‘Any Name That Has Power’: The Black Panthers of Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States, 1948-1977

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History in the Graduate School of Duke University

2013
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

The US Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was an organization of the Black Power Movement, a cultural and a political nationalist movement central to the history of the African-American Freedom Struggle. The Black Panthers’ anti-imperialist politics, militant visual style, grassroots strategies, and community programs appealed within and beyond the United States. Between 1967 and 1972, people of color struggling under class and ethnic oppression in six countries outside the United States formed Black Panther Parties inspired by the US Panthers. In the United Kingdom, West Indians, West Africans, and South Asians formed a Black Panther Movement in 1968 and in Israel, a group of Mizrahi (Arab) Jews founded a Black Panther Party in Jerusalem in 1971. This dissertation examines these two movements with reference to the US Black Panthers in order to place local, national, and global histories in dialogue.

This study adopts a transnational framework that conceives of Black Power as a movement of global migrants. From 1948 to 1967, over two million people from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean migrated to the UK and Israel. These migrants’ overlapping experiences of displacement and class- and ethnic-based oppression led them to establish Black Panther groups in their new home countries in order to raise their political concerns under a collective banner. These people chose to become Black Panthers specifically because the US Black Panther Party offered a name and style that connected their global brothers and sisters to a range of grassroots strategies promoting interethnic solidarity and the collective advancement of black communities against the social structures that
fostered racism. Through the examination of oral histories, photographs, letters, fliers, passport stamps, films, court cases, and surveillance files, this study focuses on how these global Panther activists represented themselves and their politics in the public sphere.

Both the British and Israeli Panther movements first organized in response to the city police’s harassment of youth in their neighborhoods. Their respective critiques expanded from an opposition to police brutality to systemic goals of improving housing, education, welfare, and employment for blacks. Both of the nation-states in which these groups emerged relied upon the US for military stability and economic support during this period, such that the British and Israeli Panthers saw confrontations with their respective governments as acts of resistance to American Empire.

This dissertation, then, is at once a community study of two branches of a transnational social movement as well as a larger story. The broader narrative reveals how everyday people responded to the American Empire in the 1960s and 1970s, how the US Black Panthers translated black internationalist politics into urban neighborhoods, and how people outside the US constructed narratives about African-Americans as a way of making sense of racial formations at home. This work also demonstrates how foreign governments and media producers appropriated African-American history for a variety of in political purposes during this period. This examination enables a deeper understanding of the transnational black freedom struggle, as it centers the role that people of color outside the United States played in creating and sustaining Black Panther Movements that confronted American and British Empires from the grassroots.
Dedication

For my mother, Patricia Ann Lynch Richards-Angelo, whose countless labors of love have made this one possible, and for my brother, Shawn Patrick Angelo, who inspires me.
## Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ iv

List of Figures .......................................................................................................................... viii

List of Abbreviations .......................................................................................................... xi

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................... xiii

Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 1: Becoming ‘Black Immigrants’ in Britain and Israel, 1948-67 ......................... 38

Chapter 2: Expeditions: Black Britons reconnoiter the African-American movement, 1964-69 ................................................................. 78

Chapter 3: ‘The only force that can quell it is International Black Power.’ An anti-imperialist Black Panther Movement materializes in London, 1967-69 .................. 143

Chapter 4: ‘Black Oppressed People All Over the World Are One’: The British Panthers, shadow governance, and grassroots internationalism, 1969-1973 ......................... 219


Epilogue: The Egyptian Revolution, J14 protests, and London riots of 2011 .............. 369


Appendix B: UK Black Panther Timeline, 1969-1973 ......................................................... 392

Appendix C: UK Black Panther newspaper issues by archival location, 1969-1973 ...... 413

Appendix D: Countries named in UK Panther newspapers, by order of first appearance, 1969-1973 ............................................................... 416


Appendix F: Israeli Black Panther Party members identified ................................. 419

Bibliography ................................................................................................................... 420

Biography ........................................................................................................................ 458
Figures

Figure 1: Moroccan family alights at Haifa Port, September 24, 1954......................... 40
Figure 2: West Indians arrive on the boat train at Waterloo Station, October 15, 1961 .... 40
Figure 3: Moshe Friedan, The Armistice Line at the edge of Musrara........................ 69
Figure 4: Five Met Police officers arrest a black man in Brixton............................... 80
Figure 5: Linton Kwesi Johnson poses for Black Panther members' photograph ........ 84
Figure 6: Panthers in their Brixton house salute Black Power ..................................... 86
Figure 7: National Front member advertises National Front News in Brixton .......... 109
Figure 8: Armed National Guardsmen chase black boy on The Observer Review’s front page, 1967 ....................................................................................................................... 112
Figure 9: The Observer Review tallies US casualties of race-related violence in 1967 . 113
Figure 10: Algerian visa, August 18, 1971, validated in Algiers, September 1971 and Algerian visa, September 8, 1972, not validated................................................................. 132
Figure 11: Robert F. Williams' The Crusader 9, no. 3, (Peking: December 1967).. ...... 134
Figure 12: Obi Egbuna announces UCPA’s adoption of Black Power, August 28, 1967.. ......................................................................................................................................... 143
Figure 13: Stokely Carmichael speaks at Dialectics of Liberation Congress, London, July 22, 1967 .................................................................................................................. 161
Figure 14: Carmichael speaks on UCPA platform at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, 1967.............................................................................................................................................. 164
Figure 15: Obi Egbuna speaks to the press, September 10, 1967............................... 170
Figure 16: Pamphlet cover, Black Power in Britain: A Special Statement.............. 171
Figure 17: Pamphlet cover, Black Power in Britain: A Special Statement.............. 172
Figure 18: Thousands march on the "Walk to Freedom" tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., April 15, 1968 ......................................................................................................................... 186
Figure 19: Artwork from Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, *Freedom Primer for Lowndes County Freedom Organization*, 1966 ................................................. 197

Figure 20: Back cover of *Black Power Speaks*, UCPA newsletter, June 1968 ........ 197

Figure 21: Obi Egbuna and Kwame Nkrumah in Conakry, Guinea, July 1968 ........ 202

Figure 22: Front page of *Black Power* newsletter, September 1968 ...................... 206

Figure 23: Program cover for *A Black People's Trial of Enoch Powell*, February 22, 1969 ................................................................. 209

Figure 24: Althea Jones speaks to protestors outside the Mangrove Restaurant, August 9, 1970 .............................................................................................................................. 220

Figure 25: Black Power activity in cities with concentrated black populations, 1970-1971 .............................................................................................................................. 225

Figure 26: Darcus Howe takes details from a local man ............................................. 232

Figure 27: Neil Kenlock in front of educational and organizational posters, Panthers' Shakespeare Road headquarters, Brixton ................................................................. 241

Figure 28. Boys in Birmingham pose with Afro-Caribbean Circle and Black Panther protest fliers .................................................................................................................... 247

Figure 29: CLR James at public meeting at Camden Town Hall, London....................... 248

Figure 30: Panther newsstand outside Desmond's Hip City, Brixton, 1973 .................. 252

Figure 31: Neil Kenlock, photograph of Olive Morris, King's College Hospital, London, November 15, 1969 ................................................................. 256

Figure 32: *PEACE (People Emerging Against Corrupt Establishments)*, 1, no. 2, 1970, published underground at R.A.F. Mildenhall, England .............................................. 264

Figure 33. Black Panther women march outside the Old Bailey, 1971.......................... 267

Figure 34. Front page, *Black People's News Service*, May/June 1971 ......................... 274

Figure 35: Inset photo from Figure 34 ........................................................................... 274

Figure 36: Black Panther Movement, "Slavery to Slavery," *National Conference Special Issue*, May 1971, 4-5 ................................................................................................. 284
Figure 38. Linton Kwesi Johnson at the Notting Hill Carnival ........................................... 294

Figure 39: Neil Kenlock. Farrukh Dhondy holds special issue of Black Life Brixton in front of the former Unity Centre at 74 Railton Road, March 1973 ........................................ 296

Figure 40. Sa’adia Marziano speaks to supporters wearing a Black Power patch ........ 322

Figure 41: Meeting at Black Panther headquarters, Musrara, 1971 ......................... 331

Figure 42: Inside, Membership Card, Black Panther Organization-Ramat Gan Branch, May 25, 1971 .......................................................... 334

Figure 43: Outside, Membership Card, Black Panther Organization-Ramat Gan Branch. ........................................................................................................ 334

Figure 44. Police battle Panther protestors in Zion Square, May 18-19, 1971 ............ 351

Figure 45: Black Panthers carry coffins, one labeled “Discrimination,” and a fist poster into Zion Square, August 28, 1971 ...................................................... 354

Figure 46. Black Panthers distribute leaflets with American supporter Ronnie, who wears a “By any means necessary” t-shirt ......................................................... 356

Figure 47: Darcus Howe in his home, Croydon, South London, July 28, 2011 ............ 375

Figure 48: House of Reeves, Croydon, London, August 9, 2011 .............................. 378

Figure 49: Darcus Howe, BBC News, Croydon, London, August 9, 2011 ............... 379

Figure 50: Protestors carry a banner with the Israeli Black Panther symbol, August 6, 2011 .............................................................................................................. 384

Figure 51: Tel Aviv protestors carry a banner with Arabic and Hebrew-language slogans, August 2011 ......................................................................................... 385

Figure 52: Fellowship on Reconciliation, Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story (1958), trans. and ed. Dalia Ziada (Cairo: American Islamic Congress, 2008) ....... 388
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>American Islamic Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJC</td>
<td>American Jewish Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALSC</td>
<td>African Liberation Support Committee, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMI</td>
<td>Alliance of Moroccan Immigrants, Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASU</td>
<td>American Servicemen’s Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBPM</td>
<td>British Black Panther Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLF</td>
<td>Black Liberation Front, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPA</td>
<td>Black People’s Alliance, Birmingham, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPFM</td>
<td>Black People’s Freedom Movement, Nottingham, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPNIC</td>
<td>Black People’s National Information Centre, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPNS</td>
<td>Black People’s News Service, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPM</td>
<td>Black Power Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUFP</td>
<td>Black Unity and Freedom Party, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWM</td>
<td>Black Workers Movement, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM</td>
<td>Caribbean Artists Movement, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARD</td>
<td>Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBE</td>
<td>Center for Black Education, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CND</td>
<td>Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COFO</td>
<td>Council of Federated Organizations, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPGB</td>
<td>Communist Party Great Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECM</td>
<td>European Common Market</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Freedom News, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBH</td>
<td>Grievous bodily harm</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBPP</td>
<td>Israeli Black Panther Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICP</td>
<td>Israeli Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDF</td>
<td>Israeli Defense Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Independent Police Complaints Commission, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRA</td>
<td>Irish Republican Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRACA</td>
<td>Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITUAC</td>
<td>Independent Trade Union Advisory Committee, Jamaica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITV</td>
<td>Independent Television, UK</td>
</tr>
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<td>IWA</td>
<td>Indian Workers Association, UK</td>
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<td>JIC</td>
<td>Joint Intelligence Committee, Home Office, UK</td>
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<td>KKK</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCFO</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEL</td>
<td>League of Empire Loyalists, UK</td>
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<td>LKJ</td>
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</tr>
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<td>LSE</td>
<td>London School of Economics</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLKFF</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Fund and Foundation, UK</td>
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<td>NAACP</td>
<td>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, UK and USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>National Front, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFPA</td>
<td>National Federation of Pakistani Associations, UK</td>
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<td>NINB</td>
<td><em>National and International News Bulletin</em>, UK</td>
</tr>
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<td>NJAC</td>
<td>National Joint Action Committee, Trinidad and Tobago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSM</td>
<td>National Socialist Movement, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLAS</td>
<td>Organization of Latin American Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWTU</td>
<td>Oilfield Workers’ Trade Union, Trinidad and Tobago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEACE</td>
<td>People Emerging Against Corrupt Establishments, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFLP</td>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>Palestinian Liberation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAS</td>
<td>Racial Adjustment Action Society, UK</td>
</tr>
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<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force, UK</td>
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<td>SCLC</td>
<td>Southern Christian Leadership Conference, USA</td>
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<td>SNCC</td>
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<td>UCPAA</td>
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<td>UFT</td>
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<td>USIA</td>
<td>United States Information Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WISC</td>
<td>West Indian Standing Conference, UK</td>
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Acknowledgements

It took a village.

In 2001, I graduated from the University of Virginia and left the United States for the first time, to take up a position as a US politics teacher at Uppingham School in Rutland, England’s smallest county. Two weeks after I arrived in the UK, I watched from afar as the planes hit the Twin Towers on September 11. I was incredibly shocked and saddened, yet simultaneously I became fascinated by what the events meant for the US’s role in the world and by what my students’ reactions might tell me about how they perceived the United States from outside. Looking back, I am indebted to those students and colleagues as their reactions, questions, and often implicit assumptions about the United States inspired me intellectually and helped set me on this path.

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I shared my time in Cairo with several fellow travelers, and somewhere amidst the Revolution, we became lifelong friends. Stephanie Biedermann and Jon Jensen, Emily and Ben Robinson, Emilee and Andrew Walker-Cornetta, Brittany Gonzalez, Dave Franzel, Dina Ragab, Maggie Konstanski, Kate Osterloh, Nancy and Rob Doyle, Susannah Cunningham, Alexandra Hartman, Laura Kasinof, Kate and Connor Stricklan, Katherine Chisholm Horton and Guy Horton, Dena Nicolai, Martin Towns, and Shannon

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Marcus offered joy, laughter, and encouragement. The Reverend Paul-Gordon Chandler led our tight-knit community at St. John’s, making Cairo feel more like a small town than Africa’s largest city. Paul-Gordon set an example of Muslim-Christian relations based upon respect, creativity, compassion, and shared Abrahamic faith that inspired me, as did the thousands of people who flocked to Tahrir Square in January 2011 in order to improve their communities and their country.
Introduction

In April 1970, the British Black Panther Movement urged “Black Suffering People and all oppressed people” to take part in a demonstration against “the murder of black people in Trinidad who are fighting against British and American imperialisms and their local henchmen.”¹ In a flier advertising the demonstration at Speaker’s Corner in London’s Hyde Park, the British Panthers declared that “Black Oppressed People All Over the World are One.”² The Panthers had organized the protest against Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Eric Williams, who had arrested fifteen Trinidadian Black Power activists and called in the support of the British and American navies to quell a Black Power uprising earlier that month.

The flier and its related protest highlighted the existence of a Black Power Movement (BPM) in Trinidad. Students at the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies had founded an organization called the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC), which led the Trinidad BPM from 1968 to 1970.³ Guided by George Weekes of the Oilfield Workers’ Trade Union (OWTU), an organizer whom intellectual-activist CLR James had mentored, the NJAC formed a coalition with local trade unions.

¹ Black Panther Movement, flier for Trinidad solidarity demonstration, April 26, 1970, 1, John La Rose Collection (hereafter JLR) 3/1/5, George Padmore Institute, London (hereafter GPI).
³ Black Panther Movement, leaflet on National Joint Action Committee, [1971?], JLR 3/1/5, GPI.
Together, these students and labor activists presented Black Power as a united front that seriously challenged the authority of the Trinidadian Prime Minister Eric Williams.⁴

The Trinidad BPM and the British Black Panthers, two movements in a global Black Power network, indicted the government and private sectors in Britain and the United States for exercising disproportionate power in Trinidad. The two movements blamed Trinidad’s high unemployment and welfare challenges on the influence of foreign capital, which The Times called, “the remote control of the island’s resources by foreign (white) firms.”⁵ In its flier, the British Panthers accused Williams of “fourteen years of tyrannical rule.” Williams’ heavy-handed response and his deployment of British and American military forces against the Trinidad BPM had provoked the British Panthers to express their solidarity.

The Panthers reported in their newspaper, Black People’s News Service (BPNS), in May 1970 that hundreds of people attended the April 26 London demonstration in support of the Trinidadian Black Power activists. There, Panther members sounded off on Speaker’s Corner’s iconic rostrum in support of their Trinidadian Black Power comrades. The Panthers identified, “our common enemy- British and American imperialism.”⁶ From Hyde Park, protestors marched one-and-a-half miles through central London, chanting slogans such as: “Hands off Trinidad, hands off our kith and kin;” “British and American imperialism out of Trinidad;” “Black Power, People’s Power;” and “Trinidad, Vietnam, One Struggle One War.” The group demonstrated outside the Trinidad and Tobago High

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Commission and then marched to the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square, only to find the square surrounded by London Metropolitan Police. The presence of hordes of policemen indicated to BPNS journalists that “the racist pig power structure is afraid of the might of organised black people.”7 As the marchers returned to Hyde Park, police attacked them, arresting twenty demonstrators, including fifteen black people, ten of whom were Black Panthers. The BPNS connected this mass arrest to the economic structures that supported the police, claiming that, “As long as the racist capitalist establishment continues to use their pig police force to brutalise black people, it is our right to fight back and do what is necessary in our self-defence.”8

The British Black Panthers’ accounts of the April 1970 Trinidad solidarity demonstration highlight the substantial international influence that the US Black Power Movement had on people of color globally, inspiring the formation of many such anti-imperialist solidarity networks in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Black Power Movement was a cultural and a political nationalist movement central to the history of the African-American Freedom Struggle. In the US, the politics of Black Power appealed to a broad range of people and organizations including black nationalists, Marxists, pan-Africanists, trade unionists, feminists, and liberals, as well as to small strains of conservatives interested in its call for black self-determination and entrepreneurship.9

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7 Ibid., 2.
8 Ibid.
In order to understand the influence of African-Americans in the development of a transnational black freedom struggle and to more fully comprehend America’s role in postcolonial global racial formations, historians must consider the central role that people of color outside the United States played in creating and sustaining Black Panther Movements that confronted American and British Empires from the grassroots. This dissertation examines the British and Israeli Black Panther Movements, with reference to the US Panthers in order to place local, national, and global histories in dialogue. It is at once a community study of two branches of a transnational social movement as well as a larger story about how everyday people responded to the American Empire in the 1960s and 1970s, how the US Black Panthers translated black internationalist politics into urban neighborhoods, and how people outside the US constructed narratives about African-Americans as a way of making sense of racial formations at home. This work also demonstrates how foreign governments and media producers appropriated African-American history for a variety of political purposes during this period.

Between 1967 and 1972, people in at least eighteen countries across the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East formed Black Power Movements inspired by the movement in the US. In six of these eighteen countries, communities of color formed Black Panther movements in order to access Black Power’s radical politics. The Panthers’ highly visible militant style, grassroots strategies, and community programs all appealed to an international constituency. The British Black Panthers were the first Black Panther movement to form outside the United States. In addition, the Black Beret Cadre of Bermuda, the Black (Aboriginal) Panther Party of Australia, the Dalit Panthers in India, the Black Panther Party of Israel, and the Polynesian (Māori) Panther Party in New Zealand took their inspiration from the US Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (USBPP). The sheer diversity of the places in which Black Power and Black Panther

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movements emerged makes plain once again the social constructions of race and blackness. These global Black Power sites should also prompt scholars to develop understandings of black internationalism that reach beyond the Black Atlantic and African Diasporic contexts.\textsuperscript{12}

This examination of the British and the Israeli Black Panther movements enables a deeper understanding of the Black Power movement’s global appeal, and it establishes traits that the cohorts who formed Black Panther movements outside the US shared. In both the British and Israeli cases, the movements comprised second-generation immigrants whom the European-dominated society had treated as “others.”\textsuperscript{13} How did the people involved in these movements—West Indians, West Africans, and South Asians in the United Kingdom and Mizrahi (Middle Eastern) Jews in Israel—learn about Black Power and why did they found Black Panther organizations in 1968 and 1971,

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respectively? How did these groups adapt the US Black Panthers’ organizing strategies and militant style to suit their local movements? How was it possible that a movement that emerged far outside the British and Israeli national contexts motivated thousands of these people to confront oppression in their respective nation-states?

In order to answer these questions, this work adopts a transnational framework for Black Power. This framework conceives of Black Power as a movement of global migrants. These migrants’ multiple, overlapping experiences of displacement and class- and ethnic-based oppression led them to establish Black Panther groups in their new home countries to raise their political concerns under a collective banner. These people chose to become Black Panthers specifically because the USBPP offered a name and style that connected their global brothers and sisters to a range of grassroots strategies promoting interethnic solidarity and the collective advancement of black communities against the social structures that fostered racism. More broadly, in reconstructing how and why people in these countries formed Black Panther Movements, this framework centers racial formations as ideological mediums through which people in Britain, Israel, and the United States confronted questions of imperial power.

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Global Panther supporters affirmed their emotional and material connections to African-Americans and laid claim to black identity in a process of appropriation that proved multifarious and, at times, messy and uneven. In asserting their blackness, Black Panther emulators opened their movements to a range of movement strategies from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Caribbean radicalism, anti-colonial movements, and others.16 These international Panthers critiqued racist practices within their own nation-states and by extension, the hegemonic power of the US Empire. In so doing, the British and Israeli Panthers bridged the disjunctures of the colonial past with the realities of the postcolonial present in the hearts of their respective metropoles.

British Black Panther and African-American Vietnam veteran Ray Eurquhart encapsulated the Black Power movement’s transnational appeal in a pithy sentence. “People just struggling,” he remembered, “...come up with any name that has power.”17 Here in a 2007 oral history interview, Eurquhart recalled that as people in Britain, Israel, and elsewhere struggled under class and ethnic oppression, they searched for an identity around which they could organize their communities.18 Each group’s independent search for “any name that [had] power” led them to the Black Panthers. Their searches took the

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16 Performance studies and African-American studies scholar E. Patrick Johnson informs my conception of blackness as an appropriations identity that provides access to a range of political strategies. Johnson argues that, “blackness is a performative, yet nonetheless material, construct... ‘Blackness’ does not belong to any one individual or group. Rather, individuals or groups appropriate this complex and nuanced racial signifier in order to circumscribe its boundaries or to elude other individuals or groups.” E. Patrick Johnson, Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2003), 2-3.
form of readings and discussions about the history of African-Americans, civil rights, and anticolonial struggles; examinations of the news media’s depictions of Black Power; conversations with white leftists; and journeys to meet African-American activists. Through these searches, black Britons and Mizrahi Jews viewed their struggles and experiences as connected to, and reflecting, those of African-Americans.

By focusing on the Israeli and British examples of Black Power politics, we can see how the African-American Freedom Struggle shaped the development of a range of black political spheres outside the United States. Examining the British and Israeli Panther movements side by side illustrates how people from a variety of Asian and African ethnic backgrounds came together under the umbrella of blackness. This malleable collective identity empowered their protest politics and enabled them to call their experiences of oppression racist. The USBPP offered a framework that enabled people to understand their everyday experiences of police harassment, unemployment, and poor housing and education provisions as symptoms of larger structural problems, and to envision their community programs, such as visits to black neighborhoods in outlying areas and black history courses, as steps to creating new social orders. In so doing, the British and Israeli Panthers confronted the class and ethnic divisions that undergirded the British and American Empires.

The US Black Panthers’ embrace of black internationalism and anti-imperialism, one of the most important developments of African-Americans’ post-1966 liberation politics, fueled their appeal to audiences far beyond the United States.19 The USBPP

incorporated anti-imperialism in light of members’ experiences of oppression under American imperialism, which increased considerably during the Cold War.\textsuperscript{20} As national independence movements swept across the developing world in the mid-twentieth century, the British Empire lost its colonies while the United States amplified its global dominance. This shift from British to American imperial hegemony enhanced the emergence of Black Panther movements outside the United States, since the people who formed these movements had experienced the deleterious effects of both empires.

The United States amassed unprecedented political, military, and economic global power during the Cold War.\textsuperscript{21} But with the exception of the direct control of several

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{fanon} Martiniquais revolutionary and writer Frantz Fanon heavily influenced the USBPP’s embrace of anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist politics. Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth} (New York: Grove Press, 2005).

Some historians and historical geographers have argued that American imperialism has existed throughout United States history, employing George Washington’s 1783 characterization of the United States as a “rising empire,” the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, and the 1846-1848 US-Mexico War as indicators. Although such debates are beyond the scope of this study, the classic work in this vein is William

island territories, the US avoided the formal colonialism that had characterized the four centuries of the British Empire. Twentieth century American imperialism, also known as the “soft empire,” combined a multinational market-based system that promoted free trade and capital accumulation with military interventions and the manipulation of national politics in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, thus ensuring America’s geopolitical hegemony. The 1945 Bretton Woods Agreement epitomized the inversion of the relationship between the American and British Empires during this period. The UK, ravaged by wartime losses, reluctantly signed on to the Bretton Woods international monetary system in return for $4.4 billion in postwar economic aid from the United States. The Bretton Woods agreement made the US dollar the reserve currency for industrial economies worldwide. The agreement solidified the global hegemony of American capital and increased Britain’s dependence on the US.

As British and French colonies across the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East seized their independence at mid-twentieth century, over two million former colonial subjects migrated to Israel and the United Kingdom for social and economic reasons.

Between 1948 and 1971, the non-European ethnic minority population of the UK, which

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included South Asians, Africans, and West Indians, mushroomed from an estimated 80,000 in 1951 to 1.5 million, a nineteen-fold increase.25 Similarly, between 1948 and 1972, approximately 740,000 Jews from Africa and Asia migrated to Israel.26 By the time of the Six Day War of June 1967, Jews who had originated in Arab countries, known at the time as “Eastern” or “Oriental,” comprised the majority of Israel’s Jewish population.27 These migrations fundamentally reshaped the demographics and the character of the British and Israeli societies.

In varying ways, the white populations of the UK and Israel approached this Great Migration with the same anxieties that had undergirded their respective drives to imperial dominance.28 Ashkenazi Jews, who had led the creation of the Zionist state, expressed


As Israel conquered by force fifty percent of the land that the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan had set aside for the creation of an Arab state, the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949 provides the strongest indication of the state’s imperial character at that time. Nationalist impulses dominated Israeli historiography in the country’s first twenty years, however, such that the historiographical and sociological study of Israeli imperialism emerged later, in the wake of the 1967 Six Day War. See Uri Ram, "The Colonization Perspective in Israeli Sociology," in The Israel/Palestine Question: A Reader, ed. Ilan Pappé (New York: Psychology Press, 1999), 49-71; Baruch Kimmerling, The Invention and Decline of Israeliness (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2001); Ilan Pappé, “Zionism as Colonialism: A Comparative View of Diluted Colonialism in Asia and Africa,” South Atlantic Quarterly 107, no. 4 (2008): 611-633; Gershon Shafir, Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1989); Shlomo Swirski, Israel: The Oriental Majority transl. Barbara Swirski (Atlantic
fears that if Arab Jews climbed into powerful social positions, they might “Levantize” the European character of the nation, or bring the perceived backwardness of the underdeveloped Orient into Israeli society. Many in Britain feared the extinction of the authority that the Empire had exercised in its quest to create and maintain global order; by extension, they worried that the weakening of white dominance would lead to the disappearance of the nation itself. British and Israeli elites configured domestic social relations based on the perceived inferiority of people of color. They embedded such divisions in housing, education, justice, and employment policies. As both British and Israeli elites proclaimed tolerance and social welfare as cornerstones of their national identities, however, neither government publicly acknowledged the existence of racism in domestic policies and everyday social interactions.

But the experiences of people of color in 1950s and 1960s Britain and Israel belied assimilationist rhetorics of national belonging. They endured poor quality housing, education, and employment; police brutality; and in the UK, civilian white-on-black violence. As the British and Israeli governments and societies showed little promise of full socioeconomic inclusion for their non-European residents, the second-generation of these immigrants began to question where and to which communities they belonged. They looked above and below their respective nation-states for answers, and they

31 Linda Carty, “Imperialism: Historical Periodization or Present-Day Phenomenon?” 43.
33 Brian Harrison, Seeking a Role: The United Kingdom, 1951-1970 (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 220.
recognized their lived experiences in the politics of the US Black Panther Party. “Black Power, in particular, spoke to me very directly,” Sri Lankan-British intellectual A. Sivanandan recalled, “because it was about race and class both at once. More than that, it was about the politics of existence.”

Meanwhile, escalating Cold War tensions shifted the global revolutionary focus away from Europe and toward another existential question: the fate of the non-aligned ‘Third World.’ The Third World became a magnet for US involvements abroad and a site of contestation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The US and its allies, including the UK, claimed to spread democracy to these countries. Through the United States Information Agency (USIA) and the dispersal of Hollywood movies and popular music, the US government made concerted efforts to advertise American culture abroad in order to foster a desire to emulate ‘the American way.’ Beneath this soft diplomacy lay a series of US policies toward the Global South that significantly shaped livelihoods and migration patterns. As US power grew and people of color everywhere felt the impact of American domination, those experiencing the weight of oppression

looked to examples of resistance in America, hence, the emergence of the Black Panthers in Britain and later in Israel.

**The British and Israeli Black Panther Movements**

In the neighborhoods of Notting Hill in London in 1967 and Musrara in Jerusalem in 1970, young adults of color organized politically, determined to transform the conditions of life for their communities. Separated by thousands of miles and by a language barrier, these local organizers searched for a name, identity, and overarching ideology to amplify their collective concerns. They found appeal in the Black Panthers’ strategies, which were adaptable to the concerns of different neighborhoods and communities.\(^{38}\) Both groups created ten-point plans based on the Oakland Black Panther Party’s ten-point program, which historian Yohuru Williams describes as having been “tailor-made for export.”\(^{39}\) They staged programs designed to foster the welfare of their respective communities, which included cultural events, education, and health care. They also adopted elements of the US Panthers’ militaristic style, which publicly connected their movement to that of their African-American counterparts.

Both the British and Israeli Black Panther movements served their local black communities and voiced their concerns as part of the international struggle against imperialism. Between 1968 and 1973, roughly three hundred people in the UK became Black Panthers, while a further ten thousand participated in Panther-sponsored protest events. The British movement comprised two phases: first, from April 1968 until the

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\(^{38}\) Robin Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 94. In 1970, Eldridge Cleaver explained that, “In the US the primary struggle is a revolutionary struggle, but at the same time we have to deal with the specific conditions of oppression of Black people.” Cleaver as quoted in Self, *American Babylon*, 219.

\(^{39}\) Williams and Lazerow, eds. *Liberated Territory*, 3.
summer of 1969, Biafran playwright Obi Egbuna led a small revolutionary vanguardist movement. Egbuna’s penchant for publicity led several of his comrades to break with him. Led by Althea Jones, a woman, this second phase of the Panthers formed in the fall of 1969 as a mass agitational movement in Brixton in South London, where it existed until late 1973. The Black Panthers of Israel sustained significant activity between 1971 and 1973, during which time approximately one hundred people became core members of the group, while at least eight thousand Israelis participated in their activities. After 1973, the Israeli Panthers entered party politics. The Panthers elected three members to the Histadrut, or national labor union, in 1973, and they elected Panther Charlie Biton to the Knesset, where he served from 1977 to 1992.

The British and Israeli movements spread from their home bases throughout the country to other black neighborhoods. In the UK, three Panther chapters formed in London—in Notting Hill, Brixton, and Finsbury Park. Organizations in twelve other cities across England and Wales joined a Black Power network that the British Panthers created. In Israel, people in twenty-three cities and “development towns,” labor enclaves on the country’s geographic periphery, participated in Black Panther activities.

The transnational lens used in this study also helps frame African-Americans as global actors, and the US Black Panthers as active participants in the movement of Black Power politics across borders. Between the founding of the British Panthers and the beginning of the Israeli Panther movement, several US Black Panthers traveled abroad. The visit of US Panthers Elbert “Big Man” Howard and Roberta Alexander to a conference of the Japanese student movement Zengakuren in Tokyo in August 1969 led to the establishment of a “Committee to Support the Black Panther Party, Japan.”
Eldridge Cleaver founded the International Section of the USBPP in Algiers in September 1969. Cleaver also led a delegation from Algiers to North Korea in late September 1969. By May 1970, nationals of West Germany, France, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands had set up Black Panther Solidarity Committees. Connie Matthews, the Copenhagen-based US Panthers’ International Coordinator, helped create these Solidarity Committees. In July 1970, Cleaver and Elaine Brown led a second trip to North Korea, the People’s Republic of China, and North Vietnam. In each case where solidarity committees were established, these committees did not claim to be Black Panthers themselves, but supporters of an international movement.40

While the Israeli Panthers, who shouted slogans such as “Kulanu Panterim” (“We are all Panthers”) in Hebrew and sometimes in Arabic, stand out as the first indigenous Panther movement to have emerged outside of an Anglophone context, examining the Israeli and British movements in tandem yields striking parallels. Like their counterparts in Brixton, Finsbury Park, and Notting Hill, the Panthers in Israel were the second-generation youth of families who had joined a mass migration from Asia and Africa in

the late 1940s and early 1950s. In Britain, scores of these young people’s parents had
served the British Empire on the home front during World War II. Similarly, many
second-generation Mizrahi immigrants fought in Israeli uniform during the Six Day War
of 1967. Both groups believed that these wartime sacrifices should have enabled them to
lay claims to the nation and to the nature of their citizenship rights.41 Both groups first
organized in response to the city police’s harassment of youth in their neighborhoods.
Their respective critiques expanded from an opposition to police brutality to systemic
goals of improving housing, education, welfare, and employment for blacks. Both of the
nation-states in which these groups emerged relied upon the US for military stability and
economic support during this period, such that the British and Israeli Panthers saw
confrontations with their respective governments as acts of resistance to American
Empire.42

But the identifications of the Israeli Black Panthers and their British counterparts
also differed in several ways.43 First, at the time of their movement, Eastern Jews
comprised a plurality of Israel’s population, unlike black Britons in 1971, who comprised

41 Historian Adriane Lentz-Smith’s examination of African Americans’ World War I military service and
claims to citizenship inspires this assertion. Lentz-Smith, Freedom Struggles: African Americans and
42 See Warren Bass, Support Any Friend: Kennedy’s Middle East and the Making of the US-Israel Alliance
(New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006); John Dumbrell, A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations
in the Cold War and After (New York: MacMillan, 2001); Douglas Little, American Orientalism: The
United States and the Middle East Since 1945 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004); William
Roger Louis and Hedley Bull, eds. The ‘Special Relationship’: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945 (New
York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987); McAlister, Epic Encounters; William B. Quandt, Peace Process:
American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press and the
Brookings Institution, 2005); David Reynolds, "A 'Special Relationship'? America, Britain and the
43 Taking Brubaker and Cooper’s claim that identity is too ambiguous a term, I choose to focus on the ways
in which the Panthers identified and represented themselves. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper,
only two percent of that country’s population. Although racialized as black and treated as second-class citizens, Arab Jews were not in fact a minority group within Israel. Second, the Israeli Panthers articulated their oppression in terms of spatial exclusion. Musrara, the neighborhood where the Panthers began their movement, was a slum that up until the 1967 Six Day War lay on the border between Israeli West Jerusalem and Jordanian East Jerusalem. Thus, the Israeli Panthers experienced a sense of existing not only on the figurative social periphery, but also on the literal margins of Israeli geography. Finally, the members of the Israeli Black Panther Party were of course Jewish, and therefore religiously the same as the dominant power in Israeli society, as opposed to the British Panthers who comprised a number of religious backgrounds. 

Along with their counterparts in four other countries, the people of Musrara and Notting Hill who appropriated the Black Panther identity transformed Black Power into a global movement. These groups deployed the strategies and rhetoric of Black Power to express their connections to the history and struggles of African-Americans. Their white-dominated British and Israeli societies had refused to acknowledge that collective oppression existed at home. Thus, Black Power embodied the intertwined histories and destinies of people of color around the world in ways that only its participants truly understood when they chose to call themselves Black Panthers. Collectively, these groups offered their local stories, struggles, and successes in the generative process of creating a Black Power movement. Over time, these Panthers adopted stronger class critiques,

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forming or envisioning alliances with working-class whites in Britain and with the
Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Israel/Palestine.

The Global Translation of Black Power Politics

Over the years of their main activity, 1966 to 1972, the US Black Panthers marked
two major changes in their ideology. In its formative years of 1966 and 1967, US Black
Panther Party developed arguments for racial solidarity and Black Nationalism with
elements of a Marxist class analysis. In 1968, the Panthers’ ideology evolved into a more
explicit call for class alliances through a fusion of Marxism with revolutionary
nationalism. After 1970, the BPP espoused global socialism through Huey Newton’s idea
of revolutionary intercommunalism, which they believed would overthrow US capitalism
and imperialism.45

In the course of these ideological developments, the US Black Panthers
increasingly offered their British and Israeli counterparts a language with which they
could make sense of their oppression and strengthen their collective power. This
language provided the British and Israeli Panthers a foundation for developing a range of
strategies in order to challenge racial inequality. The USBPP used the terms anti-
imperialism, anti-capitalism, anti-fascism, slavery, colonization, and pigs (an epithet for
the police) to identify the problems that they believed made racism a foundation of
American society. British and Israeli Panthers, in turn, deployed this language in
inventive new ways to describe their own experiences of oppression as racist. The British
and Israeli Panthers publicly adopted Black Panther politics by sporting bodily markers

Movement,” in Peniel E. Joseph, ed. The Black Power Movement: Re-Thinking the Civil Rights-Black
such as military jackets, badges, berets, and raised fists, as well as deploying Black Power’s related political vocabulary. With the widespread circulation of these visual symbols as markers of Black Power politics, potential supporters and affiliates could identify Black Panthers on the streets of Jerusalem and London.

Whereas many Britons and Israelis remained silent on domestic racial issues, both Panther groups changed the tenor of the public conversation around race. They marshaled their experiences of ethnic discrimination and marginalized class status to develop fluid concepts of race and to envision their communities’ collective advancement. Furthermore, in ‘speaking truth to racism,’ the British and Israeli movements tapped into a framework, that of American racial formations, which had global resonance among potential sympathizers as well as antagonists. Thus, the British and Israeli cohorts’ identifications as Black Panthers elevated the level of public attention to their concerns.

International Black Panthers were not the only people to appropriate from African-American politics outside the United States; this study also examines how narratives about black politics traveled around and outside the Atlantic in mainstream discourses.⁴⁶ White Britons and Israelis dealt with anxieties over migration by crafting and interrogating narratives about African-Americans. These narratives framed the United States as a pariah for race relations globally, against which elites could frame their own countries as tolerant and moderate. These visions alternately portrayed African-Americans as entertainers, civilized activists for liberal rights, and violent Black Power

advocates. Such constructions enabled white Britons and Israelis to ignore racial problems at home.

US Panther Chief of Staff David Hilliard asserted the Panthers’ global resonance when in December 1969 he claimed that the US Black Panthers had created, “an international language in the pigs.” Writing in The Black Panther newspaper, Hilliard, the Panthers’ Chief of Staff, contended that the word ‘pig,’ an epithet for the police, conveyed an international message that was, “the common language for oppressed people.” Hilliard argued that the term pig’s ubiquity demonstrated that the Panthers had, “transcended the language barrier.” Pigs, Hilliard said, were “fascists, warmongers, capitalists, all of these names are common names because this reflects a common ideology.” Hilliard recognized that the Panthers’ antipathy toward the racist policing of black neighborhoods in Oakland was emblematic of their broader oppositions to capitalism and state-sanctioned violence. The term pig also offers an example of the uneven circulation of aspects of Black Power, as the Israeli Panthers did not use the word. The laws of kashrut forbade the consumption and handling of pork products, and the use of the term might have been seen as blasphemous.

The Panthers’ international language reached people through images, in places as different from Oakland as Tehran, Iran. In an early 1990s oral history interview, Iranian-British feminist Mandana Hendessi recalled that, “Obviously [in Iran] we knew about the Black Panther movement in America through television… We had all these images of

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black people fighting the police." These images spoke volumes to Hendessi and other Iranians about police harassment and state formations relative to people of color globally. The accompanying news commentary, Hendessi recalled, was “sympathetic enough to make people feel support for the black movement.” Given Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s control of the Iranian media, the images of ‘black people fighting the police,’ and the sympathetic tone with which journalists described them reminded Iranian citizens that their own domestic troubles paled in comparison to those of African-Americans. Here, the Iranian state deployed a narrative of African-American suffering in order to silence concerns about domestic inequality.

But Hendessi’s recollection also pointed to the uneven process of translating Black Power politics abroad; that is, stories about the US Panthers, whether they appeared in state-sanctioned media or leftist political journals, often focused only on the perceived violence of the Panthers, obscuring or subjugating the organization’s extensive community work, including its free breakfast, health, women’s, and educational programs. In many ways, the international media failed to adequately explain the US Panthers’ role, leaving images of Panther-police confrontations and of Panthers toting

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50 An article in the Palestinian Liberation Organization’s magazine, Al Fath, also focused on Panther violence. The authors explained that in order to “end exploitation and rebuke persecution and racial discrimination,” the Black Panthers claimed that, “the only important way is violence and revolution.” Furthermore, Al Fath read civil rights and Black Power as dichotomous struggles, arguing that, “The Black Panther Movement put forward the slogan of black violence and force rather than the slogans of civil equality and freedom for Negros.”

"من أجل إنهاء الاستغلال وانتهي و الاضطهاد و التمييز العنصري أمرت الزنوج بان الكلام宝宝 لابب هو العنف والثورة. حركة الفهود السودا وطرحا شعار العنف والقوة السوداء بدلاً من شعارات المساواة العدالة و الحرية للزنوج.

guns to speak for themselves. To be fair, the Panthers consciously constructed what American Studies scholar Jane Rhodes has called their “fear factor,” an intentionally militant style highlighted by dramatic confrontations with state authority. In the absence of additional information about their programs and community engagements, however, depictions of the Panthers dressed in military-style clothing and carrying guns fueled the misperception that they were solely bent on violence.51 Such misperceptions even existed among a few British and Israeli Panthers, demonstrating that media depictions of the Panthers also distorted the adoption of Black Power among some of its emulators.

But the British and Israeli Panthers were not simply receivers of Black Panther language and identity; they appropriated these identities and developed their own progressive political aims. Although the British and Israeli Panthers took some information about their US inspiration from the mass media, most of these would-be Black Panthers parties built their knowledge by reading books, attending lectures, and developing personal relationships with African-Americans or white British and Israeli sympathizers. The British and Israeli Panthers also created their own definitions of the movement. They coordinated protest events that creatively illustrated their politics and performed day-to-day acts of service tailored to the needs of their communities at grassroots level. Both groups received national attention in the media and at the highest levels of government. That both Panther groups accomplished all of this under a name that had been commodified and exported as violent complicates readings of American

popular culture abroad as monolithic and unidirectional, reminding us that these Panther emulators actively shaped their own narratives and built their own movements.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{Taking Black Internationalism to the Streets}

The US Black Panthers linked their everyday experiences of discrimination on the streets of US cities to the politics of American imperial expansion, and they envisioned a global coalition of people of color who would bring all empires to an end. This worldview grew out of a long tradition of radical black internationalism in which African-Americans imagined an alliance that reached beyond the African diasporic context to embrace nonwhite people everywhere.\textsuperscript{53} These ideas stretched back to the nineteenth century with Martin Delany, and to W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey in the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{54} In the early years of the Cold War, President Harry Truman and African-American liberal civil rights leaders reshaped notions of race and of African-American political strategies. Their new definitions promoted the securing of rights at home as an affirmation of America’s fitness for global leadership.\textsuperscript{55}

However, in the mid-1960s, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist critiques of the global political economy regained a central position in the African-American Freedom Struggle, thanks in large part to US Black Panther critiques. Many African-American

\textsuperscript{52} With regards to popular perceptions of American culture abroad, see Jenny Burman, \textit{Transnational Yearnings: Tourism, Migration, and the Diasporic City} (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 2011), 84.


activists once again conceptualized the black liberation movement in the US as part of a
global human rights struggle. Historian Robyn Spencer claims that, “More than any other
group... it was the Black Panther Party that led the way to internationalism as a sustained
programmatic expression of the black liberation struggle in the United States.”56 For the
first time the US Black Panthers took this tradition out of the preserve of intellectuals and
activated its politics on the streets of urban neighborhoods. With an organic, pragmatic
approach, the Panthers promoted anti-imperialism at the grassroots, deploying
internationalist politics in ways that represented everyday people’s concerns.

This dissertation also recenters the internationalist politics of several African-
American Freedom Struggle activists and organizations. African-American leaders
including Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, Bayard Rustin, Malcolm X, and
John Lewis visited the UK between 1964 and 1966, offering a range of perspectives on
internationalizing the Black Freedom Struggle. In addition, SNCC’s International Affairs
office in New York, which James Forman founded following SNCC’s demise over the
years 1965 to 1967, proved critical to the formation of the British Panthers. Although
little is known about the International Affairs office’s achievements, two British Panthers
interacted with people there before forming their movement in London, demonstrating
that this small splinter group influenced black politics abroad.57 Similarly, a British
Panther corresponded with and drew great inspiration from Robert F. Williams while

56 Robyn Spencer, "Merely One Link in the Worldwide Revolution," 216. See also Wilkins, "’In the Belly
of the Beast.’"
57 Fanon Che Wilkins, "The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa Before the Launching of
Press, 1981); Wesley C. Hogan, Many Minds One Heart: SNCC’s Dream for a New America (Chapel Hill,
Williams lived in China. The British Panthers emerged following the visit of Stokely Carmichael to the UK in the summer of 1967. At that point, Carmichael was no longer aligned with SNCC and he had not yet made his short-lived alliance with the Black Panthers. An Israeli Panther met with Angela Davis in Europe, and another British Panther corresponded with Eldridge and Kathleen Neal Cleaver while they led the International Wing of the USBPP in Algiers. Both King and SNCC also declined invitations to Israel, indicating their internationalist perspectives were not simply fueled by a desire for travel or media exposure. Tracing these interactions and their impacts on would-be British and Israeli Black Panthers recasts African-American activists’ periods of exile as moments in which they actively shaped black internationalist politics abroad.

**The Historiography of the Black Panthers, Internationalized**

The myriad activities, organizations, and political manifestations of the African-American Freedom Struggle resonated transnationally in broader and deeper ways than historians have previously recognized; this dissertation reveals specifically that a number of Black Power activists offered models and inspiration for the formation of grassroots movements abroad. The history of civil rights in America from the outside has been explored in the literatures on diplomatic history and international relations; however, the addition of a bottom-up perspective to this transnational vantage point highlights people encountering and adapting American mass culture for progressive political aims.

Examinations of the transnational influence of the African-American Freedom Struggle at

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58 On Williams in China, see Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie.*
59 Historian Robin D.G. Kelley emphasizes the need for a transnational lens in order to assess the full impact of Black Power. Kelley asserts that while the genesis of Black Power is often presented as an evolution in postwar black politics, that typology obscures many aspects of the movement in part because it is, “too limited to the domestic sphere, to the U.S. nation-state.” Kelley, *Freedom Dreams,* 62.
a grassroots level reveal stories of everyday people’s efforts that interrupt the dominant thrust of co-optation present in the historiography of Cold War Civil Rights. By bringing together British, Israeli, and US Panther activists as co-equal actors, my study contributes to twentieth century US history and presents broader implications for transnational and global history.

Historical accounts of internationalism and the American black freedom struggle have largely focused on the US’s diplomatic efforts during the so-called “classical phase” of civil rights up until 1965. Sustained accounts of the Black Panthers do not appear in this literature because the Panthers appealed outside official state discourse, while diplomatic bodies often avoided acknowledging the Panthers in public. In order to capture the full extent of the Panthers’ impact, their history cannot be placed directly into the existing framework of Cold War state building.

Legal historian Mary Dudziak’s *Cold War, Civil Rights* provides the iconic example of the work in this subfield. In the book, Dudziak argues that, “The events that drive this narrative are the events that captivated the world. This focus on particular events and often on prominent leaders should not be seen as an effort to privilege a top-

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down focus as ‘the’ story of civil rights history.”61 Here Dudziak explains that the international story of the civil rights movement often focuses on events and people who made worldwide headlines, rather than the individual men and women who worked at the movement’s grassroots. She clarifies that, “The international perspective is not a substitute for the rich body of civil rights scholarship but another dimension that sheds additional light on those important and well-told stories.” My work responds to Dudziak’s instructive points by demonstrating that an international perspective not only sheds additional light on well-told stories, but that it can also reveal new stories of the everyday struggles that made civil rights an active global movement on the ground. In order to flesh out a transnational perspective on the civil rights movement, I argue that scholars need to look at other nations not just at the level of the state but also from within, at the responses of local people to global processes and events.

Histories of transnational social movements interrupt diplomatic histories as they frame local activists as integral actors who harness global flows of media, travel, kin networks, and knowledge, powerful tools that are often in the quiver of the status quo. This dissertation transforms our vision of civil rights abroad by giving agency to people on the ground and to their ideological and material achievements. It also recognizes the significant impact that the US Panthers had outside the United States, despite US government efforts to silence and destroy the party. With this approach, everyday people in Jerusalem and London narrate the “events that captivated the world” from their perspective. Their stories fashion underground narratives of civil rights struggles and

61 Dudziak, Cold War Civil Rights, 14.
state formation that have remained obscured by a focus on international diplomacy.\textsuperscript{62}

Local people’s narratives reshape the understanding of these transnational dynamics and global impulses from the ground up.

Efforts by historians of Black Power to trace these transnational dynamics have addressed the travel of black nationalist expatriates, the work of the US-based African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC), and the Black Panther Party’s official efforts to gain support in Algeria, Cuba, and the Bahamas.\textsuperscript{63} One of a handful of works available on international Panther groups, Kathy Lothian’s article on the Australian Panthers, has examined in-depth the history of a Panther party that formed spontaneously. While Lothian maintains that initially Aboriginal Panthers were drawn to the visual and rhetorical strategies of the US Panthers rather than to their revolutionary ideology or tactics, she concludes that the US Black Panther Party’s most lasting influence on the Australian Panthers was not the adoption of the Black Panther name and program, but instead the US practice of founding community programs.\textsuperscript{64} While Lothian attempts to separate Panther community programs from their militant style, I argue that the two are


mutually supportive, as the Panthers’ ideologies about protecting and increasing the welfare of the black community were embedded in their wearing of military-style clothing. These programs would likely not have reached Australian Aborigines without the Panthers’ prominent, media-savvy style.

Most other studies of the Black Panther Party outside the United States focus on the US Party’s activities in developing countries and pan-Africanist movements. Kathleen Cleaver charts the creation of the first international wing of the Black Panther Party in Algeria in 1969. John McCartney demonstrates the direct influence of the USBPP on the Vanguard Nationalists and the Socialist Party in the Bahamas. Ruth Reitan traces the relationship between Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver and the Castro regime, paying particular attention to Cuba as a haven for revolutionary black exiles from the US. Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar shows how the Party influenced the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican nationalist group that was active in the US from 1966 to 1972. Black Power and specifically the Panthers clearly developed a foothold in the politics of the Third World. However, in order to understand and contextualize the cultural and political appeal of Black Power, this narrative privileging official party efforts to internationalize needs to be expanded.

While this dissertation offers the first extended examination of the transnational relationships among the British, Israeli, and US Black Panthers, the histories of the British and Israeli Black Panthers could easily stand on their own as potential

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65 Cleaver, "Back to Africa."
interventions in their respective national historiographies. In fact, my examination of the Israeli Panthers builds upon the critical foundation of sociologist Deborah Bernstein’s 1976 dissertation, “The Black Panthers of Israel, 1971-1972: Contradictions and Protest in the Process of Nation-Building,” in which she relayed the findings of her participant observation study. Additionally, historian Oz Frankel and anthropologist Sami Shalom Chetrit have published work on the Israeli Panthers, which I discuss in Chapter 5. These local studies, necessarily limited in scope, demonstrate the need for work that connects local and national stories to transnational histories and that helps to explain the nature of the international influence of the Black Panther Party. This dissertation also contributes to a new line of scholarship that explores discourses of national belonging among black Britons in the post-WWII era, as well as the relationships among black Britons and African Americans, which I discuss in Chapters 1 and 2.

In adopting the name and politics of the US Panthers, the British and Israeli movements continued the anticolonial struggles waged in their home countries while living in the metropole in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The British and Israeli

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indicated their solidarity by participating in a range of anticolonial movements, including those in their respective countries of origin. The British Panthers’ Trinidad and Tobago protest offers one example of this transnational political engagement. As historian Davarian Baldwin writes, “The Panthers’ engagement with the US empire of transnational capital took place precisely through their manipulation and production of mass cultural products and ideas at that particular moment. In their hands, blackness became the conduit for a cultural politics of decolonization, connecting black ghettos to the Third World.”

In this study, I emphasize the full participation of black Britons and Israelis in adapting from Black Power, but also in generating new ideas and programs of their own, particularly those related to decolonization and empires.

As a social and cultural history, this study illuminates new complexities within the Black Power Movement by portraying the Black Panthers as a transnational cultural force with specific political impacts in the UK and Israel.

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Black British cultural critic Stuart Hall also illustrates the need for a consideration of American hegemony in this project. In his seminal essay, “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular,” Hall argues that, “To write a history of the culture of the popular classes exclusively from inside those classes, without understanding the ways in which they are constantly held in relation with the institutions of dominant cultural production, is not to live in the twentieth century.” Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing the ‘Popular,’” in *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1981), 228.

in tandem force a reconsideration of the definition of black in Black Power. They present a construction of blackness that people who were not considered black in the US and African diasporic contexts appropriated. The case of Israel offers transformative strength as it adds the racialization of ethnicity to the working definition of Panther blackness. In particular, the Israeli Panther case forces scholars to consider blackness as an identification claimed by people experiencing class oppression on the basis of ethnicity.

An inherent tension I have observed in transnational studies of the United States frames a specific intervention of my dissertation. On the one hand, a number of recent works have examined the diffusion of American popular culture abroad vis-à-vis the economic and cultural hegemony of the United States in the postwar era. These works have argued that the triumph of American consumerism over bourgeois European society provided the critical American vehicle for the twentieth century turn to empire. In contrast, other United States historians writing from a transnational perspective argue that the state played the crucial role in the ascendancy of the United States into global dominance. Although these two viewpoints need not be mutually exclusive, what appears to be needed is an explicit effort to bring the perspectives of the government and mass culture together in order to better understand how state formation worked in the ideological, constantly-negotiated era of the Cold War.


The critical contribution of this work is to establish an understanding of American state formation that takes place outside the United States but with the help of American hegemony. Through examining the Panthers via the routes of popular culture and grassroots organizing, the lives of everyday people are brought back into view. By choosing cases where the US has clear imperial interests, the Panthers’ critiques present tangible challenges to their nation-states, and by extension, to the United States.

This dissertation draws on quantitative, qualitative, and visual materials gathered in five countries. These include manuscripts, photographs, surveillance files, and court cases from twenty-four public archives in Britain, Canada, Israel, and the US; oral histories conducted with fourteen Black Panthers and eight other activists, filmmakers, and journalists in Britain, Egypt, Israel, and the US; and the personal photographic archives and ephemera of four Black Panthers in Britain, Israel, and the US. My interviews of British and Israeli Panthers and access to the images of the British Panthers’ photographer inform my focus on the self-representations of global Panther activists. Together, these sources enable the reconstruction of narratives about people who have often been silenced in their respective national historiographies. Or in Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s terms, these sources enable the renewal of black Britons and Israelis’ claims to truth. These British and Israeli Black Panthers’ histories reflect an investment in foregrounding the remarkable transnational achievements of the US Black Panthers, and in recovering global black history as a revolutionary phenomenon.

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77 Robert Hill, a founding member of Montreal’s Caribbean Conference Committee on West Indian Affairs, recalled that in the mid-1960s the recuperation of black history was a revolutionary gesture. Robert Hill, as cited in Sean W. Mills, “The Empire Within: Montreal, the Sixties, and the Forging of a Radical Imagination” (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 2007), 180.
Structure

This narrative unfolds through five chapters. Chapter 1, “Becoming ‘Black Immigrants’ in Britain and Israel, 1948-67,” reconstructs the early post-war era as a period of global mass migration fueled by the end of the British Empire, the expansion of American Empire, and the founding of the State of Israel. Concomitantly, Britain and Israel developed domestic racial categories that drew on narratives about US racial formations. The second chapter, “Expeditions: Black Britons reconnoiter the African-American movement, 1964-69,” examines the travels, studies, and writings of black Britons as they independently forged paths to understand the black freedom struggle and their relationships to African-Americans and the African Diaspora.

Chapters 1 and 2 set the stage for the initial appropriation of Black Power outside the United States in Britain in 1967. In the third chapter, “‘The only force that can quell it is International Black Power.’ An anti-imperialist Black Panther Movement materializes in London, 1967-69,” Biafran playwright Obi Egbuna founded the British Black Power Movement and, following a series of interactions between black Britons and Stokely Carmichael in 1967, the British Black Panthers. Chapter 4, “‘Black Oppressed People All Over the World Are One’: The British Panthers, shadow governance, and grassroots internationalism, 1969-1973,” details the efforts of the highly active British Black Panther Movement, illuminating their approach to organizing above and below the nation, a concept that I call grassroots internationalism. The fifth chapter, “‘A Jolt to Jews Both Here and Abroad’: The Israeli Black Panther Party and the empire of transnational capital, 1971-1977,” interrogates the circulation of Black Power outside of the Atlantic and African diasporic contexts. This chapter focuses in particular on how the
Israeli Panthers built a political coalition of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa and their efforts to garner the support of American Jews who held significant influence in Israeli domestic politics.

The epilogue, “The Egyptian Revolution, J14 protests, and London riots of 2011: Genealogies of activism” considers the relevance of the African-American Freedom Struggle in a transnational context in 2011, a year of global upheaval during which I gathered dissertation sources in the field. In that year, I observed revolutionary politics in Egypt, the United Kingdom, and Israel first-hand. In the epilogue, I explore the impact of the US civil rights movement on the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. I also examine the relationships between British and Israeli Black Panthers and the subsequent generation of black activists in their respective countries. This generation reemerged publicly in response to the London riots of August 6 to 10, 2011 and at the Tel Aviv housing protests of July and August 2011, also known as the J14 movement. In both the UK and Israel, contemporary activists turned to their respective country’s Black Panthers for guidance and organizing advice, reaffirming the importance of this earlier cadre of internationalists to the trajectory of black global politics.
Chapter 1: Becoming ‘Black Immigrants’ in Britain and Israel, 1948-67

The year 1948 marked a turning point in each of three intertwined histories: the transition from British to American global hegemony, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the history of global migration. In March 1948, the United States’ Marshall Plan came into effect, funneling an estimated $1.3 billion of economic recovery funds into war-ravaged Britain (and an estimated $3.6 billion elsewhere in Western Europe). In enabling postwar reconstruction and boosting trade, the Plan fueled America’s economic dominance of Western Europe and halted the seemingly inexorable westward advance of Communism.¹

Two months later and some two thousand miles away from Britain, officers at the British High Commission in Jerusalem lowered the Union Jack, and without a formal transfer of power, Britain ended its mandate over Palestine on May 14. Britain had decided to relinquish its mandate due in part to diplomatic pressure from the United States, where since 1945 American Jews had donated $400 million for the relief, development, and defense of Eretz Yisrael.²

On the same day that Britain withdrew from Palestine, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, declared the establishment of the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion’s proclamation inaugurated a wave of mass migration, the ingathering of the

¹ This $1.3 billion reflects the amount the US provided Britain in the Plan’s first year only. In total, the US

The British government had also decided to relinquish control because of its growing awareness that the Palestine question had pan-Arab support, and thus threatened Britain’s relationships with its other Middle East interests. See Avraham Sela, “Britain and the Palestine Question, 1945-48: The Dialectic of Regional and International Constraints,” in *Demise of the British Empire in the Middle East: Britain’s Responses to Nationalist Movements, 1943-55*, ed. Michael Joseph Cohen and Martin Kolinsky (Portland, Or.: Psychology Press, 1998), 221.
Jewish Diaspora that Zionists had envisioned since the late nineteenth century. The Holocaust genocide had decimated the European Jewish population such that the numbers of Ashkenazi olim (immigrants) were insufficient to fulfill the young country’s needs, so Zionists began to recruit heavily from Arab Muslim countries.

On July 30, the UK also opened the door to large-scale migration when Prime Minister Clement Attlee’s Labour government passed the Nationality Act, which entrenched the right of any Commonwealth citizen, including those in the Caribbean and South Asia, to live and work in Britain. Thus, in 1948 Israel and the UK received significant capital influxes that solidified their economic dependence on the United States, and both countries instigated mass migrations from parts of Africa, Asia, (and in the UK, the West Indies) (see Figures 1 and 2). These immigrants would provide the labor to ensure their respective country’s future growth.


Within these related contexts of American hegemony, British decolonization, and mass migration, indigenous Black Panther movements emerged in the UK and Israel between 1967 and 1971. In this chapter, through the use of oral history testimonies from British and Israeli Black Panthers, and supported by governmental and popular culture
sources, I examine the racialization of black Britons and Middle Eastern and North African Jews in order to establish several reasons why Black Panther movements circulated to Israel and the UK. As these two communities took on the same name for their protest movements, in this chapter I place them side-by-side in order to trace broader themes and to illustrate similarities between the societies into which these immigrants arrived.

As with subsequent chapters, the British case will be examined here in greater detail than the Israeli case, which enables a comparative analysis. This side-by-side examination is not intended to collapse distinctions between the histories of Israel and the UK, nor is it intended to indicate that the Israeli case is less significant than the British. Rather, this investigation yields key overarching themes that help explain why Black Panther movements developed in certain countries. While exhaustive explanations of the racialization of Eastern Jews and black Britons are beyond the scope of this chapter, the theme and examples raised ground the transnational Black Panther movement in a historical framework that reflects shared experiences of migration and displacement.  

In the 1950s, both Israel and the UK struggled to define an optimal means to achieving economic growth. Britain had suffered considerable wartime losses at the heart of its industrial centers, but many Britons retained the illusory belief that its economic

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growth only ranked second in the world to the United States.\(^7\) The UK was also in the midst of losing its territories in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. The colonies had provided cheap raw materials that fueled British industry at Empire’s height. As a new state, Israel lacked well-established industries and the infrastructure to support them. Thus over Israel’s first decade, the government worked to find the optimal level of state intervention in the economy.\(^8\) In the aftermath of the 1948 War, Israel experienced a critical labor shortage, fueled not only by a need for workers for agriculture and industry, but also for the country’s growing military and security machine.\(^9\)

In order to stimulate growth, both Israel and the UK turned abroad, recruiting new laborers. Specifically, they looked to people of color with whom the country had an affiliative relationship; both countries envisioned these respective groups as their new working classes. “The Empire was falling,” Ray Eurquhart explained, “so somebody came up with a way to prop it up by targeting somebody of color.”\(^10\) For the UK, these potential laborers were former colonial subjects in West Africa, South Asia, and the West Indies. Israel imagined its new working class as Eastern Jews who lived in the Middle East and North Africa, many of whom were Zionists. Eastern immigrants were expected to become the working-class base in rural and urban areas and to be absorbed by the labor


\(^10\) Raymond Eurquhart, interview by author, February 14, 2007, Durham, NC, digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 51:00.
market in industry, agricultural, and service positions.\textsuperscript{11} This would free up the supposedly higher-skilled, better-educated Ashkenazim to lead the professional class, solidifying them as a governing class.\textsuperscript{12}

As mentioned above, Israel and the UK took steps to inaugurate these groups’ mass migrations, but a number of other factors influenced potential migrants in their decisions to leave home. Britain’s former colonies had large labor forces, but they lacked sufficient means to produce. Thus, many people wanted to travel to the metropole where they believed they would find employment.\textsuperscript{13} These people’s long-term identifications with the British Empire also prompted their migration. For Israel, many potential Eastern immigrants had encountered growing levels of anti-Semitism and poverty in their home countries.\textsuperscript{14} Many potential \textit{olim} believed that migration would bring them religious freedom and prosperity. In broad terms, the movement of these people constituted an ingathering of Britain’s imperial subjects and Israel’s Jewish diaspora.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{The Great Migrations to Britain and Israel, 1948-1967}

“The question of race was there from the first minute,” recalled Darcus Howe nearly five decades after migrating to the UK.\textsuperscript{16} In 1962, nineteen-year-old Leighton Radford Howe and his twenty-year-old sister Carolyn arrived at London’s Waterloo Station, by way of a boat train that they had taken after completing a voyage from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Baruch Kimmerling, \textit{The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military} (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2001), 71-72.
\item \textsuperscript{15} By “imperial diasporas,” I refer to people with whom the UK and Israel had historical relationships of belonging, be they colonial or ethnoreligious, but over whose countries the UK and Israel did not have or no longer had colonial power.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Darcus Howe, interview by author, Croydon, South London, UK, July 28, 2011, digital audio recording in author’s possession, Part I of II (hereafter Howe I), 3:00.
\end{itemize}
Trinidad. On Waterloo’s crowded platform, the Howe children reunited with their mother Lucille, a teacher, and father, the Reverend Cipriani Howe, an Anglican priest and the former head teacher of the Eckel Village School in rural Trinidad. The Howe parents had preceded their children in migrating from Trinidad to the UK.

As Leighton, who later took the name Darcus, recalled, his parents immediately made him and his sister aware that they would appear different to many people in London. While still on the train station platform, the Howe parents told their children “not to walk at night alone. And if you have a white girlfriend, let her walk about four paces in front of you,” Darcus Howe remembered. “That was two issues before you even spent a day here.” By cautioning their children about the tense racial atmosphere in the city where they had arrived, Lucille and Cipriani made clear to Carolyn and Darcus that their skin color, unremarkable in Trinidad, set them apart in their new home. Darcus and Carolyn were now black young adults living in a predominantly white, race-conscious country. Darcus’s awareness of this “question of race” in Britain would resonate through many of his decisions in early adulthood: his return to Trinidad to study political activism under his great uncle, the Caribbean historian CLR James; his membership in the anti-racist, anti-imperialist British Black Panther Movement; and his abandonment of the

19 Darcus Rhett Radford Leighton Howe, affidavit, Trinidad and Tobago, Reg. no. 1872/89, 8 February 1989, in DHP; Box 4; Folder 1.
20 Howe I, 3:30.
Panther movement in order to edit *Race Today*, a magazine dedicated to raising radical political awareness among Britain’s black communities.

After World War II, as Howe explained, “thousands of us from the Caribbean flock[ed] to England.”²¹ Howe was part of an unprecedented mass migration of Commonwealth citizens from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. While in 1951, the estimated size of the non-European ethnic minority population of the UK was 80,000, by 1961 it had mushroomed to 500,000. By 1971, the number had grown to 1.5 million, nearly nineteen times the population in 1951.²²

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the vast majority of West Indian migrant workers had remained within the Caribbean or traveled to the United States.²³ The Caribbean was included within the US’s generous British visa quota, so entry was fairly easy for those who could pass tests in basic literacy and math, skills that had been taught to varying degrees in British West Indian schools.²⁴

After 1954, the US’s McCarran-Walter Immigration came into effect, radically redirecting Caribbean immigration from the US to the UK and illustrating how the shift from British to American global hegemony reshaped the lives and opportunities of people in the New Commonwealth.²⁵ In 1952, responding to domestic pressures to reduce black

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²¹ Howe I, 02:45.
²³ During this period, the term British West Indies referred not only to islands still considered British Overseas Territories today (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and the Turks and Caicos Islands) but also to former British colonies now known as the Anglophone Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago).
²⁵ The term “New Commonwealth” was a British euphemism for those countries of the former British Empire that had majority non-white populations and who gained their independence after World War II.
immigration, the US Congress had passed the McCarran Walter Act, overriding a veto by President Truman. The act reinforced the national origins system that the US had begun in its 1924 Immigration Act. Among its various restrictions, the Act parceled out the West Indies from the generous UK visa quota and it imposed a maximum of 800 immigrants per West Indian country per year who would be allowed to settle in the US. Thus, the Act forced potential migrants to find an alternative destination. In 1951, roughly 1,000 immigrants arrived in the UK from the West Indies, while in 1954, the first year after McCarran-Walter restrictions became active, 24,000 made that same journey.

In July 1962, the UK instituted new immigration provisions under its Commonwealth Immigrants Act. The Act established a voucher system that ranked immigrants in three tiers based on desired job skills and it prompted a large influx of people, of whom Darcus Howe was one, who migrated in 1962 in order to beat the ban. The voucher system led to a rise in the number of South Asian immigrants relative to those coming from the West Indies. Between 1961 and 1971 the South Asian population

The term differentiated these nations from the “Old Commonwealth” countries of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, who had majority white populations and had received independence earlier. David Mason, Race and Ethnicity in Modern Britain (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 33, 130fn3.


29 Fryer, Staying Power, 372.
of Britain grew from an estimated 112,000 to 516,000, with Indians making up the greatest number of South Asians, at 375,000.30

Although they arrived from different corners of the world, New Commonwealth immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s had common experiences with the British and American Empires’ systematic subjugations of people of color. They encountered immigration policies in the UK and the US that suggested they were unwanted in either country. These immigrants also shared experiences where white Britons homogenized their identity as “coloured” whether they had arrived from Kingston or Bombay.

Upon their arrival, these immigrants found that Britain was not prepared to absorb them. The government took actions to discourage other potential migrants from making the journey.31 The Jamaican immigrants who arrived aboard the Empire Windrush in June 1948 were placed in substandard housing “under conditions that might be better described as internment,” according to historian Kathleen Paul.32 In 1949, Clement Attlee’s Labour government passed legislation that enabled officials to refuse arrival to immigrants who stated that they were coming to the UK to seek medical treatment from the state’s National Health Service, which provided free health care.33 In 1954, Winston Churchill’s Conservative government announced that it was ending subsidies for local housing authorities, forcing local governments to raise funds for public housing. The government also instituted a points system that required potential council housing

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30 These figures are estimates that take into account the fact that from 1951 to 1981, port-of-entry figures were based on an immigrant’s birthplace, so some who were born outside South Asia but who had grown up there and immigrated from there would not have been counted. Ceri Peach, "Demographics of BrAsian Settlement, 1951-2001," in A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain, ed. Virinder S Kalra, Nasreen Ali and S. Sayyid (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008), 168-69.

31 Paul, Whitewashing Britain, 111, as quoted in Bashi, “Globalized Anti-blackness,” 593.


residents to have lived locally for several years before they could qualify.\textsuperscript{34} Thus, just as
West Indians began arriving en masse, Britain took on conservative social policies that
limited the ways in which the British government would care for its new immigrants.

Not all of these immigrants imagined staying in the UK permanently, as
Jamaican-born Black Panther Neil Kenlock remembered. “My parents came here for
economic reasons, after the War and the problems of revenues,” Kenlock recalled. “So
they decided to come for a better life, a new life in Britain. And of course the British
government invited them to come… Winston Churchill himself started to encourage
them. So lots and lots of Caribbean people believed that they could come for a short
period, make lots and lots of money, and go back home and sustain themselves.”\textsuperscript{35} As
Kenlock revealed, his parents never returned to Jamaica; rather, in 1963, they brought
then twelve-year-old Neil and his grandparents to London to join them.\textsuperscript{36}

Neil Kenlock’s nostalgia for a home to which his parents never returned resonates
with the story of Iraqi-born Kokahvi Shemesh and his parents’ hopes to “come home” to
Israel, as Shemesh recalled. When Shemesh and his family arrived in Israel in 1950,
Shemesh remembered, “I was crying because they damaged my suit.” In 1950, the six-
year-old Shemesh spent his first moments in Israel at Tel Aviv’s Lod Airport in tears. “It
smelled horrible, but I didn’t care about the smell. I cared because they damaged my

\textsuperscript{34} Paul, \textit{Whitewashing Britain}, in Bashi, “Globalized Anti-blackness,” 594.
\textsuperscript{35} Neil Kenlock, interview by author, South London, UK, July 29, 2011, part I of IV (hereafter Kenlock I),
digital audio recording in author’s possession, 2:45.
\textsuperscript{36} Sociologist Douglas Massey characterizes experiences like Kenlock’s in his theory of migrant networks,
which “link migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through the bonds
of kinship, friendship and shared community origin.” Douglas S. Massey, “Economic Development and
International Migration in Comparative Perspective,” \textit{Population and Development Review} 14, no. 3
(1988): 383-413, as cited in Virinder S Kalra, \textit{From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks: Experiences of Migration,
Labour, and Social Change} (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2000), 54.
suit.”37 As a young child, Shemesh did not know what had caused the horrible smell and damage to his suit, but it wounded his sense of pride.

