

Domestic violence: a crime, not a civil infraction

The debate over how the criminal justice system should best deal with domestic violence got a public airing in Chicago recently when Alderman Lawrence Bloom proposed to cut the city budget by having civilian counsellors, instead of police, handle domestic disputes. The resulting controversy not only killed his proposal, it also highlighted some common misconceptions about domestic violence.

Jerry Gladden, a former Chicago police officer and now chief investigator of the Chicago Crime Commission, a privately-funded watchdog of the city's criminal justice system, shares a fear of many that civilian counsellors, unarmed and without power of arrest, could, he says, find themselves with "nothing they could do except get thrown down the stairs." Gladden based his opposition to the proposal on the belief that disproportionate numbers of police are hurt and killed in domestic cases.

But a recent National Institute of Justice study, "Danger to Police in Domestic Disturbances—A New Look," disputes this claim. The study examines data from several sources in several cities, and concludes: "These incidents are proportionately less likely to result in an officer death, given the frequency

with which such assignments occur." Furthermore, preliminary data from the FBI reveals that of the 66 officers murdered in 1986, only one was killed on a domestic call.

That study, issued by the Department of Justice's research branch, explains that for many years the FBI lumped domestic disturbance calls with other kinds of disturbances when compiling annual crime statistics. Though many police and others interested in law enforcement believe that domestic calls make up the largest part of this category, it mainly encompasses incidents such as bar fights, gang calls and general disturbances.

But although the plan to use civilian counsellors may be safe, it may also be costly. Edwin Bishop, deputy superintendent of the Chicago Police Department, says Bloom's plan may have merit, but that its implementation would not save tax dollars. Bishop points to the criminal justice system's failure to curb domestic violence, and explained that "adequately trained" civilians specializing in domestic intervention "could pull together all of the agencies and professionals who have the expertise to solve the problem." But such a program would require as many as 72 additional employees without any reduction in the number of police officers, says Bishop.

And Kathleen Quinn, executive director of the Illinois Coalition against Domestic Violence, says

the proposal's approach is simply out of step with national law-enforcement trends. "[The proposal] flies in the face of everything we know and everything we've learned about domestic violence," she says. Quinn cites Justice Department studies that conclude that the most effective deterrent to spouse abuse is arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators. And since one-third of all females murdered are killed by domestic violence, she says, "to treat it as trivial is inappropriate."

According to the Washington, D.C.-based Crime Control Institute, 46 percent of U.S. cities with populations of 100,000 or more have policies that make arrest the preferred course of action in domestic violence cases. These policies encourage and sometimes require police to arrest an abuser when there is probable cause, even if the victim declines to sign a complaint. Proponents say such required arrests are needed because of the reluctance of many wives to prosecute their husbands.

Bloom himself is rethinking his position. He now says that when he proposed the program, he was discussing "innovative ways of providing services" for city residents while saving tax dollars. He believes that his proposal "obviously requires much more thought and research" and that he "shouldn't have thrown it out" without a more thorough knowledge of the issue.

Lynn Travers

Mexico's nuclear power controversy: one cardinal vs. seven bishops

MEXICO CITY—The Mexican Catholic Church hierarchy has entered the fray on both sides of the controversy over Mexico's first nuclear plant, scheduled to come on-line this fall in the Gulf Coast state of Veracruz.

In an unusual move, Cardinal Ernesto Corripio, archbishop of Mexico City, visited the Laguna Verde nuclear plant July 30 and blessed a nearby church under construction. He told a local newspaper that he "was impressed by the [plant's] safety measures that ensure there is no risk to human life."

In visiting the plant, Corripio—Mexico's only active cardinal—disregarded an unwritten rule that each bishop is responsible for matters within his own diocese. He also contradicted seven local bishops in the state of Veracruz—including the president of the 90-member Mexican Bishops Conference—who had called for a halt to the plant's construction.

The Laguna Verde facility, located about 280 miles east of Mexico City and 900 miles due south of Houston, is set to go on-line after International Atomic Energy Organi-

zation officials make their last scheduled inspection in early September.

Since construction began in 1969 at an estimated cost of \$128 million, the plant has been hit with construction setbacks and cost overruns that reportedly have increased the price tag to more than \$3.5 billion. The plant will operate with two of the problem-plagued General Electric BWR/5 Mark II reactors (see *In These Times*, July 8) sold to Mexico in 1972.

Recently a growing number of people have rallied behind a vocal anti-Laguna Verde coalition that claims the plant is poorly constructed and lies on an earthquake fault. The controversy's most recent twist was an August 12 announcement by a Federal Electricity Commission official that in addition to Laguna Verde, Mexico plans to build three other nuclear plants by the year 2000.

Late last year the seven Veracruz bishops issued a joint pastoral letter that cited the "imminent risk of lethal contamination" from radiation leaks and the "genetic consequences for all species of life." The bishops called on the government to avoid these risks by "converting the plant to use nearby natural resources, such as natural gas." They confirmed their position in a Lenten pastoral letter.

