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Third Place

Victory, a Loss, or a Draw?: Assessing the efficacy of the FBI's COINTELPRO methods against the Black Panther Party in Chicago

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"…the Black Panther Party, without question, represents the greatest threat to the internal security of the country."

FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover, 1968[1]

"You can kill the revolutionary, but you can't kill the revolution."

Fred Hampton, 1969[2]

When Fred Hampton, Chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party recited the above quote during one of his many speeches, he could not have known in a

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[1] As quoted in the Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United State Senate Vol. 3 (April 1976), p. 187.

[2] As quoted in Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (Berkley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013.), p. 177.

few short months, the sentiment behind it would be put to the test. Fred Hampton was killed when fourteen heavily armed police officers stormed the apartment where he and eight others were sleeping. Hampton was laying in bed, and unarmed when he was shot twice in the back of the head, killing him almost instantly; he was only twenty-one years old.[3]

While Hampton was neither the first nor the last Panthers to be killed by law enforcement during the 1960s and 70s, his death is one of the most shocking and remembered given the extremely violent and unprovoked circumstances surrounding his death. Unlike Panther Bobby Hutton who was killed in an ambush launched against the Oakland police, Fred Hampton's downfall was his trust in his friend and bodyguard William O'Neal. Only O'Neal was more than Hampton's bodyguard and confidant; he was also a paid informant, supplying key intelligence to both the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Chicago Police Department (CPD).[4] Information provided by O'Neal, including a hand-drawn map of Hampton's apartment, prompted and aided the raid that led to Hampton's death.[5]

The use of informants, like William O'Neal, represents only one a several methods of intelligence gathering and surveillance that the FBI employed as part of the Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), which was established in 1956 by Hoover as a way of combatting internal security threats through disruption and repression.[6] While the program's original target was communist and socialist parties, it quickly expanded to include New Left organizations, white supremacists groups, minority immigrant populations, and black extremists.[7] COINTELPRO continued to operate until 1971, when a data leak not only forced its cancellation, but also led to a Senate commissioned review of American intelligence agencies and operations. The final report is divided into eight volumes and provides a comprehensive analysis of the

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[3] Jakobi Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), p. 180.

[4] For an in-depth look at William O'Neal and his role as an informant, see Jeffry Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther*, (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010), p. 173-181.

[5] Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression*: *The FBI's Secret War against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*, (Cambridge MA: South Edge Press, 2002), p. 70.

[6] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), pp. 37-38.

[7] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), pp. 38-39.

intelligence capabilities of several organizations including the FBI, as well as comments on the legality of the methods used by these organizations. When addressing the techniques designed by COINTELPRO for use against the BPP, the report concludes

> Many of the techniques used would be intolerable in a democratic society even if all the targets had been involved in violent activity, but COINTELPRO went far beyond that. The unexpressed major premise of the program was that a law enforcement agency has the duty to do whatever is necessary to combat perceived threats to the existing social and political order.[8]

Leaving the legality of the actions aside, this statement surrounding the origins behind COINTELPRO and what it sought do accomplish lead to an interesting discussion about the role of law enforcement, and its purpose in broader society. The FBI as an agency, and CONITELPRO as a program were designed to protect the American population and ensure their safety. However, at its core, COINTELPRO was never about protecting society, but about controlling society. It sought to ensure the establishment of specific political and social norms, and actively sought to repress individuals and organizations who stood opposed to these norms. If one accepts this premise, COINTELPRO then becomes an interesting case to examine when seeking to understand mechanisms of social control, and the efficacy of various techniques. In particular, the Black Panthers present a strong case for study as the organization was the target of over two hundred and thirty authorized COINTELPRO activities, and experienced great difficulty during the COINTELPRO era.[9] However, the question remains: to what extent was the FBI, through the application of the COINTELPRO mandate, able to shape, limit and control the actions of the Black Panther Party at the local level? While COINTELPRO tracked Panther chapters around the country, it is the Illinois chapter and the Chicago office of the Party that will be considered here.

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[8] Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United State Senate Vol. 3 (April 1976), p. 3.
[9] Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United State Senate Vol. 3 (April 1976), p. 188.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The field of security and surveillance studies is littered with dozens of theories and ideas used to explain certain specific phenomenon, outcomes, and patterns of behaviour that result from the implementation of various policing and surveillance methods. Connected to many of these theories but belonging to its own field of research are theories that explore social movements, protests and civil dissent, and the effects policing has on these events.[10] Given the breadth of theories and frameworks, this study draws inspiration from a number of scholars and their ideas to help frame the discussion surrounding the BPP and COINTELPRO.

The first idea that is important to consider is the theories and definitions of social control, and how social control is operationalized from a concept into methods and techniques that are actively employed by law enforcement agencies. In his book, *Policing Dissent: Social Control and the Anti-Globalization Movement* (2008) sociologist Luis Fernandez uses the phrase "social control of dissent" to categorize the broad attempts made by law enforcement to ensure the status quo through mechanisms designed to limit the capacity of social movements to create change.[11] He uses social control of dissent instead of repression of dissent, which is a more common term used to describe methods of controlling social movements. According to his argument, focusing on repression limits the scope of study to "overt tactics such as harassment, intimidation, assault, detainment, and murder" leaving out the potential for more subtle and nuanced forms of control.[12] Within his idea of control, he identifies two different modes of control: first, "hard-line social control", which is described as the methods most often associated with repressive measures and are often very physical and confrontational in nature. The second mode of control is "soft-line control", and include tactics such as legal regulation, conditions of self-monitory, and negotiations. Often in cases of social control, both hard-line and soft-line tactics are used in consort with each other as

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[10] Luis A. Fernandez, *Policing Dissent: Social Control and the Ant-globalization Movement*, (New Jersey, New Brunswick, London: Rutgers University Press, 2008), p. 7.
[11] Fernandez, pp. 7-16. See also Wendy J. Brame and Thomas E. Shriver, "Surveillance and Social Control: the FBI's Handling of the Black Panther Party in North Carolina", *Crime, Law, and Social Change 59*, (2013): p. 502.
[12] Fernandez, pp. 8-9.

Fernandez points out, and studying both is an important part of understanding how law enforcement agencies seek to manage social movements. [13]

Working with, and building upon Fernandez's definition of social control, further influence is drawn from several concepts developed in the works of Michele Foucault. Significantly, the ideas of the panopticon will be used, but first, another piece of Foucault's work will be addressed. In his lecture series *Territory, Security, and Population* (1977-78), Foucault contrasts the notions of discipline and security, and he highlights a few major differences between the two. First, he argues that discipline is centripetal, meaning that discipline tends to isolate a space and a population in which power mechanisms can act without limit, focusing all its attentions inwards into that isolated space. Meanwhile, security is centrifugal, implying that security apparatuses tend to expand outwards to encompass a wide space, and incorporating more elements such as behaviours and psychology based on the production of knowledge. [14] The second difference between discipline and security is that discipline "regulates everything" while security "lets things happen". [15] At the heart of this contrast is that discipline restricts and controls every set of actions and outcomes, while security intervenes only to shape and limit the environment in which certain actions are taking place in order to gain better control over the space and population. [16] As scholar Idana Feldman suggests

> Letting things happen is not a matter of unconcern but rather a technique to prevent the emergence of other things that a deemed to pose a more general threat…The capacity to know which things to let happen requires a detailed knowledge of people and place, and an analysis of the relations among these details. [17]

The notion that security expands outwards, and limits rather than represses actions is useful in the analysis of the COINTELPRO, as it helps to explain why certain disruptive actions were denied in particular cases while being allowed in others, and

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[13] Fernandez, pp. 9-10.

[14] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France, 1977-1978,* Edited by Michel Senellart, translated by Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 67.

[15] Foucault, (2009), pp. 67-68.

[16] Foucault, (2009), p. 68.

[17] Ilana Feldman, *Police Encounters: Security and Surveillance in Gaza under Egyptian Rule,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), p. 13.

how actions directed against one organization, like the BPP in Chicago, often ended up growing in scope to include other organizations found in Chicago, but could also grow in include other chapters of the BPP across the country.

