

Just Motor City News

Fifth Estate Collective

1970

BOUNTY FOR COSTA

Charles Costa, an Inner City slumlord that lives in Southfield, has a habit of always trying to grab the media limelight. Through his hustling, Costa has gained a favorable reputation with Detroit's straight papers.

Among the people that he exploits in this community, however, he is branded for the pig that he is. His latest publicity ruse is to offer a 20 cent bounty on dead rats to all local residents.

Aside from the fact that it is obvious that this project is absurd and will not effect any lasting change, there are several other areas that Costa and the straight media have ignored.

First of all, this scheme is no more than Costa's method of ego building and image making. When he serves an eviction notice on the poor family and takes them to court, he will be remembered as the good guy. But not only does this rat bounty hype project a false image of Costa, but it clouds the real issue. It is the city of Detroit and slumlords like Costa that, through greed or lack of concern, perpetuate the conditions that create rat infested slums.

Also, it should have been clear to Costa, had he given it a second thought, that his announcement would create still another safety hazard for Inner City kids. How many children will be infected or bitten by rats while trying to catch them and collect the money?

Charles Costa is not interested in clearing the slums of rats. He is not interested in the welfare of Inner City children. Yet the media hails this pig as if he were some kind of humanitarian and promotes his bullshit scheme.

The Community Reporter, a local free newspaper that serves many of the people who are Costa's tenants, has long recognized the truth behind his fronts. They have consistently attacked Costa and exposed his real motivations.

In a recent editorial the paper stated: "As of a week ago last Tuesday Charles Costa's rat bounty had brought in 250 dead rats. So far no one has been shot by an over-anxious bounty-hunter's twenty-two and no rat bites have killed any neighborhood kids looking for candy money. We're lucky.

"Thanks to those faithful public servants the newspapers and the radio and television stations, Costa's do-it-yourself rat extermination project is well on its way. Maybe one of your kids is out hunting right now.

"Costa's rat bounty may yet get some publicity for the rat problem—some child may die for 20 cents and prove the point."

The time has come for the city and the slumlords to directly confront the problem. It is becoming too late for publicity stunts or ineffective policies. Only the city government or the slumlords have the kind of funds that are required.

They both are doing nothing except admonishing and vacillating. For every Inner City youth that is bitten by a rat, a slumlord or a city bureaucrat should be jailed for criminal neglect.

PEOPLE'S WEEK

Open City, in their usual fashion of diggin' on the culture, is sponsoring a celebration of "People's Week." The festival will be held March 28 through April 5.

By the time this article goes to print, a play, "First Night in the Ground", performed at the Detroit Repertory Theater, will already have initiated the week of activities.

Also scheduled for the early part of the week at the Altered Knave coffee house will be several groups including, The Gentle Craft, Jim Perkins, Garfield Blues and many other local bands. However, both will still be seen in Detroit as regular events.

On March 30 and 31, you can go and freek out on celluloid at Oakland University. The films being shown are "The Unknown Soldier," "Profiles Cast Long Shadows," "Guinea," "Little Jesus," "Plastic Fantastic Lover," and three Road Runner cartoons.

There is a 75 cent donation and the films are being shown in room 195, Hannah Hall, at 7:00 P.M. and 9:15 P.M.

On April 5, for the highlight of the week, Open City is holding a People's Party and Auction at the Easttown Theater. Brother J.C. Crawford will be the MC and head auctioneer. More than 20 local head shops and boutiques have donated clothes, jewelry and other articles to be sold.

These events at the Easttown will last from 2 P.M. until midnight, featuring All The Lonely People, Up, Rumor, Norman James Blues Band, Virgin Dawn, Brownsville Station, Red, White and Blues Band, Shaky Jake and Ormandy. Keep on truckin' Open City.

NADER THE NEMESIS

The nemesis of giant corporations and hero of the man in the street, Ralph Nader, is off and running on another crusade. Not content with killing the Corvair and making every driver a little more paranoid about Detroit's greatest products, Nader is now accusing industries of being guilty of polluting the air and water, of perpetrating a "crime wave that utterly dwarfs street crime by comparison."

Nader cited the recent episode of Santa Barbara where a large portion of the coastline was almost completely destroyed through the negligence of the Union Oil Co. He noted that whereas an individual may be fined \$50 for tossing a beer can in Yellowstone, there was no action taken against the oil company. This practice of employing different standards of legal punishment is the result of a system built upon corporate enterprise which places value on the concept of profit making and not individual freedom.

