In December 1966, two Black Panthers, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, aroused excitement in Oakland, California, by “picking up the gun” and patrolling the police. They sought to persuade all who would listen that an initial step to improving black conditions was to legally patrol the police. Thus, the Panthers legally carried weapons. In early 1967, State Assemblyman Mulford introduced a bill into the California State Legislature to outlaw the carrying of loaded firearms. On May 2, 1967, during legislative debate on the bill, Newton replied by issuing Executive Mandate Number One, in which he denounced the vehicles of protest which blacks had used in order to secure redress of their grievances and recognition of their constitutional rights. He noted that “Black people have begged, prayed, petitioned and demonstrated, among other things to get the racist power structure to right the wrongs which have historically been perpetrated against

AUTHOR’S NOTE: *This study was originally commissioned by the Afro-American Arts Institute of Indiana University.*

JOURNAL OF BLACK STUDIES, Vol. 8 No. 1, September 1977
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Black People. . . . Vicious police dogs, cattle prods, and increased patrols have become familiar sights in Black communities” (Black Panther, 1969b). Convinced that “City Hall turns a deaf ear to the pleas of Black people,” Newton vowed that “the time has come for Black people to arm themselves against this terror before it is too late!” (Black Panther, 1969b). In a bitter tone, he asserted that “the Black communities of America must rise up as one man to halt the progression of a trend that leads inevitably to their total destruction” (Black Panther, 1969b).

Although the Mulford bill was enacted into law in July 1967, members of the party continued to carry firearms. As a result, conflict between the police and the Panthers grew. The Black Panther Party's confrontations with the police brought group cohesiveness within the party.1 What follows is an attempt to discuss the similarity among members, group goals, group activities, and leadership as factors related to the degree of cohesiveness within the Black Panther Party. This study selects for more specific consideration the propositions that: (1) similarity among members increased the degree of cohesiveness within the party; (2) group devotion heightened interest in accomplishing group goals; and (3) the threat of an external enemy led to interdependence among members and affected the kind and degree of activities, as well as the type of leadership that emerged within the group.

SIMILARITIES AMONG MEMBERS

Similarity of background helped to unify the party. As matter of fact, it was similarity of background that brought the founder and cofounder, Newton and Seale, together (Seale, 1970: 13-14). Their background and training had carefully prepared them for the type of leadership that emerged in the Black Panther Party. Consider Huey P. Newton, who was born in 1942 in Louisiana and moved to California in 1945. His childhood was like that of most black youths.
in the ghetto. He was rarely given a chance to do skilled work. Later, when Huey attended Merritt College, he had a reputation as a "street guy." He was much like the panther that he created as the emblem for the party. But there was one major difference between Newton and the ordinary street guy; he had the ability to articulate ideas, organize, and get things done (Marine, 1969: 12-17).

Newton met Seale at Merritt College. Both men were in an environment where they could observe the injustices heaped upon the blacks by the police and other whites of the urban society. Seale's early poverty, his later Air Force court-martial, and his subsequent inability to keep a job helped to shape his character (Seale, 1970: 7-11). At Merritt College Newton and Seale studied Marx, Fanon, Lenin, and Malcolm X. It was here that both men developed the social and political philosophies that were to shape the Panther Party.

More importantly, it was their similarity of experience and identification with other men in the community that would provide them with a unified membership. In considering recruits for the party, Seale (1970: 64) stated that "Huey wanted brothers off the block—brothers who had been pimping, brothers who had been peddling dope, brothers who ain't gonna take no shit, brothers who had been fighting the pigs."

The party would provide the followers with a vehicle for releasing years of frustration and anxiety. Newton had in this issue an important psychological ingredient with which to work. Men suffering under economic frustration, from lack of identity and dependency on whites for their daily bread, had little other than some cathartic mechanism through which they could channel their anxiety. Hence, the party was a perfect answer for these members. Support for this idea comes from Newton (1972: 79), who wrote regarding the "Fear and Doubt" of the black man: "He looks for something to blame for his situation, but because he is not sophisticated regarding the socio-economic milieu and
because of negative parental and institutional teachings, ultimately he blames himself.” This natural and justified resentment against white power is turned outwardly toward a common enemy, the police. It was the party, then, that brought together men of the same persuasion and similar psychological scars resulting from years of oppression. In *Black Rage*, William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs (1968: 68) state:

Starting with slavery, black people, and more particularly black men, have had to devise ways of expressing themselves uniquely and individually and in a manner that was not threatening to the white man. Some methods of giving voice to aggressive masculinity have become institutionalized. The most stylized is the posture of “playing it cool.”

