

# Attorney Garry Hails Panthers

By Daryl Lembke  
Los Angeles Times

SAN FRANCISCO—Charles R. Garry, a white man who is the Black Panther Party's lawyer, seriously considered going into the ministry when he was 17 but abandoned that idea because he could not "conform to the dogma of religion."

Now 60, Garry is trying to disentangle Panther leaders from criminal indictments ranging from interfering with an officer to murder.

"He's the one man with sufficient 'soul' so that the Black Panthers trust him," said Dr. Bernard Diamond, acting dean of the University of California School of Criminology in Berkeley and a long-time friend of Garry.

Garry appears fully recovered from a recent gall bladder operation. While he was sidelined, Panther matters deteriorated.

Chairman Bobby Seale was given a four-year prison term for contempt of court in the Chicago conspiracy trial arising from disorders during the Democratic National Convention last year.

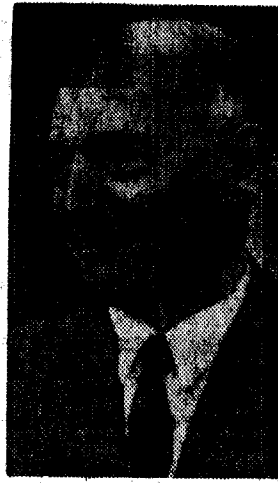
Seale protested vigorously against being tried with Garry unable to defend him, and demanded the right to defend himself. His repeated outbursts in court and disruptions of proceedings led Judge Julius J. Hoffman to have him bound and gagged and then granted a mistrial and sent him to prison for contempt.

Garry will appeal the contempt sentence.

Seale has an even bigger hurdle to jump, however. He is fighting extradition from California to face murder charges in Connecticut in the mutilation slaying of a black man who allegedly informed on the Panthers.

Garry does not always get his Panther clients acquitted but his average is good. The conviction of Panther "minister of defense" Huey Newton for manslaughter instead of murder in the killing of an Oakland policeman was considered a victory for Garry.

Garry also believes in socialism and has for a long time. He denies that he is or has been a Communist, but considers the issue irrelevant.



LAWYER CHARLES GARRY  
"... sufficient soul"

## Defended Oakland Group

Another highlight of his career was his defense of the so-called "Oakland 7" last spring, resulting in an acquittal of the seven white radicals who had been charged with felony conspiracy in violent protests at the Oakland induction center.

Garry is highly emotional in the courtroom, alternating between anger and pathos to the point of tears in his pleadings to juries.

While Garry takes pride in his skill as a cross-examiner, believing that "it's a gift," he places greater emphasis on painstaking preparation.

"The success in a trial is never in court," he said. "It is in your office."

Garry estimates that one million dollars' worth of work and talent went into the defense of Newton.

"The cost of justice is too damned high," Garry said. "Any system that requires that big an investment in effort and expense becomes a mockery, becomes a farce."

He and his partners have handled about 50 cases in the last five years involving the defense of persons involved in protests. The attorneys call these "political cases."

"We got paid somewhere between an inadequate and a token amount in most of them," a Garry aide said. "You never make money on these political cases."

However, the firm, which has nine attorneys, handles a wide variety of cases that have nothing to do with social protest: personal injury, malpractice and other liability suits, and some labor union representation.

"Up until the time I got involved in the Huey Newton case, I was bringing in \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year in various general law work," Garry said.

"We're in Trouble"

His income has fallen off in two years, to the point where Garry claims "we're in trouble," but he has no intention of shifting his emphasis. His firm has managed to remain solvent.

He said he is convinced that the federal government, and particularly Attorney General John N. Mitchell, is trying to destroy the Black Panther Party by picking off its leaders in court actions.

And he is just as sure that the party will survive.

He insists that the Panthers are not bluster on the outside and lacking in ideology on the inside.

"Don't be taken in by their original concept of guns," he said. "The Black Panther Party is an educated group that has education classes. They're geared to socialism, to the means of production being taken over by the people. If they weren't that, the establishment would not be interested in trying to eliminate and destroy them."