In light of the scale and scope of COINTELPRO, and that is remains one of the largest and broadest surveillance programs every launched by the United States, another key Foucauldian concept is that of the panopticon. There are many different ways to approach and apply the theory of the panopticon, and within this discussion, while the theory is important, it is actually a paradox that arises out of the theories of the panopticon that is of interest. David Lyons, a scholar of surveillance and security theories, writes that within the notion of the panopticon, there is a central conundrum: "the more stringent and rigorous the panoptic regime, the more it generates active resistance, whereas the more soft and subtle the panoptic strategies, the more it produces the desired docile bodies."[18] In order to demonstrate this point, he emphasises work done by Lorna Rhodes on inmates and high-security prisons in the United States to support the notion that in highly panoptic systems, individuals resist against the conditions of "bare life" or "mere existence".[19] While Rhodes' work highlights one end of the spectrum, Lyons also points to the work of Oscar Gandy and Mark Andrejevic that address the notion of panoptic states in entertainment and consumerism, which require consumers to market themselves in a world of mass surveillance technologies.[20] In his work, Lyons uses this paradox of panoptic systems as a lens to view other theories of surveillance; however, in this reading, it will primarily serve as a guide when thinking about how the BPP interacted with COINTELPRO measures, and the ways in which individuals resisted or conformed to the panoptic system.

There is one final scholar whose work will be considered here—historian and anthropologist Ilana Feldman, and in particular, the themes examined in her 2015 book *Police Encounters: Security and Surveillance in Gaza under Egyptian Rule.* In this book, Feldman studies Egyptian policing methods use in Gaza during a twenty-year period of occupation. Through her analysis, she explores how policing methods produced a unique environment where suspicion, uncertainty, and fear were as common-place as

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[18] David Lyons, "The Search for Surveillance Theories" in *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond*, edited by David Lyon, (Portland, OR: Willan Publishing, 2006), p. 4.
[19] Lyons, p. 6.
[20] Lyons, p. 7-8.

feelings of safety and protection.[21] In attempting to understand how these dynamics functioned in Gazan society, she highlights a few themes that will be useful in this discussion of the BPP and COINTELPRO methods. The first is the notion of uncertainty, which was essential to creating the public support needed for a successful policing project in Gaza. She writes "the work of cultivating both participation and suspicion involved coercion and consent, the threat of force and the promise of support."[22] The idea of uncertainty was not just used to create a situation where individuals complied with policing measures, but it also created a "context in which not knowing where one stood and not knowing what the police knew were widespread conditions".[23] Even though Feldman's arguments address policing in a much broader population and societal circumstance, the idea of creating uncertainty and suspicion in a population to cultivate support for policing methods is clearly demonstrated by the reliance upon informants and community support within COINTELPRO mandates. This fact will be addressed in further detail shortly.

Keeping these theoretical frameworks in mind, it is important to briefly address methodology used as well. There are multiple BPP chapters that could be used in examining the influence of the FBI's COINTELPRO mandate and methods, however this study will focus exclusively on the Illinois Chapter, and particularly of the offices located in Chicago. The selection of Chicago, Illinois was made based on several reasons. First is the very practical consideration that within the declassified FBI documents pertaining to COINTELPRO, Chicago is heavily represented, thus providing numerous archival resources with which to work. On an analytical level, Chicago as a case study is fascinating for several reasons. During the 1960s and 1970s, Chicago's civil right and social movement scene was highly diverse, and included chapters of organizations such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), Nation of Islam (NOI), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). In addition to these national organizations, there were a number of smaller, grass-root level groups operating in the city including the Blackstone Rangers, the Young Patriots,

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[21] Feldman, pp. 3, 145-146.
[22] Feldman, p. 27.
[23] Feldman, p. 51.

the Young Lords and the Vice Lords that contributed to a dynamic and highly fluid social environment that attracted a lot of attention from local and federal law enforcement.[24]

Additionally, Chicago was geographically isolated enough from the central Party leadership in Oakland, California that it operated with some degree of autonomy, but it was still one of the most successful and recognized branches of the Party. In fact, during a period of crisis in 1969 that saw hundreds of individuals being expelled from the Party and several of its leaders jailed, it was suggested that the best of chance of Party survival was for the headquarters to be moved to Chicago.[25] While this move never happened, Chicago remained highly active, and in 1971, when all other chapters of the Party were ordered to shut down and convene in Oakland, the Illinois Chapter was granted permission to say open given its success within the local community.[26] A further element that makes Chicago an interesting study is the assassination of Fred Hampton, who was serving as the chairman of the Illinois chapter at the time of his death. Hampton has been described by many as the "heart" of the Illinois chapter, and his unparalleled ability to forge relationships and connections between otherwise unlikely allies led to a social movement scene that was more unified than almost any across the country.[27] An important part of this study will be to consider the impact of Hampton's death, and to compare the activities of the Panthers both prior to and following his assassination.

Within this case study of the Chicago offices of the BPP, it is important to clarify what type of actions on behalf of the Panthers and the FBI will be considered. While specific details and circumstances will become clearer in the analysis of the Chicago case study, broadly speaking, Panther actions to keep in mind include fundraising drives, community development and aid programs, community outreach and recruitment, cooperation with other local organizations, and speaking engagements at public venues. FBI COINTELPRO methods that will discussed include assassinations,

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[24]Bloom and Martin, pp. 227-228; Williams, pp. 64, 159. The exact nature of the circumstances in which the Chicago Panthers operated will become clearer as this analysis continues.

[25] Williams, p. 191.

[26] Williams, pp. 27-28, 102-103 and 191-192.

[27] Williams, pp. 126, 194; Bloom and Martin, p. 292.

anonymous letters and false propaganda campaigns, harassment arrests, and the use of informants and provocateurs.[28]

In support of this methodology, a mix of primary and secondary literature is used. Archival research provides the bases for most of the discussion pertaining to the actions of the FBI. Available through the FBI's *The Vault*, one can find a series of twenty-three files that contain over 3,800 pages of declassified documents pertaining to COINTELPRO-Black Extremism.[29] Within those files, this research identified over fifty documents generated by or for the Chicago Field Offices over a two-year span (beginning in February 1968, ending in December 1969). Included in these documents are bi-weekly progress report of activates, quarterly reports of activities, permission requests to pursue certain operations against the BPP, as well as general memorandum of new techniques or relevant information that could be of use to other field offices. While names and addresses are often redacted in these documents in order to protect past informants and agents, in the majority of documents the information pertaining to operational plans, motivations and justifications, have not been redacted. A further source available through FBI archives are select declassified file on Fred Hampton, which includes one hundred and ninety-four pages addressing the investigation following the assassination of Hampton, and the ongoing relationship between the CPD and the FBI Chicago office. While these documents do not reveal much about the events leading up to Hampton's assassination, they do reveal interesting details surrounding the investigation into Hampton's death and how the effects of his death were measured.[30] In addition to these documents from the FBI, use will also be made of the reports published by the Select Senate Committee in 1976, following their review of American intelligence activities, as these reports contain statistics and data not available through FBI records.[31]

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[28] For an expanded discussion on the types of activities the FBI employed against the Panthers, see Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), pp. 37-53.

[29] The COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files can be downloaded in PDF form from https://vault.fbi.gov/cointel-pro/cointel-pro-black-extremists. List of documents pertaining to the Chicago case study available on request.

[30] These files can be downloaded in PDF from https://vault.fbi.gov/Fred%20Hampton.

[31] PDF versions of the eight volumes of the Final Report are available for download at https://archive.org/details/ChurchCommittee_FullReport . With file directly pertaining to the BPP at https://archive.org/stream/ChurchCommittee_FullReport/ChurchB3_3_BlackPanthers#page/n21/mode/2up .

