

# Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1985

**All of us at the *Fifth Estate*** want to extend our warmest greetings and wishes for a happy, healthy and revolutionary New Year to those of you who have supported our project through your subscriptions, donations and participation. We made it through the long-dreaded 1984 and although the megamachine of the state seemed all but undeterred in its vicious reproduction of itself, our capacity to maintain our ideals, our dreams and our resistance seems heightened. It may be too early to declare the resurgence of a mass anti-authoritarian/anarchist movement, but from much of what we receive at the FE office, there is a definite upsurge in libertarian activity. 1985—the year to go for the master's throat.

**We said last issue that we were unhappy** with the mainstream anti-war and anti-intervention groups, so a number of us have begun to plan independent opposition to the U.S. war in Central America. Besides waging war by murderous proxies and support for regimes of grizzly torturers, evidence has come to light of direct American troop participation in the war against Nicaragua by a clandestine paratrooper unit. Vietnam is close at hand. We are planning an event (which may have occurred by the time you read this) which will feature films, talks and a performance by the Layabouts band to coincide with a scheduled week of recruiting by corporate death merchants on the Wayne State University campus. The largest armament manufacturers are blithely coming to the urban college feeling safe in the knowledge that campus demonstrations and disruptions are a memory from a bygone era. They may be proven wrong. Call the Fifth Estate office to see what we have in progress or write us at our P.O. Box.

Others, who think that an American invasion of Nicaragua is a question of when, not if, have begun plans for a response to the anticipated U.S. aggression. Nationally and locally, the most militant organized response is coming from the Christian left. Sojourners magazine has issued a call for a Pledge of Resistance which as of December has gathered 10,000 promises of civil disobedience in the event of an invasion and the response is growing daily. In the Detroit area, the Pledge is being coordinated by the Michigan Interfaith Committee on Central American Human Rights (MICAH), which has devised an elaborate contingency plan to be initiated on the first day of a U.S. attack.

If an invasion comes prior to 3:30 p.m. on a given day, a picket/rally will take place at the McNamara Federal Building on Michigan Ave. at 4:00–6:00 pm; the following day if later than 3:30 pm. A planning meeting will occur following the demonstration at Central Methodist Church, Woodward at Adams, at 6:00 pm the same day and the civil disobedience will commence at a variety of sites including the offices of politicians and army recruiting stations. MICAH may be reached at 4835 Michigan Ave., Detroit MI, (313) 894-0840, and nationally, Sojourners magazine may be contacted for the Pledge of Resistance at 1321 Otis St., NE, Washington DC 20017; (202) 636-3637. If you don't want your response organized by radical Christians, other strategies are in order. In Detroit, call us if there is an invasion and we'll let you know how imaginative we've been; we might, however, just be down there with the bible thumpers.

**This month's award for chutzpah**, that Yiddish word meaning ultimate gall, goes to Dearborn city worker Paul Gentenberg for his remarks on Dec. 19 to a Native American, Gene Littleberry. Littleberry and some of his relatives were protesting the presence of a city sponsored Nativity scene where he stated that Christmas was “an attempt

by white men to make everything white. Indians and blacks take a back seat.” Whereupon, the city worker, son of a settler, shouted at Littleberry, “Why don’t you go live in Russia?” Huh!?

**After all these years of missing deadlines**, we should have learned by now to stop making promises. Still, we didn’t do too badly; we’re only about two weeks shy of our deadline that would have allowed us to put out four issues within a calendar year. Imagine, some publications even manage to put out monthlies, weeklies—dailies! Please be assured that it is not indolence which keeps us from publishing more frequently. Rather, it is due to a relatively small staff, many of whose productive hours are commandeered by wage work. We sometimes discuss going back to at least a monthly schedule, but when we see the latest influx of new publications (see News and Reviews), we realize that the gaps are being filled in quite nicely.

**About our cover:** the fine detournement of the famous photo of the heroic East German workers fighting Soviet tanks in 1954 was done by Zero For Conduct of Portland, Oregon. The graphic herein reprinted had a highly imaginative text on its reverse side and was given out “while performing street theater that made connections between mass media and the dictatorship of the commodity. People seemed bewildered, to say the least, by Mr. Plastic, who wore on his head a ‘Master Says’ card, and Mr. T.V. who had television screens for glasses,” writes Zero For Conduct.

**While mentioning graphics**, we forgot to give ourselves credit for last issue’s front page image. It first appeared in the October 1976 FE along with a text which has appeared numerous places since then. Also, in Detroit Seen, the FE depicted was the first issue published. The page ten drawing of the man blindered by newspapers was from Sojourners; and perhaps worst of all we neglected to credit the fine work of Stephen Goodfellow who drew the page eleven art which is entitled “TV Boogie-woogie.”

**If you are a subscriber** who has recently received a first renewal notice but have not responded yet, please, oh, please do it before we have to send a second one. Besides hating to send out a rather impersonal mailing, it means an unnecessary expenditure which could much better be spent on other necessities. Also, if you have ignored a second mailing, you are not reading this.

**On December 28, a mistrial was declared** after a Detroit jury was unable to reach a verdict in the murder trial of Karen Norman. Norman stabbed to death a man who raped her and was threatening her children. The defense attorneys felt that the jury’s refusal to find Karen innocent by reason of self-defense came after incredible hostility on the part of the trial judge, allowing prejudicial and false testimony about her previous sexual activity into evidence, and allowing unwarranted speculation about what had happened in the struggle between Norman and her assailant by an inexperienced medical examiner. Norman is free on bail but another trial looms in the future and her defense committee remains active. They may be reached at Box 3312, Highland Park MI 48203; (313) 843-9493.

**A Fifth Estate reader called the other day** to tell us how he and a friend had dealt with a U.S. Army literature stand they had discovered at a suburban library. It apparently contained several hundred publications urging young people to join the war machine and the two felt dramatic action was imperative. With one of the pair acting as look-out, the other rushed the offending stand into a near-by bathroom, dumping the contents into a toilet and smashing the structure. Our response, of course, was “Tsk, tsk.” A check of the library a week later showed the stand had not been replaced.

We appreciate the growing number of readers who have been sending us reports of activities in their areas and to those who mail in their newsletters and fliers. It is all encouraging, so keep them coming!

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