



[What We Want, What We Believe: Black Panther Party](#)

Title: [What We Want, What We Believe: The Black Panther Party Library](#)

Editor: Roz Payne

Label: AK Press

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The Black Panther Party (founded in 1966) was one of the most controversial groups of the Civil Rights era. While their aggressive Black Nationalist rhetoric frightened many mainstream Americans, their cultural pride and pragmatic programming were well received by many marginalized Black Americans. Party members such as Dr. Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, and Angela Davis were catapulted into national fame and remain some of the most legendary (and notorious) figures of that era. *What We Want, What We Believe: The Black Panther Party Library* attempts to provide a concise collection of Black Panther Party media, covering nearly forty years.

[AK Press](#), the DVD's publisher, is an independent book/film publishing and distribution company that promotes radical and anarchist material. This set is edited by Roz Payne, a documentary filmmaker, who shot original footage of the Black Panthers for Newsreel Films in the 1960s. Much of the footage contained in the set comes from her private archives.

This four disc collection runs approximately 12 hours. Disc one contains the centerpieces of the library—three Newsreel Films: *Off the Pig*, *Mayday*, and *Repression*. These films provide insight into the Black Panther Party's ideology and establish the 1960s backdrop. Also on the first disc is a lengthy interview with former Black Panther Party Field Secretary Donald Cox. Footage from the 35th Anniversary of the Black Panther Party rounds out disc one and includes very interesting speeches from Kathleen Cleaver and Bobby Seale.

Disc two features segments from Wheelock College's conference on the Black Panther Party which was held in 2003. Some of the more interesting topics include the FBI investigation of the Black Panther Party and Huey Newton's complex view of the relationship between the Black and Gay Liberation movements. Disc three contains commentary by former Black Panther lawyers on their involvement with the organization as well as discussion of various Panther court cases. The final disc features interviews with members of the Newsreel as they provide details of their intimate relationship with the Panthers.

This DVD collection can only be appreciated by those who have at least an intermediate understanding of Black Panther history. It contains no historical background on the party or on most of the people featured throughout the DVD. Although it contains a ton of information, the lack of captions and labels prevents one from understanding much of what is presented. The DVD is amateurish and has a lack of polish which renders it somewhat ineffective in its attempt to be an educational resource.

Although difficult to navigate, *What We Want, What We Believe* contains a wealth of information on the Black Panther Party. Roz Payne, Newsreel Films, and AK Press made a very valiant attempt to organize this vast amount of material into a cohesive set. It is a must watch for those looking to enhance their knowledge of this once prominent organization.

Posted by Langston Collin Wilkins

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