

The Black Panther Party—its struggles and achievements

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The journal cover. Credit: Springer Science + Business Media

The Golden Jubilee of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, which took place in October 2016, is the topic of a new special issue in the *Journal of African American Studies*, published by Springer. This special issue does not have a specific genre; rather, it consists of many academics who employed varying perspectives to tackle topics in several creative and original ways. In the end, the goal is to provide a more nuanced perspective on the diversity and complexity of this militant group. The special issue will be open to the general public until May 15th 2017.

The articles in the special issue produce reflections on the organization's 50th anniversary, plow new scholarly ground, provide insightful interviews of former Panthers, and offer a take on some of the most recent books on the Black Panther Party (BPP). The interviews and conversations with former Panthers are especially informative. Readers are treated to an up close and personal look at some of the men and women who comprised the Black Panther Party from California to Baltimore. These narratives are presented as stories in themselves, but when seamed together, create a part of the great international spectacle that was/is the Black Panther Party.

The entries are more than just chronicles of peoples' lives or straightforward narration of events; they are vibrant realities etched on the bedrock of the Black Liberation Struggle. These Panthers' lives and personalities had so great an influence on the minds and hearts of a global community that their organization still receives the lion share of attention vis-à-vis discussions, writings and/or documentaries about the American Black Power Movement. From their stories, readers are introduced to the significance and beauty of the struggle for Black liberation in the USA. With tales of bravery and achievement in the claws of adversity, the Panthers have provided the present with a window to the past and a template to build a more humane tomorrow.

Judson L. Jeffries, Editor of the *Journal of African American Studies*, and Omari L. Dyson write in the introduction, "As we reflect on this historical landmark, it is key that we remember the sacrifices made by the rank-and-file members of the BPP—who demonstrated their commitment to transform the social and political landscape of this nation. But more importantly, how they stretched the boundaries of what the human psyche can do when limitations are foisted on them. In this special issue, we dedicated our efforts to capturing the fusion between Panther and struggle—a relationship intertwined with strength, hope, love, and a determination to survive."

More information: *Journal of African American Studies*, Volume 21, Issue 1, March 2017: Special Issue on the Black Panther Party.

link.springer.com/journal/12111/21/1/page/1

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