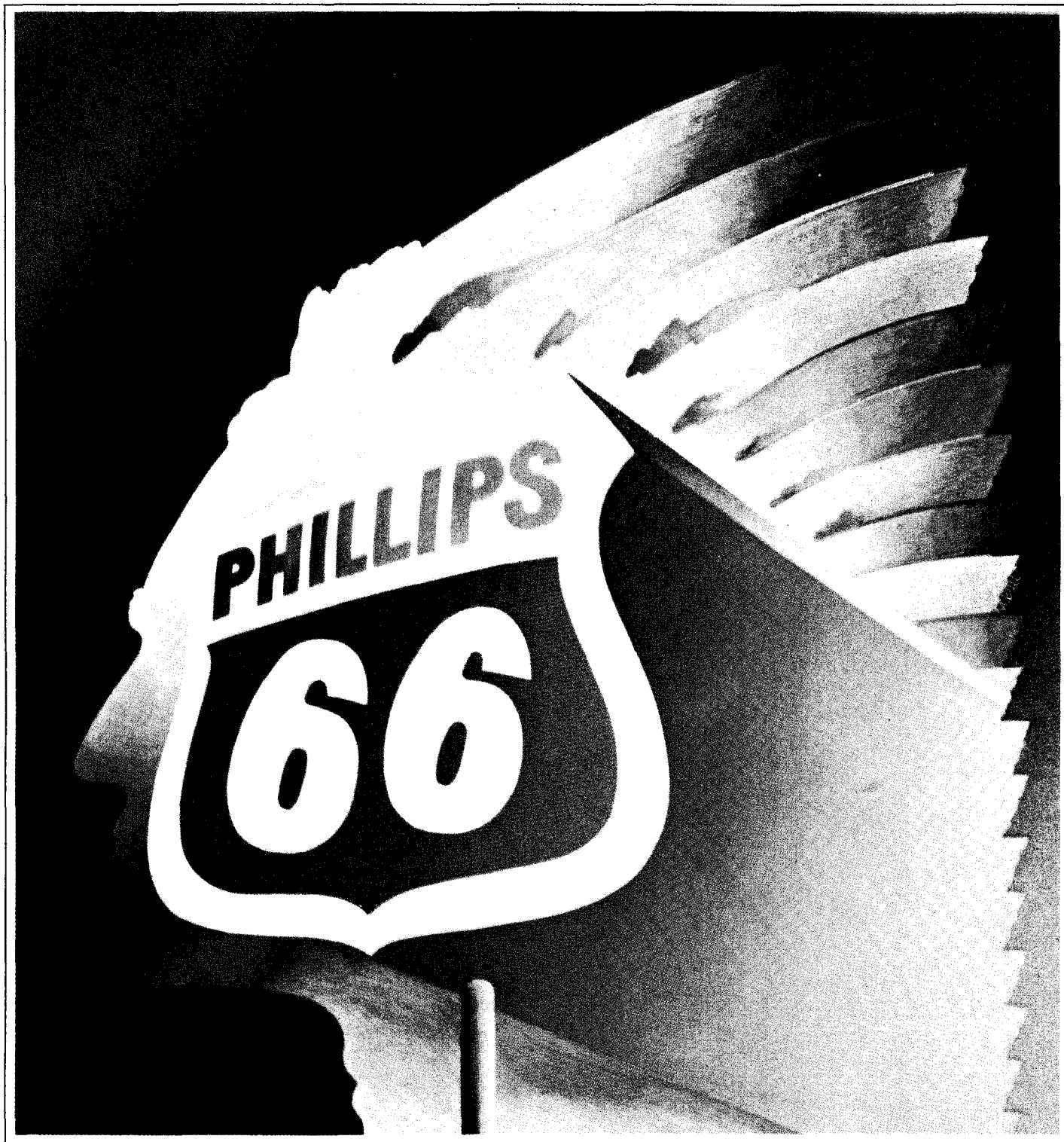
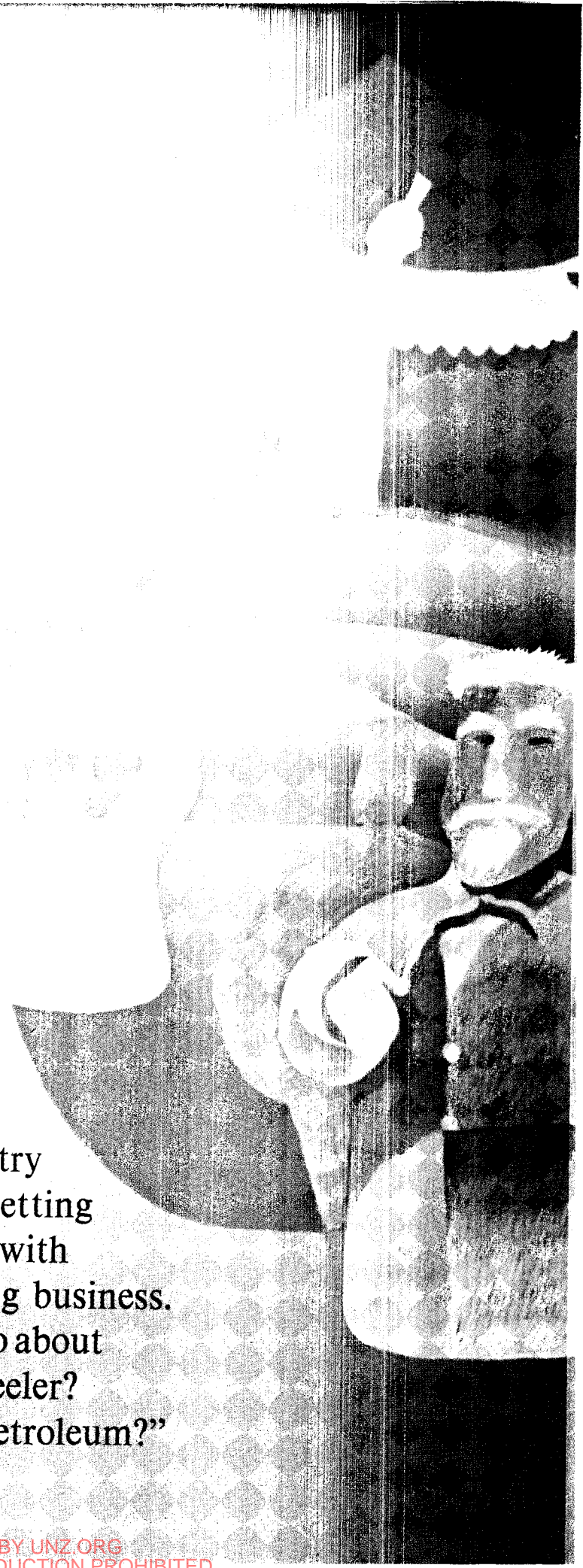


