

THE TEXAS OBSERVER

A Journal of Free Voices

March 7, 1986

One Dollar

FRIENDS OF THE 'FREEDOM FIGHTERS'

BY DAVE DENISON

LAST JULY, William Murray says, he was riding in a jeep along a rough and muddy road near the Honduran-Nicaraguan border. He was on his way to the camp where the military leaders of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) were headquartered, but it was slow going because it was the rainy season and the jeep kept getting stuck. Miles from the camp, the jeep suddenly hit a soft spot in the road, the road collapsed, and the jeep slid off to the right where it lodged briefly before beginning to roll down the side of a mountain. Murray says the jeep rolled over three or four times before it stopped against a small tree. "Ten feet forward and we would have all been killed," he says. But he counted the providential placement of the tree as a miracle, and chalked it up as just one more brush with disaster in his generally perilous mission of aiding the anti-Sandinista fighters and refugees amassed along the Honduran side of the border.

Murray runs a group called "Freedom's Friends," which stockpiles relief supplies in a warehouse in Addison, Texas, and which galvanizes at least some of the considerable Dallas-area conservative community to do more to aid "victims of communism" worldwide. The son of the well-known atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, William Murray is now a fundamentalist minister who renounces his "Marxist-Leninist" upbringing and pursues anti-communist politics with the unique energy of the recent convert. He is a relentless proselytizer and a rapid speaker, piling argument upon argument, fact upon fact. He gives the impression of a man for whom the battle against communism goes on at a breakneck pace, and in one sense it may be true: Two months after the accident in the jeep his doctor told him he had

slightly dislocated a vertebra in his neck. But he is not surprised to encounter risks in what he does. In the beginning of his efforts last summer to get supplies to New Orleans for transport to Central America, he says, his plane would average one emergency landing a week. At that time, Freedom's Friends used a 40-year-old DC-4, which he notes was older than he was, by a year.

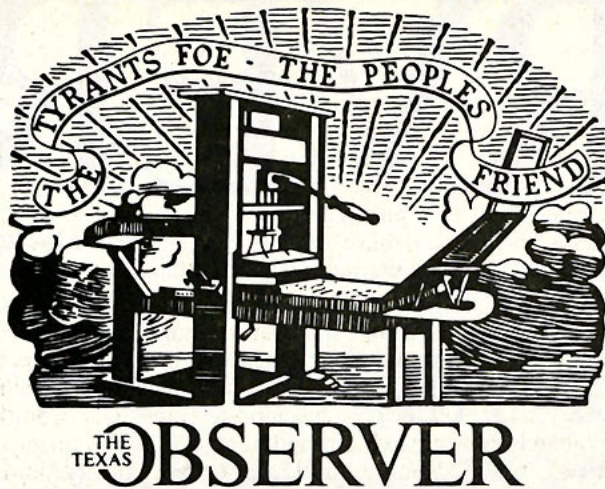


William Murray in Honduras.

Although Murray was working on refugee aid projects through Murray Faith Ministries before he launched Freedom's Friends as a separate project in July of 1985, he has only recently made it into the headlines, with a January press conference in Washington and a profile in the Sunday magazine of the *Dallas Morning News* in February. Other Texans, such as the Austin heiress Ellen St. John Garwood, have received widespread publicity for their generous support of counter-revolutionaries in Afghanistan, in Angola, and most notably in Nicaragua, where the FDN *contra* forces are in their sixth year of war against the Sandinista government.

Yet there are many others in Texas who like their covert wars the old-fashioned way — no public announcements of largesse from them. The private fundraising community is said to have played a major part in keeping the war in Nicaragua going at a time when Congress cut off funding to the rebels and barred CIA participation. Their involvement in the contra war is of obvious public interest — it may have paved the way for a wider U.S. Government intervention. Who are these armchair generals and private patrons of faraway guerrillas? In an investigation lasting several months, the *Observer* has surveyed the anti-communist landscape in Texas and found it to be as vast and wide-ranging as the land itself. (Continued on Page 7)

TEXANS HELPED TO KEEP A WAR GOING IN ITS DARKEST HOUR



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EDITORIAL

Purple Reign

DOES IT strike anyone else as strange — the sesquicentennial effusion of obeisance to a royal figurehead from a state and monarchy that the foremothers and fathers of the foreparents of this state overthrew before sending their offspring out to colonize this corner of their manifest destiny? Here we have the prince with big ears flapping in to check on British investments in Texas and to pick up a few trade secrets, and every officeholder and would-be officeholder sticks to him like glue.

Now it's not difficult to see why Governor Mark White, House Speaker Gib Lewis, Mayors Kathy Whitmire, Starke Taylor, Henry Cisneros, and Frank Cooksey would want to be seen with his demi-majesty. There is something attractive, no doubt, about the permanence of office Charles enjoys.

And it's never been a secret that the country club set of Texas, some harboring Tory blood, has so desperately longed for an official imprimatur of aristocracy, which it thinks it so richly deserves. Witness, in this Texas independence season, no less than the San Antonio Country Club's own King Antonio and his Cavaliers, who drive in uniform around town in shiny convertibles with police escorts, dispensing aluminum coins to the children of the city in their elementary schools.

And that arbiter of country-club etiquette, the *Dallas Morning News*, provided tips on proper behavior when meeting up with one of the royals. Call Charles "His Royal Highness" on first meeting, it advised, but "Sir" after that. (Ethiopian King Haile Selassie was called "His Imperial Majesty" to his face and HIM behind his back.) Don't try to shake Sir's hand unless He proffers His first. It seems princes keep their hands folded behind their backs not so much to look imperial but to prevent just anyone from trying to shake them. This probably also explains the Queen's penchant for carrying a purse.

But Charles proved to be a regular sort of blue-blooded chap. Apparently tired of all the royal etiquette himself, the bonnie prince at one point bolted from Dallas Mayor Taylor's proper entourage long enough to press the flesh of some Kilgore Rangerettes, who had turned their wide smiles and one of those complex dance routines the prince's way. (It probably has something to do with "the banality of regals" that Hannah Arendt wrote about, the way the prince's mum is said to enjoy the Ray Coniff Singers.) It was the kind of thing he couldn't do with Princess Di around.

But Charles was mostly engaged in the dull business of hacking for a doddering kingdom — visiting Shell Oil in Houston, talking with engineers at UT, sweating His way through subsidized housing with Cisneros. And there was the Winston Churchill award given to H. Ross Perot, the one-man SWAT team, in a city due south of the spot from which Sir Winston decades before had created the Iron Curtain by naming it a few years after mapping it out with Roosevelt and Stalin, as they divided up the world in Yalta.

SIR ENDED his waltz across Texas by unsheathing his sword and cutting a royal swath through a sesquicentennial cake weighing some 90,000 pounds, then disappearing as fast as Zorro, leaving the pastry for the plebes while he soired with Lady Bird for \$2500 a head.



Photo by Nancy Maniscalco

Rangerettes danced into the prince's heart.

And the poor poured into the Austin Coliseum to cart off huge slabs of the anniversary confection, understanding that for their 150 years of Texas citizenship this is all they could expect, just as their forebears understood their place in prior brushes with royalty — Marie Antoinette coming most quickly to mind.

And so the state dispensed this food, paid for by Duncan Hines, just as Harvard doctors were naming Texas the state with the most counties of hungry citizens, just as oil prices were plunging, steel workers were being laid off, just as farmers were being thrown off their land. And as the empire slowly sets in the west, we are reminded that, even in the heart of Texas, there will always be an England. G.R.

The Warfare State

IN THE FEBRUARY 19 *In These Times*, John Judis writes that the Reagan administration is bent on transforming what it calls a welfare state into a warfare state. Nowhere is this more evident than in our own backyard.

Texas is prime territory for the warfare state. Already major economies are dependent on the military: the military bases that ring San Antonio's economy, the General Dynamics operations upon which Fort Worth depends. And with the energy-related recession just beginning to dawn in the state at the same time as the demise of social spending brought on by Gramm-Rudman and the latest Reagan budget, Texas business and political leaders will be begging for a military fix. It's the only game in town.

Take a look at the Panhandle. A year or two ago you couldn't find a soul willing to say he or she favored the siting of a nuclear waste dump on the Ogallala reservoir. It would be bad for farming, bad for real estate, not to mention bad for the health and welfare of your average resident. But that's changing. Given an oil-price crisis, an agriculture crisis, both precipitating a real estate crisis, and suddenly you hear a few people whispering about the high-level radioactive waste dump as if it would be a good thing for the local economy. Now, no one has quite said that just yet, but it won't be long.

Recently, a few Amarillo Chamber of Commerce types, calling themselves "Amarillo in Motion," sponsored a town meeting. Those in attendance were told that what the region needed, given the agriculture and oil-price crises, were projects like a superconductor or "other high tech projects." Opponents

of the radioactive waste site read that as an opening salvo in the effort to locate a radioactive waste dump in the region. Such a site would hold waste from nuclear power plants and military operations from around the country. It would serve as a fitting complement for the Pantex nuclear munitions plant, which generates radioactive waste both for storage and for dispersion through fission among the peoples of the world. If the people of the Panhandle are so desperate economically as to flirt with the demise of their water supply, they will be willing fodder for the nuclear and military cannons.

In Austin, *The Daily Texan* reports that the University received \$5.3 million for star wars research in 1985 from the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization: \$2.5 million for rail gun research; \$2.7 million for compulsor power source research; \$123,000 for core machine research; and \$156,000 for compulsator research. In addition, UT faculty members received up to \$2.9 million in Defense Department contracts for star wars research. According to Henry Rylander, Jr., a professor of engineering, more than 100 faculty members and graduate students from UT are participating in the star wars research. UT Systems program analyst Don Leverty said the proposed 20 percent reduction in National Institutes of Health grants to universities will be offset by a proposed doubling of SDI research.

According to UT Systems Chancellor Hans Mark, once an advisor on technology to President Reagan, the star wars

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research is being conducted at the Balcones Research Center of the University of Texas. While the research now being conducted at Balcones is unclassified, Mark says it is possible that future work could be classified. Mark said the rule prohibiting classified work on-campus does not apply to work conducted at the Balcones site, which he says is off-campus.

What we are confronted with is a militarized economy, in which all sectors of society are either directly or not-very-indirectly dependent upon military expenditures. With a Reagan-Gramm-Rudman program pulling the rug out from under social spending on agriculture, general education, small business, the entire society will be tied into military research and development.

Lyndon LaRouche's Democratic National Policy Committee

helped pioneer the way for Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. The Larouchites now call for the mobilization of all the nation's industrial activity for the research, development, and deployment of SDI. Ronald Reagan, once again, is not far behind.

And that's the real danger of the star wars initiative. The Strategic Defense Initiative is not going to protect one civilization from another. It will, in fact, increase the danger of nuclear war because it attempts to replace negotiation with technology. But that's not the point of SDI anyway. The real aim of the Reagan program is to create a society that is entirely locked into a military economy. Star Wars is the means, not the end. And Texas makes a good little laboratory for the experiment.

G.R.

● DIALOGUE ●

Our Monster

Hugh H. Meyer of Hondo stated a truth if there ever was one (*TO*, 2/7/86). Gramm-Rudman is the *Observer's* and Maverickite's own little monster. You made it when you went against Krueger. Why do you disown your own handi-craft?

Fred Sinclair
Boerne

Beside the Point

The debate between Mr. Dugger and Mr. Maverick (*TO*, 1/10/86) and their respective supporters regarding the importance of human rights violations on the part of the Sandinistas is philosophically fascinating. It seems to me, however, that it is, in the present situation, beside the point. That point is

that the United States is engaged in an indefensible campaign to replace the Sandinistas with a rightwing government that can hold out the promise of improvement only from the perspective of the idealogues of the Reagan Administration.

The only hope for improvement in the human rights situation in Nicaragua lies in ending U.S. support (direct and indirect) for the contras. With the constant irritant and excuse of the contras out of the way, we should, in relatively short order, have a real opportunity to judge the true colors of the Sandinistas. Then and only then will we be in any position to mount an appropriate response based upon our observation of the Sandinista approach to all aspects of governance when not under military and economic attack.

David R. Denton
Austin

occasion was the best since that date. And each reader made a contribution of fact as well as of opinion on a very basic foreign policy position of this nation. I only wish an updated analysis of the Monroe Doctrine and it's skewed application in the 20th century were written.

I would contribute to the debate *Nicaragua: The First Five Years*, a series of essays edited by Thomas Walker; Praeger, New York.

Otto B. Mullinax
Dallas

Too Late


I just finished a belated reading of Geoffrey Rips's "Higher Education and the Cult of Technology" (*TO*, 12/20/85). Rips is wrong: the article is not a cautionary tale, but a description of the current situation. Texas already has a multi-tiered education system; ask anyone who has attended both UT and Austin Community College, also called "Austin Child Care." The humanities are already strictly decorative; ask any engineering student, or any liberal arts student for that matter. Star Wars and industry already pull the strings of research; ask the disgruntled junior computer science faculty, if you can get any of them to talk.

Prentiss Riddle
Galveston

Best Debate

I was never more delighted than to read the Dugger-Maverick essays on Nicaragua (*TO*, 1/10/86), and the responses thereto.

I have supported the *Texas Observer* from its inception and the depth of the writing and the reader response on this

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Contadora Revival in Congress

By Vera Titunik

Washington, D.C.

SPRING is just around the corner in Washington. And in the Age of Ronald Reagan, the rites of Spring here include the rite of the annual contra aid debate.

Last year, the Reagan administration and Congress danced around each other for months before settling on a tidy \$27 million sum for the Nicaraguan contras. That non-lethal nest egg runs out on March 31.

This year, the Administration wants \$100 million for the Nicaraguan rebels — \$70 million for covert military aid and \$30 million for humanitarian aid.