Shemesh and his family had left their home in Al ‘Amārah, an Iraqi provincial and agricultural capital, in order to emigrate to the newly established state. The Shemesh family joined a mass wave of 121,647 Iraqi olim who made aliyah to Israel in the years 1950 and 1951.38 Leaving behind what had been a thriving Jewish community for over two thousand years, the majority of these migrants left in hopes of finding home in Israel.

Shemesh wore a suit because the journey was an auspicious occasion for his family. “We [came] in class… to a new land,” he recalled.39 They had high expectations for jobs and homes. Kokhavi’s suit also reflected in part his family’s class status in Iraq, which he described as “aristocratic.”40 Shemesh recalled that his father had been a wealthy businessman and that his grandfather had had servants in his home.

As soon as the Shemeshes’ flight landed, Kokhavi recalled, “people came and sprayed us with DDT.” Historians have established that many Jews arriving from Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia during this period received DDT treatment upon

37 Kokhavi Shemesh, interview by author, translated by Rakhel Ashur Shemesh, August 10, 2011, Jerusalem, Israel, part II of II (hereafter K. Shemesh II), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 52:00.
39 Shemesh II, 50:00.
40 Kokhavi Shemesh, interview by author, translated by Rakhel Ashur Shemesh, August 8, 2011, Jerusalem, Israel, Part I of II (hereafter K. Shemesh I), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 1:36:30.
their arrival to Israel as a way of “disinfecting” or “delousing” them.\textsuperscript{41} Though scarcely discussed, the state had Israeli Defence Force (IDF) soldiers spray many arriving European and Arab immigrants during this period with the insecticide.

Despite the fact that this practice showed little concern for ethnic categories, Shemesh remembered it in a 2011 interview about his time in the Israeli Black Panthers because he connected his experience of having his suit damaged to episodes of mistreatment that have continued through his adult life. For Shemesh, the DDT spray was but one story in a narrative of the discrimination that he has experienced, in cultural, political, and economic terms.

Given Israel’s small geographic size, the successive waves of mass migration that took place between 1948 and 1972, such as that of the Iraqi Jews, quadrupled its population, leading eventually to the creation of the Eastern ethnic construct. Israel began the period with less than 800,000 inhabitants and ended it with over 3.2 million. At that time, the country’s burgeoning Jewish ethnic population fell under two umbrellas, Sephardim and Ashkenazim.\textsuperscript{42} These categories had been in existence since the pre-Zionist Old Yishuv of the nineteenth century. The term Sephardim referred to the group of Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula during the Spanish Inquisition in the late fifteenth century. They had settled mainly in the Ottoman Empire, with small numbers of them migrating to the Land of Israel. Ashkenazim referred to Jews from Germany who had settled in Eastern Europe and who spoke Yiddish. As the population of Israel

\textsuperscript{41} Segev and Weinstein explain that, “both Ashkenazi and Oriental immigrants would later remember the DDT as the symbol of humiliation.” Segev and Weinstein, 1949, the First Israelis, 119. See also Joseph Massad, “Zionism’s Internal Others: Israel and the Oriental Jews,” 56; G.N. Giladi, Discord in Zion: Conflict Between Ashkenazi & Sephardi Jews in Israel (London: Scorpion Publishing, 1990), 103.

expanded, immigrants from Western Europe and the Americas became subsumed under
the Ashkenazi label, while those from Arabic-speaking Islamic countries were labeled
Sephardic, and later, Eastern.

Two major influxes of Arab Jews prior to the Six Day War of 1967 led to the
establishment of the Eastern, and later the Mizrahi, category. From 1948 to 1951,
174,599 Jews from Iraq, Yemen, and Syria immigrated into Israel. The proportion of
Easterners among Israel’s Jews increased from roughly 12 percent in 1948 to 33 percent
in 1951. This early period of mass migration ended in the second half of 1951, partially
as a result of Israel’s successful completion of its efforts. Israel had brought the entire
Jewish communities of Yemen and Iraq into the country. The second wave of Eastern
immigration took place between 1952 and 1967, during which migrants from Arab lands
comprised roughly sixty percent of all immigrants to Israel. In this period, 246,492
immigrants arrived from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt-Sudan. By the
time this mass migration was complete, Eastern comprised the demographic plurality of
all Jews in Israel, and the country had established a new ethnic category in order to
classify them as a coherent group.

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43 Yaron Tsur, "Israeli Historiography and the Ethnic Problem," in Making Israel, ed. Benny Morris (Ann
44 Yinon Cohen, "From Haven to Heaven: Changing Patterns of Immigration to Israel." In Citizenship and
Identity: Germany and Israel in Comparative Perspective, ed. D. Levy and Y. Weiss (New York: Berghahn
‘The Africans bring their ways with them wherever they settle’: Racializing immigrants as non-white

The British and Israeli ruling classes wanted these immigrants for the labor that they would provide, but the presence of large numbers of black people in the domestic sphere presented a threat to national identity. That is, whites feared that the presence of significant black populations at home might reshape national identity away from a grounding in skin color. These ruling classes, then, saw immigrants as integral to the nation’s economic success, but undesirable in cultural terms. Consequently, the ruling establishments of both countries shaped power relations in favor of the differential accumulation of wealth among the extant white middle- and upper-classes, and they attempted to civilize, contain, and control their black immigrant populations.

Accordingly, the Israeli and British white establishments steered public attention away from the new immigrants as a way of controlling the black presence at home. In Israel, this took shape in the spatial dispersal of Eastern Jews to the peripheries of cities and of the country; in this way, Eastern Jews protected Israel’s borders while simultaneously keeping their perceived “backwardness” away from the public eye. In Britain, a number of government officials and cultural producers focused national discussions on African-Americans and the evolving civil rights-black freedom struggle in the United States.47 In foregrounding such struggles that existed only outside the country, or so they believed, the British ruling class scapegoated domestic concerns about race,

47 I employ the term “establishment” to indicate the complex process of state formation. In using this term rather than “the state,” I emphasize the UK and Israeli governments’ interactions with their respective societies not only through material influences, but also their cultural influences, heightened by the unequal, hegemonic power these governments held over black Britons and Israelis and by their greater access to tools such as the media. Joseph and Nugent’s examination of the cultural processes of state formation influences my choice to use this term. See Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, "Popular Culture and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico," in Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico, ed. Joseph and Nugent (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1994), 12-13.
ethnicity, and poverty. These patterns of indirect control mirrored those of British colonial rule, such that the British governments racialized its new black immigrants by shifting the national gaze abroad.\textsuperscript{48} In the context of the Cold War, these patterns of control served as a means for containing social problems within national boundaries and far from external view, which aligned with white liberals’ efforts to contain the African-American Freedom Struggle within the United States during the 1940s and 1950s.\textsuperscript{49}

These patterns of control racialized Eastern Jews and New Commonwealth citizens as non-white, and they portrayed those groups as having brought the excesses of the colonized world with them in their journeys to the West.\textsuperscript{50} In both countries, the white dominant classes differentiated immigrants from themselves in terms of acculturation, hygiene, intellect, criminality, and sexualization. David Ben-Gurion, then Israeli Prime Minister, viewed Eastern immigrants with disdain, comparing them to slaves and calling them “human dust.”\textsuperscript{51} In 1949, journalist Arye Gelblum wrote a series of influential articles about the new immigrants in the daily newspaper \textit{Ha’aretz}, a staple of the Israeli bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{52} In one article, he wrote that, “The primitiveness of these people is unsurpassable.” In the African areas of refugee camps, Gelblum wrote, “you find filth, gambling, drunkenness and prostitution. Many of them suffer from serious eye diseases, as well as skin and venereal diseases... The Africans bring their ways with them

\textsuperscript{48} For patterns of control of black labor in the United States, see Ronald W. Walters, \textit{Pan Africanism in the Africa Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements} (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1997), 129.


\textsuperscript{51} David Ben-Gurion, as quoted in Segev and Weinstein, \textit{1949, the First Israelis}, 157.

\textsuperscript{52} Khazzoom, \textit{Shifting Ethnic Boundaries}, 48-49.
wherever they settle.”

The camp environment within which Gelblum set this scenario, with its many casual interactions between residents, intensified readers’ fears of the rapid spread of disease.

Government officials and other white Britons characterized black Britons in similar ways, revealing white Britons’ deep insecurities about employment and wealth redistribution. London Metropolitan Police believed in the 1950s that West Indian immigrants corrupted accepted social values through their sexual relationships with prostitutes, drug dealings, and illegal drinking and gambling clubs. The Metropolitan Police’s Special Branch explained that most of the black immigrants to Clapham and Notting Hill, two areas of high black settlement, “led a normal working life” but that, “There was a small minority which led an idle life and lived on the immoral earnings of white and coloured women.”

A wave of anti-alien and anti-immigration overtook the country, with immigration opponents using such terms as ‘invasion,’ ‘swamp,’ and ‘flood,’ particularly in the urban centers of south and west London, Bradford, and Birmingham where immigrants began to settle in large numbers. A 1950 survey of race relations in Birmingham reported “patterns of provocative behavior” on the part of white employers. The black workers surveyed reported that their employers had called them ‘Niggers,’ ‘Natives,’ and ‘Sambos.’ An official familiar with the employers responded to

53 Arye Gelblum, *Haaretz*, April 22, 1949, as quoted in Segev and Weinstein, *1949, the First Israelis*, 159-161. Readers’ responses to the article included an editorial that defended Gelblum’s right to “present the facts as he saw them.” *Haaretz*, April 25, 1949, as quoted in Ibid., 349 fn. 25.
these allegations, arguing that black workers were unwilling to do jobs they considered menial, resented being ordered, and would often refuse simple requests, such as sweeping the floor. Even in these early days of postwar settlement, black Britons showed signs of resistance to prejudice and oppression.


In Britain, recently arrived immigrants found themselves in a society in flux, one struggling to recapture and redefine a sense of national identity in light of Britain’s contracting imperial power and the ascendance of American empire, and increasingly preoccupied with racial issues in the United States.58 These preoccupations enabled white Britons to maintain a sense of moral superiority. Although the United States dominated in economic, military, and cultural terms, Britain could edge out its competition in terms of civility, as the US could not, in British eyes, effectively “control its black population.”

In August 1966, Robin Haydon wrote about dispatch on Black Power in the US from the British Embassy in Washington that reported “much unrest among the negroes,” a phrase reminiscent of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slave uprisings. Haydon characterized Black Power as an amorphous slogan, a phrase that implied violence, extremism, and racism, but which never explicitly defined itself. In his view, Black Power failed to own up to a definition because it, “could lend itself to all kinds of interpretations according to the needs of the moment… attempts have been made to

define it because many people came to regard it as the battle-cry of black violence.”

Black Power brought anger that had been “smouldering in the background for a long time” into the public view and “chrystallize[d] feelings among the negroes.” He claimed that most Black Power activity was taking place outside the South, fueling fears—that he argued UK diplomats had forecast—of violence in the “ghettoes” that had absorbed African-Americans in the Great Migration.

Haydon noted that although incidents that led to Black Power demonstrations appeared to be minor, spontaneous and unplanned, the speed with which reactions to incidents of racism spread suggested a pattern and strength behind the slogan. He believed that the main motivation for Black Power was “to scare the pants off the whites and thus hasten the process of making concessions to the negro.”

Haydon concluded his dispatch with this assessment:

The Communists probably do no more than exploit wherever and whenever they can local situations in the field of civil rights. But they do not create these situations, which result far more from the irresponsible activities of plain hooligans and criminal elements working with political extremists in the fertile ground of the ghettos, where conditions are sometimes unbelievably squalid: much worse, for example, than anything I saw during three years in the Sudan; and resembling more the filth and misery and poverty of the poorer Chinese quarters of Bangkok and parts of Calcutta. . . The great and essential difference between the position of the black man in the United States and in Africa is of course that independence for the American negro is not and cannot be the goal, although there still seems to be talk of separatism among the less responsible elements.

Here, Haydon cast the same eye on African-Americans that other British diplomats had cast on the ‘rebellious colonies’ in the process of decolonization. His claim that the living
conditions for African-Americans were worse than the Sudan and like the poorest parts of
Bangkok and Calcutta firmly placed the US within the framework of British colonialism
and cast the US as yet another rebellious child who could not succeed on its own. The
United States, with its racial and socioeconomic problems, could not be like the UK
because African-Americans had brought the squalor of the “uncivilized” developing
world upon themselves. Communists and other political extremists posed a threat to
democracy when they joined forces with blacks at the lowest rung of the socioeconomic
ladder. Haydon’s concerns about African-American separatism did not take into account
the historical legacy of legal separation through slavery and segregation that had existed
for blacks in America for over 300 years. Furthermore, he gave no indication that he
believed Black Power to have any relevance beyond the former British colonies.

While Haydon wrote to his colleagues about what he saw among “the fertile
grounds of the ghettos,” millions of Britons consumed stereotypical depictions of
African-Americans through their televisions. In the period after World War II, the UK
television audience expanded significantly. Broadcasts penetrated increasingly larger
segments of the UK market, cutting across class lines. The government taxed all
televisions that received broadcasting through an annual license. A significant percentage
of the revenues raised supported the BBC’s programming. On March 31, 1958, as part of
its annual report to Parliament, the state-run BBC reported that 8 million families had
purchased television broadcast receiving licenses, of an estimated 16 million families in
the UK.62 License-holders could choose between two channels: the BBC and the newly
formed Independent Television (ITV).

For forty-five minutes each week from 1958 to 1978, usually during Saturday evening prime time, viewers tuned in to the BBC’s *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. The show featured white actors in blackface (which was actually red during the nine years the show broadcast in black-and-white, as black makeup did not show up well) alongside other white actors in a variety format. Actors treated audiences to sing-alongs of solo and minstrel songs alongside comedy interludes. Categorized by the BBC as “light entertainment,” the show portrayed African-Americans in a fantasized “Old Dixie” setting in the US south.

Remarkably, the *Black and White Minstrel Show* had the largest following of any BBC television series for its entire run. In 1962, for example, 15.2 million people on average watched the show each week, 29% of the approximately 52.8 million people living in the UK. As television programs grew in number and variety, the audience for the *Minstrel Show* declined slightly in number, but it remained the most popular BBC show on television each year. In the first half of 1965, the show reached an audience of approximately 12.6 million people each week. When analyzed along with the BBC’s estimate that 25 million people viewed one or more television programs each day that year, this figure indicates that an estimated 50% of the television-watching population of Britain watched the *Black and White Minstrel Show* in early 1965. The following year, the *Minstrel Show’s* audience grew to 13.8 million. Despite increasing numbers of blacks migrating into the UK, the *Minstrel Show* maintained its high level of popularity,

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suggesting that the show might have provided a space in which white viewers could ignore any race tensions they experienced on a daily basis as they enjoyed the entertainment of blackfaced minstrels. The show allowed for the comfortable consumption of black spectacle, apart from the realities of everyday life.

While *The Minstrel Show* attracted the largest audience of any BBC program at the time, it was not without its critics. In 1962, Barrie Thorne, a financial controller for the BBC, wrote to Kenneth Adam, the BBC’s Controller of Television Programming several times regarding the show’s content. In his first letter, Thorne informed Adam that as a member of the Urban League and a supporter of the UK branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he considered *The Minstrel Show*’s content racist.66 In a subsequent letter to the editor of *The Times* newspaper, Thorne wrote, “The Uncle Tom attitude of the show in this day and age is a disgrace and an insult to coloured people everywhere. If black faces are to be shown, for heaven’s sake let coloured artists be employed—and with dignity.” Thorne’s appropriation of the Uncle Tom metaphor suggests that he believed the show was not only broadcasting racist stereotypes, but that it was also making black actors subservient to whites. If the show had to continue, Thorne thought that there were black actors in Britain suited for the job of performing on the popular television show. He went on to attribute the racist stereotypes in the show to the BBC, which he believed was to blame for continuing “the resentment of the era of the minstrels” and other stereotypical, ignorant constructs that stemmed from the “deep [American] south.” While Thorne


acknowledged the show as popular and integral to the BBC’s supremacy among the UK’s limited television market, he indicated that he “so hope[d] that it will not be renewed after this season.”

Adam’s response to Thorne indicated that while he was aware of racism outside the UK, he did not believe the show participated in the perpetuation of racism within Britain:

I am sorry to say I find myself in complete disagreement with you that the Black and White Minstrel Show represents ‘racial guying’ in any way. I yield to no-one in my detestation of apartheid and the Little Rock philosophy. But to suggest that to continue a perfectly honorable theatrical tradition of the British music hall is a ‘disgrace and insult to coloured people everywhere’ is, I submit, arrant nonsense… I have discussed the subject with one or two of my coloured friends, and I find them much less sensitive in the matter than their well-meaning white friends.

Adam’s response rested in the belief that the Minstrel Show shared a lineage with the tradition of the British music hall, a vaudeville-style of theatrical entertainment made popular in the 1850s, but which had died out after World War II. Perhaps Adam sought to reassert the dying tradition when he chose to include the Minstrel Show among other music hall shows; at the very least, it seems he wanted to justify its existence as a show that had relevance to a British national audience. He also pointed out that well-meaning white liberals were raising problems that did not exist. Adam failed to note the socioeconomic or immigration status of the “one or two of [his] coloured friends” with whom he had discussed the show, which would likely have had an impact on their views.

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67 Thorne to Adam, September 10, 1962, T16/175/2, British Broadcasting Corporation Written Archives Centre (hereafter BBC WAC), in Ibid., 146.
68 Adam to Thorne, September 11, 1962, T16/175/2, in BBC WAC, in Ibid., 146.
of the show's effects on British society. Adam used the familiar rhetorical coupling of apartheid and Little Rock to distinguish *The Minstrel Show* from those perceived pariahs.

Five years later, like Thorne, the BBC’s Head of Light Entertainment T.J.H. Sloan suggested to Adam that the program should cast black actors as minstrels. Adam retorted that:

> Introducing genuine Negroes into the *Black and White Minstrel Show* was thought by Board of Management yesterday to have been an unjustifiable breaking of the coon convention, which has been our defence against the growing attacks upon the show.\(^7^0\)

Adam’s concern about “growing attacks” on the show indicated the rising opposition among some Britons toward stereotypical depictions of blacks by 1967. The coon referenced the popular caricature of a black man who acted stupid and lazy, and who existed primarily for the entertainment of viewers.\(^7^1\) Adam did not explain what he meant by the phrase “coon convention” (nor did it appear in other sources of British racial discourse examined here). However, the “coon convention” might have served as a justification for the continued running of the *Black and White Minstrel Show*. So long as black actors were not playing the stereotypes represented by black characters, the show, in Adam’s opinion, was “mere entertainment” and it could not be considered harmful.

Sloan’s suggestion of black actors had come in response to a critical review of the show by Elisabeth Thomas in the *Socialist* magazine. Thomas said that the show had put her in “such a frenzy of rage” that she nearly vowed never to watch television again. Her

\(^{70}\) Adam to Head of Light Entertainment Group-Television, August 15, 1967, T/16/175/2 BBC WAC, in Newton, *Paving the Empire Road*, 146.

\(^{71}\) Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001), 7-8.
concerns combined an anti-racist standpoint with recognition of the potential for anger among blacks in the UK:

We are going through the long hot summer. American Negroes are boiling over with feelings of resentment and impotence which none of the platitudes of the white liberals can subdue. Their only answer is violence against the white man and the advocacy of Black Power. And the signs of unrest here are obvious and disquieting. Yet our dear old fuddy-duddy BBC goes on putting out this coon programme… the continuance of *The Black and White Minstrels* makes one give up hope that any real understanding of the standards they owe to their viewers will ever get through to their smug minds.72

Thomas’s opposition to the show was rooted in her fears of black violence and Black Power. Thomas believed that the stereotypical depiction of blacks on the *Black and White Minstrel Show* could fuel the as-yet potential for unrest in Britain. Thomas’s frustration with the BBC stemmed from its apparent distance from its state-decreed mission to educate viewers and its aloofness about the impact that particular shows could have on social issues in Britain. She did not seem to think that changing stereotypical depictions, a “platitude of the white liberals,” would necessarily stop the spread of Black Power in the UK. However, Thomas suggested that with the continued depiction of blacks in the *Minstrel Show*, the potential for “violence against the white man” might increase.

Strikingly, Thomas’s self-interested fears of black retaliation trumped concerns for avoiding stereotypical representations of blacks for their own sake. Thomas wanted to remove such depictions not because they were *prima facie* demeaning and disrespectful, but rather because she believed they could lead to black violence. Such an articulation hints at the contours of racial discourse during the period. That is, some white liberals consciously feared the potential for black-on-white violence. Thomas’s criticism was

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bounded by and encoded in these fears, rather than in a concern about racist depictions and the perceptions that such depictions could create. She realized that, “White liberal platitudes” were no longer enough to quell what she saw as the real danger, black violence. Given that Thomas’s review was published in Socialist magazine, its message of black on white violence reached a left-leaning audience. Whether or not the Socialist’s readers agreed with Thomas, fears of black aggression rather than a desire for equality motivated some of the discourse around depictions of blacks in the media.

When the BBC began color programming for selected shows in December 1967, the Minstrel Show was one of a handful of series selected to make an early transition, alongside the news; the Queen’s Christmas Broadcast; the New Zealand All Blacks Rugby tour; the successor to the popular serial drama “The Forsyte Saga;” a mini-series examining Western civilization through the arts; and a series of golf matches, suggesting that the BBC saw The Minstrel Show as a national staple to the British television audience, much like rugby, golf, and the Queen.73 Guardian newspaper columnist Stanley Reynolds reviewed the first weekend of color television in Britain, noting that, “Of course the star attraction of the first weekend in colour was The Black and White Minstrel Show. More offensive,” Reynolds went on, “as I have said before, and a fault which is heightened by colour, is the sight of white men imitating jolly chocolate-coloured coons. This is really offensive to coloured people, but one assumes that the self-satisfied powers at the BBC will not see this until we have whitewashed darkies appearing on the screen singing ‘Rose of England’ with jolly mocking mannerisms.”74 For Reynolds, the transition from black-and-white to color television only further

increased the degree to which he found the coon stereotype offensive. He believed that the BBC maintained a double standard by ignoring the race of its actors in *The Minstrel Show*, and that if the tables were turned, whites would certainly have been offended by stereotypical portrayals of whiteness.

Reynolds was right: people of color in Britain had found the depiction of whites in blackface, and the coon stereotype embodied in their characters, offensive. In May 1967, over 200 black Britons signed a petition asking the BBC to stop televising the show. They presented it to a non-governmental organization, the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD). *The Times* reported that the petition stated, “This hideous impersonation is quite offensive and causes much distress to most coloured people. Moreover, it creates serious misunderstanding between the races.” The petition’s authors argued that the show had rhetorical and material effects of distress for blacks and that it engendered a lack of understanding among whites. A BBC spokesman responded: “The BBC has a strict attitude about the presentation of racialism in its programmes, and we do not think the *Black and White Minstrels* in any way offends this.” The spokesman did not provide further details on the policy to which he referred.75

Reinforcing Reynolds’s characterization of “the self-satisfied powers at the BBC,” the spokesman rested on the ruling principles of internal policy, the details of which remained opaque to the British public. The depiction of African-American minstrels in *The Black and White Minstrel Show*’s television iterations allowed British

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audiences an opportunity for cheap entertainment in their homes, without presenting any need to consider the black presence in Britain. *The Minstrel Show* reached millions of Britons each week, disseminating a narrow understanding of black life that required little of its viewers in terms of response.

**Out of sight, out of mind: Eastern Jews exiled to the Israeli peripheries**

While white Britons cast an intense gaze on African-Americans through detailed diplomatic reports and the frivolity of *The Minstrel Show*, the Israeli government placed Eastern Jews firmly out of sight on the geographic peripheries of the country. In comparison with its absorption of European immigrants, the Israeli government sent Eastern Jews to live in the most far-flung areas of the country and on the outskirts of cities. Eastern Jews’ presence in these border areas provided the rest of the country with a physical buffer against the perceived Palestinian enemy who lived on the other side. Furthermore, the government sent Eastern Jews to live in places that held few prospects for economic advancement, with the available jobs mainly in agriculture and manual labor. As sociologist Aziza Khazzoom has shown through her examination of Israeli census records, the state actively targeted Arab Jews for residence in development towns on the country’s periphery.76

“The government took the families and put them as they saw,” Israeli Panther Kokhavi Shemesh recalled in 201. “This one belongs to here, this one belongs to here. All the Ashkenazis went to the center of Jerusalem, in Rekhavia,” Shemesh remembered. “And the black people went to the border with the Arabs.”77 By “the border,” Shemesh referred here to Musrara, a neighborhood that until June 1967 lay on the border between

77 K. Shemesh I, 2:02:00.
Transjordanian East Jerusalem and Israeli West Jerusalem, and in which Shemesh and his fellow core members of the Israeli Black Panthers grew up. Prior to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Musrara had been occupied mainly by upper middle-class Christian Arabs, but during the war, they had fled their homes in fear and under duress from Israeli forces. The postwar partition of Jerusalem placed Musrara on the Armistice Line, which gave the neighborhood the nickname “the Seam.”

In this 2011 recollection, Shemesh referred to his ethnic group with the phrase “black people” rather than Eastern Jews, Arab Jews, or Oriental Jews, terms that others have used. Shemesh’s association of black people with their placement on the Arab Palestinian border points to the idea that to be Arab Jewish, or to claim black identity in Israel, meant to live on the geographic and figurative periphery of society.

The situation of Shemesh’s neighborhood of Musrara was one of many efforts by the state to disperse Eastern Jews along the peripheries of cities and the country, as the government exercised considerable control over the settlement of immigrants. One type of settlement for arriving immigrants were cooperative farm settlements known as moshavim. The moshavim furthered Zionist goals of agricultural self-sufficiency and of establishing communities in semi-desert outlying regions along the Israeli “frontier.” Between 1948 and 1964, the government established 267 new moshavim. Sixty-five percent of the population of these new moshavim were Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin. Most of the new moshavim built for Eastern Jews were small villages in outlying areas on hilly or relatively arid land. In some cases, the Israeli government

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appropriated “abandoned” Arab villages as sites for new moshavim. The moshavim served an important role in the agricultural economy of Israel.

Another state housing project, development towns or ma’abarot, served as the home for twenty-seven percent of the new Eastern settlers during the 1950s and early 1960s. As immigrants arrived in numbers that overwhelmed the Jewish Agency-run transit camps, the state began to build development towns, constructing twenty-seven ma’abarot between 1953 and 1963 in outlying areas. These towns usually lay near heavily subsidized industrial plants that required low-skilled labor to perform physically demanding work. With an Israeli industrial boom in the 1950s, development towns grew to form a vital part of the healthy economy. According to the Ministry of Commerce, the number of industrial workers living in development towns increased almost ten-fold between the years 1956 and 1965, from 4,500 to over 42,000. But the development towns also became centers of persistent poverty; by 1973, forty percent of all Israeli citizens whom the government recognized as “poor” lived in development towns. Easterners made up seventy-five percent of all the people living in development towns at that time.

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79 Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness*, 98.
80 By 1960, moshavim produced forty-two percent of the fodder in the country, forty-five percent of the vegetables, thirty-six percent of the dairy products, and twenty-five percent of the poultry. Despite their critical role, they received only thirty-eight percent of all the investments in agriculture during this period, while constituting sixty-two percent of all agricultural settlements in Israel. Elbaz, “Oriental Jews in Israeli Society,” 17; Swirski, *Israel*, 10-11.
82 Swirski, *Israel*, 32.
Many Arab Jews who did not live in moshavim or development towns settled on the outskirts of cities, in densely populated neighborhoods like Musrara. During the period of reconstruction after the 1948 War, Musrara had grown derelict and neglected, as most people did not want to live on the Armistice Line. Many North African Jewish families, however, began squatting on the land in the immediate aftermath of its abandonment. As their numbers grew, the Israeli government’s Absorption Department settled immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa into Musrara.

The neighborhood grew heavily overcrowded. Moroccan-born Charlie Biton remembered that he lived with his family of six children and two adults along with three other families on one floor of a house. In total, Biton recalled, twenty-five people lived on the 160 square meter-sized floor (roughly 1,700 square feet).

An early 1970s national study confirmed the density of Arab Jewish households relative to Ashkenazi homes. The study’s author, Edward Geffner, reported that five percent of Israeli households of Afro-Asian origin had more than four people living in one room, compared to one half of one percent for Ashkenazis. In addition, eleven percent of Afro-Asian households had three people living in one room, while Ashkenazi homes with three people living in one room numbered just one and a half percent. Thus, the proportion of Eastern Jews who lived in over crowding housing relative to Ashkenazim was significant.

85 Giladi, *Discord in Zion*, 359.
86 Charlie Biton, interview by author, December 12, 2010, Meveseret Zion, Israel, part I of II (hereafter Biton II), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 53:00.
Given the neighborhood’s position on the border, Musrara residents also became fodder for daily skirmishes between Jordanian and Israeli border guards between 1964 and 1967. “We were cannon meat. The people in Musrara were cannon meat,” Shemesh remembered. Musrara’s streets, buildings, and in some cases its residents’ bodies provided the landing ground for the sniper fire that Jordan and Israel exchanged in daily skirmishes after the partition of East Jerusalem in 1949. Where Musrara’s main street, Ayin-Khet dead-ended into the walls of the Old City, a sign read, “Stop - Frontier Ahead” in Arabic, English and Hebrew. The sign visibly marked the Musrara’s position as the last outpost of Israeli West Jerusalem before entering Palestine (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The Armistice Line at the edge of Musrara.

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88 K. Shemesh I, 00:02:30.
‘With iron hands in velvet gloves’: Subterranean tensions, violence, and resistance, 1958-1967

The Israeli and British establishments developed systems that justified and undergirded everyday racist practices through, respectively, placing Eastern Jews on the outskirts of Israeli society and by promulgating views of African-Americans that depicted them as either entertainers or violent rebels but that ignored the considerable presence of blacks in Britain. Biafran playwright Obi Egbuna, the founder of the British Black Panthers, expressed his feeling that white Britons exploited the racial situation in the United States in order to obscure their own race prejudices. He contended that racial biases in the United Kingdom were more insidious because they were less public than in the United States. Egbuna saw the white Englishman’s subtlety as sinister:

In Mississippi, the White man tells you straight that he does not want you in his neighbourhood and you know where you stand with him. In Wimbledon, the Englishman will apologise most profusely when he refuses you accommodation on racial grounds: “Room to let, sorry no coloureds, Irish or dogs.” When you confront him personally, it is never his fault, he of course never has racial prejudice, it is always the neighbour who is the villain. The American will lynch you and doesn’t give a damn who knows it. But the Englishman always has enough residue of subtlety to lynch you with iron hands in velvet gloves.89

Here, Egbuna believed British racism was a silent demon clothed in white middle-class propriety. Using metaphorical bastions of white supremacy (Mississippi and Wimbledon), he delineated what he saw as divergent systems of overt and covert prejudice.

Several future British Black Panthers recalled having experienced the covert racism that Egbuna described. Trinidadian Darcus Howe characterized race issues in late 1950s and early 1960s Britain as having been, “beneath the surface of society. The

tensions were enormous.”90 Jamaican-born poet Linton Kwesi Johnson recalled that racism was “very ingrained in British culture at the time. You would go to a shop and you would buy something,” he remembered, “and they would give you back your change, but they wouldn't touch your hand. They would just drop the money on the counter.”91 Interactions such as these used few, if any, words but they communicated a powerful message: blacks were not welcome in British society.

Similarly, the Ashkenazi establishment defined Israeli Jewish identity in European terms to the exclusion of Jews from Arab countries.92 As such, Prime Minister Golda Meir greeted a new set of Russian immigrants exclaiming, “You are the real Jews... You speak Yiddish! Every loyal Jew must speak Yiddish, for he who does know Yiddish is not a Jew.”93 Here, without explicitly saying, Meir excluded those Jews who had least likely been exposed to Yiddish before arriving in Israel, those who had not arrived from Europe or the United States.94

Such racist expressions evolved into episodes of white-on-black violence that took place in both Britain and Israel at the end of the 1950s, and in which black Britons and Israelis demonstrated their first acts of collective resistance in the postwar era. In the Wadi Salib neighborhood of Haifa in 1959, the police shooting of an intoxicated Eastern resident there led to riots that spread nationwide, fueling anger in the streets over the

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90 Howe I, 07:30.
91 Linton Kwesi Johnson, interview by author, August 2, 2011, Hearne Hill, South London, digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 14:15.
94 See also Aziza Khazzoom, Shifting Ethnic Boundaries and Inequality in Israel: Or, How the Polish Peddler Became a German Intellectual (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 55.
poverty that Eastern Jews were experiencing. This uprising moved Ben Gurion’s Zionist Labor party, Mapai, to take strong steps to prevent Eastern Jews from organizing politically. Residents of Wadi Salib were required by the government to join Mapai in order to gain employment. While the social movement that emerged from within Wadi Salib did not last long, the phrase “Wadi Salib” became synonymous among Eastern Jews with the first successful public expression of Eastern Jews’ mistreatment in Israel.

What Wadi Salib meant for Eastern Jews, the Notting Hill riots meant to black Britons. Beginning on the night of Saturday, August 30, 1958, the neighborhoods of Notting Hill and Notting Dale in London, which were largely West Indian, experienced what has been described as Britain’s “worst civil unrest in the 1950s.” The weeklong events that would come to be known as the “Notting Hill riots” were started by a group of teddy boys who embarked on a night of ‘nigger hunts.’ Teddy boys were disaffected, low-skilled, masculinist working-class youth, whose livelihoods were declining in status despite the increasing affluence of British society. Teddy boys also found cruel pleasure in terrorizing blacks.

On the night of August 30, the teddy boys were ready. They traveled to Notting Hill in a car carrying wooden staves, knives, an air pistol, a table leg, and iron railings. From midnight until 5 in the morning, the men, all between 17 and 20 years old, traveled the neighborhood attacking single West Indian men, and leaving them unconscious in the street. The group of nine whites reportedly never attacked more than two black men at a

time.\textsuperscript{98} As the teddy boys traveled through the local neighborhood over the following week, their numbers grew in anticipation of black bloodshed.

Many blacks in Notting Hill believed that, if confronted, the police would take the side of the teddy boys, so they gathered their resources in order to defend themselves. A group of well-known members of the West Indian community met informally and decided to all gather in two houses so as to defend themselves en masse when the teddy boys began roaming the streets.\textsuperscript{99} That night, as the boys entered the street where the West Indian comrades had gathered, Molotov cocktails, bricks and other projectiles soon rained down on them from the windows of those two houses. This act of resistance decreased the possibility of further white-on-black attacks. After five days, the riots ended and close to 100 people, mostly whites, were arrested. In broad terms, the Notting Hill riots exposed the violent racism that existed among some of the youngest members of Britain’s white working class community. The events also, however, revealed that in a time of urgency black Britons had come together quickly and developed a practical strategy with which they successfully defended their community.

With racial and ethnic tensions in Britain and Israel steadily rising in temperature, blacks in these countries began to resist oppression in little-discussed, yet powerful ways. In April 1963 in Bristol, a city in southwest England, a group of West Indian activists exposed the Bristol Bus Company’s long-standing color line against black bus crews.\textsuperscript{100} The Bus Company’s color line was legal, as no laws against racial discrimination or

\textsuperscript{98} Michael Rowe, \textit{The Racialisation of Disorder in Twentieth Century Britain} (Brookfield, Ill.: Aldershot, 1998), 109-110.

\textsuperscript{99} Guild, “You Can’t Go Home Again,” 101-103.

segregation had yet been passed in Britain. In 1965, Parliament passed its first of two Race Relations Acts, which made discrimination on the basis of color, ethnicity, or nationality a civil offense. Thus when the Bus Company’s Manager, Ian Patey, defended the color bar, black activists declared a boycott. Over a period of four months, prospective black employees of the Bus Company and Bristol University students staged the boycott, which drew the attention of Harold Wilson, the leader of the Labour Party, among others. Negotiations between the bus workers’ union and the Bus Company led to the lifting of the color bar in August. In September, a Sikh college graduate named Raghbir Singh became Bristol’s first black bus conductor.

Like Raghbir Singh and his colleagues, seventeen-year-old Sa’adia Marziano, had immigrated to Israel from Casablanca and also imagined better conditions for his life and those of his friends. He took a series of steps to focus the city government’s attention on the needs of Musrara’s residents. This work presaged the leadership role that Marziano would take in the Israeli Black Panther Movement.

“I have not yet received a response to my letter,” Marziano wrote on November 7, 1967. In a letter to Jerusalem’s Municipal Engineer, Marzano, of Block 13/35 in Musrara, complained that he had never received a reply to his letter of two and a half months prior. In his initial letter, Marziano had reported sewage running past his front door and had asked the Municipality to fix the problem.101 Musrara’s residents had by 1967 grown accustomed to unsanitary conditions and high-density housing, but the growing disparity between the conditions of life in Musrara and Ashkenazi (European)-

101 Sa’adia Marziano to Municipal Engineer, November 7, 1967, in Morasha File, container 1121, Jerusalem Municipal Archives, as quoted in Tom Segev, *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year That Transformed the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan, 2008), 47.
occupied neighborhoods had taken its toll. For nearly twenty years, the Israeli government had claimed state security as an impediment to improving public works in Musrara given the neighborhood’s position on the border.\textsuperscript{102}

In June 1967, Israel forged past that frontier, capturing Jerusalem’s Old City and its Eastern half in what provided a euphoric victory for the country.\textsuperscript{103} The Six Day War or War of 1967, depending upon one’s perspective, had provided a territorial as well as symbolic expansion for Israel. For Arab nationalists and Zionists, the War also provided an ideological pennant to be won: Jerusalem, Judaism’s holiest city and Islam’s second holiest. The status of Jerusalem as a divided city angered some Jews who had not had access to the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism, in over nineteen years. Likewise, Jordan and Egypt had sought unsuccessfully to curb Israel’s control of the lands formerly known as Palestine. In the end, Israel had taken control of East Jerusalem and the Old City, pushing the border far away from Musrara. June 10, 1967 was a jubilant day for many Israelis and Zionists, as Israel recaptured Jerusalem’s Old City.

Likewise, many Jews living in the US felt deep pride in the victory, which centered Israel as the lynchpin in the civic life of American Judaism. American Jews also increased their already generous communal efforts in support of the Israeli state. American Jews’ contributions to Jewish causes increased dramatically in the year after the war—from $136 million to $317—and the proportion of that money that went to

\textsuperscript{103} Moroccan-born Reuven Abergel described Ashkenazi Jews’ responses to the victory in the Six Day War as “euphoric.” Reuven Abergel, interview by author, August 31, 2009, Jerusalem, Israel, part I of III (hereafter Abergel I), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 25:30.
Israel grew to sixty-five percent. This level of support afforded US Jewry an even stronger foothold in Israeli politics.

The 1967 War offered a symbolic end to the refrain of state security for Musrara residents, or so they hoped. Sa’adia Marziano and many of his neighbors believed that since Musrara no longer occupied one side of a contentious international border, their hopes for government attention to Musrara’s public works might finally come to fruition. Accordingly, therefore, Marziano took the time to write the Municipal Engineer twice in the fall of 1967. If Marziano received any reply from the Municipality to his second complaint letter, the response proved insufficient in the long run. Given Musrara’s new position at the center of a united Jerusalem, the government began making plans to tear down Musrara’s houses and build high-rise apartment complexes for Russian immigrants. This implied that Musrara residents would once again be displaced, which ignited resentment among many. Three years later, then twenty-year-old Marziano met with a group of young men whom he had been organizing against police profiling in Musrara, and he suggested that they form a Black Panther Party in Israel.

Over the period 1948 to 1967, with the racialization of Eastern Jews and black Britons through patterns of cultural, political, and spatial control, establishment figures in Israel and Britain narrowed the possibilities for collective advancement for those groups. They created an environment in which domestic race issues were not openly discussed in society, while at the same time the ethnic and class-based oppression of Eastern Jews and

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105 Marziano passed away in Jerusalem on December 21, 2007. As this was two years before I began conducting oral histories in Jerusalem, I was unable to ask him this question. Eric Silver, “Sa’adia Marziano: Founder of Israel’s Black Panthers,” The Independent (UK), December 26, 2007; Yair Ettinger, “Radical Black Panther group buries Sa’adia Marciano, ‘the face of protest,’” Haaretz, December 23, 2007.
black Britons intensified. What was missing was a language to describe oppression as such and a widespread belief among black Britons and Eastern Jews that they had important things to say. Sa’adiah Marziano tried a letter-writing campaign, and other Arab Jews and black Britons also sought strategies for organizing their concerns in meaningful and tangible ways. In Chapter 2, I examine several black Britons’ sojourns into the African-American movement in the years 1964 to 1969.

In May 2002, British publisher Penguin released *Mi Revalueshanary Fren*, a volume of poetry by Jamaican-born, Brixton-based dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson under its Modern Classics imprint.¹ Johnson, a former British Black Panther known to his audiences as LKJ, had helped to invent the genre of dub poetry, a type of performance poetry with words spoken over reggae rhythms. The volume’s publication represented a significant milestone: Johnson became the second living poet and the only black poet to have his work included in the Penguin Modern Classics series. Responding to Penguin’s announcement in the *London Magazine*, poet Michael Horovitz raved that, “Few poets of the last thirty years have approached [Johnson’s] diversity of formal innovations; few have communicated so intensively via performances and recordings… and few have proved so effective politically.”² Horovitz hailed Johnson as “a living modern classic for real.” Johnson had achieved a place in the canonical works of English literature during his lifetime, a feat that few successful authors had accomplished.

Linton Kwesi Johnson’s dramatic trajectory from British colonial subject to canonized British poet, while incredibly distinguished, illustrates one of the many paths that future British Black Panthers forged in the mid 1960s. These individuals set forth on remarkable journeys in order to understand their places in the world. Their expeditions eventually led them to other black Britons seeking to build community and fight against racism. In a 2008 interview, Johnson explained that he, “still [began] with the particular

and [hoped] to arrive at the universal.” In this reflection, Johnson indicates how his trajectory exemplifies those of his comrades. Like other British Panthers, Johnson began by thinking about his everyday experiences of racism. Gradually, he arrived at a more universal sense of black consciousness. In this way, Johnson’s and his comrades’ personal narratives speak to experiences that British history has ignored. Only some of these stories will be told here, but the nuances among them will help to explain the larger forces at play in the lives of those who chose to join the British Black Panther Movement. Points of divergence in these stories, which Panthers express in their own words, demonstrate that the milieu of black British political resistance was highly varied.

Linton Kwesi Johnson’s story, then, illuminates the ways in which his evolving black politics informed his remarkable poetry, which has evoked a range of responses. According to literary scholar Caryl Phillips, Johnson’s inclusion in the Penguin Modern Classics series made some people “edgy because Penguin is messing with the canon.” In a similar vein, the conservative newspaper The Daily Telegraph ran the front-page headline, “Reggae radical joins Betjeman.” With the headline, The Telegraph positioned Johnson as a foil to Sir John Betjeman, a twentieth-century poet who infused his oeuvre with a satirical take on his white upper middle-class English roots. While the language of Johnson’s poems—Jamaican patois—may have ruffled the feathers of some linguistic

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purists, the likely cause of the ‘edginess’ that Phillips described rested in his politics, which poet and critic Fred D’Aguiar called, “LKJ’s socialism.”

In one semi-autobiographical poem entitled “Sonny’s Lettah (Anti-Sus Poem),” a black teenager named Sonny writes to his mother in Jamaica. The letter begins with Sonny’s address: “Brixtan Prison.” Sonny apologizes to his mother that he and his younger brother Jim have been arrested by London’s Metropolitan Police (the Met) while Sonny was looking after Jim. While Sonny and Jim were, “waitin pan a bus/ nat cauzin no fus,” three policemen appeared, arrested Jim, and beat him. Sonny expresses his contempt at the police’s abuse of Jim, “dem tump him in him belly/ an it turn to jelly/ dem lick him pan him back/ an him rib get pap.” With the lines, “Mama, / I jus couldn stan-up deh/ an noh dhu notn,” Sonny explains how his conscience led him to fight back against the police. Sonny struck four of the policemen, one of whom dies. He tells his mother that the other officers then, “beat me to the grung/ dem charge Jim fi sus/ dem charge mi fi murdah.” Sonny implores his mother, “dont fret/ dont get depres/ an doun-hearted,” closing with, “I remain/ Your son,/ Sonny.”

In “Sonny’s Lettah” as with his other poetry, Johnson writes about and for an audience of what he calls “ordinary people.” Here, the Met Police had arrested Jim under a law commonly known as the Sus Law (“sus” for suspicion). Until its repeal in 1981, the Sus Law allowed the police to stop, search, and arrest individuals simply on the suspicion of crimes committed. As Johnson explained in a 2011 interview, “Sus Law” was a

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9 Johnson in Wroe, “‘I did my own thing.’”
nickname for the revival of the Vagrancy Act 1824, “a piece of nineteenth century legislation that was used during the Victorian period to control the movements of the unemployed.” In the 1960s, the Sus Law was, “suddenly rediscovered and dusted off and used mercilessly by racist police officers,” Johnson said, leading to the disproportionate arrest of many young blacks. Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act empowered police to arrest “every suspected person or reputed thief frequenting... any street, or any highway, or any place adjacent to a street or highway with intent to commit an arrestable offence.” The Act required the testimony of only two police officers in

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11 Johnson, 15:45.


12 “Persons committing certain offences to be deemed rogues and vagabonds,” Sec. 4, Vagrancy Act, 1824, 5 Geo. 4, c. 83. An 1871 amendment to the Act solidified the court’s autonomy, legally codifying the use of character and circumstances to derive an accused’s intent to commit a crime. The amendment stated that, “It shall not be necessary to show that the person suspected was guilty of any particular act or acts tending to show his purpose or intent, and he may be convicted if from the circumstances of the case, and from his known character as proved to the justice of the peace or court before whom or which he is brought, it appears to such justice or court that this intent was to commit an arrestable offence,” in “Evidence of vagrancy and amendment of Vagrant Act,” Sec. 15, Prevention of Crimes Act, 1871, 34 & 35 Vict., c. 112.

At the same time that Britain revived the sus law, the US government increased its policing powers using the doctrine of reasonable suspicion. The 1968 Supreme Court case Terry v. Ohio set a legal precedent for 4th Amendment search and seizure, giving police the authority to detain individuals based on reasonable suspicion. Terry v. Ohio, 392 U.S. 1 (1968). Thus, when Black Panther groups in the US and the UK took up police brutality as a rallying cry, they responded to specific national increases in police power.
order to charge the arrested. Johnson remembered, “You were always arrested and convicted for attempting to steal from persons unknown.”

The Met’s abuse of Jim and Sonny echoed an experience from Johnson’s life as a black teenager in London. In 1972, Johnson had, in his words, “the audacity to inquire about the welfare of people who were being arrested.” When he saw, “three black youths being manhandled by police in Brixton market,” he employed a strategy he had learned in the British Black Panther Movement. “As a Black Panther I was trained to write down their names and addresses, to tell their parents, and take the policemen’s numbers,” he remembered. Johnson’s effort to record this incident was met with a similarly violent response. “I was thrown into a black mariah (police transport vehicle) and given a good kicking, then charged with GBH (grievous bodily harm) and assault.”

Within an hour of his arrest, Johnson’s comrades held a “Free Linton” demonstration outside Brixton station, and after three hours, the police released Johnson on bail. Johnson recalled that at trial, there was one West Indian and one South Asian man on the jury, “and if it was not for them I would have been found guilty.” Instead, the case was thrown out and the officers transferred.

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13 Johnson, 15:30. In the early 1970s, British police forces began using race codes on criminal records forms, which consisted of: “White-skinned European type; Dark-skinned European type; Negroid type; Asian type; Oriental type; and Arabian type.” C. Gutzmore, “Capital, ‘Black Youth’ and Crime,” Race and Class 25, no. 2 (1983): 13-30. This administrative development enabled race relations journalist Dilip Hiro to report that in 1978, Metropolitan London, Merseyside (which included Liverpool) and Greater Manchester accounted for three-fourths of Sus Law arrests that year. Likewise, although West Indians made up roughly 6 percent of London’s population, they accounted for 44 percent of Sus Law arrests. Dilip Hiro, Black British White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain (London: Grafton, 1991), 84.


16 Linton Kwesi Johnson, as quoted in Brian Alleyne, Radicals Against Race: Black Activism and Cultural Politics (New York: Berg, 2002), 156.
The episode informed Johnson’s early poetry; he remembered that audiences began to take notice of him when he recited verse composed around this incident.\textsuperscript{17} These little-documented black British experiences illuminate much of Johnson’s inventive, populist verse. As D’Aguiar emphasized, “The listener is encouraged always to think, but that thinking is full of fellow feeling... Politics, so often the nemesis of poetry, becomes in LKJ a muse, an organizing principle, an ethical foundation and vibe for his sound.”\textsuperscript{18}

Linton Kwesi Johnson’s recollection of his personal history reflects his facility in providing ‘fellow feeling’ for listeners. Johnson came from a peasant-cum-working-class family in the rural Jamaican town of Chapleton. His father Eric worked as a baker and sugar estate laborer, he and Linton’s mother Sylvena separated when Linton was seven years old. Sylvena Johnson had been a domestic worker in Chapleton; her parents were peasant farmers who struggled in the country’s shrinking agricultural sector after World War II. Sylvena moved to London in 1962, shortly before Jamaica achieved its independence that year. She settled in Brixton, which was a Jamaican enclave, and took a job as a special machinist in an overcoat factory.\textsuperscript{19} In 1963, then eleven-year-old Linton left his grandmother’s house in Chapleton to reunite with his mother. After Linton’s arrival in London, Sylvena married a rubber factory worker. Sylvena and her second husband later moved to Luton, a London suburb, where they assembled cars at the

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} D’Aguiar, “Introduction,” xii-xiii.
\textsuperscript{19} The post-war advent of the mass cheap clothing industry weakened Britain’s rigid class structure. As manufacturers introduced inexpensive clothing into British society, markers of class status became harder to ascertain. Thus, Sylvena Johnson’s work at the overcoat factory constituted multiple forms of labor: she earned wages to support herself and her son and she participated in the production of conditions that would enable his future class mobility. Brian Harrison, \textit{Seeking a Role: The United Kingdom, 1951-1970} (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 206.
Vauxhall factory. Their collective factory and childrearing labors helped to produce the influential political activist and poet that Linton became.

Johnson’s careful attention to his studies in Jamaica and the UK also propelled his remarkable trajectory. Johnson recalled that, “When I came [to London] from the Caribbean, I realized that I was brighter than most of the white boys in my class because the standard of education that we had in Jamaica was the old British colonial system which was rather rigorous.” In Brixton, Johnson attended the all-boys Tulse Hill Secondary School, where West Indians made up a significant minority of the 2,000-student body. At Tulse Hill, Johnson remembered finding himself, “about three to four years ahead of my peers.” He recalled winning a prize for finishing his first year at the school ranked first in his grade in math. Johnson’s award was doubly impressive because, like other public schools, Tulse Hill had placed Johnson in the “C section,” the lowest of his grade’s stratified classes. According to Johnson, the C section at Tulse Hill included working-class white students and all black students. Johnson remembered that, “If you were in A section, you could do modern languages and Latin or Greek. Not if you were in B or C, so I never got to do any of those things.” Nonetheless, Johnson’s conscientiousness and his flair for language led him to succeed in Tulse Hill’s English class. Johnson remembered, “I was always top of my class because we spoke better English than the kids here and we did English grammar which they didn't teach here.”

20 Johnson, 1:00.
21 Johnson, 10:00.
22 Johnson remembered that Tulse Hill streamed students in three sections, with students from white middle class backgrounds placed in the A section, white lower middle class students in the B section, and white working class and black students in the C section.
23 Johnson, 10:30.
Given his success in mathematics, Johnson aspired to become an accountant. When he told the school’s careers advisor about this goal, Johnson recalled that the advisor, “looked at me and he said, ‘An accountant? A big, strong lad like you. Have you ever thought of a career in the forces? We need people like you in the forces.’” The counselor’s advice to join the military echoed the experiences that millions of New Commonwealth citizens had when they looked for work during World War II. Even though Johnson was part of a new generation who had grown up in the UK, he commented on the fact that low expectations persisted. “People like me, children of first-generation immigrants weren’t supposed to have aspirations.”

Unfazed by the idea that only his physical stature would be useful to the work force, Johnson thrived at Tulse Hill. Outside of the classroom, Johnson joined the school’s debating society and its reggae club, which fueled his political and cultural awareness and offered him social outlets. One afternoon, Johnson walked home from a reggae club meeting carrying a prized possession: a second-hand record player that he loaned the club for its meetings. Johnson was taken by surprise when, in his words, “Some beaten up old van pulled up beside me and two white men jumped out and grabbed me.” The men, “wanted to know where I got the record player from, and started asking me all kinds of questions.” Apparently, Johnson’s assailants did not think he had could have acquired a record player by lawful means. Or if they did, they simply wanted to intimidate him. Johnson managed to escape the men, but they followed him home.

24 Roughly five million men and women from the British Commonwealth served the British Empire in World War II alongside about six million from Great Britain. Approximately 170,000 Commonwealth servicemen and women died or disappeared, along with 260,000 Britons. Christopher Somerville, Our War: How the British Commonwealth Fought the Second World War (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1998), xviii.
25 Johnson, 12:00.
Johnson did not know who they were, but he believed that they were connected to the police. He recalled that, “Harassment by the police… was a commonplace thing.” 26 Fortunately for Johnson in this case, his mother was at home when he rushed in with his assailants right behind. Sylvena gave Linton’s harassers, “such a tongue lashing that they ran with their tails behind them,” he recalled. 27

Sylvena Johnson’s reprimand of her son’s attackers hinted at the transformation in social relations taking place in Brixton and other areas with significant concentrations of black residents in the late 1960s. As Black Panther Hurlington “Hurley” Armstrong put it, “It was way down in, many years, when people started to realise that police were corrupt.” 28 Many first-generation immigrants had been reluctant to call their experiences of racialized discrimination by name. But the sight of whites tormenting their children emboldened them to respond.

Incidents in which parents witnessed such harassment, however, were few and far between. Like many episodes of white-on-black violence in 1960s Britain, the “men in the van” interfered with Johnson while he walked alone on the street, thereby exacerbating his victimization. Violent incidents often took place in public, but usually when victims were without friends to call on for aid. Assailants often worked in groups, with multiple policemen or civilian teddy boys attacking a single black person (see Figure 4). The lack of witnesses to these incidents highlighted the generational gap between first and second-generation immigrants. Often the youths who were attacked had

26 Johnson, 14:30.
27 Johnson, 15:15.
to convince their parents that their stories were true.\textsuperscript{29} As Armstrong remembered, “We grew up over here, had practical experience of the police and people on the road, but you could not go home and tell [your parents] that a police had done something wrong, no matter what you done you were wrong, if it came to police.”\textsuperscript{30}

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The second-generation immigrants who would become Black Panthers were angered by their parents’ apparent stubbornness over the benevolence of British police, educators, and other public servants. Colonialism had taught these West Indian and South

\textsuperscript{29} In the film \textit{Pressure} (1975), the character Colin’s mother berates him for viewing the police as racist, which she claims is through the lens of Black Power. She says, “Since this black power thing get in your head, you don’t think of anything else... Remember, [the policeman’s] not like us, he’s born here.” Horace Ové, \textit{Pressure} (UK: British Film Institute, 1975).

\textsuperscript{30} Armstrong, 6.
Asian parents that Britain was the mother country. First-generation West Indian and South Asian immigrants had grown up hearing the consistently reinforced notion that the British imperial system was altruistic and that public servants were there to help them. But their children grew up in the “mother country,” where they had developed far stronger awareness of the regressive features of British society.

Still, some parents believed their children’s accounts of racialized harassment. Many times, these parents had experienced racist violence themselves. Or, their general awareness led them to acknowledge the racism present in British society. Sylvena Johnson was one of these parents. Linton remembered that Sylvena and his stepfather, “never once discouraged me from going to meetings or going on demos or selling papers or anything.” He attributed this to their awareness that, “they were living in a racially hostile environment and they knew something had to be done.” The British Black Panther Movement made calling attention to these racist practices their central aim, attempting to ensure that all blacks ‘knew something had to be done.’

Most black people in mid 1960s British society experienced racism in atomized ways through individual arrests and experiences at job interviews, rental offices, and in classrooms. For the fifteen years since the start of mass migration in 1948, these individual experiences had obstructed possibilities for black solidarity. There was no monolithic voice telling black British people that when they saw a sign that read, “Sorry,

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32 Johnson, 30.
Johnson may have recalled this particular incident of all-too-common harassment because of how he cherished his record player, which appears in another of his teenage memories. At a meeting of Tulse Hill’s debating society in 1970, a guest speaker named Althea Jones-Lecointe addressed Johnson and his fellow debaters. Jones-Lecointe was a Trinidad-born Ph.D. student in Biochemistry at the University of London. The debating society had invited her to speak in her role as the leader of the South London chapter of the Black Panther Movement. Johnson could not remember exactly what Jones-Lecointe spoke about; rather it was her symbolic presence and personality that mattered to him. “[Her visit] got me interested in the Panthers, it was she who inspired me and got me involved politically,” he recalled. Johnson called Jones-Lecointe, “one of the most extraordinary people I have ever met,” and “a simply brilliant orator and a great teacher.” Largely due to Jones-Lecointe’s visit to Tulse Hill, that year Johnson decided to join the Black Panther Youth League.

If a British colonial education had taught Linton Kwesi Johnson English grammar, and Tulse Hill’s reggae society had offered the music that would drive his poetry’s flow, his time in the British Black Panther Movement empowered his black poetic politics. “The Panthers gave me a political education,” he asserted. Johnson remembered his time as a seventeen-year-old member of the Black Panther Youth League.

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33 Darcus Howe recalled the “No coloureds...” signs. Darcus Howe, interview by author, June 28, 2011, London, part I of II (hereafter Howe I), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 06:15.
34 Johnson, 2:00.
35 Respectively, Johnson, 2:15 and Johnson, as quoted in Wroe.
36 Johnson, 4:30.
as the, “formative period of my life” (see Figure 5). He spent many hours in the Panthers’ Brixton house, where he immersed himself in British imperial history and black literature. The Panthers, “had a library of black literature which I wasn’t aware existed, because there was nothing in the school curriculum that gave you an indication that black people wrote books.” In that library, “I discovered African-American literature and poetry. That’s what inspired me to start to write verse myself.” WEB DuBois manifested a particularly powerful response in Johnson. “DuBois’s Souls of Black Folk was a very moving read for me... Even though it was an early twentieth century piece of literature, I could identify with a lot of the experiences that were being chronicled by DuBois about the South and all that.” DuBois had transported Johnson into the world of the African diaspora and established a black identity that they could share across continents. As Johnson went through the process of becoming a full-fledged member of the Panthers, he began writing poetry and started a Panther writing collective. Johnson’s motivation to write, he recalled, “sprang from a visceral need to creatively articulate the experiences of the black youth of my generation, coming of age in a racist society.”

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37 Johnson, as quoted in Wroe.
38 Johnson, 5:00.
39 Johnson, 5:05
Johnson’s rigorous reading soon extended to history classes taught by older Panthers, where, “we studied chapter and verse certain texts.” He recalled reading and analyzing Eric Williams’s *Capitalism & Slavery*, CLR James’s *The Black Jacobins*, and EP Thompson’s *Making of the English Working Class*. Older Panthers also taught Johnson about the US Black Panthers, from whom the British Panthers drew inspiration and their name. Outside of the Brixton house, Johnson remembered selling the Panthers’ newspaper, *Black People’s News Service* on Saturday afternoons. At home, Johnson cranked up the record player, to play a recording of Malcolm X’s 1963 *Message to the
Grass Roots, a speech Malcolm delivered at the Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference in Detroit. Johnson recalled that Panther Youth League members shared a single copy of the record, which they passed around the group.42

Where Johnson had once sought guidance from a career advisor with low expectations for him, he now found mentors in the Black Panthers. “For us, Huey P. Newton was a hero. Stokely, Eldridge, H. Rap were all heroes.” These individuals embodied the ideas and struggles that Johnson and other Youth League members had read about. “We had posters of Huey sitting in his wicker chair with his beret,” Johnson recalled. “We hung it in [the Panthers’ South London headquarters on] Shakespeare Road and in our own houses” (see Figure 6).43 In their speeches, classes, posters, writings, and slogans, London mentors like Althea Jones-Lecointe and Panther Youth League director Darcus Howe and heroes across the pond like Huey P. Newton, Angela Davis and Malcolm X, expressed ideas that resonated with Johnson and inspired him to think critically. They helped Johnson understand his interactions with his career advisor and the men in the van as experiences that black people outside Britain shared.

43 Johnson, 29:05.
In this chapter, I examine the grassroots genesis of the British Black Panther Movement from 1964 to 1969. It was the first Black Panther organization to form outside the United States. While the US Black Panthers inspired its name and style, the British

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Figure 6: Panthers in their Brixton house salute Black Power. “This is our Brixton headquarters. You can see Angela Davis was our hero. You can see Malcolm X there. You can see Huey P. Newton. You can see police. These are members.”
-Black Panther photographer Neil Kenlock

Black Panther Movement emerged as an autonomous organization that had little contact with its American counterparts. When Biafran writer Obi Egbuna formed the British Black Power Movement in 1967, and transformed it into the British Black Panthers in 1968, no US Panthers had traveled to the UK to help start the movement. Instead, a group of British intellectual-activists built the British Black Panther Movement from the ground up. They gained an understanding of Black Power from the resources available to them, and they used this knowledge to inform their understanding of oppression under British and American imperialisms.45

During the mid 1960s, a number of civil rights activists from America sojourned in the UK on speaking tours and stopovers, helping to connect the concerns of blacks in the UK with those of the African-American movement. Among these were Martin Luther King, Jr., Bayard Rustin and Ralph Abernathy from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and SNCC’s John Lewis. Malcolm X and SNCC’s Stokely Carmichael made their first UK visits in 1964 and 1967 as stopovers on Third World tours of Africa, Cuba and Vietnam. In London, Malcolm and Carmichael linked their strategic pursuits of Third World anti-imperialism and pan-Africanism to the British context. In public speeches in London, Oxford, and Birmingham, they articulated a shared blackness between Africans and black Britons. Their visits afforded Malcolm and Carmichael fertile ground to try out ideas that the US mass movement had not yet

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45 Anthropologist Jacqueline Nassy Brown develops a concept of “diasporic resources,” which she defines as, “the sense that Black Liverpudlians actively appropriate particular aspects of Black America for particular reasons, to meet particular needs—but do so within limits, within and against power asymmetries, and with political consequences.” Brown’s definition articulates the sense of transnational appropriation in which I am interested and helps to explain how British Black Panthers mobilized specific African-American identity markers in order to achieve their material goals. Jacqueline Nassy Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2005), 42.
accepted. In particular, Stokely Carmichael’s 1967 UK visit provided the final catalyst for the British Black Power Movement, which began a month after Carmichael left London. (In Chapter 3, I examine Carmichael’s visit in detail.)

The US visitors arrived during a period of increasing polarization in British society around issues of race. The British government had made some effort to address racial discrimination in the 1965 Race Relations Act. But the weak provisions of that legislation left the door open for the development of a number of openly anti-black organizations to flourish. Between 1965 and 1967, a number of right wing groups, including the National Socialists, Ku Klux Klan, and National Front emerged.

While Carmichael’s visit provided the immediate impetus for the formation of Black Power in Britain, Black Power did not simply come full-blown across the Atlantic. Black Britons had already gone to great lengths in thinking about how to build a British movement. In a series of oral history interviews with rank-and-file members and movement leaders, British Black Panthers explain how and why they set off on independent journeys to connect with African-American activists between 1966 and 1970. Their reconstructions of these journeys help us to trace the eventual convergence of myriad paths in the British Black Panthers. These travelers include Egbuna, who led the movement in its first year, 1968-69, and Darcus Howe and others who comprised the movement’s second phase, 1969-74. With limited resources and sometimes under the guise of other purposes, these activists took risks that included possible deportation and imprisonment in order to interact with African-American activists. Some traveled by boats, planes and buses; others hitchhiked; and some who could not travel wrote letters and distributed African-American-authored materials in the UK. Their voyages
comprised a collective effort among black Britons to construct their place in the world and to develop an historical relationship to African-Americans.

During their travels, both Egbuna and Howe met former SNCC organizers who had embraced international outlooks on the African-American movement; these ex-SNCC workers’ willingness to build relationships with Howe and Egbuna contributed in part to the emergence of the British Panthers. On an organizational level, Cold War liberals largely succeeded in limiting civil rights to a national, rather than transnational movement for democracy, as Penny Von Eschen has argued. Egbuna and Howe’s interactions on their US tours, however, reveal that some SNCC members expanded their internationalist politics in the organization’s demise. These former SNCC members consciously embraced alliances with black people globally, beyond the received African and Third World contexts to places such as Canada, France, and England, in a quest for worldwide structural change.

Both Egbuna and Howe recalled that their US meetings helped them bring SNCC tactics back to Britain; however, these statements reflected these men’s memory politics rather than the actual process of adopting grassroots politics at home. Egbuna and Howe’s respective visits to the US took place after SNCC’s demise as a national organization. Both men met with what could be described as splinter groups; Egbuna met

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with the radicalized Atlanta office and Howe with the International Affairs office in New York. These two offshoots no longer espoused grassroots local organizing, revealing that in fact, the two men returned to the UK with an affinity for a former SNCC that they had not witnessed first-hand in the United States. Thus, their visits provided them with memories of having “been there,” to several places where they had read and heard that movement activity took place, and of having spent time with activists whom they admired, rather than with grassroots tactics that they applied.

In fact, black Britons learned about day-to-day tactics and movement strategies by reading, watching, and listening. Many activists in Britain read the canonical treatises of the US movement, listened to radio interviews and recorded speeches, watched television broadcasts, and analyzed newspapers. These materials offered understandings of the people and work of the African-American movement, which black Britons saw as starting points for turning their struggle into a movement. Their curiosity helped them to develop a political language that envisioned the fate of African-Americans, Africans, and black Britons as inseparably linked. This language centered on the relationship between local experiences and transnational imperial structures, and it enabled black Britons to call people into the streets and build a movement from the ground up.

*Connecting the ‘blacks of Smethwick’ and the ‘Negroes of Birmingham, Alabama,’ 1964-67*

Black Britons eager to meet African-American freedom struggle activists whom they had read about and seen on television benefited from London’s role as a hub for long-haul journeys from the United States to Europe, Africa, and Asia. As Ray Eurquhart, one of two African-Americans active in the British Panthers, explained, “You
had all these visitors from America, they'd go on these international speaking tours…

You got a significant black community in England. Not only a significant black community, but also an African community.”

London provided a welcome stopping point for many African-American activists headed for speaking tours abroad, as well as for those whose final destination was the UK.

Given the international media’s identification of King as the leader of the southern movement, his visit in December 1964, along with Ralph Abernathy and Bayard Rustin, helped lead to the founding of a civil rights organization in Britain. Global admiration for King was particularly strong at the time, as the trio stopped over in England on their way to Oslo, where King would accept the Nobel Peace Prize. In London, King preached at St. Paul’s Cathedral, a centerpiece of British national identity and the Anglican Church’s London home, hosted by leftist priest Canon John Collins and his Christian Action organization. Following the service, King gave a press conference at which he criticized Britain’s immigration laws and reflected on “signs of a rapidly growing problem in race relations in Britain.”

The visit of the American civil rights leaders also provided an opportunity to bring together the leaders of three ethnic immigrant organizations, the West Indian Standing Conference (WISC), the Indian Workers’ Association (IWA), and the National Federation of Pakistani Associations.

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47 Raymond Eurquhart, interview by author, February 14, 2007, Durham, N.C., digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession (hereafter, Eurquhart), 07:30. Eurquhart was one of two African-Americans who joined the British Panther Movement. Thus, his separation of the “black community” from the “African community” may well be due to his vantage point as an African-American. In his formulation, Africans approximated the Third World while West Indians, South Asians, and African Americans represented the trajectories from the Old to the New Worlds. His formation underscores the degree to which black Britons and African-Americans sought connections with African anticolonial activists during this period.

(NFPA) for the first time. Two months after King’s visit, the groups formed an umbrella organization, the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD). Under the leadership of its chairman and London City Council member Dr. David Pitt, a Trinidadian doctor, CARD became a civil rights organization focused on legislative change. CARD’s members included middle-class clergy, politicians, and social scientists who coordinated the work of its constituent anti-racist groups around the 1965 Race Relations Act.49 As mentioned, however, many blacks viewed the Race Relations Act as weak and ineffectual. Thus CARD’s efforts, while valuable in advancing the cause of racial equality, failed to satisfy the working-class men and women who later formed the Black Panther Movement.

Malcolm X also touched down in the UK in December 1964, where in front of a national audience he indicted the media’s penchant for distorting images of international struggles. Malcolm had just wrapped up a five-month tour with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in which he met with nationalist leaders across sub-Saharan Africa and cultivated the support of Muslim colleagues in Mecca and Cairo. Malcolm had traveled to the UK at the request of the Jamaican-born head of the Oxford University Union, Eric Abrahams, to participate in a public debate. At the Union, Malcolm was asked to defend Barry Goldwater’s controversial statement at the 1964 Republican National Convention in San Francisco that, “Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice, and moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.” The BBC televised the event.50

Malcolm took the opportunity to clarify misconceptions of his positions, which he
self-consciously called “my own distorted image.” He held up the 1964 Congolese
uprising as an example of “one of the tricks of the west,” which he argued, “is to use or
create images, they create images of a person that doesn’t go along with their views and
then they make certain that this image is distasteful.” Malcolm claimed that this
distortion occurred in the American, English, and European presses. He concluded his
speech with a call for an international revolution. “I for one,” he said, “will join in with
anyone—don’t care what color you are—as long as you want to change this miserable
condition that exists on this earth.” He finished his nearly thirty minute speech to a one-
and-a-half minute ovation.

In February 1965, Malcolm visited England again. Organized around Malcolm’s
participation in the first Congress of the Council of African Organizations, a BBC
documentary film crew followed him as he toured Smethwick, a working-class town
outside Birmingham with a large West Indian and South Asian community. Leaders of
that community had contacted Malcolm seeking his support for their local struggle. In
October 1964, they had seen their Labour MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary (who would
have been appointed Foreign Secretary) Patrick Gordon Walker lose his incumbent seat
in what should have been a safe race to Conservative Peter Griffiths. Griffiths had

51 Malcolm X, “Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice, and moderation in the pursuit of justice is no
and Arun Kundnani, “Remembering Malcolm’s Visit to Smethwick,” Institute for Race Relations, (Feb. 10,
the best encapsulation of Malcolm X’s ultimate views on race, American politics and what can only be
called universal human rights… It is hard to find a speech better than that delivered at Oxford in which to
54 Marable, Malcolm X, 412.
campaigned on the slogan, “If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour.” Reveling in his electoral success, Griffiths unabashedly told The Times that the phrase was, “a manifestation of the popular feeling.” Griffiths was the first candidate with an openly anti-immigrant platform to win election to national office, a foreboding indication that further public racism was yet to come.

In Smethwick, the BBC had attempted to organize a debate between Griffiths and Malcolm, but Griffiths was unable or unwilling to participate. Instead, Malcolm toured Smethwick for the day, where he denounced a Conservative city council scheme to buy houses and sell or rent them to whites only. He said, “I have heard that the blacks of Smethwick are being treated in the same way as the Negroes were treated in Birmingham, Alabama—like Hitler treated the Jews… I would not wait for the fascist element in Smethwick to erect gas ovens.” Here, Malcolm connected British racism to two entities that white elites had tried hard to distance themselves from: the American South and the Nazis, whom England had defeated in the War and against whose Holocaust genocide Britain had framed itself as an example of tolerance. Malcolm’s remarks prompted Griffiths to petition Labour Party Home Secretary Frank Soskice to “declare Malcolm X an undesirable alien” and ban him from returning to the UK. Soskice declined Griffiths’ suggestion, arguing that a ban would be unjustified. Malcolm’s visit also led to widespread condemnation of the BBC within the journalist community. The

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Smethwick was intimately connected to English racism in an earlier period. In 1926, Smethwick’s MP was Sir Oswald Mosley, founder and leader of the British Fascist Party.

