

INSHORT

By Jim Naureckas

3,000 shoes and one suit

A federal judge has reinstated Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos as defendants in a civil suit charging them with ordering the 1981 assassinations of two Filipino labor leaders killed in Seattle. Earlier the Marcoses had been excluded from the suit, which stemmed from the murders of anti-Marcos longshoremen Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo, on the grounds that heads of state could not be sued in a U.S. court. But Judge Barbara Rothstein ruled last month that former heads of state are entitled to no such protection, and that in any case, head-of-state immunity does not extend "to acts of political terrorism or murder."

Uncle Tom's rec-room

The building that the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was named for is now part of a suburban house in Rockville, Md., where it serves as a den.

Media-owned state

Australia has "the most concentrated media ownership in the world, excluding, of course, countries where the media is state-owned," writes Melbourne journalist Paul Chadwick in the monthly *Multinational Monitor*. Ninety-one percent of city newspaper circulation is owned by just two media groups, with two-thirds of circulation controlled by world-wide press baron Rupert Murdoch.

Go back where you didn't come from

Despite civil libertarians' objections, a U.S. District Court has upheld the State Department's decision to close the Palestine Information Office (PIO) in Washington, D.C. (see *In These Times*, Nov. 11). The office, an information and research bureau for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), closed its doors on December 3. But Congress wants to go a step further. House and Senate negotiators agreed to an amendment to the State Department authorization bill that would close the PLO's observer mission at the United Nations as well. U.S. lawyers claim that closing the PLO mission would violate the agreement under which the international body established its headquarters in New York. And Arab nations are threatening to take the matter to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Meanwhile, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) will argue the PIO's case before the U.S. Court of Appeals in late February.

White rights

In 1977 the Carter administration briefly considered closing the office of the white-minority-ruled Rhodesian government. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) argued against the move, claiming the U.S. public had a right to hear Rhodesia's point of view, no matter how unpopular. "It will be the American people who will lack the full and free debate that is guaranteed in the Constitution," said Helms. "It will be the American people who will have denied to them that which is rightfully theirs." Ten years later, Helms was a key sponsor of the legislation to shut down the Palestinian offices.

Taking leave of his senses

A pending U.S. House bill would give parents the right to an unpaid leave to care for newborn infants or seriously ill children or parents. The bill was watered-down in committee, but not enough for Cass Ballenger (R-NC). "Even diluted poison can kill," warned the congressman.

Loving the alien

NBC affiliates received 149 phone calls complaining that an interview with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov had pre-empted the sit-com *All*.

Missile envy

Chicago Tribune columnist David Evans, explaining why the military supports removing Pershing II missiles from Europe, recently wrote, "Pershing II's...don't excite the...artilleryman's abiding passion for big guns.... Artillerymen are most happy when they can haul their guns out once a week or so and fire a few dozens shells downrange. They can't do that with nuclear-tipped Pershing missiles.... Training is a platonic affair that never consummates the artilleryman's lust for the explosion of 'cold steel on target.'"

LOOKS TO ME LIKE WORLD WAR THREE UNDERNEATH THE CHRISTMAS TREE....



"ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS," THE NEW IRS SINGLE FROM TIMBUK 3, IS IN ALL RADIO STATIONS AND RECORD STORES NOW. THE PROTEST AGAINST

Record sales for war toys: Pop group Timbuk 3 has its heart in the right place. It's right there on their sleeve—the record sleeve, that is. That's where you'll find the lyrics of the group's new single protesting the proliferation of weapons under the Christmas tree. Timbuk 3's dolorous, folksy plaint, "All I Want for Christmas (Is World Peace)" cautions that it "Looks to me like World War III underneath the Christmas tree." Indeed, 11 of the season's 20 best-selling toys (many linked to Saturday-morning cartoons) have violent themes. And sales of war toys have risen 700 percent since 1982 to create a billion-dollar industry. Timbuk 3 has given the topic an activist twist: proceeds from the record will go to the War Resisters League's Stop War Toys Campaign. For that reason alone it would be nice to see the song shoot up to the top of the charts—with a bullet.

Canadian labor movement spurns U.S.-based unions

Things other than the price of herring and cod are being discussed these days on the fishing wharves and fish plants of Newfoundland. A bitter battle between the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) over representation rights for 23,000 Newfoundland fishermen and fish-plant workers has rekindled a long-smoldering debate in the Canadian labor movement over the role of "international" unions.

The battle ignited last March, when Richard Cashin, president of the Fishermen's local, announced he was leading his membership out of the Washington D.C.-headquartered UFCW and into the CAW. The Fishermen's Union—as it is popularly known in Newfoundland—was formed in 1971, organizing some of Canada's most impoverished workers in the country's poorest province. Since then, the Fishermen's Union has developed into a social movement. It has challenged the long-held power of Newfoundland's fish merchant aristocracy and, in the process, has influenced the passage of social and labor legislation that is rapidly transforming a very traditional society.

