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Newton Is For Ballots Not Bullets

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Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther party, announced a new Panther policy of working within the system in an interview with United Press International yesterday.

Newton also took an opportunity to get in a few digs against fellow Panther Eldridge Cleaver, who has criticized Newton from Algeria in recent months.

Newton, the party's 29-year-old Minister of Defense, said the Panthers have rejected Cleaver's "pick-up-the-gun-now" philosophy in favor of a new national voter registration drive and community organization.

The latter, he said, includes picketing merchants to force them to contribute money or merchandise, including white-owned businesses in black communities.

BENEFIT

He said such businesses will benefit from an agreement with the Panthers — "They will get more customers and a tax write-off." Recently, Bill Boyette, a black businessman in Oakland who was picketed, signed an agreement to make contributions after he said he was driven to the wall financially.

At his \$650-a-month apartment in an Oakland highrise, Newton said the voter registration drive has already started in Oakland and Berkeley and will eventually extend to Chicago, New York and the south.

The party will not officially align itself with a political group, he said, but will "encourage people to vote for candidates who are interested in our survival programs, such as the George Jackson Health Clinic."

He said he did not know which candidates the party would support, except for Ron Dellums, the Democratic Congressman from Berkeley, and two radical members of the Berkeley City Council.

"I am not optimistic about a new system of things coming out of the electoral process, but I believe in some areas we can get some benefits," he said. "And in areas where we can't, we can show

See Back Page

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From Page 1

that electoral politics can't give it to us."

Newton accused Cleaver, the party's Minister of Information, of trying to turn the party away from the "original vision" during Newton's absence in prison or in the courtroom.

(Newton was convicted and sentenced to prison in 1968 for the 1967 slaying of a policeman, but his conviction was overturned in 1970. After two retrials in which both juries deadlocked, the charges were dropped on December 15.)

The Panthers still believe revolution is probably inevitable and may be violent, and still "don't support the system," but Newton said "The gun itself does not symbolize a revolutionary. In order to win the revolution you must participate."

He said Cleaver believed "either pick up the gun now and win the revolution or you are an Uncle Tom."

The current social system will probably have to be destroyed in the long run, Newton said, "but we can't deal with it before it is time to deal with it."