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For The People: The Historiography of the Black Panther Party and Black Community Politics and Activism

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**For The People: The Historiography of the Black Panther Party and Black Community
Politics and Activism**

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Historiographical Essay

“...if this would have been a fair and just country . . . and if the country had been what it said it was, most Panthers would have been in the military or the police [department] because serving the people was [their] motivation.” - Sheba Haven¹

Introduction

On Monday, January 16, 2020, a crowd of supporters for the Moms4Housing movement created a human blockade in Dominique Walker’s vacant home in West Oakland, California. The crowd held Moms 4 Housing banners and protected the family from police evictions and arrests. By the evening the crowd grew to several hundreds. However, the next day, Alameda County Sheriff’s deputies in riot gear with armored vehicles removed Dominique Walker and the other families present in the property, arresting two of the other homeless mothers and two supporters.² Dominique Walker, an experienced community organizer from Oakland, her two children and two other families had moved into and renovated the vacant three-bedroom houses in West Oakland owned by Wedgewood, a private firm in Redondo Beach that flips houses.³

Walker’s motives for moving into the apartment were to raise awareness of a specific and broader issue. According to *The Guardian*, “when she and her family took possession of that house...they did so not just for themselves, not just for other homeless families like them, but to spark a movement – a movement that their supporters believe will be the next civil rights movement of our time: housing as a human right.”⁴ *The Guardian* also points out how “In Oakland, more than 15,500 units are vacant, according to the latest US Census bureau data, while 4,072 are homeless.”⁵ Before

1 Sheba Haven, September 3, 2003, interview. As cited in Curtis Austin Jr, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press).

2 Jill Cowan and Conor Dougherty. “Homeless Mothers Are Removed From An Oakland House.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times Company, January 15, 2020, Accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/us/oakland-homeless-eviction.html>.

3 *Ibid*

4 Vivian Ho. “This movement is just beginning: homeless moms evicted after taking over vacant house.” *The Guardian*, The Guardian, January 15, 2020, Accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jan/15/moms-4-housing-oakland-homelessness-eviction>.

5 *Ibid*

these situations occurred, Moms4Housing was created back in November 2019 in that house. When Dominique Walker first squatted there, the movement was willing to buy the property from Wedgewood through the Oakland Community Land Trust, which Wedgewood countered by offering them to live in a shelter for two months that Ms. Walker called “insulting.”⁶ On the Moms4Housing website, they posted the following quote that represents their purpose of the movement:

Moms for Housing is a collective of homeless and marginally housed mothers. Before we found each other, we felt alone in this struggle. But there are thousands of others like us here in Oakland and all across the Bay Area. We are coming together with the ultimate goal of reclaiming housing for the community from speculators and profiteers.

*We are mothers, we are workers, we are human beings, and we deserve housing. Our children deserve housing. Housing is a human right.*⁷

Although a judge ruled in favor of Wedgewood on January 10, 2020, Walker expressed how “We are the blueprint for this movement and we are not going to stop fighting.”⁸ Eventually, Dominique Walker and the Moms 4 Housing members were able to purchase the property from the community. Walker states how “this is what happens when we organize, when people come together to build the beloved community.”⁹ Although this was a victory for the movement, more progress is needed in order to address the issues of urban renewal in vulnerable communities such as Oakland.

All in all, what is outstanding in this situation is (1) the belief that housing is a human right especially for marginalized groups who felt they have been neglected by both private and governmental powers and (2) such beliefs are the result of the persistent housing inequalities in Oakland that

6 Jill Cowan and Conor Dougherty. “Homeless Mothers Are Removed From An Oakland House.” The New York Times, The New York Times Company, January 15, 2020, Accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/us/oakland-homeless-eviction.html>

7 Moms4Housing. “Moms4Housing.” Moms4Housing Webpage, Accessed 17, 2020, <https://moms4housing.org/aboutm4h>

8 Vivian Ho. “This movement is just beginning: homeless moms evicted after taking over vacant house.” *The Guardian*, January 15, 2020, Accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jan/15/moms-4-housing-oakland-homelessness-eviction>

9 Vivian Ho. “Mothers who occupied vacant Oakland house will be allowed to buy it.” *The Guardian*, January 20, 2020. Accessed January 23, 2020.

historically go far back as the early 1900s when African-American migrated for new opportunities in urban Oakland.¹⁰ The existence of these inequalities is the case in 2020 in Oakland, the birthplace of the Black Panther Party, and many themes run consistent in considering the Moms4Housing movement and the historical conditions of the Black Panther Party. This involves the beliefs of housing as a human right, the police intervention/police militarism and/or, the inequities African-Americans and Black bodies faced in the community. The representation of community ownership and protesting for equal opportunity within both groups are present in this historical connection. Taken from point Four of the Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program, the party believed that “We want decent housing, fit for the shelter of human beings...We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.”¹¹ This call for housing represented one of the major inequalities affecting black communities the party and other civil rights groups wanted to address. Therefore, actions of The Moms 4 Housing movement embodies a deeper historical context tied to prior social movements, especially that of the Black Panther Party (BPP). This paper will consider the works and insights of six historians who published Black Panther Party monographs in an effort to connect common threads of analysis and to distinguish among them.

Who is the Black Panther Party?

The Black Panther Party (BPP), founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966 at Merritt College in Oakland, California, rose out of a necessity to assist and empower black communities through radical measures and fight police brutality against black and brown bodies due to the consistent

10 Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

11 Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 71-72.

inequalities African-Americans still faced after the Civil Rights Movement. Although the Civil Rights Movement guaranteed specific rights and freedoms to African-Americans, ending segregation and enforcing the right to vote as examples, some African-Americans felt that they were still enduring systematic forms of discrimination, as found in conditions like poverty, housing, and police brutality. The Black Panther Party was an example of many groups, influenced by Malcolm X, who interpreted the beliefs of Stokely Carmichael's Black Power and determined their own legacy of black self-determination, self-sufficiency, empowerment, and pride. The history of the Black Panther Party represents the ongoing protest African-Americans and other oppressed groups have to undergo for full freedom and equality in a society that constantly undermines them, a history that stems as far back as the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Black Panther Party were known for both their politics of self-defense and community self-determination through their implementation of their community survival programs, and armed police patrols that combated police brutality in the communities they served. These politics resulted in the creation of dozens of BPP chapters to open across the United States by the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹² Each of these chapters served the same purpose of implementing the community survival programs like the free breakfast programs.

Additionally, their beliefs created alliances and coalitions with other organizations, who also have similar visions the Black Panther Party did in liberating oppressed groups in the United States. The Free Huey movement of the late 1960s, the Free Angela Davis campaign in the early 1970s, and the Rainbow Coalition led by Fred Hampton in Chicago 1969 are three examples of civil rights and freedom organizations who the Black Panther Party collaborated with to address the liberation of oppressed groups in the country. This was considered one of their most powerful legacies as well as their pride in blackness that contributed to an appreciation for blackness and black culture. For them,

12 Curtis J. Austin. *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008), See 'Appendix C: Partial Listing of BPP Chapters and Affiliates.'

Black Power not only meant community liberation but also pride in what blackness is without the white gaze.

The demise of the party can be attributed to both internal factors (personality clashes, top-bottom leadership, and ideological differences that greatly affected both party members and communities they worked in) and external factors (police and FBI repression tactics such as assassinations, spies, surveillance, enhancing factionalism conflicts, and COINTELPRO¹³), which slowly deteriorated the party in the early 1980s. The determination of what is considered the end of the vanguard movement is unclear whether it be the death of Huey Newton in a drug dispute in Oakland in 1989 or the official closing of the Oakland Community School in 1982, originally the Intercommunal Youth Institute. Once repressed, the Black Panther Party disappeared from the American mind, with its members either dead, in jail, or leaving the party. What was evident was that the party no longer existed to gain the foothold they did in the late 1960s and early 1970s. To the FBI and other state forces, they were successful in eradicating the party from the country. What is left is a complex legacy where different interpretations exist in what the Black Panther Party truly represented. A complexity where some people remembered the party as a radical and violent organization while others view it as an empowering organization with community politics like none other.

The Historiography of the Black Panther Party: A Tug of War

The history of the Black Panther Party is severely contested in its image and its historiography, if the group is even mentioned at all. To speak about the Black Panther Party is to acknowledge a history of protest, frustration, and resistance in the lives of African-Americans who felt that enough was enough.

13 COINTELPRO is the FBI's counter-intelligent program initially started in 1956 to guard domestic against communism after WW2 in America. The program surveilled, infiltrated, and disrupt black militant groups and nonviolent groups during the Civil Rights Movement. In 1967, the program expanded to focus exclusively on the Black Panther Party. See Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008).