The Fishermen's Union relied upon the UFCW for organizing help when it was first formed. But the relationship was never warm, as the Fishermen's Union—along with other Canadian UFCW affiliates—pushed unsuccessfully for greater Canadian autonomy.

The UFCW's philosophy has two problems, according to Rev. Desmond McGrath, a Newfoundland

parish priest who, along with Cashin, founded the Fishermen's Union. McGrath says the UFCW is "not geared toward Canadians making their own basic decisions. Secondly, it's a very highly mobilized dues-collection agency. The services just weren't there. They operated on numbers."

The Fishermen's Union's rupture with the UFCW has re-opened a public and often acrimonious debate within the Canadian labor movement over the conservative character of many U.S.-based unions operating in Canada. The UFCW, in particular, has been criticized in Canada as representing much of what is disliked about international unions. The UFCW in Canada is comprised of two regions of the union's North American operations, rather than as a single autonomous Canadian division. And it pays affiliation dues to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)—the principal Canadian union organization—on only 57,000 of its 160,000 Canadian members, thus depriving the CLC of an estimated \$600,000 a year. Last year the UFCW provided uninspired leadership during a bitter six-month meat packers' strike in Edmonton, Alberta. In January it imposed a heavy-handed trusteeship upon a Vancouver, British Columbia, local, sending armed union officials from the U.S. to seize possession of the local's office, which had been involved in a jurisdictional dispute with another UFCW local.

Over the past 20 years the presence of U.S.-based unions in Canada has steadily declined. In 1965, more than 70 percent of Canadian union members belonged to an international union. Today, that percentage has dropped to 34 per-

cent. The most dramatic split by Canadian unionists from their U.S. parent occurred in 1985 and 1986, when the 140,000 members of the Canadian Auto Workers—embittered by headquarters' pressure to accept auto company concessions—broke with the United Auto Workers.

Adding fuel to the debate was the Canadian government's 1987 annual report on the status of the Canadian labor movement. It showed that in 1984—the latest reporting year—U.S. unions operating in Canada took in \$61 million (Canadian) more from their Canadian members than they spent. The report also stated that U.S.-based unions accounted for 81 percent of the trusteeships imposed by unions upon Canadian locals in 1984, although the U.S. unions represented only 40 percent of the Canadian union membership at the time.

The UFCW has launched a blizzard of legal actions to stall the CAW-Fishermen's Union merger. But it seems clear that the vast majority of the Fishermen's Union membership will opt for the CAW. Only one member of the 24-person executive committee of the Fishermen's Union opposed the breakaway, and even he has subsequently broken from the UFCW.

McGrath is confident that the move to a Canadian parent union will enable Newfoundland fishermen and fish-plant workers to confront the capital and technological changes now transforming the North Atlantic fishing industry. "They'll have their own council. The auto workers won't be making decisions for the fishermen. They'll be making them for themselves. It's a good strong union that is more closely allied with the principles of unionism."

—Michael Lynk

FBI discourages dissent, frowns on non-violence

PEORIA, ILL.—FBI agent John C. Ryan's life was violent. Every day he carried his .38-caliber, snub-nosed Colt revolver hidden in his belly holster. He filled his pistol with super-velocity, hollow-point bullets that expand when they hit flesh, causing maximum damage to their victims.

Late in 1986, after 21 years at the FBI and a religious conversion to non-violence, agent Ryan refused to conduct an FBI "terrorism" investigation of pacifists, including Vietnam veteran and anti-war activist S. Brian Willson. In response, the FBI fired Ryan this past August for refusing to conduct a lawful investigation.

A week after the FBI dismissed Ryan, Willson's legs were mangled when he was run over by a munitions train as he protested U.S. weapons shipments to Central America at the Concord Naval Weapons Station in California.

Ryan's dismissal from the bureau is the latest in a series of events that indicate dissension within the FBI over its "domestic security/terrorism" probes of political activists. Now Congress is questioning the FBI about Ryan's dismissal, and its application of "terrorist" guidelines to peaceful protesters, according to Rep. Don Edwards (D-CA), who oversees the FBI for the House Judiciary Committee.

Ryan "had no other desire in life," he says, but to join the FBI, which he did in 1966. He investigated organized crime. "My career was all important. My family was secondary. I worked with violent people."

In his recent appeal to get his job back, Ryan wrote to FBI Assistant Director Edwin J. Sharp that he "personally developed and operated nine top-echelon informants" in organized crime. But it was that befriending of an underworld figure that changed his perspective.

"That informant pointed out my values as suspect," Ryan remembers. Looking over activities of the FBI, Ryan found that FBI agents were submitting fraudulent time vouchers. "That's a felony," Ryan observes. "I discovered there's a human side of bad guys and a criminal side of good guys."

Ryan followed the example of his wife and began attending Bible classes, reading scripture for himself instead of just listening to sermons. He began to question his values and to adopt a philosophy of non-violence.

Finally Ryan's job and his conscience clashed. In November 1986, FBI Special Agent Bobby J. Grooms, according to an FBI memo, requested that Ryan contact local police and "other sources" to discover if there had been any incidents in Peoria like the vandalism at 11 military recruiting stations in Chicago the previous month.

