

RISE OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Following World War II, the world entered into a revolutionary period. Citizens across the world demanded independence and first-class citizenship status. The world was living through a revolutionary time. This momentum carried over to the United States and influenced the Civil Rights Movement that spread across America. African Americans had been fighting racial injustices, and America was long overdue for change.

The Civil Rights Movement gave birth to a wave of leaders and organizations who fought for racial equality in America. The movement, however, was not a singular effort as leaders took several approaches to achieve this goal. Civil disobedience, non-violent resistance, sit-ins, boycotts, and marches are a few examples of steps taken during this time.

While the Civil Rights Movement had a strong foothold in the South, in many urban areas frustration continued, and many African Americans looked for other outlets to help fight the system of oppression. From here, the Black Panther Party was born. In 1966, two college students, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, in Oakland, California. Tired of seeing fire hoses, attack dogs, and bombings used in the South, the new organization was born. Starting locally, the Party aimed to protect African Americans from unlawful arrests and intimidation from the police. To ensure that no police brutality occurred, members of the Black Panther Party armed themselves and would observe from a legal distance law enforcement officers perform their duties. The Black Panther Party saw its primary goal as self-defense, changing the conversation from earlier in the Civil Rights Movement that preached non-violent resistance.

As word spread, the Party grew exponentially. The new message appealed to many who felt different strategies and goals were needed for change. The Black Panther Party also appealed to the cries of those in urban cities such as Oakland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, and New York. As they took on issues of welfare, health, housing, food insecurity, and several other social justice issues they could rally behind. The Panthers created free breakfast programs and health clinics in their communities to address some of the disparities they were facing. Created by Huey Newton and Bobby Seals to address critical social issues, the Party's *Ten Point Program* served as an organizing tool for the party and outlined the demands they had. The *Ten Point Program* served as an outline for other activist groups in America during a time that was calling for change. Today, this outline reflects demands that several groups still call for in present day America, demonstrating the impact the Black Panther Party left behind.

The Black Panther's Party Ten Point Program

What We Want Now!

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.
2. We want full employment for our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery of our Black Community by white men. (Later changed to “we want an end to the robbery by the capitalists of our black and oppressed communities.”)
4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of the decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.
6. We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.
7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of Black people.
8. We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county, and city prisons and jails.
9. We want all Black people, when brought to trial, to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black Communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.
10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace.

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