The Theft of a Nation: Apologies to the Cherokees





“So you’ve got to realize
that if things don’t look
bad down here, it’s probably
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Underneath all the sweet talk
about development and industry
and all, these Cherokees are getting
all smothered – with power, with
Oklahoma politics, and with big business.
We’ve tried, but how do you go about
fighting a man like W. W. Keeler?
How do you fight Phillips Petroleum?”

BACK IN THE GREEN rolling hills of northeastern Oklahoma, in the middle of a deserted clearing a stone's throw off a rough country road, there is a small family cemetery. It is bounded by an old wooden fence overgrown with honeysuckle and wild lavender, and thick with bees from a nearby hive. Most of the graves are marked with marble headstones, but some have only a tin plate set in the ground with a name and two dates scratched in by hand. One grave sits back toward the rear of the cemetery. It is old, the marker weathered and beginning to chip, the letters smoothing out with age. But if you look closely, you can trace the name of John Ross, one of the great leaders of the Cherokee Nation and a man who brought history to this part of the country.

When Ross became Principal Chief in 1828, the Cherokees—already known as one of the “civilized tribes” because they had seen that survival depended on adapting to some of the white man's ways—were not here in Oklahoma. The tribe was back in Georgia where it had always been, and it was fighting to keep the U.S. government from moving it west across the Mississippi to what was known as Indian Territory. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Indians, but Andrew Jackson dispatched soldiers to herd the Cherokees out of Georgia. The route they took is remembered as the Trail of Tears because 4000 of their people died along the way.

During the next decades, the Cherokee Nation carved a foothold in this wilderness. Under Ross's leadership, they built a self-sufficient government with a model constitution; they had bilingual newspapers and a populace almost totally literate in Cherokee; their sons and daughters returned from white colleges to help create a school system regarded as the finest west of the Mississippi. When John Ross died in 1866, some whites had already infiltrated the Cherokees' lands, and others—the Sooners and Boomers of a later era—were beginning to clamor for the opening of its rich bottom lands; but the traditional Cherokee fullbloods still controlled the course of their Nation, and the tribe still owned every inch of these quiet hills.

ABOUT A MILE FROM the Ross Family cemetery, there is a reconstruction of an 18th century Cherokee village which is part of the recently built Cherokee Cultural Center called Tsa-La-Gi. The tour costs \$1.00, and it is led by a local Indian girl with a well-rehearsed monologue on Cherokee history. She takes you past women sitting cross-legged, stitching skins together with bone needles or pounding grain in cratered rocks. The men, some of them wearing blue-black wigs with long braids, work hollowing dugout canoes or feathering arrows; and the children, big-eyed and half-naked, look shyly to their parents when the whites coming through ask them questions or offer them a handful of coins. The “inhabitants” of the Village are all Cherokee fullbloods who are provided with buckskins and cautioned not to speak English inside the compound as they act out a day in the life of the tribe back in the old country.

