. 1963, photographer unknown/Daniel C. Tsang/PF



Ironically I was using literature written by the imperialists to liberate myself.

sexuals, mostly, gathered). I had my share of street encounters, but never met another Asian American queer. To me, it was normal to have “sticky rice,” or same-race relationships. I did not “hate” my own ethnicity. Nor was I opposed to interracial relationships.

During one mini-semester (a one-month session when I was a sophomore), a sociology professor took us to Los Angeles to spend a few days. Class members actually had a choice of venues one night: a homosexual bar (if they were 21 or older), or a homosexual juice bar. Because I was underage, I went to the juice bar, in Hollywood. It was my first such experience—to be in a tiny room full of homosexuals—and I tried surreptitiously—in the dark room—play footsie in my shorts with the two cute guys I was squeezed between. I was very excited. Later, the class went to an all-night restaurant (this was after midnight) where we had to recount our experiences to our fellow classmates, while, our professor said, it was still fresh in our minds. I deliberately stayed in the closet, but just talked about some old guy I noticed. During that same week in Los Angeles, a Communist Party, USA official also met with us; we couldn’t have that meeting on campus, since the previous year, some U of R students had been suspended from school for doing that very thing. But none of us tied the two movements together—since gay liberation had not yet become a rallying cry or a movement.

In my junior year, I took one semester at Drew University in New Jersey, and a second in London, England. This was right after Stonewall, but it was just something I had read about in the paper (I was then vacationing in Hong Kong). The UN Semester (through Drew) allowed me to explore Manhattan’s adult bookstores, where it could be said my budding interest in researching pornography began.¹² And in London, I remember being cruised by someone in Hyde Park who followed me several blocks. But I still had my boyfriend back in Hong Kong, and felt a kind of loyalty if not full-commitment to him.

It was at the University of Michigan in the 1970s when my two identities came together again. It was not easy at first. I was active in Ann Arbor’s Gay Liberation Front (one of many GLFs taking its name after the National Liberation Front in Vietnam). I recall weekly meetings where we expressed our distrust of straight media and

reporters, refusing interviews with them. Instead, we trusted the underground press, and I for one became an activist while writing for the alternative press. We felt there was no such thing as “objective” journalism anyway.

I also helped found East Wind, an Asian American activist group at the university (where I was attending graduate school in Political Science). The name came from one of Chairman Mao’s speeches, when he predicted the victory of socialism: “The East Wind is prevailing over the West Wind.”¹³ East Wind, the group, believed that “the history of Asian Americans is similar to that of the other visible minorities. Because we share a common past and future, it is imperative that we join hands with other U.S. minority people for the eventual liberation of us all.”¹⁴ Some of my friends ended up working at factories in Chicago as part of their “proletarian” immersion. But although I was active in both Asian and in gay groups, I had a sense of isolation since the gay group was largely white, and there was practically no other gay Asian with whom I could identify, except for the official “gay advocate” at the university, Jim Toy. He was hired by the university to serve gay students, but he was not widely known as Asian and certainly wasn’t active in the Asian American Movement that had emerged by then.

As a writer, I thought the best way to connect with others would be to write an essay. (Remember this was pre-Web.) I’d already been out for some time, and thought it ridiculous that there was nothing in the media about being gay *and* Asian. The only nationally circulating Asian American magazine at the time was *Bridge*, put out by movement activists at the Basement Workshop, a nonprofit, grassroots group out of New York’s Chinatown.

My essay, “Gay Awareness,” came out in *Bridge* in February 1975.¹⁵ It served as the first gay Asian male manifesto. A letter writer to *Bridge* had several years earlier written about being gay and Asian. Hung Nung’s letter was published in *Bridge*. He wrote in part: “I won’t pretend that I’m not gay. I’m proud to be Asian. And the two are not mutually exclusive.” I began my essay with a quote from Nung, suggesting that it was “scandalous” that the issues he raised in his letter were still not being addressed by activists in the Asian American movement.

Radicalized by the Vietnam War (I questioned why Asians should be fighting other Asians for an imperialist power), many like myself found it logical for us to be active in progressive causes, yet we were bothered by the homophobia that held sway, and the heterosexist assumptions and imperative that seemed operative.



Dan Tsang addresses rally during Graduate Employees Organization Strike, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, February 1975. Photographer unknown/Daniel C. Tsang/PF

the Movement and the Moment

... for too long, gays have refused, or strategically delayed, confronting Asian American straights about their homophobia. This conspiracy of silence (and acquiescence in our own oppression) occurred under the mistaken notion that by not rocking the boat we would gain the respect of the dominant culture.



