

Letters to the Fifth Estate

Various Authors

1977

Sticks & Stones

Dear Fifth Estate,

In response to E.B. Maple ("On Organization: Two Reviews of The Camatte/Collu Pamphlet," FE #279, December 1976), I can only say that calling me a "Leninist" does not make it so.

I have not suggested that we should "organize the workers"; I have only argued that we should organize ourselves to begin the struggle for what we want. On the other hand, I am convinced that only a libertarian organization composed of tens of millions of working people can possibly overthrow class society. Scribbling slogans on walls won't do it (another lesson from SDS).

Otherwise I would like to thank the Fifth Estate collective for their efforts to begin this discussion.

It will be of interest to you that plans are now moving forward toward the publication of a mass libertarian newspaper in the San Francisco Bay Area. There are problems to be resolved, of course, but "moving the future in a libertarian direction" is something you do (or don't do)...not something that happens or doesn't happen.

For a life without bosses,

Ed Clark

Oakland, Calif.

More On Councils

Dear Fifth Estate,

We have followed with interest the exchange of letters on worker's councils (see Letters, FE #278, November, 1976, also search site for workers councils and self-management). Ned Ludd raises some interesting questions which have not been fully resolved in our own minds. Though we agree for the most part with Ludd that "the gigantic, anti-human productive forces" will stunt our lives, no matter who "controls" them, we cannot conceive of the "abandonment of the industrial means of production" as anything but the outcome of a process of communist social transformation. The immediate and total abandonment of the industrial means of production would, as Louis pointed out, be a suicidal act. This seems so obvious as to hardly need mentioning.

Ned Ludd is attempting to define the content of communism. This is more than can be said for Ted Lopez, who merely evokes the magical phrase "conscious and total radical transformation" as a substitute for discussing what real changes will take place in people's lives as the result of a communist revolution.

At this point Ludd's (and John and Paula Zerzan's) criticisms come in: In discussing communism, some "councilists" wind up endorsing a mere "rationalization" of the industrial means of production which includes the further expansion of productive forces, increased productivity, etc.

These hymns of praise to capital, mistakenly characterized by some as “communism,” can perhaps be traced to an ambiguity in Marx’s analysis of the productive forces and of capital (discussed in Jacques Camatte’s *The Wandering of Humanity*).

Finally, Lopez unfairly criticizes Ludd for his supposed “inability to read.” Ludd’s contention that Jacobs and Winks’ analysis amounts to praise for a self-managed capitalism cannot be refuted merely by quoting a passage which asserts what remains to be proved; namely, that the Spanish councils and collectives engaged in the “qualitative super-session of the relations of capitalist production.”

At the same time, it is unfair for Ludd to accuse his critics of presenting a “political program” and holding a “preconceived view of the ‘revolution’” while he is only “stating what I thought would happen.” The discussion and elaboration of revolutionary possibilities is not synonymous with putting forth a political program.

Also, Ludd’s own arrogance reaches ridiculous proportions when he refers to his critics as “crypto-Leninists” and “junior Kim II Sung.” These insults are a bit much.

Perhaps a little less arrogance all around would be in order. In our revolution, even writers are welcome, including Ned Ludd.

Yours for a new world,
Bob and Scott of Aurora
P.O. Box 1163
Madison, Wisconsin 53701

Brazilian Connection

To the Fifth Estate:

Hey, I generally like your paper, especially your article on the Brazil Indians (see “Indian Genocide: Brazil Has its Custers Too,” FE# 279, December, 1976). But why do you give away beer at your benefits? Don’t you see the connection?

Anyway, keep going and keep being funny.

LeRoy
Lansing

Friends In Italy

Dear Comrades,

The Italian comrades held a fun-raising meeting at Negrin and gathered a total of \$1040 for the anarchist movement worldwide. Of this total they decided to send to the Fifth Estate \$50. I distributed copies of the *Fifth Estate* to all the comrades and they thought very highly of it. We wish you the best in your continued efforts.

Comradely regards,
Bob Friedman
Sacramento, CA

Democratic Anarchists?

To the Fifth Estate:

As the campaign manager of the Margaret Wright/Ben Spock ticket on the Human Rights Party Label may I say that your campaign coverage stinks, but that’s understandable since the election process in the country also stinks.

But may I point out that Anarchists are not traditionally anti-democratic. The anarchists in St. Petersburg used the slogan “Free Soviets,” i.e. democratically elected soviets; the Makhnovists were particularly careful not to interfere with the elected Worker’s Councils; the Kronstadt affair was precipitated by an election of the Kronstadt Soviet

which found the Communist Party short of votes; and the left coalition government in Spain did not win the election until the anarchist organizations decided to vote and participate in the coalition government in 1936.

Don't count those who refused to vote as being anarchists. They were just too lazy and unpolitical.

FREE ELECTIONS

Bruce Brown

Lansing

Staff Response: Humanity will not be happy until the last politician (even if he calls himself an Anarchist) is hung with the guts of the last capitalist (even if he calls himself a Socialist).

Graffiti Says It

Dear Red Biped:

While lurking in the darkened alleys of industry, I came across the following graffiti:

"Party lines are for telephones!" "Urban guerillas clean restrooms the hard way!"

"The united front is a death wish!"

Bite the Bosses,

The Ferret

Red Mongoose Collective

Honolulu, HI

Libertarian Yipsters?

Dear Friends:

Greetings. Enclosed is one dollar for the November issue of the F.E.

We shall send you the money for the December issue once they sell out.

At this present moment we are discussing the possibilities of not carrying the F.E. anymore since it takes a long time to sell; most of our customers are Anarchists or textile workers and they really do not get into your paper. We feel they do not get into your paper solely because it looks like a libertarian Yipster Times, to which we agree, and because of the many pro-situationist articles. Again we must agree with the folks, but nonetheless we carried your paper because it does carry some news of interest to the non-intellectual Anarchist and proletarian.

Fraternally,

Mitchell Miller

Solidarity Collective

All Shades Books

Bristol, RI



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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/280-february-1977/letters-to-the-fifth-estate>
Fifth Estate #280, February 1977

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net