

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

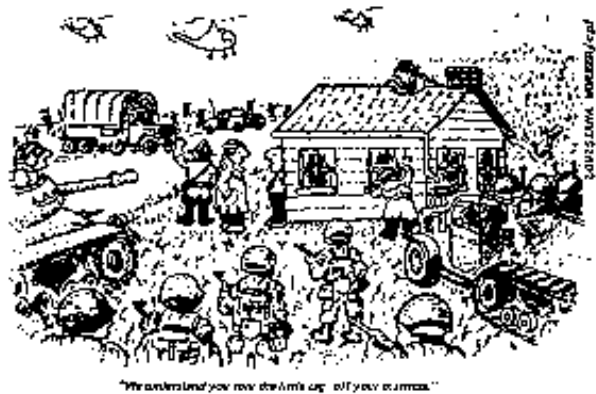
1976

To paraphrase an ex-president; we won't have *The Detroit Sun* to kick around anymore—the city's “hottest paper” collapsed financially after its Oct. 22 issue, ending several months of weekly publication. In a desperate attempt to raise needed cash (the staff hadn't been paid in several weeks), Editor John Sinclair began a campaign of favorable publicity for the mayor and the police that even outdid *The Sun's* previous performances. But even though grinning cops and politicians dominated the front pages of the last two issues, no one in the city administration was willing to secure the financial commitment the paper needed to continue publishing. The Sun was never like the other “alternative” liberal weeklies which appear in other major U.S. cities such as the Boston *Real Paper* or the Los Angeles *Free Press* with their combination of left-liberal politics and “hip” culture which meant that city hall is always fair game for investigative reporting.

Instead, under Sinclair's direction, *The Sun* existed simply as a PR sheet for Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, with stories critical of the city administration routinely suppressed and only an “up” image of the city permitted. *The Sun*, with a predominately white editorial staff and Nadine Brown, a reactionary black woman thrown in for window dressing, tried to become a paper of the black community taking even to the use of anti-white epithets in Sinclair's editorials. In the end neither the white nor black community had any interest in the paper other than its calendar information and paper sales slipped to a dismal level. Although in hock to a right-wing media conglomerate, Sinclair still plans to bring the paper out again in January—no one takes him very seriously. Good riddance to bad rubbish ...

Will the *Fifth Estate* join *The Sun* as an ex-paper? Most probably not, although our financial picture remains shaky. Reaction to our pleas for forty monthly sustainers didn't return the response we had hoped for, but many thanks to those who did send their support. Also, special thanks are due to the many readers who send in one-time contributions—you too, keep us going...

Many of you have received subscription renewal notices and we urge you to reply as soon as it is convenient for you. We don't have the money to send further letters, so if we don't hear from you in a while, we will have to assume you no longer want to receive the paper...



“We understand you tore the little tag off your mattress.”
(Louisiana Worker/cpf)

This issue of the FE is late in getting to you due to the fact that everyone of us on the staff is currently employed at least part-time, severely limiting our ability to produce the paper and maintain Ammunition Books. After a year of existing mainly on unemployment compensation, we are now remembering how greatly wage work cuts into your creative abilities and the time necessary for one's own projects. We are grateful to those comrades from outside Detroit who have been contributing articles on a regular basis and we encourage others to do so as well...

Blast from the past: Remember dancing to rock 'n roll of the MC5 at the Grande Ballroom on Grand River? It's now become the Grande Prayer Center "teaching the word of God." Times change...

Some of the most arrogant, swaggering rent-a-pigs in the area are those protecting the commodities at Oakland Mall. These ill-trained goons are now packing 9mm automatics in case any shoplifter makes a run for it...

The article on China in the October FE (#277) on pages 6 and 7 will make more sense if you reverse their order and begin the article on the right-hand page and continue to the left—sorry...

The IRS has sent the *Fifth Estate* documents collected by the tax people under the Nixon anti-radical strategy of the late 'sixties and made available to us through the Freedom of Information Act. Included were 34-pages related to the government's attempt to nail the FE on tax violations, but fortunately we disappointed them. This paper was described by the G-men as "anti-establishment, antiwar and pro-restricted drug use." Doesn't sound so bad...

Sign of the Times: A *Fifth Estate* staffer was standing around the Renaissance Center staring at the new construction, when a cop approached and asked if "there is anything I can help you with?" Recognizing this cue as a hint he is supposed to "go on about his business," the loafer asked if the cop would loan him ten dollars. "After all," the FEer reasoned, "you want to prevent crime don't you?" "Not really," said the cop, "that would put me out of a job."

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