

# LETTERS

## Birdwatching

THE CASE OF J. DANFORTH QUAYLE III AVOIDING the Vietnam War is not at all unique among our warmongering class. Other famous examples among the "hawks" have survived and prospered by avoiding dangerous duty or any military service at all. Ronald Reagan, Elliott Abrams, Pat Buchanan, Pat Robertson and Sy "Rambo" Stallone are the more famous. The question now is, are they better labelled "hawks" or "chickens"? I favor the term "chicken-hawks" for their breed, using the hyphen to distinguish them from the similarly named feathered varieties. The important distinguishing feature of the "chicken-hawk," often obscured in the mass media, is the combination of avoiding danger for itself with promoting war and death for others not of its class.

Gordon C. Blaha  
Cincinnati

## Pros in Vietnam

ALEXANDER COCKBURN SAID IN HIS "ASHES AND Diamonds" column (ITT, Sept. 14) that only two professional athletes fought in Vietnam. He forgot Al Bumbry, former outfielder for the Baltimore Orioles.

Vivian Martin  
Baltimore

## Bush and Noriega

THE EVACUATION OF NON-ESSENTIAL CIVILIANS from the U.S. Embassy in Panama is a portent of another "October surprise." Apparently the Reagan administration and Bush team have been encouraged by the Democrats' indifference to their shenanigans (i.e., delaying the Iranians' release of U.S. hostages in exchange for arms sales commitments) in October 1980.

This time there will be no hostages when Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega is violently deposed and silenced through assassination. What those in the administration ignore is that if Noriega has half a brain, he probably will expose Bush's ties to the drug network and himself through memoirs or tapes in others' hands—to be published posthumously.

Furthermore, despite camouflage as to the operation's *Yanqui* sponsors and managers, much of Latin America will pinpoint Washington as the intervening imperial power.

Thus anti-American resentment will further erode our already minimal prestige and the confidence of peoples as well as governments in the region. Neither hemispheric leadership nor security is enhanced by such flagrant violations of the U.N. charter, international law and our own Constitution.

Prof. Miles D. Wolpin  
State University of New York, Potsdam

## On the outside

COME NOW, WAS THE CHICAGO CONVENTION RIOT of 1968 due to police "out of control?" I thought they knew perfectly well what Mayor Daley wanted! Your editorial (ITT, Sept. 7) expresses regret at the youthful riotous demonstrations. My regret while inside the convention was only that the demonstrators were not 10 times as numerous. We inside drew strength from those on the outside. Where were all the rest when we needed them? Safe at home! No wonder

their movement fell into the hands of crazies like the Weathermen.

I was at that convention as an alternate pledged to Gene McCarthy. The Johnson-Humphrey Democrats, true to the record of the Democrats as the party of war, did not hesitate to revel in their victory, even drowning out our anguished pleas with "The Halls of Montezuma." As for the youngsters, well, stay-at-homes or rioters, they were a TV generation. Instant victory was not to be had, so they gave up. They thus missed an opportunity. The Democratic Party, as is so often the case, existed in many places more on paper than in the wards and precincts. Large parts of it were there for the taking, but the anti-war youths were too busy nourishing their bruised egos. Not surprising, that. After all, they had come on the scene as a completely ahistorical, anti-historical movement, steeped in ageist prejudices. We of the "Old Left" not only had nothing to teach them, so they thought, we did not even exist! Right, center, left, we were all over 30 and therefore just so much shit!

I returned home (dazed and incoherent with rage for two weeks) hoping "the movement" would seize control of much of the Democratic Party at the grass roots and move on to build a popular New Left. Instead, it disappeared into thin air.

It seems to me the resistance to the system was much more solid and less ephemeral in the '30s. Its great mistake was Marxist sectarianism and the acquiescence of the Communist Party to directives from Stalin's *sanctum sanctorum*. For the rebels of the '60s only our mistakes were visible, but only as submerged in the mistakes of everyone over 30. The old idea of education, agitation and organization—still sound today—was not for them, because it required long-term commitment, especially to that third term, organization. In common with the capitalist class it so despised, the youngsters were hung up on worship of short-term efforts and immediate results.

The uprisings of the '60s should be treasured for slowing down the war effort. The lesson to be learned is not that the disturbances were a mistake, but that the anti-war youngsters refused to study the past, sifting out what was solid and essential from what was erroneous. Spontaneity is ignored at our peril, but uninformed spontaneity leads to disaster and changing the system requires life-long commitment.

