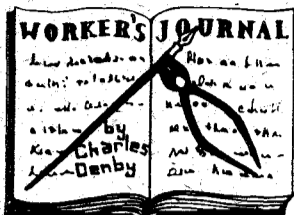


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## Letters from prison tell a freedom story

by Charles Denby, Editor

In the last year, there have been many letters coming across my desk from prisoners in all parts of this country. They want to read News & Letters, and many ask for other books and pamphlets. Some of the letters are from whites and many more from Blacks, and we get letters from both men and women. They write of their conditions, and I have learned about more prisons than I ever knew existed in the USA.

But what struck me so hard was that all the writers express the same passion for freedom, not just for themselves, but for oppressed people everywhere. They are asking questions about what is happening in Africa, and in women's liberation. Even while they are shut out of this world, they consider so many struggles that are going on everywhere around the world as their own.

When I wrote my column about Amnesty International last June, many workers I talked with did not know of the work they have been doing to defend political prisoners all over the world. I was very happy to hear that they won the Nobel Peace Prize, because the publicity may help some of the prisoners they are trying to get freed. When I wrote that column, I said I could not understand why they have never taken up cases of injustice in this country, like the Wilmington 10 who are sitting in jail in North Carolina, and many others, so I was very glad when I read recently that the U.S. chapter of Amnesty International had just adopted the Wilmington 10.

I am not saying that every person in jail is a political prisoner. All are not accused of the same thing. They are there for different reasons. But everyone knows that the jails of this country are part of the whole crisis of this society, and whatever they did to go to prison, once these men and women are locked up, they many times first really learn about themselves. Every letter that comes in seems to remind me of the Soledad Brother, George Jackson, especially where he wrote, "I met Marx and Engels and Lenin and Mao — and they redeemed me." I am sure not for Mao, but I feel I know what Brother Jackson was talking about. This is why I want to share a few paragraphs from some of the letters with our readers:

\* \* \*

**THEY ARE BUILDING UP** this place to really be a concentration camp; it's not even conceivable in the minds of a free country or people, that this camp is really a part of the state of Illinois. They attempt to contaminate the resident body here with the sick disease of hate—Would you believe that the prison officials have almost what we can call a Black House and a White House? It's like this camp has returned to the old laws of 1850.

I had a white friend here with me just a few months ago; he was forced to transfer over to the so-called good house, needless to say the almost all-white

(Continued on page 7)

## Blue Cross workers strike for union contract

Oakland, Calif.—Over 1,000 clerical workers—many Black, Latina, and Filipina women—formed mass picket lines on Oct. 6 at the Blue Cross Insurance Company here. The workers walked out when Blue Cross refused to negotiate a new contract in good faith.

After eight years of trying to get union representation, the Blue Cross clerical workers voted in Office and Professional Employees Union, Local 29, in June. The strikers said that low wages and benefits, and assembly-line working conditions were critical to the union winning. Below are comments by many of the clerical workers, as they spoke out on the picket line and at a Bay Area Women's Liberation-N&L meeting:

### PREP MEANS SPEED-UP

"Blue Cross instituted PREP, which set time standards for processing all documents. It was then possible to keep track of each worker's production. It bothered many of the older workers, because they no longer had time to check over their work. The union won because no one could meet the standards every time.

"We figure our average monthly salary is \$743, compared to management's \$2,900. Blue Cross spends only 18¢ for benefits for us, for every \$1.05 it spends on management. It's really galling to process claims for other workers who have better Blue Cross coverage than we do.

# 10¢ NEWS LETTERS

'Human Power is its own end'

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## Black Consciousness

# STEVE BIKO SPEAKS FOR HIMSELF



Black consciousness leader, Steve Biko

(Editor's Note: We are proud to present Steve Biko, leader of the South African Black Consciousness movement, speaking for himself. To hear his voice today, when the government that murdered him thinks it can stifle the whole movement, is to know how unconquerable is the idea of freedom. Our struggle for freedom throughout the world will continue.)

(From an interview in the fall of 1976 with Bernard Zylstra, a teacher at the Institute for Christian Studies.)

By Black consciousness I mean the cultural and political revival of an oppressed people. This must be related to the emancipation of the entire continent of Africa since the Second World War. Africa has experienced the death of white invincibility.

I must emphasize the cultural depth of black consciousness. The recognition of the death of white invincibility forces blacks to ask the question: "Who am I?" "Who are we?" And the fundamental answer we give is this: "People are people!" So "black" consciousness says: "Forget about color!" But the reality we faced 10 to 15 years ago did not allow us to articulate this. After all, the continent was in a period of rapid decolonization, which implied a challenge to black inferiority all over Africa. This challenge was shared by white liberals. So for quite some time the white liberals acted as the spokesmen for the blacks. But then some of us began to ask ourselves: "Can our liberal trustees put themselves in our place?" Our answer was "No! They can not."

**SOME BLACKS SUPPORT** the government policy of separate development in the homelands for the sake of peace, but not as a movement. Here we will have to look carefully into the kind of support that Gatsha Buthelezi gets. He has a tribal following among the Zulus . . .

We oppose Gatsha, he dilutes the cause by operating on a government platform of division among blacks. But we hope to avoid a real split on the basis of the Black People's Convention's great appeal to the younger generation.

Where is the evidence of support among the younger generation for BPC? In one word: Soweto! The boldness, dedication, sense of purpose, and clarity of analysis of the situation — all of these things are definitely a result of black consciousness ideas among the young generation in Soweto and elsewhere. Indeed, this is not quantitatively analyzable. For the power of a movement lies in the fact that it can indeed change the habits of people. This change is not the result of force but of dedication, of moral persuasion. This is what has gotten through to the young people. They realize that we are not dealing with mere bread and butter issues . . .

**AH, THIS IS A quick change!** We begin with the assumption that from the international point of view South Africa is a pawn in the politics of pragmatism, in the game of power between the U.S. and USSR. . . .

In order to realize its long-term policy, America has to find a group with which it can be allied. . . . It appears to us that this is the reason why (U.S. President Jimmy) Carter chose Andrew Young as ambassador to the UN, and why he sent him to Southern Africa. In this way Carter hopes to develop a new complexion, acceptable to the third world in general and to South Africa in particular. Carter uses Andrew Young's color as a special passport to the third world. But Young has no program except the furtherance of the American system. That's why he plays tennis in Soweto. Carter is doing more skillfully what Nixon and Ford did: to make the American system work more efficiently.

In being so critical of the economic self-interest in

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 8)

# Essex strikers reject watered-down contract

(Women workers from the Essex Wire plant in Elwood, Ind., members of UAW Local 1663, have been out on strike since April 6 (see NEWS & LETTERS, Oct. 1977). The following report is from one of the strikers. —Ed.)

Elwood, Ind. — There haven't been any new negotiations at Essex since we had two separate meetings: one on Saturday, Oct. 8, and a contract vote the next day. At the first meeting, we made the union read us the contract. We found out that everything was delete, delete, delete.

Essex had taken out all sorts of things, like the hygiene break that we normally had, as well as the privilege of wearing shorts, the privilege of taking a female with you to the first-aid room, and rotating people on the machinery.

We were angry when we found out what was being gutted from our contract, especially things that wouldn't cost Essex anything, like wearing shorts. Women have always worn shorts, since it gets up to 130 degrees in the plant.

Some jobs are very difficult and some are easier. We had finally won rotation of jobs, and now Essex wants it back the way it was — at the foreman's discretion. Of course, we no longer have a closed shop, and Essex still wants to keep the scabs. They did give us one thing — a bulletin board.

When they tried to sell this contract to us on Sunday, everyone locked arms and sang "Solidarity Forever," and voted it down, 82 to 44. I really don't look for Essex or the union to do too much, unless we can put tremendous pressure on them.

The company's harassment of strikers has been very

vicious. Recently a picket was hit by a truck that swerved into her deliberately. But we have also gotten a lot of support. On Oct. 16, we held a big car caravan, and it really lifted our spirits because there were at least 100 cars, and so many among them were outside supporters.

Workers at a Ford plant in Minnesota circulated a petition in support of us, and at last count, they had upwards of 1,000 names and sent us \$2,000. They made pins saying "Solidarity UAW" with clasped hands representing their local and ours, and bumper stickers saying, "I support Essex strikers."

I feel that as long as the UAW says to Essex that we'll take whatever they offer, that will be all Essex will offer. I think that if the rank-and-file hit the UAW International over the head with the fact that we do have the support of the people, that would influence the International and Essex, and the politicians who are helping Essex and trying to break our strike.

—Essex striker



—News & Letters Photo

Pickets shut down Blue Cross.

## Blue Cross clerical strike

(Continued from page 1)

Some men from Blue Cross management, wearing badges that say "Special Services" (!), have started to escort scabs through the picket line. And Blue Cross sent out letters to workers' homes, saying they would even meet them at the BART train station if they wanted to be escorted to work. Management is also hiring some clericals through temporary agencies, and they got a court injunction to limit each picket line to two people at each of the three doors. Since the women must stay 200 feet from the entrances, they have been holding "mill-ins" on the street corners to stop scabs.

The battle is developing rapidly, and several of the clerical workers summed it up this way: "Blue Cross has refused to recognize us. They still can't believe that the union is in — and they never believed that we would strike. We didn't want to go on strike, but they refused to take us seriously. This is our first contract, and anything worth getting is worth fighting for."

For more information, contact Union W.A.G.E., PO Box 462, Berkeley, Cal. 94701, and Women's Liberation-News & Letters, Box 77303, Sta. E, San Francisco, Cal. 94107.

