

INSHORT

Joel Bleifuss

Promulgating concern and dollars

"Locked in bamboo cages in the jungle, in caves in the mountains, some of our men are used as slaves, forced to drag plows in rice paddies," writes Charlton Heston as he asks the reading postal patron to help former Rep. John LeBoutillier (R-NY) "locate and bring these men home." LeBoutillier is chairman and president of "Skyhook II Project" of Old Westbury, N.Y. The men LeBoutillier is concerned about are "American fighting men"—men who "are still being held captive in the jungles of Southeast Asia." He wants "Americans who would never stand idly by and let U.S. soldiers and airmen continue to rot in stinking jungle cages" to send "many thousands of dollars" and help him "launch our mission" to get a "few bedraggled POWs out of the filthy hell in which they're hidden." But what is this mission? According to documents *In These Times* obtained from the Office of Charities Registration in New York, LeBoutillier raised \$332,861 last year. He spent \$533,236 of that money on management and fundraising. Another \$294,368 went to "secure humane treatment of, status information and accountability" for the POW/MIAs and "to promulgate concern." Besides money, LeBoutillier says the mission's success must also depend on "expert planners" who "might have to equip anti-communist rebels" and "bribe border guards" to get "two or three Americans out of those hidden horror camps." Well, there is no denying that Skyhook II Project has both civilian muscle and military might. The group's advisory board includes Yankees' manager Billy Martin, baseball great Willie Mays, Texas A&M football coach Jackie Sherrill (and a pack of other pigskin powers), Star Wars cheerleader Ret. Lt. Gen. Daniel Graham, roving counterrevolutionary Ret. Maj. Gen. John Singlaub and, lest we forget, boxing champion Rocky Graziano.

Cracks in the crystal globe

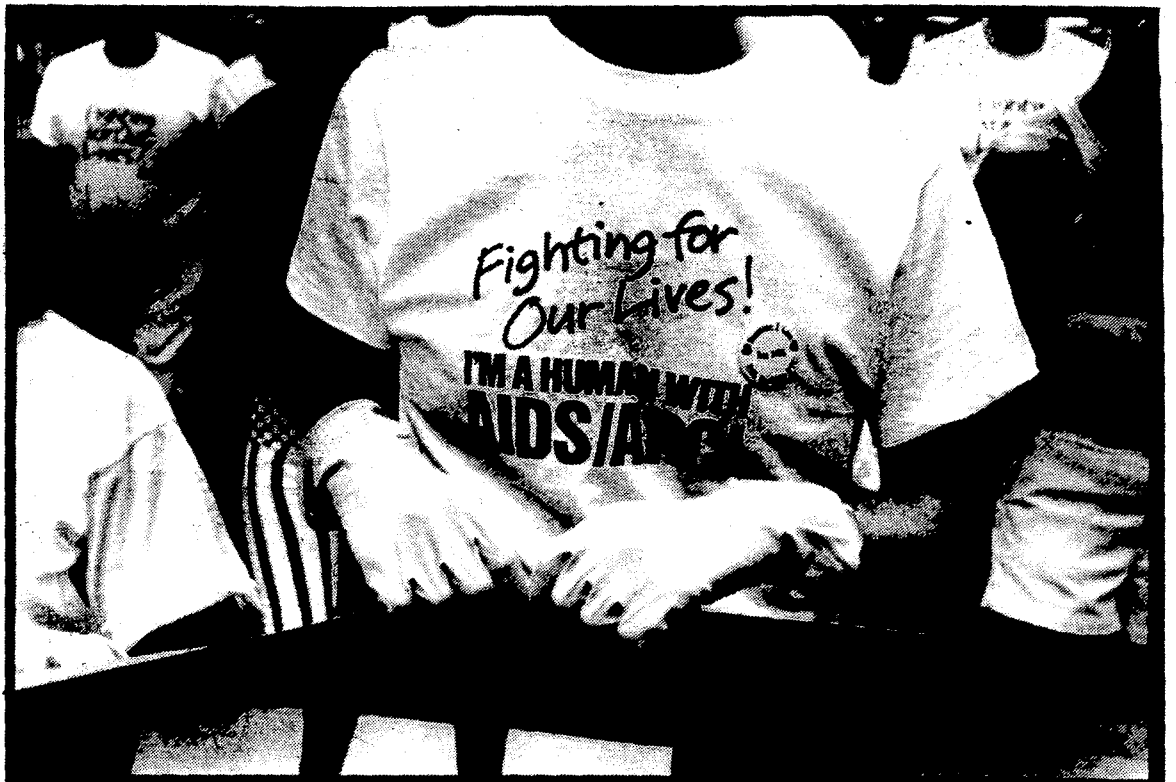
Have you ever wondered what people who study the world's future fear most? The World Future Society of Bethesda, Md., a group dedicated to promoting the study of the future, has surveyed future-oriented speculation and has come up with a list of "major worries" for 1987. In fifth place is "instability in Mexico leading to economic, political and social crises." In fourth, but favored for first next year, is "the health crisis posed by AIDS." The third greatest worry for futurists is "the permanent environmental damage caused by deforestation and species lost." Ranking second is that perennial favorite, "nuclear war." As for the number one fear of those with their eye to the future, "global economic collapse."

