

Mississippi) in 1963 for her activism, she gave a rousing speech on behalf of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic National Convention. For Hamer's speech, see <http://americanradioworks.org/features/sayitplain/thamer.html> (accessed February 16, 2009).

31. Open letter from Assata Shakur http://www.handsoffassata.org/content/assata_openletter.html

32. Ibid.

33. http://www.itsabouttime4pp.com/memorial/safiya_bukhari.html

34. Ibid.

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Revolutionary Women, Revolutionary Education *The Black Panther Party's Oakland Community School*

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Pride in myself as a [young] black man . . . and pride for all African-Americans and the revolution we are making together by helping one another. . . . See, when my mommy and daddy were growing up, black people didn't have no educational system to teach *them* that. . . . The job of a revolutionary is to learn and to teach. I try to do that. I've got a lot more learnin' to do.

Kcith Taylor, eleven-year-old OCS student, 1977¹

The Black Panther Party (BPP), a grassroots organization founded in Oakland, California, in 1966, by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, grew from the needs of local African American and poor communities. Throughout its sixteen-year history, the organization addressed and took action against police brutality, hunger, inadequate education, poor health, and unemployment in black and poor communities. Community education, specifically education for young people, was central to its vision. The BPP's original Ten Point Platform and Program emphasized providing an education that, among other things, taught African American and poor people about their true history in the United States (see point 5).² The Oakland Community School became not only a flagship



Teaching as well as culinary facilities, and administrative staff of the Oakland Community School (OCS), 1977. Standing, third from left: Donna Howell. Standing, back row, fifth from left (with eyeglasses): Erica Huggins. Standing, fourth from right: Haven Henderson. Standing, third from right: Carol Granison. Photo: Donald Cunningham, Black Panther Party Photographer.

BPP community program but also a locale for a small but effective group of administrators, educators, and youth who cultivated critical thinking skills to challenge the concept of "uneducable youth." Their efforts established a replicable model for education that was designed to empower whole communities.

The Oakland Community School (OCS) was a ten-year institution that provided an alternative instructional model to Oakland's public education system, a system in a deepening crisis. When the precursor to the OCS, Intercommunal Youth Institute (IYI), opened in 1971, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) student population was 62,000 and had a budget of \$70.37 million. The district's student population was 60 percent black and other students of color, almost half of whom lived in conditions of poverty. At this time Oakland was one of the lowest-scoring school districts in California; it was mired in tensions between the Oakland School Board, parents, and concerned community members who desired

community control of the local schools and a representative voice that counted at the school board meetings. Parents and community members expressed concerns that more money was being spent on administration than on student instruction. Other troubling issues for OUSD included school violence, the use of security guards on school campuses, and the highly contested plan to reduce the number of teachers in the district, resulting in larger class size and high student-teacher ratios.¹

Continuing a Tradition of Radical Educators

In the face of this citywide education crisis, Oakland Community School administrators followed a tradition of revolutionary educators. Historically, African American women have used academic education and "commonsense" experiences to combat social injustice. The activism of BPP women who became the OCS teaching staff and administrators during the 1970s and early 1980s was no less significant than that of women who organized and educated black and poor communities in the nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries. Sojourner Truth, Mary McLeod Bethune, Septima Clark, Ella Baker, and particularly the outspoken and defiant Harriet Tubman and Fannie Lou Hamer were activists and leaders who risked their lives as educators during pivotal historical periods in the early and modern African American freedom struggle. In their resistance to racism and sexism, they embodied a stance of dignity and courage that defeated white and male supremacist attempts to humiliate them and those they served. These powerful nineteenth- and twentieth-century women saw the needs of their communities and stepped forward to initiate change.²

In line with this great tradition of resistance, the OCS administrators saw the dire need for *quality* education and stepped forward to change educational conditions for youth of color. Each administrator was a BPP member at the time she became a school leader; organizing and educating communities, feeding and teaching children in before- and after-school programs, selling BPP newspapers, administering health care, organizing for prisoners' rights, and engaging in voter registration and in local political campaigns. OCS women organized their communities by working with fellow BPP members, actively engaged in coalition politics. In terms of their resistance and the organizing tradition, the educational activism of the women staff of the OCS during the 1970s was revolutionary.

OCS administrators were able to apply lessons from their experience as BPP members to their teaching and community outreach. On

a national level, within the BPP chapters, men and women confronted the violence of racism and sexism in their activism and personal lives. Women throughout the BPP were called upon to coordinate or support community programs because of their skill and inclination, not their femaleness. Many women played dual roles, coordinating a community program and participating in behind-the-scenes Party fund-raising and activities.

Visible Invisibility

BPP and Black Power scholarship has become increasingly popular since the late 1990s, yet the primary emphasis has remained on the charismatic male leadership and analyses of BPP ideological development. Most often these studies focus on Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and Eldridge Cleaver and delve into meanings of revolutionary action, violence, and Black Power. By marginalizing the voices and experiences of women in the BPP, the recent literature also marginalizes the work women did within the BPP's more than forty community survival programs, which were a major draw for many BPP women who embraced the Party's call to "serve the people" in the very basic sense.

Heretofore, male scholars who either have not included rank-and-file, nonleader BPP women, or have not explored the subtleties of BPP women's experiences, have written most BPP and Black liberation movement scholarship. While this literature provides a rich body of scholarship on which to build, minimization of women's roles and experiences relegates BPP women, by default, to a separate category. That approach effectively separates BPP women's femaleness from their lives as revolutionaries. Interestingly, it is females, former Party members and non-Party members alike, who have written most literature on female BPP members, with Tracey Matthews and Angela LeBlanc-Ernest publishing the earliest scholarly analyses highlighting the ways women challenged narrow-minded definitions of their roles in a revolutionary organization. Recently, Robin Spencer has expanded BPP scholarship with her attention to women's work and leadership in the Party.⁴ In that spirit, this essay is a unique collaboration between the lived experience of Huggins, a former BPP member, and LeBlanc-Ernest, a non-Party member and researcher, to shift BPP women to the center of the conversation about the BPP and black revolutionary activism. Through this, we hope to expand and aid in refining and redefining the legacy of the BPP.

