

Letters to the Fifth Estate

Various Authors

1980

Mutual Aid

Dear People,

The cena at Negri's on Saturday, January 12, 1980 raised money for anarchist propaganda, as well as \$75 for the defense of Kamalla Miller.

Those present at the dinner choose to send you \$50.00 to help with your valuable work.

Yours for the works,

Jim Bumpas

FE Note: Fund raising picnics and dinners have a long tradition in the anarchist movement as means of supporting libertarian groups and publications. A group has met in Florida twice since the appearance of our last issue and sent us \$30 and \$25 from each of the picnics. Below is listed the other recipients of the contributions as sent to us by a participant:

To L'Internazionale—\$200, The Review "A"—\$100, Freedom—\$100, Fifth Estate—\$25.

Our thanks to all those present and to those who could not be present but sent their contribution. We hope to do better next time.

Un Refrattario from Michigan

Magic Essence

Dear Editors,

The Lee Iacocca distillation was brilliant [FE #299, October 22, 1979]. Too bad workers don't read. I found the expose on Karl Marx's private life ["The Practical Marx", FE #299, October 22, 1979] complementary to the review of narcissism ["Christopher Lasch's 'War of All Against All'", FE #299, October 22, 1979]. The way to the top in politics usually requires a lot of horn tooting. In the closets inhabited by most "Marxists" the din thus created can be deafening. "Do as I say, not as I do," must be Marx's legacy to a world of intellectuals seeking to extract the magic essence of revolution from one man's 19th century cannons. The pity is that for too many bibles are still keys to salvation.

Lastly, I learned a new word that I never knew existed from reading the Fifth Estate—"synecdoche." I can't wait to try it out on my friends.

The last issue was interesting. Keep up the good work!

Noble J. Nasser

Role of Islam

Hi Kids:

Thanks for the bundle of the Iran issue. We'll put a few up around town. I'm not convinced though, that Islamic theocracy will play the same role (industrial development, internal consumer market, etc.) as Bolshevism in the USSR, and democracy here.

By the way, the Lasch reviews in the previous ish were provoking. I think the anti-nuclear movement's process fetish is an additional example of narcissism.

CG

Black Market Books Boston

Spectre Jesuitical

To the FE:

Spectre is aptly named as a "spectre" is a: "disembodied spirit." (See Letters, FE Oct 22, 1979), Spectre Publication Gang's "Response on Violence") After ten paragraphs of neo-Marxist drivel one might add gutless as well. Blanket accusations that anyone criticizing (their article) "State Fetishism" (FE, Jan 29, 1979) was rooting for RAF politics and/or claimed individualistic violence as the true faith was obviously not merely a distortion but a lie.

The letter's damned Jesuitical/Leninist logic has no place in the realm of revolutionary anti-authoritarianism. But then, their outrageous attacks on any violence but that directed by their theory place them beyond the realm of revolutionaries. They use the word comrade too loosely to be one to any but another "apparition."

Obviously, those whose heads and asses are not in the working class have always had more than a little trouble applying a decent class analysis to violence and class actions. To be sure, one wouldn't expect to find them on a barricade in front of the enemy but those in struggle may even fear to have such as these at their backs. Political posters have to be hammered to the walls with the butts of rebel weapons. Not to do so is the real "naivete."

Up the Rebels,

V.T. Lee

State Censorship

Dear FE,

I haven't gotten an issue of the FE since June and I can't tell if the state is not letting me have it or if I'm just getting impatient. But since the state is censoring my mail daily, I've got a fairly good idea.

Anarchist literature is non-existent here in segregation and the only "new" reading material we've been getting is a bunch of Communist drivel. If any Brothers and Sisters out there would send some, I can guarantee that it will be studied and passed around. And I have taken it upon myself to attempt to increase the size of the Collectives library. Any and all help is appreciated.

There appears to me to be an attitude among some Anarchists that the Revolution can be won by the peaceful application of reason by those opposed to the government. But it should be obvious to all that it is impossible to reason with a rabid dog. While I will not argue against the powers of reason and love, I will ask all the Brothers and Sisters to please stop wasting their talent and lives in this futile effort.

Love and life to all the Brothers and Sisters, but hate and destruction to the oppressors. That's the way to fight and win a Revolution. Anything less is wasted effort. A flower never stopped a bullet, but a faster bullet can.

