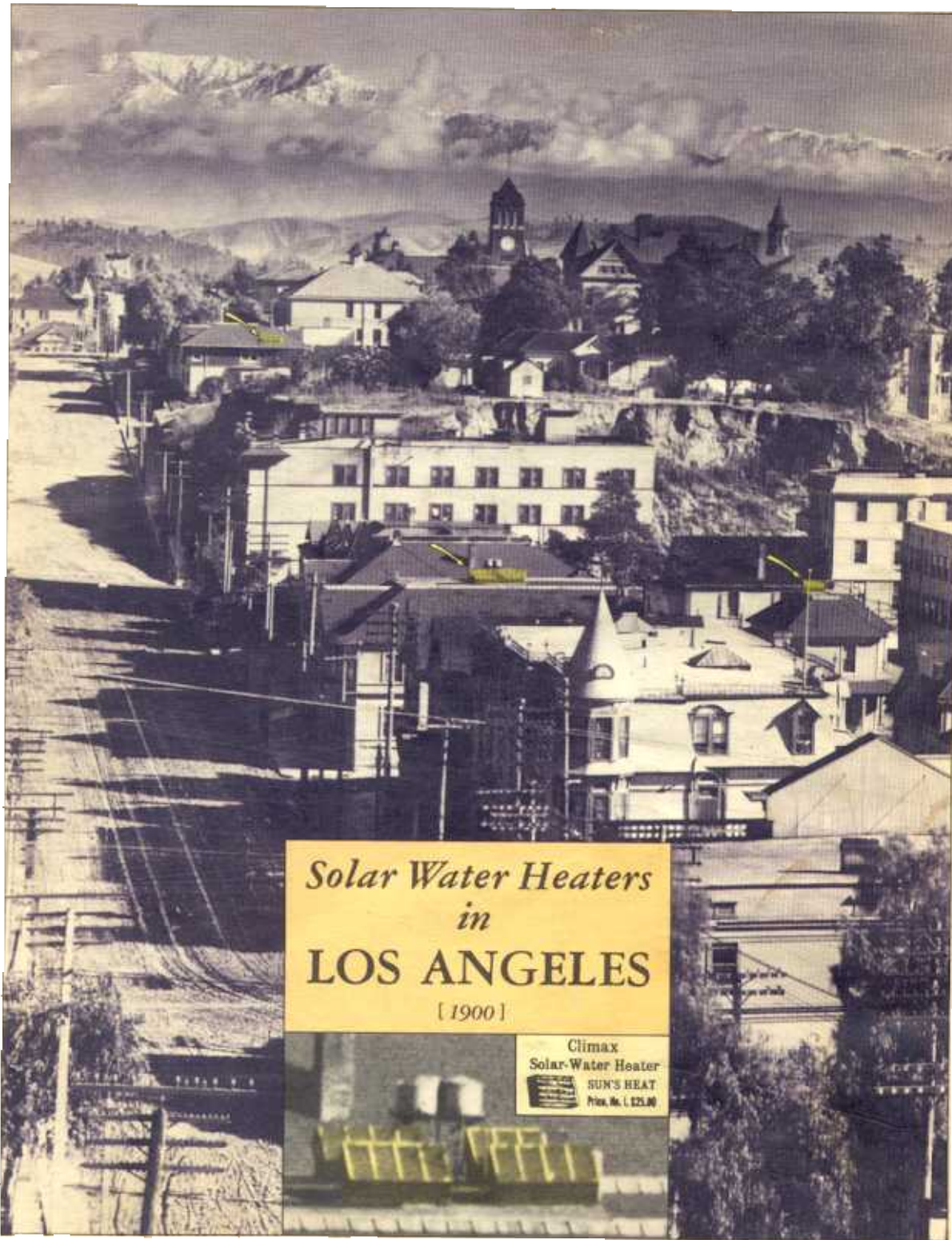


Published by the Whole Earth Catalog

The *CO*EVOLUTION Quarterly



Solar Water Heaters
in
LOS ANGELES
 [1900]

Climax
 Solar-Water Heater
 SUN'S HEAT
 Price, No. 1, \$25.00

Olive Street, north of Third Street, in Los Angeles, 1900, showing three buildings using Climax Solar water heaters (\$25). California had a major solar collector boom from 1891 to 1930 (details on p. 4). Note clear skies.

