

Handout 1: History of the Black Panther Party—Part One

The Black Panther Party Legacy and Lessons for the Future

What Was the Black Panther Party?

The Black Panther Party (BPP) was a progressive political organization that stood in the vanguard of the most powerful movement for social change in America since the Revolution of 1776 and the Civil War: that dynamic episode generally referred to as The Sixties. It is the sole Black organization in the entire history of Black struggle against slavery and oppression in the United States that was armed and promoted a revolutionary agenda, and it represents the last great thrust by the masses of Black people for equality, justice, and freedom. The Party's ideals and activities were so radical that it was at one time labeled by FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the United States." And despite the demise of the Party, its history and lessons remain so challenging and controversial that established texts and media erase all reference to the Party from their portrayals of American history.

The Black Panther Party was the manifestation of the vision of Huey P. Newton, the seventh son of a Louisiana family transplanted to Oakland, California. In the wake of the assassination of Black leader Malcolm X, on the heels of the massive Black, urban uprising in Watts, California, and at the height of the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in October of 1966, Newton gathered a few of his longtime friends, including Bobby Seale and David Hilliard, and developed a skeletal outline for this organization. It was named, originally, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. The black panther was used as the symbol because it was a powerful image, one that had been used effectively by the short-lived voting rights group the Lowndes County (Alabama) Freedom Organization. The term "self-defense" was employed to distinguish the Party's philosophy from the dominant nonviolent theme of the Civil Rights Movement, and in homage to the civil rights group the Louisiana-based Deacons for Defense. These two symbolic references were, however, where all similarity between the Black Panther Party and other Black organizations of the time, the civil rights groups and Black power groups, ended.

Immediately, the leadership of the embryonic Party outlined a Ten-Point Platform and Program [see "What We Want, What We Believe" by Wayne Au for full text]. This platform and program articulated the fundamental wants and needs of the organization, and called for rectification of the long-standing grievances of the Black masses in America, who were still alienated from and oppressed by society despite the abolition of slavery at the end of the Civil War. Moreover, this platform and program was a manifesto that demanded the express needs be met and oppression of Blacks be ended immediately; they issued a demand for the right to self defense by revolutionary ideology and by the commitment of the membership of the Black Panther Party to promote its agenda for fundamental change in America.

Historical Context of the Founding of the Party

There was no question that the end of several centuries of the institution of slavery of Blacks had not resulted in the assimilation of Blacks into American society. Indeed, there was a violent, post-emancipation white backlash manifested in the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, which was endorsed by the benign neglect of the president and Congress and was codified in the so-called Black Codes. The rampant lynching of Blacks became a way of life in America, along with the de facto denial to Blacks of every civil right, including the rights to vote, to worship, and to use public facilities.

From that time forward, then, Blacks were obliged to wage fierce survival struggles in America. At once they created the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People (NAACP) to promote integration of Blacks into society as full, first-class citizens and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), initiated by Marcus Garvey, to promote the independence of Blacks and their eventual return to Africa. Occurring at the same time were the effective efforts of former slave Booker T. Washington to establish a separate socioeconomic scheme for Blacks. America's response to all such efforts was violent and repressive and unyielding. Thus, despite the mass uprisings by Blacks in resistance to unrelenting violence and the law's delay to provide a remedy for this violence, despite tacit urgings by Blacks to be afforded some means to survive, despite the bold endeavors by Blacks to live separate lives in America or leave America, for the next half century Blacks in the main found themselves denied of every possible avenue to either establish their own socioeconomic independence or participate fully in the larger society.

Not until nearly 60 years after *Plessy* was there even the most minimal relief in the Supreme Court's holding in the 1954 case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In *Brown* the Supreme Court stated that "separate" was "not equal" for Blacks in America (at least with respect to public education). It is noteworthy that Dr. Kenneth Clark (the Black psychologist on whose study the *Brown* court based its findings as to the negative impact on Black children of the separate but equal doctrine) noted in 1994 that American schools were more segregated at that time than in 1954, when *Brown* was decided.

Even after *Brown* Blacks struggled to integrate and become full participants in American society to no avail. From the famous 1955 Montgomery bus boycott to the subsequent voter rights efforts to the dangerous sit-ins in all white public facilities led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) workers, the Civil Rights Movement challenged America. Under the spiritual guidance and the nonviolent philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. millions of both Blacks and whites protested and marched for freedom and justice for America's Black minority, though so many were murdered or maimed for life along the way. Finally in 1964 the U.S. Congress passed a civil rights act that outlawed racial segregation in public facilities.

