

THE TEXAS OBSERVER

A Journal of Free Voices

August 30, 1985

One Dollar



Photo by Henry Bargas

Activists wait for the "White Train" to carry nuclear weapons from the Pantex facility in Amarillo, August 6.

PROTESTING PANTEX

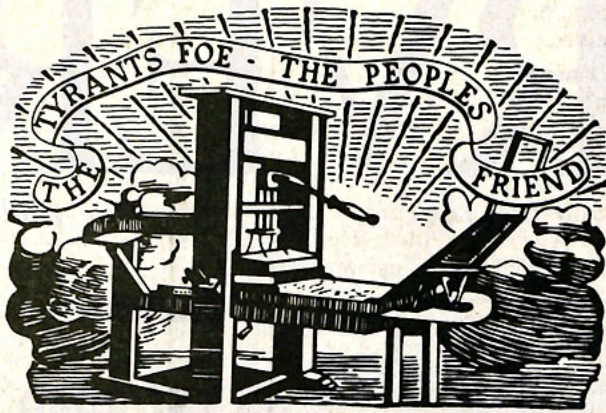
ON THE ROAD WITH THE 'PANTEX PILGRIMS'

(page 8)

DANIEL ELLSBERG ON THE SOVIET TESTING HALT:

"It's not that Reagan was sneakier than I expected. He did his job of trying to kill this proposal. But the degree to which the press, unrelievedly, accepted this was simply astounding to me."

(page 10)



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• EDITORIAL •

Workplace Safety, Insurance Rates, and Other Toxic Shocks

"Maybe we ought to be more concerned about the billowing cloud," she said. . . .

"Nothing is going to happen. . . . These things happen to poor people who live in exposed areas. Society is set up in such a way that it's the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and man-made disasters. People in shanties get the hurricanes and tornados. I'm a college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his street in one of those TV floods? We live in a neat and pleasant town near a college with a quaint name. These things don't happen in places like Blacksmith."

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

"It was the black billowing cloud, the airborne toxic event, lighted by the clear beams of seven army helicopters. . . . The enormous dark mass moved like some death ship in a Norse legend, escorted across the night by armored creatures with spiral wings. We weren't sure how to react. It was a terrible thing to see, so close, so low, packed with chlorides, benzines, phenols, hydrocarbons, or whatever the precise toxic content. But it was also spectacular, part of the grandness of a sweeping event. . . . Our fear was accompanied by a sense of awe that bordered on the religious. It is surely possible to be awed by the thing that threatens your life, to see it as a cosmic force, so much larger than yourself, more powerful, created by elemental and willful rhythms. This was a death made in the laboratory, defined and measurable, but we thought of it at the time in a simple and primitive way, as some seasonal perversity of the earth like a flood or tornado, something not subject to control. Our helplessness did not seem compatible with the idea of a man-made event."

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

"Industry would collapse if the true results of any of these investigations were released."

"What investigations?"

"The ones that are going on all over the country."

"That's the point," she said. "Every day on the news there's another toxic spill. Cancerous solvents from storage tanks, arsenic from smokestacks, radioactive water from power plants. How serious can it be if it happens all the time? Isn't the definition of a serious event based on the fact that it's not an everyday occurrence?"

from *White Noise*, a novel
 by Don DeLillo
 (Viking, 1985)

IT'S BECOME almost an everyday occurrence. *The New York Times* reported that during the second week in August there were major chemical plant accidents in Institute,

West Virginia, and near Charleston, W. Va.; Camden, New Jersey; Valentine, Arizona; and Fairfax, Virginia. In reaction to that string of events, Bruce Carrh, a vice president for safety, health, and the environment at du Pont, told the *Times* that the chemical industry will "get a lot more scrutiny from the public and Congress, and it may be warranted."

Now Jon Fisher, lobbyist for the Texas Chemical Council, claims that the chemical industry in Texas has a safety record ten times better than that for all manufacturing industry in the United States. In 1983, says Fisher, U.S. manufacturing industry had an accident rate of 4.2 injuries per 200,000 work hours while the U.S. chemical industry had a 2.4 injury rate. For the same period, the Texas chemical industry injury rate was .4. According to Fisher, a good safety record inside the workplace should make the community as a whole feel safer in terms of the possibility of major accidents. "If you're looking at accident rates, we've got something to brag about," Fisher told the *Observer*. "I don't think the chemical industry should look at scrutiny as a bad thing."

If the Texas Chemical Council is apparently so sanguine about close scrutiny of its industry, why is it still so difficult to find out what chemicals are being used and manufactured in Texas, and what the possible effects of these chemicals are on those who work with them and on the community at large? Beyond that, how does this state's anti-regulatory mindset affect such things as workers compensation rates for all industry?

After the Texas Legislature finally saw fit to pass the Hazard Communications Act, sponsored by Rep. Ed Watson of Deer Park — a bill requiring companies to submit lists of workplace chemicals and their hazards to the state health department in order to provide such information to workers, communities, and emergency services — it couldn't quite bring itself to come up with the \$400,000 per year the health department said was needed to pay for implementation of the bill. (TO,4/19/85). "I guess I'm supposed to do this on my lunch money or sell pencils at lunch," said William Elliott of the occupational health program of the health department. Elliott is now authorized to spend half his time implementing this right-to-know bill. In hearings during the legislative session, the health department had said it would take at least eleven full-time employees to do the job. "We're looking at ways of going ahead and doing it anyway," said Elliott. "But we can't do all the law would call for. We could run part of it on fees. But we would need to get start-up money from public-interest groups and possibly corporations. There are at least 75,000 businesses affected by the law. Just to contact them costs a small fortune, and I'm the only one doing the mailing."

You wouldn't think, under the shadow of Bhopal, it would be so difficult to find \$400,000 per year for such a program. That kind of money was floating all around the capitol in various discretionary funds and as a result of other program cuts. But certain business interests fought tooth and nail to see that funding was not delivered.

As a result, the inspection of manufacturing sites, as well as general public and worker education programs on hazardous chemicals, will be put on hold. Elliott says all the health department will be able to do is to require the filing of workplace chemical lists. Since the maintenance of the lists will require funding, Elliott says chemical makers and users will probably be asked to pay a filing fee. In order to institute such a fee, a series of public hearings must be held. The \$400,000 fiscal note had included provisions to computerize the lists of chemicals. "There's no way we can do that now," says Elliott. "We can at least maintain a good paper file with

a good fast micro-computer with a good index to what's received."

The Texas program was designed to dovetail with new federal OSHA standards due out in November. (The state relinquished workplace enforcement authority to OSHA in 1975.) OSHA standards were to provide documentation on chemicals used in manufacturing. The OSHA mandate has recently been broadened to include chemicals used in non-manufacturing industry. The new mandate may mean some delay in the OSHA implementation.

But even with the new OSHA standards, says Elliott, information on chemicals such as the aldicarb oxime, identified in the Institute, W. Virginia, leak may not be available to workers, the public, and emergency agencies. The state requires the reporting of approximately 6,000 chemicals from four sources. These don't include a good many chemicals. Reporting is also required only when certain quantities of chemicals are used. "In some cases," says Elliott, "it's not protectible enough. The health department has the ability to lower reportable quantities, but we won't do it right away."

"The State of Texas could definitely do more," Elliott continued. "It's not for the lack of desire here [in the health department]. We have to go with what the legislature lets us do. We would like to do more. The Texas act is pretty

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mild. Some of the states have gone real far, including many more chemicals as hazardous.

"But this should be a good start. The thing it will do is allow workers and citizens to be better informed about what they're exposed to. In the long term, workers may ask more questions, be more careful, refuse to go along with conditions they're used to in the past. I would hope that, in the long run, that would mean safer working conditions, lower workers compensation claims, lower insurance costs. It could mean initially a lot of lawsuits. The occupational health program in the health department is very small. If there were emphasis on that in the state legislature, we could do a lot more. Texas has a very bad industrial rate. We wind up paying for it as a society."

One way we end up paying for it as a society is through increased workers compensation insurance rates. On August 9, the State Board of Insurance approved a 30.7 percent rate increase for workers compensation insurance, the largest increase ever granted by the board. The insurance companies, in asking for a 40.8 percent increase, said rising medical costs, as well as an increasing number of claims, necessitated a raise.

In calculating the formula used to set rates, the board exceeded its staff recommendations for a maximum guaranteed overall return for insurance companies. While the insurance board staff recommended a 16.95 percent guaranteed rate of return, the board approved an 18.52 percent profit provision. An industry spokesperson had testified that a 15 percent rate of return was necessary. The major discrepancy between the staff's recommendation and that of the board was the board's decision to figure in a smaller amount of the insurance industry's investment income in calculating the expenses of the industry in servicing its policies.

Until about 15 years ago, none of the investment income of the insurance industry was figured into its costs and profits when determining state workers compensation rates. This year the insurance board staff recommended that 7.2 percent of the cost of insurance company expenses come from investment income.

The board, however, with Carole Keeton Rylander dissenting, voted to count investment income against only 5.2 percent of the costs. According to Gaylon Daniel, a state board official, this came after an earlier vote in which the board had decided that none of the insurance company expenses should be figured against investment income.

This is, of course, a great boon to the insurance industry and a significant part of the overall 31 percent rate increase that will burden business in the state directly and workers and consumers indirectly.

But beyond this apparent coup for insurance companies, the approach to workers compensation rate-setting in this state reveals an absolute lack of incentive to lower insurance rates by lowering worker risks. An article by Mark Green and John Berry in the June 8, 1985, *Nation* cites a study showing that unsafe working conditions are responsible for 60 percent of all workplace accidents.

Roy Evans, state liaison for the U.S. Department of Labor and the leader of a state advisory board on the workplace, says that his board has "had all kinds of evidence presented to us from all types of employers. The cost of workers compensation and all kinds of job injury could be reduced by better than half with prevention."

IF the state insurance board all too willingly grants increased premium rates for increased insurance company costs, the insurance companies have little incentive to require safer workplaces of policyholders. But the business community, faced with these escalating rates, obviously should have that incentive. The State Board of Insurance should have that mandate. And the legislature should protect the workers and residents of this state by toughening right-to-know laws and funding their implementation. If the Texas Chemical Council says it welcomes close scrutiny, what's stopping the legislature from marching right in?
G.R.

East Texans Thwart Gramm Putsch

By James Presley

Texarkana

FOR THOSE IN the First Congressional District who had grown used to having Wright Patman up there in Washington from 1929 till 1976 to defend them against a variety of Republican mischief (he, after all, had first blown the whistle on Watergate), the tenure of his successor, Rep. Sam B. Hall, Jr., following Patman's death in 1976, must have come as a shock. When Ronald Reagan assumed the Presidency in 1981, Hall soon became one of the boll-weevil Southern Democrats who gave aid and comfort to the Republicans in the House.

James Presley, a longtime Observer contributor, is a writer living in Texarkana.

Now comes 1985, with this scenario: Senator Phil Gramm, flushed with a November victory on Reagan's coattails, nominates Hall as federal judge, to create a vacancy. Hall passes the Republican litmus test on enough issues to make him acceptable, even desirable, for the beefed-up Republican judiciary. The plan then was to elect a bona fide Republican, no matter how much the cost, and use that result as evidence of realignment of the political parties. It would be a major publicity coup, particularly for Gramm.

The result was the most expensive race in First District history. The outcome would scarcely change the Democratic control of the House but would convey symbolic power wherever the news went.

To set things in motion, U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm pulled Edd Hargett from obscurity in tiny Linden, Texas, for an appearance in nearby Texarkana. Hargett, once a student of Gramm's, would make a fine Congressman, said Gramm, thereby telegraphing the next punch, which soon came when Hargett announced for the seat as a Republican.

In some ways, Hargett was the political packager's dream. Young (37) and handsome, a former Texas A&M quarterback who had played pro ball, he seemed to have a great many things going for him. The First District has traditionally been an incumbent's district. Wright Patman, known widely as a populist and a scourge of the banking industry, served here for more than 47 years, through all kinds of political permutations on the national scene. Undoubtedly Republican strategists realized that if Hargett got in, he'd probably stay in — maybe for 30 years.

The money gushed forth. Hargett attended the Republicans' candidates school. Top consultants like Roger Ailes, Lee Atwater, and Lance Tarrance were signed on.

In the first election on June 29, Hargett gained 42 percent of the vote, former DA Jim Chapman of Sulphur Springs, 30 percent, and State Rep. Sam Russell of Mt. Pleasant, 18 percent, with the other five candidates dividing the remainder.

