

# VIEWPOINT

## Panthers a respected force in mainstream of politics

By RICKY SHARPLESS  
Staff Writer

**Editor's note:** This is the fourth of a five-part series seeking to uncloud the distorted image of the Black Panther Party.

Point 7 of the Black Panther platform reads: "We want an immediate end to Police Brutality and Murder of Black people." Police have raided Panther's offices, have arrested Panthers on flimsy grounds, and have seen fit to shoot at Panthers for very unsubstantial reasons.

Questionable police activities directed toward Panthers in Oakland and San Francisco have been regular occurrences. Eldridge Cleaver and his wife, along with Emory Douglas, the Black Panther

Party's Revolutionary Artist, were subjected to a police raid in January, 1968. Police broke into the Cleavers' apartment, and searched without a warrant. This was just one of the many incidents of inappropriate police procedures endured by the Black Panthers.

The Black Panther Party has now dropped the word for Self-Defense from its name—Newton and others felt that the title laid too much stress on the simple idea of self-defense and not enough on the group's identity as a political party with a program but it was as a group dedicated to self-defense that the Panthers first came to public notice, and it did not spring into being without background.

"Today the Black Panther Party has come a long way from the gun-slinging

days of the sixties. It operates community service programs for children and old people, participates in local elections and hobnobs with leading Democratic officials. The Black Panther Party faces the nation now as a respected force in mainstream politics.

"After the era of bloody police repression in the late sixties and early seventies, Panther founder Huey Newton steered his organization back to their original emphasis on community survival programs. This policy was strikingly successful." The new Panther image is not the "leather jacketed, tough talking militants, marching in paramilitary style, an image which quickly came to symbolize the growth of the black liberation movement in the sixties."

Newton has engineered a dramatic reversal of policy. "The Panthers threw in their lot with the traditional mainstay of the black community, the church. They have abandoned Third World solidarity for ghetto organizing. They embark black capitalism. They have divested themselves of the old symbols and rhetoric. The old Panthers elicited respect through fear. The new Panthers seek to engender support through services, said R.K. Baker.

"No longer dependent on radical allies for their approbation and no longer fearful of the retaliation of authorities, the once angry Panthers have decided that politics is an extension of war by other means. The results may be the creation of the first

important black political machine in America," Baker said.

The community programs have always been an important part of the Black Panther Party, even in the old revolutionary days. Newton once explained: "We have what we call a ten-point program. It's called a survival program—survival until the people become more self-conscious and mature, because until then we are all in danger of genocide. Members of the Party spend most of their time setting up these programs and helping run them."

"These programs are open to everyone in the community. We have health clinics; we have a busing program for parents and relatives and friends of prisoners who would not be able to visit the prisons otherwise because they do not have the money; and we have clothing programs especially on the East Coast because of the winter cold. Now these are reformist kinds of programs but they have been integrated into the rest of our revolutionary program. We do them all over the country and we are expanding them. We know they won't solve the problem. But because we are interested in the people, we serve the people."

Jacob Ricky Sharpless is a senior Political Science and Afro-American Studies major from Maple Hill, N.C.

## They are real people too

By SHAROYN MARSHALL

What is a maid? What is a janitor? Aren't they people. Or are they just street folks who sweep, wash bathrooms, and empty trash?

They are real people . . .

They're usually Black, like ourselves. And Blacks are few at Carolina—unless you consider the custodians. Now there's one part of Carolina that's predominantly, if not totally, Black.

But we don't take that into consideration when we fight for our rights against discrimination or hold silent protests in the Pit. We complain about being turned down for jobs because we're Black. I wonder how many Blacks were faced with prejudices when they were hired to do the dirty work around here?

Yes, there are places in the working world for Blacks—in dorm bathrooms, hospital kitchens, and on the backs of trash trucks.

And we must frankly admit that we've turned our nose up at these people. We tend to look down on them because of their jobs and the way they carry themselves—like lost souls who work their bodies to frazzles in the dirtiest fields of work.

But recently I was lucky enough to see beyond these sad faces and into the soul of these people.

I came to realize that they were human, like me, and had minds, spirits, and most important, feelings. They, too, had goals and aspirations when they were young. They want to see our race make something of itself, but with the attitudes we have, they lose hope for us.

After making it a point to greet them with a friendly "Hi!" or "How's your day been?" I saw that many of them were just waiting for the opportunity to talk and express their feelings or thoughts.

Because of the attitudes many of us possess, the custodians feel themselves unworthy of our attention. We fight so hard for the betterment of our people and are so obsessed with getting higher in the world, that we neglect those of us who aren't there. We have become blind.

The custodial workers do their jobs, but we often take them for granted. They work for us, so let's work for them. Like all people, they appreciate a few words of kindness and the chance to talk. Let's step off our pedestals for a while and let them know we are aware that their color and ours are still the same.

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## Towards