56 See also “Malcolm X Off to Smethwick,” The Times, Feb. 12, 1965.


Sun, a liberal newspaper, argued that the BBC’s coverage of Malcolm’s visit had provided him with a platform, which was a “deplorable mistake.” 59 Malcolm was assassinated by members of the Nation of Islam at a meeting in Harlem just nine days after he left Smethwick. 60

Behind the hysteria of the travel ban idea and the condemnation of the BBC lay a fear that Malcolm X’s Smethwick remarks would energize black Britons. They did. 61 Following the visit, Trinidadian Michael DeFreitas styled himself as Malcolm’s protégé, changing his name to Michael X. 62 Michael X founded the Racial Adjustment Action Society (RAAS), a rival of CARD. RAAS set out to re-examine “the whole question of black identity,” and to strengthen “links with Afro-Asian-Caribbean peoples in a common fight for the freedom and dignity of man.” 63 The organization was open only to blacks. In May 1965, RAAS organized in support of Britain’s first black workers’ strike, at textile manufacturer Courtauld’s Red Scar Mill in Preston, a small city in the northwest. At Red Scar, Asian workers went on strike over a management decision that forced them to increase the number of machines they worked on while paying them less than whites. 64

59 The Sun, as quoted in Marable, Malcolm X, 413.
61 In a confidential memo from New York, UK Foreign Officer Richard Webb echoed a similar fear among the British elite in the US. Webb noted that people who had come to visit him, “Did not just come to talk about Malcolm. Fearing serious trouble and an outbreak of violence… they came to see that I got home safely.” Confidential memo, Richard E. Webb, February 23, 1965, 3, in “The Death of Malcolm X,” Foreign Office (hereafter FO) 371/179611, TNA: PRO.
63 Hiro, Black British White British, 45.
Although RAAS presented itself as a Black Power Movement, the organization rested largely on Michael X’s personality. In what the Home Office called a conservative estimate, RAAS may have counted as many as 1,000 members. Panther Ray Eurquhart called Michael X, “a character… who shortcut everything and [got] in the media… In terms of being grounded in an organization that saw down the long road to walk, that was something else. He was a celebrity.”\(^{65}\) Although RAAS received significant media attention, it lacked the cohesion and discipline that would be a hallmark of Egbuna’s Universal Coloured People’s Association (UCPA), the first successful Black Power organization. Given its organization around a central figure, when Michael X was arrested and sent to prison in 1967, RAAS collapsed.

In April 1966, SNCC executive chairman John Lewis raised the idea of grass roots politics with black Britons in CARD and other groups. The left-leaning \textit{Guardian} reported that Lewis, “one of the original ‘freedom riders’ in America,” had arrived in the UK, “with the suggestion that, ‘a grass roots organisation’ was the best means of overcoming the evils of racial discrimination.”\(^{66}\) The reporter admired SNCC’s work, explaining that the organization, “has been in the forefront of the civil rights struggle in the United States for the past 10 years,” and that it, “has about 150 students working in the southern states among coloured communities.”\(^{67}\) With his visit sponsored by CARD, Lewis met with representatives of black student groups in London, hoping to raise funds

\(^{65}\) Eurquhart, 1:00. The UK Home Office concurred with Eurquhart’s view, claiming that RAAS’s, “ideology became increasingly militant as de Freitas, in particular, tried to exploit the publicity that American Black Power leaders were gaining in Britain.” Immigration and Nationality Department, Home Office, “The Black Power Movement in Britain,” July 1970, 4, in FCO 95/792, TNA: PRO.


\(^{67}\) Ibid.
for SNCC. Lewis laid plain his concerns with America’s role in Vietnam and the disproportionate effect the war was having on black and white working-class people.68

‘The whole of America is the black man’s Hell’: Obi Egbuna tours the US in 1966

SNCC activists like John Lewis offered an organizing model for many people who joined the ranks of the British Panthers; in one case, the US State Department facilitated an opportunity for the politically-minded young Biafran playwright Obi Egbuna, who would found the Black Panther Movement, to meet SNCC leaders. As The Times reported in an investigative article on Black Power, in July 1966 the State Department brought roughly twenty-five African students to the United States on an all-expenses paid educational African Young Leaders Tour.69 Egbuna, age twenty-nine, was in that group. “There, he says, he was first led towards Black Power,” the article explained.70 Indeed, as Egbuna reflected in his 1971 memoir Destroy this Temple: The Voice of Black Power in Britain, he took a ‘grand tour’ of African-American life in the US in 1966, where he, “tramped the Black ghettos of America and delved into the soul of the grass roots.”71 On the trip, Egbuna spent time with people in SNCC, the Nation of Islam, Watts, Harlem, and black neighborhoods in San Francisco, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Southside Chicago. In Britain, Egbuna had been involved with Malcolm’s February

1965 visit in his role as a member of the pan-Africanist Committee of African Organisations.\(^2\)

In an essay entitled, “Letter from Brixton Prison,” Egbuna wrote that SNCC offered him, in his words, “my first confrontation with militant Black youths.”\(^3\) Egbuna visited SNCC’s Head Office in the run-down neighborhood of Vine City in Atlanta. Egbuna admired the field workers’ diligence and resolve. “In their police-scaring revolutionary outfits,” he wrote, “they worked from dawn till midnight,” and their “spirit of dedication, hard work and organisation was incredible.” The SNCC workers, he noted, were mostly young, some just out of college “with impressive degrees,” many still in school, and a few who had left school, “because the White man taught them nothing there which could improve the plight of the Blacks.” Revealing a perceived tension between black women’s bodies and power that would fascinate Egbuna throughout his writing, he also noted that “I cannot recall anywhere else in the world having come across such a tantalising collection of beautiful Black women, all without exception wearing their hair in the ‘Natural Look.’ They told me the secret of their beauty. Hard work.”\(^4\)

In the essay, Egbuna also reflected that his interaction with SNCC taught him that America was a racist country among what the Atlanta SNCC activists believed were many white-dominated countries; that living conditions for blacks throughout the US were deplorable; and that SNCC’s style of grass roots activism was powerful. Although

\(^2\) The CAO was based at the African Unity House, 3, Collingham Gardens, London. Egbuna, *Destroy this Temple*, 19.
\(^3\) Egbuna, “Letter from Brixton Prison,” 69.
\(^4\) Ibid., 69-70. Egbuna wrote the “Letter from Brixton Prison” to a black prostitute called Dolores whom he invited back to his hotel room in New York, only to turn her away in the middle of a sexual encounter. In the letter, he claims paternalistically that he saved her from re-enslavement. He says that, “Striped to the last fiber of your pubic dignity, you were grovelling on your knees like a little slave woman.” Ibid., 92. Egbuna tells her at the end of the letter that, “It was not the nakedness of your body that sickened me, … it was the nakedness of my soul,” Ibid., 93.
Egbuna did not note this in his essay, his observations were distorted by the fact that
SNCC’s Atlanta office was more radical than most of the national organization.
Traveling by bus and train around the country, Egbuna came to understand that racism
existed outside the South. Regarding Atlanta, Egbuna said, “I would once again be
wading through the realities of the worst Hell on this earth, the Hell of the American deep
south. And even that is only a slice of the truth. For the whole of America is the Black
man’s hell.” 75

Regarding international affairs, Egbuna reported that SNCC activists were
connecting their struggle to that of blacks elsewhere. He said, “They believe there is a
patent connection between the situation of the White world outside and the racial
happenings within America.” 76 What Egbuna does not point out, however, is that in the
summer of 1966, the Atlanta branch of SNCC broke off from the national organization to
form a separatist, pan-Africanist movement known as the Atlanta Project. 77 Thus,
Egbuna’s assertion that the SNCC workers assumed an internationalist posture reflected
the particular ideas and formations of the movement’s Atlanta offshoot.

SNCC workers took Egbuna on a tour of Vine City, home to the Atlanta Project’s
headquarters, which he described in terms that evoked Third World deprivation. In Vine
City, Egbuna saw that, “the streets were broken…and pock-marked with ditches. Old
shacks squatted alongside the streets like curious squashed match boxes put together by
some pack rat builder with a sick sense of humour.” 78 As they walked through what “was
supposed to be a children’s playground,” Egbuna noted “pathetic half-naked children

75 Ibid., 72.
76 Ibid., 70.
77 Carson, In Struggle, 191-201.
running on rough gravel without shoes.” In the streets, he saw, “Black men and Black women… crouching on doorsteps like little animals, chained to their pillars of poverty by ever-thickening cords of discriminating Yankee capitalism.” For Egbuna, Vine City symbolized American hypocrisy. “Like the slums of Harlem I was to discover later,” he said, “[Vine City was] a lamentable testimony to man’s inhumanity to man.” Hypocrisy at home made a mockery of the US abroad, Egbuna insisted. “This is in a country which professes to go to the faraway Vietnams of this world to prevent Vietnamese inhumanity to other Vietnamese.”

After a day of touring Vine City, Atlanta Project leaders treated Egbuna to a “Back to Africa” themed dinner, an episode that Egbuna recalled felt like being welcomed by an extended family. Egbuna described the dinner as, “The most moving reception of my American tour. Forgetting all the trials and tribulations of mankind for a few hours, we wined and dined and guffawed and sang revolutionary songs about Lumumba, Nkrumah, Odinga and Black Mother Africa.” Egbuna had not expected this celebration. “This was all the more significant to me because I had been warned before I left London that the Negro in America totally dissociates himself from Africa and looks down upon everything and everyone ‘African.’” To his surprise, “however, for the average Afro-American family to have an ‘African’ visitor home for dinner was something akin to a status symbol… They implored me to come to dinner in my national costume and give the invariably packed party a ‘back to Africa’ touch.” It is possible that SNCC activists asked Egbuna to wear his African garb out of an anthropological

79 Ibid., 71.
80 Ibid., 72.
curiosity about an “authentic” African, but given the Atlanta Project’s pan-Africanist turn, they more likely shared his enthusiasm for wearing his national costume.

Egbuna’s 1966 visit to the US exposed him to a smorgasbord of organizations and ideas, upon which he reflected and formulated his opinions. It also afforded him a bird’s eye view of black struggles globally. He reflected that, “For too many years, Black people in different parts of the world have been suffering at the hands of Whites what they believe to be isolated pockets of oppression… Hence the Indian worker in Bombay once believed that the problem of the Black man in the Caribbean was different from his own.” In this reflection, Egbuna began to trace what would become one of the most significant contributions of the British Black Panther Movement—an interethnic alliance among Africans, West Indians and South Asians. He continued, “Black peoples all over the world… drink the same waters of affliction from the hands of the same man: the White man. We know that the Negro of Harlem in New York has much more in common with the African in Angola than he has with his White neighbour in Manhattan.”

Out of the trip, Egbuna also developed a concrete definition of Black Power, making clear that Black Power, “is not indefinable.” Rather, “one can summarily define Black Power as the totality of the economic, cultural, political and, if necessary, military power which the Black people of the world need to abolish White oppression.” Egbuna returned to the UK ready to develop a Black Power organization in Britain and adorned with a small, visible symbol of his commitment—a Black Panther badge. He recalled

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81 Ibid., 85.
82 Ibid., 86.
83 Ibid., 87, 90.
attending meetings of Black organizations where other activists asked him to explain the significance of his Panther badge, an early sign of local interest in Black Power.\textsuperscript{\textit{84}}

**Fascism resurges and the UCPA emerges, 1965-67**

The period between Malcolm X’s 1965 visit and Stokely Carmichael’s visit in July 1967 saw British society dividing further over issues of race, with immigration issues sidelined in national politics and black Britons vocalizing their concerns more stridently in the concentrated areas where they lived. London and Birmingham were Britain’s two largest cities and home to its highest concentrations of blacks.\textsuperscript{\textit{85}} The 1971 census reported that 6.4\% of London’s 7.5 million residents had been born in countries of the New Commonwealth, compared to 2.1\% of the overall Great British population of 55.7 million people. Of these 477 thousand London blacks, 46\% had been born in Asia and Oceania, 35\% in the Caribbean, and 16\% in Africa. In the West Midlands Conurbation, which encompassed Birmingham, 3.1\% of its 2.4 million residents had been born in New Commonwealth countries.\textsuperscript{\textit{86}} Of these, 60\% were of Asian and Oceanic birth, 32\% West Indian, and 7\% West African.\textsuperscript{\textit{87}} These statistics did not account for all blacks in Britain as they excluded second-generation immigrants who had been born in the UK.

\textsuperscript{\textit{84}} “British Ban on Stokely Carmichael,” 1 and Egbuna, \textit{Destroy This Temple}, 17.

\textsuperscript{\textit{85}} Significantly sized, although less concentrated, black populations could also be found in the northern cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds and the East Midlands city of Leicester.

\textsuperscript{\textit{86}} A conurbation area is an aggregation of a local authority area. In the 1971 Census, the West Midlands Conurbation included: Dudley, Walsall, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton, Aldridge-Brownhills, Birmingham, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield, Warley, Halesowen, Stourbridge (parts of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire counties).

and they included people who had been born in New Commonwealth countries as expatriates.

These figures do, however, enable some generalizations about the ethnic demographics of the black communities of London and Birmingham. Birmingham had a significant concentration of Asians, the majority of whom came from India and Pakistan. London’s Asians, West Indians, and Africans largely lived in concentrated neighborhoods scattered around the city center. Bangladeshis had settled heavily in the east London borough of Tower Hamlets, also known as the East End; many Pakistanis and Indians called the northwest borough of Ealing home; and a significant proportion of London’s West Indians lived in Brixton in south London and Brent in north London.

White working-class areas surrounded these concentrated black neighborhoods on all sides, creating significant zones of contact between whites and blacks. Blacks often passed whites on the street when they traveled elsewhere in London and Birmingham outside of their neighborhoods. This high degree of contact fueled the emergence of three right-wing nationalist groups that amplified white-on-black racism and violence during this period. In Birmingham, the Socialist Movement (NSM) and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) appeared in 1965. Two years later, these groups joined forces with populists in London to establish the National Front (NF). The earlier emergence of far right groups in Birmingham likely reflected white working-class hostilities toward the predominantly South Asian black population there. Many South Asians had arrived in the UK prepared to enter skilled positions and therefore able to displace white workers more easily than

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88 The Indian and Pakistani populations of the West Midlands Conurbation were the largest numerically, with 44,680 Indian residents and 23,465 Pakistani residents, in Ibid., 68.
West Indian immigrants. Likewise, jobs were becoming scarcer in the manufacturing-based economies of the West and East Midlands, which were the areas surrounding Birmingham and Nottingham.90

In Coventry, a Birmingham suburb home to the British auto industry, Colin Jordan founded the British National Socialist Movement in 1962, a group that he modeled explicitly on Nazi Nordic racism and anti-Semitism.91 On January 7, 1965, Jordan led a group of about 100 fascists to protest at a Labour Party meeting for a special election for candidate Patrick Walker-Gordon in the East London area of Leyton. Walker-Gordon, the MP who had lost to Smethwick’s Peter Griffiths on the “Nigger for Neighbour” campaign, had decided to run in another district in an attempt to retain his seat in Parliament. At the meeting, Denis Healey, Harold Wilson’s Defence Secretary, gave a speech supporting Walker-Gordon. As Healey spoke, Jordan’s NSM demonstrators began obstructing the meeting. They gave the Nazi salute, Jordan jumped onto the platform, and one demonstrator threw a flour bomb that *The Times* said, “‘exploded’ on the chest of Bert Hume,” the Leyton Labour Party chairman.92 Healey and Jordan scuffled, and Healey landed a heavy punch that knocked Jordan off the stage.93 At the back of the meeting hall, one of the protestors blew a whistle and a row of men and teenage boys stood at the front of the hall chanting, “Send the blacks back.”94

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90 Harrison notes a postwar population drift southwards into areas of new prosperity, due to the permanent decline in Britain’s staple industries of coal, textile, and shipbuilding. Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 41.
93 “Obituary of Colin Jordan, Neo-fascist agitator reviled as Britain’s most notorious Nazi who was once sent sprawling by Denis Healey,” *The Daily Telegraph*, April 28, 2009.
94 “Police Remove Colin Jordan,” *The Times*. Jordan was also arrested and convicted under the Public Order Act in for insulting behavior when Ian Smith, the Rhodesian Prime Minister, visited Prime Minister Wilson at 10 Downing Street on October 8, 1965. According to the prosecution, Jordan pushed past police,
later, another NSM supporter dressed up as a minstrel and appeared at the Leyton election offices, where he tried to register Walker-Gordon as the “race-mixing” candidate who would, “make Britain black.”95 The NSM was insignificant in numerical terms, numbering less than seven hundred members at its peak in late 1962 and declining to 187 members by 1966.96 The group raised the political temperature considerably, however, and it served as a vanguard that allowed less extreme racist views the space to flourish.

While the NSM mimicked German fascism, Britain’s Ku Klux Klan took its inspiration from the eponymous white supremacy organization in the US. A group of white working-class men and women aged in their twenties and thirties formed a KKK in Birmingham in 1965. Led by Colin Jordan’s former bodyguard Robert Relf, the British KKK used violence to intimidate the significant South Asian population of Birmingham. On the night of June 8, 1965, a group of Klansmen wedged a six-foot tall cross in the door of a multi-family house in Leamington, a Birmingham suburb where Dharam Singh resided. They lit the cross on fire, threw a brick through the window where medical student Dalbir Kaur sat, and escaped in a car. The attack was far from random. Singh was an office worker, law student, president of the Warwickshire National Indian Association, and he had recently organized a campaign on behalf of black bus workers.97 Kaur was also Indian. The incident, which made national headlines in India, was the first evidence of Ku Klux Klan activity in Birmingham according to Leamington Spa mayor, Dr. T. Dorey. The Klan claimed that a “Mr. X,” a wealthy Birmingham businessman with close

shouted, “A present for Harold Wilson,” and waved a sign near the door of Number 10 that read, “Award for treachery for the betrayal of our white kinfolk in Rhodesia.” “Three months’ sentence on Colin Jordan,” The Times, Nov. 2, 1965, 5. 95 Leytonstone Express, Jan. 15, 1965, as quoted in Thurlow, Fascism in Britain, 239-40. 96 Ibid., 240. 97 “Stop racial madness before blood is shed,” The Birmingham Post, June 1965, in MS 2141/A/7/5, Papers of the Indian Workers’ Association (hereafter IWA Papers), Birmingham Local Archives (hereafter BLA).
connections to US KKK Grand Wizard Robert Shelton, funded them. Mr. X had
discussed with Shelton a plan for him to travel to the UK at the end of June to train the
UK group’s recruits. Speaking in the House of Commons on June 15, 1965, Home
Secretary Frank Sostice announced a ban on Shelton’s entry into the UK, thwarting the
plans of both Klan groups.

The travel ban limited the possibility that the KKK’s calls for the extermination of
blacks would come to fruition. On June 12, 1965, the Klan held a public meeting in
Birmingham in which they stated as one of their main aims to rid, “the stinking countries
of the world of black scum,” according to a government prosecutor. On June 19,
twelve Klansmen met at Long Lawford, a rural town thirty miles east of Birmingham.
The group of working-class men and women, all but one of whom were aged 27 to 45,
wore uniforms that consisted of “white gowns with a black cross over the heart and cloth
headdresses with slits for the eyes and mouth which were not unlike dunce’s caps.”


In part, this was due to Soskice’s more progressive approach toward black Britons, and to the government’s desire to avoid the extremism that the British KKK had demonstrated with their recent hate crimes. However, Soskice’s decision can also be read in the context of his efforts to have Parliament pass the Race Relations Bill. Labour had introduced the Bill to Parliament in April 1965, but the Conservative Opposition objected to the legislation because it would classify racial discrimination as a criminal offense. The Act eventually passed in December 1965, but discrimination was downgraded to a civil offense. Soskice thus used his power as Home Secretary to avoid another possible KKK crime that was not yet prosecutable.
Hiro, *Black British White British*, 210-211.
100 Rugby Magistrates’ Court prosecutor Robert Rich said that Klansman William Duncan had stated that the aim of the Klan was to “rid Britain of Jews, Catholics, and coloureds by every possible means, including violence.” Given that the Klan espoused a particular combination, that of anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-black racism, the British Magistrates were likely aware that if the public perceived any degree of permissiveness with the Klan, the country could be accused of showing an affinity for Nazi Germany after the Holocaust. “Mrs. Castle on Ku-Klux-Klan List, Prosecution Say; Three Gaoled: Court told of uniforms,” *The Times*, Oct. 8, 1965, 6.
101 Ibid.
Police charged eight of the Klan members, six men and two women, with wearing a political uniform at a public meeting, an offence under the 1936 Public Order Act. The Public Order Act banned the wearing of political uniforms in public, and had been designed to control extremist movements such as the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s. In this case, the Klan had allowed two Birmingham newspaper reporters and a freelance photographer into the meeting, which led police to charge that the meeting had been open to the public. All eight Klansmen and women were convicted, some jailed and others fined. The charges were the first prosecution in Britain involving the Klan.102

The NSM, the KKK, and other neo-fascists with roots in the 1930s British Union of Fascists joined forces with racial populists in 1967 to form the National Front, a nationalist party that achieved significant political success for the far right. When Prime Minister Harold Wilson called a General Election after only seventeen months in office in March 1966, he dramatically increased Labour’s Parliamentary majority over the Conservatives from four seats to ninety-eight. This massive victory inflamed some members of the far right who saw Conservative Party leader Edward Heath as too moderate on social issues. A.K. Chesterton, head of the League of Empire Loyalists (LEL), a pressure group that opposed the dissolution of the British Empire, reinserted immigration restriction into the national political conversation. Chesterton argued that a patriotic, anti-immigration party would have won the election.103 Chesterton then orchestrated a merger between the LEL and the British National Party to form the National Front. The NF presented itself as the only party with a credible restrictionist

102 “Relf, Robert; Webb, Michael; Webb, Patrick and others: wearing political uniform at public meeting; S1(1) Public Order Act, 1936,” in Director of Public Prosecutions (hereafter DPP) 2/4009, TNA: PRO.
stance on immigration. Over time, its existence revealed support for anti-immigration policies among the British electorate. Nine years after its founding, the NF won 15 percent of the vote in several 1976 local elections and 19.2 percent in London County Council elections in 1977. In the late 1960s, NF provocateurs trolled centers with high concentrations of blacks, such as Brixton in South London and Brent in North London, where they distributed their newspapers and shouted anti-immigrant slogans. Black leftist organizers found their most unabashed enemy to date in the National Front, as the NF targeted black people in their own neighborhoods and put forth candidates who favored political racism rather than isolating far-right thinkers to a fringe movement. As Figure 7 illustrates, however, the National Front did not always achieve success with these tactics. The NF worker photographed does not appear to have intimidated the woman next to him; rather, her smirk invokes the rising tide of black community control in neighborhoods like Brixton.

104 Hansen, Citizenship and Immigration in Post-War Britain, 223.
The spike in white racist activity and political debates about new immigration controls fomented an equally public response in the emergence of the Universal Coloured Peoples Association. In the spring, a group of black Britons began meeting weekly on Sunday nights at Speakers’ Corner in London’s Hyde Park. Since the nineteenth century, Speakers’ Corner had provided an iconic public setting for agitators including Karl Marx, Marcus Garvey, and Vladimir Lenin, who climbed its stone posts to debate and protest their respective causes. In May 1967, as Mozambique-born, South Asian laborer Tony Soares remembered, a coterie of regular participants at the Sunday night meetings at Speakers’ Corner decided to form an organization.
On June 5, a group of three women and eighty-two men from across London met in Notting Hill to form the UCPA. At the meeting, which Soares recalled was, “very confused,” founding members agreed to pay dues and they elected a committee of 12 leaders, including Soares as Assistant Secretary and Obi Egbuna as President. Like CARD, the UCPA drew an ethnically diverse contingent, but unlike CARD, the UCPA did not provide an umbrella for smaller ethnically driven organizations. Rather, UCPA formed as the first Black Power organization, whose members purposefully and organically gathered under a shared black identity. Soares characterized it as, “an equal mixture of Caribbeans, Asians and Africans that reflected on the minorities here.” As Assistant Secretary, Soares retained a copy of the UCPA’s original membership roster. The last names of its eighty-five founding members included many of South Asian origin, such as Khan, Chowdhury, Ghose; many African, including Egbuna, Wampamba, and Makiwane; and several West Indians, who could be identified as such by cross-referencing police records they later received while in the Black Panthers. These included Rupert Francis, Keith Spencer, and Eddie Lecointe.

The UCPA received little public recognition before Carmichael’s visit; rather, in the summer of 1967, the British media focused on what it presented as a shift to US Black Power, and on the increasing use of force and violence by both protestors and police. On July 4, *The Guardian* reported on the Congress of Racial Equality’s annual conference in Oakland with the front page headline, “US Negroes want power, not

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106 Ibid., 5:00.
107 “Names and addresses of financial members of UCPA,” 1967, in Tony Soares private collection, London. Postcodes for members were drawn from all cardinal directions in the city. Francis and Spencer were identified as Jamaican, and Lecointe as Dominican, in “The Queen vs. Keith Spencer and others,” 1970-71, Central Criminal Court (hereafter CRIM) 1/5497/1, TNA: PRO.
integration,” which implied shifts in the aims of the US movement. On July 30, The Times called the African-American struggle, “the time-bomb in the core of the American city.” The same day, The Observer Review, The Guardian’s Sunday edition, emblazoned its front page with a photograph of National Guardsmen chasing a black boy down a Detroit street. The article tallied the dead and injured in race-related violence in the US from 1964 to 1967 (see Figures 8 and 9). With the death toll, images, and stark headlines, these major national newspapers presented the idea of an America at war with itself. Such alarmist accounts lent themselves easily to media portrayals. As historians have established, however, assertions of a clear breaking point between integration and power such as The Guardian’s misrepresented and continue to misrepresent the Freedom Struggle. These media suggestions of a radical turn polarized perceptions of the US movement as non-violent vs. violent, moderate vs. radical, and also later in the British case, “responsible” vs. “irresponsible.” These false characterizations would affect both black British articulations of Black Power as well as whites’ and other blacks’ responses when the UK movement emerged.

110 “Anthony Howard from Detroit,” The Observer Review, July 30, 1967, 1, in Ibid.
Figure 8: Armed National Guardsmen chase black boy on *The Observer Review*’s front page.
‘Anyone that was defending black people’: Black Britons build solidarity with African-American activists

Dramatic images of state-sanctioned violence in the US along with the growing public presence of fascism in Britain exacerbated the need for visible, autonomous organizations and people who would protect the streets of black neighborhoods. In a 2009 interview, rank-and-file Panther Hurlington “Hurley” Armstrong recalled enjoying the Blaxploitation movie *Shaft* at a movie theater in London with his comrades, explaining that, “anyone that was defending black people we would be drawn to... like magnets.” Armstrong’s simile sometimes proved more literal than figurative. A number of committed black British activists believed that African-Americans offered tangible models of community control; accordingly, they took great efforts to put themselves within the magnetic fields of US activists. These people wanted to understand the

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112 Armstrong, 2.
possibilities that Black Power activism offered for themselves and their communities, so they actively formed relationships with Freedom Struggle activists whose work they admired. At times, this admiration slipped into idealization, in which British activists overestimated the achievements of their African-American models. This had the knock-on effect of leading some activists to underestimate black British accomplishments in comparison to what African-Americans had achieved.

Like Obi Egbuna’s experience in Atlanta around the SNCC family’s dinner table, these interactions afforded mutual camaraderie and opportunities to understand the African-American struggle and tactics. These journeys of travel and correspondence manifested elements of Black Power that black British activists could adapt to the UK. They localized their Black Power movement under a Black Panther label, appropriating the name and style of that organization in order to have a powerful public voice. These individuals did not know each other at the time; rather, they independently sought out African-Americans, and eventually they each joined the British Black Panthers, a process that underscores the grassroots nature of the British Panther movement.

Darcus Howe turned the opportunity of a transatlantic journey to a conference in 1968 into a crash course in SNCC organizing. Following Howe’s UK arrival in 1962, he had studied law at London’s Middle Temple, worked as a postal worker, and then served as a self-professed “pen pusher” in the Ministry of Pensions. “I was developing here,” he remembered, “I had girlfriends, I danced, I traveled as far and wide as I could afford, always having to face the vulgar end of racism.”¹¹³ In October 1968, Howe flew to Montréal with his great uncle, influential Trinidadian intellectual and radical CLR James.

in order to attend the Congress of Black Writers at McGill University. The Congress’s title, “Towards the second emancipation: The dynamics of black liberation,” the thirteen countries represented on its planning committee, and its list of speakers comprised the broadest-minded gathering of black activists in the West since the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress.

The conjuncture of many key movement figures at the Congress offered Howe the opportunity to hear about Black Power from a range of perspectives. According to the Congress’s souvenir program, James and Carmichael graced the list of speakers, as did former SNCC Executive Secretary James Forman; SNCC Chairman H. Rap Brown; activist, comedian and 1968 Peace and Freedom Party Presidential candidate Dick Gregory; Guyanese historian-activist Walter Rodney, who was teaching in Jamaica; and Jamaican law student Richard Small, who was also a student of CLR James’s in London.\(^{114}\) Black Panther Party Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver and poet and activist LeRoi Jones were both scheduled to attend, but according to Congress organizer Alfie Roberts, the US government prevented their travel.\(^{115}\) However, Cleaver wrote a

\(^{114}\) Souvenir program, “Congress of Black Writers/Congrès des écrivains noirs,” 11-14 October 1968, McGill University, 7, in 81P-660:02/16 Projet de film (box 940), Fonds de Gérald Godin, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada.


A series of related events support Roberts’ claim regarding Cleaver’s travel restriction for the Congress. The month before the Congress in Montréal, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover declared the Black Panther Party, “the greatest threat to the internal security of the country.” Hoover continued his memo with a statement that has not been as widely quoted, in which he specifically cited Black Panther Party travel as a cause for FBI concern. He claimed that, “Leaders and representatives of the Black Panther Party travel extensively all over the United States preaching their gospel of hate and violence not only to ghetto residents, but to students in colleges, universities and high schools as well.” A month after the Congress of Black Writers, Cleaver was due to return to prison to complete his sentence for sexual assault charges stemming from 1958. When he did not present himself, The New York Times speculated that Cleaver might have fled to Montréal to attend an anti-Vietnam conference there. Cleaver’s late November 1968 disappearance from the United States would turn out to be the beginning of his exile in Havana, Paris, and Algiers. Respectively, J. Edgar Hoover, September 1968, as cited in “The FBI’s Covert Action Program to
message that was read to Congress attendees. In a 2011 interview, Howe also recalled speaking at the Congress. Although Howe was not listed in the Congress’s program as an official speaker, he likely participated in the Congress’s opening session, which included messages of greetings from Congress delegation leaders and official delegates.

Stokely Carmichael drew a reported 2,000 people in the audience for his speech, in which he insisted that the black struggle must internationalize. He called on blacks all over the world to “create their own legitimations.” Echoing Carmichael’s charge to the delegates, the Congress’s co-chairmen penned an editorial:

White racism has systematically nurtured and institutionalised the physical and spiritual degradation of our people on an international level… In the face of this total colonial stranglehold, it is clear that the task of self-liberation involves much more than freedom from economic and social oppression. Genuine freedom can only come from the total liberation of the minds and spirits of our people from the false and distorted image of themselves which centuries of cultural enslavement [sic] by the white man have imposed upon us all. The struggle for liberation of black people is accordingly not only an economic or political question, but also a cultural rallying cry, a call to re-examine the foundations of the white man's one-sided vision of the world, and to restore to ourselves an image of the achievements of our people, hitherto suppressed and abandoned among the rubble of history's abuses… It is only when we have rediscovered this lost perspective on ourselves that we can

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117 Howe I, 15:15.

118 Souvenir program, “Congress of Black Writers/Congrès des écrivains noirs,” 4-5. Also in attendance for the British delegation was Michael X, the leader of RAAS. Mills, The Empire Within, 102.

119 Stokely Carmichael, Oct. 14, 1968, as cited in Ibid., 188.
truly begin to speak of emancipation; it is only when we have returned to our authentic past that we can begin to dream about the future.\textsuperscript{120}

Here, the authors epitomized the intertwining of Black Power’s internationalist and cultural work. They emphasized that the oppression of blacks had been an historical and international phenomenon, varying in its shapes and degrees but universal in its oppression. This “total colonial stranglehold” had distorted the self-image of blacks, in such a way that only a black cultural renaissance and a reexamination of history from the point of view of black people could revive them.

Armed with a deeper understanding of Black Power, Howe wanted to see the African-American movement in action. He remembered leaving the Congress in Canada and entering upstate New York, “us[ing] one of the old scams,” as he was unable to secure a visa from the British government for travel to the United States.\textsuperscript{121} Howe hopped a bus from the border to New York City, where he recalled visiting the West Indian community and with SNCC’s Manhattan office for a few days with, “that section of SNCC with James Forman [that] had broken with Carmichael.”\textsuperscript{122} By late 1968, Carmichael had joined the Panthers, and Forman had taken over leadership of a splinter faction that emerged in SNCC’s demise. Howe also remembered that he “spoke on a platform in 1968 in an open space in Harlem with Eldridge… Then I spoke on a platform at a school strike in New York in ’68 again.”\textsuperscript{123} Howe most likely participated in the

\textsuperscript{121} Howe, I, 15:30. For more on the culture of U.S.-Canada border crossings that led to the “old scams” Howe describes, see Jacob Remes, “Cities of Comrades: Urban disasters and the formation of the North American Progressive State” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2010), 18fn38, 43-52.
\textsuperscript{122} Darcus Howe, interview by author, London, July 28, 2011, part II of II (hereafter Howe II), digital audio file and transcript in author’s possession, 17:30.
\textsuperscript{123} Howe II, 15:15.
Ocean Hill-Brownsville Teachers’ Strike in Brooklyn that took place from May to November 1968. The strike pitted an African-American community-controlled school board against the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), highlighting a conflict between the community’s right to self-determination and the rights of teachers as workers. Howe’s time in New York provided him with opportunities to meet with internationalists and to participate as an active speaker in the movement.

“All my time in the States was spent talking,” Howe reminisced. Howe believed that conversations on race in Britain lacked depth, and he reveled in the opportunities for serious analysis that his US trip offered. In contrast, he recalled that, “Here I would get into a conversation about black life, and then go home to my wife and look after my eldest daughter.” Howe’s frustration demonstrated that he saw conversations about black life as central to the African-American experience, both publicly and privately. On the other hand, his comment that he had to abandon conversations about black life when he went home to his wife and daughter suggests that either private life excluded these sorts of conversations, or that Howe did not wish to have them with women.

Howe believed he had found the movement’s ancestral home when he left New York and ventured into the South, where he visited Mississippi and Georgia. He recalled meeting Courtland Cox and Carmichael, whom he identified as fellow Trinidadians. Howe also remembered having met Montgomery, Alabama’s Gwen Patton,

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125 For an example of James Forman’s internationalist outlook by 1968, see “‘Our Exploitation Results from Class and Race,’” The Militant, January 1, 1968, 4-5.

126 Howe II, 20:00.

veteran Mississippi staff member Fred Meely and Louisiana’s H. Rap and Elaine Brown. Although Howe recalled fondly his time in New York, he preferred what he saw as the Southern Movement. He remembered, “It was much higher when the Movement was in the South, the right to vote, that mobilized people. That woman who wouldn’t get off the bus, Rosa.” He deeply admired, “the political nuances that SNCC was able to deal with… I met a lot of them and you could see as you spoke with them the huge difference between what is the content of the black community here and there.”

In particular, Howe recalled meeting James “Jimmy” P. Garrett, a Mississippi SNCC organizer who shared an internationalist outlook; in 1965, Garrett had imagined obtaining the support of sympathetic white Europeans in order to bring diplomatic pressure on the US. Garrett had joined the sit-in movement at age fourteen and SNCC’s staff in 1964 at around age twenty, where veteran Mississippi field staffer Bob Moses had trained him. In 1965, after taking a beating in Jackson, Mississippi in which Garrett recalled, “I was almost beaten to death,” he left the south and moved to Los Angeles, where he worked in fundraising for SNCC. Removed from the risks and dangers of life in Mississippi, Garrett had time to reflect. He wrote a letter to SNCC staff in which he pitched a prescient idea. “Because of the groundwork laid in the early 60s,” Garrett said, “the Southern movement is progressing with a rapidity which has no parallel in American history, but this progression forces SNCC to expand its program—a national expansion to

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128 Howe II, 1:20.
129 Howe II, 16:30.
130 Howe II, 16:30-17:00.
132 Ibid., 34.
include large projects all over the South… And it seems to me just as natural that SNCC supporters expand also, that support should come from places beyond North America.”

He recalled as inspiration the case of the Scottsboro Boys in Alabama in 1931, in which nine black youths aged twelve to twenty were found guilty of raping two white women, despite weak and contradictory witness testimonies. After American public interest in the case had waned, as Garrett recalled, Ada Wright, mother of two of the defendants, Roy and Andy Wright, traveled to Europe in 1932. With the support of the Communist Party USA and of the European Communist Parties, Wright addressed delegations in 26 countries that drew many hundreds of thousands. Garrett noted reports of up to 150,000 people at Wright’s Berlin appearance. “As I noted before,” Garrett argued, “there were mass demonstrations and protests from the people here in America, but none of this was enough. It was the pressure from outside the United States, particularly European, which kept these boys alive; and the fact that this pressure was sustained over a number of years was indicative of the differences between the feelings of America and the feelings outside this country.”

Garrett’s analysis of Ada Wright’s European campaign demonstrated an understanding of the role that foreign pressure might play in shaping US domestic decisions regarding African-Americans. Moreover,

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133 Jimmy Garrett, memo to SNCC staff, “Proposal to select 25 Black Mississippi students, age 14-18, who had participated in freedom schools, and send them to Europe or Mexico for a speaking tour and to live for several months,” 1965, 1, in Box 2, Folder 9, M368 Miller (Michael J.) Civil Rights Collection, Special Collections, McCain Library and Archives, University of Southern Mississippi.


135 Garrett, memo to SNCC staff, 1.
the example of Ada Wright illustrated to other SNCC workers that their organization’s method of working with people in their local communities could take place on an international level.

Inspired by Ada Wright and the case of the Scottsboro Boys, Garrett painted an expansive vision. He wrote a letter to his colleagues asking, “What would happen if twelve Negroes—students from Mississippi, who had participated in COFO-SNCC projects and had attended freedom schools, had done voter registration work, who could express themselves, were to travel to Europe?” In Europe, Garrett imagined, the students, “selected from the movements of the south” would:

Tell about their conditions of the American south using pure simple terms—their command of English would not matter as long as they could express their conditions by just stating them—there would be no need for exaggeration [sic]. They would talk about the bombed homes, the missing brothers and sisters and lynched fathers and raped mothers—everything they had seen and heard, also, telling about the SNCC project, freedom schools, voter registration projects and community centers—federal projects, what the federal government could do.\textsuperscript{136}

Garrett suggested a complete exchange program, that European officials would then send their sons and daughters to join SNCC workers in the South to study at freedom schools and to help with voter registration drives.

Given SNCC’s limited resources, Garrett’s plan may have seemed far-fetched, but the idea illuminated a global vision that he and Howe shared. Garrett contended optimistically that the exchange, “would focus such a strong light on what’s happening in the South there would not be any more burnings or bombing from the air on churches…” [The program] would cast a world-wide light on what’s happening in the South.” In

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 2. COFO is an acronym for the Council of Federated Organizations, a coalition of Mississippi-based civil rights organizations that included the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).
addition to drawing greater international attention to the South, the movement would have advocates with personal stories to tell upon their return home. “There would be a personal commitment from the sons and daughters of prominent people outside of this country, who would go back and tell their story the way they saw it, and corroborate what’s actually happening.”137 Garrett also recognized the importance of local voices in creating domestic pressure for an international issue.

Although SNCC never realized Garrett’s European exchange, the episode illustrates the internationalist framework that some SNCC workers were thinking with in 1965, when SNCC was still active and before Black Power emerged. It also emphasizes an understanding of the role that foreigners could play in the US movement, and the agency they would be afforded by their outside vantage point. Despite the fact that it was Darcus Howe, and not Harold Wilson’s son, who eventually met Garrett in the South, one can imagine that Garrett was enriched to have a comrade from across the Pond who shared his international outlook using his limited resources to travel and meet with him and his colleagues.

Garrett and Howe shared revolutionary visions as well. Garrett’s ideas extended beyond the involvement of white middle-class Europeans to a global revolution, which sometimes got him in trouble with SNCC leaders. In April 1965, Newsweek magazine quoted Garrett saying, “We’re more revolutionary than the Communists,” for which the Executive Committee criticized him as it was not interested in publicly affiliating with the Left at that point.138 Although Garrett claimed to have been misquoted, the statement represents the particular conundrum of SNCC (and also of blacks in Britain) at the time.

137 Ibid., 3.
Writing in *The Washington Post*, conservative critics Rowland Evans and Robert Novak railed against SNCC for being, “substantially infiltrated by beat-nik left-wing revolutionaries, and—worst of all—by Communists.” In actuality, the Executive Committee did not want to appear publicly as having any relationship with Communists, so SNCC members taking a more radical turn forged these trails alone. After what he recalled as a conflict with SNCC over street organizing in September 1965, Garrett left the organization but he continued his international work. He accepted an invitation to Asia, where he toured Japan, China, and Vietnam in the fall of 1965 speaking about the movement. Garrett returned to the US the following year in order to attend San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University), where he organized the first Black Students Union in the country with a group of his fellow students in the spring of 1966.

By the time Garrett and Howe met in 1968, Garrett was in the process of co-founding, along with Courtland Cox whom Howe also met, the Center for Black Education (CBE) in Washington, DC, an organization that had connections with several black Britons. The CBE offered classes in black history and culture as a way of empowering black Washingtonians and connecting them to African liberation movements. Howe’s great uncle, the Trinidadian intellectual CLR James taught a

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140 Rogers, “Remembering the Black Campus Movement,” 33-34.
course at the center in 1969 that proved highly popular with militant North American and Caribbean activists who visited the center in order to learn from James.\textsuperscript{143} Future black British bookstore owners Eric and Jessica Huntley visited the Drum and Spear Bookshop and Press attached to the CBE. Drum and Spear published books with positive images of African-Americans, and the Huntleys recalled that this provided the inspiration for the bookshop they founded in London in 1968, Bogle L’Overture Press and Bookshop.\textsuperscript{144}

Garrett and many of his colleagues transformed Howe’s thinking with their global view. “When I came back from America,” he remembered, “I made a huge leap in my consciousness, or my analysis of the world and where we stood in it...” Howe returned transformed by his experiences with the US movement and energized to strengthen links between the two movements. He continued, “...Dealing with race and teasing at the class question and not getting consumed by the racial holocaust that happened in the past.”\textsuperscript{145} He admired the level of commitment and sacrifice that he believed the ex-SNCC members made, noting that, “They used slogans like ‘Freedom for everybody or freedom for nobody’ and those guys meant it.” Howe saw former SNCC members as active producers of thought, rather than passive consumers of ideology. “They were not empty vessels in the United States. I didn’t find one, not a single one,” he claimed.\textsuperscript{146} He also admired their efforts to transform education. He recalled that SNCC’s Black Power

\textsuperscript{143} Fanon Che Wilkins, “‘In the Belly of the Beast,’” 120.
\textsuperscript{145} Howe II, 21:00. In the interview, Howe noted that he used the term ‘holocaust’ as metaphor.
\textsuperscript{146} Howe II, 21:15.
advocates, “entered the American educational structure on their own terms. You had black history, black studies.”\textsuperscript{147}

During the trip, Howe deepened his admiration for an idealized version of SNCC that no longer existed by the time that he saw it. The structure and sloganeering of the British Panthers, Howe claimed, “came directly out of the US. But first out of SNCC.”\textsuperscript{148} This statement reflected two aspects of the politicization of Howe’s memory: his idealization of SNCC and a condescending view of the US Black Panther Party.

Howe and others who became British Panthers built their perceptions of the US movement in the absence of the daily threats to life that US Panthers often faced, and often in the absence of materials that offered nuanced explanations of the group; thus, a few British Panthers expressed misguided views of their US counterparts. These opinions focused on the Panthers’ militant responses to police brutality, in the absence of discussions of organizing tactics or programming ideas. Howe remembered, “What I knew of [the US Black Panther Party,] it was an unemployed organization reacting to police brutality in the black community. A one issue [group].”\textsuperscript{149} Howe’s reference to the Panthers as an organization of the unemployed reflected his disdain for their embrace of the lumpen proletariat, in which the “brothers on the block” became a crucial constituency the Panthers sought to involve. Howe’s view of the organization as a “one issue” group failed to acknowledge the Free Breakfast for Children programs, Free Clothing programs, and Liberation Schools that the US Panthers organized as well as the array of revolutionary reading materials they published. Howe’s focus on the Panthers’

\textsuperscript{147} Howe II, 25:30.
\textsuperscript{148} Howe II, 1:30-2:00.
\textsuperscript{149} Howe II, 13:30.
reactionary fights with police follows the contours of familiar mass media narratives, likely demonstrating once again how mass media misrepresentations of the Black Panthers influenced the perceptions even of would-be sympathizers.

Thus, despite the formation of the British Panthers’ second phase in 1969, Howe did not choose to join the Black Panthers until after the Mangrove Nine trial of 1971, the events of which will be examined in Chapter 4. However, Howe’s criticism of the Panthers may also reflect a perspective differentiated in hindsight rather than his thoughts at the time. As a Home Office intelligence report confirms, Howe served as the “Prime Minister” of a small black self-help group in South London known as the Black Eagles in 1969. Intelligence officials claimed that, the Black Eagles, “have copied the American Black Panther Party in using ‘ministerial’ titles for their leaders.”

Howe returned from the US thinking about how he might translate the movement to Britain, and lamenting that the black British community had not existed for long enough to have already built a movement. He felt that the African-American activist community had established itself over time, which provided blacks in the US with a strong foundation from which to develop. He remembered, “There was a sensibility that they had there ‘cause they’d been there for a long time.” He recognized that African-Americans’ ideas required adaptation to the British context. “You couldn’t just pick up that and put it here. It just wouldn’t fit.” The process of adopting Black Power required more than identifying sources of oppression in Birmingham, England to add to those in Birmingham, Alabama; Black Power necessitated a rethinking of one’s place in the world relative to black history and politics. As he recalled, “It’s more than adapted locally, it

150 “The Black Power Movement in Britain,” July 1970, 5, in FCO 95/792, TNA: PRO.
sets you off in discovering your own process and where you are in it. They reopened the process.”

For Howe, the Black Panthers reopened his thinking about why his family had lived in Trinidad (slavery) and why they had moved to Britain (economic opportunity), processes in which constructions of his family’s blackness had determined the outcome. Thanks in large part to these examinations, Howe and others would later build a flexible concept of Black Power that accounted for local and global conditions.

Howe’s comrade Poona-born Indian Farrukh Dhondy had come to England in 1963 on a scholarship to study physics at Cambridge, where he found his life, “fairly protected,” but that changed once he graduated and moved to London and then to Leicester, an East Midlands city with a significant South Asian population. After Cambridge, the Indian government offered Dhondy a position with the Atomic Energy Commission of India, which he turned down because, “I [didn’t] want to make bombs for India or Ghandi.” Instead, Dhondy worked walking dogs, washing dishes, and cleaning houses before he decided to go to graduate school to study Rudyard Kipling, the writer whose short stories chronicled the British Imperial experience in India. Dhondy moved to Leicester in 1968 with his partner Mala Sen, who was also Indian and a future Black Panther, where they could not find housing through rental agencies. Dhondy recalled, “The room had mysteriously gone by the time I got to the letting agency from the house. After about twenty tries it became clear that I was not going to get a decent room.”

Disheartened by his first English experience outside the more cosmopolitan London, Dhondy remembers that he “gave up. A kind girl at the estate agents took me outside and

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151 Howe II, 1:16:00.
152 Farrukh Dhondy, interview by author, London, July 26, 2011, Part I of II (hereafter Dhondy I), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 1:00.
153 Dhondy I, 2:30.
said listen, don't go through these lists. Can I be straight with you? You won't get a place in Leicester, it's not like that.” With her awareness of Leicester’s racial dynamics, the estate agent told Dhondy to, “go to the Asian district, look at the boards. You'll find a room there.” Dhondy’s difficulty finding housing in Leicester illustrates the complex terrain that South Asian migrants had to navigate in English cities that lacked nationally known black neighborhoods like Brixton. But it also reveals that blacks had taken steps to forge material networks, here through community housing boards.

Dhondy and Sen settled into life in Leicester, where Dhondy recalled helping to organize a strike of Punjabi workers they met at a pub there. Sen’s work as a clerk at the local gas board earned them their meager single income. Dhondy remembered that they visited a local pub on Friday nights, “as a treat,” where they would split one pint of beer. After 9 p.m. on Fridays, Dhondy recalled, Punjabi factory workers who had just been paid would fill the pub. The workers, Dhondy described, “gathered noisily around tables and drank six to eight pints each.” Dhondy remembered that the workers saw Sen’s shalwar kameez, a traditional Indian dress, and they asked if the couple was Indian. This interaction between two sets of strangers, fostered by the workers’ recognition of Sen through a shared visual politics, led to a friendship. The workers began meeting up with Dhondy and Sen every Friday. When the pub closed at midnight, Dhondy remembered that the group usually moved to one of the workers’ houses to enjoy some traditional Indian food.

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154 Dhondy I, 5:30.
155 Dhondy I, 6:30-7:00.
156 Dhondy I, 7:00.
157 Dhondy noted that this experience made Sen uncomfortable as the workers’ wives cooked the meal for her and the men. In his words, “Mala felt terrible because she was a ‘feminist of sorts’ and women were
On the third week of their Friday pub interactions, Dhondy recalled, the workers told him they had been fired from their jobs. “I told them to protest. With a lot of kind of socialist, Marxist theoretical consciousness, it was my first act of practically organizing a strike.” Although Dhondy was a neophyte to labor organizing, he felt indispensable to the strike. “They didn’t have the English skills to negotiate with the management or to talk to the unions that existed around the country. Or to actually organise, propagandise, talk to the newspapers.”

Dhondy believed that breaking the linguistic barrier would be critical in helping Punjabi workers to have their voices heard. Dhondy’s self-conscious assertion that workers who lacked English language skills would have been unable to organize without him illustrates the central role that elite Third World minorities played in transformational politics in the period, even within the metropole. Dhondy’s education had prepared him for the work of public life in Britain’s bourgeois society—press, meetings, mass campaigns and the like—and he employed them in Leicester just as his predecessors had done in the Indian independence movements of the 1940s.

Dhondy and the workers’ joint efforts to organize illustrate how racial dynamics complicated a well-established class structure and politics in post-colonial Britain. The workers and Dhondy found themselves united by a shared Indian identity, despite differences they had that would have been more prominent in India. In India, Dhondy was the middle-class son of an army officer who had followed a well-trodden path of family expectations: he went off to get a Western education in order to return home to working in the kitchen for us.” Sen passed away in early 2011, before I located Dhondy, so unfortunately I was unable to elicit her first-hand perspective. Dhondy I, 7:15.

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158 Dhondy I, 8:00.
join India’s elite. In India, his class and educational status would have precluded considerable interactions with the workers whom he met in Leicester. Furthermore, in India a language barrier would have separated the two groups. Dhondy hailed from Poona, where they spoke Marathi, while the Punjabis spoke the eponymous language of their state. However, the relatively small black population in the UK meant that when Indians saw one another in a Leicester pub, they were more likely to eschew class differences and take the opportunity to introduce themselves. Chance meetings such as these generated possibilities for coalitions that could not have existed in the colonies, but flourished in the imperial metropole.

Dhondy’s consciousness also formed in concert with Americans’ responses to Vietnam and civil rights. He remembered joining British anti-Vietnam protests and having friends at Cambridge who had dodged the draft. He also remembered saving up money in order to travel to New York in 1969 in order to understand the movements there. On one night during this New York trip, Dhondy recalled that he and three fellow travelers made a midnight decision to drive to Washington, DC early the next morning where they, “marched on Washington.”\footnote{Dhondy I, 11:30. Two anti-Vietnam Marches on Washington took place in 1969, on October 15 and November 15.} Like Howe, Dhondy’s quotation emphasized his active participation in the march, and thus the larger movement, rather than simply having witnessed the event. Back in London, Dhondy reflected that, “It was the time of Malcolm X, George Jackson, and all that rhetoric was coming across the Atlantic…. People were getting that from books rather than anything else.” Thus, while Dhondy’s 1969 US trip provided one powerful way to connect to the movement, he also recalled the importance of print capitalism in connecting his comrades to black intellectual currents.
Like Dhondy, Olive Morris, who co-founded the Black Panther Women’s Collective and was active in the Brixton Squatters’ Rights Movement, traveled in order to reach US Black Power activists. In 1972, Morris advertised in *Time Out* magazine seeking a travel companion to Algeria, where she hoped to meet Eldridge Cleaver who led the Black Panther Party’s International Section there. When no one replied to Morris’s ad, her friend and Panther comrade Liz Obi offered to join her on the journey. As Obi recalled in 2009, Morris had saved up money for the trip and Obi had considerable hitchhiking experience. Morris and Obi left Dover on August 7, 1972 on an overnight ferry to Calais, France. From there, they hitchhiked across France and Spain. Obi recalled that the pair faced a great deal of hostility as young black women hitchhiking in France, but relatively little in Spain. On August 17, the two took a ferry from Algeciras in southern Spain to Tangiers, Morocco. Although they had planned on traveling onwards to Algeria, they ran out of money in Tangiers and had to wait there for their families to send money for the return fares, relying in the meantime on the British Embassy. Obi remembered, “Imagine the two of us, young radical revolutionaries, showing up everyday at the British Embassy to get some cash for expenses.”

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Eventually money arrived from home, and the two returned to London in September 1972. Although Obi and Morris did not reach Algiers, it appears that Morris had visited Algeria in September 1971 on a previous visa (see Figure 9). On that trip, she likely met the Cleavers and other US Panthers living there in exile.\footnote{162}

Figure 10: Algerian visa, August 18, 1971, validated in Algiers, September 1971 and Algerian visa, September 8, 1972, not validated. 

Tony Soares also reached out to the US movement; in his case, under tight financial constraints, Soares wrote letters to African-Americans whom he admired. Soares had become a regular visitor to Vietnam Solidarity campaign events at Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park, “where we were influenced a lot by what was happening in the

\footnote{As Morris passed away at a young age, no accounts of her 1971 trip to Algeria exist in the Olive Morris Collection, LLA.}
States before the Black Panthers.” He remembered attending a large antiwar demonstration organized by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign on October 27, 1968. Organizers claimed that the protestors numbered over 100,000. They marched from Hyde Park to the American Embassy Grosvenor Square, displaying what an ad hoc committee of march organizers called, “Street Power” by traveling together in groups on the whole route. Soares also recalled that he “found out about [Black Power leaders] by reading stuff in the news, eventually discussing it with people.” He believed that many of his comrades had similar experiences, claiming, “I think we were all influenced by the events in America, by Malcolm X, by Stokely Carmichael. That’s what politicized a lot of people.”

Soares wanted to learn more than what he could find in the newspapers he could obtain, so he wrote letters to Robert F. Williams in China and to Eldridge Cleaver in Algeria; both men lived in exile in countries that openly opposed western imperialism. In London, Soares came across a copy of Robert F. Williams’s *The Crusader* magazine. Soares liked the magazine, and he wrote to Williams about it. Williams responded, sending Soares a copy of his book *Negroes With Guns* (1963), “a whole pile [of Crusaders], and we had a bit of a conversation.” Soares remembered distributing copies of *The Crusader* in London on Williams’s behalf (see Figure 11). “I was distributing his stuff,” Soares said, “mailing it everywhere. Mailing [Mao Zedong’s]

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165 “Street power: Briefing to all demonstrators, 1968,” in MSS.21/3369/29, Modern Records Centre (hereafter MRC), University of Warwick, Coventry.
166 Soares, 8:00.
167 Soares, 7:00.
168 Soares, 9:30.
“Williams meant a lot to me, he influenced me quite a lot,” Soares recalled, “…he was very articulate and expressed what a lot of people felt.” In Soares’s mind, Williams had the courage to express feelings of pent-up anger surrounding black people’s experiences of discrimination in Britain, the United States, and elsewhere. Soares noted, however, that, “the Chinese government was giving him a lot of help.” Soares recognized that the Chinese government had enabled Williams to speak more freely than blacks in the West could.

Figure 11: Robert F. Williams' *The Crusader* 9, no. 3, (Peking: December 1967). Source: Tony Soares personal collection.

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170 Soares, 10:00.
171 Soares, 10:45.
A letter from SNCC’s Atlanta office to a female friend of Soares’s indicates that this friend had attempted to sell SNCC newsletters in the UK. A SNCC worker who was to transfer to the organization’s “International Office in N.Y. immediately” replied to a letter from a London sister asking if she could sell SNCC newsletters in Britain. The organizer explained that the price of international postage would make it cost prohibitive for SNCC to send the newsletter to the UK, unless the London sister was willing to sell the newsletters at a price higher than their face value of fifteen cents. This brief exchange illustrates the day-to-day resource challenges faced by activists working to internationalize their movement. Because the letter is not addressed to Soares, the extent of his correspondence with and affinity for SNCC is unclear. However, like Egbuna’s visit to Atlanta, the letter demonstrates that SNCC’s Atlanta office, and its nascent International Office in New York, were interested in developing relationships with blacks in Britain. Although these relationships may have been a way for remaining SNCC members to garner international publicity and funding for the defunct organization, to black Britons, the gestures showed solidarity.

As Howe, Dhondy and Soares each mentioned, a plethora of materials—books, pamphlets, and news broadcasts—available in London gave black Britons access to black history and news of the African-American Freedom Struggle. Tony Soares obtained an issue of a little-known 1967 publication, *The Aframerican Report*, published by SNCC’s independent press, Student Voice, Inc. The pamphlet consisted of a transcribed,
excerpted version of Stokely Carmichael’s October 29, 1966 Black Power speech at the University of California, Berkeley.\(^{175}\) On April 3, 1968, BBC Radio 3 aired an interview-

\(^{175}\) Stokely Carmichael in Student Voice Inc., *Aframerican Report* 1, no. 3 (SNCC: Atlanta, GA, 1967), in Tony Soares private collection. An examination of the provenance of the Aframerican Report revealed the existence of Student Voice, Inc., SNCC’s independent publishing arm, which provided critical support to the organizing movement but has gone relatively unnoticed by scholars. Student Voice, Inc. was established in October 1963 in Atlanta with a grant of $15,000 from the estate of an anonymous donor. The grant enabled SNCC to purchase its own printing equipment for the first time. Student Voice Inc.’s work dramatically increased the volume and variety of SNCC’s printed materials. Prior to 1963, Student Voice, Inc. noted, SNCC had, “produced a small amount of printed matter, almost completely for northern consumption,” which was, “jobbed out to local printers.” With the advent of Student Voice, Inc., the printing operations of SNCC grew to what they claimed was, “a printing and production operation producing millions of sheets of finished printed matter a year.” In addition to circulating 40,000 copies of *Student Voice* per week by August 1964, Student Voice Inc. expanded to produce what it called “varied propaganda” for southern field offices. These materials included voter registration documents, “Freedom Days” brochures, movement stationery, and leaflets, pamphlets, and brochures. Student Voice Inc. noted that its “central printing offices” had served organizing projects in North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Arkansas. In particular, Student Voice, Inc. provided almost all of the printing for SNCC’s Mississippi Project, publishing over 500,000 Mississippi Freedom Summer Brochures and 300,000 voter registration forms, and creating the masthead for six local SNCC newsletters in Mississippi. In August 1964, Student Voice Inc., under the direction of Julian Bond, proposed increasing its staff from two to seven in order to create local “community newspapers throughout the South” with a full-time “experienced Negro journalist” as editor in each community. Student Voice outlined how the reporter would send his local newspaper to Atlanta via airmail each week so that local news reports could also feature in SNCC’s national newspaper. Student Voice Inc. explained that, “These papers would provide a means of verbalizing the feelings, ideas, and aspirations of the movement. The papers would be in communities that never had a written voice to present their criticisms. The newspapers would have to feature material that concerns the life and activities of the people. Pictures would be abundant.” Student Voice also proposed the establishment of production facilities throughout the South, “not more than a few hours drive from any major movement area,” which would enable local editors to print newspapers and provide a “training ground for local people in printing and design skills.”

All information from “Program for the Student Voice, Inc.,” 1-6, 1964, in Box 4, Folder 15, M368: Miller (Michael J.) Civil Rights Collection, Special Collections, McCain Library and Archives, University of Southern Mississippi. Digital access provided through Historical Manuscripts and Photographs, University of Southern Mississippi Digital Collections, online: http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/manu.


Given Charles Payne’s focus on Mississippi and Student Voice Inc.’s claims regarding its work there, Payne might have referred to SNCC’s print efforts in his seminal study of the Mississippi movement. But Payne scarcely discusses African-American media, referring only to Ella Baker’s work at two black newspapers in the 1930s (pp. 82); C.C. Bryant who ran a barber shop cum library of “radical literature” out of his front yard in Pike County in 1957 (p. 113); and Lou Emma Allen of Greenwood, who read printed materials out loud for her community (p. 192). While Allen’s efforts remind us that to some degree illiteracy helps to account for the relative lack of importance shown to printed materials in the historiography of SNCC, given the sheer volume of pages that Student Voice Inc. printed – over half a million copies of the *Mississippi Freedom Summer Brochure*, for example – this explanation alone does not suffice. Charles M. Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

An in-depth examination of SNCC’s print culture efforts and the networks within which SNCC-produced media circulated could broaden historians’ and sociologists’ understandings of the role that SNCC played in other radical grassroots movements, as Tony Soares’s issue of the *Aframerican Report* demonstrates. It could also bridge examinations of the role of literacy and education in southern organizing, such as Katherine Mellen Charron’s analysis of Septima Clark’s efforts, with the literacy of those who read materials such as the *Mississippi Freedom Summer Brochure*. Mellen Charron, *Freedom's Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2009). See also Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2001) and Student Voice, Inc., *Aframerican Report*, Vol. 1, No. 2, in General Research Collection, L, A3548, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

Bobby Seale and David Hilliard, interview by Jonathan Power, BBC Radio 3, April 3, 1968, in British Library Sound Archive, NP1330R.

Chapter 3, entitled *Dialectics of Liberation* (1967) and *Black Power* (1968). In February 1969, Cape published Eldridge Cleaver’s personal treatise *Soul on Ice*. In its May-June 1968 debut issue, *Running Man Magazine* published the text of a Carmichael speech at a rally for Huey P. Newton that marked Carmichael’s first public affiliation with the Black Panthers. Panthers Gideon Dolo and Ansel Wong each held copies of this issue of *Running Man*, a magazine self-described as “a platform for unorthodox views from writers that were frequently denied a hearing.” From it, Dolo, Wong and others may have developed the understanding that the Panthers rejected white involvement, as Carmichael stated in his speech. Although Eldridge Cleaver spoke after Carmichael at the same rally, where he clarified that the Black Panthers embraced white support, the magazine did not publish his speech. These elisions and misrepresentations of the US Black Panthers would appear in the development of UK Panther ideology, but nonetheless the fact that *Running Man* published Carmichael’s speech appears to have proven helpful to Wong and Egbuna who each purchased the magazine.

Trinidadian activist John La Rose and his partner Sarah White significantly expanded the availability of written materials that offered positive constructions of black political subjects. In 1966, the couple founded New Beacon Books, the first publishing


181 Gideon Dolo’s copy was found in his flat at the time of his July 25, 1968 arrest. “Schedule C: Property taken from 4 Lorenzo Street, London N1 on 25th July 1968,” in MEPO 2/11409, “Benedict Obi Egbuna, Peter Martin and Gideon Turagalevu Dolo: charged with circulating writings at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, threatening to kill and maim police officers, involvement of the above-named with 'Black Panther' Party,” TNA: PRO.
house in Britain to specialize in black history and literature, which they ran out of their flat in Hornsey, North London. La Rose saved up money from his part-time job as a bricklayer. “I had to stop because I got a back injury,” he remembered, “but the compensation provided the money we needed to start up in publishing.” In 1967, New Beacon published *Marcus Garvey 1887-1940* by Adolph Edwards, the first British publication on Garvey in the post-war period. The book was widely read and discussed among black and anti-racist groups, as well as high school student groups.

With the advent of the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) in the same year, CAM artists pressed La Rose and White for a bookshop, so in 1967, the couple opened the New Beacon Bookshop in Finsbury Park, North London.

While the FBI banned a Black Power book in the United States, the novel garnered a national award and publication in the UK. In 1969, Allison and Busby publishers released African-American Sam Greenlee’s novel *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* after thirty-eight US publishers had rejected the novel because of its content. The novel won *The Sunday Times’* “Book of the Year Award” that year. In the novel, the main character integrates the CIA as its first African-American agent and then goes rogue. In the words of one reviewer, the agent “trains a Chicago street gang to orchestrate a Mau-Mau style war on whitey.” The novel was semi-autobiographical, drawing on Greenlee’s experience as one of the first black Foreign Service agents with the US State Department, in which he served as an officer for the US Information Agency from 1957

183 Ibid., 43.
184 New Beacon Books remains open today, and the George Padmore Institute, which La Rose founded in 1991, stands above it in the same building.
Greenlee reflected on the spread of his novel despite the FBI’s efforts to suppress it and its 1973 film adaptation, saying that, “I’m the best-selling underground author I know of. It sold with no promotion, it was straight word of mouth.” Greenlee’s statement reflects one of the larger dynamics that allowed Black Power to flourish in the UK. Word of mouth publicity enabled many people in the UK who wanted to learn about Black Power and the African-American Freedom Struggle a way to achieve that goal.

Stationed in the UK with the US Air Force beginning in December 1968, Durham, North Carolina native Ray Eurquhart remembered taking leave from his base to search for like-minded activists and radical literature. He traveled into London “looking for radicals,” he remembered. Known to his comrades and friends as “Brother Ray,” Eurquhart soaked up London’s radical voices, fueled by the UK’s dissenting tradition. He brought related literature home to his fellow GIs at Royal Air Force (RAF) Mildenhall, his base in rural Suffolk county in East Anglia.

Eurquhart remembered that the best place in London to find radical thinkers was, “the Museum, [where] people be doing research.” Here, Eurquhart referred to the London Museum in Kensington Palace, which housed a collection that documented the black presence in London since Roman times, and which drew researchers interested in chronicling that history. Eurquhart remembered that he used to buy books at the Museum and take them back to RAF Mildenhall, where his fellow GIs once asked him if he had

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187 Sam Greenlee, as quoted in Rosalind Cummings, “The relaxed rage of Sam Greenlee.”
again bought books from the Museum, “where you get all your documents and strange stuff.”

Eurquhart also remembered, “discover[ing] Collett's [International Bookshop] and all that radical literature” in London. Collet’s International Bookshop consisted of a series of radical bookshops tucked along Charing Cross Road, the home of London’s specialist bookstores. Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) supporter Eva Collet Reckitt founded Collet’s, which was the place to go in London for literature from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China. Eurquhart found Collet’s and made it his second home. “I used to live in Collett's, that's what I used to do,” he recalled. In poring over Collet’s shelves, Eurquhart developed an international perspective. He remembered, “I never started out as a nationalist, because my real political perspective and growth began in Europe, and so right off it ain't just Negroes, it's folks from Spain, the Basques.” These ideas allowed Eurquhart, during his time with the Black Panthers, to support other movements with what he called “legitimate national questions.”

These bookshops, publishers and texts helped to establish a discursive world in which everyday black Britons seeking to understand their place in the world actively participated. Their curiosity—as demonstrated in their reading, their production and

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188 Raymond Eurquhart, interview by author, February 14, 2007, Durham, NC, (hereafter Eurquhart), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 14:00.
189 Eurquhart, 13:30.
191 Eurquhart, 29:00.
192 Eurquhart, 35:30.
193 My choice to establish the “discursive world” in which black Britons participated shifts attention away from reception theory, in which black Britons are positioned as “receivers” or “audience members,” or to borrow Darcus Howe’s cited phrase, “empty vessels” who accept texts. Instead, the framework of a discursive world upholds black Britons as actors who participate in the consumption of texts by choosing among them, reading them, and analyzing their information based on other knowledge. This choice was inspired in part by Melani McAlister’s discussion of US evangelical missionaries’ consumption of texts as
dissemination of literature, and their travel efforts—laid crucial groundwork for the
development of British Black Power. As Chapter 3 will demonstrate, Stokely
Carmichael’s 1967 London visit sparked the formation of the British Black Power
Movement out of the Universal Coloured People’s Association. But the collective efforts
of these black Britons in the years 1964 to 1969 had fostered a group of people who were
ready for a radical movement and who would sustain that movement from 1967 to 1974.
Carmichael offered a public call to Black Power that enabled these seekers to find one
another and start their movement.

they prepared to visit the Congo in the 1960s. Melani McAlister, “Decolonization as Martyrdom: Race,
Revolution, and US Evangelicalism in the Congo Crisis of 1960-64,” (lecture, Duke University, Durham,
NC, March 16, 2012).
Chapter 3: ‘The only force that can quell it is International Black Power.’ An anti-imperialist Black Panther Movement materializes in London, 1967-69

Figure 12: Obi Egbuna announces UCPA’s adoption of Black Power, August 28, 1967.

“We cannot wait any longer.”¹ On August 28, 1967, Obi Egbuna sounded a clarion call. At what he termed an, “emergency press conference” in London (see Figure 12), Egbuna announced that the Universal Coloured People’s Association, an organization that had formed two months earlier, would launch a Black Power manifesto within the next week. Wearing a dashiki that accentuated his Pan-Africanist leanings, Egbuna proclaimed, “It is difficult to stop our members taking dynamic action against

¹ “‘Brutalized by the police’: Coloured peoples accuse,” The Times, Aug. 29, 1967, in Tony Soares private collection.
police brutality.” The previous night, Egbuna related, Met Police had arrested four UCPA members at the organization’s weekly public meeting: UCPA co-founder Roy Sawh, Eyronumu Ezekiel, Alton Watson and Ajoy Ghose. Egbuna conveyed his moral indignation at the arrests, which he attributed to a pattern of increased police aggression ever since Stokely Carmichael had addressed a UCPA meeting at Speakers’ Corner on July 23. “Since [Carmichael] came here, associated himself with us and spoke on our platform, the police have been brutalizing us,” Egbuna said. Here, he articulated the double-edged sword that the UCPA faced in the decision to adopt Black Power. An association with Black Power connected Egbuna’s organization with the well-known African-American movement, thereby increasing the UCPA’s recognition and potentially its size and strength. However, activists who cried Black Power also increased the risk of arrest, harassment, and the silencing of their cause. When the UCPA announced its acceptance of Black Power two weeks later, they met secretly for fear of arrest.

Egbuna’s announcement ushered in an age of continuous Black Power activism in Britain that lasted from 1967 to 1973. In July, Carmichael had also appeared at London’s Dialectics of Liberation Congress, where he introduced Black Power as a provocative framework for thinking and talking about black oppression in Britain. Egbuna served on a panel that introduced ‘Stokely’ to the Congress, and he believed that Black Power offered

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3 A nascent Black Power movement had existed since 1965 with Michael X’s RAAS organization, but it died when Michael X was sent to prison in 1967. A number of Black Power organizations cropped up between 1967 and 1969, which included the United Coloured People’s and Arab Association (UCPAA), the Black People’s Alliance (BPA) in Birmingham, and Darcus Howe’s Black Eagles, but the Black Power-Black Panther Movement proved the longest lasting as well as the only Black Power group to take its name from a US movement. For more on the UCPAA, BPA, and the Black Eagles, see “The Black Power Movement in Great Britain,” in FCO 95/792, TNA: PRO. Historian Rosalind Wild offers a detailed overview of the British Black Power organizations in Wild, “Black was the colour of our fight.’ Black Power in Britain, 1955-1976” (Ph.D. diss., University of Sheffield, 2008).
what the UCPA needed. Black Power provided a provocative ideology and rhetorical style that UCPA members could couple with their concerns of police brutality and white dominance of black political issues. On September 10, six weeks after Carmichael had left London, Egbuna published the manifesto *Black Power in Britain*, which launched the British Black Power Movement. In April 1968, Egbuna broke with the UCPA over concerns of ideological weakness within that organization. He immediately formed a Black Panther Movement, which he led for a year until he was imprisoned. In the summer of 1969, a group of Panthers broke with him and took the movement to Brixton.

