

WHITES FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUEY NEWTON
Box 318, Berkeley, Calif.

April, 1968

Dear Friend,

Martin Luther King is dead. Bobby Hutton and 4 other black men, all under 18, have been murdered in the past month by Oakland police. Huey Newton must not be another.

We believe that Huey Newton is innocent, and given a fair trial, he will prove it. We believe that he must be set free and given the facts, we believe that you will, too.

We feel that the arrest of Huey Newton, Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party, is an attempt to silence those who verbalize - and organize for the attainment of - the basic needs of the black community. His brutal treatment while lying wounded and helpless in the hospital; his internment in virtual solitary; his indictment by an all-white, elderly, upper-class grand jury, in 20 minutes! - certainly not the peers of a young, black worker; all point to the fact that there is a vicious conspiracy to break the spirit of this courageous man and the back of the growing movement for freedom in the black community.

There is much misinformation about this case. Please read the enclosed material carefully and if you have any questions or wish further information, you may call the following numbers: Th. 3-4363; 655-3565; Th. 5-7456.

Mr. Newton's case will be long and the expense, enormous. For example: his attorney's attempt to prove that the method of selection of the grand jury is undemocratic is absolutely essential for his defense and in insuring future fair trials, but where is the judge who will listen to this? Perhaps, in the U.S. Supreme Court? It will take a mint of money to get there.

This is not the average request for a donation to aid with a worthy cause. This is a plea - a plea to save the life of an innocent man, a man whose only crime is love for his people and having the courage to risk his life for their dignity and humanity. A plea for money, yes, but also a plea for your understanding, for your concern, for your support. Please give what you can - and then think of all the black men and women who have died unjustly, cruelly, and join us in the determination that Huey Newton will not be one of them - and give more.

Sincerely,



Cecele Levinson
WDHN

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY - WHY?

Oakland is a community where black people cannot walk the streets or drive their cars without fear of being stopped, harassed and intimidated by armed policemen - on mere "suspicion" that they might be doing something wrong.

The Black Panther Party has organized politically to raise the demand, STOP MURDERING AND BRUTALIZING OUR PEOPLE, and to put forward a concrete program for jobs, decent housing and quality schools. As a first step toward black control of black communities, the Panthers affirm the right of self-defense against the unjustifiable violence of this racist army, the police. At the same time, the Panthers have consistently opposed spontaneous and aimless violence by the people, emphasizing instead the need for people to be organized and disciplined in their fight for their demands. Yet, the Black Panther Party is vigorously opposed to racism in all its forms.

When SNCC workers went into the South, one of the first things they had to fight for was the right to organize in the violently racist South. The Black Panther Party is still fighting for the right to organize in California. Why must there be, in the words of Eldridge Cleaver, "a series of attempts to liquidate the leadership of the Black Panther Party by the Oakland Police Department."

Several Panthers in cars in west Oakland on Saturday night, April 6, were approached by 2 policemen and menaced with guns. When the Panthers tried to defend themselves, shooting began, and the Panthers ran into a nearby house. After about 90 minutes of shooting by some 50 policemen who set fire to the house and filled it with tear gas, the Panthers were forced to surrender. With floodlights covering the house, Bobby Hutton walked out with his hands up. Someone yelled that he had a gun, and he was shot. He was not armed; no gun was found anywhere near his body. He had been too shy to follow Mr. Cleaver's advice: to undress completely because "that's the only way they can't say they thought you were armed". Nine men were arrested that night, including Panther National Captain, David Hilliard. Two policemen were wounded slightly.

Earlier the same day, a black policeman informed the Black Panther Party that the San Francisco and Oakland police had a plan to "wipe out the Black Panthers in the groups they run in." Panther leaders Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver are in prison after defending themselves against armed Oakland police. Huey faces the death penalty. Eldridge, his parole revoked, may be sent up for life. He and David Hilliard are charged with attempted murder. Bobby Seale faces trial for violating a century-old law against carrying a weapon near a jail.

For the past 8 months, pictures and descriptions of Panther leaders have been widely distributed to police. Panther vehicles have been frequently stopped by Oakland police. In January, San Francisco police crashed in Eldridge Cleaver's door and searched his apartment - without a warrant. In February, police broke down Bobby Seale's door without a warrant on a phony conspiracy charge (quickly dropped for lack of evidence) and arrested him and his wife. Last Friday night police broke down the door of Ken Denman, PFP leader and Panther organizer in San Diego - without a warrant. There are many more. Throughout, the mass media have carried on a campaign of slander against the Panthers.

Why? Why this systematic political persecution of the Black Panther Party? Because the Panthers have demonstrated their power to organize black people for their liberation.