

Defining Social Reality in a Revolutionary Way

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A vital repository of knowledge gained from concrete practical experience, *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service* offers a blueprint for U.S.-based radical organizations experimenting with the scientific, premeditated, and necessarily methodical artistry of social revolution. There is a great deal of evidence that the Black Panther Party's newspaper was a complex and multifaceted technological form with remarkable pedagogical influence.¹ This narrative-political technology operated as a tool for developing the social basis of People's insurgency, revolutionary struggle, and liberationist counter-war in North America between the late-1960s and middle-1970s. In the following essay, I conceptualize the specific *discursive practices* and *political techniques* that connected the Party's artistic and intellectual production to a larger network of insurgent cells via the newspaper-medium. Special attention is given to the Party's approach to communicating the principles of protracted revolutionary People's war and the deconstructive effects of the paper's discourse in the play of "positional" strategy and tactics.² By placing emphasis on the newspaper's circulation as a narrative technology, a modality of public pedagogy, and as a means of altering the dominant culture's grids of perception, I suggest that a more rigorous study of the newspaper's discourse is necessary for abolitionist and anti-imperialist

activists in the present. How did the newspaper articulate a shared experience of reality between disparately situated communities of struggle in this mid-twentieth century period of uprisings and revolt? How did the newspaper-medium aid in the coordination of disparately situated counter-hegemonic blocs, politico-military cells, and iconoclastic fighting formations? What was the political impact of *The Black Panther* in the Party's art of operations?³

The Black Panther: Black Community News Service was the weekly publication of the Black Panther Party. Founded in 1967 by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, the Party was first named the "Black Panther Party for Self-Defense," in line with its policy of armed self-defense and promotion of community self-determination for working class Black people.⁴ The paper was printed in San Francisco and distributed largely within the borders of the United States. Eventually, issues were also distributed internationally. Although Oakland is where the Party was headquartered, the newspaper was first printed as a tool to educate and organize the Black community in the city of Richmond, after the racist police homicide of Black teenager Denzel Dowell. For some time, it was printed irregularly until a weekly schedule for distribution was developed in 1969. Although the logistical dimensions of the publishing process are not our principal object of concern, a cursory review of its earliest list of editorial staff illuminates the peculiar immediacies and conditions of duress that contextualize the politics put forward in each issue of the newspaper.

For the entirety of its life in circulation, the newspaper's publishing process was marked by frequent and sometime unexplainable changes in the composition of its editorial staff; a demonstrable result of the overwhelmingly brutal state violence inflicted upon Party members (and their families and supporters) since its earliest of days.⁵ This is apparent merely by glancing at the first listing of its 1967 editorial staff. It follows: "Minister of Defense, Huey P. Newton (Oakland County Jail); Chairman, Bobby Seale (Santa Rita Prison Farm); Editor, Minister of Information (*Underground*); Assistant Editor, Kathleen Neal; Revolutionary Artist/Layout, Emory."⁶ The overlap between sites of racist state captivity—prisons, jails, and detention centers—and the Party's "free-world" bases of operation were uniquely conjoined, conditioning the lived truth articulated in each issue of *The Black Panther*.

To its core, the Party's strategic culture was intertwined with and intentional in developing what Dylan Rodríguez calls "radical prison praxis."⁷ This term refers to the embodied "theoretical practices that emerge from imprisoned liberationists' sustained and historical confrontations with, insurrection against, and dis- or re-articulations of the regimes of (legitimated and illicit) state violence inscribed and signified by the regime of the prison."⁸ What qualifies the discourse of *The Black Panther* as inhabiting this lineage of radical (intellectual) praxis is the fact that its staff was always partially situated at the "base" of the state's "punitive white supremacist mode of production."⁹ In other words, the newspaper's editors comprised a counter-hegemonic bloc whom, as Rodríguez notes, spoke "truth to power" in ways

inextricably shaped by and in unending struggle against the emergent warzones, carceral forms, and (un)free worlds which increasingly began to counter-pose U.S. civil society's conception of "freedom" by the late-1960s. Moreover, radical prison praxis is notably a *discursive-material* force that generates a critique of modern social formation capable of destabilizing the presumed democratic legitimacy, respectability, and coherence of a normatively white U.S. order.



