

# Letters

## Would have made a difference

Editor:

I have just read your latest issue (ITT, Nov. 30) and would like to compliment you on the fine articles you have written about the labor movement in this country.

I have been a campaigner for Ed Sadowski here in New Jersey and can say from experience that if we had more publications like the one you produce it would have made a big difference in the outcome of the Steelworkers election.

I have been with Local 6301 for over 17 years and it would interest me very much to see more articles printed on what's happening in Steel, especially about the hidden language that goes into our contract.

—Bill Groehrer  
Kearny, N.J.

## Woozy

Editor:

I'm writing to share a little something I composed in the bathtub (There's no shower, for those who think baths are bourgeois). It's on the on-going Naison-Marcuse-Cousy controversy, and is written in that most subtle of poetic forms, the limerick:

*As Mark Naison once asked on a  
Tuesdee  
Infant son now you can't be too choosy  
Is it Herbert you're after  
Or the shouts from the rafter  
Oh boy Pop I just wanna be Cousy.*

—Danny Carter  
Stuttgart, Ark.

## Proliferating ACORN

Editor:

In his article on CAP in Chicago (ITT, Nov. 30) David Moberg identifies ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) as being from the Great Plains. This is news to us.

ACORN currently has offices in Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Colorado. We can be defined by our country, the United States, and by our constituency, low-and-moderate income families (currently 10,000 member families), but not by region.

—Joshua Miller  
Little Rock, Ark.

## Houston

Editor:

The Houston International Women's Year Convention was exciting; I was very disappointed ITT had no coverage that week. It was quite an experience to be in the hall with thousands of women who were weeping, laughing, clapping and singing when the torch was carried in. I'm not so naive not to think that some of the speeches were sugar pills (some hard to swallow), but nonetheless all those women were there, together for the first time in a long time.

I met many interesting women, a revolutionary from South America, a "club woman" from the Midwest, students from all over—and it was such a good feeling. Here we were, walking down the streets of Houston, talking and talking—everywhere we went, conversations.

Several persons I talked to expressed interest in ITT. Betty and Ben Spock spoke favorably of the paper when I talked to them briefly in the convention hall.

—Penny Tremain  
Pittsburg, Kan.

## Chickenshits are in all lines of work

Editor:

I'll be honest with you, I never did have that much respect for the roundtable of chumps you call columnists, but the slandering of Schmidt as a "big time terrorist" (as compared to "small timers" such as the assholes of the R.A.F.) by Barbara Ehrenreich (ITT, Dec. 6) hits a new low.

Neither she nor I know if these murderers were themselves murdered. (I doubt it.) Ehrenreich can't believe an intelligent person would even find it plausible that weapons could be smuggled into a maximum-security prison. All the fancy-dan electronic doodads in the world depend on real live people to maintain and operate them (i.e. guards). Maybe she has more confidence in guards than I do. (I am a guard. In fact I'm writing this from the guard shack now, when I should be out freezing my butt off.)

But know this: there are at least as many chickenshits in this line of work as in any other. I find the government story plausible. "The" left shouldn't automatically jump on the anti-government side. However, if it turns out that the guards were at fault, you will have my apology (as unlikely as it would be onerous).

—Jerome Cusimano  
Justice, Ill.

## No double standards, please

Editor:

Hans Koning's item on "Human Rights," etc. (ITT, Nov. 23), manages, within a few paragraphs, to combine most of the traditional hackneyed excuses for oppression in the communist world (substitute any label you prefer).

1. Only Intellectual Elites Care About Freedom. Tell that to the different groups of rebellious workers, from East Berlin in 1953 to Poland a short time ago.

2. Anyway, Look At All The Material Gains. Square that with the fact that Russia can send up all kinds of satellites but has to scrounge its wheat from the U.S. and Canada, that China can explode atomic bombs but much of its agriculture still depends on plowing by human power (yes, not even oxen or horses).

3. Look At What The U.S. Has Been Doing Everywhere. Let me remind Koning that he probably did not go for that kind of argument when made by the other side, when Cold War suppressions were legitimized by references to Russian slave labor camps.

4. They Must Worry Constantly About What Else The U.S. Has Up Its Sleeve. Again, remember how the fear that the "Communists were out to destroy America" was utilized as a sufficient explanation for those liberals who reluctantly accepted the 1950s antics.

5. Worst of all, a combination of: You Can't Make An Omelet Without Breaking Eggs, and They Are Not Quite Ready For Freedom. This is what the reference to the need for "discipline" and the impossibility of achieving socialism with "volunteers" is all about.

I trust that most readers of ITT have, by now, rejected any notion of "socialism by the whip." Similarly, I hope they have given up a double-standard of judgment. Surely, let's always tell it like it is when discussing old-fashioned capitalist, welfare state capitalist or socialist democratic regimes. But, let us also maintain the same kind of tough-mindedness when describing Russia, China, Cuba, et al. The tragic disappointments of the past demands such honesty from socialists.

