

POWER TO THE PEOPLE: Service Learning and Social Justice

**Robert S. Oden
Thomas A. Casey**
San Francisco State University- CSU Sacramento
U. S. A.

ABSTRACT: Based on interviews with former Black Panther Party leaders, the co-authors, former Black Panther Party members, explore the link between the Panther's revolutionary approaches to political education and community survival activities in the African American community and academically-oriented service learning methodologies and practices. This research provides an approach to enhancing service learning and social justice work for students in higher education.

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Introduction

This paper seeks to forge a historic link between the traditions, principles and practice of service learning with the development, theory, practice, and social movement organization of the Black Panther Party. We will demonstrate how these two social paradigms are interconnected and how the Black Panther Party was an innovator and precursor to the principles and practices used currently in service-learning initiatives.

While there are differences and similarities between these approaches to social change, this paper seeks to begin the discussion of the theoretical links between the way service learning is being thought of and practiced in higher education today and how the Black Panther Party developed as the leading revolutionary organization in the United States from the mid-1960s and mid-1970s.

Historical Impact of Black Panther Party

The Black Panther Party for Self Defense (its original title) was formed in October 1966, by Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale both of whom came from working- class backgrounds (Newton, 1973). At the time, they were both students in their early twenties, attending Merritt College, a community college in North Oakland. Newton, a street-wise youth admired for his intellectual wit and street courage, was the seventh child of a minister from Louisiana. Seale was a former Air Force technician and part-time stage comedian and community activist. They both were inspired by the teachings and life of Malcolm X. The Black Panther Party emerged in the context of living in a community underrepresented both politically and economically, with high unemployment and constant harassment and brutality from local police. It also came out of shifting political landscapes, both nationally with the Civil Rights Movement and globally with the push for independence from colonialism. These social forces were exploding with revolutionary fervor from the bayous of Mississippi to the jungles of Vietnam, and oppressed people were becoming energized and dedicated to the liberation impulses of the post-WW II period.

Newton and Seale recognized these conditions and created an organization that reflected the vision of Malcolm X and the liberation philosophies of Marx, Lenin, Mao, Fanon and Freire. The co-founders established a 10-point program (see Appendix), which contained the organization's goals and blueprint for Black liberation. The organization believed that Black people should be able to "determine the destiny of their community" (from B.P.P. Ten-Point Platform) This meant ending police harassment and police brutality by having community control of the police; providing free housing, free health care, education rather than mis-education, and free clothing; having a jury of their peers; ending military service for Black men; and freeing Black people from prison because they are political prisoners. These and other demands were the goals established by Newton and Seale. The Black Panther Party also believed that they had a constitutional right to bear arms to better protect the Black community from violent attacks from either the police or other forces. These goals, along with their early actions of confronting the Oakland police by monitoring police stops of Black motorists, captured the imagination of the Black community and brought them into direct conflict and confrontation with police authorities.

The organization in its early formulation understood the connection between theory and practice. Newton (1973) was a self-taught reader and was well versed in the readings of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Lenin, and others. He was going to law school as well as organizing in the community. He formulated his organization into one that studied and discussed the great social thinkers and revolutionaries of the modern epoch. Newton and Seale infused the organization with the need to be politically educated to the theoretical directions of social change and the needs of the community. Political education was incorporated into the organizational framework. This activity became the major vehicle for

linking theory with practice. Much will be said about the political education process in the Black Panther Party in this paper, because this is an important corollary to the traditions in service learning, which is the ability to link learning with service. The Black Panther Party did this on an everyday basis through the implementation of its community survival programs, such as the free breakfast for children program, free medical clinics, community education programs for children, free sickle cell anemia testing, and a host of other services.

Political education classes were an essential element in the learning process for Black Panther Party members. Political prisoner and former Panther member Mumia Abu Jamal comments on his perspective about political education, "The political education program was an important party vehicle for the dissemination of the Black Panther Party message, ideology and outlook" (Cleaver and Katsiaficas, 2003, p. 47). These political education classes, combined with the everyday activities of the organization, represented the forerunner to principles for service learning highlighted in the Wingspread principles of 1989.

