The Black Panther Party and Mother Country Radicals: Black-White Coalitions and Alliances During the Black Power Movement

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by

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Under the Direction of Akinyele Umoja, PhD

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the collaborative relationships the Black Panther Party formed with white radical groups in the United States for the purposes of contributing to allyship theory and praxis and understanding antiracist and radical political consciousness development among whites in response to black political ideology and racialized political events using a historical analysis methodology utilizing a review and content analysis of primary sources including archival records, autobiographies, newspapers, and essays, and secondary sources including Panther anthologies, and Civil Rights Movement and Panther histories. This research argues the Black Panther Party and the diversity of collaborative relationships it formed nationally with organizations such as the Students for a Democratic Society, Peace and Freedom Party, and locally among its branches and chapters such as the Rainbow Coalition for Revolutionary Solidarity in Chicago, Illinois, provides potential insights and models for black-white allyship and broader multi-racial coalition politics in the contemporary Black Freedom Movement.

INDEX WORDS*:* Black Panther Party, Black Power Movement, Allyship, Antiracism, Rainbow Coalition of Revolutionary Solidarity

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DEDICATION

To my family, without whom nothing would be possible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BLM	Black Lives Matter
BPP	Black Panther Party
CBPP	Chicago Black Panther Party
COFO	Council of Federated Organizations
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
GROW	Grassroots Organizing Work
JBAKC	John Brown Anti-Klan Committee
JOIN	Jobs or Income Now (JOIN-Community Union)
NASO	North Alabama School for Organizers
NCNP	National Conference for New Politics
NUL	National Urban League / Urban League
PFP	Peace and Freedom Party
RFBL	Rednecks for Black Lives
RUA	Rising Up Angry
SCEF	Southern Conference Educational Fund
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SNCC	Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee
SSOC	Southern Student Organizing Committee
WUO	Weather Underground Organization / Weathermen
YPO	Young Patriots Organization

INTRODUCTION

In February 1968, while on trial for the murder of police officer John Frey in a shootout which occurred a year prior, BPP co-founder Huey P. Newton was visited by Stokely Carmichael, former chairman of SNCC, honorary Prime Minister of the Party, and popular advocate of the Black Power Movement, who had traveled to speak at a rally in support of the Free Huey Campaign in Oakland, California. According to the accounts offered in their respective autobiographies, the meeting lasted just long enough for these two figures to disagree. The subject of their disagreement was one long contentious in the Black Freedom Struggle – the participation, role, and efficacy of whites in the movement. While Newton acknowledged the centrality of race, from a Marxist-Leninist analysis he argued the necessity of forming multiracial alliances and coalitions on the basis of class to combat a common oppressor whose power and control benefited from class-based exploitation and racial divisions. Carmichael rejected this analysis. Informed in-part by his troubled relationship with white liberals as an organizer in SNCC, Carmichael opposed the BPP's alliance with the Peace and Freedom Party (PFP) and broader associations with whites, contending whites would destroy the movement, alienate black people, and lesson the effectiveness of the BPP within the black community. According to Newton, Carmichael also argued that Newton would not be freed without an armed uprising. On this final contention, Carmichael would prove incorrect. Newton would be freed from prison August 5th, 1970, after his charges were overturned. However, afforded hindsight, Newton would concede Carmichael's fears were not without merit, observing that although Carmichael was correct about what would happen to the BPP, he was wrong in principle. Newton reflected that relationships with whites caused the BPP to be pulled into the free speech movement, the psychedelic fad, and the advocacy of drugs - all causes he deemed irrelevant to

the work of the Party. In Newton's estimation, it would not be until years after his release that the focus of the party would be realigned.[1]

The debate between Newton and Carmichael illustrates some of the dramatically different positions held by activists of otherwise similar ideologies on the question of white allyship during the Black Power Movement. Certainly, few historical periods of black activism within the United States have been more emblematic of this ideological conflict than the transition from the Civil Rights Movement to Black Power that occurred in the 1960's, which required and represented new theoretical conceptions and practices of allyship in continuity with the evolving ideologies and broadening scope of the Black Freedom Struggle. Though the Black Power Movement was guided by the principles of racial pride, the right to self-determination, and the pursuit of equity and justice for those of African descent, portrayals in popular media and uncritical academic treatments have often caused the movement to be understood as violent and anti-white in the popular memory, facing charges of reverse-racism in the court of public opinion. Consequently, the insights this period of history may offer on the question of white allyship, multiracial coalition politics, antiracism, and antiracist and radical political consciousness development among whites remains underexplored. During their 1966-1982 lifespan, the BPP, with its emphasis on multiracial coalition politics, struggled to forge a number of collaborative relationships with individuals, groups, and communities of diverse backgrounds, identities, and political agendas, utilizing different strategies and tactics in consideration of the unique demographics, political climates, and histories of the communities in which they organized, both in the United States and abroad. The prolificity and diversity of these relationships establish the BPP as an essential subject of inquiry. This research, "The Black

[1] Newton, Huey P. *Revolutionary Suicide (*Penguin Books, 2009*),* 209-210.

Panther Party and Mother Country Radicals: Black White Coalitions and Alliances During the Black Power Movement" thus offers a thorough investigation of these coalitions and alliances, which have largely been examined in a piecemeal fashion within the broader historiography of the BPP, for the purposes of identifying potential insights, themes, and lessons which may inform approaches toward black-white allyship, antiracism, and multi-racial coalition politics beneficial in contemporary and future movements. Lastly, this study aims to contribute to historiography of both the Black Panther Party and the Black Power Movement.

Methodology

This research focuses on the historical periods of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement, and the BPP and the collaborative relationships they formed with white radical groups in order to draw lessons for antiracist and allyship practice to benefit the contemporary Black Freedom Movement. Beginning with the Civil Rights Movement, it offers analysis of the ideological development of the Black Power Movement with respect to black-white allyship theory and practice, the impact of Black Power and the BPP on the New Left, the national relationships formed by the BPP, and concludes with a case study examination of the Rainbow Coalition of Revolutionary Solidarity in Chicago, Illinois. In part, through its methodological approach of historical analysis involving a review of primary and secondary sources, this research seeks to address what the author considers to be three limitations of contemporary antiracist and allyship literature: (1) *Individualistic;* antiracist and allyship literature has often been concerned with individual practice of antiracism and allyship rather collective practice between groups and organization in activist spaces; (2) *Ahistorical*; antiracist and allyship literature are often drawn from contemporary analysis than drawing from and building upon the institutional legacy of past movements and organizations; (3) *Methods of Consciousness*

Development; antiracist and allyship literature seeks to inform practice of those with consciousness toward racial oppression. However, antiracist literature often does not examine the development of antiracist consciousness among whites in response to black political organization and racialized political events, and best practices for nurturing this consciousness in an organizing space.

Using a historical analysis methodology, this research utilizes a diverse array of primary and secondary sources for review and content analysis to ensure a thorough and accurate representation of the beliefs, works, and political positions of examined individuals, organizations and historical periods. Primary sources include archival materials collected from the Freedom Archives, Civil Rights Movement Archives, the Wisconsin Historical Society Social Action Collection, and the Black Panther Party Collection and J. Herman Blake and Emily L. Moore Papers at Emory University; newspapers including *The Movement,* and *The Black Panther Party*; autobiographies and memoires including Huey P. Newton's *Revolutionary Suicide,* Bobby Seale's *Seize the Time,* Stokely Carmichael's *Ready for Revolution,* and Bob Zellner's *Wrong Side of Murder Creek*; and Panther essays and position papers. Secondary sources utilized include Panther anthologies such as *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, In Search of the Black Panther Party,* and *Liberation Imagination and the Black Panther Party;* Civil Rights Movement histories including *Local People* by John Dittmer, and *I've Got the Light of Freedom* by Charles M. Payne; and Panther histories including *Black Against Empire* by Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, and *On the Ground* and, and *The Black Panther Party In a City Near You* by Judson L. Jeffries.

In *On the Ground,* editor Judson L. Jeffries writes "unless in-depth studies of local branches" and chapters are conducted, there are a number of fundamental, yet substantiative

questions that cannot and perhaps will never be answered in any meaningful way – questions that will give students of history greater insight into the organization's complexities, seeming contradictions, and nuances."[2] This approach to BPP scholarship informs the case study approach in this research in examination of the white radical groups participant in Rainbow Coalition of Revolutionary Solidarity in Chicago, Illinois. While scholarship has been devoted to examining the relationships with national organizations such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and Peace and Freedom Party (PFP), these organizations have rarely been examined in a collective context. Additionally, little attention has been afforded to the differences in practices of antiracism and allyship of localized white radical groups with respect to the specific historical and political conditions of their communities, in comparison to white radical groups of national prominence, and mainstream ideology, practices and trends.

By utilizing these approaches, this research seeks to provide insight into a number of presently underexplored research questions: What qualities of the Black Power Movement and the BPP inspired antiracist radicalism among whites? What variables contributed to the formation, maintenance, and ultimate success or failure of these black-white collaborative relationships and their programs and initiatives? What issues, beliefs, and ideology were shared between the BPP and the white communities with which they organized, in what conditions, and with respect to what historical political, social, and economic realities? Lastly, what lessons can be learned from the investigated black-white collaborative relationships during the Black Power Movement to the benefit of the contemporary and future Black Freedom Struggle?

Scholarship on the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement has been divided on whether these movements should be viewed as distinct or as continuous struggle for black freedom in the

[2] Jeffries, J. L. *On the Ground: the Black Panther Party in Communities across America*. University Press of Mississippi, 2010. xiii.

"Long Movement Model" (LMM). The major contentions of LMM include: (1) *Locality*; the modern Civil Rights (and Black Power) movement(s) was a series of local struggles rather than a national social movement; (2) *Reperiodization*; the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements transcends the historical period of 1955-1975; (3) *Continuity;* the Civil Rights and Black Power movements are not distinct social movements, but rather a single continuous struggle for black freedom; and (4) *Non-Distinction;* the South was not distinct, in that differences between southern *de jure* and northern *de facto* racial oppression were exaggerated, and racism is nationwide. Scholars who have engaged in similar research to this thesis using the LMM include Jakobi Williams in his work *From the Bullet to the Ballot*. However, the LMM model is not employed in this research. As Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Long write in "The Long Movement as Vampire" - *"*we question the adequacy of the Long Movement thesis because it collapses periodization schemas, erases conceptual differences between waves of the BLM [Black Liberation Movement] and blurs regional distinctions in the African-American Experience".[3] Primarily, this research takes issue with the *Continuity* and the *Non-distinction* contentions of the LMM. While the Long Movement Model properly acknowledges the continuity of struggle within the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement, it downplays the impact of the public and popular distinctions between these movements on the larger political culture of the United States. More specifically, how black political organizational models and ideology specifically attributed to the Black Power Movement influenced political and antiracist consciousness among a variety of groups in ways not attributed to the Civil Rights Movement before 1966. Similarly, the *Non-Distinction* contention does not fully consider the distinct approaches to organizing, and with respect to the focus of this thesis, perspectives on black-white

[3] Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The Long Movement as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *Journal of African American History* 92, no 2. (Spring 2007): 265.

allyship with respect to the communities specific forms of racial oppression, political history, and racial demographics. As will be explored in this research, rather than racial oppression being non-distinct, the stated differences in these communities generally, let alone between the North and South, are often determine the development of ideology and efficacy of strategies and tactics.

Lastly this research acknowledges, as a limitation, unlike white radical groups of national presence which have received significantly more scholarly and archival attention, primary and secondary sources for more localized white radical groups are limited, and the availability of and volume of these documents vary. Secondly, guidelines implemented as a result of COVID-19 limited or denied access to physical archives during the timeline of writing this thesis. Given these limitations, this research at times relies on the historiography, interviews, and other sources found in pre-existing scholarship.

Terms and Definitions

This research utilizes a number of terms, the definitions of which requiring clarification and discussion. The operational definition of "allyship," for example, varies widely between activists, organizations, and authors. In a number of spaces, instead of "allyship", the term "accomplice"[4], or even "turncoat"[5] has been used or promoted instead, with the latter two terms used to indicate one who is willing to assume physical, social, or financial risks in aiding in the active dismantling oppressive structures affecting minority groups, with minor variations of this distinction among individuals and groups. In other spaces, such distinctions are not made at all. These distinctions between allyship, accomplice, and turncoat are not made in this research.

[4] Clemens, Colleen. "Ally or Accomplice? The Language of Activism." *Learning for Justice*, 5 June 2015,
[5] Ziyad, Hari. "5 Reasons I Refuse to Call Myself An 'Ally' – And Why I Use 'Turncoat' Instead." *Everyday Feminism*, 14 Nov. 2015, everydayfeminism.com/2015/11/not-an-ally-but-turncoat/.

Instead, this research advances its own definition of allyship which can be defined as the process of building relationships based on trust, accountability, empathy, and shared vision; and actionable support and emphasizing of social justice, inclusion, self-determination and human rights for and between different organizations, identities, and communities. While certain definitions of allyship require the term be qualified by a "privileged" ingroup advancing the interests of a "marginalized" or oppressed outgroup, these qualifiers are absent from the definitions used in this research. This research argues that use of these qualifiers present a definition of allyship which is too narrow. Definitions hold value not only in their explanatory power, but in their operational utility. Such a definition proves limited in its application, often reducing allyship to matters concerning privilege, especially in discussion of race. For example, when utilizing a definition of "allyship" with the aforementioned qualifiers, blacks are unable to "ally" with "whites" in a strict, traditional sense, as "whites" are not considered a marginalized outgroup. However, in the class-based analysis of the BPP and early positions taken by SNCC for instance, a distinction is made for poor whites, who exist in a contradictory space as both privileged due to their whiteness, and oppressed due to working-class exploitation in a capitalist system, even if sensibilities and historical trends show greater association with the former than the latter. Furthermore, in this vein, such a qualified definition of allyship does not readily allow for and acknowledge multifaceted identities within the reductive black-white racial dichotomy of the United States, limiting more substantive analysis and exploration of allyship practice. The Ashkenazi Jewish community in the US for example, exemplifies this issue. Debates on this subject notwithstanding, those of Ashkenazi descent, while often visibly white, exist simultaneously as a privileged ingroup due to their skin color granting access to the benefits of

white privilege, and as a marginalized outgroup with respect to Jewish particularity and antisemitism existing as a historic anima for white supremacy.

"Coalition" in this research is to be defined as a temporary relationship between distinct parties, persons, or groups for a joint action or cause whom otherwise do not share or express mutual beliefs, long-term interests, goals, or a vision for society. Furthermore, coalitions are typically not defined or bound by formal or written agreement, nor structure for mutual cooperation. "Alliance," as used in this study, refers to a long-term relationship between distinct parties, persons, or groups who share or express mutual beliefs, long-term interests, goals, or vision for society, whose collaboration and collective action is informed by their shared beliefs, interest, and goals. Alliances, unlike coalitions, are more likely to have a more formal structure for cooperation and to be bound by written agreement. Due to "alliance" and "coalition" often being used interchangeably in the examined organizations, within this text, both terms are referred to broadly and collectively as "collaborative relationships." Distinctions between the two are to be made within the text when required for accurate representation of relationships as understood by the examined organizations, or for the purposes of more thorough analysis. The structure, practices, and objectives of alliances and coalitions, while having commonalities, differ in important ways, necessitating consideration in the ways these collaborative organizations are investigated and analyzed. The relationship between the BPP and PFP is best understood as an alliance by nature of their relatively formal structure of their cooperation and decision making, and joint effort as representatives on a presidential ticket, which while a temporary action, was informed by their shared or expressed beliefs, long-term interests, and vision for society. The Rainbow Coalition in Chicago, Illinois, despite its name, is perhaps also best understood as an alliance. Though having an informal structure with no codified or written

agreement to determine their actions as a collective, the relationship between the participatory organizations and the causes and goals they perused were on the basis of expressed mutual beliefs, long-term interests, and vision for society. In each case, though parties, individuals, or groups may have differences in how they practice their coalition or alliance, the fundamental element which defines the relationship (shared or distinct beliefs, long-term interests, and vision for society) may inform interracial tensions, how they present within and between groups, or the degrees in which they do so, a focus of this research.

"Antiracism," as an ideology, is a challenging term. Ideologically, antiracism is commonly understood as a form of action against racism and the systematic oppression of marginalized groups. In *How to Be an Antiracist,* Kendi defines "Antiracist," applicable to both individuals and groups, as "one who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing, and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequity."[6] The practice of antiracism, or to be antiracist, is then characterized by active challenge to racial inequity, rather than a neutral position or personal disavowal of antiracist behavior as the term "not-racist" suggests. The definition of "antiracist consciousness" as promoted in this research can be defined as in individual or groups acknowledgment of interpersonal, systematic, and structural racism, and their belief in the necessity of engaging in intentional antiracist learning and action. Positions differ on how antiracist consciousness develops, and most importantly, what actions and politics and antiracist consciousness should inspire, and to what end. An aim of this study is to examine the efficacy of the theory and praxis of the organizations and individuals investigated in this research with respect to allyship and antiracism based upon observable phenomena and outcomes. Navigating complexities and questioning common understanding and operational

[6] X. Kendi, Ibram *How to be Antiracist* (Vintage, 2020). 24.

definitions of allyship and antiracism is one of the issues at the heart of this study. If antiracism as term is not explicitly used as a self-descriptive term by the examined organizations, terms and phrases such as "anti-imperialist", or "in-solidarity with", along with observable interracial collaboration may also be used to identify these organizations and as having antiracist principles.

"Black Freedom Struggle" is used throughout the text to acknowledge the broader history of black-white allyship outside of the timer periods which are direct focus of this study, the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement. In *We Will Shoot Back,* Akinyele Umoja defines Black Freedom Struggle as "the historic fight of African descendants for liberation and human rights…The Black Freedom Struggle includes both the fight for emancipation from racial slavery that was waged from the seventeenth to nineteenth century and the fight for human rights, social and economic justice, and political power that was waged from the late nineteenth century through contemporary times."[7] "Today's Movement" refers to both the Black Freedom Struggle, and the concurring and overlapping social movements of other identities and interest groups in the mutual struggle for human rights; political, social, and economic equity; justice, and political power.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 2, "Growing Pains: The Transition from Civil Rights to Black Power," examines the ideological development of Black Power with respect to black-white allyship and the positions which emerged concerning the changing consensus on the role of whites in the Black Freedom Movement, primarily between the time period of 1954-1967. Often, analysis and historiography of the Black Power Movement has focused on its advocacy of self-determination, self-defense, and black pride as the root causes of its development. Examining the ideological

[7] Umoja, Akinyele *We Will Shoot Back,* (New York University Press, 2013). 6.

perspectives and experiences of key movement figures and organizations in the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement, and foundational Black Power literature such as the "Vine City Project Position Paper", and Carmichael and Hamilton's *Black Power,* this chapter highlights the ways in which Black Power emerged due to issues related to black-white racial tensions in organizing spaces, and was often understood as fundamentally a critique of white liberalism. Included in this chapter are an examination of the multitude of responses of the white press and white activist groups such as the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), and Students for a Democratic Society. Lastly, given the ideological and direct relationship of SNCC with the BPP, a thorough analysis of the challenges SNCC faced as multiracial organization leading into its adoption of Black Power as a guiding ideology and expulsion of its white membership proves insightful in understanding the approaches and positions black and white organizations took (or didn't take) in mitigating past issues in their organizational models, theories, and practices.

Chapter 3, "The Black Power Era: The Black Panther Party and the New Left," examines the multiracial coalition politics of the BPP, and the influence of the BPP and Black Power Movement on identity politics, and the political and antiracist consciousness development and activism of white radicals of the New Left and broader societies within the United States and abroad. Also examined are the successes and challenges the BPP faced in their relationship with national white radical groups such as the PFP, SDS, Weather Underground Organization (WUO), and the National Committee to Combat Fascism (NCCF).

Chapter 4, "The Rainbow Coalition in Chicago, Illinois: White Power and Black Liberation" examines white radical groups Jobs or Income Now (JOIN), the Young Patriots Organization (YPO), the Patriots Party, and Rising Up Angry (RUA), their relationship to the

Chicago Black Panther Party (CBPP), the Rainbow Coalition, and the national movement. Attention is given to the causes for their emergence, historical and political landscape of Chicago and their respective communities, the development and practice of antiracist and radical political consciousness among their membership and community, and their understanding as whites of their role in domestic and international liberation struggles.

Chapter 5, "Conclusion and Lessons for Today's Movement" explores the practical and theoretical lessons concerning black-white allyship, antiracism, and multiracial coalition politics for the contemporary Black Freedom Struggle, drawn from analysis of previous chapters. Lastly, this chapter presents potential areas for future study.

GROWING PAINS: FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO BLACK POWER

> We will not be told whom we should choose as allies. We will not be isolated from any group or nation except by our own choice. We cannot have the oppressors telling the oppressed how to rid themselves of the oppressor. I have said most liberal whites react to Black Power with the question, "What about me?" rather than saying: "Tell me what you want me to do and I'll see if I can do it." There are answers to the right question.
>
> -Stokely Carmichael, "Power and Racism"

During the birth of the Black Power Movement in the 1960's, rather than a sudden ideological shift, new conceptions of white participation in the Black Freedom Struggle developed in response to years of white racist backlash, and the reluctance and timidity of the federal government to provide protection for activists in the South and enforce civil rights legislation. Collectively, this informed growing doubts that integration and appeals to white conscience and power structures would meaningfully address the myriad of social ills stemming from systematic racism facing black communities nationwide. Tensions between black and white activists had also begun to reach a boiling point. In *Local People*, historian John Dittmer observers that media fixation on white activists, and white racial attitudes informed in-part by class differences and elitism from white university student volunteers from the North during the 1964 Freedom Summer Project were common and at times insurmountable issues which aggravated racial tensions – leading factors in the breakdown of Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) projects in the South such as in Jackson, Mississippi.[8] In June 1966 during the latter days of the March Against Fear, when newly elected Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Stokely Carmichael took the speakers platform in Greenwood, Mississippi and led the marchers in calls for Black Power which resonated

[8] John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*, (University of Illinois Press, 2006), 329.

nationwide, it signaled a historic new phase of the Black Freedom Movement which had been manifesting across the decade.

Immediately, debate arose concerning the use of Black Power as a slogan and guiding ideology of the movement. White participation in the Black Freedom Struggle naturally became a major point of contention within this developing ideological framework. In the court of public opinion, despite the emphasis its advocates placed on racial pride, self-determination, and self-defense, Black Power was frequently charged to be an anti-white or black supremacist position by both its black and white critics. The re-evaluation of the integrationist solution and call to move from interracial organizing projects which had been the modus operandi of the Civil Rights Movement to advocacy of racial division of labor which challenged white activists to organize within their own communities appeared to substantiate the most negative interpretations and misunderstandings of Black Power. Early adopters of Black Power as an ideology included Stokely Carmichael of SNCC, and Floyd McKissick National Director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), who shared similar experiences organizing in South. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and Bayard Rustin (Director of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute) were critical of what they perceived to be Black Power's cultural nationalist or separatist tendencies but sympathetic to its critique of white liberals; while Roy Wilkins, Executive Director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Whitney Young, Executive Director of the National Urban League (NUL) counted among Black Power's shaper critics.

Often, criticisms of Black Power were not directed toward its principles of self-defense, self-determination and racial pride, nor were its fundamental aims of establishing independent economic, political, and social power bases for black people considered antithetical to the

movement. Instead, criticism was concerned with the slogans potential for misrepresentation, and alienation of otherwise sympathetic whites such misinterpretation invited. Generally, support or opposition to Black Power was determined by the extent to which one believed the equivalency of Black Power with separatism to be true, ideologically or functionally. However, within the myriad of interpretations of Black Power held by movement figures, notable is the commonality of understanding Black Power ideology as a critique of white liberalism and the black-white relationship dynamic rooted in both historical trends and lived experiences as organizers in the Civil Rights Movement. Writing on Black Power in *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, King recalls that days after the Black Power slogan was popularized in Greenwood, he called for a meeting consisting of himself, Carmichael, and McKissick to address a growing division among activists between those who supported Black Power and others who supported the slogan "Freedom Now," which would become representative of factional divisions which would emerge in the national movement[9]:

> I mentioned the implications of violence the press had already attached to the phrase. And I went on to say that some of the rash statements on the part of a few marchers only reinforced this impression…I conceded the fact we must have slogans. But why have one that would confuse our allies, isolate the Negro community and give many prejudiced whites, who might otherwise be ashamed of their anti-Negro feeling, a ready excuse for self-justification?...It is necessary to understand that Black Power is a cry of disappointment. The Black Power slogan did not spring full grown from the head of some philosophical Zeus. It was born from the wounds of despair and disappointment. It is a cry of daily hurt and persistent pain. For centuries the Negro has been caught in the tentacles of white power. Many Negroes have given up faith in the white majority because "white power" with total control has left them empty-handed. So in reality the call for Black Power is a reaction to the failure of white power.[10]

While acknowledging the call to organize independently from whites was "reacting against the slave pattern of 'perfect dependence' upon the masters", King believed it was "an

[9] George Tames, "Black Power: Negro Leaders Split Over Policy", (New York Times, July 10th, 1966)
[10] King Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*, (Beacon Press, 2010), 30-31; 33.

implicit and often explicit belief in black separatism", though he remained careful not to label it as black racism.[11] *Where Do We Go From Here*, published in 1967, a year prior to the Poor People's Campaign King would launch in 1968 provides insight on his perspective concerning his criticism of separatist ideology. Along with moral justifications, King believed that black-white coalitions would be tactical necessity for successful war on poverty. King writes: "There are, in fact, more poor white Americans than there are Negro. Their need for a war on poverty is no less desperate than the Negro's…The ability of Negroes to enter alliances is a mark of our growing strength, not our weakness. In entering an alliance, the Negro is not relying on white leadership or ideology; he is taking his place as an equal partner in a common endeavor."[12] Ultimately, King believed it was impossible for the Black community to build the required political, economic, and social power required to challenge racism and systematic inequalities alone, and such a self-imposed isolation would prove counter-productive. It is important to clarify, however, these views do not speak to the necessity or idealization of black dependency on white allies, but to the pluralistic and multiracial society, and greater struggle for human rights respective to the "beloved community" ideal King and those who shared his beliefs wished to build, but believed Black Power abandoned.[13] Rather than attacking SNCC, King instead aimed to reinforce the practicality and morality of non-violence**.** Rustin, in his essay "Black

[11] Ibid., 41; 49.
[12] Ibid., 53.
[13] "Beloved community" is a philosophical/religious idea that appeals to conscience through the principles non-violence is intended to emphasize (courage, faith, acceptance, love, mutual regard) to create an atmosphere where reconciliation and justice are possible, superseding immoral social situations such as racism. Rather than issues framed exclusively as sociological, legal, or racial, beloved community frames them ones moral and spiritual in nature. In his essay "Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom", King writes: "Only a refusal to hate or kill can put an end to the chain of violence in the world and lead us toward a community where men can live together without fear. Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in ourselves." Quoted in "Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom," in Martin Luther King and James Melvin Washington, *A Testament of Hope*: *The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, (Harper & Row, 1991), 58.

