

Bring the Vanguard Home: Revisiting the Black Panther Party's Sites of Class Struggle

by

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Abstract

This essay investigates how the home and family unit functioned as political and politicizing spaces for Black Panther Party members and their children, and essay seeks to understand the significance of those moments when Black Panthers' most personal domains transformed into refuges from state violence, venues for the political education of children, and quarters that accommodated Black Panther Party members' experimentations with various living arrangements to ask: what symbolic or material significance, if any, did conceptions of parenthood, childrearing practices, or the home, have for those interested in the organization, and for those bent on its demise; and to what extent did these phenomena function as mechanisms of Black Panther Party socialism? Utilizing a range of primary and secondary sources such as autobiographies of former Black Panther Party members, newspaper articles, and general studies of the organization, it is contended that domestically-insulated interactions were as central to the Black Panther Party's political practices as members' more overt organizational labor.

Introduction

By the summer of 1968, less than two years after its inception, Oakland, California's Black Panther Party (BPP) was running out of space. Signs of the Black Power organization's rapid growth were especially evident at its Grove Street office, which by this time, was "busting out at the seams," with "piles of newsletters, leaflets, buttons, [and] flags" overflowing into members' homes.¹ Not surprisingly, state agents were equally privy to the Black Panther Party's increasing popularity among local residents; during the same year, increased rates of incarceration, police-led murders, and the political exile of Panther men resulted in a predominantly female membership.² In the midst of heightened FBI and police repression of the organization, David Hilliard, the Black Panther Party's then Chief of Staff, recalls in his autobiography that by September, he no longer felt safe in his home or the BPP office.³

Thus, the search was on for a new base of operations. With the help of friends and the pooling of organizational funds, Hilliard quickly located an ideal site on Shattuck Avenue, midway between Berkeley and Oakland. Aside from the buffer that the college town's businesses would afford Hilliard's family against "the marginally more civilized Berkeley police" at this particular location, Hilliard envisioned additional benefits to purchasing the property: "We could hold meetings, press conferences, and store the paper in the wide space on the ground floor. Upstairs in front we can put out the paper; in back are plenty of rooms, including the kitchen. From the basement we can build tunnels to the backyard of a friend of Eldridge's who lives nearby, escape routes in case of attack."⁴

Further, aware of the house's ample size, Hilliard proposed to his wife, Patricia, the idea of withdrawing their children from Oakland's public schools and homeschooling them at the new residence. His plans quickly materialized. After outfitting the bedrooms with bunk beds and equipping every desk with a telephone, Hilliard and his comrades covered the windows with steel sheets and placed sandbags along the walls.⁵ Soon "the chatter of people working, the chaos of last-minute details, some nonsense about the kids upstairs, some members sacked out on the floor in sleeping bags," filled the house with an atmosphere that Hilliard recalls, felt "familiar, natural, right." He called the new domain, "home, headquarters, embassy."⁶

But what do we make of the tripartite relationship that Hilliard describes? Beyond what it suggests about the central role that the organization's Chief of Staff played in the Black Panther Party's early years, the image he provides is telling on at least one additional level; it offers us a key window through which we can more fully examine the organization's sites of class struggle. While Hilliard may have been the only BPP member to actualize plans for building an underground escape route in his backyard (and he might have been successful, had the city's underground subway system not backed up the water level, causing the tunnels to flood), the "home, headquarters, embassy" he depicts was not unique.

In fact, accounts of BPP households outlined in memoirs and biographies of former members, organizational documents, and FBI files suggest that for numerous Black Panthers, the home existed as a liminal space, at the nexus of family, community, and work life. More specifically, for many Black Panthers, the household functioned as a primary site of contestation between the BPP and the state over the terms of social reproduction.

While much has been written about how the Black Panther Party's brand of Black radicalism operated as a spectacular politics – in the streets, in front of government buildings, and in community centers – few scholars have fully explored the more intimate terrains over which the BPP attempted to multiply its revolutionary ranks. If the state actively hindered the ability of Black working-class families to perform the daily tasks of reproductive labor by relegating them to ghettos ridden with police violence, by inculcating their children with a public school curriculum void of Black history, or by officially pathologizing Black female-headed households, Black Panther Party members responded with collective calls for self-determination.⁷

Yet, Black Power militancy, and state responses to it, did not always occur in those spaces most visible to the public. Rather, the home and family unit were just as likely targets of government subversion as the more visible urban terrains that have become the central backdrop of Black Panther iconography. Equally important, the BPP's anti-colonial politics were often transmitted across generations not in BPP offices or community centers, but behind closed doors, in the intimate spaces of living rooms, kitchens, and backyards.