WE HAVE TO WAGE A STRUGGLE INSIDE THE JAILS AND PRISONS, SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE STRUGGLE IN THE STREETS



THE BIRTH OF A REVOLUTIONARY

We speak to you today as scorpions of San Quentin's Cadre. To acknowledge the birth of Huey, a brave and strong revolutionary. For those of you who lied and said your leader Malcolm X is dead. We say, silence your tongue before your necks get wrung. Our People's Revolution is no game, and Malcolm, Huey, the B. P. P. are the same. One dies, one is born, there is no change, we'll struggle until we break our chains. When Huey P. Newton was born our cause marched on, and things brightened somehow. We'll fight, die, but not utter a cry; No force can stop us now.

All Power To The People
BPP-SAN QUENTIN CADRE

THE SAN QUENTIN BRANCH OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY OPENS!

A new era has dawned in the United States. Discrimination, repression and liberation has reached the door of America. In a world's new, most just and free nation of liberation. Historical conditions have forced the conflicting aspects of American society to the point of explosion. Now only the struggle are picking which side they wish to fight on, the side of the forces of oppression, repression and liberation or the force of liberation - the people's just cause of freedom. Because this contradiction is already raised to the level of open military encounters - revolutionaries shouting it out with the high, revolutionary being increased for selling papers, revolutionaries increasing the goods that have been ordered from the community - many brothers are being locked up in the numerous prisons and jails of the United States.

The increase in revolutionary praxis has progressively increased the level of political consciousness throughout the world, especially in San Quentin, because of its large population, its getting its share of political prisoners, Reagan's government and his puppet press administration and will cause of this and also its effect. This awareness creates a representative atmosphere throughout the world, there is San Quentin we are finding that repression and force, although it has been provided from the time our comrades founded the BPP.

The new cause and period for locking brothers in the hole is "possession of inflammatory literature" and in our institutions because we are trying to bring our incarcerated brothers up to a higher level of consciousness. They now know change their altered ideas of individual material gain through exploitation of the Black community.

The BPP are us and those who associated closely with the cadre were taking on a new complexion, a new method in social conditions. We are becoming more disciplined and are starting to think around the strategy of establishing revolutionary political power for Black people. The BPP know that once we establish the necessary political power they can no longer exploit and oppress us. They will not be able to keep our survivors in prison and only one longer. They also realize that once thousands of angry Black people revolutionaries, we are going to bring the machinery of oppression to a screeching halt, through means, force, but peaceful warfare.

This movement takes on a familiar form. They catch a group of brothers who are these revolutionaries, then establish this knowledge into special letters, labeled "millions, hundreds, revolutionaries and Black Panthers," along with photographs. This information is kept in the Department (a central command headquarters) here in Quant, similar to the Department of the P. I. A. headquarters. Whenever the pigs get the ink or urge they dig and take and prevent it from being distributed and prevent it. The whole done in a procedure whereby they take a person's cell and search it thoroughly, digging up the beds, looking all of the pictures of the walls and generally making a pigskin mess. They sit down and read revolutionary documents, personal writing and anything else, trying to find something shocking against the present social order. That is then labeled "inflammatory literature", and the names of the material is labeled in the "book" at the Adjustment Center to suit a high level of imprisonment in the KKK and imprisoned Black Prison Camp leaders.

Since a man's struggle reflect his attitude and his writings mirror both, we are politically aware individuals will have this so-called inflammatory literature in our possession on hundred percent of the time. This word the brothers were able off the part of James Ellison, Huey P. Newton, Charles Jackson, J.P. Trotter and Eddie Childers. All were charged with having revolutionary material in their possession. There was one a time when we kept out in our cells and destroy all writings in hope that we could keep the BPP from coming down. That time has passed. Now we realize that this pig has no love which we as oppressed people are bound to respect. The comrades are thought in order to view of historical inevitable revolution - liberation. We see destruction and all of his reactionary, racial ruling dogs, because we will continue to write and educate whenever we are among the masses and revolutionaries of the repression monsters and representatives happening behind it. It is time that we as people stand up and fight off the BPP power structure. We are right, history has proven he-

