

# Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1977

**Things can only get worse** for auto workers with the election of Doug Fraser as president of the UAW. Beyond just being a run-of-the-mill hack, Fraser has a record of strike-breaking that old Henry Ford's security department would have admired. Fraser engineered the suppression of four major wildcat strikes in Detroit during 1973 through 1974 at Chrysler Corporation's Jefferson Ave., Detroit Forge, Mack Ave., and Dodge Truck plants. The worst case was at the Mack Stamping Plant where a mini-occupation had taken place and Fraser put together a goon squad comprised of over 1,000 union officials armed with clubs to force the strikers back to work and to "deal with radicals". When Detroit Police Inspector Joseph Areeda saw the gang of union officials at the plant he said to Fraser, "I'm glad we're on the same side." And so it is...

**A Michigan affiliate of The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML)** has been set up and appears to be closely connected with the staff of the now defunct Ann Arbor Sun. The NORML Michigan Advisory Board is loaded with politicians and agency hustlers whose first act has been to strengthen the hand of the police. Although the House bill the group supports would eliminate penalties for use of weed in private residences, it still contains criminal sanctions for possession and sale for five other categories including a felony rap of four years for sale of more than 100 grams of marijuana (a measly 3.5 ounces). The only reason someone can buy an ounce for private use is because someone else bought several pounds, but the NORML reformers are perfectly content to support a bill that would send someone to prison. Nice. It looks like support of NORML is support for the police. Fuck all laws...

**Ready For Anything Dept.:** At a conference on urban development at Wayne State University on April 30, Bruno Leon, a prominent architect from the University of Detroit was hawking the virtues of the Renaissance Center when he was asked a question regarding the cement berm that separates the 73-story basement from the rest of the city. "Do the cement bunkers in front of the RenCen contain machine gun placements as it has been alleged?" "I don't think so," came Leon's reply. One can assume then that the answer will only be known when there is an attempt made to level the monstrosity...

**For those people who petitioned Ingham County Circuit Court Judge Brown in March 1976** to have their State Police Red Squad files turned over to them and appeared for hearings in Lansing last summer: your files will now be released to you. Contact Brown's clerk, Michael Oesterle at (517) 484-1368. All police names will be deleted and if the file is small, it will be mailed to you. If it's large, you will have to go to Lansing to pick it up. No further progress has been made as of this writing for a general release of the files or for the legal motion to release the names of informers to those who were spied upon...

**Hoping to push people off the unemployment roles,** the Michigan Employment Security Commission is now soliciting "odd jobs" from employers. Wonder how much of our money they spent on mailing cards to city businesses asking them to employ "their workers" for \$2.50 per hour doing things like leaf-raking and putting up storm windows? If some of the proposed unemployment law changes are passed, MESC will be able to force people to take these sorts of jobs if they are on unemployment. Of course, if you are lucky, they may hire you to work on the survey to see how successful this job solicitation campaign was. Their little minds are always working...

**One striking thing about electoral campaigns by leftists** is that they become indistinguishable from those of their capitalist counterparts. A case in point is the Common Council candidacy of “radical attorney” Kenneth Cockrel, who recently held a two-hour cocktail reception at the Standard Club where the admission was \$50 a head. Always the darling of the white left, fast-talking Ken has engendered the enthusiastic support of Detroit’s New Leftovers who seem to be quite willing to overlook his rank opportunism and authoritarian politics. Cockrel has been trying to get a piece of the action for over ten years beginning in 1966 with an unsuccessful bid for State Representative on the Democratic Party ticket. He quickly exited establishment politics in the late sixties as radicalism became fashionable and emerged as a member of the undemocratic, central committee of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (which bragged about the fact that mass meetings were never held and that all decisions were made by the inner circle). With the collapse of the black movement, Cockrel returned to his law practice, most notably of late, defending a Flint police officer who was involved in a shoot-out with her partner. It’s really a toss-up as to who’s more contemptible—Cockrel or his supporters, but probably the latter since two-bit politicians can only operate with the compliance of willing followers...

**Since the *Detroit Free Press* has a circulation of some 500,000 a day**, most of us always assumed that the daily appearing readers’ poll, “Sound Off” on the front page had a considerable number of respondents to each question. As it turns out, we have learned from a reliable source that some questions bring in as few as thirty-five calls and the average is only about fifty. What is reported are only percentages, so that a close vote could mean seventeen for and eighteen against. Also, some calls are just people shouting obscenities into the recording, but these are counted as a vote depending on whether the yes or no phone was dialed...

**One final note on the Cockrel campaign:** we did find a note of humor in it. As several of us were driving to Greektown, we saw one of his campaign bumper stickers that some wag had cut in half vertically leaving only the left section which made it read: “Cock for Council.” That could get some votes! ...

**A big mailing for *Fifth Estate* subscription renewals** went out last week, and we urge those satisfied readers to respond as quickly as possible as we need the revenue. The first reply we received had written on it in magic marker, “This paper is trash!” but we hope most people feel better about it than that. Also, we hope as many people as possible will decide to sign on as sustainers (sustainers this month will receive the new Pierat’s book *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*) and will join those who have become the backbone of financial support for the *Fifth Estate*. One-time contributors are just as important, like the comrade in California who sent \$50 or just those who add an extra buck with their subscriptions.



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Fifth Estate #283, June, 1977

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