

Film Review: Important History in ‘The Black Panthers: Vanguard of a Revolution’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 25, 2015 - 1:11pm

- [Bobby Seale](#) [2]
- [Chicago](#) [3]
- [Eldridge Cleaver](#) [4]
- [FBI](#) [5]
- [Firelight Films](#) [6]
- [Fred Hampton](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Huey Newton](#) [9]
- [J. Edgar Hoover](#) [10]
- [Movie Review](#) [11]
- [Oakland](#) [12]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [13]
- [PBS](#) [14]
- [Police](#) [15]
- [Stanley Nelson](#) [16]
- [The Black Panthers: Vanguard of a Revolution](#) [17]

CHICAGO – If you want to experience the old cliché of “everything old is new again,” look no further than the excellent documentary, “The Black Panthers: Vanguard of a Revolution.” The formation of the famous 1960s political group is rooted in the same issues that came out of Ferguson and Baltimore – the marginalization and harassment of African Americans by law enforcement authority. Yes, the group’s techniques were questionable, but so was the use of tax payer money – through the FBI – to destroy the organization.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

The Black Panthers were formed in 1966 out of Oakland, California, anchored by notable activists Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. With police harassment against African Americans reaching another crescendo during the mid-1960s, the Panthers reacted with revolutionary confrontation techniques. These strategies struck a chord in highest levels of federal law enforcement, and the FBI began a sting operation to destroy the group from within. The documentary creates the history in chronological order, from the first ideals of the group in its formation, to its rapid growth, through the government infiltration and acts of violence, and finally to the splintering and destruction of the movement. This is vital history, not just because everything-old-is-new-again, but because of the blatant waste of law enforcement resources to squelch the Panther’s brand of dissent, basically because of the government’s own fear.

The film opens with an interesting metaphor – the old fable of blind men considering an elephant, and describing it differently based on the part of the animal they touched. Thus was The Black Panther Movement – a organization that had many goals, and meant different things to whoever happened to be involved with it. The Black Panthers emerged from the fledgling Black Power philosophy of the mid-1960s, fomented by a radical approach opposite to Dr. Martin King Jr. and the civil rights movement.

The original Oakland Black Panthers – which included Bobby Seale and Huey Newton – sought to crush police oppression by practicing the “open carry” gun laws in California at the time. This exploded into a confrontation with the state legislature – who was perfectly willing to practice gun control when it involved African Americans – which helped to expand the movement throughout the country. What followed were years of local and federal police harassment, outright political murder and a division of philosophy from within.

“The Black Panthers: Vanguard of a Revolution” has a limited tun at the AMC Loews Crestwood 18 (Crestwood, Ill.) and the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago (601 N. State Street) beginning on September 25th. Written and directed by Stanley Nelson. Not Rated.



[Continue reading for Patrick McDonald’s full review of “The Black Panthers: Vanguard of a Revolution”](#) [18]



Black Panther Rally in Oakland, July of 1968, in ‘The Black Panthers: Vanguard of a Revolution’

Photo credit: Photo Courtesy of Stephen Shames for Firelight Films

★ [Continue reading for Patrick McDonald’s full review of “The Black Panthers: Vanguard of a Revolution”](#) [18]

Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 29 2024 - 4:28am*):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/25896/film-review-important-history-in-the-black-panthers-vanguard-of-a-revolution>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/bobby-seale>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/chicago>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/eldridge-cleaver>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/fbi>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/firelight-films>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/fred-hampton>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/huey-newton>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/j-edgar-hoover-0>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/movie-review>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/oakland>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/pbs>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/police>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/stanley-nelson>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-black-panthers-vanguard-of-a-revolution>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/25894/important-history-in-the-black-panthers-vanguard-of-a-revolution>