

Committee: 1970 Seattle Black Panther Party Meeting

Topic: Addressing Racial Injustice



Theme of AUSMUN 2024

The theme for this year's AUSMUN is "Forging Tomorrow with Yesterday's Lessons". Dating back to 500 BC, great minds such as Confucius have spread this ideal: "Study the past, if you would divine the future". During a typical Model United Nations conference, delegates are expected to learn from their country's past and, in many cases, actively rewrite it. Historical knowledge when used effectively can lead to informed decisions; by reflecting on what has and has not worked in the past, collectively we are able to gain perspective on current and future policy. We encourage delegates to keep this ideal in mind while wrestling with the nuances and complications inherent in the ideas of modern-day problems.

AUSMUN is committed to actively serving its community and combating pressing issues. As we continue to expand in numbers, we further seek to expand our positive impact on the world around us. We are proud to announce that we have partnered with Dress for Success, a non-profit organization that enables women to become economically independent by offering professional clothing, a network of support, and the resources necessary for both personal and professional growth. By participating in AUSMUN 2024, in addition to debating "model" policy, you are actively bettering society and changing the world.

The 2024 AUSMUN board is honored to host all delegates for our largest conference yet. We cannot wait to see what delegates bring forward to each committee in their efforts to embody values of collaboration and this year's theme. Looking twenty twenty-forward to seeing you!

Rationale

The Black Panther Party was an African American revolutionary organization founded in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale (Duncan). The organization was originally founded to protect African Americans from police brutality and violent riots. However, increased conflict and the persistence of violent racism in America catalyzed its quick evolution into a revolutionary group calling for various reforms including the arming of all African Americans, the freeing of black prisoners, and compensation for centuries of exploitation (Duncan). The Black Panthers played a significant role in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, rejecting the non-violent views of other civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Instead, they focused on ideas like black power and self-defense. Their approach to civil rights challenged the prevailing narrative and brought up important questions about racial inequality and systemic oppression (Yang). The Black Panthers's ideology and advocacy continue to inspire modern-day activism. The values they fought to protect become increasingly relevant in a world that seeks to remedy long-standing social inequalities and their emphasis on self-determination, community organization, and resistance to systemic oppression can be seen in the work of organizations and movements that advocate for social justice and equality today.

Background of the Issue

At a protest in 2010, Harry Belafonte said, "Although slavery may have been abolished, the crippling poison of racism still persists, and the struggle still continues (Selby)." Patterns of social and systemic racism from the 1970s are tied to hundreds of years of prejudice and

struggle. The first African slaves were brought to the Americas by Spanish colonists in 1526 (Hall). The system of the Transatlantic slave trade persisted for 366 years, traumatizing and killing generations of African families to feed the European and American economies (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation). During this period, 12.5 million people were subjected to the middle passage, the brutal transportation of slaves from Africa to the Americas across the Atlantic Ocean, where 1.5 million people died (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation). On these massive “slave ships” people were packed as tightly as possible and given the minimum resources to keep them alive (Liverpool Museums).

When these ships arrived in the Americas, the captured Africans were auctioned off as pieces of property; stripped of their names and identity (History On the Net). The slaves were then forced to work, primarily for agricultural purposes, and occasionally within the household. The system of slavery also led to the systemic rape of African American women and girls by their male oppressors (Foster). Even after slavery was abolished, its social, political, and economic ramifications would continue to harm African Americans living in American society and around the world.

Several Supreme Court decisions and constitutional amendments are key to understanding the systematic racism of the United States at the federal level. In 1857, *Dred Scott v. Sandford* ruled that enslaved people were not citizens and were not granted protection by the federal government (National Archives). This decision enraged abolitionists, whose primary goal was to end slavery in America. Finally, in 1865, the 13th Amendment forbade slavery apart from incarcerated people. This decision came at the end of the Civil War and began a reconstruction period that would shape how Black people were treated in America. This era largely saw African Americans being denied many basic rights as well as devastating violence towards Black

communities. In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that “equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races” would be provided in the United States, which resulted in legally enforced segregation emerging in the South (National Archives). It wasn’t until 1954 that *Plessy v. Ferguson* was overruled by the Supreme Court in the case titled *Brown v. Board of Education*, resulting in the official desegregation of public schools (National Archives).

