Back in black

Point one of the Black Panther Party’s Ten-Point Platform, from 1966, equates freedom with power: “WE BELIEVE,” it reads, “that black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.” Encoded in that basic, ineluctable idea was an outcry against its persistent oppression—a potent mixture of rage, desperate exhaustion and invigorating righteousness that four decades ago combined to make history, sometimes violently. Now, to many, that era’s legacy is dimly remembered but still potent, like a hot ember buried in a pile of ashes.

It’s glowing again at KINKS International, at 629 15th Street, where, through September 15, Sacramento’s It’s About Time Committee exhibits graphics and visual artwork from the Black Panther Party newspapers. The collection spans the turbulent years of 1968 through 1974, limning the papers’ efforts to chronicle, clarify, defend and incite the party’s struggle. It also reminds us that, for better and worse, not all the action was in Oakland.

An opening reception, Saturday at 6 p.m., includes appearances by one of the original Panthers, Elbert “Big Man” Howard, who will be signing his new book, Panther On The Prowl, and by Emory Douglas, the Revolutionary Artist (that’s a job description, not an aggrandizing editorial pronouncement) and the party’s former minister of culture, whose artwork this exhibit features.

“The ghetto itself is the gallery for the Revolutionary Artist’s drawings,” Douglas wrote in his “1968 Position Paper #1 on Revolutionary Art.” “The Revolutionary Artist cuts through the smokecreens of the oppressor and creates brand new images of Revolutionary action—for the total community.” What serious-minded, destiny-determining newspaper couldn’t get behind that? For more information, visit www.itsabouttimebpp.com.

—Jonathan Kiefer

August 4th through September 15th, 2005 An opening reception will be held on August 6th at 6 PM with special guest, Emory Douglas, Revolutionary Artist and former Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party. The exhibit features his artwork. Author and Deputy Minister of Information, Elbert Big Man Howard will be signing his new book “Panther on the Prowl.”

At: K.I.N.K.S. INTERNATIONAL
629 15th St.
Sacramento, CA

For more information contact:
Curator Bill Jennings, (916)455-0908
e-mail: itsabouttime3@juno.com
Visit our website: itsabouttimebpp.com