

requiring a large cut in its unproductive civil service or massive devaluation, while the banana islands will be in deep trouble when the European Community declines their (presently subsidized) fruit for cheaper and better substitutes out of Costa Rica. I have flown over the large Costa Rican banana plantations and watched the spraying of the crop; there can be no question as to whose is superior. Meanwhile, Puerto Rican wages are four times those in Mexico, and the country remains an agreeable place in which to live, indeed to thrive, when compared with its neighbors. Spanish Harlem loses its attraction, even as a staging-point for immigrants, particularly when the same American welfare benefits can be obtained on the island itself. It is well-known that only one percent of Puerto Rico's population voted for independence.

Apart from spouting the customary Castroite rhetoric, this element has argued that the island's success is due to a section of the U. S. tax code known as 936, which offered incentives in the form of tax credits to U. S. companies locating on the island, especially in electronics, pharmaceuticals, and the like. Sure it did. Why? Because 936 companies identified a skilled and diligent work force before sinking their money into this "poorhouse of the Caribbean," a once joke-country that is now the Singapore of the region. Puerto Rico's GNP has soared from \$3.7 billion in 1950 to more than \$20 billion today.

Of course, the average vacationer will care little for statistics, heading for Condado's fleshy beaches and the mile-long resorts built along them. Such are perhaps a trifle depressingly reminiscent of Miami Beach or Fort Lauderdale. Vast marshmallow skyscrapers run into each other like mammoth dice. Still, they supply the world's weary, and their young, with the backdrop they want, and one cannot say them nay. Plus it is easy to close eyes and ears to the raucous rock music and overfed bodies grilling under the pitiless sun and hie on past to the splendid Morro fortress, nemesis of Drake, where a million-dollar restorative project has preserved the last of the 18th century—churches, belfries, cobbled streets—in the erstwhile capital.

This section of San Juan has great charm, with its wrought-iron miradors and gingerbread balconies, which are presided over by potted plants and wary cats. I stayed at the gracious El Con-

vento Hotel, a converted convent beside the cathedral and overlooking a leafy square. This is no mere hostelry; the installation has preserved all the original decorative elements (stained-glass windows, chandeliers, rustic tiles, and goatskin lamps) and was carried out entirely by indigenous architects respectful of the continuity of the site's religious past.

This old center may be small but it is larger than similar architectural relics of its kind in South America, all succumbing to the deprivations of high-rise office buildings; Salvador da Bahia in Brazil is a case in point. But if the renovations of Old San Juan have been accomplished with taste under the auspices of the island's Institute of Culture, the folkloric artifacts sold in the luxury stores crowding these cobbled streets—acres of gold jewelry on offer here—lack in comparison with the architecture. The authenticity of the latter is conspicuously degraded by the crudity of dolls, figurines, plates, bowls, and general gimcrackery of a vulgarity that makes sad contrast with the lingering tradition of ceramic tiles, wooden stairway risers, and courtyard gardens.

In this respect I fear that tourism, even high tourism, has a deadening effect; art has to be made out of affection or fun, not simply to satisfy what are conceived to be the desires of a tourist market. Time and again I have returned to sources of charming folkloric art in South America only to find them vanished or degraded.

Finally, it remains to be seen what route Puerto Rico and its new governor will take in the coming months. Will the country be content to keep its current commonwealth status or will it decide to become another state? The former relationship confers on its citizenry virtually all the benefits of full American citizenship, but educated opinion on the island seems resigned to a symbolic vote for statehood. In this case Puerto Rico would have more representatives in Congress than the whole of New York State, a sobering consideration (apart from that of taxation). For it is unlikely that such servants of the public would read this Hispanic success story of the past half-century for what it says between the lines: namely, that a people who are not treated as second-class citizens, or coddled by affirmative actions and condescended to by Uncle Sam's subsidies as victims perpetually

reminded of past injustices, can do very well on their own, thank you.

Geoffrey Wagner, author of some 30 suspense fictions, lives in retirement in Grenada.