The Black Panther Party represented the community-based social change approach, which over time has been muted by political repression and organizational fatigue. This approach is congruent, however, with those, such as Jacoby and Associates (1996), who believe that service learning in higher education should proceed as a process and philosophy: "Service-learning is therefore a philosophy of reciprocity, which implies a concerted effort to move from charity to justice, from service to the elimination of need" (p. 9).

Personal Connection to Service Learning and the Black Panther Party

This paper is inspired by the personal experiences of the two authors who have a unique position from which the connection between service learning and the Black Panther Party can be investigated. Both of us are former members of the organization. Dr. Oden was a member from June 1968 to December 1968, and Dr. Casey was a member from 1974 to 1978. Since that time period both of us have received college degrees and have worked for local government in Berkeley and Oakland, California. While working on a Ph.D. in sociology at University of California, Santa Cruz, Dr. Oden coordinated and taught a service-learning class called Oakes Serves at Oakes College-U.C. Santa Cruz. This class was part of a service component in which students volunteered for 8 hours per week for 10 weeks in a non-profit agency or educational institution. Dr. Oden's involvement in this program lasted for 6 years. After receiving his Ph.D. he went on to teach in the Department of Government at California State University, Sacramento, where the Urban Politics course he teaches includes service learning as a component of the course. Dr. Casey, after receiving a Ph.D. from Golden Gate University in Public Administration/International Relations, took over the position at Oakes College and has coordinated and taught the service-learning course for the past 3 years. It is from this vantage

point that this story and inquiry are being presented. From this perspective we will be able to reflect on how we carried our perspectives, philosophies, ideology, and practices from our Black Panther Party experiences into the classroom in service-learning settings.

Theoretical Connections between Service Learning and the Black Panther Party

Service learning as a philosophy and practice and the Black Panther Party as a social movement organization took separate but congruent trajectories in each of their conceptual and practical developments. The community service, national service movements of the 1960s, which preceded the campus-based service-learning programs of today, evolved from experiences of individuals who were VISTA volunteers and who worked in poor and communities of color in the late 1960s and 1970s. The work of these volunteers was conditioned by the social movements of the time and the struggle and contention over community control that was occurring in many urban areas of the U.S. The notions of the community defining its own needs and services and the need to “serve the community” came out of expressions for self-determination from many individuals and organizations such as the Black Panther Party.

The service-learning community in the 1970s recognized these expressions as genuine ways for service to be carried out in community volunteer situations. Practitioners and educators in the community service and field experience domains began to meet and discuss the proper role of service and the connection between the learning process and the service (Jacoby and Associates, 1996; Wade, 1997). One of the articulations of this connection emerged from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The SREB was concerned with “developing learning opportunities for students that were related to community services, community development, and social change” (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999, p. 2). In the mid-1970s the early version of service-learning principles was developed by educators and practitioners to incorporate “structural opportunities for critical reflection on service, so students could ‘better understand the causes of social injustice’” (Stanton, Giles, Cruz, 1999, p. 3). In conjunction with these various conferences and meetings, Robert Sigmon (cited in Stanton, Giles, & Cruz), one of the SREB practitioners in 1979 developed three principles which have guided the development of service-learning. These principles are:

1. Those being served control the service(s) provided;
2. Those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions; and
3. Those who serve are also learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned. (p. 3)

These principles have helped guide the development of service-learning programs primarily in higher education and in some community settings. These principles articulated by Sigmon represent ideals that were also being used and had been used by social movement organizations, principally the Black Panther Party. It is, however, particularly interesting to note that Sigmon outlines for the Council of Independent Colleges "An Organizational Journey to Service Learning." This eight-page diagram outlines the historic trajectories of five different sectors in the genealogy of service learning. These five areas are: (1) Governmental Institutions, (2) Higher Education, (3) Business and Philanthropy, (4) Education Associations, and (5) Intellectual Markers. What is missing in the elaborate diagram, which starts from the 1850s with the establishment of the Morrill and Homestead Acts, up to the mid-1990s, is the lack of recognition and awareness of community-based initiatives. The absence of community-based initiatives in this diagram, particularly in the inner-cities of the United States, is a serious omission because they have helped define community needs, produced the change agents, and compelled these five different entities to become more inclusive and reflective in their engagement with social issues.