(As we go to press we learn that Blue Cross has finally been forced to re-open negotiations.)

## Can IWY be a new beginning?

And what about the inspiration and lessons we all could gain from the Farah women clothing workers in El Paso, Texas, whose union victory proved that the "sunbelt" is not a safe haven for sweatshops?

Listening to the voices of women from below — and the activity of thinking — are indispensable, we think, to any kind of actions we together may decide to take in Houston. It is certainly critical in fighting the racists and reactionaries, who we know will also be present. What we have to face before we go to Houston is how this counter-revolution within the women's movement caught women's liberationists by surprise.

We know there are many sisters who feel so strongly about events in Houston that they are planning to go. In New York City alone, a Coalition of Grassroots Women, which came out of that state's IWY experiences, grew into 65 groups in three months. They are planning to raise poor and minority women's issues at the official conference, and to provide an alternative one.

We also know there are many sisters like ourselves who would like to participate in events in Houston but don't have the money to go. That's one reason we are writing this open letter now — to bring an exchange of ideas, what you want to contribute and what questions you think must be raised, if Houston is to become not alone a "battlefield" of forces, but a "battle of ideas" for a new direction in the women's liberation movement.

If you are planning to go to Houston and would like to participate with us there, or if you can't go but want your voice heard, write to us at 1900 E. Jefferson, Detroit, Michigan, 48207.

Yours For Freedom  
Women's Liberation — N&L

# Portugal—a luta continua!

(Women's Liberation-News & Letters received the following letter from the domestic workers' union in Portugal. For a first-hand report on their struggle, see NEWS & LETTERS, June, 1977.—Ed.)

Lisbon, Portugal

Comrades,

We thank you very much for the help you've given us. There are many foreign visitors who have come through here to see us and have a meal in the cafeteria section of the co-operative. We've also already begun to operate a nursery with 15 infants, all children of workers who don't have anywhere to leave them during work.

In October, we're going to begin the struggle again, delivering a petition to the Assembly of the Republic which, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic, will oblige the deputies to discuss our work regulations.

However, our efforts at the government level are increasingly difficult, since the right-wing is more and more infiltrated into the Ministries, and continues to keep taking back from the workers the gains that we ourselves have achieved. The military forces are engaging in renewed activity against workers' power, to defend capital.

We are feeling oppressively that they already have almost everything in their power, and we are more and more left to falling back on our own courage and the force to resist wherever it can be done. But the struggle continues! We are confident that the workers, united internationally against the machinery of exploitation, must win.

Revolutionary greetings,  
Domestic Service Union

## Oppose anti-gay Initiative

San Francisco, Cal. — One hundred gay men and women attended a state-wide conference of the Anti-Briggs Initiative Campaign in Sacramento on Sept. 24, to demonstrate unequivocal opposition to the latest appearance of the world-wide unfreedom forces.

Senator Briggs' bill, which would require the firing of teachers for engaging in sexual activity with a person (even a consenting adult) of the same sex, was defeated in the state senate. But now petitions are being circulated to put an initiative measure containing this provision on the ballot in the state primary next June.

The conference in Sacramento voted to initiate opposition with Speak-Out Week, beginning on Dec. 2, the day that the Briggs Initiative petitions must be filed in Sacramento. During Speak-Out Week, the Anti-Briggs Initiative Campaign, being organized in both the straight and gay communities, and among unions, churches, minority and civic organizations, will communicate with the electorate loudly and clearly.

The conference voted for a 600-mile mass march from San Diego to Sacramento next March to dramatize the danger of the Briggs Initiative. Planning and execution of the state-wide campaign to keep Dade County, Fla. politics out of California will be thorough, detailed and comprehensive, involving all issues related to freedom of sexual choice.

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women-  
worldwide

Mrs. Trinidad Herrera, president of ZOTO, an organization representing 175,000 residents and squatters of Manila's slums, was released from prison May 13, following local and international protests at reports of her arrest and torture.

American Airlines will be forced to pay \$2.7 million to 300 stewardesses fired between 1965-70 for taking maternity leave. The settlement, which came out of a class-action suit begun in 1970, also calls for retraining and rehiring women if they meet current standards.

Police in Buenos Aires broke up a demonstration of 350 women, "Las Locas de la Plaza de Mayo," who have been meeting daily to protest the abduction of their relatives as political prisoners. The police isolated 150 women and reporters on a side street where they were arrested and taken away.

Black students in Amite County, Miss., have been boycotting classes since late August to protest sex segregation in public schools, which was begun only after racial integration of the schools was ordered in 1969.

(For letter from Japanese feminists, see page 8.)

## WOMAN AS REASON

To Our Readers:

We are writing this open letter to let you know that some of us from Women's Liberation-News & Letters are going to be in Houston, Texas, when the International Women's Year Conference takes place, Nov. 18-20. We will not be attending the Conference as "official delegates," but to join in protesting any attempt to attack the gains we have won so far, and to raise some questions we think are important.

Many of us attended the state-level IWY conferences this past spring and summer. Sometimes we were confronted with outright reactionary women. At other times, we were confronted with liberal delegates and party politicians who spoke endlessly "for" and "about" "poor and minority women."

But nowhere were the masses of Black and Native American women, poor and working women, Chicanas, Latinas, and Asian-American women—much less any women with a revolutionary perspective—allowed to be heard speaking for themselves. Will Houston be any different?

As a beginning, because the conference is in Texas, we think it's important that our Chicana sisters be heard. What do they have to say about President Carter's latest scheme for dealing with undocumented workers, many of whom are Tejanos-Mejicanos?

What are their ideas about changing this inhuman society, where the gas company can simply shut off the gas for the entire town of Crystal City, Texas, because Chicanos there can't pay the exorbitant bills?

How do they see their participation in the demands for justice for La Raza and protests against racist police brutality and murders, like in Houston, Texas, where the police killers of Jose Campos Torres were freed?

## Trenton Seven verdict spurs workers' support

Detroit, Mich.—Many Detroit auto workers, including myself, have been following the trial and working in support of seven Chrysler Trenton Engine plant workers. They were arbitrarily chosen out of hundreds of wildcat strikers, and charged with contempt for ignoring a federal court injunction against their wildcat in August.

The day their trial began, Sept. 19, hundreds of workers and supporters encircled the Federal Building in Detroit. The trial ended Oct. 6 with a guilty verdict. It's the first time workers have been brought to trial on contempt charges after a strike has ended. The seven workers will be appealing the verdict.

The latest show of support for the Trenton Seven is the decision by their own Local 372 to hold a strike vote on Oct. 26 over unsafe plant conditions. Many Local 372 members told me the strike vote is sure to be approved, since unsafe conditions is what they walked out over in August.

The working conditions at Trenton Engine are notoriously bad. They were supposedly "settled" in an authorized strike during the summer of 1976, but they are worse now than ever. When the temperature hit 135 degrees on Aug. 8, it was the final straw, and everyone walked out. This was after management had laid off probationary workers who had provided heat relief time,

and had stopped honoring heat passes. Hundreds of wildcat strikers shut the plant down for a week.

Besides the heat, workers told me that machines at Trenton Engine are speeded up so fast that they throw off an oil mist, and in some departments it is so thick you can't see through the air. Grinders shoot off sparks on floors covered with oil two inches thick. There are no covers on motor belts and overhead cranks. Jitneys are operated without brakes, horns or other safety equipment. One worker came close to being killed when an overhead engine rack fell to the floor.

On top of these deadly working conditions, management has laid off maintenance workers who are needed to repair leaking and dangerous malfunctioning machines. Supervisors work on the line, and foremen are openly abusive to workers. Over 1,200 grievances are still unsettled after the wildcat!

Many workers told me they think Chrysler and the UAW International cut a deal to clear the hundreds of Detroit Chrysler workers who were fired or disciplined during the heat walk-outs this summer, by trading them off to get the Trenton Seven. Even 52 other strikers from Trenton Engine who were fired have been reinstated.

But the International is absolutely wrong if they think they can buy off the rest of us. We do not intend to abandon either the Trenton Seven or the fight over plant conditions. —Chrysler worker

## Automation used as excuse for steel lay-offs

(This month I am turning my column over to a fellow worker, J. Hillstrom, because of the importance of the current crisis in steel.—Felix Martin)

Recently, the Bethlehem Sheet & Tube plant in Youngstown, Ohio, began a permanent shutdown. Over 5,000 steel workers will be out of a job by the end of the year. Other companies besides Bethlehem, like U.S. Steel and Kaiser, have also laid off workers in Gary, Chicago, Johnstown, and Fontana, bringing the number of steel workers thrown out of work to 10,000 in the last month alone.

The U.S. Department of Labor cites a figure of 65,000 laid-off steel workers eligible for emergency financial aid. However, there is actually no way to know the total number of steel workers that have already been put out of work. So massive are the lay-offs and plant closings that whole communities are being affected.

The reason given by the steel industry for these newly-out-of-work thousands, who join the ranks of an already 10 million-strong unemployed army, is the loss of sales to steel mills in Japan and Europe. Major industries like auto have found it cheaper to purchase their steel from the more highly-automated plants in foreign countries. Consequently, the steel industry insists that it must take these drastic steps of lay-offs to at least level off its falling rate of profit.

The truth is that U.S. capitalism knows American

workers cannot compete with newly-automated plants in other countries. Corporate conglomerates use their newly-automated German and Japanese plants in competition against their older, less automated plants in the U.S. to justify the building of new, more automated factories here.