Letter From Utah

by William Grigg

The Execution of St. William



Through the mysterious alchemy of "social justice," criminals become martyr-saints. Habitual criminal Rodney King is now spoken of in the same pious tone once reserved for icons like plagiarist/philanderer Martin Luther King, Jr. William Andrews, who was executed last year by the state of Utah for his role in the 1974 torture-slayings of three people, has now joined the leftist pantheon.

Nineteen years ago, William Andrews and Pierre Dale Selby were airmen stationed at the Hill Air Force Base near Ogden, Utah. Selby had a reputation for violence; Andrews' military record depicts him as a compulsive troublemaker who was well on his way to a dishonorable discharge. One evening in 1974, Andrews and Selby broke into a hi-fi shop in Ogden. In the course of a four-hour robbery—inspired, in part, by the need to appease drug habits—Andrews and Selby tortured five people, three of whom died.

The burglars brought an arsenal that included two handguns and a supply of Drano. The handguns were to be used to conduct the robbery, but the Drano was to be used as a murder weapon. Andrews poured caustic cocktails that were forced down the throats of his victims. The victims' mouths were taped shut, apparently to prevent them from expelling the poison.

After administering the Drano Andrews left the hi-fi store, apparently to act as a lookout. While Andrews was gone, Selby raped one of the victims and kicked a ballpoint pen deep into the ear of another. Selby then shot the latter

in the head with Andrews' .38. He thus made an individual decision to accelerate the murder objective mutually agreed upon with Andrews. While two of the victims were saved, examinations later confirmed that all of them would have died from poisoning had they been left unattended.

Both Andrews and Selby were black. Accordingly, the all-white jury at the 1974 "Hi-Fi Murder" trial became an issue, as did the fact that prospective juror James Gillespie, Jr., a black man, was dismissed by the prosecutor in a peremptory challenge. But it was the *defense* that first sought to dismiss Mr. Gillespie, because he was a law enforcement officer (and thus considered prejudiced in favor of testimony from other law enforcement officers). When the judge refused to grant the defense's motion, the prosecution asked for Gillespie's dismissal in order to deny a possible basis for an appeal. Prior to Andrews' death, Gillespie publicly *supported* the sentence and insisted that the 1974 trial was untainted by racism. Ironically, it was Gillespie—who now works as director of field communications for the Utah Department of Corrections—who delivered the official announcement of Andrews' execution.

Selby was executed in 1987, provoking predictable protests from opponents of capital punishment. Many objected to the "racist" application of the death penalty: several white murderers in Utah are serving life sentences, rather than anticipating execution on death row. As Andrews' execution approached, the "social justice" industry began to protest that he was merely an accomplice to the lethal crime and thus not properly a murderer.

In the final weeks before Andrews' execution, his supporters depicted him as a quiet, modest young man who had been helplessly drawn into Selby's orbit. But both his military and prison records belie such a description. Andrews' role in the murders had been well-established at the trial; the procedural questions related to the trial had been examined in six separate appeals to the Supreme Court. Interviews with Selby and Andrews conducted by social workers had provided evidence that it was Andrews, not Selby, who took the initiative in planning the crime.

There was no reason to believe that Andrews had been "rehabilitated" during his 18-year tenancy on death row. His

personal record at the Utah state prison is replete with escape attempts, arson attempts, threats of sexual assault, and acts of physical assault. On one occasion, for example, Andrews somehow constructed a spear, which he threw at a prison guard.

In an execution-eve interview on local public television, Andrews complained that "I haven't had a chance to enjoy the more beautiful things in life. I've never seen the ocean, I've never seen the Grand Canyon. There are so many good people in the world I never got a chance to meet." (He met a few in the hi-fi store one evening, with fatal consequences for them.) He uttered not one syllable of remorse for his acts nor regret toward the surviving victims.

The contention that Utah's death penalty is racist in application is difficult to sustain. Of the 47 murderers executed by the state of Utah before Andrews, 41 were white; the remainder of the total was divided evenly among blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians. This allotment is representative of the state's racial composition.