As the dancers move into place on the left and right sides of the issue, self-styled "moderates," with a sense of their own strategic importance, are shuffling for a prominent position. Their number includes several Texas Democrats.

Without these House moderates, the Administration will probably not be able to tip the scales for aid to the contras again this year.

Congress defeated both military and humanitarian aid last April only to approve a large sum for humanitarian aid in June. Ten Texas Democrats voted for the final aid package; five of these helped make the difference between April and June.

Some of those Texans have now joined the effort to raise the Contadora negotiations as at least a rest stop, if not a road block, to the Administration's plan to arm and supply the contras. A few see the moderate position as a real alternative to further contra aid.

"1986 is going to be a pivotal year for the future of the contras and the future of the Sandinistas," said Jim Slattery, D-Kansas, who has been trying to gather the swing-vote group around a coherent position. "We may now have the last opportunity for the Contadora process to work."

Early in February, Slattery and thirty other Democrats, twenty-five of whom had voted for the \$27 million in non-military supplies last year, sent a letter

to President Reagan urging him to postpone his anticipated aid request until after the Contadora group has met again to work out a settlement.

"We believe," the February 3 letter reads, "... that the Sandinistas should now be tested by diplomatic initiative, supported by the democracies of the region and throughout the world, to determine ... whether a diplomatic solution based on the Contadora principles is viable."

Among those seeking a delay are Albert Bustamante, D-San Antonio, John Bryant, D-Dallas, Ron Coleman, D-El Paso, Marvin Leath, D-Waco, Mike Andrews, D-Houston, Jim Chapman, D-Texas, and Charles Stenholm, D-Stamford. With the exception of Bryant, who voted against assistance

"You're telling me now I gotta cut domestic programs and we're sending \$100 million to Nicaraguense? I have a problem with that."

Albert Bustamante

to the contras last year, and Chapman, who replaced Sam Hall after the vote had taken place, all supported aid in last year's decisive vote.

"There are a number of us who think the Reagan administration has paid little more than lip service to Contadora," said Coleman in an interview February 19. "We should at least listen to what the regional leaders have to say."

THE REGIONAL leaders have been speaking loudly and clearly in recent days. In mid-February, the foreign ministers of the four Contadora countries — Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, and Colombia — and the Contadora Support Group — Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Uruguay — met with Secretary of State George Shultz in Washington to urge him to abandon immediate consideration of aid to the contras. They asked that the U.S., instead, put some muscle behind the recently rejuvenated Contadora process.

The Contadora peace negotiations are now centered on what is called the Caraballeda Message, drawn up this past January in Venezuela and subsequently endorsed by the Contadora Group, the Support Group, and the five Central American nations, including Nicaragua.

The Caraballeda Message puts forth a number of proposals for achieving peace in Central America, including an end to support for "irregular forces," an end to international military maneuvers, the eventual removal of foreign military advisors and installations, observance of human rights, and the resumption of direct talks between Washington and Managua. The foreign ministers involved in the process emphasized during their visit to Washington that progress should be made on these proposals "in a simultaneous manner." Colombia's foreign minister, Augusto Ramirez Ocampo, in an unusually confrontational statement during his visit to Washington, condemned Reagan's plan to support military aid to the contras because it "threatens the international judicial order."

"It was quite an extraordinary development," said Susan Benda, legislative analyst for the American Civil Liberties Union, of the Latin ministers' recent visit. "They [the foreign ministers] came out very plainly on the record ... that the U.S. is not a constructive force for peace in the region. ... Aiding the contras is directly contradictory to the Contadora peace agreement."

The Reagan administration has rebuffed the Contadora nations on the issue of aid to the contras as well as on bilateral talks with Nicaragua. It refuses to answer Managua's call for direct negotiations until the Ortega government agrees to talk with the United Democratic Opposition, a loose coalition of rebel groups which Susan Benda describes as "a creation for the Congress."

Rep. Slattery hopes that, if Congressional moderates can stall the contra aid request, they can buy time for the Contadora nations to work to break this diplomatic deadlock.

The fact that 25 "swing voters" have signed the letter urging the President to support a diplomatic solution is "not lost on the Administration," according to Slattery. Although he has received no official response from the White House, Slattery said he has had conversations with "key" members of the Administration. The President has not yet made the official request for aid, which would trigger a 20-day period for Congress to take action on the request. "I am watching what they do as well [as what

Vera Titunik is the Observer's Washington correspondent.

they say]," said the Kansas Democrat of Administration officials.

THOSE WHO asked for a delay in the contra aid request are not all, however, squarely against any kind of assistance. While Albert Bustamante, D-San Antonio, told the *Observer* he would vote against the entire \$100 million package, Ron Coleman, D-El Paso, would commit himself only to voting against military aid. The congressman still considers the vote for humanitarian aid last year a "step in the right direction." "We were able to keep money out of the hands of the CIA," he said, referring to a section of the

legislation that prohibits the funds from being funneled through the intelligence agency.

This year, however, the Administration will be pushing for Congress to lift those restrictions.

Some members of the Waiting-for-Contadora group make no bones about the fact that supporting a temporary delay may serve to help justify contra support in the long run. Praising the Contadora process does not necessarily mean distaste for the contras, according to Vic Lubin, an aide to Charles Stenholm, D-Stamford. "Let's wait a little bit and see what happens. The Contadora nations feel that it's time to

see if the Sandinistas are going to be genuine in negotiating or not," contended Lubin. "We're *not* talking about putting it [consideration of aid to the contras] off for six months. Just for a short period of time."

Stenholm, who is a co-founder of the Conservative Democratic Forum, better known as the Boll Weevils, approves supporting the rebel groups, Lubin said. He characterized the Managua government as a gradually developing "totalitarian state" that would "be a lot worse" if the U.S. were not backing the contra forces which are trying to subvert it. If Managua refuses to participate "in good faith" in the Contadora negotiations, Lubin offered, Reagan would find more support in Congress for the policies he is now advocating. Lubin suggested that the Contadora nations might then be brought around to Reagan's point of view.

Others, like Coleman, say they don't really know what Reagan's policy in Central America is. Viron P. Vaky, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington and a former Assistant Secretary of state under the Carter administration, suggested that current U.S. policy is "a roll of the dice" thrown with the conviction that Soviet expansionism is the cause of all strife in the region. Funding the contras, he said, will not succeed either to topple the Ortega government or to force it to negotiate, as the Administration has alleged.

The former diplomat chastised Congress for having taken a limited view on the contra debate last year by arguing in terms of "how to package" aid, rather than debating the "operational bottom line: Is there an alternative to buying a war?" "How to package the aid" is likely to continue to some extent to determine the parameters of this year's debate.

It is unlikely that many Congressional representatives will declare that "we ought to make it clear to Nicaragua that we're prepared to protect their security and their right to exist," as an aide to one liberal Democrat told the *Observer*.

Such voices are bound to be lost in the din of more politically acceptable rationales for opposition to contra funding, such as support for the Contadora process, concern over human rights abuses by the contras, and the Gramm-Rudman balanced budget legislation.

As Albert Bustamante told the *Observer*: "You're telling me now I gotta cut all this [in domestic programs], and we're sending \$100 million to Nicaraguense? . . . I just have a problem with that." □

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Friends of the Contras

(Continued from the Cover)

No one can be quite sure exactly how much money, military support, and relief supplies may have come from Texas. General John K. Singlaub, the head of the World Anti-Communist League and its U.S. affiliate the United States Council for World Freedom, told the press last fall that nearly half of the \$5-to-10 million he had raised from American citizens came from Texans. Singlaub's group has the highest profile of the money-raising groups active here; a representative of the U.S. Council for World Freedom in Phoenix told the *Observer* the group has 450 contributors in Texas. Singlaub, reached at his Colorado office in February, said private donations have slacked off lately.

But, whatever the numbers and dollars might amount to, it is clear that there are friends of "freedom fighters" to be found in all parts of the state — a loose network of activists and donors that make up a veritable "contra community" here. A portrait of that community would include evangelicals like William Murray, inheritors of fortunes like Ellen Garwood, big oilmen like the Hunt brothers in Dallas, independent oilmen with longstanding conservative ties, Nicaraguan exiles in Houston, military adventurers from Fort Worth, gun buffs and airplane buffs, neo-conservatives and party Republicans, business tycoons and developers. From a publicity-shy Dallas oilman named Harry Lucas, Jr., to a one-time Republican candidate for Governor named Jack Cox, the ties to Nicaragua are extensive. Cox is co-author of *Nicaragua Betrayed*, the inside story of the last days of the Somoza regime before the Sandinista revolution. Cox's co-author: the late Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza.

Friends of the contras now look warily to Congress as it once again has the chance to stand with them — and President Reagan — against "Soviet-sponsored revolution" by approving military aid to the rebels. They know that some Texas congressmen are solidly in their camp — one hundred percenters like Charlie Wilson for example. Wilson's support for "freedom fighters" is so strong he has made several trips to the frontlines in Afghanistan to, as he put it, "kill Russians." He plans to launch a private fundraising drive for

the Afghani rebels this spring, according to a recent profile in the *Houston Post*. Nor does Wilson have any love for the Sandinistas. A friend of Somoza, Wilson consistently argued in Congress for more military aid to Nicaragua's brutal National Guard, discounting all charges of human rights abuses. The conservative Democrat has been just as steadfast in his support of the Nicaraguan contras, as have the ten Republican representatives from Texas. But some Democrats have wavered. Six of them voted against the \$27 million in nonlethal aid to the contras that passed in Congress last summer, bringing, for many in the contra community, their good sense and patriotism into question.

Murray says the \$27 million wasn't nearly enough to take care of the needs of the contras and their families. He estimates a million dollar's worth of goods have passed through his warehouse and on to the thousands of refugees in Honduran border camps. His group has spent \$20,000 to \$30,000 in transport costs. Some of the cost has been eased by handing over "essential items" directly to the contra organization, the FDN, in the United States. Other items, such as gift-wrapped Christmas packages, have been delivered directly to the families. The work has left a strong impression on him. "Nicaragua is the first literate nation in the world to fall to communism," he said, asserting that most of those who have fled the country are middle class. "They had homes, they had cars, they had VISA cards, they owned things like the Duncan Donuts franchise, or the McDonald's franchise," he said. "And now they're living in absolute poverty."

Like most of those who have gotten involved in the contra war, Murray emphasizes the "refugee relief" aspect. The U.S. Neutrality Act and other laws prohibit American citizens from organizing military efforts against countries with which the United States is not at war, and thus from participating in weapons supply to the contras. But it is clear that the groups see that helping the refugees in Honduras allows the FDN to concentrate on the war. As FDN official Mario Calero told the *Wall Street Journal* in 1984, "The FDN has to take care of 20,000 to 30,000



Photo by Jeff Ruoff

Ellen Garwood

refugees, including freedom fighters' families. Some of the refugees are freedom fighters. I consider myself a refugee." Murray said there are United Nations camps and Red Cross camps in Honduras, but "my organization helps those families that can't get into those camps because they have political connections to the FDN."

The Lady Ellen

ON ELLEN Garwood's living room wall, opposite the portrait of President Reagan, is a large portrait of a young and distinguished Will Clayton, Garwood's father and "the handsomest man who ever went to Washington," she says. Clayton made his fortune in cotton with the Anderson Clayton Company and served in many governmental positions, including Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs from 1945 to 1947.

Garwood remains one of the most outspoken donors in the contra community, so in understanding today's anti-communists perhaps it is best to start with her. She sat for an interview recently in the living room of her central Austin home. She is 82, vigorous, quick of step and thought, at times almost militant in her views. She began the interview by reading a 1947 memo of Clayton's that is published in the new edition of the biography she wrote of her father in 1958. In the memo to Secretary of State George Marshall, Clayton warned that the reins of world leadership would soon be picked up by either the United States or Russia. "The United States must take world leadership

and quickly to avert world disaster," he wrote. "That was the reason for the Marshall Plan," Garwood explained emphatically. She read on: "In every country of the Eastern Hemisphere and most countries of the Western Hemisphere Russia is boring from within." She looked up. "God, you can't have anything clearer than that!"

Garwood made national news last summer when she went public with her \$65,000 donation for the reconditioning of a helicopter to be used for medical evacuations by the contra army in Honduras. The man who asked her to make the donation was General John K. Singlaub. Although it got less attention, Garwood also told a meeting of the World Anti-Communist League in Dallas last September that she had given \$50,000 to Singlaub to buy boots for the contras. The WACL's U.S. Council for World Freedom in Phoenix says she is their largest contributor.

These days, Garwood worries that despite her efforts the U.S. State Department might be flubbing the fight against communism. One distressing event was the run-around she ended up getting with her helicopter, which had been named "the Lady Ellen." It turned out that the helicopter technically could have been outfitted for combat and thus, under the arms control export act was held up for lack of an export license. "I guess the State Department heard some of this criticism, probably from the Nicaraguan Embassy. . . . And they're so damned wishy-washy," she said. She puts the blame on "Soviet appeasers among the Eastern elite businessmen" who have undue influence on the State Department. "They are the ones who are holding back my Lady Ellen helicopter," she said.

The question now is, will the State Department do its part to get the President's military aid request through Congress? "I just can't let myself imagine that it won't go through," she said. But if it were defeated, "I think there would be a tremendous effort among the people who are backing the freedom fighters everywhere to go up and absolutely almost mob Congress." If it failed, there would simply have to be another vote, she said.

Meet Me in Managua

THE MAN who introduced Ellen Garwood to General John Singlaub a year ago is Bert Hurlbut, a second generation oilman who now works out of an office on Bee

Caves Road in Austin. A large man, Hurlbut is partial to elephant figurines — his office contains a large wood carving of an elephant's head on one wall, a stone sculptured elephant on an end table, a brass elephant's head on his phone, elephants in parade on another table, a gold elephant in the waiting room. On another wall in his office is a nine-foot long blue sailfish that he says he caught. He often jokes with his friends "Dolph" and Mario Calero, two leading contra officials, that he is waiting for the time when he can fish again off the coast of Nicaragua and have his catch stuffed by a non-communist taxidermist inside the country.

