

[Hard Times]

Gas Battle of Algiers

El Paso Natural Gas Company's plan to buy large quantities of gas from Algeria for shipment to the east coast of the U.S. has important political consequences. For Algeria this deal, which involves more than \$1 billion, represents a major step in breaking away the country's developing economy from the oppressive French colonial influence and involving it instead with the U.S. where Algeria doesn't even have diplomatic relations. This step was made possible by the initiatives of the Houston-based gas company, the largest gas utility in the

U.S. and a major international fuels conglomerate. The pact is widely viewed as a forerunner of other deals between developing Third World nations and American-owned international corporations.

With a monopoly on California gas supplies, El Paso is the largest U.S. gas company. It now proposes to enter the east coast business by purchasing from Algeria one billion cubic feet of gas per day over a 25-year period. The gas will be liquified, then shipped in specially constructed tankers to east

coast utilities which are both short of gas and in need of a clean fuel because of increasingly strict air pollution regulations. In all, this deal will cost \$1.5 billion.

Even before the final arrangements were completed, the El Paso-Algeria deal had considerable repercussions: Because the imported liquified natural gas (LNG) will cost much more than gas piped from fields in the southwestern part of the U.S., it contributed to the pressures resulting in higher gas prices. In introducing the gas tanker trade to the east coast, it brings a new industry; the safety problems involving these tankers full of gas are not known. As the deal neared completion, other nations entered the markets. They include the Soviets, who are anxious to export gas to the U.S. from Siberia.

Negotiations for the El Paso-Algerian deal were unusual. Since the U.S. and Algeria do not maintain regularized diplomatic relations, Algerian agents in the U.S. employed the law firm of Clark Clifford to represent them in the complicated negotiations at the State Department and before the Federal Power Commission which must give final approval. The U.S. Export-Import Bank agreed to underwrite part of the cost. A group of American banks, led by Manufacturers-Hanover, will finance other aspects of the deal.

The deal initially was opposed by major U.S. oil companies, including Standard Oil of New Jersey. These companies made it clear they would block serious negotiations until Algeria paid off some \$40 million in claims pending since Algeria nationalized the oil business. Once the Algerians agreed to pay off the claims, the major companies dropped their resistance. Still the deal met objections by independent U.S. oil and gas men, who feared the foreign competition, and by the utilities, the major gas purchasers, because they did not want to pay such high prices. In Algeria there was opposition within the government on grounds it tied the nation's economy too closely to the U.S. But all these objections were eventually met.

The most serious objections came from the French who diligently sought to dominate the Algerian economy

since independence. The French, for example, have blocked World Bank loans to Algeria which might have provided a measure of economic independence. When Algeria nationalized the oil industry, the French threatened to sue other countries which bought Algerian oil. When the El Paso deal was put together, the French worked to block it. They schemed among the Arabs, attempting to convince them that by selling gas to the U.S. Algeria was casting in with Israel's principal ally, and that the deal should be opposed on this ground. In the U.S. the French attempted to convince Zionist groups that the deal was collusion between the U.S. and the Arab enemy.

El Paso had been in negotiations with Algeria for an LNG project since 1964. Then the plan was to ship liquified gas to southern Europe, but the project was cut short by the Soviets.

The Soviet Union scheme to turn its large oil reserves into a major export item had never worked out, but the Russians had successfully developed large-scale gas reserves in Siberia and built a pipeline to the Moscow area. The pipes were then extended down into Europe. And the Soviets aggressively began to market gas among the French and West Germans. They won a major deal in Italy arranging to provide the Italians with large amounts of Siberian gas through an extended pipeline system. All along the Soviets were meant to be Algeria's allies, helping the developing countries break the bonds of French colonialism. But in Europe the Soviets regularly undercut all Algerian initiatives in building a gas trade. In Algeria the Soviets were regarded with growing bitterness. Their role in blocking European gas sales was among the subtle forces which contributed towards moving Algeria away from the Soviet Union, closer to the U.S. on the one hand, and towards the Chinese on the other.

