

groups before being recruited to run for the seat of retiring Republican Hank Brown. Now he is in a tight race with Republican Congressman Wayne Allard. In Virginia, the \$300 million former state Democratic chairman Mark Warner made from his computer business bought him the right to run against his homonym, GOP Senator John Warner; both are fiscal conservatives but Mark is slightly more liberal than John on social issues. South Carolina Democrat, Elliot Close is the heir to a textile fortune and a real estate developer whose upper class origins are a handicap against the well-honed racism of Dixie's Noah, Strom Thurmond. Harvey Gantt, the black Democrat opposing North Carolina's Jesse Helms, is also a centrist. Gantt is a millionaire who made his money through radio station licenses secured from the Federal Communications Commission. He also is an extremely loyal supporter of the tobacco industry.

To these flush Senatorial candidates, we can add New Hampshire's Dick Swett. As a Democratic Congressman he voted frequently with the conservative Blue Dog Caucus. Swett leads unpopular GOP Senator Bob Smith in the polls, thanks largely to the campaign war chest raised for him by his father-in-law, California Congressman Tom Lantos, from AIPAC's Likudnik fatcats.

The National Committee for an Effective Congress is the country's leading liberal PAC, providing millions of dollars in technical assistance and cash to candidates in swing districts. Its ratings are used by the AFL-CIO to target labor support. Ask the Committee's director, Russ Hemenway, what he thinks of the current crop of Senate (and House) candidates, and he lights up like a circus carousel: "The whole Democratic Party is conservative — for a balanced budget, smaller government, an end to welfare, more for defense. They don't know how to come up with a new agenda, but refuse to embrace the old one. None are willing to address the greatest threat to democracy, the enormous disparity in wealth."

Bob Kerrey, incidentally, is a big recipient of Hollywood money. Though he no longer squires actress Debra Winger, Tinseltown's collective memory somehow has him pegged as their boy. ■

Narco-Killer at Pentagon School

The Pentagon perennially insists that the US Army's School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia, seeks to instill in its Latin American cadets the highest regard for human rights and the laws of war. This is mysterious since the School's graduates include some of the region's most rabid killers, such as Salvadoran death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson and Guatemalan Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez, the man recently implicated in the murder of several Americans.

A Colombian general, wanted for participation in a massacre in his native land, is currently teaching at a Pentagon school in Washington.

Things became a bit clearer in mid-September when it was revealed that manuals used at the school until at least the early-1990s suggested that counterintelligence agents should make use of tactics such as "fear, payment of bounties for enemy dead, beatings, false imprisonment, executions and the use of truth serum". Another manual suggested that agents could coerce cooperation by "giv[ing] a beating" to a reluctant source or "causing the arrest of the [source's] parents." A Pentagon spokesman reassuringly told reporters that the use of such instructive material "evaded the established system of doctrinal controls" and that "the problem ... has been properly reported and fixed".

Meanwhile, we have learned that one distinguished graduate of the School of the Americas, retired Colombian General Farouk Yanine Diaz (class of 1969), is currently wanted in his native land for his participation in several massacres. Despite this, Yanine is now a staff professor at the School of the America's sister

institution, the Inter-American Defense College in Washington.

Yanine is a former division commander with a long history of criminal involvement with narco-paramilitary groups accused of horrible crimes in the areas under his command. He has been linked to the assassination of an opposition mayor in 1987 and the massacre of 20 banana workers in 1988.

The general also is suspected of involvement in a 1987 massacre of 19 people who disappeared without a trace in an area close to Yanine's headquarters. That case has long been a mystery but new testimony has implicated the general along with members of a paramilitary group funded by the Medellin Cartel.

Bogota's chief prosecutor Alfonso Valdivieso issued a warrant for Yanine's arrest on July 25. A spokesman for the Inter-American College, General John C. Thompson, claimed a College task force was "looking into the matter" while awaiting a response from the Colombian Government to a request for confirmation of the charges. As we go to press, General Yanine retains his position on the faculty and the Colombian embassy has received no official, written request from the College administration. The College refused to say what classes General Yanine currently teaches.