The Black Panther's deconstructive project was sustained by the consistent publication of statements and communiqués written by imprisoned members of the Party, press releases recounting police harassment and torture of ordinary working and idle Black people, leaked documents highlighting the forces of state counter-insurgency, and the circulation of theoretical and strategic analysis developed by imprisoned activists. Consistency in the re-presentation of the U.S. state through the optics of an anti-fascist and importantly anti-patriotic Black politics, pushed for a *paradigm shift* in the ways Leftist cultural producers represented liberal-democratic capitalist nation-building. For the Black Panther Party, white American capitalist society was engaged in an historic struggle to preserve their unmerited entitlements over planetary life, land, and the meaning of personhood. This struggle was principally enacted through the practices of land occupation, population displacement, and (proto-)genocidal warfare. Ushering in a Black revolutionary vanguardist program and grammar, the theoretical lexis of the Party included a vernacular of internationalist anti-imperialism, advocating for a global coalition to

abolish the anti-Black genocide of U.S. fascism, civilization, and nation-building. For a civilian public interpellated by the creeping assimilation of the Civil Rights Movement into the discursive structures of the (neo)liberal corporate state, this was an essential and necessary task of intellectual work.

The Party's principles of struggle beautifully ran against-the-grain of a burgeoning liberal racial sensibility that stubbornly refused to give up on its pacifist codes of non-violence and policies of gradualist anti-racist/anti-violence reform. Instead of supporting and/or further entrenching the post-sixties institutionalization of Black insurgency,¹⁰ the *Black Community News Service* served as a site of imagining and inspiring a mode of struggle that located Black populations in the United States as the motor of Socialist world revolution. It provided an information clearinghouse for news coverage of global struggles against Western colonialism and imperialism, supporting movements for decolonization, indigenous sovereignty, national liberation, and non-Eurocentric articulations of solidarity and mutual aid.

The general techniques of material-discursive maneuver mobilized by the Black Panther Party reveal a significantly overlooked aspect of the Party's strategic thought, what literary critic and politico-cultural theorist Hortense J. Spillers calls "discursive positioning." She writes the following passage to localize the context of symbolic structural violence that makes the Panther's iconoclastic activist practice necessary:

"[R]ace," as the anti-essentialists have persistently misunderstood, never had much to do with bodies, as skin color...actually only facilitates an imperative that has emerged otherwise..."[B]eyond" the violating and that laid on the stigmata of a recognition that was misrecognition, or the regard that was disregard, there was a semiosis of procedure that had enabled such a moment in the first place. The marking, the branding, the whipping—all instruments of a terrorist regime—were more deeply that—to get in somebody's face in that way would have to be centuries in the making that would have had little to do, though it's difficult to believe—with the biochemistry of pigmentation, hair texture, lip thickness, and the indicial measure of the nostrils, but everything to do with those "unacknowledged legislators" of a discursive and an economic discipline.¹¹

For Spillers, theorizing racial and gender formation means contemplating the existence of deep-structural dynamics rather than simply material culture, historical contingency, and political choice. Spillers insists that we must instead look at the "semiosis of procedure" and "unacknowledged legislators" which normalize the proto-genocidal (racial) cultural structures of modern liberal humanism. Within her formula, the discursive regimes of "race"—the symbolic apparatus that renders a subject "dominant" or "subordinate," *not* because anyone was once more superior than another, but because it was *installed* to preserve European/Euro-American power—appear to be the result of an originary set of political decisions made during the early epochs of European land-ecological conquest and modern racial slavery. As

such, modernity’s historical regimes of violence have only been reinforced, as Spillers remarks, by “words, words, words”¹² (and the tropes they impart meaning to). In this context, the act of discursive positioning becomes a principle means of warfare in revolutionary struggles over social power.



The positioning of the “body” in discourse was tacitly understood by artists and editors of *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service* as a primary and essential (rather than marginal or trivial) site of struggle.¹³ Theorizing the Party’s approach to sculpting, adapting, and reworking the materiality of discourse in the cross-hairs of belligerent state repression, Panther Minister of Culture Emory Douglas speaks to the overarching strategy that guided the insurgent aesthetics promoted by the newspaper’s staff:

Besides fighting enemy, the Black Panther Party is doing propaganda for the masses of Black people. The form of propaganda I’m about to refer to is called art, such as painting, sketching, etc. The Black Panther Party calls it revolutionary art—this kind of art enlightens the party to continue its vigorous attack against the enemy, as well as educate the masses of Black people—we do this by showing them through pictures—“The Correct Handling of the Revolution”...We try to create an atmosphere for the vast majority of Black people—who aren’t readers but activists—through their observation of our work, they feel they have the right to destroy the enemy.¹⁴

