



**THE
STORY
OF THE
BLACK
PANTHER
PARTY**

**ALL
POWER
TO THE
PEOPLE**

75¢

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

THE STORY OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Text by Terry Cannon

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the Black Panther newspaper and other sources

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This primer is written by a white person to other whites who want and need to know what the Black Panther Party is all about. So when I use the words "we" and "us," I usually mean ordinary white Americans.

There's a lot in here that is the opposite of what we've been taught. You'll probably want concrete facts to back some of the statements up: ask the person who gave you this book. If they don't know, keep on trucking. We've got a lot to learn and not much time to learn it.



I

PATROLLING THE COPS

A crowd of black people gather on the sidewalk and spills out into the street. Children push their way between the adults, trying to get a better look at what is happening out there in the ghetto street on a summer afternoon.

Their faces are whipped by the turning red lights on the roofs of five Oakland, California police cars. Cops are swarming all over, yelling at the people on the sidewalk—Get Back! Beat it! Get in your houses! The people don't move. The cops carry shotguns and have strained, grim looks on their faces.

The source of all the interest is two young black men standing by their car in the street. One carries a 45 automatic pistol in plain view in a holster. The other holds a shotgun in one hand and has a lawbook in the other. The two men are Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, Minister of Defense and Chairman of the newly formed Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. It is early in the year 1967.

In the back seat of their car are two more young men. Between them, the crowd can see another shotgun, a camera and a tape recorder. The Panthers have been patrolling the Oakland cops, making sure the police stay inside the bounds of the law. The Panthers are there to stop the beatings, false arrests and harrassment that go on nightly whenever black citizens run up against the occupying army in their community—the police.

Newton and Seale are like the eye of a

hurricane. They stand perfectly still. Newton tells the crowd in a clear, firm voice that they have a right to stay where they are. They do not have to go back in their houses. "These guns are perfectly legal," Newton says. "The Constitution of the United States, Second Amendment, gives every citizen the right to bear arms."

Suddenly one of the cops, a tall fat man, puts his hand on the butt of his pistol, advances toward Newton and says,

"Are you a Marxist?"

Newton loads a round into his pump-action shotgun. The "clack!" from his shotgun quiets the crowd.

"Are you a fascist?" he replies.

"Are you a Marxist?" The cop's voice is louder.

"Are you a fascist?" Huey says, loud enough for everyone to hear.

"Are you a Marxist?" the cop shouts.

"Are you a fascist?"

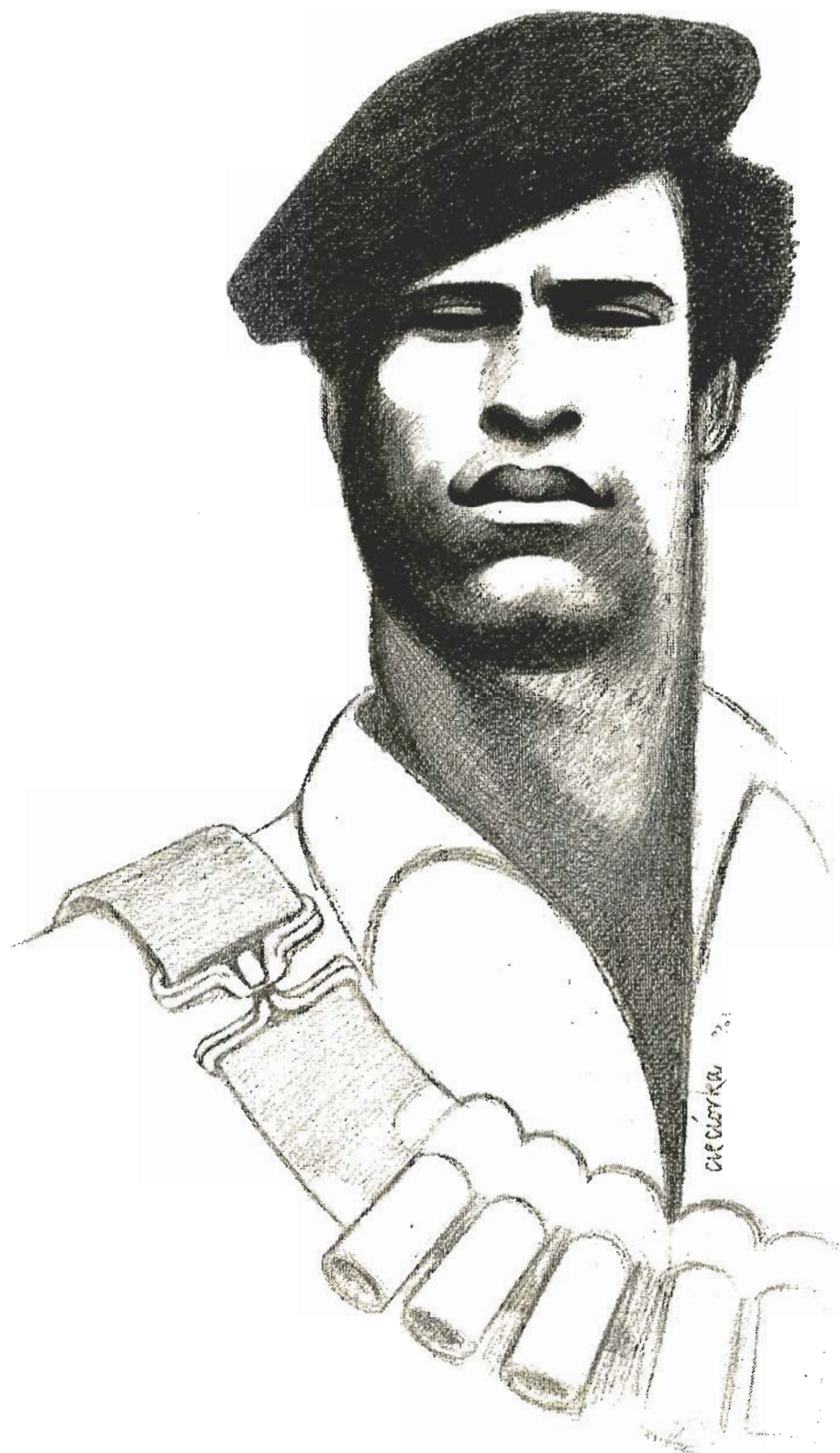
The cop's tone breaks and he repeats his question a little softer.

"Are you a fascist?" Huey Newton says.

Almost whimpering, the fat cop says, "Well I asked you *first!*"

"And I asked you second," replies Newton, cold and clear. "Now tell me—are you a fascist?"

The cop turns, takes his hand off his gun, and walks fast back to his prowler. He has just come face to face with a proud new force growing in the black community and he is scared.



II

HUEY P. NEWTON, MINISTER OF DEFENSE

When Huey Newton was two years old, his family moved to Oakland, California from Louisiana. He was the youngest in a family of seven children.

There's a kind of wisdom that you get from being on the bottom looking up. Huey Newton, like the rest of his people on the bottom of American society, wised up fast. School was a drag. Huey sat in his classes, listening to the teachers drone on about things that had nothing to do with his life.

He looked out the window to the street where real life was. His teachers said America was the land of opportunity. He could see with his eyes that this was not true. His teachers said America was a democracy. That wasn't the America he was growing up in.

When he graduated from high school he could hardly read. His teachers had given him nothing he wanted to read, nothing that was meaningful. And school taught him nothing about his own race.

Huey learned the history of the black race by living it. He ran with his brothers and sisters in the streets. He watched them get busted by the cops for standing on the corner; he saw the law, like a band of steel, circling the black community, cutting his people off from jobs, houses, and power. He felt the terror of a black nation surrounded by White Power: judges, politician, officials, welfare agencies and cops—whose purpose is to keep the black community under control, to

use them like tools in the factories and stores. Tools to make money for other people.

He asked himself the question all other black people were asking: how do we free the black community? Now he had a reason for reading. He taught himself how.

Maybe you've read a book that changed your life, that showed you what your life was all about. One of these books in Huey's life was *Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon. Fanon was a black Algerian who fought to free his country from France. Fanon said that people who live in colonies, whose lives and labor are used and controlled by rulers to make the rulers rich, can't be human until they've made a revolution.

Fanon showed how the white Europeans treated the Algerians as less than human. They passed laws saying where Algerians could live, what kind of jobs they could have, what they could read, and where they could travel.

These laws were backed up with violence. Every Algerian knew if he stepped out of line, if he acted human and challenged these laws, he would be beaten, tortured, jailed or killed.

Fanon said there was only one way out: kick the French out of Algeria and destroy their political power. If that took violence, then violence was the only human way to react.

It's no accident that Huey Newton got many ideas from a black man half way

around the world. The world has changed in the hundred years since the American slaves were freed. A hundred years ago American slaves thought they were a minority in a white world. The newspapers and TV still call blacks a "minority group," but it is not true. People of color, black, brown, yellow and red are the *majority* on the planet Earth, and they know it.

* * *

At the same time that Huey was learning how people of color around the world were freeing themselves, some black leaders in this country were meeting their brothers and sisters on other continents.

Malcolm X, one of the most important American black leaders of the 20th century, was traveling through Africa. When he was a young man he thought that all white people were "devils." But traveling around the world he met people with white skins who were willing to fight on the side of his people. In 1964, when he talked to black people, he told them not to hate *all* whites just because some whites—the rich—were their enemies.

"We're all in the same boat," Malcolm X said, "and we are all going to catch the same hell from the same man. He just happens to be a white man.

"Now in speaking like this, it doesn't mean that we're anti-white. It does mean we're anti-exploitation, we're anti-degradation, we're anti-oppression. And if the white man doesn't want us to be anti-him, let him stop oppressing and exploiting and degrading us."

A year later, Malcolm was assassinated. He is still a hero to black people. His words are believed and treasured.

* * *

The words of Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X were real to Huey Newton. All he had to do was look around at Oakland, California:

In Oakland, a woman on welfare, Mrs. Harper, had her welfare check cut off because her house burned down. When she went with her children to complain, the welfare people told her they were keeping her check to encourage her to move! But she couldn't move without the money. The Welfare Department didn't care, and Mrs. Harper didn't have the power to make them care. She was stuck.

In Oakland, Mayor Houlihan was a strong law and order man. He didn't understand people who complained about Oakland (or America). He was highly respectable—until he was caught fleecing the estate of an elderly widow and sent to jail.

In Oakland, the district attorney, J. Frank Coakley, got his start during World War II by trying to hang fifty black seamen. They had refused to load ammunition in unsafe conditions after a ship had blown up killing over three hundred people. "Any man so depraved as to be afraid to load ammunition deserves no leniency," said Coakley. Twenty-five years later, Coakley was trying to do the same thing to Huey Newton.

* * *

That's what things were like in the city where Huey Newton grew to be a man. On the other side of America, in Lowndes County, Alabama, black people were creating a political organization that would show Huey the way to move.

Lowndes County is small and rural. Eighty per cent of its citizens are black. None of them had been allowed to vote since Reconstruction. So they formed an independent party of their own, and they took for their symbol a leaping black panther.

Their party got to be called the Black Panther Party. Just before the first primary election in 1966, the sheriff came down and told them they couldn't have their own primary election because the whites would shoot it up.



Malcolm X

May 19, 1925 — Feb. 21, 1965

The leaders of the party made a decision. They told the sheriff, "We won't fire the first shot, but we're bringing our guns and if we're shot at, we'll shoot back." They brought their guns to the election and not a single person bothered them.

* * *

The story of the black citizens of Lowndes County, the words of Frantz Fanon in Algeria, the speeches of Malcolm X in the ghettos of America, all came together in Huey's mind, joining with his own thoughts and dreams to form the idea of an armed political party for the black people of Oakland.

He discussed this idea with a friend of his, Bobby Seale, another student at Mer-

ritt College in Oakland where Huey was enrolled. That was the beginning of their organization, first called the "Black Panther Party for Self Defense." When people asked them why they picked the panther for the name, they answered,

"The nature of the panther is that he never attacks. But if anyone attacks him or backs him into a corner, the panther comes up to wipe that attacker out, absolutely, thoroughly and completely."

