

PANTHERS SWEEP BERKELEY ELECTIONS!

MEMBERS OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY WIN FOUR SEATS IN BERKELEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS.

Certainly when the Black Panther Party announced we would become involved in the electoral process, we knew that the many ills which afflict Black and poor people in this country could not be totally eradicated through electoral politics. However, we realized that, still, many positive gains could be achieved by Black and poor people utilizing our collective vote for those political candidates who truly represent our interests.

Recently, the Black Panther Party seized a prime opportunity to make voting operate in a progressive manner, in the interest of the Black and poor people, in the Berkeley (California) Community Development Council (B.C.D.C.) Board of Directors Elections. The U.S. government has been (since Johnson's alleged "War on Poverty"), each year, reluctantly sending poverty funds into the low and no income areas of Berkeley, California. The function of the B.C.-D.C. Board of Directors (who are elected yearly by the community) is to funnel these federal funds into meaningful programs for the poor. In the past, this task has seemed too much for the basically reactionary Board members of the B.C.D.C. to carry out, as the poor of Berkeley have rarely been on the receiving end of these funds. With this in mind, the Black Panther Party decided to run our own Party members to hold positions on the B.C.D.C. Board, as well as support other progressive candidates. The structure of the Board is based on having one representative from each poverty "target area" vote for the channeling of funds that would satisfy the particular needs of his smaller community. The target areas are simply representative of the arbitrary sectioning-off of the city into a variety of "poverty pockets". There is one "at large area" from which low-income persons (income under \$4,000 a year) can vote for a representative. With nine seats to be filled, the Black Panther Party decided to run six candidates.

On May 23rd, one day before the scheduled elections, Comrade Ericka



COMRADE ERICKA HUGGINS will serve Target Area #7.



COMRADE HERMAN SMITH will serve Target Area #2.



COMRADE WILLIAM ROBERTS will serve the people in the "At-Large" area.



COMRADE AUDREA JONES will serve Target Area #6.

Huggins held a press conference announcing her and the other Party members' candidacy in the B.C.D.C. elections. The following is her press statement:

"My name is Ericka Huggins, I am a member of the Black Panther Party. During the 24 years of my life, I have witnessed the oppression

of poor and oppressed people; and in the most recent years, I have found it hard to ignore the unending harassment, poverty and racism Black and poor people of this country have had to face. I have been a personal witness to this, having spent 2 years in prison only to have the unfounded charges dismissed after standing trial.

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COMRADES HENRY SMITH and NORMA ARMOUR did not lose the elections, for their opponents were two beautiful people from the Chicano community, who, by being elected, will definitely insure the Chicano community of proper representation.

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"Because the government realizes its inadequacies in meeting the needs of poor people, because it has become frightened that people may awaken in anger, it has designed programs for appeasement; plans for relieving the poverty of a few, while the greater masses of people still suffer without adequate clothing, preventive medical care, housing, etc., and are confronted with the problems of basic survival from day to day everyday.

"As a member of the Berkeley Black community and a person sincerely interested in seeing some of the immediate needs of poor and oppressed people met, I feel that I should run as a candidate for Board of Directors of the Berkeley Community Development Council. I feel that myself and the other 8 candidates I have chosen to support can best represent the needs of the Berkeley Black community. Therefore, I urge you to make my choices, your choices when you go to the polls tomorrow. The candidates for the 7 target areas and the At-Large candidate to vote for are as follows: Target Area #1, Henry Smith; Target Area #2, Hcr-

man Smith; Target Area #3, Norma Armour; Target Area #4, Charles Dorr; Target Area #5, Roberto Mendoza; Target Area #6, Audrea Jones; Target Area #7, myself, Ericka Huggins; Target Area #8, Rick D'Golia; and At-Large, William Roberts.

"A vote for these candidates is a vote for community control. Thank you. All Power to the People."

As expected, as soon as the press statement was read, the Black Panther Party was met with outright vicious opposition from reactionary circles. Leading the pack was one of the candidates, opposing Comrade Ericka, a reactionary named Eric Morton. He, for example, attacked Comrade Ericka personally, as well as the Black Panther Party as a whole, by issuing blatantly ridiculous charges in his underhanded efforts to slide, as usual, into a seat on the Board (Target Area #7). This idiot, while saying he "supports the Survival Programs of the Black Panther Party", in the same breath stated that "... I strongly disagree with the manner in which she (Ericka) and the Black Panther Party have

made this 'rude intrusion' into the electoral process of Berkeley's Poverty Program". He further stated, in behalf of many others who weren't so bold, that "...if they (the Black Panther Party) sincerely want to help the poor, they should first find out how to best serve their needs." As if there was no end to his madness Morton went on to say, "If the Black Panther Party wants representation they should petition for public seats as organizational representatives or run as at-large candidates. But to run as target area representatives (is) to deny the long time residents of those target areas the right of representation on the Board".

Eric Morton says that he "supports our community survival programs yet we have yet to see Eric Morton lackey that he is, volunteer any of his time to work on any free food or shoe program, or any survival program the Black Panther Party has implemented for the poor and oppressed community, of Berkeley, as well as throughout the U.S. The people have no need for Morton's or any of his unnamed cohort's vile and hypocritical lip service to the People's Survival. What "rude intrusion" were they speaking of? The Black Panther Party has had a Branch office in Berkeley for the past four years. The Black community of Berkeley can attest to the fact that the Black Panther Party has served the Black and poor community's needs since our doors first opened there. Recently, for example, at Berkeley's San Pablo park, the Black Panther Party gave away over 4,000 free, full bags of food (with a chicken in every bag) and administered over 5,000 Sickly Cell Anemia tests, free to the Black community. Where was Eric Morton or the B.C.D.C. Board during all of this? Where was their money? It is evident that the only "rude intrusion" into those Berkeley elections was that of some people who could hear the people, serve the people's needs and not, as in the past, mess over and take over funds that belong to the people. The real "rude intrusion" has long been in the Black community of Berkeley, in the form of racists and lackeys who rip off the few pitances that come our way.

There were many other attempts to sabotage Black Panther Party members' candidacy. Above all else, however, is the overall way in which the people have been sabotaged each year with one day of voting at polling places and then several other days of counting mail-in votes. With the mail-in system (which method Elections officials suggest), one can never really know how votes are counted or if they are received, making a bi-

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