To speak about the Black Panther is to also acknowledge the complicated legacy and politics that was embedded both within the party as well as state repression tactics that lead to their complicated legacy and eventually their demise. Their history as well as the black history of protest and social movements demonstrates a tug of war. They protest and pull in one direction while those against such protests pull back. The Mom4Housing movement are pulling for the equal opportunities they deserve and Wedgewood is pulling back. Their representation and collaboration in the community represents a larger pull to address the housing inequalities of urban renewal present through the country and those in power are pulling back. The history of the Black Panther Party both in its image and historiography is a constant tug of war where different legacies are pulling against each other to get the full picture of what this party was actually about. More broadly, this tug of war demonstrates the politics of African-American protest against the power and society that oppresses them. This long Civil Rights Movement emphasizes the generational tug of war African-Americans and black bodies constantly endured from the founding of the United States to contemporary conflicts many still face today. Evidently, due to all of these factors, a tug of war exists between not only the Black Panther Party in itself but among the historians who write about them as well.

Using Joe Street's review essay, "**The Historiography of the Black Panther Party,**" to help orient us we find three historical trends that took place in BPP historiography which are, one, participant-observer period dominated by the works of former Panthers, Oakland centered studies of the BPP, Panther-created information about the Party, and contemporary witnesses.¹⁴ Second, Street identifies the Pearson era which relies heavily on Hugh Pearson's heavily contested *The Shadow of the Panther*¹⁵ through his negative tone of Newton and the BPP. This, in result, prompted other writers to "rebut Pearson's claims and establish a grassroots history of the BPP, thus offering a more complex

14 Joe Street "The Historiography of the Black Panther Party." *Journal of American Studies* 44, no. 2 (2010): 351-75. Accessed January 18, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40648818.

15 Hugh Pearson, *The Shadow of the Panther: Huey Newton and the Price of Black Power America* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley 1994).

interpretation of African-American working-class activism in the post-civil rights era.”¹⁶ Last but not least, the third trend Street identified was the transition from “activist interpretations and from Pearson’s work to turn to the cultural meaning of this BPP as it receded into history.”¹⁷ Therefore, efforts are dedicated to understanding how the contributions of the Black Panther Party fit into African-American identity, American culture, and American history. What is clear in Black Panther Party scholarship is the tug of war in which historians contest each other, especially the work of Hugh Pearson, in order to gain a more clear historical picture of what the Black Panther Party history was truly about. Each author either expanded on the existing literature or contributed a new point of view to BPP historiography.

Street mentions multiple research gaps still exist within this historiography such as an analysis of how effective the BPP community survival programs were and what political relationships did the party have with other organizations? Another gap involves black masculinity within the BPP and the impact of childhood experiences on BPP members. Moreover, local narratives of the BPP across the various chapters, and their incorporation into wider American history is another research gap that needs deeper study ¹⁸ The reality is that the historiography of the Black Panther Party is scattered in its focus and chronology. Due to the different focuses of the party, historians tended to either overemphasize some topics or not mention others at all. Thus, a complete picture of the Black Panther Party is still yet to be developed. As David J. Garrow maintained, more comprehensive and chronological history of the Party is needed as well as a deeper historical analysis of the local contributions different BPP chapters had to the overall history and politics.¹⁹ What is evident is that the historiography of the BPP in itself is a tug of war where many authors contested the image and historiography of the Black Panther Party.

16 Joe Street "The Historiography of the Black Panther Party." *Journal of American Studies* 44, no. 2 (2010): 351-75. Accessed January 18, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40648818, 363.

17 *Ibid* pg., 370

18 *Ibid*

19 David J., Garrow. "Picking up the Books: The New Historiography of the Black Panther Party." *Reviews in American History* 35, no. 4 (2007): 650-70. Accessed January 18, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/30031608.

This is especially the case when considering authors who contested against Pearson's analysis of the party given the insight of Joe Street's review essay. A tug of war of the Black Panther Party's image may conflict not only the party's existence and history but those who write about them as well. For this topic, there is something about their history that must always be revisited, re-contextualized, or uncovered if a true picture is to ever be crafted.

Many questions arose in considering the Black Panther Party historiography that can be broken down into two factors which are politics and community, often interchangeable. By politics, reference is made to the conscious decisions an individual or group may make in order to maintain, create, or change something in their society. By community, emphasis is placed on those impacted by such individuals and/or groups. Many authors seem to place an overemphasis on the national leaders of the Black Panther Party as well as the Oakland national headquarters, where the party was founded. The politics of the Oakland Black Panthers seem more evident and clear than the work of chapters throughout the country in addition to the community dynamics that lead to the creation of that party.

However, what did such politics look like in other cities where the BPP had chapters in? What were their politics and what were their sense of community? What was the politics of activism that existed in those communities where the BPP chapters worked before the existence of the Black Panther Party? With this in mind, what history of politics, activism, and community existed within those cities the chapters were in that allowed for success of initiatives like the community programs to be effective and influential? Shedding light on these questions may provide deeper insight and thus creating a more clear picture of the Black Panther Party. Additionally, how did the Black Panther Party gain so much community support especially in their implementation of the community programs? What made this group so appealing not only to Black Americans but other groups the party created alliances with? Finally, were the Black Panther Party community politics (community survival programs, armed self-

defense, and black power/pride) innovative for their time or is there a longer history of African-American protest and activism that the party expanded on? What made this group innovative but also replicate some of the same habits embedded with African-American resistance on their goal of freedom, equity, and equal opportunity?

To address these questions, I have considered six monographs that provide their answers to the questions listed above and give insight on the concepts of black politics, community, and social movements. Curtis J. Austin's (2008) *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, which explores the influence and impact of both internal and external violence and how the presence of violence at both levels shaped the actions and politics of the Black Panther Party, both in its creation and demise. Historian Paul Alkebulan in his 2007 monograph *Surviving Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party* places the timeline of the Black Panther Party into three political periods and emphasizes the experience of rank-and-file members within the party. Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin's (2016) *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* claims they provided a comprehensive history of the Black Panther Party and explores their politics in detail through significant events that shaped the party as well as those with whom they interacted. Alondra Nelson's (2011) *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* advances the sociology of racial discrimination through medicine/health and explores the historical roots of health politics in African-American communities which she ties to the Black Panther Party's versions of health clinics, sickle-cell research and community outreach. This approach of cultivating the roots of politics, culture, and activism before the Black Panther Party is also present in Donna Jean Murch's (2010) *Living For The City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* contributing to an early 1900s history of African-American migration, culture, activism, and higher education institutions that lead to the development of the Black Panther Party. Her work emphasizes the roots to the creation of

the organization. Last but not least, Judson Jeffries and Lucas N.N, Burke's (2016) *Portland Black Panthers: Empowering Albina and Remaking a City* focuses specifically on the history of Portland in regard to African-American migration/establishment and explores the history of the Black Panther Party in Portland. Their contribution embraces the importance of local chapters and narratives of the party which lacks in depth study in Black Panther Party historiography. These monographs explore the politics of the Black Panther Party from its creation, to its ability to gain support, and its official demise. In addition, they also contribute to their influence in the communities they served and explore the politics evident in the community relations in various chapters throughout the country. Such perspectives are imperative in exploring the community legacies they left behind and painting a clearer picture of the history of the Black Panther Party.

To start, a key analysis of the sources the authors presents is necessary to comprehend how each of them contribute to BPP historiography. In order for authors to understand the historical dynamics of the Black Panther Party, oral histories and narratives were imperative to contextualize their existence. All of the authors in the monographs relied on interviews they conducted with former BPP members and collaborated witness as well as the autobiographies of Black Panther Party leaders and members during the BPP's existence. These narratives provided the context that showcased the politics and social histories of the Black Panther Party during each stage of its development. At the same time, all of the authors connect these primary sources with secondary sources or scholarly works that provide historical backdrop on the narratives in BPP history. For instance, *Black Against Empire* gives their introduction of the Black Panther Party through the stories of Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in their first chapter that relies heavily on autobiographical insight from examples such as Newton's *Revolutionary Suicide* and Seale's two autobiographies *Lonely Rage* and *Seize the Time*.²⁰ This is paired

20 Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), See Chapter 1 'Huey and Bobby.'

with secondary sources that explores the history of the BPP in more contemporary approaches.²¹ This approach is maintained throughout the rest of the monograph. Donna Jean Murch is an example of an author Bloom and Martin cites specifically in incorporating how contemporary historians are including BPP historiography into wider American history, culture and black history.

Interestingly enough, Donna Jean Murch in *Living For the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* takes on a similar approach. She utilizes oral interviews and other primary sources in order to captivate the role of southern migration and the black student groups in the development of black power and radicalism which led to the party's founding.²² This is especially the case when Murch utilizes the oral narratives of southern black migrants in Oakland to express the societal problems they faced during the 1940s.²³ This historiography provides a bigger picture of life in Oakland before the Civil Rights Movement and explains the community politics of the Great Migration, drawing southern roots as part of this formation. This is in contrast to the backgrounds of Huey Newton and Bobby Seale provided by Bloom and Martin who utilize this historiography approach as their starting point. All in all, such a combination of oral narratives in combination with other BPP historiography on black protest and social movements are also embedded within the rest of the monographs, although only a few monographs out of the six are as far reaching, historically, as Murch's text.

BPP historiography has shown us the overemphasis on the narratives of BPP leaders such as Newton and Seale. More insight is needed on both the local chapters and rank-and-file members that dedicate their efforts to the Black Panther Party and the communities they served in. In regard to the needed historiography of BPP local chapters, this is where monographs like Jeffries and Burke's (2016)

21 *Ibid.*, See footnotes for Chapter 1 'Huey and Bobby.'