Before they went into the street to recruit members, Newton and Seale wrote down on paper exactly what the Black Panther Party believes in, wants and stands for. This is their Ten Point Program.



1966
Lowndes County
Election Poster

III

“WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE” — THE 10-POINT PROGRAM

One afternoon in October, 1966, Huey told Bobby Seale, “We need a program. We have to have a program for the people. A program that people can understand. A program that the people can read and see, and which expresses their desires and needs at the same time.”

That night they sat down in the North Oakland Poverty Center, where they were working, and wrote out the 10-point program which is still the basis for all Panther actions:

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our black community.

Black people in this country form a colony. In most ways they have the same *legal* rights as white Americans, but in their economic and political lives they are colonized. As Eldridge Cleaver has written, “Black people are a stolen people held in a colonial status on stolen land.”

Blacks did not ask to come to America. They were stolen from their native land and brought here by force to produce wealth for America, wealth they have never shared. Like the Indians, who did not ask to be invaded and conquered by Europeans, the blacks were forced to live in certain areas, take whatever jobs were allowed them, and suffer under the political control of their European conquerers.

They never have and never will be poured into the “melting pot” that American history books brag about. The “melting pot” has melted white Europeans into

one general category (even with them it doesn't make everybody happy: watch the Italians and the Irish fight it out for City Hall positions in most cities), but it has excluded Latins, Blacks, Asians, and Indians.

So when Huey Newton talks about freedom, he means “national liberation,” the struggle of a people to be free to determine their own destiny. Free from the decisions of Washington politicians, Army generals, and big businessmen.

“The Black Panther Party is the people's party,” says Huey, “and we are primarily interested in freeing man—freeing all people from slavery. We can only do this by having collective ownership, and then the people will decide what they are going to produce for their own use—not for specific classes or for profit.”

In their struggle to satisfy their hunger for independence and freedom, black people are questioning everything about America—its foreign policy, its capitalist economic structure, its laws, its prisons, its morals—everything. That's what self-determination means: a mass of people deciding themselves what is best for themselves.

2. We want full employment for our people.

The black colony feels unemployment as a constant crisis. The unemployment rate is twice that of the white community. A white high school *dropout* has a better chance of getting a job than a black high school *graduate*.

When the government says that to fight inflation it's going to increase unemployment, it is throwing millions of working people out of their jobs. While talking about percentage points and "curbing inflation," they are condemning millions of people, particularly blacks, to poverty.

They have no right to do this. "Every man is born therefore he has a right to live, a right to share in the wealth," Huey wrote. "If he is denied the right to work then he is denied the right to live." Full employment is the right of the people. If the rich who own the factories and run the government of America cannot come across with this right, their factories and their government should be taken away from them and placed in the hands of the people.

This is the conclusion that Huey came to. "Private ownership of the means of production must be destroyed. Everyone has to live, and in order to live he has to produce. But in a capitalistic society he never produces for use. He always produces for profit, and this is a slave situation."

The only competition left in our society is the competition between workers for jobs. The big corporations don't compete. They agree among themselves how to manage the rest of us. They plan the wars, the taxes, and the unemployment. We fight the wars, pay the taxes, and get laid off.

Blacks have seen through this game. The whole black community, men, women and children, are ready to fight for a new way of running things. They know that common people would be better at running this country than the bosses are.

3. We want an end to the robbery by the CAPITALIST of our black community

A hundred years ago the U.S. government promised every freed slave forty acres of land and two mules. This would

have given black people some economic freedom. Instead, the government betrayed them. Poverty and KKK terror forced them to move North and go to work in the factories.

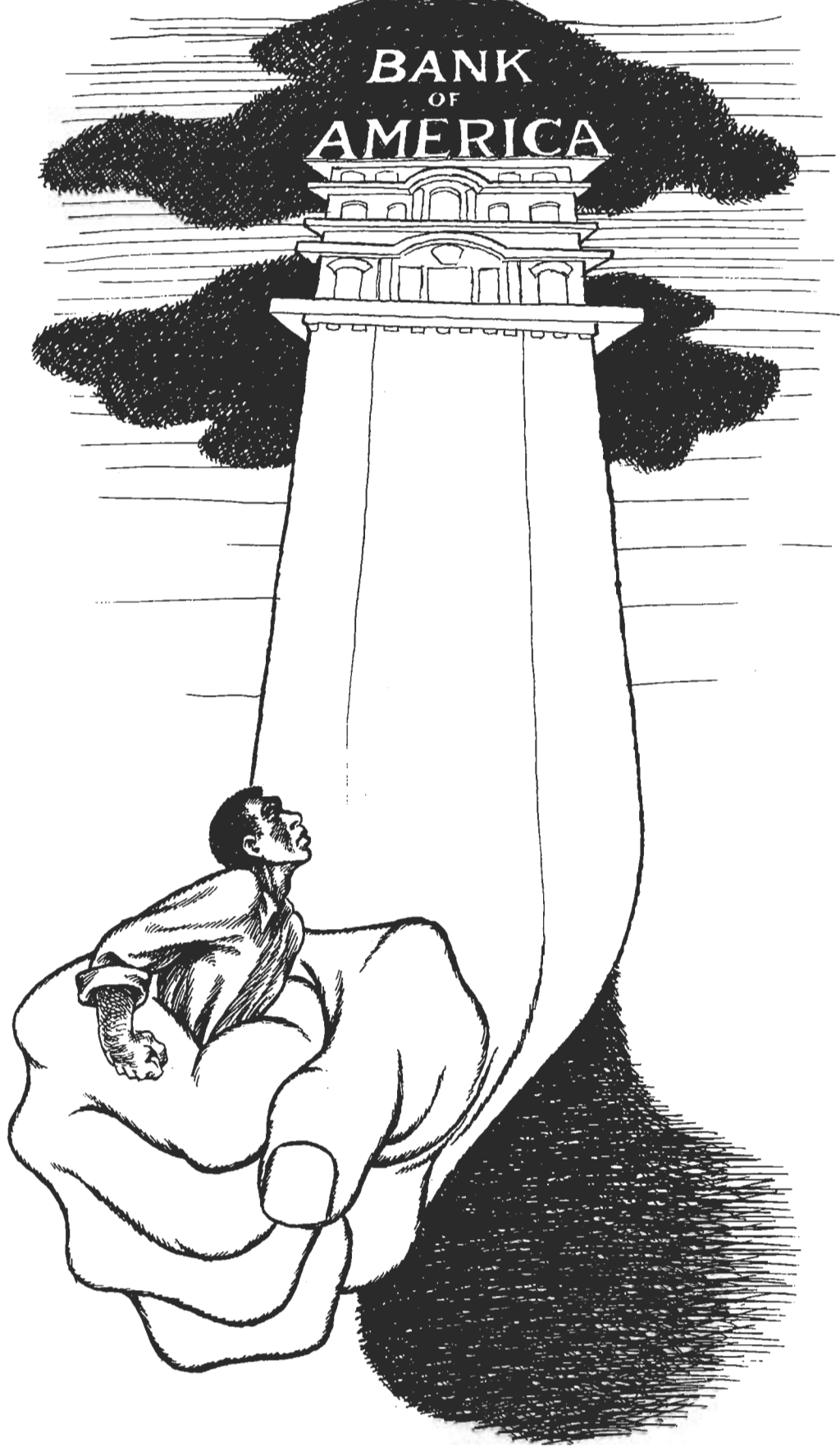
Capitalism is the system by which the labor of common people is used to create wealth. The wealth we create is the property of the employer, not the worker. It is taken from our hands and placed in the pockets of the businessman.

Every day black people see their hard-earned money disappear into the pockets of businessmen who take that money out of the black community. It doesn't matter if the businessman is black or white: the money goes into a bank and is never seen again by the people it should belong to.

The businessmen say "Oh no! We pay taxes, and our tax money is put back into the black community." This money comes back in three ways: police, welfare agencies and schools. The police are sent to control black people and protect property that's owned by people outside the black colony. Welfare is a living insult, used to control the people who get it. The only reason people put up with welfare is that they can't get jobs. Ghetto schools are the worst in every city.

If you get stuck up and robbed, you want some justice, if not repayment. When a whole community is robbed, every single day, by the most respectable "pillars of society" (the same ones who shout for law and order), when their labor is taken from them, and when the police protect the very businessmen who are robbing them, that entire community is forced to rebel.

Many white people couldn't understand why blacks burned down "their own communities" during the riots. The ghetto is not their own community: they don't own it. Someone else does.



4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.

Slums are made by landlords, not by tenants.

In New York, for example, being a slumlord is one of the most profitable businesses. The landlord of slum property stops making repairs and stops paying taxes. He just collects the rent. By the time the city catches him, he's made many times his original investment. The penalty he has to pay is much smaller than the money he's made.

"Decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings" means more than a roof that doesn't leak or a furnace that works. Our homes are our shelter and they should belong to us. We would not put up with an "airlord" who sold us air to breathe. There is no reason why land and homes should be the private property of any individuals.

A house should be a *home*, not a money-making "unit." It's the place we live, sleep, make love, raise children, die. The cave men had it better than we do: they *shared* their caves and shelter, they didn't rent them. They may have lived in fear, but not the fear that the landlord would raise the rent or kick them out. No wonder we feel insecure. Shelter under capitalism is not "fit for human beings."

5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in present-day society.

When a society is decaying, it props itself up with lies about how great it is, how invincible, and how glorious the future will be. The schools are used to pass on these lies from one generation to the next, in the name of "tradition."

School administrators tell us what *they* think *we* should be like. That's the reason

behind dress codes, hair codes, conduct codes, cops in the halls, political indoctrination and tracking. They want us to be like them. Not a chance. We have a sense of our own identities, our own *selves*. The educational system tries to give us a sense of ourselves and our place in society that is the opposite of what we know to be true.

Ever since the slave masters of the old South refused to teach black slaves how to read English, in order to keep them from learning their true past, black people have been denied knowledge of their history. The fight for Black Studies in college is part of a revolutionary process—in which we replace the definitions forced on us by our enemies, the school administrators, with our own knowledge of ourselves and our history.

Take the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. I remember as a child how I used to choke up every morning -- "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Now it didn't say, "I pledge allegiance to racism, to capitalism, and to neo-colonialism, and J. Edgar Hoover, and Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan, and Mace, and billy clubs and dead niggers on the street shot by pigs." I mean it didn't say that shit, you see.

—Eldridge Cleaver



6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.

The Black Panthers see themselves and their people as part of the Third World, the world of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the world that America is fighting to control. Along with planes, bombs, investments, CIA agents, bribes, assassinations and guns, the major tool of the U.S. politicians in controlling the Third World is the Armed forces.

All over the world, the people who are oppressed by America are rising up against its economic control and its puppet governments. The U.S. Army is used to put down the Vietnamese, who are the friends

of oppressed people inside the United States.

The Vietnamese understand this. Their revolutionary organization, the National Liberation Front, said in 1968: "as always, the Vietnamese people see in the black people in the United States brothers and comrades-in-arms fighting the same enemy—U.S. imperialism."

Whites should be exempt from the military too. Who *doesn't* want to be? Only lifers and brass. Many white Vietnam veterans have learned that they too have been put down, used and controlled by the military bosses.





7. We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people.

"The police should be the people of the community in uniform," says Hucy Newton. "There should be no division or conflict of interest between the people and the police. Once there is a division, then the police become the enemy of the people. The police should serve the interest of the people. When this principle breaks down, then the police become an occupying army."

In the black ghettos of America, the police are an occupying army like the American Army occupying Vietnam. Cops are used to protect the lives and property of the rich and to put down rebellion and resistance by the poor. You never see cops patrolling the streets of Mr. Rockefeller's community, checking the ID's of the rich, telling them to clear the streets and obey the laws.

The police forces are the most direct threat to the survival of black people in America. The police themselves think they are at war with the people, and act like it whenever they show up in the halls of high schools, at union picket lines, at demonstrations, and on military bases.

Just as the armed forces are the politician's last resort against the people of the world, so are the police forces the final weapon against the citizens of this country. Break the control of these armed servants of the rich and you break the final control that the rich have over the rest of us. That's why the battle against the Panthers by the government is so desperate and vicious—the Panthers have pointed out to all the common people of America that the cops are their most immediate enemy.

