

20 Years of the Fifth Estate

Fifth Estate Collective

On the occasion of a past anniversary, we noted that the *Fifth Estate* had been described by the FBI in its files as “supporting the cause of revolution everywhere.” It has been a pleasure and an honor, a calling and a commitment over the past twenty years for the hundreds of people who have comprised the newspaper staff and the hundreds of thousands of readers to make that description accurate. In an age dominated by a mass media whose message is that no resistance exists to the empire and its culture, we are proud to be one of the many centers which boldly announces that this is not true.

Although there have been many changes in the way the different staffs have viewed the world, our enemy and our vision have remained constant: a call for an end to capitalism and the political state and for the erection in its place a decentralized, cooperative human community.

These are goals which may at times appear unrealizable within the modern world, but they are ones which tie our lives together and which make us state firmly: even if we can never achieve them, we will never end our resistance and our dreams. For Anarchy!

“That’s what we really are—the voice of the liberal element in Detroit.” (Vol. 1, No. 1—November 1965)

“Perhaps the most important thing that we learned in Chicago is that we are right...the values of this society are fraudulent and used only to support the unjust system that benefits only the few in positions of political and economic power. The values that we have begun to devise through living and struggling together are superior to the ones of this society. They are revolutionary values and all of us that are serious must begin to live the revolution now as well as struggling to make it a reality.” (Vol. 3, No. 9—September 1968)

“A real system of democracy would be formed out of the day-to-day work and living situations we all find ourselves in. At each plant, school, neighborhood, army base, or university, democratically run councils can be formed to wrest control...away from bureaucrats who presently administer these situations for the sole purpose of profits of the ruling circles and transform them into democratic institutions that serve the needs of the people.”

(Vol. 6, No. 13—September 1971)

“It is encouraging for the bourgeoisie to commit suicide and thereby rid the world of their parasitical presence, but there is a better solution—one that would both cater to the death-wish of this alienated, soon-to-be-extinct species and would not further aggravate the energy crisis: ‘Let’s Eat the Rich.’”

(Vol. 8, No. 17—November 1973)

“The newspaper you are now holding is the last issue of the Fifth Estate—the last issue of a failing capitalist enterprise...This is also the first issue of a new *Fifth Estate*...There are exciting and dangerous times ahead and we have to begin sorting things out or go under with the rest of those who cling to the old. This is our first step. What’s yours?”

(Vol. 11, No. 1—August 1975, the first explicitly libertarian FE)

“Immediately after the advent of paradise work will be placed on a dark shelf in the basement of the Smithsonian Institute. Children under twelve will be admitted only if accompanied by a lazy adult.”

(Vol. 15, No. 2—October 1980)

“Behind all the ways work and technology can be reformulated and repackaged stands their basic domination and the resultant weariness and frustration felt so universally today. A world is faltering...If as Fourier said, ‘Civilization becomes more odious as it nears its end,’ we can at least see not only the odium but more prospects for its end.”

(Vol. 18, No. 3—Fall 1983)

“The empire is collapsing. We must find our way back to the village, or as the North American natives said, ‘back to the blanket,’ and we must do this not by trying to save an industrial civilization which is doomed, but in that renewal of life which must take place in its ruin. By throwing off this Modern Way of Life, we won’t be ‘giving things up’ or sacrificing, but throwing off a terrible burden. Let us do so soon before we are crushed by it.”

(Vol. 19, No. 4—Winter 1985)

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