22 Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

23 *Ibid.*, See Part 1 'City of Migrants, 1940-1960s.'

The Portland Black Panthers: Empowering Albina and Remaking a City and Paul Alkebulan's (2007) *Surviving Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party* both incorporate the insight and narratives of lesser known Panther members and collaborators in order to paint a bigger picture of the Black Panther party politics. Alkebulan's monograph contains rich insight on the feelings, thoughts, and motivations of various Panther members. This is especially the case in Chapter 4 'Enemies of the People' where he describes the social dynamics of BPP members after the politics of the party began to change through insights such as Eugene Williams and Carol Rucker.²⁴ Within this chapter, he also includes a section on the effect of the political split of Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton on rank-and-file members. Jeffries and Burke's monograph provides detailed insight on rank-and-file members' experiences within the Portland Panthers, in addition to, community members of Portland. Some of their insight includes either their social experiences with the party or the conditions they faced in Portland, both historically and during the Party's existence.²⁵ The importance of these experiences allowed for a deeper insight on the unique and historical roots of activism and black community politics in Albina and Portland.²⁶ As a whole, this approach lays out deeper understandings of why people joined the party, what community programs in Portland were in place, and contributes to the "understanding of the black freedom struggle in the urban West."²⁷ Curtis J. Austin's (2008) *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* also deserves an honorable mention in this category as he utilizes the oral narratives of not too known Panther members as well as community members who provided insight on party and historical dynamics considering the role of violence in shaping such situations.²⁸

24 Paul Alkebulan. *Surviving Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Arkansas Press, 2007), See Chapter 4 'Enemies of the People.'

25 Lucas N. N. Burke and Judson L. Jeffries, *The Portland Black Panthers: Empowering Albina and Remaking a City*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).

26 *Ibid.*, See Conclusion 'Legacies and Life After the Party.'

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 231.

28 Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence and the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008).

Every monograph utilizes the Black Panther newspaper archive, which was party's news service and one of their largest sources of funding. For example, Alondra Nelson (2011) in *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* utilizes these sources to explore headlines and insights of racial medical discrimination, the party's implementations of their various health clinics and the creation and operations of the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, all of which was evident within the party newspaper.²⁹ Other newspaper sources were also included by all of the monographs specifically local newspapers that spoke about the Black Panther Party during their existence. Additionally, all of the monographs utilized these newspapers as well as national, state, and journal archives for their contextualization of the party.

In the same light, the historical dynamics of the Black Panther Party cannot be as clear without exploring the factors that led to their repression and eventual demise in the early 1980s specifically in looking at the internal organization dynamics and external state dynamics that contributed to these outcomes. State authorities such as police and FBI are necessary to mention in this aspect of BPP historiography. More significantly, the FBI and its COINTELPRO played a huge role in squashing the existence of this party.³⁰ All of the authors utilize FBI memos and other state documents that shed light on the initiatives the FBI undertook to destroy the reputation and operations of the party. Thus, all authors mention the demise of the party in the late 1980s. Bloom and Martin provided a general section on FBI efforts to tarnish the group citing many sources more known in BPP historiography such as J. Edgar Hoover's new memo of the purpose of COINTELPRO in March 4, 1968.³¹ Bloom and Martin

29 Alondra, Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

30 For definition of COINTELPRO, see footnote 13.

31 Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), See Chapter 8 'Law and Order.' (See footnote 13 for definition of COINTELPRO).

maintain this approach with various FBI memos, Black Panther newspaper stories, and other newspaper articles and mainstream publications.

However, more authors provide a more in-depth view of the party dynamics and their relationship with the FBI and even go so far as to provide political history and the effects of the FBI on the party. In keeping with his argument of the politics and role of violence, Curtis J. Austin provides a detailed insight on the various FBI initiatives that served to eradicate the party's existence. His usage of FBI memos, letters and primary source images that prompted factionalism between the Black Panther Party and those they were developing or fixing relationships with whether it be Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton, heightening tensions with the US organization, or local situations as well.³² In particular Austin gathers FBI letters and memos to describe a process of promoting factionalism among the Blackstone Rangers and Fred Hampton in Chicago specifically the ways in which they sent letters to the opposing groups.³³ The insight he provides here gives an in-depth exploration of the motivations, processes, and actions that the FBI had in attempting to discredit the Black Panthers.

Additionally, not only does he describe how FBI measures affected the party dynamic both socially and politically but the politics of violence in itself that strategically explains why the FBI utilized certain measures even with full understandings of party dynamics and perspectives through their surveillance initiatives. Nelson also contributes to the social and political effect of FBI and police tactics on the Black Panther Party specifically in how the destruction of the party's health clinics affected the party dynamics but also display their perseverance in spite of such efforts.³⁴ This perspectives, as Nelson points out, is something worth noting in the legacy of the party. For more

32 Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence and the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008).

33 *Ibid.*, See Chapter 6 'Unjustifiable Homicides.'

34 Alondra, Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), See Chapter 4 'Spin Doctors: The Politics of Sickle Cell Anemia'

insight on the internal dynamics of the Black Panther Party that also led to its demise, one may benefit from reading Alkebulan's (2007) *Surviving Pending Revolution* because he is able to explore, in depth, the feelings and reactions of Black Panther Party members of such political shifts and downfall. One may learn from Curtis J. Austin's (2008) *Up Against the Wall* in exploring how internal violence shaped the social experiences of rank-and-file members as well.

Historical Approaches

All in all, these authors tapped into Black Panther Party primary sources that contain oral histories. The autobiographies of BPP members and leaders, the interviews conducted by each author, the newspaper publications by both the Black Panther Party and mainstream publications all provide an oral testimony that speak to historical insight of the party. Oral history rely on the historical narratives of oral stories and testimonies from the subject being heard and provides "a powerful insistence on an individual perspective, and...methodological engagement with issues of subjectivity and narrativity and the constructive character of remembering."³⁵ In looking at oral history, acknowledgment is made by the authors that oral narratives may contain some bias in BPP historiography. However, as Jeffries and Burke point out, "oral testimonies can provide rich insights into the lives of activists, especially those who, for a variety of reasons, shield away from the spotlight's glare and are therefore not widely known, either among the general public or to students of 1960s history and politics."³⁶ Given this, many of the testimonies in oral history takes place through the presence of a history of memory which refers to the ways in which the subject recollects historical events that can be personal, societal, and/or

35 Marek Tamm and Peter Burke, *Debating New Approaches To History*, (London, New York: Bloomsburg Publishing Plc, 2019), 130.

36 Lucas N. N. Burke and Judson L. Jeffries, *The Portland Black Panthers: Empowering Albina and Remaking a City*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 12.

collective to the past moment being mentioned.³⁷ For the history of the Black Panther Party, the history of memory became significant to understand the social experiences and politics of the grassroots community organizing they were initiating. It also provides insight into the lives of the members and the communities they served. In the six monographs, the historiography not only caters to the testimonies and insights of various BPP members and autobiographies but also how their narratives tie into bigger “historical experiences, cultural patterns, and ideological structures, and has helped to give memory studies a sense of contributing to investigation of key aspects of the modern conditions.”³⁸ In other words, how does their narrative speak to wider historical and social realities and what contribution does this narrative bring to the present? This is an approach utilized by all six monographs in their central focuses.

In many cases, each author contributes a history of memory through the BPP primary source narratives in connection their memory to a larger historiography of black social movements and protest tradition. Donna Jean Murch is able to connect the roots of African-American activism in the South to conditions in California that led to the politics of the Black Panther Party after the Great Migration because she was able to explore the oral narratives of black southern migrants and activists before the creation of the party.³⁹ Paul Alkebulan shed lights on the political eras of the party in order to draw out the memories of members like Landon Williams, and Doug Miranda.⁴⁰ Two authors that truly draw out memory in relation to the modern condition are Nelson and Jeffries and Burke where Nelson ties the party’s health clinics and politics because of her interviews with former members such as Cleo Silvers, Norma Armour and Elaine Brown. Nelson connects their history of memory in order to reveal the

37 Marek Tamm and Peter Burke, *Debating New Approaches To History*, (London, New York: Bloomsburg Publishing Plc, 2019), 128.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 131.

39 Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

40 Paul Alkebulan. *Surviving Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Arkansas Press, 2007).

importance of such race and medicine politics today.⁴¹ For Jeffries and Burke, they tie the historical memory of the Portland Black Panthers and the community legacies the Party members left behind in the modern condition citing examples like Kent Ford, Sandra Ford, and Raymond Joe.⁴² Some of these examples describes in detail the community activism of these present day Black Panther Party members who were a part of the Portland Black Panthers. He mentions many more BPP members who left community legacies of activism and community outreach in their daily lives. These authors provide an example of how the history of memory from the BPP primary sources they collected create a connection to the modern condition through such factors of cultural patterns and ideological structures. The ideological structures are the significance of community activism and outreach. The culture may be grassroots organizing and empowerment.