The Algeria project has other important implications for the U.S. Historically, natural gas was discovered in association with oil, and the business still is very much controlled by the major oil companies which produce most of the gas. The pipeline companies, of which El Paso is the largest, transport the gas through pipe

by James Ridgeway

What can just one private citizen do?

Ralph Nader urges you to become a Public Citizen

Dear Fellow Citizen:

Imagine that 25 or 30 years ago citizens concerned about the future quality of life in America had gotten together to do something about it.

Suppose they had begun an effective citizen's campaign to make government agencies and industry management sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people. The *real* needs, of *all* the people.

Think how much that was already wrong would have been corrected by now.

Think how much that has gone wrong since then would never have been allowed to happen.

In another 30 years our population will have doubled. What if our rampant economic "growth" is allowed to continue indiscriminately—mindless of the public's hopes and indifferent to their problems?

What if we continue to do nothing because we assume that others are taking care of the problems and fears that plague us?

Who *is* taking care of them?

It is clear that our institutions, public and private, are not really performing their regulatory functions. They tend not to control power democratically, but to concentrate it and to serve special interest groups at the expense of voiceless citizens.

Almost all the organized legal representation in our country is working to protect private interests and private wealth.

Who represents the citizen? Only ourselves. And that is why I urge you, as a public citizen—a citizen concerned about your community and your country—to support Public Citizen.

Thousands of graduates of law, medical, science and engineering schools and other disciplines want to work long hours, at minimal wages in the public interest. They know that our society cannot solve its problems if all our most highly trained professionals work for private industry or government agencies.

If these selfless young people are willing to sacrifice conventional rewards to pioneer the future, other public spirited citizens will surely want to make it possible for them to do so.

Through Public Citizen, we ask you to contribute \$15 to support a lean, hard-working group of these citizen-advocates.

Through published studies and documentation, they will help to sharpen public awareness of our problems. Public awareness leads to public action.

They will represent disadvantaged minority groups, including students, before the various legal agencies of state and federal governments. They will seek to temper the actions of large corporations that have acquired power far out of proportion to their contributions to society.

In some important way, every major company touches on the lives of thousands of people—employees, consumers, retailers, taxpayers and whole communities. Shouldn't these people have a voice

about policies that directly, adversely affect them? Must not a just legal system accord victims the ability to deter forces that tend to victimize them?

A way must be found to make a real impact on corporate boardrooms—and on government agencies that often serve as protectors, even service arms, of industries they are supposed to regulate.

Bureaucrats cannot easily resist the overwhelming pressures of special interest lobbies in Washington and state capitals. But there can be a greater countervailing pressure—the determination of citizens lobbying for the public interest.

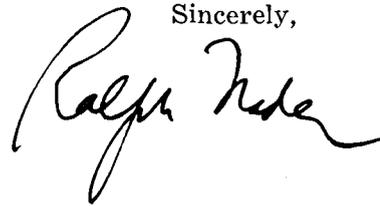
Once a year, as a Public Citizen supporter, you will receive a report on significant new citizen involvements that have been effective in achieving reform or relief at the local, state, or national level. Hopefully, you will apply them in the areas of your own commitment to action. Citizenship skills must be continually sharpened and used if we are to succeed in preventing or diminishing injustice.

Potentially, there are 200 million of us unable to work full-time for the public interest but with a full-time anxiety about it. Think how much can be accomplished if enough private citizens become *public citizens*.

Please mail the coupon and your check for \$15 or more to help Public Citizen continue and expand the work that is already under way.

Let it not be said by a future, forlorn generation that we wasted and lost our great potential because our despair was so deep we didn't even try, or because each of us thought someone else was worrying about our problems.

Sincerely,



Public Citizen, Inc. P.O. Box 19404
Washington, D.C. 20036

R 3

I am a Public Citizen. Here's my \$15.00 (I enclose an additional \$_____). Please don't waste any of it sending me a membership card or literature. I know what's wrong. What I want is to see something done about it.

