

Letters

Happy anniversary

Editor:

Just a First Anniversary note to let you know how much I appreciate your newspaper. I'm one of those "veterans of the '60s" who became very cautious and (I hope) discriminating about what he's going to believe in. *ITT* definitely makes it. Your articles are thoughtful, honest and broadening; your approach to the problem of building a socialist movement is coherent, non-dogmatic, and does not depend upon excluding unpleasant truths from political debate.

I'm happy to see the incorporation of ecological insight into your general analysis. From time to time during the year I had misgivings, but in retrospect now I can see that they were all trivial; furthermore, and amazingly enough, *ITT* seems to be slowly and steadily improving. I thought the David Milton China article (Oct. 12) was the most succinct and perceptive article on China I have ever read. It's good to know you're around. Happy anniversary. And many more.

—Martin Glass
Oakland, Calif.

One good fern deserves another

Editor:

Re: "Teng for President" (*ITT*, Oct. 19); Don't give Karmen a column—give him the paper.

—Milt Wolff
El Cerrito, Calif.

Mideast malarkey?

Editor:

Sorry I must take strong issue with you for the grotesque cartoon of Israel's Begin leading a blindfolded Uncle Sam by the beard (*ITT*, Oct. 12). Your anti-Israel bias displays itself also in your front page picture of Begin. Your photographer either deliberately or by accident caught the worst possible view of a man speaking with heartfelt passion, but the fault is yours for publishing it so prominently. Would you have chosen to publish on your front page a picture of Arafat with guns on hip striding into the United Nations as an honored guest? Methinks not.

The editorial that accompanies the cartoon is, in part, a direct contradiction. You state Israel and the Palestinians are both "little more than pawns in great power world- and oil-politics." Pawns do not, as a rule, lead anyone by the beard. That refugee Palestinians are pawns for their Arab masters there can be no doubt, since they could have been all assimilated easily long ago within the numerous oil-rich Arab states, with room to spare. Instead Arab rulers preferred to help subsidize refugee camps on Israel's harassed flank to serve as a thorn in her side and a goad against a peaceful Israel.

As for the PLO, that bloody, dictatorial cabal no more represents the majority of Palestinians than Taiwan represents Mainland China. The PLO chiefs look only for wealth and power, their interest in people's rights is non-existent.

If peace in the Mideast is to become a reality, both Israel and the Arabs will have to bend, but for heaven's sake, don't give us that malarkey of an "intransigent" Israeli. If your life was at stake after the same party had attempted to stab you time and again, you would be a fool not to take every precaution that it does not happen again by taking the knife away. You don't reward an assassin by returning the weapon. Israel does not intend to commit suicide just to make friends and influence people.

—Shirley Wolf
Chicago

Libertarians and socialists

Editor:

I must take issue with Joshua Dressler's either/or approach to socialism and libertarianism (*ITT*, Oct. 5). There are as many kinds of libertarians as there are socialists (and you know how many different varieties of *that* label exist. To assume that the Libertarian party's philosophy represents all libertarians is as ingenuous as assuming that the Socialist party speaks for all socialists.

Regarding the helmet laws of which Dressler speaks, if only libertarians opposed them (and not motorcyclists), Dressler might have a point. But cyclists form the core of the opposition to such laws. Perhaps this is because they are well aware that the sense of freedom and movement that a motorcycle imparts is achieved as part of a conscious trade-off with the relative safety available within the frame of a car. Bikers sans helmets, like skateboarders, know they are taking a chance—a risk that they relish.

If all motorcyclists wanted to wear helmets, helmet laws would be redundant. As it is, the social value of helmet laws is in granting a slight protective margin to other motorists by reducing the potential for injury to the cyclist in case of accident.

I do not think it unreasonable to suggest that libertarians and socialists have much to learn from each other. In fact, there is a growing segment of the left that characterizes itself as libertarian socialist—a segment highly aware of the tendency of socialist (or quasi-socialist) governments to congeal into bureaucratic monoliths.

—Jay Kinney
San Francisco

A convert?