Power and Coalition Politics", offers a similar assessment of Black Power to King with respect to its origins, pitfalls, and critique of white liberals:

> It is here that we who advocate coalitions and integration and who object to the "black-power" concept have a massive job to do. We must see to it that the liberal-labor-civil rights coalition is maintained and, indeed, strengthened so that it can fight effectively for a Freedom Budget. We are responsible for the growth of the "black-power" concept because we have not used our own power to insure the full implementation of the bills whose passage we were strong enough to win, and we have not mounted the necessary campaign for winning a decent minimum wage and extended benefits. "Black power" is a slogan directed primarily against liberals by those who once counted liberals among their closest friends. It is up to the liberal movement to prove that coalition and integration are better alternatives.[14]

On August 21st, 1966, Carmichael, McKissick, King, Wilkins, and Young, along with James Meredith, offered a televised interview to NCBS's Meet the Press in which they discussed the Civil Rights Movement, ideology of Black Power, and areas of alignment and disagreement on these subjects. While Carmichael refused to define Black Power due to frequent issues of misinterpretation in the press, McKissick would outline CORE's definition of the slogan after Roland Evans, the interviewer, made reference to the Lillian Smith's exit from CORE in the wake of the organizations adoption of a Black Power stance identifying the need for self-determination, political and economic power, improved self-image of the black man, the development of young militant leadership, enforcement of federal laws and abolishment of police brutality, and the development of a black consumer bloc as fundamental goals.[15] In this interview, like King and Rustin, Young would take issue with the Black Power slogans potential for misinterpretation and emphasis on associating power with racial pride.

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[14] Bayard Rustin, "Black Power and Coalition Politics," September 1966, 1; 5-7.

[15] Lillian Smith was previously a white board member of CORE who left the organization in the wake of its adoption of Black Power ideology. In this interview, the interviewer Roland Evans quotes Smith, who charged CORE had "been infiltrated by adventurers, anihilists, black nationalists and plain old fashion haters who have finally taken over." "Meet the Press Discussion," August 21, 1966, 18.

> MR. V ALERIANI: Mr. Young, to follow up that question, don't most of the civil rights leaders go along with the concept of black power, but rather deplore the idea that the term is being used, that it has a bad psychological effect?
>
> MR. YOUNG: I can speak for the Urban League. We took a position, number one, that we should be very cautious about trying to interpret the slogans of other organizations. Secondly, we deplored the country's obsession and preoccupation with a debate about a slogan which we felt deterred the country from concentrating on the problems of poverty and discrimination. The Urban League takes a position that power is something that one acquires through having sufficient economic means, educational resources and political know-how. We do not feel that one gets pride or dignity or power simply by being white or being black, but by mobilizing into various groups who have similar ideas and working toward those ends. I think I must admit that any slogan, any motto that is left open to so many interpretations always runs a risk.[16]

While Wilkins did not speak directly to Black Power in this interview like King and Rustin, Wilkins also interpreted Black Power as separatist. In an October 1966 letter to the NAACP Special Contribution Fund, he pointedly declared the position of NAACP on the slogan: "A more serious issue is posed by the slogan 'Black Power'. No Matter how often it is defined, this slogan means anti-white power. In a racially pluralistic society, 'Black Power' has to mean every other ethnic group is the antagonist. It has to mean 'going it alone'. It has to mean separatism. We of the NAACP will have none of this."[17] Historian Clayborne Carson suggests that Wilkins and Young, the influence of their organizations directly tied to the preexisting political power structure, hoped to "stem continued deterioration of white support for the Civil Rights Movement," by ascribing to Carmichael "extreme positions."[18] Such concerns that Black Power would eliminate the support of white allies however, would be challenged by early pronouncements of support by white groups within the movement.

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[16] Ibid., 19.
[17] Roy Wilkins, "Letter to NAACP Special Contribution Fund," October 17th, 1966.
[18] Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening in the 1960s*. (Harvard University Press, 1995), 220.

White Reponses to Black Power

White activists, liberals, and public intellectuals similarly questioned their role in the Black Freedom Struggle within the ideological framework of Black Power and its challenge to white liberalism. Though the media rarely broke away from framing Black Power as an ideology of anti-whiteness, reverse racism, violence, and separatism, this interpretation was far from a universal position among whites. In a number of cases, the call for white activists to organize within their own communities had been met with articulate interpretations and pronouncements of support. Often, white activists and organizations whom expressed support for Black Power had strong pre-existing relationships with SNCC**.** Minister and activist John J. Waggy, Jr. for example, delivered a sermon distributed by SNCC challenging the validity of assertions that Black Power was politically irresponsible, an incitement to violence, and against the common goal of black activists, which he charged many erroneously interpreted as acceptance and integration. Instead, addressing his sermon to white liberals, Waggy Jr. admonished those who accepted "at face value the meanings attached to black power by a white person, or by black men who represent the so-called Black establishment", rather than the meaning ascribed to it by its advocates and ideological architects, such as Stokely Carmichael. Declaring the significance of Black Power to the white community as a challenge in the "disrobing of our own liberality", Waggy Jr. framed the issue of white backlash as one the white community needed to look within themselves to solve - to "see their fear and prejudice they held, but often assumed they no longer had." [19]

Notably, a number of white sentiments supporting Black contrasted with leaders who identified the ideology as separatist and one which weakened relationships with whites, instead

[19] John J Waggy Jr., "Black Power and the Disrobing of White Liberality", October 23, 1996.

viewing it's call to organize along racially separately lines as a wake-up call and opportunity for white allies to contribute more meaningfully to the Black Freedom Struggle. Shortly after Carmichael's election to the position of SNCC chairman in 1966, the Friends of SNCC published a letter authored by the leader of the Bay Area Friends of SNCC chapter Mike Miller supporting SNCC's new Black Power direction. The letter expressed the need to address the inferiority complex in the black community, and framed Carmichael's election as a desire on the part of the staff to have a chair who could give direction to SNCC in independent county organizing given Carmichael's work with the Lowndes County Freedom Organization.[20] On June 18, 1966, the SDS similarly passed a resolution supporting SNCC's Black Power stance and new political program, expecting to continue in the joint work between the two organizations despite Black Power's charges of separatism. The resolution challenged prevailing criticisms that Black Power strategies would be frustrated by the fact blacks existed as a minority of the population, despite their numbers in the South. However, this, as SDS acknowledged, suggested a skewed relationship in which the white community existed without parallel goals to the Black Freedom Struggle which could serve as the basis for equitable relationships with Black Power organization. The resolution argues "…to this we say that the responsibilities for that frustration would lie those whites who fail to build white movements that can at some point ally with the black movement for common goals…SDS seeks to call white critics to their true tasks, not to impugn their motives. If we really want to help we will be organizing primarily among the powerless, the disenfranchised, the dependent whites — poor, working class, and middle class — toward their power in communities, unions, and professions, so that they may move toward authentic alliance with the organizations of black power."[21] The SDS would later organize a

[20] Friends of SNCC "Recent SNCC National Staff Meeting and Subsequent Newspaper Stories," 1966.
[21] Students for a Democratic Society, "Resolution on SNCC", June 18, 1966.

Black Power conference at the UC Berkeley campus that October. Carmichael, as keynote speaker, would speak primarily against the Vietnam War, galvanizing the student anti-war movement by making connections between black and Vietnamese oppression.[22]

Notably, in additional to the challenge against white liberality, support for this racial division of labor advocated by Black Power was also rooted in the promise of organizing poor whites, not just as allies to the Black Freedom Struggle, but in building an interracial movement of the poor, an idea which would become central in the late 1960's among New Left organizations for which the Poor People's Campaign initiated by King in 1968 prior to his assassination served as significant inspiration. A November 1966 issue of The Movement newspaper reprinted an article originally published earlier in September by Bruce Detwiler of *The New Republic* entitled "The Role of Whites" which demonstrated this perspective:

> It is ironic that the only major civil rights group which has given serious though to organizing poor whites [SNCC] and helping them to obtain power has been dubbed by alarmists anti-white…Suffice to say that what is happening in SNCC should be less cause for alarm than the unwarranted reaction it has evoked. White sympathizers on the picket line should be able to yell "Black Power" just as heartily and unself-consciously as they used to yell "Freedom," for the concept of black power should be no more threatening to them than is the concept of, for example, Irish power or Democratic Power, and besides, black power is in some ways synonymous with poor-white power.[23]

Detwiler's equivalency of Black Power with "poor white power" is particularly interesting. It exists as an early observation of the ways Black Power ideology, similar to the way it expanded the limits of ethnic expression and political organization on the basis of identity as explored in later chapters of this thesis, also provided an ideological model from which poor whites could organize along the same basis, offering a more class-based analysis centered on the

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[22] Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (University of California Press, 2016), 130.

[23] Bruce Detwiler in *The Movement*, "Role of Whites in Black Power," (November, 1966), 7.

revolutionary potential of the working poor. In this vein, Detwiler's observation is accompanied by those made earlier in 1964 by Bruce Maxwell in his proposal for the "White Folks Project". Maxwell's proposal followed from a previous experimental White Folks Project conducted in McComb, Mississippi in 1961 for the purposes of organizing and combating racism among poor whites. In Carson's estimation, this project "ended with little tangible evidence of success", adding "but the lessons they learned proved invaluable in subsequent attempts by the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), to establish projects in southern white communities."[24] In Maxwell's proposal to expand the project, more than an obstacle to the Black Freedom Struggle, it was observed by its advocates that the racism of the white Southerner also existed to their own detriment, limiting their ability to combat their own poverty by rendering an interracial movement of the poor impossible. Maxwell's proposal called for white volunteers (drawn from the North and South) to first move into targeted communities, spending months identifying potential leaders of the program by talking to individuals disassociated from COFO at bars, restaurants, churches, and sporting events. Requirements for the volunteers included an understanding of the poverty of the Southern white poor, the ability to communicate a concern for poverty without precipitating or reinforcing fear and hostility towards blacks and the freedom movement. Leadership must be willingness to stay in the field for several years; the personnel for several months. White skin would only be required for those with the initial task of identifying potential leadership in white communities as unobtrusively as possible. Once leadership was identified, and the community responded favorably to COFO programs, COFO staff would be invited to help run the program. In the proposal, Maxwell argues:

> COFO's experimental white community project in Biloxi has forced an inescapable conclusion: our existing experience organizing the white poor of Mississippi must be

[24] Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening in the 1960s*, (Harvard University Press, 1995. 118; 119.

> developed into a major portion of the COFO program in the coming year. No matter how difficult the task, every effort must be made, by those of us who share the dream of an interracial movement of the poor, to establish programs in white communities in twenty counties by the end of next year. The important work to be done is with poor folks and not with moderates and liberals. The white poor have the political need of decent jobs, housing, education, and health. The movement must go to then and help them develop their own leadership rather than demand that the moderates and the liberals fight their political battles for them. The greatest thing about the freedom movement in Mississippi (and what the rest of the country should consider very seriously) is that the people themselves are voicing their own political needs. Both politically and in human terms, the freedom movement has no other choice but to develop the white folks program. The resistance in the past within the movement to the white poor program has not been to the idea or to the necessity, but has reflected a frank recognition that people who know how to do the job are not available and that the hostility of the white poor to the movement makes it a near impossible task. The populist movement and the labor movement both failed to resolve the issue of race. It is the responsibility of the freedom movement, before the threat of the movement to the white poor further increases, to include them in our efforts. [25]

The Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), consisting of membership from predominately white colleges and communities across the South, was another organization which offered support and articulate insights on Black Power. [26] In the midst of Black Power's growing popularity as a slogan, the SSOC devoted the November 1966 issue of its newspaper, *The New South Student,* to the subject, with two featured articles, "Mediations of a White Southerner" by Lon Clay Hill and "Black Power and White Organizing" by Anne Braden of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF). In "Mediations of a White Southerner," Hill expresses

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[25] Maxwell also argues the need for the Black Freedom Movement specifically to establish collaborative relationships with whites is due in-part to the failures of past populist, communist, and labor movements to directly center antiracism a priori – something which has been noted by several scholars**.** See Harold Cruse and Stanley Crouch, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership*, (New York: New York Review Books, 2005), 147-170; Elbaum, *Revolution In the Air,* 328-330. See generally, J. Sakai, *Settlers: the Mythology of the White Proletariat*, (Chicago: Morningstar Press, 1989). "Description of White Folks Program," 1964, Social Action Vertical File, WHS, 1-4.

[26] The SSOC was formed in 1964 with the intention of being a Southern white counterpart to SNCC to involve more Southern white students in the Civil Rights Movement. Though ultimately independent of SNCC, in their early stages, SNCC executives such as Bob Moses suggested that SSOC be given representation on SNCC's executive committee (Carson, *In Struggle*, 103). Similar to the Young Patriots Organization (YPO) which would emerge and participate in the Rainbow Coalition in Chicago, Illinois, the SSOC attempted reappropriate the Confederate flag to represent a more radical message - one of interracial unity - by superimposing clasped black and white hands on the traditional stars and bars, modeled after a handshake between SSOC organizer Archie Allen and then SNCC chairman John Lewis. SSOC, "The Southern Student Organizing Committee," 1964.

similar perspectives to the SDS with respect to the call for independent organizing in the white community:

> That is to say that while altruism may be possible, PURE altruism or an altruism without reference to the needs of the self is hypocritical and transparently self-deceptive…If this ideological backdrop has any validity, then perhaps we can be a little more clear about some of the real issues involved for whites working with Negro communities. I am not going to argue whether whites should or could not work in Negro communities, because that sort of question in too abstract…But for the most of the whites in the movement, the problem has not been their political sophistication, but their difficulties in living and working with the particular Negroes they are supposed to be assisting. And it is of these problems I wish to speak…. One reason which should not move whites to work within Negroes communities is their alienation from white society. The fact that one is critical of white society does not imply that one is necessarily <u>for</u> Negroes. There is a reason why whites cannot 'organize' Negro communities in the sense that black organizers do. What the white must do is open channels of communication <u>between</u> black and white communities. Whereas black organizer tends to build the <u>internal</u> strength of the dark community.[27]

Of note in this passage is both Hill's challenge towards black-white alliances formed on the assumptions of altruism, the issues related black-white interracial socialization due to white racial attitudes, and assertion that a white activists commitment to the Black Freedom Struggle proves problematic when rooted in estrangement from white society. Like the SDS and Maxwell, Hill observes the altruistic conception of black-white allyship held by white liberals often dismisses their role, and conceptions of their identity not as simply allies to the Black Freedom Struggle, but in the greater humanistic project, or human rights struggle. With respect to support on the basis of societal estrangement, as discussed in later chapters, a common theme found in the analysis and criticism of white New Left organizations and activists are the personal and organizational errors reflective of these self-perceptions of estrangement such as "proving one is

[27]Though a full study and analysis on the development of white antiracist and radical political consciousness with respect to societal estrangement is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis, recent scholarship has proved insightful in exploring the similarities of white racial identity construction as it pertains to both the development to white antiracist and white nationalist ideologies. See Matthew W. Hughey, "The (Dis)similarities of White Racial Identities". Lon Clay Hill, "Mediations of a White Southerner, *"The New South Student*. Volume 111. No. 7. December 1966, 8-10. Emphasis in original.

different from other whites", or the tendency of New Left activists and organization to try and "out-left" each other.

In "Black Power and White Organizing", Braden makes similar assertions concerning the call of Black Power for whites to take a more active effort in conceptualizing their role in the broader struggle:

> But we always knew that if we really wanted to create a new South, we who believed in black-white unity must also organize among the poor and disinherited whites of the South. Now for the first time in 30 years, it appears that the circumstances are ripe for doing so…We all know that white supremacist attitudes change fastest not by logical argument, but when people have new experiences. We need to be on the lookout all the time for ways in which we can create those experiences for people…Let us face the fact that if such alliances are built in the coming period whites are going to have to seek them. Stokely Carmichael has said that integration is irrelevant when initiated by black people, and in this he is probably right. In any event, this attitude is spreading among black people, and in many places they are not going to take the first step toward even temporary alliances. It is time for some initiative on this to come from the white community – and a big part of our job is to help others see the necessity of it…White people have needed black people to nudge their consciences. From now on, we are going to have to be our own consciences, I think. This is because most militant black people won't be taking out efforts to organize poor white people very seriously.[28]

In agreement with Detwiler's observation, in this article, Braden acknowledges how Black Power's emphasis on localized, independent power bases provided direction and new possibilities for relationships between black and white communities in the South. Furthermore, similar to others examined in this, and later chapters of this thesis, Braden emphasizes the importance and need to create opportunities for attitude changing experiences, identifying them as perhaps serving the most critical role in antiracist and radical political consciousness development among whites.

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[28] Anne Braden of the SCEF was among a SSOC delegation that appeared before SNCC's executive committee seeking formal support for a "White Student Project." Receiving nine hundred dollars from SNCC to help finance a conference for white students in 1964, the project eventually evolved into the White Folks Project during the Summer Project (Carson, *In Struggle*, 102-103). Ibid. 17-20.

Black Power and The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

Few organizations provide more insight into the tensions and changing relationships between black and white activists during the Civil Rights Movement and the development of Black Power as an ideology than SNCC, who, throughout its ten-year lifespan, directly confronted the question of race and white participation within the movement and organization. SNCC thus serves as an important subject of analysis given the genealogical relationship of the organizations and its key figures to the Black Panther Party and Black Power Movement as a whole.

Prior the Freedom Summer of 1964, SNCC grappled with the decision of whether to include white volunteers from the North in a January 1963 during a meeting in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, before the "expulsion" of white membership from the group in 1966. Suggestions ranged from including an unlimited number of volunteers, and limiting the number to one hundred, five hundred, or a thousand before deciding on the latter. Those present such Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Sandra "Casey" Hayden, and Gwen Gillon were in favor of the project and the inclusion of white volunteers believing it would bring needed publicity, offer outside leverage, financing, support for SNCC programs, and importantly, federal protection against the campaign of terror that had been carried out against SNCC activists and local people across the South. Other, such as Sam Block, Wazir Peacock, Hollis Watkins, Charlie Cobb, Ivanhoe Donaldson, Macarthur Cotton, Frank Smith, Mike Sayer, and Donna Moses expressed concerns that reliance on volunteers for organizing and publicity would overwhelm staff, and inhibit the need for Mississippi people to organize themselves, representing a pattern of "taking the easy way" by not recruiting and developing state talent, and using volunteers who would

return to their campuses instead of committing to long-term work in the community.[29] In *We Will Shoot Back,* historian Akinyele Umoja notes that these objections to the inclusion of white volunteers were expressed by a majority of the Mississippi field staff, of whom consisted of Watkins, Cotton, Peacock and Block, and particularly local recruits who believed that "the involvement of White college students would interrupt the process of developing indigenous leadership and organization in Mississippi communities of African descent," and that it was "necessary to continue to organize new forces, particularly young people, and to unite with indigenous networks, which had been in local communities, like the local NAACP chapters, the informal intelligence systems and defense groups."[30] Beyond just white students, "many were also uncomfortable with the idea of a large groups of Black students coming down," writes historian Charles Payne, adding "although the objections differed in intensity, there were objections to outsiders, period, and the objections were almost certainly related to the fact that the outsiders, white or Black were perceived as taking the movement away from the people who had built it at the local level."[31]

Later that year in November 1964, black members of SNCC reflected on the Freedom Summer Project at the Waveland Retreat where a number of speeches and position papers were presented which challenged the multiracial organization projects of SNCC, reflective of the concerns expressed earlier in Hattiesburg. During this retreat, Charles Sherrod, the 1st Field Secretary of SNCC, sought to reconcile interracial tensions that had intensified between black and white members and volunteers during the project, arguing that racial animosity, while a natural consequence of black experiences with racial oppression, had no place among SNCC

[29] SNCC, "Minutes of Meeting in Hattiesburg Discussing the Summer Project," January 1964.
[30] Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back,* 85.
[31] Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 387.

staff and the society the organization wished build, expressing the need for a mechanism for members to overcome their own internal race hatred. Sherrod's Southwest Georgia Project in 1963 had been among the first SNCC project to recruit white students to work in the black community, a decision defended by James Forman, SNCC's Executive Secretary, which provided an opening for the use of white volunteers in the Summer Project.[32] Others such as Willie Peacock contended that white volunteers had been more nuisance than asset, obstructing community and grassroots organizing among blacks, a fear many had expressed earlier Hattiesburg. In a position paper written during the retreat discussing racial considerations among staff, Silas Norman Jr. writes "In summary, I believe that there are some areas (geographic) in which whites and blacks cannot be a productive team. I am also of the opinion that work assignments be made on the basis of availability, that to include in assessment of the ability of an integrated staff be productive in the designated areas."[33]

Larry Rubin, a white SNCC organizer who worked in Southwest Georgia and Northern Mississippi provides insight on the multitude of experiences that caused interracial tensions during the Freedom Summer Project in his essay "A White on Whites", a reflection of his experiences in the midst of white members expulsion from SNCC. Speaking of white volunteers, Rubin writes "…whatever their prior good intentions, few white workers were able to cope with their new situation. Immediately, they had to face the bitterness and hostility of the Negro workers who had opposed their participation." According to Rubin, the influx of white volunteers aggravated fears of black activists that whites were trying to take over the movement. Racial tensions also emerged from conscious and subconscious white racial attitudes which

[32] Carson, *In Struggle*, 101.
[33] Silas Norman, "What is the Importance of Racial Considerations Among the Staff?" 1964, Mary King Papers, WHS.

Rubin termed the "White-African-God Complex," and assumptions on the part of black and white Southerner's that white volunteers inherently had power to affect change black activists did not. In Holly Springs, Georgia, for example, Rubin relates that each morning ten to twenty black residents came to the office insisting to speak with white volunteers on the project while refusing to speak with black ones. Similarly, even though white volunteers were hated by white segregationists, segregationist officials were more likely to accommodate or compromise with white activists due to assumptions they had federal backing and protection, and contacts with the press and other public media sources. Rubin writes "The agent hated and despised me, all right. He even refused to shake hands. But he was awed by the fact that I obviously had more education than he and he fully believed the same myth that most Southern whites believed – that I had the 'power of the Federal Government' behind me."[34] Bob Zellner, the 1st white Field Secretary of SNCC expressed similarities in his organizing experience in McComb, Mississippi. Zellner, who had joined a student march at the last minute, was surprised to discover the *New York Times* identified him the leader of the march.[35] Elaborating on the "White-African-God Complex", Rubin states that the "fantasy of the intelligent, brave, white leading the poor, downtrodden, and oppressed black man to freedom" was commonplace, and whites who benefited from the superior office and administrative skills afforded to them by their education and class often worked themselves into positions of control and leadership, typically only wanting to associate intimately with black project leaders. These experiences would lead Rubin to conclude:

> All these conflicts led, of course, to much less actually being achieved by the projects. Also, I have shown some cases where white organizers were able to be highly effective in gaining victories for the movement. But they were able to do so because they were white. This fact reinforced the white supremist position that Negroes can do nothing for

[34] Larry Rubin, "A White on Whites", 1966.
[35] Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 403.

> themselves and reinforced the Negroes' feelings of inadequacy. Whites gaining victories for Negroes helped perpetuate the system of whites being superior to Negroes, and Negroes depending on whites…From my time as an organizer, I feel that it is impossible for any white person to help Negroes gain 'self-dignity.' The white supremacy mentality is too ingrained in both whites and blacks. Whenever we intervened between the blacks and the power structure, there was no way to convince Negroes they had succeeded in their own efforts. Even if we had never personally approached the authorities, Negroes would be convinced that the only reason they got results was that we were 'behind' them.[36]

Additionally, views that white volunteers were a detriment was further incensed by the fact previous arguments that white volunteers and increased media presence would guarantee federal protection and minimize violence against organizers fell flat following the murders of activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Mikey Schwerner in June. Instead, the presence of white volunteers often served to further incense white racial violence.[37] Thus the aversion toward interracial organizing projects was also rooted in pragmatic security concerns. In his autobiography *Ready for Revolution*, Carmichael writes:

> So for me the major question with whites in the field was security, tactical. As a practical matter whites in rural black communities simply stood out too much. No way could they blend in or be disguised. The local racists see somebody white in our communities and immediately, boom: civil rights worker. Target and focus for hostility and violence on everyone. On the Summer project. Of course, some brave young whites did extremely valuable work. More power to them. But at what price? Three lives. Same thing on the Selma march. Two murders. In Lowndes County we established a policy: no white workers on the project. The first and only time we relaxed that, and you saw the result. A very, very good man dead [Jonathan Daniels]. After that, my position was clear. Whites should organize in white communities where a lot of work was needed and almost none was being done.[38]

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[36] Rubin, "A White on Whites", 1966.
[37] Wesley C. Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart*: *SNCC's Dream For a New America,* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 203-207.
[38] The negative "result" from relaxing the black only policy in Lowndes to which Carmichael refers is the murder of Jonathan Daniels, a white episcopal seminarian who was murdered in Lowndes County, Hayneville, Alabama. Daniels was killed while shielding seventeen-year-old activist Ruby Sales from a shotgun blast fired by special county deputy Tom Coleman. Daniels was later designated as a martyr in the Episcopal church in 1991 with an annually recognized feast day of August 14th. For details on the murder of Jonathan Daniels, see Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution,* 468-470. Stokely Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture),* (Scribner, 2005), 566.