Hurlbut's political involvement has risen with the rise of the New Right in America — where his views might have been on the fringe a decade ago, he's now in good company. The photographs in his office tell part of the story: Bert with Bob Hope, Bert with Phil Crane (the conservative Representative from Illinois), Bert with Phil Gramm, Bert with Jack Kemp, Bert with Ronald Reagan at the White House. "There's

"Soviet appeasers" in the State Department "are the ones who are holding back my Lady Ellen helicopter."

a picture of me and Savimbi," he said with casual pride. Jonas Savimbi, the Angolan rebel leader, was feted in Washington last month, but Hurlbut mentioned the time "when we brought him to Washington four years ago."

Hurlbut was part of the "God & Country" rally organized last April to counter Madalyn Murray O'Hair's atheist convention, and he was a prominent figure at last fall's World Anti-Communist League convention in Dallas. As a board member of the U.S. Council for World Freedom, he was one of the lead organizers of the "Freedom Fighters' Banquet" held on the last night of the conference, which he says added 700 new contributors to the U.S. Council's national list.

But these days, Hurlbut said, fundraising has slowed down. "The people from Texas that normally support an issue like this are generally the oil people," he said. Because of the slump in the oil industry, those people have less to give, he said. The Congressional approval of aid to the contras also caused private fundraising to subside, according to Hurlbut.

Hurlbut has now been forced to put his small company, The First Texas Royalty and Exploration Company, registered with the Secretary of State's office in 1982, on the back burner while he seeks to make money from other projects. He plans to sell some land soon and get into the convention business, by building a small convention center. Hurlbut declined to put a figure on his own financial contributions to the contras, but said, "I feel good about what I've been able to do."

His remarks about hard times in the oil business are not speculative. In January he was sued by the United Bank of Texas for failure to repay \$21,593 in loans and interest as well as failure to cover overdrafts of \$434.78 and \$568.49. The bank noted in court documents that it holds a security interest in Hurlbut's 1982 Willcraft 24-foot outboard boat.

Hurlbut said the debt resulted from an investment he made in a company that went bankrupt and is nothing more than an "interim non-payment of debt."

Big Wheels in Action

UNDoubtedly there are other contra backers who are not having trouble covering their overdrafts. The wealth of the Hunt family in Dallas has been reduced somewhat by the celebrated silver speculation losses of 1980, but a *Wall Street Journal* article last August estimated the Hunts' trusts are still worth at least \$2 billion.

Nelson Bunker Hunt and his brother Herbert sat at a front table at WACL's Freedom Fighters' Banquet last fall. Bunker told the *Observer* at the time that he wasn't "bankrolling" the contras, but that he put out \$5,000 for tickets to that night's banquet. Herbert Hunt said he has given money to the cause but would not say how much. Bert Hurlbut recently told the *Observer* that Bunker Hunt didn't mind disclosures that he was a funder of the rebel groups. "It was like rolling over in bed to him," Hurlbut said.

Hunt played a key role in a more indirect manner five years ago when he and Fort Worth millionaire T. Cullen Davis organized the Council for National Policy, an elite group of big wheels on the New Right that meets in closed-door meetings four times a year to discuss current political events. It was in the summer of 1984, when CIA aid to the contras had run out and the rebels first began to turn to private funding sources, that the Council flew in Adolfo

Calero of the FDN to speak to the group. The Council for National Policy does not take public stands on issues, and as one member put it, "does not encourage media participation." A spokesman told the *Wall Street Journal* in September of 1984 that Calero did not attempt to raise funds at the meeting. But the network of contacts he made at that meeting and at subsequent meetings with other aid groups led by members of the Council surely has proved to be valuable, as Calero has emerged as the chief FDN fundraiser. Months later, Calero turned up in Lafayette, Louisiana, where Mayor Dud Lastrapes, a CNP member, introduced him to Republican leaders, gave him the keys to the city, and said "I can say safely that your cause is our cause."

The Council's original bylaws restrict membership to 200. A Council document published in 1982 lists 38 Texans as members. Others on the roster have been prominent leaders of contra aid groups, such as Louisiana legislator Louis "Woody" Jenkins, who runs Friends of the Americas in Baton Rouge, Dr. Alton Ochsner of New Orleans, who runs the Caribbean Commission, and Andy Messing, who runs the National Defense Council in Alexandria, Virginia. Listed as members of the group's Board of Governors are Joseph Coors, the Colorado brewer, Jerry Falwell, of the Moral Majority, and a host of other names familiar to those who watch the New Right.

A less famous member of the Council for National Policy is Charles L. Irby, a Southern Methodist University graduate now running a family construction business in Jackson, Mississippi. Irby attended the WACL convention in Dallas where he told the *New York Times* that he had given about \$25,000 to Singlaub's group.

The Council met February 15 and 16 in Phoenix, and the rebel movement in Nicaragua was still a "major topic of concern" there, according to Dr. Paige Patterson, of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas and a member of the CNP. Patterson said "the conservative community in Texas is very committed to stopping Marxism in Central America." He said that representatives from Central America spoke, but he declined to name them. Another source said that General Singlaub was present. The Council staff in Washington refused to comment.

One of the original incorporators of the Council for National Policy is Bob Perry, a wealthy Houston homebuilder and president of Perry-Houston Interests. His name is sometimes mentioned in connection with the "freedom fight-

ers," but repeated calls to his office in Houston failed to elicit a comment. Perry is on the Policy Advisory Council of the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) which two weeks ago launched a media campaign on "the Ortega 33" in the House of Representatives — targeting 33 Congressmen with "pro-Sandinista, pro-Marxist tendencies," as a NCPAC operative explained it to the *Observer*. (Dallas Democrat John Bryant was the only Texan to make the list.) According to Bert Hurlbut, Perry was at one time "probably giving a million to a million-and-a-half dollars a year" to various political causes, but may have slowed down since the slump in the Houston housing industry.

James E. Lyon, another wealthy Houston businessman (also a member of the CNP) is sometimes mentioned as a funder; he also refused to speak to the *Observer*. Lyon's name appeared on the Dinner Committee of the Nicaraguan Refugee Fund, along with that of Ellen St. John Garwood and Nelson Bunker Hunt (as well as former Dallas Cowboys quarterback Roger Staubach) last spring.

***Houston businessmen
James Lyon and
Harry Lucas, Jr., worked
with the Nicaraguan
Refugee Fund, which
raised \$219,525 and sent
\$3,000 to the refugees.***

The Fund put on a lavish banquet at which President Reagan commended their efforts on behalf of Nicaraguan refugees and said, "People like you are America at its best." (Associated Press reporter Robert Parry reported last September that the Fund had paid \$116,938 in consultant fees, \$71,163 for the dinner, and had sent \$3,000 to the refugees. Alvaro Rizo Castellón, a former diplomat for the Somoza Government of Nicaragua who was the Executive Vice President of the Fund, told the *Observer* recently that at a December meeting the Fund had been made "dormant." "We paid too many people for too little result," he said.) James Lyon is Chief Executive Officer of River Oaks Bancshares, Inc. in Houston's swankiest district.

Another name that appeared on the guest list of the Nicaraguan Refugee Fund was that of Harry Lucas, Jr. Lucas (whose Houston office is, like Lyon's, in the River Oaks Bank Build-

ing) is known to some for his prolific letter-writing to Congress on such issues as aid to anti-communist rebels. Under the letterhead of Lucas Interests, Inc., he sent out a memo last August ("From: Harry Lucas, Jr., To: Patriots") warning that the House Appropriations Committee had approved a bill that had "prohibited any fiscal '86 funding for the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters." He urged a letter-writing campaign to reverse that situation. But a call from the *Observer* in December failed to get a comment from Lucas. His associate George Pond refused to talk about the Nicaragua issue. Asked for an explanation of what Lucas Interests was, Pond said he wouldn't be able to say.

In fact, Lucas Interests is a 22-year-old oil company with offices in Houston and Dallas, of which Harry Lucas, Jr. is president. An aide to Democratic Representative Martin Frost of Dallas described Lucas as a "far-right-wing oilman" who occasionally sends letters in support of aid to the Nicaraguan rebels. Lucas has been active with Citizens for Reagan and HOUPAC, a ten-year-old Political Action Committee of independent oilmen.

William Murray told the *Observer*, "I think one time he [Lucas] gave a gift to Singlaub's organization." A staff worker at the National Defense Council in Alexandria, Va., confirmed that Lucas has contributed to the NDC. "He is a contributor as well as a vocal supporter," the staffer said, adding that "we just saw him last week" while he was in Washington. The National Defense Council is run by Andy Messing, an activist who got his start with Howard Phillips's Conservative Caucus. The NDC is a member of General Singlaub's new Coalition for World Freedom, an anti-communist network consisting of most of the major rebel aid groups. Messing is a 39-year-old Vietnam veteran who advocates meeting Soviet expansionism through "low-intensity conflict" — supporting local resistance movements such as the ones in Angola and Nicaragua, rather than going in with clumsy and heavy-handed force. With his \$250,000 yearly budget, Messing has organized a number of trips for members of Congress to visit the hotspots in Central America. (Ellen Garwood says she gives to Messing "when he gets in a hole.")

Harry Lucas said through his secretary in February that he would not respond to any questions from the *Observer* without seeing an advance copy of this story "to see how the information is presented."

Another businessman who has con-

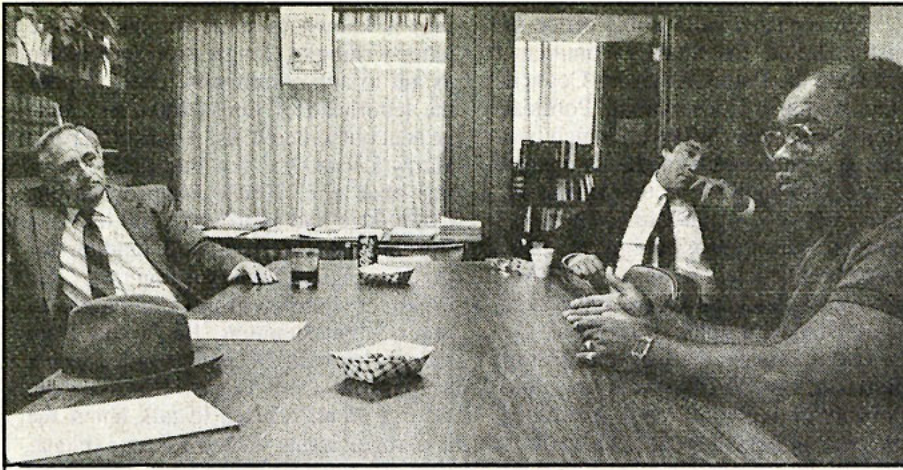


Photo by Jeff Ruoff

Clayton, Steve Schwartz, and Teofilo Archibald

Billy Clayton Meets a Contra

FORMER SPEAKER of the Texas House Billy Wayne Clayton called a press conference February 21 to introduce a Nicaraguan opposition leader who said he had been tortured by the Sandinistas. The Capitol press corps didn't show up, but Clayton proceeded to conduct his own interview with the Nicaraguan, Teofilo Archibald, a Creole from Nicaragua's Atlantic coast.

"My role is to beg the Senate of the United States that they should not cut the aid for the freedom fighters," Archibald explained. "Whenever they do that they destroy us."

Archibald said the Sandinistas were against him "because I was one of the leaders of the black people." He showed what he said were signs of torture: his fingernails were severely damaged as a result of having his nails pulled out by a Cuban advisor to the Nicaraguans while he was in jail more than four years ago, he said. Archibald now supports the United Nicaraguan Opposition and the contra war.

"What you are saying in essence," asked Clayton, "is that if the contras take over the government you'd have a free government, and if the Sandinistas take over you'd have a communist dictatorship?" Archibald assented (though "in essence" the Sandinistas have already taken over).

"So now, though," pressed Clayton, "the contras have a pretty good organization, don't they?"

Archibald said they did, though there were some military leaders, like Eden Pastora, who had gotten big heads. "He wants all the credit," said Archibald. "He wants to be Tarzan."

"I was always on the opposite side

of Somoza," Archibald contended. "But Somoza did not do what the Sandinistas do to the people." Somoza would use "diplomacy" in dealing with the opposition — he would, for example, lure an opponent to his side with a government job, Archibald said.

"Buy him off, eh?" said Clayton with a sly grin. "I didn't know they do politics like that!" Clayton got a good laugh out of that, perhaps remembering his own troubles in 1980 when he was indicted (but not convicted) in an FBI sting operation for accepting a hefty "political contribution."

Getting to the heart of the matter, Clayton asked how long it would take for the contras to "clean the country up." "How much money? To get that thing cleared up — because something needs clearin' up down there."

Archibald commented that it didn't take the United States very long to do it in Grenada. After pressing a few more questions, Clayton leaned back and said with a sigh, "Well it's a shame that people can't live free in the world."

The Nicaraguan's tour was coordinated by a Washington public relations firm called International Business Communications, which was working for the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty, a Washington-based group that is relatively new on the Central America lobbying scene. Steve Schwartz of the IBC said the Endowment "has a lot of contributors out of Texas. That's why we're here."

