

Panther Hunt

Fifth Estate Collective

1968

Editor's note: The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense is an Oakland, California based militant black organization which believes in armed self-defense of the black community from what they call the "pigs" (police).

The group's Minister of Defense, Huey Newton, is presently in jail awaiting trial on charges of killing one Oakland cop and wounding two others in a shoot-out last year. The Panther's claim this incident climaxed two years of police harassment and that Huey shot in self-defense.

The cry of "Free Huey" has united the Panthers and the white radical Peace and Freedom Party.

OAKLAND, Calif., (LNS-SCN) April 7— At a rally in Oakland in support of his candidacy for the State Assembly and Huey Newton's candidacy for U.S. Congress, Black Panther Chairman Bobby Seale urged the 500 people attending to restrain themselves from sporadic violence in response to the murder of Martin Luther King and the shooting of 3 Panthers in Oakland the night before.

Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther Minister of Information, was shot in the leg, Warren Wells, 21 year old Panther was wounded in the buttock, and 18 year old Bobby Hutton was murdered by the Oakland Police. Hutton, one of the first to join the Panthers nearly two years ago, was killed after the three Panthers had surrendered and were ordered by police to leave a teargassed building following a twenty minute shoot out. Numerous witnesses say that Hutton walked out with his hands high over his head, and then he was shot down by the cops. Seale said, "the police cut down a potential Huey Newton."

Cleaver, who has emerged as a leader capable of building a coalition between black and white radicals, is a parolee and could be returned to San Quentin, thereby cutting off his political career.

At Vacaville Prison where he is being held, Cleaver told his wife and lawyer that police shot him last night with the intent to kill, and that it was another incident in a campaign by the police to liquidate Panther leaders.

Seale called for blacks to restrain themselves from sporadic violence calling again and again to "organize."

He said, "They don't have us outnumbered, they have us out-organized. Organize so that there can be collective retaliation at the proper time. Don't go out and try to jump on the Man. Get his badge number," implying that the community will take action against those cops responsible for brutalizing black people.

About looting, he said, "now if you all go out looting a bunch of grocery stores, what is that but a bunch of jive? There are factories on the edge of the ghetto and the dudes that control those factories control the government that is oppressing us. There are three railroad lines running millions of dollars of goods through Oakland. Do, you dig?"

"We have seen 105 riots since Watts and what have they gotten us? A lot of dead black people. I think the rebellions of black people have been beautiful, but what have we got?" Seale urged the crowd to "go home and get yourself a piece."

"There must be a shot gun and a pistol in every black home so that the Oakland Pig Department knows it cannot come after our black brothers. We say racism is not sporadic. It is an organized operation of this racist society. We

have got to organize. We have got to get organized. We are going to confront racism with organized guns and force.”

The Black Panthers claim the Oakland police are racist and demand black control of the police force. A San Francisco officer boastingly said last week, “If they set Huey Newton free I intend to kill him myself.”

Seale also made a plea for unity among black people, saying, “If you stole even a nickel from a black man, you go out and find him and give it back. I ain’t saying nothing about those people in the hills” (referring to the rich white people of Oakland).

Of the election, Seale said, “We are entering the elections so that people will understand that we have a program, that we are making demands on the racist society.’ He said the Panthers are operating on all levels, underground as well as above.

The Panthers’ immediate aim seems to be to organize and arm the community for its defense, continuing to demonstrate its demand for the release of their leaders as political prisoners. Seale called on all black people to come to court on May 6, when Huey Newton goes to trial.

Meanwhile, the Panthers’ allies, the Peace and Freedom Party, are planning a march to the Oakland courthouse through the white neighborhoods of Berkley and Oakland. The party said that the death of King has been used by political leaders who never supported black liberation to raise the banner of non-violence as a cover for their sending of troops and cops to oppress the ghetto.



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