Similarly, scholarship on the community programs, a basis of BPP activism especially after 1970, is slowly emerging. "Serving the people" was the Party's goal, and the programs were developed to meet the people's needs. Former Party members' autobiographies and articles in *The Black Panther* (TBP) emphasize the extensive number and significance of the programs, while academic scholarship on the programs, in particular the OCS, has emerged only sporadically within the past ten years. A select few authors have noted women's central roles. JoNina Abrom, a former BPP member, LeBlanc-Ernest, and Charles Jones and Jonathan Gayles have written most directly about the programs and the school. Daniel Perlstein has examined the OCS in a broader context as a comparative analysis with the southern freedom schools. Researchers' recent and increasing focus on recovering details about local BPP chapters, most of which closed after 1972 when the national headquarters centralized operations to Oakland, offers a unique opportunity to explore survival program details and move toward understanding the BPP and women's central roles.⁵

Primary sources during the BPP's sixteen-year history revealed the roles BPP women assumed in the Party in ways that secondary literature has only begun to capture. Party newspaper coverage included both articles authored by women and information about BPP women's experiences. Bobby Seale's *Seize the Time* was the earliest work that publicly noted that women represented a majority of the Party by 1968. As BPP women's numbers increased and they became equal targets of law enforcement, underground press newspaper articles, of which TBP was a part, reveal that the women challenged sexist attitudes both within and outside the BPP. By 1970 Party cofounder Huey Newton had written and published "The Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements," an article supporting the women's and gay liberation movements, stating that sexism and homophobia have no place in the human rights struggle. Only one year later, *Look for Me in the Whirlwind: The Collective Autobiography of the New York 21*, provided Afeni Shakur and Joan Bird the opportunity to share their experiences as BPP women who were moved quickly into leadership positions within the community programs.⁶ At a time in the earliest years when an inordinate number of BPP men were routinely imprisoned and killed by law enforcement, women who were not incarcerated continued the Party's community organizing efforts, especially regarding education. The BPP leadership, whose political stance challenged the "power structure," encouraged women to take on significant roles in its leadership body and in its programs. BPP women learned

communication, administrative, and grassroots organizing skills from hands-on engagement with the community's needs and the systemic oppressive forces.

A historical analysis of the OCS and women's central involvement reveals how the view of community and coalition building through the lenses of gender, race, and class converged to create and sustain an alternative educational institution in the midst of the nationwide urban educational crisis. Therefore, centering the OCS female administrators and their supporters provides a case study in community-building dynamics and reframes the concept of the movement for black political, social, and economic power as not a solely violent or male historical movement.

Exploring these intersections is crucial given that black women have long been positioned at the unique intersection of race, class, and gender. Throughout American history, from slavery forward, many black women have chosen to focus on the uplift of their race. In the face of the violence of institutional racism, this decision in itself was a revolutionary, feminist action. Though women experienced and battled the force of sexism as it appeared in Party work and in intimate relationships, many BPP members, both women and men, were adamant about deconstructing the race, class, and gender socialization of the pre-1960s.

Although BPP women's work was visible within their organization and in the communities they organized between 1967 and 1981, for several reasons BPP women's voices have been relatively silent in published literature. Foremost, with the exception of their BPP newspaper contributions, BPP women did not have time to reflect and write while they were active in the Party. Most Party members worked twenty hours per day, seven days per week. Women's activism was central to Party success. Indeed, women's work in the Party was not separate work. It was seamlessly intertwined with the Party's leadership and activities. Due to the daily trauma women in the BPP experienced from external oppressive forces such as harassment from local law enforcement, shootings, assassinations, arrests, and imprisonment, all of which often caused women to be separated from their children, many privately processed the complexities of being women and mothers, black critical thinkers, and revolutionary activists. It was not until a full decade after the BPP ended and the Oakland Community School was closed that former Party chairman Elaine Brown published her autobiography, noting the central role of women in the organization both as rank and file and as leaders. The time to process and reflect was crucial.⁹

Recovering BPP women's history and lived experience invariably requires consideration of their seeming silence. For instance, Party women, while challenging issues of gender within the organization, did not believe it was necessary to hold this discussion in the public arena. Instead, women worked to dismantle gender inequity from within BPP ranks. Therefore, journalists, scholars, and others interested in the Party were left with a slim body of primary sources, which only underscored the societal tendency to focus on male leadership models, politics, and ideology.

On their own behalf, several former BPP women have written first-person narratives that reveal the intricacies of their experiences. New York BPP member Assata Shakur was the first, publishing while in Cuban exile. Elaine Brown's book *A Taste of Power* soon followed. Charles Jones's groundbreaking anthology, *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*, contains articles by Regina Jennings and JoNina Abreu that focus attention on personal concerns of BPP women and the Party's community programs. Additionally, Abreu, Madalynn Rucker, and Kathleen Cleaver each has reflected on her life as a BPP member committed to community and to combating economic and social injustices in the United States and abroad.¹⁰

Black Power often has been associated with reclaiming black male masculinity in a society that denigrated African Americans. Interestingly, the BPP, with its media-defined male public image, was an institution that in reality forwarded the principle of valuing women in a revolutionary organization. Many male members engaged in the same activities as female members: cooking, caring for children, selling newspapers, and supporting the Party's community survival programs. While there was only one in 1967, by 1977 six women were added to the BPP central committee. Many more were acknowledged as leaders within the Party ranks and the OCS, including Lorene Banks, Asali Dixon, Carol Granison, Veronica Hagopian, Haven Henderson, Donna Howell, Lula Hudson, Adrienne Humphrey, Pamela Ward, Kaye Washington, Jody Weaver, and Tommye Williams. At a time when the women's rights and feminist movements as well as women in organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Communist Party, USA, were confronting the role women would play in their organizations, women in the Black Panther Party defined and affirmed their roles as frontline soldiers in the revolutionary struggle.

This essay focuses on centering BPP women's experiences in order to reflect the reality that women were an anchoring power within the BPP,

whose presence in the membership and the constancy of their work in the community are a testament to revolutionary action. In a society within which African American women daily struggled to speak and be heard, the revolutionary BPP women found a voice and raised it, spoke and were heard.

