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The Making of Eldridge Cleaver: The Nation of Islam, Prison Life, and the Rise of a Black Power Icon.

Dr. Zoe A. Colley.

Abstract:

This article explores the early life of Eldridge Cleaver and his rise to prominence within the Black Panther Party. It argues that historians have largely overlooked the importance of Cleaver's radicalization while incarcerated inside California's penitentiaries between 1954 and 1966; this experience deeply influenced his rise to prominence as a leading figure in the Black Panther Party following his parole. The article details his earliest contacts with politically active inmates during the mid-1950s, who introduced Cleaver to radical political literature. He subsequently joined the Nation of Islam temple within San Quentin penitentiary and rose through the ranks to become the temple's minister. Through the use of Cleaver's papers, held by the Bancroft Library at the University of California Berkeley, this article contributes to the existing historiography on Cleaver in three ways. Firstly, it connects Cleaver's membership of the NOI with the growing politicization of African American inmates during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Secondly, it highlights the NOI's success in recruiting prisoners and the brutal repression that was inflicted upon members of the Nation of Islam by prison staff. It argues that Cleaver's experience of fighting prison racism was crucial in shaping his identity as a black nationalist, and continued to influence his position in the Black Panther Party after his release.

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In 1968, Eldridge Cleaver's collection of autobiographical essays—written while an inmate in California's Folsom Penitentiary—was published as *Soul on Ice*.¹ Already a leading member of the Black Panther Party, many within the predominantly white New Left responded to Cleaver's incisive commentary on American race relations with rapturous applause.² His status as prisoner-turned-author drew comparisons with Malcolm X's *Autobiography* and added authenticity to his claim to speak for the dispossessed of America.³ *Soul on Ice* follows a narrative of Cleaver's life from his childhood, detention in Juvenile Hall, his incarceration as an adult, and rise to prominence as a member of the Nation of Islam (NOI) while in San Quentin Penitentiary.⁴ The many years that Cleaver spent inside correctional institutions shaped *Soul on Ice*; at the heart of his writing stands a refusal to be cowed by the dehumanizing conditions of prison life. In 1965, Cleaver secured the support of San Francisco lawyer Beverly Axelrod; in addition to providing legal advice, Axelrod smuggled Cleaver's essays out of prison, hidden within legal papers, and sent them to the left-wing magazine *Ramparts*.⁵ Cleaver's writing proved to be his ticket to freedom; impressed by his eloquence, *Ramparts* offered Cleaver a position in their office, which helped him to convince the parole board that he had been successfully rehabilitated.⁶ In 1966, after serving a nine-year sentence, Cleaver left Folsom Penitentiary on parole.

Cleaver's writing, and his reputation as a prison organizer, soon attracted attention from co-founder of the Black Panther Party, Huey Newton.⁷ Formed in 1966 by Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California, the Black Panther Party challenged the conditions inside ghetto communities, and asserted the right to armed self-defense against police brutality.⁸ From its inception, the Party identified the white-controlled criminal justice system as a tool for keeping African Americans locked in a cycle of poverty, addiction, and crime.⁹ The level of police brutality and harassment in Black communities made arrest and incarceration a familiar experience for a significant number of Panthers.¹⁰ Cleaver's battle against the prison system appealed to many who had endured the horrors of prison, and he came to personify the BPP's resistance against the racism of the criminal justice system. Not only had Cleaver survived prison, he had emerged as a committed revolutionary.

Cleaver did not immediately embrace the Panthers as the vanguard of a revolution. In the final years of his incarceration, Cleaver had made plans with fellow inmate and ex-Muslim Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter to establish their own organization based on Malcolm X’s teaching.¹¹ With limited success in recruiting supporters, Cleaver joined the Panthers in 1967 and Newton appointed him Minister of Information.¹² From that point, he began a meteoric rise to become an iconic figure of the Black Power Movement. As a prolific writer and captivating public speaker, Cleaver articulated a version of black power ideology that drew upon his years of incarceration. A shoot-out with police in April 1968, which brought the death of party member Bobby Hutton, became a turning point in his life. Facing revocation of his parole, he sought exile in Cuba, and later Algeria, rather than return to the prison system that had nurtured his identity as a radical activist. In 1975, a very different Cleaver returned to the USA; he had rejected radical politics and adopted a new identity as a born-again Christian and member of the Republican Party.¹³

It is impossible to tell the history of the Black Panther Party without acknowledging the influence of Eldridge Cleaver. His ideological commitment to revolutionary violence and existing connections with Bay Area radicals placed him at the very top of the Party’s hierarchy, and shaped the BPP’s development in fundamental ways. However, his rebellion against America’s white power structure started much earlier inside the cells of Soledad, Folsom and San Quentin. His years of fighting the intense racism and brutality of the prison system shaped Cleaver’s critique of American race relations long after his release.¹⁴ Fellow Panther David Hilliard observed that Cleaver’s life inside the Black Panther Party “seems forged by his experience in prison, where you want to control people because you don’t know whom you can trust.”¹⁵ Cleaver himself noted that incarceration had left its mark on him. Writing in 1966, he reflected upon how “it is very easy for one in prison to lose his sense of self...he ends up not knowing who he is.”¹⁶ Prison, he concluded, had forever changed him. During 1967 and 1968 the Free Huey campaign—to defend Huey Newton against charges of killing a policeman and injuring another—consumed the Party membership. With Newton incarcerated, Cleaver became the mastermind of the campaign and emerged as the public face of the BPP. His firebrand rhetoric

helped capture the attention of the media, which in turn aided the Party's rapid expansion into communities across the country.¹⁷

In recent years, Panther historiography has shifted to look beyond the Party's 'great Black men' to present a more nuanced interpretation of the group, its membership, and its influence at the grassroots level.¹⁸ Work on the BPP in such diverse communities as Baltimore, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, and New Orleans has pushed the historiography beyond a focus upon Oakland and the national leadership.¹⁹ These studies demonstrate the complexity of the BPP and its influence upon Black communities across the country. This does not mean, however, that we have a complete understanding of the Party's operation in Oakland, nor all of its leading figures. In 2009, Peniel Joseph observed "black power's historiography suffers from the fact that [the] most important national leaders and icons of the movement...remain shrouded in mystery."²⁰ Joseph's 2014 biography of Stokely Carmichael has partly rectified this problem.²¹ Similar attention needs to be given to Cleaver in order to fully understand his role within the Black Panther Party and his shifting political ideologies. Katherine Rout's 1991 book, *Eldridge Cleaver*, is the only book-long examination of Cleaver's life, but it is deeply problematic for historians. It largely relies upon *Soul on Ice* and newspapers as sources of information, and the bibliography does not reference any archival material. Cleaver's role in the Nation of Islam and his prison years are reduced to a largely descriptive account of his writing. The majority of Rout's work is dedicated to Cleaver's life after his exile in 1968.²² A more balanced, sensitive, and critical biography would not only make a substantial contribution to our understanding of Cleaver, but also of the Black Panther Party.

Historian Joe Street has observed that some of the most recent developments in Panther historiography have contributed to our understanding of the cultural significance of the Party, and its contribution to African American identity.²³ Many of these scholars acknowledge the significance of the Party at the local level and the importance of its community survival programs, but have also refocused attention upon the Party's national development. This research has produced a more nuanced understanding of the BPP's wider contribution to the Black Power Movement. Published in 2004, Jeffrey Ogbar's *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* is one of the earlier examples of this

historiographical trend. Despite emphasizing the influence of the NOI upon the Black Panther Party, Ogbar's discussion of how the Nation engaged with the criminal justice system is limited to a brief mention of Malcolm X's prison conversion. Ogbar goes on to acknowledge Cleaver's important role in developing a Marxist outlook within the Black Panther Party, but otherwise he appears relatively briefly.²⁴

Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin's much-heralded *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* proposes that the BPP's origins lie in the complex interplay of national and local factors from the mid-1960s. They trace the political evolution of the Party and claim to have written the first comprehensive study of the Party.²⁵ Cleaver's influence as an advocate of a violent uprising against the white power structure is covered in some depth, yet it largely follows the same narrative of his prison years as in *Soul on Ice*.²⁶ Curtis J. Austin's research on the role of violence within the Black Panther Party likewise devotes attention to Cleaver's embrace of revolutionary politics and his influence upon the Party. Given Cleaver's commitment to inspiring a violent revolution, he stands out as a critical figure in this account of the Party. Nevertheless, Austin's coverage of Cleaver's formative years is limited to three pages and once again uses *Soul on Ice* as a core text.²⁷

While we do not have a biography of Cleaver, there is a slim volume of research that helps historians to start piecing his life together. Until recently, Eric Cummins's *The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement*, published in 1994, remained the strongest scholarly examination of Cleaver's contribution to the radicalization of African American prisoners. In a chapter-long analysis of Cleaver, Cummins focuses upon his relationship with the Bay Area's New Left."²⁸ The bulk of this chapter is devoted to Cleaver's influence upon prisoners after his parole in 1966. Cummins relies upon interviews and *Soul on Ice* to construct a narrative of Cleaver's earlier life.²⁹ Dan Berger's *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era*, published in 2014, follows Cummins's example by exploring the rise of Black nationalism inside the penal system, although Berger's analysis of *Soul on Ice* and its impact upon inmates and members of the Black Panther Party is far more effective than Cummins. But—once again—Cleaver's life prior to joining the Black Panther Party is limited to a few pages and references *Soul on Ice* as a key source.³⁰ Ashley Lavelle's 2012 article is set apart from other research by its specific focus upon