There is more to the Cultural Center. Across from the Village, laborers are fixing up another of its attractions—a large, elaborate amphitheatre where an outdoor drama

called “The Trail of Tears” is performed during the summer by a company of white actors. Chronicling the journey to Indian Territory and the hardships the Indians first encountered, this play brings Cherokee history up to the year 1907 and ends with the cast joining in a song praising the progress that would be shared by red man and white alike with the coming of Oklahoma's statehood.

Tsa-La-Gi attracts more customers every year. But the Indians down here don't like it. Cherokees are mild and generally keep their opinions to themselves, but if you were to ask one of them about the drama he would probably tell you that his people didn't want Oklahoma citizenship and that all they've gotten since 1907 was a good view of the white man as he stole hundreds of thousands of acres of their land. As for the Village, he might suggest that you listen closely to some of the comments the whites make and watch the resentment that lashes the faces of the “inhabitants,” the fullblood descendants of the men who pioneered this country in the day of John Ross and who now live on welfare for that part of the year they are not playing Indian.

History has taught the Cherokee, perhaps more than any other American Indian, how white power works. And things aren't getting any better. This Cultural Center is an example of the Indian's powerlessness. For it was not created by some local Chamber of Commerce or by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tsa-La-Gi was built by the Cherokees' own government with their own money. It was the special project of W. W. Keeler, their current Principal Chief, who is one-sixteenth Indian and neither speaks the Cherokees' language nor participates in their social life; who was never elected Chief by the Indians but rather appointed, as a political favor, by the Secretary of the Interior; and who has used his position in Indian affairs to subtly benefit Phillips Petroleum, the giant Oklahoma oil company of which he is chairman, while the Cherokee fullblood lives in poverty.

The fortunes of the Cherokee Nation have changed drastically since the days of John Ross, along with the face of Indian Territory. But one thing has remained constant: there are still cowboys and Indians down here, and the Indians are still getting the worst of it.

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THE SMALL RURAL TOWN of Talequah, Oklahoma, is filled with scenes that are vintage Americana: shopkeepers leaning diagonally in their doorways to gossip with passersby, slapping them roughly on the back at the conclusion of a joke; grizzled old men in bib overalls and straw hats sitting in rows in the town park, talking deliberately and occasionally rolling a cud of tobacco from one side of the mouth to the other, or bending down to shoot a stream of brown juice onto the ground; kids running through the humid evenings in pursuit of fireflies.

As you drive down the main street, it isn't hard to imagine scenes like these taking place a hundred years ago. But they didn't take place here, for a hundred years ago Talequah was the thriving capital of the Cherokee Nation. The county offices in the center of the park where the old men now congregate was the Capitol Building, constructed

by Peter Collier

Illustrations by Mike Bull

in 1867; and the two old structures on nearby streets, both still in use, were the Cherokee Supreme Court Building and the National Prison.

The people of this part of Oklahoma do not deny that they stand on a solid stratum of Indian culture. Many even claim Cherokee blood to prove that they are not latecomers to the area. They will tell you stories about the Indians and direct you to landmarks like the new Cherokee Cultural Center a couple of miles outside of town. But if you ask about the Cherokees of today, you are likely to get an evasive reply about everybody being a mixed-blood down here, and a hand might wave vaguely toward the hills as the home of the few stubborn fullbloods who hang on.

O KLAHOMANS HAVE BUILT a myth which says that their Indians have been successfully integrated into the general population. For a while they had convinced not only themselves but almost everyone else as well. Then, in the mid-1960s, anthropologist Albert Warhaftig spent a year taking a census and found there were more than 10,000 Cherokees living in small communities scattered throughout the northeastern Oklahoma hills, where they had fled at the turn of the century to preserve their way of life. These are people who regard English as a language of foreign relations and about 40 per cent are functionally illiterate in it; they are strongly traditional in outlook and folkways, and their numbers are periodically augmented by another 2000 who live in nearby towns and small cities like Talequah but return to the hills for their communal life.

The pervasive notion of Indian assimilation, like other myths, performs a function: it allows the whites of Oklahoma to avoid coming to terms with the great damage they did to Cherokees in the past, and it allows them to continue that damage today. Thus the Cherokee fullblood, although his numbers are increasing and his communities are still viable, is always slipping farther down. The per family income of the Indians living in these hills and hollows averages less than \$2000 a year. Their homes are typically log cabins or shacks built of odd-sized pieces of lumber sheathed in tarpaper. About 35 per cent of them have electricity; roughly seven per cent have inside plumbing and slightly more have supplies of pure water.

But the Cherokees are not only uncomfortable and poor; they are imprisoned in a system that keeps them at the bottom of the social ladder while it insists that they live there by their own choosing. The Indian children go to rural public schools which are as bad as the notorious Bureau of Indian Affairs schools and have an even worse record. Suffering a variety of humiliations, the children leave school early; a recent study by researchers from the University of Kansas shows that Cherokees have an average of about five years in school, which is three years less than their poor white neighbors and five years less than the state average. The economic implications are clear: the Indian occupies the lowest niche in his own economically depressed area and has little chance for work; but if he emigrates to a big city like Tulsa, he not only cuts himself off from the subtle life-support system of his community but also finds what urban unemployment is like from the



W. W. Keeler

vantage point of the ghetto.