The Intercommunal Youth Institute (1970-1973)

The OCS emerged out of several earlier BPP educational programs. Members spoke at schools and organized tutorials to combat truancy. BPP activists built political and social momentum by implementing the national Free Breakfast for Schoolchildren programs and Liberation School programs. Most significant was the decision by Party chief of staff David Hilliard and chairman Bobby Seale to withdraw their and other Party members' children from public schools. Hilliard notes that the FBI and teachers harassed the children because of the parents' BPP membership. The outcome was twofold: to provide a safe place for BPP members' children during a time when BPP offices and homes were subject to raids, shoot-outs, bombings, and FBI COINTELPRO surveillance, and to serve as an informal home-based community school.¹¹

In 1970, the BPP's two-house "home school," similar to southern black church schools, soon evolved into a more structured format—the Intercommunal Youth Institute. Brenda Bay, a BPP member from New York with an academic background in education, served as the IYI's director from 1971 to 1973. Unlike a traditional public school, the IYI had minimal enrollment, teaching staff, and BPP supported funding. The enrollment increased from twenty-eight students in 1971 to fifty by the 1973-1974 school year. The twenty-two new students primarily were children of BPP members who had moved to Oakland. As such, some IYI students and instructors lived together twenty-four hours per day to provide the children with the care they needed while their parents organized and maintained BPP community programs. The children ranged in age from 2½ to 12, and there were no traditional grade levels, only group levels based on their academic performance. The ratio of instructional staff to students was 1:10, which provided each child with individualized attention, a feature often absent from public schools.¹²

In line with the Party's political principles, the IYI's initial nonracialist curriculum incorporated community work. The IYI was distinguished by the fact that the students were taught to be politically aware.

The four- to twelve year-olds learned and practiced basic skills, such as math, science, and English. As an example, the students learned writing skills by writing poetry and letters to incarcerated BPP members, by attending trials of BPP members and other political prisoners, by distributing food at BPP-sponsored food giveaways, and by selling BPP newspapers. Over this three year period, the public expression of the institute's purpose evolved from "learning about their slave past and their true role in the present-day society" (1971), to "educate to liberate" (1972), and, finally, to "the youth are our future" (1973). By 1973, the school moved to a larger location to accommodate its growing student population and to have a more visible presence in the Oakland community. Bay expressed the IYI's ultimate mission as trying to "expose the children to a great deal of information and direct experience with the world so they can receive a more realistic view of the world."¹³

Also, unlike traditional public schools, the IYI's operational expenses were covered by a combination of BPP fund-raising efforts and community support. BPP members all worked to raise money to fund and sustain the community programs. Despite its small size and dependence on those nominal funds and volunteerism, from December 1971 on, the IYI offered free tutoring and dance and music classes to the public.¹⁴

BPP leadership's involvement in the 1972 and 1973 municipal elections in Oakland, California, mobilized public support and financial resources for the entire BPP and marked a major shift in the IYI's abilities to serve the broader community. No longer dependent solely on paltry sums that BPP members could raise on their own, the IYI received exposure through the electoral campaigns of BPP cofounder Bobby Seale and minister of information Elaine Brown. Seale's campaign for Oakland mayor and Brown's for city councilwoman were launched with the goal of "seizing control of Oakland and creating a base of revolution in the United States, which goal was served by the Party's electoral efforts." Both Seale and Brown often spoke at local student rallies and conferences prior to the campaign. Although neither Seale nor Brown won the positions they sought, education was a crucial platform cornerstone, and their campaigns garnered support from a cross section of the community: churches, local businessmen, politicians, the American Federation of Teacher's Union, and private donors.¹⁵ Brown, a Philadelphia native and former BPP Southern California chapter member, used her prolific writing and speaking skills to continue the BPP tradition of creating and supporting institutions to address children's educational, health care, cultural, and economic needs.

Simultaneously, she raised awareness of important issues and pressed for broader mobilization. Community support helped the IYI move into a larger building both to accommodate an increasing number of new students and to be a visible presence in the East Oakland community, one of the poorest areas of the city. The variety of initial funding sources for the new building included "Daniel J. Bernstein Foundation, Pacific Change, The Youth Project, The Third World Fund, the Genesis Church and Ecumenical Center and private contributors."⁶ The IYI became the programmatic springboard for what evolved into the Oakland Community School.

The Oakland Community School

The Oakland Community School blossomed because of community outreach and the new location's visibility. While the IYI had grown in outreach by 1973, during 1974, the administrators changed the school's name to the Oakland Community School. The OCS grew in visibility and popularity between 1974 and 1979 not only because of unique inroads with the local community but also because of its innovative approach to education. Youth continued to be taught *how* to think and not *what* to think. The core of student instruction consisted of math, science, language arts (Spanish and English), history, art, physical education, choir, and environmental studies. The student population ranged between 50 and 150 from 1974 to 1979, yet each continued to receive an education tailored to his or her specific needs and learning styles.⁷

Community support for OCS was wide-ranging. The former IYI had a limited outreach: primarily parents who lived nearby, the BPP newspaper readership, and local political organizations. In contrast, the OCS, as a result of Brown's campaign and the growth of community awareness of the school's effective teaching model, was supported by the school districts of Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco. Over the school's lifetime, supporters included politicians, local, national, and international educators who visited, teachers who did their internships there, and interested individuals not affiliated with a particular organization.

The school was appealing also because it was free. Because the administrators knew poor families could not afford to pay for the school's services, the OCS was tuition-free and funded by private donations, grants from local foundations, city and county resources, and the California State Department of Education. All BPP cadres, including the general

membership, the military wing, party leadership and school leadership, raised significant financial support for the school. Parents donated their time and, where possible, personal money. The school's parent-teacher organization planned house parties and other social events, including two radio-athons and numerous community dances and concerts. In addition, community supporters in professional positions often informed the school's administrators or staff about potential funding sources. In turn, the Educational Opportunities Corporation (EOC), the school's nonprofit sponsor, wrote grants and applied for funds.⁸ These actions were essential for the school to remain tuition-free and operational.

