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"THE GREATEST SINGLE THREAT:" A STUDY OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY 1966-1971

By

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on oral interviews, letters, police records, newspapers, leaflets, posters, photographs, biographical and autobiographical accounts and FBI files.

The primary questions are: what made the BPP so "threatening?" and to whom did the organization pose the "greatest single threat?" The main argument of this dissertation is that the BPP engaged in a "revolution" whose overall significance and impact have been overlooked. This dissertation explores recurrent themes of "revolution and revolutionary" throughout the BPP's literature. It argues that the interchangeability of both terms by both the BPP and scholars of the BPP has enshrouded the BPP in a series of political "isms" that have dominated the historiography of the BPP.

Little attention has been focused on how individual BPP leaders and members defined and applied "revolution" and "revolutionary" based on location, class and gender. Examining such themes exposes geographical differences in overall interpretations of the terms which account for some of the internal dissension in the BPP at both the national, local and international level. This dissertation will show that by engaging in particular activities throughout its history, the BPP posed a "threat" to the United States government because it challenged and demanded that fundamental tenets of American democracy be enforced throughout local black communities.

This study fills an important gap in the historiography of radical movements throughout American history by exposing strengths and weaknesses of perhaps the most radical organization during the civil rights era. This dissertation departs from traditional studies of the BPP which have primarily focused on COINTELPRO efforts in explaining the demise of the BPP and exposes the BPP's principal role in its own demise through pertinent internal dissension between individual leaders and rank and file members.

ABSTRACT

"THE GREATEST SINGLE THREAT:" A STUDY OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY 1966-1971

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This dissertation, "The greatest single threat," takes its title from a 1970 declaration by Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover who concluded that the Black Panther Party represented the "greatest threat to the internal security" of the United States. Founded in October 1966, by two college students Huey Percy Newton and Bobby G. Seale, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) advocated defensive action against aggressive hostile forces throughout local black communities namely, the police. Newton and Seale also drafted a political platform addressing fundamental needs of black communities nationwide including freedom, education, employment, economic and social justice which they termed the Ten Point Platform and Program.

Although the BPP dropped self defense from its name in 1968, it drew the attention of the federal government which instituted counterintelligence efforts (COINTELPRO) to neutralize and discredit the organization. This dissertation investigates the activities of the BPP at the local and national level to expose some its strengths and weaknesses. It is primarily an examination of the Oakland Chapter which served as the national headquarters of the BPP. It also examines and appraises other chapters to determine direct and indirect effects of internal and external factors on the BPP's leadership and membership. The research is based

In loving memory of Marie Jacqueline Thevenin

Francine Barthelemy

Annanie Charlo

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

"These are my credentials," David Hilliard proclaimed to the crowd of Oakland residents gathered in the small basement in June 1999. As he extracted a faded photograph of a group of young men with guns, Hilliard reminded the crowd that as the former Chief of Staff of perhaps one of the most "radical" and controversial organizations during the late 1960s, he was and still remains a 'revolutionary,' experienced in confronting police officers. In his 2000 bid for a seat on the Oakland City Council for District 3, a post long held by city Councilwoman Nancy Nadel, the photograph was resurrected as concrete tangible proof and reassurance to the Oakland community that he could be entrusted to defend, protect, and serve them as their future representative.[1]

Hilliard invoked the "revolutionary" image of the Black Panther Party For Self- Defense (BPP) to assert and reclaim its political legacy in Oakland, namely its grassroots efforts through what Hilliard termed relevant "community-based leadership" and coalitions. Despite the nostalgia, Hilliard acknowledged, "just as the Panthers symbolize an era of protest and promise, so does the Party remain a profound point of fascination for critics and advocates alike."[2] Although Hilliard did not defeat incumbent Nancy Nadel, he succeeded in conjuring the defiant imagery of the Black Panther Party For Self Defense organized in Oakland in October 1966 by college students Huey P. Newton and Bobby G. Seale.

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[1] "Political Legacy to Oakland," Oakland Tribune, 26 June 1999.

[2] Ibid.

At the onset, Newton and Seale signaled through their political organization that blacks would no longer turn the other cheek but would retaliate when attacked. They embraced Malcom X's call for the black community to defend itself against police brutality.[3] The BPP urged local black communities to pick up the gun to defend themselves against racism and police brutality. They drafted a Ten-Point Platform and Program demanding self-determination, employment and an end to the robbery by the capitalist of the black community, housing and education. The Program also demanded exemption from military service, an end to police brutality, freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city jails, and trial by a jury of one's peers. Finally, the Program insisted on land, bread, clothing, justice and peace.[4]

The BPP prioritized self-defense and armed patrols of the police in the black community. The political platform attracted black men and women determined to effect change in their local communities. The BPP dropped Self-Defense from its name in 1968 to emphasize its transition from a para-military stance to one of servicing the community through social programs. These programs were termed "survival programs" by the BPP. Among these varied programs were its free Breakfast Program, free sickle cell anemia testing, free food,

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[3] Malcom X, "Message To The Grassroots, Detroit 1963," In George Breitman ed. Malcom X Speaks, Selected Speeches and Statements (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1966), 17.

[4] "October 1966 Black Panther Party Platform and Program, What We Want, What We Believe" In Huey P. Newton, With the assistance of J. Herman Blake, Revolutionary Suicide (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing Inc. 1995), 116-118.

liberation schools, free busing to prisons, free medical services, free shoes and free pesticides.[5] By 1969, the BPP had thirty chapters throughout local black communities in the U.S. and they also had international chapters.

The BPP immediately drew media attention when its leaders and members engaged in violent confrontations with police throughout the U.S. The BPP also drew the attention of the federal government which instituted 233 of its 295 counterintelligence efforts known as COINTELPRO to neutralize and discredit the BPP.[6] The year 1970 epitomized the zenith of Panther trials throughout the U.S. as chapter members faced indictments for criminal conspiracy, murder, attempted murder and assault charges. In 1970, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Chief Edgar J. Hoover declared the organization, "the greatest threat to the internal security of the United States."[7] Hence, the title of my dissertation, "The Greatest Single Threat": A Study of The Black Panther Party, 1966-1972 seeks to answer two main questions: to whom was the BPP considered the "greatest single threat? and why?

This dissertation seeks to understand the strategies employed by the Party in realization of their specified objectives. It is primarily an examination of the Oakland Chapter which served as the national headquarters of the Party. It also examines other chapters to

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[5] Bobby Seale, Seize The Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1991), 412-418; Huey P. Newton, To Die For The People, Selected Writings and Speeches Edited by Toni Morrison (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing Inc., 1995), 57.

[6] Winston A. Grady-Willis, " The Black Panther Party: State Repression and Political Prisoners," In Charles E. Jones ed., The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998), 366.

[7] Kenneth O'Reilly, Racial Matters, The FBI's Secret File On Black America, 1960-1972 (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 290.

determine direct and indirect effects on the leadership and membership of the BPP. This dissertation departs from traditional studies of the BPP which primarily focused on COINTELPRO efforts in explaining the demise of the BPP, the Party's overall significance, its legacy and political repression by local, state and federal authorities.[8]

This dissertation is divided into five chapters which demonstrate that the demise of the BPP cannot be mainly ascribed to COINTELPRO efforts. It argues that the BPP was a multi-faceted and complex organization replete with internal contradictions and ambiguities. The research is based on court documents and transcripts, oral interviews, letters, police records, newspapers, leaflets, posters, photographs, biographical and autobiographical accounts and declassified FBI files. This dissertation makes judicious use of secondary sources to investigate and establish inconsistencies and ambiguities. It is a work in progress largely based on the primary and secondary sources available to the researcher at the present time.

The FBI files of particular BPP leaders and members remain confidential and will not be released until individual BPP members demand access to them. Such files remain inaccessible to the researcher until and unless BPP individuals also consent to or authorize access to the researcher. Individual FBI files will not be released by the FBI unless and until the individual

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[8] JoNina M. Abron, "The Legacy of The Black Panther Party," The Black Scholar 17 (November/ December 1986): 33-37; Charles E. Jones, "The Political Repression of The Black Panther Party, 1966-1971, The Oakland Bay Area," Journal Of Black Studies 18 (June 1988): 415-434; Sundiata Acoli, "A Brief History Of The Black Panther Party And Its Place In The Black Liberation Movement, " Written April 2, 1985, Originated on January 25, 1995 @ Crsn@aol.com; Scot Ngozi-Brown, "The US Organization, Maulana Karenga, And Conflict With The Black Panther Party, A Critique of Sectarian Influences on Historical Discourse," Journal Of Black Studies 28 (November 1997) :157-170.

has passed away and surviving relatives pose no objection to the release. It is unknown how many FBI documents exist on the Black Panther Party and access to the FBI files of most BPP leaders and individual BPP members is limited. Although the FBI declassified and released thousands of pages on the BPP, there are more documents which have not yet been released to the public such as the FBI files of the BPP's rank and file membership including local and national leadership documents. Thus, conclusions in this work may or may not alter especially as local, state and federal agencies declassify more "confidential" documents and the BPP's national and local leadership and rank and file membership secure FBI documents, permit greater access to researchers, and as more BPP members publish autobiographies and other works on the BPP.

In 1998, Charles E. Jones published a collection of essays on the BPP focusing on contextual landscape along with organizational and gender dynamics, reflections from the rank and file and the decline and legacy of the BPP.[9] Despite the contributions of Jones' volume, none of the essays exclusively focused on the strategies employed by the BPP in the realization of its various objectives. The debate centered on causes for the demise of the BPP with contributors alternately prioritizing external and internal factors. The BPP historiography is saturated with the autobiographies of former Panther leaders which accentuated the central role of Counterintelligence measures including, Minister Of Defense Huey P. Newton, Party Chairman Bobby Seale, other BPP members, Assata Shakur, William Lee Brent, Chief of Staff David Hilliard and Elaine Brown, the only

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[9] Charles E. Jones, The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998).

Chairwoman of the BPP and FBI informant Earl Anthony.[10] The autobiographies highlight police harassment, ideological clashes between the leadership and membership and details regarding the day-to-day operations of the BPP.

Scholars variously describe the political ideology of founder Huey P. Newton as black nationalism, revolutionary internationalism, revolutionary black nationalism derived from "Marxism-Leninism and revolutionary intercommunalism."[11] Too often, scholars tracing the BPP's major ideological developments have emphasized the triumverate of Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver.[12] As a result, voices of the BPP's rank and file,

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[10] Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide (New York: Writers And Readers Publishing Inc., 1995); Huey P. Newton, To Die For The People, The Writings Of Huey P. Newton (New York: Writers And Readers Publishing Inc., 1995); Bobby Seale, Seize The Time : The Story Of The Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991); Bobby Seale, A Lonely Rage, The Autobiography of Bobby Seale (New York: Times Books, 1978); Eldridge Cleaver, Soul On Ice (New York: Dell Publishing Inc., 1970); Eldridge Cleaver, Soul On Fire (Texas: Word Books, 1978); Assata Shakur, Assata, An Autobiography (Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1987); William Lee Brent, Long Time Gone, A Black Panther's True Life Story of His Hijacking and Twenty-Five Years In Cuba (New York: Times Books, 1996); Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power, A Black Woman's Story (New York: Pantheon Books,1992); David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, This Side of Glory: The Autobiography Of David Hilliard And The Story Of The Black Party (Boston: Little Brown And Company, 1993); Earl Anthony, Picking Up The Gun, A Report On The Black Panthers (New York: The Dial Press,1970); Earl Anthony Spitting In The Wind: The True Story Behind The Violent Legacy Of The Black Panther Party (Santa Monica, Roundtable Publishing, 1990).

[11] Charles E. Jones and Judson Jeffries, "Don't Believe The Hype": Debunking The Panther Mythology," In Charles Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 25-56; Jimmy Mori, "The Ideological Development of the Black Panther Party," Cornell Journal of Social Relations 12 (Fall 1977): 137-155.

[12] See, Gene Marine, The Black Panthers (New York:Signet Books, 1969); Kathleen Rout, Eldridge Cleaver (Boston: Twayne Publishers,1991); Lee Lockwood, Conversations With Eldridge Cleaver, Algiers (New York: Delta Books, 1970); G. Louis Heath, The Black Panther Leaders Speak, Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and Company Speak Out Through The Black Panther Party's Newspaper (Metuchen, New

especially those who did not establish national prominence were obscured. Although scholars of the BPP concurred that the BPP experienced various forms of political repression, too often their writings portrayed a victimized BPP without focusing on the organization's "day-to day resistance "at both the national and local level.[13]

As a consequence, the BPP's activism and vitality at the local level has been suffocated and silenced amid COINTELPRO efforts which more than any other factor has been ascribed throughout the historiography as the root cause of the BPP's demise.[14] Scholars have also argued that internal and external factors contributed to internal dissension within the BPP. However, it has not been conclusively shown how ambiguities also affected the BPP's membership and leadership.[15]

This study incorporates COINTELPRO activities, documents and memos to expose local,

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Jersey: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1976).

[13] Winston A. Grady Willis, "The Black Panther Party: State Repression and Political Prisoners," In Charles Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 363-389; Charles E. Jones, "The Political Repression of the Black Panther Party 1966-1971, The Case of the Oakland Bay Area," Journal of Black Studies 18 (June 1988), 415-434; Nikhil Pat Singh, "The Black Panthers And The Undeveloped Country Of The Left," In Charles Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 56-105; Chris Booker, "Lumpenization: A Critical Error of The Black Panther Party," In Charles Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 337-362.

[14] Kenneth O'Reilly, Racial Matters, The FBI's Secret File On Black America, 1960-1972 (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 293-324; Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement (Boston: South End Press, 1988);Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents From The FBI's Secret Wars Against Domestic Dissent (Boston: South End Press, 1990); Nelson Blackstock, COINTELPRO, The FBI's Secret War On Poltical Freedom (New York: Anchor Foundations, 1988).

[15] Ollie A. Johnson II, "Explaining The Demise of the Black Panther Party: The Role of External Factors," In Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 391-414.

state and federal complicity in fomenting divisions within the BPP. It illuminates the culpability of BPP leaders as well as rank and file members in the BPP's demise. This research argues that the BPP engaged in a "revolution" whose overall significance and impact demand closer examination and analysis. This dissertation explores recurrent themes of "revolution and revolutionary" throughout the BPP's literature. The various chapters demonstrate that ideological ambiguities and internal contradictions plagued the BPP. Although the BPP's most ardent leaders espoused political ideologies of the BPP, such ideologies were not always internalized by the BPP's rank and file. Thus, individual and collective flaws of BPP leaders and members fomented ambiguities which constituted contested terrains in the BPP.

Members and leaders of the BPP did not adhere to all the guidelines set forth in the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program outlining the BPP's overall political objectives. Many of the self-proclaimed "revolutionaries" in the BPP engaged in "revolutionary" activities that were diametrically opposed to the BPP's leadership and membership. This research demonstrates that the historiography of the BPP has been enshrouded in a series of political "isms" combined with political repression and internal dissension.

Ambiguities in the construction of these political "isms" effectively stifled and obscured the autonomy and agency of the BPP's leadership and rank and file. Too often, the BPP historiography has focused on the writings of Huey P. Newton as representative of the BPP as a national and international organization.[16] Thus, voices of other members have

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[16] Jimmy Mori, "The Ideological Development of the Black Panther Party," Cornell Journal of Social Relations 12 (Fall 1977): 137-155; Floyd Hayes III and Francis A. Kiene III, " All Power To The People": The Political Thought Of Huey P. Newton And The Black

been effectively silenced and ignored as no attention was paid to how individual members themselves interpreted these ideological "isms" and how they were shaped and molded at the local and national level.

For example, in 1994, journalist Hugh Pearson published *The Shadow of the Panther, Huey P. Newton and the Price of Black Power In America.* Pearson affirmed that he 'had no interest' in traversing or navigating the "political minefields" of the BPP and his text was devoid of any analysis of the BPP's political ideologies.[17] Pearson's work was not a comprehensive history of the BPP because he asserted, "such a project would take many years to complete and would require the navigation of political minefields I have no interest in traversing."[18] Pearson's "illuminating interviewees" consisted of disaffected, disgruntled and disillusioned former BPP members such as Sheba Haven, Landon Williams and Mary Kennedy "who would never forgive Huey for what he did to the party" He maintained that their "shocking revelations" were "indispensable" in his overall assessment of Newton and the BPP.[19]

Pearson blamed Newton for "ghastly deeds" particularly murders and other criminal activities including alcohol and cocaine addiction resulting in the demise of the BPP.[20] He

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Panther Party," In Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 157-176; Helen L. Stewart, "Buffering: The Leadership Style Of Huey P. Newton" (Ph.D diss., Brandeis University, 1980).

[17] Hugh Pearson, The Shadow Of The Panther: Huey P. Newton And The Price Of Black Power In America (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 346.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid, 345.

[20] Ibid, 290.

drew a parallel between himself and Newton and surmised that Newton's "enigmatic behavior" was mainly rooted in his namesake Huey. He concluded, "one of the things that struck me as I wrote was how disappointed, even angry, I often became at our society and myself, for paying so much attention to an organization, that arguably in so many ways amounted to little more than a temporary media phenomenon."[21] Therefore Pearson's book, although heralded as "a keenly observed, often brilliant, Panther-busting book" by the *Los Angeles Times*, hardly represented a balanced examination of the BPP as Pearson concluded that the BPP was a criminal 'black mafia' organization.[22]

Several works have attempted to fill the gap in the BPP historiography concerning women's roles by examining gender, race, class and sexuality within the nation-wide proliferation of female leadership throughout local BPP chapters.[23] Historians Angela Le Blanc- Ernest and Tracye Matthews argued that BPP women negotiated contestations of power and gender within the gendered sexualized internal politics of the BPP. This study reinforces the critical role of black women in the "revolutionary" environment of the BPP. It also explores the internal politics of the BPP in five chapters.

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[21] Ibid, 346-347.

[22] Leon Forrest, "The Brain and the Heart: The Shadow of the Panther: Huey P. Newton and the Price of Black Power in America," Los Angeles Times, 3 July 1994.

[23] Angela Le-Blanc-Ernest, "The Most Qualified Person To Handle The Job:"Black Panther Party Women 1966-1982, In Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 305-336; See also, Tracy Ann Matthews, "'No One Ever Asks What A Man's Place In The Revolution Is:'" Gender And Sexual Politics In The Black Panther Party 1966-1971" (Ph.D diss., The University Of Michigan, 1998); Monica Marie White, "Panther Stories: A Gendered Analysis of the Autobiographies of Former Black Panther Party Members" (Ph.D diss., Western Michigan University, 1998).

Chapter I "There's Gold In Them Thar Hills:" The Evolution of The San Francisco East Bay Area 1900-1966" argues that the realignment of racial boundaries in the San Francisco East Bay area stemmed from the postwar crisis of black unemployment, segregation and urban housing. It mainly examines four cities, Richmond, Oakland, Berkeley and San Francisco, to analyze the overall impact of southern migration to the San Francisco East Bay area. It elaborates further on the argument that the BPP transformed the character of protest in California.[24]

Chapter II, "Unshrouding The Vanguard: The Meaning of Revolution in The Black Panther Party," traverses and navigates the "political minefields" of individual BPP men and women exploring recurrent themes of "revolution" and "revolutionary." It traces the impact of local figures and individuals who dominated the San Francisco East Bay's economic, political and social arenas to better understand the intervening circumstances and conditions which contributed to the rise of the BPP. Given that Panthers viewed themselves as "revolutionaries" my questions are: How were BPP members and leaders contextualizing "revolution" and "revolutionary?" What kind or type of "revolution" did individual Panthers themselves envision? Chapter II argues that ideological ambiguities, inconsistencies and contradictions fomented rifts within the BPP.

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[24] See, Jon F. Rice, "Black Radicalism On Chicago's West Side: A History Of The Illinois Black Panther Party" (Ph.D diss., Northern Illinois University,1998); Yohuru R. Williams, "No Haven: Civil Rights, Black Power And Black Panthers In New Haven, Connecticut 1956-1971"(Ph.D diss., Howard University,1998); Jennifer Bradford Smith, "An International History of the Black Panther Party," (Ph.D diss., State University of New York At Buffalo,1997); Jeffrey Ogbanna Green, "From The Bottom Up: Popular Reactions To The Nation of Islam and The Black Panther Party, "(Ph.D diss., Indiana University, 1997).

Chapter III, "Revolutionary Life" exposes multi-layered and multi-faceted interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary" throughout specific moments in the BPP's history which generated contradictions and inconsistencies between BPP leaders and members. It examines gender-based interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary." It also exposes fundamental unresolved conflicts between BPP men and women in performing "revolutionary" duties and assignments.

Chapter IV, "There's A Pig In Our Community:" "Avaricious Businessmen" Vs. The Black Panther Party, examines how the BPP defined and organized a "revolution" by demanding the complete elimination of what it deemed "avaricious businessmen" throughout local black communities.[25] Chapter IV analyzes the BPP's "revolution" in the Oakland community from 1969 to 1972 illuminating the BPP's socioeconomic activities. It surveys expressions of the BPP's economic activism at the local level.

Chapter IV elaborates on the BPP's relationship to local businesses. Although it is well known that the BPP administered community service programs such as its Free Breakfast For Children, Liberation Schools and various others, how such programs were administered and implemented continues to be a mystery that has for too long remained unexplored. Chapter IV does not examine all of the BPP's programs but mainly focuses on

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[25] Philip S. Foner ed., The Black Panthers Speak, The Manifesto of the Party: The First Complete Documentary Record of the Panthers' Program (New York: J.B Lippincott Company, 1970); G. Louis Heath ed. The Black Panther Leaders Speak, Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and Company Speak Out Through The Black Panther Party's Official Newspaper (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1976); Christian Davenport, "Reading The Voice Of The Vanguard": A Content Analysis of the Black Panther Intercommunal News Service, 1969-1973," In Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered" 193-210; Regina Jennings, "Poetry Of The Black Panther Party, Metaphors Of Militancy," Journal Of Black Studies (September 1998): 106-129.

administration of the Free Breakfast Program throughout some local BPP chapters.

Questions posed in Chapter IV are, how did the BPP acquire funding to facilitate the Program? Who supported and who opposed the Program and what strategies did the BPP adopt to confront opposition? Exploring BPP ideological underpinnings which influenced its "relationship" to local businesses reveals positive and negative variables which enhanced and debilitated the BPP's overall effectiveness throughout many local communities. It accentuates activities of individual leaders and members to analyze the "greatest single threat" from the BPP's resistance to "avaricious businessmen."

Chapter V, "A House Divided Against Itself: Internal Dissension Within the Black Panther Party 1966-1972," examines factional rifts and internal dissension within the BPP at the local, national and international level to expose interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary." It traces the "split" in the BPP in 1971 which resulted in the Newton and Cleaver faction of the BPP. This study reiterates that scholars need more complex and sophisticated methods of examining the BPP. It departs from the traditional COINTELPRO explanations which have dominated the BPP historiography. This study argues that although COINTELPRO played a major role in the demise of the BPP, it did not eradicate the commitment of BPP members to strengthen local communities. It did not neutralize the BPP in Oakland by the end of 1971. It demonstrates that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's assessment of the BPP as the "greatest single threat"was inaccurate and grossly exaggerated.

In his memo dated March 4, 1968 Hoover outlined the goals of COINTELPRO in relation to the civil rights movement. The goals were to prevent the coalition of militant black nationalists groups, avert the rise of a black "messiah" and most important, "to

prevent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability by discrediting them thereby deterring their long range growth."[26] In November 1968, Hoover issued another memo directing field agents "to exploit all avenues of creating...dissension within the ranks of the Black Panther Party ...recipients offices are instructed to submit imaginative and hard-hitting counter intelligence measures aimed at crippling the Black Panther Party."[27]

This dissertation highlights counterintelligence measures implemented by Hoover and federal agents in neutralizing and undermining activities of the BPP to nullify the perceived "threat" Hoover argued the BPP posed to the U.S. This dissertation examines the activities of BPP leaders and members within the frame of the "greatest single threat" to show how specific activities undertaken by the BPP fueled such a grossly exaggerated perception.

This study also illuminates strategies employed by the BPP amidst state repression and internal dissension to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of such strategies. Such a study adds to the historiography of radicalism in general and explores some of the contours of black radicalism in particular by evaluating the individual roles of the principal leaders of this "radical" organization as well as the roles of the rank and file. The BPP was a very complex organization whose multi-dimensions demand greater analysis. My dissertation sheds light on some of these dimensions by tracing the origins and strategies employed by this organization to formally register their grievances against inherently flawed and unequal

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[26] Blackstock, COINTELPRO, The FBI's Secret War, 22.

[27] Churchill and VanderWall, Agents of Repression, 63.

power relationships.

CHAPTER I

"THERE'S GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS": THE EVOLUTION OF THE SAN FRANCISCO EAST BAY AREA 1900-1966

"the Negro is making his big mistake, he is butting into the white civilization instead of keeping in the perfectly orderly and convenient Negro civilization of Oakland, and he is getting himself thoroughly disliked."[1]

The relocation of over five million Americans from the southern rural centers to industrialized urban settings shaped the course of twentieth century American history. Black men and women abandoned the Jim Crow South to escape from white violence, intimidation, hostility and terrorism. All were an intrinsic part of everyday life in the South which combined with legal proscriptions through the courts to subjugate black men and women in the political, social and economic arenas. This chapter explores the overall impact of southern migrants on four San Francisco East Bay cities, Richmond, Oakland, Berkeley and San Francisco. It traces the principal roles of black men and women to illuminate economic, political and social conditions which culminated in the "radicalism" of the Black Panther Party

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[1] Editorial from The Observer 11 March 1944, Quoted in Beth Bagwell, Oakland, The Story Of A City (Novato:Presidio Press, 1982), 242; "There's Gold In Them Thar Hills" was an expression from Hollywood western movies referring to the California Gold Rush. It was also David Hilliard's first impression of California. See David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of The Black Panther Party (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 61.

organized in Oakland in 1966. The thesis of this chapter is that southern African-Americans migrants experienced a variety of difficulties whose repercussions were not strictly economic but interwoven with race, national and local politics.[2]

Sanctioned by the Supreme Court's 1896 ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the "separate but equal doctrine" legitimized Jim Crow practices of segregation which combined with other measures such as the grandfather clause and the poll tax to disfranchise blacks in the South. Burdensome land tenure and credit systems in the South including exorbitant rents, crop liens and sharecropping systems exploited black labor and kept black families in abject poverty.[3] Migration was not only a relocation process but was also a political expression which conveyed not only economic, political frustration and dissatisfaction with life in the southern centers, but also a deliberate attempt to improve political, economic and social status.[4]

Migration was the most effective "unhidden transcript" employed by black men and women as an expression of individual and collective empowerment and an attempt to achieve personal autonomy.[5] Black men and women from Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas

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[2] Thomas J. Sugrue, The Origins of the Urban Crisis, Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit (Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1996), 9.

[3] Leon F. Litwack, Trouble In Mind, Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 128-135.

[4] Shirley Ann Moore, "Getting There, Being There, African-American Migration to Richmond, California, 1910-1945," in Joe W. Trotter, The Great Migration in Historical Perspective (Urbana: Indiana University Press, 1991), 123.

[5] Kenneth W. Goings, "Unhidden Transcripts, Memphis And African-American Agency 1862-1920," in Kenneth W. Goings and Raymond A. Mohl, The New African American Urban History (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1996), 142-166.

and Tennessee migrated to Kansas during the first millenarian movement in the U.S. They also settled in northern industrial centers such as Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Memphis and Harlem.[6]

Migration to northern cities did not end discrimination and racism, nor did it immediately yield greater opportunities because migrants were initially kept out of industrial positions. Black women were recruited as the "last hired, first fired" to fulfill industrial demands from World War I.[7] Although African-Americans participated in World War I to defend democracy and secure fundamental rights, their activities did not convince America to reverse the course of segregation. Black men and women continued to endure residential segregation, housing shortages, and job discrimination that fueled tensions culminating in violent clashes throughout American cities such as St. Louis, Chicago and Houston.[8]

Black migrants fueled aggressions in northern cities by constantly pushing residential boundaries which resulted in urban racial violence, intimidation and riots due to racism, housing conflicts and job competition in cities such as Chicago, Houston, Detroit and Harlem. Unlike northern cities, the black population in the San Francisco East Bay area remained very small prior to 1940 because of limited economic opportunities, greater competition with ethnic groups for unskilled positions and the San Francisco East Bay

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[6] See Nell Irvin Painter, Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).

[7] Karen Tucker Anderson, "'Last Hired, First Fired', Black Women Workers During World War II," Journal of American History 69 (1982): 82-97.

[8] See, Robert V. Haynes, A Night of Violence : The Houston Riot of 1917 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977); William M. Tuttle, Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919 (New York: Atheneum, 1972).

area's greater distance from the South. In addition, the San Francisco fire of 1906 devastated the city and destroyed businesses and homes which frustrated housing and further aggravated economic opportunities. Although a small number of blacks migrated to Oakland between 1900 and 1910, northern cities remained the magnet drawing southern migrants.[9]

The racism, discrimination and injustice which plagued northern urban centers spurred the activism of black leaders. Included among the pivotal roles of black leaders were Booker T. Washington's powerful Tuskegee machine among black intellectuals, professional and business people throughout northern cities; W.E.B DuBois' marshaling of civil rights coalitions which yielded the Niagara Movement culminating in the National Association For The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); and Marcus Garvey's Universal Improvement Association (UNIA) which sought to link all peoples of African descent in commercial and industrial intercourse through a steamship enterprise. In addition, black women such as Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells Barnett and Lugenia Burns Hope formed clubs, founded institutions and created informal educational programs throughout local communities. Despite their efforts, black men and women were unsuccessful in curtailing racism and discrimination.[10]

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[9] Albert Broussard, Black San Francisco: The Struggle For Equality In The West 1900-1954 (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1993), 21.

[10] See, Louis Harlan, Booker T. Washington, The Making of A Black Leader 1856-1901 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); David Levering Lewis, W.E.B. DuBois: A Biography of Race 1868-1919 (New York: Henry Holt, 1993); E. David Cronon, Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Improvement Association (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, Afro-American Women of the South and The Advancement of the Race 1895-1925 (Knoxville:

The economic status of black Americans further deteriorated with the onset of the Great Depression as the most disadvantaged group in American society and because of the federal government's failure to enact policies ensuring protection from exclusion from New Deal relief programs. The outbreak of World War II caused tumultuous changes throughout local black communities. Black families supported World War II and viewed it as an opportunity to assert and reclaim American citizenship by launching the Double V campaign of victory at home and abroad. They also sought equal opportunities in the workforce and demanded desegregation of all public facilities, equal salaries for black teachers, greater access to education, anti-lynching legislation, desegregation of the U.S. armed forces and integration of black women nurses into the military nurses corps.[11]

A. Phillip Randolph's March On Washington Movement culminated in Executive Order 8802, which forbade discrimination by companies with defense contracts, and also created the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to grant greater access to blacks receiving training and skilled workers. Executive order 9346 expanded FEPC jurisdiction by granting the agency adjudication powers over complaints against all unions and employers with federal government contracts.[12] Federal intervention encouraged black

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University Of Tennessee Press, 1989).

[11] Darlene Clark Hine "Mabel K Staupers and The Integration Of Black Nurses Into The Armed Forces" in John Hope Franklin and August Meier, Black Leaders Of The Twentieth Century, Black Women In White: Racial Conflict And Cooperation In The Nursing Profession 1890-1950 (Urbana: The University Of Illinois Press, 1982).

[12] William H. Harris, Keeping The Faith: A. Phillip Randolph, Milton P. Webster and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters 1925-1937 (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1977), 225.

families from southern and midwestern states to move to California as war mobilization transformed the West with new capital from the federal government to establish aircraft, shipbuilding, manufacturing, steel and catering industries.[13]

As the center of the shipbuilding industry which employed eighty percent of black workers in the San Francisco East Bay area, California offered greater racial tolerance.[14] There was no first ghetto in the San Francisco East Bay cities of Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond prior to World War II.[15] Migration to the San Francisco East Bay area involved married couples and differed from other migrant populations within the U.S. It encompassed mainly young, single women who outnumbered men by "almost two to one among fifteen to twenty-four-year olds."[16] Partly due to the drafting of young single black men in the war effort, the San Francisco East Bay attracted black women mainly because of increased availability of jobs in a variety of industries such as shipyards, naval laundries and supply centers, food processing and military postal offices.[17]

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[13] Gary B. Nash, The American West Transformed, The Impact Of The Second World War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 35; Broussard, Black San Francisco, 146.

[14] Gayle B. Montgomery and James W. Johnson in collaboration with Paul G. Manolis, One Step From The White House, The Rise And Fall Of Senator William F. Knowland (Berkeley: The University Of California Press, 1998), 39

[15] Douglas Flamming, "Becoming Democrats: Liberal Politics and the African American Community in Los Angeles 1930-1965," In Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy and Quintard Taylor eds. Seeking El Dorado, African-Americans In California (Los Angeles: Autry Museum Of Western Heritage, 2001), 279-308.

[16] Marilynn S. Johnson, The Second Gold Rush, Oakland and the East Bay in World War II (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1993), 52, 59.

[17] Moore, "Getting There, Being There,"106-126.

Black migrants relied on personal networks and utilized their own friendship, kinship and social channels including church membership, co-workers and relatives to inform and assist them throughout the migration process.[18] Extensive support networks of family members, relatives and friends helped single women make the transition to the East Bay by providing assistance in housing and jobs. Darlene Clark Hine argued that black men and women migrated to the midwest in distinctive, incomplete, fragmented processes and patterns.[19]

Hine concluded that migration was inspired by a variety of personal factors including the love of one's children, the desire to preserve the family unit, flight from suffering and loss.[20] In accounting for black women's suffering and loss, Darlene Clark Hine introduced the notion of a "culture of dissemblance" defined as "a politics of silence" which encompassed a "culture of secrecy" to preserve dignity, control and protect their inner lives. For many black women, migration offered escape from sexual exploitation both within and outside their families and from sexual abuse at the hands of southern white and black men. Hine maintained that black men and women engaged in "secondary migration" wherein single men worked their way north and lingered a few years at a given

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[18] Ibid, 114.

[19] Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Migration to The Urban Midwest, The Gender Dimension, 1915-1945," In Trotter, The Great Migration In Historical Perspective, 131.

[20] Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Southern Black Women: Thoughts on the Culture Of Dissemblance" In Darlene Clark Hine, Hine Sight, African-Americans Women And The Re-Construction Of American History (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1994), 37-48.

residence before moving to the next location.[21]

Single black women often traveled the entire distance in one trip and left children in the South only to later send for them and other family members. The Hilliard family demonstrated some migratory patterns in California. David Hilliard, whose family moved to Oakland from Rockville Alabama, relied on his brother Bud to spearhead the Hilliard family's migration to Oakland. Hilliard's mother migrated to Oakland to settle with her son Bud and later sent for her husband and ten other children.[22]

Upon arrival to the East Bay, black men and women relied on kinship networks largely administered by black women to provide housing arrangements. Black churches throughout the East Bay were fundamental institutions which extended missionary work, education and social services to migrants. The migration of southern blacks from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and Oklahoma throughout the 1940s increased the populations of Alameda, Berkeley, Oakland and Richmond, the main sites of the defense boom in the East Bay area. Oakland's total population increased from 14.3 percent or 302,163 in 1940 to 27.3 percent or 384,575 in 1950. Oakland's black population grew from 8,462 in 1940 to 21,770 or 157.3 percent in 1944 and further increased to 47,562 in 1950 for a total of 118 .5 percent from 1944 to 1950.[23]

Richmond demonstrated the greatest black population growth from 270 in 1940 to

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[21] Hine, "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest,"131.

[22] Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 61-73.

[23] Johnson, The Second Gold Rush, 53.

10,000 in 1945 as its overall population increased from 23,642 in 1940 to 99,545 by 1950.[24] More than sixty-five percent of migrants to the East Bay area came from Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Large scale migration in northern centers exacerbated housing shortages and in cities such as Chicago, Miami and Detroit and resulted in the emergence of a "second ghetto" by World War II. The second ghetto was periodically renewed, strengthened and reinforced by government sanction and support through urban redevelopment, planning and renewal policies throughout urban centers.[25]

There was no "second ghetto" in the San Francisco East Bay cities such as San Francisco, Richmond, Oakland and Berkeley. Although blacks were confined to the Western Addition in San Francisco, historian Albert Broussard argued that unlike northern cities, housing discrimination did not permeate the city of San Francisco before 1940 because blacks, especially the black middle class, resided in virtually all neighborhoods. Broussard maintained that blockbusting and restrictive covenants did not dominate housing markets by either white and black residents nor did white San Franciscans respond with racial violence as blacks attempted to integrate neighborhoods before 1940.[26]

The absence of violent protest to integration in the San Francisco East Bay does not necessarily mean that blacks and other minorities were readily embraced by neighborhood

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[24] Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, Abiding Courage: African-American Migrant Women and the East Bay Community (Chapel Hill: The University Of North Carolina Press, 1996), 2, 158-162.

[25] Arnold Hirsch, Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960 (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1983), 253-258.

[26] Broussard, Black San Francisco, 30-33.

residents. It did not translate into non-existent cultural, racial, class and gender based discrimination throughout the San Francisco East Bay. Review of the migrant experience of southern blacks in San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland and Richmond after 1940 reveals effusions of institutional racism, uneven development, discriminatory and segregation patterns. Examination of increasing southern black migration to the San Francisco East Bay exposes white black and immigrant resentments and illuminates strategies employed by southern migrants to cope with economic, social and political conditions.

World War II stimulated the midwestern migration of southern blacks and exacerbated housing shortages. Increased demands for housing inflated property values by unscrupulous landlords who demanded exorbitant rents and fees for decrepit, inferior housing.[27] Migrants were cramped into overcrowded, haphazard living spaces throughout the San Francisco East Bay. In Richmond, shipyard workers rented "hotbeds" which alternated between shipyard workers depending on their work shifts.[28] Housing shortages provided opportunities to supplement and increase the incomes of families, widows and single women by subletting, renting and boarding.[29] For example, Bobby Seale's parents who moved from Texas to Berkeley supplemented their income by renting half of their

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[27] Sugrue, The Origins Of The Urban Crisis, 34.

[28] Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, To Place Our Deeds: The African American Community In Richmond, California, 1910-1963 (Berkeley: The University Of California Press, 2000), 75.

[29] Johnson, The Second Gold Rush, 89.

living space to other families.[30]

Migrants constantly pushed residential boundaries which intensified restrictive covenants, blockbusting and redlining, all of which prohibited realtors and property owners from selling, leasing and renting to blacks. These three mutually reinforcing and complementary measures led to what Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton identified as hypersegregation and spatial concentration whose geographic dimensions include clustering, concentration and isolation.[31] Hypersegregation was also a combination of prejudice, discrimination and segregation infused with a conglomeration of private behaviors and institutional practices.[32]

North Richmond's black population was clustered along the westside of the city in an area which became known as the "Black Crescent." It was separated from the city of Richmond by the Eastshore Freeway, the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads. North Richmond, which became a "shanty town" during World War II, was plagued with inadequate garbage collection, insufficient sewage and drainage. Such conditions were aggravated during stormy weather as water and mud ruined makeshift overcrowded tents and trailer parks.[33]

Restrictive covenants geographically confined blacks to West and South Berkeley. San

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[30] Bobby Seale, Seize The Time, The Story Of The Black Panther Party And Huey P. Newton (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991), 6.

[31] Douglas Massey and Nancy Danton, American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 74.

[32] Hirsch, Making The Second Ghetto, 254.

[33] Moore, To Place Our Deeds, 88,111-112.

Francisco's Western Addition consisting of one hundred and fourteen blocks housed 37,030 people in 1943 who endured squalid and substandard housing which caused the city's health department to order two hundred and eighty-eight structures vacated because of health and fire hazards.[34] San Francisco's Fillmore District also considered the worst of the city was overcome with rodent infestations. West Oakland contained eighty-five percent of the city's black population by 1952 and provided the largest source of temporary housing for migrants. It also contained the city's highest level of units in dire needs of repair and without private baths or adequate sanitary provisions.[35] Black migrant families usually paid higher rents than non-whites for less living space.

Ronald V. Dellums who grew up in West Oakland recalled that his home, like many others, contained three generations and multiple families. He also maintained that cooking odors and "sounds of family life" exuded from garages throughout his neighborhood which had been converted into living spaces.[36] Huey P. Newton, whose family settled in Oakland from Louisiana, asserted that his family never lived comfortably. Newton slept on a cot in the kitchen with his older brother Melvin next to an icebox of a two-room basement apartment which accommodated nine family members with little opportunity for privacy.[37] David Hilliard's family settled with relatives in a two-bedroom

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[34] Broussard, Black San Francisco, 173-174.

[35] Lemke-Santangelo, Abiding Courage, 80.

[36] Ronald V. Dellums and H. Lee Halterman, Lying Down With The Lions, A Public Life From the Streets of Oakland to the Halls of Power (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000) 11.

[37] Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide (New York: Writers and Readers Inc.,1995) 16, 41.

apartment located on the second story of a one-family home in Oakland.[38]

The federal government responded to the housing crisis by constructing more than thirty thousand public housing and "temporary" housing units throughout the San Francisco East Bay. Although the federal government planned to construct eleven housing units in addition to the five-thousand five hundred units at the Hunter's Point naval yard in San Francisco, wartime exigencies frustrated completion efforts. Only five of the scheduled eleven units in San Francisco, Holly Courts, Potrero Terrace, Sunnydale, Valencia Terrace and Westside Courts were completed by 1943.[39]

The San Francisco Housing Authority engaged in a federal policy of segregation as blacks were confined to Westside Courts located in the Western Addition as the four other housing units did not contain any black tenants. Congested, subdivided and overcrowded rental and federal housing threatened to disrupt traditional residential boundaries as groups struggled over a handful of housing units. Some housing projects bordered lowland areas and neighboring white neighborhoods.[40] Berkeley, which contained only one housing project constructed in 1941 was a contested terrain as white residents vociferously opposed a federal plan to construct housing in West Berkeley.