The notion of propaganda invoked by Douglas is quite different than that of American militarists and bourgeois social theorists. In accordance with the Party’s protocols of revolutionary cultural production, it is important to note that a principal strategy employed in newspaper was the visual rewriting of everyday Black people into positions in which they are active participants in processes of radical economic, cultural, and socio-political change. We also see this revalorizing practice complimented by a persistent iconoclastic devalorization of the various symbols of capitalist decadence, white supremacist apartheid, and anti-Black fascist morality

embodied by U.S. civil society and a nascent law-and-order state. This latter strategy was implemented through discursive tactics that depersonalized the symbol of the “police officer”—one of the many structural/institutional bodies that terrorize Black populations on a regular basis—as a racist “pig,” comical “swine,” and the guardian of decadent, greedy, and distrustful capitalist rats. As chief methodologies utilized in the Party’s cultural arsenal for self-defensive Black revolutionary struggle, these basic reorienting gestures attempted to “reverse the Gaze” of a white racial optics that requires the slow pulse of anti-Black degradation, humiliation, and physiological/physic violation to preserve its fabricated integrity, transparency, and singular humanness.



Yet it is also important to emphasize how the newspaper’s formal aesthetics did not hold transformative potential in-and-of-itself, as much as it enabled the newspaper to become a *medium* through which disparately situated communities of struggle acquire the capacity to interact with the Party’s strategic analysis, political education, military theory, program, and general revolutionary principles. Departing from Paulo Freire’s classic formulation of a non-hierarchical revolutionist pedagogy, I briefly highlight some aspects of the newspaper’s project of political education that were useful and can be appropriated, emboldened, and/or redeployed by present-day oppositional movements. Freire describes the “correct” method for political leadership as one that works against the vulgar definition of propaganda as managing, baiting, or manipulating the masses. Instead, he remarks upon the practice of mass-based political education in the following way:

The oppressed, who have been shaped by a death-affirming climate of oppression, must find through their struggle a way to life affirming humanization, which does not lie simply in having more to eat (although it does involve having more to eat and cannot fail to include this aspect). The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reeducated them to things. In order to regain their

humanity, they must cease to be things and fight as men and women. This is a radical requirement. They cannot enter the struggle as objects in order later to become human beings...

The struggle begins with men's recognition that they have been destroyed. Propaganda [in the vulgar sense], management, manipulation—all arms of domination—cannot be the instruments of their rehumanization. The only effective instrument is a humanizing pedagogy in which the revolutionary leadership establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed. In a humanizing pedagogy the method ceases to be an instrument by which the teachers (in this instance the revolutionary leadership can manipulate the students (in this instance, the oppressed), because it expresses the consciousness of the student themselves.¹⁵

Experimenting with and configuring sustainable ways to continue collective projects for political education and theoretical work in the face of imminent state terror and repression is a unique challenge for any organization, especially if their objective is “demolishing the colonist's sector, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory.”¹⁶ Even if the shortcomings of a movement are realized by its participants or its output of deconstructive knowledge production is sustained in a relatively consistent manner, the state is the final arbiter of any revolutionary situation. This is by way of its monopoly on the so-called “legitimate” use of force and instrumentalization by ruling elites for the enforcement of late-capitalist social reproduction, white freedom/mobility, and the enduring structures of settler occupation.

Here Assata Shakur's 1986 autobiography offers a much-needed point of departure for contemporary activists, noting the importance of remaining principled in one's actions and separating “above” from “underground” political-intellectual work. She writes:

Just because you believe in self-defense doesn't mean you let yourself be sucked into defending yourself on the enemy's terms. One of the [Black Panther] Party's major weaknesses, I thought, was the failure to clearly differentiate between aboveground political struggle and underground, clandestine military struggle....An aboveground political organization can't wage guerrilla war any more than an underground army can do aboveground political work. Although the two must work together, they must have completely separate structures, and any links between the two must remain secret. Educating the people about the necessity for self-defense and for armed struggle was one thing. But maintaining a policy of defending Party offices against insurmountable odds was another. Of course, if the police just came in and started shooting, defending yourself made sense. But the point is to try to prevent that from happening.¹⁷

The most important lesson we might glean from our speculation on the symbolic power of *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service* may be in recognizing the newspaper's potential to communicate with other organizations in the mass struggle

without establishing any traceable link to the infrastructure of clandestine organization. In the epoch of mass information warfare and government-monitored email, tweeting, and digital sociality, establishing the infrastructure needed to build an objectively “unified” politico-military front against colonialism, racial slavery/imprisonment, structural apartheid, and white supremacist domestic warfare is a critical task that we as (aspiring) revolutionaries should pursue in the coming years. Contemporary radical organizations should consider developing a means and language that enables activists, intellectuals, and other political workers to speak across platforms without any noticeable fingerprint or paper trail. Whether through a return to print-based mediums of public pedagogy (as opposed to operations based 100% online) or by making accessible the technical skills necessary for encrypting and transmitting messages and information, the directions one might take this suggestion are infinite.¹⁸ By turning to a short analysis of the Party’s repurposing of the famous map-image, entitled “GUERRILLA WAR IN THE U.S.A.,” I conclude this article with an analysis of some ways and means that autonomous movement builders can develop the social basis for mass insurrectionary, revolutionary, and liberation struggle(s).

