

PEACE FRIENDSHIP SOLIDARITY



**Angela
Davis
in the
GDR**

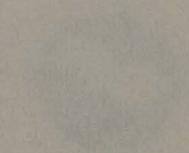


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Angola Dev's to the GDR



VERLAG DER WELT DRUCK

PEACE - FRIENDSHIP - SOLIDARITY

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Angela Davis in the GDR



VERLAG ZEIT IM BILD DRESDEN

PEACE

FRIENDSHIP

SOLIDARITY

Angela Davis in the GDR

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Angela Davis—today this name is known all over the world, as a symbol of the fearless struggle against racism and imperialist aggression, the struggle for truth and justice and the dignity of man.

A few weeks after she was released from the clutches of the blood-thirsty class-justice, Angela Davis, together with the organizers of the "Free Angela Davis" committee in the USA, Kendra Alexander, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USA, and her husband, Franklin Alexander, member of the National Council of the CPUSA, accepted an invitation from brother parties to make a friendship tour, which would take her to the Soviet Union, other European socialist countries, to Cuba and to Chile. Everywhere people, who had been anxious about her, had given her evidence of their sympathy, had fought for her freedom, rejoiced that they had an opportunity to meet her. So it was also in the German Democratic Republic, which she visited from 10 to 17 September 1972, with her companions, Kendra and Franklin Alexander. This week in September brought for her, as well as for hundreds of thousands of citizens of the socialist German state who met their American friends, hours and days which none of them will ever forget. At the reception at the airport, at the impressive solidarity meeting in the Friedrichstadt-Palast in Berlin, in Magdeburg, the centre of the GDR's heavy engineering industry, or in Leipzig, that tradition-filled centre of the German workers' movement; at meetings with state and party representatives, and many friendly meetings with cooperative farmers, workers, students and young people—everywhere the pleasant feeling of affection and the strength of solidarity was to be felt.

The welcome:

"It is a wonderful feeling to be in Berlin. I've looked forward to this moment for a long time . . ."

Fifty thousand people, a large proportion of them young workers and students, waited for Angela Davis, and her comrades, at the Berlin-Schönefeld Airport. They had scarcely left the aeroplane when they were surrounded by hundreds of joyful and excited people, all wanting to shake Angela Davis' hand, give her flowers, or embrace her. On the faces of the 50,000 people, who had organized themselves into an enormous reception committee to welcome her on behalf of all 17 million inhabitants of the first German workers' and farmers' state, was an expression of pride and joy . . .

They had all contributed to foiling the plans of the executioner, and to bursting open the prison doors.

In the name of the leaders of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic and the whole population, Werner Lamberz, member of the Political Bureau, and Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, cordially welcomed the representatives of progressive America. Dr. Günther Jahn, First Secretary of the Central Council of the Free German Youth (FDJ)—the united socialist youth organization in the GDR, declared, to the cheers of tens of thousands:

"In the country of Kant and Hegel, whose philosophy Angela Davis has studied, in the country of Schiller and Goethe, whose works Angela Davis has read in the original language, in the liberated homeland of Marx and Engels, millions of hearts are beating for her and her American comrades . . ."

He recalled the many demonstrations of solidarity by which the people of the GDR helped in the fight for Angela Davis' freedom.

The young American peace fighter declared in moving words that she had experienced the life-giving meaning of revolutionary solidarity, and was happy to be able to give thanks personally for all the demonstrations of sympathy and affection. She gave thanks on behalf of the Communist Party of the USA for the overpowering

reception, and expressed her pleasure in being in Berlin, where in the coming year, the Tenth World Festival of Youth and Students is to take place.

With young people:

"On our journey I have experienced some wonderful moments; this is one of the happiest moments of my life . . ."

In the traditional rallying-place—the Friedrichstadt-Palast in Berlin—3,000 enthusiastic boys and girls of the capital arrived to honour Angela Davis and Kendra and Franklin Alexander at a meeting. Beforehand, the 28-year-old civil rights fighter had been awarded the Great Star of Friendship among the Peoples, at the suggestion of the Central Committee of the SED and the Council of Ministers of the GDR, by Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the Council of State of the GDR. This was an award which particularly pleased her since—as she declared—it had also been awarded to one of the greatest heroes of the USA, Paul Robeson.

