

Keeping Rap Alive Movement

Written by Robert ID1664

Wednesday, 13 July 2005 06:21 -

The International Committee To Support Imam Jamil Al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown), ICSIJAA and the Prisoners of Conscience Committee (POCC) have embarked on a joint project to develop a way to address the historical disconnect evident in both the popular music and in the struggle for justice and self-determination.

The movement asserts the fact that the word RAP in New Afrikan culture has traditionally meant not only to speak well, but to articulate. It is for this precise reason that Imam Jamil Al-Amin was called "Rap" during the mass rebellion stage of our struggle for community self-defense and self-determination.

In a recent interview (August '04 on The Block Report) Imam Jamil speaks of the historical disconnect encouraged by referring to the music as "Hip-Hop"; a term with no historical connection to our people's culture. He points out, concerning this phenomena, "I was Rap before the music."

The term Rap was personified by his actions and attitude, referring to clear articulation of a clear position. The music developed out of the efforts of combining music with political lyrics and poignant poetry; which can be traced through the works of Amiri Baraka, Oscar Brown Jr., Gil Scott-Heron and the Midnight Band, the Last Poets, Curtis Blow on down to Grand Master Jay and the Furious Five. He points out "Hip-Hop" was not even a word ... just a sound in the lyric of the poetry "hippity hippity hop and you don't stop."

Some of the rappers have remained true to their craft and true to the struggle, so their music is referred to as "Conscious Rap". But there are others who betray RAP and thereby betray the struggle, either out of ignorance because they have been historically disconnected themselves or they do it out of greed. The recording industry never intended for the success of RAP, or for the struggle to be institutionalized and sanctioned by the industry. In fact Oscar Brown Jr. and Gil Scott-Heron were only given the type of exposure they were given back in the day to be used as gate keepers, to keep out the flood of creative black genius coming forth. The labels could/would say, "Sounds great, but we've already got an artist like that. Uh...good luck though". It was only when Rap lost its political purpose, that it became mainstream and accepted by the white corporate world. It went from Amiri Baraka's classic "Beautiful Black Woman" to the Last Poets' lustful "Black Thighs", to the Watts Prophets vulgar "Black Pussy" and on down to the degenerate, misogynist, disrespectful misrepresentation of women that we hear too often on the radios and pumping out of the cars blasting through the community today. Imam Jamil (Rap) uses the term RAP, because we are for correcting this disconnect in the

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continuity of culture and struggle.

We are initially calling for a "retreat" to White Hall, Alabama in the fall of this year, where the RAP artists who have been "keeping rap alive", the veteran artists from the "Black Arts Movement" era, along with veterans of the struggle, and the youth that are on the front line in today's struggle for justice and self-determination can spend the better part of a weekend together, sharing experiences and learning from each other. We will gather on Friday September 30, 2005 all of those who can be present are invited to Salatul Jumu'ah with the discussions to begin later on that evening. The main discussions will take place on Saturday, October 1, 2005.

Keep RAP Alive Movement

Sept. 30, Oct. 1, 2005

White Hall, Alabama

A fund raising concert for the Justice Fund/ ICSIJAA (for Imam Jamil Al-Amin) will take place that Saturday night. Some of the issues we hope to address are:

- (1). the aspects of Historical disconnect... (a) in struggle (b) in RAP music

- (2). organizing the artists and their management to connect to the movement

- (3). using the art form for Consciousness Raising (a) amongst the artists (b) amongst the masses

- (4). using the art form for Fundraising.

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(5). administrative continuity in building this movement to keep RAP alive.

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Amir Sulaiman, Spoken Word Artist, Bay Area, CA (winner of Def Poetry Jam contest Spring, 2004)

WHY WHITE HALL, ALABAMA?

White Hall, Alabama including the surrounding Lowndes County has a tradition of struggle. During the now popular, historical "Selma to Montgomery" March, White Hall was the half way point which served on that historic occasion as both a resting place and a refuge from the vicious white racist mobs (kkk and law enforcement) that attacked the marchers. White Hall residents were not considered violent, however they were known to practice armed self-defense. It was a zone of resistance along the corridor of Highway 80 that was known as "blood alley" when Lowndes County was known as "bloody Lowndes".

In 1964 when the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegates, a democratically elected delegation lead by Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, a sharecropper from Mississippi, were denied their due seats and status at the National Democratic Party Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey...

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Lowndes County along with Green County were areas that residents and activists returned to with the resolve to continue organizing, but not as part of the Democratic nor the Republican Party. Local independent political parties developed. California had the Peace and Freedom Party. New York had the Freedom and Peace Party. Lowndes County residents in concert with SNCC activists (including H. Rap Brown) developed the Alabama Freedom Organization and began to run candidates on the Black Panther platform.

Eventually they elected a local sheriff and other officers, and eventually a Mayor of White Hall, Alabama. Bobby Seale, Co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, California has always said that he got the name, the Black Panther emblem, and the organizing for political power and self-defense, from some material he had gotten about the struggle in Lowndes County, Alabama.

In the mid nineties the then Mayor of White Hall and a group of city officials met with their old colleague H.Rap Brown, now known as Imam Jamil Al-Amin, and invited him and his community to their city. They were given the green light to set up mosques, schools, businesses and the infrastructure of an independent community. In March of 2000, Imam Jamil Al-Amin was sought by federal law enforcement after two deputies were shot, one fatally, in the area near Al-Amin's mosque. In a militarily hysterical climate in which Imam Jamil was said to be wounded, many feared for his life.

He was apprehended on March 20, 2000 in White Hall, Alabama surrounded by Lowndes County Sheriff Deputies ... untouched by the FBI except for their kicking and spitting at him in a rage of disappointment. White Hall has a tradition and a legacy of struggle and is ripe for struggle, today. The infrastructure of an independent Islamic community is slowly growing. These are some of the conditions and legacy we'll find in White Hall, Alabama in the fall of 2005. We hope that you will participate.

Support Black August 2005 - <http://www.BlackAugust.net> - Atlanta, Oakland

Black August 2005 - <http://www.BlackAugust.net>

Assata Shakur Forum - <http://www.assatashakur.org/forum>

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FTP Dollar A Month Club - <http://www.ftpmovement.com/dollar.html>

Pan African TV - <http://www.PanAfrican.TV>

The Talking Drum - <http://www.thetalkingdrum.com>