

By Joel Bleifuss

Body-count accounting

Could it be that U.S. officials are playing a numbers game with the figures for U.S. fatalities in Central America? While in Honduras last year, Jerry Genesio, of the Portland, Maine-based Veterans for Peace, asked two U.S. Embassy officials and one senior U.S. military officer how many U.S. soldiers had died in that country. The embassy officials said that they could recall four deaths. The officer said he knew of at least four. Sensing a dearth of frankness, Genesio returned to the U.S. and filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the Defense Department. Eventually the National Guard, Army, Air Force and Navy released their body counts. Adding the more recent media reports of U.S. casualties, Genesio determined that 68 soldiers have died in Central America since Jan. 1, 1984. Forty, not four, of those deaths occurred in Honduras. That total is undoubtedly low. The Marine Corps failed to provide any figures, despite orders to do so from the Defense Department. According to the Marines, "The information requested is not available since records of decedents are maintained by name, not by location of death."

The Linder autopsy goes to court

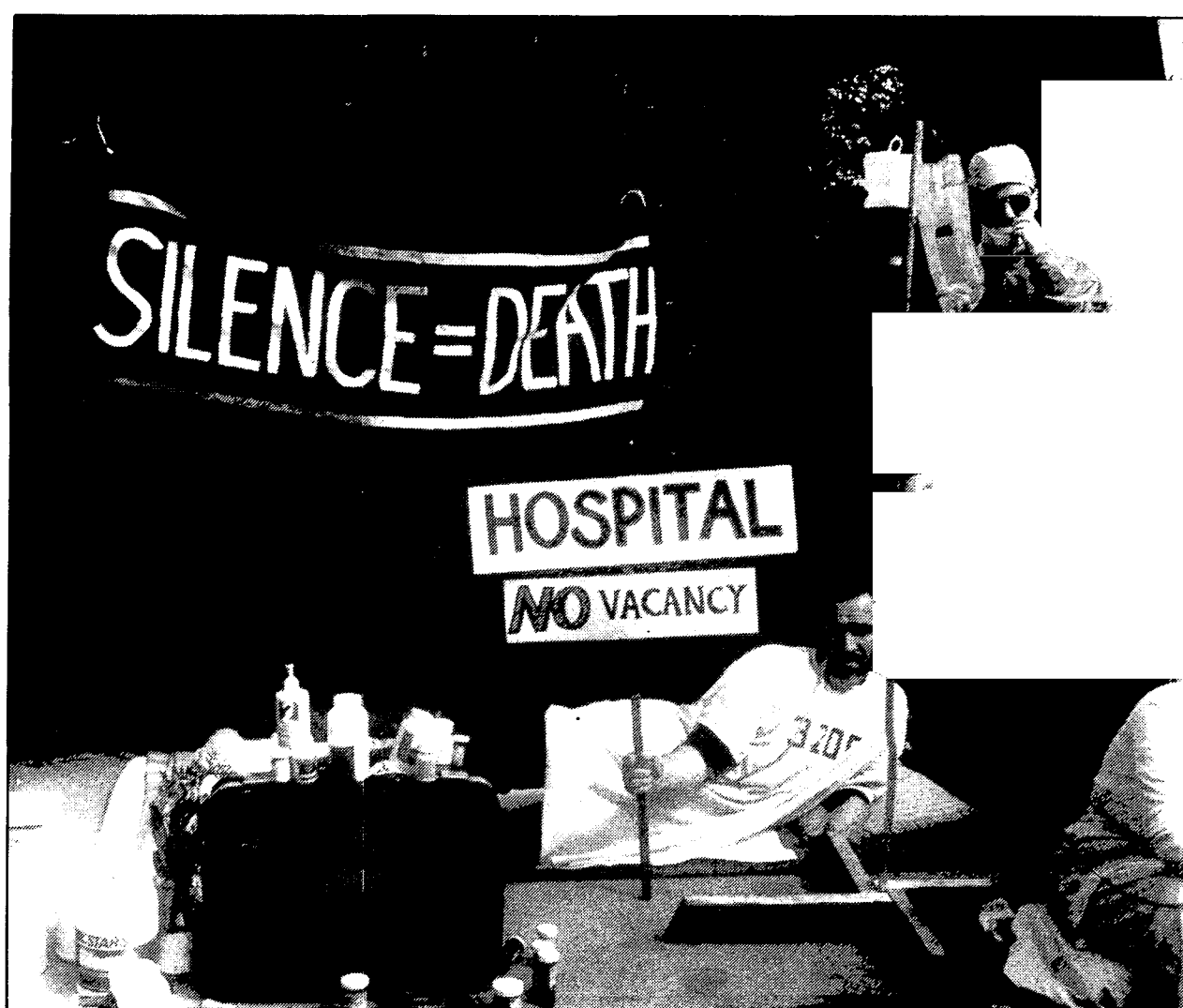
Last spring, Ben Linder and two Nicaraguans were killed by the contras as they were building a small dam near the northern Nicaraguan town of San Jose de Bocay. The contras claimed that the 27-year-old American was caught in cross fire. And Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams told a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee that as far as he knew, "Linder was in the middle of a group of armed men, which would be a legitimate target." But according to the Nicaraguan government, the autopsy revealed that after being brought to the ground with shots to his legs and left arm, Linder was stabbed 30 to 40 times in the face with a sharp-pointed instrument and then shot in the temple at point-blank range. Earlier this year the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights discovered, through a Freedom of Information Act request, that the State Department had investigated the Nicaraguan autopsy and found it valid. Those declassified State Department memos will be among the evidence offered by the Linder family and the Center for Constitutional Rights in a \$50 million law suit against the contra leadership. The suit was filed on April 28, the first anniversary of Linder's death.