Carter just recommended that Congress vote in a tax subsidy of up to \$20 billion to corporations for capital investment. That the President makes such a move at this time clearly shows that the government means to foot the expense for the construction of these new plants. This means that workers are being told to pay additional taxes to create their own joblessness!

Moreover, everywhere that labor is "owned" by U.S. capital investments, workers will pay for this increased automation of production with increased unemployment, reduced real wages, and impossibly stifling work loads.

Once again workers of the world are being told they must compete against each other. This time the false god of competition is being lifted up as a solution for workers to save their livelihoods. It is time for workers in America—the seat from which capitalists manipulate this most vicious global game—to see that their enemy is at home, and not workers in other countries. It is time for workers to see that their solutions to their problems must begin where they spend most of their lives—the shops and factories of the world.

## FROM THE AUTO SHOPS

### Fleetwood

Detroit, Mich.—We voted again to authorize a strike at Fleetwood, but we still have no strike and no local agreement. The International has let it be known that the 10 workers fired after last year's walkout will never get back, so they have been sitting on any local agreement as long as re-hiring them is a local demand.

Rufus Coleman resigned as local president to take a job with the International in Region 1-E. He knew that nobody in their right mind in the plant would vote to re-elect him in June. In his last three months on the job, a year after all the jobs in the plant should have been settled, only two jobs were solved.

Neither the local nor the International have been doing anything about discrimination complaints. Workers have been filing grievances over serious intimidations, discrimination and browbeatings. Some foremen have been using racist curses and threats, and they are still on the job. If the union trades off these grievances in exchange for bringing back workers on the job, then the problem will continue to exist.

We need unity of the rank-and-file against corrupt management, against Labor Relations, and against the International, if we are going to force the company to listen. We have been without a local agreement for over a year, and the company would gladly keep talking for another two years. If we strike now, the company would get the message quickly.

—Second shift worker

### Lynch Road

Detroit, Mich.—At the Oct. 9 UAW Local 51 membership meeting, a resolution was passed in support of the seven workers fired at the Trenton Engine Plant. Despite efforts by conservative elements to crush the resolution, it was passed with overwhelming support.

In response to some of the executive board members' remarks that the wildcat strike wasn't "legal," one

worker responded, "If 135 degrees isn't legal, what the hell is?" The membership present strongly supported the workers' right to walk off the job.

The members of Local 51 (Lynch Road and Mound Road plants) were given a first-hand report on the Trenton Seven case by one of the fired workers, Roger Elkins. He said the Trenton Seven were found guilty of criminal contempt of court on Oct. 6 by Judge Feikens. One of the clients of the judge's law firm is Chrysler.

The verdict will be appealed, but the seven workers face a maximum of six months in jail and fines. They need our support.

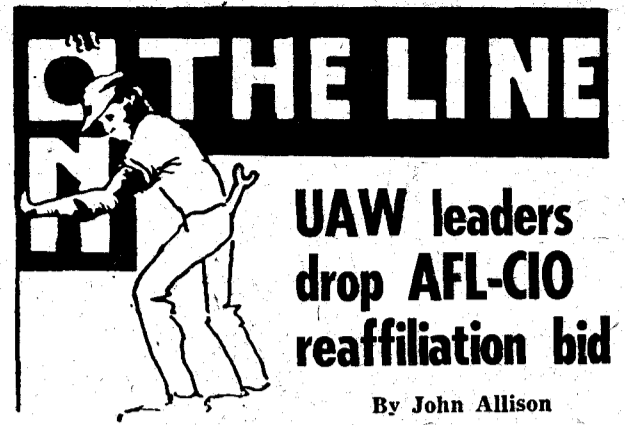
—"Diver Dan", Lynch Road worker

### Dodge Truck

Warren, Mich.—A brother from Trenton Engine Local 372 wanted to speak to the membership at the Local 140 October general membership meeting. He wanted to ask us to go on record supporting the seven workers at Trenton Engine who were fired for wildcatting over unsafe working conditions in July, and convicted in a kangaroo court of breaking an injunction against the wildcat.

Our new International service representative for Local 140, Willie Stoval, who was telling president Paul Cooper how to run the meeting, took the floor to say that the case of the Trenton Seven is in the federal courts, and the issue is not Local 140 business. Since the rank-and-file is always getting stabbed in the back right on the shop floor by our union reps, few members see any reason to come to the union meetings. So, Stoval and Cooper succeeded in preventing passage of a motion to let the brother from Trenton speak.

Cooper and Stoval are wrong if they think we aren't concerned with the things that have caused an authorized strike and a wildcat in one year at Trenton Engine—safety and health violations, no action on grievances. Maybe they don't want us to think we can strike too. —Main building worker



## UAW leaders drop AFL-CIO reaffiliation bid

By John Allison

It looks like the question of the merger of the UAW with the AFL-CIO will be put on the back burner for the time being. Even though UAW President Doug Fraser was in favor of affiliating, and the executive committee of the UAW voted 20 for and four against affiliation, it really didn't mean a thing.

On the face of it, you might think that if there's a vote of 20 for a motion and four against that the motion would carry and be put into effect. But this is just another example of union machine politics that exposes the way these birds operate.

According to the reports, the executive committee voted to support affiliation with the AFL-CIO, but most talked against submitting the proposal to a special delegate convention that would have to be called to approve reaffiliation. The talk was that the proposal would be voted down; that there was too much dissatisfaction among UAW members with the AFL-CIO.

The upshot of all that discussion was that Fraser figured it would be better to just let things go the way they are for the time being. Now it's true that the idea of reaffiliation would have been voted down by the delegates to a special convention.

Actually, they were afraid to send the merger question to the local unions for a vote because of past sins. The rank-and-file remembers the sweetheart relationship between the UAW and the Democratic Party. However, McGovern and Wallace split the union wide open in the 1972 campaign, and Blacks have never trusted either the AFL-CIO or the UAW since that election. And white auto workers don't like the way the AFL-CIO supports Republicans who vote all too often against labor when they get in office, even though they sound good to Meany and others in the leadership of the AFL-CIO before they're elected.

But there's another point too, and that has to do with UAW Secretary-Treasurer Emil Mazey and Vice President Irving Bluestone. They wield a great deal of power, more than Fraser in fact, and they were also opposed to reaffiliation. So the combination of the rank-and-file opposition, plus the influence of Mazey and Bluestone, put off reaffiliation with the AFL-CIO for the time being. But it'll come up again. The only question is how long it will be before Fraser thinks he'll be able to carry it.

## 'Quality time' at Uniroyal

Detroit, Mich.—This is the worst time of year for harassment at Uniroyal. In the summer it's "let the good times roll" — they'll take just about any tire you build, no matter what's wrong with it.

Last summer my machine was out of order and started turning out defective tires. I told the supervisor and he just said "go on building until the repairmen get here — we need the tires!"

Now that the demand is down, all of a sudden it's "quality time." They criticize every little wrinkle when it isn't even a defect, and tell you to do one thing one day and another thing the next.

In a lot of departments they are also trying to make workers take short coffee and lunch breaks and stay on their machines until 10 minutes before punch-out. When you're on piecework, you like to finish a little bit early, being pushed beyond the limit anyway. What's happened, though, is that most people are just slowing down, and the company is losing production.

I'm wondering if the tires they are getting now are the ones they use to get contracts, and use on their own vehicles. I know they're stockpiling a lot and that could be a sign that lay-offs are coming up.

—Tire builder

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## EDITORIAL

# East Europe Continues the Hungarian Revolution

The 21st anniversary of the great Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was fittingly marked this year when over 1,000 East Berlin youth disrupted the East German government's 28th anniversary celebration on Oct. 7 with chants of "Russians out!" and "End the police state!" Speakers, who had just been proclaiming "harmony" within East Germany and the "closest friendship" between East Germany and Russia, watched riot police break up the demonstration, which ended with three dead, 200 wounded, and 700 detained overnight.

Nothing more proves the persistence and continuity of the East European Revolt for over two full decades. It was in East Germany that workers first exploded the myth of the invincibility of Russian totalitarianism, as they broke out into spontaneous mass strikes against speed-up on June 17, 1953. But it was in Hungary where the revolt was distinguished by its greater depth, its uncompromising stand, and the involvement of the entire population of workers, youth and women. Through Czechoslovakia 1968 and Poland 1970 to today's struggles, the movement has been ceaseless.

In the past month this deep revolt has taken different forms in each of the Russian satellites, and inside Russia itself. In Rumania, coal miners have been engaged in a massive strike, the first in some 30 years. In Czechoslovakia, where trials of three Charter 77 signers for "subversion" have just opened, activists responded by circulating new petitions for civil liberties. And from Russia come reports of organized resistance by Helsinki movement supporters even in the labor camps and mental hospitals in which they have been confined.

### PHILOSOPHY INTEGRAL TO REVOLT

While some leftists, like the Trotskyists, have been busy following Ukrainian dissident exile Leonid Plyushch around from meeting to meeting—bitterly denouncing him for terming Russia a state-capitalist society and insisting that he accept their program, the defense of the "degenerated workers' state"—West German reporters who viewed the East Berlin protest dared criticize the youth for being "only against," rather than "for" any-

thing.

The revolutionary philosophy so integral to the East European revolts, which they all refuse to face, is the return to the humanism of Marxism, and the creation of new forms of organization. That was the legacy left by the students and the workers from the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.

