

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1977

With this issue of the *Fifth Estate*, the paper begins its thirteenth year of continuous publications with the first edition appearing November 19, 1965. Since that date 288 issues have been published, hundreds of people have come and gone from the staff, publishing schedules have varied from weekly to monthly and the politics contained within have flipped and flopped from liberal to New Left to Maoist to anarchist to its current perspectives. We keep on truckin' through, sometimes with less of a sense of purpose than at others, but always with a desire for revolution and the demand for the sweetness of life. Hope you can dig a little of what we are doing, and are doing something we dig on as well. Through all of it, we always try to remember the immortal words of Sammy Smoot, "When you smash the State, keep a smile on your lips and a song in your heart"...

With his victory in the November 8 Detroit Common Council election, attorney Kenneth Cockrel has finally obtained what he has always sought after—a piece of the action. Ken joins the growing list of ex-Movement heavyweights, like Tom Hayden in California, Chip Marshall in Seattle, and Paul Soglin in Madison, who have parlayed their "radicalism" of the '60s into cushy jobs as capitalist politicians. Last issue's "Vote for Cockrel—A Little Humiliation Won't Hurt" ad [FE #287, October 28, 1977] got Ken and his toadies kind of upset, but word reaching us from inside the campaign is that what they are really worried about is their man getting a pie in the face at the Council swearing-in ceremony. Street sources tell us the only problem now is, "What's your favorite flavor, Ken?"...

Speaking of the Cockrel campaign ad, to those of you who asked if it was "for real," we can only say: If you have to ask, does it really matter? (Remember when Paul Krasner—wrote in his *Realist Magazine* that Lyndon Johnson had fucked Kennedy's corpse on the plane from Dallas, and people asked him if it was TRUE!)...

The Matthaei sports complex at Wayne State University is the prime example of urban renewal (people removal) at its most callous, making a graveyard out of a poor community which was obliterated to build a playground for students. To add insult to injury, neighborhood people are all but excluded from using the facilities, and increasingly, fees are charged them for the building's use. Another one of WSU's many rip-offs is their pay-parking lots for their captive audience, but apparently not a willing one at Matthaei. The building custodians and campus piglets have been unable to keep in repair a wooden parking gate at the entrance to the complex. Every time one goes up, the wooden structure is snapped off within hours, and no amount of surveillance seems to be able to stem the tide...

Your local police state scored a big victory and a small defeat in November. The victory came as the Detroit Public Schools took on even more of the trappings of a medium-security prison with its ruling that all students must wear photo-ID badges at all times while attending school. Combined with the ever present armed guards, the constant assaults on teachers and the marauding groups of non-students (that evil category), school becomes a place where you not only have your head filled with nonsense, but is increasingly dangerous to your health. The set-back for the 1984-advocates came at the hands of the Michigan Court of Appeals which ruled that police did not have the right to arbitrarily demand ID from people, seemingly circumventing the age-old cop practice of the roust and ID-check. It's degrading enough as it is to have to carry a pocketful of cards from the State and other assorted institutions without being submitted to the further indignity of having some oinker demand proof of your slave

status. However, knowing the Detroit police, any attempt to invoke this current ruling in practice will probably bring you a nightstick across the head if you start citing the case rather than producing your wallet...

Since all States—modern and ancient—have always run on the reverse Robin Hood principle, that is: Rob from the poor and give to the rich, it should come as no surprise that the Michigan lottery has taken in \$409 million since its inception with nary a penny of it reducing the taxes gouged from us. The Lottery—the ultimate sucker bet (the worst odds in betting history for a big score)—attracts mainly the poor who hope for “50-cent miracles,” but is in reality just another tax on those who can least afford it and goes to finance a state apparatus that functions contrary to all of our interests...

Department of Ghosts: Several of us have read a recent addition to the Ammunition Books listing, *How It All Began*, by Bommi Baumann, the account of a working-class West German urban guerrilla. In his account of how his group developed from the antics of the Hash Rebels into armed struggle, we came across this passage: “We (the Hash Rebels) had an example in America: the MC5, the band; the White Panthers in Detroit, the only whites who took part in the ghetto uprisings, and who pushed things forward with their music. Later, the Berlin police were looking for hundreds of groups and sects—even hunting a ‘terrorist group’ called the MC5...” Although the Hash Rebels were wrong about who took part in the 1967 Detroit uprising (many whites did), it’s curious to find the influence your actions carry when printed in the media. A Fifth Estate staffer who visited Europe this summer was surprised to find a White Panther chapter still functioning in Glasgow, Scotland.



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