

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1979

Emily's, the downtown shop where all the nicey-nice smile faces go to get their over-priced touchy-feely thingys is apparently plagued with the same problem as any other Motor City store—shoplifting. The proprietor has displayed a sign reading, “Free double-dip ice cream cone to anyone fingering a shoplifter!” and another cutesy plea, “We don’t steal from you! Don’t steal from us.” Nothing more could drive us to a life of crime...

A local radio station had planned a retrospective on the ‘sixties with ex-radicals and ex FE staffers Harvey Ovshinsky (now a TV producer), John Sinclair (now an ad agency executive), and Frank Joyce (now a hack in the Communist Labor Party). Harvey couldn’t make it due to legitimate personal reasons, but Sinclair outright refused, stating, “I don’t want the past to interfere with what I’m trying to do now.” This left the morning talk show to Joyce, who although having interesting insights into the period, finally ended with dull Stalinist arguments for socialism. Had the show gone off as intended with all three, one station employee offered, it should have been called “Morning of the Living Dead” or “They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?”...

Speaking of dead horses, the national elections occurred right after our last edition bringing with them absolutely nothing of interest other than further confirmation that the vast majority of people see no value whatsoever in participating. George Gallup, writing after only a third of those eligible humiliated themselves by trooping off to the polls, stated, “The continuing decline in voter turnout—slightly more than 1/3 of adults voted last Tuesday—is also a matter of great concern (FE note: to whom?). Some of the nation’s voters feel, in effect, that there’s no difference between the parties; they both stand for the same thing.” Very perceptive, George. Of course, who is worried about this phenomenon are the rulers, who need voter turnout to justify their rule. You would think with such public apathy the vote returns would be relegated to page four wrap-ups in the newspapers and to a brief summary on the TV news. But no, it is treated as the number one story even though the population stays away in droves. Evidence of the interest was that when TV ratings were checked to see which of the three network election coverages were favored by viewers in the Detroit area, “The Pink Panther” won hands down. The old Peter Sellers movie was being shown on a UHF station as an alternative to the election bullshit. Wonder what would happen if the vote totals got around 5%? Right now the only country with a smaller turnout is the African country of Botswana with a largely illiterate population. Beat Botswana!...

Two ex-radicals who have made it big on the media interview circuit, Judge Justin (“30 years”) Ravitz and Councilman Ken Cockrel, have appeared in publications as diverse as *Mother Jones* and the Providence, Rhode Island, *Evening News*, always basking in a completely uncritical limelight as a novelty—a marxist judge and politician. However, a major Detroit publication is finally going to get at the other side of Cockrel in a story to appear later this year. The Councilman (who drives a city-purchased 1978 Chrysler Newport) will be characterized by one of his ex-cronies as “the Idi Amin of Detroit politics.” Cockrel, who certainly has the worst temper in town, reportedly is none too pleased about as much space being given to his detractors as has been granted to him in the past...

The time must be ripe for revolution—the Michigan Legislature has just passed into law a bill that would abolish the State Police Red Squad and in the same stroke abolished a 1930s statute that made it illegal to display a red flag. No information on the status of black flags which may still remain a prohibited symbol...

Becoming more reactionary with each passing day, the U.S. Labor Party (you labor; they party) teamed up with a right-wing black islamic group headed by the deposed head of the Nation of Islam for an ill-attended rally against drugs. The expressed purpose of the gathering was to rally opposition to the attempts to decriminalize marijuana which these idiots refer to as a “drug.” Since Detroit’s sub-zero weather has not deterred their fanatical pestering of drivers at every traffic light in the city, the fun becomes whether your phlegm will freeze before it strikes one of these cretins in the face.



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