Also undermining the Pentagon's claim of reverence for human rights is a new documentary, "Inside the School of Assassins". A School of the Americas graduate interviewed for the film described classes held in Panama for which homeless people were plucked from the streets to serve as human guinea pigs. Blindfolded and stripped, the victims were subjected to physical and psychological torture techniques in classes supervised by a US Army medical doctor. Students were taught how to find nerve endings, apply maximum pain with minimum risk of death, calculate how much the heart could tolerate before stopping and how and when to revive victims to prevent premature death. ■

Dees v. CounterPunch

Stung by our exposé of its meretricious fundraising and poor record in the May 15 **CounterPunch**, the Southern Poverty Law Center has issued a 50-page plus "rebuttal" of our article. The packet is being sent to the many people who have written to the Center vowing that after reading our disclosures they will never again donate money to Morris Dees' outfit.

The Center denies that it selects cases on the basis of fundraising potential. For example, Dees pulled out of a project that assisted death penalty prisoners because his partner, Millard Farmer, wasn't "living up to his obligations", not because the project wasn't profitable, as we charged. The Center admits that it paid Farmer \$50,000 to settle litigation over its withdrawal from the project but calls this a victory "because Millard had wanted much more". Farmer, like **CounterPunch**, was amused by the Center's cry of victory in a case in which it shelled out \$50,000 to avoid a trial. He reasserted that Dees had dumped the death row project "for the pure and simple reason that we weren't making money".

The Center also disputes our charges concerning racism and paternalism at its offices, though these were based on the accounts of black employees who previously worked there. No African-American has ever held a top level management position at the Center and the organization currently has only one black lawyer on its five-member legal staff. Not too impressive for a group that calls itself a civil rights organization.

The Center's rebuttal defends Dees for supporting Ed Carnes for a federal judgeship a few years back, saying that he believed Carnes was "a person of integrity whose record was being distorted". As we noted in our original report, Carnes previously was an assistant attorney general in Alabama and is a fervent supporters of the death penalty.

In Alabama, Carnes represented the state at the post-conviction stage in arguing against new trials for:

- Horace Dunkins, an African-American whose lawyer failed to tell the jury that he was mentally retarded. Dunkins was executed in 1989.
- Arthur Lee Jones, whose lawyer failed to give an opening statement,

offer any evidence about his life or give a closing argument in the penalty phase of the trial. Jones was executed in 1986.

- Patricia Ann Thomas Jackson, a black woman sentenced to death by an all-white jury after the prosecutor used 12 of his preemptory strikes to eliminate all blacks called for jury service in her case.

The Center chastises us for criticizing Democratic Senators Ted Kennedy, Paul Simon and Joseph Biden for not doing enough to block Carnes, saying that all three had voted against his confirmation and had led a filibuster against it. But none of these three senators turned up at the crucial confirmation hearings on Carnes nomination, thereby ensuring that he was questioned by a purely friendly jury. That made the process of stopping Carnes' appointment impossible.

We did err in stating that Carnes had met with GOP Senators Strom Thurmond and Orrin Hatch in helping draw up a section of the Clinton administration's anti-terrorism bill (based on a misunderstanding during an interview). But Carnes was perhaps the chief supporter and intellectual author of a key provision in the bill that will speed up executions by limiting the ability of federal courts to review state convictions. His testimony on behalf of the provision was arranged with the help of the GOP senators.

We said the Center filed only 12 lawsuits between October 1989 and December 1994, a period during which it had raised some \$50 million. The Center did not dispute that figure but said that the number of cases filed in any time period is not a good indicator of "how busy lawyers may be". Perhaps, but it's still hard to see how a group such as Stephen Bright's Southern Center for Human Rights currently handles 50 death penalty cases and a score of jailhouse conditions cases with an annual \$600,000 budget while the Center does so little with a legal budget of \$1.6 million.

The Center also complains that we relied on another journalist's account in stating that Dees' group was working on only a handful of cases last year when in fact its case load was 24. Since the Center admits it filed a total of 12 lawsuits be-

tween 1989 and 1994, it's very hard to believe that it was tied up with twice that number during 1995 alone. In any case, we asked Dees' office to tell us how many cases the Center was handling and were told by Judy Bruno that no number could be provided.

In its statement to the IRS in 1994, the last that is available, the Center lists its prime mission as "providing legal services for victims of civil rights injustice". But out of total revenues for that year of \$17,188,114, the Center spent only \$1.6 million for said purpose. The rest of its "program" expenses — another \$7.1 million — was spent on educational purposes, including its "Teaching Tolerance" project. Even this figure is suspect because the Center will not disclose detailed accounting of its expenditures and in the past has included part of its fundraising costs as educational on the grounds that its dramatic appeals for money include informative material. years."

We have addressed here the most germane issues raised by the Center's rambling and tendentious response to our story. If readers have further questions about Dees' 50-page document please drop us a line and we'll be happy to reply. ■

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