

Off Center

Sol Plafkin

1967

Surprise “hero” of the recent narcotics bust—Recorder’s Court Judge Frank Schemanske. Lena Sinclair (John’s wife) and three others were going to be held a second night without being formally charged, pending a chemical analysis of the stuff seized in the raids. When Lena’s pregnant condition was pointed out to the judge, he called the Narcotics Bureau and ordered the prisoners’ immediate release without bond of any kind.

“Tell them to appear at the Narcotics Bureau tomorrow morning,” he said. “If they don’t show up, I’ll be responsible.”

So, it appears, even a conservative judge doesn’t think much of our antiquated laws on narcotics.

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By the nicest coincidence, the executive board of the American Civil Liberties Union was holding its monthly meeting the night after the raid. Attorney Dennis James made an excellent presentation of the constitutional issues presented by the raids; possible suspensions of students, questions of illegal arrest and searches, etc. The ACLU decided to conduct a complete investigation of the matter and was especially concerned about the treatment of Wayne and DIT students charged under the narcotics laws.

Wayne Pres. William Keast and Board of Governors Chairman Norman O. Stockmeyer are members of the ACLU Executive Board. (They weren’t present at the meeting.) So, ACLU intervention should prove a deterrent to any unfair action by the University.

Veteran civil liberties attorney Harold Norris was particularly disturbed at the ACLU meeting by the greater implications of the raids. He saw them as part of a dangerous movement designed to stifle those who disagree with the basic precepts of our society.

Much literature was illegally seized during the Workshop raids, including copies of *THE FIFTH ESTATE*. Maybe some of the cops will now get “educated” by reading the material.

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Particularly disconcerting is the arbitrary police harassment of those involved in creative artistic endeavors in this town. This is an old pattern going back at least nine years, when Win Wells was arrested for reading allegedly obscene poetry at the old “Hungry i” on West Vernor and was continued recently by the closing down of the Concept East theatre for the performance of plays by Leroi Jones.

No wonder Detroit is such a cultural wasteland. Where do the Detroit Police expect future Picassos, Steinbecks, and Arthur Millers to flourish? In Lafayette Park?

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Flickers of hope from the Detroit Board of Education. Board member Abe Zwerdling has recommended that the Board’s administrative staff come up with a “demonstration school” project immediately. Classes of 15, etc. He’d like to show that with a little bit of extra work, every kid in Detroit is basically educable.

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Did you know that the entire peace movement in the U.S. is based upon a directive from the Communist “Worker” in late 1964? At least, that’s what Don Lobsinger said on WTVS last week. So, the next time you pick up

a placard to march in an antiwar demonstration, check with the “Worker” to make sure that you’re following the “correct” line.

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An atom smasher for Harlem? Maybe. The world’s largest atom smasher is to be built in a community where, according to the latest Federal standards, there is a minimum of segregation so that Negroes may share in the economic bonanza that will ensue from its construction and operation. NAACP’s Al Wheeler fought hard against its being brought to Ann Arbor, because of the blatant discriminatory practices there.

It finally got awarded to Weston, a suburb of Chicago. But the National Committee against Discrimination in Housing is now yelling that bigotry runs rampant in that area. (Remember last year’s backlash in the Chicago area.) So, if non-discrimination is an essential criterion for the placement of the atom smasher, it looks like Harlem would be one of the few places to qualify.

fifth Estate

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