In the Friedrichstadt-Palast, young people reported how they had contributed in the fight to free Angela Davis:

"You are a great example for us", declared 12-year-old schoolboy Axel Marum of the 17th secondary school in Berlin-Treptow, to stormy applause.

"We sent many letters to you in prison, in the hope that they would encourage you . . ."

And Angela Holan, student at the Humboldt University, Berlin, who two years ago took part in a world youth conference of the United Nations in New York as a member of an FDJ delegation, said:

"We are very happy that you are free and here with us. We see your great victory as a magnificent triumph of proletarian internationalism . . ."

Songs—some composed during the fight to free the young American patriot—alternated with short speeches by the young people. The song of the victorious October Revolution in Russia was followed by the song of Sacco and Vanzetti,—“the good shoemaker and the poor fishmonger”—, who were sent to the electric chair in 1927 as

victims of American class-justice, and directly after that, the optimistic composition "But Angela is free . . ."

Then Angela spoke:

"This gathering reminds me of when I was still in prison, and my sister Fania spoke to you here, and asked you to continue to fight for my release. She brought your message to me in prison in California. I am happy not only to be here in the German Democratic Republic, in Socialist Germany, but especially in Berlin, in the city of the Tenth World Youth Festival . . ."

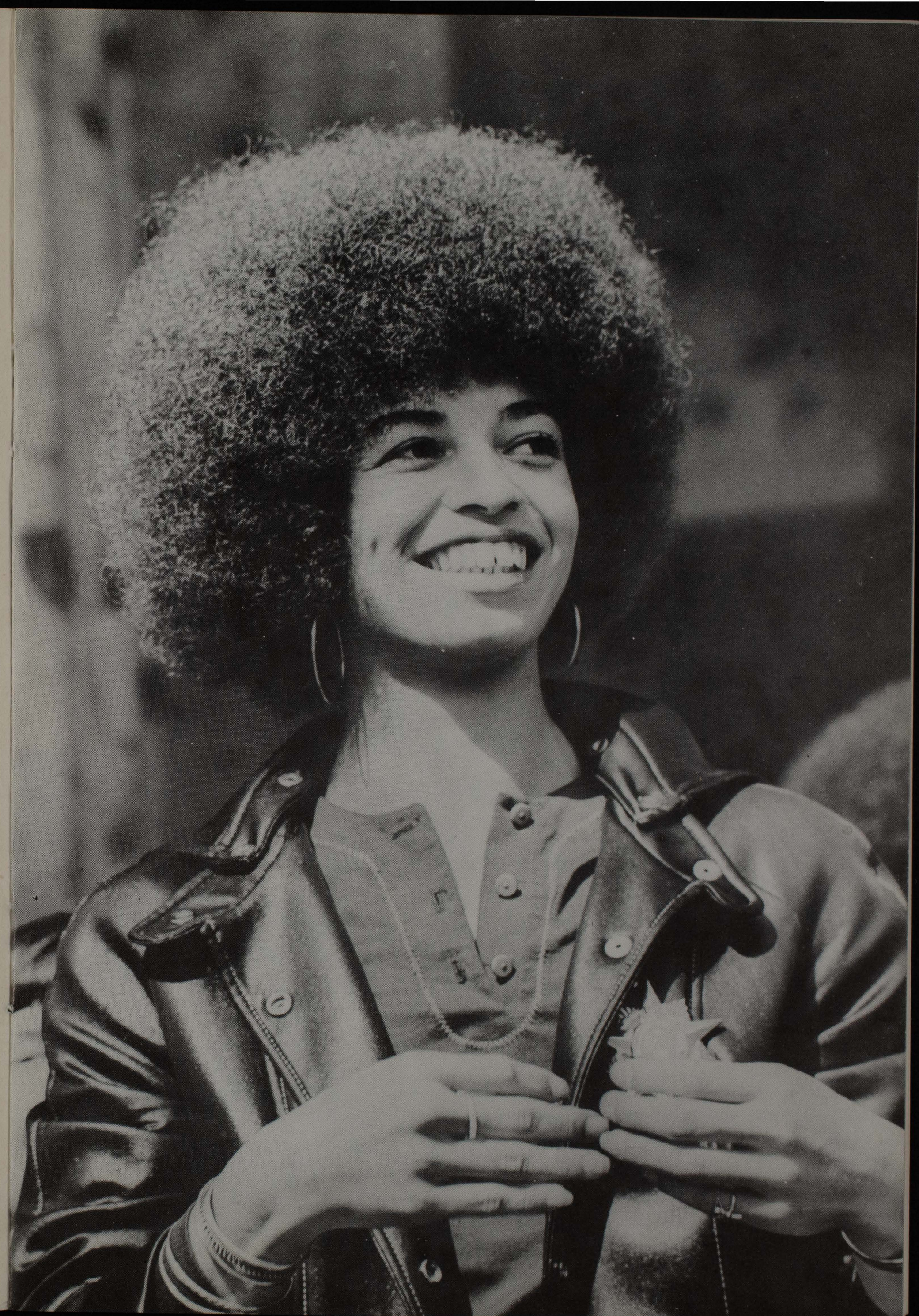
Then Angela Davis praised the solidarity campaign for her release, and stated:

"With the many, many letters written to me, and the letters of protest written to the government of the United States, the people of the GDR made a lasting impression on the government of my country. The peoples of the Soviet Union, the peoples of the German Democratic Republic, and the peoples of the other socialist countries lead the way in the great movement of progressive world powers which led to my release. The victory won by my release is not only my victory, and the purpose was not merely to release one prisoner from political oppression in the USA. This victory is a lesson for everyone in the world. Above all and in the first place it teaches us that we are in a position to end the genocide in Indochina!"

Angela Davis then spoke of those things which had impressed her most on her journey:

"We see here in your country the living results of the deeds of the peoples of the Soviet Union, who freed your country and the world from Hitler fascism. We see here the legacy of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the first theoreticians and activists of scientific Socialism, and also the great deeds of the German anti-fascists.

"As we journeyed through the Soviet Union, and since we have been in your country, we felt as if we were in a new dimension, a completely new dimension of space and time. We find ourselves, indeed, in a new historical era, when we compare life in the socialist countries with that in the United





Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and President of the GDR National Festival Committee, received Angela Davis and invited her to attend the 1973 Xth World Festival of Youth and Students in Berlin, capital of the GDR, as guest of honour.

At a friendship rally in the Friedrichstadt Theatre Angela Davis was enthusiastically welcomed by over 3,000 young Berliners. Right: Erich Honecker. Background, second from left: Kendra Alexander.



Angela Davis and her two comrades Kendra Alexander, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, USA, and Franklin Alexander, member of the CPUSA National Council, honoured the victims of fascism and militarism at the memorial in Unter den Linden, Berlin.





In the Auditorium Maximum of the Karl Marx University, Leipzig, Angela Davis, deeply moved, expressed thanks for the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy conferred upon her, the third outstanding champion of civil rights in the USA, after Professor William DuBois and Paul Robeson, to be awarded this high honour.



Angela Davis visited the men and women working at the rolling mill construction section of the Thälmann works in Magdeburg; as in all other sections of this huge nationally-owned heavy machinery complex she was given an extremely warm welcome.

At the request of the workers she entered her name in a brigade's book of honour.



Coremaker Karl-Heinz Jechow of the Thälmann foundry in Magdeburg handed Angela Davis a tape cassette with a message of solidarity from the workers of Magdeburg.

In every town she visited the people greeted her with the words: Welcome Angela Davis!





On 17 September 1972 Angela Davis and her fellow comrades were given a rousing send-off from Berlin-Schönefeld airport. From right to left: Werner Lamberz, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, Gerhard Weiss, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the GDR, Kendra Alexander, Dr. Günther Jahn, First Secretary of the Central Council of the Free German Youth, and Franklin Alexander.

States. We see here what it means for the working class to wield the power. It fills me with pride to meet here in the Friedrichstadt-Palast men and women under whose guidance the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin have been put into practice. The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, Comrade Erich Honecker, spent ten years in the hell of fascist prisons, and I know that there are many other men and women present, besides Comrade Honecker, who, in Germany's darkest hour, also felt the weight of the iron heel. It fills me, therefore, with the greatest joy to see how thousands of young people here pay tribute to such men and women. May the day draw nearer when in America, too, men and women who languish in prison for their convictions will also receive such acclaim. Then the way will be open to a bright future for our country."

Her last words drew spontaneous applause from the 3,000 present which led into the hymn of the workers of all countries—the Internationale.

With Erich Honecker:

"For me it is a strange and wonderful feeling to be the guest of the leadership of a whole country because we are used to fighting against the leaders of our country . . ."