Cleaver's conversion from a Left-wing radical to a Republican and devout Christian while in exile.³¹ Lavelle's psychohistorical analysis of Cleaver characterizes him as a "flawed radical," who constantly searched for a sense of identity and purpose. According to Lavelle, his conversion stands as just one example of Cleaver's constantly shifting political ideologies.³²

Historians' reliance upon *Soul on Ice* when discussing Cleaver's early life is problematic. Cleaver wrote many of the essays during the final years of his sentence while in Folsom penitentiary; by this time he had separated from the Nation of Islam and rejected the organization's Black separatist philosophy. Cleaver's account of his early years in prison and radicalization in *Soul on Ice* is a largely *retrospective* analysis.³³ Historians have tended to overlook this important contextual information when using *Soul on Ice*. They have failed to dig deeper into the archives to understand how Cleaver's embrace of Black nationalism originated in his prison years. Cleaver's private papers, held by Berkeley University, contain a wealth of material on his incarceration—including psychiatric evaluations, parole board reports, prison records, and letters written by Cleaver to family, friends, and prison authorities.³⁴ It not only provides a much richer understanding of Cleaver's incarceration and his rise to prominence within the Nation of Islam, but also offers an insight into his later life.³⁵

Drawing upon Joseph's call to explore the lives of influential, yet understudied, figures in the Black Power Movement, this article uses Cleaver's papers to shine a light on his time in prison. In doing so, it aims to counter the dominant narrative of his incarceration and the myopic focus upon *Soul on Ice*. It demonstrates how Cleaver's initial radicalization while incarcerated in Soledad Penitentiary became part of a growing political consciousness amongst African American prisoners, which grew during the course of the 1950s and reached a height in the late 1960s and 1970s. In recent years, scholars have explored aspects of this history, but the focus has been upon prisoners' politicization after 1966.³⁶ Historians need to explore in much finer detail the role that the Nation of Islam played in radicalizing prisoners in the decade before the rise of the Black Power Movement. The NOI became the first Black nationalist organization to directly target the correctional system; its message of racial pride and solidarity made it deeply

appealing to some African American prisoners. The organization established the groundwork for the Black Power Movement's influence upon inmates after 1966. By tracing Cleaver's emergence as a leading figure in the organization, this article reveals the relatively hidden history of the NOI inside penitentiaries.³⁷ It also supports an interpretation of the Black Power Movement that emphasizes its longer-term development and connection to pre-1966 activism.³⁸

A second purpose of this article is to demonstrate the extent to which authorities were willing to go to combat the growth of the Nation of Islam inside correctional institutions. Cleaver's letters to prison authorities reveal the brutal repression inflicted upon incarcerated Muslims by wardens and guards. They stand as testament to the physical and psychological repression visited upon inmates who, like Cleaver, challenged the prevailing racial order inside California's penitentiaries.³⁹ In particular, the yearly psychiatric assessments that Cleaver underwent reveal the power that psychiatrists held in determining prisoners' treatment, along with their efforts to categorize inmates' protests as symptomatic of mental illness.⁴⁰ This article closes by considering Cleaver's decision to join the Black Panther Party in 1967, and how his struggle against the physical and mental brutality visited upon him by prison authorities influenced his articulation of Black Power ideology following his release.⁴¹

Cleaver was born on August 3 1935 in Wabbaseka, Arkansas. In 1946 his family settled in the Watts area of Los Angeles.⁴² The Cleaver family's move west typified the experience of many Black families in the 1940s. During World War II, African Americans seeking shelter from the racism and brutality of the South left the region for the promise of a better life in California. As the historian Josh Sides has shown, Los Angeles became a beacon of hope for African Americans during the decade. As a result of the war-time economic boom, the city's Black residents enjoyed greater economic advancements than ever before. However, beneath the surface, racial division deepened during the late 1940s and African Americans who attempted to move into all-white parts of the city were met with violent resistance.⁴³

Like many youths in Los Angeles' Black community, petty crime and juvenile detention featured heavily in Cleaver's childhood years.⁴⁴ His first encounter with the criminal justice system came in 1946 after he broke into school buildings with a

number of other youths, including his brother. He continued to engage in petty crime on Los Angeles' streets following his release. Between 1947 and 1952, he returned to Juvenile Hall three times for burglary and peddling marijuana. In December 1953, having only been paroled from Juvenile Hall two months earlier, Cleaver police arrested him for possession of marijuana. Convicted as an adult in 1954, authorities sent him to the California Institution for Men, located in Chino, for assessment.⁴⁵ Despite Cleaver's history of criminal behavior, his psychological evaluation described him as "mature, orderly, friendly, and [a] leader for all races." His assessment found him to not represent a custody risk and that he associated with "a wholesome group of friends."⁴⁶ Summed up as a "dependable and co-operative person" in his medical evaluation, authorities assigned him to Soledad Penitentiary.⁴⁷

Soledad had only been open three years before Cleaver's arrival.⁴⁸ Built at a cost of \$10.5 million, Soledad stood at the forefront of California's prison reform movement, which sought to rehabilitate inmates through individualized treatment programs of psychological, vocational, and educational therapy.⁴⁹ However, behind the shiny new buildings and rhetoric of treatment lay age-old problems of racism, brutality, and extreme punishment. African American inmates were the most vulnerable to punitive measures; the prison's racial hierarchy placed them at the very bottom of the social ladder and they faced the constant threat of violence at the hands of guards and white inmates alike.⁵⁰ One African American inmate summed up this conflict between the idea of rehabilitation and the brutal reality of prison life: "You are told upon arrival here that you must adjust...[to] this unimaginable horror before you will be considered socially responsible enough to be placed back into free society."⁵¹ At the heart of California's rehabilitative program stood the indeterminate sentence: a system whereby an inmate would only be released once the parole board judged them to have been rehabilitated. Under indeterminate sentencing it became possible to incarcerate an individual indefinitely—even for the pettiest of crimes—if the parole board ruled that the person had failed to engage with their "treatment." The prison activist Jessica Mitford described the indeterminate sentence as a "potent psychological instrument for inmate manipulation and control, the 'uncertainty' ever nagging at the prisoner's

mind.”⁵² The presence of psychiatrists and psychologists on parole boards, who wielded considerable power when it came to judging whether an inmate had been rehabilitated, compounded the punitive aspect of indeterminate sentencing.⁵³

Cleaver’s prison records from his time in Soledad indicate that he fully participated in the penitentiary’s educational and therapeutic programs. The assessments conducted on Cleaver praised him as a model prisoner and a committed member of Soledad’s therapeutic community.⁵⁴ This image of a compliant inmate differs from Cleaver’s own account of his time in Soledad. In his essay “On Becoming,” Cleaver locates the origins of his politicization in this first period of incarceration between 1954 and 1956. He claimed that shortly after his arrival at Soledad, he “fell in with a group of young blacks who, like myself, were in vociferous rebellion against what we perceived as a continuation of slavery on a higher plane.”⁵⁵ Cleaver expanded upon this claim in a 1971 interview with the journalist Lee Lockwood, in which he recalled meeting a man named Pontifelt in 1954, who became a “guru” to younger prisoners and introduced him to philosophy, history, and literature.⁵⁶ Cleaver’s experience with Pontifelt corresponds with Eric Cummins’s claim that underground libraries and political education classes existed within California’s penitentiaries at this time.⁵⁷ During the 1960s, outside supporters smuggled radical literature into the state’s prisons, and politically active inmates engaged their fellow prisoners in discussion of Marx, Mao, Fanon, and other radical authors. Inspired by the rising discontent and protest activity outside the prison walls, young Black prisoners like Cleaver absorbed these radical ideologies and began to rethink their designation as criminals. George Jackson, who would become a leading figure for Black inmates in the late 1960s, recalled that his radicalization also started with an underground library, which introduced him to political literature, including *The Communist Manifesto*. He attended underground political education classes in San Quentin and Soledad penitentiaries during the early 1960s.⁵⁸

In an unfinished autobiography, Cleaver explained that an inmate named John Hall introduced him to the *Communist Manifesto* and other Marxist literature in 1956.⁵⁹ In 1971 he claimed that a branch of the Communist Party had been established inside the penitentiary during the late 1950s, although there is no further evidence to confirm this.⁶⁰ While Cleaver stated that he did not join the

party, he nevertheless identified with its values. In particular, *The Communist Manifesto* provided Cleaver with a political outlook on his life thus far, and his ambitions for the future. He claimed that this exposure to Marxist ideology convinced him of the need for an uprising against the white capitalist power structure. "I was no longer a criminal," he wrote, "but a revolutionary in support of a noble cause."⁶¹ Cleaver's interpretation of the *Communist Manifesto* provided an intellectual framework for his critique of the racist character of the criminal justice system. Within this context, he began to interpret his criminality as an act of resistance against an imperialist and capitalist power structure; this would remain a core part of his political ideology throughout the 1960s.⁶²

Cleaver's prison records suggest that authorities were unaware of his changing political outlook, and no doubt he understood the need to placate his keepers if he stood any chance of securing parole. In a letter written to the parole board in 1956, Cleaver claimed: "Looking back upon the distance between my present self and the Leroy Cleaver that I was upon my arrival at prison, I cannot reconcile the two personalities." He assured the board that he "was ready and able to take my place in society as a productive, lawabiding [sic], acceptable citizen" and would seek employment as an electronics engineer.⁶³ Whether Cleaver was sincere in his submission to the parole board, or if he merely told the board what they wanted to hear, is difficult to assess. Either way, the parole board accepted Cleaver's promises and released him on parole.