OCS administrators had varying backgrounds, but their commitment to education, community, and children united them. Born in Washington, D.C., Ericka Huggins became OCS director beginning in 1973. After majoring in education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, Huggins left in her junior year to find the BPP. She and John Huggins joined the Party's Southern California chapter. A community survival program organizer and mother when John Huggins was murdered at UCLA on January 17, 1969, she moved to New Haven, Connecticut, to be with John's family. Huggins stayed to start a BPP chapter in New Haven, was arrested in 1969, and was charged and tried with Bobby Seale for alleged conspiracy to commit the murder of fellow BPP member Alex Rackley. In 1971, after the declared mistrial in New Haven, Huggins, with her 2½-year-old daughter, moved to Oakland to resume community organizing. She sold newspapers, taught, spoke at rallies, and edited *TBP*; two years later, the central committee appointed Huggins OCS director.⁹

At the helm of OCS with Ericka Huggins was Donna Howell. Howell joined the BPP Massachusetts chapter in August 1969 and served on the Boston chapter's central committee. Primarily, Howell was lead organizer of a BPP free health clinic. After transferring to the Oakland chapter in January 1972, Howell served briefly in the Bay Area BPP's free health clinic, the child development program for preschoolers, and the IYI, under Bay's leadership. Howell's tireless efforts demonstrated her dedication to children and her considerable organizational abilities.¹⁰

With this dedicated leadership, the BPP established the Oakland Community School as a model that could be transferred easily to community control and replicated in cities nationwide. The ultimate goal of Elaine Brown, Huggins, Howell, and others was to mentor community teachers and have them assume the school's operations after a number of years. They had the freedom to develop and sustain this approach because the

school staff was integral to and yet, because of the children, protected from the everyday BPP operations.

The children who were taught at the OCS came from a variety of geographic locations and economic classes. While most children lived with their parents in poverty conditions, several families were middle class. Several students were from other states because their parent(s), who were BPP members, transferred from other national offices to the national headquarters. One example was the Armour family, whose children traveled ahead because the school year began before the parents could leave the BPP Southern California chapter. The children's mother and father, Norma and Al, were part of the L.A. chapter's strength. Norma was a leading member and, later, a member of the BPP central committee.²¹ This variety of student backgrounds made the OCS a welcoming, multifaceted institution.

Students were admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. A student's ethnicity, economic class, learning style, or physical ability was never a criterion for entrance or retention. Demographically, OCS students were approximately 90 percent African American. However, Mexican American, Asian American, biracial, and European-American students were also enrolled. Students were divided into seven groups, each designed for students working on that level, each according to their ability, each according to their need. The student population was roughly 55 percent female and 45 percent male.

The staff was as diverse as the student body. OCS staff was primarily African American, although teachers also were Latina, Asian American, and white, and most were between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-five years. Some were newly trained public school teachers, others seasoned educators hoping to be re-inspired. Although men were not represented in the OCS administration, their leadership roles as head teachers, food service managers, and senior and teen program staff were apparent in the OCS. It was not uncommon to see a male teacher brushing a child's hair or soothing tears. As well, it was common to see female staff making decisions that impacted facility use, programmatic details, and finances. No duty was beyond any person: administrator, BPP and community teaching staff, party member, or volunteer. Whoever had the skill or ability to do it, did.

The administrators paid particular attention to programmatic details. Elaine Brown, FOC board director, created a committee that she encouraged to write a curriculum. The committee included Huggins, Howell, and

Carol Granison, the OCS curriculum director. Later Dr. William Moore, a local educator, also provided input. The curriculum was based in the dialectical teaching method. The BPP had adopted the philosophy of dialectical materialism, which emphasized and encouraged critical thinking skills and local and global awareness. The students learned to ask questions that fostered discussion and ideas. They were taught that no one person holds the "right" answer. They were encouraged to create solutions and implement those solutions together.²²

Although the curriculum had many innovative components, most important was the manner in which it was implemented. Individual instructors were encouraged to tailor the culturally relevant curriculum to meet the specific learning styles of each student and the instructors' own teaching style. The curriculum was culturally relevant and fostered critical thinking skills. The curriculum's multilevel flexibility was essential for student success. Granison, a BPP member who became both an instructor and a curriculum developer, after spending a year cooking meals for the children in the kitchen, recalled working with a group of students with reading difficulties. Curriculum and community combined to solve the problem when a special education consultant visited the school specifically to make an offer to help assess any student with reading and/or cognitive difficulties. These children were tested and determined to have different learning styles. Consequently, the plan for their individual learning was adjusted, as was the instructor's teaching strategy.²³

The OCS nurtured its many students by providing formal and informal outlets for their physical, emotional, social, creative, abstract, and spiritual needs. Physical education, in the form of martial arts and calisthenics, was taught to help students make the link between mind and body. The administrators established an open-door policy for children who needed to talk privately. They encouraged children to ask as many questions as they needed to grasp a concept. The school's remarkable Youth Committee was the formal venue for students to critique faculty, school, and self in an attempt to foster independence, as was the student-generated newsletter. OCS students tutored their peers, hence implementing the essence of the school's "Each One Teach One" philosophy. Students wrote and performed their own plays about socioeconomic and political realities that were both humorous and sobering. In 1979 the school even added a meditation room. Every day after lunch the entire staff and students sat quietly for a few minutes to "honor their own innate greatness."

These and other activities demonstrated the many ways in which children were taught to care for themselves and one another at the school.

Equally important to staff were each child's physical health, cleanliness, and appearance. Donna Howell coordinated the OCS youth's general health care and appearance, overseeing clothing, grooming, nutrition, and doctor visits. This responsibility extended to OCS children living in the children's dormitory. Caretaking was the shared responsibility of male and female members because the administrators had designed the school to function within a collective framework, similar to the BPP. "Weeknights, BPP members who worked in the school served as parents to the BPP children who lived in dormitories," recalled Howell. "Dormitory life was an integral part of how BPP children and staff lived together as a family. The special interconnectedness and sharing that occurred in the BPP extended family life was an integral part of the trademark atmosphere of love, support, and learning that made OCS so special."²⁴

The goal to make the OCS a replicable model led Huggins, Howell, Newton, and Brown to assess staff and volunteer choices carefully, according to the children's needs. Huggins and Howell were responsible for assessing employment qualifications through observation and interviews. Although he was not an official administrator, Huey Newton suggested several staff members based on their caring for children, rapport with children and families, love of humanity, and ability to recognize a need and meet it quickly, as well as their educational background. College education was not a requirement for teaching at OCS, although several teachers came to the school with undergraduate or advanced degrees. Instead, the emphasis was on the quality of education: the combination of staff could achieve. Caring for children and maintaining the school's daily program required a specific kind of educator. Patience and dedication, among other qualities, were essential due to the long hours and direct contact with small children.²⁵

Consequently, the Oakland Community School's reputation attracted educators interested in educating the whole child. The educators represented a mixture of individuals: Black Panther Party members, former Oakland Unified School District teachers, and teachers from other cities, including Berkeley, Richmond, and San Francisco, California, as well as Detroit and Philadelphia. Other volunteers included students from surrounding colleges and universities such as the University of California, Berkeley, San Francisco State University, and Laney College. The instructors and staff were attracted to the OCS because they

enjoyed the environment the school fostered and because they knew that OCS was achieving academic, social, and individual results with its students.²⁶