Starting in the mid-50s, a series of protests and events and the persistent denial of equality for Black Americans led to an increase in the participation and vigor of the civil rights movement, both in peaceful and violent ways. One catalyst of this was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or NAACP, which was founded in February of 1909 as a response to anti-Black violence in Springfield, Illinois. It would later become one of the most well-known and respected civil rights organizations in the United States (NAACP). Most notably, in August of 1963, approximately a quarter million people marched for civil rights at the National Mall (NAACP). This became known as the March on Washington, which helped position America for the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act, passed by Congress, prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (US Department of Labor). In addition, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 took steps to lower racially biased voting barriers (Civil Rights Teaching), and in 1968, the Fair Housing Act worked to prevent redlining and other common forms of housing discrimination (US Department of Housing and Urban Development). In October of 1966, the Black Panther Party was formed to patrol African American neighborhoods and protect them from police brutality. This later evolved into a revolutionary group that called for the arming of all Black Americans, their exemption from the draft, their release from jail, and compensation for the generations of oppression and exploitation

(Duncan). Later, in April of 1968, Martin Luther King Jr., widely considered the face of the civil rights movement, was assassinated, leading to racial violence in more than 100 cities around the country (Stanford).

Current Situation

The Black Panther Party was founded in 1966. It is now the year 1970, and civil rights activism has been gaining momentum for the past decade. Just two years prior to the conference, a group of Chicago police raided a meeting of Black Panther Party members, killing Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, two of the party's most influential leaders. The Party has already been deemed "the most dangerous threat to the international security of the country" by the FBI. President Richard Nixon and his cabinet are making a concerted effort to repress the Black Panthers and their movement. The date is January 1st, 1970, and members of the Party are on their way to a meeting at their Seattle headquarters.

The goals of this meeting are to address issues of police brutality, protest, public upset regarding the Black Panthers, etc. At the turn of a new decade, decisions made at this conference will affect the future of the Party. Chapters all over the United States will be present at the conference, with members from New York, Seattle, Chicago, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia branches all in attendance.

Each branch of the Black Panther Party is bringing their own initiatives to the conference. For example, the Harlem chapter in New York is focused on founding and keeping up its regular bulletin, *People's Community News*. They are building up social programs including a free health

center, two free breakfast groups, and the Black Panther Athletic Club (University of Washington).

Directive

Delegates should consider the goals and possible outcomes regarding police brutality during acts of civil disobedience, specifically during their upcoming protest in the nation's capital. We encourage delegates to look beyond what happened in history and make creative decisions based on their delegation's characteristics, not just their previous actions. Because there was a great deal of discourse within the civil rights movement about both ideals and execution, each delegate will have a unique view on each of the topics discussed. We encourage delegates to move forward with compassion, understanding the real impacts that the topics discussed in this conference have had on individual lives. Understanding possible CIA surveillance in the party, the body should also be cautious of possible spies. If evidence of sabotage is found, the party will be capable of trying the spies for their crimes.

Questions to consider:

1. What role should intersectionality play in the civil rights movement?
2. Which form of civil resistance is most effective?
3. Can nonviolent protest be excused in specific cases? When?
4. What is the future of the Black Panther Party as the nation moves into a new era?

Resources for Delegates

[All 119 References in “We Didn’t Start the Fire,” Explained | Britannica](#)

[Black Panther Party | History, Ideology, & Facts | Britannica](#)

[The Black Panther Party: Challenging Police and Promoting Social Change](#)

[The Black Panthers Were Founded 50 Years Ago, and Their Influence Hasn’t Waned |](#)

[History| Smithsonian Magazine](#)

Delegations

1. **Angela Davis-** Angela Davis was a communist, women's rights advocate, and opponent of the American prison complex. She was born into a family of school teachers in Birmingham, Alabama and would eventually become a university professor. There is no evidence suggesting she was registered as a member of the Black Panther Party, but she demonstrated to be closely related to the party.

[Angela Y. Davis](#)

[Angela Davis](#)

2. **Ashanti Alston-** Ashanti Alston was a member of the Black Panther Party and also served in the Black Liberation Army and the Jericho Movement. He was a prolific writer and was published for his views on nationalism, war, and revolution. He was also a member of the Black Liberation Army and spent 11 years in jail for participating in an armed robbery to raise funds for their cause.