Among the Democrats, Jim Chapman, 40, enjoyed an advantage — and in some ways, a disadvantage. Having run for state senator against state Sen. Ed Howard last year in virtually the same district except for one county, he was acquainted with the district, had some name recognition, and had supporters at the outset. The disadvantage he faced was that his race against Howard had also left him with political enemies. Howard had charged Chapman was backed by labor and liberals, and now the Republicans took up the same charges.

Chapman, however, had assets of his own. He was willing to put a great deal of his own money into the campaign, and he was able to use his highly-honed skills as a trial lawyer to distinct advantage, showing himself to be agile-witted and articulate in the forums, the one debate (held in Kilgore outside the district and viewed on Tyler TV), and speeches.

Chapman's early theme was that the Big Bad Ol' Republicans Are Gonna Try to Cut Social Security. He said he'd fight any cut, down to the last COLA. But Hargett said he, too, would fight any attempt to cut Social Security. Chapman matched Hargett's stand on so-called "family" issues such as abortion, school prayer, and gay rights. (The *Texarkana Gazette* chided Chapman for making such an issue over his championing of school prayer, which, the newspaper noted, was advocating something everyone had — the right to pray any time he or she wanted to.) On the other hand, Hargett embraced what might be seen as traditional Democratic values, such as support for Medicare (and Social Security), more jobs for depressed East Texas, and a simplified tax system. There was no calling attention to Hargett's party affiliation by name. His billboards identified him only as being "In the Tradition of East Texas."

All the thunder and lightning from the conservative heavens showered down upon Northeast Texas before the summer was over. About the only thing lacking, really, was a personal visit from The Great Communicator Himself, though that was accomplished electronically.

Jobs turned out to be the hot issue by early July. By then Texarkana plants had laid off 400 workers, AT&T had



Was Wright Patman watching?

shut down its Shreveport plant, another Texarkana plant had announced layoffs, while Lone Star Steel's problems continued to fester with employment at only 60 percent of its full force. With this as background, Chapman took up the issue of a trade policy to help American exports and to keep American jobs from going overseas. At this point Hargett told a reporter, "I don't know what trade policies have to do with bringing jobs to East Texas." Chapman pounced upon the sentence. Hargett claimed he was misquoted. When a reporter disproved his claim, Hargett said it was taken out of context. In a July 24 editorial, the *Texarkana Gazette* had the final say: "Hargett has said that the statement was taken out of context and was a misquote. Neither claim is true. The context is accurate — a reporter asked a question about foreign trade policy and Hargett answered it very simply. The quote is the same quote that was videotaped by KTAL-TV and aired on the 6 p.m. news on July 9."

Jobs for the depressed First District, where the unemployment rate passed the national level, and protection of Social Security became the leading "solid" issues of the campaign. Senator Bentsen hammered away at the Reagan administration's having no trade policy. Whether East Texans are conservative or liberal or in between (which they probably are, for the most part), like people everywhere else, they like to have jobs.

IN THE BEGINNING, much of Hargett's advertising and personal presentations leaned heavily on his football career at Texas A&M and later professionally. The Aggie maroon color graced his signs, billboards, and campaign materials. (One wonders how many votes he lost from alumni of other Southwest Conference schools.) His television commercials featured football

game excerpts. But weeks before the first election, the *Texarkana Gazette* in an editorial, "Hang up the cleats, Edd," chastised him for talking football instead of issues. The commercial was dropped.

The Republican tactic was to hang the image of "dirty campaigner" on Chapman. In the process of this effort, negative mailings and advertising went out until images of a "dirty campaign," ironically, began to form about the Hargett headquarters. In another irony, Chapman began to emerge from the dust of battle as something of a gentlemanly campaigner, though aggressive, but articulate and seemingly undisturbed by the stream of allegations his foes poured forth. At forums and radio interviews, Chapman responded vigorously, decisively, and with good manners. His confidence seemed to grow as the campaign aged.

The negative mailings by the Hargett campaign, from the early days to the last week, kept hammering away with the charge that Chapman was a liberal, that he had run a dirty campaign against Ed Howard (never documented), that he was running a dirty campaign now (never substantiated), and that he supported unpopular planks (gay rights, etc.) of the 1984 Democratic platform and would be controlled by Tip O'Neill and the Northern liberals (which he had denied).

One mailing, handwritten from "Mrs. Shirley Hargett," the candidate's wife, extolled her husband as "a good Christian man" and added: "It is unfortunate that Edd's opponent chose to lie. When he could not find a flaw to attack he resorted to lies. . . . It makes me mad when Jim Chapman doesn't tell the truth, especially concerning Edd's views on Social Security." The letter then segued into how Hargett's parents died of cancer while on Social Security and Medicare and how that left the candidate a strong friend of the legislation. Then the scene shifted back to Chapman: "Edd says he understands why Chapman is always throwing mud. It's because Chapman is a Liberal whose support is from the Labor Unions, the Liberal Special Interests and the National Democrats like Tip O'Neill and Walter Mondale."

Though Chapman was "right" — to the conservative way of thinking — on the emotional, often contrived, "family issues," as were every one of the original candidates, being "right" wasn't enough. Moral Majority honcho Jerry Falwell signed a letter that charged:

"Jim Chapman, who supported the Mondale/Ferraro ticket in '84 and Mark

White's tax increase has yet to disavow the National Democratic platform. That's the platform that calls for gay rights and the E.R.A.

"Jim Chapman remains silent on school prayer and a pro-life amendment. Jim Chapman's silence on these issues proves one point: he can't stand up to the liberal national Democrats."

Falwell either wasn't listening, didn't care, or knowingly misrepresented the facts. Anyone who ever attended any of the candidate's forums would have heard Chapman, who repeatedly called himself a conservative particularly in the early days of the campaign, state he was against affirmative action for gays, he was against abortion (except in the case of incest, rape, and danger to the mother), and he favored prayer in the schools.

A slick anti-abortion handbill, featuring photographs of Edd and Shirley Hargett and of a winsome small child ("This Little Gal Wants YOU to Vote Saturday, August 3"), was placed on automobiles parked at the Highland Park Baptist Church in Texarkana and, one might well presume, at other churches over the district, during services on the Sunday before election.

Mailboxes were filled by both sides. Senator Lloyd Bentsen sent a letter urging voters to "finish the job" and pushing Chapman's candidacy for its support of "old-fashioned family values," "a strong defense," defending "the sacred contract of social security," and protecting American jobs.

The biggest Republican gun came in a mailing during the last week before election, from Ronald Reagan — "we need Edd Hargett in Congress." He continued, "If Edd Hargett wins, it will be strong evidence that the principles of this Administration have the support of the American people — regardless of party label." (Seemingly an appeal for help, not realignment.) Then the postscript clincher: "I was proud to nominate Sam B. Hall, Jr., to be a Federal judge, but sorry to lose the advice and support of this able conservative Congressman. The election of Edd Hargett would mean East Texas continues its tradition of independent conservative representation in the U.S. House of Representatives." Like Wright Patman, one presumes.

By the time voters received Reagan's letter, the television channels had been saturated with his spot commercials pleading with East Texans to vote for "my friend Edd Hargett." Over and over and over. Though Reagan had not appeared in person, he had risked his prestige almost as much with the

commercials.

In reviewing campaign ads and "literature" on both sides, it becomes clear that negative charges were a particularly strong thrust of the Hargett campaign.

What made the rampant negativism even more apparent was that, as the Republicans piled accusation upon innuendo, Chapman studiously grew more and more "clean." Hargett's campaign became so negative that in the final week the *Texarkana Gazette* specifically chided him for it. The newspaper never endorsed anyone in the election and, in fact, appeared to take an even-handed approach to the race. But three times it came down editorially on Hargett, for discussing football instead of issues, for denying a statement he had made on jobs and trade policies, and for heading up such a negative campaign.

Chapman ads countered claims that he was tied to the "Northern Liberals" by suggesting the Republicans were trying to buy the election. A large ad during election week headlined, WHO IS THE REAL INDEPENDENT?, focused upon Hargett's spending four times what Chapman had and that more than 40 percent of Hargett's money came from conservative political action committees, with only 12 percent identified as coming from within the district. On the other hand, the ad noted that 42 percent of Chapman's money came from within the district, not including his own \$135,000 personal contribution, with only \$10,450 coming from political action committees.

In an editorial the same day, the *Gazette* noted that of Hargett's \$825,000 war chest, he had received approximately as much money from outside the district — \$229,603 — as the entire Chapman campaign had raised — \$236,819.

The *Gazette* editorialized: "The lopsided total donations — \$822,589 for Hargett and \$333,042 for Chapman, including the First Committee — seem to lend some credibility to the charge that the election is being bought. . . . Can a Congressman really represent East Texas when he owes his political soul to a PAC, a party organization or a group of wealthy donors?"

CHAPMAN WON the runoff over Hargett, 52,665 to 50,741 — a margin of 1,924 votes out of 103,406 votes cast, almost one-third of those registered. Chapman's margin was 50.9 percent to Hargett's 49.1 percent. The turnout was 30 percent of the registered voters, 10 percent more than for the first election, with a significant

increase in black and older voters.

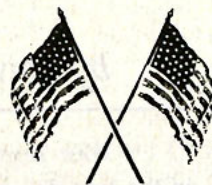
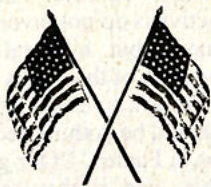
One of the major factors in Chapman's victory was a significant improvement in his showing in Bowie County (the most populous county, and the location of Texarkana) over his performance in June. An intensive organizational effort led to a jump in Chapman's vote totals from 20 percent in June to 44 percent in August in the city of Texarkana. He more than doubled his percentage of the absentee votes, resulting in the Democrat defeating the Republican at the absentee box by a margin of 3 to 2.

In the end, Hargett, with a million-dollar effort behind him (he spent none of his own money, according to his reports) probably gained more name recognition than his football playing had accomplished. Gramm experienced a deep disappointment, if not frustration. President Reagan, after appearing in TV ads over and over, failed to push Hargett over the goal line and probably suffered some tarnishing of his reputation as a winner. The *Texarkana Gazette*, often criticized over the years as either establishmentarian or as bland, came out of it as a vigorous, impartial recorder and referee. And Chapman, so frequently accused of "dirty" politics, came off a gentleman, if one will pardon the expression — and the winner.

It is too soon to report whether the flood tide of Reaganism has crested and is receding, based on the First District, but one thing is certain — a carefully engineered test case has backfired, despite everything that could be done. And the reason it did is that the Democrats by and large got together and got their votes out. In a post-election interview, Chapman said he would probably take his own path in Congress, different from either Sam Hall or Wright Patman, but from what he said and did in the special election, it is probable that his record will wind up closer to Wright Patman's than to Sam Hall's.

Gramm, the main loser, was quoted shortly before the election as saying, "Win or lose this race, this is only my first involvement. We're going to keep on building the party until we're hunting Democrats with dogs."

A memorable statement and something to think about by those putative Democrats who edged into Hargett's camp. Stay in line, boys, or here come the dogs! After a campaign like this one, many voters may start thinking, not of realignment, but of reassessment. The First District, of course, is a continuing story. Chapman, now the incumbent, will be up for reelection in 1986, and that campaign is not far off. Stay tuned. □



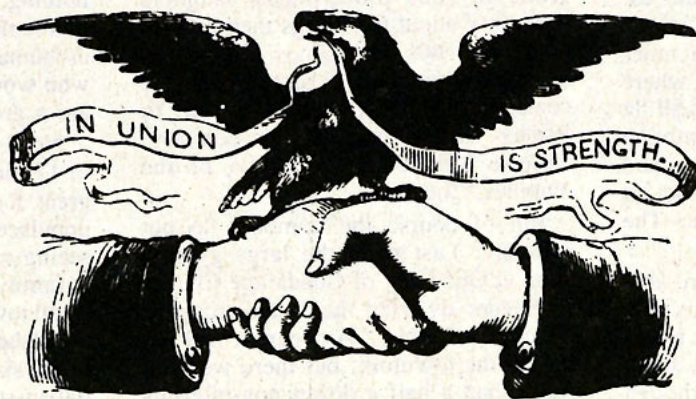
LABOR DAY 1985

Labor Day is a call for Americans to re-dedicate their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to the common welfare. Labor Day also summons us to renew our conviction that America means the building here of a human fellowship without social, political or economic restrictions — without ghettos — without fears — without hopelessness, but with “liberty and justice for all,” as the Pledge of Allegiance proclaims.

The Texas AFL-CIO wishes for Texas workers a most joyous and safe Labor Day.

