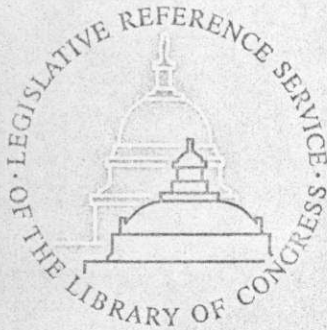


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[ THE BLACK PANTHERS ]

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## THE BLACK PANTHERS

### Introduction

The Black Panther Party was founded in Oakland, California, in October 1966, by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, two young Negro activists.<sup>1/</sup> The name of the organization was inspired by the example of the Lowndes County (Alabama) Freedom Organization, which had adopted the black-panther symbol -- an appropriate emblem, Seale has explained, for the black people in America: "It is not in the panther's nature to attack anyone first, but when he is attacked and backed into a corner, he will respond viciously and wipe out the aggressor."<sup>2/</sup>

Newton and Seale first met in Oakland in 1961; <sup>3/</sup> subsequently, Seale affiliated with the Revolutionary Action Movement,<sup>4/</sup> a militant

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1. "Black Panthers," The Progressive, July 1969, p. 20. Headquarters are now located at 3106 Shattuck Terrace, Berkeley, California. Estimated membership is 1200 [Life, February 6, 1970, p. 18], distributed among 22 cities and three of the boroughs of New York. [Washington Post, January 25, 1970, p. B1.]
  2. "The Call of the Black Panthers," New York Times Magazine, August 6, 1967, p. 10.
  3. Human Events, September 7, 1968, p. 7.
  4. Ibid.

black nationalist group founded in 1964. <sup>5/</sup> By the end of 1965, however, Seale had disassociated himself from the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), and in 1966 he and Newton conceived the idea of establishing the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. <sup>6/</sup> Eldridge Cleaver, the third member of the Panther "Triumvirate," joined the organization early in 1967. <sup>7/</sup>

Nora Sayre, writing in The Progressive, has said that "The Panthers' motto is the famous quotation from Mao: 'We are advocates of the abolition of war; we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war; and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to pick up the gun.'" <sup>8/</sup> Cleaver, "in an interview published in Playboy, spoke as one who has often seen the wrong end of a gun: 'I don't dig violence. Guns are ugly... But there are two forms of violence: violence directed at you to keep you in your place and violence to defend yourself against that suppression and to win your freedom.'" <sup>9/</sup>

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5. George Thayer, The Farther Shores of Politics, p. 332.
  6. Human Events, September 7, 1968, p. 7.
  7. "Old Con, Black Panther, Brilliant Writer and Quintessential American," New York Times Magazine, September 7, 1969, p. 142; and "Black Panther," The Progressive, July 1969, p. 20.
  8. The Progressive, July 1969, p. 20.
  9. Ibid.

It has been argued that "the Panthers provide the first nationwide black political movement -- as distinguished from the religious or apolitical groups of the past." 10/ For the Panthers, the revolutionary violence is a tool toward "socialist" revolution: "the 'archenemy' is capitalism, which they see as intertwined with racism: 'You cannot have a democracy with capitalism. And we don't...' Eventually, they wish for the establishment of some form of socialist state -- and a total redistribution of wealth." 11/

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10. Op. cit., p. 21.

11. Op. cit. p. 21.

The Panthers' Revolutionary Posture

The Panthers first attained a measure of National attention when, in May 1967, they "invaded" the California State Legislature in Sacramento, armed with rifles, shotguns, pistols and cartridge belts around their waists.<sup>12/</sup> They wore the attire which has become the Panther trademark: leather jackets, boots, and tight-fitting trousers.<sup>13/</sup> The Panthers came to Sacramento, explains a former editor of Ramparts magazine,<sup>14/</sup> "not to 'invade' or to 'take over' the Legislature, but simply to exercise their right to attend a session of the Legislature and to state their opposition to a pending bill...intended to impose severe restrictions on the carrying of loaded weapons in public."<sup>15/</sup>

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12. "The Call of the Black Panthers," New York Times Magazine, August 6, 1967, p. 11.
  13. Ibid.
  14. Ramparts is a monthly periodical described as "concerned with major social and moral issues. Primary concerns are civil rights and the war in Vietnam, the latter of which the editors oppose." [From Radical Left to Extreme Right, ed. by Robert H. Muller. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967, p. 73.] Cleaver is currently an "international editor" of Ramparts, having begun his association with the magazine in June 1966. [Ramparts, October 26, 1968, p. 23.]
  15. New York Times Magazine, August 6, 1967, p. 11.