Of course, one can not neglect the presence of postcolonial history in Black Panther Party historiography because such a presence was pivotal to the politics and mission of the party in itself. Tamm and Burke point out how “postcolonial historians take colonialism, decolonization, and neo-colonial practices as their object of study.”⁴³ Alondra Nelson provides significant contribution to medical discrimination and the Black Panther Party through their exploration of the party’s postcolonial perspectives. Her ability to manipulate BPP oral narrative sources and medical journals during this time phase provided significant insight on the postcolonial perspectives the party was embedded in. More specifically, she dedicates a chapter on the origins of Black Panther Party health activism in which she elaborates on the postcolonial perspectives of the examples of Frantz Fanon, Mao Zedong, and Che Guevara to explore how the party utilized these postcolonial insights into their own

41 Alondra, Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), See Conclusion.

42 Lucas N. N. Burke and Judson L. Jeffries, *The Portland Black Panthers: Empowering Albina and Remaking a City*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), See Conclusion.

43 Marek Tamm and Peter Burke, *Debating New Approaches To History*, (London, New York: Bloomsburg Publishing Plc, 2019), 57.

community health politics.⁴⁴ For example, Party members utilized the works of Fanon, Mao, and Che in their political education classes as the party shifted from self-defense to self-help and self-determination politics.⁴⁵ The works of these authors help to connect health and medicine perspectives to the medical mistreatment that African-American endured in America.⁴⁶ Additionally, Alondra Nelson's significant contribution explores the intellectual processes of the Black Panther Party and explores how the party was able to tie medical inequality to racial inequalities, thereby, contributing to the discussion of race and medicine. This is the case considering their fight against UCLA's Violence Center and their intellectual processes of connecting sickle cell to postcolonial perspectives of racism and racial inequality in the *Black Panther* newspapers.⁴⁷ Ultimately, oral history, history of memories, and postcolonial history all tie into the historiography of the Black Panther Party. The understanding of these histories are essential to grasp the community politics of the Black Panther Party.

The Community Politics of the Black Panther Party

The study of politics of the Black Panther Party was evident for each monograph. All of the authors explore the politics of the Black Panther Party from its existence to its demise and explored how their politics shaped the dynamics of the party and those around them. In particular Bloom and Martin and Alkebulan provide an organized outlook in understanding the political evolution of the party. Bloom and Martin give us a comprehensive history of Black Panther Party events and contains chapter sections which gives us an in-depth historiography of the conditions that led to national-wide Black Panther Party events. One of the central questions shown in this monograph is exploring how the

44 Alondra, Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), See Chapter 2 'Origins of Black Panther Party Health Activism.'

45 *Ibid*

46 *Ibid pp.* 73

47 *Ibid*, See Chapter 5 'As American As Cherry Pie: Contesting the Biologization of Violence.'

politics of the party became effective drawing support both locally, nationally, and internationally.

Bloom and Martin maintain that the cause for such impact is evident because the political climate of blacks as well as nationalism worldwide, the rage that was felt both in the conditions of America as well as conditions elsewhere such as Vietnam, and the rage of other activist groups provided the background climate for the Panthers to create their particular insurgent practices and gain the level of support they hoped for. However, it was when these political climates changed within the state and the communities they served that the party had a difficult time maintain their politics of self-defense, postcolonialism, and allied support.⁴⁸

This similar argument is also expressed by Nelson as she argues that the Sickle Cell Anemia Research Foundation had trouble maintaining their racial discrimination politics on medical discrimination once governmental efforts were in place to tackle sickle cell.⁴⁹ Bloom and Martin provide an overview of the history of the Black Panther Party and reading this monograph should be read as such. More emphasis can be created connecting the political theories present in the conclusion throughout the chapters and sections present in the monograph. At times, it was unclear understanding the connection between the political claims of repression and context when considering BPP events. The monograph may benefit from Alondra Nelson approach in chapter structure where she provides a very detailed yet overview of each chapter in her introduction and then proceeds to summarize and connect key arguments for each chapter that is read.

The politics of rank-and-file members and lesser known members is also a much needed contribution to Panther historiography. Alkebulan in *Surviving Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party* not only provides a comprehensive organization of the evolution of the politics of

48 Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), See Conclusion for political argument.

49 Alondra, Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), See Chapter 4 'Spin Doctors: The Politics of Sickle Cell Anemia.'

the Black Panthers into three political eras but also provides various insight on the experiences of lesser known members from their motivations to joining the party and their social experiences on each political era in its party's existence. Nelson, Jeffries and Burke, and Murch also provide valuable insight of this focus as well.

Alkebulan also explores the politics of women within the party as well in which he expressed how their contributions represented a passion for social justice and community change in facing challenges of sexism in the party as well the social inequalities they faced outside of it. Alkebulan points out how women “achieved positions of trust and responsibility because they fought for them [and] consistently demanded respect while pointing out contradictions between rhetoric and practice.”⁵⁰ His usage of oral narratives from BPP women serve to strengthen these points especially in Chapter 5 ‘Women and the Black Panther Party’ where Alkebulan explores black masculinity and highlights the insight of women panthers like Elaine Brown, Tarika Lewis, Lu Hudson, and JoNina Abron.⁵¹ Through these narratives and the insight of many more BPP women, he is able to explore how black women faced sexism in the party and how they distinguished themselves from other women's social movements.

This is an approach that Curtis J. Austin could have benefited from. For Austin, he provides a very elaborate and detailed study of the role of violence on the party's creation, existence, and demise. This historical approach is very unique and fruitful both to readers and scholars of 1960s history. All under the theoretical umbrella of the role of violence, he places great emphasis on the state efforts to repress the organization, the experiences of rank-and-file members or lesser-known members, the party's social and political dynamics that led to their rise and fall and the communal influence the Party

50 Paul Alkebulan, *Surviving Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Arkansas Press, 2007), 116.

51 *Ibid.*, See Chapter 5 ‘Women and the Black Panther Party.’

had within communities.⁵² Reading this monograph may prove beneficial to gain such insight. At the same time, more research can be dedicated exploring the influence of media in tarnishing the image of the Black Panther Party and its impact today as well as a more detailed study on the experiences of women in the Black Panther Party. In particular, studying how black women made significant contributions to the party should be mentioned followed by the struggles they faced both in and outside the party. It also adds more depth on the role of violence affected Black women during the Black Panther Party and how Black women, in particular, responded to that violence. The structuring of this narrative is important because it does not assume that the history of black women in the BPP only involves struggle and acknowledgment but includes them into the historiography of social movements, and African-American identity.

On the other hand, though these books offer a foundation of the politics of the Black Panther Party, the history and image of the Black Panther Party is much more nuanced than the starting points of Alkebulan and Bloom and Martin. Although these works provide a point in the legacy of politics of the party, certain works maintain that the community politics of the Black Panther Party were distinctive but not innovative. Various historians cite the long Civil Rights Movement that took place in which the politics and activist habits of the party stemmed from a long tradition of African-American protest and resistance. Nelson, Murch, and Jeffries and Burke all together provide in depth study on the history of the Panthers by providing this perspective as a significant understanding to their central questions. Nelson provides a history and origins of African-American health politics reaching as far back as 1880s. This approach cites various historical moments such as Marcus Garvey and UNIA to shed light on the histories of health politics and she even goes so far as to categorize these politics into

52 Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence and the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008).

three categories: institution-building, integrationism, and politics of knowledge.⁵³ Jeffries and Burke provide a detailed account on the historical politics of Portland in responding to housing discrimination and urban renewal during the early 1900s and how such politics set the stage for the creation of the Portland Black Panthers.⁵⁴ Finally, Donna Jean Murch in *Living For the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland* maintains that the community politics of the Black Panther Party stem from postwar black radicalism from the Great Migration where southern black migrants brought with them activist habits already present in the South and, thus intertwined them within diasporic California cities, especially with Bay Area.⁵⁵ Additionally, Murch elaborates on the activism embedded within higher education institutions where the Black Panther Party politics was founded through activist experiences in places like Merritt College and organizations like Afro-American Association.⁵⁶

Essentially another factor that led to the establishment of the party was also through the influence of these black power politics already embedded in higher education institutions and the usage of personal networks to gain membership into the party. Austin provides a brief mentioning of the tradition of African-American protest in his introduction begins with the study of Black Power in shaping his claim on how state violence lead to the creation of black self-determination and self-sufficiency.⁵⁷ Many readers may benefit from reading this approach of black power as well.

Subsequently, what is at the heart of Black Panther Party historiography is the inevitable community legacy that the party left behind. It is a picture that is not so clear in the contemporary mind

53 Alondra, Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), See Chapter 1 'African-American Responses to Medical Discrimination Before 1966.'

54 Lucas N. N. Burke and Judson L. Jeffries, *The Portland Black Panthers: Empowering Albina and Remaking a City*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), See Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

55 Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), See Conclusion.

56 *Ibid*

57 Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence and the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008), See Chapter 1 'Civil Wrongs and the Rise of Black Power.'

and much light needs to be shed on exploring the community legacies of the Black Panthers. Both Nelson and Jeffries and Burke do a noteworthy job dedicating their conclusion to BPP members who went on to contribute to their communities, both locally and nationally. Readers may benefit by reading these two particular monographs to get a hint at this legacy of community, love, self-determination, and self-sufficiency. The rest of the monographs also provide a decent insight into the community legacy of the party.

