

Dec. 11, 1963

Dear Eme:

It was good to hear from you at such length, and to have your letter of Nov. 23, include within it two articles. The one on the trades unions will be published in full, and the political notes will be shortened considerably because there are various items that need background material for use in the U.S., and others that are omitted that would be of greater interest to us. Therefore I think that it is best to spell out what NEWS & LETTERS is most concerned with, and how we hope that you as a regular correspondent from Nigeria would follow through:

1) Naturally a labor paper like ours is primarily concerned with labor news. The American workers want to know what the Nigerian workers are doing. Any activity, such as a strike, takes priority over all other items. And when we read about strikes in Africa, or anywhere else for that matter, we want to know what it is the rank and file worker is doing, thinking, saying. This means that where strikes occur within your area, it would be good to interview the workers on strike and let them speak for themselves. Where that is not possible, then, of course, you report what is reported in the Nigerian press, and here too selection should be of what the rank and file worker is doing, then what his trade union leadership is, and finally if there are more than one union involved, whether they are collaborating, or fighting each other; and if so, why? In that respect, we also want to know if these have international relations. For example, every one in Africa speaks of African leadership, as against "foreign", but the truth is that there still are two, not one, African centers, and neither Accra nor Dakar were truly independent, one leaning on ICGTU and the other on the WFTU, in other words, the trade union bodies of the so-called West and East. Now, I know how bureaucratic the AFL-CIO is, but there is still more trade union freedom in it than there is in the Russian or Chinese-dominated trade unions that are truly pure and simple state organs and not at all independent working class organizations. On the other hand, there may be some cases where, though a union in Africa belongs or doesn't belong to an international body, it still operates for the workers' interests within the country. But in that case, one has to say so openly and not go on the basis that American workers don't know the "ins" and "outs" of these things. So that, if you report, first facts, then activities, organizations, and always, always, keep in mind the rank and file, then your reports will be truly of help not only to the American reader, but European and African readers for we are an international paper as well.

2) NEWS & LETTERS considers itself also Marxist-Humanist, and this means we are interested in politics. But ours is a very different type of politics. We are not too interested in what "party" a worker is a member of half as much as in what his aspirations and actions are. Therefore when you report on parties, it again must be oriented toward labor, but here you must give us background information. For example, when you, in your political news, speak of NPW as "the only party with a definite tone and bearing in Nigeria," you know it is feudalistic but to the American reader it may sound as if you approve. In a word, you must be more specific & not use such abstract terms as "definite tone and bearing" without saying what it is. In this case it was easy to substitute for that phrase "the only party that knows what it wants and what it wants is retention of emirates and feudalism." But, first, we shouldn't need to edit your material, and, second, sometime I won't know what a certain party or person stands for and therefore will simply have to cut it. For example, I do not know what "Okpara Brigade" is, and though you too say "the doctrine of Okparaism God only knows what that means", you really do know a lot more than we, and you would have to explain who Dr. Okpara is and what he said or pretended he was doing when he established these brigades. Facts are needed also when you speak of wealth—that is to say, to name some official and the palatial home he lives in, or which foreign capitalist enterprises he represents. Thus you do well when you hit out against Preventive Detention Act because it is concrete, but to speak of any call for "More States in Republic of Nigeria" means nothing to us because "states' rights" is precisely the most reactionary formula which South USA is using not only against Federal Government which wants to establish civil rights on a national basis, but is a formula to fight human rights. In a word, the fight for

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more states or de-centralization could be either progressive or reactionary, and we would need to know the principles that underlie this fight before taking position, or even knowing what the position of the other truly is. I know that NCNC was fighting for "federalism" and the Action Group fighting for "regional federalism", each wanting to be boss in its region or the whole country, and so we wouldn't be interested in either. On the other hand, if a fight for an independent state was not for tribal reasons, but for workingclass reasons as Eastern Nigeria was, in its past at least, more revolutionary than either West or North, then it would be a different story altogether. So, again we come back to the masses, the workers, what do they want; why; what do they say; are they fighting merely a tribalist fight or for socialist independence, etc.etc.

