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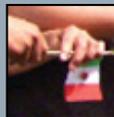
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Neutralize and destroy: The continuing vendetta against the

Panthers

A series by Larry Pinkney and Gerald Sanders

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Neutralize and destroy: The continuing vendetta against the Panthers

A series by Larry Pinkney and Gerald Sanders

Introduction



Larry Pinkney

Perhaps no single political organization in modern U.S. history still evokes more joy, pride, hope and debate in the hearts and minds of people than the Black Panther Party, a revolutionary, community based, national Black political organization founded in October of 1966, which by the end of the 20th century had been physically decimated nationwide. The Black Panthers had been "neutralized and destroyed."

Nevertheless, the ideas and programs of the Black Panther Party, for one breathless historical moment, actually shook the very foundations of the most powerful nation in the world: the United

States of America. Indeed, though ultimately physically destroyed, many of the ideas and programs initiated by the Black Panther Party (BPP) survived its brutal physical decimation well into the 21st century [see pages 233-240 of the book, "We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party," by Mumia Abu-Jamal, introduction by Kathleen Cleaver].

Now, in the 21st century, the principles and goals of the Black Panther Party's Ten Point Platform and Program [see chapter 1 of the book, "To Die for the People," by (Dr.) Huey P. Newton] remain of enormously increasing relevance to the present. Thus, despite the fact that the Black Panther Party was ruthlessly destroyed, its activities callously "disrupted," many of its members viciously framed, forced into exile, railroaded to prison and/or murdered, the United States government has been incapable of destroying the ideas, the hopes and the aspirations of the Black Panther Party.

Like the phoenix that rose from the ashes, the ideas and hopes of the Black Panther Party for Black liberation and self-determination have refused to die and continue to take root. Therefore, former members of the Black Panther Party and its very legacy are today deemed by the United States government and its many repressive forces to be a threat that is to be totally eliminated.

Our message, we believe, is a timely one, and it is hoped that you the reader will find our perspectives informative, important and urgent, not merely because we are both former members of the Black Panther Party, but because our own individual experiences in the Black Panther Party started separately, from different coasts, merging in the 21st century to jointly take up the clarion call alerting our



Gerald Sanders

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communities to the methodical and intensifying nationwide vendetta by the U.S. government and its repressive agencies against the Black Panther Party, its true legacy and the Black communities from which we sprang.

Today, the situation is both urgent and critical. The sustained government vendetta against former members of the Black Panther Party and its very legacy is in reality an attack against Black people nationwide and is intended to frighten Black people into submission. This must be understood precisely for what it is.

We look forward to presenting you with poignant upcoming segments in this series.



One of the ways the Black Panther Party earned the love of the people was its Free Breakfast Program that started at St. Augustine's Church in Oakland in January 1969 and, within a year, was feeding 10,000 children a day in cities throughout the country. It was the people's love for the Panthers that frightened and infuriated the government.

How the vendetta is being carried out

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word vendetta, in relevant part, as being act(s) or an attitude "motivated by vengeance [revenge]." With the founding of the Black Panther Party in October of 1966, young Black people made a commitment to obtaining human rights that the U.S. government deemed then, and deems now, to be "revolutionary," including the right of Black people "to determine the destiny of our Black community" [self determination], the right to "an immediate end to police brutality," the right to "full employment," and the right to "land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace" [from the Ten-Point Program of the Black Panther Party].

That the Black Panther Party demonstrated the audacity to demand these so-called

"revolutionary" rights prompted then FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] chief J. Edgar Hoover, in outlining the theme of the now infamous Cointelpro [Counter Intelligence Program] activities against the Black Panther Party, to declare that, "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries."

Moreover, the Black Panther Party was scandalously labeled as "public enemy number one" and dubbed "the greatest threat to internal [U.S.] security." Thus began the ongoing vendetta against the Black Panther Party.

The very idea of Black people insisting upon economic, social and political justice was in 1966 and remains today unacceptable to the United States government and is therefore viewed as justification enough in America for taking revenge against Black people in general and former members of the Black Panther Party in particular.

The reality of extended and extensive racist vendettas against Black people is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, to this very day, the governments of the United States and Canada, in conjunction with certain European governments, harbor an active and bloody vendetta against the Black people of the island nation of Haiti, which dates back at least to the early 1800s when, during the Haitian Revolution, Black slaves under the leadership of former carriage driver and

slave Toussaint L'Ouverture confounded and militarily defeated the European colonial nations of England, Spain and ultimately France and in so doing inspired Black slaves to revolt in both North and South America [see the book, "Before the Mayflower," revised edition, by Lerone Bennett Jr., pages 104 -108].

