

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1992

Welcome to our Winter 1992 edition. This was our final issue for the 1991 year, continuing our recent pattern of three papers per year. As we've said in the past, the fact that we publish so infrequently comes neither from a lack of will nor is it a measure of the growing anti-authoritarian movement.

There really are so many anarchist papers and 'zines being printed these days that you could probably assemble a dissident daily from the ones available. Best sources of alternative and anarchist publications are Anarchy, POB 1446, Columbia MO 65205 and the recently published Directory of Alternative Publications, PO Box 33109, Baltimore MD 21218. Send a couple of bucks postage for each.

Thanks to all of you who donated extra money to the paper and to our GI/ prisoner fund, to those who promptly renewed their subscriptions, and thanks to all for helping us keep this project functioning.

We are pleased to have Tony Doyle's illustrations grace our pages for another issue. His dramatic drawing, "Builders of Empires," featured on our cover last issue was inadvertently uncredited. As it is, the small lines of type appearing next to our drawings and photos hardly give proper recognition to the enormous amount of time, talent and effort that goes into the creation of the graphics which appear in the FE. Tony may be reached at PO Box 8062, Columbus OH 43201 if you are interested in his graphic work.

We saw a recent item in the leftist weekly, *The Guardian*, stating, "Other (national) Green campaigns for the coming year include a 'Detroit Summer,' in which young people will help build alternatives in the decaying inner city..." Since the last crew to come to Detroit to organize was the Weatherman faction of SDS some twenty years ago, we thought we should check this out.

We wrote a letter to national Green honcho, Howie Hawkins (also on the board of the *Guardian*) and asked what was supposed to happen. That was about three months ago, but we never received an answer. So, look out, Detroit, here comes help (whether we want it or not).

Since government is too easily exposed as a racket set up to protect the wealth and privilege of society's elite, the rulers are always looking for ways to sanctify their governance as being ordained or "natural." Reaching the outer limits of the preposterous is the current "Bill of Rights Tour," sponsored by that assassin of the masses, the Phillip Morris Co., the cigarette manufacturer and purchaser of the tax credits of the Detroit incinerator. The tour consists of public showings of the original document that contains the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. These guarantee a range of civil liberties which the cops are nice enough to let us practice if doing so in no way threatens their bosses' rackets.

The Tour, which arrived in Detroit in November, is part of a 50-state presentation. It is a 24-screen multimedia event and, in its sponsor's words: "the highlight of this 15,000-sq.-ft exhibit is the moment the trumpets sound [FE note: We should have gone to see this!] and the actual document rises from beneath the stage in full view of every man, woman and child in the room. So close you can touch it with your eyes." If this is not idolatry, what is?

On another floor in the exhibition hall. Inhere this spectacle occurred, the American Lung Association set up a display appropriate to Phillip Morris' sponsorship—a model of the Statue of Liberty comprised of cigarettes.

The Fifth Estate is presenting its first Annual Vartan Kepegian Award for Domesticated Journalism to Brian Bell, editor of the Wayne State University student newspaper, *The South End*. This award is named for the last editor of the old WSU *Daily Collegian*, as it was called before it was given its current title in 1967 by a radical student (and FE writer), Art Johnston.

Johnston, who understood the function of the university within capitalist society, took the paper's new name, *The South End*, from WSU's geographic location within a power institution grid which began a mile north of the campus at the world headquarters of General Motors, and extended to the south end where the college is located.

It was obvious to an earlier generation of students that the university played a key role in training businessmen, technicians and bureaucrats to staff the administration of a system being challenged on numerous fronts. The paper under Johnston and subsequent editors began to unmask the university and to end the isolation from the community surrounding it.

Current editor Bell has returned the paper to student sandbox journalism at its worst. The paper's masthead even announces its intent as "Covering Wayne's World," as if the university was divorced from the grinding poverty, dope and crime which exists in the adjacent Cass Corridor area. The paper now reads like press releases from the University Public Relations office and the campus cops—supplemented by fluff pieces about college personnel and programs. The rest is mostly ads, sports features, which often command the front page, and endless crime reports.

No wonder WSU students leave large piles of unread *South Ends* for the recycling bin; their interest in Bell's sycophantic efforts at creating a job resume for the "real" world of journalism interests them about as much as it does us.

404 Willis continues to evolve and expand as an autonomous zone and anti-authoritarian collective in Detroit's Cass Corridor. As a direct response to the war on the poor, 404 has recently begun the distribution of free clothes, food and coffee every Sunday afternoon. Monday night poetry readings, Tuesday night acoustic jams, Wednesday night Women's discussions and a whole host of cultural events on the weekend continue.

404 needs donations in the way of volunteer energy, free subscriptions to radical periodicals, money, clothes, coffee, and food. 404 can offer space for traveling bands, poets and all sorts of anarcho-nomads to perform, crash and hang out. Please write c/o 404 W. Willis, Detroit MI 48201 or call (313) 831-3903.



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