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Challenge to Ultimate Pantherism 1990s

Ashanti Omowali Alston

Sometimes the QUESTIONS are just as important as the Answers. Here are some questions that i drew up while in prison that developed from my continuing criticism and learning experiences of the movement. See if you can follow my thinking and my overall concerns for those who have chosen and are choosing the roller-coaster path of Revolution:

1. Why have we accomplished so little over the past 20–25 years?
2. Has our PRACTICE matched our IMAGE or VISION of what we consider our ROLE in the Revolution? Or should we even question what one's ROLE is?
3. What would make us PANTHERS and/or FIGHTERS of the BLA and what would make us WORTHY of presenting ourselves as the kind of new human beings who would be socially responsible and politically conscious citizens of a new society?

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4. Can our deep commitment to armed struggle be an escapism, on some levels, from the necessity to truly change one's self? Or what negative side-effects could one's hatred for Babylon have on one's self esteem and self-love?
5. Can the reasons for our frequent failures be deeper than COINTELPRO-type activities or the failure to achieve Marxist standards of criticism / self-criticism? Can the reasons ever be PERSONAL? PSYCHOLOGICAL?
6. What function does philosophy have for us? Feminism? Spirituality? Humanism? Can they in any way enrich our vision and practice in LIVING LIFE and MAKING REVOLUTION?
7. Do REVOLUTIONARY QUALITIES come upon INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT of awareness ... ALONE, OR by combining that with DEEP EMOTIONAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUGGLE?
7. "Life is a Journey, not a Destiny." What is Nationalism? Socialism? Black Power?
8. Is there a relationship between the ability to feel, to love, to respond AND the ability to perform the multitude of tasks and functions and responsibilities of a Revolution?
9. Does it speak for or against one's commitment, understanding and practice if one be more willing, ready and able to fight AND DIE for the Revolution, for each other, YET NEVER HUG EACH OTHER, DARE CRY ON EACH OTHER'S SHOULDERS OR BE CHILD-LIKE SPONTANEOUSLY? OR is the latter a legitimate revolutionary behavior or way of being?
10. Is it possible that on an unconscious level, we are still LOYAL to the System we seek to destroy?

11. Can one become a revolutionary INTELLECTUALLY, yet remain CONSERVATIVE or LOYAL (to the System) emotionally, sexually and socially?
(As in a male fighter who remains macho?)
12. Can emotionally backwardsness undermine revolutionary enlightened INTENTIONS?
(Right hand undo what the left hand has attempted to do?)
13. Can Marxism become an OPIATE of the Revolutionary? Can ANY "ISM" become an opiate of the People, the Revolutionary?
14. Do theories of psychology, personality or character-structure have a place in the development and empowerment of our movement?
15. What do the names we use to identify ourselves with say about us: List the names and see what they have in common>
(List even the names you would have for yourself.)

THE PURPOSE OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE TO PROVOKE THOUGHT AS A CHALLENGE TO MORE DARING THINKING ABOUT OUR POSSIBILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO PERSONAL REVOLUTIONARY GROWTH. IT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER:

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ALL Power to the People