America's 'Fifth Estate':
The *East Village Other*, The Underground Press Syndicate, and the Creation and the Transformation of the Press of the Sixties Youth Movement

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Introduction

On the evening of October 20, 1967, hundreds of writers and editors representing an eclectic mix of independent newspapers and student publications gathered in a loft near Washington, D.C.'s Logan Circle. The dress code was eccentric: several "police-looking young men with ties" were asked to leave, while the meeting's organizers wore ensembles including Sgt. Pepper jackets or 'Indian headdresses.'[1] The agenda was frequently interrupted with jokes, arguments, and poetry readings — at one point two editors descended into an "impromptu poem-off."

The following day, many attendees would become participant-observers in the March on the Pentagon: a demonstration that combined the youth movement's appetites for radical politics and cultural transgression, serving both as an anti-Vietnam War rally and a piece of guerrilla theater in which longhaired hippies promised to 'exorcize' or 'levitate' the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense. On that night, however, the gathered newsmen were concerned not with the planning of the March itself, but the way in which the March and its participants would be covered and remembered.

There was one point on which all parties in attendance agreed: the mainstream American press could *not* be trusted to cover the March and its participants. "[W]hoever controls the communications system of this country, controls the American consciousness," said Allen Katzman, one of the organizers of the conference, to the gathered attendees.[2] But within the communications industry, Katzman explained, "the oligarchic squeeze is on. Information passed through the hands of I.B.M. executives and corporate structures is distilled news, devoid of morality."[3] Katzman's colleague, Walter Bowart, suggested a remedy: the gathered newspapermen would together

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[1] John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 92; Raymond Mungo, *Famous Long Ago: My Life and Hard Times with Liberation News Service* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1970), 18-19.

[2] Walter Bowart and Allan Katzman, "Underground Press Address," *East Village Other*, November 1-15, 1967. Though Katzman is often credited as 'Allan' in *EVO*, in reality his name was spelled 'Allen'; this thesis uses 'Allen' to refer to the man, but uses 'Allan' in references when an article was attributed to his pseudonym.

[3] Bowart and Katzman, "Underground Press Address," November 1-15, 1967.

constitute an "alternative press to begin a dialogue with the presently monopolistic vested-interest press."[4]

"I am told that the editors present here today represent more than 15 million young readers," Bowart continued. "15 million people who have yet to exercise one iota of the social, economic, and political majority they possess." [5] Per Bowart, if they could successfully form a coherent 'underground press' that could hold its own against the mainstream, the gathered papers and their youthful audience might contend for control over the 'American consciousness.'

Katzman and Bowart were two of the editors of the *East Village Other* (*EVO*), a paper founded in 1965 to serve the countercultural enclave surrounding New York City's St. Mark's Place. Initially presented as a more radical alternative to the *Village Voice*, early editions of *EVO* were largely devoted to the local. Investigations into corrupt landlords ran alongside check-ins with local bands.[6] Reviews of local art installations accompanied cries to free the latest area artists busted by the narcotics squad.[7]

The *East Village Other*, however, had larger ambitions that could be seen in its choice of role model. Though the youth movement tended to dismiss or disdain Marx, Lenin, and other theorists of the Old Left — and the *East Village Other* was relatively uninterested in Marcuse, Fanon, or the other theorists beloved by the political side of the movement — references to Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan regularly made their way into *EVO*'s pages.[8] Katzman's speech to the D.C. conference included the statement "[t]he media is the message," a reference to McLuhan's "the medium is the message"; McLuhan proposed that it was a communication medium itself and not its

[4] Bowart and Katzman, "Underground Press Address," November 1-15, 1967.

[5] Bowart and Katzman, "Underground Press Address," November 1-15, 1967.

[6] See John Graffiti, "Lower East Side Funk"; Dan Rattiner, "Our Slums: 148 Avenue C: No Heat and a Child with Pneumonia"; "Local Landlords Accused of Bribery"; and "Screaming Girls Attack Fugs at Lower East Side Concert" in *East Village Other*, January 1966.

[7] See Marcia Goldstein, "Artist found Guilty – Resisting Badgeless Feds" and Lil Picard, "Voyeurama" in *East Village Other*, May 1-15, 1966.

[8] See as example Allan Katzman, "The Media is the Message," *East Village Other*, March 1-15, 1966; "1984 vs Brave New World," *East Village Other*, May 1-15, 1966; Walter Bowart, "Emerging: A Fifth Estate," *East Village Other*, September 1-15, 1966.

content that should be the focus of study.[9] This impacted *EVO* stylistically: Bowart and Katzman considered *EVO*'s most pressing competition to be not the *New York Times*, but the spectacle of the television screen, and accordingly filled their paper with eye-catching graphics and non-traditional typesettings.[10] It also prompted them to look outwards: if they could join with other *EVO*-like publications, could the result — something that Bowart initially referred to as a 'Fifth Estate,' but eventually became known as the 'underground press' — challenge commercial media on a national scale?[11]

In 1966, the paper took a leading role in creating that 'underground press' by establishing what would become known as the Underground Press Syndicate (UPS): a loose confederation that sought to bring under one roof those independent newspapers serving hippies, New Left political radicals, anti-Vietnam protestors, and everyone else aligned with the 'youth movement.' These papers differed wildly in geographic location — ranging from countercultural havens like California's Haight-Ashbury, to college towns in Michigan and Texas — and circulation. Some espoused the radical politics of Marcuse and Mao, while others preached the personal liberation found in free love and LSD. A select few dated back to the 'early days' of '64 and '65, though many more had sprung up just weeks or months before the Pentagon March. Notwithstanding these differences, UPS gave its members the opportunity to network with other publications, exchange information, and freely reprint each other's copy.

UPS had counted just five members at its founding: California's *Berkeley Barb* and *Los Angeles Free Press* (a/k/a "*Freep*"), Michigan's *Fifth Estate* and *The Paper*, and New York's *East Village Other*. In the year-and-change since its founding, the Syndicate had experienced exponential growth. Now, hundreds of writers and editors representing dozens of publications had traveled to

[9] Abe Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1985), 32; Bowart and Katzman, "Underground Press Address," November 1-15, 1967.

[10] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 32; Robert J. Glessing, *The Underground Press in America* (Bloomington, IN: University Press, 1970), 40.

[11] Bowart, "Emerging: A Fifth Estate," September 1-15, 1966.

Washington to listen to Bowart and Katzman speak.[12] Once geographically-dispersed publications concerned primarily with the goings-on within their own respective 'East Villages,' the papers of UPS had converged upon the American capital on the eve of the Pentagon March.

The *East Village Other*'s dual loyalties to its local countercultural scene and the national cultural revolution were not unique: to some extent, every underground paper had to perform the same calculus. However, its status as both an early model of a youth movement community paper and a leader in the creation of the national underground press made its navigation of this tension particularly high-stakes. The *East Village Other* demonstrates that the papers of the underground press were not simply reacting to broader changes in the youth movement when they covered and participated in national politics, but played an active role in forming the national youth movement — both through the role it played in reifying the national 'underground press' by forming the Underground Press Syndicate, and by giving its readers a means through which they might self-identify with people and struggles beyond their own neighborhood. Yet *EVO*'s failures to resolve the tensions between its dual identities ultimately contributed to its undoing.

Review of Literature

In his review of Todd Gitlin's 1987 *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, Paul Buhle comments that the Sixties generation's "work of collective self-documentation began early and has not abated."[13] Buhle frames Gitlin's book — an analysis of the youth movement built around an account of the rise and fall of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), of which Gitlin was once president — as an extension of the memoirs, oral histories, and other such works of "history from the bottom up" that began during the youth movement itself.[14] To Buhle, Gitlin is most compelling when he writes about his own experiences as "participant-observer," rather than as "journalist-historian" about the latter half of the Sixties, after his time in SDS leadership.[15] Buhle later described

[12] Blake Slonecker, "Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm, and the New Left, 1967-1981," Ph.D. diss. (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), 11.

[13] Paul Buhle, "Review Essay: Remembering the Sixties," *Oral History Review* 17, no. 1 (1989): 138.

[14] Buhle, "Review Essay: Remembering the Sixties," 138.

[15] Buhle, "Review Essay: Remembering the Sixties," 140.

Gitlin's respective characterizations of these periods as the "good sixties" and "bad sixties"; this framework has been adapted by other authors to comment upon or critique accounts that positively treat those aspects of the youth movement in which the author was personally involved.[16] Through this lens, the youth movement's propensity for 'participant-observation' is simultaneously an asset that provides unique perspectives and revolutionizes existing methodology, while also posing a liability by opening the author to accusations of bias.

Literature on the Sixties youth movement can thus be divided into two categories: a first wave that blended history and autobiography, written by people like Gitlin who might claim the title of 'participant-observer'; and a second wave analyzing the works of these 'participant-observers,' primarily by people who were not there themselves. The historiography of the underground press is no exception. The earliest analyses of the underground press, such as Robert J. Glessing's 1970 *The Underground Press in America*, were produced scant years after the Pentagon March, when the number and circulation of underground publications had not yet reached its peak. Glessing surveys 30 notable underground publications, tracing the movement from proto-underground forebears like the *Village Voice* to the wave of papers that followed *EVO*. Though the first part of Glessing's book treats these papers as historical subjects, the second part operates as almost a 'how-to' for new publications; from Glessing's point of view, America's underground press was then so clearly on the upswing that he confidently declares in his first chapter that it "is not going to go away and it is not going to disappear."[17]

But by the time Abe Peck published his *Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press* in 1985, the underground press as Glessing knew it had indeed disappeared. Although Peck was as intimately a part of the Sixties as Glessing — a onetime editor of Chicago's psychedelic *Seed* and a writer with New York's *Rat Subterranean News*, Peck briefly served on the

[16] Paul Buhle, "Madison Revisited," *Radical History Review* 1, no. 57 (1993): 248; for examples of works that reference the 'good sixties/bad sixties' framework, see Mark Lytle, *America's Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2006), 2, and Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (New York, NY: Verso, 2002), 8.

[17] Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, 39.

steering committee of the Underground Press Syndicate — the very title of his book portrays the Sixties as something to be dug up, examined, and historicized.[18] Like Glessing, however, Peck explicitly identifies his project as "less a history of the day-to-day operations of any one paper than a narrative of papers and people encountering key events of the day."[19]

In contrast, recent academic work on the underground press — often written by generational outsiders to the Sixties — has tended to prioritize these 'day-to-day operations.' In his *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, historian John McMillian discusses how new scholarship on the Sixties has bucked a "New Left consensus" that centers SDS and other national organizations by instead "examining the Movement at the local level, and exploring other groups within the organized Left."[20] Adopting an almost episodic approach, McMillian devotes chapters to distinct moments in the history of the underground press: for example, the 1967 March on the Pentagon, the 1968 Columbia protests, as well as a half-misinformation/half-conspiracy promoting the smoking of banana peels that swept through the counterculture in 1967. Interestingly, McMillian's book concludes not with the end of the Sixties, but with a discussion of alternative media trends in the ensuing decades; titled "From Underground to Everywhere," his concluding section suggests that, rather than the death of the underground that Peck describes, the spirit of the Sixties press survived in alternative forms.

A few recent works, notably Matthew T. Pifer's "Dissent: Detroit and the Underground Press, 1965-69" and Blake Slonecker's "Living the Moment: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm, and the New Left, 1967-1981," approach the underground press with even greater specificity. Pifer surveys the underground press in Detroit, attempting to intervene in a scholarship that has largely considered Detroit's undergrounders "in terms of their relation to national protest movements" by analyzing the role played by "the more localized manifestations of the underground press movement"

[18] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, xvi.
[19] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, xv.
[20] McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters*, 5-6.

in countercultural formation.[21] Slonecker does much the same for the underground press organization most comparable to UPS: the Liberation News Service (LNS), which was the second nationwide underground press organization.[22] Slonecker notes that, as LNS became increasingly interested in not only covering the youth movement but shaping movement discourse, its international coverage increased to include not only the perennially-relevant Vietnam but also more obscure anticolonial liberation struggles in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.[23] However, this newfound internationalism went unappreciated by those "community-based underground rags that maintained local readerships and local missions," highlighting the tension between the local and international.[24]

Previous writings on the underground press, then, have largely fallen into two categories: an initial wave of insider-authored analyses spanning the entire history of the underground, and works focusing on discrete publications and geographic contexts that have aimed to add specificity and detail to those broader histories. This thesis aims to bridge these two approaches by considering the ways in which underground papers were simultaneously local and national. The *East Village Other* possessed intensely local character *and* concerned itself with the entire generation-wide, nation-spanning youth movement. It played both an important community-forming role within its home neighborhood, *and* an ideational role in the 'underground press.' Rather than merely reacting to broader trends in the youth movement, the *East Village Other*'s purposeful founding of the Underground Press Syndicate demonstrates how underground papers themselves took active roles in creating national networks.

Though the content produced by the *East Village Other* can certainly be read as eyewitness accounts of the major events and cultural transformations of the Sixties, this thesis is primarily interested in the ways in which the paper chose to cover and frame the history that it was living through — and, in doing so, how it created that history. That the *East Village Other* and other

[21] Matthew T. Pifer, "Dissent: Detroit and the Underground Press, 1965-1969," Ph.D. diss. (The University of Oklahoma, 2001), 27.

[22] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 11.

[23] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 109.

[24] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 111-12.

underground newspapers were staffed by 'participant-observers,' simultaneously reporters and cultural revolutionaries, makes them open to accusations of bias and untrustworthiness. However, this also makes the *East Village Other* a site of great insight into the psyche of the nascent nationwide youth movement. By placing the *East Village Other* in conversation with the existing secondary literature, the content produced by its fellow underground newspapers, and autobiographical content produced by former *EVO* staffers, this thesis explores how the *East Village Other* helped create *and* was destroyed by the Sixties.

Chapter One follows *EVO* from its October 1965 founding to the March on the Pentagon two years later. Beginning as a paper with a locally-focused mission intent on safeguarding the culture of the East Village from outside disruption, two realizations — the awareness that there existed 'East Villages' all across the country, and that the politics of spectacle could be utilized to expand this awareness further — led *EVO* to expand its project from protectionism to cultural revolution. By the time of the D.C. conference, *EVO* had transformed itself from something contentedly 'other,' to a paper that wanted to transform the 'American consciousness.'

Chapter Two explores the history of the Underground Press Syndicate, which constituted the first attempt at transforming the nascent 'underground press' from a collection of loosely-related local papers into a semi-cohesive force that could challenge traditional media for national prominence. Yet several factors — the emergence of viable competitor-organizations, government repression, internal strife within UPS, and disagreements as to what exactly the function of the underground press should be — hindered the organization from reaching its full imagined potential.