In his memoir, Egbuna described Carmichael’s visit as, “like manna from heaven,” claiming that the public appearance gave Black Power, “a foothold in Britain.” In expressing his messianic admiration, Egbuna pointed to the cult of personality that Carmichael cultivated on his international tour, and for which SNCC members criticized him upon his return to the US. Egbuna’s admiration of Carmichael also proved aspirational, as many UCPA members and Black Panthers took issue with what they saw as Egbuna’s narcissism. In this respect, Egbuna and Carmichael’s trajectories paralleled one another. Both men began their activist careers in organizations at the forefront of their respective movements. Over time, however, both men found themselves seduced by their own egomania and lacking an organizational affiliation. Nevertheless, Egbuna and Carmichael’s powerful personas acted as flashpoints that drew awareness toward their respective causes.

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5 Egbuna, *Destroy This Temple*, 18 and 16, respectively.
In this chapter, I examine the early years of the British Black Power Movement, tracing the movement’s intellectual genesis from Carmichael to Egbuna in 1967-1968, and its evolution into the British Black Panther Movement in 1968-1969. I examine Carmichael’s London appearances, Egbuna’s recollections, and British Black Panthers’ early newsletters, events, and treatises in order to understand how the UCPA appropriated and transformed Black Power as a vehicle for their local concerns.

In London, Carmichael unveiled a broad, if controversial, vision that promoted local black concerns to the level of becoming topics of international importance. Carmichael drew on his own experiences as a colonial subject in Trinidad, framing Black Power as an anti-imperialist movement that engaged with Third World liberation struggles. He argued that the British Empire presented an ongoing barrier to achieving complete social transformation. In Carmichael’s London speeches, the British Empire functioned as the oppressor and Black Power symbolized the fight against it. Although Carmichael did not travel to London intending to advance the British Black Power Movement, I argue that his articulation of Black Power as anti-imperialist resonated powerfully with listeners from New Commonwealth countries. Given black British activists’ encounters with colonialism at home and their experiences of racism in the metropole, anti-imperialism struck a poignant cord with them that the white-dominated British Left’s narrow focus on class had not. Furthermore, Carmichael’s presence offered a tangible embodiment of the African-American Freedom Struggle with whom black

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6 This argument is motivated in part by sociologist Brian Alleyne’s assertion about radical writers and publishers in London. Alleyne argues, “Black was the means to an end and not the end in itself... As [activists] engage with present-day social antagonisms around race, they name some of their politics Black. Ultimately though, their activism is against race understood as the fundamental basis of identity and social organization.” Brian W. Alleyne, Radicals Against Race: Black Activism and Cultural Politics (New York: Berg, 2002), 177.
Britons could ally their cause. The UK government’s determination to silence Carmichael and the UCPA through a travel ban and arrests increased blacks’ desire for British Black Power. Egbuna and the UCPA thus adopted and transformed Black Power locally, using the ideology to frame black people’s experiences of police harassment within their larger oppression. The structural analysis empowered everyday people, enabling them to confront everyday incidents of racism on London’s streets on a global scale.

When Carmichael took the stage at the Dialectics of Liberation Congress in July 1967, SNCC was in a state of disarray. In May 1967, some members of the defunct group established an International Affairs Commission in New York with Jim Forman as its chair. In the same month, Carmichael relinquished his position as SNCC Executive Chairman and announced that he was, “going back into the field to organize.” Historian Clayborne Carson argues, however, that Carmichael “soon discovered that he was still in great demand as a black militant spokesman.” In reality, Carmichael had ceased to be a grassroots organizer in June 1966, when he publicly introduced the radical slogan Black Power at the reincarnation of James Meredith’s March Against Fear in Greenwood, Mississippi. Carmichael proceeded from then on to spread the slogan nationally, and by July 1967, internationally. Historians of SNCC have criticized Carmichael for presenting Black Power as a series of abstract concepts, without offering people the tangible steps

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8 Carson, *In Struggle*, 273.
needed in order to realize them.\textsuperscript{10} Likewise, SNCC leaders critiqued Carmichael for traveling the world spreading Black Power when they thought he had abandoned the grass roots.\textsuperscript{11} Understandably, these historians and activists have focused on the impact that Carmichael’s abandonment of grassroots organizing had on SNCC; in this chapter, I am more interested in establishing how the African-American Freedom Struggle moved and took shape beyond national borders.

By 1967, Carmichael envisioned the possibilities that Black Power might offer blacks outside the United States; this expansive interpretation of Black Power’s potential constituted an important contribution to the development of the movement in the UK and to the possibility of global revolution.\textsuperscript{12} In London Carmichael offered black Britons a rhetorical vision that addressed their oppression, and his visit hastened and undergirded the UCPA’s decision to adopt Black Power. Moreover, Carmichael’s presence in London mattered a great deal to black Britons starting a movement of their own, as it indicated

\textsuperscript{10} Charles Payne maintains that after Carmichael stepped down as SNCC Chairman in 1967, he continued with, “a pattern of substituting rhetoric at the top for program at the bottom.” With reference to Carmichael’s 1966 call for Black Power, Wesley Hogan argues that, “the terms ‘black power’ and ‘black people’ were sweeping abstractions that urgently needed specific content. The words could excite, but they did not provide a concrete way to act.” Carson takes a more measured view of Carmichael, explaining that, “In some respects, [SNCC leaders’] criticisms of Carmichael were unfair, since he was not alone in having abandoned SNCC’s previous emphasis on indigenous, local leadership.” Charles M. Payne, \textit{I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle} (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1995), 378; Wesley C. Hogan, \textit{Many Minds One Heart: SNCC’s Dream for a New America} (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2009), 247; Carson, \textit{In Struggle}, 277.

\textsuperscript{11} At a May 1967 meeting, SNCC leaders had discussed possibilities for collaboration with the Third World and declared SNCC a “Human Rights Organization.” Despite these efforts, SNCC workers criticized Carmichael’s efforts on his 1967 international tour. Fay Bellamy commented, “Ain’t no one person going to call for no revolution.” Ethel Minor recalled that SNCC leaders called Carmichael while he was on his trip to convey their concerns. “All of us got on the phone and ordered him to shut up and told him that no one understood what he was saying back here,” she recalled. Fay Bellamy and Ethel Minor, as quoted in Carson, \textit{In Struggle}, 273 and 276, respectively.

\textsuperscript{12} In exploring the possibility of a global revolution vis-a-vis Black Power, I am inspired by the work of historian Robin D.G. Kelley. Kelley asserts that, “Too often our standards for evaluating social movements pivot around whether or not they ‘succeeded’ in realizing their visions rather than on the merits or power of the visions themselves.” Robin D.G. Kelley, \textit{Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination} (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), ix.
that a man whose work they had admired from afar saw an intrinsic connection between black Britons and African-Americans. Carmichael’s visit also demonstrated that the process of translating a social movement to a variety of contexts abroad necessitated a degree of abstraction and fluidity in approach.\textsuperscript{13} To be clear, Carmichael had no intention of staying in London to organize, and his use of abstract terms in speaking at the Congress in part represented the fact that he knew relatively little about contemporary conditions for blacks in the UK. But Carmichael’s presentation left Egbuna and the UCPA with the autonomy to adopt Black Power as they saw fit, rather than presenting them with a ready-made framework that they may not have found applicable to the UK.

By the summer of 1967, the medium had become Black Power’s message; different groups appropriated and defined Black Power with their respective communities in mind because of the term’s broad construction and its emphasis on self-determination. The call for Black Power resonated with many everyday black people in the US because the slogan activated connections to experiences of racism in an iconoclastic way that few people had ever heard expressed publicly. In the UK, Carmichael outlined an ethereal vision, and British organizers who had already been building a movement from below found a language that they could use to frame their autonomous aims. Carmichael’s speeches and visit offered legitimacy to the extant work of the UCPA. As historian Hasan Kwame Jeffries explains with reference to the US, “Black Power transcended simple rabble-rousing rhetoric and moved people to act.”\textsuperscript{14} Carmichael’s fiery message offered a

\textsuperscript{13} Similarly, historian Hasan Kwame Jeffries offers a rebuttal to journalists, white liberals, and civil rights moderates who criticized Carmichael’s discussions of Black Power as ambiguous. “In fact,” Jeffries argues, “Carmichael’s explanation of Black Power as it applied to the rural South was unmistakably clear largely because he used Lowndes County as an example.” Jeffries, \textit{Bloody Lowndes}, 189.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 188.
strategic way of connecting black British urban resistance efforts to the shifting African-American movement.

A controversial package of “race relations legislation” that Harold Wilson’s Labour government proposed in April 1968 opened the floodgates on the right, sending waves of anti-black sentiment crashing into the currents of the British mainstream. The legislative proposal intensified the polarization between right wing groups and Britain’s major anti-racist organizations. While one piece of the legislation package, a new Race Relations Bill, enumerated additional protections against discrimination, another denied 66,000 South Asians their rights as Commonwealth citizens to settle in the UK, as established in the 1948 Nationality Act. Angered by the Race Relations Bill and the perceived incrementalism of the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill, Conservative MP Enoch Powell called publicly for the voluntary repatriation of all black British immigrants in April 1968. When Conservative Party leader Duncan Heath fired Powell from his position as Shadow Defence Secretary for what the Shadow Cabinet called Powell’s ‘racist speech,’ protestors flooded the streets outside Parliament in support of Powell. Furthermore, Gallup opinion polls suggested widespread support for Powell’s repatriation ideas. Finally, racism was visible. No one could deny that a significant part of the British population harbored racist sentiments, and more extremely, that they supported the forced removal of blacks.

Egbuna wasted no time treading water; instead, he swam against the racist stream. Within a week of Powell’s repatriation speech, Egbuna converted the British Black Power Movement into a rigid, hierarchical British Black Panther Movement headquartered in Notting Hill. I argue that Egbuna appropriated the Black Panther
moniker for two strategic reasons; the breakoff of the Panther movement enabled Egbuna to cultivate a highly dedicated, secretive cadre and to draft off of the US Panthers’ success in order to generate attention for the UK movement. Egbuna envisioned the Panthers as a vanguard movement to lead the black British masses to liberation by “smashing the system.” Through their establishment of a newsletter, door-to-door campaigns, and dramatic, creative events that highlighted British racism, the Panthers developed a two-tiered attack on imperialism and its local embodiment in the police and the British public. Eager to embrace the aspects of black nationalism that he believed black Britons needed, and free of some of the hair-splitting that plagued the more established US Black Power movement, Egbuna also connected the Panthers to pan-Africanism and cultural nationalism. Thus, the Panthers generated new possibilities for critique that drew on their experiences as colonial subjects in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

British government surveillance, however, hampered Egbuna’s efforts to ignite a mass movement. A series of Home Office files on the British Black Power Movement establish that the government watched Egbuna, paying particular attention to his contact with Americans as they portrayed Egbuna as susceptible to external forces. In line with its view that Americans infected Britain with a contagious Black Power bug, the Home Office examined white American leftists with whom Egbuna interacted. This suspicion led national officials to claim that they could dismantle the movement by having the London police remove Egbuna from the streets. The Special Branch, The Met’s intelligence arm, staged a campaign of coordinated surveillance against the Panther Movement, eventually imprisoning Egbuna and his comrades Gideon Dolo and Peter
Martin in 1968 on trumped-up charges of threatening to kill police. Dolo and Martin were acquitted, but Egbuna was sentenced to a year in Brixton Prison after the three men had spent five months awaiting trial.

Even though Egbuna was in jail for a year, however, the movement evolved autonomously. The Panthers continued to construct narratives that offered black people’s perspectives on encounters with police. They used Egbuna, Martin and Dolo’s case to draw attention to myriad other incidents of police mistreatment. A few members who had been frustrated with Egbuna’s attention-seeking style took the opportunity of the leadership vacuum to relocate the movement from Notting Hill to Brixton, the heart of the black British community. Starting in November 1969, this second cadre of Panthers redefined the movement in light of the ideological grievances they had with Egbuna’s vanguardist approach. They reshaped the movement toward its major contribution—a mass solidarity movement that agitated for global revolution by confronting imperialism at its grass roots. While this second cadre of Panthers delivered the movement’s lasting contributions, the first phase had appropriated and adapted Black Power and the Black Panther model. As British Panther Ray Eurquhart reflected, “The Black people in Britain were standing up. At last they found some backbone, and had a movement.”

‘We have to extend our fight internationally’: Stokely Carmichael in London, 1967

“I have something against England, I really do,” Stokely Carmichael declared on stage on July 18, 1967 at the Dialectics of Liberation Congress in London. “Because when I was young,” he explained, “I had to read all that rot about how good England was to Trinidad, while she was raping us left and right.” With this sentence, Carmichael

interpolated those audience members who had received a British colonial education. “I’m amazed when I pick up the paper and read that, ‘England today decided to give independence to the West Indies.’ Who the hell is England to give me my independence? All they can do is stop oppressing me, get off my back.”16 Carmichael’s vision rested in the inherent freedom of human beings, which he believed the British Empire had eroded. This struggle to recapture humanity’s freedom, Carmichael argued, defined Black Power. “The struggle for Black Power in the US, and certainly in the world, is the struggle to free these colonies from external domination.” Carmichael then indicated that a complete redistribution of power would signal the end of imperialism. “We do not seek merely to create communities where, in place of white rulers, black rulers control the lives of black masses, and where black money goes into a few black pockets. We want to see it go into the communal pocket.”17

From July 15 to 30, 1967, European students, white liberals, and black British immigrants filled London’s Roundhouse for the Dialectics of Liberation Congress. Congress organizers intended the event to serve as a space for critiques of the modern world and discussions regarding future liberation. The Roundhouse, a circular building that had been converted from a railway turntable into a concert venue, provided an avant-garde setting for the unconventional event. The Congress organizers comprised an eclectic, non-traditional group of American existential psychiatrists active in the British left: David Cooper, R.D. Laing, Joseph Berke, and Leon Redler of the Institute of Phenomenological Studies. They advertised the conference as a lofty endeavor, “a unique

17 Ibid., 161.
gathering to demystify human violence in all its forms, the social systems from which it emanates, and to explore new forms of action.”

Stokely Carmichael’s acceptance of the Congress’s invitation confirmed his desire to connect Black Power with black movements outside the United States. As he reflected in his autobiography, he attended the Congress in order to clarify misrepresentations of Black Power and as an opportunity to connect with African anticolonial and black British struggles. “So much disinformation had been flung around the concept of Black Power that I thought somebody ought to be at this conference to make necessary clarifications,” he recalled. Carmichael’s statement implies that he thought foreign perspectives on Black Power were important, as was a clear articulation of Black Power among the leftists with whom he would interact at the Congress.

Carmichael continued, “Also, SNCC was eager to make contact with revolutionary brothers and sisters, especially the freedom fighters in Africa. We considered ourselves part of that same generation of the same struggle.” Carmichael linked Black Power and anticolonial movements and rendered African anticolonialists and American Black Power activists as comrades, in recognition of the revolutionary potential that coalition could offer both movements. He also noted that, “Then again, ‘Black Power’ formations had begun to emerge in the African/Caribbean communities in Britain. This seemed a perfect opportunity to establish contact and exchange ideas with these emerging forces.” In the terms ‘establish contact’ and ‘exchange ideas,’ Carmichael implied that black Britons were coequal actors in a global Black Power Movement, rather than people who needed

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his help in order to organize. Darcus Howe, who had been a childhood friend of Stokely’s in Trinidad, remembered renewing Carmichael’s acquaintance at the Congress.20

When Carmichael spoke at the Congress, he found a white leftist audience that, to him, seemed out of touch with global anticolonial struggles. In his words, “Some black and brown faces were in the audience (especially the sessions where I, and later CLR James, spoke), but I’d come expecting and eager to meet revolutionary activists, especially Africans, from the front lines of the third world struggle.” Carmichael had overestimated the links between African anticolonial struggles and the British left, assuming that more anticolonial activists would have attended the Congress.21 The Guardian corroborated Carmichael’s account, noting that the audience for Carmichael’s July 18 speech was, “several hundred strong, white outnumbering coloured by approximately six to one.”22 Carmichael observed that, “The speakers’ list was European leftists, literally, to a man, heavily ‘theoretical,’ and seemed weighted toward intellectuals and academics…” Carmichael criticized the Congress’ organizers for eclipsing certain voices. “I found that, as usual, the discussions tended simply to exclude black people’s concerns and perspectives. Nor can I recall women or women’s perspectives. Not only was I a minority on the program, but I began to feel like a

21 The British Left considered support for anticolonialism one of its few successes in the postwar era, but these efforts did not continue in the postcolonial era. Historian Stephen Howe points out that while the Left had supported anticolonial movements, it did not take on “soft empire,” which included Britain’s continuing Third World entanglements and the United States’ burgeoning media, military, and economic power. Stephen Howe, Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918-1964 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
footnote, a token representative of the black struggle.” Carmichael, like the Black Power philosophy he espoused, did not take kindly to being subordinated to footnote status.

The conference’s eschewing of Third World issues struck Carmichael as anachronistic. “And this at a time when the only real struggle was not in Europe but in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In no way did the program adequately reflect this.”23 Carmichael’s characterization of African, Asian and Latin American movements as the “real struggle” illuminates his belief that the Third World represented the final hope for those who still believed that socialist revolution was possible.24

While the Congress’s invitation had signified to Carmichael an opportunity to discuss the liberation of oppressed peoples, upon participating he found that the organizers had framed the conference around the process of individual liberation. Carmichael noted that the lack of black issues on the Congress’s agenda reflected the obliviousness of the white left. He saw the conference presentations as more geared toward, “The psychological ‘dialectic’ of individual liberation,” which was in his view, “very Eurocentric. Business as usual,” he noted cynically, “among white bourgeois intellectuals even when they call themselves revolutionary.”

Carmichael’s reading exposed the threat that whiteness posed to potential leftist coalitions; if white Marxists continued to preach to their own choir, they would fail at their efforts to ignite a revolution by eschewing any possibility of long-term coalition with blacks. He acknowledged that this marginalization took place not out of malice, “Not necessarily even deliberately excluding us as much as being oblivious, not even

23 Carmichael and Thelwell, Ready for Revolution, 572-73.
recognizing the existence and relevance of our perspectives, concerns, or analyses.”
Carmichael found the narrow thinking under the guise of a broad leftist initiative frustrating. The convention did not recognize “that the black world could have valid perspectives they needed to respect,” he said. “Same ol’, same ol. The casual assumption that they defined and owned the terms of the discussion.” Carmichael’s use of the term “black world” encapsulated the potential strength of the people whom the European left excluded: an oppressed black cadre who could transform global power relations.

Carmichael’s July 18 lecture on Black Power criticized the Congress for missing the opportunity to call for structural change. Future Black Panthers Darcus Howe, Obi Egbuna, Farrukh Dhondy, and Tony Soares all remembered listening to Carmichael’s message that day. In Carmichael’s view, the Black Power Movement was already in the midst of a transnational anti-imperialist struggle and the New Left’s focus on individual consciousness threatened to minimize its impact. On stage, Carmichael began, “Since I’ve been at the Congress from Saturday, I’ve been very confused, because I’m not a psychologist or psychiatrist, I’m a political activist and I don’t deal with the individual...” Carmichael sought strength for an autonomous movement by calling for active group efforts. Carmichael was the only major speaker at the Congress to cite Frantz Fanon, whose work on the effects of colonization on blacks aligned with the Congress’s interest in psychology but examined it from a structural, rather than individual, standpoint.

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In order to get at the root of oppression, Carmichael argued, capitalism must be dismantled. He maintained that, “a capitalist system automatically contains within itself racism, whether by design or not.” He traced two forms of racism: individual and structural, and he argued that the anti-racist policies of the white left would address individual acts but would not erode underlying structural problems. Carmichael expanded what he saw as white definitions of racism. He said that the white West thought of racism as white terrorists bombing an Alabama church, but that racism was also when, in the same city, 500 black babies die each year from lack of proper nourishment and health care. While both involved the loss of lives, Carmichael believed that in order to end individual racism, the people had to demolish the structure and start anew.

Within this argument, the British Empire represented the ultimate proponent of structural racism. Carmichael traced a line of imperial history through the Greeks and Romans, and he blamed the current structural racial divide on the British Empire. “The only difference,” he said, “is that after the Roman Empire, when the British Empire - on which the sun never used to set, but today it sets, sometimes it don’t even rise - began to exploit non-white people, what they did was let colour be the sole choice of the people they would exploit.”28 Here, Carmichael explicitly differentiated the British Empire for its emphasis on color.

Following Fanon, Carmichael argued that the British Empire had exploited the Third World economically, culturally, and psychologically. “The West has used force to impose its culture on the Third World wherever it has been,” he said. “The West with its guns and its power and its might came into Africa, Asia, Latin America and the USA and

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28 Ibid., 155.
raped it.” Interestingly, Carmichael cited the United States as a victim of British imperial oppression, rather than as an oppressor. This delineation revealed that, at least in front of a European audience, Carmichael claimed the British Empire was at the root of the world’s problems. Furthermore, in using the word ‘raped’ to make his point, Carmichael implied that Britain had emasculated the Third World. His use of rape imagery paralleled Frantz Fanon’s depictions of the relationship between black women and white men in his *Black Skin, White Masks*, and which Carmichael drew on in his speech. In Fanon’s study, he noted that “frenzied women of color,” or in Carmichael’s metaphor, the people of the Third World, were sexually “frantic for a white man,” or the West. In applying this trope of black female victimization and hypersexualization, Carmichael intimated that the black Third World needed protection against the white West, which could potentially come from a masculine force.

Carmichael declared unequivocally that he intended to internationalize Black Power in order to strengthen the African-American movement and reinvigorate Third World struggles; this pronouncement contradicts portrayals of Carmichael as having

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29 Ibid., 156.

Literary scholar Gwen Bergner establishes that in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon’s “description of colonial psychodynamics as a relationship between white men and black men—a relationship that is, at times, mediated through women’s bodies—removes feminine subjectivity from the center of his analysis.” This gender critique may surprise some scholars. Bergner argues that, “Fanon’s almost mythical significance for post-colonial theorists and, more recently, for others gesturing toward multicultural contexts nearly forestalls a gender critique of *Black Skin, White Masks.*” I employ Bergner’s critique here to suggest that Carmichael and other Black Power leaders’ readings of Fanon, with its reductionist construction of female subjectivity, may have contributed to problems in gender relations in the movement. Gwen Bergner, "Who Is That Masked Woman? Or, the Role of Gender in Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks," *PMLA* 110, no. 1 (1995): 75-88.
privileged cultural nationalism at the expense of Third World alliances.\textsuperscript{32} “We are going to extend our fight internationally and we are going to hook up with the Third World. It is the only salvation - we are fighting to save our humanity,” he proclaimed. “We have to extend our fight internationally, not only because such a consciousness would destroy within black communities the minority complex so carefully calculated by the American press, but also because we know that if the black man realizes that the counter-insurgency efforts of the US are directed against his brothers, he will not fight in any of their wars.”\textsuperscript{33} Carmichael believed that a global alliance would illustrate that African-Americans shared their struggle against oppression with the North Vietnamese. Carmichael also hoped that the internationalization of Black Power would reshape media coverage of the African-American Freedom Struggle, shifting it away from white liberals’ depictions of blacks as victims, which engendered a culture of fear and further oppressed black people.\textsuperscript{34}

Carmichael concluded his speech with indications of his move toward racial separatism in 1967. He argued that any opportunity for black-white coalition would require the white left to refocus their critiques away from individual oppression. Carmichael concluded that, “The psychologists ought to stop investigating and examining people of colour, they ought to investigate and examine their own corrupt society... And once they are able to do that,” he said, “then maybe we can move on to build in the Third

\textsuperscript{32} Clayborne Carson argues that, “[Carmichael’s] activities on behalf of Pan-Africanism were often at cross-purposes with the efforts of SNCC’s new leadership to build domestic Third World alliances... Forman, for example, though himself a Pan-Africanist... was more willing than Carmichael to accept the Marxian doctrines shared by most socialist nations and revolutionary movements with which SNCC hoped to establish ties.” Carson, \textit{In Struggle}, 277.


\textsuperscript{34} Martin Berger argues that white journalists’ depictions of the Freedom Struggle, particularly photography of white-on-black violence in the South, narrowed the scope of the movement and created the conditions in which the media framed Black Power’s oppositional culture as overly aggressive and violent. Martin A. Berger, \textit{Seeing Through Race: A Reinterpretation of Civil Rights Photography} (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2011).
World.” Although a black-white coalition was not outside of the realm of possibility for Carmichael at this point, as it would be by 1968, he placed the onus firmly on whites. Carmichael called upon whites to assess the ways that they benefited from the social inequality inherent in European societies rather than paternalistically looking to improve the Third World.

Figure 13: Stokely Carmichael speaks at Dialectics of Liberation Congress, London, July 22, 1967.

Carmichael again advanced his critique of white privilege when, on July 22, he spoke on a Congress panel in which a white man questioned whether black self-defense

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was necessary. Clad in black sunglasses and an eye-catching gold shirt, Carmichael stood and shouted while the other panelists, beat poet Allen Ginsburg and San Francisco Diggers founder Emmett Grogan spoke from their seats at the table (see Figure 13). During the audience question and answer period, Carmichael had a back-and-forth exchange with a British man who told him, “I don’t mind you advocating violence if you take the risk. The only risk you take is of becoming a martyr.” Carmichael shouted into the microphone, “I didn’t ask you what you advocated. I asked you what you are doing to stop white violence...” He continued with his invective, “You haven’t done a goddamn thing to stop white violence. Have you? ... You are the descendants of the violent society. Have you stopped it?” The man shouted back, “Why don’t you?” Carmichael retorted, “Because it’s my survival I’m fighting for, white boy…” Here, Carmichael envisioned leveling the playing field between whites and blacks. “The reason it’s going to be stopped is because when a white man comes with a gun, he’s going to know the same thing can happen to him that he’s gonna do to the black man. He can die just like anybody else. That is the only way you gonna stop it…” He continued, “If you can’t stop it that way, I will say, like your eminent Prime Minister Winston Churchill said, when he stole a poem from a black man, ‘If we must die, we will nobly die fighting back.’”

36 Stokely Carmichael, public discussion at Dialectics of Liberation International Congress, Anatomy of Violence, directed by Peter Davis.

paused, and the audience erupted into applause. The man whom Darcus Howe, among others, would call “Starmichael” had galvanized the Congress’s participants.38

The next day, Carmichael spoke on the UCPA platform at Speakers’ Corner where he called for the defeat of capitalism, and he criticized the white left for socialism’s failure (see Figure 14). Future Black Panther Tony Soares kept a transcript of the speech, which he printed as a pamphlet entitled, “The Struggle for Black Power.”39

Carmichael’s Hyde Park speech reinforced the mutually constitutive nature of racism and capitalism. He said, “Around the world to-day there are two things that the coloured people of the world are going to have to fight. Number one is world-wide white supremacy, and number two is world-wide international capitalism, and there can be no choice.” He cited the failure of white movements, claiming that, “All of the white movements in the United States have failed miserably to do that, as have the white movements inside of Europe—they have all failed to talk about the redistribution of wealth… that is because the white man has a sense of property rights that has been the most destructive thing to humanity around the world.”40

In Carmichael’s mind, there was no white working class with whom blacks could align. He said, “The working class white people of Europe and the United States were able to enjoy the profits of neocolonialism and keep their mouths shut, so there is no white working class.”\textsuperscript{41} Carmichael charged the white working class with tacitly accepting Britain’s continued industrial entanglements in Africa and Latin America’s economic dependency on the US, both of which contributed to the oppression of workers in the Global South. Carmichael’s reference to US neocolonialism implies that he included Latin Americans among the oppressed, rather than black people only. Here, Carmichael deployed a rhetoric of blackness as a political stance against oppression rather than an explicitly African Diasporic identity.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 2.
Liberation involved freeing all colonies from oppression, and according to Carmichael, this included setting free the African-American colony in the United States. “We are a colony inside the US,” he said. “We are the best example of neo-colonialism that you need to see.” Carmichael’s phrasing is particularly important: he did not identify African-Americans, or even blacks, as the only victims of neo-colonialism. Instead, he framed African-Americans as the epitome of an oppressed class, hemmed in by the dual historical experiences of British and American empires. “We can’t own the houses, the stores or the land, we can’t control the police, the schools, the health, wealth, any force,” he said, “all the Institutions are controlled by whites outside our community.”

Colonialism had reified property ownership and the control of institutions. Carmichael envisioned a radical redistribution of these resources and community control in order to end neo-colonization.

Carmichael’s rhetoric provoked the British government, who ordered that he not be allowed to reenter the country. Before the conference had officially ended, the UK Home Office instituted the ban, calling Carmichael’s Congress speeches “race-hatred.” On its front page the following day, The Times noted that Home Secretary Roy Jenkins proposed the ban as a response to complaints that Carmichael’s speeches were “virulently anti-white and called for violence.” The government took this decision in line with their belief that Black Power would become contagious. However, in his autobiography, Carmichael saw the government’s ban, rather than his visit, as a provocation. He recalled that, “It wasn’t anything I said or did that caused the demonstrations... it was that silly

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{“British Ban on Stokely Carmichael,” The Times, July 28, 1967, 1}\]
order.” Given that Harold Wilson’s Labour government, which might have been expected to show sympathy toward African-Americans, set the ban it likely increased anger among black Britons and led to an even stronger response.

In an internal report, The Met’s intelligence service known as the Special Branch, doubled down. The Special Branch noted in a memo that Carmichael’s visit “had all the appearance, and some of the effect of an evangelical crusade.” Despite the memo’s confidential nature, the government exposed no anxieties about the potential for British Black Power, continuing to propagate its opinion that black Britons suffered less than African-Americans: “Despite what may be written from time to time about Brixton and Notting Hill; there is nowhere in this country where a black man might not live in competition with the rest of the population as is the case in the USA and no area of coloured settlement where a white man need fear to walk.” The Special Branch could not imagine that Black Power would succeed in Britain. “As far as this country is concerned,” the report continued, “Black Power is a remedy in search of a complaint and its advocates are preaching, in the main, to unbelievers.” The metaphor of Carmichael as a preacher, Black Power advocates as missionaries, and other blacks as unbelievers reflected the idea that Black Power was a cult of personality, requiring adherence to principles that lacked empirical proof in the conditions of black life.

*The Guardian*, by contrast, reviewed Carmichael’s July 18 speech and found multiple layers in his approach. Reporter David McKie noted that, “Anyone who wanted

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44 Carmichael and Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*, 582.
46 Ibid., 4.
evidence to support his contention that Mr Carmichael’s philosophies are dangerous and fanatical could have garnered plenty from what he said yesterday. However, “no one who had sat through [his] lecture… could honestly dismiss Mr Carmichael as simply as that.” Beneath Carmichael’s fiery rhetoric lay a natural storyteller. “With great gaiety, wit and good humour, Mr Carmichael, a slim figure in a blue sweater, taking an occasional swig from a bottle of milk, built on [Lewis Carroll’s Humpty Dumpty story] for more than an hour…” The description of Carmichael in a sweater, drinking milk, and telling the Humpty Dumpty story portrayed him more as a grandfather than a revolutionary. McKie concluded, “What we are seeing now, in the Black Power movement in the States and elsewhere in the third world, was a refusal of the oppressed to accept any longer the definitions placed on it by the West.” Here, McKie grasped the anti-imperial nature of Black Power that Carmichael had offered, and he accepted Carmichael’s characterization of the United States as part of the Third World.

“In the opinion of myself and my friends no clearer or stronger voice for socialism has ever been raised in the US” than Stokely Carmichael, Trinidadian historian CLR James explained; in an August 1967 speech, James confirmed the strength of Carmichael’s structural analysis at the Dialectics Congress. In a speech to a private audience of black and white activists at the West Indian Students’ Centre in Earls Court, James defended Carmichael against leftist criticism and offered his analysis of Black

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47 David McKie, “Teachings of Black Power Apostle.”
Power, which he called, “a political manifestation on a world scale.”  

James explained that, “too many people [in England and the US] see Black Power and its advocates as some sort of portent, a sudden apparition, as some racist eruption from the depths of black oppression and black backwardness. It is nothing of the kind. It represents the high peak of thought on the Negro question which has been going on for over half a century.”

James traced this intellectual genealogy of Black Power from Booker T. Washington, to WEB DuBois, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, and Frantz Fanon, who collectively made it possible for Carmichael and other Black Power activists to, “stand on the shoulders of their ancestors.”

From James’s vantage point, Carmichael had provoked a strong reception for Black Power in Britain. James argued:

Everybody, everywhere calls him Stokely, which is I think a political fact of some importance. The slogan Black Power, beginning in the United States and spreading from there elsewhere, is undoubtedly closely associated with him and those who are fighting with him. But for us in Britain his name, whether we like it or not, means more than that. It is undoubtedly his presence here, and the impact that he has made in his speeches and his conversations, that have made the slogan Black Power reverberate in the way that it is doing in political Britain; and even outside of that, in Britain in general.

Carmichael’s presence, James argued, had inspired both activists and the less politically-minded alike. Despite Carmichael’s importance to the Black Power Movement and to the

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49 James’s friend Richard Small provided the details of the speech’s location, in Bunce and Field, “Obi B. Egbuna, CLR James and the Birth of Black Power in Britain,” 9fn42. The West Indian Students’ Centre in Collingham Gardens, Earls Court, London in 1955 played home to many intellectual and cultural events for the West Indian community. Attendance at WISC events was not confined to students. George Padmore Institute, “Collections in the GPI Archive: The Caribbean Artists Movement,” online: http://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/archive/?p=collections&c=CAM.


51 Ibid., 4-6.

52 Ibid., 1.
British movement more specifically, James maintained that people’s reactions to Black Power mattered the most, as he detailed:

I have followed closely the career of this young man, and I leave you with this deeply based philosophical conception of political personality. He is far away out, in a very difficult position, and I am sure there are those in his own camp who are doubtful of the positions he is taking, but I believe his future and the future of the policies which he is now advocating does not depend upon him as an individual. It depends upon the actions and reactions of those surrounding him and, to a substantial degree, not only on what you who are listening to me may hope, but also on what you do.53

Here, James encouraged those who had been inspired by Carmichael’s speech to act. He advanced the idea that the local appropriation of Black Power concepts mattered even more than Carmichael’s visit. James grounded Carmichael’s ideas with a specific call to action for black Britons.

‘The only force that can quell it is International Black Power’: Obi Egbuna and the British Black Power Movement of 1967-68

On September 10, 1967, the UCPA heeded James and Carmichael’s calls. They met in North London, in an undisclosed location in order to hide from police, where they launched the British Black Power Movement. While Egbuna did not allow journalists to attend the UCPA meeting, he held a press conference near Speakers’ Corner before the meeting at which he wore a Black Power badge (see Figure 15) and distributed a pamphlet he had written. The pamphlet was a fourteen-page credo entitled *Black Power in Britain: A Special Statement* that sought to, “explain to the British people what Black Power in [that] country really [was.]”54 According to *The Guardian*, the UCPA claimed to be the British equivalent of SNCC, with similar objectives to Michael X’s RAAS, but...
without the religious influence of Islam or other faiths.\footnote{Brian Lapping, “Secular black brotherhood launched in Britain,” \textit{The Guardian}, Sept. 11, 1967, 14.} Egbuna told \textit{The Times} that his group had recruited 778 members in seven weeks.\footnote{Marshall, “Black Power Men Launch Credo.” It is possible that Egbuna exaggerated his membership figures. The sources I have examined, however, do not permit a definitive analysis. According to the UCPA’s membership roster detailed in Chapter 2, the organization had fewer than 100 founding members when it began in July 1967, two months before Black Power’s launch. A 1968 case at the Central Criminal Court corroborates Egbuna’s claim. Case notes stated that the UCPA had “at least 800 coloured members,” although it is unclear whether investigators relied on \textit{The Times} for this information or if they gathered additional evidence in order to arrive at this estimate. “Claim for compensation,” January 24, 1969, 2, in “Egbuna, Obi Benedict and others uttering and letter threatening to kill,” Central Criminal Court (hereafter CRIM) 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.}

![Figure 15: Obi Egbuna speaks to the press, September 10, 1967. Source: Obi Egbuna, \textit{Black Power or Death!} 1967, in Tony Soares private collection.](image)

The ideological treatise \textit{Black Power in Britain} drew heavily on US Black Power politics. One version of the pamphlet featured a Black Panther logo on the cover (see Figure 16), while another featured a black panther and a raised fist (see Figure 17). The pamphlet had a photo of Stokely Carmichael inside the back cover. In the manifesto, Egbuna detailed the transformation in consciousness that UCPA members had made, “For too many years, Coloured peoples in different parts of the world have been suffering
at the hands of Whites what they believe to be isolated pockets of oppression.”57 The UCPA attacked the divide-and-conquer method they associated with imperialism, arguing, “Hence the Black peoples of Britain think that it is only the White men of Britain who oppress Black people… Hence the African in Nigeria once thought that political independence for Nigeria meant real freedom for the Black man.” Here, Egbuna drew a line connecting African anti-colonialism to Black Power.

In order to achieve liberation, the UCPA asserted, Third World independence would have to be accompanied by an end to imperialism everywhere. Total liberation would enable blacks across the world to unite. “Hence the Indian worker in Bombay once thought that the Black man in the Caribbean has a different problem from his… Hence the Afro-American of Detroit thought, until recently, that his White oppressor was a different man from the White oppressor of the Vietnamese people.”\(^{58}\) The UCPA made clear the scope of the struggle, arguing that, “We have found out that what we are facing today is not, as we were once told, isolated pockets of White oppression, but International White Power. And the only force that can quell it is International Black Power.”\(^{59}\) The UCPA also confronted media distortion of Black Power, arguing, “White press, Black

\(^{58}\) Ibid.
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 4.
Power is not indefinable. Black Power is not the slogan of dissident blacks… Black
Power does not even mean black domination of the world. Black Power simply reflects a
new stage in the revolutionary consciousness of the Black man. Egbuna framed Black
Power as, “the totality of the economic, cultural, political, and if necessary military
power which the black peoples of the world must acquire in order to get the white
oppressor off their backs.” Thus, in order to throw off oppression, blacks would need
power in multiple forms. Egbuna also took a clear position on violence: “We are no
advocators of violence. But if a white man lays his hand on ONE of us, we will regard it
as an open declaration of war on ALL of us.” In broad terms, Black Power in Britain
agreed with the politics Carmichael had presented in his speech—Black Power had
grown out of a need to address white hegemony. The selection of blacks to fill formerly
all-white positions would not suffice as the revolutionary change that Carmichael and
Egbuna desired. Finally, they did not advocate violence but saw it as a necessary
response to white violence as part of a larger anti-imperial and anti-oppressive struggle.

Egbuna remembered that the UCPA-led Black Power Movement took to the
streets in high gear. “We worked literally around the clock… trampling the streets of

60 Ibid., 5.
61 Ibid., 6.
62 Ibid., 12.
63 Bunce and Field reveal the similarities between Egbuna and Carmichael’s treatises in their structure,
logic and rhetoric. They assert that, “Some passages of Black Power in Britain are little more than
unacknowledged transcripts of Carmichael’s speech.” Bunce and Field, “Obi B. Egbuna, CLR James and
the Birth of Black Power in Britain,” 5.

In an internal memo, the Communist Party Great Britain analyzed the Black Power manifesto and
noted its lack of attention to class. The CPGB believed that Egbuna had promoted black unity at the
expense of class. They asserted that the pamphlet pitted all blacks against all whites, which ignored class
intersections and differences within those groups. They also maintained that the pamphlet presented a
worldview that failed to acknowledge socialist programs in China, Mongolia, Russia and elsewhere. In the
CPGB’s examination, Egbuna denied the existence of working class solidarity across racial and ethnic
boundaries, which could preclude further organizing along those lines. RPD, “Notes on ‘Black Power’
Manifesto of UCPA,” Dec. 1967, in London District, CPGB, CP/LON/RACE/2/1, Labour History Archives
and Study Centre (hereafter LHASC), Manchester, UK.
Brixton, Ladbroke Grove or whichever ghetto was scheduled for our field-work of the season, and start knocking from door to door, distributing leaflets, selling our manifesto, and talking to people.”⁶⁴ According to a leaflet from the spring of 1968, Black Power activists also patrolled the streets protecting black people. The leaflet stated, “Last night in Brixton, a mob of teddy boys were trying to castrate a black boy walking with a white girl when a commando of our Black Power boys arrived and they fled.” The UCPA vilified these whites. That fact is, they said, “we are blacks and they are Anglo-Saxon fascists. Any country run by them, as in America, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Rhodesia, is a fascist lunatic asylum.”⁶⁵ The UCPA’s characterization of teddy boys as fascists illustrated the organization’s creative deployment of Black Power politics. While generally speaking the use of political violence as a strategy was considered socially unacceptable, the British government had already waged so-called “legitimate violence” against fascists in World War II. Thus, the UCPA selectively deployed the term fascist as a way of enabling the potential use of force against teddy boys.⁶⁶

Under Egbuna’s leadership, the UCPA acted swiftly to ensure that people of color led black British political organizations. The UCPA was a constituent organization of CARD, the umbrella lobbying and reform group that King had helped to form during his 1964 visit. At CARD’s annual conference in November 1967, UCPA members formed an alliance with some members of the Indian Workers’ Association (IWA) in an attempt to end what they saw as the white domination of the organization vis-a-vis white officers.

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⁶⁴ Egbuna, *Destroy This Temple*, 20.
⁶⁵ Universal Coloured People’s Association, “Calling all Black People!” leaflet, [n.d. but after April 20, 1968], in Tony Soares private collection.
⁶⁶ Here I draw on visual culture scholar Nicholas Mirzoeff’s examination of how Frantz Fanon appropriated fascism as a form of acceptable violence. Nicholas Mirzoeff, video commentary on Frantz Fanon, *We Are All Children of Algeria*: *Visuality and Countervisuality, 1954-2011*, July 2010, available online: http://scalar.usc.edu/nehvectors/mirzoeff/Frantz-Fanon?path=Fanon.
and the co-optation of CARD’s leaders as lackeys for the British government due to their service on the statutory National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants. Some white CARD leaders objected to their attempted removal. Member Pat Arrowsmith argued that CARD leaders could oppose racism “even if their skin was white” and that an all-black leadership “would bring racialism into the organization, which was just what [we are] trying to do away with.” CARD’s northern organizer, Maureen Baker, claimed that between thirty and forty of the delegates at the meeting had not properly affiliated with the organization, and she declared the election invalid. Egbuna and the UCPA persisted, however, and at CARD’s December meeting, they rallied a coalition of the London Workers Committee and the Southall Indian Workers Club. Together, the three organizations ousted six CARD leaders in order to ensure an all-black leadership, and they reorganized CARD as an anti-imperialist, rather than a national organization. UCPA’s successful promotion of Black Power to the center of the CARD agenda generated national media recognition, with The Times reporting that the UCPA, “an organisation standing openly for Black Power,” had helped push CARD to a “crisis point.”

**Carmichael and the Black Panthers find common (grass) roots in the Third World**

During Carmichael’s 1967 London visit, he spoke not as a representative of any organization, presenting a form of Black Power that centered on its anti-imperialist

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67 Wild, “‘Black Was the Colour of Our Fight,’” 75.
leanings at a time that the US movement struggled to articulate a clear position on internationalism. While these ideas represented more Carmichael’s aims than the thrust of the US movement at that moment, the formation proved particularly applicable in the British context. Carmichael was not involved with the Black Panthers when he visited the UK, and he had not expected to attend the Congress, but the growing international cachet of Black Power brought him there. Amidst increasing tensions over SNCC’s direction with regards to leadership styles, class, and the role of whites in the movement, Carmichael had relinquished his position as chair of the organization earlier that spring at the annual staff meeting in Atlanta. Soon after that announcement, invitations poured in from abroad from people and organizations outside the US who wanted to learn about Black Power. Thus, Carmichael arrived in London during a key period of transition for the movement—while some members continued to use the organization’s name for their splinter programs, SNCC no longer functioned as a coherent organization and the Panthers were just beginning to build momentum, with the opening of their first office in January 1967 and the publication of their first newspaper in April.

Back home in the United States, discussions of Carmichael’s 1967 summer organizing tour revealed rifts within SNCC over the internationalization of the movement and what constituted grass roots organizing. To the surprise of SNCC staff members who expected his imminent return, Carmichael left Havana and traveled on to North Vietnam, Russia, China, Algeria, and Guinea. What began as a two-week trip to London had turned into a four-month tour of Europe, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa in which Carmichael spread a message that was not SNCC’s, but his own.

71 Carson establishes that, “SNCC did not speak with a unified voice in its foreign relations.” Carson, In Struggle, 272.
On his return to the United States, Carmichael was greeted with increased prestige and popularity among militant blacks. Carmichael arrived confident that he could build a unified and powerful black movement, however, he continued to diverge from SNCC in ideological terms. During his time in Guinea he had developed a love for cultural nationalism and Pan-Africanism. Many SNCC staff did not like the cult of personality that Carmichael had strengthened during his time abroad, seeing it as a false image that departed from the organization’s core values of local, grassroots organizing. Like Carmichael, however, several other former SNCC members saw the link between the local and the international. Between 1966 and 1968, at least eight other former SNCC members traveled or moved abroad, indicating that some activists viewed internationalization as a logical next step for the African-American movement.

While SNCC no longer functioned as a national organization, the US Black Panther Party and its leader Huey P. Newton valued Carmichael’s speaking talents, and

72 Carson, *In Struggle*, 277.
73 Stokely Carmichael was not the only SNCC member to transport Black Power politics abroad. Clayborne Carson details two SNCC trips, Faye Bellamy and three other SNCC staff members’ trip to the Soviet Union in 1966 and Julius Lester and Charlie Cobb’s participation in Bertrand Russell’s War Crimes Tribunal in North Vietnam in 1967. In order to understand how these trips impacted the development of a transnational Black Power network, if at all, they merit examinations from the point of view of people in those countries. Carson, *In Struggle*, 272.

Two British Commonwealth diplomatic memos establish that former SNCC members Monroe Sharp and J. Butler also transported Black Power outside of the US. These documents provide further evidence that in SNCC’s demise, several former members turned to a strategy of internationalization. In March 1968, the British Interests Section of the Canadian High Commission in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania sent a memo entitled, “Black Power representatives in Tanzania” to the British Commonwealth’s Office East Africa Department. The memo relayed that Monroe Sharp, “the East African representative of the Black Power African-American Movement” spoke at an event commemorating the eighth anniversary of the March 21, 1960 Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa. What the memo’s author does not appear to have known was that before moving to Tanzania, Sharp had been the head of SNCC’s Chicago office. Sharp went into exile in Tanzania in order to escape the Chicago Police and the FBI.

In the same memo, the author also reported that SNCC member J. Butler had arrived on a three-day visit to find, “new homes for American negroes who are tired of being ruled by whites.” Butler intended to, “discuss with Government officials details of economic matters before the Afro-Americans come to Tanzania in the hundreds,” the officer reported. Memo from British Interests Section, Canadian High Commission, Dar Es Salaam to East Africa Department, Commonwealth Office, March 22, 1968, in “United States: Social, Black Power and the American Left,” FCO 7/863, TNA: PRO
the organization began to incorporate some of his ideas. Formally established early in 1967 in Oakland, California, the Panther Party had adopted the panther symbol from the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) in Alabama, an organization with which Carmichael had worked closely on its landmark efforts to elect blacks to local government and where, for the last time, he was an organizer. As the first step of an intended long-term merger with SNCC, Newton invited Carmichael to serve as the Panther Party’s field marshal, responsible for law, order, and justice within the organization. Carmichael’s first public appearance as a Panther was at a well-publicized rally for Huey Newton’s legal defense in Oakland, California in February 1968. Eldridge Cleaver, who had become the Party’s main spokesperson while Newton was in prison, announced that the appointment of Carmichael and other SNCC leaders to positions in the BPP constituted a merger between SNCC and the Panthers.

Carmichael had no sooner joined the movement than he caused problems for the Panthers with his speech at the Newton rally, which reaffirmed his oratorical talents but also laid bare his ideological differences with the Party. In front of an audience that included a significant number of white radicals, Carmichael argued that African-Americans were concerned primarily with survival in a hostile, racist white society. Demonstrating a shift in his thinking that had taken place in Guinea, Carmichael argued that neither Communism nor socialism suited blacks, as they did not address racism. Inspired by his time in Guinea, Carmichael posited instead that blacks must develop “an African ideology which speaks to our blackness—nothing else.”

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74 Carson, *In Struggle*, 278.
argued the Panthers did not want white support, an idea that Bobby Seale rejected in his own speech later that day.

Despite his differences with Seale, Carmichael accepted a leadership position with the Panthers in February 1968 and SNCC expelled him in July of that year; Carmichael’s shift in allegiance engendered an association between his ideas of Third World revolutionary nationalism and the Panthers. Newton and others sought to capitalize on this association in order to build international support for the Panthers. Within eighteen months, however, Carmichael resigned from the Panthers in July 1969 over the issue of white involvement, of which he disapproved. At the time of Carmichael’s resignation, Panthers who had initially been interested in his ideas about internationalism had failed to act upon them. Meanwhile, Carmichael’s ideas about Black Power had taken hold in the UK, where a British Black Power Movement had begun, and, without the help of the US Panthers, a British Black Panther Movement formed in the spring of 1968.

The ‘phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic’ comes across the Pond, 1968

In the spring of 1968, a group of *Times* journalists argued that American black revolutionary culture had forced an interrogation of the relationship between race and class in Britain. The journalists argued that for the black enclave of Notting Hill, it was, “only a matter of time before it’s a ‘Little Harlem.’”76 In a series of newspaper articles and a book entitled *The Black Man in Search of Power*, the journalists described American attempts, “to export features of the urban revolution to this country,” noting in

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particular the visits of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. The authors asserted that, “For on the TV screens of those who can afford them, America’s race riots are brought as a hideous example into our own homes. It is no longer possible to view Britain in isolation.” By characterizing uprisings as “hideous example[s],” *The Times* perpetuated the popular framing of the US as a pariah of race relations. But the writers also signified the fluid relationship between black Britons and African-Americans. Their public acceptance of a transatlantic race politics significantly advanced the idea that Britain could no longer live under the assumption that race did not exist there, or that it was a fixed, immutable category. In fact, the journalists noted that, “the gap between the standard of living—and status that goes with it—available to both white and black British” had caused blacks’ susceptibility to “the tub-thumping visits of [those] two Americans.” Black Britons had publicly linked their nascent race politics to structural causes, with the journalists concluding that, “coloured people are becoming the new working class.”77

In one of the articles, *The Times* acknowledged that the Black Power Movement had burst onto the world stage, and that the movement had inculcated an analysis of African diasporic history. Carmichael’s visit had made his critique clear, as the journalists noted that, “International black power is up against international white power—the white-dominated capitalist system which may put coloured public relations officers in the local offices of big companies but retains control of the purse strings in New York or London.”78 *The Times* discerned that the representational integration of

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78 “The eleventh hour: The Black Man in Search of Power.”
blacks, particularly in media professions, did not mean that economic power had been achieved. Moreover, *The Times* framed black men as having been on a period of self-examination over time, noting that, “Like some violently bitter American Negroes, a few thinking militants began to look backwards through historical slavery towards a common root with Africa and Negroes everywhere.”79 While *The Times* acknowledged the historical roots from Africa that some Black Power supporters shared, the journalists failed to note that that history had been forged in violence, through shared processes of dispossession, enslavement, and torture at the hands of whites. Thus, while *The Times* proved sympathetic to Black Power, its reporters had a limited understanding of the historical antecedents that had led to the movement. Furthermore, as Carmichael had established, not all Black Power advocates shared Africanness. Rather, Black Power spoke of imperial oppression, a formulation that had already appealed, for example, to South Asians like Farrukh Dhondy and Tony Soares.

Driven by the fear that it could no longer avoid domestic race problems, the British government took a series of decisions in the spring of 1968 that had the opposite of their intended effect, thereby intensifying the fraught atmosphere of race relations to an unprecedented level. In a single hour on February 29, 272 South Asians, a previously unheard of number, passed through passport control at Heathrow Airport and entered the UK.80 The travelers had arrived from Kenya to find work in the UK. Through a number of “Africanization” policies, the Kenyan government had enacted restrictive measures such as refusing to renew work permits for South Asian workers and restricting them to certain sectors of the economy. UK Home Secretary James Callaghan feared that 200,000

79 Ibid.
more Asians who held only British citizenship because they had been born outside their ethnic home countries would attempt to migrate to the UK. In order to halt this mass migration, Harold Wilson’s Labour government had rushed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act (CIA) of 1968 through to Royal Assent in three days. The Act restricted immigration from the Commonwealth to citizens who had been born in the UK or who had had a parent or grandparent born in the UK, effectively leaving those 200,000 individuals stateless.81

Some Conservative and Labour MPs deemed the legislation a disgraceful appeasement of racist hysteria. In the left-wing magazine *New Statesman* Senior Labour MP Sir Dingle Foot declared that the cries of “Shame!” that some MPs had showered on the Speaker of the House of Commons when he announced the bill’s passage on March 1 had been justified.82 Other MPs believed that the Labour Party and Home Secretary James Callaghan who had proposed the bill had made a calculated decision to reach out to its base of white working- and lower middle-class voters.83 The Act indicated that the government no longer claimed responsibility for the fates of its ex-colonies, as it had washed its hands of 200,000 individuals who found themselves without local citizenship after their countries had achieved independence. The European Economic Community (EEC) also rejected the Labour government’s application to join the community in the same year, which would have had Britain shift its foreign priorities toward Europe.84

Given that the Labour government passed the Kenyan Asians Act despite having been turned down by the EEC, it was no secret that Britain’s interest in and sense of obligation to the Commonwealth had withered significantly.  

The Labour government’s public whitewashing efforts also extended to sensitive diplomatic matters following Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination in April 1968. A series of memos between Prime Minister Wilson and Cabinet officials reveal that neither party wanted to attend funeral and memorial services for the Nobel Peace Prize winner. Ultimately the government based its decision on whether to appear at King’s memorial services on what officials believed would keep British blacks from responding angrily. Chancellor of the Exchequer Roy Jenkins was in New York at the time of King’s death, and he wondered whether he should attend the funeral on April 9, the day that he had been due to return to London. Jenkins’ Private Secretary Mr. Dowler called the Prime Minister’s office on April 7 and said that the Chancellor was, “not ‘terribly keen to go.’” Dowler also reported that British Ambassador to the US Sir Patrick Dean had advised Jenkins that the matter was, “a domestic affair.” Based on his previous position as Home Secretary, Jenkins had said that, “to come back [to London] on the day of the funeral might cause some offence in England.” Conversely, Jenkins’ presence at the funeral, “might secure some definite benefit for the Government.”

In London, Prime Minister Wilson might rather have had dental work done than attend a British memorial service for King. Wilson’s secretary wrote to him regarding a memorial service to King that the Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral, the Very Rev. Martin

85 Hansen, Citizenship and Immigration in Post-War Britain, 155.
86 Prime Minister’s Office, “Note for the Record,” April 7, 1968, 1, in “Death of Martin Luther King: UK representation at funeral; memorial service in London,” Records of the Prime Minister’s Office (hereafter PREM) 13/2448, TNA: PRO.
Sullivan, had organized for April 10. The secretary explained that the Foreign Office, “advise that if you can possibly manage it, it would be desirable for you attend the service personally.” As the secretary noted, however, Wilson had a small schedule conflict, “It may mean postponing your appointment with the dentist at 5.0 p.m.”\footnote{Memo to Prime Minister, April 8, 1968, in Ibid.}

Although an assistant initially scrawled on the memo that the Prime Minister would attend the service, a later note from the same file revealed that in the end Wilson did not attend and that he sent Home Secretary James Callaghan in his place.\footnote{Note for the record, April 11, 1968, in Ibid.} It remains unknown whether Wilson’s conspicuous reversal of his decision to attend owed to a change of heart, to King’s public urgent government business, or simply to the difficulty of rescheduling a dentist’s appointment.\footnote{Prime Minister Wilson exhibited the same pattern of decision making in April 1970. When Coretta Scott King visited the UK on a tour for her book My Life With Martin Luther King Jr. (1969), which Hodder and Stoughton reported was ranked number one on the bestseller list, Wilson and his wife welcomed King into their home at 10 Downing Street. On April 20 the Rev. Hywel Davies, an Anglican priest who directed the London-based Martin Luther King Memorial Fund and Foundation, wrote to the Prime Minister to follow up on the fact that he had expressed interest in the work of the Foundation to Coretta King. Wilson declined Davies’ meeting request and sent Merlyn Rees, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office to meet with Davies in his stead. Letter from Coretta Scott King to Prime Minister and Mrs. Wilson, April 3, 1970; Letter from Hywel Davies to Prime Minister Harold Wilson, April 20, 1970; Memo from Prime Minister’s Office to Hywel Davies, May 6, 1970; in “Appeal for Martin Luther King Memorial Fund,” PREM 13/3348, TNA: PRO.}

A massive British public response to King’s death and efforts to work in his memory establish likely reasons why Wilson equivocated about attending the service. UK Ambassador Dean wrote in a confidential telegram from Washington that, “the assassination has had as great an effect outside the U.S. as within it.”\footnote{Sir Patrick Dean, telegram no. 1179 to Foreign Office, April 7, 1968, 1, PREM 13/2448, TNA: PRO.} On April 11, Canon John Collins and Christian Action, the organization that had hosted King on his 1964 visit, opened a Martin Luther King Memorial Account in response to spontaneous
donations they received in the wake of King’s death.91 Collins was a leftist Anglican priest who founded Christian Action and was a founding member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), an anti-proliferation peace organization. On April 15, Collins hosted a “Walk to Freedom” across London to St. Paul’s Cathedral that attracted thousands of mourners (see Figure 18.) A group known as the Aldermaston Marchers figured prominently among the Walk’s participants. From 1958 to 1965, the CND organized the annual Aldermaston March, in which thousands of people marched the fifty-two miles between the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment in Aldermaston, Berkshire and London. The CND continued to gather in opposition to the Vietnam War in the late 1960s.

The CND’s participation in the Walk to Freedom stemmed from King’s vocal opposition to the Vietnam War and its deleterious effects on impoverished people in the US and Vietnam in the year preceding his death.92 On April 4, 1967, King had delivered his seminal speech at Riverside Church in New York on “Why I Oppose the War in Vietnam.” King declared that “my conscience leaves me no other choice” than to demand that the United States take radical nonviolent steps to stop the war.93 The immediate response to the news Washington Post explained that King had, “diminished his usefulness to his cause, his country, his people.”94

Marchers pay tribute to Martin Luther King

To whatever degree that King had diminished his cause in the United States, he had inspired Britain’s thriving anti-war movement, who formed a Foundation in King’s name in the wake of his death. By November 1968, Canon Collins had transformed Christian Action’s Martin Luther King Account into an independent organization, the London-based Martin Luther King Fund and Foundation (MLKFF), which Coretta Scott...
King publicly supported. Soon after its founding, the Fund approached George Thomas, the Minister of State for Commonwealth Affairs, and Hugh Foot, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and the British Ambassador to the United Nations. The Fund asked the two Ministers whether they would be willing to serve as public sponsors of the organization.

A briefing memo for a February 1970 meeting between Wilson and Coretta Scott King reveals that the government advised Thomas and Foot to decline the Fund’s invitation because of conflicts between the MLKFF’s work and the government. The government, “advised against this because of the Fund’s association with Christian Action and because of the danger of embarrassment as a result of a conflict of the objectives of the Fund and the policies of H.M.G.” Christian Action had been established in 1946 to work for reconciliation with Germany after World War II, and it evolved into a radical pressure group that worked to end hunger in Europe during the 1960s. The objectives of the Fund in 1970, the secretary continued, “seem to me a smack of American thinking and practice. They are quite understandable from the point of view of the coloured community but I fear they may be leading down the sort of road that we...

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96 Private Secretary to Prime Minister, “Brief for meeting with Mrs. Martin Luther King,” February 6, 1970, 1, in PREM 13/3448, TNA: PRO.
have been hoping to avoid in this country.”97 The secretary noted that the Fund’s efforts overlapped in part with those of the Community Relations Commissions and others, and that the Fund should coordinate with those groups. In particular, the secretary took issue with the Fund’s proposal to create an employment agency for blacks. “There is no objection in principle,” the secretary wrote, “to efforts designed to eradicate discrimination in employment... but at first sight an employment agency created to help black people secure good jobs might well be unlawful under the [1968] Race Relations Act.”98 Here, the secretary read the 1968 Race Relations Act as a color-blind law that prohibited the government from taking active measures to promote the full employment of blacks.

The Labour government had proposed the Race Relations Act on April 9, 1968. The bill prohibited racial discrimination in housing, employment, and access to consumer goods and services for the first time. However, the government’s services and agencies remained notably excluded from the bill, meaning that the state could not be criminalized for its own race-related discrimination.99 The exclusion typified the Labour government’s Jekyll and Hyde approach of presenting an appearance of tolerance while restricting culpability for discrimination to the private sphere. Parliament passed the Act on October 25, 1968.

The proposed bill had provoked outrage among a vocal contingent on the far right; on April 20, Shadow Defence Secretary and Birmingham Conservative MP Enoch Powell forcefully reclaimed white power in what became known as the “Rivers of Blood”

97 Ibid., 2.
98 Ibid., part 2, 3.
speech. Powell spoke to a group of his constituents at the West Midlands Area
Conservative Political Centre in Wolverhampton, an industrial suburb of Birmingham. In
response to the Race Relations Bill, Powell recommended three stark restrictionist
policies: strict immigration control, voluntary repatriation of immigrants, and equal
treatment of all citizens under the law. He described a conversation with a constituent
who wanted to send all of his children to live overseas because, as Powell recounted, “‘In
this country in fifteen or twenty years time the black man will have the whip-hand over
the white man.’”100 Powell argued that it was his duty as an MP to attend to the man’s
care, and that, “What he is saying, thousands and hundreds of thousands are saying
and thinking—not throughout Great Britain, perhaps, but in the areas that are already
undergoing the total transformation to which there is no parallel in a thousand years of
English history…” Here, Powell established what Gallup Polls would soon verify: many
whites in areas of Britain with significant black populations held racist opinions about
how the British government should proceed, but prior to Powell’s speech, they had not
voiced those concerns publicly. “It almost passes belief,” Powell argued, “that at this
moment twenty or thirty additional immigrant children are arriving from overseas in
Wolverhampton alone every week—and that means fifteen or twenty additional families
of a decade or two hence.”101

Powell sketched the death of the British nation in his account of the long-term
impact of open immigration. “We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation to be permitting
the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are for the most part the material of

100 Enoch Powell, Speech to the Annual General Meeting of the West Midlands Area Conservative Political
Centre, Apr. 20, 1968, as quoted in Hansen, Citizenship and Immigration in Post-War Britain, 183.
101 Ibid.
the future growth of the immigrant-descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping its only funeral pyre.” If immigration ceased immediately, but families already in the UK were allowed to stay and their relatives joined them, Powell alleged that the problem would be just as significant. He said, “The prospective size of this element in the population would leave the character of the national danger unaffected.” Therefore the only option he saw was, “the encouragement of re-emigration.”

Powell grounded the logic of repatriation in the Conservative Party’s policy of equal treatment of all UK residents. He argued that the principle of equal treatment, “does not mean that the immigrant and his descendants should be elevated into a privileged or special class, or that the citizen should be denied his right to discriminate in the management of his own affairs between one citizen and another…” Powell argued that the government should not infringe on the rights of private citizens to discriminate among their free-market choices in buying and selling goods and services. Rather, equal treatment meant that the government should keep anti-discrimination laws off the books as these laws would further victimize whites. “Proponents of the Race Relations Bill,” Powell charged, “have got it exactly and diametrically wrong. The discrimination and deprivation, the sense of alarm and of resentment, lies not with the immigrant population but with those among whom they come and are still coming.” Thus, the mass immigration of the 1950s and 1960s had victimized the predominantly white British

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102 Ibid., 183-84.  
103 Ibid., 184.  
104 Ibid.
population. After retelling another constituent’s story and attacking the Race Relations Bill once more, Powell concluded his speech with what were to become infamous words:

> As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see ‘the River Tiber foaming with much blood.’ The tragic and intractable phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic but which is there interwoven with the history and the existence of the States itself, is coming upon us here by our own volition and our own neglect.\(^{105}\)

With this passage, Powell reinforced the notion that the British nation held inherent superiority over the United States. Britain had not woven slavery into its national creed, and therefore race did not comprise an existential part of the country’s history, he claimed. But his claim that immigration concerns in the UK had come about only “by our own volition” disavowed the mutually constituted histories of British imperialism and enslavement. The assertion reflected a form of national amnesia that privileged British domestic history. The narrative glorified Britain to the exclusion of its two centuries of global imperial domination.

Leader of the Conservative Opposition Sir Edward Heath reacted swiftly and decisively to Powell’s vitriol, in a manner atypical of the usual parlor games of British party politics. The next day in a phone conversation, Heath fired Powell, with the expressed agreement of the rest of the Shadow Cabinet, on the basis that Powell’s speech had been “racialist” in tone.\(^{106}\) In Heath’s mind, Powell had flouted his responsibility to the Shadow Cabinet and to the Conservative Party. Powell accepted his sacking without protest, never holding another senior political post.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 185.
Powell’s speech and Heath’s firm response unleashed a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment that had been brewing in far-right organizations and on shop floors, and brought it to the center of the national political debate. The rhetoric of white victimhood had struck a chord within the white working class, who expressed extensive hostility at the news of Powell’s removal. On April 23, over 1,000 workers at the West India Dock marched to Parliament in support of Powell. Some of the dockers told *The Guardian* that they had voted Labour their entire lives, but that talking with Powell outside Westminster made them feel proud to be British. Their statements illustrated the threat that race issues posed to the sacrosanct nature of British party politics. A group of Smithfield meat porters marched to Parliament carrying placards that proclaimed, “Keep Britain White” and “Don’t Knock Enoch!” and singing, “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas.”107 In London and the Midlands, engineering workers, tanker drivers, brewery, and construction workers also walked out in support of Powell.108 Supporters flooded the Conservative Central Office with over 45,000 letters backing Powell and condemning Heath; many of the letters were obscene and some contained excrements.109 In an opinion poll, Gallup found that sixty-nine percent of respondents disapproved of Heath’s firing of Powell.110

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110 *Attitudes towards Coloured People in Great Britain 1958-1982* (London: Gallup, 1968), Question 66, as cited in Ibid., 187. Even moderate conservative voices expressed ‘not in my backyard’ type fears. Amédée Turner, a prospective Conservative Party candidate for Norwich North in East Anglia, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Times* in which he endorsed the principle of anti-discrimination legislation represented in the Race Relations Bill. Turner claimed that, “the events in the United States make it obvious that action must be taken.” However, he explained that whites, “fear that they personally (or cases they can easily imagine) will be swamped by coloured people where they live.” Turner argued that this “legitimate fear” could be addressed by establishing a race relations board to which, “any group of residents in a street or locality” could complain of perceived overcrowding in another house on the street. Residents could also complain if they, “feared that an undue proportion of houses were being taken over by coloured families.” Amédée Turner, “Removing a fear,” *The Times*, April 24, 1968, 11.
Powell’s argument that unchecked immigration would trigger long-term economic burdens provoked fears of unemployment among workers, particularly given the country’s shrinking labor demands.

‘A fraternity of brothers of strictly identical ideological orientation’: Egbuna forms the British Black Panthers, 1968-69

By the spring of 1968, Egbuna believed that the Black Power Movement required a stronger, more organized response to this explosion of racism on Britain’s streets. He lamented that the UCPA, having drawn in a new cadre of members from the CARD putsch, had become “too much of a mixed bag to constitute one political movement.”

A lack of consensus over rank-and-file and leaders’ visions of how to mobilize the masses for revolution frustrated Egbuna. He also believed that a series of hypermilitant “black informers and trained disruptionists” who fomented division had infiltrated the organization. When another self-avowed Black Power organization, the United Coloured Peoples and Arab Association (UCPAA), led by Roy Sawh, broke off from the UCPA, Egbuna did an about-face. As he recounted in his memoir, Egbuna called the UCPA annual meeting in Notting Hill six months earlier than planned in April 1968, at which he resigned as chairman, and announced that he was forming a British Black Panther Movement (BBPM.) While Egbuna recalled leaving the UCPA to form the BBPM in April, he may not have

Although Egbuna recalled breaking off to start the Panthers in April, the first time that the Black Panthers are mentioned in the newsletter Black Power Speaks indicates

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111 Egbuna, Destroy This Temple, 19.
112 Ibid., 21.
that the UCPA may have gradually shifted to join him between April and July.  

In May, the newsletter listed “UCPA Editorial Board” as its producer. In June, the newsletter was produced by “P.P.P.” Given that Egbuna participated on a public panel about Garveyism on June 8, an event that is discussed later in this chapter, the use of ‘P.P.P.’ likely refers to Garvey’s People’s Political Party. Garvey formed the PPP as Jamaica’s first political party in 1929, for which he wrote a progressive fourteen-point manifesto. The PPP had put forth candidates in Jamaica’s 1962 elections, so its relatively recent activity may have particularly inspired Egbuna and his colleagues. However, the June newsletter’s fifth page consisted of a full-page announcement of the opening of the Black Panther Party’s office on Stanhope Street in North London, which is the first mention outside of Egbuna’s memoir of a British Black Panther Party. The July issue listed “BPP editorial board” as its producer, signifying a full shift to the Black Panther Party. In the same month, Kwame Nkrumah referred to Egbuna as the “leader of the Black Panther Movement in Britain.” From July onwards, the Black Panther Movement was the only name that Egbuna and others used to describe the organization. The discrepancies in the group’s name between April and July, however, reinforce Raymond Eurquhart’s idea that

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113 Rosalind Wild finds that the newsletter Black Power Speaks that Egbuna published in May, June and July 1968, “claimed to be the work of ‘the UCPA editorial team’ despite the fact that Egbuna had left to start the Black Panther Movement in April 1968.” A closer reading of Egbuna’s account of the formation of the Black Panthers from his memoir, however, reveals him referring to the “old UCPA.” This suggests that rather than leaving the UCPA to form the Black Panthers, he transformed a faction of the UCPA into a Black Panther organization over the period April to July 1968. Wild, “‘Black Was the Colour of Our Fight,’” 92fn72.


115 P.P.P., ed., Black Power Speaks, June 1968, 5, in Central Criminal Court (hereafter CRIM) 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.

116 UCPA, P.P.P., and B.P.P., eds., Black Power Speaks, respectively, May, June, July 1968, in Ibid.


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black Britons were looking for ‘any name that [had] power,’ and that they considered a few possibilities before settling on the Black Panthers.

With ideological unity as his motivation, Egbuna consolidated a faction of the UCPA into a small, secret revolutionary socialist vanguard. “We began the Panthers with only three or four members,” he said, “but we had learnt from the old UCPA that what really mattered was not the number of beginners, but the ideological unity, mutual trust and solidarity of purpose which would cement the core together and the discipline and maturity with which they were prepared to implement it.” Egbuna’s explanation of the formation of the Panthers read like the establishment of a solid base in order to mount an effective, focused movement. From the outset, Egbuna insisted that the Panther Movement be ideologically coherent because, “the secret of the [US] Panthers’ success to date, even if limited, lies in this insistence, from the very dawn of its formation, that the movement must be a fraternity of brothers of strictly identical ideological orientation.” Here, Egbuna’s use of ‘fraternity’ pointed more to the idea of a brotherhood rather than the explicit exclusion of women, as at least one woman, Beatrice Williams, served on the editorial board of the newsletter Black Power Speaks in May 1968. In the first phase, the Panthers did not announce their formation in the mainstream newspapers, nor did they identify their earliest actions as Panther events. They noted “Black Panther Movement” in small print on some fliers and publications, but they did not identify the names of individual Black Panthers.

