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The Black Panther Party for Self Defense: Militant Human Rights

MovementBy Luis RamirezContentsIntroductionII. Problem formulationIII.

Purpose and hypothesisIV. MethodV. AnalysisVI. The Black Panther Party and the Struggle for Human Rights by Meredith RomanVII. ArgumentA.

Self defense for human rightsB. Civil Rights Movement becomes militantVIII.

SummaryIX. ConclusionX. Cited work1. Introduction: The Black Panther Party was a revolutionary black nationalist and socialist organization movement active in the United States from 1966 until 1982. This group challenged authorities behavior towards minorities by using their rights given as American citizens.

The founders Bobby Seale and Huey Newton created the organization after seeing police brutality in Oakland, California. The formation of the Panthers was the direct result of the development of the civil rights movement which had already been in full swing for more than a decade before they were created. The group leaders and members would all practice learning laws and court outcomes so no government officials could abuse their power towards African Americans. With citizens learning their own rights this allowed for them to challenge and exercise any amendment. The second amendment was the most practiced one amongst Black Panther members. The second amendment was used so often with members of the Black Panther that it become seen as a threat to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Black Panther group started off with a simple Malcolm X influence philosophy during the Black Power movement as in "Malcolm X's Influence on the Black Panther Party Philosophy" by Arthur Gibbs states, "I

don't even call it violence when it's in self defense: I call it intelligence"

(Gibbs 4).

Later on in the Black Panthers, the militant actions they are involved with caused its demise in 1982. The FBI corrupted the groups actions to leave leaders and members in prisons as the founder Huey P. Newton did over a death of an officer. I will also go into detail why this groups influence forever will leave in impact towards human rights for anyone to defend themselves towards police when our rights are being violated. 2. Problem formulation: The activities done by the Black Panther Party first were militant self-defense of minority communities.

From the start of the organization they focused to fight to establish a revolutionary socialism through mass organizing and communities. The Black Panther Party were a group whose agenda was revolutionary establishment for real economic, social, and political equality across gender and color lines that expanded throughout the world. 3. Purpose and hypothetical questions: The aim of this paper will be to analyze how the Black Panther Party conceived the African American liberation struggle as they fought for human rights. In seeking to understand the elision of the Panthers from broader discussions of human rights, it contemplates the critical roles such as the Cold War geopolitics, the party's rhetoric of "pigs" and armed revolution, and US White supremacy that identifies humanity with whiteness.

Reconceptualizing the Black Panthers as human rights activists is not merely an academic exercise, but rather contains the potential to foster greater support for the Black Lives Matter movement. 4. Method: The method that

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will be used in this paper is a qualitative text analysis of relevant sections in the book "Seize The Time" by Bobby Seale and "The Black Panther Party and the Struggle for Human Rights" by Meredith Roman together with the support of articles and historical texts which concern similar topics to this paper. 5.

AnalysisThe analytical section of this paper will focus on the presentation and discussion of the Black Panthers fundamental ideas regarding the organizations early ideology and later activities that became problematic towards the government causing its demise. 6. The Black Panther Party's Start and the Struggle for Human RightsIn 1960s civil rights legislation followed the landmark of the U. S. Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954).

In the book "The Black Panther Party and the Struggle for Human Rights" by Meredith Roman explains it as "the Brown v. Board was the Supreme Court ruling that declared state laws to separate public schools for black and white students to be unconstitutional" (Meredith 2). This ruling affected African Americans living in cities throughout North America as they continued to suffer economically and social inequality.

Poverty raise to a new high for African Americans and reduced public services characterized these communities, where residents of these locations were subject to poor living conditions, joblessness, chronic health problems, violence, and limited to any sort of support by the government. African Americans at this time felt targeted in every direction but the corruption that called the most attention amongst the community

was the police brutality shown on the television and radio. During a time where Revolutionary socialism wasn't accepted the Black Panther Party formed. " Although the Black Panther Party believes in Black nationalism and Black culture, it does not believe that either will lead to Black liberation or the overthrow of the capitalist system, and are therefore ineffective."

(Meredith 57) The Black Panther Party formed at a time when the African American community needed them the most, someone to defend their rights as humans." Basically, cultural nationalism sees the white man as the oppressor and makes no distinction between racist whites and non-racist whites, as the Panthers do." (Meredith 26).