Since the Sacramento incident, the Panthers have gained growing fame (or notoriety) as a paramilitary organization, some of whose members have boasted of storing arms in hidden caches <sup>16/</sup> and have frequently made statements (including threats of violence against police) <sup>17/</sup>

16. Cf. The New York Times, September 10, 1968, p. 31.

The storing of hidden weapons has been denied by David Hilliard, the Party's Chief of Staff, now under indictment for allegedly threatening the life of President Nixon. "We are very aware of the gun laws," said Hilliard. "We advocate each individual having a shotgun in their homes [sic], as spelled out under the Constitution of the United States. It is not our purpose to assemble large caches of weapons." [Washington Star, December 29, 1969, p. A5.]

This statement may be contrasted with the testimony of a former member of the Black Panther Party, Larry Powell, before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, in June 1969: "An arsenal might consist of a couple of cases of rifles, a few grenades, handguns, and ammunition. Some of the weapons in the arsenal are M-16's, which is a government piece; AR-15's, which is a model of the M-16, but it can be bought across the counter and the party would get them and turn them into fully automatic weapons." [Christian Science Monitor, June 23, 1969, p. 3.]

17. A case in point is the following statement of Huey Newton, quoted in the New York Times of May 21, 1967, p. 66: "We do not believe in passive and nonviolent tactics. They haven't worked for us black people. They are bankrupt... The situation here in America is that the police are in our communities not to protect us. They are here to contain us, to oppress us, to brutalize us... If any person in the black community was being brutalized or murder was being attempted by the occupying army [the police] it would be my duty to come to the person's defense. If it meant killing the aggressor, this is the tactic the Black Panther would use. Force, guns, and arms are the real political arena. Decisions against the black people are always backed up by racist police forces and racist military force."

that may be characterized as "revolutionary." <sup>18/</sup> Such utterances, in conjunction with numerous highly publicized and hotly debated violent encounters with police, have earned for the Panthers a controversial reputation, which includes the sympathy and support of some elements, and the condemnation of others.

The closest thing to a Black Panther "creed" is a ten-point program <sup>19/</sup> of "black liberation," or "social revolution": <sup>20/</sup>

"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 CAPITALIST 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.

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18. "We are special," Panther Chief of Staff David Hilliard has said, "We advocate the very direct overthrow of the Government by way of force and violence. By picking up guns and moving against it because we recognize it as being oppressive and in recognizing that the only solution to it is armed struggle," [New York Times, December 14, 1969, p. 64.]

19. "Letters from Oakland: The Panthers," New York Review of Books, September 11, 1969, p. 14.

20. Christian Science Monitor, September 25, 1969, p. 3.



"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. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held through the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their natural destiny." 21/

The explanation of the Panthers' aims and goals is perhaps best summarized by Huey Newton: "As far as blacks are concerned, we are not hung up on attempting to actualize or express our individual souls because we're oppressed not as individuals but as a whole group of people. Our evolution, or our liberation, is based first on freeing our group...

21. Quoted in "Letter from Oakland: The Panthers," New York Review of Books, September 11, 1969, p. 22. This set of demands appears in every issue of The Black Panther, the Party's weekly newspaper.

"A people who have suffered so much for so long at the hands of a racist society, must draw the line somewhere. We believe that the Black communities of America must draw the line somewhere. We believe that the Black communities of America must rise up as one man to halt the progression of a trend that leads inevitably to their total destruction...

"The Black Panther Party is a vanguard group leading the revolutionary struggle, playing a part in it, because this is world revolution: all colonied people are now resisting. To work as one of the administrators of this revolutionary action, you have to view yourself as an oxen to be ridden by the people. This is what the Black Panther Party teaches -- that we should all carry the weight, and those who have extreme abilities will have to carry extremely heavy loads." 22/

Publicity was initially accorded the Panthers largely because of two factors: the skill of Panther leaders in creating a flamboyant public image, and the direct appeal exercised by the Panthers to the needs of the people for whom they claim to speak. Thus, as the Wall Street Journal has observed: "Much of the support for the party comes from younger people apparently attracted to the Panthers by their panache -- their distinctive uniforms of black berets and black leather jackets, their ostentatious display of guns, their avowed determination to overturn

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22. The Black Panther, February 17, 1969, pp. 3-4.

