

By Joel Bleifuss

When just saying no is not enough...

...get on that bandwagon. "Yes, there is a change in our employee manual," *Rolling Stone* Publicity Manager Hope Hening told *In These Times*. *Rolling Stone* management now reserves the right to test employees for drugs.

"Torture and so on" in El Salvador

Police torture is so widespread in El Salvador that the country does not deserve the \$7 million in police aid President Reagan is asking Congress to approve this year. That is the conclusion of *El Salvador Update: Counterterrorism in Action*, a report released last week by the Unitarian Church and the Southern California Ecumenical Council. Last May the two organizations sent a research team to El Salvador to investigate U.S. assistance to the Salvadoran police. The team discovered that "most political prisoners are held incommunicado and are tortured by the police before being brought to the prisons where they await trial." That torture continues despite the fact that the national police are now trained, according to the report, either by U.S. military instructors in El Salvador or by federal agents under the auspices of the State Department's Office of Counter-Terrorism in the U.S. Three "students" who attended one of the U.S.-based classes have been accused by human rights activists of being members of death squads. As U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) said, "We're training hard-core killers to be more efficient." Meanwhile, down in El Salvador, the U.S. military does the training, but takes a hands-off approach when the police get to work. One U.S. officer told the investigating team, "My guys aren't even allowed to be present at the interrogation. Not because I think they're going to participate, but because it leaves them open to a whole series of accusations about participating in torture and so on."

As Michael Ledeen sees it

Intellectual nematode Michael Ledeen (see *In These Times*, Jan. 21) is helping explain the roots of what he calls the "Iranian/contra business" through his Presswatch column in the *American Spectator* (February 1987). Though he doesn't hit at where his busy fingers may have been, Ledeen does say that this crisis involves "much higher stakes" than Watergate since "this time, the crisis strikes directly at the foreign policy community." According to Ledeen the problem stems from "lack of discipline in the foreign policy bureaucracy (above all, leaks)." And those "leakers," says Ledeen, "are very often those who were excluded from the policy, are angry at being 'out of the loop' and are consequently trying to shoot down those who excluded them." Could one of those who did the excluding include Ledeen himself? According to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Ledeen "appears to have played a key role in the initial contact between the U.S. and Israel vis-a-vis Iran."

Ledeen's press awards

Ledeen, in his above-mentioned February column, also gave out awards to members of the press—those "playing 'Jr. Watergate,' those cheated at being born too late to participate in the overthrow of the Nixon regime." His award for "worst essay" on the Iranian/contra business went "by acclamation" to Michael Kinsley, editor of the *New Republic*. Kinsley began his editorial last December 22, titled "A Case for Glee," this way: "The only irritating aspect of the otherwise delightful collapse of the Reagan administration is the widespread insistence that we must all be poker-faced about it." Kinsley goes on to give good reasons why we should all enjoy the spectacle. Ledeen was not the only commentator to damn this as heresy. The *Washington Post's* David Broder responded to "Juvenile" Kinsley in his column:

"The continuing crisis in the Reagan administration is having one beneficial side effect: it is sorting out the grownups from the juveniles... juveniles are jubilant... the grownups see this disaster for what it is, a calamity to the nation, and would do anything in their power to put it in the past.... [Kinsley] is as devoid of learning skills as the bellicose Buchanan.... 'Spare us these juveniles who won't learn or can't understand that the presidency is too damn important for their mock-war games.'" Of course, you have to understand Broder's position in raising the presidential standard. If he didn't, six years' worth of *Post* columns analyzing White House officials as serious grownups might seem a little silly, now that people are seeing Reagan and Co. for the rogues they are and always have been.

THE PINOCCHIO PRESIDENT

... IT JUST KEEPS GROW

FCC tries to tune out community broadcasters

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has—under the reign of Chairman Mark Fowler—been ingenious in finding ways to take diversity out of the public airwaves. The latest victim is community radio.