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Please make check payable to: Public Citizen, Inc.

systems to markets. El Paso grew pre-eminent among the pipeline companies because it monopolizes the California markets. The Supreme Court sought to break this western monopoly by ordering the company to divest part of the western system, but so far El Paso has refused to sell off the pipes. Friends in Congress, including Washington's Senator Warren Magnuson, are sponsoring legislation which would exempt the company from the Supreme Court's order.

The east coast gas markets are dominated by a handful of pipeline companies with lines running from the southwest to Philadelphia, New York and Boston. In the past few years these companies, along with gas producers, have been warning of a gas shortage; in some instances companies actually curtailed sale of gas on grounds it was in scarce supply. Both the pipelines and the oil companies clamored for an increase in price in order to spur exploration. The sudden introduction of gas transported by ship from Algeria to east coast U.S. markets throws the entire business out of kilter. The Algerian deal without doubt is the first of several, and in time the pipelines may be rivaled as a mode of transportation by a fleet of natural gas tankers. Instead of the east coast being dependent on production from major oil companies in the southwestern U.S., it may become dependent on gas from Venezuela, Algeria, Libya, or the Soviet Union.

The Algerian deal probably will come under attack from an unexpected quarter. Environmental groups, which are partially responsible for the pressure on electric utilities to use more gas, are seriously considering challenging the project because of its potential hazard to the environment. They are worried about dangers of the LNG business, whether the land storage tanks are safe, and in particular, whether the new ships are reliable. Nobody really knows what might happen if an LNG tanker hit a rock or collided with another ship in the fog on entering harbor. Would the liquified gas dissipate or might it explode? In one inquiry the Bureau of Mines dropped small amounts of LNG into an aquarium and in a larger test dumped a steam shovel full of material

DUPONT NATION: On the surface the DuPonts are all for the environment. But as the devastating Nader report reveals in one instance after another, DuPont works behind the scenes to stymie efforts aimed at environmental protection. Thus when DuPont employees opposed construction of the Colonial oil pipeline across their personal property, DuPont, which sells products to Colonial, turned on them. The employees questioned the constitutionality of extending the public right of eminent domain to Colonial, which was taking private property for private use. On looking into the situation they discovered the pipe was thin, poorly welded, and the steel was brittle and inadequately protected from erosion. Using X-ray photography the landowners determined that 10 welds out of a sample of 41 were not satisfactory. With these photographs and testimony from several DuPont engineers who were pipeline experts, they filed a complaint with the Public Utilities Commission in Pennsylvania.

But DuPont sold tetraethyl lead

and explosives to the oil companies and explosives to the pipeline contractors. To protect its own interests, DuPont tried to stop the engineers, even though they worked against the pipeline on their own time.

All the DuPont workers, save one, gave in to the pressure. The Nader report explains, "A DuPont engineer, whom we shall call Ed, was warned by his division manager against going into New Jersey to look at the pipeline and against fighting the pipeline in general. One Sunday afternoon, Ed stopped at a location in New Jersey where the pipeline was not yet buried. The following week . . . his division manager told him that he had disobeyed orders and might lose his job. Ed demanded to talk to his chief engineers. But at a subsequent meeting with several superiors, the chief engineer read a statement putting Ed on probation before he even had a chance to defend his actions. When that year's bonus list was announced, Ed's name was not included, cutting his salary by 30 percent. Soon thereafter, he left the DuPont Company."

into a pond. In both cases there were explosions. In a report on the tests, the Bureau said, "Unfortunately the study raised questions on one aspect of the problem for which no answers are yet available. Small-scale explosions occurred when LNG was poured onto water; no explanation can be offered with confidence for these explosions and no assurance can be offered that these explosions could not scale up to damaging proportions in a massive spill."

Environmental challenges to the Algerian project would be ironic. Ecologists have applied much of the pressure which is causing electric utilities to use more gas. They have pushed hard for strict air pollution regulations, limiting the amount of sulfur emissions, and thereby virtually excluding coal as a fuel. (The market for low sulfur coal is tight, and there is no practical way of getting sulfur out of coal.) At the same time, ecologists successfully blocked a variety of nuclear power projects. As a result, util-

ities are forced to search harder for gas and to convert to oil.