Social movements of the late 1800s, 1930s, and the 1960s through the 1970s have provided the framework and environment for service-learning activities to operate at the community level in poor and communities of color in the United States. The most dynamic social movement organization of the 1960s in terms of longevity and commitment for social change was the Black Panther Party. At the apex of its organizational development the Black Panther Party had in 1970, some 5,000 party members located in 38 party chapters and branches in the United States and several in Europe and Africa. The fact that this organization and an entire social movement sector are left out of a historical description of service learning demonstrates the dissonance between social movement organizations and the service-learning paradigm. What Sigmon and others did not realize is that the Black Panther Party initiated a militant, revolutionary model of service learning that was reflective and service-oriented. This occurred throughout much of the history of the organization. The political actions of the organization were informed by advancing principles and practices that were similar to those adopted in 1989 by service-learning theorists and practitioners.

The Black Panther Party's Ideology and Methodology as a Service-Learning Innovator

It is important to explore the link between the Black Panther Party and service learning. This relationship is influenced by what others have articulated as the agency of the oppressed to become conscious or in Paulo Freire's term "conscientization" (Freire, 1993, p. 19). Freire envisioned and experienced the necessity of the oppressed to become masters of their own transformation. Freire introduced pedagogical directions that included transformative processes for reaching liberation. Praxis for Freire is "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (O'Grady, 2000, p.33). Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in

their creation of the Black Panther Party developed an organization that was engaged with the literature of the oppressed. They used that literature to inform the uninformed masses in the black community who were living in substandard conditions.

The Black Panther Party represents an organization and community institution that utilized Freire's (1993) principles to link the Black Panther Party with the community it served in a transformative manner. The Black Panther Party, through its political education classes, which were a requirement for all party members and particularly new recruits, introduced theoretical writings that embraced and articulated revolutionary social change. The primary text in political education classes was Mao Tse-Tung's (1966) "Red Book," a collection of quotes consisting of sentences and paragraphs from Mao's vast collection of revolutionary, historic, and theoretical writings. During their political education classes, the Black Panther Party members, led by a section leader (or the Minister of Education, if it occurred at the central headquarters in Oakland), would continuously review and go through the phrases in the "Red Book" line by line, interpreting the sentence and relating it to the reality of the Black community in the United States. These interpretations of the "Red Book," along with other literature from thinkers and revolutionaries such as Fanon, Marx, Lenin, Malcolm X and others, helped frame the intellectual and theoretical basis for the organization's ideology and programs. The political education classes were used for educational purposes but also as a space for discussion and reflection upon the work of the organization as it related to improving the work with the community.

Connecting the Wingspread Principles with the Black Panther Party

Service-learning principles, developed from the theory and practice of programs emanating from universities and colleges in the U.S. in the 1980s, derived from lessons learned from the experiences of the 1960s and 1970s in volunteer and community service programs. In the 1980s, several national community service and experiential education groups worked on improving the connection between service and learning. The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), a group of practitioners and educators in the service-learning field, in conjunction with the Johnson Foundation, worked on numerous drafts and joined by 70 organizations at a workshop at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1989 (Jacoby and Associates, 1996, p. 29). The Wingspread Principles came out of the publication *Principles of Good Practices for Combining Service and Learning* from the Wingspread Conference (Kendall and Associates, 1990).