8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.

The folks in jail, white, black or any other color are 99 and 44/100 per cent people like us. They're in jail for \$8 service station holdups, smoking dope, getting drunk, not paying traffic tickets, or passing bad checks.

This is clearest when you look at women prisoners. Women are treated in our society like sex objects and are then punished for being prostitutes. They are taught to want lots of possessions and then busted for shoplifting. When things get too hard they smoke or shoot dope and then get jailed for possession of drugs. All women prisoners are actually victims of society.

All prisoners in America are *political* prisoners because they are captured while fighting to survive in the war between the upper class which runs this country and the rest of us whose lives are messed over by the way they run it.

Besides, these aren't even the real criminals in the country. General Honeycutt, who was responsible for GI's getting slaughtered on Hamburger Hill; San Francisco cop Michael O'Brien, who said "I want to kill a nigger so goddamned bad I can taste it" and then went out and shot George Baskett in cold blood; the General Electric executives who fixed the prices of appliances in order to rob millions of working people; Illinois State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan, who ordered the murder of Fred Hampton—these criminals are running around free in society and no one tries to arrest them. And they're more of a threat to our lives than any gas-station stick-up artist.

9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the constitution of the United States.

The laws of a country are the *agreements* that the people make among themselves about how we'll act toward each other. We agree that we won't murder, rob, run through red lights or steal from each other. We accept these laws and the punishment for breaking them, as long as we agree that the laws serve and protect us.

This agreement is breaking down. The laws have stopped serving and protecting us. When a cop shoots a black person or a poor person because he *suspects* that person of a crime, or maybe he didn't like that person's looks, then the laws are being used *against* us. The agreement has been broken, and it wasn't us that broke it.

American law serves the rich. The law protects businessmen against militant strikes, and it protects cops when they murder one of us. The law ignores the rich who steal legally by working us to death, or by raising taxes, prices and rents. The law lets the military bosses invade foreign countries to get minerals, oil, rice and rubber. And it throws in jail a poor man who robs a gas station out of desperation and misery.

When people lose faith in the laws that govern them the rich use force to make them obey. More cops with more guns and more power patrol this country forcing people to obey laws we had no part in making and which we don't respect.

Working people should be tried in courts by working people, unless we want to suffer under the rich man's justice.

Rich people should be tried by working people too. That's only fair because we're the people who built and keep this country running.

This point in the Panther program is the first step in the right direction. The rich and powerful say—"No! That's taking the law into your own hands." Well, anyone with eyes can see that the law is in the wrong hands now.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

A plebiscite is a special election in which a people express their feelings on a certain subject.

"There is nothing unrealistic about the Black Panthers' call for a U.N.-supervised plebiscite in the ghettos," writes Eldridge Cleaver. "The mere widespread agitation for such a plebiscite will create a major crisis for U.S. imperialism. . . ."

"America will be placed in the peculiar position of arguing to black people that they do not need UN membership because they are American citizens. The blacks in the ghetto will respond with, Oh yeah? Well, if I'm an American citizen, why am I treated like a dog?"

When the Black Panther Party is asked about this point in the program they remind us of the words of the Declaration of Independence, which begins, "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another. . . ."

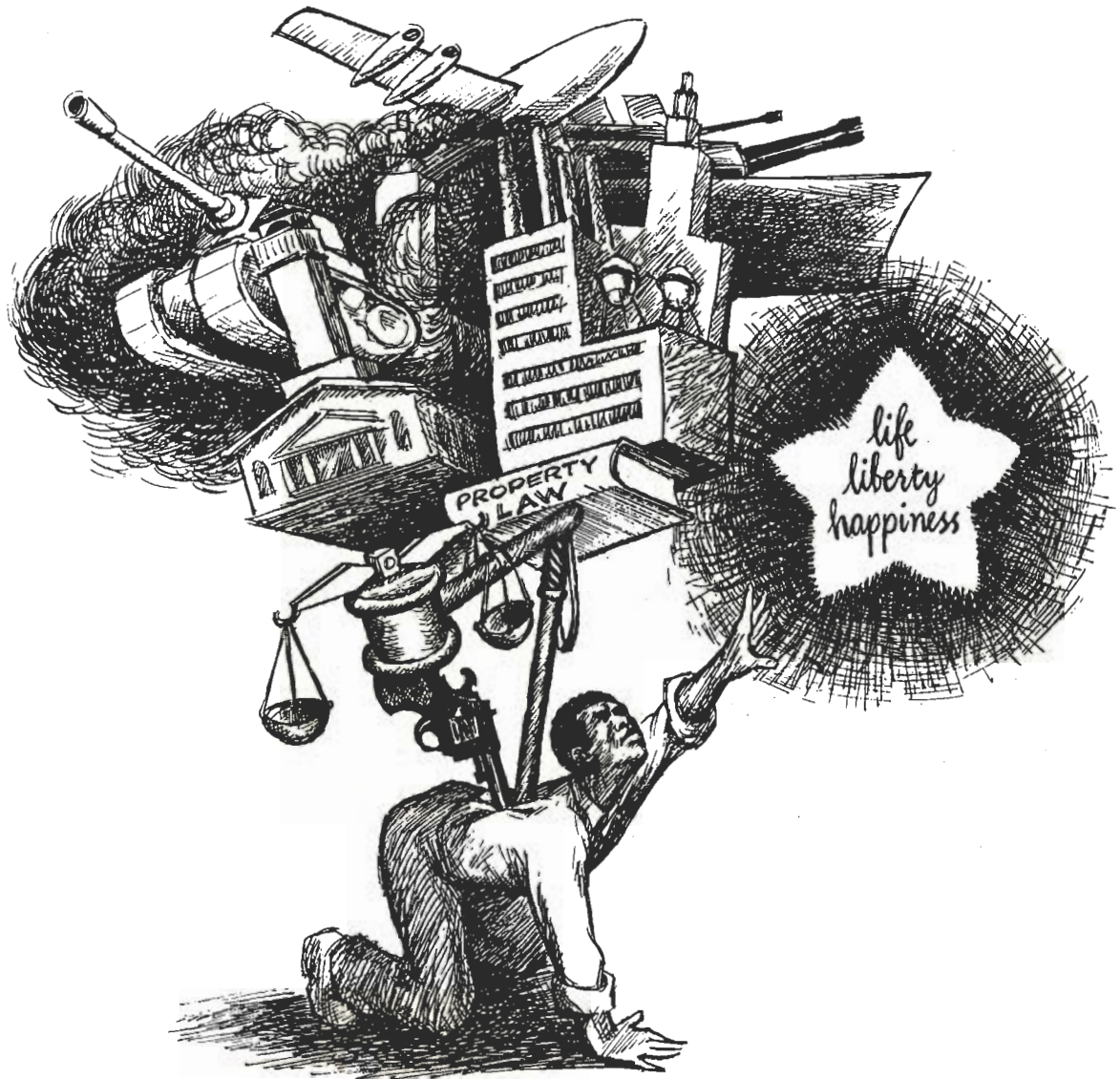


The black people of the U.S. do not *want* a nation—they *are* a nation. They are connected to the colonized people the world over, because they face the same enemy. Perhaps they will decide eventually to separate themselves from America politically. If they do, that is their right.

* * *

Land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. All simple things but to get them it takes a revolution.

Revolutions are always fought for simple things: in Russia it was Land, Peace and Bread. In China, it was Land to the Tillers. Every demand by the Panthers is a threat to the control the rich have over all of us, and the rich never give up control without a fight. The Panthers are a revolutionary organization because they are willing to fight to take the power out of the hands of the rich and give the power to the people.



IV

A SHOTGUN AND A LAW BOOK

Huey Newton and Bobby Seale went into the streets of Oakland, California to put the Ten Point Program into action, beginning with Point 7, "We want an immediate end to *police brutality* and *murder* of black people."

Point seven is about survival. A people must survive in order to be free. So Huey and Bobby began with a traffic light.

The street corner at fifty-fifth and Market had no traffic light. Several black children coming home from school had been hit by cars and killed. The "city fathers" mumbled about sending the problem to a committee that might make a decision in a year. Meanwhile children were in danger.

The Black Panther Party announced that until a stop light was installed, they would direct traffic at that corner, carrying their guns. The city government could not allow this. If they allowed independent armed citizens to perform *any* of the duties of the police, even directing traffic at one corner, it would threaten the power of police to tell people what to do. The city fathers put in a traffic light a few days later. Bobby Seale explained it this way:

"Huey saw that the signal light served the people, helped to keep young kids from dying. It would give them a chance to learn and live and survive and exist so they would understand that they have to mold the world, to change the world. Huey was so human! He wanted the kids to survive!"

The Panthers then set up a school and taught young children to learn black his-

tory for themselves. When the children went to public school they questioned their teachers when the teachers said that black people liked slavery or that under Reconstruction "crime and anarchy ruled." The teachers got uptight. "Where did you learn that?" they demanded. "From the Black Panthers," the children said. So the teachers spread the rumor that Huey Newton was teaching the children to shoot whites.

The Panthers were not teaching the children to shoot whites; they were teaching the *adults* in the community how to defend themselves. Bobby Seale says, "We have never used our guns to go into the white community to shoot up white people. We only defend ourselves against anybody, be they black, blue, green or red, who attacks us unjustly and tried to murder us and kill us for implementing our programs."

* * *

In April, 1967, a young black man, Denzil Dowell, was shot and killed by Sheriffs in Richmond, a city a few miles from Oakland. Unarmed, he was shot while his hands were over his head. The Coroner's Office reported that Dowell had been shot nine or ten times. The police said he'd been shot once or twice.

The proof was in Denzil Dowell's body and his clothes. The cops refused to let his family photograph his body or see his clothes. The cops had threatened Dowell's life several times before.

Dowell's family asked the Black Panthers to investigate. They came to Richmond, wearing their black leather jackets



and carrying guns, and investigated the killing. A crowd of people followed them. The Panthers explained to the people why they were carrying guns and what the Panther Party stood for. Suddenly someone yelled, "Here come the cops!"

Huey loaded a round into the chamber of his shotgun. Bobby Seale unhitched the strap that held down the hammer on his .45. The cops, who couldn't believe their eyes, looked and kept on driving.

"We just stood tall, ready to defend ourselves," said Bobby. "We were educating the people that we would die for them." That was their message: they were standing up to the cops. Nat Turner stood up to the southern plantation owners. Blacks and some white poor stood up against the Southern rich during Reconstruction. Blacks stood alone against the KKK. And now the Black Panther Party was standing up against the cops, and saying "No more!"

A few days later the Panthers held a rally in Richmond. The whole block was full of people. Some people, following the Panthers example, came carrying guns. They weren't going to let the police stop them from having a political meeting in their community.

The cops couldn't do anything on the ground, so they sent a helicopter to fly over the area, looking to see what was going on. Huey was talking to the crowd about the law, how police had to respect black people, and how the gun was for their protection and not a thing to play around with.

The helicopter kept flying over, whirring away. Huey pointed up to the helicopter and said to the crowd, "Always remember that *the spirit of the people is greater than the man's technology.*" The people replied, "Right on!" That day the Panthers got three hundred applications for membership.

The Richmond demonstrations were some of the first activities of a new Panther member, Eldridge Cleaver. Two months after Huey and Bobby wrote the Ten Point Program, Cleaver was released from San Quentin, after nine years in jail; he was thirty-two years old.

"My first fifteen years were given to learning how to cope with the world and developing my approach to life," Cleaver wrote in prison. "I blundered in my choices and set off down a road that was a dead end.

"During my last stay in prison, I made the desperate decision to abandon completely the criminal path and to redirect my life." Eldridge was a follower of Malcolm X; when he got out of prison he wanted to follow the path that Malcolm had been killed for opening up—the path of black liberation.

Cleaver met the Panthers for the first time at a political meeting of black people in San Francisco. He described it later: "Suddenly the room fell silent. I spun round in my seat and saw the most beautiful sight I had ever seen: four black men wearing black berets, powder blue shirts, black leather jackets—and each with a gun!"