Angela Davis speaks at Third World Peoples' Solidarity Conference, Ann Arbor © 1974, Daniel C. Tsang /PF

Significantly, I wrote that I had come out at the February 1974 Third World Peoples' Solidarity Conference in Ann Arbor, where a group of us (including blacks and a progressive white) were angry at some of the anti-gay sentiments expressed at the podium by "otherwise radical leaders." This was a conference East Wind had helped organize.¹⁶ Ironically, we were upset at a comment Angela Davis made, something about the "sissy" shoes worn by George Washington, or words to that effect. This, of course, was decades before the former Communist Party, USA radical (and now UC Santa Cruz professor) herself came out. I didn't mention Angela's name in the essay, but I wrote: "I came to realize the depth of homosexual oppression, even that emanating from sisters and brothers in the Third World movement."

I went on to give examples of how that oppression manifested itself, and suggested that "[f]or too long, gays have refused, or strategically delayed, confronting Asian American straights about their homophobia. This conspiracy of silence (and acquiescence in our own oppression) occurred under the mistaken notion that by not rocking the boat we would gain the respect of the dominant culture." I criticized the "reformist" aspects of a movement that sought merely to acquire "enough capital to obtain a larger slice of the Amerikan (sic) pie." I suggested that "[s]uch a *reformist* orientation naturally left unchallenged the sexist, heterosexual character of Amerikan society. In the scramble to attain middle-class white respectability, Asian Americans could not be bothered with such trivia as *feminists'* and *gays'* demands. But today, as more and more Asian American activists come to realize the futility of a reformist strategy, it is imperative that the question of oppression of homosexuals be directly confronted." I concluded: "As a gay Asian American, one is doubly oppressed: due to racism and to homophobia . . . Because the color of one's skin is usually more visible than one's sexual preference, the problem of white racism remains crucial. But a united front against racism must not be at the expense of gays."

A few months before this essay was published, I had finally met a fellow gay Asian American activist, Don Kao, at the Second Midwest Asian American Conference at Madison, Wisconsin. Don was a student at the University of Wisconsin, and roomed with Jack Tchen, the

historian who now heads New York University's Asian/Pacific/American Studies Program. Don had read an earlier draft of my essay that I had circulated. He came out at that conference, to general uncomfortable indifference, I thought, during a sexuality workshop.¹⁷ Still, it was an important step.¹⁸

My *Bridge* essay also caught the eye of a Chinese American high school student from Sacramento, Steve Lew. Steve and I began writing to each other. In his first letter, dated May 17, 1975, he wrote in long-hand: "I am asian american and gay. I also feel oppression because of the fore-mentioned and I was very elated to hear another asian american voice the situation." He spoke about his isolation in high school. It was a self-imposed isolation, since "I never told anyone I was gay. I simply felt it was best not to go to dances and partys (sic) that insist on straight conformity (bringing a girl) and 'click'-type socializing." While he would still socialize with others, he wouldn't put himself in any situations demanding "heterosexual conduct." He couldn't yet come out, but he respected my decision to do so "very much." He did not plan to come out "until I can move out on my own." In fact, his family would come to be his strongest allies when he later did come out. His sister, when he came out to her, had actually read my *Bridge* essay as well, and thought it was good.

Steve had been already a student organizer for two years. He spoke out against racism and the Vietnam War. When the liberation forces won in Vietnam and Cambodia, Steve celebrated the victories with an essay in a high school underground zine that he helped put out. In an issue of *Asian Expressions*, he wrote: "Our solidarity with the people of Indo-China strengthens our own fight against racism here in America."¹⁹ He was also an artist, silk-screening activist posters (and would later paint a street mural in Los Angeles' Chinatown). He searched for a way to combine his sexuality with progressive work. On graduating from high school, he moved to Southern California, where he had expectations of working with some of the left groups there, especially a gay left one.

Don Kao comes out at Midwest Asian American Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison.
© 1974, Daniel C. Tsang /PF



In the scramble to attain middle-class white respectability, Asian Americans could not be bothered with such trivia as feminists' and gays' demands.

the Movement and the Moment

Steve Lew
© 1975, Daniel C. Tsang /PF



Our solidarity with the people of Indo-China strengthens our own fight against racism here in America.

Steve Lew

At the time a largely white Trotskyite group, the Lavender Union, in Los Angeles, had been championing gay liberation. But as a nonwhite community activist, Steve didn't find the group to be very welcoming of him; further, the members seemed to be focused on debating theory and not doing praxis. In short, they didn't seem very relevant to what he had in mind.