The project raises other questions of a more subtle nature. An environmental challenge to the Algeria/El Paso deal, for instance, might be perceived as pitting the American white, upper-middle-class environmental movement against the interests of a developing Third World nation. For the radical community in the U.S., Algeria's relationship with El Paso Natural Gas Company holds other poignant ironies. Here is a new nation of the Third World having secured its independence from France, breaking from oppressive economic dependence and now replacing that relationship for partnership with a U.S.-based mining corporation, which, as much as any other company, has worked to exploit the "energy crisis" for the profits of its stockholders. In that sense Algeria has escaped the French to become a junior partner in that international oil cartel which through history has systematically ruled the world's natural resources. ■



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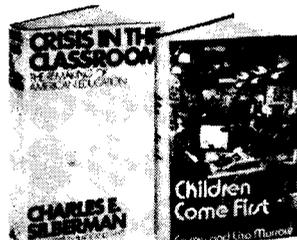
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Mayday

DEAFENING JETS: Children in East Boston apparently are losing their hearing from the noise of planes landing at nearby Logan airport. Last spring the Boston School Committee conducted routine hearing tests of school children in East Boston and other Boston communities. Twice as many East Boston school children failed the test as did those in South Boston or Dorchester, quieter neighborhoods located farther from the airport. Hearing failure in East Boston ranged from five to twelve percent; in the other two communities it ranged from one to eight percent.

One member of the school committee who conducted the audiometric tests said they were difficult to administer in East Boston because planes roared over some of the schools every one to two minutes. Even equipped with earphones, school children could not hear the test sounds over the noise of the planes. When jets pass over their schools, teachers stop talking. Physicians working in East Boston say that children there often appear to have difficulty pronouncing "s" or "sh" sounds—high frequency tones; noise pollution first damages hearing by impairing the ability to hear such high frequency sounds.

Some East Boston residents wear earmuffs to shut out the noise of the planes. One woman standing outside while a plane flew over felt a violent popping in her ear. When she went to Massachusetts General Hospital, doctors said she had a fractured ear bone. Ceilings and homes of East Boston are routinely cracked because of the noise. Children can't go to sleep, and people live in dread of a plane crashing into their homes.

Massachusetts Attorney General Robert Quinn recently announced that on the basis of a questionnaire six other Boston communities are adversely affected by the noise of planes. So far the federal government, which controls air traffic through the FAA, has sloughed off reports of deafness due to noise. One report prepared for the Department of Transportation was revised at

the department's request because it initially had appeared too critical. But the government must now take matters more seriously for the city of Boston has filed suit to block further runway construction at Logan airport because of the noise.

CYCLAMATE PAY-OFF: Among the election year handouts is a bill pending before subcommittee Number 2 of the House Judiciary Committee which would authorize the Court of Claims to recompense the manufacturers, packers and distributors of cyclamates for their losses—estimated at more than \$100 million. Ostensibly this bill, introduced by the conservative Florida Congressman Sisk and unaccountably co-sponsored by such liberals as William Kastenmeier (Wisconsin) and Don Edwards (California), is to help the California Cannery and Growers coop which was nearly wiped out by the ban on cyclamates in 1969. Actually, most of the money will go to the big bottling companies: Coca Cola, Seven-Up, Pepsico, etc. Pepsico is headed by Nixon's good friend and former law firm client, Don Kendall. Biggest pay-out of all will be to Abbott Laboratories, the major cyclamate manufacturer. Although the staff of the Justice Department opposed the cyclamate bill, they were overridden by Deputy Attorney General Kleindienst.

The cyclamate legislation would repay large companies which deliberately ignored research that showed cyclamates to be dangerous. In addition, it would establish a precedent that companies are to be indemnified against mistakes by having the government insure their adventures in the market place. That would cancel the existing law which places the burden of proof for safety on the company.