By being members of the Panther Party, the black man had found another way of expressing himself. He did not have to “play it cool.” The fact that the Panthers dared to “pick up the gun” demonstrated courage and attracted members to its ranks.

The overcrowded and crime-ridden ghetto, with its tension and friction, precipitated the 1965 riots in Watts and other urban communities. Those who participated in these riots were ready recruits for the Panther Party. The party appealed also to “people from other organizations who were dropping their old groups and coming to check out the Panther” (Seale, 1970: 271). The aforementioned factors might suggest that the Black Panther Party consisted only of men who had been in trouble with the law. This was not the case. Seale states that one of the initial methods of gaining recruits for the party was to talk to “brothers and sisters in colleges, in high schools, who were on probation, who’d been in jails, who’d just gotten out of jail, and brothers and sisters who looked like they were on their way to jail” (Seale, 1970). It is fair to say, however, that the majority of the members of the party were men outside the mainstream of American life. Further support for this belief comes from Gerald Leinwand (1968: 47), who, in summing up the conditions of the
ghetto, states that “It [the ghetto] also has young people, who in spite of obstacles, go to college and find a career. But it has far more who accept defeat from the moment they leave their homes and enter the classrooms.”

Some members of the party were men and women suffering in a state close to poverty. This in itself is reason to believe that these men and women held similar values, attitudes, and interests. Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander (1968: 96) point out “there is the assumption that a person’s attraction to a group is determined not simply by the characteristics of the group but also by his view of how these characteristics relate to his needs and values.”

That mode of dress characteristic of street guys influenced membership is reflected in Eldridge Cleaver's initial reaction to the Panthers while attending a Bay Area Grassroots Organization Planning Committee meeting in a storefront in the Fillmore district, the center of San Francisco’s ghetto. The purpose of the meeting was to plan activities for involving the black community in commemorating the fourth anniversary of Malcolm X. Another item on the agenda was providing security for Betty Shabazz, Malcolm X's widow. Cleaver describes his first meeting with the Panthers:

I spun around in my seat and saw the most beautiful sight I had ever seen; four black men wearing black berets, powder blue shirts, black leather jackets, black trousers, shiny black shoes—each with a gun! [Scheer, 1968: 23-24]

Cleaver said that he fell in love with the Panthers at first sight. It took him little time to relate to the Panthers. The reaction that Huey had when he heard Cleaver on the radio is also of interest:

“Damn! Who is this Cat?” This cat is blowin man! He’s been in prison! This cat’s been in prison for nine years! I’m going to talk to this cat. [Seale, 1970: 32]

There was that base of attraction so common to the members of the party, shared background. The followers of Newton
and Seale perceived this attractiveness and used it as a weapon for cementing the party.

GROUP GOALS

According to Cartwright and Zander (1968: 96), "When the members of a group accept a common goal and agree on the actions required to reach it, they become cooperatively interdependent." As reflected in the Panther program, one goal of the Panthers was to develop survival programs for the people through the main tactic of patrolling the police (Black Panther, 1967). To carry out this function, the Panther Party developed a small but dedicated cadre of workers who were willing to devote their full time to the goals of the organization. One member of the party summed up the work ethic of the members in the following manner: "The dedication that the Party members have is something above sloth, and not caring about people. This is because Party members care about the survival of black people, even at the risk of being made political prisoners, or getting murdered by the fascist cops, or being forced into exile" (Seale, 1970: 390).

Many of the members found in the goals, principles with which they could identify themselves. The tactic of "offing the pigs" provided a rallying point for the party. Stanley Schachter (1958: 1) says "people do mediate goals for one another, and it may be necessary to associate with other people or belong to particular groups in order to obtain specifiable individual goals." Lott and Lott (Cartwright and Zander, 1968: 100), along with Lewis Coser, believe that it is a common enemy or threat to the group that accounts for the attractiveness of the group.