In Sacramento, Steve had become interested in working with I Wor Kuen, a Marxist-Leninist group that also championed the thoughts of Mao.²⁰ He joined a couple of their study groups, immersing himself in weighty matters such as The National Question and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought. But he soon realized that the group viewed homosexuality as "degenerate." Still, when he moved south, he hung out with IWK members in the L.A. area. The group was active in Chinatown and Little Tokyo fighting redevelopment. Steve never became a member of the group, but supported their community organizing. He discovered, however, that IWK's position on gays was that we couldn't be good revolutionaries, that it was a bourgeois and psychological aberration one had to "struggle" against. The heterosexual assumption was the party line. For that reason, Steve, who had eventually come out to members of the group, never joined the group.²¹

On my frequent forays back to my homeland to visit my boyfriend, I continued to speak out for gay liberation, having in my youth even written to a local paper advocating that. From Ann Arbor, where I attended graduate school, I would write to the Hong Kong-based *Far Eastern Economic Review*, defending homosexuality. The *Review* had perceptively observed editorially ("Comment," June 4, 1976) that "the claim that homosexual behaviour is un-Chinese smacks strongly of all-too-typical Hongkong hypocrisy." Writing as a former resident who had escaped the "oppression" there, I concurred, pointing out:

One reason for this erroneous conclusion may lie in the way homosexuals are typically brought into public view, in a scandal involving a Chinese with a European, or involving two Europeans. Thus, many Chinese may come to believe that it was the European who "corrupted" the Chinese.

Of course, this is quite absurd. Given that a substantial percentage of the population is probably homosexual, compared with just 1% being European, it is statistically impossible that most homosexuals are orientated towards persons of their own sex because of a European. The “problem,” in short, is not homosexuality, but society’s condemnation of it.²²

Living in Philadelphia by 1978 (I had been hired for a two-year librarian position at Temple University’s Contemporary Culture Collection’s Alternative Acquisitions Project), I ended up befriending a fellow university student from Hong Kong who had been studying in the U.S. Ng Siu-ming is a gay man who would later author various books, in Chinese, on homosexuality and gay liberation under his pen names, Samshasha and Xiaomingxiong. With another Hong Kong student (now a successful entrepreneur), Sam and I conducted the first interview in Chinese (Cantonese) about gay liberation the summer of 1979. Symbolically, we sat on the lawn next to Independence Hall. Sam stayed with me using a spare room while researching the gay movement. On June 5, 1979 (a decade after Stonewall), although he was not a U.S. citizen, Sam represented Asian Americans at the White House when a delegation of “Third World” lesbian and gay activists, including Sam, met with President Jimmy Carter’s aide, Midge Costanza, to press for anti-discrimination legislation. Shortly thereafter, Sam returned to Hong Kong, and began writing gay liberation missives.²³

In Philadelphia, I also got to see Don Kao more often and he and I ended up organizing the first gathering of gay and lesbian Asians—at the first National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference at Howard University in Washington, D.C. in October, 1979, the same weekend as the first gay March on Washington. The conference was organized by the National Coalition of Black Gays.

Those events are documented in the Summer 1980 issue of *Gay Insurgent*, a gay left magazine I edited at the time. I wanted to make sure that this historic gathering would not be forgotten. Re-reading it recently, I’m struck by how the cover stands out: It features a photograph of

The “problem,” in short, is not homosexuality, but society’s condemnation of it.



Don Kao and others march through Chinatown, Washington D.C.
© 1979, Daniel C. Tsang /PF

the Movement and the Moment

There is no hierarchy
of oppression.

—Audre Lorde



Excerpt from *Gay Insurgent*:
“When Will the Ignorance End?”

© 1980, Daniel Tsang (photograph of Audre Lorde)/
Gay Insurgent (Summer 1980)/Daniel C. Tsang/PF

the nine of us, female and male, some with arms raised, most of us smiling, behind a huge banner: “WE’RE ASIANS, GAY & PROUD.” Inside was Audre Lorde’s keynote address at the conference (“When Will the Ignorance End?”),²⁴ resolutions from the conference,²⁵ and news accounts after the conference. For example, the accounts reminded me that we had heard solidarity statements from the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and socialist *compañeros* from Mexico. The statement from the Consul General of Nicaragua in San Francisco warmed our revolutionary hearts: “May from your conference be born a movement that identifies, that unites and struggles with the liberation movements of all oppressed people.”²⁶ It also contained my report on the formation of a “Lesbian and Gay Asian Collective,”²⁷ when several of us at the conference caucused and expressed the need to network after we went back to our respective communities. There is as yet “no statement of principles to guide the group,” I reported, but clearly we felt the need to stay connected as gay and lesbian people who shared the “common experience of being Asian in North America.” Among the dozen or more Asians in our new “collective” that historic weekend in D.C. was Mini Liu, a community activist, doctor and later (in 1986), co-founder of the Manhattan-based Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence. In 1974, as a medical student, she had begun reading Mao, and as she later told an interviewer, “I was just really taken by the idea, the vision of a different kind of society. And that’s when, I think, I became more consciously political based on heading for a certain point, not just a general liberal notion of trying to serve other people.”²⁸

Also reprinted in the magazine was a Chinese-American lesbian sister’s talk at the conference, Tana Loy’s “Who’s the Barbarian?”²⁹ Expressing unity with other people of color, she spoke about what had happened at the Asian caucus meeting: “Somehow, we felt—immediately and immensely in tune with each other, because when an Asian sees another Asian—they run away from each other.” She attributed this avoidance of ourselves in part to a “survival response, because for decades of imperialist wars we have been atomic bombed, we have been napalmed; we have been raped; we have been driven to suicide—and we have built this country from the

east to the west. And we have been called the barbarian! . . . Who's the barbarian?"