[The Publishings of Ashanti Omowali Alston](#)

[Ashanti Alston on... Turtle Island, The African and the U.S. of Amnesia](#)

3. **Barbara Easley-** Barbara Easley studied at San Francisco College and grew interested in Guerrilla movements during the time of the Vietnam War. She became involved in her local chapter of the Black Panther Party and spent a great deal of time in foreign communist conferences. She is known for speaking out about inequalities within her own party, specifically on the treatment of women. As the party regressed, she was known for being unafraid to call them out.

[Untold Stories of a Black Panther: Barbara Easley-Cox 2021](#)

[Interviews: Black Panthers Today](#)

4. **Bobby Seale-** Bobby Seale worked with Malcolm X until his death, later founding the Black Panther Party. In 1969, he was charged with the murder of a party member who was suspected to be a police informant, but he was not sentenced until 1971. He was also charged with inciting a riot in Chicago with a group of other Black Panthers in 1969.

[Bobby Seale](#)

[Bobby Seale \(October 22, 1936\)](#)

5. **Charles Barron-** Charle Barron was a member of the New York City Council who proclaimed himself an “elected activist”. He was a member of the party and delivered newspapers for the organization. While serving his time in office, he spoke actively about the corruption and racism operating within the system.

[Charles Barron: Elected Activist](#)

[Talking real Black Panther revolutionary politics with Charles Barron](#)

6. **Connie Matthews-** Connie Matthews was an international organizer of the Black Panther Party based in Denmark. She had a degree in psychology and worked on an international council of folk music. She is known as one of the most important individuals who contributed to the party's growth in Europe.

[Newton Denounces 2 Missing Panthers](#)

[The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in The Global Sixties](#)

7. **Denise Oliver-Vélez-** Oliver-Vélez was a community organizer, editor, activist, and eventually professor. She was particularly interested in the role of women within racial justice movements. She was also passionate about LGBTQIA+ rights and justice for those suffering from HIV AIDS. This activist organized everything from community clean-ups to militant activism.

[On the Radical Rebelliousness Of Denise Oliver-Velez](#)

[Womanica: Revolutionaries: Denise Oliver-Velez](#)

8. **Ed Bullins-** Ed Bullins was a Black artist who specialized in prose but wrote plays for the Black Panther Party. He was not interested in a coalition with radical White allies, and he did not like the ideas of explicit and charged plays that he would often be tasked with writing. Bullins was the chief artist in residence at the “Black House,” which served as the San Francisco headquarters for the Party.

[Ed Bullins, Leading Playwright of the Black Arts Movement, Dies at 86 -](#)

[The New York Times](#)

[Ed Bullins's Biography](#)

9. **Elaine Brown-** Brown was the Minister of Information and Chairman of the Black Panther Party. She compared her commitment to the Black Panthers to “committing her life”. Being one of the only female Black Panthers, she was interested in promoting female participation. Living in Los Angeles, she became a part of the Black Panthers due to her friendship with Fred Hampton.

[Elaine Brown](#)

[A Woman Black Panther | American Experience](#)

10. **Eldridge Cleaver-** A member of the Oakland chapter of the Black Panther Party, Cleaver spent much of his early adulthood in prison for crimes against the police and “attempted murder” charges. He was the first Minister of Information for the Black Panther Party. Through his time in the Black Panther Party, he faced exile from the US. He continued his work in Mexico, Algeria, Cuba, and France, expanding the Party internationally.

[Eldridge Cleaver \(August 31, 1935 - May 1, 1998\)](#)

[Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther Who Became G.O.P. Conservative, Is](#)

[Dead at 62](#)

11. **Ericka Huggins-** A leading member of the Black Panther Party, Huggins stood in her position for 14 years. She was extremely passionate about youth education and the unlawful incarceration of men and women of color. She was the director of Oakland Community School which was founded by the party. The school's curriculum became a model for the charter school movement.