Meriting consideration concerning the issues of white participation during Freedom Summer is the responsibility that has been placed on the lack of internal educative process within SNCC**.** In *Many Hearts, One Mind*, Wesley C. Hogan relates the assessment of Diane Nash, who, while acknowledging the issues caused by the influx of white volunteers, retrospectively placed blame on the lack of an internal educative process to familiarize these volunteers with SNCC's work, ideas, and principles. Nash states: "I think education was the key. While some people think it was the influx of northerners, of whites, that made the redemptive community idea dissipate, I don't agree. I think it's possible for even a large-scale movement to operate as a band of brothers, and sisters, a circle of trust. The reason wasn't that new people came in; I think we did not devote enough time and energy to the education of the people coming in." Offering his own analysis, Hogan agrees with Nash's assertion writing: "The rapid increase in staff without this 'internal' education was a key factor in the abandonment of SNCC's democratic ethic and the drift away from the close, mutually supportive relationships between SNCC staff and local people. Most important, perhaps, was SNCC's failure to hold wide-scale workshops on 'lessons learned" to permit reflective thinking about prior actions.' [39] Prior to 1964, few whites were in SNCC, with Zellner being the only white staff member among sixteen in 1961. After 1964, the number of whites in SNCC increased by 20%.[40] Hogan suggests that "only a handful of white individuals were able to come to terms with their own racial identity and successfully interact with blacks in SNCC."[41] Given the timelines of the Summer Project, an intense educative process was rendered infeasible due to logistical constraints. Instead, volunteers underwent a weeklong training in Oxford, Ohio.[42] Additionally, in order to have a common basis

[39] Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart*, 215.
[40] Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 381.
[41] Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart,* 172.
[42] Ibid., 160-161.

of knowledge, volunteers were asked to read at least the first three of the following five books by project staff, ranked in order of importance: (1) *Souls of Black Folk;* (2) *The Mind of the South;* (3) *The Other-America*; (4) *Stride Toward Freedom;* (5) *Killers of the Dream.* [43] In a 1967 pamphlet, James Forman also reflected on the failure of SNCC to implement a political education program for its membership:

> It goes without saying that each day we work we engage in various forms of political education. However, there has still not been a systematic attempt to educate ourselves; to train new members; to instill a sense of history of the organizations, its objectives, successes and failures; to discuss and analyze many events occurring in the world…Without question, every time we allowed a new member to join our staff without undergoing some indoctrination program we were contributing to misunderstanding, suspicion, ill-will, wasted effort and time lost.[44]

While Waveland dealt inconclusively with the race question in SNCC, the December 1966 meeting in Kerhonkson, New York, at the Peg Leg Bates Motel where whites were officially expelled from the organization concluded much more definitively.[45] However, there are conflicting accounts in the historiography concerning the events leading up the expulsion, the actual causes, and how the meeting itself unfolded. In his memoir, *Wrong Side of Murder Creek*, Zeller argued that Carmichaels replacement of John Lewis as Chairman in May 1966 marked a fundamental shift in the organization. Zeller writes: "Nobody at that point could envision what the new political direction was going to be except that we could feel the undercurrents of white-black tension. History, in my opinion, has not dealt adequately with this schism in SNCC, because a lot of people who argued that it was a good think for SNCC to be an all-black organization based their stand on the possible takeover of SNCC by white people."[46] Zellner's

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[43] COFO, "Letter to Freedom Summer Project Volunteers," May 5th, 1964.
[44] James Forman, "Rock Bottom (re: SNCC, the Movement & Black Power)," 1967.
[45] CORE would soon follow SNCC's example in its expulsion of white membership from its organization, eliminating the word "multiracial" in describing its membership in the July of 1967. Earl Caldwell, "CORE Eliminates 'Multiracial' In Describing Its Membership," (New York Times), July 6th, 1967.
[46] Bob Zellner and Constance Curry, *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek: A White Southerner in the Freedom Movement,* (NewSouth Books, 2020), 291.

claim that fears of a white takeover motivated the expulsion of white membership, though implicitly supported by Rubin, is among a number in dispute in SNCC historiography. In his autobiography, Carmichael challenges both the idea of black nationalist fears as cause for the expulsion, and the degree and significance of racial tensions within SNCC:

> There's the question of "whites" in SNCC and the "black nationalism" that drove these "good white liberals" out. In the typically reductive, simplistic, media-driven version of history, SNCC began as an "integrated" group devoted to a mystical Christian vision of a communal "beloved society," before the rise of an "intolerant" black nationalism ruined this interracial Eden. Or there's it's opposite, and equally inaccurate revisionist version. According to which "race relations" in SNCC were never really all that good. The organization had always, from the git, been riven by racial/sexual tensions and jealousies so that the apparent color-free-harmony had always been just a myth. Some commentators even allege both at the same time. Gimme an ever-loving break. Both are equally pernicious. I believe I can shed some light here. As usual, the truth is far more interesting than that conventional piffle.[47]

In his autobiography, Carmichael makes an interesting challenge to the idea of SNCC as an integrated organization, stating that no "white" Americans were ever on SNCC staff. Carmichael argued that "white" ceased functioning as a meaningful category for members of SNCC outside of physical complexion as a result of a number of attitude changing experiences resulting from working in rural black communities, stating "when white members experienced the full force of racist hostility from Southern white politicians, police, and public opinion, compounded by the indifference or paralysis of the national political establishment, whatever class and color privileges they might have taken for granted were immediately suspended". These attitude-changing experiences Carmichael identified included: (1) Working with blacks in complete equality; (2) being on the receiving end of white racial hostility; and (3) being immersed in the highest expressions of black culture at its very best. This, Carmichael argued,

[47] Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution*, 306.

resulted in a cultural dynamic which reversed the "melting-pot" model of integration where "blacks adopt the attitudes, lifestyles, vocabulary, and values of "mainstream" (read *white*) American culture, hoping to become assimilated and begging acceptance in a white world – instead - in SNCC, 'white' folk became 'black.'"[48]

In most historical accounts, opinions of the SNCC ATL project office have been unfavorable, and given responsibility for making white membership within the organization a fundamental conflict for SNCC. Zellner asserts that "the Atlanta Project reflected some of the most virulent anti-white feelings and many of the staff were fired shortly after I left."[49] The Atlanta Project or Vine City office was founded in 1966 in the aftermath of the Georgia State Legislature's vote to bar activist Julian Bond from his elected seat in the state legislature as a representative for Atlanta's 136th legislative district that January. Afterwards, activists in Atlanta including Zoharah Simmons (Gwen Robinson), Gwen Patton, Donald Stone, and Bill Ware formed the Special Committee to Reelect Julian Bond, emerging as the Atlanta Project after Bond's reelection on February 23rd. Carson, writing on the Atlanta Project Office states:

> Members of SNCC's newly formed Atlanta Project promoted black separatism with singular fervor. Unlike SNCC workers in Lowndes County, Alabama, who had generally avoided explicit racial appeals, the Atlanta Project staff used racial separatism as their basis for appealing for black support…The Atlanta separatists unhesitatingly rejected many of SNCC's prevailing values. Most joined SNCC after it had turned from desegregation protest toward organizing efforts focused on political and economic goals…The distinctive orientation of the Atlanta staff became evident when they rejected several applications by white workers who wanted to join their project.[50]

In the proposal to establish the Atlanta Project office, its main authors, (Bill Ware, Donald Stone, and Ronald Snelling; also of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)) identified the election and the reelection of Bond as signifying a number of promising

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[48] Ibid., 308-309.
[49] Zellner and Curry, *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek*, 290.
[50] Carson, *In Struggle,* 191; 192; 194.

possibilities. First, that Georgia, being the first state in the South to reappropriate its legislature, set a precedent for the possibilities for organizing in other Southern states, necessitating a major political program less black communities face issues plaguing Northern ghettos: a system of welfare and patronage to the benefit of a few. Second, Bond's election demonstrated the potential to shift the focus of the federal government as the major agent of the South to local governments on the municipal, county, and state levels where the authors of the proposal argued politics can be made most relevant.[51] The position paper the office later developed on Black Power as an ideology, and which vocalizes arguments for racial division of labor in the Black Freedom Struggle, would in-part stem from the experiences of its project members in attempting to organize urban communities. Carson writes "the Atlanta Project began with the assumption that urban organizing required a different set of principles than those SNCC organizers had developed while working in the rural areas and small towns of the deep South."[52] The position paper, at times falsely attributed to Carmichael, cites issues of paternalism and attitudes of western superiority among whites, and asserts their role in movement had ended (namely, helping give blacks the political rights to organize independently), and called for white activists to organize in their own community.[53] In a 2011 interview, ATL Project staff member Zoharah Simmons recalls the experiences and thought process that informed the positions in the paper:

> So, another important point is that after Mississippi Summer, uh, the racial composition of SNCC changed, because so many of the white volunteers wanted to commit their lives to fulltime. And so the organization expanded, and the numbers changed in terms of the ratio. Now, the Atlanta office, the national headquarters, had, uh, a significant number of whites. And one of the problems that fed the feeling that whites needed to go and organize in the white community was that we would have to go there and often ask for resources and justify them to white members. And so, we'd say, "Well, wait a minute, is this a black organization or what?... Now, there was some racial tension. But it was

[51] Prospectus for an Atlanta Project, 1966. Samstein--Mendy Samstein papers, 1963-1966 (Archives Main Stacks, SC3093; WIHVS260-A)
[52] Carson, *In Struggle,* 195.
[53] SNCC Vine City Project, "Atlanta Project Paper*,"* 1966.

> about, "We cannot change the white community. Possibly you can. Maybe you can't, but clearly we can't even go into the white community to try to even organize." So, that's really what our position was: "You go and work in your communities. We should run the Black Movement and we need to see where we want to go."[54]

In his personal commentary in Carmichael's autobiography, co-author Ekwueme Michael Thelwell challenges the Atlanta Project papers legitimacy, and offers clarification on Carmichael's positions and popular narratives on the expulsion of whites from SNCC. Thelwell argues the Atlanta Project Paper demonstrates an ignorance of SNCC's history, culture, experience, and an inversion of its psychological and cultural dynamic, suggesting the paper was the work of a small clandestine militant revolutionary nationalist formation missioned to infiltrate SNCC. Thelwell reports the words of an individual who claiming to be the founder of the group. This individual was reported to state the goal of the clandestine infiltration was "to purge whites and establish a correct revolutionary ideology."[55] Writing of the expulsion of white members from SNCC, Thelwell states that rather than Carmichael being an advocate for the expulsion, Carmichael, in his opening remarks at Kerhonkson, "saw no need to sunder-time honored relationships with sincerely progressive whites". Instead Carmichael advocated a racial division of labor within the organization, with the remaining white members organizing in white

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[54] In this interview, Simmons would also describe an encounter with Bob Zellner, amongst the sharper critics of the ATL Project, in Chicago in the late 2000's. She admits not initially recognizing the pain white students, activists, and volunteers experienced after their expulsion by SNCC, particularly those who had been involved in SNCC for more than the Summer project in 1964, like Zellner, for which SNCC was home. She acknowledged that the calls for white activists to go back to the white community, for some like Zellner, who's family were members of the Ku Klux Klan and threatened his life as a consequence of his activism, were unlikely, if not impossible. Simmons, Gwendolyn Zoharah, Interviewee, Joseph Mosnier, and U.S Civil Rights History Project. *Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons oral history interview conducted by Joseph Mosnier in Gainesville, Florida*. 2011.

[55] Thelwell's sharp criticism of Atlanta Project Paper and the project office as it relates to SNCC's ideology and history is difficult to navigate. One reason being that Carmichael appears take similar positions to those advocated in the paper in a number of articles and speeches or has been accused of doing so by individuals such as Bob Zellner and Huey P. Newton in their memoir and autobiography, respectively. Whether or not the ATL project, its paper, and the eventual expulsion of whites is the result of a clandestine unit as Thelwell claims, is ultimately inconclusive, or appears contrary to other historical treatments and primary source narratives. Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution*, 569.

communities as consistent with the organizations experience and current direction.[56] Furthermore, according to Thelwell, the voting process which saw whites expelled from SNCC did not reflect the common narrative of a newly anti-white organization helmed by militant black nationalists, but instead a troubled process reflective of the organizations values and history:

> After almost three full days of a discussion variously described as "wearing", "exhausting," "painful," "pitiful," and "horrendous," the agenda had not moved beyond the first item and at least forty people had abandoned the meeting in anger and frustration. Quite evidently the separatist minority had succeeded in holding the proceedings hostage to their position that nothing could be discussed until their "fundamental" question was decided. Why this should have been allowed to happen remains for me an abiding mystery on which it is tempting to speculate. But I shan't. What is beyond dispute are the facts. By the time the question was called, only sixty-one folks were still participating. Of the vote itself, the numbers are eloquent and perplexing. Nineteen voted for the motion to "expel." Eighteen voted against, with twenty-four, including the seven remaining whites, opting to abstain. So, forty-two did not vote for the motion. Nineteen of sixty-one is hardly a ringing endorsement."[57]

Grassroots Organizing Work (GROW)

In 1967, Bob and Dorothy "Dottie" Zellner, accepting the challenge put forth by Black Power to organize poor whites presented the Grassroots Organizing Work (GROW) proposal to SNCC, a project idea developed in collaboration the with SCEF.[58] The proposal identified the purpose of the project was to "begin the serious long-range effort to organize the white people in the south into a force equal in strength and similar in commitment to the movement now flourishing in the black community so that interracial coalitions, based on common interests, can be formed".[59] According to Bob Zellner, SNCC would serve as the ideal facilitator of the project

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[56] Ibid., 566.
[57] Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution,* 571.
[58] Specifically, the GROW proposal references the challenge put forth by Carmichael in "Power and Racism" in which he states: "There is a vital job to be done among poor whites. We hope to see, eventually, a coalition between poor blacks and poor whites. That is the only coalition which sems acceptable to us, and we such a coalition as the major internal instrument of change in American society. SNCC has tried several times to organize poor whites; we are trying again now, with an initial training program in Mississippi. It is purely academic to talk about brining poor blacks and whites together, but the job of creating a poor-white power bloc must be attempted. The main responsibility for it falls upon whites." Quoted in Stokely Carmichael, "Power and Racism," in *Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism,* (Chicago Review Press, 2014), 28.
[59] Grassroots Organizing Work, "GROW Proposal," January 1967, 2.

due to their expertise, contacts, and ability to demonstrate the power developed in the black community which whites could see and develop for themselves, each community moving forward together. One of the arguments Zellner presented to SNCC to enlist their support was that poor white communities could organize themselves without negative outcomes, necessitating interracial relationships. Zellner writes "it was arguable that black people can be organized as black people without it being a negative formation, but anybody would agree you can't organize most Southern white people as white people and have anything but a racist group. So white people had to be organized in conjunction with blacks in order to combat their racism and so they could see what they had to do to destroy the superstructure of oppression and privilege and segregation."[60] Ultimately SNCC and the Zellner's were unable to come to terms about the role of the Zellner's and the project within SNCC, and the project officially found a home in the SCEF.

GROW began operation in the Summer of 1967, working to organize working-class Southern whites in Laurel, Mississippi, where the International Woodworkers of America union was staging a strike against the Masonite Corporation after the introduction of a partial automation plan to reduce labor costs. This effort would later involve a municipal election campaign for mayor and two posts on the city commission. Beginning in the white community, GROW hoped to form a joint project with black organizers who worked separately in the black community around common interests to prevent the company from dividing the workers on the basis of race. Identifying the South and its black and white inhabitants as exploited members of a colony, Zellner suggested that consciousness could be built along these class lines on the grassroots level. However, in-line with Braden's assertions in *The New South Student* examined

[60] Zellner and Curry, *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek,* 97.

earlier, black groups contacted both in Mississippi and on the national level were initially unresponsive. It would be a year and a half before GROW was able to find a black person to work on a similar basis in the black community.

According to Zellner, over the course of the strike and election effort, members of the black and white community began experiencing notable changes in racial attitudes. In the aftermath of a train explosion that damaged the black community for example, white members of the union collected clothes for the victims which were distributed at a black church. Zellner notes that for many whites, they were standing in a black church for the first time in their lives. In a meeting preceding the electoral effort, Dottie Zellner recounts the sincere expressions of comradery that emerged, both blacks and whites insisting on the need for solidarity and mutual support. One recorded exchange went as followed:

> WHITE UNION LEADER: *Mr.* ____ _ , if you run for mayor, I'll be your campaign manager!" *(Mr. _____ is a black union member.)*
>
> Mrs. - ---'---• if you run I'll be behind you all the way *(Mrs. _____ is a black movement leader)* ... Naturally *(smiling)* if I run, I'll expect the same from you."[61]

Where years earlier the Southern whites in Laurel were in opposition to the Black Freedom Struggle violently defending segregation and white supremacy, by 1969, they were working collaboratively with the black community in a multi-racial election campaign. In one account, a multiracial group of workers went to the Jones County Courthouse to copy the names of eight thousand voters from the registration rolls by hand for the campaign mailing list which had been provided to other candidates, but made inexplicably unavailable to them.

[61] GROW, "The Lessons of Laurel: Grass-Roots Organizing in the South," 1968. 8. Names redacted by author.

There a number of lessons GROW drew from their experiences in Laurel, Mississippi. The first, and most important – that white people can be reached and changed. Zellner posits that this change cannot occur through rhetoric, but through change and crisis. The authors observe that "appeals to conscience and morality cannot work in isolation from struggle. In the Laurel case, the whites needed the blacks - to win a strike, to hold a successful election campaign - and in the act of needing, they became aware of how they had been manipulated into struggling against the black community instead of their common enemy. In this case, the Masonite management."[62] The grievances of the black community thus became real to whites in Laurel because the grievances affected them, forcing a change in attitude toward blacks. This also caused a change in an attitude among whites about themselves. Rather, or in addition to identifying themselves as white in the context of the white supremacist system, they recognized themselves as "workers" and the meaning of that identity with the capitalist system, informing the importance of unity, even across previously unthinkable multiracial lines. Ultimately, the thesis Zellner presents in this paper is that whites could change in conditions and crisis and forsake skin privilege for greater benefit in other areas.

Secondly, the paper argues that white communities cannot be organized effectively without simultaneous organizing in the black community. GROW's focus of organizing in the white community in accordance with racial division of labor Black Power ideology advocated, and a lack of parallel struggle in the black community meant they knew little of the black community and its feelings towards issues such as the strike until they were able to find a black organizer to work within that community. Lastly, Zellner acknowledges a fault of GROW's, that in the aftermath of the strike and election they did know enough to suggest means of continuing

[62] Ibid., 11.

the struggle in the white community when those had ended. In other words, in addition to maintaining political activism in that community, they also struggled with how to further encourage change in white racial attitudes, and maintain the collective "worker" identity which informed the foundation of the interracial class-based solidarity in Laurel. [63]

The Politics of Liberation, and the Reframing of Black-White Allyship and Beloved Community

Leading into the Black Power Movement, the reframing of black-white collaborative relationships would be outlined in Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton's foundational text *Black Power*, published in 1967, and a later 1969 piece by Carmichael entitled the "The Pitfalls of Liberalism". The "Myth of Coalition" chapter of *Black* Power exists as thorough summary of coalition politics in Black Power ideology which seeks to establish the grounds and reasons for which interracial political coalitions could be viable. This chapter observes three major myths or fallacies: (1) The interests of black people are identical with interests of certain liberal, and other reform groups; (2) Viable coalitions can be effected between the politically and economically secure, and the politically and economically insecure; (3) Political coalitions are, or can be sustained on a moral, friendly, sentimental basis by appeals to conscience. Summarizing their analysis, Carmichael and Hamilton write:

> Viable coalitions therefore stem from four pre-conditions: (a) the recognition by the parties involved of their respective self-interests; (b) the mutual belief that each party stands to benefit in terms of self-interest from allying with the other or others; (c) the acceptance of the fact that each party has its own independent base of power and does not depend for ultimate decision-making on a force outside itself; and (d) the realization that

[63] The Lessons of Laurel paper concludes by positing a number of interesting, albeit unanswered questions speaking to complexity of class-based interracial organizing for further exploration: **"**Who is a scab [strikebreaker]? Did Laurel's union history make it inevitable that black people would go back to work in large numbers? What kinds of things must black union members do to make sure that the union represents them? How must white unionists deal with these questions, both in their union and during strike situations?" Ibid.

> the coalition deals with the specific and identifiable - as opposed to general and vague-goals.[64]

In naming the "The Pitfalls of Liberalism", Carmichael identifies four: (1) The primary task of the white liberal is to stop confrontation, to stop conflicts, rather than redress grievances ;(2) The true role of the liberal, regardless of what they say, is to maintain the status quo rather than change it, for they enjoy economic stability from the status quo; (3) Liberals are afraid to alienate anyone, and therefore are unable to present alternatives to strategies and tactics employed by blacks for which they express disapproval; (4) Liberals do not understand the difference between influence and power, and pursue influence rather than power; meaning the influence to bring about change rather than the power to implement it.[65]

While beliefs the 'beloved community' idea prevalent in the Civil Rights Movement was abandoned in the wake of Black Power is common one, not dismissing the existence of separatist or supremacist strains, it is perhaps more accurate to state that Black Power ideology reinterpreted the circumstances under which this "redemptive community" would best occur – through racially independent organizations collaborating on the basis of shared vision and mutual interest, rather than integrated projects and assumptions related to white altruism. As can be interpreted from the review of the literature, Black Power did not uniformly seek to abandon black-white allyship or coalitions as its critics asserted, but a number of interpretations sought to reframe them in attempt to address and improve upon the problematic relationship dynamics experiences in the Civil Rights Movement. Both the "Myths of Coalition", "Pitfalls of Liberalism", and black and white advocates of Black Power examined in this chapter reject

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[64] Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, (Vintage Books, 1992), 79-80.
[65] Stokely Carmichael, "The Pitfalls of Liberalism," in *Stokely Speaks: from Black Power to Pan-Africanism*, (Chicago Review Press, 2014), 166-173.

political gradualism and frames white liberalism to be fundamentally in opposition to the Black Freedom Struggle, making necessary an alignment in class, political aims, and independent bases of power actively engaged in three areas of interrelated antiracist work: "educative", "organizational", and "supportive". [66] As will be examined in the following chapters of this thesis, individuals and organizations during the Black Power Movement attempted to evolve the issues of black-white allyship in the Civil Rights Movement in a myriad of ways, with varying degrees of success.

Analysis of the transition from Civil Rights to Black Power reveal a number of common lessons, themes, and observations concerning the effective practice of black-white allyship and antiracist and political consciousness development among whites which may serve as comparative framework for understanding the successes, failures, and challenges of the collaborative relationships the BPP and its chapters formed with white radical groups investigated in the later chapters of this thesis. In analyzing these organizations and relationships, in addition, and with respect to the pre-conditions of viable coalitions outlined in *Black Power,* this framework calls for the exploration of: (1) Degree of black-white interracial socialization between individuals, organizations, and communities; or the degree to which these groups live and work in proximity, allowing for attitude changing experiences. The personal narratives, experiences, perspectives, and testimonies explored in this chapter offer compelling assertions concerning the importance of interracial socialization in promoting antiracism, interracial solidarity, and diminishing problematic white racial attitudes. This also specifically includes a contrast and comparison with the types of experiences Carmichael identified white staff members encountered while working on organizing projects in the South such as white racial

[66] Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power*, 81.

violence, working in equal, non-hierarchal relationships, and immersion in black culture. (2) Class similarities; including income, job opportunities, and living conditions. This includes a contrast and comparison in the differences between collaborative relationship formed with organizations consisting by majority of either poor or middle-class whites with respect to the frequent theme of an interracial class based movement of the poor as explored in this chapter. (3) Degree of similarity in political goals and strategy; i.e. electoral vs grassroots. (4) Centering of antiracism in ideology and practice. (5) Practice of internal and external political education.

THE BLACK POWER ERA: BLACK PANTHERS AND THE NEW LEFT

> The white mother country radical is the off-spring of the children of the beast that has plundered the world exploiting all people, concentrating on the people of color. These are children of the beast that seek now to be redeemed because they realize that their former heroes who were slave masters and murderers, put forth ideas that were only facades to hide the treachery they inflicted upon the world. They are turning their backs on their fathers.
>
> - Huey P. Newton in *The Movement*, 1968
> -

By 1967, Black Power had become a national movement. An early national dialogue among black activists on Black Power, the National Conference on Black Power held in Newark, New Jersey between July 20-23rd, and attended by prominent figures and organizations including Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones); Jesse Jackson; Maulana Karenga (US Organization); Floyd McKissick (CORE); and H. Rap Brown (SNCC), solidified the new political direction of the Black Freedom Struggle even in the midst of ideological differences among activists, who, in a series of seventeen workshops, "sought to bring fresh understanding of what it means to build, maintain, and exercise power."[67] Over four days, attendees produced a number of resolutions on promoting programs for economic, cultural, and political development in the black community - the stabilization of the Black family; education, leadership and cultural exchange programs with Africa for black youth; a call for blacks artists, craftsman and communication personal to create a black consciousness in the minds of black people; general welfare through mutual aid and reparations; establishment of mutual economic, social and political progress and alliance with African nations, communities, and organizations; negotiations with black news media and investigation of its negative impacts on conceptions of black beauty and pride; and consideration of establishing a separate homeland in the US for black people.[68] The issue of white participation

[67] "Press Release: Conference Projects New Directions," July 24th, 1967.
[68] Newark Black Power Conference Continuations Committee, "Black Power Manifesto and Resolutions," 1967.

in the Black Power Movement, however, remained vague. The press release summarizing the conference offered a concise position - "the skills of white people and the facilitation of black power, as part of total community relationships, were seen to have a place."[69] Meanwhile, the Black Power Movement and domestic and international developments including the Vietnam War and Third World liberation struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America informed the development and ideological direction of the broader New Left, characterized by a rejection of liberalism, anticapitalist critiques of US society, prioritization of grassroots organizing over traditional electoral politics, and the anti-imperialist connection between domestic and international struggles in the US. Discussing the development of Black Power ideology in the previous chapter, this chapter examines the influence of the Black Power Movement and its ideology on, and in relation to, the New Left and antiracist and radical political consciousness development among whites. In *Revolution in the Air,* a seminal history and analysis of the New Communist Movement, Max Elbaum credits the Civil Rights Movement as the "prime force initiating a generation's ideological evolution from 1950's conformism to 1968 revolutionism," identifying SNCC, through its grassroots organizing in the South, which embodied "audacity and persistence" as being "more than any other group" one which "shaped the consciousness of the early New Left."[70] However, despite the self-professed alignment of white New Left radicals such as SDS with Black Power, old challenges navigating the relationship between black and white activists persisted as new ones emerged.