Subscription Price: \$8 a year

Sanctuary In Cuba

RECOLLECTIONS AND SNAPSHOTS OF HUEY P. NEWTON



It's a cane-cutting machete, but I only used it to work on the yard. I asked to cut cane, but the Cubans don't feel North Americans can adjust to the heat — it's 110° in the cane fields. Even the Venceremos Brigades no longer cut cane, they only do construction work. Cubans are tough. They can do it.



This shot is very significant to me. When I went into Havana it was at night and I was many miles out at sea, and I was told to look for this beacon light that flashes twice every 15 seconds. Of course I couldn't see it most of the time because we were in a small boat and the waves were 5 to 10 feet high and we only had 9 horsepower, so I could just peek at it. It was Thanksgiving Eve, 1974. The boat turned over about 50 yards from the shore and then ran over us, but we went under water and weren't hurt and were washed ashore. Cuba is a volcanic island and we were all cut up by the rocks, but there were no broken bones. We were rescued by the CDR (Committee to Defend the Revolution). They called the Army of course and took us to Immigration. We were questioned there and then placed under house arrest until they could verify our identity. We were treated well.

Huey Newton (35) is the founder (1966), President and chief theoretician of the Black Panther Party, based in Oakland, California. In the fall of 1974, while under indictment for assault, murder, and a tax charge, he left the United States and sought asylum in Cuba. He and Party member Gwen Fountains lived in Havana for six months and then in Santa Clara in Los Villas Province for six months, where they were joined by Huey's children Jessica and Ronnie (care of Gwen's mother), then they moved back to Havana for a year, then

Alamar near Havana for six months. Gwen worked as a teacher in a hospital, Huey repaired cement trucks, and the kids went to school. Most of these pictures were taken this spring and summer just before they returned to the U.S. Huey, now out on bail, loaned us his snapshots and gave us a brief interview on what he learned in Cuba. Contributions for Huey's defense fund (tax deductible) can be made payable to the Capp Street Foundation, Suite 217, Claremont Hotel, Berkeley, CA 94705.

—SB



This is the truck repair shop where I worked. The Party likes that one best of all. I worked there about six months. It was required to work 10 hours for 5 days and then 5 hours on Saturdays, but I worked 10 hours a day 7 days a week voluntarily. I never worked on cars before so I wasn't too good, but everybody was nice to me anyway.



This is Jessica in her uniform at school. She was a member of the Pioneers, which is like advanced students. You start out in the Pioneers, then you're in the Young Communists, then later the Communist Party. Jessica's Spanish was so fluent they thought she was Cuban most of the time.

That's Gwen in the Hotel Riviera. Barbara Walters was there at that time. It's kind of a fabulous hotel. Usually we stayed at the Havana Libre.



Stewart Brand: I gather that you and Gwen Fountaine were married in Cuba?

Huey Newton: Yeah. We were married in a wedding temple where a lawyer reads the ceremony, and the family code is read which says that by Cuban law the male has to take half the responsibilities of child care and housecleaning and cooking, or else you can go to jail.

Brand: Do they indict people for that? Some lady comes and says he won't wash the dishes.



That's Harry Tanner and his wife. His parents are Canadian, he was born in Cuba. He's a Cuban artist — I have some art work of his. He had a big contradiction with the courts because he was a filmer and he wanted to just be a painter, but Cuban artists have to have a job someplace else. So he refused to take a job — he supports the Revolution and so forth — and there's an anti-loafing law. He sells his paintings mostly to the embassies. He's a fine artist and he couldn't get along with the people in the film institute on the creative level, so they charged him and sent him to court. He got a lawyer and the lawyer told him to just stick to his guns because the anti-loafing law was made for loafers, and he worked about 20 hours a day. He brought his work to court and showed that he was paying the rent and for his kids in school, but he lost the case. They appealed and it's been at the Supreme Court now about four or five years, and he doesn't think they'll ever rule on it because they don't want to change the law. Tanner is sort of a hero among the Artist's Union.



