

1. Prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups. In unity there is strength that is no less valid for all its triteness. A coalition of black nationalist groups might be the step toward a real "Yankee" in America, the beginning of a true black revolution.

2. Prevent the rise of a "messiah" who could unify and electrify the militant black nationalist movement. Malcolm X might have been such a "messiah;" he is the martyr of the movement today. Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael and Elijah Muhammad all aspire to this position. Elijah Muhammad is less of a threat because of his age. King could be a very real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed "obedience" to "white, liberal doctrine" (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism. Carmichael has the necessary charisma to be a real threat in this way.

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Eddie Conway's
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The Greatest Threat

3. Prevent violence on the part of black nationalist groups. This is of primary importance, and is, of course, a goal of our investigative activity; it should also be a goal of the Counterintelligence Program. Through counterintelligence it should be possible to pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their potential for violence.

The Black Panther Party and COINTELPRO

4. Prevent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability, by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community. The goal of discrediting black nationalists must be handled tactically in three ways. You must discredit these groups and individuals to, first, the responsible Negro community. Second, they must be discredited to the white community, both the responsible community and to "liberals" who have vestiges of sympathy for militant black nationalist simply because they are Negroes. Third, these groups must be discredited in the eyes of Negro radicals, the followers of the movement. This last area requires entirely different tactics from the first two. Publicity about violent tendencies and radical statements merely enhances black nationalists to the last group; it adds "respectability" in a different way.

MARSHALL EDWARD CONWAY

5. A final goal should be to prevent the long-range growth of militant black nationalist organizations, especially among youth. Specific tactics to prevent these groups from converting young people must be developed.

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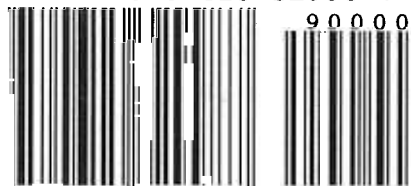
In 1969, J. Edgar Hoover described the Black Panther Party as representing "the greatest threat to internal security of the country" and began issuing directives to destroy the party through the federal government's secret Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO)

At the time, the U.S. armed forces held several million men and women with the world's largest and most technologically advanced arsenal. Meanwhile, the BPP could not have been more than a few thousand strong, armed with pistols and shotguns.

The Greatest Threat puts the government's war on the Panthers in historical context. Marshall "Eddie" Conway, a veteran of the Black Panther Party who has been held as a political prisoner for four decades, has compiled the available documentation and research on COINTELPRO, and traced its dirty history, from the active repression of the black revolutionary movement of the 1960's and 1970's, to the conditions of Black America today and the dozens of political prisoners who remain in U.S. prisons on charges stemming from their involvement in the Black liberation movement.

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