This year, the future

It's a common sci-fi setting. The world no longer supports life. Behind hermetic seals mutant humans struggle against the video eyes of the corporation-state. Welcome to Citibank, Mexico City—well, almost. The New York-based corporation has installed special air filters in its downtown office tower to protect its employees from Mexico City air. Air filtering systems are a booming business in the smog-shrouded capital, reports former "In Short" editor Rachel Sternberg. In the local papers an ad for the electronic Filtron 2000 reads: "The birds are dead today! And next...? Protect yourself from the lethal effects of pollution. Breathe clear air in your home and office and gain life for you and yours." Next year, mutant humans.

Which one's Dopey?

A couple of weeks ago the seven Democratic presidential candidate-contenders gathered in Washington to roast Sen. Bill Bradley of New Jersey. Among the best jokes... Dick Gephardt of Missouri: "Mike Dukakis is trying to show his deep understanding of agricultural issues. He went to a farmer in Iowa and asked, 'So, how much wool are you going to plant this year?'" Bruce Babbitt of Arizona: "Over at the Gephardt campaign headquarters they were arguing about campaign colors. Dick put his foot down and said, definitively, 'Plaid!'" Paul Simon of Illinois: "I'm announcing my first cabinet appointment. Secretary of Transportation goes to Bill Bradley, because he's a Rhodes Scholar. Get it?" Joe Biden of Delaware: "Officially, I'm six feet eight inches tall. Unfortunately, I'm standing on my record." Jesse Jackson of Illinois: "Bradley had it tough growing up. He was a white boy from the right side of the tracks, and he wanted to play basketball. His high school counselors told him to forget it. 'You're too rich. You can read. You can talk. You have a number of handicaps.' But Bill persevered. He proved race is no bar to talent."



David Vito

On the line: A participant in New York City's June 28 18th Annual Lesbian/Gay Pride Day March.

Breeding Frankenstein's dog

So far this year pit bull terriers have fatally mauled five Americans, two of them children.

Michelle Green in the July 6 *People* magazine reports that one of those children was two-year-old James Soto of San Jose, Calif. On June 13 Soto toddled into a neighbor's back yard and was attacked by their dog, Willie, a 52-pound pit bull. There were no screams. His parents found him locked in the dog's jaws. According to the attending paramedic, Soto was "unrecognizable as a human being."

And it was on June 10, 1986, in Bessemer, Mich., according to Green, that a "pit bull tore through a fence, almost strangling itself before breaking free of its chain. The animal then attacked a 20-month-old child playing near his mother. The pit bull snapped the child's neck, then carried his body into a wooded area."

As the attacks grow so does the breed's popularity. The Philadelphia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says that the number of pit bulls in that city has grown in the last five years from 25 to 4,000.

All of which has led to the debate over which is at fault, the breed or the circumstance.

In this case, history suggests it is the dog—a Frankenstein dog that reflects thousands of years of selective breeding for violence. Domestic dogs are eloquent proof of genetic engineering long before the days that genes could be spliced in a laboratory. All are descended from one or possibly four wild species adopted by the forebears of *homo sapiens* in the Miocene Age, some 25 million years ago.

