



Black Panther Tells It Like It Is
U.F.A.F. WOMENS PANEL:

ROBERTA ALEXANDER AT CONFERENCE

I would like to start out by saying brothers and sisters, that there is a struggle going on right now. Our topic up here today is to talk about women versus fascism, the role of women in the movement. There was some commotion here, and I would like to address myself briefly to that commotion. I think it's significant. First of all, there is a struggle now going on in the Black Panther Party. A lot of people around the country are confused about what's happening now in the Black Panther Party around the woman question, around the role of women in the Black Panther Party. This confusion has been created and added to with the demagoguery of the bourgeoisie, with their Larry Powells and their McClellan

Committees. They're adding to the confusion of the people and the Black Panther Party now wants to stand up forward, before all of you and explain a little bit of what's happening. We talk about divisions among the people and how the ruling class uses those divisions to weaken the people and to weaken the people's struggle. We are now faced with a rising tide of fascism in this country, and the people have to be united in order to fight this tide. Huey P. Newton says (as the brother said earlier tonight), we have to limit our bickering as much as possible between the movement and make our concentration upon the enemy. This is correct. (applause) And we must recognize the enemy when we see

it. This is also very important because if we don't know what the enemy is then we're in bad shape. Now, on the question of male chauvinism, on the question of male supremacy, this is a true problem in our society and reflects capitalist society, period. Women are placed in a particular role and they are expected to stay in that role. We have problems in the Party. That's true. Because we are part of the society and if we were to say that we didn't have no problems we would be lying to the people. We're not going to lie to the people. In order for the people to understand the question, we'll tell the truth. (applause) For the last several months in our Party there have been struggles over this question. These struggles have gone through the whole gamut of possible real problems; have gone through women leadership; women being able to be armed, to defend themselves as well as the brothers; on whether or not the women do all the typing or whether or not they also take part in the armed self-defense and the running of the offices, not just behind the typewriters; and it even goes down to the sexual levels, whether or not the women are supposed to do so and so for the cause of the revolution, etc. (applause) And there have been a hell of a lot of distortions on the party's position on precisely this point. There's been a lot of struggle in the party and at times this struggle has become so principal that we think more, we have thought more (this has been corrected) about the contradictions between the women and the men, between the sisters and the brothers than we do about the pigs. Now, there is a problem there, because that cannot be allowed. The pigs are out to murder us. The sisters and brothers are class sisters and brothers--sisters and brothers in the struggle and the party has addressed itself to this problem and it is now being resolved, and it is being resolved correctly. It's being resolved through an intense struggle among the Party.

"The women," as Eldridge Cleaver said, "are our other half. They're not our weaker half they're not our stronger half. They are our other half." It's no accident that Eldridge should say that right now. Ideas come from a social context and the struggle is being carried through. The contradictions arise and are being carried through.

Now, I would like to say a few words about where it comes from. We see in this society class div-

isions. We see in this society race divisions and we see in this society sex divisions. Black women, interestingly enough, are oppressed as a class, part of the super-oppressed class of workers and unemployed in this country. Black women are oppressed because they are black, and then on top of that, black women are oppressed by black men. And that's got to go. (applause) Not only has it got to go, but it is going. (applause)

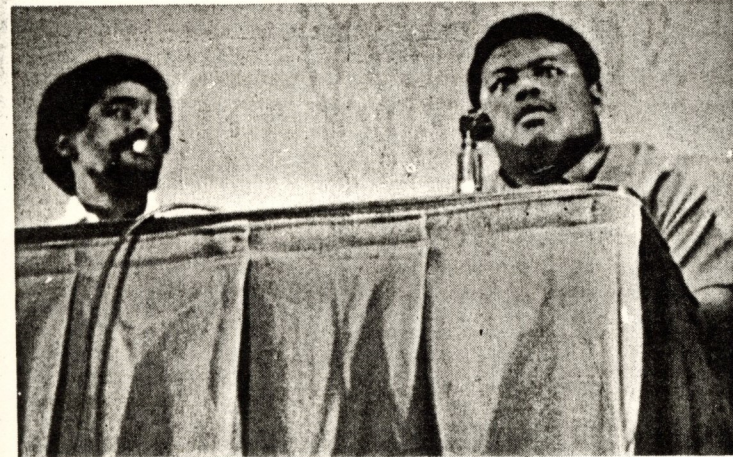
But, I think we've had an example tonight of how pigs, or people who may not be pigs but who objectively are acting like pigs, can function. One of the most destructive aspects of male supremacy is how it divides people who should be united. This is a very important concept to understand. When we struggle against male supremacy, we struggle because we want unity. When we struggle against male supremacy, we struggle with the brothers in the party and the brothers struggle too. Cause it ain't the sisters that are doing all the struggling, believe you me. That can't be, because the problem of male supremacy can't be overcome unless it's a two-way street. (applause)