Nevertheless, career leftists and race-baiters besieged the state. Amnesty International orchestrated an international letter-writing campaign on Andrews' behalf; letters from around the globe were delivered to Utah Governor Norman Bangertter and published in Utah papers. Television actor Mike Farrell (B. J. Hunnicutt of *M*A*S*H*) was brought to the state in an attempt to win clemency from the governor. In a speech to Andrews supporters, black activist Ron Hampton declared, "We have reason to believe Utah can be classified among the states in the Bible Belt that live and practice racism." (Hampton's logic is as reliable as his geography.) The Utah chapter of the NAACP announced that "the color of justice in Utah is white" and conducted a nightly vigil outside the governor's mansion. Two other black organizations filed an appeal before Third District Judge Anne Stirba. Attorney Victor Gordon, who represented the organizations, announced that "this execution signals the end to the hopes that racism and discrimination will end, and will signify . . . the arrival of repression, and will build the foundation for Apartheid in Utah." In keeping with the South Africa parallel, Desmond Tutu called the Utah NAACP to express support for Andrews.

In a final testament delivered hours

before his July 30 execution, Andrews thanked his supporters for their efforts and urged them to "continue the fight for social justice after I'm gone." He also expressed the hope that "maybe a lot of white people will learn that black people have the same emotions, same loves, and same hates as they do."

Black "leaders" in Utah saw nothing amiss in designating Andrews a symbol of the "black community." But at a memorial service Steven Hawkins of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund elevated Andrews beyond the status of martyr: he compared him to Jesus Christ, insisting that Andrews was "innocent and unjustly accused . . . a man whose life has changed us all and made the world a better place. . . . He has made the ultimate contribution to our struggle."

The Utah NAACP has taken strength from Andrews' "sacrifice." It has even organized a "William Andrews Committee for Equal Justice," a group that intends to tabulate incidents of individual and "institutional" racism, monitor court proceedings, and "educate Utahans about racism." The William Andrews Committee will be assisted in this effort by the Utah Martin Luther King Human Rights Commission, which was established by Republican Governor Norman Bangertter's executive order in August 1991. One state legislator who serves on the commission has said that informal contacts between the two groups had been made before Andrews' execution.

The state Human Rights Commission has since beatified another criminal. Last August, 18-year-old Stevie Manzanares was shot while attempting robbery. Because Manzanares is Hispanic, many elements of Utah's "social justice" industry—including the Socialist Workers' Party and members of the Human Rights Commission—have classified the shooting a racial incident. A coalition of career malcontents organized a protest march on Manzanares' behalf in Salt Lake City last August 29. Among the speakers at the protest was Jeanette Williams, a vice-president of the Utah NAACP and a member of the William Andrews Committee. She added Manzanares' name to the martyrs' roster: "Every time they hear Stevie's name, they'll know we are fighting the injustices here in the state of Utah."

The Human Rights Commission has few misgivings about Manzanares' worthiness as a hero. When I mentioned

the young man's attempted robbery to a legislator who serves on the commission, I was told, "If he [Manzanares] was an Anglo, the police wouldn't have pulled their guns so quickly." The Human Rights Commission is obviously too busy auditing racial attitudes to take notice of the human rights abuses wrought by thieves and murderers.

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Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Capture the Flag, Part I



In an earlier letter I cheered my buddy Chris's suggestion that announcements at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics be given in both Southern and Yankee English but pointed out that on preliminary form Atlanta's civic leaders are unlikely to cotton to the idea. I didn't mention another of Chris's proposals, one they're guaranteed to like even less: he wants to fly the Stars and Bars at the Games. My first impulse is to unleash a rebel yell for that proposition, too, but let's think about it a bit before we write Maynard Jackson.

Chris observes that the Catalans got to fly their flag in Barcelona, and personally I like the idea of the South as a sort of American Catalonia. But we have a problem that the Catalans don't. Unlike their historic symbols, which are signs of national unity, ours are mostly the symbols of the Confederacy, which these days signify and inspire mostly discord.