But only one strain of dogs was carefully bred, by culling and inbreeding, for blind courage in at-

tack and docile obedience to an often ruthless master. Pit bulls are dogs that will fight on with two or three parts of their bodies missing.

The evolution of the strain has been recorded through the ages. Spanish cave paintings dated to 4,000 B.C. show the pit bulldog's earliest pictured ancestor accompanying primitive hunters.

The strain shows up again in 1200 B.C. on a Greek wall painting in Tyre that depicts a powerful dog of enormous size attacking wild boars. The Greeks called the strain "Mollosi" and used it against wolves, bears, boars, lions and tigers—as well as in human battle. Some paintings show the dogs weeping over fallen comrades.

Assyrians in 600 B.C. reveal the dog taking part in military campaigns—armed, chained, open-mouthed. The Romans continued and expanded the practice, often loosing hundreds of Mollosi in front of advancing infantry. Rome's enemies used the Mollosi, too: At the Battle of Versella, Marius the Roman Consul is described as overcoming hordes of war dogs led by women.

When the Romans got to the British Isles, they found an even tougher strain originally brought over by the Phoenicians, and took them back for use in the arenas against lions, tigers—and men. By the Christian era the Mollosi were common throughout the Western world, introduced by conquering Roman legions.

The British descendants of these pugnacious dogs were known as "Alaunts," and by the time of Shakespeare as "tydogs," guard dogs kept on chains or used by gamekeepers to hunt poachers.

During the Middle Ages, the Alaunts were called "butcher's dogs" (later known as "bulldogs") and used to drive and restrain oxen on their way to slaughter—a prac-

tice seen as a way to tenderize the meat. At its master's command, the dog would seize an ox by the nose and hold or throw it on its side.

By the 14th century the Alaunt had become the foundation dog of the breed that would make the sports of bull- and bear-baiting a European national pastime. Bear-baiting was so widespread in the 16th century that Queen Elizabeth I forbade the showing of plays in her theaters on Thursdays—bear-baiting days.

Later, under Puritan influence, strong efforts were made to outlaw the various canine blood sports. When baiting fell out of popularity with the elites in the 19th century, dogs were bred to exaggerate the characteristics associated with the bulldog: large, powerful body, broad face with small, front-looking eyes and powerful underjaw, bandy legs and silence.

But millenia of breeding for ferocity did not end there. The fiercest strains of bulldogs and terriers were in the 19th century concentrated through interbreeding to produce the iron-jawed pit bull terrier. Pit fighting, an underground sport, was popular in both England and the U.S., where Irish immigrants had brought their "old family strain" of pit bulls and continued close inbreeding.

Today the pit bull terrier is by no means a uniform breed, but one bred for the dominance of one specific trait—the instinct to attack, silently, to the death. It is also an increasingly popular breed as the dog-fighting underworld expands to service a public not sated by the recreational violence provided by all-star wrestling and video death.

But in the end, what the pit bull testifies to is not the monster quality of a dog but the cruel streak of the human.

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—Josephine Alexander

It's O.K., Ollie: Arms sales to Iran are legal after all

In These Times has learned that officials of the government agency that regulates and licenses U.S. arms sales abroad admitted last February to a Senate committee that Iran was never legally ineligible for U.S. arms sales because it was never put on the list of countries barred from receiving U.S. weapons and weapons-related equipment.

Furthermore, even in the wake of the arms scandal, Iran continues to be declared legally eligible for arms transfers through fiscal year 1988, officials of the State Department's Office of Munitions Control (OMC) told Sen. John Glenn's (D-OH) Governmental Affairs Committee that is examining arms-transfer regulations. This testimony from OMC Director William Robinson and OMC Licensing Director Joe Small Doane contradicts the Reagan administration's announced embargo on all U.S. weapons sales to Iran.

And, indeed, U.S. Customs Service officials testifying before the committee indicated that some of the 33 attempts to illegally export weapons to Iran since January 1981 that have been prosecuted were commercial sales approved by the OMC. The OMC officials, however, had earlier told the committee that no commercial sales to Iran had

ever been licensed, referring to the arms and trade embargo imposed against Iran on Nov. 4, 1979, when Iranian students seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held its staff hostage.

