

Non-violent Civil Disobedience versus the Black Power Movement



The **Black Panther Party** (originally the **Black Panther Party for Self-Defense**) was an African-American revolutionary socialist organization active in the United States from 1966 until 1982. The Black Panther Party achieved national and international notoriety through its involvement in the Black Power movement and U.S. politics of the 1960s and 1970s.

Founded in Oakland, California by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale on October 15, 1966, the organization initially set forth a doctrine calling primarily for the protection of African-American neighborhoods from police brutality. The leaders of the organization espoused socialist and Marxist doctrines; however, the Party's early black nationalist reputation attracted a diverse membership.

Why were the Black Panthers formed?

Describe the picture from the newspaper. What emotions does the picture convey?

Awareness of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense grew rapidly after their May 2, 1967 protest at the California State Assembly.

In May 1967, the Panthers invaded the State Assembly Chamber in Sacramento, guns in hand, in what appears to have been a publicity stunt. Still, they scared a lot of important people that day. At the time, the Panthers had almost no following. Now, (a year later) however, their leaders speak on invitation almost anywhere radicals gather, and many whites wear "Honkeys for Huey" buttons, supporting the fight to free Newton, who has been in jail since last Oct. 28 (1967) on the charge that he killed a policeman...

How did support for the Black Panthers grow?

Were African Americans their only supporters?



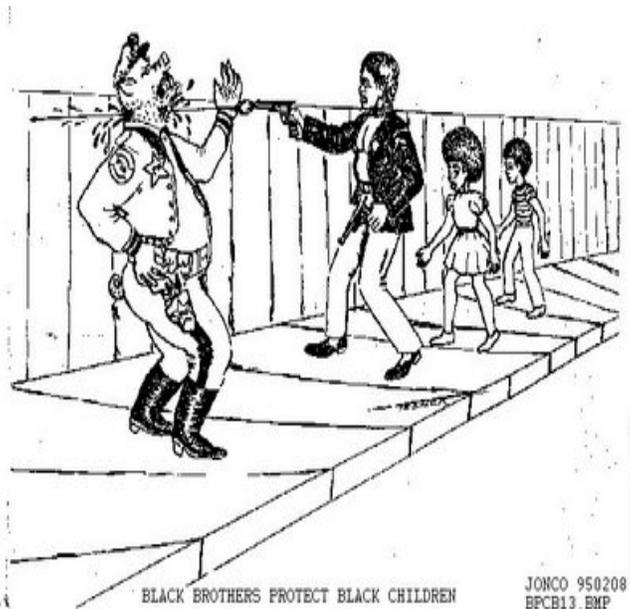
Referring to the 1967–68 period, black historian Curtis Austin states: "During this period of development, black nationalism became part of the party's philosophy." During the months following the "Free Huey" birthday rallies, one in Oakland and another in Los Angeles, the Party's violent, anti-white rhetoric attracted a huge following and Black Panther Party membership exploded.

Two days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 6, 1968, seventeen-year-old Bobby Hutton joined Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther Party Minister of Information, in what Cleaver later admitted was "an ambush" of the Oakland police. Two officers were wounded, and Bobby Hutton was killed when officers opened fire, wounding Cleaver as well.

After Hutton's death, Black Panther Party Chairman Bobby Seale and Kathleen Cleaver (Eldridge's wife) held a rally in New York City at the Fillmore East in support of Hutton and Cleaver. Playwright LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka) joined them on stage before a mixed crowd of 2,000:

We want to become masters of our own destiny...we want to build a black nation to benefit black people...The white people who killed Bobby Hutton are the same white people sitting here.

The crowd, including many whites, gave LeRoi Jones a standing ovation.



What methods were used by the Black Panthers?

Look at the political cartoon above. How is the policeman pictured?

What is the man with the gun protecting?

What message does this cartoon send?

SIX PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE

Fundamental tenets of Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence described in his first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*. The six principles include:

1. ***Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.*** It is a positive force confronting the forces of injustice, and utilizes the righteous indignation and the spiritual, emotional and intellectual capabilities of people as the vital force for change and reconciliation.
2. ***The Beloved Community is the framework for the future.*** The nonviolent concept is an overall effort to achieve a reconciled world by raising the level of relationships among people to a height where justice prevails and persons attain their full human potential.
3. ***Attack forces of evil, not persons doing evil.*** The nonviolent approach helps one analyze the fundamental conditions, policies and practices of the conflict rather than reacting to one's opponents or their personalities.
4. ***Accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause to achieve the goal.*** Self-chosen suffering is redemptive and helps the movement grow in a spiritual as well as a humanitarian dimension. The moral authority of voluntary suffering for a goal communicates the concern to one's own friends and community as well as to the opponent.
5. ***Avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence.*** The nonviolent attitude permeates all aspects of the campaign. It provides mirror type reflection of the reality of the condition to one's opponent and the community at large. Specific activities must be designed to help maintain a high level of spirit and morale during a nonviolent campaign.
6. ***The universe is on the side of justice.*** Truth is universal and human society and each human being is oriented to the just sense of order of the universe. The fundamental values in all of the world's great religions include the concept that the moral arc of the universe bends toward justice. For the nonviolent practitioner, nonviolence introduces a new moral context in which nonviolence is both the means and the end.



How was Dr. King's philosophy different than the Black Panthers?

Twitter Conversation

If Twitter was available in the 1960s what do you think supporters of the non-violence civil disobedience movement would have to say to leaders of the Black Power movement?

Create a series of tweets between Martin Luther King, Jr. and a leader of the Black Power movement. Write at least two tweets from each of them. Your purpose is to show your understanding of their beliefs. What would they say to each other? You can have a little fun ... but keep the tweets school-appropriate.

Each tweet should be limited to 140 characters or less.