People need only fear guns that are pointed at them. We gain strength from guns that are pointed at our enemy, no matter what the color of the person holding the gun. The guns of the Black Panther Party are aimed at the common enemy of all common people.

* * *

Two weeks after the Richmond rallies, Huey read of a bill a California Assemblyman was trying to pass in Sacramento, that would forbid "carrying of loaded firearms in public streets and in public places by all except peace officers, guards, and members of the armed forces."

This law was aimed at the Black Panther Party. The politicians know there is a conflict between black Americans and the government. They want to disarm one side of the conflict, the black side, the people's side. "An unarmed people are subject to slavery at any time," said Huey.

The Panther Party decided to lobby in Sacramento against the bill. Since the people have no professional lobbyists, because they have no money, the Panther Party went to Sacramento with the only power that people have—the power that comes from the barrel of a gun.

The Panthers didn't go to shoot anyone. They never pointed their guns at anyone. They did not threaten. They carried their guns to show that they had the *right* to carry them. They carefully obeyed every law about proper handling of firearms in public.

When the Panthers arrived, Governor Reagan was on the front lawn with some schoolchildren. He saw the Panthers coming, jumped up and ran. He knew where he stood with poor and oppressed people—as their enemy.

The cops didn't know what to do. They wanted to arrest the Panthers, but the Panthers weren't violating any laws.

Bobby Seale read a statement from the steps of the Capitol that said, "Black people have begged, prayed, petitioned, demonstrated and everything else to get the racist power structure of America to right the wrongs which have historically been perpetrated against black people. All of these efforts have been answered by more repression, deceit, and hypocrisy. The Black Panther Party believes that the time has come for black people to arm themselves against this terror before it is too late."

As they were leaving the Capitol, the police dug up a Fish and Game Law

against carrying loaded guns in a car and arrested twenty-three members of the Party. The Panthers did not resist. They had made their point—black people watching TV all over the state heard Bobby Seale say they had a right to defend themselves.

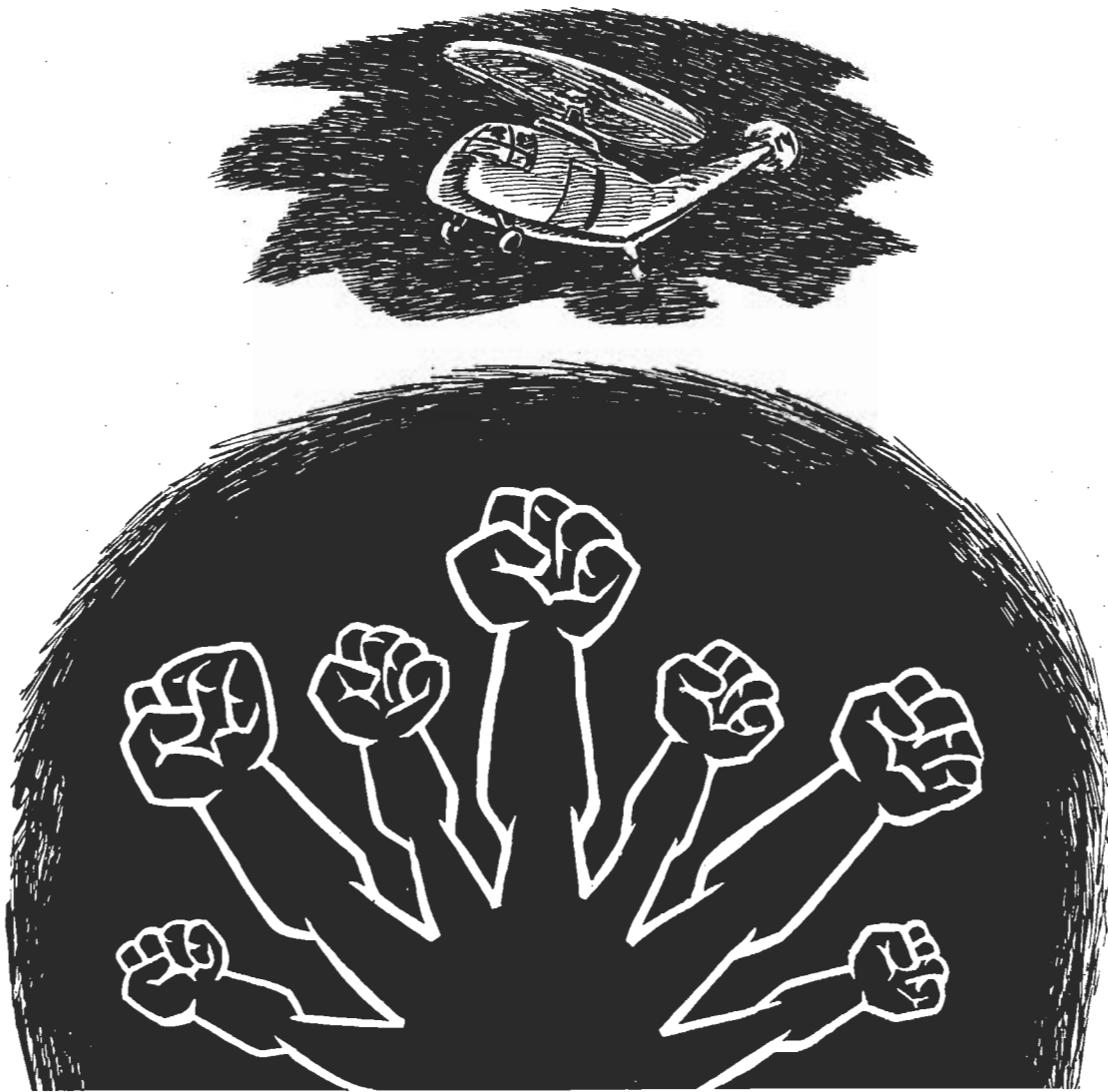
Among those arrested was Bobby Hutton, the first person to join the Party. He was sixteen and he had less than one more year to live.

The Party had decided that Huey Newton should not go to Sacramento. He was on probation and they didn't want to risk his going to jail. He came to Sacramento the next day when the members were bailed out. As each left the jail, Huey gave them a big hug. "Brother, are you glad you did it?" he asked them. "Right on!" they replied.

From that night on, Huey and the Panther Party members were in the streets, patrolling the cops. "We set up patrols," said Huey, "to observe the police (or the Gestapo as they are called in the black community). Three or four guys would ride in a car at various parts of the black ghetto, with a tape recorder, cameras and weapons. We would observe the police and make sure that no violence was committed in our community."

Things changed in the Oakland ghetto. The police were forced to cool down. They had to be more careful when they took the law into their own hands. A Panther might be watching. And these Panthers couldn't be pushed around.

Every night Huey, with a twelve gauge shotgun in one hand and a law book in the other, was out with his brothers and sisters explaining the Constitution and standing up against the cops. Five or ten police cars might pull up around a Panther car, the cops swarming all over to find some violation to book them on. People



“The spirit of the people is greater than the Man’s technology.”

would pile out of their houses, watching and listening to Huey rap about their rights. This was a *real* education, not the kind you get in school.

“What are you doing with that gun?” a cop demanded once. Huey replied, “What are you doing with *your* gun?” The people in the black community know that the police are used against the common person. And here was a man standing up to the cops and treating them for what they are: the obstacle to all our dreams of being free.

Huey Newton set out to break the control of the rich and powerful over the

black community. If blacks were able to break the power the politicians and businessmen have over them, then the rich have less power over all of us.

So the word went out: Get Huey Newton and the Black Panther Party. If the message of the Panthers to America was “Give us liberty or give us death,” the reply of the rulers of America was “smash the Panthers; smash them so bad nobody will ever again dare to pick up the gun and fight for freedom.”

On October 28, 1967, at 5:00 a.m., they got Huey Newton.

V

FREE HUEY!

Huey Newton was feeling good the evening of October 27, 1967. His period of probation ended that night. He didn't like reporting every month to the Probation Officer, and he was in a mood to celebrate.

He had a date that night with his fiancée, Laverne Williams. After dinner he walked over to Miss Williams house only to find her ill. She insisted that he go out and celebrate anyway, and lent him her car, a Volkswagen.

He drove over to a Congregational Church where a social was going on, talked with the people there, and then went to a home where people were dancing and playing cards. Huey doesn't dance or play cards, so he sat around talking until the party broke up about four in the morning.

A friend of his, Gene McKinney, suggested that they go to an all-night restaurant to get some food. They got in the VW and drove downtown to look for a place to eat. As they were turning a corner, Huey looked in the rearview mirror and saw the flashing red light of a police car.

The Black Panther Party was a year old that month. In that year, Huey Newton had been stopped by the police some forty or fifty times. He knew what to do: stay cool, remember the law and demand that the police stick within legal bounds.

Officer John Frey got out of his patrol car, walked up to the VW, looked in the window and said, "Well, well, what do we have? The great, great Huey P. Newton." Huey handed Frey his driver's

license and Miss Williams' car registration. Another cop car pulled up, driven by Officer Herbert Heanes.

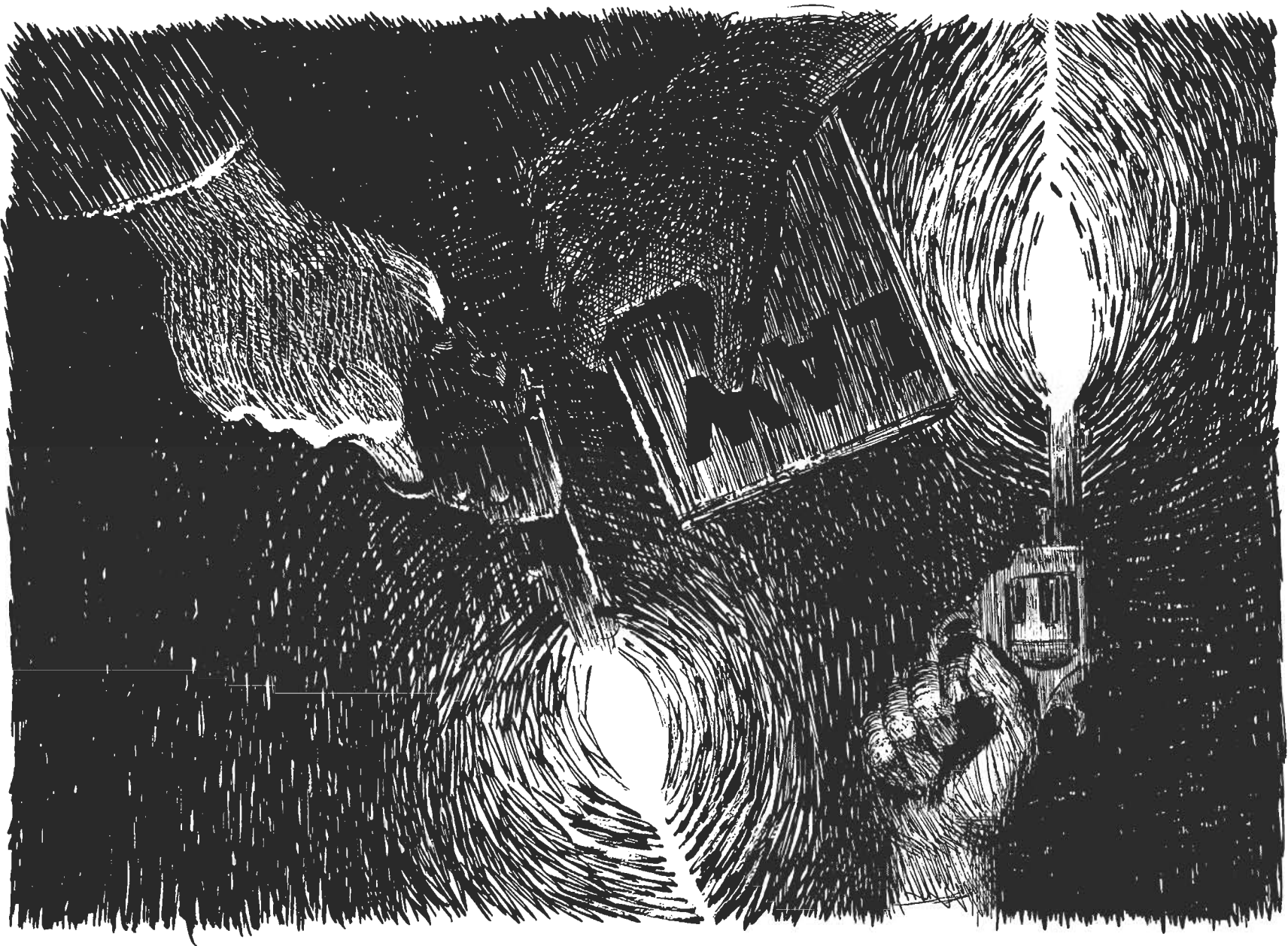
Frey ordered Newton out. Newton put on the handbrake and noticed his textbook of criminal law lying between the seats, where it had been since the last time he used the VW to patrol the police. Huey picked it up, got out of the car and asked Frey if he was under arrest. Frey said no, searched Newton and told him to walk back to the patrol car.