The active vendetta by the United States government against former members of the Black Panther Party and the concomitant distortion of its true legacy is a sustained campaign of officially sanctioned government sponsored terror to exact revenge and destroy every vestige of the will of Black people in America in the ongoing struggle to obtain full human rights.

Individual acts of police brutality or judicial tyranny are often ascribed to obsessive mad dog behavior of this cop or that bureaucrat. But a series of these oppressive acts, begun at a specific time and carried out relentlessly through every U.S. presidential or administrative regime, be it Democratic or Republican, clearly proves a conscious, systematic vendetta against the Black Panther Party.



Huey Newton in "Revolutionary Suicide" describes how police officers handcuffed him to a trolley and beat him after he had been critically wounded in the abdomen. When he spat blood on them, they covered his face with a towel and beat him some more. Huey wrote that a young Dr. Finch committed suicide after Huey's first trial. His conscience would give him no peace after his treatment of Huey in the emergency room.

Out of hundreds of reported murders of members of the Black Panther Party by the police or other agents of U.S. government repression, of at least 295 FBI operations against Black organizations, a full 233 of them were directed against the Black Panther Party. Notwithstanding the physical decimation of the Black Panther Party by the U.S. government, this vendetta continues to the present against former members of the Black Panther Party.

One of the most common and ongoing weapons in America's vendetta against the Panthers is the use of wrongful imprisonment. Not satisfied with having physically decimated the Black Panther Party, having murdered or wrongfully railroaded its members to prison - some of whom are still imprisoned today - the U.S. government and its many agents continue presently to harass former members of the Black Panther Party by attempting to have court indictments brought against them, seeking to discredit and intimidate them with bogus criminal allegations and/or threatening them or their family members with imprisonment.

Torture the American way

While demented politicians hypocritically claim that torture does not take place in America, it is clear that not only is torture routinely practiced in the United States, but "the use of sensory deprivation as a form of behavior modification" in fact "began as an experiment with political prisoners in this country," including first and foremost with "members of the Black Panther Party." Indeed, among other forms of physical and psychological torture, debilitating "sensory deprivation torture" is all too common in U.S. prisons [see the article, "Prisons and Sensory Deprivation Torture," by Bonnie Kerness, American Friends Service Committee, 1997].

Torture inside the United States itself has been, and continues to be, an integral part of the arsenal of weapons used by the U.S. government and its surrogates against the dissidents they repress. Torture is in fact as American as apple pie.

U.S. state and federal authorities have no compunction whatsoever in viciously framing and using physical, psychological and emotional torture against its own citizens, especially Black people. Thus, it should come as no surprise that U.S. authorities today are directly and indirectly using torture against persons around the world.

As will be discussed in more detail later in this series on torture and intimidation against former members of the Black Panther Party, some forms of torture routinely used by U.S. authorities against U.S. citizens and most particularly against Black people included and still include being stripped naked and beaten with blunt instruments, being blindfolded while having blankets of boiling water thrown onto their bodies, being slammed into walls while blindfolded, having electric probes placed on their genitals and other body parts, having an electric cattle prod and/or other objects forced into their anus and, of course, the more blatant favorite of police departments and other government agencies nationwide, being repeatedly punched, kicked and in general viciously beaten.

These specific forms of torture and/or judicial harassment were in fact used against former Black Panther Party members as discussed at the Feb. 26, 2006, collective presentation by John Bowman, Ray Boudreaux, Hank Jones, Richard Brown and Harold Taylor in Oakland, California. [See also the Dec. 21, 2005, San Francisco Bay View newspaper piece, "How the U.S. destroyed the Black Panther Party and continues to persecute its veterans."]

Black people know that there is no real question about whether the U.S. uses torture abroad, as we are the ongoing victims of its torture against us right here "at home."

In following segments in this series, we shall delineate some specific examples of torture and ongoing harassment in the vendetta against former members of the Black Panther Party today and the impact this has on Black people nationwide. Also, we will delve into some methods to resist and possibly even reverse some of the affects of this continuing vendetta against former members of the Black Panther Party and the necessity on the part of Black women and men of all ages throughout the United States of America to stand firm against repression.

Larry Pinkney is a veteran of the Black Panther Party, the former Minister of Interior of the Republic of New Africa, a former political prisoner and the only American to have successfully self-authored his civil/political rights case to the United Nations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Email him at Leconsult@aol.com. Gerald Sanders is also a Black Panther Party veteran, a member of the Labor Action Committee and a leader of the largest demonstration thus far, in Oakland, in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Email him at gsanders@jps.net.