That's downtown Havana from Tanner's balcony.

Newton: Yeah, or won't take care of the baby. It's not happening as much as it will happen because the women have to get more confidence to take the guys in.

Brand: How'd that work out for you and Gwen?

Newton: I like to do dishes anyway, so I had no problem with that. And I think I can cook better than she can, some things. I did that long before the marriage. We'd been staying together four years before the marriage.

Brand: Was the wedding a big deal for you guys.

Newton: If it was going to be a difference I wouldn't get married. Maybe that's why I waited so long because I had a certain amount of fear that things would be different. But I was pretty secure at that time that we had a definition of the situation. I was calling her my second wife because the Party was my first, and I'm a bigamist. She accepts that.

Brand: What was your status in Cuba?

Newton: Well, political asylum. I was a permanent resident and an honored guest of the government. That included special privileges, like I could always get a driver and a car. Transportation there is very bad — the buses are like a sardine can and they have taxis but they're not enough. And I could get reservations in restaurants on the weekends, when Cubans like to go out to eat. I had a delegation status, so I could get a table in any restaurant as the North American Delegate.

Brand: Was there any kind of fuss made when you left?

Newton: No. They were just concerned that I wouldn't say anything that would embarrass Cuba or make any official statements for Cuba. They were very intent, because every North American that they've given an honored guest status to has denounced Cuba. Robert Williams denounced Cuba. Stokely Carmichael denounced Cuba, said it was a racist state. And Eldridge Cleaver. Each one of them really let Cuba down. I think that was one of the big reasons I didn't

see Fidel. Each one of those people saw Fidel. That's my impression anyway — of course I never asked to see him. I think it's impolite to ask to see him. But everything else I wanted I got.

They also were concerned that I didn't use Cuba as a base of operations, because they wanted a relationship with the United States, so they were concerned about Party members visiting me.

Brand: How did that work out in terms of rest for you, to be cut off from the Party for a while?

Newton: It was good for me. I didn't know how tired I was. I didn't know how much of a toll the constant surveillance had upon me until I didn't have that any more. For the last 11 years I was obviously followed, even to the grocery store, pictures being taken. Everyone I contacted, they were eventually bugged and harassed by the FBI. I don't notice anyone on my tail since I've been back this time. Maybe their technology's so high that they can use radio beams, but it's really strange not to be followed.

Brand: I often wondered about the — it's really a tradition — of exile for political people. You just are out of it for a while.

Newton: I got a chance to do a lot of writing on Party history. And a lot of reading. I hadn't read a book in its entirety in years.

Brand: What did you find yourself reading?

Newton: Just everything I got my hands on. I read Korzybsky, *Science and Sanity*, a book that I had had for about 6 years. I always said that I wanted to read it. I finally read it and I was as impressed as I thought I would be. I read a lot of Marx' works and Lenin. I read Harrington, *The Twilight of Capital*, a very good book. I've always been interested in Existentialism. I read Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*. I read some books on Fanon. Of course I read *Roots*. A friend sent me *Five Rings*, it's a very small work, about this Buddhist samurai. It's a fascinating book. It seems it's all on combat, really it's on how to live.

Brand: Were you doing any light reading?

Newton: I read some novels. Gore Vidal's *1876* and *Burr*. I read a lot of Saul Bellow, whom I like a lot. I hadn't read a novel in about 10 years. I really entertained myself. I read about 400 books. It was really something to give the books away. I gave everything else away and I had read these books, but I found myself attached to them. I wanted to keep them, but people needed them there because it's hard to get some books.

Brand: How did you find so much time for reading?



That's Bill Brent. He's a Panther. He hijacked a plane in '68, and he's been in Cuba ever since. He just graduated from the University of Havana where he'll be teaching in Spanish history and languages — French and English. He's a member of the CDR and a member of the North American Union. He's very respected there. He's the only North American skyjacker who's really made an adjustment to the Cuban life. Just about all the other skyjacks — they have about 25 — are in big trouble with the Cuban government for getting into black marketing and all sorts of things. They've gone to prison several times in fact, after they got out for invading the integrity of Cuban territory.