In conclusion, each author provides a unique contribution to the study of the Black Panthers not only through their unique approaches of the BPP but also their incorporation into wider historiography on American history, protest, black history, and social/revolutionary movements. Through these lenses, their work captures a must needed insight of the Black Panther Party if the goal of the reader is to receive a deeper insight and clearer picture of the party's existence and legacy. One way to do so is to incorporate the impact the Black Panther Party members had on the communities they served because a bigger message can be said about what it meant to be there for the people.

Primary Sources

Stokely Carmichael, “Black Power”, October 29, 1966

Kwame Ture, formally known as Stokely Carmichael was a West-Indian born civil rights leader during and after the Civil Rights Movement and became a part of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at Howard University (SNCC). His “Black Power” speech was the ideological foundation for the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, the predecessor to the Black Panther Party. The Lowndes County Freedom Organization came up with the Black Panther logo that Black Panther Party incorporated in 1966.

But the question of, why do black people, why do white people in this country associate Black Power with violence? And the question is because of their own inability to deal with “blackness.” If we had said “Negro Power” nobody would get scared. (laughter) Everybody would support it. Or if we said power for colored people, everybody’d be for that, but it is the word “Black,” it is the word “Black” that bothers people in this country, and that’s their problem, not mine—their problem, their problem.

Now there’s one modern day lie that we want to attack and then move on very quickly and that is the lie that says anything all black is bad. Now, you’re all a college university crowd. You’ve taken your basic logic course. You know about a major premise and minor premise. So people have been telling me anything all black is bad. Let’s make that our major premise.

Major premise: Anything all black is bad.

Minor premise or particular premise: I am all black.

Therefore ...

I’m never going to be put in that trick bag; I am all black and I’m all good. (Laughter). Anything all black is not necessarily bad. Anything all black is only bad when you use force to keep whites out. Now that’s what white people have done in this country, and they’re projecting their same fears and guilt on us, and we won’t have it, we won’t have it. Let them handle their own fears and their own guilt. Let them find their own psychologists. We refuse to be the therapy for white society any longer. We have gone mad trying to do it. We have gone stark raving mad trying to do it.

I look at Dr. King on television every single day, and I say to myself: “Now there is a man who’s desperately needed in this country. There is a man full of love. There is a man full of mercy. There is a man full of compassion.” But every time I see Lyndon on television, I said, “Martin, baby, you’ve got a long way to go.” (applause)

So that the question stands as to what we are willing to do, how we are willing to say “no” to withdraw from that system and begin within our community to start to function and to build new institutions that will speak to our needs. In Lowndes County, we developed something called the Lowndes County Freedom Organization. It is a political party. The Alabama law says that if you have a Party you must have an emblem. We chose for the emblem a black panther, a beautiful black animal which symbolizes the strength and dignity of black people, an animal that never strikes back until he’s backed so far into the wall, he’s got nothing to do but spring out. Yeah. And when he springs he does not stop.

Charles Bursey, Black Panther Party member, serves food for the Free Breakfast for Schoolchildren Program, Oakland, California, ca. 1970.

The Free Breakfast for Children Program, initiated in January 1969 in Oakland, was one of many 'survival programs' the Black Panther Party founded with the intention of providing free breakfast to children in the communities they served. This program was one of the first survival programs enacted by Oakland headquarters and became one of the long-lasting programs emulated by chapters across the country. This program helped inspire the foundation for many of the school breakfast programs that exist today.



Fred Hampton, left, chairman of the Black Panthers, speaks during a news conference with the Young Lords on Oct. 10, 1969, at Holy Covenant United Methodist Church. With Hampton are, from left, Pablo "Yoruba" Guzman, a Young Lord from New York, Jose "Cha-Cha" Jimenez, founder of the Young Lords of Chicago, and Mike Klonsky, a Students for a Democratic Society spokesman. (Dave Nystrom/Chicago Tribune)

Fred Hampton was chairman of the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party and deputy chairman of the national BPP. Fred helped to lead various coalitions with various organization such as the Puerto Rican Young Lords, Students for a Democratic Society, and even the Young Patriots, Fred eventually founded the Rainbow Coalition, a political organization comprising many of the political groups mentioned above to combat injustice in America. His actions represented the community politics of the Black Panther Party specifically the necessity to liberate all oppressed peoples in America throughout racial and economic lines. Fred Hampton was assassinated by Chicago police in December 1969.



I Joined the Panthers by Joan Bird from *The Black Panther* newsletter, June 27, 1970

Joan Bird was a member of the New York Panther 21, a group of 21 members who were charged with conspiracy to kill several police officers and destroy public buildings in April 1969 in New York City. After two years in court, all of the defendants were acquitted. The following excerpt of Joan Bird expresses many of the justifications as to why members like her, particularly rank-and-file, decided to join the Black Panthers. Many of those who joined BPP joined with the intention of combating police brutality and the conditions they faced in American through the efforts of the community survival programs.

I was born in New York City 20 years ago. I grew up in the Harlem Community and attended parochial elementary school, Resurrection, and from there went on to Cathedral High School for Girls. Growing up in the typical black ghetto community I clearly recognize the ills of poverty. Embedded there among my people. We suffer day to day . . . trapped into hunger, disease and complete destitution, which is so actively present in our lives. Having loving and concerned parents I am indeed lucky, but there are so many in Harlem who have none to turn to for help. Their world is blatant.

My ambition: to become a nurse. I thought I could sincerely help my people with this perspective in mind. After graduating from Cathedral in 1967, I entered Bronx Community College majoring in nursing. During this period, I felt that this was not enough. I needed and wanted to be fully aware of myself, the changing world, my people's true identity and their roles in society and the need for us to unite if we are ever going to achieve any sort of power.

I first heard and read about the Black Panther Party in the summer of 1968 right after the incident in Brooklyn Court when 2000 policemen violently attacked members of the Black Panther Party. Having lived in Harlem all my life, I was aware of bad cops and police brutality, but this was more than I had ever dreamed of.

I wanted to know more about the Black Panther Party and its purpose so I went to the office on Seventh Avenue and met a few of the brothers. They related to me the necessity for all oppressed people to be politically aware of the fascism which has crippled them for centuries. I read the 10-point program and what brothers like Malcolm, Huey, Eldridge, and Che were talking about began to make sense.

I became a Party member and actively participated in its various programs-free breakfast for the children, free clothing for the people, political education classes open to the public and finding out the immediate needs of the people by going into the community. I continued to go to the school at night and devoted my days to working with the people. I was never tired by this schedule because doing anything to help my people gave me the energy to go on.

Black Panther Sisters talk about Women's Liberation reprinted from *The Movement*, September 1969

The following excerpt below is a 1969 interview from The Movement newspaper where six Panther women are interviewed about their experience as women within the Black Panther party. This interview highlights the realities many women faced both within the party and on a societal level in advocating and liberating the communities in which they served.

MOVEMENT: How has the position of women within the Black Panther Party changed? How have the women in the Party dealt with male chauvinism within the Party?

PANTHER WOMEN:

...We realize that we have a role to play and we're tired of sitting home and being misused and unless we stand up, male chauvinism will still show itself and be something that's just passed over. Unless we speak against it and teach the brothers what's correct and point out what's wrong, then it'll still be here.

There used to be a difference in the roles (of men and women) in the party because sisters were relegated to certain duties. This was due to the backwardness and lack of political perspective on the part of both sisters and brothers. Like sisters would just naturally do the office-type jobs, the clerical-type jobs. They were the ones that handled the mailing list. You know all those things that go into details. They were naturally given to the sisters and because of this, because the sisters accepted it so willingly because they had been doing this before, this is the type of responsibilities they've had before, it was very easy for male chauvinism to continue on. The only examples we had of sisters taking responsibility were probably in Kathleen or one or two people who exercised responsibility in other areas of Party work.

We've recognized in the past 4 or 5 months that sisters have to take a more responsible role. They have to extend their responsibility and it shouldn't be just to detail work, to things women normally do. This, I think, has been manifested in the fact that a lot of sisters have been writing more articles, they're attending more to the political aspects of the Party, they're speaking out in public more and we've even done outreach work in the community, extensive outreach work in that we've taken the initiative to start our own schools – both brothers and sisters now work in the liberation schools. It's been proven that positions aren't relegated to sex, it depends on your political awareness.

Pocket Lawyer of Legal First Aid From The Black Panther, March 23, 1969

Shown below is an excerpt from 'The Pocket Lawyer of Legal First Aid' which was published in The Black Panther newspaper, a newspaper service given to members and residents of the communities the party existed in. The pocket lawyer represents the political politics of the Black Panther Party as it pertains to the community combating oppression and police brutality.

This pocket lawyer is provided as a means of keeping Black people up to date on their rights. We are always the first to be arrested; yet the racist police forces are constantly trying to pretend that rights are extended equally to all people. Cut this out, brothers and sisters, and carry it with you. Until we arm ourselves to righteously take care of our own, the pocket lawyer is what's happening.