One of the favorite mechanisms for producing adherence to group goals was the policy of reinforcement of political ideology. To understand how the Panthers reinforced political ideology, one must examine the written discourse dissem-
inated by the *Black Panther*, the official organ of the party. An essential feature of the *Black Panther* was the use of slogans, speeches, and cartoons in gaining and holding the attention of the rank and file members of the party. Every issue of the Panther paper carried the program and platform, as well as rules of the Black Panther Party. The program is divided into one section of ten points entitled “What We Want” and there are 26 rules governing the behavior of the members. Also appearing regularly in the paper was a “Pocket Lawyer of Legal Aid” designed to inform members of the black community of their rights and responsibilities in the event of an arrest.

Much of the rhetoric of the Panthers centered around a political ideology aimed at solidifying the party, stressing the need for devotion to the cause. For example, a large proportion of articles dealt with the need to “intensify the struggle.” In keeping with this goal, Randy Williams, using the title “Tis the Season,” warned the brothers and sisters that “Hunting season will soon be upon us. If you are going to participate it is very necessary that you arm yourself with the political ideology of the Black Panther Party and the proper weapons” (*Black Panther*, 1968a). The proper weapons were guns which, along with the panther, became symbols of the party. George Murray, in explaining the necessity of a Black Revolution, quotes Huey Newton as saying, “The racist dog police must withdraw from the black community” (*Black*, 1968c). When Newton and Seale drew up the ten-point program in October 1966, identifying the enemy was crucial. The enemy was the capitalist system and the police who brutalized and murdered black people.

Thus, Newton and Seale recognized the importance of naming the enemy in the struggle. As Leland Griffin notes, an enemy or victim is important in the development of a social movement (*Rueckert*, 1969: 464). Never once does the *Black Panther* deviate from this strategy of naming the enemy. The enemy was identified as “Fascist Pigs,” “Mickey Mouse Reagan,” and other such labels. The strategic value
of such name calling is significant. It appears that lashing out at the enemy served the purpose of keeping the members’ minds focused on the goals of the Black Panther Party. The persuasive power of political education through the Panther paper was intensified by the addition of numerous repetitive slogans sprinkled throughout every edition of the paper. The “true believer” must have been impressed and persuaded by the parade of slogans such as “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun,” “The will of the people is greater than the man’s technology,” “It’s time to intensify the struggle,” “Do something, nigger, if you only spit,” and “All power to the people.” It seems that the Panthers recognized the power of endless repetition.

The use of words in order to solidify the group was only one tactic. In addition to the slogans, pictures and cartoons were used to heighten the emotions of members. The reader was bombarded with pictures of dead Panthers who had been “murdered” by the police. In February 1970, a special issue of the paper was circulated to point out the “evidence and intimidation of fascist crimes by the U.S.A.” Pictures of 19 dead Panthers appeared with the caption, “The invincible thoughts of the Black Panther Party can never be destroyed because they’re manifested in the people” (Black Panther, 1970b). Again we see the use of attacking the enemy device as a means of unifying the members around a common cause, although it was pretty obvious at this time that the Party was gradually losing members. Here, however, the keystone to the party, the people appear. The message is clear: in spite of the number of Panthers killed the party will live on because its power comes from the people. The comment that appeared in the Black Panther (1969a), seems to describe accurately how the Panthers felt about the role of the people in the revolution: “The Black Panther Party cannot be suppressed by the establishment and its racist pigs because the Party exists by the will of the people and as Huey P. Newton has said, ‘The will of the people is greater than the man’s technology’.”
A third major method of focusing on group goals was the use of political cartoons aimed at those members of the establishment perceived as the enemy of the people. In a classic cartoon, Emory Douglas, the minister of culture, identified the four enemies of the black people: avaricious businessmen, demagogue politicians, pig cops, and the U.S. military. The cartoon consisted of four fat-bellied pigs dangling from a tree, representing each of the enemies mentioned (Black Panther, 1969a). Another cartoon showed a gun thrust down the nose of a pig, with four guns surrounding the central one, with the captions “Get out of the Ghetto,” “Get out of Latin America,” “Get out of Asia,” “Get out of Africa” emblazoned on them (Black Panther, 1968b). Most of Emory’s cartoons appeared more than once in the Black Panther.