Elaine Brown, the Panther Party Chairperson, came to visit in 1975.

Newton: I only worked at the truck shop for 6 months. When I taught at the University of Havana, that was on a part-time basis. I taught the History of Social Movements to small workshop groups. That was only a couple of hours a week.

Brand: What was the University like?

Newton: It was different, because everybody there was interested in learning. That was different than schools I've been to and lectured at here. They're really interested in their field, and international politics. There's a direction. Here you have all these things happening and disagreements. There you get this singleness of purpose, from the university to the cane fields. You get the feeling you're a member of a collective, the whole country's a collective, and you're working to make life better there.

Brand: How does that compare with what you saw in China?



This is right out in front of my home at Alamar, about 30 miles from Havana. They're building a sports stadium here to seat 20,000. The apartments across there are similar to the ones I was living in.

Newton: It was similar in China. But China is such a brass taking thing because it's so huge. And the Chinese way of going about things is much more efficient I would say. It's like clockwork. And Cuba is more of a laid-back thing, it's more relaxed. For instance if a Cuban tells you you're going somewhere at 8 o'clock, if you actually come at 8 and not 10, they'll think you're crazy. In China if someone's going to pick you up at 9 o'clock, at two minutes of 9 you can expect a knock on the door. And then the Chinese have a relaxed way of sitting down with a cup of tea like they're going to sit there for two hours, and then straight-up-9, and one will just get up and start backing out to the door while they're still talking. Of course I was in China only about 20 days, and Cuba 3 years. Cubans have more of a Black culture. I could feel more of a part of it. I was strictly an observer in China, and I felt integrated into Cuban society.

Brand: What's different in Cuba from here?

Newton: I think the feeling that truly everybody is an extended family, and the concern for everybody else's well-being. If you borrow some flour or some meal from someone, it's an insult to give them that back. If you get some extra beans something, you'd give them that and then they would be happy because it's like a gift. You never have to worry about someone watching kids, because the whole building is glad to do it. Everyone's in the CDR, and they meet once a week. Here it's a feeling of alienation, and there it's a collective. That's outside the political thing. They're interested in each other's life in a brotherly way.

Brand: Is there much crime?

Newton: The crime rate is relatively low, but it's rising, it seems, as more tourists come in.

Brand: Why?

Newton: Well, because you have scarcity, number one, everything's on ration, and then these tourists come in with big money, spending it. So around the hotel area the crime rate is going up, but it's not going up in the countryside. All the stores around the hotels are considered tourist stores. Cubans can't buy there. So you get some Cubans giving tourists things to buy them things — radios, watches from Japan, and so forth. For the Cuban government, of course, the stores are a way to buy foreign money in order to enrich their economy. But just this display of things that people can't have, and other people do have, creates a certain amount of crime — purse-snatching and robbery.

Brand: Usually when you have a controlled economy you get a fair amount of black market activity. Is there much of that?



This is the capitol. You notice it's patterned after the capitol in Washington.

Newton: Yeah. It's not a national problem but I think it's a growing thing. It'll happen more as tourists come in because, you see, the tourists will buy these things for Cubans — say, a radio, and the Cuban will resell it for double its price on the black market. The government is aware of this and what they're trying to do is put more in the stores for Cuban consumption. And they feel the only people who can really supply them with this kind of stuff is the North Americans.

Brand: Do they get North American television broadcasts there?

Newton: It's all blacked out. Every once in a while something will go wrong and you'll get "Soul Train" for a few minutes.

Brand: They do that because why? It would be like having a tourist in the living room I guess.

Newton: Yeah. They show North American movies though. They showed "The Godfather," "Buck and the Preacher." They show a lot of old gangster movies because it's good propaganda. And a lot of Canadian movies, French movies, English movies, Italian movies.

