THE TEXAS OBSERVER

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Living History: Emma Tenayuca Tells Her Story

(Story Page 7)

San Antonio Light photo. (Institute of Texan Cultures)

Emma Tenayuca leads a 1937 Workers Alliance demonstration on the steps of San Antonio's City Hall. "This demonstration was a protest against cuts in WPA, but what had once been a struggle for jobs had become a mass movement for jobs, against deportation, against discrimination, for justice."

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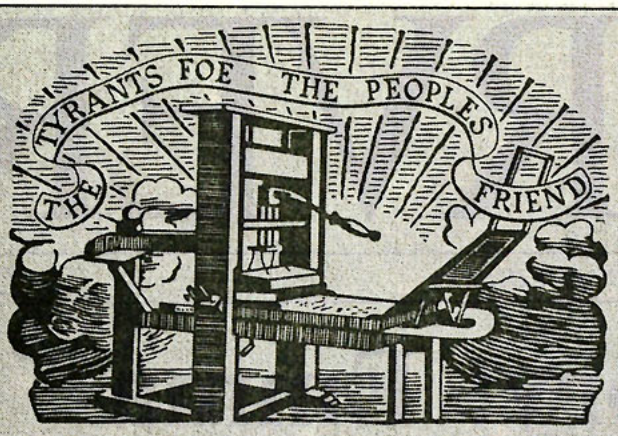

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◇ DIALOGUE ◇

Rebuilders Vindicated

It is usually easier to shake a hungry dog loose from a bone than to shake Ronnie Dugger loose from an important point in an argument. I was surprised, consequently, when he gratuitously conceded an important point which the *Observer* has defended in the past.

I refer to the strategy, advocated in the 1960s by the Democratic Rebuilding Committee, of liberal Democrats voting for Republicans — such as John Tower for the Senate and George Bush for Congress — when their conservative Democratic opponents were at least as conservative as they were.

Dugger is not alone among liberals who, from the vantage point of 1983, believe that their strategy at the time was mistaken, even if well-intentioned and based on plausible assumptions.

Yet the history of the past two decades in Texas has borne out the wisdom of the Rebuilding Committee. We now have in Texas genuine two-party competition in presidential nominating politics, in primaries for statewide office, and in general elections for president, statewide officeholders, and increasingly, for lesser officeholders as well.

The results of the 1982 elections demonstrate what is possible, under favorable conditions, for liberals in a two-party setting. They not only have a much better chance of choosing progressive Democratic nominees, but of electing them in November.

Of course, both Republicans and liberals have worked for a competitive two-party system in Texas, operating from opposite premises: each group has believed that its forces will be able to mobilize a winning coalition once the electorate is presented with "a choice, not an echo." It remains to be seen which of these premises is correct, over the long haul. Was 1978 or 1982 the typical election year?

But in any case, the liberals and their moderate allies now control the Democratic party machinery, and they are in a better position to field progressive and moderate nominees than ever before. If they can overcome the low voter turnout that has traditionally plagued their "natural constituency," the new Democratic party in Texas has an excellent chance to neutralize the impact of the recent Republican surge.

This turn of events is partly the result of the Rebuilding Committee and partly the result of the McGovern-Fraser reforms, which liberal "rebuilders" had a hand in shaping and implementing.

True, it would have been nice if John Tower had not proved to be so durable a senator. But every advance has its cost. Twenty-three years of Tower is well worth the changes that have occurred, especially when one remembers that if it had not been he in that office, it would have been a crony of the Shivers-Connally machine.

Chandler Davidson, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251.

Senate committee created

Getting Food to Hungry Texans

By Zy Weinberg

Austin

In the brush of the Rio Grande Valley, a young boy forages for "nopalitos," cactus leaves that will be the only food his family eats that day.

An elderly East Texas woman tries to stretch a single home-delivered meal from Friday through the weekend because she has no other source of food.

A South Texas mother puts her children to bed without supper because she has nothing in the house to feed them.

TO THESE TEXANS and millions of others, hunger is an acute and constant problem.

The Texas Legislature took a first tentative step toward confronting the reality of hunger in the state when, on August 31, Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby named a special committee of the Texas Senate to study the problem. The four-member Interim Committee on Hunger and Nutrition in Texas plans a year-long investigation, which will include hearings on hunger around the state. The committee's findings, along with recommendations for legislative action, will be presented to the 69th Legislature that convenes in January 1985.

A host of topics awaits the committee. Millions of low-income Texans are in need of dietary assistance, but only a small percentage of them are getting it through a confusing panoply of local, state and federal programs. In spite of recent growth, the food stamp program still reaches barely 30% of those Texans in need. The distribution of government surplus commodities, which provides only limited items of dubious nutritional value, has been fraught with problems in Texas. The rapidly developing network of food banks in the state has increased food supplies to the needy somewhat, but its only begun to scratch the surface. And local mechanisms to develop food resources, particularly for the poor, are rare or non-existent.

"I don't think anybody in Texas wants people to go hungry," state Senator Hugh Parmer, who was appointed to chair the committee, noted recently. "One of my concerns is that the cuts in federal programs have had more serious effects than expected." Indeed, Texas experienced a nearly $80 million loss in federal food and nutrition aid in 1982 alone, according to figures compiled by the Anti-hunger Coalition of Texas (ACT). Parmer said two major purposes of the committee will be "to measure the impact of cuts from the federal level," and to examine the nature and extent of hunger in Texas.

Named to the committee along with Parmer, a Fort Worth Democrat, are state Senators Hector Uribe (D-Brownsville), Craig Washington (D-Houston), and John Whitmire (D-Houston). Parmer sponsored a resolution this spring to create a joint food and nutrition committee of the House and Senate, but it did not pass during the legislature's regular session. He was able to get the hunger committee established when the Senate Administration Committee, of which Parmer and Whitmire are members, approved on Aug. 25 a budget for an interim board.

A New Era in the Legislature

The hunger panel will actually be a special subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Resources, headed by Chet Brooks (D-Pasadena), the committee responsible for initiating much of the human services legislation put in place in Texas in recent years. The subcommittee led by Parmer may be the beginning of some positive state action to help provide more food and food resources for the state's poor. Parmer believes that "if the cuts in federal programs in Washington have resulted in a significant number of Texans not getting enough to eat, then the Legislature and State of Texas are morally obligated to fill that gap." Historically, Texas has been less than enthusiastic about spending money on food for its citizens.

Photo by Alan Pogue

State Senator Hugh Parmer

Sen. Uribe agrees that the situation may be changing. "I see the dawning of a new era in the Texas legislature," he said. "Five years ago, the Texas legislature was a very conservative group. After redistricting, that's not the case anymore. The legislature is no longer controlled by conservative, rural interests. If anything it is controlled now by urban, moderate interests. I think there's a great deal more sensitivity . . . toward many of these social service issues. I am hoping that the Texas legislature will assume its responsibility in this area."

The fulfillment of Sen. Uribe's hopes, however, also depends on the House of Representatives, which, in an unusual turnabout this session, has dealt with social service issues more conservatively than the Senate. Although the House has offered cooperation with the Senate study, it will basically be a one-chamber endeavor. House Speaker Gib Lewis' desire to trim legislative expenses forestalled the establishment of a number of joint committees proposed during the session.

Zy Weinberg is director of the non-profit Anti-hunger Coalition of Texas.

Representatives Mary Polk (D-El Paso) and Al Price (D-Beaumont) carried a House bill to set up a joint hunger committee this spring; Lewis made sure it stayed in Calendars Committee limbo. Polk, as Human Services Chair, could have requested that her committee study hunger during the interim, but did not do so. Her committee, with only one staffer, is already overburdened with nine topics to cover between sessions, ranging from child-care needs and telecommunication devices for the deaf to nursing-home reform and chelation therapy.

State Slant May Differ

Parmer initially asked for the subcommittee to be formed to supplement the work of a federal panel investigating hunger with a focus on Texas. The composition of the Texas committee contrasts sharply with the group named by President Reagan. Reagan's Task Force on Food Assistance (the president has studiously avoided using the word "hunger" in his comments about the task force and its charge) is made up of conservative Republicans, the majority of whom are white males. The interim committee in Texas is one-half minorities, liberal, and Democratic. The minority members of the Texas group represent two of the poorest areas of the state and the nation; most of the national task force are middle-class or above.

The presidential task force is headed by James Clayburn LaForce, dean of the graduate school of management at the University of California at Los Angeles and active in conservative politics. Other taskforce members, who are known for their efforts to cut away at federal food programs, include Dr. George Graham of Johns Hopkins University; Kenneth Clarkson, a former Reagan administration budget official, now an economist at the University of Miami; and J. P. Bolduc, a corporate officer of W. R. Grace and Company.

The presidential panel will do limited research and expects to have its report out by late December. The hunger committee in Texas, on the other hand, will conduct field investigations, research existing literature, and try to assess the magnitude and causes of the problem. Parmer agrees with other Democratic critics that Reagan's task force may be "slanted so as to prejudge its results in the direction of minimizing the problem. We're hopefully not going to do that in Texas," he said. "We're going to try and take a truly objective approach."

The hunger and nutrition committee plans to conduct eight or nine hearings in rural and urban areas around the state and anticipates comments from local elected officials, community leaders, food bank representatives, persons involved in running food programs, and hungry people themselves. In a rather novel approach, Parmer proposes sending questionnaires to certain people in each area prior to conducting a hearing, to get raw data on hunger.

Parmer, who is in the marketing research business, says he wants to do "random sample polling of two types: one within target groups that you would presume might have problems in the hunger and inadequate nutrition area;" and secondly, surveying people related to the issue, such as social workers and state agency personnel. "Using those two sources of information, maybe you can get a fairly objective picture of what's really going on out there," Parmer said. If performed, such surveys could undoubtedly yield useful local data on hunger and nutrition that are not available now.

An advisory board composed of representatives from state agencies that administer food and nutrition programs will assist the committee. Two private organizations, ACT (Anti-hunger Coalition of Texas) and the Texas Dietetic Association, will serve as special consultants to the advisory group. State agencies slated for the advisory board are the Departments of Health, Human Resources, Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and Community Affairs, plus the Department on Aging, Rehabilitation Commission, Education Agency, and Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service.

Setting a Course

Parmer has expressed a particular interest in nutrition assistance for poor children and the elderly. One of the most valuable efforts against malnutrition, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC Program), is reaching a meager 15% of those Texans eligible. WIC provides dietary supplements for pregnant and lactating women, infants, and young children during critical years of growth and development. WIC has been found highly effective in lowering the infant death rate, increasing birthweight, and improving children's learning and behavior measures.

But WIC services in Texas are limited. Less than 140,000 of the nearly one million women and children in Texas at nutritional risk are getting the food, health examinations, and nutrition education that WIC delivers. WIC services are available in only 97 of Texas' 254 coun-

ties. Almost 20% of all counties in the nation without WIC are in Texas.

Nutrition aid for the elderly in Texas is also circumscribed. Federal funding provides for a total of about 45,000 daily meals, both home-delivered and in a congregate setting, for seniors. But there are more than two million Texans over age 60, and several hundred thousand are in need of food assistance because they live in poverty.

The committee will need to examine the scope and operation of all of the federally-funded, state-run food and nutrition programs. A shocking 26% of the state population — 4.1 million people — are now eligible for food stamps. Only 1,260,000 Texans were participating in the food stamp program in August, indicating a vast, unmet need. The committee also needs to investigate problems in the distribution of surplus commodities; upcoming reductions in federal assistance for school breakfast; the need for increased dietary support in child care programs; flagging efforts in summer food services for children; and funding limitations on nutrition education.

The Texas legislature is on record in opposition to further cuts in federal programs that provide critical dietary assistance to the needy. A "preventing hunger at home" resolution passed both the Texas Legislature and the U.S. Congress by nearly unanimous votes. The resolution says that "funding for federal/state nutrition programs . . . should be protected from further budget cuts and should continue to respond to changes in unemployment and food prices." That legislative sentiment is in opposition to President Reagan's proposal to trim another $2 billion from federal nutrition spending in 1984.

SINCE THE legislature and state government have rarely investigated food assistance and resources, the initiatives of other states may prove useful in directing Texas efforts. The proposals detailed below (many of which are part of ACT's legislative program) are examples of actions that could be taken to support assistance programs and alleviate the need for emergency food. The development of local food resources to improve the availability and quality of food for all Texans, particularly those of low-income, is also crucial. Some of the proposals require legislative action; others can be implemented administratively.

In the area of food assistance programs, possibilities include:

• *School Breakfast Financial Assistance.* Beginning in July 1984, schools in Texas which are required to offer breakfast but do not have 40% needy children will no longer be eligible to receive federal "severe need" supplements. At least 2,000 Texas schools may be affected by this change. State support would be helpful to maintain the integrity of the breakfast program and to encourage schools to continue providing a morning meal service.

• *State Nutrition Supplementation for Women, Infants, and Children.* The WIC program is now 100% federally funded. State dollars committed to WIC could increase the currently meager coverage of this important nutritional program.

• *Nutrition Education for Children.* A federal effort for nutrition education and training has been reduced over 80% in the past two years. Improved and expanded nutrition education could help teachers, food service workers, and children themselves make better dietary choices for health and growth.

• *Community Food Program.* With a little bit of seed money, low-income people can effectively organize themselves to obtain more and better quality food. Self-help projects might include food cooperatives, buying clubs, greenhouses, and canneries.

• *Consumer Education for Low-Income Persons.* Instruction in the areas of food buying, storage, and usage could aid low-income households in stretching their limited food budgets.

Food resource programs might include the following:

• *Community Gardening.* A resolution passed the legislature this spring to encourage the use of vacant state lands for gardening. About eight other states have laws that require idle public land to be available for family and individual gardening. Such a policy provides one key resource — land — for citizens who want to grow their own food but do not have the space for it.

• *Direct Marketing.* The Department of Agriculture under Jim Hightower has begun to provide assistance on farmers' markets and is now expanding its efforts. Farmers' markets can aid consumers in obtaining high quality food at lower prices and can give producers an opportunity to sell their products through local, non-commercial markets. An excellent example of this potential is the city-run Dallas Farmer's Market, in operation for 35 years.

• *Gleaning.* Unharvested produce that would otherwise be left to rot in the fields can be gathered and distributed to the needy by volunteers and non-profit groups, through food banks and other means. A few western states have encouraged gleaning by giving tax breaks to farmers who allow their land to be gleaned. Rio Grande Valley citrus growers, for example, permitted 110 tons of aging but edible grapefruit to be picked off their trees and distributed to Texas' poor through a state-financed surplus citrus project earlier this year.

• *Seed Banks.* With a minimal amount of instruction and cost, family and community seed banks can be started to provide non-hybrid seeds to low-income gardeners and small farmers. Seed expenses would be lowered and the availability of local, disease-resistant, high-yield seed varieties would be increased through seed propagation techniques.

• *Composting.* Publicly-supported composting operations could recycle resources, aid soil conservation and reclamation, and increase environmental beautification. Organic wastes that are presently dumped could be used productively, particularly for community gardens. The City of Austin already sends leaves and grass clippings to the community gardens for use, instead of shipping them to the county dump.

In short, The Interim Committee on Hunger and Nutrition offers Texas an opportunity to investigate a critical problem for millions of Texans and to propose constructive solutions. Texas has never had a state food and nutrition policy before, but the extent of hunger statewide cries out for one to be developed. Parmer's committee has an opportunity to take an aggressive lead in that effort.□

Humpy's Fall

Sheriff "Humpy" Parker has been brought to justice, but his neighbors still support him.

By Paul Sweeney

Coldspring

THE SAN JACINTO County Fair is the biggest event of the year in this seemingly peaceful county of fewer than 12,000 people. A visitor to the fairgrounds this autumn could witness a parade with trail riders on handsome horses and cowgirl beauty queens waving from the tops of shiny pickup trucks. The sunny fall afternoon was alive with the spirited sounds of marching bands, drill teams, and pep squads like the New Caney High School Bluebonnets. But this year the excitement took place against a backdrop of controversy and, for some, outrage and humiliation.

Recently, James C. "Humpy" Parker, 47, the former sheriff of this pioneer county in the piney woods, and two of his deputies were found guilty of torturing prisoners. One witness at the trial testified in federal court in Houston that he confessed to a crime only after two deputies handcuffed his hands under a table. Once confined, the witness said, the deputies jerked his head back by the hair, wrapped a towel around his nose and mouth, and poured buckets of water over his face until he feared he would suffocate and drown.

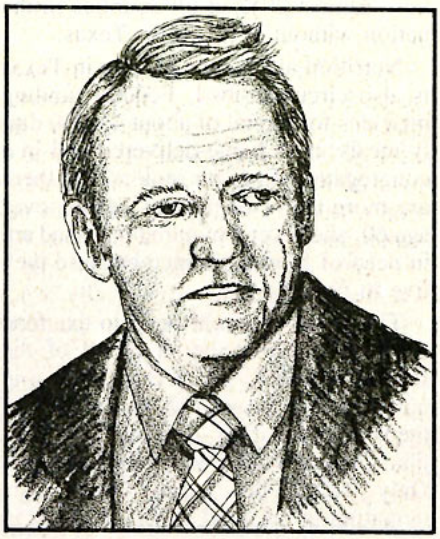
A *Dallas Times-Herald editor* called Parker "an outrageous and revolting anachronism, a throwback to that unlightened time in the Old West when law officers often acted as policemen, judge, prosecutor and executioner." But here in San Jacinto County, even as he and his deputies awaited further charges of using and reselling drugs, guns and other belongings seized from motorists at a speed trap on Highway 59, about 50 miles north of Houston, many remained stubbornly loyal to the longtime lawman. As many as two hundred citizens signed a petition to U.S. District Judge James DeAnda seeking leniency.

