

# Letters

Various Authors

1968

## To the Editors:

On the afternoon of November 1, there was a demonstration in front of the 13<sup>th</sup> precinct police station on Woodward. The purpose of the demonstration was to protest the brutal treatment which the police inflicted upon a group of anti-Wallace demonstrators at a rally earlier in the week.

We were present at the demonstration and would have liked to take part in it. We saw what happened at Cobo Hall where innocent people were clubbed because one policeman was injured by one demonstrator. We didn't like what we saw. It looked too much like Chicago.

We would have liked to take part in the protest, but we didn't: we couldn't. Virtually every sign and every chant used by the demonstrators referred to the police as pigs. This epithet has become very popular with the left recently.

We consider the term as going against what we would hope the movement stands for. We see the purpose of the movement as being to change the world in which we live into something more human than what it is at present. "Pig" is a dehumanizing term. When you call a man a pig, there is a very good chance that he will soon begin to feel like a pig and then he will act like a pig.

If we are interested in changing people's actions we should try to convince them that their present actions are wrong. Name calling doesn't convince anyone of anything more than that possibly the name caller is in the same bag as the person who is being called the name.

What is the difference between the person who calls a black man a nigger and the person who calls a policeman a pig? If there is a difference, it isn't very obvious to the man on the street -who hasn't quite decided which side he wants to be on.

This letter probably sounds like it was written by a hunch of liberals: it hasn't. We are radicals with good credentials. One of us was busted in Chicago. Another had his head clubbed to Chicago. Several are risking prison by our activities in draft- resistance. Some have been involved in radical activities in Detroit For several years,

We are all willing to protest against police brutality whenever it occurs because we realize only too well that we could easily be its next victims. But we would hope that the next such protest will not use the very tactics which we are working to stop the mass of society from using against us.

If these dehumanizing tactics continue we will find it necessary to fight for change in our way, apart from the rest of the movement people in Detroit. We don't want that to become necessary.

Bernie McCoy  
Stan Vittoz  
Dick Earl  
Fred Chase  
Ron Halstead  
Bob Morrison

Barbara Burris

**Editors' note:** Our demeanor towards the police is irrelevant. Whether we call them "Pigs" or "sir," their actions toward us will be the same.

Young girls at the Belle Isle Love-In last year were putting flowers in the bridles of police horses and telling the mounted cops, "We love you," yet an hour later these same mounted police rioted and began indiscriminately bashing heads. Your statement that a man will act like a pig if so called only gives credence to the Daley-type bullshit that the poor cops are always being provoked by us unruly demonstrators.

You say the tern pig is dehumanizing. Of course it is.

Do you call men human beings that laid three young men on the floor of the Algiers Motel and shot their genitals off? Or that attacked an unarmed crowd of peaceful citizens with clubs and gas? Or that terrorize an entire people because of their skin color or economic condition or length of their hair? We call them pigs and the police of this country have acted like pigs long before anyone ever thought to call them that.

If you don't realize the difference between calling a black man a "nigger" and a cop a "pig" we hardly know what to say. The former is part of a system of oppression that has kept an entire people enslaved on this continent for the last three hundred years and the use of that term gives expression to the mythology that serves as the rationalization for that system of oppression.

The term "pig" is hurled at the most immediate symbol and instrument of that oppression, the police. It is a term used by the oppressed against the oppressor. And therein lies the difference.

Your main difficulty lies in your failure to understand the role of the police. The police at home, like the army abroad, is utilized as the State's instrument of repression against people that attempt to make challenges to our political and economic system.

The police do not go to our demonstrations of their own choosing, just as the troops in Vietnam did not elect to go there. Both are just following orders.

And this gets to the essence of what it means to be a radical. A radical is not defined by a stitch count or measured by the amount of time he spends in jail, but rather by his understanding of capitalist society.

That means an understanding that there is a ruling class which benefits from the power and property relationships that presently exist and that it will fight to the death to maintain those relationships. Those relationships mean we live in a pig society where wealth, power, and violence rule and the enforcers of those values are properly characterized as pigs.

## **Sir:**

While passing a bookstore the other day I stopped and picked up the last few issues of your newspaper. What a change! From peace and love to violent revolution.

It seems like all the cats who write for your paper can do is put down the Beatles and talk about blowing things up. Tell 'em all to get SCREWED!

If you overthrow the government with violence your own lives and those of many others will end that way. Anything you start in violence will end in violence and that means anything.

You don't even have to revolt because this government will fall anyways. On the other hand if you preach peace and love and base your lives on this you will go on forever. Real peace cannot be destroyed. I wish some of these bastards would open their eyes and see where fighting has always got us. Nowhere!

Peace in Jesus,

Richard Tronbley

## **To the Editor,**

The front page of the October 31 issue of the Fifth Estate displays a poster stating "Stop all wars." Yet upon reading what is inside this paper it is clear that you advocate violent revolution.

How can you say peace on page 1 and then print articles like “Creating Chaos” on page 3, “Piss in the Voting Booths” on page 9, or “From the Other Side of the Tracks” on page 13?

Are you asking us to pick up our guns and fight for pence and freedom? That’s what our government is telling us to do .. only in Vietnam. That’s also what we did in WWII.

Where do you really stand?

Gemini

**Editors’ note:** See the brother’s letter below for an answer to your letter and the one proceeding it. Also, we think it would be more appropriate for other readers rather than us to answer letters in the future.

## Dear Editors,

I have this comment on what Gary Wintz wrote in your last issue [Letters, FE #66, November 14–27].

Sure maybe what happened at the Wallace rally didn’t change anyone’s mind drastically but it proved (to me at least) that Chicago could happen here in Detroit.

I wasn’t at the rally but was affected by what happened. I have no doubt that our city (state and country, too) needs a change, now.

I believe that you could chalk up what happened as just another event that set minds thinking. You can’t expect it to have an immediate effect. It may take many more battles to shock America into seeing herself for what she really is. So, as we try to change the world it may take bloodshed.

When you are confronted by a mass of inhuman “pigs” you have to fight back however you can. Maybe I have no right to write this since I wasn’t there, but these are my observations.

Before we can have love throughout this country (and world) we are going to have to fight to obtain the freedom to love. I hope to do my share of the fighting sometime in the near future.

P3

P.S. I’m not the only one who has been jolted into hating cops in the past six months.

## To the Editor:

Again and again Tony Reay, “Detroit’s foremost blues freak,” attacked one of the finest R&B groups in the world, the Rolling Stones.

Myself being a fan of the Rolling Stones can not tell you what to do about Mr. Reay. But if I had my way I’d put him on the first boat back to good old England.

Thank you,

Nanker Phelge

## Gentlemen.

I find the Plum Pit ad in your Oct. 31-Nov. 13 issue totally offensive, insufferable in its absolute tastelessness and vulgarity.

Do you really want your image to encompass such juvenile bad taste?

If you cannot appreciate the point I’m making because of your lack of taste or background, I do think you presume too much to be in your present position of authority.

If, on the other hand, you’re that desperate for money, I must sadly conclude that the real message of your journal is support for the money establishment. A prosaic and ironic truth perhaps.

Disappointed and Disgusted

Mary Daas

# fifth Estate

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