Brand: What about job mobility? Do you pretty much stay with whatever line of work you first get a job in?

Newton: Each job center has a school where you can go two hours a night three times a week, and the unions put social pressure on you to advance yourself. If you want another job you can register in whatever ministry — of culture, of labor, of industry — and if you get the new job you can quit the job you're on.

Brand: What did you learn personally in Cuba?

Newton: Well, I think that my view of what revolution is about has changed a little.

Before the revolution in Cuba there was a tradition of a cotillion ball, like a coming-out party for the girls when they were 16. The rich would do this. The girl would go to this hotel, there'd be fancy parties, she would change clothes about 10 times, with a banquet room and a lot of food. And this was denied to the poor people.

So after the revolution many people don't understand and they want everything the bourgeoisie had. So now the worker many times starts saving the minute a girl is born and saves for 16 years a few pesos a week so that they can give her this party. The Communist Party is against this, but they know that the people want it, so they make the hotels available, only they cut the price and at the same time propagandize against these parties, but they don't make a law against it or make it more difficult for the people.

I say that generally speaking too much of the time the Left in the United States requires the people to make a big jump that they're not prepared for. The Cubans don't even do that after a revolution. Fidel said in '59 they "won the right to make revolution." They have to transform the man and the woman now. They only won the right to do that.

So my whole attitude is changed as far as my approach to people no matter what their values are. I try to slowly stimulate their consciousness. That's one big change that I've noticed in myself.

Brand: It took a revolution in Cuba for that to happen. Do you think it'll take one here?

Newton: Yeah. But I think that Cuba is no blueprint for the United States. It's a whole different situation. It's a technological society. We would have to make our revolution based on our cultural history and the whole gestalt of our society. Some form of socialism will have to exist in the United States, but it won't be the Cuban form because the Cubans don't have the Soviet form or the Chinese form. They have a form of socialism consistent with their history.

Brand: What I'm wondering is if the United States requires something as sudden as what happened in Cuba?

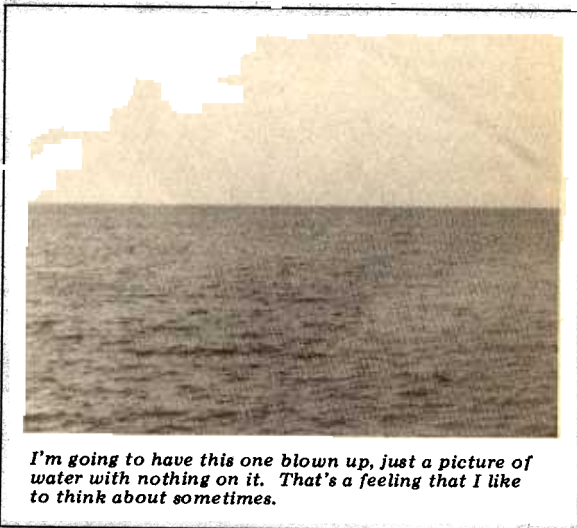
Newton: I think that some things will be dramatic. What happened in Chile when Allende was voted in — some leftists say, "But you see what happened," — I say, "Yes the revolution was crushed by the CIA and the dictators, but you can't deny that a transformation was made with the vote." Now after that transformation, perhaps, Allende should have drawn the workers as an army around him, and then it would have been one of the more smooth transformations that has ever happened in history as far as I know.

Brand: One of my friends worked with Allende, and he says, "I'm not sure. By moving too fast for the Chileans we may have brought about the oppression we have now by moving so fast that there had to be a counter-revolution." And it then was able to stick, in a way the revolution wasn't.

Newton: That's possibly true. Or possibly after the gradual move, the electoral process, the pace could have been moved faster to put down the reaction. I don't know. It's just speculation. Something went wrong. I just emphasize that the transformation was made and not in a bloody way. But to hold it there other means were necessary apparently, because the thing failed.

Brand: Well, it's like love affairs. None of them are a pattern for any other.

Newton: That's right. ■



I'm going to have this one blown up, just a picture of water with nothing on it. That's a feeling that I like to think about sometimes.