Chapter Three covers the later years of the *East Village Other* as it and the papers around it continued to struggle with defining the purpose of an underground paper. In 1968, *EVO* continued the national political interest it had sparked at the March on the Pentagon as something approaching a *de facto* party paper of the Youth International Party. However, the violence and turmoil of that year's Democratic Convention in Chicago created a crisis of faith within the underground: while some papers (like *EVO*'s rival in the East Village, *Rat Subterranean News*) responded by embracing second-wave feminism, radical political violence, and other innovations in youth movement thought,

others abandoned the urban political struggle to attempt to build a new society in the countryside. The *East Village Other* did neither, ultimately losing its revenue, circulation, and respect within the underground press before it disappeared from the scene altogether.

Chapter One – The Evolution of *EVO*, 1965-1967

In October of 1965, the inaugural issue of a new newspaper hit the newsstands of Manhattan. With four tabloid-style pages and type that circled and danced around the edge of the page, it did not resemble a traditional newspaper. Nor was it produced in the same manner as traditional papers; it utilized offset printing, a new technology with much lower financial and technological barriers to entry than the letterpress type used by the large broadsheets. Yet, apart from its strange artwork and occasional manifesto-esque rants, it served the same purpose as a traditional community paper, albeit for a very untraditional community. In the first issue of the *East Village Other*, one could read articles about an anti-war rally on Avenue B, local poet-hangout Le Metro Cafe, and the area band The Fugs, as well as an interrogatively-titled editorial: "Why an East Village Newspaper?"[25]


THE east village OTHER

VOL. 1 NO. 1 OCTOBER, 1965 25 CENTS

GLORIOUS NEWSPAPER STRIKE THE HERETO FORE UNDERGROUND "OTHER" EXPANDS ITS TO COMMEMORATE THE PATAREALISM

PEACE RALLY BREEDS STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

strange bedfellows

VICTORY OVER COMMUNISM

THE ONLY GOOD COMMUNIST IS A DEAD COMMUNIST

COMMUNISTS ATE FOR COMMUNISM VIET CONG

WORK POLICE

Generation of Draft Dodgers

See...Hear...Feel...Taste...Smell

Go ahead, raise a few eyebrows.

BOB DYLANTAUNT

MIDNIGHT PORNY movie RAID

THE ANNEX 163 Avenue B New York, N.Y.

Country Fugathon Set For October

Figures 2-3: Front and Back Cover of the *East Village Other*'s First Issue

This was not a question that even Walter H. Bowart — founder, publisher, and longtime editor of *EVO* — could answer. At least according to his one-time business partner Dan Rattiner, Bowart had "no idea" whether he planned to do a second *EVO* issue.[26] But the majority of the first

[25] See "Peace Rally Breeds Strange Bedfellows"; Ishmael Reed, "Poetry Place Protest"; "Country Fugathon Set for October"; and Walter Bowart, "Why an East Village Newspaper?" in *East Village Other,* October 1965.

[26] Dan Rattiner, "Founding of the East Village Other," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/rattiner.

issue's 5,000-copy run sold, and a second issue did indeed come out in November.[27] Within a year, the *East Village Other* had attained a self-reported circulation of 20,000 — an indication that a sizable population evidently agreed that the East Village needed a paper, and that the *East Village Other* would serve that role.[28]

Yet the *East Village Other* did not restrict itself to the geographic boundaries of the East Village for long. It soon became apparent that 'East Villages' could be found all over: in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury; on college campuses; wherever anyone had a tab of acid and an *EVO* subscription. Whether they lived on Avenue A or in Middle America, there was a rising population who lived in functionally the same 'deviant' ways as did East Villagers. By the March on the Pentagon in October 1967, the *East Village Other* had come to realize that the 'East Village' was not merely a place, but a culture — one that the *EVO* could cover, defend, and take an active role in spreading.

Why an East Village Newspaper?

The term 'East Village' was a postwar neologism. Today accepted to describe the neighborhood bordered by 14th Street, Fourth Avenue, Houston Street, and the East River, for much of the city's history, the area was understood to be part of the Lower East Side.[29] The invention of the East Village involved an uneasy marriage between the broader Lower East Side, which was historically a stopover for first-generation immigrants pursuing the American Dream, and the bohemian Greenwich Village to its west.

The Lower East Side faced a population crisis after the immigration restriction laws of 1917 and 1921 effectively cut off new immigration from Europe.[30] Though migration from within the American territories continued — primarily Black and Puerto Rican newcomers, who respectively

[27] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 33-34.

[28] See Underground Press Syndicate bumper in *East Village Other*, November 15-December 1, 1966.

[29] Marci Reaven and Jeanne Houck, "A History of Tompkins Square Park," in *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side* ed. Janet Abu-Lughod (New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), 93.

[30] Jan Chien Lin, "The Changing Economy of the Lower East Side," in *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side* ed. Janet Abu-Lughod (New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), 54-55.

arrived with the onset of the Great Migration and when seeking economic opportunity in the early 1950s — these influxes were not enough to offset the neighborhood's losses to old age and economic mobility, and its population nearly halved between 1910 and 1930.[31] The Lower East Side's tenements were so cramped and undesirable that few would choose to live in them other than residents of New York City's bohemia, Greenwich Village, who from the mid-1950s onward faced rising rents and evictions from urban renewal.[32] 'East Village' was coined as a real estate term by landlords hoping to attract the students, artists, and general misfits fleeing rising expenses to the west.[33]

Many of these people were avid readers of the *Village Voice*, Greenwich Village's neighborhood newspaper. Though not Greenwich Village's first paper — that distinction went to *The Villager*, established back in 1933 — the founding of the *Village Voice* in 1955 arguably marked the beginning of the 'neighborhood paper' that considered a 'neighborhood' to mean not just a physical place, but a set of ideals.[34] To *Voice* founders Dan Wolf, Ed Facher, and Norman Mailer, a new paper was needed in the mid-'50s to counter the conservatism and quotidian banality of *The Villager*.[35] The *Village Voice* — which prioritized cultural reporting on arts and music, and organized against 'urban renewal' — would better reflect the priorities of the neighborhood's bohemian residents.

The *Village Voice* was also something that *EVO,* in the words of former *Village Voice* columnist and *EVO* editor John Wilcock, "evolved more or less in reaction to."[36] When Norman Mailer left the *Voice* in early 1956, for example, he explained that he was doing so because "[t]hey

[31] Chien Lin, "The Changing Economy of the Lower East Side," 54-55.

[32] Christopher Mele, "The Process of Gentrification in Alphabet City," in *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side* ed. Janet Abu-Lughod (New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), 185-186.

[33] Ada Calhoun, *St. Marks Is Dead: The Many Lives of America's Hippest Street* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), ch. 9.

[34] Devon Powers, *Writing the Record: The Village Voice and the Birth of Rock Criticism* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 23-24.

[35] Powers, *Writing the Record*, 29-30.

[36] John Wilcock, "How the UPS Papers Fill the Gap," *Other Scenes*, April 2, 1967.

wish this newspaper to be more conservative, more Square — I wish it to be more Hip."[37] Almost a decade later, Bowart and company were essentially members of the *Village Voice*'s target audience who had rejected it in favor of creating something more hip, more radical, more bohemian. The *Village Voice*, a paper dedicated to voicing the values of the West Village, could not be trusted to speak for the East.

In asking "Why an East Village Newspaper?", Bowart aligned himself and his new paper with the nascent neighborhood. Alleging that, since the start of the decade, Greenwich Village had transformed "into a side show of gnawing mediocrity and urban renewal," Bowart described a need to serve the "exodus of its authentic population (young artists, poets, and writers)" moving east across Fourth Avenue.[38] The East Village was thus presented in opposition to the West Village as the more authentic inheritor of New York bohemianism. Yet Bowart also defined the 'East Village' in opposition to the old Lower East Side, drawing a "distinction between the old world immigrants and the more recent west side immigrants."[39] This new East Village, threatened both by the old Lower East Side slumlords and the "urban renewal and 'civilization'" of the West, needed the advocacy of the *East Village Other*.[40]

Not all were satisfied with this explanation. "God damn it, what is this 'East Village' shit? Man, this is the Lower East Side," read one Letter to the Editor published in *EVO*'s second issue; the editors responded with the declaration that "'Lower East Side' refers to the old time immigrants from Europe. 'East Village' refers to the immigrants from the West Village."[41] These two groups of 'immigrants' often co-existed in uneasy relation to one another. In some cases, there was an irreconcilable difference in ideology: though few hippies had read Marx or Lenin, their anti-consumerist, collectivist ethos insulted many of the older Ukrainians who had fled the Soviet Union

[37] Powers, *Writing the Record*, 33.
[38] Bowart, "Why an East Village Newspaper?," October 1965.
[39] Bowart, "Why an East Village Newspaper?," October 1965.
[40] Bowart, "Why an East Village Newspaper?," October 1965.
[41] Anonymous, Letter to the Editor, *East Village Other*, November 1965.

to set up shop along Second Avenue.[42] But there was also a fundamental class distinction. Unlike generations of immigrants to the Lower East Side — who fled famines, war, pogroms, and poverty in their countries of origin — the average 'East Villager' was the scion of a white, middle-class family.

Many 'East Villagers' took pride in the fact that they had 'chosen' poverty — including Walter Bowart. In his Letter from the Editor in the September 15-October 1, 1966 issue of *EVO*, Bowart called on the "children of our mediocre, money-over-soul oriented middle class" to reject the lifestyle of their parents and instead "go to the ghettos."[43] And in New York City, there was no 'ghetto' more suited to those walking the "unshaven, long-haired, possessiveless [sic], road of a new social consciousness" than the East Village.[44]

Like the "artists, poets, and writers" it claimed to represent, many *East Village Other* staffers had backgrounds in the arts: Bowart himself dropped out of his University of Oklahoma journalism program at age 19 to pursue painting in New York, where he met neighborhood poet Allen Katzman.[45] These writers immediately threw themselves into becoming, as Bowart put it, "the mirror of opinion of the new citizenry of the East Village."[46]

Though the rise of 'New Journalism' — propagated by writers like Hunter S. Thompson, Tom Wolfe, and *Village Voice* co-founder Mailer — meant that journalistic subjectivity was becoming fashionable even within the traditional press, *EVO* took it to another level. The first few *EVO* issues literally blended fact and fiction: Letters to the Editor from real readers ran alongside faux letters from supposed Byzantine Duchesses and French lords.[47] Soon, however, the paper's more parodic aspects and advertisements were dropped in favor of a commitment to fact-based reporting: "Our facts usually are herded into the same room like sheep," read one advertisement for

[42] Calhoun, *St. Marks Is Dead,* ch. 13.

[43] Walter Bowart, Letter from the Editor, *East Village Other*, September 15-October 1, 1966.

[44] Bowart, Letter from the Editor, September 15-October 1, 1966.

[45] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 32.

[46] Bowart, "Why an East Village Newspaper?," October 1965.

[47] See Gilda Byzantine Titular and Lord Harry Rosti, Letters to the Editor, *East Village Other*, March 1-15, 1966.

EVO, "but honesty is basically the animal that leads them there."[48] Yet even after *EVO* dropped printing blatant falsehoods, it did not seek objectivity: articles not only reflected their writers' subjectivity, mirroring New Journalism's fondness for the pronoun 'I,' but also reflected what was felt to be the collective consciousness of the East Villagers.

Articles in the *East Village Other* nigh-uniformly held up what came to be the basic shared values of the Sixties counterculture: anti-Vietnam, anti-LBJ, pro-sex, and (perhaps most of all) pro-drugs. From its first issue, *EVO* was reporting on narcotics squad busts and drug possession arrests of local notables.[49] From its second, it was publishing editorials advocating for the legalization of LSD and marijuana.[50] Professor Timothy Leary's regular column, which began appearing in *EVO* in the spring of 1966, marked one of Dr. Leary's first uses of his famous "Turn On/Tune In/Drop Out" maxim.[51]

The amount of drug-focused content was doubtless due in part to *EVO*'s editorial team being well aware of the preexisting interests and habits of its readership; as but one example, an article covering LSD's side effects began with a content warning advising, "If you're tripping, don't read this now."[52] Readers, in turn, wrote into *EVO* with questions, trip tips, and recommendations. But much of this advice was unverified or blatantly incorrect; a reader who wrote in one week describing recreational use of the antihistamine Sominex as "great, great, great," sent in a correction a few issues later warning, "Don't use Sominex. It can kill, kill you."[53]

As a newspaper, *EVO*'s unverified promotion of false or even dangerous information about recreational drugs might be criticized. As a community bulletin, however — a forum in which people whose habits were being increasingly policed and litigated might share their takeaways and experiences — it seems to have been markedly successful. "A token gesture of madness like the

[48] "The East Village Other," *Other Scenes*, April 2, 1967.

[49] See "Midnight Porny Movie Raid," *East Village Other*, October 1965.

[50] See Stephen Dangerfield, "Repeal of Marijuana Prohibition Due," *East Village Other*, November 1965.

[51] Timothy Leary, "Turn On/Tune In/Drop Out," *East Village Other*, May 15-June 1, 1966.

[52] Simon Galubara, "ACID," *East Village Other*, June 15-July 1, 1967.

[53] Richard Nelson, "Groovy Horror Drug Discovered (Letter to the Editor)," *East Village Other*, July 1-15 1967; Richard Nelson, Letter to the Editor, *East Village Other*, August 1-15, 1967.

EVO manages to conjure up necessary rationales for being in one place as opposed to another," read one Letter to the Editor published a year into *EVO*'s publication. "[I]t holds us together, the East-siders, wherever they are."[54]

The Kind of Thing that Could Only Happen in Haight-Ashbury

While *EVO* from early on expressed some interest in events outside its neighborhood borders — by the March 15-April 1, 1966 issue, *EVO* listed multiple long-distance correspondents, who sent regular first-person missives covering art in London or parties in Paris — its outward-looking ambitions were exemplified by John Wilcock. First appearing in *EVO*'s March 1-15, 1966 issue, Wilcock's regular column, "Other Scenes," was informed both by his prior work at the *Village Voice* and his ongoing gig as a writer of budget travel guides for *Frommer's*.[55] An "Other Scenes" column typically included several short anecdotes from countercultural 'scenes' in cities that Wilcock had visited or from which he had received correspondence.