Throughout these small Cherokee communities the Indians take whatever work they can find, and it is not uncommon to see Indian women doing hard labor for white families at \$3.00 a day, and their husbands working in nurseries or chicken processing plants for not much more. But gradually the capricious bounty of the welfare worker is beginning to replace the low wages of the rural white employer as the economy of this area. While Cherokees comprise about 12 per cent of the total population of this part of Oklahoma, they now make up more than 35 per cent of those on welfare. Better than half of the Indian families here are dependent on some kind of government assistance—old age, aid to dependent children, and the like—and the figure is rising. The government check has not only created a new economy in the backwoods, but is replacing land as the Indians' most easily swindled asset.

None of this should shock anyone familiar with the so-called "plight" of the Indian in America. What is surprising in Oklahoma is that despite all this evidence, the Cherokee is still socially invisible. Oklahoma whites believe that theirs is a society where people sink or swim on their own merits. What more do you want, they ask, than a place where an Indian like Bill Keeler can grow up to be head of one of the most powerful corporations in the world?

[III]

S ITTING BEHIND A DESK in a well-furnished office and periodically checking with the mini-skirted Indian secretary in an outer office, Billy Bob Stopp, general manager of the Cherokee Nation and recently appointed as a deputy chief, says that things are getting better and better for the Cherokees and that for the first

time this year the tribe will be operating out of the red. Noting in passing that his parents were fullbloods, the young, moon-faced Stopp, a graduate student in business administration at the University of Missouri when the general manager's job became vacant, says, "Our main goal is to take these Indian people off welfare and get them into decent jobs."

Stopp's office is in the main building of what they call "The Keeler Complex," a cluster of four buildings on a 40-acre tract the tribe owns just outside Talequah. In addition to the headquarters of the tribe, which leases a portion of its space to the local Bureau of Indian Affairs agency, there is an arts and crafts center selling Cherokee handcrafts, and a restaurant, the Restaurant o' the Cherokees, featuring an expensive menu and a large wood sculpture of W. W. Keeler encircled by the traditional symbolism of Cherokee leadership. The other component of the Keeler Complex is a tribally operated gas station flying the red Phillips 66 shield.

If there is a contrast between the luxury of this group of buildings and the poverty of the Cherokees living back in the nearby hills, between its air of industry and their imprisonment in an unrelenting caste system, the Indians themselves rarely see it. The people who come to the Keeler Complex are mainly whites—white tourists paying \$10.00 for beaded medallions which took a Cherokee fullblood a whole day to make (and for which he got \$3.00), and white officials coming and going from the BIA. Tribal Cherokees have no feeling for this headquarters, although at least it has acquainted them with the fact that there is a chief the white world recognizes as theirs.

WHEN KEELER, THEN A rising young executive at Phillips Petroleum, was first appointed Principal Chief in 1949 by President Truman (the fact the position is appointive was one of the provisions for the abolition of the Cherokee Nation's formal government), there wasn't any outcry. The title carried with it no power and was more ceremonial than anything else. Even though Keeler appointed an Executive Committee to act as a ruling oligarchy in tribal affairs it didn't matter, because this committee had no way of affecting the fullbloods. At the turn of the century, the Cherokees' communal lands had been broken up into individual allotments, and while the clique of mixed-bloods and whites of Indian descent who had taken control of tribal affairs got the rich agricultural flatlands, the fullbloods had pushed farther back into the hills. They had no reservation and were therefore not a captive constituency.

In 1961, however, an event occurred that changed things. The U. S. Indian Claims Commission, established to give Indian tribes cash compensation for lands stolen over the centuries, awarded the Cherokees \$15 million for a strip taken from them in 1893. After attorneys' fees and the BIA's "offsets" for the services it had given the Indians over the years, a \$280 per capita payment was made to the more than 40,000 people, most of them whites, who were either enrolled in the tribe in 1907, or their descendants. There was still more than \$2 million left over because of fractional and unclaimed shares; and this became the "seed

money" that Keeler and his Executive Committee needed to make their plans for the Cherokees come true.

First, the past was taken care of. State and federal funds were obtained to supplement \$100,000 in tribal funds, and work on the Village and the amphitheatre housing the Cherokee drama began. The Cultural Center will ultimately include two more attractions: a museum and a Cherokee national archives. Also in the Nation's plan is the sum of \$50,000 for the compilation of an official history of the tribe, and one of the members of Keeler's Executive Committee, former State Supreme Court Justice N. B. Johnson (who was impeached for taking bribes), has been doing some preliminary research work.