The other cop, Heanes, was standing by the passenger side of the car with McKinney, who had gotten out on his side and was standing on the sidewalk.

"So I took a couple of steps going back," Newton described later, "and he took my left arm with his right, and we started to walk back to the car."

"We stopped at the back door. At this time I took my book and I opened the book up and said, 'You have no reasonable cause to arrest me.' He said, 'You can take that book and stick it up your ass, nigger,' and as he says this he gives me a straight arm in the face and he kind of dazed me. I went back for about two, three arm lengths. I went down on one knee.

"I think I still have my book in my hand, and as I was getting up off my knee, I saw the first officer (Frey) draw a service revolver and then I felt like hot soup—boiling hot soup—had been spilled on my stomach, and then I remember hearing a sound, a loud sound or volley of shots, or it was like an explosion to me."



When the shooting stopped, Frey was dead, Heanes wounded. Huey, shot in the stomach, was semi-conscious. The next thing he knew he was by the Emergency Entrance of Kaiser Hospital. The nurse was saying, "You don't seem badly hurt to me." She wouldn't call a doctor until the "proper forms" were filled out and she had called the police.

Newton was handcuffed to a hospital cart, his arms stretched over his head. The cops were hitting him in his wounded stomach and on the handcuffs and on his head. They were all around the cart. They were yelling, "You killed a policeman and you're going to die for this!"

* * *

As Huey was sitting in jail awaiting trial, the people who supported his struggle to free the black colony raised the demand—Free Huey!

Free Huey! Let him go! They did not demand that he be given a "fair trial." Huey could never get a fair trial. He is the enemy of everything our court system stands for—the corruption of the status quo.

The courts are not independent of the police. Both the courts and the police are servants of the rich and powerful, Huey's enemies. So when Huey Newton, a black resistance leader, was jailed, his supporters did not pretend that the right hand (the court) did not know what the left hand (the rich) was doing. They said, "Take both your hands off him. He does not belong to you."

The people on Huey's jury were almost all white, except for one black banker. They were middleclass (not rich) people.

None except maybe the banker knew about ghetto life or ghetto language.

Huey told the jury that he was shot in the stomach, that he heard shots all around him, that he never shot or killed anyone, that he didn't know who did the shooting or how he got to the hospital. Then the jury heard a Negro bus driver say that he saw Huey draw a gun and shoot Frey.

The jury did not believe the bus drivers story, for they knew somebody had shot Huey. It must have been Frey. But they feared the Black Panthers and wanted Huey in jail. Something in the back of their minds told them, "Well, he probably didn't do this, but he must have done *something*." Since they couldn't in good conscience find him guilty of murder, they compromised and found him guilty of "voluntary manslaughter." That means they thought Huey shot Frey, but he did it in self-defense.

Huey was sent to San Luis Obispo, California to serve a two to fifteen year sentence. His lawyers asked that he be freed on bail while the case was appealed, which might take two years. The court turned them down. The Judge and the District Attorney said that Huey was "dangerous to the community," even though more than thirty thousand people from the community signed a petition asking that he be freed.

Nearly two years later, the State Court of Appeals rule that Huey had not been given a fair trial (just what the people said all along) and that he must be given a new trial or set free.

Even so, as this is written, Huey is still in jail.

"Are they doing it now?"

"Yes."

"In our schools?"

"Yes."

Huey Newton and the Black Panther Party are absolutely clear on this. And still the newspapers, the police and the politicians call the Panthers "black racists" who believe in "racism in reverse," and other nonsense.

* * *

In the armed forces, in every school and factory where there are a large number of black people, blacks are the most rebellious, most angry and the most together. They are leading the way, by example and by organizing, in the struggle that continues every day, sometimes hot, sometimes cold, between the wealthy and those whose lives are controlled by the wealthy.

The racism of whites, the suspicion and resentment of blacks, have cut through the people like a knife, keeping separate and hostile those who could be united against their real enemies. The force that may finally bring us together is a fighting philosophy that is plowing under tyrannical governments and age-old slaveries all over the world—and uniting peoples who have been divided for centuries:

It is sometimes called *socialism*.

* * *

Socialism is what poor and working people build when they have the power of government in their hands.

They take the land away from the landlords and give it to the people who live on it. They take the factories away from the Rockefellers and turn the profits and the products over to the community.

Socialism says loudly and clearly—It is right to rebel. It is good to have no one over your head and no one under your feet. No one should own us, not for our

lives and not for eight hours a day.

Socialism says that we, blacks and whites, Vietnamese and Americans have one common enemy. His name is cop, general, slumlord, industrialist, fat cat, ruler, rich man, pig. No one is safe while he rules the earth. The poor and working people of the earth who are fighting him call themselves socialists.

The Black Panthers call themselves socialists. You can't vote in socialism at the ballot box. If ninety-nine per cent of the people voted for socialism, the rich would just throw out the election. They'd laugh in our faces.

That's why the Panthers also call themselves "revolutionary nationalists." They know that the rich will not give up their power voluntarily. The rich got rich by pushing us around; they aren't about to stop pushing just because we ask. We have to take what is ours: to make a revolution.

Nationalism means that black people know they are part of a black nation, a group that has a common history, culture and experience. Not for a minute can they afford to think they are not black. No matter where in America they travel, they are part of the black nation. Their black skins are their "passports" and their common history is their national "boundary line."

"We the Black Panther Party," says Bobby Seale, "see ourselves as a nation inside a nation, but not for any racist reasons. We see it as necessary for us to progress as human beings and live on the face of this earth along with other people.

"We don't fight racism with racism. We fight racism with solidarity. We do not fight capitalism with black capitalism. We fight capitalism with basic socialism. You don't fight fire with fire, you fight fire with water."



"It's not only Blacks & college kids who want to turn things around. Other working people & young people - we know we're being done the same way. / And we don't need any politicians to tell us what we want. We know! WE WANT TO RUN OUR OWN LIVES!"

- Peggy Terry, Chicago

And, adds Huey Newton, "To be a revolutionary nationalist, you would by necessity have to be a socialist."

The Black Panther Party does not just mouth the word socialism. They don't just say they do not hate whites. They act on their beliefs.

Huey Newton wrote from prison:

"The only way we're going to be free is to wipe out once and for all the oppressive structure of America. We realize we can't do this without a popular struggle, without many alliances and coalitions, and this is the reason we want to get as many alliances as possible with people that are equally dissatisfied with the system."

The first alliance took place in the Spring of 1968 when white radicals in California formed a new political party, called the Peace and Freedom Party. It was small (about one hundred thousand people) and it didn't win any elections, but they did something new. They did not go to blacks and say "Why don't you elect us." Instead, they supported Black Panthers as their candidates to many offices.

Eldridge Cleaver ran for President of the United States on the Peace and Freedom Ticket. The Vice-Presidential candidate was Peggy Terry, a poor white woman from Alabama.

Peggy Terry has a fourth grade education, but she knows what's going on. In one of her campaign speeches she said, "It's not only Blacks and college kids who want to turn things around. Other working people and young people—we know we're being done the same way. And we don't need any politicians to tell us what we want. We know! We want to run our own lives!"

Cleaver and Terry and the other Peace and Freedom Candidates did not run to win. Poor people don't win elections.

They ran because they wanted to share their vision with other working people: a vision of what America could be like if we took it away from the people who control us.

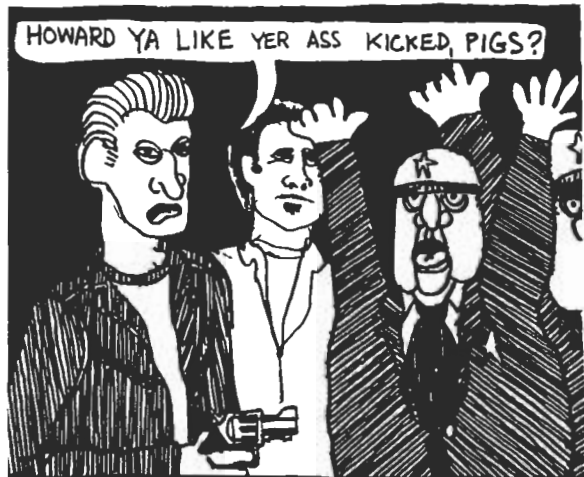
Another alliance was made in Chicago. Uptown Chicago is a poor white ghetto. The people who live there come from the South. Since every American city is a jungle, the young kids get together in clubs and gangs to protect themselves.

White gangs, black gangs and Puerto Rican gangs used to fight it out in the streets. It was a waste of time and a lot of good young people got hurt and killed. The city would send in social workers to "pacify" the kids, but the kids knew better than the social workers what it takes to survive. The social workers could go home to the suburbs after work; the kids had to stay on their blocks.

Today much of that fighting has stopped. The social workers didn't do it. The Black Panthers did. They organized black kids to "serve the people." They taught them that the real enemy isn't the poor white or the Puerto Rican, the real enemy is the cops and the city government, the slumlords and the rich.

The young whites and Puerto Ricans watched what the Panthers were doing and caught on to a whole new way of living. They started doing things for the community. They didn't do it by joining "civic committees" or police athletic clubs. They went to their people directly, with demonstrations, leaflets, newspapers and heavy rapping.

In Chicago there's an organization called *Rising Up Angry*, made up of young white working class people (they call themselves Greasers in Chicago, Blocks in D.C., Slicks in Pittsburgh). Here's what they say in one of their papers:



from RISING UP ANGRY FUNNIES

"We were frustrated and angry. We had hate in our guts, messing up the love in our hearts. So we'd fight blacks, Latins, hippies and even other grease. Then it started to come to us; we'd been fighting the wrong people.

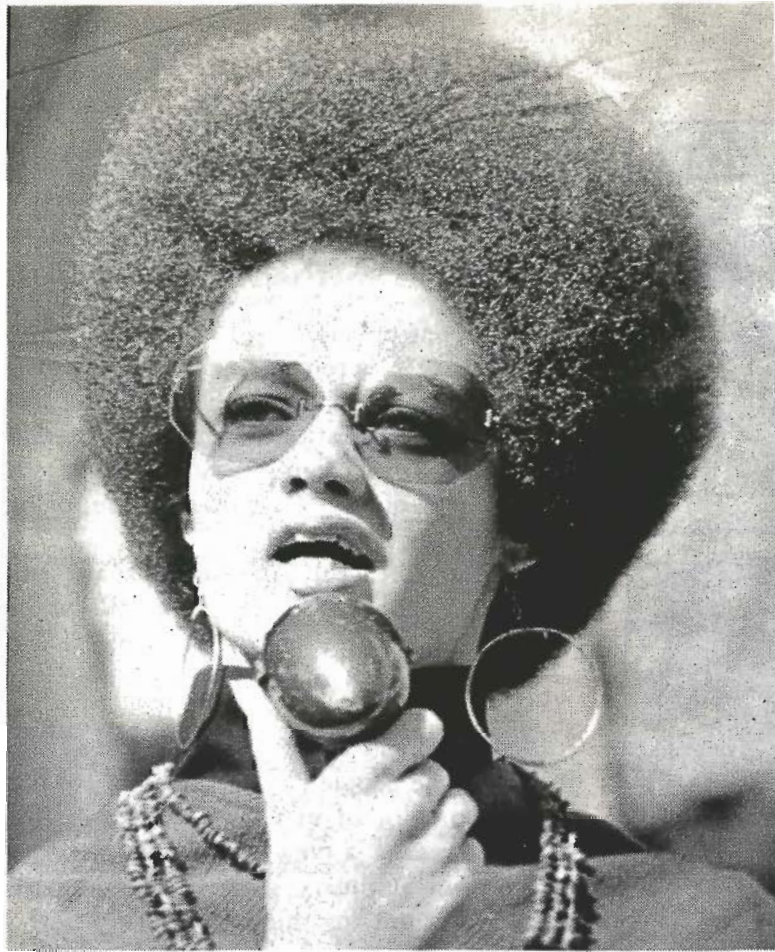
"Huey Newton and the Black Panther Party helped show the way. Blacks had the same frustrations, anger and hate that we did. They often missed the target too, taking it out on their own people, or on the wrong whites.