By February 1967, Wilcock had left *EVO* to pursue transforming his "Other Scenes" column into his own independent underground newsletter. "For a brief period of eight issues I did take over as editor and started to turn EVO into the kind of international paper I had long envisaged," he wrote in the first independent *Other Scenes* issue. "It didn't last. EVO's founder had other ideas and, while I understand his views, I feel that the kind of paper he wants is much more limited."[56] Wilcock thus described the *East Village Other* of 1966 as torn between its identity as a neighborhood paper, and the potential of expanding its coverage. Notwithstanding its international correspondents and interests in 'other scenes,' at least at the start of 1967, Wilcock saw *EVO* as firmly tied to the local.

The beginning of 1967, however, also saw the country's attention turn west. The counterculture, previously something about as familiar to Middle America as the beatniks that preceded them, entered the American political consciousness in 1967 with the 'Summer of Love.'

[54] James Tressler, Letter to the Editor, *East Village Other*, November 15-December 1, 1966.
[55] McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters*, 118.
[56] John Wilcock, Letter from the Editor, *Other Scenes*, January 1967.

An estimated 50,000 to 75,000 young people made their way to the San Francisco neighborhood of Haight-Ashbury that season, and their pilgrimage dominated the news cycle.[57]

The *East Village Other* was no exception, carefully following their goings-on from its vantage point on the East Coast and encouraging readers to make pilgrimages westward. Its February 1-15 issue covered the first 'Human Be-In,' held in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park on January 14, 1967.[58] By February 1967, the first New York City-area Human Be-In — accompanied by police and arrests — occurred in Grand Central Station. The *East Village Other* described this Be-In as spontaneous and unplanned, as it was "brought about by a word-of-mouth rumor"; but the article does not mention that *EVO*'s own coverage of the first San Francisco Be-In undoubtedly played a role in popularizing the concept among its neighborhood readership.[59] The article ends, perhaps in an act of manifestation, by announcing that "the next Human Be-In, rumor has it, will be on April 30th, in Central Park."[60] Reality surpassed *EVO*'s predictions: the paper soon announced Central Park Be-Ins on March 26 and April 15.[61]

As the summer of 1967 took hold, the Be-In concept morphed and evolved. The first in what became a series of Tompkins Square Smoke-Ins occurred on July 16, covered, of course, by *EVO*.[62] Just as they had in Central Park, East Villagers gathered in their collective backyard — except instead of just being there, now they also smoked pot. One *EVO* write-up assigned the Smoke-Ins political importance, as something capable of "break[ing] down some of the paranoia that keeps people here immobile."[63] Using the logic of safety in numbers — "the cops aren't going to bust 3,000 people, or molest a crowd made up from all groups" — *EVO* concluded that "[t]ogether the people are even

[57] Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1987), 215.

[58] *East Village Other*, January 15-February 1, 1967; Oliver Johnson, "The Human Be-In," *East Village Other*, February 1-15, 1967.

[59] Irving Shushick, "Hate Attacks Love Parade," *East Village Other*, March 1-15, 1967.

[60] Shushick, "Hate Attacks Love Parade," March 1-15, 1967.

[61] Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, April 1-15, 1967.

[62] "The Tompkins Square Smoke-In," *East Village Other*, August 1-15, 1967.

[63] "Tompkins Square Smoke-In," *East Village Other*, August 5-17, 1967.

capable of resisting the laws… that discriminate against people in the ghetto; and changing them, directly and nonviolently."[64]

These community events, *EVO* argued, therefore had coalition-forming potential: a 'Smoke-In' was something that hippies could participate in side-by-side with "ghetto people."[65] Around this time, *EVO* also lessened the sharp demographic delineation it had drawn between bohemian 'East Villagers' and immigrant 'Lower East Side residents' earlier in its history. An article about the Puerto Rican direct action organization The Real Great Society, for example, enthused that the organization's community-focused projects might "bridge the gap between the Puerto Ricans on Avenue D, and the hippies on Avenue A."[66] Recruiting for the counterculture didn't only have to come from members of the white middle class, dropping out of their privileged lifestyles to join the 'ghetto.' So long as they shared the community values of the counterculture, the people of the Lower East Side could effectively join the East Village.

Just as important was the sentiment of an unidentified girl attending the first Smoke-In, quoted by *EVO* as expressing that, "I thought this kind of thing could only happen in Haight-Ashbury."[67] Only months earlier, the *East Village Other* had treated Haight-Ashbury as 1967's countercultural vanguard. "We [East-coasters] run six to twelve months behind the Bay Area," one May 1967 *EVO* article explained.[68] The Smoke-Ins — and the community organization that brought the Smoke-Ins into being — set the East Village on the cutting edge of the counterculture.

Yet the Summer of Love did not occur in a vacuum. The counterculture required the building of counter-institutions: thousands of transient, indigent hippies in Haight-Ashbury needed to be clothed and fed. Starting in 1966, the Diggers, an anarchist community action group, opened 'free stores,' ran a volunteer medical clinic, and organized giveaways in Golden Gate Park. Like the Be-Ins and Smoke-Ins, these counterinstitutions soon spread to the East Coast: *EVO*'s April 1-15, 1967

[64] "Tompkins Square Smoke-In," August 5-17, 1967.
[65] "Tompkins Square Smoke-In," August 5-17, 1967.
[66] "Real Great Society," *East Village Other*, April 1-15, 1967.
[67] "The Tompkins Square Smoke-In," August 1-15, 1967.
[68] Keith Lampe, "Flower Power," *East Village Other*, May 15-June 1, 1967.

issue reported that "the ghetto landscape is sprouting magical growths" in the form of Diggers-inspired community action groups like the Provos, the Jade Companions, and even the East Village's own Diggers chapter.[69] Soon, the East Side had its own free food and clothing stores, park distributions, and even, according to one article, "a chemist's guild to manufacture free acid."[70]

Although *EVO*'s passive wording makes it seem as if such counter-institutions had simply 'sprouted' into existence, these endeavors required huge amounts of effort from huge amounts of people to donate supplies, work in distribution, and get the word out — an effort in which the paper's coverage of these resources doubtless played a role. The *East Village Other*'s coverage undoubtedly played a significant role by publicizing resources such as the free stores to its 20,000+ readers, and suggesting and circulating ideas for further community improvement.

One editorial in the February 1-15, 1967 issue, for example, suggested that members of the counterculture themselves must organize protection against the criminalization of psychedelics, rather than waiting for the government or the ACLU to step in to save them.[71] The editorial proposed the creation of an "Eastside Protective Association" that could provide medical care, harm reduction, drug education, and, importantly, bail funds.[72] Mentions of the Jade Companions (a bail fund that was later described by the rival *Village Voice* as the "first evidence of cohesion in the hippie community") appeared in *EVO* soon thereafter.[73]

Countercultural outsiders, meanwhile, were regarded with suspicion: in its writeup of a Jade Companions benefit concert, *EVO* mentioned that it had "contacted some of the radio stations and newspapers in New York several times, in order to bring publicity of the event uptown."[74] Though thanking those outlets — such as the Johnny Carson Show, as well as *Time*, *Look*, and *Escapade* magazines — that had plugged the concert, it named and publicly shamed others that had refused

[69] "Real Great Society," April 1-15, 1967.
[70] Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, August 19-September 1, 1967.
[71] Peter Stafford, "Psychedelic Protection," *East Village Other*, February 1-15, 1967.
[72] Stafford, "Psychedelic Protection," February 1-15, 1967.
[73] Don McNeill, "A Long Way from May to December," *Village Voice*, January 4, 1968.
[74] "Bread for Heads," *East Village Other*, July 15-30, 1967.

"because it would be contrary to the policy of their advertisers."[75] Some of the ire was motivated by the refusing outlets' perceived hypocrisy: "Much of the media that refused to plug the benefit," *EVO* noted, "often publicizes the be-ins, psychedelic parades, and discotheques, which are NOT against the policy of their sponsors."[76] In other words, the counterculture was acceptable to mainstream media when it was consumed as a spectacle, but not when it was something to be aided and supported. Only insider papers like the *East Village Other*, the *EVO* article implied, could be trusted to not exploit but aid the community.

The Great Morality Play

While East Villagers pursued their own slice of the Bay Area dream, current events closer to home were less 'peace and love.' The New York City area's top news item of summer 1967 was the Newark riots, one of the largest and most broadly-covered of the more than 150 'race riots' that erupted across America over the 'long, hot summer of 1967.' *EVO* published coverage and op-eds about the Newark events, with Katzman citing them as something that "brought home to me how corrupt the 'system' has become[.]"[77] The paper also used Newark as inspiration.

In the September 1-15, 1967 issue, *EVO* contributor Keith Lampe enthused that "[t]he work of the black men of Newark and Detroit has freed us honkies… of a few more scholarly hangups," adding that it "[f]eels like there's going to be a white rebellion too."[78] He singled out the Diggers as the cohort among the white counterculture that best understood the need to "get[] past the talk and the analysis and the petitions and the protests" by engaging in confrontational politics.[79] The same issue contained a Bowart article covering an incident in which Diggers Abbie Hoffman and Jim Fouratt threw thousands of dollars off the visitors' balcony of the New York Stock Exchange. The

[75] "Bread for Heads," July 15-30, 1967.

[76] "Bread for Heads," July 15-30, 1967.

[77] Walter Bowart, "The United States of America Rhymes with Armageddon," *East Village Other*, August 5-17, 1967; Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, August 5-17, 1967.

[78] Keith Lampe, "Tripping Across the Potomac: Come March on Washington October 21," *East Village Other*, September 1-15, 1967.

[79] Lampe, "Tripping Across the Potomac," September 1-15, 1967.

'meaning' of this latter action was somewhat obscure: Bowart quoted Hoffman as stating that "[m]oney is over. The government owns it all, and only lets you use it"; but atypically for *EVO*, Bowart avoided definitively declaring its meaning.[80] Lampe's article, however, interpreted the Stock Exchange demonstration as a "gleeful exorcism" that could serve as an example for future actions.[81]

The title of Lampe's piece — "Tripping Across the Potomac: Come March on Washington October 21" — doubled as an advertisement for one such action. Resembling previous notable marches of the Sixties in that it aimed to bring political action right to the nation's capital, the forthcoming 'March on the Pentagon' diverged by drawing inspiration from the theatrical actions of the Diggers. Participants planned to circle and 'exorcize' the Pentagon, which was home to the Department of Defense and therefore viewed as the symbolic heart of the Vietnam War machine. This would be not an act of civil disobedience, but rather "psychic guerrilla warfare."[82]

The Pentagon exorcism perfectly matched the sensibilities of the McLuhan acolytes who edited *EVO*. Having designed their paper to be enough of a visual spectacle to compete with the television screen, *EVO* staff now threw themselves into promoting a March spectacular enough to compete with prevailing political narratives. In the October 1-15, 1967 issue, *EVO* ran an article describing how Hoffman and fellow Digger Martin Carey had been arrested during a preparatory trip to stake out the Pentagon; in addition to delivering an account of their arrests, the narrative informed readers of the basic plan for the March (forming human rings around the building) and the size of the crowd that the Diggers expected (an optimistic 200,000).[83] In its very next issue, *EVO* published a letter — penned by Abbie Hoffman under the pseudonym 'George Metesky' — advertising a March benefit at the Village Theatre, and instructing readers how to obtain a free bus ticket to the March from the Diggers.[84]

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[80] Walter Bowart, "Casting the Money Throwers from the Temple," *East Village Other*, September 1-15, 1967.

[81] Lampe, "Tripping Across the Potomac," September 1-15, 1967.

[82] Lampe, "Tripping Across the Potomac," September 1-15, 1967.

[83] Martin Carey, "Diggers Busted for Litter Art," *East Village Other*, October 1-15, 1967.

[84] George Metesky, "Dear Mary Prankster…," *East Village Other*, October 15-November 1, 1967; George Metesky was the name of the notorious 'Mad Bomber' who operated in New York City in the 1940s and 1950s.

Katzman and Bowart departed the day before those Digger buses to attend the aforementioned Washington, D.C. conference of the underground press. The next day, however, they joined thousands of others in marching across the Potomac to the Pentagon. The first *EVO* issue published in the aftermath prioritized the firsthand testimony of those within the youth movement above all else, even running the claim — contested by both the Department of Defense and the mainstream press — that at least three soldiers defending the Pentagon had defected to join the protestors.[85]

Yet the question of whether the protest had succeeded in its objective remained. Some protestors, like Abbie Hoffman, announced that their goal was to *metaphorically* levitate the Pentagon through use of 'Tibetan Chants'; artist Michael Bowen curiously maintained that they would *literally* levitate the Pentagon.

For its part, *EVO* had always proclaimed the goal to be 'exorcizing' the Pentagon by ritualistically encircling it in human rings. The paper planned to supplement these human rings by dropping hundreds of pounds of flowers out of a plane; in the same issue announcing the March on the Pentagon, *EVO* had run a "PILOT WANTED FOR DARING FEAT" advertisement.[86] But this ad was 'answered' by the FBI, who cut Katzman and Bowart off at Dulles Airport and put a stop to their planned 'Flower Power' airdrop.[87] "A small despair leaped in us as we thought that we might have failed in circling the Pentagon," read Bowart's account. "To lighten the heavy moments, we bought the local newspapers and found, to our great delight, the headlines singing 'TROOPS RING

[85] See Ray Mungo, "The Keystone Cops The Animal Farm," *East Village Other*, November 1-15, 1967; Marshall Bloom, "Interview with a Paratrooper," *East Village Other*, November 1-15, 1967; as expressed in John McMillian, "All the Protest Fit to Print: The Rise of the Liberation News Service," in *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), the March on the Pentagon has often been portrayed as a moment where underground and mainstream coverage notably diverged, with the former's propagation of the hearsay-based defection claim being a key example.

[86] See "Wheel and Deal," *East Village Other*, September 1-15, 1967.

[87] Walter Bowart, "The Logistics of Flower Power," *East Village Other*, November 1-15, 1967; Jason Katzman, "EVO, the FBI, and the Plot to Bomb the Pentagon," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/katzman.

PENTAGON.' They had played right into our hands."[88] No matter what the mainstream media might say about the chaos of the March on the Pentagon, the *East Village Other* proclaimed it a success.

Bowart concluded his recounting by pronouncing October 21, 1967 to have been "the Day of The Great Morality Play."[89] The culmination of months of increasingly performance-based East Village politics, the March on the Pentagon was akin to a play in its absurd theatricality, pitting flowers and 'flower children' against the firepower of the American military. It was also a play in that it was utterly scripted: no matter what happened, *EVO* would report that their protagonists prevailed in the end, as they had gone into the confrontation morally in the right. And it was a play that *EVO* had, at least in part, scripted and orchestrated itself, albeit on a far more national stage than previous events it had supported. By the end of 1967, the *East Village Other*'s stage was no longer limited to the boundaries of the East Village — it was sending readers across state lines, to participate in the theater of national politics.