Harry Hubbard
President

Joe Gunn
Secretary-Treasurer



On the Road to Pantex

by Dave Denison

West Texas

IT IS 5:40 a.m. on the first day of August, the moon and the stars are still out, and the highway belongs to us. I am riding my blue Peugeot (eight years old, but with brand new wheels) alongside Bobby Slovak and his Raleigh, newly purchased. Slovak is a government teacher at the A&M Consolidated High School in College Station, and we are talking — though it is far too early for such matters — about the peace movement and how it might make an impression on the townsfolk of Texas. A few bicyclists are ahead of us, and a few are still back in Snyder, just now collecting their stiff-as-board bodies off the hard gymnasium floor.

Occasionally an eighteen-wheeler blows by, and the sound of it seems to be the very definition of the highway at an odd hour: the peaceful night air is filled with the sudden roar of the truck and then the high-pitched hum of the wheels hanging in the air long off into the distance, and then the quiet air again. It reminds you of the other odd places you've been, the other strange trips that have put you on the dark deserted highway, when all other souls — except truckers — are doing something else.

The trail of diesel fumes blends in with the smell of sulphur from the oil wells. We are riding northwest on Highway 84. Sweetwater and Abilene — and now Snyder — are behind us. Lubbock is 90 miles up the road; Amarillo, 250 miles. Seventeen miles beyond Amarillo is the factory where 2,850 citizens (more or less), earn \$11.84 an hour (on the average), assembling 1,800 nuclear warheads a year and disassembling old ones, though not as many of those as they assemble. The Pantex plant is our destination.

By an official count as we are able to get, there seems to be 17 cyclists now on the road to Pantex. Most of the riders started the journey in Glen Rose, south of Fort Worth (250 miles back), though one started riding a couple hundred miles earlier in Houston. Another half dozen people are along to drive the cars and vans that serve as support vehicles; they carry the baggage and the water and the snacks and give generally unreliable estimates of how far it is to the next town. Exercising uncommon

good sense, I have joined the journey only after half of it is over, and after the gradual altitudinal climb onto the High Plains has been made.

The sun is rising over the mesquite range to our right. An oil well pumps and creaks, the black iron arm moving up and down, up and down, to the same steady rhythm, it seems, as our feet on the pedals. Hand-painted religious messages are posted on the barbed wire fence every few miles. TRY JESUS, NOT DRUGS. Bobby is saying that his students are very much affected by the conservative A&M environment and by the tenor of the times, but that he tries to impress upon his high school seniors the idea that civil disobedience and other more "unusual" forms of political participation are just as important to democracy as voting is. His ideas of what political action should be were obviously formed in the 1960s but, at least within the confines of his role as high school government teacher, are no more radical, really, than the idea of democracy. He has found a way, it occurs to me, to pass along the ideal of "participatory democracy" — the ideal of his generation — to today's students, who were just learning to walk when yesterday's students were learning to march.

Bobby Slovak wonders if I've seen a recent TV commercial that depicts a group of '80s professionals laughing derisively about the things they used to do in the '60s. It offends him to see his generation sold off as sell-outs. He considers the people on the ride to Pantex as evidence to the contrary. "We're kind of the opposite of the Yuppies," he says.

But of course the numbers do not compare. Last night the large gymnasium at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Snyder dwarfed the small group of "Pantex pilgrims." A program was put on for the townfolk, but there were no more than a half a dozen non-pilgrims there — and they were the church *madres* who had cooked the meal. Snyder, an oil and farming town of more than 12,000, has no peace movement. Nevertheless, ten activists stood on the stage of the church auditorium holding a banner ("No More Nuclear Victims. 40 Years is Enough."), while songs

were sung, and testimonials made. One speaker said there is nothing "pinko" about the peace movement, in fact, "many of us are conservative Christians," he said. Another said that the activists do not favor unilateral disarmament, but bilateral. Ruth Roberts, a veteran of the 1960s anti-war movement who now lives in Georgetown, said there should be nothing secret about what goes on at Pantex. "Our government is doing this, and if they're proud of it, they ought to talk about it. We intend to," she said.

Insects and Grass

A sign on Highway 84 claims JESUS NEVER FAILS.

The grasshoppers this year are big, like toads on the road. Plump and plentiful, grasshoppers galore. Herbivorous grasshopper, reminder of past plagues and future tribulations. It will be the grasshopper, we are told, that will have a high enough tolerance of radiation to survive in greater numbers than most other species, if nuclear war breaks out. It will be the grass and the grasshoppers that will be the last to go.

The roadside Baptists (I assume) bring us a message in the spirit of such reflections: ETERNITY. WHERE?

It's something to think about when Lubbock is 90 miles up the road.

Breaking Away

"I still don't know what bicycles have to do with peace," said a friend in Austin, and she is someone who knows plenty about the peace movement. Why do people ride their bicycles hundreds of miles through West Texas in the August heat? To make an impression on the good sensible West Texas citizenry? It does that, undoubtedly, though it does nothing, I can assure you, to further the notion that we are all so very much alike as humans. There are some, after all, who would bike to Amarillo, and there are a great many who would not.

Nor is there anything about the looks of 17 road-weary bicyclists that inspires great feelings of solidarity among the populace. I happened to notice, upon seeing my reflection in the window of a family dining establishment in one small town, that I may as well have been a Brother from Another Planet — me in my skin-tight black biking shorts and Italian-style T-shirt, dusty face, backwards cap, and gloves with no fingers. There is a very good chance that Kathleen Stockwell, an art teacher from Austin, is the only person in recent history to ride a bicycle into the Texas Panhandle with a floppy straw hat inscribed with a slogan celebrating five years of revolution in Nicaragua.



Photo by Gaylon Wampler

Ten protesters occupy the railroad tracks near the Pantex nuclear weapons factory. They stayed three days and were not arrested.

We do it, obviously, so as not to blend in. We do not want to cultivate the attitude of, for instance, the town of Los Alamos, as described by Vivian Gornick recently in *Mother Jones*: "In Los Alamos you need never confront a human being who makes you question your life, your work, your values. This, indeed, is the point of small-town life — respite from the fierce and painful struggle of the city. . . . In Los Alamos . . . the fact that the residents see it as 'a town like any other' is, to me, inappropriate and offensive."

We, the bike riders, are an odd and freaky people; perhaps. We are a bomb-affected people. On to Amarillo! I want to see the Pantex plant loom up before me, and I want to get there on the slow and pensive route. I want to see who drives that long farm-to-ranch road to make \$11.84 an hour to put our warheads together (high school graduation, "Q" clearance and manual dexterity required).

I want to post a kooky road sign in West Texas: APOCALYPSE. WHEN?

Surrounded

We stop for lunch in Post, at the Holy Cross Catholic Church, where, again, the church *madres* serve us a bountiful meal. The town is hurt from layoffs at the Burlington textile plant, but still the congregation has been busy lately trying to raise the bail bond money to spring two Central American refugees from jail.

Back on the highway we bear down on Lubbock. There seems to be nothing but cotton fields for miles around. By three in the afternoon, a group of us rolls into town. We make our way to downtown Lubbock, such as it is, and get comfortable on the town green, across from the federal building. Jimi Clark, a senior at Westbury High in Houston, is talking about music. He has been playing the guitar since he was 14

and is serving as the bard of the bikers on this trip. Bobby Slovak asks him if he's listened to Phil Ochs. "I think I've heard of him," says Jimi. "Oh, you really got to get his albums, man, you'd love him," says Bobby.

At 5:00 a sizeable crowd of cyclists and Lubbock peace activists gathers at the federal building. A twenty-foot-long blue banner with white dots is raised; the inscription explains that there are 50,000 dots on the banner — one for each of the world's nuclear weapons. One hundred dots are outlined in red: "100 dots=Enough to Destroy Most Life on the Planet." After a few songs, ribbons are distributed and the crowd joins hands and ribbons in an attempt to encircle the building. The chain only makes it three-quarters of the way around, but from the front, at least, it looks complete.

Betty Anderson, vice chair of West Texans for Peace (mailing list: 387), says such symbolic actions have made a difference, "from Vietnam to the present." She retains hope that the arms race could be reversed "if enough people willed it." But how is she able to hold onto that hope, I wonder. She pauses and thinks. "If you don't have hope, all is futile," she says.

Marcie Winsler, who has been involved in peace politics in Lubbock for six years, says "It's something we always wanted to do: to encircle the federal building in downtown Lubbock." In these parts, the victories are small and simple.

That night, at the Casa San Jose a surprisingly good satirical skit called "The Wheel of Misfortune" is presented to the local activists, with Jimi Clark in the role of game show announcer. As contestants are awarded points for helping to set up nuclear disasters, Ruth Roberts in the role of disillusioned housewife suddenly announces "The

only way to win is not to play the game," and thereby hits the jackpot, for that was the game's secret phrase.

At 10:00 Channel 13 news gives the day's anti-nuclear activities the top five minutes of the broadcast. The messages that there were nearly enough peaceniks in Lubbock to surround the federal building, and that a group was bicycling to protest weapons-building in Amarillo go into the homes of 46,000 solid citizens.

Lubbock in the Rear-View Mirror

Friday we have a short ride from Lubbock to Plainview — 45 miles. This is the wisdom presented on a plaque in the Dairy Queen in Hale Center: Winning is not a sometime thing.

It is an all the time thing.

You don't win once in a while;

You don't do things right once in a while;

You do them right all the time.

There is no room for second place.

There's only one place and that's first place.

— Vince Lombardi

There could be no better example of the philosophy that created Pantex and Trident and the MX, and now, Star Wars. *There is no room for second place.* The leaders of our country believe this. We as a country believe it.*

By and large the peace movement considers the Vince Lombardi Ethic as dangerous, even ridiculous. This presents us with a tremendous problem — perhaps the central political problem of our era: how does one enter into a competition with a violent system led by men hellbent on "winning" without coming out on the losing end of the one struggle that, ultimately, matters most? Between the superpowers, it may be true, the only way to win is not to play the game. But what is the way to win the fight against the Bomb, and the system that creates the Bomb?

I am travelling with the wing of the peace movement — and this is only a view of a miniscule, perhaps unrepresentative portion of the peace movement rank and file — that wants to reject the American win/lose ethic. Those working to influence Congress, and those in the National Freeze Network, are likely to play the conventional game by the conventional rules (taking it, often enough, on the chin). But

*As for what Lombardi's wisdom has to do with Dairy Queen, the line of explanation was "Dairy Queen is Everybody's Everything."

Ellsberg: Stop the Testing

Amarillo

FOR THE LAST three years Daniel Ellsberg has been arguing that the best strategy to end the arms race is to get either the United States or the Soviet Union — and eventually both — to declare an end to the testing of new nuclear weapons. He has argued the case to members of Congress and he has pushed the idea in meetings with Soviet leaders in Moscow.

So when the Soviets announced a five-month halt to nuclear weapons testing beginning August 6, "that should have been one of the glorious days in my political life," he said

among the Pantex pilgrims there is very seldom talk of "strategies" for changing the political system. In fact, there is very little "political" talk at all — not about first strike theory, or SDI, or the freeze or disarmament. The talk, instead, often turns to "inner transformation" and spiritual progress.

Friday began with a 7:00 a.m. religious ceremony in Guadalupe Park in Lubbock, led by two Catholic priests, a Unitarian, and a Church of Christ minister. "Almighty God," they prayed, "Take from the hearts of the people and rulers all partial aims, unhallowed ambitions, jealousies, covetousness, and fears."

"And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb," went the reading, "the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and the little child shall lead them."

The peace movement is running on faith. Carl Schaer, who has a degree in physics from Yale and now works with Houston Interfaith Peaceforce, looks at the arms race this way:

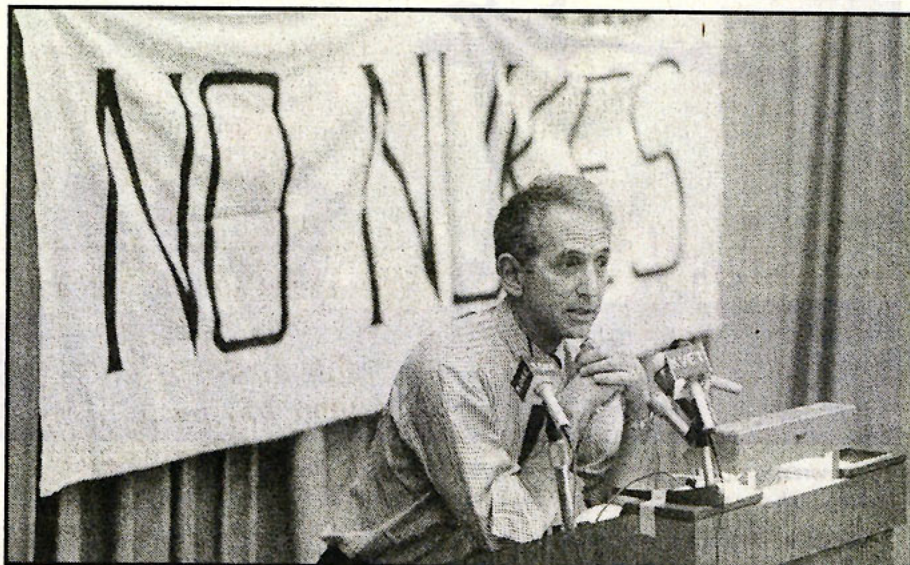


Photo by Alan Pogue

Ellsberg speaks at the University of Texas-Austin, 1979. Outside the Pantex weapons plant, August 4, Ellsberg talked about the "astounding" rejection by the Reagan administration of a weapons testing halt.

to about 50 activists at the Pantex peace camp August 4.

