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The Plan For A British Hiroshima

Due to political infighting within the British ruling class, a shocking fact has come to light. During the Falklands War, in the Spring of 1982, Britain prepared to use nuclear weapons against Argentina. A submarine armed with nuclear missiles was dispatched to the South Atlantic. The third largest city of Argentina was

chosen as the target of incineration. And it was explicitly determined which losses in Britain's conventional invasion force would be considered serious enough to warrant unleashing the nuclear strike.

The known facts, as reported under the title "The Belgrano Papers: Thatcher's Plan for Total War," were published in

the August 24 issue of the *New Statesman* in the following short account:

"One well-placed political source has already revealed to Tam Dalyell (British parliamentary representative — RW) that a Polaris submarine was sent to the South Atlantic. Dalyell was informed

that the submarine went as far south as Ascension; the likely target for a threatened or demonstration nuclear attack was said to be Cordoba, northern Argentina. The nuclear threat might have been used if any of the task force's capital ships — one of the carriers, or the troop

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In Memory of Yilmaz Güney



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Letter on Meche and the Revolution in Peru

RW

One day last week a driver came into our taxi dispatch room with an article on the repression in Peru. With a copy of the RW spread out on a table we stood around and read the story of Laura Zambrano and the women of Callao prison and the appeal for letters and telegrams against the repression. (See RW No. 271 which features an important statement and report from the Communist Party of Peru.) This got an immediate response from some of us and within several minutes it was agreed that we would send a telegram expressing our indignation.

Five people contributed enough to enable us to send two telegrams to Peru which have already been sent off.

I myself have been interested in the situation in Peru since the news of the guerrilla war began to filter out a year and a half ago. I was surprised and pleased to see the strong and immediate reaction by the other drivers. This summer of nausea ad nauseam (some of which we witnessed very up close) has brought out some strong feelings of disgust in people and it seems there is quite a reservoir of anger that this outrage in Peru has tapped a bit of. The revolution in Peru is beginning to have an influence here and I would say a positive one.

The message sent by telegram is included.

A S.F. cab driver who reads the RW regularly

Telegram: (sent to Belaúnde and the magazine *Caretas*)

THE ARREST AND TORTURE OF PROFESSOR LAURA ZAMBRANO AND THE CRUEL TREATMENT OF THE WOMEN OF CALLAO HAS AROUSED OUR ANGER! SENOR BELAUNDE'S "DEMOCRACY" IS JUST ANOTHER CRUEL COLONIAL DICTATORSHIP. FREE MECHE! WE ARE WATCHING.

Free Meche!

We have received a report that leaflets titled "Save Meche" have appeared on the streets of Lima, the Peruvian capital, signed by the Communist Party of Peru (known in the press as Sendero Luminoso).

Worldwide support for Meche's freedom is developing. In Europe, some supporters have begun sending telegrams addressed to Peruvian president Belaúnde (Plaza de Armas, Lima), to the magazine *Caretas* (Jr. Camana 615-308, Lima), the magazine *Equis* (Jr. Soledad 416, 3° piso, Lince, Lima), other magazines, and to Peruvian embassies in Europe.

In this country, the address of the Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru is: 2483 Hearst Ave., No. 225, Berkeley, CA 94709. ☐



Scene from *Yöl*

Thousands Honor Yilmaz Güney At Paris Memorial

Paris, France. Thursday, September 13, 1984. Hundreds of people lined up outside the Kurdish Institute in Paris to honor Yilmaz Güney, at a memorial held this morning. In the afternoon, more than two thousand people marched to Père-Lachaise Cemetery where Yilmaz Güney was buried. Père-Lachaise is the site of the last battle of the Communards in the Paris Commune of 1871. Flowers were sent to the memorial from all the Turkish left organizations, including the Communist Party of Turkey, Marxist-Leninist (TKP/M-L), and flowers were also sent by a Kurdish group from Iranian Kurdistan, and by the RCP, USA, in honor of Yilmaz Güney.

French television is featuring special programs on Güney and his films *The Herd* and *Yöl* are being aired this week. Güney's death received wide coverage in the international press, including front-page notice in the newspapers of Turkey. ☐

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In Memory of Yilmaz Güney

Yilmaz Güney was a great revolutionary artist and an internationalist. On September 9, 1984, at the age of 47, he died of illness in Paris, France. His death is a profound loss to the proletariat and oppressed people of the world.

Born in 1937 to a Kurdish peasant family in the southeast of Turkey, Yilmaz Güney became the leading figure in the Turkish film industry, acting in scores of films before he began making films himself in the late 1960s. Beloved by millions and hated by the U.S.-backed Turkish regime, Güney spent more than half his life since 1961 in prison and in political exile; he continued with immense creativity, in such circumstances, to act, write and direct films, and seriously grappled with the problem of art and revolution. Framed-up and convicted to 18 years in prison on charges of killing a judge, in 1974 Güney began the remarkable feat of writing and directing films from prison, leading and working with his comrades on the outside as "eyes and ears." His film *The Herd*, made in 1978, was a big success in Europe. In 1981 Yilmaz Güney escaped from prison and completed his best known work *Yöl*, in exile.

A truly wonderful work of art, *Yöl* soared into the international arena — winning the Palme D'Or, Best Picture, the International Critics Award, Best Film, and the International Catholic Film Prize at the 1982 International Film Festival in Cannes. A triumph belonging to the oppressed of the earth and a victory of proletarian politics in the sphere of art. Despite the complete ban since 1980 on Güney's work by the Turkish regime and their desperate attempts to slander him, millions of people, who consider Güney one of their own, drew their *own* inspiration from the events at Cannes. One journalist in a remote village of Turkish Kurdistan reported being asked by a Kurdish peasant if he knew of the victory of *Yöl* at Cannes! Since the success of *Yöl*, which continues to be shown in the U.S., several of Güney's earlier works have been shown in this country, but his latest film, *The Wall* has not yet been seen here.

It is a great sorrow that the life and work of Yilmaz Güney has been cut short. He has left a legacy of revolutionary art belonging to the oppressed of the whole world, to learn from, deepen and treasure, as they wrench this planet into the future.

Scene from *Yöl*



The *Revolutionary Worker* has featured several articles on Yilmaz Güney, including "A Talk with Yilmaz Güney," October 1, 1982 and "A Review of *Yöl*" by A. Pine, February 11, 1983.

Punctuating The Point ■

Taking a cue from their Commander in Chief, outmoded people in all spheres continue to uphold and embellish on Ronald Reagan's threat of August 11: "My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you today that I've signed legislation which will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes."

Consider the following exploration of grammar problems by the conservative columnist William Safire, writing in his weekly column "On Language" in the liberal *New York Times Magazine* section on Sunday, September 2, 1984. In this article, "The Wicked Which and the Comma," that purports to be a story of the debate over the tax-hike controversy at the Republican Convention, Safire poses the grammar problem at hand:

A dependent clause is like a dependent

child: incapable of standing on its own but able to cause a lot of trouble. You can recognize these lovable but troublesome clauses because they begin with a *relative pronoun*, such as *that*, *which*, *who*, *whom*, *whose* — words that stand in for nouns.

These clauses come in two types: Fowler, the great grammarian whom sensible people follow on *that* vs. *which*, called them *defining* and *nondefining* clauses. . . .

Let's hit that notion again, harder: "He deep-sixed the evidence that was incriminating." (Defining clause, beginning with *that*, no commas; it is "the evidence" that was incriminating.)

Try that sentence this way: "He deep-sixed the evidence, which was incriminating." (Nondefining clause, beginning with *which*, separated by a comma; it is the fact that he deep-sixed it, not the evidence itself, that was incriminating. You think grammarians are splitting hairs? A person could go to jail on the

difference.)

Safire, however, has no desire to deep-six evidence *that* is incriminating but chooses to revel in it. After a brief foray into the mundane world of tax-hike commas, he continues:

At the risk of an accusation of which-hunting, I must point out that Republicans seem to have an unfortunate aversion to *that*. In his off-the-record thigh-slapper before a radio broadcast, President Reagan said, "My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you I just signed legislation which outlaws Russia forever." In that sentence, "which outlaws Russia forever" is a defining clause referring to the particular legislation and should be introduced by the relative pronoun *that*. Otherwise, if the clause were led by *which* and separated by a comma, the sentence would mean that, by virtue of the act of signing any legislation, he had outlawed Russia. ("I just signed legislation, which outlaws Russia forever." Quite different, and not what he meant.)

President Reagan, whose comment was noted around the world, may consider this complaint as a kind of late hit, but in future off-the-record outlawings, he should introduce his defining clauses with *that*. That will keep him out of trouble with grammarians.

That, however was not the end of the matter, as Mr. Safire went on to explore other grammar problems such as the use of the word *abject* by Governor Cuomo:

Abject, from the Latin, means "cast off" — the *ject* has the same root as *jet* — and that was its earliest meaning. It later came to mean "despicable": Shakespeare used it to describe

"paltry, servile, abject drudges." John Milton used it to mean "wretched": "To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n." Servility became the key: Thomas O'Connor, biographer of Disraeli, wrote, "Those who in adversity are the most abject, are in prosperity the most insolent."

In our time, the word has been married to *poverty*, in the cliché *abject poverty*; however, this phrase has taken on the connotation of "really deep poverty" more than poverty that reduced people to cringing servility. Undoubtedly, Governor Cuomo used *abject* as an intensifier for *poor* rather than as a description of the degraded condition of the fine people of Essex County.

The Governor, and others, will now know better: *Abject* has a meaning all its own, and not as part of a cliché. It still means what George Washington had in mind while addressing the Continental Army before the Battle of Long Island (now Nassau and Suffolk counties): "Our cruel and unrelenting enemy leaves us only the choice of brave resistance, or the most abject submission."

Mr. Safire has indeed provided a lesson: he not only knows how the imperialists had better phrase their threats, but he knows a fitting representative of U.S. imperialism when he sees one and how and why they are planning to use their nukes. Furthermore he has deliberately erred in using the phrase "brave resistance" when he really means "mass murder" and wrongly substituting "most abject submission" when he means "second-rate superpower." The correct use of the word *abject* in this case would be Shakespeare's usage: "paltry, servile, abject drudges" as applied to people like William Safire and the liberals of the *New York Times*. □

The INS River Murders

In the last ten years, at least thirteen farmworkers in California have been reported drowned in irrigation canals and rivers during INS raids — the actual number is certainly higher. At least seven of these deaths have occurred since 1982.