1. If you are stopped and/or arrested by the police, you may remain silent; you do not have to answer any questions about alleged crimes, you should provide your name and address only if requested, although it is not absolutely clear that you must do so. But then do so, and at all times remember the Fifth Amendment.
2. If a police officer is not in uniform, ask him to show his identification. He has no authority over you unless he properly identifies himself. Beware of persons posing as police officers. Always get his badge number and his name.
3. Police have no right to search your car or your home unless they have a search warrant, probable cause, or your consent. They may conduct no exploratory search, that is, one for evidence of a crime generally or for evidence of a crime unconnected with the one you are being questioned about. Thus, a stop for an automobile violation does not give the police the right to search the automobile. You are not required to consent to a search; therefore, you should not consent and should state clearly and unequivocally that you do not consent, in front of witnesses if possible. If you do not consent, the police will have the burden in court of showing probable cause. Arrest may be corrected later.
4. You may not resist arrest forcibly or by going limp, even if you are innocent. To do so is a separate crime of which you can be convicted even if you are acquitted of the original charge. Do not resist arrest under any circumstances.
5. If you are stopped and/or arrested, the police may search you by patting you on the outside of your clothing. You can be stripped of your personal possessions. Do not carry anything that includes the name of your employer or friends...
7. As soon as you have been booked, you have the right to complete at least two phone calls—one to a relative, friend, or attorney, the other to a bail bondsman. If you can, call the Black Panther Party, 845-0103 (845-0104), and the Party will post bail if possible.
8. You must be allowed to hire and see an attorney immediately.
9. You neither have to give any statement to the police, nor do you have to sign any statement you might give them, and therefore you should not sign anything. Take the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, because you cannot be forced to testify against yourself...

The Black Child's Pledge

This pledge was created by Shirley Williams, a member of the Black Panther Party. The pledge highlights many of the political aims of the Black Panther but also emphasizes the importance of education, well-being, and community values and solidarity for black youth. The pledge was published in The Black Panther newsletter in 1968.

I pledge allegiance to my Black people.

I pledge to develop my mind and body to the greatest extent possible.

I will learn all that I can in order to give my best to my people in their struggle for liberation.

I will keep myself physically fit, building a strong body free from drugs and other substances that weaken me and make me less capable of protecting myself, my family, and my Black brothers and sisters.

I will unselfishly share my knowledge and understanding with them in order to bring about change more quickly.

I will discipline myself to direct my energies thoughtfully and constructively rather than wasting them in idle hatred.

I will train myself never to hurt or allow others to harm my Black brothers and sisters for I recognize that we need every Black man, woman, and child to be physically, mentally and psychologically strong.

These principles I pledge to practice daily and to teach them to others in order to unite my people.

Liberation Schools, From *The Black Panther*, July 5, 1969

One of the more prominent community survival programs that the Black Panther Party created was the liberation schools that intended to provide a culturally and racially representative education to youth within the communities they served. The creation of these schools were present throughout many of the BPP chapters across the nation and existed to provide a culturally responsive education and an education that exposes the reality of all oppressed groups, from black to international identities.

The liberation school is the realization of point five of the Ten-Point Platform and Program, that is, “We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches our true history and our role in the present-day society.” We recognize that education is only relevant when it teaches the art of survival. Our role in this society is to prepare ourselves and the masses for change. The change we want is within this decadent society. It’s the implementation of the Ten-Point Platform of the vanguard Party. It’s the destruction of the ruling class that oppresses and exploits the poor. It’s the destruction of the avaricious businessman—the youth in the liberation school call him the “big, fat, businessman.” It’s the destruction of the lying, deceiving politicians, and most important of all, the destruction of the racist pigs that are running rampant in our communities.

...Liberation School is the second of the many socialistic and educational programs that will be implemented by the Black Panther Party to meet the needs of the people. The first program began Wednesday, June 25 at 9th and Hearst Streets in Berkeley, California. The program is a success with the maximum participation coming from the youth and volunteers throughout the community. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the youth, to guide them in their search for revolutionary truths and principles. Brunch and a well-balanced lunch are served daily. Three days of the week are spent in class. Thursday is film day and Friday is set aside for field trips throughout the community. The 30th of June marked the opening of two additional schools in East Oakland and Hunters Point in San Francisco, California. Additional programs are scheduled to begin in the very near future throughout the Bay Area and across the country.

The youth understand the struggle that’s being waged in this society. It’s evident by their eagerness to participate in the program. They understand that we’re not fighting a race struggle, but in fact, a class struggle. They recognize the need for all oppressed people to unite against the forces that are making our lives unbearable. Their understanding manifests itself in their definitions, i.e. “Revolution means Change;” “Revolutionaries are Changers;” “Liberation means Freedom;” and by their collective view of themselves as being part of a “big family” working, playing, and living together in the struggle. The beauty of socialism is seen through their daily practice while involving themselves in the program.

We call upon the people within the community to join the vanguard Party in putting forth the correct examples for our youth through their active participation in our liberation schools across this country. Community political education classes will also be starting in the evening for adults.

The education of the masses is primary to the vanguard Party. People, take part in this revolutionary program to continue the struggle for freedom in this country.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE! ALL POWER TO THE YOUTH!

People's Medical Care Center By Lincoln Webster Sheffield from *The Black Panther*, October 26, 1968

The Black Panther Party's Free Health Care Clinics existed to provide free medical treatment and care for the communities they were located. Their existence stemmed from the necessities to address health in their communities. Their clinics also addressed point 6 of the Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program which is "We want completely free healthcare for all Black and oppressed people." One of their most significant contributions to the country was their research on sickle cell, specifically the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, which significantly plagued the lives of African-Americans during this period.

One of the Black Panther Party programs in Chicago is the People's Medical Care Center, located in the Lawndale ghetto on the West Side. The center is named for Spurgeon "Jake" Winters, a martyred Panther killed by police last year. The only publicity the center has received came when city authorities attempted to close it a few days after it opened in December, charging numerous building and Board of Health violations.

But the center remains open, in spite of harassment, and it regularly treats more than 100 patients every week. Part of the center's work includes training community people to perform services wherever possible. "For example," said Mrs. Woods, one of the center's volunteers, "we are training some of the young people to do laboratory urinalysis and blood tests, and teams of people from the community are organized to canvass the neighborhood and bring the center to the people.

Most of the people in Lawndale are so poor they never go to a doctor until they are practically dying. Our teams take their blood pressure, medical histories, and in general determine if there are people suffering from illness. If illness is discovered, whether chronic or just simple ailments, the person is urged to visit the center, where an examination, treatment, and prescription are all free."

In a typical evening of duty, Mrs. Woods may help to treat 20 or 30 people...

After the examination and discussion with the mother, an appointment was made for the baby to return for continued treatment and shots." Mrs. Woods said "all of the patients were treated free, no questions asked about 'ability to pay' or anything. On hand to take care of all these people were a pediatrician, a general practitioner, two interns, and two nurses."

The center does not stop at treating medical problems. A member of the Black Panther Party is on hand at all times to serve as a "people's advocate." He interviews each patient. "Whenever possible, the Panthers will help with the problem, no matter what it is," Mrs. Woods said. "For example, we discovered that many of the school children, aside from problems like going without breakfast, faced serious strain from the difficulty of finding a place to study or play, safe from the hazards of the street. So we opened up the center to them during the afternoon, before the regular hours, where they can play quietly, or study, paint or do whatever they wish."

The success of the Spurgeon "Jake Winters People's Medical Care Center has inspired similar efforts by other organizations, particularly those in the "rainbow coalition" with the Panthers. Both the Young Lords and the Young Patriots have opened centers, although they are not yet operating as full a schedule as the Panthers.

Free clothing being offered at an event sponsored by the Black Panther Party in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1969.

The Black Panther Party's People Free Clothing program provided free clothing to the communities they served. Such necessities were important because the Black Panther Party understood that many people were unable to buy decent clothing. They believed this program to be beneficial to individuals in their career and families, particularly children, who needed such clothing in order for the children to attend school.



Textbook Critique

In order to provide a historical lesson on the Black Panther Party, a textbook critique of the Black Panther Party is necessary to understand how textbook authors describe them. The textbook of choice is *A People And A Nation: A History of the United States* by Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, Howard P. Chudacoff, Fredrik Logeval, Bailey Beth, Thomas G. Paterson, and William M. Tuttle, Jr published in 2005 by Houghton Mifflin Company. The following quote below is a subsection titled ‘A Nation Divided from Chapter 30 ‘The Tumultuous Sixties’:

A year after Malcolm X's death, Stokely Carmichael, SNCC chairman, denounced “the betrayal of black dreams by white America.” To be truly free from white oppression, Carmichael proclaimed, blacks had to “stand up and take over” - to elect black candidates, to organize their own schools, to control their own institutions. “Black Power,” his listeners chanted. That year, SNCC expelled its white members and repudiated both nonviolence and integration. CORE followed suit in 1967.