In what is the first decision of its kind in U.S. communications history, FCC Administrative Law Judge Walter Miller last November withdrew the non-commercial broadcasting license of the Dallas community-based Agape Broadcasting Foundation and turned it over to the wealthy fundamentalist Criswell Center for Biblical Studies.

"It's virtually unprecedented," said Agape attorney Sam Buffone, who is appealing the decision. "The commission has always had a hands-off policy in the past with non-commercial stations." While the Commission has changed its policies over the past six years to favor the wealthy, the Dallas case indicates it is now taking a more active approach to ensure that the airwaves are placed in the right hands.

Agape Broadcasting Foundation, during its management of station KNON-FM, managed to create something Dallas had never heard before: a true community station—"The Voice of the People," as its logo says. Dedicated to serving Dallas' low-income and minority communities, of which there are many, KNON broadcasts Vietnamese music, gay public affairs, American Indian programming, a "labor hour," bilingual news and music and, of course, "Radio Jalapeno" and other Texas programs. "If that ain't serving the community," argued a writer for one community magazine, "then grits ain't groceries."

The Criswell Center for Biblical Studies is an arm of the First Baptist

Church of Dallas, the largest Southern Baptist Church in the country with an annual budget of \$9 million. Criswell's board members include the vice president of Hunt Oil Company, a CEO of another Texas oil company, trustees of several banks, attorneys, investment bankers and a physician. Criswell already holds broadcasting licenses in Abilene, Weatherford, Brownwood, Palestine and also another non-commercial license in Dallas. Their Dallas station currently broadcasts religious programming to the entire city.

Of the five non-commercial frequencies licensed to Dallas, according to Jim Schutze of the *Dallas Times Herald*, three are now owned by "conservative Christian organizations." The other is a classical music station. Agape in 1983 became the first station to broadcast bilingual programming in this heavily Hispanic city.

Judge Miller found Agape underserving of an FCC license in part because KNON had been off the air between 1979 and 1983 and had thus, he argued, not served the community responsibly. In 1978 the station's transmitter was destroyed by a thunderstorm. In 1979 KNON filed for permission to broadcast from a new site. The FCC did not

grant their request until 1983. KNON had been broadcasting for two years—each year doubling its number of community supporters—when the Criswell Center launched its license challenge in 1985. KNON, which had finally raised enough money from its listeners to increase its power, was forced to spend its savings on legal fees.

Miller also ruled that Agape had not been candid with the FCC in its relations with community group ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), and that ACORN was a closet owner of KNON.

KNON station manager Jeff Murray says that KNON and ACORN share an interest in empowering low-income and minority constituents, and that it is necessary and more effective for them to work together. "Of course we cooperate with organizations that share our concerns. That's what community radio is all about." Murray believes that the judge's accusation is more appropriate for Criswell and First Baptist. Criswell requires its board members to belong to First Baptist, whereas Agape has no such requirement for its board.

The low-income, minority and previously unheard-from residents of Dallas are not tuning out. On Dec. 6, 1986, more than 5,000 people marched through downtown Dallas (and past the First Baptist Church) in an eclectic parade that included rap artists, high school marching bands, Gray Panthers, low riders, Africans for KNON, local politicians, gospel singers, gay rights groups and country musicians.

Still on the air, awaiting a final verdict from the FCC, KNON has launched its most ambitious fundraising drive to date. The station needs money to pay legal costs of appealing the decision.

—Caroline Senter

The author is the director of the Affiliated Media Foundation Movement, a New Orleans-based media network, which holds a consulting contract with KNON.



MARK FOWLER



Luc Williams/Kansas City Times

Roadside detraction

This billboard has reappeared along Interstate 35 in Kansas City, Mo., now that Republicans have picked New Orleans for the 1988 GOP Convention. The sign was erected January 5, but was removed while Kansas City was being considered as a site for the convention.

Guatemala campaigns for Central American parliament

GUATEMALA CITY—Guatemalan officials announced last week a new, broad, diplomatic initiative aimed at reactivating a dialogue to form a Central American parliament and to revive regional peace negotiations.