Editor:

You put out a very good paper. I just let my *Guardian* sub lapse because I cringed almost every page at the hard-edge rhetoric; and felt a bit guilty about doing so, but who needs to read screaming, positive, "militant" headlines over stories that are all too often blah or simply negative? I'd rather decide for myself whether the week's news is up or down. *ITT* allows for an intelligent readership.

—Jon Livingston
Berkeley, Calif.

Protest Shah's U.S. visit

Editor:

By early November, the despotic Shah of Iran will be visiting the U.S. to receive the "reaffirmation of U.S. support" and be embraced by his new boss in the White House.

Aside from the usual huff and puff public gestures about "human rights," the dictatorial Shah and Mr. Carter are basically to conclude the following plots against the Iranian people:

1. Shah is to be briefed on the results of the Carter administration's six-month study on Iran and the Persian gulf. This study broadens the direct military involvement of the U.S. in this region and includes plans for invasion in case the Shah's regime and U.S. corporate interests are seriously threatened either by the liberation movements in the area or by competition by the Soviet Union.

2. Conclude arms agreements with the Shah promising him a continuation of the Nixon administration's *carte blanche* arms sale policy for his regime.

3. Apply make-up to the notorious image of the Shah who is known as a vicious dictator and his regime as the most oppressive in the world. In this way, Carter hopes to hide the glaring contradiction between continued support for the Shah and his rhetoric on human rights.

Iranian Students Association in the U.S. strongly urges all freedom-loving people to oppose and condemn the Shah's visit, and to rally behind the Iranian people in this just struggle for independence and democracy.

—Iranian Students Assoc.
P.O. Box A3575
Chicago

In praise of "terror"

Editor:

Your, and Diana Johnstone's use of the highly charged and relatively irrational terms "terrorists" and "desperadoes" when referring to the Baader-Meinhoff RAF people in Germany sent me to my dictionary. So here are these violent criminal bomb throwers and their victims, the poor Nazis! And of course, a few upper middle class university Marxists, theorizing their way to Mecca or Bethlehem or wherever university Marxists are going.

Who is being "terrorized"? And who is performing the criminal violence that drives some of its victims to acts of desperation? Your simplistic application of these terms is no different, in essence, from the mass media analysis of the SLA/Patty Hearst events of a few years ago. Because a millionairess was kidnapped by a band of revolutionaries, the people were expected to quake in fear of "the terrorists."

As though the average American was a member of the Hearst family! Most Americans, not being university theorists, were hardly worried about the "terror" of the SLA, having to deal with the daily terror of programmed reality. I have a feeling that the average German has much more to be concerned about than whether a millionaire gets kidnapped.

The terror and criminality we encounter and participate in every day, the lying, stealing, cheating, the rape and murder of mind and body, should concern radicals and socialists. Not the perpetuation of ruling class ideology through language pollution, however cosmetized by leftist jargon. "Terrorists and their victims" indeed. The only time the various 'sects' of the left unite is when something too practical occurs in the real world.

Which side are you on, folks?

—Frank Scott
San Rafael, Calif.

For women in name only

Editor:

As far as I could tell the CACOSH conference on Women and Occupational Health (*ITT*, Oct. 19) was notable for its non-women orientation: males leading workshops contributed to making the day a woman's day in name only. Particularly ironic was the OSHA workshop with two white male discussion leaders representing the workers and a white woman and a chicano man representing OSH. They talked procedure and forms until most of us fell asleep.

One woman factory worker broke the drone of voices with genuine indignation at the situation in her workplace and her supervisor's nonresponsiveness. The men soothed her into uncertainty, insecurity and silence by pointing out her stupidity in not going through channels, which admittedly often take years, if they work at all. ("Give us a break," smiled Mr. Besuited Chicano charmingly, "we're snowed under." The "we're all pals in the backroom" air prevailed. Levied Cacoshers grin sheepishly. "Sure, we know you're snowed under, but safety is an immediate matter.")