If this is violence, so be it. I would rather die under the sights of a gun than under the sting of a whip.

Neither God Nor Master,

John H. Bosch

Anarchist Black Dragon Collective

FE Note: Don't know if you'll see this, John, since it does appear as though the prison authorities are doing a number on you. We've never had your paper returned, but a shipment of books that we recently sent to another prisoner was returned marked "Not Acceptable." Those dogs; their prisons are unacceptable!

Tresca's Death

Dear FE:

The account of Carlo Tresca's death from *Soil of Liberty* (See FE #299, Oct 22, 1979) is erroneous on one point and leaves out other points that are quite important.

The error is regarding Generoso Pope, who was not a gangster in the strict sense, i.e. not a mafioso of the Galante type. Generoso Pope was the founder/publisher of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, still the leading Italian language daily newspaper in the U.S. *Il Progresso* was famous before the second World War as Mussolini's voice in the U.S., and during the War was harassed as seditious by the Justice Department.

Pope also founded the *National Enquirer*, originally the *New York Enquirer*, then famous also as a fascist sheet, and investigated by the government for its pro-Hitler propaganda.

Regarding Tresca's death there are many unanswered questions that shed a rather different light on the whole matter. Certainly, Galante was famous in the New York Italian community as the triggerman in the Tresca case, and there is evidence the thing was done in order to gain points for "the dons" with Mussolini. However, Mussolini was not the only individual with a reason to have Tresca killed, and one wonders exactly what danger this exile, thousands of miles away, editing a (then) small and uninfluential paper, could have presented to the dictator.

Tresca's heyday as a journalist and "anti-fascist" leader was in the middle-thirties, when *Il Martello* was a large newspaper, coming out three times a week, with a massive readership in the U.S. and Europe. By 1943 *Il Martello* was a small journal largely supported by Italian speaking officials of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

At the time of Tresca's death suspicion focused on neither the mafia nor Il Duce, but on an entirely different group: members of the Italian Communist Party exiled in New York. The last issues of *Il Martello* before the assassination reflect a savage political struggle between the CP and Tresca's grouping for control of the Italian section of the Office of War Information, the Roosevelt administration's war propaganda agency. Tresca had collaborated with the C.P. on anti-fascist grounds until 1937, when the conduct of the C.P. in the Spanish civil war caused him to break with them and denounce the C.P. and the USSR.

A name that was often mentioned at the time of Tresca's murder was that of Enea Sormenti, a.k.a. Vittorio Vidali, a.k.a. "Comandante Carlos," a leading Italian C.P.er, widely feared as the Soviets' executioner of Italian volunteers in the International Brigades in Spain. It was said that Tresca's denunciations of Sormenti had been answered by more-or-less open threats to put Tresca out of the picture, and Sormenti was a figure in the Italian exile community in N.Y. at the time. After the war Sormenti, as Vidali, became a Communist member of the Italian legislature.

Of course, at this point it is virtually impossible to make a clear case for mafia or C.P. or fascist responsibility for the murder. Again, nobody doubted that Lilo Galante pulled the trigger. But who gave the orders, and who caused the whole thing to be hushed up by the N.Y. police? Another angle on the whole thing is the fact that part of the deal between the U.S. government and Luciano was for the policing of the New York docks, where sabotage of war-supply ships was so common that much war material was diverted from N.Y. to the port of Baltimore. It has been said that the "cleanup" of the N.Y. docks was carried out by the mafia with the collaboration of the C.P. through the unions. Certainly the N.Y. waterfront unions are under mafia control today, but it wasn't always so clearly defined.

Finally, beware the tendency, comrades, to treat Tresca as an anarchist martyr pure and simple. By 1943 much of his anarchism was diluted by Rooseveltian anti-fascism. In fact, the eulogy given by Arturo Giovanitti, the onetime Wobbly leader, provoked a certain discontent among Tresca's old comrades for its fulsome praises of F.D.R. and the cause of the "four freedoms."

I will conclude by noting that I hope to treat Tresca's life and death in detail in a book project of mine on Italian anarchism in the U.S. and its struggle against the mafia (and the Stalinist mafia) from 1925 through world war two.
Steve Schwartz
San Francisco, California

fifth Estate

Various Authors
Letters to the Fifth Estate
1980

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/301-february-26-1980/letters-to-the-fifth-estate>
Fifth Estate #301, February 26, 1980

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net