



Cromartie, J. Vern, *Reappraisal of the Black Panther Party: Selected Essays for the 21st Century*. Pittsburg, California: Geechee Press (P.O. Box 945, 94565), 2013, pp.170, index, bibliography, appendix, ISBN: 978-0-9913523-1-9. Reviewed by Itibari M. Zulu (editor, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*).

Considering the surge of books published on the Black Panther Party (*Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, *From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago*, *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*, etc.), this collection of seven (previously published) essays provide another view of the organization by Cromartie, a professor of Sociology at Contra Costa College in San Pablo, California, who first heard

of the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1967 at age 12 and contends that the Black Panther Party was one of the most important social movements to emerge during the 20th century (p.12). More importantly, the author's hope is that this book will help people to become more aware of the contributions of the BPP by BPP alumni like Joan Tarika Lewis, Li'l Bobby Hutton, B. Kwaku Duren, Regina Jennings, and Mumia Abu-Jamal, and BPP supporters like Betty Scott (p.13).

The first chapter of this work examines the BPP as a social movement in relationship to the concept of identification, organizational leadership, structure, and ideology. Next, the author outline the involvement of youth in the BPP as the organization grew to some 5,000 members and 40 chapters/branches throughout the U.S. engaged in the ideology and programs of the BPP with chief members like first recruit Bobby Hutton (Li'l Bobby Hutton), 16 year old Regina Jennings (she flew to Oakland from Philadelphia to join the BPP), and 15 year old Mumia Abu-Jamal who was a founding member and lieutenant of information of the Philadelphia chapter of BPP and in 1982 was convicted and sentenced to death for the December 1981 murder of Philadelphia police officer.

Shifting to particular members of the BPP, the book specifically focuses on the contributions of Joan Tarika Lewis, B. Kwaku Duren, and Li'l Bobby Hutton. In this insight, the reader learns that Joan Tarika Lewis was an English and math tutor at the Pan-African Cultural Center (1967) founded in Oakland, California by Fritz Pointer and Dave Patterson (many of the original cadre of the Black Panther Party were recruited from the center), and was one of the first female members of the BPP at age 17, who became the BPP minister of culture, and was later purged in 1969 after complaining of the mistreatment of the membership by the leadership.

Second, a detailed outline of the contribution of B. Kwaku Duren, before and after he was a member of the BPP, which includes his four and a half years in prison, work with Black House (a cultural center in Long Beach, California operated by former members of the Long Beach chapter of the BPP), how/why he joined the BPP, the re-establishment of a BPP chapter in Los Angeles, California in 1977, a report of his frustrations with the BPP headquarters in Oakland, California, receiving a law degree, practicing law, the founding of the New Panther Vanguard Movement, and several other activities of B. Kwaku Duren related to social change and justice.

The significance of this biography of Duren by the author is that others books on the BPP have generally overlooked or ignored B. Kwaku Duren and the southern California chapter of the BPP between 1976 and 1981, the last chapter of the BPP. Third, the life and times of Li'l Bobby Hutton (1950-1968), the first recruit and treasure of the BPP is explored, which documents his participation in many armed patrols of police in Oakland, California, how he: recruited other youth to the BPP, distributed the ten-point platform and program of the BPP with Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton (1942-1989) in 1966, helped to rent the first BPP office in Oakland, helped BPP co-founders Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale sell copies of the *Quotations from Chairman of Mao Tes-Tung* (the "Little Red Book") at UC Berkeley (1966), assisted in the distribution the first issue of *The Black Panther* (the official publication of the organization), aided in the recruiting of Eldridge Cleaver (1935-1998) to the BPP, participated in the 1967 California legislature armed protest demonstration in Sacramento, California (armed with a 12-gauge shotgun), participated in the protest of the police shooting of Denzil Dowell in north Richmond, California in 1967, and ultimately, how he was assassinated by police in Oakland, California on April 6, 1968 on 28th Street.

Next the author provides a summary of several surveys that show that the Black Panther Party received widespread support in the Black community and concludes with an appendix which list an "about the author profile," the October 1966 Black Panther Party platform and program, the rules of the Black Panther Party, the eight points of BPP, the three main rules of the BPP, the cover of the 1965 pamphlet of the BPP in Lowndes County in Alabama, a 1975 Scott-Smith committee leaflet, and August 1967 and March 1968 documents of the FBI covert project to aimed at surveying, infiltrating, discrediting, and disrupting domestic political organizations between 1956 and 1971.

This book thus adds to the growing body of literature on the Black Panther Party, such as *My People Are Rising: Memoir of a Black Panther Party Captain* (Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2012), an autobiography by Aaron Floyd Dixon, founder of the Seattle, Washington chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1968, or *The Founding of the Seattle Black Panthers Party and Its Influence on the African-American Civil Rights Movement in Seattle 1968-1977* self-published by Haile Berhe (2012). And moreover, the care of the presentation by the author who discusses his excitement about the Black Panther Party as a youth and his co-founding on a political study group (the 125th Street People's Party) in Waycross, Georgia is gratifying.