The principles emphasize program development and sustainability, partly in response to the tenuous status of earlier service-learning initiatives, such as the University Year for ACTION and National Center for Service-Learning, which were marginalized or phased out when their funding ended. Hence, the

Wingspread principles reflect a major concern for creation of sound educational programs that could succeed in being institutionalized with the academy (Jacoby and Associates, 1996, p. 29).

The Wingspread principles provide the basis for effective service-learning programs. The principles are as follows:

An effective and sustained program that combines service and learning:

1. engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good;
2. provides structural opportunities for people to reflect critically on their services experience;
3. articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved;
4. allows for those with needs to define those needs;
5. clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved;
6. matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances;
7. expects genuine, active and sustained organizational commitment;
8. includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals;
9. insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate and in the best interest of all involved and
10. is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations. (Jacoby and Associates, 1996, p. 30)

These principles are reflective of how service-learning programs should conceptually operate. While these principles were developed in the idyllic setting of Wingspread in the rural Midwest, away from the inner-city problems of the poor and people of color, they are very relatively close to the principles and practices of the Black Panther Party that had emerged some two decades earlier in Oakland, California.

In order to study the connection of the Black Panther Party with the precepts of service learning, we conducted an in-depth interview with six former Black Panther Party members, three of whom were in the top leadership positions and three members who were considered "rank and file" or cadre of the Black Panther Party. We presented the Wingspread principles to these individuals. The principles were modified to reflect the Black Panther Party as the active agent in the principles as opposed to an individual service-learner. The following modified Wingspread principles were read to the interviewees:

1. How did the Black Panther Party engage people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good?
2. Did the Black Panther Party through political education provide structural opportunities for members to reflect on their experience?

3. Did the Black Panther Party have clear goals in mind when they implemented their community service or survival programs? If so what were some of those goals?
4. Did the Black Panther Party allow those in the community to define their needs?
5. Did the Black Panther Party clarify the responsibilities of each person in organization?
6. Did the Black Panther Party through its community service programs provide a process that recognized changing circumstances?
7. Did the Black Panther Party expect from its members genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment to the community?
8. Did the Black Panther Party through its operation provide training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet the goals of the organization?
9. Did the Black Panther Party ensure that the time commitment for political education and community flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of the community?
10. Was the Black Panther Party programs committed to working and participating by and with diverse populations?

The Black Panther Party obviously was neither ideologically nor in practice similar to service-learning programs that are located on college campuses. In contrast, the Black Panther Party was a revolutionary organization that went through various ideological and organizational changes during its 15-year period of active existence. Yet, these questions had much resonance for the interviewees because of the similarity of vision between both ideological paradigms.

The responses from the Black Panther Party members to the questions posed from the Wingspread principles indicate that the Black Panther Party was a pioneer in seeking to provide community services to the Black community through empowering that community with “conscientization” that would help bring about social change. The Black Panther Party linked their political education classes within their organizational framework to create a learning environment for party members and the community. Political education classes were open to the public, and if you became a member of the organization, internal political education classes occurred continually. Internally the organization used the precepts of Chairman Mao’s (1966) dicta of criticism and self-criticism as a method of reflection that was used to improve the work of party members. The process of discussing criticism, self-criticism, and the implementation of political education classes certainly is not akin to educational environments at colleges and universities, where service-learning opportunities for reflection and learning have different meanings and context. The party used their formal and informal education processes to sharpen their understanding of the oppression facing them every day and to refine their methodology and practices to defeat the White

power elite that the organization believed was oppressing the Black community and all oppressed people.

While the service-learning process does not fit all the dimensions of the Black Panther Party, there are similar elements that solidify the relationship between service and learning, and those elements are reflection and reciprocity (Jacoby and Associates, 1996, p. 6). The processes of political education, criticism and self-criticism, in many ways served as the learning modality in the organization, and the community service work, which was reciprocal in every dimension. The next section in this paper will assist in clarifying how these two paradigms are interconnected through the lens of the Wingspread principles.