The conference was notable also for the absence of anyone asking why health and safety continues to be a mounting problem—that includes pollution of air, water, and minds.

The political economics of health and safety was carefully skirted. Except for one friend's statistic on better records in Russia, ancient communist fears of raising questions of roots, of placing the problem in an historical context hung heavy in the union hall as Joe McCarthy's cigar smoke.

—Teena Brown
Chicago

Blue Collars losing turf

Editor:

Now that most informed people no longer hold to the once-popular notion that the blue collar worker in the U.S. was all but wiped out by cybernetics, a new, more dazzling and possibly a more

desperate notion is being offered: that the very turf of the blue collar workers is being wiped out—that Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, New York are about to be buried, and from their ashes there is arising a new industrial center in the New South.

Stanley Aronowitz' guest column (*ITT*, Oct. 18) reworks this rickety, unproved theory. However, there are no reliable figures to show that industrial growth in the South during the last ten years has been significantly more rapid than it has been in the North, or that the sophisticated Wall Street banks are losing out to folksy southern financial institutions. Although petroleum production, natural gas operations, and ranching conglomerates are flourishing in Texas and Oklahoma rather than in the Berkshire Hills or the Catskills, there isn't really very much else to point to.

The advantages of the open shop, cheap labor, tax breaks, absence of controls, were once upon a time substantial incentives for industry to locate in the South. But of course this life-belt for a troubled industry has been pretty well deflated in recent years, and not surprisingly northern capitalists are as smart as their southern kin folk in controlling labor and in wheedling government subsidies. Much more pertinent to the crisis of American capitalism in both the North and the South is the insurgent movements of workers, blacks, women, and the development of industry in the non-capitalist world.

—Charles Spencer
author of *Blue Collar*
Chicago

Eleanor Miller

Eleanor Miller, an activist for many years in progressive causes, died Oct. 9 in Philadelphia after a long illness. A talented sculptor, she also pioneered in teaching sculpture to the blind. She leaves her husband Joseph, her son David, and her three daughters, Wendy, Rima and Beth.

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.

STRETCH
retirement dollars
Liberal Arkansas development
Homesites, lake
Non-Profit building
Information \$1.00 T.S.E.
P.O. Drawer 268, Naperville, IL 60540

Bay Area
In These Times Associates
Present

Dr. Barry Commoner
on

The Energy Crisis

Can the U.S. economic system solve it?
8 pm, Wed., November 16
Retail Clerks Local 1100 Hall
1245 Mission
(Between 9th and 10th)
San Francisco
Donation \$1.50

M. Ron Karenga

Black criticism of Carter: appearance and essence

Serious analysis of any phenomenon or process must define and discuss the socio-historical context in which it occurs. Such is the requirement for understanding and drawing the appropriate lessons from the black criticism of President Carter and the controversy that has developed around it.

The present crisis of black leadership should be considered against the background of the planned decimation and discrediting of black leaders during the '60s by police and intelligence agencies, which created a vacuum that still exists. It is exacerbated by a crisis of ideology—that is, the absence of a clear and coherent conception of what is to be done. The black leadership crisis, moreover, occurs at a time of worsening socio-economic conditions not only for blacks but for the whole country.

Blacks, however, are especially hard hit. Unemployment among blacks is 14.5 percent, as compared with about 7 percent for whites, and it will no doubt continue to rise. Black teenagers are hit by over 40 percent unemployment, over twice the rate among white teenagers. The rise in *lumpen* activity in the black community reflects the increase in the scarcity of basics and the erosion of values in a context where profits mean more than people, and concern with the immediate undermines interest in the future. Moreover, recent legal and political gains are being challenged and eroded and blacks lack the structural capacity on both the local and national level successfully to confront this tendency.

Criticism of Carter by the Urban League and the Congressional Black Caucus occurs in this context and yields five fundamental lessons.

