

ganized by dozens of citizens in a local church, opened with a 24-hour hot meal program, shelter for flood victims, medical assistance, and distribution of clothes, groceries and cleaning supplies. But it soon ran into difficulties: the state police refused to recognize the legitimacy of the TVRC and blocked its allocations for a time.

The county was not declared a federal disaster area for several days after the flood, and it was nearly a week later that the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration opened its first "one-stop" center. Staffed by workers hastily drafted for the job and insufficiently trained in the complexities of the available federal relief programs, it offered a kind of hit-or-miss help and left many questions unanswered.

#### Housing the immediate need.

For residents trying to make some sense out of the area's new disaster status, however, the focus quickly became housing.

It was clear from the start that HUD's pre-planned disaster program—developing emergency and then temporary group trailer sites—was not tailored to fit the topography, the land ownership pattern, or the needs of the people.

Flood victims feared "another Buffalo Creek," remembering the disastrous process of poor planning and broken promises that followed the 1972 flood in nearby Logan County. Relief efforts after that flood crowded victims willy nilly into trailer parks, separating them from their neighbors. Five years later, some are still in trailers.

HUD should change its policies, Mingo County citizens argued, to allow emergency campers or temporary mobile homes to be placed on homeowners' sites while houses were being repaired or rebuilt.

HUD officials agreed to a policy change—but failed to implement it in the month after the flood. Instead, residents were placed at three emergency camper parks—one at a state campground in an isolated part of the county miles away from their homes.

Even that process took weeks. By the end of April only 48 families out of an estimated 1,800 who needed housing were in campers. Others were living at schools, with family or friends, or in the cars in which they had fled the night of the flood. Announcement of a visit by HUD Secretary Patricia Harris and promises of speedy housing by U.S. Senators Robert C. Byrd and Jennings Randolph prompted a scramble to get more families into the 18-foot campers, and by May 3 there were more than 200 housed.

#### Many ineligible for help.

Meanwhile, two and a half miles of more spacious mobile homes lined a highway near Williamson, parked on the shoulder. The reason, said HUD, was not enough contractors to drive the units to areas where they were needed.

For flood victims faced with repairing or rebuilding, it was soon apparent that the maze of federal programs was not only insufficient, it left a number of low-income people indigible.

HUD's mini repair program would provide up to \$6,400 to make homes livable and restore water and sewage. But for a person whose home was damaged more extensively and whose income level was too low for a Small Business Administration rebuilding loan at 6.3 percent—there was little help. Neither the mini repair grant nor a special \$5,000 FDAA grant to replace furnishings could be used to offset the amount of the SBA loan. Farmers Home Administration, which has special programs for rural areas at lower interest rates, would not offer assistance because SBA was the designated loan program under FDAA.

Quirks in the programs further ired flood victims. Because of the season, HUD said grant money could not be used for furnace repair. But without furnaces, there was no way to dry out watersoaked homes.

The jumbled relief effort added to the burden of people trying to cope with the shock of losing their homes.

"If you could ever get these federal people and state people to give you a straight and honest answer—regardless of what

it is—then people might be able to plan a little bit," sighed Silvia Walker of Chat-taroy. She and her husband and son lost the home they finally managed to buy two years ago and had spent all their energies rebuilding.

"It wasn't much when we bought it—people thought we couldn't do a thing with it, it was that bad. But we've done a lot to it. You would really have to be in my shoes to know the depth of the feeling," she said.

Walker thinks her neighbors at the camper park on the Williamson ballfield are also in shock. "Some of these people that's in this camp I've known all my life, and I see a difference in them. Some of them are just like strangers, compared to what they're really like—just like a whole new person."

#### Got to get off flood plain.

While residents wrestle with new lives on a floodplain, the high, dry corporate land—78 percent of the county's total acreage—lies untouched. Permanent housing off the floodplain requires getting hold of some of that land. It could be done by state or county condemnation.

The vast majority of land in Mingo County, as in most mountain counties in the Appalachian coal fields, is owned by out-of-state corporations. In Mingo, total absentee-owned land is near 80 percent of the surface, with the four largest owners being Georgia-Pacific (20.8 percent), Island Creek Coal (16.8 percent), Cotiga Development (14.4 percent) and U.S. Steel (13.4 percent).

In the land where the corporation is king, it will not be an easy task. But it would be an important precedent in southern West Virginia, where a critical housing shortage—a need for 40,000 units in Mingo and surrounding counties—existed prior to the flood.

Tug Valley Recovery Center organizers were encouraged by the county's agreement to form a Public Housing Authority to which condemned land could be turned over, and by the county's recent move to condemn coal company property for a landfill during clean-up operations.