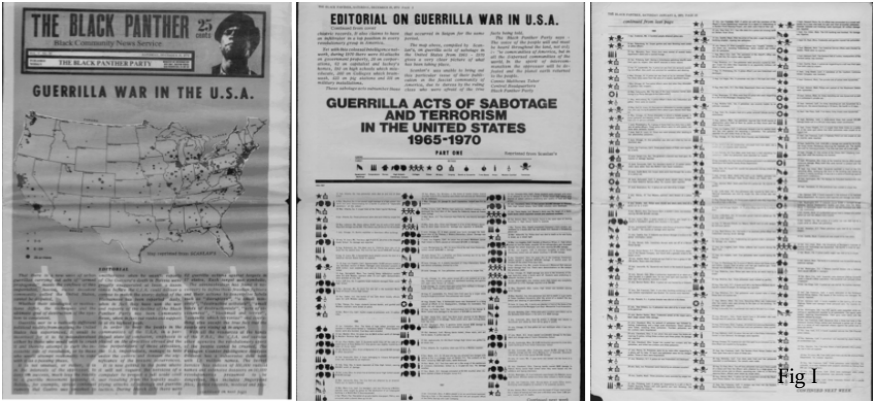


Fig I

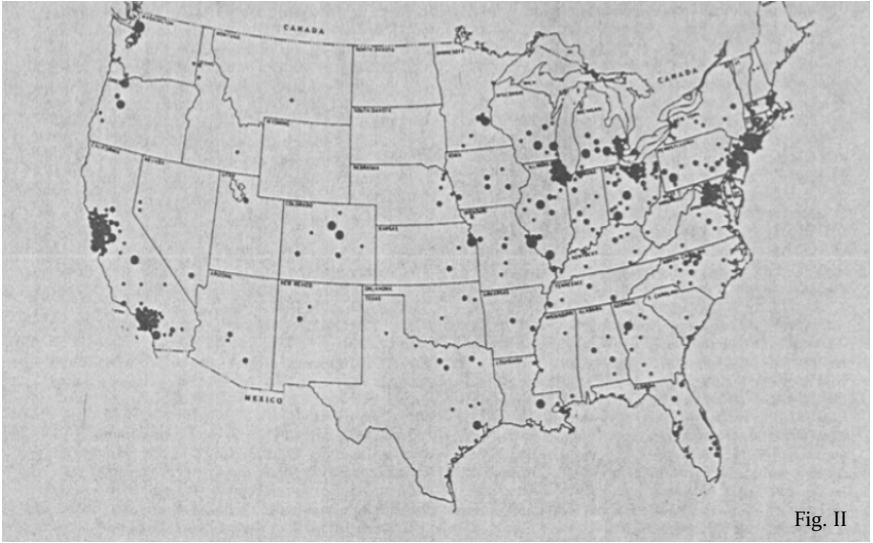


Fig. II

The map-image in Fig. II displays instances of counter-hegemonic/anti-state uprising and armed tactical operations initiated by oppressed and resisting sectors of U.S. society between 1965 and 1970. This insurgent coalition gradually emerged in opposition to the racist capitalist state during the middle twentieth-century, spearheaded by the efforts of Black liberationist fighting formations. Originally intended to be published in the magazine *Scalan's*, "GUERRILLA WAR IN THE U.S.A." was rejected by over 50 potential publisher. Fortunately, the piece was salvaged and released in a two-part editorial for *The Black Panther*.¹⁹

A vulgar analysis of the map's function as an aesthetic object would likely interpret it as an example of effective radical propaganda. And indeed, such a reading would not entirely miss the mark. After all, "radical propaganda"—if we define radicalism as a viewpoint that interprets the world in terms of the *foundational and systemic*—is a term reserved for an image/text that compels the other toward critical thought and action. Yet by interpreting the map's functionality as merely propaganda, scholars conceal the dynamism of its effects, both willed and unintended, in the play of signification. Fixing attention to the symbolic power of the map-object allows us to speculate upon the social implications of its aesthetic elements, rhetorical structures, and underlying discursive strategies, which in turn reveals how this narrative technology opened new avenues for political dissidence, autonomous movements, and insurgency-building in the theater of revolutionary struggle.