To the Black Panther cultural nationalism was a main part of what they believed in. They have been on the record saying they're not racist or sexist towards anyone, they accept anyone that sees the injustice the system of government the United States had at the time. They gave the opportunity to any person to join their party and exercise the rights and laws every United States American has. The Black Panthers political position was " Far-Left", according to the Oxford Dictionary Fra-Left is " the extreme left wing of a political party or group".

Even with being a Far-Left group, they were known to be Anti-fascist, Anti-imperialism and a Revolutionary socialism group. The Black Panthers were a big part of what was known in the United States as the Black Power movement. The term Black Power was powerful amongst itself as it was a political slogan and name for various ideologies for self-determined people of African descent. But rather than being criticized for racial segregation for

black superiority over others, the Black Panther Party just became a threat of militant because of the actions they did to protect anyone being abused by police. The one amendment in the United States Constitution used by all the Black Panther Party members the most was the second amendment, “protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms”.

The right to keep and bear arms was adopted on December 15, 1791, as part of the first ten amendments contained in the Bill of Rights. As the book *Seize the Time* by Bobby Seale states, “there was a law service section up in the poverty program office, and Huey studied those law books, backwards, forwards, sideways, and catty corners; everything on gun laws” (Seale 14). Bobby Seale acknowledged himself on all the rights he has to protect himself and others by knowing his own rights as an American. The Black Panthers created a powerful image for themselves with intellectual African Americans that knew the law better than the authority itself and wasn’t afraid to abuse their rights to defend themselves or others. 7. ArgumentA.

Self defense for Human RightsSelf-defense is defined by Oxford dictionary as “an act or instance of defending or protecting one’s own interests, property, ideas, etc.” That definition perfectly describes what the Black Panthers were trying to demonstrate to the government about their feelings on how their people were being treated by the police as well as influencing their people to defend their interests and ideas. “We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black community. We believe that black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny” (Seale 25), is the belief of the Black Panther Party as said in their October 1966 Platform and

Program speech, “ What We Want What We Believe”. The United States during this time had many injustice actions towards minorities and it all started since the police brutality in Oakland, California.

The Black Panthers used their constitutional right to carry arms to implement Malcolm X’s philosophy of self-defense, by patrolling the police. “ A free people ought not only to be armed and disciplined, but they should have sufficient arms and ammunition to maintain a status of independence from any who might attempt to abuse them, which would include their own government.” — George Washington (Gibbs 34) is a quote stated by the first president of the United States that reflects the actions minority groups had to do in the 60’s to avoid abuse by their own government. During this time police brutality was common, with police beating down and killing African Americans at complete random. Many of the cops during this time were even recruited from the racist south to work in the ghettos. Huey P. Newton became aware of the threat of his own health, his family and his people so he would always had a look out for any blacks being attacked or harassed by the police.

On one occasion as said in the article “ The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense” by Rebecca Cuevas tells “ whilst on patrol, they witnessed an officer stop and search a young guy. The Panthers got out of their car and went over to the scene and stood watching their guns on full display— angrily, the policeman began to question them and tried to intimidate them with threats of arrest” (Cuevas 8). Huet P.

Newton had studied his rights and knew the law intimately and could quote every law and court ruling relevant to any situation he was defending. Huey stood there with a law book in one hand and a gun in the other and told the police about his constitutional right to carry a weapon as long as it was not concealed. He also told them about the law about how it is said that every citizen has the right to observe any police officer while they carry out during his duty as long as they stood a reasonable distance away. On another occasions he states to a police officer “ about the Supreme Court ruling which defined that distance” (Huey 22). To police, this was one of the first times a socialist organization movement group uses both knowledge and violence to defend their rights.

Police wasn't used to this kind of behavior towards African Americans so as others saw the impact the Black Panthers were creating they immediately joined. B. Civil rights becomes militant The Federal Bureau of Investigation “ FBI” was the main government organization that did not want the Black Panthers ideology to grow among the minor groups. FBI documents were released stating “ prevent the rise of the messiah” (Meredith 34), “ prevent militant Black groups from gaining respectability” (Meredith 35), “ prevent growth among youth” (Meredith 36) and this was all objectives targeted towards the Black Panthers. The influence of the Black Panthers grew all the way to the east coast of the United States with offices and meetings being held now in New York. The FBI became threaten the more of the socialist organization movement gained more followers.