She added: "But today we are going toward each other, and we are sharing our strength with each other, and with all our brothers and sisters here today. You know something? We're not that quiet and reserved Asian. . . We're not that 'model minority.' Oh no, oh, we're silent, but why are we silent? We're silent, even from each other, by the racism and the sexism that exists in this country, that manifests itself in the fears and frustrations that keep our own people in the closet as Asians and as lesbians and gay men. Many of us cannot even come out for fear of deportation; and yet I know there are many Asians who are going to be out on that street tomorrow, knowing that's a reality in their lives."

She explained: "In our short time together, a support system has evolved from which we have drawn our strength, from each other and from all of you here. And out of this strength we have collectively decided to march together as Asians. . .and you can be sure, you can be damned sure, that those who oppose us will hear us, and they will hear us loud and clear."

And indeed they would, as about a dozen of us marched from Howard University in the black neighborhood through to Chinatown and to the mall, behind the banner expressing our pride, an historic first march by openly gay and lesbian Asians.

At the march, we marched joined in solidarity with other people of color, with the indigenous gays and lesbians leading the entire Third World contingent, behind a "First Gay Americans" banner. We listened as one selected to represent our group, Michiyo Cornell, a Vermont-based Eurasian poet, addressed the huge rally at the Washington Monument, on the theme, "Living in Asian America." Her talk was also published in the magazine.³⁰

Saying it was the first time such a network had been formed, Michiyo noted: "I am careful to use the phrase Asian American because we are not hyphenated Americans nor are we always foreign-born women and men from Asia. We have been in this country for over 150 years! We live in *Asian America*. . ."

The statement from the Consul General of Nicaragua in San Francisco warmed our revolutionary hearts: "May from your conference be born a movement that identifies, that unites and struggles with the liberation movements of all oppressed people."

Solidarity statement read at the National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference

the Movement and the Moment

Your *Tongzhi*
Body*

Russell C. Leong

I see a brown
tongzhi body—
Neither female
nor male
Eyes from Beijing
Lips from Hong Kong
Spleen from Guizhou
Belly from
Guangzhou
Feet from Singapore.

I touch a smooth
tongzhi body—
Without day, month,
or year of birth
Whose fingertips
reach to Canada
and America
Whose thighs and
calves stretch
to Malaysia
Whose toes touch
Thailand and
Vietnam
Whose body travels
from Italy to
Australia.

I hear a *tongzhi* body
speak out—
A voice sings,
cries, and prays
As she/he tells stories
of love and lust
Of homelessness
and loneliness.

She continued: “We are called the model minority, the quiet, the passive, exotic erotics with the slanted cunt to match our ‘slanted’ eyes or the small dick to match our small size. But we are not. For years Asian Americans have organized against our oppression. We protested and were lynched, deported and put into concentration camps during World War II. We must not forget that the United States of America has bombed, napalmed and colonized Asian countries for decades. . . . It could rape and murder Vietnamese women, children and men, then claim that ‘Asians don’t value human life.’”

Describing herself as an “Asian American woman, a mother and a lesbian,” characteristics that are “difficult to put into a neat package,” Michiyo exclaimed that “I know that I live in the face of this country’s determination to destroy me, to negate me, to render me invisible.” She demanded “white lesbians and gay men” to think about how they repress “your Asian American lesbian and gay sisters and brothers,” urging them to address their “white skin privilege.” She urged the crowd to realize that “the capitalist system uses not just sexual preference but race and class as well to divide us. . . I would say that we share the same oppression as Third World people, and for that reason we must stand together or be hanged separately by what Audrey Lorde calls the ‘noose of conformity.’” She urged fellow closeted Asian Americans to come out, asking them to “consider how we become accomplices to our own sexual and racial oppression when we fail to claim our true identities.”

The excitement and solidarity we felt that weekend is captured by Richard Fung’s report, “We’re Asian, Gay and Proud,” in the *Body Politic*, a gay liberation journal from Toronto. His report was also reprinted in *Gay Insurgent*.³¹ Richard, now well-known as the Canadian Chinese (born in Trinidad) videomaker who has pioneered in documenting the gay Asian experience, wrote that “if for many of us it was the first time we had spoken with other Asian gays, we immediately recognized each other’s stories.” He offered a stinging critique of existing gay society, “organized and commercial,” is “framed around the young middle-class white male. He is its customer and its product. Blacks, Asians and Latin Americans are the oysters in this meat market. At best we’re a quaint specialty for exotic tastes. Native people aren’t even on

the shelves.” Fung noted, “To make our voices heard, non-white lesbians and gay men have organized.” He concluded: “Washington was just the beginning.”