Historian Marilyn S. Johnson maintained that white Alameda, Berkeley and Albany residents launched an anti-housing petition drive in 1943 to keep "an undesirable element" out of their community, prevent integration of public schools and block further

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[38] Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 62.

[39] Broussard, Black San Francisco, 176-177.

[40] Johnson, Second Gold Rush, 99.

development of alleged prime industrial lands to accommodate black southern migrants. Albany homeowners demanded installment of an eight-foot fence to discourage "transients" and children of war workers from encroaching on Fairmont Trailer Park In addition, the University of California opposed construction of Cordonices Village and claimed that the construction site was slated for a future veterinary and agricultural school.[41]

Despite white opposition, the Federal Public Housing Authority (FPHA) constructed nineteen hundred units of Cordonices Village segregated for both black and white tenants on San Pablo Avenue.[42] Most blacks resided West of Cordonices Village which was situated near the Pacific Rail line and the city dump, thereby exposing residents to unhealthy conditions and pollution from burning trash fumes, scarce garbage collection, poor sanitation and high decibel levels from passing trains. Bobby Seale who grew up in Cordonices Village, recalled that residents lived in poverty and semi-poverty under crowded conditions which frustrated housekeeping efforts. Seale noted, "the place was always dirty."[43] The "heavy rumble" of freight and passenger trains was a permanent aspect of Dellums' West Oakland neighborhood.[44]

From 1940 to 1950, housing shortages increased the population density in Oakland

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[41] Ibid, 103.

[42] Lemke-Santangelo, Abiding Courage, 87.

[43] Seale, Seize The Time, 6; Bobby Seale, A Lonely Rage: The Autobiography of Bobby Seale (New York: Times Books, 1978), 12-13.

[44] Dellums, Lying Down With The Lions, 9.

from 15.2 percent to 30.7 percent, and in Richmond, from 8.1 percent to 56.1 percent.[45] These shortages also accounted for low vacancy rates in the East Bay area such that between April 1941 and September 1942, the vacancy rate in Oakland plummeted to sixty percent. Although the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) reported seven hundred thirty-five applications for housing in December 1944, only six black families secured placements in housing projects.[46] Such figures indicated more than a housing shortage but evidenced larger implications of racial discrimination proscribed and reinforced through government endorsement.

The bourgeoning migrant populations overwhelmed city municipal services necessitating federal construction of the "Shipyard Railway" by the Maritime Commission in 1942 including bus and streetcar lines. The Shipyard Railway provided access to eleven thousand passengers daily for more than sixteen miles between west Oakland's Moore Shipyards and Richmond's Kaiser shipyards.[47] Public schools were also overwhelmed as school enrollment multiplied exponentially. The Richmond student population increased from three thousand pupils in 1940 to more than forty-three thousand in 1943.[48]

Although the public schools in the San Francisco East Bay area were integrated, the high concentration of poor and minority students in schools throughout the East Bay

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[45] Johnson, The Second Gold Rush, 93.

[46] Lemke-Santangelo, Abiding Courage, 86.

[47] Johnson, Second Gold Rush, 99.

[48] Nash, The American West Transformed, 72.

intensified race and class composition of schools and their geographic location.[49] Black students attended elementary school in two main districts in Richmond and San Pablo of which the larger Richmond district contained four elementary schools and only one for high school juniors and seniors.[50] Overcrowded schools and classrooms aggravated tensions among students and fueled discrimination as black students were disproportionately assigned to lower level classes in congested public schools.[51]

Huey P. Newton claimed to have been a casualty of Oakland overcrowded schools. He maintained that although he was routinely promoted to higher grade levels, he never learned to read as he drifted into what he termed, "patterns of petty delinquency." Newton was shuffled between Oakland public schools such as Lafayette Elementary School, Santa Fe Elementary School and Woodrow Wilson High School because of disciplinary problems which resulted in numerous expulsions and suspensions. He later learned to read by memorizing poems and literature from his older brother Melvin Newton's poems and literature.[52]

Although class sizes increased and schoolteachers doubled class sessions, San Francisco East Bay cities were unable to provide adequate playgrounds or community centers during

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[49] Harvey Cantor and Barbara Brenzel, "Urban Education And The "Truly Disadvantaged": The Historical Roots Of The Contemporary Crisis 1945-1990," In Michael B. Katz ed. The Underclass Debate, Views from History (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 373.

[50] Moore, To Place Our Deeds; 102-104.

[51] Ibid, 74, 78-79.

[52] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 19-33, 28.

schooldays because of deficient funds to address educational demands. Inherently unequal educational facilities particularly in southern black migrant strongholds may have reflected larger inequities in differences and variations in differences and variations in spending levels of districts per child in not only the educational system, but the reflected larger inequities in not only the educational system but the socioeconomic and political system of the San Francisco East Bay area.[53]

The San Francisco East Bay area's labor force evidenced the main example of socioeconomic inequity. Economic marginality permeated the diversified and expanded Oakland, Richmond, Berkeley and San Francisco labor force during World War II. Oakland's shipyard labor force was an assortment of "Okies" who were southwestern white migrants from Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri and Arkansas. European and Chinese immigrants and southern blacks also migrated to California.[54] Whereas white immigrants were allowed to join local unions, blacks and other minorities combated discrimination and racism in the work force. Despite previous work experience and industrial skills that black migrants brought with them, they were relegated to unskilled labor which yielded greater income but a decrease in their professional status.[55]

Black migrants also experienced wage, race and gender discrimination as work placements were not commensurate with previous professional or industrial experience.

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[53] Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools (New York: Crown Publications, 1991), 220-222.

[54] Johnson, Second Gold Rush, 21.

[55] Moore, To Place Our Deeds, 55.

Skilled positions such as welding, shipfitting, clerical and supervisory positions were restricted to white employees. Migrant men were relegated to semiskilled and unskilled labor in the shipyards and in the service sector.[56] Black women were assigned to cleaning and painting ship hulls whereas white women completed welding, considered the easiest jobs in the shipyards.[57] Black women in particular were relegated to arduous labor and were paid less than white men, white women and black men. Hence, black women experienced gender, race and class discrimination.

The exclusion of black men, women and other minorities from local unions was the best example of discrimination and racism in the workforce. The Boilermakers Union which controlled almost seventy percent of shipyard hiring and placements encouraged blacks and other minorities to join segregated auxiliary unions such as Locals A-36, A-33, A-26 and Local 513 which could all be dissolved at the discretion of international union officials.[58] All auxiliary union members necessitated white local union approval for promotion. Black auxiliary union members could not vote on collective bargaining and other decisions and could not attend local union meetings. Black women were denied membership in both local unions and auxiliary unions. Black protest and resistance to segregated unions included delays and nonpayment of dues and legal redress through the courts. "Nothing about California" seemed to welcome Robert F. Williams, a Detroit resident recruited by the

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[56] Lemke-Santangelo, Abiding Courage, 111,166.

[57] Quintard Taylor, In Search of the Racial Frontier, African-Americans In The American West 1528-1990 (New York: W.W Norton and Company, 1998), 256-257.

[58] Ibid, 259.

Mare Island Naval Yard in Port Chicago, California in 1943 Williams experienced "racial fights" in naval dormitories, exclusion from the machinist union and unequal treatment from police. Williams left California after only three months of employment.[59]

Despite economic, social and political barriers including ever-present economic, political and social dislocation complemented by greater isolation from society at-large, black southern migrants were determined to carve a space for themselves throughout the San Francisco East Bay area. They engaged in a series of protest activities which later provided templates for black protest activities in the 1960s. A brief examination of black protest activities in cities such as Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco and Berkeley demonstrates that San Francisco East Bay cities did not suddenly spark into political action in the 1960s. Drawing from the union tradition of black workers, black "radicalism" in the San Francisco East Bay originated from the southern migrant experience of black workers and entrepreneurs. All four cities, Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco and Berkeley enjoyed a long tradition of protest and resistance prior to the birth of its most "radical" organization, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in October 1966.

CL. Dellums, founder of the Western Regional Headquarters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) played a pivotal role in resistance activities. Dellums became the international Vice-President of the Brotherhood Of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) organized by A. Phillip Randolph and Milton P. Webster. As the first all black union to receive an international charter from the American

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[59] Timothy B. Tyson, Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 42-43.

Federation of Labor (AFL), the BSCP challenged grievances of black porters from the Pullman Company concerning wages, work hours, union representation, trade unionism and employment conditions.[60] By 1937, the BSCP, became the legitimate representative of black porters and maids to secure overtime pay, rates of pay, seniority and union benefits. During the 1940s C.L. Dellums expanded the agenda of the NAACP to address migrant concerns including "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns, equitable housing and rates of pay, discrimination and equal access in employment. Black shipyard workers' opposition to segregated unions strengthened Richmond's NAACP established in 1944 which became the fastest growing and most militant NAACP chapter on the West Coast.

Joseph James, a welder who worked in the San Francisco shipyards became the President of the San Francisco NAACP. James played a pivotal role in organizing mass protest against segregated auxiliary unions by mobilizing black shipyard workers and civic leaders who later formed the short-lived Committee Against Segregation and Discrimination.[61] The San Francisco East Bay's NAACP received substantial support from black club women whose political activism demonstrated that they belonged to a network of southern black female activists, who emerged regionally as the leaders and members of the club women's national organizations.[62] They played pivotal roles in a variety of social movements including, suffrage, the black Baptist church, birth control,

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[60] Harris, Keeping The Faith, 218.

[61] Albert S. Broussard, "In Search Of The Promised Land: African American Migration To San Francisco, 1900-1945," In De Graaf et. al. Seeking El Dorado, 199-201.

[62] Jacqueline Anne Rouse, Lugenia Burns Hope, Black Southern Reformer (Athens: The University Of Georgia Press, 1989), 54.

welfare and health care.[63] Black club women in the San Francisco East Bay Area organized interracial coalition campaigns with Mexicans, labor activists and Jewish organizations to advocate fair employment practices, equal pay, child-care centers and fair housing.[64]

Although black women experienced what historian Stephanie Shaw termed the "triple burden of domesticity, professionalism and community empowerment," San Francisco East Bay area women formed clubs, founded institutions and created informal educational programs throughout local communities.[65] In Oakland, black women opened the Housewives Market and with other migrants established DeFremery Park and Well Baby Clinic. Black men and women's anti-discrimination efforts culminated in the 1945 California Supreme Court ruling that the Boilermakers' discriminatory practices of auxiliary unions, layoffs and firing of non-paying members were unconstitutional. Limited gains in the shipyards increased a small group of black men who prospered as a professional elite made up of doctors, lawyers, ministers and business entrepreneurs.[66]

Black women prospered in the San Francisco East Bay area by establishing businesses,

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[63] Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, Afro-American Women of the South and The Advancement of the Race 1895-1925 (Knoxville: University Of Tennessee Press, 1989), 202.

[64] Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, "Your Life Is Really Not Just Your Own": Black Women in Twentieth Century California," In De Graaf et. al, Seeking El Dorado, 228-229.

[65] Stephanie J. Shaw, What A Woman Ought To Be and To Do: African-Americans Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.

[66] Broussard, "In Search Of The Promised Land," 199-201.

especially restaurants and nightclubs which catered to southern cultural tastes and provided employment opportunities for black workers. Two successful black businesses were Willie Mae "Granny" Johnson's North Savoy Club which hosted blues performers and Minnie Lue Nichols' nightclub and restaurant.[67] Minnie Lue's was the first black establishment to secure a liquor license in 1958. Black women also flourished as beauticians and hairdressers who catered to black and white customers. Ronald V. Dellums' mother briefly worked as a beautician who perfected her skills by hot-combing and practicing on the neighbor's hair which suggests that hairdressing provided and supplemented family incomes. Such enterprises demonstrate black women's agency as managers, owners and patrons.[68]

Historian Richard Thomas argued that individual efforts combined with local and national institutions in the development of a "black community building process."[69] Local and individual initiatives yielded a new "ghetto-based middle class" and increased the size and number of black institutions such as churches and black businesses. Prosperity during the war boom increased black consumerism. Oakland's Tenth Street Market was the center of spendthrift war workers who asserted their economic prosperity by purchasing and donning various items such as fur coats, cowboy hats and boots. Seventh Street in West Oakland was the commercial center of black businesses such as barber shops, beauty salons,

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[67] Moore, To Place Our Deeds, 132-133.

[68] Dellums and Halterman, Lying Down With The Lions, 11-12.

[69] Richard Thomas, Life For Us Is What We Make It- Building Black Community in Detroit 1915-1945 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), xi.

nightclubs, cafes, grocery stores. Bobby Seale's father who was a carpenter opened a furniture store, *Seale's Cabinet Shop, Refinishing Furniture, Repair.*[70] Huey P. Newton described the "special status" of what he termed "big men" in his 'lower-class community,' "they drove big cars, wore beautiful clothes and owned many of the most desirable things life has to offer."[71]

Historian Joe W. Trotter has argued that black men and women were workers who made transitions from agricultural, domestic and personal service jobs into urban industrial pursuits through complex interactions of race and class consciousness and behavior.[72] He defined "proletarianism" as the process through which black migrants became urban industrial workers. "Proletarianism" intensified patterns of ghetto formation and directed the emergence of a new black business and professional middle class, catering exclusively to black customers. When compared to southern migrants, the majority of the new black elite in San Francisco was younger, in their thirties and forties, and resided North and West before migrating to San Francisco. They were graduates and alumni of black colleges and played principal roles in major local campaigns and organizations and black churches.[73]

Members of the black middle class also played important political roles throughout the San Francisco East Bay area. Tarea Hall Pittman, a representative of the National Council

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[70] Seale, A Lonely Rage, 29.

[71] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 39.

[72] Joe W. Trotter, Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat 1915-1945 (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1985), xi, 83.

[73] Broussard, "In Search of the Promised Land," 199-201.

Of Negro Women (NCNW), mobilized a coalition with Mexicans, whites and labor activists in securing five million dollars from Governor Earl Warren for childcare centers in 1949. Pittman's coalition was responsible for statewide legislation ensuring equal pay for women in the workplace. Charlotta Bass became the first black woman to serve as a member of a grand jury in Los Angeles in 1943 and launched political campaigns for city council in 1945 and vice presidential candidate of the Progressive Party in 1952. William Byron Rumford, a black pharmacist in Berkeley, organized a petition drive urging desegregation of housing units in Berkeley. Rumford was later elected to the state assembly in 1948. Despite their political gains, there existed intraracial class distinctions and conflicts between old timers and newcomers.[74]

Oakland, Richmond and Berkeley residents attributed negative characteristics to newcomers as unruly, disorderly and unsanitary. Street peddlers, shoeshine boys, gamblers and "undesirables" were perceived as a menace and bore the brunt of law enforcement.[75] Newcomers and minorities in Oakland constituted a disproportionate share of those arrested and accounted for an increase from thirty-nine percent of all those arrested in 1940 to fifty-four percent in 1944.[76] Such figures also demonstrate a deliberate attempt by public officials to control and regulate public space in the midst of "wartime urban disorder." Historian Marilyn S. Johnson argued that city officials sensationalized the "crime wave" to justify the proliferation of police personnel and to bolster federal assistance

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[74] Moore, "Your Life Is Really Not Just Your Own, " 228-229.

[75] Johnson, The Second Gold Rush, 154-156.

[76] Ibid, 164.

for controlling business centers and downtown districts.[77]

Johnson maintained that San Francisco East Bay leaders employed inflammatory rhetoric and federal assistance to discourage and eradicate absenteeism and turnover by southern black migrants and other immigrant groups throughout defense industries. They sought to "clean up" districts by reducing the visibility of newcomers, women and the youth. Increased law enforcement presence heightened tensions which continued after World War II as a predominantly white police force proliferated throughout local communities to preserve order and patrol city streets. In West Oakland, police escalated the number of arrests by "more than 275 percent" between 1940 and 1944.[78] Mere suspicion of illegal activity justified probable cause to accost and arrest black migrants who violated unwritten rules and codes of conduct which governed race relations.

As the visibility of black migrants increased in downtown San Francisco East Bay establishments, local mores governing race relations were violated. For example, some black migrants demanded service in local white establishments and refused to surrender seats to white patrons in local restaurants, transportation and other municipal services. In 1944, a restless crowd of fans smashed windows and doors after they were turned away from a sold-out Cab Colloway dance at the Oakland Auditorium in 1944 resulting in the Twelfth Street Riot.[79] Black migrants were blamed for the riots which prompted one editorial to state "the Negro is making his big mistake, he is butting into the white

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[77] Ibid, 164-169.

[78] Ibid, 168.

[79] Ibid, 169.

civilization instead of keeping in the perfectly orderly and convenient Negro civilization of Oakland, and he is getting himself thoroughly disliked."[80]

Additional tumultuous changes throughout the San Francisco East Bay resulted in urban crisis and urban renewal. Historian Thomas J. Sugrue argued that the origins of the urban crisis were interwoven with histories of race relations, residence and work in the postwar era within an economic and spatial context.[81] San Francisco East Bay cities epitomized urban crisis as conflicts over control and use of public space remained unabated and unresolved after the end of World War II. Examination of housing conflicts, local and national politics interspersed with race relations demonstrates that during the post World War II period, Oakland, Richmond and Berkeley constituted a contested terrain as southern migrants challenged economic, social and political barriers.

Southern migrants prioritized the struggle for housing as temporary housing projects assigned to blacks and other minorities in the San Francisco East Bay became the targets of demolition after World War II. The Richmond Redevelopment agency sought to increase commercial and residential developments by eliminating and reducing temporary war housing in north and south Richmond. Richmond's Canal and Terrace Housing projects were cleared by 1952 resulting in the eviction and relocation of seven hundred and four black families into other temporary housing along State and Fall Avenue.[82] Residents of

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[80] Editorial from The Observer 11 March 1944, Quoted In Beth Bagwell, Oakland, The Story of a City (Novato:Presidio Press, 1982), 242.

[81] Sugrue, The Origins of the Urban Crisis, 5.

[82] Moore, To Place Our Deeds, 99.

Berkeley's Cordonices Village, which contained eighty-eight percent of black residents by 1954, faced displacement and eviction after receiving notice in 1954 that the federal government planned to evacuate the premises.[83]

Resistance to the destruction of black homes erupted in violent confrontations. Bobby Seale witnessed a confrontation between "raging mad crowd of people" of more than one hundred black and white men and women and four 'government project men' at Cordonices Village. He wrote, "people fought taking policemen's clubs, fist fighting, turning cars over in the street, and one government car being set afire and the fire department coming to put it out."[84] Despite many arrests, black men and women continued a daily vigil to protest relocation, eviction and destruction of Cordonices Village because they were determined not to "lose the issue" of saving apartments and homes. The city of Berkeley authorized the demolition of Cordonices Village which displaced black residents and increased competition for placements.[85] For example, after leaving Cordonices Village, Seale's parents experienced housing difficulties and later managed a hotel in Oakland primarily frequented by pimps and prostitutes which also served as their home.[86]

Strong opposition to demolition and displacement did not deter housing officials throughout the San Francisco East Bay. Oakland's Bay Area Council and the Metropolitan Oakland Area Program (MOAP) sought to promote industries by transforming designated

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[83] Johnson, Second Gold Rush, 229.

[84] Seale, A Lonely Rage, 39-40.

[85] Johnson, Second Gold Rush, 228-231.

[86] Seale, A Lonely Rage, 103.

"wasted" and "open"areas into industrial parks and new residential developments.[87] Delineation of "wasted" and "open" spaces by the MOAP was based on race and class because enclaves where blacks and other minorities resided became the targets of urban renewal. Hundreds of acres of black homes and businesses including one half of Oakland's Seventh Street, the center of black businesses during the 1940s was demolished to accommodate the city's transit system and postal complex. The Oakland Housing Authority also demolished its seven housing projects as part of its West Oakland Redevelopment Plan.[88]

The demolition of housing projects and businesses accompanied population increases to the San Francisco Bay area resulting in a housing crisis. In West Oakland, the black population increased from 16.2 percent in 1940 to 61.5 percent by 1950.[89] Richmond's population increased by three hundred and twenty-one percent between 1940 and 1950 and Berkeley's population increased by thirty three percent between 1940 and 1950.[90] Black migration to densely populated areas exacerbated spatial concentration of the urban black poor. Discriminatory and segregation patterns in government housing programs perpetuated racial divisions by placing public housing in already poor urban areas.[91]

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[87] Gretchen Lemke Santangelo, "Deindustrialization, Urban Poverty and African-American Community Mobilization in Oakland, 1945 through the 1990s," In De Graaf et.al Seeking El Dorado, 348.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Johnson, The Second Gold Rush, 95.

[90] Ibid, 35.

[91] Lemke-Santangelo, Abiding Courage, 86-87, 110-113.

Through its "neighborhood policy,"and "neighborhood pattern" implemented in 1942, the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) assigned housing based on a community's race and ethnicity. In 1949, the Las Deltas Projects were constructed in North Richmond in the Black Crescent area. [92] The SFHA built the remaining six housing developments of the eleven housing units originally scheduled before World War II, but blacks were restricted to only one housing project in a densely populated black neighborhood. Although the San Francisco Superior Court nullified the neighborhood policy and pattern of the SFHA, housing and racial segregation prospered throughout the San Francisco East Bay area.[93]

Black population increases resulted in "white flight." Although some predominantly white housing projects were also slated for demolition, white residents relocated to suburban enclaves and new housing developments. Richmond's Harbor Gate, a predominantly white housing project was demolished and its residents relocated to Atchinson Village, the largest newly constructed Richmond housing project. Newly constructed Parchester Village slated by the federal government as an integrated community in 1949, became a contested terrain when whites withdrew their financial support and security deposits to express their opposition to integration.[94]

As whites moved, black migrants and other minorities assumed their former living spaces. Over ten thousand displaced residents from West Oakland moved to East Oakland, formerly a white neighborhood, after many white residents moved to the suburbs and newly

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[92] Moore, To Place Our Deeds, 111.

[93] Johnnson, Second Gold Rush, 105-108.

[94] Moore, To Place Our Deeds, 110-116.

built housing projects. Black middle and working class Richmond residents also moved to the one hundred and nine newly constructed homes of Parchester Village in North Richmond in 1949 where they built a variety of institutions such as home associations, veterans' wives clubs, political associations, religious and citizen committees. Historian Shirley Ann Wilson Moore maintains that Parchester Village exemplified the attempt of white power brokers to appease African-Americans demands and simultaneously preserve residential segregation.[95] Although seventy-eight percent of blacks in Richmond lived in temporary housing scheduled for demolition by 1950, sixty percent of black migrants residing in North Richmond owned mortgage-free homes by 1948.[96]

The economic, social and political status of blacks in the San Francisco East Bay post-World War II worsened due to accelerated demobilization and deindustrialization which began in 1947. The deindustrialization process included, "the closing, downsizing and relocation of plants and sometimes whole industries."[97] Kaiser shipyards, one of the main employers of black workers began laying off workers from a total of over one hundred thousand people in 1943 to nine thousand by the spring of 1946. Servicemen returned to jobs assigned to blacks during the wartime boom. As black workers, especially black women were the "last hired, first fired," black unemployment in Richmond rose to forty percent of the total twenty-eight percent unemployment rate in 1947.[98] Oakland's

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[95] Ibid.

[96] Johnson, Second Gold Rush, 95.

[97] Lemke-Santangelo, "Deindustrialization, Urban Poverty," 350-351.

[98] Anderson, "'Last Hired, First Fired,'" 82-97.

unemployment rate for non-white residents in 1950 was 19.8 percent for men and 21.7 percent for women doubling that of the city's white population.[99]

Unlike the wartime employment opportunities of the 1940s, black men were relegated to semiskilled occupations such as longshoremen, packers, construction, warehouse and service jobs.[100] Women in the San Francisco East Bay area experienced financial difficulties as the number of female shipyard workers decreased by sixty-three percent by 1945 and only three hundred from a total of forty-one thousand women remained employed in the shipyards statewide by June 1946. Black women were relegated to unskilled factory jobs, clerical positions, laundries, the garment, food processing, custodial and service industries. Although a small number of black women also engaged in private domestic service, the unemployment rate for black women was higher than that of black men, white men and white women. Black men and women received lower salaries than white men and white women, but black women also experienced race and gender discrimination, and received lower salaries than black men.[101]

Escalated decentralization adversely affected the economic status of black men and women. Automobile manufacturers such as the "Big Three" Ford, General Motors and Chrysler in Detroit were in the vanguard of decentralization and established precedents for other American cities. Between 1947 and 1958, the "Big Three" built twenty five new plants in suburban communities in Detroit and, between 1950 and 1956, one hundred and twenty-

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[99] Moore, To Place Our Deeds, 94-95.

[100] Broussard, Black San Francisco, 209.

[101] Johnson, Second Gold Rush, 198.

four auto-related manufacturing firms also relocated to suburban Detroit.[102] Most of the Detroit firms were located more than fifteen miles from the center city. Similarly, in the San Francisco East Bay area, manufacturing and defense firms such such as Ford, General Motors, Borden Chemical, Heil Equipment and Trailmobile in Oakland moved to the suburbs of southern Alameda County because of tax breaks, greater and cheaper land for construction.[103]

Job losses and long commutes further displaced workers. For example, after the Ford plant moved from Richmond to Milpitas, black workers who mainly resided in Richmond and Oakland were excluded from new housing developments whereas white and white ethnic workers had greater access to suburban housing enclaves. Scholars Joe T. Darden, Richard Hill, June Thomas and Richard Thomas have argued that federal and state discriminatory housing subsidies bankrolled white suburbanization and intensified "uneven development."[104] The San Francisco East Bay area epitomized spatial concentration and uneven development. Huey P. Newton described two "very distinct geographic" Oaklands, the "flatlands" and the "hills." The "flatlands" consisted of substandard, dilapidated and overcrowded housing in West and East Oakland. The "hills" referred to the suburban enclave of the upper middle and upper class in Piedmont occupied by statesmen and officials such as William Knowland, United States Senator and owner of the Oakland

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[102] Sugrue, Origins of the Urban Crisis, 128-129.

[103] Lemke-Santangelo, "Deindustrialization, Urban Poverty," 350-351.

[104] Joe T. Darden et al., Detroit: Race and Uneven Development (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987) 27.

Tribune newspaper.[105]

Deplorable economic and social conditions in the East Bay produced what journalist Ken Auletta described as an "underclass."[106] The "underclass" constituted a distinct socioeconomic class, self-perpetuating pathology and culture which reinforced characteristics of the "inner city pathology," "culture of poverty" and "ghetto pathology" debated by scholars.[107] The "underclass" composed a distinct socioeconomic class, self-perpetuating pathology and culture. Auletta argued that the "underclass" was characterized by chronically poor unemployed welfare recipients, juvenile delinquents and street criminals, alcoholics and drug addicts, high school drop-outs and "hustlers" partaking in an underground economy. The most damaging effects from the confluence of these factors were promiscuity, family instability, emasculation of the male, criminal and delinquent behavior, segregation and educational inequality. Scholars have argued that the "underclass" reinforced characteristics of the "inner-city pathology," "culture of poverty" and "ghetto pathology" because as a group, the "underclass" was predisposed to anti-social, criminal and immoral behavior.[108]

Sociologist William Julius Wilson challenged such an assessment. Wilson argued that the

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[105] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 15.

[106] See Ken Auletta, The Underclass (New York: Random House, 1982).

[107] See, Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas Of Social Power (New York: Harper and Row 1965); St Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Black Metropolis: A Study Of Negro Life In A Northern City (New York: Harcourt Brace And Co., 1945); W.E.B.DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro, A Social Study Originally published n 1899, (New York: International Publishers, 1982).

[108] Ibid.

term "underclass" depicted social transformations in the inner city due to increasing social dislocation resulting from structural changes in the economy and the black middle and working class exodus from inner city neighborhoods.[109] Wilson argued that social dislocation exacerbated complementary sharp rises in female-headed families and black male joblessness due to economic changes. However, scholars challenged Wilson by debating the poverty paradox, the economic condition of the "underclass," the causes and consequences of concentrated poverty, the rationale for inner city life and policy responses. Scholars including Michael B. Katz, Christopher Jencks and Paul Peterson challenged Wilson by debating the poverty paradox, the economic condition of the "underclass," the causes and consequences of concentrated poverty, the rationale for inner city life and policy responses.[110] Jencks, Peterson and Katz have argued that all of these complementary factors affected the development of the "underclass" but disagreed with Wilson on the root causes of such factors in that, they cannot all be explained by structural or institutional economic changes. They have emphasized the expansion and greater isolation of the "underclass" from society at large from the additional factor of decentralization.[111]

Historian Thomas J. Sugrue argued that decentralization was an aggressive

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[109] William Julius Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass And Urban Public Policy (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1987), 56.

[110] See Christopher Jencks and Paul Peterson, The Urban Underclass (Washington D.C: The Brooks Institution,1991); Michael B Katz ed., The Underclass Debate: Views From History (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[111] Lemke-Santangelo, "Deindustrialization, Urban Poverty," 350-351.

transformation process which reconfigured local economies and industrial landscapes. It included automation thereby increasing labor outputs and reducing the labor force and labor costs. Decentralization also empowered corporate leaders to control labor management relations. The confluence of decentralization, racial discrimination, automation adversely affected the black migrants and the youth by reducing the number of entry-level jobs available. For urban black youth during the 1950s, exclusion and systematic barriers in the work force prevented them from securing skills, experience, connections, and simultaneously entrapped them in " an economic and political system which confined them to the very bottom."[112] Three urban youth in the San Francisco East Bay area, David Hilliard, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale were convinced that they were ensnared in an exploitive capitalistic system strategically designed to dominate and exploit all blacks in particular.

Examination of the lives of Hilliard, Newton and Seale illuminate the formative experiences of "urban youth" post-World War II who may have been considered members of the "underclass" in Richmond, Oakland and Berkeley. Their life stories reveal that all three were southern black migrant children who experienced and witnessed the economic, social and political dislocation of their parents as children, and experienced similar conditions as teenagers and adults. Their growing isolation society at large partly explains why and how all three later formed the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, one of the most "radical" political organizations in American history. Their background reinforces the central argument of this chapter that the southern migrant experience throughout the San

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[112] Sugrue, Origins of the Urban Crisis, 127-147.

Francisco East Bay area provides a fundamental source for understanding the "radicalism" of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

David Hilliard, the youngest of twelve children, engaged in two main activities, "drinking and sex," in junior high school and fathered a child in the tenth grade. Hilliard later dated Patricia, a teenage mother whom he later married. Hilliard and Patricia dropped out of high school and had three children by 1962. Hilliard went from job to job performing a variety of menial tasks as a "laborer" in the shipyards, a tile chipper, stacking and packing at the canneries, cleaning trucks and meat barrels, and inspecting bottles. Hilliard gave up on jobs altogether, he wrote, " I no longer need real reasons to quit; I make them up, I adopt and abandon jobs like I change clothes, shuffling things...working schemes on welfare and unemployment."[113]

Hilliard's experiences paralleled that of his childhood friend Huey P. Newton. Although Newton described his father as a "jack of all trades," who worked two to three jobs simultaneously and also worked as a minister at a local church, Newton did not wish to emulate his father's example. Newton's multiple disciplinary problems culminated in his dismissal from Berkeley High School. He was sentenced to Juvenile Hall after seeking retribution from another youth by bringing a gun to school to "defend himself." As a teenager, Newton was convicted for what he termed, "various beefs, mostly burglary and petty larceny" which disgusted his parents as he was continuously bailed out by his childhood friend Sonny Man. Newton later graduated from Oakland Tech High School as

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[113] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 89-109.

what he termed a "functional illiterate."[114]

While attending Oakland City College, (renamed Merritt College) in 1959, Newton was also drinking, fighting on street corners. He engaged in additional criminal activities such as burglarizing cars by the emergency entrances of hospitals, gambling, pimping, burglarizing homes, in Oakland and Berkeley Hills. He participated in what he termed "small-time armed robberies" with his "crime partners." He and his friend, "hid in the parking lots of expensive white clubs and when the people came out, we took their fur wraps, wallets, rings and watches." He also utilized stolen credit cards and "short-change games." Newton admitted that he exploited and "lived off of women." He wrote, "women paid my rent, cooked my food and did other things for me while any money I came by was mine to keep." Newton was fascinated with criminality and initially studied law to "outmaneuver" the police and "to become a better burglar."[115]

While in college, Newton's criminal activities yielded criminal charges for short-changing sixteen stores which were dismissed. Newton also received three hung jury verdicts after three trials for stolen books. Newton was later convicted of assault with a deadly weapon and sentenced to six months in the county jail for the stabbing of another youth Odell Lee. Although Newton admitted his guilt, he claimed that he was "falsely convicted" of assault with a deadly weapon because he was not tried by a jury of his peers. Newton was released from Alameda County Jail in 1965 and reunited with his college friend Bobby

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[114] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 19-109.

[115] Ibid, 93.

Seale.[116]

As a teenager, Seale attended Berkeley High school where he and other friends joined the Village Gang comprised of "a half-dozen boys from the project houses." Three days before his high school graduation, Seale learned that he could not graduate because of failing grades during his last semester. Unable to find a job, his unlawful activities resulted in a sentence of fifteen days in jail. He later joined the U.S. Air Force where he served as an aircraft mechanic and corporal. After more than three years of service, Seale was sentenced to the stockades because of fights with other servicemen and missing payments on a set of drums owed to a collection agency owned by his Colonel's relatives. After shifting jobs in the steel industry, he obtained his high school diploma and enrolled at Merritt College where he met Huey P. Newton and both joined the Afro-American Association.[117]

The intertwining thread which binds David Hilliard, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale is that all three typified sets of self-destructive behaviors ascribed to the "underclass" including criminality and promiscuity. However, all three were determined to overcome their difficulties. For example, despite dropping out of high school, Hilliard was committed to support his family by whatever means necessary. Similarly, Seale joined the army because it provided some form of leverage to counter the economic hardships and his gang-related past. Newton's father worked multiple jobs to support his family. Although Newton exploited women, he also attended law school. Despite their shortcomings,

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[116] Ibid, 89-90.

[117] Seale, Seize The Time, 7-11.

particularly their behaviors and criminal past, the experiences of Hilliard, Newton and Seale show that they were disaffected with the economic, political and social conditions of the San Francisco East Bay area. However, they were determined to survive the "inner-city pathology" ascribed to the "underclass" which demonstrates the collective agency of the "underclass" amidst adversity.

In 1966, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale channeled their economic and political frustrations to create one of the most radical political organizations in American history, the Black Panther Party For Self-Defense (BPP). Newton's childhood friend David Hilliard later became the BPP's Chief of Staff by 1968. Newton and Seale devised a Ten Point Platform and Program which reflected "essential points for the survival of black and oppressed people in the United States." They separated their ideas into two sections "What We Want" and "What We Believe,"(Figure 1) outlining fundamental demands and "objective conditions" necessary to attain their goals.[118]

The Ten Point Platform and Program borrowed heavily from two documents, the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. The BPP asserted that any repudiation of their Ten Points amounted to a denial of fundamental human rights under "absolute despotism" and justified their right and duty to "throw off such government and to provide new guards for their future security."[119] The BPP demanded in Point Seven that self-defense groups be formed to protect and defend the black community from racist

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[118] "October 1966 Ten Point Platform and Program of the Black Panther Party, What We Want, What We Believe," In Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 116-119.

[119] Ibid.

oppression and brutality. Newton and Seale asserted their Second Amendment right to bear arms to thwart police aggression. They also urged black men and women to pick up the gun to formally articulate grievances against police brutality and racial domination. Seale and Newton argued that the gun provided self-defense and ensured federal, state and local enforcement of fundamental constitutional amendments. Such an assertion has caused the BPP to be considered one of the most "radical" organizations in American history.

The Ten Point Platform and Program demonstrated that the BPP was not the precursor of civil rights activism in the San Francisco East Bay. As a political organization, the BPP was a continuation of the resistance and protest tradition of the San Francisco East Bay area. The Ten Point Platform and Program addressed the basic needs and concerns of local black communities, and simultaneously served as a template which not only outlined but universalized the fundamental needs and concerns of black communities nationwide. Seale and Newton argued that black communities were victimized by oppressive social, economic and political conditions and needed "land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace" to empower individuals living in these communities.

Self-determination was the resounding theme of the BPP Ten Point Platform and Program. Newton, Seale and Hilliard transformed themselves into ardent and outspoken proponents of self-help. The BPP came into contact with Ronald V. Dellums, the nephew of C.L. Dellums who offered them limited support as he too fought injustices in the San Francisco East Bay area. Ronald V. Dellums canceled his plan to pursue a PhD at Brandeis University in social policy for becoming a Berkeley councilman in 1967. He proclaimed himself "a new breed black politician" whose politics confronted and addressed

contradictions throughout society at-large. During his term as councilman, he spearheaded challenges to various measures including pursuing a court injunction to prevent the city's Department of Transportation (BART) from building an above ground transit system which he argued would be detrimental for poor neighborhoods.[120]

Dellums also attempted to alter the jury selection process which he argued excluded many blacks and ethnic minorities. In 1971, Dellums defeated six-term Democratic Berkeley Congressman Jeffery Cohelan who served from 1958 to1970 to become one of a record number of twelve black congressmen elected to the House of Representatives in the 92nd Congress of 1971. Dellums who represented Berkeley California, was one of five newly elected black officials from the Democratic Party including Parren J. Mitchell, Maryland's first black congressman, George Collins of Illinois, Charles B. Rangel who defeated powerful Harlem Representative Adam Clayton Powell and Ralph Metcalf who replaced the late William Dawson of Chicago. Although Dellums acquired a reputation in the San Francisco East Bay area for his 'militancy' and one black press heralded him as "the man to re-light the torch Adam Powell used to carry," the national media was drawn to the BPP's radicalism.[121]

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[120] "Berkeley's New Breed of Black Politician," San Francisco Examiner, 25 August 1968, 11; William Brand, "Berkeley Ex-Congressman Dies At 84 After A Long Illness," Oakland Tribune, 18 February 1999; "A New Breed Takes Over In Dixie," Baltimore Afro-American, 23 January 1971, 1. Jefferey Cohelan was one of the Congressional delegates to Selma, Alabama to get Martin Luther King Jr. released from jail. He co-sponsored legislation to protect the Point Reyes Peninsula and create Redwood National Park. He later became the executive Director of Group Health Association and also helped create legislation for the creation of HMOs.

[121] Ibid.

All four men Newton, Seale, Hilliard and Dellums would later play substantial roles in the history of the San Francisco East Bay area throughout the late 1960s and 1970s. This chapter has argued that it is erroneous to argue that the BPP "radicalized" the San Francisco East Bay area. The BPP was not a sudden spark that fueled San Francisco East Bay cities such as Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco and Berkeley into political action. All four cities enjoyed a long tradition of protest and resistance prior to the birth of the BPP in October 1966. BPP leaders Newton, Seale and Hilliard migrated to the San Francisco East Bay during the tumultuous 1940s where they and their families encountered the trials and tribulations of the southern migrant experience in the San Francisco East Bay area. Their "radicalism" must be understood as an outgrowth of the southern migrant experience in the San Francisco East Bay area as they struggled through dislocation and greater isolation from society at-large which propelled them to political activities in the form of the BPP in October 1966.

Newton, Seale and Hilliard as leaders of the BPP were shaped and molded by the southern migrant experience. They channeled their collective efforts to address the main obstacles affecting black men, women and children nationwide, such as unemployment, educational and economic inequity, political oppression, exploitation of black labor and racial discrimination. This chapter highlighted some of the main problems which necessitated formulation of the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program. It also demonstrated strategies employed by black men and women during their migration from the South to the San Francisco East Bay area to argue that southern migration did not necessarily translate into or yield greater freedom. Economic disparities remained

accompanied by housing conflicts and job competition.

This research demonstrated that BPP members cannot be separated from their past without illuminating the turmoil, conflicts, trials and tribulations they endured as young migrants to the San Francisco East Bay area. Such an examination offers a multi-dimensional focus on their goals and objectives in forming the BPP to draw attention to their individual and collective strengths and flaws. Newton, Seale and Hilliard did not suddenly surface in the San Francisco East Bay area in 1966. Therefore, their experience throughout their residence in Oakland, Richmond and Berkeley is significant and must be included in the BPP historiography to better understand the "radicalism" of the BPP.

As members of the "underclass" Seale, Newton and Hilliard devised strategies for coping with their hardships. Such strategies were employed in the realization of specific objectives outlined in the Ten Point Platform and Program. Although the BPP's political platform is always cited throughout the BPP's historiography, this chapter has shown that the Ten Point Platform aptly reflected the social, political and economic conditions experienced by the BPP's founders who formulated the Ten Points Platform and Program to address their immediate concerns for 'employment, education, housing, justice and peace.' In other words, the BPP's founders universalized fundamental demands for black communities nationwide after experiencing social dislocation, economic and racial oppression. The BPP has been the focus of ongoing debates among scholars who dispute the BPP's significance and overall effectiveness. The following chapter explores main themes of the BPP's historiography to evaluate a variety of explanations accounting for the rise of the BPP.