Ellen Garwood of Austin recently told the *Observer* the Endowment has a few donors in California who have given much more than she has to help the Nicaraguan rebel cause. **D.D.**

tributed to rebel aid organizations is Wendell Hobbs of McAllen. He said he "had a long talk" with General Singlaub at the WACL convention in Dallas and has contributed to that organization. "I think I've been fairly generous, though not as generous as a Mrs. Garwood. But maybe her resources are a little different than mine, I don't know." Hobbs said he is a good friend of McAllen mayor and vegetable grower Othal Brand (who is a member of the Council for National Policy and has been moving some of his agricultural operations to El Salvador of late) and has lived in the Rio Grande Valley since 1928. "I have been for many years taking care of my investments, and that's all I do," he said. Gen. Singlaub was in the McAllen area holding public and private meetings on December 17, but Hobbs said he was unable to attend those meetings.

Austin real estate developer Nelson Puett is another man with strong feelings on the Nicaragua issue. "I believe it was a terrible mistake to let the Russians come into Cuba. Naturally, I'm for keeping them out of Nicaragua." As far as he can remember, no one has ever repealed the Monroe Doctrine, he said. Asked if he contributes to the U.S. Council for World Freedom, he said, "I think I have. I can't keep track of all of them. There's numerous ones — one for Afghanistan, one for Angola, one for Latin America. . . ."

A host of like-minded business people showed up last fall at WACL's Freedom Fighters' Banquet, at a cost of \$500 a ticket. Among them were Edward J. Drake, a corporate attorney and member of the CNP who sat at the table with the Hunts, Tarlton "Topsy" King of Corpus Christi, heiress to a sizeable oil fortune, and Scott Parrott, a vice-president of Parrott Oil Corp. in Dallas. Parrott said in February that he has had contact with several groups that deal with rebels and refugees, "but I'm certainly not going to be the one to tell you which ones." Parrott said, "It's just a personal thing, you know, red, white, and blue."

The Thrill of the Jungle

TEXANS HAVE always been an independent fighting people," said Gary Bennett, who talked with the *Observer* last April at a Waffle House restaurant in Fort Worth. He is an unpretentious man — "I never got no college degree," he said — with a thin face and a scruffy beard. He had brought some photographs from his latest trip down to Honduras. "That was our hooch when we were down there," he

said, showing one of the pictures. Like a lot of the men who have found their way into the Central American jungles since military adventure magazines began putting out the word of a war going on there, Bennett is a Vietnam veteran who felt comfortable with a group calling itself Civilian Military Assistance. It was with the downing of a helicopter over Nicaragua in which two CMA men were killed on September 1, 1984, that the issue of private American aid to the contras first got widespread attention.

At the time of the interview, Bennett was the regional director of the CMA in Texas. He has since quit the group, but he has not quit the issue. On his latest trip to the refugee camps in Honduras he found a five-year-old Nicaraguan girl starving and brought her home to Fort Worth. His comments of last spring gave an insight into the role CMA has played in times of U.S. aid cutbacks. "What CMA is about is training and supplies," he said. The contra soldiers are basically civilians, he explained. CMA took part in teaching them "how to stand, how to salute, how to march, how to carry a weapon, how to clean a weapon," he said. "We train them how to be soldiers."

Bennett spoke of people he'd met who had scars and torture wounds from the Sandinistas. His sense that a very dangerous movement was underway — that communism was closing in — seemed unshakeable. "My aim is to do all I can to help these people do their own fighting and help these people take their country back," he said. But it was also evident that, for a man running an air conditioning business in Fort Worth, plagued with bills and child support, Central America held the lure of adventure, a sense of mission, and a welcome relief from the American rat race. "Yeah, I do get a thrill out of it," he said. "Not the killing part — anyone who says he likes to see someone get their guts blown out is wacko. It's time to put them away. But it is a thrill to be down there, in the jungle, helping people." His concern about the refugees he's met was unquestionable. So was his longing to get the communists. In the parking lot outside the Waffle House, he stood and watched as an F-11 screamed across the sky. Above the din, he shouted, "Boy I'd sure like to have one of them."

The current state director of the CMA is Pappy Hicks of Troup, Texas. In an interview with the February 9 *Dallas Life Magazine*, Hicks said his "couple hundred" CMA members in Texas "do not train groups to go down there —

that's against the law." The one-time soldier in a "special covert operation" for the U.S. Government went on to fulminate about the killing done by anti-communist warriors: "I kill people for what I think is an ideology and for a religious purpose. I don't want nobody impressing their way of life and their political beliefs upon me. So I don't think it's heathenistic or barbaric that people like me do what we're doing."

With his blunt political style, Hicks may be the perfect man for Tom Posey, who started CMA in 1983 in Decatur, Alabama. Posey has a similar militance. Photographed for national publications in a T-shirt reading "Kill 'em All, Let God Sort 'em Out," Posey told the *Washington Post* September 23, 1984, that he had been a member of the John Birch Society in 1963 and that "what we're wanting to do is finish what we started in Vietnam and that's to beat communism." Last September at the WACL convention in Dallas (at which "a majority" of the volunteer security guards were CMA members, he said) Posey told the *Observer* his group had provided \$3 million worth of supplies and 15,000 man-hours of military training to the contras. Mention of the 1984 Congressional cut-off of aid to the contras made him livid. "You're saying communism isn't strong in the United States? Come on, man."

A Man Named Maco Stewart

Last January, according to a freelance journalist in California, a group led by a wealthy Texas oil scion and including four North American Indians left Houston's Hobby airport for Tegucigalpa, Honduras. From there, they traveled with a contra group across the border into Nicaragua to meet with opposition Miskito Indian groups. The journalist traveled with them, crossing the Rio Coco in a canoe with "three military-types" and the Texan oilman, Maco Stewart III, of Houston. One of the "military-types" was a "very experienced paramilitary operative who called himself Colonel Flaco," said the journalist, Dean Metcalf of Soquel, California. "Flaco was erudite, extremely literate on geopolitics" with degrees, he said, in sociology and psychology. Flaco claimed to be with Civilian Military Assistance, but Metcalf suspected he was working for the U.S. Government.

Metcalf said that Maco Stewart's role was in coordinating American Indian groups with the Indian resistance groups in Nicaragua. Stewart had sent out solicitation letters to Indian groups in California; the Tachi tribe near Fresno

approved Metcalf to represent them on the journey. Metcalf, who later wrote about the trip for the San Jose *Mercury-News*, said the vouchers for the trip were handled by Stewart Petroleum of Houston. Maco Stewart "paid for our tickets [and] he paid for all our lodging," Metcalf said. Stewart was also asking American Indian groups for "monetary investments" in the contras, according to Metcalf.

A representative of Stewart Petroleum in Houston said Stewart was currently "on a boat" out of the country and could not be reached for comment.

Air Support

WHEN PHIL Bennett, the former CMA member from Fort Worth, needed a ride out of the jungle with the starving five-year-old refugee, he found help from a group called "Mercy Flight" and a pilot named John Baldwin. Baldwin, a Corpus Christi-native and a 1958 University of Texas graduate now living near Los Angeles, flies medical evacuation missions in Honduras. Baldwin is careful to stress that he has nothing to do with combatants and that most of the war wounded are flown out by Honduran organizations. He attends to refugees that need care. Still, he said, Americans are not doing enough to help the contras. "I've seen guys go across the border with almost nothing but their bare hands," he said. "They're doing all the things we as Americans say we stand for. They're fighting for their freedom."

Baldwin's high-wing Cessna airplane



The Caribbean Commission in New Orleans has a new poster for the contras. Dr. Alton Ochsner recently told the *Observer* "the whole purpose was to try to give them a good-guy image."

was provided by a St. Louis-based group called "Wings of Hope," headed by Bill Edwards. Edwards told the *Observer* that Texas is the leading state in financial support of Wings of Hope. George Haddaway, a board member for the group who lives in Lindale, Texas, said that crucial support comes from another board member named Jack Taylor, a Houston pilot and airplane broker.

The Road to Nowhere

THE PASSAGE of \$27 million in humanitarian aid to the Nicaraguan contras last August came along in time to head off Congressional hearings into the conduct of the "covert" war in 1984 and 1985.

Republican member of Congress Jim Leach of Iowa had drafted a bill that would have made it illegal for private citizens to aid rebels in times when the U.S. Government itself was barred. An aide who worked on the bill said it was gaining co-sponsors last summer and a hearing was planned when "the bottom fell out" because of the Congressional decision to get the government back in league with the contras.

The Congressional action also forestalled an investigation into the government's role in secret fundraising for the contras. As news reports came out last summer that Col. Oliver North of the National Security Council had met with leaders of private aid groups, questions were raised about possible violations of the Boland Amendment, which stated that during the fiscal year 1985, no funds were to be spent for supporting "directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua by any nation, group, organization, movement or individual."

Rep. Michael Barnes, D-Md., wrote to Robert McFarlane, President Reagan's national security advisor, to ask for further information on North's involvement. A hearing was set for September 17, 1985. But when Congress passed the new aid package in August, the Boland restrictions were dropped (and technically went out of effect October 1). "The investigation pretty well petered out because of the impossibility of cracking the NSC," said a Barnes aide.

McFarlane's response to Barnes's letter was classified, and so all subsequent correspondence between Barnes and McFarlane also became classified, the aide said. □

"Every time he sold a big airplane, he sent us ten percent, so we latched onto him pretty quick. He's a marcher," Haddaway said.

Haddaway, who said he is 77 years old but feels like he's 30, ran an aviation trade journal for 44 years. He said the reports he gets from Central America indicate that "both sides are pretty bad." Still, "I must admit, my whole life has been spent concerned with the containment of Marxist-Leninism on this continent." "Those communists [in Nicaragua] don't want us operating in there, they don't want any Americans coming in, and I dare say they don't really care about the Christian religion."

The Neo-contras

Just as some groups, such as "Wings of Hope" and Friends of the Americas shun talk of direct help to the combatants in Central America, some groups that work against the Nicaraguan government attempt to distance themselves from the more "action-oriented" groups with close ties to the contra army. One such group is a little-known Washington-based outfit called Gulf and Caribbean. "My membership looks like a Who's Who of Texas," said Dan Kuykendall, a former member of Congress from Tennessee, who runs Gulf and Caribbean. "But they aren't part of this straight-aid-to-the-contra. They don't like to be a part of anything that appears to be radical."

Kuykendall said his group's main activity has been to sponsor "outstanding scholars" who are "really credible." One of the accomplishments he has seen come out of his work has been the introduction of the term "democratic revolution" used for the contra force. "That came from a booklet we published," he said with satisfaction, adding "I remember the first time I showed that [term] to someone at the White House. He said, 'Is that us?'"

But the term has gained currency in Washington and without fanfare for Gulf and Caribbean, which is just as he likes it, Kuykendall said. "We simply have no profile . . . I don't even have a letterhead," he said. "To get the truth out you almost have to do it this way" because sides that are readily identified with one ideology tend to lose credibility.

Kuykendall said the group has sponsored many trips to Central America and later helped place articles in major U.S. dailies. The only criterion for a participating scholar is that he be against communism as a form of government, he said, noting that one trip was led by Eli Wiesel, the holocaust expert. "Now,

Wiesel is a socialist. But he's also an anti-communist of the first order."

Kuykendall said he assumes most of his funders are Republicans. He said the group was started by 25 individuals two years ago who were disturbed by the increase in immigrants coming to the United States through Mexico. "We've got to do something," they decided. They have taken an interest not only in Nicaragua but in El Salvador, where Christian Democrat José Napoleon Duarte last year held off an election challenge from the extreme rightist Roberto D'Aubisson. "Two-thirds of the people who fund us really had to hold their noses to support Duarte over D'Aubisson" because D'Aubisson's economic policies "sounded like Ronald Reagan," Kuykendall said, a curious admission from a man trying to put a moderate face on his group.

One of the Texans who helped start Gulf and Caribbean is John M. Bennett, a former banker and a Republican who now runs a family beef ranch near Port Lavaca. Bennett said he would be "perfectly happy" to see Congress approve military aid to the contras this month "because I know damn well the Russians are doing it — the Bulgarians of all people!" Bennett said the contra aid issue doesn't seem to have the steam it once had, but he believes that when the \$27 million in humanitarian aid expires in March, "someone will blow the bugle, wave the flag, and the troops will respond and hammer on the Congressmen to get that aid."

The Nicaraguans

SITTING IN THE background amidst all the clamor about aid to the contras has been the community of Nicaraguan exiles in Texas, centered in Houston. The Nicaraguan Patriotic Association was formed in Houston in 1980, even before the FDN, according to Juan Sacasa, an exile who has worked with both groups.

The Patriotic Association worked with Christian Broadcasting Network's "Operation Blessing" project in 1982 and 1983, raising over two-and-a-half million dollars for food and clothing for refugees, he said. Now the group has a mailing list of about 1,000 and has periodic social gatherings. Sacasa is from a prominent Nicaraguan family that "was very close to the Somoza clan," according to former contra leader Edgar Chamorro. Sacasa's cousin, Octavio Sacasa, is active with the FDN in Miami, and another cousin, Guillermo Sevilla-Sacasa, served as Somoza's ambassador to the United States. For his part, Sacasa says now

that Somoza was authoritarian, but that "there was much more freedom than with the Sandinistas." Sacasa said he ran a construction business in Nicaragua, "but everything was taken from us, you know. As a member of the private sector, I was always against the Sandinistas."

Sacasa now runs a construction company in Houston with an American partner. He said there has been little contact between the private fundraisers in Texas and the Nicaraguans, "and I am sorry to see that. . . I don't know how much money they have because I haven't seen a single cent of that."

A Job for the Government

Some in the contra community in Texas are getting restless. News reports indicate the war is going badly for the

rebels, and conservatives in Texas are full of information on the Sandinistas' Soviet-supplied arsenal that is putting the contras to rout. "I don't think we can defeat the Sandinistas militarily," admits Juan Sacasa. He hopes further deterioration of the Nicaraguan economy will win the war for the opposition.

