

LETTER FROM JAIL

On the night of May 25, 59 students were arrested for committing an act of civil disobedience. Many of the students were troubled. Even though they had demonstrated the total nature of their commitment, they felt their message still hadn't gotten through. The result was the following statement of conscience written at Ingham County Jail, Mason.

The problem of civil rights is that the gulf between those who have experienced humiliation as a people and those who have not is the deepest and most significant we have to face; contemplation of this gulf and awareness of its meaning are the chief essentials for dealing with this problem.

This gulf exists in East Lansing.

We, and others before us, through discussion and demonstrations have tried to impress upon the people the growing seriousness of this gulf that has divided Americans from each other.

Despite all their protestations of good faith, the leaders of this community have failed to grasp the moral urgency of this problem. They are men of good faith, but their moral vision is blinded. Our discussions and demonstrations have not given them the new vision these times require.

Stronger action was necessary.

Civil disobedience is a dramatic force. But we are not trying through such action to force those opposing us to their knees. We are trying to force them to look at the situation in a new way. And our message is too urgent and has been ignored too long — a message about dangers and hopes that should involve all men. Respect for the law must not obscure what is morally right.

Because they failed to realize the basic human issues and its sources, the leaders of this community have so far failed to take positive action. The most obvious action a community such as East Lansing can take is the passage of legislation guaranteeing open occupancy and rentals.

More than a year after the need for legal action to cope with housing discrimination was brought to the attention of the City Council by East Lansing citizens, no action has been taken. No legal report has been made, and the mayor of East Lansing is, by his own admission, still uninformed about many aspects of the problem. Despite resolutions expressing concern, despite the existence of guarantees in the State Constitution, there

"Civil Rights Struggle"

1965-1966

is no rapid justice for members of minority groups denied rental on the basis of race, and discrimination still exists in the sale of housing.

The meeting Tuesday night was the culmination of three weeks of discussions. Despite previous statements that the resolution of legal obstacles was the chief problem, Mayor Thomas revealed that he was unequivocally opposed to an open occupancy ordinance, even if it proves to be legal. While he expressed qualified support for an ordinance banning discrimination in licensed rental, he would promise no immediate action.

In a responsible community, moral leadership cannot be founded on the basis of equivocation of this kind.

Negotiations had yielded nothing but exposure of hypocrisy. The only action left — action we had discussed for weeks — was civil disobedience.

At 11:00 P.M., we confronted the community with a plea to search their hearts. The gravity of our action, jeopardizing our futures and suffering the indignities of jeers and jail, is testimony to our commitment and the immediacy of the issue. Some will be deterred by our action, but few will remain indifferent. We have made our commitment. We ask those deterred by our action to re-search their hearts. We beseech those who with us realize the seriousness of the situation to take action also — to take the risk of speaking out and acting for that which they know to be good and right.

East Lansing
Civil Rights
Movement

CIVIL RIGHTS RALLY
→ THUR. JUNE 3
UNION BALLROOM
8 30

Two groups blast African Center

By JEANNE SADDLER
State News Staff Writer

As a follow-up to the occupation of the African Studies Center last week, the Pan-African Students Organization in the Americas (PASOA) and the Black Liberation Front (BLF) issued a joint statement questioning why so few black students involved in African studies were informed of an African Studies conference last week in Montreal. The Center's staff was attending this conference the day the organizations demonstrated.

About 25 members of BLF and PASOA demonstrated at the center Oct. 17 demanding that it be placed under black control.

They charged that black students had been intentionally and systematically excluded from the center.

"The number of African students born in mother Africa and those born in the Americas on this campus who participate in African Studies courses, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, is very large, and number in the dozens," the statement read.

"Yet as far as we have been able to discover, only four African students were informed about this conference, and only one eventually attended."

The PASOA and BLF statement also noted that the conference was obviously intended for professors and students, and that the expenses

of the students were paid.

"If this episode amounts to a deliberate and callous display of discrimination and racism, then the African Studies Center, especially the center director, Charles Hughes, must take full responsibility for having incurred the wrath of all African students on this campus," the two organizations stated.

The students said that they doubted that the omission was simply due to "indifference" or "administrative inefficiency." They demanded that the Center improve its organization and avenues of communication. The incident was called an "insulting, painful experience."

"PASOA and BLF want to make it crystal clear that they will no longer permit the center to rape and exploit the African students on this campus in the name of mother Africa. The African students are not too naive to realize that the center is a nursery-school for neo-colonialist academic scholars; we know all this," the statement read.

Ruth Hamilton, asst. professor of sociology and the only black faculty member involved with the center, said that she would hate to think that the exclusion was deliberate, but she really could not say.

"I think it's an extremely good idea for structural changes to take place in the center so that blacks have a greater deal to say about all aspects of its operation," she said.

Mrs. Hamilton has submitted a proposal to Hughes that would expand the center's programs so that undergraduate students would be able to major in African Studies. The proposal also includes courses on black America and provides for field experience in the black communities. She pointed out that Northwestern University already grants a certificate in African Studies.

