

Letters

Various Authors

2019

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.

DINNER SERVED

Enjoyed your review of John Zerzan's *A People's History of Civilization*, "The Way of the Passenger Pigeon," by Peter Werbe in FE #401, Summer 2018. In your reviewer's analogy of civilization being a train heading towards a bridge that is out without the realization of those supping in the dining car, if I enjoy that last supper as it crosses that trestle, is that decadence?

Gary B.
Orlando, Fla.

Peter Werbe replies: Bon appétit!

BLACK PANTHER REVIEW

I thought your review of the Black Panther film was on the soft side, but decent. [See FE #401, Summer 2018, "Black Panther: Breakthrough or More Hollywood Marketing," by Matthew Lucas.]

I consider it a reactionary film. The thesis is that a black nation that eludes colonization and becomes technologically superior will be governed by a monarchy. Liberated women get to be a Praetorian Guard who serve (and supposedly advise) a male. The hero's colleague is a white CIA operative. Not my cup of tea.

I want to congratulate you for publishing poetry and fiction on a regular basis, a rarity on the left.

Dan Georgakas
Amherst, Mass.

FE note: Dan Georgakas has written previously for the *Fifth Estate*. He was part of the Black Mask group in the 1960s, along with Ben Morea. While living in Detroit, he co-authored, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*, about the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

He has been an editor of the *Cineaste* film magazine.

THE CLASH

Your brief story of The Clash brought me wonderful memories. (See FE #393, Spring 2015, “A Brief Story of The Clash, Radio & the Fifth Estate.”)

As you write, the band also inspired me to drop out. But for me, it was from the teaching profession as a high school English and adjunct instructor of composition at university and community colleges.

After teaching from 1977 to 1982, I left schools and academia to pursue “my own dream.” Happily, I made a life as a vagabond janitor and outlaw—with only brief brushes with the law.

Gary B.
Orlando, Fla.

Fifth Estate note: People every once in a while urge us to give up print and publish only online. It is a letter like this that re-enforces our commitment to continue in a medium which has a lasting quality. The article that Gary comments on is from a three-year-old issue!

Back issues are available at FifthEstate.org; click on Archive.

DRUG EXTINCTION

You people wouldn't happen to know anybody who's working with that scary CRISPR technology, would you? The reason I ask is that I was thinking that CRISPR might be used to cause the opium poppy and coca plant to go extinct.

I figure you know how heroin and cocaine are used to fund the CIA and anti-democratic and fascistic awfulness. Programming an extinction time bomb into the genes of the plants would result in cutting off that funding at the tap.

Obviously, there would be drawbacks. Extinction isn't to be taken light. But a case can be made that further extinctions could be avoided by killing off those two plants. And, yes, indigenous cultures have connections to the plants, so you'd have to have to ask them which they prefer, a continuation of their traditions or a continuation of the death squad funding.

Chris Kelley
Portland, Ore.

FE note: Not sure what to say, Chris. CRISPR is a very sophisticated gene manipulating process. The Internet says of it: “CRISPR stands for Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats, which are the hallmark of a bacterial defense system that forms the basis for CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing technology.”

Its use regarding cocaine seems limited to understand the epigenetics of addiction to the drug.

DRAWN TO FASCISM

What is it in fascism that people are viscerally drawn to and simultaneously repulsed by it as it takes on an added strange character in its (digital) second mass iteration?

The same spirit that fetishizes fascism enjoys liberalism's tepid rebuttals: op-eds in the *New York Times*, John Oliver bits, etc. Perhaps, this is merely thanatos, the death drive. Certainly, it is a manifestation of the guilt within the liberal complex.

What are people drawn to in fascism? Is it its unbridled expression of the ethos underlying this civilization? Domination of the natural world and life in general, stratification of wealth, militarism, class and racial hierarchies, submission of women, environmental degradation; the list goes on.

Isn't this what is unabashedly signified by Trump and his cadre, indeed, manifest in the most chilling and intense ways in his most diehard followers?

They at least see this for what it is; but then again, maybe liberals do too, and maybe the horror and fascination of this slow fall into post-postmodern dystopianism are one and the same.

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