He slogged his feet in a puddle that had formed under the main tent. "I would say that the day I read that news was at the low point of my political life. I've never been so depressed, and really, distraught."

Ellsberg said he was stunned, "dizzy, almost," to see the way that the Reagan administration preempted the announcement of the Soviet action with an offer to allow the Soviets to monitor a U.S. nuclear

test in Nevada. What piqued him even more was to see "how strongly the media was in the grip of the President at this point — the fact that each story on this read as if it had been written by Pat Buchanan."

"Granted that the White House management of this was brilliant, masterly; they are marvelous public relations handlers," he said. But "given the significance of this issue, I would say that the press behavior in the last week on that issue — which is one day [giving] totally misleading

"Whether we can stop it or not, I don't know. All I can do is say 'no' as strong as I can. The rest is up to God." The peace movement speaks the language of moral philosophy. Bishop Leroy Matthiesen has asked Pantex workers to consider whether it is a sin to build a nuclear weapon. Schaer refers to Tolstoy's "The Kingdom of God is Within You," for inspiration. Others on the pilgrimage talk about Gustavo Gutierrez, the father of liberation theology, or Harvey Cox, the political theologian. And, of course, Gandhi.

High Plains Drafter

On the road to Plainview we hitch up behind Paul Tay, the one serious racer along for the ride to Pantex. Tay made it the 90 miles from Snyder to Lubbock yesterday in five hours, getting to town before noon. Today being Friday, his regular day to take it easy, we are able to keep up with him.

He is a sight to see, Paul Tay, in his one-piece suspender style biking shorts, with an ant-like waist and brown legs that look like they were carved out of

rock. He is of Burmese descent and in the little time when he is not riding, he studies physics at the University of Oklahoma. Riding in Tay's draft, my wheel a foot or so behind his, his English-made Raleigh seems to take on a life of its own, accelerating now and then, with no visible effort from the rider.

Tay wanted his Oklahoma teammates to come along on the Texas ride — they are against the arms race, as he is, but they didn't see the point. About nuclear matters, "they just feel so helpless," he says.

We spend Friday night at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Plainview. The group now numbers 32 people. Cindy Evans calls them together for a meeting. Evans is the wheel around which this group turns. She has been working with the Red River Peace network since it was born three years ago at a meeting among Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico activists. Evans is also the mother of three boys, and has been in trouble with the law recently — she was arrested for taking part in

White House coverage, and then, silence, is the worst performance by the press on a single defined issue that I have seen in my lifetime. And I could give lots of competing examples."

The *Los Angeles Times*, as Ellsberg pointed out, headlined the story on July 30, U.S. INVITES SOVIET EXPERTS TO OBSERVE NEVADA A-TEST. The subhead was "Rejects Proposal for 5-Month Moratorium." On August 1, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* all editorialized against the Soviet proposal. "The propagandistic nature of the Soviet initiative is deplorable, to say the least," commented the *L.A. Times*. The *New York Times* called the Soviet action "a cynical propaganda blast."

The *New York Times* editorial "amounted to saying that the idea of a test ban is ridiculous," Ellsberg said. "And the *New York Times* had not ever taken that position before, to my knowledge. And that meant a shift in the establishment position which has at least paid lip service to at least the test ban. . . ."

Ellsberg lamented that the public has been left largely unaware "that something extraordinary had been done by the Soviets." It was not merely "a proposal" that had been made. "What Gorbachev had done was announced a unilateral action by the Soviets on ending testing for at

least five months, on an open-ended basis; to be extended indefinitely if the U.S. joined any time within that five months. . . . So it's open-ended: We never test again, they say, unless the U.S. does. We will not be the first to resume." This was the first unilateral action undertaken by either

"No more should nuclear weapons be tested or built in this country without having to arrest Americans to do it."

side since John F. Kennedy announced a stop to atmospheric tests in 1963, according to Ellsberg.

The hope now lies in pressuring Congress to stop the arms race by cutting off funds for certain nuclear testing, Ellsberg said. "They could make the funding for the testing of nuclear weapons and for the testing of ballistic missiles . . . contingent on Soviet testing. . . ." Ellsberg said that the testing of nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles is "thoroughly verifiable."

Although the major part of the arms race could be stopped "with a phone call" from the President, asking a stop to ballistic missile testing, it is obvious that this will not happen under this administration.

"But Congress could stop by itself, until we get a better President, the testing of ballistic missiles and the testing of warheads," Ellsberg said. A current bill by Rep. Patricia Schroeder of Colorado would call for such a halt, he said.

"It is very obvious that Congress has never done anything for us — even our best people in Congress — without unremitting and strong pressure," he said. "It is up to us to discover whether Congress is right or not in thinking that the peace movement is dead. I don't think that is true. I think it is weakened, depressed, smaller, but I have no impression whatever that it doesn't exist — that's just in the media's eyes."

Beyond getting through to the media, Ellsberg suggested, it will take continued civil disobedience. He said his son had recently put it this way at a demonstration at the Rocky Flats plant in Colorado: "What we are hearing from these people on these tracks is, 'No more should nuclear weapons be tested or built in this country without having to arrest Americans to do it.'"

The next day, Daniel Ellsberg was on his way to the Nevada test site. He was arrested for trespassing August 6 along with about 120 others. He pled not guilty and his trial was set for September 26 in the town of Beatty, Nevada. **D.D.**

a sit-in at Sen. Lloyd Bentsen's Austin office in June. With a seriousness that often gives way to an infectious smile, she seems universally respected in the group.

"If you plan to do C.D.," she is telling them, "that is something you must do a lot of contemplating about, and there will be a workshop you should attend, and you need to have come to a decision by 8:00 Monday."

Evans plans to occupy the railroad tracks outside of Pantex, and, if need be, to get arrested doing it.

Although she was "on the bandwagon" in the 1960s, she is certain things need to be done differently this time around. "I remember in the sixties, anyone who didn't agree with us was either 'a pig' or 'establishment' or some other set-aside group," she tells me. Now she wants to resist "talking about 'us' and 'them.'"

Talk of the Town

We ride northwest, Saturday morning, toward Dimmit. We ride past cornfields, sunflower fields, getting

every once in a while a pungent smell of fertilizer. Cattle trucks charge by us, leaving a strong whiff of manure. Sometimes members of the Bandidos bike gang go by. Today is our longest day — 98 miles to Vega.

Downtown Dimmit has a talking Coke machine. It says: "Hi. I'm a talking Coca-Cola machine . . . You need to put in more money . . . Make your selection please."

Jeff Meckler, a medical student from Ann Arbor, hands out leaflets. He engages a woman in talk of nuclear weapons, but she doesn't buy his argument that they could be cut back. "No, because there's always wars and rumors of wars," she says triumphantly.

Twenty-two miles to Hereford, home of the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame. More leafletting. Downtown Hereford, lorded over by huge grain elevators, seems depressed. The Department of Energy entertains plans to put a nuclear waste dump near here. A burly man curtly refuses to take a leaflet; he doesn't want to talk about the dump. He won't say why. "I said I didn't want to talk

about it," he fumes.

A strong wind at our backs blows us the final 30 miles, past the Palo Duro Creek and into Vega. We are 40 miles due west of Amarillo.

Thirty-five people sit in a large circle in the Vega Catholic Church gym and each takes a turn talking about the trip to Pantex. One of the more hopeful signs here is that there are no less than six 17-year-olds along. They are high school seniors who seem to have very few rose-colored illusions about the nature of political protest, but who still hope to make a difference. Jimi Clark and Troy Engel have organized an anti-nuclear group at Houston's Westbury High School and have brought in speakers such as ex-CIA agent John Stockwell and representatives of the War Resister's League. "What really disturbs me," Jimi said as we were riding one day, "is that we are always told you have to prepare for your future and your career and everything, but, if somebody doesn't get up and do something, there won't be any future."

Jimi Clark is the son of Quaker

A Woman's Perspective

Amarillo

MARGARET BRENNAN-GIBSON, a clinical psychology professor at the Harvard Medical School, sat under a large canvas tent August 4 with about 50 activists gathered around her and with the Pantex weapons factory directly in front of her, perhaps a half mile ahead, and said, "The history of the world, which has largely been superintended by men, has led us to the end of the male imagination."

To Brennan-Gibson, the bleak-looking weapons complex that sat across the field was not just a symbol of a military policy that must be reversed, but of a "masculine" way of thinking that has brought the world to the edge of disaster.

In a Sunday afternoon workshop, Brennan-Gibson, the founder of Women's Peace Initiatives in Washington, D.C., said she is currently trying to understand "the pathology of fear" that leads to violence, and how gender differences in child raising contribute to different responses among women and men. She said she is studying "the readiness to see 'the Other' as different, to see 'the Other' as alien, to see 'the Other' as the enemy." It is easier for men to differentiate between themselves and 'the Other,' she hypothesizes, because men are born to women — an 'Other.' "I really believe it," she said, "but I can't prove it yet."

The *Observer* asked Brennan-Gibson a few follow-up questions about the differences between men and women in regards to peace and violence. The

following is an edited transcript of her responses.

How does a women's peace movement differ?

Let's say, how do women's perspectives differ? O.K.? How does the woman's voice differ from the man's? . . . Because I don't think that we should have a separate woman's peace movement. I don't think that. But I think that women have to become infinitely more self-assured and articulate in the peace movement, in that they are not as a group as much obsessed from the beginning of their playing as children with competition, with winning or losing; they are much more interested in keeping the game going.

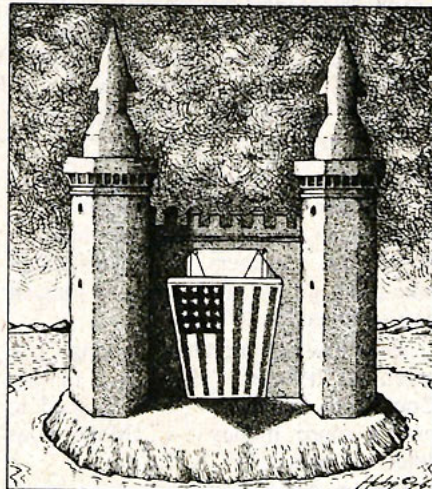
And this has been established by Carol Gilligan in a book called *In A Different Voice* — I think a brilliant book, an eye-opening book. . . . She's saying that what women's voices bring into the world, and always have, is something that involves the importance of interdependence, that involves: where there's conflict, maybe we can negotiate this, maybe it's not a question of I'm gonna win and you're gonna lose, or you're gonna win and I have to lose,

parents; his mother is a social worker. Both parents were active in the anti-war and civil rights movements of the 1960s. Will it be the children of the 1960s generation, then, who will be able to a greater extent than today's young careerists to stand back and ask larger questions about society? Are there the seeds of a radical generation in the progeny of the last one?

Troy Engel says his father, an ex-philosophy professor, approves of his activism but doesn't think it will make much difference. "With age comes a certain cynicism," Troy says. "With youth comes hope. You know?"

Amarillo By Morning

The ride from Vega to Amarillo goes quickly. I ride part of the way with Mike Gray, an activist from Midland who works as a landscaper and spends most of his free time "looking for liberals." He says proudly that the mailing list for his group, the Basin Peace and Justice Coalition, is up to 40 names. His co-worker, Kathryn Bowers, says in their moments of discouragement they refer to themselves as "the Basin Peace and Just Us Coalition." The political atmosphere of Midland and Odessa is so oppressive, she says, that sometimes it seems impossible to find just one more political activist in the entire Permian Basin. The ride to Pantex is sustenance



Dan Hubig

for her political soul.

Amarillo materializes before us.

Ever mindful of the city ordinance that makes it illegal to wave your arms at cars, especially on Amarillo Boulevard, where the "known prostitutes" are the subject of continual police crackdowns, we keep our hands to the handlebars. Amarillo Boulevard, also known as Route 66 (get your kicks), takes us through town and onto the final road to Pantex.