In "On the Tail of the Panther*"* Simon Hall, in his analysis of the 1967 Convention of the National Conference of New Politics (NCNP), examines the complex relationships between the peace, New Left, and Black Power Movement that unfolded at the conference. The purpose of

[69] "Press Release," 2.
[70] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air,* 19; 20.

the 1967 convention, writes Hall, was to "bridge the gap between radicals and antiwar liberals, which it hoped to accomplish by bringing about a coalition between New Left and antiwar groups, the civil rights movement, and reform democrats," centering on "ending poverty racism, and the war in Vietnam."[71] According to Hall, the convention was troubled by the issue of race from the outset. Prior to conference, figures such as Julian Bond, Floyd McKissick and Fannie Lou Hamer signed a letter urging blacks to ally with progressive whites at the NCNP convention.[72] The Black Caucus, who received a last minute invitation, presented an ultimatum to convention delegates to accept a thirteen-point list of resolutions without alterations or they would withdraw their participation. The demands included a 50 percent representation on all convention committees, and support for: all wars of liberation, the reinstatement of Adam Clayton Powell to his congressional seat (excluded pending allegations of corruption), reparations for the contemporary and historic exploitation of blacks: establishment of white "civilizing committees" to eliminate white racism: rebuilding of ghettos, support for the Newark Black Conference resolutions, and the condemnation of Zionism.[73] The resolution was affirmed by white delegates by a three-to-one margin after debate. For some delegates, support for the resolution occurred despite the presence of resolution items they personally disagreed with**.** Hall writes that the "ultimatum had been presented as a test of the white delegates commitment to work with the black movement, and nothing less than a unequivocal endorsement of the thirteen points would have prevented the Black Caucus from walking out". [74] Though some viewed the acquiescence of white delegates to the resolution as a victory for the movement and racial unity,

[71] Simon Hall, "On the Tail of the Panther": Black Power and the 1967 Convention of the National Conference for New Politics," *Journal of American Studies* 37, no. 1 (2003), 61.
[72] Ibid., 65.
[73] Ibid., 65.
[74] Ibid., 67.

others offered common dismissals, labeling the successful passage of the resolution "as the product of white guilt," and "organizational surrender"; that in pursuit of a mythical unity, "the white majority at the convention thus soured most potential support for the NCNP from the much-maligned (white) liberals throughout the country.[75] Hall summarizes:

> The convention debates over the demands made by the Black Caucus offer a fascinating insight into the problems of black-white relations in late sixties America. Certainly it was becoming impossible for liberal whites to work with militants blacks. It is certainly the case that white guilt and paternalism provided some of the motivation behind the decision of the white delegates to accept the blacks demands. Paul Booth acknowledged that most "radicals" at the convention were "liberals trying to show they're different from their parents, or the people back home. Charles V. Hamilton condemned the motives of guilt that lay behind the votes in favour of the black demands. In defining Black Power, Hamilton acknowledged that whites would be needed for coalition, but that they had to realise that blacks were going to "insist on equitable distribution of *decision making power,"* since anything less would serve only to perpetuate a "welfare mentality." However, such an equitable distribution had to result from "a conviction that it is a matter of mutual self-interest, not from the feelings of guilt and altruism that were evident at the" convention.[76]

A fundamental question of this research concerns the development of antiracist and radical political consciousness among white individuals, groups, and communities in response to racialized political events and black political organization. As exemplified in the NCNP, though Black Power ideology and practice resulted in the reticence of white liberals previously aligned with the Civil Rights Movement to support the Black Freedom Struggle, others were inspired toward political consciousness and antiracist activism in response to new ideological, strategic and tactical developments offered by Black Power. Within this context, Elbaum writes that the BPP "were the most prominent revolutionary organization in the country during the key transitional years 1968-1971, and they proved to be the most important single organization in the

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[75] Ibid., 70.

[76] Ibid., 76. **I**n this quote summarizing Hall's analysis, Hall quotes Charles V. Hamilton in Charles V. Hamilton, "An Advocate of Black Power Defines It," in August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *Black Protest in the Sixties* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 162.

transition of thousands of activists from New Left radicals, Black Power advocates or Third World militants to partisans of Third World Marxism and Leninism."[77] Like their influence on the adoption of Third World Marxism and Leninism by radicals, the BPP and broader Black Power Movement influenced other communities to organize on the basis of their specific racial and cultural identities, exemplified by organizations such as the Puerto Rican Young Lords, Chicano Brown Berets, and Chinese Red Guard Party, who adopted – with minor variations respective to their history and needs - Panther ideology, organization models, and programs.[78] Furthermore, this influence extended to other communities often excluded in the discussion of Black Power and consciousness development. In *Black Power, Jewish Politics,* for example, Marc Dollinger argues the American Jewish religious revival borrowed more from Black Power than it did from any imagined Jewish past, writing: "At a time when American Jews ascribed their newfound Jewishness to their own tradition, they actually were reflecting a larger Americanist trend. Black Power expanded the limits of acceptable ethnic group expression in 1960's America."[79]

The influence of the BPP and Black Power on antiracist and radical political consciousness development among white radicals can be found in personal testimonies and narratives such as those in *Enemies of the State*, featuring interviews offered by white antiracist and anti-imperialist political prisoners Laura Whitehorn, Dave Gilbert, and Marylin Buck. Whitehorn, invited to reflect on her personal and political history, identifies her Jewish heritage, womanhood, and the BPP as foundational to her opposition to injustice. "As a Jewish kid born in

[77] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air*, 65.

[79] Marc Dollinger, *Black Power, Jewish Politics: Reinventing the Alliance in the 1960s*, (Brandeis University Press, 2018), 107.

1945, I was raised to hate prejudice," writes Whitehorn. She continues "I felt passionately about those issues [segregation; voting rights; anti-war]. Some of this was motivated by own deep sense of unfairness, regarding how I was treated as a woman in sexist U.S. society. This helped me to identify with others affected by injustice." [80] Whitehorn further attributes her decision to take up armed struggle to the influence of the BPP and black political organization:

> I think that the emergence of the Black Panther Party and armed organizations within the Black Nation played a particular role for me, too, because I'd hated racism so passionately but had felt powerless to make any real change. The prospect of armed self-defense and armed struggle for Black liberation directly motivated me to take up armed struggle myself, because it seemed clear to me (and still does) that racism won't be eradicated without political power – Black Power. And power won't be won without armed struggle. [81]

Buck, whose father was a Civil Rights activist, explains that despite her political awareness of domestic and international struggles, she did not engage in activism during the Civil Rights Movement, nor participate in the anti-war movement when the Vietnam War escalated in 1965. According to Buck, it was the emergence of the Black Power Movement which provided a medium through which to understand and navigate her own gendered oppression, inspiring her activism:

> There was a lot of social and political ferment. I was skeptical that sit-ins and moral outrage could end the war. But more militant sectors were rallying. When the Black Power movement emerged from the civil rights movement, raising questions of power, I was vitalized, yanked up out of my chair of skepticism and alienation, and moved to activism. Of course that also meant having to learn about and understand power and the system – imperialism, colonialism, white supremacy, male supremacy, capitalist exploitation. The Black Power Movement gave me the tools to put into perspective my own oppression as a woman in relation to issues of national oppression and class exploitation. It also challenged my complacency as a good white person who does no harm to others, but also had not confronted the haters and murderers – the state, the Klan etc.[82]

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[80] *Enemies of the State*, (Arm the Spirit, 2002), 9; 10.
[81] Ibid., 14.
[82] Ibid., 53.

The importance Whitehorn and Buck ascribed to their "Jewish" and "Woman" identities in determining their and anti-racist activism by way of understanding their own specific forms of oppression through the medium of black political ideology bears consideration to the extent this is visible both historically, contemporarily, and why. Traditionally, attention on the influence of the Black Power Movement in promoting consciousness development of non-black outgroups has been given primarily to aforementioned groups of color who mirrored the BPP's ideological positions and organizational model. However, as Dollinger's work suggests, the larger impact on different segments of what is often considered a monolithic "white" community is often overlooked.

In his narrative of consciousness development, Gilbert attributes his antiracist radicalism and the dismantling of his white liberal attitudes to his attitude changing experiences working in the historically black neighborhood of Harlem in New York. Notably, Gilbert's recollection is in agreement with the impact and importance of interracial socialization emphasized by Carmichael and Zellner in the previous chapter.

> When I went to college at Columbia University, the most important experience for me was the opportunity to work in Harlem. In addition to the starkness of oppression there, I was deeply moved by the vitality of the culture and the spirit of resistance. People in Harlem certainly had much more profound analysis of the social system that the political science professors at Columbia! That's what transformed me from a left-liberal who wanted to "uplift" the oppressed (to be more like me), to a radical who saw that the oppressed people could run their own community far better than any outsider.[83]

Whitehorn, Buck and Gilbert provide thoughtful analysis and self-criticisms concerning the errors of antiracist and anti-imperialists groups of the New Left, both generally, and ones in which they held membership, when asked **"**what are some of the achievements or errors of the anti-imperialist movement and its armed clandestine organizations that you participated in?" [84]

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[83] Ibid., 33.
[84] Ibid., 18-19.

Answers to this question were presented jointly by Whitehorn and Buck, and separately by Gilbert. Whitehorn and Buck identified as major errors (1) a lack of clarity in their statements that they were "under third world leadership", at times interpreting "what the leadership of any given struggle was arguing for to suit our own politics"; and (2) their inability to organize larger numbers of white people due stringent standards of commitment, misuses of "criticism/self-criticism", and "strict methods of leadership" which "weakened rather than strengthened members", effecting wider recruitment.[85] Gilbert charged the racism of these groups as the foremost error, which he identified as occurring primarily in two different forms:

> A main problem was various forms of racism. It's amazing how deep this stuff runs, that even while consciously opposing it, we continued to make racist errors. In some periods, we just built our own organization, enjoying the greater resources and the protection of being white without offering significant support to Black or Latino or Native armed struggle groups under attack. At our worst, we even pretended to an overall leadership of a "multinational U.S. revolution." The opposite swing of the pendulum was to put ourselves under "direct third world leadership." But that became a way of intervening in their struggles by throwing our resources to the group of our choice, before the strategic issues involved had been resolved by the national liberation movement as a whole. It's not that there is a set blueprint for the correct way to relate, but we need a better consciousness to avoid both the arrogance of total unaccountability or the interventionism of picking the third world leadership. These apparently opposite forms of racism have a common element: out wanting to be validated as "the most revolutionary white folks going" – either through our own claim of leadership or, once that was discredited, through getting the stamp of approval from a heavy third world group.[86]

These errors that Whitehorn, Gilbert and Buck identify are similar to those observed in *No Fascist USA!*, a work by Hillary Moore and James Tracy which examines the successes, failures, and tactical and ideological errors of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee (JBAKC), a white anti-racist organization that emerged in 1977 to challenge the renewed recruiting efforts of the Ku Klux Klan. In the conclusion, Moore and Tracy identify the JBAKC's self-righteousness, limited ability to address low-income and working class issues, and its antisemitic and anti-

[85] Ibid., 18-19.
[86] Ibid., 39-40.

Zionist orientation as leading errors. This issue of self-righteousness is one Whitehorn, Buck, and Gilbert each reflect on. Moore and Tracy note that the JBAKC did not relate well with other sectors of the radical left due to the JBAKC "investing in a maximalist vision where achieving Black liberation was espoused as the one and only way to abolish white supremacy; and armed struggle the only revolutionary solution to imperialism", causing the group to be limited by a "self-imposed social and political rigidity."[87] The inability of the JBAKC to effectively address low-income and working-class issues is similarly attributed to their almost singular dedication to abolishing white supremacy and supporting armed resistance, "rather than attempting to do so while confronting white working-class willingness to serve the interests of the wealthy" and "expose and incite rebellion against the ways that white supremacy is inextricably interconnected with mechanisms of economic injustice perpetrated by the wealthy few."[88]

The summation of Moore and Tracy's analysis on antisemitism and anti-Zionism is that JBAKC "relied on a simplified portrayal on the complex relationship between Jewish and Black organizations during the Civil Rights Movement", without due consideration to the way antisemitism has served as a historic anima of white supremacy "through conspiracy theories and Jewish scapegoating".[89] There is much to be said on the relationship between the black and non/black Jewish communities both historically and specifically within the Black Power Movement, the full extent of which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis. The issue of antisemitism and anti-Zionism within the New Left and Black Power Movement is one thoroughly investigated by Dollinger. *The Price of Whiteness* by Eric L. Goldstein, in its study of the complicated relationship the Jewish community has had historically with the "white" racial

[87] Hilary Moore and James Tracy, *No Fascist USA!: the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and Lessons for Today's Movements*, (City Lights Books, 2020), 219.
[88] Ibid., 220-221.
[89] Ibid., 223-224.

category in the United States, is also informative. Conflict between the Black and non/Black Jewish peoples and the "severing" of the historical relationship between the two communities in social justice struggles is often sourced to the positions taken by figures and groups in the Black Power Movement, and which contemporary movements and organizations continue to take on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, identifying Zionism as a Western colonialist/imperialist project. SNCC, for example, took a position affirming Palestinian self-determination in 1967 which Carmichael would later connect more explicitly with the Black American revolution in an speech given in 1968.[90] Carmichael states plainly "…we have taken the position that if white people who call themselves revolutionary or radical want our support, they have to condemn Zionism.*"*[91] This position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was likewise advocated by the BPP, albeit with acknowledgement of Israeli protests for peaceful resolution and against further annexation factored into their analysis.[92] The Israeli BPP organized by Mizrahi (those who lived in the Arab world and Turkey as minorities in Muslim rather than Christian culture) and Sephardic Jews (who's religious practice and diaspora path can be traced through the Iberian Peninsula) in response to the comparatively privileged political and social position of European Ashkenazi Jews also merits mention, speaking more to the complexity and nuance of Black-Jewish relations and positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[93] Though a full treatment of this subject is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis, it remains topical in terms of both consciousness development, the positions white radicals took inspired by positions of Black

[90] Third World Round-Up: The Palestine Problem: Test Your Knowledge," SNCC Newsletter, June-July 1967, 4-5.
[91] Stokely Carmichael. "The Black American and Palestinian Revolutions" in *Stokely Speaks: from Black Power to Pan-Africanism*, (Chicago Review Press, 2014), 140.
[92] Huey P. Newton, "On The Middle East," in *To Die for the People: the Writings of Huey P. Newton*, by Huey P. Newton and Toni Morrison, (City Lights, 2009), 194–199.
[93] Michael L. Clemons and Charles E. Jones; "Global Solidarity: The Black Panther Party in the International Arena" in *Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party A New Look at the Black Panthers and Their Legacy*, ed. Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas (Taylor and Francis, 2014), 24.

Power advocates, and the impacts of this position on intergroup relationship among whites. As Tracy and Moore posit:

> What bears closer examination, and serves as a lesson for today, is not the conflict with the Jewish Defense League, but critiques of anti-Semitism originating from Jewish allies who were themselves supports of Palestinian self-determination…For example, the group relied on a simplified portrayal of the complex relationship between Jewish and Black organizations in the Civil Rights movement. Its position criticized Jewish donors for severing financial support for radical Black organizations that pursued self-determination and rejected imperialism…The Committee was absolutely correct in its depiction of how non-black supports of the Civil Rights movement often distanced themselves from the sections of the Black Freedom Movement that embraced self-determination. However, when Committee statements made over generalizations about Jewish people, it often raised questions as to whether the Committee had sufficiently grappled with the legacy of anti-Semitism and was itself perhaps engaging in forms of racism.[94]

The Coalition Politics of the Black Panther Party

On October 26, 1967, the day prior to the fateful encounter with police officer John Frey which would lead to his incarceration, murder trial, and the subsequent Free Huey campaign, Newton was invited to speak at a forum on "The Future of the Black Liberation Movement," sponsored by the Black Student Union at San Francisco State College. There, Newton discussed the ideals and political program of the BPP with black students, an experience he identified as "particularly challenging" as it offered an "opportunity for lively discussion" with those who disagreed with his ideas. In his autobiography *Revolutionary Suicide,* Newton relates that after he had finished speaking, almost all of the questions and criticisms of the BPP concerned its willingness to form coalitions with white groups.[95] Certainly, among Black Power organizations of the period, the BPP took a rare position. Rarer still were Black Power organizations who put their ideological conception of such black-white coalitions into practice, cautioned by fears of

[94] Hilary Moore; James Tracy, *No Fascist USA!: the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and Lessons for Today's Movements*, (City Lights Books, 2020). 223; 224.
[95] Huey P. Newton, J. Herman Blake, and Fredrika Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 182.

co-option and persisting racial tensions inherited from the Civil Rights Movement. Newton reasoned that such black-white coalitions were possible given black control of the programs, identifying the development of anti-imperialist, and anticapitalist orientation among the white left which suggested that such coalitions were not only becoming feasible, but desirable. Newton writes:

> I pointed out that many young whites had suddenly discovered hypocrisy; their fathers and forefathers had written and talked about brotherhood and democracy while practicing greed, imperialism and racism…White youths now saw through this hypocrisy and were trying to bring about changes through traditional electoral politics…I agreed that some white people could act like devils, but we could not blind ourselves to a common humanity. More important was how to control the situation to our advantage.[96]

Newton would expand the BPP position on coalitions with whites in a prison interview offered in a 1968 issue of *The Movement* in the wake of the BPP alliance with the PFP*:*

> MOVEMENT: Other black groups seem to feel that from past experience it is impossible for them to work with whites and impossible for them to form alliances. What do you see as the reasons for this and do you think that the history of the Black Panther Party makes this less of a problem?
>
> HUEY: There was somewhat of an unhealthy relationship in the past with the white liberals supporting the black people who were trying to gain their freedom. I think that a good example of this would be the relationship that SNCC had with its white liberals. I call them white liberals because they differ strictly from the white radicals. The relationship was that the whites controlled SNCC for a very long time. From the very start of SNCC until here recently whites were the mind of SNCC. They controlled the program of SNCC with money and they controlled the ideology, or the stands SNCC would take. The blacks in SNCC were completely controlled program-wise; they couldn't do any more than these white liberals wanted them to do, which wasn't very much. So the white liberals were not working for self-determination for the black community. They were interested in a few concessions from the power structure. They undermined SNCC's program.
>
> The result was that the leadership of SNCC turned away from the white liberal, which was very good. I don't think they distinguished between the white liberal and the white revolutionary, because the white revolutionary is white also and they are very much afraid to have any contact whatsoever with white people. Even to the point of denying

[96] Huey P. Newton, J. Herman Blake, and Fredrika Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide,* 182; 183.

> that the white revolutionaries could give support, by supporting the programs of SNCC in the mother country.[97]

Within this analysis, Newton makes important distinctions between the "white liberal" and "white revolutionary", delineating the different contexts and experiences from which BPP and SNCC determined their position on forming collaborative relationships with white groups. Newton argues that SNCC erred in its monolithic interpretation of whiteness, limiting its flexibility and process for strategically determining with whom, and when, to form relationships with white groups. In this interview, Newton continues:

> Our alliance is one of organized black groups with organized white groups. As soon as the organized white groups do not do the things that would benefit us in our struggle for liberation, that will be our departure point. So we don't suffer in the hang-up of a skin color. We don't hate white people; we hate the oppressor. And if the oppressor happens to be white then we hate him. When he stops oppressing us then we no longer hate him. And right now in America you have the slave-master being a white group. We are pushing him out of office through revolution in this country. I think the responsibility of the white revolutionary will be to aid us in this. And when we are attacked by the police or by the military then It will be up to the white mother country radicals to attack the murderers and to respond as we respond, to follow our program.[98]

Here, Newton identifies that the primary responsibility (and measure) of a white revolutionary, as opposed to a white liberal, is full support of the BPP political program and willingness to follow black leadership. Additionally, as had been dictated by Carmichael and Hamilton in *Black Power,* that coalitions be formed between groups with their own independent bases of power and constituency – aligned with the instruction of Black Power ideology that whites organize against racism within their own communities. Furthermore, Newton expands on his challenge to monolithic interpretation of whiteness, instead framing the movement and areas of mutual cooperation along class and anti-imperialist lines.

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[97] *The Movement*, "Huey Newton Talks to the Movement about the Black Panther Party, Cultural Nationalism, SNCC, Liberals and White Revolutionaries," 1968, 6; 7.
[98] Ibid., 7.

Certainly**,** a major contributing factor in the Panther's willingness to form coalitions with whites can be attributed to the organizing flexibility their class-based analysis afforded. Though SNCC and Carmichael theorized the possibility of working with poor whites, as evidenced by their refusal of the GROW proposal and critiques of the BPP alliance with the PFP, this theorizing amounted to little. James A. Geschwender and Judson L. Jefferies in their article on the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, for example, suggest that a primary challenge for the League in forming working relationships with white radicals can be attributed to the groups inability reconcile the contradictions between the "capitalist exploitation" and "colonial model" ideological strains of racial stratification, attempting to merge them "without full articulation of and derivation of consistent strategic and tactical implications".[99] The capitalist exploitation model identifies race prejudice as a means of justifying the exploitation of racial groups, utilized to divide the workers into competing groups to their detriment. The colonial model portrayed blacks as a nation within itself, which, in the context of colonization, places black and whites in fundamental opposition, with all whites existing as an exploiting group, and suggesting collaborative relationships with whites were unreliable at best, and impossible at worst.[100] Geschwender and Jefferies write:

> Acceptance of the colonial model logically entails cultural and revolutionary nationalism aimed at ultimate establishment of a separate Black political entity. It is unlikely that Black workers could, by themselves, successfully bring about a socialist revolution. They need white workers as allies. Yet it is these very white workers that the colonial model entails defining as an enemy. A combined model requires simultaneously working with and fighting against white workers. It also requires simultaneously working with and fighting Black capitalists. The colonial model calls for seeking their aid in a war of national liberation, and the capitalist exploitation model requires a socialist uprising against all capitalists. It is undoubtedly possible to design a model that incorporates the desirable features of both models without requiring incompatible tactical lines of endeavor, but the league did not work this out. The failure to explicate a logically

[99] James A Geschwender and J. L. Jeffries, "The League of Revolutionary Black Workers." in *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, edited by J. L. Jeffries, (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2006), 153.
[100] Ibid., 153; 154.