the American 'system,' their refusal to back down under intense police pressure."<sup>23/</sup> Or, as Newsweek explains: "[The Panthers] are Media Age revolutionaries, gifted with words, good at sloganeering..., irresistably photogenic, scary on television, masterful at poster art from their first effort -- that high-camp classic of Newton scowling out of a peacock chair with a gun in one hand and a spear in the other. They put 'pig,' for policemen, into the radical vocabulary. They made berets and black leather de rigueur for splinter groups of Latin, Indian, Chinese and even Appalachian white dissidents. Ghetto kids walk the Panther walk and talk the Panther talk. White student radicals are entranced by Panther machismo."<sup>24/</sup>

More important, perhaps, is the Panthers' "technique for filling the desperate need of the young, under-educated black man to achieve a sense of pride and purpose. At the same time they have created a villain -- the police, the 'establishment,' the 'system' -- against which he can vent his hostility and hatred. The psychological emasculation which many young black men suffer -- or are told they suffer -- is being appealed to by the aggressive, super-male image that the Panthers project. In the process of exploiting this feeling,

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23. Wall Street Journal, January 12, 1970, p. 1.

24. Newsweek, February 23, 1970, p. 26.

the Panthers have developed a tremendous potential for a black revolutionary party." 25/

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25. Human Events, September 7, 1968, p. 17.

Panther Conflicts with Law Enforcement Officers

Attention has recently focused upon what may be considered as a growing "armed conflict" between the Black Panthers and the police in various major U.S. cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. This series of repeated confrontations has resulted in the killing of numerous Black Panthers and policemen. Moreover, at the present time every major National Black Panther is either under indictment, in prison, or in exile. This combination of circumstances had led the Panthers, as well as others, to charge that the police are engaged in harassment of local Panther chapters as part of a larger, concerted policy of the National "power structure" to "exterminate" the Black Panthers -- or at least effectively to eliminate the Panthers as a viable conduit for protest. 26/ (████████████████████)

The history of the Panther-police struggle is virtually inextricable from the history of the Black Panther Party itself. Originally called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the organization was formed, under the aegis of Newton and Seale, as a kind of ad hoc

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26. Cf. The Washington Post, June 25, 1969, p. A9; The Nation, July 28, 1969, p. 79; Christian Science Monitor, September 25, 1969, p. 3; The Washington Post, December 7, 1969, p. A3; The New York Times, December 7, 1969, p. 4E; The New York Times, December 14, 1969, p. 64; The New York Times, December 21, 1969, p. 47; The New York Times, December 21, 1969, p. 3E; The New York Times, December 29, 1969, p. 38.

response to what was felt to be the needs of the black community in Oakland. In September 1968, Huey Newton, who holds the title of Minister of Defense, was sentenced in Oakland to from two to fifteen years in prison following his conviction of voluntary manslaughter in the gunfight death of a policeman in October 1967. 27/

In November 1968, Eldridge Cleaver, Panther Minister of Information, fled the United States, first to Cuba and then to Algeria, where he is living in voluntary exile. Cleaver had previously spent nine years in several California jails on charges of assault with intent to murder, assault to commit rape, and assault with a deadly weapon.28/ He had been paroled in 1966, joining the Panthers in the following year. In April 1968 he was with a group of Panthers who became involved in a gun battle with the Oakland police, in which a 17-year-old Panther named Bobby Hutton was killed. Cleaver was wounded and sent back to jail as a parole violator. Superior Court Judge Raymond J. Sherwin freed Cleaver on a writ of habeas corpus, maintaining that he was being held as a political prisoner. Higher courts reversed Judge Sherwin's ruling, however, and in November 1968, Cleaver was ordered

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27. Ramparts, October 28, 1968, p. 23.

28. Washington Post, September 28, 1968, p. A3. It was during this time that he wrote the series of essays which were subsequently collected and published as the best-selling Soul on Ice.

to return to prison. He did not comply, and was subsequently discovered to have fled the country. 29/

In July 1969, Stokeley Carmichael, who had been Panther Prime Minister, resigned from the party. The Carmichael-Panther rift was the result of a bitter dispute in which Carmichael denounced the Panthers for entering into "alliances" with white liberal organizations (such as the Students for a Democratic Society), in order to wage common cause against the "capitalist" power structure.30/

In addition to condemning the Panthers' cooperation with white radical groups, Carmichael cited four other factors as precipitating his resignation: the Panthers' "dogmatic" position, their tactics, the

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29. New York Times, December 1, 1968, p. 5E.

