

Media's at the Dog Show

Barry Barkan

1970

Maybe the overground media will learn from the people.

Der Fuhrer unleashed his vituperative and narrow Goerbels to whip the media into presenting only what the government wants the people to know.

The networks and the newspapers tripped over their own feet in an effort to shuffle into line. Like their liberal counterparts of a previous generation, the managers of the media crumpled, cringed and quickly rearranged their objective reality to oblige the rightwing fanatics of the government.

Now, dig the people.

Der Fuhrer attempted to silence them and make good, quiet Nazis of them by throwing eight brothers into the Chicago version of the circus maximus.

It was a very violent attempt at intimidation. The same world which watched the riot of the Chicago police in 1968, knew that the brothers were not submitting to Julius Hoffman, Atty. General John Mitchel and their coconspirators because they respected them. The world knew that the brothers submitted to the mockery of justice at the point of a gun.

The goal was clear: to intimidate the people.

But the people refused to shuffle. Across the nation they took to the streets, raising their middle fingers in a mighty "fuck-off." For the most part, however, the media ignored the people's rebellion.

You wouldn't have known it by the image on your television sets, but here in Detroit more than 400 people took to the streets of downtown to express their solidarity with the Chicago Eight and' their lawyers.

The police were there too in their first mass confrontation with the people since Commissioner Patrick Murphy took office.

The police under Murphy appeared more disciplined than usual. Although many of the heavily armed and badgeless members of the Tactical Mobile Unit nervously rammed their three-foot truncheons against their fists, there was no massive head cracking.

Instead the animals isolated individuals and busted them up.

Murphy's cops were just as racist as Spreen's who were just as racist as Girardin's, etc.

In the entire street force, which was estimated at more than 200 men, there was only one black face—that of an aged patrolman who directed traffic in front of Kennedy Square.

Perhaps Mr. Murphy does not trust his black officers to aggressively kick ass, or maybe he is afraid they might restrain the swine. Whatever the reason, they were systematically excluded.

The representatives of the state also used the demonstration as an opportunity to vamp on the Blacks. Black participants in the demonstration were in a minority.

Members of the National Committee to Combat Fascism, who did not participate, were on the streets selling the Black Panther newspaper.

But when the people were sufficiently fragmented so the man could kick ass with impunity, it was—for the most part—NCCF members who were vamped upon.

Throughout the demonstration, the cops moved about in cars apparently looking for leaders who they could isolate from the people and persecute in the courts. They shot hundreds of feet of film.

Some cops carried pictures of exiled White Panther leader Pun Plamondon on their dash boards. But they did not see him even though he was there. He was also in Chicago, New York, Berkeley, Washington and a number of other cities.

Few windows were smashed during the demonstration, which snaked back and forth through the downtown area. Some said it was because of the time of day.

Hundreds of shoppers were on the street, and many demonstrators appeared fearful of injuring them. At one point, as the police pursued about 100 protestors down Woodward, the people urged shoppers into the store where they would be safe from unpredictable and violence-prone pigs. Several stores locked their doors keeping anxious shoppers out.

The most dangerous aspect of the whole demonstration was the almost total blackout by local newspapers and television stations.

“The people’s right to know” is one of the time worn platitudes of the news reporting business. Reporters see themselves as guardians of this right. And, indeed, the right to know is vital.

The first thing that must be accomplished in order to effectuate totalitarianism is the silencing of the press. To maintain a fascist state the people must be kept from realizing the proportions of the opposition as well as the lengths of repression used to squelch it.

By keeping their cameras in the studio and at the dog show, the TV stations have effectively contributed to that end. They have set a dangerous precedent with grave consequences.

The logical projection of their self-enforced censorship is a convention like the one held by the Democrats in Chicago in 1968 with the TV cameras zeroed in on the windy floor debate while avoiding the police riot on the streets.

If the media does not take the cue from the people and tell Nixon, et al, to fuck off, and if it follows its current trend of bowing to intimidation without a whimper, then the web of fascism in this country will be speedily completed.

fifth Estate

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<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/100-march-5-18-1970/medias-at-the-dog-show>
Fifth Estate #100, March 5-18, 1970

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