Figures 4-5: Centerfold Depicting October 21, 1967 March on the Pentagon

[88] Walter Bowart, "The Logistics of Flower Power," November 1-15, 1967.

[89] Walter Bowart, "The Logistics of Flower Power," November 1-15, 1967.

Chapter Two – The Creation of the 'Underground Press,' 1966-1973

In July of 1969, 300 delegates swarmed onto a farm outside of Ann Arbor, Michigan for a 'Revolutionary Media Conference.' They represented 40 underground papers, multiple press services, and even political groups — according to Abe Peck, John Sinclair's White Panthers attended with guns, scaring "Art Kunkin [of the *Freep*] and a group of vegetarians from Santa Cruz." With an estimated combined circulation of 2 to 4.5 million, underground papers were more popular than ever. But not all that attention was positive: on day two of the conference, police surrounded the farm, kicked in doors, and checked papers, supposedly in search of an attendee who had skipped bail on marijuana charges.[90]

In his coverage of the Revolutionary Media Conference, John Wilcock reported that "[v]irtually all of the editors agreed that the press should be an organizing tool for 'the revolution' rather than merely a vehicle for information… Are we going to be journalists or revolutionaries? Surely the answer is both."[91] The 'press' that Wilcock spoke of — an 'underground press' representing the youth movement, existing apart from and in opposition to America's 'mainstream' press — had been invented only three years prior, when the *East Village Other* and four other papers created the 'Underground Press Syndicate' in the summer of 1966.

Though some were more countercultural and others more political, early UPS members shared a common allegiance to the youth movement, and also a willingness to collaborate with other publications. In the three years since its founding, UPS had developed just enough organizational capacity to host events like the July 1969 Revolutionary Media Conference; however, UPS existed more as an idea on paper than as an institution with comprehensive rules and regulations. By taking a leading role in creating UPS, *EVO* made it possible to envisage a unified 'underground press' with the potential to act as a vanguard in America's cultural revolution. Yet a combination of factors — government repression and surveillance; competition from other organizations; internal division,

[90] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 183-187.

[91] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 187.

disorganization, and disagreement as to what UPS should be — inhibited the Underground Press Syndicate's ability to fulfill this role.

The Underground Press Enters Syndication

The Underground Press Syndicate arguably began with the debut of Timothy Leary's recurring column "Turn On/Tune In/Drop Out" in *EVO*'s May 15-June 1, 1966 issue. The column was accompanied by an Editor's Note explaining that the column would be "syndicated by EVO for L.A. Free Press, Berkeley Barb, Fifth Estate, & The Paper."[92] These four papers were geographically scattered — based in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, Detroit, and Ann Arbor respectively — but shared *EVO*'s status as youth movement-oriented independent papers.

At that time, Leary was one of the most prominent figures in the counterculture; *EVO* evidently believed that not only their readers, but the readership of papers like theirs, would want access to Dr. Leary's words. This consideration may or may not have been sought by these other papers: two issues later, *EVO* published a Letter to the Editor from *The Paper* founder Michael Kindman, who thanked *EVO* for its help but then noted that "two marijuana arrests (apparently a frame-up) a week ago make us both anxious and apprehensive about using your Leary articles."[93] Other underground papers eagerly took advantage of *EVO*'s efforts, with the *Berkeley Barb* publishing an advertisement for "Turn On/Tune In/Drop Out" on May 6, 1966 before the first column appeared in its May 20 issue.

Soon, *EVO* proposed making the arrangement behind the "Turn On/Tune In/Drop Out" syndication permanent. *EVO*'s June 1-15, 1966 issue included an editorial from Allen Katzman calling for the establishment of a 'hip' variant of the Associated Press.[94] Two months later, the masthead of the August 1-15 issue announced that "the East Village Other is a Member of UPS (Underground Press Syndicate)."[95] The September 1-15 issue then ran a bumper defining UPS as an

[92] Leary, "Turn On/Tune In/Drop Out," May 15-June 1, 1966.
[93] Michael Kindman, Letter to the Editor, *East Village Other*, June 15-July 1, 1967.
[94] Allan Katzman, Editorial, *East Village Other*, June 1-15, 1966.
[95] See the masthead of *East Village Other*, August 1-15, 1966.

organization that "exists to facilitate the transmission of news, features and advertising between anti-Establishment, avant-garde, new-Left, youth oriented periodicals which share common aims and interests."[96] But this vague description offered only one means by which UPS facilitated this exchange between like-minded publications: the organization's "members are free to pick up each other's features without remuneration." Each UPS member sent a copy of each of its own issues to every other UPS member, from which they could then reprint *gratis* as desired.

This radical approach to sharing content distinguished UPS papers from predecessors like the *Village Voice*. John Wilcock's writings have criticized his former employer for everything from its "pseudo-liberalism" to its remuneration policies, but it was the *Village Voice*'s refusal to join UPS that provoked him to deride it as "a teacher outsmarted by its students."[97] Criticizing the fact that "[a]ny paper that wanted to pick up something from the Voice had to write for special permission (sometimes refused)," Wilcock concluded that *Voice* "publisher Ed Fancher's basic conservatism (and greed) wouldn't allow him to cooperate with UPS papers."[98] Willingness to join UPS, and the non-possessive relationship with one's copy that would require, could mean the difference between being 'hip' or 'square.'

Beyond its ideological significance, the basic function of UPS-as-vehicle-of-copy-sharing served a more practical purpose. "Membership in the Underground Press Syndicate brought immediate benefits for us, in the form of a wealth of interesting articles available for reprinting as all of the member papers began exchanging copies with one another," *The Paper* editor Michael Kindman wrote in his autobiography.[99] Though based in the university town of East Lansing, Michigan, Kindman and his writers could consume and reprint news from across the country; they could also access easy sources of movement-approved filler when the local news cycle ran slow. Though papers like the *East Village Other* — metropolitan, relatively wealthy, and possessing staff

[96] See UPS Bumper in *East Village Other*, September 1-15, 1966.

[97] Wilcock, "How the UPS Papers Fill the Gap," April 2, 1967.

[98] Wilcock, "How the UPS Papers Fill the Gap," April 2, 1967.

[99] Michael Kindman, *My Odyssey Through the Underground Press* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2011), 22.

members with professional journalistic experience — might need UPS less, *EVO* still regularly reprinted articles from fellow members.

UPS quickly grew in reach. The UPS bumper in *EVO*'s September 1-15, 1966 issue calculated the total circulation of all UPS papers to be 55,000, a figure reached by adding together the sales of each member's most recent issue. By the November 15-December 1 issue of *EVO*, its estimate of UPS's combined readership had nearly doubled to 98,000. And by springtime, *EVO*'s April 1-15, 1967 issue declared that UPS's member newspapers had an aggregate circulation of 264,000.[100] These numbers are likely *under*estimates of UPS's total readers given that underground papers had significant pass-along readership.[101]

Although the individual circulations of UPS's original five founding papers expanded during this period, much of the rise in the Syndicate's collective readership was due to adding new members. The September 1-15, 1966 issue of *EVO* listed two new UPS members, both international: Montreal's *Sanity* and London's *Peace News*. The November 15-December 1 issue added several more papers to the UPS roster, including the important additions of *EVO* London correspondent Barry Miles' *International Times*, and the psychedelic *San Francisco Oracle*, whose circulation set records by surpassing 117,000 during the Summer of Love.[102]

Defining the Underground Press

McMillian's *Smoking Typewriters* credits John Wilcock with naming the Underground Press Syndicate, quoting him as stating that "my adolescent idols [had] been the papers of the French *maquis*, the underground resistance group whose propaganda leaflets urged continued resistance to the German occupiers. We all agreed that though a little grandiose, it was an appropriate image for a new Fuck Censorship press in a supposedly free society."[103] Wilcock's story consciously connects

[100] See UPS Bumpers in the September 1-15, 1966, November 15-December 1, 1966, and April 1-15, 1967 issues of the *East Village Other.*

[101] McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters*, 73.

[102] See UPS Bumpers in September 1-15, 1966 and November 15-December 1, 1966 issues of the *East Village Other* for membership additions; Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 51.

[103] McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters*, 73.

EVO's attempts at building that anti-censorship press with a historical analogue, positioning the 'underground press' in the international, multigenerational struggle for press freedom. Reflecting his international vision for the paper during his time at *EVO*, Wilcock's origin story envisions UPS as a player in the long arc of global history.

Peck's *Uncovering the Sixties*, though acknowledging that multiple naming-stories exist, chooses to retell Walter Bowart's far more comic explanation: "[S]earching for inspiration, Bowart's eyes wandered out the windows of EVO's office and saw a United Parcel Service truck rolling down Avenue A."[104] In this version, the name 'Underground Press Syndicate' becomes not a carefully-constructed historical homage, but an offhand reference to a quotidian sight on a neighborhood street. These contrasting explanations illustrate that, from the beginning of the Underground Press Syndicate, core members of the underground press disagreed on the fundamental nature of their project. Was the Underground Press Syndicate a serious political organization offering an alternative to the toothless liberalism of the big dailies? Or was it an inside joke, whose punchline was simply that it appeared to carry far more meaning than it actually did?

These questions would play out at the first meeting of the Underground Press Syndicate, which took place over Easter 1967 on the shores of Stinson Beach, California. At that time, the Syndicate had about 30 members, but representatives from only a handful — the *East Village Other*, the *Berkeley Barb*, the *Los Angeles Free Press*, the *L.A. Provo*, the Austin *Rag*, the D.C. *Independent*, and the Chicago *Seed* — were able to join their hosts (the staff of the *San Francisco Oracle*) at this West Coast conference.[105] The *Oracle*'s invitation had promised a weekend of "spiritual guidance and fun"; on the agenda were both practical matters, such as the "[d]iscussion of the management, distribution, and circulation of all underground newspapers," and not-so-practical activities like a "group turn-on."[106]

[104] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 40.
[105] Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, 70.
[106] Ron Thelin, "The Voice of the Oracle," *Other Scenes*, April 1967.

John Wilcock's account of the conference, published afterwards in his *Other Scenes*, recalls getting stoned, taking acid, and discussing spirituality with Rolling Thunder (purportedly a Hopi representative) in between the practical meetings.[107] Wilcock divided the member papers into two categories based on whether their editors were more interested in the 'conversing with Rolling Thunder' or the 'hammering out practicalities' aspects of the conference: "On one side are the two Oracles (SF & LA), EVO and a couple of others; on the other, the Barb, the LA Free Press, Fifth Estate, etc."[108]

In his account of the underground press, Abe Peck expands upon Wilcock's typology: the former camp (*i.e.*, the "hippies") held that "changing oneself was a prerequisite for changing society"; while the latter (*i.e.*, the "politicos") "turned the process around" by believing that society must be changed to alter the political.[109] These two tendencies could and did coexist under the UPS umbrella: so long as a paper agreed to the basic principles of sharing and collaboration, it didn't matter if it was the psychadelic *Oracle* or text-heavy *Barb*. Though Peck's account warned that "changes within the movement" would rapidly "encourage or pressure all the papers to politicize," on Stinson Beach the *Barb* and *Oracle* considered each other part of the same journalistic movement.[110]

However, by the end of the conference, little in the way of concrete decision-making had been accomplished. Attending editors signed a "UPS Statement of Purpose," in which they promised "[t]o warn the 'civilized world' of its impending collapse," "to note and chronicle events leading up to the collapse," and "to prepare American people for the wilderness."[111] More mundanely, attendees also agreed to keep allowing one another to reprint fellow papers' copy, to send a copy of each of their issues to every other member, and to regularly print a list of UPS members.[112] But a number of

[107] John Wilcock, "Underground Press Syndicate Members Hold First Meeting," *Other Scenes*, April 1967.
[108] Wilcock, "Underground Press Syndicate Members Hold First Meeting," April 1967.
[109] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 59.
[110] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 59.
[111] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 45.
[112] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 45.

structural questions — who should be allowed to join the Underground Press Syndicate? how might the Syndicate generate revenue? should UPS papers invest in technologies, like teletypes and photo-transmitting machines, that might strengthen connections between member papers? — went unaddressed and unresolved.[113]

Enter Liberation News Service

The Underground Press Syndicate was not the only alternative press association. At the same time that UPS was facilitating copy-sharing among undergrounders, the United States Student Press Association (USSPA) was publishing the Collegiate Press Service (CPS), which supplied stories to university newspapers around the country. Though many collegiate papers faced administrative repression — as had happened to UPS co-founder *The Paper*, which started as an alternative Michigan State University student newspaper before becoming an independent undergrounder — many proved as politically and culturally radical as the youth who produced and read them.

During the summer of 1967, the USSPA elected a radical but internally-contentious new leader: Marshall Bloom of the Amherst *Student*, who brought with him Ray Mungo, a fellow radical who had used his position as Editor of the *Boston University News* to advocate for Lyndon Johnson's impeachment.[114] In *EVO*'s September 1-15, 1967 issue, Allen Katzman described attending the USSPA's National Student Press Congress at Bloom and Mungo's invitation.[115] There, he witnessed the USSPA split over the election of the radical Bloom, whom many editors wanted to fire. Katzman's solution was to go more radical; he wanted to merge CPS with UPS.[116]

Before the National Student Press Congress was over, Bloom had left the USSPA, but he brought 15 newspaper editors with him.[117] Bloom's new organization was eventually named the "Liberation News Service" (LNS), and it intended to replace the Collegiate Press Service by

[113] Wilcock, "Underground Press Syndicate Members Hold First Meeting," April 1967.
[114] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 13.
[115] Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, September 1-15, 1967.
[116] Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," September 1-15, 1967.
[117] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 15.

providing more radical news items to subscribing publications.[118] Yet Katzman believed that LNS was not planning on staying independent for long: when Bloom called the next week to announce the split, Katzman wrote in his column, a future merger between UPS and Bloom's CPS alternative was still in the cards.[119]

On October 20, 1967, the night before the March on the Pentagon, Katzman and Bowart joined Bloom and Mungo at the meeting of the underground press in Washington, D.C. In the two months since its founding, LNS had expanded from those 15 initial USSPA defectors to over 90 subscribing publications in the underground and collegiate presses.[120] Bowart's speech to the conference included the claim that representatives had "come together to discuss a merger of hundreds of small newspapers and publications written by and for people who represent the driving power behind the future," presenting the UPS-LNS merger as if it were a conference agenda item.[121] The might of the resultant joint organization, Bowart continued, would allow the underground press to compete with the traditional press, a dialectic that would reshape the relationship between the press and power.[122]

However, Ray Mungo's autobiography recalled that Bowart's speech was met not with cheers, but rather with "charges of embezzlement against the Underground Press Syndicate and EVO" from both John Wilcock and representatives of D.C.'s own *Washington Free Press*.[123] Though there is no mention of this combative exchange in *EVO*, the embezzlement charges made their way into the *Washington Free Press*'s coverage of the conference, which labeled UPS a "vacuous association" about which most members "don't give a damn."[124]

Ultimately, the D.C. conference had massive utility in that it gave the editors of America's underground press a chance to form connections, network, and feel like part of a movement that

[118] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 15.
[119] Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," September 1-15, 1967.
[120] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 15.
[121] Bowart and Katzman, "Underground Press Address," November 1-15, 1967.
[122] Bowart and Katzman, "Underground Press Address," November 1-15, 1967.
[123] Mungo, *Famous Long Ago*, 19.
[124] Michael Grossman, "Underground Press Joins Theater of the Absurd," *Washington Free Press*, November 23, 1967.

transcended their own neighborhoods. Similarly to the Stinson Beach conference, however, the D.C. conference addressed none of the outstanding questions about UPS: who could join, how the organization would make money, and what if anything would be provided apart from the promise of free exchange of copy. Belief in the underground press's existence might have been greater than ever, but there was still little in the way of organizational structure to supplement this belief.