30. In regard to the Panthers' relationship with SDS, the Chicago Sun-Times, on May 25, 1969, reported the following statement by [then] Illinois Panther Chairman Fred Hampton: "We work very close with the SDS, and they help us out in many ways, and we try to help them out in as many ways as we can. On many political questions and on many methods we and SDS go down the same path -- as far as theory goes. ["Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders," Hearings before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations. United States Senate. Ninety-First Congress, First Session. June 26 and 30, 1969. Part 20, p. 4444.]

In the fall of 1969, the Black Panthers formed an "alliance" with the Puerto Rican Young Lords, and the Appalachian Young Patriots, two Chicago street gangs. The merger is called the "Rainbow Coalition", a tri-partite alliance whose formation further illustrates the Panthers' willingness to cooperate with non-black leftist groups in a common struggle against "capitalist imperialism." Leaders of the three groups thus see the coalition as a "vanguard of the dispossessed" that will act as a "revolutionary spearhead" toward overthrow of the present system. [New York Times, November 9, 1969, p. 83.

"direction" of the party, and what he termed "the need for an unrelented armed struggle against the white Western empire...

"The white left in the United States," he explained, "...not only controls capitalist and imperialist policies, but also the so-called Marxist-Leninist movements... If the Black Panther party continues on the present course, it will at best become reformist and, at worse, a tool of racist imperialists used against black masses." 31/

"The alliances being formed by the party," he concluded, "are alliances which I cannot politically agree with, because the history of Africans living in the US has shown that any premature alliance with white radicals has led to complete subversion of blacks by the whites through their direct or indirect control of the black organization." 32/

In response to Carmichael's accusations, Panther Chief of Staff David Hilliard replied: "We tried to bring him [Carmichael] around, but he just did not come to understand that you can't fight racism with racism... It doesn't matter if you are black, white or brown -- the enemy is capitalism. Black people have two enemies, capitalism and racism. You can only get rid of them by practicing solidarity, not more racism." 33/

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31. The Washington Star, July 4, 1969, p. A2. Cf. also The New York Times, July 26, 1969, p. C-11; The Washington Post, July 5, 1969, p. A1; The Washington Star, July 4, 1969, p. H-2.

32. New York Review of Books, September 19, 1969, p. 14.

33. The Washington Post, July 5, 1969, p. A1.



Eldridge Cleaver responded to Carmichael's attack in an open letter to Carmichael, written from Algiers and published in Ramparts magazine [September, 1969]. The letter said, in part: "For you to speak about an undying love for black people... that denies the humanity of other people is doomed. It was an undying love for white people that led them to deny the humanity of colored people and which has stripped white people of humanity itself.

"It would seem to me that an undying love for people would, at the very least, lead you to a strategy that would aid our struggle for liberation instead of leading you into [an] attempt to destroy the Black Panther Party...

"You should know that suffering is color blind and that the victims of imperialism, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism come in all colors and that they need unity based on revolutionary principles rather than skin color." 34/

The ranks of Panther leaders were further depleted in 1969 by the November sentencing of Bobby Seale to four years in prison for contempt of court by U.S. District Judge Julius J. Hoffman. The

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34. Quoted in The New York Times, July 26, 1969, p. C-11.

Carmichael returned in March, 1970, to the United States after living for 14 months in the African nation of Guinea. [Washington Star, March 23, 1970, p. A-3.]

sentence was imposed as a result of Seale's repeated interruption during his trial on charges of conspiracy to incite a riot during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago -- charges under which seven other defendants were also tried. <sup>35/</sup> Thus, Seale still faces trial on the original charge of conspiracy.

In December 1969, Panther Chief of Staff David Hilliard, the single active National Panther leader remaining in the United States, was indicted on a Federal charge of threatening the life of President Nixon, during a speech to a peace rally in Chicago. <sup>36/</sup>

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35. Washington Post, September 27, 1969, p. A3.

Seale's status is complicated by his arrest in August 1969, one month before the opening of the Chicago trial, on charges of fleeing from Connecticut to avoid prosecution in the slaying of former Panther member Alex Rackley, in New Haven, in May 1969. [Washington Post, November 9, 1969, p. A1.]

At the time of his arrest in August on the Connecticut charge, moreover, Seale was on probation for his part in the Black Panther "invasion" of the California State Legislature in 1967. [New York Times, August 21, 1969, p. C32.]