These *not-accidental* "accidents" have occurred as part of a strategy of terror against immigrants in raids in the countryside, known officially as the "open fields" policy. In a typical "open fields" raid, Border Patrol agents roam around in jeeps and trucks, swooping down on groups of "suspected aliens" at will. And in a part of the country in which agriculture absolutely requires dirt-cheap labor from Mexico, almost anyone working in the fields is "suspect." In the broad, flat agricultural valleys where the drownings have occurred, workers can sometimes see the agents coming over a mile away; those without papers, and unwilling to take the chance of beatings, rapes, and almost certain deportation the INS is notorious for, run for whatever cover or temporary hiding place can be found.

The Border Patrol, on foot and in their

jeeps, tries to herd and trap as many workers as possible — pursuing across fields criss-crossed with the network of canals that carry water down from the Sierras. The large canals are forty feet wide and the water is fast and cold from the melting snow in the mountains. Almost all who have been drowned have been young men, several as young as seventeen, who have been driven to the edge of a canal and have tried to swim across.

The INS has defended the conduct of every single agent involved in a drowning. As the deaths have mounted and the INS has come under criticism from forces ranging from Catholic bishops to the ACLU to the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund, and as the INS practices have been the target of lawsuits and other legal action by activist lawyers, various branches of the government have been called in to investigate, and to exonerate the INS. One U.S. attorney who "investigated" several drownings near Sacramento concluded: "All of the drownings resulted from the voluntary entry into the water by the decedents

(those killed — *RW*) following the arrival of the Border Patrol agents in the fields immediately adjacent . . . we have solicited evidence and leads from a variety of sources and none of the material we have received remotely suggests that the Border Patrol acted with improper intentions. Every indication has been that the deaths were a highly regrettable byproduct of that agency's proper performance and its duty to arrest persons illegally in this country."

Of course, there has been a rather convenient limit to the "variety of sources" such investigations have been able to tap — almost all witnesses to drownings, except Border Patrol agents, have been deported to Mexico. One man, interviewed last year in Mexico by an investigator for the California Rural Legal Assistance organization, told of watching two of his boyhood friends drown near Sacramento — while Border Patrol agents forced him to sit on shore, handcuffed. Everytime he tried to get up in answer to calls for help, he was shoved back to the ground. No "improper intentions" there.

Border Patrol agents have explained

that it's all just part of "enforcing the law." In such situations, you see, if they turn their attention to helping someone who is drowning, or turn loose someone they have already caught to try a rescue attempt, then someone might escape — and that would be against the law. A top INS spokesman put it this way: "What are we supposed to do, stop enforcing the law? It's really a question without an answer. If people are going to flee, they have to be responsible for what happens to them." The law, and the INS as its agent, puts these workers in the position of being trapped between the Border Patrol and an icy river — and if you don't walk into the arms of the INS, then, well, you deserve to drown.

A Ventura County newspaper carried this account of the death of Pedro Vargas in 1982: "...About fifteen or twenty men were being sought by officers. He (INS official, Jensen — *RW*) said the young man who drowned was spotted running toward the fast moving creek. He jumped into the creek, Jensen said, and swam across it two or three times in

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THE U.S. A-TEAM IN NICARAGUA

The U.S.'s highly publicized and well-known "secret war" against Nicaragua was supposed to be over and done with earlier this year; supposedly incensed by the CIA's mining of Nicaragua's harbors (apparently all the previous hit-and-run attacks on small villages, bombing runs, sabotage, kidnappings, etc. were not quite so dastardly), the U.S. Congress officially cut off funding to the *Contras* with a great deal of liberal fanfare. But then, two Americans died in a September 1 *Contra* raid on a training school inside Nicaragua near the Honduras border when the Hughes helicopter gunship they were flying in was shot down; four Nicaraguans, three of them children according to the Nicaraguan government, were killed in the raid — bringing to 7,300 the number that have been killed in such attacks.

Of course, there was bound to be all kinds of thinking that the U.S. government was still very actively engaged in armed assaults on Nicaragua, and that the two dead Americans had been operating at the behest of Washington, D.C. Oh no, nothing could be farther from the truth, said all the terribly sincere U.S. officials — ranging from State Department and Pentagon spokesmen to Democratic Senator Pat Moynihan of the Senate's Select Committee on Intelligence; these guys were supposedly mere "private citizens" acting completely on their own. It seems that the old "secret war" is now to be called a "private war" — and both titles are equally accurate.

The two American corpses had, prior to their sudden demise, reportedly been part of a team of six or seven mercenaries (details tend to get murky in this shadowy underworld) who had recently gone to Central America to help the largest *Contra* group, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), conduct its raids in Nicaragua. Both had been helicopter pilots in Vietnam, but that was not the end of their connections to the U.S. military. One of the deceased, Dana H. Parker, in addition to being a detective with the Huntsville, Alabama Police Department, was also a captain in the Alabama National Guard — apparently a popular organization with the CIA: in the early '60s, the CIA used the Alabama Air National Guard to train Cuban exiles as pilots for the Bay of Pigs invasion.

With the Alabama National Guard, Parker was assigned to the 20th Special Forces (or Green Beret) Unit of the U.S. Army Reserve; the active component of this unit just happened to be engaged in some type of "maneuvers" in Panama at the time of Parker's adventure. Of course, a National Guard spokesman in Washington, D.C., assured the *Los Angeles Times* that the army has no control over reserve officers when they are on "their own time," as he claimed Captain Parker was. Another member of this particular mercenary group was not only part of the same Green Beret unit as Parker, but also a full-time supply officer for the Alabama National Guard. Could any of these supplies have been funneled to the FDN? The ever-vigilant Guard ordered a special audit of the Huntsville Armory, whereupon a spokesman declared, "They found no major discrepancies — nothing of any consequence." One can only speculate as to whether M-16s, mortars, explosives, helicopter gunships, etc., fall within the category of "any consequence."

The mercenary team was part of a group called Civilian Military Assistance (CMA), which is based in Alabama and dedicated to providing military supplies and training (and combat commanders as well) to those who fight against the U.S.'s opponents in Central America. While the ever-anonymous "intelligence officials" admitted to the *New York Times* that they have used mercenaries in the past, and that due to "budget cutbacks" they often use "contract agents" and private corporations, some of which they set up themselves, they immediately announced that CMA and CIA were in no way connected. A few days later it was reported that the CIA had been aware of the group, but that the CIA had no advanced knowledge of any specific mission of the CMA and had not been in contact with any members of the group before the raid.

Shortly after the raid, the Sandinistas reported that based on maps discovered on the downed helicopter, it appeared that the raid had been launched from two airstrips in Honduras — Aguacate and

Jamastrán. Both of these have recently been enlarged and improved by U.S. Army engineers, and are choked-full of U.S. military personnel; the spokesman for the FDN replied that the raid had been launched from one of the group's own nonexistent airstrips within Nicaragua. A few days later, an anonymous Congressman admitted that the airstrip at Aguacate was used and that the CIA had known it was being used. And of course, the helicopter the mercenaries were flying in had been given to the *Contras* by the CIA. No connection here.

It turns out that the "private citizens" of Civilian Military Assistance were also helped along by the U.S. embassies in El Salvador and Honduras. According to Tom Posey, a former Green Beret and the leader of CMA, last October a U.S. officer assigned to the embassy in San Salvador set up a meeting for Posey and another CMA leader with then Chief of Staff of the Salvadoran army, Col. Mario Reyes Mena; the U.S. officer also helped out with translation. The *New York Times* subsequently reported that Defense Department documents revealed that U.S. military officers had introduced CMA leaders to the entire general staff of the Salvadoran army, had encouraged the mercenaries to send equipment to the Salvadoran army, had delivered the materiel to the Salvadoran army and had acted as the overall channel between the Salvadoran army and the CMA. Although Posey has been unable to remember the name of the U.S. officer that had given him so much help, the *Times* reported that the main U.S. officer involved was merely the chief U.S. logistics officer in El Salvador. Then, when the CMA decided (or was informed) that the *Contras* needed their help more than the Salvadoran army, an official at the U.S. embassy in Honduras helped arrange a meeting between Posey and then commander in chief of the Honduran armed forces, General Gustavo Alvarez Martinez. CMA leaders were later escorted by senior Honduran military officers to an FDN camp near the Nicaraguan border, where they began to get involved, according to Posey, in training pilots and planning military missions.

Of course, it's not only Americans who are concerned about the help that the *Contras* might need. Officials of the non-involved U.S. government informed the press that the *Contras* received aid from Taiwan, Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina, Venezuela, and, of course, Israel.

The Sandinistas say that the huge

helicopter gunship was accompanied on the raid by three Israeli "Arava" planes, but it's not clear at the moment whether those were donated to the FDN by Israel or by the U.S. CIA... or perhaps it was a joint gift. It would be "illegal" for the above-mentioned bastions of independence to divert the "aid" they receive from the U.S. to a third party without the U.S.'s permission, and since the U.S. is not involved, this just couldn't happen. No problem — U.S. officials say these countries are using their "own" money (including El Salvador!!) because they are dedicated to the cause. All the countries mentioned deny any involvement with the *Contras* — but, of course, they each have their own "private citizens" just like the U.S.

Well, maybe they aren't exactly like those in the U.S. (although the ol' boys in all the dependencies are surely doing their best to follow in the footsteps of their idols). It is doubtful if the mercenaries anywhere else could say, as Tom Posey did, that their organization came together from "a bunch of us who got to talking when we were hunting or fishing or going to gun shows." And he added, "Everytime we heard about the communists doing something somewhere, we got ticked off real bad." Actually, it turns out that these guys aren't "mercenaries" at all, but just loyal and adventurous Americans dedicated to fighting to preserve a certain way of life. According to highly-publicized "expert" testimony, from executives of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine and such, now splashed across the pages of the respectable press, these guys don't care about the money anyway. And the FDN spokesman chimed in that they would never use money-grubbing mercenaries — only "voluntary advisors" were acceptable to these honorable *Contras*.

How much more noble it is that there are so many gung-ho Americans — you know the kind, those deerhunters who see the mystical importance of drinking the blood of their kill — motivated by something other than crass self-interest. How much more uplifting to be dedicated to the greater good of U.S. imperialist domination of the globe — and the "way of life" it brings to those sections favored by its rule. How much more useful to the appropriate agency than those who would simply sell their services to the highest bidder.

But really, gentlemen, the tales of "private citizens" do seem to stretch things a bit. Like the story of a certain "Dr. John" described in a recent column in the *New York Times*. Forty-ish "Dr.