118 Egbuna, Destroy This Temple, 21.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid., 22.
121 Black Power Speaks (London), May 1968, 2, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.
Egbuna’s valorization of what he saw as the “best practices” of the US Panthers demonstrated his respect for them, but it also masked the ways that Egbuna and others localized the movement to the British context. Egbuna and his comrades took on the Black Panther label in order to claim a cohesive and disciplined identity for their movement. The label signaled a transnational affinity with the US Black Power struggle broadly writ, which was not limited to the Black Panther Party. Within and beneath the Black Panther label lay Black Power ideology, a shifting, multifaceted terrain from which Egbuna and others could appropriate and adapt ideas and generate their own ideas that originated in the experiences of British imperial subjects. Stylistically, however, the British Panthers directly replicated aspects of their American counterparts’ work in order to engender a visual association between the two movements. The logo of the UCPA Black Power and Black Panther Movements that first appeared in their newsletter Black Power Speaks in June 1968 mirrors that of SNCC’s 1966 Freedom Primer for the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (see Figures 19 and 20.) The UCPA’s logo invited people to “make Black Power a way of life.”122 Here again, SNCC’s printed materials fueled the British movement, offering artwork that allowed the UCPA to denote their movement’s connection to the global Black Power struggle. The newsletter had a print run of 1,300 copies in May 1968, 1,000 copies in June, and 800 copies in July.123

122 Black Power Speaks, June 1968, back cover, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO. The logos appear so similar that Egbuna likely collected SNCC’s primer or a related document while on his 1966 tour of the US and replicated the logo for the newsletter.
When Met Police arrested nineteen West Indians and one white man at the Ska Bar in South East London on trumped-up charges on April 27, 1968, the Black Panthers organized their first public event. By doing so, they demonstrated that opposition to police abuse was a central rallying cry around which they would organize people. The Panthers called for a public meeting on May 20, which they advertised in a three-page leaflet headlined, “Blacks Unite Against Racial Oppression and Police Brutality.” As the first public document the Panthers produced, the leaflet constitutes the Panthers’

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earliest effort to define their movement to other blacks. The Panthers did not identify themselves as the organizers of the meeting, which demonstrated their understanding of themselves as a vanguard organization and their fears of police surveillance. They simply invited, “all black brothers and sisters” to a public meeting on May 20 at St. Albans Hall in Southeast London. The authors wrote that the purpose of the meeting was, “to organise ourselves against racialism and fascism. And to support our brothers who have been the victim of police aggression and injustice.” Thus, they articulated a two-tiered analysis: the Panthers wanted to organize people against police aggression, which they saw as the local embodiment of racist and fascist ideologies.

The Panthers constructed an alternative narrative of the events at the Ska Bar that enumerated their claims to police brutality. The Panthers explained that, “the police planted drugs on some of these youths and charged others with having ‘offensive weapons’ and ‘resisting arrest’.” A roughly equal number of blacks and whites had patronized the Ska Bar that night, “yet, apart from the one white who was arrested and later fined 30/- for ‘drunk and disorderly conduct,’ the racialist cops deliberately picked out the blacks.” The Panthers indicted “the fascist public and the fascist police [who] are stepping up their violent aggression against us.” The ‘fascist public’ referred to the white working class who had opposed Powell’s firing in the same week as the Ska Bar arrests. They asserted, “Black people are being shot and knifed by the white fascists; Black people are being terrorised and unjustly thrown into jail by the fascist police,” thereby

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125 Although the Panthers did not identify themselves anywhere in the leaflet, the text description of the arrests and the quotation from Chairman Mao appeared verbatim in the Panthers’ newspaper *Black Power Speaks* under the headline, “19 Black Youths Arrested Unjustly.” *Black Power Speaks* (London), June 1968, 8, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.
linking police and civilian racism through the assertion that all were fascists. The authors established that, “We will not remain unarmed in face of armed attacks.”

In two quotations separated out from the rest of the leaflet, the Panthers staked allegiances to Mao and to the African-American struggle. In a block quotation, Mao Tse-Tung explained the extent to which self-defense was necessary, with “We do not strike rashly, but when we do strike, we must win,” highlighting the selective use of force the Panthers had described elsewhere in the brochure. “We must never be cowed by the bluster of reactionaries,” Mao continued.126 Here, the Panthers argued that those who attended the public meeting would distinguish themselves from “reactionaries,” who feared violence and preferred the “bluster” of speech to the directness and completeness of action. The second quotation read, “Blacks in U.K. Support Blacks in U.S.A.” Here, the Panthers visibly linked their concerns to the struggles of African-Americans and implied that attendees at the public meeting would participate in supporting the African-American struggle. The latter quotation was the only part of the leaflet that was handwritten, implying that it may have been added as an afterthought before a Panther took the document to the printer. Read in this way, the Panthers remembered to note their links to African-Americans in order to attract potential supporters to the meeting who would have admired African-American Black Power advocates.

In the newsletter *Black Power Speaks*, the movement took an explicitly anti-white, anti-imperial stance that they fused with cultural nationalism. “Every black man today,” the eight men (including Egbuna as editor) and one woman of the newsletter’s editorial board argued, “has two ambivalent personalities co-existing within himself, one

White, one Black... In most cases, unfortunately, it is the White one that is still dominating the Black. The result is what we call intra-personal colonialism.”

Black Power, the authors asserted, could defeat this internal colonialism. “Black Power demands a total rejection of the White man,” they argued, and a concomitant revival of black consciousness. However, the authors stopped short of turning fully toward Africa. “We have not said,” they maintained, “that the aim of the Black Power movement is to make people put on African clothes. We do say however that cultural nationalism, as exampled by the wearing of African robes, is a manifestation of the Black consciousness upon which the Black Power conviction is based.” Black consciousness, they asserted, was the driving force behind the work of Garvey, Malcolm and Carmichael, as well as “Black Power all over the world.”

In claiming African culture as a manifestation of black consciousness, the editorial board intimately connected the British Black Power Movement to African people and their ongoing anticolonial struggles.

With his Biafran background and African cultural consciousness, Egbuna had implicitly linked British Black Power to Pan-Africanism since the day he founded the movement, but in the summer of 1968, he forged public alliances between the British Panthers and pan-Africanist ideologies. In May-June, African-American Paul Boutelle, the Socialist Workers’ Party 1968 vice presidential candidate, visited the UK on a speaking tour. In an appearance at London’s Black United Action Front on June 8,

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127 Bunce and Field point out that like Carmichael, Egbuna admired Frantz Fanon. Bunce and Field, “Obi B. Egbuna, CLR James and the Birth of Black Power in Britain,” 8. The other members of the UCPA May 1968 editorial board were assistant editor Lester Springer; research editor Louis Young; designer Peter Martin; distributing manager Edmond Licoint [sic]; two “Ghetto Roving Reporters”: G. Maynard in Ladbroke Grove and Brother Michael in Brixton; and general secretary Brother Webb. Beatrice Williams, mentioned earlier, served as the Women’s Corner columnist. Black Power Speaks (London), May 1968, 2, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.

Boutelle spoke on “Black Experiences and Consciousness,” a talk that was accompanied by “Local Black Brothers on how Marcus Garvey’s idea of Black Control of the Black Communities can work in Britain.” A collector of the flier, Trinidadian activist John La Rose, wrote down the names of the six “local black brothers” who spoke, including Obi Egbuna.129 Here, Egbuna drew on another of Black Power’s intellectual forefathers, analyzing Garvey’s potential relationship to the local black British community.

In July 1968, Egbuna also traveled to Conakry, where he asked Kwame Nkrumah to serve as the patron of the British Black Panthers; Nkrumah accepted the invitation and declared that Black Power contributed to anticolonial struggles in Africa.130 During the visit, Nkrumah asked Egbuna to publish a personal Message to the Black People of Britain in the UK.131 The pamphlet featured a photo of Egbuna and Nkrumah on the cover (see Figure 21.) Nkrumah addressed his message to, “members of the Black Panther Association and all my Black Brothers and Sisters, comrades and friends from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Latin America and all corners of the Third World.”132 Nkrumah pointed out that Black Power activists could participate in the global struggle wherever they lived. “To those of you who want to make Britain your home…” he said, “remember that what is important is not where you are but what you do. And to those who want to come back home and fight for Africa’s total emancipation and unity and independence I say, come home.”133 Here, Nkrumah recognized that African-born activists who resided in the UK could participate in anti-colonial movements at home

129 Flier, “Black United Action Front invites you to come and hear Bro. Akinloye Obasuji (formerly Paul Boutle [sic]),” 8 June 1968, in “North America,” JLR 3/9, GPI.
130 Egbuna, Destroy This Temple, 23.
131 Nkrumah, Message to the Black People of Britain, NEW 17/20, GPI.
132 Ibid., 2.
133 Ibid., 3.
through Black Power’s global network. “You have asked me to be your patron,”
Nkrumah said. “My answer is YES,” he replied enthusiastically. “I will stand behind you
in all your Black Power revolutionary endeavours,” he said. “I hope, you will answer my
call when the clarion sounds,” referring to the political unification of Africa he
envisioned.134 On July 22, 1968, printer Simeon Davies, a Nigerian who was not involved
in the Black Panthers but who printed the Black Power Speaks newsletters, testified to the
Met police that when Egbuna returned from Guinea, he said that Nkrumah had pledged
financial support to the Black Panthers, which would arrive shortly.135

![Message to the Black People of Britain](image)

Figure 21: Obi Egbuna and Kwame Nkrumah in Conakry, Guinea, July 1968.
Panther Pamphlets, 1968), NEW/17/1, GPI.

134 Ibid., 3.
135 “Statement of Simeon Davies,” July 22, 1968, 6, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.
The sources do not reveal whether Nkrumah’s donation arrived, but three days after Davies’ testimony, the Met Police arrested Egbuna at his home in Wimbledon, South London. The Met also arrested two other Panthers that day, Gideon Dolo, a thirty-four year old Fijian insurance agent living in West London, and Peter Martin, a twenty-two year old Nigerian artist living in Brixton. Police charged that during the month of June, the three men were guilty of “threatening to kill police officers at Hyde Park, London.” The writing was entitled, “What to do when cops lay their hands on a black man at the Speakers Corner!” In the document, Egbuna had explained how people should handle arrests by the police. At trial, Dolo was acquitted in his role as the printer of the document, Martin who ordered the document’s printing was fined fifty pounds over three years, and Egbuna, the document’s author, was sentenced to a year in prison.

‘[The Establishment] is bent on denying justice and common humanity to people whose pigmentation is darker.’

The Panther Movement generated public opposition to the arrests of Egbuna, Martin and Dolo, issuing a scathing public critique of the police and the judicial system in general. In August, the Panthers published a four page memo entitled, “The People

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Must Know the Truth: The Case of Cameron Worrell.”140 In this document, the authors detailed the Met’s arrest of Worrell, an economics graduate student, as he walked home from an anti-Vietnam demonstration outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square on March 17, 1968. The National Council for Civil Liberties intervened in Worrell’s retrial, but despite that organization’s efforts, inconsistent police evidence, and the testimony of three eyewitnesses as to Worrell’s innocence, the magistrate court upheld the verdict that Worrell had assaulted a policeman.

In a section entitled, “How Does Obi Egbuna Come In?” the Panthers connected Worrell, Egbuna, Dolo, and Martin’s stories, and they criticized the national media for presenting a one-sided account. They related how, “Cameron Worrell’s case is just one of the many cases of police victimization of black people especially in London.” The authors stated that they, “wish[ed]... simply to point out certain facts which the National News Papers omitted when they reported ... on the case so far.”141 In the subsequent pages, the Panthers recreated their narrative of events, in which they alleged that Gideon Dolo, the printer, could not be held liable for the content of the document he had typed and printed. They also held that the police had lied in court about pieces of evidence, and that the magistrate’s refusal to grant the three men bail was due to his unfounded fear that they would incite violence if released.

More powerful than the arguments about Worrell and Egbuna’s cases, however, was the Panthers’ crafting of an indictment entitled “Powellism: The True Manifestation of White Racism,” in which they drew together stories that the press had not linked into a

141 I have retained the syntax and spelling from the original.
single narrative. The Panthers chronicled episodes of violence committed against blacks in the three months since Powell’s inflammatory speech:

A week or so [after the speech] the dismembered body of a coloured woman was found in a suit case. Not long after that a Jamaican was stabbed outside a public house in the East End of London. Then the naked body of another black woman was discovered – having been indecently assaulted and murdered afterwards. At Kings Cross Station, in broad daylight, a white youth struck a black man with a piece [sic] of stone and ran away. In Brixton a gang of long-haired boys attacked a black woman bus conductor, struck her on the face and spat on her... In a Sheffield High School, a white teacher persecuted all the coloured children in her class, accusing them of stealing 10 [shillings]. She forced three black girls of over 13 to strip down to their under pants and pressed and squeezed their bodies in search of the money. No white child was searched or even suspected!142

As the Panthers narrated story after story of white-on-black physical and sexual violence, they built the case for Black Power. For years, blacks in Brixton, Sheffield, and the East End had recounted these painful stories with their families and in their neighborhoods. Here, the Panthers brought these individual narratives and experiences of violence together as a black British experience that demanded a collective response. The victims were men, women, workers and children, representing a diverse cross-section of the black community.

While Egbuna, Martin and Dolo remained in Brixton Prison for three months before standing trial, the Panthers gathered support for their release. The cover of a September 1968 issue of the Black Power newsletter (see Figure 22) depicts a London protest. A protestors carried a sign demanding the immediate “release of Obi, Peter, and Gideon,” while another group of protestors held a banner that connected the case of the three Panthers to a larger cause. “Stop police brutality now,” read the banner that a black

woman and another comrade carried. The article’s headline read: “Three Black Militants Sent for Trial.” Panther events around the trial provided a public spotlight for the movement and its causes. In addition, Jagmohan Joshi, leader of the Birmingham-based Black People’s Alliance, wrote to Home Secretary James Callaghan asking him to investigate reports that Egbuna, Martin and Dolo were being abused in prison. “These men face daily the most vulgar and provocative abuses and insults,” Joshi stated in his letter. “Not infrequently they have been treated with physical violence and one of them has been spat upon.”

Figure 22: Front page of *Black Power* newsletter, September 1968.
Source: MS 2141/C/4, IWA Papers, BLA.

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143 “Black Power men beaten up in prison,” unknown newspaper, in MS 2141/A/7/13, IWA Papers, BLA.
On October 3, the Black Panthers wrote an open letter to whites whom they thought might be sympathetic to their cause, demonstrating that they were willing to embrace white involvement at least in the case of their leader’s imprisonment. In a three-page single-spaced letter, the Panthers appealed for help in securing Egbuna, Martin and Dolo’s release. They noted that David Ennals, the government’s minister with special responsibilities for race relations, had said on September 28, 1968 that, “There is racial discrimination in every branch of our society, including the police.” The Panthers then narrated the specifics of Egbuna, Martin and Dolo’s case. In the letter’s closing, the authors issued a foreboding threat, “Unless justice is not only said to be done but seen to be done the masses of our oppressed black people will have no alternative but to rise to their own self defence.” In the absence of action, the Panthers warned, black Britons would reach an apocalyptic point of no return. “And once we are driven to that position, redress will be too late. Detroit and Newark will inevitably become part of the British scene and the Thames may foam with blood sooner than Enoch Powell envisaged!”

Here, the Panthers drew on Detroit and Newark as catchwords for the US racial uprisings in the summer of 1967. The authors assumed that they did not have to describe what happened in those two cities in order for readers to understand their threat.

In closing, the Panthers demanded an immediate investigation into the conduct of the Met Police and asked for help from “decent minded white people.” The Panthers implored whites: “We feel that the best opportunity for you to show your genuine desires in practice (and not simple talk them [sic]) is to join us in demanding the immediate

144 Black Panther Movement, letter, October 3, 1968, in “Black Panthers,” 01/04/04/01/04/01/05, IRR.
145 Ibid., 1.
146 Ibid., 3.
release of Obi Egbuna, Peter Martin and Gideon Dolo. Here, the Panthers employed strategic rhetoric, ingratiating themselves to “decent minded white people” whose “genuine desires” the Panthers acknowledged. They also urged whites to ally with their cause by deliberately playing on white fears of black violence.

The Panthers’ inventive rallying cries also stretched to theatre, where they publicly staged a vision of the new world order they hoped to create. On February 22, 1969, the Panther Movement held “A Black People’s Trial of Enoch Powell” at St. John’s Church Hall in Clapham (see Figure 23.) The event featured, “A Black Peoples’ Revolutionary Council” with, “solemn black music, haunting rythms [sic] of ‘talking’ Drums,” and a tongue-in-cheek note that, “It’s all so Un-English, so unique – so BLACK.” In the trial, the Panthers symbolically damned Powell and his followers. “When therefore we condemn Enoch we condemn them all,” the Panthers said, “the Tory Twins: Powell and Heath and The Callaghan-Wilson Labour Gang, representing the Entire White British Racialist Establishment.” The Panthers saw the Conservative and Labour parties as equally complicit, stating that, “Both Enoch's Tory party and Callaghan's Labour gang compete with each other in their racialism. Their styles may be different. The Tories shout the abuse; and the Labour Government passes into law the Tory cries of hate.”

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147 Ibid.
In the process, the Panthers indicted British imperialism as a whole. “We Black People,” they wrote, “forced out of our own lands through colonial exploitation, have built up [the] British economy over the years... Even now Britain still depends almost entirely on the uninterrupted flow of raw materials from our indigenous countries,” signifying their belief that the imperial project continued, despite Britain’s loss of its colonies. “But the reward of all our labour and sweat for Britain is intense persecution and ceaseless victimisation.” The trial inverted the power structure, as “The Judge, the Prosecution and the witness [sic] [were] all black.” They demonstrated that the Panthers could create a new and different world. “Their experiences, their talent, their wit and their conviction - all combine [sic] – [would] produce a NEW situation, a gripping BLACK
CONSCIOUSNESS that must expose, condemn and smash BRITISH RACIALISM.”

Black consciousness compelled people to act, they argued, just as the actors had dramatized.

‘Charged, for writing that?’: Government surveillance of Panthers’ speech

In 1967-68 Black Power transported a long history of black radical thought onto London’s streets; these everyday people’s use of Black Power language drew systematic surveillance from the British government. Transcripts in Tony Soares’s private collection reveal that the Special Branch officers attended the UCPA’s Speakers Corner meetings following Carmichael’s July 1967 visit. Detective Sergeant Battye transcribed the Hyde Park speeches of UCPA co-founder Roy Sawh on August 6 and August 20 and member Alton Watson on August 13. In September, police arrested Sawh, Watson, and Ajay Ghose, another UCPA Hyde Park speaker. Under the auspices of the 1965 Race Relations Act, the state charged the men with using hate speech against whites. The surveillance episodes and arrests came on the heels of Carmichael’s London tour and the Home Office’s travel ban on Carmichael, which together demonstrated a systematic effort by the UK government to curtail Black Power’s influence in Britain.

An examination of the Met Police and Home Office’s files reveals that the trumped-up charges against Egbuna, Martin and Dolo derived ultimately from an effort to

149 Ibid., 3.
150 “Transcript of shorthand notes taken by Det. Sgt. Battye, Special Branch, of parts of a speech made by Roy Sawh at a meeting held under the auspices of the Universal Coloured Peoples Association at Speakers’ Corner, Hyde Park, W.1, on 6th. August, 1967,” “Transcript of shorthand notes taken by Det. Sgt. Battye, Special Branch, of parts of a speech made by Alton Watson at a meeting held under the auspices of the Universal Coloured Peoples Association at Speakers’ Corner, Hyde Park, W.1, on 13th. August, 1967,” “Transcript of shorthand notes taken by Det. Sgt. Battye, Special Branch, of parts of a speech made by Roy Sawh at a meeting held under the auspices of the Universal Coloured Peoples Association at Speakers’ Corner, Hyde Park, W.1, on 20th August, 1967,” in Tony Soares private collection.
curtail their activism. When Simeon Davies, who had printed *Black Power Speaks*, called the police concerned about his latest printing job for the Panthers, the Met used the document as a further opportunity to criminalize the Panthers. They arrested Egbuna, who admitted to having handwritten the leaflet entitled, “What to do when the cops lay their hands on a black man at Speakers Corner!,” which Davies gave to police. The leaflet encouraged blacks to fight back against the police as they arrested other blacks. Police also arrested Gideon Dolo who had delivered the leaflet and paid for the printing and Peter Martin who had verified Davies’ typed draft of the document. They charged the men with, “conspir[ing] together and with persons unknown to utter a writing threatening to murder police officers in Hyde Park” and “to incite such coloured persons as might attend meetings at Hyde Park to murder Police Officers.” When the police showed Egbuna the leaflet at the time of his arrest, he replied, “Charged, for writing that?” indicating his disbelief that he could be arrested for having written a threatening document.

The leaflet established that Egbuna called for blacks to respond aggressively when police arrested other blacks, an act that he noted the police carried out with similar violence. In the leaflet, which Davies had not printed for distribution, Egbuna detailed a police arrest at a UCPA Speakers’ Corner meeting on June 8, 1968. In that arrest, the police, “were able to kidnap three Black men [and] club them till they nearly died.” Egbuna explained that, “the reason the cops got away with it was that the Black boys

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152 Gideon Dolo’s checkbook, Exhibit 8 and check from Dolo to Davies, Exhibit 14; “Statement of Peter Martin,” July 25, 1968, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.
153 Queen vs. Benedict Obi Egbuna, Peter Martin, and Gideon Ketueni Turagalevu Dolo, Central Criminal Court, 1968, 2, in CRIM 1/4962/2, TNA: PRO.
154 Obi Egbuna, as quoted in Ibid.
there did not quite know what to do.” The purpose of the leaflet was, “so that the next
time the fascist cops lay their hands on a Black man in that park again, we will all know
exactly what to do and how to do it fast, neatly and like men who are serious about their
determination to fight oppression.” The tactics that Egbuna suggested included forming a
large group, shouting for attention, chasing the police, strategically diverting police
attention away from the arrested, and “smash[ing] the glass and the face of the [police
van] driver, wreck[ing] it in such a way that it won’t ever be used again to carry Black
men.” Egbuna had no qualms in demanding that black people respond aggressively to
the Met’s use of force.

The government employed its stop and search privileges and retained a Black
Power informant in order to build the case that Egbuna and the Panthers threatened
British society. When they searched Egbuna and his house using a warrant obtained
under the Sus Law, the officers discovered a scrawled list in his wallet that they claimed
was a formula for explosives. The list read, “resin of pine, chorilate of potassium,
sulphoric acid.” They also found a typed document entitled, “General Principles
Concerning the Use of Explosives.” They also located a handwritten copy of the
Panthers’ membership rules, which indicated that members would receive training in
karate, judo, intelligence work, weaponry, and military tactics. Detective Chief
Inspector K. Thompson noted that, “I have received reliable information from an
informant within the organisation of the Black Power Group, that in the near future they

155 Obi Egbuna, “What to do when cops lay their hands on a black man at the Speakers Corner!” [n.d.,
June-July 1968], 1, 5, Exhibit 3, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.
156 “Formula,” Exhibit 1, “Notes on use of explosive found in Egbuna’s house,” Exhibit 2, and “Members,”
Exhibit 25, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO. The scrap of paper that comprises Exhibit 1 does not have
“Formula” written on it; the police assigned it that title.
intend to use explosives to blow up Police boxes, the one situated in Hyde Park in particular.”\textsuperscript{157} While the police claimed that this rhetoric indicated a threat to society, they did not offer evidence that Panthers had carried out this idea.

In a separate document commending the seven Met officers involved in the case, Thompson argued that the Panthers caused social discontent within the black community. He explained that, “The ‘Black Panther’ Party was a comparatively new militant group, whose prior aims were to cause discontent among coloured persons and thereby civil disobedience, and violence.” Here, Thompson portrayed the Panthers as the sole cause of black discontent, ignoring any consideration of the structural barriers that animated their cause. He also asserted that, “It was also known that they were training in the use of explosives and firearms, and although a cache was known to exist to date it has not been found.”\textsuperscript{158} Here, Thompson failed to note whether evidence existed beyond the handwritten membership document that demonstrated the Panthers were receiving such training, and how he knew that a cache of weapons existed, or whether this was merely hearsay. Thompson also noted that the Director of Public Prosecutions, a Home Office position that dealt only with “high-profile” cases, had ordered the arrests, indicating that individuals at higher levels of government had participated in the campaign against the Panthers. Indeed, files obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request establish that the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) of the Home Office coordinated government

\textsuperscript{157} Det. Chief Inspector K. Thompson, Metropolitan Police Special Investigation Department, “Threats to Murder,” August 1, 1968, 15, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO. The identity of the informant remains unknown.

\textsuperscript{158} Thompson, Metropolitan Police, “Recommendation for Commendation or Reward,” Jan. 13, 1969, in Metropolitan Police (hereafter MEPO) 2/11409, TNA: PRO.

213
surveillance on British Black Power. As examined in Chapter 1, the first JIC report on Black Power was discussed at a meeting on September 22, 1967.  

Interestingly, the Met had also criminalized the Panthers because of what police believed about the Panthers in the United States. Thompson indicated that the Panther Movement was, “without doubt, militant, copying the example of other such organisations operating in the United States of America where extreme violence is used on every occasion against persons who disagree with the views of the party.” This emphatic, yet false portrayal proscribed the activities of the British Panthers. Although the UK Panthers had in fact used the term militant to describe themselves (cf. Figure 6), they had not committed any actual acts of violence that the police named in their report. The reputation of the US Panthers, while a powerful tool for organizing among black Britons, led the movement to increased scrutiny and criminalization by the UK government.

As with the diplomatic discussions examined in Chapter 1, the Home Office maintained that Americans were responsible for any successes the British Black Power Movement had gained. The Met Police’s Special Branch collected intelligence on American anti-Vietnam War activists. In a 1968 Special Branch report, Sergeant P. Radford noted that the Cambridge Students Union had invited CORE chairman Floyd McKissick to speak to its student body. “For prestige purposes, the Movement in this country needs a visible connection with ‘Black Power’ in America, and for that reason

may try to capitalise” on McKissick’s proposed visit. In its catalogue of 114 Americans involved in leftist organizing, including the anti-war “Stop-It Committee,” the Special Branch explicitly identified two Americans as known contacts of Obi Egbuna, Leon Redler and George Rawick. Referring to them as “the only Americans resident here who have recently come to notice in connection with ‘Black Power,’” the Special Branch named Leon Redler, one of the American founders of the Institute of Phenomenological Studies, which had sponsored the Dialectics of Liberation Congress and George Rawick, an historian of US slavery who spoke on Black Power at a January 30, 1968 meeting of the Camden Committee for Community Relations. Thus, Special Branch officers demonstrated ignorance of the degree to which many black Britons were frustrated with their lives in the UK, as the officers searched for the American rabblerousers who had come to Britain to provoke a Black Power movement.

**Black Panthers forego the vanguard to pursue mass agitation, 1969**

By late 1968, some Panthers had grown frustrated with what they saw as Egbuna’s narcissistic style and his emphasis on violence at the expense of grassroots organizing. When the Met Police arrested Gideon Dolo in July 1968, he said, “I don’t agree with Obi’s views, he’s too violent.” Dolo preferred grassroots community activities. He noted, “I like to get houses and jobs for my people, I’m more of a social worker.” While Dolo may have downplayed his interest in using force to respond to the police in order to diminish a possible jail sentence, his eventual acquittal due to

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161 Ibid., 3.
163 The Metropolitan Police note that members of the UCPA had been similarly aggravated with Egbuna before he left that organization. UCPA members disliked Egbuna’s “irresponsibility and obsessive pursuit of women.” K. Thompson, Metropolitan Police, “Threats to Murder,” August 1, 1968, 2, in CRIM 1/4962/1, TNA: PRO.
164 Gideon Dolo, as quoted in Ibid., 11.
insufficient evidence against him implies that he was less prone to aggressive responses than Egbuna. As Tony Soares recalled in 2011, he had difficulties with Egbuna’s leadership of the UCPA. “Obi had his good points but he also had a difficult personality,” Soares recalled.165 “He was an ego tripper.” Soares found Egbuna’s media-friendly approach unwise. “He liked his style of operating which was speaking to the press about everything. Sound bytes, which didn’t go down well with me.” Soares explained that he thought Egbuna’s media-friendly approach, “was the wrong thing to do, we were exposing ourselves while we were quite weak... I thought we should be working within the community.”166 Soares noted that when Egbuna started the Black Panthers, “he did the same thing to them as he was doing to [the UCPA], going off on his own speaking engagements, the press, without the others knowing, so they kicked him out basically.”167

Indeed, while Egbuna was in jail, some Panthers removed him from the group; they also appropriated the mantle of the movement and took it in another direction, geographically and ideologically. A group whom Darcus Howe remembered included Keith Spencer and Eddie Lecointe (who would later marry Althea Jones) moved the nexus of the Black Panther Movement from Notting Hill to Brixton in the summer of 1969.168 This second phase sought to generate a mass movement, and they found inspiration in CLR James’s August 1967 speech about Black Power.

These new Panthers expelled Egbuna from the movement. They wrote a “Statement on Obi Benedict Egbuna” that aired their grievances with their former leader

166 Ibid., 11:00.
167 Ibid., 2:30.
and reframed the terms of the movement. They proclaimed that Egbuna had been, “expelled and denounced by [the] Black Panther Movement as a traitor!”169 Implying that they would focus their public efforts on forming a broad-based collective, the authors wrote that “He goes around deceiving people, posing as [a] Black Panther leader. But he has never participated in the community activities of the Movement, and has never identified himself with our people at grassroot level.”

The Black Panther authors of the one page flier took issue with what they saw as an egomania that gripped not only Egbuna, but also the leaders of two rival Black Power organizations, the UCPAA and RAAS. “This man does not care a damn about the misery and the struggle of Black People,” they wrote. “He is just obsessed with himself and his career.” They accused Egbuna of using Black Power to pander to white audiences, and more specifically, “to make converts among white women.” The Brixton Panthers also indicted RAAS’s Michael DeFreitas (Michael X) and the UCPAA’s Roy Sawh, with whom Egbuna had co-founded the UCPA, for having eschewed grassroots organizing in order to cultivate their own publicity and personalities.170 The Panthers called the three leaders, though representatives of rival organizations, allies. They argued, “Together, these three crawl on hands and knees to racist press, sell Black People down the drain, expose Black Movements without regret and betray our struggle to gain personal publicity and prestige.”

In Brixton, these Panthers generated a new sense of anti-imperial material solidarity in the movement’s second phase, 1969-73. The Black Panther Party provided the embodied heroes who inspired the formation of a Black Panther Movement in the

170 Sawh formed the UCPAA out of the UCPA after Egbuna left to start the Black Panthers.
UK. In the hands of Egbuna and other members of the first Black Panther Movement to form outside the United States, imperialism provided the lens through which they articulated their relationship to their local authorities, to the British post-imperial nation-state and to American Empire. The British Empire, with its history of the slave trade and the displacement of people of color, provided the framework through which black Britons understood their relations to blacks outside Britain.

British Black Panthers connected local grassroots politics to transnational, anti-imperial ideology, as they believed the US Panthers had done. Former SNCC leaders helped provide some of the organizing tactics and the US Black Panther Party provided discipline, an embodied structure, and a highly visible label that could be appropriated to signify involvement in the Black Power Movement. The US Panthers became the umbrella under which British activists appropriated fluid concepts of Black Power. Chapter 4 examines the efforts of the British Panthers to build a black mass movement in the years 1969 to 1973.
Chapter 4: ‘Black Oppressed People All Over the World Are One’: The British Panthers, Shadow Governance, and Grassroots Internationalism, 1969-1973

In the summer of 1969, as discussed in Chapter 3, a small group of Panthers took issue with Obi Egbuna’s egomania and relative neglect of the day-to-day struggles of London’s black community; consequently, they denounced Egbuna and broke away from him while he was in prison. As Darcus Howe explained, Egbuna, “got to prison and all his boys developed the Panthers and came to Brixton.”¹ The headquarters of the Panther Movement relocated from Notting Hill to Brixton in South London. This group included Eddie LeCointe and Keith Spencer, both of whom had been comrades of Egbuna’s since he founded the UCPA in 1967.² For the first time, however, the Panthers included more than ‘Egbuna’s boys.’ As former Panthers noted, Althea Jones, a woman, led this phase of the movement (see Figure 24).³ While the relocated Panthers’ activities centered in Brixton, the movement soon spread elsewhere. By June 1970, a group of blacks in North London and another group in Acton, West London had formed local chapters of the Panther Movement.⁴ By October of that year, the Brixton Panthers had established a

² Howe, II, 1:40:30; UCPA Membership Roster, 1967, Tony Soares Private Collection.
³ Tony Soares of the North London chapter called Jones, “the main person in the Black Panthers.” Farrukh Dhondy said that the Panthers were, “under the leadership of Althea Jones” and that Jones was “the brains” of the movement. Respectively, Tony Soares, interview by author, July 22, 2011, London, (hereafter Soares), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 14:15; Farrukh Dhondy, interviewed by Rakhee Kewada, July 31, 2009, London (hereafter Dhondy OMC), 6, transcript and audio recording in IV/279/2/15/1a-1b; “Do you remember Olive Morris? Oral History Project,” Remembering Olive Collective, Olive Morris Collection (hereafter OMC), Lambeth Local Archives (hereafter LLA), Minet Hall Library, London.
⁴ The only party who identified the leader of the Panthers’ second phase as someone other than Althea Jones was the Special Branch, as a recently declassified intelligence file reveals. The Special Branch claimed that Eddie LeCointe led the Brixton Chapter, which it characterized as, “the most active group in this organization.” Special Branch Report, “‘Black Power’ in the United Kingdom,” August 11, 1970, Appendix A: “‘Black Power’ Organisations in the United Kingdom,” 2, in HO 376/154-155, “Black Power Intelligence Reports,” TNA: PRO. (File released to author through Freedom of Information Act UK).
headquarters at 154 Barnsbury Road in Islington, in another section of North London, at
the home of Althea Jones and her partner Eddie Lecointe.\textsuperscript{5}

![Figure 24: Althea Jones speaks to protestors outside the Mangrove Restaurant, August 9, 1970](image)

Source: Neil Kenlock private collection.

As the 1970s dawned, the British faced a shaky economy. The Government also
struggled to solidify the country’s role on the postcolonial global stage. In the summer of
1970, Edward Heath and the Conservative Party ousted Prime Minister Harold Wilson
after six years of a Labour majority. Heath would serve as Prime Minister for the

\textsuperscript{5} The 154 Barnsbury Road is noted in the October 1970 \textit{BPNS}. \textit{BPNS}, October 1970, 4, in 01/04/03/02/042, Institute for Race Relations (hereafter IRR), London.
remainder of the British Black Panthers’ existence. He inherited an economy in which inflation was rising at a much faster rate than in the United States (and in the twenty-one other industrialized countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.)6 This erosion in purchasing power accentuated Britain’s reputation for poor labor relations, low productivity, and mediocre-quality goods. In an attempt to address these problems, the Heath government emphasized decreased government intervention and self-help. In 1971, the government proposed an Industrial Relations Bill that weakened the bargaining power of trade unions. The bill passed, prompting a backlash from the unions that led to the repeal of the Act in 1974 when Harold Wilson and the Labour Party took over the government once again.

In the early 1970s, the gulf between Britain and its ex-colonies, now part of the Commonwealth widened. Under Heath, the UK applied for membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) for a third time. Britain joined the EEC in 1973, increasing its foreign trade with the European Common Market (ECM) and consequently slowing trade with the Commonwealth. Race issues expanded the gap between Britain and the Commonwealth, particularly when in 1970 the Heath government resumed arms sales to South Africa, prompting protests from black activists as well as Commonwealth countries. In November 1970, during the Prime Minister’s annual world affairs speech at London’s Guildhall, Heath said that the Commonwealth countries, “must accept that our right to take decisions in pursuance of British interests is no less than theirs to pursue the policies which serve their interests.”7

7 *The Times*, November 17, 1970, 4, as quoted in Ibid., 38.
On a domestic level, a national survey about race issues revealed that social attitudes toward blacks had improved little over the previous decade. A full 84% of Conservative Party supporters and 49% of Labour supporters said that they were strongly opposed to “coloured immigration.” The British tabloid, The Sun, who administered the survey, reported that only 6% of Conservatives and 9% of Labour voters had, “accurate knowledge of the facts, as distinct from myths, concerning race and immigration.”

In terms of legislation, the Race Relations Acts of 1965 and 1968 had accomplished some liberal reforms but the laws could not achieve the lasting structural and cultural changes that many blacks in Briton needed for their livelihoods.

In Brixton, the Black Panthers envisioned revolutionary changes that would transpire above and below the level of government legislation. They imagined an autonomous grassroots movement that jettisoned Egbuna’s cult of personality in favor of a more egalitarian approach. Their approach connected local community organizing to historical narratives of black resistance and to similar struggles taking place outside the UK, in order to resist ongoing imperialist practices in postcolonial Britain. Community organizing proved particularly effective given the relatively small size of the black British community and the concentration of black communities in a few metropolitan areas in the country. As discussed in Chapter 2, the 1971 British Census reported that while 2.1% of the overall population of Great Britain had been born in New

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Commonwealth countries, 6.4% of London’s residents and 3.1% of metropolitan Birmingham’s residents came from the New Commonwealth.⁹

In comparison to their American Black Power counterparts, the British Panthers drew their members from a smaller proportion of the national population, and they lacked the strategies of an earlier generation from which they could adapt as they shaped their movement. In contrast, the British Black Panthers comprised part of the first cohort of postwar black organizers in the country. The UCPA, CARD, WISC, and RAAS had emerged in rapid succession between 1964 and 1967.¹⁰ Before that, Communist activist Claudia Jones had created alternative social structures for the black community. In 1958, Jones had founded the *West Indian Gazette and Afro-Asian Caribbean News* and the Caribbean Carnival (later the Notting Hill Carnival) in London. Jones passed away in December 1964, while many of the future Black Panthers were teenagers.¹¹ While a few UK Panthers had encountered the work of black radical intellectuals such as CLR James,

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¹⁰ Among the range of leftist and moderate groups fighting for racial change in this period, RAAS, CARD, and the UCPA proved the most active. Michael X had founded the Racial Adjustment Action Society (RAAS) in 1964, the Campaign against Racial Discrimination (CARD) was established in 1965, and Obi Egbuna and Roy Sawh started the UCPA in the summer of 1967. CARD and RAAS, respectively, reflected the differences between the styles of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X in the United States. By 1968 the Black Peoples Alliance (BPA), the Black Unity and Freedom Party (BUFP), and the Black Workers’ Movement (BWM) also existed. For more on these groups, see Brian W. Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race: Black Activism and Cultural Politics* (New York: Berg, 2002); Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2010); Dilip Hiro, *Black British White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain* (London: Grafton, 1991); Ron Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain: Five Hundred Years of Black and Asian History* (Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 1999); Edward Scobie, *Black Britannia: A History of Blacks in Britain* (Chicago: Johnson Pub. Co., 1972); Rosalind Wild, "'Black Was the Colour of Our Fight.' Black Power in Britain, 1955-1976" (Ph.D. diss., University of Sheffield (U.K.), 2008).

George Padmore, and Frantz Fanon, the British Panthers did not have domestic models that showed them how to transfer black radicalism to the streets. Thus, the British Panthers did not have the benefits of immediate past experimentation or lessons learned.

Simultaneously, then, the Panthers articulated an intellectual foundation and tested organizing strategies in the absence of local models from which to adapt or critique. The second phase of British Panthers developed their organizing praxis through an organic process of determining what they believed best suited the needs of their community. In order to provide some structure to this fluid process, the group of intellectual activists who made up the Panthers envisioned themselves as a collective grassroots movement.

While at its height the British Black Panther Movement had no more than three hundred core members, Panther photographer Neil Kenlock noted that, “it had a lot of sympathizers and followers and it was punching well above its weight.” The group demonstrated this at public events such as their largest protest, a march against a proposed Immigration Bill in 1971 that drew nearly ten thousand supporters.

Additionally, the Brixton Panther Movement had a broader influence, as the Panthers created a network of black communities across Britain. Two other London neighborhoods formed Black Panther chapters and Black Power activists in ten cities across England and Wales developed alliances with the Panthers (see Appendix A for a list of these chapters and the dates of their alliances with the Panthers). Figure 25 reveals the British Black Panthers as a national network that existed in areas of concentrated black populations. This map, originally created by geographer P.N. Jones in 1978, reveals the areas of

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Britain that had the largest black populations in 1971. The map has been repurposed to illustrate that most English and Welsh cities with sizeable black populations had Black Power movements. Cities that had such movements are marked with a blue pushpin.

![Map of cities with concentrated black populations, 1970-1971.](image)

**Figure 25. Black Power activity in cities with concentrated black populations, 1970-1971.**

The British Black Panther Movement garnered this high level of support primarily because of the significant commitment that its members made to organizing local communities. The Panthers saw each of these communities as integral parts of a national and international network of black resistance. Panther Ray Eurquhart remembered that
the Brixton Panther group consistently asked, “What [can] help organize black people in Britain?”13 They answered this question with inventive, organic, and defiant forms of resistance, which fueled local participation at their events and inspired black communities outside Brixton to form movements of their own. Often, the Panthers traveled to help organize other cities in Britain at the request of local Black Power activists there. Neil Kenlock explained that the Panthers were, “dedicated for the people. These are some radical people who are making a lot of noise, but they care a lot for the community.”14

Through their prominent public identity as a military-style Black Panther movement, members developed connections to international black struggles, which also contributed to their level of support. The Panthers believed in ending imperialism as a form of black oppression globally, and they shared that vision widely at their public events and in their publications. Hurlington Armstrong recalled that among the Black Power organizations in Britain, the Panthers attracted attention because, “We was the strongest and the most militant.”15 The Black Panther name also activated connections with the black struggle in America. Panther protests and Panther-published international news bulletins cast an even wider net, developing support for and knowledge about autonomous black movements in the West Indies, Israel, South Africa, and elsewhere.

In this chapter, I argue that the Black Panther Movement used their commitment to the community as a means of building a system of shadow governance for black Britons. With this system, the Panthers created a public, informal social project that

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14 Kenlock I, 29:00.
assisted black Britons in a myriad of interactions with the British state.\textsuperscript{16} Shadow governance, a concept drawn from the field of international political economy, describes a process of \textit{de facto} and informal market activities that mirror those of state actors who promote their own patronage networks and private self-interests. The UK Panthers’ system of shadow governance provided the structure for a highly active movement that stretched across all aspects of black British life. From 1969 to 1973, the British Panthers led hundreds of campaigns around housing, education, health, legal aid, employment, and against police brutality. In this chapter, I trace the development of this shadow governance and identify its key aspect, which is the Panthers’ promotion of black internationalist politics. I call this concept grassroots internationalism. That is, the Panthers organized local communities and connected them to a transnational network, thus working above and below the level of the British national government in order to engender black solidarity within and across national borders.

Through their system of shadow governance, the Panthers agitated for change and fostered a radical discourse that expanded the boundaries of possibility for blacks in Britain. By organizing solidarity campaigns and teaching other black Britons everyday forms of resistance, the British Black Panthers amassed collective power at the nexus of local, national, and international concerns. They also fostered an environment that enabled other black social movements to pursue legislative change.\textsuperscript{17} From late 1971

\textsuperscript{16} Here I draw on the work of international political economist Fredrik Söderbaum. Söderbaum argues that while systems of shadow governance are usually regional and subnational, occasionally they stretch beyond the borders of the states that they shadow. In this case, the British Black Panthers’ efforts extend outside Britain to hail people and governments in other countries. Fredrik Söderbaum, "Modes of Regional Governance in Africa: Neoliberalism, Sovereignty Boosting, and Shadow Networks," \textit{Global Governance} 10, no. 4 (2004): 419-436.

\textsuperscript{17} Sociologist Herbert Haines offered the term “radical flank” to describe the effect that the US Black Power Movement had on whites’ acceptance of legislative goals such as public desegregation and voting
through 1973, the Panthers emphasized working-class solidarity rather than a struggle based strictly on racial oppression. This change eventually led the group to separate in several directions, based in part on its members’ views of race and class but also upon a resurgence of strength within workers’ movements on a national level.

The Panthers identified and named centers of oppression in Britain, the United States, and in the West Indies, Tanganyika, Ireland, Israel, and Vietnam, all of which were countries that the British and American Empires had dominated at some point. The Panthers celebrated the cultures they represented and analyzed their shared imperial experiences, while simultaneously confronting the crumbling empire’s tight grasp on immigration, policing and public services as ways of controlling its black population. In so doing, the Panthers bridged the disjuncture of the colonial past with the realities of the postcolonial present, pragmatically employing social movement strategies in order to actively engage with life in the metropole. For a brief moment from late 1969 to early 1973, the British Black Panthers forged a radical black unity in the streets of London.

‘Black Power, People’s Power’: Reconstructing a Panther Archive

The Panthers worried about the surveillance and ensuing violence that Egbuna and others had endured, and they took steps to avoid this by maintaining secrecy regarding their activities. The organization did not keep records, nor did they publicly identify individuals’ contributions to the movement. Many Panthers also participated in

rights. The British Black Panthers provide an example of a Black Power group that constituted a radical flank and legitimized the legislative aims of other black British social movements such as CARD. Herbert Haines, Black Radicals and the Civil Rights Mainstream, 1954-1970 (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1995).

18 The section heading “Black Power, People’s Power” is drawn from an interview with Linton Kwesi Johnson in which he recalled it as an important slogan for the movement. Linton Kwesi Johnson, interview by author, August 2, 2011, London, (hereafter Johnson), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 4:00.
self-defense courses in an effort to prepare themselves for confrontations with the police. Therefore, what follows is a history of the British Panthers based on their publications, photographs, and oral history narratives. Collectively, their stories comprise what amounts to a Panther archive, which enables this transnational history of the black freedom struggle.

This chapter draws on a body of sources that can be broadly categorized as first-hand accounts of the movement. Individuals’ stories as retold in oral histories, court cases, and handbills detail Panther organizing efforts through the eyes of members themselves. A number of these events will be examined through the Panthers’ own words and photographs in the second half of this chapter, employing a visual culture analysis for the image sources. This chapter begins, however, with a bird’s eye view of the Panthers. A detailed investigation of the movement’s newspapers, or its collective narrative, yields an understanding of the overall structure and organizing praxis that the Panthers established. Specifically, I examine forty-four issues of the Black Panthers’ newspapers collected from seven archives in Birmingham, London, New York, and Durham, North Carolina, detailing the contents of each cover-to-cover. This rich source material broadens the range and number of Panther community organizing activities beyond those that the Panthers recalled in their oral history interviews.

The British Black Panther newspaper evolved over the period 1969 to 1973, taking on three separate titles before splitting into two separate newspapers in 1973. From December 1969 to July 1971, the paper was called *Black People’s News Service*. From July 1971 to February 1972, the Panthers published the *National and International News Bulletin* under the auspices of the Black Peoples’ National Information Centre (BPNIC),
a national clearinghouse of black organizations and information that the Panthers ran. When the BPNIC slowed down its activities in February 1972, the Panthers started publishing *Freedom News*, which continued until the London Panthers split into two separate movements in March 1973. In that month, the Brixton Panthers published a single issue of the newspaper *Black Life Brixton* while the North London Panthers published *Freedom News: North and East London Community Voice* until October 1973.

In an effort to document as many incidents and types of black British resistance as possible, Appendix B details every event chronicled in the forty-four issues of the Panthers’ newspapers as well as the other archival materials examined in this chapter. Appendix C provides a list of all the newspaper issues examined along with their respective locations, and it identifies missing newspaper issues that subsequent research might add to this archive.

Collectively, these newspapers, handbills, and leaflets reveal that between May 1969 and October 1973, the British Panthers staged a highly aggressive grassroots movement. During these four-and-a-half years, the Panthers organized or responded to 364 events that affected the black British community. The Panthers staged rallies, demonstrations, public and private meetings, leafleting, newspapers of various kinds, and fundraising. As Tony Soares recalled, the Panthers had “a lot of activity.”[^19] The level of activity peaked during the years 1971 and 1972, when, respectively, 153 and 89 of these events took place. These events clustered around seventeen categories.[^20]

[^20]: The categories under which I classified these events are: cultural, discursive, education, events outside London, hospital visits, housing, international, legal aid, police, police brutality, prisoner support, public campaigns, solidarity, state interactions, visits, women, workers, youth.
Of these categories, the largest included events in which the Panthers demonstrated in solidarity with people outside of their group, mainly other blacks. Panthers participated in 147 such events from 1969 to 1973. These included events in which London Panthers traveled on weekends to support comrades in other cities. Neil Kenlock remembered traveling with the Panthers to Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Bradford, Bristol, Derby and Nottingham, and other cities with sizeable black populations.21 Danny DaCosta recalled traveling to Sheffield and Leeds with the Panthers.22

The Panthers also offered material support to other black Britons or blacks abroad. When a bus stopped short outside Manor House Station in north London on June 30, 1969, it badly injured a black female passenger. While the injured woman recovered in north London’s Stoke Mandeville Hospital for two months, a friend of hers contacted “some brothers” in the Black Panther Movement for assistance. The Panthers visited the woman in the hospital, provided her with legal advice from their collective knowledge base, and assisted her in her interactions with her publicly appointed lawyer.23 Through this and other unheralded day-to-day activities that included court advocacy, mediation between landlords and tenants, and support for squatters’ rights, the Black Panthers provided a shoulder for black Britons to lean on in times of need, which over time bolstered the community’s well being and identified the Panthers as a key source of community help (see Figure 26).

In April 1970, the Panthers showed solidarity with Pakistani workers in London’s East End, a predominantly South Asian neighborhood. On April 6, a group of “bovver boys,” a Cockney slang term for ‘bothersome’ white skinheads, stabbed fifty-year-old Pakistani kitchen porter Tausir Ali in the throat, killing him. Three days after Ali’s murder, a group of bovver boys appeared on the Today news show on Thames Television and admitted to “Paki-bashing,” the first public recognition of this type of racialized violence on a national level. In the tabloid The Sun, Member of Parliament Arthur Latham expressed his frustration that the bovver boys had said on Today that, “They

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could see no wrong in it as [the Pakistanis] were only blacks.” In response, the Panthers wrote and distributed information about growing patterns of violence against Pakistanis, showing solidarity with Ali and his fellow workers and attempting to increase knowledge about episodes of racialized violence. \(^{27}\) Hurlington Armstrong recalled that on other occasions Panthers, “used to dress in our Panther things,” in order to be readily identified in the East End where, “we patrolled the streets... to protect people from the police and to protect people from thieves.” \(^{28}\) In other episodes, the Panthers demonstrated solidarity with potential immigrants, victims of police brutality, activists in the West Indies, women, prisoners, the US Black Panthers, American soldiers in Vietnam, squatters, and public housing residents, among others.

Many other events mirrored the Panthers’ informative handouts about violence against Pakistani workers; the Panthers and their network of affiliated groups developed 92 different publications in which they revived black history and codified black Britons’ stories of oppression as written narratives. The most iconic example of the Panthers’ black history work was a one-page document that the Panthers wrote in September 1969 entitled, “Black People Get to Know Yourself” that called on black Britons to wake up to black consciousness. \(^{29}\) In the flier, the Panthers laid out their justification for the study of black history and culture. They traced the origin of man to Africa and satirized the “so-called European civilisations,” which had plundered Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and the Americas when their own feudal systems failed them. The authors asked readers if they

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\(^{26}\) Arthur Latham, as quoted in Ibid.


\(^{28}\) Armstrong, 14.

\(^{29}\) Black Panther Movement, “Black People Get to Know Yourself,” September 1969, in John La Rose Collection (hereafter JLR) 3/1/5, GPI.
knew, “that the systematic denial of the civilisations Europeans met in Africa, is the method the racist system has been using to justify its barbarities against black people.” Here, the Panthers signaled that Africans had not needed the ‘civilizing projects’ of empire, as they had civilizations of their own.

The authors also noted an ongoing history of black struggle, claiming that, “Black people have fought, are fighting and will continue fight white racist control of our lives.” The flier’s authors argued that the acquisition of knowledge about “ourselves and our history” would lead the way toward liberation. They claimed that the education system had denied them knowledge of black history because, “If we know our true history, we would soon realize that it is not God’s will or fate why we are suffering today.” They also highlighted the punishment that enslaved blacks received if they tried to communicate with their families during the Middle Passage. After tracing the histories of the 1791 Haitian Revolution and the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1866 in Jamaica, the authors made an explicit connection to the US Panthers, claiming that, “Our struggle is not unlike the struggle in America.” They argued that blacks in Britain needed to periodize their history over several centuries that stretched back to the common enslavement of blacks across the Caribbean and North America during the British Empire. They wrote that, “To fight racism we must understand how we came to be in England. To do this means going further back than the West Indies where we see that the same man oppressing us here is in control in our homelands. Then further back we see that it’s the same man who plundered Africa and forcibly enslaved us.”

In a 1971 leaflet, Nottingham’s Black People’s Freedom Movement (BPFM), a group that had affiliated with the Panthers, drew attention to black children’s experiences
of abuse at school. In this leaflet, which the Panthers recounted in their newspaper, the BPFM detailed two incidents in which children were physically abused at Douglas Junior School in Nottingham. Nottingham was a mid-sized city in the East Midlands that served as home to the country’s bicycle and tobacco industries. In the leaflet, Black parent Mr. Harrison described how a teacher sent his six-year-old son outside on a December morning even though he was wearing a t-shirt and had no shoes on. In another incident, a Douglas School cafeteria worker banged a student’s head against a wall. Harrison explained that when he registered a complaint about this treatment, Nottingham Education Minister Jackson replied that he could, “get any of you black folks beaten by the police, hands tied behind your backs and thrown off Clifton Bridge like they did to Oluwale.”

Jackson referred here to Nigerian brick worker David Oluwale, who had been found dead in the river Aire near the northern city of Leeds in May 1969. The Panthers chronicled this developing story for readers over four issues of their newspaper. Leeds police sergeant Kenneth Kitching and inspector Geoffrey Ellerker were found guilty of assaulting Oluwale on the morning of April 17, 1969, which they claimed led Oluwale to run away from them towards the river Aire, where in their account, Oluwale jumped to his death. Jackson’s summary of the case, however, implied something more sinister: that Kitching and Ellerker had beaten and bound Oluwale and thrown him from Clifton Bridge into the Aire. The Panthers argued that, “the death of David Oluwale in Leeds and

32 “Mr Oluwale was a social problem, sergeant says,” *The Times*, November 20, 1971, 3.
many others adds up to the systematic murder of black people in Britain. Here, the Panthers built a case for what they saw as systematic violence against black Britons. The case would have been much more difficult to prove had the Panthers not tracked national events. In addition to Leeds, London and Nottingham, the Panthers recorded violence against blacks in eight other cities: Cardiff, the Welsh capital; the West Midlands cities of Birmingham and Wolverhampton; the East Midlands city of Leicester; the northern cities of Manchester, Liverpool, and Bradford; and the southern city of Oxford.

In addition to solidarity demonstrations and the assiduous recording of historical and contemporary events affecting black Britons, the Panthers acted in a range of other areas. In their newspaper, the Panthers recorded 148 incidents of police brutality toward blacks in England and Wales. The group also called for at least eighteen mass public protests in the streets of London around domestic issues. They visited at least sixty blacks in Britain’s prisons and hospitals. The Panthers held at least fourteen cultural events, fifteen events that addressed women’s concerns, and forty-eight events that supported black British youth. Additionally, the Panthers demonstrated solidarity with blacks and working class people around the world through starting or joining international solidarity campaigns for people in at least ten different countries. They also chronicled the struggles of black and other oppressed people in fifty-eight additional countries in their newspapers (see Appendix D).

Fundamentally, the British Black Panthers created an immersive solidarity, a movement in which membership became a way of life. Panthers envisioned themselves in solidarity with blacks around the globe, and they attempted to put this vision into action.

They stood in solidarity with other nationalist movements that they believed had legitimate causes, including the Irish, Basque and African-American movements. British Black Panthers took the sensibility of the American Black Panthers as a model, demonstrating in black berets, army-style jackets, and with fists raised in Black Power salutes. They built solidarity across ethnic lines and worked to provide blacks with the resources to learn black history and culture in an effort to combat racist stereotypes and to push back against London’s notoriously racist police.

Panthers develop their organizing praxis

In London, the British Panther Movement had three chapters, each with its own headquarters and leadership. In North London, the headquarters was at Barnsbury Road in Islington; in East London in the Clapton neighborhood; and in Brixton on Shakespeare Road. The three chapters had a local core committee of leaders, and the Movement as a whole had a central core who met in the Barnsbury Road and Shakespeare Road headquarters. The central core of the British Panthers included Althea Jones, Eddie Lecointe, and Keith Spencer, as well as Ira O’Flaherty, a Bajan man named Tosh, and a self-taught Bajan bus conductor named Reginald Beckles, who went by the name Shaka and ran the Panthers’ library in Brixton. Later, Indian Farrukh Dhondy and his partner Mala Sen joined the central committee. Dhondy pointed out that the central committee

34 Black Panther Movement, BPNS, May-June 1971, in NEW 17/7, GPI.
35 DaCosta, 4, 11-12. Farrukh Dhondy pointed out that Ira O’Flaherty was also from the Caribbean. Dhondy OMC, 36.
rebuked any notion of a cult of personality. He noted that, “Althea was our leader. But we never treated her with any cult following... There was none of that nonsense.”

Along with the central core of between eight and ten people, people participated in the Panthers at various commitment levels. Farrukh Dhondy recalled that up to eight thousand people turned up to support the Panthers at various demonstrations. He estimated that roughly two thousand people attended public meetings and youth league meetings at various times. Full membership, however, required a significant commitment of time and energy. Dhondy remembered that the roughly three hundred people became full Panther members at different times during the movement.

Membership in the BBPM required a significant commitment. The central committee invited people to full membership only after they had proven their dedication to the cause. Prospective members attended a number of open meetings and educational classes where they read about black history and the contemporaneous African-American struggle. Linton Kwesi Johnson remembered that he first joined the Panther Youth League at age seventeen. He hoped to eventually achieve full membership because, “You couldn't become a member of the Panthers just like that.” Johnson recalled that would-be members had to have a “track record of involvement and activity” before they were invited to join.

Farrukh Dhondy recalled that he started attending Panther open meetings because the Panthers had an established membership and they seemed to have, “an active group

37 Ibid., 20:30.
38 Ibid., 36:30.
39 Johnson, 2:30.
politically.” Once Dhondy had attended a number of candidate meetings and classes, the central core offered him a full membership. Dhondy recalled asking whether he would have to pay to join, and that he was told no. Instead, central core members said that Dhondy needed to attend meetings on Wednesday and Thursday nights, and that he would distribute leaflets and attend campaigns on Saturday and Sunday mornings. This level of commitment engendered what Dhondy recalled was a very close membership.

For Hurlington Armstrong, becoming a Black Panther seemed like what he was meant to do. Armstrong recalled that, “I don’t remember why I actually joined... It just seemed like part of my life, just natural.” In Armstrong’s case, membership required a financial commitment that placed a strain on his relationships with his parents. “I use to earn fifty-five pounds a week doing demolition in the summer holidays with my brother,...” Armstrong remembered. “In that time my mother was getting fourteen pounds a week as a cleaner at Buckingham Palace and my father was getting something like twenty-one or twenty-two pounds a week to drive buses. I was getting fifty-five pound a week and I was giving the [Black Panther] organisation forty pounds a week. My family was going ape!” But, Armstrong recalled that, “I’d give everything [I had] to the Movement. I was really, really taken in and I had no regrets.”

Neil Kenlock remembered that members shared their resources because, “We were a collective. A proper collective.” But he also recalled that, “Many of my Black Power colleagues were

40 Dhondy, 12:00.
41 Ibid., 35:00.
42 Armstrong, 6.
43 Armstrong, 15.
thrown out of their houses” over the way in which they devoted themselves and their resources to a movement that many parents did not understand.\(^{45}\)

The Black Panther Movement transformed the lives of many of its members in profound ways, providing a raison d’être and a sense of belonging that they had not found elsewhere. Neil Kenlock remembered that, “I wanted to give my entire life for the struggle of black people.”\(^ {46}\) African-American Ray Eurquhart, who was stationed with the US Air Force at RAF Mildenhall in the East Midlands, considered himself a “family member” who belonged to the Panthers. As such he had a home and a community in London.\(^ {47}\) Likewise, Kenlock called his fellow Panthers, “my brothers and sisters. We were all one family.”\(^ {48}\)

The transformative effect of Black Panther membership centered on the spaces of the Panther headquarters. At meetings and informal interactions inside the four flats that acted as headquarters for the Panthers in London, British Panthers found places to speak freely about individual experiences of racism and to organize themselves (see Figure 27). They also found social outlets, building friendships in a space that was safe and generative of individual opinions. Danny DaCosta recalled that, “The Movement provided a social base for us,... somewhere that we could focus on.” The existence of Panther houses enabled many members to devote their free time to the movement. “It didn’t take long before we were completely immersed in it,” DaCosta remembered. “Our whole activities was based around the activities of the Movement, in Shakespeare Road and in Barnsbury Road, traveling to different areas of London, supporting other brothers

\(^{45}\) Kenlock I, 23:00.
\(^{46}\) Kenlock I, 11:30.
\(^{47}\) Eurquhart, 39:30.
\(^{48}\) Kenlock II, 39:00.
and sisters, going to meetings.”49 In particular, the Panthers’ flat at Shakespeare Road in Brixton became a focal point for the movement. DaCosta recalled that the Shakespeare road flat had a dark room, library, bookshop, and meeting spaces.50 In addition to the headquarters, the Panthers established a cultural and political drop-in center known as the Unity Centre at 74 Railton Road in Brixton. The center distributed information about the, “history and resistance of black people and about the struggle of the English working class.”51

Figure 27: Neil Kenlock in front of educational and organizational posters, Panthers' Shakespeare Road headquarters, Brixton, [1971-72?].
Source: Kenlock private collection

49 DaCosta, 2.
50 DaCosta, 4.
51 Black Panther Movement, “Fire Bomb War on Black People,” Black Life Brixton, March 16, 1973, 1, Box 4, Folder 13, Series II.2, DHP.
The Panthers welcomed members from across ethnic and class boundaries. “We said no matter where you come from, how much money you got in those days,” Hurley Armstrong remembered, “the colour of your skin was what determined the treatment you got and we were all the same colour.”52 Although the ethnicity of Panther members remained predominantly West Indian, several South Asian members joined, including Farrukh Dhondy, Mala Sen, Tony Soares, and HO Nazareth. Panthers mobilized across these lines in an effort to combat what they saw as the social divisions wrought by capitalism. Neil Kenlock believed that capitalist forces had kept blacks from organizing on an interethnic level. In his words, “Capitalism didn’t want communication.”53

Capitalism also did not want the Panthers training a new generation of activists, which they did through their Youth League. Established in November 1970, the Youth League brought the interest in black consciousness to black British youth.54 Panther Darcus Howe led the Youth League in small meetings at the Shakespeare Road Panther headquarters as well as at larger venues, such as the Oval House youth club. Like the elder Panthers, Youth League members learned about the movement and black history through studying books, discussing contemporary issues, and dissecting Panther campaigns.55

Panther Youth League members joined in the hard work of the movement. Linton Johnson recalled that, “Some of us had to go door to door trying to get black people

52 Armstrong, 15.
53 Kenlock I, 43:00.
54 In its May 1971 issue, the BPNS announced the establishment of the Youth League in November 1970, noting its great enthusiasm and success thus far. Black Panther Movement, Black People’s News Service, May 1971, NEW 17/7, GPI.
55 Johnson, 24:15.
involved and get them aware of what we were doing.”56 The Youth League helped fundraise for the movement by selling newspapers in the local marketplaces on weekends. They also designed and sold t-shirts with British Panther slogans in order to raise funds for the movement.57 They held cultural events and dances at the Metro Youth Club, a public community center for Brixton teenagers.58 On one occasion, Howe’s great uncle and Panther ideological inspiration, CLR James, exhorted the Youth League at a meeting at the Youth Club to understand the gravity of the work that they were doing.59 Howe recalled that members of the central committee who had already been concerned about his firebrand, independent streak, “used to get pissed off at me because I had the ear of all of the youth league, which was bigger than any other section.”60 Indeed, Linton Johnson believed that although he admired Althea Jones’s leadership, his loyalty within the group lay with Howe because he had spent a formative part of his high school years learning from him.

The Youth League helped to ignite an interest in black history and culture among London’s youth. Farrukh Dhondy recalled that the Youth League provided the Panthers with an opportunity to educate and recruit teenagers into the agitational movement.61 This moved beyond indoctrination, with Youth League members soon spreading education beyond the walls of the Panthers’ headquarters. In September 1971, students at Tulse

56 Ibid., 25:00.
57 Black Panther Movement, National and International News Bulletin, August 6, 1971, Box 5, Folder 1, Series II.2, DHP.
58 Black Panther Movement, flier, “Grand Carnival Dance at Metro Youth Club,” Feb. 20, 1971, Box 9, Folder 20, Series II.4, DHP.
59 CLR James, speech at Metro Youth Club, transcript, Jan. 4, 1971, Box 5, Folder 2, Series II.2, DHP.
60 Howe II, 1:29:00.
Hill, Linton Johnson and Neil Kenlock’s high school, and at Dick Shepard School started black studies programs at their schools.⁶²

As with many movements, finances were a considerable cause of concern. In May 1970, the Panthers established a Legal Aid and Defence Fund in order to support the “many blacks being incarcerated,” which drew heavily from Panther finances.⁶³ The Panthers corralled a number of celebrities who contributed to their cause. In 1973, author John Berger donated half of his £5,000 pound Booker Prize winnings to the Panthers. Berger explained that his reasoning was that, “Simply, it is the black organisation with a socialist and revolutionary perspective that I find myself most in agreement with in this country.”⁶⁴ The most prominent patrons of the British Panthers were actor siblings Vanessa and Corin Redgrave. The Redgraves provided funds that helped the Panthers lease and in some cases purchase the flats that became their headquarters, and they donated funds for legal assistance in the Panthers’ most major court case, the Mangrove Nine.⁶⁵ On top of donations, Panther full members submitted a considerable amount of their weekly earnings to the Movement collective, which helped to fund the flat purchases as well as operating costs and training costs. The group’s shared finances also paid for members to learn skills that they believed were key to the movement’s success. Panther Minister of Defence Hurlington Armstrong remembered the movement sponsoring his fees so that he could travel to Birmingham to take karate lessons there.⁶⁶

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⁶² Black Panther Movement, Freedom News, June 10, 1972, Box 4, Folder 13, Series II.2, DHP.
⁶⁵ Respectively, DaCosta, 4 and Metropolitan Police (hereafter MEPO) 31/20, TPA: PRO.
⁶⁶ Armstrong, 12.
In terms of self-defense, the Panthers believed that physical preparation was necessary in order to combat police violence on the streets. Although individual members had varying levels of comfort with the possibility of political violence, Armstrong recalled that, “We believed that the time would come, we was preparing for a revolution,” an idea that he indicated members agreed upon across the board. However, unlike their US counterparts, the British Panthers did not carry weapons. Armstrong pointed out that this is why the British group called themselves a movement rather than a party. “A party is allowed to bear arms, the Black Panther Party in America they could walk bearing arms. Obviously in this country you can’t under no circumstance, so that’s why ours was called a movement,” he recalled.

To foster spaces in which Panthers could learn and organize, the movement purchased four houses in different neighborhoods of London. The first house they bought was at Barnsbury Road in North London, followed by the Shakespeare Road house in Brixton, and then a house in Tollington Park in West London, and a house in east London’s Clapton neighborhood. Farrukh Dhondy recalled that as one of the few members of the central core who was employed full-time he was able to obtain a mortgage in order for the group to buy the Tollington Park house. The houses also provided lodging for various Panther members. Ray Eurquhart recalled that as many as twelve people lived in the Barnsbury Road house at one time.

67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., 15.
70 Dhondy I, 43:45.
As a shadow government, the Panthers advocated on behalf of blacks anywhere that injustice occurred. This led the Panthers to travel to a number of cities outside London in what members referred to as the “rent-a-mob” phenomenon.72 “If we heard of injustices outside London,” Neil Kenlock recalled, “We'd hire two to three coaches and go there to support them.”73 For instance, Kenlock recalled hearing that someone had been beaten up at a pub in Birmingham and arrested for assault. In response, between twenty and thirty Panther members pooled money and hired a bus to travel to Birmingham on the weekend, where they demonstrated with members of the Afro-Caribbean Circle, Birmingham’s Black Power organization, in the city center. Kenlock recalled marching down the street with the group, chanting, “Pig, pig, pig! Kill the pig! Out pig!” Kenlock stopped in front of a group of enthusiastic children, whom he posed for a photograph holding the protest’s fliers (see Figure 28). The fliers symbolically attested to the young boys’ potential future in the black British movement. The events generated a sense of solidarity and gave other members of the public a new impression of the organized resistance that black people were capable of mounting. Onlookers, he remembered, “would be shocked, they'd never seen black people defiant before.”

72 Kenlock I, 23:00.
73 Ibid., 22:30.
This willingness to raise the concerns of a black person in a city outside London to a level of national importance derived from the Panthers’ ideology. The Panthers were, as Eurquhart recalled, Marxist-Leninist, anti-capitalist, and anti-imperialist. The Panthers went through various ideological changes, starting as a vanguard party and ending with a Trotskyist alignment that led some members to leave the organization in 1972 and 1973. Linton Johnson remembered that the group remained roughly similar in

74 Eurquhart, 1:39:00.
ideological terms to the trajectory that their American Panther counterparts were taking. Members felt that race and class were both important markers of oppression. However, Johnson also laid claim to a different term to describe the British Panthers’ ideology: Jamesian. CLR James, Johnson recalled, “had the phrase, ‘Every cook can govern,’ which summarized our outlook.”

With this philosophy and through various sessions in which the Panthers learned from James at public meetings (see Figure 29) and in private Panther-only gatherings, the British Panthers set forth the idea that any member and any potential recruit had an important role to play in the life of the community. Thus, when Birmingham police

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75 Johnson, 6:30.
76 Johnson, 8:00. James had defined this phrase in his 1956 work, *Every Cook Can Govern: A Study of Democracy in Ancient Greece; Also, Negro Americans and American Politics*. Detroit: Correspondence Pub. Co. Neil Kenlock recalled that James was the Panthers’ “intellectual inspiration.” Kenlock I, 50:00.
assaulted a black person, the Panthers traveled to support him or her because their existence and well being mattered to the black British community. This approach appealed to members like Danny DaCosta who referred to himself as, “Not a great political animal, I’d be the first to admit.” For DaCosta, the ‘every cook can govern model’ that the Panthers upheld appealed because, “I saw a need, and I saw something that I felt I identified with... Other people were far more adept at political analysis than I was, but I got the gist and I knew where my heart was, and that’s pretty much where my involvement was.”

The Panthers bolstered their ideology with a rigorous education system that was required of all of its full members and Youth League members, and open to others in the community. Panthers engaged in the intensive study of theory and practice, under the teaching of CLR James, Selma James, Guyanese historian Walter Rodney, and Panther member Farrukh Dhondy. The Panthers had a rigorous approach to reading, speaking, and self-expression through writing and photography that generated high expectations among members. Danny DaCosta recalled that, “It was a very educational organisation... You needed to study, you needed to know what was happening.”

In terms of the content of their education, Panthers studied Marxist-Leninist theory; the histories of the West Indies, slavery, the British Empire, and the Labour Party; postcolonial theory; and the work of African-American activists. Danny DaCosta remembered reading Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis, Stokely Carmichael, and Franz

77 DaCosta, 8.
78 Eurquhart, 24:00 and Eurquhart, 58:00.
79 DaCosta, 6.
Fanon through the courses that Panthers took at the bookshop at Shakespeare Road.\textsuperscript{80} Farrukh Dhondy recalled teaching works by Marx, Lenin, DuBois, and CLR James. Chairman Mao’s works, he recalled, were discouraged from study because Mao headed a peasant country, and therefore his ideas were seen as less applicable in the UK. Dhondy also initiated the study of EP Thompson’s \textit{The Making of the English Working Class} (1963), in order that Panthers would know the history of the Labour Party and “who [they] were talking to.”\textsuperscript{81} Kenlock recalled that CLR James’ \textit{Black Jacobins} (1938), Eric Williams’ \textit{From Columbus to Castro} (1970), and Kwame Nkrumah’s \textit{Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism} (1965) also peppered the reading lists of the movement.\textsuperscript{82} With the educational preparation and sense of collective strength that came from sharing their homes, resources, and life experiences with one another, the Panthers began approaching the streets of London, Birmingham, and elsewhere in Britain on their own terms. In the rest of this chapter, I trace these street encounters as the Panthers retold them in their own words.