These sources represent the archival research to be included in this study. In support of these documents, use will be made of secondary literature to contextualize and place FBI actions found in the primary documents within a broader understanding the BPP.[32] Given the extensive nature of the secondary literature surrounding the Panthers, a full review of the secondary literature is not a possibility. However, in comparison the volumes that have been written about the Party in general, there are relatively few sources that address the Illinois chapter specifically. Included in those sources are a number of text that will be referenced throughout this analysis. One such text is Paul Alkebulan's book *Survival Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party* (2007) which focuses specifically on the community programs the Panthers operated, and makes specific reference to a number of the programs organized by the Chicago office as they were some of the most successful from across the country. Additionally, *Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (2013) by Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr. is worth noting. This text present a reconceptualised analysis of the Panthers as more than just armed and angry black men, and gets at the heart of the revolutionary politics that drove the party to not only focus on armed revolution but also social revolution in the form of their community program. Once again, this text draws heavily upon primary documentation to support its analysis, as well as numerous interviews with former Panthers which offers an illuminating look at why "rank-and-file" members joined the Party, and how they were responsible for much of the Party's core successes.

Historian Jakobi Williams' 2013 book *From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago* analysis how the Panthers shaped the nature of pollical cooperation, and suggests that the development of Chicago's current political environment can be traced directly back to the presence of the Panthers in Chicago. Williams' book relies heavily on policing archives from the CPD, particularly the records from the "Red Squad"—the racial crime and gang unit responsible for the CPD's targeting the Panthers. In order to accesses these sources, Williams received special permission and was granted unlimited accesses to sources

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[32] Some additional texts that will be used include Churchill and Vander Wall (2002(a), 2002(b)), Churchill (2001), O'Reilly (1989), Austin (2006), and Brame and Shriver (2013).

never before used by academics in study, making his text a valuable contribution to the research at hand.[33]

Finally, and also addressing the Chicago offices of the BPP is a text by Jeffry Haas entitled *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther* (2010). Haas, who served as the lawyer for Hampton's family and several other members of the BPP, combines his personal testimony with academic and scholarly research to produce an interesting text that examines in great detail the causes and impacts of Hampton's assassination. While his personal connection to the Hampton family does have some impact on his analysis of the event itself, Haas' text is useful in understanding Hampton's character and personality.

Keeping these theories, methodologies, and sources in mind, this analysis will now proceed with a brief introduction into the BPP and COINTELPRO, followed by an outline of the Illinois Chapter of the BPP. Next will be an analysis of the FBI activities taken under the COINTELPRO mandate, and finally an analysis of the Chicago offices to determine the extent to which COINTELPRO impacted day-to-day operations of the Party. Finally, this research will conclude with a brief discussion on what can be learned from the interaction between the Panthers and COINTELPRO in the Chicago context, and what this means moving forward.

An Introduction to the Black Panthers and the COINTELPRO Mandate

In order to fully understand an analysis of the BPP as a social movement, it is important to understand history of the movement, and the circumstances surrounding its foundation. The BPP was founded in an era of immense civil and social unrest in the United States, however they also drew influence from the protracted civil rights struggle that the African-American community had been engaged with since the end of the Civil War. While many factors contributed to the atmosphere of social unrest in the 1950s and 60s, two key events to keep in mind are the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Brown decision overturned the "separate but equal doctrine" which led to programs of desegregation,

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[33] See Williams, pp. 1-14 for discussion on his methodology, sources, and goals of study.

but it also lead to a period of increased tensions and protests as desegregation occurred on paper, but often not in practice.[34] Additionally, while the 1964 Civil Rights Act was seen as a significant legislative victory, it failed to address the structural inequalities that guaranteed a lower social status for African Americans, nor did it promise protection against police brutality that plagued many African American communities. As Curtis Austin argues, these efforts were "band-aids where extensive surgery was needed."[35] While many were content to continue using methods of non-violent protests that had led to these legislative victories, others were not, marking the beginning of the Black Power movement.[36] Among those frustrated by the lack of tangible progress and influenced by the ideas of Black Power were Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. The two co-founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (later shortened to just the Black Panther Party) in Oakland California in October 1966 in order to protect the black community from police brutality, and inform blacks of their constitutional rights during arrest and detention. In support of these aims, Newton and Seale would patrol the streets armed with law books and shotguns, and would observe and document police arrests.[37]

Shortly after their founding, the Party adopted its Ten-Point Program, which addressed key grievances the party had against the current conditions in the United States. Demands articulated in their Program include full and equal employment for blacks, equal accesses to housing and education, the end of police brutality, and the re-trial of black defendants by a jury of their peers (i.e. fellow blacks).[38] For some time following its creation, the BPP remained a rather localized organization, focusing on Oakland and surrounding neighbourhoods; however, that changed during 1968 as more members of the black community embraced the revolutionary nature of the Party. By the end of the year, the BPP had active offices in over twenty cities, and by 1970, that

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[34] Brame and Shriver, p. 505.

[35] Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party*, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2006), p. 2; Paul Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party*, (Tuscaloosa AB: The University of Alabama Press, 2007), p. 3.

[36] See Austin, pp. 2-23 for a fuller discussion of the emergence of Black Power, and the early leaders and organizations who embodied the Black Power movement. Included in Austin's text is the evolution of Black Power and the beliefs of Stokely Carmichael, who would later become an influential personality within the Black Panthers.

[37] Alkebulan, p. 4-5.

[38] Alkebulan, p. 5.

number had grown to over sixty cities, with thirty-three chapters across the United States.[39] While most offices and chapters operated with some degree of autonomy, all were required to adopt and follow the Ten-Point Program as the guiding doctrine, thus ensuring a basic level of continuity across all BPP chapters. [40] That the Panthers appealed to many young black activists is hard to deny, especially in light of is rapid growth from 1968 to 1970. As one scholar wrote

> [the] Panther supporters were more distrustful of whites…less favorable towards the police, more inclined to reject non-violence…less expectant that black-white problems will be peacefully and constructively resolved, and more fatalistic about the change that 'people like me' have to succeed in life.[41]

The Panthers, in essences, established a platform for those who had become disillusioned with peaceful, non-violent protests, and who were ready to adopt more radical and revolutionary measures to create the change they desperately sought.

Just as it is important to understand the origins and goals of the Panthers as a social movement, it is also important to understand the origins of COINTELPRO, and the FBI's relentless targeting of the BPP. The modern understanding of the FBI as a large domestic investigative and intelligence service is largely due to the leadership of J. Edgar Hoover, who was appointed directed in 1942.[42] Using the Smith Act of 1940, and playing off war-time fears, Hoover expanded the power of the organization, creating conditions that allowed for nearly-blanket approval for any intelligence activities directed against those suspected of subversive activities.[43] During the late 1940s and into the 1950s, the primary target of FBI operations were individuals belonging to communist or socialist organization, or those suspected of harbouring communist ideologies. [44] The fear of these individuals grew to the extent that by 1956, the FBI launched a new counterintelligence operation specially designed to track and disrupt

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[39] Bloom and Martin, p. 2; Brame and Shriver, p. 505.
As a point of clarification, each city in which the BPP was active did not count as an independent chapter. Chapters were usually divided along state lines. So, for example, the Chicago office of the BPP belonged to the Illinois Chapter of the BPP.
[40] Brame and Shriver, p. 505-506.
[41] As quoted in Brame and Shriver, p. 506.
[42] Brame and Shriver, p. 506.
[43] Brame and Shirver, pp. 506-507; Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), p. 24.
[44] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), pp. 34-36.

subversive social movements; this program represents the origins of COINTELPRO, as it would become known in the 1960s was it grew to include specific programs mandates that targeted not only socialists and communists, but also the New Left, black extremists, white hate group, and several others.[45]

As it pertains to COINTELPRO-Black Extremists, a memorandum set out in August 1967 instructs all offices receiving the memo to establish a file and appointed a Special Agent in Charge (SAC) to coordinate investigation and activities pertaining to "black nationalist, hate-type organization". The purpose of this new program, according to the documents, was to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalists, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supports, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder."[46] The document continues to explain that any technique of exploitation could be employed as long as it actually serves to "disrupt, ridicule, or discredit" the organization, not simply bring more publicity to the group. This original memorandum was sent twenty-three field office, and by February 1968, the Bureau had expanded the program to include another eighteen field offices in this initiative.[47]Additionally, as the program grew to include more offices, the mandate of the program was also expanded and clarified, as seen in a Memorandum from February 1968. According to this document, the long-term goals at the centre of the program were to: prevent coalitions among black nationalist groups, prevent the "rise of a messiah" figure who could unify the movement, prevent protracted violence on the part of the black community, prevent black nationalist groups from gaining respect from the community, and to prevent long-term growth of black nationalist organizations.[48] The purpose and instructions stated in both the August 1967 and the February 1968 memorandums remained central to COINTELPRO-Black Extremists until the program was cancelled in 1971.