—William Spinrad  
Glen Cove, N.Y.

## Our omission

Editor:

I was disappointed that in my account of Dennis Kucinich's mayoral victory in Cleveland (ITT, Nov. 23) all reference to

his past racist tactics were edited out.

I understand the need for cutting and the time problem involved, but believe at least the phrase in the lead paragraph that he had a "spotty record on race," could have been left.

As a result, a misleading portrait of the candidate resulted.

While it's encouraging that a candidate won on progressive issues in Cleveland and while even politicians can change attitudes, Kucinich's popularity lies at least in part in his past racist tactics. That element would have made the report more realistic.

—Roldo Bartimole  
Cleveland, Ohio

## Kowtowing?

Editor:

Reading the articles on Citizens Action Program and Illinois Public Action Council (ITT, Nov. 30), I found it hard to believe they were written by the same person. These criticisms of CAP should have been made long before now. Like it or not, groups around the country trying to build activist/democratic organizations have looked to the CAP model for leadership and guidance. What CAP organizers, spokespeople and supporters shared were their organizational techniques, tactics and victories. What they didn't share were the problems and pitfalls of a staff-dominated, fund-raising-focused organization. It was good finally to see an analysis of CAP's problems that direct action organizations can learn from.

But the companion article about Illinois Public Action Council is devoid of such analysis. According to Moberg, the leaders of Public Action have learned from the mistakes they made as leaders of CAP. But will we have to wait two years to learn about the problems or shortcomings of this new, statewide organization?

New organizations need encouragement and they need support. They do not need to be rubber-stamped, especially by a Chicago-based publication that claims to be delivering a hard-hitting socialist analysis of the state of current organizing efforts in the U.S.

I realize that ITT, being the "new kid on the block," needs friends too, but kowtowing to the direct action establishment in Chicago is too high a price to pay.

—Lee Gulon  
Durham, N.C.

*David Moberg responds: Illinois Public Action Council may, indeed, deserve harsh criticism in two years (or less). For the moment its structure—putting more control over finances and local staff in the hands of constituent groups—provides some check on the ever-present problem of central staff domination. But that's only one of the pitfalls of direct action community groups, as the CAP article indicated.*

## "Senior Citizen" again (but not any more)

Editor:

Ruth Dear's letter to the editor (ITT, Dec. 6) deserves the appreciation of all thoughtful older people for criticizing her article on the Gray Panther national convention.

In an excellent essay entitled "Silent Winter," on the plight of the elderly, which appeared on the Op-Ed page of the New York Times, May 13, 1975, Fred R. Hechinger stated, "Those who dreamed up the term 'senior citizens' were engaged in a cover-up of the aged."

I followed up Hechinger's article with a letter to the Times urging the newspaper to drop the usage of "senior citizen" whenever possible. Adding to Hechinger's objection to the term, I said that it implies second-class citizenship to most of the elderly population who are struggling for existence on Social Security and possibly other meagre income. Moreover, "senior citizen" is hardly ever

used when referring to older establishment politicians and well-heeled elderly in our society.

The Times agreed with me. In a letter to me dated July 16, 1975, on behalf of the Managing Editor, A.M. Rosenthal, it stated: "We are in agreement to the point of taking note of this matter in the forthcoming new edition of the New York Times Style Book. Under the listing for the term in this book, our writers and editors will be advised as follows: 'Avoid whenever possible.'"

IN THESE TIMES would do well to adopt a similar policy on the usage of the term "senior citizen."

With best wishes for success to your splendid socialist periodical.

—Lou Goldberg  
New York

*Editor's note: We agree, and will avoid the term in future.*

## No slogans

Editor:

Now that I finally have a settled address I'll subscribe to your superb paper. It's such a joy and relief to find a left paper that doesn't sound as though it were written by a computer stuffed with slogans. Bad slogans, at that.

—Paul Stamler  
University City, Mo.

## In praise of Jane Melnick

Editor:

While many people have written in praise of ITT, I expect many more have thought about doing so. I am finally moved to write by the work of Jane Melnick. While so much photography in journalism is indifferent or merely sensational, hers is compassionate and insightful. This is another reason why ITT is superior to any past or present publication that I know of.

—David Anderson  
Decorah, Ia.

## Coors strike

Editor:

As you are aware, brewery workers at the Adolph Coors Co. in Golden have been on strike for more than seven months. Their demand is simple: they want a union contract which allows them the dignity of not being subjected to lie detector tests, body frisks and other arbitrary actions by Coors.

