

The fall of the black panther party



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The Fall Of The Black Panther Party-, 1966· The Fall Of The Black Panther Party The Black Panther Party was one that started as a result of the struggle that African Americans faced from day one in America. With a militant hand the Black Panther Party wanted to uplift African Americans and bring about revolutionary socialism and equality for all oppressed minorities. Following in the steps of Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party also sought to bring about positive social services, and to take Malcolm X's goals for African Americans to new heights. With these theories and the manpower of a unified oppressed group, the uprising of the Black Panther Party was a steady, powerful, and productive organization for advancements in the African American community .

Their were various events that lead to the downfall of the party. Some of these events included the militancy of the group in their efforts to achieve equality , the rallies that incited the minds of their followers, the protest for the use of firearms as well as the use of firearms, and the arrest of the Defense Minister of the Panthers, Henry Newton. The group pushed forward to achieve their goals of equality, against a system that wanted to smother there voices. Though the uprising of the Black Panther Party was short lived, they manage to bring hundreds of thousand of backs and other minorities, as well as some whites together in a struggle for unity across colors. In the eyes of political figures this type of power in the hands of the Black Panther Party was seen as unhealthy for the nation. The FBI quickly developed plans and strategies to break down the party. The use of firearms was both a symbol for African Americans and white police officers.

To blacks, the gun was a reminder that they had the right to defend themselves against the aggressive acts of police officers, and that they were on equal footing with the police because their bodies were not bullet proof. The possession of the guns gave African American? s a sense of presence. The police had shown nothing but unlawful treatment to blacks for so long, that they had made the blacks feel defeated and unable to defend themselves. The guns made them feel like they had power again, it made them feel like a worthy human being who had rights. The party made African American? s aware, and they showed them the way to equality, even if it was with the use of guns.

The police officers also had fear installed in them as a result of the Party's use of firearms. They now second guess their actions towards blacks that were armed, and were forced to obey the law in most instances. The arrest of the Defense Minister Henry Newton , for killing an Oakland cop, was an event that was followed by a cascade of events that soon led to the downfall of the Party. Immediately after Huey? s arrest, Panther Eldridge Cleaver started the, ? Free Huey? movement. The group soon developed slogans such as, ? You can Jail a Revolutionary, But You Can? t Jail the Revolution?. The Black Panther Party felt like it was them against the whites, and they often referred to the white man as, ? The Man?. They felt like ? The Man?, was trying to hold them down, and in all honesty he was. The government was taken back by the views and messages that the party represented, and they feared what might happen if too many people started to believe and follow the views of the party, which was already starting to happen.

Arresting Huey was a major part of the governments goals to disassemble the party. On February 17, 1965, the Black Panther Party held a rally in honor of the , ? Free Huey? movement. During this rally the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) announced their merge with the Panther Party. Stokely Carmichael, a prominent member of SNCC, spoke on the importance of Huey to the movement at the rally. He wanted followers to understand that Newton was, ? part and parcel of black people wherever we are on the world?. He wanted people to understand what Newton? s imprisonment symbolized about the movement.

Carmichael wanted to ensure that the followers of the Party did not lose hope because Newton was in jail. He wanted them to still hold up the belief that , ? The sky was the limit?. The unity and urge to use force, because of years of oppression was evident, and this bought about fear in political leaders as well as in the Federal Government. The FBI kept a close watch on the Party, and after the arrest of Huey Newton they wanted to end the Party for good.

The FBI, under J. Edger Hoover started a program called COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program), which had the main goal of breaking up the spread of the unity of revolutionary groups that had started to come together because of the work and examples of the Panthers. Some of these groups that had began to unify included the Peace and Freedom Party, Brown Berets, Students for a Democratic Society, the SNCC, SCLC, Poor People? s March, Cesar Chavez and others in the farm labor movement, the American Indian Movement, Young Puerto Rican Brothers, the Young Lords and many others. In hopes of destroying the party, the FBI started a

program of surgical assassinations, which included killing leading members of the party, followed by a series of arrest, followed by a program of psychological warfare designed to split the party both politically and morally through the use of espionage, provocatures, and chemical warfare.

In March, 1970, the FBI began to try their best to infiltrate the Panthers by forging letters to members. Eldridge Cleaver was one of their main targets, who at this time was living in exile in Algiers, they gradually convinced him with a steady stream of misinformation that the Black Panther Party leadership was trying to remove him from power. Cleaver received stacks of forged FBI letters from supposed party members, citing Newton's leadership, and asking for Cleaver to take control. These letters would also tell how things were poorly organizing in the party, and how the party deeply need Cleaver to resume some order. Cleaver was upset by what he was reading in the letters, and on the phone from Algiers with Newton who was a T.

V. talk show interview, Cleaver expressed his absolute disdain for what had happened to the party, and demanded that David Hilliard (Chief of Staff) be removed. Because of this Cleaver was removed from the Central Committee, and he started up his own Black Liberation Army.

With the FBI constantly attacking the Panther Party and creating so much struggle for its members it became very hard to keep it together. Seeing the party being ripped apart by factions and internal hatred, Huey, like other members, became disillusioned. He no longer wanted to lead the party, even though so many expected and demanded him to, he began to doubt

himself and depend heavily on drugs. On August 22, 1989, Newton was shot dead on the streets of Oakland in a drug dispute. By the beginning of the 1980s, attacks on the party, internal degradation and divisions, caused the party to fall apart.

The leadership of the party had been absolutely smashed by the FBI. Many remaining Panthers were hunted down and killed in the following years, imprisoned on trumped charges, or forced to flee the United States. Cleaver would later state in an interview, "AS it was (the U. S. government) chopped off the head (of the Black liberation movement) and left the body there armed.

That's why all these young bloods are out there now, they've got the rhetoric but are without the political direction? and they've got the guns? - C ;,?