Licensed to bribe

An unknown number of U.S. corporations are able to bribe foreign officials with impunity. The names of these companies are known to only a few CIA officials. Stephen Kurkjian and John Kelly of the *Boston Globe* recently unearthed a memo from a 1984 congressional investigation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). The memo reads, "[CIA General Counsel Stanley] Sporkin confirms that there is a whole series of companies registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that are exempt from the reporting requirements of the FCPA because they are covers for the CIA. Sporkin claims these exemptions are provided for by the FCPA legislation." The unidentified congressional investigator continues, "How does the SEC assure that there are no abuses by companies with these exemptions—is it a license to bribe?" (Before becoming CIA general counsel, Sporkin was head of the SEC's Enforcement Division. He is now a Reagan-appointed U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Columbia.) Under the FCPA exemption, "the head of any federal department or agency responsible for [national security] matters" may exempt "any person acting in cooperation" with a federal agency from the provisions of the act. According to *Corporate Crime Reporter*, journalist Kelly says that "congressional investigators currently believe that the CIA's power to allow payments to foreign officials might explain why [Edwin Meese's friend] E. Bob Wallach sought and obtained then-CIA Director William Casey's approval for protection payments to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres for the Iraqi pipeline to be built by Bechtel."

Child labor

What do Federal Reserve Board members Martha Seger's beating heart and a pile of cash have in common? Both are cold and hard. Seger recently told a small business group that congressional plans to raise the \$3.35 minimum wage should be abandoned. A higher wage would only increase youth unemployment, she said. "A lot of them aren't worth \$3.35 an hour; they don't know anything. Maybe they're worth two bucks."



Curfew in the Occupied Territories: another policy failure

WEST BANK, OCCUPIED TERRITORIES—It is just before sunset and the Jalazon Refugee Camp is quiet. The streets of the normally bustling camp six miles from downtown Ramallah are empty, its 5,000 residents nowhere to be seen.

As darkness comes, Jalazon, perched on the sides of a steep mountain pass, disappears into the mountainside. Electricity at the camp has been cut off since at least April 1.

Jalazon, like many of the refugee camps, villages and cities in the West Bank and Gaza, is under curfew. As of Land Day, March 30, all of Gaza's 650,000 Palestinian residents were under complete curfew, as were many villages and camps in the West Bank. Although since then some curfews have been lifted, according to the *Jerusalem Post* more than 400,000 Palestinians were still under curfew in late April when Israel celebrated its 40th anniversary.

The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) has used curfews to quell disturbances since 1967, but in the last five months of the *Intifadah* (the Arabs' name for the uprising), curfews have been used with a vengeance. At the beginning of the uprising Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, speaking on Israeli television, promised that "there will be curfews in the refugee camps and in every place where order is disrupted."

Month-long curfews have been

used to punish villages, camps and cities where demonstrations have been frequent and where stone-throwers are thought to have been given refuge from IDF troops. Hardest hit have been villages that have acted against suspected collaborators or spies.

"We are using collective punishment because in a way it is a collective uprising—all the population is participating," says Haim Ramon, a Labor Party Knesset member. "I'm not justifying everything. I'm sure that here and there some measures that were taken were wrong. But this is the nature of war; this is the nature of violence."

Under curfew, normal life is impossible. No one is allowed to leave their home or their community. But other than that basic principle, the rules governing individual curfews are arbitrary and occasionally malicious. Water and electricity can be shut off. Municipal services stop functioning. At times sewage overflows into the streets. Medical care is delayed, restricted and sometimes simply refused. Food supplies are often the first thing cut. Severe food shortages, especially in the poorer Gaza Strip, have been reported by United Nations officials.