36. Washington Star, December 29, 1969, p. A5, and Newsweek, February 23, 1970, p. 27.

In addition to the alleged "harassment" of National Panther leaders, however, the increasing frequency of police "raids" on local Panther chapters had led to the charge by Panthers that there is a national conspiracy to "wipe out their leadership and destroy their organization."<sup>37/</sup>

Perhaps the most highly publicized of the Panther-police "confrontations" occurred in Chicago on December 4, 1969, when the Chicago police, in a search for illegal weapons, raided an apartment in which Illinois Black Panther chairman Fred Hampton and a Panther leader from Peoria, Mark Clark, were quartered with seven other men and women. Hampton and Clark were killed in the ensuing shoot-out. <sup>38/</sup>

On December 8, in a similar raid in Los Angeles three Panthers and three policemen were wounded.<sup>39/</sup> In both raids, police found caches of weapons, including high-powered rifles, shotguns, pistols, and ammunition. <sup>40/</sup>

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37. New York Times, December 7, 1969, p. 4E.

38. Washington Post, December 14, 1969, p. A1.

39. The Wall Street Journal, January 12, 1970, p. 1.

40. The Washington Post, December 7, 1969, p. A3, and The New York Times, December 14, 1969, p. 64.

These incidents, plus the claim by the Panthers that 19 of their members have been killed in encounters with police since January 1968, 41/ have led a number of public figures to call for an investigation to determine whether the Panthers are indeed victims of a nationwide campaign of police harassment. 42/ Thus a survey of nine metropolitan areas conducted by the American Civil Liberties Union "produced charges that law enforcement as applied to Black Panthers is a pattern of provocative and punitive harassment, denying to black militants the right of free political expression." 43/

A Wall Street Journal opinion poll taken in January 1970, indicates, moreover, that "the police raids appear to have aroused wide sympathy for the Panthers among blacks who, while they may not agree with Panther tactics, resent what they see as a deliberate police effort to wipe out the Panthers." 44/ In regard to the backlash of black support for

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41. Life, February 6, 1970, p. 22.

42. The Wall Street Journal, January 12, 1970.

43. The survey, which covered police raids, arrests, clashes and infiltration of Panther groups during 1969, was prepared for submission to an independent commission created to investigate incidents in which Panthers have died violently. The Commission is headed by Arthur J. Goldberg, former Supreme Court Justice and Ambassador to the United Nations, and Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP. [The New York Times, December 29, 1969, p. 38.]

44. Ibid.

the Panthers which had resulted from police-Panther shoot-outs, the New York Times quotes "a black writer in San Francisco who has followed the Panthers for several years, [who] said that 'on at least two occasions' the Panthers were close to folding but... support rallied because of police clashes kept them going." 45/

Panther leaders insist that it is the police who attack them, as part of a systematic campaign of genocide against black people. 46/ Thus, Eldridge Cleaver has asserted that "in order to stop the slaughter of the people we must accelerate the slaughter of pigs... Those who can't stand the sight of blood, especially their own, should stay home." 47/

The police, on the other hand, accuse the Panthers of provoking, and often initiating, the shootings by arming and by plotting against authority, particularly police authority. 48/ Four policemen have, in fact, died in gunfights with the Panthers. 49/

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45. New York Times, December 14, 1969, p. 64.

46. New York Times, December 14, 1969, p. 64.

47. The Washington Post, December 14, 1969, p. A1.

48. New York Times, December 14, 1969, p. 64.

49. Life, February 2, 1970, p. 22.

David Hilliard charges that the police raids are usually carried out in the predawn hours in order to avoid community uprisings by blacks; police insist that the timing ensues from the desire to minimize the risk of injury to passersby.<sup>50/</sup> In addition, the Justice Department has specifically denied "any policy of concerted activity with local police in order to harass any members of the Black Panthers party." A Justice Department statement released in December 1969 claimed that "recent incidents of violence...took place when local police departments were attempting to serve warrants. The violations alleged in the warrants were infractions of state law... No federal officials participated in the police actions." <sup>51/</sup>

Following this statement, the Justice Department designated a special grand jury to investigate the fatal shootings of Hampton and Clark. Attorney General John Mitchell indicated that the investigation would center upon allegations that the shootings "may have involved a denial of federally protected rights." <sup>52/</sup> A coroner's jury was called at the request of lawyer's associations and other groups, and

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50. The Washington Post, January 25, 1970, p. B1.

