

# Letters

## Various Authors

1976

### **Nature of Work**

Dear Friends:

Barbara and I were glad to receive the most recent issue of the *Fifth Estate*. The critique of the Boggs pamphlet was especially good. I think Durruti and I part company, however, in his assertion after the Marx quotation that “that was work under capitalism in 1844, that was wage work under capitalism in the 1930’s and that remains the nature of work today.”

At a certain level of analysis there is no denying this statement. But, at the concrete, when we ask how do/did people experience their work in 1844, the 1930’s, and today, the situation becomes more complex.

Indeed, the nature of the CIO, the impact of the social movement in art and literature, etc., cannot be understood without recognizing that there was some sort of pride in work, working, working hard. (Also see the discussion in Piven & Cloward, *Regulating the Poor*, on work relief both as demanded from below and as a form of social control.)

I fully agree with the assessment of present attitudes toward work, but we must ask careful questions about why such attitudes have appeared on a mass level since the late 1960’s.

Pete Rachleff

Pittsburgh

### **W. Coast Greetings**

Greetings, and salutations to the creators of the new *Fifth Estate*:

What you seem to be doing there is the best regularly published expression of “our tendency” currently operative in the U.S. I didn’t get to see your very first issue since driving the old *Fifth Estate* past the point of no return, but I did get to glance through the second one, featuring the Debord article on traffic, (the “Newpot” ad, the reporting on Portugal, and many other amusing and exciting items.

American revolutionaries, as the children of McLuhanesque modernity, should be light years ahead of our European counterparts in these areas, but so far, with few exceptions other than yourselves, this basic banality has not taken hold.

For this reason, and others, I am writing this letter to help alleviate your isolation. You made it known in the “letters” section of number two that you were disappointed at the lack of response to the first one. I hope this all too familiar problem doesn’t end up getting the best of you.

It’s such a lift to comrades scattered around the country, to know that in a major city thousands of people will be continually exposed to the libertarian communist perspective, that I think many others would join me in wishing you well. Then again, it would be a mistake to keep the paper going if it outlives its usefulness, and no outsider can be the judge of when that moment has arrived.

Agent 491.

Unitary Space Time

San Rafael, California

### **No Beautiful Losers**

To The *Fifth Estate*:

Regarding your article on Portugal: two minor criticisms. First of all, state-capitalism doesn't have to mean the eradication of workers' councils, as the example of Yugoslavia shows.

Also, there's nothing particularly revolutionary about "decentralization" and "autonomy" per se: capitals are "decentralized" and "autonomous" with relation-to one another. In fact, a communist society will have to be both "centralist" and "decentralist" in its approach to social planning.

And earlier, the councils, or whatever the organs of proletarian power turn out to be called this time around, will have to have developed some kind of centralized coordination so as to defeat the forces of the capitalist State.

The horrid example of the anarchist uprisings in Spain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries shows what happens as a result of the ideology of decentralism: isolated and crushed one by one, crushed by inferior numbers of troops whose only real advantage was organization.

Myself, I'm tired of our side being the Beautiful Losers.

Louis

Berkeley, California

### **Inaction News**

Dearest FE

Recently I saw that wholesome young Viet Nam veteran, Kelly Burke, ace-reporter for Channel 7 Action News, giving the citizens the low down on the low-grade "feud" between two rival radical newspapers, namely the FE and a certain expansionist paper, the *Sun*.

Apparently your paper is staffed by mutes, as Mr. Burke was shown by the Action Cameras standing in your offices thumbing through an issue of the FE (held at arms length), not attempting to elicit any views from the staffers. However, an extensive overview of the situation by Mr. Fenton of the *Sun* was aired, which was quite enlightening.

In as much as the WXYZ News Gang is a conscientious and objective outfit, I feel sure that the state of Detroit's radical media has been well represented.

By the way, as a result of Mr. Burke's report, I rushed to my nearest newsstand and bought a copy of the *Sun*, which seems to be merely a "Tradin' Times" type advertising periodical, judging by the volume of advertisement contained therein.

How fortunate I am to live in a society where I can get the full picture of an issue like this one. In Action Color.

Your friend

Bill Uki

### **Bon Appetit**

Dear Madams & Sirs:

I really must take this opportunity to commend you on the splendid method of preparing Roast Goose of Grosse Pointer (*FE note: suggested in "To Serve the Rich"*).

Taking your advice, I recently took my 16 gauge shotgun over to an area of Grosse Pointe Park and after about an hour or so of stalking the elusive above-mentioned fowl, bagged myself a 240-pound female.

After dragging it home, plucking it, gutting it and hacking away the incredibly thick layers of fat; after preparing it in accordance with your recipe, I treated myself to the most succulent meal I have had in some time.

Your "Serve the Rich" recipe booklet is truly a masterpiece and could possibly even solve the nutrition problems of millions of starving peoples throughout the United States and the Third World.

I'm running out of space, but next time I write I will send you some as yet untried recipes that my own taste buds have been dreaming up...Luau Gordon, Hubbard's Legs, Broasted Brooks of Patterson and Steamed Tongue of Sexton.

Most Respectfully Yours,

Pervert O. Hogfukker III

Gourmet Extraordinaire

# fifth Estate

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/268-january-1976/letters>  
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