It was recently reported by NBC News and Reuters that last March low-technology computer equipment capable of being used to direct anti-aircraft weapons systems was allowed to be commercially sold to Iran. The computers fall under the OMC's U.S. Munitions List, a categorical enumeration of the arms and arms-related services the agency controls. Since Iran is eligible for arms sales, the computers could legally have been licensed by the OMC.

The Reuters story quoted an anonymous administration official as saying that the government had in the last three years licensed \$60 million of commercial sales of the computers to Iran.

Iraq is another country that has continued to be declared legally eligible for arms sales, despite the administration's claim of neutrality in the Iran/Iraq war. The two OMC officials admitted that, despite the official policy of neutrality, last year, on orders from the executive branch, they approved a \$169,000 sale of unidentified weapons to Iraq. This contradicts State Department spokesman Charles Redman's assertion that "we don't sell arms to either side, nor do we allow transfers by others of U.S.-sourced

or licensed arms to either side."

The OMC officials explained under questioning that decisions on whether to grant any given license application are based not on written criteria but on policies originating from the White House.

But arms sales to Iraq, as they are to Iran, are supposed to be denied without exception. Reaffirming Redman's policy statement, Licensing Director Doane testified that "if we receive an application for Iran or Iraq, we simply return it without action as being inconsistent with U.S. foreign policy. We have a form on which that statement is prerecorded."

An investigator for the Governmental Affairs Committee, who asked not to be identified, told *In These Times*, "But policy or no policy, the fact is that these countries are legally eligible for arms sales, and it's clear that if this administration wants arms sold to, say, Iraq or Iran, it can have them licensed, because these countries are legally eligible."

Or, as Doane explained to the Senate committee, "For guidance on whether or not a particular application ought to be approved, that becomes a policy judgment...beginning with the White House and coming right on down through the bureaus in the [State] Department...delegated from the president, to the secretary of state, to this office."

—Anthony L. Kimery

Housing quota controversy: discrimination for integration

A federal court in New York decided in May that private landlords cannot regulate the percentages of tenants by race to ensure integration. The decision could settle one of the toughest dilemmas in the fight against housing discrimination: How do we integrate rental housing without "benignly" discriminating against some racial groups? It's a problem that has long divided fair housing and civil rights advocates.

In a case first brought by the NAACP and later taken up by the Reagan Justice Department, U.S. District Court Judge Edward Neaher decided that the privately owned (but federally assisted) Starrett City complex in Brooklyn, N.Y., discriminates against minority tenants when it limits the number of apartments available to tenants by race.

Starrett City regulates its population so that 63 percent are white, 22 percent are black and 8 percent are Hispanic, even though blacks and Hispanics make up much higher percentages of those applying for apartments. Such regulations are necessary, management

says, to keep the complex from becoming predominantly minority.

Starrett City management argues minorities benefit from that discrimination, since the result is they live in an integrated community. Says Betty Hoeber, whose Open Housing Center in New York City helped bring the suit, "It's a beautiful system if you don't happen to be needing an apartment."

Hoeber rejects the contention that whites will stop applying to live in Starrett City if minorities make up more than half the tenant population. She believes people of all races will continue to apply for Starrett City units as long as the complex is well managed and superior to most alternatives in the area.

Oscar Newman, a race-relations scholar and community planner who oversees the court-ordered housing desegregation in Yonkers, N.Y., defended Starrett City's system in court by arguing that its integration could not be maintained without quotas. If the minority population grows too large, Newman says, "tipping"—white flight after the minority population rises above a certain point—will inevitably result.

Newman cites innumerable studies that tipping is inevitable in areas without "occupancy controls," especially in public housing—and private but federally as-

sisted housing such as Starrett City.

"It is impossible, given the housing demand situation," Newman says, "to maintain an integrated community without some form of conscious controls. You could not maintain integration at that high a level [Starrett City's 36 percent minority population] without quotas."