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[45] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), pp. 37-39.
[46] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 1, (25 August 1967), pp. 3-5.
[47] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 1, (29February 1968), pp. 66-72.
[48] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 1, (29 February 1968), pp. 70-71.

1960s Chicago and the Formation of the Illinois Chapter of the Panthers

During its period of operations, the Chicago office of the BPP remained one of the most engaged and successful, despite its somewhat rocky beginnings. At the start of 1968, Chicago was one of the most racially segregated cities in America, and the black community faced consistent persecution, especially from the Chicago Police Department.[49] These conditions attracted many to the ideology and rhetoric of black power espoused by the Panthers, however there was no formal BPP chapters operating in Chicago, or in Illinois.[50] The formation of an official Panthers chapter began with two chapters, one formed on the South side and the other of the West side of the city.[51] The South side was led by Bobby Rush and Bob Brown, two former members of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); they relied heavily on assistance from the Chicago Freedom Movement for support in establishing an office and in meeting potential recruits. The West side was led by Drew Ferguson and Jewel Cook, and sought to recruit members from the Deacons for Defense and Justice, the Vice Lords, and SNCC.[52] For several months, the two groups jostled for position and recognition both in Chicago but also in terms of national recognition, as chapters had to be officially sanctioned by the national leadership in Oakland.[53] Eventually, the South side was given the official recognition it required and the two factions merged, forming the Illinois chapter of the BPP in November 1968.[54] The chapter modeled itself on the leadership structure found in Oakland, with a central committee and Fred Hampton serving as the spokesperson of the Chapter. The group experienced great success in Chicago and surrounding areas, and the leadership in Chicago was identified as a possibility to help guide the Party through its crisis that saw a purge of Party membership, Newton in jail, and Bobby Seale awaiting trail. Given that Seale's trials were to be in Chicago, there was a strong desire of many to see the national headquarters moved from Oakland to Chicago, and entrusted to Hampton, among

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[49] Williams, p. 126.
[50] Williams, p. 62.
[51] Williams, p. 62-63.
[52] Williams, p. 63.
[53] Williams, p. 8-9.
[54] As an aside, the decision to grant recognition to the South side was decided by circumstance rather than by preference. The South side office had a phone line, while the West side did not, so when two Panther members were arrested on a flight from New York for suspicions of hijacking, Oakland Panthers reached out to the South side for support in getting these members released from jail.

others.[55] In 1971, when most chapters of the Party were ordered to shut down, the Illinois chapter was granter permission to stay open given its success within the local community, and while the Illinois chapter was disbanded in 1974 and the Chicago office closed, the legacy of the Panthers and its efforts in Chicago continued to have effects into the 1980s.[56]

Like any organization, strong leadership was crucial for the Panthers' successes, and in the Illinois chapter, the primary leadership role fell to Fred Hampton. Born in August 1948, Hampton demonstrated from an early age his desire and passion to help the African-American community. For example, his mother recalls that when one of his high-school classmates was wrongfully arrested, Hampton convinced a number of fellow classmates to protest with him outside the police station until the student was released.[57] Hampton's leadership and passion were soon recognized by leaders in Chicago's civil rights movement, and during his first year of college, Hampton was recruited to help form a youth branch of the NAACP in Chicago.[58] While serving as leader of the NAACP Youth Chapter, Hampton was drawn to the rhetoric of black power, and paid close attention to events unfolding in California surrounding a new revolutionary group—the Black Panther Party.[59] Slowly, Hampton began to advocate more confrontational measures to addresses police brutality, and systemic inequality in Chicago—a move that the adult NAACP chapter did not outwardly condone nor support.[60] Due to his outspoken nature, Hampton quickly caught the attention of the CPD, and in late 1967, Hampton was arrested for the first time on charges of inciting mob violence. His rate of arrest dramatically increased following this event to the point that he stopped driving to avoid the potential of traffic violations.[61]

Although aware of the growing Panther movement, Hampton did not have direct contact with the organization until 1968 when a contingent of Panthers from the Los Angeles chapter arrived in Chicago as part of a speaking tour. Deeply impacted by

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[55] Williams, pp. 27-28, 65.
[56] Williams, pp. 102-103, 191-192.
[57] Williams, pp. 54-55.
[58] Williams, pp. 56-57; Jeffrey Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther*, (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010), p. 20.
[59] Haas, p. 28.
[60] Williams, p. 57.
[61] Haas, pp. 31-32; Williams, p. 57.

this encounter, Hampton contemplated resigning from his role in NAACP to join the Panthers; however the Panthers had yet to establish a Chicago branch.[62] His desire to work with the Panthers did no disappear however, and when he was introduced to Bobby Rush and Bob Brown, the co-founders of the South Side Panther's faction, he formally joined the South side group that would later become the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and was given the role as the spokesman due to his oratory skills.[63] As a member of the Panthers, Hampton often spoke at public rallies, and appeared on several local news programs informing the public about the Panthers' ideology and goals, while also offering support to other organizations and social movements.[64] For example, in early 1969, Hampton appeared on local talk-show *Chicago*, and publicly endorsed student protests at the nearby Roosevelt University. Hampton urged high-school and college students "control their schools"—to make demands and not back down, even if it meant staging walk-outs, something that was already happening in schools across California.[65]

Hampton's willingness to support other local movements translated into his desire to see movements cooperate with each other—recognizing that they were stronger as a unified coalition than as individual organizations.[66] With Hampton at the helm, the Chicago Panthers launched the Rainbow Coalition—a political coalition that brought together diverse organizations and united them for a common purpose. There was no central leader of the Coalition, and all organizations operated with significant autonomy. However, they did coordinate on activities, support each other's initiatives, and come to the aid of other organizations, for example, by posting bond for jailed individuals.[67] The Rainbow Coalition was one of Hampton's greatest legacies, and will be addressed again shortly.

Given Hampton's impact on the Chicago Panthers, and his assassination, it is tempting to focus on Hampton alone, and forget that the Illinois Panthers, like most

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[62] William, pp. 61-63.
[63] Williams, pp. 62-64; Austin, pp. 197-198.
[64] William, pp. 68.
[65] As an aside, students were quick to follow Hampton's advice and over the next several months, multiple high-schools and colleges experiences walk-outs and high levels of racial tension between white and black students. See Williams, pp. 68-69.
[66] Williams, p. 127.
[67] Williams, p. 128.

other chapters, relied on the hard work of its members who often worked as volunteers, not as paid employees. At the time of its founding in 1968, the Chicago branch was estimated to have about fifty members, all of whom were highly dedicated to the cause.[68] As historian Jakobi Williams writes "This was the real threat of the BPP: the part was not just an organization but a structured group of young leaders".[69] The work and dedication of these individuals cannot be overlooked, and will be considered as more detail as this analysis continues. Before this analysis takes place, attention shall first be given to considering the methods of disruption used by COINTELPRO in Chicago.

To Disrupt and Discredit: COINTELPRO Efforts in Chicago

Within the COINTELPRO documents, there are several types of activities and methods that the FBI used in their goals to disrupt and discredit political targets. Those that will be considered here, in relation to the Chicago Panthers, include fake mail campaigns, disinformation and propaganda operations, the use of informants, and political assassinations.