"There are so many things he's done for people in this community," Gene Bushue, the 51-year-old city superintendent in Shepherd, the former sheriff's hometown, told the *Observer*. Interviewed outside Kimon's Restaurant, one of a tiny clump of stores near the railroad tracks in Shepherd, Bushue recalled the extraordinary pains that "Old Humpy" took when attending to the needs of local people.

'Once I called him at 1 in the morning when my oldest boy was in jail up in Illinois," Bushue, a short, bearded man with an emphatic voice, remembered. "He offered to go there. I said, 'No, I've got a plane reservation.' I just wanted him to call up there for me. Keep in mind that it was 1 in the morning, and I just woke him up out of a sound sleep."

Ray Woods, 44, was just as supportive. "I've known him fifteen years," he said of Parker. "I've never known him to harm anyone. I've seen him take people who were drunk and take them home. I never even heard him raise his voice. I wish he could go back in office."

The convicted sheriff, awaiting a jail sentence that could put him behind bars for as much as thirteen years and facing additional charges, bore little resemblance to the man his neighbors and supporters knew. To them Parker was a near-hero, a man from a respected family in the community with an affectionate nickname — earned from a bird dog he played with in his boyhood — whose high school class voted him "most popular."



Former San Jacinto County Sheriff Humpy Parker

The confusion lies in the double standard that pervades this insular county where settlers 150 years ago hacked through tall trees to create tiny hamlets such as Evergreen, Stephens Creek, and Point Blank. The discrepancy lies in the unwritten but ironclad code of frontier life, in a deeply felt belief that you either belong or you don't.

"One man at the fairgrounds told me he wasn't interested in anybody's civil rights, just his own," said Martha Charrey, editor of the *San Jacinto News-Times*. A fierce critic of the local value system, she reprinted the *Times-Herald's* scathing editorial. "People here don't care what Parker did because it happened to people who were from outside the county. Those were the only people he bothered."

SOME WHO would have liked to question Parker's behavior cite his invincibility at the ballot box as one discouraging factor. In 1976, when Bob Brumley — now the acting sheriff — got into a runoff against Parker, the campaign turned dirty. The rumor quickly spread through town that Brumley was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Race relations in the county are complicated and rigidly observed. But with more than 50% of the voters black, the unfounded rumor could only hurt Brumley who lost the runoff.

In a community with little taxable wealth, where tax exempt timber companies and the federal government dominate much of the land, the sheriff's speeding tickets and court fines were a major source of public funds. "It's either that or raise taxes," said J. B. Clark, a local constable. The sheriff's activities also served as a boon to

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wreckers, bondsmen, and other businesses that participated.

For those in the community who suspected wrongdoing, there weren't many outlets. A few years ago, the Federal Bureau of Investigation came to town to investigate Parker and couldn't find a thing. "It's really tough to say something," said Philip Wisiackas, 32, the only doctor in the county and a Connecticut native. "Especially when (the FBI) set up a booth in the front lobby of the bank."

As Don Morris, 43-year-old owner of the local Purina feedstore noted, "What are you going to say? Who is going to believe you? And if you lose, don't forget, you've got to live here."

Although the speed traps were common knowledge — "How could you miss eight sheriff's cars on Highway 59?" one man asked — the torture stories came as a shock. Despite the informal but sophisticated rumor mill, the water torture practices had been a closely held secret.

Yet few here see any change in the system that created Parker and allowed the double standard. The heavy conformity manifests itself in many ways. One example is the prominent Coldspring businessman who said of Parker: "I hope he gets what he deserves." But in the next breath, the businessmen explained he didn't want to broadcast his views in a village where Parker's popularity still ran high. "Please don't use my name. You can't stick your neck out. People will cancel their business with me if you use my name."

"This is a poor county," Wisiackas the doctor from Connecticut observes. "It really doesn't have a lot of structure. It lacks self-confidence and pride. If you watch the way that people take care of their cattle at the fairgrounds, of course, you do see a high level of pride. They groom these cattle so they look better than a woman at a beauty salon getting a permanent. But it doesn't extend to setting up a good system of government."

Some hope that the grinding apathy can be overcome by a better brand of politics and more participation at the polls. But so far, change has been forced on the community by the outside press and federal prosecutors. The old ways may die if more new blood is infused into the county. The influx of retirees, Houston-spawned sub-division growth at Lake Livingston, a nearby resort, and newcomers escaping the pace of urban life may eventually break down some of the more stifling traditions.

"It's changing," says Victor Schrubb, the 40-year-old mayor of Shepherd, who came here seven years ago after a job transfer from Erie, Pennsylvania. "The more outsiders you get, maybe it will break up some of the cliques. It's changing — I hope for the better." □

Tenayuca

(Continued from Cover)

Austin

Emma Tenayuca is a name still whispered on the West Side of San Antonio, especially among those who lived through the 1930s. While still in her early twenties, she was the charismatic leader of a labor movement that shook San Antonio, both because it affected the city's largest industry at the time — pecan shelling — and because it marked the first sign of political liberation of the city's Mexican American populace from the bossism that had controlled it for decades.

Tenayuca was instrumental in the organization of the Workers Alliance of the unemployed and marginally employed in 1936 through 1938. She became the guiding spirit for the pecan-shelling workers strike in 1938 and was elected the strikers' spokesperson during a mass meeting on the first night of the strike. [*See box, page 12.*] *"It was right she would be called La Pasionara," former organizer Latane Lambert says in* Women in the Texas Workforce: Yesterday and Today [*edited by Richard Croxdale and Melissa Hield, People's History in Texas, Inc., 1979*], *"because in her shrill little voice she would make your spine tingle."*

As the leader of the strike and later as a member of the Communist Party in San Antonio, whose meeting in the Municipal Auditorium was broken up by a mob of 5,000, Emma Tenayuca was in the jails, in the courtrooms, and on the front pages of San Antonio newspapers a number of times. In the 1940s, she worked with striking garment, cement, and laundry workers. In the late '40s she moved to California and finished a college degree at San Francisco State University. In the late 1960s, she returned to San Antonio, where she taught elementary school. She retired from teaching last year and continues to live in San Antonio.

What follows is drawn from a three-hour interview conducted with Emma Tenayuca in San Antonio on October 1 of this year. In the course of the interview, Ms. Tenayuca discussed her background, the influences that led to her activism, her role in the organizing of the 1930s, and her philosophy. Throughout, she tried to downplay her importance in the events and struggles of the late 1930s. But according to her niece, Sharyll Teneyuca [*there were two spellings of the name within the family*], *a lawyer in San Antonio, Emma Tenayuca is far too modest. "When I was down at the courthouse," she said, "I used to get asked almost on a daily basis about her, especially by the people that were living during that time. She is a heroine. They don't even have words to talk about her. It was her sense of justice. It was a righteous indignation that gave her such fire. Also the fact that she was Mexican American from San Antonio. They could trust her, believe in her. She wasn't afraid to take a stand."*

Geoffrey Rips

Background and Influences

THE TENEYUCAS have been here quite a while. A fellow named Evers published a book about 35 or 40 years ago based on a survey that the Spanish government made of the Indians here. He mentions a name similar to Teneyuca, who had not made friends with any whites here, the European population. It's quite possible that with the invasion of Mexico and the coming to Texas of the Spaniards that there were Indians who were pushed north. I think it's possible to trace it. The place where the Aztecs finally settled is called Tenayuca. But there's no evidence of any Aztec civilization in Texas. The Indians here were from the Cherokee nation, made up of a number of tribes in East Texas right around the Arkansas border. These people were building homes and even wrote a language for themselves.

My mother's name is Zepeda. As far as we can determine, they were brought to San Antonio and given lands in 1793. But they had been part of the missions in the east near Nacogdoches. There were about 200 who were moved to San Antonio in order to fortify the presidio here. I am satisfied that we have been here quite a long time. I learned English and I always felt like an American because my father was Indian. I didn't think I had to apologize to anybody.

I may have become a snob if I hadn't had a good Indian name. I never had a fashionable Spanish name. I was born in 1916 at the end of the year. After you had Ferguson as governor, I became

San Antonio Light photo, Institute of Texan Cultures. (All photos collected and printed by Alan Pogue.)

San Antonio police book Emma Tenayuca.

aware of Texas and a bit of Texas politics. Jim Ferguson had been impeached, yet my entire family went out and voted for Ma Ferguson. I remember a heated debate, arguments back and forth between my uncles and my grandfather. They finally decided that they were going to vote for Ma Ferguson, and their reason — because of Ma Ferguson's position on the Ku Klux Klan. My grandfather and my family were some of the few who voted for Alfred Smith in 1928. The whole South went Republican that year. They were so afraid that the Pope would come over here and rule us. If I look back on my life, I can't say there was one or two or three factors or influences. It was the entire situation here.

The attitudes of my grandparents, who raised me, and my mother, too, and my father were based on honesty which motivated a religious type of life. When we got up in the morning when I was a youngster, we said, "Buenos dias a Dios." I received my first instruction and communion from an English priest, Father James Lockwood. He made quite an impression. I was made aware that the atmosphere in America had never been as agreeable as it might have been for the Catholics. I attended catechism. I made my first communion. I was confirmed. There's still a nun who is about 81 years old now at Our Lady of the Lake — she corresponded with me all during the time I was being active. And once she wrote me a note: "I have to look at the papers," she said, "to find out if you're in or out of jail."

My grandparents were most tolerant people. One of my grandfather's brothers went to Arizona and fell in love with an Indian girl there and brought her back. She never went back to her family, but, on the other hand, she never became Christian. There wasn't the slightest conflict between my grandfather and this girl, saying, "We'll make you a Catholic." She would follow my grandmother around the house and look at the faces of the saints and say, "He looks exactly like my sweetheart on the reservation."

Then there was the plaza in front of the Santa Rosa hospital on Milam Square. You could go there on Sundays. You could go there during the week. And you could hear anarchists. I started going to the plaza and political rallies when I was only 6 or 7 years old. That's where I learned to sing. I learned the anarchist words to the Marseillaise. You had the influence of Flores Magon brothers [anarcho-syndicalists active in the overthrow of Porfirio Diaz]. Then from our country we had the Wobblies. And you had *enganchadores,* contractors who came in and took people out to the Valley. I was exposed to all that. You knew what the conditions were. San Antonio was just buzzing with Carrancistas, Villistas, Maderistas, etc. And if you wanted to hear anything and you knew Spanish, well, all you had to do was go there on a Sunday at any time.

Up to 1910, most of the people who had come over had been peasants, Indian peasants for the most part. But now you had certain members of the upper classes. The Urrutias, people such as the maternal grandfather of our present mayor [Henry Cisneros], and they began to have an impact. They built certain organizations and power bases.

After World War I we saw the beginning of the development of agriculture in the Southwest. Not only in Texas but in Arizona, Colorado with the beet industry, and it cannot be referred to as farming. It has to be referred to as agribusiness. You needed labor here. As long as there is a need for labor, Mexico will be the place where labor is most accessible. But you have to remember that these people were not coming to a foreign country exactly. They were coming to cities that were very much like the cities they had left: Laredo, El Paso, Los Angeles. So you have the continuation and the development of a large section of Spanish speaking people here.

Also, remember the situation worldwide. Hitler came to power in 1933. There was persecution of the Jews with many people in concentration camps, which people refused to acknowledge. There was a ship loaded with Jewish refugees that came to Cuba, and they weren't allowed to enter there. They weren't allowed to enter our country. There were more than 200 people there. We stood by for quite a while before we did anything to join the fight against Hitler. I think we have to bear in mind, too, that Hitler came into power fighting communism. You had a world situation that was certainly bound to have some effect on anybody who was in school and was doing some type of thinking, was engaging in some kind of discussion.

I don't think I could have grown up here without feeling the sting of racism and discrimination. Somebody suggested that we should join LULAC, the auxiliary. They didn't let women into the LULAC organization. So I joined the ladies auxiliary long before I got out of high school. I remember there were students here from Mexico who tried to get food at a restaurant. They were denied service and were actually thrown out. You had things like that happening all the time. But there was also a tremendous surge of nationalism and pride that came with the election of Cardenas [in Mexico in 1934]. This had a tremendous influence on all Mexicans here. For once people began to lose their fear.

You Had to Act

IN HIGH SCHOOL, I belonged to a group of students who selected and read books and gathered for discussion. This association continued after graduation. We started a newspaper. There were articles about "We're not the boys who drive around in daddy's car," and so on. All of us were affected by the

Depression. We became aware that there were some aspects of the free enterprise system which were highly vulnerable. But we were not hippies. It was a protest movement of the youth.

I saw my first strike activity during the Finck Cigar strike. It was not the first [such] strike. It was the second. It was 1934. I went down to the picket line. We had a sheriff here named Albert West. His family's quite prominent. He had a picture taken of himself with a brand new pair of boots. He said that was what was going to greet the strikers. They were mostly all women. That was the first time I went down and saw a police action. I went to observe; I landed in jail and learned how difficult it would be to make this a union town. For a while, I think, I probably was very much of an anarchist. I had their ideas. I felt that the labor movement was the way: you organize the laborers and they'd change the situation.

The attitude of the establishment led me to activism for one thing. Another thing was that the immigration authorities had always been used against strikers. A prominent San Antonio political leader made a statement that all he had to do was notify the immigration authorities and they would go to the picket line and that would break up the strike. And both strikes [at Finck] were broken by the police, and some of those people had been born here.

I had a basic underlying faith in the American idea of freedom and fairness. I felt there was something that had to be done. But the idea of having women kicked. Now that was something I was going to do something about, and I went out on the picket line. That was the first time I was arrested.

Here was a devout Catholic — Finck, you see — and the priest there was telling the strikers that this is communism. Even in the confession box. You wonder why there are so many Protestant churches on the West Side? I was 17 or 18, in my last year of high school. But I never thought that I would get that involved.

I had some contacts in the Socialist Party. I went to some of their meetings. They were mostly Jewish people. And they got into arguments about Trotskyites and so forth. But I didn't get anything out of that. There was such division among these people. I couldn't understand the feelings of those people because some of them embraced the Russian Revolution as being the ultimate with all its weaknesses.

After the Finck Cigar strike, I drifted into the Workers Alliance. I was very curious. I read everything that was given to me. I wouldn't say I emerged suddenly. There were some cigar workers who lost their jobs, and I was going down to the unemployment offices with them. This was part of it. I never thought too much of my role in it. Organizing the unemployed was one field in which the communists and the socialists got together. They only spoke English, so I went with them. Then, when I went to organizing meetings, I would always find members of the Workers Alliance. I remember two socialists here and I remember one Mexican who was an anarchist. They were already working with the unemployed. We started a movement here. But there was never any factionalism in the Workers Alliance because the main issue was jobs. The ranks of the unemployed soared, and then so did the ranks of the Workers Alliance. There were so many people here. There was a handful of Jewish socialists — Trotskyites who started here and whose meetings I attended, and they had an influence on me. But I wasn't ready to become associated with any party. What was the impression I had of the Democrats here? A small group of people who fought only for jobs for certain Mexicans. And LULAC had nothing to do with the foreign born. I was just out of high school. I worked at the Gunter [Hotel]. I operated an elevator there for one dollar a day. I sold things house to house. I worked in a pickle factory washing jars. What else did I do? Whatever I could.

There were meetings every Sunday in various places. There was pressure on the Administration for jobs. We didn't ask for relief; we asked for jobs. We never asked for money but for jobs. There were a number of demonstrations. We had this demonstration for the Workers Alliance at the Gunter Building. We went down to protest the layoff of WPA workers. I think they got paid at this point $30 a month. The police came in and broke it up. There were five of us arrested. We were charged, and I was the first one who was tried. And Everett Looney came down to defend me. A magnificent man. He was somebody I didn't know, but he came down and represented me free of charge. He was an assistant state attorney under Governor Allred. When the police went into the Workers Alliance hall and broke every bit of furniture [and injured Eugenio Narvaez and Juan Mendoza on June 29, 1937], Looney came down. I will also never forget a guy by the name of Nichols, who worked for the WPA. He was very blonde, very blue-eyed. The cuffs on his shirt were starched. He had cufflinks. Everett asked him, "Well, where were you born?" He was born in the East. He had gone to college. He was working for the WPA.

I met David Dubinsky. Dubinsky was the president for life of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). I met Meyer Pearlstein [regional director]. The ILGWU had no compunctions about getting me to write circulars for them. I knew Rebecca Taylor very well. I worked with her.

San Antonio Light photo. (Institute of Texan Cultures Archives) AFL-CIO collection.

CIO Strikers on San Antonio's West Side.

That was before the pecan strike. I was never offered a job as an organizer. Dubinsky came here and hired Rebecca. They went over the workers' heads and signed a local here, a local there, and so on. Rebecca Taylor spoke Spanish, but she was not an organizer. I went before the Labor Council here, spoke several times asking for their help [for the pecan shellers]. They did not dare speak against us, but they did not help us at all. I went lots of times with Myrle Zappone, one of the organizers for the garment workers, to the homes of Mexican women and talked to the people about joining the union. But the minute they had about 50 or 60 workers, whatever they considered enough, they called a strike. What they did — they never developed leadership.

In dealing with the population at that time, you had to answer more than just the economic questions. Schooling: I had visions of a huge hall on the West Side, possibly maintained by several unions — pecan, laundry, ironworkers — which would become a center where you would help people become citizens, where you would have classes in English. The union had to serve as a social service organization because of the conditions of the people. You had to act. You had, perhaps, to take a very sick person to the hospital. The union had to do that. It had to. When you involved someone who didn't even know anything on a committee, just picked somebody up and you knew he'd just say, "Yes, yes," that was Dubinsky's idea. Dubinsky's idea was just to grab these people and throw them into the union.

