



## We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party

*Mumia Abu-Jamal, Kathleen Cleaver (Introduction)*

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In his youth Mumia Abu-Jamal helped found the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party, wrote for the national newspaper, and began his life-long work of exposing the violence of the state as it manifests in entrenched poverty, endemic racism, and unending police brutality and celebrating a people's unending quest for freedom. In *We Want Freedom*, Mumia combines personal experience with extensive research to provide a compelling history of the Black Panther Party—what it was, where it came from, and what rose from its ashes. Mumia also pays special attention to the U.S. government's disruption of the organization through COINTELPRO and similar operations.

While Abu-Jamal is a prolific writer and probably the world's most famous political prisoner, this book is unlike any of Mumia's previous works. In *We Want Freedom*, Abu-Jamal applies his sharp critical faculties to an examination of one of the U.S.'s most revolutionary and most misrepresented groups. A subject previously explored by various historians and forever ripe for "insider" accounts, the Black Panther Party has not yet been addressed by a writer with the well-earned international acclaim of Abu-Jamal, nor with his unique combination of a powerful, even poetic, voice and an unsparing critical gaze. Abu-Jamal is able to make his own Black Panther Party days come alive as well as help situate the organization within its historical context, a context that included both great revolutionary fervor and hope, and great repression. In this era, when the US PATRIOT Act dismantles some of the same rights and freedoms violated by the FBI in their attack on the Black Panther Party, the story of how the Party grew and matured while combating such invasions is a welcome and essential lesson.

## We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party Details

Date : Published May 1st 2008 by South End Press (first published May 1st 2004)

ISBN : 9780896087187

Author : Mumia Abu-Jamal , Kathleen Cleaver (Introduction)

Format : Paperback 176 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, Politics, Autobiography, Memoir, Race, Cultural, African American

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## **From Reader Review We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party for online ebook**

### **Brotha Nameless says**

I loved Mumia sharing this perspective on the BPP. Not only does it give a good analysis to the BPP, but it provides info into his earliest period of contributions to the people.

Free Mumia!

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### **Winter Sophia Rose says**

This Is A Well Written Documentary Of The Struggles Of The Freedom Fighters Of The 1960's. Excellent Read!

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### **Mikal says**

A life in the Black Panther Party is a great account of the history, ideology and philosophy behind the movement from one of its most famous, and relevant East Coast Members, Mumia Abul Jamal. While being all of sixteen years of age, and literally joining at or near the height of its strength, he offers a comprehensive and sober view of the movement, its policies, flaws and strengths.

The biggest thing I took away from this book, is how skewed the message and realities of the Black Panther Party have become. It was no question that they were a multi-national/international movement, bent not only on racial justice, and emancipation for African Americans, but for all those oppressed under the imperialistic attitudes of the West. It also reflects that the Panther's mission...grass roots, community organizing under the premise to raise awareness and self sufficiency are mantras that present revolutionaries and activists should take note of.

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### **Ciara says**

i read this a long time ago, so i am working off a foggy memory here, but i recall that i liked it. it's a memoir kind of deal about mumia abu-jamal's time in the black panther party. he got into it at a pretty young age, selling newspapers & such forth. as an insider's account, it avoids a lot of the salacious guns-&-violence crap that a lot of other books about the black panther party focus on, & as a journalist, abu-jamal does a good job weaving the everyday nuts & bolts work-a-day life on his time in the party into a readable & informative narrative. if i recall correctly, he oscillates between recounting some of his more salient memories of his youth with reflections on the legacy of the party thirty years later, so it's both a history lesson & a kind of manual on what exactly he thinks the BPP accomplished in the long-term. i've read several black panther memoirs, but i think this one was my favorite. abu-jamal is critical of some of the excesses the party took, but without losing sight of the party's goals, & his own goals in joining. a lot of these radical memoirs veer too far in the direction of justifying youthful indiscretions, or attempting to distance the present-day author from tactics that might seem excessive to people in there & now, but this book doesn't really do either. thank

god, because usually when i read other memoirs, i'm thinking that the author needs a therapist, not a book contract, & i just get bored & irritated.

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### **Elias says**

This is a great, critical, and detailed account of both political prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal's life in the Black Panther Party, but also the roots and development of the party itself - the two kind of grew up together. Reveals the true origins of the BPP, integrates them into a continuum of black resistance to colonialism extending back hundreds of years, and also really illuminates the every day reality of a revolutionary group completely tarnished by racist media and government slander. A thorough and sweeping account of a dynamic period in our countries revolutionary past.

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### **Alex says**

This is a great history of the Black Panther Party, Mumia Abu-Jamal's early life, and even a great overview of the history of black resistance movements from the first slave rebellions - which he says the BPP fits into as an integral piece.

Mumia does a great job explaining the origins and philosophies of the party, as well as covering its history succinctly but in a sweeping way that other books have failed to do. There is a chapter on women in the party, which is of mixed quality, but other chapters, like the ones on COINTELPRO and snitches in the party, are absolutely vital.

Don't miss the pictures of young Mumia working in the BPP (at age 14...)

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### **Ryan Mishap says**

Adding another book to the collection of histories about the Black Panthers, Abu-Jamal offers us something not a lot of some others have: personal experience and a successful attempt to place the Panthers in a historical context of black resistance to oppression by the white power structure. This historical exploration is one of the best parts of the book, but my favorite sections deal with his own personal experiences as a young man joining and experiencing the Panthers—from Philadelphia to California. It's too bad he didn't give us more memoir (but I prefer the personal story), but he covers the Panther's history well enough, from the rise, to COINTELPRO, and more. Certainly worth reading, especially if you don't know anything about the Black Panthers.

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### **Ted Heitz says**

Clearly biased as a man that is seeking relevance and support from behind bars. Skewed interpretations shining a haloed light on a racist organization.

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**Jess says**

I learned a lot about the Black Panther Party, how they were organized, the different types of programs they had, and why the organization fell apart by reading this book. Mumia is REALLY a great writer and I hope to read some more of his books in the future.

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**Lyds says**

gotta read it.

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**Kimberly says**

Required reading for my poli sci class, but I'm sure I would have happened across it at some point as a result of my interest in all things controversial. A very interesting book. Mumia is obviously an educated man, passionate about what he believes in. Now, just waiting on the questions from my professor which will turn into my 4-page mid term.

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**Mujahid Ibn Abdellah says**

So Far, all that I knew already. How the Brother Huey Newton was an exceptional and amazing individual who had the right vision.

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**Laura Phelan says**

A very timely read for the times.

"...that which is repressed will eventually find expression.

"The Black Panther Party may indeed be history, but the forces that gave rise to it are not.

"They wait, for the proper season, to arise again."

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**Spicy T AKA Mr. Tea says**

A very good read about the rise of the Black Panther Party and Mumia's experiences in Philly growing up with the Panthers. It was a history I really needed to read as I'd heard a lot about the Panthers but really didn't

know much else. This was a very accessible and interesting personal history.

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### **Mookie says**

Given my familiarity with the subject I can say that it wasn't terribly earth shattering, but at the same time also a very honest and comprehensive look at the historical significance of the Panthers (that one might expect from a writer/thinker such as Mumia). There are certain aspects of the Party's character that he... paints in a positive light, but anybody who can read at a 6th grade level should be able to read between the lines (which I suspect was his intent). Overall I would absolutely recommend this to anyone interested in the subject matter.

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