The chaos of this October 1967 conference may have also dissuaded Bloom and Mungo from pursuing a closer relationship with UPS: Mungo later cited it as the moment his faith in participatory democracy and the idea of an organization "owned by those it served" collapsed.[125] Instead, in the wake of the D.C. conference, LNS refined its position as the 'AP of the underground,' producing original items for its subscribers to run.[126] Liberation News Service and the Collegiate Press Service would eventually be joined by a host of similar underground press organizations, including the Chicano Press Association, the G.I. Press Service, the Free Ranger Intertribal News Service, and the High School Independent Press Service (as well as a fellow service for high school papers known simply as "FRED").[127]

Though one might assume that these various press services would pose competition to each other, many underground papers belonged to multiple organizations at once; even after hope for a UPS-LNS merger faded, *EVO* continued to reprint articles from LNS.[128] And following in the tradition of the October 1967 D.C. conference, future major gatherings of the underground press (such as a November 1968 Radical Media Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, and the aforementioned July 1969 Revolutionary Media Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan) were organized and attended by UPS and LNS in collaboration with other radical media organizations.[129]

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[125] Mungo, *Famous Long Ago*, 19.

[126] See Blake Slonecker, "Living the Movement: Liberation News Service, Montague Farm, and the New Left, 1967-1981," Ph.D. diss. (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009) for an authoritative account of the Liberation News Service.

[127] Abbie Hoffman, *Steal This Book* (New York, NY: Grove Press, Inc, 1971), 26; Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, 76.

[128] The *East Village Other* even had a section in each issue where multiple LNS clippings would be compiled, initially under the heading of 'News,' *i.e.*, in *East Village Other*, October 15, 1969; later the section was given a more imaginative name, *i.e.*, "…Mr. and Mrs. America… And All the Ships at Sea…" in *East Village Other*, May 5, 1970.

[129] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 147-48, 183-187.

Though the invention of the Underground Press Syndicate had reified the 'underground press' as a coherent concept, it was no longer the only organization holding its members together.

Too Good an Idea to Let Lapse

Even as the D.C. conference's attendance demonstrated how much the underground press had grown, dissatisfaction with the current state of UPS swelled. Ray Mungo's recollections of the D.C. conference demonstrate that rumors about *EVO*'s mismanagement of UPS funds had spread to the point that the staff of the *Washington Free Press* felt comfortable airing them publicly. Even erstwhile friends of *EVO* expressed at best disappointed neutrality regarding *EVO*'s management of UPS: "The publicity and attention—and impact—have been far out of proportion to the measurable accomplishments," wrote Michael Kindman in a *The Paper* editorial published towards the end of 1967. "Almost needless to say, the UPS is not really well organized."[130]

Among *EVO* insiders, none had been as vocal a critic of the paper's handling of the Underground Press Syndicate as John Wilcock. According to Ray Mungo, Wilcock had put himself forward as a candidate for control over UPS during the pre-Pentagon media conference. Mere months later, on March 7, 1968, Wilcock sent a letter to the hundreds of UPS members across the country announcing his intention to take over the Syndicate and relocate it to a new office outside the jurisdiction of any individual publication. "I realize that many of you are very skeptical about UPS by now — with good reason — but let's give it another try," he wrote.

Effectively confirming the *Washington Free Press*'s accusations that *EVO* had been siphoning money from UPS's accounts to fund its own publication, Wilcock asked all member papers that "have <u>not</u> paid the UPS initiation fee of $25" to "please let us have it so that we have some funds to work with."[131] He also revived his idea, first proposed at Stinson Beach, to offer a UPS subscription for libraries and traditional newspapers that might generate new revenue "at no cost to

[130] Michael Kindman, "The Underground Press Lives," *The Paper*, December 8, 1966.

[131] John Wilcock to Underground Press Syndicate Members, March 7, 1968, John Wilcock Collection, 1967-1971, box 1 folder "'Other Scenes' Related Materials," Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (hereafter cited as John Wilcock to Underground Press Syndicate Members, March 7, 1968, John Wilcock Collection).

[UPS members] except a dozen subs — all going to subscribers who should get your paper anyway."[132] For the time being, however, Wilcock stated that he would have to revive UPS from out of his own wallet — an investment he considered worthwhile, as UPS's mission of gathering all of America's alternative publications under one roof was "too good an idea to let lapse."[133]

In a follow-up letter sent in April 1968, Wilcock claimed that "most of UPS's troubles to date had been as a result of it being operated by a single paper"; removing the underground press's first unifying organization from *EVO*'s control should therefore effectively solve those troubles.[134] Yet UPS was not Wilcock's only priority: he was simultaneously engaged in the time-consuming work of writing travel guides for *Frommer's* while continuing to publish his passion project, *Other Scenes*. A long-term solution to UPS's management needed to be found.

For a time, the possible solution took the form of a UPS steering committee, wherein a rotating cast of editors — at various times including Wilcock, the *Freep*'s Art Kunkin, the *Rat*'s Jeff Shero, Liberation News Service leadership, and the Chicago *Seed*'s Abe Peck — shared managerial responsibilities.[135] However, the steering committee did not take an active role in UPS's day-to-day going-ons; Peck's account of the underground press, for example, only mentions his own position on the steering committee in the context of organizing the Revolutionary Media Conference.[136]

Wilcock's primary assistance ultimately came in the form of Tom Forcade, who, according to Wilcock's autobiography, was involved in two popular countercultural pastimes — drug smuggling and running a homemade art magazine out of his home in Phoenix — when he read about Wilcock's takeover of UPS and called offering his assistance.[137] Forcade soon opened a UPS bank account, took over distribution of Wilcock's monthly newsletters, designed an underground press

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[132] Wilcock, "Underground Press Syndicate Members Hold First Meeting," April 4, 1967; John Wilcock to Underground Press Syndicate Members, March 7, 1968, John Wilcock Collection.

[133] John Wilcock to Underground Press Syndicate Members, March 7, 1968, John Wilcock Collection.

[134] John Wilcock to Underground Press Syndicate Members, April 1968, John Wilcock Collection, 1967-1971, box 1 folder "'Other Scenes' Related Materials," Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

[135] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 184; McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters*, 119.

[136] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 184.

[137] John Wilcock, *Manhattan Memories* (self-pub., lulu.com, 2009), Ch. 5-6.

directory, and published the UPS anthology "Orpheus."[138] He also engaged in several moneymaking ventures for UPS, including selling the right to UPS papers' microfilms to camera company Bell & Howell, and retaining hip promoter Concert Hall Productions to serve as UPS's National Advertising Representative.[139]

But The Man Can't Bust Our Papers

On November 6, 1967, House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) member Joe Pool called for an investigation of what he termed "a nationwide underground press syndicate" that aims to "slander and libel everyone who opposes these traitors in their attempts to destroy the American government."[140] The response from many underground publications was mockery — did Pool even understand the difference between UPS and LNS?[141] Pool's inquiry ultimately went nowhere, symptomatic of the fact that the peak of HUAC's influence over political culture had passed.

Indeed, in its 1981 report on the "rampant government sabotage of the underground press movement," the PEN American Center concluded that "the government rarely attempted to prosecute any underground newspaper for its open political statements and never obtained a conviction on a political charge."[142] Instead, the government targeted underground papers and their staff for reasons that were in theory entirely separable from the papers' radical political content, such as obscenity and drug possession.[143] The papers of UPS had less to fear from the Joe McCarthys of the world than the unelected, covert mechanisms of the FBI and CIA.

As previously discussed, *EVO* devoted significant amounts of its copy to distributing crowdsourced information about recreational psychedelic drug usage; this was hardly unique to *EVO*, and staffers of 'hip'- and 'politico'-leaning papers alike commonly used marijuana, LSD, and other

[138] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 186; McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters*, 117.
[139] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 186; McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters*, 117.
[140] Marshall Bloom, "The Revenge of Buster Crabbe," *East Village Other*, December 1-15, 1967.
[141] Bloom, "The Revenge of Buster Crabbe," December 1-15, 1967.
[142] Geoffrey Rips, *Unamerican Activities: The Campaign Against the Underground Press* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 1981), 51.
[143] Rips, *Unamerican Activities*, 51.

substances. Though the American justice system might present the drug-related arrests of underground newsmen that ensued to be simply fair enforcement of the law, from the underground's perspective such charges were only pretense. Tom Forcade claimed, for example, that underground staffers were 100 times more likely than the general population to be subject to drug arrests.[144]

EVO was also both fiercely dedicated to the publication of images and articles that mainstream society might consider obscene, and keenly aware of the legal danger this dedication might attract. In 1957, the Supreme Court in *Roth v. United States* had established a test defining material as "obscene" if it was "utterly without redeeming social value," which allowed underground papers to employ the defense that their use of nudity or sexual imagery was making political or social commentary; however, this legal defense did not protect alternative papers from expending time and effort proving that their publications *weren't* obscene as a matter of law.

EVO's second issue parodied this predicament by running an article stating that the paper "has been out only one issue and already it's been investigated. A patrolman picked up a copy of EVO off Sid's Newsstand at 10th street and Ave B. and showed it to Sid asking him if he thought it was pornography."[145] Soon, however, this bait-and-switch parody gave way to substantive articles about real police interference; subsequent early *EVO* issues reported on and reprinted articles on police busts of fellow UPS members like the *Fifth Estate*.[146]

On February 2, 1968, police seized approximately 1,000 copies of the latest *EVO* issue and arrested two distributors for possession of obscene material.[147] In the following days, other news dealers reported police harassment, and one major distributor announced it would no longer carry *EVO*.[148] Allen Katzman's first column following the bust recalled that he and other staffers had gone through the offending issue and debated precisely which item had provoked the charge: a nude

[144] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 143.

[145] "EVO Gets the Eye," *East Village Other*, November 1965.

[146] See for example Peter Werbe and Harvey Ovshinsky, "Free Press Busted," *East Village Other*, February 15-March 1, 1967.

[147] "East Village Newspaper is Confiscated as Obscene," *New York Times*, February 3, 1968.

[148] Bruce Tobin, "The EVO Report: An Editorial," *East Village Other*, February 9-15, 1968.

portrait, or perhaps a sexually-explicit comic.[149] Expressing little worry that the obscenity charges would stick, Katzman concluded that "[t]his kind of action will only get us publicity and friends." *EVO* put its money where its mouth was: the cover of that same post-bust issue displayed a connect-the-dots drawing of a couple in intimate embrace, which *EVO* encouraged readers to complete and send to the Brooklyn District Attorney.

Though the various articles reacting to the bust professed confidence that the First Amendment would protect the paper's free expression, this legal protection was not enough. "The courts may uphold our right to say what we want, but the powers that be will attempt to choke us to death before we say it," read a column by *EVO* contributor Bruce Tobin, who added that "[t]his is what is happening to us now through this action with our newsdealers."[150] Confidence that the underground press would overcome legal challenges did not mean that combating said challenges wasn't time-consuming, expensive, and, as a result, potentially ruinous.

Government repression may have also occurred in more covert ways. Per Robert Glessing's account, UPS National Advertising Representative Concert Hall Productions had been placing $40,000 a month in advertisements in 79 UPS member papers by the summer of 1969.[151] Many of these advertisements came from major record labels, which had what Abe Peck characterized as an "up-and-down love affair" with the underground press.[152] Alongside anti-corporate tirades and editorials panicking over the commercialization of the youth movement, an issue of an underground paper might run advertisements from Capitol or Columbia Records. Sometimes, these ads borrowed the language and aesthetics of the alternative press to better match the sensibilities of their audience: in the summer of 1968, for example, many UPS papers ran a Columbia Records ad displaying a group of banner-bearing protestors sitting in a police holding cell under the caption "But The Man can't bust our music."[153]

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[149] Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, February 9-15, 1968.
[150] Tobin, "The EVO Report: An Editorial," February 9-15, 1968.
[151] Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, 72.
[152] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 166.
[153] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 169.

Though not the underground press's sole revenue stream — subscriptions and personal ads provided reliable funds, albeit on razor-thin margins — one 1968 CIA report estimated that alternative papers had become so dependent on music ads that "eight out of 10 would fail if a few phonograph record companies stopped advertising in them."[154] As such, when editors began noticing that advertisements from major record labels were disappearing from their papers in the spring of 1969, it was a cause of UPS-wide concern.[155]

On June 11, 1969, Wilcock and Concert Hall Publications employee Michael Forman met with Columbia Records representatives known to be "quite sympathetic to the Underground" to discuss that company's withdrawal from UPS papers.[156] The Columbia representatives explained that their decision was based on 'market research,' which they pointedly refused to share with Wilcock.[157]

In their respective accounts of this period, both Wilcock and Abe Peck have suggested a benign explanation for Columbia's decision: competition from publications like *Rolling Stone*, which more narrowly focused on music and was less politically radical, may have made advertising in UPS publications less appealing by comparison.[158] Others, including the above-referenced PEN America report, have suggested that the FBI used its industry contacts to persuade record companies to drop their UPS advertisements.[159] Regardless of the actual nature of government repression against the underground press, there was strong sense of fear and perception of discrimination and censorship among UPS and its papers. In 1969, UPS reported that 600 underground papers were experiencing what it categorized as major repression.[160]

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[154] Angus MacKenzie, "Sabotaging the Dissident Press," *Columbia Journalism Review* 19, no. 6 (1981): 57-63, 60.

