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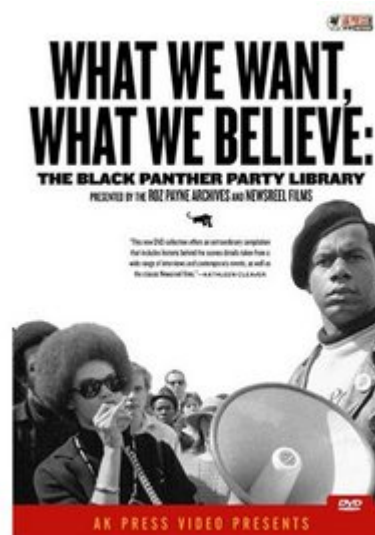
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What We Want, What We Believe – The Black Panther Party Library (DVD-Video Set)

Picture: C Sound: C
Extras: C+ Main Films: B

The rise of The Black Panthers was seen as the biggest threat to domestic security by the FBI and Nixon administration in particular, though they formed during LBJ's time. On the good side, they wanted to empower African Americans in a more blatantly racist society, set up education (give or take the propagandic side) and even set up free lunches for the community. Unfortunately, this Black Separatism started endorsing Red Book Communists Maoism, which meant violent revolution, which meant the U.S. Government became extremely interested and decided to do what they could to destroy the organization.

What We Want, What We Believe – The Black Panther Party Library is a new 4 DVD set that extensively archives their history and show the radical politics, historical events and raw facts in a way you will see hardly anywhere else. Roz Payne is the keeper of their archive and



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 > The Cure CD Reissues: The Top + Head On The Door
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 > The Interpreter (HD-DVD)
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has presented a remarkably complete DVD set that is as well put together as it is researched. Of course, the group was busted up and to this day, some of its members are *still* in jail for their conflict with federal authorities. Those who think just because all draft dodging youths and others like The Weather Underground (see their story reviewed elsewhere on this site) does not mean all have been freed or served their time.

This was not all that long ago, but despite their long-term failure built on ideologies that were never going to help (including, despite what Miss Payne may or may not agree with, issues the Panthers had with women that helped to bring about their downfall) and are more dated and obsolete than ever, their very existence and fact that they even caused the U.S. Government trouble proved that things had to change in the U.S. and they did.

Even after the rollback of so many civil rights in the 1980s, their sacrifices pushed the system into a better direction that has benefited African Americans and really the rest of the country by increasing visibility, opportunity, mutating racism for better & worse and even Gangster Rap has been regressively imitating the shortcomings of the Panthers, whether most realize it or not. However, there are new challenges over racism and inequality like what happened after Hurricane Katrina, but the Panthers even at their worst suggested empowerment for African Americans without establishment approval and when you feel you have nowhere to turn, that is better than nothing. This is why we must never have in this country again a reality that allows anyone to feel that way anymore from any minority group. After watching this, you will understand that they did score a key victory for progress, no matter the price they paid, some are still paying or even if they do not believe it. They were never going to get what they really wanted, but that they were willing to die for it is sad and unfortunate.

Easily forgotten in the revision of this history since the 1980s how many politically aware non-African Americans also supported them. John Lennon most famously (and naively, as covered in the recent **U.S. vs. John Lennon** documentary we recommend) donated money, but he was not the far Left figure like those of the American Communist Party and like-minded people were the other support for the group. Even the current ideology is trying to divide and conquer attacking the facts. It makes you wonder how much of the COINTELPRO points of division continue and wait in the wings today. This set is a must for Political

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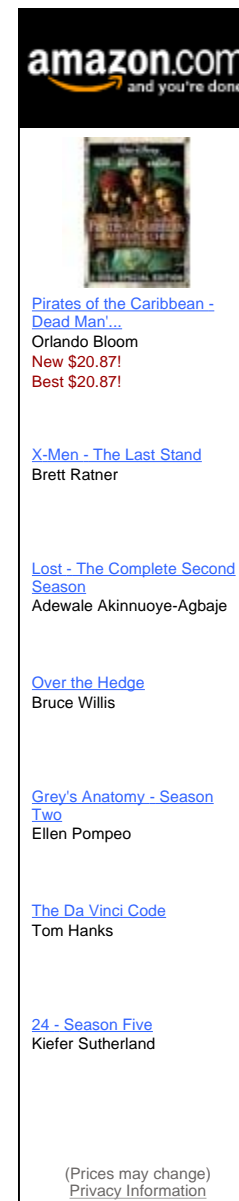
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Science study.

The 1.33 X 1 image is not bad for its age on the old black and white film footage, but too bad they are not cleaned or restored. The owners should consider that, with all the artifacts on the footage, plus jump cuts that include missing audio. Whether any of the missing snippets have survived anywhere is a big question, though if the FBI or other government organization has better copies, The Freedom Of Information Act might not even save them. The original sound is here in Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono, likely from magnetic mono. The new programs do not look any better, shot on old NTSC video and with analog sound.

Those new segments, along with DVD-ROM extras including PDF documents & images, audio-only clips on DVD One and an informative booklet about the 4 DVDs and the history that makes a solid guide. Even if you are no fan of the Panthers, this is a top-rate archival set that deserves to be available to anyone who wants to see, know and study it as it should be in a free society.

- Nicholas Sheffo



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