Emory clearly viewed his cartoons as “revolutionary art: a tool for education.” In a speech delivered at Malcolm X College, Emory told the members of the Revolutionary Arts Convention that “We will have to begin to draw pictures that will make people pick up guns and kill pigs; pigs that murdered Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.” Emory’s advice concerning the use of revolutionary art as political persuasion was implemented. In July 1970, a member of the party wrote, “We put revolutionary art on the telephone poles, we put revolutionary art on the buses, on the store fronts, windows, on passing cars. . . . We put it out there so that the people can see it” (Black Panther, 1970c).

More than likely the cartoons and revolutionary art appealed mostly to those who were already convinced of the party’s ideology or to those persons who were, because of their economic and social condition, susceptible to the Panther philosophy. The cartoons and revolutionary art indicate that the audience was familiar with the situations depicted and thus could experience a feeling of wanting to enact the behavior suggested by the cartoons. To the party members these car-
toons must have been impressive and satisfying, that is, if we use *Black Panther* reader reactions as a gauge. In most issues, for instance, readers—members of the rank and file—would send in drawings or poetry expressing the sentiments of the cartoons and other rhetorical devices used in previous issues of the paper.

In addition to the political ideology stressed in the *Black Panther*, a political indoctrination program was carried out in small-group meetings that took place in apartments or flats. In some instances small groups of Panthers lived together. This provided them with an opportunity to have frequent discussions regarding group goals. More than this, living together allowed the members to “keep their thoughts focused on revolutionary rhetoric.” One member of the party, Earl Anthony, points out that “Constantly being around one another, eating, sleeping and working together helped to psychologically sustain these brothers and keep them on their toes about their political and military work” (Anthony, 1970: 29).

Members were reminded that the values and goals of the party were the only hope of making life better in the black community and that it was their duty to see that these goals were accomplished. Additionally, the leadership admonished the membership that they were the “vehicles” of the people and that the struggle against oppression would come only through the implementation of group goals. John W. Thibaut and Harold H. Kelley (1965: 256) state that: “Group goals are social matters and require at least some degree of consensus before they can be prosecuted by enough members to warrant their being called group goals.” Of course, the goals of the Panther Party were not completely carried out because as Tom Milstein (1970: 41), writing in *Commentary*, puts it, “the tactic of ‘offing the pig’ was the thing that built the Party and also ended it.” Police attack on the Panthers, however, led to increased solidarity among the members. This aspect of Panther cohesiveness will be discussed later.
GROUP ACTIVITIES

In spite of the grand plans of the party the activities ultimately centered around confrontation with the police and rallies to raise funds for jailed Panthers. One activity was the direct result of the other. Initially, the Black Panther Party started around patrols in the black community and, as a result of their activities, were subjected to continuous harassment by the police. In Seize the Time, Seale (1970: 77) describes the first Panther patrol of police:

So we floated around the streets, and we patrolled the pigs. We followed pigs. They wouldn’t even know we’d be following them. That’s the way that shit went down in the very beginning. That went on for a month, back there in December 1966.

When the police realized that they were being followed by the Panthers, conflict between the two groups started. According to Seale, the first confrontation began when Newton challenged a policeman who had stopped him to ask for his address and phone number. In response to the question regarding his phone number, Huey said, “Five!” and remained silent. The policeman said, “Five What?” To this question Huey replied, “The Fifth Amendment.” As the exchange between Newton and the policeman continued, crowds began to form. This provided Huey with an opportunity to display his verbal skill, which at the same time created respect and admiration for him and the Black Panther Party. Newton was successful in articulating the ideas of the party and his constitutional rights to the policeman. Huey dared the policeman to do anything and, according to Seale, the policeman left (Seale, 1970: 85-92). Continuing his description of the event, Seale states: “After that, we really began to patrol the pigs then, because we got righteous recruits. I think ten or twelve, maybe thirteen extra members in the Party that day, just came and put applications in” (Seale, 1970: 93). A series of incidents between the police and the Panthers followed.
The incident that attracted the attention of the police in the whole state of California and mass media, however, was the dramatic Sacramento event. More than this, it helped to build solidarity among the members of the party. The Sacramento event occurred when 30 members of the Black Panther Party carried firearms to Sacramento. The purpose of carrying weapons into the Capitol was to protest the state assembly's attempt to pass a bill prohibiting the Panthers' right to bear arms as guaranteed by the second amendment to the Constitution. From the steps of the Capitol Seale read Executive Mandate Number One which was a statement by the minister of defense, Huey P. Newton. The message was important because it was the first major one to all the black people. After leaving the Capitol building, the Panthers were arrested, jailed, and later bailed out (Scheer, 1969).

