

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

We dedicate this issue to the memory of the 14 women slaughtered in Montreal December 6 at the hand of a patriarchal maniac. As he lined up his victims and methodically shot them, he expressed a hatred for all women and said he wanted “to kill feminists.”

In the memory of these dead sisters, we pledge, “We’re all feminists here!”

It’s been six months since our last edition, thus becoming the longest hiatus between publishing we’ve experienced. The usual excuses prevail with nothing exceptional interfering with our efforts other than a hundred political and personal callings. Hopefully, our absence is slightly compensated for by the quality of the issue and its length-32-pages, the longest our printer can handle in a single section (thankfully!). Also, Fall is the occasion of our yearly anniversaries, this being the 24th since an energetic teenager put out the first issue in his basement in 1965. Since next year will mark our quarter-century milestone, perhaps we should start planning now for an appropriate celebration; any suggestions?

Our finances remain healthy thanks to our subscribers, generous donations, book sales and the select group of *Fifth Estate* Sustainers who offer extra support. Our bookshop has added a large number of new titles and brought more back in stock in recent months, so we hope readers will take the opportunity to transfer many of the books from our shelves to yours. Thanks to all for everything and revolutionary greetings for a New Year in which we realize our personal and political desires.

The day before Detroit Mayor Coleman Young’s November 7 re-election, three dozen people protesting the Detroit incinerator were surrounded at a freeway overpass by an even greater number of swarming tactical police units. The cops included a precinct commander, a helicopter, two canine corps units, and a three-man video crew filming picketers for their files on who’s attempting free speech against the world’s largest incinerator.

A few reporters and television cameras wandered into the police hysteria looking even more bewildered than the marauding cops, and they mysteriously vanished as the first two of five protesters were getting handcuffed for refusing to put down their banners (many signs, especially those condemning the mayor, were quickly confiscated). In a decade of numerous demonstrations, these sidewalk arrests were among the most absurd many of us have ever witnessed.

So, while elections reinforce the illusion of choice and representation, perilous issues like poisonous air and toxic ash are so routinely filtered out of the media that even the paranoia of uniformed goons is ignored. This is one reason why some have moved their protests to the main streets, altering billboards and hanging banners whenever they can.

Although such displays seldom find opportunities to detail facts about pollution (and the state), they are not dependent on the corporate media contributing to this wasteland they call progress (and treatable with the latest techno-fix). In a few minutes, we can get the attention of hundreds of trapped motorists fleeing the misery of the daily work and spend, and cause at least a few to realize that maybe we’re not so helpless after all.

To honor the police and media request for better advance notice, two friends later printed a bogus flyer announcing a massive counter-offensive at the now famous overpass. The alert team of leafletters distributed this special

news (complete with battle plans about chaining people to the bridge railing) to nobody except a couple precincts and three TV stations. The media style disinformation campaign was a brilliant success: on November 27, police units and paddy-wagons again swarmed through the area. As our friends drove by for the last laugh, a confused Channel 7 TV crew searched desperately for an interview. Alas, it was one event they didn't dare cover.

The charges against ten of the twenty-five people arrested at the WEAVE (Women Empowered Against Violence to the Environment) blockade of the Detroit incinerator last June were dismissed after a two month advisement period. Their bail money was returned in full.

A deferred plea was also accepted for fourteen people whose charges are to be dismissed after a six month period, although their bail money was retained by the courts. One person did not appear in court for the arraignment.

WEAVE continues to meet and is involved in other activities of opposition to the incinerator, in support of women's reproductive rights, and in celebration of Earth Week.

A giant demonic [George H.W.] Bush head with huge bloody hands looms over the crowd at a demonstration against contra aid and U.S. intervention in El Salvador which took place in Detroit on December 4th. At least 400 people took part in the protest. A leaflet distributed by Bad Attitude stated "while we support a social struggle that goes far beyond the reformist platform of the FMLN, we celebrate the possibility of a stinging defeat to the U.S. client state in El Salvador. As we hope the spirit of rebellion inspires the people of El Salvador to do it this time without new bosses, cops and politicians, we must also fight here in the streets of Detroit. San Salvador is everywhere.—Bad Attitude, Box 11589, Detroit, MI 48211.

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