Cleaver's freedom lasted a mere eleven months before his arrest for assault in November 1957. This part of his life has been well documented, not least by Cleaver himself. On the evening of November 3, Cleaver attacked a couple in their parked car. He tied up the man and pulled his girlfriend into the back of the car with the intention of raping the woman; in the ensuing struggle, Cleaver struck her around the head with a gun. Meanwhile, the man had managed to free himself and blew the horn to draw attention. As he fled the scene, Cleaver turned and shot at the car. The police apprehended him just a few hours later, and charged Cleaver with assault with intent to commit murder and assault with intent to commit rape.⁶⁴

In *Soul on Ice*, Cleaver famously linked the motivation for his crime with the 1954 murder of fourteen-year old Chicago teenager Emmett Till while he visited

relatives in Money, Mississippi. Till's brutal murder came after an accusation that he had said "bye baby" to one of his murderer's wife while in a local store. Upon receiving her son's body, Mamie Till made a decision to hold an open-casket funeral in her hometown of Chicago. The spectacle of Till's battered and mutilated body made his murder a defining point in the course of the Black Freedom Struggle.⁶⁵

The failure to convict anyone of Till's murder demonstrated to Cleaver, more powerfully than ever before, that the criminal justice system existed, first and foremost, to protect white supremacy. It focused Cleaver's attention upon the hypocrisy of a system that visited violent retribution upon Black men accused of sexual advances on white women, yet refused to punish those white men who raped Black women. In "On Becoming," Cleaver claimed that Till's death threw him into a "nervous breakdown." Cleaver subsequently arrived at a plan to attack "white womanhood" upon his release in retaliation for Till's death. This desire for revenge, he claimed, that motivated his attempted rape in November 1957. In one of the most commonly cited parts of *Soul on Ice*, he explained:

Rape was an insurrectionary act. It delighted me that I was defying and trampling the white man's law, upon his system of values, and that I was defiling his women—and this point, I believe, was the most satisfying to me because I was very resentful over the historical fact of how the white man has used the black woman. I felt I was getting revenge.⁶⁶

By the time he was writing the essays that formed *Soul on Ice*, Cleaver wanted to convey the impression of a man in continual and uncompromising rebellion with prison authorities. His politicization of crime appealed to many members of the Bay Area's counterculture, and especially white middle class radicals.⁶⁷ The combination of class politics and celebration of the black outlaw fitted perfectly with those who looked to the prisons as a source of revolutionary action. Not everyone celebrated *Soul on Ice*; some attacked Cleaver's rationale for rape, and especially his claim that he had initially "practiced" his crime on Black women. Yet many others chose to overlook the contradictions in Cleaver's writing and celebrated him as the ultimate revolutionary. *Soul on Ice* cemented Cleaver's reputation as a leader who had not only survived prison—he had fought prison authorities and emerged a hero.

Upon his conviction in May 1958, Cleaver returned to Chino for assessment. There is nothing in these records that refer to Cleaver's justification of his crime;

however, they show that authorities now viewed him as a dangerous and aggressive inmate. Following “psychosexual testing,” the psychiatrist’s report indicated that his crimes were part of an “overidentification [sic] with the passive, feminine approach to life.” The psychiatrist did not give any further explanation of how he arrived at this judgment, but he concluded that Cleaver needed “specialized help” from a psychotherapist. A further report claimed that he had returned to prison as an inmate “capable of extremely aggressive activity.” He was anxious, suspicious of others, and rigid in his thinking. The psychiatrist concluded that San Quentin penitentiary would be best suited to treating Cleaver’s psychological needs.⁶⁸ The prison’s assessment of Cleaver greatly differed from earlier, more positive, reports. No doubt the nature of his crime--violent and incorporating sexual abuse—made Cleaver a target for San Quentin’s process of therapeutic treatment.

Despite these negative psychiatric assessments, Cleaver joined San Quentin’s educational and group therapy programs upon arrival. Described as an excellent student, he threw himself into securing his high school diploma and became a regular attendee at group therapy sessions.⁶⁹ At the same time, prison authorities agreed that Cleaver could be in possession of a typewriter, and he began a letter-writing campaign to be transferred out of San Quentin.⁷⁰ In July 1959, he requested a transfer to Chino in order to be closer to family and friends; the warden denied his request.⁷¹ The following November, he wrote a lengthy letter to the classification committee requesting a transfer to the California Medical Facility in Vacaville for intense psychological treatment. Cleaver’s letter appealed to the emphasis upon the power of psychotherapy, but it also carried a subtle critique of the prison’s power to eradicate an inmate’s sense of self. Cleaver expressed fear that he would soon be assimilated into the prison machinery that would leave him “virtually lost and destroyed,” and he felt continually anxious that he would not escape “the deadly treadmill of criminality.” The head psychiatrist at Vacaville agreed that the program of psychotherapy on offer in that institution could provide Cleaver with an opportunity for rehabilitation. In a letter to the classification committee, Cleaver appealed to be granted a transfer: “I am desperate for a chance to be subjected to the program at Vacaville...I need it.”⁷² Once again, it is difficult to assess Cleaver’s

motivation for this appeal, but his therapist, A.B. Carr, wrote highly of Cleaver and supported his transfer.⁷³ He informed the classification committee that Cleaver had:

proven to be one of the more active, genuinely involved members of the group. He is quite concerned over his chronic aberrant behavior, and recognizes that he is no longer able to rationalize his delinquencies through a variety of self-deceiving defenses. Cleaver is becoming increasingly anxious over the fact that he has added rape to his anti-social episodes, and is well motivated for exposure to a more intensive program.⁷⁴

In spite of considerable support from San Quentin and Vacaville psychiatrists, the classification committee refused to transfer Cleaver; it is quite possible that this related to his decision to openly identify with the Nation of Islam at around the same time.

Founded in Detroit during the 1930s by W.D. Fard, the Nation of Islam required converts to follow a strict code of behavior, which included daily prayers, abstinence from drugs and alcohol, and a diet that excluded pork. African Americans were defined as part of the original African race and descendants of “the lost-found tribe of Shabazz.” The white race had ruled the earth for six thousand years, during which time they had enslaved the Black race and separated them from the language and culture of their African-Asiatic ancestors; however, their reign would soon end. Muslims were taught that God would soon return to destroy the evil white race and restore the noble Black race to its rightful position as ruler of the world. The NOI’s ideology spoke to the racism and isolation experienced by ghetto residents; its message of racial pride and self-reliance offered a psychological and practical escape route from the cycle of poverty, crime, and incarceration.⁷⁵

A number of Muslims were incarcerated for draft resistance during World War II, which included one of Fard’s most faithful follower, Elijah Muhammad. Appointed as Fard’s successor and Supreme Messenger, Muhammad’s experience of incarceration convinced him of the importance of recruiting prisoners.⁷⁶ Malcolm X’s prison conversion in Massachusetts’ Norfolk Penal Colony in 1952 brought the formation of one of the earliest prison temples of the NOI; it also established the importance of incarceration as a radicalizing experience, and the prison system as a critical source of support for the organization.⁷⁷ Malcolm X’s account of his criminal life, incarceration and redemption became a powerful part of his appeal to African

American prisoners. During the 1950s, the Nation of Islam succeeded in transforming thousands of convicts into loyal members, and temples were established inside penitentiaries across the country.⁷⁸

Cleaver first became aware of the Nation of Islam in San Quentin shortly after his entrance to the penitentiary in 1954, but he chose to focus his attention upon Marxist literature. One of Cleaver's friends, known as Butterfly, piqued Cleaver's interest in the NOI when he returned to prison in 1957, but it would take another two years before Cleaver made the decision to convert. At this point, the group's militant and open resistance to the prison system appealed to Cleaver far more than its religious aspect. He recalled that Muslims' preparedness to defend their own, and their powerful sense of unity, first attracted him to the Nation. It was some time later that he accepted the NOI as a religious influence upon his life.⁷⁹ Cleaver noted that the group "gave dignity, belonging and a cause; and we finally became the most singularly powerful group in the California prisons."⁸⁰ For Cleaver, and many others, the Nation's appeal derived from its commitment to rehabilitate prisoners and offer an alternative identity to that of 'criminal.' In the deeply racist and violent environment of the prison, the Nation of Islam also offered converts racial solidarity and protection from attack.⁸¹