Nevertheless, Mexico City's Cardinal Corripio heaped praise on the

plant's safety system during his July 30 visit. According to *El Dictamen of Veracruz*, Corripio said that the plant design included "the most scrupulous safety measures which will avoid any problem of contamination.... There is no risk to human life, nor to plants, nor animals. I am very impressed by the safety measures."

The cardinal was reportedly flown to Veracruz in a private jet belonging to the government-backed national electricians' union, which is contracted to provide the labor for construction and operation of the nuclear facility. An August 12 press release by the cardinal's Mexico City office did not deny this. According to the statement, Corripio went to Veracruz to "celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Parish of Our Lady of Light" and while there "took advantage of an invitation [to visit the plant]."

The press release denied that the Cardinal had actually blessed the nuclear plant, as was reported in the Mexican press.

In keeping with church protocol, the bishop of the local diocese, Bishop Padilla y Lozano, accompanied the visiting cardinal on his tour of the facility. But he later told reporters that neither he nor the other Veracruz bishops had altered their position on the dangers of the nuclear plant.

Mike Tangeman

Refuse on the rebound

In June former Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) director William Ruckelshaus joined the board of Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI), the country's second largest toxic waste dumper. According to the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes of Arlington, Va., the company is having legal problems. The Justice Department has filed a suit on behalf of the EPA and the state of Louisiana against BFI for massive violations at its Livingston, La., toxic landfill. The resulting fines could top Waste Management's—the number-one toxic dumper—record of \$15 million. BFI is also in court, or the object of grand jury investigations, in Michigan, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Arizona, Ohio, California, Vermont and Georgia. Some of these cases involve allegations that BFI and Waste Management conspired to rig contracts, fix prices and carve up the trash market. On a related note, the National Wildlife Federation has named Dean L. Buntrock, head of Waste Management, to its board of directors.

Boycott baloney

The boycott against Coors is not over, only the AFL-CIO's support for the boycott. Several weeks ago the labor federation reached an agreement with Coors guaranteeing that the building trades unions would do all future construction for the company. Coors also agreed not to interfere in AFL-CIO attempts to organize its brewery workers. In making this deal, the AFL-CIO preempted attempts by the Teamsters, who are also trying to organize the plant. A source who has worked on the boycott but who asked not to be identified, said of the AFL-CIO settlement: "You read about the victory and what the fuck is it? Some construction jobs. That's fine for the building trades who put virtually nothing into the boycott. But we didn't carry on the boycott for 10 years just for that." This person suspected that AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland agreed to the Coors settlement as a favor to the construction unions that are his power base. He also said that the AFL-CIO employees who had directed the boycott were not included in the negotiations with Coors and only found out about the agreement the night before it was announced. The source said the boycott will continue without AFL-CIO support. "Coors plays a very sinister role in American life. We have no reason to drink Coors when some of the profits from every bottle go to the ultra-right."

Hispanics say no

"Not all Hispanics are abusing drugs," said Beatrice Rouse, statistician for the National Institute on Drug Abuse. She gave this good news to a group of Mexican and U.S. health-care workers who were attending a human services symposium in Mexico City, reports Rachel Sternberg. "Sometimes I think we need to be reassured that not all Hispanics are abusing drugs," Rouse told the jaw-dropped audience. "Having been to Texas, I know that there are Hispanic leaders who may well be national leaders, that there are Hispanics out there who are not drug users, or who used it and gave it up, who will go on to make important progress for the U.S. and for their community."

A nut, a dolt and a bad screw

It's not common knowledge that former Secretary of the Interior James Watt now sits on the board of Jerry Falwell's PTL Ministries, helping that friendly fascist resurrect Jim and Tammy's fallen empire.

What does God know, and when did he know it?

Cardinal Obando y Bravo, the Nicaraguan prelate who has received U.S. dollars for unknown indulgences, refuses to blame the *contras* for the July 3 death of a Franciscan monk. Tomas Zavaleta of El Salvador was killed in Matagalpa province when the truck he was driving hit a land mine. A priest who had been travelling with the Franciscan has blamed the *contras*, saying that they planted the mine in the expectation that Zavaleta's truck would be returning along the same road it had covered two hours earlier. In what was interpreted as an oblique hint that the Nicaraguan government had set the mine, Obando said, "Only God knows who did it." To which President Daniel Ortega replied, "Only God knows how much money Obando has received from the CIA."



"Chac 4 Ans," or "Every Four Years," is a slogan in the push for democratic Haitian elections.

Wave of violence undermines democracy

By Anne-christine d'Adesky

PORT-AU-PRINCE

A WAVE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE HAS SHAKEN Haiti recently, and has undermined an already fragile democratic process. While the national goal remains open presidential elections in November, the political reality today is one of random violence, assassination and the disappearance of civilians by armed, uniformed men.

This anonymous violence has accompanied weeks of anti-government protests by a coalition of opposition groups made up of political parties, unions, student groups and religious organizers. Many Haitians believe the slayings that have occurred are the work of the infamous *Tonton Macoutes*, a private militia that governed Haiti by terror under former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier.