Jack Cox, who ran for governor against John Connally in 1962 and now writes and produces films from his home in Abilene, said recently, "I think the communists have it and I think they're going to keep it." The co-author with Anastasio Somoza of *Nicaragua Betrayed*, the story of the downfall of Somoza's regime, Cox now believes the Sandinista government must be "unseated." "I just don't think the contras can win," he said, unless they get major military help. "And that

military support can only come from one place, if we're honest with ourselves, and that's the United States. I don't think you'll have victory any other way."

The Austin businessman Nelson Puett suggests that there is only so much the private sector can do in a war like the one in Nicaragua and that there may come a time for the government to take over to get it done right. "I'd be for the United States moving in with absolutely massive might, just like we did in Grenada, and replacing that government with a democratic one — completely, suddenly, in a matter of days." The private patrons have kept the war going. They wait now to see where the government will take it. □

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On the Railroad Commission: A Talk with John Pouland

Aside from state judgeships, the most hotly contested race for the Democratic nomination for statewide office occurs in the battle for the Railroad Commission seat vacated by Buddy Temple. On November 18, 1985, John Pouland visited the offices of the Observer shortly before announcing that he was seeking the Democratic nomination for the commission seat. The 31-year-old Pouland was born in Angelina County in East Texas, went to the University of Texas, received his law degree from UT Law School, and has practiced law in Dallas since 1980 as a law partner of Dallas Congressman John Bryant.

During these years he has also been immersed in Democratic party politics. In 1972, he worked for Ron Clower's state Senate campaign, and in 1974 he ran John Bryant's House campaign. In 1975, he worked on a Dallas City Council race by the late Juanita Kraft. In 1976, he worked on Jimmy Carter's Texas campaign and for Bob Gammage's run for Congress. In 1977 and '78, Pouland worked for Bob Krueger's U.S. Senate bid. He worked on Clower's race in 1980, as well as on a number of state House races that year. In 1982, Pouland managed John Bryant's successful campaign for Congress, and in 1984 he was the director of Gary Hart's presidential campaign in Texas. While attending school during the '70s, Pouland worked for both Clower and Bryant in the legislature — with Clower during the Killer Bee session and

with Bryant during the Constitutional Convention. For the first six months of 1985, Pouland took off from his law practice to work part-time in Washington for Gary Hart on such things as the oil import tariff and agriculture.

In the following interview, conducted by Geoffrey Rips, Pouland discusses campaign finance, trucking regulation, import tariffs, the role of independent oil producers, and his leading Democratic opponent, John Sharp.

Since the interview, Pouland has called for the voluntary campaign finance limitations that he discusses below. He has called upon his Democratic primary opponents to: limit spending to \$500,000 per candidate through the May 3 primary; refuse all contributions from political action committees; limit contributions to \$5,000 per donor; not borrow money for the campaign; pay all bills by election day; and file daily contribution reports during the last ten days. Pouland, P.S. Ervin, and W.A. MacNaughton have agreed to such limitations, but front-runner John Sharp has not.

How do you think the race looks? At this point, you look like you're a long shot.

I think I would be categorized as somewhere between the long-shot and the leading range. But then, when you talk to some reporters at some newspapers, they consider me one of the two

serious candidates — on an equal footing with Sharp. I would say realistically that a state senator, and someone who has the ability to raise money as he [Sharp] has, is going to be perceived as a front-runner. On the other hand, I think being perceived as a long shot is a little too pessimistic. I wouldn't put myself in that category at all.

Over the years, in previous political campaigns, I have gotten to know on a personal basis people in virtually every county in the state; many of them are friends and are helping me because of that. Many of them are helping because they agree with me politically. Many of them have the ability to give large sums of money or can raise money. So, despite the fact that I have never held elective office, I don't think I'd be considered a long shot. Other candidates will spend the rest of the year covering areas that I've been to fifteen or twenty times.

Why did you choose the Railroad Commission?

It involves the best possible and most important issue in our state — energy and resource management. Aside from that, [I chose] the Railroad Commission because it is also not a purely administrative post. It's quasi-judicial in the sense that the three-person commission acts in many cases as a three-judge panel ruling on cases. And because there are three members there's some of the give-and-take of the legislative process. It's not purely administrative, purely judicial, purely legislative. It deals, like I said, with the most important issue, resource management. It has political appeal obviously: it's a six-year term.

I got into the Railroad Commission race because I was trying to talk a couple of friends of mine into running for it. Neither one of them felt it was the right

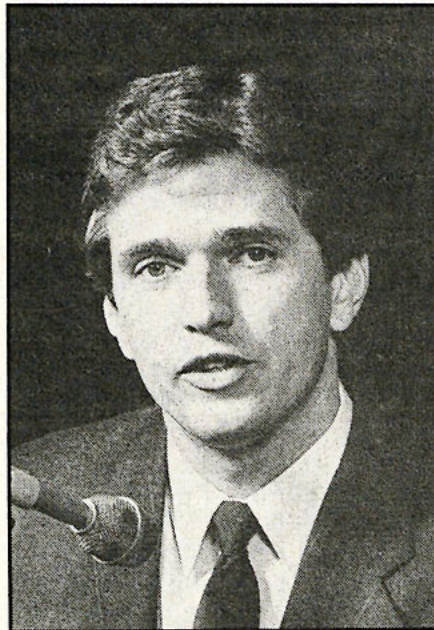
time. One of them felt that he couldn't do it because he was in the middle of a Senate term and he thought he'd be prohibited. The other one was a House member and a longtime friend and just didn't think it was the right time for him in terms of his family and his job. And both of them said, If you think it's such a good idea, why don't you do it? I started thinking about it. By the first of August there were a number of people whom I would like to have seen run for this race, and none of their names had surfaced, or in the case of a couple of them, like Hector Uribe, their names had surfaced and they had decided against it. There was a pretty long list of people I'd like to have seen run for this. But John Sharp wasn't on the list. That's what got me into it. I was out in East Texas working for a couple of weeks for Chapman. I'm from East Texas originally. I was out there visiting family, volunteering. It was after that race that I started thinking about it more seriously, thinking about it and talking to people and finding out if I could get the financial support. I think it's going to take a half a million bucks to make the race. And I'm confident I can raise that.

In terms of energy management, what's the Railroad Commission not doing that you think it should be doing?

It doesn't have the proper emphasis. I'm not sure what the Railroad Commission is — it's sometimes like watching Reagan in the sense that there really doesn't seem to be any kind of coherent, cohesive energy policy on the national level. And, to some extent, that makes it very difficult to develop one on the state level, obviously. The Railroad Commission is having a lot of difficulty because it's nearly impossible to predict the energy needs of the country because of the price fluctuations. [This interview took place several months before the precipitous oil price drop.] It's very difficult to gauge what will be future production because of both the prices and the regulatory changes that come and go on the federal level. So I think it's been increasingly difficult for the commission to play the role it has historically and have the impact it's had historically. But what I would do more aggressively — aside from using the commission as a forum for asserting a national energy policy, much as Jim Hightower has used the Agriculture Department to push for a national agriculture policy (the analogies between agriculture and energy on a federal level are really remarkable because in both cases we've got a President who has no real policy on

either) — we need to aggressively pursue a policy that encourages domestic production and conservation.

And people who think that the energy crisis is over or that the energy shortage is over are right in the short term. Things seem to be going good now. But back in the '70s when things were going very well for OPEC, the leaders of OPEC said that the '70s will not be the decade of OPEC. It will be the '90s. That is when continued dependence on imported energy and the failure of nuclear power and other alternative sources will hit hard at home. As long as the prices remain low or continue to drop, there's not going to be any incentive for development of alternatives. Nuclear power is a joke in terms of being competitive either economically or environmentally.



John Pouland

What the Railroad Commission needs to do is aggressively pursue a policy that increases domestic production as well as overall conservation. I would also like to see a more aggressive policy of utilization of natural gas — the most efficient and cleanest fuel we have. You keep hearing how there's a gas shortage and how we can't use gas for this and we can't use gas for that. Yet you go out and talk to people who are in the oil business — they hit gas wells all the time but don't have transmission lines to hook up to, can't make contracts with the end user because there's no way to deliver the product. There's gas out there. The problem is that people either don't want to pay the price for it or there is no way to get the product to market. That's a function of the gas companies' lack of cooperation, and that is certainly something that the Railroad Commission could have an impact on and could

influence — the transmission companies.

Mark White was decrying the fact that Congress was talking about cutting out the depletion allowance, but he wouldn't come out in support of a tariff on imported oil. [White has since announced that he supports an emergency tariff.] How do you feel about an import tariff?

I worked with Gary Hart on the development of the oil import tariff. My position doesn't differ from Hart's that much. What Hart proposed and got attached to the Senate Budget Resolution was an oil import tariff, which would obviously help cut down on our trade deficit. It would obviously aid our budget deficit. And people who think it would raise prices are accurate for the short term. It would raise prices a little bit for the short term, but OPEC and other producing nations could lower their price to compete again.

I proposed an import on non-hemispheric oil. I do not think we ought to have a tariff on Mexico, Venezuela — despite the fact that Venezuela and Ecuador are OPEC countries. To me the distinction should not be OPEC vs. non-OPEC. It should be Americas vs. non-Americas. If we are going to have to import oil, which we are, I would like to see our country become more dependent on oil in this hemisphere. Therefore, we're less susceptible to the pressures from people in the Middle East who have conflicting political agendas. I would not favor a flat \$10 a barrel tariff on Mexican oil. I don't think the Mexican economy can handle that. And, as we have learned in the past, any disruption in the Mexican economy ultimately results to some extent in a disruption in the U.S. economy, particularly along the border.

So, I am a strong supporter of the oil import tariff — it would aid in conservation, it would aid the deficit, and it would certainly aid in domestic production. There's no question that an increasing price would aid in the production.

A lot of folks think that it would kind of be unfortunate for U.S. producers to receive more money for their oil. If we expect them — and I do — to fulfill their obligations from an environmental point of view — and that is that they should produce oil, as well as coal and other natural resources, in such a way to allow minimum disruption of the environment — that means they're going to have to make a profit sufficient on that production so that they're able to fulfill the environmental rules and

regulations. You can't have one without the other. You could try, but what you're going to find is that they're ignoring the environmental law — which to a large extent is the case now — not properly plugging wells, not properly removing some of the salt water and other problems that come from drilling. If oil had a little higher price, I think it would be easier to enforce that, be easier to require that.

The Railroad Commission should obviously look at people who have a bad track record on environmental issues and take that into account in giving permits for drilling or permits for secondary recovery. So the commission ought to be a little more active on that.

In the old days the Democratic party was made up of what are now called "special-interest" groups — labor, minorities, etc. — but it also had a base with a lot of the independent oil producers. Most have shifted to the Republican party. Do you think there's a place for them in the Democratic party?

Yes, I think there is. They were not necessarily national Democrats ever in the past. You know "independent" is kind of a misnomer because some of the largest oil companies in the world are so-called "independents." And some of the true wildcatters, the guys who go out there and take the risk and discover new oil, are small but independent. But as a rule they're overwhelmingly Republican. That's been a national tendency for some time. They were Democratic on the state level because the Democrats that were elected in this state were their kind of Democrats, and Democrats were all that was being elected. Everybody was a Democrat when I was growing up. That has changed now, and the bulk of those people are becoming Republicans or are "coming out" as Republicans.

I believe, not only is there a place for them in the Democratic party, but there will ultimately come a time when the true independents, the smaller producers, will come back in and help form the base for a new resurgent Democratic party in the state because their interests are clearly going to be best protected by a party that believes in true competition as opposed to mergers and takeovers. If Ronald Reagan and the Republican party have it their way, there won't be any independent oil producers some day. There will be eight oil companies, there will be five steel companies or less. Everything will be big, the economy of bigness will prevail, and mergers and takeovers will be the rule. You can't pick up the paper

without reading of another merger.

All this newfound wealth, this so-called "Reagan recovery" that we've experienced, has been nothing more than a paper recovery, in which companies have used tax breaks and special incentives to acquire other companies. You don't see new jobs. They're not really producing anything for the economy. They're just kind of digging in for when the fall comes so that they'll be diversified enough so they can handle a recession, or worse, a depression in the energy or the agriculture or the real estate sectors.

It's becoming a situation where independents are not going to have a choice: they're going to be Democratic. And the Democrats are going to be the ones who are going to stand for their interests, in many cases, when it comes to tax reform. The import tariff is a classic case of where Republicans tend to oppose that because they claim to support free trade, when, in fact, they're against the proposal because an import tariff hurts the Exxons of the world and helps the independent producers. And the more independent producers come to recognize that, they're going to become more Democratic in their outlook or, at least, in their support. They'll definitely have certain differences and problems with certain Democrats and Democratic programs because of the diversity of our party. But they will, at least, find a home in terms of true free enterprise.

Republican candidate John Thomas Henderson has run saying he won't accept campaign contributions from oil companies or producers. How do you feel about this?

I'm not taking PAC [political action committee] money at this point. I would like for all the candidates to do what the legislature does not have the leadership to do — I'm referring to the lack of interest of certain members of the legislature in making campaign financing reasonable and a little more calm than what we've had in the past. John Sharp said it would take between \$500,000 and \$900,000 to win the primary. I would like everybody to agree to a \$700,000 spending limit and a maximum amount or a percentage that could be accepted from PAC contributions.

What I guess is the most hypocritical, unethical of all campaign practices is the practice of going heavily into debt running for a regulatory agency and then having a fundraiser after you win and essentially extorting the money out of the interests that you're elected to be

regulating. Extortion is not too strong a word. That's exactly what it is. It's not extortion under the penal code, but it's extortion in an ethical and moral sense. That probably is the biggest problem we've got. I believe that the public has a right to know what you're going to do. And when you go out and borrow \$300,000 or \$500,000 and then, after the election, take your money from those interest groups, that's deceptive, and I think it's a form of extortion.

