

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.

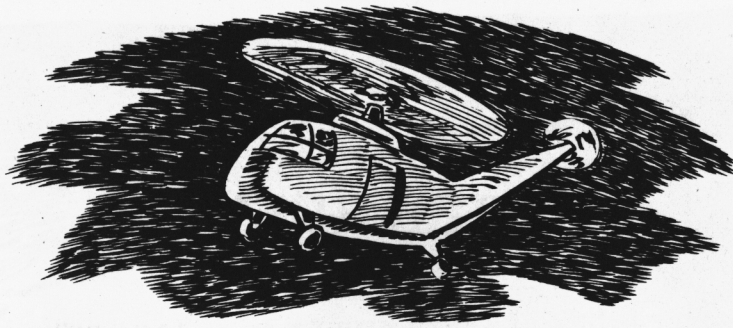
Among those arrested was Bobby Hutton, the first person to join the Party. He was sixteen and he had less than one more year to live.

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 prowl 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 straightarm 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.

VI

WHY THE PANTHERS DON'T HATE WHITES

At his trial Huey Newton was asked:

"Is the Black Panther Party a racist organization?"

Huey replied, "The Black Panther Party stands against racism. One of our chief purposes is to wipe out racism in this country and also throughout the world. We have been victims of racism for many, many years and it is not a thing we want to promote."

"Can a white person join the Black Panthers?"

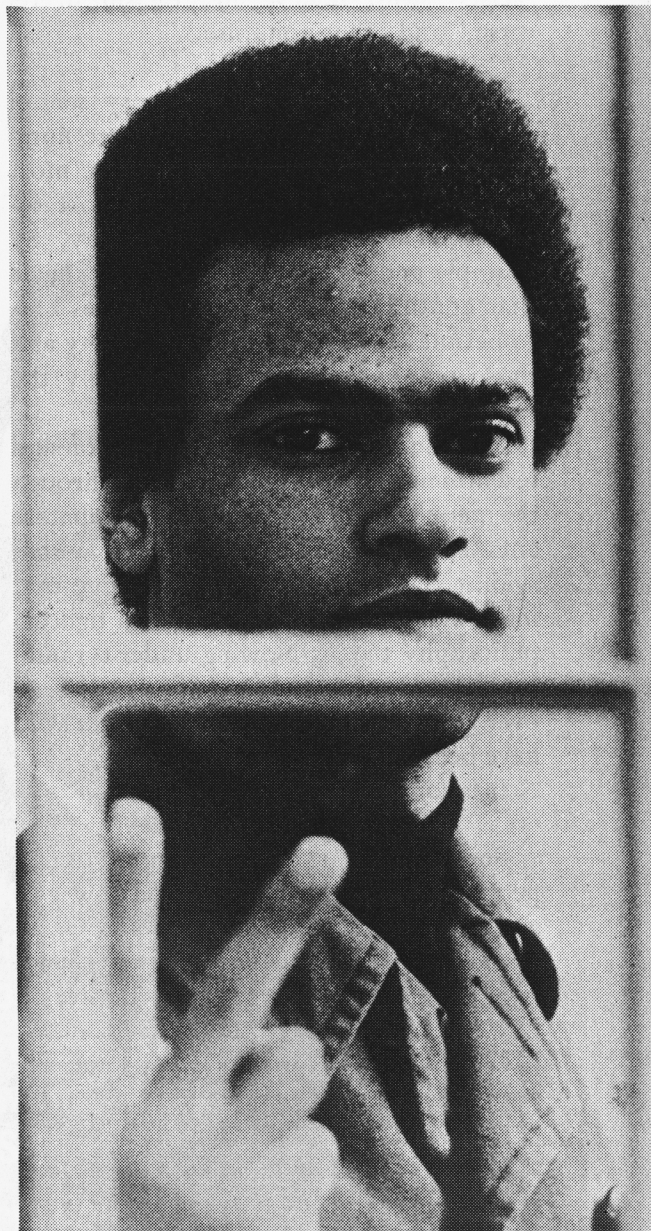
"White people can be affiliated with the Black Panther Party, but because of the political dynamics in the black ghetto, we must maintain a cultural, economic group based upon our heritage."

Later, in jail, a reporter asked Huey how the Panther Party felt about whites. He replied:

"We don't hate white people. We hate the oppressor. And if the oppressor happens to be white then we hate him. When he stops oppressing us then we no longer hate him. And right now in America you have the slave-master being a white group. We are pushing him out of office through revolution in this country."

What do you mean by "oppressor?" he was asked.

"The oppressor takes the production of people's labor and uses it for his own benefit. He also dominates culturally. He teaches that black is bad, that black is evil, that black people aren't even human beings."



Huey P. Newton

"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.

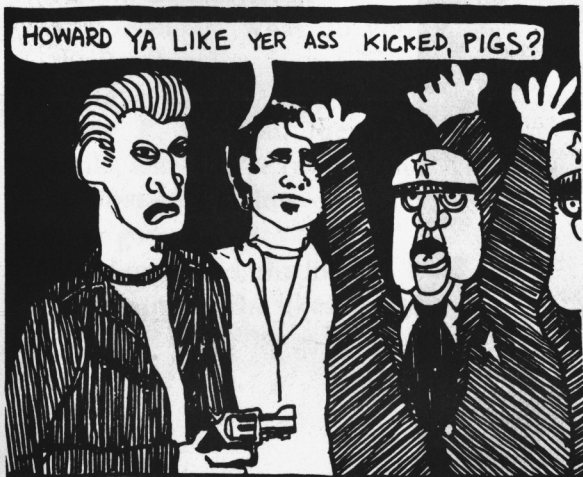
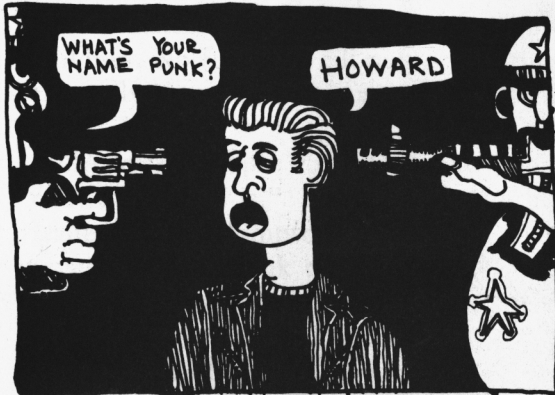
Another alliance was made in Chicago. Uptown Chicago is a poor white ghetto. The people who live there come from the South. Since every American city is a jungle, the young kids get together in clubs and gangs to protect themselves.

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:



"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.