

Making It—Underground

"It's embarrassing," laughs Peter Werbe, long-haired co-editor of Detroit's underground newspaper The Fifth Estate, "but we've almost become a financial success." In a year and a half, The Fifth Estate has become a twenty-page biweekly with a claimed circulation of 12,000. Three staff members, including Werbe, are even paid \$10 weekly, and the paper has moved into a storefront near the Wayne State University campus. But its underground mission remains the same. "I still view it as the first step in the guerrilla movement," says the 27-year-old Werbe. "Here we can begin to question the legitimacy of the System."

Indeed, spicing at the System has never been more aboveground. From Boston's Avatar and New York's East Village Other to The Los Angeles Free Press, underground papers report they are making substantial circulation gains.



Newsweek—John Burks



Newsweek—Robert R. McElroy



Newsweek—John Burks

Berkeley Barb news vendor, EVO newsroom and editor Garson: The Spirit of '76?

According to the best guesses, there are now more than 150 U.S. underground newspapers claiming a total circulation of 2 million. To be sure, the papers come and go like hippies in a communal pad. The San Francisco Oracle, a colorfully illustrated psychedelic journal, has gone from an irregular weekly to a monthly and its counterpart in Los Angeles has folded. The Westside News in New York is now appearing as The New York Free Press.

The Scene: The successful undergrounds have made it due to a variety of factors: the failure of many city dailies to cover adequately the youth and antiwar scene, the comparatively low overhead of offset printing methods and the whole new permissiveness in print made possible by the 1966 Supreme Court decision defining hard-core pornography.

Though many are amateurish and scatological, and sometimes seem endlessly devoted to attacking the police and authority, the best undergrounds provide a happy hunting ground for uninhibited cartoonists, writers and critics. "Mostly they're throwbacks to what college kids put out when they realized for

the first time that they could get into print," says press critic Ben Bagdikian. "Few of them make the distinction between rumor and proven fact. But they represent areas of concern where the daily press hasn't been vigorous enough."

Last week, for example, the five-week-old San Francisco Express Times (circulation: 6,000) ran a 7,500-word transcript of Stokely Carmichael's get-the-honky "Declaration of War" in Oakland, Calif. ET also features what may be the only underground sports columnist. Of Houston's upset basketball win over UCLA, Frank Bardacke, 26, wrote that "the hired hands from Texas decisively outplayed the sophisticated black nationalists from Los Angeles."

'Freep': The Los Angeles Free Press, a weekly known as the "Freep," is the most successful (circulation: 68,000) and one of the most professional underground papers. It boasts a full-time staff of 32, grossed \$450,000 last year and has filed for incorporation. Editor Art

Kunkin, 40, went overground to hire an advertising manager from The Hollywood Citizen-News and a film critic from Hearst's Los Angeles Herald-Examiner. "Some people naively mistake stability for a change in point of view," says Kunkin to reassure readers that success will not spoil the Free Press. Freep has the best cartoonist among the undergrounds—Ron Cobb, whose savagely antiwar drawings (such as one showing a toy windup marine bayoneting a small boy) run throughout the underground press. And last week the Freep was trying to round up the story behind the San Quentin prisoner strike, which was first broken by the Berkeley Barb through convict sources. On the other hand, the Freep rides tired New Left hobbyhorses such as Jim Garrison's Kennedy assassination theories.

The Barb (circulation: 50,000) is well known—like other undergrounds—for its classifieds ("Chicks that dig sex and wrestling, call 552-1535 from 8 to 5!"). The Barb also offers Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld, an M.D. at the University of California Health Center in Berkeley, who writes an offbeat medical column about

specialized maladies under the title HIP-pocrates. Answering a question about intercourse during the latter months of pregnancy, Schoenfeld wrote that most gynecologists advise against it in the last month. "Imagine the fetus floating in warmth and darkness. Suddenly he is subjected to thumping, buffeting and other phenomena. Are there any readers who remember?"