First, the criticism is "correct" but not fundamental. It is directed against the behavior of a person, an administration, not against the system in which both operate. Such non-systemic criticism is deceptively superficial and poses what should be minimum goals as maximum goals of black people. It is true that the administration has no real national policies for full employment, national health, urban revitali-

zation, welfare or "aggressive affirmative action." But is it the administration or the system that militates against such a planned economy and urgent social correctives? And is the simple stress on jobs not a narrowing of focus away from the overall criticism of the system's inability to meet its claims and thus, the compelling need for broad and profound social change in the U.S.?

A moral appeal

Second, because the criticism is made from a position of weakness rather than strength and is essentially friendly, rather than oppositional, it is fundamentally a moral appeal and not a power demand. The Urban League and the Black Caucus know that they, in fact, did not organize blacks to elect Carter and that blacks voted not necessarily for Carter, but primarily for a Democrat. Also, they know that regardless of Carter's response, they do not have the capacity to do anything more than request meetings, hold press conferences and issue statements. Thus when representative Parren Mitchell (D—Md.), chairman of the Black Caucus, says he told Carter he would fight him with "all the vigor" he possessed, he certainly understood that his vigor and organizational strength among the masses of black folk are two different things.

This recognition of weakness by the black critics not only forces them into the role of making moral appeals for "social kindness," but also gives an ambivalent janus-faced character to their criticism and response to the administration. Thus, Vernon Jordan begins his speech not with criticism of Carter, but with praise of him as a friend and as an essentially progressive president. At the September fundraising dinner of the Black Caucus, Carter received a standing ovation before and after his speech, which was interrupted several times by applause. Such an ambivalent posture is hardly reflective of strength and commitment. Nor is it the stuff out of which successful struggle is made.

Carter leading from strength.

A third lesson from all this is that the Carter administration also understands the obvious position of weakness from which its black critics speak, and will respond accordingly. Carter, in response to Jordan, stated with a ludicrous mixture of "disdain and how-dare-you" that Jordan's criticism was "erroneous" and "demagogic." Moreover, he admitted that blacks are not getting a fair deal, but pointed out to the pious that there were a lot of things in life not fair or equal and it was not the role of the government to go about fixing them.

Surely this is not a man under the illusion that he owes his presidency to the Urban League or the Black Caucus, or that they have the capacity to penalize or reward him in any significant way. Nor is he, as some might assume, confusing the League and Caucus with the masses of black people they suggest they speak for—directly and indirectly. Deny Carter what one will, he is a skilled political observer and technician. His understanding of the crisis of black leadership leaves him ample latitude to delay and chide his black critics. On the other hand, he will respond to more powerful interests and maintain his own priorities—balancing the budget, reducing inflation, and a strong, military-backed foreign policy—regardless of moral appeals in the name of minimum social justice.

Fourth, even though launched from a position of weakness and incomplete, the criticism of Carter enhanced Vernon Jordan's and the Black Caucus' image of political leadership. This proves to be a problem on at least two levels. It increases the probability that moderate black leadership will fill the leadership vacuum created by the destruction and discrediting of left black leadership in the '60s, and thus perpetuates the crisis of leadership among blacks rather than solves it. And it means that the tendency to project minimum goals as maximum goals will gain strength and divert attention from programs of broad and fundamental change in society.



Given this state of affairs, the historical victimization of blacks will continue in new forms and the real solution to the problem will be disguised and dismissed as unreal, simplistic and suicidal.

Lacking mass leverage.

Fifth, the black leaders' criticism and the controversy around it illustrate the historical problem of the petty-bourgeoisie, the professional in this case. The essence of the problem is that although they have skills and access to contexts of power, winning and maintaining their people's loyalty is always problematic. Amilcar Cabral's solution that they commit class suicide and identify totally with the interests of the black masses is theoretically sound. The problem comes in practice.

Regardless of their skills and access to the powerful, they lack real leverage that only a mass-based organization or movement can provide. The black critics of the Carter administration are pseudo-oppositional, ambivalent and unrepresentative of the needs of the masses. But in the absence of a clear alternative, their criticism seems bold and basic. Moreover, the unorganized character of the black community makes it vulnerable to externally imposed or "respectable" leadership as is the case with so many black professionals.