Their mentors and friends often referred teachers to the school. Rodney Gillead was one such instructor. A New York native, Gillead was referred to the OCS by the late Dr. Asa Hilliard, then dean of education at San Francisco State University and program consultant to the OCS. Dr. Hilliard encouraged Gillead to apply to teach at the OCS because of the program's innovative approach to elementary education. Gillead, who taught K-3 children, became a pillar of the OCS staff. He recently stated that his OCS experience laid the foundation for his current teaching career. Gillead was so committed to the OCS vision that he drove two families of children roundtrip between San Francisco and Oakland daily.²⁷

OCS administrators and staff knew that flexibility was the key to effective functioning, and they demonstrated a range of expertise in academics, programmatic efficiency, and financial management. Individual women, like Norma Armour, Adrienne Humphrey, and Phyllis Jackson, were meticulous about the OCS financial management. Building cleanliness and organization and something as practical as the quality of front-office reception were crucial to the school's image. Therefore, Lorene Banks, the receptionist and school secretary, was someone who represented the community; children and families trusted her. Banks, whose four children attended the school, often kept extra clothes and other items in her office in case children needed them. One former student even recalled that Banks kept extra bus transfers in her desk.²⁸

As educator activists, OCS administrators also modeled justice in the broader community. Director Ericka Huggins's appointment in 1976 as the first black person and woman to serve on the Alameda County Board of Education reflected another way OCS administrators affected preexisting institutions. This board was responsible for Alameda County's special schools (for incarcerated youth) and school programs for students with special needs. Huggins saw this position as an opportunity to "help the board become more responsive to human concerns, and more public in its actions." In particular, the OCS director wanted to infuse a sense of humanity into the board's actions, helping the board to adjust its practices to be more responsive to the ongoing special needs of students. During her tenure on the board, she particularly became interested in improving the living conditions and education for youth in juvenile detention centers.²⁹

By fall 1977, the Oakland school district was in worse condition than during the 1971-1972 academic year. The OUSD, which had increased from 60 percent to 80 percent African American and many other ethnicities, held the lowest scores locally, statewide, and nationally at the elementary grade levels. The second grade reading percentile was 19, and sixth graders were scoring at the 12th percentile in reading and the 16th percentile in math. Such statistics revealed depressing educational options for Oakland youth. To complicate matters, within three months of Oakland Community School receiving its state commendation, teachers in the OUSD went on an eight-day strike for higher pay. The strike resulted in eight days of missed instruction for the district's 52,000 students, who were already doing poorly.²⁰

Unlike California public schools, OCS did not rely on state standardized testing as a tool for structuring and implementing its curriculum and for grade placement. Rather, standardized testing played a very small part in OCS instruction; students were not placed in traditional grades according to age but assigned to levels with various age ranges. Students did not receive letter grades. Instead, their families received carefully written academic and social evaluations, encouraging the child's effort and highlighting areas of needed improvement. In its later years, the OCS had a twofold purpose for administering the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). While the OCS did use some information from CTBS results, the students were tested to satisfy state requirements to receive particular state funding, and to emotionally and academically prepare students for public school testing after OCS graduation. In fact, over time the OCS developed its own assessment tool.²¹

Nevertheless, CTBS test results can be used to make preliminary analyses of OCS and its students. Although the students were not placed in traditional grades, their ages are listed with their test results for November 1977. For example, in level A (the age equivalent of preschool), student ages ranged from 4.8 years to 5.5 years. As testament to the fact that students were placed in levels according to ability, there was one eight-year-old in level A. Also, in level A, a five-year-old student tested in the 95th prereading percentile, and one scored in both the 33rd prereading percentile and the 18th total math percentile. The OCS was supporting preschool students who were achieving at high levels. This group of sixteen students tested on average at the 70th percentile for reading and the 71st percentile for math. Similarly, thirteen level 2 students (aged 8.8 years to 11.5 years—equivalent to fifth and sixth grades) ranged from the 5th to

82nd percentile in total reading and from the 8th to 93rd percentile in total math. On average, level 2 students scored 32.9 percentage points above their OUSD peers in reading and 28 percentage points higher in math. Although the OCS staff did not rely on these scores as determinants of intelligence or "smartness," the statistics reveal, in numerical terms, a level of success that the OCS staff was quietly achieving.²²

The OCS attracted the attention of other educators and community representatives who saw it as an effective educational program for all children regardless of ability, ethnicity, or geographic location. Indeed, the school educated the students so effectively that a waiting list became standard. Parents often wait-listed their unborn children or siblings of students already enrolled. The Oakland and Berkeley Unified School Districts recommended OCS and collaborated with school staff to serve families whose educational needs could not be met by the districts. In August 1977 the California State Department of Education gave its approval to the school as a *model* elementary school, one of the OCS administrators' goals. When William Whiteneck, deputy superintendent of the California State Department of Education, visited, he gave official approval to the school and acknowledged its outstanding contribution to the Oakland and Bay Area communities. This award led to increased public exposure. The OCS was so successful that, by late summer 1977, it formally requested a meeting with OUSD's superintendent, Ruth Love, to explore ways the school and the district's alternative school umbrella could work more closely together. In addition, the possibility of funding the OCS was discussed, although ultimately this request was not approved. This was another instance of OCS administration pursuing an opportunity to infuse its education model into the larger public school structure, a model designed to incorporate the community in meeting the individual needs of each child.²³

While the California Department of Education finally acknowledged the effectiveness of the OCS, parents had always appreciated the school's impact on their children. Indeed, parent participation was a critical component of the school's success. The active parent-teacher association provided a direct link between the OCS and the community. The Parent Advisory Board organized dances and other fund-raisers and also advertised student-sponsored events to community members. Parents were required to participate in their child's schoolwork as well as attend parent meetings and were able to meet with teachers without an appointment. Furthermore, parents were active members of the elected School Advisory

Committee, which included interested community members and OCS instructors. The instructors acted as advisers, particularly "in the areas of curriculum development, classroom activities, field trips and school events." Parents were incorporated into all aspects of school structure and were consistently the best volunteers.³⁴

Some children who attended the Oakland Community School found sanctuary from the stressors of home and community life. A poignant example of the intersection of this sanctuary and the role female administrators played involves two siblings who both attended OCS. One day Huggins, by now a mother of two, returned to her office to find the two children huddled beneath her office desk. Unknown to OCS staff, their mother had abused the children regularly. Huggins comforted them, then summoned the mother to a meeting at the school. Acting in the capacity of a mother, revolutionary educator, counselor, social worker, and youth activist, Huggins counseled the mother, strongly encouraging her to stop abusing the children and seek help. The mother, who admitted she had never been taught how to raise children with compassion for them or herself, did receive help. The mother received counseling to resolve her own anger about being abused as a child. Incidents like this sparked Huggins's realization of the community's need for peer-facilitated discussion groups, which the school initiated.

