

VFAF July 69

TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN SDS

There can be no question that the Black Panther Party is in the vanguard of the struggle against US capitalism, racism, and for the liberation of black people. In spite of the incredible ruling class repression, Panthers maintain and carry out the right of armed self-defense against pig terror. They have been developing Marxist-Leninist ideology and practice and identify their interests with working class and other progressive elements that will fight for socialism. For these and more reasons we must support the Panthers not merely by crying "Free Huey" but by concretely supporting their revolutionary program and practice. But true support does not preclude comradely criticism.

On Friday, the first night of the conference, there was a spontaneous demonstration of women against what was clear male chauvinism. Friday night was billed as a panel of "Women vs. Fascism". Many people came to hear these women speak. After starting late we heard a series of four male speakers none of whom addressed himself to the problem of the oppression of women. People listened restlessly for two hours and finally during the 45 minute speech of Herbert Auerker, originally scheduled to come after the women's panel, there was sporadic clapping and occasional shouts of "Let the women speak!" A number of women and men stood up, individually and in small groups, to express their frustration. This expression on the part of the participants was summarily denounced as the action of "objective pigs and provocateurs". Finally the women's panel got its chance. But not only was it relegated to the end of the program, but all eight women speakers were allotted a total of an hour and ten minutes. Women wanted to hear their sisters speak. We need a dialog between black and white women so we can fight that aspect of fascism that oppresses all women: male supremacy. It is also essential that these women teach the conference on the nature of oppression of women and how to fight it.

It is clear male chauvinism to consider that a panel of women is so unimportant and inessential that it can be casually pushed to the back of the bus. It was clear to the participants in the conference that the panel was about to be cancelled because of lack of time but for the demonstration on the floor. Furthermore we feel that the events of Friday night were in no way counteracted by placing token women on subsequent panels; in fact this type of reaction appears an attempt to pacify women.

Like racism male supremacy pervades our society; male chauvinism pervades our thinking. Several speakers told us we must struggle against male supremacy. But women find that whenever they struggle against it, they are told that it is inappropriate. It is essential to fight male chauvinism wherever and whenever it appears. Our intent Friday night was not to destroy the conference. We were interested in making a better conference for all of us, to build a stronger and healthier movement and United Front, responsive to the needs of all of us, both men and women.

Several women who were disturbed about the events of Friday night decided to call a meeting for Saturday afternoon open to all women attending the conference. The discussion centered on the problems raised on Friday night and how we could best respond to the reaction to our spontaneous protest. In contrast to those who wished to make a statement or write a leaflet for the last day of the conference, a number of NO and Nat'l Collective women at that meeting took the position that no action should be taken. Although there was room for substantive disagreement in the Women's Caucus Saturday afternoon, and despite the fact that some of the RSU women were actually in agreement with the substantive position expressed by NO*NC women, we feel that the manner in which NO-NC expressed that opinion made further discussion at that meeting impossible. We do not feel that all those in our movement who disagree are "objective pigs" and "racists." We feel that the heavy handed tactics such as those employed yesterday and other occasions -- chanting, shouting, heckling the chairman, etc, are detrimental to building a viable strong revolutionary movement.

Corporate Bay control now
- Better than class?

Substant Black who control? Corporate Bay ?? good
Premature ??