

Letters

Our readers respond

Various Authors

2016

Send letters to fe-at-fifthestate-dot-org or Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220. All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten; letters may be edited for length.

Printed propaganda

Enclosed is \$30. Please send us a bundle of the Summer 2015 Vietnam issue. Thank you for putting out this paper! Printed propaganda is where it's at!

We just went to upstate New York to visit our comrade, Herman Bell, at Comstock prison kamp. He has been in for over 40 years. We need to push harder for freedom for all the Black Panther/Black Liberation Army prisoners.

We will be tabling at the upcoming Trans and/or Women's Action Camp fundraiser here in Maine. FE will be on the table.

RCat

Wellington, Maine

FE note: Herman Bell was convicted in 1975, with two co-defendants of killing two New York City policeman. The trial was marked with circumstantial evidence, and prosecutorial and judicial misconduct.

Bell has a state parole board hearing in February 2016 and he is asking for letters of support for his release. Although he has been a model prisoner gaining college degrees, teaches other inmates, and has initiated a Victory Garden Project, he has 42 years of a 25 years to life sentence.

Simple justice demands Bell's release. Information is at freehermanbell.org for writing to the parole board.

Burning streak

I can tell you for sure that I can use 100 or 200 back issues of the *Fifth Estate* to hand out to those with a "burning streak of anarchy," to give those people that one extra little push.

I will move those magazines at the Thomas Merton Center, with the New People newspaper editorial collective, with the IWW and the people stopping police brutality.

I need you to whisper anarchy like you did for me when I was going through puberty. You spoke to me so nicely. You were so encouraging.

Kenneth Miller

Pittsburgh

Bulletproof vest

In Bellamy's report of the Transhumanism/Anarcho-Primitivism debate, he notes that Zoltan Istvan may have worn a bulletproof vest because of the anarchists in attendance.

(See "Debate at Stanford," FE, Summer 2015.)

Considering the necessary totalitarian police control of a future transhumanistic world, I would think it would be John Zerzan, his debate opponent, who would consider wearing the vest!

Gary Brown

Orlando, Fla.

Simplistic articulation

After reading the Summer 2015 issue, I found myself troubled by Jim Tull's article, "Out of Love." Maybe I shouldn't have been, but I was surprised to find such a simplistic articulation of primitivism among the pages of the Fifth Estate.

Having hosted foundational debates on anti-civ and primitivist theory throughout the '80's and on, I would expect the journal to keep up with the development of these ideas and expect more intellectual rigor from its contributors.

Romanticized generalizations about "tribal" life and "Neolithic village societies" should not even require an articulated critique at this point. At best they are bad arguments: ahistorical attempts to argue the truth of an assertion based on some supposedly essential and pure state of humanity. At worst they are racist caricatures of complex and diverse cultures and the infinitely more diverse humans that make/made them up.

What worries me even more than these simplifications, though, are the moments when the article begins to walk the troubling paths between green anarchist (and particularly primitivist) thought and eco-fascism (see Black Seed, #2 for more on these tendencies).

Tull writes, "The modern, especially urban child is exposed to cultural variety, but also cultural confusion and contention. We are lost and anxious in the stew of the mixed messages we receive from the Big (global, nontraditional) Culture and the remnants of its assimilated subcultures."

Arguments about how confused the "urban child" is because of the "stew of the mixed messages" created by "cultural variety," find their home in the racist ramblings in [the neo-Nazi] Stormfront and shouldn't be found on the pages of the *Fifth Estate*. While cultural traditions can add to human life, they are very often straight jackets destroying the lives of people caught in their endlessly-reproduced spiral. The mixing of cultures, particularly when it happens/happened in Maroon communities, moments of collective revolt, or by those escaping repressive traditions or culture can be beautiful moments when human imagination breaks free from stagnation and realizes a better world.

I was particularly sad to see this article alongside Lorraine Perlman's informative and loving celebration of the life of Judith Malina and Penelope Rosemont's inspiring history of the slogan, "Make Love: Not War." Thanks to both for their continued contributions.

O'Connor

St. Louis

Sci-fi organizing

I very much enjoyed your interview with adrienne maree brown in the Summer 2015 *Fifth Estate* [See "All Organizing is Science Fiction."] Her proposal of drawing from science fiction is encouraging.

SF deals with the problems of living in a technological society more directly than any other style. It is full of ideas that can be readily used and has a long tradition of anti-authoritarianism.

This is particularly true of New Wave and Cyberpunk, much of which was explicitly anarchist. There is much imaginal material in it to help vitalize our insurrectionary project.

Jason Rodgers
Albany, N.Y.

Coming of age

I was recently thinking about my coming of age years in the late '60s and '70s in Detroit.

Of course, no self-respecting young counter-cultural idealist such as myself was ever caught missing the latest edition of the *Fifth Estate*.

The paper was invaluable to me for its hands on help with referrals, calendar of events, music and concert reviews; the list was endless. I thought of the publication as something most likely long dead and buried as most other iconic reflections of those vibrant, exciting years.

I near hopelessly Googled Fifth Estate to see if there might be some trace of the publication's history. Much to my utter delight, I found it was still publishing and instantly subscribed, receiving the Spring 2015 issue soon after.

I was intrigued by the change of format [from tabloid to magazine] and its harder hitting political decisiveness. It seems that the publication has mirrored my own place in life now, as if it's matured, become calmer but deeper and more seasoned.

I read the issue cover to cover within two to three hours and immersed my mind in the substance of the excellent content by its talented staff. Both are hard to come by these days! I'm ordering a gift subscription for a British friend who lives in London. I know he'll very much appreciate it, as he tells me many if nearly all British underground presses have become a thing of the past.

Bartley N. Gilkeson
Princeton, W. Va.

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