The Interview Process

Both authors of the study interviewed three former Black Panther Party members each. The interviewees were questioned using the modified Wingspread principles. The interviews lasted from 20 minutes to one hour in length. The interviewees were:

- David Hilliard, Chief of Staff of the Black Panther Party (1967-1974)
- Emory Douglas, Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party (1967-1981)
- Erika Huggins, Deputy Minister of Education, who directed the Oakland Community Learning School operated by the Black Panther Party
- Audrea Jones, a leader of the Boston chapter of the Black Panther Party
- Joe Abron, Technical Advisor for the Community Learning School
- Kaye Washington, Language Arts Teacher at the Community Learning School

The following is a matrix of the responses given by these individuals to questions formed from the Wingspread principles. An additional structured question was asked that detailed the interviewees' role in the party and their involvement in political education.

Matrix of Black Panther Party Member Interview Responses				
Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure	Summary Explanation
1. How were you involved in the BPP and political education.				Everybody was participating in the P.E. studying subjects like police brutality and survival programs
1. Did the BPP through PE provide structural opportunities for members to reflect on their experience?	6			The party allowed people reflect in PE classes and informal discussions.
2. How did the BPP engage people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good?				People would volunteer to work with one of the survival program.
3. Did the BPP have clear goals in mind when they implemented their community service or survival programs? If so what were some of those goals?	6			
4. Did the BPP allow those in the community to define their needs?	5	1		Survival programs were a response to community expression of needs.
5. Did the BPP clarify the responsibilities of each person in the organization?	6	2		
6. Did the BPP through its community service programs provide a process that recognized changing circumstances?	6			The BPP through time changed constantly.
7. Did the BPP expect from its members genuine, active and sustained organizational commitment to the community?	6			Yes, sometimes to the detriment of party member themselves.
8. Did the BPP through its operation provide training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition and evaluation to meet the goals of the organization?	4	2		In the early years and not as much towards the end.
the BPP ensure that the time commitment for Political Education and community service was flexible, appropriate the best interests of the community?	3	3		
Did the BPP programs committed to engaging and participating by and with diverse populations?	6			The BPP from beginning to end worked with all kinds of groups i.e. Whites, Hispanics and Puerto Ricans.

Analysis of Interview Findings

These preliminary findings are based upon a small sampling of opinions and perspectives from former Black Panther Party members. We thought it would be important to be as diverse in our sampling as possible. There was a 50/50 split between those that were part of the organization's leadership and those that were considered rank and file. In addition, we interviewed equal numbers of women and men. Generally most participants in the interviews were eager to share their views of the Black Panther Party experience, and all agreed that many of the models for social service programs in the United States were begun by the Black Panther Party. Two of the responses mentioned the Free Breakfast for Children program, which has resulted in near-universal child meal programs in the United States. Another example is the Oakland Community Learning School which may have been the first Charter school in Oakland or California before the term was used. Unlike private schools, the Panther school included children from all economic levels without required tuition.

There were 10 questions in the survey with nine quantifiable and one purely qualitative. The initial warm-up question asked of the interviewees was to discuss their role in the Black Panther Party and their involvement with the political education process. Following that question, the first question asked was qualitative in nature: "How did the Black Panther Party engage people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good?" The responses were diverse but most respondents mentioned the survival programs as a way in which people became actively engaged. Emory Douglas stated: "We led by example...By example of the patrols, by showing people they had a constitutional right to bear arms, and also educating people to those rights and to stand in firm conviction of those rights" (Douglas, Interview, July 23, 2004). This also included the free breakfast programs, the schools, and assistance to the poor which including free food and medical care.

The second question asked, "Did the Black Panther Party through political education provided structural opportunities for members to reflect on their experience?" The responses were all yes and included reference to the Party's political education classes, which most felt were the structured vehicle through which people became aware of the Party's program and the organization's active response. However one respondent, Audrea Jones stated:

Your term *reflection* is interesting because we probably call that subjective reflection. We certainly wanted people to sharpen their analysis of the theory and practice and how those two things come together, so certainly the political education classes were a vehicle for that. But I would say it was definitely political, it was not as much reflection on your personal experience so quite frankly and unfortunately there was not a lot of emphasis on anyone's personal experience. (7-25-04)

Jones' response indicates that reflection in the service-learning methodology was not implemented in classroom type of settings but through everyday struggles and work within the party's organization.