John" left his job as a psychologist to take part in a raid in Mexico on the home of a drug dealer who had *welshed* on a drug deal. A few months later, he was leading patrols and staging ambushes in Nicaragua; and after that, organizing a coup in Surinam. Here, the *Times* may have unwittingly shined a little light on the naked lies and hypocrisy that are behind the cries, most recently represented in a week-long series in the *Times* itself, about "foreign" (and especially lately "terrorist") dope production and smuggling into the U.S.; Dr. John's employer is obviously into more than dope-pushing.

This is not to say that there is no role for private citizens in the tasks at hand. Fundraising is very important, and the free press has been quite helpful in this regard. In addition to offering lots of free publicity to the CMA and FDN (and featuring comments like those of a FDN leader who stated that without private aid, "We could not continue our struggle..."), the *L.A. Times* published a front-page story that ran down the name, person in charge and city of every *Contra*-supplier in the U.S. so they could be easily contacted to offer a donation; and the *New York Times* dropped the exact address of one of the groups into the body of an article. The latter newspaper also discussed the manner in which the money was laundered (by funneling it through a series of foundations and foreign-based corporations) in order to avoid detection from possible prying bureaucrats — some do-it-yourself handy hints. Of course, one shouldn't get the idea that such private contributions would enable the *Contras* to go it alone; after all, administration officials did admit that the FDN had been getting advice on the proper way to conduct fundraising efforts — from the CIA, of course.

Actually, U.S. officials have been rather blatant about their involvement in the *Contra*/mercenary assaults on Nicaragua. Each lie about "private citizens" has been accompanied by some "anonymous official" indicating greater active participation on the part of a host of U.S. government agencies. In this, it is following the tack that has been taken with *Contra* activity from the start — admitting that the U.S. is behind it in order to increase the pressure on the Sandinista government to bend to the U.S.'s demands. But such admissions always seem to leave just enough crawl-space for a wriggle out. For example, U.S. officials announced that it was four Cubans, not Nicaraguan children, who were killed in the *Contra* raid — but of course, this doesn't mean that the U.S. was involved. Or the State Department finally admits, over a week after the incident, that official policy had been to "not discourage" support for the *Contras* from U.S. mercenaries — but that doesn't mean that the U.S. encouraged such support either. Somehow, such qualifiers enable the liberal Democrats in Congress, who have been clucking over these revelations for nearly two weeks, to say that they don't really like this mercenary stuff but nothing can be done. After all, this is a free country — and every "private citizen" has the right to assist in the murder of all who would oppose it. □

Complete Training, U.S.-Style

As we reported in last week's *RW*, the massacre of peasants by El Salvador's army has been intensifying since the inauguration of the second term of José Napoleón Duarte. In the past week, several recent massacres have been reported. Between July 18-July 22, some 68 unarmed peasants were murdered in the village of Los Llanitos and the surrounding area, with many of the bodies being burned by the army (apparently in an attempt to destroy the evidence). Peasants also reported that the troops had cut down the cornfields in the area and destroyed the roofs of the houses. This incident was reported by Tutela Legal, the Roman Catholic Legal Aid Group, and appears to have been confirmed by the investigation of several U.S. reporters, including one from the *New York Times*. Peasants from the area

reported that the soldiers had shouted they were from the Atlacatl Battalion. Major Ricardo Murcia, executive officer of the Atlacatl Battalion, admitted that at least part of his unit was active in the area during that time, and told the *New York Times* that the guerrillas controlled the region. "There is no peaceful life there," he said. "There are no people living in this zone." Apparently, the many peasants that reporters found living in the area don't qualify as "people" to the Atlacatl Battalion. It has also been reported by a guerrilla radio station that the Atlacatl Battalion kidnapped some 50 people from various towns near San Antonio de la Cruz in Chalatenango on September 7, and that the bodies of 36 of these people appeared over the next three days; reporters who tried to investigate the claims were turned back by the

Salvadoran army.

The Atlacatl Battalion, "considered to be one of the most militarily effective army units" according to the *Times*, was the first unit of the Salvadoran army to be trained entirely by the U.S. Indeed, the entire unit was initially brought to the U.S. so that such training could be most complete. Virtually every large peasant massacre that has occurred in El Salvador since 1981 has been the work of a U.S.-trained unit, with the Atlacatl Battalion being the foremost practitioner. And, as we go to press, Tutela Legal has announced that it has begun investigations into the massacre of between 100-150 people near the Río Sumpul on August 30; as usual, only women, children and old people were killed. □

Ferraro's Warning Shot

Proving that two parties can play at the game of nuclear war "gaffes," Geraldine Ferraro last week let slip a few deadly words about a U.S. first nuclear strike.

Speaking at a high school in Independence, Missouri, Ferraro responded to a student who had asked what circumstances would be "appropriate" for the U.S. launching of a first strike against the Soviet Union. Ferraro said she would not discuss "the levels at which we would move for a first strike." The meaning of her answer was obviously that there were "levels" which would trigger the strike.

Later, just before a news conference, a campaign aide explained that it was all a mix-up in terms. Ferraro, he said, didn't really mean to speak of first strike — by which U.S. warplanners mean an all-out, surprise nuclear attack against the Soviet homeland and its allies — but was talking about first *use* — usually defined as use of battlefield nuclear weapons in the course of a war. Ferraro then tried to explain herself in basically the same terms.

But even the explanation didn't exactly make the candidate look like a pacifist, nor was it meant to, as Ferraro made clear by expounding on first use when the

conference got started: "First use would be if we were involved in Europe in a conventional war and at one point we thought we might send over a warning shot of some nature, of a nuclear missile, something like that."

And so, a well-placed "error" here, a breezy little definition there, and the Democrats have themselves a statement on nuclear war every bit as chilling as a Reagan Administration tract on nuclear warfighting and just as casual in style as a Reagan joke. Indeed, Alexander Haig's own infamous statements about nuclear warning shots was dropped with the same matter-of-fact air.

The Ferraro "gaffe" came at a time when the Mondale campaign had announced that it had decided to come out more heavily on what the party calls "strength issues" — more honestly, it might be simply termed warmongering. The "strength issues" included a call for better "military preparedness" in the defense budget, in essence more and stronger on the Democrats' theme of a leaner, meaner war machine. One David Aaron, described as a top advisor to the Mondale camp, put it squarely: "The

campaign will come down to whose finger is on the nuclear trigger." Not, mind you, to taking the finger *off* the trigger, still less, to putting down the gun, but to which candidate is most fitting to lead the imperialist state off to battle. (The Democrats also have a "second track" of calling for talks with the Soviets, but this is no contradiction to preparing for war, as Reagan himself, who is to meet with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko later this month, well understands.)

In light of the Democrats' even-more-explicit calls for war readiness, Ferraro's "gaffe" looks very much like a deliberate slip. At the press conference following the incident, Ferraro showed quite an excellent understanding of the terms the imperialists use to define their war plans. And well she should, since her party platform defines and upholds first use of nuclear weapons in Europe (while staying conspicuously silent on the policy of first strike). One can assume she has read the platform since she headed up the committee that wrote it.

There is a final and vicious piece of irony

in the affair. In explaining her remark, Ferraro actually echoes official U.S. policy by trumpeting the Americans' willingness to use nuclear weapons first on the battlefield level — this is an important part of the West's political and military preparations for war at the moment — but tries to make a great distinction between that and an all-out strategic surprise attack, a first strike. In real warfare, however, there will be no such great divide. Should the U.S. launch battlefield nuclear weapons against the Soviets, a nuclear exchange would almost certainly escalate very rapidly up to the level of strategic attack — and, in these conditions, of course, whichever side strikes first stands to gain a great edge over the other.

All in all, it was an affair up to the level of a Ronald Reagan in its bloodthirsty talk of war. Although Reagan remains at this time the most fitting representative for the imperialists, the Democrats are going quite a distance to show that, should the call come their way, theirs will also be a steady finger on the nuclear trigger. □



A Pageant Of Disgrace

As we go to press we are about to witness once again the thrills and chills of the crowning of the next Miss America. More accurately, it will probably be a crowning ceremony to this summer's orgy of tradition — family, god, and Ugly American patriotism — in which the Pageant is so firmly rooted. This will be especially so given the recent and highly suspicious demotion of Vanessa Williams, the first Black Miss America. The Pageant will no doubt soar to new heights in an effort to restore its "tainted image." So as sort of a preprogram guide, we thought we would aid our readers in taking a look at some of the traditions and values that bulged out during this latest affair.

As everyone knows, Williams was asked to resign for posing for pornography photographer Thomas Chiapel, who sold his pictures to *Penthouse* magazine. According to Albert Marks, the 70-plus-year-old Pageant head, such photos are inconsistent with the values of the Pageant: "The Pageant has been built on traditional American virtues. For six decades it celebrated the beauty of young American womanhood in a fashion that has created wholesome models for girls and young women throughout the country."

The man who heads up the Miss Texas pageant was a bit more frank in describing just how these wholesome models are created: "You can't win the Kentucky Derby with a jackass," said he, "We want to send a thoroughbred to Atlantic City. Who cares if she has silicone put in her? All we care about is the finished product." And not only are the contestants worked over physically for the proper all-American look, but they are grilled by judges for the right American attitudes on subjects like abortion, religion, and politics ("I wanted to be sure I knew the difference between the MX and Pershing missiles," one contestant told reporters this year). No wonder a great many people have called out the hypocrisy of the Pageant's dumping of Williams as merely a sugar-coated, white-washed version of *Penthouse*, selling women as objects...as marketing the social role of women. No wonder the Pageant has been the example of everything sexist and reactionary to so many, and the target of demonstrations since 1968.

Then there is the sanctimonious outrage of the likes of *Newsweek* magazine, which pontificated that "many lost sympathy for Williams after seeing the photos, depicting startlingly explicit lesbian sex scenes." (The magazine then goes on to quote one disillusioned supporter: Phyllis Schlafly!) This stuff is empty enough coming from Pageant officials and their ilk. It's hypocrisy is truly astounding coming from the major media, of which pornography is an integral and accepted part. Porn is definitely as American as apple pie. It grosses more than the legitimate film and record industries combined, a difficult distinction to make at times. Businessmen, academicians, and candidates for president are routinely interviewed in the pages of *Penthouse* and *Playboy*, never feeling compelled to explain their appearance in such a recognized medium to "the boys." Six out of ten of the top-selling newsstand magazines are "men's" magazines. And as for the violence so rampant in much of porn, this is hardly an aberration of the American scene, as witnessed by the skyrocketing rape, incest, battery and murder, sanctified and codified on every level of the bourgeois state. In fact for an accurate role model for women in this society, our blessed leaders might just as well award a crown on a certain pool table in a famous bar in New Bedford. America thrives on chronic degradation, hatred and murder of women — all of which is faithfully reported, spectacularized, and promoted in the media — and where is *Newsweek's* moral outrage over such doings in its own industry?