Specifically, this essay investigates the ways in which the home and family unit functioned as political and politicizing spaces for BPP members and their children. In the context of the organization's politics of self-determination, this exercise seeks to understand the significance of those moments when Black Panthers' most personal domains transformed into refuges from state violence, venues for the political education of children, and quarters that accommodated BPP members' experimentations with various living arrangements. I ask: what symbolic or material significance, if any, did conceptions of parenthood, childrearing practices, or the home, have for those interested in the BPP, and for those bent on its demise? Similarly, to what extent did these phenomena function as mechanisms of Black Panther socialism? Utilizing a range of primary and secondary sources including autobiographies of former Black Panther Party members, newspaper articles, and general studies of the organization, I contend that these more domestically-insulated interactions were as central to the organization's political practices as members' more overt organizational labor.⁸

Background

Like the Black Panther Party's gender theories, the ideas the BPP espoused about parenthood and family were neither monolithic nor static throughout its twelve-year lifespan from 1966 to 1982. And while Oakland's Black Power group never released an official statement articulating the role of family and children in the socialist revolution, questions about fatherhood, motherhood, and family structure figured prominently in organizational theories and practices from the group's early stages.⁹

In fact, on many levels, the BPP's establishment by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale served as a response to U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's controversial 1965 study, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. Drawing on a compilation of sociological, economic, and historical research, Moynihan ultimately attributed the high unemployment and school attrition rates among Black people in low-income cities to the structure of Black families. Black mothers and matriarchal households were particularly troubling to Moynihan, as his report would cast both as debilitating to the social and economic progress of Black men and male youth.¹⁰

Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that tropes of the reclamation of Black manhood, which could be achieved through a man's ability to protect his family, fill the pages of the BPP's early literature. In his early writings, Newton's response to the matriarchal family form offers an ironic corroboration of many of Moynihan's assertions about the state of Black fatherhood. His 1967 essay, "Fear and Doubt," for example, depicts the Black husband and father as a dejected figure, consumed with feelings of guilt over his inability to provide for his wife and children. Unable to financially support or protect his family, he ultimately "withdraws into the world of invisibility."¹¹

Newton's trope of invisibility is coupled with a rhetoric of protection and survival that underscores the paradoxical nature of the Black father figure; both a product of governmental neglect and the target of police-sanctioned violence, he is at once invisible and hypervisible. Echoing Newton's personal writings, the BPP's agenda of combating police brutality inscribed a version of revolutionary Black manhood that was directly tied to the protection of the home and family. One of the organization's earliest documents, Executive Mandate Number One, for instance, called on members to defend the homes and persons of the black ghetto from oppressive state forces.¹²

But scholars of the BPP's gender politics, including Tracye Matthews remind us that the Black Panther Party maintained fluid, and at times contradictory notions of familial relationships as the organization's political ideology transformed over time, in constant dialectic with external contemporary discourses.¹³ Even Newton, while acknowledging Moynihan's patriarchal conceptions of family and marriage, at other moments posited the "bourgeois family" as "imprisoning, enslaving, and suffocating."¹⁴ In line with capitalistic forms of property ownership and exploitation, the nuclear family symbolized a direct challenge to socialist modes of parenthood and siblinghood.

Moving Away From the "Bourgeois Family"

Certainly, Huey Newton's critique of the nuclear family model did not fall on deaf ears. In fact, even before the publication of his "Fear and Doubt" essay, Black Panthers were already experimenting with communal living arrangements and sexual relationships. The image of Panther homes as at once serving as sleeping quarters, all-night diners, and organizational meeting centers abound in Panther memoirs.¹⁵ Looking at a handful of Panther families, in the following section I trace the ways in which home life manifested itself for both those individuals who worked for the BPP, and those whose lineage bound them to Black Panther politics. By mapping the spatial layouts of Panther households, by tracing the nature of childhood development including the education and socialization of Panthers' children, and by examining BPP members' conceptions of parenthood, this section asks: how did members of the Black Panther Party prepare their kin for a post-capitalist future?