Indeed it was. Richard went on shortly thereafter to found Gay Asians Toronto, serving gay Asians in the Canadian metropolis.³² He had been inspired by Chua Siong-Huat, whom he had met for the first time at the march. A Malaysian Chinese who had graduated from MIT, “S.H.,” as he was affectionately known, had just founded, in the summer before the D.C. conference and march, the Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians. S.H. had started the group with two lesbians and another gay man at Glad Day Bookshop in Boston. A member of the radical *Fag Rag* collective, he also wrote for the first gay liberation newsweekly, *Gay Community News*. He was profiled in Richard Fung’s *Fighting Chance*, a documentary about Asians with AIDS or seropositivity. S.H. remained a strong advocate of seeing Asians as sexual “subjects” rather than just “objects.” He would later argue that “there is nothing wrong really with being a sexual object if you can also be a sexual subject.” He authored the definitive essay on gay Asians for the *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, which came out in 1990.³³ He died of AIDS in August 1994.³⁴

At the time many of us remained active in progressive causes because we sought a radical restructuring of America. We rejected straight depictions of us as psychologically impaired, or as incapable of progressive work. We knew those stereotypes weren’t true. We remained activists even when we suffered racism or homophobia, because of this larger goal of changing over-all society. And we saw our struggle as part and parcel of people of color (“Third World” peoples’) struggles. But in 1979, because similarly inclined individuals were able to meet together, a critical mass was achieved, and we were able to begin organizing publicly as both Asian and gay. That effort continues, because the task of creating a society that meets basic human needs remains unfinished.³⁵ The transnational flow of queer activists and activism back and forth between the U.S. and Asia also continues. One example. Less than a year after China reclaimed sovereignty over the former British territory, Russell Leong, I and other activists from North America gathered with our sisters and brothers in

I know a *tongzhi*
body like yours—

Who is HIV positive
And HIV negative
But I will kiss you
on the lips anyway
And on every part
of your body
For everyone’s love
and nobody’s fault.

For I possess
this brown
tongzhi body—
And so do you,
and you, and you.
For we are one,
or are we not?

**tongzhi* is Hong Kong slang
for gay or queer; it also
means comrade in the
Chinese language

Russell Leong poem,
“Your *Tongzhi* Body”
© 1999, Russell C. Leong/John
Loo, ed., *A New Reader on
Chinese Tongzhi: Essays and
Conference Proceedings* (Hong
Kong: Worldson Books, 1999)

the Movement and the Moment

At the time many of us remained active in progressive causes because we sought a radical restructuring of America. We rejected straight depictions of us as psychologically impaired, or as incapable of progressive work. We knew those stereotypes weren't true.

the Chinese diaspora for the first Tongzhi Conference in Hong Kong under the Communist control (during an unexpectedly chilly February of 1998). In impeccable Mandarin, Russell spoke and read poetry while I resorted to English as I reminisced about my early days of gay activism and writing in Hong Kong and the initial stirrings of gay Asian activism in North America. My talk was simultaneously translated into Mandarin for a large delegation (male and female) from across the border. The solidarity that emerged at that meeting resembled similar gatherings in the U.S.; we felt a certain comradeship that transcended national boundaries, coupled with a sense of mission to continue this work.³⁶

Daniel C. Tsang hosts "Subversivity" (go.fast.to/sv), a public affairs interview show at KUCI in Southern California, and covers "civil unliberties" for OC Weekly. He co-founded Asian Americans United (Philadelphia) and Alliance Working for Asian Rights & Empowerment (Orange County, California.). He successfully sued the CIA for spying on him. He's also the Asian American Studies, politics, and economics bibliographer at University of California, Irvine, where he runs its Social Science Data Archives. E-mail: awaredt@hotmail.com. URL: go.fast.to/ar.



Dan Tsang hosting "Subversivity" show at KUCI, 1999.
Photographer unknown/Daniel C. Tsang/PF