There is one point in which we would have to agree with Pageant officials and their apologists though. The Pageant in all its hypocritical, sexist, and — despite

recent tokenism — racist glory, is indeed an example of "traditional American virtue." And who would want to be a part of it! While it is very revealing to look at the how and why of Williams' fall, one must also ask at the same time, why should anyone "want in" on this sickening celebration of oppression and the society from which it issued?

A Political Affair

The Pageant stated its spirit was "inconsistent with calculated sexual exploitation" versus *Penthouse*. On the contrary. Not only is sexual exploitation the name of the game here, but the selection and promotion of Vanessa Williams as the first Black Miss America was a highly "calculated" affair. If there is at all an ounce of truth to the "outrage" these Pageantaries in the legitimate press are expressing, it is simply that they had originally planned a different use for Miss Williams than that taken by the turn of events.

Williams' crowning, along with the selection of Suzette Charles as the first runner-up, was a conscious and planned political act by the Pageant (and by others, no doubt). It was only in 1970 that Black contestants were allowed to enter in Atlantic City. Before then, according to *Jet* magazine, Black women had been used in the Pageant to portray slaves at the queen's feet during her crowning. The Pageant of 1980 was the first time a Black woman was a finalist. In fact, the 1983 choice of Williams and Suzette Charles as finalists doubled the number of Black women finalists ever — a grand total of four.

Williams did not enter the contest on her own, but was asked to do so by New York's Pageant officials. Starting in 1980, "debate" had begun on the possibility of a Black Miss America. (Also around that time other modernizing of the Pageant went on including bouncing there-she-is-Miss-America Bert Parks and

generally trying to appeal to a younger-than-Lawrence Welk's audience.) Debra Maffett, the outgoing queen who crowned Vanessa, had predicted prior to the Pageant that "it's going to be the year of the Black Miss America." (Given such a break with lily-white tradition, it is not hard to imagine there was a bit of discussion ahead of time so as no one would faint or cry inappropriately over such a selection.) The fact that an all-white panel of judges picked not only a Black winner

but also runner-up, was dismissed as coincidence, but the facts reflect that the Pageant made sure at every step that a Black Miss America was crowned last year.

After Vanessa's crowning, Marks summed up the years of maneuvering as follows, "I can assure you that this young lady got here on her merits...and to prove that you can be tops in America without regards to your color, as it should

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Does Guccione Work for the Pageant?

Bob Guccione, publisher of *Penthouse* magazine, announced prior to the Miss America Pageant that he had 350 color slides of a current contestant posing in the nude and that he would publish the photos if the contestant won.

The threat created tremendous interest for the Pageant which had seen its viewer ratings drop to their lowest point during the last two years. Reporters, who had already used the Vanessa Williams affair to fire a constant stream of demeaning questions at contestants about whether they had ever posed for nude or sexual photographs and would they consider it in the future, now filled the airwaves with the newest threat by Guccione. Pageant Director Albert Marks, hardly working to sweep the controversy under the rug, called a press conference on nationwide TV to respond to the *Penthouse* threat. The new scandal offered so many benefits to both sides that the question had to be posed: is Bob Guccione in the

pay of the Miss America Pageant?

The links between the two forms of woman-selling have often been noted. Pornographers like Guccione need the wholesome "good girl" images of the beauty pageant so that they can be degraded, defiled, and brutalized in his disgusting sheet. The pageants need porn as the evil by which they measure their own oppressive morality, just as in real life where rape is seen as the punishment for an uppity woman who "asked for it." Whether portrayed as virgin or whore, their point is to treat women as objects and keep them in their place.

There is no escaping that the Miss America Pageant is no less a meat market of women than is *Penthouse*. In the 1920s, contestants were judged by individual body parts, with "facial expression," "legs," and "torso" each worth ten points. Though the point system is gone, contestants are still encouraged to carefully adjust the cleavage and leg-

openings on their Jantzen supersuits.

Both Guccione and the Pageant are huge industries in the wholesaling of women's oppression. Guccione claims to have grossed \$4 million dollars in his spread on Vanessa Williams alone. The Pageant estimates that 80,000 women competed at some level of the show this year.

Guccione has also done a yeoman's job in helping out the Pageant's political profile this year. Every year since the late sixties contestants have had to defensively answer reporters asking the inevitable question: do you feel that you are being used as a sex object? This year the contestants are grilled as to whether they are fit to be objectified and marketed by the Pageant.

Well the Pageant must have Guccione on the take. How else does one explain such close connection between the All-American show and this wretched, woman-hating pornographer? □

The Vietnam Legacy and

Paul Reutershan firmly believed that the liver cancer killing him was brought on by exposure to Agent Orange, the main herbicide sprayed by the U.S. over Vietnam during the war. Shortly before he died in 1979, Reutershan initiated a lawsuit against the chemical companies who manufactured the herbicide. On May 7, nearly five years later, the case, by now involving tens of thousands of veterans in a massive class-action suit, was suddenly settled just hours before it was to go to trial. Then in August, the court conducted hearings on the settlement around the country.

According to the terms of the settlement, Dow Chemical, Monsanto, and

five other chemical companies will put \$180 million into a fund to be distributed among Vietnam veterans who are suffering from exposure to Agent Orange. Some have hailed the settlement; others have castigated it. Viewed on an economic level, the sum is indeed pitiful. But the settlement involves more than simply a "sellout." There were larger, and largely hidden, features which shaped the case and the settlement. Central to this is the legacy of the war in Vietnam.

The Case

The case had its more immediate roots in the conflict which many Vietnam veterans were experiencing with the Veterans Administration hospital system over treatment of certain diseases. One veteran, later found to have a form of bladder cancer rare except in men over the age of sixty, described in one study his initial encounters with the VA: "In the beginning, when I first started urinating blood, they insisted I was putting ketchup and water in the specimen jars. They said I was doing something to myself so I

could receive disability, and that the problem was all in my mind. They also scheduled me for an appointment with the staff psychiatrist because they said my illness was self-inflicted. I would get really upset with them and say, 'Look, when I start urinating blood I'll just fill a test tube and bring it in so you can see for yourself I'm not lying.' So I brought it in and the doctor looked at it and said, 'Oh sure, Ray, that's ketchup and water.' Or, 'C'mon, Ray, that's just ketchup and urine and you know it.'" (From the book *Waiting for An Army to Die, the Tragedy of Agent Orange*, by Fred A. Wilcox.)

The VA, charged with taking care of veterans, has persistently been in the front ranks of those who have denied that there was anything real to take care of. Initially they argued that there was no dioxin in the herbicides sprayed in Vietnam (Agent Orange is composed of equal parts of 2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T, which contained most of the dioxin), then that no American soldiers were exposed to it, and finally that even if they were, dioxin was not at all harmful to humans. Besides, they added, no vet could *prove* he was exposed, since the Pentagon had either destroyed or was withholding records of the spraying. Vets with chloracne (which looks like a severe, disfiguring acne) and other dioxin-related diseases tell of continually being sent to VA staff psychiatrists, given Valium and Thorazine, along with Rorschach and Minnesota Multiple Personality Inventory tests, since it was "all in their heads."

To the VA was added the voices of the Environmental Protection Agency and



The Agents of Destruction



other government and chemical company spokesmen. One chemical company representative proclaimed that dioxin was "as safe as aspirin." During the war itself, GIs had been issued purifying tablets to clean up any contamination in the water. It was like dropping the tablets in a vat of arsenic.

After Reutershan initiated the case, vets joined from all over, including New Zealand and Australia. Some had soft-tissue sarcomas, a rare cancer of the connecting tissues; a number had children born with birth defects including cleft palates, missing bones, missing genitals, and other rare abnormalities; other vets had chloracne, loss of memory or sexual drive and a number of other problems. Meanwhile evidence mounted from other sources about the effects of dioxin on human beings, including from chemical workers who had produced or handled the herbicides, from locations in the U.S. and other countries where 2, 4, 5-T had been heavily sprayed, and from various accidents involving the herbicide. Conspicuously absent from the mounting discussion of dioxin poisoning was anything from or about Vietnam and the Vietnamese.

The case gathered momentum, propelled by the tens of thousands of veterans numbering among the plaintiffs. The chemical companies mounted a massive defense, with a battery of several hundred lawyers and expenses reaching a million dollars a day in the weeks just before the trial date. As for the U.S. government as such, the judge had early on allowed it to exempt itself from the

suit under what it called the Feres Doctrine. This is an American legal theory that derives from the common-law doctrine of "sovereign immunity" — the king can do no wrong. And in this case, neither can Washington. The judge explained that it would harm national security and the integrity of military discipline to allow soldiers to sue the government for wartime injuries. Taking this logic a step further, the judge went on to say that if the government did in fact know about Agent Orange's toxicity, then Dow and the others would *also* be immune, sheltered by the government's sovereignty — because they would only have been following the wartime orders of the Pentagon.

Thus an extremely narrow legal framework was intentionally imposed on the proceedings — not only was it out of order to go after the government, but doing so would automatically result in losing the formal legal case by exempting the chemical companies.

But at the same time, interestingly, this framework also resulted in some intense infighting; Dow, for instance, even as it

continued to claim dioxin "safe as aspirin," was bringing forward evidence of government knowledge of dioxin toxicity right and left in an effort to shield itself behind the government's immunity. (It led to a doubly bizarre spectacle: on nationwide TV the head lawyer for Dow was waving around letters he said proved the Defense Department's knowledge of Dioxin's toxicity, while the veteran's lawyer insisted that the government had no real knowledge and that it was the chemical companies' responsibility.) Dow was also charging that a good number of the veterans' problems could be laid at the doorstep of the VA. A not

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The Vietnam Legacy and The Agents of Destruction

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inconsiderable amount of the exposure in the case resulted from such infighting, which was bound to increase once the trial got underway.

The Settlement

As the trial date neared, articles and stories abounded in the nationwide media. What was generally expected was a bitter trial that would go on for weeks, probably months, with a continual spotlight on the issue of dioxin poisoning, just how deadly and widespread it was, of whether the government and the chemical companies knew what they were doing even before they did it, and similar matters inherent in determining the outcome of the case. Talk from the vets' legal team was of sums of money in the billions of dollars. A poll of people in Brooklyn, where the case was to be tried, revealed that a good majority of people already thought that dioxin was a deadly poison and that the government had sprayed U.S. troops.