One of the very first issues at the Workers Alliance here was the right of workers to organize without fear of deportation. But the pressure of economic conditions moved faster in the direction of poverty. For instance, the Finck strike and the pecan strike were not planned strikes. The two were spontaneous strikes. The Workers Alliance gathered a tremendous momentum when the workers returned from the fields, not having worked, without money and without food.

The year 1938 proved to be a very disastrous year for the migratory workers. The pecan shelling industry was important to the workers here because some of them started leaving as early as March. They did some work in the Valley. Then they went to Colorado and the beet fields there. They went to Michigan and came back some time around November. Some of them would come back and sell their car and buy a piece of land. These were called *surcos*. They were pieces of land about 25 feet wide. So the only way you could build would be back. Nevertheless, some of them took that. Some of your houses are very nice houses. But they didn't have any water. They had to carry it by buckets. There was a whole picture there on the West Side. I felt there was something that had to be done.

Photo by Russell Lee. (Institute of Texan Cultures)

Picking pecan shell fragments from pecan meats.

Pecan Shellers

THE PECAN SHELLERS strike was the culmination of organizing. What I did was help organize the Workers Alliance. There were some very good people in there. You had a lot of *mutualistas* [members of cooperative mutual aid societies]. There was a woman who was a very wonderful woman here by the name of Rodriguez, who organized la Union. The communists I think had a few people out there, and so did the socialists. I was aware all along that any organization, especially of the Mexican laborers in San Antonio, would be a very difficult endeavor. To succeed you never rest. Pecan shelling was an industry where you had subcontractors and you had hundreds of little shops. It was the latter part of January in 1938. I think they were paying about 5 cents or 6 cents per pound. The crackers got a bit more.

What happened here was a lot of the pecan shellers were members of the Workers Alliance. The Workers Alliance at its peak had more than 10,000 members. It's difficult for people to understand that the Workers Alliance continued, carrying grievances, meeting on Sundays. For anybody who'd been laid off, we'd go back to the WPA and back to the Relief Office here. At the same time we kept campaigns going for greater assistance.

I remember some members of the Workers Alliance coming by, saying, "We're not going into the shops." So I went out with them. The workers just started marching out. The only thing I did was organize these committees and send them down. The first thing was to prepare for a meeting and to keep the workers out [on strike]. The person who was in charge was Donald Henderson, and he was the founder of the United Cannery Workers [United Cannery and Agricultural Processors and Agricultural Workers of America — UCAPAWA]. It was one of the CIO left-wing unions whose funds were eventually cut. The CIO put some money into organization here. They tried their best. The CIO made a real effort to organize the migrant workers of California. And they did not succeed. The only people who had organized the migrant workers were the IWW, the Wobblies.

So the strike was on. But this had been preceded by many demonstrations, by a continuous appeal, mass meetings, all kinds of activities in which people participated on all labor questions. I had a woman recently come up to me — she's a member of COPS now — and her father was a member of the Workers Alliance. It was a training ground. It was actually a breaking up of the type of political activity that had been a feature of the West Side. So there were quite a few struggles there.

There was tremendous pressure upon the CIO to remove me as the strike leader because I was a Communist.'

Donald Henderson met with Homer Brooks [Emma Tenayuca's husband at the time and former Communist Party candidate for Texas governor]. When I saw Homer I was here in the city. When he came in and already had the statement typed out to remove me from the strike leadership, I did not buckle. I did not feel like buckling down, but, on the other hand, if it meant more support . . . I knew that we had not developed the leadership to take care of the negotiations and I would have needed help in that. I knew that I was a good organizer, but when it came to negotiating, this was something else. So George Landrum came in and took over. There were at least seven or eight hundred workers who joined the union immediately. So I continued to write all the circulars, met with all the picket captains when Landrum took over.

The pecan workers strike was the culmination of activity for jobs, for a much broader program. As to whether it was an authorized strike [the CIO said it was partially authorized], that would be just like Henderson [to say it was partially authorized], some Yankee coming down here. Did they ever succeed in organizing the sharecroppers? How could there ever be an authorized strike? There was no CIO here in San Antonio. There was only an American Federation of Labor. The CIO came in after the strike and after we had organized it here. So how could the CIO have ever authorized a strike and an organization that it had never even lent one blessed dime to organize? And we did raise placards for a minimum wage. This was why the strike gained prominence. Incidentally, a lot of those statements that were attributed to me, I don't know where they were picked up. "My blood or something or other." Believe me, I was so careful at demonstrations to see that we didn't have anybody provoke the police. [See box, page 13.]

I think there was a lot of support for the pecan workers. I think that little book [*The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio* by Selden Menefee and Orin Cassmore, published by the WPA] is very good evidence that there was support and concern. There was a woman named Consuelo Gosnell, who worked for the Relief Office, and there was Mrs. Clare Green [county social work supervisor]. Some of these people were very conscientious.

Remember this — so many people were scared. How many people would have stepped out and helped? There were some ministers. There were a few others who stuck their heads all the way out, including Maury Maverick. But others here, although their sympathies were there, they would not stick their heads out. And perhaps I do deserve some credit for sticking my head out. I have been asked if I had been afraid. I said, "No. If I had been afraid I wouldn't have done it. I wouldn't have gone out." I felt enough pressure from my family.

I was not afraid at the auditorium riot [in 1939]. We held a meeting before that auditorium riot, and there were some of us who brought up the fact — one person was Elizabeth Benson — as to whether we should go on to the meeting. There had been no support. The Soviet Union had signed the Non-Aggression Pact a few months earlier. Not one newspaper in San Antonio supported our right to hold a meeting. What I expected was just a small meeting with a few people and that was all. When I think back — this trying to explain the Soviet-German pact, it was impossible. I read the Duclos Article assessing the situation. I read it quite a few times, and I still could not understand it.

The three leaders against us — one was Jewish, Clem Smith a photographer; Namy, a Lebanese I think; and Father Valenta. Clem Smith might have been a veteran. I don't know why someone like Clem Smith was not fighting anti-Semitism. Namy was a businessman and foreign-born. He said he was American and by choice. Father Valenta was an Italian. I met an Italian here who thought Mussolini was doing a wonderful job. You had Father Coughlin up in the Midwest. The Church finally had to silence him. I felt at times that some of these people had lost sight of their roles and their origins in their fighting for Americanism and their idea that this was communism. What we were fighting for as an organization was really freedom of speech, and that was all.

The person who was mayor at the time was Maury Maverick. I never knew this until I talked to Maury Maverick, Jr., but the fellow who was Chief of Police [Ray Ashworth] had every intention of actually reorganizing the police. Maverick would have given us a good city government if he had been re-elected. The fellow who was in charge at that time, who escorted me, I think, was a Quaker.

Ideas

NOW WE HAVE the general opinion that the New Deal and the legislation that followed had for a measure answered the problems and forever eased any idea of socialism in our country. I would say that I am a socialist, but with many, many qualifications. I cannot believe, for instance, that you can look up on a problem and solve every economic problem for everybody. Look at the situation in Lebanon. Is this actually just a political problem? I would say it's a deep religious problem rooted in years of conflict. And for us to think that a Camp David agreement would solve the problem. . . . It is such a superficial approach to the problem. I have never looked upon socialism or upon social democracy as coming about suddenly as the result of a crisis. I look upon it as

(Continued on Page 13)

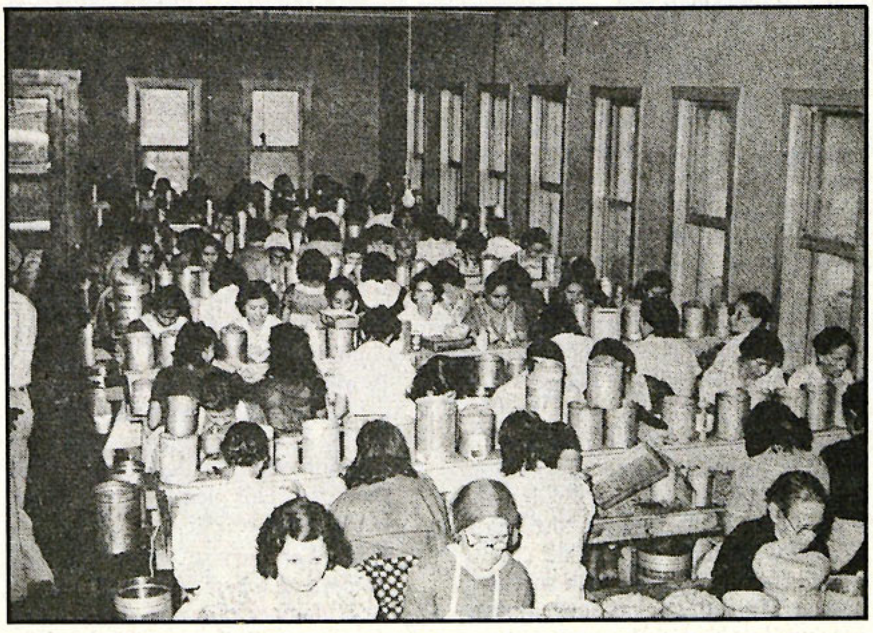

Photo by Russell Lee. (Institute of Texan Cultures)

Pecan shellers worked up to 15 hours a day in hundreds of shelling sheds on San Antonio's West Side.

San Antonio Light photo. (Institute of Texan Cultures Archives)

Emma Tenayuca and attorney Everett Looney.

Reporting on Pecan Workers in the '30's

IN 1938, the principal source of industrial employment during the winter months for Mexican Americans in San Antonio was the pecan-shelling industry. According to a report written for the Work Projects Administration by Selden Menefee and Orin Cassmore, the average pecan-shelling family received an income of $251 that year. The average worker earned $2.73 per week for a 75-hour week.

77% of the pecan workers interviewed for the WPA report rented houses with an average of 2.1 rooms, while the 23% who owned homes had houses averaging 2.6 rooms. 12% of all the houses had running water and only 9% had indoor toilets. 25% of the pecan workers had electricity, while the other three-fourths used kerosene lamps. The Mexican American population of San Antonio, comprising 38% of the total population in 1938, suffered extremely high infant mortality and tuberculosis rates.

San Antonio was the center of the nation's pecan industry. In 1926, Julius Seligmann and Joe Freeman started the Southern Pecan Shelling Company, which, by 1935, controlled almost one-third of the pecan market. Though the pecan-shelling industry had been fully mechanized by the 1920s, Seligmann decided to take advantage of the cheap Depression labor pool and reverted to hand labor, reaping large profits while paying between 3 and 6 cents per pound for pieces that sold in New York for 39 cents per pound. He also took advantage of a contract system whereby he controlled 120 subcontractors and 5,000 workers who sometimes received as little as 2 or 3 cents per pound from their subcontractors.

In 1933, a Pecan Shelling Worker's Union of San Antonio was formed by Magdaleno Rodriguez. Rodriguez was supported by Seligmann, who thought the union would prevent his being undercut by smaller operations. Within a few years the union all but disappeared. In 1937, the United Cannery and Agricultural Processors and Agricultural Workers of America (UCAPAWA) of the CIO chartered the remnants of the union in San Antonio. At the same time, the Workers Alliance was organizing on the West Side of San Antonio among the unemployed and the working poor, including the pecan shellers. This led to the pecan workers strike.

On February 1, 1938, the *San Antonio Express* reported that a large number of pecan shellers had "unexpectedly" gone out on strike the day before. They elected Emma Tenayuca Brooks honorary strike chairman. The strike was in reaction to a pay cut enforced by the shelling owners from 7 and 6 cents per pound for halves and pieces to 6 and 5 cents for the shellers and from 50 cents to 40 cents per hundred pounds for the crackers. It was estimated that 6,000 of the 12,000 pecan shellers went out on strike the first day. The next day over 10,000 went out. Emma Tenayuca was arrested with two others on February 1 at the outset of the picketing. 600 people appeared outside the Bexar County jail in protest. CIO officials called the strike "unauthorized," and Maxwell Burket of the ILGWU said radicals were horning in on the unions.

The February 3, 1938 *Express* reported that Rebecca Taylor of the ILGWU said her union supported the strike but not the Communists in it. Taylor was later reported by some strikers to have been assisting police officers in naming purported Communists among the strikers. Reverend John Lopez of the National Catholic Welfare Council announced that he was working with the CIO in getting rid of Communists. Police Chief Owen Kilday said the strike was unauthorized because it was called by Communists. He, therefore, did not recognize the rights of the strikers and dispersed some picketers with tear gas and other forceful means and arrested others.

On February 4, San Antonio Mayor C. K. Quin visited the Zerr pecan factory, whose owner had been booked for assaulting an employee. He told the workers there to get rid of "those agitators and self-appointed leaders . . . such well-known Communistic leaders as Mrs. Emma T. Brooks." Meanwhile, Cassie Jane Winifree, state chair of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, asked Quin for permission to solicit funds for food for the strikers.

On February 7, the *Express* announced that Emma Tenayuca had been asked by Donald Henderson, president of UCAPAWA, not to participate further. On February 10, Henderson, Tenayuca, and three others were called before a grand jury. The next day 112 strikers were arrested; 63 were Mexican nationals. This provoked a protest from

the Mexican government. Police Chief Owen Kilday called the union a "red menace" and closed the union's soup kitchen, citing sanitary reasons. Governor Allred expressed his concern for the strikers' rights.

On February 14, Everett L. Looney, State Industrial Commission chairman (and former attorney for Emma Tenayuca during her trial for a WPA protest in 1937) convened a state investigation of the situation in San Antonio. One police officer claimed he heard Tenayuca say, "The police can stand me up against the wall and shoot me down, but my blood will still protect the people." [See page 11.] Several ministers testified on the working conditions of the shellers and said the strikers had behaved peacefully. Police Chief Kilday later testified in an injunction hearing that he did not "interfere with a strike. I interfered with a revolution."

In early March, Governor Allred persuaded Seligmann and the union to submit to arbitration. This eventually resulted in union contracts for plants covering 8,000 workers. The contracts provided for closed shops, union dues checkoff, grievance representatives, and 7 and 8 cents per pound in wages. On October 24, 1938, however, the Fair Labor Standards Act went into effect. This provided a 25-cent-per-hour minimum wage. The result was that, by mid-1939, most of the plants had reverted to machines, employing one-sixth the number of employees.

On August 25, 1939, Emma Tenayuca again appeared on the front page of the *San Antonio Express* under the headline "120 Police Eye Commie Meet." Tenayuca, as a member of the city's Communist Party, had received permission from Mayor Maury Maverick's office to use the Municipal Auditorium for a meeting. City police ringed the auditorium to protect the meeting but were soon overwhelmed by a mob of 5,000, throwing rocks and bricks. The Communist Party members were led to safety by the police. The mob demanded Maverick's recall, then marched to the Alamo and from there to City Hall, where Maverick was hanged in effigy. "The civil liberties of everybody in San Antonio, even Emma Tenayuca, will be upheld," Maverick later declared. "The Constitution will be served."

G.R.

(Continued from Page 11)

an educational endeavor, where people learn to work together, where they learn to think together.

The Communist Party was semi-legal. Whether the authorities worried about us, I don't know. I think I joined the Party about 1937. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was a member of the IWW, and she didn't join the Communist Party until 1937. Your Communists were at the forefront of the struggles. There are wonderful descriptions in *The Romance of American Communism* [by Vivian Gornick]. There are very bureaucratic people following in line and looking at it as purely an economic struggle. Then you had people who found that, standing on the lines or going down and picking vegetables or tomatoes or something like that, it was possible to be human. Here's some guy from the city who's never been on a farm, and no matter how he tried he could not get enough tomatoes that day to take some home. So as the people he worked with went around, they filled his basket one, two, or three times. The idea of sharing, of helping — this was brought into the Communist movement. You could see it in the labor struggle — the sacrifices that were made, the number who went to jail.

Continued next page

The $10 Program

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Police Chief Owen Kilday contended strike was unauthorized and picketing was illegal.

I'd read *Price and Profit, Wage, Labor, and Capital.* I didn't tackle *Das Kapital.* I read some things about dialectical materialism. I've read some fantastic theories as applied to literature. The idea that tragedy as applied under dialectical materialism is a negation of a negation. The rights of the lovers to love — this is tragedy; it is negated. I don't know. I would take Aristotle there.

I met quite a few organizers who came in with all sorts of ideas about what should be done. They had a blueprint. I was a very practical person when it came to organization, and many times I found myself at odds.

One of the things to remember is that crises are a permanent feature of the free enterprise system. If you read *The Populist Moment* [by Lawrence Goodwyn], you will find that the late 19th Century was a very revolutionary time in American history, a time when banks and the Eastern establishment won over the West and labor. The crises that followed were part and parcel of the free enterprise system.

Labor unions have become places where the workers go and hold a meeting, listen, elect a committee, and then vote. But your labor unions in America have not been political enough. Never. The labor organizations here, the whole labor movement, proceeded to organize on a very narrow economic approach. The struggle against child labor — this was actually the work of women. The right to vote, the 19th Amendment — I don't know how many labor people supported that. On the other hand, there have always been people who have adhered faithfully to a Jeffersonian idea of democracy. And you still have them. They're disorganized. I think there's quite a few of them in the Democratic Party. But whether they will be able to answer Reaganomics. . . . I've heard discussions by economists from MIT, Harvard, and they maintain that you cannot have a real revival of industry here unless the unions, the workers, participate. But what they're doing now is breaking up whatever unions exist. It's a sad thing.