[Bio | Ericka Huggins Official Website](#)

[Ericka Huggins \(January 5, 1948\) | National Archives](#)

12. **George Jackson-** Jackson was a revolutionary who fought against unlawful incarceration, having served ten years in solitary confinement himself. He argued against the horrific treatment of black prisoners and fought for their rights in his time with the Black Panthers. He spent much of his time educating and advocating from behind bars through books and letters exposing the uncivilized treatment of African Americans in American prisons.

[George Jackson: Dragon Philosopher and Revolutionary Abolitionist](#)

[The evolution and spiritual journey of two former Black Panther Party members: George Jackson and Eldridge Cleaver - Research Outreach](#)

13. **Geronimo Pratt-** Enrolled at UCLA, Pratt was a member of the Los Angeles branch of the Black Panther Party until an FBI informant within the party wrongly accused him of murdering a young woman. He was eventually acquitted, and continued fighting for justice with the Black Panthers. He fought for just legal

representation in court for African Americans as well as for several other pillars the BPP stood for.

[Last Man Standing: The Tragedy and Triumph of Geronimo Pratt | Office of Justice Programs](#)

[Elmer 'Geronimo' Pratt dies at 63; former Black Panther whose murder conviction was overturned](#)

14. **Huey P. Newton-** Huey founded the Black Panther Party, where he served as the Minister of Defense, alongside Bobby Seale. The party gained international support, especially in China, but Newton began to face roadblocks when he was tried for assault and murder. His arguments with other Black Panther leaders over the main purpose of the party caused it to break into small factions. He was fatally shot in 1989 by a member of the Black Guerilla Family.

[Huey P. Newton \(February 17, 1942- August 22, 1989\)](#)

[Huey Newton, Black Panther Minister of Defense | National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)

15. **Jamal Joseph-** Jamal joined the Black Panthers when he was 16, and though he was incarcerated, he wrote 5 plays, 2 volumes of poetry, and earned 2 college degrees that helped him break down racial barriers within the prison system. He was one of the leaders of the Panther's revolutionary underground. In 1969 he was one of the defendants in the Panther 21 trials in which the party was accused of deadly attacks in New York City.

[Speaking engagements for Jamal Joseph | Hachette Speakers Bureau](#)
[Jamal Joseph, Keynote Speaker | Sarah Lawrence College.](#)

16. **JoNina Abron-Ervin-** JoNina became involved in civil rights activism following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. She worked on several magazines in college, and upon joining the Black Panthers post graduation, she edited the party newspaper. She also had a large role in the party's social programs that aided the community, such as the free breakfast and education programs.

[JoNina Abron-Ervin - Wikipedia](#)

[The Legacy of the Black Panther Party | The Anarchist Library](#)

17. **Judy Juanita-** Judy began her role as an activist by joining the first US black student union and continued this by joining the Black Panther Party. She worked as an editor for the Black Panther newspaper and in the monumental Free Breakfast for Children program. Juanita later taught in the first Black Studies program in the United States at San Francisco State University.

[About Judy Juanita](#)

[Judy Juanita - Wikipedia](#)

18. **Kathleen Cleaver-** Kathleen Cleaver joined the Black Panther party in 1967 and married Eldridge Cleaver, the Minister of Information. She was the Communications Secretary, a combination of spokeswoman and press secretary, and she organized the campaign to free Huey Newton. She and her husband were

targeted by the FBI for involvement in the party and later had to flee the United States.

[Kathleen Cleaver - Wikipedia](#)

[Emory acquires archive of Black Panther Party activist Kathleen Cleaver](#)

19. **Kent Ford-** Kent co-founded the Portland chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1968. He actively participated in Vietnam War protests and created a successful children's breakfast program in Northeast Portland. Ford's main focus within the chapter was education and care for the community, and the chapter established two medical clinics.

[Kent Ford \(activist\) - Wikipedia](#)

["Sting Like A Bee": Kent Ford and the Portland Black Panthers — The Vanport Mosaic](#)

20. **Magora Kennedy-** Not only known for her role in the Black Panther Party, Kennedy was monumental in her LGBTQ activism in the Stonewall riots. She was a Baptist preacher and joined the Boston and New Haven chapters of the Black Panther Party following Martin Luther King Jr.'s death. She later became more widely known for becoming the Chaplain of the Stonewall Veterans Association.

