

March Update 2013

International News

Back from Melbourne, Australia, and I had a wonderful time. I brought the Black Panther Party Newspaper exhibit with me and was a guest speaker at the Marxism



Conference. I was in Australia for two weeks; it was my first time there. I was a guest of the Socialist Alternative Organization which is based out of Melbourne. I met Julia, a member, in London last year and she asked if I would come to Australia.

I was treated very well by all. I had the chance to spread the word about the BPP. I had radio and newspaper interviews daily and as many as three per day. ABC radio is pretty big; they reach all the way into Asia. I was on that radio channel three different times, reaching many small islands and countries who haven't

heard from the BPP in many years. Melbourne has over 4 million people and I was in the Sunday morning newspaper in the front section.



One of the best things to happen is that I finally got to meet with Gary Foley; I mean Dr. Gary Foley; he just received his PHD in 2012. Gary was a member of the Aboriginal Black Panther Party. He told me great stories about how they tried to copy everything we did. They started Breakfast Programs and opened up Free Medical Clinics all across Australia. The comrades even had a legal aide program for the people and history classes like we had in our liberation schools. Just like us, the time the government was jailing them and beating them.

The Aboriginal Community Center held a special event for me. Gary Foley spoke and Aboriginal Panther Sister Berta chaired the meeting. Speaker after speaker

praised the BPP for its community service programs, standing up to the American government and exposing racism in the U.S.



One Sister broke down and started crying saying, “you just don’t know what the BPP means to us.” She went on to say, “we watched you and did what you did, we served our people too.”

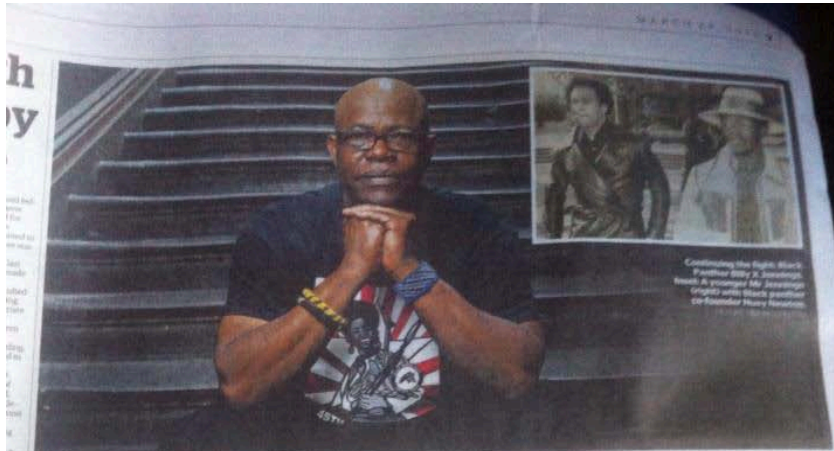


On the first day of the conference, I put up the BPP newspaper exhibit which drew a crowd throughout the conference. Many people came to take photos in front of the exhibit. I passed out information about the exhibit and the It’s About Time website. I spoke to a standing room only crowd on Saturday. My presentation was on the Rank and File

Party members, making of a Panther in Training, our reading list, doing community work and the development of our Survival Programs.

I was able to make contact with many people in Australia, plus the many people who attended the conference from other counties.

Being able to spread the word about the BPP is a job I really love. Billy X



Spreading the word of the Black Panther code

JOHN ELDER

We believe... But all black and oppressed people should be armed the full defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces — from the cover of the Black Panther Party's *Black Panther* newspaper.

Billy X, Sacramento, CA, still lives the Black Panther code, still has his guns locked up at home — believing that so much more lives changed the Black Panther code has no one to take them the same. The right goes on...

"I'm back, I just don't carry the guns around any more, but I still live by the 10-point plan," he says.

Mr. Jennings is in Melbourne, Florida, to attend a 34th anniversary conference and to promote the legacy of the Black Panthers, playing drums the gun-toting rapper, and talking more about the

social programs that shunned the US government from taking action on long-term children, elderly people at risk from violence on the street, and raising awareness about the high risk of sickle-cell anemia in the black population.

"The programs that we started have since been taken up by the government, and they're still going," he says.

What remains large in Billy's picture book are those images of black men and women in boxes, handcuffs and sunglasses, coming onto the steps of the state Capitol building in Sacramento in May 1967.

What scared the hell out of white — "you see that even something like it" says Jennings — provided an alternative view of the black America to that captured by Martin Luther King.

Billy Jennings was 15 years old at the time, running a school radio program, growing up on a rural base in the San Joaquin Valley. Mr. Jennings' father was an orchestra man. He married, a native of Alabama, was first married to her as white people were concerned.

"She wasn't a follower of Martin Luther King," he says. "She didn't believe in turning the cheek. If she saw black people being beaten up on TV, she'd try to stop it. 'Don't you ever let anyone treat you that way.'"

When the Sacramento coordination made the move, Billy Jennings got an accident he went to school the next day and demanded the social club change its name from the Disciples to the Panthers.

Mr. Jennings graduated from high school the next year, 1968 — when Martin Luther King was assassinated, and the first of the Black Panthers had been killed in a shoot-out with police. The

night he finished school, he got on a bus and headed for Oakland, California, where the Black Panthers were headquartered.

"I wasn't thinking of joining at that point, it was a coincidence — I just wanted to start college," he says.

One day he was in a community class when he heard a controversial speech by Huey P. Newton, the co-founder of the Panthers. Huey Newton, who was being taken into court on charges of shooting a police officer — and there was a huge mob going on.

"The message was very powerful politically and militarily — it resonated with me," he says. "I'd experienced racism from when I was two years old."

He became a Panther in training, which meant reading 10 political books, learning the dogma and writing himself. He was 15, and thought he first got a .38 Special, for \$20. Later, he bought a Fittsow assault rifle.

Mr. Jennings gradually learned about the party, eventually writing on his own behalf, as the senior leader found a sense of steady state.

He believes the party was at its most stable and effective when Huey Newton — after being shot and hospitalized — was in jail. Mr. Jennings got in 1974, feeling the Panthers had lost direction.

Later, he joined up with some former members and has since founded the party's archive — and is concerned about organizing for the absence of Panthers who remain in jail, 40 years into "political prison."

Mr. Jennings will speak at the 34th anniversary conference, October 11-13 at 3pm. Leave your guns at home.

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LOCATION	DATE	TIME
East Melbourne	Thurs 4 Apr	12:30PM