Larry Wolf  
Cincinnati

## Dukes up

SO YOU THINK MICHAEL DUKAKIS IS A SLIME? I'm not arguing, but I think his election will make our lives easier. For me, voting is less

an ideological exercise than one of determining which candidate is most likely to commit inane criminal acts, thereby forcing me to write letters, demonstrate, attend meetings and otherwise waste my valuable leisure time. Last June I voted for Jesse Jackson. Now the choice is between the Greek and the Geek. Take a look at these issues.

Nuclear weapons: Dukakis is the only major party candidate ever to run with the stated position of being against *every* new strategic nuclear weapon system. He has embraced a variety of important ideas, including a ban on test flights of new missile systems. Don't be fooled by his posturing on Star Wars. He has always supported some sort of research. However, Dukakis' original intention, which he has not changed, is to reduce the Strategic Defense Initiative's budget by 80 percent with no money for deployment. Can he follow through on these positions? Rep. Les Aspin and Sen. Sam Nunn are the congressional Democratic defense gurus. If you want them pulled toward the right, don't vote and let George Bush win.

Central America: Dukakis is genuinely and passionately committed to non-intervention. When the Democrats decided to demonstrate their virility and pushed through a "beans and blankets" aid package to the contras, President Reagan vetoed it for being insufficiently violent. Dukakis was under severe pressure to support it. Instead, he vehemently denounced it. The reporter looked startled, as this normally cool man angrily poured forth lists of treaties and international laws violated by contra aid. If you want an ex-CIA director bombing Central America, let Bush win.

Abortion and civil liberties: The next president will get to choose three Supreme Court justices. This will transform the court into either a "moderate" conservative body, or a nest of goosestepping yahoos. If you want abortion illegal don't vote, let Bush win. If you want the next three judges picked by a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union, vote for Dukakis.

Dukakis is one of the most progressive candidates to ever have run for president. Do I trust Dukakis? Only to sell us out at any given opportunity. No matter who wins, we will be busy. Real political power rests not with the politicians, but with people like us. The need for political activity does not decrease with a Democratic administration.

William Finn  
San Rafael, Calif.

**Editor's note:** No, we don't think Dukakis is slime, just that he's running a miserable campaign.

## Sinking

FIND IT SADLY IRONIC THAT YOU RUN FINE ARTICLES criticizing our society's continued fetishization of women's bodies (ITT, Sept. 7) while Joel Bleifuss devotes much of his column quoting from *Playboy* magazine. We used to make jokes about the one guy in every crowd who was always quoting from *Playboy*, and what a jerk he was. Well, now the guy has become a crowd, and the creepy thing is that they are mostly on the left. Bleifuss (who does this rather frequently—he must have a subscription) has recently been joined by such *Playboy*-quoting writers as Christopher Hitchens in a recent issue of *The Nation*, and so-called "radicals" like Alexander Cockburn and now Abbie Hoffman have even published articles in it.

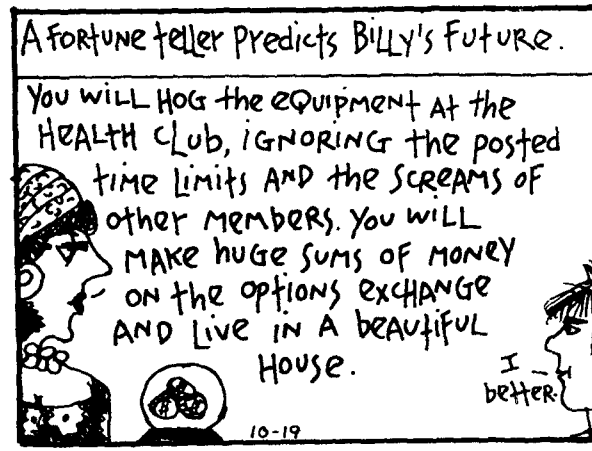
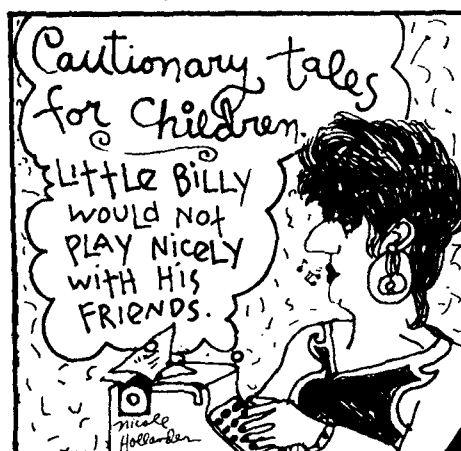
These are sexist and hypocritical acts coming from men who claim to be critics of capitalist patriarchy. Apparently, they believe their audience is 100 percent male and will not be offended by quotations from pornographic magazines. But this woman reader is angered, hurt and humiliated when the male writers I trust and respect (albeit falteringly) make references to the enterprise of Hefner and Hefner for any reason. Whether they intend to or not, they are legitimizing and endorsing the magazine and others like it; they are aiding and abetting the trade in women's bodies. They are smut peddlers.