The expansion of the NOI within correctional institutions primarily derived from the confluence of two factors: demographic change and the growing radicalization of Black inmates. The rapid growth of African American communities outside the South during and immediately after World War II brought with it an expanding Black prison population. In 1951, African Americans constituted 4.4% of California's population, but 19.9% of the prison population. By 1960, this figure had increased to 23.1% of prisoners.⁸² The growing number of young African American men threatened the supremacy of white inmates in correctional institutions, and confrontations between Black and white inmates became ever more common. Simultaneously, the expansion of the Black Freedom Struggle during the 1950s and 1960s added weight to Black prisoners' determination to engage in their own acts of resistance to white supremacy. Both served to create an environment in which African Americans—and especially the youth—were empowered to challenge the traditional racial order inside penitentiaries.⁸³ The criminologist John Irwin observed

that African Americans “steadily moved away from their acceptance of the Jim Crow arrangement that prevailed in prison and began to assume equality in the prison informal world.”⁸⁴ Through this time, prison authorities complained of a growing level of racial unrest and a destabilization of the traditional racial order in their institutions; they often blamed the Nation of Islam for motivating these disturbances. For example, in August 1960, authorities claimed a “race riot” had taken place after Folsom prisoners challenged a guard who attempted to confiscate NOI literature. In May 1961, shots were fired after attendees resisted efforts by San Quentin’s officers to break up a prayer meeting. By 1962, the state reported that it had identified 239 Muslim prisoners, with the majority held in San Quentin and Folsom.⁸⁵

As the most visible expression of Black inmates’ defiance, the Nation of Islam became the main focus of wardens’ attempts to maintain control. In 1960, the California Department of Corrections (CDC) started a concerted campaign to stamp out Muslim activity.⁸⁶ At the same time, authorities identified Cleaver and Booker T. X as leading figures in the organization; fellow inmates Raymond Lewis and Robert Wilkerson, were classified as important figures in recruiting and organizing Muslims.⁸⁷ During early 1961 a series of memos between CDC officials noted the challenges posed by the growing influence of the NOI, and the need to restrict Cleaver’s access to the mainstream prison population. They considered him to be the most influential follower of Elijah Muhammad inside California’s penitentiaries.⁸⁸ Despite determined efforts by the warden to crush NOI activity, the group continued to increase its support base.⁸⁹ Authorities believed that Muslims in Folsom Penitentiary were behind a series of protests against segregation in the dining hall during the early months of 1961.⁹⁰ At the same time, Cleaver wrote a writ of habeas corpus in response to guards’ repression of Muslim activity, and charged San Quentin’s warden with denying Muslims’ constitutional right to practice their religion; an additional eight men added their signatures to the document.⁹¹ When the warden refused to allow the legal papers to be sent out of the prison, the litigants started a hunger strike and Cleaver refused to accept a work assignment to San Quentin’s Education Department.⁹² For this display of resistance, Cleaver, Lewis, and Wilkerson were placed in solitary confinement in the prison’s Adjustment

Center, where they continued their protest.⁹³ The warden's actions prompted a flood of letters from Cleaver to CDC officials protesting his treatment and demanding the right to practice his religion freely.⁹⁴

While authorities recognized Cleaver as a leader of Muslim inmates, it is difficult to quantify just how much influence he had upon the general population of African American inmates. Between 1961 and 1963, Cleaver spent prolonged periods in solitary confinement for protesting the treatment of Muslims, but there is no evidence in his papers to suggest that he engaged in open confrontations with staff or fellow prisoners. What is abundantly clear from the communication between CDC officials is that they *believed* Cleaver had the capacity to inspire a mass uprising of Black inmates. Cleaver's alleged power over other inmates prompted the warden's increasingly aggressive crackdown on the NOI and his specific focus upon restricting Cleaver's access to San Quentin's general population.⁹⁵

The treatment of Cleaver typified the increasingly hysterical reaction of authorities to the growing power of the Nation of Islam inside correctional institutions. In October 1960, the FBI reported that opportunistic troublemakers were using the Nation as a cover for fomenting racial conflict. The following year, New York authorities reported that their penitentiaries were in an "explosive state" as a result of Muslims' presence. In 1961, James V. Bennett, director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, testified before the House Appropriations Committee that the Nation of Islam represented the single greatest challenge to maintaining order in federal penitentiaries.⁹⁶ Despite its relatively small membership, prison authorities considered the NOI to be a deeply disruptive and militant group that had influence far beyond its immediate membership.

The conflict between Cleaver and the warden soon attracted attention from the prison's psychiatrist, David Schmidt. In 1959, Schmidt had judged Cleaver to be a perfect case for transfer to Vacaville, but the following year he assessed him as a man with "a very sociopathic orientation...[and] noticeable schizoid and autistic ideation." Schmidt defined Cleaver as hostile, rebellious, and deeply attached to "delinquent values" and accounted for Cleaver's crimes as a "hysterical reaction to a stressful situation" and part of his "confusion" over his psychosexual identity.⁹⁷ The diagnosis of schizoid and autistic personality disorders appears again in Cleaver's

1962 psychiatric evaluation. The author defined Cleaver's involvement with the NOI as a neurotic defense mechanism to avoid confronting his "real, underlying problems." In March 1962, a psychiatric evaluation concluded that parole should be denied on the basis that Cleaver's anti-social values made rehabilitation impossible. The author interpreted Cleaver's membership in the NOI as a sign of mental illness and he prescribed a treatment of "institutional programming."⁹⁸

Psychiatrists' reports on Cleaver reflect the profession's concern with providing a medical explanation for criminal behavior during the post-war period. During the 1960s, psychiatry and psychology acquired significant influence among those who sought explanations for a myriad of social challenges—including racism, sexism, poverty, and crime.⁹⁹ Psychotherapy played a key role in San Quentin's rehabilitative process, and authorities invested great faith in its power to reform criminals. By the early 1960s, however, this commitment to therapeutic communities had faded. Increasingly, psychiatry and psychology assumed a punitive function in the campaign to assert control over recalcitrant inmates.¹⁰⁰ Incarcerated Muslims were often the focus of this repression, and some were subjected to experimental forms of behavioral modification.¹⁰¹ Indeed, psychiatrists played a crucial role in developing strategies to control the Nation of Islam inside penitentiaries. In his 1978 book, *Soul on Fire*, Cleaver complained that the head of the psychiatric department in San Quentin targeted Muslims for electro-convulsive therapy. "(H)e recommended shock every time he saw me," Cleaver recalled, "and he cooked the minds of some close brothers."¹⁰² Cleaver apparently managed to escape attempts to inflict electro-convulsive therapy upon him, but authorities nevertheless used his psychiatric diagnoses to justify his treatment.

By the summer of 1962, Cleaver had returned to San Quentin's general population, where Muslims were waging a determined campaign to practice their religion and confrontations with guards had become ever more common. There is no evidence that indicates Cleaver took part in these confrontations, but the warden nevertheless believed that he had engineered the protests. On August 5, a skirmish between guards and twenty-three Muslims who had gathered in the exercise yard appeared to confirm the warden's belief that a serious racial disturbance may occur.¹⁰³ The crackdown came on August 10, when guards marched Cleaver,

Wilkerson, Lewis, William Mason, and Leroy Doctor to the isolation unit. Authorities subsequently found Cleaver guilty of leading racial and religious agitation and placed him in solitary confinement for 29 days.¹⁰⁴ Cleaver claimed that the men were subjected to “fiendish torture” at the hands of correctional officers, who beat them and then proceeded to shave off their beards with a dry, dull razor blade that cut the men’s faces. Kathleen Cleaver wrote that guards subjected her husband to the most “sadistic, insane torture.” Such complaints were commonplace across California’s correctional institutions. In a letter to California’s governor, Edmund Brown, Cleaver claimed that guards regularly beat Muslims and had fired on a group in the exercise yard as they engaged in prayer. He listed eleven members of the temple who had disappeared from the prison with no explanation; he feared that at least some of the men had been murdered.¹⁰⁵ In a letter to the state’s Director of Corrections, Cleaver described the violence that had been visited upon Muslims; he highlighted the hypocrisy of a prison system that claimed to rehabilitate men, but used violence to silence its critics. “[V]ery soon the hatchet of law will fall on all whose necks are not in line,” he warned. “Allah is going to bring his Divine Wrath down upon...those [who] lay Evil, Unclean hands on the Lost-Found members of the Holy Tribe of Shabazz.”¹⁰⁶ Over the following months, Cleaver produced a voluminous amount of hand-written letters protesting the treatment of Muslims, and sent them to a variety of men, including the warden and state governor.¹⁰⁷ San Quentin authorities were clearly shaken by the growing influence of Cleaver and his fellow NOI leaders. In a report on the situation, Associate Warden Frady stated that the men had the capacity to inspire a serious disturbance within the prison.¹⁰⁸ They were described as highly emotional and in an “irrational state,” which had created a dangerous and explosive situation for San Quentin’s guards.¹⁰⁹

The rising conflict between incarcerated Muslims and prison authorities placed Elijah Muhammad in a difficult situation. For at least a decade, the prison temples had functioned as the most radical wing of the organization, and Muhammad struggled to enforce his authority over his inmate followers.¹¹⁰ Prison censorship made direct communication difficult, and prisoners also found it more challenging to follow the Nation’s code of non-engagement with white authorities. The prison environment placed them in much closer contact with whites, and

Muslims faced severe restrictions on their ability to follow even the most basic elements of the NOI's philosophy. For example, prison authorities refused to provide a pork-free diet, and members of the kitchen staff were known to deliberately add pork to meals.¹¹¹ Given the acute levels of discrimination and brutality faced by men like Cleaver, incarcerated Muslims were often forced to choose between keeping their faith hidden from authorities, or engage in open confrontation with guards.

