

BERSERK
GEN. CLARK
KILLS MUSEUM PIECE

Tells the Facts and Names the Names

CounterPunch

\$2.50

OCTOBER 1-15, 1999

Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair

VOL. 6, NO. 17

■ IN THIS ISSUE

THE TRUTH FROM DWAYNE ANDREAS

- "The Food Business Is Far and Away the Most Important Business in the World"
- Who Owns What We Eat?
- Who Pays the Price?

MEET GORE'S TOP MAN: TONY COELHO

- There's Nothing He Doesn't Already Know About Corpses

THE BITTER SUNSET OF WESLEY CLARK

- Mad Dog NATO Supremo Goes Down In Blaze of Lies

OUR LITTLE SECRETS

- Bribing Boris Yeltsin
- Kissinger on Heroin!
- Horman's Killers
- More on Justus Weiner

Food Central

The world's two largest grain companies are now one. The wave of mergers that has changed the face of the American economy in Clinton time is also engulfing the food industry. On July 9, 1999 Cargill Inc., the nation's largest privately held company, won approval from the Clinton administration to acquire the grain-trading operations of its primary rival, Continental Grain Inc. The approval came over the objections of attorney general offices from farm states, the Farmers Union, consumer and green groups, which charged that the union will create a near monopoly in the grain business. Combined, the two companies will control 94 per cent of the soybean and 53 per cent of the corn market. How can farmers get a fair price under these circumstances? Grain is not the only product where concentration is extreme. In the Midwest four companies control more than 40 per cent of the processing of each of the major farm commodities, lamb, beef, pork and chicken.

Approval of the Cargill-Continental merger does come with a few gossamer-like strings attached. Joel Klein, assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's antitrust division, said the full proposed acquisition would have eliminated an important competitor for the purchase of crops from U.S. farmers and other suppliers. Among the conditions of the acquisition, Cargill is:

- prohibited from acquiring an elevator in Missouri;
- required to enter a "throughput agreement" to make one-third of the capacity at its Havana, Ill., elevator available to an independent grain company;
- prohibited from acquiring a rail terminal facility at Salinas, Kansas;
- required to divest itself of four port elevators in Seattle, Texas, California and Chicago; of three river elevators in Illi-

nois and one in Missouri; of one rail terminal in Ohio.

But these are minimal demands and Klein himself boasted at a field hearing on the farm crisis in Montana this summer that more consolidation in the food industry might be needed "in order to make American agriculture more competitive internationally". Klein naturally passed over the fact that NAFTA, GATT and other international treaties pressed by the big agribusiness firms and Clinton and Gore have done much to undermine the fragile balance sheets of independent farmers in the United States.

Take a look at the situation in the grain/soybean region in the Upper Midwest: western Minnesota, eastern North Dakota and eastern South Dakota. In this region, Continental Grain accounts for 50 percent of all soybean purchases and 30 percent of all corn purchases. Meanwhile, in the same region, Cargill accounts for 44 percent of all soybean purchases and 23 percent of all corn purchases. As noted above, combined they will control 94 percent of the soybean and 53 percent of the corn market.

According to the industry publication GrainNet, Cargill's swallowing of Continental Grain means that Cargill will now control more than 40 percent of all US corn exports, a third of all soybean exports and at least 20 percent of wheat exports. Cargill isn't done yet. Cargill executives say they want the corporation to continue doubling in size every five years. According to the Wall Street Journal, the purchase price of Continental Grain was only \$1 billion. That means the company probably has another billion or so a year in profits to spend buying out other interests. Cargill could buy two operations the size of Continental's global grain operation with one year's earnings. That's leverage.

(Food Central, continued on page 7)

Our Little Secrets

THE KILLERS OF CHARLES HORMAN

We remember as if it were yesterday the hysterical reception awarded Costa Gavras's 1982 film *Missing*, about the abduction and murder of freelance American journalist Charles Horman by Chilean security forces in the wake of the 1973 military coup against Allende. The movie and its star, Jack Lemmon, were subjected to poisonous abuse by the right, most notably the *Wall Street Journal*, for daring to suggest that the US embassy in Santiago might have been complicit in his death. Nathaniel Davis, ambassador at the time, was vitriolic in his indignation.