Mary Williams offers a telling example of the communalism that was characteristic of many Panther households. Born in Oakland, California in 1967, Williams was exposed to the Bay Area's culture of Black radicalism from a young age. During the BPP's early years, her mother, Mary Williams, sold issues of *The Black Panther*, the organization's literary mouthpiece, to local residents, and helped facilitate the group's community service programs. Her father, Louis Randolph, served on the BPP's community police patrols until his arrest and incarceration in Soledad Prison in 1970 on charges of the assault and intent to kill a police officer.¹⁶ Her father's political prisoner status and her parents' ultimate divorce meant that Williams and her siblings were exposed to different types of family settings growing up.

From time to time, the Williams children stayed with their uncle, Landon Williams, who also worked for the BPP. As a child, Mary recognized that her uncle's decision to live independently with his wife and child, outside the confines of Panther housing, was somewhat unique. Whereas her uncle resided in "his own tidy little apartment," other members of the rank-and-file settled in BPP housing, "which meant bunklike [sp] quarters and often sleeping on pallets."¹⁷ While Williams reminds us of the diversity of living styles among Black Panther Party members, her account also echoes the theme of mobility – evidenced by the constant flow of comrades – that is central to David Hilliard's account of his Shattuck Avenue home. As the cases of Mary Williams and the Hilliards indicate, then, the constant movement of people within the household serves as a telling symbol of the inseparability of personal and political spaces for Panther families.

Movement between residences was also a common experience among Panther youth. Dorion Hilliard, son of David and Patricia, recalls spending much of his childhood moving from state to state as a result of his parents' deep involvement in the movement. Ironically, although his was a childhood of constant relocation, Dorion remained fully surrounded by Black Panther culture. Nearly twenty of his relatives belonged to the BPP, adding a sense of normalcy to his engagement in learning political songs and writing to incarcerated Panthers – activities that might otherwise have been considered strange and "un-American" by his non-Panther peers.¹⁸

At the same time, however, his Black Panther lineage was also evidenced by what was deliberately absent from his family's home: TV, nursery rhymes, and G.I. Joes.¹⁹ His parents' decisions regarding what they would and would not expose their children to are revealing on at least two levels; on the one hand, their banning of television viewing suggests a level of regimentation and discipline within the Hilliard household. Secondly, David's and Patricia's prohibition of G.I. Joe toys may be understood as their unwillingness to accommodate symbols of the state in their home, a possible indication of the BPP's firm rejection of the U.S.'s involvement in the Vietnam War; a conflict the BPP understood as an exercise in U.S. imperialism.

For other children of Black Power families, the wedding of BPP and family life at times posed challenges for the existence of more intimate parent-child relationships. Ericka Abram, the daughter of former BPP chair Elaine Brown, recalls how her mother's commitment to the working-class revolution at times led to a degree of physical and emotional distance between the two. Brown's leading position often required her presence abroad, meeting with leaders of socialist and anti-colonial movements in places such as North Korea and China as part of the BPP's efforts to build international coalitions.²⁰ Still, even when the two shared the same living space, the frequent presence of Brown's bodyguard often precluded Brown and her daughter from spending exclusive time with one another. For many years, theirs was more of a professional and politically-oriented relationship. After Brown's departure from the BPP in 1977, she and Ericka moved in together, thrust into a new situation in which they would both learn to exist as mother and daughter. Years later, in an interview with journalist, John Blake, Brown and Abram would remember it as an awkward experience because for so long, they had lived more like comrades.²¹

Ericka Abram was among many children of Black Power organizers whose early years were embedded in expressions of vanguard activism. To be sure, the theme of duty to one's community appears regularly in biographical and autobiographical sources. At a young age, Ericka worked alongside Black Panther Party organizers distributing food to local youth as part of the BPP's Free Breakfast for School Children Program, one of the organization's more than forty community service programs.²² Reflecting on her early grassroots work over thirty years later, Abram describes a duality to this phase of her life. Being politically aware as a child, she contends, was both purposeful and demanding. She notes, "Sometimes I didn't want the responsibility of being awake. I just wanted to be like other kids. I wanted to watch cartoons."²³ Here, Abram's understanding of her past echoes what Dorion Hilliard described earlier as an insulated childhood, one that was at once rewarding in its communalism, yet necessarily distinct from the daily operations of the more apolitical adolescence.