The best known black radicals of the era were the Black Panthers, an organization formed in Oakland, California, in 1966. Blending black separatism and revolutionary communism, the Panthers dedicated themselves to destroying both capitalism and “the military arm of our oppressors,” the police in the ghettos. In direct contrast to earlier, nonviolent civil rights protestors, who had worn suits and ties or dresses to demonstrate their respectability, male Panthers dressed in commando gear, carried weapons, and talking about killing “pigs” - and did kill eleven officers by 1970. Police responded in kind most infamously, Chicago police murdered local Panther leader Fred Hampton in his bed. However, the group led by its women members-also worked to improve life in their neighborhoods by instituting free breakfast and healthcare programs for ghetto children, offering courses in African-American history, and demanding jobs and decent housing for the poor. The Panthers’ platform attracted many young African Americans, and as calls for Black Power spread, many white Americans reacted with fear. Radicalism, however, was not limited to black nationalist groups. Before the end of the decade, a vocal minority of America’s young would join in calls for revolution.⁵⁸

Considering the in-depth studies of black power, black activism, and Black Panther Party historiography, one can only express disappointment in the textbook’s inability to not only provide definitive terminologies for key figures, groups, and concepts but also their inability to present deeper interpretations on what is black power and what the Black Panther Party represented. Before we speak about the ways in which the Black Panther Party is described in this excerpt, it is important to analyze

58 Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, Howard P. Chudacoff, Fredrik Logeval, Bailey Beth, Thomas G. Paterson, and William M. Tuttle, Jr. *A People and A Nation: A History of the United States*. (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), 847-848.

how black power is being interpreted. This is because without understanding the concept of black power and its historiography, it might be difficult for readers and learners to understand the meaning of the Black Panther Party.

To start, the authors provide no insight on who were Stokely Carmichael or the Students for Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the campaigns they initiated during their time. What is most problematic in the first paragraph are the ways in which the syntax of quotes from Stokely Carmichael and Black Power are utilized to describe what black power meant to the authors who crafted this section. The history and conceptualization of black power, Stokely Carmichael, and SNCC, are far more extensive than what is being offered here. There is no mention of the societal factors that led to the creation of SNCC and no mention of Stokely Carmichael's *Black Power* speech in 1966 which offers unique insight on white supremacy and oppression that proves useful for contemporary issues today. Lastly, the concept of black power is not explored at all and no information is given to us on why the beliefs of black power came about. What is present is a clear selection of sources that describes the authors' biases in how they interpret black power. This concept is one that deserves in-depth study alone. For more insight on what Black power meant and the factors that led to its ideological creation (police brutality, systematic racism, poverty, unemployment), the authors may benefit from reading Chapter 1 'Civil Wrongs and the Rise of Black Power' from Curtis J. Austin's (2008) *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*.

Subsequently, this historical bias is also present in the textbook's description of the Black Panther Party as a military-like organization. It makes it seem as if the party was an unfortunate reaction to the Civil Rights Movement and was a movement that had to be put down. This is evident in the way the authors began the paragraph about the Black Panther Party. They immediately start off with the militancy of the party, and compare the Black Panther Party to a military organization with their description of "commando gears" and "weapons." For some reason, the authors compared these

appearances to the “nonviolent civil rights protesters who work suits and ties.” Their approach highlights not only a specific selection of sources in describing the party but dictates, in their perspective, what is considered a legitimate protest in African-American historiography. No in-depth analysis of how the party was established is given nor any explanation in why the party believed in armed self-defense which they enforced through the Second Amendment. There is no mention of the Ten-Point Program or the community politics they set in place such as the armed police patrols and free breakfast programs. They only mention that these community programs were created.

Moreover, the only definition provided is that the organization was created in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. This assumes that the meaning of the party was based only in Oakland and through the lives of Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. When in fact, as explored in Black Panther Party historiography, the meaning of the party did not exist only in Oakland, but had branches and chapters throughout the country, all with different impacts and legacies. However, all of these chapters were repressed by FBI and police authorities and shut down because of Newton attempting to localize party efforts on the election campaigns of Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown. For more insight on local chapters, Judson Jeffries and Lucas N.N. Burke (2016) provide great insight in *The Portland Black Panthers: Empowering Albina and Remaking a City*. In looking at the deeper perspectives of FBI’s involvement with the BPP, Austin (2008) provides valuable insight as well as Nelson (2011), in exploring the politics of FBI and police involvement in party’s health clinics.

In speaking about the state, *A People and a Nation* provides no acknowledgment of the forces that lead to both the creation and demise of the Black Panther Party. Previous to this excerpt, the authors briefly mention the urban riots that took place throughout the country in the wake of Martin Luther King Jr’s assassination but do nothing to explore a history of emotions on why African-Americans were frustrated that civil rights progress was not enough in their lives. There is no analysis of this frustration that explain why African-Americans began to construct the beliefs of black self-

determination, self-defense, and black pride. There is no mention of the police brutality that African-Americans faced after the Civil Rights Movement, no mention of the systemic racism and discrimination, both economic and social, that remained intact even after the victories of the Civil Rights Movement, and no mention of the other interactions the party had with the state whether it be armed police patrols to defend vulnerable communities or their contribution to sickle-cell anemia. For a deeper analysis on such factors, reading Nelson (2011) and Austin (2008) may prove beneficial.

Speaking about the internal dynamics of the party is important because it allows the readers to learn about the historiography of social movements and organizational dynamics. Although the party was not perfect in itself, it is important to consider its strengths and weaknesses, as with any other social movements, to provide bigger lessons on social movements and protest. This, in addition to, to the community legacy they left behind should be noted. For insight on the internal party dynamics that led to their downfall, the authors can read Austin (2008) and Bloom and Martin (2016).

Although the authors briefly mention the community programs the Black Panther Party started, they are extremely vague both in its description and impact. Thus, a deeper analysis of the community programs must be included. The characterization of the term ghetto children proves problematic when considering the rhetoric embedded within this excerpt. The language in itself assumes an inferiority in both the programs and the communities the programs served. The party catered more to just black and underprivileged communities. They also relied on collaboration with other social movements in order to survive. This understanding was present in various instances of the party's politics in both their collaboration with other social movements and organizations who had similar goals in mind whether it be the 1969 Chicago Rainbow Coalition, or their relationships with other countries. This was an organization who was also very inclusive in the community initiatives they created, both nationally, and internationally. Although the BPP community programs intended to serve Black communities, they were not exclusive in who came into the offices.

Lastly, the authors give no in-depth analysis of the role that women had within the Party. Their only interpretation is that women ran the community programs. Although this is true in many instances, their experience is far more significant than a one sentence analysis. Many women became leaders of chapters and the entire organization. For example, Ericka Huggins directed the Oakland Community School, which proved to be one of the biggest legacies of the party. Black women had the opportunity to empower themselves and their communities even though they were facing sexism both in and outside of the party. Their history as black women does not deserve a one sentence interpretation.

Black history does not deserve fragmentation. Fragmentation does a disservice to the identity, culture, and history of the group being fragmented. It does not deserve a selection of what should be included or excluded in its historiography. Not only does the bias present a one sided viewpoint of this form of black protest and resistance but it proves the total neglect to explore the deeper insights and perspectives of African-Americans. African Americans who felt that America was not doing enough to give them what they deserved. Historians and authors must take a deeper look into the Black Panther Party and can not be selective in how they interpret black history. A deeper and more objective study of the Black Panther Party, and black history inevitably, is necessary especially for an identity in America that still struggles to receive the things they deserve to this day.

New Textbook Entry

The urban race riots throughout the country from 1965-1968 came about because of the frustration that African-Americans felt after the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement ended in 1964 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ending segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination. Even though progress was made to ensure the rights of African-Americans, many situations remained in their lives that were discriminatory. The death of Emmett Till on August 28, 1955, and the assassination of various civil rights leaders such as Medgar Evers in 1963 and James Chaney in 1964 are a few examples of these situations. Other situations included the four little girls killed in the Birmingham church bombing on September 15, 1963 and the persistence of police brutality both at nonviolent protests and within vulnerable African-American communities. Finally, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr on April 4, 1968 served as one of the last straws. At this point, examples such as the ones stated represented the sporadic events that made African-Americans feel that enough was enough.

All throughout the country, African-Americans were thinking of new ways of gaining their freedom and equality. This is where the idea of Black power began to emerge from Stokely Carmichael. Stokely Carmichael was a West-Indian civil rights activist and chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC started in 1960 and organized campaigns around community organizing and the empowerment of everyday people, especially in the African-Americans community. SNCC was involved with initiatives such as the Freedom Riders' initiative in 1961 and Freedom Summer in 1964. Stokely Carmichael, in 1966, gave a speech called *Black Power* which expressed the feelings that many African-Americans, particularly African-American youth in Northern cities felt. For him, it was a necessity to "begin within our community to start to function and to build new institutions that will speak to our needs." Although the Civil Rights Movement was successful in defeating legal segregation and public discrimination, many black youth felt that African-Americans were still facing

oppression in American society, especially through police brutality and economic discrimination. Black power is a slogan that speaks to the need to maintain one's own black community; it comes in response to the frustration that social problems in the African-American community were not being solved by the government.