The FBI director J. Edgar Hoover supervised an extensive counterintelligence program called "COINTELPRO". The program was for surveillance, infiltration, perjury, police harassment and many other tactics designed to undermine the Black Panther leadership and incriminate party members to slowly demolish the party. The head of the FBI, Edgar J Hoover, called the Black Panther party, "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country." Hoover's involvement with the Black Panther Party came as the party began to gain momentum with more minority groups during 1967 & 68. COINTELPRO had been established since 1956 for police to focus on "political radicals" within the United States. The next objective of COINTELPRO was the focus now came onto the Black Panther Party creating pressure amongst both parties.

On June 15, 1969, J. Edgar Hoover declared, "the Black Panther Party, without question, represents the greatest threat to internal security of the country"; he pledged that 1969 would be the last year of the Party's existence in which he failed to keep that promise as they lasted more than decade later. The Black Panthers ended up slowly falling apart by the FBI's efforts of corrupting the party members with legal issues. The biggest corruption the government did to the Black Panthers was the arrest of group leader Huey P. Newton for the death of police officer John Frey. Huey's arrest created the "Free Huey" campaign that attracted many black power organizations such as the New Left groups, and activist groups such as the Progressive Labor Party, Bob Avakian of the Community for New Politics, and the Red Guard. For example, the Black Panther Party collaborated with the Peace and Freedom Party, "which sought to promote a strong antiwar and

antiracist politics in opposition to the establishment democratic party” (Huey 45). The Black Panther Party provided a needed legitimacy to the Peace and Freedom Party’s racial politics that went hand in hand with the group.

The return received by the Peace and Freedom Party was a invaluable support for the “ Free Huey” campaign. Huey philosophy on the constitutional rights followed the Black Panthers until the end. Huey has stated that “ the constitutional rights and all that stuff about the rights of citizens to have guns—the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and no police or militia force can infringe upon that right; it states that specifically”. He shares one of the first stories he experienced when exercising his right to bare arms as a police officer said, “ hat the hell are those damn niggers doing with these goddam rifles?—they actually stopped and looked at us and stood up there around the Capitol, and stared up from the grass and looked at us. I didn’t pay a damn bit of attention to them because we knew our constitutional rights and all that stuff about the rights of citizens to have guns” (Huey 66). In August 22, 1989 Huey P. Newton was killed by a gun in Oakland, California and the killer is still until this day to be unknown.

An American political activist was taken away by the same issue he seen to be trying to change in the Black community. 8. SummaryTo summarize, the United States government in the late 1960’s had a lot of injustice amongst minorities. All the American laws promised to be given to everyone would be violated by the police. African Americans were targeted so they grew to learn their own constitutional rights and created their own socialist organization

movement known as the Black Panther Party. The Black Panther Party was a revolutionary group that took Malcolm X's philosophy of self-defense and expanded it to anyone that felt as they were being treated unfairly. Group leader Huey P. Newton tested out the American constitutional amendments and used it for his own safety by memorizing every law and every outcome in court.

As Huey learned the American constitutional amendments he advised for members of the Black Panthers to also learn and practice them. The Black Panthers pushed the limits with militant actions towards authority but always gave back to their community watching for their safety. The rise and fall of the Black Panthers demonstrated a injustice in human rights that the government and FBI felt threatened by. The movement they created was one that allowed every American citizen to notice what happens if they learn their own rights. The Black Panthers philosophy on self-defense has been traced to the humble beginnings of the Black Power movement but now is seen as a mandatory rule for any United States citizen abused by police authority. 9. Conclusion To conclude, the Black Panther Party was a needed social movement to place authority back in its place against abuse and for normal day to day American citizens to exercise the rights and laws they have.

The actions of the Black Panthers was extreme and militant but it was the only way to show America that minorities were absent about their treatment. The social movement that came out of the Black Panthers for years to come is a self-defensive and self-awareness that can be still seen today with police

brutality. I find it to be very important to know and exercise your rights and always defend your right as an American no matter the color of your skin. The Black Panthers gave African American a voice to be heard all across the country with the group itself expanding to every part of the world that was dealing with the same kind of police brutality behavior. For decades to come the Black Panthers revolutionary socialism forever revolutionized the way people behave towards the injustice of government authority.