This event catapulted the Panthers into the national arena. Five months later Newton was wounded and arrested following a shooting incident in Oakland. One policeman died as a result of the shooting and another one was wounded (Black Panther, 1967). Just one year after the party was organized, the founder was jailed. The jailing of Newton was important because the party members found an activity that they could use to illustrate to the black community the evil nature of the police and the “system.” Also, the jailing of Newton was viewed as a threat to the whole community. Robert Park, in commenting on racial movements states: “the effect is to arouse in those involved a lively sense of common purpose and to give those who feel themselves oppressed the inspiration of a common cause... the effect of this struggle is to increase the solidarity and improve the morale of the oppressed minority” (Coser, 1967: 34).

That the jailing of Newton was considered a “common cause” around which the community could rally is reflected in Anthony's (1970: 65) statement: “We began to take care of the immediate tasks at hand—the humble beginnings of what became the sustained struggle to save the life of Huey Newton, and to popularize his ideas and example to the
masses of black people, and progressive white people in America.”

As a method of popularizing Newton’s ideas, rallies were held throughout the Bay area. One such rally was held on Sunday, February 16, 1969, at the Berkeley Community Theatre, in honor of Newton’s birthday. The impact of this demonstration was underlined by the upraised black fist and the chants “Free Huey,” tactics that were primarily reinforcing. There is little doubt that the “Free Huey Rallies” were successful in evoking mass ecstasy, a feeling of community and togetherness so necessary in implementing group activities. The Black Panther stated that “There was almost ominous silence surrounding the empty chair of Huey P. Newton” (Black Panther, 1969c). Here we see the symbol of the “empty chair” used by the Panthers as an instrument of persuasion. Once the members of the rally saw the “empty chair,” the people themselves showed their disapproval of the absence of the leader and the minister of defense of the Black Panther Party by raising clenched fists in Black Power Salute and shouting in unison, “Free Huey” (Black Panther, 1969c). For them, it appears that the “empty chair” symbolized what the party was all about and at the same time named the enemy, the police whom they regarded as being responsible for the jailing of Newton. In this sense the chair served to call into being a series of emotional and attitudinal responses. John W. Bowers and Donovan J. Ochs (1971: 24-25) say that “The symbol is like a highly respected word in that it can stand for a variety of referents, any one of which may have special appeal for a given individual.”

So the rallies held for Newton served the function of putting the audience into a psychological frame of mind necessary to carry out group activities, as well as to raise defense money for Newton. To accomplish this goal of raising defense money for Newton, coalitions were formed with other black groups as well as the Peace and Freedom Party, a white radical party. The Panthers said that “it was valuable to form a coalition for the specific purpose of encouraging black people
to register in the Peace and Freedom Party instead of the Republican or Democratic parties who are oppressing us" (Seale, 1970: 208-211). In Seale's view the power structure attempted to limit the party's activity with this coalition. “We had a lot of clashes,” says Seale, “with a lot of different groups of people, but there were thousands of black people coming into the Panther Party because of what was happening. The coalition was a working coalition, not just a verbal one” (Seale, 1970: 209).

Subsequent to Newton's arrest and the rally, the Oakland Police Department and the Berkeley Police Department arrested a total of 16 members of the Panther Party, including the chairman, Bobby Seale. With so many arrests, it was difficult for the Panthers to raise ample funds for bail. Nevertheless, the Panthers continued to exist as a party, and it was at the peak of their crisis with the police that most of the chapters outside of California were organized (Seale 1970: 238). For example, it was after the murder of 16-year-old Bobby Hutton that the New York chapter was formed. By this time there was no doubt that the police, it seemed, were intent on wiping out the Panther Party. However, instead of the party disintegrating, it appears that the “true believers” became more cohesive. In this regard, William G. Sumner's proposition “that in-group solidarity increases when clashes arise with out-groups,” seems applicable (Janis, 1973: 4).