The third question asked if the "Black Panther Party had clear goals in mind when they implemented their community service programs." Again there was universal agreement that the Black Panther Party had goals as expressed in their Ten-Point Platform and Program. However, there was divergence around whether those goals were clear. Some felt that many people missed the point that the programs were meant to be temporary solutions to structural problems in the communities throughout America. Others felt confusion existed because the political education was not as consistent as it could have been.

The fourth question asked if the "Black Panther Party allowed the community to define their needs?" Five out of the six respondents felt that the Party had allowed the community to participate in determining their own needs. One of the respondents felt that the Party practiced a form of chauvinism where the Party independently of the community decided what was best for the people. An example of the positive response to this question comes from David Hilliard; he stated:

First the ideas would come from the community, sometimes, distinct and disconnected. But we would take these ideas and refine them and send them back to the community as their very own. That was the technique of these professional organizers. Always having this dialogue with the community. (7-7-04)

The fifth question asked, "Did the BPP clarify responsibilities of each person in the organization?" It received a near-universal positive response. However, one respondent replied yes and no, stating that there was public surface responsibility for BPP members that was pretty clear, but then as a revolutionary organization there was an unpublicized role that was hidden in which one's role and responsibility was not explicitly defined. In other words, one did whatever was required to forward the struggle. Job classifications were not strict.

Question six related to whether the "BPP through its community service programs provide[d] a process that recognized changing circumstances." Again there was general agreement that the BPP had evolved and changed over the years. One respondent, Audrea Jones said, "I think the Party evolved over time. From an organization that started out as the BPP for Self Defense, military, community programs, internationalism, intercommunalism, it developed. We had to change the ways we were going to be engaged in this struggle because of internal contradictions as well as external" (7-25-04). Other respondents indicated that the BPP changed so often that some members could not keep up.

Question seven asked, “Did the BPP expect from its members genuine, active and sustained organizational commitment from the community?” A comment from one respondent Emory Douglas, probably best summarizes the way most former party members felt.

As a rule when you join the party, you begin by selling papers, attending PE (political education). You had to participate in the breakfast programs and you had to participate in other outreach programs. If you could not do those things, you had to leave or you were told to leave. (7-23-04)

Most Party members interviewed had the perspective of “service to the people.”

Question eight asked, “Did the BPP through its operation provide training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition and evaluation to meet the goals of the organization?” Four of the six respondents felt that the Party did some training, supervision, and monitoring. However, two of the respondents felt that the Party did not provide adequate training and supervision and provided almost no recognition and evaluation. One respondent, Joe Abron, commented, “I would say the organization was weak in that area. The organization had weak management structures, which is why it imploded in on itself. If it would have done a better job in that area, it would have lasted longer. But those management systems did not exist” (8-15-04).

Question nine asked, “Did the BPP ensure that the time commitment for Political Education and community service was flexible, appropriate and in the best interests of the community?” This question was the most contentious of all the questions. In fact, three of the respondents responded in the affirmative to this question with three responding negatively. One respondent, Ericka Huggins, said, “No, we felt we were going to die tomorrow. There was no downtime unless you were sick or pregnant.” Another respondent David Hilliard said, “Sure, as simple as it seems, you had to train people to give away 10,000 bags of groceries. There would be classes on how to do this effectively” (7-8-04).