I would call on all other candidates to consider a gentleperson's agreement on a spending limit, a limit on the amount of PAC money, and even a debt limit. A number of other states have laws that prohibit campaigns from going into debt. You just flat have to pay cash on the barrel, and you can't spend money 24 hours before an election. You've got to have spent all your money. And you can't go into debt and have something come up after the election. That to me is a good policy. It may be going to an extreme because that may discriminate against candidates like me — who don't have personal wealth — seeking an office. But there's got to be some balance in there, where people run for office and are able to get support but are not deceptive.

This would obviously require a great deal of cooperation from some people who are not inclined to cooperate on something like this. John Sharp, for instance, would probably not be interested in something like that because, I expect, he expects to get a good deal of money from major oil and from the pro-regulation trucking interests — areas where we disagree. I doubt he'd be inclined to limit spending or to limit the amount of PAC money or to limit borrowing, but I think it would be the right thing to do. . . .

You've spoken in favor of the deregulation of trucking. I think most of labor supports the continued regulation of trucking.

I don't think that's accurate. I think there's a perception that there are certain segments of labor, certain unions, that support the continued regulatory system. There's concern on the part of labor that deregulation will cost jobs. I believe just the opposite. I believe most studies indicate just the opposite. Not only will a phase-out of our regulatory scheme increase jobs and competition, but it will also open up opportunities to people who have not had those opportunities in the past.

The present regulatory scheme we have in this state not only is outdated, not only is anti-competitive and anti-free enterprise, it's very discriminatory. It's

almost like the tobacco program, where you inherit your permit to raise a certain amount of tobacco, and if somebody else wants to raise tobacco, they've got to go out and buy or lease somebody's permit. It just makes no sense where, in trucking, the public is paying for the highway, the consumer is paying the price of the freight, that there should be a scheme devised that prohibits me and you and Joe Tijerina from going into the trucking business. And essentially that's what we've got now. It's a system that discriminates against new entrants. It regulates who gets into the industry, on the one hand, and it doesn't regulate what they're carrying and the safety that is necessary for the transportation of dangerous or toxic chemicals.

Then, as a good example of where we're backwards on our regulatory thinking, we have gas pipelines that are not made common carriers. They can take from whom they please. Yet they are a monopoly. Trucks are not a natural monopoly. The highways are open to the public. And if safety requirements are met and enforced aggressively, there should not be a practice which prohibits free enterprise and prohibits entrepreneurship. That's exactly what we've got now.

The railroads got into this situation. They had such a rigid and inflexible rate system that, when trucking developed and competed against them, it was more efficient. And air transportation is more efficient. For the railroads to be more competitive, they needed more flexibility in the rate-making. And I think the same is true of trucking. They're going to lose that competitive edge if they don't have some incentive to be more efficient and to do what their users want. So I disagree with those who say that it is bad for jobs. I think it's good for jobs.

Some people have told me you're running for this office to create some kind of vanguard for the Gary Hart Presidential campaign in '88.

I've heard that a number of times. Sharp and others have said they think I'm just running to front for Gary Hart in '88. Probably for the first time in my life I've come to a point where I have ambitions or aspirations that don't coincide. They conflict. And that's the irony of that statement. I am very

interested in the Presidential race in '88. I am very interested in Presidential politics. But as Railroad Commissioner, obviously I'll have my own job to do and my own fish to fry, and I would not be able to go at it full time like I've enjoyed doing in the past. I enjoyed working in '76 and '84 in the Presidential race. I think it's important or I wouldn't have done it. But I can't do both.

There's talk among certain people that I'm not running for the Railroad Commission. That I'm running for Gary Hart. I don't know if the story is that I'm running to win and then help Hart or if I'm running just to run and build up an organization to help Hart. That second scenario strikes me as pretty ludicrous. If I wanted to submit myself to that type of abuse, I'd play contact football without pads or something. I can't see the logic behind that. Obviously, in winning I'd be in a better position to help Hart or any other candidate. And I would make no bones about it. I would do so. I would relish the opportunity in 1990 to assist a Democrat in a race against Phil Gramm. I couldn't think of anything better to do. It should be a great opportunity. I despise Phil Gramm — his hypocrisy and his ignorance. It's brilliant in some ways, but the hypocrisy I just can't take. I would look forward to the opportunity in 1990 to work against him for Jim Hightower or John Bryant or whomever. I really look forward to beating him.

I find it a little ironic because John Sharp, for instance, had no intention of running for the Railroad Commission. He wanted to run for comptroller. There's not too many offices statewide for a non-lawyer, or at least there's that perception. And he always wanted to be comptroller and was planning on running for comptroller. And then Bob Bullock decides not to run for governor, so Sharp looks around, and this is the only race he's got. So, in terms of being opportunistic, I find that to be considerably more opportunistic than what they say my position on this is.

I don't have anything against Sharp personally. He's a nice person — a good ol' boy. But our political backgrounds are such that, when I made up the list of people that I would like to see run for this office or when I look at the list of people I want to see succeed Bob Bullock, he's just not on it.

Who are some of those people?

People like John Bryant, Ron Coleman, Clint Hackney, Chet Edwards, Hector Uribe, Al Luna, a lot of my friends around the state that I agree with politically. And the list could go on. But John Sharp wasn't on the list. And it's because ever since I've known John, from the '70s, we've been on opposite sides. Not that he's ever been a mean or vicious or bad adversary, but I came to the Senate with Ron Clower, a reformer and just a hell of a good senator. And Sharp was there with Bill Moore, who probably did more to thwart progress in the reform session than any other individual. I go to work in '76 for Carter, and he works for Phil Gramm.

He did work for Gramm?

Oh yes, he was on his campaign and actually on the FEC report. In 1978, I was working for Bob Krueger, and Sharp was running for the legislature as a Billy Clayton, ultra-conservative Democrat. He votes to gut consumer protection. He votes to gut the Deceptive Trade Practices Act. He votes what I consider anti-progress and anti-people in his term in the House. He runs for the Senate and he backs Bill Moore against Kent Caperton. He was for Kent Hance in '84.

It's not that he's ever switched parties, but he has a history and a track record of supporting people that I just don't support. Again, I like Kent Hance personally. He's a nice, likeable guy. But his politics I disagree with. I disagree with the politics of Bill Moore and Billy Clayton and Phil Gramm. I think you've got to look at somebody's background. If we were going way back into the politics of the '60s and the '70s and it was evident in his background but there was some recent history to demonstrate he's changed or is a different type of person, I wouldn't feel this way. But Kent Hance was his most recent election. And I bet the guy hasn't voted for Democratic candidates for President and the U.S. Senate.

Although he professes to be a Democrat — he talks like a Democrat now and talks about what an environmentalist he is and what an advocate of consumer interests he is and how moderate he is, how labor's backing him and so forth and so on — yet he votes like his mentors — the Bill Moores and the Phil Gramms. That is not the kind of person that I want to see going to statewide office and have to contend with in the future. I don't want in 1990, if there's a race for governor, for Jim Hightower or Ann

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Richards to be going up against somebody that all of a sudden is on the other side. And when you look to someone's financial backing, you also know a lot about what kind of person he is. You'll look and find powerful interest groups, major oil companies, putting a lot of money into John Sharp because they think that he's their guy. And I think they're right. You don't fool them very often.

The Railroad Commission was initially a populist invention. It hasn't acted like one in quite a number of years.

It's like most regulatory agencies, not just in Texas, that become captives of the industries that they're supposed to regulate. It has not had a history of being a consumer agency. All through the '30s and the '40s and the '50s and even in the '60s, up until the embargo, the commission acted as the protector of the independent and smaller producers and the royalty owners and the landowners against the potential abuse by the majors and the control of the majors.

That all became confused and muddled with the embargo when it became us against them, their oil against our oil. What a lot of people forget is that "us"

is the independent producer and "them" is sometimes the Exxons and the Mobils and the Gulfs of the world. They are the ones who produce, transport, refine, and sell all the oil from the Middle East. Their interests do not necessarily coincide with our security interests or our energy interests. That's where I believe the line should be redrawn: independent domestic production versus the multinationals. Obviously if they had their way, there'd just be a handful of oil producers in the world as they continue to gobble each other up. They would dictate the terms of both exploration and production and cost. I would not want to see such a thing. □

• POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE •

Second Best

✓ U.S. Senator Phil Gramm has been stumping the state in an effort to convince voters that the Gramm-Rudman budget balancing act is a silk purse. During a visit to El Paso, Gramm allowed how he was not discouraged by the ruling by federal judges that part of the Gramm-Rudman act was unconstitutional. He said a "fallback" provision in the act would still be okay to work with. By way of analogy, Gramm told the *El Paso Times*, "I might have preferred Sophia Loren for a wife, but I like the one I've got."

Undoubtedly, had he been married to Sophia Loren, Gramm would have shown her face in 1984 television campaign commercials, even if she is Italian. You may remember Gramm's 1984 All-American family commercial, in which we only saw Wendy Gramm's back, while the faces of their two part-Asian sons are hidden in the shadows of large-billed caps.

✓ Both Sen. Phil Gramm and House Majority Leader Jim Wright lead the pack in the amount of funds received from political action committees (PACs); Federal Election Commission reports show.

In the 1983-84 races, Gramm received more money from PACs than any other senator, with \$1.5 million. He had the distinction of being ranked fourth in fundraising (\$9.8 million) for his 1984 senate victory. He also was ranked fifth in fundraising (\$978,091) and 13th in spending (\$842,927) in the 1983 special House election.

Lloyd Doggett, Gramm's Democratic opponent for the senate, ranked fifth on

the campaign contribution list (\$6.03 million) and sixth on the spending list (\$6.02 million).

Wright's \$512,898 in PAC money and \$1.3 million total raised in 1985 led all 435 House members in both categories. At the end of 1985, he also had more cash on hand: \$1 million. He also came in third for spending (\$348,459), trailing top-spending U.S. Rep. Jack Kemp, R-N.Y., who was the only other congressman to raise more than \$1 million in 1985.

Other top-raising Texans in 1985 include Reps. Steve Bartlett, R-Dallas, Martin Frost, D-Dallas, and Mac Sweeney, R-Wharton, all of whom placed among the top ten House members in total receipts.

Prayerful

✓ On the frontiers of leadership last month were Speaker of the Texas House Gib Lewis and Rep. Stan Schlueter of Killeen. Shortly after Comptroller Bob Bullock warned in a Capitol press conference that "We can no longer depend on the oil and gas industry to finance state government," Lewis and Schlueter were quoted in the papers addressing the current state budget crunch. Schlueter, the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, refused to speculate on alternative revenue raising measures: "I wouldn't even start talking about that now. What I would do between now and January is pray for a miracle and hope the price of oil goes up and the economy improves." Lewis: "If we had a special session, I predict we're not going to pass a tax bill. We'll just have 30 days of sitting around, twiddling our thumbs."

✓ Speaker Lewis won't be twiddling his thumbs now that he faces opposition from the Republicans in his Tarrant County re-election race. Right-wing

maven Fran Chiles reportedly talked one K. Wayne Lee into making the race against Lewis, a conservative Democrat. Some Democrats reacted with glee, imagining the Speaker in the position now to have to seek support from traditional Democratic bases. Columnist Molly Ivins observed, "There were some union people up that way who were just knocked whomper-jawed when the Speak called."

✓ Gib has a plan. Speaking to reporters on February 14 about the state budget crunch, House Speaker Gib Lewis said he didn't think it would necessitate laying off state workers. Instead, he said the state employee squeeze could be solved through "employee nutrition." That's when employees retire or die off (perhaps from overeating) and are not replaced.

✓ Former San Antonio City Councilperson Van Archer, running for Tom Loeffler's congressional seat in the Republican primary, supports putting U.S. military troops along the Rio Grande in order to stem illegal immigration. In a speech to the Noon Lions Club of San Angelo, Archer criticized "liberal-oriented columnists" and "Hispanic sources" for opposing such solutions.

Archer has picked up an unlikely supporter in his quest for Congress — former San Antonio City Attorney Jane Macon. She's now working for the San Antonio office of Fulbright Jaworski and has contributed \$1,000 to Archer's campaign, also serving on his steering committee. Macon, a leader of the Texas Women's Political Caucus, is generally credited with bringing the National Women's Political Caucus convention to San Antonio in 1984. At the time, then-Councilperson Archer called the convention "a couple of hundred hairy-legged women."

Political Intelligence is reported by Beau Barton, Ron Cesar, and Ellen Williams.

✓ Republican Railroad Commission candidate John Thomas Henderson is not too impressed with the latest commission proposal to require the posting of a \$10,000 bond with the request for a drilling permit to assure that a well will be properly plugged when abandoned. Said Henderson: "I've said all along that those knuckleheads don't know what they're doing and this proves it! The

The Intimidator

Washington, D.C.

When Sen. Phil Gramm recommended Sidney Fitzwater for the federal bench, liberal watchdog groups in Washington started digging through the 32-year-old state district judge's history and found some rather disturbing incidents.

It turned out that the Dallas judge had placed what the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, based in San Antonio, calls "intimidating signs" in minority precincts before a 1982 general election in Dallas County. The signs warn, in official-looking red block letters, "YOU CAN BE ARRESTED" for such transgressions as "if you influence or try to influence a voter how to vote." The Project says that the signs were clearly intended "to discourage voters and confuse them about their right to vote," which would be helpful to Republican candidates in heavily Democratic minority districts. Even the Reagan Justice Department in 1983 concluded that "no nonracial justification has been offered for placing most of the signs at minority precincts."

So, when Democratic senators on the Judiciary Committee, which must approve all federal judicial nominees, succeeded in getting a second hearing to question Fitzwater, expectations ran high that Fitzwater would show his true colors under interrogation.