Though the settlement came as a surprise to many involved in the case, it had been especially hard fought for by the judge for months. Judge Weinstein brought extraordinary pressure to bear to achieve the settlement. He rushed the last months before trial at an unusual pace, refusing mutual pleas from both sides for postponements. The lawyers were brought together for near round-the-clock negotiations on the weekend preceding the trial date. Weinstein appointed a team of former government officials to mediate. He warned the chemical companies of the widespread public sympathy for the vets, as well as pointing out the dangers of their own mutual backstabbing. At the same time, Weinstein threatened the vets, saying that he might not even let the case go to jury because of the paucity of scientific evidence demonstrating dioxin's toxicity, and that even if he did and the vets won a huge settlement, it would almost surely be overturned on appeal. He concluded with

an appeal to settle the case "for the sake of patriotism."

The resulting agreement was widely hailed by government and media spokesmen. The chemical companies called it a "compassionate, expedient and productive means" of meeting the needs of all parties. The *New York Times* said that "It was the best feasible solution to an intractable problem" and added that "it avoids the venom and hazards of protracted litigation."

And this was exactly the point. The "venom and hazards" of fighting out the case in the national (and international) spotlight were effectively cut short. Not least of these "hazards" was avoiding major debate on the toxicity of dioxin itself. The press dutifully pointed out that the out-of-court settlement meant that the dangers of dioxin were not formally established in what has been by far the most important case in which it was litigated. Had the case been settled against the chemical companies, the door would have been opened all the wider for a host of attacks on the chemical industry and the government. Throughout the '60s and early '70s, over five million acres of land in the U.S. were sprayed each year with domestic 2, 4, 5-T, which contains dioxin, though at far lower levels than did that used in Vietnam. A recent survey revealed that dioxin was contained in the breast milk of half of all women in Texas, an area of particularly heavy spraying. Dioxin contamination has been recently brought to light in Newark, New Jersey; a ton of dioxin is buried in upstate New York (Hyde Park) by the same company responsible for Love Canal (the chairman of the parent corporation, Armand Hammer, is on the White House Cancer Panel); an entire town, Times Beach, Missouri, was contaminated; etc. In short, the country is sitting on a dioxin time bomb, at a time when cancer rates are already astronomical, with one in three Americans expected to die of cancer. This was certainly an issue which not only the chemical companies and

government had an interest in seeing kept out of a prolonged national debate.

But there was clearly a much more fundamental hazard involved — that of the legacy of the Vietnam War itself, and this on a number of levels. For one thing, it seems likely that in its efforts to take advantage of the sovereign immunity protection of the government, Dow and the other chemical companies would have succeeded in demonstrating that the government did in fact have solid knowledge of the toxicity of the dioxin in Agent Orange on people, as the limited number of documents released go a long way toward establishing. This does not paint a pretty picture of the way the empire treats its own army.

But more, the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam paints an exceptionally vivid picture of the barbaric nature of what is now called America's "noble endeavor." The court, and others, had gone to extremes to avoid such exposure. One of the first rulings was that Vietnamese could not be part of the lawsuit. They were the main victims, yet they are not even mentioned in the piles of documents entered in the case. Indeed, insofar as the case record was concerned, Agent Orange might have been sprayed anytime, anywhere. This framework was agreed to by the veterans' lawyers, who made an early decision not to even fight for using evidence from Vietnam — this would be "too controversial."

Vietnam

U.S. use of Agent Orange and other herbicides on Vietnam (Agents White, Blue, etc.) was the single largest use of chemicals in warfare ever. The American military sprayed almost 20 million gallons of herbicides on 11 million acres of Vietnamese territory. Up to one fifth of the land area of South Vietnam was left defoliated, with severe, perhaps permanent, damage to the land. Where tropical forests once stood, stripped

trunks of trees now rise from a barren earth, like a postnuclear landscape.

The U.S.'s stated purpose of the use of the herbicides was to strip away the jungle so as to deprive "the enemy" of food and of cover for ambushes. It was this — and on a truly massive scale — but it was much more. Originally introduced in 1962 at the urging of President Kennedy — a fact which has been overlooked as often as possible — Agent Orange as the most potent of the herbicides came into peak use in the mid-'60s as part of the strategic hamlet pacification program overseen by the CIA. In a situation where the U.S. and their puppet troops were unable to capture the fish, to use Mao's phrase, they determined to "dry up the sea" — in other words, to isolate the mass of peasants among whom the guerrillas operated at will. This was done through forcibly removing the peasants from their villages into virtual concentration camps, huge enclaves of poverty surrounded by barbed wire and troops. This was facilitated by the various herbicides which deprived food, not so much from the guerrillas as from the masses themselves.

But it was more than this. There is certainly plenty of evidence showing that not only were the effects known beforehand, but that they were a welcome and calculated product of the use of Agent Orange. Listen to the words of a veteran quoted in one study (he uses the term "Viet Cong" popularized by the U.S. command):

"We used to play tapes from loudspeakers basically saying that the VC are telling the people that herbicides are making them sick, that the spraying is responsible for their miscarriages and illnesses. And the tapes would say that the VC are lying, they just don't like the sprays because it makes it hard for them to hide, and that the VC are actually poisoning people's water so they will believe it's herbicides that are making them sick. I was young and gung-ho at the time; so I just believed the propaganda we were feeding

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What does it mean to join the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA?

Article 1

Any proletarian or any other person involved in the revolutionary struggle who accepts the Constitution of the Party, is committed to working actively in a Party organization, to carrying out the Party's decisions and to observing Party discipline and paying Party membership dues, may become a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

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Reporters Notebook

Agent Orange: A Political Spectrum

Throughout mid-August, Judge Weinstein held a series of hearings in several major cities allegedly to assess the attitude of veterans towards the Agent Orange settlement. The hearings gave some idea of what was avoided by keeping the case from going into trial, thus out of the public spotlight. *Newsday*, a New York newspaper (and one of the few papers devoting any real attention to the case), reported that veterans at the hearings spanned the political spectrum from left to right. (Among the former group were "two veterans who turned their backs on the flag and denounced the government.") This was true, and between the "extremes" lies an exceptionally broad, highly contradictory, volatile and embittered group. The settlement has shown that among these vets things are anything but settled. We attended the New York hearings, and a sample of the testimony gives a flavor of the mood.

"I was born in a small country in Central America — now it too is being torn by war. Let's call it El Salvador.

"I came to the United States when I was 19 years old. Three months later I got my notice from the Selective Service System. I went... I fought in Vietnam... I was proud to have served this country."

The speaker was, as he put it, "40 years old, going on 60." His right leg was going numb, his left already semiparalyzed. He had children with birth defects. At one point in his testimony he called America "the greatest nation on earth." A few moments later he described how in the

last year he had tried to kill himself two different times. He concluded his testimony, choking down the tears: "I came home to America, the land of the free. I thought I was going to live a dream. I married my sweetheart, for 18 years... but now I live in the darkness."

Another man took the podium. He was a factory worker from western Pennsylvania, a Black man and, like the Salvadoran, also a combat veteran. He had, he said, "been looking everywhere for answers." In fact, two years ago he had joined the American Legion and become a county organizer for them. A couple of months ago he had resigned: "they didn't have the answers either." He finished his testimony by saying "There's one last thing I want to leave you with, Judge. I pray to God every night to forgive me for the wrong I've done (in Vietnam) as a human being."

A Long Island mother had remarried a vet and had several children with severe birth defects — one son is legally blind, one has an enlarged spleen, a daughter has a 59-degree curve in the spine, and there are neurological impairments and liver abnormalities. She asked the judge how she should answer her sons when they ask why they should pledge their allegiance to the American flag.

(Some vets didn't make it to the courtroom. As was reported in a recent book, *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation*, "one vet who spoke to no one was Steven L. Anderson, found dead of a bullet wound in June of 1978 in his parents' home. A note was found: 'When I was in Vietnam, we came across a North Vietnamese soldier with a

man, a woman and a three- or four-year-old girl. We had to shoot them all. I can't get the little girl's face out of my mind. I hope that God will forgive me. I hope the people in this country who made millions of dollars off of the men, women and children who died in that war can't sleep at night. I can't — and I didn't make a cent...")

Some reactionaries showed up at the hearings. One vet framed his appeal for a much higher settlement in terms of giving "the greatest fighting man the world had ever seen" a better deal. Others said "we should have fought this case the way we should have fought in Vietnam." On hearing this, another vet remarked, "You didn't hear this kind of gung-ho shit over there. If someone said something like that, a fight broke out, or at least a heavy argument. Over there what you heard was 'hey man, keep your head down and maybe we'll get out of here alive.'"

Several vets denounced the settlement as "racist," and pointed out that not only did it exclude the Vietnamese, but even the Koreans and Filipinos who fought on the same side as the U.S. One surgical technician described how he was working in a medical unit when a pregnant Vietnamese woman came into camp in labor, having great difficulty. While the baby was being born the doctor reached to adjust the baby's head so it would come out properly, a routine move. As the vet stated, "But the neck was so small and so fragile that the baby's head came right off in his hands. This is the god's honest truth — I was there. And this happened many times in Vietnam, especially the areas of heavy spraying like the one I was in. This

woman had the rash (chloracne)."

Some veterans had been active in revolutionary politics in the past and seemed to have "appeared out of nowhere." One wore a T-shirt into court sporting a slogan popularized by Mao Tse-tung during the Cultural Revolution: "Women hold up half the sky." Another told us, "They're getting ready to use chemical warfare again. They've got the National Guard recruiting for a special chemical warfare unit just a few blocks from here, and then they get these guys to go into the army with special pay. They're going to use it against Nicaragua, or who knows where, but somewhere. They don't want us in there talking about Agent Orange, 'cause that was genocide."

One veteran stepped to the stand, turned his back to the judge, faced the people in the court and said: "What could be expected of the legal system that pardoned Nixon? A legal system which deems it just to pay more money for libel than for physical injury, which issues a judgment at Nuremberg but says nothing about the atrocious treatment of South African peoples, which wars against the peace-loving and justice-minded people of Nicaragua and Vietnam, and has a policy in Israel which is the same as the policy against the American Indians in the 1880s.

"This settlement is completely unjust. Like Nixon it admits no guilt, and no one is punished! What is there to expect from the same leadership and legal system that brought us Vietnam? ... after such a colossal slaughter of people, including their own people, we have two of these officials running for president." □

Legacy

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the people. We heard the Vietnamese complain. They talked about depressions, diarrhea, flus, colds, rashes, spontaneous abortions. But it was a war zone, and we just figured there were a lot of diseases that we had never heard of. Thinking back, I recall being struck by the number of children with cleft palates. And I suffered from the same things over and over, screaming pains in my joints, pains in my gut, blood in my urine, my feet going numb...."

