

Bicycling

by John Justice

This is a subjective article. Henry J. Perry and myself run the funkier bicycle programs in the country; Bikes Unlimited and the ISCCF (Intercommunal Survival Committee to Combat Fascism) People's Free Bicycle Repair.

Bicycles are the focal point of many comrades lives; especially young comrades. Since the re-popularizing of bicycles, more capitalists have flooded the market (bicycle market), raising bicycle prices hopelessly beyond the reach of the poor youth. The State often uses these kind of attractive deprivations as a weapon against the poor communities.

One such example happened on Friday, August, 11 of this year in a Black community in Washington, D.C. Police planted a shiny, new, extra-chrome "gotta have one" bicycle unlocked outside of the Safeway store at 21 Street and Elm, waiting for some poor youth to be tempted. As the police lay in hiding, 16 yr. old Gregory Colman walked by the store. What kid wouldn't be tempted? He got on the bike and started pedaling away. Immediately a policeman appeared, gun drawn, ordering Gregory to stop. Then, from 3 feet away, the "policeman" shot 16 year old Gregory Coleman in the back, killing the criminal they just created.

This must stop!

Henry and I both realize that the State neglects the needs of the poor communities and the basic necessities are often priced out of reach. Our's are survival programs, striving to make people aware that love of the People is more important than love of the Dollar and that the means of survival is through unity.

Henry is beautiful! This 57 yr. old mailman goes to college at night and runs Bikes Unlimited in his "spare" time. Bikes Unlimited is a free bicycle lending program for the youth of East Oakland. As part of the program, Henry has three bicycle drill teams; one for young sisters, one for young brothers, and one for older comrades. The older team rides the baddest bikes I've ever seen, with each rider sitting six or seven feet off the ground while going through precision patterns. Through these programs he teaches the comrades self-respect, discipline, and safety, stressing the need to continually look after your comrade.

Both of our programs are suffering from a lack of bicycle parts. Henry can't turn anyone away and refuses to open the program until he has enough bikes to fill the demand. He presently has about 80 bikes lying around in need of spare parts, tires or minor repairs, but there isn't the man or woman power or spare parts to fix them. These are 80 bikes that could be in the community brightening the lives of 80 young brothers and sisters.



The people's Free Bicycle Repair Program is a different approach to the problem. Realizing that the poor community can't afford the rip-off prices of the local bicycle shops, I initiated the program in conjunction with the other survival programs of ISCCF; free plumbing, free window repair, free child care and a free health clinic.

The goals of the program are: fast, completely free repairs; to give away free bicycles to the people in the community who need them; to show the people how to fix their own bikes and to help the community realize that they are being exploited not just by the money conscious bicycle shops, but by all the capitalistic establishments that are geared for profit and not people.

We rely completely on donations from the community. Our parts stash is presently as empty as a landlords heart, and unless more parts are donated we might have to discontinue repairs for a while. We can't afford to buy new tires, wheels and all the other parts with built in obsolescence.

We need the community to come through with spare parts, broken bicycles, bikes that have been outgrown or aren't needed. There are many poor people in the community who can not afford bicycles, but want one for transportation or recreation.

We need people who can donate one, two or more hours a week to help us fix bicycles. You don't have to know how to fix bicycles, we'll teach you. Every Saturday at ISCCF I teach a class in general bicycle maintenance and repairs. The class is free and informal, with the emphasis on learning by doing, so dress accordingly.

Community involvement is essential. I called Henry up tonight to arrange a class in wheel building and truing, and we started talking (again) about getting the community involved in our programs. I said that people "think we are weird because we spend all this time running free programs", and he told me, "You are weird." I said, "So are you, brother." "I know," he said. "but everyone should be weird." This is what we need; a few more weirdos willing to donate a little of their time a week.

Bicycle donations for Bikes Unlimited can be left at Black Panther Central Headquarters, 8501 E. 14 Street, Oakland, or call Henry at 632-6338. Donations for the People's Free Bicycle Repair Program can be brought to the ISCCF Center at 1415 Stannage in Berkeley or call 525-4375. These are People's programs.

Power to the pedalers!

SPORTS



BASKETBALL TIME: Larry Coleman, a guard on the North Peralta basketball team, demonstrates his scoring abilities. North Peralta will play City College of San Francisco on November 24th in San Francisco.

BELIEVER'S DRIVE-IN

"We Believe in Food That Satisfies!"
FLAVOR CRISP CHICKEN BY THE BUCKET
BREAKFAST
DELICIOUS HOT DOGS
No. 1
3500 GROVE ST., OAKLAND, CALIF. - 632-8983

TELEGRAPH AVE. Pizza-land



WEDNESDAY NIGHT
BEVERAGE SPECIAL
\$1.00 Pitcher
BEER

TELEGRAPH
& 63rd

Every Wednesday LIVE ENTERTAINERS!