Which raises the question: why maintain integration if there is no discrimination? Besides the argument that integration is a good thing, Newman stresses political realities. He says evidence that shows public maintenance of schools, parks, infrastructure, jobs and other vital institutions inevitably decline as a community's minority population grows. History makes the results clear: separate is almost never equal. State and local governments time and again seem incapable of sustaining adequate public services in minority neighborhoods.

Newman recommends a managed integration that includes "benign" discrimination. But establishing quotas to achieve integration is a form of social engineering that many people—including pro-integration civil rights groups and, certainly, the Reagan Justice Department—are not prepared to endorse. And if Judge Neaher's ruling sticks on appeal, it would also be illegal.

—Darryl Brown

Let me count the crimes

Reporters have commented that Ronald Reagan was at times completely lost during discussions at last month's Venice summit. One said, in all seriousness, that the president would just tune out when a topic came up for which he didn't have the right cue cards. More recently, Reagan blathered his way through a press conference of economic reporters. He was asked about charges from Democratic presidential hopefuls that his administration lacked integrity. His answer: "I don't think there's anyone that's ever been in this job—ever—that has not gone to bed every night knowing that, with all the thousands of people that are out there, there could be somebody that's breaking the rules someplace, and you try to get at that and do something about it." The next questioner asked about the 100-plus members of his administration who left their jobs "under some sort of cloud or scandal." Reagan said, "A number of people in our administration—there have been things that have been uncovered by someone, let's say, that—in the past, before they ever came here. But isn't it the very fact that we are uncovering if there's something going wrong and something being done about it [sic]. We're not covering it up or hiding it."

And now who's getting screwed?

Italians last month elected porn princess Ilona Staller, age 37, to parliament on the Radical Party ticket. According to Uli Schmetzer, writing in the *Chicago Tribune*, as a victory treat Staller invited her supporters to Rome's Piazza Navona to kiss and fondle her breasts. But all did not go well. The well-wishers went into a frenzy, and baton-wielding riot police were forced to disperse a crowd that was squeezing Staller and her proffered charms to death. In the uproar, three pillars of the piazza's famous fountain, built by 17th-century sculptor Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, were damaged. A Radical Party spokesman says that the party only promoted Staller as a joke and has since requested that she step down—an invitation she declined. Now in parliament, Staller has immunity and cannot be prosecuted for several charges of obscene behavior in public places. Of course the Italian political establishment is none too happy. One member blamed "voyeurism and electoral sadomasochism." Sure, it's sad, but hey, don't blame the Italian people. After all, for 40 years Italy has been plagued by parliamentarians whose sanctimony and corruption are legendary.

Bringing radiation to life

It seems that General Electric-NBC (the nuclear-weapons, nuclear-power, electrical-appliance and TV-broadcasting conglomerate) has put the screws on the *Cleveland Plain-Dealer*. According to the *Nuclear Monitor*, an anti-nuclear power publication, the *Plain Dealer's* James Lawless and Bill Sloat reported that in 1975 GE engineers recommended to the company that it quit selling its nuclear reactors because the design "does not constitute a quality product." In their study the engineers listed among their concerns "deteriorating metals, inadequate cooling systems, earthquake hazards and radiation dangers to plant workers." A couple of days later Lawless and Sloat alleged that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and GE entered into a secret agreement to keep this document from the public. A former NRC commissioner, Joseph Hendrie, told the paper that GE had threatened to sue the NRC if it released the study. The paper also reported that the chief of GE's reactor division wrote, "If any of our customers ever get a copy of this, we will have real trouble. All of the comments may be true, but why does GE have to put it into print?—to ruin a business?" A source told the *Nuclear Monitor* that two days after the article was published GE officials went to Cleveland and met with *Plain-Dealer* editors. By the end of the week Lawless was taken off the nuclear beat and assigned to cover Cleveland's municipal bus system.

And when they dance, they twitch

Just like drug addicts, rock fans when deprived of a music "fix" suffer withdrawal symptoms, according to a report in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, a Soviet newspaper. Says psychology professor G.A. Aminev, "If you completely isolate them for a week from such music they feel worse, their irritability rises, their hands start to tremble and their pulse is unstable." The professor from Bashkir University adds that tests have shown that some rock fans could not go even three days without their music. Furthermore, heavy rock addicts on average produce 50 percent less than those who forego the sounds.