

Pigman Meets the Super Media

Thorne Dreyer

December 12-25, 1968

NEW YORK (LNS)—The media of the revolution is mushrooming through America.

The growth of the underground and movement press is phenomenal. Equally notable is the outrage and fear which it creates in those whose interests it opposes. As the radical media grows, so do the attempts to repress it.

In recent weeks, the minions of law and order have been beating on the doors of the underground press. *The Great Speckled Bird* in Atlanta has been threatened with grand jury indictments for obscenity. *Dallas Notes* has seen its office torn apart by the cops and its equipment confiscated. Bloomington, Indiana's *Spectator* and Ithaca, New York's *First Issue*, have had their editors busted for resisting the draft.

And the problem is not limited to the underground press. Numerous college papers have been getting the same treatment.

The UH News/Liberated Press at the University of Hartford has been busted on a Connecticut libel/obscenity statute. They ran a cartoon depicting our new president as a large erect index finger.

Among the college papers that have had to deal with the heavy hand of the censor are the *Daily Cardinal* at Wisconsin, *The State News* at Michigan State and the *Daily Californian* at Berkeley.

Among the most astounding cases of underground harassment is that of Dallas versus *Dallas Notes*.

The paper has been busted twice, on Oct. 30 and Nov. 15. Vice squad cops came looking for "pornography" and tore the office apart, carrying away everything in sight.

In the two busts, the cops confiscated the following: four typewriters, cameras, darkroom and graphic equipment, business records, books, posters, a desk, a drafting table, copy and other material for the next issue, and everything else that could be ripped loose and carried off.

In the first raid, the cops made off with all the *Notes*' typewriters, so the paper had to rent a new one. When the fuzz returned, they took the rented one.

Not only did the cops take equipment and totally destroy the office, but the Dallas police also arrested several staff members for possession of pornography. Publisher Stoney Burns was busted both times. Editor Rodd Delaney and his wife, circulation manager Donna Delaney, were arrested the first time and left the paper soon after, partly because the hassle was getting to be too much.

But Stoney Burns is staying on and *Dallas Notes* is still alive.

Another southern paper, the *Kudzu*, in Jackson, Miss. (!) has raised the ire of local folk. Salesmen have been busted, cameras have been confiscated, and the paper has been evicted from its office. On Oct. 8, 18 *Kudzu* staffers and friends were jumped and beaten by deputy sheriffs in front of a local high school.

It's not just in Dixie that they're whistling sad tunes.

Many northern papers have been labeled "smut" by the city fathers.

Philadelphia's *Distant Drummer* had its troubles this summer. Street salesmen were arrested, some retail outlets quit selling the paper, and some advertising was lost.

But one charge went way beyond obscenity. Police Commissioner Rizzo asked the District Attorney to prosecute the *Drummer* for solicitation to commit murder.

Milwaukee has written a new obscenity law (something to do with exposure of nipples) to harass its underground tabloid, *Kaleidoscope*. Several staffers are facing obscenity charges. And editor John Kois' car has been firebombed and its back windows shot out.

John Bryan, editor of *Open City*, in Los Angeles, has been convicted of obscenity once, and now they're after him again.

With college papers, the main bugaboo seems to be the word "fuck." According to Susie Schmidt of the College Press Service, "The word 'fuck,' long a commonplace in youthful vocabularies, and adult as well, has sent countless printers of college papers into such rage that they censor the copy, refuse to print the papers, even try to get schools to discipline editors."

Editors of Wisconsin's *Daily Cardinal* almost got fired because of a College Press Service story on the recent SDS national council meeting which quoted a member of Up Against the Wall/Motherfucker.

Michigan State's *State News* printed a story about the censorship at Wisconsin and got some of the same treatment. Salaries of the editors were cut as punishment.

Other college papers which have been dumped on include *Envoy*, from Hunter College in New York, which ran the word "fuck" in an article about Chicago; the Oakland (Mich.) *University Observer*, whose printer would not run a four-page supplement written by a black student, and the *Lion's Roar* from Windham College in Putney, Vt., whose printer boycotted an article titled "The Myth of Vaginal Orgasm."

New York's *Rat* has been under fire of late. The New Jersey attorney general threatened an obscenity investigation and frightened off the *Rat's* Jersey printer. Editor Jeff Shero says too many Jersey high school kids were reading the paper.

Other papers are faced with more subtle forms of repression. *The Rag*, in Austin, Texas, almost folded last summer because it couldn't get an office. Every place *The Rag* rented got condemned by the city. Eventually, no one would rent to the paper because they didn't want the kiss of death on their property.

The Rag has had other problems. Several staff members were called before the grand jury because of such things as a front page photo which pictured two lions fucking and bore the caption, Peace. The county decided not to prosecute.

Orpheus, in Phoenix, Arizona, has been turned down by 25 printers.

John Mathieson, editor of *Raison Bread*; Tony Seed, editor of the *Canadian Free Press*; and John Sinclair of *The Sun* and the *Fifth Estate* have also been busted on dope raps.

This has only been a small sampling of the papers facing the axe of repression. Others that have been hassled (some to the death) include *Avatar*, *Georgia Straight*, *Helix*, *Logos*, *Seed*, *Spokane Natural*, *Florida Free Press*, *Vanguard*, *Harbinger*, *L.A. Free Press* and many more.

So What's in the future?

Open City's John Bryan thinks things will get even tighter. "It feels like the heat's getting turned up," he told LNS.

Stoney Burns of *Dallas Notes* plans to stick it out. "The cops have succeeded in ruining our production schedule, in causing us great expense, but we're too stubborn to quit.

But perhaps the best statement comes from *Kudzu*. David Doggett says that, after *Kudzu* staffers were busted the jail cell bore the following inscription:

"On Oct. 8, 1968, the *Kudzu* staff was illegally seized and thrown into this cell. But we are free forever in our minds and our souls. Freedom is a constant struggle—and we are ready, we are together. We want the world and we want it now."

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Accessed July 24, 2021 at
<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/68-december-12-25-1968/pigman-meets-the-super-media/>
Fifth Estate #68, December 12-25, 1968, Vol. 3 No. 16, page 8

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