And Fitzwater came through. When Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois asked him if he could give some indication from his past record that he would be a federal judge sensitive to racial issues, Fitzwater could only respond, "In my family we were taught to be sensitive to people of all races." He further impressed the senators by adding that two of his "father's closest friends were black colleagues."

The Senate Committee was to have voted on the Fitzwater nomination on February 20, but Democratic Senators requested the vote be postponed for yet another week. V.T.

world has been swimming in oil; the economy of several countries, including ours, is suffering from low oil prices caused by an oversupply of oil, and those nincompoops have been going around the state saying, 'There's no oil glut, there's no oil glut!' Where in Sam Hill have these guys been? The small operator is practically the heart of our oil industry, and what the Railroad Commission is trying to do is destroy the small operator."

In Whose Interests?

✓ It's not surprising that on February 13 the University of Texas System Board of Regents decided once again not to divest UT money from companies doing business in South Africa. What is surprising is that the board acted at all — they'd already heard speakers twice and decided in December 1984 that they wouldn't divest. This time they more strongly endorsed the Sullivan Principles, which are guidelines to help further social justice and cripple the racist system of apartheid. The regents, apparently feeling expansive, even instructed the staff to vote with UT's shares to promote the spirit of the Sullivan Principles.

Some observers suggest that UT, stung by persistent criticism of racism, adopted the policy to make itself look less like the Great White University that has few blacks and doesn't care about their problems. Although divestiture itself has died down as a campus issue, many minority students have complained about black retention and recruitment recently.

The UT regents' endorsement of the Sullivan Principles means little, though — it's ultimately hypocritical. UT currently owns stock in 14 companies that haven't signed the Sullivan Principles. Divestiture would have, in effect, barred UT from investing in companies such as Exxon Corp. (which has signed the principles), Texas Commerce Bancshares (which hasn't), and Sedco, Inc. (which hasn't). At present, UT has no money invested in these companies, but it has had substantial amounts in the past.

Funny thing. Board Chairman Jess Hay is on the Exxon board of directors. Regent Jack Blanton and former regents Jon Newton and Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson are on the Texas Commerce board of directors. And regent Tom Rhodes is chairman of the board of Sedco, a company started by former Gov. Bill Clements.

Another funny thing. In a report to the board by Mike Patrick, UT System vice chancellor for asset management,

there was a list of all Sullivan Principles non-signers. Quite mysteriously, Sedco was left off.

Water Woe

✓ Austin media have played up coverage of the pipeline issue, but they ignored a U.S. Geological Survey that forecasts gloom for the Edwards Aquifer. The study, released over a month ago, concludes that increased pumpage due to population growth will dry up part of the aquifer as well as Barton Springs in the next 15 years. The news is even worse than it seems at first glance: the report works under conservative estimates, so the aquifer could run dry even sooner, according to Raymond Slade, a hydrologist who worked on the study. Projections, he said, did not include growth east of the study area, even though many newcomers there are supplied with aquifer water, and population figures were completed before the announcement of two new mega-subdivisions that will pump an estimated 5 million gallons of water out of the ground per day.

Slade said they sent out press releases to all major news organizations, and he doesn't know how the Austin media missed the story. "We thought it was news. That's why we sent out the report — it's the only way we have to make it public other than sending up balloons," he said.

✓ Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower's only Democratic primary opponent is apparently upset because Hightower believes in free enterprise and is not ready to dedicate the nation's economy to the creation of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Noel Cowling of Dublin, a member of Lyndon LaRouche's Democratic National Policy Committee and a chemist for the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant, says Hightower has "anti-technology, extremist, environmentalist attitudes."

As a LaRouchite, Cowling opposes the doctrine of free trade and supports the elimination of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. He thinks the nation's industry should be concentrating on Star Wars and is running on a political platform calling for a return to the basics "of our religious heritage, our political heritage and our economic heritage." It's difficult to tell just what Cowling imagines that heritage to be.

The LaRouchites of Houston, for instance, in a wide-brush approach, have issued a statement saying, "Hightower agrees with Phil Gramm, Milton Friedman, and the rest of the believers in the 'magic of the marketplace.'" Them's fightin' words. □

The Texas of His Time

By Gary Pomerantz

LARRY KING writes about politicians, fatcats, and climbers, but there are plenty of buck privates, roughnecks, and drunks between his covers, too. And, to borrow a phrase from Joseph Mitchell, they are all just as real, just "as big as you are, whoever you are." King's latest collection proves the point; *Warning: Writer at Work* showcases some of the biggest people and some of the best writing between the Atlantic and the Pacific, this side of the Rio Grande.

The pieces in *Warning* were written between 1966 and 1983, and in them we have Larry King playing cowboy; singing the redneck blues; throwing a tantrum in front of Lyndon Johnson; recreating his youth, his father, his home town, his vanished Texas; exposing a right-wing comedian; drinking all night with Louis Armstrong; and cavorting with all kinds of other folks, some fancy, some plain, all interesting and worth the time. The book is divided into two sections: "Echoes of Texas," which is, in King's words, "a loose autobiography" of his life in Texas; and "Other Echoes," which contains five pieces set outside the home state. Many of the pieces have been collected before, some are between hard covers for the first time, and some old pieces should have been recollected here, but were not.

The most notable omission is King's stinging piece on the trial of John Connally. Also conspicuously absent is King's rollicking essay, "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," which was the basis for the Broadway play. In the "Whorehouse" piece, King gave his solution to the working journalist's problem of how to write an article when the people involved refuse to be interviewed: "Well, screw research; fall back on perceptions. Besides, beer halls are more fun than telephone booths anyway. . . ."

King's writing about Texas is full of frontier humor, and, like Mark Twain,

Gary Pomerantz is a freelance writer living in Houston.

he loves a tall tale. He has a great ear for the Texas idiom and a fine sense of the myths, prejudices, charm, and cussedness of his native state's natives. In "Requiem for a West Texas Town," King writes of the childhood belief that his hometown would live forever: "Putnam would still be standing when Rome had only a general store and an old stadium." And when Putnam could no longer thrive, when government bureaucrats decided to pave an interstate highway through the heart of the town, King testified to the passing of his piece of Texas: "One day two years ago the

WARNING: WRITER AT WORK

By Larry L. King

TCU Press, Fort Worth, 1985.

289 pages, cloth \$17.95, paper \$10.95

growling machines came. An iron ball swung its fist, and bulldozers with metal jaws took bites from the earth. The barbershop, that exciting Istanbul of spicy tonics, racy stories, and old shaving mugs — where my Uncle Claude cheerfully and for two bits skinned young heads before drenching them in Red Rose Hair Oil — fell under the assault." But a few old-timers still believed that Putnam would come back, believed that this shell of a town could renew itself. King describes their attitude: "Miracles were like buses: if you missed one, you simply caught the next."

THE BUS Larry King caught out of Putnam took him on an American journey of success to the lucrative wonderland of Broadway, with stops along the way to lackey in Washington, and to lecture and teach in the ivied halls of Harvard and Princeton. Not bad for the son of a blacksmith; not bad for the kid who dropped out of high school at seventeen to join the army; not bad for an ex-GI who polished off his formal education at Texas Tech in Lubbock. And he did it with a typewriter and hard work, with a skill for listening carefully to himself and others, and an ability to write

honestly whatever he heard.

Perhaps it also helped to pay selective attention to the advice of his high school coach, A.R. Nooncaster: "He placed a big hand on my shoulder; I don't know which of us he felt the need to steady. Softly he said, 'Stay in school. Learn. Equip yourself. Don't throw your future away.'" The piece, "A Coach for All Seasons," is one of the most moving in the book. In it King credits "Coach Noon" with being one of the most important people in his life. In fact, *Warning* is dedicated to Nooncaster and to Willie Morris. King's piece moves from terse recollections of the Coach (as team coach, English literature teacher, and poet) to a meeting in 1983 when King was fifty-four and the Coach was pushing seventy (" 'Coach,' I said, 'I love you.' He gripped my hand, hard, and said, 'And I love you too.' ") Sentimental? Yes, but brimming over with raw, honest emotion — and the emotion perking in the essay is hot enough to burn straight through to the heart.

Some of King's writing is so full of imagery and has such a Rabelaisian rush of descriptive words that it has the same heightened effect as good poetry. This is especially true in some of the pieces on the Texas of King's youth. For example, in "The Terrible Night Santa Got Lost in the Woods" King recalls Christmas in Putnam in the 1930s. There wasn't that much in the way of presents — but there was always the Christmas feast:

I loved the preparations of those dinners almost as much as their consumption: the fine odors of bubbling pots on the cast iron wood-burning stove and companion pans baking in the oven; the strong, sweet smell of the smokehouse as my father removed a home-cured country ham suggesting essence of brown sugar and sage; the digging of sweet potatoes from the underground bin where they had been stored against the mischief of Jack Frost; the opening of summer peaches my mother had canned in fruit jars and stored in the rude dirt cellar against the good promise of winter cobblers; the warm and joyous bustle as I performed small, presumably helpful chores to the music of mother's hymns celebrating her personal understanding with Jesus.

Larry King handily and beautifully achieves the goal he set for himself as explained in the introduction to this collection. "My writing has been about, and was *meant* to be about, the Texas of my time there," King writes. "I felt it my job to define and record the Texas culture as I best knew it before (and

perhaps in the beginning of) transitions toward what it has become, to leave signposts saying to those coming along later, *This is how it was then.*"

Joan Didion claims that "writers are always selling somebody out," but that dictum is hard to apply to King when he confesses to being tongue-tied in the presence of Louis Armstrong. Satchmo put the journalist at ease, and they wound up drinking together all night. And did King sell out the Tennessee novelist, Jesse Hill Ford? No, he portrayed him with sympathy and care.

"The Liberation of Jesse Hill Ford" is a strong piece of writing, and King, in telling the story of the white writer's trial for the murder of a local black man, conveys the darkness of the events of the killing and the small-town xenophobia of Humbolt, Tennessee. But he doesn't sell anybody out.

Some of King's writing, like the Jesse Hill Ford piece, is excellent reporting; some of it, like the piece on Coach Noon, is raw and emotional; and some of it, like the essay on Christmas, is poetic. But all of it is strong and

personal. There is always a *voice* in a King piece — always a teller of the tale. And there's usually much humor and humanity in the telling.

Warning: Writer at Work isn't the definitive King — I think of it more as a primer, a place to begin, a good introduction to the world according to Larry L. King. Read it first; then rush out and get all the other King books you can find. And if you're ever lucky enough to see him walking down the street, hustle him into the nearest bar — Edwin Shrake says in his foreword that "he talks like he writes." □

POWER Has None

By Elise Nakhnikian

"AL NEEDS to see that movie," said a woman on her way out of the theater.

"Really!" agreed her friend. "Al thinks everything in politics is upfront — President Reagan is perfect."

Maybe Al does need a lesson in practical politics, but *Power* sure isn't it. The sad thing is, director Sidney Lumet seems to think it is — or, at least, to want his audience to think so.

Subtlety has never been Lumet's strong point. Even his best movies, films like *Dog Day Afternoon*, *Network*, and *The Verdict*, are clanging amalgamations of polar opposites — white-hat good guys, black-hat bad guys, sentimental humanism, and a pervasive cynicism. But they percolate with energy and an underlying moral outrage that seems genuine, if seriously eroded by an acid sense of irony.

At first glance, *Power* seems to fit that profile nicely. Billed as an exposé of the media consultants who shoehorn uncaring or incompetent candidates into office, it is a variation on a tried-and-true theme which proved popular in *The Candidate*, *Being There* and other more or less imaginative movies. And in its cast are Julie Christie and Gene Hackman, two actors who add class to any production. Unfortunately, it doesn't take long to realize that this poisonously cynical, fundamentally dishonest film is every bit as slick, manipulative, and insincere as the political machinations it pretends to protest.

Elise Nakhnikian reviews films for the Observer.

Under the towering, important-looking letters of the opening credits, Richard Gere squints shut his small, bleak eyes and drums to the jazz on his Walkman in the seat of an airplane. The actor is a strange choice for the lead role of Pete St. John, the king of kingmakers, a media consultant so brilliant and charismatic his candidates almost never lose: Gere has already become something of a bad joke for baring his chest instead of his soul; he is not so much a cold fish as a frozen fillet.

POWER Directed by Sidney Lumet

In a vain attempt to flesh out his character, Lumet and screenwriter David Himmelstein resort repeatedly to shots of Gere rapping out a beat to the jazz on the soundtrack that usually accompanies his appearance. (His nemesis, sinister lobbyist Arnold Billings, is underscored by a dully ominous theme.) Lest we miss the point, cameras angle up leeringly at Billings and other bad guys from below, focusing on the deep shadows cast on their faces by off-center key lights. Meanwhile, Gere moves through most of the movie as if underwater, passing from murky gray anterooms through steel-blue offices, black elevator shafts, and greenish hallways that look as if they were illuminated with nightlights to cover a sense of illicit action. In one scene, his number-crunching assistant turns off the lights in the room where he is working, leaving us alone in the dark with Billings's foreboding theme song and a blinking VDT screen. The moment is

fraught with a Hitchcockian sense of doom, but without the payoff — all that comes of it later is that the contents of a Federal Express package are shredded.

Worse than the stagy lighting — or the planes which are shown over a dozen times either taking off, landing, or in flight — is the awkward dialogue. "I don't want His Majesty to be upset with another failure: mine . . . or yours," intones a caricature of an Arab sheik with a highly dubious accent in one of several speeches that might have been lifted verbatim from "Man From U.N.C.L.E." Worse yet are the clumsy monologues used to explain what a character is about to do as the action grinds to a halt. It's the sort of information that would come out in bits and pieces — or in the form of action — in real interaction or in a well-written script.