CHAPTER II

UNSHROUDING THE VANGUARD: REVOLUTION AND INTERNAL DISSENSION IN THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY 1966-1970

The Black Panther Party (BPP) has been the focus of debates among scholars who have traced its political ideology by examining dimensions of race, class, and gender. Scholarship on the BPP highlight ideological ambiguities and shifts and its contribution to internal dissension. Too often ambiguities of founder Huey P. Newton and his writings were cited throughout the BPP historiography as the main ideologue of the BPP without tracing or examining his overall direct and indirect effects on the leadership and membership.[1]

As a result, the multitude of voices of the BPP leaders and members are too often stifled and silenced by the various political "isms" expounded by the most vocal and visible leaders of the BPP such as Co-founder Bobby Seale and Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver.[2] For example, scholars have expounded the five main political ideologies of the BPP

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[1] Huey P. Newton, To Die For The People, The Writings Of Huey P. Newton, edited by Toni Morrison (New York:Writers And Readers Inc., 1995); Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide (New York: Writers And Readers Inc.,1995); Huey P. Newton, War Against The Panthers, A Study Of Repression In America (New York: Writers And Readers Inc., 1996).

[2] Bobby Seale, Seize The Time, The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991); Eldridge Cleaver, Eldridge Cleaver, Post Prison Writings And Speeches (New York: Random House, 1969); Lee Lockwood, Conversation With Eldridge Cleaver, Algiers (New York: Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1970); Philip S. Foner ed. The Black Panthers Speak, The Manifesto of the Party: The First Documentary Record of the Panthers' Program (Philadelphia: J.B Lippincott Company, 1970); G. Louis Heath, The Black Panther Leaders Speak, Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale,

as black nationalism, revolutionary nationalism, revolutionary intercommunalism, internationalism and Marxism-Leninism.[3] No attention has been paid by scholars on how individual members shaped and reconfigured these political "isms" at the local level.

This chapter traverses and navigates the "political minefields" of individual BPP members to explore and expose recurrent themes of "revolution" and "revolutionary" to unstack recurrent political "isms" of the BPP. Such an examination reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the BPP at the local and national level. It elucidates the autonomy and agency of individual members and chapters of the BPP to better understand ideological interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary." It unearths and incorporates the symphony of "other" voices throughout the BPP's history from 1966 to 1970 to better understand the BPP's political ideologies.

Journalist Hugh Pearson blamed Newton's excesses and chaotic doctrines for disorganization eventually resulting in the demise of the BPP.[4] This research rejects the argument that Huey P. Newton's ideological ambiguities were primarily responsible for mass confusion and gross misinterpretations of the political doctrines of the BPP. The

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Eldridge Cleaver and Company Speak Out Through The Black Panther Party's Official Newspaper (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1976); G. Louis Heath, Off The Pigs The History And Literature of The Black Panther Party (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1976).

[3] Jimmy Mori, "The Ideological Development of the Black Panther Party," Cornell Journal Of Social Relations 12 (Fall 1977):137-155; Floyd Hayes III and Francis A. Kiene III, " All Power To The People": The Political Thought of Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party," In Charles Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998) 157-176.

[4] Hugh Pearson, The Shadow Of The Panther, Huey P. Newton And The Price Of Black Power In America (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 345-347.

main argument of this chapter is that the historiography of the BPP, has been enshrouded in a series of "isms" combined with political repression and internal dissension which have effectively obscured the autonomy and agency of the leadership and the rank and file. Too often, Newton and other leaders and national figures of the BPP accentuated political "isms" without explaining how such political "isms" would foment fundamental changes in political, economic and social institutions.

This chapter defines revolution as fundamental changes in the socioeconomic, political and social structure of society. It connotes a redefinition of power rooted in a redistribution of wealth to compel transformations in the existing power hierarchy. The BPP revered the "revolutionary" ideals of international movements and their leaders including Mao Tse-Tung in China, Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution, Argentinian Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Vietnamese people and numerous others. One of the BPP's main flaws was that it did not evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these movements to show how they were applicable to the United States. The BPP did not explain how fundamental changes would take place or which mechanisms it would construct to ensure freedom in an economic, political and social context as reflected in its Ten Point Platform and Program demanding freedom full employment, an end to the robbery of the black community, decent housing, education, exemption from military service, and end to police brutality and murder of black people, freedom of all blacks in state, county and local jails and prisons, that all black people be tried by a jury of their peers, land, bread, housing, justice and peace.[5]

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[5] "October 1966 Ten Point Platform and Program of the Black Panther Party, What We Want, What We Believe," In Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 116-119.

Although the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program reflected fundamental demands, it did not contain a concrete strategy for implementing those demands to eliminate political and socioeconomic inequities. That is not to state that the BPP lacked vision or that they drafted a "laundry list" which included everything they wanted. The BPP argued that all expressions of capitalism fomented exploitation of the poor and must be eliminated. The BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program did not include a concrete formula or plan for effecting substantive transformations in existing power relationships but outlined specific fundamental requirements necessary for self-determination. Newton explained that the BPP's main function was to "awaken the people and teach them the strategic method of resisting a power structure" whose intent was to annihilate the black population.[6]

Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale began the BPP by composing the Ten Point Platform and Program then set out address the Ten Points as the organization developed and expanded. One example is the declaration of the BPP's Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver that members of the BPP were "revolutionaries" who sought the transformation of the American social order by destroying the existing power structure in the United States. He further added, " we have to overthrow the government...we say we will do this by any means necessary...and the only means possible is the violent overthrow of the machinery of the oppressive ruling class."[7]

It was unclear which kind or type of machinery the BPP would construct to replace and

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[6] Huey P. Newton, "The Correct Handling of A Revolution, July 20, 1967," In Newton, To Die For The People, 15.

[7] Eldridge Cleaver, The Black Panther hereinafter cited as TBP 28 June 1969, 12-14, Quoted in G. Louis Heath, The Black Panther Leaders Speak, 25.

correct economic, political and social disparities. As a young organization, the BPP experienced a variety of trials and errors consistent with their perception of themselves as "revolutionaries." Given that Panthers viewed themselves as revolutionaries, this chapter explores several questions such as, how did BPP members and leaders contextualize "revolution" and "revolutionary?" What kind or type of revolution did individuals in the BPP envision? Exposing multi-layered and multi-faceted interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary" throughout specific moments in the BPP's history provides yet another terrain to explore fundamental unresolved conflicts, contradictions and inconsistencies. It also accounts for factional rifts and internal dissension within the BPP at the local and national level.

In October 1966, the BPP prioritized Point Seven of its Ten Point Platform and Program by patrolling the police in its assertion of self-defense. The BPP was profoundly influenced by the works of Robert Williams, president of the North Carolina branch of the NAACP and the Deacons for Defense and Justice in Louisiana.[8] Both advocated defense of civil rights marchers and community patrols of black neighborhoods to thwart police aggression. Newton and Seale maintained that the BPP was the concrete testament to Malcom X's call for self-defense.[9] They adopted the symbol of the black panther from the Lowndes County

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[8] See Robert F. Williams, Negroes With Guns (Chicago: Third World Press, 1973); Timothy B. Dyson "Robert F. Williams, "Black Power" and the Roots of the African American Freedom Struggle," The Journal of American History (September 1998): 540-570; Timothy B. Tyson, Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 112.

[9] Malcom X, "Message To The Grassroots, Detroit 1963," In George Breitman ed. Malcom X Speaks, Selected Speeches and Statements (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1966), 17.

Freedom Organization and rationalized that the panther was a fierce animal who would not attack unless provoked.[10] Newton explained, "the nature of a panther is that he never attacks, but if anyone attacks him or backs him into a corner, the panther comes up top wipe that aggressor or that attacker out absolutely, resolutely, wholly, thoroughly and completely."[11]

For the BPP, police patrols and carrying guns were "a form of armed propaganda" to arouse interest in the BPP. They were a realization of point seven of the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program which called for self-defense and a recruiting tool which attracted "street brothers." They were strategically aimed at teaching the community security against the police to provide a concrete model for defending, liberating "educating and revolutionizing the black community."[12] Panthers did not engage in direct confrontations with the police during random patrols in Oakland, Richmond, Berkeley and San Francisco, nor were they expressly behind police cars.[13] They were usually four or five blocks away, if they witnessed police engaging in an arrest as they drove through the community, they exited the car with shotguns, tape recorders and law books and observed.[14]

From the outset, the BPP decreed police as "pigs," a co-option of Elijah Muhammad's doctrines to condemn police harassment, aggression and brutality to convey grotesque and

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[10] Seale, Seize The Time, 65.

[11] Foner ed, The Black Panthers Speak.

[12] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 120-121.

[13] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 143, 121, 166.

[14] Bobby Seale, Interview in Film, *Berkeley In The Sixties*, Produced and Directed by Mark Kitchell, Kitchell Films In Association with P.O.V Theatrical Films, San Francisco: California Newsreel 1990.

brutal qualities to their nemesis. The term also referred to "unpleasant connotations" of a destructive, filthy swine, unclean animal that did not relate to humans because of its gross and uncaring nature.[15] The BPP likened police to occupying armies throughout local communities and defined "pig" as "an ill-natured beast who has no respect for law and order, a foul traducer who's usually found masquerading as a victim of an unprovoked attack."[16] The BPP also coined the phrase "Off the Pig" translated as a call for self-defense, or deliberate offensive action against police officers if and when threatened.[17] Any arrest was defined as a "kidnapping," bail was classified as "ransom," and the United States was labeled "Babylon."[18] Redefining bail and arrests reiterated the BPP's contention that both were unreasonable, prohibitive and excessive measures unfairly targeting poor, unemployed, ghetto residents.

Denotations such as "kidnaping" and "ransom" reinforced that ghetto residents were victimized and exploited by the existing power structure. Renaming the United States government "Babylon" was an abstract biblical reference justifying destruction similar to that of the 'decadent' Babylonian empire.[19] The BPP's labels especially "pig" were affronts to police officers and law enforcement authorities nationwide which prompted a temporary

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[15] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 165-166.

[16] "A Pig," In Foner ed, The Black Panthers Speak, 14.

[17] Bobby Seale, *TBP* 10 January 1970, Quoted in Heath, The Black Panther Leaders Speak, 23.

[18] Lockwood, Conversation With Eldridge Cleaver, 41.

[19] Cleaver, Soul On Fire, 92.

campaign of "Pigs Are Beautiful" buttons and pins by San Francisco East Bay police officers.[20] The BPP also coined the phrase "all power to the people" to raise the consciousness of the community and to characterize the call for self-determination through local community control. Negative connotations demonstrates a concrete attempt by the BPP to challenge and alter existing power relationships by arguing that the people retain the ultimate power to effect change. To Newton, the gun balanced power between the police and the local community. Newton commented, "with weapons in our hands, we were no longer their subjects but their equals."[21]

Newton argued that the gun was the "basic tool of liberation," because it empowered the masses to halt the terror and brutality of the "armed racist power structure."[22] Although the gun provided some form of armor for the masses, it was unclear how the gun singularly offered concrete changes in the power structure and how violence perpetrated by both the power structure and the masses would translate into fundamental changes in the political, economic and social structure of American society. The gun in and of itself did not necessarily balance or equate the masses with police forces throughout local communities.

The BPP attracted local attention through its pivotal role in mobilizing the community after the death of twenty- two- year-old Oakland resident Denzill Dowell. Police gunfire killed Dowell in Richmond, California on April 1, 1967. Newton, Seale and their first

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[20] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 166.

[21] Ibid,120.

[22] Newton, "In Defense of Self-Defense," TBP 20 June 1967, 4, Quoted In Heath, The Black Panther Leaders Speak, 19.

seventeen-year-old recruit Bobby Hutton who later became Treasurer of the BPP, organized community meetings. They protested police inaction as the policeman responsible for Dowell's death did not receive a suspension and no other law enforcement agencies conducted an official investigation.[23] To denounce Dowell's death the BPP produced and circulated the first issue of the *Black Panther, Black Community Service* issue on April 25, 1967. The BPP alternately published its paper weekly and bi-weekly from 1966 to 1972 and became the principal means through which the BPP publicized, encouraged and organized community discussion groups. It also served as a recruitment mechanism which drew individuals from the local community, college campuses, pool halls and bars.[24]

The BPP drew media attention during its escort of Malcom X's widow Betty Shabazz. Two years after her husband Malcom X's assassination/murder at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, New York, Shabazz was scheduled to speak at a Malcom X Memorial Day Conference in Hunter's Point, considered one of the largest black ghettoes in San Francisco. Newton and eight BPP members volunteered to provide security for Shabazz and to escort her during her visit. Armed with guns, Newton, Seale and other BPP members arrived at the San Francisco airport where they faced numerous challenges by police officers. Newton asserted his constitutional right to bear arms and refused to allow the media to take photographs.

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[23] Seale, Seize The Time, 134-149; Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 137-142.

[24] "Why Was Denzil Dowell Killed?" TBP, 1 April, 1967; Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 126-127, 143-144.

Newton and BPP members faced additional challenges and "tense scenes" by police officers after escorting Shabazz to the Ramparts magazine office in San Francisco. A camera man challenged Newton when Newton blocked closer coverage of Shabazz from the throng of media spectators. Similarly, police officers challenged the BPP's right to carry guns in public view. A policeman refused to arrest news reporter Chuck Banks after he and Newton engaged in a scuffle. Newton challenged the policeman whom he referred as a "cowardly dog" to draw his gun as he and other members of the BPP were surrounded by police officers.[25]

This confrontation with police officers would set the tone for what Newton termed 'dramatic encounters' with police officers. Newton wrote, "at times, they drew their guns and we drew ours until we reached some sort of standoff."[26] Seale asserted that he and the others "had spit on the pigs," "stood these pigs off" and almost became involved in a "righteous shootout" with pigs you know are racists."[27] Covering this event for *Ramparts* magazine, Eldridge Cleaver a former convict who enjoyed literary acclaim from his book *Soul on Ice*, was permanently transformed by this scene.[28]

Cleaver admired Newton's "revolutionary courage" to oppose the oppressor by traversing

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[25] Seale, Seize The Time, 113-130; Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 131.

[26] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 123.

[27] Seale, Seize The Time, 129-130.

[28] "The Courage To Kill," In Scheer ed. Eldridge Cleaver, Post-Prison Writings And Speeches, 35-37.

and singlehandedly entering what he termed, the "no man's land of revolution."[29] He concluded, the "genie of black revolutionary violence is here and it says that the oppressor has no rights which the oppressed are bound to respect."[30] Cleaver explained that he did not envision a race war but a guerilla resistance movement amounting to a second civil war in the U.S. Such a movement necessitated thousands of 'white John Browns' immersing America into the depths of its "most desperate nightmare" towards realization of the American Dream."[31]

Newton and Seale were awed by Cleaver's nine-year incarceration, writing skills and fame after they heard him on the radio the evening after their escort of Shabazz. Seale contended that Newton envisioned Cleaver as "a Malcom X, coming out of prison."[32] Newton initially sought out then later met with Cleaver to urge him to join the BPP. Newton reasoned, "he was an ex-convict...he could not be all bad if he had pulled time."[33] Cleaver became the Minister of Information of the BPP.

In early 1967, funding was the main concern for the newly formed BPP for Self-Defense. Newton and Seale alternately raised funds for the BPP by selling copies of the book *Quotations from Chairman Mao* by Chinese Premier Mao Tse-Tung. They purchased the

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[29] Cleaver, Soul On Fire, 83.

[30] "The Courage To Kill," In Scheer ed. Eldridge Cleaver, Post-Prison Writings And Speeches, 38.

[31] "Playboy Interview With Nat Hentoff," In Scheer ed.,Eldridge Cleaver, Post Prison Writings and Speeches, 165.

[32] Seale, Seize The Time, 132; Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 140.

[33] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 135;

"red books" for less than a quarter from the New China Bookstore in San Francisco then sold them for a dollar first at Sather Gate on the University of California at Berkeley campus, then to other university campuses throughout the Bay Area. Additional funding for the BPP include speaking engagements, individual and group donations including the proceeds from the sale of Eldridge Cleaver's book *Soul On Ice*. Such funding allowed the BPP to lease office space on 56th and Grove Street for $150 month in Oakland in January 1967 which served as BPP headquarters.[34]

Newton coined the phrase "revolutionary suicide" to convey that the 'revolutionary' must always be prepared to face imminent death because it symbolized a resolute determination to effect change.[35] Seale explained, "to be a revolutionary is to be an enemy of the state, to be arrested for this struggle is to be a political prisoner."[36] Both Newton and Seale's descriptions narrowly defined "revolutionary" as opposition to both authority figures and to representatives of the existing power structure. In other words, defiance and contempt for the state was the prerequisite of a "revolutionary." "Revolutionary suicide" was the ultimate sacrifice and exemplified the "revolutionary's" commitment to effect political, economic and social change. On July 3, 1967, Newton urged the masses to move against the oppressor with "implacable fortitude,' "the oppressor has no right that the

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[34] Seale, Seize The Time, 179.

[35] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 7.

[36] Bobby Seale, *TBP*, 10 January 1970,11, In Heath ed. The Black Panther Leaders Speak, 23.

oppressed is bound to respect."[37]

On May 2, 1967, the BPP catapulted to the national media through its "storming" of the state capitol. Twenty-four BPP men and six women converged on the steps to protest Congressman Don Mulford's proposed gun-control bill prohibiting the carrying of loaded weapons within city limits. The BPP argued that the bill infringed on their constitutional right to bear arms and left them defenseless against police aggression. BPP Chairman Bobby Seale and other BPP members were implementing Newton's directive to deliver his Executive Mandate Number One which beckoned the American people and black people in particular, to note the 'racist legislation' in the California State Legislature strategically aimed at keeping them disarmed as police agencies exacerbated 'terror, brutality, murder and repression of black people.'[38]

Seale led BPP members inside the capitol building against the prudence of Newton, seeking a spectator section to observe the Assembly. Bewildered by his surroundings and overwhelmed by media attention, Seale was erroneously and perhaps deliberately led to the Assembly floor interrupting its closed debate session. Privately, he thought he had made a mistake, but he simultaneously experienced an 'exhilarating high' from "vamping on these pigs."[39] The guns were seized by police officers who unloaded them prior to returning them to BPP members. Any exuberance over the media attention soon evaporated as the twenty-four BPP members were promptly arrested by the police minutes upon their

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[37] Newton, "In Defense of Self-Defense II," In Newton, To Die For the People," 88.

[38] Seale, Seize The Time, 158-162.

[39] Ibid.

departure from the capitol in route to their homes. They were charged by police with felonious and misdemeanor conspiracy to wilfully disturb the Legislature and commit disorderly conduct to interrupt its proceedings thereby impairing its authority.[40] Seale was later sentenced to six months in jail.

Taped and filmed media reports of Seale and other BPP members conveyed alarm to the American public that armed "riflemen" created a 'shouting turmoil' during their 'storming' of the California state capitol building and interruption of a closed debate session.[41] Deliberate and prominent use of the term "invasion" by the media imparted that the state capitol was susceptible to occupation by domestic, militant, "grim-faced, silent young men with guns," who posed a genuine pervasive threat to society at large.[42] Images of scuffles as agitated Panthers yelled, "take your hands off me if I'm not under arrest!" and others of Panthers angrily demanding the return of their guns from the "cop dogs" and "pigs" inside the capitol building, accompanied fragments of Seale's statement on nationwide television.[43]

Panthers were portrayed by national media as forcefully protesting a gun bill in broad daylight, in full view of gaping schoolchildren, startled and frightened state employees,

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[40] "Here's Section Of Code Used For Arrests," San Francisco Examiner hereinafter cited as SFE, 3 May 1967, 4.

[41] "Panthers Invade Capitol," "'Panther' Riflemen In Capitol," "Loaded Guns In Assembly," All of these headlines were published by the SFE 2 May 1967, 6. Seale was erroneously identified as Newton in the SFE's front page story.

[42] "Armed Negroes Enter California Assembly In Gun Bill Protest," The New York Times, 3 May 1967, 24.

[43] Film, *Berkeley In The Sixties.*

bemused policemen, outraged and incredulous assemblymen. The media accentuated the guns symbolizing and embodying the party's confrontational paramilitary thrust and its volatile propensity for violence to achieve political objectives. Portrayals of the BPP as confrontational, unyielding, and contemptuous of law enforcement and authority figures, were permanently engraved in the media throughout the BPP's history. Although media attention catapulted national publicity to the Party, it established a dangerous, ominous tone and precedent for interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary." Newton avowed Seale "a true revolutionary," shook his hand and wrapped his arm around him because he and the others had done "righteous revolutionary work."[44] Newton once again interpreted the BPP's confrontation with law enforcement as a "revolutionary" act because Seale and the other BPP members formally and forcibly challenged the legitimacy of the Mulford Bill.

The BPP's actions symbolized a dramatic shift in the political strategy of the civil rights movement in general, because the BPP expanded the direct action strategy in general and departed from the nonviolent and "we shall overcome" message. They confronted vestiges of American political power in California at its doorstep by challenging the constitutionality of the Mulford bill which they argued was an infringement of the right to bear arms. They also questioned the legitimacy of police forces throughout local black communities nationwide. The BPP's endorsement of armed self-defense as a resistance strategy signaled that they abhorred 'turning the other cheek' when and if confronted. The BPP was ell-

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[44] Seale, Seize The Time, 171.

versed concerning the positioning of guns in the capitol building due to Newton's completion of law courses at Oakland City College and San Francisco Law School. Newton noted that the BPP's tactics in Sacramento were correct but were simultaneously a grave error and miscalculation which exacerbated law enforcement efforts to disarm the BPP.[45]

The BPP's protest had the opposite effect on gun legislation, it yielded dramatic consequences which mobilized ambivalent voices at the State Capitol. Thus, the "revolutionary" activities of Seale and other BPP members reinforced and strengthened the necessity and legitimacy of more stringent gun legislation to prevent duplication of any similar occurrence at the State capitol, other government buildings and public places. The BPP's objective in Sacramento was not to change gun laws, but to spark a national outcry against the Mulford Bill, then to transform the outrage into the political mobilization of local black communities nationwide. The BPP was unprepared for the spontaneous response of state and local officials.

Newton and Seale raised the $2200 bail for each person arrested. Both imparted to the membership that the BPP would not abandon its members should incarcerations result from implementing its directives. Several conclusions about the BPP's early days can be reached based on the records of those arrested. Although the core of the BPP's membership was based in Oakland, California, the majority of members were between nineteen and seventeen years old. Moreover, of the twenty-four arrested only five were

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[45] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 150.

between twenty-eight and thirty- three years old and those members were in leadership positions. They include thirty-three-year-old Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver and Organizer Mark Comfort, thirty-year-old Co-founder Bobby Seale and John Sloan, and twenty-eight-year-old Captain George Edward Dowell. [46]

Younger members also played important roles such as twenty- three-year-old Minister of Culture Emory Douglas, nineteen-year-old Captain Warren Tucker, and seventeen-year-old Treasurer Bobby Hutton. Several members were related including the two brothers of Denzil Dowell, George Edward Dowell and James Dowell and brothers Sherwin and Reginald Forte. The twenty-four members were recruited from three main areas, Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond with the exception of Panther artist Emory Douglas who resided in San Francisco and Eldridge Cleaver who worked for *Ramparts* magazine and also resided in Ramparts. Most of the twenty-four members had prior misdemeanor and felony convictions.[47]

Because of their similar past, Newton and Seale sought to transform criminal activities by channeling them into significant political actions to uplift the community through police patrols and community service activities.[48] Both Newton and Seale endorsed the belief that "activities" for survival could be integrated with subversive actions to successfully undermine the established social order. Throughout its history, the BPP successfully transformed former pimps, prostitutes, convicts, drug addicts, veterans and professionals

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[46] SFE, 3 May 1967.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 127.

into "revolutionaries" because these same individuals assumed leadership positions in the BPP, administered the political education classes or conducted the community service programs of the BPP. For example, Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter who was the head of the Slausson gang became the Deputy Minister Of Defense of the Southern California chapter. In New York, Shaba Om stopped "hustling skag" and "pimping," Afeni Shakur stopped smoking cocaine and acid after joining the New York BPP chapter.[49]

Both Newton and Seale continued to partake in the "underground economy" in tradition with other "revolutionary" movements. Cognizant that international revolutionaries such as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara for example, financed their activities through sources criminalized by the existing power structure, Newton and Seale fortified links with those engaging in illegal activities willing to finance and contribute to the BPP. In Oakland, burglars and those engaging in illegal activities contributed weapons and essential materials to the BPP's "community defense." Those who sold "hot" or stolen goods also donated cash to the BPP. Thus, the "underground economy" initially funded and supported some of the BPP's "revolutionary" activities. Newton noted, "ripping off became more than just an individual thing."[50] The BPP's "revolution" encompassed financial and material support from those engaging in the "underground economy" consistent with other international revolutionary movements.

Although "brothers off the block" were very desirable for launching the "revolution"

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[49] Kuwasi Balagoon et. al, Look For Me In The Whirlwind: The Collective Autobiography of the New York 21, (New York: Random House, 1971), 246, 287-293.

[50] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 127.

which Newton and Seale envisioned especially in Sacramento, it is erroneous to conclude that the BPP only recruited the so-called "lumpen-proletariat" into the organization. The BPP's Oakland chapter in 1967 was not representative of all members of the BPP throughout its history.[51] The BPP was a diverse organization primarily composed of college students although some high school students also joined. Women who joined the BPP tended to have higher educational attainment than men in the BPP, usually in the form of a minimum of one or two years of college.[52] Black men and women joined the BPP regardless of race, class, gender, sexuality or religion. Reasons for joining the BPP include, a genuine desire to uplift the race and serve the community, an opportunity to cultivate organizational skills, a realization and endorsement of the BPP's political platform. Some men and women also joined the BPP to express their support for spouses and significant others.

Kathleen Neal Cleaver a former SNCC member joined the BPP with her husband Eldridge Cleaver and served as the Communications Secretary of the BPP in 1968. Emory Douglas' wife Judi Douglas also served as Deputy Communications Secretary. Newton's brother Melvin Newton assumed the post of Minister of Finance in October 1968. David Hilliard served as National Headquarters captain and later became the BPP's Chief of Staff in 1968. His wife Patricia Hilliard served as Finance Secretary and his brother June Hilliard

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[51] Charles E. Jones and Judson Jeffries, "Don't Believe The Hype": Debunking The Panther Mythology," In Charles E. Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998), 27-55.

[52] Angela D. LeBlanc-Ernest, "The Most Qualified Person To Handle The Job": Black Panther Party Women, 1966-1982, In Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 318.

was the Assistant Chief of Staff in 1970.

Newton and Seale organized a Central Committee to serve the ruling body of the BPP which operated under the principle of "democratic centralism." Most of the BPP's Central Committee members had some prior experience and engaged in political activity in other local and national organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the National Association For The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Nation Of Islam (NOI), and other student or local community organizations. For example, Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver was a co-founder of Black House and member of the NOI. Newton and Seale were members of Donald Warden's Afro-American Association and Robert F. Williams' organization Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). Seale and Newton also played significant roles in the Soul Students Advisory Council which advocated black history instruction at Merritt College.[53]

The BPP's Central Committee was a male dominated hierarchy which governed policy and administered official decisions of the BPP. Kathleen Cleaver was the only woman to serve on the BPP's Central Committee as Communications Secretary in 1968. In 1971, Elaine Brown served as Deputy Minister Of Information and later became the only Chairwoman of the BPP from 1974 to 1977. The Central Committee adhered to Newton's writings which initially defined the BPP's "revolution." Newton's 1968 essay "On The Correct Handling Of Revolution" argued, the vanguard party must raise consciousness and earn the respect of the masses through leadership. Its activities would necessarily be short-

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[53] Seale, Seize The Time, 24-29; Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 108-109.

lived, because it must exist aboveground until forced into secrecy underground whereupon the masses would continue the resistance struggle. Newton maintained, members of the vanguard group must be "tested revolutionaries" to minimize the dangers of informers and opportunists. He concluded the masses would endorse the untraceable slaying of a "gestapo policeman" as the resistance tactic by "revolutionary executioners."[54]

The political significance of the "revolutionary executioner" was ambiguous because it was unclear how this offensive action would bring significant changes in the socioeconomic and political structure. Newton argued, executing a policeman, one of the representatives of the existing power structure would fuel the masses to duplicate similar activities as a resistance strategy. Newton also argued that people initiated "revolution" by seizing defense weapons from the power structure and that the sincere "revolutionary" must accept imminent death because, "revolutionary" activities were 'extremely dangerous.'[55]

Newton's strategy was contrary to the principles espoused by the "revolutionary" movements he emulated. The main idea of the vanguard party going underground reflected his adherence to ideals of Argentinian Ernesto "Che" Guevara's 1961 *Guerilla Warfare* manual from which the BPP fastidiously quoted and printed excerpts. Guevara maintained that all conditions for revolution would not necessarily be created through the impulses of guerilla activities unless, and until the people were completely convinced that all possibilities

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[54] Huey P. Newton, "In Defense Of Self-Defense, The Correct Handling Of A Revolution," TBP, 18 May 1968, 8.

[55] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 7.

for peaceful struggle were duly exhausted.[56] In addition, the people must support and assist what Guevara termed an "agrarian revolutionary" who is first and foremost a "social reformer" who takes up arms in response to the angry protest of the people against their oppressors. The agrarian revolutionary's intention was to "break the mold" of the institutions which perpetuated "ignomy and misery" on the people. Guevara's conditions applied to "wild places of small population" where the struggle for reform is concentrated on the "peasant masses" whose concerns primarily included ownership of land and the means of production. [57]

Newton was convinced that the BPP would duplicate the guerilla warfare executed by Guevara, Fidel and Ramon Castro in the Cuban mountains of Sierra Maestra. Newton and BPP members argued that existing conditions of racial exploitation would necessarily mobilize the masses to destroy 'Babylon.' Despite the turbulence of the 1960s primarily the civil rights movement, conflicts over Vietnam, voting rights, desegregation, equal rights issues and a variety of other conflicts, Americans remained unconvinced that the complete overthrow of the United States government was the answer to their political, economic and social problems. Picking up the gun as Newton advocated would not necessarily and immediately yield ownership of land or control of the means of production.

Newton encouraged the development of the vanguard 's political organ, the *Black Panther* newspaper to popularize its political platform and mobilize local black

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[56] Ernesto "Che" Guevara, "General Principles of Guerilla Warfare," Quoted In Daniel Castro ed. Revolution and Revolutionaries, Guerilla Movements in Latin America (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), 65-86.

[57] Ibid.

communities. The *Black Panther* became the principal means of disseminating and articulating political ideology and what BPP Minister of Education George Murray, a college instructor when he joined the BPP termed "revolutionary culture." Murray defined "revolutionary culture" as the total ways of the people reflected through fundamental changes in the existing institutionalized structure. "Revolutionary culture" would necessarily be "anti-white, anti-capitalist, against imperialism, against the racist dogs."[58] To Murray, "revolution" was imbued with violence and necessitated black political power secured through the barrel of a gun.

He advocated black paintings depicting "dead businessmen, bankers, lawyers, senators, congressmen burning up inside their stores, being blown up in cafes, restaurants, nightclubs."[59] "Revolutionary culture" was reinforced through the BPP's art and poetry published in the BPP's political organ by Revolutionary Artist and Minister of Culture, Emory Douglas and Revolutionary Artist Matilaba (Joan Lewis). Douglas sought to educate and agitate the people through representations, extensions and interpretations of "revolutionary actions" of the masses from what he termed the "gallery of the ghetto."[60]

BPP revolutionary artists portrayed and popularized black men with guns, choking, stabbing, killing and assaulting the police portrayed in uniform with pig faces. In numerous drawings, the black man or woman always emerged victorious as the "pig" police

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[58] George Murray, "For A Revolutionary Culture," The Minister of Education, TBP, 7 September 1968, 12.

[59] Ibid.

[60] "Position Paper #1 On Revolutionary Art, By The Minister Of Culture Emory Douglas," TBP, 20 October 1968, 5.

were always portrayed as cowards running away or dying from confrontations with armed black people. Douglas conveyed that the purpose of "revolutionary art" was to mobilize, empower and invigorate the masses through illustrations.[61] It imparted that black people would no longer be brutalized by 'racist police forces' occupying the community.[62]

The BPP's political organ, contained illustrations of "revolution" elucidated in its political platform. For example, Eldridge Cleaver interpreted Douglas' "revolutionary art" as capturing and embodying the essence of "revolution." Cleaver wrote, "Emory's art says if we really want pigs dead, Lyndon Johnson, for example or Henry Ford or his cousin or his friends then we must kill them."[63] In 1968, the BPP advertized instructions for making a variety of weapons including firebombs, self-igniting molotov cocktails and home made grenades. Defensive ammunition fortified the masses against random, fatal confrontations with law enforcement and adversaries depicted in the BPP's "revolutionary art."[64]

The BPP caricatured and ridiculed what Newton and Seale considered main perpetrators of black oppression, imperialism and capitalism, "racist pig cops, demagogic politicians and avaricious businessmen." All were denounced and characterized as "pigs" in "revolutionary art" reinforced through "revolutionary poetry." Although the BPP's "revolutionary poetry" was interrelated to Black Arts and Black Aesthetic themes exposing

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[61] Oral Interview by Author with Emory Douglas, April 3, 1999.

[62] "Position Paper #1 On Revolutionary Art, By The Minister Of Culture Emory Douglas," TBP, 20 October 1968, 5.

[63] "Eldridge On Weatherman," TBP, 22 November 1969, 5

[64] "Grenades and Bombs: Anti-Property and Anti-Personnel," TBP, 16 November 1968.

and confronting vestiges of racism and exploitation, it also delineated the BPP's interpretations of revolution and revolutionary.[65] "Black Revolutionary Poetry" reiterated themes of self-determination and resounded the urgency of organizing the people against all forms of exploitation and oppression. It was also employed as a recruiting tool.[66]

BPP Co-founder Bobby Seale frequently recited his poem, "Uncle Sammy Called Me Full Of Lucifer," in the streets of Oakland and on college campuses.[67] Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter, was also renown for his "revolutionary poems." The BPP dropped Self-Defense from its name in 1968 to counter portrayals of the BPP as a paramilitary organization. However, "revolutionary artists" continued to emphasize negative portrayals and assaults of law enforcement officials throughout their artwork. By 1969, the BPP's "revolutionary art" did not reinforce its ideological emphasis from self-defense to community service programs such as the Free Breakfast For Schoolchildren. For example, in its September 1968 issue of its newspaper, the BPP featured two articles, "Black People Keep Your Guns" and a "Breakfast for Schoolchildren" advertisement on the same page.[68]

Such drawings conveyed mixed messages. On the one hand, the BPP announced openings of free breakfast programs nationwide to emphasize its community service activities. The BPP simultaneously clung to the 'revolutionary' artwork which encouraged confrontations

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[65] Regina Jennings, "Poetry of the Black Panther Party, Metaphors of Militancy," Journal Of Black Studies (September 1998):106-129.

[66] "Black Revolutionary Poetry," TBP, 2 November 1968, "Black Revolutionary Poetry,"16 November 1968.

[67] Seale, A Lonely Rage, 144-145.

[68] TBP, 28 September 1968.

with the police and exacerbated federal, local and state government efforts to neutralize the organization. The BPP further alarmed law enforcement when it announced a merger with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1967. Newton acknowledged that the BPP's long term plan was to organize northern black communities employing the administrative and leadership resources of SNCC. Newton contended that the black community needed both organizations and that partnership with or incorporation of SNCC provided greater opportunities for developing an "administrative body" to better coordinate BPP activities. The merger would allow the BPP to cultivate structure and give " a powerful striking force to black liberation.[69]

Newton's assertions and the announcement of a merger between the two organizations was a realization of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's fears as confirmed in a1968 memo to field agents. Hoover specifically outlined one of the objectives of the Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) as "to prevent prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups."[70] Particularly because both organizations were targeted by COINTELPRO, the BPP's announcement reinforced the perception of a paramilitary organization whose armed members were strategically positioned to achieve "long term-growth" and perhaps gain respectability in violation of the objectives set forth by the FBI Director.[71]

Newton issued Executive Mandate No.2 on June 29, 1967 officially 'drafting' Stokely

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[69] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 154-158.

[70] Nelson Blackstock, COINTELPRO, The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom (New York: Anchor Foundations, 1988), 22.

[71] Ibid.

Carmichael into the BPP as Field Marshal "to establish revolutionary law, order and justice" because he had proven himself "a true revolutionary" dedicated to serving the people.[72] Carmichael elicited major debates throughout local black communities when he popularized the phrase "black power" to reflect the demands of the black masses. H. Rap Brown became Minister Of Justice and James Forman became Minister Of Foreign Affairs of the BPP. The SNCC/BPP "merger" was fragile, shortlived and inherently flawed as the national leadership and membership of SNCC were not officially informed and did not formally approve of the merger decision ratified between Carmichael, Forman, Brown and Newton.[73] Newton's Executive Mandate No.2 commended Carmichael's "new endeavor" to organize and liberate Washington D.C, and to "establish revolutionary law, order and justice" from the Continental Divide East to the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico.[74] It was also unclear how the merger between the two organizations would create "revolution." Although Carmichael and Forman later denounced the BPP alleging menacing threats, main reasons for the failure of the SNCC/BPP merger were political and organizational differences and ambiguities, lack of trust, miscommunication, and COINTELPRO efforts.[75]

On October 28, 1967, Newton was involved in a major confrontation with police officers

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[72] Huey P. Newton, "Executive Mandate No.2, June 29, 1967," In Newton, To Die For The People, 9-10.

[73] George Forman, The Making Of Black Revolutionaries (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 522-543.

[74] Newton, "Executive Mandate No.2," 9-10.

[75] Clayborne Carson, In Struggle: SNCC And The Black Awakening Of The 1960s (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 280, 284-285 ; Kenneth O'Reilly, Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File On Black America (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 300-301.

after his vehicle was stopped . The ensuing encounter resulted in the death of police officer John Frey and Newton sustained a bullet wound in his stomach. Officer Frey's death was characteristic of the violent defensive posture characterized in the BPP's "revolutionary art" and "revolutionary poetry." Newton wilfully committed "revolutionary suicide" and expected the death penalty. He reasoned that his execution in the gas chamber would raise the consciousness of the community.[76] Newton's imprisonment resulted in a massive "Free Huey" movement spearheaded by Kathleen Cleaver and Eldridge Cleaver who assumed leadership of the BPP as both Newton and Seale were in prison.

The Huey P. Newton Defense Fund was formed to raise money for his defense and black and white radicals joined forces to protest his imprisonment. The BPP employed Newton's trial to articulate grievances against the existing institutionalized American structure. It sought to educate and organize the people against interrelated forms of oppression such as unemployment, inadequate housing, educational, social and political inequities. Newton maintained that his trial was a "political forum" demonstrating that fighting for his life was a logical and inevitable outcome of the BPP's efforts to lift the oppressor's burden."[77]

The BPP promoted Newton's imprisonment as a cause for mass protest in that Newton made the ultimate sacrifice for the people's "revolution." BPP men and women demonstrated daily on the front steps of the Alameda County Courthouse chanting, "the revolution has come, off the pig, it's time to pick up the gun, off the pig, free Huey."[78] Support for

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[76] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 184-185.

[77] Ibid, 188.

[78] Film, *Berkeley in the Sixties.*

Newton's release yielded increased membership in the BPP as nationwide chapters skyrocketed nationwide. David Hilliard noted, "the organization just propelled, it took off like a prairie fire, it spread everywhere."[79]

Although the BPP demanded "revolution" and Newton's freedom, larger questions remained unanswered such as what kind or type of "revolution" did the BPP itself envision? and how would the self-proclaimed "vanguard" of the people lead the "revolution?" Speeches delivered by two BPP members illustrated ideological ambiguities of the BPP's "revolution." William Lee Brent, a Captain in the Oakland BPP, provided security for BPP leaders, spoke at Panther rallies and conducted political education classes for BPP members. During one Free Huey rally, Brent urged the crowd to free Newton because he was the only leader black people should recognize because he was willing to face 'pigs' "gun for gun if necessary."[80] Eldridge Cleaver dared the U.S. to "bring it on," and that the United States would erupt if Newton was not freed.[81]

Brent and Cleaver's rhetorical metaphors projected and predicted further violent confrontations between the BPP and those considered perpetrators of the existing institutionalized structure. Neither Cleaver or Brent defined or specifically explained how picking up the gun translated into a realistic, concrete "revolution" espoused in the BPP's political platform. Both men did not provide examples to show how Newton's freedom transformed existing economic, social and political relationships. Brent dismissed and

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[79] David Hilliard, Interview In Film, *Berkeley in The Sixties.*

[80] William Lee Brent, Quoted in Film, *Berkeley in the Sixties.*

[81] Eldridge Cleaver, Quoted In Film, *Berkeley in The Sixties.*

deliberately overlooked predecessors of the U.S. freedom struggle. He publicly declared the historical contributions of many leaders irrelevant and insignificant because supposedly none was willing to commit Newton's "revolutionary suicide." Although the BPP advertized its reading list which included various writings of Malcom X, Frantz Fanon, W.E.B Dubois, Carter G. Woodson and many others, the BPP set Newton apart as the lone "warrior" of black liberation.

