

# Black Panther Party Internationalism During The Cold War in the United States

In the darkest years of the Cold War, when communism loomed as an existential threat to the United States, an unlikely group emerged as a powerful force for change and equality - the Black Panther Party. Against a backdrop of racial injustice, political turmoil, and anti-colonial struggles around the world, the Black Panther Party adopted a radical approach to combat systemic racism that extended beyond its domestic focus. The party's philosophy of internationalism not only shaped its own ideology but also influenced broader political discourse in America during this tumultuous period.

The Black Panther Party was founded in Oakland, California, in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. At its core, the party sought to challenge the oppression faced by African Americans, emphasizing the necessity of armed self-defense and community empowerment. However, amidst the escalating tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Black Panther Party recognized the interconnectedness of global struggles against oppression and shifted its focus towards international issues.

One of the key elements of the party's internationalism was its outreach and solidarity with liberation movements across the globe. Inspired by figures such as Frantz Fanon and Che Guevara, the Panthers sought to align themselves with anti-colonial struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They saw these movements as part of a larger fight against imperialism and its manifestations of racism and economic exploitation. This international perspective resonated with many African Americans who identified with a global struggle against oppression.



## Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism during the Cold War (The United States in the World) by Sean L. Malloy(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
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The party's commitment to internationalism was visible in its engagement with various issues affecting communities of color beyond the borders of the United States. Embracing the slogan, "All Power to the People," the Black Panther Party aimed to unite marginalized communities worldwide in their fight against oppression. Whether it was expressing solidarity with the Palestinian cause, supporting the Irish Republican Army, or speaking out against atrocities committed in Vietnam, the Panthers made their voice heard on a wide range of issues.

The Black Panther Party's strong stance against imperialism quickly turned them into targets for the U.S. government. Authorities, fearing the spread of communist ideologies, launched a relentless campaign to undermine and dismantle the party. The FBI's infamous COINTELPRO program, designed to disrupt and discredit radical groups, targeted the Black Panthers relentlessly, using tactics such as infiltration, disinformation, and illegal surveillance.

However, despite constant persecution, the party's dedication to internationalism remained unwavering. Their activism extended beyond ideological solidarity; it involved practical actions such as organizing medical aid for revolutionaries in Cuba, establishing educational programs to raise awareness on global issues, and building alliances with sympathetic organizations abroad. Through these efforts, the Black Panther Party demonstrated a commitment to transforming the racial struggle in the United States into a global fight against injustice.

International solidarity was not just a theoretical concept for the Panthers. They actively sought to build international alliances and networks, recognizing the power of collaboration in effecting meaningful change. This approach extended to Asian and African diasporas in the United States as well, with the Panthers forging connections with groups such as the Asian American Political Alliance and the Puerto Rican Young Lords Party.

By embracing internationalism amidst the backdrop of the Cold War, the Black Panther Party challenged the popular narrative that depicted communists solely as the enemy. They argued that the fight against racism, capitalism, and imperialism should unite all people who yearned for liberation. The party's commitment to anti-imperialism and its solidarity with global struggles expanded the parameters of political discourse in America at a time when it was tightly controlled.

Moreover, the Panthers' internationalist approach had a profound impact on subsequent social justice movements in the United States. Their emphasis on the interconnections between struggles for racial, economic, and political justice continues to influence activists today. The party's commitment to internationalism serves as a reminder of the importance of recognizing the global dimensions of injustice and the power of coalitions.

Although the Black Panther Party faced significant challenges during its existence, its legacy as an advocate for global anti-imperialism and social justice endures. By seeking to dismantle systems of oppression and highlighting the interconnectedness of struggles worldwide, the Panthers made an indelible mark on the history of activism during the Cold War.



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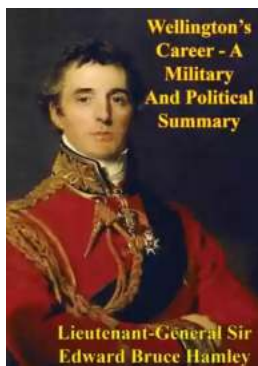
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In *Out of Oakland*, Sean L. Malloy explores the evolving internationalism of the Black Panther Party (BPP); the continuing exile of former members, including Assata Shakur, in Cuba is testament to the lasting nature of the international bonds that were forged during the party's heyday. Founded in Oakland, California, in October 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, the BPP began with no more than a dozen members. Focused on local issues, most notably police brutality, the Panthers patrolled their West Oakland neighborhood armed with shotguns and law books. Within a few years, the BPP had expanded its operations into a global confrontation with what Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver dubbed "the international pig power structure."

Malloy traces the shifting intersections between the black freedom struggle in the United States, Third World anticolonialism, and the Cold War. By the early 1970s, the Panthers had chapters across the United States as well as an international section headquartered in Algeria and support groups and emulators as far afield as England, India, New Zealand, Israel, and Sweden. The international section served as an official embassy for the BPP and a beacon for American revolutionaries abroad, attracting figures ranging from Black Power skyjackers to fugitive LSD guru Timothy Leary. Engaging directly with the expanding Cold War, BPP representatives cultivated alliances with the governments of Cuba, North Korea, China, North Vietnam, and the People's Republic of the Congo as well as European and Japanese militant groups and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. In an epilogue, Malloy directly links the legacy of the BPP to contemporary questions raised by the Black Lives Matter movement.



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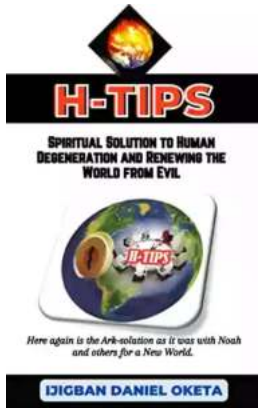
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