In the meantime, the misery of the world's women increases. They sink deeper into abject poverty and face hunger, disease and mental illness in escalating numbers. They are beaten, raped and killed by men to an astonishing degree, and they must struggle harder than men for their jobs, shelter, education, access to media and technology, and political rights. Third World women face additional perils in the form of severe malnutrition, starvation, genital mutilation, economic enslavement, warfare that turns them into refugees and death-by-poverty of almost half their children. Meanwhile, back in the First World, all safe and warm, there are well-fed, healthy and wealthy white male "leftists" blithely quoting from a girlie magazine. It truly makes me sick.

Kathleen A. Dahl  
Pullman, Wash.

**Editor's note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

## SYLVIA





By Marlene Nadle

**T**HE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ARE SO busy with their own race that they aren't paying attention to elections in Latin America that could cause the future president his first crisis. In the next year, U.S. policy may be rejected by newly elected leaders in Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil even more emphatically than it was by the strong showing of Cuauhtemoc Cardenas in this summer's still-disputed Mexican presidential election.

Cardenas is just the first of an emerging group of Latin leaders who are challenging the U.S.-backed debt policies being carried out by their present governments. Polls indicate Carlos Andres Perez is likely to be elected in Venezuela by the time the new U.S. president is inaugurated. Carlos Saul Menem is currently favored to win Argentina's election next May or June. Leonel Brizola has a strong chance of victory in Brazil's election in November 1989—unless the military intervenes. Each candidate promises to stop payment on all or part of his country's foreign debt. Each is also likely to repudiate the International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescription for more government belt-tightening.

If the next U.S. president responds to this rebellion with a punitive cutoff of credit and capital instead of an innovative new policy, he will further damage the stability of countries that have been traumatized by the debt burden. This would further deteriorate U.S. relations with the region.

Latin American "populists" are already

## Latin American debt: an issue that won't go away

fueling their campaigns by capitalizing on the widespread resentment over U.S.-backed debt terms and over prescriptions for contracting their economies. They are expressing their people's anger at policies that give U.S. bankers billions each year, but put Latins and their countries in deep economic crisis. And they are appealing both to middle-class voters who have seen their way of life ravaged by inflation, and to the poor who have suffered the worst of the recession, unemployment, hunger and despair.

Trying to explain the tremendous enthusiasm these candidates generate, an Argentine opponent of Menem claimed it was the same as Jesse Jackson's. "It is the sort of magic touch—a non-rational approach to redemption. The rational sectors have been unable to provide any solution to the people's needs, and so the people seek a charismatic solution." Charisma plays a part, but more importantly, Menem and the other populists try to address their people's needs. These populists do not leave the people almost entirely out of the equation as do their current governments and U.S. policy.

**Debt for all:** American policy has treated the debt crisis as a banking problem rather than the complex social problem it is. Since

the crisis began in 1982, the main approach of the Reagan administration has been to use the IMF to protect banks holding Latin loans and to make sure the interest on them is paid regardless of the social cost to the debtor nations. It wasn't until 1985 that the new Baker plan took rhetorical note of the Latin side of the debt crisis—and that was done only in response to the actions of Peruvian President Alan Garcia, who was one of the first to refuse to put the bankers' needs ahead of those of his own people. The Baker plan has remained mainly rhetorical rather than making real its stated goal of economic growth and loans for progress. Minimal debt relief schemes were developed to pacify the troubled nations, but they have barely touched the staggering sums that continue to be sent to the bankers.