One main example was Newton's most famous portrait orchestrated by Eldridge Cleaver which Newton sitting in a wicker chair, spear in one hand, and a gun in another. Although Newton himself despised the photograph, it illustrated continuity between African forebears and the BPP in that Newton embodied the struggle for self-determination and was the heir of the liberation struggle. The determination to free Newton was encapsulated in the BPP's rallying cry, "black is beautiful, Free Huey, set our warrior free, Free Huey, the sky's the limit."[82] The BPP promoted Newton throughout its newspapers and posters as a victim of police brutality, racial and political oppression. Hilliard noted the BPP's "formula" for popularizing Newton during this period. Each week, the cover of the BPP's newspaper featured Newton on the cover page with lingering shadows on his face to make him look "handsome and defiant," opposite the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program in the inside back pages also contained a photo of Newton "with a bandolier over his chest and a pump shotgun cradled in his arms."[83] The BPP heralded Newton as a "revolutionary" black man

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[82] Film, *Berkeley in the Sixties*; See also Film, *All Power To The People*, Directed and Produced by Lee Lew Lee, 1998.

[83] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 149.

wrongfully incarcerated by "racist pig cops" intent on destroying the people's "revolution." BPP members and other Newton supporters organized "Free Huey" rallies and birthday celebrations. They printed and distributed thousands of leaflets nationwide and secured some free time on local radio and news stations to publicize Newton's plight.

Angela Davis, a philosophy professor at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) attended one Free Huey rally which featured widely known speakers such as SNCC members and leaders such as Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, James Forman, BPP Co-founder Bobby Seale, Ronald Karenga of the cultural US organization and Reis Tijerina. Davis remarked that after all of the various speeches, "a gaping void remained," because no strategies and no specific concrete proposals were articulated for Newton's release or defense. She noted, " the applause was ample enough, but where were we to go from there?"[84] Davis questioned the phrase the "sky's the limit" because it was unclear how demonstrations and rallies would organize the masses to guarantee Newton's freedom.

Although the mass "Free Huey" rallies drew national attention, they did not yield Newton's freedom. A jury convicted Newton of manslaughter for which Newton received a two to fifteen year sentence in 1968. The BPP's "violent rhetoric" alarmed law enforcement which became determined to neutralize the BPP. Newton's imprisonment and conviction reinforced law enforcement's characterization of the BPP as a violent, subversive paramilitary organization intent on fatally executing police officers. Whereas Newton endorsed his "revolutionary suicide," his actions renewed the perception of the

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[84] Angela Davis, Angela Davis, An Autobiography (New York: International Publishers, 1988), 167.

BPP as violent "revolutionaries" willing to exact fatal retaliation on police officers nationwide. Police patrols combined with Frey's death and provocative "violent rhetoric" fostered a threatening image of the BPP. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover issued a memo in November 1968, directing field agents "to exploit all avenues of creating...dissension within the ranks of the Black Panther Party ...recipients offices are instructed to submit imaginative and hard-hitting counter intelligence measures aimed at crippling the Black Panther Party."[85]

Newton's conviction and imprisonment yielded unprecedented support for the BPP from white radicals. The BPP attempted to forge coalitions which other radical groups although whites were not allowed to join the BPP. The only notable exception was the White Panther Party organized in Ann Arbor, Michigan which adopted the BPP's Ten Point Platform and program and also worked with individual members of the BPP nationwide. Although the BPP did not permit white persons to join the organization, Seale and Newton insisted that race restriction in its membership does not mean that the BPP was a racist organization. They argued that it reflected the BPP's adherence to the belief that black people must endorse and lead the 'Afro-American struggle' even as the BPP relished support from white radicals especially the Peace and Freedom Party (PFP).[86]

The BPP formed a temporary coalition with the PFP which marked a significant evolution of the BPP's "revolution." The BPP's most prominent leaders sought to control local community institutions by becoming representatives in the Legislature. Candidates for political office on the PFP ticket include Eldridge Cleaver ran for President, Kathleen

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[85] Churchill and Wall, Agents of Repression, 63.

[86] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 155.

Cleaver for Assemblywoman 18th District, Bobby Seale For State Assemblyman 17th District and Huey P. Newton for 17th District. These unsuccessful campaigns epitomized the root of what Newton termed "functional definition of politics" which he defined as "war without bloodshed" to challenge and control the means of production.[87] In other words, BPP members would become agents of change through participation in the political process. They would negotiate with the existing power structure with what Newton termed "self defense power" to exact a "political consequence" if their desires were unmet.[88]

Political candidacy of BPP leaders marked a redefinition of the "revolution" because the BPP's "revolutionaries " sought to become capable and competent administrators and managers to energize a power base from which they would negotiate the desires and concerns of the black masses. The BPP/PFP coalition epitomized what the BPP termed the "fountainhead of radical political machinery" to fuse and "harness the liberation struggle in the black community and the class struggle in the white community."[89] Although the "Free Huey" movement galvanized support for the BPP nationwide, it did not sustain significant momentum for the BPP nationwide to translate into any of the BPP's candidates gaining political office. It did not yield a substantive political movement which mobilized the support and resources of those discontented with the existing power structure. Discontent with the existing criminal justice system did not convince the masses

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[87] Huey P. Newton, "Functional Definition Of Politics," TBP, 17 January 1969.

[88] Ibid.

[89] "The BPP-PFP Coalition–Explained And Defined," TBP 10 June 1968. In Heath, The Black Panthers Speak, 90.

that the U.S government or 'Babylon' must be overthrown. Although the BPP/PDF coalition was shortlived, it was not the BPP's last attempt to merge with other groups which indicated the BPP's uncertainty, doubt and a struggle for legitimacy.[90]

Newton continued to authorize directives from prison. He issued Executive Mandate No. 3 as a result of the police raids on Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver's home on January 16, 1968 and the raid on BPP Chairman Bobby Seale's home on February 25,1968. Both raids indicate implementation of law enforcement's directives to neutralize the BPP consistent with the FBI's denotation of the BPP as a threat. Newton mandated a general order to all BPP members to acquire "technical equipment" to defend their homes and their dependents. The "technical equipment" was a veiled coded reference to guns, molotov cocktails and other weapons. Newton declared, "any member of the Party having such technical equipment who fails to defend his threshold shall be expelled from the Party for life."[91] Bobby Seale reinforced Newton's mandate with his published declaration that as Chairman of the BPP, if any more 'pigs' came crashing down his door in a vicious unjust and illegal manner unbecoming of police officers, they would receive a 12 gauge buckshot in return.[92]

Seale emphasized self-defense as the "law of survival" and urged all brothers and sisters to retain a shotgun in their home to counter abuses from the racist power structure and the police. Newton's order influenced the response of members of the Los Angeles

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Huey P. Newton, "Executive Mandate No.3," TBP 16 March 1968, 1.

[92] Bobby Seale, "Gestapo Tactics," TBP, 16 March 1968,11.

Chapter on December 8, 1969. BPP men and women trained by Elmer Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt, a Vietnam veteran, exchanged gunfire with police for several hours at the BPP's Los Angeles office. Although all BPP involved were later arrested, the BPP extolled their "revolutionary" valor in defending their Panther office.

In public appearances, Cleaver advocated war against the U.S government and in a televised interview with Mike Wallace of the television show 60 Minutes, he threatened to kill a U.S Senator. Cleaver publicly ridiculed Governor Ronald Reagan as "Mickey Mouse," and spurred crowds in chants of "F— Ronald Reagan" as a "liberating," "revolutionary" exercise.[93] Cleaver's verbal public assault on the Governor were more personal than political because in the fall of 1968, Cleaver was invited to teach a sociology course at the University Of California at Berkeley. Reagan attempted to block the course through the University Of California Regents. In one speech, Cleaver challenged Reagan to "a duel to the death and you can choose the weapons, and if you can't relate to that, right on, walk, chicken, with your ass picked clean."[94]

Inflammatory provocative language interspersed with obscenity, especially "mother------" frequently appeared as "every other word" employed by some BPP members at rallies, public speeches and the BPP's newspaper.[95] Some black preachers and

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[93] Eldridge Cleaver, "An Aside To Ronald Reagan," In Scheer, "Eldridge Cleaver,"112.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Seale, Seize The Time, 257-261; Huey P. Newton, "On the Defection of Eldridge Cleaver from the BPP and the Defection of the BPP from the Black Community," April 17, 1971," In Newton, To Die For The People, 52.

congregations were offended by the language, causing the BPP to be "kicked out" of some churches. Cleaver also employed similar language during an appearance at a Catholic Girls' school in 1968.[96] During a meeting of the National Committee of Black Churchmen at Berkeley, Hilliard exclaimed that the preachers assembled were 'a bunch of bootlicking pimps and mother------s."[97] Seale acknowledged that although his mother who was 'about sixty' in 1968, supported the BPP and respected Eldridge Cleaver, she "wish[ed] he wouldn't cuss so much."[98]

The BPP's provocative messages were designed to recruit black people in the community to become revolutionaries. Although many were entertained and reveled in such speeches, BPP supporters, especially the rank and file were dismayed and "superficially" related to Cleaver, "not really understanding him."[99] BPP members imitating Cleaver's prose were convinced that "revolutionary" deportment necessitated profane and inflammatory rhetoric which exacerbated tensions among BPP leaders. Hilliard admitted, he was simply following Cleaver's lead and "went along" with him because he believed Cleaver was an embodiment of Malcom X.[100] He endorsed Cleaver's thesis that the American flag and the American

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[96] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 128-129

[97] Newton, To Die For The People, 73-74.

[98] Seale, Seize The Time, 258.

[99] Ibid, 268.

[100] Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 304.

eagle symbolized fascism.[101] Hilliard publicly declared in a speech at the San Francisco Moratorium Demonstration on November 15, 1969 "we will kill Richard Nixon, we will kill any mother------r that stands in the way of our freedom."[102]

Hilliard proclaimed that his assertion was a realization of Marxism-Leninism in service of proletarians against the capitalist structure and system.[103] In an interview with CBS News a month later, Hilliard staunchly defended his first amendment right to espouse "political rhetoric" in what he termed "the language of the ghetto." He explained that he did not call for the assassination of the president and that his use of profanity was "within the idiom of oppressed people."[104] His rhetoric was construed by law enforcement as a threat to the life of the President resulting in his subsequent arrest.

Seale praised Cleaver for exposing Reagan as what the BPP termed a "demagogic politician" and for rebuking the "fascist" power structure.[105] Whereas Seale and Hilliard endorsed Cleaver's speeches, Newton considered such activities "phrase-mongering" characteristic of what he termed a "filthy speech movement" which permeated not only the

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[101] "What You Are, Speak So Loud I Hardly Hear Anything You Say," TBP, 8 November 1969, 6.

[102] "If You Want Peace You Got To Fight For It," Speech Delivered At San Francisco Moratorium Demonstration, November 15, 1969, In Foner The Black Panthers Speak, 128-130.

[103] David Hilliard, TBP, 22 November 1969, In Heath ed., The Black Panther Leaders Speak, xi.

[104] "Interview With CBS News, December 28, 1969, Reporters: George Herman, CBS News, Bernard Nossiter, Washington Post, Ike Pappas, CBS News," In Foner ed. The Black Panthers Speak, 130-136.

[105] Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 261-263.

BPP's newspaper but nationwide announcements and public appearances of BPP members. Hilliard noted that Newton admonished BPP members over the "dirty language" that 'alienated' the BPP from the community.[106] Enunciations of what many considered foul language by the BPP served no greater political purpose other than to ridicule and castigate local and national authority figures.

Whereas the profanity demonstrated the abrasiveness and boldness of BPP members and leaders nationwide, it did not produce vital inducements for the masses to pick up guns and join the BPP in armed struggle. It may have also offended older people to misunderstand the "real" Program of the BPP.[107] One main example is the reaction of some preachers and religious congregations to the BPP who "kicked out" BPP members because they considered expressions in the BPP vocabulary such as "F------s," "mother-------- s"offensive. Therefore, instead of cultivating a base, the BPP was alienating fundamental roots for any successful revolts against those whom they considered "common oppressors."

Newton later blamed what he termed the "filthy speech movement" for waning support for the BPP in 1971. To discourage such language in its literature, the BPP published a statement in its newspaper announcing to readers that it would attempt to publish all relevant material to educate the oppressed and overturn its negative portrayals in the media. The BPP warned contributors that its newspaper was not "an outlet for emotional outburst

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[106] Ibid, 262.

[107] Seale, Seize The Time, 258.

of irrelevant profanity."[108] Such a warning was issued at the behest of Newton who, while in prison, was infuriated over the "filthy speech movement."[109]

The BPP's reaction to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968 exemplified different BPP interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary." Eldridge Cleaver viewed it as an acrimonious and fatal repudiation of nonviolence, a resounding alarm for black people to "fight fire with fire," and a signal to commence a "terrible and bloody chapter" of what he termed a "holocaust."[110] Although the BPP urged restraint throughout the Bay area, on April 6, 1968, two days after King's assassination, Cleaver was involved in a shootout with Oakland police resulting in the death of seventeen-year- old BPP Treasurer Bobby Hutton. The California Adult Authority (CAA) revoked Cleaver's parole status and ordered his return to prison on November 27, 1968. Determined never to return to prison, Cleaver developed a secret plan from everyone including his wife "out of the normal corridor of Panther activities."[111]

The necessity for secrecy was due to Cleaver's strong suspicion of FBI informants in the BPP including his distrust of the BPP's Central Committee. He explained, "we were so saturated and infiltrated with government agents that I could not possibly trust even the so-

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[108] "Editorial Statement," 2 February 1969, In Foner ed., The Black Panthers Speak, 26.

[109] Huey P. Newton, In "Playboy Interview: Huey P. Newton," Playboy, May 1973.

[110] "The Death of Martin Luther King: Requiem For Nonviolence," In Scheer ed., Eldridge Cleaver, 75.

[111] Cleaver, Soul On Fire, 141.

called inner circle."[112] After a public speech, Cleaver look-alike 'Ralph Smith' espoused "revolutionary rhetoric" as Cleaver escaped into a waiting car disguised as a sick old man to San Francisco airport. He took a flight to JFK airport in New York then later escaped to Cuba claiming he would have been killed if returned to prison.[113]

The BPP praised Cleaver's disappearance in numerous BPP articles proclaiming that Cleaver had taken the "revolution" underground to establish the International Section of BPP abroad. The BPP heralded Cleaver's departure as the realization of the "revolutionary suicide" espoused by Newton. In its newspaper, the BPP announced that Cleaver represented the international solidarity which had been at the core of the BPP's self-determination ideology chronicled in its Ten Point Platform and Program. The BPP further extolled Cleaver's activities and blamed "racist" "fascist pig cops" for Hutton's murder. In other words, the BPP maintained that Cleaver's "revolutionary" actions necessitated his immediate escape to join other international "revolutionaries in Cuba.

The BPP assumed that Cleaver's actions would yield international condemnation of the American government and would become a rallying cry similar to that of the Free Huey movement. However, Cleaver's escape and the death of Bobby Hutton only reinforced law enforcement's contention that the BPP posed a "greatest threat" to all law enforcement and authority figures nationwide and also exemplified the BPP's total disregard for the law. When combined with Newton's conviction for shooting police officer John Frey the year

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Gordon Parks, " Eldridge Cleaver In Algiers: A Visit With Papa Rage," Life, 6 February 1970, 22.

before, Cleaver's activities portrayed the BPP as instigating fatal confrontations with police officers under the guise of fighting the BPP's "revolution." Thus, Cleaver's activities on the night of April 4 1968 did not inspire, persuade or convince the masses of Cleaver's innocence. Hutton's death spawned public outcries as many contended that Hutton was unarmed when he was shot by police. Hollywood actor Marlon Brando appeared at the BPP's press conference to condemn the brutality of Hutton's death and to denounce law enforcement aggression and persecution of the BPP.[114]

Two months after Cleaver's escape the BPP faced yet more probing questions after the deaths of Deputy Minister of Defense, Alprentice Bunchy Carter, and John Jerome Huggins, Deputy Minister of Information of the BPP's Southern California Chapter. Both men were killed at Campbell Hall on the campus of UCLA on January 17, 1969. The BPP issued a statement to the black community condemning the murder of both men by two members of the US organization headed by Ronald Karenga.[115] Karenga maintained that the purpose of US was to promote African cultural and religious beliefs to better understand the concept of "US against Them."[116] Mounting tensions between both groups escalated even as both the US office and Panther headquarters were located next door to each other in Oakland

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[114] Film, *Berkeley In the Sixties.*

[115] "Statement To The Black Community By The Black Panther Party Los Angeles Chapter, Panthers Assassinated By US Organization: A Political Assassination," TBP, 25 January 1969, 1.

[116] Author Conversation with Maulana Karenga, October 1997; Scot Ngozi Brown, "The Us Organization, Maulana Karenga and Conflict with the Black Panther Party: A Critique of Sectarian Influences on Historical Discourse," Journal of Black Studies 28 (November 1997): 157-170.

since 1967.

The BPP ridiculed US as an acronym for United Slaves and charged that "pork chop nationalists" assassinated two valiant revolutionaries and vanguards of the people. The BPP was uncertain and conflicted in responding to the deaths. Most probing questions were, how does a "revolutionary" organization respond to the deaths of fellow comrades? Does one avenge the deaths of "revolutionaries," if so, how, when and where? The BPP answered such questions in its newspaper. Although the BPP proclaimed, "today's pig is tomorrow's pork chop," Seale and others discouraged BPP members and others throughout the local community from inciting what he termed a "jive war" among black people. He also encouraged legal prosecution of the guilty parties responsible for the murders.[117]

However, the BPP's newspaper and political organ *The Black Panther* did not heed Seale's message. *The Black Panther* denounced and castigated Karenga as an ally of the existing power structure intent on facilitating the demise of the BPP. In its January 25, 1969 issue, *The Black Panther* featured a full page entitled political assassins with a photo of Karenga with four men in which a drawn arrow specified Karenga along with three other photographs of US members, Twala, Larry Stiner his brother Ali or George Stiner and Twalaseen.[118]

Another page in the same issue featured another article declaring that 'pork chop nationalism' "must no longer be allowed to exist" as it threatened to destroy the 'people's

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[117] Seale, Seize The Time, 271.

[118] "Political Assassinations Of Deputy Defense Minister Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter and Deputy Information Minister John Huggins," TBP, 25 January 1969, 2.

revolution.' On the one hand, Seale called for calm, yet the BPP's "revolutionary art"and other members demanded revenge on Karenga and the guilty parties. Tensions between US and the BPP continued unabated and were also exacerbated by COINTELPRO efforts of "brown mail" consisting of provocative and insulting portrayals of organization leaders and members.[119] Intercine warfare between both groups resulted in confrontations including the shootings of BPP members Anthony Dumas and Zeke Tate in August 1969 and the murders of Sylvester Bell August 14, 1969 and John Savage on May 23, 1969.[120]

Conflicts between the US organization and the BPP reinforced some debilitating factors about the BPP. First, it revealed that organizations mainly US challenged the BPP's claim to be the vanguard of the people. Although the BPP argued that culture was important, the BPP also claimed that reverence for the past did not offer concrete strategies for addressing persistent problems throughout local black communities such as housing, unemployment and racial discrimination. In other words, the BPP concluded that African culture was not an empowerment tool and only offered token benefits.

Delineating cultural nationalism as "pork chop nationalism" did not necessarily mean that the BPP abhorred African culture. The BPP argued that African cultural expressions such as those carried out by US members including daishikis, boubous and hairstyles did not and would not alter the existing power structure. Some BPP members claimed that the US organization was an affront to black revolutionaries because it was a covert organization

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[119] Churchill and Vander Wall, The Cointelpro Papers, 136-139.

[120] "John Savage Killed," TBP, 23 May 1969; "Murder of Sylvester Bell, TBP, 30 August 1969, 8.

funded by the FBI to destroy the BPP. Although no documents conclusively supported such BPP claims, some BPP members including Elaine Brown have remained unconvinced.[121]

In conclusion, this chapter demonstrated that the BPP's "revolution" from 1966 to 1970 underwent various strategic changes and evolution. From the BPP's inception, the term "revolution" was constantly being defined and contextualized by both BPP leaders and members. There existed no uniformity in the overall definition of "revolution" from 1966 to 1970 as the BPP experienced fundamental unresolved conflicts in its attempt to popularize its Ten Point Platform and Program and challenge fundamental tenets of the existing power structure. In prioritizing police patrols of the police, the BPP established an ominous tone for the organization as confrontational and unyielding which in turn cemented perceptions of the BPP as threatening.

From its inception, the BPP demanded a "revolution" rooted in self-defense which became infused with violence as illustrated in the BPP's "revolutionary art" and "revolutionary poetry." One of the main problems of the BPP demonstrated in this chapter was that the contours of the BPP's "revolution" never remained static. For example, the BPP initially prioritized self-defense, but the BPP dropped self-defense from its name in 1968 and implemented a series of measures in its struggle to contextualize its revolution including short-lived mergers with other groups.

BPP members and leaders fostered negative threatening images of the BPP as its most vocal and visible leaders Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver engaged in violent confrontations with police. Although the BPP argued that such actions were consistent with

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[121] Brown, A Taste of Power, 163-177.

systematic oppression from the existing structure, the doctrine of "revolutionary suicide" did not compel the masses to "pick up the gun" until driven underground even as some people rallied behind the "Free Huey" movement. In its attempt to apply specific international concepts to the "revolution" the BPP fostered internal contradictions and inconsistencies among its membership and leadership.

In essence, the BPP's "revolution" did not contain a complete strategy for effecting substantive changes in existing power relationships even as the BPP argued that guns balanced power between self-proclaimed "revolutionaries" and law enforcement authorities. The BPP's "revolution" from 1966-1970 was at times, ambiguous as reflected in through its attempts to merge with other groups, the Free Huey movement and the "filthy speech movement." Thus, characterizing various political ideologies or political "isms" as representative of the BPP's political ideologies does not aptly reflect the discordant actions, ideological ambiguities and inconsistencies of the BPP as an organization.

Political "isms" espoused by the BPP's most vocal and visible leaders does not necessarily encompass the BPP's strategies for effecting fundamental changes in the socioeconomic and political structure of American society. It did not result in either a redistribution of power or a redistribution of wealth as I defined "revolution" in this chapter. Even as the BPP sought to empower themselves and local black communities against police brutality, goals of the "revolution" outlined in the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program were not strictly constructed or interpreted by individual members and chapters. This chapter does not dismiss the contributions and mobilizing efforts of the BPP as insignificant or totally ineffective, but argues that discordant actions combined with flawed interpretations of the

terms "revolution" and "revolutionary" hampered the BPP. Although the BPP dropped "Self-Defense" from its name in 1968, its paramilitary thrust continued to plague the organization as some of the actions and activities of BPP leaders reinforced law enforcement's premise that the BPP posed a significant threat to society at large.

This chapter demonstrated that despite political affirmations throughout the BPP's literature, individual translations of the BPP's "revolution" reveals inconsistencies and fueled internal dissension. It also highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the BPP's most visible leaders during a turbulent period of the BPP's history. Although BPP members espoused that they were "revolutionaries," individual "revolutionary" goals and objectives conflicted with the Ten Point Platform and Program of the BPP. The following chapter explores some of the internal struggles in the BPP as members sought to emulate international principles and adhere to the rules and regulations adopted by BPP "revolutionaries."

CHAPTER III

"REVOLUTIONARY" LIFE

"We sell ourselves out, we sell our children out, and we sell our women out when we treat them in any other manner."

Eldridge Cleaver[1]

The Black Panther Party's (BPP) Central Committee outlined administrative duties, expectations and procedures for its members. It developed points of attention, rules of discipline and eight rules (Figure II) governing the conduct and behavior of its members which expanded to twenty-six rules (Figure III) by 1969.[2] This chapter explores the responsibilities and duties of BPP men and women. It attempts to answer several questions. What did a typical day in the BPP entail? What were some of the daily routines, responsibilities and challenges of a BPP "revolutionary?" Did membership in the BPP expose men and women to greater harassment by law enforcement? Answering these questions offers insight into some of the daily routine activities of BPP members to illuminate strengths and weaknesses of both individual members and local BPP chapters nationwide.

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[1] Eldridge Cleaver, The Black Panther hereinafter cited as TBP, 13 September 1969, 12-13.

[2] Bobby Seale, Seize The Time, The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991), 391-393.

BPP leaders Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver, David Hilliard and Elaine Brown offered very brief glimpses into the daily lives of BPP members in their autobiographical accounts.[3] BPP members Assata Shakur, William Lee Brent, Regina Jennings and Steve McCutchen, have also enumerated their activities in some detail in their autobiographies.[4] The main challenge in examining these various autobiographical accounts is that the experiences of the BPP's leaders are not representative of all BPP members, namely, the rank and file. Although these primary accounts offer significant details about individual lives, experiences and specific events, autobiographical accounts do not necessarily or accurately convey all of the facts about specific events.

The accounts of BPP leaders cannot be generalized to account for the daily activities of all BPP members and must be examined with other sources to note inconsistencies. However, such accounts provides a window to contextualize individual interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary." Although recollections of specific events may differ between BPP leaders and rank and file members, this research exposes some of the

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[3] Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide (New York: Writers And Readers Inc.,1995); Bobby Seale, A Lonely Rage, The Autobiography of Bobby Seale (New York: Times Books, 1978); Eldridge Cleaver, Soul On Fire (Texas: Word Books, 1978); David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard And The Story of the Black Panther Party (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993); Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power, A Black Woman's Story (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992).

[4] Assata Shakur, Assata, An Autobiography (Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1987); William Lee Brent, Long Time Gone: A Black Panther's True Life Story of His Hijacking and Twenty-Five Years In Cuba (New York: Times Books, 1996); Regina Jennings, "Why I Joined The Party: An Africana Womanist Reflection," In Charles E. Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998),257-266; Steve McCutchen, "Selections From a Panther Diary," In Charles E. Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998), 115-134.

inconsistencies within primary accounts to explore fundamental gender and class differences in connotations of "revolution" and "revolutionary" in the BPP.

Although some autobiographies contain personal disillusionments, conflicts and tensions among individual BPP members and leaders, examining the autobiographies with oral and published interviews and FBI files elucidate counterintelligence efforts to foment tensions within the BPP. This chapter explores the "revolutionary life" of BPP members to probe and contextualize the FBI's delineation of the organization as the "greatest [single] threat." This chapter surveys some of the definitions and connotations of individual members, local and national chapters to argue that membership in the BPP was laden with risks and that the "revolutionary" environment of the BPP was fraught with tensions between BPP men and women. BPP members accepted such risks because of their strong commitment to serve and liberate the people and because of their genuine commitment to racial uplift. Despite such dedication and commitment, the "revolutionary" environment of the BPP provided a fertile terrain for exacerbating internal dissensions.

Many college students, high school students and high school graduates joined the BPP. Some individuals also joined the BPP because of their "militant" image promoted in the media after the BPP's "storming" of the state capitol in 1967. Regina Jennings, sported her best suede and leather outfit and cabaret hairpiece determined to join the Oakland BPP to "kill all the white people."[5] BPP members ignored her outburst and took her number. Jennings' actions showed that she initially endorsed the media imagery of the BPP as confrontational and unyielding. Some BPP followed Jennings for 'over a week' to verify her

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[5] Jennings, "Why I Joined the Party," 257-259.

address and to confirm whether she was deliberately sent by federal, state and local authorities to infiltrate the BPP. That BPP members followed Jennings indicated their caution and their overwhelming concern for security to ensure that Jennings was not an FBI or law enforcement agent. Jennings became a BPP member after the BPP ensured and confirmed that she was not an agent.[6]

Such pertinent concerns for security were not strictly or uniformly enforced throughout all BPP chapters. Assata Shakur who joined the BPP's Harlem Branch noted careless security concerns in the BPP's Harlem Branch. On the first day Shakur entered the Harlem BPP office, she was "knee deep" in paper, filing the chapter's "security files." She remarked, "I had just walked in off the street and they let me go through all the files."[7] The activities of both the Oakland and the Harlem chapters suggest that security may have been more highly prioritized by the BPP's California chapters, particularly as Oakland was the national headquarters of the BPP.

Such actions also indicate the Oakland BPP's keen awareness that the organization was under law enforcement surveillance which necessitated vigilance at all times to prevent infiltration of the organization and hinder counterintelligence efforts. They also indicate preventive measures implemented by the BPP to impede FBI infiltration. Hilliard noted that the BPP's rapid growth increased the problem of infiltration as new persons sought to assume positions of trust. Hilliard wrote, "we have little trouble with this in Oakland, the area's fairly contained....we know everyone, but in larger cities and new chapters, guys bully

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Shakur, Assata, 205.

their ways into positions of trust."[8] Observation and surveillance of Jennings also suggests that suspicion and mistrust permeated the organization as BPP members became more cautious about exposing themselves to harassment and prosecution from law enforcement.

Some individuals initially joined the BPP for what Seale termed, "status reasons" because they were enamored with the Panther uniform, "black beret, black slacks, black shoes, black pimp socks or regular socks, shined s hoes, blue shirt and a black turtleneck."[9] Seale labeled such individuals "do-nothing terrorists" because, they would linger in front of the BPP office assuming a macho stance with a "mean face," chests stuck out and folded arms. Seale surmised that such individuals were responding to "incorrect media sensationalism" of the BPP as a paramilitary organization. Seale's main annoyance with those engaging in such behavior was that they were only interested in "rapping" to women, "they never did any work at all or faked work."[10] Seale also complained of women who wanted assertive brothers who would " talk bad and loud, sell wolf tickets and carry on."[11] Although many people joined the BPP, "many did not return, they were driven away by the discipline and the reading."[12]

The BPP instituted political education classes to indoctrinate members about its Ten Point Platform and Program and to counter misconceptions of what the "revolution" was

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[8] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 248.

[9] Seale, Seize The Time, 367.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Brown, A Taste of Power, 137.

about and what it meant to be a "revolutionary" in the BPP. Such classes were "mandatory for general membership" and include weapons training and handling and a review of selected books ranging from Frantz Fanon, Karl Marx and Mao-Tse Tung. BPP Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver's book *Soul On Ice* and all articles published in the BPP's newspaper were also required readings. BPP members were expected to study assigned readings and be able to recite the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program on command.[13]

The BPP outlined administrative expectations and procedures for its members. The BPP's Central Committee developed rules of discipline and eight Points of Attention (Figure II) governing the conduct and behavior of its members which expanded to twenty-six rules by 1969 (Figure III). BPP members were expected to memorize all 'intraparty' disciplinary rules featuring a variety of edicts including, speaking politely, prohibitions from hitting, swearing and damaging property. The Points also forbade men from "taking liberties with women," ill-treatment of captives and proper reimbursement for anything borrowed or damaged.[14]

Points of attention were published in every edition of the BPP's newspaper to reinforce Rule 25 of the twenty-six rules of the BPP, "all chapters must adhere to the policy and ideology laid down by the Central Committee of the Black Panther Party."[15] The main problem with Rule 25 was that there was no unanimity in the BPP's political ideology as

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[13] Ibid.

[14] "Points of Attention of the Black Panther Party;" In Seale, Seize The Time, 391.

[15] "Rules of the Black Panther Party, National Headquarters, Berkeley California," In Seale, Seize The Time, 391-393. See also Figure II and Figure III of this work.

individual members and leaders misinterpreted and routinely violated codified rules of the BPP. The most debilitating aspect of the political education classes administered in the BPP was that, required readings were subject to individual interpretations of the person administering political education classes.

Word- for-word repetition and automatic citation of quoted works did not guarantee overall understanding of the literature. Tommy Lewis, a 'sixteen or seventeen-year old' former member of the Slauson gang who joined the BPP's South California chapter illustrates this point. Lewis did not know how to read but would have someone read political education assignments to him then memorize and recite whole passages of text from memory.[16] Elaine Brown studied "every revolutionary book" she could 'lay her hand on' and learned to shoot a pistol and an automatic rifle. Brown interpreted Lewis' action as indicative of his commitment to freedom and "revolution."[17]

Brown's "first mission" as a "revolutionary" was to make molotov cocktails, travel with BPP Captain John Huggins, other BPP members including Lewis wearing black clothing and gloves to toss lit gasoline-filled bottles at an empty building.[18] Lewis and Brown also transported caches of weapons to John Huggins' apartment where Lewis also resided. Brown maintained that Captain John Huggins had "gone over" the details and "political" significance of their activities.[19] Brown and Lewis viewed late night strikes to empty

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[16] Brown, A Taste of Power, 139.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid, 138.

[19] Ibid, 154.

buildings as symptomatic of the "revolution" launched by the BPP's Southern California chapter under the tutelage of Huggins. It is also possible that such activities were organized and reinforced in the political education classes administered by Huggins.

Despite political education classes, and the BPP's rule that everyone in a leadership position must read no less than two hours per day, the BPP was unsuccessful in curtailing misconceptions of what the BPP's "revolution" entailed and what it meant to be a "revolutionary" in the BPP. As BPP chapters increased nationwide, the BPP experienced difficulties with both leaders and rank and file members. All BPP members did not adhere to all of the rules concerning conduct and behavior. Captain William Lee Brent best exemplified the BPP's internal conflict with one of its 'leaders' and demonstrated flawed interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary" as interpreted by Brent and national leaders of the BPP.

Brent received three felony convictions before joining the Oakland BPP, he provided security for BPP leaders, spoke at Panther rallies and administered political education classes for BPP members.[20] Brent admitted ignoring BPP rules while "doing Party work" which resulted in his fatal confrontation between himself, BPP members and police. BPP Chief of Staff David Hilliard assigned Brent to accompany the other BPP Panthers to their San Francisco newspaper office and bring them back from an important meeting. Prior to the incident, Brent and two BPP members took the BPP's van to deliver the BPP's newspapers. Brent maintains that all three individuals in the van had been drinking alcohol. Brent had also taken 'a couple of Dexedrines' plus another pill given to him by a fellow Panther. Brent contended that violation of some BPP rules was routine. Brent's explanation of his behavior

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[20] Brent, Long Time Gone, 105.

and that of others in the van was, "any member who didn't drink or smoke a joint once in a while wasn't completely trusted by the rest of us"[21]

Brent and the others never arrived at the meeting, but were involved in a violent confrontation with police involving an alleged robbery attempt of $75 using the BPP's van. Brent contended that he was in a drug induced state of mind, unaware of the fatality of his actions, and had innocently accepted money given to him by a frightened attendant intimidated by the sight of an automatic weapon 'sticking out' of his waistband.[22] Law enforcement authorities formally indicted and charged Brent with three counts of assault to commit murder, one count of robbery and one count of an ex-convict carrying a gun.[23] The BPP's Central Committee, the ruling body of the BPP immediately held a press conference in which Eldridge Cleaver delivered the BPP's press statement.

Cleaver asserted that the Party did not advocate 'roving gangs of bandits' robbing service stations and taverns. He denounced Brent's actions as a 'foolish counterrevolutionary act of banditry' and accused Brent of being a suspected provocateur agent who had infiltrated the Party.[24] Hilliard noted that the incident was "the last thing" the BPP needed because it reinforced negative media portrayals of the BPP as "hypocrites and opportunists, members of an outlaw organization using politics to justify petty thievery, plus the sheer stupidity of

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[21] Brent, Long Time Gone, 105.

[22] Ibid,118.

[23] "3 Cops Shot: Jury To Probe Panthers," Oakland Tribune, 20 November 1968, 1.

[24] "Central Committee BPP Press Conference," TBP, 4 January 1969, 6.

the action makes us look asinine, a gang that can't shoot straight."[25]

The BPP expelled Brent for violating Party rules as the Central Committee was convinced of Brent's guilt which jeopardized the lives of unsuspecting BPP members. Brent was dismayed by his expulsion from the BPP and "torn to pieces emotionally and psychologically by their treachery."[26] He contended, on the one hand, he regretted the incident so that he "could just keep talking about black liberation and playing at being a revolutionary, on the other hand, I was damned proud of myself, I thought I would burst."[27] Brent demonstrated that despite the numerous political education classes he "never missed" and that he himself taught to other members as Captain and 'spokesman' for the BPP, he interpreted his actions as "revolutionary."

Five months later, Brent met with the Central Committee to seek readmission in the BPP. He maintained that all of the three Central Committee members upheld his expulsion but Co-founder Bobby Seale agreed to publish a statement in the Party's newspaper stating he was not an agent. The BPP published Seale's statement concerning Brent in its newspaper. Seale exonerated Brent from the charge of being an agent and proclaimed that the BPP had come forth to admit its "mistakes" to the community. He announced that Brent "cleared up" his misunderstandings with the Party by relating to the organization as "a person who

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[25] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 157-158.

[26] Brent, Long Time Gone, 125.

[27] Ibid.

we find really believes in the people's revolution."[28]

Seale emphasized that Brent was not in collaboration with other expelled members. The statement was absent of any criticism, or reference to the botched robbery attempt, injuries to the officers and the arrest of unsuspecting BPP members in the van as events unfolded. Seale admitted that the Party made a mistake, but he did not condemn or reassert Cleaver's earlier pronouncements that Brent was guilty of any wrongdoing.[29] Seale's statement implied that the Party erred in publicly denouncing and chastising Brent which effectively exempted Brent from any accountability or responsibility for his actions.

Seale was ominously silent in reprimanding or condemning Brent's actions. Seale's statement exemplified seeds of internal discord within the leadership because a censure and denunciation of a BPP member by Eldridge Cleaver was implicitly reversed by Co-founder Bobby Seale. Brent, in his autobiography interpreted Seale's statement as total vindication in the community because it was the Party's admission of an error concerning the accusation of being an agent. Brent later hijacked a plane to Cuba to avoid criminal prosecution.[30]

Brent and other BPP members violated the BPP's prohibition of possession of "narcotics or weed while doing Party work." The BPP also banned possession of a weapon while drunk or "loaded off narcotics or weed." Such restrictions did not decrease the popularity of "Bitter dog,"nicknamed "Panther piss" which was a Panther invention made of red port and

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[28] Bobby Seale, "Being Honest With The People Concerning Bill Brent," TBP, 20 April 1969, 7.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Brent, Long Time Gone, 126-129..

lemon juice throughout BPP chapters.[31] Seale explained that the BPP admonished those who brought alcoholic products to Panther offices to "go into the back" and not to get drunk.[32] The ineffectiveness of such a directive resulted in its abandonment in favor of more severe penalties such as work suspension from all political work, expulsion from the BPP and public denouncements.

Adoption and implementation of such severe measures suggest that some BPP members did not abide by the alcohol prohibition in the BPP and on occasion violated or abused alcohol. Violation of BPP rules and fundamental principles amounted to "individualism," a lack of discipline detrimental to its overall effectiveness and credibility throughout the local community. The BPP announced that it would not tolerate "ultra-democracy" defined as an aversion of discipline and an expression of "petty-bourgeoisie desires."[33] The organization suspended and expelled individuals through a purging process in 1968 and 1969 citing violation of discipline as the main reason for demotion and expulsion.[34]

The BPP promoted international resistance movements such as the Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese people, Latin American and African liberation struggles from which it modeled interpretations of "revolutionary." Individual chapters and members were expected to practice the principle of *Juche* or self-reliance, co-opted from the North Koreans and

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[31] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 222.

[32] Seale, Seize The Time, 366-367.

[33] "Panther Purge" TBP, 20 January 1969.

[34] Ibid.

promoted by the national symbol of a flying horse of Chulima in its newspaper centerfold.[35] Elaine Brown, who later became the only Chairwoman of the BPP in 1974, explained, "if we had been in Bolivia with Che, we told ourselves, we would be shot for violations of rules and orders, discipline was essential in the vanguard."[36]

The BPP emulated Argentinian doctor and famous guerilla fighter Ernesto "Che" Guevara as a model for implementing disciplinary measures. Examination of such application, reveals one of the main flaws of applying such an international "revolutionary" model in the BPP. Environmental conditions under which Guevara waged war and the disciplinary measures he enforced were vastly different from the urban environment of the BPP.[37]

Guevara mainly engaged in guerilla warfare, he and his followers operated from the mountains, forests and hills of Sierra Maestra in Cuba and from Bolivia. Guevara did not tolerate insubordination from his very small group of less than twelve men who operated "underground" under hazardous conditions such as sparse water and food supplies, lack of basic necessities and long marches. Guevara and his men were constantly under attack by authorities causing them to constantly rotate strategic positions under heavy gunfire.[38] Insubordination, lack of discipline and any evidence of indolence was punishable not only

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[35] Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 211.

[36] Brown, A Taste Of Power, 275.

[37] See Jon Lee Anderson, Che Guevara, A Revolutionary Life (New York: Grove Press, 1997); Ernesto "Che" Guevara, "General Principles of Guerilla Warfare," In Daniel Castro ed. Revolution and Revolutionaries: Guerilla Movements in Latin America (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), 65-86.

[38] Ibid.

through corporal punishment but execution and torture. Newton and the BPP equalized their oppression with those of "revolutionary" individuals especially Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Mao Tse-Tung because the same existing power structure and "the oppressor who had controlled them was controlling us both directly and indirectly."[39] The BPP hailed these fellow "kinsmen" whom Newton argued developed "successful strategies" for liberating their people.[40]

Although the BPP struggled to combat state repression, conditions and extremes under which Guevara functioned were not exactly similar to those of the BPP in Oakland and other BPP chapters nationwide. Newton argued that the BPP did not deliberately attempt to "import ideas and strategies" but also attempted to "transform what we learned into principles and methods acceptable to the brothers on the block."[41] In its attempts to operationalize and transform a "revolutionary" model to endure disciplinary measures, the BPP induced great latitude for abuse.