Angela Davis is the guest of Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, in the Central Committee building. Erich Honecker praised the brave stand of Angela Davis, her perseverance and courage, and emphasized that the ties with Angela Davis were an expression of the traditionally strong fraternal relations between German and American communists:

"The theories of Marxism-Leninism, and solidarity in the struggle against our common enemy, imperialism, have always been a strong link uniting our two parties. We are putting into practice the theories of Marx, Engels and Lenin, we are working in the spirit of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Ernst Thälmann, a militant spirit, inspired by

proletarian internationalism. All our sympathy lies with those brave citizens of the USA who are struggling with determination in their own country against the imperialist policy of aggression in Vietnam . . .”

Angela Davis conveyed greetings from Henry Winston, the Chairman of the Communist Party of the USA, and Gus Hall, the General Secretary as well as all American communists and progressive forces, and expressed her particular pleasure at the education of young people in the GDR:

“From all our meetings with young people and students, we are convinced that here the younger generation has grown up free from racial prejudice and fascist ideas. This is one of the greatest achievements of the working class and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, which has overcome the racial prejudice resulting from Hitler’s brutal master race ideology by which the German people were corrupted, and has planted the seeds of international friendship in the hearts of the people. Only Socialism, only a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party could have brought about such a change. When we get back to the USA, and recount how the children called out ‘friendship’ to us, and waved to me, when we speak of the wonderful open faces of all the people that we met here, and of the proletarian internationalism with which we were met by the people of the GDR, then we have a weapon in our hands to use against the imperialist enemy and its attempts to keep our people uninformed.”

At the end of this cordial meeting, Erich Honecker, in his capacity as President of the National Festival Committee of the GDR, invited Angela Davis to take part in the Tenth World Festival in Berlin in 1973 as a guest of honour.

With the border guards:

“We will explain in the USA the true function of the border with West Berlin . . .”

At Brandenburg Gate, on the border between the GDR and West Berlin, Angela Davis, Kendra and Franklin Alexander made themselves acquainted with the responsible duties of the border guards of the GDR. Sergeant Jürgen Uhlig, on duty here on the dividing line between Socialism and imperialism, told of the death of Corporal Reinhold Huhn, who was treacherously murdered by West Berlin gangsters on 18 June 1962, right on the border, and assured the American friends that he and his comrades were doing everything in their power to assure peace.

Angela Davis declared to the border guards that in the USA many lies were told about this border:

“We mourn the deaths of the border guards who sacrificed their lives for the protection of their socialist homeland. We also dedicate our lives to the fight against imperialism. When we return to the USA, we shall undertake to tell our people the truth about the true function of this border. In this way, we shall make our contribution to the ideological struggle against the powers of imperialism.”

From the hands of the Berlin painter and graphic artist, Ernest G. Reuter, Angela Davis received a print inspired by the support of the people of the GDR for the brave peace fighter.

With the workers:

“When the oppressed peoples all over the world join together, then we will have the power to overcome imperialism . . .”

One of the high points of the visit of Angela Davis and the American civil rights fighters to the GDR was a visit to the Ernst Thälmann Heavy Engineering Combine in Magdeburg. On behalf of the 12,000 employees, Hans Winterfeld, Secretary of the factory’s branch of the

SED, welcomed the representatives of the other America: "In the whole combine, there was not a single team of workers which did not protest against Angela Davis' arrest, and did not demand her freedom." This was further confirmed by the workers that Angela Davis visited in the factory. Many had stayed behind after the early shift to see her. In the Heinz Belger youth work-group, in which only young people work, Angela and her companions were given an enthusiastic welcome:

"We are happy that you are free again and we are proud that you have come to visit us at our work",
said the young foremen.

On behalf of the women of the Haberland crane-drivers' team, who want to take the name of "Angela Davis team", Waltraud Leuscher explained:

"Angela, we have taken you to our hearts and sent you many letters when you were in prison. We request your permission to give our team your name."

Angela gave her permission gladly, and was awarded honorary membership of the team. As she took her leave of the crane drivers, Angela said:

"Perhaps we shall meet again next year when I attend the World Youth Festival in Berlin . . ."

Meanwhile, a worker had presented Franklin Alexander with his party badge and embraced him. The national organizer of the Davis defence campaign in the USA was visibly moved; he shook the Thälmann worker's hand vigorously, and said:

"Our two parties—the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and the Communist Party of the USA—are united by many bonds in the fight against imperialism; these bonds can never be broken."