‘That ain’t no girl! That’s a bloody wog’: Panther Youth League member Olive Morris narrates her assault by London police, 1969-1970

On the afternoon of Saturday, November 15, 1969, seventeen-year-old Black Panther Youth League Members Olive Morris and Hurley Armstrong touted copies of the \textit{Black People’s News Service (BPNS)} outside Desmond’s Hip City, a typical activity on what would become a transformative day for the two friends.\textsuperscript{83} Desmond’s Hip City was

\textsuperscript{80} DaCosta, 11.
\textsuperscript{81} Dhondy I, 38:30.
\textsuperscript{82} Kenlock I, 50:30.
\textsuperscript{83} In her account of the story, Olive Morris does not mention the newspaper sale, while her comrade Hurlington Armstrong does. In Morris’s story, she notes that she, “went along in the direction of Desmond’s Hip City” after doing “some shopping in Brixton.” Armstrong describes the group of people with whom he sold newspapers that day, including Morris. The reason for this discrepancy likely lies in the
a local landmark known to many as London’s first black record store. Desmond’s was located on the corner of Atlantic Road and Coldharbour Lane in Brixton, where on weekends locals could find the Black Panthers selling newspapers (see Figure 30). While Morris, Armstrong and a few others sold newspapers outside Desmond’s, a Mercedes Benz with tinted windows and diplomatic license plates sat next door outside Dell Robinson’s, an African food shop where Armstrong worked part-time. Armstrong recalled watching a Met policeman write the car a parking ticket, which seemed to him a bit strange. “If you got diplomatic plates on it, you didn’t get parking [tickets],” Armstrong remembered. “But even if the police give you a parking ticket they take it to the Embassy to get it dismissed. But the police this day wanted a confrontation with this man.” Armstrong watched as the police officer, “stayed and hung about the car.”

fact that while Armstrong’s account comes from a 2009 oral history, Morris’s account was printed as a first-person narrative in the Black Panther News Service in May 1970. Given the collective, secretive nature of the Panthers’ work, Morris likely did not want to identify herself with her service to the movement.

84 Armstrong, 18.
85 Ibid., 17-18.
86 Ibid.
When the car’s driver, the Nigerian High Commission’s First Secretary Clement Gowalk, walked out of Dell Robinson’s, Armstrong watched as a group of policemen arrested him. The police, “twisted him up, obviously ‘cause the African answering him back,” Armstrong remembered. The *BPNS* later reported that the police were seen, “beating [Gowalk] violently around the groin.” This open display of police violence sparked the concern of many people who were out shopping in Brixton that afternoon.

The Panther newspaper sellers approached the arrest, along with a group of people that

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87 Ibid., 18.
the BPNS said grew to over 500 protestors. Armstrong called it, “a mini riot, just in that area” of Atlantic Road. The BPNS noted that an officer was heard saying, “Why isn’t this crowd dispersed? Send for the meat wagon and get some of them in.”89

In the May 1970 BPNS, Olive Morris courageously told the story of what happened next; her narrative was of a type not likely to have been printed in Britain before.90 As Morris approached the scene, she saw four policemen dragging her friend Steve away as he shouted, “I’ve done nothing.” Morris shouted at them to, “Leave him alone!” One officer grabbed Morris’s neck and said, “You can shut up for a start.” She remembered that another two policemen took her by her legs and pushed her head first inside a police van. Inside the van, she saw two other ‘black youths’ on the floor, with roughly six policemen sitting on top of them. “The three cops who threw me into the van then climbed in on top of me,” Morris recalled, and they held her down with their hands and feet. “I cried out that I was choking and then tried to raise my head. Then I was turned round on my back and one cop mashed my chest with his boots and bruised my breast,” she remembered. Each time she tried to talk, Morris recalled, “I was slapped in the face by a plain clothes police.”

As Morris turned onto her side bleeding, officers continued to attack her. One kicked her in the chest. “My friend Arlene,” whom the police had also arrested, “shouted to the cops who were hitting me, ‘She’s only a girl you know!’” Olive tried to tell the police that she was bleeding, but she recalled that they continued to kick and slap her. “By this time I was choking from the blood which was pouring out of my nose.” The

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89 Unknown policeman, as quoted in Ibid.
police taunted Morris for her boyish appearance, with her thin build and close cut hair. One officer told the others to stop hitting her, and then he slapped her saying, “‘She ain’t no girl.’” During the trip to the police station, the van’s driver asked another officer, “‘have you got a female back there?’ One cop answered, ‘Yeah, so what she’s only a black,’” Morris remembered. The police showed no respect for Morris’s body or privacy as they kept her in close quarters with the men they had arrested, subjugating her gender, which might otherwise have afforded her different treatment, to her status as black.

At the station, Met officers persevered with calling Morris’s gender into question. As she was dragged out of the van, Morris remembered an officer kicked her in the back while another said, “Go on you black cunt.” Inside the station, a group of what Morris remembered as “fifteen to twenty policemen” surrounded the five youths whom the Met had arrested. When a female officer came to take Arlene into the back for questioning, Arlene asked if Olive could go with her, saying, “‘She’s a girl you know.’” Morris recalled that the policemen teased her about “my sex.” Some of them said that Morris was a girl who looked like a man. “Others said, ‘No! That ain’t no girl! That’s a bloody wog.’ And they all laughed. Then one of them came close to me and drew out his truncheon and threatened to hit me.”

The vulgarity, misogyny, and physical violence turned into a full-fledged sexual assault. “They all made me take off my jumper and my bra in front of them to show I was a girl.” After Morris disrobed, “The one with the truncheon said, ‘Now prove you are a real woman.’ He pointed at the truncheon in front of me and said, ‘Look it’s the right colour and the right size for you. Black cunt!’” Morris does not explicitly say whether the men raped her, but Armstrong says that Morris told him the men, “threatened to rape
her,” but did not. After the female officer returned, Morris remembered that she, “went down on my knees and begged her to take me from the men and to ask them not to tease me any more.” The policewoman told her, “if you shut up they won’t hit you.” The officer took Morris to a room and, “asked me to take my clothes off to search me.” Morris who, “was crying because I was in terrible pain,” asked to see a doctor. A police doctor appeared and told Morris that she was bruised and gave her two pills to take.

The Met policemen persisted in their aggression. After the doctor left, some of the policemen returned and, Morris said, “continued arguing about my sex. Another said I should strip and get on the table and give them a little demo.” Arlene was brought into the room, and Morris recalled that, “They tried to make her say that it was she who kicked me and bruised my mouth. She refused.” At the end of this harrowing episode of physical, emotional, and sexual violence, Morris remembered, “My particulars were taken and I was charged with assaulting a policeman. I was then told to plead guilty when the case was called; and I was let out through the back way of the station at about 6 o’clock.” Downtrodden but not defeated, Morris found her way to nearby King’s College Hospital where she obtained treatment for her injuries.

As Morris received treatment at King’s College that night, Panther photographer Neil Kenlock headed to the hospital where he took a photograph of Morris (see Figure 31), which provided evidence of her tenacity. Morris saved the photograph, scrawling a note on the back: “Taken at about 10 PM on 15 Nov 69 after the police had beating me up (at Kings College Hospital.) Olive Morris.” The photograph illustrates how the
Panthers employed a range of media technologies in order to narrate black people’s experiences for the community.

![Figure 31: Neil Kenlock, photograph of Olive Morris, King's College Hospital, London, November 15, 1969. Source: OMC IV/279/1/3/1, LLA.](image)

Somewhat ironically, the photograph offers few details of Morris’s injuries that day, but it tells the viewer a great deal about Morris’s character. There is a faint mark near her mouth on the right side of her face, and some slight discoloration that indicates bruising on her forehead. The bridge of her nose appears swollen. What strikes the
viewer, however, is the stain on Morris’s blouse.93 Stretching from just below her breastbone to the bottom of her shirt, a gnarly stain that could be blood or dirt offers the viewer a reminder of Morris’s traumatic day. But the stained blouse does nothing for us without Morris’s gaze, which is at once solemn and determined. Morris looks straight into the lens, standing straight, defying the brutality of the men who forced her to disrobe for them earlier that day. The shadow of Morris’s hair on the wall behind her makes her appear ethereal, larger than life, suggesting that her experience that day had transformed her, not only physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. Given Kenlock’s role as the Movement’s photographer, he may well have worked to keep the flash a bit below Morris’s height, in order to give her shadow its halo-like quality.

The story of what happened to Olive Morris on November 15, 1969 illuminates the history of police violence, and particularly sexualized and gendered aggression, against people of color in Britain; what differentiates this story from others like it, however, is that the story ran in the BPNS, a newspaper that put forward black people’s voices, and had Neil Kenlock, a photographer who took pictures that contextualized black people’s experiences, as its official photographer. Whereas Olive Morris wrote over 1,000 words in recounting her experience, The Times had proffered one line of passive voice, which read, “Six people were also arrested after a demonstration against Mr. Gowalk’s arrest.”94 The BPNS’s inclusion of Morris’s story illustrated that the Black Panther Movement showed solidarity with one of its own, and moreover, that they believed that her story was more accurate than any police narrative that might emerge.

93 Roland Barthes encourages viewers to examine a photograph for its punctum, which is the detail that “pricks” the viewer. Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 57.
This was underscored by the fact that the BPNS did not publish the photograph of Morris, even though it had already featured some photographs of police violence, instead the paper relied on the story she told in her own words as valid evidence.

As an eighteen-year-old woman when she finished her three-month jail service for the so-called assault on a police officer, Morris’s exercise in truth-telling demonstrated her courage and sense that she was living her life in service to a greater cause. The story likely helped to heal some of her readers who had suffered similar experiences of violence and sexual trauma. Hurlington Armstrong admired Morris’s tenacity, recalling in a 2009 interview that, “Anything that had to be done she was ahead of everyone to volunteer, we used to print news sheets,… she’d be ahead of everyone to volunteer to print, ‘cause she types as well.”95 Speaking at a 2008 memorial to Morris, who passed away from cancer at age twenty-seven in 1979, fellow Brixton Panther Elaine Holness said, “Olive was a lady who didn’t mess around. If she felt I was shirking or anyone around her was shirking, she would tell you straight… You would be expected to hold the line and to deliver.”96 In her short life, Morris participated in the Black Panther Movement, co-founded the Black Panther Women’s Collective that became the Brixton Black Women’s Group, and founded the Campaign for Squatters’ Rights in Brixton. Holness spoke to the solidarity that Morris and others had found in the Panthers. “The Black Panther Movement was very important to us, because that gave us a sense of identity. It told us for the first time, ‘say it loud, I’m black and I’m proud.’”

95 Armstrong, 1.
The juxtaposition of Olive Morris’s story with the approximately 500 people who gathered in support of the Nigerian diplomat’s arrest sheds light on the ways that police violence became a rallying cry for the British Black Panther Movement. Darcus Howe believed that, “The question of the police was key.” In fact, Howe saw it as one of the Movement’s most lasting achievements, arguing, “That is where the Panthers had an impact more than most on the youth of Britain.”

Black Panthers called attention to the fact that violent police arrests were but one symptom of the British government’s systematic failure to protect black people. Armstrong recalled that, “It was about getting justice with the police. The police were more racist than the people on the street. If you had people… black bashing, you couldn’t go to the police.” In the weeks following the arrest of Olive Morris and her four comrades and the Nigerian diplomat, the BPNS ran the front-page headline, “Home Secretary Callaghan Supports Police Brutality.”

**British Panther internationalism swells, 1970-71**

Diplomats and embassies played significant roles in the minds of British Panthers, as they offered a way for Panthers to show solidarity for blacks outside Britain. On March 2, 1970, roughly 100 people protested outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London, in support of US Black Panther founder Bobby Seale, who was on trial for murder in New Haven, Connecticut. They chanted “Free Bobby!” and carried posters proclaiming ‘Free, Free Bobby Seale’ and ‘You Can Kill a Revolutionary But Not a Revolution.’ Demonstrator Tony Thomas waved a large red and yellow flag

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97 Howe II, 1.
98 Armstrong, 14.
99 “Home Secretary Callaghan Supports Police Brutality,” *BPNS*, December 1969, 1, in MS/2141/C/4, BLA.
100 “Persons Charged Following the Black Panther Demonstration on the 2nd March 1970,” in Director of Prosecutions (hereafter DPP) 2/4827, TNA: PRO.
emblazoned with a Black Panther symbol. Claiming that, “their joint actions amounted to a general threat to passers by,” London police arrested sixteen of the protestors that day. Police charged these three women and thirteen men with threatening behavior, assault on police officers, distributing a flier called “The Definition of Black Power,” intention to incite a breach of the peace, and willful damage to a police raincoat. At trial, the Judge dropped the raincoat charge and found five of the accused, named as “Black Panther Defendants,” guilty of the remaining charges.

At the protest, the Panthers claimed that through a US inter-state conspiracy, America was officially plotting to wipe out the BPP and to continue the repression of black and progressive white Americans. Their flier stated:

America plots state execution and cold blooded murder of Black Freedom Fighter, Bobby Seale, Chairman, Black Panther Party. . . . Now he is to be handed over to the blood-sucking mad dogs and murdering pig-hangmen in Connecticut to be butchered. . . . Black People and All Progressive People in Britain!! This American Murder Plot, this policy of widespread ruthless suppression against the Panthers is also directly against all of us here in Britain. Therefore all of us must resist it here and now.

The leaflet authors called for resistance as they saw themselves as not merely allies of Seale, but as the direct recipients of American oppression. They saw this oppression taking official state form and therefore believed that the American government was against them as well.

More generally, the British Panthers stressed their shared blackness with the American Panthers. When Keith Spencer was questioned at the trial about why he was

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101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
protesting in support of Bobby Seale, he responded, “I am always angry as far as black people are concerned.”

British Panthers recognized a shifting trans-Atlantic relationship between the growing American empire and contracting British colonialism. With this recognition of a historical relationship between the nations, black American concerns became black British concerns. Panthers insisted that the imprisonment of Bobby Seale was part of a policy of suppression targeted at blacks everywhere. Their flier stated, “Remember: America dominates and so controls Britain economically and even politically! America controls our homelands in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Therefore American suppressive policies, fascism, and international murder plots concern all of us.”

Here, the UK Panthers derived their notion of a diasporic black identity shared with African-Americans from a post-colonial critique of American dominance, asserting that the imperialist US establishment oppressed black people globally.

The UK Panthers also attracted some of the participants in the classic New Left: middle-class whites. The Embassy protest reveals that whites supported the struggles of the British Panthers, as the police report cited both white men and women who marched at the event. Protestors included American Jane Grant, a film editor living in Regent’s Park, a predominantly white middle-class London neighborhood. She noted the privileging of her race and perhaps her nationality when she claimed that Keith Spencer, “was probably shouting as I was ‘Free Bobby,’ [but] I was not arrested.” Additionally, the fliers asking for support for Bobby Seale called to, “all Progressive People in...

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104 Ibid, 4.
106 Jane Grant, “Statements in Case,” 4, in DPP 2/4827, TNA: PRO.
Ray Eurquhart remembered using the BPM’s internationalist lens and openness in that moment to start an anti-war organization on his base, RAF Mildenhall, in the summer of 1970. Eurquhart and his comrades named the organization “People Emerging Against Corrupt Establishments,” or as they commonly called it, PEACE. PEACE supported the efforts of the American Servicemen’s Union (ASU). PEACE’s second issue listed ASU’s ten demands verbatim, which included the rights of soldiers to peacefully abstain from fighting in “the illegal, imperialist war in Southeast Asia.” ASU and PEACE also supported, “the right of black and brown servicemen to determine their own lives, free from the oppression of any racist whites,” and to keep troops from being sent into black and Spanish-speaking communities.

Eurquhart recalled running into a group of Rhodes Scholars as he was on duty guarding the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square one day. The scholars were demonstrating against Cecil Rhodes and in favor of the Rhodesia campaign by tearing up

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In 1958 The Listener, a BBC magazine, reported that “the true Progressive was essentially urban and middle class.” A 1955 report on The Treatment of British P.O.W.’s in Korea equated the Progressive view with Communism and claimed that Progressives served as mouthpieces for Communist propaganda. Both from “progressive, n.” The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50189656.


108 People Emerging Against Corrupt Establishments: A paper by and for GI’s with the intent to foster a more humane military. Vol. 1 No. 2 (published underground at Royal Air Force base RAF Mildenhall, UK, Sept. 1, 1970), in Papers of Jack Askins: Anti-Vietnam War Movement, MSS.189/V/2/5/19, Modern Records Centre (hereafter MRC), University of Warwick.

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their scholarships. Eurquhart and a group of GIs approached the scholars, who invited the soldiers to visit them at Oxford. Eurquhart remembered finding thirty soldiers to take to the meeting, and following the meeting, he and his GI comrades put together PEACE’s first publication (see Figure 32), an underground newsletter.

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109 Eurquhart, 15:00.  
110 Ibid., 16:30.
Eurquhart’s role in the Panthers made him a liaison between his fellow GIs and the British anti-war front. He remembered that, “every opportunity [British people] had to
expose America as hypocritical… they took leave to do it.”\textsuperscript{111} He recalled gathering with his fellow GIs at 6 pm every night around the television to watch ITV and BBC News’s anti-war reports. “It was just exciting, you’re young and… you’re in the military and you’ve got this group that’s… basically an anti-war group.”\textsuperscript{112} The interplay between Eurquhart’s roles in PEACE and the BBPM inspired him. “We could go into London and work with the BPM,” he recalled, “and make those connections and get a sense that what we were doing in the military was righteous.”\textsuperscript{113}

\textbf{The Mangrove Nine Trial and the Working-Class Turn, 1971-1972}

On August 9, 1970, a Black Panther group protested “the white racist system’s use of their police force to invade . . . the places where black people frequent,” which in this case was The Mangrove restaurant in Notting Hill, a meeting place of black radicals.\textsuperscript{114} A group of 150 protestors marched through the community toward Notting Hill, Notting Dale, and Harrow Road police stations to “expose the racist brutality that black people experience[d] at the hands of the police.” Police and protestors clashed during the march, and police arrested nineteen black protestors, charging them with assault, possession of an offensive weapon, and incitement to riot.\textsuperscript{115} Ten defendants’ charges were soon dropped but support swelled for the other nine accused, who became known as the Mangrove Nine. CLR James summoned the remaining protestors the day

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 2:00.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 2:30.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 3:30.
\textsuperscript{115} The “Organised Action in Self Defence” flier states that police arrested 19 of the protestors while the “Battle for Freedom at the Old Bailey” leaflet cites 30 arrests.
after the arrest and urged them to continue their fight, emphasizing the seriousness of the charges against their comrades.116

The Mangrove Nine trial captivated media attention and exposed the full thrust of the Panthers’ shadow government. Panthers protested daily outside the Old Bailey, Britain’s most famous court, carrying signs that indicated their anger at the Mangrove Nine arrests and their distrust for the British judicial system (see Figure 33). Darcus Howe used his legal training to represent himself. Ray Eurquhart recalled that working on the Mangrove Nine trial was his entry into the Panther Movement. Eurquhart, “churned out all of those interviews [with defendants], work[ed] with Ian MacDonald who was our attorney... [and did] a lot of legwork. Researching the British laws and trying to understand all that stuff.” Eurquhart remembered that he enjoyed the sense of purpose that the trial gave him.117

117 Eurquhart, 18:00.
The Panthers produced daily verbatim transcripts of the proceedings as a means of creating their own written record of the trial, and so that others in the black British community could know what had taken place in the courtroom. Danny DaCosta was responsible for recording the trial on audiotape. “Every day now we would be based in the well of court number two...in the Old Bailey,” DaCosta recalled, “recording the statements and the evidence that was given during the day.”118 Farrukh Dhondy hurried home from his teaching job to type the transcripts based on Eurquhart and DaCosta’s

118 DaCosta, 4.
notes and recordings. Panthers distributed these trial reports as handbills in their neighborhoods the following day. The group also produced the transcripts in order to aid Howe, Jones, and the other Mangrove defendants in their defense strategies, Danny DaCosta recalled.

In January 1972, after fifty-five days of trial, the Panthers’ collective work resulted in a massive victory for the movement. The judge acquitted all of the Mangrove Nine defendants, declaring that there had been “evidence of racial hatred” on the part of the Metropolitan Police. The ruling represented a major achievement of the Panthers’ collective efforts to make British society aware of police racism.

The government’s proposal in 1971 of a comprehensive immigration reform bill that targeted black migrants set the stage for a campaign that refigured the Panthers’ international role. The fight against the 1971 Immigration Bill strengthened the Panthers’ internationalist nexus and opened up the movement to new forms of coalition. The Panthers had supported African-Americans since the beginning of the movement, but the government’s introduction of the Immigration Bill of 1971 significantly intensified the debate over who belonged in Britain. The proposed Bill barred Commonwealth passport holders from entering the UK unless they already had family ties there. The Panthers responded to this by organizing the mass protest march discussed at the beginning of this chapter, and by refusing to accept the possibility of these new regulations as barriers to social change.

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119 The Black Panther Movement’s Mangrove Nine Trial handbills are located in Box 6, Folder 5, DHP.
120 Black Panther Movement, *NINB*, January 7, 1972, DHP.

Historian Joshua Guild examines the Mangrove Nine trial extensively, arguing that the acquittal of the defendants provided a particularly important victory for the defense of spaces in which black people could socialize in post-war Britain. See Guild, “Pressure: Policing Autonomous Spaces During the Era of Black Power,” in "You Can't Go Home Again: Migration, Citizenship, and Black Community in Postwar New York and London" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2007), 199-273.
Angry at a seeming reversal of the gains achieved in the 1968 Race Relations Act, the Panthers responded vigorously to the proposed Immigration Bill. On January 12, 1971, they published, “A message to all black people: You can only be an ALIEN in Britain.”\textsuperscript{121} The one-page flier delineated what the bill, if passed, would mean for blacks in Britain and for those who wanted to immigrate. Namely, they explained that the bill would require blacks to report to the police regularly, produce a work voucher or passport on demand if stopped on the street, and, they claimed, pay more for social services than white workers. Black immigrants coming to Britain, they wrote, would only be allowed work vouchers for one year, be required to live only in certain areas as designated by the government, required to renew work permits annually, would not be allowed to vote, serve on juries, or bring their families to the UK. Panthers argued that the bill would victimize all black people inside and outside Britain, and did not discriminate between those who held British passports and those who did not. The flier announced that the Panthers had started a national campaign against the immigration bill, and that petitions were available from the Panthers’ Shakespeare Road headquarters.

The Panthers employed two international critiques in order to fuel opposition to the Bill. Although black immigrants would not be able to bring their families to Britain, they argued, “White workers coming from Europe will be allowed to bring their families.” They called the bill an attack on their human rights, deploying the international language of rights in order to decry the bill. The Panthers highlighted blacks’ physical contributions to the history of the British nation, noting that black people, “have contributed towards building the wealth of this nation for the last 400 years.” The

\textsuperscript{121} Black Panther Movement, “A message to all black people: You can only be an ALIEN in Britain,” in Box 4, Folder 11, Series II.2, DHP.
disparity highlighted the way that the British government had turned its back on its Commonwealth citizens and had sidled up to Europe. Finally, the Panthers juxtaposed the Immigration Bill with the situation in South Africa, calling the Bill an “apartheid law.” The three days in which the East African Asians Bill had passed through Parliament successfully fueled the Panthers’ sense of urgency. They saw the Bill as an attempt to, “[force] black people to leave this country.”

The Panthers further solidified their place among the global network of leftist organizations when they demonstrated solidarity with their Israeli Panther counterparts on the day of that group’s first protest, March 3, 1971. That day, which marked a milestone in the development of transnational Black Power networks, Black Power activists joined members of the Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad (IRACA) outside the Israeli Embassy in London’s Kensington Gardens. The gathered delegation presented a co-authored letter addressed to Israeli Ambassador Michael Comay and Prime Minister Golda Meir.

The IRACA was an anti-Zionist, anti-imperialist activist group of exiles from the Israel Socialist Organization, which was commonly known by its Hebrew name, Matzpen. A group of former Israeli Communist Party (ICP) members had broken with the ICP in 1962 and had formed Matzpen, an anti-Zionist and anti-capitalist youth movement that drew support from a broad front in opposition to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Matzpen characterized Israel as a settler-colonial state, and rejected Israel’s legitimacy

122 Ibid.
based upon its perception that Israel was colonial and racist. Matzpen members argued that Zionists had allied themselves with Western imperialists in order to thwart revolutionary movements such as the Black Panthers. While they recognized the right of the Jewish people to self-determination, Matzpen asserted that a Zionist state could not form at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian population. They stressed the importance of an international workers’ struggle in the achievement of a socialist revolution, and Matzpen members in Israel provided support to the Black Panthers there.

In the letter, the authors responded to the Israeli government’s detention of a number of members of the Israeli Black Panthers and Matzpen at that Panther group’s first protest in Jerusalem, urging Meir to release them. Darcus Howe kept a copy of the letter, which given his role as a spokesperson for the Black Panthers, suggests that Howe participated in the envoy that visited the Israeli Ambassador. The letter established that on March 2, Israeli authorities had detained Panthers in Jerusalem and Matzpen members throughout Israel. The letter writers called on Meir to immediately release these detainees, “apologize to them and compensate them.” They also directed Meir to lift a ban she had placed on a Black Panther demonstration that had been scheduled for March 3 in Jerusalem. They criticized the Israeli government’s opacity around the Black Panthers, calling on Meir to, “state in public the legal basis and political motives for the banning of the Black Panther demonstration and for the detentions.” The authors advised Meir to set up a public enquiry to learn who was responsible for the decisions to ban the

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demonstration and to detain the Panthers, and asking her to dismiss all whom the commission would find responsible from public office.

Darcus Howe and other British Black Power advocates’ coalitions with Matzpen indicate the genesis of an alliance that, although unrealized, illuminates the bold transnational approach that both groups envisioned in order to confront imperial power structures. In the letter, the authors stated that the public enquiry commission they proposed, “should come from the same oppressed strata” as the Black Panthers, again framing the logic of their struggle in terms of a broad oppression rather than identifying it specifically by class, ethnicity or race. This global frame allowed Matzpen and both Panther groups to see one another as potential allies in an international struggle.

In 1971, Matzpen co-founder Moshé Machover, who emigrated from Israel to Britain in 1968, founded the IRACA. In June, the IRACA published the pamphlet *Black Panthers in Israel*. The pamphlet explained the ethnic makeup of Israel and offered first-person accounts from Israeli Panthers of their experiences of police violence in Jerusalem. The IRACA explained that following pressure for information from the press and leftist groups abroad, the Israeli police had admitted that Golda Meir had ordered the cancellation of the March 3 demonstration and ordered the detainment of the Panthers. The Panthers had advertised the demonstration with a flier entitled, “Enough.” The detention and demonstration cancellation highlighted how quickly and decisively another international government acted to shut down Panther activities in its country. The fact that British Black Power advocates would visit the Israeli Ambassador the day after

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127 Ibid., 4.
the arrests of an emerging Panther cohort demonstrates how quickly news also traveled along the pathways of international leftist networks, and how global Black Power activists saw their struggles as closely linked.

In addition to the letter, pamphlet, and delegation in which Darcus Howe participated, the British Panthers’ *National and International News Bulletin (NINB)* carried reports of Israeli Panther activities on two subsequent occasions. On August 27, 1971, the *NINB* reported a protest against inflation during which demonstrators carried a coffin and burned a Golda Meir effigy. On October 2, 1971, the *NINB* noted that the Israeli Panthers were among the participants at the International Workers Congress of Potere Operaio in Florence. In each of these cases, British Panthers placed their Israeli comrades in a shared anti-imperialist framework.

`We Are On the Move`: The Panthers take to the streets en masse, 1971

“We Are On the Move,” the British Black Panther Movement proclaimed on the cover of its newspaper, *Black People’s News Service*, in May 1971 (see Figure 34). On March 21, 1971, the *News Service* reported, the Black Panthers had organized a march that brought ten thousand people into London’s streets to protest the Immigration Bill. For blacks in Britain, the patriality clause within the proposed Bill meant that if they had neither lived in the country for five years nor had a parent or grandparent who had been born in the UK, they could be stopped and asked for papers or deported at any time.129

129 Those Commonwealth citizens who had established residency in the country for five years would become subject to increased restrictions under the Bill. Police could detain them for a lack of proper identification and employers could require them to renew their work permits each year.
Figure 34: Front page, Black People’s News Service, May/June 1971.

Figure 35: Inset photo from Figure 34.

Source for Figures 34 and 35: Black Panther Movement, Black People’s News Service, May/June 1971, in NEW/17/7, GPI.
The government had curtailed the free flow of migration with the passage of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, and the proposed 1971 Bill would taper that flow to a drip. The Bill sent the message that, if passed, the UK would not welcome any more black immigrants.

How did the Black Panthers mobilize an estimated ten thousand people to protest against the Bill? While the actual number of people who protested may have been somewhere between five and seven thousand, the difference between that approximate figure and the roughly two hundred people who comprised the Panthers’ core membership is nonetheless remarkable.130

While the Immigration Bill march owed some of its participation to the extensive restrictions the government had proposed, this factor alone could not fully account for the level of support the Panthers garnered at their event. An examination of this particular cover of the Black Panther Movement’s newspaper renders visible many of the Panthers’ practices that generated this groundswell of support. The masthead lists the paper’s title in English, *Black People’s News Service*, and in Hindi, *Hamāra Samāchār*, or “Our News.”131 The Hindi masthead offers evidence that this second phase of Black Panthers sought community with Indian immigrants, and the use of the phrase “our news” signifies South Asians, West Indians, and Africans’ joint ownership of the movement.132

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130 *The Times* reported that approximately 4,500 people participated. “Immigrants Protest,” *The Times* March 22, 1971, 2. Given the close relationship between the London police and the British mainstream media, it is plausible that the figure *The Times* reported came from the Metropolitan Police and may represent a low estimate in an effort to quell public concerns about unrest.

131 Transcribed and translated by Sumathi Ramaswamy, e-mail correspondence with the author, July 28, 2012.

132 Of the forty-four newspaper issues that the British Black Panthers published between 1969 and 1973 and that are examined in this study, Hindi was only featured on the masthead in this issue.
The inclusion of Hindi on the BPNS’s May 1971 masthead grew out of the Panthers’ attention to the problems that the 1971 Immigration Bill would present to some 60,000 Indians who lived in Uganda. The majority of these Indians resided in Uganda because the Imperial British East Africa Company had moved their ancestors there in the early 1890s in order to build the Ugandan Railway. Since ascending to power in February 1971, Ugandan President Idi Amin had instituted a national “de-Indianization” policy that used propaganda in order to exploit extant racist sentiments. Fears that Amin’s policy would cause another mass migration led the UK government to draft the Immigration Bill, which limited the number of Indians who became able to enter the UK when Amin exiled them in 1972. In this context, the phrase “Our News” in Hindi represented the Panthers’ idea that Indians belonged in Britain alongside other black people with whom they shared common experiences of displacement. The masthead also references the British Panthers’ militant sensibility—with its depiction of two men striking a Black Power fist salute—to signify a connection to the global mass movement.

The front-page photograph (see Figure 35) demonstrates that on this occasion the Panthers actively embraced this sensibility with their clothing and protest accoutrements. They marked their connection to the US movement with the Black Panther on their flag, which Kenlock recalled a Panther by the name of Druell usually carried on demonstrations. Hurlington “Hurley” Armstrong remembered the flag as one of his contributions to the collective. “All the Black Panther flags you see… a big red flag with

135 Kenlock II, 1:01:00.
a Panther on it… that was in Britain,” he recalled, “I cut them and I sewed them, I made them. I was a tailor. I made… any flag you see on a demonstration or anywhere. Anywhere a flag with a Panther on it, I cut it out and stitched it.” In addition, many Panthers wore militaristic clothes, such as the camouflage and leather jackets and berets that this photograph reveals. Kenlock, who was also the Panthers’ photographer, recalled that, “Everybody needs the badge, black leather jacket, black beret, dark glasses.” Kenlock’s mention of the badge referred to a small white pin that Panthers wore, which helped other people to recognize them as members of the movement.

The photograph also reveals aspects of the Panthers’ organizing tactics. Here, people shouted in order to be heard in the streets. While the group at the front of the march appears at this point to have mostly included men, one woman is visible in the center of the front row. The group was also interethnic, with two men of South Asian descent flanking the right hand side of the march. The attire of the man in the foreground, a jacket and tie, indicates that perhaps the militant clothing worn by the group of Panthers in the center of the photograph did not appeal to him. This possibility is corroborated by Dhondy’s recollection that when he was thinking about joining the Panthers, “It became very apparent [to me] that they had adopted the name Black Panther Movement to excite the West Indian youth, so that West Indian youngsters who looked across the Pond to America would join the movement.” Dhondy’s memory and the man in the photograph’s tie offer an indication of some of the tensions involved in interethnic organizing that will be explored in this chapter. Another possibility is that the tie could

136 Armstrong, 7.
137 Kenlock, II, 1:00:30.
138 Dhondy I, 15:30.
indicate that the man supported this march as an onlooker or active participant, but that he had not joined the movement.

The Panthers moved en masse in order to maintain safety and strengthen their collective voice, as the dense crowd in the photograph’s center demonstrates. As he looked at this photo in 2006, Ray Eurquhart recalled, “I was in the back somewhere there, because we had security along the sides and security in the back. We learned that the hard way.”

Ever aware of the limitations that the police and the national government had placed on their movement, and of the contingent nature of state violence, the Black Panthers nonetheless declared their appropriation of Black Power in the London streets.

While their attire, marching, and waving of the Panther flag visually associated the group with the Black Panthers in the United States, the British Panthers used their banners and signs to define Black Power’s ideology. The large banner in the foreground reads, “Black Panther Movement: Black Oppressed People All Over the World Are One.” The banner proclaimed the Panthers’ two-pronged agenda. They had a global lens, which they employed to look within and beyond Britain for alliances with other oppressed peoples. They also developed a radical humanism through their agitation toward the liberation of all oppressed people, and especially for anyone who identified as black. Tony Soares remembered that black, “was a political affiliation rather than a skin colour,” and his reflection is emblematic of the new world order that the Black Panthers envisioned.

139 Eurquhart, 47:00.
141 Soares, 22:30.
embrace of blackness brought power to individuals and communities in Britain and beyond.

The newspaper’s headline “We Are On the Move” also helps viewers to understand the Panthers’ goal of building collective unity.142 With its use of the pronoun “We,” the headline urges readers to see the photograph, and the Panthers, as a collective body. The phrase “on the move” calls readers to focus on the Black Panthers as an active mass movement progressing toward social change. Hurley Armstrong recalled that, “along the side of other movements,” the Black Panthers wanted to portray to the outside world that, “We was the strongest and the most militant.”143


In part, the Panthers’ internationalist turn had resulted from the Panthers’ education programs, which had led movement organizers to a new stage in their critique. As Kenlock recalled, “All members from different parts of the world felt that they were a victim of oppression.”144 The knowledge had engendered a solidarity across ethnic lines. They believed that strengthening their international coalition was part of the process of moving toward revolution. It was also due to the Mangrove Nine trial, which provided a highly visible moment for the Panthers nationally.

As Neil Kenlock pointed out, however, the turn to internationalism also reflected a pragmatic approach. “Black people in Britain were not enough en masse to make an

142 Barthes argues that the caption, “helps me to choose the correct level of perception, permits me to focus not simply my gaze but also my understanding.” Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image,” 274-75.
143 Armstrong, 5.
144 Kenlock IV, 55:45.
impact so you had to make it international,” he remembered. The relatively smaller size of the British population made internationalism a necessity, and it enabled new forms of anti-imperial coalition that extended beyond the African-American and West Indian contexts the Panthers had established in 1969-70. The “new internationalism” of 1971 and 1972 also reflected the growth of anti-imperial movements outside England, which included the extant African, South Asian, and Caribbean anti-colonial movements but had expanded to include Italy, Ireland and Israel.

In May 1971, the Panthers helped to organize the National Conference on the Rights of Black People, which took place at London’s Alexandra Palace; the conference’s theme, “Towards Black Unity” reflected how the Immigration Bill had convinced black activists of the need to unify their movements in order to generate a socialist revolution. Linda Hodge wrote an invitation on behalf of the conference’s organizing committee who called themselves, “National Black Organisations.” Hodge explained that over the past few years, black British organizations had attempted to unite in order to mobilize black people. “Today all black people see the need to unite under increasing pressure from the Conservative government - especially with the New Immigration Bill,” she wrote. “To make this unity a reality black organisations in Britain are calling a National Conference, on the ‘Rights of Black People IN Britain.’” Hodge listed five organizations from which interested people could obtain information on the Conference: the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help group in Handsworth, a Birmingham suburb; the Afro-Caribbean Circle in Wolverhampton, also a Birmingham suburb; the United Caribbean Association in Leeds; the Huddersfield West Indian Association; and the

145 Kenlock IV, 55:05.
Black Panther Movement’s Barnsbury Road headquarters in London. Conference panels included a performance of the play *The Black Experience*, written and directed by Farrukh Dhondy; panel sessions on black youth, education, the Industrial Relations Bill, the Immigration Bill, black women; and breakout sessions on legal rights, self defense, political prisoners and housing.

Conference organizers designed the event to motivate black workers to participate in an international revolutionary struggle, proclaiming, “International Solidarity the world over” as one of its aims in the conference program. Conference organizers promised speakers from the Caribbean, Palestine, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Africa, and the United States. In a separate flier, conference organizers explained that these speakers were attending in order to “express solidarity with black people in Britain,” and to provide inspiring examples of how, “Puppet governments are falling to pieces everywhere as dispossessed people demand the right to run our lives.” The final conference session examined the potential creation of Black People’s Information Centres. Another organization attending the conference, the Black Unity and Freedom Party (BUFP), which had formed out of the UCPA when it dissolved in 1970, prepared a pamphlet for the conference. The BUFP, more coherent in terms of its ideology but less militant and numerically strong than the Panthers, proposed a coalition among black organizations in order to mobilize a revolutionary mass movement. The BUFP also argued that because capitalism was international, the British mass movement had to

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develop links with other movements throughout the world. “If there is a strong peoples’
movement in the Caribbean or in the Third World,” they wrote, “it would have
resounding effects on the mass movement in Britain and the U.S.A.”150

The Panthers wrote and published a special newspaper for the conference, in
which they connected their historical analysis to the contemporary moment. They
proclaimed that the world was undergoing, “a process of vast reorganisation.” They
argued that, “Out of the ruins of the old world, with its poverty and exploitation, a new
world is taking shape.” The “international solidarity of oppressed people,” they claimed,
“will hasten its presence, and make possible the re-distribution of the tremendous wealth,
accumulated on our backs.”151 The paper also included two striking visual examples of
the Conference’s vision. The headline “slavery to slavery” stretched across the paper’s
center spread (see Figure 36). The designer of this layout placed an image in the middle
of the headline, a drawing of a slave with a yoke on his neck that spanned in two
directions. Beneath the word “slavery” on the left-hand side of the page, the Panthers
explained how blacks came to live in Britain. On the right hand side, also beneath the
word “slavery,” the authors wrote about the struggles of Indian workers against
exploitation. In particular, they examined the successful campaign of Indian and
Pakistani workers at the Coneygre Foundry in Tipton, between Birmingham and
Wolverhampton. Thus, rhetorically, the authors connected the depiction of a yoked
African slave to the struggle of South Asian workers, indicting both as forms of slavery.

pamphlet, 17, in JLR 3/2/13, GPI.
151 Black Panther Movement, National Conference, Special Conference Issue (London: May 1971), 6, in
NEW/17/5, GPI.
In the center of the spread, the Panthers solidified the connection between slavery in the fields and the cities. A photograph of a man carrying a chain on his back shaped in an inverted triangle rose out of the center of an image of industrial smokestacks. Together with the drawing of a slave above the man’s head, the three images from top-to-bottom illustrated the chronology of African slavery to plantation labor to industrial wage slavery.
Figure 36: Black Panther Movement, “Slavery to Slavery,” National Conference Special Issue, May 1971, 4-5.

The cover of the Conference newspaper also laid bare the organizers’ goal of uniting ‘non-white’ people in Britain (see Figure 37). Against a bright red background, a drawing at the top of the cover illuminated this vision. The drawing included six people: a Sikh man, an African man, an East Asian woman and child, an Indian woman, and an African woman and child. Strikingly, the African woman was the only person not facing the viewer. Rather, she stretched her arms wide to hold hands with both genders and with people from two different religions. This choice implied the role of the African-descended woman as the connector of a diverse range of black people in Britain. While later liberal calls to multiculturalism might have deployed similar images, the multiple uses of the word “black” signified that blackness providing the overarching unifier among the types of people depicted. As with the BPNS issue for the Immigration Bill, a South Asian script appeared on the paper’s masthead. Interestingly, the script was not Hindi but Panjabi on this occasion. The inclusion of the struggle of Panjabi workers in Tipton and elsewhere indicates that the Panther movement still sought to reach out to South Asian people.
Several Panthers recalled that although the Movement recruited some South Asian members, they did not successfully recruit as many working class South Asians as they would have liked. Darcus Howe remembered that most South Asians who joined the Panther Movement were middle-class. Dhondy remembered that the Panther Movement was mostly West Indian, but that a few Asians joined. He remembered that many of the Asians who joined were dedicated Marxists, like Suneet Chopra who went on to serve on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India.\textsuperscript{152} HO Nazareth came from a lower-middle class background in India. Tony Soares came from a working-class background, but he only involved himself in the Black Panther Movement for a short time, choosing to ally himself with Workers Movements.

The lack of South Asian working class involvement in the Black Panther Movement appears to have come more from class, rather than ethnic differences. Hurlington Armstrong remembered that although the group traveled to the East End in order to patrol and support their South Asian brothers and sisters, “They still saw themselves as a different breed, and they rejected [us.]” Armstrong claimed that the Indians, “always thought they were a bit more intellectual or a bit more whatever.”\textsuperscript{153}

Despite the struggles they faced with recruiting South Asian members, the Panthers emerged from the Alexandra Palace Conference having significantly expanded their vision and organizing scope. They overhauled their newspaper in the issue that followed the conference, which reflected the broader vision. In July 1971, the Panthers changed the paper’s name from \textit{Black People’s News Service} to \textit{National and International News Bulletin}, updated the paper’s masthead, and significantly increased its

\textsuperscript{152} Dhondy I, 34:30.
\textsuperscript{153} Armstrong, 14-15.
international coverage. In part, Farrukh Dhondy, who led the paper’s effort to chronicle the Mangrove Nine Trial wanted to reach new international audiences in order to raise awareness around the struggle of the Nine. Dhondy remembered mailing copies of the NINB to sympathetic left-wing groups and their newspapers around the globe. But the newspaper’s changes also demonstrated that the Alexandra Palace conference had offered the movement new ideas and rhetorical strategies. The editors borrowed the masthead image from the Conference’s logo, which signaled the movement’s intended diversity. They also added the slogan: “Correct Information is the Raw Material for New Ideas.”

The NINB began as a news bulletin, a one-page sheet of up-to-date information on black struggles around the world. The first issue was published two weeks after the Alexandra Palace conference. Rather than a typical front-page article about a battle between the police and black Londoners, the first issue of the NINB focused on activity outside London that precipitated the need for national and international unity. The issue featured an article about Handsworth, another Birmingham suburb, where, the Panthers claimed, vans of police Special Forces had attacked a house party thrown by the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Organisation there. In addition, the issue included a photocopied telegram of international solidarity from the Independent Trade Union Advisory Committee (ITUAC) in Jamaica. The telegram, dated May 26, 1971, read in its

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154 The transition of newspaper name and format took place in early June, immediately following the Alexandra Palace conference. The May/June 1971 issue of Black People’s News Service did not report on the Conference. The June 6 issue of the newspaper was entitled National and International Joint Information Centre News Bulletin. The June 11 issue had the title National and International News Bulletin. Box 5, Folder 1, Series II.2, DHP.
156 Black Panther Movement. National and International Joint Information Centre News Bulletin No. 1, June 6, 1971, in Box 5, Folder 1, Series II.2, DHP.
 entirety, “We wholeheartedly support any action by you for self defense against all forms of racism fascism and imperialism.”157 Given the Alexandra Palace Conference’s note that attendees would receive words of solidarity from the Caribbean, the telegram was likely a late-sent greeting from black Britons’ Jamaican comrades.

The Panthers’ connections to activist networks outside the UK extended to what the British government considered its greatest existential threat: the Irish Republican Army (IRA). As Hurlington Armstrong recalled, the Panthers had a secret relationship with the IRA, in which they invited IRA members to speak to the group. Ray Eurquhart remembered attending standing-room only conferences that Irish Republicans led.158 “We identified with the IRA at the time, you know…” Armstrong remembered, “Gerry Adams and these guys… used to come over and do lectures, but we had to smuggle them into the venue and smuggle them out ‘cause they were wanted in England.”159

The Panthers generated that support through a series of internal discussions and debates that came to a head in the question of whether the movement should publicly support the IRA in a march following the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry’s Bogside neighborhood on January 31, 1972. Ray Eurquhart recalled that the Panthers had a long discussion in which they talked about the possibility of alienating potential supporters, both blacks and white liberals. They also feared the possibility that they could be labeled as terrorists and receive retaliation from far right groups like the National Front. “They could really say, these people are… not just black people or people from the islands.

157 Independent Trade Union Advisory Committee, Jamaica, telegram to Black Panthers, 154 Barnsbury Road, London N1, May 26, 1971, in Ibid.
158 Eurquhart, 1:42:00.
159 Armstrong, 11.
These are fucking terrorists, Communists.” In the end, the Panthers chose to march because, “the Irish had a legitimate national question. And we had a legitimate national question. So we saw it intersect.” Here, the Panthers connected with the IRA through a sense of shared autonomy and belief in a nationalist cause.

On February 5, 1972, Freedom News reported, the Panthers marched with an estimated fifteen thousand people to Prime Minister Heath’s residence at Downing Street. Freedom News noted that the Panthers carried their flag and a banner that proclaimed, “The Black Panther Movement Stands in Total Solidarity With the Irish Liberation Struggle.” The banner and flag openly identified the Panthers with their Irish comrades. Eurquhart recalled it as a massive powerful demonstration that made him feel, “so connected and proud” with the larger international leftist movement. He referred to the event as the “Avenge Derry” demonstration and remembered that the Panthers shouted in call-and-response, “We want him...” followed by “Dead” in reference to Major-General Robert Ford, Commander of the Land Forces in Northern Ireland at the time of Bloody Sunday.

As the shadow government for black Britons, the Panthers also resisted British international entanglements that they believed harmed their community socially, culturally, and economically. In January 1973, Britain joined the European Economic Community; Neil Kenlock recalled that this made a dramatic impact on West Indians in London and back home. He recalled Britain’s accession to the EEC came across as an insult to the people of the Commonwealth and the labor they had done for the British

160 Eurquhart, 36:00.
161 Ibid., 35:00.
162 Black Panther Movement, Freedom News, February 19, 1972, 1, NEW 17/10, GPI.
163 Eurquhart, 34:30.
164 Ibid., 1:43:00.
Empire. “The first thing they did was stop bananas,” Kenlock recalled, remembering how membership in the EEC radically reshaped Britain’s foreign trade patterns. In his memory, France had their colonies bringing in bananas, so they forced Britain to put up a barrier to the Jamaican banana trade. He recalled Chiquita Banana fighting the Europeans over the trade barrier, and under World Trade Organization statutes, forcing the removal of the barrier. The Americans’ use of flat fields rather than Jamaica’s mountains and hillsides made the US trade much more cost-effective. Kenlock recalled that the banana plantations of Jamaica became, “overgrown, bush, nothing... Unsustainable.” In practice, Britain’s membership in the EEC severed the possibility of return migration. The membership and ensuing trade policies that the British government pursued rendered futile the dreams of black Britons who had migrated with hopes of returning home to the West Indies and South Asia one day.

However, for the first time in the post-war era, black Britons had an embodied cadre of activists to whom they could turn. The Black Panther Movement had provided black Britons with a vehicle to collectively voice the depth and extent of racist practices and ideas entrenched in Britain. Panther activities had emphasized the particularity of different members’ and affiliates’ identities and the specificity of the various forms of oppression affecting groups such as West Indians, South Asians, women, and the working class. The Panthers had employed Black Power as a malleable construct that allowed for interethnic organizing.

The Black Panthers offered solidarity and collective support for black people’s struggles nationally and internationally. In the hands of Britain’s black community, Black

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165 Kenlock II, 28:45.
166 Ibid., 28:00.
Panthers became a powerful and broad rhetorical label that enabled broad-based solidarity. The Black Panther identity and moniker drew attention to the historical relationships among black Britons, African Americans, and blacks in other countries. Black Britons in the Panthers constructed a relationship to the African-American Freedom Struggle that brought power and recognition for their own movement. Due to the extensive media attention that the Panthers in the US received, taking on the label provided British Panthers with immediate attention among potential recruits and likely opposition in the government and moderate and conservative elements of British society.

The most significant achievement of the British Black Panther Movement was the intellectual grounding in the African Diaspora that members developed. Through courses, lectures, close readings, self-produced cultural events, and private group discussions, black Britons in the Panther Movement developed understandings of and asked questions about white racism, black history, and the legacy of imperialism. Panther members came to believe that white imperial hegemony had amassed not only economic and military power, but also control over people’s minds through cultural and discursive practices. Armed with this knowledge, Panthers sought to control the discourse about blacks in British society and beyond.

Through his photographic work for the movement, Neil Kenlock helped to revolutionize the meaning of blackness in British society. As he recalled in a 2011 interview, the Panthers wanted black people to “understand themselves, not to be ashamed of being black, accept their colour and their culture and be proud of it.” The Panthers wanted black people to share a sense of pride, as well as a common connection
to the African Diaspora. “Africans have heritage, and you have a right to be a part of it,”
he remembered.\footnote{Kenlock IV, 43:00.} Kenlock applied these principles accordingly to his photography:

I wanted to find a way to photograph black people so that they can become proud
of themselves. When I was first doing it, they were submissive. They would just
stand up and have no life in them. When I was taking photographs... I didn't know
that one day it would become important. But I had something in me to say, 'look,
this person should be proud.'\footnote{Kenlock I, 35:30.}

Kenlock accomplished this in his photography, by envisioning his fellow Panthers as
people who deserved to be a part of a visual archive. He portrayed the Panthers as a
collective marching proudly in London’s streets, as with the images in the Immigration
Bill protest (see Figures 34 and 35). Kenlock also depicted Panthers as individuals who
enjoyed their lives in London at events like the Notting Hill Carnival (see Figure 38).
Kenlock’s images registered a sense of vitality and vibrancy, triggering an affective
response among viewers.
From 1967 to 1972, members of the Black Panther Movement allied under the idea that they were black first, that race was a combination of their ethnic background plus a class status that they had acquired because of their blackness. The Panther Movement foregrounded race over class for a time, with the notion that black people regardless of class background, education, and employment status must build solidarity. Over time, however, tensions and differing expectations about the role of class and ideology surfaced that led in part to the demise of the movement. A group of middle class intellectuals, led by Darcus Howe and Farrukh Dhondy, thought that the movement had
drawn too heavily on Marxism-Leninism at the expense of articulating an ideology that accounted more explicitly for race. They decided to break up the movement in order to form an intellectual collective known as *Race Today*.

But Howe and Dhondy were not the only people dissatisfied with the movement’s direction. Some working class people, including Tony Soares, thought that debates over ideology took attention away from grassroots organizing and failed to focus enough on the needs of the working class. Soares would go on to form the Black Liberation Front (BLF) as a spin-off of the Panthers. The BLF and the Black Workers Movement (BWM) would take black working class concerns as their explicit struggle.

The end of the movement was sealed with a firebomb. On the night of March 15, 1973, Farrukh Dhondy lay sleeping inside his flat above the Unity Centre on Railton Road in Brixton. He awoke suddenly to find himself encircled by smoke, and he remembered jumping out of the window onto the sidewalk below wearing only his undergarments. By morning, the fire had destroyed Unity Centre and its library of black history, politics, and literature. Although no arrests were made in the attack, the Black Panthers believed that members of the National Front had thrown the firebomb through the window. The Panthers of Brixton published a final issue (see Figure 39) of *Black Life* in which they ran a eulogy to the Unity Centre, “For the past four years in Brixton, the Black Panther Movement has been working to mobilize the community around our basic needs. From an empty shell at 74 Railton Road, we created with our own hands the first and only cultural and political centre serving the black and working community in Brixton. There was an immediate response from black and white sufferers.

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169 Dhondy, 56:30.
Every day people would drop into the shop to offer assistance, express their support or discuss their daily sufferation at the hands of the Council, the Government, Employers, police, and other Oppressors.”170

Figure 39: Neil Kenlock. Farrukh Dhondy holds special issue of *Black Life Brixton* in front of the former Unity Centre at 74 Railton Road, March 1973.
Source: Kenlock private collection


On the afternoon of March 3, 1971, the Black Panthers of Israel took their concerns about discrimination and deprivation to the streets of Jerusalem for the first time. The Panthers staged a demonstration downtown on Jaffa Road outside the city’s Municipal Council Building. Ironically, of the few hundred people in attendance, only a handful of them were Black Panthers. The assembled group included mainly Israeli and foreign university students, leftist activists, and intellectuals. The handful of Panthers who were present demonstrated without their leaders. Jerusalem police had arrested Moroccan-born friends Charlie Biton and Sa’adia Marziano, and five other Panther organizers as they distributed leaflets to advertise the event. In this leaflet, entitled “Enough!” the Panthers had outlined their initial demands:

> We are a group of victimized youth addressing all those who are fed up.

ENOUGH of no work.
ENOUGH of sleeping ten to a room.
ENOUGH of looking at the apartment houses for new immigrants.
ENOUGH of prison and beatings every Monday and Thursday.
ENOUGH of Government promises which are never fulfilled.
ENOUGH of Deprivation – Enough of Discrimination

How much longer will they carry on and we’ll keep quiet? Alone we can do nothing – Together we’ll succeed. We are demonstrating for our right to be like all the citizens in the Country.

The demonstration will take place on Wednesday 3rd March 1971 at 3.30 in Jaffa Road, opposite the Municipality. -The Black Panthers.

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1 Charlie Biton, interview by author, transl. Denise Levin, December 12, 2010, Mevaseret Zion, Israel, part
2 I examined two English translations of this flier, and I chose to transcribe the translation from Deborah Bernstein. Bernstein wrote her 1976 sociology Ph.D. dissertation based on two years of participant observation with the Israeli Black Panthers in 1971-72. Bernstein’s dissertation remains unpublished outside of a journal article, Deborah Bernstein, “Conflict and Protest in Israeli Society: The Case of the Black Panthers in Israel,” *Youth and Society* 16, no. 2 (1984): 129-152. The flyer translation that I did not transcribe can be found in a pamphlet by the Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad (IRACA), which was published in London in 1971. Bernstein and the IRACA’s translations differed in the specificity.
The authors identified themselves as victimized youth whose main concerns were employment, overcrowded housing, criminalization, and the government’s failure to improve these conditions. The writers also called attention to routine police monitoring of working-class neighborhoods, and to the fact that police had beaten members of their group in jail. The repeated refrain of “Enough” signified that the group demanded an immediate change. Although these demands and concomitant claims to Israeli citizenship rights may not have seemed particularly radical in the context of the global political upheaval taking place in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this grass roots expression of popular discontent marked a watershed in Israeli history. The Black Panthers drew up to 7,000 protestors at their events, and they presented the first serious threat to the status quo in the history of the state of Israel. Their movement signaled the failure of the Israeli “melting pot” ideal, known among Zionists as mizug galuiot, the “ingathering of the exiles.”

For the six weeks prior to the demonstration, newspapers had chronicled developments among what Israelis called "street gangs" in Jerusalem slums. “Street
gangs" referred to groups of youths who traveled neighborhoods together, looking for spaces in which to socialize and sometimes engaging in petty crime. Jerusalem city officials had assigned counselors to the street gangs. In January 1971, twenty-one-year-old Moroccan-born Sa'adía Marziano reportedly responded to the Musrara street gang's counselor by saying, "We want to organize against the Ashkenazi government and the establishment. We will be the Black Panthers of the State of Israel." The left-wing daily newspaper *Al Hamishmar*, affiliated with the Socialist-Zionist workers' party Mapam, published the quotation. The widely circulated centrist newspaper *Maariv* published a response from Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek and Jerusalem Chief of Police Turjeman. They said, "Here, among us, no such thing could ever happen." By the evening of March 3, 1971, the Black Panthers had proven Kollek and Turjeman wrong.

The demonstration, and in particular the public’s response to the preemptive arrest of the Panther leaders, sparked what Israeli journalist Sergio Yahni called, “still the most significant social movement in Israeli history” in a 2009 interview. As patterns of state-based discrimination mounted, in the fall of 1970 a small group of Jews, who were known at the time variously as “Oriental,” “Eastern,” or as a subset of the larger Sephardim construct, organized politically. The group of young men had grown up together in Jerusalem’s historically Arab neighborhood of Musrara, and they came together around their experiences of arrest, imprisonment, unemployment, and discrimination, and their frustrations over the government’s lack of adequate social

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6 Sergio Yahni, interview by author, November 20, 2009, Jerusalem, Israel, interview notes in author’s possession.
welfare provisions for other Jews from Eastern backgrounds. In March 1971, this group publicized their Black Panther name at this, their first protest. Within a year, Eastern Jews in more than twenty cities and towns in Israel had established Black Panther chapters or had participated in Black Panther protests in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (See Appendix E).

The Panthers politicized Eastern Jews across the country, rendering their daily concerns visible and identifying their shared ethnicity. The Panthers’ efforts helped lead to the development of the term Mizrahim, a political and ethnic construct used since the mid-1970s to identify Eastern Jews. In 1976, toward the end of the Panther movement, the Israeli government inaugurated the study of Middle Eastern and North African Jewish history as part of the national educational curriculum. Social scientists also began using the term Mizrahim as a model for understanding ethnic relations in Israel. By the 1980s, the term had come into widespread usage. As Black Panther filmmaker Eli Hamo explained in a 2009 interview, through the Black Panthers’ efforts, “Mizrahim became a political term.”

Over the six years of their existence, the Israeli Black Panthers followed a trajectory of first addressing prominent national institutions and transnational capital flows, and then organizing local communities at grassroots level, before they turned to electoral politics as a way of attaining national representation for their concerns. The

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7 I use the term Eastern Jews (rather than Oriental) to refer to this group throughout, in an effort to avoid the recuperation of Orientalist narratives.
10 Eli Hamo, interview by author, November 29, 2009, Tel Aviv, Israel, part I of III (hereafter Hamo I) digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 00:03:00.

While the core of the Israeli Black Panthers in Jerusalem comprised a small group of no more than fifty people, their supporters ranged in the thousands. An examination of the group's publications and oral history interviews identifies twenty-six active core members of the Panthers, the bulk of whom were involved in the Jerusalem founding chapter (see Appendix F). Large group demonstrations occurred roughly once every month between March 1971 and January 1972. They ranged in size from between 200 and 400 people at smaller demonstrations to five thousand at a demonstration known as the "Night of the Panthers" on May 18, 1971 and seven thousand at a demonstration on July 5, 1971.\footnote{Bernstein, “The Black Panthers of Israel,” 286-287.}

In this chapter, I argue that the Black Panthers provided an organizing model and protest politics with which neighborhoods of Eastern Jews across Israel mobilized in the early 1970s. Prior to the Panthers, there had been little evidence that Jews from Arab countries, rather than Moroccan, Yemeni, Kurdish, or Iraqi Jews, identified as a coherent ethnic group within Israeli society. They spoke different Arabic dialects, had varying
degrees of Hebrew, and had been scattered in small groups on the peripheries of cities and the national outskirts. Moroccans, Iraqis, Kurds, and Yemenis had built strong connections within their national groups as they had supported one another in the process of settling into Israel. The Black Panthers, in turn, generated a grassroots protest lexicon and movement through which numbers of these people called attention to their collective oppression. The movement resonated powerfully with the Israeli government and the public, as it indicated an emerging political coalition among Jews from the Middle East and North Africa.

Black Power politics did not, however, map neatly onto the Israeli domestic sphere. The process proved uneven, complicated by disjunctures between the languages of Black Power and blackness in the American and Israeli contexts. The word ‘black’ occupied divergent meanings in English and Hebrew, and blackness as a political term lacked definition in the Israeli context. The circulation of Black Power to Israel also took place within a vast power differential between East and West. That is, the Israeli Panthers lacked access to American Panther counterparts, to Hebrew-language media on Black Power, and to the resources available to those who took up Black Power in the West.

While the Israeli Black Panthers offered new opportunities for political alliances among Eastern Jews, the movement also obscured and silenced other possibilities for coalition building. This silencing took place most notably in regard to a potential alliance with Palestinians. Several Panthers discussed the idea of a coalition with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), but the group never reached consensus on whether to form an alliance. The Panthers’ inaction on the Palestinian question narrowed the scope of their movement to focus on domestic politics and relationships with American Jews.
The Israeli Panthers’ iconoclastic protests and grassroots activities brought thousands to the well-trafficked streets and public squares of Jerusalem and Israel, which engendered a sense of camaraderie among Eastern Jews and projected a unified front within Israeli society. Having been drawn to the US Panthers because of the ways in which they articulated how larger structural forces shaped the lives of everyday African-Americans, the Israeli Panthers expressed their vision of a just society through grassroots activities. They set out to solve basic social problems by providing clothing, housing, and food for Eastern Jews. The Panthers confronted these problems creatively, through such activities as “liberating” milk bottles that had been provided for the pets of people in wealthy neighborhoods and redistributing them to the poor. By enacting their political beliefs in these grassroots ways, the Panthers created space for other Eastern Jews to imagine that they too could participate in the improvement of their condition.

The Israeli Black Panthers addressed these domestic concerns through developing networks among everyday people in Eastern neighborhoods in Israel while framing Eastern Jews’ experiences in a transnational context. Based upon their perceptions of US history and African-American history, the Israeli Panthers claimed that their historical experiences of discrimination paralleled those of African-Americans. They deployed their understanding of the history of African-Americans as a framework that gave shape to their own narratives of discrimination and isolation from power. They also chose the Panther identity because of a common belief within Israeli society that the US Black Panthers were anti-Semitic. The Israeli Panthers claimed that the name held “shock value” that would significantly increase attention to Eastern concerns and in this way, generate possibilities for change.
In calling themselves Black Panthers, the Musrara youth joined a global anti-racist network that raised the cachet of their everyday activities to an international level and opened more channels of communication than an organization of its size would normally have gathered. Within a few weeks of their first protest, they secured a private meeting with the Prime Minister, Golda Meir. At that meeting, the group expressed their critiques and frustrations with their circumstances. They also presented Meir with thirty-three specific ideas for improving the lives of Eastern Jews in Israel.

The Panthers developed a strategic analysis of the influence of foreign capital on Israeli domestic politics. They argued that the wide socioeconomic gap between Eastern and Ashkenazi Jews derived in part from the unrestricted economic support that Israel received from American Jews. The Panthers claimed that their existence demonstrated to American Jews that ethnic discrimination existed within Israeli society, and that growing dissent could threaten Israel's stability and undermine the ideals of Zionist socialism. Thus, the Panthers hoped that their movement would lead American Jews to pressure the Israeli government to redirect funds toward solving Eastern Jews’ socioeconomic problems. The Panthers deployed this analysis in their public speeches, meetings with Meir and other government and labor officials, a demonstration outside the US Consulate in Jerusalem, and an attempt to travel as a group to the United States in order to meet with American Jewish donors.

In this chapter, I examine sources located in Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These sources ground this argument in a transnational framework. They include oral histories with Panther activists; unpublished and published photographs of the Israel Panthers; pamphlets and fliers published by the Black Panthers and their
sympathizers; US State Department cables; Israel state police records; and oral histories with artists and filmmakers who chronicled the Panthers’ efforts. Several of these sources have been translated from Hebrew or Arabic: I conducted oral histories with Hebrew speakers with the assistance of a simultaneous translator, interviewed several Panthers in Arabic, translated a handful of sources from written Hebrew into English, and examined the body of primary sources that Israeli scholars of the Black Panthers have translated into English.

My effort to examine the transnational circulation of ideas and sources regarding the Israeli Panthers builds on the foundational work of sociologist Deborah Bernstein. In 1971-72, Bernstein completed a participant observation study of the Israeli Panthers, which remains unpublished outside of an article that details her broadest findings. Given Bernstein’s access to the Panthers and to a range of sources that have potentially never been seen by other scholars, her work remains the most detailed secondary source to date on the Israeli Black Panthers. I rely on Bernstein’s dissertation for event details and an overarching chronology as I trace several key events that respond to my questions about the development of the Eastern Jewish struggle for equality in Israel.13

'That's the way we should be': The Musrara Youth Become Black Panthers, 1970-71

In the middle of 1969, most of the group that would found the Black Panther Movement returned to Musrara from various stints in the army, prison, and reform schools. The group began spending most of their time together. "We'd sit around in some room all night," Sa'adia Marziano recalled, "because there was nothing to do and we were already grown up and weren't working." Frustrations grew as the police continued to detain the young men for anywhere from five to thirty days at a time, before revealing that their suspicions were unsubstantiated. Charlie Biton was released from his second twenty-month prison sentence, this time for a burglary he had not committed. He recalled that, "It was very difficult for us to have hopes or plans because of the Establishment. This expressed itself specifically in the police. The police would come and they'd check us… and we didn't know why they wanted to check us the whole time, to see what we were doing. It was very difficult for us to cope with this."\textsuperscript{14} Tensions also ran high in their homes, particularly between the young men and their fathers, who struggled to support the family on meager wages. Marziano recalled that, "Your father would scream at you at night because - well, it's also hard for him, and he's right, but you are also right… You wanted to study, you wanted, well, somehow to do something."\textsuperscript{15}

Later that year, the group located a few places in the city center where they could socialize without fear of police intervention. "We used to go to the coffee houses in town and we met other people a little bit," Charlie Biton remembered.\textsuperscript{16} One such space was the Yellow Tea House, run by a student of Moroccan origin. At the Tea House, the

\textsuperscript{14} Biton I, 40:00.  
\textsuperscript{15} Marziano, as quoted in Bernstein, “The Black Panthers,” 149-150.  
\textsuperscript{16} Biton I, 23:00.
Musrara group befriended some Ashkenazi high school and university students from the wealthy neighborhoods of Beit Hakerem and Rekhavia. The Ashkenazi students who spent time at the Yellow Tea House came from a radical leftist, anti-Zionist political point of view. Over the many hours the Musrara, Beit Hakerem, and Rekhavia youth sat in the teahouse together, they built friendships; smoked marijuana; and talked about the police, the establishment, and discrimination.

The group also found the Cellar, a community center located near the Yellow Tea House, where they would go, "to meet people like ourselves and to play," Biton recalled. The Cellar was a Jerusalem municipal youth club run by forty-year-old Moroccan-born Avner Amiel, who was known for approaching social work in a creative, informal manner. The Cellar acted as a drop-in center with few formal activities, providing a space for youth to play snooker, drink coffee, and watch television. Marziano and his friends began visiting the Cellar and attending Hebrew classes to practice their reading and writing.17

The Cellar's Hebrew classes focused on reading newspapers and discussing current events, activities that provided an environment in which the young men from Musrara expanded their political awareness. Amiel recalled a class in which the group read an article about an immigrant from the Soviet Union. In that session, the Musrara group expressed strong feelings of discrimination in comparison with the Russian immigrant's experience as recounted in the article. A government inspector who was there observing the class lectured the young men on the importance of immigration to the creation of a healthy, strong state. In spite of the lecture from a government official, the

group continued to express frustration and continued the discussion long after class ended, Amiel remembered. "The feeling of 'Pantherism appeared much before the concept itself," he recalled. "There was the feeling of 'that's the way we should be."18

The ‘feeling of Pantherism’ that Amiel mentioned could be defined in terms of a grass-roots, militant approach. Through shared conversations about experiences of discrimination and inequity, the Musrara group built a collective awareness of their specific class and ethnic oppression. At first implicitly and later explicitly, they shared a commitment to addressing those problems collectively using whatever resources they had or could make available. ‘Pantherism’ also included an oppositional approach to dominant Ashkenazi culture, and a determination to approach society from a critical standpoint. For the first two years, this approach was rooted in personal and collective experience rather than ideology. Kokhavi Shemesh, an Iraqi who joined the group a few months later, elucidated this point. When an interviewer asked Shemesh how society must change, Shemesh replied, “We don’t have any easy formulas. We just have to work for a society with social justice and equality and an opportunity to abolish the private accumulation of capital.”19 The journalist responded by asking Shemesh whether what he had just described was not in fact socialism. “I’ve never learned what socialism or Marxism are,” Shemesh replied. “If what I am describing is socialism, then let it be socialism. Definitions aren’t important to me.”20 ‘Pantherism,’ therefore, became an independent ideology that favored the experiential knowledge of people of color while

18 Ibid., 155.
20 Ibid., 265-266.
refuting the need to apply Eurocentric social theories to explain what was, for the Panthers, self-evident in their daily lives.

The Hebrew classes at the Cellar also provided opportunities for the youth of Musrara to read international news, where they learned about dissident movements taking place around the globe. Charlie Biton remembered that a number of these movements influenced the group’s line of thinking. He recalled that struggles against rising prices and inflation in the United States, France, and Latin America in particular, “influenced us to want to organize ourselves, to want to fight these things.”21 They began to see their socioeconomic condition as the result not only of Israeli policies but also of global economic fluctuations.

Late in 1970, group conversations at the Cellar turned from expressions of grievances to discussions about how to take action. While the members of the group shared a passion for expressing their grievances and understanding ongoing international struggles, they lacked relative knowledge of political organizing tactics. Reuven Abergel recalled, “We didn’t know nothing, we didn’t understand nothing in politics.”22 Abergel also lamented that most of the extant social movements in Israel took their names from the Hebrew Bible, and that the Eastern ethnic movements were under “bombastic” names that failed to draw attention to their concerns.23 Thus, joining one of the extant movements, such as the Moroccan Immigrants Association, did not seem a good idea to the group. They wanted a voice of their own.

The spaces in which the Musrara group congregated downtown also afforded

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21 Biton I, 31:00.
23 Ibid., 3:30.
them opportunities to meet young Eastern Jews from other Jerusalem neighborhoods. Charlie Biton recalled meeting Eastern youth from the Jerusalem neighborhoods of Bukharia, Katamon, Shmuelim Navim, and Bakhat Talpiyot. He recalled that these interactions broadened the perspective of the Musrara group: "It wasn't only our problem. It was the problem of all the neighborhoods around Jerusalem in which people from the East lived… When we met people from the other neighborhoods like ours, we understood that our situation wasn't special and wasn't worse, that their situation was also bad." Thus, the Musrara youth came to believe that an organized movement could draw together many groups of people who had similar interests in ending the socioeconomic gap between Eastern and Ashkenazi Jews and in developing pride and dignity among Eastern Jews.

Early in 1971, the city's Division of Social Work invited the group to present their experiences and their social critiques in a series of newspaper articles and a radio show. After a few preparatory debate sessions with the Cellar's community workers, the group spoke publicly for the first time about their concerns. The events provided the group with their first experience of producing rather than consuming media, and of using the media as a tool to create political awareness.

The group embraced the Black Panther name through a fluid, *ad hoc* process. According to Kokhavi Shemesh, they wanted to create an “earthquake," in the form of a group identity that would capture the attention of Israeli society and make "the

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24 Biton I, 33:30.
25 Biton I, 41:00.
government take this group seriously.”\textsuperscript{27} If there was anyone in the Musrara group whom the government was likely to take seriously, it was Sa'adia Marziano. Informally the group's leader, Marziano had successfully recruited other youth from the neighborhood and earned their respect. When in late 1970 Marziano began raising the idea that the group could be like the American Black Panthers, in terms of its organization and its militancy, group members considered the suggestion.\textsuperscript{28} Initially, Marziano used the Panthers as a frame of reference when he spoke with community workers and journalists, saying that their group wanted to be “like the Black Panthers in America.”\textsuperscript{29} In turn, the journalists began referring to the group in their articles simply as Black Panthers.