#### Shutting down the mines.

With increased emphasis on coal production as key to the nation's energy policy, citizens of Mingo County have a valuable weapon at hand.

They wielded it briefly when they organized a one-day work stoppage three weeks after the flood to draw attention to their demands for lower interest rates. They picketed area coal operations and idled close to 30,000 miners, as well as those Williamson businesses that had managed to re-open. Miners strongly supported the action.

That work stoppage also drew the support of much of the area's business community, which rallied around the notion of lowered interest rates. As the Tug Valley Recovery Center's activities became increasingly political—particularly in regard to strip mining—some of that support has fallen away. The local Chamber of Commerce, which initially supported the center has now attacked it. But center organizers are convinced that some of the smaller businesspersons—educated by their mud-covered floors—will remain sympathetic to their efforts.

Lee Stevens, born and raised in Matewan, saw televised accounts of the flood while he was living in Nashville. He rushed back home. "I couldn't believe it," he said. "The house I'd lived in wasn't even there, the house next to it wasn't there—everybody's house was gone."

He took his grandfather, an 87-year-old former UMWA organizer who lives near Matewan, to view the damage. "He got out of the car and looked around and he said, 'People haven't seen this kind of destruction—they've never seen anything like this around here.' He said, 'Coal brought these people to this area, and coal's taking them away.'"

"People's whole lives were washed down that river," added Stevens, "not just their homes. And nobody's gonna do a damn thing. As long as that coal rolls out of here, they're not gonna do anything."

Deborah Barker is a freelance reporter in West Virginia.

# Buffalo Creek set the pattern

ON FEBRUARY 26, 1972, in Logan County, West Virginia, a coal waste dam burst apart, unleashing a million tons of coal waste and 132 million gallons of water on the valley below. A 20-acre lake of coal sludge and water tore through Buffalo Creek's 17-mile valley, killing 125 people, injuring 1,100 more and leaving 4,000 people homeless in 16 communities. Property damage was estimated at over \$50 million.

Yale University sociologist Kai Erikson's book *Everything In Its Path* does a remarkable job describing the effects of this man-made catastrophe. Hired by the law firm of Arnold and Porter to document the emotional costs of the flood, Erikson had the opportunity for lengthy involvement with the survivors.

He lets people speak for themselves about "the human wreckage" and the destruction of community along Buffalo Creek. Many survivors continue to feel numbed: "I feel dead now. I have no energy. I set down and I feel numb."

Some describe the faces of death they carry in their daydreams and nightmares—"...an advance look at Hell"—while others are plagued with guilt for their own survival.

And there are the scarred children, whose fears have a lifetime to play themselves out: "My little girl, she wakes up every night and all you can do is sit and hold her, just hold her in your arms until she hushes screaming—not crying, screaming—"The water's going to get us, Mommy, the water's going to get us."

#### The destruction of community.

When tragedy and death hit people, it is assumed that "time heals the wounds." Research on disasters tends to confirm this. But on Buffalo Creek Erikson's reports that years later the scars remain.

The persistence of suffering reflects the uniqueness of the Buffalo Creek tragedy. The flood was more than a sudden blow to the residents. It also meant the permanent end of a way of life.

Erikson's greatest contribution is in showing that people are unable to heal themselves when their communities are destroyed.

It is also to Erikson's credit that he calls attention to the second disaster on Buffalo Creek, the replacement of communities with trailer parks that have come to resemble concentration camps.

These trailer camps, where many still live, were set up for emergency housing after the flood, but they actually made adjustment problems worse. People suddenly found themselves assigned to large camps where they did not know anyone. Relatives who had lived near each other for years were spread up and down the creek. Lifetime neighbors were miles apart.

Many people in these camps have been unable to re-establish close personal relationships with new neighbors. Even ties within families have been strained to a breaking point.

In Erikson's words, these trailer camps "served to stabilize one of the worst forms of disorganization resulting from the disaster by catching people in a moment of extreme dislocation and freezing them there in a kind of holding pattern."

In the words of a survivor, life in these

crowded camps "is like being all alone in the middle of a desert."

#### A third disaster...

Erikson's book makes a significant contribution to the study of the emotional and social effects of disasters. But as a study of the Appalachian people and culture, his book is undoubtedly a disaster. Erikson accepts a stereotyped view of life in the mountains before the coming of the coal industry. He adapts popular fictional accounts of Appalachia to explain a lifestyle unfamiliar to his middle-class sensibilities.

But Logan County is not an arrested frontier, or the home of "yesterday's people." It is a densely populated industrial region. He would do better to look at the actual array of economic and political forces at work in the area.