Only miles away, we gather forces at the JET gas station (look for the big

red and yellow missile atop the station). There are 32 bicycles ready to roll into the Peace camp. Last-minute signs and banners are made up.

Seventeen miles northeast of town, on our way to Oklahoma almost, we turn onto FM 2373, just as so many commuters, bomb-makers, do each day, for the last two miles to the Pantex gate.

There is no campground for the peace camp, of course; there is only the wide ditch on both sides of the road. The tents are pitched for hundreds of yards along the road, up to the Pantex gate (U.S. Dept. of Energy. Restricted access.). We ride single file past the tents, and about a hundred activists line the road to cheer.

And in the distance . . . In the distance is the wholly unspectacular sight of the weapons factory. It lies a half-mile across an open field and consists of low-lying brown buildings, and electric wires, and a few dome complexes, and more low-lying buildings.

In the afternoon, Ed Asner, Daniel Ellsberg and others hold a press conference under an open canvas tent. After that the workshops begin. At 6:00 Bishop Leroy Matthiesen holds a mass near the Pantex gate. That evening members of the Red River Peace Network meet to plan their occupation

where I disappear or you disappear, or in the present state of things, we may both disappear. . . .

It's much easier for women to have empathic feelings about the person with whom the conflict is. It is much less usually found in men who are in struggle, to sort of feel into the other person's needs, the other person's wishes. So that, for example, now, when I talk sometimes with people in Washington and I say: if we don't get off the road we're on, we're gonna end up where we're headed — which is Mutually Assured Destruction — then, I say to them we have got to find a way to end the nuclear arms race. And these guys, most of the Congresspeople, as you know, are men, they say, oh, we don't want to end the arms race, we want to win it. That is the opposite of let's say, a feminine perspective. . . .

Do you think there needs to be a feminization of the peace movement? . . . And isn't winning the only thing that matters, in this particular competition of stopping the arms race — isn't it as Vince Lombardi says, winning is the only thing?

No. And I think that's the reason that,

for instance, more and more I have the impression all over the country . . . that the peace movement is becoming more and more non-violent. Which means that you don't go in there and win by violent hostile protesting. That what, in fact, you do is really, as Gandhi said, you address

“You try to negotiate — which is the style of women.”

the spark of human decency in the other person and you try to negotiate — which is the style of women, by the way. Gandhi, in my own opinion — I speak now as a psychologist — was probably one of the best integrations of a feminine and a masculine position, which brings about the non-violent pursuit of truth, really. I would say in our country now there are a few men like this. Dan [Ellsberg] is one of them. There are other leaders . . . people like John Stockwell — people who have been in the military and are now doing their best to bring about a non-violent resolution

to the nuclear conflict. Admiral Gene LaRoque in Washington, there's loads of people like that. . . .

I do believe that what changes [people] is what you're calling a feminization of the peace movement, which takes not a win/lose position, but a real sense of the interdependence of the planet, and a negotiating position and an empathic position. . . .

Someone who interviewed me earlier in the day said, But aren't you very emotional about this whole subject? I said, I sure am! You better believe I am. I said anybody who is not emotional about the risk that the human species may well disappear from the planet along with this incredibly beautiful whole thing we call earth . . . I am deeply emotional. I cry a lot, by the way. I do. And sometimes it is when I'm making a speech in public about this and I can't help it. Because I am, I think, properly emotional about it. □

Margaret Brenman-Gibson was arrested August 6 at a nuclear test site in Nevada. She pled not guilty and will face trial in Beatty, Nevada, on September 26.

of the railroad tracks. The police intend to allow them on the tracks, as long as no property is destroyed. There is not enough room in the local jails to house a great deal of people if mass arrests were made.

Daniel Ellsberg speaks for an hour and a half in the evening. He is preoccupied with the last few months' setbacks to the peace movement, especially the cavalier way in which the Reagan administration was able to ignore the Soviet halt in weapons testing and reject out of hand a U.S. halt, with no public protest. He thinks the time is growing near for a dramatic act of civil disobedience at Pantex. "I have no doubt that the time will come when it will be good for people to be arrested in Amarillo and have a trial and raise the issues in that fashion," he says.

Night falls on Pantex. Hundreds of orange lights shine in the distance, across the field. A search light periodically scans the field around the plant. Yellow stoplights blink along the drive to the factory, and trucks come and go in the night. The place has taken on an eeriness now, as if the darkness somehow unmasked its nature and made it visible. Then the rain comes. The winds are powerful and the downpour torrential. The ditch collects the water; it becomes impossible to sleep. The place has become inhospitable. □

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Who Are The Law Breakers?

Amarillo

JIM DOUGLASS, the author and theologian, spoke about the "little understood and little explored" power of non-violent action at an August 5 workshop at the Pantex peace camp. Douglass is the founder of Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action near Seattle, and spends a good deal of his time there trespassing on the grounds of the Trident nuclear submarine base and then dealing with the legal consequences. He has been involved in efforts to block the railroad tracks upon which the "White Train" carries nuclear warheads from Pantex to the Trident base.

Douglass, who refers often to the teachings of Christ and of Gandhi, told activists "there is a power of non-violence that is more inconceivable than what's in the Pantex plant." In telling about acts of civil disobedience the nine members of the Ground Zero community have staged over the past few years, he explained that the most important victories were in getting people "on the other side" to join the resistance, even in a small way. "Non-cooperation with evil is as important as cooperation with good," Douglass said.

During one trial in Washington in which the protesters made the case for non-cooperation with American nuclear policy, he said, the prosecutor was won over and resigned from the case. In another trial for blocking the tracks near Trident, the activists

found themselves charged with conspiracy as well as trespassing. The judge eventually dismissed the conspiracy charges but gave the jury little grounds in his instructions to reach a not-guilty finding on the trespassing charge. Nevertheless, the jury, moved by the anti-nuclear testimony, invented their own reasons to acquit the activists. "The jury realized that they were the conscience of the people," Douglass said.

Douglass urged the Texas protesters to seek ways to avoid antagonizing Pantex workers; the mission, he said, is to help workers eventually "walk off the plant." But he said there are no "quick fixes" in non-violent protest. "In doing things in a deeply patient way, we create time. If we do things in a hurried way we lose time," he said.

Midway through his talk, Douglass said he intended to stop using the term "civil disobedience." "We don't think we're disobeying the law," he said. "We use the term 'Nuremberg action.'" Douglass claims that, because the Nuremberg trials condemned warfare directed at the civilian population, planning for nuclear war is an illegal act. After his talk, the *Observer* asked him to expound on that theme. His remarks were as follows:

"What the Nuremberg tribunal did was to make what Thoreau and Gandhi called 'civil disobedience' a legal obligation. It's transformed our relationship to the state in a way that

we have not understood and begun to incorporate into our lives. Because what Nuremberg said is that if there is a crime being committed, a huge crime — and nuclear weapons are a huge crime, [and] preparations for nuclear war — we have the responsibility under law in our own country to resist that even when it means violating particular laws in a country. So that is a legal obligation; and our government had that proposed at the United Nations in 1946. President Truman said: we want that incorporated into law. What that means, according to our Constitution, Article 6, Section 2, is that the Nuremberg obligation, the Nuremberg principles, are part of the supreme law of the land. [Article 6, Section 2, states: "This Constitution . . . and all treaties made or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, any thing in the Constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding."] So they are part of the constitutional obligation of the United States and that means that when we go into court and say we have blocked a train carrying nuclear weapons, we are doing the same thing as saying we are blocking a train carrying out slavery. If everybody in the United States Senate and everybody in the House of Representatives votes in a law advocating and helping to prepare first strike weapons, it's still not legal. And it's not legal because we have agreed to principles that have become constitutional law in this country — a treaty obligation to the Nuremberg principles and obligations." □

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Free Ride Is Over On Overtime Pay

By Bill Adler

San Antonio

IT'S HOTTER'N teenagers in love this afternoon. At the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 694 hall on N. Flores, just down the street from the bus depot, members huddle near the window unit in an upstairs office. Joe Garcia's on the phone, as he often is these days, when he eyes a visitor. "Get yourself a soda water, young man, and I'll be right with you. Lemme call ya later," he barks into the phone, "I got the news media here."

Garcia ambles across the hallway to an empty office and plops himself down on a long sofa, motioning the news media to do likewise.

"So whaddaya wanna know, young man?" he says, pulling an index card from his shirt pocket. He begins reciting from the card, telling me what I want to know. I flip on the tape recorder.

This is not the sort of interview I want to be doing. Surely, only five months after he entered the annals of constitutional history, there must be something original left to ask. "Excuse me for interrupting, Joe, but the facts I know. I wanted to talk to you about how it feels to enter the annals of constitutional history."

"Feels pretty good. The wife's real tickled."

THE U.S. Supreme Court on February 19, in a landmark decision on the division of power between the federal government and the states, ruled that Joe G. Garcia, 41, who drives a bus for the publicly-owned San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority — known locally as VIA — is just as entitled to overtime pay under the federal law as if he were driving for a private company.

The court said that state and local governments were not immune from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. The Act is supposed to ensure that employers pay at least the minimum wages and overtime pay at the rate of time-and-a-half after a forty-hour work week.

Bill Adler works for the Texas State Employees Union and lives in Austin.

Congress extended the Act to states and localities in 1974, but the Court ruled in 1976 that the extension was an unconstitutional infringement on "state sovereignty."

In that case, *National League of Cities v. Usery*, the court held that the 10th Amendment bars Congress from legislating in areas that have been the "traditional governmental functions" of the states. The 10th Amendment provides that powers not granted by the Constitution to the federal government are "reserved to the states."

It was the first time in 40 years — since the New Deal — that the Supreme Court had said a federal law intruded on the authority of the states. For the past nine years, however, the liberal wing of the court has successfully blocked attempts to apply the decision to other states' rights questions.

In 1982, for example, the court ruled that employees of the New York State-owned Long Island Rail Road had a federally guaranteed right to strike because running a railroad was not a "traditional" state function. In 1983, the court ruled that the federal age-discrimination employment law applied to Wyoming state employees. By the time the high court heard *Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority*, the writing was on the wall.

In 1981, then-U.S. District Judge Fred Shannon ruled, based on the National League of Cities decision, that mass transit workers were exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act. Both the union and the federal government appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that mass transit was not a traditional state function and that the 10th Amendment should not apply. The Supremes remanded the case to Judge Shannon, who, in February 1983, upheld his original verdict.

The high court heard the case in March 1984, and, after failing to reach a decision by the end of the term, ordered a new argument for last October. In February, in a ruling that will affect roughly half of the nation's 14 million public employees, the court reversed itself on the National League of Cities decision, voting 5 to 4 to permit

Congress's 1974 amendments to take effect.

Justice Harry Blackmun, who voted reluctantly with the majority in the 1976 case, was the justice who in *Garcia* tipped the balance. Joined by the dissenters in *National League of Cities* — Justices William Brennan, Thurgood Marshall, Byron White, and John Paul Stevens — Blackmun wrote that the effect of that decision had been to have federal courts decide which state activities are or aren't exempt from federal regulation — a system he called "unworkable." This arrangement, he said, "invites an unelected federal judiciary to make decisions about which state and local governments have sufficient clout in Congress to ensure that "laws that unduly burden the states will not be promulgated."

WELL BEFORE the corks hit the ceiling at Local 694, however, a well-orchestrated attack on the ruling was set in motion.

"If they [San Antonio Metropolitan Transit] had won," said Joe Garcia, who is now the union's vice-president, "we were ready to say okay, the heck with it, the Supreme Court decision is final. And we figured if they lost, they'd do the same thing. But these guys haven't given up, they're just getting started."

The assault began with the terse, one-paragraph dissent of Justice William Rehnquist, who said it was unnecessary "to spell out further the fine points of a principle that will, I am confident, in time again command the support of a majority of this Court."

"How true, how true," harangued James J. Kilpatrick, the Right's flagship columnist. "Just as soon as Ronald Reagan has a chance to replace Brennan, Marshall or Blackmun with a latter-day Patrick Henry. . . ."

Meantime, a Senate subcommittee held one hearing in Washington, July 25, and another on August 28 in Oklahoma City, and scheduled a third for September 10 in Washington on legislation that would overturn the effect of the decision — "to wipe us off the books," Garcia said. At the July hearing, Texas Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby joined a bevy of state and local officials, including the governors of North Carolina, Missouri, and Colorado, in howling about the impending financial doom for their states caused by the ruling.

Hobby told the Labor Subcommittee of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee that the decision could cost Texas more than \$20 million.