Our "In Memoriam: Spontaneity of Action and Organization of Thought," written on the 5th anniversary, before the permanence of the revolt had a chance to appear, is even more appropriate on this 21st anniversary:

"The Communist Party with more than 800,000 and the trade unions allegedly representing the working population just evaporated. In its place arose Workers' Councils, Revolutionary Committees of every sort—intellectuals, youth, the Army—all moving away from the Single Party State. Over night there sprung up 45 newspapers and 40 different parties, but the decisive force of revolution remained the Workers' Council. When 13 days of armed resistance was bloodily crushed by the might of Russian totalitarianism, the new form of workers' organizations, factory councils, called a general strike. It was the first time in history a general strike followed the collapse of the revolution . . .

"As Imre Nagy himself recognized—and it was this fact that brought him to the leadership of a revolution he did not desire: 'They want a People's Democracy where the working people are the masters of the country and of their own fate, where human beings are respected, and where social and political life is conducted in the spirit of humanism . . .'"

### WORKERS ARE THE BASE

The proletarian character of today's opposition is equally striking, especially when one looks at Poland 1976-77. Ever since the spontaneous July 1976 nation-

wide strikes and demonstrations forced the government to rescind its food price hikes, the workers, far from disbanding, have moved to expand and spread the organizations and newspapers they created in that struggle.

Recent Polish exiles report that opposition organizations today are so widespread that illegal communications networks are operating among workers in factories, mills and shipyards, linking workers in all sections of the country. The latest news is that shipyard workers in Gdansk, whose actions spearheaded the 1970 events, have again downed tools to demand the re-instatement of fired workers.

Polish workers today are living—and fighting—under the impact of Hungary 1956. What was accomplished by the workers, intellectuals and youth of that revolution was once and for all to free Marx's philosophy, which he called "humanism," from the vulgar perversions of the Russian state-capitalist ideologues. In doing so, they thrust a new banner of revolution before the eyes, not only of those suffering under Stalinism, but of the whole world.

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### WHO WILL EDUCATE THE EDUCATORS?

I was happy to see a small group of Black parents here demonstrating in front of Washington High School to protest Rev. Jesse Jackson's controversial "Push for Excellence" program. Our Board of Education, which just threw out the one liberal and replaced him with the most notorious anti-busing candidate, is so reactionary even the courts rejected their segregation plan. Into this body walks Rev. Jackson and in one day gets \$500,000 for his police-groceryman-church-neighbor-parent coercion of the children to "excel." The Board is crying about not having the money for busing, but lost no time giving half a million to Jackson out of their busing money. Everybody seems able to find a Black face for their reactionary work.

Activist  
Los Angeles

I used to think that, since the minorities were shortchanged on economic and political power, they accidentally also didn't get a good education. But I'm starting to think that maybe this is the way it's supposed to work, not just inefficiency. The students are future labor. So what you have is really public day care, nothing else. They are seen "just" as factory workers, and most of these factories are moving out of the city, anyway, so why waste money educating them?

Puerto Rican Intellectual  
Chicago

About 200 students successfully prevented the administration of York University here from meeting with representatives of the South African government by occupying an administration building. The South Africans apparently let the university off the hook by offering to cancel the meetings.

New Marxist-Humanist  
Toronto

Work is continuing on the "historical" films of ancient Iran—320 minutes of film (eight 40 minute segments) are in production. Dr. Herman King, head of the academic services, which oversees the Instructional Film and Multimedia Production Unit where the film work is being done, says the target date of the

film is April 1978. King holds to the belief that these films are "purely educational and not political."

The film footage on contemporary Iran will be sent to NRIT (National Iranian Radio and Television) with a request that MSU's name not be associated with it. In addition, finished prints of the ancient films, when they are completed, will go to Iran in accordance with the contract. Once there, the films will become another oppressive tool in the hands of the regime.

MSU Student  
E. Lansing

The Indians in Quebec who opposed the mandatory French language bill that Shainape Sheapwe wrote about last issue reminded me of the students in Soweto who protested learning Afrikaans because they want to learn a useful international language.

Observer  
Bay Area

I was very surprised to discover that my daughter's second-grade class in a Detroit public school is also a third-grade class. Due to a drop in enrollment two grades were put together under one teacher, who spends half her time with each "grade." It's a purely administrative decision having nothing to do with the needs of the children. We find we must always fight for every gain: smaller classes, more subjects like art and music, books free of racism and sexism. We should be working out a revolution to bring a new human society. That's the only way we will develop a real education for ourselves and with our children.

Marxist-Humanist  
Detroit

### CONCENTRATION CAMP

I attended a luncheon here in honor of Ms. Rose Toguri. She was given a Presidential pardon after having been accused of treason and incarcerated for a number of years. Almost all of the attendees were Japanese-Americans who were interned in the concentration camps in various parts of the U.S. during World War II. One woman shared with me an experience in camp which I would

like to pass on to you.

She was interned in a camp which was located in the Black section of Roher, Arkansas. The Blacks, who had often never seen Asians before, would come by the camp and start conversations through the barbed-wire fence. This eventually led to friendship and trust. Since meat and chicken were scarce in the camp, the Blacks were supplying the internees with these things. After a few transactions, one Black man said, "You have it made in there. What do you have to do to get into a place like that?"

It makes you stop and think about what freedom really means.

Japanese-American Feminist  
Chicago

### ACTION FOR CHILE

The Group of Relatives of Non-Recognized Prisoners has asked all concerned with the struggle of the Chilean people to support a project which deals concretely with some of the aftermath of the junta's kidnapping of thousands of men and women. They have established a Day Care Center with the goals of providing 1) education, food, and medical and psychological attention to the children of the disappeared and 2) jobs to the wives and mothers who are professionally qualified but unable to find work under the dictatorship. Eventually, they hope to offer care to the orphaned children of those murdered by the junta and to the children of the unemployed. Help can be channeled through: Ayuda Christiana Evangelica (Christian Evangelical Aid), Manuel Montt #460, Providencia, Santiago, Chile and marked for "Jardin Infantil Huenicito." Support can also go through any social or church group with contacts in Chile; it cannot go through any private sectors or the program will not be allowed to receive it. For further information contact:

Action for Women in Chile  
P.O. Box 530, Cathedral Station  
New York, NY 10025

# Reader

### BAKKE AND KENT

Bakke did better on test scores than 36 other white students who did gain admission into UCD Medical School. Yet, Bakke made no mention of this fact. The public believes that a white man has been the "victim" of "reverse discrimination." Racism has always reared its head triumphantly by covering up the truth. Now President Carter and Calif. Gov. Brown have come out and said that they're opposed to "quota systems." They are really suggesting we go back to tokenism, not toward equal opportunity.

Chicano Worker  
California

Many of the things we have discussed in terms of Kent State are showing up in the Bakke case, which touches on labor, women, youth, Black and minorities, but nobody is showing how all the forces of revolution are related to the struggles involved in this case. At a CCNY meeting today, several speakers left out women entirely, although the turnout of 100, mostly Black students, is a good sign.

N&L Youth Member  
New York

There are many voices and struggles coming together at Kent State. They bring out Black and white, history and present, war and revolution. I was 12 years old and not active when the massacre occurred there in 1970, but when the gym issue arose I went back to the bound volume of N&L and read about it, and traveled to Ohio with other Youth Committee members to take part in the demonstration of 3000. We had loved their T-shirts ("Remember the Spirit of Kent and Jackson State") so much that we were surprised that the Black United Students and the May 4th Coalition had never had a joint meeting there. I think it says a lot about Marxist-Humanism that this first happened right here in Detroit, 200 miles away, at our meeting at Wayne State U.

WSU-N&L Youth Member  
Detroit

## TWO WORLDS

by Raya Dunayevskaya  
Author of PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION  
and Marxism and Freedom

*"The philosophy of PRAXIS is consciousness full of contradictions in which the philosopher himself, understood both individually and as an entire social group, not merely grasps the contradictions, but posits himself as an element of the contradictions and elevates this element to a principle of knowledge and therefore of action."—A. Gramsci, "Problems of Marxism" in PRISON NOTEBOOKS*

Fifty-one years ago this month, on Nov. 8, 1926, Antonio Gramsci, revolutionary leader of the Turin Factory Councils, a founder of the Communist Party of Italy, a Marxist theoretician-activist, was arrested by Mussolini's police. When, after nearly a year of incarceration, Gramsci was brought to face fascist courts, the Prosecutor, demanding condemnation of Gramsci, mouthed Mussolini's injunction: "We must prevent this brain from functioning for 20 years!"

It meant a life sentence for the frail revolutionary. Indeed, he died before the 20-year sentence had expired. But fascism could not stop the brain from functioning. The 11 years of brutal fascist imprisonment had produced profound philosophic-political writings that retain relevance for our day. Naturally that was not the lived revolutionary life any Marxist would have wished, much less one who had experienced the *Biennio Rosso* (the Two Red Years, 1918-1920) of the General Strike, the Factory Councils, the near-revolution that turned into the failed revolution. But it was the period that laid the ground for working out anew the integrality of philosophy and revolution as Gramsci thought through the experiences of the *Biennio Rosso* as well as its philosophy, history as well as triangular relationship of class, factory councils, party. That is to say, spontaneity

and organization, to Gramsci, could no more be narrowed to an elitist party ordering the masses around than spontaneous actions could be squeezed dry of the creative thought that produced the action of masses in motion.