EXPLICATION weakens the movie, but its death blow is dealt by a surplus of subplots. Perhaps Lumet and Himmelstein didn't trust the innate drama of their subject; perhaps they didn't trust their audience to follow a single story without getting bored. After all, they seem to have thought, people don't really want to watch movies about politics, so we'd better coat the pill with a lot of sugar. Especially in its penultimate sequence, when Gere and Christie switch between four video screens, each simultaneously displaying a different picture, *Power* seems to conform to the worst stereotypes about the MTV generation's short attention span and lust for visual stimulation. Whatever his motivation, the result is that Lumet becomes part of the problem: as he switches among the four campaigns St. John handles throughout the movie, we are not given enough time or information to care about any of them.

Perhaps the most cynical touch is the candidate with whom the film spends the most time — the one whose near-victory is presented at the end as a

triumph of justice (sort of). Phil Aarons (Matt Salinger) is supposed to be the thinking man's alternative, a sincerely idealistic Oberlin professor. From the start, Aarons is a Madison Avenue version of the unworldly egghead, a square-jawed, blue-eyed, 30-ish man who looks like a *GQ* model. He is constantly surrounded by adoring, clean-scrubbed young people of all colors, all with wholesome grins and casual clothing, who could be refugees from a Dr. Pepper ad. Yet this cuddly liberal proves to be as easily manipulated as his amoral opponents, toning himself down in accordance with his media consultant's suggestions.

Then St. John appears, full of contrition for having sold out and anxious to redeem himself on the eve of Aarons's big TV debate. In what may be the most contrived speech in this relentlessly contrived movie, St. John urges Aarons, "Instead of going back and teaching history, why don't you go out there tonight and make some? Why don't you go out there and tell them exactly what you think? Maybe even what you feel?" Hackman's character has the good taste to leave the room, but Aarons's mouth drops open in admiring wonder as St. John adds, "Just the spectacle of something human up there might make

hordes of people come tumbling out of their homes to vote for you."

Phrasemaking like that makes Frank Capra look like John Kenneth Galbraith. Capra's unabashedly flag-waving *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* had far more savvy, more insight, and more clearly delineated issues than *Power*. Most important, there was more of what St. John would call "something human" up there on the screen. *Power* is full of references to "humanity," as if the power plays, backstabbing, and callous manipulation it portrays are not just as much a part of human nature as the idealism it purports to champion. In the end, Lumet seems to be saying the answer to our political problems is a candidate who can hesitate charmingly before the TV cameras and then tell us openly and honestly how uncomfortable they make him feel.

If Al's friends want to teach him about politics by sending him to the movies, they might do well to steer him clear of *Power*, find him a VCR, and rent a copy of *Mr. Smith*. Better yet, they might ferret out a copy of *A Face in the Crowd*. Elia Kazan filmed his version of the dangers of demagoguery almost 30 years ago, but nobody has done it better since. □



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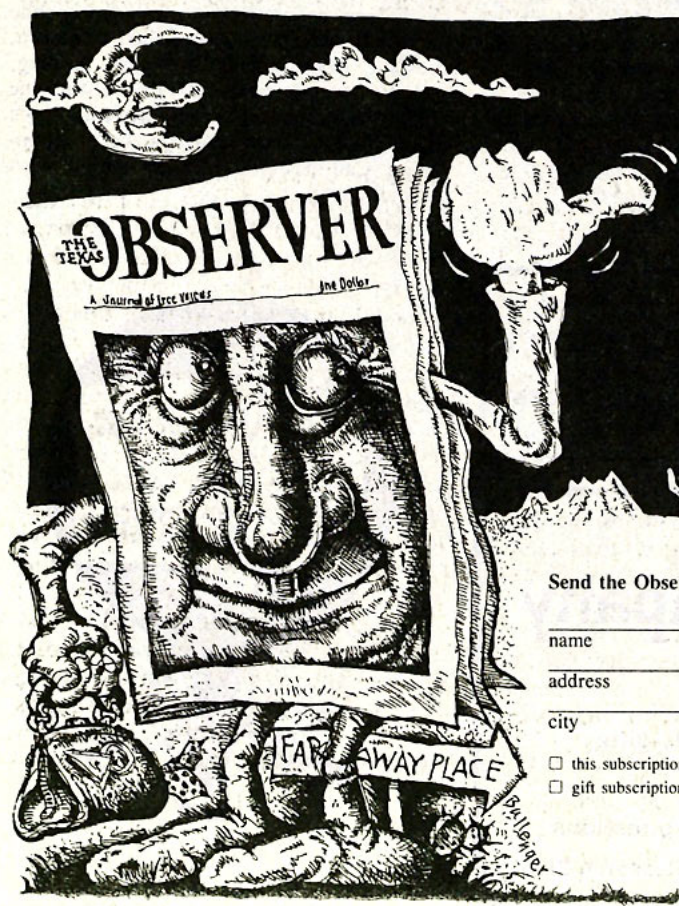
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SOCIAL CAUSE CALENDAR

AUSTIN WRITERS CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

A festival featuring women artists performing music, literature and dance in honor of International Women's Day will be **March 7-9**, Elisabet Ney Museum, Austin, sponsored by the City of Austin, the Texas Commission on the Arts, Texas Circuit, Plain View press, and the Elisabet Ney Museum. An opening address by Sarah Weddington will be followed by performances by Tina Marsh, Elouise Burrell, Heloise Gold, Hewdig Gorski and others, with workshops by Sally Jacque, Joia Jithidi, and Shamman Ochaum. Call Lynn Lichtenfels, (512) 441-2452 to register for workshops and for details. Doors open at 7:30 each night; come early for seating; admission is \$4.

CLASSICAL BENEFIT

An evening of classical music with Bill and Mary Ann Bloomquist will be held in Austin **March 13** at the First Unitarian Church of Austin as a benefit for the Central American Refugee Task Force. The music starts at 8 p.m. and the donation is \$5. Call (512) 834-9642.

FOREIGN POLICY AND LOCAL CORRUPTION

Vecinos, an Austin initiative supporting the Contadora process and public education on Central America, and the LBJ School of Public Affairs will sponsor a conference on the subject of "U.S. Foreign Policy and Local Corruption," **March 14**, LBJ School's Bass Lecture Hall, Austin, to explore the effect corrupt handling of U.S. aid money can have on the implementation of U.S. foreign policy. Speakers will include Chris Hedges, *Dallas Morning News*, Rep. Jim Leach, R-Iowa, Henry Tuason, Philippine

OBSERVANCES

March 8, 1986 — International Women's Day.

March 12, 1947 — Truman Doctrine of anticommunist aid to Greece and Turkey ushered in Cold War era.

March 16, 1827 — The first black newspaper in the U.S., *Freedom's Journal*, was published.

March 20, 1896 — U.S. Marines invaded Nicaragua.

March 25, 1918 — Gov. William Hobby signed the bill giving Texas women the vote at primary elections and in nominating conventions. 300,000 women registered to vote in the next gubernatorial primary, helping defeat Hobby's opponent, Jim Ferguson.

businessman, Leonel Gomez, former government official from El Salvador, and Col. Lyman Duryea, professor, U.S. Army War College. Call (512) 467-7527 to register; \$15 registration fee; students with ID, free; sponsors, \$50.

TEXAS LITHOGRAPHS EXHIBIT

"Texas Lithographs," an exhibition of 68 prints, examines the visual image of Texas in the nineteenth century as a frontier, a nation, and a state. Included are works dating from the first lithograph of Texas, a picture of a settlement of Napoleonic exiles at the mouth of the Trinity River near present-day Liberty) printed in Paris in 1818, to a chromolithograph of the 1900 hurricane in Galveston. Exhibit opens **March 14**, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth; call (817) 738-1933 for details.

INNER CITY OUTINGS

Inner City Outings is a community outreach program of the Sierra Club designed to provide wilderness activities to individuals (including those with physical and mental handicaps, the elderly, and victims of domestic violence) who would not otherwise be able to participate in such activities. Outings include McKinney Falls State Park, Barton Creek Greenbelt, and the National Wildflower Research Center. Call Diane Brewer (512) 335-0549 for information about outings scheduled for **March 16**, **April 20**, and **May 4**, generally 1:00-4:30 p.m.

NUTRITION VS. STRESS: WHO'S WINNING?

The Women's Counseling and Resource Center, Austin, formerly Womenspace, will sponsor a workshop on learning how nutrition affects you physically, emotionally and mentally; **March 24** and **31**, 6-8 p.m., 2330 Guadalupe above Hastings Records. For more information, call (512) 472-3053.

TUNE IN

Paper Tiger Television, in association with the Boston Film and Video Foundation, is producing an 8-week series that will air on public access channels in **mid-April** across the country. Each hour-long show will be a collage of material from many public access producers on topics such as racism, sexism, labor, nuclear weapons, farming, youth, and gay rights. ACTV Austin, one of the biggest public access systems in the U.S., will be represented in the programming. Call (512) 478-8600 to find out what it's all about.

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A Soldier's Life

By Louis Dubose

"Communists are liars, stealers, cheaters, and murderers. When are we going to figure this out around here?"

—U.S. Representative Richard Armev from the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives

"If I have to be something I'll be a Liberal, because the conservatives are tricky."

—Col. Aureliano Buendía in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

EDEN PASTORA is a quietly handsome man. In June, under the subdued lighting of the House chamber he looked particularly good. He's not as tall as news photos suggest, wears a conservative blue suit and gold-rimmed glasses; there's more grey in his hair than I'd expected. And something of a blown-dry look. All in all, a pretty good presentation.

Since August of 1978, when he led some two dozen armed Sandinistas into Anastasio Somoza's National Assembly — which he held hostage until Somoza agreed to the release of 60 prisoners and payment of a ransom of \$500,000 — Pastora had become something of a mythical Marquezian *caudillo*. Wounded by a bomb in the Costa Rican jungle, lost in a helicopter crash in Honduras, sighted in Panama, rumored to be fighting on every front, he is resilient. Part of his personal apocrypha, I'm told by a Mexican physician with Nicaraguan connections, is that *Comandante Cero* is the father of twenty-three illegitimate sons.

Pastora's past did not go unnoticed on the House floor. But the focus of this day's debate was Pastora's presence, and future. Lobbyist Zero was in Washington as a guest of Denton Republican, Richard "Dick" Armev. Sitting in the section of the gallery reserved for foreign visitors — where I briefly spoke with him — Pastora was an accessory to debate on the floor. Something like the photo of a gun-toting

liberation theologian that served as a visual aid for some rhetorically (and sartorially) flamboyant representative from Illinois.

The result of this most unlikely political marriage — the conservative economics professor turned legislator and the socialist military *commandante* turned lobbyist — was of course last June's appropriation of \$27 million in humanitarian aid for the *contras*. Speaking (for us) to one of the folks from up north, Congressman Armev offered more than our money:

"I would like to remind the people of this body that I'm from Texas. As I mentioned to one of the folks from up north the other day, one of the things that we are aware of is, if the Communists from South America are going to come through Texas to get to Ohio, we will do the best that we can to stop them down here, but I think you ought to give us a little help."

Our boys remain at home, safe from the daily waste of life in Central American jungles.

As of this particular writer's deadline, our border and our sesquicentennial appear safe. But we're already reminded that the future requires sacrifice. We are, I assume, about to stand ready for one more year by committing some \$100 million to the contra effort to topple the government of Nicaragua. One hundred million dollars, if I read my *New York Times* correctly, is almost half the entire U.S. aid package to the Philippines for the fiscal year of 1987. "You don't have to be a Sandinista, but you have to accept reality," a woman in a park in Managua told me. "Your country is making a war against mine." That was, however, last summer's modest \$27 million war.

IN MANAGUA, signs of the war abound. There are frequent military funerals, a large number of adolescent amputees, crowds milling outside the Davila Boloños military hospital.

In Washington, there was little mention of the loss of Nicaraguan life and

limb. Again and again, the spectre of "our boys" or "the marines" dying in the jungles of Central America. Representative Barbara Kennelly, D-Conn., observed that June 12 — the date of this particular debate — was her only son's 16th birthday. "I hope," she said, "that there will be no further connection down the road." I recalled what I was told by Don Samuel Ruíz, the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Mexican Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, on the Guatemalan border: "Americans aren't going to change their government's policy in Central America unless American soldiers are dying here. It's a very egotistical position, but what changed American opinion on Vietnam?"

Edén Pastora will not come back for more money. He is too much discredited. But there will be others, a Cruz, a Chamorro, a Fagoth. There is, in Central America, a sufficient admixture of *caudillismo* and chronic unemployment to provide this Congress with surrogates to fight until all governments crumble. So our boys remain at home, safe from the daily waste of life in Central American jungles. And I side-step the debate that is being waged in these pages by offering that one doesn't have to embrace the Sandinistas to abhor Ronald Reagan's contra war.

In Managua, I sat and talked with a young Nicaraguan soldier home to visit his wife and six-day-old son.

"Take your hat off, you'll frighten him," the young wife said. And, suddenly, I was reminded of a scene from the Mexican novel *Los de abajo*. Demetrio Macías, a Mexican soldier, after two years fighting has returned to his home near Juchipila. His wife, sobbing, embraces him and pleads the futility and cruelty of war. When he moves to embrace his child, to hold him in his own arms, the child screams and hides his face in the mother's skirt.

Here is a scene that Mariano Azuela lifted directly from the pages of the *Iliad*. Hector, for a while, is safe within the walls of King Priam's city. Andromache pleads the futility of war. When Hector leans forward to pick up his son, the child, terrified by the plumes, helmet, and armor, screams and presses his face against his mother's breast.

We know the fact of Azuela's Demetrio Macías and of Homer's Hector. But I have wondered, now and again, what became of that young Nicaraguan soldier, his wife, and his infant son. □

Louis Dubose is a regular contributor to the Observer.

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