> consistent model facilitating a cohesive direction for action was a constant source of strain within the organization. Attempts by some league members at principled cooperation with white radicals were opposed and often hindered by other league members.[101]

Unlike the Panthers, according to Geschwender and Jefferies, the League dismissed the revolutionary potential of the lumpen to build a successful movement "as they lacked a potential source of power", instead believing "Black workers were the most promising base for a successful Black movement because of the potential to disrupt industrial production," and viewed "the capitalist class as being entirely white."[102] In this way, the League expressed a homogenous view of the whites along race and class lines. While not dismissing the impact of race or racism, the Panther's challenged such perspectives. In "On Ideology of the Black Panther Party," Cleaver writes:

> White workers belong to a totally different world than that of Black workers. They are caught up in a totally different economic, political, and social reality, and on the basis of this distinct reality, the pigs of the power structure and treacherous labor leaders find it very easy to manipulate them with Babylonian racism.
>
> This complex reality presents us with many problems, and only through proper analysis can these problems be solved. The lack of a proper analysis is responsible for the ridiculous approach to these problem's that we find among Mother Country Marxist-Leninists. And their improper analysis leads them to advocate solutions that are doomed to failure in advance. The key area of the confusion has to do with falsely assuming the existence of one All-American Proletariat; one All-American Working Class; and one All-American Lumpenproletariat. [103]

The Panther analysis of the revolutionary potential of the lumpenproletariat is of particular note. In classic Marxist-Leninism, the lumpenproletariat are described as a dangerous reactionary group and the social class with the least revolutionary potential. The Panthers, in their analysis and organization of the lumpenproletariat, drew from Franz Fanon's analysis of the

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[101] Ibid., 155.
[102] Ibid., 145; 153.
[103] Eldridge Cleaver, "On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party," June 1970, 7.

revolutionary potential of the lumpen in *The Wretched of The Earth.* Fanon writes: "It is among these masses. In the people of the shanty towns and in the lumpenproletariat that the insurrection will find its urban spearhead. The lumpenproletariat, this cohort of starving men and women, uprooted from their tribe and clan, constitutes one of the most spontaneously and radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people."[104] Seeking to apply Fanon's insights to the US context, making parrels between the impoverishment of the "shanty towns" of colonized African nations and American ghettos, following from the previous excerpt in "On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party," Cleaver continues:

> The Lumpenproletariat are all those who have no secure relationship or vested interest in the means of productions and the institutions of capitalist society. That part of the "Industrial Reserve Army" held perpetually in reserve; who have never worked and never will; who can't find a job who are unskilled and unfit; who have been displaced by machines, automation, and cybernation and were never "retained or invested with new skills", all those on Welfare or receiving State Aid.
>
> Also the so called "Criminal Element", those who live by their wits, existing off that which they rip off, who stick funs in the faces of businessmen and say 'stick' em up', or 'give it up'! Those who don't even want a job, who hate to work and can't relate to punching some pig's time clock, who would rather punch a pig in the mouth and rob him than punch that same pig's time clock and work for him, those whom Huey P. Newton calls "the illegitimate capitalists". In short, all those who simply have been locked out of the economy and robbed of their rightful social heritage. [105]

However, differing from Fanon and other black nationalists groups, rather than identifying the black lumpen specifically as having revolutionary potential, the Panther's also attributed this revolutionary potential to the white lumpen as well, though ascribing more potential to the former than the latter. In *Seize the Time,* BPP co-founder Bobby Seale references the Young Patriots Organization, members of Rainbow Coalition in Chicago (examined in the

[104] Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (Grove Press, 1963), 81.
[105] Cleaver, "On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party," 7.

following chapter), whom he identified as the "vanguard in the poor white communities".[106] Seale adds "Alliances between poor oppressed peoples work out readily. It is the poor oppressed people who have to dictate their political desires and needs, and explain what should be done and what should not be done. The organizations of the lumpen proletariat are the ones we can relate to. We even have a problem with black students sometimes because they tend to have a detached understanding of the realities of the black community."[107] It can be argued that in their effort to ascribe revolutionary potential to both the black and white lumpen, the Panther's sought to, borrowing Geschwender and Jefferies phasing, "design a model that incorporates the desirable features" of the colonial and capitalist exploitation model to **"**explicate a logically consistent model facilitating a cohesive direction for action".[108] In ascribing revolutionary potential to the white lumpen, and in avoiding defining all capitalists and the oppressor along racially explicit (white) lines, the BPP identified potential white allies within the colonial model while still centering antiracism, the role of race, and the central oppression faced by people of color that the colonial model espoused. Similarly, in this way, the capitalist exploitation model which called for a socialist uprising against capitalists was not logically inconsistent with forming collaborative relationships with whites, nor were such relationships logically inconsistent with organizing along racially independent lines. The Panther's recognized the nature, degree, and consequences of oppression varied along racial lines informing the belief in the need for racially independent entities with respect to each communities immediate needs, lived experiences, and political history which contributed to a collective liberation. In other words, while a socialist

[106] Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton*, (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press 1991), 211.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Geschwender and J. L. Jeffries, "The League of Revolutionary Black Workers," in *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, 153.

revolution or national liberation remained the ultimate goal, in the United States context, it was envisioned by the Panther's as necessarily a pluralistic or multiracial endeavor. Within this ideological construction Black Power, its aims (at least those of the Panthers), and white allyship (or White Power as used and understood by white radical groups such as the YPO) are thus complimentary, rather than theoretically antagonistic or inconsistent. As was explored with Maxwell's White Folks Project Proposal and Detwiler in his article on Black Power in the New Republic in the previous chapter, Black Power becomes then, "is in some ways synonymous with poor-white power."[109]

Outside of forming collaborative relationships with poor whites, it is also important to note, of course, the ideological roots which informed the willingness of the Panther's to work with, and receive support from white groups of all class strata, though (attempting to do so) on their own terms. Similarly, the Panther's drew from Fanon (again, attempting to adapt his theories to a US context), who, while placing primary revolutionary potential upon the lumpen, viewed all strata's of society as required for achieving a revolutionary decolonization. Synthesizing Fanon's ideology concerning the role of different class strata in decolonization in *Forms of Fanonism*, scholar Reiland Rabaka offers an insightful passage from which we may draw parallels between Fanon's theory and the BPP's practice of coalition politics:

> However, it should be pointed out that it was not the rural radicalism of the African peasantry alone that constituted the singular revolutionary socialist force of change in Africa for Fanon, but a creative coalition and alliance of an anticolonialism, anticapitalism, and antiracist rural, urban, and even, suburban, sociopolitical classes with a shared interests in Africa's development, as well as the distinct development of their respective nations, cities, towns, and rural regions. This means then, that Fanon does not completely reject the active and important radical participation of the African proletariat as much as he emphasizes its embourgeoisement when compared to and contrasted with the lived-experiences, life-struggles, and more importantly, the anti-imperialist and

[109] Bruce Detwiler in *The Movement,* "Role of Whites in Black Power," November, 1966, 7.

> potential revolutionary consciousness (if provided with proper "political education') of the lumpenproletariat and peasantry of Africa.[110]

However, as will be examined in the following section in an analysis of the relationships the Panthers formed with the PFP and SDS, while this flexible class-based analysis would inform the Panther's willingness to form coalitions with white groups of all class strata – ironically - it would also present challenges in the willingness of white radical groups to work with the Panthers. Newton's ideal that white radical groups with which the Panther's would form coalitions should offer full support to the BPP program and follow black leadership would be tested in various forms and degrees. As reflected upon by Gilbert, racism and white racial attitudes, even among those who profess solidarity and adherence to black leadership persisted, taking unique forms with respect to the ideology of the broader movement.

The Black Panther Party, Peace and Freedom Party, and Students for a Democratic Society

In their seminal history of the BPP, Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin write "by the summer of 1969, the Black Panthers recognized that the broader New Left was turning towards their party for leadership. They seized the opportunity."[111] Practicing its coalition politics on a national level, the BPP formed relationships with white radical groups such as the Peace and Freedom Party (PFP) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Often the relationships formed between the BPP and New Left organizations were characterized by the BPP's claim and popular designation as the vanguard party, both for the black community and the national

[110] Reiland Rabaka, *Forms of Fanonism Frantz Fanon's Critical Theory and the Dialectics of Decolonization*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 155-156.
[111] Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*, 299.

movement. In *Revolution in the Air*, Elbaum offers a succinct explanation of the functions and origins of the vanguard party concept:

> Lenin's key point was an emphasis on the *distinction* between the socialist party and the working class. He challenged the dominant view that a revolutionary party could embrace the entire proletariat and called for building a party restricted to a self-conscious *vanguard* layer, that is, to the proletariat's most politically advanced section. For Lenin, this was the key to combating reformism, economism and opportunism, and mobilizing the working class for revolution. Lenin laid out his argument in *What Is to Be Done?*, where he placed much greater emphasis than previous socialists on the *limitations* of spontaneous working class consciousness.
>
> Lenin went beyond [Karl] Kautsky's position that socialistic consciousness had to be originally brought to workers by intelligentsia. He argued that once socialist ideas entered the workers movement, the force of bourgeois ideology would still constantly pull workers back toward a narrow, trade unionist consciousness. This pull could only be combated by a party made up of a vanguard minority of workers (and intellectuals) who had transcended the narrow horizons of reformism. This party would serve as the indispensable "conscious element" in the working class movement. It would not limit itself to strengthening the militancy of workers in economic struggles, but would utilize every instance of injustice to raise the consciousness of the proletariat. [112]

According to Elbaum, the BPP's centrally led, cadre party model which sought to build a base among ordinary people - different from the leading New Left organizations SNCC and SDS – "was a watershed in legitimizing the notion of a tight revolutionary party among young radicals." Elbaum continues "Even though the Panthers did not derive their organizational approach from Leninist theory, they did speak of themselves as a vanguard. For most sixties activists of all colors, contact with the Panthers marked their first encounter with a cadre group claiming that title (except for largely disliked Old Left groups)."[113] Given the vanguard designation of the BPP, a central question of this section is – how did the white radical groups PFP and SDS navigate their relationship with the BPP given its designation and a vanguard party?

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[112] Elbaum, Revolution in the Air, 148-149.
[113] Ibid., 67.

The BPP and PFP alliance was established December 22nd, 1967, encouraged by the belief of BPP leadership "a broad base of support would be necessary in order to win allies and raise funds" for Newton's defense for his murder trial related the death of police officer John Frey in an altercation which occurred on October 28th, 1967.[114] Ultimately, this alliance resulted in the creation of the "Free Huey" campaign. **[115]** The Bay Area PFP, having offered alliance proposals rejected by SNCC and other black organizations, were in desperate need of signatures required for placement on the California state ballot by the January 3rd deadline, having only twenty-five thousand - far from the sixty-five thousand signatures required.[116] Despite initial fears a collaborative relationship with the PFP and the placement of BPP members on official ballots would bring increased political repression upon the party, BPP leadership agreed to the alliance believing the relationship structure offered by the PFP was one in-line with their ideological framework.[117] The BPP, despite its media portrayals and Marxist-Leninist orientation, had never dismissed the potential of electoral politics as a tactic. Similar to the Black Nationalist ideology expressed by Malcolm X in "The Ballot or the Bullet", wherein Malcolm X criticized the two-party system and voiced the need to withhold the ballot "until you see a target", and suggested the black man in the black community "has to be re-educated into the science of politics so he will know what politics is supposed to bring him in return," the BPP, concerns of repression aside, at the time lacked the broad base required to successful engage in

[114] Huey P. Newton, J. Herman Blake, and Fredrika Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide,* 205-206.
[114] Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire,* 108.

[117] Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time,* 207-208.

electoral politics, which an alliance with PFP, who likewise sought to challenge the two-party system contributed.[118] "Revolution in the White Mother Country & National Liberation in the Black Colony", an essay authored by Cleaver and presented to the Peace and Freedom Foundation Convention in Richmond, California further indicates this ideological position of using electoral politics as a consciousness raising tool for Black Power. Cleaver explains:

> Our dual status gives us a mythical right of citizenship and the concrete reality of our situation has given us the national consciousness of an oppressed and colonized people. We intend to use them both wisely. The citizenship we have on paper we will use through the mechanism with the Peace and Freedom Party…By running Huey P. Newton for Congress we are uniting the revolutionary political arena with the conventional political arena, and thereby obliterating the distinction between the two. We are able to focus attention in all of our campaigns on a revolutionary leader with a revolutionary program within the conventional political context. In over-sophisticated and decadent "revolutionary" circles, this is called "heightening the consciousness of the masses." In practical terms, this kind of campaign becomes another tool for political organization for black power.[119]

The BPP and PFP alliance was also believed to adhere to the principle that black-white coalitions be formed on the basis of mutual benefit, self-interest, and racial division of labor in line with the dictum outlined by Carmichael and Hamilton in *Black Power*. While the PFP would provide support and bring additional awareness in white communities to the Free Huey campaign and contribute $3,000 to Newton's defense fund, the BPP would provide an inroad into black communities to aid in the PFP's efforts to acquire the required signatures.[120] Given their respective causes for establishing the alliance, the BPP and PFP relationship ultimately proved fruitful for both organizations. "The PFP connection," wrote Jane Rhodes in her study of the BPP's relationship to the media, *Framing the Black Panthers*, "greatly enlarged the Panther's

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[118] X, Malcolm, "The Ballot or the Bullet" in *MALCOLM X SPEAKS*, edited by George Breitman, (NEW YORK, NEW YORK: GROVE Press, 1965), 38.
[119] Eldridge Cleaver, "Revolution in the White Mother Country & National Liberation in the Black Colony". July-August, 1968. 14; 15.
[120] Jane Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers: the Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017) 123.

media efforts – the groups appeared jointly in press conferences, joined forces to distribute leaflets and other materials, and capitalized on the PFP's contacts to attract press coverage."[121] Similarly, Bloom and Martin relate that "The day after the announcement of the coalition, new registrations in Berkeley alone jumped to more than 500 – reaching 1,200 per day by the end of the week", adding "By the deadline on January 3, over 105,000 signatures had been gathered: the Peace and Freedom Party would be on the November ballot in California."[122]

In addition to this alignment on challenging the two-party system, the PFP claimed to profess full support the BPP political program, which Newton outlined in his interview with *The Movement,* referenced earlier, reflecting a similar position taken by the Black Caucus at the NCNP:

> MOVEMENT: Would you like to be more specific on the conditions which must exist before an alliance or coalition can be formed with predominately white groups? Would you comment specifically on your alliance with California Peace and Freedom Party?
>
> HUEY: We have an alliance with the Peace and Freedom Party. The Peace and Freedom Party has supported our program in full and this the criterion for a coalition with the black revolutionary group. If they had not supported our program in full, then we would not have seen any reason to make an alliance with them, because we are in the reality of the oppression. They are not. They are only oppressed in an abstract way; we are oppressed in the real way. We are the real slaves! So it's a problem that we suffer from more than anyone else and it's our problem of liberation. Therefore we should decide what measures and what tools and what programs to use to become liberated. Many of the young white revolutionaries realize this and I see no reason not to have a coalition with them. [123]

By placing Eldridge Cleaver, BPP Minister of Information as the presidential candidate on the PFP ticket; Newton as a candidate for the Seventh Congressional District of Alameda

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[121] Bloom and Martin, *Black Against* Empire, 109.

[123] *The Movement*, "Huey Newton Talks to the Movement about the Black Panther Party, Cultural Nationalism, SNCC, Liberals and White Revolutionaries," 6.

Country; Seale as candidate for the 17th Assembly District; and Kathleen Cleaver as a candidate in the 18th Assembly District, the PFP aimed to establish their revolutionary credentials through their alignment with the Black Freedom Struggle. In a statement issued by the Eldridge Cleaver for President Committee which included the Radical, Brown and Black Caucus and the Medical Committee for Humanity, the committee identified that the PFP's decision to run Cleaver for president "acknowledges the vanguard role of the leadership of the black liberation struggle and projects one of the leaders, spokesman, and strategists of the Black Panther Party as the leader of the nation."[124] Representative of criticisms that emerged from white delegates acquiescence to the demands of the Black Caucus at the NCNP, the BPP and PFP alliance was not without cautionary analysis of the relationships between the two organizations. Though the editorial in the April 1968 issue of *The Movement* offered a positive assessment of the alliance, it also identified a **"**danger that the PFP will be drawn into the trick bag of spending all of its time defending Huey Newton," adding, "If this happens it will cease to be an independent group and useful ally and will degenerate into just another liberal support group. We are not suggesting that Huey should not be defended by as many people as possible; but that the defense should be carried out an integrated part of an organization's program and should not be an end in itself."[125] Beyond this assessment of the Free Huey Campaign aspect of the alliance, Lincoln Bergman and Buddy Stein critiqued the PFP's focus on electoral politics in the January 1968 issue *of The Movement*. Bergman and Stein argued that similar to what had been observed in the NCNP, the PFP's focus on electoral politics (and the strategy of electoral politics itself) almost exclusively appealed to middle-class whites, was tarnished by the historic tendency to "subordinate political principle to the pursuit of the vote", and most importantly, "participation in a campaign

[124] Eldridge Cleaver for President Committee, "Press Release," May 13, 1968, 4.
[125] *The Movement*, "Where It's At," April 1968.

reinforces the faith in the ballot box as the only effective path to social change. Thus, when the campaign ends, if not effort at internal education has been made, the electoral isolation leads to deep dissolution with any kind of politics."[126] Given these criticisms of electoral politics, Bergman and Stein offer a poignant question: "If there are black and poor people registered, what assurance is there that the party can articulate their needs and interests?"[127]

This question, of course, speaks to the troubled historical relationship and power dynamics between black and white activists. The challenges, concerns, and criticisms identified and offered in issues of *The Movement* concerning the BPP and PFP alliance would become evident in its practice. Recounting his personal experiences, Stew Albert provides insight into a number of personal relationships and tensions between BPP and PFP leadership. While the relationships between individual activists do not necessarily reflect the dynamics between the two organizations as a whole, and analysis of the relations between different chapters and rank and file, and PFP and community would prove enlightening (though unfortunately, beyond this scope of this thesis), interpersonal relationships among leadership are informative on broader ideological conflicts. While Albert spoke of the laid-black Panther-Yippie association, he also observed "While the Peace and Freedom membership was extremely diverse, the party's movers tended to be of an ideological bend that in some cases leaned to Leon Trotsky and in others Mao Tse-Tsung. They kept their ideological purity intact by aligning their organization to the Black Panther Party and its program."[128] Albert's claim invites investigation into the extent the problematic trend of New Left organizations (and white activists in general) associating with the Black Freedom Movement to validate revolutionary credentials and garner

[126] Lincoln Bergman and Buddy Stein, "Peace & Freedom – Where Will It Lead?". *The Movement*, January 1968, 3.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Stew Albert, "White Radicals, Black Panthers, and a Sense of Fulfillment" in *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party,* ed. Kathleen Cleaver; George Katsiaficas, (Taylor and Francis, 2014), 191.

support of the Left due to the role of the Black Freedom Movement held within the radical imagination of white activists, rather than a sincere support for black liberation and its political programs is present in the BPP and PFP alliance. In *Seize The Time,* Seale expressed doubts concerning the PFP's commitment to the Free Huey campaign and the more radical and revolutionary elements of the BPP's political program following a conversation concerning placing community control of police on the PFP political platform:

> It was at this time I began to think that some members of the Peace and Freedom Party weren't really concerned with brother Huey P. Newton as a political prisoner who needed to be free. Many people who worked on our campaign, and showed concern, but some just weren't interested. Some of the leaders looked at it as a political lever, or something to use, but others were earnest and really wanted to free Huey. It became apparent that many Peace and Freedom Party members would have to become more radical and revolutionary. Many people did not understand that the very police who attempted to kill Huey were controlled by the Democratic and Republican parties, so they weren't concerned with community control of police. They didn't understand that Huey's situation was inseparable from the needs of the community. We also saw that they didn't have a real interest in the community control of police…Some of the leaders felt that running Huey was a losing tactic, but that was not the case. They misunderstood how much Huey was interlocked with every black man in the black community who suffers from oppression. We'd run Huey again because ours is a revolutionary struggle. They acted like social democrats and were not able to advance to a higher level and continue working.[129]

That Seale would reach such a conclusion concerning the PFP's commitment to the more radical and revolutionary elements of the BPP program is unsurprising, given that, though the PFP would later form an alliance with the BPP in the December of 1967, earlier in August at the Convention of the National Conference of New Politics, Bob Avakian of the California PFP would be among the few who opposed the demands presented by the Black Caucus. Though this evident lack of support for the Black Liberation Movement caused members to leave the

[129] Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time*, 209-210.

organization, a number would rejoin following announcement of the BPP-PFP alliance.[130] Despite the mutual benefits the coalition afforded each organization, the about-face acknowledgement of the "the vanguard role of the leadership of the black liberation struggle" in the Eldridge Cleaver for President Committee statement proved too sudden to be sincerely representative of a cohesive PFP position. In a number of ways, the positions on the PFP and BPP alliance in issues of *The Movement* discussed in this section proved correct in their assessment of how the Free Huey campaign would come to dominate the PFP, how the electoral strategy of the PFP did appeal to primarily middle-class whites, and the PFP's subordination of political principle (which additionally, is related to the ability of the PFP to articulate the needs and interests of the black and poor, given their reluctance or refusal to adopt elements of the BPP political program, and the BPP's stated purpose to serve as representatives of these underrepresented communities), they were perhaps wrong in principle. The positions articulated in *The Movement*, which cautioned that a primary focus on the Free Huey campaign would degenerate the PFP into just "another liberal support group" - as Seale noted in his criticism of PFP leadership - failed to consider or diminished the impact and importance of Newton's incarceration and the pursuit of his freedom as consciousness raising symbol. Instead, as Seale charged, viewing Newton solely as a political prisoner who deserved a fair trial, exoneration and freedom – perhaps due to the abstract nature of their own oppression as white activists. Echoing Seale, Newton would reflect on the symbolism and impact of his incarceration and the Free Huey Campaign:

> But mainly the alliance between the Black Panthers and the Peace and Freedom Party was meant to demonstrate that racism and police oppression were responsible for my being in jail and that I was falsely accused of the murder of Patrolman Frey…Meanwhile, all across the country, Black people were relating to my imprisonment. The Black Panthers were recruiting members in every major city and also in some of the rural areas.

[130] Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire,* 108.

> In some cases, people just formed a group and called themselves Black Panthers without ever getting in touch with central headquarters. Sometimes, groups would form around our ten point program and use another name. It was all the same: the community was being educated; their consciousness was being raised.[131]

As Newton observed, and Cleaver posited, rather than electoral politics of the BPP and PFP alliance lacking an educative process, focus on the Free Huey campaign (not discounting the successful utilization of the press and grassroots work in the form of speeches and literature distribution) arguably ensured the education aspect of the electoral work was inherent. Furthermore, though the PFP's electoral politics almost exclusively attracted the white middle-class, this in itself proved productive. Seale, by way of the BPP and PFP alliance and Free Huey campaign, were able to engage in numerous invited speeches and lectures, which, according to Bloom and Martin advanced an "anti-imperialist political ideology that linked the oppression of antiwar protestors to the oppression of blacks and Vietnamese." [132] Seale also argued "antiwar demonstrators faced a plight like that of the black community" with respect to escalating repression, an analogy Bloom and Martin relate antiwar activists "eagerly adopted." [133] Like Whitehorn, Gilbert and Buck, these students found within the Free Huey Campaign a medium through which to make connections with their own interests, issues, oppression, and repression. Given this, the tendency of electoral politics to exclusively attract the white middle-class perhaps, in and of itself, should not be considered inherently problematic, even in an ideological framework which ascribes significantly more revolutionary potential to the poor or working-class. Despite the flaws and errors within this coalition, such examples perhaps give credit to thesis posited by Zellner (as examined in the previous chapter) on both the need for parallel

[131] Huey P. Newton, J. Herman Blake, and Fredrika Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide,* 206.
[132] Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire,* 110.
[133] Ibid., 110-111.

movements in the black and white community, respectively, and the opportunity to combat white racism by the mechanism of interracial coalition and socialization.

The relationship between the BPP and PFP has also been explored in Joe Wilson's "Invisible Cages: Racialized Politics and the Alliance between the Panthers and the Peace and Freedom Party". In this article, Wilson observes the ways in which ideological divisions within the PFP were representative of those plaguing the broader New Left. Wilson writes **"**divergent views about race and its impact on American society prevented the development of a healthy, interracial movement that might have breathed new life into the late-sixties Left; indeed, the troubled relationship between the BPP and PFP represented in microcosm the same tensions and lack of effective communication that plagued efforts to unite the black liberation movement and the New Left nationwide."[134] Wilson's assessment of the ideological divisions within the PFP concurs with observations made by Albert and Seale, identifying and categorizing two competing factions - "pragmatists" and "visionaries" - divided by contrasting approaches to political organizing. According to Wilson, while both pragmatists and visionaries in the PFP "believed that racial inequality could be surmounted through their organizations stirring of a popular movement that would expose racism and militarism in American life and also increase the state commitments to ending racial inequality", they "advanced contrasting conceptions of how such a popular movement would occur." Pragmatists downplayed black liberation and believed change would come quickest through appeals to middle-class whites, while visionaries favored a centralized organizational structure which focused less on electoral politics in favor of

[134] Joe Wilson, "Invisible Cages: Racialized Politics and the Alliance between the Panthers and the Peace and Freedom Party" in *In Search of the Black Panther Party New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement*, ed. Jama Lezrow, (Duke University Press, 2006), 194.

community organizing and working toward an interracial alliance which would fuse poor and working-class Americans with organized labor and the anti-war movement.[135]

Another informative relationship, especially concerning complicated and often contradictory relationship between the white New Left and black vanguard can be observed in the relationship between the BPP, SDS, and Black Freedom Movement which has been examined by several scholars. The SDS, having rapidly grown from a membership of 30,000 in Fall 1967 to 80,000 to 100,00 members by November 1968, dealt with ideological divisions represented by four different factions. These include, Progressive Labor (PL); Revolutionary Youth Movement I/Weathermen (RYM); RYM II; and those unaligned with any faction, the majority of SDS membership. The ideological differences between these factions were perhaps most prominent at the June 1969 national SDS convention.[136] In his work on the SDS and Weather Underground, Berger writes "The RYM resolution pledged solidarity with Black and other Third World struggles, making anti-racism a defining political principle for white youth. This proposal stood in contrast to PL's perennially Worker-Student Alliance initiatives, which saw race as divisive and promoted a staid and conservative view of 'the working class.' For PL politics began and ended at the point of production; student radicalism and autonomous organizing by people of color was a distraction."[137] As invitees to the SDS national conference, the BPP, Brown Berets, and Young Lords collectively presented an ultimatum demanding PL change its position on self-determination in communities of color. PL's refusal to do so was a factor which contributed their eventual expulsion from SDS. Berger asserts that the RYM split from PL "clarified that there were thousands of white youth in the United States insisting on the

[135] Ibid., 195-196.
[136] Daniel L. Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*, (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006), 77.
[137] Ibid, 7.

centrality of anti-racism ad solidarity with movements fighting U.S. Imperialism.[138] However, Dave Barber, offering a more critical assessment of the SDS and the Weather Underground Organization (WUO) in "Leading the Vanguard", asserts that, ironically, the expulsion of PL presented a danger to SDS in that "having dramatically rid itself of a racist force SDS, unchecked by the strength of the black movement, could foist off onto PL all of its white supremacy. In other words, PL could serve as the white supremacist 'other' to SDS's purity and antiwhite supremacism."[139] After PL's expulsion, ideological differences between RYM I/Weathermen and RYM II, became central**.** While both RYM factions agreed on centrality of antiracism and expressed solidarity with Third World revolutionary movements, RYM I/Weatherman placed less faith in the revolutionary potential of the working class and "embraced Black Power ideology by building an all-white group to fight racism" as RYM II "endeavored to build a multiracial groups with internal leadership by people of color" criticizing RYM I/Weathermen's depreciation of class.[140] RYM II argued for the need to organize "U.S. workers into class struggle" and move "much more immediately toward the creation of a Communist Party" which" RYM I/Weathermen criticized as working from the same "flawed and dated Communist Party as PL." [141] Berger observes "It was a split over class and race, over aboveground versus underground action. Communist party versus armed revolutionary movement – and more than a few strong egos were involved."[142]

Despite the SDS designating the BPP as a "vanguard party**",** Barber asserts "the SDS never systematically or seriously supported the BPP", writing "… the BPP that SDS designated

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[138] Ibid., 84; 85.
[139] David Barber, "Leading the Vanguard: White New Leftists School the Panthers on Black Revolution," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement*, ed. Jama Lezrow, (Duke University Press, 2006), 235.
[140] Berger, *Outlaws of America,* 95-96
[141] Berger, *Outlaws of America,* 87.
[142] Ibid., 87.

as vanguard was a Party that did not exist in the social reality of black people; rather, SDS conferred leadership status on Panthers that existed in the minds of white young activist and nowhere else. The vanguard party that the SDS was willing to follow was a Party that SDS itself invented."[143] This is perhaps exemplified in the refusal of SDS's to form a relationship with the PFP when invited by the Panthers. Though Cleaver originally suggested then SDS president Carl Oglesby as his Vice Presidential running mate, for example, Oglesby and the SDS refused, disagreeing with the PFP's focus on electoral politics among other differences, believing such an alliance would misrepresent SDS and that electoral politics were inappropriate for the level of consciousness in the SDS's white constituency.[144] Similar to the positions examined in *The Movement*, the SDS dismissed the potential of election politics when practiced by a black radical group, relying on their own abstract understanding of oppression and consciousness to determine the validity of black political action and organization. Barber frames SDS's refusal to consider an alliance with a PFP as evidence the RYM position was one that advanced "it would willingly follow a black vanguard whose requests coincided with its inclination".[145] Likewise, given that the PFP only became a significant force after announcing its alignment with the BPP, it is interesting they remained reluctant to adopt the more revolutionary and radical elements of the BPP program. This perhaps speaks to implicit white racial attitudes among white activists, and credits Seale's lamentation that some PFP leaders "were unable to advance to a higher level." Such an analysis may apply to the SDS, but in a different form. While the PFP were reluctant to commit to black leadership out a fear of alienating their white middle-class base and other reasons related to political expediency, the SDS took the position that their antiracist and radical

[143] Barber, "Leading the Vanguard," 222-223.
[144] Ibid., 228.
[145] Ibid., 237.

political consciousness and activism was beyond the terms and task the vanguard they themselves had designated had requested or assigned. In each case, to "advance to a higher level", for white activists, using Seale's phrasing, can be understood in one interpretation to mean moving beyond the abstract lens of the white identity and the associated white racial attitudes which function as limiters in relating to, and offering full support for black leadership.