The BPP enforced disciplinary measures throughout all BPP chapters and branches as an informal judicial system essential in the vanguard. Disciplinary measures varied from chapter to chapter and were almost always at the discretion of those in positions of power within the BPP hierarchy. As "revolutionaries," BPP members were conditioned to accept punishment for violations and infractions to promote and enhance efficiency and

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[39] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 111.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

cohesiveness in all Party work.[42] No one, not even those in leadership positions, was exempt from disciplinary measures which always contained an element of violence or corporal punishment. Brown recalled receiving ten lashes ordered by Bobby Seale because as editor of the Party's newspaper, she was late in 'getting the paper out on time.'[43]

A member of the Detroit Chapter known only as "A," recalled her punishment of standing in a closet with a red light to study Mao Tse Tung's Red book for five hours.[44] Such activities may have been characteristic of "people's jail" instituted in some chapters which Hilliard described as, "the adult equivalent of quiet time when you stand in a corner and consider your behavior, a room with a chair and light where people can read the Red Book or an appropriate essay."[45] In Oakland, disciplinary measures included, "a marathon of push-ups or pumping X number of laps around the corner."[46] Other disciplinary methods include house arrest wherein a member was prohibited from engaging in BPP activities and under the supervision of others.

"Mud-holing," was perhaps one of the most violent disciplinary methods, described as a 'beatdown' administered to BPP men in some local chapters. John Seale explained, "that's old term that means beat your ass, it came out of the streets; if there were fights and a

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[42] Frank Jones, "Tightening Up," TBP, 25 January 1969, 17.

[43] Brown, A Taste Of Power, 275.

[44] Author Oral interview with A, Detroit BPP, 10/10/99. I have only used the first letter of A's name to protect identity.

[45] John Seale, Quoted In Hilliard This Side Of Glory, 236.

[46] Ibid, 236.

person fell down, he'd get stomped–"mudholed" you're in the mud."[47] Such a practice was an undertaken by a cadre of people in the BPP to discipline BPP men. "They just beat them up, nothing that would break arms or bones or anything like that" he explained, "you figure four or five guys beating a guy in his ribs and his chest, popping him in his face, he'd get bruised."[48] The ultimate decision on which methods to employ for disciplining a BPP member was always left to the discretion of those in positions of power which provided great latitude for abuse.

The FBI seized upon this opportunity to fracture the BPP by inserting FBI informant William O'Neal into the Chicago BPP. Unbeknownst to other BPP members, O'Neal was later revealed as the FBI informant who arranged Fred Hampton's assassination/murder in Chicago.[49] O'Neal's activities are not representative of all BPP members but elucidates a concrete example of FBI manipulation and misappropriation of the term "revolutionary" to hamper the BPP. It also highlights a deliberate attempt by an FBI informant to manipulate connotations of "revolutionary" to adversely affect, disrupt and neutralize the BPP's leadership and membership. O'Neal concocted the most outlandish proposal for discipline as head of security of the Chicago BPP.

O'Neal devised a plan to wire up an electric chair in the Party's basement to discipline Chicago BPP members. He expected other members and leaders to unquestionably accept his proposal and reasoned that as "revolutionaries," BPP members should endure torture

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[47] Ibid, 235.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 270.

as a disciplinary measure. It is possible that had O'Neal succeeded in this endeavor, the "electric chair" would have granted law enforcement authorities the necessary leverage to prosecute the BPP. O'Neal's outlandish proposal was immediately rejected by the national and local leadership.[50]

The BPP implemented more rigorous methods throughout its local chapters for ferreting suspected informants. In February 1969, the Indiana Chapter of the BPP publicized a photograph of a male individual referred to as D.H suspected of being an informant.[51] D.H came to the Chicago chapter claiming to be sent from the Oakland Chapter. After calls to the coast could not confirm his affiliation with the BPP, he was 'taken into custody,' searched and verbally interrogated, ironically by FBI informant and Security Officer William O'Neal. A "more intense stage" of questioning continued for three and a half hours, causing D.H to "make sense" of his statements, admitting he was an FBI informant. Such questioning methods also show internal inconsistencies as members ignored one of the main 8 points of attention, " if we ever have to take captives do not ill-treat them."[52] The Indiana chapter asserted, "as quickly as they plant informer, so shall we root them out, but at our own discretion."[53]

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[50] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 236.

[51] Ministry Of Defense, Indiana Chapter of The Black Panther Party, "All Panthers Beware," TBP, 17 February 1969, 9.

[52] Point 8 of the BPP's "8 Points of Attention," In Seale Seize The Time, 391-393. "Rules of the Black Panther Party, National Headquarters, Berkeley California," See also Figure II of this work.

[53] "Dealing With Pig Informers," TBP, 20 April 1969, 8.

The BPP's "intense questioning" methods of suspected informants caused the District Attorney's office to indict several members of the New Haven Chapter, including Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins, for the New Haven murder and torture of Alex Rackley whose body was found in a marshland May 1969. Rackley was a member of the New Haven Connecticut BPP chapter organized by Ericka Huggins in 1969. He was accused by the Connecticut leadership and membership of being a counterintelligence agent who infiltrated the BPP's Connecticut chapter. During the trial in which Huggins and Seale were acquitted of all charges in May 1971, the State attorney played a recovered tape on which Rackley's excruciating screams were heard. Convicted of Rackley's murder were two BPP members, Landon Williams and Roy Hithe who both pled guilty to reduced charges of conspiracy to murder. BPP member Lonnie McLucas was also convicted of conspiracy to commit Rackley's murder.[54]

Rackley's murder resulted from fatal methods of ferreting suspected informants which suggests that some BPP members may have been defenseless against charges of infiltrating the BPP. It also suggests that by 1969, heightened security concerns exacerbated tensions as the BPP sought to counter state repression. Suspected informants and disruptive individuals were labeled "jackanapes" by the BPP leadership and membership. Individual actions of BPP members raised questions about overall interpretations of "revolution" and further aggravated tensions in the BPP.

The BPP's most pressing dilemma was that some of the leadership and rank and file

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[54] See Gail Sheehy, Panthermania, The Clash Of Black Against Black In One American City (New York: Harper & Row Publishers 1971).

membership interpreted revolution as authorization for committing illegal acts. Despite political education classes, the BPP was unsuccessful in curtailing misconceptions of what the BPP's "revolution" was about and what it meant to be a "revolutionary" in the BPP. The BPP coined the phrase "the stupid revolution" to describe illegal activities undertaken by members under the guise of "revolution."[55] The BPP also redefined "jackanape" to refer to individuals who joined the Party whose only interest was shooting police.[56]

Seale explained, " a jackanape generally works from an opportunistic position, he centers things only around himself, he's still selfish, he thinks his pot and his wine are above the Party, he thinks his gun is something that he can use at will, to rip off stuff for himself."[57] Hilliard himself recounted that after drinking with June and Bobby Seale one New Year's Eve, he unleashed a .380 magnum and started firing at a police car that rolled by his house to express "a material blow against the pigs."[58] Hilliard was ashamed of himself after engaging in such behavior and after a rebuke from Seale. Hilliard renewed his studies of *Fanon* and noted the importance of studying and analyzing revolution as "a science, not simply a matter of risking a lot and acting like a rebel."[59]

Some BPP members did not concur with Hilliard's experience. Hilliard recalled being awakened by pounding on his door and shouts of "Let me in!" "The pigs are after us!" at

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[55] Ibid, 157.

[56] Ibid, 147.

[57] Seale, Seize The Time, 381.

[58] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 151.

[59] Ibid, 152.

4 AM. When he opened the door, two out of breath members pushed inside informing him they'd just "made a move on police" that had resulted in a shoot-out on 32nd street. Although no one was hurt, they were seeking refuge as their car had been "all shot up" and was parked around the corner from his home. Hilliard described this incident as "an unconscious abuse of loyalty" because their "foolishness" threatened themselves, the Party, his own well being and the safety of his family.[60] Both Hilliard's actions and those of the BPP members involved in this incident demonstrate violation of the BPP's rule that, "no Party member will use, point or fire a weapon of any kind unnecessarily or accidentally at anyone."[61]

Bobby Seale differentiated between a "revolutionary" and a 'jackanape' in his autobiography. Whereas the 'jackanape' was a selfish and 'foolish' opportunist who employed a gun at will to commit illegal acts, a "true revolutionary" was dedicated to the community, competent to organize, support and facilitate the BPP's programs. [62] As a dedicated member of the BPP, "he is constantly trying to educate himself about the revolutionary principles and how they function to get a broad perspective, he'll also defend himself and his people when we're unjustly attacked by racist pigs."[63] Although Seale has advanced his role in his autobiographical accounts in promoting and ensuring equality for

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[60] Ibid, 175-176.

[61] "Rules of the Black Panther Party, National Headquarters, Berkeley California," In Seale Seize The Time, 391-393. See also Figure III of this work.

[62] Seale, Seize The Time, 380.

[63] Ibid.

women in the Party, his description of the "true revolutionary" was male gender specific.

For Seale, the ideal "true revolutionary" was initially a tough macho male willing to commit the "revolutionary suicide" espoused by Newton and who was undaunted by "pussy power." The concept of "pussy power" was popularized in the BPP by Edridge Cleaver who argued that black women's "revolutionary power" sprouted from "the lips of a pussy." He urged women to persuade their men to become part of the solution, "you can put them under more pressure than I can with speeches, you can cut off their sugar," he stated in an October 1968 speech at Stanford University.[64]

"Pussy power" strongly influenced BPP members particularly during the BPP's early days. For example, two weeks after joining the BPP, Elaine Brown and a group of men and women gathered for Wednesday night meetings and political education classes administered by BPP members John Huggins and Ericka Huggins. Shortly after John Huggins explained the structure of the BPP, the group "broke into small groups according to gender."[65] Brown contended that Ericka Huggins informed the group of women that they were in the "vanguard of revolution," and may have to engage in sexual encounters with the "enemy" at night and "slit his throat in the morning."[66] The women were also informed that "gender was but another weapon, another tool of the revolution." As "revolutionaries," BPP women "had the task of producing children, progeny of revolution who would carry the

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[64] Scheer ed., Eldridge Cleaver Post-Prison Writings, 143.

[65] Brown, A Taste of Power, 135.

[66] Ibid, 136.

flame when we fell, knowing that generations after us would prevail."[67]

Such an assertion revealed the BPP's parallels with Vietnamese, Cuban, Angolan and Mozambique women and many others who employed their bodies against aggressors. Sexual intimacy was but one of the main tools to neutralize and eliminate "enemies." For BPP women the term "revolutionary" denoted various interpretations which were not always congruent with the BPP local and national leadership. In 1968, women of the BPP published poems characterizing the supportive role of the "revolutionary woman" by functioning as "everything" for the "revolutionary black man."[68]

One article in 1968 described the ideal "revolutionary woman" as "militant, revolutionary, committed, strong and warm, feminine and kind."[69] However, it is erroneous to conclude that such limiting descriptions aptly reflected the roles of women in the BPP throughout the organization's history. Historian Tracye Matthews argued that the BPP was a male-dominated hierarchy wherein black women struggled to create an environment conducive to their own empowerment amid sexism, harassment, male chauvinism and sexual exploitation.[70]

By 1969, women proliferated among the leadership of the BPP in chapters such as

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[67] Ibid, 137.

[68] Linda Greene, "The Black Revolutionary Woman," TBP 28 September 1968,11; Gloria Bartholomew, "A Black Woman's Thoughts," TBP 28 September 1968, 11; "Black Woman" TBP, 14 September 1968, 6.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Tracye Matthews, "'No One Ever Asks, What A Man's Place In The Revolution Is': Gender and the Politics of the Black Panther Party 1966-1971," In Charles Jones ed, The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 291.

Boston, Chicago and Connecticut. Jane Culberson of the Southern California chapter articulated the role of a revolutionary woman in a May 1969 article. She revered examples of Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban women and asserted, "our role is to fight in and participate in this revolution on an equal footing with our men...we would like to be regarded as PANTHERS not females (Pantherettes), just Panthers."[71] She further demanded equal footing and equal rank for BPP women based on competence and devoid of "emotional hangups" concerning gender. Unresolved conflicts concerning gender manifested in the BPP's "panther pads" and collectives throughout local BPP chapters.

The fundamental necessity of the Panther pads/collectives demonstrated the BPP's strained financial resources. Members relied on the mobilization of their own limited resources which were often insufficient to provide rental fees for additional apartments and collectives. It also suggests that in most chapters, the BPP lacked sufficient living arrangements to accommodate its membership. The BPP encouraged five or six members to rent a house together to yield cheaper rent. Seale explained, as long as members were "dedicated revolutionaries," who worked around the clock, the Party would "take care of them" by providing for their "basic necessities" such as rent and food.[72] Although the BPP instituted a variety of social programs to local communities, of which the Free Breakfast For Schoolchildren Program was the most popular, "often-times Panthers themselves had little

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[71] June Culberson, "The Role Of The A Revolutionary Woman," TBP, 4 May 1969, 9.

[72] Seale, Seize The Time, 381.

food and certainly very little money."[73]

BPP members with apartments accepted others into their living spaces, they established and formed friendships, intimate and work relationships. However, for those who enjoyed their own living spaces, any additions may have exacerbated tensions and caused certain infringements on both space and privacy. Members clashed over delineations of duties in the Panther collectives concerning, cooking and cleaning. Brown recalled a gathering in Los Angeles involving men and women including Central Committee members. As Brown sat with the men, one of the women specifically notified her that all sisters had to help with food preparation. Ten women prepared eggs, bacon, biscuits and potatoes, served the food and poured the orange juice for the men who continued with their discussions.[74]

Brown became agitated over the fact that the women had to clean the kitchen after they had eaten. Brown avoided what she termed her "uglier tirade," but banged dishes to express her outrage and loudly exclaimed her displeasure. She also denoted sexism on the part of Co-founder Bobby Seale, who later claimed that he was an ardent proponent of gender equality in the BPP.[75] Brown stated that her actions alienated most of the men and women which suggest that in Los Angeles, cooking and cleaning roles were automatically and routinely relegated to women. Thus, the Panther collective/pad represented another

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[73] Jennings, "Why I Joined The Party," 260.

[74] Brown, A Taste Of Power, 190-192

[75] Bobby Seale, Keynote Address delivered at Georgia State University, Black Panther Party Revisited: Reflections and Scholarship," Conference at Georgia State University Atlanta, Georgia, October 24-25 1996.

"vignette of contestation" for BPP women.

In Los Angeles, Brown and other women who refused to accept what they considered "an inferior role" in the BPP's "revolution" developed a "collective posture" and became known as the "clique." Brown wrote, "we would not be rewarding any brother with our bodies, in the bedroom or in the kitchen."[76] The "clique" according to Brown acquired a reputation for what some men in the BPP considered "bad attitudes," and for being "smart bitches who needed to be silenced."[77] Brown and the women of the "clique" were determined to quell and dispel such negative labels through hard work and dedication. Brown noted support for the "clique" by Geronimo "Ji Jaga" Pratt and Minister of Education Raymond "Masai" Hewitt. Such an environment did not deter many BPP men and women. Jennings explained, "(there were) women in the Party like me who tried to hold on because we understood the power, the significance and the need for our organization."[78]

Brown described "Camelot house" which served as the "central nervous system" of the Los Angeles chapter on Century Boulevard. The apartment was rented by Ericka and John Huggins, but shared by eight other BPP members. Brown noted that the apartment was a two-story, wood-framed fixture, whose bottom structure included a garage which served as a library and office area. Brown slept on a mattress on the floor with a hatchet to deflect what she termed the "obnoxious advances of Long John, a definite blight in Camelot."[79]

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[76] Brown, A Taste of Power, 192.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Jennings, "Why I Joined The Party," 263.

[79] Brown, A Taste Of Power, 153.

Deliberate placement of the hatchet by her bedside suggests that it was maintained for protection against Long John's unwelcoming sexual advances.

Panther pads/collectives epitomized the BPP's realization of *Juche* because Brown and women of the BPP were solely responsible for their security which suggests that the BPP's collective environment was also fraught with sexual tensions. Historian Tracy Ann Mathews argued those living arrangements, especially for those who took residence in the apartments of others, caused tensions among members concerning gender roles, class conflict and sexual politics.[80]

All BPP men were not sexists. Those who challenged or repudiated unfair practices against women in the BPP were in some instances "ostracized by the leadership."[81] Their defense of women violated the BPP's popularization of the macho "revolutionary male" who was undaunted by "pussy power." Assata Shakur greatly respected Zayd, the Minister of Information of the BPP's Harlem chapter because he refused to participate in "unprincipled attacks on sisters," and volunteered to cook dinner and wash dishes.[82] Shakur noted, "I knew this had to be especially hard for him because he was small and his masculinity was always being challenged in some way by the more backward, muscle-headed men in the Party."[83]

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[80] See Tracye Anne Matthews, "No One Ever Asks What A Man's Place In The Revolution Is": Gender And Sexual Politics In The Black Panther Party 1966-1971, (Ph.D diss, University Of Michigan, 1998).

[81] Shakur, Assata, 223.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

Perhaps one of the most ardent criticisms of sexism in the BPP was issued by Eldridge Cleaver from Algiers in support of Erica Huggins the widow of slain BPP member John Huggins. Erica Huggins who established the BPP's New Haven Connecticut chapter was on trial along with Bobby Seale for the murder of Alex Rackley. Cleaver argued that Huggins' incarceration and suffering in prison should be a "stinging rebuke" to all manisfestations of male chauvinism within BPP ranks. He wrote

> we must too recognize that a woman can be just as revolutionary as a man and that she has equal stature, that along with men and that we cannot prejudice her in any manner, that we cannot relegate her to an inferior position, that we have to recognize our women as our equals and that revolutionary standards of principles demand that we go to great lengths to see to it that disciplinary action is taken on all levels against those who manifest male chauvinism behavior.[84]

BPP women reiterated their role as "revolutionary" women and reinforced Cleaver's position in a published interview on September 13, 1969. The women stated that they emulated the "revolutionary women" of Palestine, Vietnam, South Africa and China. One woman stated, "as Panthers we cannot separate ourselves and divide ourselves and work as as Pantherettes...we can't be divided on the basis of sex and we can't be divided on the basis of principles or anything,"[85] In essence, BPP women redefined their relationships in the "revolutionary" environment of the BPP.

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[84] Eldridge Cleaver, "Message To Sister Erica Huggins of the Black Panther Party," TBP, 5 July 1969.

[85] "Sisters," TBP, 13 September 1969, 12-13.

Brown contended, "Panther women were stripped of the pretty things the "bourgeois sweetnesses that could have made them glamorous women, the kind I saw Huey adored despite his revolutionized ways, Panther women were hard in a way, soldiers, comrades, not pretty little things."[86] Some BPP members engaged in "revolutionary marriages" performed by Reverend Earl A. Neil.[87] One of the most celebrated "revolutionary marriages" in the BPP was that of Minister Of Education Raymond "Masai" Hewitt to Shirley Neeley on August 19, 1969 at the Free Church at Berkeley.

Photographs of the couple's wedding were published in the BPP's newspaper where the BPP claimed that the couple received "million dollar rings" made from destroyed U.S. planes in Vietnam supplied by the People's Democratic Republic of Vietnam.[88] The wedding devastated Brown who was four months pregnant with Hewitt's child. She contemplated leaving the BPP but changed her mind after a scolding from David Hilliard who convinced her that as a "true revolutionary," she should not be deterred by what Hilliard termed "dick and pussy problems" and permit the 'subjective' to overrule her 'objective.'[89] Brown wrote, "he had tried to make my pain seem absurd-when I knew it was not."[90]

Hilliard's admonishment revealed his notion of the "revolutionary" woman whose commitment to the people outweighed her personal displeasure. Newton reinforced the

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[86] Brown, A Taste Of Power, 260.

[87] Author Interview with Reverend Earl A. Neil 7/99.

[88] "Revolutionary Love, Revolutionary Wedding," TBP, 23 August 1969.

[89] Brown, A Taste Of Power,199.

[90] Ibid.

notion that the primary relationship between BPP men and women was that of "comrade" and that defining or claiming a BPP member as one's own was to liken him/her to property.[91] Hilliard noted in his autobiography, that he did not accept the concept of romantic love and struggled with "love relationships." He wrote, "even in the best circumstances the idea of a perfect match between a man and a woman is idealistic."[92] Hilliard fathered a child with BPP member Brenda Presley. Hilliard recalled that his wife BPP Finance Secretary Patricia Hilliard confronted him at gunpoint in a bedroom with Presley after spending months ignoring rumors.[93]

Patricia Hilliard's reaction to the fact that her husband and father of her three children was with another BPP woman showed that although both Brenda Presley and Patricia Hilliard continued to share Hilliard, the notion of sexual equality in the BPP was fraught with tension. The BPP attempted to diffuse tensions by redefining intimacy for the BPP "revolutionary" which was best reflected in Newton's assertion that "the demands two people make upon each other can be crippling and destructive."[94]

Some BPP men and women who readily endorsed such a view practiced freedom to choose a sexual partner to the extreme. Hilliard wrote, "a lot of members are younger than I and single; they seem to be playing romantic musical chairs, practicing to the extreme our

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[91] Ibid, 259.

[92] Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 223.

[93] Ibid, 252.

[94] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 96.

principle that people are free to choose their sexual partners."[95] Seale accentuated his sexual encounters with women of the BPP in his autobiographical account. He claimed six sexual encounters with five different women on the same evening three days before his arrest.[96]

He later blamed these encounters for his contraction of a venereal disease. Seale acknowledged that he may or may not have infected these women. He dispatched messages from jail notifying the women of the disease to ensure that they could receive "proper medical care."[97] Seale's statement demonstrated that sexual tensions manifested in the residence of Party members in Panther collectives/pads. It also demonstrated a hazardous sexual consequence resulting from the sexual freedom of BPP "revolutionaries." That is not to state that all BPP engaged in such a practice or were infected with sexual diseases, but to note the sexual behavior of some BPP members, and its principal leaders as a source of internal discord in the BPP. Sexual tensions in the Panther collectives did not deter BPP men from fulfilling obligations to the local communities they served. Regina Jennings explained, "since we expected to be killed or jailed, we loved one another fully, purely and platonically unless we decided otherwise."[98]

Disciplinary measures, purging and counterintelligence efforts did not hamper the Party's struggle to raise the consciousness of the community. Examination of the diaries of Cheryl Foster of the BPP Harlem Chapter offers insight into the daily activities of some Party

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[95] Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 221.

[96] Seale, A Lonely Rage, 187-190.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Jennings, "Why I Joined The Party," 262.

members.[99]

Monday to Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00AM-exercise, clean up and eat	7:00-get up, exercise clean, eat	8:00-get up clean eat
7:00 Breakfast Program	9:00-office opens	9:30-drill Central Park
7:30 sell papers at busy train and bus stops	9:30-sell papers in	12:00-office opens
9:00 sign in	progressive areas	12:30-go into field
10:00 section work	2-3 lunch P.E class	Everyone will be
12-1 Progressive paper selling	7:00-sign in office	assigned to a specific
1:30-2:15 lunch, P.E (political education class)	7-8-dinner	church to relate to the
2:30-3:30 section work	8:30-10:30 field	people (in) service
3:45-6:30 progressive paper selling	work in colony-bars,	3:00-door to door
7:00 sign in	dances etc.	section work, housing
8:00 dinner		complaints
8:30-10:30 community work, office work, P.E class.		6:00-sign in

Although Foster's log is not representative of all BPP members' activities nationwide, it reflects a typical day in the life of a "revolutionary" in the BPP fraught with paper sales, community outreach measures, and political education classes. It is unknown whether Foster adhered to this schedule to the letter. However, examination of all three activities illuminates the daily, group and community activities of the BPP at the local level. "Progressive paper selling" dominated Foster's activities because it provided financial

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[99] Notebook of Cheryl Foster, Special Collections, Black Panther Party Collection, Schomburg Center for Research Center In Black Culture.

support for individual members and chapters. Members kept ten cents from every paper sold for twenty-five cents. They submitted the remaining fifteen cents to the chapter's financial officer who would submit half of chapter's total finances to national headquarters in Oakland. The chapter's half of the money was used to pay utilities and expenses and support Party activities.[100]

The Oakland leadership would then disseminate funds for the local chapters in 1969. Very often, the finances of local chapters were strained partly because of the backlog of unsold newspapers. One example was a counterintelligence memo documenting the activities of the North Carolina chapter. One FBI Special Agent noted, that half of the group's newspaper income or $1,750 was required by national headquarters. The group frequently retained the previous week's newspapers on hand when their next shipment arrived.[101] Thus, they were not selling all of their newspapers which also meant acute financial difficulties. Such financial difficulties explain why individual chapters were often strained to raise bail money for fellow members including court and attorney costs.

According to a financial report conducted by the United States House of Representatives (USHRS) Subcommittee of the Committee on Internal Security in 1970, of twenty five active BPP chapters, nineteen of the groups were 'barely solvent,' five were 'seriously in debt' and only one was considered in "good financial condition."[102] Such dire

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[100] Jennings, "Why I Joined the Party," 260.

[101] FBI File, North Carolina Black Panther Party, To Director, FBI from SAC, Charlotte, 8/19/70.

[102] United States House of Representatives, Subcommittee of the Committee on Internal Security 1970, Exhibit 25, 5081.

financial straits suggest that BPP members were struggling to support themselves and their families especially since the BPP did not encourage its members to retain full-time jobs. Elaine Brown explained, "we were on twenty-four hour call, there were no part-time revolutionaries, we were full-time revolutionaries, full-time Panthers."[103]

BPP members had unofficially taken a vow of poverty to foster a greater sense of purpose. Their very existence centered on the people and the communities they served despite obstacles from law enforcement. To be a "revolutionary" in the BPP was to be bombarded with some form of harassment from law enforcement. BPP leaders and members complained of their arrests and imprisonment. Panthers in every locale were constantly, "being stopped and/or arrested, and/or beaten, en route to or from breakfast programs, rallies, offices and homes."[104]

Law enforcement. authorities frequently seized BPP newspapers upon an arrest and also conducted raids on BPP residences. The BPP considered such raids "gestapo tactics," and "vamping." From April to December 1969, raids of BPP headquarters include San Francisco, Chicago, Salt Lake City, Indianapolis, Denver, San Diego, Sacramento and Los Angeles.[105] The raids also indicate a concerted effort by law enforcement to wage a pre-emptive strike to disarm and to disrupt the BPP consistent with its perceptions of the organization as the "greatest single threat." Raids on BPP residences included searches,

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[103] Brown, A Taste of Power, 138.

[104] Ibid, 196.

[105] See G. Louis Heath, Off The Pigs, The History And Literature Of The Black Panther Party (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1976).

seizures of BPP property and arrests. Raids prompted Newton to issue a warning to law enforcement officials while he was in prison stating that anyone who approached BPP members' homes with intent to kick down doors and ransack was violating their human rights; henceforth, would be "treated as outlaws, gangsters and evildoers" as the Party had no way of distinguishing guardians of the law from lawbreakers.[106]

According to the BPP's Rule 9, upon any arrest, any BPP member was to provide only their name and address. BPP men and women were forbidden to sign anything when arrested and were often brutalized by the police. One example involved nineteen-year-old student nurse Joan Bird, a student of Bronx Community College who published an account of her arrest on January 17, 1969. A photograph of Bird's bruised and swollen face supported her contention that she was tortured, threatened, beaten, harassed and intimidated by police.[107] Although BPP men and women were accorded similar punishments when arrested, brutal treatment had more serious consequences for pregnant BPP women.

For example, Afeni Shakur, one of the Panther 21 arrested in 1969 for allegedly trying to bomb the Botanical Gardens in New York and various department stores, and Assata Shakur both gave birth to their children in prison as the BPP was unable to pay the excessively high bail amounts. Usually after paying such bails, the charges were later dropped. Bail for the Panther 21 in New York was $100.000 per person. Most of the

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[106] Huey P. Newton, "Executive Mandate No.3," 1 March 1968, TBP, 16 March 1968, 1.

[107] "Student Nurse Tortured," TBP, 17 February 1969, 9; Kuwasi Ballagoon, Look For Me In The Whirlwind, The Collective Autobiography Of The New York 21 (New York: Random House, 1971), 305-306

Panther 21 spent two years in prison after a fifteen- month trial and ninety-minute deliberation of a jury which acquitted them of the total one hundred and fifty-six counts against them.[108]

Arrests and imprisonment of BPP leaders and members were strategically aimed at draining the financial resources of the organization and crippling its membership. Bobby Seale and his wife were arrested on February 25, 1968. Prior to their arrest, Seale counted $9,000 for the Huey P. Newton Defense Fund. However, when he was taken to jail, he learned that four other Panthers including Chief of Staff David Hilliard and Audrey Hudson had also been 'busted.' Seale, his wife and the four other Panthers, were all charged with conspiracy to commit murder and Seale's bail was set for $11,000. When he was bailed out three hours later, he learned his wife's bail was also set for $11,000, and the four other Panthers' bail was $6,000 each. Seale wrote, "what came to my mind was that with four of us with $6,000 bail each and my wife and I with $11,000 bail each, when added comes to $46,000, now the ten percent premiums alone come to $4,600."[109] Both examples demonstrated that arrests and high bails devastated the BPP and financially strained local BPP chapters.

They also limited the resources of the BPP because frequent arrests and incarceration removed BPP members from the local communities thereby limiting the BPP's outreach. Bail was very often raised through the mobilization of several local chapters as BPP members often worked in more than one local chapter. For example, in the Bay area,

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[108] Ballagoon, Look For Me In The Whirlwind, 364.

[109] Bobby Seale, "Gestapo Tactics," TBP, 16 March 1968, 11.

members of the Southern California chapter also worked in Oakland, Richmond and Berkeley. New York BPP members worked in Harlem, Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn. Joan Bird noted, "Panthers can go anywhere and know that there is another Panther, another comrade, another person that will watch your back the same as you would watch theirs."[110]

Such interactions allow one to understand the degree of counterintelligence infiltration in the BPP in that the very same people sharing section and field work, administering or attending political education classes, and representing the Party in the local community may or may not have been the very same informants who devastated the Party by betraying fellow members and leaders despite the comradeship of the Panther collectives or pads.[111]

Another example other than William O'Neal in Chicago is that of Earl Anthony, Deputy Minister of Information of the Southern California Chapter. Earl Anthony joined the BPP in April 1967 and sought national fame and notoriety by publishing a book about the BPP in 1970. In October 1968, Anthony secured a book contract with Dial Books concerning his experience in the BPP. The BPP's Central Committee disapproved of his actions. Eager to publish his account, Anthony left the BPP. Although Anthony stated that he was not expelled from the Party until March 29, 1969 in his autobiography, he admitted leaving the Party in November 1968. Anthony traveled to Stockholm in 1969 to write *Picking Up The Gun, A Report On The Black Panthers* which was published by Dial Books in 1970.[112]

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[110] Joan Bird, In Look For Me In The Whirlwind, 309.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Earl Anthony, Picking Up The Gun, A Report On The Black Panthers (New York: Dial Press, 1970).

In 1990, Anthony published yet another biography *Spitting in the Wind, The True Story Behind The Violent Legacy Of The Black Panther Party*, confirming that he began working as an FBI informant August 1967, four months after joining the BPP.[113] Anthony essentially criminalized the activities of the BPP. Anthony's unsubstantiated exaggeration in his second book was that by 1969 the membership of the BPP exceeded five thousand members, of which three thousand went to prison, three hundred others were suspected of being informants and killed by the Panthers themselves.[114] Anthony's unsubstantiated claims expose internal disruption caused by yet another known FBI informant in the BPP who was also in a position of leadership.

Examining the "revolutionary" life of BPP members and leaders demonstrate that the "revolutionary" environment of the BPP was not glamorous or glorious. BPP men and women were committed to their local communities and endured harassment, police brutality, incarceration and dire financial straits as "revolutionaries." BPP members endured such conditions because it was consistent with similar consequences experienced by the international movements they sought to emulate. BPP members also endured punishments in fulfilment and realization of "revolutionary" principles.

The main flaw in their evaluation was that although the organization experienced state repression, such conditions did not necessarily mirror similar geographic and environmental conditions consistent with that of other "revolutionaries." This chapter drew a parallel

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[113] Earl Anthony, Spitting In The Wind, The True Story Behind The Violent Legacy Of The Black Panther Party (Santa Monica, California: Roundtable Publishing, 1990), 8-9.

[114] Ibid, 38.

between one of the BPP's models to argue that the settings within which the BPP launched its "revolution" contained internal contradictions and flaws. One example was the gender interpretations of the term "revolutionary" which exposed a "contested terrain" within which BPP men and women struggled to define, practice and implement on a daily basis.

Although BPP men and women were committed, their actions at times, contradicted the principles, codified rules and regulations established by the BPP particularly the BPP's twenty-six rules and eight points of attention specifying the conduct and expectations of BPP "revolutionaries." Such rules demonstrate an internal struggle in the BPP concerning discipline. Failures to comply with such codes were a violation of discipline which subjected one to various acts of violence which varied from chapter to chapter. The BPP did not enforce such methods merely to reflect adherence to codified rules but to ensure the overall security of BPP chapters nationwide. Hilliard explained, "cadre must follow orders, undisciplined brothers disrespect themselves and others, they jeopardize the Party."[115]

Cognizant of COINTELPRO efforts to neutralize the BPP, the organization sought to eradicate disruptive behaviors which could accomodate FBI infiltration and repression. Thus, the BPP implemented a series of corrective measures modified from the local environment of its members such as "mud-holing" and "people's jail." BPP members were dedicated but inconsistent. Such contradictions combined with counterintelligence measures to exacerbate internal dissension in the BPP by FBI informants in leadership roles and positions of power within the BPP hierarchy. Thus, the BPP was in several instances incapable of ferreting suspecting informants and FBI informants who were at times in

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[115] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 236.

esteemed positions of leadership.

At times, informants also resided in the Panther pads and collectives, promoted and organized by the BPP. Whereas the Panther pads and collectives offered and fostered comradeship, they did not shelter the BPP from FBI informants, destructive and disruptive behaviors contextualized by the BPP's leadership and membership as "revolutionary." This chapter has shown that becoming a "revolutionary" in the BPP was laden with risks. Although BPP men and women strove to redefine themselves as "revolutionaries," at times, their overall understanding and interpretation of the term were severely flawed.

This chapter demonstrated that misinterpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary" directly and indirectly affected "revolutionary life" throughout nationwide BPP chapters. Despite its internal struggles, the BPP successfully implemented social programs. The next chapter examines the BPP's mobilization efforts in fulfilment and realization of Point Three of its Ten Point Platform and Program.

CHAPTER IV

"THERE'S A PIG IN OUR COMMUNITY:" "AVARICIOUS BUSINESSMEN" VS. THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY 1966-1970

> ***"black dogs bite just as readily as white dogs—they both have teeth, capitalism is capitalism in all its dog eat dog viciousness, no matter what color the capitalist."***[1]

Point Three of The Black Panther Party (BPP) Platform and Program originally phrased "we want an end to the robbery by the white man of our black community" in October 1966 formed the basis upon which the BPP viewed local businesses. The BPP adopted the term "avaricious businessmen " to describe individual businessmen and local businesses in general. "Avaricious businessmen," were portrayed as "bloodsuckers" monopolizing on the exploitation of the dispossessed and disadvantaged. The main purpose of this essay is to explore inevitable confrontations between the BPP and "avaricious businessmen"throughout Oakland and other local BPP chapters from 1967- 1971 to survey and evaluate the BPP's overall effectiveness in its mobilizing efforts.

This chapter explores and investigates the BPP's grass roots activism focusing on strategies employed in the administration of its Free Breakfast For Children Program throughout local black communities. The thesis of this chapter is that the BPP sought to

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[1] "Reverend Leon Sullivan High Priest Of Black Capitalism," The Black Panther hereinafter cited as TBP, 30 January 1971, 4.

control local businesses throughout black communities by wielding a series of tactics whose significance and overall effectiveness have been overlooked throughout the BPP's historiography.

Although scholars have acknowledged the dedication and commitment of the BPP to fulfill basic needs through its Free Breakfast for Schoolchildren Program, the BPP's tactics and implementation strategies have not been probed. The one exception is journalist Hugh Pearson who charged that the BPP strong-armed, threatened, coerced, and bribed store owners and local businessmen to donate to their various programs.[2] This chapter argues that the BPP maligned many local businesses and individuals under the guise of "revolution" and that in making certain demands of local businesses, the BPP sought to establish itself as the people's speakers and representatives to collect the restitution due them for historical and ongoing exploitation. In employing specific tactics and strategies, the BPP unintentionally reinforced their delineation as a threat to local businesses.

Point Three accompanied the BPP's "What We Believe" statement in its Ten Point Platform and Program (Figure I) that black people were owed the "modest demand" and "overdue debt of forty acres and two mules" as "retribution" for slave labor and 'mass murder.'[3] The BPP demanded reparations for centuries of racial inequality, exploitation and violence. The BPP also charged that it was incumbent upon the American government to

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[2] Hugh Pearson, The Shadow of the Panther, Huey P. Newton and the Price of Black Power in America (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 243.

[3] "October 1966 Black Panther Party Platform and Program, What We Want, What We Believe," In Huey P. Newton, Revolutionary Suicide (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing Inc. 1995), 116-119. See also Figure I.

compensate all blacks for the horror and violence which accompanied American slavery.[4] "Retribution" was later changed to "restitution" in May 1968. The main difference between both words was that whereas retribution denoted reparation, penalty, vengeance and punishment, restitution symbolized contrition, compensation and atonement.[5]

Four basic enemies of the Panthers were, racism, capitalism, imperialism and police brutality.[6] Of the four, capitalism and racism were the main enemies of the people. Too often, the two were intertwined. Panthers viewed all four variables as interrelated and interdependent components that legitimized exploitation and colonization of people throughout the world. The BPP equated racism and capitalism in definition, in that the capitalist, particularly the white capitalist, was necessarily a racist and a "fascist." As one BPP member explained, capitalism was a man-made disease which allowed "five percent of the people to control 95 percent of the wealth, imperialism is the cancer of capitalism that spreads and destroys whole countries and whole nations of people, greed is the purpose, racism is the excuse."[7]

Newton charged that black people constituted a colonized people within the capitalist structure and that the existing American political structure perpetuated, protected and

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Marshall D.C At Fillmore "Speech By Field Re: Auditorium, S.F," TBP, 20 April, 1969.

[7] Ibid.

inflicted racism.[8] He urged "drastic changes" in the political structure which BPP Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver explained in his 1968 article, *"Community Imperialism."* Cleaver declared that black communities were colonized and controlled from the outside and that the relationship between the black masses and capitalism was a mercantile relationship wherein the "mother country" (capitalism) dictated and controlled all aspects of the colony (black communities).[9]

The BPP condemned capitalism in all its forms for historically postulating inequality in the black community and throughout the world. It maintained that capitalism exploited the masses and produced a ruling class system which perpetuated racism.[10] The BPP argued that capitalism and racism reinforced each other to stabilize and preserve the "monopolistic interests" of the existing socio-economic structure.[11] Class was the unifying factor bonding "avaricious businessmen" as exploiters of the community. The BPP argued that capitalism created "elite classes" among oppressed populations to exercise a form of "indirect rule" over the masses secured through the cooperation of the "black bourgeoisie."[12]

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[8] Huey P. Newton, "In Defense of Self-Defense," TBP 16 March 1968, 17

[9] Eldridge Cleaver, Minister of Information, "Community Imperialism," TBP, 18 May 1968, 10.

[10] "Breaking Capitalism Down," TBP, 20 April 1969; Seale, Seize The Time, The Story of The Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton, (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991), 70.

[11] Seale, Seize The Time, 70.

[12] Kathleen Cleaver, Communications Secretary, "Ministry Of Information Black Paper, Position of The Black Panther Party on the Seventh Congressional District Election In Alameda County And The Candidacy Of John George In The Democratic Party," TBP 16 March 1968.

The BPP adhered to E. Franklin Frazier's 1965 analysis of the behavior, attitudes and values of the 'black bourgeoisie.' Frazier argued that upper and middle class blacks were politically divorced, socially isolated and culturally detached from the black community.[13] Frazier maintained, that the black bourgeoisie developed "a deep-seated inferiority complex" and created "a world of make-believe in which it attempts to escape the disdain of whites and fulfill its wish for status in American life."[14] To the BPP, members of the "black bourgeoisie" prioritized their own personal interests at the expense of the black "underclass." Newton explained, "they are pro-administration, they would like a few concessions made, but as far as the overall set-up, they have a little more material goods, a little more privileges than the have-nots, the lower classes."[15]

Throughout the BPP's literature, the "black bourgeoisie" was condemned as "a long tradition of bootlickers, uncle toms, black Anglo-Saxons who are willing to rise to prominence on the backs of the oppressed masses by selling their votes to the Democratic Machine."[16] Newton elaborated on this theme in a 1968 statement drawing from Malcom X's distinction between the "house slave," whom he argued protected and defended the interests of the slave masters, as opposed to the field slaves, who conspired to kill the

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[13] E. Franklin Frazier, Black Bourgeoisie, The Rise of A New Middle Class (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957), 24-25.

[14] Ibid.

[15] "Huey Newton Speaks To The Movement," In Huey P.Newton and Toni Morrison ed. To Die For The People, Selected Writings and Speeches (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing Inc., 1995), 94.

[16] Kathleen Cleaver, "Position of The Black Panther Party," TBP 16 March 1968.

master to liberate themselves and end the master's dominion.[17]

Newton argued that the BPP characterized the 'field blacks' who promoted the interests of the "black have-nots" whereas the 'black bourgeoisie' identified with and promoted the interests of the existing power structure. Newton declared, "if the black bourgeoisie cannot align itself with our complete program, then the black bourgeoisie sets itself up as our enemy, and they will be attacked and treated as such."[18] The inherent flaw of this argument was that it was totally dismissive of any past or present contribution of the black upper and middle class to local black communities in general.

