

Letters

Various Authors

1970

Editors' Note: Fifth Estate staffer Rick Londin is in Cuba with Venceremos Cane Cutting Brigade. The Brigade has been there since last November to assist the Cubans in harvesting 10 million tons of sugar cane as part of their program of attaining economic independence. The contingent Rick is with will be arriving back in the U.S. in early February and a second group will leave for Cuba at that time.

Locally, Brigade organizers are trying to raise money to insure that Detroit will be well represented. The group will be made up of 1/3 blacks, 1/3 Latins and 1/3 whites. Money is needed for travel to Mexico City where the Cuban airline will pick them up. Donations should be made out care of this newspaper and sent to our office where the money will be forwarded.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have been in Cuba for a few weeks now and are working in the cane fields next to our Cuban comrades. Our schedule is basically that of all the camps participating in the harvest: we cut cane from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the morning and from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the afternoon during the week and on Saturdays only in the morning. We travel in the area on Sundays having thus far visited a sugar mill and an artificial insemination camp. We will be cutting cane during the first six weeks and traveling around Cuba during the last two weeks of our stay here.

We are 216 strong and share the camp with 57 Cubans. Our presence was exposed nationally yesterday with front page stories in both Granma and Juventud Rebelde (organ of the Union of Young Communists) as well as on a special nationally televised program.

The Cuban people are enthusiastic about our presence here and are doing everything possible to accommodate our attempt to participate in their revolution.

While it is impossible to describe the scope of the revolution in a letter such as this, there are several outstanding aspects of Cuban society that may be noted. First, is the tremendous level of consciousness of the Cuban people. The leadership of the revolution takes great pain and care to explain in detail the meaning of every program that is implemented and all programs that are practiced are discussed at all levels and in all areas of Cuban society. The result is a social understanding on the part of the Cuban people of the work they do. The incentive to work harder comes from the knowledge of how the effort of each individual contributes to the development of the whole society.

Beyond this fantastic development of consciousness, the revolution has begun the process of taking Cuba from being an underdeveloped country to one of economic strength and wealth. This struggle, in the face of imperialism and centuries of colonization, is of course a difficult one, but one that the united Cuban people are well on the way to winning. The harvest for ten million tons of sugar in which we are participating is crucial to this development. It will mark the beginning of economic independence for Cuba and will give the Cuban people the resources necessary to begin the full development of all aspects of their society.

It is an inspiration to be a part of this struggle, if only a brief part.

Hasta la Victoria Siempre,
Rick London
Campimento Brigada Venceremos
Habana Province

Dear Fifth Estate:

I think that by your reply to my letter in your last issue, [Letters, FE #96, January 8–21, 1970] I must clarify a few points.

Number one, I do not believe in Capitalism. I think the government as it stands is completely corrupt. My people are oppressed. I am Not a Conservative by any stretch of the imagination. BUT...

Anyone who takes out their aggressions on a vague force, i.e., “The Establishment”, “those niggers”, etc. will get no results—except maybe some well-fed neuroses or ulcers. I UNDERSTAND your anger, But...

HATE WILL NOT GET YOU WHAT YOU WANT. If any changes are to be made, you must stay calculated and cool. Violence and hating only serve to stand in the way of efficiency. I mean, like, what are your plans, to change the system, or to leave it? Obviously, you care, if you were true “dropouts”, you would not give a shit.

O.K. That only leaves that you want to change it. So how? Do you have a plan? Do you have a calculated planned system to replace the corrupt one? Is it strong enough and well-planned enough to completely wipe out present problems?

You say that the division is already there. I agree—but you helped to make it. You say that you are right and they are wrong (a rather childish remark, don't you thing?) I say neither are right. Until you can get the emotion out and start thinking baby, you are nobody.

Lynda Pilzner

Editors' Reply: We never said hate will get us what we want; we just said we hated capitalism and the oppression and exploitation that are the basis of it. What will get us what we want for the people of the world is struggle and sometimes struggle will take violent forms.

The total refusal of an oppressor—whether it is the English king in 1776 or the U.S. government in Vietnam in 1970—to heed the legitimate grievances of an oppressed people makes violent struggle a historical necessity. Our basic motivation is a deep love for our brothers and sisters of the world who are struggling to make the world free and along with this goes a deep hatred for those forces and people who are employing every barbaric method possible to retain their minority rule of the planet.

Eldridge Cleaver said, “You are either part of the problem or part of the solution.” This says directly that there are two sides with one being right and one being wrong; there is no middle ground.

As for the plan—that will be worked out in struggle as people go from general slogans like “All Power to the People” to specific ones that talk concretely about the dismantling of capitalism and its replacement with a system that serves the people and not just the rich.