51. The Washington Post, December 11, 1968, p. A3.

52. The New York Times, December 20, 1969, p. 1.

was one of the eight investigations of the incident -- including that of the Justice Department and that of the commission headed by Goldberg and Wilkins.<sup>53/</sup>

On January 21, 1970, the coroner's jury ruled that the shooting of the two Panthers was justifiable, since the police officers had fired their guns in the "reasonable belief" that to do so was necessary to prevent death or bodily harm to themselves.<sup>54/</sup> On January 30, 1970, a Cook County grand jury returned indictments charging the seven survivors of the raid with attempted murder and armed assault.<sup>55/</sup>

↘ A pre-trial hearing was begun on February 2, 1970, in New York in the bombing conspiracy case against 13 New York Black Panthers charged with plotting to blow up department stores, police stations, and the New York Botanical Garden.<sup>56/</sup> The hearing was suspended on February 25, by New York Supreme Court Justice John M. Murtagh, owing to the defendants' refusal to maintain decorum in the courtroom. Justice Murtagh has stated that the hearing will remain in abeyance, and the defendants in jail, until he is guaranteed that proceedings can continue without

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53. New York Times, December 24, 1969, p. 11.

54. Washington Post, January 22, 1970, p. A1.

55. Washington Post, January 21, 1970, p. A6.

56. Newsweek, March 9, 1970, pp. 22-3, and Time, March 9, 1970, p. 31.

disorder in the courtroom.<sup>57/</sup> The defendants have rejected this demand, and have countered with a list of their own grievances -- a petition which Justice Murtagh has refused to accept as a basis for reconvening the hearing.<sup>58/</sup> The hearing reconvened on April 7, 1970. <sup>59/</sup>

On March 31, 1970, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the power of the trial judges to deal with unruly defendants by punishing them for contempt, removing them from the courtroom while the trial proceeds, and as "a last resort," binding and gagging them.<sup>60/</sup> Thus the action of Judge Hoffman, in sentencing Bobby Seale for contempt in the Chicago trial, and of Justice Murtagh, in recessing the New York hearings, would seem to be vindicated by the Supreme Court ruling.

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57. New York Times, March 1, 1970, p. 8E.

58. New York Times, March 3, 1970, p. 1.

59. Washington Post, April 8, 1970, p. A13.

60. Washington Post, April 1, 1970, p. A1.



Panther Activities and Programs

In addition to Panther problems with the police and the U.S. judiciary, a number of Panther activities have received widespread publicity. Among the more prominent is the so-called "Conference Against Fascism," held in Berkeley, California, in July 1969, in which Panther leaders decried "this business of racial discrimination, whatever its form..." <sup>61/</sup> The primary purpose of the conference was to organize a national campaign for community control of local police. Bobby Seale explained that the campaign would work to change city charters, in order to permit city neighborhoods to organize and control their own police forces. Seale thus rejected the concept of "black capitalism," in favor of a national drive for neighborhood autonomy. <sup>62/</sup>

Perhaps most notorious among Panther activities was the publication last spring of a Panther "coloring book," which pictorially advocated the killing of police, depicted as pigs. Responsibility for the book was denied by Panther leaders. <sup>63/</sup> who asserted that the book had been withdrawn from publication soon after its release.

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61. Washington Post, July 20, 1969, p. A9.

62. Washington Star, July 21, 1969, p. A-12.

63. Chicago Tribune, June 25, 1969, p. 6.

Perhaps the most favorably received of Panther activities have been the Panthers' "free breakfast program" for black ghetto children, a free medical care program, and a war on narcotics use among black youth. <sup>64/</sup> These programs have developed, according to one source, because "stricter gun laws and frequent arrests have forced the Panthers to stop the regular displays of armed force that first attracted attention to them. In the past several months, they have developed other programs designed to convince ghetto residents that capitalism is incapable of meeting their needs and that socialist forms of organization can do so," <sup>65/</sup>

The breakfast program is financed, for the most part, by voluntary contributions from local stores. Some merchants have made the claim that the contributions are sometimes the result of pressure, however: "They didn't threaten, but they asked us in such a way that we knew we might be opening the door for bad publicity if we didn't give," explains one businessman. "We run a lot of routes all over this area, and we don't want to make any enemies." <sup>66/</sup>

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64. Wall Street Journal, January 12, 1970, p. 1.

65. Wall Street Journal, August 29, 1969, p. 1.

66. Ibid.

Similarly, the Black Panthers' free medical care program depends upon contributions from outside the Panther organization, 67/ According to the Wall Street Journal, "a growing number of young doctors across the country...have volunteered to help the Panthers attack poor health in the ghetto. Many of the volunteers are just out of medical school, and some currently are serving two-year hitches with the Public Health Service in place of military service. Most are members of the Medical Committee for Human Rights, an organization of about 7,000 doctors and other health professionals, most of them whites, formed in 1965 to fight for better health care for the poor and admission of more Negroes to university medical schools.