In response to one broken window and several broken locks, the

Chicago FBI Terrorism Task Force opened a 90-day preliminary investigation into "an organized conspiracy to use force/violence to coerce the United States government into modifying its direction." The vandals left behind leaflets that credited the peace group Veterans Fast for Life with inspiring the anti-military acts.

According to Ryan and an FBI teletype, the FBI investigation into the vandalism included the veteran group and its founder, S. Brian Willson. The FBI teletype concluded that the conspiracy was "probably nationwide."

"These aren't terrorists," Ryan says. "Eleven locks, one window, maybe you're talking about \$1,000 damage." Ryan knew the terrorism label could mean serious prison terms for the offenders.

He decided he would investigate the crime as damage to government property—not as a terrorism investigation. "The politics of the group influenced the FBI to probe an act of vandalism as a terrorist investigation," Ryan says.

He then dictated a memo to his boss stating that he refused to conduct a terrorism investigation of people he knew to be peaceful.

On June 10, 1987, Sharp, the FBI

assistant director, wrote to Ryan to advise him that "strong consideration was being given to 'dismissing you from the rolls of the FBI for...insubordination.'" Sharp gave Ryan "an opportunity to rectify the matter."

In reply, Ryan—who planned to retire in 1988—asked that he be allowed to serve out his last 11 months at the bureau. "I do not want to be fired and denied my pension," he wrote, but "I would be disloyal if I did not act as I did."

On Aug. 25, 1987, FBI Executive Assistant Director for Administration John D. Glover sent Ryan a letter of dismissal that said, "While I appreciate your personal conviction, I find your conduct totally unacceptable."

Ryan, however, concludes that, "We, the FBI, as an internal arm to quell dissent, are absolutely essential to perpetuate unjust, immoral and terrorist activities in other countries. If I were to have worked the S. Brian Willson case, I'd have been in complicity with what our government is doing in Central America."

—Angus Mackenzie

A version of this story appeared in National Catholic Reporter.

The FBI fired John Ryan for not treating protesters as terrorists.



What you don't know can't hurt you

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is cancelling the only program that measures how much toxic chemicals Americans are absorbing. The program, which measures chemicals found in human fat, has found most Americans carry at least 30 of 55 surveyed chemicals in their bodies, including PCB, dioxin, chloroform and DDT byproducts. The EPA says it will save \$1.2 million a year by cancelling the program.

Greetings from 60657-3278

So far, the U.S. Postal Service has spent more than \$1 billion implementing the nine-digit ZIP code now found on one out of every 17 letters.

Man of God

Despite complaints from American Indian groups that Father Junipero Serra's California missions brought mainly slavery, torture, rape and disease to the original inhabitants of California, progress continues in having Serra granted sainthood. The Catholic Church has exhumed Serra's body, one of the necessary steps on the way to canonization, and has announced that a nun was miraculously cured after praying to the 18th-century missionary.

...but maybe they'll make him a saint

Meanwhile, after a 20-year campaign, regents at Colorado University recently agreed to rename Nichols Hall, a dormitory named for Capt. David Nichols, a 19th-century Colorado politician who helped lead a notorious massacre of American Indians. In a report commissioned by the university, CU history professor Patricia Limerick wrote that Nichols "enthusiastically took part in a massacre on Nov. 29, 1864, at Sand Creek in which Indians' brains were knocked out, children's ears were cut off, and men and women's 'privates' were cut out and used as tobacco pouches or saddle ornaments."

Bug off

In the early '50s, according to Cornell entomologist David Pimentel, insects destroyed 7 percent of U.S. agricultural production. Over the past 35 years, Pimentel says, pesticide use has increased 10-fold—and insect crop damage has nearly doubled.

Career opportunities

Last month Robert Watkins, the Reagan administration's top automobile trade official, became the latest Reaganite to step down under fire. Watkins, while still a deputy assistant secretary of commerce, had circulated a resume to Honda, Toyota and Nissan offering his services as a lobbyist against "protectionist and xenophobic political action." His chief qualification: he had recommended that the president "end the request to the Japanese government for voluntary export restraint on automobiles." After Watkins' resignation, Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) commented: "I can now understand why he was such a weak negotiator."

San Francisco shake-up

Art Agnos received 70 percent of the vote December 8 in a runoff election for mayor of San Francisco. With a well-organized grass-roots campaign, Agnos defeated John Molinari, who was supported by real estate interests (see *In These Times*, Oct. 21 and Nov. 11). Agnos is expected to promote gay rights, rent control and curbs on development, although his administration will be hampered by a large budget deficit left by outgoing Mayor Dianne Feinstein.

Late-breaking bull

"The same outlook that makes bonds attractive works for stocks as well," writes Larry Biehl in the fall 1987 *Stanford Magazine*. "Add to that an abundance of liquidity, better-than-projected corporate earnings growth, and a shrunken supply of equities due to takeovers and buybacks, and you have the ingredients for a continuing bull market—believe it or not!"

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