For other members of the second generation, their place in the socialist revolution was delineated even before birth. In July 1969, nearly one year into his life as a political exile, BPP Minister of Information, Eldridge Cleaver, was joined in Algiers by his wife and BPP Communications Secretary, Kathleen Cleaver, who at the time was seven months pregnant with their first child.²⁴ The Cleavers named their son, Maceo, after the nineteenth-century Cuban revolutionary, Antonio Maceo, and on the day of his birth in Pissemsilt Algeria, *The Black Panther* announced that the Cleavers' child would implement the BPP's ideals "until the pigs who enslave the world are wiped out from the face of the earth."²⁵ Witnessing his parents' efforts in developing an international network of anti-colonial solidarity undoubtedly contributed to Maceo's own budding consciousness of class disparity, and his role in the struggle against it. As an adult looking back on his early years, Maceo Cleaver asserts, "We knew we were freedom fighters. We realized that there were a lot of injustices and that it was our responsibility to speak up and say something about it."²⁶

The prioritization of the community over the individual that was central to Black Panther politics affected other realms of interpersonal relations as well. Beyond the ways in which communal thinking may have shaped children's daily activities and self-awareness, the organization's vanguard sensibilities also informed how individual members conceptualized parenthood. Again, the case of Elaine Brown and Ericka Abram serves as a useful example. Like many Black revolutionary nationalists, Brown posited the overthrow of the ruling class as inherent to one's parental duty. But the revolution never came. Abram contends that the disillusionment her mother felt upon leaving the BPP in 1977 stemmed both from an unrealized political project, as well as Brown's feelings of parental failure. In an interview with John Blake, Abram says of her mother, "In her mind, she failed me because she didn't change the world for me."²⁷ Brown adds, "We thought we were going to create something new or die trying. We didn't think we would leave our kids right back where we started."²⁸

For some, collective parenting also involved collective forms of discipline. While Black Panther Party members with children employed a range of disciplinary practices, memoirs and biographical sources suggest that it was not uncommon for Panther parents to experiment with non-punitive measures. Ericka Abram remembers instances in which she was asked to make amends with her peers after a dispute by writing essays on leading Black figures such as Jackie Robinson.²⁹ In this sense, some activists utilized discipline as a mechanism to expose the daughters and sons of members to the organization's political education efforts. And, perhaps not surprisingly, parents themselves were not exempt from receiving such disciplinary actions. During her membership in the BPP's Brooklyn branch, Safiya Bukhari often brought her daughter, Wonda with her to the BPP's office during long work days. When her comrades detected signs of parental neglect such as a diaper that was overdue for changing, Bukhari sometimes faced repercussions in the form of volunteer work assignments. On one occasion, her comrades tasked with cleaning a community members' apartment. In another instance, after witnessing Safiya raise her voice in front of Wonda, Bukhari's colleagues assigned her the job of writing an essay on Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*.³⁰

As the Black Panther Party grew in membership by the end of the 1960s, conversations about the relationship between the BPP, family, and parenthood assumed new forms. The BPP's Chicago branch offers a telling example of the ways in which the personal was political for Black Power radicals. In 1972, the leader of the Chicago chapter, Audrea Jones, issued a position paper addressing both the recent growth in Black Panther Party membership and the rising number of children born to Panther women. Reflecting her anxieties about the increased strain on BPP resources which had been used to support members and their families, Jones advocated for a change in the organization's policy concerning birth control and family planning. Specifically, she proposed a four-step program that would require all Panther couples intending to have children to communicate with "responsible members" of the BPP's Review Committee, which included the Finance Secretary, Personnel, and Ministry of Health. After assessing the "objective conditions" of a given couple under review, the Committee would present a recommendation to the BPP's Central Committee. Ultimately, the latter group would have the final say regarding whether or not a couple should proceed with plans to start a family.³¹

While Jones' program never became official policy, only two years later Panther leaders did issue a mandate requiring all members to use birth control.³² Aside from what it reveals about the momentum gained in the Black Power Movement by the early 1970s, the proposed initiative is revealing on another level. At a time when the rhetoric of "genocide," "sterilization," and "annihilation of the black race" flooded the pages of *The Black Panther*, the organization implemented its own measures to curtail and regulate the sexual activity of its cadres. Ironically, the same people that the state actively sought to control through surveillance, incarceration, displacement and murder, became key sites through which the BPPs' Black revolutionary nationalism grew beyond its self-sustaining limits.