It was too little too late. As the images of nonviolent Blacks and other civil rights workers and demonstrators being beaten and water-hosed by police, spat on, and jailed, merely for protesting social injustices shot across America's television screens, which was a new and compelling phenomenon in American life and popular culture, young urban Blacks rejected nonviolence. The full expression of this was the violent protest to the brutal police beating of a Black man in Watts, Los Angeles, of the 1965 rebellion that shocked America and set off other such responses to oppression. By 1967 there had been more than 100 major Black, urban rebellions in cities across the country. At the same time in 1965 the Vietnam War erupted. As television reports revealed the horrible realities of the war, good American soldiers killing Vietnamese children, America's white youth called into question and rallied against the war. America's youth, Black and white, had become openly hostile to the established order.

Rise of the Black Panther Party

It was against this backdrop that Huey P. Newton was organizing the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, boldly calling for a complete end to all forms of oppression of Blacks and offering revolution as an option. At the same time, the Black Panther Party took the position that Black people in America and the Vietnamese people in Vietnam were waging a common struggle as comrades-in-arms against a common enemy: the U.S. government. What was most "dangerous" about this was that young Blacks, the same urban youth throwing molotov cocktails on America, were listening.

This message was amplified when a small group of Black Panther Party members, led by Bobby Seale, designated chairman of the Party, marched into the California legislature in May 1967 fully armed. Defined as a protest against a pending gun-control bill, which

became the Mulford Act, supporting the position that Blacks had a Constitutional right to bear arms, the Party's message that day became a clarion call to young Blacks.

Therefore, in October of 1967 the incident in which Huey Newton was shot, arrested, and charged with the murder of a white Oakland, California, cop, after a gun battle of sorts on the streets of West Oakland that resulted in the death of police officer John Frey, provided the spark that lit a prairie fire. Young whites, angry and disillusioned with America over the Vietnam War, raised their voices with young, urban Blacks to cry in unison: "Free Huey!"

It became a movement in and of itself, the very embodiment of all the social contradictions, between the haves and have nots, the included and excluded, the alienated and the privileged. The freeing of the Black man charged with killing a white cop, the oppressed who resisted oppression, was tantamount to the freedom of everyone.

One result was not only the flowering of the Party itself, but also a rapid proliferation of other, like-minded organizations. Chicanos, or Mexican Americans, in southern California formed the Brown Berets. Whites in Chicago and its environs formed the White Patriot Party. Chinese in the San Francisco Bay Area, California, formed the Red Guard. Puerto Ricans in New York created the Young Lords. Eventually, a group of so-called senior citizens organized the Gray Panthers to address the human and civil rights abuses of the elderly in society. The Party expanded from a small Oakland-based organization to a national organization, as Black youth in 48 states formed chapters of the Party. In addition, Black Panther coalition and support groups began to spring up internationally, in Japan, China, France, England, Germany, Sweden, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uruguay and elsewhere, including, even, in Israel.

At the street level, the Party began to develop a series of social programs to provide needed services to Black and poor people, promoting thereby, at the same time, a model for an alternative, more humane social scheme. These programs, of which there came to be more than 35, were eventually referred to as Survival Programs and were operated by Party members under the slogan "survival pending revolution."

The first such program was the Free Breakfast for Children Program, which spread from being operated at one small Catholic church in the Fillmore district of San Francisco to every major city in America where there was a Party chapter. Thousands upon thousands of poor and hungry children were fed free breakfasts every day by the Party under this program. The magnitude and powerful impact of this program was such that the federal government was pressed and shamed into adopting a similar program for public schools across the country, while the FBI assailed the free breakfast program as nothing more than a propaganda tool used by the Party to carry out its "communist" agenda. More insidiously, the FBI denounced the Party itself as a group of communist outlaws bent on overthrowing the U.S. government.

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Handout 2: Key Words

Directions

In each box write one word that you associate with the reading you have done on the Black Panther Party.

Black Panther Party—
Historical Context
and Rise
of the
Party

Handout 3: Serve the People

This speech was delivered by Comrade Mao Tse-tung at a memorial meeting for Comrade Chang Szu-teh held by departments directly under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on September 8, 1944.

Our culture is a people's culture; our cultural workers must serve the people with great enthusiasm and devotion, and they must link themselves with the masses, not divorce themselves from the masses. In order to do so, they must act in accordance with the needs and wishes of the masses. All work done for the masses must start from their needs and not from the desire of any individual, however well-intentioned. It often happens that objectively the masses need a certain change, but subjectively they are not yet conscious of the need, not yet willing or determined to make the change. In such cases, we should wait patiently. We should not make the change until, through our work, most of the masses have become conscious of the need and are willing and determined to carry it out. Otherwise we shall isolate ourselves from the masses. Unless they are conscious and willing, any kind of work that requires their participation will turn out to be a mere formality and will fail. The saying "Haste does not bring success" does not mean that we should not make haste, but that we should not be impetuous; impetuosity leads only to failure. This is true in any kind of work, and particularly in the cultural and educational work the aim of which is to transform the thinking of the masses. There are two principles here: one is the actual needs of the masses rather than what we fancy they need, and the other is the wishes of the masses, who must make up their own minds instead of our making up their minds for them.