Newton and the BPP exposed a blatant disregard of the historical contributions of the black upper and middle class to local communities by contemptuously labeling them as 'avaricious businessmen' who exploited their brethren. Scholars have examined the strengths and weaknesses of the black upper and middle class over time and place and have appraised class divisions among them that may have impeded or enhanced the realization of specific objectives in particular local communities during specific periods of time.[19]

Studies have documented the contributions and the commitment of the black upper and middle class to uplifting local black communities through a community building process

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[17] Malcom X, "Message To The Grass Roots," Detroit 1963, In George Breitman ed. Malcom X Speaks, Selected Speeches And Statements (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1966), 17.

[18] Huey P. Newton, "To The Black Movement," 15 May 1968, In Newton, To Die For The People, 94.

[19] Richard Thomas, Life For Us Is What We Make It (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 52, 208-214 ; Darlene Clark Hine, Speak Truth To Power, Black Professional Class In United States History (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1996), 60-61.

including community outreach programs, institution building through churches and schools, and the establishment of professional and civic organizations that have drafted various measures including conventions, resolutions and petitions.[20] Thus, contrary to the views of the BPP, it cannot conclusively be argued that the black upper and middle class historically prioritized its own interests to the detriment of the black community. Although the BPP did not distinguish between white and black capitalists, black capitalism was more reprehensible because it symbolized betrayal and rejection of the 'black masses.'

To the BPP, it also signified that black capitalists collaborated with 'part of the solution' instead of uniting with the 'black masses' to solve pertinent problems. Such a view is best expressed in an article by the BPP's Philadelphia Chapter asserting, "black capitalism is similar to the theory that a black dog won't bite black people because it's black, but in reality, black dogs bite just as readily as white dogs—they both have teeth, capitalism is capitalism in all its dog eat dog viciousness, no matter what color the capitalist."[21]

Conflicts between the BPP and the "avaricious businessmen" irrespective of race, were orchestrated on the contested terrain involving the implementation of the Party's Free Breakfast For Children Program. More than any other program, Free Breakfast For Children served as the signature of the BPP. It was administered in twenty two of the BPP's twenty-nine chapters in November 1969. BPP Chairman Bobby Seale claimed that the BPP fed one hundred and fifty children on $40 per week, and that the BPP served over two

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[20] Ibid.

[21] "Reverend Leon Sullivan High Priest Of Black Capitalism," TBP, 30 January 1971, 4.

thousand children breakfast throughout the San Francisco Bay area on a "typical day."[22]

The BPP's organ *The Black Panther was* a fundamental element of the BPP's "tax deductible" Free Breakfast for Children Program. The BPP solicited donations and elicited support for the Program by featuring a donation form. Such a form required a name and address and also listed the phone number of the person in charge of the Program, as well as the address where the donations were to be sent. Such an address was usually that of a local church or a community center.[23] Weeks before starting the program, some local BPP chapters also sent letters to retail and wholesale stores in the community.

The BPP also published various "statements to the press" from local BPP chapters requesting people to provide transportation, sisters and mothers to donate their time, unlimited daily donations of storable and perishable foods, kitchen utensils, and cash donations."[24] Women were actively recruited for serving and donating food in addition to contributing a few hours every day or every other day or week to support the Program. Many women from the local communities volunteered their services. Historians Tracye Matthews and Angela Le Blanc-Ernest maintained that women mainly facilitated and implemented the Free Breakfast For Children Program.[25] For example, Elaine Brown

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[22] "Chairman's Press Conference at Safeway Boycott," TBP, 21 June 1969, 14.

[23] Ibid.

[24] "Statement To The Press On The Breakfast Of Children," TBP, 27 April 1969,3.

[25] Angela Le-Blanc-Ernest, "The Most Qualified Person To Handle The Job:"Black Panther Party Women 1966-1982," In Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 305-336; See also Tracy Ann Matthews, "No One Ever Asks What A Man's Place In The Revolution Is:" Gender And Sexual Politics In The Black Panther Party 1966-1971, (Ph.D diss., The University Of Michigan, 1998).

secured donations for the Los Angeles Chapter's Free Breakfast Program after persuading the director of food services at the University of California's Weyburn Hall's to donate to the BPP.[26]

The BPP's funds came from many groups and individuals who supported the BPP including lawyers groups, church organizations, speaking engagements and the BPP's newspaper sales.[27] BPP members also solicited door to door donations from businesses and the local community. Encounters between BPP members and businessmen were not always friendly and did not always result in endorsements or contributions to the BPP's programs. Male and female BPP members published accounts of treatments they allegedly received when confronting businesspeople. Examination of their various accounts reveal that the treatment accorded to BPP members nationwide was similar in that some received endorsement while others received unbridled contempt.

The San Francisco and Harlem BPP chapters published accounts of encounters with local businessmen. Harlem BPP members Beth Bragg and Brother Ray successfully persuaded four Harlem wholesale distributors to agree to make donations to the BPP but two other local businesses refused to donate.[28] The San Francisco BPP chapter took children with them to secure food donations and traveled in large groups to "stare down" the owners who refused to "relate" to them.[29] Whereas the children were present to reinforce the urgency of

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[26] Brown, A Taste Of Power, 157-159.

[27] Seale, Seize The Time, 178-179.

[28] "White Plains Panthers Work for Breakfast," TBP, 20 July 1968, 20.

[29] "Breakfast In S.F District" TBP, 5 July 1969, 19.

the BPP's demands, the "stare down" was deliberately intended to exert more pressure and probably intimidate the store owner to cooperate and support the BPP. It yielded cooperation from most of the businesses solicited for donations in San Francisco which suggests that some store owners may have been intimidated to cooperate and support the BPP. The "staredown" may have also been utilized as a "threat."

In addition to donation forms in the newspaper and door to door solicitation, letters were also sent to retail and wholesale stores in the community. Examination of letters from two local BPP chapters New Jersey and Southern California, sheds light into how the Party sought donations from national and local businesses. Consider the content of the following two letters sent to local and national businesses. A letter produced in April 1969, bearing the name of BPP Chairman of Party Relations Gwen Goodloe of the Southern California Chapter was submitted to the manager of General Foods Corporation. In the first two paragraphs, she informed, the Party would be instituting the John Huggins Hot Breakfast For Children Program, however, because of Party's "wafer thin resources" and the fact that they were not, 'subject to funding or control by any political, private or government organization or agency,' they solely depended on donations from those in the community " able" to share in the maintenance of the program.[30]

'Able' was underlined to reflect the BPP's demand for restitution in that avaricious businessmen such as General Foods had the means and the resources needed by the Party and were therefore, obligated to return some of its profits back to the community. After

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[30] Letter from the South California Chapter to General Foods Corporation, April, 1969, Special Collections, Black Panther Party file. Schomburg Center for Research In Black Culture,

listing the groceries and items needed, Goodloe concluded the letter with the following, "as we will be visiting all community outlets, we welcome your telephone call for an appointment with us or we will see you at an unappointed time, thank you for your help."[31] The BPP contended that it was incumbent upon the corporation to contact the BPP to discuss this matter, as the Party was merely 'requesting' a regular portion of the many profits the corporation reaped from the black community.

The intimidating tone of this letter implied that the BPP unmistakably intended to meet with or confront the manager to collect the restitution due to the community. It is also probable that Goodloe's letter and other similar letters may or may not have been manufactured by the FBI as a part of COINTELPRO "brown mail" efforts to neutralize the BPP. It was not unlikely for the FBI to fabricate such letters to destroy and curb sources of material or monetary support for the BPP. As the authenticity of this letter and Goodloe's signature have not been ascertained at the present time, if it was received by General Foods and other businesses in 1969, it undoubtedly portrayed the BPP as menacing and harassing local businesses to reinforce law enforcement's premise that the BPP posed a pervasive "threat" to local businesses.

The New Jersey BPP distributed a leaflet addressed to those who supported and those who refused to feed hungry children.[32] In the first two paragraphs, Panthers announced the location of the Program then stated, that the food for the program was supplied by

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[31] Ibid

[32] "Black Panther Party Free Breakfast For Schoolchildren & Those Who Refuse To Feed Hungry Children," Schomburg Center for Research In Black Culture, Special Collections, Black Panther Party File. Special Collections, Black Panther Party File.

merchants of the Jersey area, who were the same merchants and "avaricious businessmen" who daily exploited and profited from the community. They also charged that the workers of this merchant took 'huge profits' to benefit their 'greedy selves.'[33] Both letters illuminated another internal contradiction in that the Party acknowledged support from merchants as it simultaneously berated them as "avaricious businessmen." Thus, the BPP's line between exception and condemnation was very often blurred.

The BPP praised and accused businessmen in the same breath, therefore, cooperation and support for the BPP's Free Breakfast For Children program did not exempt one from being labeled "avaricious." Although local merchants General Meat Corporation, Kupfer Berger Company, and Ace Packing provided meat to the Harlem Free Breakfast Program on a regular basis, they along with other businesses were criticized in an article by Beth Mitchell stating, the BPP received food for the Program from Harlem merchants who were "the same avaricious businessmen" and "leeches" who exploited the Harlem community."[34]

Seale stated that when the stores and milk companies don't donate, people should leaflet the community. He asserted that any particular chain food stores that could not or would not donate a small percentage of its profits or one penny from every dollar it makes from the community should also be boycotted.[35] He maintained, the BPP did not "ever threaten or anything like that," but informed people in the community that "avaricious

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[33] Ibid.

[34] "Harlem A & P Refuses To Donate To Free Breakfast," TBP, 16 August 1969, 3;"To Feed Our Children," TBP, 27 April 1969, 3.

[35] Seale, Seize The Time, 414.

businessmen" exploited poor oppressed people in the community.[36]

In 1969, a collision ensued between the BPP and Safeway stores in Oakland. In an article published May 19, 1969, the BPP's Oakland Chapter announced Safeway had taken the initial step in showing a socialistic attitude towards the desires and needs of the people after 'years and years of reaping profits from the people' and 'making grand theft money off black people.'[37] Safeway began donating food to the Free Breakfast For Schoolchildren Program, on April 26, 1969. The article concluded with the insistence that donations from Safeway should be of a minimum of $100 and on a weekly basis even as the BPP acknowledged Safeway for taking "this revolutionary step toward the people."[38] Two weeks later, the BPP published a very brief article urging the public to help the grape strikers of Delano by going to the nearest Safeway store and asking to speak to the manager. The article urged, "tell him that you refuse to shop at Safeway as long as they intend to carry grapes, if enough of us do that, it will begin to make a difference."[39]

In June 1969, the BPP called for a boycott of Safeway Stores because, they were "greedy avaricious businessmen" whose refusal to feed hungry children was " low and rotten." They charged that Safeway's refusal was spearheaded by 'top lieutenant fascist Hooper' and that

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Samantha Cha Black, "Safeway Store Oakland Donates Food for Breakfast for Children," TBP, 19 May 1969, 19.

[38] Ibid.

[39] "Grape Boycott" TBP, 31 May 1969, 14.

"it is very insane for these avaricious fools to refuse to contribute $100 per week.[40] In a press conference at the Safeway Site on June 21, 1969, BPP Chairman Bobby Seale addressed the question concerning further negotiation attempts with the store manager. "Right now as of today, we're going to raise the demands to $125, every week that he doesn't come around, we're going to raise it an extra $25, all he has to do is come out here and tell one of these people that they can pick up the food he's going to donate to the people's Free Breakfast For Children Program."[41]

Seale affirmed that the purpose of the boycott was to persuade Safeway to make donations to feed children. Yet, he exhibited more insistence on the cash to be given. The raising of the cash demand was a blatant example of a deliberate strategy employed by the Oakland BPP wherein Safeway's arm was economically twisted to force him to cooperate. The Oakland BPP alluded to its success and persuasive 'power' by contending that in its first two days, Safeway closed forty-five minutes early.[42]

Throughout the collision between Safeway and the BPP, the BPP's newspaper played a major role. Initially, the BPP utilized the "power of the press" to praise as it simultaneously condemned Safeway. It is likely that although Safeway had agreed to make donations, both parties probably were still negotiating specific terms. By insisting on $100 on a weekly basis the Oakland BPP outlined its 'talking points' and publicly solidified its steadfast position. The article of May 19, 1969 was therefore a precipitous move and a pre-emptive strike by the

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[40] "Boycott Safeway Stores," TBP, 19 June 1969.

[41] "Chairman's Press Conference At Safeway Boycott," TBP, 21 June 1969, 14.

[42] Ibid.

Oakland BPP to persuade and compel Safeway to cooperate with its demands. This explanation gains more credibility given that Safeway resolutely refused the terms set forth in the article.

The BPP's tactics during its collisions with Safeway were not unique. Leafleting and protesting businesses throughout local black communities was reminiscent of the economic nationalism of black men and women during the 1930s. Both engaged in the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" and the "Buy Black" campaign aimed at convincing white store owners to hire black clerks. Such campaigns were mainly organized by black women who formed Housewives Leagues, picketed and boycotted white-owned stores that did not hire blacks during the Great Depression. [43] Unlike the Housewives' Leagues the BPP primarily focused on demanding contributions as "restitution" for operating throughout black communities.

Larger political demands for employment, promotion and fair treatment were not strongly prioritized by the BPP nationwide in administering the Free Breakfast For Children Program. Despite such a shortcoming, the BPP's determination to feed children and its efforts to secure donations to implement a social program demonstrated the BPP "revolution" throughout local black communities. The BPP sought to refine the roles of all businesses operating in local black communities. It demanded and compelled a redistribution of power rooted in the redistribution of wealth as I defined revolution earlier in this research. The BPP's efforts showed BPP members revolutionizing the

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[43] Darlene Clark Hine, "The Housewives' League of Detroit: Black Women and Economic Nationalism," In Darlene Clark Hine Hine Sight, Black Women and The Reconstruction of American History 129-146; Thomas, Life For Us, 222-223.

community by not only securing some donations from local businesses but confronting economic inequity by employing the boycott as a strategic mechanism to compel store owners to make donations.

When the local A&P supermarket chain, Alpine Beef Company and A. Salmon and Sons refused to make donations to the Harlem BPP Chapter, Panthers called for a boycott of the stores. Beth Mitchell of the Harlem BPP published an article in *The Black Panther* denouncing all three businesses as "fascist" "avaricious pigs" and "racists" that refused to feed hungry children.[44] She also asserted that the 'racist, 'avaricious businessmen' at A&P Foodstores specialized in 'overworking, underpaying and overcharging the working people.'[45] Although A&P agreed to donate $10 a year to the Harlem BPP, Mitchell charged that the people of Harlem "cannot and will not allow these filthy pigs the right to exploit our community everyday then oink about returning $10 a year."[46] Mitchell noted alleged economic inequities but urged the boycott not because of labor conditions but primarily because of A&P's refusal to donate and support the BPP.

Alpine Beef Company and A. Salmon and Sons were denounced in the article "Fascist Meat Companies Refuse Food To Hungry Children" and accused of being "avaricious pigs and racists."[47] A statement from James Mott Lieutenant of Education of the Sacramento

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[44] "Beth Mitchell, "Harlem A&P Refuses To Donate Free Breakfast," TBP, 16 August 1969, 18.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Janet Cyril, "Fascist Meat Companies Refuse Food to Hungry Children," TBP 7 June 1969, 20.

BPP typified this strategy. Mott admonished 'hypocritical preachers' and 'avaricious businessmen' as "conspirators" engaged in a concerted effort 'to stop all progress' on the community Breakfast for Children Program in Sacramento because they refused to answer letters or meet with BPP representatives about the Program.[48] He affirmed that the Party would continue to fight until victory was ultimately won inside the 'pig pen of Sacramento' where "the racist administrators plot their destruction and genocide against the people as clearly shown in their attempt to let small hungry helpless children starve to death."[49]

The BPP's recurrent theme nationwide was that the refusal to donate was equated with racism and signified that local businessmen sanctioned the exploitation of the masses by refusing to provide restitution due to the community. Race was employed in an attempt to isolate and condemn local businesses which refused to cooperate with BPP demands. Refusal particularly by 'white' businessmen was analogous to racism and greed which justified the actions of the Party. It also signified a rejection to feed poor, hungry children throughout local black communities. In essence, hunger and poverty were politicized and racialized to justify the Party's call for boycotts against anyone who said "no."

The politicization and racialization of hunger was a pattern ensued from 1968 to 1972 even as the Party shifted focus as it adopted various themes ranging from dropping Self Defense from its name in 1968, the Year of the Panther in 1969, a focus on community service programs in 1970, and "the Youth Make The Revolution in 1971. Throughout this

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[48] James Mott, Lieutenant of Education, Sacramento Branch, "Conspirators Block Breakfast Progress," TBP, 4 May 1969,13.

[49] Ibid.

period, attention to the Free Breakfast Program reached a peak from 1969 to 1970. Yet, one salient factor remained the same, the definition of "avaricious businessmen" never wavered and the Party impressed upon its readership that 'avaricious businessmen' had to be stopped through boycotts.

The boycott was more stringent than the verbal lashing in the BPP's newspaper as it forced "avaricious businessmen" to recognize that the BPP would not simply speak from a distance but would confront store owners at their doorstep. The boycott exemplified the BPP's "revolution" throughout local communities in its attempt to restructure a power base to challenge the existing 'capitalist structure' concerning access to fundamental resources. The BPP sought to advance a community mobilization process through what Newton later termed "survival programs." At times, such a strategy proved to be very effective as some businesses deferred to the Panthers.

Steve McCutchen of the Baltimore BPP does not elaborate on this point in his diary, but his entry from August 19, 1969 illuminates the realization of this ideology. He wrote, "we've decided to boycott Roth's Market On Gay St, the manager and owners won't contribute to the programs even after we've explained our position to feed hungry children, they refuse, Jack is heading the picket and the one on one discussions with wary customers and inquirers, good comrade."[50] A few lines later, he wrote, "Roth's Market Gave In, they will donate to our program on a weekly basis, Power to the People."[51]

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[50] Steve McCutchen, "Selections From A Panther Diary," In Jones. ed. The Black Panther Reconsidered, 120.

[51] Ibid.

The two operative words of this entry are "gave in" implying that the Party had been so effective in its boycott that it neutralized the resistance of Roth's Market. Moreover, in this particular instance, the picket line was transformed as a political forum to espouse the 'legitimacy' of the Panther position. Jack's role was described not only as an organizer but to possibly convince the wary and generate support for the boycott of Roth's market by discouraging customers from shopping at the store.

BPP denouncements of "avaricious businessmen" became more pronounced in 1970. Consider the following *Black Panther* headlines, "Avaricious Businessmen Refuse To Feed Hungry Children," "To Feed The Hungry," "Avaricious Businessmen Stealing From The Children," "Big Business Kicks Out Hungry Children." The BPP employed its newspaper as the people's organ to capture the attention and intensify the general public so that businesses would have no choice but to commit to BPP donations. Another purpose of the articles was to convey the message that the BPP had no tolerance for those who relied on black communities for economic survival yet would not support the "people's programs."

Inevitably, the BPP's newspaper was a major spark that fueled the collision course between some local businesses and the BPP. Very often, the articles were accompanied by photographs of grinning children at the site of the program. This in no way suggests that the BPP's commitment to feeding children was suspect or that the BPP had sinister motives in implementing the Free Breakfast Program nationwide. Throughout the various photographs, male and female Panthers were shown feeding children and many chapters published accounts attesting to the fact that most members were at the sites by 6 AM daily to serve the children before engaging in any other Party activity.

The correlation between the headlines and the photographs was that both illustrated the BPP's campaign for political legitimacy and its struggle for leadership of the black community. The BPP chastised schools for perpetuating hunger and contended that the schools and the 'racist-oriented fascist' Boards of Education should have instituted this program long ago. However, because the school board and administrators were "part and parcel of the U.S fascist pig apparatus," the perpetuation of hunger was their main weapon for carrying out genocide on the oppressed peoples of Babylon.[52]

By 1970, Newton labeled the various BPP programs "survival programs." Newton in his autobiography stated, all of the BPP's programs were aimed at one goal, complete control of the institutions in the community.[53] He argued that mere control would not automatically solve problems, therefore the BPP's primary objective should be to organize community institutions into co-operatives whereby profits or surplus from the co-operatives would be returned to the community, "in this way all communities would be allied in a common purpose through the major social, economic, and political institutions of this country."[54] Newton asserted that the BPP sought 'natural rights' for the people based on what it believed they required and deserved as summed in the slogan "all power to the people."

The BPP's unsuccessful attempts to garner support were masked under other issues in addition to avaricious greed. The BPP attacked and disparaged the individual and business character of those who refused to support its programs regardless of race. One example

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[52] "Breakfast for School Children Programs," TBP, 27 December 1969, 4.

[53] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 167.

[54] Ibid.

to illustrate the BPP's negative portrayal of individuals is that of 'white businessman' Sam Belowitz of Baltimore and black businessman Wendell Handy of Oakland. Panther Baloti of the Baltimore Chapter, wrote the article "There's A Pig In Our Community" accusing Belowitz of being "a pig,... a prominent animal member of the capitalist system, (who has) executed his plan to rob steal and cheat the people in the black community."[55]

Next to the article was a drawing showing the half defiant face of a black man holding a gun, staring directly at the reader as a white man labeled an 'avaricious business' lay dying from a bullet wound right between the eyes as dollars fell freely from where he laid. This illustration had various overtones. On the one hand, it threatened Belowitz's safety and was purposefully intended to intimidate Belowitz to comply or else face fatal consequences. On the other hand, it conveyed the message that the BPP was willing to protect the people by avenging the community. Belowitz's crime like that of the other businessmen was that he owned a grocery store but refused to support the Free Breakfast Program.

Baloti maintained that Sam Belowitz and his store were "deadly" since they had been in South Baltimore because they perpetuated 'the starvation and suffering of the people living in South Baltimore.' Among his many faults, "everyone who has ever been in Sam's store has seen the flies and bugs he offers, his meat is rotten and his bread is stale."[56] Baloti urged the community to rid itself of "pig Sam" and the rest of the people's enemies by letting Sam

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[55] Baloti, "There's A Pig In Our Community," TBP, 10 October 1970, 2.;"Handy Exploits The Black Community," TBP, 31 May 1970, 3.

[56] Ibid.

know that they would no longer accept his "rotten food, bug infested meat or sour milk."[57] Black Oakland businessman Wendell Handy was characterized as "a bootlicker and rectum kisser of Mickey Mouse Ronnie Reagan" when he withheld his support for the Program.[58] Both examples illustrated that the character of both businessmen was attacked regardless of race as neither Belowitz nor Handy escaped condemnation and contempt.

After its unsuccessful attempt to boycott the Matthias Company, the BPP's Baltimore Branch sought to expose the company as "bloodsucking pigs" who were "charging outrageously high prices for inferior food."[59] Unsuccessful attempts to obtain donations from the Country Farms Market in Compton, California were met with a call for boycott and an accusation of the establishment as racists who did not hire blacks in management positions. The following statement enumerated the many defaults of the store according to the South California Chapter. The BPP claimed an "overwhelming stench from "rotten foods" at the "fresh" meat and vegetables section.[60]

Consequently, people paid "exorbitant prices" for "inferior goods." Panthers cautioned people walking up and down the aisles to avoid slipping and breaking your neck on "spilled contents of a broken bottle that nobody bothered to clean up, also there is only one bathroom which is never kept clean."[61] The BPP prioritized the alleged deficiencies and hazards of the

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[57] Ibid.

[58] "Handy Exploits The Black Community," TBP, 3 May 1970, 3.

[59] "Mathias Companies Must Be Exposed," TBP, 2 May 1970, 12.

[60] "People Of Compton Boycott Country Farm Market, " TBP, 5 September 1970, 24.

[61] Ibid.

store rather than the alleged racism of the store owners. The denouncement of the business establishment came after the refusal to support the BPP. Allan & Sons Meat Company which refused to donate to the Free Breakfast Program in San Francisco was described as one of the largest meat operations whose odors were "enough to knock an elephant out."[62]

Such claims were grossly exaggerated to justify the Party's decision to boycott the store. Given that the Party 'knew' of such alleged deplorable conditions, why request donations from such stores? Moreover, it would seem that if such statements were in fact true, wouldn't the Party also be committing irreparable harm to the very community it claims to represent by soliciting "rotten food" or food and supplies from stores which functioned under deplorable conditions. Such examples bring to mind a proverb of "washing one's hands only to wipe them in the mud" in that if the money that the stores took was tainted with injustice, how would donations to the Panthers rectify the situation as the money would always remain tainted.

The credibility of the articles was addressed by Frank Benson Jones who briefly served as the BPP's managing editor. On October 7, 1970, Jones former editor of the *Black Panther* newspaper, testified before the United States House of Representatives Subcommittee of the Committee on Internal Security (USHR, SCOIS). Jones, a former bookstore owner, testified in the Congressional record that when material was sent from any particular given locality, he basically checked for grammatical errors. No attempt was ever made on the part of the paper or the BPP's national headquarters to check the accuracy of the articles sent

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[62] Ibid.

from the local community because the BPP had " neither the facilities or staff to do that."[63] Elaine Brown and David Hilliard also maintained that the BPP made no attempts to verify the veracity of articles submitted then printed in the BPP's newspaper.[64]

On August 9, 1971, the BPP circulated its newspaper calling for a boycott of black businessman Willie R. "Bill" Boyette. Boyette, a long time community activist, was a University of California at Berkeley business graduate who also belonged the Men of Tomorrow, the Oakland Black Chamber, the National Business League and Operation Push.[65] In 1971, Boyette was the President of Cal-Pak and owned two local businesses, Bill's Liquors #1 located at 2520 Grove Street and Bill's Liquors #2, located at 5350 Grove Street in Oakland California. On July 31, 1971, forty to fifty male and female members of the BPP hoisted picket signs outside Bill's Liquors #2, proclaiming, "Boycott Don't Shop Here," "Black Businessman Says No," "Boyette Must Donate To The People's Survival Programs," "Support Those Who Serve The People." Picketers chanted and sang as they circulated in front of his store.[66]

The BPP devoted the August 9, 1971 issue of its newspaper to the boycott and included a supplement featuring a front page headline, "Black Businessman Says No," with a photograph of picketers and picket signs. The supplemental issue outlined the Party's

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[63] United States House of Representatives Subcommittee of the Committee on Internal Security, October 7, 1970, 4751-4756.

[64] Author Interview with Elaine Brown and David Hilliard, March 1999.

[65] "Willie Boyette" Oakland Tribune, 23 March, 1990.

[66] TBP, 9 August , 1971,.A-C.

objectives concerning the boycott. The article "Why Boycott Boyette" summarized the Party's complaints against Boyette.[67] The Party insisted that they had 'liberated' their brothers of Cal-Pak by endorsing and participating in a previous boycott of Mayfair stores. The unwritten underpinning of this assertion by the BPP was that their presence intimidated Mayfair and neutralized its resistance. The BPP affirmed that it had an "agreement" with all members of Cal-Pak concerning weekly contributions to the People's Community Survival Program in exchange for Panther support.

Such an "agreement" was very ambiguous as no detail was provided in the Party's supplement to reflect any exact amount agreed upon by any member of Cal-Pak, or when it transpired.. No information was furnished stating how soon after the boycott donations would begin or how long any member was obligated to donate. The BPP did not elucidate who would collect the donations and how they would be applied to any survival program of the BPP. The only term hinting of any specific detail of this "agreement" was the clause "on a weekly basis" implying that any support provided by Cal-Pack was expected to be indefinite.

The BPP asserted, Boyette violated their "agreement" by refusing to donate 'on a weekly basis.' Boyette's "No" signified endorsement of racism and exploitation. The Party substantiated their arguments with the publication of two photographs in its August 9, 1971 supplement. The first photograph was of Boyette and a female employee with a white policeman inside the store. It contained the following line, "Bill Boyette's employees confer with police about the people, the police intimidate, brutalize and murder black people."[68]

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[67] "Why Boycott Boyette," TBP, 9 August, 1971, A.

[68] Ibid.

The photograph was incriminating evidence showing Boyette fraternizing with their main rivals, the "pigs" of Panther literature whom they asserted were also "enemies" of black people in particular. In 'conferring' with police, Boyette and his employee were guilty by association as the photograph substantiated the BPP's charge that Boyette sanctioned police brutality against the Panthers and the black community at large. The photograph reiterated the Party's argument that the police were not protecting the local community but preserving business interests.

Featuring Boyette alone with his well-stocked shelves of liquor in the second photograph with a line, "Bill Boyette sits alone-he could join the people by donating a small, small minimal amount each and every week to the People's survival programs," epitomized the extent of his estrangement from the community.[69] Such a photograph also demonstrated and reinforced the crux of Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier's thesis on the *Black Bourgeoisie*. Frazier charged that the "black bourgeoisie" escaped into a world of 'make-believe' and rejected " both identification with the Negro and his traditional culture, through delusions of wealth and power, they have sought identification with white America which continues to reject them."[70]

The shelves represented Boyette's financial resources and demonstrated that Boyette had the means to contribute but had instead placed his own interests at the forefront by severing all ties with the people who provided his source of income. The boycott characterized a class struggle wherein Boyette and Cal-Pak represented the black upper and

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Frazier, Black Bourgeoisie, 237.

middle class which the BPP and Frazier argued favored self-preservation over the well-being of the local community. To the BPP, Boyette personified main characteristics and traits of Frazier's "black bourgeoisie."[71] Therefore, the BPP waged a deliberate political campaign framing Boyette's refusal as a rejection and betrayal of the Oakland community.

Bobby Seale elaborated upon this theme in his speech at the boycott site whose full transcript was published in the Party's supplement of August 9. 1971. Seale excused Boyette's refusal by calling him 'a fool,' and an oppressed black victim of 'white capitalists' who didn't yet recognize or understand the full extent of his oppression.[72] Therefore, Panthers, " had to teach him, just like you teach a little child, you have to spank him a little bit, no we're not going to hurt him, we're not going to touch him, we'll hold a legal demonstration in front of that place."[73]

Seale evoked an image of Boyette reduced to a petulant child in dire need of parental scolding. As 'parents' of the black community, the BPP was administering a "spanking" through the boycott as a disciplining measure to teach Boyette to share his profits. Seale urged, "boycott him, boycott him, boycott him brothers and sisters, boycott him to death, till the brother realizes that he's one of us, that he's a victim like us, until he relates to us and unity in the community."[74] Seale encouraged the community to 'shut down' black businesses that refused to donate to the people's survival programs. He reasoned that a massive

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[71] Ibid.

[72] "Chairman Bobby Speaks at Boycott Site," TBP, 9 August, 1971, B.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

consumer movement in which the people of the local community refused to patronize Bill's Liquors #2 would force Boyette to return what the BPP considered the "restitution" due the community by making Boyette lose one to two thousand dollars daily.[75]

Seale affirmed that it was the duty and responsibility of the BPP to reunite 'brother' Boyette with the "family." The BPP appealed to the biblical parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 who abandoned his father's home to recklessly squander his wealth in a foreign land only to return home penniless begging for his father's forgiveness.[76] Seale proclaimed, Boyette was a prodigal son who abandoned his family, the black community, to lavish his money in partnership with the "alien community" of 'white monopoly capitalists.' Boyette's "NO" was translated by the BPP as a desertion which caused division, fomented dissension within the 'family' and demonstrated his indifference to its concerns.

He predicted that similarly to the prodigal son whose father celebrated his son's homecoming, Boyette would have no other choice but to return to his "family" having learned his lesson. He also predicted an 'open arms' welcome for Boyette from the black community, his "only family" when the boycott ended.[77] Thus, the BPP's boycott was also a lesson in humility and an attempt to forge a reunion by raising the consciousness of the 'prodigal son' to make him more responsive to the needs of his 'family.'

Lingering questions from Newton and Seale's ideas were, if the end goal was the organization of the black businesses, why seek to economically cripple Boyette as the

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Luke 15:11-32.

[77] "The Black Community Is Boyette's Only Family," TBP, 21 August, 1971, 8.

inevitable result would be that Boyette would no longer be in a position to help or support anyone including himself? Moreover, how can any black business act in unison when resistance may result in a collision like the Boyette boycott? Newton reasoned that the BPP must first organize before pursuing dues owed to the 'family.'[78]

Newton's ambition to unite all local black businesses under the umbrella of the BPP would establish what he termed a 'complementary economic linkage' between black businesses and the community. Newton did not elaborate on any specific plan for implementing this linkage, he merely forwarded the concept that black businesses would support the people by contributing to the survival programs administered by the BPP. Implicit was that the BPP was the intermediary and legitimate representative of the black community at large. He encouraged the incorporation of all local black businesses to solidify a community-focused black united front in Oakland in particular.[79]

Such a proposal was within the historic tradition of black resistance organizations which formed a variety of "united fronts" to combat vestiges of social, political and economic inequity. However, Newton assumed that the BPP would indisputably lead this "united front" throughout local black communities. He did not tabulate any other organizations vying for positions of leadership within the Oakland black community. Newton reiterated this theme in his essay "Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed : Theoretical Analysis And Its Practical Application," also published in the BPP's August 9, 1971 supplement. He urged black

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[78] Huey P. Newton, "Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed : Theoretical Analysis And Its Practical Application," TBP, 9 August, 1971, H.

[79] Ibid.

businesses to use a "common bank" to permit themselves 'more economic muscle' to better serve the black community.[80]

Newton argued, regardless of financial status, all black businesses were betrothed and beholden to the community which enabled their economic success and survival. Although Newton provided no details on the implementation strategy for creating and operating the common bank, how and where it would be organized, implemented and administered, his idea of a common bank cannot be casually dismissed or perceived as an impossible ambition. Newton envisioned a financing mechanism to empower Oakland's black business community by pooling its resources.

He viewed the BPP in charge of this "common bank" to finance the survival programs of the BPP and to assist black businesses in crisis. However, he offered no details on how the "common bank" would operate and assumed all black businesses would embrace his idea. Newton and Seale surmised that the 'black community' at large consented to the BPP's leadership as evident by Seale's assertion that the "ten years" he and Newton had spent in the 'struggle' qualified them as leaders of the black community.[81] In other words, both Seale and Newton epitomized American "political prisoners" whose multiple arrests (kidnappings) certified their commitment to racial uplift. Whereas other leaders concentrated on superfluous speeches, the BPP argued that it shifted away from the "jive talk" of politicians by implementing concrete survival programs for the people such as free food, free shoes, free clothing, the free sickle cell anemia research program, free ambulance service and free

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[80] Ibid.

[81] "Seale, Chairman Bobby Speaks At The Boycott Site,"TBP, 9 August, 1971, D.

medical service.[82]

The BPP published a photograph of Newton hoisting the picket sign, "Don't Support The Greedy" in front of Bill's Liquors #2 with a by-line, "the Minister of Defense boycotts in behalf of the people." Newton's photograph reiterated that he was authorized to defend the economic interests of the local community.[83] Seale called for a redefinition of freedom through "revolution." He stated, the 'revolution' was about freedom personified by the BPP to ensure that the people receive new quality goods free, "that's the real freedom."[84] Seale defined freedom as social, political and economic access to fundamental resources for survival. He contextualized "revolution" as a redistribution of wealth to be enforced by the BPP as the legitimate representatives of the people.

The BPP's aim was to "change it all" through a quantitative increase in the survival program that also entailed the raising of black consciousness to advance the realization of freedom in all its forms. To Seale, any other avenue than regular contributions 'on a regular basis' to the survival programs indicated that the BPP was 'jiving.'[85] Seale affirmed, the Party's mission was to re-evaluate the relationship between the community and the people by appealing to the humanity of exploiters.[86] Boyette therefore, epitomized how this lesson would be learned.

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Photograph of Newton in front of Bill's Liquors #2. TBP, 9 August, 1971.

[84] "Seale, Chairman Bobby Speaks At The Boycott Site," TBP, 9 August, 1971, D.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid, C.

Neither Newton nor Seale provided any specific details as to how the money collected from black businesses would be disbursed. Both assumed that the financial commitment of black businesses would establish equatability through social programs administered by the BPP. The BPP provided no detail explaining how this change would take place or what mechanism the BPP would construct to ensure freedom in an economic, political and social context. Newton acknowledged that the BPP's survival programs were merely temporary vehicles through which some degree of social change would result. Newton argued, that the survival programs of the Party were not intended to either replace revolution, demand radical action or challenge existing power relations but meant "survival pending revolution."[87] Thus, they encompassed community empowerment for the 'coming fight' and were akin to "a lifeboat or raft" safely ushering the community to shore.[88]

Contrary to this assertion, the BPP's survival programs did challenge power relations especially through the boycott by advocating a reciprocal relationship between local businesses and the black community. Through the boycott, the BPP demanded racial solidarity and accountability from black businesses whom they argued, had a duty to uplift and address the needs of the local black community. Hence, they were demanding "radical action" by advocating a transformation of existing power relationships especially between Boyette and the local black community. Newton's assertion alluded to the political ideology of the BPP in 1971 which he termed "revolutionary intercommunalism."

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[87] Huey P. Newton "Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed I," In Newton, To Die For The People, 110.

[88] Ibid.

Its fundamental principle was that technology created one world, a "global village" that mandated sharing all wealth produced and the people seized the means of production and all social institutions to effect a 'qualitative leap' in the organization of society.[89] Newton argued that the BPP embraced the "dialectical materialism"of Karl Marx and urged people of the world to seize power from the small ruling circle and "expropriate the expropriators." He urged the masses to extricate members from the pinnacles of power thereby equalizing and making them accessible to the people resulting in an equitable distribution of the fruits of labor.[90]

He concluded that the people would become autonomous by controlling their social institutions and "establish communism, a stage in human development in which human values will shape the structures of society, at this time the world will be ready for a still higher level of development of which we can know nothing at this time."[91] Newton and Seale's pronouncements revealed a blatant inconsistency in the BPP's political ideology concerning black businesses in particular. On the one hand, they denigrated Boyette's fundamental right to operate a business. On the other hand, they prioritized their and defended their right to conduct a lawful picket. The *San Francisco Examiner* praised Boyette's courage in withstanding the "merchant levy" of the Panthers and concluded, "no matter what racial or Marxist rhetoric the Panthers invoke to justify their demands upon him, those demands

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[89] Huey P. Newton, "Intercommunalism: In Conversation At Yale University, "In David Hilliard and Donald Weise The Black Panther Party Reader, Selected Writings Of Huey P. Newton (California: The Huey P. Newton Foundation, 1998), 11.

[90] Ibid, 16.

[91] Ibid,

constitute a form of political extortion."[92]

Newton ridiculed charges that the BPP impinged on Boyette's constitutional rights as Boyette was a marginalized black man in a historically victimized status.[93] The BPP praised businesses which complied with its demands and regularly featured advertisements for black businesses which supported its programs. This strategy employed by the BPP was not new but reminiscent of other local and national organizations such as Detroit Housewives League (DHL) which promoted local businesses in exchange for free advertisements in its newspaper.[94] For example, the BPP praised black businessmen Al Ligon and his Ligon's Ford dealership and material store owner Herman Pico announcing "the black community will support the black business that supports the community survival programs."[95]

The Black Panther featured similar advertisements of other black businesses in the Oakland Bay area along with requests for support from black businesses under the headline "Black Businessmen, We Are Calling For Unity In The Black Community."[96] The BPP later announced a "settlement" between Boyette and the Oakland community months later on the front pager of its newspaper with the headline, "Unity Ends Boycott, Agreement Reached

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[92] SFE, 13 August 1971, 32.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Darlene Clark Hine, " The Housewives' League Of Detroit, Black Women And Economic Nationalism," In Darlene Clark Hine, Hine Sight, Black Women And The Reconstruction Of American History (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1994), 129-145.

[95] TBP, 9 August, 1971.

[96] Ibid.

Between Bill Boyette And Black Community."[97] Terms of this "settlement" were not released to the public. The *Black Panther's* front page featured Newton sitting in the center surrounded by Boyette and Congressman Ronald V. Dellums.

The BPP also published a picture of a child with a full bag of groceries ranging from produce to cleaning product, on the bag was an inscription that urged support for "Brother Bill Boyette" who contributed to the free survival programs of the community, under the headline "Have Mercy, Have Mercy Unity In The Community."[98] The BPP formally acknowledged that Boyette had been the"example" for the black businessman and the community in general. The Party acknowledged that its conflicts with Boyette were bitter, resolvable 'family arguments.' Boyette's return 'home' according to the BPP, was speared not only by financial loss but "his love for and understanding of the people," and Boyette's acknowledgment of the fundamental role of the black community in his survival combined with the commitment to join the whole community against the common oppressor.[99] In other words, Boyette had recognized the error of his ways, he had come full circle, Panthers had returned the prodigal son to his father.

Reflecting on the boycott years later, Elaine Brown wrote, "the fight was so drawn out, however, it hardly mattered when he removed the cognac from his shelves...the one noteworthy yield from the boycott was that the publicity accompanying the effort contained

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[97] "Unity Ends Boycott, Agreement Reached Between Bill Boyette And Black Community," TBP, 22 January, 1972.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

a strong message- black merchants and businessmen-not only in Oakland but in every locale where there was a party chapter or branch–were on notice that it was not profitable to defy the Party."[100]

Examining the methods employed by the BPP in the realization of specific objectives, particularly Point Three of the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of the BPP at the local and national level. By instituting Free Breakfast Programs nationwide, the BPP fed many children and simultaneously fulfilled a basic need throughout local black communities. Thus, the Free Breakfast Program was a concrete testament of the BPP's revolution at the local level. The BPP mobilized black men and women to serve children and to assist them through donations of fundamental resources.

