

Panther Leaders Blast RYM - RYM Leaders Attack White Workers

And that I think that they need to be reminded that if it were not for the Black Panther Party, or black people in particular in America - that there would be no need for S.D.S. and that they would probably be - be laying up in some park - Yellowstone Park somewhere freaking off. And we want them to know that we're not going to stand any shit from them.

And that they're not revolutionaries, that they are national chauvinists, that they are national socialists. That the kind of socialism that they advocate is nothing more than an acute case of racism, manifested in every organization that white counterparts are allowed to participate in.

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Excerpts from interview with Chairman Bobby Seale and Chief of Staff David Hilliard, Black Panther Party.

Jamie Kilbreth, Editor

The Revolutionary Youth Movement leadership has based their legitimacy so much on the Black Panther Party (BPP) - which they have hailed as the vanguard -- that the BPP leaders' attack on them comes as a surprise. Their alliance with the BPP leaders was probably the main way the RYM leadership got any honest people to follow them when they walked out of the June Convention, declaring PL and who-knows-who-else 'expelled' (by a minority). The RYMers said:

...because the groups we look to around the world for leadership in the fight against U.S. imperialism, including the Black Panther Party (our emphasis) and the Brown Berets, urge us to do so, SDS (read: RYM) feels it is now necessary to rid ourselves of the burden of allowing the politics of the Progressive Labor Party to exist within our organization. (from RYM statement on why they walked out)

Now, in a Berkeley Barb interview (excerpts are printed above) with BPP leaders David Hilliard and Bobby Seale, the BPP labels RYM 'national socialists' - that is, fascists! Does RYM still consider the BPP leaders' word all-im-

portant? Are groups the BPP condemns to be purged? Is the BPP still the vanguard?

The Panthers' attack on RYM takes away a respected group on whose coat-tails they can ride. It was apparently provoked by RYM's decision not to push the Panthers' 'community control' of police petition in white communities. RYM objected to the Panthers' plan to circulate the petition in white as well as non-white areas. Said RYM: 'This flaw in the petition not only undermines the fight against white supremacy, but might even reinforce racism that would use police forces to 'protect' whites from Blacks.' (from statement by RYM NIC)

I think 'community control' of police is a reactionary demand because it creates the illusion that the people who are oppressed by capitalism can take control of a chunk of the very government the capitalists use to keep those people down! The idea is, in effect, for a given community to create an oasis of socialism while the society as a whole remains capitalist. It is impossible to share control of the government; fighting for 'community control' of police can only be diversionary.

But what if 'community control' of police were a GOOD demand? Then it would be good for both Black and white working people! While I think the Panthers' program of 'uniting against fascism' by circulating 'community control' of police petitions is wrong and harmful -- RYM's criticism of the petition is precisely the WRONG one! RYM argues that it would be bad for white workers to control the cops -- that this would increase racism, and harm Black and other third world working people. That means white workers can't be won to an anti-racist viewpoint. It means that white workers are seen as more reactionary, potentially, than the present power structure! (For, they imply, it would be WORSE, it would be MORE harmful, than at present, it would BUILD racism to circulate the petition.) Thus the workers - not the ruling class - are seen as the vanguard of fascism.

So when the BPP leaders now attack RYM for being parasites, for not wanting to fight racism but for wanting to fight to the last Black and other Third World person, their argument is not without justification.

The reasons for this criticism and the furious counter-attack by the BPP leadership are not exactly clear. It may be part of some elaborate power struggle within RYM. Or maybe the 'Communist' Party was offended by RYM's 'attacks' on revisionism. Or maybe the BPP leaders just got tired of being allies with a dead weight. A clearer explanation will probably be possible in the future.