Reports of the effects of Agent Orange on the Vietnamese were so widespread that they were even carried by the heavily censored South Vietnamese press. The U.S. government not only knew that such reports were not false, they knew of the workings of 2, 4, 5-T even earlier. Here is a chronology of what was known about 2, 4, 5-T, some of which has come out in the course of the case:

—In the mid-1930s there were severe outbreaks of chloracne among chemical plant employees working with chlorinated phenols, the source of dioxin.

—In 1955, a high official of the Diamond Shamrock Corp. wrote in a memo concerning the opening of a new plant in Newark, N.J. (the site of the recently uncovered dioxin deposits) that "we are going to have some liver deaths among the workers" there.

—In 1957, Boehringer, a West German chemical firm, wrote to the American producers of 2, 4, 5-T warning them of the danger of dioxin and giving them advice on how to get rid of dioxin in the process of making the 2, 4, 5-T. Dow studied the process and learned how to make 2, 4, 5-T without then detectable levels of dioxin, but concluded that it was too expensive.

—1959: Rivkin of the chemical company defense team says he has documents proving that the government was then considering use of 2, 4, 5-T as part of its chemical warfare program and was aware of the danger to humans.

—1965: Dow's chief toxicologist, V.K. Rowe, wrote of dioxin to the head of a

subsidiary: "This material is exceptionally toxic. It has a tremendous potential for producing chloracne and systematic injury." Two years later a Dow report stamped "confidential" stated that chloracne "is usually not debilitating but may prove fatal."

—1967: Robert McNamara, then Secretary of Defense, sent the Joint Chiefs of Staff a report which stated that the fear of Vietnamese peasants of the toxicity of Agent Orange "was founded partly on actual experience and not just on Vietcong propaganda." Dow's lawyers state that they have documents proving that McNamara and two science advisors to Johnson discussed the toxicity of Agent Orange to humans two years earlier.

Considering that the government refused to release its most sensitive documents because of "national security," the above chronology undoubtedly represents only the tip of the iceberg of actual knowledge and calculation on the part of the government in its use of 2, 4, 5-T in Vietnam, which continued until 1971! Moreover, the dioxin levels in the 2, 4, 5-T used in Vietnam were 15 to 15,000 times higher than those in the 2, 4, 5-T which the Environmental Protection Agency finally banned from domestic use in 1979 as too dangerous. In sum, the government used Agent Orange not only to defoliate jungles and destroy the food of the peasants, but to spread disease and terror in the countryside. General Westmoreland, head of U.S. command in Vietnam, noted with satisfaction that the Vietnamese guerrillas tended to avoid areas where Agent Orange had been sprayed for fear that it was poisonous.

Today, years later, the destruction in Vietnam remains. Vietnamese doctors, though operating with far fewer resources than needed to investigate the effects of Agent Orange, have noted serious increases in birth defects in areas affected by the spraying, including conjoined twins, facial clefts and deformities of the sense organs. Liver cancer has increased from the eighth most prevalent form of cancer in Vietnam to second; rates in areas unaffected by spraying have remained the same, while in those affected they have mushroomed. Much of the wildlife and soil of Vietnam is serious-

ly contaminated, though no one really knows just how far dioxin penetrates into the food chain.

And the USA accuses the Soviets of "yellow rain"!

Venom and Hazards

With all this in mind, we return to the *New York Times'* dire anxiety that the "venom and hazards of protracted litigation" be avoided. Consider what a lengthy trial would have looked like. Domestic and international attention would have been riveted on the legal proceedings and the steady stream of limping, cancer-ridden, scarred and angry veterans, their wives and their children with massive birth defects. Veterans' testimony would have been enhanced by bitter denunciations of the command which poisoned them. Aggravating the mood would have been the finger-pointing and infighting already so evident in the case. Other aspects of the "plight of the Vietnam veteran" could have surfaced. News features might have appeared citing ugly statistics: about one-fourth of combat veterans have been incarcerated since their return from Vietnam; it has been estimated that, in the New York City area alone, 30,000-45,000 Vietnam veterans are heroin addicts; unemployment among these veterans is nearly twice as high as that among nonvets; over 51,000 died of cancer between 1974 and 1980 — an astounding figure given their age. Such exposure would have been very difficult to contain, and this amidst the U.S. Army's continuing exhortations that potential enlistees "be all that you can be...."

Further, a trial would have given a high-profile forum to disclosures indicating dioxin as deadly. In the August hearings, one woman pleaded with the court to take the case to trial so the voluminous evidence about dioxin accumulated through the case "would not be lost." But this, of course, was part of the point.

And, despite labors to exorcise Vietnam from the case, a trial would most certainly have dredged up all manner of demons: as at no time in recent years, public attention would have been drawn to the wholesale destruction and slaughter by the U.S. in Vietnam. This was irrepressible during the August hearings even inside the courtroom and would

have been all the more so had the case gone to trial.

But the problem is that the "wounds" of Vietnam have been officially declared "healed." This is a "new era." The "awful days" of "national inferiority" have been laid to rest forever. Now we are "standing tall." So it is certainly no accident that the Agent Orange suit was also laid to rest just before "world-war-fever summer" — that is, just before the Olympics, and Democratic and Republican conventions.

A trial would have stirred broad interest and would have conjured up exposure, images, "venom" — the all-around legacy of Vietnam would have been "opened up." But this is a legacy born of the military defeat of the U.S. and revolutionary opposition to it — internationally, domestically and even within the ranks of America's own army. This is not "standing tall," and certainly not in synch with present opinion creation for America's next "noble endeavor" — World War 3. (We might also note that a trial over Agent Orange would have aroused distinctly nuclear comparisons — that of future genetic disorders, and that of the chemical and nuclear battlefield, where strategists count on, and plan for, large numbers of troops being wiped out by the weapons of their own side. And, it might have aroused other comparisons: after all, both the veterans and the Vietnamese were sprayed by the same USA.)

For all these reasons, a high-level decision was made to leave the Agent Orange can of worms sealed. No one seriously expects a reversal by the court, and it is likely that a good chunk of the funds from the settlement will go toward the establishment of a sort of "Agent Orange machine," a regiment of minor bureaucrats drawn from the ranks of the suit's leading elements, charged with "administering" the dough. This is about all the money's good for anyhow. There are over 120,000 Vietnam veterans listed on the Veteran's Administration Agent Orange Registry as having complained about herbicide contamination — all potential class members in the settlement. Divided into \$180 million, that leaves \$1,500 per complainant — not even enough to pay for the battery of exams needed to test for dioxin poisoning. □

The Day The Blue Angels Hit Chicagoland

To the Editor:

In my excitement over the Olympics being fought on home turf and addiction to the double-shot of democratic process played out on my 19" BW, I almost forgot the import of a recent yearly event in my hometown which I'd like to share. An event that drew hundreds of thousands and which, in a small way, made up for the fact that so few people tuned into the conventions. (There's more than one way to wash a brain.) Now, having regained my perspective, I'd like to share the story of:

The Day the Blue Angels Came to Town (and "strafed") Lakeshore Drive and surrounding vicinity)

Dateline: Chicago, July 1984

It was a Sunday like any other Sunday, except for the deafening sounds of the latest hi-tech jets and carriers as they acrobated through the skies to the delight of what was reported as upwards of a million people over a two-day period. These silver wonders cut through the air, to the left, to the right, soaring straight up, then racing downwards, finally swooping perilously close over the crowd, as if zooming in for the kill. Ah, the thrill of it all! Of

course, more the point behind these yearly "entertainments" — to show off the latest in napalm and nuclear-carrying machinery under the guise of military hi-tech and thrill skill. (Let us not forget: "Entertainment in the defense of liberty is no vice.") Sort of similar to spilling blood and guts, and exposing T&A over the TV and movie screens, anesthetizing and at the same time preparing youngsters and grown-ups alike for the real thing.

As if to illustrate this point, I was treated to a particularly succinct reaction the following afternoon on a local radio station. A woman newscaster and the local "funny guy" DJ were performing their usual back and forth banter. It went something like this:

DJ: Ah, so did you get a chance to see the Blue Angels yesterday?

NC: Oh yes, they flew right past my apartment on the twentieth floor. What a noise, I thought they were going to crash right into me! I waved but I don't think they saw me. But I sure would like to have met one of those 'guys in uniform' and showed them around town.

DJ: Yeah, sure, knowing you, you probably had a sign out the window, with your phone number on it. (laughter) The head of the squad probably came by

last night followed by the rest of his guys... probably *crashed right into you*, said "Hey boys, follow me, let's go," and they *all crashed into you* one after another. (More laughter)

Ah, but all this sexual arousal and the death-defying thrills were just one side of the Blue Angels story and the benefits they brought to this fair city....

I had occasion to ride by bicycle afterwards amid the carnage along the 3-mile stretch of Lakeshore where the crowds had gathered. It was just breaking up, the Drive was bumper to bumper with cars and doorstep to gutter with beer cans, bottles, containers, cigarette wrappers — several tons of good ole American garbage; and already, in its wake, could be seen the aluminum can pickers with their Hefty bags, taking advantage of this unexpected windfall.

A ways up the Drive on a side street I spotted a Laotian woman and her three children walking laboriously, hauling their take home. The woman pushed a shopping cart laden down with giant trash bags bulging from all sides. A boy and girl followed, with two smaller bags each. A third child, a girl of not more than 8 or 9, balanced a broomstick on her left shoulder with two full Hefty

bags tied at each end.

The next morning the Drive looked picked clean, only paper and bottles could be seen scattered along the sands and walk. But the seasoned pickers knew better. A young Asian girl was standing smack dab in the middle of a huge dumpster, sorting through the mounds of garbage for those precious cans hidden underneath catsup- and mustard-smeared wrappings, pounds of bottles, soiled napkins, empty soured milk cartons, and whatever vermin made their home there.

... And so the Blue Angels came and went, taking their simulated-war fun with them. And can-pickers remained, people driven from their homelands where the Blue Angels play for keeps; homelands where these same people had once made shelters out of crashed and destroyed USA fuselage. Now they found themselves in the belly of the market economy, daily trading in their pickings for some of that green stuff to put food on the table and pay the rent. Now, what was going through *their* minds, I wondered?