"But when Huey sat in that chair, with the spear in one hand and the rifle in the other, he wasn't on an ego trip. He was saying to his people: "Look, brothers and sisters, no more bullshit jobs, no more bullshit hustles. The Black Panther Party serves the people."

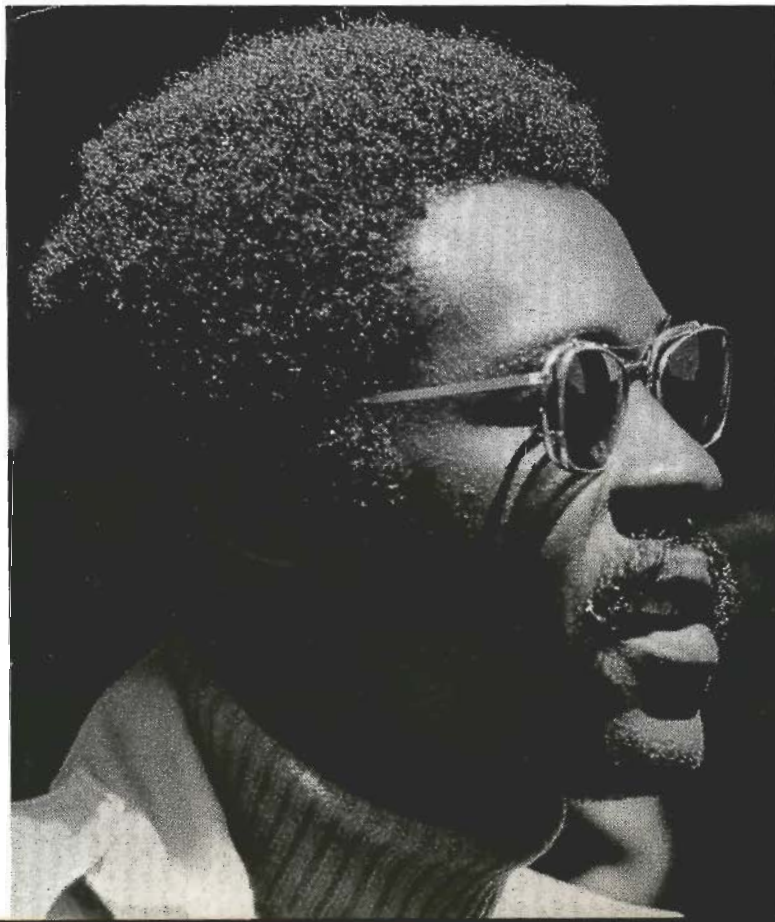
"So a lot of us Grease started to find ourselves at a new place. We were no longer reactionary grease, defending the Man's crumbling thing, but *Revolutionary Grease*, digging ourselves, digging our people, and beginning to show a love for the people."

The vision that started with two young men in a poverty program office in North Oakland swept like a new wind through the communities of the black nation. The politicians thought that they could jail the revolution by jailing its leader, Huey Newton. Instead, his trial scattered the vision of the Black Panther Party like seeds into every major city.

The Panthers offered hope for change to black America, hope for survival. New leaders rose to stand beside Huey, Bobby and Eldridge: David Hilliard, Kathleen Cleaver, Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter, Erica Huggins, Ray "Masai" Hewett, Fred Hampton, Bobby Rush, John Huggins and more too numerous to name. One of the sick things about America is that most of us never heard their names until after they had been indicted, jailed or killed.



KATHLEEN CLEAVER,
Communications Secretary



DAVID HILLIARD,
Chief of Staff

VII

“SERVE THE PEOPLE”— WHAT THE PANTHERS DO

Every morning at 6:00 a.m., members of the Black Panther Party in every chapter in the country get up and prepare a free breakfast for thousands of school children. No forms to fill out, no waiting; the only requirement is an empty stomach.

“A lot of people don’t know how serious the thing is,” assassinated Panther leader Fred Hampton once said in a speech. “They think the children we feed ain’t really hungry. I don’t know five year old kids that can act well, but I know that if they’re not hungry then we sure got some actors. We got five year old actors that could take the Academy Award. Last week they had a whole week dedicated to the hungry in Chicago. Talking about the starvation rate here that went up fifteen per cent. Over here where everybody should be eating. Why? Because of capitalism.”

A reporter from *The Movement* newspaper talked to some of the children at one of the breakfast programs in New Haven, Connecticut.

Movement: What do you know about the Panthers?

Boy: I know they are trying to free Huey P. Newton, the leader is Bobby Seale, and they’re revolutionary.

Movement: How do your parents like your going here?

Johnny: Yes, she likes it. I live with my grandmother. She likes the Panthers.

Movement: How do you like it here?

Girls: Fine.

Movement: Where did you go before the Breakfast Program started?

Boy: We didn’t have no breakfast.

Movement (to one of the girls): What’s your name?

Vanessa: Vanessa Harris.

Movement: Do you like the Panthers?

Vanessa: Yes.

Movement: How old are you?

Vanessa: 8.

Movement: I want to show you something. What is this picture about?

Vanessa: About how poor people live and . . . like . . . I’m poor. I’m not rich and I’m not in the middle but I’m poor, right? They are not giving nothing to the poor. They give it to the rich people and the pigs because they’re trying to get rich. If somebody is a pig and he drops like a little crumb to me like that to make me jealous, I’ll be begging him on my knees for more, right?

Movement: Are your parents in the Black Panther Party?

Vanessa: Not my father. He would be a Panther but he doesn’t agree with what they’re saying. The Panthers are saying white and black together. Cause you see the pigs are making it a black and white’s fight.

* * *

People sometimes get upset when the word "pig" is used because they don't know who it's aimed at: All policemen? All whites?

"When we use the word 'pig,'" says Bobby Seale, "we are referring to people who systematically violate peoples' constitutional rights—whether they be monopoly capitalists or police. When the pigs supported strike-breakers like they did at Union Oil in Richmond, where one hundred local police came in and cracked strikers' heads, even workers began to call them by their true name."

"The way you judge that a person is not a pig," Seale said, "is by their actions. Like the Afro-American Patrolmans League in Chicago investigated the racist murder of Fred Hampton that was committed by other members of that same police force. By serving the people, the actions of the League members defines them as not being pigs."

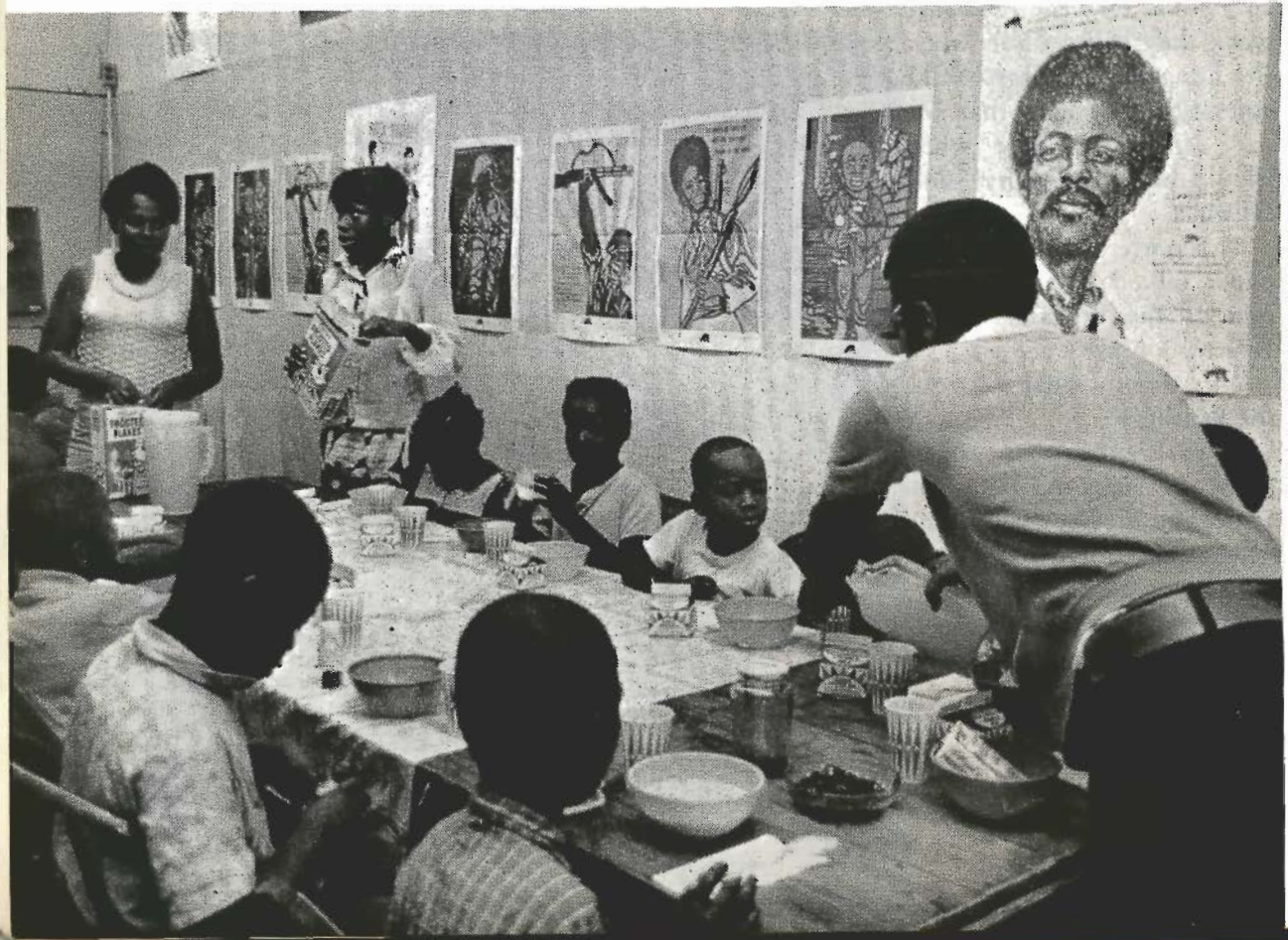
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COMMUNITY CONTROL OF POLICE

If you don't think that the US Government believes its city policemen to be a part of the military machine, check out the San Francisco cop who was awarded the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He was leading a raid on an apartment that was supposed to contain marijuana. When he broke down the door, someone inside shot him. The city awarded him the Purple Heart: Wounded In Action in the war against Americans who smoke dope.

The government claims that police are hired to serve and protect the people. If this were true, police would live in the same communities they police. They would have no fear of the common people.

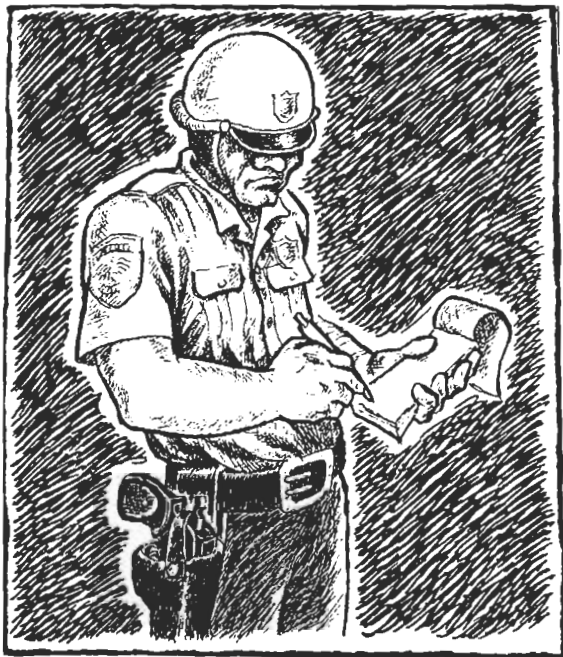
There would be no need to arm cops with M-16 rifles, machine guns, Stoner Rifles (that shoot through walls), tanks,



WHAT'S IN A NAME?