Continuing, the difference between the Weathermen and RYM II, according to Barber was that the WUO "sought to create a black vanguard that would lead the revolution" while the RYM II "sought a black vanguard that would better appreciate the necessity for allying with the same – but not, revolutionary white workers, as a part of a united working-class revolution."[146] The criticisms of Barber and Berger align with those offered by Gilbert concerning the racist trends which may persist subconsciously, even, and especially, taking unique forms among individuals and organization professing solidarity with liberation movements and a commitment to centering antiracist ideology practice. In the case of the WUO, for example, its proposal of assassinating police officers in minority communities with the intention to bring repression in those communities in an effort to radicalize more people of color toward their correct version of revolutionary politics, for example, was observed to be the peak of Leftist racism.[147]

Finally, summarizing his criticisms of SDS, Barber identifies five factors which characterized the SDS's attitudes toward the BPP: (1) support for the Panthers' "military program" and rejection of their survival programs and electoral projects; (2) rejection of Panther projects that would push the SDS into organizing in white communities for black self-determination and against racism; (3) rejection of Panther critiques of its tactics and mindset; (4) lack of Panther support on terms the Panther's themselves set while still affirming fealty to Black

[146] Ibid., 244.
[147] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air*, 71; Barber, "Leading the Vanguard", 262.

leadership for the purposes of radial legitimacy; (5) lastly, the SDS sought to teach the Panthers on the meaning, tactics and strategies of black liberation and against white supremacy.[148]

THE RAINBOW COALITION IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS: WHITE POWER AND BLACK LIBERATION

Following an investigation and analysis of the relationships between the central BPP office, the PFP, and SDS in the previous chapter, attention must also be given to the practice of coalition politics among the BPP's branches and chapters. As stated in the introduction, BPP chapters nationwide often took different approaches and positions on black-white allyship with respect to the unique demographics, political climate, and history of their communities. Such realities are found in the studies of local chapters, collected in works such as *On the Ground* and *The Black Panther Party in a City Near You.* Writing on the BPP chapter in Seattle, Washington, for example, Jeffery Zane and Judson L. Jeffries observe that Seattle's "relatively small black community (26, 901 in 1960, in a city of 557,087) made unity much easier," and considering "the multiethnic membership of many of the city's organizations, the CARC [Central Area Civil Rights Council; formed 1961] functioned as a coalition in and of itself".[149] Zane and Jefferies would later posit that these factors impacted the Seattle Panther's whom "had grown up and attended schools with people of other race; thus coalitions [including the Communist Party; American Indian Movement; SDS; Red Guard; and the Seattle Liberation Front, consisting of

[148] Barber, "Leading the Vanguard", 223-224.
[149] Jefferies, Judson L., and Jeffrey Zane. "A Panther Sighting in the Pacific Northwest: The Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party." Essay. In *On the Ground: the Black Panther Party in Communities across America*. (Jackson, Miss: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2010), 45

largely white college students] were a natural by-product of their personal relations."[150] Similar observations were made by Reynaldo Anderson in his essay on the BPP chapter in Kansas City, Missouri who noted "there was constant tension that what was strategically feasible and beneficial to the African-American masses on the East and West coasts may not be beneficial in the Midwest because of the Midwest's limited black population."[151]

Outside the central office in Oakland, California, however, few chapters have captured the popular attention afforded to the Chicago, Illinois chapter of the BPP (CBPP) headed by Deputy Chairman Fred Hampton, and the Rainbow Coalition of Revolutionary Solidarity he spearheaded. Founded April 4th, 1969, and promoted by the central office as a national model, the Rainbow Coalition would famously define the relationship between radical groups of various racial and ethnic identities within the city. The organizations participatory in the coalition included the Young Patriots Organization (YPO) primarily comprised of poor Southern whites from Appalachia; the Puerto Rican Young Lords Organizations (YLO); and Rising Up Angry (RUA) composed of working-class whites from Chicago's North Side. The significance of the Rainbow Coalition is measured not only by its practical achievements, but also in the way it continues to inspire the radical imagination in its "almosts," and ever enduring "what if's?" A mountain of literature on the CBPP, and recently, the feature film *Judas and the Black Messiah*[152] concerning Hampton's life and work as stand as testament of the BPP, CBPP's, and Rainbow's Coalition's continued relevance. As one of the most racially residentially, and politically segregated cities in America during the 1960's – Chicago's historical and political

[150] Ibid., 67.
[151] Reynaldo Anderson, "A Panther Sighting in the Pacific Northwest: The Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party." Essay. In *On the Ground: the Black Panther Party In Communities Across America*. (Jackson, Miss: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2010) 106.
[152] Judas and the Black Messiah

context appeared more a recipe for racial factionalism than the interracial political unity that would become emblematic of its Rainbow Coalition.[153] Jakobi Williams, in his work on the CBPP *From the Bullet to the Ballot,* writes that the key factors which bonded the Rainbow Coalition were "opposition to the [Richard J.] Daley democratic machine's perceived political corruption, police brutality, urban renewal, and gentrification" against which the coalition made efforts to "eradicate political divisiveness centered in racism, to teach communities how to empower themselves via grassroots organizing, and to develop a classless society."[154] Organizations in the Rainbow Coalition all viewed or identified interracial socialization and cultural work as essential to the practice of interracial solidarity, coalition politics, and the development of antiracist consciousness in white communities. As a general practice, "all who joined the coalition were required to educate the masses about the ideology of racial coalitions."[155]

Rather than an extensive historical overview of the Rainbow Coalition as a whole, this chapter examines the white radical groups either participatory in, or related to the Rainbow Coalition; namely Jobs or Income Now (JOIN; JOIN-Community Union), the YPO, and the RUA**.** More specifically, this chapter examines the development of antiracist and radical political consciousness and its practice among the membership of these groups and their larger community. Unlike the previous chapter, the BPP and CBPP will thus largely be discussed in the context of, and relation to these organizations. Amy Sonnie and James Tracy in *Hillbilly Nationalists,* a history on local white radical groups including those aforementioned in the Rainbow Coalition, the October 4th Organization in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and White

[153] Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot,* 126.
[154] Ibid., 126.
[155] Ibid., 153.

Lightning in the Bronx neighborhood in New York City, suggest that there has been an uneven analysis of black-white allyship in scholarship which has given almost singular attention white radical groups of national presence whom primarily consist of college educated, middle and upper-class whites. Furthermore, in studying these organizations, their work seeks to challenge the popular narrative that poor and working-class whites fundamentally present a counter-revolutionary force. As was explored with GROW in chapter two, organizing poor and working class whites both generally and with respect to interracial solidarity and coalition politics present comparatively unique challenges, and with respect to differences in class strata, different conceptions of race and manifestations of white racial attitudes. More importantly, in the examination of these organizations and experiences, perhaps we may draw similarly unique lessons.

JOIN (Jobs or Income Now; JOIN-Community Union)

Described as the SDS's "only major success in white community organizing in the country," JOIN in Chicago, Illinois began as part of the Economic Research Action Project (ERAP) launched in 1963 by the SDS - influenced by the grassroots organizing efforts of SNCC (and partially by its emphasis on community leadership) - to organize poor urban neighborhoods to challenge poverty in ultimate effort to build an interracial movement of the poor, as had been discussed by Tom Hayden and Carl Wittman in their paper on the possibilities of multiracial alliance.[156] Similar to GROW, JOIN in Chicago found success in organizing and promoting antiracist consciousness development among poor whites on the basis of mutual economic interests. As Kim Moody, a member of the SDS National Council and director of the ERAP Baltimore project wrote of the ERAP's goals and ideology: "There is no area of organization

[156] Richard Rothstein, "A Short History of ERAP," SDS Bulletin 4 [November 1965], 1.

where the race issue causes more antagonism then in that of the employment. For this reason the necessity of integrating the racial aspects of unemployment into the program is important. Whites must be made to realize that they cannot win their demands at the expense of the negro. Arguments for biracial unity will be most effective if economic in nature, i.e. designed to appeal to the interests of whites." [157] The ERAP project office in Chicago, located next to an unemployment compensation, was the first of a later ten experimental projects conducted in the Summer of 1964. A 1965 report on the ERAP by SDS member Richard Rothstein indicated ERAP organizers were divided between two competing lines of thought. While projects like those in Baltimore and Chicago insisted "social change could come about only by movements which attacked the fundamental issues of issues of our economic structure" - mainly the inability to find jobs for those in need - projects in Newark and Cleveland "felt movements must be built at first around issues which community people saw most relevant, whatever they might be". While the former represented JOIN ideology, the latter would be termed, somewhat derisively by its opponents, GROIN (garbage or income now). [158]

By 1964, the GROIN approach become dominant. In the October of 1964, the Chicago project moved its offices into poverty stricken white Chicago neighborhoods, and by February next year, the Project has become JOIN-Community Union, moving beyond employment to address broader community concerns.[159] JOIN, designed to promote and create class-based coalitions with communities of color began to make headway in this effort through its rent strikes and hosing campaigns conducted in collaboration with organizations such as the Latin American Defense Organization, and The Woodlawn Organization and Kenwood-Oakland

[157] Kim Moody "Organizing Poor Whites" Kim Moody 3
[158] Rothstein, "A Short History of ERAP," SDS Bulletin 4 [November 1965], 1
[159] Ibid. 2,

Organization, representing historically black communities, culminating by mobilizing its membership in support of Martin Luther King's campaign for housing desegregation in 1966.[160] Both *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, the memoir YPO co-founder and JOIN member Hy Thurman, and Sonnie Tracy's *Hillbilly Nationalists* provide a narrative of transformation for the white members of JOIN. Writing on Peggy Terry, a Southern-born white woman, emergent leader in JOIN, and future Vice Presidential candidate alongside Eldridge Cleaver on the PFP ticket, Sonnie and Tracy relate that Terry "is one of hundreds shaped, first by the civil rights movement and, second, by deliberate local organizing that engaged working-class whites in the New Left through the prism of their own experience."[161]

Working in close proximity with other races on the basis of mutual interest - or interracial socialization as has been defined in this thesis - proved effective, providing attitude-changing experiences for antiracist consciousness development. In their chapter on JOIN, Sonnie and Tracy reflect on the influential role of JOIN's black members Dovie Coleman and Dovie Thurman (known as the Dovies) in the development of antiracist consciousness among white members of the organization. "For better or worse," they opine, "these personal relationships often went the furthest in changing people's minds," observable in the testimonies of white members Virginia Bowers and Bobby Joe Wright whom acknowledge the impact direct exposure to Black and Latino people, culture, and coalition politics had on their development.[162] Bowers, a recent arrival to Chicago, related how it was the first time she saw blacks and whites living and working together, and that, until then "she didn't know what prejudice was". Similarly, eighteen year-old Wright recalled how the Dovies and his new friendship with local black youth cemented

[160] Hillbilly Nationalists 42-43
[161] Amy Sonnie and James Donald Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists: Urban Race Rebels, and Black Power: the Rise of Community Organizing in America*. (New York: Melville House, 2011) 14.
[162] Ibid., 40

his growing repulsion at racial violence, stating "I started findin out all these things about black people bein' really fucked over for so many years, you know, and I also started findin' out about my own people bein' fucked over as much as they was, and like it changed my whole view about things."[163]

Present during Carmichael's call for Black Power at the March Against Fear, in addition to finding agreement in the call for racial division of labor, of which JOIN already served as a model, Black Power's critique of white liberalism also resonated with Terry who stated "We reached a period in the civil rights movement when Black people felt they weren't being given the respect they should have and I agreed. White liberals ran everything."[164] The white Appalachian community in Uptown met the definition of the lumpenproletariat outlined by the Panthers. Displaced from their traditional homes, many in the community were unemployed, faced extreme levels of poverty, discrimination for their ethnic difference as "rednecks" and "hillbillies" within the city, and experienced frequent abuse from the police.[165] The latter issue led to the formation of the Goodfellows (a predecessor to the YPO), JOIN's de-facto anti-police brutality committee. Described by Sonnie and Tracy as "a cross between a street gang and loose-knit radical social club", the Goodfellows "intended to unite local gangs by turning street youth's attention to the 'real' enemy'" – corrupt politicians, the war and capitalism, and police.[166] "Jobs were a major issue for JOIN, but police brutality was the primary reason for these streetwise to associate with JOIN," writes Hy Thurman, a member of the Goodfellows and later co-founder of

[163] Ibid., 39-40.
[164] Ibid., 53.
[165] For more on the community in Uptown, see Todd Gitlin, and Nanci Hollander. *Uptown: Poor Whites in Chicago*, (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1970). For poverty in the United States, see generally Michael Harrington, *The Other America*, (Macmillan, 1970).
[166] Ibid., 46.

the YPO, "because several of their friends had been murdered, beaten, and jailed by the cops."[167] The issues with white liberals and their elitist attitudes Terry indicated would ultimately cause the December 1967 split between community members of JOIN and the SDS, incensed by the SDS's members - often middle-class whites - having ultimate decision making power and control of organizational resources. In some cases, this meant SDS leadership stood in opposition to community led initiatives such as the refusal of SDS membership in JOIN to support an August 1966 march against the Summerdale police station in protest of police brutality (in collaboration with the Goodfellows). Reportedly, SDS students "sat around a table at a local bar discussing whether community members were aware of the danger they were walking into." Feeling underestimated, they began the march without the students.[168] In another instance, Rennie Davis, an SDS leader in Chicago, overruled a community request to organize a rent strike in a building.[169] Much the same for the participation of white volunteers in the Summer project, cultural and class differences proved a fundamental issue difficult for many SDS's activists to overcome. Thurman writes:

> Some community participants felt that some of the students were not allowing community residents control over major decisions that they believed were best for the community. The community felt that some students were more interested in international revolution and the anti-draft movement than the needs of the community, or that they were there for an adventure and unwilling to make a commitment for the long haul…Community members believed that the students organizers had the luxury of building a counterculture movement, and whenever they decided could fit in with mainstream society. The community organizers were attempting to get the students to understand that poor community residents have been rejected by mainstream society. In addition, most Uptown people had not been exposed to the radical left movement, and did not understand what the movement was trying to accomplish.[170]

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[167] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly: Notes from the Struggle on the Edge of the Rainbow*, (Berkeley, CA: Regent Press, 2020), 69.
[168] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,* 49.
[169] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, 67.
[170] Ibid., 67-78.

In agreement with Thurman, Rothstein offers an organizational self-criticism on the attitudes of SDS organizers in poor communities:

> To many, the very existence of the organizer had paternalistic implications. Why would an organizer be there if he didn't assume that he was better than the ghetto residents, had some superior knowledge about a movement which he was imposing (by fact of superior articulateness) on the innocent, unknowing ghetto residents…For one thing, ERAP organizers in the beginning did *not* know to relate honestly to poor people. Cultural differences were too great to be easily overcome; middle class students, despite the best of intentions, carried condescending attitudes with them into the ghetto. Thus, although organizers could argue with each other into the night, persuading, cajoling, reasoning, the common assumptions were not present to allow similar experiences to take place with the poor. Any attempt to persuade a man on his back porch took on a psychological implication of 'manipulation.' And until those cultural differences were overcome and mutual respect could exist between organizer and resident as human beings, persuasion would be manipulative.[171]

The issue of self-determination remains evident along both racial and class lines with respect to power and relationship dynamics with white liberals. Thurman offers a critique of "An Interracial Movement of the Poor", in which Hayden and Wittman wrote of poor communities that "seeing themselves to blame for their situation, they rule out the possibility that they might be qualified to govern themselves and their organizations. Besides fear, it is their sense of inadequacy and embarrassment which destroys the possibility of revolt." [172] What this position "failed to understand" writes Thurman, "is that poor people are expendable to their oppressor and that his statement perpetuates the belief the oppressor is their superior." He continues "In reality, the oppressed see the oppressor as being a lower form of human being and therefore not their superior, at least among the poor and working classes."[173] In December 1967, JOIN leaders would publish an article "Take a Step Into America," which "cautioned activists to expect some culture shock and assume a period of learning from the community" reminiscent of Bruce

[171] Rothstein, "A Brief History of the ERAP," 2. Emphasis in original.
[172] Tom Hayden and Carl Wittman, "An Interracial Movement of the Poor," 1963.
[173] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly,* 44

Maxwell's outline for the White Folks Project.[174] In the case of GROW, Zellner organizing in Laurel, Mississippi, certainly benefited from his Southern heritage, hailing from Alabama. That the Uptown community would in the future form a relationship with other racial groups who organized from a similar perspective and class base is understandable. As Seale said, quoted in the previous chapter, "the organizations of the lumpen proletariat are the ones we can relate to."[175] Notably, both Thurman and Terry would express regret in JOIN's decision to split from SDS. Terry would describe it "as the worst political mistake of my life," while Thurman stated perhaps "more debate on how their exodus would leave the community vulnerable was needed."[176] A lack of funds, a reduced infrastructure, and needed numbers at protests and events SDS members provided would presage JOIN's eventually collapse as an organization.

After their split from SDS, JOIN, organized the National Community Union (NCU), an effort to bring poor factory workers across the US together. In 1968, in the midst the BPP and PFP alliance, the NCU would put Terry forward as Cleaver's Vice Presidential running mate after failing to secure either Carl Oglebay or Jerry Rubin, Cleaver's initial choices. Focusing on challenging segregationist Governor of Alabama George Wallace's presidential run, Terry campaigned in Iowa and Kentucky.[177] Thurman writes:

> Cleaver and Terry attempted to educate the public that there was little difference in living conditions of poor whites and poor Blacks, and they need to use this commonality to unite and organize with each other. They did not win the election, or personally confront George Wallace, but they did manage to spread the idea that Blacks and whites could unite for freedom. The campaign proved that Blacks and poor whites could overcome their divisions by years of segregation, and that the baton of racism and hate does not have to be handed on to future generations.[178]

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[174] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,* 55.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly,* 71.
[177] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,* 62-63.
[178] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly,* 73.

However, as Sonnie and Tracy note, her "goal of inspiring poor whites outside of Uptown proved more difficult than she anticipated," and Terry "doubted whether working-class whites or even the PFP's liberal white membership understood her message."[179] The issue of taking a locally successful project of organizing poor whites against racism would be an issue faced by the Young Patriots Organization in in their split into the Patriot's Party, explored in the following section. However, "Perhaps JOIN's biggest legacy is the number of organizers that," write Sonnie and Tracy, "through their shared experience, became lifelong radicals." In 1968, Terry, as editor of Firing Line, JOIN's newsletter turned newspaper, would express a sentiment that would inform the relationship between the YPO, the Uptown community, and CBPP in advance of the Rainbow Coalition in the midst of JOIN's participation in the SCLC led Poor People's Campaign:

> We see the upcoming Poor People's Campaign in Washington as an important and logical step forward, as an opportunity for developing unity among the poor of all races and groups, this common perspective as vital and historically necessary. We of JOIN Community Union understand now that freedom and human dignity cannot be won for poor whites unless and until it is won for all exploited peoples. Organizing for change in a poor white area, to find new and better ways to run our country, is what JOIN Community Union is all about in Uptown, Chicago, Illinois.[180]

Young Patriots Organization (YPO) and Rising Up Angry (RUA)

Founded in 1968 following the dissolution of JOIN, the YPO immediately set to work organizing the Uptown community. According to all accounts, the BPP and YPO's relationship began by accident. Bob Lee, Field Secretary of the CBPP, was invited to speak at the Church of the Three Crosses on the near northside, where the YPO had also been invited to speak about police brutality. The mutual presence of LEE & the YPO members was due to a mistake in programming. Speaking on similar issues, each organization found resonance in the other's

[179] Ibid., 63.
[180] Peggy Terry, "Organizing Poor Whites in Uptown, Chicago: A History of Join Community Union," 1968, 3-4.

experience and parallel dilemmas. Eager to establish a relationship with Uptown residents but concerned with the influence the Ku-Klux Klan and neo-Nazi held in the community, the YPO agreed to prepare for the CBPP's introduction to the community.[181] In forging the relationship between the YPO, Uptown residents and BPP, Lee reportedly *"*spent his first three weeks breaking bread with folk in Uptown, without telling Chairman Fred Hampton", and "chipping away at people's ignorance one home-cooked meal at time," spending necessary time in a period of learning to understanding the needs and culture of the Uptown community.[182]

The following Fall 1968 CBPP meeting with the Uptown community was famously captured in Howard Alk's documentary *American Revolution II,* where Lee offered support for the Uptown community and the YPO attempted to relax tensions, defending the presence of the BPP in community by reasoning to attendees that a relationship with the Panthers would aide in the common issues of police brutality, poverty, and housing.[183] Ultimately, Thurman writes, "The success of the meeting was one of unity. Most residents had looked upon the Panthers with suspicion, but that changed after hearing that the same conditions of poverty, police brutality, slum living, class hatred existed in the Black and Hispanic community. The meeting had broken down crucial racial barriers in Uptown." [184]

After the YPO officially joined the Rainbow Coalition, in addition to their own experiences, they began to take inspiration from the ideology and programs of the BPP, creating an 11-point program, a free health clinic (administered by poor white, mostly southern immigrants), and a free breakfast program. The new membership of whites in the coalition,

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[181] Jakobi Williams. *From the Bullet to the Ballot: the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 132-133.
[182] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists*,77.
[183] Howard Alk, *American Revolution II*, 1969. Notably, American Revolution II would be banned in every movie theatre in Chicago by the Daley administration.
[184] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, 143.

however, exposed racial tensions within each group, as both the YLO and BPP lost members when the coalition was announced. As Sonnie and Tracy relate, some "questioned whether an alliance with the Patriots so soon would compromise the organizations [BPP] nascent sovereignty."[185] Released in April 1969, Bobby Seale expressed concerns about the Panthers he saw in *American Revolution II* advocating violence against white people, stating "These were the expressions of nonmembers or new members who hadn't learned of the party's guiding philosophy."[186] The decision of the BPP and YLO to collaborate with the YPO saw a loss of membership in all three organizations. According to Thurman, "The leadership of both the Black Panthers and the Young Lords believed that the purge was necessary and beneficial to them, because both organizations had moved from using differences and conflict with other racial, ethnic and minority groups, to one class struggle."[187] In the Rainbow Coalition, the YPO would express solidarity through their presence of coalition members events and protests, and serving as security for a Black Panther rally at Chicago's band shell in Grant Park and at the United Front Against Fascism in Oakland, California.[188] Additionally, in collaboration with the BPP, the YPO would form would form the People's Coalition of Poor People which attempted to unite residents against those described as slumlords.[189]

Important to this thesis is the ideology and approach the YPO took in organizing, promoting antiracism, and developing radical consciousness in the Uptown community. Aiming to avoid the over intellectualization they saw negatively impacting the efforts of the New Left,

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[185] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,*79.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, 144.
[188] Ibid., 147.
[189] Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot*, 135.

the YPO sought to organize the Uptown community starting from the basis of shared cultural heritage and lived conditions, building a community based movement. Thurman writes:

> The idea of a revolution was different for us than it was for college students. The language used by students and other activists was not familiar to us. They would use technical terms like petite bourgeoisie, proletariat, indigenous, oligarchy, misogynist and others. It is not that we could not educate ourselves, we did. Oftentimes, after a conversation we would scratch our head and ask, "What the fuck did they say?" We had to do it our own way. Any organizing had to directly come from our own understanding of the situation, and not from outside political activists. Our revolution had to start locally with the residents of Uptown. As most of us did not know much about the national movement, we wanted the revolution to be community based…We understood that many people that we wanted to communicate our ideas to were not politically illiterate, but ad their own view of the political process…Our philosophy was that we could organize poor white and working-class people, because we were poor, white and working class.[190]