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Handout 4: Vision of the Black Panther Party

The original vision of the Black Panther Party was to serve the needs of the oppressed people in our communities and defend them against their oppressors. When the Party was initiated we knew that these goals would raise the consciousness of the people and motivate them to move more firmly for their total liberation. We also recognized that we live in a country led by what has become one of the most repressive governments in the world; repressive in communities all over the world. We did not expect such a repressive government to stand idly by while the Black Panther Party went forward to the goal of serving the people. We expected repression.

We knew that because the Panthers were part of the revolutionary vanguard, repression would be the reaction of our oppressors, but we recognized that the task of the revolutionist is difficult and his life is short. We were prepared then, as we are now, to give our all in the interests of oppressed peoples. We expected the repression to come from the outside, forces that have long held our communities in subjection. However, the ideology of dialectical materialism helped us to understand that the contradictions surrounding the Party would create a force that would move us toward our goals. We also expected contradictions within the Party, for the oppressors use infiltrators and provocateurs to help them reach their evil ends. Even when the contradictions come from formerly loyal members of the Party, we see them as part of the process of development rather than in the negative terms the oppressors' media use to interpret them. Above all, we knew that through it all the Party would survive.

The Party would survive because it had the love and support of the people who saw their true interests expressed in the actions of the Party. The Party would also survive because it would be a political vehicle that continued to voice the interests of the people and serve as their advocates...

...A revolutionary vehicle is in fact a revolutionary concept set into motion by a dedicated cadre through a particular organized structure.

Such a vehicle can survive repression because it can move in the necessary manner at the appropriate time. It can go underground if the conditions require, and it can rise up again. But it will always be motivated by love and dedication to the interests of the oppressed communities. Therefore the people will insure its survival, for only in that survival are the people's needs serviced. The structured and organized vehicle will guarantee the weathering of the tests of internal and external contradictions.

The responsibility of such a political vehicle is clear. It is to function as a machine that serves the true interests of the oppressed peoples. This means that it must be ever aware of the needs of the communities of the oppressed and develop and execute the necessary programs to meet those needs. The Black Panther Party has done this through its basic Ten-Point Program. However, we recognize that revolution is a process and we cannot offer the people conclusions; instead, we must be ready to respond creatively to new conditions and new understandings. Therefore, we have developed our Free Breakfast Program, our Free Health Clinics, our Clothing and Shoe Programs, and our Buses to Prisons Program, as well as others, responding to the obvious needs of Black people. The overwhelmingly favorable response to these programs in every community is evidence that they are serving the true interests of the people.

Serving the true interests of the people also means that the political vehicle must stand between the people and the oppressive forces, which prey upon them, in such a manner that the administrators will have to give the appropriate response. Such articulation requires us to have a political organ that will express the interests of the people and interpret phenomena for them. Again, the existence of such a political vehicle is justified only so long as it serves the true interests of the people. Serving the true interests of the people,

however, does not mean that the vehicle is simply a reflector of public opinion, for the opinions of the people often have been molded and directed against the people's true interests by slick politicians and exploitative educators. Their diversion tactics often lead the people down blind alleys or onto tangents which take them away from their true goals. We can easily see this when we apply the concept of American democracy to the Black community.

Democracy in America (bourgeois democracy) means nothing more than the domination of the majority over the minority. That is why Black people can cast votes all year long but if the majority is against us, we suffer. Then the politicians and educators try to deceive the community with statements such as "It's rule by the majority, but the rights of the minority are protected." If, in fact, participating in the democratic process in America were in the interest of the Black community there would be no need for a Free Breakfast Program, there would be no need for Free Health Clinics or any of the other programs we have developed to meet the people's needs. The rights of the minority are "protected" by the standards of a bourgeois government, and anything which is not in their interest is not permitted. This may be democratic for the majority, but for the minority it has the same effect as fascism. When the majority decreed that we should be slaves, we were slaves; where was the democracy in slavery for us? When the majority decreed that we should pay taxes, fight and die in wars, and be given inferior and racist education against our interests, we got all of these things. Where is democracy for us in any of that? Our children still die, our youth still suffer from malnutrition, our middle-aged people still suffer from sickle-cell anemia, and our elderly still face unbearable poverty and hardship because they reach the twilight period of their lives with nothing to sustain them through these difficult times. Where is the democracy in any of this for Black people? Democracy means only that the majority will use us when they need us and cast us aside when they do not need us. A true understanding of the workings—and effects—of American democracy for Black people will reveal most clearly that it is just the same as fascism for us. Our true interests and needs are not being served...

The Black Panther Party was born in a period of stress when Black people were moving away from the philosophy and strategy of nonviolent action toward sterner actions. We dared to believe that we could offer the community a permanent political vehicle that would serve their needs and advocate their interests. We have met many foes; we have seen many enemies. We have been slandered, kidnapped, gagged, jailed, and murdered. We know now, more than ever before, that the will of the people is greater than the technology and repression of those who are against the interests of the people. Therefore we know that we can and will continue to serve and educate the people.