[155] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties,* 175-176.

[156] Concert Hall Publications Letter, June 11, 1969, John Wilcock Collection, 1967-1971, box 1 folder "'Other Scenes' Related Materials," Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (hereafter cited as Concert Hall Publications Letter, June 11, 1969, John Wilcock Collection).

[157] Concert Hall Publications Letter, June 11, 1969, John Wilcock Collection.

[158] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 176-177; Wilcock, *Manhattan Memories*, Ch. 10.

[159] This is also the thesis of Angus MacKenzie, "Sabotaging the Dissident Press," *Columbia Journalism Review* 19, no. 6 (1981): 57-63.

[160] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 143.

The underground press stopped expanding in the early 1970s.[161] The birth rate of new underground papers — which were once started with such frequency that Tom Forcade predicted there would "inevitably be [a] daily underground paper in every city, and a weekly in every town" — soon fell below the number of die-offs.[162] Certainly government repression, in the form of drug arrests or obscenity busts or plausible strangling of advertising revenue, played a role in this mass extinction. Yet the politicization and radicalization of the underground press, alongside many papers' struggle to place themselves within this rapidly-changing youth movement, had a considerable role to play in its demise. The later history of *EVO* and its competitors in the East Village demonstrates this struggle.

[161] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 144.
[162] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 184.

Chapter Three – The Partisan Paper, 1968-1972

"1968 is the year of the 'yippees,'" *EVO* proclaimed in its February 16 issue.[163] The Youth International Party, or "YIP" for short, was formed on December 31, 1967 by a group including *The Realist* publisher Paul Krassner, Digger Abbie Hoffman, and Berkeley Free Speech Movement alumnus Jerry Rubin. The confrontational, theatrical politics that Hoffman had displayed on Wall Street and at the Pentagon had been praised and promoted by *EVO*; the new Yippies!, as YIP adherents came to be called, received similar welcome. When the Yippies decided on the 1968 Democratic National Convention — to be held August 26-29 in Chicago, Illinois — as the stage for their next national confrontation, *EVO* threw itself into promoting the YIP 'Festival of Life.'

Figures 6-7: Centerfold Drawings Depicting 'Central Park Yip-Out'

For those few short months between the founding of YIP and the Chicago convention, *EVO* embraced an ideology that appeared to fully resolve any contradictions between the paper's status as a for-profit entity, and its ambitions to foment cultural revolution. To Abbie Hoffman — who, in his book published just after the Chicago convention, labeled Marshall McLuhan "more relevant than

[163] "Notes from an Era Yippizolean," *East Village Other*, February 16, 1968.

Marx" — the content of his Wall Street demonstration or the Pentagon 'levitation' was less important than their ability to get on TV. By extension, everything that *EVO* did to increase circulation and publicize this spectacle was revolutionary.

It was more difficult for the *East Village Other* to resolve the debates in the youth movement prompted by the spectacular violence of the Chicago convention. While many of its fellow undergrounders embraced one of two alternative ideologies — either fleeing the urban struggle for rural communes, or embracing the ideal of the 'journalist and revolutionary' by taking up arms — the *East Village Other* continued to espouse the YIP-adjacent politics of spectacle that had seen it through 1968. However, this stance left *EVO* unable to embrace post-Digger neighborhood community groups, the rise of second-wave feminism and other identitarian politics, or even the base contradiction between its goal of 'revolution' and its status as a product. By refusing to adapt or evolve long after the 'Year of the Yippie' had come and gone, *EVO* made itself outdated and obsolete in the eyes of its contemporaries.

The Long March to Chicago

Walter Bowart left the *East Village Other* for Tucson, Arizona in November of 1967, just after the March on the Pentagon, to marry heiress Peggy Mellon Hitchcock.[164] Allen Katzman and Peter Leggieri then effectively inherited control over *EVO*. The two removed staff titles from the masthead to "emphasize [Leggieri's] belief that *EVO* was an artistic collaboration," replacing them with a vertical column of contributors' names; Katzman's and Leggieri's names, however, often shared a line at the top of the masthead, indicating an extant hierarchy that they jointly topped. This duumvirate presided over what was (according to Leggieri) *EVO*'s "'golden' time, a period of more

[164] Dan Rattiner, "EVO, the Mafia, and the Takeover that Wasn't," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/rattiner-02; Kim Deitch, "Ode to Joel Fabrikant," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/deitch.

than two years when circulation nearly doubled to more than 70,000, bills were paid on time and paychecks were regular."[165]

During the first year of this 'golden time,' no event was more important to *EVO* than the Yippie 'Festival of Life.' *EVO* regularly printed articles by Jerry Rubin encouraging readers to attend the protest in Chicago.[166] The paper also covered debates and dialogues between various New Left and countercultural figures — socialist David McReynolds, folk singer Phil Ochs, presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy — and Rubin.[167] Such articles invariably supported Rubin as the 'winner' of these encounters; the article on the McReynolds debate, for example, described Rubin's rhetoric as "his own," "direct," and "true" in comparison to that of his debating opponent.[168] And *EVO* attended a host of Yippie events: a confrontation with police at Stony Brook University in February; a confrontation with police at Grand Central Station in March; and a Central Park "Yip-Out" on Easter Sunday which, in a turn of events surprising even to the *EVO* reporter on-scene, did *not* devolve into a confrontation with police.[169] Though the Yippies were attempting to co-organize the Chicago demonstration with other entities, including the more politically-focused Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (the Mobe), it would be unsurprising if the average *EVO* reader came away with the impression that YIP was the dominant political and cultural force within the youth movement in 1968.

Not every underground newspaper expressed the same unbridled support. According to Abe Peck, the first major piece of anti-Yippie criticism in an undergrounder appeared in the *Barb* in March of 1968, with a flood of pieces questioning the Yippies and their organizing tactics soon

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[165] Peter Leggieri, "Peter Leggieri's East Village Other," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/leggieri-2.

[166] Jerry Rubin, "Shake 'em up tonight!," *East Village Other*, February 2-8, 1968.

[167] Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," February 9-15, 1968; Allan Katzman, "EVO Sports," *East Village Other*, March 8-14, 1968; "Yippie-Yi-O-Ki-Yay," *East Village Other*, April 5, 1968.

[168] Katzman, "EVO Sports," March 8-14, 1968.

[169] "Demonstrations are a Drag and Besides We're Much Too High," *East Village Other*, March 1-7, 1968; "Take the A Train to Auschwitz," *East Village Other*, March 29-April 4, 1968; "Bejesuschrist the cops did not crucify anyone…" *East Village Other*, April 19-25, 1968.

following.[170] As the Convention drew nearer — and it appeared less and less likely that Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley would grant the 'Festival of Life' a permit — some publications responded by encouraging their readers to stay at home.

Though *EVO* warned readers about the possibility of violence, it persisted in supporting the Yippies' planned protest. "I am going to Chicago anyway… with the realization that I too could possibly become a martyr for the media," wrote Katzman.[171] Other articles were blunter. "Don't come to Chicago if you expect a five-day Festival of Life, music and love," an article by *EVO* writer Lennox Raphael warned no less than five times.[172] That same Lennox Raphael article, however, included both a festival program and detailed directions to Lincoln Park; moreover, an ad encouraging readers to reserve seats on the Fifth Ave. Vietnam Peace Parade Committee's charter buses to the Convention ran in that very *EVO* issue.[173]

Ultimately, Katzman and six other staffers journeyed to Chicago for the 1968 Democratic Convention, publishing first-person accounts of their experiences in the following three issues of *EVO*.[174] They and other members of the underground press simultaneously witnessed and participated in the events that ensued: theatrical Yippie antics culminating in their nominating a pig for President; violent clashes with police that left many injured and one dead; and the arrests of high-profile youth movement figures such as SDS founder Tom Hayden. "There was little amnesty for the press," one article reported, adding that "[n]ewsmen looked no different from demonstrators in the dark."[175] This same article went on to state that two *EVO* reporters had been stopped and frisked,

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[170] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 103-104.

[171] Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, August 23, 1968.

[172] Lennox Raphael, "Pig Butcher," *East Village Other*, August 16, 1968.

[173] Raphael, "Pig Butcher," August 16, 1968; "Confront the Warmakers in Chicago… (Advertisement)," *East Village Other*, August 16, 1968.

[174] See announcement on interior cover of September 6, 1968 *East Village Other* reading "FUBAH is an old military term for Fucked Up Beyond All Help. Ironically it also describes the efforts of our 7 man team in Chicago. Read about their adventures in this issue."

[175] Dennis Frawley, "Pigs Pigs Pigs / The events of the past week in Chicago…," *East Village Other*, August 30, 1968.

and Allen Katzman harassed and beaten by cops — their press credentials did nothing to protect them from being treated differently than any other Yippie.[176]

Urban Pessimism

For some time, *EVO* had been expressing weariness over its role as an urban publication. In June of 1968, Katzman's recurring "Poor Paranoid's Almanac" column had highlighted the "problem and a disease" of alcohol- and amphetamine-using young people arriving in the East Village, who, in contrast to the Flower Children of the summer previous, led a "purposeless" existence.[177] "What goes on at St. Marks Place is no longer a beautiful or creative act, but a mass-salvation fizzled into a mass-suicide," Katzman concluded.[178] Soon thereafter, Katzman visited Haight-Ashbury, the East Village's 'sister-neighborhood,' and found it to be much the same. "Most of the people who were on this scene this time last year are now firmly entrenched in houses that feel like barricades," Katzman described for the readers back home, "…while others have taken to a farther retreat in woods and wilderness[.]"[179]

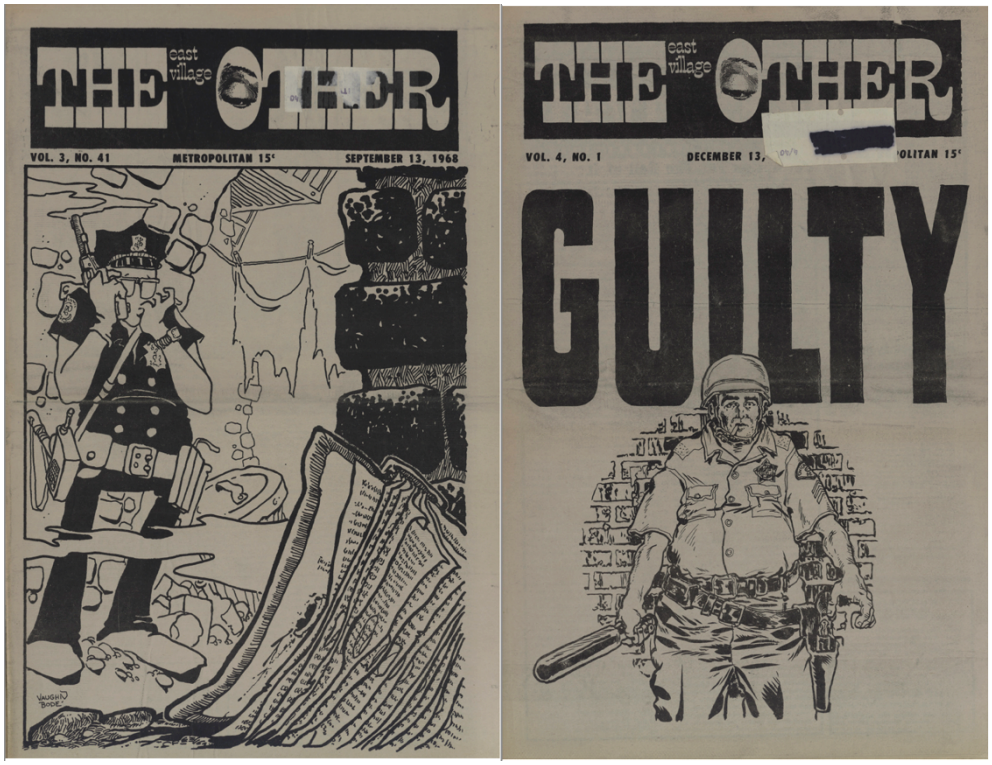
Katzman's traveling companion to the West Coast was Michael Bowen, co-founder of the *San Francisco Oracle* and the newspaperman who had hosted the first underground press conference at Stinson Beach the year previous.[180] The final *Oracle* had been published in February of 1968, with many of its staffers leaving to join agricultural communes.[181]

The *Oracle* was not the only urban paper to lose staff to the countryside: across the nation, a new back-to-the-land movement was inspiring thousands of former city-dwellers to turn away from the mass urban struggle, and instead fully 'drop out' by pursuing rural commune-dwelling.[182] This choice was dramatized in the August 1968 Liberation News Service split, during which half of the

[176] Frawley, "Pigs Pigs Pigs / The events of the past week in Chicago…," August 30, 1968.
[177] Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, June 28, 1968.
[178] Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," June 28, 1968.
[179] Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, August 9, 1968.
[180] Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," August 9, 1968.
[181] Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," July 26, 1968.
[182] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 54.

service's staff, including founders Marshall Bloom and Ray Mungo, fled New York City for a farm in Montague, Massachusetts. Disapproving of their founders' abandonment of establishment-altering politics, the other half of the LNS staff remained in their New York City office, where they rebranded as "LNS-NY"; disapproving of the fact that Bloom and Mungo had stolen most of LNS's money and printing supplies upon their departure for literally greener pastures, they did this only after driving up to Montague and holding Bloom hostage.[183]

When Katzman and company traveled to Chicago later that August for the Democratic Convention, they finally experienced the full brutality of violent urban struggle head-on. An *EVO* article by one of Katzman's companions in Chicago, David Bodie, concluded that while "[a] year or so ago a genuine alternative became conscious as the hippies exploded into the mass media," after the events of 1968, "flower power is dead."[184]



Figures 8-9: Post-Chicago Democratic Convention *East Village Other* Covers

[183] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 1-2.

[184] David Bodie, "Da-yeh-nu," *East Village Other*, September 13, 1968.

Nonviolent action simply could not contend with the country's Mayor Daleys. It followed that it was necessary to become truly revolutionary: either by picking up a gun, or by abandoning the urban strongholds in the East Village and the Haight and fully 'dropping out.'[185] Bodie clearly favored the latter option, stressing that, "… the young can walk toward life, not the barricades[.]"[186]

Although individual *EVO* staffers occasionally fell off the masthead to try their luck elsewhere, Katzman stayed on staff until the paper finally folded in 1972. Despite all the urban pessimism it expressed in 1968, the *East Village Other* would remain in the neighborhood for which it was named for several years yet.