But on October 8, a few hours after a British magistrate ruled Pinochet could be extradited to Spain to stand trial on charges of torture and human rights offenses, an incriminating document surfaced amid the release by the US government of 1,100 records pertaining to the 1973 coup. This two-page document, written on August 25, 1976, by three officials in the State Department's office of Chilean affairs, states that "US intelligence may have played an unfortunate part in Horman's death". At best, the document — as described in an AP report of it — goes on, "the US intelligence community's role in Horman's death "was limited to providing or confirming

information that helped motivate his murder by the government of Chile. At worst, US intelligence was aware the government of Chile saw Horman in a rather serious light and US officials did nothing to discourage the logical outcome of the government of Chile's paranoia." CounterPunch finds the State Department's best and worst interpretations baffling, with its best being (from the moral vantage point of any normal person) substantively worse, in that it suggests that US intelligence actually provided info (presumably intimations that Horman was a dangerous subversive) that prompted his murder.

Charles Horman's father Ed has always believed that the US government never charged the Pinochet regime with Horman's killing because any investigation would disclose its own sponsorship.

ANOTHER NIXON TAPE

October 5 saw another freshet of Nixoniana released by the National Archives, in the form of 445 tapes covering a seven-month period in 1971. Amid the usual foul-mouthed colloquies between Nixon and his senior staff came this observation on the war in Vietnam, in May 1971, from Henry Kissinger: "I suppose with so many of the lower-level people there and so many negroes, I'd be interested to see a break-down of the statistics of how many of those, percent, take heroin, how many percent of those are negroes. I bet it would show an enormously large number." Nixon's reply was unintelligible, but no doubt he nodded vigorous agreement. The late H.R. Haldeman recorded in a diary entry for 1969 that in the course of a conversation with Nixon on strategy for the war on drugs Nixon "emphasized that you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to." The "key" turned out to be the 100-to-1 disproportion in sentencing for crack cocaine as opposed to powder cocaine offenses. The key being assembled jointly in 1986 by the Reagan White House and the House of Representatives at that time led by Democrat Tip O'Neill.

NEM. CON. ON THE BOMB

Here at CounterPunch we're great fans of *The Catholic Worker*. There's always

wonderful stuff in it and the annual sub (25 cents for seven issues) is scarcely exacting. The August-September issue carried a fascinating article by Harvey Fireside, describing how, after being demobbed in 1957 after two years in the army, he still felt he had not paid his debt to a country that had saved his life in 1940, when he was a refugee from Hitler's Vienna. So he answered a recruiting ad and got a job at the Atomic Energy Commission:

"On our last day of training, we were posted to regular positions. My illusions were shattered. There was no 'Atoms for Peace' in my future. I was going to the Secretariat, which had a sinister Stalinist ring to it...[My boss] told me that I would join the Meetings Branch. In effect, I

The US sponsors of Horman's death should stand trial just like Pinochet.

would become one of the glorified secretaries who took minutes at the weekly meetings of the five AEC commissioners. My cohort soon explained to me why we were needed. The chairman, a desk-bound admiral named Lewis Strauss, ran the agency with an iron hand. To placate congressional critics it had recently been decreed that AEC meetings would be conducted strictly by Roberts Rules of Order. Yet, I was totally confused when I sat in as an understudy at the next session of the five commissioners. Admiral Strauss had invited someone named General Starbird, a ramrod figure with four rows of ribbons on his chest, to present the case for augmenting the stockpile of H-bombs.

"Were there any questions? One of the other men around the table raised a cautionary quibble. Willard Libby, a chemist, responded to a nod from Admiral Strauss by saying there was nothing to worry about. End of discussion.

"How was this exchange going to appear in the official minutes? Jack, my mentor, showed me his draft: 'Following a report by the chairman of the Military Applications Branch, Commissioner Libby moved that the recommendations be adopted. After being debated, a motion to that effect was seconded by Commissioner Vance and passed unanimously.' That text was formally adopted the following week.

Editors
ALEXANDER COCKBURN
JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

Design
DEBORAH THOMAS

Counselor
BEN SONNENBERG

Published twice monthly except
August, 22 issues a year:
\$40 individuals,
\$100 institutions,
\$30 student/low-income
CounterPunch.
All rights reserved.
CounterPunch
3220 N. St., NW, PMB 346
Washington, DC, 20007-2829
1-800-840-3683 (phone)
1-800-967-3620 (fax)
www.counterpunch.org