The tension between Muslims and San Quentin's guards continued to grow during 1963 as authorities poised to crush any sign of a disturbance. On February 25 1963, a confrontation between African American and Mexican American convicts in the Adjustment Center exercise yard appeared to confirm their worst fears. During the short brawl, armed guards—positioned on the gun rail above the yard—fired shots towards the crowd. One of the bullets hit and killed Minister Booker T. X.¹¹² The following day, fifty-nine Muslims participated in a strike to protest their leader's death, which they viewed as part of the state's campaign of violent repression against the Nation of Islam. The protesters demanded an investigation into the shooting and recognition of the right to practice their religion. An inquest subsequently ruled that the shooting of Booker T. X had been accidental after he “stumbled” into the line of fire.¹¹³

The death of his close friend marked a turning point in Cleaver's life. Elijah Muhammad appointed Cleaver as Booker T. X's successor, and gave him strict instructions to prevent any retaliatory actions for Booker's death.¹¹⁴ This development convinced San Quentin's warden that he had to act immediately to avoid a complete breakdown in discipline. On June 28 he issued an order to transfer Cleaver to Folsom Penitentiary on the basis that it would undermine his leadership position and that he may “modify his attitudes.”¹¹⁵

Cleaver's first psychiatric evaluation in Folsom took a different tone to earlier assessments. Indeed, the author suggested that the treatment of Cleaver while in San Quentin constituted an overreaction on the part of prison authorities, and that his identification with Islam had the potential to be a positive influence on his behavior.¹¹⁶ It is quite likely that Cleaver's growing distance from Elijah Muhammad fed into this more positive assessment. Muhammad's heavy-handed approach to preventing protests against Booker T. X's death had intensified inmates'

dissatisfaction with his leadership.¹¹⁷ The suspension of Malcolm X from the NOI in December 1963 greatly aggravated these tensions and left some inmates uncertain of where their allegiance should lie. Not long after he arrived at Folsom, Cleaver renounced his support for Muhammad and declared himself a follower of Malcolm X. As an influential figure in the NOI, Cleaver's split from Muhammad produced significant disquiet amongst African American prisoners. Cleaver claimed that over the following months, more prisoners chose to follow his example and the Nation of Islam began to decline within California's correctional institutions.¹¹⁸

Cleaver's assessments while in Folsom continued to paint him in a more positive light. In September 1965, Folsom's psychiatrist noted that Cleaver's attitude towards prison authorities had improved to the point that he no longer required psychological therapy. His final psychiatric report in 1966 described him as being "capable of reasonable contemplation and control" and stated that his earlier psychiatric conditions were in remission. It assessed him as being of minimal risk for violent behavior and recommended his parole. There is a clear relationship between the change in Cleaver's psychiatric evaluations and his distancing from the Nation of Islam; with his psychiatric conditions judged to be in remission, he convinced the parole board that he had been successfully rehabilitated.¹¹⁹

On December 12 1966, Cleaver finally walked out of the prison gates to freedom. Although he escaped the guards' terror, he remained under close supervision by his parole agent; the threat of being returned to prison cast a shadow across his hard-fought for liberty. Cleaver had been preparing for this moment for a long time. Along with his fellow convict Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter, he had made plans to move to the Bay Area and revive the work of Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity.¹²⁰ However, he found it difficult to put his plans into action. Having amassed a small group of supporters, Cleaver complained that they were more concerned with arguing with each other than taking action.¹²¹

Unbeknown to Cleaver, his reputation as a militant Black leader inside California's prison system had already caught the attention of co-founder of the Black Panther Party, Huey Newton. As co-founder Bobby Seale explained: "Huey related to Eldridge as a Malcolm X coming out of prison."¹²² Although both Newton and Seale had served time in jail, they had served relatively short sentences in

comparison to Cleaver's experience of incarceration. Newton's determined efforts to draw Cleaver into the Party were initially unsuccessful, but he changed his mind in February 1967, following a visit of Malcolm X's widow, Betty Shabazz, to the *Ramparts* office. A phalanx of armed Panthers awaited Shabazz's arrival, ready to defend the visitor from attack. That day's display of Panther power convinced Cleaver that joining the BPP offered the best opportunity to bring his own plans to life.¹²³ Newton bestowed Cleaver with the title of Minister of Information. Cleaver, fearful that his association with the BPP would be used as an excuse to revoke his parole, chose to keep his membership secret.

Cleaver's motivations for joining the Black Panther Party were manifold. From its inception, the Party identified the penal system as a core part of the racial order that kept African Americans powerless and impoverished. Bobby Seale explained they targeted those "who were on parole, on probation, who'd been in jails, who'd just gotten out of jail." These were the "forgotten people at the bottom of society."¹²⁴ A significant proportion of those who joined the Panthers had experience of prison life; the combination of poverty, drug addiction, and police racism meant that many Panthers had experience of prison.¹²⁵ This made the BPP an appealing prospect for Cleaver, who clearly perceived his role within the Party as a continuation of his activism inside the prison system. In an autobiographical essay, he explained: "when I left prison, I knew perfectly well that I was going to war....I was merely being transferred to another front....What I was walking away from was what I was walking into."¹²⁶ Evidently, Cleaver arrived at the decision that the Black Panther Party offered him the best opportunity to translate his prison survival skills into a mass movement on the streets.

During his time in San Quentin, Cleaver had adopted Marxist ideology to present his crimes as an act of political resistance against a capitalist white power structure; this idea of "politically creative lawbreaking" continued to influence him outside of prison as he sought to apply his own experience of incarceration to the Black Panther Party's development.¹²⁷ Writing in 1978, he claimed he left prison prepared for a socialist revolution; "I wanted an end to the capitalist economic system," he claimed.¹²⁸ Alongside the Panther's socialistic programs, the Party's image of gun-toting revolutionaries complemented Cleaver's own plans to launch an

uprising in the ghettos. “Indeed, I had reached the conclusion that there was no other way,” he explained. “There was time to mobilize the people, but in the final analysis the shit would have to be arbitrated with the gun.”¹²⁹ Cleaver’s strong attachment to the gun can be aligned with his many years of battling to survive within California’s penitentiaries. The prison environment made Black men even more vulnerable to racist violence than on the streets; the ability to defend oneself could be a matter of life and death for inmates. Cleaver still faced danger outside the prison walls, but the gun brought him a level of power and protection that had previously been inaccessible.

While the BPP expressed a commitment to liberating African American prisoners from the outset, in its early days it focused more upon police brutality than the problems inside the penal system. This began to change in late 1967, with Huey Newton’s arrest in connection with the death of police officer John Frey. The precise details of what happened when police stopped Newton as he drove around Oakland in the early hours of October 28 1967 are disputed, but the confrontation ended with Newton suffering a gunshot to the stomach. Officers Herbert Heanes and John Frey were shot, and Frey later died from his injuries. Just a few hours later, Newton was arrested at a local hospital, and arraigned on charges of murder and assault with attempt to commit murder.¹³⁰ He faced the death penalty. The Party immediately launched a “Free Huey” campaign. Cleaver’s skill as a public speaker, combined with his ability to articulate the injustice of the criminal justice system to the masses, made him the perfect spokesman for the defense campaign. His critique of Newton’s case drew in thousands of supporters and the Party opened up new chapters across the country.¹³¹ With Newton isolated in solitary confinement and Seale imprisoned for his involvement in a 1967 protest at the State Capitol in Sacramento, Cleaver emerged as a figurehead of the group.