Witness the fact that many of Georgia's and virtually all of Atlanta's political bigshots are now campaigning to end what the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* calls the "disgrace" of including the Confederate battle flag as part of the Georgia state flag. Far from wanting to fly the rebel flag at the Olympics, these folks want it completely out of sight before the television cameras come to the

City Too Busy to Hate and beam it out worldwide. The *Journal-Constitution's* editorial cartoonist even did a scurrilous little number juxtaposing the Nazi flag flying over the 1936 Olympics and the Southern Cross waving over the 1996 Games. (The cartoonist, a young man from Seattle, claims he got some death threats, but not nearly enough to suit me.)

All the arguments for and against changing have been aired at length in the Georgia press, and they even spilled over to the editorial page of *USA Today*, which gratuitously urged Georgia to rejoin the Union, then printed the predictable letters. Most of the pros and cons you can probably reconstruct for yourself, and I won't rehash them here. If you have trouble seeing the case for keeping things as they are, write a group called Northeast Georgians for the Flag and Southern Heritage and ask for a copy of their brochure (Box 2731, Athens, Georgia 30612—send them a buck or two to cover expenses). The anti-flag arguments are pretty obvious, I should think; we've heard them in a dozen other disputes.

One complication in the Georgia case, however, is that the present flag was adopted only in 1956—to symbolize resistance to desegregation, its opponents claim. Its defenders find in the record of the legislative deliberations no signs of that motive and a good many indications that the point was to honor the Confederacy in light of the upcoming Civil War centennial. Those who object to honoring the Confederacy, of course, don't see that as an improvement.

Another factor that gives the Georgia dispute a special twist is the nature of Atlanta. The Peach State's capital is the kind of place where you get off an airplane and confront a sign that says "Welcome to Atlanta: A World-Class, Major-League City." (I mean, really: try substituting London or Tokyo or even Los Angeles or Budapest in that line to see how pitiful it is.) When Atlanta's Convention and Visitors Bureau recently hired McCann-Erikson to devise a slogan for the place, the best the Mad. Ave. boys could come up with was the insipid "Atlanta: Hometown to the World." (My buddy Martin did better off the top of his head with "Atlanta: The South Stops Here.") Anyway, a town this insecure doesn't want to emphasize its true, provincial identity or

the ambiguity of its history.

Nevertheless, it seems that most white Georgians don't share their betters' distaste for the flag of their ancestors. A Mason-Dixon poll last July, for instance, showed that 66 percent of all white Georgians—even 61 percent of all white Atlantans—wanted to keep the present flag and that only 29 percent wanted to scrap it. Not even many black Georgians dislike it, if we can believe the polls: fully 59 percent of them want to retain the current flag. Given this, and the fact that Atlanta still doesn't muster a majority in the Georgia legislature, the political handicappers I've talked to predict that the flag will be retained. But one Atlanta pol told me at supper one night that he and his friends will simply not fly the state flag, if they can't get it changed back to what it was before 1956. (He didn't know, of course, and apparently hardly anyone else does either, that the old Georgia flag is actually the Stars and Bars, the Confederate national flag proper, with the state seal—and motto, "Wisdom, justice, moderation"—substituted for the stars. It was adopted in 1879 with the restoration of home rule after Reconstruction.)

Anyway, when these conflicts arise, my first reaction—and surely that of many sensible people—is always to wonder whether our politicians and journalists don't have something better to do. After all, it's not as if Alabama and Georgia and North Carolina don't have some real problems, even a few real problems of race relations. I feel like "Soapy Sam" Wilberforce, 19th-century bishop of Oxford, confronted with a bitter controversy over whether priests could wear chasubles. "What a plague it is," His Lordship complained, "that people cannot have common sense as well as earnestness."

But like the chasuble question, this is important, if not in itself, at least in the matter of what it stands for. The Confederate flag is as offensive to some of our fellow citizens as Romish vestments were to some of Wilberforce's, and in many of the same ways. Like their Victorian counterparts, our latter-day Roundheads see scraps of colored cloth as representing doctrines they find repugnant, doctrines once thought to have been extirpated for all time. Those of a more Whiggish disposition—like Atlanta's leaders—see the flag as an emblem of opposition to progress and