

# What lies beneath essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Humans are all created equal, but people make different categories to separate themselves from each other. Race, gender, religion and culture are main categories, which separate humans and make the World an unstable place to live. As time goes by, people learn to get along with each other. This separation was demonstrated during the 1960s, when African Americans were treated different than whites. After much suffering, blacks started to fight for their rights. The Black Panther Party For Self-Defense was one of these organizations, that flued the Civil Rights Movement. This organization, whose name was shortened to BPP, was founded in October 1966, in Oakland, California by Henry P. Newton and Bobby Seale. Eventually BPP had started spreading eastward through the black urban ghetto-colonies across the country. One city, in the middle of this racial evolution, was Richmond, California.

Mrs. Dextra Christiansen and her family were white family living in Richmond, in a pure black neighborhood during the Civil Rights Movement. As a child of a poor family from the South, Dextra experienced the winds of racial change, which had blown through the United States at that time. Due to the lack of white people living in Dextras neighborhood, she started making friends with the black kids. Her parents witnessed a murder of a white neighbor killed by the Black Panthers. Consequently, Dextras parents did not want her to be around African Americans. Dextra eventually become a friend with black kids, even though she was the only tall blond girl interacting with them. Everyday when Dextra and her friends played basketball her parents feared for her safety. They specifically had forbidden her to interact with others from a different race. She was placed between

two flames of truth. One was burning for her and her friends and another one was for her parents opinion and order to stay away from a people of different skin color in who she saw nothing but the friends. This segregation just helped in raising the question Arent we all the same? Explanation from the parents for this dividing process came from the 1930s, for which they were saying that segregation was strong and existed even then, and that there is nothing wrong with it. At those days while growing up, she could smell white superiority, which was coming out through the chimneys of most American households.

She says that here parents told her that even back in 1930s it was segregation between black and white people. Black people worked the fields and poor whites mild it. Moving westward, Police Departments in each city made military raids on BPP offices or homes in Philadelphia, Chicago, Newark, Omaha, Denver, New Haven, San Diego, Los Angeles, and other cities, murdering some Panthers and arresting others.

Because Dexter was lonely, she started making friends with black guys by playing basketball with them. Even though she was a tall blond girl at that time, they led her play with them. Dexters parents were really scared for her safety. They didnt allow her to play and interact with others who were from a different race then them. Since at the same time the leadership of BPP was getting corrupted, as a result of corruption the lack of unity within the cities was growing. COINTELPRO eventually intimidated and corrupted all of the BPPs top leaders: Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver. Each, in their own way, caved in to the pressures and began acting in a manner that was deliberately designed to destroy the BPP, and to disillusion not only

Party members but African people in America for years to come.

COINTELPRO's hopes were that Africans in America would be so disillusioned that never again would they trust or follow any African leader or organization which advocated real solutions to Black oppression. Combining above and underground was the most serious structural flaw in the BPP. Party members who functioned openly in the BPP offices, or organized openly in the community, by day might very well have been the same people who carried out armed operations at night. This provided the police with a convenient excuse to make raids on any and all BPP offices, or members homes, under the pretext that they were looking for suspects, fugitives, weapons, and or explosives. It also sucked the BPP into taking the un-winnable position of making stationary defenses of BPP offices. However there were still few members who kept the organization alive.

Even though the BPP got corrupted, it still had its benefits and made contributions to the community. Self-Defense is one of the fundamental areas in which the BPP contributed to the BLM. It's also one of the fundamental things that set the BPP apart from most previous Black organizations and which attracted members (particularly the youth), mass support, and a mass following. All history has shown that this government will bring its police and military powers to bear on any group, which truly seeks to free African people. Any Black "freedom" organization, which ignores self-defense, does so at its own peril. Then Revolutionary Nationalist Ideology: The BPP was a nationalist organization. Its main goal was the national liberation of African people in the U. S., and it restricted its membership to Blacks only. It was also revolutionary. The BPP theories and

practices were based on socialist principles. It was anti-capitalist and struggled for a socialist revolution of U. S. society. And finally Mass Organizing Techniques: Another fundamental thing that attracted members and mass support to the BPP was its policy of “ serving the people”. This was a policy of going to the masses, living among them, sharing their burdens, and organizing the masses to implement their own solutions to the day to day problems that were of great concern to them.

