

Within a week of his release from a three year jail term, Huey Newton, Supreme Commander and Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party gave this exclusive interview to Sechaba. The interview was arranged by the Africa Research Group with the assistance of Karen Wald. We take this opportunity to pay tribute to Huey Newton, a great revolutionary leader of the heroic Black Panthers.

SECHABA: Mr. Newton, welcome back from jail and thank you for granting us this interview. First we would like you to explain the relationship between the Black Panther Party and Black Power movement.

HUEY: The Black Panther Party grew out of the Black Power movement, but the Party transformed the ideology of Black Power, into a socialist ideology, a Marxist-Leninist ideology. The Black Power movement has a tendency to have a capitalistic orientation along the lines of what Marcus Garvey talked about the kind of organization that Elijah Muhammed has, that is based upon Black capitalism. The Black Panther Party feels that not even the Black bourgeoisie will be able to compete with imperialism whose central base is here in North America. The United States is the central base of the bourgeoisie, and this is because this country is really not a nation any longer, it's an empire that controls the world, through economics or through physical force - military might. Even the Black Panther Party has transformed this movement into a socialist movement and we have become not nationalists, like the Black Power movement in the past but internationalists.

The bourgeoisie that is based here in America has an international character, because it exploits the world, it controls the wealth of the world, it has stolen, usurped the wealth of the people of the world, including the people who are in the Black colony here in America and who were stolen from Africa. We feel that the only way that we can combat an international enemy is through an international strategy, unity of all people who are exploited, who will overthrow the international bourgeoisie, and replace it with a dictatorship by the proletariat, the workers of the world. And we feel that after imperialism is destroyed, nationhood will no longer be necessary; the state will then wither away; then the whole world will belong to the people and the old national boundary lines will no longer exist. We think that the movement is at this stage, we think that the dialectics are now breaking upon taking socialism, socialist ideology to its final goal: communism and the absence of statehood.

SECHABA: Do you want to say a little about the programme and programme of action in the immediate future for the Party and for yourself.

HUEY: Our programme is armed struggle. We have hooked up with the

people who are rising up all over the world with arms, because we feel that only with the power of the gun will the bourgeoisie be destroyed and the world transformed. We feel that the imperialists will not become Buddhists overnight, they will not lay down their butcher knives. Therefore the people will have to use certain measures to restore peace to the world and to restrain the madmen who're running amuck throughout the world oppressing people everywhere. The world enemy number one is the ruling circle in the United States of America. We view the United States as the 'city' of the world and all the other countries as a 'countryside.'

As one country becomes free it makes each country stronger because it develops a base of liberated territory so that we'll be in a better strategic position to fight, and also it will be one step in cutting off the raw materials that imperialism needs to feed its factories here at home. We'll slowly strangle imperialism by freeing one country after another. This is why we support the brothers and sisters in Southern Africa and those who are struggling in Northern Africa for socialistic goals and against capitalism, against imperialism, as well as the brothers and sisters in Asia and Latin America. We support all struggles where people are struggling for freedom, and we also support our European brothers and sisters who are struggling to overthrow the bourgeoisie in their country. While we are not nationalists, we support national wars of independence because this is a step again towards cutting off the international bourgeoisie which is home based in the United States. We feel that every country has a right to be nationalistic at this point as long as they are internationalists at the same time. We feel that Black people in America have a moral right to claim nationhood because we are a colonized people. But history won't allow us to claim nationhood, because it has bestowed an obligation upon us; to take socialist development to its final stage, to rid the world of the imperialist threat, the threat of the capitalist and the war monger. Once he is destroyed then there will be no need for nationhood, because the nations won't need to defend themselves against the imperialist, because this is the most powerful imperialist country in the world, and other imperialist countries depend on the backing of the U.S. At this point the imperialist is running rampant, so any country has a right to claim nationhood or be nationalist, as long as they are internationalists as well.

