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RE: JPC Publications and Reporting on Africa

In the past three months, at least two uncommonly important events affecting the Black world (including, indirectly, Black Americans) took place in Africa: the conference of nonaligned nations in Algiers; and the International Monetary Fund meeting in Nairobi. As far as I can find out, no Black American publication had representatives on hand at either event.

It seems long past the time that responsible Black publications should be re-writing the white press and wire services where news regarding Africans (as well as Afro-Americans, and it is alarming to see how frequently the Black press re-writes the white press and wire services without making any effort at all to see the news from a Black perspective) is concerned. The Black press waits until the white press focuses on some situation or event before it notices Africa at all. Africa IS a big story ALL the time, and it will increasingly be so.

It seems to me that JPC is in a position to take the lead in a move to cover the African continent. It also seems to me that the emphasis in reporting from Africa should be less on individuals with European-style affluence and pretensions ~~than~~ more on substantive efforts to translate political independence into genuine economic development and power. The African continent is huge and varied, and there are fantastic stories of economic possibilities in places like Zaire (the former Congo), Nigeria and Guinea. Also, what is happening in Tanzania (building an economy from the ground up) promises much in the way of model for underdeveloped lands. And the railroad which the Chinese are engineering and building in copper-rich Zambia will open up political

and military prospects, as well as economic ones (Zambia is already a center of guerilla activity against the racist regimes in Southern Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique). Black Americans need some reliable information on what Africa is like and what it can become.

What I am suggesting is that JPC give serious attention to an African bureau. If that is not feasible at this time, then perhaps it is possible to deliberately schedule solid, documented, mature features on Africa in all the publications several times a year. Of course, writers assigned to the continent should have some background and some demonstrated sense of identification with the whole developing picture on Africa. It also would help if the writer had some facility in a language other than English, but a resourceful writer always can get around that limitation.

A really competent correspondent and researcher could produce features on the same country or event which would be geared for the needs of EDONY, JET or BLACK WORLD.

I think the time is ripe to increase the coverage on Africa.