To pressure Coors into accepting that demand, the strikers and supporters throughout the nation have initiated a boycott of Coors beer. They boy-

*Continued on page 17.*

*Editor's Note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.*

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★  
**BE A MINI-DISTRIBUTOR OF ITT**  
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Order bundles of 5 (10, 15, up to 25) copies of **In These Times** to be mailed directly to you every week for three months. You pay us in advance, at 20¢ a copy, and help us expand circulation.

Are you a natural?

Then fill in the coupon below:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

Town/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Send me a bundle of \_\_\_\_\_ copies.  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ enclosed is payment for 3 months at 20¢ each copy.



# Does rising labor militancy foretell new black-white alliance?



This autumn marks a dramatic renaissance of militancy in the American labor movement. Virtually ignored or deliberately distorted by the white-owned media, the unusual uprising of working class people covers the entire spectrum of American industry. This labor activism means, in the long run, new possibilities for a black alliance with American labor.

In Virginia, Minn., thousands of steelworkers are on strike, demanding higher wages, better health care programs, and the maintenance of a 30 cent an hour attendance bonus already in their last contract. Iron ore workers in the Midwest's Mesabi range are now realizing that the bureaucratic leaders of the United Steelworkers and its president, Lloyd McBride, are in league with the corrupt corporate executives in the steel industry. At a massive rally on Nov. 6, the workers expressed their unanimous refusal to accept a new contract that favored management, and declared their willingness to march and to continue striking. As one steelworker declared, the miners reminded him "of the 1960s, when you used to see the civil rights marches down South."

The 277,000 members of the United Mine Workers of America are also engaged in an important union contract struggle. Since 1973, about 400 miners

died on their jobs; health and safety conditions in some of the mines are worse than they were 30 years ago.

Recognizing the dangerous and unhealthy conditions of their work, the UMW is raising a list of contract demands that all working and black people should have, no matter where they work. The union is demanding an end to compulsory overtime, a greater amount of sick and personal leave time, full dental and eye care, birth control and other health benefits, as well as a wage increase plus a cost of living clause. The coal industry has rejected most of these demands as inflationary and unnecessary. The immediate prospects seem to point toward a direct confrontation between the owners and the workers.

On Oct. 10 over 15,000 employees struck at Lockheed's three plants in California. One week later they were joined by 5,000 Lockheed machinists in Marietta, Ga. Significantly, this was the first industrial strike in Georgia since the late '50s.

Throughout the country, there have been numerous strikes involving white, middle class oriented working people. Many of these whites were never on a picket line; most benefited from the prosperous economy of the '60s and voted for Richard Nixon in 1972. Now, mil-

lions of blue collar workers in every city and state are dissatisfied with phony income increases which never offset the mounting monthly increases in the cost of living. Not since the 1930s has there been such a long period of underemployment and unemployment. These white workers are angry that President Carter, who they supported last year, has not come up with a real domestic program for employment. And according to a Times-CBS poll, only 36 percent of all Americans believe that Carter can reduce unemployment to any real extent, despite his campaign promises.

What does all this mean to black people?

First, black people must understand that they are oppressed both as an ethnic group and as a distinct working class. No group of white workers will ever experience the long-term effects of racism and class exploitation. The American capitalist economy and political system, from slavery down to today, was never designed to advance the economic interests of any but a very few token "bourgeois Negroes."

Most black folks are beginning to understand the cruel realities of this. That's partially the reason why confidence in Carter among black people has dropped from 83 percent in April to under 57 per-

cent this month. Black unemployment is higher today, under a Democratic President, than it was under a Republican President 12 months ago. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have come up with a basic solution for permanent black unemployment. Only the militant political activism of blacks themselves, and a renewed commitment to aggressive struggle against economic exploitation and racism, will create jobs for black people.

Second, the rebirth of militancy within white labor provides a common ground for the economically oppressed of both races. So long as white workers think and reflect upon their social and economic condition as *white people*, however, there is no chance that a coalition could work. Yet the possibility remains that if white workers begin to challenge their own racism and backwardness, just as they are now challenging their own corrupt union leaders and their employers, that such a coalition might create the beginnings for a fundamentally different kind of America. ■

*Manning Marable is chairperson of the Department of Political Science, Tuskegee Institute, Ala., and an associate fellow of the Institute of the Black World, Atlanta.*

Stanley Aronowitz

# Recession is not as bad for business as it is for the rest of us



Business and Carter administration economists are worried about the economic picture for 1978. As the new year approaches, trends threatening double digit inflation, recession or both are on the horizon. On international markets, the dollar has dropped in price compared to leading European and Japanese currencies. The balance of trade deficit exceeded \$3 billion in October, the highest monthly deficit in American history. Even though the deficit is being blamed on higher oil imports (an obvious ploy to support the Carter energy bill and give the largest oil companies billions for oil exploration on the North American continent), increasing steel, auto and other basic commodity imports are part of the reason for unfavorable trade balance.

