

**Razlogova, Elena**, Concordia University, Canada

### **Chinese Socialist World or Soviet Communist Camp? FBI Surveillance and Spaces of Chinese Socialism in the Black Power Movement**

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Federal Bureau of Investigation believed that the Communist Party, USA existed solely as a base for Soviet espionage. At the same time, Secretary Herbert Hoover insisted, contrary to the FBI's own reports, that the party "does wield substantial influence over Negroes which one day could become decisive." FBI surveillance and media campaigns against various Black Power organizations were justified based on this premise.

Conversely, the majority of black nationalist leaders believed that Western Marxism could not help in combating racism either in America or abroad, and looked to Chinese socialism instead. Elaine Powers and Huey Newton visited China; Robert F. Williams lived there for a time. The non-Western concept of socialism as a Chinese domain shaped programs and actions of Black Power organizations.

This paper will thus examine two competing constructions of global socialist spaces: FBI surveillance strategies mapped the civil rights and Black Power movements as encroachments of the Soviet communist camp on American soil, whereas Black Power activists imagined inhabiting a transnational space of Chinese communism. These competing spatial imaginations constrained the FBI's ability to understand and contain the movement's goals and ideologies.