Keeler's government also has plans for the Indians' future, which is to depend on the success of a program of development through private enterprise. The tribal headquarters ring with earnest talk about industry and capital, about contract negotiations and proper worker relations. Billy Bob Stopp is in charge of the day-to-day management of Cherokee money, and he sees his main task as superintending the growth of the local GNP. "We want to do things with the Nation's money," he says, "things that will get the ball rolling and bring industry into the area. One of the things we are willing to do is loan our funds to businesses at the lowest going rate of interest so they'll come in here and set up shop. We make a gentleman's agreement that there'll be some Indians hired." He notes that the tribe has recently loaned \$60,000 to Stephens Manufacturing Company, a local firm making heating equipment; and \$150,000 to Glassmaster Plastics, a company making fiberglass boats in the small town of Grove.

THE CHEROKEES' ENTRANCE into the business world is intimately tied to Chief Keeler's own relationship with Phillips, and it has been carried forward with the assistance of Marvin Franklin, appointed by Keeler to be Phillips's Director of Special Projects. Franklin not only helps the Cherokee Nation with its enterprises but also sits on the board of directors of the Navajo Timber Company and journeys to reservations all over the country, helping Indians develop economically in partnership with private enterprise.

From his office in Phillips's Bartlesville headquarters, Franklin, talking with the rough geniality of this region, says that Phillips is committed to helping all minorities. "We have the philosophy that we ought to do what we can to bring development to those places that are behind." And as far as the Cherokees are concerned, Franklin feels that the two loans already made to local companies represent a step in the right direction.

But for him the big development is the Cherokee Industries, a tribally operated business. He draws a small electronic assembly from his desk and holds it god-like in the palm of his hand. "This was the beginning about a year ago," he says, putting it down and producing a bigger one with more complicated wiring. "And now they're making these." He tells how he negotiated a contract for the Cherokee Industries with Western Electric, which is now buying all the assemblies they can make. "Now we've got 80 employees out there, and each one of them gets five

shares of stock at Christmas. They own the whole thing. It gives you a real thrill to see how quickly they pick up on business. Anybody who says that Indians can't do it is all wrong." Franklin, who was elected board chairman of Cherokee Nation Industries, mentions that another contract was recently arranged to do carpet cutting for American Airlines, and that Phillips itself—through Phillips Products, a subsidiary making plastic pipe—now has a plant in the nearby town of Pryor where three-quarters of their employees are Cherokee. Passing under the color photograph, just outside his office, of Chief Keeler dressed in a ceremonial headdress and a red-and-white beaded jerkin, Franklin says that this industrial development is the wave of the future for America's Indians.

BUT AS IS SO OFTEN the case where Indians are concerned, the reality is far less rosy than the picture that is painted. And so, the two operations to which the tribe has loaned a total of \$210,000 of Cherokee money now employ respectively five and 14 Cherokees at an average wage of less than \$2.00 an hour. The Cherokee Nation Industries does have a working relationship with Western Electric, but of the 83 employees Franklin mentions, less than half are full-time and only 25 are men, the favoring of women disrupting the ecology of the Indian family. As for the contract with American Airlines, so far seven people are employed cutting carpet, and the operation takes place behind the Restaurant o' the Cherokees in a large, deserted warehouse originally built for a South Carolina textile company that was to come and employ hundreds of Cherokees, but which came and left.

The Phillips Products plant at the small town of Pryor is not much more encouraging. According to O. E. Larsen, plant manager, 40 of the 60 employees are indeed Cherokees, although none are in supervisory positions. But the motives for hiring these Indians are far less altruistic than Franklin leads one to believe. "We hire Indians here because of Mr. Keeler's interest in them," Larsen says. "But also because it makes good economic sense." The Indians come to Phillips on the Bureau of Indian Affairs employment assistance program, which means that while they are "learning the trade" for up to 18 months, as much as one-half of their wages is paid by the government. In addition to this wage subsidy, the Indians are a naive and fairly docile labor force. "Your minority people," Larsen notes, "they aren't so transient. There are a lot of Indians living in this area with their families and all, and you know they aren't going to pick up and leave. I mean, if you train up a group of them, they aren't likely to go running off to a place like Chicago hunting a better-paying job with the skills you've given them. We hire a lot of Indians here because we have the kind of jobs they qualify for because of their lack of education. Now if we had a lot of jobs paying \$4.00 or so an hour, you'd see our ratio of Indians to white workers flop right on over."

It is not only among the Cherokees that the claim of private enterprise to have a solution for the nation's Indian problem has been inflated. There have been an estimated 10,000 jobs created by industries located on reservations, but less than half of them—and those always the lowest-paying and most menial—have been filled by Indians. Busi-

nesses have come to the reservation surrounded by a halo of rhetoric. Often they obtain lucrative employment-training contracts given with the tacit understanding that the business will set up an ongoing operation after the contract is over; but they rarely do. Instead they move on to a new contract at the next reservation, leaving behind them Indians who finally become qualified in several occupations but have nowhere to work. What makes it bad here in Oklahoma is not only that Keeler uses the Indians as a public relations lacquer for Phillips, or even that the disappointing relationship with industry is financed with Cherokee money, but that the Cherokees have no opportunity to decide how development of their area should proceed. And as all these quests after industry are taking place—some of them cynical, others simply quixotic—the real problems of the Indian people fester and become worse.

