

"WE HAVE TO ATTEND TO OUR PEOPLE"

AN
INTERVIEW
WITH
COMRADE
HUEY P. NEWTON
CONCLUSION



"I think it's very critical to talk about the helpless victim and his defense rather than to talk about the blood and the aggression of the true criminal, that is, the American fascist forces."

Q: The FBI is investigating Black Panther involvement in politics?

COMRADE HUEY: They're more concerned about what we're doing now than they were about the shoot-outs. They asked, "Why don't you come to Washington and talk?" And so we had a meeting there and the FBI said that they're concerned about our political movement and that they wouldn't allow us to, as they put it, "takeover". What they're really saying is that they

won't let the people take over. We only intend to register people and give them a voice so they'll put in whom they like. So you see, Oakland is an impoverished community for Blacks and Mexican people and this is the first time that Mexican and Black people, who usually don't vote at all, are becoming united in order to have a say. We're really creating a new political environment, in the true sense of the word, because the money that we spend on our campaign is money we've

spent on the people. And then the people will decide who's really concerned about them.

Q: I'm sure that one of the questions that jumps to the mind of an FBI agent is: where does all that money for Panther activities come from?

COMRADE HUEY: We used to get a lot of money from public donations, but

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

that was before the swing to the Cleaver emphasis. But since I've been out of the penitentiary, I've made something like \$400,000 in various advances on books and magazine articles. We Panthers don't have any private ownership of our possessions; therefore, all we receive, we give. So even though I made that money, I don't have it, I gave it to the Party. Bobby Seale also receives money on his books. Ericka Huggins received a small advance on a book of poetry, for which I wrote the introduction. I received money from my bail when I got out of jail. We've used the money to organize the people and give hope to the whole situation.

Q: How do you view the media's treatment of the Black Panther Party since its inception in 1966?

COMRADE HUEY: When the Black Panther Party was organized in October, 1966, we presented a program which included the cessation of police brutality, the exercise of the Fourth Amendment, and other points. And the media has constantly assaulted us. As far as we're concerned, they've attempted to paint us without any virtue whatsoever. And you can't paint people without virtue. I think that the real crime is that we allowed them to isolate us. We wanted to use the media to a certain extent, to manipulate them because we wanted to organize programs within the community. We really wanted to move politics to where the people were. But I think we used the wrong strategy.

Q: Wasn't one your first programs to tail the Oakland police?

COMRADE HUEY: We were protesting the murders that the police committed in our community, such as the shooting of an 18-year-old in the back for stealing a car. We exercised the right to bear arms because it's constitutionally guaranteed. And our Party was right because the police would harass people. So we said: if you can't have a police-civilian review board, and if we can't guarantee security to our own people, then we will exercise these rights ourselves.

We even went to Sacramento because we were interested in legislation. Here we thought we would meet the receptive ear of the people, and we would be able to document our statements. It was a protest of the genocide committed by the fascist authorities who are historically against the Blacks. And we said that we had to draw the line somewhere. I wanted to do what the law allowed, which was to secure our own community.

Q: Many people view the Black Panther Party as a racist organization

that preaches racial hatred. Is the Party separatist or racist?

COMRADE HUEY: I think that is a very important question. I'd say that the Black Panther Party is not a separatist party. We believe that it's a natural law of the universe that everything is interconnected and becoming more so because of the advancements of technology. Yet you can't fairly fit us into the so-called integrationist line. We think that it's not a question of separation or integration. The Party believes in controlling the institutions in our community. We believe that Blacks should be represented in administrative positions in the community. We believe that the community shouldn't necessarily be totally Black. On the other hand, in the white area, the administrative staff should reflect the percentage of the different races there. I'm not speaking of any rigid line, but if we're talking about democracy, government should be reflective. If a white person comes into this Black majority community, he has a human right to be represented. So we certainly are not racist; we stand against racism. As victims of racism, we won't take up that banner. We will introduce a plan that allows people to be free and live in harmony. Either we'll live together in harmony or we'll live in combat and cause the destruction of our species.

Q: In the history of the Panthers there have been a number of shoot-outs. Are you now de-emphasizing the role of gunplay in the revolution?

COMRADE HUEY: I'm always very careful not to apologize for any defensive measure and not to mix it up with aggression. And I would never view the Vietnamese defense of their homeland as mere violence. Our Panther defense is a tool to get rid of the violence and aggression. I'm against all wars. I'm for world disarmament; the Party is also. But we're not pacifists. We think that it's time to organize the people in the United States, which, of course the authorities are very upset about. We want peace. But, in certain situations I won't guarantee that I won't use means that the people think are necessary and efficient, to bring about liberation. And if I were to tell you anything else, I'd be dishonest with you.

I hope that America will stop acting violently so it will no longer be necessary for the people of the world to defend themselves. And we hope that the people will require America to stop the violence and not dwell upon criticizing those who decide to defend themselves. I think it's very critical to talk about the heloless vic-

tim and his defense rather than to talk about the blood and the aggression of the true criminal, that is, the American fascist forces. I would say that we are advocates of the abolition war--we don't want war, but war can only be abolished through war. In order to get rid of the gun, it becomes necessary to take up the gun. Chairman Mao stated that political power grows through the barrel of a gun. Just as the Chinese understand Mao's statement, I say power grows through the barrel but it culminates in the ownership of land and institutions by the people.

Q: Are there any particular political leaders besides Shirley Chisholm in this country whom you support or regard highly?

COMRADE HUEY: After Malcolm X was murdered, this country was in very bad shape. There were many contributors to the progressive liberation struggle, such as Martin Luther King. And before him, of course, Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois. They made the current liberation struggle possible. I think it would be unfair to overlook the NAACP's contribution. I respect all of the Black groups that speak against racism and repression. As the world becomes more complicated, the contribution of an individual can't be measured without talking about a time and a particular move toward freedom. So I respect all of the progressive roots, those that are Black and those that are white, too.

Q: Do you think we'll ever see in our lifetime the completion of the Panthers' 10-point program?

COMRADE HUEY: (Long pause)
No.

Q: Does that thought depress you?

COMRADE HUEY: No, it doesn't depress me, because the Black Panther Party's 10-point program is an immediate demand that I feel will not be satisfied now because of the oppressive conditions. But later, even after those demands are satisfied, there'll be more battle cries, and new reasons for people to protest, and to right wrongs. Revolution is a law of nature; contradiction is the ruling principle of the universe. And that brings about development, of course. So, if it's not the Party, then it's some other organization that will attempt to make more freedom for man. This is a permanent process, according to my understanding at this time. Of course, we know that laws are subject to change. We'll all have to analyze it to see what we'll be struggling for the next time. If you stop struggling, then you stop life.