

Keep the 2nd Coming

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

The Second Coming, a new underground newspaper at Eastern Michigan University, is locked in battle with the administration of that school over its right to distribute on campus.

University president Harold Sponberg (called the Phantom by students) is largely responsible for the hysteria, having freaked out after seeing issue number two of the Second Coming.

The Ypsilanti based paper featured a contest called "Meat, the Game for Men," which ran separate pictures of the heads and bodies of the candidates for the EMU Home Coming Queen. The prize for the most correct entry was to sock it to the chosen Queen on national television.

This parody of a college tradition that demeans women and turns them into prize cattle that are to be inspected by the "judges" led to Sponberg ordering the disciplining of 13 students who were selling the paper on campus.

He claims they violated a Board of Regents rule barring unauthorized commercial products being sold on campus. The Phantom thinks the paper is "unacceptable" and has used excessive freedom to cast aspersions on the good name of 10 students (the Queen candidates) and their parents."

However, Sponberg's plans to nip the paper in the bud have failed as students and faculty have rallied to the aid of the people involved. The faculty senate met to consider a resolution condemning the administration for its action, students including several fraternities have issued statements of support and the poor Phantom couldn't even get a student court to uphold his charges.

The court threw out the case saying the peddling rule doesn't apply to newspapers which fall under the protection of the 1st Amendment to the Constitution. Undaunted, the Dean of Students, Thomas Aceto, refused to accept the student court decision and ordered a special disciplinary review board to re-examine the case. No decision has been made yet.

The Second Coming has published its third issue on schedule and began distributing it outside the campus limits, and were not hassled.

The problem is not settled at this writing, but the *Second Coming* editors assure us that they plan to continue to print their paper and fight any attempt to interfere with their rights to sell it.

Sponberg better be hip that of the 300—or so odd papers that have membership in the Underground Press Syndicate there has never been a paper that has succumbed to official threats or harassment. The Second Coming will certainly not be the first.

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