### FACTORY COUNCILS IN ITALY

Rather than either only a vanguard party to lead, or philosophy sans revolution, what had to be worked out was the inseparability of philosophy and revolution. So solidly grounded in philosophy was Gramsci's concept of the Russian Revolution and the soviets which brought the Bolsheviks to power that he hailed them as opening a "new stage of humanity." And when he wrote of the Factory Councils in Italy as "the model of the proletarian state," he knew that, far from arising from his head, it was the Fiat factory workers who had spontaneously formed them during the summer of 1919; that universalism and the anti-state would concretize *State and Revolution*: "The Russian Revolution is the triumph of freedom; its organization is based on spontaneity, not on the dictates of a 'hero' . . ." (1)

Consider, then, the irony that among Gramsci's detractors are not only state-capitalists in power calling themselves Communists, as in Russia, or those who hunger for state power in the existing parliamentary bourgeois states (with or without a King, be it Spain or Italy or France) who are busy attempting to make that great revolutionary Gramsci sound like a Euro-

(1) Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings (1910-1920)* edited by Quintin Hoare, translated by John Mathews, London, 1977, p. 54.

(2) This is especially ludicrous in view of Gramsci's singling out for criticism class collaborationism as well as the then existing Socialist Party. See *Selections from the Political Writings, 1910-1920*, London, 1977, p. 43: "The political decadence which class collaboration brings is due to the spasmodic expansion of a bourgeois party which is not satisfied with merely clinging to the state, but also makes use of the party which is antagonistic to the state . . ."

communist class-collaborationist (2). No, the detractors also include those who fight Eurocommunism and try to restore Gramsci as the revolutionary he was, like the Trotskyists (all varieties), as well as some from the New Left. The latter try to intellectualize Gramsci as if he, as philosopher who had a certain concept of the function of intellectuals, could possibly have assigned a revolutionary role to intellectuals who kept themselves apart from the proletariat, from masses in motion. It all

(Continued on page 6)

### WHO WE ARE

*News & Letters* was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcats against Automation and the Montgomery, Ala. Bus Boycott against segregation —activities which signalled new movements from practice, which were themselves a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices from below could be heard, and the unity of worker and intellectual, philosophy and revolution, could be worked out for our age. A Black production worker, Charles Denby, is the editor.

The paper is the monthly publication of *News and Letters Committees*, an organization of Marxist-Humanists that stands for the abolition of capitalism, whether in its private form as in the U.S., or in its state form calling itself Communist, as in Russia and China. The National Chairwoman, Raya Dunayevskaya, is the author of *Philosophy and Revolution and Marxism and Freedom* which spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism for our age internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene. In opposing this capitalistic, exploitative, racist, sexist society, we participate in all freedom struggles and do not separate the mass activities of workers, Blacks, women and youth from the activity of thinking. We invite you to join with us both in the freedom struggles and in working out a theory of liberation for our age.

## Views

### LABOR: THREE SETBACKS

I went out to Zenith several different days to talk to the workers about the coming lay-offs. The papers and TV have been playing up the angle of "foreign devils" undercutting U.S. labor, but this wasn't their concern. In fact, several workers commented on it as a diversionary tactic. Most of them were angry about conditions in the plant; the union won't fight speedups; they heard about the layoffs on TV and that's all they were told. They waited a year or more for this job and what now?

Committee Member  
Chicago

I saw that the labor-supported minimum wage bill now before Congress has an amendment to allow children as young as ten to work as farm laborers — but only if the Secretary of Labor established that there were not enough workers 12 or older available for work. If Congress can roll the clock back in child labor from the meager gains that have been won, what gains will be taken away in the next bill?

Amazed  
Detroit

The demise of "Newsroom," Channel 9, KQED public Broadcasting System local news program, was mourned last week by over 150 former and present employees, who gathered to say goodbye to the distinguished veteran and young reporters and staff members who were dismissed. This award-winning program, the only one of its kind, for nine years was the bastion of honest reporting, effectively portraying the struggles of the United Farm Workers, students, prisoners, strikers and all local important events.

The long bitter strike by KQED workers, three years ago, was culminated by a negotiated agreement, and Bill Osterhaus, the Westinghouse anti-union, pro-olevision manager, has finally won out. "Newsroom" is being replaced with a program called, "A closer look" — which

will deal with "selected" events. Using the pretext that this is a "new" program, Osterhaus claims it is not necessary to honor the union contract and pay penalty dismissal fees to those fired outside of established seniority, while he is, at the same time, keeping some of the "Newsroom" employees who have less seniority. Strike talk is rampant among the remaining employees.

Supporter  
Bay Area

### TWO STRIKES WON

The Social Credit Party is in power here. It is quite anti-labor. The B.C. employees have been working for some time without a contract. The Government would not bargain seriously. The employees finally threatened to strike. Instead of calling out all workers they decided to strike only the Government owned liquor stores.

The Government countered by threatening a general lock-out. It could never have worked and would have meant the fall of the Government. There were lines a block long at all the liquor stores. Four days of threat and the overnment settled and the employees got their contract.

New Reader  
British Columbia

Community Health and Social Services (CHASS), funded by the city, state and donations, has served the Latino community of southwest Detroit for eight years. The 21 workers employed directly by CHASS won AFSCME representation last year, but 14 months of fruitless negotiations led them to reach out to their clients for support. The CHASS workers never actually went on strike, the struggle's high point being incredibly vocal lunch-hour picket lines where they were joined by other community people, including sick or elderly who had just received treatment. Sept. 13, two weeks after this solidarity action began, a contract guaranteeing right to strike, liberal health and vacation benefits, and a pension plan was signed.

Workers I spoke to the day after the contract was won pointed out that it is too early to tell if the working conditions will improve. Massive case loads, invasion of the workers' privacy, and the way the Board of Directors squanders money on expense accounts may continue, in which case they will take action again.

CHASS Supporter  
Detroit

### WOMEN'S LIBERATION

A friend who is a veteran of the Spanish Civil War recently spent three weeks back in Spain, and said the political climate is extremely hopeful. Book shops are open on every corner and although only the Communists continued to work underground, now everyone from socialists to anarchists is holding open meetings. None think the revolution is here, but even this level of democracy smells good after so long.

What disturbed her was the extremely backward position of the women. At all the meetings she attended she saw women come in only to clean the tables — and she knows many of these women are party members, who fought and served prison terms.

Correspondent  
Los Angeles

At the meeting to assess the rally of the "Coalition to Defend Reproductive Rights," the organizers were worried because the women most affected by abortion and sterilization setbacks, the poor and minority women, weren't there. What it meant to us was that you can't just ask for women's bodies to be at a rally. Why weren't they asked to be on the committee to plan the activities?

WL-N&L Member  
Bay Area

I recently watched a special program jointly produced by English and Russian authorities on the Russian Revolution. I was not at all surprised that they made no mention of the women textile workers who sparked the February revolution by striking in celebration of International Women's Day. The only mention of women at all were two deliberate references with pictures of the brigade of women soldiers who "remained loyal to the czar to the end."

In the photographs of people wanted by the secret police and actual films of street demonstrations that were shown, the number of women was astounding. This treatment of history by Russian authorities says more to me about their concern for women's liberation than the continual reference to the "fact" that 97 percent of doctors in "socialist" Russia are women

Suzanne Casey  
WL N&L, Detroit

Reading *Sexism, Politics and Revolution* makes you see how much worse state capitalism is when it calls itself socialist. Who else could hold such awful meetings as what Jade had to go through? The Chinese hold up Ting Ling's "Thoughts on the 8th of March" as being counter-revolutionary. Yet that was just what the Three Marias were raising that preceded the toppling of fascism in Portugal. You can see how revolutionary the women's dimension is when you see that the rulers don't want us to talk about our own lives.

Feminist  
Chicago

### REVISING MARX

Did you see the full page picture of Marx in the *New York Times*? In their own way, the bourgeoisie seems to understand the centrality of theory. A recent lead editorial in the NYT said the concurrent high inflation and unemployment reflect a "bankruptcy of modern theory," resulting in an "intellectual vacuum" that "has pushed economic policy to the right by default." Of course it's the new revolts that have caused their re-evaluation, but that's the last place they would look for the new in theory to "break out of their theoretical paralysis."

Marxist Humanist  
Chicago

I see the Chinese Communists have now officially rewritten Marx's great "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" to read "to each according to his work." Just as in private capitalism, however, I'm sure that those who work the hardest are those who get the least.

Reader  
New York

## BLACK-RED VIEW

by John Alan

When the Bakke decision was handed down by the California Supreme Court, only a few could predict the vast amount of racism that this legal opinion would dredge from the dark corners of this country.

Who would have guessed that "liberal" organizations would find themselves in the same corner with conservative organizations like Young Americans for Freedom, and then have this anomaly crowned by the support of American Nazis for the Bakke decision? This is not a vulgar attempt to paint every pro-Bakke organization with the brush of Nazism, but to show how widespread racism is in this country.

The most casual examination of the hue and cry about "reverse racism" would reveal it as a clumsy attempt to ignore hundreds of years of Black slavery, and more than a hundred years of continuous racism in the U. S. Not only does this concept attempt to falsify history; it is an attempt to convey the equally false idea that Black people in this country have real equality with white people. This simply isn't true.

### BLACKS URGED TO IGNORE BAKKE

Nevertheless, the cry about "reverse racism," quotas, etc., has produced some strange thinking in the minds of public Black personalities. Bayard Rustin warns that Black people are making a mistake by stressing the Bakke case, because they will lose "natural allies" who could help them on the "economic front."