Boston's Avatar (circulation: 35,000), a stylishly arty production which digs astrology, plans to print a New York City edition by the end of March and a European edition by late spring. Its entire staff has been arrested by the police because of the paper's fondness for four-letter words. Says 31-year-old editor Brian Keating: "That's the way people speak. I really didn't realize we were using four-letter words until the police pointed them out to us." New York's East Village Other (circulation: 40,000) is also in trouble with the Brooklyn D.A. over a comic strip that its lawyers may

be hard-pressed to demonstrate meets the Supreme Court test of "redeeming social value." But EVO's sales are prospering at some 300 newsstands around the city.

Telex: "It's going to get bigger all the time," says Marvin Garson, 26, husband of Barbara Garson (the author of "Mac-Bird!") and co-editor of the tabloid Express Times. There are going to be more and more papers that will give people coverage they're not getting—and will never get—from the daily papers." To provide this coverage, the underground press has banded together to swap stories through the 60-paper Underground Press Syndicate and has established a Liberation News Service based in Washington. LNS claims 310 subscribers, including 100 college newspapers and is presently converting from mail delivery into its own Telex network around the country; a Telex link is planned with the European News Network in London. LNS also hopes to capitalize on the growing high-school underground movement by launching a junior division, staffed by high schoolers.

"San Francisco," says old Berkeley

radical Garson, "is beginning to take on the flavor that Boston and Philadelphia must have had around 1770. If the monopoly press begins dying . . . 1776 won't be far away."

Managing Crime News?

The pretrial newspaper accounts of the 1954 Cleveland murder case involving Dr. Sam Sheppard have already made law-school casebooks—as a deplorable example of how flamboyant stories can influence the outcome of a trial.

To curtail such excesses, the American Bar Association sought to develop a set of rules for criminal trials. And last week the ABA's House of Delegates voted to adopt rules recommended by the panel headed by Justice Paul C. Reardon of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. The Reardon rules forbid prosecutors, lawyers and judges to participate in releasing information about: criminal records, the existence or contents of a confession, the results of an investigation, or the identity of witnesses, before they are introduced in court. The recommendations exist as a model only; there will be no penalty for those who do not comply unless state bar associations, which set standards of practice, also adopt the rules and decide to discipline lawyers.

Moreover, most pretrial publicity originates at police stations, and this will continue. Though the Reardon report puts the ABA on record as recommending that police departments adopt its standards, the association can do little to bring this about. At local and state levels the influence of newspapers is much stronger than that of bar associations, and Reardon's unfriendly reception by the press appeared nearly unanimous.

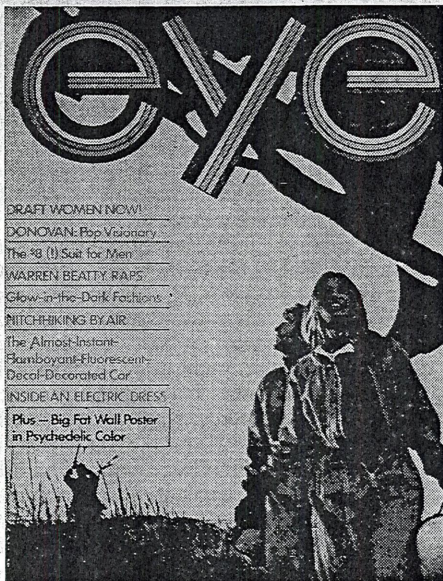
"This is an arrogant, presumptive move," said The St. Louis Globe-Democrat. "What the bar association now proposes is to manage the news about crime which is at the heart of a domestic crisis," said The Miami Herald. "What is needed in the country is not less but more scrutiny of its police, prosecutors and judges," argued The Washington Post.

For the Teeming Teens

When Helen Gurlay Brown took over at ailing Cosmopolitan three years ago she shifted the 79-year-old Hearst magazine's appeal from homemakers to husband-hunters with tangible results: circulation went from 782,701 to 889,175, while advertising soared 162 per cent.

Impressed, Hearst executives asked editor Brown to be midwife at the birth of a new monthly magazine aimed at the 17 million Americans between 16 and 20, who spend \$15 billion a year (and buy 81 per cent of all single phonograph records sold and 53 per cent of all movie tickets).