In March 1968, Cleaver’s notoriety reached new heights with the publication of *Soul on Ice*. The text became essential reading for Party members and it circulated within the underground libraries that existed in prisons across California and beyond. At the time of *Soul on Ice*’s publication, Cleaver had reached the height of his career as a black power icon. However, on April 6 1968, two days after the assassination of Martin Luther King, his life took a new turn. That evening, Cleaver

loaded a car with guns and convinced some fellow party members to seek revenge for King's death. Police quickly apprehended the group. Cleaver fled the scene with sixteen-year old Party member, Bobby Hutton. Bullets and tear gas rained down upon them as they sought refuge in the basement of a local house. Finally, with the house alight, Cleaver shouted to the police that they would surrender. Cleaver chose to strip naked to show he was unarmed, but Hutton did not follow suit. With his arms in the air, Hutton stumbled as he walked towards a patrol car—police responded by shooting him six times. Bobby Hutton became the first member of the Party to be killed by police.¹³²

Cleaver's role in the shoot-out brought his arrest and—with his parole revoked—he returned to San Quentin for assessment, followed by solitary confinement in Vacaville. Party members launched a campaign for him to be released on bail. After two months of what Kathleen Cleaver described as torture at the hands of prison guards, Eldridge secured his release on bail until the start of his trial. He immediately threw himself into campaigning for Newton's release, but Kathleen Cleaver described the prospect of returning to prison made her husband "a man tortured night and day by a fate too deadly to accept, too real to ignore."¹³³

Just a few days before the start of his trial, Cleaver delivered a speech that brought together his own experiences as a prisoner with a wide-ranging critique of the penal system. Rehabilitation, he argued, "presupposes that at one time one was 'habilitated' ..and was sent to this garage, or repair shop, to be dealt with and then released." The only answer to the failure of rehabilitation was to "tear down the walls."¹³⁴ It seems that by this point Cleaver had already decided that he could not return to prison; shortly before his trial date, Cleaver fled the country and sought exile in Cuba. He subsequently established the International Section of the Black Panther Party and continued to be an influential leader of the Party from afar.¹³⁵ However, Cleaver's ongoing commitment to a violent uprising against the white power structure drew him into conflict with Newton. In 1970, shortly after his release from prison, Newton issued a call for chapters to abandon revolutionary violence and dedicate themselves to the Party's community service programs. Cleaver refused to conform and the Party disintegrated into pro-Cleaver and pro-Newton factions.¹³⁶ In March 1971, Newton expelled Cleaver and other members,

who Newton claimed had refused to accept his orders. Cleaver remained in exile until 1977, when he returned to the US to face the charge of attempted murder. A plea bargain enabled him to avoid a return to prison in exchange for 1200 hours of community service.¹³⁷

There continues to be much work to be done to fully understand Cleaver, his influence upon the Black Panther Party, and his transformation into a born-again Christian and Republican. Any evaluation of Cleaver's life must start with his early days inside San Quentin, Soledad, and Folsom penitentiaries. The course of his radicalization reflects the role that the Nation of Islam played in establishing the foundations for later political action by and on behalf of prisoners. Muslims' determined legal campaign to secure recognition of the NOI as a religious organization during the early 1960s established a legal basis for the radical Prison Rights Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s.¹³⁸ The Nation also provided a sense of brotherhood and racial pride amongst Black inmates that challenged the racial order inside correctional institutions. Many prisoners found the example of open resistance to guards and white prisoners liberating—including some of those who did not openly support the group. Cleaver's letters reflect the way in which Muslims combined their demands for the right to practice their religion with an overarching critique of rehabilitation. Cleaver's correspondence also provides evidence of the extent to which authorities were willing to go to eliminate the NOI from the nation's penitentiaries. Deemed as "incurables," Muslims were viewed as incapable of rehabilitation and therefore candidates for the most extreme forms of psychiatric "treatment." The reports on Cleaver reveal the power that psychiatrists held over those who challenged the prison's racial order. Under the cover of rehabilitation, officials used psychiatry to depoliticize prisoners' protests and categorize them as mentally ill.

What is clear, and closely documented in his personal papers, is that Cleaver's identity as a revolutionary originated with his incarceration in San Quentin and Soledad. He was part of a larger movement within correctional institutions that challenged the criminalization of African Americans and introduced inmates to a range of political ideologies. Cleaver's rise to prominence in the Nation of Islam can only be understood in the context of these shifting concepts of crime and justice

amongst African American inmates. It is only by placing Cleaver's role in the Black Panther Party within the context of his earlier life as a convict that we can fully understand how he came to be such an iconic figure in the Black Power Movement.

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1. Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1992).
 2. While *Soul on Ice* was criticized by some, it also received high praise in many reviews. For example, see Floyd McKissick, "Soul on Ice by Eldridge Cleaver," *California Law Review*, 57 no. 2 (April 1969): 547-50. Forty-two reviews of *Soul on Ice* were sampled in Ray Lewis White, "Eldridge Cleaver's 'Soul on Ice': A Book Review Digest," *CLA Journal*, 21 no. 4 (1978): 556-566. Almost all of the reviews cited in this article were positive.
 3. "To Mr. and Mrs. Yesterday," *New York Times*, March 24 1968, 111. The reviewer of *Soul on Ice* concluded the book "is about the imprisonment of men's souls by society. This, of course, can happen outside of prison walls too, but if you're a black man in this country you stand an excellent chance of having as your ultimate frame of reference a jail cell."
 4. Cleaver also discusses a range of issues, including the Vietnam War, Malcolm X, and African American women.
 5. For some of Cleaver's letters to Axelrod, see Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 133-41.
 6. Some of Cleaver's essays were first published in *Ramparts*. See "Notes on a Native Son," *Ramparts*, June 1966, 51-57; "Letters from Prison," *Ramparts*, August 1 1966, 15-26. Other essays published by *Ramparts* were: "My Father and Stokely Carmichael," *Ramparts*, April 1967, 10-14; "Requiem for Nonviolence," *Ramparts*, May 1968, 48-49; "An Aside to Ronald Reagan," *Ramparts*, October 26 1968, 22; "An Address," *Ramparts*, December 14 1968, 6-11; "The Black Moochie, part I," *Ramparts*, October 1969, 21-27.
 7. According to Bobby Seale, Newton first became aware of Cleaver in early 1967, after he heard Cleaver being interviewed on the radio. See Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton* (New York, NY: Random House, 1970), 132.
 8. On the formation of the Black Panther Party see Paul Alkebulan, *Survival, Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party* (Palo Alto, CA: Ebrary, 2010).
 9. The Party's ten-point program demanded an end to police brutality, a trial by a jury of their peers, and freedom for all Black prisoners. It appeared in the *Black Panther Newspaper* for the first time on May 15 1967. See "What We Want, What We Believe," *Black Panther Newspaper*, May 15 1967, 3.
 10. On the policing of Oakland and police harassment of youth, see Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 58-68.

11. Cleaver discusses his relationship with Carter in an essay named "Bunchy" in Eldridge Cleaver, *Target Zero: A Life in Writing*. Eldridge Cleaver, ed. Kathleen Cleaver (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 113-34. Carter was released from prison shortly after Cleaver joined the BPP. Carter was initially opposed to the Panthers and wanted to pursue the original plan to establish their own organization. Carter eventually joined the Black Panther Party and was killed in January 1969 following a feud with the US organization. See *Ibid.*, 177-79. On the US organization, see Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2003).

12. Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton* (New York, NY: Random House, 1970), 132-34. Cleaver writes about this in Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 103-110

13. On Cleaver's later life, see Ashley Lavelle, "From Soul on Ice to Soul on Fire: The Religious Conversion of Eldridge Cleaver," *Politics, Religion, and Ideology*, 14, no. 1 (2013): 75-93.

14. Most histories of the Black Power Movement pass over Cleaver's prison radicalization in a couple of pages. See, for example, Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2006); Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007); Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Jeffrey Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004); Jane Rhodes, *Framing the Panthers: The Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

15. David Hilliard, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 1993), 129.

16. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 28.

17. On Cleaver's influence upon the Free Huey campaign, see Hilliard, *This Side of Glory*, 141. Some of Cleaver's earliest writing on the campaign are "Editorial: Huey Must be Set Free!," *Black Panther Newspaper*, November 23 1967, 1-2; "Huey Must be Set Free!," *Black Panther Newspaper*, November 23 1967, 1.