Perhaps one of the most prevalent activities that is discussed in the COINTELPRO documents is the use of fake mail in order to cause disruption either between leaders within one organization, or to create tension between two groups to prevent cooperation. This reflects several of the COINTELPRO mandates identified in a March 1968 memorandum to field offices.[70] According to Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, this use of falsified mail would often be the first step in disruption activities that would later lead to intense violence between factions.[71] One example is the relationship between the Panthers and another black nationalist group—Organization US—based in Los Angeles. During late 1968, for example, the FBI helped foster a division by sending letters to the LA BPP offices from an "anonymous source" within Organization US indicated that they are aware that the Panthers have a contract (plans to kill) against the leader of Organization US, and in retaliation, Organization US

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[68] Williams, pp. 65-66.
[69] Williams, p. 65.
[70] See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 1, (4 March 1968), pp. 69.
[71] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), p. 40.

plans to ambush Panther leaders in LA. [72] The ensuing feud between the two organizations culminating with a shoot-out in January 1969 that left two Panthers dead, and led to a string of retaliatory attacks over the next several months.[73]

Similar disruption attempts were made in Chicago on several occasions and regarding several organizations. In a series of documents from late 1968 and early 1969, the Chicago Field Office recognizes the potential for cooperation between the Chicago Panthers, and the Blackstone Rangers (BSR), a street gang with Black Nationalist ideologies. A report from Chicago to the FBI director dated 16 December 1968 identifies the BSR as one of the most violent street gangs in Chicago, with over thousands of active members, and led by Jeff Forts—an individual who was already on the FBI's agitator watch list, and who had recently been arrested on weapons charges.[74] Further on in the 16 December dispatch, it is suggested that the Panthers rejected offers to work together, and that an individual (name redacted) "reportedly made disparaging remarks concerning [Jeff] Fort personally, and for lack of commitment to the black people generally."[75] The document then suggests that Fort be made aware that the Panthers held such a low opinion of him, and were disseminating that opinion in the black community in hopes that Fort would no longer communicate with the Panthers, and given his pension for violence, might take further steps of retribution against the Chicago Panthers.[76] In a subsequent report, dated 13 January 1969, the Chicago office provided a draft of the letter they planned to send to Fort regarding the comments made by the Panthers. The letter reads:

> Brother Jeff
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> I've spent some time with some Panther friends on the west side lately and I know what's been going on. The brothers that run the Panthers blame you for blocking their thing and there's supposed to be a hit out for you. I'm not a Panther, or a Ranger, just black. From what I see these Panthers are out for themselves, not black People. I think you ought to

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[72] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 6, (14 October 1968), pp. 108-109; COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 7, (29 November 1968), p. 35.

[73] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), pp. 42-43.

[74] See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 9, (16 December 1968), p. 75. For FBI documents pertaining to Fort's record and arrest, see COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 9, (12 December 1968), p. 67.

[75] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 9, (16 December 1968), p. 76.

[76] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 9, (16 December 1968), p. 76.

know what they are up to. I know what I'd do if I was you. You might hear from me again.

A black brother you don't know.[77]

Permission to send this letter was granted in a memorandum sent to the Chicago office on 30 January 1969.[78] As such, relations between the Panthers and the Blackstone Rangers remained hostile, and eventually the organizations both gave orders to cease recruiting in the other's territory, especially after Fort issued a warning he would personally "blow [Hampton's] head off" if he was found in BSR territory.[79]

A similar letter campaign was used to create tension between the Panthers, and an organization identified in FBI records as the Mau Maus—a Chicago Negro youth gang.[80] In a report to the Director dated 16 January 1969, the Chicago office suggested sending a letter a unnamed leader of the Mau Maus gang, encouraging him to avoid relations with the Panthers, as the Panther leadership only "care about themselves" and that the leaders "have been with every black outfit going where it looks like [there] was something in it for them". Furthermore the letter suggested that two leaders of the Panthers were in a homosexual relationship, and that one worked for "the man", which is how he dodged his Vietnam draft.[81] Permission to send this letter was granted on 30 January 1969, with a reminder to ensure that this letter could not be traced back to the FBI.[82] Unfortunately, this was the last time relations between these organizations was mentioned in the declassified documentation, so no further information concerning continued disruption actions is available.

Closely related to practice of false mail campaigns was the practice of sending out propaganda literature either by falsifying the origins and mailing it the desired

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[77] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 9, (13 January 1969), pp.196.
[78] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 9, (30 January 1969), pp. 197.
[79] Churchill, 2001, p. 91.
[80] It is important to note that this research could not find any reference to this organization anywhere in the secondary literature. There was a Puerto Rican Mau Maus gang that operated in New York around this time, but they never opened a Chicago chapter. It is possible that this false letter campaign was directed at another Puerto Rican gang operating in Chicago that was mislabelled as belonging to the Mau Maus; however this is unclear from the documentation available.
[81] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 9, (16 January 1969), pp. 214.
[82] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 9, (30 January 1969), pp. 215.

recipients, or by giving literature to trusted news sources to disseminate to the broader public.[83] For example, throughout its operations, the Chicago office identified and used over twenty journalists deemed to be sympathetic to the COINTELPRO mandate.[84] Like false mail campaigns, the use of propaganda was often used to create division between organization. For example, in a memorandum between senior leadership within the Bureau dated 10 October 1968, it is suggested that falsified SNCC literature be given to news sources across the country to aid in dividing the BPP and SNCC national leadership.[85] In addition to creating division among organizations, these propaganda campaigns were often used to ostracise black leaders by falsely accusing them of crimes, or by suggesting they were "immoral" in some way."[86]

Several of examples of these types of propaganda campaigns can be found it the records pertaining to the Chicago chapter. In a 22 November 1968 report, the Chicago Field Office suggests sending a letter to associates of [name redacted] suggesting that he is homosexual, and an informant working for the police. The decision to play upon fears of this leader's homosexuality reflect the growing emphasis on aggressive masculinity within the black nationalist movement, and it was thought that if they could call into question a leader's sexuality, it would discredit him among his colleagues.[87] In the same document, a second campaign is suggested, this time calling into question the role of Panther members supporting student protests and walk-outs at high schools and colleges around the city. Again, names are redacted but the document

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[83] In a memorandum to several field offices dated May 1968 (date illegible), agents are instructed to consider using news sources that are appealing to the Negro community as a source for distributing relative information, ensuring that it reaches a wide African-American audience, and has the greatest effect at ostracizing "radicals" within the black community. See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 3, (May 1968), p. 82. Pertaining to accusing members of a crime, in a report from November 1968, it is noted that the Chicago office will pay close attention to determine if there the Chicago office is or appears to be "skimming funds" from money raised for the Oakland branch, they will exploit that activity. See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 7, (19 November 1968), p. 155.

[84] Churchill, 2001, p. 84.

[85] The falsified SNCC statement would read "According to zoologists, the main difference between a panther and other large cats is that the panther has the smallest head. In short, the Panthers are pinheads!" See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 6, (10 October 1968), pp. 142-143.

[86] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), pp. 42-44, 49-51.

[87] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 7, (22 November 1968), pp. 117-120. It is interesting to note that these claims of homosexuality, and informant status closely reflect the claims used in the letter used to disrupt relations with the Mau Maus. While it is impossible to know if these letters are targeted at the same leader, due to the redaction in the document, the continuity of claims used by the FBI suggests at the very least, they had an established patter of discrediting individuals.

does provide a template of the letter that would be sent from an "anonymous employee" in the school system to several trusted news sources (identities redacted). The letter would express concern over the lack of government response, and questioning whether the motives of the black leader are nefarious in some way.[88] Both of these campaigns were approved in a document dated 10 December 1968, however, no additional information on when there were acted upon, or their success is referenced in the available documentation.[89]

A more explicit example of propaganda literature is the suggestion of furnishing local newspapers with political cartoons that suggest the Panthers are being dominated and exploited by the Chicago SDS chapter. A memorandum from 31 July 1969 grants the Chicago office permission to send three cartoons to local writers for use in their articles pertaining to the Panthers. While the cartoons are not included in the document, a description of each is given. For example, one cartoon is described as containing a SDS member taming a caricatured panther with a whip, while another shows an SDS member with a domesticated panther as a house pet. The aim of these cartoons was to "create strife" between the SDS and the Panthers, and the Bureau felt that these cartoons would achieve these aims with little change of it being traced back the FBI.[90]