The result, out this week, is "eye," a 130-page book featuring electric-shock photography, a tear-out psychedelic poster and a lead article urging that



First issue of eye: Astigmatic?

women be drafted. It also offers features on such well-mined subjects as drugs, sky diving, rock, and Warren Beatty on violence and "Bonnie and Clyde."

Eye borrows from big-sister Cosmopolitan the Q and A personality interview (borrowed in turn from Playboy), offbeat astrology and the Brown formula of how-to pieces (how-to decorate your car, hitchhike on airplanes). The interviews aren't called interviews, but raps. "To rap is to level," explains executive editor Howard Smith, 31, who resembles a hip Trotsky. "It's someone getting what they have to say off their mind, without an interviewer controlling what's said."

When-to: Future issues promise raps from movie men François Truffaut and Alfred Hitchcock and from sitarist Ravi Shankar, how-tos like "How to add five sexy years to your face: grow a mustache!" and at least one when-to (see a psychiatrist).

Eye editor Susan Szekely is 27 but claims she will have no trouble gearing copy to readers ten years younger. "You sort of need a retooling of your mind and a real effort to stay open to new things," she raps. "I really hated rock 'n' roll music a few years ago, but now I love it."

Eye may suffer from some astigmatism: it tries to appeal equally to both the male and female markets. Magazines like Seventeen have aimed for and succeeded in selling to female teens while boys have read Playboy.

Another "youth" magazine, six-month-old Cheetah, has tried to break into the combined market. And Cheetah is now lagging on a minuscule promotion budget and a paid circulation of 100,000.

The first press run of eye, by contrast, is 500,000. And, Hearst Magazines president Richard E. Deems predicts a sellout. "Ten years ago the Electric Circus would have been a very unique New York establishment," argues Miss Szekely. "But it isn't today. There's an electric circus in Schenectady."

TRANSITION

Hospitalized: LURLEEN BURNS WALLACE, 41, governor of Alabama, for abdominal surgery to remove a malignant tumor, the third such cancer operation she has undergone in the past two years, in Montgomery, Ala., Feb. 22. Her doctors said they were "quite pleased" with the results.

Died: SCOTT WIKE LUCAS, 76, who served Illinois in Congress for sixteen years, the last twelve in the Senate, where he rose to become Democratic Majority Leader in 1949; of a cerebral hemorrhage, in Rocky Mount, N.C., Feb. 22. Lucas's career ended abruptly in 1950 with his defeat by Republican Everett Dirksen, then an ex-congressman, a loss which he blamed mainly on fellow Democratic Sen. Estes Kefauver's crime investigation in his state.

■ Dallas District Judge JOE BRANTLEY BROWN, 60, an affable jurist sometimes criticized for his easygoing courtroom manner, who presided over the tempestuous murder trial of Jack Ruby; of a heart attack in Dallas, Feb. 20.

■ HOWARD WALTER LORD FLOREY, 69, Oxford pathology professor who headed a U.S.-financed research team that helped synthesize and produce penicillin in World War II for which, along with two others, he was honored with a 1945 Nobel Prize; of a heart attack in London, Feb. 22.

■ GEORGE HACKENSCHMIDT, 90, onetime wrestling champion known as "The Russian Lion," who had 3,000 bouts, losing only one, before retiring in 1908; of heart failure, Feb. 19, in London.

■ WILLIAM PHILLIPS, 88, career diplomat for the U.S. during two wars and twice Under Secretary of State, who as U.S. ambassador to Italy in 1940 sought in vain to dissuade Mussolini from declaring war against Britain and France; of a heart ailment, in Sarasota, Fla., Feb. 23.

■ FANNIE HURST, 78, sometimes called the sob sister of American literature, whose numerous romantic magazine stories and novels ("Back Street," "Imitation of Life") earned her great wealth and millions of followers, mostly women; after a short illness, in New York City, Feb. 23. Rivaling the melodrama of her fiction was her own marriage, kept secret for five years while she and husband Jacques S. Danielson lived like illicit lovers "to keep the dew on the rose."



Fannie Hurst: Romance for millions