The last and tenth question asked, “Was the BPP programs committed to working and participating by and with diverse populations?” This question received an overwhelmingly positive response. The responses could be summed up by this comment from respondent Emory Douglas,

Yes, we were part of the anti-war movement, we also dealt with strikes. Also mainstream politics or electoral politics. We were involved with the Brown Berets, Red Guard, and also worked with white people in the Appalachia’s. Fred Hampton worked with the Appalachians, the Young Patriots. (7-23-04)

The Black Panther Party, according to those interviewed, really believed and practiced its slogan, “All Power to The People.” In fact it was felt that this was

one of the strongest aspects of the Black Panther Party. Yet one respondent pointed out that the organization was able to make coalitions without losing its own ideological perspective.

Reflection on Linking the Wingspread Principles with the Black Panther Party

The findings of the interviews conducted with former Black Panther Party members using the modified Wingspread principles indicate a relationship between the principles and practices of both paradigms. In fact in a concluding remark in the interview with Emory Douglas, former Minister of Culture, he stated,

It seemed like those questions were taken from the reality of what we were already implementing. It fits like a glove. I do not see much disconnection between any of those questions from what we were actually doing in the practice. It seems like they [Wingspread principles] were derived from our practice. (7-23-04)

The Wingspread principles, while designed for higher education settings, philosophically embody the training, commitment, sustainability, and diversity needed for a valid service-learning program. The Black Panther Party also valued those elements in the performance of its tasks as a party, the paramount difference being what the word *commitment* meant for party members. Audrea Jones, former Boston chapter leader comments:

I think that people who joined the Black Panther Party understood the level of commitment they were making. Because it was not like joining the Urban League or the NAACP, with all due respect to those organizations, because you were putting your life on the line. (7-25-04)

Most service-learning placements are not at that level of commitment. However the Black Panther Party members demonstrated continually the seriousness of their volunteer work which was reflected in their ideology and practice.

While this paper presents only preliminary and anecdotal findings to illustrate the connection between service-learning and the Black Panther Party, much can be learned and used from this study for further research.

We believe that there is a need to more fully recognize the contributions that the Civil Rights movement made toward the development of service learning. The work by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in setting up liberation schools for literacy and community action (Carson, 1995) and other Civil Rights organizations needs to be more fully researched to ascertain linkages to the development of service learning. The Civil Rights and Black power movement time period, roughly 1965-1975, should be seen as a propitious

time period when principles and practices used later in service-learning were already in practice.

The Black Panther Party methodology was clearly different from most volunteer community service programs due to the regimentation of the organization and the hierarchical structure of the organization; however, party members were still volunteers and they conducted community services.

While the Black Panther Party organizational structure will be difficult to replicate using current service-learning practices, the spirit and commitment to social change exemplified by the Black Panther Party can be pursued within service learning curricula using the Wingspread principles as a basis for working in communities seeking ways to achieve social justice.

Conclusion

The research for this paper has brought us, both authors, full circle from where we began our political journey by joining the Black Panther Party in the 1960s and 1970s to achieve Black liberation for the Black and oppressed masses. As stated earlier, we have both had the opportunity to teach a service-learning course: Oakes Serves, at U. C. Santa Cruz, Oakes College. The experience of teaching principles and techniques and facilitating reflective discussion from students on their field experiences was not dissimilar to our experiences in the party. The pedagogy and design of the service-learning course at Oakes College was informed by the experiences of both of us as party members. The link between theory and practice was utilized in the course curriculum which enabled students in the courses to look outside of their service work to analyze the larger social forces making volunteer service work necessary. During the Oakes Serves course students examined the impact of race, class, and gender on the ability of people to attain the services needed to sustain and improve their lives. The Oakes Serves class mirrored for us the political education classes of the party in not only discussing and reflecting on the students' own volunteer experiences at placement sites, but also in linking their service work to greater societal struggles that impact on the ability of volunteers to deliver services to those in need. Studying these dimensions enabled the Oakes Serves students to become more conscious and critical of the limitations and possibilities for social change. Many of the former Oakes Serves students are now working in socially-oriented careers. In our discussions with some of these students, they credit the Oakes Serves experience for guiding them into that career direction.