A third technique employed by the FBI was the use of informants and provocateurs. Informants often provided valuable information on organizations and leaders, while provocateurs were paid to disrupt the internal operations of a group, and to create tension between various organizations.[91] Records indicate that at the time of its cancellation, COINTELPRO employed nearly seven thousand five hundred informants across its various programs, and during 1969, there were at least sixty-seven active informants in the Black Panthers.[92] Information on who these informants were is often hard to find, especially in the FBI documents as the names are redacted in almost every circumstance, however there are plenty of references to informants and their uses throughout the documents. In a document sent to the Chicago office on 21 May 1969, the Bureau orders the Chicago office to select several BPP informants who are

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[88] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 7, (22 November 1968), pp. 117-120.
[89] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 7, (10 December 1969), p. 116.
[90] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 20, (31 July 1969), pp. 48-49.
[91] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), p. 47.
[92] Churchill, 2001, p. 95.

positioned to influence the BPP leadership in Chicago, and to instruct these sources to discourage cooperation with the SDS based on the argument that the SDS is exploiting the Panthers. The document makes clear that each informant should have their own argument so that the suggestions do not appear staged, and that the informants should not be put in a position that would isolate them or get them expelled from the Panthers.[93] It is also interested to note that the FBI did not just employ informants as a practical tool but they also created an atmosphere of fear around the idea of informants. Hundreds of individuals were expelled from the Party simply because they were suspected of being an informant, and in one extreme case, a Panther was tortured and murdered because his fellow Panthers believed him to be an informant.[94]

Then, of course, there is the case of William O'Neal, who is never mentioned by name in the declassified documents, but is perhaps one of the best-known Panther informants due to his role in the death of Fred Hampton. O'Neal in many ways represented the perfect informant from the FBI's viewpoint. He was highly influential in the Chicago offices, serving as the head of security for the Illinois chapter, and as Hampton's personal body guard. Within this role, he was responsible for organization security and obtaining the Panther's firearms. Additionally, his role allowed him to protect other informants within the Chicago offices, while also controlling the efforts to combat infiltration meaning that he could expel individuals if they became too suspicious.[95] O'Neal was so successful in his role as an informant that every effort was made to protect his status during the investigation into Hampton's death, and he was able to maintain his position within the Chicago offices until they closed.[96]

The final tactic used by the FBI during the COINTELPRO era to be addressed here is that of assassinations. As Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall note, "this is the murkiest of all COINTELPRO areas" as no documents currently declassified for public use indicate the FBI ever directly authorised a political assassination.[97] However, what is clear from the Senate Committee report and other documents is that the

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[93] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 16, (21 May 1969), pp. 219-220.
[94] Churchill, 2001, p. 95-97.
[95] Churchill, 2001, p. 96.
[96] Ivan Greenberg, *The Danger of Dissent: The FBI and Civil Liberties since 1965*, (Plymouth, UK, Lexington Books, 2010), p. 40.
[97] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), p. 53.

COINTELPRO methods and the willingness to share information with local police departments often led to political assassinations, as was the case with Fred Hampton. O'Neal was an FBI informant, and was handled through the Chicago Field Office, and it was only through the sharing of information originating with O'Neal that the raid resulting in Hampton's death took place. A report from the Chicago office dated 3 December 1969 (the day before Hampton's death) indicates that information had been shared with the CPD concerning the location of weapons recently purchased by the Chicago offices. The report also states that the CPD was "planning a positive course of action relative to this information".[98] While it is impossible to know whether this "positive course of action" was the raid that occurred on 4 December, the fact that the FBI shared information and allowed the CPD to act upon that information suggests that the FBI was at least complicit in these sorts of activities, if not directly responsible. While there are many other technique used by COINTELPRO and examples that could be discussed, this analysis will now turn to a consideration the BPP's activities in Chicago, and the extent to which these activities were shaped or limited by COINTELPRO methods.

Panther Activity in the Chicago Streets

Community Survival Programs

One of the greatest, and often overlooked legacies of the BPP are its community survival programs also know at the "serve the people programs". These programs ranged from providing free breakfasts, to medical clinics, to after school program and summer classes for black children, and each chapter was responsible for organizing whatever programs they felt their community most needed. In an essay addressing the creation of the survival programs, Panther founder Huey Newton explained the necessity of these programs:

> We [the BPP] recognize that in order to bring the people to the level of consciousness where they would seize the time, it would be necessary to serve their interests in survival by developing programs which would help them meet their daily needs…All of these programs satisfy the deep

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[98] COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 23, (3 December 1969), p. 74.

needs to the community but they are not solutions of our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution.[99]

The most influential and widely implemented of these survival programs was the Breakfast for Children program, which was first launched in January 1969 by the Oakland chapter, and grew to include programs in over forty-five cities, serving approximately 50,000 students. [100] Because of its prominence, the breakfast program became a significant target for COINTELPRO action, because as Ward Churchill suggests, it would be impossible to cast the Panthers as thugs and criminals when they were feeding thousands of children daily.[101]While the most common argument used in propaganda literature was that the Panthers were corrupting and recruiting innocent children for their violent revolution, several methods of disruption were also used to prevent the breakfast program from taking place.[102] These range from the use of health permits for serving food, to blocking attempts at finding suitable locations in which to hold the program, to even suggesting that the volunteers working with the program suffered from venereal disease and were contaminating the food. [103] In the case of Chicago, extensive use was made of informant William O'Neal to disrupt activities, by telling him to destroy or contaminate food and kitchen equipment central to the ongoing breakfast program.[104]

Despite efforts to shut down the breakfast program in Chicago, it remained highly popular and very active for a number of years; in the western parts of the city alone, there were five different program locations alone. The Chicago Panthers

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[99] As cited in, *The Black Panther Party: Service to the People*, edited by David Hilliard, (Albuquerque, US: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), p. 3-4.

[100] Alkebulan, p. 28-29; Churchill, 2001, p. 87.

[101] Churchill, 2001, p. 87.

[102] The "targeting of children" actually earned the Panthers a comparison the Hitler and his techniques of recruitment for the Hitler Youth in one article written by an unnamed newspaper columnist and further distributed by the FBI. See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 9, (8 January 1969), pp. 170. See also COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 16, (4 June 1969), pp. 32-36 for example of longer propaganda piece directed against the breakfast program.

[103] See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 16, (6 June 1969) p. 25 for example of use of health permits to shut down program. See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 21, (29 August 1969), pp. 182- 183 for example of an anonymous letter sent to a Catholic Church that had been donating its building to the program and has put the congregation at risk of racial violence. See COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files part 16, (28 May 1969), pp. 170 for a report indicating volunteers were contaminating food.

[104] Austin, pp. 208-209.

partnered with the Better Boys Foundation for locations in the north, south and west sides, and with black and white churches and community centres for all other locations.[105] The organization of the Chicago breakfast program primarily fell to Wanda Ross and Barbara Sankey, and both women recall how exhausting but also rewarding their efforts were. According to Ross, she would spend most days talking to sponsors—private and corporate, arranging for food donations, and buying supplies. On average, Ross estimates that they were receiving six hundred dollars a week in monetary donations alone.[106] COINTELPRO methods undoubtedly made running the breakfast program more difficult. Take for example, an FBI raid that occurred on 4 June 1969 during which three thousand dollars in cash was seized from the Chicago office and food donations for the breakfast program were destroyed during the search.[107] Despite all the challenges they faced, the Panthers continued operating their breakfast programs, and even after the Illinois chapter closed in 1974, long-standing volunteers and activists continued running the breakfast program throughout the city. [108] Additionally, the Free Breakfast program became a model for government-run programs in Chicago, and some scholars have even gone as far to suggest that at the national level, the Panthers Breakfast program became the model that encouraged the free food program amendments to the Child Nutrition Act.[109]

In addition to its highly successful Breakfast program, the Chicago Panthers are also known for their success in launching a medical clinic that catered to the black and poor white community. Founded in January 1970, and named after a Panther who had been killed by police a year prior, the Spurgeon "Jake" Winters People's Free Medical Care Centre served more than two thousand patients in its first few months of operation.[110] The clinic was staffed mostly by volunteers, including medical students and professionals who would work shifts after hours and on the weekends. The Chicago clinic provided a wide range of services based on their diverse volunteer pool

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[105] Williams, pp. 93-94.

[106] Williams, pp. 88-89, 94-95.

