

# The Black Panther Party: A History of Power, Politics, and Resistance

## The Founding of the Black Panther Party

The Black Panther Party was founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Newton was a former law student at Merritt College, and Seale was a former Black Panther Party member. The two men were inspired by the Black Power movement, which was a growing force in the United States at the time. The Black Power movement advocated for black self-determination and self-defense, and it rejected the nonviolent tactics of the civil rights movement.

The Black Panther Party's goal was to protect the black community from police brutality and to fight for black liberation. The party's members armed themselves with guns and patrolled black neighborhoods, monitoring police activity and intervening when they saw instances of police brutality. The Black Panther Party also established social programs, such as free breakfast programs for children and health clinics, to serve the black community.



## Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party (The George Gund Foundation Imprint in African American Studies) by Joshua Bloom

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## **The Black Panther Party's Rise to Power**

The Black Panther Party quickly gained popularity in Oakland and other black communities across the United States. The party's members were seen as heroes by many black people, who were tired of being mistreated by the police and other white institutions. The Black Panther Party's social programs also helped to build support for the party in the black community.

The Black Panther Party's rise to power was met with resistance from the government and from white supremacists. The government infiltrated the party and tried to discredit its members. White supremacists attacked Black Panther Party members and their offices. Despite these challenges, the Black Panther Party continued to grow in strength and influence.

## **The Black Panther Party's Decline**

The Black Panther Party's decline began in the early 1970s. The government's infiltration and harassment of the party took its toll, and many Black Panther Party members were killed or imprisoned. The party's internal divisions also contributed to its decline.

In 1974, Huey Newton was convicted of voluntary manslaughter and sentenced to prison. Bobby Seale was also convicted of conspiracy and sentenced to prison. The loss of these two leaders weakened the Black Panther Party and made it more difficult for the party to continue its work.

The Black Panther Party officially disbanded in 1982. However, the party's legacy continues to inspire activists and organizers today.

## The Black Panther Party's Legacy

The Black Panther Party was a powerful and influential organization that fought for black liberation. The party's members were willing to risk their lives to protect the black community from police brutality and to fight for social justice. The Black Panther Party's social programs also helped to improve the lives of many black people.

The Black Panther Party's legacy is complex and controversial. Some people see the party as a symbol of black empowerment and resistance, while others see it as a violent and criminal organization. However, there is no doubt that the Black Panther Party was a major force in the Black Power movement and that its legacy continues to inspire activists and organizers today.



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