

FAT IS FINE

In a powerful public presentation of its medical findings and revelations, the Fat Underground, a three year old collective of fat women, held a meeting at the Church in Ocean Park on Wed., Nov. 12. One of the most active radical groups in LA, the Fat Underground has staged such actions as demonstrating against the KNBC program "Feeling Fine", speaking at the August 26th. Day rally and at other feminist gatherings. But on this night the Collective documented actual medical information which brilliantly corroborates their well-known axiom, Fat is Fine.

Gudrun Fonfa, who introduced the program, stated that such medical information was necessary "to gain power back" from the medical establishment. Since the notion that fat is unhealthy is the most stubbornly-held prejudice of both conservative and radical slim and fat people, it is essential to combat it on a factual -- as well as emotional -- basis. The program showed conclusively that dieting (not to mention the other more bizarre forms of weight reduction), far from being healthy, is the one sure way to ruin one's health, and ruin one's body. And the paradox of the 99% failure rate, rather than convincing doctors and patients that diets don't work, merely serves to perpetuate further the big business of hunger repression.

The fact is that "most fat people don't eat any more than most slim people", and fat people are every bit as "normal" and healthy as slim people. This was made painfully clear to the audience when a tape was played, near the end of the program, of a woman who had undergone a by-pass operation. (A by-pass operation is the cutting out of most of the intestinal tract, thereby making it impossible for the body to absorb "too much" food. It

also has the frighteningly high death rate of 1 out of 10.) One phrase stuck out as the woman spoke of chronic infection, months of 105° fever, losing the skin on her hands and feet. It was: "I was in perfect health before the operation. I weighed 300 pounds and I was in perfect health. Now I've lost my health forever".

The politics of fat oppression are, as Aldebaran made clear, identical to those of any exploited and starved group -- blacks, lesbians, the poor.

People want to know "why" people are fat, as though being fat was a choice. Aesthetics also serve to exploit fat people similarly for instance, to blacks, since (as some doctors admit) the only reason for women, in particular, to lose weight is "fashion". (This is the actual reason given for the lowering of the government weight charts five to ten pounds in the past ten years.)

She also pointed out the incredible class distinction between fat and slim people: that the former are made to "starve and sweat" while the latter are encouraged to "eat and relax." The generally-believed attributes of fat people -- lethargy, emotional unhappiness, compulsiveness -- are also attributes (often quite real) of all persecuted and oppressed groups.

Aldebaran also spoke of an attempt by some scientists to repress anger in rats by cutting the nerve tissue in their brains which signals hunger. The expectation was that both hunger and anger would disappear, since both originate in the same place. On the contrary, with the loss of the hunger signal, the animals became extremely vicious and irrepressibly angry. Warning to the medical establishment: you may try to kill our hunger, but you cannot kill our anger!

-- Cindy Frazier

(From unknown Los Angeles newspaper, date unknown.)