Huey P. Newton, Chairman of the Black Panther Party, wrote to William Coblentz, Chairman of the Board of Regents of the University of California, to suggest that the whole idea of quotas is "false" and "divisive" because it does not take into consideration disadvantaged white people. He urges that other means than race must be used to get Blacks into graduate schools.

At this moment in history, when the tides of racism are rising everywhere, to ignore the Bakke case and to ignore race is dangerous. Understanding that the objective situation in the country is still very racist, these public figures are saying that a little bit of disguised racism is O.K.

In doing so, they blindly, persistently fail to realize that U.S. capitalism is in a state of internal crisis that keeps churning racism to the surface. All you have to do to realize this, is to look at the rate of Black unemployment, at the raw racism in Chicago, and at the most recent New York City black-out.

The real danger is outright aggressive racism—a racism that is so integral a part of U.S. capitalism that

## Bakke case: critical moment in civil rights history



—News & Letters Photo

Wide variety of organizations march in Oakland, Cal. to protest Bakke decision.

"liberal" organizations that once found themselves on the side of the Black minority are now supporting the inherently right-wing stance of the Bakke decision.

It is commonly understood that the majority members of the California Supreme Court wrote their Bakke decision for the purpose of getting the whole idea of affirmative action aired before the U.S. Supreme Court. The question is: Why at this time? Why didn't some Bakke come forward before this? Does this timing fit well with the present composition of the U.S. Supreme Court and the shift to the right in this country?

In the past, this Supreme Court has ruled against Blacks, women, and, most recently, against gays, by its refusal to review the ruling on the firing of a gay teacher in Tacoma, Washington.

We Marxist-Humanists oppose the Bakke decision because it is racist and a part of the attempt to wipe out 20 years of civil rights struggles. We urge all Black people and all minorities, all working class people, all women, all students to call for the reversal of the Bakke decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

But we have no illusions, because racism cannot be eradicated until the system of capitalism is eradicated. This can be done only through people who have become conscious of themselves as human beings, conscious of the system they are opposing, and, in struggle, conscious of the new society they want to achieve.

OAKLAND, Cal. — Over 3,000 people marched through a working-class neighborhood here on Oct. 8 to demand the overturn of the Bakke decision in the U.S. Supreme Court. The march was sponsored by the National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision and the Black American Law Students Association, who also sponsored demonstrations in Detroit and other cities.

Many different organizations took part in the day-long march and rally. There were youth groups from the Latino Mission district, Asian medical workers, gay health workers and schoolteachers, Native American activists, Black and Latino rank-and-file committees, and various trade unions and labor organizations, including Union W.A.G.E. and Women Organized for Employment.

The resurgence of racism was emphasized at the rally when ten uniformed Nazis, carrying placards reading "Bakke=White Power," tried to march through a group of Committee people. After several of the Nazis received bloody lips and noses, the cops moved in to protect them.

There are plans for continuing activity around the Bakke protest, including a national conference of civil rights groups in November.

NEW YORK, N.Y.—A meeting I recently attended on the Bakke case called by the Black Studies Department of City College indicates that the threat of a renewed assault on Black and minority enrollment at the City University is as serious as ever.

One Black student said, "The situation is more than Allan Bakke himself. The face of the student body has changed at this campus in the past few years. By throwing out what they call quotas, what will we have left?"

Several other students said what interested them wasn't what the Supreme Court did about Bakke, but rather why the colleges should choose this moment to challenge affirmative action.

In the past two years, for instance, the Black student population at the City University has declined by over 25 percent, while at the same time, minority unemployment in New York hit an all time high. Many feel that because the city no longer can offer the pretense of fiscal crisis to reduce minority enrollment, it will use the excuse of "avoiding quotas" instead.

Implicit in the Bakke case, but which I haven't heard many discuss, is the need to fight it by confronting this racist backlash as a whole, just as the "looters" who took to the streets during New York's summer blackout confronted the economic crisis head on.

## TWO WORLDS

(Continued from Page 5)

adds up to fear, on the one hand of philosophy and on the other of proletarian revolution, thus reducing the proletariat to robot. It therefore is essential, though in very abbreviated form, to restore the wholeness of Gramsci's "philosophy of praxis." Indeed, the very phrase itself shows how inseparable are thought from action, theory from practice, philosophy from revolution.

By no stretch of the imagination can one excuse moving away from the central core of Gramsci-ism—"philosophy of praxis"—on the ground that since the fascist prison guards were looking over his shoulder, and since many a time when Gramsci would have used the word, revolution, he had to use the phrase "philosophy of praxis," both for Marx and for revolution, as if that were not his own world view. (3)

Quite the contrary. First and foremost, the substance of his *Prison Notebooks* is directly on philosophy. Far from adhering to a "Crocean idealist" analysis of Hegel, his most profound and violent attack is precisely on that type of "historicism": "This (Croce's — rd) historiography is a degenerated and mutilated Hegelianism because his fundamental concern is the panicky fear of Jacobin movements of every active intervention of the great popular masses as historically progressive factors." (4)

### SPONTANEITY

To Gramsci, "history" was always masses in motion shaping history. So much so, that it is not only the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois interpretations he attacked, but also Marxists, from Plekhanov to Bukharin, because their mechanical and scientific views had no conception of what Lenin called "the dialectic proper," whose central Marxian core was the proletariat as Subject transforming history. So solidly grounded in Hegelian-Marxian philosophy was Gramsci all his adult life, that his "purely" journalistic writings before he became a leader of the Communist Party of Italy — the early Gramsci of the *Biennio Rosso* period — were

(3) The French edition of the truncated version of Gramsci's writings is profoundly criticised by Attilio Baldan in "Gramsci as Historian of the 1930s". He gives both a more comprehensive view, though abbreviated, of the whole literature, as well as a critique of the French structuralist misinterpretation. It appears in *Telos*, Spring 1977, which includes other articles as well as reviews of the available translations in English.

(4) Selections from the *Prison Notebooks*, London, N.Y., 1971, pp. 404-5.

## Gramsci's 'philosophy of praxis'

permeated with the dialectic of thought as well as of liberation. That is first and foremost and is not at all something forced upon him by prison life which kept him from activism. In truth, the few times Gramsci created ways to send out uncensored messages, or was able to talk in person to visitors, there never was any separation between philosophy and revolution.

Indeed, this is what gave birth to such designations as "insurrectionist" and "spontaneist" in addition to attempting a forced identity between Gramsci's concept of "Council Communism" and the anarcho-syndicalist concept. It is this which led the Stalinist-Communist leader, Togliatti, not to publish Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* for ten long years, and then to truncate them in the post-war years as the Communists became part of the bourgeois government and capitulated to the Catholic Church monopoly of education. Now that the writings are being published as written, it has no more stopped the present-day Communists from perverting this revolutionary's "philosophy of praxis" than did the truncated version which had likewise fooled no-one. Eurocommunist reformism just reflects the hunger Communists have for state power, displayed abroad as in Russia when it was transformed from the early workers' state into its present opposite, a state-capitalist society.

What is of the essence for our age, which has witnessed more aborted revolutions than any, is Gramsci's revolutionary legacy which so integrated philosophy as to create ground for working out a new, urgent need for integrality of philosophy and revolution for our age. For this it is necessary to turn to the most fundamental of all of Gramsci's views — what he called "absolute historicism," "absolute humanism."

### ABSOLUTE HISTORICISM, ABSOLUTE HUMANISM

Nothing so scares economists, even when they are Marxists, as the word "absolute," as if it really could mean only God or something equally mystical they attribute to Hegel. Because of this, even when they wish to restore to Gramsci his revolutionary stature, the greatest part of the time is spent endlessly revealing the Stalinist distortions, while they themselves so drain philosophy out of Marxian economic categories as to turn Marx himself into an "economist." In a word, what bothers them most in Gramsci is "lack" of economics. (5) It must have been just such vulgar materialism

(5) See Chris Harman's two-part spread in *International Socialism* (#99), which, though it tells much that is available against Eurocommunist distortions, ends with

that Gramsci had in mind when he wrote:

"It has been forgotten that in the case of a very common expression (historical materialism) one should put the accent on the first term — 'historical' — and not on the second which is of metaphysical origin. The philosophy of praxis is absolute historicism, the absolute humanism of history. It is along this line that one must trace the thread of the new conception of the world." (6)

Gramsci hit out not only against Croce but also against Bukharin who kept stressing "objectivity," "science": "Objective always means humanly objective, what may correspond exactly to 'historically subjective', in other words, objective would mean 'universally subjective'... the Hegelian 'Idea' is resolved into the structure as much as into the superstructure and the whole method of conceiving philosophy has been 'historicised'..." (7)

On this, the fifty-first year since the arrest of Gramsci, with which the fascists thought they would "prevent this brain from functioning", let us return to the study of Gramsci's own writings, not just as "legacy" and not uncritically but as ground to build anew, both as integrality of philosophy and revolution, and to work out so new a relationship of theory to practice that the triangular relationship of class, spontaneity, organization can first come alive in a successful revolution.

an economist summation which totally disregards Gramsci's philosophic totality: "Although he provides a correct abstract account of the relation between economics and politics, Gramsci is alone among the great Marxists in not integrating a concrete economic dimension into his political writings. This is an arbitrariness..." To be that distant from Gramsci's working out the concept of totality is to be deserving of all Gramsci wrote against Bukharin's economist disregard of "the dialectic proper". See my analysis of other IS disdain for philosophy: "Tony Cliff reduces Lenin as Theoretician to an 'Uncanny Intuition'" in the forthcoming *News & Letters* joint British-U.S. publication, *Marx's CAPITAL, Today's Epigones, and the Global Crisis*, off the press, Jan. 1978. (6) *Prison Notebooks*, p. 465.