In *Hillbilly Nationalists,* Sonnie and Tracy note how the YPO's avowal of its Southern heritage served as a tool for recruitment and raising consciousness in Uptown: "Despite the vagueness of their positions, the Patriots' message might be one of the few times in U.S. history that anyone uttered the phrase 'White Power' as a rallying cry for racial justice. The Patriot's early leaflets highlighted the phrase on the cover to capture attention…'The South Will Rise again,' read one of their early manifestos, accompanied by the caveat, "Only this time in solidarity with our oppressed brothers and sisters."[191] The YPO's use of phrases traditionally used to organize white nationalists and supremacists gives weight to Hughey's "hegemonic whiteness" and the similarities white communities use in their racial construction. Given the similarities, Williams' observation that "Uptown was a prime recruiting zone for white supremacists" and, YPO's belief that Uptown also held potential for radical and antiracist organizing are thus both true simultaneously.[192] Though the use of "White Power", a phrase officially supported by the BPP (though not greeted with popular support or widespread use on

[190] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, 125; 126-127.
[191] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,*74.
[192] Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot*, 132.

the Left), "The South Will Rise Again", and the Confederate flag remains debatable, their use merits deeper consideration and analysis. In their organizing, the YPO found alignment to radical politics through the lens and reinterpretation of a Southern tradition of rebellion against government tyranny. Naturally, organizing their community on the basis of their Southern heritage – inseparable from associations with privilege racism, slavery, and death for people of color – presented challenges to their relationship with the YLO and BPP. The YPO's contemporary notoriety is doubtlessly owed to the use of the confederate flag as a symbol for the organization, at which members of YLO and BPP bristled and questioned. However, of equal relevance to the Confederate flag's serving as symbol for the organization, is the YPO's eventual renunciation of its use. Thurman notes:

> Also, the Young Patriots saw the need to address the Confederate Flag, which was worn by many Patriot Party members because the Young Patriots in Chicago had discontinued its use. We had grown in our knowledge of the civil war, and it had become clear to us that the South was the counterrevolutionary and reactionary side in the conflict. In our view, there was no justification for any revolutionary group using a symbol of racists. The flag represented a system of slavocracy, which not only perpetuated the slavery of Blacks, but also the powerlessness of poor whites, to further racial and class hatred. We believed that the so called "rebel" flag continued to offend our Black brothers and sisters, because it was a symbol of hate from a period in history in which they were nothing more than private property to be bought and sold.[193]

This demonstrates that the YPO, through its relationship with other organizations in the Rainbow Coalition, began in some form, to identify and understanding their historical role in the maintenance and enforcement of white supremacy in the United States while managing to navigate, grow, and draw meaningfully from their own history and ethnic difference as a Southern community, rather than reinterpret their entire history uncritically. While the strength of the Rainbow Coalition, if not its very existence, has been attributed to class solidarity in literature, and identified as a code word for "class solidarity" by its membership, the strength of

[193] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, 166-167.

relationships between organizations and communities were also forged on the basis of commonalities in the political history of their race and ethnicities. Thurman notes the YPO:

> We believed that the Appalachian states were, much like Puerto Rico, treated like a colony in the United States. The US government had neglected sharing its wealth and resources with people who were only recognized as resources to be exploited by the coal and textile industry, military recruitment, and a forgotten people by politicians. Since there was not much taxable wealth due to low wages, major resources to help the people out of poverty was given to other wealthier states. People were left to scratch out a living by any means possible and were reduced to low level servitude. This was the message that the Young Patriots would use as an organizing tool. We would explain how these conditions in Chicago and nationally kept poor Southern whites in poverty by being denied proper healthcare, job training, and employment assistance. They were stereotypes as being backwards and treated by the majority of the population as a separate entity of the United States, as was brought to light by Michel Harrington's book, *The Other America*.[194]

Though the comparison and equivalency between Appalachia and Puerto Rico as colonies is inexact and not an argument made in this thesis, it demonstrates the ways in which both class and ethnicity were used as an organizing tool for class and antiracist solidarity made possible by consideration of the lived conditions and political history of the Uptown community and Appalachia. It can also be argued that through this comparison and understanding, the YPO were able to reconcile their otherwise contradictory place as white people within capitalist exploitation and colonial model explored in the previous chapter. Notably, by accounting for ethnicity in their organizing efforts, the YPO were able to find potential for antiracist multiracial organizing through empathetic understanding in ways which were not considered by others in the mainstream left who largely disavowed the complexity of the white racial identity. Similar to the YPO, in *From the Bullet to the Ballot*, Williams observes how the RUA located and appealed to ethnic identity traditionally subsumed under whiteness to introduce and promote antiracism and leftist politics. The RUA, however, formed by ex-JOIN members in the aftermath of Hampton's

[194] Ibid., 120-121.

assassination, instead of organizing poor Southern whites like the YPO, RUA instead aimed to build an organization consisting of the working class youth who did not see themselves as poor, or share the Southern heritage of the community in Uptown.[195] Sonnie and Tracy write of RUA member Paul Wozniak, "As it had been for new radicals in JOIN Community Union and the Young Patriots, the moral and political demands of Black Liberation supplied the catalyst the called Paul Wozniak to activism."[196] Like the Panthers, RUA adopted community service programs including legal and medical aid, sex and drug education, a daycare and sensitivity groups.[197] Though the RUA has received less scholarly attention than JOIN or the YPO, but analysis of their anti-racist organizing practices still prove informative.

> RUA also used its newspaper to appeal to the sentiments of white ethnics. For instance, Chicago has long had a large and vibrant Irish community. RUA wrote articles on Ireland's independence campaigns and people like James Connolly, who in the early 1900s led Ireland's workers against the British for freedom. Fully aware that older Irish Chicagoans would identify Connolly as a revolutionary people's hero, the group evoked his actions to relate Ireland's struggle to Chicago's racial coalition movement. RUA focused on this approach to appeal to the city's white ethnic communities. Although it is unclear if these efforts influenced older Irish Chicagoans, the method resonated with the younger generations.[198]

The use of print media by the YPO and RUA has also been explored by Jeff Tischauser in his article *"*That Applies to My People Too". Tischauser identifies three themes in YPO and RUA newspaper, the *New Patriot* (NP) and *Rising Up Angry*, which aided in sustaining the militancy and radicalism of counter-hegemonic identity and values, identifying the role of white individuals in systems of oppression, and the development of antiracist radical political consciousness through use of media as a medium to critically interpret and racialize the meaning of their white racial identity. These themes include (1) white revolutionary role models –

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[195] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,* 103.
[196] Ibid., 105.
[197] Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot,* 157.
[198] Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot,* 153-154.

highlighting white revolutionary activists such as Helen Keller, John Brown, and Eugene Debs and the role in challenging slavery, racism, capitalism, and corruption; (2) shared experience as working class and poor whites - exploring how capitalism and white racism mutually reinforces their segregation; and (3) revolutionary friendship - sustaining the radicalism of counter-hegemonic identities and values by identifying the actions and attitudes of white allies in the Rainbow Coalition. Tischauser further breaks down "revolutionary friendship" into three sub-themes: (1) Liberate minds and bodies; (2) Liberate Turf; (3) Liberate communities. Tischauser also identifies what the RUA and YPO conceived as the challenges to building intra- and inter-racial relationships presented in three dominant themes: (1) Stigmatized bodies - the stigma attached to people of color and poor whites as untrustworthy, criminals and drug users by society used to rationalize violence against other groups and individualize their oppression; (2) Reactionary attitudes of communities – the need to deal with male chauvinism, take direction action against reactionaries, and encouraging empathy through storytelling; (3) Building a shared vision – citing that a lack of knowledge on revolutionary rhetoric limits the ability of white individuals to come closer together, to create a shared language, and a way to think about the future.[199] In his analysis, Tischauser concludes:

> As shown in this study, when white individuals organized Rising up Angry and the Young Patriots they were influenced by the social justice movements occurring around them and took steps to critically interpret and racialize the meaning of their white racial identity. The newspapers reimagined a white racial identity grounded in class, and in doing so, marked the oppressive nature of whiteness and the revolutionary potential of their material circumstance as a raced group. This identity informed a critical consciousness that opened lines of inquiry into the nature of oppression, corruption, and poverty, and positioned the white press of the Rainbow Coalition as insiders to poor white communities. The RUA and NP not only show how to represent their allyship effectively, but also how to imagine a *counter*-hegemonic whiteness, one that represents

[199] Jeff Tischauser, "That Apples to My People Too": A Discourse Analysis of the Radical White Press in the Original Rainbow Coalition, (Democratic Communiqué, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2019) 17-24.

> pride in a shared tradition of opposing systems of oppression by highlighting their own conditions of un-freedom.[200]

The YPO also engaged in cultural, interracial socialization work through the medium of the Uptown People's Northeastern University Center, which opened in June 1969 as a part of Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). Thurman relays that the purpose of the center "was to foster understanding of all racial, ethnic and minority groups", with the goals and courses of the center created with student and community input. For students to receive five credits per course, it was required they perform fieldwork with outside groups of their choice that differed from their own culture and nationality. According to Thurman, the participation of these students were reportedly welcomed by organizations such as the American Indian Center, Native American Committee, Japanese Service Committee, Latino Institute, and Hull House Association.[201] It is also to be observed that in the case of the YPO and BPP particularly, their relationship operated in a manner similar to the way Zellner suggested. In addition to taking inspiration from the BPP in adopting a 11 point platform and community service programs, the YPO also organized in "conjunction" with the BPP in ways beyond joint political action, learning from the experiences of the CBPP. Williams relates, for example, that *"*After a meeting in the fall of 1968, Lee announced that the BPP was in the process of training YPO members in how to set up a free breakfast for children program and other community service projects to assist and organize Uptown occupants."[202] Reflecting on this training, Thurman states: "Bob Lee gave us a lot of guidance on how to adapt their Survival Programs to our community."[203] Notably, though the YPO originally formed along (predominately male) white racial lines, this was a more a natural

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[200] Ibid., 24.
[201] Ibid., 91-92.
[202] Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot*, 133.
[203] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, 137.

consequence of their community demographics and shared ethnic background, rather than operating from a principle of white racial exclusivity that had been the express positions of organizations on the New Left. The YPO developed into a more multiracial group over time due to both an evolving ideology (more broadly community based instead of exclusively ethnic and racial) and social realities (changing racial demographics). After the YPO began organizing with the CBPP, they steadily included more ethnicities and races into the organization including Spanish, Irish, Italian, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and African American, in recognition and reflective of their effort to better represent *the entirety* of the larger Uptown community.[204] The RUA, however, engaged in cultural work more directly. Aiming to building racial and class solidarity through sharing agendas, and identify commonalities between communities during their events, RUA organized regular Peoples Dance's "mixing rock and roll, blues, and radical politics", a People's Celebration on July 4th, 1969, and formed the group Cooperative Energy Supply which "put on mega dances with food, poetry, theatre, and rock and roll", attracting a diverse group of Chicago youth from various neighborhoods.[205] Similarly, RUA also held "Peoples Tribunal's", were mock trials against notorious slumlords with buildings across the city to build common cause among multiracial neighborhood groups.[206]

Following Hampton's assassination on December 4th, 1969, a split occurred in the YPO between those who wanted to develop the YPO into a national organization citing the successes found by student and other movements, and those who wanted to remain a community based organization, concerned the groups base in Chicago was not strong enough and making a national effort would weaken the progress that had been made in the community. Ultimately, this

[204] Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot*, 135.
[205] Ibid., 155.
[206] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,* 120.

led to the formation of the Patriot Party with chapters in New York, Washington DC, Oregon, and New Haven, Connecticut.[207] This split also demonstrated ideological differences. Aside from the Patriot Party's continued use of the confederate flag which YPO disavowed, the two groups fundamentally disagreed on the nature of the Rainbow Coalition. Notably, the YPO – despite supporting the Panther program in full - unlike the SDS, PFP and any number of New Left organizations, did not subscribe to the idea of nationally black-led movement, nor, according to Thurman, was such a philosophy ever espoused in the Rainbow Coalition. Instead, there was a "strong understanding that self-determination must remain the main focus in forming the coalition."[208] Thurman writes:

> There were organizational disagreements between the Chicago Young Patriots and the newly formed Patriot Party about who should lead the Rainbow Coalition. In an article in the New York Times, titled "Black Panthers Join Coalition with Puerto Rican and Appalachian Groups," a quote attributed to Defense Captain of the Patriot Party Arthur Turco caused dissent between the Young Patriots Organization and the Patriot Party. The article notes: "Since the Panthers and Young Lords are the best organized of the groups and that the Blacks are the largest oppressed element in American society, Mr. Turco sees the black group as the leaders of the coalition." We felt that Turco's statement went against the original purpose of the Rainbow Coalition, because to allow any group or individual to lead the Coalition would become just another movement organization controlled by a hierarchy.[209]

However, according to Thurman, Sonnie and Tracy, the Patriot Party quickly collapsed. Unlike Chicago, Thurman suggests the Patriot's Party "failed to build a base of community organizations and community leaders, and were attacked by racist groups who did have an established base in the communities."[210] In the case of Washington DC, despite the desires of its members to create community programs in Chicago, in a wave of repression, Sonnie and Tracy

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[207] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, 164-165. For more on the assassination of Fred Hampton, see Jefferey Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther* (Lawrence Hill Books, 2019).
[208] Ibid., 145.
[209] Ibid., 168-169.
[210] Ibid., 170.

write "The Patriots had become 'The Committee to Defend the Panther's" as a series of Panther arrests consumed all their attention and resources.[211] YPO members Raymond Tackett and John Howard returned to their homes in South in an attempt to organize using the Rainbow Politics of Chicago, but were killed for their efforts.[212] The Patriot Party ultimately dissolved following a February 22, 1970 raid on their headquarters, leading to a mass arrest of the entire Patriots central committee.[213]

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS FOR TODAY'S MOVEMENT

> If black survival really is at stake, as black militants are fond of asserting, then black radicals must assume primary responsibility for seeing to it that hostile whites are neutralized and friendly whites are won over to an effective joint struggle. This is not to say that black organizers should begin flooding into white suburbs. Obviously not. It is to say, however, that it is ridiculous to contend that racism and exploitation are the white man's problems. For if racism and exploitation are allowed to continue, it will be the black community as a whole, not sympathetic middle-class white students, which will be the greatest loser. It is thus politically irresponsible to lament that no domestic allies are in sight. The black radical, if *he* is serious, must take it upon himself to search out, and if necessary create, allies for the black liberation struggle.
>
> - Robert Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*

Within the past two decades, history has repeated itself in frightening ways. Similar to the manner backlash towards protest movements of the 60's and 70's signaled a rightward shift in US politics that saw the election of Ronald Reagan, the contemporary Black Freedom Struggle and the presidency of Barrack Obama informed the election of Donald Trump. In each case, consequences followed. Gains were diminished; systems, laws, and institutions designed to offer opportunity and redress, challenge poverty, injustice, and promote equity were dismantled, defunded, or discredited. Racist and counter-revolutionary forces and ideas were galvanized, expressed violently in the open air of the mainstream. In the aftermath of Trump's election, the

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[211] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,* 92.
[212] Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*, 160.
[213] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,* 92.

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reported that the number of hate groups recorded in the US rose to 1,020 from the 954 counted in 2017 – an all-time high – and the number of white nationalist groups grew nearly fifty percent, from 48 to 100.[214] And as white nationalism grew, news often became synonymous with obituary. The attack on Emanuel African Methodist Church in South Carolina, the car attack in Charlottesville, Virginia, the Walmart shooting in El Paso, Texas, to name but a few, and the ongoing state sanctioned violence committed against black and other oppressed communities stand as testimony that despite the sluggish progress achieved over centuries, black lives remain at stake.

These circumstances suggest that even fifty years later, the words of Robert Allen sting of truth. Most importantly, they present a challenge. Allies are required. Not for reasons rooted in the belief or assumption of black dependency on whites, but in the effort of fulfilling the promise and possibility of a pluralistic and multiracial society. In this pursuit, communities building strong interpersonal and working relationships in mutual recognition and respect of each other's self-determination and humanity are a fundamental necessity. However, while the relationships to be formed between blacks and other people of color (not being without their own challenges) and their potential impacts are all but self-evident, the possibilities of forming meaningful collaborative relationships with whites are met with, at best, skepticism and caution, remaining elusive in the radical imagination. The reasons are clear. The scars of history still ache while we tend to fresh wounds.

Certainly, as J. Sakai explores in *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat,* in a society where the black population exists in the minority, the notion that a historically oppressed group should or is able to form effective and sustainable collaborative relationships on the basis

[214] https://www.splcenter.org/news/2019/02/19/hate-groups-reach-record-high

of mutual interest, let alone humanistic altruism with those who are representative of and benefit from white supremacy is seemingly a contradictory if not impossible notion.[215] Historically, positions on white allyship have ranged from unconditional acceptance of white involvement in the Black Freedom Movement to total opposition and separatism. In each case, a dogmatic adherence to a position on this ideological spectrum has often considered requisite to the successful striving for black liberation. It is a testament to the divisiveness of the issue that debates concerning white allyship – it's desirability, role and efficacy – stretches from the earliest slave rebellions and abolitionist movements and endures today with no loss of intensity, significance, or disagreement. Writing the forward to Elbaum's *Revolution in the Air,* Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza reflects on the racial tensions that exist between black and white activists on the Left often to the detriment of perceived shared interests. Garza explains:

> Bernie Sanders had a base that irritated me. "Bernie bros" became a popular nickname to describe Bernie supporters who were white men, generally between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five, who essentially believed that Sanders was the second coming of Jesus. In all seriousness, Bernie bros represented an image that has been plaguing the Left for a long time, particularly as it relates to communities of color – older white men insistent that class must always trump race, that racial discrimination and gender discrimination represent an outdated form of identity politics that would be resolved by improving the economy…An ambivalence on the Left about electoral politics, the lack of a clear approach to electoral organizing and understanding politics not as we want them but instead understanding them and how they function, alongside purity tests that were simply impossible to meet, led to one of the most significant losses for the Left in recent history. A rising tide of resistance, from Occupy Wall Street Efforts to the People's Climate March to Black Lives Matter was met with an equal and opposite reaction in the form of a new kleptomaniac, authoritarian regime that at the time of this writing has already done, significant and, in some cases, irreversible damage.[216]

Considering Garza's perspective, work is required to capitalize on independent political momentum generated by grassroots organizing and the movement at large, centering antiracism

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[215] J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*. (Morningstar Press, 1989).
[216] Elbaum, Max, and Alicia Garza. *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che*. Verso, 2018. xii-xiii.

in the political action and ideology of the Left for effective and meaningful allyship between black-white activists and multiracial coalition politics. And perhaps we are beginning to see the movement take just such a direction. In the final days of May, 2020, when Americans erupted in protest to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the *New York Times* reported that by early June, antiracist literature such as *How to be an Antiracist by* Ibram X. Kendi[217]; *So You Want to Talk About Race*[218] by Ijeoma Oluo; and *White Fragility*[219] by Robin DiAngelo dominated the best-seller lists of online retailers such as Barnes and Nobles and Amazon, in some cases selling out entirely.[220] In accordance with popular demand, antiracist book clubs, conferences, workshops, and literature have flourished, been ravenously consumed, and held political discourse in thrall. The following October, writing for *The Atlantic*, Adam Sewer suggested that surge of support for Black Lives Matter in the aftermath of Floyd's murder presented the United States with its best opportunity in 150 years to remake American society and fulfill its promise as a multiracial democracy.[221] The increasing attention to antiracist theory and practice suggest a more fundamental question gnawing at the root. One debated in public forums, activist meetings, homes, and the gathering places of our communities: "What is the role of whites in today's movement?". Yet, if whites in the United States seem eager to claim the legacy of John Brown, if the advent of this multiracial society is upon us, old contradictions, conflicts, questions and errors abound. The collective exploration of more substantiative questions surrounding black-white allyship and antiracism such as those posed by Dan Berger in *Outlaws of America* are required*:*

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[217] Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be Antiracist* (Vintage, 2020).
[218] Ijeoma Oluo, *So You Want to Talk About Race*, (Basic Books, 2020.)
[219] Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why it's So Hard for White People to Talk About Race* (Allen Lane, 2019).
[220] Elizabeth A Harris, *"People Are Marching Against Racism. They Are Also Reading About It," New York Times*, June 5th, 2020.
[221] Adam Serwer, "The New Reconstruction," *The Atlantic,* Oct. 2020.

> "What does it mean to be a white person opposing racism and imperialism? What does it mean to be born of privilege in a world defined by oppression? How can those with such unearned social benefits work in a way to undermine and ultimately dismantle systems of injustice? What does it mean to be accountable to the world's people today, especially in the absence of a clear global strategy and the presence of insurgent right-wing and fundamentalist elements? What are today's political alternatives to white supremacy and empire?"[222]

Despite old questions and contemporary racial tension in activist spaces, society is changing, however gradually, in positive ways. The increasing attentions and centering of antiracist theory and practice aside, demographic changes in the populations suggest that the possibilities of effective black-white allyship and multiracial coalition politics are perhaps greater than before. The rapid growth of the US bi and multiracial population also suggests the strength of black-white racial dichotomy from which we often base our understanding of race relations wanes as identities overlap and expand, challenging pre-existing concepts of race and identity. At the time of the report, the latest US Census states that youth under 18 consist of nearly 46% of the multiracial population, and more so than previous generations, are likely identify as such, navigating multiple racial and ethnic identities. Within the last decade, those in the black community identifying as multi-racial, for example, have grown 144%, from 1.5 million in 2000, to 3.7 million in 2019. Between 2000 to 2010, the number white and black biracial Americans have more than doubled.[223] The way the bi and multiracial community navigates their identities proves complex, and is becoming an increasingly prominent subject in scholarship. Beyond the double consciousness of W.E.B. DuBois, is the triple consciousness discussed by scholars such Juan Flores and Miriam Jimenez Roman.[224] As Edwina Barvosa-Carter has suggested, multiracial coalition politics are poised to take center stage as the growing

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[222] Berger, *Outlaws of America,* 272;299.

[223] https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/facts-about-the-us-black-population/#population-growth?menuItem=0fd1ca7d-3fdc-4530-befd-f6389b2fa369

[224] Juan Flores & Miriam Jiménez Román (2009) Triple-Consciousness? Approaches to Afro-Latino Culture in the United States, Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies, 4:3, 319-328, DOI: 10.1080/17442220903331662

multiracial and multi-identity population serves as a potential bridge between differing communities in the building of multiracial coalitions and radical alliances.[225] In addition to the expanding multiracial population, cities in the US are becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, even if racial communities remain separated through de-facto segregation.[226]

So why study the Black Power Movement and Black Panther Party? It is because insights and answers are perhaps best discovered through trial and error, triumph and failure – in struggle. As Malcolm X teaches us, "Of all of our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research."[227] Each successive generation benefits from the organizational and intellectual legacy we inherit from our forbearers. The manner in which the BPP, its chapters, and the white radical groups they collaborated with grappled with questions of antiracism, black-white allyship, multiracial coalition politics, and mitigated or overcame interracial tensions for the purposes of fundamental societal change may prove instructive to today's movement. These relationships succeeded and failed in varying degrees, but at all times they were committed to seeking answers in struggle, building the road as they walked. The answers they found may to pave the road head.

Counter-Hegemonic Whiteness in Race and Class

> Because they think they are white, they do not dare confront the ravage and the lie of their history. Because they think they are white, they cannot allow themselves to be tormented by the suspicion that all men are brothers. Because they think they are white, they are looking for, or bombing into existence, stable population, cheerful natives, and cheap labor. Because they think they are white, however vociferous they may be and however multitudinous, they are as speechless as Lot's wife – looking backward, changed into a pillar of salt.
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> -James Baldwin, "On Being White…and Other Lies"

[225] E. Barvosa-Carter, (1999). "Multiple Identity and Coalition Building: How to Identity Differences Within US Enable Radical Alliances Among Us. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 2(2), 111.

[226] https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/articles/2020-01-22/americas-cities-are-becoming-more-diverse-new-analysis-shows

[227] Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots," 1963.