Another example that reflects the combined roles of the administrators and teachers was their support of OCS youth in valuing themselves and others. As women, the OCS administrators and teaching staff confronted the impact of American beauty standards on girls and boys. On one occasion, an OCS student walked into Huggins's office to ask whether others considered her beautiful. She asked Huggins if she could become beautiful if she were to bleach her head and body hair blonde. Huggins responded by encouraging the student to adopt a personal and global perspective of beauty. She asked the preteen young woman, "Is there beauty in African hair, skin, or eyes?" The student had neither considered her African ancestral heritage to be beautiful nor been given permission to question American beauty standards. This was a life-affirming lesson for both Huggins and the young woman, one that reflected the school motto, "The World Is Our Classroom." The impact of women in leadership was so strong that decades later, former female and male students recall these women as central in educating and inspiring them. A former OCS student stated it directly: "It was the women of the Oakland Community School—like Donna, Jeannette [Keyes] and Carol—who inspired me to be the woman I am today."³⁵

Oakland Community Learning Center

In addition to their work in the school and the BPP, women played many roles in the community. The Oakland Community School had become a landmark community institution by 1974. Yet a school history is incomplete without a discussion of its direct link to the nonprofit Oakland Community Learning Center (OCLC). The center was an umbrella that covered a host of BPP-generated community programs. As the surrounding community's needs were uncovered, BPP leadership, supported by Huggins and Howell, developed programs and used the school's physical space to host them. Such proximity allowed OCS students to reinforce their connections to the community by participating in the programs after school. It was also a way for the BPP women to infuse their revolutionary activism into the academic education.

Joan Kelley, originally from the BPP Southern California chapter, directed the OCLC. This community center sponsored numerous programs: adult education, a teen program, a free film series, self-defense classes, community legal aid, and a community forum for political discussion and action, among others. Seniors Against a Fearful Environment (S.A.F.E.), a BPP-created program that moved into the OCLC, is a powerful example of a community need that linked OCS youth with community elders. Many non-Party OCS children were raised by their grandmothers. Often these elder caretakers needed transportation, advocacy, and protection as they traveled to and from banks, medical appointments, and shopping areas. Although the BPP created S.A.F.E. in 1972, the OCLC became the space to house it. Similarly, the OCLC offered teen programs, dances, and employment opportunities for teen and young adult siblings (and their friends) who longed for programs to broaden their horizons and life options beyond drugs, prostitution, and boredom. Several OCLC-based programs advocated for public housing support and cash assistance for single parents. The BPP's George Jackson People's Health Clinic provided health, dental, and emotional care.³⁶

School staff and administrators also worked in coalition with broader community organizations. In 1979 Pastor J. Alfred Smith, of Allen Temple Baptist Church, held a press conference announcing data that showed the city of Oakland had one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. The African American and Chicano communities experienced 26.3 deaths per 1,000 births. In response, OCS and OCLC leadership summoned community organizations, including the Third World Women's Alliance,

to co-found the Coalition to Fight Infant Mortality, an organization composed of forty-four community groups.³⁷

The model of community connection envisioned by the OCS administrators became so successful that organizations such as the National Association for Alternative Schools invited Huggins to join its ranks, which included progressive educators such as Jonathan Kozol and Herbert Kohl. ReBop, the Boston, Massachusetts, children's television show, featured the Oakland Community School. Kellita Smith, an eight-year-old OCS student, narrated the OCS segment. She was filmed both with her family and at school. She conducted a historic and remarkable interview with Huey Newton. Many social justice organizations in the United States and globally sent representatives who visited and showed interest in the OCS programs and its curriculum, including a Belgian television station and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. Additionally, internationally known visitors and supporters included civil rights activists Rosa Parks and Cesar Chavez, poet Maya Angelou, and author James Baldwin, each of whom admired the OCS as a revolutionary model for education.³⁸ Through these events and activities the school's children became aware of their place in local, national, and international youth communities.³⁹

Despite their many successes, the existence of OCS and OCLC faced external and internal challenges. Local and national law enforcement challenged the school's activities, while the FBI's counterintelligence program remained interested in interrupting the school and its community service component by utilizing print and electronic media to discredit OCS. In 1978, as a result of political and governmental pressures on the Party leadership outside the Oakland Community School and the OCLC, the OCS began to suffer from challenges within, due to personal problems and the Party's dwindling membership and funds.⁴⁰ In the midst of these pressures, staff remained dedicated to the students and the community until the OCS (and the OCLC) officially closed in 1982.

Passing It On

The OCS's dialectical training was so successful that the students' adjustment to the public schools in communities of color was often a difficult one. Both Newton and Huggins were hopeful that OCS graduates would leave the elementary-level institution prepared to enter the public school system and "do well because we've equipped them." Newton continued, "They will be the political organizers of the future. They [will] make

students in the other schools aware." Similarly, in 1974, when noted educator and author Herbert Kohl asked Huggins whether she worried about the children's transition to public school, her main concern was whether the four- to eight-year-olds who had not been exposed to public school would be ready to face future challenges. Huggins was concerned they would encounter teachers unwilling to answer their "why" questions.⁴¹ At such an early stage in the school's development, it was clear to administrators and others that the OCS was training children to have a different worldview.

One such student was Erica Watkins, who attended OCS during the public school equivalent of grades four through six. After attending OCS she enrolled in both Albany Middle and High Schools, small Bay Area schools in a school district known for lower class size and attentive staff. Her OCS education had taught her how critical her voice was in effecting change. Therefore, she questioned her history teacher about using an outdated text with two simplistic chapters on African Americans and Native Americans. When confronted by the principal, Watkins chose suspension instead of compromise. Ultimately, the teacher apologized and asked Watkins to coordinate the school's first Black History celebration, during which she used poetry, songs, and stories learned at the OCS.⁴² Erica had taken revolutionary action for her own and her peers' education.