On the one hand, the map's visual schematics are published in juxtaposition with the Black Panther Party's deconstructive analysis of white settler mythology in ways that render visible the emergent coordinates of a laterally-aligned insurgency that was (at least in scale and scope) prior unbeknownst to its participants. As can be seen in Fig. I, the Party editor's first visible statements provide a useful case in point. Invoking a notion of propaganda as "revolutionary art," the editors of *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service* illuminate how a "new wave of urban guerrillas carrying out acts of 'armed propaganda' inside the confines of [the] imperialist, fascist, racist decadent community called the United States,"²⁰ was becoming an increasingly indisputable fact. "Whether their ideologies or motivations differ, the techniques and the ultimate goal of destruction of the system is consistent."²¹ Within this editorial spread, similar statements are woven into the discursive structure of the map-image imparting shape, meaning, and conceptual stability to what was an otherwise amorphous constellation of uprisings and anti-authoritarian fighting formations proliferating within and across nation-state borders.

On the other hand, we can also see the map's schematization of disparate insurgencies operating in ways that serve a concrete social function for Left-political opposition. As white settler society began to reassert military, political, moral, economic, and racial dominion over colonized (and poor) people amidst compounding "crises" in the U.S. national form during the middle-to-late 1960s, it is not hard to imagine the map-image, embedded within the newspaper, held the potential for circulating, collating, and re-theorizing the terms of strategy within this

blooming insurrection. To further illuminate the specific historical situation enveloping this articulation of consciousness and revolutionary People's War, I would like to reproduce a brief section from the editorial at length. In the following passage, the newspaper appears to be the center-piece of a flowering insurgent cultural apparatus which cultivated a shared consciousness of opposition to the existing state, law, and order. The statement follows:

It is not unusual, or rather, it is in the interests of the oppressor, to deny the success, much less the reality to a guerrilla movement opposing it...In order to keep the people in the communities of the USA in a perpetual state of confusion, emphasis is placed on the atrocities abroad and the true perpetrators of these atrocities, the US imperialists, manage to hide under the covers and demean the significance of the present occurrences...

It is now getting to that point where it will not require the services of a computer to project a full scale civil war resulting from the rapidly multiplying attacks of sabotage and guerrilla tactics. During March 1970 there were 62 guerrilla actions against targets in 17 states. Each target was symbolic...The administration has found it necessary to define these freedom fighters and their actions by descriptive labels such as "disrupters," "a small minority," "destructive activists," "acts of viciousness," "Blackmail and terror," "assaults which terrorize" and everything else except the true fact that the people are rising in anger...

With all the resources at the hands of the FBI and CIA and various other agencies the revolutionary spirit of the people cannot be crushed...[Even considering the US government's] colossal Intelligence network, during 1970 there were 85 attacks on government property, 28 on corporations, 62 on capitalist and lackey's homes, 192 on high schools which miseducate, 280 on colleges which brainwash, 423 on pig stations and 101 on military installations...These sabotage acts outnumber those that occurred in Saigon for the same period...

The map above, compiled by *Scalan's*, on guerrilla acts of sabotage in the United States from 1965-1970 gives a very clear picture of what has been taking place. The Black Panther Party says—The voice of the people will and must be heard throughout the land, not only in the communities of America, but in all the dispersed communities of the world. In the spirit of intercommunalism the oppressor will be defeated and the planet earth returned to the people.²²

In this historical and theoretical context, the republished map of "GUERRILLA WAR IN THE U.S.A." clearly appears to be a technology fundamental to insurgent cohesion.²³ In its circulation throughout a human geography that was literally and figuratively under siege, the map-image became a medium—or mediating device—through which a broad array of anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and (I would argue increasingly feminist) anti-imperialist formations became legible and coherent to itself as a larger, simultaneously emerging community of struggle. That is, an emerging "social movement" realized itself as an object of knowledge, autonomous of any direct corporate or government-funded resources. Additionally, we might argue

that the Black Panther Party's appropriation and re-contextualization of the map-image performs a number of other important strategic and logistical functions, such as *reconnaissance*, *unit coordination*, and *terrain analysis*. I would also argue this component provided the mass struggle with a source of intentionally public intel that could be incorporated into the frameworks of clandestine political formations, collectively analyzed to modify strategy, and then later tested and revised in practice, through subsequent tactical operations.