If they are nationalist alone then they are chauvinist. If they are both nationalist and internationalist, they realize that they need liberated territory but they also realize that their interests are the same as every other

peoples interest who are fight against imperialism. While we resp your fight for nationhood and independence, and we struggle with y we feel that we must destroy the v necessity for countries to be nati in the first place. And this is the wh idea of making the world a place wh territorial boundaries will no longer necessary.

SECHABA: The leadership of the Black Panther Party has come under v severe attacks during the past ye Can you tell us what effects th attacks have had on the Party?

HUEY: The repression breeds resistance. We feel that by virtue of fact that we are being attacked, the attacks are extremely vicious, know that we must be hitting a sensit spot. We have the fascists disturb and they are running amuck sim because we are threatening them, we threatening their very foundation, th very existence. Otherwise they wo try to pretend to the world that ti is democracy and they would supp our right to freedom of speech, c right to freedom of the press and c right to political activity. But all the so-called democratic civil rights a denied the Black Panther Party, whi is the Vanguard of the people, becau the Party must be hitting a sensit spot, it must be a threat to the burea cratic imperialistic capitalist. We welcome all attacks. We will overcor all obstacles and advance wave up wave. We will rid the world of t bourgeoisie and destroy all of t monsters, and the whole world w belong to the people.

SECHABA: Do you believe there a revolutionary possibilities in t United States?

HUEY: I would like to emphasize th without the people of the wor struggling against imperialism, v would have a very weak position work from here in the United States which I am calling the urban area the world. But because we know we ha friends, comrades-in-arms who a fighting the same enemy that we a fighting, we feel that what we've do is just open up a new front. We shou say we are attempting to open up new front, because we don't claim any thing that we haven't done. But we a advancing the fight, we're strengthen ing our strategy of resistance an attack. We can do this because v realize the American fascist troops a being divided because the people of th world are struggling against them. W encourage - we admire, we have gre admiration for socialist or communi guerrillas all over the world. We fe we will never be free until mar colonized people are free. We notic that in most revolutions wher guerrilla kind of tactic was used, th urban area or city was the last are to be covered, and that bases opene up first in the countryside. We se

now many bases opening up in the countryside. We have advanced to the point where in many areas we've gone from guerrilla, to a kind of people's army that can operate with a face to face, head-on collision with the imperialist. This is only because of the great perseverance and great strength that you have shown, and that the people of the world have shown. While we're being attacked from the left and from the right and from all sides, we're still trying to follow your examples. We realize that you're also being attacked from all sides by the enemy. Because you are driving on you've given us strength to drive on. So onward to victory. We will someday meet and celebrate our victory, because I know we will have that.

#### THE GUERRILLA BAND IS OUR EXAMPLE

SECHABA: What has been the most important inspiration for the Black Panthers?

HUEY: I think that not only Fidel and Che, Ho Chi Minh and Mao and Kim Il Sung, but also all the guerrilla bands that have been operating in Mozambique and Angola, and the Palestinian guerrillas who are fighting for a socialist world, I think they all have been great inspiration for the Black Panther Party. As I've said before, they're examples of all these guerrilla bands. The guerrillas who are operating in South Africa and numerous other countries all have had great influence. We study and we follow their example. We are very interested in the strategy that's being used in Brazil, which is an urban area, and we plan to draw on that. And we've certainly been influenced by all of the people who are struggling in the world. As far as control is concerned, our Central Committee controls our Party. But I won't deny the influence. We don't consider that question an accusation, because I think we all should learn from each other.

SECHABA: Last year there was a United Front - the National Conference to Combat Fascism which included a number of groups, among them SDS, the Dubois Club, the Communist Party of the United States. What is the Black Panther Party policy on this kind of relationship?

HUEY: Our policy is that we are friends with all Marxists, want coalitions and allies within this country and all over the world. We could never have success without a popular movement - and when I speak of 'popular' I mean it in the truest sense of the word, in the internationalist sense. We have to have a popular mass in order to achieve victory, because victory is not for us, it's for the people. Therefore the people must be considered and the people must take a part in the struggle at every level.