So, when a proposal is brought up that the sisters walk out, I don't know what to say. I righteously don't know what to say because how the hell are we going to solve a problem like this if the sisters walk out and just leave the brothers right on behind. I realize the sisters have a lot to teach the brothers, but they ain't going to learn if we walk out of the building and talk among ourselves. (applause)

The repression that we're facing in this country is a matter of life and death. We have prisoners all over this country--something like 30 now who are facing the gas chamber. There are also many other political prisoners in this country. The chairman quoted 108. Well, we know that there are hundreds more than that and we just can't count them. We tried to compile a list for the newspaper, and that was absurd. What we're facing is a serious matter. We can't be divided.

At the same time, we're not going to turn in among ourselves, we're not going to look upon neither our women nor our men feeling sorry for ourselves with super sympathy. We're not going to be super sentimental. This is not our role. The people who have gone over to Vietnam, to North Vietnam, who have talked to the Vietnamese people who are carrying on their heroic struggle weren't told about the atrocities. They were informed,

but this is not what the Vietnamese people harped on. They harped on their positive programs. This was what was most important to them. Because it was their positive program that carried them forward and this is going to be the case with the Black Panther Party. We're going to carry forth our positive programs. The sisters and the brothers, united to carry these programs forth. The sisters aren't going to stay home worrying about their babies; the sisters aren't going to stay home worried about their house, worried about their husbands, worried about the sacrifices made. And there is a backwardness on the part of many women in this country, on the part of the women as a whole. And this backwardness we're going to face and we're going to overcome. We're going to understand this backwardness and where it comes from, from a true isolation from production and from the world. The woman is set up, especially in middle class families--she's set off into the house to sit with the kids, to make dinner, wash the dishes, vacuum up afterwards. Now how is she going to get an overall picture of what's happening in this society. Her whole life is those kids; if her whole life is her kids and her husband, she's not going to understand the revolution. We're going to have to widen her perspective, and that takes a struggle. Among the student activists too, you find that the women are afraid to speak up. It's true in the Black Panther Party, not to such a great extent. Our sisters are struggling and participating in our Political Education classes. The sisters are more and more taking a leadership role. We have sisters who can shoot, who shoot as well as brothers. They're not sitting home with the babies. (applause) They're out there. They've got their babies with them. They're out there in the community. They're doing field work. And the sisters in the Black Panther Party, and I hope the sisters in the rest of the movement, of the rest of the United Front against fascism follow the example of the Vietnamese women. (applause). This is the example we're going to follow. We're going to go on the offensive and we're going to take an advanced position. We're going to fight backwardness, and Right On, Vietnamese Sisters, we're with you. Right on. (applause, standing ovation).



Chairman Bobby with S.F. State Student, McAllister

VICTIM OF FASCIST TERROR SPEAKS

Don McAllister (on anti-fascism poster) speaks out against fascism. I know, as many brothers and sisters know that fascism in this country does exist. I am here because I lived. Many brothers and sisters have not lived and cannot tell you what they lived. But I did. What happened to me, can happen to you, can happen to anyone. What happened to me did not happen because I was wrong. What happened to me happened because I

was not reacting in the manner in which I was so instructed. Because I happened to be handy and because there was no obvious retaliation for what was to happen to me and what did happen to me. Fascism exists. And I cannot deal with it. You cannot deal with it. But WE can deal with it. (applause). I'm here to listen, to find out what we are going to do and what we are thinking. Thank you. Power to the people.