—A reader

Contribute to the Prisoners Revolutionary Literature Fund



The Revolutionary Communist Party receives many letters and requests for literature from prisoners in the hell-hole torture chambers from Attica to San Quentin. There are thousands more brothers and sisters behind bars who have refused to be beaten down and corrupted in the dungeons of the capitalist class and who thirst for and need the *Revolutionary Worker* and other revolutionary literature. To help make possible getting the Voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party as well as other Party literature and books on Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought behind the prison walls, the *Revolutionary Worker* has established a special fund. Contributions should be sent to:

Prisoners Revolutionary Literature Fund
Box 3486, Merchandise Mart
Chicago, IL 60654

Shine the Light of Revolution Behind the Prison Walls

Dear Bro/Sis,

As Salaam Aliakum, first I wish to let you know that I highly appreciate the reading material you have sent to me. Also the *Revolutionary Worker* newspaper was on tac, 'cause there were some events taking place that I wasn't even aware of: such as the case involving the "San Francisco Fog" dating back to July 20, 1984. As the title says, the convention story they wouldn't tell; I wasn't aware of this even taking place. And I want to thank you for providing me with this information and that way I can keep up with the current events that's going on around the world.

I intend to read and share the literature you have sent to me as I do all of the knowledge I acquire. It also would be highly appreciated if I can receive even some material on social change within the Revolutionary Party. So that I may have a perspective on all levels. Well Bro/Sis until the next time stay strong, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be with you all.

Huntingdon, PA

P.S. The literature was highly appreciated and seems to be very encouraging, considering they came on my Birthday. I feel as though they were a very well needed Gift. Thank you.

8/23/84

Dear RCP:

I thank you for your coverage of recent events such as the dinosaur olympics, the fund raising democratic convention and Ronnie's jokes on nuclear annihilation (real funny, huh?). I also thank you for the books you sent on the Social-Imperialist government of the U.S.S.R. You were correct. They are not worth the support of millions of proletarians in the world who want equality and justice, not peace. In the words of Gandhi, "Everyman has an equal right to the necessities of life even as the birds and beasts have."

We live in dangerous times, with war fever running high. We must call upon the working class to oppose all aspects of the WW III preparations throughout the world. It is indeed a big job, but anything less has the most terrible consequences. Thank you for your continued support against the beasts in power.

Your comrade
Texas

Dear *Revolutionary Worker*:

I inmate XX, am presently incarcerated at the XX Correctional Center, and we don't have funds for subscriptions for *Revolutionary Workers*. I must say that I'm very interested in your paper, and I would like to be put on your mailing list. And if at any time afterwards, I do receive any money, I will make a contribution too for the cause. R.W., if it is at all possible, I would like to also receive Part II of Bob Avakian's "To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees."

The first part was very enlightening and it really cleared up a lot of my false hopes about the American dream. I would really appreciate receiving your newspaper because I know it can be enlightening for many more inmates besides myself.

Sincerely yours,
Alabama

Dear Sirs:

I am incarcerated, and I have no funds, but, I would like to have a copy of the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* in Arabic; if you can afford to send me a copy please do. I will appreciate it intensely! I hope that this appeal has found you constant in the struggle against the ignorance of capitalism!

Yours in the struggle,
Tamal

P.S. Please also send *Revolution* No. 41-46 — Thanks. Also please let me know when *America in Decline* will be available for the P.R.L.F. of the RCP. Hope you will respond soon.

P.P.S. I recently spoke with the director of the Prison Atheist League, whose primary concern is how religion is used to exploit the lower class and illiterate masses, by false promises of a pie in the sky in exchange for blind obedience to the priestly hierarchy. It was Marx who stated "Religion is the opiate of the masses." Certainly this is true today, as the rise of the "religious right" in the U.S. proves. Please write him as you will find him a worthy comrade in the struggle for human justice.

South Africa

“Once The Sparks Fly...”

The uprisings sweeping over dozens of black townships continued for a second week in South Africa (called Azania by revolutionary forces there). New outbreaks have been reported almost daily — both in the townships around Johannesburg, including fresh eruptions in Soweto, as well as in other areas of the country. By the end of last week more than 150,000 black students were boycotting schools from the primary school level up to the university. In Johannesburg and Pretoria the government ordered all black schools closed a week prior to the upcoming official holiday of September 14 (the day of P. W. Botha's inauguration as president of South Africa under its new constitution). According to the South African regime, these schools had to be shut down “in light of the events” and whether or not they will reopen in October remains questionable.

Over the last week, the apartheid regime has made a number of arrogant yet feeble attempts to portray itself as having the situation well under control. Yet each attempt does more to expose just how precarious things really are. On September 6 a contingent of government cabinet ministers, including the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Internal Affairs (in charge of the police), toured Sharpeville and Sebokeng — two of the townships where the heaviest rebellions have occurred so far. The government officials, escorted by army helicopters and armored personnel carriers, literally sped through Sharpeville in a bus cased in iron grilles. When they reached Sebokeng, hundreds of Azanians blocked the highway, forcing the officials to beat a hasty retreat back into a police command base in a nearby white town.

The government has also bent every effort to contain the upsurge itself and its agitational effects. South African TV coverage of the rebellions has been minimal. Journalists have been kept out of many of the townships by the police. According to the *Rand Daily Mail*, a Johannesburg daily newspaper, hospitals in the areas affected have been given police orders not to reveal the number of people treated for injuries over the last

two weeks. (Hence the official figure of only 50 Azanians injured throughout the entire course of the rebellions.)

A number of Azanian children have been murdered by the South African police over the last two weeks. Some of these children were only between six and nine years old. One child was shot while playing in his front yard. Another was with some friends inside a house. When the youngster stepped to a window to see who was being shot at outside, police sitting on top of a van and armed with rifles shot the child in the head. Outrage over these murders has reverberated throughout Azania. For its part, the South African government has played at shedding some tears over the murder of young children — partly to head off anger and partly to undercut “international criticism.” The apartheid government even announced that an official inquiry into the police killing of children would be conducted. In fact, the *London Times* reported that the South African ruling class recently announced that not only would there be no “public inquiry” allowed, but also that the results of the official inquiry were definitely not going to be made public either.

In addition, the apartheid regime has also employed its version of the “carrot and stick” theme in an effort to quell the rebellions. On the one hand, they have been more than willing to negotiate. In Sharpeville they have even consented to talk with representatives chosen from the ranks of about 3,000 Azanians who were engaged in a standoff with South African police and army on the outskirts of the township. After eight hours of talking an unofficial announcement was made that the proposed rent hikes in the township had “been scrapped.” Yet the very next day the government officially announced that only negotiations with the “elected” town council would be recognized.

The South African government does have a bit of a problem here. While they may have to grant some minor concessions in efforts to undermine the rebellions, they have to also very staunchly “hold the line.” Under the apartheid regime the Azanian people have been

assigned to specific townships — based on government racial categories — in which they must live. In order to legitimize this set up — especially among the black Azanians who are not recognized as citizens of South Africa — the government has put into effect the facade of home rule in the black townships. Elections were held for a “town council,” nominally “independent” of the South African state and responsible for the total administration of the township. These town councils have been overwhelmingly rejected by the Azanian people as lackeys of the apartheid regime (even the elections for the town councils consistently brought out only 10% of all those eligible to vote in every black township). In a sense, these town councils — like their counterparts in the bantustan “homeland” — are the representatives of the South African state among black Azanians. For the South African government to negotiate with any force in the township other than the councils would definitely contribute to the complete breakdown of local authority. Of course, one other problem remains to be solved before the government can negotiate with these forces. Since these councils have been among the main targets of the rebellions, many of the council members have dropped out of sight — some killed in the uprising while others have simply resigned and run for their lives.

On the other hand, the South African ruling class has also unleashed one of the heaviest waves of repression in Azania for quite some time. On September 7, all public meetings were banned. This is specifically aimed against rallies called by the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) to mark the seventh anniversary of the assassination of Steve Biko — a leader of the Black Consciousness Movement murdered in jail by the police. But the ban also prohibited any meetings to discuss the deaths and arrests that occurred during the first week of uprisings. Funerals, scheduled for last weekend, were placed under very heavy restrictions. According to the government, funerals for those killed during the week could only be held if there were no mar-

ches, no political speeches, no banners with slogans, no songs and no students attempting to carry the coffin through the streets. In practically every township where funerals were held last weekend the government restrictions were openly defied with politically charged funerals. After a number of funerals, clashes broke out with the police and in Katlehong township the house of the chairman of the town council was burnt to the ground. In Babeytown 3,000 people turned out for a funeral which began with a rally in an athletic field complete with huge banners and songs. Following the rally four coffins were carried shoulder high in a spirited march throughout the town. In this case, the South African police could only hover on the edge of town issuing empty threats: “They can do what they like as long as they keep to themselves. But if they start causing disruptions in the township, end of story.”

By September 11 the situation was such that Law and Order Minister Louis LeGrange issued a ban on all “indoor meetings” critical of the government until midnight September 30. The ban also forbids anyone in a room to make any comment critical of the government. This order covers 21 cities and towns including Johannesburg, Pretoria and all of the black townships around them. This ban, too, was openly defied. In Soweto alone, thirteen different clashes with the police erupted on September 12, including one during a memorial to Steve Biko.

The South African ruling class has often been referred to as a “laager” government and country — after the Afrikaner word meaning fortress. These last two weeks of uprisings, however, have once again shown that this fortress is far from impregnable. Adding to the significance of these rebellions is the fact that they broke out in the Transvaal area — both the industrial heartland of Azania and an area which not so long ago the Afrikaners viewed as a major stronghold of their regime.

For the immediate future, the fortress is more and more taking on the appearance of a tinderbox. There are more explosive contradictions in Azania today. The drought which has affected large areas of South Africa — especially in the bantustan “homelands” — is exacerbating many of the contradictions in the rural areas and there have recently been reports in the South African press of disturbances among the Azanians forced into the prison camp-like “homelands.” Beyond this, black gold miners are scheduled to go out on strike on September 17. Given the situation confronting the South African ruling class today — both the atmosphere generated by the recent rebellions and the fact that South Africa is in the grips of its worst economic crisis since 1930 (with gold as the mainstay of the economy) — this strike is sure to generate more than a little trouble for the apartheid regime. And finally, the government celebrations scheduled for the inauguration of Botha as president of South Africa on September 14 may very well provide a tempting focus for further rebellions.

Summing up the situation in South Africa last week a British magazine, *The Economist*, declared: “But once the sparks fly it is never easy to predict where they may fall next.” Doubtlessly, this sentiment is presently weighing heavily on the minds of both the apartheid regime in South Africa and its American and European parents. □



The INS River Murders

Continued from page 4

an apparent bid to elude pursuing officers. Each time he got near shore, however, the young man spotted a Border Patrol officer and swam back toward the middle of the creek, Jensen said. The officers then lost sight of the man, but apparently he was swept about a quarter of a mile downstream toward the Santa Clara River. Officers found him on a sandbar near the point where Santa Paula Creek joins the river. . . . Officers said they believed the young man tired and drowned fairly quickly.”

