

Bismillah - is Rahman - is Raheem

As Salamun Alaykum

Power to the People

While i cannot be with you in body i am with you in spirit AS ARE others locked away or fallen in the cause of freedom. This 20th ANNIVERSARY of the BLACK PANTHER Party and the theme, "The Panther Experience" is a fitting one for such an occasion. We considered ourselves revolutionaries determined to bring about a change in the hearts and minds of our people so as to enable them to liberate themselves. In the process some of us were transformed by the ideals and message we spoke about. Have faith in the Party, have faith in the people.

For me the Panther experience has been an on going one, as a political prisoner, it is my politics gained in P.E. classes and my study of history as well as the events in South Africa which has sustained me for over 15 years and the love ^{for} the people drives to be constant in learning.

One of the themes brought home to me many years ago was the idea of protracted struggle, the same problems which gave rise to the Party and affected our communities then are still with us only more intense. Cracks, hunger, poor housing and homeless people, a community terrorized by our own because there is no one to lead them away from destruction. Had politics been in command we'd be in a better position to address these issues today. Self-criticism is also something learned from the Panther experience, it is a good thing and not a bad thing. And because we failed to let politics command, we didn't change our methods of study and methods of work, we left a void filled by negative attitudes and self-destruction.

Yet to me the Panther experience will always be the collective life, teaching the children, sitting in peoples houses explaining what we were about and most of all having that feeling of knowing you're doing something right. As Elaine Brown sang in the "Siege the Time" album, one time in life right comes along to the man whose always been wrong, to me the Panther experience was that right, not only for me but for black people in general, it was a shared experience and in this our celebration we should reflect on a time when our voices were heard in a noonday sun. When we dared to struggle and dared to win and were important on the promises we had.

Siege The Time
Albert Nuh Washington
Political Prisoner