Remember: the American system has fought tenaciously and viciously against the organization of labor. On the other hand, . . . if labor had accepted the Socialist Party, I think you would have still had a large Socialist Party here. The idea of socialism, the idea of a cooperative society still exists. Who's going to begin it here?

We can no longer look upon our nation as some place where you can grow up and stake a claim. This is a dream of the past. Europe has introduced a social democracy, placing more stringent regulations on mining and transportation. Here we've done away with all this. The Democratic Party is still afraid of using even the words "social democracy." I think that as time goes on we are going to see the type of thing that we saw in 1932, '33, '34, where you had mass demonstrations.

What I see now is an assault upon all the gains made for social democracy, the rights of labor and so forth. If not exactly a nullification, then placing the agencies in such a position that they are ineffective. I almost reach the brink of being cynical, but then I never cross over to being a cynic.

THERE IS SUCH a thing as wanting to do the things I want to do. It's so easy, if you had the support, to be given a nice job

somewhere and be assured of food until you die. But that was one thing I could not accept. I could not go down to the establishment. Now there is some recognition about that. And there's some recognition by those who did take money and make a nice little niche for themselves.

These things everybody was feeling. But how many people got out there and did something about it? I think personally I feel that I have contributed something, and I've talked to members of COPS and so forth, and I have been invited to march with the farmworkers. I was arrested a number of times. I don't think that I felt exactly fearful. I never thought in terms of fear. I thought in terms of justice. □

San Antonio Light photo. (Institute of Texan Cultures) Texas AFL-CIO collection.

San Antonio workers on strike.

DIALOGUE

(Continued from Page 2)

Strange Place

Fourteen years now I been in Texas and fourteen years I been reading the *Observer*. Slowly, slowly, I'm learning how this strange place works. It runs on money and the other guys usually got more.

"Sorting It All Out" is great reporting, the best I've yet read on what's going on in Mobil vs. The People. It fleshes out earlier *TO* claims that 1982 was a watershed year and things are looking up.

Like Joe Holley I favor reform and public financing of elections. The present system is plain obscene. But sometimes obscenities can be fun and this is one. Meanwhile, please keep us informed on this story of money and oil. Certainly, no one else is gonna do it.

Bill Plapp, 1003 Glade Street, College Station, Tx. 77840

Danburg Iceberg

Being both an avid reader of *The Observer* and a constituent in Debra Danburg's State Representative District I was surprised that you listed Debra as a disappointment in this session's legislature. A quick glance at your voting record chart in the June 24th issue shows that Debra voted (according to *The Observer*) correctly 12 out of 16 times (a 75% positive rating). To my knowledge this could hardly be called disappointing.

In addition although you mention two instances where you feel that Debra voted incorrectly you make no mention of her good votes or the leadership she showed. For instance concerning civil liberties she was at the forefront of getting killed the infamous sodomy law that was introduced.

In another area that is my particular concern, the environment, Debra used her skills as a House Environmental Affairs Committee member to see to it that the Texas Trails bill and the Urban Parks Fund bill renewal both passed. She also fought hard for a compromise Senate Water Package which would have gone far in addressing our state's water problems. Finally she introduced a bill to regulate the transportation of hazardous waste materials in our state.

I hope that *The Observer* will keep in mind the "big picture" when discussing a legislator's performance in the legislature. Like an iceberg, there's more than what meets the eye many times.

Brandt Mannchen, 1822 Richmond #2, Houston, Tx. 77098.

POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE

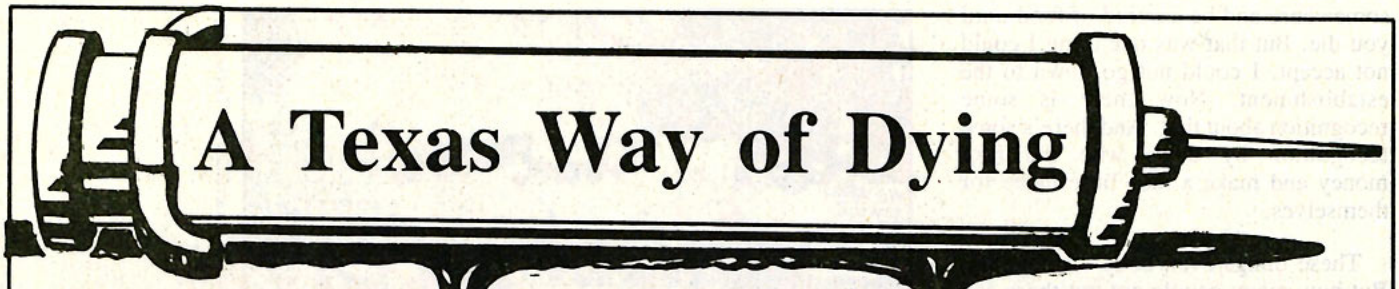
✔ The organizing of the Valley Interfaith community organization around health care in South Texas has borne fruit. On October 14, Gov. Mark White announced that $800,000 in earned federal funds were to be used to open and operate for two years the newly dedicated wing of the South Texas State Hospital. The wing in the former Harlingen State Chest Hospital. The wing in the former Harlingen State Chest Hospital had been built with previously appropriated funds, but funds had not been appropriated to staff and run the facility.

The funding will allow the facility to open almost immediately in order to provide the only public hospital care for indigents living in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The action comes in the wake of the closing to new patients of the Brownsville Community Health Clinic due to federal and local cutbacks. The clinic had been the last Valley public health care facility for treatment of the poor with chronic health problems.

Speaking for Valley Interfaith, Elvira Aguayo told the *Observer* that the organization had been working on the health care issue for over a year, culminating in a meeting on June 26, in which 6,000 Valley Interfaith members received a promise from White that he would look for funding for a regional hospital.

White said the $800,000 would serve the facility for two years but that additional appropriations must be approved by the next legislature in order to assure continued service beyond mid-1985.

A Texas Way of Dying



Drawing by Kevin Kreneck

By Bill Helmer

Chicago

NOTHING ANNOYS me more than the sight of a bunch of dewy-eyed, bleeding-heart humanitarians clutching their candles and whining because the state is finally going to pull the plug on some psychopathic killer. Unless it's the sight of an even larger bunch of bloodthirsty nitwits outside the same prison gates howling their disapproval at a last-minute stay of execution. There isn't any comfortable stand to take in a case like that of James "Cowboy" Autry, who was already soaking up the saline solution when saved by the proverbial legal technicality. All other arguments aside, I think cancelling the whole affair might have been a proper sporting gesture at that point, sort of like sparing a bull who survives the *corrida.* All considered, a lifetime in the pastures of TDC is about as close as you can get to cruel and unusual punishment.

Conceding that some of the above language was calculated to annoy my high-minded friends, I think what sent me to the typewriter was the television coverage of the Autry fiasco and the boring rehash of the death-penalty issue on TV and in the press afterwards. I heard nothing new: sure, the deterrence arguments remain unprovable either way; yes, the only other developed countries with capital punishment are Russia and South Africa; right, it's *not* humane and it *is* discriminatorily used; but does it affirm the sanctity of human life, or does it, by process of example, lend moral respectability to killing? I think it was Governor Mark White who on one talk show inferred that the governor of New Mexico, who opposes capital punishment on moral grounds, was a wimp, and that if God hadn't meant us to electrocute criminals, he wouldn't have given us electricity. Lethal injection was his idea of a nice compromise with liberal sensibilities.

The people we didn't hear from were the psychologists and criminologists whose work I studied when I was on the staff of the National Violence Commission. These people don't betray, at least, the sort of limp-wristed liberoid bias that drives any righteous redneck up the wall. They do draw upon their training, research, prison interviews, and common sense to conclude that just the prospect of the death penalty appeals rather strongly — if sometimes unconsciously — to the self-destructive impulses of the true psychopaths we fear the most. Commenting on one murderer's calm acceptance of execution, criminology professor Bernard L. Diamond once wrote:

> I have observed this peculiarly passive, anxiety-free state in others who have committed acts of great violence. Such acts are appropriately designated *terminal acts.* They occur at the end of a long build-up of emotional tension and conflict; the intense passion no longer is containable, and the actor, out of a sense of great desperation, commits his violent deed fully believing it will terminate his miserable existence.

Considering that the vast majority of murders are not premeditated and don't qualify as capital crimes, it's probably safe to say that the death penalty is mostly educational — that the reasoning behind it reaches from the somber halls of justice down to the bedroom or barroom, where the hard-breathing victim of some intolerably humiliating injustice has just let all the air out of his antagonist's ribcage.

"Crime may not pay but it can be a shortcut to immortality."

From my study of the literature, it seems to me that the very existence of the death penalty also cheapens human life in the eyes of a dimwitted punk whose loyalties are primitive and tribal. He may have no moral qualms whatever about wasting either a rival street-gang member or, in the case of "Cowboy" Autry, the terrified mother of five who happened to be working in a convenience store. Where rationality enters the picture at all, these young rascals may well take out not only an unoffending store clerk but anyone else whose testimony could put them on death row. The job-worth-doing principle.

There's also a good point that's been made by Austin attorney Hugh Lowe, a lecturer-at-law at The University of Texas who has worked on death-penalty cases for the ACLU, which likes to defend criminals. "Crime may not pay," Lowe contends, "but it can be a short-cut to immortality." His point was that the average young delinquent can blunder his way into a ho-hum criminal career, flopping in and out of jails, causing misery for himself, his family, and countless innocent citizens, and still not become the stuff of song and legend. But by means of a thoroughly spectacular atrocity, he can dispel an anguishing sense of impotence, become regally attended by the criminal justice system, get to know some fancy ACLU lawyers on a first-name basis, and finally "ride the lightning" in a grand ceremony specially arranged by the state.

Presumably it takes wealth, effort, time, and political skill to become the United States vice-president, whose name slips my mind at the moment. But I'll bet good money that the folks you meet outside Woolworth's know who Gary Gilmore was. □

Bill Helmer, an occasional Observer *contributor, is a senior editor for* Playboy Magazine.

Don't Blame Huntsville

By Gary Edmondson

Huntsville

WE KILL people in Huntsville — stick needles in their arms and pump deadly fluids into their bodies. Our neighbors do the work and announce the results. The dirty work in done here, but it's done for — and at the insistence of — the people of Texas.

It's an ugly business, death — and state officials don't reveal who does the ugliest work. It's fitting that the two death watches here have been ugly scenes dominated by blood-thirsty mobs chanting for death, threatening those who disagree with them, and, in toto, making a mockery of their own claims about the sanctity of human life.

The execution circuses should not be held against Huntsville. The belief in capital punishment is predominant in town. It is a belief born of rural conservatism and the presumption that only the death penalty can deter attacks on the friends and neighbors working for the Texas Department of Corrections.

(In Huntsville, we don't talk about reports of violence against inmates.) But Huntsvillians, as we call ourselves, are not villains. That we are also victims of the maximum-security mentality of our prisons is a major local problem.

Thus, what follows is an old-fashioned apologia for Huntsville, a defense but not an excuse.

For the execution of Charlie Brooks and the last hours of James Autry, crowds of about 300 people gathered in front of the Walls Unit just east of the downtown business district. Probably 60% were Sam Houston State University students, 30% media, 5% curious locals, and another 5% out-of-town opponents of capital punishment. The last 10% would probably stand in silence for the entire macabre clockwatch, as would another 10% from the students ranks. The behavior of the other 80% can be charitably described as sickening.

Having once been of — and hoping to rejoin — the ranks of working journalists, I am not one to blame the media for inciting the mob to a mindless frenzy. But, press and broadcast reporters cannot slough all responsibility for the scenes of blood lust that have just barely stopped short of actual mob violence. What began innocently as the press' fascination with death-penalty supporters actually gathering to "make sure" the executions are carried out, quickly spiraled into a game of one-upmanship as publicity seekers brought signs, masks, and balloons to parade in front of the cameras' lights. (And, yes, it IS news that some legal-aged adults can cavort in such a manner while a fellow human being is being killed less than a hundred yards away.)

The first capital punishment supporters at the Brooks execution wore suits and black gloves to emphasize the solemnity of the occasion and stood and talked rationally about their beliefs. But that's slow copy compared to "Die in Vein" signs and Halloween masks. The scenario now is for TV lights to tell crowd members and other reporters where the action is, and it takes on a grim parody of a "blue light special" as thrill-seekers surge between the TDC Administration Building and the Walls itself. The question reporters should ask themselves is just how much time they should spend interviewing 18 to 21-year-old publicity seekers, many fresh from one local bar or another.

The alliance between the press and its performers has broken down

(Continued on Page 18)

The Issue Is Proportionality

By John B. Duncan

Austin

WHAT DOES one say about a system that places 56 people on death row, with 53 of those placed there for killing anglos, 2 for killing chicanos, and one for killing a black? Death row population for these cases was 26 anglo, 22 black, and 8 Spanish surname.[1]

What does one say about a system where 39 of 42 persons tried for capital murder with court appointed attorneys are convicted of capital murder (93%) and 31 of these received a death sentence (74% of those tried), but for those able to afford retained counsel, only 20 of 31 tried were convicted of capital murder (65%) and only 11 received a death sentence (35% of those tried)?[2]

And what does one say about a system where, during a four-year period, police charged capital murder 115 times, and the district attorney's office reduced the charge to a non-capital offense 68 times and prosecuted for capital murder 47 times. 65% of the cases where a minority group member was

(Continued on Page 18)

[1]Source: Texas Judicial Council, "Survey on Death Penalty Cases Based on Inmates on Death Row," August 25, 1977.

[2]Source: Texas Judicial Council, Capital Murder Study, June 14, 1973-February 4, 1976.

Huntsville

(Continued from Page 17)

at both execution extravaganzas — and at the same moments. When the cries of "Bullshit, bullshit" drowned out Attorney General Jim Mattox as he tried to explain the stay, the reporters were the ones who cried the loudest for silence so they could "do our jobs." It was the same situation last year when TDC officials and media witnesses tried to answer questions from the press following Brooks' death. The message is the same, too, but the press never takes time to explain it, and the goons in the crowd would never figure it out themselves.

I have both the time and the inclination. What the media cries for silence are really saying is that the men and women at the microphones are the ones in the center ring and the ghouls are merely the sideshow freaks. Again, the press should not — and cannot — ignore the sideshow, but, by remembering it for what it is, the media could prevent an even uglier story developing of a lynch mob unloosed seeking violent expiation elsewhere.

That takes care of how the scenes in front of the Walls become so ugly — and scary as hell. How does it relate to a defense of Huntsville? There are no more than a dozen working journalists from the Huntsville media covering the execution-night festivities. The rest are from elsewhere. Similarly, the Sam Houston students are only temporary residents of this town. And it should be pointed out in fairness to SHSU that the publicity geeks who may get someone hurt the next time around account for less than one percent of the college's student body. Thus, Huntsville can claim very little credit for originating the ugliness which emanates from here on an execution night. It's the work of people from throughout the state — sort of like the makeup of our prison populations.

I, for one, am tired of Huntsville looking like the moron capital of Texas. There's not a lot of difference in attitude between chanting "bullshit" as a court-ordered stay is announced or saying, Mattox told the local yahoos, he never knows what to expect from the Fifth Circuit or the Supreme Court.

The retirement of the electric chair and introduction of intravenous death makes the technology for execution locally available throughout the state — the better to deter you with, pro-death advocates could say. I hope for the appropriate legislation to return the death penalty to the county where the crime was committed. Let the Neanderthals in Houston, Dallas, Austin and elsewhere parade their ignorance for the media. Let the evil vibes of unbridled hatred reach Huntsville from a distance for a change. By taking the death show on the road, people throughout Texas could — if they would — see just what an ugly business an execution is and that they have never really confined that ugliness to a small town in East Texas. □

Gary Edmondson is a poet and printer living in Huntsville.

Proportionality

(Continued from Page 17)

charged with death of an anglo were prosecuted as capital murder. Only 32% of anglo-on-minority or minority-on-minority were tried as capital murder.[3]

A plausible hypothesis is that there are factors at work other than the heinous nature of the crime that caused the state's attorney to seek and the judicial process to assess the death penalty. Among those would seem to be the race and the socioeconomic class of both the victim and the defendant — and whether the crime had become a media event. This is the essence of the proportionality argument.

In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court threw out all of the death penalty statutes after finding that, as applied, the death penalty was administered in a "harsh, freakish, and arbitrary" fashion. Between 1930 and 1967, for example, 455 persons were executed for rape (not rape-murder) in this country; 405 were black. All 455 executions were for the rape of a white woman.

While this society has come a long way since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, not all vestiges of racism have been eliminated from the criminal justice system. This is clearly indicated by the available Texas statistics. It is unfortunate that the Texas Judicial Council ceased to collect and publish the above-quoted statistics after 1977. Later data would no doubt be consistent with earlier findings.

Unfortunately, the issue of proportionality review raised in the Autry case may be a short-lived legal issue. The Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit held last year that a death sentence could not be carried out until and unless the California Supreme Court conducted a comparative proportionality review to assure that "the penalty in each case is proportionate to other sentences imposed for similar crimes."

Last term the U.S. Supreme Court reached out and took cases from the California Supreme Court and the Eleventh Circuit and reimposed death sentences that had been set aside by the lower courts. In one of those cases Justice Stevens wrote of the Rehnquist/Burger/O'Connor majority, "No rule of law required the court to hear this case. . . . No other state would have been required to follow the California precedent if it had been permitted to stand. Nothing more than an interest in facilitating the imposition of the death penalty in California justified this Court's exercise of its discretion to review the judgment of the California Supreme Court."