IN FACT, TO AN uneducated observer it would almost seem that the tribal government is countenancing these problems. There is, for example, its close cooperation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As Billy Bob Stopp says, "We have a pretty good relationship with the BIA out here. If we have a gripe, we sit down with businessmen and talk things over." But while these presumably amiable discussions are going on, the BIA continues to allow the full-bloods' precious lands—their only connection with the past and their only hedge against the future—to slip away at the rate of over 5000 acres a year. And while Billy Bob Stopp insists that something must be done to get Cherokees off welfare, the tribal government joins the BIA in watching over the Cherokees, engaging in threats to declare them incompetent or to send their children to orphanages.

The tribe also participates in some programs whose aims are good but whose long-range effect could be damaging. It is, for example, involved with HUD and the BIA in what is called a "mutual help housing program." Under this plan, the Indian can apply for a new home, donating one acre of his land for a homesite and 500 hours of his labor to help in the construction. He gets a three-bedroom house valued at \$15,000 and a "sweat equity" of \$1500. He pays the balance off in monthly payments (although the actual value of the home is about \$10,000 and the rest represents "administrative costs"). The title for the home and homesite rests with the housing authority until the balance is paid off, and if the Indian doesn't make minimum equity payments as well as take care of upkeep, the housing authority can pay out the money and charge it to his equity account. According to Tom Tribby, Housing Officer for the BIA, "If the equity ever falls below ten per cent of the value of the home, it can legally be taken over by the housing authority and sold." There are also pressures in this program to get the Indian to sell his allotment in the hills (once valueless but now of increasing importance to the State's plans for artificial lakes and recreational development) and move into tracts near towns. "We encourage the Indians," Tribby says, "to think about coming down closer to town where they can build their home and work into a job."

Ultimately, the tribal government is as insensitive to the Indians' needs and desires as the Bureau of Indian Affairs

—seeing them as clock-punching workers, cogs in the wheels of industry, decent citizens or some other Anglo abstraction. The Cherokees have no chance to develop in ways dictated by communal plans and priorities, and for them Keeler's government is just another foe to be wary of. But it is doubtful that the Principal Chief knows of the depth of their suspicion. For not only is he isolated by birth and background from the Indians he insists on governing; like all men of power he surrounds himself with people whose only real job is to tell him good news.

C. C. Carshall, Deputy Area Director of the BIA, says of the Chief of the Cherokees, "Mr. Keeler is a very compassionate man. He has more compassion for the common people than anyone I've ever met. And he is doing wonders out there. These Cherokees couldn't have a better man. Not even if they could elect him."

Billy Bob Stopp says with sincere admiration, "I think Mr. Keeler is the man of the century for the Cherokee people. This thing is really getting off the ground now, and by the time it's all over, I think Bill Keeler is going to rank right up there with Will Rogers as one of the great Cherokees."

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NOT EVERYONE BOWS and scrapes before the Cherokees' Chief, of course. Armin Saeger, for instance, presently a social worker in Tulsa, once ran afoul of Keeler when he was working for the U.S. Department of Public Health's Indian hospital in Talequah. Saeger noticed that the Cherokees coming out of the hills were suspicious of the hospital and alienated by some of its routines, so he helped establish a hospital committee comprised of fullbloods selected by various congregations of the Cherokee Baptist Church, which functions as the core of the social life in the fullblood communities. The innovation was very successful and became an example which Indian hospitals and health services elsewhere were encouraged to imitate. But then, with no warning at all, Saeger was informed by his supervisor that he was to be transferred and had 24 hours to select a new assignment.

"I later found out," he reminisces, "that Keeler felt his authority had been challenged by this hospital committee, small as it was. The director of the hospital admitted to me that Keeler had ordered them not to meet with the committee anymore, but only with the official representatives of the tribe, by which he means *his* representatives. He also made his feelings known to the higher-ups in the public health department." Fingering his luxuriant beard, Saeger adds, "I was still shaving then, and I figured that I wouldn't be able to look myself in the face if I took re-assignment, so I quit altogether. But I've been involved in Indian affairs since then, and I've never run into anything like this situation with Keeler. He seems to be afraid that these Cherokees will get a chance to make up their own minds about something. Down here the BIA is the same bureaucracy of fear that it is on all reservations, but the difference is that the BIA—like everything else—is subservient to a higher authority. And that's W. W. Keeler."

But by far the bitterest critic in the small anti-Keeler underground is a doughty 70-year-old woman named Mil-

dred Ballenger who lives in Talequah with her husband, a retired professor of history who taught at the local college and whom Keeler once tried to cajole into updating the official Cherokee genealogy. Mrs. Ballenger, who counts herself close to half-Cherokee and has an album of sepia-toned photographs of a grandmother who was six when she came across the Trail of Tears, has been involved in Cherokee affairs for a long time. In 1953, Keeler appointed her to his Executive Committee and she went to its irregular meetings until the claims settlement was made. Then she found herself in violent disagreement with the uses to which the Indians' money was being put, and quit working with the Principal Chief.

