

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1980

This issue is in your hands for two reasons: 1) your generous and numerous response to our plea for financial assistance and 2) the feeling of support we got from the accompanying letters you sent in. Our problem was really two-fold, but we only told you about the money side of the difficulties we faced. The other, a feeling of demoralization and a questioning of the purpose of our project, was really a more serious matter, but your desire for the Fifth Estate to continue infused a similar determination in us as well. We did discriminate, though, in a manner we should apologize for; we sent direct letters of thanks to large contributors and left our small donors to receive our appreciation in this space. We know that often it is as hard for some of you (and us) to find a spare five dollars where others are fortunate enough to have larger sums to contribute. We meant no slight but just couldn't possibly thank everyone personally. We were exceptionally fortunate to have gotten the money we did as we had several large expenses relating to our office plus sent off several hundred dollars to book publishers such as Partisan Press, Cienfuegos, Black & Red, and Bratach Dubh. These important projects are experiencing much of the same difficulties as we are and we thought the least we could do was to pass along your donations to us for the debts we owed them. We don't know what the future looks like financially, but we feel that if we can publish fairly regularly and offer an interesting selection of books, we can continue our projects. Still, we were just informed by our printer that his price is going to rise by 50%, our postage costs are already up, and we may have to switch mailing companies, all of which will entail a goodly sum. Ugh! So, any of you who feel the spirit to pledge a certain sum per month to the maintenance of the paper, you can join the small group of sustainers who receive the paper first class mail each issue and are a vital part of keeping us afloat...

We sent out renewal letters last issue to those whose subscriptions had expired and many of you responded immediately. If you still have our letter sitting around and plan to resubscribe, we would appreciate you doing it as soon as possible so as not to necessitate a second mailing to you. Thanks.

A curious Detroit/Haiti connection was discovered recently. It was revealed that the Detroit Police have been training members of Haitian President Baby Doc Duvalier's cops here at the Motor City's Detroit Police Academy. The irony of the city's black police chief, William Hart, shamelessly defending the training of a black police force widely recognized as a cruel gang of torturers to suppress an all-black population seems lost on all involved. The chief's protest that all that is involved is the ordinary training of a foreign police contingent ignores that Haiti's cops are the bulwark of what keeps the fat dictator and his vicious regime in power. Hart's arguments ring even more hollow since the training in question was followed almost immediately by an unusually repressive campaign against opposition forces on the island...

Speaking of the cops, congratulations to the *Detroit Free Press* for their recent series, "Blacks in Detroit," in which they finally discovered that racism and police brutality existed in a systematic manner against the city's black population up until, they contend, the early 1960s. Of course police abuse of the citizenry has not by any means disappeared and the admission of it by a newspaper that was part of the process for years whereby it was officially denied is just a bit grating. During all of the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, the *Free Press* regularly accepted the police version of confrontation situations and even conspired with the cops after certain incidents, such as the

Poor People's March and the George Wallace demonstration in 1968, to suppress the news of what were obvious police riots...

Hmmmmm, this is turning into Cop Corner; yet more on the boys in blue: After six years of foot-dragging, the City of Detroit has finally agreed to a release of its voluminous Red Squad files which the police have been compiling on radicals over a forty-year period. The release procedure will follow the pattern of the State Police who, as a result of a similar suit, disclosed the existence of their files through a mailing to individuals and groups indexed in their Red Squad files. There has been some objection expressed about the terms of the settlement agreed to by the National Lawyers Guild which allowed the State Police to assemble an updated list of activists, with current addresses, in order to notify those who were spied upon. Also, the form required for receipt of an organization's file demands such absurd bureaucratic procedures that several groups have elected not to respond. In addition, the State Police form also demands one's current telephone number (in case they want to call and wish you Happy New Year!). Of the 32,500 notices sent out in November, the State has received back over 17,000 notices that were undeliverable. If you think you might have been one of those spied upon and have not received notification, you should write immediately (the files will soon be destroyed if unclaimed) to the Michigan State Police, 714 S. Harrison, East Lansing MI 48823, or call the National Lawyers Guild in Detroit at 9610843. Notification of the Detroit Red Squad files, which are said to number 110,000, will be sent out and announcement newspaper ads placed within 90 days...



Fifth Estate Collective
Detroit Seen
1980

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/304-december-31-1980/detroit-seen>
Fifth Estate #304, December 31, 1980

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net