In part, the Musrara group embraced the name because that they believed that Ashkenazi Jews, with their Western backgrounds, knew the broad narrative of African-American history. Therefore, the Panthers believed, Ashkenazi Jews inside and outside Israel would recognize the Musrara group’s claims of dispossession. “There have been all kinds of Eastern organizations,” Sa'adia Marziano explained. “For example, there is an organization called 'The People of Katamon - For Katamon,' no one has ever heard about it. All these organizations disappear or just die out. This name was shocking and provoking. It gave us the drive, it enabled us... to elicit a reaction.”\textsuperscript{30} The name inspired the group to further express their protest politics.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{27} Kokhavi Shemesh, interview by author, transl. Rachel Ashur Shemesh, August 8, 2011, Jerusalem, Israel, part I of II (hereafter K. Shemesh I), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 1:40:00. \\
\textsuperscript{28} Kokhavi Shemesh, interview by author, transl. Rachel Ashur Shemesh, August 10, 2011, Jerusalem, Israel, part II of II (hereafter K. Shemesh II), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 16:15. \\
In her account of an interview with Cellar community worker Guri, with whom the Musrara youth were close friends, Bernstein corroborates Shemesh’s recollection that the Black Panther name was Marziano’s idea. Bernstein, “The Black Panthers,” 157. \\
\textsuperscript{29} Sa'adia Marziano, as quoted in Ibid., 158. \\
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid. Katamon was an Eastern neighborhood in Jerusalem.}
The group knew comparatively little about the Black Panthers in the United States; rather, the name resonated with them in broad, if somewhat ambiguous, terms. Charlie Biton recalled having learned a little about the US Panthers from television and radio, but not very much in comparison with what he read. Shemesh could not recall having learned about the Panthers from television or radio at all. But the Black Panther name resonated with the group, as it foregrounded what they saw as stark disparities between the socioeconomic conditions of African-Americans and whites in the United States. “The only name that catch us,” Abergel recalled, “is the Black Panthers, because the history there it’s like our history: black and white.” For Abergel and many of his comrades, the name signaled a connection to a history of forced displacement and labor, and a discriminatory social structure that could be summarized in his phrase, ‘black and white.’

Charlie Biton recalled that the African-American historical narrative resonated heavily with the group. An Israeli education had offered lessons in US history to several future Panthers. Biton recalled learning in history classes and from other books he read as a child, “about the blacks and the Negroes as they were brought to the States.” He also remembered that he “learned that in some of the areas, there were more black people living than white people. We knew there were racist laws against the blacks in previous years in the States.” Biton and his friends also discovered a narrative of African-American resistance. “We slowly learned that the blacks were organizing themselves.

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31 Respectively, Biton I, 05:00 and K. Shemesh I, 1:41:00. It is not clear whether or not either man’s parents owned a television. Biton referred to a television as, “more of a decoration in the house.”
32 Abergel I, 4:30.
33 Biton I, 1:02:00.
34 Ibid., 1:03:30.
And that there were social movements in the United States in which the blacks were participating. That's how we learned about the establishment of the Black Panthers in the United States.” The group’s choice to adopt the Panther name provided an impetus for the Musrara group to continue to learn African-American history.

For Biton and his comrades, the Black Panther name also resonated because it indicted the hypocrisy of the establishment. Biton remembered that the group decided to become Panthers “almost for the same reason that the Black Panthers in the States had: discrimination, racism, hurtful attitudes. What was special,” he pointed out, “was that it was a socialist Jewish state, where there was meant to be equality between people.”

Here, Biton pointed to one of the Panthers’ main critiques: that Israel had been envisioned as a socialist state, and therefore that citizens should expect equal provisions of treatment from the government. Biton contended that, “There shouldn't have been any attempt to discriminate between different people who came from different countries.”

The group also agreed to Marziano's suggestion because they thought that the name would publicly identify their struggle with the Black Panther Party in the United States, and thus bring public attention to their concerns. This hunch proved true several times during the movement. When Al Hamishmar quoted Marziano saying, "We will be the Black Panthers of Israel," in January 1971, other journalists approached Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek for further information. Kollek sent the reporters to Amiel at the Cellar, who organized a meeting for them with the Musrara youth. After the community workers held a series of debates with the Musrara group to help them prepare, Sa'adia Marziano led his group's meeting with the press. On their home turf at the Cellar, the

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35 Ibid., 1:00:45.
Musrara group told their story once more to journalists, expressing their frustrations, their experiences, and their determination to be heard.

The following day, Israel's most widely-circulated newspaper *Yediot Ahronoth* published this article, entitled "We Won't Keep Quiet - Violence Will Shock the Government":

We want everyone to know that we are here, and we want them to know that something is going to happen. There are two kinds of people in this country - a superior one and an inferior one. It's enough. If our parents were quiet all the time, we are not going to keep quiet.\(^{36}\)

Here, the Panthers represented their social concerns in terms of a sharp division between an elite class and a subjugated group. The article also offered a foreboding message: the Musrara group intended to speak publicly about their concerns in the earshot of anyone who would listen. The group argued that the lines of class and ethnic division together bisected the whole of Israeli society. The group also made clear that unlike some of their parents, they did not believe that assimilation was an option.

The group chose the Black Panther moniker as they believed it would garner them media attention and that it connected to a highly-disciplined organization in the US, which could therefore increase the group's leveraging power with the Israeli state. Even before the Panthers started holding public demonstrations, the name choice raised the political ante. Charlie Biton remembered that, “When we called ourselves the Black Panthers, there was at times a little note in the newspapers about us.”\(^{37}\) Likewise, Biton recalled that the Panthers’ first public event, a demonstration on March 3, 1971, was covered, “in the front page of the newspaper, so it had power.” Here, Biton emphasized


\(^{37}\) Charlie Biton, interview by author, transl. Denise Levin, December 12, 2010, Mevaseret Zion, Israel, part II of II (hereafter Biton I), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 32:00.
his that the media brings publicity to events and offered his analysis that the front page of a newspaper can elicit increased interest in an event. Biton also highlighted his memory that many journalists participated in the demonstration or covered it, including international press outlets. “The highlight,” Biton recalled, was that the first demonstration was covered in “the main Israeli radio program, in the middle of the day.” In addition, Biton recalled that the government said, “Just because we were doing the Black Panthers, that we are a great threat to them.”

One journalist pointed out that the group’s choice of the Panther name among the range of options that the African-American Freedom Struggle offered increased the level of media attention that they received. In a *New York Times* article, Israeli journalist Amos Elon argued that, “There is little doubt that much of the publicity [the Panthers] won in the local and foreign press would have been lost if they had called themselves the ‘National Association for the Advancement of North African Youth.’” Here, Elon underscored the US Black Panthers’ international resonance, in comparison with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). By their nature, the activities and critiques raised by the NAACP and Elon’s imagined emulator, the National Association for the Advancement of North African Youth were limited to a national context. In Elon’s reading, those organizations were also perceived as less powerful and demanding than the Black Panthers.

The members of the group wanted coverage in the media because they knew it would bring attention to their concerns, and because they believed that lack of access to

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38 Charlie Biton, interview by author, December 12, 2010, Mevaseret Zion, Israel, part II of II (hereafter Biton II), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 30:30.
39 Biton II, 25:30.
media technologies offered another example of their ethnic group's poverty relative to Ashkenazim. Many of the Cold War era’s technological advancements had not reached Eastern homes. Kokhavi Shemesh lamented that his family did not obtain telephone service until fifteen years after their arrival in Israel, much later than his Ashkenazi Israeli counterparts. Charlie Biton remembered that televisions were a luxury. When Shemesh joined the Panthers, his job as a printer at an Ashkenazi-run printing press provided him with useful skills to help the Panthers build their newspaper and flier outreach.

In Kokhavi Shemesh’s memory, the group also took on the Panther moniker because they believed that the U.S. Panthers’ reputation for anti-Semitism, as perceived in Israel, would shock the Israeli establishment, lending further exposure to their grievances. Shemesh recalled, "We know very little about the Black Panthers in the United States, but we know one thing. The Jewish tells the Black Panthers is anti-Semitic, is very violent people. We take the name because we think the government it's afraid." Here, Shemesh recalled two perceptions of the Black Panthers: violence and anti-Semitism. The would-be Israeli Panthers believed that the use of an anti-Semitic group identity would spark a strong response from the state to the Panthers' concerns. In particular, the group believed that given Prime Minister Golda Meir’s interests and experience in the United States, she knew about the US Black Panthers. Meir had emerged as a key fundraiser for labor Zionism, traveling throughout the US to raise funds for Israel and serving as its Minister of Labour from 1949 to 1956 and its Minister of

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41 K. Shemesh I, 1:51:00.
42 Biton I, 1:45.
46 K. Shemesh I, 00:06:00.
Foreign Affairs from 1956 to 1966.\textsuperscript{47} Thus, they believed that the choice to become Black Panthers might unsettle Meir enough for her to attend to their demands. Shemesh remembered that, “She was our special target. We came up with the name Black Panthers to frighten her.”\textsuperscript{48}

Shemesh also recalled that a reason for choosing the Panther name derived from the name's immediate recognition among American Jews, who held economic power in the Israeli state, and that in this vein, the choice would highlight the hypocrisy of the so-called socialist Israeli political system. Shemesh explained that, “The Jew in the United States, he gives the money to [Israel's] government." However, the money went to Ashkenazi neighborhoods, rather than places like Musrara. "The money not come for the poor neighborhood," he said. "The donations did not go to the periphery," added Rachel Ashur Shemesh, Panther supporter and wife of Kokhavi.\textsuperscript{49} "The Jews of America," Kokhavi recalled, "they say, 'what is it? Black Panthers, in Israel? We give money every day, every month… Where is the money,' they asked. We support Israel we don't want to see poor and rich."\textsuperscript{50} Shemesh also recalled that the Musrara group believed that American Jews had disassociated themselves from the US Black Panthers. Accordingly, "We said, that's a good name for us, because the point is we want to agitate the Jewish Americans. If we called ourselves another name, nobody would know."\textsuperscript{51}

In this recollection, Shemesh could be deploying a contemporary narrative in order to explain his group’s actions in the past; however, Shemesh offered a consistent

\textsuperscript{49} Rachel Ashur Shemesh, interview by author, August 8, 2011, Jerusalem, Israel, part I of II (hereafter, R. Shemesh I), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 00:06:30.
\textsuperscript{50} K. Shemesh I, 1:43:00.
\textsuperscript{51} K. Shemesh I, 1:42:00.
explanation of the role that American capital played in the choice of name at the time of his involvement in the Panthers. In a 1972 interview with the leftist news magazine *Israleft*, Shemesh claimed that the Israeli Black Panthers chose their name in order to cultivate media exposure. “We hunted around for a name which would attract attention, which would help to get our problem into the headlines.”52 In addition to wanting to choose a name that would help their concerns get media attention, Shemesh claimed that his comrades also wanted a name that would resonate among Israel’s largest individual financial contributors, Jews in the United States. “Since a black group with the same name had arisen in the United States,” Shemesh argued, “and since Israel’s propaganda had claimed that its members were the enemies of Israel and since most of Israel’s foreign capital comes from the United States we chose the name ‘Black Panthers’ in order to give a jolt to Jews both here and abroad.”53 In Shemesh’s mind, the Black Panther label provided a way in which he and his comrades could confront their day-to-day, neighborhood-based experiences of discrimination on a transnational level. Becoming Black Panthers allowed the group from Musrara to address the roots of their oppression in two senses: first, by drawing attention to local grassroots organizing in communities throughout Israel and second, by provocatively illuminating ethnic and class divisions within Israel for American Jewish donors. Shemesh’s reasoning traced the Panthers’ perceived transnational relationship to Jews in the United States in an effort to make domestic change in Israel. 

Shemesh's explanation for the Black Panther name is confounded by the fact that he was not a part of the Musrara group when they chose the name; rather, he joined the

53 Ibid.
group after its first series of protests and became the group's spokesperson in the summer of 1971, thus his primary role within the organization was to raise public awareness about the group. Charlie Biton recalled that the members of the Musrara group who spent time together at the Cellar and founded the Panthers were Sa’adia Marziano, Ya’acov (Koko) Dera’i, Eli Avigzar, Me’ir Levy, David Levy, and himself. Biton also remembered that Kokhavi Shemesh, Reuven Abergel, and Rafi Marziano, Sa’adia’s younger brother, joined after the first few protests. In a 1971 interview with journalist Baruch Nadel, Biton recalled the same six founding members, and he remembered two additional founders: Meir Wigoder, who became the group’s photographer, and Haim Turjeman.

The fact that Shemesh, who was not a founding member of the Panthers, related a story about the group’s choice of its name exemplifies the messy processes of transnational circulation in this movement and the ways in which individual Panther members could mold the fluid Black Power narrative to suit particular needs. In this case, Shemesh shaped the Panthers’ story in order to connect the Panthers to American Jews, a group that Shemesh believed might help the Panthers. In Shemesh’s reading, the Black Panther name evoked a fraught connection to American Jews, which made it possible for the Israeli Panthers to expand the audience for their movement. Therefore, Shemesh, whom the group later elected as its chair in the summer of 1971, took advantage of the Panthers’ appropriation of a well-recognized name to expand the critique transnationally.

54 Biton I, 26:00. Biton is corroborated in Bernstein, “The Black Panthers,” 268.

Biographical information about Nadel from Finding Aid to Baruch Nadel Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University, online: http://yufind.library.yale.edu/yufind/Record/922008. Nadel’s article may have first been published in Haaretz on March 12, 1971, as the English-language translation of the Haaretz article in the IRACA’s pamphlet appears substantially similar to the article reprinted in Controversy. Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad, Black Panthers in Israel, 3.
and to align with the same imperial forces against which the U.S. Panthers also fought.\textsuperscript{56} Shemesh developed these ideas in the absence of face-to-face interactions with African-American activists, despite several Israelis’ invitations to American civil rights activists during this period. These opportunities might have expanded the possibilities for coalition between African-Americans and Eastern Jews. According to files that the Israel State Archives released to the public in 2013, Israeli officials extended invitations to Martin Luther King to visit Israel three times, and although King accepted the third invitation, the visit never materialized.\textsuperscript{57} The Histadrut extended an invitation in 1963, and the former head of the American Jewish Committee Irving Engel, a personal friend of King’s, invited him in 1965. In both cases, King expressed interest in visiting but declined due to demands on his time. Upon learning that King intended to lead a pilgrimage to the Holy Land sites in 1967, Michael Arnon, the Israeli consul in New York, suggested a third invitation for an official visit, which Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol extended to King in February of that year. In early May, King accepted Eshkol’s invitation, however, due to the Six Day War that began in June, King’s visit was once again cancelled. As historian Clayborne Carson has pointed out, Israeli leftists extended an invitation to SNCC members to visit Israel in 1966, but the SNCC activists declined.\textsuperscript{58}

King’s polite decline of the first two invitations and SNCC members’ firm

\textsuperscript{57} Ilan Ben-Zion, Histadrut Representative in the United States, to Martin Luther King, Jr., Ebenezer Baptist Church, February 27, 1963; Irving Engel to Martin Luther King, Jr., June 2, 1965; Michael Arnon, Israel Consul General in New York, to Avraham Harman Israel Ambassador in Washington, June 27, 1966; Levi Eshkol, Prime Minister of Israel, Jerusalem to Martin Luther King, Jr., February 7, 1967; Martin Luther King, Jr. to Levi Eshkol, Prime Minister of Israel, May 9, 1967 in RG 93.8/MFA/6531/8, Israel State Archives, Jerusalem (hereafter ISA).
negative reply highlighted the fact that African-American civil rights activists were reluctant to affiliate with Israel given the sensitive position of the Israel-Palestine question in the African-American movement at the time. However, had these visits taken place, given the general global resonance of the African-American Freedom Struggle, several of the people who eventually formed the Israeli Black Panther movement may likely have wanted to meet King and especially SNCC’s impressive youth activists. Limited by the precarious politics of the Israel-Palestine question, the Israeli Black Panthers nonetheless built a grassroots movement that accessed and adapted from the US Panthers’ revolutionary politics, oppositional approach, and visual style (see Figure 40).
Transforming 'Zion Square' into 'The Square of Oriental Jewry': The Panthers Mobilize, 1971-72

Drawing on the strength gained from their discussions at the Cellar, the six young men who had founded the Panthers decided to hold a demonstration in front of Jerusalem’s Town Hall to publicly announce their concerns. The Panthers had little knowledge about how to organize people politically, and they lacked examples of sustained protest movements whose tactics they might draw on for ideas. Thus in their
first year, the Israeli Panthers focused their activities on large demonstrations. The idea to
hold the first demonstration likely came from the leftist activists with whom the Panthers
interacted, though the Musrara group had certainly observed demonstrations in their
neighborhood before organized by Jerusalem community workers. In the context of
Israeli society at that time, such public protests were in and of themselves radical steps.
Later, once they had established a base of support and had survived repeated arrests and
police altercations, the Israeli Panthers focused on other forms of mobilization,
specifically grassroots local organizing and service to the community.

In an attempt to follow established legal procedures, the six young men applied
for a protest permit with the Jerusalem District Police. "We wanted to do everything
legally,…” Charlie Biton recalled. Accordingly, they filled out a series of forms at the
police station, requesting permission to hold a demonstration on March 3, 1971. Biton
recalled that the group followed the proper procedures, applying five days in advance of
the planned demonstration and gathering the signatures of five to ten people who were
responsible for organizing the event. The same day, the group started distributing the
“Enough!” leaflet to advertise the demonstration.

Meanwhile, the media coverage that the Panthers had received in their first few
months of agitating evidently alarmed Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek and the Deputy
Mayor for Social Welfare, orthodox Rabbi Menachem Porush. Kollek and Porush asked
the National Commission for the Prevention of Delinquency to study the “Black Panther

60 Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad, Black Panthers in Israel, 4.
61 Biton I, 31:30.
63 Ibid., 158.
The Commission reported back on February 28, declaring openly that “the Black Panther problem” was not in fact a political issue. The Commission wrote that, “the news media inflated the problem and presented it to the public in a way which does not fit the reality, as the problem of this marginal youth is not a political one.” The Commission also condemned the community workers, claiming that they were, “external forces who ‘imposed’ on [the Panthers] a political ideology unknown to these youngsters.” Here, the Commission implied that the Panther youth had been indoctrinated into forming a movement, that they lacked political awareness, and that the elevation of their concerns guaranteed that, “those already disgruntled by personal or ethnic deprivation” would “bring about acts of destruction.”

On March 1, the police informed the Panthers that their request to hold a demonstration had been rejected. “We didn’t understand,” Biton recalled, “We did everything we were required to do,… but they said to us, ‘Why do you want to have a demonstration?’” The police informed the Panthers that their permit had been denied due to concerns that the proposed demonstration would lead to public disorder and violence as some of the permit applicants were, the police claimed, “hardened criminals,” and because the Panther organization was linked with Matzpen, the revolutionary anti-Zionist organization discussed in Chapters 1 and 4.

In reality, the police had rejected the application because the Panthers were raising the cause of the Eastern Jews as an ethnic group, which the government feared

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64 The religious view of social welfare as charity disturbed many of the community workers and youths who favored a more secular approach. Hence, they did not embrace Rabbi Porush’s involvement with their concerns. Ibid., 153.
66 Biton I, 28:30.
could lead to massive dissent. A senior police official explained to sociologist Deborah Bernstein that the Panthers had not come up with a specific request for public services, such as a youth club. Instead, the official said, “They came up with the ethnic problem - the problem of the oppressed Blacks, and people (and I shall not specify who [sic]) began to be afraid.” The official explained that in his opinion, while the fear of public disorder was one reason why the police did not grant the permit, the root cause of the application’s rejection was that the Panthers were raising the concerns of the Eastern ethnic group.

“They would have given [the Panthers] everything, as long as they kept quiet, as long as they didn’t raise the ethnic problem,” the official claimed. Here, the official explained that the government feared that political alliances along ethnic lines could destabilize domestic politics and potentially divide the country.

The city police official, it turned out, was merely a messenger for the decision to deny the demonstration permit, which had been taken by Prime Minister Golda Meir. After some pressure by the media, police spokespersons revealed that the Minister of Police Shlomo Hillel had passed the request straight to the Prime Minister’s office. In a special emergency meeting, Meir took the decision together with Hillel, Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek, and Police Commissioner Pinhas Kopel. The Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad reported in their Panther propaganda leaflet that Meir instructed the police to prevent the demonstration at all costs.

That same day, the fledgling Panther group publicly denounced the government’s decision. They published a leaflet calling the permit’s rejection an act of discrimination.

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69 Ibid., 159.
70 Ibid., 159. Emphasis added.
71 Israeli Revolutionary Action Committee Abroad, *Black Panthers in Israel*, 5.
against them as Eastern Jews and as former juvenile delinquents. They titled the leaflet, “An Open Letter to the Black Collaborator - The Minister of the Police,” in which they addressed first the criminalization of their group. “The minute we are out of prison walls we are not criminals,” they claimed, declaring that their status as youth who had previous convictions should not limit their participation in the political sphere.\textsuperscript{72} Rather, they argued that the rejection of their permit to demonstrate fostered conditions in which crime was more likely to happen than if the permit had been approved. “Rejecting our request only drives us to break the law, as the demonstration against deprivation will take place.” The authors also pinpointed hypocrisy in the treatment of Russian and Eastern Jews. “Why can those of Golda Meir’s ethnic group demonstrate for Soviet Jewry, and we are not allowed to say a word about our condition?” they argued. Here, the Panthers referenced ethnicity as an explicit division between their group and others in Israel. Specifically, they raised the point that Ashkenazi Jews could demonstrate for the concerns of immigrants from one particular country, whereas the Panthers had been discouraged from speaking publicly about the difficult living conditions faced by Eastern Jews, the demographic majority of Jews in Israel at that time.

The Panthers also announced that they had garnered support from outside Jerusalem. They had received support from Eastern Jewish communities in Kiryat Shmona, Beit She’an, Shlomi, and Dimona. These groups had not interacted with Matzpen, the authors indicated. The authors also declared that they had caught the Prime Minister’s attention, claiming, “Golda Meir is interested in us,” and that, “we are willing to meet with her at any time and place;” revealing that one of their early goals was to

meet with Meir and express their concerns to her. Through this leaflet and its immediate appearance in public, the Panthers rejected their portrayal as “hardened criminals” and signified that they would not be deterred.

The Jerusalem Police, for their part, exercised the power that Meir had vested in them in order to stop the protest. The police arrested Sa’adía Marziano, Charlie Biton, and six others from the group as well as a few Matzpen members, preventively detaining them in a Jerusalem prison until the day after the protest. The neighborhood Rabbi tried unsuccessfully to convince the Panthers to call off the demonstration.

Despite the fact that Marziano, Biton, and their comrades sat in prison, the March 3 demonstration proceeded as scheduled in their absence. On March 3, roughly 350 people attended, mostly students, activists, and intellectuals, as previously mentioned. The demonstration lasted roughly an hour and the police did not intervene. Protestors marched on the police station demanding the release of the prisoners. Then they marched to the municipality building where several supporters spoke on the position of Eastern Jews, freedom of speech, and democratic rights. While the police stood by, Mayor Teddy Kollek leaned out of his office window inside the municipality building and shouted at the protestors to “get off the grass.” The phrase would linger in the minds of several who were gathered that day, and presumably among some of the Panthers who were in prison but heard the story later. Several months later, demonstrators carried placards at another event that stated, “Teddy - We Shall Not Get Off the Grass.”

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73 Burkett, Golda, 252.
Building the Panther core, 1971

The Panthers’ demonstration and the state’s preemptive arrest of the Panther leaders thrust open a public debate about ethnicity and inequality in Israel. The press had covered the demonstration in great detail. Biton recalled that the demonstration had been covered, “in the front page of the newspaper, so it had power.” Here, Biton offered his analysis that front-page coverage can significantly augment the perceived importance of an event. Biton also remembered that many journalists participated in the demonstration themselves. “The highlight,” Biton recalled, was that the first demonstration was covered in “the main Israeli radio program, in the middle of the day.”

In the subsequent weeks, journalists wrote follow-up articles that chronicled the personal stories of the Panther founders and the issues they had raised; the articles acknowledged that while the Panthers had opened the debate, the discussion of poverty and ethnic inequality was destined to be of importance to the whole country. An article that appeared on March 6 in popular centrist newspaper Maariv highlighted the fact that the national government had begun paying attention to the Panthers’ concerns. With the headline, “The Black Panthers helped the government ‘find’ the budget,” Maariv reported that the Israeli Minister of Finance and the Minister of Welfare had agreed on a supplementary budget of 80 million Israeli pounds (US $22.9 million) in order to address urgent needs in impoverished neighborhoods. The article connected this special provision of funding to the concerns that the Panthers had raised in their demonstration.

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75 Biton II, 30:30.
77 “The Black Panthers helped the government ‘find’ the budget,” Maariv, March 7, 1971, as quoted in Bernstein, “The Black Panthers,” 162. The IRACA pamphlet also details this expenditure, but quotes the amount at £ 100 million, further underscoring the possibility that its authors had difficulty translating the information coming from Israel to the UK. ISRACA, “The Black Panthers in Israel,” 5.

Elsewhere, the minority of journalists who toed the government’s line even joined the debate. They pointed out that the Panthers should be discounted as unsuitable spokesmen for Eastern Jews because of their past delinquency and connections with the Left.

The publicity around the Panthers sparked interest among potential recruits who helped to expand the core of the group. Chief among these new Panthers were Reuven Abergel, a Moroccan whose younger brother had helped found the group; Kokhavi Shemesh, an Iraqi; and Rafi Marziano, Sa’adia’s younger brother. Abergel was slightly older than the rest at age twenty-eight, married, and a father. He had spent longer in jail than the others, but he had also ingratiated himself to the community workers in the neighborhood, who remembered him as their ‘helper.’ Shemesh was a young Iraqi who worked at a printing press and whom the Panthers would elect as their leader in June 1971. He also served as one of the main spokespeople for the group. Rafi Marziano became involved through his brother Sa’adia, the most visible of the Panthers’ members.

Although unbeknownst to the Panthers at the time, the Israeli government immediately infiltrated the group, emphasizing the degree to which the state perceived the Panthers as a threat. Accordingly, the state recruited Ya’akov Elbaz, who was roughly forty years old and had a reputation for organized crime. Elbaz joined the group shortly after its first demonstration, and he commanded a powerful presence because he supplied large sums of money to the group and heavily advocated violence. The Israel State Archives released documents in 2007 that reveal that Elbaz served as an undercover

79 Biton I, 20:00.
81 Ibid., 202.
informant for the Jerusalem police within the Panthers.\textsuperscript{82} The State Archive documents include internal newsletters describing the day-to-day activities of and conversations among the Panthers, details likely provided by Elbaz.\textsuperscript{83} Charlie Biton stated that he now knows that Elbaz brought the group Molotov cocktails because he, “was planted by the police in the organization to try to make it look more radical.”\textsuperscript{84} It is highly likely that the police established a number of sources of information within the group other than Elbaz, introducing an element of distrust that reinforced existing tensions and introduced others.

Another of the new members, Reuven Abergel, declared his flat the Black Panther Headquarters, an act that led to tensions within the group. Abergel lived in a small one-room apartment and, as the oldest Panther at age twenty-eight was the only member to head his own household. Thus, relative to the younger Panthers, he had a greater degree of freedom and could offer his home as a meeting space. In Abergel’s account, some other Panther members set up his house as the headquarters by hanging a sign reading “Black Panther Headquarters” over his back door. Charlie Biton, however, claims that Abergel “put a notice in a sign - ‘Black Panthers’ - and he did what the police expected of him to do.”\textsuperscript{85} In fact, Sa’adia Marziano and his core group leveled serious suspicions that Abergel was a police informer, which Biton echoed in our interviews. Both Shemesh and Biton claimed that the Panthers met in their early months not at Abergel’s house, but

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\textsuperscript{84} Biton II, 13:00.

\textsuperscript{85} Respectively, Abergel I, 52:00 and Biton II, 21:00.

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instead on the roof of Panther Koko Dera’i’s home.\textsuperscript{86} It is likely that both spaces served as meeting spaces for different factions within the group, with Sa’adja Marziano and his founding group meeting at Koko Der’ai’s house and Reuven Abergel, Rafi Abergel, and Ya’akov Elbaz and other newer members at Abergel’s home (see Figure 41).

Figure 41: Meeting at Black Panther headquarters, Musrara, 1971
“This is my wife, sleeping. I am here, wearing a scarf. And this [points to third man from the left] is the Shabak [intelligence service officer.]” -Reuven Abergel\textsuperscript{87}
Source: Private collection of Reuven Abergel.

This photograph also reveals aspects of the Panthers’ interiority and gender politics. They used media resources to stage their movement, as demonstrated in the photograph by the placement of the typewriter along the far wall and the books and papers seen on the meeting table. In addition, they made hybrid use of their limited

\textsuperscript{86} Shemesh II, 16:00 and Biton II, 22:00.
\textsuperscript{87} Reuven Abergel, interview by author, partial transl. Sergio Yahni, November 22, 2009, Jerusalem, Israel, part II of II (hereafter Abergel II), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 12:00.
resources, such that the group met here while Abergel’s wife attempted to sleep less than five feet away. The fact that she is sleeping rather than participating in the meeting points to the fact that although women participated in and were welcomed at Panther events, few women joined the movement as members. This disparity must be understood within the context of the militarism of Israeli society and the cultures of North Africa and the Middle East. Universal male conscription predisposed the Panthers, with their militaristic approach, to a male-dominated organization. With regard to the structure of the Arab family and men’s expected roles as breadwinners, men spoke more often in public about their experiences of oppression. This does not mean that women failed to experience the oppression of their partners, of course, but that they had fewer opportunities to voice their concerns publicly. Although only a few women joined the Panthers, many others supported the movement informally, through administration, preparing meals, and hosting meetings, such as Abergel’s wife has done here. These women served the Panther movement in the absence of the public recognition that members received, as the Panthers’ militaristic style and organization largely excluded women from taking on externally-visible roles.

Despite the early tensions between Abergel and Marziano and their respective cohorts, the Panthers had established themselves as an organization with goals and an identity, which they codified through the creation of membership cards. Every recruit to the Panthers had to pledge to stop committing crime, after which he or she was entitled to a membership card. The Panthers emphasized this policy in media interviews and on public platforms, underscoring the idea that Black Panther membership extended to all

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parts of a person’s life. As Reuven Abergel explained, “We, the Panthers, were activists
everyday of our lives. We were meeting with each other every minute, every hour,
because we were all of us in one pressure cooker.”89 The membership card thus
represented a commitment to a way of life. In addition to the pledge, prospective
members contributed five Israeli pounds (US $1.43) in dues to the organization.90 One
side of the card included places for the member’s photograph, their name, occupation,
year of birth, and the signature of a witness (see Figure 42). The reverse (see Figure 43)
depicted a Panther underneath the slogan “Enough Poverty” and above the words “Black
Panther Organization.”91 The card also listed the organization’s six goals:

1. The elimination of slums
2. Free education for those in need, from kindergarten to university
3. Free housing for families in need
4. The elimination of institutions for juvenile delinquents and the establishment of
   vocational and agricultural boarding schools in their place
5. Increased salaries for those supporting large families
6. Full representation of the Orientals in all institutions.92

89 Abergel I, 47:00.
90 Abergel I, 55:00.
91 Black Panther Party, Ramat Gan Branch, in RG 79.3/392/18, “Israeli Police, Headquarters - The Dan
Region (Ramat Gan),” ISA.
92 Ibid.
Figure 42: Inside, Membership Card, Black Panther Organization- Ramat Gan Branch, May 25, 1971.

Figure 43: Outside, Membership Card, Black Panther Organization- Ramat Gan Branch.

Source: Black Panther Organization, Ramat Gan Branch, in RG 79.3/392/18, “Israeli Police, Headquarters - The Dan Region (Ramat Gan),” Israel State Archives.
Having organized a demonstration, developed goals, and established meeting places and membership requirements, the Panthers soon turned to cultural politics, where they wrote a satirical take on the traditional Passover Seder Hagadda. Entitled, “The Hagadda in Black Panther Style,” the Panthers used the traditional narrative of the “Four Children” or “Four Sons” to introduce four characters that illustrated the ways in which Eastern Jews were doubly victimized. In their narrative, the four sons became an Ashkenazi son, a Sephardi son, a rich son, and a poor son. The verse begins with the rich son offering of construction work as a way of ‘rescuing’ the poor son. In response the poor son says, “I am not asking for any favors and I have not risen against the government, and as I don’t speak Yiddish - I get kicked out.” The Ashkenazi son then asked, “How come this Sephardi is asking to go to the University? Why he hardly finished primary school and can hardly express his opinions, if he has any - and suddenly he rises and demands his rights.” The Sephardi son responds, “It is true that for twenty-two years I have not said anything, I have not asked to be given better housing, and I have not cried out against the poor education, and the discrimination, and all the constraints from which we have suffered and still suffered to this day.” The Sephardi son then staked his claim to Israeli citizenship, declaring, “Being an Oriental Jew, here I am - demanding my right of existence - as an Israeli citizen, loyal to the People of Israel wherever they are.”

The Panthers added a section to the Hagadda entitled, “The Black Panthers - What do they say?” that addressed the issue of cultural pride among Sephardic Jews. The Panthers noted that they believed Sephardi Jewish culture was rich and diverse; that it

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was more educational and enlightening than Ashkenazi culture; that Sephardi Jews had served as a good example throughout history; and that Sephardic culture was possibly more valuable than Eastern European Jewish culture. “Sephardic culture is culture,” they wrote, indicating a belief that culture would not exist without the specific contributions that Sephardic Jews had offered.94

The Panthers’ creative tactics and level of collective support prompted city officials to attempt to individualize the young men’s concerns and to use the white left as a scapegoat for the appearance of the movement. Rabbi Porush, the head of Jerusalem’s Division of Community and Group Work, asked Mayor Teddy Kollek to fire all the community workers in Jerusalem who had worked with the Musrara youth.95 Porush claimed, falsely, that the community workers had introduced the Matzpen members to the Musrara youth and had helped them instigate and infiltrate the Panther movement. Kollek rejected Porush’s demand; instead, the mayor insisted that the community workers deal with the Musrara youth on an individual basis. Accordingly, the Division of the Community Work sent Meir Levy and Eli Avigzar, two new Panther members, on a year’s course in hotel work near Tel Aviv. The Minister of Police also met with Sa’adia Marziano and Reuven Abergel, offering them equipment for the Cellar youth club, help in organizing social activities, and complimentary bus tours of the country. While a few members took advantage of these opportunities in order to develop job skills, the majority of the Panthers saw these offers as appeasement and declined them.

In search of collective change rather than token provisions, the Panthers went to significant lengths to secure a group meeting with Prime Minister Meir. In early April,

94 Ibid., 391, Appendix 3b.
95 Ibid., 174.
the Panthers submitted an official request for a meeting with the Prime Minister, to which they received an evasive reply.97 On April 11, Reuven Abergel announced that the Panthers had started a hunger strike at the Kotel or Wailing Wall, one of the holiest sites in Judaism, which they would continue until Meir agreed to their meeting request. The hunger strike mimicked a recent protest by Russian Jews, who had demonstrated at the Wailing Wall against the mistreatment of Jews in the USSR. In this way, the Panthers asserted their right to protest like Ashkenazi Jews had done. The Panthers’ symbolic protest in a well-trafficked space attracted public attention. According to Iraqi Jewish journalist Nissim Rejwan, within a little more than an hour of beginning the strike, the Panthers had received a message at the Kotel inviting them to meet the Prime Minister two days later.98

On April 13, a group of the Black Panthers, who before that day had interacted with Israeli government officials mostly in jails and courtrooms, met with Prime Minister Golda Meir. Around the long table in Meir’s office sat Reuven Abergel, Sa’adiah Marziano, Kokhavi Shemesh, a fifteen-year-old recent Panther recruit, Meir, and two of her Cabinet members, Minister of Education Yigal Allon and Minister of Social Welfare Michael Hazani. Kokhavi Shemesh remembered that, upon their arrival Shabak officers searched the Panthers and took what they had in their pockets. When it came time to smoke during the meeting, Shemesh recalled, the Panthers had no cigarettes or lighters on them. They saw Meir’s wooden box filled with Liggett & Myers Chesterfields, and a few of the Panthers helped themselves to a cigarette. Meir noticed this, removed the box, and

97 Ibid., 421 fn. 23.
put it away in a drawer. “It was the beginning. We were taking cigarettes, but she didn’t like it…” Shemesh explained. “And then we became more nervous.”

Trained in the clandestine, disciplined world of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, which she led from 1956 to 1966 before becoming Prime Minister in 1969, Meir had a reputation for refusing to accept citizens’ criticisms of government. Golda treated her meeting with the Panthers as an individual interview of each young man in the room. As Shemesh recalled, once the cigarette box was stowed, Meir, “started with the investigation. ‘Where do you work? What are you doing?’” When Meir’s interviews turned to the fifteen-year-old boy in the group, Shemesh remembered that she also asked him where he worked. At this question, Shemesh remembered having interrupted the interview. Shemesh asked Meir, “‘Have you no shame?… Instead of asking him why aren’t you at school, you asked him why he isn't at work… If he was a child from Russia or Poland or Germany, you would ask him, 'why aren't you in school?’” Here, Shemesh pointed out Meir’s assumption that a teenager from Musrara was a high school dropout as prejudicial.

The Panthers had prepared a slate of ideas that they wished to discuss with Meir. When Abergel asked if the Panthers could be involved with any senior government officials working on those issues, Meir replied:

There will be no such thing. I would like to tell you something: the government, the state, were not born yesterday. I have heard you. Now you listen to me. It is not enough and more has to be done, but it did not begin yesterday or a month ago when you got organized. If you want, and if you are interested you will receive a list of how many families were taken out of slums over the years. I know about it

99 Shemesh I, 1:17:00.
100 Burkett, Golda 248-249.
102 Shemesh I, 1:18:00.
103 Ibid., 1:18:30.
- you haven’t revealed anything new today.\textsuperscript{104}

The group brought with them a list of thirty-three proposals for improving the situation of Eastern Jews, which they categorized under the headings housing, reform schools, education, and crime. Abergel read the proposals aloud.

The Panthers’ perceived parallel relationship to African-Americans and the question of why they had formed a Black Panther Party preoccupied Meir more than other issues. Given her upbringing in Wisconsin, her affinity for American Jews, and the strong relationship between Israel and the United States by 1971, Meir was aware of the US Black Panthers.\textsuperscript{105} Reuven Abergel recalled that Meir asked them many times, “Why did you choose this name in particular?”\textsuperscript{106} Abergel recalled that the group explained to her that they felt that their concerns and history were like those of African-Americans, to which she responded by telling them that the US Panthers were anti-Semitic.\textsuperscript{107} The Musrara group’s claiming of an identity of African-Americans, who were engaged in a battle for full civil rights and economic equality, also unsettled Meir because it implied that the Zionist-socialist experiment in Israel was floundering.

Kokhavi Shemesh also recalled that Meir gave them a lecture about the expense of national security, implying that there were not enough resources to keep Israelis safe and meet the Panthers’ demands.\textsuperscript{108} Although the precise content of this lecture is unknown, we can surmise its contours. For Meir, the idea of an alliance between Eastern

\textsuperscript{104} Stenographer’s minutes, meeting between Prime Minister Golda Meir and Black Panthers, Prime Minister’s Office, April 13, 1971, Hebrew University Library, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem (hereafter HUL). Translated English quotations from Bernstein, “The Black Panthers of Israel,” 176.
\textsuperscript{105} Historian Elinor Burkett calls Meir, “by upbringing, an American Zionist. Unschooled in lofty Eastern European rhetoric, she knew the American audience, where their fears and dreams lay buried, what made their emotions vanquish their intellects.” Burkett, \textit{Golda}, 64.
\textsuperscript{106} Abergel I, 7:30.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 4:30.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 252.
Jews and Palestinian or Israeli Arabs presented a potential security threat to the state. This threat could also generate a lack of confidence in Meir’s leadership among Israelis as well as among Zionist donors, of whom the growing majority were American Jews. There is also evidence to suggest that Meir, in this meeting or in subsequent conversations, claimed that she could not redirect funds to Eastern neighborhoods because the government’s money came from abroad and was earmarked for certain programs. As influential Israeli columnist Sophie Keshet explained, “The argument that the money came from abroad has no force for if the donors were told that it is necessary to replace the slums and the ghettos with new quarters, they would provide the funds.”

Meir’s sensitivity to the potential concerns of American Jews and her status as a relative outsider to Israel’s dominant culture of European Jewry came to a head in an interaction she had with Sa’adion Marziano. Marziano complained to the Prime Minister that in spite of having been born in Israel, he had a Moroccan accent that predisposed him to greater discrimination every time he spoke. Meir replied, referencing her thick American accent, “So what? Is my accent any better?” Marziano responded to her, “Give me your [American] accent, and I’ll manage.” In his reply, Marziano intimated that Meir’s American afforded her cultural and social capital, which contrasted with Marziano’s experiences of discrimination when he spoke with his Moroccan accent. More generally, the episode highlighted accents as a key marker of insider or outsider status in Israel.

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110 Sa’adion Marziano, Yediot Aharanot July 16, 1971, as quoted in Sami Shalom Chetrit, “‘Either the Pie Is for Everyone, or There Won't Be No Pie!’” 101.
The most significant outcome of the meeting between the Panthers and Meir lay in the fact that the Prime Minister had recognized them and by extension their concerns as important, whether or not she agreed with their politics. Following Abergel’s presentation of the Panther’s thirty-three proposals, Meir and her colleagues left the meeting in a rush to get to the Knesset, promising the group that they would hear more from them in the future. Soon thereafter, Meir appointed a government commission to study “Youth in Distress,” which comprised a large body of academics, professionals, and administrators. In light of the fact that the members of this group were largely middle-class and middle-aged European Jewish men, the commission’s chair, Dr. Israel Katz, suggested to the Prime Minister that she appoint one or two of the Panthers she had met to join the body. Meir rejected the idea. The Panthers dutifully retold their first-hand encounters with Meir and her brusque responses in the media, however, which demonstrated publicly that the young activists had earned the ear of the country’s leader.

Meir’s assertion that the US Black Panthers espoused anti-Semitism, though inaccurate on an official level, was founded in legitimate fears of anti-Zionist sentiments that the Panthers had expressed. Two diverging viewpoints on Israel-Palestine had emerged from the US Panthers in the year that preceded the emergence of their Israeli counterparts. The Oakland-based Black Panthers, led by Huey P. Newton, presented a viewpoint from which the Party’s International Section in Algiers, headed by Eldridge Cleaver, diverged. Both viewpoints were derived from an anti-imperialist ideology, but they differed in their emphasis and the actions they called for. The multiple opinions of various US Panther members on this issue, and the concomitant uncertainty over which

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111 Bernstein, “The Black Panthers of Israel,” 177.
views represented the group, generated another disjuncture in the process of circulating Black Power to Israel.

Speaking at a press conference at radio station KPFA in Berkeley, California on August 26, 1970, US Panther leader Huey Newton had declared accusations of anti-Semitism against the Black Panthers to be in and of themselves racist. “We would like to make it very clear that the Black Panther Party is not anti-Semitic,...” Newton explained. “As far as the Israeli people are concerned, we are not against the Jewish people.”

Newton acknowledged that some Panthers had made anti-Semitic statements in anger in order to, “hurt some of our White radical friends, because we believed that they did not live up to the friendship agreement.” However, Newton argued, “These were internal fights. They should have been kept internal.” Newton also clarified that:

We realize that some people who happen to be Jewish and who support Israel will use the Black Panther Party’s position that it is against imperialism and against the agents of the imperialist as an attack of anti-Semitism. We think that is a backbiting, racist underhanded tactic and we will treat it as such. We have respect for all people, and we have respect for the right of any people to exist. So we want the Palestinian people and the Jewish people to live in harmony together. We support the Palestinians’ just struggle for liberation one hundred percent. We will go on doing this, and we would like for all of the progressive people of the world to join our ranks in order to make a world in which all people can live.

Newton’s speech was reprinted in an issue of *Jewish Currents* magazine in New York in February 1971, further increasing the possibility that Meir or American Jewish donors had read the speech and responded to it.

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113 Ibid., 4.
The Israeli Panther movement emerged against a backdrop of the Palestinian struggle’s use of armed resistance, thus the International Section of the Panthers in Algiers’ support for the Palestinian cause constituted a greater potential security threat to Israel than Newton’s faction did. Less than three weeks before the Israeli Panthers staged their first demonstration in Jerusalem, Don Cox of the International Section presented a position paper to the Second International Symposium on Palestine. At the symposium, held in Kuwait City from February 13 to 17, 1971, Cox’s paper traced the International Section’s stance on a number of issues, including Israel. Cox asserted that, “The Black Panther Party unconditionally and firmly supports the just struggle of the Palestinian people and their war of national salvation against the lackey state of Israel and its imperialist backers.” Here, Cox positioned Israel as the weak, ‘yes man’ beneficiary of countries with imperial designs. Specifically, the International Section saw Israel as a common enemy of all those opposed to American Imperialism. “The Black Panther Party calls upon all the progressive people, parties, organizations, governments and movements to mount a new offensive,” Cox declared, “against the piratical and barbarous U.S. Imperialist Empire and its bootlicking Zionist puppet Israel.”

Two weeks after Cox published his position paper, on February 26, Huey Newton expelled Eldridge Cleaver and the International Section from the US Black Panther

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Party. The split between Cleaver and Newton was not ostensibly related to the issue of coalition with Al Fatah or calling for an offensive against Israel, but it was related to Newton’s conviction that the Black Panther Party should continue its work within the US system. Likewise the Panthers in the US faced direct and violent confrontation with the political system on a daily basis. Alternatively, Cleaver had come to believe that black liberation in the United States was inextricably linked to the end of American imperialism abroad. Thus, by forming alliances with those who opposed American imperialism throughout the world, the International Section of the Panthers had fostered an environment for the development of anti-Zionist ideas such as Cox’s.

However, these differences of opinion may not have mattered to Meir, her Cabinet, or Israelis who opposed the Panthers, as the Israeli public perception of Black Panther anti-Semitism loomed large. A March 1971 Haaretz article obscured the divergences on Israel among Cleaver, Newton, and Black Power leader (though no longer a Panther) Stokely Carmichael, which stimulated the perception that the Panthers were universally anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist. The lengthy article dealt with relations between African-Americans and Jews in the United States. Specifically, the article’s authors posited that Black Power’s anti-Semitism impeded relations within the New Left.

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118 *Haaretz Magazine* January 15, 1971, in Frankel, "What's in a Name? The Black Panthers in Israel,” 15. The eclipsing of individual viewpoints and debates within the Black Power Movement can also be found in some of the scholarship on international Black Panther movements. In the footnote to the *Haaretz* article referenced here, Frankel notes that in an April 1970 broadcast of *The David Frost Show*, a UK television program, Stokely Carmichael stated that Adolf Hitler was the white man he admired most. Here, Frankel fails to note that Carmichael had broken with the US Panthers in the summer of 1969 and that he no longer represented their viewpoints. Frankel, “What’s in a name?” 24 fn. 32.
Meir also had legitimate reason to fear that Israel could lose some of its citizens to the United States. An article that appeared in *Haaretz* on March 9, 1971, a week after the Panthers’ first demonstration, warned that America offered a temptation to Israelis.\(^{119}\) The Jewish Agency sent official emissaries to the United States to promote interest in Zionism and immigration to Israel. The article suggests that the emissaries who at first mocked American materialism and culture grew to enjoy the service culture, cheap goods, and what they saw as the relative plenty of life in the United States. Some grew so “intoxicated,” the article said, that they decided to settle in the United States. This reverse migration subverted the emissaries’ role as cheerleaders for Israel and threatened to weaken the state.

The Israeli Panthers themselves also disagreed on whether the US Panthers were anti-Semitic, highlighting the murky ways in which narratives about the US Panthers traveled, sometimes obscuring internal debates or shifting policy positions. When asked where he had learned that the US Panthers were anti-Semitic, Kokhavi Shemesh claimed, “All the time we were discussing this here in Israel, in the media. It was as clear as day.”\(^{120}\) In the meeting between Meir and the Panthers, Sa’adia Marziano conceded that the US Panthers were “against Jews.” Later, Charlie Biton argued that the US Panthers only hated Jews when they claimed an imperialist role.\(^{121}\)

**Local Actions, Transnational Alliances: Coalition-Building on Musrara’s Peripheries, 1971-1973**

The Panthers emerged from the Meir meeting ready to return to direct action; the Panthers harnessed the encouraging public response to their early efforts in order to

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\(^{119}\) *Haaretz*, March 9, 1971, as quoted in Ibid., 19.  
\(^{120}\) Shemesh I, 1:47:00.  
\(^{121}\) Frankel, “What’s in a Name?” 15.
elevate Musrara as the capital of black politics in Israel. From the summer of 1971 to early 1973, the Panthers built coalitions with Eastern Jews in cities, development towns, and settlements on Musrara’s periphery and they built transnational alliances with American Jews, Palestinian Arabs, and European leftists. Through these efforts, the Panthers built their own state within the state of Israel. They did not deny their Israeli citizenship, nor did most Panthers deny Israel's right to exist, but they also created shadow systems of governance that would ensure Eastern Jews were represented politically, even if in an informal manner.

After a month of meetings with various organizations, the Panthers jettisoned institutional politics and refocused their efforts on organizing Eastern neighborhoods and on staging protests in highly visible public spaces. Given the security environment and relative insularity of Israeli domestic politics, the Panthers also began to look outside Israel for potential allies for their struggle. The politics of capital inflows, land divisions, and Ashkenazi Jews’ minority hegemony over the fates of Arabs from several different religious and national backgrounds—Palestinian Arabs, Arab Muslim Israelis, Arab Christian Israelis, and Arab Jewish Israelis—led the Panthers to begin to incorporate a transnational lens for their anti-imperial struggle. Although Panther members sometimes disagreed on the nature of these transnational alliances, the group sought out partnerships in an effort to build the foreign policy of their emerging system of shadow governance.

In the month after the meeting with Meir, the Panthers staged two public protests in Jerusalem and two in Tel Aviv, where for the first time, neighborhoods outside

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122 Frankel calls this phenomenon, “a rather claustrophobic insistence on national cohesion” in Israeli domestic politics. Ibid., 12.
Jerusalem identified as Black Panthers. In Jerusalem, Panthers appeared at the Alliance of Moroccan Immigrants' (AMI) celebration of Mimuna, a North African holiday on the last day of Passover on April 18, 1971. Roughly thirty-five Panthers protested at the celebration chanting, "Kulanu Panterim," or "We are all Panthers!" Some of the AMI's attendees joined in, but when the Panthers tried to get hold of the microphone on stage, the police intervened and arrested eleven of the Panthers. The morning after the arrest, Edi Malka raised bail for himself and his comrades, and he obtained a permit for another protest that same day, April 19.

The Panthers rallied a few hundred people in less than a day to attend the April 19 protest, which took place at Menora Square just outside the city center. The speakers at this demonstration included the Panthers, students, a father of ten children, and a well-known Matzpen member. After the descriptions of poverty, deprivation, and discrimination, one of the Panthers explained that, "The State is to blame for the situation which has developed." The Panthers referenced the government's refrain that, "We are told that this is not the time to talk about poverty, as the State has serious problems of defense," and they offered a counterargument. "We are also defense. If 40,000 or 80,000 people are in prison, another 20,000 are released from the army because of crime records and another few thousands are in reform schools - well, that is also a blow to defense." The Panthers viewed their treatment as second-class citizens as a serious impediment to Israeli security. They argued that they could not serve the state as full citizens if they were in prison, reform schools, or if the government prevented their service due to minor

124 Black Panther Demonstration, April 19, 1971, Jerusalem, as quoted in Ibid., 179.
125 Ibid.
crimes they had committed as teenagers.

Danny Sa'il, an Iraqi Jew in his early 30s organized an emerging cadre of Panthers in Tel Aviv. Inspired by the framework the Jerusalem Panthers had developed, Danny sold his apartment and purchased a van, which he told people at the Jerusalem headquarters that he did in order to work in service of the movement. Sa'il organized a group of supporters from Tel Aviv and the nearby town of Ramla, whom he drove from Tel Aviv to the April 18 and 19 demonstrations in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Panthers, in turn, traveled to Tel Aviv for a May Day demonstration where they spoke on the platforms of a range of Leftist groups. Kokhavi Shemesh described this event as evidence of the "snowball" effect that the Jerusalem Panthers had produced. Two days later, Sa'il called for a Black Panther demonstration at the Tel Aviv Town Hall. Here, the Jerusalem Panthers joined once again as Sa'il led a protest against deplorable conditions in two Tel Aviv slums and in support of the tenants of those neighborhoods who sought government compensation for their forced displacement from the slum in light of an urban renewal scheme.

The Jerusalem Panthers returned home from Tel Aviv to friction within the group, which led them to engage in action as a way of avoiding a split in the organization. Unbeknownst to most of the rest of the group, Reuven Abergel had visited a lawyer to register the organization as an Ottomanic Association, which would allow the group to function as a public interest company. In the company documents, he had named himself, his brother, and Rafi Marziano as the leaders of the organization, failing to include

126 Ibid., 180.
127 Shemesh I, 1:14:00. See also, Black Panthers in Israel, 5.
Despite the blow that Abergel's actions dealt to group unity, the Panthers wanted to avoid a public split in the organization, so they decided to hold a large, symbolic demonstration on May 18, 1971. The group decided that they wanted to take control of Zion Square, an iconic public space at a crossroads in Jerusalem’s shopping and municipal district. They would gather at nearby Davidka Square and march to Zion Square en masse to attract others to participate. Rafi Marziano suggested that the group rename Zion Square, “The Square of Oriental Jewry” for the night as evidence of their takeover. The Panthers applied for and received a permit, but the police stipulated that although the group could march in Jerusalem, they could not enter the square.129

On the night of May 18, despite the permit’s stipulations, between four and five thousand people who had read publicity about the demonstration gathered in Zion Square. During the rally at Davidka Square, Panther sympathizer Joseph Schwartz reported at a press conference, the police arrested Danny Sa’il and dragged him in order to provoke a reaction.130 The Panther organizers had begun the night unsure about whether to go to the Square because of the police’s prohibition. But upon seeing their comrade dragged and learning had gathered in the Square, they decided to enter it. As they marched, they chanted, “Ku-la-nu Pan-te-rim” (“We are all Panthers.”) Rafi Marziano led the marchers, chanting, “Ours is a Jewry, the real Jewry.”131

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129 Ibid., 184.
Tensions mounted as the marchers arrived in the Square. Jerusalem police had gathered in the side streets in riot gear and many were mounted on horseback. Panther supporter Shulamith Tsubri had distributed leaflets for the Panthers to advertise the demonstration and had brought her family of fifteen whom she described as living in “abject hunger” to Zion Square to attend what she thought would be a nonviolent, quiet event. But when the Panthers arrived in the Square, police superintendent Bar’eli commanded those gathered to disperse and declared the demonstration illegal. Sa’adia Marziano responded by shouting to protestors from the middle of the square, “Don’t move.” Then, Tsubri noted:

I saw a shocking sight. From the side streets the police came out with horses, helmets, and shields; they charged at us in order to trample us under the horses’ hooves. I was walking with a leaflet; a policeman came to me and tore it up. Around me I saw that our people were actually torn to bits. A policeman picked me up, hit me; another came along and threw me into the crowd.

Although it is unclear exactly how the clashes began, they lasted into the next morning. Demonstrators broke into small groups and hid in side streets, occasionally entering the Square to throw bottles at the police (see Figure 44). Police roamed the Square, intermittently hitting protestors with batons and beating them. Late that night, two Molotov cocktails were thrown. Sa’adia Marziano reported that the Panthers did not know who threw them, and Danny Sa’il went so far as to claim that the police had pre-planned all of the clashes that took place on May 18, using agents provocateur in order to make the Panthers appear violent.

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133 Ibid.  
134 IRACA, Black Panthers in Israel, 5.  
Police arrested roughly 100 demonstrators, many of whom had not previously been Panther supporters but who had come to the Square in anticipation of the “Oriental Jewry” event. In the police vans and in jail, police beat the arrested men and women senseless. Mazal Sa’il, the wife of Danny Sa’il and who participated in many Panther demonstrations, reported being punched, having her hair pulled, and having watched as her husband was dragged in the road. She said she thought he had died. Mazal Sa’il also remembered that, upon her arrest, she asked a policewoman at the jail to give a pregnant arrested woman some food. The policewoman responded, Sa’il recalled, by calling Sa’il

136 Sa’adia Marziano, Shulamith Tsubri, Danny Sa’il, Simon Michaeli, Mazal Sa’il, Irith Yacobi, Nathan Katz, Shai Hausmann, and Noam Kaminer all reported having been beaten in prison that night. Ibid., 7-14.
and Irith Yacobi, another protestor, prostitutes. Sa’il retorted, “You are the top Nazi.”\footnote{Mazal Sa’il, in Ibid., 10.}

Yacobi, a self-avowed pacifist, recalled that when a policeman started to beat her, she shouted, “Heil Hitler.” Here, Sa’il and Yacobi indicated the depth of their rage. Eight police then threw Yacobi to the ground and kicked her while she lay on the floor, she reported.\footnote{Irith Yacobi, in Ibid., 11.}

Sa’adia Marziano related that upon his arrival in a patrol car at the police station, a policeman made a telephone call. A group of policemen then took Marziano into a side street and kicked and beat him with sticks for twenty minutes. Two hours later, the police took him to the hospital before placing him in solitary confinement. A detective appeared at Marziano’s cell and told him, “’You will get a bullet in your head,’” Marziano reported.\footnote{Sa’adia Marziano, in Ibid., 13. Marziano also noted that one of the detectives, Inbar, was “one with sadistic hobbies,” which suggests that Marziano or a comrade may have been raped while in jail. Marziano, in Ibid.}

These stories and other people’s accounts of that night in jail pervaded public discussion in the months following the May 18 protest such that the Jerusalem Police Chief Commissioner appointed an internal inquiry into what happened. The inquiry’s report was never released to the public.\footnote{Bernstein, “The Black Panthers,” 186.}

Over the two days that the Square of Oriental Jewry demonstrators spent in jail, Jerusalem police also attempted to co-opt them. Charlie Biton recalled that after the demonstration had ended, the jail wardens took Sa’adia Marziano, Eli Avigzar, and him to a floor of the police station where Jerusalem police commander Turjeman worked. He remembered that the police were enjoying snacks and drinks. “When we were arrested,”
Biton remembered, “everything was paper cups, but here everything was so nice.”\textsuperscript{141}

Subsequent events revealed that the police had used this lavish reception in an attempt to co-opt the movement. At the reception, at which Marziano reported the police opened several bottles of whiskey to drink with the Panthers, Ben Simhon, the head of the “Alliance of Israelis of Moroccan Origin,” a state-funded group for Moroccan immigrant absorption appeared and suggested that the Panthers join his group.\textsuperscript{142} The Alliance group was part of the Histadrut. Biton recalled that the Simhon had, “even prepared a document saying that we were united, that we were combining forces.”\textsuperscript{143} But, as Biton recalled, the Panthers declined the offer. Although he was sure that as Panthers they were more likely to be arrested, they would have been “less free” if they had joined the Alliance. At the May 20 press conference, Marziano denied leaked allegations that the Alliance and the Panthers had signed an agreement, calling the group, “an ‘Uncle Tom’ organization.”\textsuperscript{144}

On May 19, while many of the Panthers were in jail, Golda Meir spoke on a platform with Simhon at a cultural event put on by the Alliance. When Simhon noted that the Panthers were “nice boys,” Meir responded forcefully. “They are not nice,” she declared. “I met with them. Many are angry at me for inviting them. They claim I gave them prestige. I am not sorry. As long as I had not spoken with them, I couldn’t know what they were like... How can a hand be raised in the State of Israel to throw a Molotov cocktail at a Jew? Whoever does that is not nice.”\textsuperscript{145} The phrase “not nice boys” became

\textsuperscript{141} Biton II, 28:00.
\textsuperscript{142} Marziano in “Verbatim report of the press conference,” 13.
\textsuperscript{143} Biton II, 27:30.
\textsuperscript{144} Marziano in “Verbatim report of the press conference,” 13.
\textsuperscript{145} Golda Meir, May 19, 1971, as quoted in Bernstein, “The Black Panthers,” 188.
a catch phrase that the Panthers and the media used to describe how, in her own reserved words, Meir had demonized the group.

The Panthers held three more large demonstrations in the summer of 1971. A demonstration at Davidka Square on July 5, 1971, their largest, drew the support of between 6,000 and 7,000 people. They also held an August 23, 1971 demonstration outside an expensive hotel in Zion Square.

Figure 45: Black Panthers carry coffins, one labeled “Discrimination,” and a fist poster into Zion Square, August 28, 1971.


On August 28, 1971, the Panthers gathered once more in Zion Square. At this protest, Panthers carried coffins labeled “Disparity, “Ignorance,” and “Discrimination” (see Figure 45). At the event, a demonstrator lit an effigy of Prime Minister Golda Meir on fire. Panther speakers claimed, “We are warning the government that we will take all necessary means against show trials of the Panthers’ activists… A state in which half the
population are kings, and the other half are treated as exploited slaves – we will burn it
down.”146 This rhetoric demonstrated that the Eastern Panthers were willing to take
significant risks to reshape Israeli society. They made it clear that they did not approve of
the current government and that they were willing to act violently if provoked. The
Panthers insisted that the Ashkenazi government had failed to provide them with the
opportunities and homeland for which they had migrated. Panther Shalom Cohen argued
that the creation of an Eastern working class in Israel was “the big break between Zionist
ideology and Zionist reality. Zionist ideology says that we are one people—the Jewish
people—and it doesn’t matter where you come from, you are all equal.”147

While the Panthers continued these direct action protests, they also began to
receive support from and build alliances with sympathetic Americans. They attracted the
support of an American student named Ronnie Horowitz, who became a close friend of
Sa’adia Marziano’s and who traveled with the group to recruit members.148 In Figure 46,
Ronnie is pictured on the far right of the image. In the photograph, Horowitz comports
with the ideas of Black Power: his hair is styled in an Afro and he wears a t-shirt
emblazoned with the Malcolm X slogan “By Any Means Necessary.”

(UK), December 26, 2007.”
The Panthers’ most significant American supporter was political scientist Naomi Kies. Kies had migrated from Yonkers, New York to Jerusalem after the 1967 War, and she taught at the School for Preparatory Studies, a program for new immigrants and recently discharged soldiers, at the Hebrew University. After the Panthers’ first demonstration, Kies had sought out the group, perhaps out of a desire to continue the civil rights activism that she had begun as a political science graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Kies offered administrative and organizational service - establishing contacts, bailing detainees, driving Panthers to events, and coordinating media appearances, especially by providing translation services for foreign journalists. Kokhavi Shemesh recalled that when American journalist Bob Novak visited

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Jerusalem to report on social and economic problems among Israeli youth in August 1971, Kies organized an interview for him with Shemesh and she provided the translation. Shemesh also believed that Kies had worked with the Panthers in the US, which led the Israeli Panthers to appreciate her perspective and ideas.

On June 14, 1971, Arthur Hertzberg, a prominent Conservative Rabbi, lecturer of Jewish history at Columbia University, and board member of the Jewish Agency, offered a provocative implicit endorsement of the Panthers in a controversial speech at the American Cultural Center in Jerusalem. In his speech, Hertzberg warned that Israel was in danger of mimicking the racial problems of South Africa and the United, and he indicted the failure of the Zionists at maintaining the socialist ideal they had envisioned.

“What is most incomprehensible to someone who looks at contemporary Israel with love and deep involvement from the perspective of contemporary American experience,” he argued, “is the lack of sympathy, comprehension and identification of the Israeli religious leadership, intellectuals, and the middle class as a whole with the outcry of the poor.” Hertzberg added insult to injury by using the example of American Jewish support for civil rights as a benchmark. “Martin Luther King did not walk alone,” Hertzberg said, “for the most morally sensitive circles in white America were shaken and they identified. As of this moment, there is not a single rabbinic figure of public consequence in all of Israel who is publicly pleading for that one-fifth of its population which is abysmally and well-nigh hopelessly poor.” At a press conference later in the day, Hertzberg also

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152 Shemesh I, 1:40:00.
rejected the conventional argument that Israel’s resources had to be diverted from helping
the neediest in order to defend state security. “During the four years from 1967 when the
country was under siege,” he claimed, “the standard of living of the middle class
doubled... It seems the country is only under siege when it comes to the needs of the
twenty percent of the population who are below the poverty line.”154 Here, Hertzberg
implied that whenever Arab Jews raised their concerns, the Israeli government reverted to
focusing on the external Palestinian Arab threat as a way of ignoring this domestic issue.

The Panthers’ plan to travel to the United States in order to help redirect capital to
Eastern communities in Israel constituted their most expansive vision of promoting
equality and the redistribution of wealth. In late July, 1971, the Black Panthers’ lawyer, a
self-made Eastern named Shlomo Segev suggested to Sa’adia Marziano that the Panthers
should travel to the United States to speak with Jewish communities there, presenting the
facts of Eastern deprivation.155 Segev said that he had secured funding from some
wealthy Sephardi Jews who wished to remain anonymous. Naomi Kies would travel with
the Panthers, acting as their guide and translator. Marziano embraced the idea
wholeheartedly, and he raised it with the Panthers who after some discussion agreed to it
and chose a delegation to make the trip.

The Panthers’ announcement of the US tour was met with a public outcry among
Israelis, and with support from American Jews. Some Israelis penned letters to the editor
claimed that the Panthers would be ‘airing Israel’s dirty laundry.’ A few even argued that
the Panthers intended harm to the State of Israel by making the trip. The Panthers
repeatedly emphasized publicly that this was not their intention. Rather, they claimed, the

154 Ibid.
trip was meant to reach wealthy American Jews who would put pressure on the Israeli government. Reuven Abergel saw the trip as a way of bringing outside pressure on the nation. He stated that the Panthers wanted to make the trip because attempts to address their concerns within the Israeli national framework had failed. “As long as it’s within the family we can hush it up somehow,” he said. “So now we want to go out to explain things to our good Jews, who always contributed money to the State and cared for its security... We are going to find out – are you giving money to Jews in a State of Jews, or to Ashkenazim.”

American Jews reached out to the Panthers with varying degrees of support. American students studying abroad at the Hebrew University, where a Panther chapter had recently formed on campus, met with the Panthers and invited them to speak on their respective college campuses at home. Invitations came in from the National Religious Party who had affiliates in the United States, from the Union of Jewish Students, and from a Canadian professor who offered to introduce the Panthers to Reform Rabbis in the US if they agreed not to meet with radical organizations on their trip. Likewise, an urban renewal expert offered his help if the Panthers agreed not to meet with the New Left or the US Panthers. The Panthers, on the other hand, began brainstorming radical organizations with which they might meet on this trip, as they saw the organizations of the Left in the West as potential partners in their struggle.

In the end, the trip never materialized. A month went by and, for unknown reasons, Segev backed out of the plan, claiming that he had too much work. According

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156 Reuven Abergel, as quoted in Ibid., 207-208.
157 Ibid., 208.
158 Ibid., 209.
to Kokhavi Shemesh, members of the American Jewish Congress (AJC) pressured the Panthers to cancel the planned trip. He recalled that two AJC leaders traveled to Israel and met with the Panthers and heavily pressured the group not to travel to the United States. “They were shocked that we wanted to come,” he recalled. “They said it might... increase the anti-Semitism in America if the Black Panthers came there.”¹⁵⁹ In the end, Shemesh recalled, the Panthers cancelled the trip for economic reasons, “not because of their pressuring us... We were determined to go.”¹⁶⁰

Shemesh did have the opportunity to meet American Black Power icon Angela Davis at an international youth festival both activists attended in East Germany in 1973; their interaction revealed a disjuncture and linguistic difference in the two activists’ understandings of the term black. Shemesh recalled that Davis knew he was a leader of the Panthers in Israel. The two discussed the struggle in Israel and the problems of Eastern Jews. When Shemesh remarked that, “the Ashkenazim give the Eastern Jews people the black work,” in reference to the manual labor that Easterners performed, Davis replied, “Why do you call it ‘black work?’ Black is beautiful,” he remembered. Davis’s casual rejoinder imparted Shemesh with a lifelong lesson. “I was very naive... Since then I’ve stopped saying black work.” Rather, he recalled, Davis told him to call it “’simple work.’ She was right,” he remembered.¹⁶¹ Despite the difference in terminology between the Hebrew and English meanings of “black work,” Shemesh chose to accept Davis’s correction. His choice emphasized his desire to learn from Davis and to understand meanings of blackness outside the Israeli context.

¹⁵⁹ Shemesh I, 1:47:00.
¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 1:47:45.
¹⁶¹ Ibid., 1:36:30.
Over the winter of 1971 and spring of 1972, the Panthers’ critiques shifted away from ethnicity and towards a more specifically class based oppression, which corresponded with new and creative ‘Robin Hood’-type service efforts for local communities. The most well-known of these was the Panthers’ “milk project.” In March 1972, the Panthers “liberated” the contents of a milk truck in Rekhavia, a middle-class Ashkenazi neighborhood in Jerusalem. The Panthers claimed that families in Rekhavia gave milk to their pets while Eastern children had none to drink. Shemesh remembered preparing a flier that stated, “We are taking the milk to give it to children who don't have milk. And your dogs and cats may excuse us that only for a day they won't drink milk.” Charlie Biton remembered that this project proved popular and that it continued, with Panthers liberating milk and yogurt from supermarkets and other places and providing it to poor children. In addition to the milk project, the Panthers undertook a number of other projects in service to the community. They held clothing drives a few times per year. They squatted in new uninhabited apartments and moved Eastern families into them. They entered supermarkets and quietly lowered the prices on goods in order to make them more affordable for the needy.

The Panthers also broadened their organizing praxis by building a network of Eastern Jewish communities outside Jerusalem. Danny Sa’il traveled to the coastal city of

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164 Biton II, 5:00.

Acre where he and two Tel Aviv Panthers distributed leaflets. In April 1972, Shemesh, Charlie Biton, Eli Avigzar, and Haim Turjeman visited Beit She'an. They spoke to a group of youth in HaShomer HaTzair, a Zionist-Socialist secular youth organization. Several of the youth approached the Panthers after the meeting and asked how they could become involved, Maariv reported. In the small town of Yahud, near Tel Aviv, a few young adults declared themselves Black Panthers and protested to their local housing council about the poor conditions in their neighborhood. In the northern cities of Tiberias, Haifa, and Natanya; and Ma’alot, a development town, groups of youth banded together and called themselves Black Panthers.

'Political Pressure, Friendly and Otherwise, Can Work Both Ways': The Panthers in Israeli Party Politics, 1973-77

In early 1973, the Panthers formed a coalition with Shalom Cohen and the Israeli Democrats. Cohen was a Member of the Knesset who had been involved with the Panther movement. While the rhetoric of the Panthers-Democrats coalition evolved from the Panthers to a more reformist rather than radical approach, they maintained a transnational approach as they deepened their claims as national citizens. They revealed this in a demonstration they held outside the US Consul General in Jerusalem on December 10, 1973. Participants gathered outside the Consulate Building located just outside Jerusalem’s Old City. They asked that the Consul General “convey to the People of the United States and its Government our sincere feelings of friendship, and our appreciation

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167 Joseph Waxmann, “The Panthers Dream to Fight Together with the Arabs Against the Establishment,” Maariv, April 11, 1972, translated in Davis, Mack and Yuval-Davis, Israel & the Palestinians, 120-122.
169 Black Panthers-Israel Democrats, “Petition presented to the U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem, on Monday December 10, 1973;” POL 29: Prisoners, 1972-73; Box 22; Records Relating to Israel and Arab-Israel Affairs, compiled 1951-1976; U.S. Department of State Files; Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
of their help and solidarity in these times of danger and crisis.” Here, the Panthers
demonstrated that they understood the role that the United States had played in Israel’s
victory in the war against Jordan, Egypt, and Syria, who had been backed with military
support from the USSR. The authors of the petition pleaded with Consul General Day for
the US’s assistance in securing the release of Israeli POWs (prisoners of war) who had
been captured in the October War of that year. They expressed their “anguish for the fate
of [their] sons and brothers reported as missing in action on the Syrian front since the
fighting broke out on Yom Kippur.” The authors reckoned that “all cecilised [sic] public
opinion” would support their demand that the Syrian Government release a reported list
of prisoners of war as well as the names of those soldiers that had died within Syria. The
petition’s authors appealed to the United States as a world leader and as a well-known
voice. They also expressed concern over reports of ill treatment and execution of some of
the prisoners.