Up Against the Wall, *East Village Other*!

Although the *East Village Other* had not been New York City's sole undergrounder for some time — established Old Left magazine *The National Guardian* had joined UPS, while the short-lived *New York Free Press* published uptown — a new contender arrived on the scene to challenge *EVO*'s position as the East Village's underground newspaper. The *Rat Subterranean News* was founded in March of 1968 by Jeff Shero, an established underground journalist who had previously worked on both SDS political bulletin *New Left Notes* and Austin-area UPS member *The Rag*.[187] According to an apocryphal origin story included in Robert Glessing's account of the era, Shero started *Rat* on a whim when, passing through New York on his way back from Europe, friends convinced him that "New York City needed a radical political paper" because "*EVO* was something 'other' than politically radical."[188]

Shero's timing was fortuitous. The *Rat*'s big break came the following month, when hundreds of students at Columbia University, reacting to both the university's ties with the Vietnam War machine and its gentrification of the neighborhoods around it, occupied five buildings on campus in a move that shut down classes and drew national media attention for a week. Though *EVO* also

[185] Bodie, "Da-yeh-nu," September 13, 1968.
[186] Bodie, "Da-yeh-nu," September 13, 1968.
[187] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 93.
[188] Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, 34-35.

covered the Columbia events, *Rat* writers took immersive reporting to another level by occupying buildings and risking arrest alongside students.[189] As the students denied such access to mainstream media publications, underground papers like the *Rat* were the only means by which readers at home could access the occupiers' perspective.[190]

The *Rat* soon came to speak for another group of radicals. While *EVO* backed the theatrical, hip Yippies, *Rat* associated itself with anarchist affinity group Up Against the Wall Motherfucker (abbreviated as "UAW/MF"). Formed in 1966 by painter Ben Morea as a Dadaist art collective, by early 1968 the 'Motherfuckers' had come to fulfill a similar role to the Diggers and Provos before them, engaging in direct action and political agitation in the East Village.[191]

Initial *EVO* coverage of UAW/MF was positive. An article in the October 11, 1968 issue critiqued other area political groups for not matching their rhetoric with action, while pointing out that "Ben [Morea] and UP AGAINST THE WALL MOTHERFUCKERS were virtually alone all summer trying to maintain several crash-pads for the strung out and transient as well as trying to feed them."[192] But when UAW/MF criticized *EVO*'s coverage of its feud with Bill Graham — concert promoter, owner of notable neighborhood rock-and-roll venue Fillmore East, and perhaps not incidentally *EVO*'s then-landlord — the paper struck back. In *EVO*'s January 10, 1969 issue, Dean Latimer revealed that he had attempted to write a piece on the organization's crash pads a few months prior. "But no, man," came the reply, "cause the Motherfuckers had to tell me exactly what to write, or write it themselves with absolutely no revisions: anything less, understand, would be Unsound Revolutionary Tactics."[193]

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[189] Jeff Shero was even arrested alongside students at the Hamilton II protests on May 21, 1968, as his name appears on the arrests lists found in University Protest and Activism Collection, box 72 folder 6 series XIV, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

[190] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 91-92.

[191] Patrick Burke, *Tear Down the Walls: White Radicalism and Black Power in 1960s Rock* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 102.

[192] Baby Jerry, "Sprockets," *East Village Other*, October 11, 1968.

[193] Dean Latimer, "Up Against the Mother, Fucker / Decomposition," *East Village Other*, January 10, 1969.

Latimer's article concluded by stating, "that's why you never see anything about the Motherfuckers in *EVO*."[194] Though the paper's coverage of the Yippies had demonstrated its willingness to effectively endorse a political group, *EVO* refused to submit control over its copy to this new outside influence. The *Rat* took a markedly different approach. "Every layout night," Abe Peck wrote, UAW/MF "rolled into the *Rat* like an angry tumbleweed to lay out a page of graphics."[195] Such pages included a mixture of collage art, political manifestos, and event announcements: if one wanted to know what the East Village's leading youth movement group was saying and doing, one had to read the *Rat*.[196]

Rat was also more eager than *EVO* to embrace the post-Chicago turn to revolutionary violence. Just as *EVO* had near-ignored SDS in its coverage of Chicago convention preparations, so did the subsequent dramas that unfolded within the political side of the youth movement receive little acknowledgement. The 1969 Students for a Democratic Society National Convention, held June 18-22 in Chicago, Illinois, saw what had once been the country's most significant mobilizer of radical students splinter into factions; neither the June 25 nor July 2 issues of *EVO* so much as mentioned this SDS conference.[197]

A few months later in that same city, one such SDS splinter — known initially as the Revolutionary Youth Movement and then as the Weathermen — sought to "take the war home" by violently clashing with police. *EVO* Editor Jaakov Kohn published a letter praising the Weathermen for the fact that "they did their thing and thus established a new set of rules in a game called the politics of confrontation" — and, in a vengeful addition perhaps inspired by *EVO* staffers' experience during the Democratic Convention, he further praised them for giving "Chicago club-swinging pig[s]" their comeuppance. However, Kohn then criticized the Weathermen's so-called 'Days of Rage' for diverting attention from the then-ongoing 'Chicago Eight' trial.

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[194] Latimer, "Up Against the Mother, Fucker / Decomposition," January 10, 1969.
[195] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 171.
[196] Burke, *Tear Down the Walls*, 102-103.
[197] See *East Village Other*, June 25, 1969 and July 2, 1969.

Following the Democratic Convention, eight SDS, Mobe, Black Panther Party, and YIP-associated individuals — including *EVO* regulars Rubin and Hoffman — had been charged with conspiracy by the federal government.[198] Viewed by many within the youth movement as a political show trial, *EVO* published articles and cartoons offering support to the 'conspirators' and insulting the prosecution in nearly every issue, several of which featured play-by-plays of the courtroom antics written by *EVO* reporters on-the-scene.[199] Allen Katzman was even called to testify during the Chicago Eight trial (and subsequently wrote about his experiences on the stand in *EVO*).[200] The attention paid to the trial demonstrates that *EVO*'s lack of concern with the internal strife of SDS was not due to geographic distance — rather, it was simply not a priority. The ideological battles and radicalization occupying the more political side of the movement were of less concern than keeping up with the line that *EVO* had adopted in 1968: namely, the antics of the Youth International Party and the media spectacle of the Democratic Convention.

The *Rat*, in contrast, embraced post-Convention political violence. Having joined *Rat* after pitching a how-to article on plane hijackings, future serial bomber Jane Alpert became a regular contributor to the paper in 1969.[201] Not all on *Rat* were completely on-board — Abe Peck, for example, quotes Jeff Shero as privately believing that the underground press was being co-opted "by noncreative secondraters…. The radicals who believe in what they say, and woe to anyone who does not believe accordingly" — but many seemed to view Alpert's activities as a natural escalation from supporting the Motherfuckers. Alpert's autobiography recalled that, on her first day back at the *Rat* following her release on bail for alleged participation in a string of bombings around New York City, "my fellow staffers greeted me with cheers as though I had been elected to office," even organizing a benefit for her defense fund.[202]

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[198] Jaakov Kohn, "HIRAP," *East Village Other*, October 15, 1969.

[199] For examples, see Renfreu Neff, "Hoffman's Follys," *East Village Other*, October 1, 1969; Mike Gold, "There go my people, I must hurry and catch up with them for I am their leader," *East Village Other*, November 5, 1969.

[200] Katzman testified in January 1970, as conveyed in: Allan Katzman, "Poor Paranoid's Almanac," *East Village Other*, February 4, 1970.

[201] Jane Alpert, *Growing Up Underground* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1981), 175, 202-203.

[202] Alpert, *Growing Up Underground*, 235.

Perhaps attributable both to its very public mishandling of UPS, and the emergence of markedly more radical alternatives like *Rat*, the reputation of *EVO* within the underground press declined. The March 1, 1969 LNS news packet included a long item titled "The Movement and the New Media" by LNS members Victoria Smith and Thorne Dreyer; though acknowledging *EVO*'s role as a UPS founder, the article dismissed it as a paper that "never served much more than a mind-blowing function, being a freak's National Inquirer."[203] Treating *EVO* almost as if it had already folded, the article heralded newer alternatives: "As EVO had been a reaction to the Voice, another paper, Rat, was started early in 1968 to fill the void EVO left." The *Rat*, the article continued, has decidedly "taken EVO's place as journalistic inspiration on the East Coast."[204]

Preceding Robert Glessing's *The Underground Press in America* by a year, "The Movement and the New Media" — supposedly an excerpt from a longer book, edited by the *Rat*'s Shero, though a completed book appears to have never been published — represented perhaps the first stab at writing a history of the underground press.[205] Certainly, the fact that Shero reportedly edited the piece may have influenced its assessment of *EVO*, as Shero might have had an incentive to denigrate his rival for the East Village's readership while positioning his own paper as the most innovative and influential.

That this excerpt was included in an LNS packet and distributed to its then-hundreds of subscribers would have helped to canonicalize this position: any *EVO* allies that remained after its mishandling of UPS were now being told by an authoritative force that the paper's age of relevance was over.

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[203] Thorne Dreyer and Victoria Smith, "The Movement and the New Media," *Liberation News Service*, March 1, 1969, in John Wilcock Collection, 1967-1971, box 3 folder "Wilcock Colln LNS Mar 1, 1969 March 27, 1969 April 5, 1969 - fragments," Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

[204] Dreyer and Smith, "The Movement and the New Media," March 1, 1969.

[205] Dreyer and Smith, "The Movement and the New Media," March 1, 1969.

Goodbye To All *Rat*

Rat was also quicker than *EVO* to embrace yet another change in the youth movement: the emergence of identity-based politics. The articulation of Black Power as a separate tendency from the integrated Civil Rights Movement had begun early on, perhaps datable to Stokely Carmichael's expelling of white volunteers from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the spring of 1967. Then, on September 7, 1968, members of the New York Radical Movement protested the Miss America pageant, marking second-wave feminism's first dive into the theatrical confrontation politics that had come to dominate the youth movement.[206] The implications of these events echoed through the underground press.

Though *EVO* was like most undergrounders in that it was majority male and led by, as Abe Peck put it, "single strong (male) editors," several women were credited as writers and even editors.[207] Sherry Needham was listed as a member of *EVO*'s Editorial Board for its first handful of issues, before disappearing and eventually returning to the staff roster in the fall of 1968. Another woman, Lorraine Glennby, was credited as Managing Editor for parts of 1966 and 1967 before becoming a regularly-listed foreign correspondent.

Though numerous female artists and organizers were profiled and featured with respect, some content could be more dubious. In December 1965, *EVO* introduced a once-per-issue "Slum Goddess" segment, named for a song of the same name by The Fugs. Each segment highlighted a different young, attractive "Slum Goddess" that one might find in the East Village. Some included interviews with their subjects, while others only a name; some Slum Goddesses were pictured fully clothed, others as nude pinups.

Several female staff actively participated in the 'Slum Goddess' segment: Lorraine Glennby appeared as the Slum Goddess of the March 1-15, 1967 issue; several years later, secretary Jackie "Coca Crystal" Diamond had that same "great honor" bestowed upon her.[208] "In a short time, *EVO*

[206] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties,* 208-209.

[207] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 242

[208] Coca Crystal, "Coca Crystal: Handmaiden, Slum Goddess, Reporter," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/crystal.

was dead; but I will always be a SLUMGODDESS," Crystal wrote in one retrospective.[209] What reader criticism *EVO* received focused on the lack of diversity among its Slum Goddesses, rather than the concept of a Slum Goddess column in and of itself. "[H]ow is it that your monthly 'Slum Goddess' is a persistently pulchritudinous damsel?" queried one Letter to the Editor. "Are not less physically and facially endowed women goddesses also?"[210] Another Letter critiqued, "Despite your liberality you remain trapped in the mainstream of American Culture! WHERE ARE YOUR SLUMGODS?"[211]

Figures 10-11: *EVO* Managing Editor Lorraine Glennby as 'Slum Goddess'

[209] Crystal, "Coca Crystal: Handmaiden, Slum Goddess, Reporter.".

[210] L.F.R. and S.E.L., "In retrospective examination… (Letter to the Editor)," *East Village Other*, March 1, 1967.

[211] Carl Dahlke and Mary Lee Katz, "Despite your liberality… (Letter to the Editor)," *East Village Other*, February 15, 1967.

Then, in early 1970, the women of *Rat Subterranean News* produced a special issue that focused on feminist issues. Robin Morgan, then a member of the Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (a/k/a "W.I.T.C.H."), contributed "Goodbye to All That," a critique of the "liberal cooptative masks on the face of sexist hate and fear" worn by supposedly-progressive men like her *Rat* colleagues.[212] Morgan issued an ultimatum: "If the men return to reinstate the porny photos, the sexist comic strips, the nude-chickie covers… Rat must be taken over permanently by women–or Rat must be destroyed."[213] When the next issue of the *Rat* promised a return to form — its cover sporting a cartoon of the paper's rodent mascot unzipping its fly under a headline reading "The Old Rat is Back" — the women of the *Rat* responded by occupying the paper's offices and kicking out male staffers.[214]

Other publications took a different approach. Liberation News Service, which picked up "Goodbye to All That" and distributed it to underground papers across the country, opted to respond not by embracing gender separatism, but rather by taking conscious steps to create true gender inclusiveness: creating a LNS Women's Caucus; organizing an East Coast Women's Media Conference; committing to increase its ratio of female-to-male employees.[215]

EVO did neither. "Why Rat? Why not EVO…?" Morgan's *Rat* essay had asked. "First, they'll get theirs–but it won't be by a takeover, which is reserved for something at least worth taking over."[216] Neither did *EVO* seem to deem the *Rat* takeover worthy of attention, as in the weeks surrounding it, *EVO* only twice addressed either the takeover itself or the broader issue of women's liberation. First, a Letter to the Editor asking "if the RAT is male or female" received *EVO*'s response that "[a]ctually, the RAT is a rodent hermaphrodite compensating for feelings of sexual inferiority on both counts."[217] Then, the next week, Lita Eliscu, an *EVO* art critic and one of its most frequently

[212] Robin Morgan, "Goodbye to All That," *Rat Subterranean News*, February 6-23, 1970.
[213] Morgan, "Goodbye to All That," February 6-23, 1970.
[214] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 125; Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 212-14.
[215] Slonecker, "Living the Movement," 123-127.
[216] Morgan, "Goodbye to All That," February 6-23, 1970.
[217] Anna Maria Leving, "Could you tell me … (Letter to the Editor)," *East Village Other*, January 14, 1970.

published female contributors, wrote that "Women's liberation, with or without the capitals, puzzles me" because "it is people, whether sexually characterized by breasts or balls or both who change the world."[218]

Though the *Rat* events went relatively unremarked upon, *EVO* ran two side-by-side op-eds addressing the feminist response to *Playboy* in its April 28, 1970 issue. Writer Claudia Dreifus criticized *Playboy* for its reluctance to hire female writers, and its founder Hugh Hefner for his "leering interest in the feminist movement" that saw him refusing to cover the women's liberation issue objectively; writer David Walley's piece, however, can be summarized in his claim that "Playboy's always running these photo essays on the Girls from Hong Kong or Paris, but they'd never run Slum goddesses."[219] Dreifus's article demonstrates that at least some female *EVO* staffers, like their counterparts on the *Rat*, were becoming interested in women's liberation, yet *EVO*'s editorial line seemed uninterested in following them there. Abe Peck's 1985 *Uncovering the Sixties* quoted Dreifus as stating that "I found it much harder to work [at *EVO*] once I got involved in the women's movement…. People were just hateful and impossible and horrible to me."[220]

Certainly, both ingrained misogyny on the part of *EVO* men (as accused by Robin Morgan) or anti-identitarian commitment to the unified movement (as described by Lita Eliscu) played a role in this editorial response. However, the extent to which *EVO* relied both ideologically and monetarily on sexual advertisements and imagery cannot be understated. *EVO* treated the publishing of sexual content as a press freedom issue, and (as detailed in Chapter 2) devoted large amounts of copy to defending both itself and UPS compatriots from anti-obscenity busts. Meanwhile, classified ads (the majority of which came in the form of 'man-seeking-woman') provided a steady income stream for both *EVO* and the majority of its fellow underground papers.[221] In April of 1969 — coincident with the withdrawal of Columbia Records from the underground press — declining advertising revenues

[218] Lita Eliscu, "Thilm," *East Village Other*, January 21, 1970.