But while we may draw parallels between the organization's introduction of a new politics of sexual and familial responsibility and concurrent state attempts to produce vulnerability among Black Panthers, there is a danger in equating these two phenomena. While state agencies such as the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program operated with the intent to physically eradicate Black militants, BPP efforts to curtail the birth rates of the second generation reflect one of several organizational strategies used to mitigate resource scarcity in order to sustain the Black Panther Party and its programs. Rather than interpreting such family planning initiatives as reproductions of state efforts to extinguish Black Panther radicalism and its legacy, then, we might better understand these policies as examples of members' attempts to preserve their capacity to serve their communities and build a more egalitarian world for future generations.

The Home and the State

As noted above, the Black Panther Party's attempts to determine the conditions of the social reproduction of its cadres never occurred in isolation from similar state projects. Just as the home and family unit acted as important domains in which Panthers cultivated a unified Black body politic bent on the overthrow of capitalism, so too did the state recognize these spaces as crucial to its own agenda of annihilating the organization.

Government officials' framing of the BPP as antithetical to a safe nation is perhaps best illustrated by J. Edgar Hoover's multiple warnings to the American public that the Black Panther Party – and its Free Breakfast for School Children Program in particular – posed a primary threat to national security.³³

But what did the state's attempts to inscribe its own national borders mean for families of revolutionary socialism in the 1960s and 1970s? And in the context of social reproduction, in what ways did agencies like COINTELPRO and local police departments enter the Black Panther Party's intimate spaces while carrying out the state's mission to eliminate Black radicalism? Certainly, few sites of Panther activity were left untouched by the government's repressive hand. Evidence of state penetration of the BPP's internal operations abounds in Panther memoirs, through symbols of wiretapped phones, parked police cars stationed outside of members' homes, and household doors laden with police-fired bullet holes.³⁴ A fuller understanding of Black Panther Party-state relations, then, warrants an examination of those moments of government intrusion in the less publicly visible realms of BPP activity – particularly those spaces in which BPP members fed, housed, educated, and socialized their kin.³⁵

Certainly, children were not exempt from the monitored status that characterized so many BPP families. Targeted at home, at school, and in some cases, as members of exiled families, children became primary avenues through which government agents produced vulnerability and disruption within both the Black Panther Party and its individual family units.

David Hilliard offers one of the most insightful examples of the extent to which Hoover's agency would go to obtain information about the Black Power organization. When the Hilliard's' six-year-old son, Darryl, was sent home from school for starting a fire in his classroom, administrative officials alerted Darryl's parents that the school might press charges. When the family received a knock on their door one week later, they were greeted by a man in a business suit, his FBI badge in hand. Hilliard recounts that when the agent informed David that his son was at risk of facing serious charges, the man used the interrogation as an opportunity to survey the inside of their home. Angry and amused, Hilliard remembers thinking to himself, "In the face of the warfare I'm bracing for, this foolishness strikes me as really contemptible, pathetic."³⁶ After asking the agent if his threat of taking Darryl to trial was serious, Hilliard asked the man, "A six year-old boy? Is that how desperate you are? Worried about six-year-old revolutionaries?" Although Hilliard read the situation as a moment of embarrassment for the FBI agent, his question was not unfounded. Years later Hilliard would aver that the FBI and local police would "use every weapon in their arsenal to destroy the Party," including children.³⁷

At times, the state's invasive measures intensified to such a degree that some activists no longer felt that Oakland's public schools provided safe spaces for Black youth. In fact, Hilliard and Seale were among the first Black Panther Party members to withdraw their children from the Oakland Public School District after cases of their repeated harassment by teachers due to Seale's and Hilliard's political affiliations. Hilliard and Seale would also be the first BPP members to enroll their children in the BPP's newly established liberation schools.³⁸

For the sake of brevity, I will not address the history of the organization's alternative schools here. However, it is important to note that such political education initiatives, on many levels, exemplify the BPP's agency in determining the nature of the educational and social development of Oakland's Black youth. The Oakland Community School – the BPP's first and longest-running liberation school – for example, served as both a safe haven for scores of local children, and as a direct corrective to a white-washed public school curriculum which many Panthers felt alienated non-white children.³⁹