It would appear that the same Rehnquist faction on the court voted to grant the State of California's request to review the proportionality issue, and, given the Rehnquist faction's increasingly impatient attitude toward the subject of death, the prospects of capital punishment opponents prevailing on the issue are not good.

Another issue closely connected to the proportionality issue is the practice of prosecutors' using peremptory challenges to remove all blacks from the jury panel. On October 3 of this year, Justice Marshall wrote in dissent, "For the third time this year, this Court has refused to review a case in which an all-white jury has sentenced a Negro defendant to death after the prosecution used peremptory challenges to

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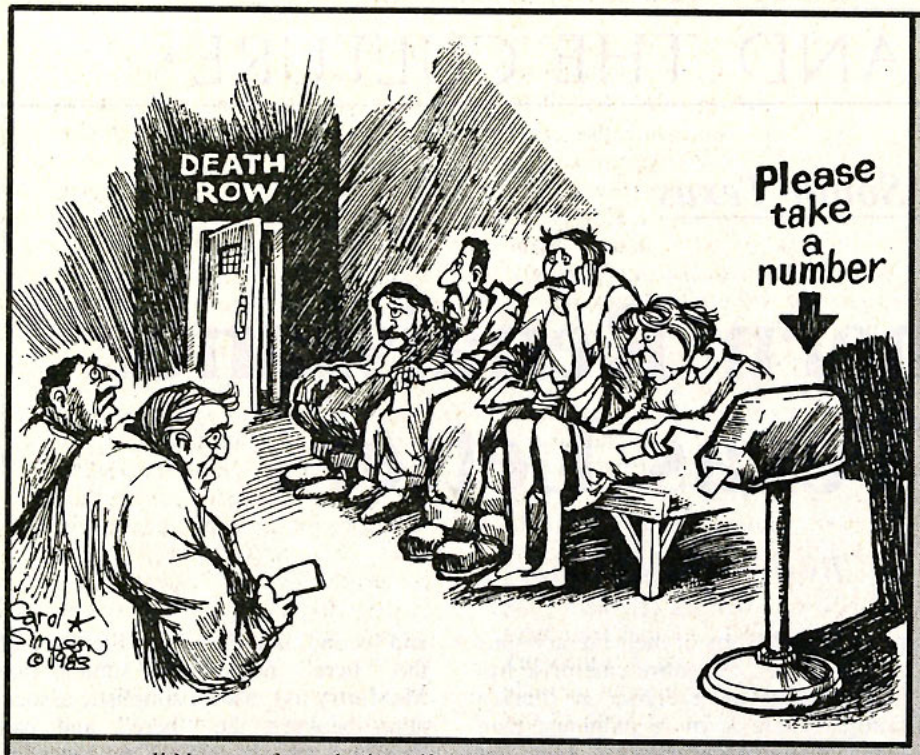
[3]Source: unpublished study of Houston Police Department and Harris County District Attorney practices, 1975-1978, Professor Ed Sherman, University of Texas Law School.



remove all Negroes from the jury."

It is clear that many Texas prosecutors have followed such a practice. For example, when the Dallas County District Attorney's Office held its annual week-long "Criminal Prosecution Course" in 1976, John Sparling, Chief of the Specialized Crime Division of Henry Wade's office, distributed a paper on jury selection. It said, "You are not looking for a member of a minority group . . . they almost always empathize with the accused."

The 1977 Texas Judicial Council Study indicates a record of blacks on only thirteen of the first 56 death-sentencing juries. Of the 22 black defendants, only 4 had blacks on their juries.

It should be clear that proportionality as an issue goes beyond the issue of disproportionate treatment of co-defendants. And in fact many cases involving co-defendants with disparate sentences are not good proportionality cases because the factual records of the cases clearly indicate the differing degree of involvement of the co-defendants.

Yet, the case of Charlie Brooks is the ultimate proportionality case. Two persons enter a motel room with one hostage and one gun. One shot is fired. At no time in the proceedings against either defendant was anything introduced into the record that indicated who fired the fatal shot other than Woody Loudres answer of "yes" to the question in his plea of "Did you cause the death of an individual . . . by shooting him with a firearm?"

On November 1, 1982, Loudres plea bargain was filed. His death sentence had been overturned due to an error in jury selection, and now out of the glare of publicity from earlier years he was allowed to plea to a sentence of forty years — parole eligible in seven years. On November 5, 1982, in the same Tarrant County courthouse, a judge signed Charlie Brooks death warrant.

Proportionality? The Loudres plea bargain instantly made it the underlying issue in the Brooks appeal. A stay was sought pending appeal, and a stay was denied. Charlie Brooks was executed on December 7, 1982.

On April 7, 1983, the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which along with the U.S. Supreme Court had refused to issue a stay pending appeal, dismissed the Brooks appeal as having been mooted by Brooks death.

On July 6, 1983, in the Barefoot case, the Supreme Court said, "When a certificate of probable cause is issued by the district court . . . a petitioner must then be allowed to address the merits, and the court of appeals is obligated to hear the merits of the appeal." The court went on to say a stay should be issued "where necessary to prevent the case from becoming moot by the petitioner's execution." Charlie Brooks had a certificate of probable cause for appeal.

Do we need proportionality as an issue? Not really. The U.S. Supreme Court in its collective inaction and in its actions in Brooks, Barefoot, and Autry has failed to meet its own standard that capital punishment not be applied in an arbitrary capricious manner. By failure to note the unbriefed ground of error on October 3 and voting 5-4 to allow Autry's execution to proceed they again underlined the fact that their procedures are as arbitrary and capricious as those that they condemned in Furman v. Georgia in 1972. That should be sufficient reason to finally eliminate capital punishment from our system of justice. □

John Duncan is director of the Texas Civil Liberties Union.

A literary flowering in South Texas

A "Southern Renaissance" for Texas Letters

By Jose E. Limon

I read, much of the night,
and go south in the winter.
— T. S. Eliot

. . . Home to Texas, our Texas
That slice of hell, heaven
Purgatory and land of our Fathers.
— Rolando Hinojosa

Austin

THE FOREMOST of the few critics of Texas literature has come to believe that there is no such worthy thing. Larry McMurtry started out on his path to judgment with his 1968 essay "Southwestern Literature?" which really dealt substantially only with Texas literature defined as the books "native in the most obvious sense: set here, centered here, and for the most part, written here." (McMurtry defines literature as not only fictive writing but history, social analysis, and the essay; I'm also speaking of literature in this broader sense.) Most of these Texas books were also contemporary, for, critically speaking, McMurtry saw "no point in going back beyond the thirties." Some thirteen years later he decided fully to answer the question in his title with a new essay whose sub-title explicitly tells the whole story.

In "Ever a Bridegroom: Reflections on the Failure of Texas Literature," (*TO*, 10/21/81) McMurtry finally comes to harsh judgment. From its start with Webb, Dobie, and Bedichek to the present-day efforts of their literary sons and daughters, the entire enterprise has been largely an exercise in literary failure. There is more judgment than explanation in McMurtry's account, but he seems to find at least two major reasons for this failure: a lazy overindulgence in a Texas version of the pastoral and a related apparent reluctance on the part of Texas writers to read broadly and deeply. These two factors come together in a disastrous mix, producing ". . . a limited shallow, self-repetitious literature . . ." dealing with ". . . homefolks, the old folks, cowboys, and the small town . . . ," a literature ". . . disgracefully insular and uninformed." Texas has a literary culture, but one more akin to a biologist's sense of that term, for in McMurtry's estimation, this culture has become "a pond full of self-satisfied frogs."

There is an old Mexican saying, *"Silencio ranas, que va a cantar el sapo"* (Be silent frogs, the toad is about to sing). Yet even as I inject my voice into this discussion, it is not really to dispute McMurtry's critical claim which frankly I endorse, albeit with an endorsement based on a more limited knowledge of his area. Rather, and from a cultural anthropologist's perspective, I want to explore the possible reasons for this failure; I also want to point to one Texas regional/ethnic area not included in McMurtry's discussion, an area that might be an exception to his general indictment.

Let me begin with McMurtry's notion of the "here," for he suggests that it is the Texas writer's obsession with the rural Texas sense of time and place that vitiates this literature. Two questions emerge. First, is a concern for the "here" really the source of the problem, and second, is a significant literature of the "here" possible? I submit that McMurtry has made a simplistic association between the "here" and bad literature, that the two are not necessarily correlated.

Another American region with a distinctive literary identity might provide a useful comparison. I refer to what scholars call the Southern Renaissance — that great flowering of literature between the two World Wars that included Faulkner, Wolfe, Warren, Welty, Tate, and Ransom. In *Writers of the Modern South* (1963) Louis D. Rubin has this to say about that period and its literature: "A time and a place have produced a body of distinguished writing. No one would think to explain the nature of that distinction merely by examining the time and the place." However, he cannot finally deny time and place — a sense of the "here," for while great art is in one sense transcendant,

> . . . even so . . . when one looks at William Faulkner and his contemporaries, observes their sudden arrival on the literary scene when before them there was very little, notices the similarities in the way they use language, the way they write about people, the kind of life that interests them, one is convinced that literature grows out of culture, and theirs has grown out of the twentieth-century South and has its roots in Southern history and life.

Another perceptive student of the South has filled out what Rubin implies about Southern history and culture and its connection to literature. In *Consciousness and Chance*, the anthropologist James Peacock argues that the South's intense concern with the past, with kinship, hierarchy, race, and most fundamentally with a sharp

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Jose E. Limon is an assistant professor of anthropology at UT-Austin. This essay is an abbreviated version of a longer work in progress, "The Other American South: Society, Culture, and Literature in Mexican South Texas."

insider/outsider distinction *vis-a-vis* the North — all of these have provided the nutritive matrix for a great literature as gifted Southern writers responded with individual talents to the interplay of this tradition and a period of social change.

If these sorts of cultural concerns — this sense of the intense "here" and major social change — do have some responsibility for literature and intellect, at least in the United States, then it might make us reconsider the Texas literary effort and ask why it failed, and has continued to fail, although, at first glance, this same anthropology of literature might seem to hold for Texas as well.

IT SEEMS TO ME that to the extent that history and society are responsible for literature, the general Texas experience was simply not intense enough in comparison to the South — not enough history, kinship, hierarchy, race, and group sense — so that when change came to Texas at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, it was gradual; the nurturing crisis, therefore, was insufficiently intense. We must not forget that we are talking about slightly less than one hundred years from the time that the first English-speaking Texans appeared in this area to the beginnings of Texas literature. Not long, as history and society go. This was a relatively mobile, open, and geographically dispersed society, from the first English-speaking illegal aliens who flooded the area in the Mexican period to today's unemployed seeking the Sun Belt. Such mobility might not make for a group beset with intense and enduring concerns for kinship, hierarchy, race, and religion. These concerns were present, as they are in most societies; they simply may not have been particularly intense or salient.

To be sure, Mexicans, Indians, and blacks were possible foils for the development of a Texas racial consciousness, but these were small in number and either quickly exterminated or pushed to the margins of white society. They could never become a haunting, stimulating influence in the development of a Texas literature comparable to the black presence in Southern fiction or the formal negation of that presence in Southern poetics. Only the Mexicans come close, particularly in the work of Webb and Dobie. In our time, non-Texans have become the primary outsider reference group for the creation of an "insider" mentality, but nothing, of course, comparable to the Southern consciousness of the North.

In short, if the particular features of Southern history and culture "explain" anything about their significant literature of the "here," we can sense why a great Texas literature could not be, and why McMurtry is right, even while his explanation is limited. In spite of all its real and significant differences from other states, Texas has simply not furnished sufficient cultural metaphorical depth for its writers. Certainly enough dramatic history happened here to make for literary stimulation but not enough to provide the intense sociological conditions which could be sharply exploited by talented writers.

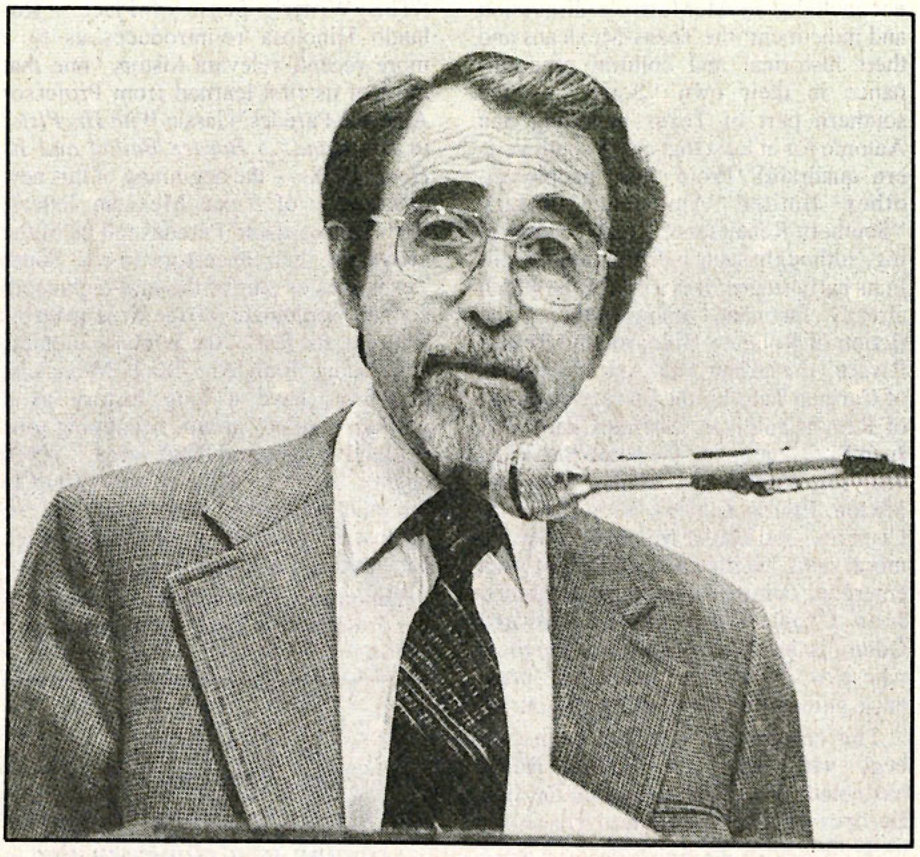

Photo by Larry Murphy

Americo Paredes speaking to last spring's UT literary symposium.

We come to the question of individual talents. As noted earlier, McMurtry believes that most Texas writers are intellectually ill-prepared for their task. For McMurtry (and I can only agree):

> Writing is nourished by reading — broad, curious, sustained reading; it flows from a profound alertness, fine-tuned both by literature and life. Perhaps we have not sloughed off the frontier notion that reading is idle or sissified. At the moment our books are protein deficient, though the protein is there to be had, in other literatures. Until we have better readers, it is most unlikely we will have better writers.

We can easily see why books might not have been central in nineteenth-century Texas life, but I, for one, am at a loss to explain why this condition should continue to prevail among Texas writers. The real problem, I suspect, is not the lack of well-read Texas intellectuals and potential writers, but their disinterest in Texas. Texas may be simply an insufficiently compelling literary resource which, by default, goes to minds generally of a second order. The real question is not why do Texas writers fail to read, but why do the best Texas minds take their intellectual and artistic energies to cultural domains other than Texas?

Allow me to speculate a bit. Had the conditions of long tradition, intense social change, and interested first-rate minds prevailed in Texas, it is possible that we might have seen a flowering of literature and intellectual life somewhat like that of the South — a literary culture with the concreteness of the "here" but with a larger, deeper, exploration of the human condition everywhere. That, if possible, might have been a successful Texas literature and not the failure generated by lesser conditions. The "here" as such is not the problem; it is the lack of historical, cultural and intellectual prerequisites for the significant use of the "here."

YET IT SEEMS TO ME that there is at least a possibility for such a Texas literary/intellectual culture of the "here," one which to some degree might resemble that of the Southern Renaissance. I refer to a group

not included in McMurtry's discussion and indictment: the Texas-Mexicans and their historical and cultural predominance in their own "South" — the southern part of Texas including San Antonio (or at least that city's southwestern quadrant). From these people another limited American literary "Southern Renaissance" may be emerging, although such a formation is still in its early stages. It is a discourse which already includes, among others, the fiction of Rolando Hinojosa and Tomas Rivera, the urban San Antonio poetry of Carmen Tafolla, the literary criticism of Ramon Saldivar, Norma Cantu, and Juan Rodriguez, and the socio-historical analyses of Ricardo Romo, Mauricio Mazon, Emilio Zamora, Victor Nelson-Cisneros, and David Montejano. At the moral and intellectual center of this emergent culture, like some combined John Crowe Ransom and Howard Odum, is the figure of Americo Paredes, whose work informs and whose presence guides this developing discourse.

This comparison with the South may begin with history. As Ricardo Romo has noted, one could argue that the first European literature native to Texas soil took the form of Cabeza de Vaca's fantastic reports from his travels "here" in the sixteenth century. In his essay "This Writer's Sense of Place," Rolando Hinojosa re-introduces us to a more recent, relevant history, one that most of us first learned from Professor Americo Paredes' classic *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (1958) — the beginning of this new emergence of Texas-Mexican letters. Both Hinojosa and Paredes tell us of the arrival of their ancestors in the South Texas area as part of the mid-eighteenth century settlement of the area even as Georgia, the last of the English colonies, was being founded. Texas-Mexicans, therefore, have a long history as a unified, settled group occupying one distinctive geographical area. When change began to come to this group in the mid-nineteenth century, it did so against the grain of long tradition which had nurtured a distinctive culture.

Hinojosa's account and that of Paredes also reveal a Texas-Mexican society intensely concerned with cultural themes not unlike those of the South. Here too geographical *place* is important for self and group definition. There is a keen awareness of social hierarchy, a sharp articulation of patriarchy, intense patterns of kinship.