In spring 2008, Zachary Killoran, another former OCS student, recalled the difficulty of his academic and personal transition from OCS to public school. He transferred to an OUSD school during spring 1981, as a fifth grader. Although he learned calculus and algebra at OCS, in OUSD he was in classes with students learning addition and subtraction and with students "who could barely spell." One of the main things Killoran learned to do in public school was use profanity and fight. Killoran, of bicultural heritage, African American and Irish, recalled that at OCS he was not singled out because of his ethnic background. In contrast, this was the basis of some of his fights in public school. Nevertheless, Killoran always remembers the deeper lessons from OCS that taught him to see himself as part of a broader community, caring for others, what he calls "communal thinking." He further explains: "I don't just take care of me, I take care of my community; anybody who happens to be around me."⁴³ The community-based OCS had accomplished its larger goal: to educate youth to be critical thinkers who, in their own way, would help to transform their world.

NOTES

1. Ken Kelley, "Black Panther, White Lies," *California*, August 1990, 122. Kelley refers to Taylor as Lumumba and, later, as Keith. We determined Taylor's last name by matching dates of Kelley's article with published names of students in issues of *The Black Panther Community News Service* (TBP). Taylor was eleven years old in 1972. "OCS September 1972 Enrollment (Non-Collected) 6-12 years, page 2," box 5, OCS Enrollment, Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation Inc. Collection, M864, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, CA. Throughout the endnotes the authors refer to the original box numbers and folder titles of the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation Records (NFR).
2. "We want an education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else."
3. "We Want Education for Our People," TBP 8/9/72C; "Add Racism to the Three 'R's,'" TBP 10/28/7214; "Part XVI Classroom Crisis: We Need Teachers, Not Executives," TBP 11/9/7216; "Vote for the People's Plan," TBP 4/14/73A-B.
4. Nell Irvin Painter, *Soljourner Truth: A Life, a Symbol* (New York: Norton, 1997); Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York: Black Bay Books, 2002); Audrey Thomas, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York: Black Bay Books, 2002); Barbara Ransby, *Ellie Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).
5. See numerous articles in Charles Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered* (Belmont: Black Classic Press, 1998). Also see such works as Jackson L. Jeffries, *Huey P. Newton: The Radical Theorist* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002); Jeffrey O. G. Chab, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Jackson L. Jeffries, ed., *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Curtis J. Austin, *Up against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2006).
6. See Tracey Matthews, "No One Ever Asks What a Man's Role in the Revolution Is Gender and the Politics of the Black Panther Party," and Angela D. LeBlanc-Ernest, "The Most Qualified Person to Handle the Job: Black Panther Party Women, 1966-1982," both in Jones, *Black Panther Party Reconsidered*; Robin Ceanne Spencer, "Empowering the Black Freedom Struggle: Revolutionary Black Womanhood and the Black Panther Party in the Bay Area, California," *Journal of Women's History* 20 (2008): 90-111.
7. Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (New York: Pantheon, 1992); David Hilliard with Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2001); Flores Alexander, *Forbes, Will You Die with Me? My Life and the Black Panther Party* (New York: Atria Books, 2006); JoNina Aborn, "Serving the People: The Survival Programs of the Black Panther Party," in Jones, *Black Panther Party Reconsidered*; see gender section in Jones; Regina Jennings, "Why I Joined the Party: An African Womanist Reflection," Matthews, "No One Ever Asks What a Man's Role in the Revolution Is"; LeBlanc-Ernest, "The Most Qualified Person to Handle the Job"; Jane Rhodes, "Black Radicalism in 1960s California: Women in the Black Panther Party," in *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000*, ed. Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Daniel Persim, "Minds Stayed on Freedom: Politics and Pedagogy in the African American Freedom Struggle," *American Educational Research Journal* 39 (Summer 2002): 249-277; Charles E. Jones and Jonathan Gayles, "The World Is a Child's Classroom: An Analysis of the Black Panther Party's Oakland Community School," in *Youth, Freedom, and the Black Panther Party*, ed. Charles Payne and Carol Strickland (New York: Teachers College Press, 2008); David Hilliard, ed., *The Black Panther Party: Service to the People Programs* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008); Hilliard, ed., *The Black Panther Intercommunal News Service, 1967-1980* (New York: Atria Books, 2007); Jama Lazerus and Yohuru Williams, eds., *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Jackson L. Jeffries, ed., *Comrades: A Local History of the Black Panther Party* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Yohuru Williams and Jama Lazerus, eds., *Identified Territory: Unsettled Local Perspectives on the Black Panther Party* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).
8. TBP, 1967-1980; Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time: The Story of Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party* (New York: Random House, 1968); Huey P. Newton, "The Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements: August 15, 1970, in *To Die for the People: The Writings of Huey P. Newton* (New York: Writers and Readers, 1995), 152-155; *Look for Me in the White Wind: The Collective Autobiography of the New York 21* (New York: Vintage, 1971).
9. Brown, *Taste of Power*.
10. Assata Shakar, *Assata: An Autobiography* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1987); Brown, *Taste of Power*; Jennings, "Why I Joined the Party"; Aborn, "Serving the People"; Kathleen Cleaver, "Women, Power, and Revolution," in *Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy*, ed. K. Cleaver and George Katsifelis (New York: Routledge, 2001), 123-127; Michel Lynn C. Ruckel and JoNina Aborn, "Comrade Sisters: Two Women of the Black Panther Party," in *Unsettled Race and Gender in Women's Personal Narratives*, ed. C. Etter-Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1996), 129-168; "Voices of Panther Women," conference at the University of California at Berkeley, October 26, 1990.
11. Angela LeBlanc-Ernest, interview with Malik L'Amour, San Francisco, CA August 1996; Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*, 199-201, 208-209.
12. Brenda Bay, correspondence with the authors, October 6, 2008; "We Have to Attend to Our People," TBP 6/12/73; "The World Is Their Classroom," TBP 11/3/73A.
13. "We Have to Attend to Our People," "The World Is Their Classroom."
14. "The People's Community Survival Programs," TBP 10/9/719; TBP 12/11/7112; "Educate to Liberate," TBP 9/30/7214.
15. Elaine Brown, correspondence with authors, October 9, 2008; "Dellums and A.E.T. Undorse Bobby," TBP 5/5/7314; "Alameda Students Welcome Bobby Seale," TBP 2/12/7335.
16. "Youth Institute Opens," TBP 9/13/7316; "Unity Conference Pledges to Support Bobby Seale," TBP 5/5/7334; "Dellums and A.E.T. Undorse Bobby," TBP 5/5/7334; "The Seale-Brown 14 Point Program to Rebuild Oakland," TBP 5/12/734; "Women Organize for People's Candidates," TBP 2/10/7354; "Educational Opportunities Corporation (a Non Profit Corporation) Intercommunal Youth Institute," "Each One Teach One" Youth Club, TBP 10/6/7316.
17. These statistics are from NFR OCS Weekly Reports (OCSWR) and TBP issues.
18. Funding information: Brown, *Taste of Power*; Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*; March 6, 1974, box 14, Directives OCSWR; EOC and EOC-S grant proposals and financial audits, Brown, October 9, 2008.
19. Donald Fred, *Agency in New Haven* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973); Yohuru Williams, *Black Politics/White Power* (New York: Brandwynne Press, 2000).
20. Angela LeBlanc-Ernest, interview with Donna Howell, San Francisco, CA, January 1992; NFR, box 14, Directives, October 20, 1973 and November 7, 1973; Donna Howell, correspondence with the authors, October 7, 2008.
21. Angela LeBlanc-Ernest, interview with Norma Armour, Los Angeles, CA, September 1996.

