

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1983

The birthdays seem to be coming around faster and faster. This November marks the 18th anniversary of the Fifth Estate's appearance as an "underground" paper in 1965. Several of us were recently looking at some back issues and smiling at the lavish language they contained-"ALL POWER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO UNDERSTAND THE REVOLUTION AND WHO ARE WORKING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN." But we were also marveling at how well much of it has stood the test of time. Is it too early to prepare for our twentieth anniversary celebration?

As usual, thanks to all of you who sent a donation with your subscription renewals or book orders-it's that extra bit which keeps us alive. And, our other usual request: Please send back your subscription renewal forms as soon as possible, so we don't have to send out a second mailing to you. If you've ignored two renewal mailings, you probably won't be reading this.

One of the more horrible sights at our office is to see piles of Fifth Estates which go undistributed. We would encourage anyone interested in doing free distribution to write us for a bundle of papers. If you give them away free, we'll charge you only postage (send what you can afford and we'll mail the number of papers that amount covers). We're also always looking for stores and individuals who want to sell the paper. We send them on a consignment basis and you pay for only what you sell and keep half of the proceeds.

During the Vietnam war era, the *Fifth Estate* sent hundreds of free copies of each issue to anti-war GIs in Southeast Asia who in turn passed them around their unit. We featured regular news of the wide-spread dissatisfaction, indiscipline and even mutinies among the armed forces in hopes of doing as much as possible to aid those men who were unwilling to be part of the US-sponsored slaughter. Since it now looks as though war is once again on the horizon (the shooting's already begun in Lebanon), we thought we'd give a reduced rate to servicemen-and women with the hope to encourage them to receive as much independent information as possible to combat the official propaganda. Subs to GIs will be appropriately available at the prisoner rate of \$2.00 until hostilities begin; free after that.

Since the U.S. Post Office demands we put out four FEs a year to meet our "quarterly" status, you can look for another issue before this year's end. Anyone thinking about submitting articles or graphics, please get them in fast.

It was to be a carefully planned, well-executed, swift attack on the offending billboard, but as the effort quickly became an impromptu Three-Stooges Affair, one member of the raiding party allowed, "It was still great fun." The idea was to hit the (un)Selective Slavery System billboard, one of the many which have gone up around the Detroit area, in under a minute, using a pre-painted sign to be affixed with Pet Milk and a paint roller. The assault began with posted look-outs stationed, but rapidly fell apart as the sign, dripping with gooey evaporated milk, fell back upon itself and over the sign-guerrillas leaving some of those concerned ready to quit. "Let's get out of here," said one discouraged member, "It's hopeless." But stouter hearts prevailed and soon the "improvement" was completed although the 3-4 minutes spent there felt like 20 to those up on the sign. Plans are now to move on to the other signs we are told.

These are certainly the days when we should be publishing a weekly not a quarterly newspaper, given the speed of current events. Our subscription offer to GIs, mentioned above, has already been outdated in the few weeks since it was first pasted down here. Free subs to soldiers in Lebanon and Grenada are now in order, but obviously not as a reward for doing imperialism's dirty deeds, but hopefully to encourage a refusal to commit similar acts in the future.

We took a stab at anti-war activism during the week of October 14–22 as part of the world-wide protests against the Euromissiles (see page 1). Not wishing to become organizers or the central committee for an anti-state/anti-nuke movement; we restricted our publicity to the area around our office and had as a focus General Motors, a major war contractor, whose main office is only several blocks from us. About 20 people showed up, all friends of the *Fifth Estate*, along with two leftists with literature, and we had a spirited march complete with signs and banners. Along the way, we took a sweep past the Burrough's world headquarters, another war, contractor, and then on to the General Motors Building where we found every entrance barred by cops that outnumbered us two to one.

We also sponsored a "Festival for Universal Disarmament" which was well received and featured two nights of poetry and music.

Our initial disappointment at the rather small turn-out for our march changed somewhat after attending the official Nuclear Freeze Demo the next day, October 22, which had some 800 in attendance. Somehow the experience of marching to a park in order to listen to the same, boring leftist speeches, made our small march of friends to express the fear and outrage we feel about the arms race seem more meaningful to us in many ways than the larger, more fragmented demonstration. Next time we plan to march, maybe we'll try to reach more of our friends and spend less time in leafleting strangers. Hopefully, the "strangers" will assemble their friends and march with us.



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