Notes

1. Much of the biographical information that follows comes from web-based sources, including: "Kiyoshi Kuromiya: A Brief Bio" (www.fairlaw.org/kiyoshi_Bio.htm), his "Brief Curriculum Vitae" (www.fairlaw.org/kiyoshi_Resume.htm) and my obituary of him, "Obituary: Asian American Gay Pioneer" (kuci.org/~dtsang/subversivity/obit.html).
2. In the late 1970s, Kiyoshi began collaborating with R. Buckminster Fuller, the geodesic dome inventor. In the mid-eighties, he began doing AIDS work, eventually naming an AIDS organization he had founded "Critical Path" (www.criticalpath.org), after one of Fuller's books. By the 1990s, he was an ACLU plaintiff in an ultimately successful challenge to the Communications Decency Act (CDA) of 1996, and was lead plaintiff in *Kuromiya et al v. USA*, a class-action lawsuit against federal laws against the therapeutic use of cannabis. He succumbed to AIDS in Philadelphia in May 2000.
3. Cited in Russell Leong, "Introduction: Home Bodies and the Body Politic," *Asian American Sexualities: Dimensions of The Gay and Lesbian Experience*, edited by Russell C. Leong (New York: Routledge, 1996), 6. Originally from Merle Woo, "What Have We Accomplished? From the Third World Strike Through the Conservative Eighties," *Amerasia Journal* 15:1 (1989), 81-89.
4. In 1975, Kitty joined Merle and others in forming the writers' collective Unbound Feet. Kitty also wrote the first book by a Chinese American lesbian, *The Words of a Woman Who Breathes Fire* (Argyle, New York: Spinners Ink, 1983). See Patti Capel Swartz, "Tsui, Kitty (Kit Fan)," in *Gay & Lesbian Literature*, vol. 2, Tom Pendergast and Sara Pendergast, editors

- (Detroit: St. James Press, 1998), 355-358. She is now well-known for her poetry, short stories, erotic writing, and as a competitive body builder, having won the gold medal at the Gay Games III in 1990.
5. Cited in Leong, 6. From "Politics of the Interior," editorial essay in *Asian Women* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971).
 6. Leong, 6.
 7. KDP was the leading group in the solidarity movement against the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines: *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino*, or Union of Democratic Filipinos.
 8. Gil Mangaoang, "From the 1970s to the 1990s: Perspective of a Gay Filipino American Activist," in Leong (1996), 107-108.
 9. Leong, 6-7.
 10. Huey Newton, "Letter from Huey to the Revolutionary Brothers and Sisters about the Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements," *The Black Panther* (August 21, 1970).
 11. See my "M. Butterfly Meets the Great White Hope," *Informasian*, 6:3 (March 1992), 3-4, a call to strive beyond "Orientalism" in our personal relationships. *Informasian* is a publication of the Los Angeles-based Gay Asian Pacific Support Network.
 12. See my recent "Beyond 'Looking for My Penis': Reflections on Asian Gay Male Video Porn," in *Porn 101: Eroticism, Pornography, and the First Amendment*, edited by James E. Elias et al. (Amherst, New Jersey: Prometheus Press, 1999), 473-478.
 13. Mao made his speech at the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, November 18, 1957. See William Wei, *Asian American Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 32. William, a fellow graduate student, devotes a number of pages more to East Wind.
 14. Cited in Wei, 34. This University of Michigan campus group needs to be distinguished from the Eastwind Collective in Los Angeles, or *East Wind*, the magazine.
 15. It appeared on pages 44-45 as a "Reader's Turn." Expressing my ethnic pride, I used my full name, written as: Daniel Tsang Chun-Tuen.
 16. Wei, 34. Wei, who didn't know about our being upset, merely mentions the "unity" achieved at the conference becoming the basis for the formation of the Third World Coalition Council on campus.
 17. Don's talk appeared as "Sexuality: Highlighted at Midwest Conference," *Rice Paper* (Madison), 1:2 (Winter, 1975). The publication also reprinted my *Bridge* essay under the title, "Asian Sexuality: An Asian American Male Gay." See Wei, 287-289, n56.
 18. Don, now well-known as a long-time New York Chinatown community activist, would later host meetings of the Lavender Left at his "farm" in the Catskills and help start a host of groups, including Gay Asian and Pacific Islander Men of New York. See, for example, Tom Geveran, "Gay Asian Group Marking Milestone," *New York Blade* (June 23, 2000): www.gapimny.org/stuff/NYBlade/nyblade.htm.
 19. "Lessons in Victory," *Asian Expressions* (May/June, 1975).
 20. The name of the group is taken from the Boxer Rebellion in China, meaning in Cantonese, "Society of the Harmonious Righteous Fist." See Fred Ho, "Fists for Revolution: The Revolutionary History of the I Wor Kuen/League of Revolutionary Struggle," in *Legacy to Liberation: Politics*

The Pink Triangle

...During the roundup for the concentration camps, Gypsies, prostitutes, communists, labor leaders and homosexuals, as well as Jews, were collected. The group of homosexuals were singled out by a pink triangle worn point down on the left arm of the jacket and on the right pant leg.

*An Active Response
to Repression:
Some Forgotten History*
by Mark Freeman
and Michael Ward

© Mark Freeman and Michael Ward, *An Active Response to Repression: Some Forgotten History* (Tsang/PF)



Logo, "A Chinese Gay's Statement."
© 1980, "Sam" (Ng Siu-ming)/front page
of *Pink Triangle* /Daniel C. Tsang/PF

the Movement and the Moment

Excerpt from *Gay Insurgent*:
"Who's the Barbarian?"