"The Indians out there in the hills," she says, "I mean the real Indians—not the old white-faced Indians like me, but the fullbloods who are the only Cherokees left now culturally and socially—they are the ones who could have used that money. Even if all the things that Keeler and his bunch have done—building restaurants and Villages and industries and all that—ever makes any money, which they won't, these fullbloods wouldn't get a dime of it or have any voice in the way it got spent. I know that."

In 1968, when Senator Robert Kennedy's Subcommittee on Indian Education held field hearings in Oklahoma, Mrs. Ballenger was one of the most impressive witnesses. For a while afterwards she and others hoped something might come of the visit, but now she realizes that Keeler is even more powerful than she had imagined, and that she and her husband are "getting too old." Thus she spends some time helping fullblood friends like Polly Bear, whom she grew up with, work through the obstacle course of regulations and prohibitions the BIA sets up in front of their life and death decisions. Otherwise she doesn't get too involved. "One of the things you've got to say about Keeler," Mrs. Ballenger says, "is that he's real smooth. I remember once after we had an Executive Committee meeting up there in Bartlesville, he said to me about something, 'Now Mildred, you know you can catch a whole lot more flies with honey than you can with vinegar.' So you've got to realize that if things don't look too bad down here, it's probably because you can't see them. Underneath all the sweet talk about development and industry and all, these Cherokees are getting all smothered—with power, with Oklahoma politics, and with big business. We've tried, but how do you go about fighting a man like W. W. Keeler? How do you fight Phillips Petroleum?"

It is difficult, especially in the heavy political climate of Oklahoma, to imagine anyone even thinking that Keeler's hammerlock on the Cherokees can be broken. But there is one organization for which Mildred Ballenger's questions are practical ones. This is a group of fullbloods called the Original Cherokee Community Organization who have banded together to become the fly in Chief Keeler's ointment.

[v]

YOU CAN'T HELP BEING struck by the difference in style between the OCCO and the tribe's "official" government. Instead of panelled offices with secretaries and receptionists, the Original Cherokee Community Organization rents a cramped two-room store-

front off one of Talequah's main streets and has a staff of three, a mimeograph machine, and a white attorney. The OCCO has no money to loan out to industries, but it manages to scrape up enough to survive as a legal aid organization for the traditional Cherokees and as a sort of tribal government in exile.

George Groundhog, an energetic 57-year-old, was elected chairman in 1968 by the fullbloods living in the hills who make up OCCO's constituency. A veteran of both World War II and Korea, Groundhog spends most of his time on the go, arranging community meetings at congregations of the Cherokee Baptist Church, driving Indians to appointments, and hoping for a time when the OCCO will have the leverage to challenge Keeler's government and deal with the rural Oklahoma power structure that causes the Cherokees endless misery.

The Original Cherokee Community Organization is the product of a renaissance that materialized almost overnight in the fullblood communities in the mid-1960s. One impulse was a celebrated case which began when a Cherokee named John Chewie was picked up and jailed in one of the outlying rural towns for shooting a deer out of season. For the Indians of Oklahoma (as for those in the State of Washington and elsewhere in the rural United States), the hunting and fishing issue is more than an academic question about whether rights guaranteed in every treaty ever made between the red man and the white government were going to be honored. For people living at a subsistence line, it is more a question of whether or not there will be meat on the table; and so, on the day John Chewie was scheduled to come to trial, the traditionally mild Cherokees sent a shiver of fear through rural Oklahoma by starting to filter into town in their pickups, looking suddenly quite dangerous, armed with the rifles and shotguns they used out of season and without licenses to help feed their families.

At roughly the same time as the Chewie case, another ingredient that was to help produce the OCCO was moving into action. This was a small team of University of Chicago researchers who came to northeastern Oklahoma to test a hypothesis about trying to increase literacy in a people's native language as a way of increasing their literacy in English. They chose the Cherokees for the study because not only had the institutions of the past—the Cherokee Nation's famous school system and its government—decayed after statehood, but the once-high literacy in written Cherokee had also shrunk to the point that only ministers in the Cherokee Baptist Church used it; moreover, almost half the adult Cherokees in the area were functionally illiterate in English.

As part of their study, this project set up a new Cherokee newspaper, printed a Cherokee primer and some bilingual reading material and helped initiate a radio program in Cherokee. Their work began to take on an activist quality that caused Keeler and others to fire off angry letters to Washington and had some of the local rednecks grumbling ominously about Indian-lovers. For as their language suddenly came into play again, it was as if the Cherokees began to think about the days when they had controlled the destiny of the Nation, speaking through John Ross and other great leaders. Soon there were community meetings which had a new tone of militance; and soon

some of the Talequah merchants were painting signs in Cherokee on their store windows.

In the wake of the Chewie case and the excitement generated by their resurrected language, the OCCO was formed in 1967 with a small continuing grant from the Field Foundation. Stuart Trapp, a white civil rights attorney from Memphis who had come to Oklahoma to consult in Chewie's defense, stayed on as the OCCO's lawyer.