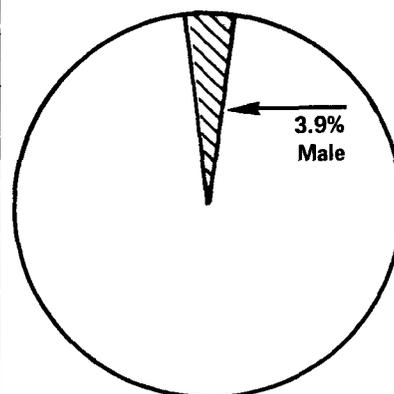
SEXISM AT BELL TEL: The accompanying chart shows the disparity in wages paid men and women at the telephone company. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which prepared the chart as part of a voluminous report on the telephone system on file with the FCC, adds, "Males begin at higher wages than females and continue to maintain a greater wage throughout their tenure

in the Bell System. The average maximum wage for males in entry level jobs in the 30 SMAs (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas) was \$8,613; the average maximum wage for beginning females was \$6,114 or only 71 percent of the male wage. A female in first-level management averages \$11,194. Should she compare herself to a male in first-level management, she would discover that her wage is only 79 percent of his. When measured in terms of total "occupational position," females' wages were only 75 percent of the average wage for all employees and only 60 percent of the average wage for male employees."

DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALES AND MALES IN WAGE LEVELS IN 30 SMSA's,

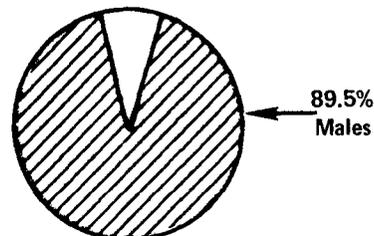
DECEMBER 31, 1970

Below \$7,000 per year



171,003 Employees

Above \$13,000 per year



61,989 Employees

Source: EEOC C-661 —
EEOC C-690 as annotated.

First Decree for the Protection of Life

WHEREAS —

After thousands of years of slow and laborious development, mankind during the past few decades has rapidly come into possession of technological means which promise either unlimited opportunity and abundance or sudden and universal catastrophe.

The People of Earth are, in fact, confronted daily with the threat of instant extermination by the accidental or deliberate unleashing of nuclear weapons. This threat multiplies as more nations gain nuclear capability and install multiple warheads which defy inspection and control by treaty.

Even limited use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction imperils civilian populations, towns, cities and country-sides, and can turn entire countries into ravaged battlefields.

The \$200,000,000,000 being spent by the nations each year for military purposes, mainly for weapons of mass destruction and their deployment, is a criminal waste of resources and manpower which could otherwise be devoted to supplying the People of Earth with adequate food, shelter, clothing, education, health services and expanding opportunities in life.

So long as nations give priority to expenditures for military might, there is scant chance of applying the brainpower, manpower and resources needed to solve other rapidly mounting problems which threaten humanity with the breakdown of society, misery and death in multiple ways before the end of the century. These problems include environmental pollution, the gap between rich and poor, hunger and population, urban decay, technological cancers, social disorientations and other troubles.

Apart from dangers of universal ruin, the means of modern warfare comprise the tools of force by which stronger nations interfere in the affairs of weaker nations and enforce imperialistic and colonial policies.

Meanwhile, the civil and human rights of people in all countries are nullified when nations are permitted to keep large and heavily armed military forces, since it is with military force that dictatorships and tyrannies are enforced, movements for peaceful change crushed, and people kept subservient—making a mockery of the Charter of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations.

Despite the extreme dangers to all life on Earth, which are growing every day and year, the national governments not only fail to protect their citizens from these dangers, but on the contrary many national governments are actively increasing the hazards by

continuing to install nuclear weapons and to devise other weapons with ever greater capacity for death and ruin.

During the next one to thirty years, in order to survive and prosper, the residents of Earth must overcome manifold problems and perils of planetary scope unknown in history. Yet at the world level, no agency exists which has the authority or competence to cope with the problems, and anarchy prevails.

THEREFORE —

When life is seriously endangered and existing governments are either unable or unwilling to remove the dangers and improve the conditions of life, then it becomes necessary for responsible citizens to proceed with remedies which seem appropriate.

Men and women acting under such circumstances may be described as Trustees acting for the common good, ultimately justified by whether their actions are endorsed by their fellow citizens.