[219] Claudia Dreyfus, "Playboy After the Dark Ages," *East Village Other*, April 28, 1970; David Walley, "David in Bunnyland," *East Village Other*, April 28, 1970.

[220] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 210.

[221] Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, 210-211.

prompted *EVO*'s publisher to supplement this income stream by starting *Kiss* magazine, described by Bob Rudnick as "the cheapest, ugliest porno publication."[222] Robert Glessing claimed that *Kiss* had a circulation of 70,000 by the summer of 1969, outstripping his estimated circulation of 65,000 around the same time for *EVO* proper.[223] Either removing sexualizing content from *EVO* or discontinuing *Kiss* would result in significant loss of revenue.

Crossing the Bowery

The Katzman-Leggieri duumvirate did not last forever, and the paper's operations and management continued to change in the years following Bowart's departure. In 1969, Katzman and Leggieri's positions at the top of the masthead were often superseded by two additional names: Joel Fabrikant and Jaakov Kohn. Leggieri had brought in Fabrikant in late 1967 to serve as the paper's business manager, but when the new hire gained the position of Publisher and the influence that came with it — hiring and firing power, control over salaries, the initiative to start spin-off papers like *Kiss* — *EVO*'s masthead came to reflect his authority.[224]

Fabrikant occupies a contentious position in the memory of *EVO* staffers. According to comix artist Kim Deitch, few writers were aware of his background, how he had come to run *EVO*, or exactly what role he possessed.[225] Though Deitch expressed fondness for Fabrikant, remembering him as an "honest man" who truly supported Deitch's professional career, he simultaneously labeled Fabrikant a "staunch Republican" only in it for the money who had "no sympathy with new left politics."[226] Others were even less fond of Fabrikant. Several retrospectives recall that the bathrooms in the *EVO* office were covered in graffiti delivering messages such as "MILLIONAIRE PIGS GO

[222] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 211.
[223] Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, 90, 93.
[224] Leggieri, "Peter Leggieri's East Village Other."
[225] Deitch, "Ode to Joel Fabrikant."
[226] Deitch, "Ode to Joel Fabrikant."

HOME. EVO IS OURS."[227] One of the alleged 'millionaire pigs' in question was, of course, Fabrikant.[228]

It should be kept in mind that Fabrikant was presiding over *EVO*'s finances during a period in which several external factors — including increased government repression and the pullout of major advertisers like Columbia Records — increasingly threatened them. Employees who relied on these finances might therefore have been predisposed against Fabrikant: though *EVO* staffers were among the underground press's better-compensated, with some full-timers receiving salaries of $45 a week by 1969, threats to this status-quo doubtless required someone to blame.[229] However, several former staffers have accused Fabrikant of contributing to *EVO*'s financial ruin from the inside. Onetime *EVO* stockholder Dan Rattiner once claimed that Fabrikant was involved in the mafia, and further alleged that the paper's financial difficulties toward the end of the Sixties stemmed from the fact that Fabrikant was allowing the mafia to reap all the rewards of the paper's increased circulation.[230] Leggieri, however, responded to Rattiner's story with disbelief: Fabrikant, he wrote, was not involved in the mafia, but merely "'cooking the books' by doctoring circulation figures and misreporting income and expenses" for his own personal gain.[231]

When Fabrikant started at *EVO*, the paper occupied an office at 105 Second Avenue. The paper had moved there in the spring of 1967, when the building was still occupied by the Village Theatre. The two developed a symbiotic relationship whereby *EVO* 'paid rent' for its 5,000 square office by giving the theatre free ad space.[232] The office was large enough to add a photography darkroom, light tables, and headline machine, greatly enhancing *EVO*'s ability to create artistically-complex issues in-house.[233] When Bill Graham purchased the Village Theatre building and

[227] Peter Leggieri, "The EVO Takeover That Never Was and the Mafia that Never Were," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/leggieri-1.

[228] Leggieri, "The EVO Takeover That Never Was and the Mafia that Never Were."

[229] Glessing, *The Underground Press in America*, 46, 92; Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 93.

[230] Rattiner, "EVO, The Mafia, and the Takeover that Wasn't."

[231] Leggieri, "The EVO Takeover That Never Was and the Mafia that Never Were."

[232] Leggieri, "Peter Leggieri's East Village Other."

[233] Leggieri, "Peter Leggieri's East Village Other."

redeveloped it into his Fillmore East in 1968, *EVO*'s ad space-for-office space arrangement remained intact. A good relationship with Graham ensured that *EVO* retained access to its extensive office space — now with the added benefit of "free, live music, performed by the world's greatest rock bands in airshaft stereo" — at minimal expense.[234]

Then, in early 1970, both *EVO*'s structure and its space abruptly changed. In February, Fabrikant convened a staff meeting, allegedly to demand more editorial control over *EVO* and its spinoff papers.[235] In a move that was photographed and published in the March 3, 1970 *EVO* issue, cartoonist R. Crumb left the room, returned with a cream pie, and threw it into Fabrikant's face.[236] Whether in direct reaction to the 'pieing' or out of general exhaustion with *EVO*, Fabrikant soon left, taking the "pornographic cash cow" *Kiss* with him.[237] Shortly thereafter, during the first week of May 1970, Graham evicted *EVO* from its spacious office above the Fillmore East.[238] The previously supportive relationship between Graham and *EVO* — as expressed by *EVO*'s disavowal of UAW/MF during the latter's conflict with Graham — had deteriorated beyond repair. Now, *EVO* referred to Graham as the "rock empire's most famous slumlandlord."[239]

The captaincy of the sinking ship was left to new Editor-in-Chief Jaakov Kohn.[240] Kohn was an established *EVO* player whose regular "Patarealist Papers" column served much the same role that Wilcock's "Other Scenes" once had, consisting of a grab-bag of short clippings, movement-related news items, and philosophizing. However, at least according to writer Ray Schultz, Kohn as an editor was "not much of one," playing favorites and prizing their copy above all else.[241]

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[234] Leggieri, "Peter Leggieri's East Village Other.".

[235] Ray Schultz, "The Death of Robert Crumb," *East Village Other*, March 3, 1970; Ray Schultz, "Ray Schultz about Jaakov Kohn," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/schultz.

[236] Schultz, "The Death of Robert Crumb," March 3, 1970.

[237] Schultz, "Ray Schultz about Jaakov Kohn."

[238] Renfreu Neff, "Happy Birthday, Hair…," *East Village Other*, May 5, 1970.

[239] Renfreu Neff, "Happy Birthday, Hair…," *East Village Other*, May 5, 1970.

[240] Schultz, "Ray Schultz about Jaakov Kohn."

[241] Schultz, "Ray Schultz about Jaakov Kohn."

One of Kohn's first actions was presiding over the move to *EVO*'s new office on the 11th floor of 20 East 12th Street.[242] In a radical change from *EVO*'s status quo, rent suddenly needed to be paid from the paper's declining circulation revenues. Cost-saving measures were taken: writer Lynda Crawford wrote that "salaries were slashed to the single digits, and then disappeared," while Coca Crystal recalled that she and other staffers resorted to distributing papers themselves.[243] It didn't work. A year later, *EVO* moved again, this time to a storeroom at the offices of the Law Commune at 640 Broadway — a handful of blocks west of the Bowery.[244] For the first time in its history, the *East Village Other* was based somewhere *other* than the East Village.

[242] Brooke Kroeger, "Allen Katzman and J.C. Suares on the Reportage of Wonderment," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/wonderment.

[243] Lynda Crawford, "John and Yoko's Leftovers and EVO's Post-Salad Days," *The East Village Other: The Rise of Underground Comix and the Alternative Press*, New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, 2012, https://nyujournalismprojects.org/eastvillageother/recollections/crawford-1; Crystal, "Coca Crystal: Handmaiden, Slum Goddess, Reporter.".

[244] Kroeger, "Allen Katzman and J.C. Suares on the Reportage of Wonderment."

Conclusion

The last issue of the *East Village Other* was released on March 1, 1972. It was not an end that *EVO*'s few remaining staffers desired. "Perhaps it is a telling symptom that during these past weeks a neverending flow of rumors about our impending demise have been circulating all over town," Kohn wrote at the beginning of the December 23, 1971 issue. "The fact of the matter is that we are now, more than ever, ready to do what we deem to be our main objective – offering a forum to reality and giving it maximum exposure."[245] Declining revenues and piling bills got the better of them, however, and the few remaining staffers were forced to leave the office, bringing *EVO* to an unceremonious end.[246]

Even if Kohn was not ready to admit that *EVO* was fading, there seemed to be a sense around the office in those final days that the 'underground' that *EVO* had helped create had ended. "From all outward indications, the burgeoning underground of a few years ago is either disappearing, dissolving, dying or totally disillusioned," read an editorial in *EVO*'s February 20, 1972 issue. "Underground papers are all suffering financial pains; the various movements have ceased moving; even the Weathermen are silent."[247] Though the editorial continued on to suggest a solution — perhaps a new underground party could be created, big enough that there would be room for all the identity groups and leftist tendencies that had sprung out of the late Sixties — by imagining some future remedy, *EVO* declared the current youth movement to be already dead.

Yet it is in no small part because of the *East Village Other* that not only the underground press, but the concept of a coherent and unifiable youth movement that the underground press perpetuated, came about in the first place. Beginning its existence as a local paper limited in scope to the geographic bounds of the East Village for which it was named, the *East Village Other* gradually developed a sincere interest in not only reporting on but playing an active role in nationwide events.

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[245] Jaakov Kohn, "HIRAP," *East Village Other*, December 23, 1971.

[246] Kroeger, "Allen Katzman and J.C. Suares on the Reportage of Wonderment."

[247] "Opinion!," *East Village Other*, February 20, 1972.

Though this expansion in attention initially extended to Haight-Ashbury as an 'Other Scene' demographically and culturally similar to the East Village, the emergence of 'guerrilla politics'-employing groups intent on creating a *counter*cultural revolution in America granted the paper a means to naturally enter national politics. The staff of *EVO*'s active participation in events such as the March on the Pentagon and 1968 Democratic Convention — and championing of the Yippies, key ideologues behind these events, as the 'political party' that might bring about countercultural revolution — signaled a remarkable shift in the paper's vision. Rather than seeking to protect the East Village from the outside influence of mainstream society, the *East Village Other* was now seeking to export the culture of the East Village to the rest of the country.

However, the *East Village Other*'s key role in the ideation of the Underground Press Syndicate demonstrates that this shift was not simply the paper reacting to broader trends within the decade's culture and politics. It was *EVO* that proactively reached out to stylistically-similar papers based in 'East Villages' throughout the country. The act of bringing these papers under the common UPS umbrella arguably created the 'underground press' as a distinct category, separate from antecedents to be found in papers like the *Village Voice*.

These 'underground papers' often differed in their exact goals and focus — some being more 'political' and some more 'countercultural,' as the typology suggested by John Wilcock proposed — but nonetheless shared core values, notably the willingness to share with other Syndicate papers. As the ability to freely reprint content from other UPS papers significantly decreased the barrier to entry for creating a new underground paper, *EVO* also helped make possible the vision of a future where, in the words of Tom Forcade, there could be "[a] daily underground paper in every city, and a weekly in every town."[248] Very quickly, papers that might have otherwise been interested only in their own personal 'East Village' had access to news from papers across the country and abroad — and their readers could learn that, not only were there people very similar to themselves dispersed across the country, but they could potentially organize with these people to change American culture.

[248] Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties*, 184.

Several factors held UPS back from meeting its full potential. This is seen most obviously from the beginning in the internal disagreements between members of the Syndicate: both in its slow progress in implementing organizational rules and goals, and in the eventually-substantiated critique of *EVO*'s mishandling of UPS's infrastructure and finances. The emergence of competitor organizations, as exemplified by LNS, additionally restricted UPS's potential as a channeler of unified energies. Though UPS was able to peacefully coexist and collaborate with LNS, it was no longer the sole organization bringing together the underground press. Government repression — in the form of obscenity busts, drug arrests, and alleged advertiser interference — ate away at member-papers' human resources and finances, forcing many papers already running on shoestring budgets into the red. And experiences such as that which many underground reporters and editors faced at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago shook faith in the idea that existing tactics could succeed at changing America: should they abandon existing society to form hermetic 'East Villages' apart from society, or meet the government's force with guns?

The *East Village Other* did neither. Though it remained in the East Village as long as its finances would enable, *EVO* also did not throw its weight behind either new neighborhood organizations (like UAW/MF) or new national political currents (like second-wave feminism). Though *EVO* maintained several years of profitability and popularity before funds and circulation dwindled, its reputation as a cutting-edge role model within the underground press quickly passed. Even before the mass extinction of the underground press had begun, it had passed over its creator.

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