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Handout 5: Parallel Statements Worksheet

In your group, read through the two handouts you have been given: Vision of the Black Panther Party and Serve the People. Discuss what phrases or ideas are present in both pieces of writing and note them in the chart below. Finally, in the box at the bottom of the page, record your group's reactions to the handouts.

Vision of the Black Panther Party	Serve the People

What surprised us or interested us in these readings:

Handout 7: Breakfast Program: To Feed Our Children and Why the Free Breakfast?

To Feed Our Children

From The Black Panther, March 26, 1969

The Free Breakfast for School Children is about to cover the country and be initiated in every chapter and branch of the Black Panther Party. This program was created because the Black Panther Party understands that our children need a nourishing breakfast every morning so that they can learn.

These breakfasts include every nutrient that they need for the day. For too long have our people gone hungry and without the proper health aids they need. But the Black Panther Party says that this type of thing must be halted because we must survive this evil government and build a new one fit for the service of all the people. This program is run through donations of concerned people, and the avaricious businessmen that pinch selfishly a little to the program. We say that this is not enough, especially from those that thrive off the Black community like leeches. All of the avaricious businessmen have their factories, etc. centered in our communities and even most of the people that work in these sweat shops are members of the oppressed masses.

It is a beautiful sight to see our children eat in the mornings after remembering the times when our stomachs were not full, and even the teachers in the schools say that there is a great improvement in the academic skills of the children that do get the breakfast. At one time there were children that passed out in class from hunger, or had to be sent home for something to eat. But our children shall be fed, and the Black Panther Party will not let the malady of hunger keep our children down any longer.

The Breakfast Program has already been initiated in several chapters, and our love for the masses makes us realize that it must continue permanently and be a national program. But we need your help, and that means money, food, and time. We want to turn the program over to the community, but without your efforts and support we cannot. We have had a few mothers come down to the breakfast in the mornings to cook and serve, but not hardly enough. This is the people's program, for the people, and we want the people to assist in it. We are holding a community meeting May 3, 7:30 p.m. at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church on 27th and West in Oakland, California, concerning the Breakfast Program. We will have a movie of the children participating in the Breakfast Program, your children, to show to all of the members of our community. Speakers from the Black Panther Party shall inform you on the achievements of the breakfasts, and the ways that you can assist. Hunger is one of the means of oppression and it must be halted.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Why the Free Breakfast?

From The Black Panther, October 4, 1969

The Free Breakfast for Children is just one of the programs being carried out by the Black Panther Party that can be attributed to Huey P. Newton. Huey P. Newton, organizer and minister of defense of the Black Panther Party says that the Party must go forth to meet the basic desires and needs of the people. Huey says the members of the Party are oxen to be ridden by the people.

How is the Party ridden by the people? Panthers working the Breakfast Program get out of bed at approximately 6:00 a.m. every school day. They set tables, clean facilities,

cook and prepare the food, they direct traffic to see that the children cross the streets safely. After a day's breakfast has been completed, the Panthers attend to the constant task of procuring food from the merchants who do business in the community to see that the program is constantly supplied with the necessary food. Why a Breakfast for Children Program? The answers to this question need be answered for only those who belong to the upper- or so-called middle-class. The majority of Blacks, Mexican Americans, Orientals, and poor Whites know from their American experience that it is impossible to obtain and sustain any education when one has to attend school hungry.

Huey P. Newton knew that these conditions existed and that the American school system has not seen fit to alleviate them. Validity has been added to Huey's knowledge by the fact that the Free Breakfast program has spread like wild fire across the United States wherever Black Panther chapters and branches exist.

The Free Breakfast for Children program is a socialistic program, designed to serve the people. All institutions in a society should be designed to serve the masses, not just a "chosen few." In America this program is revolutionary. In capitalist America any program that is absolutely free is considered bad business. The Black Panther Party is a vanguard organization and a vanguard organization educates by example. The Black Panther Party is educating the people to the fact they have a right to the best that modern technology and human knowledge can produce.

"The world belongs to all the people."

FOR TOO LONG OUR CHILDREN HAVE GONE HUNGRY

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Handout 8: Education: Black Child's Pledge and Liberation Schools

Black Child's Pledge

By Shirley Williams (Richmond Black Belt) from The Black Panther, October 26, 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

What are revolutionaries? "Revolutionaries are changers." This response comes from the eager lips of the youngsters participating in the first liberation school sponsored by the Black Panther Party. 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 schools will replace, for the summer, the Free Breakfast for School Children that was initiated in the beginning of this year and has since spread through chapters and branches of the party throughout the country. 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 addi-

tional 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!

