

Some reflections on the Seattle BPP from Comrade Elmer Dixon....

Seattle was and remains an influential place for developing artists and entertainers of all disciplines and skills. In the 1950's clubs like the Birdland and the Martigra routinely featured such greats as Sammy Davis J., John Coltrane, Ray Charles, Billie Holliday and Seattle's own Quincy Jones. At the center of the development of many young artists was Garfield High School located in the heart of the Black Community. Quincy himself graduated from Garfield and went on to fame and success as an internationally acclaimed writer and producer of music for many artists.

In the 1960's Comrades Aaron, Elmer and Michael Dixon attended Garfield as did their older sister Joanne. It was as students there that the seeds of revolutionary consciousness were sown. Elmer was once introduced there to Bruce Lee, who at the time was attending the University of Washington while working and training at a popular Seattle Restaurant called Ruby Chows which was located blocks from the high school. Several of Bruce's close friends who became part of his inner circle and trained in his unique style of Kung Fu attended Garfield.

Another prominent graduate of Garfield in the mid 60's was Jimmie Hendrix, one of the most influential musicians in the development of Rock and Psychedelic music. While on tour in 1970, comrade Elmer approached Jimmie's manager during at a concert in Seattle at the Sick's Seattle Stadium and asked to speak with Jimmie. Almost immediately upon recognition that Elmer represented the Seattle BPP he was ushered backstage where he met Jimmie and sat down over beers and a couple of doobies to talk about the Free Breakfast Program and other activities of the chapter. Comrade Elmer wanted only to request a donation for the programs but Jimmie insisted that he do a whole concert performance to benefit the programs and said that as soon as he returned from his upcoming European tour, that he would put the concert together. Sadly, he was never to return from the trip, dying in the back seat of a limousine.