[Magora Kennedy • LGBTQ Religious Archives Network](#)

[Magora Earnastine Kennedy, \(1938 - 2023\) - ForeverMissed.com Online Memorials](#)

21. **Marshall "Eddie" Conway-** Conway joined the Black Panther's Baltimore chapter in 1968 and worked for the free breakfast programs run by the chapter. Eddie was framed for the murder of a police officer in 1970 and sentenced to life in prison in 1971. He fought for justice throughout the 44 years he spent in jail until he was released in 2014.

[A tribute to the revolutionary life of Marshall 'Eddie' Conway](#)

[Marshall "Eddie" Conway \(1946-2023\): A life committed to the people and revolutionary change – Liberation News](#)

22. **Michael Zinzun-** Zinzun joined the Black Panther Party in 1970 at 21 years old after supporting the black power movement in his teenage years. He specifically advocated against police brutality and violence towards black people and was an essential member of the West Coast Black Panthers. He left the Black Panthers in 1972 and formed the Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA) in Los Angeles.

[Michael Zinzun, Ex-Black Panther Challenged Southland Police Agencies](#)

[Michael Zinzun: Pasadena's real Black Panther superhero](#)

23. **Mumia Abu-Jamal-** Mumia Abu-Jamal (born Wesley Cooks), joined the Black Panther party in 1968 at age 14 after being beaten by a group of white people and a policeman during a peaceful protest. With Reggie Schell, Abu-Jamal formed the Philadelphia branch of the party and was appointed "Leader of Information". He was responsible for making news stories and writing about events in the city. By

1970, he was working for the Black Panthers in Oakland, where the party was founded.

[Mumia Abu-Jamal American journalist and political activist](#)

[READY TO PARTY: Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Black Panther Party](#)

24. **Paul Coates-** Coates joined the Baltimore branch of the Black Panthers in 1967 after serving a tour in Vietnam, having experienced racism and discrimination in the military. He started as a volunteer for the Panthers's breakfast program but quickly rose in rank and became the Defense Captain of the Baltimore Black Panthers. He oversaw almost all of the Black Panther activities in Baltimore.

[As a Vietnam vet, former Black Panther, and father of a literary superstar,](#)

[Paul Coates has lived a life reminiscent of the great literature he publishes.](#)

[A talk With Paul Coates](#)

25. **Richard Aoki-** Aoki was one of the lesser-known founding members of the Black Panther Party. He joined in 1960, one of the very first members and one who was personally invited by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Aoki worked as a field marshall, putting his military experience to use to protect black communities. He was also the first to carry out "Shotgun Patrols." In these, a group of Black Panthers would follow the police around black neighborhoods with cameras to keep them in check.

[Biography of Richard Aoki, Asian-American Black Panther](#)

[The man who armed the Panthers](#)

26. **Russell Maroon Shoatz**- Shoatz was a “soldier” of the Black Liberation Army. He devoted his life to fighting systemically racist institutions, specifically the police. In Philadelphia, he was a hero amongst the black community because of how he fought these institutions. However, the local government thought he was a dangerous extremist who needed to be stopped.

[A Black Panther in prison makes a reckoning: the story of Russell Maroon Shoatz.](#)

[Political prisoner Russell Maroon Shoatz out of solitary confinement](#)

27. **Sundiata Acoli**- The death of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 radicalized Acoli and he joined the Harlem chapter of the Black Panther Party in the same year. In 1969, he was arrested for being a suspect in a bomb and long-rifle attack on two police stations in New York city. He was acquitted from these charges, but the police kept tabs on him from that point on using FBI spying tactics.

[Prison Radio: Sundiata Acoli](#)

[Sundiata Acoli Amicus](#)

28. **Stokely Carmichael**- Carmichael was one of the most popular revolutionaries of the 60s. He was considered the predecessor to Malcolm X and was a leader in the SNCC. He also traveled around the world to advocate for peace in places of war. In 1968, he left America due to FBI spying. Three months later, he released a statement condemning the Black Panther Party for not being separatist or extreme

enough. Even though he prefers being in Africa to America, he came back for this conference.

[Stokely Carmichael West Indian-American activist](#)

[Stokely Carmichael Overview](#)

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