To the Editors:

We youths of America are not happy with what we see in present day society. We see a society that has a perverted frame of mind. A frame of mind that only has one thought in mind, the individual. Present society has little thought of helping the needy, only themselves.

We see a society that supports a 54 billion dollar military budget. 54 billion dollars is twelve times what we spend on education, and thirty-five times what we spend on housing and community development. Society spends its money supporting an unjust and impractical war while its people are starving in the streets.

The youths of America must find a place in this society. But how can we find a place in society that we cannot accept? Should we revolt? The institutions as they stand must change for the benefit of all people today, and for the

benefit of future generations. Our forefathers have done a good job of screwing things up, it is up to us to straighten them out.

An establishment writer claims that out of every political revolution is born a cultural revolution. He says that the political revolution of the youths of today is being accompanied by a cultural revolution which adheres to wild clothes, drugs, long hair, and loud music. He is wrong.

The cultural revolution was not created by the political revolution, it was created by society. Society, with all its restraints and sickening individualism forced the youths of today to create a more free world.

A world where we could be more creative. A world where we could throw off the handcuffs of the establishment and be ourselves. A world where we could be free. Drugs, slang, long hair, and loud music are only the tools with which we express our freedom.

Through the cultural revolution we are able to get attention and show others how we feel. Long live the revolution.

George Sinutko

Brothers and Sisters,

I would just like to write a few lines to let you know how things are going here at the ghetto of the army. It seems that the army is up to another one of their diabolical tricks again.

About a year ago I wrote a letter to you from the Ft. Leonard Wood while awaiting an undesirable discharge which I was refused. At that time a lot of brothers were committing felonies which they normally wouldn't have done just to get out of the army. Not that I have anything against felonies but I do have a lot against people having to do something they don't want to do.

Meanwhile I split from the army for my fifth AWOL which lasted about ten months. After I was apprehended in December I was taken from my wife and two week old child and shipped to Ft. Riley, Kansas. Arriving here I couldn't help but notice how happy and pleased all the other men in the cage with me seemed.

After inquiring about this mood that seemed so abnormal I found that in September of '69 the army changed their regulations on a 200 discharge. It seems that the army finally realized the more men they keep in that don't want to be in the more trouble they're going to have brain washing the men that are undecided to what's going down here in the universe.

After they sent me in to a platoon to await my discharge I saw brother after brother being turned in by other men for minor infractions just to get on the good side of the officers and cadre in charge just to get their own processing speeded up. Every man that was dealt with properly was busted by someone dropping a dime. Sent behind the slam things got worse instead of better. The more people that talked or acted in their revolutionary way, the more that got busted.

A riot occurred here on the 15th of December, ended up with eight military pigs injured and no injuries to any prisoners. That was alright but immediately afterwards 90 brothers were sent to the slam. Turned in by photographs and their own so-called brothers. 90 men slammed because someone saw it could be beneficial for them to open their pig mouth.

Brothers and Sisters, we have to realize that no matter how obvious it seems sometimes, the government is not ignorant. They have ways of making you feel that you're really getting over and actually you're falling right into one of their well planned traps. Many men inside the slam for instance carry on about how pissed off they are and how much they're going to do for the movement when they're on the block. Back on the block they find that the money they make from FoMoCo and Great Lakes Steel seems to please them well enough to shut them up for the rest of their remote control color TV life.

Brothers and Sisters, there is something better at the end of the road. Let's see if we can kick Uncle Sam's bribes square in the teeth and keep on pushing.

Keep the Faith,

Bruce Martinsen, Prisoner of War

To the Editors,

Things like the following—from friends of mine—I’ve been hearing now for some time:

“The Fifth Estate always slants news in its direction.”

“The paper is a pile of filth.”

“They never mention Vietcong atrocities.”

“Calling cops pigs is asinine.”

I’m not here answering these charges. I’m in this letter neither defending Fifth Estate policy nor refuting it. I simply would like pointing out to my friends that a complaint can be sent to the paper with a good chance of being printed. Better this way than like sulking in the corner, keeping it inside one’s psyche. Let it loose!

A particular psychology of the right-wing is to inhibit themselves, to sulk, to brood. Next thing we know, an underground-press office is ransacked (like last month at San Diego). My friends are not right-wing (not all anyway) but in this sulking respect they remind me of it.

Got a gripe? See what it looks like in print! This is one area where the Fifth Estate in particular and the underground press in general is to be commended on. They’ll often print your resentment, a la the Voltarian “I disagree with what you say but will defend to the death your right to say it.”

(Which is more than the Detroit News and Jane Lee dare doing.)

Sam Cohen

fifth Estate

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