The courts are thoroughly intimidated by the threat of economic retribution and therefore continue to turn their heads at the gross illegalities of big firms. Nader maintained that if the existing laws were followed and enforced upon business as well as private citizens, the pollution problem would be lessened considerably.

These remarks came in a speech at the recent environmental teach-in at Ann Arbor. A capacity crowd of 4,200 gathered around to listen to, agree with, and wonder about his accusations, although the sincerity of the group demonstrated by their actions was to be doubted. Only about 30 people were on hand to conduct a tour of actual evidence of pollution along the Detroit River.

While not actually saying that the University of Michigan is negligent in its duty Nader seems to think that there is some connection between UM's ownership of 27,000 shares of General Motors stock and the fact that GM contributes some 35% of all pollution in the country. The group sponsoring the teach-in answered this challenge by saying that it had asked Robbin Fleming to condemn GM for refusing to cooperate with Nader's project on Corporate Responsibility.

There has been no response from Fleming at this point.

The project on Corporate Responsibility is seeking to raise the question of unsafe technology and pollution at the next stockholder's meeting late this spring.

PLYMOUTH vs PEOPLE

The problem of who is really responsible for the safe keeping of court records has come up once again in a Wayne County Circuit Court. Rolf Dietrich, who was recently charged with distributing "obscene material" (Fifth Estate) is presently suing the Plymouth police chief, for \$2,980 in damages.

The issue of responsibility cropped up when Dietrich attempted to gain control of the records of his case and was refused by the Plymouth attorney.

Although the law states that such material will be available in this type of case, District Judge Dunbar Davis said that he would not cite the attorney for contempt of court if he did not comply. This behavior has been termed "ridiculous" by a higher judge but the records remain in court hands.

Dietrich is suing Police Chief Herbert Straley because of the hassle that resulted from the incident. His conviction was overturned when the ordinance he was charged with violating was ruled unconstitutional.

The local ordinance had to be repealed when it was found that the Fifth Estate is, after all, an expression of free speech and any attempt to interfere with the printing, sale or distribution of it is an infringement upon those rights.

Following Judge Davis's refusal to abide by the law, Dietrich then took his case to Wayne Circuit Judge James N. Canham and received encouraging words, but no action.

Canham refused to become directly involved by saying, "The law is clear, I suggest you go back and ask the judge to follow that law."

Judge Canham, by not ordering the release of the records as is his responsibility has succeeded in prolonging the case and carefully avoiding stepping on the toes of his colleagues.

He has not completely washed his hands of the matter; however, Dietrich may take some hope in Canham's further statements. The judge stated that if the records were not forthcoming in Dietrich's next attempt, he would "consider the case again."

This entire episode, with its obvious and flagrant violations of Constitutional Law is another example of the lengths to which Amerikan courts will go to suppress youth and the New Left.

POSEN FOLLIES

Protest demonstrations and classroom disruptions are no longer events exclusive to urban environments. On March 25, Posen, a small farming community in Northern Michigan, began to feel the effects of student protest.

In a rather comical series of events, the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Posen School Board resigned March 25.

Their resignations followed two days of sit-ins; 197 of the town's 217 high school students, and a noisy emergency board meeting at which students and parents demanded that the board reconsider the dismissal of the town's high school art teacher. At the meeting, when several members of the board threatened to resign, 400 students and parents cheered and Gerald Wozniak, board president, stomped out.

In his resignation the next night he spoke of "badgering, abuses, and total lack of respect" for his authority, unprecedented in his 13 years on the board. He further compared the students and their parents to SDS factions.

The teacher, Daniel Morse, who has long been a civil rights advocate, sparked the affair with a letter to the *Alpena News* citing the Board's policy of dismissing teachers with new ideas. He also charged that the tenure committee, whose unanimous decision was upheld by the board, had based its recommendation to dismiss him more on hearsay evidence than on classroom observation.

He was also denied the year's probation which is customarily granted to teachers who are not approved for tenure after two years of service. One Posenite accused Morse of advocating "a very liberal teaching policy with an entirely different set of new morals than the children have been subjected to before."

Although the students were solidly behind their teacher, some citizens did not approve of his ideas for their children's minds. The resigning board members feared that the whole affair would undermine the authority structure of the school system. Right On, Posen!

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