

ACTION GROUP - CITIZENS OF DETROIT

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Once again, we are compelled to voice our opposition and outrage at the policies of the Detroit News.

Daily, polarization increases and opposition to the Detroit News grows. We can only demand that the Detroit News see the intrinsic errors of its policies and if not the error, the economic infeasibility of this policy in a long-range perspective.

The Detroit News would have us believe that all accusations of racist policies and reporting are based on myths. But an aware community continues to accuse, and factual evidence continues to support their accusations.

Although started in 1967, the "Secret Witness" column of the Detroit News has covered cases prior to that year. Yet it never offered a reward for the apprehension of the killers of Eddie Cook, shot in 1966 on Brush by "nightriders" - nor did it offer rewards for the Algiers or Rouge Park murderers.

The "Crime in Detroit Streets" column (Crime Blotter) does not cover the entire metropolitan area. Coverage of the entire metropolitan area might, in fact, educate racial supremacists. It would also be educational if coverage were given to code enforcement, consumer and other crimes. As it stands, the Crime Blotter can only inflame, rather than inform.

The Detroit News does not "tell it like it is." It did not report on the Mendelsohn study of Police which received front page coverage in the Free Press, 1/2 page with charts. It did not report the Vickery Committee and Task Force findings on racism in police recruiting - only that some members of the Task Force had resigned over "stop and frisk."

It is our community's tragedy that the racially inflammatory policies of the Detroit News are not limited to the newspaper alone. The same ownership and policies extend to Channel 4 TV and Radio Station WWJ. This cross-media ownership gives the Detroit News a dominant position (perhaps an unlawful one) with respect to communications in the Detroit metropolitan area. The tragic effects of this common ownership are substantial enough to warrant official attention: for a political democracy thrives only where there is a free, unhindered exchange of information and ideas. To insure that this exchange - and ultimately the truth - is made available to the community it is imperative that we have the broadest spectrum of competition among our news media. The dereliction of duty and betrayal of public trust by the communications organs of the Detroit News, and the resulting incendiary atmosphere of fear and hatred dramatically demonstrates why a democracy cannot thrive where media concentration exists.

We call upon citizens who are aware of the extent of the Detroit News' menace to exercise their right, and their moral obligation, to protest.

The circulation boycott of the Detroit News is rapidly gaining momentum, and its effects are being felt. Advertisers who support the News with their patronage have been made aware that their revenues are, in effect, supporting the policies of the News. These advertisers will respond to your expressions of concern.

We demand:

- (1) The removal of the Crime Blotter on the grounds that it only reinforces existing racism because the general level of awareness and values reflects the mis-education and mis-information that has plagued our country and our city.
- (2) A complete change of policy by the News, from editorials and headlines to daily reporting, acknowledging the responsibility of the Detroit News to the entire community.
- (3) That the Detroit News cease and desist in aiding and abetting the political activity of a potential armed political party - in some circles known as the Detroit Police Department.

We wish to you.....

Peace and Power

Ad Hoc Action Group.
Citizens of Detroit