Hardest hit by the decision, Hobby said, would be the departments of Public Safety, Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and Corrections.

"From February 19, the date of the decision, through the end of June, we estimated that it would cost TDC \$3.6 million in overtime, DPS \$1.6 million, and MHMR \$900,000," Hobby said. "Multiply that total by three and you get approximately \$20 million."

Union representatives took a different view. "Fair overtime pay is pure and simple economic justice," said Peggy Connerton, chief economist of the Service Employees International Union, which represents 525,000 public workers. The lobbyist for the International Association of Firefighters, Harold Schaitberger, said public officials were trying to "create panic" by exaggerating the impact of the decision.

Nevertheless, five bills, including one by Don Nickles, R- Okla., chairman of the Labor Subcommittee, have been introduced to overturn the overtime portion of the decision.

During the final week of its 69th legislative session, the Texas House chimed in with a resolution calling on Congress to pass similar legislation. The non-binding resolution, which died in the Senate for lack of a sponsor, was carried by Rep. Mike Millsap, D-Fort Worth. "This should not be construed as a vote against the working people of this state or the public employees of this state," he allowed with a straight face.

"I can assure you that the Congress doesn't read our resolutions," Rep. Orlando Garcia, D-San Antonio, who opposed the resolution, told the *San Antonio Light*. "It would be a waste of time and a waste of paper."

Meanwhile, the U.S. Labor Depart-

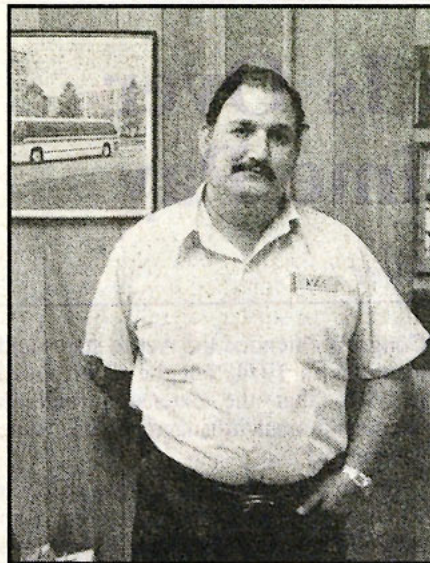


Photo by Bill Adler

San Antonio bus driver Joe Garcia

ment has done little but sit on its hands in hopes of a Congressional remedy to its enforcement mandate. The department announced that, although it will not begin active enforcement of the law until October 15 — due to a need to achieve "orderly transition" — it will expect states and localities to have complied since April 15, the day the court formally refused to reconsider its February decision.

But unions aren't buying the department's line. Communications Workers of America President Glen Watts in May fired off an angry letter to Labor Secretary Bill Brock. "CWA is outraged at DOL's cavalier attitude," wrote Watts, who has since retired. "Such a policy sends a clear message to employers that they have a 'free ride' for at least six months. . . . Moreover, it shifts the burden of enforcement from the Labor Department to unions and individual workers whose resources cannot nearly match those of the department."

In Texas, the Texas State Employees Union (TSEU), a CWA affiliate, has jumped into the fight. The union last month filed suit against the Texas Department of Corrections in federal

court, seeking an order for TDC to pay overtime — pegged at \$8 to \$10 million — to some 10,000 prison employees. And union officials said they may file similar suits against other state agencies, particularly MHMR and DHR.

TDC announced in June it would comply with the Supreme Court ruling. But TSEU said the agency has "said one thing and done another."


"Employees have not been credited for all overtime worked, have been forced to take overtime on an hour-per-hour basis rather than at a rate of time-and-a-half, and large numbers of workers have been exempted from overtime," said Eliseo Medina, organizing coordinator for the 12,000-member union. "We hope this lawsuit sends a message not only to TDC that they cannot violate federal law and get away with it, but to all state agencies." [TDC officials would not comment on the matter.]

FOR STATE and local governments, the high court's mandate "probably is the single biggest burden they will be facing this year and maybe next year," Gregg Jackson, research director of the International City Management Association, told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Beyond that, though, the ruling struck at the heart of efforts by states' rights activists to impose limits on federal power. "I always viewed the Supreme Court in the role of referee, standing on the field in a striped shirt, mediating the contest between the states and federal governments," said Democratic Gov. Bruce Babbitt of Arizona. "What this decision does is have the referee leaving the field and heading for the shower."

Babbitt said he was particularly concerned that, because the court had "taken a walk," Congress would be free to pre-empt state power in areas far beyond the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Joe Garcia said he hadn't given much thought to those larger issues, but if they're valid, he said, public employers have only the San Antonio Transit Authority to blame. "When we first started off with this, our thing was just to cover the transit employees, that's all," Garcia said. "We thought it would just be a simple little decision: yes, no, or you're not a traditional government function, period. VIA was actually the one to cause all these problems around the country. They were the ones who brought up the questions of constitutionality. They were the ones who wanted to compare us to the National League of Cities case. They put the rope around their own neck." □



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Colonial Law

✓ The U.S. House of Representatives adopted an amendment to prevent the District of Columbia from spending any of its budget for abortions. This means a woman there cannot get a federally-funded abortion even if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest or if her life is in danger. Here is how the representatives from Texas cast their votes:

Of the 16 Texas Democrats, all but five voted against the amendment. The five voting for the amendment were de la Garza of Mission, Hall of Rockwall, Leath of Marlin, Ortiz of Corpus Christi, and Stenholm of Stamford.

Of the ten Republican representatives, all voted in favor of the amendment, except Boulter of Amarillo and Loeffler of Hunt, who were absent for the vote.

✓ Coke drinkers were outraged when Coca-Cola changed its formula, but Dr. Pepper drinkers and native Dallasites may be crushed when they hear this: the Dr. Pepper plant in Dallas has been sold for development.

Harbord Enterprises, Inc., plans to build a shopping center, hotel, and office buildings on the 27-acre site at Mockingbird Lane and Greenville Avenue. The art deco headquarters building, built in the late 1940s, sits back from the road on an expanse of green grass and has been a landmark for two generations of Dallasites.

Ross Love, spokesman for Harbord, says he does not know if they will tear down the building that faces Mockingbird. "Right now," Love told the *Dallas Morning News*, "one of our scenarios has it that we will leave the building there. The final outcome will depend on our final master plan and what the real estate market dictates." The land is zoned industrial, and the developers may build up to 20 stories high without special permission or a zoning change from the city.

Even if the Dr. Pepper building remains, the landmark will be changed forever, since the first phase of development, according to Love, will be a shopping center fronting on Mockingbird.

✓ Busing is again at issue in Fort Worth, where the school board voted Aug. 5 to ask a federal judge to abolish their court-ordered busing program.

The three minority members of the

school board voted against the measure, saying that to end busing would increase racial segregation and black children would lose out.

"What you're trying to do tonight is to reconfirm your belief in [the doctrine of] separate but equal, and I won't buy it," said Reby Cary, president of the Fort Worth Black Chamber of Commerce.

The five white school board members who voted in favor of the abolition request say they are worried about continuity in the lives of the students. "Busing interferes dramatically with continuity," said board member Jocelyn Wuester. "We realize that every time children change schools, they lose something."

Fort Worth's busing activities now involve only second and third graders in 20 elementary schools. Leon Haley, attorney for the Fort Worth National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said if the desegregation plan is re-opened for changes, his group will attempt to add three currently all-black high schools to the busing program.

Fort Worth's busing program has been cut back dramatically and steadily since the early 1970s.

✓ Knight-Ridder's reporter in South Africa, Robert J. Rosenthal, had a very difficult time one Sunday in August



seeing the country's blacks in human terms. Rosenthal covered the stoning of a black policeman by a "pack" of youths. They chased the policeman with "animal fury," he reported in his lead. Later in the story, he wrote that "a great animal cry rose from the crowd as many realized that one of the policemen was running for his life." Still again, "but the policeman was like a wounded animal chased by a pack frenzied by the scent of the kill." That's quite a metaphor Rosenthal sank his teeth into. And, like a tenacious dog in a tug-of-war, he wasn't about to let go. The *Austin American-Statesman* carried the story on its front page under the headline, "Wild mob stalks wounded officer with animal fury."

✓ Approximately \$9 million in Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation contracts may go to women's businesses this year. The department says it wants to increase by 50 percent its awarding of contracts to women and disadvantaged businesses. Before shouting "Hosanna," you should know that represents .75 percent of the \$1.2 billion in such contracts awarded.

✓ For Ballinger Publishing, Mayor Henry Cisneros of San Antonio is finishing a book, "The Entrepreneurial City," with the help of "book doctor" Pat O'Heffernan of California. Cisneros told *San Antonio Express-News* reporter Mary Jane Bode he is working on a second book "about the way the world is changing for the United States," but declined to do an autobiography on grounds that he has not done enough in his life at this point.

Cisneros told Bode, concerning Walter Mondale's consideration of him for the vice-presidential position on the Democratic ticket last year:

"I did not expect to be taken seriously. I had it in my mind that if he said, 'Will you?' I would say, 'No, I cannot.' It was not in my clock; not anywhere close. I couldn't resign here and travel all fall." But, while awaiting Mondale's call on his decision, Cisneros said: "For the first time, I asked myself, 'Can I say no to him?'"

✓ Seven Texas statutes that limit labor union picketing were declared unconstitutional Aug. 7 by U.S. District Judge Mary Lou Robinson.

It all started during the 1980 onion harvest in Deaf Smith County. Farm-worker organizer Jesus Moya tried to organize a picket of fields and packing sheds. But 17 vegetable growers and distributors used the seven statutes to stop Moya, and a state district court judge issued a temporary injunction against his organization. Robinson has ruled that the restrictions violated Moya's right to free speech. □

Political Intelligence is reported by Dawn Albright.

Observer Bequests

Austin attorney Vivian Mahlab has agreed to consult with those interested in including the *Observer* in their estate planning. For further information, contact Vivian Mahlab, attorney-at-law, P.C., at 617 Blanco, Austin, Texas 78703, or call 512-477-1700.

Why the Hewers of Wood Can't Read

By Michael King

JONATHAN KOZOL begins his latest book by recalling the circumstances which produced his first, *Death at an Early Age*, the story of his experiences as a fourth grade teacher in the Boston Public Schools: "I saw before my eyes a world of suffering, of hopelessness and fear, that I could never have imagined in the privileged and insulated decades of my childhood and schooling." He goes on to describe how he was in effect being introduced to the dismal lives and futures of the children of his family's live-in maid, a woman whose own children went without her attention so that young Jonathan could receive her "love unstinted."

In 1964 I learned at last, and with a wave of shame and fear that turned before long into an unbounded and compensatory rage, that the children of our colored maid had been denied the childhood and happiness and care that had been given to me by their mother. . . . I had been the recipient of stolen goods. What had been stolen from them seemed unspeakable: a crime, an evil past imagination.

It is to Kozol's credit that he can frankly confess to being an unconscious accessory to an ongoing social crime, and it is yet true that for most of us the contradictions of class society never appear in such stark and personal form. Generally, they are disguised by ghetto boundaries, superhighways, and railroads tracks, and rare is the child of privilege who looks back upon his comfortable upbringing with more than misty nostalgia.

Kozol notes that most of the children whom he taught in 1964 have since grown up to lives of poverty, ignorance, welfare, and crime — and that they were and are, like the maid who raised him, illiterate. It is illiteracy, and not more generally the disastrous state of public education, that is the subject of this book. Like Faulkner's Sutpen, he asserts, we have denied our children — the many millions of underclass illiterates ignored and abandoned by our educational and social systems — and

we shall pay for our crimes: "Societal denial of the crime by which it lives demonstrates political ineptitude and ethical betrayal; but it also tells us of that civic pride that goes before a fall."

Kozol has written an unapologetically impassioned book about the astonishing levels of illiteracy which persist throughout American society — by his rough

ILLITERATE AMERICA

By Jonathan Kozol

Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1985
270 pp., \$15.95

estimates, some 60 million Americans, or one-third of the adult population, either cannot read at all (25 million) or read only at marginal levels (35 million). He has spent much of his adult life either teaching illiterate young people or working in programs devoted to teaching reading skills to adults, and this book is an attempt to describe that problem in detail to a wide audience and to exhort that audience to action. It is an honorable and necessary effort, and one can in the first place only applaud it and hope that it has some tangible and positive effects.