Among the lessons to be drawn from this study are the limitations in monolithic interpretations of whiteness along class and racial lines. The black-white racial dichotomy which often positions whiteness in the United States as homogeneous, has often informed our theoretical and practical considerations of the role of whites in the movement, best practices for black-white allyship, and antiracist consciousness development. The privilege and humanity afforded to whiteness in opposition to people of color is unquestionable, but whiteness as a concept in the movement has often been exclusively limited to the discussion of privilege and the degrees to which antiracist whites fail or succeed to grapple with this privilege properly. However, on both ends of the dichotomy, and the worlds in-between – there exists a multitude of complexities to be factored into our analysis which informs our strategies and tactics**.** In 1984, when James Baldwin wrote "the crisis of leadership in the white community is remarkable - and terrifying - because there is in fact no white community", he spoke to the complexity and troubled construction of whiteness in the United States. As Baldwin notes, before there was what we commonly refer to as a homogenous white population - there were Irish, German, Italian, Jewish, English, Polish, and French communities. That such communities once existed in their fullness, but now fall under the umbrella of homogenous white identity, Baldwin writes, "bears terrifying witness to what happened to everyone who got here, and paid the price for the ticket. The price was to become 'white.' No one was white before he/she came to America. It took generations, and a vast amount of coercion, before this became a white country." [228]

Literature such as *How Jews Became White* by Eric L. Goldstein, and *Are Italians White?* by Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, for example, are among a body of emerging scholarship aligned with Baldwin's observations, and which illuminate the nuanced and often

[228] James, Baldwin and Randall Kenan, "On Being White and Other Lies" in *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 167.

tumultuous construction of race, ethnicity and nationalism in the United States, both generally and with respect to individual ethnic communities, and the consequences of this racial construction for culture, conflict, and solidarity.[229] The understanding we derive and lines we draw from the black-white racial dichotomy rests on unsteady ground. The ongoing struggle demands the complexity of blackness be acknowledged. That, rather than a monochromatic painting, blackness is a mosaic consisting of many shades, each contributing to the whole. The complexity of the white racial identity and its construction however, is often lost or diminished in our discourse, and perhaps, in error, to the detriment of black-white allyship and broader coalition politics. As Goldstein observes, "…if many Jews have ignored the black critique as members of the white elite, so too have African Americans frequently dismissed Jew's protestations that their identities are far more complex and their minority sensibilities more intact than blacks often allow." Goldstein continues: "Significantly, while stressing the black-white dichotomy has traditionally been the tendency of whites who aimed to preserve their own racial self-image, today it is becoming the role of African Americans, who's post-civil rights politics have tended to focus on the assertion of racial identity and have frequently invested them in a clear moral distinction between blacks and whites."[230]

In *Outlaws of America,* Berger relates a political question formed by Bernadine Dohrn, a former leader of the SDS and Weather Underground, concerning the troubled role of whites in the movement: "The dilemma has always been, how do you as white people support the Black freedom movement in the United States in a wholehearted way without appointing the vanguard, without appointing yourself the white equivalent of it? [How do you keep] your own balance,

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[229] For more on the construction of white racial identity in the US see: Allen, Theodore W. *The Invention of the White Race*. London: Verso, 2012.
[230] Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008) 220.

your own mind, your own sense of right and wrong?" [231] The answer to Dohrn's question might be found in another – what does self-determination mean for white communities, and in what way does this self-determination align with people of color? Furthermore, how do white communities practice or uphold this self-determination while ensuring that "keeping one's own mind," is not rooted in historically negative and persisting white racial attitudes examined in this thesis, which diminish the ideology and political programs of people of color? The inherent challenges in this line of thinking are evident. Unquestionably, through willingness or coercion, self-determination for white communities of all strata and ethnicities in the United States has often meant, or was eventually assimilated into the maintenance and enforcement of white supremacy. Whatever revolutionary sentiments have emerged from the white communities in response to (among others) class-based exploitation - radical and antiracist politics, and long term prospects of fundamental social changed have often been compromised or abandoned in favor of the immediate, tangible benefits of white unity and supremacy – a privilege not afforded to people of color. In the case of JOIN for example, Sonnie and Tracy noted that "more than one JOIN member came into the organization railing against uppity Blacks who were looking for a free lunch, then showed signs of changing attitudes before retreating back to the safety of superiority." [232] Must we conclude that all roads to white self-determination ultimately lead to supremacy or its maintenance - or that whiteness as an identity can only exist in a Manichean antithesis to blackness – to humanity – or can it find its place in the greater whole to the benefit of the movement at large?

In the introduction to this thesis, the definitions of allyship which qualified the need for a privileged in-group to work toward the interest of an oppressed or marginalized outgroup were

[231] Berger, *Outlaws of America,* 277-278.
[232] Sonnie and Tracy, *Hillbilly Nationalists,* 39.

challenged. This research again presents the argument that this definition of allyship is one which often proves too narrow. Definitions hold value not only in their explanatory power, but in their operational utility. Such a definition, built upon a strict Manichaeism of white-black, privileged-unprivileged, proves limited in its application. Though faith oscillated among activists on the potential of forming coalitions with poor whites, The Black Power Movement, and the BPP specifically, as examined, made important contributions in demarcating class differences in white communities (in the BPP's case from a Marxist-Leninist analysis; and acknowledging a role for activists of different class strata) while still centering antiracism with beneficial outcomes, despite the challenges observed. This was in contrast to the traditional Marxist-Leninist positions and organizations which minimized racism, and white supremacy by extension, as purely the consequence of class based exploitation of the bourgeoise, and placed revolutionary potential almost exclusively in the working class. As examined in Chapter 3, "The "Black Panther Party and the New Left", in a number of cases, Marxist-Leninist organizations were completely agonistical to centering antiracism, or, additionally, the self-determination of people of color outside traditional interpretations of mutual class struggle. Progressive Labor (PL) condemned it as "anti-working class nationalism", and the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) attacked racial nationalism as "petty bourgeois nationalism".[233] We, perhaps, must go further still in our demarcation of whiteness in terms of both race and class. Rather than viewing whiteness as uniformly homogenous, we must present a greater challenge to the white-black racial dichotomy by asking in our theory and praxis: which white people, with what history, in what community, living in what conditions, and what political climate? As the JOIN, the YPO, and RUA demonstrated, whiteness an identity, where possible, requires acknowledgment and

[233] Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air,* 49; 64.

concrete analysis on the basis of individual difference with respect to ethnicity and class, the role this difference plays in defining perspectives, and the resulting implications for effective allyship and organizing such analysis affords. Within this line of reasoning, it is also proposed there is value, if not necessity in reinterpreting whiteness itself as a mode of being in our theory and praxis. In the article "The Distribution of Whiteness," which discusses the contemporary mode of whiteness as a historical and social construct he Roderick A. Ferguson strikes the heart of the matter.

> Specifically, I argue that the contemporary mode of whiteness represents an antiredistributive discourse par excellence. This mode is different from prior modes of whiteness in that it attempts to forestall redistribution not primarily through the denigration of minority difference, but through its hegemonic affirmation - that is, through an appreciation of diversity *and through the avowal rather than the disavowal of whiteness…*Far from being a national phenomenon, this new mode of whiteness—partially introspective but wholly antiredistributive—is global through and through, having been ushered into being as a response to decolonizing, civil rights, and antiracist movements of the fifties, sixties, and seventies.[234]

In his study of white racial identity, Matthew W. Hughey examines the process of white racial identity formation in the United States through long-term examination of both a white nationalist and white antiracist organization, advancing a framework of "hegemonic whiteness" based on notable similarities in the way two theoretically diametrically opposed organizations understand and construct white identity. "Hegemonic whiteness" suggests white identity formation can be understood as a cultural process in which: "(1) racist, reactionary and essentialist ideologies are used to demarcate inter-racial boundaries, and (2) performances of white racial identity that fail to meet those ideals are marginalized and stigmatized, thereby creating intra-racial distinctions within the category 'white'."[235] Within this framework, three

[234] Roderick A. Ferguson "The Distributions of Whiteness," (American Quarterly 66, no. 4 2014), 1001-1002
[235] Matthew W. Hughey, "The (Dis)similarities of White Racial Identities: The Conceptual Framework of 'Hegemonic whiteness', Ethnic and Racial Studies, 1289 (2010). DOI: 10.1080/01419870903125069

shared aligned ideals are outlined as fundamental to the performance of "proper" white identity: (1) Affection - where the ideal of white emotional expression either was that of a regular display of sadness in regard to the pain of racism, or the exhibition of anger over 'reverse racism'; (2) Consciousness – the ability to see through the 'propaganda' and 'disinformation' of society in order to adopt willingly, and without coercion, a correct understanding of their own whiteness; (3) Simplicity – the ideal white member understanding race and race relations as simple, material observations, to be clouded neither by overly theoretical paradigms nor by lengthy explanations – in the case of the white antiracist organization – severing as a marker of how clearly they understood their own role as an antiracist white person. Across both the antiracist and white nationalist context contexts, Hughey also observes that whiteness was often understood as "normal", ''dull," "plain," 'boring," empty or even "inauthentic". As a 'remedy' to a negative and empty whiteness, members often (1) use social relationships with people of color and/or (2) claim ownership or knowledge of objects and traditions symbolically coded as non-white."[236]

The Young Patriots Organization (YPO) and Rising Up Angry (RUA) prove instructive in this discourse concerning the construction of white racial identity and the theoretical and practical benefits of an anti-hegemonic interpretation of whiteness in the development of antiracist and radical political consciousness, prospects for black-white allyship, and greater multiracial coalition politics. In addition to understanding their role in the movement and relationship with the BPP and YLO and the basis of class based solidarity, the YPO and RUA developed and nurtured radical political and antiracist consciousness among their membership and community – in part – through the lens of their own white ethnic difference, or "avowal" of whiteness. In other words, rather than attempting to "break away" from whiteness and viewing it

[236] Hughey, "The (Dis)similarities of White Racial Identity." 1299.

as an inherently counter-revolutionary identity, the YPO and RUA used appeals to white racial difference as a tool with which to organize instead of perceiving it as an obstacle to overcome**.** While other organizations sought to find and promote revolutionary consciousness in the white working-class - whiteness and racial divisions were generally positioned as a detriment to the development of this revolutionary working-class consciousness (or class solidarity), with white racial identity being a product of class-based exploitation. However, the YPO and RUA attempted to find a better alignment between the two in their theory and praxis.

The YPOs eventual disavowal of the confederate flag after forming relationships with communities of color, for example, demonstrates that the YPO, through its relationship with other organizations in the Rainbow Coalition, began in some form, to "confront the ravage and the lie of their history" to which Baldwin spoke, identifying and understanding their historical role in the maintenance and enforcement of white supremacy in the United States while managing to navigate, grow, and draw meaningfully from their own history and ethnic difference as a Southern community, rather than reinterpreting their entire history uncritically.

The YPO and RUA were able to construct a counter-hegemonic white racial identity in a way which had lasting impacts. It allowed them to organize white communities using tactics and perspectives largely unexplored or disregarded by the mainstream Left to build more concrete working relations with the BPP, YLO and other communities of color on the basis a shared vision of society rooted in class solidarity and in the radical political history located in their ethnic difference. For example, their position that Appalachia existed as colony like Puerto Rico helped define and cement their relationship to the YLO. Notably, the YPO and RUA largely managed to avoid the problems in the construction of white racial identity Hughey identified, avoiding essentialist ideologies and the simple interpretations of whiteness, race and race

relations in the movement; and the self-righteousness and difficulty appealing to low-income and working class communities that plagued the SDS, Weathermen, and JKABC as observed by Berger, Sonnie and Tracy. The value of the YPO's and RUA's strategies, and tactics rooted in their interpretations of whiteness perhaps offers an important lesson for today's movement.

Interracial Socialization, Parrel Movements, Cultural Work, and Attitude Changing Experiences

> Solidarity isn't just a word. It's a process, and sometimes it is an uncomfortable process.
> -Hy Thurman, *Revolutionary Hillbilly*

In today's movement, the popular wisdom of the Black Power Movement concerning racial division of labor remains largely unchallenged. Much has been written about the benefits of this racial division of labor to the black community, but less on its limitations, best practices, and how white activists and organizations could potentially operate under this formation to the detriment of the larger movement. Rather than a closed solution, this issue presents different challenges, and in our search for new strategies and efforts to build upon the legacy of past movements, begs old questions. One stands the most fundamental: Do multiracial organizations, or those formed on strict racial and ethnic divisions of labor lead to better working relationships between differing racial communities, toward what end, and under what circumstances and conditions?

Zellner's position that *"...*it was arguable that black people can be organized as black people without it being a negative formation, but anybody would agree you can't organize most Southern white people as white people and have anything but a racist group," and the thesis presented in "Lessons of Laurel" concerning the need for parallel movements from his organizing experiences in GROW is prescient.[237] In his analysis of the New Communist

[237] Zellner and Curry, *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek,* 297.

Movement, Elbaum would offer a similar charge to Zellner's, questioning the efficacy and functionality of exclusively white organizations in the movement:

> Further, the New Communist Movement took a principled stand against the thesis that it was acceptable for whites to organize exclusively white organizations, which was adopted implicitly by many white veterans of the New Left and groups such as the New American Movement. While often justified as a way of respecting the independence of people of color movements, in practice this view usually served as a rationalization for avoiding the antiracist organizing priorities and internal struggles necessary to build a multiracial organization. Even more backward was the position taken by tendencies like the Weatherman, which went beyond pragmatic adaption to all-white groups to promote the alleged virtues of recruiting whites, as whites, into exclusively white organizations. No matter how militant the rhetoric accompanying this posture (or how sincerely antiracist those who advance it), this view almost invariably ends up (at best) detaching its supporters from the main direction of the antiracist struggle and (at worst) leading them into a set of unsavory relationships with activist of color.[238]

The truth of Elbaum's assertion is perhaps evident in the Panther's relationship with the PFP and SDS examined in Chapter 3, but by all outward appearances contested by the Rainbow Coalition. In Chicago, contrary to what many believed possible, Southern whites organized themselves into antiracist groups in solidarity with Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, and other oppressed communities of color. In their analysis of the Rainbow Coalition, both Williams, and Sonnie and Tracy would ultimately conclude that the strength and major factor contributing to the formation of the coalition lie in the intense segregation which divided communities along strict racial lines, allowing for organizations to develop independent power bases and concepts of self-determination while minimizing organizational conflict for leadership and resources.[239] Under this analysis, the Rainbow Coalition met all the requirements for viable coalitions outlined by Carmichael and Hamilton in *Black Power* (recognition of self-interest; mutual belief of benefit; independent bases of power; identifiable goals). However, while the Rainbow Coalition

[238] Elbaum,. *Revolution in the Air,* 330.
[239] Williams, *From Bullet to the Ballot* 198.

can, and has, been viewed as an argument in favor of racial divisions of labor, there are additional conclusions to draw. Namely, while the coalition may demonstrate the potential of such racial divisions of labor, it perhaps should not be conflated with an argument for white racial exclusivity as an organizing principle – particularly interpretations which call for white activists to remain truly independent in their antiracist organizing work. Furthermore, while racially independent organizations have its efficiencies, these efficiencies do not necessarily imply necessity. The Rainbow Coalition invites us to explore the nuances of white racial exclusivity in organizations, interracial solidarity, and the grater the call for white activists to organize within their own communities. An analysis of JOIN, YPO, RUA, and BPP suggest that in avoiding or minimizing the errors Zellner and Elbaum assert such formations risk, or are doomed to commit, white radical groups benefit from building close interpersonal and working relationships with organizations and communities of color. Though communities and organizations were segregated across racial lines in the Rainbow Coalition, interracial socialization proved to be a central practice of the coalition, and a key factor to its success, sustainability, and potential. In other words, their relationship can be seen as defined less by the racial exclusivity of their organizations, but by the parallel nature of their experiences, ideology, and proximity, both in terms of their community and the grassroots nature of their work. Interracial socialization extends beyond joint political action in activist work. In addition to the three areas of interrelated work of white allies outlined by Carmichael and Hamilton in *Black Power* (educative; organizational; supportive), this research suggests that the Rainbow Coalition reinforces the importance of a fourth area of work – cultural - to be conducted jointly between differing racial communities and organizations organized along racial lines. More plainly, as

Anne Braden suggested in "Organizing Poor Whites," examined in Chapter 2, work which provides opportunities attitude-changing experiences.

In their case study of the relationships between the Black and Hispanic Community in Houston, Texas, "Black Brown Relations and Stereotypes," in addition to intermarriage, shared social class status, and similarity in minority group experiences, Tactho Mindiola Jr., Yolanda Flores Niemann, and Nestor Rodriguez similarly suggest that interracial socialization plays in important role in creating stronger relationships and more effective intergroup exchanges between communities:

> In the absence of data, it is not unreasonable to suggest that persons who frequently attend sports events alongside other ethnic and racial group members may be more accepting of intergroup relations than persons who do not have close intergroup encounters with a similar common purpose. The solidarity that forms in boosterism campaigns or during recreational activities may not itself create common group unity in the larger community, but it certainly provides a familiarity if not an identity with the other that can make further intergroup exchanges easier. Of course, the way recreational events are organized can affect the prospects of intergroup relations.[240]

Organizations in the Rainbow Coalition all viewed or identified interracial socialization and cultural work as essential to the practice of interracial solidarity, coalition politics, and the development of antiracist consciousness in white communities. As a general practice, "all who joined the coalition were required to educate the masses about the ideology of racial coalitions."[241]

These observations concerning the importance of interracial socialization are aligned with those made by Zellner, Carmichael, and Gilbert discussed in this thesis. Arguably, the YPO and RUA faced similar attitude changing experiences to those Carmichael identified in white SNCC workers in the South, under similar conditions (working with blacks in complete equality; being

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[240] Tatcho Mindiola, Yolanda Flores Niemann, and Néstor Rodriguez, *Black-Brown: Relations and Stereotypes*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 124-125.
[241] Williams, From the Bullet to the Ballot, 153.

on the receiving end of white racial hostility; being immersed in expressions of black culture). Moreover, the Rainbow Coalition speaks to the reinterpretation and practice of the "redemptive community" idea in a movement proposing racial division of labor. Nash's assessment that declining faith in the redemptive community idea resulted in lack of time and energy devoted to internal education of new members also merits consideration in the context of the Rainbow Coalition. This racial division of labor was beneficial in that the CBPP could concern themselves less with such an educative task. Instead, as exemplified here, it became the responsibility of white radicals groups to educate their own communities. However, and most importantly, in conjunction with, and through close interpersonal relationships and collaborative work with communities of color.

Directions for Future Research

This research provides insight into historical conceptions and practices of antiracism, black-white allyship, and multiracial coalition politics through an investigation and analysis of allyship ideology and practice during the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement, and the BPP's coalitions and alliances, both nationally, and locally in its examination of white radical groups in the Rainbow Coalition of Solidarity. As this thesis demonstrates, in addition to class-based solidarity, counter-hegemonic interpretations of whiteness along race and class lines, political education, cultural work and interracial socialization, proved impactful in the sustainability and efficacy of black-white allyship, coalition politics, and the development of antiracist and radical political consciousness.

The findings in this study suggest multiple directions for future research. First, additional research is required which investigates the historical and contemporary practices of antiracism, black-white allyship, and multiracial coalition politics between and within local organizations

and communities which can further validate the assertions in the analysis. The flexible approaches taken by localized chapters, groups, and communities in their application of radical ideas with respect to their unique historical, social, political, and economic realities can at times surpass the visionary capacity of national organizations and figures, and minimize errors identified in their practice on a national level. Naturally, popularity of a given ideology, position or practice does not guarantee uniformity in practice. Examples of future research in this area include an analysis of the Rainbow Coalition in Houston, Texas, and the relationship of the Peoples Party II (PPII; predecessor to the Houston BPP) with the white radical group John Brown Revolutionary League (JBRL) and October League (formally known as the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist CP;ML). As noted by Jakobi Williams and Charles E. Jones in their respective works, the Houston Rainbow Coalition shares a direct connection to Chicago's due to Chicago Panther Bob Lee's relocation to Houston in 1970 and influence on the PPII's adoption of multi-racial coalition politics. In addition to an independent investigation of the Houston Rainbow Coalition, a comparative analysis between the Houston and Chicago Rainbow Coalition to identify differences in ideology and practices would prove valuable in deepening our understanding of the role ethnic expressions of whiteness, class, and local realities, play in the sustainability and efficacy of black-white allyship. Towards this aim, Black Lives Matter (BLM) is also a potential area of research. BLM's decentralized organizational structure has often meant its chapters exist with varying ideologies, informing a diversity of strategies and tactics with respect to their community needs and history. In certain cases, this has led to conflict between multiple chapters within the same city who each stake a claim to being the legitimate representative of BLM due to their ideological differences. In Birmingham, Alabama, for

example, the BLM chapter experienced a schism that saw it divided in two, attributed to intergroup differences towards the perceptions of whites and white allyship.[242]

Second, the impact of the Black Power Movement on the expansion of ethnic group expression and its significance to antiracist and radical political organizing remains underexplored. In the context of this thesis, historical and contemporary practices of counter-hegemonic whiteness or white ethnic group expression for the purposes of antiracist and radical political organizing merit further study. Far from a phenomenon unique to the YPO and RUA in Chicago, in today's movement, organizations such as Southern Crossroads and Rednecks for Black Lives (RFBL) continue the legacy of the YPO and SSOC before them through interpreting southern heritage and ethnic whiteness in ways which aid in the development of antiracist and radical political consciousness. Raised in rural Kentucky, Beth Howard, organizing director of Southern Crossroads and originator of the RFBL slogan, identified the need to reclaim the derogatory term "redneck" as one associated with racial solidarity and justice rather than racism and ignorance. Locating the historical origins of the term to the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain in West Virginia where a multiracial group of coal miners fought to unionize - "redneck" originated from the color of the bandanna workers tied to their necks to identify themselves as union members. Similar to the ideology of the YPO, Howard explains how racial divisions have been used and promoted by the wealthy and elite in to diminish and obscure the power and potential of multiracial politics to address shared social ills such as poverty and class-based exploitation.[243] Furthermore, the RFBL have also grappled with the challenges of utilizing

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[242] Mo Barnes, "Why There Is a Beef with Black Lives Matter Activists in Atlanta, Part 1.*"* Rolling Out, 23 Mar. 2018, rollingout.com/2018/03/23/why-there-is-a-beef-with-black-lives-matter-activists-in-atlanta-part-1/.
Greg Garrison, "Black Lives Matter Group Splits: Who Speaks for BLM in Birmingham?" Al, 10 Sept. 2015, www.al.com/living/2015/09/black_lives_matter_group_split.html.

[243] https://fight4thesouth.medium.com/rednecks-for-black-lives-edddd51cf95b

Southern heritage for antiracist organizing in remarkably similar ways to the YPO. In an interview with WBUR, Boston's National Public Radio (NPR) station, Greg Reese, resident of Campton, Kentucky, and founder of the RFBL Facebook group discusses his use and eventual disavowal of the Confederate Flag:

> A lot of people down here never did see [the Confederate flag] as a racist thing, even though it's blaringly racist. We realize that now, a lot of us. Some of us still are in the dark or want to stay in the dark about it. And it was an icon growing up as a child. You saw it everywhere. You knew it stood for rebellion. It stood for you standing up for your rights because we were taught that way. It's so whitewashed. You feel disgust about ever having flown it. There probably were people that saw that that feared me when they saw it.[244]

In addition to discontinuing the use of the Confederate flag, the RFBL endeavored to create a new Southern Pride flag featuring "Confederate bars in the background with a heart handshake of a person of color and a white person". Reese suggests the new flag " represents the South awakening and the new thought process and the new Southern pride that I hope sweeps across, you know, the whole South and even the whole nation." [245] This year, the historical relationship between the YPO, Southern Crossroads and RFBL has grown even more direct. In March, Beth Howard and YPO Co-founder Hy Thurman, leading a new organization, the North Alabama School for Organizers (NASO), held a "fireside chat" discussing how their organizations are building alliances of membership organizations working for collective power and multi-racial alliances among the poor and working class towns across the South, and continued growth of the RFBL movement.

Furthermore, the role of white ethnic group expression in antiracist organizing is not limited to those who identify as Southern or hail from Appalachia. As discussed in the literature review, though the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has caused division between the black and (black

[244] https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/07/27/rednecks-for-black-lives
[245] https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/07/27/rednecks-for-black-lives

and non-black) Jewish community, ethnic and religious expression of the Jewish identity have similarly served to promote antiracism and radical politics. In 2020, in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Adam Garvey, a Jewish teenager, created a graphic of the Star of David inlaid with the words "Tikkun Olam Means Black Lives Matter" to support antiracist protestors, the use of which has experienced increased popularity on social media.[246] Tikkun Olam is a Jewish concept translating to "world repair" from Hebrew, which has come to connote social action for the pursuit of social justice.[247] Explaining the reasons for its creation in the *Jewish Journal*, Garvey stated he "wanted to show solidarity as a Jewish person. Black and Jewish solidarity is super important and I wanted to spread that…I think that Black Lives Matter needs to go beyond the organization in terms of what it means to individual people…Black Lives Matter means just that — that black lives matter. Using the organization's BDS stance to say one doesn't like the entire movement is frankly a cop out way to justify one's silence."[248] Similarly, though Zionism has often been condemned as a supremacist or colonialist project, and in opposition to the goals and ideology of the Black Freedom Movement with respect to common positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, organizations such as Zioness challenge such interpretations. A multiracial Jewish organization, Zioness separates Zionism from the policies and practices of the Israeli government. Identifying Zionism as a progressive value in-line with the self-determination of other communities, Zioness roots its stated opposition to racism, classism, antisemitism, islamophobia, colonialism, white saviorism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and xenophobia in the history, lived experiences, and values of the Jewish people and faith.[249]

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[246] https://forward.com/fast-forward/447751/tikkun-olam-black-lives-matter/
[247] https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tikkun-olam-repairing-the-world/
[248] https://jewishjournal.com/news/316593/16-year-old-creates-tikkun-olam-means-black-lives-matter-line-charity/
[249] https://zioness.org/about-zioness/

Third, in the contemporary movement, it is important to understand the practice and impact of white allyship, interracial socialization, and the development of antiracist and radical political consciousness development in digital spaces such as Twitter and Facebook. Emerging research has highlighted the way BLM has prompted a new generation of whites to examine social privileges, inequity, and oppression tied to whiteness and white supremacy. In an study of implicit and explicit racial attitudes before BLM and during its high points of struggle from 2009-2016, researchers concluded that whites "became less implicitly pro-White during BLM, whereas Blacks showed little change. Regarding explicit attitudes, Whites became less pro-White and Blacks became less pro-Black during BLM, each moving toward an egalitarian "no preference" position. Furthermore, the data suggested that "social movements have the potential to influence implicit and explicit attitudes through a variety of associational and propositional mechanisms, in addition to redefining ingroup identities (e.g., as antiracists of all races), and enhancing feelings of efficacy to collectively ameliorate racism. [250] Research conducted on the rhetorical functions of Twitter during the early stages of the BLM movement noted how activists used Twitter to balance competing aims for social change, such as growing the movement beyond disadvantaged-group members, while preventing appropriation or dilution of their message by advantaged-group 'allies'. The researchers determined that one way of resolving the tension between growing the movement and promoting disadvantaged-group control is by using identity and technology resources to explicitly define (1) how different groups can be movement advocates, and (2) action strategies for social change. [251]

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[250] Sawyer, J., & Gampa, A. (2018*). "Implicit and Explicit Racial Attitudes Changed During Black Lives Matter*." Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 44(7), 1039–1059. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167218757454

[251] Wilkins, D. J., Livingstone, A. G., & Levine, M. (2019). *"Whose tweets? The rhetorical functions of social media use in developing the black lives matter movement."* British Journal of Social Psychology. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12318

Lastly, work remains in the effort to develop a class and racial analysis merging both the class exploitation and colonial models ideological strains of racial stratification the Panther's attempted. As examined in Garza's perspective, the increasingly proclivity of anti-capitalist critiques trends of a lack anti-racist centering merits investigation.

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