"In San Francisco and other cities across the country, Panthers are to be trained to instruct residents on nutrition, parasite prevention and oral hygiene on regular home visits, according to the party's medical program. Doctors in several cities already have donated or promised to donate drugs, microscopes, and other equipment to the program and have agreed to train Panther volunteers."68/

In regard to the breakfast program, the New York Times has noted that "while the Panthers say that the program was initiated to feed hungry children, they make no effort to mask its political side."69/

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67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. New York Times, June 15, 1969, p. 57.

Thus, while the Panthers "feed breakfast to [an estimated] total of 10,000 children a day in cities like New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, 70/ [s]ome Panther branches in New York and other cities keep children after breakfast for morning 'liberation' classes at which they are taught the party platform and anti-police songs." 71/

Or, as the Panthers themselves point out, the free breakfast program is designed "to expose a capitalist system that sends satellites to the moon but doesn't solve the problems of hunger... The one thing our system can't stand is exposure. And that is what we are doing by our examples." 72/

Motivations notwithstanding, it cannot be denied that the breakfast, medical, and drug programs bring to the Panthers a considerable degree of moderate Negro support. 73/

The general question of the Panthers' integrity, however, has been the subject of considerable public debate. Columnists Rowland Evans and Richard Novak reported in January 1970, for example, that "the full extent of Panther involvement in extortion, robbery, and burglary,"

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70. Ibid.

71. Wall Street Journal, August 29, 1969, p. 1.

72. David Hilliard, quoted in The Washington Post, January 25, 1970, p. B1.

73. Wall Street Journal, January 12, 1970, p. 1.

is unknown. Evans and Novak point to the "extensive evidence of Panther criminal records," and observe that "[t]he arrest of more than 350 Panthers on criminal charges in 1969 alone barely scratches the surface of suspected participation in unsolved and undetected crime.

"Extortion from white merchants in the ghetto, much of it unreported to authorities, is a regular source of funding in Panther grant strategy. Moreover, there is hard information from former Panthers that bank robberies to obtain funds for the party -- in the old Bolshevik tradition of 'expropriation' -- were planned and executed in 1968 and perhaps into early 1969 (although recently Panther leaders have discouraged such activity)." 74/

As to the purported financial influence the Communist Party, U.S.A., wields over the Black Panthers, the New York Review of Books reports that [w]hile the CP is happy to ride the Panthers' tail, it by no means calls the shots," 75/ Lt. William L. Olsen, of the Chicago Police Department, in testimony before the Permanent Subcommittee in Investigations of the Senate Government Operations Committee (June 26 and 30, 1969)

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74. Washington Post, January 14, 1970, p. A19.

75. New York Review of Books, September 19, 1969, p. 14.

seems to echo this statement: "[T]he party is financed by a variety of means, ranging from speakers' fees to income received for the sale of The Black Panther, the organization's newspaper, published in California. Sympathetic white organizations like the Chicago Peace Council and the Chicago Legal Defense Committee have contributed sums of money to the Black Panther party. The Chicago Peace Council is Communist infiltrated and administratively controlled by identified members of the Communist Party ... [T]he Communist Party, U.S.A. pays \$5 yearly membership dues regularly."<sup>76/</sup>

Evans and Novak maintain, however, that 'more than any other black revolutionary organization, the Panthers maintain close ties with overseas Communist parties. Whether or not they have been the beneficiary of Communist contributions from abroad is a matter of debate, but there is at least suspicion of financial aid from countries

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76. 'Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders,' p. 4446.

that receive regular and unremitting praise in the weekly newspaper, The Black Panther." 77/

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77. Washington Post, January 14, 1970, p. A19.

It has also been noted that since Panther resources have increasingly had to be utilized as bail money, the Panthers' have recently had to look for financial assistance not only from the Communist Party, USA, but also from white liberal organizations. Thus, the suggestion has been made that Panther willingness to cooperate with white radicals is at least partially motivated by financial necessity, and as such, is viewed with suspicion by some black militants: "The Black Panthers... have been forced to accept financial infusions from the Communist Party of the U.S., according to a member of the Worker-Student Alliance... They have also been relying increasingly on such New Left groups as RYM II and the New Radical Student Movement to help out on their breakfast programs and to aid in the distribution of their newspaper. [The Washington Post, January 4, 1970, p. D3.]