This entire process of intense social change has been coming to a climax in the last ten to fifteen years.

We also find in both accounts the historical and continuing problem of race, which has haunted the Southern imagination, but in South Texas there is a complex difference. In one sense the Mexicans, like blacks, were the victims of racial violence and outright segregationist practices, the latter continuing well into our time. Unlike blacks, however, the Mexicans did not suffer slavery and discontinuity from their homeland; thus, they were more like Southern whites in relation to the North. Here we may have the most fundamental parallel to the South. As Hinojosa notes, South Texas *was* Mexican and thus the Mexicans have operated under an historically-derived insider/outsider distinction between those who were from *here* and those largely English-speaking outsiders who, like so many "Yankees," began to enter and dominate the area as the nineteenth century became the twentieth. Much of the literature of the Southern Renaissance can be read as symbolic response to this Northern presence in the Southern way of life. Similarly, the Mexicans had their "Northerners" and, as Paredes has shown us, they were called *fuerenos* and *gringos* (foreigners), and the very old people of South Texas still speak of the country beyond the Nueces as "el norte."

This unwelcome appearance of the Northern outsiders brings us to the theme of intense social change which has occupied such a prominent place in Southern history. More like the Southerners and less like their fellow Anglo-Texans, the South Texas-Mexicans experienced severe social disruption. It also spawned different forms of class and cultural rebellion and resistance. And it produced, with decidedly mixed blessings, the slow pressures of long-term acculturation.

Social change also came from the other side of the Rio Grande as a result of the chaos of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and its aftermath. *That* was a war, in comparison to the small affair of 1836. Thousands of impoverished refugees crossed the river to join their cultural kinsmen in South Texas, and, as Romo has shown us, this increased migration in turn produced the phenomenon of urbanization as Mexicans found their way to San Antonio, Houston, and Corpus Christi.

Finally and most importantly, this entire process of intense social change has been coming to a climax in the last ten to fifteen years. The Texas-Mexicans are in a position analogous to that of the South between the two World Wars as past tradition meets the most far-reaching social change, including the potential loss of tradition itself. Texas-Mexicans, in coming to terms with a more intense cultural past and therefore a greater culture threat in the present, appear to be responding, as did the South, with a rich array of symbolic forms, not only literary but critical, historical and sociological.

Another important element which must be added to this formative mix of tradition and social change is the role of learning and intellect. As McMurtry has noted, the Anglo-Texas literary tradition has not been particularly blessed with either of these, but the Texas-Mexicans may be in a better position in this regard. Paredes has pointed to this community's long tradition of folkloric literature, as well as an extensive written literary tradition, principally in the medium of local Spanish-language newspapers. Those writers and intellectuals who are beginning to give us the first impressions of this new Texas-Mexican renaissance are

drawing upon and re-examining these two traditions.

There is also a third source of learning, and herein we find a bit of irony. This Texas-Mexican literary-intellectual community is also a product of the institutions of higher education created by the English-speaking Texans, and several are now faculty members of these institutions. (Indeed, this new artistic and intellectual concern with southern Texas is being articulated principally at or through the University of Texas at Austin; the South Texas-Mexicans have found their "Vanderbilt" and "Chapel Hill.") As such, these writers and intellectuals have a large and firm acquaintance with world letters and learning. It is an acquaintance of some intensity. As Franz Fanon noted some years ago, the peculiar marginality which is the condition of "native intellectuals" leads them to feast

> . . . greedily upon Western culture. Like adopted children who only stop investigating the new family framework at the moment when a minimum nucleus of security crystallizes in their psyche, the native intellectual will try to make European culture his own. He will not be content to get to know Rabelais and Diderot, Shakespeare and Edgar Allen Poe; he will bind them to his intelligence as closely as possible . . .

No one can say with any certainty how significant this "Southern Renaissance" will be. The writing continues; its merit will be decided in time, although already, for this critic anyway, it shows promise. According to McMurtry, Texas literature seems to need all the help it can get, but Texas, he and others seem to forget, does not stop at the Nueces; the Anglo-Texans saw to that in the nineteenth century. The intriguing paradox is that, like the Northern invasion of the South, this historical process of contact and domination in South Texas may have produced the much needed replenishment and amplification of what it means to say Texas literature. □

Greasers Chronicles Texas Racism, Past and Present

By James C. Harrington

Austin

THEY CALLED THEM GREASERS is one book you won't find for sale in the Alamo's gift shop. Nor will author Arnoldo De Leon ever be a welcome guest of the Daughters of the Texas Revolution in their hallowed shrine to the defeat of Bowie, Crockett, and company.

In fact, De Leon's book barely mentions the Alamo, probably because, as an event, the fall of the San Antonio mission was insignificant to the lives of Texas *mexicanos*. Yet its historical symbolism for Anglos is what *Greasers* is all about.

De Leon's scholarly work looks at 19th-century Anglo attitudes, feelings, and beliefs toward Mexican-Texans; but it chronicles more than past chronologies. *Greasers* describes the growth of a historical racism which reaches into our present time and helps us understand such modern-day phenomena as the quiet but effective community organizing of *mexicanos* and their recent dramatic muscle at South Texas ballot boxes.

De Leon shows Texas Anglos building a "white racial state" in the 1800's by using violence and manipulating *mexicanos*. For example, he quotes a government surveyor in the Valley during Franklin Pierce's administration:

> The white makes his alliance with his darker partner for no other purposes than to satisfy a law of nature, or to acquire property, and when that is accomplished all affection ceases.

THEY CALLED THEM GREASERS: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900

Arnoldo De Leon

Austin: University of Texas Press
153 pp., $19.95 ($8.95 paperback)

The Anglos brought with them the desire to create a Texas separate from Mexico. De Leon argues that racism helped move Anglo Texans inexorably toward independence: "Racism was not *the* cause of the Texas Revolution, but very certainly, it was *very* prominent as a promoting and underlying cause. Its roots were planted in the unique psychohistorical experience of white Texas pioneers and settlers."

Greasers examines how Anglo writings, speeches, and newsprint (especially the Corpus Christi, Brownsville, and San Antonio papers) seized upon myths to perpetuate the Anglo belief of self-superiority, especially so that "rationalization could be made for dual wage systems."

Many of the myths are still familiar. *Mexicanos* complacently accepted "their fate of social inequality." They were cheerful and given to perpetual merriment; they drank excessively and possessed defective moralities (and *mexicanas* lusted after the white men, causing their fall into sin) — all the same "deficiences" catalogued about America's other racial and ethnic peoples and uttered today by Texas growers about *mexicano* farm workers.

But, as *Greasers* notes ironically, Anglos still depended on those "inferior" and "indolent" people who "composed the primary labor force responsible for . . . advances," including laying the railroads of Texas, building its cities, and harvesting the fields. Work 'em harder; pay em less — and laugh all the way to the bank.

Not long after Texas independence came events leading up to the Civil War. As a rule (save for a few Starr County and Laredo bounty hunters), *mexicanos* opposed slavery as contrary to democracy. Their American loyalty as a result was challenged.

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Anti-slavery sentiment was widespread, despite severe punishment for breaking the slave codes. The underground railroad into Mexico was so effective that Anglos talked of sending the Texas Rangers to patrol the Rio Grande border.

Texas plantation slaveholders retaliated against such "traitorous" *mexicanos*. Guadalupe County passed resolutions prohibiting Mexican "peon" sympathizers. An 1854 Gonzales convention recommended vigilance committees to prosecute persons tampering with slaves. Colorado County formed a patrol to keep out *mexicanos*. Matagorda County simply expelled all *mexicanos*, and Uvalde County would not let a *mexicano* travel without a passport granted by an Anglo.

One of the more important historical events for *mexicanos* at the time was the 1859 Juan Cortina insurgency, which coincided so closely with John Brown's Harper Ferry raid that it "sent the most chilling tremors of fear into the world of white Texans."

Cortina's uprising started in July in a Brownsville cafe when he shot an Anglo sheriff for using a racial epithet against him. Cortina then retreated to his mother's ranch nearby. A few months later, he occupied Brownsville, freeing some prisoners from the city jail. He went to Mexico for a while then returned to the ranch, where, for two months, he withstood military attacks to dislodge him until mid-December when he retreated upriver and into Mexico.

While at Rancho del Carmen, Cortina issued several proclamations "on behalf of a downtrodden people," accusing the Anglos of "robbing the natives of their land titles, incarcerating and murdering them." He hoped in vain that Governor-elect Sam Houston would give legal protection to him and his followers.

Cortina's victories electrified Valley *mexicanos* and made him a hero. Many joined his ranks. To the extent that Cortina called attention to a government which had deviated from its democratic principles, De Leon compares his uprising to Shays' Rebellion, the Whiskey Rebellion, and even the Texas Revolution.

The Cortina insurgency contributed strongly to the refusal by many south Texas *mexicanos* to show allegiance to the Confederacy, although there were more Mexican soldiers in the Confederacy than serving the Union. A band of pro-Union Zapata County *mexicanos* were defeated near Carrizo while marching to the county seat to prevent some county officers from taking the oath required by the Secession Convention. In South Texas, *mexicanos* harassed rebel soldiers and seized cotton and stock for the northern forces.

After the war, Union sentiment translated into general *mexicano* support for Radical Reconstruction, except to some extent in San Antonio. The *New York Times* reported that Mexican-Americans in Texas remained loyal to the federal government, while ex-Confederates were doing everything they could to subvert Reconstruction.

De Leon sees that period in Texas history as the beginning of "an almost perpetual demand" that *mexicanos* prove their loyalty. To be sure, in those days, as today, some of the Mexican population in South Texas "floated" between Mexico and the United States; but Anglos could never understand that the political loyalties of Texas *mexicanos* were different from those of Mexican nationals.

The violence unleashed by the Civil War and Reconstruction led to a bloody era in frontier Texas as Anglos began to murder and brutally repress blacks, Indians, and *mexicanos*. There were an astonishing number of lynchings, and they became an almost common form of retaliatory violence. It was clearly the most violent era in Texas history.

Some of the more notorious purveyors of violence were the Texas Rangers, the cowboy "outlaws of the state," who were tacitly hired "to do to Mexicans in the name of the law what others did extra-legally."

The Rangers had been abolished during Reconstruction, but were resurrected later. "Rip" Ford and Richard King (of King Ranch fame) often organized and used their own rangers to assist in their own "cattle stealing."

So depraved was the violence against *mexicanos* that De Leon wonders what would have happened "if, in those areas where they predominated, Mexicans did to whites what whites were doing to Mexicans?"

The 1870s and 1880s was also a period of general lawlessness in the Nueces Strip and out west in the Presidio area, where Mexican national outlaws crossed the border to plunder and sometimes kill Anglos and *mexicanos* alike. But, compared to the dozen whites or so who were killed in the Rio Grande Valley in 1873, for example, hundreds of *mexicanos* were hanged or shot by Anglos.

And *mexicanos* fought back. There were riots in El Paso (1877), Alpine (1886), Laredo (1886), Rio Grande City (1888), and Beeville (1894).

About the same time, Anglo commercial farming began to transform the Valley, as well as introduce more prejudice against a population which then was almost totally *mexicano*.

There is almost a historical logic to the Rangers' helping the growers steal land from *mexicanos* and then, nearly a century later, seeing the growers call upon Captain Allee and his *rinches* to brutally break the United Farm Workers strike in Starr County.

The history of the Mexican fight against Rangers and Anglo violence lives on in Valley folklore. Corridos are still popular and widely sung about such turn-of-the-century heroes as Gregorio Cortez and Dimas De Leon.

A note about *Greasers'* style before looking at its 20th Century conclusion. If the strength of *Greasers* is historical overview, its weakness is its scholarly

On Red- and the

By Ed Garcia

Dallas

THEY CALLED THEM GREASERS is an angry book. I imagine the author, Arnoldo De Leon, coming home at night from the archives after a day of poring over microfilms of the *Brownsville Ranchero* or the *Beeville Weekly Picayune*, mad as hell, telling his wife, "Let me read you this, can you *believe* those bastards?"

His book is about Anglo attitudes toward Mexicans in 19th Century Texas, and it is full of juicy quotations like this one:

> They are of mongrel blood the Aztec predominating. These degraded creatures are mere pilferers, scavengers and vagabonds downright barbarians but a single remove above the Digger Indians, hanging like vermin on the skirts of civilization — a complete pest to humanity.

That's a man named Gilbert D. Kingsbury writing about the Mexicans of Brownsville in the early 1860s. My father tells me that our family was already in Brownsville by then.

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tone. Not to speak ill of academia, but too often the style can be ponderous and cumbersome. On the other hand, such a serious debunking of Texas history needs all its footnotes to withstand a sure barrage of skepticism.

Greasers' structural outline bounces back and forth between thematic development and historical treatment. As a result, it chops up important historical happenings (such as Juan Cortina) and examines them in different chapters from varying perspectives. The events tend to lack a cohesive impact. *Greasers* would have read more powerfully if it had examined events chronologically, analyzing their ramifications and nuances at once. The piecemeal treatment tends to diminish its historical impact.

The nagging question on which *Greasers* ends is: How many Anglo folks still have racist motivations? De Leon's last chapter is a kind of mellow toast that things are better — at least there is less physical violence and fewer gross manifestations of racism. It is not now always popular to be a bigot. Government policy does not generally favor out-in-the-open discrimination, and society appreciates more the cohesiveness of Mexican family life.

Things may be better; but bigotry and bias still thrive, especially when combined with poverty. Consider again the miserable treatment of Mexican farm workers in Texas and the still discriminatory laws under which they suffer. And immigration laws are made and enforced against *mexicanos* with a vengeance that Anglos would not tolerate against their own kind. The racism implicit in the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill and its jobs provisions and rehashed bracero program, for example, will enforce as much discrimination and abuse as the more appallingly overt racist immigration laws of days past.

Maybe we are making progress, but the subtleties of modern life often obscure racism's new sophistication, which rests, as it always has, on the old WASP notion that *mexicanos* are "not the white man's equal."

Maybe we should be as sanguine as De Leon about improvement, but the scope of his research suggests that we still too easily re-create the same injustice as did our predecessors a century ago. Any hope for the future will only come from the history we make as we earn our daily bread. □

Haired Girls Greaser-in-me

DeLeon also discovered apparently serious beliefs that the bodies of Mexicans are unpalatable to buzzards and coyotes — all those spices and peppers. Those ideas are a laughable remnant of a savage, old world that, thank God, we don't live in anymore.

And yet . . .

And yet there is the sneaking, paranoid suspicion that the difference between then and now is a matter of fashion, of politeness — that beneath the more polite surface slither those same venemous attitudes.

Of course, that is all wrong. "Things" are better. There's that mayor of San Antonio and Freddy Pena from Brownsville is the new mayor of Denver. (Maybe his folks weren't in Brownsville in the 1860s.)

And besides that we aren't *greasers* anymore. We don't talk in that sing-song accent — some of us have even taken on a broad Texas twang. Some of us have named our children Garth and Kristin.

It would seem there is something unassimilable about DeLeon's book, some long buried, but still rubbed-raw place it touches.

When I was a boy, the fashionable neighborhood in Brownsville was called Los Ebanos — The Ebonies. Later, when it got a little less fashionable, the joke was that they had changed the name to Los Sebos because of all the Mexicans that had moved in. "Sebo" means grease. This joke was told by Mexicans. I couldn't say what jokes the Anglos were telling.

The summer before seventh grade, I went to a dance at the Country Club. I remember a red-haired girl named Cindy came up and said, "I'm glad I'm not you. Those ladies over there are talking about you." I didn't even look over to see who the ladies were and I never found out what Cindy heard, but I *thought* I knew and I think now I was right. Word obviously was out. I was a Mexican.

My first wife's father didn't want her to marry me — he didn't know me — because I was a Mexican. I understand that. We were married anyway, and I came to have a great affection for him and to be glad he was my children's grandfather. He grew up in Turnersville, Texas, and probably had a pretty limited experience of Mexicans. My aunt, on the other hand, could not understand. "It's not as if Eddie is a *dark* Mexican," she told my parents.

I can't pretend to be much scarred by all of this though I can still remember the soul-chill of Cindy's words on that warm summer night. It was as if someone had decided that I should have implanted in me a small, poisonous doubt. What if the ladies were talking about someone else, or about my being fat or looking ridiculous in a flattop? No matter. If not that night, then another.

DeLeon tells plenty of stories of lynchings and other atrocities, but those seem remote, at least from my experience. I am troubled rather by the imagined slights and the deep, even unconscious suspicion that "they" are right about us. That what we are can never be as good, no matter how white we become.

That is what is unacceptable — not what someone has thought of me, but the "greaser" implanted in me. The greaser-in-me is an invitation to despise myself, to be determined to change myself until I am acceptable. Of course, the joke is on me. It doesn't matter what I do; the ladies aren't even paying attention. And it is unacceptable that, like my aunt, we become our own overseers, exacting subtle discriminations of color that most Anglos can't even see.

I remember a time when I was in college and heard of a conversation a friend had with a girl I knew slightly from high school. My friend asked her about me, and she said that in Brownsville some of the Mexicans you thought of as Mexicans and some you didn't. She told my friend that I was one of those you did think of as Mexican. To my discredit I thought and hoped she would say I was not. I am now — at this moment — ashamed of having wanted that. And I regret and resent ever having given a damn what she thought. But I did. □

A Sense of Place Marks Tale of Growing Up Female in Texas

By Susan L. Clark

Houston

A *FAMILY LIKENESS,* for which Janice Stout won the Frank Wardlaw Prize, draws heavily on East Texas regionalisms: the typically Southern double names (Ora Lee, Edna Earle), the "country" folk remedies, and the combination of piney woods and "dead heat" that is a Texas summer. Accordingly, the novel's most memorable scenes gather their shape from Stout's conscious awareness of regionalism, yet hers is a sense of place deliberately set back in time (the work's two parts focus on the Depression era and on the fifties) and made, paradoxically — as is always the case with successful regional novels — universal.