Not surprisingly, the state's intrusion into the personal realms of Black radicalism in America transcended national borders as well. Although most of his involvement with the BPP took place outside of the U.S., as the head of the Black Panther Party's International Chapter, Eldridge Cleaver was also fully aware of the precarious position of second-generation Panthers. As political exiles, the Cleavers underwent constant relocation, between and within nations, employing a range of tactics to protect the confidentiality of their family's whereabouts. In a 2006 published collection of his writings, Eldridge recounts, "We had to be very secretive about where we kept our children, often keeping them in hiding places separate from where we were staying."⁴⁰ He adds, during the family's nearly seven-year period in exile, he and Kathleen placed their son and daughter in hiding for one year.⁴¹ When these measures left Eldridge feeling vulnerable still, he went as far as lying to his children about his own identity. It was a failed attempt, however. After their father repeatedly stressed to Maceo and Joju that his was name Henry Jones, they refused to believe him.⁴²

While the Cleavers' case is by no means representative of the numerous BPP families that found political asylum abroad during the Black Panther Party's years of operation – the archives have left us with few sources detailing the experiences of such families – their trajectory offers a window into the complex and diverse nature of how mid-twentieth century Black radicals negotiated family responsibilities and participation in the revolution. Analyzing the Cleavers' experience in particular may further help to expand our understanding of how reproductive labor operated within Panther families. That Eldridge Cleaver's efforts to protect his children from state repression assumed the form of a false identity suggests that for some, family development was a necessarily precarious and at times, alienating process.

Conclusion

While scholarship on the Black Panther Party has only recently begun to explore the organization's spatial politics, few authors have situated the home and family unit as key sites of Party members' class struggle. Just as public parks, government buildings, and the streets became central domains of Black Power activism, Black Panthers also utilized less obvious spaces to implement their brand of revolutionary socialism. Signs of the organization's rejection of a capitalistic state, and Panthers' attempts to wrestle control from the state in securing a future for their kin, can be seen in members' parental practices, living arrangements, and in the socialization of the second generation. And as newspaper articles, memoirs, and state sources reveal, the state was not hesitant to infiltrate these spaces in its efforts to monitor Party operations. For it was precisely within these realms of social reproduction that the co-construction of the Panther vanguard and Hoover's "American" nation materialized.

Endnotes

1. David Hilliard, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard And The Story of the Black Panther Party* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 201.
2. Ericka Huggins and Angela D. LeBlanc-Ernest, "Revolutionary Women, Revolutionary Education: The Black Panther Party's Oakland Community School," in *Want to Start a Revolution? Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*, eds. Dayo F. Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 165.
3. Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*, 208. Hilliard notes that he and fellow Panthers felt increasingly vulnerable to police infiltration after Party co-founder and Minister of Defense, Huey Newton, was found guilty of killing Oakland police officer, John Frey, and sentenced to two to fifteen years in prison. Newton's conviction took place on September 8, 1968. See Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 199.

4. Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*. 208 Here, Hilliard refers to Eldridge Cleaver, who initially served as the organization's Minister of Information and ultimately led the BPP's international chapter until his departure from the Black Panther Party in 1971. Eldridge Cleaver, *Target Zero: A Life in Writing*, ed. Kathleen Cleaver (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), Introduction.

5. Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*, 208-209.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Here I refer to Daniel Patrick Moynihan's controversial 1965 study, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, in which Moynihan attributes high unemployment rates among Black men and youth in urban areas to the predominance of female-headed families. In the following section I provide a fuller discussion of the Moynihan Report. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. U.S. (Washington: Department of Labor, Office of Policy Planning and Research, 1965).

8. It should be noted that the following is not an exhaustive overview, nor does it account for the nuances of individual experiences within and among Panther families. Due to the skewed nature of source material – most memoirs and biographical accounts reflect the perspective of members who held some kind of leadership position in the Black Panther Party – and the spatial constraints of this essay; I will focus on only a handful of Panther families. Further, because of spatial constraints, this essay is less concerned with how the body, sex, marriage or gender factored into the Black Panther Party's socialist politics. Finally, while I have not yet fully engaged with literature that deals with theories of child agency, this essay will more so focus on how children raised by Black Panther Party members (what I call “second-generation Panthers”) were socialized within the Black Panther Party's intimate spaces, rather than provide an argument about how members of this generation defined their own political identities.

9. I have found no official Black Panther Party-endorsed statement about the role of family and children in my research. All mentions of family, children, and parenthood I have come across in organizational documents and literature on the Black Panther Party reflect the views of individual members.

10. Moynihan, *The Negro Family*.

11. Huey Newton, *To Die For the People: The Writings of Huey P. Newton* (New York: Random House, 1972), 80-81.

12. Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992), 152; James Tyner, “Defend the Ghetto”: Space and the Urban Politics of the Black Panther Party,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 1 (2006): 112.