This is a deplorable condition. It will not be dispelled by cries of betrayal, tomism and sellouts. For in the final analysis, real criticism of social conditions must be transformed into social practice to change them. This requires, at a minimum, active commitment to the awesome task of organizing the masses of black people so they, themselves, can take control of their daily lives and build their future in their own image.

M. Ron Karenga, an adjunct professor of social change at U.S. International University, San Diego, is author of Afro-American Nationalism: Social Strategy and Struggle for Community, to be published in March 1978 by Third World Press.

DIALOG

Yugoslavia: it's not as simple as it looks

Having just returned from a summer's work on Grand Valley State Colleges' programs in Sarajevo and Krakow I am late in responding to the anonymous criticism of my article on Yugoslavia *TT*, (Dialog, *ITT*, May 25).

Two points deserve comment. Poor word choice or excessive editing may have wrongly suggested that the 1974 constitution represented a popular compromise. The compromise reached was within the party (League of Communists) which then convinced the general population.

Secondly, the "avid reader" and I agree that the party is vigorously reasserting itself. But saying it is trying to control all aspects of life distorts reality beyond recognition for everyone save a few American diplomats, Croatian fascists, and cold warriors. In this light I will update my initial report rather than answer unfounded personal attacks.

First the problem areas:

- To increase productivity the party is directing workers councils to increase capital accumulation and distribute in-

come according to the measurement of work performed. Since the party believes technical experts need more stimulation, the result will be decreased expenditures for social services, lower income for the unskilled, and increased social differences. Low income workers are more attracted by Soviet-style centralism than other groups.

- Yugoslavs are nervous about the unprecedented welcomes Tito received in the USSR, China, and North Korea in August. Soviet pressures for military concessions seem mounting.

- Many party officials increasingly abuse their influence for personal gain and decrease their effectiveness as leaders. As socialist rhetoric increases, believability decreases. Other party members are unable or unwilling to alter this trend. In fact, data given at the Paris Self-Management Conference last month indicated that young Yugoslavs most active in political affairs scored lowest in egalitarian values.

- Internal security, ostensibly due to the European Security Conference in Belgrad, is tighter than anytime since the mid-'60s.

Conversely:

- The decentralization of factories into units of associated labor has clearly increased the participation of all workers. People feel they have more influence over work-related issues.

- The self-managed planning process—building from associated labor units upward—is functioning (though sloppily) and is worthy of serious study as a model of decentralized planning.

- In August Edward Kardelj, second to Tito in the party, circulated a paper for discussion at the next party congress calling for more open discussion of differ-

ences—proclaiming a new socialist pluralism.

The image is confused because Yugoslavia may possess more contradictions than any other social system. Could it be otherwise when a Leninist party imposes self-management on a multi-national, peasant-based country forced to find its

own way amidst Eastern and Western imperialism?

I know of no country about which foreigners disagree more or to which we are more willing to give advice.

Kenneth Zapp
Allendale, Mich.

I DIDN'T KNOW TATI

—Saul Landau

I never saw a raven in her eyes
or black lillies round her neck
Her voice spoke Fall and Summer chimes;
in her gait the Spring of youth

I could not imagine—my mind's cliché—
the sorrows she dared to feel
nor taste the acid of family wounds
that burned beneath her smile

I never spied a raven on her back
or black lillies in her hair
Her words said brave and noble deeds;
In her stare the grasp of truth

I did not know—a simple phrase—
of depths she dared to probe
nor divine the slime of torture tales
that boiled within her bowel

I never saw the raven strike her
or black lillies curl round her throat
Her lips purred blends of confidence;
on her shoulders stood the world

I could not believe—I'd said before—
such gangrene within her soul
nor fathom depths of human hate
that she had come to know.

Beatriz (Tati) Allende, oldest daughter of Salvador Allende, committed suicide on October 11, four years and one month after the overthrow of her father's government in Chile. She had been living in Cuba and had been gathering testimony of Chileans tortured by DINA, the secret police of the Pinochet regime.