Unfortunately, while *Illiterate America* is a laudable and insistently well-intentioned book, it also seems to me flawed in persistent and important ways — in aspects related to the somewhat curious moral Kozol derives from the story of his childhood maid. That she was illiterate is undeniable; that her children, and the children of countless other black and Hispanic and poor white families are illiterate, is also undeniable — but to move implicitly from that deplorable circumstance to the identification of illiteracy and impoverishment is both misleading and potentially dangerous. For such an equation confuses a symptom with a cause, and it suggests that it is only a lack of literate education that is keeping millions of people in economic and cultural bondage: that, had Kozol's apparently nameless maid and her children been able to read, the doors of American opportunity would have somehow magically opened

for them and the millions of others like them — and they would no longer be maids or menials or on the dole.

Kozol himself never says this directly, but his whole book implies that the poor have no jobs (and no money) because they are illiterate, when in actual and ineluctable fact the poor are illiterate because they have no jobs — that is, because they have no money, and no prospect of any. Children, especially non-white children, who are born into the American underclass, are not stupid — they look about them, to the lives of their parents and their neighbors, and learn in their bones very quickly that neither virtue nor ambition is likely to be rewarded, and that other means will be necessary to secure whatever "success" they are likely to have. Another reviewer, Stanley Aronowitz, has pointed out that Kozol never asks the crucial question, "Is social mobility really available to poor people who can read?"

He never asks because he too knows the answer, and yet the argument of his book and his work is based upon the exhortation to his audience that an effective literacy campaign is the key to the social advancement of poor Americans. "Teach them to read," he wants to suggest, "and they will find their way to the good life" — and add millions of dollars to the economy, and save the failing publishing industry, and educate their own children, and improve military preparedness, and transform the culture, and make peace with the Russians. . . . Kozol himself is a little bit embarrassed by the extravagant claims he finds himself making for the benefits of universal literacy, noting that one publisher had rejected his manuscript because he had not sufficiently "hit the reader in the pocketbook." But when he is not suggesting that millions of suddenly literate poor people will be able to find jobs in newly emerging technical fields, he is hinting that they will also save the staggering economy, by enormous increases in tax revenues and productivity.

BUT IT IS, of course, "in the pocketbook" that the American social structure is particularly resistant to battering, at least when the expense comes for an obviously broadly-based social good like mass public education. Kozol admits that there are no serious monies available for the improvement of public schools, let alone for extension programs like adult liter-

Michael King is a regular Observer contributor on matters cultural.

acy; that the current national and local administrations are reluctant to do anything about education but cut budgets and "raise standards" (i.e. blame the students for the failure of the system), and that the whole cultural atmosphere, not to mention the overheated economy, has made "social programs" like public education seem an unnecessary and expensive frill next to serious business like defense boondoggles in outer space and threatening small neighboring countries with extinction. Yet, in the teeth of such a withering ill wind, he insists, in all seriousness, that a national campaign for literacy is a real possibility and the only thing which will save us from ourselves.

It is when Kozol turns to recommending solutions to the literacy crisis that his vision is transformed from simply utopian idealism to serious political fantasy. Since he basically no longer believes that the public schools are reformable, or even sufficiently humane institutions to be trusted with adult illiterates, he envisions armies of volunteer neighborhood organizers, recruiters, and tutors, drawn from neighborhoods and schools (but only during off-hours), and teaching singly and in small groups in converted store fronts and abandoned housing projects, and emphasizing concepts like "anger" and "revolution" instead of textbook primers and phonetics. His models for this campaign are the explicitly revolutionary national campaign in Cuba and Nicaragua, and Paulo Freire's work in Brazil, although he tap-dances around the political implications such parallels have for American audiences. What he does not wish to acknowledge is that the phenomenal success of such programs occurred in explicitly revolutionary conditions of grand national consensus — conditions which are not remotely comparable to the present or foreseeable state of the American body politic.

Most major urban school systems, now the great factories of present and future illiterates, are going begging for thousands of schoolteachers for pay — at admittedly risible salaries. Municipalities (and the federal government) are even more than usually disinclined to provide serious and necessary financial support to education. Does Kozol seriously believe that there is a silent and yearning multitude of volunteers with ample time on their hands, ready to do what paid professionals have not been able to do, or that the institutional funds are available for a project of this scope, to be built on activist principles?

Although he insists that the number of adult illiterates could be realistically reduced by half within the next ten

years, the desperate tone of his whole book belies his explicit optimism. More important, his dismissal of the school systems as incorrigible, and his blind advocacy of voluntarism as the remedial solution, strike me as inadvertent neo-conservatism in an idealistically liberal guise. I do not think the "volunteers" exist for such a project, but moreover I do not think we should be asking individuals to perform the proper mission of communal, public institutions, in this case the public school systems. At all levels the American governments are in the process of dismantling and abandoning the entire system of mass public education which, whatever its faults, had for much of the century provided free access to competent schooling for the bulk of the populace. We should be demanding its salvation, transformation, and reinvigoration — not writing it off as a bad investment that could be replaced by storefront workshops and marginal freedom schools.

Kozol laments the state of government support for education, but the thrust of his own proposals lets the politicians,

and the schools, off the hook. Buried in his footnotes is a more realistic assessment by Texas literacy researcher Jim Cates:

The problem of literacy is national and, as with other national funding needs, any productive solution must be federally inspired and funded . . . Left to their own devices, the local public educational systems are now contributing approximately one million incompetents annually to the national pool of functional illiterates. . . . We are hampered by a "barn-raising" mentality that likens major problems to the simplistic gathering of a band of hardy pioneers coming to the assistance of a frontier neighbor in distress. The increasing sophistication of this society now requires leadership able to see beyond the first line of trees at the edge of the clearing and into the forest of national need.

Cates also calls *Illiterate America* "the most important book of the decade," but it seems to me thoroughly permeated with the "barn-raising" mentality he deplores. Part of the problem is no doubt Kozol's understandable desperation — the situation appears hopeless, with no institutional solutions

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Pd. Pol. Adv. by Judge Steve Russell Campaign, Pamela Giblin, Treasurer, 919 Congress Ave., Austin, Texas 78701.

even in prospect, and thus he advocates voluntary responses as the only ones presently likely. He defends his relentlessly overwrought tone as only in keeping with the immense human costs of illiteracy, but at its repetitious length — the book is too long by half — he sounds like a man shouting into a hurricane.

KOZOL'S subject is of enormous importance, and his sincerity in conceiving and writing the book is undeniable. Yet, beyond its approaches to the specific problem of American illiteracy, *Illiterate America* is worrisome evidence of the continuing paralysis of American liberalism. Locked out of or disdainful institutions, marginalized in political debate, made to seem unfashionable or wistfully impractical, the liberal left is reduced to strident moral exhortations and anxious waiting for an egalitarian revival. It may happen, but it is not likely to be brought about or made permanent by ceding the public institutions to those

most intent upon destroying them.

Finally, a book on literacy, which rails repeatedly at academic and governmental jargon, should not have been so poorly written. The book is marred by irritatingly "punchy" prose, tortured syntax, and painfully bludgeoned literary allusions. Even in his initial definitions, Kozol cannot make himself clear: his 35 million functional illiterates are said to read "only at a level which is less than equal to the full survival needs of our society." Who is surviving there — the citizen? the society? He fudges that distinction because his enormous numbers are founded upon a definition of illiteracy so broad that it seems to include nearly everyone without a B.A., and a good many of those. The problem is indeed overwhelming, and it is not necessary to inflate it by cooking the books.

But, indeed, Kozol's earnestness is such that he wants to blame illiteracy for nearly everything: joblessness, crime, airplane disasters, Three Mile Island, and the threat of nuclear war.

I've got news for him: it is not the people who can't read that we need to worry about, but the "best and the brightest" who presumably can, and, yet, who rule the world for their own gain and the misfortune of the rest of us. For them, in an important sense, illiteracy is no accident, for it maintains the status quo of class relations. Black educator Kenneth B. Clark recalls being told by a member of the New York Board of Education, "there must also be hewers of wood and drawers of water" — and until the educational system is made over in the interest of the hewers and the drawers, young people will continue to be dying at a very early age.

Those currently applauding the "raising of standards" in the schools should also be asking "standards for what and for whom?" As long as the H. Ross Perots and the IBMs are determining the nature and direction of education, and who will receive it, "literacy" will be little more than a training into bondage, and millions of students will continue to find little use for it. □

Shaping Chilean History

By James C. Harrington

The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man; it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.

— William Faulkner

TRAGIC historical events often provide for great literature, and so it is that the brutal 1973 Nixon-backed coup in Chile has produced two masterpieces now on U.S. bookshelves. *The House of the Spirits*, which has made the best seller lists, is a "fictional" account of a Chilean family, by Isabel Allende, niece of Salvador Allende Gossens. *I Dreamt the Snow Was Burning* is written by Antonio Skármeta, a journalist who held philosophy and literature positions at the University of Chile before Allende's downfall.

Besides being outstanding writing, they each approach differently the role

of the individual in a socialist democracy. Both books compel us to consider the struggle for justice in the context of our families, traditions, and society. They examine issues important for

THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS

By Isabel Allende

Trans. Magda Bogin
Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1985
368 pp., \$17.95

I DREAMT THE SNOW WAS BURNING

By Antonio Skármeta

Trans. Malcolm Coad
Readers International, New York, 1985
220 pp., \$14.95 (paperback \$7.95)

contemporary Americans facing an increasingly homogenized culture and monopolized economy.

The House of the Spirits describes the unspoken strength of women and the

matriarchy in Hispanic America by chronicling the lives of the telepathic and clairvoyant Clara del Valle, her more mundane daughter Blanca, and Alba of the third generation. Against the histories of these long-suffering women plays the unhappy, long life of Esteban Trueba, leader of the Conservative Party, who obstinately plots against the Liberal regime only to see the new brutal military leaders he supports torture and rape his granddaughter Alba and kill his physician son, who treated the poor of the barrio.

The fact that his granddaughter was violated by the grandson (also named Esteban) of Pancha García, whom Senator Trueba himself had raped many years earlier on his farm and whose own mother and grandmother "had suffered the same animal fate" before her, injects more than philosophical irony into the family chronicle.

Esteban Trueba, Clara's husband — whom she grew not to love because of his violence against her and the children — lives more as an adjunct to the family, bringing as much havoc to it and to the workers on his estate, Tres Marías, as he does to the country's politics, which move inexorably toward social justice. Trueba despising reform and detesting charity, is a social Darwinist.

Clara, even in death, is the mystical soul of the family, keeping the family together and molding compassion into the hearts of her children and grandchildren. Esteban's heart, on the other hand,

James Harrington is legal director of the Texas Civil Liberties Union and reads 19th century Spanish philosophy in his spare time.

grows harder the older he gets and the more he interacts with society.

The Trueba family shapes and is shaped by the social upheaval around them, in which they play roles on all political sides, at times unwittingly. (Alba, for example, is Blanca's daughter by a socialist party organizer). It is a revolution that permeates the family, drawing members away from each other but never irrevocably. Clara, when near death, even forgives Esteban's brutality toward her.

The issue of fate is laid out in the novel's frequent juxtaposition of the Trueba household with the parallel lives of the Garcías of Tres Marías, some of whom are illegitimate offspring of the Senator. The grandparents' ignorance and docility evolve into the grandchildren's demands for better working conditions.

The interaction among the members of each family (Trueba's abuse of the women and his illegitimate offspring's abuse of Alba) underlines the question of fate. Does human existence have a cyclical quality, within which good and evil vie with each other? Alba views her captivity by Esteban García as part of the "terrible chain" of events:

The day my grandfather tumbled [García's] grandmother . . . he added another link to the chain of events that had to complete itself. Afterward the grandson of the woman who was raped repeated the gesture with the granddaughter of the rapist, and perhaps forty years from now my grandson will knock García's daughter down among the rushes, and so on down through the centuries in an unending tale of sorrow, blood, and love.

The three-generation saga is told poignantly by Alba, through her mother's notebook, and by Esteban, who dies in Alba's arms. This "unending tale of sorrow, blood, and love" is difficult to put down and difficult to forget.

Do we exist merely on the wheel of fortune or is the purpose of our life, as Clara told Alba in a visit from beyond the grave, "not to die, since death came anyway, but to survive, which would be a miracle"?

IDREAMT the *Snow Was Burning*, which has long been praised as a literary classic in Europe, pays some of the same attention to family and duty but is more a look at the Allende revolution through the eyes and hearts of some of its participants and non-participants living in a cheap Santiago boarding house. Told through a Faulk-

nerian stream of consciousness, the novel creates an overall sense of human tragedy.

Skármeta tells his tale of despairing political hope through the lives of the tenants' landlord Don Manuel; of a once-and-future second-rate street entertainer Señor Pequeño (Ernesto Lecaros) and his son Beast (Ángel); of the non-political country boy Arturo, who tries to be a national soccer star but dashes his dream in a fight with a referee; and of other common folk who have found a better life in a new political order, which they know they are fated to defend with their lives, something they do passionately.