As a result, the determined marches that, first Edna Earle and then later her daughter Lori, make through puberty, as well as their conflicted identification with and separation from family, seem at first only possible against the stark backdrop of Clarksville's three-block main drag and the "stripped and barren fields" of the region's bottomed-out cotton culture. But the story Stout tells about growing up female in Texas proves to be the same story that has occupied other gifted regionalists such as Midwesterner Mabel Seeley in *A Woman of Property* or fellow Texan Dorothy L. Scarborough in *Impatient Griselda.* Each heroine must sort out for herself, against her unique background of landscape and customs, those origins that inform her past and shape her future, as well as those "givens" in her particular family situation that may be discarded or disregarded.

For Edna Earle McCall, the girl of Part I who turns 15 on August 5, 1931, that particular family situation is painfully apparent. Her older sister, Ora Lee, is the sort who runs "full tilt up against frustrations" and later becomes a family disgrace for "goin' off in sin" with a boy. Then there is Cleora, whose aggravating adolescent prissiness matures into intolerable whining accusations at the family reunion that takes place in the fifties, just after the fifteenth birthday of Edna Earle's daughter, Lori. Floyd, who pumps gas, and Elmo, who aspires to be a preacher, are more to Edna Earle's liking, whereas her married sister, Ruth, is just another irritation.

A FAMILY LIKENESS
By Janice Stout
Austin. Texas Monthly Press, 1982
$11.95

Against Billie, the baby of the family, Edna Earle harbors an "inner trench of resentment . . . that would never be filled in," for Billie's father was not Virgil McCall, but rather crazy-eyed Jake Glover, a mental patient who terrorizes the entire family because Edna Earle's mother has him arrested for "petting on the girls" and exposing himself to Ora Lee. Finally, there is Mamma McCall, (who will later be "Mamaw" to Lori), her arms "ropy with strength" and her attitude one that allows her to "face away from that gray wall of sure defeat" and work against tremendous odds to keep the family together, first in East Texas and then in Fort Worth, during hard economic times.

Part II of *A Family Likeness* treats Lori's coming of age, a process that bears certain fundamental resemblances to Edna Earle's growth in Part I and yet exhibits necessary and healthy differences. Lori is a city child for whom East Texas is a land of mythic proportions and her family is a source of great curiosity. The reader first encounters her sorting and poring over family pictures, "her fingertip hovering over each face in turn, looking for her own likeness in one or another of them," trying "to connect one image with the other." McCall family history filtered through Lori's growing consciousness of it becomes a demythologizing of the world that she sees in the family pictures. This process is effected on a day-to-day basis by her own observations of Mamaw, the photographic image that looks "like a real pioneer" having been replaced by "the old matriarch who didn't rule any more."

Mamaw and Edna Earle continually retell and revise the family history, and Lori finds herself hating and loving them with all the intensity of an adolescent as she, "this smart-mouthed kid that had appeared in their midst," grows and takes "the place of that good little girl." Awkwardly, she stands on the edge of Mamaw's and her mother's conversations, which turn so much on old times and women's work, and she wonders:

"Had Mama sat in the kitchen and watched Mamaw like this when she was a girl? Had Mamaw watched her own mother and even grandmother? For she must have had one, though Lori had never heard about her. Maybe this was the regressive linkage of the chain of foremothers, this kitchen-sharing,

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kitchen-love, a parallel to the history-book linkage of the forefathers."

Stout's raising of the "history-book" linkage proves to be telling, for it is Lori's father, seen reading about Jefferson Davis and who "fancies himself a fair amateur historian," who sparks Lori's interest in history, so that she takes a novel and a history book with her when she goes to East Texas to spend a week with Aunt Ruth and her family. Yet the history remains largely unread: "All week long she had tried to fill the time with reading, and still her bookmark set off only a quarter inch from the fatness of the waiting chapters."

Instead, Edna Earle, her mother, and her daughter all come to experience a different sort of history, not a "great men's history," but rather a history of foremothers that is made up of conversations over women's work, meals, holidays, and reunions.

A Family Likeness punctuates Lori's involvement in this history with two significant incidents: a hilarious 4th of July family reunion picnic, and a painful visit to East Texas, when her cousins and a buddy ("Ol' Jerry") attempt to initiate Lori sexually. The former is a comedy of errors filled with squabbles, wonderfully true-to-life dialogue, and the "body of shared love" that forms part of the social rituals of the McCall family.

Out of the picnic arises the second milestone event in Lori's coming into touch with her history, and that offers itself in the form of a casually rendered invitation from Ruth's boys, Duane and Randy, to visit them in East Texas. The visit, so eagerly anticipated, turns unpleasant, despite the aura with which Lori has imbued her journey back to her origins, to "down home." Moreover, she seeks in visiting her cousins to escape the awareness of her awakening sexuality and the unpleasant obscene phone calls she regularly gets, and finds instead a confrontation with the very conflict with which she associates Fort Worth: some man/boy "getting to her" before she is a certain age. For Lori, Fort Worth — and not East Texas — is a way-station on her road to adulthood, and she is forced to ask why it was "so important for her mother to have reached [Fort Worth]? She was glad to be escaping it."

Despite the things that "went wrong" with Lori's visit "down home," this encounter with family likeness takes its place with the novel's other renderings of growth. Stout expresses this growth in terms of each woman's resolve for a different present, a present that still retains necessary links to a rich and primarily female-rendered past.

A Family Likeness occasionally seems overstated and obvious until one realizes that the places where Stout relies on somewhat hackneyed images (the country girl who longs for the city, the mother who pins her hopes on her daughter, the indominatible matriarch) are precisely those points where the reader is challenged to recognize the network of likenesses that link not only families but also works in a literary tradition. Stout draws on the increasing body of literature about growing up female — and male — in Texas. Clarksville isn't Thalia, not by a long shot, but *A Family Likeness'* blend of penetrating sadness and humor compares favorably to the best of the early McMurtry and marks Stout as a writer of considerable promise. □

Ronnie Dugger: "Heard's accounts of the Bees in hiding are the pure gold of real history."

Bryan Woolley *(Dallas Times Herald):* "It ought to be right beside the Alamo books."

"The Miracle of the KILLER BEES: 12 Senators Who Changed Texas Politics"
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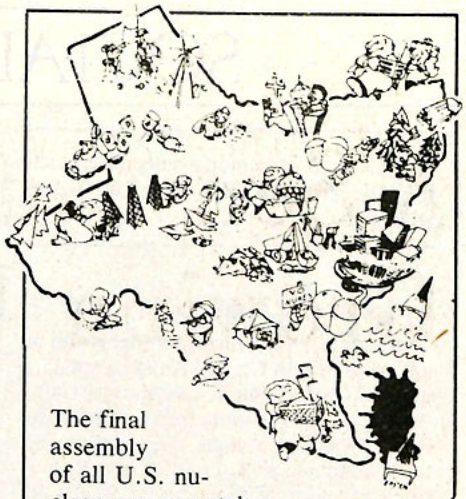

The final assembly of all U.S. nuclear weapons takes place in the Texas Panhandle. Houston has more oil company headquarters than any other city in the world. The whole state reeks of Sunbelt boosters, strident anti-unionists, political hucksters, and new industry and money.

THIS IS THE LOOK OF TEXAS TODAY and the *Texas Observer* has its independent eye on all of it. We offer the latest in corporate scams and political scandals as well as articles on those who have other, and more humane, visions of what our state can be. Become an *Observer* subscriber today, order a gift for a friend, or instruct us to enter a library subscription under your patronage.

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◦SOCIAL CAUSE CALENDAR◦

Notices on upcoming events must reach the *Observer* at least three weeks in advance.

CENTRAL AMERICA BENEFIT

Entertainer Roy Brown will perform at a Pena to benefit Central America solidarity work, **November 4,** Las Manitas Cafe, Austin, 8 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Puerto Rican Graduate Student Association and the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador. Tickets are $3.50, $4.50 at the door.

SUNSET REVIEW WORKSHOP

The Texas Environmental Coalition, the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, and other environmental protection organizations will hold a day-long workshop to inform conservationists about the sunset review of state agencies with environmental and national resources responsibilities, **November 5,** South Austin Neighborhood Resource Center, 2508 Durwood, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., $10 registration fee. For information and to register call (512) 476-6962.

NUCLEAR SECURITY TALK

Physicians for Social Responsibility will sponsor a talk on "The Myth of Nuclear Security: Why Do We Believe It" by psychiatrist Judith Lipton, M.D., expert on the effects of the threat of nuclear war on children, **November 7,** UT-Austin, East Campus Lecture Hall, Sid Richardson complex, 7:30 p.m., free. Call (512) 480-8273 for details.

DEPRESSION EXHIBIT

A show of mid-1930's photographs by Walker Evans, which dramatize the plight of the rural poor in the United States, will continue at the San Antonio Museum of Art, Photography Gallery, 200 W. Jones Avenue, through **November.**

MILITARY ARGUMENTS AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Departments of Sociology and Political Science at Trinity University, and the United Campuses Against Nuclear War will co-sponsor a talk by Major General W. T. Fairbourn, Ret., U.S.M.C., former strategic planner for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who will give the military argument against nuclear weapons and warfare. Judith Lipton, M.D., will also speak on the psychological consequences of the nuclear arms race, **November 8,** Trinity University, Laurie Auditorium, San Antonio, 8 p.m. Call (512) 226-0636, Megan Gerety, for details.

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM

There will be an Austin meeting in **mid-November** to prepare for the National Issues Forum, **March 1984,** LBJ Library, Austin. Those interested in being one of a limited number of participants in the nuclear forum, federal budget discussions, and/or talks on priorities for the nation's schools should contact the Austin chapter of the Gray Panthers, 7710 West Rim Dr., 78731, (512) 458-3738.

EVOLUTION AND TEXTBOOKS

A conference on "Evolution, Science Teaching and Textbook Selection in Texas," to discuss Texas restrictions on the teaching of evolutionary theory and textbook content requirements will be sponsored by People for the American Way, **November 9,** Sheraton Crest Hotel, Austin; $20 fee for materials and lunch. Contact PAW, 1206 San Antonio St., 78701, to register.

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

In November the House and Senate are scheduled to consider the Defense Appropriations Bill for 1984. Important votes are expected on the MX missile, Pershing II and Cruise missiles, chemical weapons production, and the nuclear freeze resolution. Organizations of lawyers, physicians, churches, environmentalists, and others are calling for concerned citizens to write, call, send telegrams, or arrange meetings with their representatives and senators to urge them to oppose production and funding for these weapons.

WATER EXHIBIT

A public "Water Exhibit" of Houston's water problems scaled down to size with models of the Watershed, Buffalo Bayou Beautification Project, Houston Ship Channel Clean-up, and Wetlands Wildlife Protection Exhibit will be presented for viewing by the River Oaks Garden Club, **November 9-10, Garden Club Forum Building, 2503 Westheimer, Houston. Call (713) 522-0916 for times.**

GRIDIRON SHOW

The Sixth Annual Gridiron Show, a journalists' spoof on politicians to raise money for the Stuart Long Memorial Scholarships and the Dewitt C. Reddick First Amendment Fund, will be **November 12,** Paramount Theatre, Austin, 8 p.m., $9 admission. For more information contact Glenn Smith, Houston Chronicle Capital Bureau, (512) 478-3495.

Progressive Organizations

The Observer is now filling orders for its mailing list of progressive organizations. The list is available for a $5 processing fee to any group deemed progressive in purpose. Please send us the name, address, and phone number of any group we've omitted. *The Observer* especially thanks those friends who helped with the updating task.

AUSTIN

ACLU, 447-5849; **ACORN,** 442-8321; **Alternative Views (ACTV),** Box 7279, 78712; **Amn. Friends Service Cmte.,** 474-2399; **Amnesty Intl.,** Box 4951, 78765; **Anti-Hunger Coalition of Tx. (ACT),** 474-9921; **Assoc. for Retarded Citizens (ARC),** 476-7044; **Audubon Scty.,** 472-4523; **Audubon Scty. (National),** 327-1943; **Aus. Lesbian-Gay Pol. Caucus,** 474-2717; **Aus. Nghbrhood Fund,** 454-0963; **Aus. Peace and Justice Coalition,** 474-5877; **Aus. Tenants Ccl.,** 474-1961; **Aus. Women's Alcohol Resource and Education Center (AWARE),** 472-5553; **Aus. Women's Centr.,** 472-3775; **Aus. Women's Political Caucus,** 474-1798; **Aus. Writers' League,** 444-9379; **Austinites for Public Transportation,** 454-9060; **Black Aus. Demos.,** 478-6576; **Blackland Nghbrhood Ass.,** 474-1243; **Brthrhood of Viet Vets.,** 892-4220; **Center for Battered Women,** 472-HURT; **Central America Resource Center,** 476-9841; **Central Aus. Demos.,** 477-6587; **Central Tx. Lignite Watch,** 479-0678; **Citizens Party,** 459-1022; **Ctzns. Party (Gay Caucus),** 472-1717; **Ctzns. United for Rehab. of Errants (CURE),** 476-4762; **Cmte. in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador,** 477-4728; **Common Cause,** 474-2374; **Demo. Socialists of America (DSA),** 458-2472; **Ecology Action,** 478-1645; **El Central Chicano,** 472-9832; **Grandparents for Nuclear Disarmament Action,** 453-1727; **Gray Panthers,** 458-3738; **IMPACT,** 472-3903; **In These Times (Tx. Bureau),** 477-3281; **Lawyers Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control (LANAC),** 476-5121; **League of Women Voters,** 451-6710; **Leonard Peltier Support Group,** 472-4142; **Live Oak Fund for Change,** 476-5714; **Lone Star Alliance,** 472-3998; **LUCHA,** 477-5770; **LULAC,** 477-6511, ext. 2859; **Max's Pot,** 928-4786; **Mxn.-Amn. Demos.,** 473-9444; **Music Umbrella,** 476-1324; **Nat'l Lawyers' Guild,** 472-6270; **NOW,** 452-7276; **Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign,** 476-3294; **Nurses' Environmental Health Watch,** 472-1980 (leave message); **Organizing Cmte. for a Nat'l. Writers Union, (OCNWU),** P.O. Box 4184, 78765; **Pax Christi,** 258-3942; **People for the American Way,** 472-7007; **Phogg Foundation,** Box 13549, 78711; **Planned Parenthood,** 472-0868; **Poverty Education and Research Center (PERC),** 474-5019; Box 13549; **Poverty, Education and Research Center Professionals for Nuclear Arms Limitations,** 443-9826; **Red Ryder Preservation Soc.,** 479-8548; **Save Barton Creek Assn.,** 451-7739; **Sierra Club,** 478-1264; **Socialist Party,** 452-3722; **Sponsor Coordinator for Refugees,** 454-2519; **Txns. for Children,** 445-0414; **Tx. Abortion Rights Action League (TARAL),** 478-0094; **Tx. Alliance,** 474-5019; **Tx. Center for Rural Studies,** 474-0811; **Tx. Cmte. on Natural Resources,** 443-8037; **Tx. Council on Family Violence,** 327-8582; **Tx. Death Penalty Action Group,** 3104 Dancy, 78722; **Tx. Environmental Coalition,** 476-3961; **Tx.**

Farm Workers Union, 441-0837; **Tx. Fathers for Equal Rights,** 452-0848; **Tx. Mobilization for Survival,** 474-5877; **Tx. Pesticide Project,** 474-0811; **Tx. Solar Energy Society,** 472-1252; **Tx. Women's Political Caucus,** 474-1798; **Travis Cty. Demo. Women's Cmte.,** 443-0479; **UCAM,** c/o Carlota Smith, Dept. of Linguistics, UT-Austin, 78712; **UNICEF,** 837-7248; **Univ. Mobilization for Survival,** 476-4503; **West Aus. Demos.,** 454-2828; **Women and Their Work,** 477-1064; **Women's Advocacy Project,** 477-8113.

