

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1985

Thank you for your patience in waiting for our Spring (almost Summer) issue. Our normal problems (or excuses) were compounded in the last few weeks by a broken typesetter which remained unfixed for a week due to IBM's reluctance to dispatch a repairman to work on our almost two decades old machine. We are faced now with the decision to forge on into the computer age (choke!) or see if we can nurse along the mechanical nightmare that has served us for so long. A part of the problem is that the new technology of photocomposition is unsuited to our sporadic typesetting needs and is damn expensive to boot.

Anytime you think we've fallen off the edge of the earth because you haven't seen our paper in a while, feel free to drop us a line and say hello and we'll send back at least a note and an FE newsletter.

Thanks to all who have renewed their subscription lately and to those who have had the means to include a bit extra as a donation. We notice that many anarchist papers faithfully list each and every donation received by the publication and while this seems one way of handling thank-yous, our mini-bureaucracy is just too muddled to keep track of our readers' generous support. This doesn't mean that we don't take note of those who are giving special assistance, since we all look forward to opening the day's mail and always shout out to the others present "Hey, so-and-so sent an extra ten bucks." So, thanks again. Also, if you have a sub renewal outstanding, please take the time to mail it in.

A note on graphics: Most of the Vietnam and anti-war photos previously appeared in the *Fifth Estate* during the '60s and '70s. The front page photo is from a demonstration in Detroit's Kennedy Square in probably 1971. Unfortunately, very few of the photos in our file of demonstration shots contain dates or locations. We thought at the time our activity would bring about the end of history, so why bother to identify photographs? Now we are faced with the task of approximating information for hundreds of them, but it should be interesting doing it.

This issue begins our 20th year of publication and while we still intend to have a big celebration this Fall, nothing definite is planned as of this writing.

Despite a viciously prejudiced judge, a Detroit jury found Karen Norman not guilty April 17 of murdering a man who had raped her and threatened the lives of her children. This was the second trial for Norman after the first jury was unable to reach a verdict. The case had become the focus of national attention supporting the right of a woman to defend herself against sexual attack. Much of the credit for her acquittal goes to the diligent work of Norman's defense committee which may be reached at Box 3312, Highland Park MI 48203 for a fuller account of the trial and charges.

"Not one leaf" is the battle cry from horrified supporters of Detroit's island park, Belle Isle, over the proposal which would transform the idyllic island into a posh gambling resort. The park is a haven from the city asphalt where generations of Detroiters have strolled, fished, picnicked and played. The plan put forth by the high-rollers would establish 12 hotels, each with a casino, as well as an observation tower and a monorail system. All or any of this would not only destroy the island's physical beauty, but also transform its character from that of a poor and working class park into a playground for the well-heeled.

The move has recent precedent in the city when a cohesive ethnic neighborhood called Poletown was demolished over the objections of the residents to put in a Cadillac assembly plant. However, some think that the almost universal objection to the casino plan was what the developers expected and was in fact only a stalking horse for their real scheme to locate gambling in downtown Detroit which would be offered as an "alternative" site. It looks like our lovely economy will probably consist predominately in years to come of "industries" like gambling along with fast food restaurants, war production and the police apparatus.

What with Reagan doing everything but saying "Seig Heil," not only has the bloody Nazi era become a focus of intense national interest, but so has the small but violent, psychotic neo-nazi movement been featured prominently in the press recently. For instance, while the local papers here gave scant attention to the 60,000 plus who marched against U.S. foreign policy in Washington DC April 20, the arch-conservative Detroit News ran a three-part series on Detroit-based fascist groups. The last appeared on the front page under the headline "Swastikas Still Seen in Detroit" and spotlighted 30 creeps who call themselves the "SS Action Group." Written by a dim-wit reporter, Claudia Capos, who reported so uncritically on the racist, anti-semitic and pro-war remarks of the group's fuhrer, that the article will probably be used as a Nazi recruitment brochure. In fact, this is exactly the function of such articles according to the Nazi spokesman interviewed by Capos. Where did he learn about Nazism? Oh, it turns out he "just picked it up from reading the paper...". Obviously from articles like this one. Capos and the News' editor should apply for their Iron Crosses.

The spectacle of the starving people of Ethiopia has brought forth from the well-fed, reactions ranging from genuine compassion to syrupy gush. There has also been the crass and exploitative perhaps best illustrated in Detroit by a "Walk for Life" event sponsored by something called the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). As it turns out, the relief of hunger in Africa was only secondary to the real reason for their walk: A spokesman for the group said they wanted "to provide hands-on public relations experience" for their members. What with hunger a permanent institution in so many nations, maybe this could become an annual event for these sleazes. It makes one wish that some hungry Ethiopians could get their "hands on" one of their well-fed necks.

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