Since Richmond was a small town, most peoples lives were more opened toward church and religion, where they believed GOD is savior and since during that time the country was getting more corrupted day by day, it was their belief for survival. Since Dexters parents were really religious, they attended church very often. We shared the same religious roots, we shared the same fate and the same rituals with black people, but we didnt workshop together. (Dextra) However Dextra mentions that even with the same common morals, blacks and whites yet did not get along and there are still in arguments with each other.

In the late 1940s, after WWII, Dextras parents get married. Her mother worked in Texas in so called Mill Blocks. Her father grow up in Southern Missouri in family of 13 children. He dropped out from the school and worked on the fields. As a kid whose fathers ancestors were slave owners during 1800s, Dextra was raised to be scared of black people and she was told that she is different, smarter, and that she is in great danger if she is around black people. Few years before Dextra was born parents moved toward west chasing for the better future. Her mother became the first women butcher in Safe Way while her father was working in refinery. With both of Dextras

parents working hard for survival, they managed to buy a little house (little homes- shanties) in the mid lower class of the town which was previously owned by mill owners. By the time Dextra was 4 years old in 1955, the neighborhood started to be integrated with other races such as Blacks and Koreans. They lived right next to railroad and Country Jail.

History will be the ultimate judge of the BPP's place in the Black Liberation Movement (BLM). Although the BPP made serious errors, it also gained a considerable measure of success and made several significant new contributions to the BLM. The final judgment of history may very well show that in its own way the BPP added the final ingredient to the Black Agenda necessary to attain real freedom: armed struggle; and that this was the great turning point which ultimately set the Black Liberation Movement on the final road to victory.

In 1962 Dextra went to black high school. Again anxiety, feeling like a minority and being one at the same time, physical difference just could not fit with blacks. The black guys were constantly beating her up because she was different. Some of the black kids who were her friends she played with and stayed by her, unlike some others who did not treat her the same and turned their back on her. While being in Junior High years, Martin Luther King the Civil Rights leader got killed. That was also a time when Malcolm X showed up on the scene. She quotes his words Forget the whites, there are all devils! Malcolm was the one who rejected Kings nonviolent approach and called for the separation of blacks from mainstream society. Even Malcolm X was shot to death as he delivered a speech in Manhattans Audobon Ballroom on February 21, 1965 while Dextra was only 14. Just a few years old, not

even a grownup person yet Dextra was a part of history of American nation, and movements, which will change people lives forever in the future. While feeling that equality between all people from all races needs to be delivered in her teenager years she was marching proudly for the rights of all people.

The interview I had with a mother of my American friend was very interesting and inspiring to me. This interview was such an inspiration, it opened a door beyond the knowledge of the historian books I have read. Speaking with Mrs. Dextra Christiansen made me realize there is more to history than what we read in the books and watch on TV. As a young historian I felt I know too little about a real truth which lies beneath the dusty historian papers and books. I am glad that I had expanded my views on some of the major historical events in American History and that I could share some magnificent moments with my interviewee

Humans are all created equal, but people make different categories to separate themselves from each other. Race, gender, religion and culture are main categories, which separate humans and make the World an unstable place to live. As time goes by, people learn to get along with each other. This separation was demonstrated during the 1960s, when African Americans were treated different than whites. After much suffering, blacks started to fight for their rights. The Black Panther Party For Self-Defense was one of these organizations, that flued the Civil Rights Movement. This organization, whose name was shortened to BPP, was founded in October 1966, in Oakland, California by Henry P. Newton and Bobby Seale. Eventually BPP had started spreading eastward through the black urban ghetto-colonies across

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