The BPP canvassed the community and made genuine efforts to address a fundamental necessity throughout the local community. Their organizing efforts dispels the notion and perception of the BPP as a paramilitary organization of former convicts engaging in criminal activity under the guise of "revolution." The Free Breakfast Program also showed the BPP playing a very active role in the community as they struggled to refine their "revolution" to call for a redistribution of wealth. It also demonstrated concrete manifestation of the self-determination represented in the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program because the BPP mobilized resources throughout black communities to feed children. They also implemented other "survival programs" without governmental support. Most important was that many people donated their time and played a significant role in administering the BPP's Program.

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[100] Brown, A Taste Of Power, 332.

The BPP successfully demonstrated a redistribution of wealth consistent with their demand for a redefinition and restructuring of existing power relationships between local businesses and communities and between government and individuals. Point Three contextualized the BPP's "revolution" at the local level because the BPP constructed a medium through which it sought to collect "restitution" due the community for historical inequities. By labeling "avaricious businessmen" the BPP articulated its demand for fundamental changes in power relationships. The BPP argued that businesses operating throughout local communities must support the community by making donations "on a regular basis" to that community especially to black communities in particular.

My analysis of the "revolutionary" tactics of the BPP to implement the Free Breakfast Program reveled various flaws and inconsistencies in the BPP. The BPP maligned many businesses and individuals by condemning "avaricious businessmen" as leeches who absorbed the vitality of local communities. Local BPP members also made a series of unsubstantiated charges ranging from thievery to health hazards. In detailing specific examples of the BPP's implementation strategy, I have shown that although the BPP fulfilled a significant fundamental need throughout local communities, the BPP did not succeed in persuading all merchants and businesses to embrace both the BPP's political ideologies and strategic methods.

The BPP's inability to compel all stores to make donations to its programs was representative of one of its main flaws and further projected and substantiated the perception of the organization as a "greatest single threat." The BPP did not articulate a concrete political ideology to reflect how it would effect permanent substantive changes in the

existing economic structure and "end the robbery" of local black communities nationwide. Such a failure further aggravated tensions and conflicts in the BPP at the local and national level which is explored in the next chapter to expose additional internal dissension in the BPP.

CHAPTER V

"A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF:" INTERNAL DISSENSION IN THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY 1969-1971

We'll battle like two bulls, we'll lock horns.

Huey P. Newton[1]

The title of this chapter "a house divided against itself" epitomizes the central theme of the status of the BPP from 1969 to 1971 to illustrate and expose internal dissension, low morale, ideological ambiguities, failures and poor leadership skills which combined to create a fertile terrain for the "split" in the BPP in February 1971. Throughout the BPP's historiography, scholars have acknowledged a rift between Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver to demonstrate the success of counterintelligence measures to aggravate and exploit extant tensions in the Black Panther Party.[2] Probing some of the causes of this rift demonstrates that

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[1] Huey P. Newton, Conversation between Eldridge Cleaver and Huey P. Newton, Quoted In David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, This Side Of Glory, The Autobiography Of David Hilliard And The Story Of The Black Panther Party (Boston: Little, Brown And Company, 1993), 324.

[2] Charles E. Jones, "The Political Repression of the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971, The Oakland Bay Area," Journal of Black Studies, 18 (June 1988): 415-434; See Also, Ward Churchill and Jim Varder Wall, Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret War Against The Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement (Boston: South End Press, 1988); Nelson Blackstock, COINTELPRO: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom (New York: Anchor Foundations, 1988); Kenneth O'Reilly, Racial Matters, The FBI's Secret File On Black America, 1960-1972 (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 293-324; Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents From the FBI's Secret War Against Domestic Dissent (Boston: South End Press, 1990); Hugh Pearson, The Shadow of

it was a direct result of different interpretations of 'revolution' and 'revolutionary' espoused by both Cleaver and Newton.

This chapter appraises Newton and Cleaver's conduct to show how they fueled internal dissension in the BPP. Such behavioral patterns and characteristics attracted the attention of COINTELPRO agents who fomented existing tensions among the BPP's leadership and membership. This chapter briefly analyzes fraudulent manufactured COINTELPRO letters which neither Newton nor Cleaver acknowledged receiving in their autobiographies. Utilizing autobiographies, oral and videotaped films and interviews, including FBI documents, this chapter exposes critical factors responsible for the divided "house" of the BPP from 1968 until 1971.

The main argument of this chapter is that the BPP's internal hemorrhage fractured the BPP from 1967 to 1971 culminating in irreconcilable differences between BPP leaders and members. My analysis departs from the BPP historiography which has solely blamed Huey P. Newton and Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover's counterintelligence efforts for both the demise of the BPP and internal dissension in the BPP.[3] This chapter investigates the assertions of the BPP's national leaders who blamed each other for critical ailments and shortcomings of the BPP throughout their autobiographies. For example, Elaine Brown blamed the FBI, Bobby Seale's weakness,

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The Panther, Huey P. Newton and the Price of Black Power In America, (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 257-268.

[3] Ibid.

Eldridge Cleaver's cruelty and Huey P. Newton's excesses for the demise of the BPP.[4] Seale has vociferously proclaimed in numerous public appearances that Elaine Brown's leadership destroyed the BPP. Newton solely blamed the FBI in his doctoral dissertation and book *War Against The Panthers, A Study of Repression in America..*[5]

Some BPP members have also portrayed Newton as a cocaine addict whose cravings resulted in bouts of rage and abuse of other BPP members including depletions of the BPP's resources.[6] BPP members in the videotape, "All Power To The People" implied and stated that Elaine Brown was a counterintelligence operative who destroyed the BPP through Newton.[7] Review of the BPP 's leadership confirms that the BPP's founders were imprisoned during the organization's greatest growth. In 1967, the BPP's leadership encompassed its founders, Huey P. Newton and Bobby G. Seale. Seale was imprisoned from August 1967 until December 1967 from charges stemming from his appearance at the State Capitol in May 1967.[8]

Seale was again imprisoned from August 1969 until May 1971 for his part during an

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[4] Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power, A Black Woman's Story (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 324, 350-357, 222-225.

[5] Bobby Seale, Keynote address Delivered at Georgia State University, "The Black Panther Party Revisited: Reflections and Scholarship," Conference, Atlanta, Georgia October 24-25, 1996; See also Film, *All Power To The People*, Directed and Produced by Lee-Lew Lee 1998; Huey P. Newton, War Against The Panthers, A Study of Repression in America (New York: Writers and Publishers Publishing Inc., 1996).

[6] See the accounts of Landon Williams, Mary Kennedy and Sheba Haven, In Pearson, The Shadow of the Panther, 227- 237.

[7] Film, "All Power To The People," Directed and Produced By Lee-Lew-Lee, 1998.

[8] Bobby Seale, Seize The Time, The Story of The Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991), 187.

anti-Vietnam war rally followed by a charge of conspiracy to commit BPP member Alex Rackley's murder in New Haven Connecticut for which he was on trial in March 1971.[9] Newton was imprisoned and later convicted in 1968 of manslaughter in the death of police officer John Frey in 1967.[10] The BPP was virtually defunct with its two founders in jail, thus, David Hilliard assumed leadership of the BPP was assumed by Minister Of Information Eldridge Cleaver and to recruit and mobilize support for Newton's release.

Cleaver and his wife Kathleen Neal Cleaver, who also served as Communications Secretary of the BPP, launched a massive Free Huey movement to secure Newton's release from prison which spawned new recruits and local BPP chapters nationwide. On April 6, 1968, two days after Martin Luther King's assassination, Cleaver and seventeen-year-old Bobby Hutton were involved in a shootout with Oakland police resulting in Hutton's death. The California Adult Authority (CAA) ordered Cleaver returned to prison on November 27, 1968 after the State Appellate court affirmed its discretionary powers. Cleaver jumped his $50,000 bail, escaped to Cuba then he traveled to Algiers and established the International Section of the Black Panther Party in Algiers on September 13, 1970. [11]

Cleaver maintained a select group of former hijackers and BPP members wanted by U.S.

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[9] See, Gail Sheehy, Panthermania: The Clash of Black Against Black in One American City (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971).

[10] Seale, Seize The Time, 240-244.

[11] Lee Lockwood, Conversation With Eldridge Cleaver- Algiers (New York: Dell Publishing, 1970), 50. The BPP contributed $5000 to the bonding company. The signatures of Dr. Jane Aguilar, Godfrey Cambridge, Dr. Phillip Shapiro and Ed Keating served as collateral for the $50,000 bail which all had to collectively pay when Cleaver jumped bond.

law enforcement in Algiers.[12] He planned to develop what he termed a political arm and a military arm of the BPP to launch what he termed, "a people's war," fundamental to urban struggle. BPP men who joined Cleaver's International Section had officially "gone underground" to avoid criminal prosecution. For example, Don Cox who joined Cleaver in 1970 was one of twenty-two BPP members in Baltimore indicted for murder. Sekou Odinga and Larry Mack of the New York BPP came to Algiers shortly after hijacking a plane to Guinea. Other men who hijacked planes to Cuba to avoid criminal prosecutions and refuged with Cleaver in Cuba followed him to Algiers.

They include, Byron Booth, Clinton "Rahim" Smith and James "Akili" Patterson. Exceptions were Michael "Catewayo" Tabor and his wife Connie Mathews, Newton's secretary who went to Algiers over disagreements with Newton. Pete O"Neal of the Kansas City BPP went to Algiers and BPP Artist Emory Douglas.[13] Whereas Cleaver advocated a militaristic approach which employed violence to "revolutionize" Babylon, the Oakland chapter under David Hilliard's leadership who also became the BPP's Chief of Staff, prioritized the survival programs of the BPP especially the Free Breakfast for Children program popularized throughout BPP chapters.[14]

Proliferation of the BPP's twenty-nine chapters in the U.S. by November 1969 caused

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[12] Cleaver, Soul On Fire (Texas: Word Books, 1978), 154.

[13] Kathleen Neal Cleaver, "Back To Africa: The Evolution of the International Section of the Black Panther Party, (1969-1972)," In Charles E. Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998), 228-229.

[14] "On Eldridge Cleaver By Kathleen Cleaver," TBP, 9 August 1969, 5-6;

rifts between branches and the national leadership of the Party.[15] There existed no unanimity on the Party's ideology between the local and national membership and leadership. The New York BPP embraced cultural nationalism which Hilliard and the BPP officially condemned as "pork chop nationalism."[16] There existed no unanimity on the Party's ideology between the local and national membership and leadership.

For example, in his autobiography, Hilliard expressed disapproval of the New York Chapter's focus on making citizens' arrest of police. Some New York BPP members accosted police officers drunk or asleep on the job. Such a practice was very effective in popularizing the BPP chapter in New York, however, the Oakland leadership particularly Hilliard disapproved. He reasoned, "Let the police sleep, if they're drunk, good for them! Keep them asleep."[17] Hilliard noted uneasiness, 'personal discomfort' and withering "organizational security" after visiting the New York BPP.[18] Members of the New York chapter also adopted African names. One of the most popular last names adopted by the chapter was Shakur. Other notable differences include the marriage of Afeni Shakur as a second wife to Lumumba Shakur whose first wife Sekou Shakur also joined the BPP.[19] Moreover, the New York BPP also prioritized welfare, hospital and tenant rights.

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[15] Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 250.

[16] "Political Assassinations of Deputy Defense Minister Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter and Deputy Information Minister John Huggins," TBP 25 January 1969, 2.

[17] Hilliard , This Side Of Glory, 159.

[18] Ibid, 236-237.

[19] Kuwasi Ballagoon, Look For Me In The Whirlwind, The Collective Autobiography Of The New York 21 (New York: Random House, 1971), 245-246.

Another notable difference in local chapters was the Chicago BPP led by Fred Hampton. Hampton politicized street gangs such as the Blackstone Rangers, the Disciples and formed coalitions with groups such as the Young Lords, the Young Patriots, the Mau-Maus and the white radical group Students For A Democratic Society (SDS).[20] Some members of local BPP chapters engaged in illegal activities which prompted the BPP's Central Committee to issue a press statement asserting that the Party did not advocate 'roving gangs of bandits' robbing service stations and taverns.[21]

The BPP instituted a "purging process" to repair the internal and external damage caused to its image and to ferret disruptive individuals committing illegal acts, or suspected agents who infiltrated the BPP. Purging, was an internal cleansing process to stop internal hemorrhage in the BPP by removing individuals whose actions besmirched the BPP's image nationwide. The BPP's Central Committee released a press statement proclaiming that if the vanguard failed to criticize and denounce "buffoons and simpletons" in its midst, it would become immersed in hypocrisy.[22]

Frank B Jones, managing editor of the BPP's newspaper, likened the purge to that of a 'prepatory process' of a boxer. He stated, "we are preparing much as a boxer who is over weight must do, the boxer sheds weight to gain greater stamina, more speed and agility, we are doing with our organization what a boxer must do with his body and for a similar

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[20] Churchill and Vander Wall, The COINTELPRO Papers, 136-139.

[21] "Panther Purge" TBP, 20 January 1969.

[22] Virtual Morrell, "Panther Purge," TBP, 25 January 1969, 17.

purpose."[23] Violation of discipline was the main reason for "purges" in the BPP. Voluntary dismissal, suspension or expulsion in the BPP deemed one, "counterrevolutionary."[24]

Main problems with the purging process include, the absence of a uniform national or local standard to identify and determine purged members and the absence of a concrete system of checks and balances to safeguard abuses from the unlimited discretion of those in positions of power. For example, some men of the BPP employed disciplinary measures, particularly expulsion, as retaliation against those who contested their authority or who resisted sexual advances, particularly women. Assata Shakur of the New York BPP, Frances Carter of the New Haven chapter, Regina Jennings and Elaine Brown of the Oakland chapter recounted examples of sexual coercion and offensive verbal exchanges resulting in their expulsion and punishments for allegedly abrogating responsibilities.[25]

Purging decimated the size of chapters after the boom of the Free Huey movement. To the BPP, two or three dedicated, functioning people were more effective and preferable to twenty 'non-functional names' in its ranks. For example, one local BPP chapter published a list of twenty-six purged members including at least nine women whom it considered

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[23] Frank B. Jones, "Tightening Up," TBP, 25 January 1969, 17.

[24] Elaine Brown, A Taste Of Power, 351.

[25] Assata Shakur, Assata, 217- 218; Frances Carter In Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 249; Regina Jennings, "Why I Joined The Party: An Africana Womanist Reflection,"In Charles E. Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998), 261.

"reactionaries, renegades, counterrevolutionaries and traitors."[26] Of the published lists and photographs in the BPP's newspaper of those purged from the BPP between March and August 1969, about two hundred and fifty members were purged, of which sixty-two were labeled 'renegades,' twenty-four were deemed 'counterrevolutionary,' eight were 'police informants.'[27] Expelled and disgruntled members complained to the media alleging BPP misconduct, criminality and violence.[28]

Hilliard complained in his autobiographical account that Cleaver's supporters were disrupting the BPP by engaging in illegal activities.[29] However, expelled members from the BPP claimed that the BPP sanctioned criminal activities as long as perpetrators were not caught and the BPP was not directly implicated. Those arrested or apprehended claimed denouncements and disclaimers by the BPP displayed pervasive betrayal of "revolutionaries" by the leadership.[30] Conflicts arose between local chapters over dwindling chapter finances as group and individual arrests and high bails exacerbated tensions over who was released and when.

It became nearly impossible for the BPP national and local chapter to raise money to

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[26] "Discipline Violated, Sister Ousted," TBP, 27 September 1969, 5; Vallejo Chapter Expels Reactionaries," TBP, 31 March 1969, 21.

[27] G. Louis.Heath Off The Pigs The History And Literature of the Black Panther Party (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1976), 127.

[28] Rush Greenlee, "Ex-Panthers Call Party "Black Klan'" San Francisco Examiner hereinafter cited as SFE, 8 April 1969, 1.

[29] Hilliard, This Side of Glory,175-176.

[30] William Lee Brent, Brent, Long Time Gone: A Black Panther's True Life Story of His Hijacking and Twenty-Five Years in Cuba (New York: Times Books, 1996),118.

release fellow comrades. Confrontations with police notwithstanding fatal confrontations for selling the BPP's newspapers, soliciting donations, weapons possessions resulted in frequent arrests particularly as the BPP itself was under COINTELPRO surveillance. There began suspicions and accusations of favoritism towards individuals as decisions on who would be released was left to the discretion of local leaders. The FBI exploited financial difficulties throughout BPP chapters to foment suspicions and accusations of mismanagement by Hilliard. One example was noted in Hilliard's FBI file.[31]

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover suggested in a September 16, 1970 memo that agents forward an anonymous communication to Newton accusing David Hilliard of stealing BPP funds and depositing them in foreign banks, although there existed "no record" that Hilliard was skimming large amounts of money. Hoover conceded, it was immaterial whether facts existed to substantiate the charge, "the skimming of money is such a sensitive issue that disruption can be accomplished without facts to back it up."[32]

This method of creating suspicion through rumors and manufacture of "evidence" to ignite accusations of financial mismanagement and mistrust was better known as "bad jacketing" or "snitch jacketing."[33] Hilliard himself became controversial as individuals throughout local chapters became pessimistic about the fiscal accountability of the Oakland leadership. Discontented with Hilliard, many BPP members eagerly anticipated Newton's

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[31] Air tel to SAC's From Director, FBI, 9/16/70, 2-3. The FBI file of David Hilliard. Huey P. Newton Foundation Records, Stanford University.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Blackstock, COINTELPRO, 22.

return. Analysis of Newton's activities upon his release from prison, exposes his major role in aggravating and fomenting internal dissension in the BPP.

Immediately after his release, Newton appeared at his lawyer Charles Garry's law office library for an interview with the media announcing his plans for the BPP. He planned to ask the United Nations to return Eldridge Cleaver to the U.S. and to free all political prisoners including Bobby Seale and the Soledad Brothers. His most controversial statement was that the BPP would commit troops internationally to any people fighting American imperialism and to the Vietnamese people in particular to fight the "cowardly American aggressor."[34] As the self-proclaimed "spokesman" for the BPP, he planned to present this proposal through a national liberation front at the Paris peace talks to the Vietnamese people. Newton did not elaborate on any specifics such as, the number of the troops offered, where they would be recruited from, when and where they would serve and for how long any of them would be committed to any specific nation.[35]

Newton's announcement was divisive for those who marched and demonstrated for his release, especially white radicals and liberals. It was one thing to vociferously oppose the war in Vietnam and demand justice for all, but quite another to fight a civil war on foreign soil. Many BPP supporters were disillusioned and questioned the prudence of defending Newton. Newton outraged sympathizers and critics of the BPP who expressed their disgust and anger in newspaper articles and commentaries nationwide, including letters to FBI

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[34] Film, *All Power To The People*, Directed and Produced By Lee-Lew-Lee, 1998.

[35] FBI File #105-165429, Section Three Serials 40-57 To Director From San Francisco, 8/6/70, 1-3.

Director Hoover. Hoover received angry letters, one of which demanded Newton's immediate arrest for treason, and for levying war against the United States government according to Article III of the United States Constitution.[36]

Similar letters may have prompted Hoover to issue a memo to agents throughout twenty-six cities urging them to expeditiously develop all pertinent information concerning Newton's activities, travel plans and public appearances.[37] Thus, Newton inadvertently increased the floodgates of investigations not only on the BPP's local chapters but mainly on himself. The U.S. Attorney General authorized microphone and telephone surveillance of his residence four months later.[38] Increased FBI surveillance may have entailed greater efforts to recruit and infiltrate informants in the BPP and greater persistence and persecution of BPP members. Newton's announcement stunned the BPP's rank and file who were unfamiliar with him except through his published writings in the BPP's newspaper.

BPP rank and file supported Newton but did not join the BPP to be shipped to foreign

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[36] FBI File #105-165429, Section Three Serials 40-57 To Director From San Francisco, 8/6/70, Letter to Mr. J. Edgar Hoover From Anonymous, August 5, 1970. The identity of the author was concealed in accordance with Freedom Of Information Act guidelines.

[37] FBI File #105-165429, Section Three, Serials 40-57 Airtel To SACs, From Director, 8/10/70. Given BPP's leaders' history of fleeing to other countries to avoid imprisonment, FBI agents contacted Alameda Assistant District Attorney Don White to inquire of any legal constraints concerning Newton's travel. White informed them that Newton's current bond did not include any restrictions and he doubted any such restrictions would be imposed.

[38] FBI File 105-HQ-165429, June Mail To SAC San Francisco, From Director 12/1/70.

lands to fight fellow Americans, or fight foreign battles notwithstanding their admiration and support of international liberation movements. Newton may have raised doubts about membership in the BPP and support of the BPP nationwide. He formally asserted his discretion to make decisions directly and indirectly affecting the national leadership and the rank and file. He also officially declared his sovereignty by adopting the title, *Supreme Commander* of the BPP days later. Newton appeared at colleges and universities to popularize BPP ideology at Boston College, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Michigan State University, Oakland University in Michigan and New York City Community College. Those who expected fiery chants of "off the pig," "revolution" and violent overthrow of the U.S. as advocated by Eldridge Cleaver were sadly disappointed. Rather than the fiery "off the pig" rhetoric and profanity of Eldridge Cleaver, David Hilliard and other local BPP leaders and members nationwide, Newton presented a restrained and philosophical approach to the BPP.

Newton displayed more than merely stylistic rhetorical differences in the BPP, but a deliberate strategic attempt to re-invent the BPP in his own personal vision and image. He popularized the BPP's solidarity with other movements as "revolutionary intercommunalism" which was perhaps the most confusing idea espoused by Newton to the rank and file membership. Its fundamental principle was that the world was a collection of dispersed communities which must be united against their common oppressor. Newton argued that the U.S. government was an imperialist power and that technology created a "global village" mandating sharing all wealth produced. He urged people around the world to seize power from the small ruling circle and "expropriate the

expropriators."[39]

He argued that democratic capitalism was replaced by bureaucratic capitalism and advocated a new U.S. constitution based on a socialist framework. Newton did not espouse a concrete strategy for implementing such transformation nor did he define or elaborate on the various political "isms" espoused in his speech. He did not offer a concrete strategy for establishing and sustaining the "global" intercommunal village he envisioned. He did not indicate what kind or type of changes he supported.

Newton did not epitomize or fulfill the popularized image of himself standing with Seale in front of the BPP's office guns in hand and bandolier of bullets strewn over one shoulder. He hardly lived up to his image seated in a wicker chair with a gun in one hand and a spear in another and of articles in the BPP's newspapers proclaiming his "genius." Nowhere was this more evident than during Newton's appearance at Yale University during a conference with sociologist Erik Erickson where he discussed the 'dialectics' of Marx, Hegel, Freud, Kant and others for almost two hours.[40] Transcripts of Newton's speeches, FBI reports, interviews with attendees as well as local media coverage of Newton confirmed the opinion of one FBI agent, who noted, the speeches were "rambling, incoherent and poorly organized."[41] Newton admitted, "I am not a good speaker, I tend to lecture and teach in a rather dull fashion-but the people were not

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[39] Huey P. Newton, "To The Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention: September 5, 1970," In Newton, To Die For The People, 156-162.

[40] See, Kai T Erikson, In Search Of Common , Conversations With Erik H. Erikson And Huey P. Newton (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973).

[41] FBI file 105-HQ-165429 Section 6, Domestic Intelligence Note, 11/16/70.

responding to my ideas, only to an image."[42]

Stringent 'security' measures combined with Newton's disastrous speeches, projected a negative image of the celebrated figure of the "Free Huey" movement as inconsistent and incompetent. Discomfiture with Newton's vision of the BPP interspersed with ambiguous 'dialectics' concerning the BPP's political ideology diminished morale in the BPP. His incoherence dominated BPP political education classes as BPP members "couldn't grasp where he was coming from."[43]

One such climax occurred at the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention (RPCC) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania November 27-29, 1970 in fulfilment of drafting a new United States constitution by a conglomeration of "revolutionary" organizations and coalitions including the women's liberation movement and the gay liberation movement.[44] Five hundred BPP east coast members reunited at one locale to sponsor, organize and coordinate convention activities as marshals and guides. The RPCC highlighted turbulence in the BPP shortly after Newton's return.

On its first day, the BPP ran out of registration slips, three films were to be shown but only one torn, spliced tape with unintelligible audio of Bobby Seale was shown and the film broke before ending. The convention was unable to secure space at Howard University. Very few events were planned and poorly attended, attendees were mostly entertained by the

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[42] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 296; Hilliard, This Side of Glory, 302.

[43] Brenda Presley, In Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 310.

[44] Huey P. Newton, "To The Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention," September 5, 1970," In Newton, To Die For The People, 156-162.

BPP's singing group "The Lumpen," and "Freedom Messengers."[45] The one noteworthy event was a rally at Meridian Hills Park and a speech by Newton on "intercommunalism." No constitution was drafted due to the divergent suggestions of the many different groups gathered. They agreed to draft another constitution at a second RPCC convention weeks later which also yielded similar results.[46]

Overall, the RPCC was considered an embarrassing debacle by the BPP's leadership. Newton ordered a national central staff meeting on November 30, 1970 with all national staff members present to discipline and expel those deemed responsible for the event.[47] The RPCC exposed lack of coordination, poor planning and attendance and withering support for the BPP. Newton rapidly espoused a series of positions for the BPP without explanation or elaboration.

For example, Newton delivered the eulogy for Jonathan Jackson and William Christmas after what the press termed, the "bloodiest prison escape attempt" since that of the 1927 Folsom prison outbreak. On August 21, 1971, three prison guards, Charles Breckenridge, Kenneth McRay and Urbano Rubianco were wounded, six people were killed in what prison officials deemed the "blackest day" in San Quentin's history. Killed were, prison guards Sergeant Jere Graham, Frank P. De Leon, Paul Krasner, prison inmates, John Lynn, Ronald

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[45] FBI File 105-HQ-165429 Section 6, "Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention," 2.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

L. Kane and George Jackson, the "underground Field Marshall" of the BPP.[48]

Prison officials claimed that shortly after Jackson met with his lawyer Stephen Bingham, he fired shots from a .38 caliber pistol smuggled to him which he hid either in his hair or under an "Afro-wig" later found jammed into a toilet in the prison's adjustment center. According to prison officials, George Jackson was killed as he broke from jail running out of the adjustment center. Jonathan Jackson and William Christmas were killed after a failed attempt to free the Soledad Brothers from prison by holding up a courtroom killing the judge.[49]

Newton heralded both men courageous revolutionaries who achieved freedom by committing revolutionary suicides for the 'revolution.' He declared, "there is a big difference between thirty million unarmed black people and thirty million black people armed to the teeth."[50] Such an assertion was an internal contradiction with his earlier attempt to distance the BPP from the violent language of its earlier days. Writing from Algiers, Cleaver extolled Jackson's actions as an attempt to create the "right climate" for the people to pick up the gun.[51]

Newton immediately sought to stifle other voices in the BPP by becoming the BPP's

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[48] Larry D. Hatfield, "3 Guards, 3 Cons Slain In San Quentin Break Try," SFE, 22 August 1971; Dick Alexander, " Bloodiest Since Folsom 1927," SFE 22 August 1971, 30; Dexter Waugh, "Deathly Calm At A Marin Hospital," SFE 22 August 1971; Will Ellsworth Jones, "A Guard's Reaction--"Pretty Mad Bitter'" SFE, 22 August 1971, 29.

[49] Ibid.

[50] "Eulogy For Jonathan Jackson And William Christmas: August 15, 1970, In Newton, To Die For The People, 222.

[51] Eldridge Cleaver, Cited in Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 301.

sole spokesman which created undercurrents between him and Cleaver who continued vocalizing his thoughts in the BPP's newspaper. One controversial undercurrent between Cleaver and Newton concerned Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). CBS News correspondent Richard T. Hottelet reported on a Cleaver and Al-Fatah partnership wherein Al-Fatah would train Panthers in combat, assassinations, bombs and sabotage against both the U.S. and Israel.[52] Although Cleaver visited Al-Fatah, it is unknown and unclear whether such training occurred. His statements and those of David Hilliard expressing support for opponents of U.S. imperialism and Zionism stirred the resentment of Jewish sympathizers and supporters of the BPP in the U.S.[53]

On September 5, 1970, Newton called a press conference to repudiate a delegation led by Stokely Carmichael in Jordan stating that the BPP was not anti-Semitic despite assertions by "some member of the Party" made in anger to cripple relations with the BPP's 'white radical friends.'[54] Such a statement was a veiled response to all BPP members especially Stokely Carmichael who Newton denounced as a CIA agent. Newton may have also been indirectly referring to Cleaver and other BPP supporters who spurned Israel while expressing support for the Palestinian liberation struggle.[55]

Newton's statements concerning Israel were also ambiguous and inconsistent. Newton

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[52] Kathleen Rout, Eldridge Cleaver, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 144.

[53] Statement Of David Hilliard, TBP 17 February 1970, In Heath. ed. The Black Panther Leaders Speak, 29.

[54] "On The Middle East, September 5, 1970," In Newton, To Die For The People, 193-196.

[55] Ibid, 191.

proclaimed that the BPP officially condemned "that government" which persecuted Palestinian people but supported the Jewish people.[56] He favored the creation of a "people's republic" in the Middle East by Palestinian people because Israel was a manifestation of western imperialism maintained by western military power. He argued that Israel was a religious state operating at the height of chauvinism and ethnocentrism.[57] Newton urged harmony in the Middle East and affirmed, that the BPP supported the Palestinian 'just struggle' for liberation "one hundred percent."[58]

Newton may or may not have inadvertently alluded to his support of a possible Palestinian state independent of Israel in cooperation with other worldwide nations. Although he provided no further details on strategies employed in the realization of Palestinian liberation, his contradictory statements presented a unique opportunity for the FBI to fracture the BPP's relationship with its Jewish contributors. Counterintelligence operatives immediately tapped into the vulnerability of both leaders concerning connotations and interpretations of 'revolution' and 'revolutionary' by manufacturing fraudulent letters from Jewish supporters.

Two such letters concerned BPP Jewish supporter Algonquin J. Fuller. Agents asserted in one letter that as "one who believes in the revolution," the BPP would be better served with a leader who would bring the BPP back to the people.[59] Another letter criticized

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[56] Ibid, 193.

[57] Ibid, 194.

[58] Ibid, 196.

[59] Newton, War Against The Panthers, 66.

Newton as "a part time revolutionary" to reiterate the necessity for Cleaver's leadership of the BPP.[60] The FBI's Los Angeles Bureau authorized an anonymous letter to Newton welcoming him back and disclosing that the authors left the BPP because Hilliard and others were only interested in themselves and not in "revolution."[61]

The three counterintelligence letters reinforce and illustrate manipulation and exploitation of both terms "revolution" and "revolutionary" to successfully sever Cleaver's relationship with Newton. In other words, Cleaver's urban guerilla warfare was preferred and congruent with the "revolutionary" aspirations of his supporters and would better mobilize the people. In addition to such letters, the FBI also fabricated letters from BPP members. One letter attributed to Comrade Connie Matthews, Newton's secretary, cast doubts on Field Marshall Don Cox and targeted suspicion on Geronimo Pratt, Deputy Minister of the BPP's Southern California chapter.

The letter reported a dismal and "dreadfully disorganized" BPP headquarters, poor decisions, weaknesses and excesses of Newton. It also noted that the BPP's newspaper was "in shambles," and that a 'rebellious spirit' lurked between the rank and file as the 'foreign' chapter received no support.[62] Deliberate infusion of "foreign" to describe the International Section was purposefully intended to question the validity and legitimacy of Cleaver's International Section. "I fear there is rebellion working just beneath the surface," the letter continued, it recommended one of two "drastic"steps, "we must either

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[60] Ibid.

[61] FBI File 105-HQ-165429, Airtel to SACs, From Director, FBI," 9/16/70, 3.

[62] Ward and Vander Wall, The COINTELPRO Papers, 153, 160.

get rid of the Supreme Commander or get rid of the disloyal members."[63]

Such a statement was deliberately infused to incite violence and complete elimination or assassination of Newton to satisfy dissident voices in the BPP. One San Francisco FBI agent noted in a report to Director Hoover that, "increasing dissension, serious morale problems, strained relationships among the Panther hierarchy [were] due to the dictatorial, irrational and capricious conduct of Huey P. Newton, his extreme sensitivity to any criticism, jealousness of other leaders and belief he is some sort of deity."[64] The *San Francisco Examiner (SFE)*, days later charged that Newton under the assumed name of Donn Penn was living a 'high style' life in his in a $650 per month 25th floor 'plush pad' at 1200 Lakeshore Apartments.[65]

The *SFE* reported that Newton's penthouse was daily decorated with floral arrangements, imported furniture, a full time doorman, sauna, gymnasium and plush green since November 1970.[66] A photograph of Newton leaving the building with fellow BPP members David Hilliard and Viron Redwine appeared on the front page as he was picked up by John Seale. The lease was negotiated by Stronghold Consolidated Productions Inc. of New York with David Gabriel Lubell who was described in the press as "a white lawyer with communist party affiliations."[67] Lubell's description was intended to fuel suspicions and accusations of the

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Airtel to SACs From Director of FBI 9/16/70, 3.

[65] "Huey Newton's Plush Pad, $650 A Month 25th Floor Digs," SFE 21 February 1971, 1, 16.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

BPP's communist affiliations. To discontented members, Newton's extravagance verified that Newton was not defending the people and was no longer leading the vanguard but basking in 'a glamorous bourgeois penthouse.'[68]

Assata Shakur of the Harlem chapter noted that news of Newton's residence 'contrasted sharply' with the living conditions of the New York BPP. "Panthers who owned little more than the clothes on their backs were out in the street in the freezing cold weather selling papers, with big pieces of cardboard in their shoes and with flimsy jackets that did nothing to hold back the hawk...I wanted to believe the security story, but it didn't fit my sense of logic."[69] To some rank and file members, Newton indulged in elegance and decadence. Six days later, the *SFE* published another article which described Newton's furnishings being "of a very basic design" with vinyl couches and conference type dining table near a 25th floor window.[70]

Newton claimed that he was told to live at his new residence by the BPP's Central Committee who convinced him that the apartment was necessary for "security reasons." He described his new residence as a prison, "I feel like I'm a prisoner, I can't walk down the streets like I used to, when I go, there's a security force that goes with me."[71] He claimed that the apartment was the only place where he could get a good night's sleep

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[68] Brown, A Taste Of Power, 265.

[69] Assata Shakur, Assata, 230.

[70] "Newton's Pad For "Security," SFE 18 February 1971, 9.

[71] "Huey Newton Luxury Life Stirs Growing Resentment," Oakland Tribune, 26 September 1971, 1.

without the danger and threats on his life from expelled enemies of the BPP.[72]

The BPP reprinted an article proclaiming that the SFE's story was a "plantation trick in modern trappings" to arouse suspicion, dissension, distrust and separation.[73] It further claimed that as tax money supported the 'plush living' of government officials, Newton and other Panther leaders risked their lives to challenge the existing system and should have moved from their modest locale at Lake Merritt to a top floor V.I.P. suite with a helicopter at their disposal. Some rank and file members remained unconvinced as the article may have added salt to an already gaping wound in the BPP. Newton received letters bitterly expressing outrage. Newton's residence violated the unofficial vow of poverty of many BPP members who predominantly languished on meager incomes and overcrowded Panther collectives.

Two former members in Cambridge, Massachusetts sarcastically lamented in a letter to Newton, "we are sorry to hear that you feel like a prisoner in your $700 month penthouse, we feel so free here in our $65 month cold-water, heatless walkup."[74] According to FBI surveillance, Newton had male members driving him wherever he wanted to go and kept

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[72] James M. Stephens Jr., "Inside Report On transformed Black Panthers," Jet, 11 May 1972.

[73] "'Huey Newton's Plush Pad' A Gross Distortion," TBP, 23 February 1971, also published in The Sun Reporter, 20 February 1971.

[74] To Huey P. Newton From M.H.G and A.H.G. Lancaster Massachusetts, March 13, 1971. Huey P. Newton Foundation Records, Stanford University, Series 3, Box 6, Folder 6.

at least two bodyguards with him at all times.[75] COINTELPRO agents noted in a memo to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, that internal dissension coupled with financial difficulties in the BPP offered an exceptional opportunity to "further disrupt, aggravate and possibly neutralize this organization through counterintelligence."[76]

Newton's additional purges of BPP members further increased tensions with Cleaver. On February 10, 1971, Newton declared Michael Cetewayo Tabor, Richard "Dharuba" Moore and Connie Mathews Tabor expelled from the BPP in a meeting with New York BPP leaders.[77] Newton stated, with only two exceptions, the two men were expelled for abscounding with Party funds and Connie Mathews for leaving with valuable Party information. Newton ordered that no BPP members were to relate to the New York 21 and were forbidden from attending their trial or offer any type of moral or physical assistance.[78] He justified the purges as a "necessary thing" undertaken by himself because of their waning support of Bobby Seale's trial and one of the two men with Connie Tabor threatened his life.

The New York chapter and the New York 21 deemed Pratt's expulsion and those of Moore, Tabor and Mathews as "the straw that broke the camel's back and...the spark that

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[75] FBI File 105-HQ-165429, Section 12, Report of SF 157-203, 1/15/71-4/20/71, 279.

[76] Ward and Churchill, COINTELPRO Papers, 161.

[77] "Enemies Of The People," TBP, 13 February 1971, 12-13.

[78] FBI File 105-HQ-165429 Section 12, Report of SF 157-203, 1/15/71-4/20/71, 280.

set off the prairie fire."[79] The Panther 21 published a letter demanding Hilliard's immediate expulsion from the BPP. Publication of their letter reveals not only discontent over Hilliard's leadership of the BPP but disagreements with the leadership of the BPP at large. Newton responded to the letter by expelling the Panther 21. Michael Cetewayo Tabor released a letter explaining what he and the New York chapter considered the main contradictions in the BPP. He outlined ten reasons including, abandonment of democratic centralism, opposition of military activity, splurging of BPP funds and deterioration of morale between the rank and file.[80]

The Panther 21 released additional letters in defense of their criticisms of Hilliard and the Central Committee. Two letters were published in the April 3, 1971 issue of the *RIGHT ON!* newspaper claiming that the Panther 21 did not mention any specific group by name. The Panther 21 summarized their views, "to be very blunt about it, Huey Newton came out of prison more like a kitten than a Panther."[81] On February 26, 1971, in a televised long distance phone call while appearing on Jim Dunbar's television show, BPP Minister Of Information Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers stunned Huey P. Newton by demanding Chief Of Staff Hilliard's resignation and the reinstatement of the NY 21 in the BPP. Cleaver declared, purges of the New York 21 and Geronimo Pratt were "regrettable" and took place "without proper consultation" of the entire Central Committee.

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[79] Michael Cetewayo Tabor, "On The Contradictions Within The Black Panther Party," RIGHT ON! 3 April 1971, 14.

[80] Ibid.

[81] "An Open Letter To The People From Bobby Hutton, RIGHT ON!, 3 April 1971, 8.

He charged that David Hilliard should either be dismissed or should resign from the BPP as the BPP was "falling apart at the seams."[82] Cleaver demanded the reinstatement of the New York Panther 21 in the BPP. Newton refused to discuss BPP affairs publicly. Following their conversation, Newton made another call to Cleaver in which both expelled each other from the BPP. "We'll battle like two bulls," Newton declared, " we'll lock horns."[83] After their conversation, the media announced a "split" in the BPP as fragments of the conversations reverberated on television and radio.

Scholars examining the BPP pinpoint the conversation between Cleaver and Newton on February 26, 1971 as epitomizing a factional division in the BPP which some have termed the "Newton-Cleaver split."[84] Newton and Cleaver supporters made charges and countercharges against one another in the media. From a New Haven Connecticut jail, Seale released a letter denying a "split" in the BPP, he declared his allegiance to Newton, "I am the Chairman of only one Party." Seale condemned what he termed the "divisionary, counterrevolutionary actions and jive tactics" of Cleaver and his supporters which he claimed jeopardized the support and defense of BPP political prisoners.[85]

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[82] Transcript, Jim Dunbar's Television Program A.M" KGO-TV, San Francisco, California, February 26, 1971, FBI File 105-HQ-165429 Section 12, Report of SF 157-1203, 1/15/71-4/20/71, 165.

[83] Huey P. Newton, Conversation between Eldridge Cleaver and Huey P. Newton, Quoted In Hilliard, This Side Of Glory, 324.

[84] Ollie A Johnson III, " Explaining The Demise Of The Black Panther Party: The Role Of Internal Factors," In Charles Jones ed., The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998), 391-416.

[85] "The Black Scholar Interviews Bobby Seale," The Black Scholar (September 1972): 13-14,

Newton deemed Cleaver's "defection" "reactionary suicide" claiming Cleaver appealed to all negative attributes of the BPP including "force, firepower and the intense moment when combatants stood at the brink of death."[86] Newton's most blistering criticism of Cleaver was that he was a repressed homosexual whose affiliation with the BPP fulfilled a "masculine kind of demonstration to reinforce his very shaky sexual identity." Newton claimed to have witnessed "a long passionate kiss," between Cleaver and writer James Baldwin which he kept secret until a Playboy interview in 1973.[87]

Elaine Brown's "Free Kathleen Cleaver" article published in the BPP's newspaper caused a nationwide media flurry days later. It epitomized one of the many internal conflicts and disputes affecting the BPP in 1971. Both women served on the BPP's Central Committee, Brown and Kathleen Neal Cleaver who had previously served as Communications Secretary. Brown charged that during her visit to Korea in July and August 1970, Kathleen Cleaver confided in her through "clandestine discussion" and "whispered conversations" that she lived in constant fear of her physically and mentally abusive husband. Allegedly, Eldridge Cleaver harassed his wife charging that the second child she carried was not his. Brown cited Kathleen Cleaver's routine use of dark sunglasses as concealment attempts to disguise bruises and black eyes from physical bouts with her husband.[88]

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[86] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 330.

