

# Pro-War Group Tries to Smear Lafferty, Fifth Estate in 17<sup>th</sup> District

Fifth Estate Collective

1966

James Lafferty's campaign for the Congress from the 17<sup>th</sup> District on Detroit's far West side took on a new dimension with the appearance in the district of a leaflet branding Lafferty a "traitor" and calling the FIFTH ESTATE an "anti-Christian, anti-American hate sheet." Although the leaflet, entitled "HOW DARE JAMES LAFFERTY RUN FOR OFFICE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!" is signed by a group calling itself the 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Citizens Associated for Support of Our Boys in Vietnam, with headquarters at 17538 Rutherford, Detroit, it appears as though this is a front for Detroit's anti-Semitic hate group—Breakthrough. Particularly obvious is the re-use of "evidence" reprinted from past Breakthrough smear sheets and the liberal (excuse us) use of capital letters.

The candidate, who is running on a peace platform, is accused of backing "a policy of Retreat and Surrender to Communist Aggression in Asia." The leaflet attempts to brand Lafferty as a "traitor" by describing his connections with the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, Citizens for Peace in Vietnam, the National Lawyers Guild, and THE FIFTH ESTATE. Also accused of disloyalty, communism and subversion are a number of Wayne State University faculty and local clergymen.

The Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, of which Lafferty is listed as a sponsor, is described as being "in the forefront of the anti-Vietnam demonstrations in this area" and as having "all essential traits of a communist front." The D.C.W.V. is said to have "consistently parroted the COMMUNISTS' terms for settlement of the War, namely, that the U.S. halt the bombings, withdraw all its forces, and negotiate with the Viet-Cong—in other words—SURRENDER." The leaflet also assaults the peace group for "aiding" the W.E.B. DUBOIS CLUB and informs the reader that, "W.E.B. DUBOIS, a founder of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was during his lifetime associated with 96 COMMUNIST fronts."

Citizens for Peace in Vietnam, of which James Lafferty is Chairman, is described in the rightist leaflet as "another camouflage for the promotion of a COMMUNIST VICTORY and U. S. SURRENDER in Asia." Endorsers of an ad sponsored by the Citizens for Peace in Vietnam and speakers at a rally it sponsored with the DCEWV are listed as further proof of traitorous intent. Among these are the Rev. Clarence Nelson, the Rev. Robert Willoughby, Helga Herz described as the ("daughter of Alice Herz who burned herself to death in protest against the war"), Marion Edman, William Bunge, and David Herreshoff of the Wayne State faculty, and Harold Shapiro, representative of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters Union. Ernest Mazey is described as "Executive — Director of the AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION and—according to the Washington Daily News—a sympathizer of Trotsky who co-founded the Soviet Union with LENIN."

The National Lawyers Guild, of which Lafferty is Executive — Secretary, is described as having been cited as a "COMMUNIST-front" by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The leaflet points out that the guild has been accused of going "far afield to oppose the foreign policies of the United States in line with the current line of the Soviet Union," of conducting activities "directed toward

the weakening of the security programs of Federal and local governments,” and of “having launched a program to defend persons in ‘civil rights’ cases in Mississippi.”

Lafferty is also attacked for his supposed connections with THE FIFTH ESTATE. The Pro War group’s leaflet notes that “this paper is promoted and distributed by the above-mentioned “DETROIT COMMITTEE TO END THE WAR IN VIETNAM’. which is said to have reported that “the paper is being circulated among ‘people like us’ “. This is followed by the announcement, \*EDITOR is HARVEY OVSHINSKY.” (emphasis in the original) The writers of the leaflet are of the opinion that “a peddler of smut might blush if he read the pages of THE FIFTH ESTATE newspaper.”

“In this paper have appeared cartoons, ads, and articles which border on OUTRIGHT TREASON. Gutter — type attacks have been made upon our men in military service and our beloved country. Christian virtue and morality have been scourged, mocked and ridiculed. One especially vicious slur was cast upon every American who has ever worn the uniform of this country and especially upon those who fight and die in Vietnam. This was in the form of the FIFTH ESTATE’S version of a military recruiting ad which said ‘Killers, Sadists, Arsonists, Brain-washers— Enlist today in the service of your choice...”

“Bumper stickers have been advertised in FIFTH ESTATE which read ‘CHASTE MAKES WASTE, ‘PRAY FOR SEX,’ ‘HIRE THE MORALLY HANDICAPPED,’ etc. Poking fun at Prayer this anti-Christian, anti- American hate sheet printed a cartoon depicting a Christian about to be eaten by lions in the Roman Colosseum saying ‘Lord, we bless this meal...”

At its conclusion the’ leaflet put out by the 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Citizens Associated For Support of Our Boys in Vietnam calls upon its readers to “repudiate the TRAITORS in our midst” and calls for absolute victory in Vietnam. “Our purpose in Vietnam,” it says, “should not be to achieve a negotiated compromise. Let us help the South Vietnamese liberate their countrymen in the North by fighting to achieve the SURRENDER of the Aggressor COMMUNIST NORTH VIETNAM REGIME. Let us recognize that there can be NO PEACE so long as the Communists control the mainland of China. Let us, therefore, begin to employ all necessary steps to undermine the Chinese Communist Regime and replace it with the Forces of Freedom.”

The leaflets are signed by Mike Barrett and Gloria Daniels, respectively “Chairman” and “Secretary” of the pro-war group. In a postscript they request that “anyone wishing further information about the matters dealt with herein, please write above address or contact BREAKTHROUGH (local anti-communist organization) P.O. Box 3061, Detroit 48231.”

When reached at his Plum Street Office, HARVEY OVSHINSKY, EDITOR and publisher of the FIFTH ESTATE, commented on the charge that his paper was an “anti-Christian, anti American hate sheet.” “We are not anti-American. Why,” he said, “some of my best friends our Americans.”

Asked about the charges of treason leveled against the DCEWV, Peter Werbe, a long-time member of the group said, “Charges? I thought the leaflet was soliciting for contributions to mental health research.”

James Lafferty when reached said he did not want to dignify such slander with a reply. He said the distribution of the leaflet is having no effect on his campaign and that the best way to combat such things is to work harder for peace, civil rights, and an end to poverty. Campaign workers are still needed and may volunteer at the Lafferty headquarters at 14406 Grand River, phone 273-6540.

## Related

- *Fifth Estate’s* Vietnam Resource Page.
- Campaign ’66, FE #12, August 15, 1966

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1966

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/11-july-30-1966/pro-war-group-tries-to-smear-lafferty-fifth-estate>  
Fifth Estate #11, July 30, 1966

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