A policeman waving a banker across the street



An officer writing a speeding ticket



A cop approaching a picket line



*A pig patrolling the black community
(drawing by Panther artist Emory)*

VIII

MURDERS AND FRAMEUPS

In 1966, the year of black rebellions, Fred Hampton was graduating from high school in Maywood, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. His parents worked at a nearby refinery; his father as a painter, his mother an assembly line worker.

He joined the NAACP that summer because he believed in its peaceful methods of trying to improve the lives of black people. During the summer of 1967 he campaigned for a swimming pool for the community. The NAACP's nonviolent demonstrations were viciously broken up by the troopers of the Cook County Sheriff's Department. Hampton was arrested and beaten.

"He tried to get across peacefully," said his brother, "but it didn't work." Hampton began to see that power yields only to power. Like Huey Newton, he looked up at capitalism from the bottom and saw the way it comes down on the simplest demands for change, like a swimming pool for black people.

In November of the next year, Fred Hampton and ten others founded the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party. Under his leadership they set up a free breakfast program and were feeding one thousand children a day.

He urged his people to arm themselves to defend against police attack, but not to use their guns offensively. "The time isn't right," he said.

At 4:44 a.m. on the morning of December 4, 1969, Fred Hampton was murdered, by two bullets in his skull. He was lying in bed asleep.

The bullets came from a raiding party

of Chicago police acting under the orders of Illinois States' Attorney, Edward Hanrahan. Fourteen cops, one firing a machinegun, attacked Hampton's apartment, while others cordoned off the entire area outside.

Hampton was shot from above. The apartment was riddled with machinegun fire. Mark Clark, a Panther leader from Peoria, Illinois was killed by a shot through the front door. Several other Panther members who were staying at the house were wounded and arrested.

Hanrahan and his buddies on the daily newspapers, claimed that it was a "shoot-out," but they have never been able to find a single bullet hole going *out* of the apartment. He sent photos to the newspapers that showed "outgoing" bullet holes: the holes turned out to be the heads of nails.

He praised the "bravery, restraint, and discipline" of his private army. The white mayor of Maywood demanded murder indictments against Hanrahan's agents.

In the weeks after the murders, thousands of Chicagoans, black and white, walked through the bullet-riddled, blood-stained house in silence and sympathy. The association of black Chicago policemen called it "a political assassination." The black community united behind Fred Hampton; no one raised a word against him.

Fred Hampton wrote his own epitaph months before in a speech. "You can kill a revolutionary," he told the people, "but you can't kill the revolution."

* * *

That is what governments always do when threatened by revolutionary forces among the people—try to kill the revolution by killing those who speak for it. Like a wounded elephant, the bureaucracies of nation, state and city thrash about, arresting, jailing and killing those people they can grab.

For the Panthers, the nightmare of official repression began with the attempted killing of Huey Newton. After that the government thrashed further, trying to silence Cleaver and Seale, and failing because it had to make the repression at least look legal.

Six months after Huey was arrested, the Oakland police dropped all respectable cover-up and went in for the kill.

The Panthers were planning a barbeque picnic for April 7, 1968 in Oakland to raise money for Huey's defense. So the night before they were busy collecting food to be served the next day.

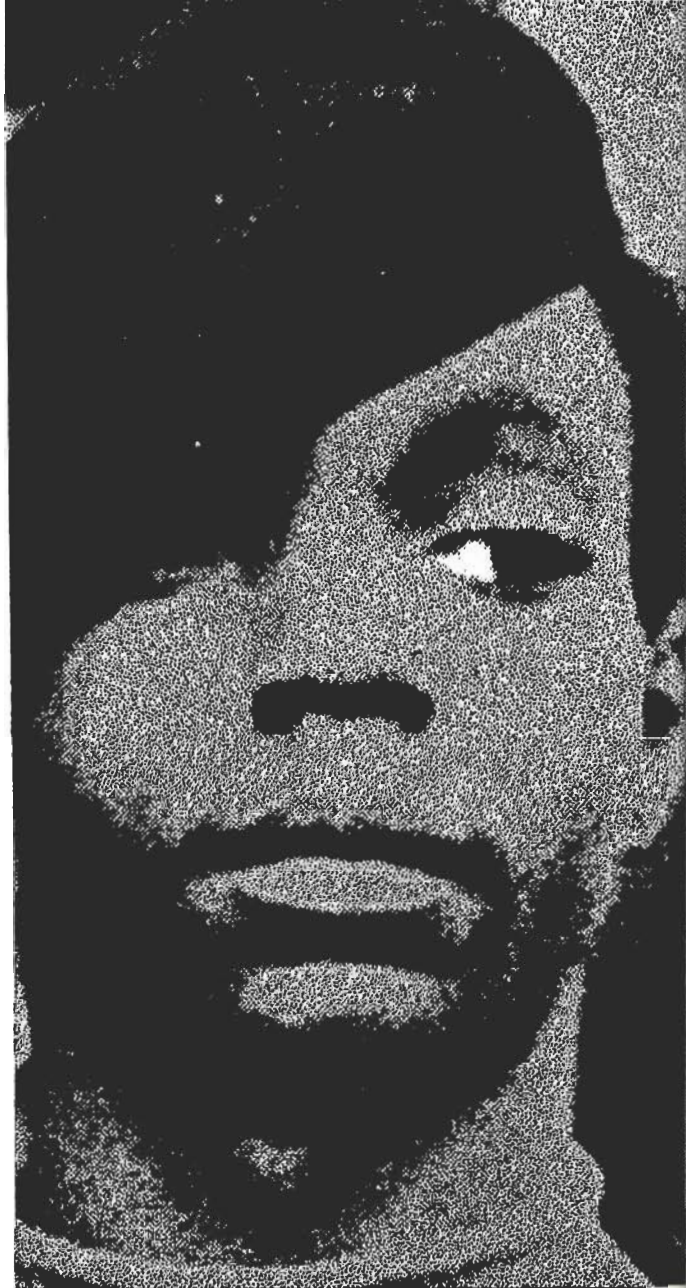
That was the night Bobby Hutton was murdered.

The cars collecting food were parked on the side of an Oakland street. Suddenly a police car pulled alongside and the cops yelled at Eldridge Cleaver, who was in one of the cars, to come into the street with his hands up. Cleaver later described what happened as he cleared the front of his car:

"The cop on the passenger side of his car started shouting and firing his gun, and then the other cop started shooting. The explosions from their guns sounded right in my face."

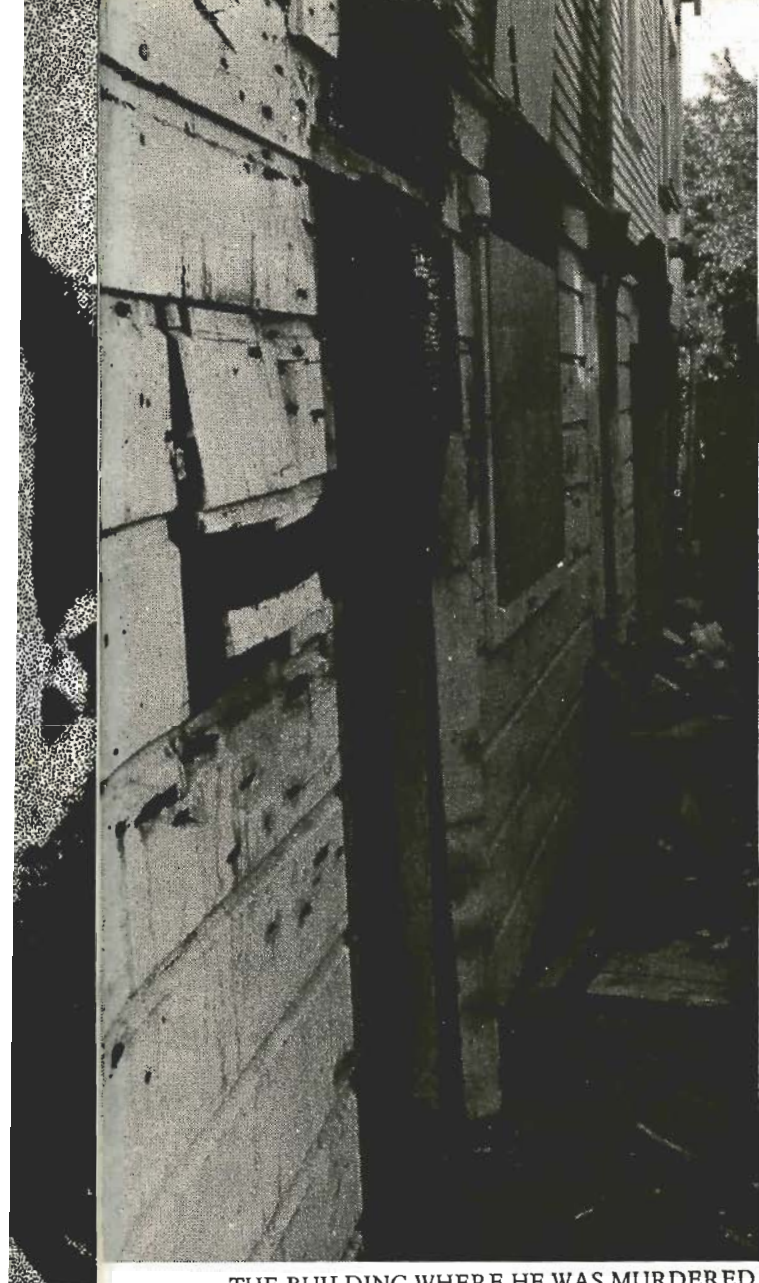
The Panthers scattered under a crossfire from several police cars. Eldridge and Bobby Hutton found themselves boxed in:

"We could not budge from that little nook because the street was filled with cops and they were pumping shots at us as



LITTLE BOBBY HUTTON

though shooting was about to go out of style. In the dark I could not see that Little Bobby had a rifle, until it started to bark, producing a miraculous effect: the cops, cowardly pigs from their flat feet to their thick heads, all ran for cover. The few seconds that this gave us allowed us to find a door into the basement of the



THE BUILDING WHERE HE WAS MURDERED

house to our right, and we dove inside.

"We lay down flat against the floor while the bullets ripped through the walls. This unrelenting fire went on for about half an hour, and then it stopped and the pigs started lobbing in tear gas.

"The pigs started shooting again and we had to hit the deck. The material we had

stacked against the wall was blown away by what sounded like machinegun fire. We decided to stay there and choke to death if necessary rather than walk out into a hail of bullets.

"One of the shots found my leg and my foot. . . . In my mind I was actually saying goodbye to the world. I said goodbye to my wife, and an image of her dancing for me, as I had watched her do many times before, floated past my mind's eye, and I reached out to touch her, to kiss her goodbye with my fingers.