Although the largest corporations, the U.S. based multinationals, may be gainers rather than losers from the international economic developments, the American economy is certainly being hurt. Lay-offs in steel reflect the stagnation in the size of production in the wake of higher productivity. Fewer workers are producing as much as a larger labor force did a couple of years ago. As some basic industries cut back, and employment in the public sector fails to expand, new car sales are already dropping. According to the *Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 30) planned auto output for the closing months of 1977 was down, reversing an expected modest increase. The auto industry, which was able to weather strong foreign competition during the last year, is finally reaching the limits of its expansion. This crucial consumer product is an important bellwether of the economy. It absorbs a great deal of steel, rubber, glass, aluminum and even textiles, so the new year may bring bad news for workers in industries that supply it.

Of course, unemployment among

blacks and other minorities is reaching scandal proportions. Black workers in steel and auto are hardest hit by reduced production schedules. In addition, new jobs in the public sector have failed to materialize. And, even though *U.S. News and World Report* and the *Wall Street Journal* have featured front page stories on the issue during the past several weeks, there is little likelihood that the Carter administration will move significantly to increase the public payrolls. The Humphrey-Hawkins bill, no world beater to begin with, is in the process of being cut to ribbons by the administration and the conservatives in Congress. The youth employment measures are temporary expedients to keep the lid on until the 1978 congressional elections. Most of the jobs that are being created are the temporary, "leaf raking" variety, and low paid. They are being used to reduce the welfare rolls as much as to put a few hundred thousand unemployed on the payroll for show.

The President has made clear his opposition to "inflationary" public spending in this era of international problems. The expected reappointment of Federal Reserve Board chairman Arthur Burns was preceded by a struggle among Carter's chief economic advisers about such questions as the size of the money supply and the interest rate. Burns, who has advocated frankly recessionary policies to limit the money supply by increasing interest rates in order to hold down inflation, seems to have won out. Next year, federal spending will be constrained by these policies (except for arms). It will be harder to get a loan for a new house or, equally important, for a small business to cut its losses that may result from the need for retooling to meet the competition of the giant corporations, or to reduce prices to stay in business. "Anti-inflation" policies will spell accelerated

consolidation of capital into few hands, closing of smaller and less efficient plants and a higher official rate of joblessness.

We can expect the recession to be blamed on higher energy costs and the planned increases in the minimum wage and social security benefits. At the same time, the conservative campaign will try to focus on the need to foster energy independence in the form of nuclear, coal and oil development, moderation in federal spending for job programs and social benefits and approval of tax write-offs for new business investment. These policies, it is claimed, would create more jobs in the private sector and moderate the need for the government to step in as the employer of last resort.

In short, recession is good for some banks and major industrial corporations that believe that this is no time to encourage programs that would raise production costs in the wake of international competition. They argue that a tax cut to put more money in the hands of businesses and consumers would constitute a better economic policy because it would reduce government spending. As the recession matures, there is no doubt that new cries will be raised for wage restraint, more business mergers and slashes in welfare and other social programs. A straw in the wind is the recent rejection by congressional conferees considering the energy bill of a Senate passed measure that would lower electricity and other energy costs for the elderly. At the same time, federal jobs programs are almost entirely linked to "crisis" intervention and are not intended to increase the number of permanent jobs in the public sector, a decision that would entail increasing the mandatory budget rather than the discretionary budget. The administration has gone along with these approaches to joblessness and other economic problems and, short of

strong objections from labor, minorities, women and the liberal organizations, the policy will not likely be reversed in the near future.

Some observers (see *ITT*, "Carter in 1984," Nov. 16) have argued that Carter is in trouble with big business. Undoubtedly, many economists for large banks and industries have expressed chagrin at the inability of the administration to settle on a firm course of action directed towards aiding investment and cutting losses on international markets. Others are concerned that the administration has failed to intervene sufficiently to blunt the criticism of the labor movement and minority organizations. But these tactical differences should not obscure the basic orientation of the Carter economic program: it is a big business policy. Its major appointments in the economic sphere have been drawn from large corporations—the latest, for example, the general counsel of the federal energy administration is an attorney for some of the major polluters. Further, liberal weight at the commanding heights is weaker than at any time since Carter won the primary.

In the main, it is Carter's failure to deal with the problems in terms of business priorities without losing his mass base that constitutes the basis of most of the right-wing criticism. As for his "left" critics, it must be said that few have offered penetrating critiques of the administration's economic performance. Rather, most labor and liberal groups are still at the complaining stage because they have accepted the lesser evil theory according to which "it could be worse." ■ *Stanley Aronowitz is Professor of Comparative Culture in the Social Science School, University of California-Irvine, and author of False Promises and Food, Shelter and the American Dream.*