

INTRODUCTION

The Black Power Movement

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Less than five years old, the *Black Diaspora Review* is fast becoming the leading online Black Studies journal in the diaspora. A cursory look at the contents of previous issues shows that authors have tackled some of the most pressing and cutting-edge issues of the 21st century where the Black world is concerned as well as examined several of the world's most powerful movements and impactful actors. The American Black Power Movement and its global impact is the subject of this special issue of the *Black Diaspora Review*. The Black Power Movement emerged at a time when the modern nonviolent Civil Rights Movement was in its final leg as a viable agent for social, political, and economic change. Black Powerites eschewed the nonviolent tactics of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. They believed as Malcolm X did; that nonviolence as a strategy was not practical for Black people seeking liberation. Malcolm did not believe in being nonviolent with people who were violent toward Black people. He also viewed integration as a surrender to White supremacy; for its aims of total assimilation into White society implied that African Americans had little worth preserving.

The Black Power Movement was the culmination of a journey that began with Blacks singing “We Shall Overcome Someday” to cries of “Freedom Now” to shouts of “Black Power,” with each exasperated pronouncement representing a maturation in the ideological development of the struggle for Black liberation. Still, as the essays contained in this special issue reveal, an examination of the ideologies of various Black Power organizations and activists shows that

Black Power took on different iterations depending on the organization and/or the actor, but of paramount importance was ridding Blacks of the yoke of oppression (both in the U.S. and abroad) that had prevented them from reaching their goal of full citizenship and wholesale freedom.

The essays in this volume are an eclectic group of works that seek to do the following: a) provide a more nuanced historiography of the Black Power Movement, b) situate some of America's most iconic figures within the dynamic construct of Black Power, c) highlight the role that female Black Powerites played in the cultural nationalist sector of the movement, and d) demonstrate the impact that the American Black Power Movement made on both the Caribbean and Africa.