Luis Miranda (00:01):
This is the Upon Reflection podcast.

Oryon Hamlin (00:07):
Yes, sir.

Luis Miranda (00:07):
My name is Luis Miranda, and I'm here with...

Oryon Hamlin (00:09):
Oryon Hamlin.

Brian Thevenot (00:11):
And Bryan Thevenot.

Oryon Hamlin (00:12):
Yes, sir.

Luis Miranda (00:12):
And we're going to talk to you about the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

Oryon Hamlin (00:19):
Yes, sir.

Luis Miranda (00:20):
Or in short, it's just the Black Panther Party because who really likes long names? If you can't abbreviate it or acronym it, don't have all those words.

Oryon Hamlin (00:30):
Yeah.

Brian Thevenot (00:30):
Like the March on Washington for Jobs and what happened?

Luis Miranda (00:34):
Exactly. [inaudible 00:00:35]. Yeah. You can't even remember it all, man.

Oryon Hamlin (00:35):
It is the March on... Let's get into it.

Luis Miranda (00:42):
Basically, about what happened before the party's creation in 1967, there was the assassination of... Or 1966, sorry. There was the assassination of Malcolm X the previous year, a hugely important figure in
the black power, black nationalist movement, as the co-leader, some would say, of the Nation of Islam, which really went against a lot of the civil rights movement rhetoric, particularly the stuff with King and nonviolent protest.

(01:20):

It was created by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale at Merritt College in Oakland, in California. They were two black students that really advocated for changes within their institution that affected a lot of the state of California, such as the transfer of credits in black studies from junior college to senior college. They created the party after the killing of an unarmed black man, Matthew Johnson, in San Francisco, as they saw that as an opportunity to organize the black people in Oakland and in the Bay Area. And they were correct.

(02:01):

I mean, the party didn't have a huge following for the first eight months or so, but they were able to get people to come to the cause. What they really set their goals and sights on was self-defense, especially initially. So, they were a party against police brutality, but they also had other pillars within the foundation. They eventually developed the Ten-Point Program, the two of them, Huey and Bobby, which advocated for better housing and employment for black people, as well as the end of police brutality, as I said, American conquest overseas. They really wanted the end of the Vietnam War, a really hot topic at that time, as well as the release of black people from jails and prisons and retrials for those that were the worst offenders by fair jurors in a-

Oryon Hamlin (02:59):
Or unfair jury.

Luis Miranda (02:59):
Yeah.

Oryon Hamlin (03:02):
If you don't mind me for asking, this isn't the first sort of black movement with a violent rhetoric or without a nonviolent rhetoric, right?

Luis Miranda (03:12):
No, it definitely wasn't. There were other groups, Nation of Islam, and there was some competing contemporary groups of the Black Panther Party that went against them directly, but they were definitely not the first group to have a violent rhetoric behind them.

Oryon Hamlin (03:29):
They were just the first group to grab the national attention and traction.

Luis Miranda (03:32):
Right, and speaking of that national attention, they wanted to talk to us about their perception in the public.

Oryon Hamlin (03:38):
Yeah. Oh, yeah. Down to the public perception, the public perception was basically based on what the media and the FBI made or forced the narrative to be. So, basically, to give you a sense of the public perception, the FBI declared the Black Panthers a communist organization and the enemy of the United States government in 1969, not too long after its inception. To even further that statement, the FBI's director, J. Edgar Hoover, that guy-

Luis Miranda (04:20):
Yeah, for real.

Oryon Hamlin (04:22):
Yeah. In 1968, he called the Black Panthers, one of the... Him himself. This is a direct quote, "One of the greatest threats to the nation's internal security." This is very interesting, and this is a party of black people, obviously, I think. And as far as that perception, white people didn't really take too kindly to black people having arms, taking up arms, or being violent, which is the whole non-violent rhetoric that Martin Luther King really wanted and stood for. So, it was very pretty controversial at that time for them to take on this type of rhetoric and gain the type of traction that they gained in the US, but it is a little different for black people within the US because they did do a lot of community work. They weren't just on the streets shooting cops, you know what I'm saying? They opened-

Luis Miranda (05:21):
Yeah. They show up to really better the lives of everybody in the community.

Oryon Hamlin (05:24):
Yeah, exactly.

Luis Miranda (05:24):
That was one of the main goals of the Black Panther Party.

Oryon Hamlin (05:27):
Yeah. They provided free healthcare, free breakfast programs for children.