© 1980, Daniel Tsang (photograph of Tana Loy/
Gay Insurgent (Summer 1980)/Daniel C. Tsang/PF

Who's the Barbarian?

AN ASIAN AMERICAN LESBIAN SPEAKS BEFORE
THE THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE

Sisters and brothers, you know that lesbian and gay Asians who are here have had a lot of a struggle and you know you have to fight, you have to fight inside yourself for what you think is going on, try to figure out what really is going on. We had some difficult feelings amongst ourselves in the sense of where we felt left out. But we want to say right now that the strength that comes from being here and being out with you in the thing that is keeping us in here and keeping us thinking about unity. (Applause)

Sisters and brothers, and sisters and brothers in ways that only we who are Third World lesbians and gay men can know, because we live it every day of our lives. Because there's attacks, there's attacks all around, and it may mean we don't have children, it may mean that we get lousy medical care, or no medical care; or that we don't have jobs or that we go back hungry.

My name is Tana... and I feel especially fortunate to share with you what happened to us at the Asian American

conference, what happened to us personally and politically. Somehow we felt... immediately and intensely in touch with each other, because when an Asian sees another Asian... they run from each other. Because whatever the reason and there are many, many reasons... we run from each other because of the story, because of the legends, because of the deep self-hatred of racism in this country. It's a survival response, because for decades of imperialism wars we have been atomic bombed; we have been raped; we have been raped; we have been raped in suicide... and we have built this country from the east to the west. And we have been called the barbarians! (Exclamation from audience) We have been called the barbarians! Who's the barbarians!

It is something extremely important, and that is, that in the context of this history-making conference, we Asians, gay Asians... and that means Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Indonesian, Vietnamese, whether we're from Guam, Korea, Malaysia, whether we're Indian, whether we're Pakistani... we have for the first time, for many of us, with some tears and misad, run toward each other. (Applause)

And we all know that for a Third World lesbian and gay man, to do something that personal is highly political. It is very much as though we had been in a wasteland and we were thirsty, and someone had... another Asian... had a drop of water, and we saw that and we wanted it, and we couldn't take it. But today we are going toward each other, and we are sharing our strength with each other, and with all our brothers and sisters here today.

You know something? You know we're not that quiet and reserved Asian... (Applause) We don't clean those clothes every day 24 hours a day. We're not that "model minority" (Applause) -- oh, no, we're silent, the why are we silent? We're silent, even from each other, by the racism and the sexism that exists in this society, that suffocates itself in the fears and frustration that keep one from people in the closet or Asians and an lesbians and gay men.

Many of us cannot even come out for fear of deportation, and yet I know there are many Asians who are going to be out on that street tomorrow, knowing that's a reality in their lives.

In our short time together, a support system has evolved from which we have drawn our strength, from each other and from all of you here. And our of this strength we have collectively decided to march together as Asians. (Applause)

We come to you to share our strength, as we have come out strong with each other. We express our strength and power with all of you, with all of us. Because when we come tomorrow it will be the Third World lesbian and gay people, side by side, as one voice, to say no to racism, no to sexism, and no to anti-gay bigotry. And you can be sure, you can be damned sure, that those who oppress us will hear us, and they will hear us loud and clear. (Applause)

by Tana Loy

GAY INSURGENT 6 SUMMER 1980 PAGE 15



Tana Loy, Photograph by Daniel Tsang

for decades of imperialist wars we have been atomic bombed, we have been napalmed; we have been raped; we have been driven to suicide—and we have built this country from the east to the west. And we have been called the barbarian!...
Who's the barbarian?

Tana Loy

and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America, edited by Fred Ho (San Francisco: AK Press; Brooklyn: Big Red Media, 2000), 3-13.