In addition to the Oakes Serves program, Dr. Oden developed a tutorial/mentorship program in which U. C. Santa Cruz undergraduates, primarily students of color, were paid to tutor and mentor low-performing middle and high school students in a local community some 50 miles away from the campus in Seaside, California. Three times during the quarter, Dr. Oden met with the students to have them reflect on their work with the students. These sessions

were intended to have the U.C. students discuss the larger issues in education and ways of improving their work with the young students. This work continued with Dr. Casey, after Dr. Oden left U.C. Santa Cruz. Dr. Casey used the techniques and practices learned from his years working as an instructor in the Black Panther Party Community Learning School to further inform his work in this program.

Out of this study, several recommendations and observations can be made:

- More research is needed to explore the linkages between the Black Panther Party and other social movement organizations to the genealogy of service learning.
- Service-learning programs in higher education should deepen community-based linkages. Service-learners need to be more embedded in the communities that they serve.
- Service-learning placements, particularly those that are community-based, should last at least a year in duration, which will enable service-learners to work in community settings that can lead to empowering community members in the spirit of the Black Panther Party.
- Colleges and universities should consider a college major that is structured around a community-based service curriculum. Students in this major would spend up to two years serving and learning in a community, similar to the commitments made by Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers.
- Service-learning methodologies need to go beyond reflection and toward empowerment models used by organizations like the Black Panther Party to challenge and confront the larger political and economic systems, which will then empower community members and service-learners.

These recommendations and observations, we believe, will enable community-based service learning to become more meaningful, crucial, and relevant in the empowerment of the poor and communities of color, and help make the famous Panther slogan of the 1960s, "All Power to the People," become a reality.

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Appendix

BLACK PANTHER PARTY PLATFORM AND PROGRAM October 1966

WHAT WE WANT WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. **We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.**

We believe that Black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.

2. **We want full employment for our people.**

We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the white American businessman will not give full employment, then the means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. **We want an end to the robbery by the capitalist of our Black community.**

We believe that this racist government has robbed us and how we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The Germans are now aiding the six million Jews. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifth million Black people; therefore we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.

4. **We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.**

We believe that if the white landlords will give decent housing to our Black community, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that our community,

with government aid, can build and make decent housing for its people.

5. **We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent 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 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.

6. **We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.**

We believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world, who, like Black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military, by whatever means necessary.

7. **We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of Black people.**

We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

8. **We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.**

We believe that all Black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.

9. **We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.**

We believe that the courts should follow the United States Constitution so that Black people will receive fair trials. The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives a man a right to be tried by his peer group. A peer is a person from a similar economic, social, religious, geographical, environmental, historical, and racial background. To do this the court will be forced to select a jury from the Black community from which the Black defendant came. We have been and are being tried by all-white juries that have no understanding of the "average reasoning man" of the Black community.

10. **We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace. As our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the Black colony, in which only Black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of Black people as to their national destiny.**

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with one another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is the right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Robert Stanley Oden, Ph. D., (Assistant Professor of Government in CSU Sacramento) graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz, in sociology and taught service learning course at U.C Santa Cruz. He is a social activist and city administrator in Berkeley and Oakland in California and recently published an article about prospects for recovering citizens in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in "Reflections and Responses to Hurricane Katrina."

Thomas Amar Casey, Ph. D., (Lecturer of Black Studies in San Francisco State University) graduated from Golden Gate University in public administration and taught service learning classes at U.C. Santa Cruz. He has also worked as a city planner in Oakland, CA. and has traveled and researched extensively in South Africa, in which he wrote his dissertation on the informal economy of South Africa.(Contact the authors at rso@csus.edu, tbcasey@aol.com ; contact the editors of EMME at emme@eastern.edu.)

Recommended Citation in the APA Style:

Oden, R. S., & Casey, T. A. (2006). Power to the people: Service learning and social justice. *Electronic Magazine of Multicultural Education*, 8(2), 1-19. Retrieved your access month date, year, from http://www.eastern.edu/publications/emme/2006fall/oden_casey.pdf

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