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Handout 9: Legal Rights: Pocket Lawyer of Legal First Aid

From The Black Panther, March 23, 1969

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.
6. Do not engage in "friendly" conversation with officers on the way to or at the station. Once you are arrested there is little likelihood that anything you say will get you released.
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.
10. You must be allowed to post bail in most cases, but you must be able to pay the bail bondsmen's fee. If you cannot pay the fee, you may ask the judge to release you from custody without bail or to lower your bail, but he does not have to do so.
11. The police must bring you into court or release you within 48 hours after your arrest, unless the time ends on a weekend or a holiday, and they must bring you before a judge the first day court is in session.

12. If you do not have the money to hire an attorney, immediately ask the police to get you an attorney without charge.
13. If you have the money to hire a private attorney, but do not know of one, call the National Lawyers' Guild or the Alameda County Bar Association (or the bar association of your county) and ask them to furnish you with the name of an attorney who practices criminal law.

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Handout 10: People's Medical Care Center

By Lincoln Webster Sheffield from The Black Panther, October 26, 1968

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. One patient, she said, "brought in a four-month old baby who had a bad cold. The baby was examined by the pediatrician, and a throat culture was taken. This baby had been going to the well-baby clinic operated by the Board of Health, but had not yet received any of the normal shots. 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.

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Handout 11: FBI Memo

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM BLACK NATIONALIST-HATE GROUPS RACIAL INTELLIGENCE 3/4/68 [...]

By J. Edgar Hoover

Goals

For maximum effectiveness of the Counterintelligence Program, and to prevent wasted effort, long-range goals are being set.

1. Prevent the COALITION of militant black nationalist groups. In unity there is strength; a truism that is no less valid for all its triteness. An effective coalition of black nationalist groups might be the first step toward a real "Mau Mau" [Black revolutionary army] in America, the beginning of a true black revolution.
2. Prevent the RISE OF A "MESSIAH" who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement. Malcolm X might have been such a "messiah;" he is the martyr of the movement today. Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael and Elijah Muhammed all aspire to this position. Elijah Muhammed is less of a threat because of his age. King could be a very real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed "obedience" to "white, liberal doctrines" (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism. Carmichael has the necessary charisma to be a real threat in this way.
3. Prevent VIOLENCE on the part of black nationalist groups. This is of primary importance, and is, of course, a goal of our investigative activity; it should also be a goal of the Counterintelligence Program to pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence.
4. Prevent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining RESPECTABILITY, by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community. The goal of discrediting black nationalists must be handled tactically in three ways. You must discredit those groups and individuals to, first, the responsible Negro community. Second, they must be discredited to the white community, both the responsible community and to "liberals" who have vestiges of sympathy for militant black nationalist [sic] simply because they are Negroes. Third, these groups must be discredited in the eyes of Negro radicals, the followers of the movement. This last area requires entirely different tactics from the first two. Publicity about violent tendencies and radical statements merely enhances black nationalists to the last group; it adds "respectability" in a different way.
5. A final goal should be to prevent the long-range GROWTH of militant black organizations, especially among youth. Specific tactics to prevent these groups from converting young people must be developed.

Targets

Primary targets of the Counterintelligence Program, Black Nationalist-Hate Groups, should be the most violent and radical groups and their leaders. We should emphasize those leaders and organizations that are nationwide in scope and are most capable of disrupting this country. These targets, members, and followers of the: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), and Nation Of Islam (NOI). Offices handling these cases and those of Stokely Carmichael of SNCC, H. Rap Brown of SNCC, Martin Luther King of SCLC, Maxwell Stanford of RAM, and Elijah Muhammed of NOI, should be alert for

counterintelligence suggestions. [...]

John Edgar Hoover was born in Washington, D.C., in 1895. He served as the director the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 1924 until his death in 1972.

Handout 12: Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO)—U.S. Domestic Covert Operations

Harassment through Psychological Warfare

While boring from within, the FBI and police also attack dissident movements from the outside. They openly mount propaganda campaigns through public addresses, news releases, books, pamphlets, magazine articles, radio, and television. They also use covert deception and manipulation. Documented tactics of this kind include:

False Media Stories

COINTELPRO documents expose frequent collusion between news media personnel and the FBI to publish false and distorted material at the Bureau's behest. The FBI routinely leaked derogatory information to its collaborators in the news media. It also created newspaper and magazine articles and television "documentaries" that the media knowingly or unknowingly carried as their own. Copies were sent anonymously or under bogus letterhead to activists' financial backers, employers, business associates, families, neighbors, church officials, school administrators, landlords, and whomever else might cause them trouble.

One FBI media fabrication claimed that Jean Seberg, a white film star active in antiracist causes, was pregnant by a prominent Black leader. The Bureau leaked the story anonymously to columnist Joyce Haber and also had it passed to her by a "friendly" source on the *Los Angeles Times* editorial staff. The item appeared without attribution in Haber's nationally syndicated column on May 19, 1970. Seberg's husband has sued the FBI as responsible for her resulting stillbirth, nervous breakdown, and suicide.