13. In her study of the Black Panther Party's gender politics, Tracye Matthews contends that the socio-political context in which the BPP developed reflected an amalgamation of Black cultural nationalism, feminism, and Moynihanian ideas about men's and women's social roles. As such, Black Panthers' individual gender consciousnesses were necessarily shaped by their negotiation of these particular gender paradigms and the Black Panther Party's internal discourses. Tracye Matthews, "No One Ever Asks, What A Man's Role in the Revolution Is': Gender and the Politics of the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971," in Jones, *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), 276.

14. Taken from Matthews, "No One Ever Asks," 276.

15. In his autobiography, David Hilliard explains that during the BPP's early years (before his family relocated to the Shattuck Avenue residence in 1968), he and Black Panther Party Chairman, Bobby Seale, offered their homes to hold Black Panther Party meetings, manage the organization's finances, and engage in other organizational labor. His living room, he notes, served as a counting office, and his kitchen remained open to members day and night. Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*, 164.

16. Mary Williams, *The Lost Daughter* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2013), 3-4, 6.

17. *Ibid*, 9, 26.

18. Sandra Davis, "Rebel Fruit: Children of Black Militants," *YSB* 3, no. 5 (1994), 76.

19. *Ibid*.

20. Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*, 318-322.

21. John Blake. *Children of the Movement: The Sons and Daughters of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, George Wallace, Andrew Young, Julian Bond, Stokely Carmichael, Bob Moses, James Chaney, Elaine Brown, and Others Reveal How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Transformed Their Families* (Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Press, 2004), 166-167, 170, 174.

22. Beginning as early as 1966, the year of the Black Panther Party's formation, Black Panther community programs provided local residents with a variety of services, from health care and education to transportation of the elderly. Such programs served the dual purpose of offering governmentally-neglected urban populations basic human necessities, as well as serving as models of social activism for Oakland's working-class and unemployed sectors. The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation, *The Black Panther Party: Service to the People Programs*, ed. David Hilliard (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 3.

23. Blake, *Children of the Movement*, 168.

24. Cleaver, *Target Zero*, xx-xxi. On Christmas Day of 1968, in efforts to eschew his arrest resulting from an armed altercation with police in Oakland, California, Eldridge disguised himself as a Cuban soldier, embarked on a freighter, and disembarked in Havana. This migration would initiate a seven-year period of refugee status for Cleaver, during which time he and his wife would raise two children before returning to the United States in 1975. *Ibid.*

25. Quoted in Davis, “Rebel Fruit,” 76.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Blake, *Children of the Movement*, 177.

28. *Ibid.*, 177-178.

29. *Ibid.*, 168.

30. Safiya Bukhari, *The War Before: The True Life Story of Becoming a Black Panther, Keeping The Faith In Prison And Fighting For Those Left Behind* (New York City: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2010), 23.

31. Angela LeBlanc-Ernest, “‘The Most Qualified Person to Handle the Job’: Black Panther Party Women, 1966-1982,” in *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore: Classic Press, 1998), 319-320.

32. *Ibid.*, 320. According to former Panthers JoNina Abron and Elaine Brown, not all women in the Black Panther Party adhered to the directive.

33. Taken from Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 156; Martin and Bloom, *Black Against Empire*, 211.

34. Here, I refer to the case of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, both of whom were killed by Chicago police while sleeping in Hampton’s apartment on December 4, 1969. State investigations of the murder would reveal that the FBI provided the Chicago Police Department with a set of blueprints mapping Hampton’s apartment. Present during the killing, Hampton’s (at the time eight-month pregnant) wife, Deborah Johnson, survived. Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*, 237-239, 245.

35. For many Panther families, the home served as both a site of refuge and vulnerability. To a large degree, members of the Black Panther Party were well aware of which households existed more prominently on the government’s radar, so much so that members of the Oakland chapter utilized the term “safe houses” to refer to those residences that were less regulated by local police and FBI agents. Brown, *A Taste of Power*, 8.

36. Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*, 200.
37. *Ibid*, 201.
38. Huggins and LeBlanc-Ernest, "Revolutionary Women," 168.
39. Huggins and LeBlanc-Ernest, "Revolutionary Women."
40. Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 266.
41. *Ibid*.
42. *Ibid*.

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