Strikingly, the Panthers-Israel Democrats appealed to the people of the United
States as fellow global citizens. They reminded the Consul that, “it is public knowledge”
that President Nixon had verbally promised to seek an exchange of Israeli and Syrian
POWs as part of an upcoming ceasefire agreement between the two combatants. The
authors expressed their hope for a peaceful settlement between Israel “and all of our Arab
neighbors,” but emphasized that they did not wish for the POWs’ fates to be ignored until
a settlement was reached. The petition writers also asked that the Consul remind the
Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who was due to visit Israel and Syria, of Nixon’s
promise regarding the POWs. They requested that Kissinger also call upon the
government of the Soviet Union, who as co-sponsors of the ceasefire agreement had also
pledged to support a POW exchange, and remind them, “that this humanitarian demand is a token of their good faith in the search for detente and peaceful co-existence between the nations of the Middle East as well as the World Superpowers.” Here, the authors illustrated their understanding of the powerful Cold War dynamics shaping the fates of Middle East nations in the early 1970s.\footnote{Nigel J. Ashton, ed. \textit{The Cold War in the Middle East: Regional conflict and the superpowers, 1967-73} (New York: Routledge, 2007); Rashid Khalidi, \textit{Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East} (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 101.} In their closing paragraph, the Panther-Israel Democrat authors issued a warning if not a threat to the United States about their willingness to express their concerns if America did not use its global power wisely. “Let [Kissinger] bear in mind,” they argued, “that political pressure, friendly and otherwise, can work both ways. Not only towards Israel.”

Over the six years of their existence, the Panthers grew from a neighborhood organization to a political party with national representation. Their critiques began in Musrara, but soon developed to touch institutions, other neighborhoods, cross-border organizing, and eventually party politics. In effect, the Israeli Panthers enabled Eastern Jews to form a coherent ethnic identity. The Panthers also helped thousands of Israelis to argue that Eastern Jews’ aspirations and political opinions mattered. They successfully elevated that space to the level of its full integration in Israeli society, touching on all aspects of the political sphere. In 1977, the Panthers elected Charlie Biton to the Knesset as a Black Panther candidate. The election of a Eastern Jew to the Knesset on the ticket of a radical organization was a significant achievement in Israeli terms.
The Mizrahi ethnic construct and the Panther-Palestinian alliance question

While the Black Panthers’ promotion of a unified ethnic identity led undoubtedly to positive outcomes, some scholars’ blanket use of the term Mizrahi has masked the diversity of national backgrounds represented in Israel and within the Black Panther Party. This *prima facie* acceptance of an ethnic construct does a disservice to the diverse range of people whose stories the Panthers represented and also masks a potential reason why the movement never transitioned to mass movement status. The Israeli government’s broad use of the Oriental label to identify those Jews who did not arrive in Israel from Europe or the Americas constructed social divisions that were designed to keep Eastern Jews from advancing in society. Given the overrepresentation of Ashkenazim in the Israeli government and labor movement at the time, people within the government described Jews from the Middle East and North Africa as Eastern and Oriental ‘Others’ as a way of writing off their potential social advancement.

Thus, the ongoing choice among historians to continue to deploy the term Eastern has, I argue, in some ways oversimplified the historical experiences of the people whom that label references, and it reflects a weakness in the historiography of the Panthers. Sociologist Deborah Bernstein and historian Oz Frankel have both examined the Israeli Panthers; however, neither has put the individuals in the Panthers into the context of their personal experiences of immigration or national background. In her 1984 article on the Panthers, Bernstein states that at the time of the Panthers’ first demonstration all of the members of the group were Moroccan. While it is true that the majority of Israeli Black Panthers came from a Moroccan background, Panthers with Iraqi, Yemeni, and Egyptian roots also played important roles within the party, which she does not mention in that
In her unpublished dissertation, Bernstein references a few Panthers being of Iraqi origin (Kokhavi Shemesh and Danny Sa’il), but she does not interrogate how these varied national backgrounds may have contributed to tensions within the group. By casting our attention to the differential experiences of Panthers whose parents migrated from Iraq, Morocco, and Egypt, we can identify several reasons for intragroup tensions as well as greater understanding of the demise of the Israeli Black Panthers.

While the claiming of a broad Eastern identity opened up the Panther group to a wide swath of supporters, individual Panthers’ national backgrounds may have provided ongoing tension within the movement. Although it is difficult to reconstruct specific internal debates because of a lack of organizational records, a close reading of the sources around the possibility of coalition with Palestinians or policy towards the Palestinian question prompts this hypothesis.

The Panthers harbored deep philosophical differences over whether they should make a formal alliance with the Palestinian cause. The Panthers who appeared most interested in forming an alliance with Palestinians were Kokhavi Shemesh and Danny Sa’il, both of whom were Iraqi. Shemesh remembered meeting with several leaders of the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1972. He recalled meeting Bassam Shak’a in Nablus, who later became the mayor of that city, as well as meeting the mayor of Hebron. Shemesh also remembered meeting Faisal Husseini, a Muslim Iraqi-born Palestinian and prominent politician who was considered a potential future leader of the Palestinian

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171 Bernstein, “Conflict and Protest in Israeli Society,” 133.
people in the peace process before his death from natural causes in 2001.172 Danny Sa’il was the only Panther to openly advocate for Eastern/Arab separatism from Ashkenazi Jews in Israeli society. The Israeli government accused Sa’il of joining the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary organization, in Nablus in May 1975.173 When the Iraqi government announced that Jews of Iraqi origin could return to that country despite having lost citizenship privileges when they made aliya in the early 1950s, Danny Sa’il returned and organized the Iraqi left. Sa’il’s activities suggest that he envisioned a broad network of transnational anti-imperialist affiliations.174 Despite dialogues between some Panthers and the PLO, and the possible involvement of one Panther in the PFLP, however, the Panthers never formed an official policy or alliance with either organization.175 At the other end of the spectrum, Sa’adéa Marziano favored a more reformist approach that kept what he saw as a manageable focus on Musrara and other Eastern communities. The organizational coalition between the Panthers and the PLO never materialized because of disagreements within the Panthers and logistical barriers that the Israeli government had instituted to prevent precisely the type of organizing that Shemesh and Sa’il wished to initiate. The logistics of such an alliance proved challenging, as Palestinians could not legally travel into Israel, so any direct action events would have had to take place in the West Bank, outside of the attention of the Israeli public, and

174 Abergel II, 7:30. Bernstein notes that many Panthers believed Sa’il was the only Iraqi Jew who moved back to Iraq after its government granted Jews the right to return. Bernstein, “The Black Panthers,” 180 and 437 fn. 15.
175 Ibid., 363.
would have presented a significant security threat to both groups.

However, I argue that the Panthers’ lack of consensus on the Palestinian issue was also due in part to the national backgrounds of individual Panther members. Shemesh and Sa’il’s shared Iraqi backgrounds meant that they had come from a Jewish community that had a tradition of leftist politics and generally greater wealth than the Moroccan Jews who had arrived in Israel. Thirty-six percent of Iraqi Jews had been involved in white-collar professions when they lived in Iraq. There were proportionally four times as many Iraqi Jewish doctors in Iraq prior to 1948 than there had been among the Ashkenazi Jews in Palestine, progressive journalist Baruch Nadel reported in 1976.176 While Shemesh and Sa’il envisioned the possibility of being on equal social footing with Palestinians and in formal alliance with the Palestinian cause, they arguably were less threatened in security and economic terms by the risks of such an alliance than their Moroccan comrades, who comprised the majority of the Panther movement.

While Moroccan Jews shared a similar historical legacy of remarkable achievements in the diaspora, they remembered being treated as the lowest of all Eastern national groups in Israel.177 “I don't understand until today,” Charlie Biton recalled in 2011. “The government developed a hatred for our community, much more than for any


177 Giladi, Discord in Zion, 29-30.
other communities. For Moroccans.”\textsuperscript{178} Given Moroccan Jews’ greater vulnerability within Israeli society, I argue that they were more susceptible to arrest, jail, and harassment had the Panthers formed coalition with the Palestinians, and therefore were predisposed to reject the idea.

The argument raised here about the Panthers-PLO alliance offers one example of how national historiographies and projects have elided the personal histories of the individuals involved. By failing to interrogate Arab \textit{olim}’s pre-\textit{aliyah} nationalities, they ignore the ways in which Eastern Jews were responding not just to the Israeli state but also to their multiple experiences of British, American, Israeli (and potentially French) imperialisms. Further study of the role of Eastern Jews’ national backgrounds within the group may generate additional explanations for the specific critiques the Panthers raised and those that they chose not to raise.

The Panthers’ collective achievement was the establishment of a voice for blacks and the poor within the Israeli political sphere. The movement opened a door to new coalitions, to unheard voices, and to public dissent that has not since been closed. They pointed a critical lens at the roots of American imperialism in Israel, and they defied many state efforts to achieve the establishment of a black political sphere. As Sa’adia Marziano recalled, “The important thing is that we woke them up. We showed them that they have a right to speak out. Before, people used to say, it’s all from heaven. Now they know they have a right to speak and shout.”\textsuperscript{179}


\textsuperscript{179} Sa’adia Marizano, as quoted in Bernstein, “The Black Panthers of Israel,” 375.
Epilogue: The Egyptian Revolution, J14 protests, and London riots of 2011

In 2011, as I completed the research for this study, the British and Israeli Black Panthers and the African-American Freedom Struggle’s broader transnational legacy resurged in the contemporary spotlight. I was fortunate to witness firsthand the African-American movement’s continued influence on global activists in Egypt, the UK, and Israel. In particular, I observed the Egyptian Revolution of January 25, 2011, in which I learned how Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference contributed to the Egyptian people’s struggle to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak. In July and August, the British and Israeli Black Panthers motivated new generations of activists as movements developed in those countries. The Panthers’ mentorships of younger protestors illustrated the older activists’ lifelong commitments to the movement. As Kokhavi Shemesh recalled, “Until now we call ourselves the Black Panthers... The Black Panthers, it’s forever.”¹

In Britain and in Israel, younger protestors called upon individual Panthers, which included Darcus Howe, Neil Kenlock, Kokhavi Shemesh, Charlie Biton, and Reuven Abergel, for advice and inspiration for their struggles. Just as those men had done some forty years ago in their searches for an identity and methods for their struggle, contemporary activists investigated protest models that resonated with them, and found them in the Black Panthers. These intergenerational interactions illuminated Black Power’s resonance over time and space, and they reinforced the long-term commitment to community organizing that many British and Israeli Panthers had made. Through their lifelong efforts as activists, Howe, Kenlock, Shemesh, Biton, Abergel and others

¹ Kokhavi Shemesh, interview by author, Jerusalem, Israel, August 10, 2011, part II of II (hereafter K. Shemesh II), digital audio recording and transcript in author’s possession, 07:15.
embodied a coterie of people who could help contemporary communities historicize their struggles within transnational and anti-imperial contexts.

* * *

“This is the most uncertain time I’ve ever lived in Britain,” Darcus Howe lamented on July 28, 2011. “I don’t know what will happen.” As I sat with Howe in his living room in Croydon, South London that day (see Figure 47), he overflowed with memories of the past and doubts about the future in nearly equal measure. Howe recounted his involvement with the British Black Panther Movement and his subsequent career as an editor with the *Race Today* journal collective, a columnist for the *New Statesman*, and host of the current affairs show *Devil’s Advocate* on British television’s Channel 4.² As

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² Howe was the first black Briton to host a UK television program. In 1995, Ben Thompson of *The Independent* called Howe, “the most immaculately scary man on British television... Howe embodies a
our conversation shifted to current events, however, Howe grew worried as he divulged his fears for his grandson’s generation. On more than one recent occasion, Howe explained, the London Police had stopped and searched his grandson Rap, named for Black Panther and SNCC activist H. Rap Brown, in the absence of any evidence of wrongdoing. The Met Police’s criminalization of Rap evoked Howe’s memories of his own youth in postwar London, bringing him pause.

“I don’t know what to ask,” Howe wondered aloud, referring to how he might analyze the contemporary moment. “But that’s a process of me becoming something else. If I didn’t know it as a process, I wouldn’t allow it its own spontaneity and definition…” Here, Howe indicated his awareness that his role in the movement was shifting from that of an on-the-ground agitator to an elder statesman. With the onset of his golden years, Howe worried that his experiences may have failed to yield relevant critical insights for life in contemporary neoliberal Britain. The former Black Panther Youth League leader, skilled as he was at inspiring the likes of Linton Johnson and Neil Kenlock in the early 1970s, did not know exactly what to say to the youth of 2011. Or so he feared.

Exactly one week after Howe offered this somber, yet prescient reflection, Met Police shot and killed twenty-nine-year-old Mark Duggan, a black resident of Tottenham, North London; Duggan’s death triggered a weeklong bout of civil unrest across Britain. Between August 6 and 10, people in London, Birmingham, Nottingham, Liverpool,

quality that has almost wholly disappeared from our public life: gravitas.” Ben Thompson, “Darcus Howe, TV presenter, talks to Ben Thompson,” The Independent, October 8, 1995.


4 Ibid., 1:13:00.
Manchester, and Salford poured into the streets, unabashedly looting and vandalizing retail establishments and confronting police. Media and government authorities soon referred to the various events as the “England riots” and “London riots” of 2011.

The unrest took its greatest toll on Croydon, Howe’s neighborhood, where violence peaked on the night of August 8. The neighborhood witnessed the national uprising’s first death when a group of assailants shot twenty-six-year-old black Briton Trevor Ellis in the head as he sat in his car.⁵ That same night, an arson fire destroyed the House of Reeves, a family-owned furniture store and local landmark that had stood in Croydon since the mid-nineteenth century.⁶ Police told arriving firefighters that they could do little to protect them if they chose to battle the blaze. An iconic image of the ferociously burning store, with firefighters watching helplessly nearby, epitomized the nearly unprecedented lack of law and order in the heart of the metropole (see Figure 48).

While Croydon Council leader Mike Fisher called the events “mindless hooliganism,” Darcus Howe asked the transnational and historical questions that he had feared he might have lost; in answering them, Howe recast the “England riots” as local manifestations of a global uprising. On the morning of August 9, Howe stood in front of the gutted House of Reeves as a BBC anchorwoman questioned him about the previous night’s events (see Figure 49). “I don’t call it rioting,” Howe explained. “I call it an insurrection of the masses of the people. It is happening in Syria, it is happening in Clapham, it is happening in Liverpool, it is happening in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad,” he

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7 Fisher, as quoted in “Man, 21, arrested on suspicion of arson attack on historic family-run furniture shop that survived the Blitz,” The Daily Mail, August 10, 2011.
declared, tracing the geographic contours of a network of anti-imperial insurrections.

“That is the nature of the historical moment.”

Figure 49. Darcus Howe, BBC News, Croydon, London, August 9, 2011.

Howe’s visible presence on Croydon’s streets and the connections that he drew among events in the UK, Syria, and the West Indies reinforced his continuous role as a grassroots transnational activist. Although less than two weeks before this appearance, Howe had confessed that he did not know what to tell Britain’s youth, in his BBC interview, he refashioned the ideas and methods of the British Black Power Movement for 2011. Just as he had done in the early 1970s, Howe reminded disaffected British youth that their struggles had historical antecedents and that their grievances mirrored those of other activists—in this case, Arab Spring revolutionaries and West Indian anti-colonialists—with whom they shared ongoing encounters with imperialism. Once more,

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Darcus Howe stood in Croydon and looked out onto events in the wider world, connecting Croydonians to a network of anti-imperial activists, past and present.

Three months after the uprisings ended, The Guardian newspaper and the London School of Economics (LSE) conducted a qualitative, interview-based study with 270 participants in the August events, entitled Reading the Riots, that revealed historical and historiographical connections between the London riots and events in the United States. The study’s lead investigators, The Guardian’s Paul Lewis and LSE social policy scholar Tim Newburn explained that a 1967 collaboration between the Detroit Free Press and University of Michigan Institute for Social Research into the causes of the Detroit riots of that year had inspired their study.9 Reading the Riots reported that seventy-three percent of the people who had joined the uprisings identified within one of three racial categories: black, Asian, or mixed race.10 The study found that, although characterizations of the uprisings as “race riots” oversimplified them, relationships of solidarity among various ethnic communities formed that enabled these groups to fight together against the police. As one study participant who had joined the disturbances in Birmingham explained, “Normally we [Birmingham gangs] don't get along... But the other gangs there like, we all together one day, we weren't fighting each other, we were fighting the police. That one day, we all got together, the Asians, the blacks, the whites... It felt like we were like one big gang… We took over Birmingham.”11 This individual’s reflections rang true on a

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10 James Ball, Matthew Taylor, and Tim Newburn, “Who were the rioters?” The Guardian, December 4, 2011. The study’s use of “black,” rather than West Indian or African, as a category separate from the “Asian” category illustrates the ongoing fluidity of black identity labels in Britain. While Linton Johnson reflected that, “black in those days simply meant non-white,” today the categories, at least according to The Guardian and the LSE, have bifurcated once more.
broader level. The study found that participants in the disturbances overwhelmingly saw the events as retribution for the police’s abuse of power in their local communities and as a response to persistent urban poverty. Eighty-six percent and eighty-five percent of respondents, respectively, cited poverty and policing as the two most important causes of the disturbances.12

Although Lewis and Newburn mailed study invitations to approximately one thousand prospective participants who had been arrested during the riots, the actual participants in the study came forward primarily through word-of-mouth, drawn by the opportunity to participate in an oral history project. Lewis, Newburn and their colleagues promised anonymity to people who had not been arrested in the riots, and “a surprising number agreed to take part in the study, often because they wanted their story to be heard.”13 Here, the researchers spoke volumes to the relevance of the British Panthers’ work. That is, Lewis and Newburn recognized that people who participated in the 2011 uprisings had grievances worth explaining and stories worth being told. Participants in the disturbances had valid reasons for their anger. As the Panthers had done some forty years earlier in their movement, Lewis and Newburn offered a platform through which participants could recount these underheard narratives.

In fact, the British and London city governments have never officially recognized police brutality toward black Britons. While the Judge in the Mangrove Nine case of 1971 noted “evidence of racial hatred on both sides,” the Met remained silent on its culpability in the violent treatments of Olive Morris, Linton Johnson, and their comrades

12 Raekha Prasad, “English riots were a ‘sort of revenge’ against the police,” The Guardian, December 4, 2011.
13 Lewis and Newburn, “The Reading the Riots project.”
in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This silence is echoed by an Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)’s investigation into the death of Mark Duggan, which at the time of writing remains mired in controversy and has received criticism from Duggan’s family. With the exception of the conviction of two police officers in the 1969 death of David Oluwale in Leeds, as detailed in Chapter 4, little evidence of police brutality toward black Britons has been officially acknowledged.

In contrast, a year earlier British Prime Minister David Cameron had apologized to the families of the victims of the January 30, 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry, Northern Ireland. On June 25, 2010, Cameron addressed the House of Commons on the occasion of the release of the Saville Report, the UK government’s twelve-year-long official investigation into the events of Bloody Sunday. “What happened on Bloody Sunday was both unjustified and unjustifiable,” Cameron lamented in his speech. “It was wrong… The government is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the armed forces and for that, on behalf of the government, indeed, on behalf of our country, I am deeply sorry.” Cameron’s apology offered the British government’s mea culpa to the families of the fourteen men whom British Army paratroopers had shot and killed on Bloody Sunday, and to the twelve other casualties whom the Army wounded that day. The apology symbolized the British government’s efforts to find justice in its violent treatment of its white citizens in the early 1970s. No similar apology or investigation has

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been offered to the number of black citizens who individually fell victim to violent crime at the hands of British police in the same era as the Bloody Sunday massacre.

In light of the ongoing systematic failures of the justice system for black Britons, many British Panthers remain vigilant. “Up to this day, I’m fifty-seven years old,” Hurley Armstrong recounted in 2009, “And if I walk along the road and I see police interfering with someone who you can see is innocent, it’s just a routine. I will stop and observe and make my presence be known... Because [the police] think no one is interested, they ill-treat, they take it a step too far... So even now, it’s still in me that I will stand up and be counted.” The day-to-day work of Armstrong, Howe, and others, like Neil Kenlock, who also received requests for advice from others in his community, illustrates the importance of these individuals’ long-term commitments to their communities. By continuing to live in and support people in their local neighborhoods, the British Panthers have offered significant contemporary contributions to the ongoing struggle.

Like Howe, Armstrong, and Kenlock, the Israeli Black Panthers also embodied the protest politics to which contemporary activists aspired in 2011. On August 7, nine days after I met with Darcus Howe, I arrived in Jerusalem for a final series of interviews with Israeli Panthers. My host in Jerusalem informed me that the night before I arrived, Charlie Biton had spoken in Tel Aviv at a rally of a reported two hundred thousand people in support of the “J14” or July 14 protests against the high cost of living in Israel.16 Biton, who had served in the Knesset from 1977 until 1992, told protestors that, "Forty years have passed since the day I stepped out, instilled with faith against the

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injustice surrounding me. Since then, year after year, I've been waiting for a new
generation to stand up against injustice – and here it is.” Here, Biton named Israeli
activists as descendants of the Black Panther Movement. Given the Movement and
Biton’s national stature, in effect, his remarks legitimized and strengthened the J14
protests.

Figure 50. Protestors carry a banner with the Israeli Black Panther symbol, August 6, 2011.
Source: Oren Ziv/Activestills.org, in Noam Sheizaf, “The fault and the hope of J14,” +972
Magazine, August 7, 2011, available online: http://972mag.com/the-fault-and-the-hope-of-
j14/20324/, accessed October 4, 2011.

The August 6 rally at which Biton spoke, which journalists have called Israel’s
largest-ever protest event, saw protestors using visual culture to relate their struggle to a
number of other national and transnational protest movements. One group of people
carried a banner with the Panthers’ symbol on it and the caption “Black Panthers”

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17 Charlie Biton, as quoted by Attila Somfalvi, “Charlie Biton: ‘My vision is realized after 40 years.’” YNet
18 Noam Sheizaf, “J14 Photos: Largest protest in Israel’s history.”
underneath (see Figure 50). Another group referenced the Arab Spring, carrying a banner with slogans in Arabic and Hebrew (see Figure 51). In Arabic, the protestors sounded a familiar chant of the Egyptian Revolution, “Irhal!” or “Go!” The Hebrew script below read, “Egypt is here.” With this phrase, the protestors declared that the iconic public space of Tahrir Square existed in Israel. The Israeli protestors hailed the spirit of Egypt’s revolution from within their struggle, thereby claiming that their grievances had international relevance. Together, the banners located Israeli domestic dissent inside the lineage of two other movements for social justice, the Black Panthers and the Arab Spring, calling attention to the wider struggles against capitalism and imperialism against which both previous movements fought.

Figure 51. Tel Aviv protestors carry a banner with Arabic and Hebrew-language slogans, August 2011.

On August 10, Kokhavi Shemesh expressed mixed feelings about the J14 protests. Shemesh, who earned a law degree after his time in the Panthers, explained that he had
advised several J14 activists who contacted him asking how to organize a movement. He said that he agreed with the protestors’ struggle against Israel as a country of great wealth and increasing inequality. The differences between the two protests, Shemesh maintained, were that the contemporary protestors were largely middle class and that, “all the newspapers, television, and media support them,” Shemesh asserted. “Today you have Facebook. If we had such a luxury, we would have taken two million people to the streets to demonstrate.” Shemesh also expressed his concern that the current protestors would not achieve significant or lasting changes. “It’s not the same government it used to be,” he explained. “The government of that time... had obligations because they were socialists that are completely different from today, because the right is controlling power, and there the left were in power.” Here, Shemesh pointed out that shifts in Israel’s political economy, with a move away from labor Zionism and toward neoliberal capitalism, had narrowed the potential sympathy for protestors’ concerns to those people already involved in the movement. Indeed, while many J14 protestors saw their struggles as confronting capitalist structures, as journalist Noa Shaindlinger remarked, activists were “actually propagating the status quo, rather than undermining it” by failing to draw attention to the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The reason for the Israeli and British Panthers’ continued appeal lies in the ongoing salience of the anti-imperial protests that those activists waged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The interplay between 1970s and 2010s activists’ concerns raises questions about the potential permanence of the postcolonial era. When and how will scholars know that

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19 Shemesh II, 08:00.
20 Ibid., 08:45.
‘the postcolonial moment’ has ended? Given the centuries-long deleterious impact of colonialism on the lives of Israeli and British Panthers and their activist descendants, is it possible to imagine a time in which anti-imperial struggles will no longer be relevant? Through their interactions, protestors past and present have created activist genealogies that are of incredible use in advancing contemporary anti-imperial struggles, which by their nature are steeped in common historical experiences of colonialism, trauma, and displacement. These genealogies allow current activists to connect to past struggles, while simultaneously they emphasize the long, intergenerational process of struggling for social change.

Months before I watched Darcus Howe talk about a global insurrection on the BBC or heard about Charlie Biton speaking to hundreds of thousands in Tel Aviv, I had the opportunity to witness the Egyptian people appropriating a powerful transnational movement and transforming it into a revolution. As I walked a mile to Tahrir Square on the night of January 25, 2011 (the main bridges into the square were closed to traffic), nothing could have fully prepared me to see the thousands of protestors gathered there. A man greeted me and explained that this was “an important day for Egypt,” as people stood their ground in the Square long into the night and for the ensuing eighteen days, refusing to back down to President Hosni Mubarak.22

22 Author’s notes, January 25, 2011.
Perhaps nothing should have surprised me less than learning that the African-American Freedom Struggle had influenced many of these protestors at least two years before the Egyptian Revolution began. In 2008, Cairo-based activist Dalia Ziada of the American Islamic Congress (AIC), a pan-Arab civil rights organization, translated Martin Luther King and The Montgomery Story, a comic book, into Arabic (see Figure 52). Ziada and the AIC distributed over two thousand copies among activists in the Middle East between 2008 and 2010. In 2009, Ziada explained that the AIC hoped to teach
people that, “Change is not impossible. It is time to stop using our muscles blindly. Let's try using our intellect in innovative, creative ways to pressure decision makers and end dictatorship, tyranny and the suppression practiced against us.” Ziada related that after learning about King in 2006 at an AIC-sponsored conference in Cairo, she used nonviolent resistance, verbal pressure, and negotiation tactics to successfully stop her uncle from circumcising her eight-year-old niece. Although King may not have anticipated his ideas having purchase in Egypt, Ziada, herself a survivor of female circumcision, believed that his methods could work in her family, whose Arab Muslim culture differed from King’s African-American, Protestant background. Nonviolent resistance, therefore, was not bound to a specific culture, time, or place; rather, King’s ideas about social change spoke to people like Ziada in universal, humanist terms.

In times of intense political uncertainty, the groups of everyday people examined in this study located fellow visionaries across ethnic and religious lines. In crossing ethnic boundaries, they opened up their movements to the transgression of national borders. The African-American Freedom Struggle’s global political valence, fueled by the popularization of American mass culture, enabled local activists abroad to further advance their causes. Thus, in 2006 Dalia Ziada read about Martin Luther King (see Figure 53), just as Linton Johnson had read WEB DuBois in 1970, and Kokhavi Shemesh had met Angela Davis in 1973. In the 2000s as in the early 1970s, activists consumed print, broadcast, and visual media to learn about comrades thousands of miles away.

information they learned had traveled in the sinews of imperial networks. From those networks, global activists appropriated ideas from other struggles and forged vibrant, defiant social movements of their own.

Figure 53. Dalia Ziada reads Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story in Arabic. Source: Dalia Ziada, as printed in Michael Cavna, “Amid revolution, Arab cartoonists draw attention to their cause,” The Washington Post, March 7, 2011.

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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Month first noted by Panthers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>Sheffield University and Sheffield Black Peoples’ Organisation organize Black Liberation Conference</td>
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<td>Bristol</td>
<td>Black People's Movement</td>
<td>January 1971</td>
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<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>Afro Caribbean Circle</td>
<td>June 1971</td>
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<td>West Indian Afro Brotherhood</td>
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<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>Black People's Freedom Movement</td>
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<td>Black Power activity</td>
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<td>Leeds</td>
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<td>Birmingham</td>
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<td>Huddersfield</td>
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<td>August 1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Nello James Centre</td>
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Appendix B: UK Black Panther Timeline, 1969-1973

Newspaper Abbreviations

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<td>Black People’s News Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Freedom News</td>
<td>1972-1973</td>
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Organizational Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>BWM</td>
<td>Black Workers’ Movement</td>
<td>1973</td>
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1969

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<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Nigerian David Oluwale found dead in river Aire near Leeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>Twenty Enoch Powell supporters attack an African teacher and a Pakistani man near Middlesex Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>MP Enoch Powell reports figures warning of immigration ‘disaster’ and renews his repatriation plea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>Met Police assault Calvin St. Louis outside Toypetika travel agents, Kentish Town Road, N7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>Met Police car hits and kills black man, police arrest his 4 friends in order to quiet them, assault them at Notting Hill Police Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>International Socialists organize “Sheffield Weekend School on Black Power and International Socialism”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 13</td>
<td>Bermuda Conference on Black Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 16</td>
<td>Met Police push and aggressively question black youth in Ridley Road Market, Dalston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 23</td>
<td>Three whites attack Ashur Mish near his home at Gower Street North, throw petrol bomb at his house when he escapes</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Robert F. Williams detained at Pentonville Prison in London en route to Detroit</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Black People Get to Know Yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>Olive Morris, 3 other men, and Nigerian Diplomat attacked on Atlantic Ave and Coldharbour Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Black Power Movement: What We Want and What We Do in Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement publishes “Black Peoples Reply to Callaghan Concerning ‘Police Brutality’ in Brixton”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Tony Soares supports Free Robert F. Williams campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 11</td>
<td>Plainclothes Met officers beat up 17 year old boy at Acton police station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 18</td>
<td>Trial of five black youths arrested by Met Police on Nov. 15 begins, South Western Magistrates Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 22</td>
<td>International news from Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Vietnam, Jamaica</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 22</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement: What We Stand For</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2</td>
<td>Veronica Charles, a 67-year-old woman collapses at home, receives inadequate treatment at West London hospital, dies at home later that day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 13</td>
<td>White prison guard found dead in Soledad Prison</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Fire at RAAS headquarters, 97/101 Holloway Road, N7</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>International Socialists meeting on Black Panthers at Africa Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>US Black Panther Connie Matthews and 2 other comrades visit UKBPM in London and Handsworth, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>BPNS reports MP John Fraser praises conditions in Jamaica; black people walk out.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>BPNS details Selaissie’s oppression of Ethiopians</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>BPNS details exploitation of black workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Eulyss Alan Headlam gives testimony of police brutality in BPNS</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>BPNS tells story of Morant Bay Rebellion, part 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Black Panther and related groups march on U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Black Panthers release report of Embassy Protest</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Embassy protest detained appear in court.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>BPM youth who had participated in Brixton protest go to ABC Cinema on Brixton Hill, arrested.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Demonstration against Brixton Police for brutality and in solidarity with USBPP.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Panther members go to South Western Magistrates Court to see youth who were arrested</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>Whites in East End kill Tausir Ali, BPM organizes information about patterns of violence against Pakistani workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>Chief detective of H. Division in Stephney says in interview with &quot;The Sun&quot; that skinheads are targeting Pakistanis because they are retaliatory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>BPM delegates attend conference of European Solidarity Committees of Black Panther Party in America</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Rally for arrested BPYL members at South Western Magistrates Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>Brother Eli taken to Brixton Prison, held on remand</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>BPM organizes Trinidad &amp; Tobago solidarity demonstration</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Black people who attended court hearing of those arrested at Trinidad &amp; Tobago solidarity march accosted and arrested by plain clothes police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>BPM starts Legal Defence Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>Stanley John, an 18-year-old from Acton, West London sentenced to Wormwood Scrubs Borstal for 6 months to 2 years after being attacked by group of 15 white youths in Horn Lane.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>Brother Eli of North London BPM sees pool attendant beating a 12 year old black boy; approaches pool attendant and rescues boy</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>White man shoots brother Reginald Passey in the head at Acton High Street bus stop, outside the Acton Fun Fair. Black people refuse to leave him despite police pressure and take him to Hammersmith Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>BPM demonstrates in Notting Hill in solidarity with U.S. Black Panther Party and Trinidad struggle as part of European solidarity committee activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>BPM publishes “Black People Don’t Vote” leaflet</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Tony Soares released from prison</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement does heavy leafletting; Acton chapter holds picket at Acton Police Station</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>Conservative Edward Heath becomes Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>Conference on Black Liberation, University of Sheffield</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>BPM publishes Repatriation &amp; Retaliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>BPM presents &quot;Black Culture for Black Liberation&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Government publishes report that Black Power is based solely on North American problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Met Police raid Frank Critchlow’s Mangrove Restaurant</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>Jonathan Jackson holds judge hostage in San Rafael courtroom trial of San Quentin Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 9</td>
<td>Hands Off Black People demonstration at Mangrove Restaurant</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>BPM publishes “Organised Action in Self-Defence”</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>Oval House dance attacked by over 100 police, 2 BP male members arrested</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Keith Spencer and Edmond Lecointe go to court to assist brothers arrested at Oval House.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Police arrest Keith Spencer at his home, charge him with GBH</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>BPNS profiles British investments in South Africa and connections to British government</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Socialist Worker publishes article on UK Black Panthers</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Kathleen Cleaver writes to Tony Soares for help in securing passports for travel in France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Police arrest several Panthers in connection with the Portnall Road demonstration</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Bobby Seale’s <em>Seize the Time</em> published in the UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>In court, police add charge of riotous assembly to Len, Edmond, Keith and Rupert’s charges</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>International Socialists ask their chapters to hold meetings of working class people for Black Panthers to speak with</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Derrick Morrison publishes &quot;The Black Panthers: An Assessment&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Brixton Black Panther Youth League founded</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
November 1
In Cardiff, Wales, four police arrest and beat Jamaican Marshall Minigee in his home without a warrant, let loose a patrol dog to attack him.

November 1
BPM campaigns for justice on behalf of Joshua Francis

November 18
International Socialists show solidarity with Black Panthers

November 22
Police arrest and beat Joshua Francis at his home

1971

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2</td>
<td>Petrol bomb attack on Black People's Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 4</td>
<td>CLR James exhorts youth at Metro Youth Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Mangrove Nine committed to stand trial at Old Bailey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 23</td>
<td>Youth of Wolverhampton's Afro-Carribean Circle demonstrate outside Birmingham New Road Police Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>BPM publishes flier about Immigration Bill: “You can only be an ALIEN in Britain”</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement starts campaign against Immigration Bill, circulates petition</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>Police arrest Danny Murrell of Black Unity &amp; Freedom Party, charge with insulting behavior and obscene language</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>Police arrest Keith Spencer, Abdul McIntosh and David White of BPM, charge with assault and threatening behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>Grand Carnival Dance at Metro Youth Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 23</td>
<td>Police arrest Baldy Gordon of the BPM, charge with using insulting words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>BPM publishes “Stop the Racist Immigration Bill”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>BPM delivers letter to Israeli Ambassador in London demanding that Golda Meir release Mizrahi Black Panthers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>BPM plans to hold Reggae Festival; event cancelled at the last minute because college authorities learn that blacks are involved</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>All Night Reggae Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>10,000 people march against Immigration Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Police arrest Elizabeth Kaodi and Joel Emerole of the BPM, charge them with using violent behavior, beat them such that they need medical treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>Outside Brixton police station, police beat and arrest Reginald Beckles and Joel Emerole of the BPM and charge them with using violent behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>Police stop 14 Black Panthers and attempt to intimidate them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>BPM trip to Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Judge in Leeds summons two senior police officers for murder of Nigerian David Oluwale in April 1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Penny Jackson in Britain to raise funds for defense of her brother George Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Soledad Brothers Rally by Friends of Soledad UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>West Indian woman Aseta Simms, age 42, dies in custody at Stoke Newington Police Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Freedom Forum active in Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Hindi script appears on BPNS masthead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Mrs. E. Lee writes asking the BPM for help with housing, which the Council and Race Relations Board buried.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>UKBPP publishes “The Position of Black People in Britain Today”</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Black newspaper Flambeau merges with BPNS, BPNS expands to 8 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>An Attack on the Panthers is an Attack on All Black People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Free Bobby and Free Erica proclaimed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Oval House 4 trial begins at Old Bailey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Police officers Kenneth Kitching and Geoffrey Ellerker appear before Leeds City magistrates charged with murder of David Oluwale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Oval House trial begins with two black jurors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Judge dismisses jury in Oval House case, calls a retrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>Police search Black Panther headquarters on Shakespeare Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>Abdul MacKintosh and Tony Graham distributing leaflets about National Conference; arrested in Stoke Newington High Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22</td>
<td>Conference on “Rights of Black People in Britain” at Alexandra Palace, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22</td>
<td>UKBPM publishes leaflet collection of their past activities entitled “Black People Have the Right to be in Britain”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>Police arrest Cartwright Joseph and 19 others at the Metro Youth Club in Notting Hill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>Independent Trade Union Advisory Committee (ITUAC) Jamaica sends telegram of solidarity to UKBPM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>Over 200 American servicemen present petition opposing Vietnam to US Embassy in London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Israeli Revolutionary Committee Action Abroad publishes <em>The Black Panthers in Israel</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Organisation reports that vans of special command force police attacked a house party given by their organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>Keith Spencer collapses on first day of Oval House trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>Merle Major, a black mother of 4 who has been on the list for Council Housing for 10 years, squats in an empty flat in Kensington &amp; Chelsea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>Spencer's lawyer Platts-Mills presents certificate to judge regarding Spencer's illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>Black Defence Committee sponsors rally to &quot;Smash the Immigration Bill!&quot; BPM represented with a speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>Doctor admits Spencer to hospital; police arrest Spencer at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>BPM organizes picket at Old Bailey for unjust Oval House trial and Keith Spencer's illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>Two men, Roger and Ricky, arrested in South East London. Police accuse them of stealing their own car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12</td>
<td>Two white youths attack the family of Sister E of Haggerston Estate in East London with rocks, glass, sticks, and by following her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>USAF servicemen distributed protest literature on NATO Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>Trial of Rammstein 2 begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 29</td>
<td>White man accuses Abdul MacKintosh of assaulting him outside Old Bailey during Oval House trial picket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 29</td>
<td>Judge Roskill says that Mangrove Nine trial will start in 5 days; Mangrove Nine protest the short time frame and trial is delayed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>Three of four arrested in Oval House convicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>Abdul MacKintosh found guilty of threatening police officer O'Connor in Stoke Newington High Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Two police officers kidnap 35 year old Jamaican Lela Harding on her way home from sewing class in Wednesfield, Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>NINB announces that Jamaicans have formed “Committee for the Protection of Black People in Britain”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Two black seamen at Shipping Federation in Cardiff report an ad for whites only in a crew for a Shell Tanker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Black People’s Information Centres form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Jamaican High Commission asks Jamaican government to investigate Nov. 1970 incident of police brutality against Marshall Minigee in Cardiff</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>African-American Caroline Hunter of the Polaroid Revolutionary Workers Movement arrives in Britain to speak on the movement to end Polaroid’s role in the production of South African Pass Books. Black Panther Movement hosts her and records the talks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9</td>
<td>Police arrest 7 men and 2 women protesting harassment in Willesden, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>London Alliance in Defence of Workers’ Rights demonstrates against Immigration and Industrial Relations Bills; 250 people march.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>Police arrest Sylvan Bryan, manager of Music City on Portobello Road W10 and charge him with assaulting the police.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>NINB publishes the story of police requesting a £100 bribe to withdraw their objections to a prisoner’s bail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 11</td>
<td>Liverpool police officer states that brutality, harassment and drug planting take place against black people at police stations, particularly in the city center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>Judge Abdilla sentences 6 black youths to a total of 47 years in prison at Inner London Sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 17</td>
<td>Magistrate dismisses Notting Hill police’s charges of robbery against Mangrove restaurant owner Frank Critchlow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 17</td>
<td>Police arrest 16 year old Marion M outside her friend Christine’s house in Cricketfield Road, London, charged her with malicious wounding and inject her. Take her to a ‘home’ in Brighton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Guyanese Basil John Sands sentenced to 7 years in jail for conspiring to import drugs. Sands claims he is an informant for Detective Chief Inspector Victor Kelaher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 21</td>
<td>Victor Barton acquitted at Middlesex Quarter Sessions on charge of attempting to steal from City Tote Limited betting firm in Harlesden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 22</td>
<td>Four black youths from Brixton have charges of sexual assault against them dismissed at Old Bailey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Birmingham Afro Caribbean Self Help Group members Glen Scott and Owen Leach give out leaflets concerning Soledad Brothers, arrested in the Bull Ring shopping area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Blackburn Royal Ordinance Factory refuses to give jobs to blacks, NINB reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement travels to National Cultural and Political Evening organized by Black Peoples Freedom Movement Nottingham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>A group of brothers and sisters observe a possible police kidnapping on Camberwell Road.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Revolutionary People's Communication Network of US Black Panther Party in Algiers mails bulletins to Tony Soares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Anti-immigrant group &quot;Send Them Back&quot; organized in Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Panther Youth League organizes printing of t-shirts with BPM slogans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Members of Afro West Indian Society, Bradford, report constant police brutality there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Notting Hill Social Council set up to investigate police brutality against blacks in absence of Home Secretary inquiry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Avtar Jhoul and his family detained on return to Britain from family holiday as &quot;suspected illegal immigrants&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2</td>
<td>5 members of Leicester's Black People's Liberation Party on trial, some served with deportation papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 4</td>
<td>South London girl contacts BPM for help locating her brother, 13 year old Ferron Morris, who had been arrested two days prior on the charge of indecent assault of a white girl.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 6</td>
<td>National Front sets Caribbean Overseas Association headquarters in Acton on fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 8</td>
<td>Ricardo Gaynor of Liverpool imprisoned for failure to appear in court, telegram with court date had been sent to wrong address, police admitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 9</td>
<td>Huey Newton murder trial declared a mistrial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 13</td>
<td>NINB reports that British Army's &quot;ace marksman&quot; against Irish is a black man, Joe Marciel, from Barbados.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 13</td>
<td>NINB reports police concocting black people's statements by having illiterate people sign blank forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 15</td>
<td>Rally to stop Irish internments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 17</td>
<td>Police raid headquarters of Peoples Association of Notting Hill, looking for Jake Prescott and Ian Purdie, charged with bombing Minister of Employment Robert Carr's home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 20</td>
<td>Brothers Frank Sweeney and Calvin Clayton refused bail by High Court Judge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 22</td>
<td>BPM protests murder of George Jackson and demands unconditional release of Angela Davis outside U.S. Embassy, Grosvenor Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 24</td>
<td>Report on Israeli BPM demo in Jerusalem - includes Arab coalition and protest against Meir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>Nottingham police attack Glenvil Thompson, a black worker on his way to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>Report that Labour movement is taking a hammering.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 29</td>
<td>Carnival Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 30</td>
<td>Demonstration for Soledad Brothers Fleeta Drumgo and John Cluchette, and Angela Davis - Trafalgar Square to U.S. Embassy</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Darcus Owusu (Howe) writes letter to comrades in Trinidad about why he wants to stay in the UK for the Mangrove Trial</td>
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<td>September 1</td>
<td>NINB reports that Israel has banned the Israeli Black Panthers</td>
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<td>September 1</td>
<td>Seventeen-year-old Eustace Bogle approached by police in Acton Park who want to take him in for questioning; Bogle refuses</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Black students at South London’s Tulse Hill and Dick Shepherd schools start black studies programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>George Jackson Memorial at St. Pancras Town Hall</td>
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<td>September 3</td>
<td>Nearly 100 black people rally at private dance to prevent Nottingham police from arresting Black People’s Freedom Movement Brother Redver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>Brother Radcliffe Carr, 14 years old, admitted to Kings College Hospital after beating by 20 white youth at Peckham Fun Fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>Solidarity demonstration at St. James Court for trial of BPM member Elizabeth Kaode</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>BUFP and BPM organize demonstration against police attack on Radcliffe Carr in early September; approximately 400 youth reported to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>British Black Panthers and Israeli Black Panthers attend International Congress in Florence, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>Attack on a brother at Peckham Manor School leads 300 blacks from Peckham and Peckham Manor Schools to show solidarity and help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Black Panther Linda Hodge arrested on arrival home in Trinidad</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>BPM circulates petition demanding a black jury in Mangrove Nine trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Black nurse Johnson found guilty of possessing cannabis after police delivered it to her house in Nottingham.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Potere Operaio's newspaper publishes Black Panther Movement's statement on the position of black workers in Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>NINB reports that Trades Union Congress betrayed black workers in meeting with Home Secretary over Immigration Bill.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
October 2 | NINB reports that the Clerk of the Court for the Mangrove Nine trial is going to allocate seats for defendants' relatives only, as opposed to the general public.

October 3 | Rally and benefit for Mangrove Nine at Faraday Road Church Hall, Ladbroke Grove.

October 4 | Mangrove Nine trial begins; call to national and international community to picket Old Bailey.

October 11 | Two white men attack 63-year-old Octavius McCleod as he leaves a Brixton pub. When McCleod shouts murder, the men identify themselves as plain clothes officers.

October 13 | Angela Davis's mother and sister Fania Davis Jordan speak at rally in Westminster.

October 14 | Three South Asian children killed in Bradford in arson attacks on their homes.

October 24 | BPM North London Collective presents afternoon of Black Revolutionary Culture.

October 27 | Twin sisters Migg attacked by dogs and armed white people. Police did not arrest anyone.

October 28 | Immigration Act of 1971 becomes law.

November 1 | 40,000 London airport workers strike over contract awarded to U.S.-owned General Aviation Service.

November 1 | Enoch Powell gives anti-immigrant and anti-Asian speech in predominantly-Asian London neighborhood of Southall.

November 3 | Joshua Francis’ trial begins.

November 5 | In Scotland, 8,500 Upper Clyde Shipyards workers tell Trade and Industry Minister John Davies that they will not allow any ships to leave the yard.

November 10 | Picket and demo outside Old Bailey in support of Ian Purdie and Jake Prescott.

November 19 | 8,000 Coventry toolroom workers go on strike to reinstate wage agreement.


November 20 | Bradford Sikh woman protests “very personal religious and marriage questions” on a maternity grant form.

November 20 | NINB reports that although 4.5% of Britain and Northern Ireland are unemployed, in some areas there are 20-25% blacks unemployed.

November 20 | British government announces that effective January 1972 it will halt semi-skilled and skilled workers from outside ECC, Norway and Denmark from entering UK.

November 20 | Special Branch officers arrest Tony (Soares) Sinaris at distribution center of Grass Roots newspaper.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>NINB alleges that Leeds Judge Justice Hinchcliffe instructs jury in Oluwale murder trial to return a not guilty verdict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>Information Centres solicit contributions for Afro-Caribbean Self Help’s headquarters which is up for sale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Freedom Meeting for Black Suffering People in Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>CLR James speaks to meeting on Trinidad &amp; Tobago called by Black Peoples National Action Collective (of which Panthers are members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>Organized by Trades Union Congress, 90,000 workers march on House of Commons to lobby against rising unemployment</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>NINB announces that Britain recognizes white rule in Rhodesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 29</td>
<td>Hearing for Octavius McCleod’s police assault case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 30</td>
<td>Robert F. Williams writes letter from Michigan to Tony Sinaris (Soares) regarding what Sinaris and the BLF can do to help Williams’ cause.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Jury awards 15 year sentence to Jake Prescott for conspiracy to bomb house of Minister of Employment Robert Carr</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>BPFM Nottingham publishes leaflet explaining two incidents in which children were physically abused at Douglas Junior School; Nottingham Director of Education George Jackson evicts the BPFM from the Radford Sports Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>13 Bengali seamen request asylum in Britain due to harassment from Pakistani seamen; British government places them in Brixton Prison and deports them to East Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>NINB reports racism in employment practices at Royal Ordnance Factory, Blackburn</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>NINB reports that number of people imprisoned under Commonwealth Immigrants Act has doubled in a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>Black Peoples National Action Collective organizes National Campaign Against Political Repression in Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>BPIC leads protest against railroading of political prisoners Jake Prescott and Ian Purdie</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 7</td>
<td>BPIC calls for picket outside Old Bailey for Mangrove Nine every week day in advance of the verdict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 17</td>
<td>Rhodan Gordon, NINB founder, defends himself in Mangrove Nine trial, asks judge to send him to jail rather than give suspended sentence. Gordon arrested the next day on charges of obstruction and assault on police.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>176 staff members at Maudslay Hospital in London petition against clause 30 of the Immigration Bill, which allows the government to deport Commonwealth citizens deemed &quot;mentally ill&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Police in Birmingham arrest a diabetic black man who loses his balance, charge him as drunk and disorderly</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Chief Inspector Wilson of Birmingham Police reports to Birmingham Council that Afro-Caribbean Association is a black power organization.</td>
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<td>January 1</td>
<td>Trial of Joshua Francis at a London Sessions Court, Crystal Palace</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Several organizations in Trinidad send messages of solidarity to the Mangrove Nine after their acquittal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 4</td>
<td>Twelve black youths ages 15 to 17 on trial in Leeds for riotous assembly, property damage, and disturbing Her Majesty's subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 4</td>
<td>St. Ann's Hospital nurse Barbara DeMonick, age 19, given two months' notice despite consistently good reports during her training year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 7</td>
<td>NINB announces increased demand for enquiry into police brutality following Mangrove Nine acquittal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 9</td>
<td>National Union of Miners strike over poor proposed pay increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 11</td>
<td>Judge finds BUFP members Gerry Cailiste and Alphonso Edwards found guilty of assault on police officers. Judge keeps them in custody while he awaits a report on their social background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 18</td>
<td>Women's Lobby calls meeting to support West Fife MP William Hamilton's bill to end discrimination against women in employment, education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Case-Com, radical social workers' group, publishes pamphlet on police &amp; black workers (boroughs of Greenwich and Lewisham). Hold meeting to launch pamphlet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>Parents of working class youth Stephen McCarthy--who died Jan. 26 at the hands of London police--call for a march of working class solidarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>Angela Davis trial begins in Santa Clara, California</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Special Branch officers visit BPM HQ/BPIC at 301 Portobello Road looking for a printing press and the publishers of the broadsheet Justice for the Mangrove 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Nottingham Police arrest four members of the BPFM, including Bros Wright and Kirlew, beating them and then releasing them without charge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Calvin Clayton, father of 9 children, sentenced to 5 years in prison for grievous bodily harm after attack on his life by Harlesden Police in Northwest London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>NINB reports on Bloody Sunday in Derry</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement participates in Irish demonstration organized by Anti-Internment League</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>House of Commons Select Committee on Race Relations visits Notting Hill to hear evidence of police brutality against blacks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>BUFP launches campaign to demand a public enquiry into murder of Aseta Simms. BPM supports campaign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>Paraffin salesman, 22-year-old Clarence Spencer attacked by police in Brixton</td>
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<td>February 12</td>
<td>Enoch Powell states that since Pakistan has decided to leave the Commonwealth, Pakistanis will become alien workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>Emergency Campaign Committee hosts demonstration against British government’s support for Rhodesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>Special Branch visits 154 Barnsbury Rd. (BPIC) to locate BPM in connection with broadsheet “Battle for Freedom at the Old Bailey.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Freedom News announces weekly Panther Youth League activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>African-American soldier on base in Britain writes BPM asking for solidarity and support in ending injustices against black servicemen throughout Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>First issue of “Freedom News” published</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>BPM interviews Biplab Das Gupta, active member of West Indian Association, who has recently been in India, about situation in Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Freedom News calls on blacks all over Britain to write to the Royal Ordinance Factory, Blackburn demanding that they employ blacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Freedom News writes that Michael X is an agent of the ruling class in Britain and Trinidad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 22</td>
<td>All-white jury convicts 40-year-old Joshua Francis of assaulting 3 police</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**February 23**  
Black People’s Freedom Movement (Nottingham) organizes rally in support of educational programs it runs at Radford Youth Centre. Director of Education in Nottingham calls school Marxist-Maoist, says children are being taught Communism.

**February 23**  
Notting Hill youth Justine Dennys (age 15) and Phillip Dennys (age 13) appear at Westminster Juvenile Court charged with threatening behaviour and insulting behaviour.

**February 25**  
Plain clothes policemen stop two 13-year-old youth on Tufnell Park Road and take them to the station in connection with a fight that had taken place at the Nags Head Pub.

**March 1**  
Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) appoints Rev. John Stott as warden of Metro Youth Club, Youth Club members reject the appointment of a white minister and elect 10 youth to serve as their collective leadership.

**March 1**  
BPM Sisters' Forum on the History of the Oppression of Black Women.

**March 1**  
Lord Salmon, Lord Chief Justice of the Middle Temple, summons Mangrove Nine attorney Ian McDonald and reprimands him for the politicized closing speech he gave at the trial.

**March 1**  
Notting Hill Police's Chief Inspector and Mangrove Nine lead detective Trotman promoted to Community Liaison Officer for Kensington and Chelsea.

**March 1**  
Farrukh Dhondy leads a group that buy Tollington Park House.

**March 1**  
Five black students at Tulse Hill School expelled over teacher confrontations. Students organize meeting with headmaster and schools council.

**March 1**  
Sixteen year old "Lil' Douza" (Lorraine Bartley) dies in Oxford Detention Centre. His mother Mrs Bartley observes a swollen jaw and blood smeared around his nose and mouth.

**March 1**  
Letter to the editor writes in appreciation of change in newspaper to incorporate more oppression against non-blacks.

**March 4**  
BPM criticizes London boroughs' proposal to spend £27,000 to send 150 white teenagers to West Indies on "educational holiday" in August 1972.

**March 1**  
Andrew, age 9, writes editorial in FN's "Children's Corner" about how his poor housing conditions showed him how black people are treated all over the world.

**March 1**  
Public meeting to demand justice for Joshua Francis and inquiry into Brixton police brutality.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>BPM and BUFP organize meeting about Joshua Francis and other cases of police brutality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Judge Morton sentences Joshua Francis to 9 months, 6 mos. and 6 mos. on charges of assaulting police.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>BPM pickets outside Croydon Crown Court for Joshua Francis's sentencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>BPM and BUFP form Joshua Francis Defense Collective to demand his acquittal and release from prison</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>Special Branch raids Grass Roots office and arrests Tony Soares</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>Police search the home of the 4 Nottingham BPFM members arrested in February; find evidence to suggest that they were the three men who had stolen a pyrex dish from a hotel in Westbridgeford on March 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>J. Winkler of Bradford, Yorkshire writes to Freedom News thanking the paper for its Northern Ireland coverage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>BPM members attend &quot;Lil' Douza's&quot; funeral in Brixton</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>BPM announces weekly Sunday political and cultural activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>Angela Davis London Committee meets to affiliate to national organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>National Meeting of Angela Davis Defence Committee in Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Joshua Francis Committee holds public meeting; BPM represented with speaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Brixton police beat up 16 year old Winston Miller who refused to give his football to a white woman</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>BPM puts on “The Black Experience” cultural event</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>BPM’s Grand Reggae Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>Daily Express publishes article linking BPM and IRA through Potere Operaio’s International Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>124 West Indian workers occupy Stanmore Engineering Factory demanding better wages, fewer hours, unemployment, and holiday pay</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Friends of Soledad (UK) publishes Soledad Brothers News</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Black Panthers-West London Collective organize a public meeting for Stanmore Engineering Workers; shop steward Brother Lynton speaks</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>A sister writes a letter of solidarity to Tony Soares in prison detailing a recent visit by a group of sisters to Pentonville Prison.</td>
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<td>May 8</td>
<td>Secondary school student demonstrations begin at working-class schools Maida Vale High and Hampstead Comprehensive</td>
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<td>May 17</td>
<td>All-London schools strike brings thousands of youth to Trafalgar Square</td>
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<td>May 26</td>
<td>Nottingham workers and West Indian and Pakistani activists organize in solidarity with the workers of the yarn processing firm Crepe Sizes, the majority of whom are Pakistani</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Free Tony Soares campaign</td>
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<td>June 1</td>
<td>Jury records 21 verdicts of not guilty in case of Metro 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>FN writes about Cheesebrough-Ponds Factory workers’ fight to be unionized</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>BPM reports that youth have been demanding an end to school uniforms, want black study courses, and that BPM runs a weekend playgroup for young children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>FN announces that ILEA has brought in West Indian Standing Conference to negotiate with Metro Youth Club members</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>BPM participates in Angela Davis Victory Rally and March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 13</td>
<td>Joshua Francis Defence Committee organizes public meeting at Tooting Co-op Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>On a court order from the Industrial Relations Court, police evict the mostly black 126 Stanmore Engineering workers who were occupying the factory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 22</td>
<td>South London landlord throws mother of two Gloria Francis’s belongings into the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>Two members of BPM Women’s Collective visit prisoner Eileen Evans, a 30-year-old black mother of two, arrested for stealing £1.95 of food from Tesco’s grocery. Held in Holloway Prison for 3 months without trial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Brixton police force entry to the Miller family flat in search of a stolen radio while the Millers' 12 year old daughter was home alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 13</td>
<td>Notting Hill and Notting Dale police arrest Mangrove Restaurant waiter Jean Caboussel for failing to appear at Inner London Sessions on July 5. Caboussel had not received notice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 25</td>
<td>BPM joins cross-industry workers’ rally for dockers at Tower Hill. They march to Pentonville Prison for release of 5 arrested dockers</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 29</td>
<td>An attack on the Bernard family by a gang of racists in a Tottenham pub results in the murder of their 20 year old son</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 29</td>
<td>C.M., a female secondary student at Tottenham College for Further Education writes FN to say that a group of black students have organized a political discussion class on Tuesdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>Eldridge Cleaver writes from Algiers to Tony Soares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>Reggae Concert at St. Pancras Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>BPM issues statement of solidarity with Uganda/East African Asians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Author John Berger donates half of his £5,000 Booker Prize to the BPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Ebony publishes special issue on Britain’s Blacks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1973**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Police accost four youths as they leave Waterloo Station for pouncing on a woman’s back to rob her; no such woman is found. BPM intervenes in court system and juvenile trial is moved to jury trial; boys are acquitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement splits into Brixton movement; North and East London movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Britain joins European Economic Community (EEC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Brother Joel arrested while going on BPM ‘door to door’ activity, beaten, and charged with maliciously damaging police and grievous bodily harm</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 27</td>
<td>Linton Johnson and Donna were in Brixton Market when police arrested Errol Tucker; when Johnson helps get Tucker’s information, police accuse him of assault and arrest him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Lambeth Council for Community Relations makes grant to Panther bookshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Repairman arrested as he left Unity Centre; police followed him from Brixton to Camberwell Green and charged him with theft of his hammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement South Collective opens Unity Centre in Herne Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>BPM holds meeting about struggle of Azania (South African) workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td><em>The Times</em> publishes “Black Power: Reality and the Rhetoric”</td>
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<td>March 1</td>
<td>Tulse Hill School teacher John Sherrington notes importance of Unity Centre’s black history and culture to her classroom teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Greater London Council sends Unity Centre an eviction letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Student Union of Northern Polytechnic Institute, Holloway, donates £400 to BPM and condemns student N. Bennett’s involvement in the Unity Centre fire bombing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Rev. Robert Nind, vicar of St. Matthew’s Brixton, collects £40 from his congregation for owners of the shops damaged in fire bombing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>National Front fire bombs 5 black premises in South London, including BPM’s Unity Centre at 74 Railton Road, Brixton. Bombs injure 7 people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Brother Al lives at Unity Centre and describes how he uses music to speak to black struggles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>BPM starts fund to Rebuild Unity Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>BPM interviews a teacher participating in a 12,000-person teachers’ strike; Lambeth teachers hold mass meeting at Classic Cinema in Brixton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>Tony Soares convicted of incitement at Old Bailey; Judge King Hamilton orders mental health report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>BPM writes to people interested in Unity Centre, encouraging them to contribute to fund and sends sample letter to write to Lambeth Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Council Housing resident Carol Carter finds feces and dirt outside both doors of her flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>National Front wins 16.3% of vote in West Browich by-election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Police attack a Mrs. Enis in her Brixton home, arrest and charge her with assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>BPM campaigns for the rights of Islington council housing tenants at 46 Wray Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>BPM North and East London Collective moves from Barnsby Road to 37 Tollington Park N4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Black Panther Movement North &amp; East Collective prints Freedom News from community press at 11 Hemingford Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>BPM encourages people to support arrested Mrs Enis of Brixton at her court appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>FN encourages black people to report arrests in the community as a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>way of combatting increased police brutality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Sisters Liz Obi and Olive Morris continue squatting in Brixton flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>despite police assisting landlord three times in trying to evict them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>Freedom News reports a police riot at a fair in Brockwell Park in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South London, with return of Special Patrol Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 16</td>
<td>BPM North &amp; East London interviews 46 Wray Crescent housing tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>regarding their poor housing circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>BWM (formerly BPM) organizes Rally, March and Meeting Against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Growing Police Terror in South London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Demonstration against 1971 Immigration Act’s retrospective clauses,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over 10,000 people attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>BPM Solidarity Campaign for Freedom Fighters in West Indies Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>Black Workers Movement sister goes with 46 Wray Crescent residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to legal centre, residents receive repairs and offers of alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>BWM helps 3 homeless evictees investigate the legality of their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>BWM encourages solidarity with black workers' strike at Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone &amp; Cables (STC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>BWM members speak with STC workers and black shop stewards outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>factory gate; the workers explain that South Asian workers are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being intimidated by white management and are not striking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 5</td>
<td>Solidarity Meeting for West Indies Freedom Fighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Tenants at Ferndale Court form rehousing committee, make film and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>petition for Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 22</td>
<td>BWM investigates unattended classrooms in Inner London schools, finds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>up to 100 students are left without teachers per day in Inner London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 22</td>
<td>BWM calls on blacks in Britain to campaign for the Caribbean Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Because of a petition which BWM helped organize, Ferndale Tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action Group meets with Ken Livingstone, Lambeth Housing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vice Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Brockwell Three appear at Wells Street Magistrates Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>BWM Brixton shows film in support of Caribbean Freedom Fighters: Gillo Pontecorvo's <em>Quemada</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: UK Black Panther newspaper issues by archival location

Archive Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLA</td>
<td>Birmingham Local Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHP</td>
<td>Darcus Howe Papers, Columbia University Rare Book &amp; Manuscript Library, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPI</td>
<td>George Padmore Institute, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Raymond Eurquhart personal collection, Durham, NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNA: PRO</td>
<td>The National Archives: Public Record Office, London</td>
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</table>

Black People’s News Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Archival Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1969</td>
<td>BLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1970</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1970</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1970</td>
<td>TNA: PRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1971</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June 1971</td>
<td>GPI</td>
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National and International News Bulletin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Archival Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 6, 1971</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11, 1971</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 1971</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 30, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 13, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 20, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 27, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 17, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 6, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 20, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4, 1971</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 7, 1972</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 14, 1972</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22, 1972</td>
<td>DHP</td>
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<td>January 29, 1972</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4, 1972</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11, 1972</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18, 1972</td>
<td>DHP</td>
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**Freedom News**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>February 19, 1972</td>
<td>GPI</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>March 18, 1972</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10, 1972</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
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<td>July 29, 1972</td>
<td>RE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26, 1973</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1, 1973</td>
<td>GPI</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1973 Special Issue</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 16, 1973</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 28, 1973</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 17, 1973</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 22, 1973</td>
<td>GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20, 1973</td>
<td>DHP</td>
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</table>

**Black Life Brixton**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 16, 1973</td>
<td>DHP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missing Issues:**


*Freedom News:* April 1972; May 1972; newspaper temporarily out of circulation August 1972-February 1973; April 1973; May 1973
Appendix D: Countries named in UK Panther newspapers, by order of first appearance, 1969-1973

*NB: Unless otherwise noted, the country is mentioned in one issue only.

1. Rhodesia/Zimbabwe – mentioned in 12 issues
2. United States – mentioned in 20 issues
3. Ethiopia
4. Jamaica – mentioned in 7 issues
5. Laos
6. Trinidad & Tobago – mentioned in 25 issues
7. Vietnam – mentioned in 2 issues
8. Denmark
9. Sweden
10. Belgium
11. Netherlands
12. Guinea - mentioned in 3 issues
13. Ireland – mentioned in 4 issues
14. South Africa – mentioned in 11 issues
15. Aden
16. Guyana – mentioned in 3 issues
17. Nyasaland/Malawi
18. Zambia – mentioned in 2 issues
19. Anguilla
20. East Germany – mentioned in 2 issues
21. West Germany
22. Canada – mentioned in 2 issues
23. France – mentioned in 4 issues
24. Uruguay
25. Surinam
26. Uganda – mentioned in 3 issues
27. Antigua – mentioned in 2 issues
28. Grenada – mentioned in 5 issues
29. Israel – mentioned in 3 issues
30. Tanzania – mentioned in 2 issues
31. Barbados – mentioned in 2 issues
32. India – mentioned in 9 issues
33. Mozambique – mentioned in 4 issues
34. Angola
35. Spain – mentioned in 4 issues
36. China
37. Chile – mentioned in 2 issues
38. Italy
39. Iceland
40. Australia – mentioned in 3 issues
41. Pakistan – mentioned in 2 issues
42. Bangladesh – mentioned in 3 issues
43. Ceylon
44. Holland – mentioned in 2 issues
45. Japan
46. Malta
47. Ghana – mentioned in 2 issues
48. Kenya – mentioned in 2 issues
49. Bahamas
50. Northern Ireland – mentioned in 6 issues
51. Dominica – mentioned in 3 issues
52. Lebanon
53. Honduras
54. Thailand
55. Scotland – mentioned in 2 issues
56. Portugal
57. Namibia
58. St. Vincent
Appendix E: Israeli cities and towns with Black Panther activity, 1971-1977

Acre
Ashdod
Bat-Yam
Beersheba
Beit She'an
Dimona
Eilat
Givat Olga
Hadera
Hatzerim
Jerusalem
Kfar Saba
Ma'alot
Masmia
Natanya
Ofakim
Qiryat Shmona
Ramat-Gan
Ramla
Tel Aviv
Tiberias
Wadi Salib
Yahud
Appendix F: Israeli Black Panther Party members identified

Avi Bardugo
Azir Herzl
Charlie Biton
Danny Sa’il
David Levi
Edi Malka
Eli Avigzar
Haim HaNegve
Haim Turjeman
Hayim A.
Hayim Koko
Ilan HaLevi
Isaac
Kokhavi Shemesh
Koko Derie
Mardush
Me’ir Levi
Mony Yaqim
Moshe A.
Rafi Marziano
Reuven Abergil
Ronny Horowitz
Sa’adia Marziano
Shabi A.
Shulamith Tsubri
Simon Michaeli
Victor Alush
Victor Teir
Ya’akov Abergil
Yaakov Elbaz
Yehezkel Cohen
Yigal Bin-Nun
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Jerusalem, Israel

Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem
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Hebrew University Library

Israel State Archives
Series 197: Knesset Records
Series 392: The Dan Region (Ramat Gan)
Series 412, 489: Jerusalem Area, Black Panthers
Series 2731: Political Protest
Series 6484: Prime Minister
Series 7997: Committee for Integrating Eastern Jews
Series 13892: Consultant Bureau of Social Affairs
Series 14166: Department of Immigration and Absorption
Series 14824: Education

Israeli Left Archive, http://israeli-left-archive.org/

National Library of Israel

Birmingham, United Kingdom

Birmingham Library Black History Collection
Black History Collection Pamphlets

Birmingham Local Archives
Papers of the Indian Workers Association, 1959-1998

Coventry, United Kingdom

Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick
Bob Purdie Papers
Colin Barker Papers
Jack Askins Papers
The Socialist Party Collection
Spartacist Series, 1968-1969
Bookmarks Publications Collection, Socialist Workers Party

University of Warwick Library
A. Sivanandan Collection Pamphlets, Ethnicity & Migration Collection

**London, United Kingdom**

Black Cultural Archives
Ephemera Collection
Papers of Ansel Wong
Records of the Black Cultural Archives

British Film Institute
British Film Institute National Archive

British Library
General Reference Collection
The British Library Sound Archive
Millennium Memory Bank
Women’s Liberation Movement Interviews

George Padmore Institute
John La Rose Collection
UK Society and Politics
Journals, UK and Caribbean
Newspapers, UK and Caribbean
Black Panther Movement Publications

Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Senate House Library, University of London
Institute of Commonwealth Studies Special Collections

Institute of Race Relations
Black History Collection

Lambeth Local Archives, Minet Library
Olive Morris Collection

London Metropolitan Archives
Eric and Jessica Huntley Archives
Office of the Chief Rabbi
The National Archives, Public Record Office
CRIM: Central Criminal Court
  Series 1: Proceedings in Court
DPP: Director of Public Prosecutions
  Series 2: Case Papers, 1931-2003
  Series 7: American and Latin American Departments, 1967-1980
  Series 39: North and East African Departments and successors, 1967-1972
  Series 44: West Indian Department 'B', Smaller Commonwealth West Indian Territories, 1967-1980
  Series 95: Information Research Department, 1966-1977
FO: Foreign Office, 1567-2002
  Series 371: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1966
HO: Home Office, 1700-2002
  Series 325: Queen's Peace, 1944-1984
  Series 376: Racial Disadvantage, 1963-1984
MEPO: Metropolitan Police Office, 1803-1995
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  Series 28: General, 1969-1986
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Black Life Brixton (London)
The Black Panther (Oakland)
Black People's News Service (London)
Black Power (London)
Black Power Speaks (London)
Chicago Reader
Chicago Sun-Times
Chicago Tribune
The Crusader (Havana, Peking)
The Daily Express (London)
The Daily Mail (London)
The Daily Telegraph (London)
Freedom News (London)
The Glasgow Herald
Grass Roots, Black Liberation Front (London)
The Guardian (London)
Haaretz (Tel Aviv)
The Hindustan Times (New Delhi)
The Independent (London)
The Indian Express (Delhi)
Jerusalem Post
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Maariv (Tel Aviv)
The Militant (New York)
The Milwaukee Sentinel
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National and International News Bulletin (London)
New York Times
New Statesman (London)
The New Zealand Herald (Auckland)
People Emerging Against Corrupt Establishments (RAF Mildenhall, UK)
The Pittsburgh Press
Race Today (London)
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Shu'un Filastiniyah (Beirut)
SNCC Newsletter (Atlanta)
Socialist (London)
Sunday Mirror (Trinidad & Tobago)
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By author (unless otherwise stated, English-language digital audio recordings and transcripts in author's possession)

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Charlie Biton, 12 December 2010, Mevaseret Zion, Israel (Hebrew)

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Joan Countryman, 18 October 2012, Providence, RI

Avi Dabach, 10 August 2011, Musrara, Jerusalem

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Eli Hamo, 24 November 2009, Tel Aviv

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HO Nazareth, 29 July 2011, Queen's Park, North London

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Danny DaCosta

Farrukh Dhondy

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Reuven Abergel, Jerusalem

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Published Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


435


Biography

Anne-Marie Angelo was born in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania in 1979. She attended Princess Anne High School in Virginia Beach, Virginia and received a bachelor’s degree in American Studies from the University of Virginia in 2001. From 2001 to 2005, she taught American politics, history, and literature at Uppingham School and Oakham School in the United Kingdom. Angelo entered the graduate program in history at Duke University in 2005 and earned a master’s degree in history at Duke in 2007. She is the author of “The Black Panthers in London, 1967-1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic,” published by Radical History Review in 2009. She has received funding from the U.S. Department of Education Foreign Language and Area Studies program (FLAS), the Duke University Graduate School, the Duke University History Department, the Duke University Middle East Studies Center, the Duke University Women’s Studies Program, and the Humanities Writ Large program at the Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University. In 2012, Angelo received the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Mentoring from the Duke University Graduate School. She lives in Durham, North Carolina.