

# **THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY – 40 YEARS OF HISTORY**

**By Elbert “Big Man” Howard**

In 1966, when a few of us got together and formed the Black Panther Party, I don't think any of us had any idea that we were to become a part of a movement so unique and of such historical importance that its effect has lasted 40 years. I believe that because after so many years, people are interested in the history of the BPP and seek out information about it, a great deal of what the party was about is timeless.

This 40 year anniversary celebration is a great time for reflection – a time to reflect on the good times as well as the bad times and a time to reflect on the comrades and the friends we made, many of whom did not live to be here to celebrate with us but none-the-less are remembered by us and really are still with us.

There are those comrades we also think of, who are locked up in America's concentration camps, and who continue to struggle in whatever ways they can, to resist oppression. There are comrades who live outside the clutches of the US government and are still carrying on the work and following and teaching the principles of the BPP.

Over the years, the faces of the tyrants and oppressors have changed and they have different names for the evil they do, as they seek the loftier goal of world domination. For 40 years the BPP has continued to stand in their way as we have continued to expose them and educate the community on how to resist them and survive.

As we approach the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Black Panther Party, I am convinced that I did not choose to join the BPP – the BPP chose me. So to all former members of the Black Panther Party, friends, and community supporters: the spirits of our fallen comrades and the ancestors command us to continue to educate the uneducated and reeducate the miseducated. Let us join together to celebrate our history and each other and continue on – there is work for us to do.

All Power to the People

Big Man