AROUND TEXAS

Amarillo: Clergy and Laity Concerned, 373-8668; Panhandle Environmental Awareness Cmte., 376-8903. **Arlington:** United Viet. Vets. Organization, 461-6453. Arp: NOW, 566-8263. **Bastrop:** Central Tx. Lignite Watch, 321-5246. **Bay City:** Matagorda Co. Citizens for Environmental Protection, 245-2261. **Beaumont:** NOW, 833-9966; Sierra Club, 866-2814; United Viet. Vets. Organization, 727-4873. **Bonham:** Citizens Party, 111 E. 5th St., 75418. **College Station:** Alternative, 846-8022; Brazos Valley Peace Action, 693-1532; Brazos Valley Sierra Club, 696-7437; Bread for the World, 696-2802; Gay Student Services, 846-8022; NOW, 696-9538; Women and Agriculture Information Network, 846-2506. **Corpus Christi:** American GI Forum, 241-8647; Coastal Bend Sierra Club, 883-0586; C.C. Cmte. on Justice in El Salvador, 884-6699; C.C. Ground Zero, 884-2898; Gulf Coast Conservation Assoc., 991-9690; League of Women Voters, 991-4059; LULAC, 882-8284; NAACP, 884-8541; NOW, 883-4469; OPUS, 881-6308; Tx. Pesticide Abuse Coalition, 855-7061; Women's Political Caucus, 854-1080; Women's Shelter, 881-8888. **Denton:** Tx. Gay Task Force, 387-8216. **El Paso:** El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization, 772-1483; El Paso Peace Coalition, 9524 Bellis Ave., 79925; Santa Lucia Reach Out, 518 Gallagher, 79915. **Euless:** Dist. 10 Demos., 283-7001. **Fredericksburg:** Fredericksburg Peace Alliance, 997-3263. **Gainesville:** Organizing Cmte for Nat'l Writers Union, 411 N. Morris St., 76240. **Galveston:** Sierra Club, 765-9289. **Garland:** Bread for the World, 495-1494. **Hereford:** Tx. Rural Legal Aid, 364-3961. **Littlefield:** Socialist Party, Box 926, 79339. **Lubbock:** National Lawyers' Guild, 799-2714; Network, 796-1905; NOW, 793-0582; South Plains Alternative Resources Coalition, 796-1905; South Plains Clergy and Laity Concerned, 2007 28th St., 79411; West Tx. Demos., 792-5720. **Midland:** United Viet. Vets. Organization, 684-3768; Tx. Women's Political Caucus-Permian Basin, 683-3863. **Muleshoe:** Chicanos Unidos-Campesinos, Inc., 272-4233; Defensa, 272-4233. **Nacogdoches:** East Tx. Cmte. for Nuclear Awareness, 564-4553; Tx. Cmte on Natural Resources, 564-9728. **Raymondville:** Centro del Pueblo, 759 W. Hidalgo, 78580. **Robstown:** Citizens Against Dumps, Rt. 2, 78380. **San Angelo:** Concho Valley Sierra Club, 944-2424. **San Marcos:** Americans for a Secure Future, 396-4222; Students Against Continued Involvement in El Salvador, (Austin) 443-8525. **Saratoga:** Big Thicket Assn., 274-5000. **Temple:** Ground Zero, 771-3779; Temple Peace Group, 771-3779; United Viet. Vets. Organization, 773-7987; **Texas City:** Gulf Coast Council on Foreign Affairs, 938-1211, ext. 296/297. **Tyler:** Interfaith Peace Fellowship, 593-5650; NOW, 566-2705; Tyler Nuclear Awareness Group, 593-0184; Tyler Peace Group, 561-5501. **Valley (Rio Grande):** Border Assn. for Refugees from Central America, 585-4003; Cmte. Against Public Utilities, Box 789, Brownsville 78520; La Raza Legal Alliance, 402 E. Harrison, 2nd Floor, Harlingen, 78550; Oficina Legal, Box 1493, San Juan, 78589; Proyecto Libertad, 425-9552; Sierra Club, 687-2169; Tx. Health Coalition, 113 W. Harding, Harlingen, 78550; Valley Citizens for a Bilateral Nuclear Weapons Freeze, 682-1857; Valley Interfaith, 787-7283; Valley Pesticide Coalition, 968-9574; Valley Troqueros, 1101 Vine, Suite A, McAllen 78501. **Waco:** ACLU, 755-3611; American GI Forum, 799-8712; Audubon Society, 3701 Beverly Dr., 76711; Baylor Young Demos., 756-4839; Bread for the World, 772-3135; CURE, 754-2008; IMPACT, 772-7006; League of Women Voters, 754-1066; LULAC, 776-0438; NOW 752-5975. **Wichita Falls:** Citizens for Nuclear Awareness, 691-6001.

HOUSTON

ACLU, 524-5925; **ACORN,** 523-6989; **Americans for Democratic Action,** 669-0880; **Amnesty Intl.,** 626-0625; **Casa Juan Diego,** 869-7376; **Centro Para Inmigrantes de Houston,** 228-0091; **CISPES,** 524-4801; **Citizens' Anti-Nuclear Info. Team (CAN IT),** 522-3343; **Citizens' Environmental Coalition,** 523-3431; **Citizens' Party,** 434-1350; **Demo. Socialists of America (DSA),** 645-6522; **Gay Political Caucus,** 521-1000; **Harris Co. Concerned Women,** 674-0968; **Houston Anti-Draft Coalition,** 529-4087; **Houston Area Women's Center,** 528-6798; **Houston Nonviolent Action,** 661-9889; **Houston War Tax Resistance,** 661-9889; **Interfaith Cmte. on Central America,** 526-3276; **Interfaith Peaceforce of Houston,** 688-3803; **Lesbian and Gay Demos. of Texas,** 521-1000; **Metropolitan Organization,** 868-1429; **NAACP,** 526-3389; **NICASOL (Nicaraguan Solidarity),** 522-0619; **North Harris Co. Demos.,** Box 90704, 77290; **NOW,** 522-6673; **Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign,** 522-2422; **Park People, Inc.,** 741-2524; **Physicians for Social Responsibility,** 792-5048, or 774-4006; **Pueblo to People,** 523-1197; **Senate Dist. 15 Demos.,** 862-8431; **Sierra Club,** 523-3431; **Southern Africa Task Force,** 528-1225; **Tx. Abortion Rights Action League (TARAL),** 520-0850; **Tx. Coalition of Black Demos.,** 674-0968; **Tx. Fathers for Equal Rights,** 960-0407; **Toxic Substances Task Force,** 523-3431; **Women's Lobby Alliance,** 521-0439.

DALLAS

ACLU, 651-7897; **ACORN,** 823-4580; **Amns. for Demo. Action,** 368-8931; **Armadillo Coalition,** 349-1970; **Bois d'Arc Patriots,** 827-2632; **Bread for the World,** Joe Haag, 741-1991x298; **Casa America Libre,** 942-9413; **Ctzns. Assn. for Sound Energy (CASE),** 946-9446; **Ctzns. Party,** 352-1239; **Clean Air Coalition,** 387-2785; **Comanche Peak Life Force,** 337-5885; **Cmte. in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador,** 375-3715; **Dallas Area Bilateral Nuclear Freeze Coalition,** 324-1972; **Dallas-Ft. Worth Solar Energy Assn.,** 522-2816; **Dallas Friends Service Group,** 321-8643; **Dallas Gay Alliance,** 528-4233; **Dallas Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America,** 375-3715; **Dallas Nuclear Freeze Coalition,** 691-2872; **Dallas UN Assn.,** 526-1853; **E. Dallas Nghbrhood Assn.,** 827-1181; **Environmental Health Assn.,** 620-0620; **Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR),** 370-3805; **Fredrick Douglass Voting League,** 426-1867; **Hard Times News,** 942-4236; **Human Ecology Research Foundation,** 620-0620; **Humanists of North Tx.,** 381-1818; **Lawyers' Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control,** 43 Charles St., Suite 3, Boston, 02114; **Lesbian Rights Task Force (Dal. Co. NOW),** 742-6918; **Neighborhood Info. & Action Service,** 827-2632; **N. Lake Col. Solar Club,** 659-5254; **N. Tx. Abortion Rights Action League (NTARAL),** 742-8188; **NOW (Dal. Co.),** 742-6918; **NOW (N. Dal.),** 494-2990; **Physicians for Social Responsibility,** 688-2699; **Progressive Voters League,** 376-1660; **Resistance Cmte.,** 942-4236; **Sierra Club,** 369-5543; **Socialist Party,** 4711 Bowser, 15, 75219; **Tx. Cmte. on Natural Resources,** 352-8370; **Tx. Tenants Union,** 823-2733; **UNICEF,** 241-7807; **War Resisters League,** 337-5885; **West Dallas Involvement Cmte.,** 1902 Bickers, 75212; **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,** 324-1972.

FORT WORTH

ACLU, 534-6883; **ACORN,** 924-1401; **Allied Communities of Tarrant (ACT),** 332-1830; **Bread for the World (Dist. 12),** 924-1440; **Citizens for Education on Nuclear Arms (CENA),** 295-6587; **Citizens for Fair Utility Regulations,** 478-6372; **Citizens' Party,** 834-5123; **Coalition of Labor Union Women,** 540-1393; **Conscientious Objector Awareness Cmte.,** 457-6148; **Dist. 10 Demos.,** 283-7001; **Dist. 12 Demos.,** 535-7803; **Farm Workers' Support Cmte.,** 927-0808; **Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR),** 274-7554; **First Friday,** 927-0808; **Ft. Worth Task Force on Central America,** 921-0419; **IMPACT,** 923-4806; **Mental Health Assn.,** 335-5405; **Mexican-American Demos.,** 626-8305; **NOW,** 338-4456; **Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign,** 926-3827; **Sierra Club,** 923-9718; **Tarrant Co. Demo. Womens' Club,** 261-6583; **Tarrant Co. Precinct Workers' Club,** 429-2706; **Tx. Coalition of Black Demos.,** 534-7737; **Tx. Tenants' Union,** 923-5071; **Traditional Native American Circle,** 926-9258; **Women's Political Caucus,** 336-8700.

SAN ANTONIO

ACLU, 224-6791; **Alternatives to Imprisonment,** Box 27393, 78227; **Amnesty Int'l.,** 734-8692; **Bread for the World,** 494-1042; **Centro Cultural Aztlan,** 733-7928; **Citizens Concerned About Nuclear Power,** 653-0543; **Civil Rights Litigation Center,** 224-6726; **Common Cause,** 494-5676; **Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS),** 222-2367; **Ex-Partners of Servicemen for Equality (EXPOSE),** Box 34474, 78233; **Fellowship of Reconciliation,** 822-9631; **Habitat for Humanity,** 822-9900; **Inter-University Faculty Network,** 436-3107; **International Center for Peace Through Culture,** 822-0461; **Interreligious Task Force on Central America,** 432-1125; **Latin-American Assistance,** 736-9306; **Metropolitan Congregational Alliance,** 349-2401; **Mexican-American Democrats,** 223-1776; **NAACP,** 224-7636; **Padres,** 736-1330; **Pax Christi,** 732-2136; **Peacemaking Fellowship,** 732-9927; **People for Peace,** 822-3089; **Physicians for Social Responsibility,** 735-8044; **Presbyterian Peace Fellowship,** 732-9927; **Proyecto Hospitalidad,** 736-9306 (leave message); **Residents Organized for Better and Beautiful Environmental Development (ROBBED),** 226-3973; **S.A. Ad Hoc Committee for Peace and Disarmament,** 736-2587; **S.A. Demo. League,** 341-7361; **S.A. Forum on Energy,** 653-0543; **S.A. Gay Alliance,** Box 12063, 78212; **San Antonians for Freedom of Choice,** 347 Bushnell, 78212; **Sierra Club,** 271-7169; **S.west Voters' Registration Education Project,** 222-0224; **Tx. Fathers for Equal Rights,** 337-6803; **UNICEF,** 828-4528; **United Campuses Protesting Nuclear War,** 732-2722; **Vietnam Vets. Against War,** 533-9693; **Women's Political Caucus,** 828-3061.

Management Concessions — An Economic Imperative

By Anthony Mazzocchi

Mr. Mazzocchi is Special Assistant to the President, District 8 Council, of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), and Director of the Workers' Policy Project.

On June 11, 1982 in Philadelphia the OCAW District 8 Council, representing 30,000 workers, unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a campaign for management concessions.

It is our firm belief that management, not working people, is directly responsible for the economic fear and suffering we face today. And we believe there will be no economic recovery for working people unless we force management to give up their one-sided control over all the key investment and production decisions that affect our economic well being.

We Need:

- an end to management's right to run away overseas;
- an end to their right to "milk" profitable companies into bankruptcy;
- an end to their right to devastate our communities through plant closings;
- an end to their right to squander investment funds on unnecessary mergers, wasteful supervision and sky-high salaries for themselves;
- and an end to their ability to divide us by discriminating against women and minorities.

We are calling for this bold initiative from labor because we believe that the old ways of collective bargaining are no longer adequate.

For years we have abided by an unwritten agreement with management: "You give us more in wages and benefits, and we'll let you run the show."

And for years this deal seemed to pay off. We did gain higher wages and better benefits. Meanwhile management consolidated their control over investment and production decisions, embodied in the "management rights" clauses found in nearly all of our contracts.

But those days are over. In today's competitive world economy management is using their control to force givebacks and concessions. Instead of wage and benefit improvements they want to cut our contractual rights. And, if we refuse to accept their takeback demands, they threaten us with layoffs and shutdowns. That isn't collective bargaining. It's economic blackmail.

But, worker concessions won't save our jobs, revive our industries, or help the economy. Worker concessions won't work because workers' wages and benefits are not the problem. Data developed by the Workers' Policy Project documents that American workers are not killing the economic goose that lays the golden eggs. (This data is contained in the booklet, "It's Time for Management Concessions," published by the Workers' Policy Project, 853 Broadway, Room 2014, New York, New York 10003.)

The truth is that the goose is being gobbled up by corporate mergers, plucked bare by greedy conglomerates, shipped overseas bit by bit, and supervised to death.

In order to survive we must go on the offensive by challenging the fundamental assumptions of traditional collective bargaining. Rather than argue about how much to give away, we must raise new demands that challenge management's right to make the vital production and investment decisions that affect our jobs and our communities.

But Don't We Need More Cooperation, Not Conflict?

Many corporate leaders and "Atari Democrats" (a widespread label for those politicians and economists who are calling for support of new high-tech "sunrise" industries, like computers, as opposed to old "sunset" industries like steel and auto) are calling for more Japanese-style cooperation in order to rebuild U.S. industry. They are advocating the establishment of a new government agency, similar to the New Deal Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which would make capital available for modernization.

But these corporate proposals for cooperation are a mask for a more centralized version of the economic blackmail which corporations now exercise at the bargaining table. As one of their leading spokespersons, Felix Rohatyn put it:

"We will have an entity which could say to Governors, 'We have $2 billion to invest which we might make [available to you]. But first we need to make the following changes in the tax structure, or changes are needed in union work rules . . .' Because of the possibility of economic activity, the Governors will accept political change . . ."

— Al Watkins
"Felix Rohatyn's Biggest Deal,"
Working Papers, Sept.-Oct. 1981

We reject this kind of phony cooperation. We have already made enough concessions at the workplace and in our communities. If corporations and political leaders are so eager to cooperate, let us first see some real management concessions.

Is Demanding Management Concessions a Collective Bargaining Strategy?

In our union, the oil industry has taught us that you can't win just at the bargaining table. Because of their size, wealth and technology, the oil giants can withstand our strike tactics. But, they are vulnerable to public pressure. Therefore, to make progress on key issues like health and safety, we have been forced to develop broader programs that rally workers and their communities across the country.

Proposals for management concessions do need to be raised at the bargaining table. But in most cases they will go nowhere unless we can back them up with a public campaign and achieve national legislation. Just as it took a mass movement to pass the Wagner Act and Social Security, it will take a mass movement to stop U.S. corporations from driving our economy into the ground.

Is This a Full Program for Economic Recovery?

No. Economic recovery requires more than management concessions, and OCAW District 8 fully supports other proposals to aid economic recovery such as full employment and plant closing legislation, tax reform and cutbacks in military spending.

We also recognize that it will take time to mobilize for a full-scale economic recovery program. In the meantime, we need a movement which puts a moratorium on worker concessions. We should not pay the price for years of management failure and economic disorganization.

We further believe that all programs for economic revival are doomed to failure unless they are built upon a foundation of management concessions.

As long as management has the right and power to disinvest from our industries, misinvest in mergers, supervision and high executive salaries, and discriminate against women and minorities, there will be no economic recovery for U.S. workers.

What are the International Effects of this Program?

We are seeking to control U.S.-based multinationals in order to prevent runaway shops and wasteful mergers. By doing so, we are joining the common effort of workers' organizations in both the developing and developed world to gain control of their labor and natural resources.

The record shows that in country after country, multinationals have not been agents for progress. Instead, the net effect of their investments in developing nations has been more poverty, more inflation, more depleted resources, and more inequality.

Multinationals also are key factors in the suppression of trade unions and the support of anti-democratic governments in Latin America and Asia. And they are pillars of the system of racial oppression in South Africa.

By seeking to control multinationals we are not opposing our trade union brothers and sisters overseas. We are joining with them. If U.S. Steel won't guarantee a good job in the U.S., what kind of job will it guarantee in South Africa? And for how long?

Where do we Start?

We start with education. We need to learn the facts and share them with our rank and file. In OCAW we are holding educationals to stimulate a real discussion about the kind of management concessions we really want and need.

We at OCAW District 8 do not pretend to have all the answers. But we are making our proposals known with the hope that you will study them and help us begin a dialogue. Only through such a dialogue will we be able to formulate a solid set of demands, and develop a new awareness of what we need to struggle for at the bargaining table and beyond. A booklet produced by the Workers' Policy Project, "It's Time for Management Concessions," is designed to help begin that dialogue within the labor movement. It's part of our educational effort to put management concessions on the agenda for the 1980's and take worker concessions off.

And Then??

As we struggle for management concessions, we will have to face the sad fact that both major political parties end up speaking for management. Despite our best efforts, we see most politicians stumbling over themselves to offer pro-business solutions to our economic mess.

In order to widen the national debate on economic policy, the OCAW unanimously adopted a resolution at its 1981 convention directing the union "to support and participate with other unions in developing a new political strategy for labor in the 1980's that will not rely on the Republican or Democratic party for success." We at District 8 are vigorously pursuing this mandate by organizing discussions with other trade unionists on whether or not a labor party is needed at this time.

We would like all our brothers and sisters in the trade union movement to join in these discussions. And we promise to keep you informed of any developments.

OCAW District 8 welcomes your comments and suggestions, which may be sent to the Workers' Policy Project, 853 Broadway, Room 2014, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Postmaster: If undeliverable, send Form 3579 to The Texas Observer, 600 W. 7th, Austin, Texas 78701

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