Camp refugees charge that the IDF uses the curfew to terrorize the population. Houses built without proper permits are demolished. The local *shabab*, politically active youth, are rounded up for questioning and/or administrative detention. Nor has the curfew stopped indiscriminate use of tear gas, beatings and shootings.

"The soldiers shoot when they see anything," says Salweh, a 24-

year-old mother of four from Jalazon who escaped from the camp after more than three weeks under curfew. "Always we are looking out the windows for the soldiers. Always we are afraid."

As arbitrarily as they are imposed, the curfews are occasionally lifted. In Al Am'ari Refugee Camp the curfew is lifted one hour each day, but the IDF lifts it in the early morning hours, forcing the camp's 5,000 people to get up at 4:00 a.m. to take advantage of their hour of freedom. In Jalazon the curfew is lifted only once every four or five days.

Raja Shehadeh of Al Haq, a human rights groups based in Ramallah, says the Israelis use the curfews "to exhaust the population so that they will be too tired to continue with the uprising."

But that strategy may have already backfired. Even though at times half the Palestinians in the Gaza and West Bank have been under what is essentially house arrest, the Israelis have found the restoration of order an illusive goal. As with many Israeli policies—beatings, use of live ammunition, house demolitions, deportations, administrative detentions and other forms of collective punishment—the curfews have hardened the resolve of the Palestinians.

Many Israelis are beginning to realize that their measures are failing, but the question of what to do to quiet an uprising that shows few signs of waning has no easy answers. A final decision will probably have to wait until after Israel's November election. But the harsh measures of the last five months have made coexistence more dif-



Breaking the silence: On May 1 a mock hospital was set up in front of Michael Dukakis' Massachusetts home to protest what demonstrators say is the governor's inadequate response to the AIDS crisis. On the night of April 29, AIDS activists in New York took their message to gay and lesbian bar-goers with an "ACT UP, Make Out" kiss-in on Sixth Avenue. These were two of many actions organized in about 35 cities during the nationwide "Spring AIDS Action '88." The April 29 to May 7 protests were coordinated by the San Francisco-based ACTNOW (AIDS Coalition to Network, Organize and Win), an umbrella group that grew out of a meeting at last October's National Lesbian and Gay March on Washington. Each of the 60 or so local organizations that affiliate with ACTNOW addressed the issues most relevant to them. Coalition spokesman Terry Beswick says the overall purpose of the demonstrations was "to force AIDS issues into the national awareness even more than it has been."

difficult. The days of quiet occupation are a thing of the past.

"It comes to such a point that

you're so angry at the Israelis," says Shehadeh. "I mean, how can [they] possibly think we can live together

when [they] are treating us as less than human beings?"

—Ellen Hosmer

Christic Institute releases a new document

The Christic Institute, the group suing 29 contragate figures, has lost a court battle but won an intellectual victory.

The liberal non-profit law center is suing Richard Secord, Theodore Shackley, John Singlaub and other covert operatives for their alleged participation in the bombing of disaffected contra leader Eden Pastora. The lawsuit attempts to prove that the defendants' other illegal activities—carried out during three decades of official and unofficial covert actions—constitute an organized criminal conspiracy.

But last month Judge James King, who is hearing the case in Miami, restricted the Christic Institute to taking testimony and subpoenaing witnesses only about the Pastora bombing and contra support activity. He upheld his ruling that the evidence of earlier crimes was insufficient to expand the discovery process.

In an attempt to persuade the judge, the Institute released a 300-page document in support of its charges against the group it calls "the Enterprise." This document replaces a December 1986 affidavit filed by Christic attorney Daniel Sheehan as the most complete account of the Institute's charges.

The new version provides documentation and corrects errors that plagued the Sheehan affidavit.

While the old affidavit relied on the sometimes fallible memories of unnamed informants, the new document has more than 1,000 footnotes showing how these conspiracy charges are supported by public information. Many of the document's sources are mainstream journalists. The document also includes information uncovered by last summer's Iran-contra hearings, as well as the Institute's own interviews with witnesses the Iran-contra committee overlooked.

Although this new document failed in its legal purpose, it serves as a catalog of most of the underexamined issues of the Iran-contra scandal. Among the important charges are the following:

- During the Vietnam War, the Enterprise cornered the opium market in Laos by conducting bombing raids against competitors. It then set up a major heroin factory using a Pepsi-Cola bottling plant as a front. The Enterprise used its connections to the Miami syndicate, which had worked with Enterprise figures in plots to assassinate Fidel Castro, to distribute the heroin in the U.S.

- Former intelligence officer Edwin Wilson, now imprisoned for selling arms to Libya, claims to have gathered information on Libya's Muammar Khadafy for the Enterprise. While Wilson's testimony to the Institute may have been self-serving, Enterprise figures continued working with Wilson years after he was linked to Libya.