For example, I have read in West Africa that Dr. Tunji Otegbaye intends setting up a new party, called Socialist Party. Knowing, how strongly he leans towards Communism, I would want to know (a) Is "Socialist Party" just a name, but actually will follow the Russian Communist or Chinese Communist line? (b) Is it renaming the Nigerian Youth Congress, or does it have a new mass base either in youth, labor, etc.? (c) Will that party "follow the leader", or have genuine intra-party democracy and concrete relations with the masses who will set the line, or will that line be set by some one else? (d) Is it a national party, or only in a few regions? Do write me about it, and we can judge after that whether we wish to publish an item on it.

3) Also, there is "African Socialism", an umbrella that covers multiple political tendencies. I wrote a piece on it which I enclose, and I believe that piece, which also has the subtitle: "Why Not A New International?" will be published in Presence Africaine. Does the English edition get to Nigeria? Do you read it?

4) Finally on Marxist-Humanism, since you are just beginning, I believe first and foremost, is to get one's principles straight, and not worry about organization. As you see from the Constitution of the News & Letters Committees I enclose, we openly say we are not a party and make no pretense at being; we are a body of ideas. What organization of a permanent nature would result from that—whether simply what we call ourselves now News & Letters Committee, or as the youth calls itself Young Marxist-Humanist, or, as in Scotland, Marxist-Humanist Group—doesn't matter. It is what one thinks, nationally and internationally; what one does, whether it is in the Freedom Now movement, or in establishing new relations on a world scale that is independent both from capitalism and communism, that counts. We all of course belong to different trade unions, depending on job, and also function in other organizations on a concrete basis, like civil rights; but when it comes to the total philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, we will not give an iota and therefore maintain the simple Committee type of organization of all who think like us. You may feel that belonging to some organization as a base may help, so long as what you do is propagandize Marxist-Humanist ideas, that is it. Or it may be best of all—no soon as you get MARXISM-FREEDOM—to start a class in that. Certainly, as you get NEWS & LETTERS each month, you should discuss and see what the others feel, and take it from there.

We do hope that by now you have received all our pamphlets, papers, books, and Political Letters as well as the typewriter. We will send you a single copy of NEWS & LETTERS each month by air mail; but air mail is too expensive for bundles and so we will just have to wait till the material reaches you. We always go to press the middle of the month, and we need 12 days to prepare for printer, etc. so it means that the deadline always is first or second of each month.

Olga is our Organizational Secretary and all she writes and sends is official. I'm too often out of town, so it is best to send directly to the office as she always knows where I am and how to reach me. The December issue will be off next week and will be sent you immediately so you'll see our analysis of the tragic assassination of President Kennedy. Meanwhile I enclose also the picture & New Year's greetings. Fraternaly,

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THE MARXIST HUMANIST

SCHEDULE OF ORGANISATIONAL MEETINGS OF APPROVED CENTRES 1964 SESSION

THE MARXIST HUMANIST - NIGERIA, ANNOUNCES A SERIES OF ORGANISATIONAL MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN EASTERN NIGERIA FOR THE PURPOSE OF FORMING THE 1964 SERIES OF MARXIST HUMANIST CLASSES. INTERESTED MEN/WOMEN ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THESE MEETINGS.

NO	CENTRE	MEETING PLACE	REP.	DATE	TIME
1	ENUGU	MUNICIPAL SCHOOL HALL	Eme. A. Okeke	Jan. 15, 1964	5 p.m.
2	do	COUNCIL HALL	do	" 16, "	"
3	do	UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA ENUGU CAMPUS	do	" 17, "	"
4	do	COAL MINERS HALL	do	" 18, "	"
5	do	ST. PETERS SCHOOL HALL	do	" 19, "	"
6	ONITSHA	REX CINEMA	Eme. A. Okeke	" 19, "	"
7	do	NNEWI HALL	Amara H. Oji	" 20, "	5 p.m.
8	do	ST. JOHNS SCHOOL HALL	do	" 23, "	"
9	do	OUR LADIES HIGH SCHOOL	do	" 24, "	"
10	do	COUNCIL SCHOOL	do	" 25, "	"
11	do	BROADWAY CINEMA	do	" 27, "	"
12	do	ONITSHA TOWN HALL	do	" 28, "	"
				" 30 & 31 "	"
GATE			FREE		9677