We view part of our role as a vanguard, that we must educate the people as we go, orientate them and provide

an understanding of the social forces that are in operation and the dialectics at the time. We can only do this through involving the people in practical application, and involving them at every level of the struggle. And we do have relationships and coalitions and just comradely love and work with all these groups, and we hope to even expand this to other groups - some we haven't even heard of.

#### SOLIDARITY IN ARMED STRUGGLE

SECHABA: Would the Black Panther Party like to set up or establish more direct contacts with the liberation struggles of Africa, Latin America and Asia?

HUEY: Yes we think that we can learn even more from each other if we were to establish better means of communications. One of the chief difficulties is a matter of communications. It is an international struggle - the Black Panther Party even thinks in terms of a new International, an International based upon armed struggle and the socialist ideology, because we feel the International that exist now is somewhat deteriorated, as far as the Third World is concerned, especially the Third World countries involved in armed combat. The International has half-stepped and criticized many of the national wars of independence and the armed struggle tactic as being too hasty and without enough orthodox political development. We see the need to overthrow the evil gentry and corrupt officials and we see only one way to do this: we don't believe we can do it through negotiation or electoral politics or any kind of non-violent means. The enemy is a violent man and we must treat him in an appropriate way.

SECHABA: And more specifically, would you be interested in having contact with the liberation movement of Southern Africa and, if so, in what form?

HUEY: As you know, we've offered troops to the Vietnamese people to show our international solidarity. At the same time we also made it clear that we would send troops or offer troops to any of our friends who would accept them. We think the ultimate gesture of friendship that we could offer is to send our comrades to shed blood on your soil in the name of freedom, in the interest of the people, and against the imperialist enemy. If there is anything else that we can do other than to struggle to break the chains that shackle us, then let us know about that, and we will be willing to consider it.

SECHABA: Is there mass interest in the United States about the struggle in Southern Africa? What can Sechaba do to publicize the South African revolution among the Black people in the United States?

HUEY: We, the Black Panther Party, are a vanguard group, so necessarily we're more enlightened than the masses and we're very interested in the international scope of things. The people are as people all over the world, so tied up and so involved in their survival from day to day, that much of the time they overlook, or they don't understand the international nature of the struggle. That is why it is our duty - one of our first duties - to raise the consciousness of the people through education. We would like more information about the struggle in Southern Africa. We are familiar with it right now, but we would like more information on your armed struggle and what the guerrillas are doing, so that we can spread this information. We would like film footage: we have trucks that we drive around in the community and show films to people that walk in the streets.

For example we have films of the revolution that took place in Algeria. The community is very impressed with that kind of thing because they can easily see the relationship between the way the French treated the Algerians and how we're treated in this country. And we have a motto in the Black Panther Party which is an old saying: "a picture is worth a thousand words". And the people, maybe they don't read as much as they should; so we found in our political education that it's very helpful to show films. If you have any pictures or film footage you can get to us, I will assure you that it will be shown inside of the Black community, the Chinese community, the Indian community and the White community. There are poor White people in this country who are now becoming involved in the common struggle, and we're involved with them, and we hope this national kind of involvement of many ethnic groups will aid us in relating to the people, to help them make that jump to identify with people in other countries who may be from other ethnic backgrounds, other cultural backgrounds.

So that's how you can help us. And on our side we can send you some more tapes and maybe some film footage of things that we're doing and things that happens to us in this country.

#### ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE footnote:

The above interview was done a week after the Supreme Commander and Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party, Huey P. Newton, was released from jail. Since then, he has developed the Party's ideology to a much higher level and we have become intercommunalists and not internationalists as in the past. Becoming intercommunalists doesn't in any way contradict or negate any of the above statements but rather gives more validity to them and places us on a quicker path towards the achievement of one community - the community of the peoples of the world

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 abolitional 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.