The following statement by the Black Panther Party, in acclaiming “1969: Year of the Panther,” lends credence to the aforementioned proposition: “The undeniable truth of the statement that ‘1969 is the year of the Panther' can be best seen by reviewing the dynamic rise of the Black Panther Party despite the despotic attempts of the establishment to suppress the Party's move to liberate black people” (Black Panther, 1969a). In an editorial Big Man stated, after some 20 Panthers had been murdered, that “These deaths and attacks have not and will not destroy the people's vanguard. The result has been quite the contrary; the Party has grown and become strong. This is a clear indication that the oppressed
people will conquer without a doubt" Black Panther, 1969d).

Subsequent issues of the Black Panther continually denied that the police were decreasing the membership of the Party: "Even though the pig and pork chop forces have killed and brutalized our heroic brothers, sisters, and comrades distributing the truth of this ferocious pig's death instead of decreasing behind these cowardly attacks by the pigs and chops, the revolution is progressing" (Black Panther, 1970d). The Panthers viewed the fact that "newspaper distribution has increased many times," as an indication that "the truth is getting to more of our beloved people" (Black Panther, 1970d).

The Panthers also began to purge members from the party in 1969. The Panther purge, it seems, was directly related to apparent CIA-FBI infiltration of the party. Consequently, steps were taken to expel members who were considered to be working against the interest of the party. In explaining the reasons for the purge, Seale says: "The Black Panther Party began to purge in January 1969, by announcing that we weren't going to be taking any more members in. We worked and found out about a lot of fools, expelled them and printed their names and pictures in the Black Panther" (Seale, 1970:370). In enforcing the rules of the party, on April 27, 1968, the names of expelled "counter-revolutionaries" from the New York chapter were printed in the Black Panther (1969e) with the admonition that "They are not to be associated with or let into any Black Panther office anywhere." In other instances condemned Panthers were labeled as "either agents provocateurs or insane men."

Accompanying this purge was a ban on new recruitment by the national headquarters. The purge helped to protect the internal cohesiveness of the party. It has been known for some time that in-group solidarity increases when there is a threat to the group by an external agent. However, in this regard, Coser (1956: 92-93) observes that, "the degree of group consensus prior to the outbreak of the conflict seems to be the most important factor affecting cohesion." There is a tendency for a group to disintegrate if it is lacking
in basic consensus. This did not happen in the case of the Black Panther Party. Therefore, it seems that the “true believers” of the party, regardless to the number of actively functioning members considered the preservation of the party to be a worthwhile concern. Robert Williams' explanation of group operations seems to be useful at this point:

Given a social group which is a “going concern,” a sense of outside threat to the group as a whole will result in heightened internal cohesion. . . . However this [general principle] holds true only under very specific conditions: (a) the group must be a “going concern” i.e., there must be a minimal consensus among the constituent individuals that the aggregate is a group, and that its preservation as an entity is worthwhile; (b) there must be recognition of an outside threat which is thought to menace the group as whole, not just part of it. [Coser, 1967: 93]

At first glance, it could be argued that the threat to the Panther Party was from within, since the purged individuals were allegedly members of the party. However, a closer examination of the situation reveals that the agents and provocateurs came into the party with the intention of creating a menace for the Panthers. More than this, the provocateurs were considered CIA-FBI agents. Viewing the situation from this perspective, it seems safe to conclude that the provocateurs should be classified as outside enemies. At any rate, the conflict between the Panthers and the enemy agents seemed to have increased group bonds.