More importantly, political leaders here believed that the provisional National Government Council (CNG) is at least partly responsible for allowing the *Macoutes* to reorganize and undertake their campaign of terror. While moderate presidential candidates are pleading with the CNG to take charge of the situation and stop the killings, many Haitians have joined the opposition groups calling for the CNG to step down.

"The mentality of fear": "The CNG has lost control of the situation," said Haitian lawyer and human-rights advocate Gerard Gourgue. "It's the mentality of fear and repression by the army that have made people afraid."

So far at least 30 people have been killed and 200 injured in anti-CNG demonstrations since early July. The protests were prompted by the CNG's failed effort to effectively organize the upcoming elections. Soldiers fired shots into crowds of unarmed civilians and used tear gas to break up the protests.

These official acts of violence were ac-

companied by two separate incidents where civilians were killed in which the army and the *Tonton Macoutes* are being implicated. On July 30 at least 150 peasants and 10 Catholic missionaries were found massacred by machetes in an apparent conflict over land reform.

And on August 2, a prominent Haitian democratic political leader and avowed anti-communist was similarly slaughtered, along

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with two aides, by a crowd of 150 peasants. According to the opposition coalition, the "Committee of 57," well-known *Tonton Macoutes* who have been integrated into the small Caribbean country's army, are behind the murders.

Although the CNG officially disbanded and disarmed the *Macoutes* after Duvalier fled Haiti in February 1986, committee members say that the ex-militia is now armed again. Some *Macoutes* are members of the newly-formed militia corps called the Service for

Criminal Research, a kind of security branch, they said.

According to Dr. Jean-Claude Bajoux, a prominent member of the Committee of 57, this new corps is backed by military strongmen Col. Jean-Claude Paul and Col. Prosper Avril, men considered *Macoutes* by many Haitians.

Bajoux heads the Ecumenical Center for Human Rights here, a place where Haitians from all over the island have been coming nearly every day to relate the disappearance of a family member or friend. To date, Bajoux has received no response from the CNG or army to the many complaints of disappearances he has documented since this latest round of violence began two months ago.

Elections and the army: As Bajoux sees it, "The political reality is that the government wants to provoke a mass absenteeism at the elections, which is why they have started their campaign of terror."

Bajoux believes the CNG, which is made up of two army men and one civilian, must be replaced with a coalition of civilians—

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including moderate and more radical democratic leaders, union officials, community organizers and the representatives of the progressive church. But he refuses to consider keeping the military in power, or letting CNG head Gen. Henri Namphy share in the task of guiding Haiti to free elections. He and other opposition organizers think that unless the CNG goes, only 5 percent of Haitians will vote. "Our priority must be the full participation of all Haitians in this election, even if it means putting it off for some time," he said.

Moderate leaders fiercely disagree with this analysis. "We must have elections, and we must make a compromise to avoid a confrontation between these opposition groups and the CNG," said presidential candidate Leslie Manigat, who heads the Assembly of Progressive National Democrats. "Right now the situation is so grave that if it continues it will destroy the country and the electoral process."

Manigat has presented a proposal that may unite moderates. It's a plan to enlarge the CNG with civilians but retain a member of the army selected by the army. As Manigat sees things, the army will not agree to give up power regardless of strikes, protests and other popular manifestations of discontent with the military's domination of Haiti. "We need to politically negotiate with the CNG—it's our only way out," Manigat concluded.

Uncle Sam's vote: The U.S. agrees with the moderate camp about the need for elections. An embassy source said that the U.S. has continued to support the CNG because the provisional council represents "the best hope for stability in Haiti at this time." And although the State Department last month reproached the Haitian military government for its human-rights record, the criticism came as the U.S. released military aid it had withheld from the CNG all summer. Observers interpreted the release of the last \$500,000 of \$1.6 million in 1987 U.S. military aid as an effort to stabilize the CNG.

While the U.S. officially supports all democratic efforts in Haiti, U.S. officials have a clear alliance with certain individuals.

Dr. Louis Roy heads the list of U.S. favorites. The head of the Association for the Defense of the Constitution, Roy may be tapped to step up to the CNG, according to high-level Haitian and U.S. sources. In Roy's case, there is the political advantage that he is considered "clean." He never served in Duvalier's government, unlike several leading presidential candidates.

Roy, who is not a declared candidate, hopes that the moderates and the radicals, including the small-but-growing Haitian United Communist Party, can come to some understanding or joint position with regard to the CNG, in order to "save the election." To him, unity is necessary to fight the *Macoutes* and their right-wing civilian counterparts, the Duvalierists, as well as the far-left groups who are now advocating armed revolution to oust the CNG.

"The '57' realize the danger of the generals. That is why there is a timid gesture to reconcile with the moderate camps," said Roy.

But Bajoux explained the Committee of 57's outlook this way: "We are now trying to provoke a mobilization in the entire country. There are two possibilities as we see it: Either we have a quasi-official government and we have 300,000 boat people arriving in Florida, or we have democratic elections."

Anne-christine d'Adesky is a U.S. journalist.