

# Letters

**We want your letters.**

Various Authors

1972

## **Dear F.E.**

A few months ago we read a blurb in your “letters” column from a couple of prisoners in an Ohio penitentiary who wanted to hear from any of your readers. We wrote, expecting to join the hundreds who would respond.

They got three replies—one from a girl of 13, one from an old crank and one from us.

We have been enriched by a steady stream of letters from a couple of beautiful guys. What surprises us is the apathy of your many thousands of readers who apparently have lost, or never really had, the concern and the humanity that “movement” people constantly claim the rest of the world lacks. A sad commentary.

Sam and Jann

Dalton Pa.

## **Dear Comrades,**

Here’s my November and December Sustainer’s contribution.

Since I can’t seem to find the energy to make it to staff meetings, let me make some observations here.

1) The paper continues to look really fine. The FE format is certainly one of the things that makes it one of the most readable papers anywhere.

2) “Roots of the Underground” is an excellent series. Layout is good. I couldn’t understand why some of the excerpts from Kerouac were chosen, but I guess everyone’s got their favorite passages. I think you should continue the series and see if you can use it to solicit original poetry and creative prose. (And when you get original shit, I hope you give it more space than poor Mr. Toad got.)

3) The post-election issue was weak in one respect. Not one word about socialism or about an alternative to the bourgeois political system. The main articles—on abortion, voting, McGovern and the Detroit Hijackings—all had the same despondent note. Admittedly, it was not a good week. But the articles were a summary of defeat and carried no hint of a constructive alternative. This is important, not for what it says about your consciousness, but for what it does to the readers’ consciousness. It reinforces the blind despair and hippy nihilism which is unproductive, at best.

Of course, it’s really a chore to figure out ways of talking about socialism. I think that the pieces we used to run on Cuba and China were better than nothing. I know that some of you have principled objections to holding up these countries as examples of socialism. I have a general reservation about using socialist regimes in primarily agricultural societies as models for this country. (I believe that this was one of the characteristic errors of the New Left.) But the problem of talking about socialism remains and it must be addressed.

4) Beginning with the “News Ad Ban Hit” article and extending to certain ads which appeared recently in the Fifth Estate (cf., for *Oui Magazine* and *Deep Throat*) you have arrived at a remarkably opportunist position on advertising.

To my knowledge, the FE has never repudiated its position on personal ads. According to this policy, the paper refused to carry ads which perpetuate objectified, alienated social/sexual relationships. Now, *Deep Throat* and *Oui Magazine* are media products which perpetuate the fucked up sexual relationships of this society at least as much as some dude who wants uninvolved meetings with 36-24-36. How can you adopt a policy on display ads which so thoroughly contradicts your policy on personal ads?

Your readers are sensitive to this. They write in wondering how you can criticize the *News* for dropping X-rated movie ads and yet continue the censorship of personal ads. Part of your answer is to say that whereas the *News* hypocritically pretends objectivity, the FE is an “openly partisan newspaper.” Hence, it can continue to censor personal ads. Then, in the next issue we find the display ad for *Deep Throat*.

If you intend to continue the no-censorship policy on display ads, what will you do when the X-rated movie houses, the Blue Orchid Studio, Barney’s Swinging Singles Club and Aunt May’s Massage Parlour decide to take you up on it?

This problem has always been a confusing and frustrating one for the FE staff, because “nobody likes censorship.” OK. “Nobody likes dictatorship,” either. But I, for one, have the goal of universal dictatorship of working people exercised against the bourgeoisie. So I’m not against dictatorship in all instances. And I’m not against censorship in all instances.

Anyhow, here’s a vote for applying the personal ads policy to display ads. One of the reasons that people have joined the sustainers club is to help overcome the advertising handicaps you incur by refusing to print objectionable ads.

Keep up all the good work that you do. Keep on giving us lots of local news.

Love & Revolution,

Ripple

**Staff note:** Please see the ad policy editorial on this page.)

## Dear F.E. brothers and sisters:

As a concerned citizen dedicated to freedom, I would like to know if you could send me the addresses of any government agency or congressman, etc., so I can voice my opinion on such issues as: the legalization of marijuana, abortion reform, STRESS and the Metro Squad.

Peace Thru Struggle,

Ken Young

**Staff note:** You can probably get all those names and addresses from your city information office but why bother? Don’t believe for a minute that it’ll do any good.

# fifth Estate

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<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/173-december-16-1972-january-5-1973/letters>  
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