Due to these conditions of continued oppression, the Black Panther Party was born. The Black Panther Party (BPP) was founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966 at Merritt College in Oakland California. The party soon became a voice of Black Power. The organization was created to protect vulnerable black communities against police brutality which plagued the lives of African-Americans all throughout the country. They wanted to empower and protect black communities from the racial and economic issues they still faced in America after the Civil Rights Movement. For them, both armed self-defense and creating community survival programs were the key to doing so. They were heavily influenced by the writings and speeches Malcolm X and by Stokely Carmichael's *Black Power* speech in 1966. They created the Ten Point Program, which details their mission statement and purpose of the organization. An excerpt of what these points are shown below:

What We Want

1. *We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black community.*
2. *We want full employment for our people.*
3. *We want an end to the robbery by the White man of our Black community.*
4. *We want decent housing, fit for shelter [of] human beings.*
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.*
6. *We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.*
7. *We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of Black people.*
8. *We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county, and city prisons and jails.*
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.*
10. *We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace.*⁵⁹

59 Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016)

The Black Panther Party (BPP) started with observing police patrols in Oakland to protect residents from police brutality. While the BPP members were observing police, they carried weapons; their weapons represented the commitment to self-defense from police brutality. They believed they were well within their Second Amendment right to bear arms. Along with police patrols, the Black Panther Party had political education classes and community programs that catered to the Oakland communities they served. They created a local newspaper called the *The Black Panther*, free breakfast programs for children, free clothing programs, liberation schools, a community center, and many more. One of their famous contributions was their genetic screenings and research on sickle-cell anemia. Sickle-cell anemia is a disease that affected African-Americans greatly. In this disease, red blood cells become irregularly shaped, thereby constricting the blood vessels and slowing down blood flow and oxygen throughout the body. The BPP initiated genetic screenings in many communities and raised awareness of not only the disease, but how it affected African-Americans who were not receiving any medical treatment for it. The Black Panther Party programs were emulated in dozens of chapters throughout the country around the late 1960s and early 1970s. Black Panther Party chapters existed in Chicago, New York City, Portland, Philadelphia, New Haven, Connecticut, Newark, New Jersey, and many other cities. All of these chapters had different legacies and impacts from Oakland, California within the communities they served. Many black youth joined the Black Panther Party for the purpose of catering to their community or protecting themselves from police brutality. Some of the more known members and leaders of the party were Stokely Carmichael, David Hillard, Elaine Brown, Kathleen Cleaver, Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, and Fred Hampton.

Support for the Black Panther Party was widespread throughout the United States. Their purpose allowed them to gain the support of other social groups/organizations and people different than their own during this time. Fred Hampton's Rainbow Coalition in Chicago 1969, the Free Huey movement of the late 1960s and the Free Angela Davis movement of the early 1970s served as prime

examples of their collaboration and support. The Black Panther Party was able to bring different groups of people together in order to vocalize or demonstrate for social change in America. They advocated for people of different races, classes, gender, and nationalities. This advocacy or solidarity for various identities existed because of their belief in “power to the people.” In other words, power to the people meant that everyday people, especially oppressed people in societies, have the power to influence and create changes in their society. In many instances, other organizations like the Young Lords, A Chicago originated Puerto-Rican social movement who advocated for Puerto-Rican equality in America, returned the favor. Organizations like the Young Lords joined the Black Panther Party in protests that advocated for the release of BPP figures like Huey Newton and Angela Davis from prison. The BPP sought to advocated for people of any identity who endured oppression in American society. The Young Lords and the Black Panther Party also came together at BPP events to advocate for community activism and empowerment. The Black Panther Party was widely supported due to these values and even went so far as to establish international relations and solidarity in other countries such as Algeria.

As the party grew throughout the country, the image of black men and women holding guns was perceived as particularly threatening among white leaders in the government. This fear enabled the FBI and the police to do what was necessary to eradicate the Black Panther Party’s existence. In particular, J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI at the time, determined that the Black Panther Party was the “greatest threat to internal security in the country.” The FBI and police departments all throughout the country created operations to discredit, and destroy the party from the inside and out starting in the late 1960s. These efforts were largely responsible for the death of the BPP by the early 1980s. Initiating often illegal projects of surveillance, discrediting, and disrupting the Black Panther Party, the FBI’s Counter-Intelligence Program or COINTELPRO project served as one of the most influential factors to the demise of the party. The agents in COINTELPRO crafted false letters and spread misinformation in order to destroy relationships the BPP had with organizations and themselves. They placed informants,

or spies, within the Black Panther Party to promote violence. More significantly, they targeted the community programs like the free breakfast clinics. This repression affected Black Panther operations and the lives of members in the party. J. Edgar Hoover made the following quote that showed his determination to target the free breakfast programs:

You state that the Bureau under the CIP [COINTELPRO] should not attack programs of community interest such as the [Black Panther Party] "Breakfast for Children." You state that this is because many prominent "humanitarians," both white and black, are interested in the program as well as churches which are actively supporting it. You have obviously missed the point. . . . You must recognize that one of our primary aims in counterintelligence as it concerns the [Party] is to keep this group isolated from the moderate black and white community which may support it. This is most emphatically pointed out in their Breakfast for Children Program, where they are actively soliciting and receiving support from uninformed whites and moderate blacks.⁶⁰

This statement provides Hoover's justification for the actions of the FBI and led to more moments of police brutality.

The FBI and police authorities beat, arrested, and in some cases, killed Black Panther Party members and leaders. The FBI and police illegally raided Black Panther Party offices and community programs in chapters throughout the United States. They specifically targeted community programs such as the health clinics and free breakfast clinics by destroying supplies, documents, equipment, and food. In many instances, standoffs took place between the police and the Black Panther Party. Many Panther members were either killed, injured, or arrested. One severe case included the targeted assassination of Fred Hampton, leader and founder of the Chicago Black Panther Party, who was killed in his home on December 4, 1969. The FBI and police authorities were determined to stop the Black Panther Party from gaining support for their political cause of community organizing and black liberation.

60 Bloom, Joshua and Martin, Waldo E. *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016.

Ultimately, the end of the Black Panther party came around the early 1980s. Although the party went through FBI and police repression are important external forces that led to the BPP's demise, internal factors also contributed to the party's collapse. Differences of opinion regarding what direction the party should go were very frequent throughout the BPP's existence. The split of Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver proved detrimental to the party in the late 1970s. They disagreed over what aspect of the BPP agenda was most important. Newton believed in putting the gun down and emphasizing the BPP's community programs. In contrast, Eldridge Cleaver believed in violent control of the government through armed revolution. Cleaver was formerly imprisoned on the charges of rape, assault with intent commit murder, and assault with a deadly weapon during his earlier years before joining the party. Claiming that he learned from his wrongdoings, Cleaver joined the party as the Minister of Information in the Black Panther and was known for his radical speeches. At some point, Cleaver fled to Cuba in 1968 to avoid custody in a shoot-out with the police. He traveled to many countries and set up an international chapter in Algeria before being kicked out of the group in 1971. Cleaver often publicly disagreed with Newton regarding the party's direction. Some leaders and members believed in Cleaver's violent rhetoric, while others wanted to emphasize the community programs the party created around the country. These conflicts made it difficult for the party to stick together and made the image of the Black Panther Party more conflicted than it already was. The party was beginning to fall apart internally while police brutality still took place externally. This affected rank-and-file members, or ordinary members, who joined for the community efforts of the party. Many of whom were burdened by the actions and personalities of some BPP leaders.

Internal conflicts took place in the party with the intention of trying to keep things under control. Both the external repression the party endured, and the internal leadership conflicts the party had, all led to its downfall. The need to survive by any means through power tactics also led to their demise. This was the case for Newton trying to regain control of the party after his release from prison

in the early to mid 1970s. Falling into a life of drugs and state of paranoia, his decisions during the mid 1970s to late 1980s affected the party greatly. Whether it was purging party leaders or embezzling funds, Newton's actions lowered the amount of support the party had.

Many Black Panther party members today still maintain their legacy of community outreach and advocacy. Some of the party's most successful contributions in the community not only came from Black men but also Black women such as Ericka Huggins who directed the Oakland Community School, a liberation school in Oakland, California that existed until 1982. Ericka Huggins is currently a professor of sociology and African-American Studies at Peralta Community College. Another woman was Norma (Armour) Mtume who ran the Panther health clinics at the age of 20 and was an assistant finance manager for the Los Angeles BPP chapter. Eventually she became the Minister of Finance for the entire Black Panther Party. Later on in her life, she completed two masters degrees and founded two community health organizations.

Black women made significant contributions to the party from their efforts in the community programs and in leadership positions. This served as a form of empowerment for black women even though they endured sexism and misogyny from both members/males within the Black Panther Party and in the wider society. Some BPP chapters were more inclusive to Black women than others, but black women made significant societal contributions to the communities they served within the Black Panther Party. Through this, the community legacy of the Black Panther Party is a legacy that stands out in the minds of activists. Although the party was not perfect in its ability to sustain itself the BPP's efforts represent a message on the necessity of community collaboration and community programs. The need to advocate for struggling communities was a solution to fix inequalities that the U.S government had slowed its progress in addressing. The Black Panther Party's legacy also shows how this need prompted a strength and resiliency from the organization. The fact that people today appreciate the

efforts of the BPP indicates that no matter how much these communities struggle there are those who are convinced that they, must continue to advocate “for the people.”

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