18. Peniel E. Joseph, "The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (2009): 751-746.

19. See, for example, Judson L. Jeffries, ed., *Comrades: A Local History of the Black Panther Party* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007); Judson L. Jeffries, *On the Ground: The Black Panther Party in Communities across America* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2010); Judson L. Jeffries and Curtis Austin, eds., *The Black Panther Party in a City Near You* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2018); Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams, eds., *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Jakobi Williams, *From the Ballot to the Bullet: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalitions in Chicago* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

20. Joseph, "The Black Power Movement," 774.

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21. Peniel E. Joseph, *Carmichael: A Life*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2016).
22. Katherine Rout, *Eldridge Cleaver*, (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall and Co, 1991). Only one third of the book is dedicated to Cleaver's childhood, his incarceration, and time with the Black Panther Party up to 1968.
23. Joe Street, "The Historiography of the Black Panther Party," *Journal of American Studies* 44, no. 2 (2010): 370-75.
24. Ogbar, *Black Power*, 94-96.
25. Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*, 3-9. For a critique of *Black Against Empire* see Navid Farnia, "State Repression and the Black Panther Party: Analyzing Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin's *Black against Empire*," *Journal of African American Studies*, 21, no. 1 (2017): 172-79.
26. Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*, 74-80.
27. Austin, *Up Against the Wall*, 69-71.
28. See Eric Cummins, *The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 93-127
29. Cummins covers Cleaver's life up to his parole in four pages. See *Ibid.*, 94-97.
30. Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). Cleaver's life before parole is addressed on pages 60-61, and *Soul on Ice* is covered on pages 71-72, 74.
31. Lavelle, "From 'Soul on Ice' to 'Soul for Hire'?", 54-72.
32. *Ibid.*, 71-72.
33. For Cleaver's account of his childhood, incarceration, and initial radicalization, see the essay "On Becoming," which was written in June 1965. See Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 39-50.
34. Eldridge Cleaver Papers, 1963-1988, MSS 91/213, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (hereafter EC papers). The collection has only been open to researchers since 2007, and additional material was opened in 2013.
35. Dan Berger and Ashley Lavelle cite Cleaver's papers, but have not used them extensively, nor have they used the material cited here.
36. Donald F. Tibbs, *From Prison Power to Black Power: The Making of Jones v. North Carolina Prisoners' Labor Union* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; Berger, *Captive Nation*; Heather Ann Thompson, *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2016).
37. For existing work on the Nation of Islam within state and federal penitentiaries see Zoe A. Colley, "'All America in a Prison': The Nation of Islam and the Politicization of African American Prisoners, 1955-1965," *Journal of American Studies* 48, no. 2 (2014): 393-415; Cummins, *The Rise and Fall*, 63-92. Cummins focuses upon the NOI in San Quentin; much of the chapter covers the organization after Cleaver was paroled, and there is little discussion of the repression Muslims faced as a consequence of their involvement with the group. Dan Berger provides an overview of the NOI's prison organizing, but largely follows Cummins's narrative. See Berger, *Captive Nation*, 55-61.
38. Ogbar, *Black Power*, 194-95. As Ogbar has argued, the NOI established some key traditions that later activists were able to build upon.
39. Jonathan Metzl has written a powerful study of the changing relationship between blackness and mental illness. In particular, he focuses upon schizophrenia

and how it was originally perceived as an illness of white women, but by the late-1960s, it was classified as a disease of African American men. See Jonathan M. Metzler, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2009).

40. In a 2015 article, Joe Street explored the incarceration of Huey Newton during his trial in connection with the death of an Oakland police officer, and the psychological impact that solitary confinement had upon Newton. See Joe Street, "The Shadow of the Soul Breaker: Solitary Confinement, Cocaine, and the Disintegration of Huey P. Newton," *Pacific Historical Review* 84, no. 3 (2015): 333-363.

41. The following is a sample of some of the most important studies on the Black Panther Party since 2000. Alkebulan, *Survival, Pending Revolution*; Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*; Jeffries, *On the Ground*; Lazerow, *In Search of the Black Panther Party*; Murch, *Living for the City*; Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Campaign Against Medical Discrimination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers*; Robyn C. Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); Jakobi Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Yohuru Williams, *Black –White Power: Civil Right, Black Power, and the Black Panthers in New Haven* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); Yohuru Williams, ed., *Liberated Territory: Untold Local Perspectives on the Black Panther Party* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

42. Medical evaluation, RCG-Chino, July 28 1954, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers

43. Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 110-115. For specific discussion of these problems in Oakland, see Murch, *Living for the City*, 38-51.

44. Cleaver observed that most African Americans in adult prisons had first been incarcerated as juveniles, and then "graduated" to the adult prison system. See Eldridge Cleaver, "An Address on Prisons," 154-55.

45. Medical evaluation, RCG-Chino, July 28 1954, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

46. Psychological test, reception guidance center, July 1 1954, folder 7, box 32, EC papers. Cleaver was diagnosed with mild anxiety and a "troublesome psychopathy."

47. Medical evaluation, Cleaver-A29498, 28 July 1954, folder 9, box 32, EC papers.

48. On Soledad Penitentiary see Min S. Yee, *The Melancholy History of Soledad Prison. In Which a Utopian Scheme Turns Bedlam* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

49. On California's rehabilitative order see Jessica Mitford, *Kind and Usual: The Prison Business* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 64-128.

50. For inmates' descriptions of race relations in prisons see G. Saladin, 'Racism I,' in *Inside Prison: American Style*, ed. Robert Minton (New York, NY: Random House, 1971), 82-83; M. Maguire, 'Racism II', in *Inside Prison*, ed. Minton,

84-95; G. Saladin, 'Racism III, San Quentin: Riot for Graft' in *Inside Prison*, ed. Minton, 96-111.

51. Letter from Thomas Clark, July 6 1970 in *Maximum Security: Letters from Prison*, ed. Eve Pell (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1972), 35.

52. Mitford, *Kind and Usual*, 90.

53. *Ibid.*, 106-108.

54. Group psychotherapy record and report, December 1959, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Group psychotherapy record and report, June 1960, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Educational record classes, April 27 1962, folder 6, box 32, EC Papers.

55. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 17-18. Also see Lee Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver. Algiers*, (London: Butler and Tanner, 1971), 78-82; Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 11-12. Apart from the prison records, there is no information in Cleaver's papers on this aspect of his life.

56. Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver*, 80-81.

57. Eric Cummins discusses the rise of underground libraries in *The Rise and Fall*, 21-32.

58. Jessica Mitford, "A Talk with George Jackson," *New York Times*, June 13 1971; Ted Szulc, "George Jackson Radicalizes the Brothers in Soledad and San Quentin," *New York Times*, August 1 1971.

59. Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 11-12.

60. Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver*, 81-83

61. Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 12.

62. Cleaver's embrace of the *Communist Manifesto* was part of a wider engagement with radical ideology within the African American Freedom Struggle. As Robin Kelley has argued, the *Communist Manifesto* carried particular significance for African Americans due to its recognition of the "color line and its role in maintaining colonialism." Robin Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 40.

63. Notice of Adult Authority Hearing, August 1956, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Medical, Social, and Psychological Evaluation, July 28 1954, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

64. *The People of the State of California versus Leroy Eldridge Cleaver*, 3 November 1957, folder 23, box 30, EC Papers.

65. For one of the most recent studies of Emmett Till see Timothy Tyson, *The Blood of Emmett Till* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2018).

66. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 26.

67. Cummins, *The Rise and Fall*, 128.

68. Psychological evaluation, May 14 1958; readmission clinical report, May 14 1958, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Staff recommendations, May 14 1958, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

69. During 1959 and 1960, Cleaver was recorded as attending the majority of the group therapy sessions. Group psychotherapy record and report, December 1959, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Group psychotherapy record and report, June 1960, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Educational record classes, April 27 1962, folder 6, box 32, EC Papers.

70. Interdepartmental communication, October 8 1959, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Permit to receive from approved correspondent, April 14 1959, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

71. Letter from Cleaver to Mr Johnson, July 5 1959, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Letter from Wilhelmina Robinson, July 24 1959, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

72. Classification committee, A-29498, Cleaver, 12 July 1959, folder 10, box 32, EC Papers; Letter from Cleaver to classification committee, November 4 1959, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers; Disciplinary report and previous actions, Cleaver, Leroy E., November 1966, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

73. Classification committee reports, November 16 1959 and report by David Schmidt, December 2 1959, folder 10, box 32, EC Papers.

74. Report from A.B. Carr to Chief Psychiatrist, A-29498, November 10 1959, folder 10, box 32, EC Papers.

75. This draws upon Dawn-Marie Gibson, *A History of the Nation of Islam: Race, Islam, and the Quest for Freedom* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2012). On Elijah Muhammad see Claude Clegg, *An Unoriginal Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997.)

76. On this expansion within correctional institutions see Colley, "All America is a Prison," 406-410.

77. On Malcolm X's conversion see Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (London: Penguin Group, 2011).

78. Keith Butler, "The Muslims Are No Longer an Unknown Quantity," *Corrections Magazine* 4, (1978): 57. Also see "Ordeal at Lorton Prison. Why Black Jobs in Jail Join Muhammad," *Muhammad Speaks*, October 9 1964, 25; "Historic Court Fight Ends for Muslim Inmates," *Muhammad Speaks*, October 23 1964, 9.

79. Lockwood, *Conversation with Eldridge Cleaver*, 82-86.

80. Cleaver, *Soul on Fire*, 74. Also see Cummins, *The Rise and Fall*, 65-67.

81. Cleaver claimed that—as was the case outside penitentiaries—each prison temple had its own "Fruit of Islam." This was a para-military unit that both protected members from attack, and acted as an internal police force to punish those who failed to live according to the NOI's rules. See Eldridge Cleaver, "Prisons: The Muslims' Decline," in *Prison Life: A Study of the Explosive Conditions in America's Prisons*, ed. Frank Browning (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 100.

82. Cummins, *The Rise and Fall*, 65,

83. For testimony on the growing racial conflict in California's prisons, see James Carr, *Bad: The Autobiography of James Carr* (London: Pelagian Press, 1975), 106; Saladin, 'Racism I' in *Inside Prison*, 82-83; Maguire, 'Racism II' in *Inside Prison*, 84-95; Saladin, 'Racism III, San Quentin: Riot for Graft' in *Inside Prison*, 96-111.