One result of this seemingly successful maintenance of in-group solidarity among the members of the Panthers was the subsequent increase of police raids on Panther headquarters. According to Reginald Major: “There is the possibility that the nationwide crackdown on the Panthers occurred because the purge was successful, leaving police without any clue as to what the Panthers were involved with” (Major, 1971: 121).
LEADERSHIP

Although jailed one year after starting the party, Newton was able to exert his leadership while in jail. He was imprisoned for about four years. Yet, during this time he was able to give direction to and inspire the Panther Party. The question emerges, "Why was Huey P. Newton equipped to influence his followers while in jail?" A possible answer to this question is reflected in the charisma of Newton. There was something magical and powerful about this man whose features were well-chiseled and whose voice commanded respect and enthusiasm. Consider Anthony's impression of how some members of the party viewed Huey: "There was a deep respect for Huey among the Panthers at that time [the beginning of the Party] and when he was later imprisoned this respect became something which was almost sacred" (Anthony, 1970: 25). Another powerful aspect of Huey's character stemmed from his special knowledge of not only the workings of the ghetto but also his expertise relating to the perceived enemy. No one in the party could question Newton's ability to articulate revolutionary doctrines or the ten-point program. Huey's early training at Merritt College helped to cultivate his knowledge of revolutionary rhetoric. While at Merritt, Newton seldom took more than eight or nine units a semester, and he always got good grades. More than this, Newton used the extra time to do outside readings so that he could be astute in class. It seems that he was bent on proving that he could go to college, contrary to the predictions of a white counselor (Seale, 1970: 19). At any rate, this special knowledge provided Newton with a base from which to influence his membership. People listened to Huey because he could express things well. He was a master rhetorician in terms of articulating the commonly held ideas of the group.

Bobby Seale, whose relationship with Huey bordered on hero-worship, says: "I was proud to be with that brother, beginning to deal with pigs, beginning to educate people to self-defense, because Huey handled it so beautifully" (Seale, 1970: 76).
It is not difficult to see why the membership identified with Newton if one considers the fact that most of the members had spent some time in jail and could understand quite clearly the treatment that Huey was subjected to. Had not Huey expressed to the black community that all “black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial?” That this sense of identification with Newton was strong is revealed in the following statement: “When the Party became a national organization, which was after Huey was in jail, the few brothers who could make the statement, ‘I walked with Huey,’ were held in high esteem within the ranks of the Party. This identification with Huey indicated that the brothers respected within the Party had come through the tough days of the armed patrols.”

This “lost Saint” image of Newton kept the party alive. Newton set the example for the party. More evidence for this interpretation is revealed in subsequent copies of the *Black Panther*. Practically every copy of the paper from October 1967 until 1970 had numerous references to Newton’s writings and emphasized his leadership qualities. An article in the *Black Panther* on January 3, 1970, testifies to the leadership qualities that the members felt that Huey exhibited. “It was Huey P. Newton,” the article states, “who taught us how people learn. You learn by participation” (Black Panther, 1970a). Speaking at a “May Day rally to free Huey,” in 1969, Seale suggested quite strongly the power of Huey’s leadership. “We’re saying,” he observed, “that if it had not been for Huey P. Newton, there would not be any BREAKFAST FOR CHILDREN. If it had not been for Huey P. Newton community CONTROL OF POLICE would not be in the process of being implemented. If it had not been for Huey P. Newton, the TEN POINT PLATFORM AND PROGRAM of the Black Panther Party would not begin to be implemented by the people” (Black Panther, 1970a). Huey was the type of leader who could wield power and influence his followers.
Also appearing regularly in the paper was the classic picture of Newton sitting in an impressive peacock chair, holding a gun in one hand and a spear in the other, flanked by an African shield and sword. In some instances Newton’s picture would cover the entire front page of the newspaper. Huey P. Newton was the symbol that inspired scores of young men to “pick up the gun” and “die for the people.”

In conclusion, this paper has revealed that the very existence of the Black Panther Party depended upon the attraction of members to it who shared a common background, believed in the same basic ideologies and values, and who were willing to develop and implement programs, goals, activities, and leadership aimed at attacking the enemy. It was the threat of this “external enemy” that provided the party members with the “stick-togetherness” necessary to unify them around a common cause, that of using the gun as a powerful organizing symbol for the purpose of the political liberation of black people.

NOTE

1. Group cohesiveness is defined by Leon Festinger as “the resultant of all the forces acting on members to remain in the group” (see Shaw, 1971: 93).

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Carolyn R. Calloway is Assistant Professor of Speech Communication at Indiana University. Professor Calloway's interests are communication in Black America and cross-cultural communication.