

# Black power movement



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Black Power is a political slogan and a name for various associated ideologies. It is used in the movement among people of Black African descent throughout the world, though primarily by African Americans in the United States. The movement was prominent in the late 1960s and early 1970s, emphasizing racial pride and the creation of black political and cultural institutions to nurture and promote black collective interests and advance black values. This paper will take an analytical view of how and why this movement began. What its targeted audience was and how the message targeted that audience.

We will examine the artifacts surrounding that movement and how they help promote the cause. Every social movement derive from a social problem, we will look at what cause the people in the community to rise up and began an effective campaign to bring about change. How the leader was formed and what message was conveyed to bring the people together and unite effectively. We will conclude with the effectiveness of the artifact and its representation to the movement. Background African Americans (blacks) were first imported to the United States in 1619 . And for the next 200 years they were held in slavery against their own will. They were forced into hard labor, uncomfortable living conditions while being beaten so severely that it resulted in death for many.

And when they tried to escape they were punished or killed. Some black slaves began to adapt to their situation and became grateful to their slave owner for the food and board to the point that they didn't want to leave the plantation. And if they saw other slave attempting to escape they would be the first to tell their " master" (slave owner) of the attempt. This will later be

referred to as "house negro" (during the black power social movement). A term used to refer to the Negro who loved the "white man" more than he love himself, or his black brother or sister. On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The proclamation declared "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free.

" This gave Negroes a new hope, and a desire to be treated with respect. However, most Negroes continued to stay and work on plantations and receive a wage at the end of the day. The pride in this was the fact that they were getting paid and could leave whenever they wanted to. It was becoming clear to all Negroes that a change must come in order for them to enjoy the "American Dream". By the 1950's racial hatred was out of control. Thousand of Negroes had been lynched for no reason, whites refused to share the same public area with them and the Negroes became fed up with it all, thus beginning the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights movement began on December 1, 1955, when Rosa Parks (1913-), a black seamstress, refused to cooperate with a segregation law.

As she boarded a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama, she took a seat in the designated "black" rows in the back. When the bus filled up she was asked to move so that a white man could have her spot. She refused to give the man her seat and was then arrested. This event sparked what would become a national movement of resistance to racial segregation (separation of black people from white people) and discrimination. Ann Swidler writes that the social movements not only can arise from cracks in culture but also can process culture insofar as they consume what is culturally given and produce

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transmutations of it. If social movements can arise from a crack in the culture, then it is quite possible that the crack that launched the “ Black Power” social movement was the civil rights movement itself. America first heard the words “ Black Power” in 1966 as they echoed from the Mississippi Delta when Martin Luther King Jr, and Stokely Carmichael led hundreds of demonstrators through the state of Mississippi during the Civil Rights Movement.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activist sprinkled the march route with their new slogan “ Black Power”. The SNCC needed a leader and Stokely Carmichael was the obvious choice because he had marched with Martin Luther King, yet opposed the belief of peaceful resolution causing a split in their relationship. Stokely Carmichael views were large in scope and he had the ability to rally the people together. Stokely Carmichael the newly elected leader for the SNCC, would re-introduce the slogan “ Black Power” when he was arrested at that time he started his organization; “ This is the twenty-seventh time that I’ve been arrested. I aint’t going to jail no more. The only way we gonna stop them white men from whuppin’ us is to take over. What we gonna start saying now is Black Power! ” The attempted was to radically redefine the relationship between blacks and whites in American society.

The ideology was to bring about a new awareness to blacks in a radical way and to get the following rights; control of schools, Black Studies programs at colleges and universities, welfare rights, prison reform, and jobs and racial justice for the poor. Black power stood for a lesser emphasis on integration and more attention to a predominantly, if not exclusively, black leadership in

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matters relating to race and color. The young blacks really took to the idea of blackness and began to have pride in being black. They no longer wanted to be called Negro, but Blacks. Text Justification The artifact that represents this movement is the raised fist (see page 9). It stood for the social movement and its desire to oppose the social norms and values. In terms of innovation, blacks no longer wanted to be beaten or tortured and they set out to change the status quos by fighting back.

Their new values would be black leadership, black government, and black ownership. The raised fist on the artifact is very persuasive to the people because it was something they all could identify with, and something they all had ownership of. Once the transformation of perception of social reality was established, by addressing the past issues (slavery, lynching, segregation), the raised fist took the hope from the past to the present making it a present day problem that need to be changed. It represents the urgency of the problem and the need to take action now. The raised fist and shout of " Black Power", offered an apocalyptic appeal, and encouraged the blacks to prepare for battle. The artifact appealed to the ego function of self esteem and self worth through the unity of everyone raising their fist at the same time, relying on the theory that there is strength in numbers. Power is what Negroes have been struggling for since the emancipation proclamation went into effect.

Now they were willing to induce change by challenging social reality out of confrontation even if it resorts to violence. The artifact works with their theory because it makes the social movement seem legitimate by enforcing strength, equality, justice, and dignity. The raised fist re-enforced the mobilization for action. Analysis The artifact was very persuasive during the

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movement. It set the tone by revealing the attitude toward the subject matter which was force. It revealed in a negative way how the organization viewed the world and what it will take to correct or change for the better. The consignment was emphasized with the fist and words being in black on a white back ground.

This suggested that blacks were no longer the minority but it was their chance to be in the fore front and whites be behind or the underdogs. It offers good will, by suggesting if the people will raise their fist in protest, they will empower themselves and the white man will not be able to take advantage of them again. The credibility of the artifact suggest good common sense to its audience by suggesting that if you are tired of being miss-treated, then fight back. The arraignment of the fist being prominent and in the middle of the artifact displayed in a big and bold manner suggested that it wanted the reader to see the fist first and read the words " Black Power" second to help emphasize the force behind the movement. The artifact does not represent good moral character because the movement was not about going on a peace mission like Martin Luther King, instead the Black Social Movement believed in taking what belongs to them by any means necessary. Therefore the artifact is easy to understand in its representation of the movement. The symbol of a clenched fist give the impression of anger, followed by words written in bold " Black Power" suggest power.

So anger and power was the driving force behind the movement therefore the artifact was a good representation. Conclusion Stokely Carmichael saw the concept of " Black Power" as a means of solidarity between individuals

within the movement. With his conception and articulation of the word, he felt this movement was not just a movement for racial desegregation, but rather a movement to help combat America's crippling racism. He was quoted in saying: " For the last time, 'Black Power' mean black people coming together to form a political force and either electing representatives or forcing their representatives to speak their needs. The Black Power movement paved the way for a diverse plurality of social justice movements, including black feminism, environmental movements, affirmative action, and gay and lesbian rights. Central to these movements were the issues of identity politics and structural inequality, features emerging from the Black Power movement. Because the Black Power movement emphasized and explored a black identity, movement activists were forced to confront issues of gender, and class as well.

The social movement was successful because its image was narrative in terms of what blacks were feeling at the time. To quote Kenneth Burke: " If man is the symbol-using animal, some motives must derive from his animality, some from his symbolicity, and some from mixtures of the two". The Black Social Movement of the late sixties and early did just that with their raised fist and strong shouts, with their images plastered on buttons, and shirts, hats, and poster, The separation and the mixture of the two were evident.