[107] Haas, p. 51. The pretext for the raid was that the FBI suspected George Sams, a fugitive, was staying there. Sams had been at the premise and left prior to the raid occurring. It was later revealed that Sams worked as an informant, and the FBI used his presence in Panther offices for otherwise illegal seizures and raids.

[108] Williams, p. 192.

[109] Williams, p. 193.

[110] Williams, pp. 95-96; Alkebulan, p. 36.

which included gynecologists, pediatricians, dentists, and optometrists.[111] In addition to medical services, the clinic's community advocate also had access to resources such as therapists, teachers and tutors, and social workers, and would work as a liaison between these resources and patients at the clinic.[112] Furthermore, Chicago's clinic became the first ever to launch free sickle-cell anemia testing, a disease that disproportionally affected young African-Americans; in the first three days alone, records indicate that over six hundred children were tested.[113] As with the Breakfast for Children program, COINTELPRO measures against the free health clinics varied from city to city, and included measures such as acts of vandalism against the building or intimidating individuals attempting to access services.[114] That there is no indication as to the COINTELPRO tactics used against the Chicago clinic in the available record cannot be taken to mean that no disruption activities were aimed at the Chicago clinic nor that the clinic did not have its struggles. However, just as with the Breakfast program, the success of the Chicago clinic prompted a positive government response, with the Chicago Board of Health establishing medical clinics in poor areas that modeled themselves on the structure and organization of the Panther's Chicago clinic.[115]

The Rainbow Coalition

If the community survival programs represent on the greatest legacies of the BPP at large, then the Rainbow Coalition is one of the greatest legacies of the Panthers in Chicago. While Hampton served as the spokesman and public face of the coalition, fellow Panther Bob Lee was the visionary and activist who worked on the streets recruiting individuals and organizations for the Coalition.[116] Already steeped in the environment of community organization through is job at the YMCA in North side Chicago, Lee began working with members of the Young Patriots, and achieved some success before he approached Hampton with the possibility of forging an actual

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[111] Bloom and Martin, p. 187; Alkebulan, p. 36.
[112] Williams, p. 96.
[113] Williams, p. 96.
[114] Bloom and Martin, pp. 188-190.
[115] Williams, p. 194.
[116] Williams, p. 127.

relationship between the two organization.[117] Recognizing that their offices and homes were under surveillance, Hampton and Lee met on the roof of the Panther's office to discuss the matter, with Lee recalling that Hampton shared his feeling that solidarity between organizations in Chicago was possible, and also a high priority as both recognized that the Panthers would not succeed on their own. [118] Originally, the Panthers identified five organizations with which they sought to partner—Rise Up Angry (RUA), the Young Lords, the Young Patriots Organizations (YPO), the Blackstone Rangers (BSR), and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). While the BSR and SDS never joined the coalition, the Young Lords, the YPO and RUA all agreed.[119]

The name "Rainbow Coalition" reflected the diversity and unity of the groups, and it was a diverse group of individuals.[120] The first organization to be drawn into the Coalition was the Young Patriots Organization (YPO), a group made up mostly of poor, white southern migrants. The YPO was primarily focused on class and the economic disenfranchisement of the poor, regardless of race.[121] The Panthers became aware of the YPO when Bob Lee was invited to speak alongside YPO representatives on the topic of police brutality. Lee remembers being surprised that southern whites and Panthers were invited to speak on the same subject and was impressed by the passion of the YPO members. Not long after, the YPO agreed to establish a formal alliance between the two organizations, thus beginning the Rainbow Coalition.[122]

The Young Lords were a Puerto Rican gang that primary operated in the northwest areas of Chicago, and like the Panthers, they faced highly levels of police brutality resulting in numerous violent clashes with the CPD.[123] By 1968 and under the leadership of Jose "Cha Cha" Jimenez, the Young Lords transformed themselves from a street gang to an organized revolutionary group that worked not only with Puerto Rican communities, but also the Mexican American and Chicano communities.[124] Due to their activism, Hampton approached Jose Jimenez personally and invited him and his

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[117] Williams, pp. 126-127.
[118] Williams, pp. 127-128.
[119] Williams, p. 128; Alkebulan, pp. 55-56.
[120] Williams, p. 129.
[121] Williams, pp. 130-131.
[122] Williams, pp. 131-134.
[123] Haas, p. 44.
[124] Haas, p. 44; Williams, p. 144.

organization to join the Rainbow Coalition, and Jimenez accepted, and the Young Lords became the second organization recruited by the Panthers for the Coalition.[125] The final group who formally joined the Rainbow Coalition was Rise Up Angry (RUA). Formed as a breakoff group from an unsuccessful SDS initiative, RUA made up of predominately white middle-class students dedicated to social revolution for disenfranchised poor whites.[126] RUA was attracted to the Panther's "Power to the People" slogan, and the commitment of the Panthers to the community through programs like free breakfast and health clinics. It was the RUA that reached out to the Panthers, drawing upon many of their shared ideas, and Hampton responded by extending an invitation to join the Rainbow Coalition, thus completing the final formation of the Coalition.[127]

The ability of the Panthers to draw together such a diverse group of individuals and organizations relied on two key strategies. First, the Coalition was structured as a series of partnerships, not a dictatorship of the Panthers. While all three groups recognized the leadership of the Panthers as the primary organization, they maintained their independence. As Jakobi Williams writes: "the groups were clear that their role was not to organize the black community but in their own, to heighten the contradictions there, and to educate their own people."[128] By aligning together, groups could share resources and ideas, thus broadening their scope of influence in way that might otherwise not have been possible. The second key factor is that Panthers were able to create a common enemy for all the organizations to focus upon. The mayor of Chicago Richard Delay—a highly controversial figure—was notorious for his support of police brutality, and programs of gentrification and renewal that resulted in the disenfranchisement and displacement of poor communities, especially black and immigrant populations.[129] By uniting against a common political enemy, these organizations were able to build on each other's efforts and campaigns, and often partnered to co-sponsor speaking tours that reached several different audiences.

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[125] Williams, p. 145.
[126] Williams, pp. 150-151.
[127] Williams, pp. 151-153.
[128] Williams, p. 128.
[129] Williams, p. 126.

The solidarity among those belonging to the Rainbow Coalition meant that the organizations would often intervene on behalf of another when one group drew police attention, or suffered from brutality. For example, when a Young Lord member was shot and killed by an off-duty police officer in April 1969, the Coalition organized a protest outside a local police station, and circulated demands for an independent investigation.[130] In addition to coming to each other's aid in times of crisis, the members of the Rainbow Coalition were influenced by each other's practices. In particular, the other groups were drawn to the Panther's community survival programs, resulting in all three adopting programs that those of the Panthers. The YPO opened a free health clinic in the Uptown Chicago neighbourhood, and ran their own free breakfast program. [131] The Young Lord opened a Puerto Rican cultural centre, offered free breakfasts for children, and daycare services for women who wanted to join the movement.[132] Similarly, RUA ran a breakfast program and a health clinic out of a local church; additionally, they established the People's Legal Program which provided legal advice and representation to local residents.[133]

Efforts to disrupt the Rainbow Coalition were prevalent, and often targeted the other groups besides the Panthers. The logic was that if you could punish an organization for allying with the BPP, they and others would be deterred from future alliances with the Panthers. For example, when the Young Lords negotiated the use of a property for their daycare centre, the city refused to grant them a permit, and a local inspector found eleven code violations that cost the organization approximately $10,000 to fix only to have the building raided and vandalized police several weeks later.[134] This tactic did not work on the Young Lords, and the relationship between the Panthers and Young Lords remained strong, so much so that the partnership translated to the New York chapters of both organizations, where they worked together on several projects in the Bronx.[135]

Where COINTELPRO did experience success was in the prevention of an alliance between the Blackstone Rangers (BSR) and the Panthers. The BSR was a Black

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[130] Haas, p. 45.
[131] Williams, pp. 136, 139-140.
[132] Bloom and Martin, p. 293; Williams, p. 146.
[133] Williams, pp. 155-156.
[134] Williams, p. 149.
[135] Williams, p. 150.