- William Buckley, the CIA station chief in Lebanon whose 1984 kidnapp-

ing spurred the Reagan administration to negotiate with Iran, had ties to several Enterprise associates. This connection may explain why Theodore Shackley, former deputy director of the CIA and reportedly a key figure in the Enterprise, first proposed that the administration trade arms for hostages.

- The Enterprise continues to have a network of front companies, nicknamed "the Fish Farm," that functions as an assassin-for-hire service.

All of the problems of the Sheehan affidavit are not corrected by the new document. Some important allegations are still attributed to unnamed sources, while other assertions are questionable. Shackley, for example, is given personal credit for the CIA's overthrow of the Allende government in Chile, and FBI Assistant Director Oliver Revell is incorrectly described as Attorney General Edwin Meese's deputy. These lapses are the exception, however, and not part of a pattern of errors as in the earlier affidavit.

While the document's argument is credible, much of the evidence is unlikely to stand up in court. Wilson, a major source in the document, is anything but a credible witness, and other testimony is in many cases based on inadmissible hearsay. Judge King's ruling, which is being appealed, makes it harder for the Institute to produce hard evidence. If it hopes to win a legal and not just a moral victory, it faces an uphill battle in court.

—Jim Naureckas

Right-wing bias at PBS

The liberal New York-based media watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) is gearing up for a campaign to put the "public" back in public television. The most recent issue of the group's newsletter, *Extra!*, points out that two of the editors of the right-wing *National Review*, William F. Buckley Jr. and John McLaughlin, host three weekly Public Broadcasting System (PBS) programs. Left and liberal commentators are granted no such air time. Further, the world view of corporate America (and PBS' corporate sponsors) is fully aired by PBS programs like *Wall Street Week*, *Adam Smith's Money World* and the *Nightly Business Report*. There is not one corresponding program that represents the public-interest community. The two PBS news shows hosted by centrists, the *MacNeil Lehrer NewsHour* and *Washington Week in Review*, present opinions that generally range from moderate to conservative. A Conservative Political Action Conference membership survey recently ranked *MacNeil Lehrer* as the "Most Balanced Network News Show." FAIR spokesmen say it would help if viewers, especially those who subscribe to public TV, voice their concerns to their local PBS affiliate, as well as PBS President Bruce Christensen, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Minus hooded robes

Joe Clark, the Patterson (New Jersey) High School principal who recently made it to the cover of *Time* with his trademark baseball bat in hand, seems intent on promoting himself as a rising star of the ghetto's right wing (see *In These Times*, Feb. 3). Daniel Lazare reports that in an April 26 speech in Honolulu before 1,500 members of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, Clark proclaimed himself "HNIC—head nigger in charge." He called for public executions of drug dealers "live at five" and urged ghetto residents to "get some two-by-fours and go out there and beat the hell out of [pushers]." At a press conference afterward he suggested that more extreme measures might be needed. "What I see happening to kids on crack...lives being destroyed, yeah, I've reached the point where I think a few lynchings might be in order," Clark continued. "Why do you think [Bernhard] Goetz was so popular? Do you know what I would have done if they had attacked me on the subway? I would have shot them, too. I would have shot them until I didn't have a bullet left." Clark also called for the sterilization of welfare mothers who persist in having babies. In his speech, he praised President Reagan for "tak[ing] the handout away from black people and mak[ing] us work for ourselves." According to reporters on the scene, the overwhelmingly white male audience applauded enthusiastically.

Avoid indictment

Why shred when you can disintegrate? That is the theme of Security Engineered Machinery, the Westboro, Mass., manufacturer of the "Security Disintegrator." As a company brochure explains, "A Security Disintegrator destroys and compacts all confidential material. A shredder doesn't. A congressional committee gained valuable evidence simply by piecing together shredded documents.... This would have been impossible had the material been destroyed by the Security Disintegrator.... There's simply no way to reconstruct original documents. That's why the Security Disintegrator is approved by the Department of Defense for the destruction of classified material." Company President Len Rosen told *In These Times* that business is "terrific"; even the White House uses one of his disintegrators. Said Rosen, "Our systems take documents, even books six-inches thick, and reduce them to confetti."

We hope it's true

Fawn Hall was reportedly "crushed" after being spurned by Bruce Springsteen. According to the "ever-reliable" *National Enquirer*, during a recent concert Hall sent the Boss a note saying that she would like to meet him. He is said to have written back: "Forget it.... I don't like Oliver North.... I don't approve of the things you did.... I have nothing to say to you!"

Nuclear-free Chicago

Last year the Chicago City Council unanimously passed an ordinance declaring the city a nuclear-free zone. Two dozen billboards have now been erected at the Chicago city limits to let the world know that the Second City is—if not the first—the largest nuclear-free zone in the nation.