Brian Thevenot (05:31):
And free education.

Oryon Hamlin (05:32):
Free... Yeah.

Luis Miranda (05:33):
Books for school.

Oryon Hamlin (05:35):
[inaudible 00:05:35]. Published black newspapers.

Brian Thevenot (05:38):
All the things, white races stood against.

Oryon Hamlin (05:42): Yeah, exactly. That's part of the reason why they were painted such a terrible light along with their violent rhetoric.

Luis Miranda (05:50): Yeah. And they were all over the country. They were in a lot of cities like Chicago, New York, down in the South. So, they were all over the place. They were really becoming popular-

Oryon Hamlin (05:58): Yeah. Los Angeles.

Luis Miranda (05:59): ... back in 1968 and back in 1969.

Oryon Hamlin (06:01): Pretty much every urbanized city had a chapter of the Black Panthers. Although, there were... I mean, I say all this to say, there was still a little bit of controversy among the black people because of the media portrayals and the violent stigmatism that they carried in the militia-like presence. It was also hard for black people to follow them because of infighting caused by the FBI, which we'll talk about later. Yeah. I'm in this just to get into the major events that Luis is going to give.

Luis Miranda (06:38): Yeah. The first big one and one of probably the more famous events was the protest at the State Capitol, where they sent 18 men of the Oakland branch in 1967 to protest a bill that would outlaw assault rifles in the state of California. They were obviously against it as a very publicly armed political group, but they showed up there.

Oryon Hamlin (07:08): With guns.

Luis Miranda (07:09): They showed up with guns [inaudible 00:07:10] on the statue of the Capitol.

Oryon Hamlin (07:10): Yeah. It's a bad look.

Brian Thevenot (07:10): It reminds me of an event that happened recently.

Oryon Hamlin (07:10): Oh, yeah.
Luis Miranda (07:18):
A few months after this happened, Huey Newton was charged with manslaughter of a police officer.

Oryon Hamlin (07:24):
I remember that.

Luis Miranda (07:27):
... after he and a few other party members ambushed. They later admitted to ambushing, but at that time, it was thought that it was just a dispute between the officers that resulted in the shoot-out. But yeah, there was the killing of Bobby and one of the members was really a major event set that sparked a lot of outrage, and that's kind of why the party grew to where it is now. Yeah. I mean, the party eventually succumbed to outside forces, and the arrest of Newton definitely didn't help in 1972 as he faced gun charges. He eventually went into exile.

Oryon Hamlin (08:15):
Of the party?

Luis Miranda (08:16):
Yeah.

Oryon Hamlin (08:16):
Interesting.

Luis Miranda (08:17):
He left the country.

Oryon Hamlin (08:21):
Oh, yeah. He fled, yeah. Yeah. To get a...

Brian Thevenot (08:22):
Yeah, make sense.

Luis Miranda (08:22):
Now, Bryan can talk to you about what were some of the lasting effects of the party.

Brian Thevenot (08:27):
Yeah, there were a lot of lasting effects of the party, not just in the United States, but also kind of around the world too. Like in Vietnam, with the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, they kind of used the Black Panther Party as an organized... Used it as a model. They actually nicknamed themselves the Yellow Panthers. And then, also after the end of the Black Panther Party around 1990, there was a revival of the organization and they called it the Black Panther Militia.
Interesting.

Brian Thevenot (09:02):
Who is founded by alderman Michael McGee in 1990. And then, in 1998, they eventually became the New Black Panther Party. This was after a leader of the party... Or this was after an African American man, James Byrd, I think... I believe that's how you say his name.

Luis Miranda (09:26):
Yeah.

Brian Thevenot (09:26):
He was murdered by the KKK. So, there was a new... All these things always feel like it comes at the expense of an African American person being killed.

Luis Miranda (09:37):
Yeah. At a black life. Yeah.

Brian Thevenot (09:40):
And that's how the new revival and new energy wanted and made a new party. But unfortunately, the reputation of them being antisemitic and racist kind of-

Luis Miranda (09:52):
Caught up to them.

Brian Thevenot (09:53):
Then caught up to... Even though that was not true-

Luis Miranda (09:55):
It wasn't.

Brian Thevenot (09:55):
... but that was one of the main reasons why he dissolved again.

Oryon Hamlin (09:58):
Okay. Yeah.

Luis Miranda (10:03):
That's all we have on the Black Panther Party. Thank you for listening.

Oryon Hamlin (10:07):
Yes, sir.
Tune in next week.