In view of the increasing jeopardy to the lives and property of everyone on Earth, and in the absence of effective action by national governments and international agencies to protect life, we who are listed below, from many countries, have organized ourselves into an Emergency Council of World Trustees to take immediate action on behalf of humanity. Our purposes are to outlaw war and war preparations, to convene a Peoples World Parliament for continuous work, to prepare a Constitution for Federal World Government for submission to the Parliament, to appoint global legislative commissions to prepare legislation on urgent world problems for submission to the Parliament, and to take other appropriate action leading to the establishment of a Provisional World Government under democratic popular control.

As a first action to rescue Planet Earth and its inhabitants from destruction, and to provide a tangible rallying ground for people everywhere

who want peace and human rights while moving towards the creation of a Provisional World Government, we do hereby issue this First Decree for the Protection of Life:

1. Upon the effective ratification of this decree, it shall be outlaw and forbidden everywhere on Earth to design, test, produce, transport, sell, buy, install, deploy or use nuclear weapons, chemical-biological weapons, or any weapons of mass destruction, including airplanes equipped for bombing, I.C.B.M.s and other delivery systems, battleships, tanks and all manner of bombs and newly devised weapons.
2. This decree shall go into effect as soon as it is ratified by groups of students and professors at 200 universities and colleges in at least 20 countries, or by the signatures of at least 10 million individuals in at least 20 countries, or any equivalent thereof.
3. Any and all executive, administrative and chief policy making officials in governments, the military forces, industry, scientific work education or labor who may be responsible for violation of this decree after effective ratification, shall be guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.
4. Those who sign or ratify this decree thereby pledge themselves personally to abide by the decree. Opportunity to ratify shall be continued beyond the minimum stated herein for the decree to go into effect.
5. Individuals found guilty of violation of this decree may be assigned to rehabilitation and reconstruction work in areas devastated by war, or to other work of service to humanity.
6. Procedures for enforcement of this decree shall be determined either by the Emergency Council of World Trustees upon effective ratification, or by the Peoples World Parliament or Provisional World Government as soon as the latter institutions are established.

PEOPLE OF EARTH, UNITE TO OBTAIN NEW PRIORITIES FOR LIFE. BY SIGNING OR RATIFYING THIS FIRST DECREE FOR THE PROTECTION OF LIFE!

This First Decree for the Protection of Life was issued at the inaugural meeting of the Emergency Council of World Trustees at Santa Barbara, California, Dec. 28, 1971, to Jan. 2, 1972. At time of issuance, the Decree carried the signatures of several hundred persons from all continents of Earth, more than half being presidents of university student unions and other student leaders.

ALL PERSONS WHO AGREE WITH THIS ACTION ARE URGED TO RATIFY THE DECREE AND SEND A CONTRIBUTION TO CARRY THE ACTION FORWARD!

Ratified by Native country

Print name Contribution \$

Address

Occupation or position

Please send me copies of the Decree to circulate for ratification, together with a list of the first signers. (Note: You can help the cause by printing the Decree at once and circulating it in your community or on your campus. Use this copy for offset printing.)

Return signed Decrees with contributions to the World Constitution and Parliament Association, Inc., Trustees Office, 1480 Hoyt St., Lakewood, Colorado 80215, USA.

Early signers include: Nobel Laureates Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, USA; Frederick Sanger, UK; M. H. F. Wilkins, UK; 36 members of Parliament of India of 7 political parties; Presidents or secretaries of Student Assns: Awooner-Williams, Ghana; Jessy Ang, Philippines; Mikael Daher, Lebanon; Sam H. W. Davis, Gambia; Aziz Hussain, Singapore; Guillermo Mazzotti, Peru; Carlos Nunez U., Mexico; J. C. Obiri-Ibe, Nigeria; Ronnie Sookhoo, Trinidad; Haile Zamadie, Ethiopia; Jan Bishop, Marsha Martin and 23 others from USA; Statesmen R. K. Nehru, India; A. Casely-Hayford, Ghana; Kanichi Nishimura, Japan; and professors, lawyers, businessmen, writers, other student leaders, etc. from 52 countries.