Nationalist gang that had between three and five thousand members, and was led by Jeff Fort. The addition of the BSR to the Rainbow Coalition would have doubled its membership, and greatly increased its access to monetary resources, which was something the FBI could not allow. [136] In order to facilitate a split between the organizations, COINTELPRO took advantage of a tense relation between Hampton and Fort, who shared a strong dislike for the other, despite respected what the other sought to achieve. With the help of several informants, and a series of anonymous letter campaigns, the FBI managed to forestall an agreement, and any future possibility of cooperation between the two organizations. [137] This success of eliminating relations between BSR and the Panthers, when placed within the larger context of the Rainbow Coalition, does appear a rather limited success, given that one of the core foundations of COINTELPRO was to prevent the emergence of large coalitions and unified fronts.

The Chicago Scene After Hampton

In addition to the prevention of coalitions, another key goal of COINTELPRO was to prevent the rise of a "messiah" figure within the movement. In many ways, Hampton was that "messiah-like" figure within the Chicago scene. As has been established, he was central to the operations and success of not only the Panthers, but to the unity of the Rainbow Coalition. Young Lords leader Jose "Cha Cha" Jimenez was quoted in 2009 as saying "…Fred [Hampton] clarified the issues—[that] these are our friends and these are our enemies…and that we need to unite with as many people as possible." [138] Hampton's death was many things—unjustified, illegal, and tragic; however, it was not the downfall of the Chicago Panthers nor the Rainbow Coalition, as the CPD and FBI had hoped.[139] In many ways, Hampton's death served to strengthen the Panther's and the Coalition's resolve to continue their struggle against police brutality and systemic inequalities—Hampton became a martyr for the cause.[140] Indeed, the legacy of the Rainbow Coalition propelled Jose Jimenez to run for political office in June 1974, announcing that he "still believed in the Rainbow Coalition"; his political bid

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[136] Churchill, 2001, pp. 90.
[137] Churchill, 2001, pp. 90-91; Williams, pp. 161-162.
[138] As quoted in Williams, p. 191.
[139] Churchill and Vander Wall, 2002(a), pp. 69-70.
[140] Williams, p. 194.

was supported by many who had once belonged to the Rainbow Coalition who were now working with the Uptown Coalition, under the leadership of Walter Coleman.[141]

An additional effect of Hampton's death was the eventual downfall of several political figures who had been involved in the planning, execution, and cover-up of Hampton's assassination. For example, State's attorney Edward Hanrahan, whose office was responsible for organizing and ordering the raid on Hampton's apartment, lost his 1972 re-election bid to his Republican opponent. The black community overwhelmingly rejected Hanrahan, and instead voted Republican—the first time in nearly two decades.[142] Additionally, after Delay's death while in office in 1976, the Democrats began to lose significant seats in every political office to Republican and independent politicians.[143] Beyond the 1970s, Hampton's legacy continued to influence politics in Chicago. During the Mayoral election of 1983, African-American candidate Harold Washington adopted the Rainbow Coalition as part of his campaign, and employed not only Jose Jimenez but also Mike James, former RUA leader as coordinates within the campaign. Additionally, former Panther members mobilized the African-American community in support of his campaign. Washington was successful becoming the first African-American Mayor of Chicago, and nicknaming his cabinet, "the Rainbow Cabinet" as it was composed of Puerto Ricans, southerners, northerners, blacks, whites, men, women—just like Hampton's original Rainbow Coalition.[144]

A Victory, a Loss, or a Draw?

During the COINTELPRO era, twenty-nine members of the Black Panthers were killed by law enforcement, hundreds more were arrested and served time in jail, and the Panthers were the subject of two hundred and thirty-three authorized COINTELPRO actions.[145] Alternatively, over forty-five inner cities benefited from free breakfasts for school-children, and thousands of individuals had accesses to health

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[141] Williams, pp. 195-196.
[142] Williams, p. 195.
[143] Williams, p. 195.
[144] Williams, pp. 198-199.
[145] Churchill, 2001, p. 109; Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United State Senate Vol. 3 (April 1976), p. 188.

services, and free medical testing. The legacy of the Panthers is indeed complicated—on the one hand, there is a violent revolutionary organization who routinely clashed with law enforcement, and on the other hand, there is an organization that genuinely sought to improve the conditions of black America, and in the processes trying to rectify those two images of the Panthers, one also has to address the legacy of COINTELPRO and FBI interference within the Panther organization. This is certainly not an easy job. This research here as attempted to complete just a small portion of daunting task by examining the legacy of COINTELPRO and the Chicago offices of the Illinois Black Panther Chapter, and the efficacy of COINTELPRO methods in shaping and controlling the Panther's activities.

By using a selection of documents from the COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, it becomes apparent that the FBI used a range of methods in their attempts to disrupt and destroy organizations like the Panthers. These attempts included hard tactics such as police raids, assassinations, and direct confrontation as well as numerous soft tactics like falsified mail campaigns, political propaganda to manipulate public perception, and informants. Through this combination of technique, the FBI was able to create fear and uncertainty among many members of the Panthers. Hampton, months before he was assassinated, stated that he was afraid he would be killed by police for his role in organizing the Panther offices in Chicago, and the formation of the Rainbow Coalition. [146] Fear and intimidation also resulted in many individuals becoming informants for law enforcement, as was the case with Chicago's William O'Neal who agreed to infiltrate the Chicago Panthers after he was arrested on felony charges and parole violations, and feared returning to prison. In exchange for information on the Panthers, the charges against O'Neal were dropped, and he went on to become a highly useful FBI informant.[147] However, what all this fear and uncertainly, hard and soft tactics of social control failed to do was actively dissuade the majority of Panther activity from occurring.

This is not to say that Panthers were not affected by COINTELPRO, or that COINTELPRO methods in Chicago represented a blanket failure. Instead, what it

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[146] As quoted in Williams, p. 167. See also COINTELPRO-Black Extremists files, part 13, (24 March 1969), p. 208.
[147] Austin, p. 207.

suggests is that the relationship between social control methods and social movements is highly complex, and will usually contain elements of both success and failure. It also suggests that David Lyon's paradox of the panopticon is correct in its basic form, but could perhaps be more nuanced when talking about forms of resistance to a panoptic regime. Lyon's paradox, if one recalls, argued that the more repressive the panopticon experience, the more it will produce active, physical and violent resistance, while subtler forms of the panopticon produce the desired "docile bodies". The Panthers, despite operating in a very panoptic environment in which they were fully aware that their action made them primary targets for police violence, continued their day to day activities. They did not shy away from political protests and marches, they continued confronting police over questions of police brutality, they did not move or close offices even though they were continually vandalized by police raids, they continued to serve breakfast to children even when their food donations were destroyed, and they did not dissolve the political coalition that directly contributed to their leader's assassination. This fits within Lyon's assessment of resisting strong panoptic regimes, however what differs from Lyon's description is the physically and violence of this resistance. The Panther's unwillingness to fold under the pressure from law enforcement in Chicago demonstrates that resistance is not equated with violence, and non-violence is not the same as pacification.

The Chicago case further demonstrates that violent and non-violent resistance are not a dichotomy either, and can be used together for great effect. By using both violent and non-violent resistance, the Panthers created an image of a socially conscious, community-based revolution that appealed to both ends of the Black Power spectrum. However, it is also interesting to note that ultimately, it was the division between those who wanted violent resistance and those who wanted more peaceful methods that caused the final fracture between the Panther's national leadership.[148] So while the Chicago Panthers were able to marry violent and non-violent resistance, their successes was not duplicated at the national level. The further suggests that the relationship between social control and social movements in not ubiquitous, and is often determined by local factors.

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[148] Alkebulan, p. 117-118.

In the case of the Chicago Panthers, COINTELPRO experienced only limited success in their objectives; however, the Illinois chapter was only one of over thirty Black Panther Chapters across the United States, which means there is a significant opportunity to further explore how COINTELPRO impacted the Panthers. This study offers a preliminary attempt at understanding the complex relationship between social control and social movements during the COINTELPRO era. As more COINTELPRO documents become declassified, and as mores local histories of the Panthers become available, scholars will have a greater ability to examine the image of the Panthers as an organization of violence and non-violence, and the role of the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program had in the creation of that legacy.

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