- 21. See also Eric C. Wat, *The Making of a Gay Asian Community* (Boulder, Colorado: Rowman & Littlefield, forthcoming). The book is based on Eric's master's thesis, "In No One's Shadows: A History of Organizing Among Gay Asian Men in Los Angeles in the pre-AIDS Years," M.A. thesis, California State University, Fullerton, 1998). Steve discusses the two groups on pages 122-125 of the thesis. Eric also presents interviews with gay Asians who grew up in World War II at various internment camps. Steve would later be instrumental in the 1984 founding of Gay Asian Rap in Long Beach, which later became Gay Asian Pacific Support Network in Los Angeles. He now is active in AIDS work in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1995, when Steve was executive director of the Gay Asian Pacific Alliance Community HIV Project, he was named to serve on President Clinton's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.
- 22. My letter, "Hong Kong's Gays," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (July 9, 1976), 6, was published with my real name and University of Michigan affiliation. Available online at: sun3.lib.uci.edu/~dtsang/ghkltr.htm. My coming out in this major magazine was positive: Friends read it and two years later I was able to freelance for the *Review*, reporting (using declassified U.S. documents) about Hong Kong's past ("Hongkong: Home Truths from History," July 14, 1978, 28-29.)
- 23. In Hong Kong, Sam started (in February 1980) a gay liberation magazine in Chinese, *Pink Triangle*, containing his "A Chinese Gay's Statement" on the front page. A later (April 1980) English-language version also reprinted the transcript (translated into English) of our Independence Hall interview. His *Twenty-Five Questions about Homosexuality* (in Chinese) came out in 1981 from Pink Triangle Press. Sam followed with his *History of Homosexuality in China* (1984), also in Chinese, which he dedicated to me and other gay activists. He's known as the father of gay liberation in Hong Kong, although he would joke with me that I was the grandmother. His *History* book was revised to come out just around the time of the return of Hong Kong to China in mid-1997. See also: Mark McClelland, "Interview with Samshasha," *Intersections* 4 (September 2000); online at: www.she.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/issue4/interview_mcclelland.html.
- 24. This appeared in *Gay Insurgent* 6 (Summer 1980), 12-14. Her talk was first published in *Off Our Backs*, November 1979.
- 25. Not all left groupings were anti-gay; the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women, in which Merle Woo was active, endorsed lesbian and gay liberation. See "Struggles Reach New Levels: National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference Resolutions," *Gay Insurgent* 6 (Summer 1980), 17-19.
- 26. Cited in Daniel Tsang, "Third World Lesbians and Gays Meet," *Gay Insurgent* 6 (Summer 1980), 11.
- 27. "Lesbian and Gay Asian Collective Formed," *Gay Insurgent* 6 (Summer 1980), 14.
- 28. Mini herself finally came out publicly in a big way in the *New York Daily News* in December 1990 during protests against the Broadway play, *Miss Saigon*. The protests were organized by Asian Lesbians of the East Coast and GAPINY. See Linda Wong, "Mini Liu, Long-Time Activist," in *The Very Inside: An Anthology of Writing by Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian and Bisexual Women*, edited by Sharon Lim-Hing (Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1994), 345-351.

29. *Gay Insurgent* 6 (Summer 1980), 15.
30. *Ibid.*, 16. Her talk was later reprinted in *Asian American Sexualities*, 83-84. Michiyo, whom I'd originally known as Margaret, later changed her name to Michiyo Fukaya, using her mother's name. I kept a stream of correspondence with her, feeling for her rearing a young daughter, Mayumi, as a single mom. Her self-published 22-page collection of her poems, *Lesbian Lyrics*, came out in 1981. She helped organize lesbian/gay pride rallies in Vermont. She was a valued contributor to *Common-woman*. I was pained when she took her own life in 1987 at the age of 34. A collection of her writings, including speeches at other gay and women's conferences, as well as her poetry, has appeared: *A Fire is Burning, It is in Me: The Life and Writings of Michiyo Fukaya*, edited by Gwendolyn L. Shervington (Norwich, Vermont: New Victoria Publishers, 1996). See also Alice Y. Hom, "Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders," in *Lesbian Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 72-75.
31. *Gay Insurgent* 6 (Summer 1980), 21. Richard's essay first appeared in *The Body Politic* 58 (November 1979), 17.
32. See also my entry, "Asians in North America," in *Gay Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia*, edited by George E. Haggerty (New York: Garland, 2000), 76-78.
33. Siong-huat Chua, "Asian-Americans, Gay and Lesbian," in *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, edited by Wayne R. Dynes (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), vol. 1, 84-85. S.H. wrote that the 1979 conference provided a "major impetus" for organizing gay Asians, and that we "lobbied hard" for Tana Loy to be the March speaker. He meant Michiyo Cornell.
34. Daniel C. Tsang, "Founder of First Gay and Lesbian Asian Group Succumbs to AIDS," *AsianWeek* (September 2, 1994), 3. Available online at: sun3.lib.uci.edu/~dtsang/sh_obit.html.
35. For my critique of reformism in the current gay Asian movement, see "Losing its Soul? Reflections on Gay and Asian Activism," in *Legacy to Liberation*, 59-64.
36. The proceedings from that 1998 gathering have been carefully and beautifully compiled into a book, *A New Reader on Chinese Tongzhi*, by John Woo, editor (Hong Kong: Worldson Publications, 1999). Largely written in Chinese, the volume contains a smattering of essays translated into English.

I am an Asian American woman, a mother and a lesbian. Because these things are difficult to put into a neat package, because I am genuinely different — I know that I live in the fact of this country's determination to destroy me, to negate me, to render me invisible.

Margaret Noshiko Cornell



Excerpt from *Gay Insurgent*: "Living in Asian America."
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the Movement and the Moment