Like Isabel Allende's novel, *I Dreamt the Snow Was Burning* (titled after a Chilean folk song) has a mystical quality, reflected in the lives of the poor and their concern for each other. Here, too, a woman, Susana, a revolutionary, plays a role of strength and direction, a link to human transcendence through grief and duty.

I Dreamt the Snow Was Burning is set during the time in which Allende's supporters had "lost the initiative" and the military coup was anticipated momentarily. The book looks at the phenomena of the time: fascist gang attacks against leftists, economic chaos and food shortages brought on by anti-Allende strikes, efforts to gain back the 91 nationalized factories, the loyalty of the poor to "the President" ("the Guard never surrenders") and their devotion to the country.

Some of the more moving sections of the novel describe Allende's clear rapport with his followers, the *compañeros*, as they celebrate the fizzling of the first coup attempt. It is startling how much the social revolution in Chile depended on the good will of the military forces. Skármeta never explores how history might have been different had Allende armed the populace as the Nicaraguan Sandinistas have done.

The book employs some interesting symbolism, including Señor Pequeño's time of despair in the rubbish yard and his redemption by a woman. Skármeta also finds analogies between the style of soccer in Latin America and the foundation-less political edifices of its countries. Themes unfold through day-to-day conversations and dialogue:

. . . know what, Oliva? you're no traitor, you're no deserter from the cause . . . you carry on like this because . . . you don't understand what the struggle of the people is all about, because you don't understand that you yourself are a poor

bastard, because when you sell your bit of cloth on the black market, you're selling your kid, man, because you're pushing everything backwards . . . you're breaking up the only weapon we have, man, our class morality, our class consciousness gettit, mate?

In the end, the brutal military takeover kills many of the characters. But the "sticky blackness" of the coup does not lead to total despair. This message is carried by the old housekeeper, Juana Gómez, who breaks her silence to tell Don Manuel that the boardinghouse folks whose blood stains the carpet are "still alive."

. . . on a special mission . . . to heaven . . . and that they would come back . . . wrapped in a banner so big its tail would trail along the *cordillera* like a comet . . . Don Manuel, how much longer are we going to stay here sweeping the carpet . . . we've been wandering about choked with death for long enough . . . dear boss of mine . . . we have to get organised. . . .

Both Isabel Allende and Antonio Skármeta, in their own ways, see inevitable victory for the human spirit, rising out of tragedy. A victory that is reflected in strong people who mold history as much as they are molded by it. These novels, too, contribute to, and are shaped by, the tedious historical process of justice. □

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• SOCIAL CAUSE CALENDAR •

WAVE SOIREE

A haute hip exhibit of plastic art of the '80s by the women of WAVE, Debe Bentley and Catherine Goddard, will be on view until **September 1**, Nadine's, 1600 E. 6th St., Austin. See shower curtains beyond description; free. Call (512) 443-7803 for information on this art-and-more group.

WATERFRONT FESTIVAL

The Houston Toxic Substances Task Force will have its fourth annual Waterfront Festival, a "family oriented environmental awareness event," **September 2**, Sam Houston Park, noon-8 p.m., with kids' games, music, food, information display booths, and entertainment. Call Rory Miggins (713) 921-2939, or 665-8528 for more information.

HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK YOU'RE WORTH?

Houston Area National Organization for Women (NOW) has officially designated Labor Day as Pay Equity Day, a day for women everywhere to focus the public's attention on sex discrimination in the marketplace, and to demand that Pay Equity legislation be enacted. Pay Equity is the rating of jobs according to established criteria such as skill and knowledge, responsibility and accountability, working conditions, and interpersonal skills. Texas has not implemented Pay Equity, nor does it have a task force, job evaluation study, or suit pending on Pay Equity. For more information on Pay Equity or on local NOW Labor Day plans call Pam Swann, (713) 893-4520, or write NOW, Box 66351, Houston, 77266.

OBSERVANCES

September 1838 — First known Texas workers' strike, when the Texas Typographical Association struck Houston publishers for a 25 percent wage increase.

September 1-4, 1972 — The founding national convention in El Paso of La Raza Unida as an independent political party.

September 2 — Labor Day.

September 5, 1882 — 30,000 workers marched in the first Labor Day parade, New York City.

September 8, 1965 — United Farm Workers' grape strike began in Delano, California.

September 9, 1919 — Boston police strike began.

September 10, 1897 — 19 striking miners were killed and 40 were wounded by sheriff's deputies, Latimer, Penn.

September 14, 1959 — Landrum-Griffin Act was passed to limit trade union activities.

BIKES NOT BOMBS

Austin Bikes Not Bombs, a non-profit group collecting bikes to send to Nicaraguan health and education workers, will have a benefit to raise money for bike repair and shipping costs, **September 11**, Chameleons, 607 Trinity, Austin 8 p.m.-midnight, with music, poetry readings, and Mike Conroy speaking about his most recent Nicaraguan adventures. Bike shipments are classified as humanitarian aid and are not affected by the embargo.

TEXANS WITH DISABILITIES MEET

The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities will have its eighth annual convention on Leadership Development, **September 27-29**, Sheraton Hotel, I-40 W. at Georgia, in Amarillo. The Coalition is a non-profit, cross-disability organization of 80 local and state member organizations concentrating on the following areas: training and technical assistance; leadership development and role modeling; information gathering and sharing; organizing for action; and, cross-disability education and cooperation. For registration information contact: CTD Annual Convention, Box 4709, Austin, 78765; \$15 fee includes membership dues.

CANCEL THE NUKE

The South Texas Cancellation Campaign (STCC), with branch offices in Austin, San Antonio, and one planned for Houston, is working to achieve cancellation of the South Texas Nuclear Project (STNP) with the help of an experienced intervenor, Lanny Sinkin, who will present arguments and evidence before hearings of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Bay City and Houston. STCC chapters are having a membership and fundraising drive to help support this work. To contribute or to volunteer time to work on the campaign write STCC, c/o Sherry Stephens, 1811 Heights Blvd., Houston, 77080.

ART CALL

The Austin Contemporary Visual Arts Association Citation Exhibition will open **November 3**, Designer's Space, Austin. A call for entries is being made to all ACVAA members and prospective members. There is no entry fee and membership is \$25 per year for artists; \$20 for students. Deadline for slide entry is **September 10**. Artist Tony Moore, Assistant Operations Manager, Guggenheim Museum, will be the exhibition juror.

• AFTERWORD •

Summer Journal

By Elroy Bode

I SAT AT THE HUNTING cabin beneath a tree. I had a blank notebook page in front of me and I was grappling with my problem of the moment: How to interpret a cow's stare.

Longtime Observer contributor Elroy Bode lives and writes in San Antonio.

That is, how could I get down on paper the essence of a red hereford's stare as she lifted her head at mid-morning in the water lot, turned slightly, and regarded me from within her solid cow-center? How to convey that deep cow-superiority and cow-indifference, that all-seeing and unseeing gaze-and-droll? The hereford's look — apparently

so guileless, so impersonal, so much like a blank pane of glass in an empty house — seemed, suddenly, to contain an awesome, coded message coming to me across the chasm of evolution.

The hereford drank and dripped and stared, and I waited for a breakthrough. I demanded communication: I wanted to see past that pink, comedian's nose into a hidden First Cause.

I got up from my chair and moved toward her. I walked slowly, stopped a moment, talked to her quietly, came closer, stopped again. I was within six feet of those childish, towheaded swirls

and curls on the blunt plain between her eyes. She continued to stare at me from beneath the awnings of her long, white, girlish lashes and then — convinced that I had no feed for her behind my back — moved off heavily to the salt blocks, imperturbable as Nero.

She looked back at me once — unblinking, stoic, almost godlike: light years away.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Byron and I were at the cabin in June when it began to rain — a light afternoon sprinkling out of a lowered gray sky. We listened to the rain on the tin roof, and through the doorway we could hear it touch the cement slab of the porch and hit against the weeds and the rust-red barrels — a pleasant, steady sound that made me sink into the doorway chair and Byron roll over into his cotton quilt. He pulled the quilt close and curled on his side and slept with a 16-year-old's peacefulness as thunder rolled mildly in the west.

Xanadu, his dog, slept on the floor beside him, her legs out straight, her muzzle touching his white running shoes.

I sat in the doorway in the satisfying quiet of a summer rain. No sheep bawled in the pasture. No planes passed overhead. We were there in our little pasture world: a private place of cedars and oaks, drizzle on the tin roof, Byron's steady breathing.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

In the late afternoon, as if welling out of the heat and the waning sunlight, a dove began calling. It was like an escaped breath from the land itself, an unobtrusive, suggestive voice saying, "Do you remember? Do you still care?" Like a tide coming in to shore, the dove call flowed so evenly through the trees it was as if I had thought the call rather than heard it.

I followed the call, somewhat. I walked toward it down the dry creek bed west of the pens, then looked back to the clearing of the cabin and the remains of my father's old feed store truck there beside it. I stood beneath the walnut trees, on the layer of smooth rock where we had once had family picnics, and I thought: How do you repay a pasture, a clump of trees, the sun? What can you give them for making your life worthwhile?

The dove called, again and again, taking me deeper into the mood of the silent rocks and lengthening shadows. As night fell, it seemed to me that the only way to give a proper thanks — to repay the earth — was to keep on paying it close attention. To keep looking hard

at creation and saying: Yes, I see.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

"Chi-ink. Chi-ink."

Gregorio was digging post holes in a layer of rock.

"Chi-ink. Chi-ink."

I saw him on the fenceline morning and afternoon — blue cap, red shirt in the sunshine-and-shade. He maintained a smooth, swaying little rhythm, almost a dance step: feet in place, swinging a bit from side to side as he sent the crowbar twisting down.

Each morning he got up at six, made breakfast in his tent, and was there at the fenceline as I rolled over in my



sleeping bag outside the hunting cabin door.

"Chi-ink. Chi-ink. Chi-ink. Chi-ink."

At noon he would stop and come back slowly toward the pens, walking past his row of cedar posts gleaming ivory-and-brown in the sunlight. He would eat and rest in the tent, then walk back to his crowbar and gloves.

"Chi-ink. Chi-ink."

The afternoon shadows deepened, the sun lost its glare, doves scouted above the walnut-tree arroyo, and Gregorio worked at the fenceline, cutting cedar trees, stripping and shaping posts — aligning, tamping them until they were solidly in place: as if made of rock themselves.

He would stop working just before dark and come to the water lot to fill his bucket at the windmill pipe. Sometimes he pushed back his cap — at 53, his hair remarkably full and black — and smoked a Bugler cigarette and we talked about the cows, or cedar ticks, or the spread of purple thistles in the pastures. He spoke deliberately and carefully enunciated Spanish.

Once, when we were talking about sports, I mentioned that my son had become a cross-country runner at his high school. Gregorio talked at length — almost didactically — about fitness programs for athletes and the Olympic trials he had watched on Mexican television. He said his sons had also

been runners in school. When our conversation died away and he finally lifted his bucket and headed toward his tent, the bullbats had begun to sweep over the water lot and katydids were flashing their messages in the darkening trees.

... Gregorio: I think of him and the other lives he might have led. I see him seated behind a desk, an investment broker giving measured, articulate advice to a client. I see him in the dugout of a semi-professional baseball team, his silk manager's shirt fitting tightly over his thick chest and muscular arms.

As I drive down a city street or have coffee in a cafe, I hear his crowbar biting into rock; I see oak tree shadows sliding across his blue cap and sweat-circled red shirt. A cardinal flashes through the cedars, a buzzard coasts in the mid-summer sky, and Gregorio makes another envelope of dollars he can send to his sister in Piedras Negras.

"Chi-ink. Chi-ink. Chi-ink. Chi-ink."

Alone in the pasture, from daylight till dark, Gregorio digs through hill country rock. I listen, and he is like a myth that keeps growing in my mind. □

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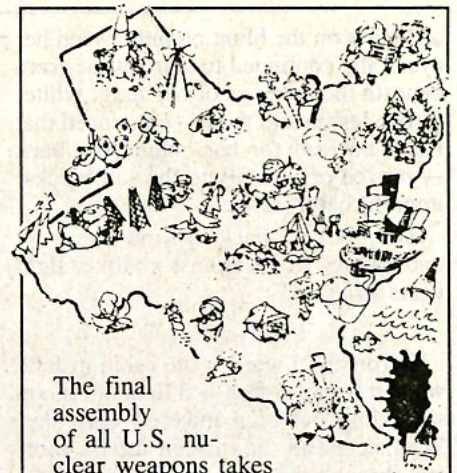
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