It is time that a book on the Buffalo Creek flood should appear this spring because once again the relationship of people, land, and industry has come dramatically to the public eye. Thousands of families have been left homeless in recent months as rivers and creeks surged over their banks and flooded the small towns, coal camps and county seats of the Appalachian area.

In Mingo County, W. Va., the town of Williamson was almost totally wiped out as flood waters crested 60 feet above flood stage.

Mingo County residents, learning from the experience of Buffalo Creek, formed a "Victims' Committee" when they realized that federal disaster relief and rehousing efforts were only adding to their problems. They circulated a statement throughout the Tug River Valley charging, "The government of the State of West Virginia and the federal department of Housing and Urban Development are well aware of the tragic mistakes made in trying to house victims of the Buffalo Creek disaster. We must not make those mistakes again."

Dwight Billings teaches sociology at the University of Kentucky where Sally Ward Maggard is a Rockefeller Fellow. A version of this review appeared in *Mountain Life & Work* magazine (Clintwood, Va.) whose May issue gives extensive coverage to the spring flooding.

**Everything In Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood**  
By Kai T. Erikson  
Simon & Schuster, 1976, \$8.95

# IN THESE TIMES

Editorial



## Bring the FBI and CIA within the law

In 1908, when Theodore Roosevelt's Attorney-General, Charles I. Bonaparte (Napoleon I's grandnephew) appealed to Congress to establish a permanent detective bureau within the Justice department, he was turned down cold. Rep. Walter I. Smith (R-Iowa) opposed the creation of such a bureau on the ground that a democratic country like the U.S. needed "no general system of spying upon and espionage of the people such as prevailed in Russia [under the Czar], in France under the Empire, and at one time in Ireland." To make its intentions absolutely clear, Congress then passed a law specifically forbidding the Justice department to borrow any additional detectives from the Secret Service or from other federal agencies.

Nonetheless, acting under Roosevelt's direction, Bonaparte waited until Congress adjourned and the members went home, and then on his own authority established a Bureau of Investigation within the Justice department. And that's how the FBI was born (though it did not become the Federal Bureau of Investigation until 1935, under the second Roosevelt). From its inception the Bureau of Investigation solved few real crimes but served as a political police.

In 1908 congressional opponents of the Bureau charged that its agents were spying on them and opening their mail. President Roosevelt righteously denied the outrage-

ous charges, saying that the agents whose duty it was to uphold the law would never violate it. But, Roosevelt added, "sometimes through the accidental breaking of [a mailed] package the contents are exposed." He then published some of the private letters of Sen. Benjamin R. Tillman (D-S.C.), one of the new Bureau's principal opponents.

- In 1910 when the Mann Act—prohibiting the transportation of women across state lines for immoral purposes—was passed, the bureau seized on the opportunity to establish itself in the public's esteem. Yet the bureau's first big case did not involve organized prostitution at all. Instead, it arrested and won a conviction against Jack Johnson, the black world heavyweight champion, who had crossed a state line with his white wife before they were married.

- In 1919, when the Socialist Party of America was splintering, a federal judge found that "government spies were active and influential in" the breakaway Communist parties. These "spies constituted in December 1919 an active and efficient part of the Communist party."

And so it has gone up to the present. Both the FBI and, since World War II, the CIA have been involved in illegal activities designed to deny American citizens their constitutional rights of free speech, equal protection under the law and privacy, which is not to mention

CIA subversion of the legal and democratic rights of governments and individuals in foreign countries.

Over the years both agencies have steadily accumulated power and have acted with greater and greater impunity.

The FBI's COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program) has systematically used agents, provocateurs, forgery, character assassination, anonymous threats and pressure on employers against "subversives."

These tactics have been used against the traditional left, for example in robberies of Socialist Workers party offices and in provocations against the Black Panther party, against civil rights leaders, most notably in J. Edgar Hoover's vendetta against Martin Luther King Jr., against union organizing and even against liberal members of Congress.

The left has long been cognizant of these activities and has long protested them. But in recent years the extent of FBI and CIA anti-democratic and illegal activities has been so great that liberals and the media as well have turned their attention to them.

## Candidate Jekyl, meet President Hyde

Early last month Sen. George McGovern arraigned the Carter administration for adopting "Republican economics," in violation of the Democratic party's 1976 platform and of Carter's own campaign promises. A few days later Pierre Rinfret, "the unreconstructed free market economist," as the *Wall Street Journal* calls him, made a judgment similar to McGovern's. He praised Carter as a "conservative Southern Democrat, or even possibly a liberal Republican."

An advisor to Nixon, consultant to some of the largest American corporations, and anointed oracle of Wall Street, Rinfret recalls that as a candidate, Jimmy the Baptist "frightened us." He appeared to be "to the left of Hubert Humphrey." But since his ascension to the office on high, "our perception of Carter has changed materially...there are very critical differences between what Carter said as a candidate and what he and his people are doing."

