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# The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, And The Black Panther Party In Oakland



## Synopsis

In *The Revolution Has Come* Robyn C. Spencer traces the Black Panther Party's organizational evolution in Oakland, California, where hundreds of young people came to political awareness and journeyed to adulthood as members. Challenging the belief that the Panthers were a projection of the leadership, Spencer draws on interviews with rank-and-file members, FBI files, and archival materials to examine the impact the organization's internal politics and COINTELPRO's political repression had on its evolution and dissolution. She shows how the Panthers' members interpreted, implemented, and influenced party ideology and programs; initiated dialogues about gender politics; highlighted ambiguities in the Panthers' armed stance; and criticized organizational priorities. Spencer also centers gender politics and the experiences of women and their contributions to the Panthers and the Black Power movement as a whole. Providing a panoramic view of the party's organization over its sixteen-year history, *The Revolution Has Come* shows how the Black Panthers embodied Black Power through the party's international activism, interracial alliances, commitment to address state violence, and desire to foster self-determination in Oakland's black communities.

## Book Information

Paperback: 280 pages

Publisher: Duke University Press Books; Reprint edition (December 2, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0822362864

ISBN-13: 978-0822362869

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #56,236 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #65 in Books > History > Americas > United States > African Americans #116 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Asian #138 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Gender Studies > General

## Customer Reviews

"Tearing down myths and distortions on virtually every page, *The Revolution Has Come* is the first substantive account of the Black Panther Party's Oakland chapter—the iconic gathering that birthed the party and held on to its very last breath. Robyn C. Spencer's incisive attention to

gender, state repression, black radical alliances, philosophical and ideological debates, and the organization's long decline makes this one of the most original studies of the Panthers to appear in years." (Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*) "Using a wealth of interviews and extensive archival research, Robyn C. Spencer narrates the untold history of the Black Panther Party from the inside out. A wonderful storyteller, Spencer shines a light on both the incredible promise of the Panther programs and the overwhelming, coordinated repression of the government programs designed to destroy them. Equally revealing, she shows that the Panthers' organizational reaction to this repression contributed to their demise. Most important, Spencer threads the voices of Panther women, showing how their critical leadership, skills, and creativity sustained the organization. Beautifully written, this brilliant and groundbreaking work is important for young activists on so many levels." (Judy Richardson, coeditor of *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*) "In *The Revolution Has Come*, her detailed organizational history of the party, the historian Robyn C. Spencer reminds us that for the party's leaders, it was critical that their platform be accessible, as [Huey P.] Newton put it, to 'the brothers on the block.'" (James Ryerson *New York Times Book Review* 2016-11-20) "Unlike other scholarship that has foregrounded a handful of primarily male leaders, Spencer's account is a well-rounded organizational history. . . . The author deftly weaves together an impressive source base to present a cohesive and accessible narrative of the evolution of the Black Panther Party. Highly recommended." (A. Ribeiro *Choice* 2017-06-01) "This book is an outstanding contribution to the growing literature on the history of the struggle of African Americans to liberate themselves. Spencer's attention to historical details, with respect to the critical stages and features that marked the short lifespan . . . of the BPP, is breathtaking." (Kwesi Tsri *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2017-05-04) "The author's crisp, clean, incisive prose proved an eye-opening reading experience that at times left me dumbfounded as to how many myths and assumptions have come to dominate latter-day perceptions of the Panthers." (Michael Ezra *Black Perspectives* 2017-07-10) "Spencer's attention to women and gender provides a much-needed intervention in the historiography of the [Black Panther] Party and of Black Power more broadly. . . . Ultimately, her book reveals how the Party and its dynamic women members and gender frameworks offer a roadmap for a new generation of historians, activists, and revolution." (Ashley Farmer *Black Perspectives* 2017-07-12)

Robyn C. Spencer is Associate Professor of History at Lehman College, City University of New York.

From the very first pages, Spencer drew me into this beautifully written historical account of the origin and development of the BPP. It's evident that an enormous amount of research was done with specific details and accounts driving the narrative, enabling the reader to feel like she is curbside to the events that are recalled. In addition, Spencer highlights the instrumental role that women played not only in the BPP but also in overall Black activism efforts. Her writings are truly a gift for newcomers and scholars alike interested in learning more about the BPP.

Born and raised in Oakland, CA. Proud of my home town and her history....ALL of it. Thank you Robyn for focusing on a very important bit of history that is relevant and impacting our lives today.

From the start you are transported to the Black Panther headquarters. I felt as though I was actually there ,witnessing a part of history.Ms.Spencer's writing ,her use of words paints a picture I will not forget.

interesting and informative!!

It was a gift!

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