This banking strategy, which has continued long past the time when it may have been necessary to prevent a collapse of the banks, lacks a broader vision of our national interest. The State Department stayed away from the debt problem almost entirely until this August. During George Shultz's catch-up trip to Latin America he encountered the resentment that has grown from exploitation. Even then he continued to speak in bankers' language about bridge loans instead of responding to the political warning given in Argentina when the opposition parties demonstrated against his visit, and in Bolivia when the Workers Federation declared him "persona non grata."

Shultz's treatment was just a preview of the rejection of the policy that is to come. The next president is likely to encounter the following crises and demands in Latin America:

• **Mexico:** Just because Cardenas did not win the fraud-tainted election does not mean relations with the U.S. aren't going to change. Carlos Salinas, the ruling party can-

commenting on the building social pressure, said, "The ruling party no longer controls the social forces. Their discipline has cracked, especially in the labor movement. The recent election broke a psychic barrier."

• **Venezuela:** Former President Carlos Perez, the leading candidate and a man with a continental perspective, has become an outspoken supporter of Peruvian President Alan Garcia's debt stance. Like Garcia, who unilaterally reduced debt payments to 10 percent of his country's export earnings, Perez is determined to set his own terms on future payment of the \$33 billion debt. He rejects the "economic totalitarianism" of the IMF, which took 26 percent of Venezuela's export revenue in 1987. He has taken this stance because even this wealthiest nation in Latin America has debtor problems. The 12-month inflation rate reached 28 percent in August, unemployment is growing, cash reserves are falling and, for the first time, Venezuela has to go further in debt by borrowing to pay the interest on existing loans. Perez' decision to do something about the suffering is the reason his Democratic Action Party—now in power—has not lost support and legitimacy as has happened in Mexico. With his restless energy and magnetism, Perez is likely to play a hemispheric role in the coming debt rebellion. He already spoke for the continent when he warned, "The current debt policies that hit the poor hardest have very dangerous consequences for the nascent democracies of Latin America."

• **Argentina:** Carlos Menem, confident of victory, has promised to ask his Congress for a five-year suspension of interest payments on the \$56 billion debt that took 56 percent of export earnings in 1987. He is likely to get it because of the recent congressional defeat of President Raul Alfonsin's Radical Party in 1987. This defeat is in large measure a result of Alfonsin's failure to obtain substantive relief on U.S.-IMF-backed debt payment or prescriptions for the currency devaluation and spending cutbacks that have caused such hardship. The living standard has gone back to '60s levels, the annual inflation rate reached 513 percent in July and the country is near economic collapse. In this difficult situation, Menem appeals as a populist and Peronist whose party has strong ties to the labor unions and a tradition of concern for the "shirtless ones." As a governor who is producing an economic boom in his poor province, he is taken seriously when he says he will create a "productivity revolution" for his moribund country by using its money for growth instead of sending it to U.S. bankers.

• **Brazil:** Former Gov. Leonel Brizola, who is ahead in the polls, has endorsed the declaration of peasant and labor leaders that announced the debt would be considered paid in full and the issue closed. He also talked about a moratorium on interest payments until there is a renegotiation of the \$122 billion debt that ate up 35 percent of export earnings in 1987. The left scoffs at his conflicting positions as political waffling. But the military sees Brizola only as the fiery socialist he once was rather than the mellow social democrat he has become. There is a risk the armed forces would prevent direct presidential elections, or even make a coup to keep him out of office. That would add a greater political

HOLIDAY

Gift

OFFER

MY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Send my first gift to:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ XX82

☐ \$34.95 one year ☐ \$18.95 for 29 issues  
☐ New order ☐ Renewal

Send my second gift to:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ XX82

☐ \$24.95 one year ☐ \$16.95 for 29 issues  
☐ New order ☐ Renewal

Send my third gift to:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ XX82

☐ \$19.95 one year ☐ \$14.95 for 29 issues  
☐ New order ☐ Renewal

☐ Payment enclosed.

☐ Bill me later.

☐ Charge my MC/Visa

# \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Or call our toll free number 1-800-435-0715. In Illinois call 1-800-892-0753.

A gift card will be sent announcing your gift. All gifts will begin with the first issue in January, 1989. Please write any additional gifts on a separate sheet of paper. Each gift being sent to Canada or Mexico, please add \$6.50 postage for 29 issues and \$13.00 for one year. All other foreign orders add \$23.20 for 29 issues or \$33.00 for one year.

In These Times

1912 Debs Ave.

Mt. Morris, IL 61054