[Conversations]

The Panthers After the Trial

“It would have been much more favorable to the movement if the DA had tried the case for a fourth time,”

Huey Newton told me. It was just two weeks after Oakland, California’s District Attorney Lowell Jensen, the man who tried to send him to the gas chamber in 1968, had asked an Alameda County judge to dismiss manslaughter charges

against the Panther leader, after his third trial had resulted in a hung jury. “We were approaching a situation and a set of conditions for the kind of mobilization we had in 1968,” Newton continued. “Everything was set. There were a number of organizations, including the most conservative ones, the churches, KDIA (a black-oriented radio station) that were set to start mobilizing people. But the DA was smarter than that.” Newton sounded

disappointed. “He understands that conditions change. People were getting ready to walk down to the courthouse again,” he said with a smile.

Did he consider two successive hung juries followed by a dismissal of the charges a victory? “It’s one of the small battles won. I won’t deny that,” Newton said almost casually. “It doesn’t mean we’ve achieved a greater amount of freedom, but it testifies to the fact that there are still avenues left open inside the system where you can get results that look fair. You get the appearance of fairness within an unfair system. This is what we have to keep educating the people on. We had the black community excluded from the jury, but then we get a hung jury. Does that make it fair?”

Compared to the furor created by Newton’s first trial in the summer of 1968, when he was tried for murder in the shooting of Oakland policeman John Frey, and the cry “Free Huey” reverberated from one end of the country to the other, the end of the case was almost anticlimactic. Newton had already served 33 months in jail (almost all of it in solitary confinement) for a crime he did not commit, and the political climate and the Black Panther Party had changed a great deal since 1968, when the Panthers marched outside the courthouse in military formation, wearing “uniforms” of black leather jackets and black berets.

The Panther image at the time was one of a paramilitary organization organizing itself for an armed struggle against the “racist pig power structure.” The mass media ran frightening accounts of Panther intentions, aided by fierce Panther rhetoric, and white radicals canonized the Panthers as “the vanguard of the revolution,” hoping one day to create an organization of whites similar to them. The Black Panther Party had a ten-point platform and program which it frequently referred to, but few people took it seriously, regarding it more as a cover for the Panthers’ running battles with the police.

In 1969, shortly after Richard Nixon was inaugurated, federal, state and local police began shooting at and breaking into Panther offices all across the country, touching off gun battles in

which several Panthers were killed, including Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in Chicago. The Panthers continued organizing rallies, and denouncing the power structure. They had started a Breakfast for Children program, but they found that, despite their revolutionary rhetoric, not too many black people were participating in their programs.

“When I got out of jail,” Newton recalled, “we couldn’t even call a rally where one-third of the people who showed up were blacks. Ninety-nine percent of the rallies were attended by white radicals.”

The situation reached its climax on Thanksgiving Weekend of 1970, at the “Revolutionary People’s Constitutional Convention” which the Panthers called in Washington, D.C. White radicals came by the thousands in answer to the Panther call. Close to two hundred flew and drove across the country from Berkeley. Others poured in from Vermont communes, and collectives in New York, Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, North Carolina, Ohio, and Colorado. There were radical feminists, GI organizers, gay liberationists, student radicals, self-proclaimed revolutionaries, working-class organizers, women’s liberationists, ex-Weathermen, and lots more. The only missing element was representatives from the black community. Considering the fact that Washington, D.C. has a population that is 70 percent black, their absence was quite noticeable.

“The black community was not interested in us, and was not interested in that Constitutional Convention,” Newton says emphatically. “We had lost the blacks long before that, but we were still in the lead of the white radical movement. This was evidence of the whole wrong tactic that the party used in giving up its roots in the community in order to lead the white radicals who didn’t have any roots in their own community as far as organizing goes.”

In an essay written last year, Newton described the situation the Black Panther Party found itself in. “Our hook-up with white radicals did not give us access to the white community, because they do not guide the white community. The black community does not relate to them, so we were

by Art Goldberg