22. "OCS Instructors Handbook, September 1977," "OCS Instructor's Handbook, September 1979," "OCS Instructor's Handbook, September 1980," NFR.
23. Ericka Huggins, interview with Carol Ganssion, Oakland, CA, October 1, 2007; TBP 2/9/74-4.
24. NFR, box 36, Health Cadre Reports, September 1, 1972; NFR box 10, Central Committee Info., September 27, 1973; NFR, box 14, Directives, October 20, 1973; NFR, Health Cadre Reports, Howell, October 7, 2008.
25. NFR, box 3, Section Progress Reports, Committee Heads and Coordinators Report, September 9, 1972-2.
26. "Youth Institute Teachers Have Great Love and Understanding," TBP 2/9/74-4; OCSWR, 27. Ericka Huggins, interview with Rodney Gilkes, Oakland, CA, September 2007.
28. Adrienne Humphrey, correspondence with the authors, October 11, 2008; Ericka Huggins, interview with Zachary Killoran, Oakland, CA, September 6, 2007.
29. Michael Akeley, *The Montclair*, 1976 (in page); reprinted as "Black Panther Wins Seat on County Board: Ericka Huggins on Board of Education," TBP 5/13/76-6.
30. "Oakland School Test Results Show Serious Lag," TBP 11/19/77-6+.
31. Descriptions of the school's structure are in TBP articles; OCS Instructor's Handbooks; "OCS January Report" to Huey from Ericka, 3/11/78; November 11, 1977, box 4 OCS Weekly Report to Huey from Ericka.
32. CTBS test scores, November 1977.
33. OCS enrollment reports and photographs in the NFR; JoNina Abrom, "Reflections of a Former Oakland Public School Parent," *Black Scholar* 27, no. 2: 15-20; To Ruth Love, from Huey P. Newton, August 20, 1977, box 4 Educational Opportunities Corporation; Brown, October 9, 2008.
34. This information is based on numerous documents found in OCSWR and OCLC memos; OCS Parent Brochure [1980-1981], box 88, Miscellaneous.
35. Ericka Huggins, interview with Ericka Watkins, Berkeley, CA, November 12, 2007.
36. The Black Panther Party, guest editors, *Catvolution Quarterly*, Fall 1974; box 4, OCSWR, "Seniors against a Fearful Environment," TBP 12/16/72-31, "Funds for Senior Safety," TBP 1/13/73-4; OCLC Weekly Reports.
37. "Community Coalition Organizes against Infant Mortality," TBP 1/13-26/84-4.
38. "OCS, Director Ericka Huggins Highlights Chicago Alternative Schools Conference Part 1," TBP 6/16/76-1-15; Part 2, TBP 6/26/76-4-4; Part 3, TBP 7/3/76-4-4; To Huey from Ericka, November 4, 1977, NFR, box 4, OCSWR; information about visitors in TBP issues between 1971 and 1980.
39. To Huey from Ericka, November 4, 1977-2; November 12, 1974; and January 9-15, 1978, NFR, box 4; NFR, box 4, OCSWR; Kellin Smith, correspondence with the authors, October 12, 2008.
40. JoNina Abrom to Huey P. Newton, Correspondence, October 1, 1980, NFR, box 69, no folder title; "A Second Look/Who Got the Money?" *San Francisco Examiner*, August 22, 1985, n.p.; Kate Coleman with Paul Avery, "The Party's Over," *New Times*, July 10, 1978, 22-27; Letters to *New Times* editor by OCS staff and students, box 41; Letters from Institute Students; Joel Dreyfus "Huey in Plaster?" *Black Enterprise*, June 1979, 69; Lance Williams, "State Probes Panther School Funds," TBP 6/29/82-A1+, "School Aide Says He Warned Official of Misused Funds," and "School Official Stepped into Chaotic Conditions," TBP 11/7/82-A1, A4; "Second Look," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 22, 1985, n.p.
41. "We Have to Attend to Our People," TBP 9/21/72-13; "Student's Interests Stressed in Learning Center's Music Program," TBP 2/16/74-4.
42. Watkins interview.
43. Killoran interview; Zachary Killoran, correspondence with the authors, October 9, 2008.

8

Must Revolution Be a Family Affair?

Revisiting The Black Woman

Margo Natalie Crawford

The reason we are in the bag we are in isn't because of my mama, it's because of what they did to my mama.

Stokely Carmichael

Black men, during the 1960s and 1970s black freedom struggles, were very aware of intersectionality, that which Kimberlé Crenshaw defines as the "need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed."¹ Indeed, they insisted on the need to connect manhood and blackness. Their emphasis on black male power often convinced them that the liberation of black men would lead to the liberation of all black people. The black struggle, in this point of view, could not afford to be divided; a black women's movement would allow the dominant power structure to continue to "divide and conquer." This subsuming of black women in the black male struggle becomes particularly troubling when we realize that the intersectionality that overdetermined black male consciousness-raising was not extended to black women. As black women refused to be subsumed in the black male struggle, they began to think about the black family affair in a more critical manner as they confronted the problems of the "brother and sister" rhetoric and the Moynihan paradigm (the larger circulation of the idea of