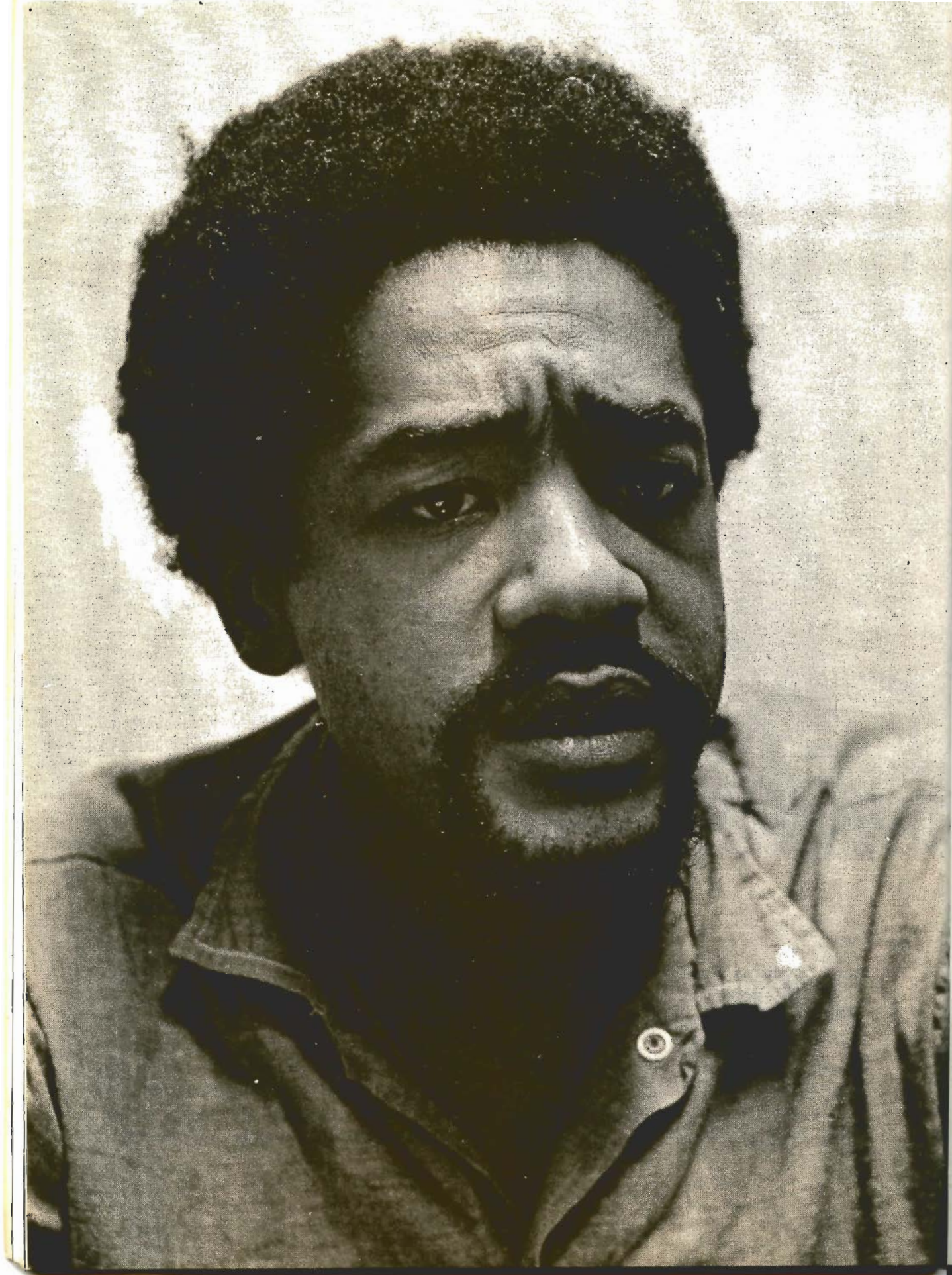
"The rest of the story is madness, pain and humiliation at the hands of the pigs. They shot firebombs into the celler, turning it into a raging inferno. . . . We tumbled through the door. The pigs told us to stand up. Little Bobby helped me to my feet.

"The pigs pointed to a squad car and told us to run for it. I told them I couldn't run. Then they snatched Little Bobby away from me and shoved him forward, telling him to run to the car. It was a sickening sight. Little Bobby, coughing and choking on the night air that was burning his lungs as my own were burning from the tear gas, stumbled forward as best he could, and after he had traveled about ten yards the pigs cut loose on him with their guns. . . ."

* * *

Black Panther Party Chairman Bobby Seale was invited by the organizers of the anti-war demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic Convention to come to Chicago and speak. He did, flying in from Oakland that morning, giving a short speech, and then returning to the West Coast the next day.

Half a year later Seale was indicted along with seven others for conspiring to cross state lines with intent to incite a riot. No one had rioted after Seale spoke and there was little evidence that he tried



to incite one. That's irrelevant anyway. He's in jail now, not for inciting to riot, but for demanding that he be allowed to defend himself in court.

The press played up Seale's "outbursts" in front of Judge Hoffman. They never quoted any. One of his "outbursts," for which he was bound and gagged went as follows—taken from the court transcript:

The Court: Is there any redirect examination?

Mr. Seale: I would like to request again—demand, that I be able to cross-examine the witness. My lawyer is not here. I think I have a right to defend myself in this courtroom.

The Court: Take the jury out.

Mr. Seale: You have George Washington and Benjamin Franklin sitting in a picture behind you, and they were slave owners. You are acting in the same manner, denying me my constitutional rights being able to cross-examine this witness.

The Court: Mr. Seale, I have admonished you previously. . . .

Mr. Seale: I have a right to cross-examine the witness.

The Court: . . . of what might happen to you if you keep on talking.

Mr. Seale: I still have the right to cross-examine the witness. Why don't you recognize my constitutional rights?

The Court: Mr. Kunstler (is) on record as your attorney.

Mr. Seale: He is not. He is not my lawyer, and you know it.

The Court: He is. I don't know—

Mr. Seale: You know that. You have made your choice of who you think should represent me. I make the choice of Charles R. Garry to represent me.

The Court: We are going to recess now, young man. If you keep this up—

Mr. Seale: Look, old man, if you keep up denying me my constitutional rights,

you are being exposed to the public and the world that you do not care about people's constitutional rights to defend themselves.

The Court: I will tell you that what I indicated yesterday might happen to you—

Mr. Seale: Happen to me? What can happen to me more than what Benjamin Franklin and George Washington did to black people in slavery? What can happen to me more than that?

Judge Hoffman ordered Seale bound and gagged. When the clanking of his chains against the metal chair disturbed the jurors, Hoffman ordered a wooden chair. Finally, the sight of a black man bound, gagged and chained in an American courtroom got to be too embarrassing. Hoffman separated him from the trial and sentenced him to four years in jail for contempt of court.

But before the Conspiracy trial ever began, the government was trying to legally murder Bobby Seale. In May, 1969, fourteen members of the Black Panther Party chapter in New Haven, Connecticut were arrested for "conspiring to murder" Alex Rackley, a Panther member in good standing who was shot by police-agent George Sams.

Three months later twelve carloads of armed Feds pulled up to the national headquarters of the Panthers and arrested Bobby Seale on the same charge. According to the pigs, Seale had flown to New Haven to give a speech at Yale University, after which he dropped over to the local Panther office, found the Party members torturing Rackley as a suspected fink, and casually ordered his murder.

Seale's bail for this frame-up was set at a quarter of a million dollars. He is now in jail in New Haven, awaiting a trial that may send him to the electric chair.

Erica Huggins was one of those arrested in New Haven on the Rackley frame-up. In January, 1969 she lost her husband John, assassinated on the UCLA campus. She moved to New Haven after that and worked in the Panther chapter there. That May she was arrested, separated from her three month old daughter Mai. She is still in jail,

Erica Huggins wrote a letter from the jail:

"We cannot allow our children, be they Black, Mexican, Indian, Japanese, Chinese or White to be miseducated and degraded in America's degenerate school system. We cannot allow any more lynching, bombing and racial ignorance down South or up South.

"We cannot allow unions, any longer, to drive the working class—the working class must drive the unions. Our fight must be endless to organize the workers of this country, to overhaul and change every assembly line in every factory. . . .

"We cannot allow the reformists to clean up the surface while the inner structure rots. We need a revolution!"

It was to Erica that Eldridge Cleaver sent his first message from exile. "We must not rest until this sister is liberated," Cleaver wrote. "We must recognize that a woman can be just as revolutionary as a man and that she has equal stature, along with men, and that we cannot prejudice her in any manner, that we cannot relegate her to an inferior position."

Free Erica Huggins!



The Panthers have never invaded or shot up white communities. The black community does not want the government to "protect" it from the Panthers. After Fred Hampton was murdered, not one black Chicagoan thanked the police.

Still the politicians and the rich are terrified of the Panthers and want them destroyed.

Not just because the Panthers feed school children. So do some schools.

Not just because they have a free medical clinic. So does Cesar Chavez' Farmworkers Union.

Not just because they believe in self-defense. So do most people.

Not just because they don't like cops. Neither do most young people.

Not just because they are socialists. Many Americans believe in Marxism, socialism and communism. Their speeches and writings and conversations are supposedly protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution.

It is for *all* these reasons and more together that the cold-blooded old men who run this country have decided to eliminate the Black Panther Party. The American Empire is beginning to fall apart. Its armies are being defeated by peasants in Asia. A few strikes by working people can tie up an entire city.

And we, the poor and working Americans, are getting restless. The Empire never did us any real good. It gave us slightly higher wages and a lot more gadgets than working people in the rest of the world, and then with the other hand it takes them all away with payments and mortgages and taxes and prices and fines and fees and interest.

We end up surrounded with a whirlpool of lies on TV, mindkilling work, pompous rich fools yapping for our votes, senile judges sending our friends to jail, and always, cops on the prowl. We have questions we want to ask, but the only answer we get back is "Do what we tell you," and some fifth grade stuff about obedience.

And all the time the rulers are watching us from the White House and the Pentagon, scared to death, seeing all their excuses vanish and their lies come home to roost. They're afraid we're going to kick them out.

In the middle of all this doubt, confusion, bureaucracy and terror, Huey Newton stood up, carrying a shotgun in one hand and a law book in the other, and said very clearly,

"The value of man, the purpose of man is to be free and engage in productive creativity. This is the freedom we are talking about; this is the freedom that makes life worth living."

We do not have that freedom in America, but we can get it, said Huey Newton, if we fight for it. When our bosses look out at us from the windows of the Pentagon or U.S. Steel, they do not see people, they see objects to be used to oppress the people of the world. All our sorrows come from them, the rich, who use the schools, the Army, industrial "discipline," and the family to turn us into billyclubs to beat other people (like the Vietnamese) over the head. And what's worse, they try to make us like it.

The Panthers said "No. This is where it stops."

That is why there is a war between the U.S. government and the Black Panther Party. This war is nothing new; it's gone on without truce for a thousand years and more. It is the struggle between the rulers and the ruled, the rich and the poor, the owner and the worker, the colonizer and the colonized.

All over the world the barricades are going up. One thing is sure about a barricade: you have to be on one side or the other. The people who want freedom are all on one side of the barricades. The cops of the world are on the other.

When you look carefully on our side of the struggle you find Huey P. Newton right up there in the front, standing off the cops, with his fist in the air.

He's yelling "Power to the People!" and he means *all* of us.

The genie of black revolutionary violence is here, and it says that the oppressor has no rights which the oppressed are bound to respect. The genie also has a question for white Americans: which side do you choose? Do you side with the oppressor or with the oppressed? The time for decision is upon you.

Eldridge Cleaver



FURTHER READING

BOOKS

(generally available in bookstores)

Soul on Ice by Eldridge Cleaver

Post-Prison Writings by Eldridge Cleaver

The Autobiography of Malcolm X

Seize the Time by Bobby Seale

Ideology of the Black Panther Party by Eldridge Cleaver (available through the Black Panther Party)

Wretched of the Earth by Franz Fanon

The Genius of Huey P. Newton (available from the Black Panther Party)

Black Reconstruction by W. E. B. DuBois

FILMS

Available through Newsreel: (New York City: 322 7th Avenue/ San Francisco, California: 1232 Market Street, Room 104 or 968 Valencia Street.)

Off the Pig an interview with Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, and Bobby Seale

Mayday features Bobby Seale, Kathleen Cleaver. Discusses the programs of the Black Panther Party

Bobby Seale an interview with Bobby Seale in the San Francisco County jail.

THE BLACK PANTHER

BLACK COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE
PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY



July 1967--Minister of Defense, Huey P. Newton (right) and Chairman, Bobby Seale (left), reading an early edition of B.P.P. Newspaper at the home of Eldridge Cleaver, Minister of Information B.P.P.

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Huey would say, "a newspaper is the voice of a party, the voice of the Panther must be heard throughout the land."



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