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During the 1960s, some black activists lost faith in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) because it failed to introduce immediate reforms. African Americans were impatient with the slow changes of the CRM and decided to join a more revolutionary cause and adopted the more radical and aggressive tactics of the philosophy called the Black Power Movement (BPM). They felt that the use of self-defence and violence was justified in the struggle for equality. There were multiple reasons that led to the philosophy of the BPM. Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael were among the African American leaders who played an important role in the movement. The BPM believed violence was justified. In the 1960s, a wave of riots occurred due to poor living conditions and police brutality in the ghettos. Movement groups such as CORE and SNCC developed militant agendas and adopted the term Black Power which endorsed black pride and black separatism instead of integration into white society.

Black power was an ideology rather than a political movement. The term 'negro' was rejected, opting to rather be called black, and eventually, African American. This was important as it stressed black pride and promoted black interests. It allowed for emphasis on black history and the importance of black culture. It encouraged self-help, self-sufficiency and self-defence. Slogans such as Black is Beautiful were adopted. Blacks promoted the development of a distinctive black identity. Black power was not a formal organization, so different followers promoted different aspects of the philosophy. The father of the BPM, arguably, was Malcolm X. He rejected King's non-violent ideologies. He believed his followers should secure their rights "by any means possible". In his early life, he was involved in criminal activities, was arrested and completed his education in jail. There, he learnt of the Black Muslim Movement. On his release, he joined the Nation of Islam, led by Elijah Mohammad. He left the organization after numerous scandals. He travelled to Mecca where he met Muslims of all nationalities, which challenged his beliefs about black superiority. He was assassinated in 1965.

Despite Malcolm X's death, his ideologies of black separatism instead of integration lived on. Students of the SNCC continued to hold peaceful protests. The passing of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act marked an important milestone for young activists such as Stokely Carmichael.

Stokely Carmichael was a member of the non-violent SNCC and a believer in King's ideologies. At a march against racism, he was arrested. Upon his release, he made a speech using the words "Black Power". His message to the African Americans was to adopt a sense of community and belonging and take pride in their black heritage. The slogan Black is Beautiful was adopted and white fashion was rejected. This resulted in Afro hairstyles and African styled clothing becoming popular. Carmichael became critical of the CRM and its leaders. He excluded all white members from the SNCC. He was expelled from the organization and joined the Black Panther Party, where he became the honorary prime minister.

The Black Panther Party was a militant group within the BPM. They wanted an end to white capitalist rule and police brutality against African Americans. They were critical of the US waging war in Vietnam and called for all black men to be exempt from the war because they did not want to defend a racist white regime. They also called for decent housing, schools, juries for court cases involving blacks and the release of blacks from jails. They gained massive respect in the ghettos. They were armed and clad in black. They patrolled the streets and called for an armed revolution. They provided valuable support to the community in the form of soup kitchens and breakfast programmes, among other community-based programmes. They were broken up by the late 1970s.

The BPM aimed to increase black pride and self-confidence among the black community. It encouraged black participation in public affairs, and this resulted in the appointment of black mayors. Black businesses and education programmes were introduced. A greater sense of community, ethnic identity and culture had been developed.

The CRM left a permanent mark on history with the implementation of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. However, the BPM raised awareness for the problems in the ghettos and raised black morale and self-confidence. Their self-help schemes, radical ideologies and revolutionary leaders, such as Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael, had undoubtedly contributed to the end of segregation in the United States.