[87] "Playboy Interview: Huey Newton, A Candid Conversation With the Embattled Leader of the Black Panther Party," Playboy, May 1973, 84.

[88] "Free Kathleen Cleaver and All Political Prisoners," TBP, 6 March 1971 A-D.

Such allegations lent some credence to allegations not only of spousal abuse and physical abuse of women but of other possible allegations of mistreatment of black women in the BPP. Such allegations may have further reinforced the possible suspicions of the physical threat that males in leadership positions posed to all BPP women. Other radical groups supporting the BPP printed this story in their publications. Kathleen Cleaver emphatically denied Brown's charges as "patently absurd" and evidence of a "counterrevolutionary clique" in the BPP. [89] Brown's most serious charge was that Cleaver murdered Clinton "Rahim" Smith, a BPP member who hijacked a plane to Cuba to avoid criminal prosecution then joined Cleaver in Algiers.

Brown claimed that Smith's subsequent disappearance in Algiers was due to his involvement with Cleaver's wife and because he was the alleged father of Kathleen Cleaver's baby. Brown claimed that Eldridge Cleaver kept a burial ground in Algiers for eliminating his opponents. Brown also denounced Algerian President Houari Boumedienne's alleged duplicity in concealing Cleaver's alleged crimes and violence.[90] Contrary to Brown's assertions, although the Algerian government provided refuge to the International Section, Cleaver did not enjoy diplomatic immunity from Algerian law enforcement who frequented the International Section. In fact, Cleaver repeatedly declared

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[89] "Mrs Cleaver Denies Charges Of Being Hubby's Prisoner," Baltimore Afro-American, 13 March 1971, 7.

[90] "Cleaver Accused Of Slaying Over Wife,"SFE, 4 March 1971,1; "Free Kathleen Cleaver and All Political Prisoners," TBP, 6 March 1971 A-D

his desire to return to the U.S [91] Although Cleaver acknowledged difficulties with his cadre of recruits and violation of discipline as the main causes for expulsions and confrontations in Algiers, FBI agents boasted of their pivotal roles.

They acknowledged manufacturing and sending a spurious letter to create friction between BPP leader Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers and BPP Headquarters concerning "an internal dispute" which Cleaver accepted as genuine. As a result, the International staff of the BPP was neutralized when Cleaver later expelled most of the members of the International Section. FBI bureau personnel later received incentive awards from the Director for this particular operation.[92] Weeks after the Dunbar show, BPP chapters became dangerous terrains for rank and file members because of violent reprisals between Newton and Cleaver supporters.

Intercine warfare escalated in New York where the Corona, Queens branch supported Newton and the Harlem branch aligned with Cleaver resulting in fatal confrontations. On March 1971, twenty-year-old Robert Webb, Field Marshall of the pro-Cleaver faction of the BPP in New York was shot through the back of the head when he and another Panther attempted to stop three Newton supporters from selling *The Black Panther* on Harlem's main street, 125th street and seventh avenue.[93] Zayd Malik Shakur Deputy Minister Of

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[91] "Newton Says Little On Feud With Cleaver," SFE, 6 March 1971, 3; Phil Garlington Jr., "Party Split Widens, Cleavers Ridicule Panther Charges,"SFE, 5 March 1971; 1, 10; "Panthers Accuse Cleaver,"SFE, 4 March 1971, 1- 2.

[92] To Mr W. C Sullivan From G.C Moore, May 14, 1970, In Churchill and Vander Wall, The COINTELPRO Papers,149.

[93] "Panther's Body Returned To S.F," SFE, 13 March 1971, 6; "Death Here Tied To Panther Feud," The New York Times, 10 March 1971, 29.

Information of the pro-Cleaver New York BPP chapter held a press conference the following day charging Newton supporters with murder. He defended Webb's attempt to confiscate Newton's "reactionary rag sheet" and further charged that Newton had deployed 'seventy-five robots' to curb opposition to the Oakland leadership.

Less than a month later, police recovered the bullet-ridden body of Samuel Napier, Circulation and Distribution Manager of the BPP's newspaper found bound and gagged on a bed in the basement of the BPP's Corona Queens, office in New York. Napier was shot six times, three bullet holes in his back and three to his head.. Twenty-one year old Gwen Dolores was tied up on the first floor with her mouth taped and left in a first floor closet from which she was rescued..[94] Newton delivered the eulogy at Napier's funeral and declared, " to die for the reactionaries, the racists, the capitalists is lighter than a feather, but to die in service to the people is heavier than any mountain and deeper than any sea."[95] Newton supporters mourned Napier's death as the loss of a "revolutionary spirit" in the BPP.

Two days later, on April 20, 1971, the charred remains of BPP captain Amon Frederick "Fred" Bennett was identified by two keys and a ring among scattered bone fragments discovered at a remote hideout in the Santa Cruz mountains [96] In addition, to one hundred

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[94] "A Black Panther Found Slain Here," The New York Times, 18 April, 1971, 1, 57; "Panther Found Slain In N.Y," SFE, 18 April 1971, 6; "2 Witnesses Held In Corona Death," The New York Times, 20 April 1971, 73.

[95] "Eulogy For Samuel Napier, May 1, 1971," In Newton and Morrison ed. To Die For The People, 230; TBP, 1 May 1971, 6.

[96] "'Bomb Plant' Panther Killing Quiz," SFE, 20 April 1971, 1, 10; "Panther Killing, Fire Linked," *SFE*, 21 April 1971, 4; "Charred Remains Of A Man Thought To Be Panther Found, The New York Times, 21 April 1971, 36.

and forty nine sticks of dynamite, bomb components, fuses, nitroglycerin and C-4 plastic similar to that used in Vietnam, police found materials linking the cabin as the manufacturing site of bombs placed and detonated in Oakland.[97] Such discoveries implicated the BPP in violent explosions throughout the Bay area and illustrated the brutality of fratricidal warfare in the BPP. Although police alleged that Bennett may have been killed on January 6, 1971 because of "an unsanctioned romance with a woman Panther," the barbarity and execution of Bennett suggested that under the veneer of a "revolutionary" organization, laid a criminal component as two Black Panthers were sought for questioning amidst a national rivalry.

Bennett's death provided opportunities for FBI agents to further disrupt the BPP. Agents proposed a letter to Field Marshall Don Cox in Algiers on February 17, 1971 suggesting a "long talk" with Cleaver before allowing Kathleen Cleaver come to the U.S as two other BPP members were supposedly missing and Geronimo Pratt was "really uptight."[98] Similar COINELPRO "brown mail" letters were intended to isolate Pratt, prevent Kathleen Cleaver from attending the RPCC, discourage any possibility of reconciliation between Newton, Cleaver and 'dissident factions,' and to "further split the BPP and nullify any further attempts to unify the BPP."[99] Convinced of successful and irreversible fractures in the BPP, one FBI agent boasted in a memo to the FBI Director that the "chaotic condition" of the BPP was "possibly a direct result of our

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[97] Ibid.

[98] Churchill and Vander Wall, The COINTELPRO Papers, 151-152.

[99] Ibid, 152.

intensive counterintelligence efforts aimed at causing dissension between Newton and Cleaver and within the Party."[100]

Irreconcilable differences were manifested in the publication of *RIGHT ON! Black Community News Service* by Cleaver supporters to rival the BPP's *The Black Panther Intercommunal Service*. *RIGHT ON!* discouraged the sale of *The Black Panther* as a "filthy slander sheet"supplementing the lavish lifestyle of Newton and Hilliard. It also denounced Revolutionary artist Emory Douglas as an "Al-Capp." *RIGHT ON!* published artwork by Brad Brewer portraying a black man staring at the reader preparing to shoot a policeman who was about to enter or exit from his vehicle with an open car door.[101] The work proclaimed, "if I should go forward-follow me, if I should hesitate-push me, if I should stop kill me."[102] Brewer claimed that the work, inspired by the death of Robert Webb, portrayed "revolutionary violence." It further illuminated the deliberate execution of an authority figure characteristic of the urban guerilla warfare embraced by Cleaver supporters.

Brewer's drawing depicted a glaring misconception of "revolution" as spontaneous, violent aggressive action which the people were encouraged to emulate and support. One noteworthy difference was the abandonment of the pig image of the policeman popularized by the BPP which highlighted one main difference not only between the two different newspapers but ideological differences between Cleaver and Newton supporters.

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[100] FBI File 105-HQ-165429 Section 12, Report of SF 157-1203, 1/15/71-4/20/71, Counterintelligence Informative Note, March 4, 1971.

[101] Brad Brewer, "Revolutionary Artist Or Revisionist Al Capp?" RIGHT ON!, 3 April 1971, 15.

[102] Ibid.

Whereas Newton on March 20, 1971 ordered all drawings of guns and references to violence stricken from the BPP's newspaper in favor of photographs depicting the BPP's survival programs, Cleaver's supporters demonstrated their willingness to execute a police officer as manifestation of 'revolution.'[103] Newton formally repudiated Cleaver's guerilla warfare and employment of guns in pursuit of "revolutionary" objectives in an essay published on April 17, 1971. Newton clarified and reiterated Mao Tse Tung's statement that political power was begotten from guns.[104]

He stated, "the gun by all revolutionary principles is a tool to be used in our strategy, it is not an end in itself."[105] He criticized what he termed Cleaver's "either or attitude" and maintained that Cleaver translated personal problems in political terms resulting in Cleaver's and the BPP's 'defection' from the community. He argued under Cleaver's direction, the BPP was not fulfilling the black community's needs through various social programs. Newton considered survival programs such as, the Free Breakfast For Children, Free Sickle Cell Anemia Testing, Free Busing to Prisons and various others as essential mechanisms to mobilize the community. He acknowledged that revolution was a process, not a particular action or conclusion, "the only time an action is revolutionary is when people relate to it in a revolutionary way, if they will not use the example you set, then no

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[103] FBI File 105-HQ-165429 Section 12, Report Of SF 157-203, 1/15/71-4/20/71, 286.

[104] "On The Defection Of Eldridge Cleaver From The Black Panther Party And The Defection Of The Black Panther Party From The Black Community," April 17, 1971, In Huey P. Newton, To Die For The People, (New York: Writers And Readers, 1995), 44-53.

[105] Ibid, 49.

matter how many guns you have your action is not revolutionary."[106]

Newton endorsed promoting community structures to promote a community's interests. He repudiated Cleaver's call for revolution through warfare, "we would not order everyone into the streets tomorrow to make revolution." Newton later sought to solidify his international mantle of leadership of the BPP during a trip of China in November 1971. He released a photograph of himself with Chinese dignitaries to reinforce his international leadership of the BPP and effectively ostracize and nullify Cleaver's International section in Algiers. He argued that Cleaver's exile in Algiers was symbolic of "reactionary suicide" and 'geographical, psychological and spiritual' defection from the community.[107]

Disunity in the BPP may have provided greater access and infiltration of the BPP by FBI informants. The FBI's San Francisco office, in its report on the BPP from July 25, 1971 to November 2, 1971, enumerated at least twelve informants in the BPP 's San Francisco office, perhaps including one source which the FBI considered "highly sensitive" who particularly reported on the leadership of the Party particularly on Newton and Elaine Brown.[108] Division in the BPP denied vital testimony to Panthers on trial. One of the worst casualties may have been Geronimo "Ji Jaga" Pratt. FBI documents confirm that Julius Butler, the Director Of Security of the Southern California chapter was a pivotal

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[106] Ibid, 48.

[107] Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 331.

[108] FBI File # 105-HQ-165429. Section16, FBI Report from San Francisco, 7/25/71-11/2/71. In one memorandum to Mr. E.S Miller from GC Moore dated 9/21/71, in the same file Section 15, the "highly sensitive source from San Francisco" reported on Elaine Brown's correspondence including details from telephone conversations not only with Newton but also with BPP headquarters.

FBI informant who enabled Pratt's conviction of murder and over twenty-five year imprisonment for a crime he did not commit.[109]

Newton's expulsion of Pratt accompanied by his directive that no BPP member should assist or support Pratt in his criminal trial denied Pratt access to pivotal testimony corroborating his alibi which may or may not have resulted in his acquittal.[110] Hilliard and Seale provided affidavits in 1991 attesting that Pratt was attending a Panther meeting at the time the alleged murder took place. In 1994, Hilliard stated that Newton showed him letters he received during his imprisonment stating Pratt was planning to assassinate him.[111] Newton's letter may have been one of the many "brown mail" manufactured by FBI agents engaged in COINTELPRO activities.

Reflecting on the rift decades later in 1998, Kathleen Neal Cleaver attributed the "split" to Newton's "arrogant title of Supreme Commander," Hilliard's "harshly authoritarian policy," 'purges of rebellious Panthers' and the Oakland leadership's obstruction of "revolutionary acts" by individual members. [112] Although she did not enumerate or elaborate on the "revolutionary acts," she might have been referring to illegal activities, which Eldridge Cleaver contended drove him to "gangster patterns" in Algiers.[113] Although Newton defined revolution as the mobilization of the local black community through a variety of survival

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[109] Reginald W. Major and Marcia D. Davis, "Prisoner Of War," Emerge, June 1994, 30-35.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Kathleen Neal Cleaver, "Back To Africa," 236-240.

[113] Cleaver, Soul On Fire, 153-154.

programs, Cleaver instituted no such programs in either Cuba or Algiers.

Although scholars and national media claimed a "split" in the BPP, Newton dismissed the "split" in the BPP as a fictional myth as only two BPP chapters, New York and the International Section were lost and he was relieved to see particular individuals leave the BPP.[114] RIGHT ON! as well as the BLA gradually vanished into non-existence. There has not been a comprehensive work examining and analyzing the BLA, thus the activities and contributions of its members remain largely unknown. In seven pages of his doctoral dissertation, published in 1980, Newton provided examples of COINTELPRO letters mailed to BPP supporters to demonstrate that the FBI was solely responsible for fostering the "Newton-Cleaver split."[115] Newton asserted that the "Newton-Cleaver split" in the BPP in 1971 was a misnomer which characterized a "split" between Cleaver and the BPP not a personal rift between the two men.[116]

This research confirms that definitions and interpretations of 'revolution' and 'revolutionary' formed a contested terrain which permeated the BPP culminating in permanent schisms in the BPP. Differences between Newton and Cleaver supporters resulted in violent fatal confrontations which yielded a violent portrayal of the BPP in the media. It further confirmed suspicions and allegations that the BPP was imbued with violence and epitomized an organization whose volatile members unleashed fatal

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[114] "Statement By Huey P. Newton, Minister Of Defense, Black Panther Party, Servant Of The People To The Black Odyssey Festival," TBP, 29 May 1971.

[115] Huey P. Newton, War Against The Panthers, 65-71.

[116] "Playboy Interview: Huey Newton, A Candid Conversation With The Embattled Leader Of The Black Panther Party," Playboy (May 1973), 82.

consequences on each other.

This research illuminated the pivotal role of COINTELPRO in fomenting dissension in the BPP. However, COINTELPRO alone does not suffice as an adequate explanation for all of the internal and external conflicts plaguing the BPP. My research has shown that internal dissension included the culpability of BPP leaders and rank and file members in fomenting divisions in the BPP. Seizing on the internal strife due to differing interpretations and connotations of 'revolution' and 'revolutionary' FBI agents manipulated pre-existing conditions and divisions in the BPP to successfully sever ties between Newton and Cleaver supporters. Thus, the BPP's demise cannot be explained merely by external factors.

CONCLUSION

My dissertation explored key factors directly and indirectly affecting the BPP at the local and national level and argued that the interchangeability of two terms, "revolution and "revolutionary" employed by the BPP fomented internal dissension within the organization. I argued that the overall articulation and employment of these two terms combined with Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover's tactics were partly responsible for the demise of the BPP. This research departed from traditional studies of the BPP which have singularly focused on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's COINTELPRO efforts and Newton's excesses as main reasons for the demise of the BPP. It explored some internal and external factors to expose some of the roots of internal dissension within the organization.

This research began with an exploration of the historical background of the Oakland Bay area to root the BPP within the historiography of black activism to demonstrate that the BPP was not a sudden spark which ignited black activism throughout the San Francisco East Bay area. The BPP built upon the protest tradition of African-Americans and on the civil rights activism of the San Francisco East Bay area in particular to recruit members into its political party. Although the BPP's historiography briefly mentions Newton, Seale and Hilliard's friendship prior top joining the BPP, critical details about their backgrounds especially their migrant experience has not been explored. Scholars have not probed the backgrounds of the BPP other than to briefly mention their friendship and troubled past. I contend that the

backgrounds of the most visible and well known leaders of the BPP cannot be ignored and must be framed within the context of the political, economic and social conditions of the San Francisco East Bay area. By analyzing some of the urban conditions experienced by southern migrants such as Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and David Hilliard, my dissertation fills an important gap in the origins of the BPP to better understand some of its political ideologies.

I explored contested terrains in housing, education and labor throughout the San Francisco East Bay area to argue that analysis of the origins of the BPP must include their southern migrant experience which is pivotal to understanding their Ten Point Platform and Program. My dissertation surveyed pivotal social, economic and political conditions which framed and contextualized the origins of the BPP within the historiography of the political, economic and social conditions of the East Bay area during the post 1940s period.

Scholars Albert Broussard, Marilyn S. Johnson, Gary B. Nash, Shirley Ann Wilson-Moore, and Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo highlighted conflicts over urban space throughout the San Francisco East Bay area. [1] By posing the following questions, who were Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and David Hilliard and why do scholars need to probe their past? I argued that the BPP's founders were molded and shaped by the southern migrant experience of the San Francisco East Bay area. My research shows that the BPP's

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[1] See, Albert Broussard, Black San Francisco: The Struggle For Equality In The West 1900-1954 (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1993); Gary B. Nash, The American West Transformed, The Impact Of The Second World War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), Marilynn S. Johnson, The Second Gold Rush, Oakland and the East Bay in World War II (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1993); Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, To Place Our Deeds: The African American Community In Richmond, California, 1910-1963 (Berkeley: The University Of California Press, 2000); Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, Abiding Courage: African-American Migrant Women and the East Bay Community (Chapel Hill: The University Of North Carolina Press, 1996).

principal leaders and rank and file members experienced political, economic and social dislocation which in part contributed to their "underclass" status.

Examination of social, economic and political conditions in cities such as Oakland, San Francisco, Richmond and Berkeley illuminated intersections of race, gender and class to expose the confluence of political, economic and social factors throughout the San Francisco East Bay area. Such a confluence resulted in unequal treatment, inherent racism, segregation, urban poverty, unemployment and uneven development throughout local black communities, economic, political and social dislocation throughout the San Francisco East Bay area. Many BPP members were members of the "underclass" who cultivated and nurtured their own leadership of an organization designed to protect the community from what they perceived as hostile police forces.

Such an analysis frames the BPP within the historical context of social movements because the BPP exemplified the agency and autonomy of local individuals who composed what sociologists termed the "underclass" amid oppressive social, economic and political conditions. The BPP also demonstrates the mobilization efforts of individuals, some with similar and diverse backgrounds to generate some measure of social change throughout local black communities. The BPP was a composed of young black men and women who had a genuine commitment to community uplift and although some BPP members had prior experience working with other organizations and groups, many did not.

Bobby Seale and David Hilliard did not graduate from high school. Huey P. Newton later attended Merritt College. Both Seale and Newton had criminal pasts, they initially recruited men with similar backgrounds to launch the BPP. Such factors challenge the

negative characteristics ascribed to the underclass by showing that despite negative social, economic and political conditions, the "underclass" maintained both autonomy and agency. The young men who later formed the BPP struggled to sustain jobs, secure an education and support families.

Newton and Seale formulated and composed the Ten Point Platform and Program of the BPP to articulate grievances and to demand access to fundamental resources and a restructuring of existing power relationships. Throughout my research, I argued that the demands of the Ten Point Platform and Program were not "new." The Ten Point Platform and Program echoed and reflected similar demands of African-Americans throughout American history. It also evidenced self-determination which formed the core of the Ten Point Platform and Program and Program. The BPP built upon the protest tradition of African-Americans and drew from the civil rights tradition of the San Francisco East Bay area in particular to recruit members. Newton and Seale proclaimed the BPP, the "vanguard party" as Newton explained the purpose of the BPP's 'revolution,' " the people make revolution, the oppressors by their brutal actions cause resistance by the people, the vanguard party only teaches the correct methods of resistance."[2]

The BPP did not have a concrete strategy for effecting the substantive changes they sought in the Ten Point Program and did not provide a template for effecting each of the objectives specified in the Ten Point Platform and Program. Although I argued that the BPP did not provide a concrete map or plan for achieving and realizing the objectives set forth in the Ten Point Platform Program, the BPP's political platform cannot be dismissed as incoherent or

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[2] Ibid, 18.

unrealistic.

The BPP articulated its Ten Point Platform to demand "revolution" which I defined as a redefinition of power rooted in a redistribution of wealth to compel transformations in the existing power hierarchy. I argued that the BPP's "revolution" was conducted by trial and error. Newton and Seale purposely composed an open-ended political platform which Newton explained, " we left the program open-ended so that it could develop and people could identify with it, we did not offer it to them as a conclusion, we offered it as a vehicle to move them to a higher level."[3] This research provided examples of the BPP's modifications, alterations, and changes affecting the BPP's leadership and membership.

The lack of specificity in The Ten Point Platform provided a fertile terrain for cultivating ideological ambiguities and inconsistencies within the organization. For example, the BPP initially argued that "picking up the gun" empowered the masses against aggressors in 1966-1967. The BPP adopted "self-defense" strategically aimed at policing the police. The BPP decreed police as "pigs," to condemn police harassment, aggression and brutality to convey grotesque and brutal qualities to their nemesis. They also urged the masses to pick up the gun. The main problem with this strategy was that the gun in and of itself did not create a counterbalance force to local and national police agencies.

The BPP restricted its membership to black men and women because of their genuine commitment to racial uplift. The Panthers believed, like other organizations throughout

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[3] Huey P. Newton, "On the Defection of Eldridge Cleaver from the Black Panther Party and the Defection of the Black Panther Party from the Black Community," April 17, 1971," In Huey P. Newton, To Die For The People (New: York: Writers and Readers Inc., 1995), 47.

American history that black people must liberate themselves from oppressive forces. The BPP demanded "all power to the people" to raise the consciousness of local communities and and to characterize the call for self-determination through local community control. [1] The organization sought to transform the negative characteristics of some of its members. Regina Jennings joined the BPP to conquer her "serious drug habit, "and to join other black men and women to "transform the black community with social programs, to defend where we lived and breathed with our lives."[5]

Jennings' reasons for joining the BPP are not unique. Many BPP with criminal records and drug habits successfully altered their lives to become revolutionaries. Jennings explained, "the void I used to fill with drugs was now filled instead with a pure and noble love for my people."[6] Throughout the various autobiographical accounts of BPP members, many acknowledged their personal transformations upon joining the BPP which demonstrates one of the main successes of the BPP's "revolution."

For example, individual members of the Panther 21 case in New York provided testimonials on how their lives changed upon joining the BPP. In New York, Shaba Om stopped "hustling skag" and "pimping," Afeni Shakur stopped smoking cocaine and dropping acid after joining the New York BPP chapter.[7] Perhaps one example of personal

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[5] Regina Jennings, "Why I Joined The Party: An Africana Womanist Reflection,"In Charles E. Jones ed. The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998),259.

[6] Ibid, 260.

[7] Kuwasi Balagoon et. al, Look For Me In The Whirlwind: The Collective Autobiography of the New York 21 (New York: Random House, 1971), 246, 287-293.

transformation was that of Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter who was the head of the Slausson gang. Carter became the Deputy Minister Of Defense of the Southern California chapter. Similar transformations throughout local and national BPP chapters evidence the BPP's "revolution" in that the BPP rehabilitated its members to serve and mobilize the community. Such successes evidence the constructive benefits and significance of the BPP's political education classes and the BPP's insistence that its members become agents of change.

Such transformations dispel the myth that BPP members were all hustlers and gang members or that they were members of a "black mafia" organization as charged by journalist Hugh Pearson.[8] Many men and women who joined the BPP were college students. Although the BPP was committed to community service and racial uplift consistent with its Ten Points Platform and Program, two main obstacles in the BPP were class and gender tensions fueled by the fact that some of the BPP's 'transformed' "revolutionaries" had severe character and disciplinary flaws which did not disappear upon joining the BPP. Such flaws fostered ambiguities and inconsistencies in the BPP's "revolution."

Members and leaders of the BPP did not adhere to all the guidelines set forth in the BPP's Ten Point Platform and Program which outlined the BPP's overall political objectives. Some BPP members interpreted "revolution" as criminal activities strategically aimed at inducing confrontation with the existing power structure. The provocations and confrontations between individuals and law enforcement disrupted both the BPP's leadership and rank and file membership. The BPP argued that it must exist aboveground until driven underground

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[8] Hugh Pearson, The Shadow Of The Panther: Huey P. Newton And The Price Of Black Power In America (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 346.

whereupon the masses would continue the liberation struggle.[9]

I argued that such a view reflected the BPP's and Newton's attempts to contextualize the BPP's "revolution" based on co-optation of the concepts of other liberation movements. The BPP particularly adopted the doctrines of Argentinian Ernesto "Che" Guevara's description of the "agrarian revolutionary." Newton and the BPP modified Che Guevara's assertions to suit their own reality. The BPP argued that federal, local and state repression compelled BPP members to accept "revolutionary suicide" which represented the ultimate sacrifice of one's life to the liberation struggle. In its attempts to operationalize and transform a "revolutionary" model to endure disciplinary measures, the BPP induced great latitude for abuse.

The BPP enforced disciplinary measures throughout all BPP chapters and branches as an informal judicial system. Disciplinary measures varied from chapter to chapter, they were almost always at the discretion of those in positions of power and always contained an element of violence or corporal punishment. The ultimate decision on which methods to employ for disciplining a BPP member was always left to the discretion of those in positions of power which provided great latitude for abuse. "Counterrevolutionary" accusations provided a coercive means employed by some BPP men seeking to extract sexual favors from BPP women. For those engaging in such behavior, the role of the "revolutionary" male was masculinist and egotistical and the "revolutionary" woman was perceived as compliant and subservient.

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[9] Huey P. Newton, "The Correct Handling of A Revolution, July 20, 1967, In Huey P. Newton, To Die For The People, The Writings of Huey P. Newton (New York: Writers and Readers Inc., 1995), 16

BPP members and leaders daily struggled with disciplinary guidelines which also became a contested terrain as men and women sought to define and contextualize "revolutionary." My research has shown that gender and class distinctions delineated expectations of the BPP "revolutionary." Although BPP women revered Vietnamese, Cuban, Palestinian, Chinese, Angolan and Mozambique women and many others who employed their bodies against aggressors, many BPP women rejected the doctrine of "pussy power" espoused by BPP Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver.[10] BPP women carved a space for themselves within the "revolutionary" environment of the BPP which often contained manifestations of male chauvinism and sexism.

BPP members and leaders daily struggled with disciplinary guidelines which also became a contested terrain as men and women sought to define and contextualize "revolutionary." Examination of the "revolutionary life" in the Panther pads and collectives confirms that the gender contested terrain of the BPP was firmly rooted in interpretations of the term "revolutionary." This research has shown that the gender dynamics between men and women in the BPP was one of the main factors fomenting internal dissension in the BPP. BPP members had personal flaws which in turn created ambiguities concerning connotations of the BPP's "revolution" and what it meant to be a BPP "revolutionary."

In its attempt to emulate and operationalize disciplinary measures similar to that of other movements, the BPP provided great latitude for abuse as BPP members exacted penalties for violations of its codified rules and regulations. The absence of a system of checks and balances in the BPP provided a fertile terrain for counterintelligence measures and infiltration

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[10] Scheer ed., Eldridge Cleaver Post-Prison Writings, 143.

of the organization by COINTELPRO operatives. Examples of the activities of COINTELPRO agents in leadership positions in the BPP show that the FBI exploited existing tensions and "all avenues" of creating dissension in the BPP.[11] Such "hard-hitting" intelligence measures were specifically intended to create suspicions among BPP members and included frequent arrests and high bails. At times, the "revolutionary" activities of both BPP leaders and members diametrically opposed to one another. Disciplinary methods in the BPP almost always contained an element of violence and provided great latitude for abuse. On at least one occasion, disciplinary measures culminated in the death of Alex Rackley suspected FBI informant.

Disciplinary methods reinforced by international resistance movements supplemented by the disappearance of BPP "revolutionaries" in Cuba and Algiers fueled the accusations of the BPP as a threat to national security. The BPP heralded BPP Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver's escape to Cuba and his subsequent residence in Algiers with other BPP "revolutionaries" to escape criminal prosecution as evidence of the BPP's adherence to and fulfilment of international "revolutionary" expectations. Although the BPP revered international resistance movements, the BPP failed to persuade the masses that the organization offered the best alternative for addressing fundamental inequities.

Additional violent confrontations with police throughout the U.S drew the attention of the federal government especially Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Chief Edgar J. Hoover who declared the organization, "the greatest threat to the internal security of the

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[11] Nelson Blackstock, COINTELPRO, The FBI's Secret War On Political Freedom (New York: Anchor Foundations, 1988), 22, 37.

United States."[12]

Nationwide violent and fatal confrontations between BPP members and police reinforced such a view beginning with May 2, 1967, when twenty-four armed BPP men and six women converged on the steps of the California State Capitol Building to protest a proposed gun control bill prohibiting the carrying of loaded weapons within city limits. The media accentuated the guns symbolizing and embodying the party's confrontational paramilitary thrust and its volatile propensity for violence to achieve political objectives. Newton's conviction for the manslaughter of a police officer supplemented with BPP Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver's shoot-out with police officers resulting in the death of Bobby Hutton, and the trial of several BPP members including Bobby Seale for the death of an accused FBI informant, fueled FBI investigations.

The inflammatory and provocative language employed by BPP leaders and rank and file members reinforced the confrontational paramilitary thrust of the organization. Newton's doctrine of "revolutionary suicide," confirmed the FBI's premise that the organization included a volatile propensity for violence to achieve political objectives. It also resulted in the infiltration of the organization by FBI informants who further aggravated tensions in the BPP and were in positions of leadership in the BPP. I argued that organizational and individual flaws in both the BPP's leadership and membership framed the ideological ambiguities and internal contradictions plaguing the BPP. Both combined to create a fertile terrain upon which the FBI targeted 233 of its 295 counterintelligence efforts to neutralize

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[12] Kenneth O'Reilly, Racial Matters, The FBI's Secret File On Black America, 1960-1972 (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 290.

and discredit the BPP.[13] As an organization, the BPP did not have a concrete structure to address some of the serious problems directly affecting the rank and file membership.

By 1968, the BPP dropped Self-Defense from its name to dispel views of the BPP as a paramilitary organization. The BPP also implemented a variety of free programs to forge a link between the organization and the community. The Free Breakfast Program provided a window to evaluate strategies employed by the BPP in fulfilment of specific objectives. By politicizing hunger through its Free Breakfast Program, the BPP drew attention to larger structural barriers which prevented black children from having fundamental necessities such as, food, housing, and equal access to education. The Free Breakfast Program was a concrete example of the BPP's "revolution" because it conveyed the BPP mobilizing resources and organizing to feed schoolchildren.

Examining the relationship between local businesses and the BPP to illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of the BPP at the local and national level. BPP members solicited and received support from both local businesses and the local community. Although the BPP successfully mobilized men and women to support and implement its Free Breakfast Program, I argued that the methods employed by the BPP included harassment and coercion and public denouncements. The BPP condemned and simultaneously praised "avaricious businessmen" which revealed an internal contradiction in the BPP's implementation of a concrete strategy to demand a redefinition of power rooted in the redistribution of wealth as I defined revolution throughout my research.

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[13] Winston A. Grady-Willis, "The Black Panther Party: State Repression and Political Prisoners," In Charles E. Jones ed., The Black Panther Party Reconsidered (Baltimore: The Black Classic Press, 1998), 366.

The BPP blurred the lines between exception and condemnation as both supporters and non-supporters of the BPP were labeled "avaricious." The BPP's methods and strategies were not unique and including boycotting and denunciations as well as implied and expressed threats which may or may not have validated FBI delineations of the organization as a disruptive and subversive organization targeted by COINTELPRO. The BPP's methods were firmly rooted in the civil rights tradition of other groups throughout African-American historiography. The BPP employed methods consistent with that of other African-Americans throughout American history particularly the boycott to fulfill the demands of Point Three of its Ten Point Platform and Program.

This dissertation explored recurrent themes of "revolution and revolutionary" throughout the BPP's literature to demonstrate that although scholars have enumerated the BPP's political ideology as nationalism, revolutionary nationalism, Marxism, Leninism and intercommunalism, examination of individual BPP leaders and rank and file members interpretation, definition and application of political ideologies were also based on class and gender. My main argument is that examining themes such as "revolution" and "revolutionary" exposes differences in overall interpretations of the political "isms." Too often, the "isms" were not uniformly applied and understood by the BPP's leadership and rank and file membership.

Examples include chapter differences between New York, Chicago and Oakland. Whereas it was acceptable in New York to wake police and monitor their activities, such a practice was not prioritized in Oakland. Another example included the implementation strategies of various BPP chapters for the Free Breakfast for Children Program. I argue that

the differing interpretations of political ideologies account for internal dissension in the BPP at both the local and national level.

Thi study challenged the historiographical view of the BPP as an organization whose members were victimized by federal, state and local repression. Too often, scholars point to COINTELPRO as the main debilitating cause for both the decline and demise of the BPP.[14] Throughout this dissertation, I've argued that COINTELPRO in and of itself does not adequately explain many of the individual and group complexities and ambiguities of the BPP. COINTELPRO explanations tend to portray an organization composed as hapless, naive victims unaware of the full extent of their persecution. Despite COINTELPRO, I argue that the BPP exhibited autonomy and agency at both the local and national level. Although BPP members were not completely aware of all 233 counterintelligence measures against the organization, they initiated security and safety measures to prevent further infiltration of the BPP. Such measures were ineffective when compared with the large scale organization and strategic planning of local, federal and state authorities determined to neutralize the BPP.

One of the main flaws of the BPP's strategies and preventive methods was that they

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[14] See Charles E. Jones, "The Political Repression of the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971, The Oakland Bay Area," Journal of Black Studies, 18 (June 1988): 415-434; See Also, Ward Churchill and Jim Varder Wall, Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret War Against The Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement (Boston: South End Press, 1988); Nelson Blackstock, COINTELPRO: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom (New York: Anchor Foundations, 1988); Kenneth O'Reilly, Racial Matters, The FBI's Secret File On Black America, 1960-1972 (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 293-324; Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents From the FBI's Secret War Against Domestic Dissent (Boston: South End Press, 1990); Hugh Pearson, The Shadow of The Panther, Huey P. Newton and the Price of Black Power In America (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 257-268.

were not uniformly applied throughout the BPP's chapters and at times proved to be unsuccessful particularly when some FBI informants assumed leadership positions in the BPP. The BPP's efforts to combat COINTELPRO fits within the context of resistance strategies to counter state repression.

This research evaluated and exposed some of the strengths and weaknesses of the BPP's leadership. I argued that individual weaknesses exposed the vulnerabilities of the BPP and granted counterintelligence agents opportunities to further disrupt the BPP by exploiting what they perceived as inherent flaws mainly differing interpretations of "revolution" and "revolutionary." By 1971, individual and group differences culminated in the BPP "split" which Newton characterized as personal not organizational. Such a "split" had fatal consequences for both New York and Oakland chapters.

I maintain that the "split" was a culmination of personal and organizational differences supplemented by COINTELPRO activities. This research sought to answer two main questions: to whom was the BPP considered the "greatest single threat?" and why? I argued that the BPP's mobilizing efforts threatened existing power relationships. The BPP mobilized dislocated and discontented people and also recruited college students and professionals with its Ten Point Platform and Program. The BPP also initiated "survival programs" strategically designed to empower local communities by pooling community resources to address social, economic and political inequities. People who endorsed the BPP's political platform also joined the BPP and others assisted in implementing the BPP's social programs. However, the BPP's methods for implementing at least one of its more popular programs, The Free Breakfast program portrayed BPP members coercing,

denouncing and even threatening businessmen. Such activities rendered them a threat to local businesses at large.

Intercine warfare within the BPP combined with fatal confrontations nationwide between the BPP and law enforcement further confirmed that the BPP employed violence against law enforcement and within itself to resolve disputes. Thus, the BPP was also "single greatest threat" unto itself as it struggled with political and ideological ambiguities supplemented by state repression. The BPP did not pose the greatest single threat to the national security of the United States government because it was plagued with internal and external contradictions.

APPENDIX

FIGURE I

OCTOBER 1966

BLACK PANTHER PARTY

PLATFORM AND PROGRAM

WHAT WE WANT

WHAT WE BELIEVE[1]

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black community.

We believe that black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.

2. We want full employment for our people.

We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the white American businessmen will not give full employment, then the means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. We want an end to the robbery by the CAPITALIST of our Black community.

We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules was promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The Germans are now aiding the Jews in Israel for the genocide of the Jewish people. The Germans

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[1] "October 1966, Black Panther Party Platform and Program, What We Want, What We Believe," Quoted In Bobby Seale, Seize The Time, The Story of The Black Panther Party And Huey P. Newton, With a New Introduction by Author. (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991), 66-69.

murdered six million Jews. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million black people; therefore, we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.

4. We want decent housing fit for the shelter of human beings.

We believe that if the white landlords will not give decent housing to our black community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that our community, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for its people.

5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.

We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else.

6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.

We believe that black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who like black people are being victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.

7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of black people.

We believe we can end police brutality in our black community by organizing black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.

We believe that all black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.

9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities as defined by the Constitution of the United States.

We believe that the courts should follow the United States Constitution so that black people will receive fair trials. The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S Constitution gives a man a right to be tried by his peer group. A peer is a person from similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical and racial background. To do this the court will be forced to select a jury from the black community from which the black defendant came. We have been and are being tried by all-white juries that have no understanding of the "average reasoning man" of the black community.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with one another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

FIGURE II

8 POINTS OF ATTENTION[2]

1 Speak Politely

2. Pay fairly for what you buy.

3. Return everything you borrow

4. Pay for anything you damage

5. Do Not Hit or Swear at people.

6. Do not damage property or crops of the poor, oppressed masses.

7. Do not take liberties with women.

8. If we ever have to take captives do not ill treat them.

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[2] The Black Panther. The Eight Points of Attentions were printed weekly in the BPP's newspaper.

FIGURE III

RULES OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY[3]

Every member of the Black Panther Party throughout this country of racist America must abide by these rules as functional members of this Party. Central Committee members, central staffs, and local staffs, including all captains subordinate to either national, state, or local leadership of the Black Panther Party will enforce these rules. Length of suspension or other disciplinary action necessary for violation of these rules will depend on national decisions by national, state or state area, and local committees and staffs where said rule or rules of the Black Panther Party were violated.

Every member of the Party must know these verbatim by heart. And apply them daily. Each member must report any violation of these rules to their leadership or they are counterrevolutionary and are also subjected to suspension by the Black Panther Party.

The Rules Are:

1. No Party member can have narcotics or weed in his possession while doing Party work.

2. Any member found shooting narcotics will be expelled from this Party.

3. No Party member can be DRUNK while doing daily Party work.

4. No Party member will violate rules relating to office work, general meetings of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY, and meetings of The Black Panther Party ANYWHERE.

5. No Party Member will USE, POINT or FIRE a weapon of any kind unnecessarily or accidentally at anyone.

6. No Party member can join any other army force other than the BLACK LIBERATION ARMY.

7. No Party member can have a weapon in his possession while drunk or loaded off narcotics or weed.

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[3] "Rules of the Black Panther Party" Quoted In Bobby Seale, Seize The Time, The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton, (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991), 391-393.

8. No Party member will commit any crimes against other Party members or BLACK people at all, and cannot steal or take from the people, not even a needle or a piece of thread.

9. When arrested, BLACK PARTY MEMBERS will give only name, address and will sign nothing. Legal aid must be understood by all Party members.

10. The ten-point program and platform of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY MUST BE KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD BY EACH Party member.

11. Party communications must be National and Local.

12. The 10-10-10 program should be known by all members and also understood by all members.

13. All finance officers will operate under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance.

14. Each person will submit a report of daily work.

15. Each Sub-Section leader, Section leader, Lieutenant, and Captain must submit daily reports of work.

16. All Panthers must learn to operate and service weapons correctly.

17. All leadership personnel who expel a member must submit this information to the Editor Of the newspaper, so that it will be published in the paper and will be known by all chapters and branches.

18. Political Education Classes are mandatory for general membership.

19. Only office personnel assigned to respective offices each day should be there. All others are to sell newspapers and do Political work out in the community, including Captains, Section Leaders, etc.

20. COMMUNICATIONS- all chapters must submit weekly reports in writing to the National Headquarters.

21. All Branches must implement First Aid and/or Medical Cadres.

22. All Chapters, Branches, and components of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY must submit a monthly Financial Report to the Ministry Of Finance, and also the Central

Committee.

23. Everyone in a leadership position must read no less than two hours per day to keep abreast of the changing political situation.

24. No chapter or branch shall accept grants, poverty funds, money, or any other aid from any governmental agency without contacting the National Headquarters.

25. All chapters must adhere to the policy and the ideology laid down by the CENTRAL COMMITTEE of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY.

26. All branches must submit weekly reports in writing to their respective chapters.

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