

Out of Control

3543 18th Street, Box 30
San Francisco, California 94110

January 31, 1991

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Freedom Now! Network recently invited Bo Brown, a member of Out of Control, to participate in a Network event scheduled sometime in March. Bo is and has always been a very out butch lesbian. A former political prisoner, Bo has done work for and about political prisoners and POWs for twenty years. She did eight years in federal penitentiaries for her activities with the George Jackson Brigade, a clandestine organization operating out of Seattle in the 1970s.

Out of Control has worked with Freedom Now! since it was first formed approximately two years ago. In that time, both as an organization and certain of us individually, have had to endure a series of homophobic incidents. The first glaring incident occurred during a press conference announcing the formation of Freedom Now! , held in New York in December 1988. The press conference was planned to include ex-political prisoners. Bo was present but not invited to sit with the other comrades. A formal criticism was presented to Freedom Now! by Out of Control. Individuals claimed this was an "oversight", but there was never any acknowledgment of the criticism from the organization.

Bo was also not invited to attend the recent Tribunal held in New York. When one of our members approached one of the organizers, the response was again "oversight". We can't be certain of the process the Tribunal organizers used to determine who would represent the various North American prisoners and their movements; Out of Control was not approached in the process. One thing we can be sure of is that the response "oversight" was homophobic. Bo's own herstory and the herstory of the struggle that Out of Control has waged with Freedom Now! over the issue of homophobia leaves no doubt that we are being marginalized. The suggestion that Bo was inadvertently glossed over as a candidate is really too hard to believe, particularly when she spoke at a pre-Tribunal event in December, 1989.

Over a year ago, Out of Control chose not to participate at Freedom Now! meetings in the Bay Area and totally withdrew from relating to the organization on the national level. It was only with the advent of the Network that we once again made an organizational commitment.

We are committed to fight for the freedom of all political prisoners and therefore plan to continue our struggle against homophobia within the Movement. Out of Control recognizes the differences between the local Network and National Freedom Now! and understands that the connection between the two is currently in process. Both forums are nonetheless connected. Because we work on a day to day basis with people in the local network we want assurances that there is a continued building of trust and respect through open dialogue. We want recognition that anti-lesbian and anti-gay insights are never mere "oversights". Part of our work is to fight against lesbian invisibility not only for ourselves but also for our lesbian sisters, especially political prisoners, inside.

In struggle for better and better days,

Bo, Luke & Blue for Out of Control

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