The modus operandi of the re-narrativized map-image, and the particular way the image operated in (and worked upon) the public discourse opens this analysis up to a more robust consideration of *The Black Panther* newspaper's functionality in the play of strategy and tactics more generally. Recall that it is extremely probable that the map-image, published in the context of the Black Panther Party's theoretical analysis, operates as a modality linking various underground cells and counter-hegemonic blocs through indirect lines of pedagogy and communication. It is not a stretch to argue that creating more narrative-political technologies that function in the ways described in this article can make the theory-practice-theory sequence a broader (as in "mass") collective experience shared between different people and organizations with relatively divergent visions of progressive social change.

What we are being forced to confront today is the grave possibility that the numerous regimes of imperial and domestic war-waging that buttress the white locality of the American "homeland" (i.e. Wars on "Drugs," on "Gangs," on "Terror," etc.) may simply overwhelm the quasi-hegemonic grammars of protest, coalition, social justice, and activism. It is from an orientation and approach to praxis which takes seriously the demands of developing awareness of the social aspects of insurgency and revolutionary movement-building that the warfare condition may become not an obstacle, but a point of departure, confrontation, or even radical possibility. Understanding the functionality of *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service* in the Party's art of operations is one of many places where we can begin to discern how this urgent task might be further enabled in the current historic conjuncture. From the so-called "victories" and "failures" of past communities of struggle, we must continue to draw lessons, inspiration, and insight. Onward we march in the intellectual struggle!



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- ¹ “Pedagogical” is just a fancy way of calling something educational. The Panther newspaper was, among many other things, a vital tool of mass political education.
- ² This paper is written from a belief that the war of position is a component within a larger politico-military “war of maneuver.” For more on the concepts of “war of position” and “war of maneuver” see: Daniel Egan, “Rethinking War of Maneuver/War of Position: Gramsci and the Military Metaphor.” *Critical Sociology* 40:4 (2014): 521-538; *Antonio Gramsci, Selected Writings: 1916-1935*, edited by David Forgacs. New York University Press, 2000, esp. Part 2, “Prison Writings,” Chapter 5, “Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc” and Chapter 6, “The Art and Science of Politics”; Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach.” In *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, 143- 145. New York; London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978 [1845]; V.I. Lenin, “Guerrilla Warfare.” In *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works* (vol. 11), edited by Clemens Dutt, 213-222. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972 [1906]; Mao Tse-tung, “On Guerrilla Warfare.” In *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (vol. 9) Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967 [1937]; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004 [1961]; Amílcar Cabral. “National Liberation and Culture.” *Transition* 45 (1974).
- ³ For more on the concept of the “art of operations” (or *operational art*) see: T. Derbent. *Categories of Revolutionary Military Policy*, translated by Kersplebedeb. Montreal: Kersplebedeb, 2006; Michael R. Matheny, “The Roots of Modern Operational Art”; and Bruce W. Menning, “Operational Art’s Origins.” In *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, edited by Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips, 3-18. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2005. For more on the *art/science of revolutionary warfare and counter-warfare* generally see: Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982 [1832]; Donald E. Davis and Walter S.G. Kohn, “Lenin’s “Notebook on Clausewitz”; Vo Nguyen Giap. “People’s War, People’s Army.” In *The Military Art of People’s War: Selected Writings of General Vo Nguyen Giap*, 101-116. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970; Che Guevara, “Organization of the Guerrilla Front.” In *Guerrilla Warfare*, 95-129. Melbourne; New York: Ocean Press, 2006 [1961]; H. von Dach Bern, “Organization and Operation of the Civilian Resistance Movement.” In *Total Resistance: Swiss Army Guide to Guerrilla Warfare and Underground Operations*, edited by R.K. Brown. Boulder: Paladin Press, 1965; Carlos Marighella, “Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla.” In *Terror and Urban Guerrillas: A Study of Tactics and Documents*, edited by Jay Mallin. Florida: University of Miami Press, 1982; Robert Taber. *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare*. Dulles: Brassey’s, Inc., 2002 [1965]; Kwame Nkrumah, “Organisation for Revolutionary Warfare.” In *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*. New York: International Publishers, 1968.