Rinfret points out that though in the campaign Carter "talked about increasing welfare and cutting back defense spending," nevertheless since his election "there hasn't been a single new spending proposal.... He hasn't moved to spend all the money that was budgeted," he has deferred "immediate action" on welfare, "and he has pressed for more defense money."

### Jekyl and Hyde.

It may be that in Carter we have a Candidate Jekyl and President Hyde. But it is well to remember that Dr. Jekyl became Mr. Hyde out of a compelling dedication to science. So liberal candidate Carter becomes the fiscal conservative president, little different from his Nixon-Ford predecessors, out of his devotion to the corporate system or, as he puts it, to the requirements and "virtues" of the private sector.

In the compulsion to govern in the interests of sustaining the corporate order, Carter is little different from his liberal predecessors in this century—from Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy and Johnson. Their rhetoric, like Carter's, was also to the left of their policies. The difference is that Carter's predecessors had more room to maneuver in times when American capitalism was still expanding and when new forms of governmental involvement in the corporate economy were still to be put in place.

### Risk of disruption.

But Carter assumes the presidency at a time when any expansion, by peaceful means or by war, is not open to Ameri-

Because of this, both defenders of democratic rights and political liberties (and, therefore, enemies of the FBI and the CIA) and defenders of the Bureau and Agency are both pressing for reforms. The agencies' defenders need reforms to "restore confidence" in government. The defenders of democratic rights wish to secure constitutional guarantees. As a result, several legislative proposals have been or will be presented this coming year.

We support one of these, the Federal Intelligence Agencies Control Act of 1977 (HR-6051), introduced by Rep. Herman Badillo (D-N.Y.) and 17 co-sponsors. Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Cal.) has introduced a similar bill. The purpose of the bill, whose provisions are outlined in the box below, is to guarantee that national security and the enforcement of law are achieved within constitutional restraints and without violating democratic principles.

We urge readers to support the Badillo bill by writing to him and to your representative at the House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515.

can capitalism as the way to ameliorate class conflict and social antagonisms. And he holds office at a time when government has become so integral a component of the corporate economy that its behavior must either accord with the demands of the corporate investment system or, short of a socialist reconstruction, risk disrupting and bringing down the whole economy and with it the chances of reelection.

Whatever the public rhetoric, therefore, be its phrase-making liberal or conservative, there is little room for differences over government policy in practice between a Republican and a Democratic president. The disparities between Carter's promises and his policies testify to the realities of corporate power in dominating the American political-economy.

In Carter's case, those disparities have revealed themselves more quickly and starkly than ever before—scarcely three months past the inauguration. And that difference in degree signifies something new in American political history: Not that Carter is more of a hypocrite or demagogue than other presidents, but that the old ideological and programmatic verities are dissolving as the requirements of corporate capitalism make it impossible to implement programs for full employment, stable prices, medical and health care, urban development, environmental protection, racial and sex equality, or adequate and affordable housing and education. Those members of Congress and social movements concerned for such things find themselves forced to act against even a liberal-sounding president whether or not he be of their own party. And voters are casting about for programmatic alternatives.

### A new ideology?

Carter and his advisers like Pat Caddell (*JT*, June 1) are searching for a "new ideology" to gather in the growing number of voters disaffected from the two major parties. But wedded as they are to restoring the old corporate consensus, they can only give us more of the same disparities between promises and performance.

A new testament signifying the renewal of the American democratic and egalitarian tradition will not come from the cloth of technocratic mysteries and old moral pieties Carter and like-minded Republicans and Democrats are trying to weave together. It will have to come from elsewhere—from those movements of working people opposed to the corporate order and candidly bringing socialist views and programs to the people.

### HR-6051

### The Federal Intelligence Agencies Control Act of 1977

Title I—domestic political investigations; allows only investigation of crimes

Title II—sets and regulates the kinds of investigative techniques that are allowable

Title III—reforms the CIA, renames it the Foreign Information Service, outlawing covert operations, and limiting it to analyzing intelligence from technical and open sources.

Title IV—revises the secrecy system by limiting the kind of information that can be classified and by denying classi-

fication to any evidence of official crime.

Title V—outlaws official deceit and plausible denial.

Title VI—protects government employees who blow the whistle on illegal agency activities.

Title VII—sets up a temporary special prosecutor with jurisdiction over the crimes of the intelligence agencies.

### Other provisions of the act:

- criminal penalties against officials who violate the Act
- gives victims a statutory basis to sue for damages
- requires greater oversight of the intelligence agencies—public budgets, audits, review, warrant requirements, paper trails.