The initiative reflects the scramble by Guatemalan authorities to shore up the country's policy of neutrality in Central America in the wake of a series of international reports implicating Guatemalan military officers and others in arms trafficking to the Nicaraguan contras (see *In These Times*, Feb. 4).

Neutrality is a cornerstone of Guatemala's foreign policy. Following the historic meeting of Central American presidents in May 1986, organized by Guatemala, President Vinicio Cerezo emerged as a leader in regional negotiations. Since then Cerezo has been able to resist pressures to adopt an anti-Sandinista stand by relying on support from the Contadora peace-seeking nations and the European Economic Community (EEC).

In October Cerezo toured five of the EEC countries where he received overwhelming statements of support for his government's neutrality, backed by promises of almost \$300 million in economic aid.

Not surprisingly, then, officials emphatically insist the government will not alter its neutrality policy, despite reports of military aid to the contras and alleged army pressures on the civilian government.

"We will not fill body bags in the service of the superpowers," said President Cerezo last week. "Guatemala will not abandon its policy of neutrality in the Central American conflict."

Guatemala will redouble its efforts this year to inspire "the Central American nations to sit down

at the negotiating table," Vice Minister of Foreign Relations Rodrigo Montusar told *In These Times*. "The Central American parliament's creation would be a basic instrument to revive regional dialogue."

Last year's agreement to form a parliament originally proposed by Guatemala and envisioned as a regional forum for the Central Americans to discuss their grievances free from foreign intervention, was seen as a major boost for the peace process.

But the project has been stalled since September due to diplomatic fallout caused by Nicaragua's case before the International Court of Justice against Honduras and Costa Rica, for allegedly harboring contras in their territories.

"Our foreign policy this year will be based on neutrality and the formation of the Central American parliament," said Guatemala's Vice President Roberto Carpio in a press conference last week.

Carpio, responsible for overseeing the parliament's creation, revamped some aspect of the proposal to speed up its formation. The original proposal, for example, calls for immediate, open elections in each country to choose their 10 representatives to the parliament. This was criticized internationally as a possible attempt to apply political pressure on Nicaragua to carry out new elections, thereby converting the parliament into a "Trojan horse" for the Sandinistas.

In the new document, elections would be postponed for two years and each nation's legislative assembly would name their representatives in the interim, thereby alleviating pressures on Nicaragua and on El Salvador, whose Christian Democratic government now faces a broad domestic opposition movement (see *In These Times*, Jan. 28).

Last week Vice President Carpio began a diplomatic tour of Central America to muster support to re-initiate dialogue. A vice presidential adviser told *In These Times* that while officials are confident that

only minor differences remain with Nicaragua, Costa Rica and El Salvador, Honduras remains a major obstacle.

Indeed, in a meeting with Honduran officials on February 2, Honduras President Jose Azcona reaffirmed his country's refusal to continue regional conversations until Nicaragua withdraws its world court case. In December, a group of Honduran congressmen proposed to exclude Nicaragua from the parliament, and two weeks ago Honduran congressional president Carlos Orbin angered Guatemalan officials by comparing Guatemala's neutrality with an "ostrich hiding its head" from the danger of Nicaragua.

"I fear Vice President Carpio will return from his regional tour empty-handed," Congressman Edmond Mulet from the Guatemalan Congressional Foreign Relations Commission told *In These Times*. "When the U.S. and the other Central American countries see the need to dialogue with Nicaragua, then the parliament will work."

To that end, Guatemala's congressional delegations will also visit Honduras and Costa Rica and attempt to convince them to negotiate the elimination of Nicaragua's world court demand directly with the Sandinistas.

Guatemala hopes to solicit European political and economic support for the parliament at this week's EEC-Central America conference. A substantial increase in EEC multilateral aid to Central America is expected, including loans, donations and favorable commercial treaties for Central American exports to EEC countries.

