

Letters to the Fifth Estate

Various Authors

1976

FEer Kidnapped?

[In response to Rich Take Non-Aspirin Over FE Ad, #274, July 1976]

Dear Sirs (sic):

We have kidnapped your staff member, E.B. Maple. If you do not deliver \$300,000 in one dollar bills or the Chairman of the Board of General Motors, whichever weighs more, to a site known only to us, we will be forced to release him.

We hope you do not find our demands unreasonable. We did not have much time to think them up. If you have any comments or suggestions concerning our terrorist rhetoric or actions, we would be most grateful to hear them.

Thank you for your time, consideration and kindness. And please, drive safely.

The ("Big") Alliance

(Names withheld in the interest of anonymity)

Flint

IRS Secret Files

Staff note: The following letter was received from the U.S. Internal' Revenue Service announcing it had kept a special file on this paper under the Nixon administration's program to combat radicals through the use of government agencies. The *Fifth Estate* (and individual staffers) has already gained access to its secret dossiers kept by the Detroit and Michigan Police subversive squads and one can only speculate how many other agencies keep/ kept records on us and other radical projects. We have requested inspection of our IRS file as indicated in the letter and will pass on any relevant material to the readers in future issues.

To the Fifth Estate:

During the period July 2, 1969 through August 9, 1973, an organizational component known as the Special Service Staff existed within the Internal Revenue Service. Shortly after assuming office, Commissioner Donald C. Alexander ordered the abolishment of the Staff. Although this order was given on August 9, 1973, the files of this organization are currently being retained by the Service at the request of the Congress of the United States.

We have reviewed the Special Service Staff files and determined that they contain material relating to you or your organization. In addition, on the basis of the material in these files, a referral was made with respect to you, your spouse, or your organization to a field office for evaluation or investigation of matters relating to your tax status under the laws of the United States.

This letter is to notify you that under applicable statutes you may have access to the files of the former Special Service Staff as they pertain to you or your organization. However, in accordance with those statutes, limited portions of the records may not be available to you. Disclosure laws specifically, exclude data such as that which would identify confidential sources; tax information related to third parties; that which would constitute an invasion of privacy; and records generated by another agency from which permission to disclose has not been received.

If you desire access to these records, please complete and return the enclosed form letter.

Charles A. Gibb

Acting Director, Disclosure Division, IRS

Washington DC 20224

Support & Criticism

Dear Fifth Estate:

I'm glad to add my support to the paper—hope you keep at it!

One criticism—sometimes your super-rhetoric seems to conceal ideas, rather than clarify or communicate. Our language needs improvement and growth not burial under dogmatic phrases.

Hope no one got kidnapped.

Love,

Z.

Somerville, Mass.

Staff Reply: Dear Z: Thanks for both your contribution and your criticism. From time to time readers will chide us for over use of “rhetoric,” but we have never been quite sure in what instances they mean.

We are obviously interested in communicating with as much clarity as possible and would like to know what type of language you find either difficult or rhetorical. Often we tell ourselves that it is problems with what we are saying more than with how, but we are always open to finding better ways to express ourselves. We invite other readers to suggest any ways we can “clean up our act.”

Support Needed

To the Fifth Estate:

Sometime around 2 am on March 9, 1976, a bomb exploded in the grounds of the Toulouse-Rangueil Science Faculty in Paris killing two anarchists: Robert Touati, 24, and Juan Durran Escribano, 23. It was not until 2 pm on March 10 that a gardener at the university discovered the corpses. Immediately the French press began to scream about an attempt against the French Minister of the Interior, Poniatoski, by the “GARI” group.

As the press and police did not know what had happened they fell back on invention. Poiniatowski had attended the funeral of a local CRS (riot police) colonel, killed a few days earlier in a clash with wine-growers at a CRS barracks adjoining the campus later in the morning of the explosion. According to the press reports, Touati and Escribano had planned to lower their device over the wall of the CRS barracks and detonate it during the funeral service. Somehow, while apparently setting the timer, it had exploded prematurely killing both comrades.

According to the French police, Touati was a member of the GARI and they attributed a whole series of explosions and attacks on public buildings to him that had occurred in the Toulouse area. Later the papers had to admit that it was more likely that Touati and Escribano had acted alone on their own initiative—though not discounting that others may have been involved and managed to escape.

In raids throughout the area, 23 people were arrested for questioning regarding the incident, but later released. Although failing to construct a conspiracy against the GARI group, the police arrested Sylvie Porte, a friend of Touati in Paris in the hope that they could widen the net to implicate more people and make more arrests. Sylvie was held in Paris for seven days of questioning, then transferred to Toulouse.

She is at the time of this writing still in jail in the Prison St. Michel Toulouse awaiting the whims of the French police and Examining Judge Bensoussan. So far all visits—even from members of her own family—have been refused.

For the “crime” of losing a friend Sylvie Porte has been imprisoned and is being used as a political hostage by the French authorities. It is up to all of us to see that she does not remain in prison.

Write letters of solidarity to her at:

Sylvie Porte, No. 25–72

Prison St. Michel

32000 Toulouse

France

and protest to your local representative of the French government and to Judge Bensoussan, Palais de Justice de Toulouse, France.

An English Comrade

London

No Workers’ Councils

Dear Fifth Estate People:

Your article in the July 1976 FE on the Spanish Revolution which condemned politicians of all varieties (even anarchists) was good as far as it went. However, what we are left with is the adulation of workers’ councils and their ability to administer every aspect of capitalist daily life and without a boss.

The article states that “the (Spanish) proletariat proved capable of administering and improving a modern urban economy, increasing productivity while maintaining necessary services” (emphasis added). This all amounts to a self-managed capitalism. A “modern urban economy” is capitalism no matter who administers it and “increased productivity” is always its demand no matter who is in control.

Workers’ councils could very well be the last counter-revolution (although one can never be sure what capital will come up with next). An authentic revolution would probably see the complete abandonment of the industrial means of production, if not their complete destruction, by those who have worked there under the coercion of the wage system.

Does anyone (other than those “revolutionaries” who think their role will be to plan production for others!) really believe someone would willfully return to those ghastly places where our lives are stolen from us each day—workers’ councils or not?

If we are serious about a revolution—an event which turns everything over—we have to look beyond the alternatives which capital has chosen for us.

Ned Ludd



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