For a critical deconstruction of the coloniality, misogyny, and/or phallogocentric militarism present in each of above citations see: Cynthia Enloe and Carol Cohn. “A Conversation with Cynthia Enloe: Feminists Look at Masculinity and the Men Who Wage War.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28:4 (2003); Comrade Parvati and Butch Lee. *People’s War... Women’s War?: Two Texts By Comrade Parvati Of The Communist Party Of Nepal (Maoist) With Commentary By Butch Lee*. Montreal: Kersplebedeb, 2006; Butch Lee. *On Military Strategy of Women and Children*, 65-116. Montreal: Kersplebedeb, 2003; Butch Lee. “The Re-Biography of Harriet Tubman.” In *Jailbreak Out of History: The Re-Biography of Harriet Tubman & the Evil of Female Loaferism*. Montreal: Kersplebedeb, 2015; E. Tani and Kaé Sera. *False Nationalism, False Internationalism: Class Contradictions in the Armed Struggle*. Seeds Beneath the Snow, 1985; Assata Shakur. *Assata: an Autobiography*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1987; Dylan Rodríguez. “The Terms of Engagement: Warfare, White Locality, and Abolition.” *Critical Sociology* 36:1 (2009): 151-173.

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- ⁴ Bobby Seale. *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991 [1970].
- ⁵ Please see Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, eds. *Agents of Repression: the FBI's Secret War against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*. Boston: South End Press, 1988.
- ⁶ As seen in *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service* (23 November 1967): 11.
- ⁷ Dylan E. Rodríguez, *Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- ¹¹ Hortense J. Spillers. "Peter's Pans: Eating in the Diaspora." *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*. (2003) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 21.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ See also Kara Keeling's *The Witch's Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- ¹⁴ Cited in Philip S. Foner, ed. *The Black Panthers Speak*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1970. For a great introduction to the artwork of Emory Douglas, see: *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. New York: Rizzoli, 2007.
- ¹⁵ Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin, 1996 [1970]. 10
- ¹⁶ Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963 [1961].
- ¹⁷ Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*. New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1986.
- ¹⁸ The Party's approach to pedagogy of course was not without its own flaws. As Shakur notes, the political education (PE) program in the Party were not perfect. She notes how there were three sectors of PE internal to the organization: 1) community classes, 2) classes for BPP cadre, and 3) PE classes for Party leadership. After being forced underground, continuing her political work in a cell of the Black Liberation Army, and eventually being captured by (and successfully escaping) the U.S. prison regime, she reflects on the problems she noticed in her acclaimed autobiography. On page 221 to 223, we see Shakur arguing:
 ...the problem lies in the fact that the BPP had no systematic approach to political education. They were reading the *Red Book* but didn't know who Harriet Tubman, Marcus Garvey, and Nat Turner were. They talked about intercommunalism but still really believed that the Civil War was fought to free the slaves. A whole lot of them barely understood any kind of history, Black, African or otherwise. Huey Newton had written that politics was war without bloodshed and that war was politics with bloodshed. To a lot of Panthers, however struggle consisted of only two aspects: picking up the gun and serving the people...That was the main reason many Party members, in my opinion, underestimated the need to unite with other Black organizations and to struggle around various community issues...I am convinced that a systematic program for political education, ranging from the simples to the highest level, is imperative for any successful organization or movement for Black liberation in this country. The Party has some of the most politically conscious sisters and brothers as members, but in some ways, it failed to spread the consciousness to the cadre in general. I also thought was a real shame the BPP didn't teach Panther organizing and mobilizing techniques. Some members were natural geniuses at organizing people, but they were usually the busiest comrades with the most responsibility. Part of the problem was that the Party has grown so fast that there wasn't a lot of time to come up with step-by-step approaches to things. The other part of the problem was that almost from its inception, the BPP was under attack from the U.S. government.
- ¹⁹ "GUERRILLA WAR IN THE U.S.A." *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service* (Nov. 1970/Jan. 1971)
- ²⁰ Ibid., 1.

²¹ Ibid., 1.

²² Ibid., 1-2.

²³ “Insurgent cohesion” is a term that refers to the shared sense of belonging, collectivity, and consciousness that is shared amongst the participants or members of an insurgent revolutionary movement. This term is a play on the military concept developed in Paul Staniland’s *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*. It is a theoretically flawed text, no doubt, but the concept of “cohesion” amongst revolutionaries is quite useful for our purposes here.