And political overtones will clearly accompany any economic accords. Said Antonio Argueta, Guatemala's public relations official in charge of hosting the visiting delegations, "The overriding objective is to obtain peace in Central America as a base for economic and social development in the area."

—Kevin Robinson

Star Wars: the pope's got the dope

Two years ago a Vatican-appointed academy of 70 scientists began studying the feasibility of Star Wars (Strategic Defense Initiative, in official mumbo-jumbo). They came to the unanimous conclusion that Star Wars is "unworkable and a serious stumbling block to disarmament," according to the *National Catholic Reporter* (January 30). But so far Pope John Paul II has refused to publicly release the academy's July 1985 report. To that end Pax Christi USA, a Catholic peace group, has initiated a post-card-writing campaign. Apparently one of the few people to have seen the "strongly critical" study—the 70 authors never received their copy—was President Reagan who, according to the *National Catholic Reporter*, "immediately dispatched various emissaries to Rome to halt publication."

"My fellow surviving Americans..."

Fight, win and survive: the Reagan administration is still busy figuring out how it can do all three once a nuclear war gets started. According to Donald Goldberg, a staff investigator for the syndicated Jack Anderson column, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is preparing the nation's radio broadcasters for nuclear attack. (A similar version of Goldberg's story appeared in *Channels of Communication* January 1987.) The Commission's new plan is code-named "The Last Resort." "Last Resort" calls for the commission to identify 30 to 40 commercial stations in remote locations across the country where antenna and electronic systems will be protected against a nuclear blast, enabling them to transmit White House messages to what's left of the nation. "The Last Resort" was quietly readied in the wake of a 1986 FCC investigation that discovered the U.S. Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) has virtually no chance of surviving a nuclear war. (The impetus behind that 1986 investigation of emergency communications was White House fury at the fact that when Marcos fell last February Washington lost contact with the U.S. Embassy in Manila.) EBS—familiar to most listeners as a tone followed by the words "This is only a test"—relies on a network of local and regional broadcasters to relay presidential messages in case of a national catastrophe. But many of these stations are located near large urban areas and are consequently not expected to exist in the post-nuclear world. The new plan calls for significantly strengthening the towers of selected stations and protecting solid-state equipment against the electromagnetic pulse that follows a nuclear blast. According to an FCC official, the supposedly "low-risk" broadcasters selected can cover up to 85 percent of the population. Of course, after a nuclear war that percentage would shrink dramatically. Carl Loughry, president of WFRB-AM and FM in rural Frostburg, Md., is one of the broadcasters who has already been contacted. Though Loughry plans to cooperate, he grumbles that the FCC hasn't appealed to anything but his patriotism: "There's no money in it for us, no nothing."

Sodomy as civil disobedience

A gay man in Norfolk County, Mass., recently wrote letters to his legislator and the governor protesting that state's sodomy law. The law, written more than 200 years ago, reads, "Who ever commits the abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast, shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 20 years." Having received no response, the man thought his letters were getting nowhere and decided to take direct action. He wrote the local police, telling them that he intended to break the sodomy law in his home at 8:00 p.m. on January 8. The man, who declined to be named, told his tale to Boston's *Gay Community News* (January 25). He begins, "Shortly after 8:00 p.m., the phone rang, and it was a policeman who began asking about the letter. I said that 'Yes, I wrote the letter, and I meant every word of it.' He said that he wanted to talk to me, and asked when I would be available to talk. I told him that I was engaging in my criminal activity and was having trouble getting aroused due to the circumstances. The officer eventually said he would come by at 9:00 p.m." Two policemen arrived at the man's house at 9:15 p.m. and began interrogating him. The story ends this way: "The police finally said that they were never going to break into my bedroom to see what I was doing, regardless of what I said or wrote.... They nonetheless maintained that they would uphold the law and make arrests if they saw an act in progress, and that if I wanted to be arrested, I would have to come down to the station and perform an act in front of them."