(7) Part of the *Prison Notebooks* were incorporated in *The Modern Prince and Other writings*, London, N.Y., 1957. It is from there that I quote here pp. 106-109. It is the central article for our purposes, which Gramsci called "Critical Notes on an Attempt at a Popular Presentation of Marxism by Bukharin," pp. 90-117.



by Jim Mills

I turn this column over to two freedom fighters from Kent State University in Ohio, whose talks at Wayne State University on Oct. 6 (see article, this page) are briefly excerpted below.—J.M.

**JETER PITTMAN, Black United Students:**

Eight years ago, KSU had approximately 600 Black students enrolled in classes. Today that population has increased three-fold. At first, the acceptance of Black students at this institution attracted little attention, and such feelings as it aroused were mainly of complacency and satisfaction. However, the Black student of the early '70s was aggressive, loud and boisterous, and rhetoric did not enter into his mind.

Finally, the university itself began to think heavily about the ultimate effect upon its own vitality and solidarity of this injection of Black consciousness. Now to understand this unity of thought by the university, one must understand the psychology of its few members, the Board of Trustees, in their respective social settings.

I call it the institutionalization of white privilege and prosperity, maintained through the subjugation and exploitation of the Black minority. Others call it apartheid.

With the addition of Brage Golding (new KSU president and major stockholder in Alco Steel), this unity of the power elite proves to us that it is not just a simple reflection of men and institutions, because they are inter-related.

Black students in white institutions cannot afford to lose any type of political consciousness. We must bring a new perspective to these institutions which will eradicate the stigmas that have plagued us since 1619, stigmas represented by lack of Black faculty and staff, the low retention rate of Black college students, and Blacks being used as economic commodities for federal monies to universities and receiving little financial aid. Our potential lies within our own willingness to be political.

**WORKER'S JOURNAL**

(Continued from page 1)

house. All this was just because I am Black and he is white. It's as open here as night and day: the prison officials will do all that they can to keep Black and white from reaching any type of understanding here behind the walls of this slave camp.

—Illinois Prisoner

**SINCE THE INCARCERATION** I have become politically aware toward our international conflict and our constant struggle for decolonization here in America. There are Third World people who have no employment, no homes or food or clothing. I am a poor Black currently locked up in the hole making 35¢ a day, five days a week, and trying to learn all he can about his people and other people's liberation movements and struggles. I would love you if you would be kind enough to send me *Philosophy and Revolution* and your pamphlets *Black, Brown and Red*, *Working Women For Freedom*, and *America's First Unfinished Revolution*.

—Pennsylvania Prisoner

**I CAN'T WAIT** to get into *Marxism and Freedom*. It looks really comprehensive, and I noticed in the Introduction that it deals with the Humanism that is integral to Marxism. I read Fromm's "Marx's Concept of Man" in the early '60s, and I remember being caught up in Fromm's explanation of Marx's thoughts, and especially in the concept of "alienation." I remember the sense of illumination I felt at the exposure to Marxist materialism. The worker experiences work in capitalist society as an activity that adds to his oppressed status. Labor in a true socialist society would be a creative activity. This is, as I see it, the philosophical core of Marxism.

—Oklahoma Prisoner

**I AM A PRISONER** (female) and I am writing you to ask you if you could send me the following books. Others will be able to share them. If I was to tell you all I have learned, seen and experienced here it would fill at least ten books; I wouldn't be able to find an envelope big enough to hold the information I could send you on these supposed-to-be rehabilitation concentration camps.

I feel I am a political prisoner and a revolutionary, an activist and a socialist. They will never have my mind, nor will they have my thoughts, womanhood, beliefs, rights of pride or dignity or how I feel about the people. I will fight this system and capitalism until the day I die.

—Ohio Prisoner

**THE SITUATION IN AFRICA** has affected me somewhat hard. The revolutionaries in Rhodesia are in the better position now, so why should they accept the conditions set up by a racist government which wants to keep control of the army and the police?

Revolution, one hopes, is us. "Freedom, freedom!" cries the caged. As brother Karl Marx said, "Freedom is so much the essence of man that even its opponents realize it. . . No man fights freedom; he fights at most the freedom of others."

—Illinois Prisoner

**Kent students speak at Wayne on common struggle**

**TODD McFARREN, May 4 Coalition:**

To be in control of the state and all its apparatus is like the Board of Trustees of a major university. It is to be in control of history. The proud history of people's struggle is at the same time a struggle to resurrect the true history of the revolutionary events of the past. KSU is but a chapter in the people's history, a very important chapter.

The struggle of this summer and fall around the gym issue is today fact that seeks a future. But new beginnings don't just happen. They are made by the political consciousness of its agents. This political consciousness must entail a commitment to action.

At times we failed to organize in such a way as to insure the best procedure for democratic decision-making. This is the blame put not only on individual members, but on certain vanguard groups I feel have overstepped their bounds to a certain degree within the coalition.

We failed to adequately analyze and tap into the level of political consciousness of students on our campus, to link our struggles to the concerns of union activities of campus workers, to properly deal with sexism in our own ranks, and to link our actions with the struggles of our Black brothers and sisters in Kent. But despite these flaws our struggle continues to grow.

Detroit readers

**Hear Raya Dunayevskaya speak on**

**"New Passions and New Forces"**

**WAYNE STATE U., DETROIT, MICH.**

Thursday, Nov. 17, 7:00 p.m.

Student Center Building, Room 350 (3rd floor)

Sponsored by WSU-N&L Youth Committee

**Memorial for Steve Biko**

Berkeley, Cal. — A memorial service for Steve Biko was held here on Oct. 5, sponsored by KARABO!—Committee of South Africans For Freedom. Despite the many organizations listed as support groups, only about 85 Black and white people attended.

Most of the speakers claimed Biko as "their own fallen comrade." A Pan-Africanist student who called for "guerilla action" said, "Carter is the same as John Vorster," and "let funerals come to both sides if terror be their weapon." A longshore member of the Liberation Support Committee said: "Soweto is an indication of what Biko stood for, and the greatest memorial to him would be to oppose apartheid and racism, here and everywhere in the world."

The featured speaker was Jeanne Hendrickse, a South African "Coloured" woman, who worked underground with Steve Biko for many years. She told how their group had decided years before that they would never go on a hunger strike if arrested, and there was no question that Biko was brutally murdered in prison.

Giving the history of SASO (South African Student Organization), which was formed to fill the void left by ANC (African National Congress), PAC (Pan-Africanist Congress) and NUSA (National Union of South Africa—which was mainly white, liberal and segregated), Jeanne Hendrickse quoted Biko as saying, "They thought they had a monopoly on thinking. Freedom is the ability to define oneself. Black consciousness makes Blacks see themselves as more complete. Racism is more than just skin color, it presupposes subjugation. Above all, we want a new Africa, with a human face."

**Nuclear power protest misses**

Detroit, Mich. — Around 100 people, mostly young white college students, participated in a march and rally here, organized by SECO (Safe Energy Coalition), on Oct. 15. The demonstration was called to oppose the construction by Detroit Edison of the Fermi 2 nuclear power plant in Monroe, Mich.

The issues the speakers discussed concerned the consequences of nuclear energy technology — unsafe waste disposal, the near-deadly core melt-down at Fermi 1 in 1966 which could have wiped out Detroit, and the high cost of nuclear energy.

But there wasn't an attempt to broaden SECO's focus by linking it to other issues — like the relationship of nuclear power hazards and ecology, to the factory environment's hazards — chemicals, fumes, noise, etc. — that Detroit workers live in each day.

I think this narrow focus is one reason the turnout was disappointing. Almost all the people I talked with (quite a few told me it was their first demonstration) were from campuses far from Detroit, or else from the suburbs. There were only a handful of Black people at the rally — which was in downtown Detroit.

But what was most disappointing — in fact, disgusting! — was a sexist attempt at humor by SECO. A man came on the speakers' platform dressed in a wig, false breasts, and a skirt, and proceeded to do an imitation of Nancy Dickerson's commercial pitch for Detroit Edison.

SECO better go back and reorganize its thinking. The answer to nuclear energy isn't solar energy, it's revolution.



—News & Letters Photo

**KSU students, Jeter Pittman (l.) and Todd McFarren, speak at WSU.**

Detroit, Mich. — Over 150 people came to hear students from Kent State University in Ohio, who spoke at Wayne State University here on Oct. 6 at a meeting co-sponsored by the WSU News and Letters Youth Committee and CADRE (Collective Against Discrimination and Racism in Education).

The campus meeting featured Todd McFarren, a member of the May 4 Coalition, and Jeter Pittman, a member of Black United Students. Both spoke about the struggles at Kent State — McFarren about the movement to stop the gym on Blanket Hill, and Pittman about B.U.S. efforts to end the racist attacks on Black students and faculty, and Black organizations.

Both Kent State students expressed the affinity of issues and struggles in Kent and Detroit by stating they had come here not just to gain new student support, but that by sharing their experiences, they could help us in our battles at WSU.

This universality of struggles was summed up by Jeter Pittman, who began the meeting by relating it to two other Black student freedom fighters — Mellaine Turner and Steve Biko. (For excerpts from Jeter's and Todd's talks, see "Youth Column," this page.)

