

Prisoners Respond to the *Fifth Estate*

Various Authors

1990

FE staff note: Last issue we sent out 115 sample copies of the *Fifth Estate* to prisoners, the result of a listing as a free publication in a prison resource handbook. Rather than automatically granting free subscriptions to those who requested them, we asked that prisoners read and evaluate our publication and let us know if they wanted to be put on our list. Gratifyingly, more than a third responded with positive and strong replies, some of which are printed below.

Also, our readers came through with generous contributions to aid in our efforts to supply prisoners of the state—inmates and GIs—with literature calling for the abolition of all institutions of repression. Our thanks to you and to those who continue to add an extra dollar or two when subscribing or renewing.

Finally, we must be doing something right, or, in the eyes of the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, wrong. A mailroom screw, a Mrs. L. Large (?!), refused to allow our paper to reach three inmates, marking the *Fifth Estate* as constituting an “Inflammatory Publication.” This arbitrary censorship by a half-wit flunky for the state corrections system is on the face of it a back-handed compliment to the paper, but on the practical level only a small indication of the daily humiliation prisoners are subjected to.

ATTENTION PRISONERS RECEIVING A SAMPLE OF THE FIFTH ESTATE:

If this is your first copy of this newspaper and you want to continue to receive it for free, you must write back and let us know. Contact us at PO Box 02548, Detroit MI 48202.

The Lying Bastards

Dear Friends:

Having received your paper, I must tell you how pleased I was with it. Having lost all hope of ever receiving justice from the dictators, I was thrilled to find there are others who see the monsters for what they really are and are not afraid to say it.

Until I was 45, I too believed everything the lying bastards told me about equal justice, freedom for all, equal opportunity and all the other good things they lie about. Then came the moment of truth. When it was justice I needed most, they exposed themselves for the liars they truly are. That was eight years ago and I have been watching them closely and have seen how badly they fooled me.

Now, I am an anarchist who will never believe a thing they say and dedicated to the destruction of the power mad beasts. Now, I see them as they truly are: exploiters and abusers of humanity.

I thoroughly agree with Feral Faun: SMASH ALL AUTHORITY!

Lee D. Landau
Huntington PA

War Against Life

Dear FE:

I read quite a few “radical” publications when I can get them in here, but I found the FE’s perspective to be refreshingly different.

I have been both politicized and radicalized by my contact with the criminal injustice industry and have discovered both the strengths and weaknesses of left-wing social critiques. I especially appreciated the Earth Day section. [See FE #334, Summer, 1990.] The realization that the environmental movement must become a revolutionary movement, that capitalism, patriarchy and the state are inherently bound up in a war against life itself, seems to be something that a lot of liberal and “progressive” people avoid as if it were blasphemous.

Lin Elliot
Arizona State Prison
Florence AZ

Tyranny is Law

Comrades:

This will confirm receipt of my first copy of the *Fifth Estate* and to request that you continue to send me this dynamite paper.

Currently I’m in solitary confinement doing 540 days for alleged acts during the October 25–27, 1989 rebellion. I’m also awaiting criminal charges.

Your (our) newsletter is a blessing and tells it like it is and I will share it.

When tyranny is law, revolution is in order...

Rafi
Camp Hill PA

A Little Anti-Social

Hello there, Comrades:

I got your address from a pal in a U.S. state pen, Phil S. I’m doing a life sentence for various bank and armoured van robberies. Also, a series of gangland killings; pretty heavy duty scene, I agree.

I’m in one of England’s Special Units because I don’t really like being in jail. To be honest, I think England’s penal institutions and the whole judicial system stink! This includes the police, judges, screws and majority of prisoners. Probably I am a little bit anti-social and anti-authoritarian oriented.

I’m a Category “A” prisoner and it costs the state £1,000 per week to keep me here. This last item gives perverse satisfaction. A Cat. B/C/D only costs £325 to keep in jail.

I’ve gotta pal, an absolute diamond. I’d be really obliged if you could include this guy on your list. Graham Y. is the kinda guy who, if you have a row with someone and slung in the strong box, before you know it, he’s next door to you having finished what you started.

Warmest greetings from thousands of miles away,
Bruce (A)
Lincoln, England

Dear FE:

Just a line to say thanks for the issue of the *Fifth Estate*; found it most interesting.

There is no need to mail further issues to my friend Graham of Parkhurst Jail. Graham died in his cell last week; he’s now free.

In Solidarity,
Bruce (A)

Stifles My Desire

Greetings my fellow Earthbound friends:

I have recently been awarded a wonderful, five-year, all-expense, paid vacation to southern Arizona. The wonderful benefactor of this trip is the truly caring Arizona Dept. of Corrections.

Unfortunately, one of the amenities at this resort is a library that is not very broad in scope. This stifles my desire to be a fully functional data recipient. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to ingest the information and stories offered by your publication.

I wish I could send some clam shells, beads or money in exchange, but my lawyer needed a new 12-cylinder Jaguar to park in front of his new villa in the south of France.

I shall try to enjoy my stay here, but I offer a word of advice to any who might venture this way: don't smoke that demon weed in Arizona.

Another victim of reefer madness,
Robert Shearin,
Arizona State Prison
Tucson AZ

Contrary to Logic

Dear Fifth Estate,

Please remove my nacre from your mailing list. I don't wish to receive your newsletter (FE) or anything similar. Your anti-authority propaganda is contrary to common logic. Without any form of authority the world would be nothing more than a jungle.

I don't like today's situation any more than the next person, but I have enough sense to know that two can't walk together unless they're agreed; and two can't be agreed unless one leads and the other follows!

Johnny M. Duck
Georgia State Prison (!?)

Sidebar

“Christians are the only people on earth who kneel before an instrument of torture. If Christ had been martyred in this century, I guess we'd all be wearing little electric chairs around our necks.”

—More Tales of the City
Armestead Maupen

Sidebar: Books for Cons

The Left Bank Books service, “Books to Prisoners,” is offering 100% cotton t-shirts with the project logo on it as a fund-raising effort. A project volunteer described them as “absolutely stunning,” with the proceeds going to support their work of processing over 150 prisoner book requests received each month. Indicate size and send \$10 plus \$1.25 postage to Books For Prisoners, c/o Left Bank Books, POB A, 92 Pike Street, Seattle WA 98101.

Besides Left Bank Books, two other sources provide free books to prisoners. Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight St., San Francisco CA 94117 as well as Left Bank are the best sources for radical and anarchist titles, whereas Redbook

Store Prison Book Program can also provide more general books such as dictionaries, texts, etc. Their address is 92 Green St., Jamaica Pln. MA 02130.

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