Bogus Leaflets, Pamphlets, and Other Publications

COINTELPRO documents show that the FBI routinely put out phony leaflets, posters, pamphlets, newspapers, and other publications in the name of movement groups. The purpose was to discredit the groups and turn them against one another.

FBI cartoon leaflets were used to divide and disrupt the main national antiwar coalition of the late 1960s. Similar fliers were circulated in 1968 and 1969 in the name of the Black Panthers and the United Slaves (US), a rival Black nationalist group based in southern California. The phony Panther and US leaflets, together with other covert operations, were credited with subverting a fragile truce between the two groups and igniting an explosion of internecine violence that left four Panthers dead, many more wounded, and a once-flourishing regional Black movement decimated.

Another major COINTELPRO operation involved a children's coloring book that the Black Panther Party had rejected as antiwhite and gratuitously violent. The FBI revised the coloring book to make it even more offensive. Its field offices then distributed thousands of copies anonymously or under phony organizational letterheads. Many backers of the Party's program of free breakfasts for children withdrew their support after the FBI conned them into believing that the bogus coloring book was being used in the program.

Forged Correspondence

Former employees have confirmed that the FBI has the capacity to produce state-of-the-art forgery. This talent was used under COINTELPRO to create snitch jackets and bogus communications that exacerbated differences among activists and disrupted their work.

One such forgery intimidated civil rights worker Muhammed Kenyatta (Donald Jackson), causing him to abandon promising projects in Jackson, Mississippi. Kenyatta

had foundation grants to form Black economic cooperatives and open a “Black and Proud School” for dropouts. He was also a student organizer at nearby Tougaloo College. In the winter of 1969, after an extended campaign of FBI and police harassment, Kenyatta received a letter, purportedly from the Tougaloo College Defense Committee, which “directed” that he cease his political activities immediately. If he did not “heed our diplomatic and well-thought-out warning,” the committee would consider taking measures “which would have a more direct effect and which would not be as cordial as this note.” Kenyatta and his wife left. Only years later did they learn it was not Tougaloo students, but FBI covert operators who had driven them out.

Later in 1969 FBI agents fabricated a letter to the mainly white organizers of a proposed Washington, D.C., antiwar rally demanding that they pay the local Black community a \$20,000 “security bond.” This attempted extortion was composed in the name of the local Black United Front (BUF) and signed with the forged signature of its leader. FBI informers inside the BUF then tried to get the group to back such a demand, and Bureau contacts in the media made sure the story received wide publicity.

The Senate Intelligence Committee uncovered a series of FBI letters sent to top Panther leaders throughout 1970 in the name of Connie Mathews, an intermediary between the Black Panther Party’s national office and Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver, in exile in Algeria. These exquisite forgeries were prepared on pilfered stationery in Panther vernacular expertly simulated by the FBI’s Washington, D.C., laboratory. Each was forwarded to an FBI legal attaché at a U.S. embassy in a foreign country that Mathews was due to travel through and then posted at just the right time “in such a manner that it cannot be traced to the Bureau.” The FBI enhanced the eerie authenticity of these fabrications by lacing them with esoteric personal tidbits culled from electronic surveillance of Panther homes and offices. Combined with other forgeries, anonymous letters and phone calls, and the covert intervention of FBI and police infiltrators, the Mathews correspondence succeeded in inflaming intraparty mistrust and rivalry until it erupted into the bitter public split that shattered the organization in the winter of 1971.

Anonymous Letters and Telephone Calls

During the 1960s activists received a steady flow of anonymous letters and phone calls that turned out to have been from the FBI. Some were unsigned, while others bore bogus names or were purported to have come from unidentified activists in phony or actual organizations.

Many of these bogus communications promoted racial divisions and fears, often by exploiting and exacerbating tensions between Jewish and Black activists. One such FBI-concocted letter went to Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) members who had joined Black students protesting New York University’s discharge of a Black teacher in 1969. The supposed author, an unnamed “SDS member,” urged whites to break ranks and abandon the Black students because of alleged anti-semitic slurs attributed to the fired teacher and his supporters.

Other anonymous letters and phone calls falsely accused movement leaders of collaboration with the authorities, corruption, or sexual affairs with other activists’ mates. As in the Seberg incident, interracial sex was a persistent theme. The husband of one white woman active in civil rights and antiwar work filed for divorce soon after receiving an FBI-authored letter.

Still other anonymous FBI communications were designed to intimidate dissidents, disrupt coalitions, and provoke violence. Calls to Stokely Carmichael’s mother warning of a fictitious Black Panther murder plot drove him to leave the country in September 1968. Similar anonymous FBI telephone threats to Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leader James Forman were instrumental in thwarting efforts to bring the two groups together.