In the rolling-mill, a young core-moulder, Karl-Heinz Jechow, embraced Angela Davis warmly.

"Almost a year ago, on 21 October 1971, I assured your sister Fania at a solidarity meeting here in the factory, that we, the members of the Free German Youth, together with all young people in the GDR would stand at your side in the fight for justice and against despotism, and would fight for your release. Today we see our solidarity rewarded."

And another worker continued: "They say that the American prisons have thick walls, but today there is no wall thick enough to stand against the weight of our solidarity!"

Angela told the workers that the name of Ernst Thälmann, whose name the Magdeburg Heavy Engineering Combine bears, also has a good reputation among progressive movements in the USA:

"The name of Ernst Thälmann is of great significance for us, especially because we see fascist tendencies arising in our own country, similar to those which preceded Hitler's rise to power in Germany. For this reason, we regard Ernst Thälmann as a guiding light for us in our own campaign."

With the scientists:

Where Socialism has triumphed, study, research and teaching are exclusively for the benefit of the people; I was able to see this in the GDR for myself . . ."

In the large lecture theatre of the Carl Ludwig Institute of the Karl Marx University in Leipzig there was a festive gathering. Prorector Professor Gebhard announced, to applause of all those present, that the Scientific Council of the University had decided to award the young American lecturer an honorary doctor's degree. The Rector of the Karl Marx University, his Magnificence Professor Winkler, praised the high principles and courageous stand of the young Afro-American scholar, who stood as an example to the youth of the GDR. In his speech of praise he said:

"Great are those people who fight selflessly for noble causes. Great was Giordano Bruno, who in 1600 remained faithful to his scientific and philosophical convictions even in the hands of the Inquisition; the obscurantists burnt him, but could not break him.

"Great was Georgi Dimitrov, who in 1933, -falsely accused by the nazis of the Berlin Reichstag fire, -upheld his revolutionary convictions, and became the accuser of fascism. "The fight for freedom produces great men, true heroes.

They are the pride of humanity; reactionary forces persecute them, but the people love and honour them.

"Great is Angela Davis, who, in our times upheld her communist honour, her Marxist-Leninist outlook, the principles and goals of her party, the Communist Party of the USA, in the face of death. True philosophy does not only interpret life: its purpose is to change it. That is also the purpose of the militant life of Angela Davis . . ."

After William Dubois and Paul Robeson, Angela Davis is the third representative from the other America to receive an honorary doctorate from a university of the German Democratic Republic. Visibly moved, Angela faced the auditorium:

"I accept this honour, with the promise to do everything in my power to attain the high level of Marxist-Leninist scholarship embodied in this university bearing the name of Karl Marx."

On behalf of all students, among whom were many from Africa, Asia and Latin America, philosophy student Ingeborg Ohnreisser assured Angela that they would emulate her in fulfilling the demand of revolutionary philosophy to its protagonists, to do justice to the absolute unity of word and deed. She then presented Angela with a red banner signed by hundreds of students as a symbol of solidarity and eternal friendship.

Taking leave of the GDR:

"Goodbye until the Tenth World Festival of Youth and Students in the summer of 1973 in Berlin . . ."

The days flew past, making strong impressions on Angela, Kendra and Franklin Alexander, and everyone that experienced this time with them—the 80,000 at the Alter Markt in Magdeburg, or the 200,000 on the Karl Marx Platz in Leipzig,—felt the force of solidarity and common interest, which binds all progressive and peace-loving people in the world.

Angela Davis expressed her thoughts over these days in the following words:

"Everything that we have seen here has exceeded our expectations, everywhere we have been welcomed so warmly and cordially that we are deeply moved. The brothers and sisters who welcomed us had good reason to be joyful; they celebrated with us in Berlin, Magdeburg and Leipzig the triumph of their own power, a victory of proletarian internationalism and the class solidarity of the workers of the world, which, in the court room of San José was achieved by the efforts of many people. It was not the victory of one person, but the victory of a great cause—our common cause. It shows us that we are strong enough to deal imperialism even more severe blows, that we can fight to free more political prisoners, and also work towards the ending of the war in Vietnam . . ."

Goodbye, dear friends, until the Tenth World Festival of Youth and Students in Berlin in summer 1973!"