84. John Irwin, *Prisons in Turmoil* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 62.

85. On these instances of conflict see "Muslim Trouble Rises in California Prisons," *Los Angeles Times*, May 20 1962. For reports of the growing influence of the NOI in prisons outside California see "Muslim Negroes Suing the State," *New York Times*, March 19 1961; "Muslims A Problem in Prison," *Trenton Evening Times*, November 1 1962; "Muslims Studied in Jersey Prison," *NYT*, November 8 1962; J.B. Jacobs, *Stateville: The Penitentiary in Mass Society* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 60, 256 n.19; Testimony of Dr. Henri Yaker to the Supreme Court of New Jersey in *Cooke v. Tramburg*, December 14 1964. Available at

http://www.leagle.com/xmlResult.aspx?page=3&xmlDoc=196455743NJ514_1439.xml&docbase=CSLWAR1-1950-1985&SizeDisp=7, accessed December 15 2018.

86. Interdepartmental Communication from Dale B. Frady to Walter Dunbar, 28 December 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

87. Interdepartmental Communication from Dale B. Frady to Walter Dunbar, 28 December 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers. While he was clearly influential upon fellow Muslim converts, there is no evidence to support the belief that Cleaver was responsible for organizing conflict between converts and guards.

88. Ibid.

89. The fear regarding Cleaver's ability to convert his fellow inmates were occurring across the country during this time. In March 1961, the *New York Times* revealed that New York officials were facing an "explosive situation" in their prisons due to the rapid growth of the Nation of Islam. It detailed a number of legal challenges that had been initiated by converts to be given the right to practice their religion without hindrance. "Muslim Negroes Suing the State," *New York Times*, March 19 1961.

90. "Pact May End Folsom Prison Muslim Strife," *Monroe Morning World*, March 5 1961; "4 Muslims Lost Plea in Court," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 8 1961.

91. Memo to L.S. Nelson from H.K. McGarry, March 28 1961, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers; letter to F.R. Sickson from Eldridge Cleaver, December 1961, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

92. Letter to C.G. Hocker from H.F. Zink, April 11 1961, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

93. Letter to F.R. Dickson from H.K. McGarry, April 12 1961, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers; letter to F.R. Dickson from Joe Quinn, August 17 1961, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers. Cleaver had secured the aid of a lawyer Donald Warden, with whom Cleaver regularly communicated the treatment of NOI converts in prisons across California. See letter from Eldridge Cleaver to Donald Warden, December 9 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

94. Letter to Mr. Marks from Eldridge Cleaver, October 1 1962; letter to Warden Fred Dickson from Eldridge Cleaver, October 16 1962; Letter to Warden Fred Dickson from Eldridge Cleaver, October 18 1962; Letter to Warden Fred Dickson from Eldridge Cleaver, October 19 1962; letter to Warden Fred Dickson from Eldridge Cleaver, October 21 1962; letter to Warden Fred Dickson from Eldridge Cleaver, October 26 1962; letter to Warden Fred Dickson from Eldridge Cleaver, December 1 1962; letter to Walter Dunbar, Director of Corrections, October 21 1962 letter to Walter Dunbar, Director of Corrections, October 26 1962. All in folder 8, box 32, EC Papers. Cleaver was clearly producing long essays in protest of his treatment, including a lengthy essay titled "America's Debt to Elijah Muhammad"; the essays, which were subject to close scrutiny by the warden, were presumably destroyed.

95. Disciplinary note, Cleaver, October 23 1962, folder 10, box 32, EC Papers

96. "Muslim Negroes Suing the State."

97. Psychiatric summary, February 4 1960, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

98. Psychiatric evaluation for adult authority, March 1962, San Quentin prison, folder 10, box 32, EC Papers.

99. Michael Staub, *Madness is Civilization: When the Diagnosis was Social, 1948-1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Also see Ellen Herman *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis*.

100. On this process, see Mitford, *Kind and Usual*, 87-128.

101. In 1962, James V. Bennett, Director of Federal Bureau of Prisons convened a seminar on the use of behavioral modification techniques in the prison setting. He requested that further research be undertaken on the application of these techniques to disrupt the operation of the NOI inside the federal penal system. See Mitford, *Kind and Usual Punishment*, 130-34

102. Cleaver, *Soul on Fire*, 72-73; Kathleen Cleaver, "On Eldridge Cleaver," *Ramparts*, June 1969, 4.

103. Letter from S.T. Hardiman to Captain C.G. Hocker, August 5 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

104. Report from Dale B. Frady to Walter Dunbar, 28 December 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

105. Letter from Eldridge Cleaver to Edmund Brown, May 20 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

106. Letter to Walter Dunbar, Director of Corrections, from Eldridge Cleaver, Leroy Doctor, Raymond Lewis, Robert Wilkerson, William Mason, n.d., folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

107. See, for example, letter from Eldridge Cleaver to Walter Dunbar, October 21 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers; letter from Eldridge Cleaver to Fred Dickson, October 18 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

108. Inter-departmental Communication, State of California, Dale Frady, October 19 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers; Inter-departmental Communication, California State Prison at San Quentin, R.E. McNurlan, August 5 1962, folder 8, box 32, EC Papers.

109. Disciplinary note, Cleaver, October 23 1962, folder 10, box 32, EC Papers

110. This belief is repeated in "The Nation of Islam," FBI Criminal Research Section Report, October 1960, 51-52, available at <https://vault.fbi.gov/Nation%20of%20Islam/Nation%20of%20Islam%20Part%201%20of%203/view>, accessed 22 December 2018.

111. On the divergence between NOI strategy inside and outside prisons, and especially the increasingly political outlook of California's prisoners, see Cummins, *The Rise and Fall*, 65.

112. No historian has linked Cleaver with this event in San Quentin's history, but Kathleen Cleaver wrote that her husband was present and attempting to protect Booker T. X from white inmates when guards in the gun tower shot him dead. Cleaver, "On Eldridge Cleaver," 4-11; "Black Muslim Convict Killed; Others Isolated," *El Paso Herald-Post*, February 26 1963; "San Quentin Muslims Protest Leader's Killing," *Los Angeles Times*, February 27 1963.

113. "Inquest Set in Prison Death of Black Muslim," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28 1963; "Quentin Cult Death Inquest is Set Tonight," *Daily Independent Journal*, March 5 1963; "Convicts Lose Plea to Practice Muslim Faith," *Los Angeles Times* March 7 1963.

114. A parole report in May 1963 noted that Cleaver had assumed leadership of San Quentin's Muslims. Adult Authority and Parole Release Referral Report, May 1963, folder 10, box 32, EC Papers.

115. Classification, Eldridge Cleaver, June 18 1963, folder 10, box 32, EC Papers. Initial classification, Eldridge Cleaver, July 1 1963, folder 11, box 32, EC Papers.

116. Psychiatric Evaluation for Adult Authority, November 1963, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

117. Muslims were also angered at Muhammad's refusal to support the "LA 7"—a group of seven Muslims in Los Angeles who were charged with a range of crimes following a police raid on their temple; the temple's occupants were unarmed. Police wounded several Muslims and killed Ronald Stokes. See Frederick Knight, "Justifiable Homicide, Police Brutality, and Governmental Repression? The 1962 Los Angeles Shooting of Seven Members of the Nation of Islam," *The Journal of Negro History*, 79 no. 2, (1984), 182-96.

118. Cleaver, "Prisons: The Muslims' Decline," 100-103.

119. Psychiatric progress note, 11/66 AA Calendar, October 10 1966, folder 9, box 32, EC Papers.

120. Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 103-104.

121. *Ibid.*, 104.

122. Seale, *Seize the Time*, 132.

123. Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 100-112

124. Seale, *Seize the Time*, 65.

125. Murch, *Living for the City*, 48-58; Seale, *Seize the Time*, 64-66.

126. Cleaver, "Uptight in Babylon," 68.

127. Cummins uses this term in *The Rise and Fall*, 103.

128. Cleaver, *Soul on Fire*, 83.

129. Cleaver, "Uptight in Babylon," 68-69.

130. "Patrolman Killed in Coast Gunfight," *New York Times*, October 29 1967; "Panther Chief Arraigned," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, November 1 1967.

131. On the "Free Huey" campaign see Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*, 99-114.

132. *Ibid.*, 115-38.

133. Cleaver, "On Eldridge Cleaver," 6-10.

134. Cleaver, "An Address on Prisons," 142.

135. On the international aspect of the Party see Sean Malloy, *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism During the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017).

136. On 'the split' within the party, see Austin, *Up Against the Wall*, 297-334.

137. On Cleaver's return to the US see Lavelle, "From Soul on Ice," 55-74.

138. Butler, "The Muslims Are No Longer an Unknown Quantity," 57; Cummins, *The Rise and Fall*, 72-73; G. Hawkins, *The Prison: Policy and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 138-39; James B. Jacobs, "The Prisoners' Rights Movement and Its Impacts, 1960-1980," *Crime and Justice*, 2 (1980): 429-70.