

Other Scenes

John Wilcock

1969

NEW YORK: City officials have turned down, sight unseen, a plan to turn NYC's individual subway stations into fascinating communities, more or less reflective of the areas in which they exist.

The vast space in Greenwich Village's West 4th Street station, for example, would be tenanted by a sort of miniature Mulberry Street festival with push carts selling vegetables, church-operated gambling wheels, an art show and second-hand bookstalls of the type found along the banks of the River Seine.

In Yorkville, the 96th Street station would feature a year-round German carnival with steins of beer available for travelers, quaffed to the accompaniment of a brass band and strolling yodelers.

Small stations would be decorated, policed and staffed by block committees who'd be encouraged to do their own thing i.e. acquire brightly-colored paints and murals for the walls, persuade local artists to donate their time and designs. There'd always be a life in each station and going uptown (even without leaving the train) would be like a miniature journey through the different villages, communities and cities of another country. In fact regional and national dishes—a change from the ubiquitous rubber weiner—would be widely available.

Naturally, there'd be regular contests for which station had the most imaginative ideas and could log the most passenger traffic. Subway deficits would become a thing of the past, as would muggings and other little New York nasties. (What keeps Central Park unsafe is that it's not used enough).

Back Stage's Bill Smith reports that a "pocket sized" phonograph with records to match is being tested in the Pacific Northwest, presumably Seattle—a favorite test area for new products.

Marshall McLuhan's *Dew-Line* newsletter is not only exorbitant (\$50 per year); it's also dull...

San Diego Black Panthers report they are being infiltrated by "bald-headed U.S. organization niggers, working with the FBI and other local pig forces." Planting grass in Panthers' homes, they complain is an increasingly common tactic.

Jamestown's TV station, WNYP, in upstate NY has a half-million audience for pirated Canadian programs that owner Lowell Paxson "picks up" from CFTO in Toronto and relays across the border.

The money *Ramparts* squandered would have paid Cleaver's bail several times over...

Keith Lampe and David Herres of *WIN* magazine are putting together (for Bobbs-Merrill) an anthology of high-school-age writings on drugs, revolution, lifestyles etc. and solicit pieces c/o WIN (5 Beekman St., N.Y.C. 10038)

Yesterday's toys and games are the subject of a late-March exhibition at Philadelphia Civic Center Museum...

"Pure Tokyo Canned Unfresh Air," with a red label, is outselling "Pure Mountain Fuji Canned Fresh Air," with a blue label, in Tokyo souvenir shops. Both cans are empty but the first presumably contains more smog.

Joan Baez recently made a recording "with the help of some of the finest musicians in Nashville," says Israel G. Young, and then told the *NY Times* they were fascists. "If she feels that way she shouldn't have recorded with them... I believe it is time for her to give up her career and help some other country." Says Paul Maag: "The rich have Socialism and the poor have brutal enterprise. For the poor the law is what the bureaucrats say it is. Why not have a hippy convention to write a new Constitution?..."

Warren Stevens is currently searching the Caribbean for land suitable for “an independent sovereign nation” which can be colonized with freedom-lovers who already subscribe to his “Atlantis News” (25¢ from RD No. 5, Box 22a, Saugerties, NY 12477).

White people are moving out of the cities and eventually “will be cut off from the intelligence that cities represent,” says LeRoi Jones: Cities are always the most highly developed form: first you have cities, then a nation...One city will fall to Black people, maybe, peacefully. One will fall by force of arms. One will fall because white people don’t want to be there anymore, and they will voluntarily leave. I mean, things come together, they break up, they come together on a higher level, they break up. Things are young and strong, they struggle, they achieve some kind of solidarity—they get comfortable, they get lazy, they die.”

“The white man,” says LeRoi, in an interview with Marvin X and Faruk in Ed Bullin’s *Black Theatre* mag. is the same way. “He’s like an overripe plum. There’s nothing he or I can do to stop what’s going to happen to him.”

The Fillmore East maintain their own undercover narcs who wander around sniffing out grass smokers and warn them to lay off or else...

Buckminster Fuller’s “floating city” that can be built in a shipyard and towed around for mooring in different places is explained in an interesting mat called *The Futurist* (“a journal of forecasts, trends and ideas, about the future”) which costs \$1.25 from World Future Society, P.O. Box 19285, 20th St. Station, Washington, D.C. 20036...

“Barbara Streisand...is endowed with natural gifts without the taste to exploit them. Her vulgar excesses carved for her an overnight niche among the cherished matriarchy of the homosexual chic, alongside such Mother-figures and disaster-identification objects as Ethel Merman, Carol Channing, Mabel Mercer, Marlene Deitrich and especially Judy Garland whom Miss Streisand fair threatens to depose as Jukebox Den Mother of the gay bar” (Grover Sales reviewing *Funny Girl* in *SF* magazine).

Mexico’s bilingual *El Corno Emplumado*, certainly that country’s most literate quarterly, had its government subsidy cut off after a mildly critical editorial (over the student strike) protesting “against a repression which had not even then reached its high point.” Subsidy provided about 50 percent of the mags funds...

Chicago’s Lake Shore National Bank closed out its accounts with *The Seed* after the latter got busted for obscenity. Now even our money’s too dirty for ‘em. Which is a laugh when you think where banks get theirs..

As Supt. Hendrick and three of the wardens admitted, virtually every slightly-built young man committed by the courts is sexually approached within a day or two after his admission to prison, many of these young men are repeatedly raped by gangs of inmates. Others, because of the threat of gang rape seek protection by entering into a homosexual relationship with an individual tormentor.” (Alan J. Davis in *Transaction*, reporting on the results of a three month investigation into sexual assault in the Philadelphia prison system)...

Frank Zappa, who’s studied Varese, has hit upon the golden rule for acceptance of the totally far out: you can get away with virtually anything as long as you keep a steady beat going most of the time.

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