"African Studies programs were originally started by large white institutions, and this original condition had perpetuated itself," she explained. "We should recruit and encourage black people to find out about the various aspects of African studies."

In response to the statement, Hughes said not all students were notified because there was a limited amount of funds. All of the professors involved with the center were notified, and

told to spread the word to their students.

"But general announcements were not made in their classrooms," Hughes explained, "because of the lack of money. Graduate students were probably notified for the most part."

The center's budget for this year is \$180,000, which includes salaries, Hughes said. He said that they have often requested more money, but never received more than a small increase. Forty per cent of the Center's budget is subsidized by the U.S. Office of Education.

At the Montreal conference, jointly sponsored by the Canadian African Studies Assn. and the African Studies Assn. of the United States, only one-third of the participants were black, Hughes said.

Referring to the charge of exclusion, James R. Hooker, professor of history said, "If they'll believe that, they'll believe anything. Every single one of my students who displayed an interest, went."

Hooker said that there was nothing new about the

conference, which is held every October in different cities. He explained, however, that professors in the center spend most of their time with students who they know best, and who contact them. He said that these were the students that would probably know about the conference.

"It never occurred to me that undergrads would go except at their own expense, because this is a professional organization, and undergraduates are in the process of becoming professionals," he commented. The statement was signed by the executive councils of BLF and PASOA. PASOA is a statewide organization, formed last April, with chapters at the University of Michigan and Wayne State. The MSU chapter is headed by Kamuyu Kangelthe and Maina Kinyatti.

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'U' committee works to end racial conflict

By MARILYN PATTERSON
State News Staff Writer

A multi-racial committee expects to report to the Academic Council early this fall on procedures for investigating and adjudicating complaints of racial discrimination on campus, Wilbur Brookover, Professor of secondary education and chairman of the committee, said Tuesday.

Brookover said the committee is working to "develop procedures of creating a more positive climate to improve practices" of campus racial relations.

"We are under the assumption that the situation can be improved, that there may be practices on campus that excise racist kinds of actions," he said.

The committee has looked at the by-laws of the University, the Academic Freedom Report and the by-laws of the faculty and University labor union contracts with an eye to the kinds of policies that have been stated and the procedures that have been involved, he said.

"Our concern is the entire University community, not just the faculty or the students," Brookover continued. "We are working toward a general policy of dealing with complaints of discrimination, but we don't want our procedures to take the place of already existing procedures for investigation and redress."

Brookover said that it is "premature" to talk about specific procedures that the committee is considering. However, two subcommittees of the multi-racial committee are now working on tentative statements on some of the committee's ideas. *no non-academic member?*

The members, appointed by Acting President Adams, are Brookover; David Berlo, chairman of the Dept. of Communications; John Henderson, professor of economics; C.C. Killingsworth, professor of labor and industrial relations; Hideya Kumata, professor of communications; Stan McClinton, ASMSU cabinet vice president for black affairs; Donald Nickerson, asst. professor of special education, and Charles Thornton, East Lansing graduate student.

African group backs BLF in studies center takeover

By JEANNE SADDLER
State News Staff Writer

The Pan-African Student Organization in the Americas (PASOA) released a statement Sunday giving their support to the Black Liberation Front's (BLF) take-over of the African Studies Center last Thursday.

"Like BLF, PASOA feels that the center should be under 'black control.' The way the center is now, from top to bottom, it is controlled, dominated, directed and operated entirely by whites," the statement read.

The African students said that the center excludes blacks from the policy-making process, and that the center itself reflects a white caste and is identified with a white culture.

In two specific examples, PASOA said that the only black faculty member in the center, Ruth Hamilton, asst. professor of sociology, was excluded from the policy-making process, and charged that the center gave an assistantship to teach Swahili to a white student this fall while there are African students who speak Kiswahili fluently and better qualify to teach the subject.

One African student explained that Kiswahili is the real name of the language and that Swahili was the name of a nation of people.

Referring to the many national crises on the African continent recently, the students said, "Pan-African Students Organization questions why the center has completely failed to

direct its energies and resources toward rendering itself more relevant and competent to deal with the challenging times and conditions of black people in Africa, in the United States and in the West Indies."

PASOA said that African students in the Americas had shown a "burning desire to reclaim their African heritage," and that any study or approach to African studies in North America must begin with at least a brief history of this interest.

"The center has failed to realize this, and this is its contradiction," PASOA stated.

"In moving toward this objective, Pan-African Students Organization charges the center with playing the old game of 'divide and rule,' with its racist refusal to include the blacks in any participation in the decision-making process."

The Pan-African Students called an African Studies Center on campus a necessity, but said that it must involve the "black faculty, the African students from abroad and the African students born in the United States."

PASOA said that it is more

important for the center to "address itself in relevant educational ways which will eventually change American public opinion on this campus based on deep racism.

"In summing up," the statement said, "both PASOA and BLF are waiting and watching carefully for an immediate response regarding the African Studies Center and its program . . . The black students want to make it clear that they can destroy the center, but the center cannot destroy them." 255