We feel that this discussion will add a new dimension to the struggles we are beginning at WSU this year.

—WSU N&L Youth Committee

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## OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Peter Mallory and Ron Brokmeyer

# 50,000 in Bologna demonstrate against Italian Communist Party

In Bologna, Italian workers and youth conducted a three-day demonstration, from Sept. 23-25, against the Communist Party which controls the city government. The numbers of demonstrators grew from 10,000 on the first day, to 50,000 on the final day.

The workers and youth opposed the class collaboration of the Italian Communist Party with the Italian capitalist government of Giulio Andreotti. The Communists have been instrumental in keeping the Christian Democrats in power in Italy.

Bologna has been under local Communist rule for the past 30 years. It was the site of the anti-Communist demonstration because the Communist Party uses it as their showcase for how efficiently they are able to run things. Apparently the workers — who suffer from capitalist exploita-

tion under the Communist Party—and the youth—who suffer unemployment under the CP regime—think differently.

One million Italian youth, who feel themselves rejected by society, have graduated from their schools and universities and now find themselves among the two million unemployed, never having found even their first job. The head of the Italian Communist Party, Enrico Berlinguer, called the youth "plague carriers," but when he saw how many were coming to demonstrate in Bologna, he went back on earlier threats to restrict the demonstrators, and decided to "open up the city" to them. The people of Bologna welcomed the demonstrators by providing low-cost meals, and universities opened their dormitories.

What really plagues the Eurocommunists, who

are hungering for power in Italy, is that the central idea among the new leftists is autonomy, or independence from all political parties. The youth, known as "the marginals," include in their ranks feminists, gay activists and environmentalists, who used to feel that the CP was their organ for housing, jobs and justice. "It no longer plays that role," one spokesperson for the demonstrators commented. "There is a need for a new communism that the party can no longer provide."

The demonstrators' activities were something that American workers and youth could easily recognize. They travelled from all over Italy, slept in sleeping bags, carried guitars, sang revolutionary songs, put on street plays, called themselves "urban Indians," and disdaining the old red flag of state-capitalism, waved the yellow flag—symbol of dissent and alienation.

## Japan

From feminists in Tokyo, Japan, we received a letter excerpted below, which they sent to the NY Times, critical of an article which was widely reprinted, equating the loss of the "Women's Party" in recent elections to the death of the Japanese women's liberation movement.

Letter to the Editor, NY Times

Your reporter's claim that just because one group, Chupiren, has dissolved and its leader, Enoki Misako, has retired, the women's liberation movement itself has folded is an unwarranted exaggeration.

Contrary to your correspondent's report, the Japanese women's liberation movement was not founded by Enoki in 1972; the first reports about the current Japanese women's movement, founded by Tanaka Mitsu, appeared in the prestigious Asahi Shimbun and other newspapers as early as 1970. Enoki founded her own group two years later.

Last year, when the publicity given to Enoki's alimony demonstrations started to peter out, she founded a religious sect, based on matriarchy and the superiority of women. It did not seem to catch on, so she founded the Japan Women's Party.

Would a really serious feminist make such a defeatist promise to her husband to abandon the movement if her party lost the election when everyone knew the party had no chance the first time around? Moreover, Chupiren was folded arbitrarily by its leaders despite the fervent protests of many of its members.

Other active feminist groups may not be so flamboyant, but they have been steadily increasing in numbers. Recently, publicity has been given to women's actions to abolish sexist TV commercials and to the establishment of a refuge for battered wives. The first Women's Liberation Center, founded in 1972, has contacts all over Japan and in various foreign countries. The Japanese women's liberation movement may not be as large as the American; but with a little research, your reporter perhaps would not have made the ludicrous assertion that the Japanese women's liberation movement has disappeared into dust.

## China

The news that Chinese workers will get a pay raise for the first time since 1959 has been released by China's new bosses. Mao always opposed such pay increases as "capitalist incentives." Factory workers in China receive 40 to 110 yuan (equal to \$22 to \$61) per month. The reported 15 percent raise will amount to \$3.30 a month.

At the same time, details were released of the violence and struggles that took place in Hangchow. The city was closed to foreign visitors during 1974, 1975 and 1976, when public services came to a halt, factories were closed and food was not delivered. The new regime blames the disruption on the political struggles of the "gang of four," but economic discontent would be closer to the truth.

Workers in American factories should take up a collection to send their local Maoists on a one way trip to Maoist heaven to see it themselves.

## Hugo Blanco

Hugo Blanco, the great Peruvian revolutionary, finally won with international support his two-year fight to obtain a U.S. visa, and is currently on a speaking tour in this country. He recently came to Detroit, and although he primarily spoke about U.S. imperialism and political repression in Latin America, the most exciting part of the evening was when Blanco spoke about his own experiences in the great Indian peasant movements in Peru.

Blanco said that today's peasant movements—primarily struggles for land—have less of a national character than the revolts of the past. But the Indians, especially in the cities, do have a clear sense of their national power. Blanco said it was truly moving for him to see, in Cuzco—where so many of the landowners live—mass demonstrations of peasants, who conducted the rallies and spoke to each other in Quechua. Up to that point, it was considered shameful to speak in Quechua, and many bi-lingual people would say they didn't know Quechua in order to raise their social status.

Blanco said that at present, while many Indians took part in popular demonstrations against the government last June and July, there is not a large, independent peasant movement as he had described it in the past. But the peasants have been active throughout the southern part of Peru, and there have been new acts of revolt. In some places, they have barricaded roads and torn up airstrips to protect new land seizures by keeping federal troops from coming in.

# Black consciousness: Steve Biko speaks for himself

(Continued from page 1)

the third world on the part of American capitalism, I at the same time have no illusions about Russia. It is as imperialistic as America. This is evident in its internal history as well as in the role it plays in countries like Angola. But the Russians have a less dirty name; in the eyes of the third world, they have a clean slate. Because of this, they have had a better start in the power game. Their policy, seems to be acceptable to revolutionary groups . . . Here we are probably faced with the greatest problem in the third world today. We are divided because some of us think that Russian imperialism can be accepted as purely an interim phase while others — like myself — doubt whether Russia is really interested in the liberation of the black peoples.

**THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS** movement does not want to accept the dilemma of capitalism versus communism. It will opt for a socialist solution that is an authentic expression of black communalism. In the present stage of our struggle it is not easy to present details of this alternative. But it is a recognition of the fact that a change in the color of the occupier does not necessarily change the system. In our search for a just system we know that the debate about economic policy cannot be pure, completely separate from existing systems. In our writings we at times speak of collective enterprises because we reject the individualistic and capitalistic type of enterprises. But we are not taking over the Russian models.

(From a statement to Sen. Dick Clark of Iowa last December.)

**THESE ARE CRUCIAL** years in the history of Azania (South Africa). The winds of liberation which have been sweeping down the face of Africa have reached our very borders. There is no more doubt about the inevitability of change — the only questions now remaining are how and when.

We rely not only on our own strength but also on the belief that the rest of the world views the African discrimination against, oppression and blatant exploitation of, the Black majority by a minority as an unforgivable sin that cannot be pardoned by civilized societies.

While many words and statements to this effect have been made by politicians in America, very little by way of constructive action has been taken to apply concerted pressure on the minority white South African regime.

Heavy investments in the South African economy, bilateral trade with South Africa, cultural exchanges in the fields of sport and music and of late joint political ventures like the Vorster-Kissinger exercises are amongst the sins of which America is accused.

The new American Administration must, however, take to account that no situation remains static forever. Through their political intransigence and racial bigotry, the South African white minority regime has increased the level of resentment amongst Blacks to a point where it now seems that the people are prepared to use any means to attain their aspirations.

(From an article by Biko on "Black Consciousness.")

**THE CALL FOR** Black consciousness is the most positive call to come from any group in the Black world for a long time. It is more than just a reactionary rejection of Whites by Blacks. The quintessence of it is the realization by the Blacks that, in order to feature well in this game of power politics, they have to use the concept of group power and to build a strong foundation for this. Being an historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group, they have the strongest foundation from which to operate. The philosophy of Black consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination by the Blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self.

At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realization by the Blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the White man, then there will be nothing the oppressor can do that will really scare the powerful masters. Hence thinking along lines of Black consciousness makes the Black man see himself as a being, entire in himself, and not as an ex-

tension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine . . .

**IT IS OFTEN CLAIMED** that the advocates of Black consciousness are hemming themselves into a closed world, choosing to weep on each other's shoulders and thereby cutting out useful dialogue with the rest of the world. Yet I feel that the Black people of the world, in choosing to reject the legacy of colonialism and White domination and to build around themselves their own values, standards and outlook to life, have at last established a solid base for meaningful cooperation amongst themselves in the larger battle of the Third World against the rich nations.

As Fanon puts it, "the consciousness of the self is not the closing of a door to communication . . . National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension."

**WE HAVE IN US** the will to live through these trying times; over the years we have attained moral superiority over the White man; we shall watch as Time destroys his paper castles and know that all these little pranks were but frantic attempts of frightened little people to convince each other that they can control the minds and bodies of indigenous peoples of Africa indefinitely.

## AN APPEAL FOR HELP

News & Letters has been a forum for the voices of revolt, speaking for themselves, ever since its birth. We want to expand that forum to meet the ever-growing crisis of time running out. We want to print a new pamphlet to be called "Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought". But we cannot continue without your help. If you have already contributed to our Appeal, we thank you. If you have not, please, mail your contribution today to:

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