Ideology: The Goal of "Socialist" Revolution

Since the Panthers identify themselves with the goal of worldwide revolution against capitalism, however, [Cf. footnote 11, page 3, above], the Marxist orientation of the organization cannot be discounted in any appraisal of its ideological stance. Thus, it is significant that Panther rhetoric is possessed of a distinctly Marxist (or more accurately, Maoist) cast. ] It is therefore noteworthy that in the third demand of the Panther "liberation program," [Cf. page 6, above], the phrase "robbery by the WHITE MAN of our Black Community" has been changed to "robbery by CAPITALIST of our Black Community." 78/ The Black Panther weekly newspaper is frequently, indeed, persistently, embellished with quotations from Communist leaders such as Mao-Tse-Tung, who purport to represent the "rising expectations" of the "third world" -- the non-industrial, "colonized" peoples of the world with whom the Black Panthers identify themselves.79/

In this connection, as can be seen from the writings of Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, the influence of Franz Fanon upon Panther ideology is relevant. Fanon, a black psychiatrist who died in service to the Algerian revolution, was a chief formulator of the notion promulgated by the Panthers that black people "form an oppressed colony

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78. New York Review of Books, September 19, 1969, p. 14.

79. Cf. The Black Panther, February 17, 1969, p. 14.



within the mother country, the United States" -- a colony "kept in line by an occupying army [of] white policemen who live outside the ghetto ...and...exploited by businessmen and politicians.

"...The exploiters can be black as well as white, for the enemy they insist, is not so much racism as capitalism, which creates and nourishes it... As an alternative [to capitalism, the Panthers] offer 'revolution,' to liberate oppressed minorities in the United States and break the stranglehold of capitalism on the economically underdeveloped countries of the Third World. Until there is some form of socialist 'revolution' in America, they believe, small countries will remain prey to neo-colonialism and imperialism. The revolutionary in America, therefore, carries the world upon his shoulders. The black man in America will not be free until the white man is free, and until the white man is free, until America is transformed by a socialist revolution, the underdeveloped countries of the world will remain in economic chains." 80/

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80. New York Review of Books, September 11, 1969, p. 14.

Conclusion: Congressional Action

The Panthers' revolutionary stance and Marxist ideology have occasioned considerable Congressional interest,

This interest has resulted in numerous committee hearings, many of which are still in progress. The House Internal Security Committee held hearings on Black Panther Activity in Kansas City, Missouri, on March 3,4,5, and 6, 1970, which have not yet been published. <sup>81/</sup> Further hearings are scheduled for May 1970. The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Government Operations held extensive hearings on the Black Panthers during the summer of 1969, which were published as three parts in a series entitled "Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders." <sup>82/</sup> These publications include documents relevant to Black Panther and New Left activity, newspaper and periodical articles, and testimony of individuals knowledgeable in the area of investigation. In addition,

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81. Cf. Chicago Tribune, March 5, 1970, section 1, p. 26; March 6, 1970, section 1, p. 19; March 7, 1970, section 1, and March 1, 1970, section 1.

82. Hearings before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations, United States Senate, Ninety-first Congress, First Session (June 16 and 17, 1969, Part 18; June 18, 24 and 25, 1969, Part 19; and June 26 and 30, 1969, Part 20).

the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Senate Committee of the Judiciary has inaugurated a series of hearings on subversive and violence-oriented groups which includes investigation of the Black Panthers. Five segments of these hearings have already been published,<sup>83/</sup> with additional publications anticipated in the future.

According to Mr. William Shaw, Research Director of the House Internal Security Committee, the hearings conducted by that Committee reflect Congressional concern with the degree of involvement of the Black Panthers in revolutionary activities. This concern, explains Mr. Shaw, is directed toward the accumulation of sufficient information for the purpose of evaluating the necessity of remedial legislation: specifically, for determining whether or not existing laws (particularly State laws) are adequate to cope with such activities which may be identified as violent and revolutionary.

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83. The New Left: Memorandum (Ninetieth Congress, Second Session, October 9, 1968); Extent of Subversion in Campus Disorders: Testimony of Ernesto E. Blanco (Ninety-First Congress, First Session, June 19, 1969, Part 1); Extent of Subversion in Campus Disorders: Testimony of John F. McCormick and William E. Gorgan (Ninety-First Congress, First Session, June 26, 1969, Part 3); Extent of Subversion in Campus Disorders: Testimony of Max Phillip Friedman (Ninety-First Congress, First Session, August 12, 1969, Part 2); and Extent of Subversion in the 'New Left' (Ninety-First Congress, Second Session, January 20, 1970, Part 1).