The Chicago FBI made effective use of anonymous letters to sabotage the Panthers efforts to build alliances with previously apolitical Black street gangs. The most extensive of these operations involved the Black P. Stone Nation, or “Blackstone Rangers,” a powerful confederation of several thousand local Black youth. Early in 1969 as FBI and police infiltrators in the Rangers spread rumors of an impending Panther attack, the Bureau sent Ranger chief Jeff Fort an incendiary note signed “a black brother you don’t know.” Fort’s supposed friend warned that “The brothers that run the Panthers blame you for blocking their thing and there’s supposed to be a hit out for you.” Another FBI-concocted anonymous “Black man” then informed Chicago Panther leader Fred Hampton of a Ranger plot “to get you out of the way.” These fabrications squelched promising talks between the two groups and enabled Chicago Panther security chief William O’Neal, an FBI-paid provocateur, to instigate a series of armed confrontations from which the Panthers barely managed to escape without serious casualties.

Pressure through Employers, Landlords, and Others

FBI records reveal repeated maneuvers to generate pressure on dissidents from their parents, children, spouses, landlords, employers, college administrators, church superiors, welfare agencies, credit bureaus, and the like. Anonymous letters and telephone calls were often used to this end. Confidential official communications were effective in bringing to bear the Bureau’s immense power and authority.

Agents’ reports indicate that such FBI intervention denied Martin Luther King Jr. and other 1960s activists any number of foundation grants and public speaking engagements. It also deprived alternative newspapers of their printers, suppliers, and distributors and cost them crucial advertising revenues when major record companies were persuaded to take their business elsewhere. Similar government manipulation may underlie steps recently taken by some insurance companies to cancel policies held by churches giving sanctuary to refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala.

Tampering with Mail and Telephone Service

The FBI and CIA routinely used mail covers (the recording of names and addresses) and electronic surveillance in order to spy on the 1960s movements. The CIA alone admitted to photographing the outside of 2.7 million pieces of first-class mail during the 1960s and to opening almost 215,000 pieces. Government agencies also tampered with mail, altering, delaying, or “disappearing” it. Activists were quick to blame one another, and infiltrators easily exploited the situation to exacerbate their tensions.

Dissidents’ telephone communications often were similarly obstructed. The SDS Regional Office in Washington, D.C., for instance, mysteriously lost its phone service the week preceding virtually every national antiwar demonstration in the late 1960s.

Disinformation to Prevent or Disrupt Movement Meetings and Activities

A favorite COINTELPRO tactic uncovered by Senate investigators was to advertise a nonexistent political event or to misinform people of the time and place of an actual one. They reported a variety of disruptive FBI “dirty tricks” designed to cast blame on the organizers of movement events.

In one “disinformation” case, the [FBI’s] Chicago Field Office duplicated blank forms prepared by the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (NMC) soliciting housing for demonstrators at the Democratic National Convention. Chicago’s FBI filled out 217 of these forms with fictitious names and addresses and sent them to the NMC, which provided them to demonstrators who made “long and useless journeys to locate these addresses.” The NMC then decided to discard all replies received on the housing forms rather than have out-of-town demonstrators try to locate nonexistent addresses. The same program was carried out when the Washington Mobilization Committee distributed housing forms for demonstrators coming to Washington for the 1969 presidential inaugural ceremonies.

In another case, during the demonstrations accompanying inauguration ceremonies, the Washington Field Office (WFO) discovered that NMC marshals were using walkie-talkies to coordinate their movements and activities. WFO used the same citizen band to supply the marshals with misinformation and, pretending to be an NMC unit, countermanded NMC orders.

In a third case, a [Bureau] Midwest field office disrupted arrangements for state university students to attend the 1969 inaugural demonstrations by making a series of anonymous telephone calls to the transportation company. The calls were designed to confuse both the transportation company and the SDS leaders as to the cost of transportation and the time and place for leaving and returning. This office also placed confusing leaflets around the campus to show different times and places for demonstration-planning meetings, as well as conflicting times and dates for traveling to Washington.

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Handout 13: Discussion Web

NO

Was the Use of
COINTELPRO
Justified?

YES

Conclusion:

Handout 14: History of the Black Panther Party—Part Two

Armed with that definition [that the Black Panther Party was a group of communist outlaws bent on overthrowing the U.S. government] and all the machinery of the federal government, J. Edgar Hoover directed the FBI to wage a campaign to eliminate the Black Panther Party altogether, commanding the assistance of local police departments to do so. Indeed, as Hoover stated in 1968 that the Party represented “the greatest threat to the internal security of the U.S.,” he pledged that 1969 would be the last year of the Party’s existence. Indeed, in January of 1969, two Party leaders of the Southern California Chapter, John Huggins and Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter, were murdered at UCLA by FBI paid assassins, with the cooperation of black nationalist Ron Karenga and his US Organization. By the end of that year, nearly every office and other facility of the Black Panther Party had been violently assaulted by police and/or the FBI, culminating in December, in an FBI-orchestrated five-hour police assault on the office in Los Angeles and FBI-directed Illinois state police assassination of Chicago Party leader Fred Hampton and member Mark Clark.