In an article not long after Pedro Vargas' death, the same Ventura County newspaper said that he was “just one in a million” Mexicans coming across the border; that kind of brutal and calloused attitude has long been required and cultivated by the ruling class toward the agricultural proletariat. The drowning of Pedro Vargas, and the drownings of the other fieldworkers in California, are simply expressions of the conditions of existence the system demands for agricultural labor. The aim of the INS in the fields is not to drive out “illegal” labor. That labor is essential. What the INS aims to do instead is attempt to drive the workers into submission, to institute

and enforce a constant tension and uncertainty in people's minds, to create a situation where people are able to look up from the crops only to see if the Migra is charging in.

The most oppressed and exploited of the fieldworkers in California are made up largely of youth, who make the dangerous crossing from Mexico and who often work the hardest and lowest paying jobs, often for far less than the minimum wage. Keeping these people “caught between the Border Patrol and the river” is exactly where the system wants them — it is “their fault” if they chose not to submit, and drown.

One sign of just how deliberate and murderous these drownings really are is the fact that, for a period of years stretching until 1982, no INS-caused drownings were reported. Then suddenly there were six in less than a year starting around the beginning of 1982 — the same period that brought a big push for passage of the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill, and the nationwide “Operation Jobs” roundups. In that period, people were drowned in Ventura County, in the Central Valley, and in fields near Sacramento.

The drownings have continued, espe-

cially in the Central Valley, the latest of them on May 31, 1984, followed by a new and cynical INS propaganda twist. The Border Patrol held a press conference after the drowning to announce that agents were being trained in lifesaving techniques. When reporters' questions got into the drowning, the INS regional commissioner claimed that the agents at the scene had taken off their clothes and dived into the water to save the drowning man, a Mr. Fuentes-Onate, but they couldn't quite do it. The official INS report on the “incident” does mention that other workers arrested in the raid had a different story to tell. No matter.

The report went on: “Fuentes-Onate chose to risk his life rather than to return to the safety of shore. When the . . . officers went into the water, they chose to risk their lives because of the high value they placed on the life of Fuentes-Onate. I recommend that the officers . . . be presented with the U.S. Attorney General's award for heroic and humane acts.” □

24 August 1984 70p 1R £1.16

New Statesman

The Belgrano Papers

Thatcher's plan for total war



1. Following evidence from Mr Francis Fym on General Belgrano, the Foreign Affairs Committee to provide a note listing the changes made to the during operation ~~Copy date~~. I attach copies of ~~cripts of the evidence~~ and the note

form of our response with
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PLUS: Smack and sensationalism • Blackpool: the last resort • Miners and the TUC • Edinburgh Festival • NS poetry award

Finally, the details of the British plan to nuke Cordoba raises some chilling new questions, which cannot be definitively answered at present, but which deserve consideration. What was the nature of the behind-the-scenes maneuvering by the U.S. and Soviets during the war and how sharp did it become? Although Argentina was not by any stretch of the imagination a Soviet proxy in this war, it is known that the Soviet bloc was eager to exploit any openings in this intra-bloc conflict, and was certainly interested in promoting defeat for Britain with all the danger that that would pose for NATO. Accounts of the war not only document that the Soviet bloc was offering multifaceted support to the Argentine junta, but also that the Galtieri government apparently attempted to use such offers as leverage in its own desperate maneuvering. Haig quotes Galtieri as saying that, "I cannot fail to express to you that I have received offers of aircraft, pilots and armaments from countries not of the West." However, Haig reports that in the second week of May, only days after the

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A Pageant Of Disgrace

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be." Sure. Remember only that its the year of Black "historic firsts," like the first Black astronaut and Jesse Jackson.

Patriotic Womanhood

These are not just any times to draw Blacks into "identifying" with America. It is prewar time. And in this light it is interesting to note one other time Miss America was not thoroughly WASP. Crowned in September 1944, reigning through 1945, the year World War 2 ended, was Bess Meyerson, the first and, to our knowledge, only Jewish Miss America. Obviously the "healthy role model" here was of America as "a force for democracy" and "cultural pluralism" versus those "barbaric Germans." Meyerson was a symbol to be raised as a battle-standard for those at home, and at least as important, to be seen internationally. Today, for similar reasons, the imperialists stage a search for Black role models: patriotic, and, in the case of women, "virtuous."

Right there was the catch for Williams. "We cannot allow American womanhood to be besmirched," proclaimed the Pageant. And from the standpoint of the necessities of imperialism, an image "besmirched" is not an idle issue or simply *pointless* hypocrisy. Whether it's Bess Meyerson or the 1960s Miss America, cheerleading tours of Vietnam, images of womanhood are an important cog in the wheel of wars and empires. Miss America is to personify the "unstained patriotic American womanhood" Our Boys will be fighting for — the Living Bra for the dead soldier. (And let's hear it for democracy that now Blacks can have equal opportunity pin-ups for the trenches.) War is, after all, when virtuous womanhood is defiled and threatened by "the other side" and saved by your own. And this is where the "tainting" of Miss America becomes, therefore, a problem.

Check out this classic piece of World War I propaganda referring to the Germans: "Many Americans have looked with horror upon the photograph of the mutilated bodies of women. Sacred forever the bosom of his mother and not less sacred the bosom of every woman. Not content with mutilating the bodies of Allied officers, of Belgian boys, they lifted the knife upon the loveliness of woman...."

Anyone who would dismiss this as turn-of-the-century Victorianism obviously hasn't listened to Ronald Reagan or heard Fritz promise to never touch Gerry in public. The battle is on for such shit. This is after all an outmoded system preparing for a fix of war and such is its "poetry."

On an international stage, choosing a Black Miss America not only is meant to cover over the real and continuing fact of national oppression, but is intended as grist for the mill of every neocolonial bourgeois. And it is a slap in the face to the people of the world, a statement that "see, the oppressed in this country are representing America, now, you won't see any revolutions here." But there are millions of Black women who will have a surprise for these strutting imperialists in the future.

A few things need to be said here about Williams herself. On the one hand, she is not a babe in the woods. Nor was she known for the most advanced views on the conditions of Black people or of women; frankly, she played the role that was expected of her. Yet, despite this rather willing service, Williams' conduct of her career, her "integrity and honesty" and so forth were dragged through the mud of the major media and made the whole point of the incident. However, the real indictment lies elsewhere. In fact, the avenues Williams chose to get ahead in the busy marketplace of women, from Chiapel's studio to Atlantic City, are constantly offered and beckon to young women. At the top there is the glitter of the glamour roles open to some women, but even here the bottom line is being meat in a man's market, to be used and abused at others' discretion...and especially so for Williams who found herself in a pool with some

Warming up for World War II: a 1933 Norman Rockwell titled "On Top of the World" (below) and Air Force fuselage painting circa 1930.



A British Hiroshima

Continued from page 14

British decision to deploy their Polaris nuclear missile, the U.S. sent a secret mission to Buenos Aires "for a final talk with the junta." The mission, according to Haig, "eliminated any possibility that the desperate leaders of Argentina would collaborate in their last moment with the Soviet Union."

Did the fielding of the nuclear missile figure in the message conveyed by the U.S. in its secret mission to Buenos Aires? Did the U.S. flaunt its bloc's nuclear muscle to counter the influence of the rival nuclear power? While such a threat is most certainly not the only channel by which the U.S. could muscle Argentina into line, it is surely one possibility. And even the distinct possibility of such behind-the-scenes nuclear jockeying calls for a good hard second look at this war, at similar crises which will erupt in the near future, and at the global showdown now rapidly developing. What stands out is that the intensity of bloc rivalry in the world today is at such a high level that it repeatedly and dangerously asserts itself in conflicts big and small and of every type. It is a lesson in what time it is — a time when little things could become big things very quickly. □

CORRECTION

In last week's *RW* (No. 271, September 7, 1984) there appear a couple of errors.

In the article "Report From Peru," on page 8, in the first column, the fourth sentence of the fourth paragraph should read: And there were also celebrations among the ranks of the Party, in the PGA, the People's Committees, the People's Schools and especially in the concentration camps where the prisoners maintain as always their unbending revolutionary spirit.

In the article on page 12, "Warfighting: Turning Points in U.S. Strategy," there are two errors. The first is a missing footnote number and appears in the last paragraph of the subsection "1958-1972...." The second sentence of that paragraph should end: ... the U.S.-led bloc in the 1960s.²⁶

The second error appears in footnote 24, on page 14. The publishers information should read: Brookings Institution.

unusually large piranah.

Questions

It is the highly political nature of her ascendance that causes such a foul odor to emanate from her fall. Consider the following:

—*Penthouse* released its September issue with the photos two months early. The standard story is that this was done to avoid any legal suits which might have blocked its lucrative appearance. But this isn't in contradiction to making sure the story broke prior to the Pageant, also slated for September. Since officials couldn't be sure of Vanessa's response — whether or not she would fight it — breaking the story prior to the Pageant would more likely ensure she was actually *knocked down* and not just suffer a scandal at showtime or after. The timing has ensured that a lesson has been administered to Williams and those who will follow her.

—Pageant officials met with Williams after she learned of the impending publication via an anonymous phone call. At the meeting on Tuesday, July 17, officials assured Williams that things would work out. ("There are plenty of girls who have done worse," Williams quotes official Marks as telling her, "Don't worry dear, it'll all blow over. Would you like a valium or something?") Three days later, Williams was informed not in person but via the press and her attorneys that the officials were calling for her resignation.

—The Pageant's explanation of the

turnabout is that officials had not actually seen the photos and were shocked by them. One has got to wonder what else, or who else, intervened between Tuesday and Friday. It is hard to believe that the politics that figured so prominently in choosing Williams did not also come into play in dumping her out the door.

—Suzette Charles, the first runner-up was immediately played up to "uplift the Pageant" once again. Charles tried, by her attitude and statements, not to take sides, but objectively it still amounted to the age-old routine: the "good" Black woman versus Williams.

—All this transpired exactly as Jesse Jackson delivered his humble apologies to the Democratic Party on nationwide TV. (Williams' meeting with Pageant officials took place the day of this speech.) And now, many wondered, what were they going to do to the Black astronaut?

Certainly there is much that hasn't and may never come to light from this affair. But the political impact is quite clear. Jackson delivered his constituency straight into the arms of the imperialist system, as planned. Vanessa Williams just got hit over the head by it. In neither instance is it the case that Black role models are no longer wanted. But what the incidents do reveal is exactly whose game this really is. The shots on getting into this system, even for the privileged among oppressed peoples, will be called by white-imperialist America. The proper position for entry "in" has been well-defined by these events: *crawl*. □

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