In the interim, there had been the Oakland police murder of 17-year-old Party member Bobby Hutton, in April of 1968; the August 1968 Los Angeles police murder of another 17-year-old Panther, Tommy Lewis, along with Robert Lawrence and Steve Bartholomew; numerous arrests, from that of Party chairman Bobby Seale on conspiracy charges in connection with antiwar protests at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, to that of chief of staff David Hilliard on charges of assaulting police officers (in the April 1968 police gun battle in which Bobby Hutton was killed), to a conspiracy charge of trying to kill President Nixon arising from an antiwar speech, to the famous New Haven murder conspiracy case of Bobby Seale and veteran Panther Ericka Huggins. There had been every kind of assault imaginable on the Party’s social programs and destruction of Party property. From police raiders who smashed breakfast programs’ eggs on the floors of churches to those who crushed Party free-clinic supplies underfoot to those who caused the destruction of batches of the Party’s newspapers. In addition, intimidation and other such tactics were being employed to undermine the Party’s support, to break the spirit and commitment of Party supporters and family members. More sinister and subtle, perhaps, were the activities carried out under the FBI’s so-called “counterintelligence” program known as COINTELPRO, whereby the FBI directed its field offices and local police to destroy the Party through the use of informants, agents provocateurs, and covert activities involving mayhem and murder.

Nevertheless, the Party survived and continued to build its Survival Programs, which came to include not only the free breakfast programs and free clinics, but also grocery giveaways, the manufacture and distribution of free shoes, school and education programs, senior transport and service programs, free bussing to prisons, and prisoner support and legal aid programs, among others.

The Free Huey Movement and the Growth of the Party

Hundreds of thousands of black as well as white youth had marched throughout the streets of Oakland and all over America in support of the “Free Huey Movement,” as it had come to be called. While Huey was eventually convicted, it was not on the original charge of first-degree murder but for simple manslaughter. Soon, however, even that conviction was set aside and a new trial was ordered. In July of 1970, then, Huey was indeed set free from jail. Thousands greeted him.

The celebrations seemed meaningless in light of the July 7, 1970, murder of 17-year-old Jonathan Jackson (George Jackson’s brother) in the incident that gave rise to the famous arrest and trial of Angela Davis. The question of Huey’s freedom was nearly

forgotten when well-known Party leader Eldridge Cleaver, living in exile in Algeria, challenged the Party's agenda of social programs and proposed a terrorist one. By the end of 1970, Cleaver was expelled from the Party in a nasty riff that culminated in the murder of Party loyalist Sam Napier in New York. Still, the Party continued to build its programs and move its agenda, as it began to consolidate its efforts in its home base of Oakland, California.

Over the next few years, until 1973, the Party maintained and built its agenda, despite the brutal assassination at San Quentin prison in August of 1971 of Party field marshal and author George Jackson. Nevertheless, in 1972–73, the Party entered into electoral politics in Oakland by running Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown for public office, for mayor and city councilwoman, respectively. Though that election was lost, *per se*, it allowed the Black Panther Party to solidify a broad base of support for its future efforts. In 1974 there was great upheaval in the internal affairs of the Party, so much so that by the time Huey Newton went into self-imposed exile rather than stand trial for the murder of a young prostitute (for which he would be acquitted), most of the original leadership was gone. David Hilliard was expelled while in prison; Bobby Seale was expelled. Elaine Brown took over the chairmanship of the Party during those three years that Newton was in exile in Cuba.

The Last Chapter

During that time, Brown ran for Oakland public office again, this time garnering more than 44 percent of the vote along with the support of every labor union in the area. At the next city election, the Party supported and virtually installed Lionel Wilson as mayor of Oakland, the first black to hold that post in the 100-year history of the city. In the meantime, it further solidified its base by fighting for and obtaining funds to build 300 new replacement housing units for poor people displaced by a local freeway, and by entering into a working partnership with certain developers to build up the dilapidated downtown city center in order to provide 10,000 new jobs for Oakland's poor and unemployed. At the same time, a permanent primary school was instituted, which was highly lauded by the California legislature and others. On Huey's return from exile, in 1977, the Black Panther Party was alive and well in Oakland, California, maintaining a strong constituency base in the black and working communities, and prepared to move forward to carry out its primary goal to make Oakland a base for revolution in America.

Soon after Newton's return to Oakland in July of 1977, however, a combination of the continued, albeit more subtle and sophisticated, activities of the FBI (despite J. Edgar Hoover's death in 1972) and internal stress and conflict came to erode the Black Panther Party. By the end of the decade, it had come to a slow and unheralded demise.

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Handout 15: Facts and Feelings

In the boxes below write facts you have learned about the Panthers that surprised, intrigued, interested, or moved you. In the box next to each fact, write down your feelings and thoughts on the facts.

Facts	Feelings