TRAPP AND I TALKED over the din of his old Volkswagen bus on the way from Talequah to the Muskogee law library, a 37-mile trip he makes several times a month because OCCO cannot afford a basic set of law reference books.

He mentioned some of the people who come in for help and some of the cases OCCO has gotten involved in, notably the "big" Groundhog vs. Keeler suit filed in 1969 to challenge the whole basis of the present tribal government, but which was cursorily dismissed by a local judge and is now languishing on appeal. Most cases are much less dramatic but more indicative of the real problem. For instance, Trapp mentioned a case involving welfare checks in a small town. The general store had burned down, and with it the post office branch located inside. The storeowner gave the Indians credit at the end of the month at high interest rates. He counted, as they did, on the prompt arrival of the welfare checks in the mail. "So this man," says Trapp, through teeth clenching a big-bowled pipe, "gets the postmistress to give him the checks and he goes through the community getting the Indians to endorse them over to him. Some of them refuse, and then he goes and gets the local sheriff to drive him around and help enforce the collection."

He talked of the O'Fields case, involving a Cherokee named Joe O'Fields who had a 160-acre allotment, as well as several children for whom he was getting monthly aid-to-dependent children payments. Using the 40-acre rule (a state law which says that nobody with more than 40 acres can be eligible for assistance), the welfare department had cut him off. Because this law results in the forced sale of much Indian land, the OCCO decided to make a test case out of it. "We began by trying to get a hearing at which we could subpoena the area director of the BIA," Trapp says. "We wanted to make him testify about how the Cherokees feel about their land, what it really represents to them and how it is connected with their being Indians. We wanted to make the simple point that Indians and whites aren't the same, especially when it comes to land—that is, that Indians don't believe land is something you speculate with, and to apply this 40-acre rule to them the same as to whites was totally arbitrary and wrong."

Trapp wasn't allowed to force the BIA to testify, and the O'Fields suit was dismissed by the same local judge who had dismissed Groundhog vs. Keeler, although it too is on appeal. But Trapp brings it up for a different reason. "One night we had this old Cherokee woman out to dinner. She was going to be one of our witnesses in the O'Fields case because she had once been forced to sell 120 of her 160 acres for a very low sum of money and then spend it all before she could get welfare. Anyway, after we'd agreed

about her testimony and she was getting ready to leave, she looked up at us and said kind of quietly, 'I'll talk for you in court tomorrow, but do you think then they'll take away my \$40 a month welfare?' I've gotten hardened, I guess, but my wife just broke out in tears."

Cases like these fill Stuart Trapp's files, and George Groundhog talks to people with similar problems every day. The Original Cherokee Community Organization doesn't have the resources to help all the Indians who ask for help or need it. But the organization is still the Cherokees' only protection against the parasites and predators who work all around them. It is also the fragile umbrella under which Cherokee nationalism now huddles. As such, it is vulnerable. As Mildred Ballenger points out: "If Keeler could get rid of Trapp and the OCCO—and you can bet he's been trying—then he'd have these Indians totally powerless and dependent. Which is the way he wants them."

[vi]

OH, I SUPPOSE THIS OCCO group has managed to mislead a few Indians," W. W. Keeler shrugs from his executive suite perched high in Bartlesville's new Phillips Building, "but it doesn't have but a few people behind it now, this white civil rights man named Trapp and a few others. Anyway, it is just another case of outsiders trying to direct the Indian. It first got started when some university people came down here to teach our Indians their language. I was all for that. But then the first thing you know, I started getting these phone calls saying that these outsiders were telling Indian people to be militant and carry guns."

The 18 floors of the Phillips Building make it the tallest building in town, and from the giant windows that wrap around Bill Keeler's office you can see the whole of Bartlesville Valley, the historic valley where Oklahoma oil was first discovered and where the old wooden derrick of the Nellie Johnstone, the first big well, still sticks up above a line of trees. It is hard to believe that a group of Indians could be important to a man in Keeler's place. It is not just the prestige of being the head of Phillips Petroleum and the \$280,000 a year salary; it is the fact that Keeler sits at the throttle of real power in this office. In this town of 40,000, where one out of every six people is a Phillips employee, Keeler is a household word. He owns a beautiful home in town and a large working ranch just outside the city. The street the Phillips Building faces is named after his grandfather, a friend of Jake Bartles, the man who watched the mill he built on the Big Caney River in the 1880s grow into a town. Keeler agrees that this is enough. "What the hell," he says with a deprecating look turning down the corners of his mouth, "I could be a despot in a teapot down there at the tribe. But why? What do I need with that kind of power?"

In the business articles about Phillips Petroleum where 63-year-old William Wayne Keeler is mentioned, his degree of Indianness veers between "fullblood," "half-Indian" and "of Cherokee descent." The truth is that he is one-sixteenth Indian by blood quantum and not Indian at all by any other criterion. Rather, he is one of Oklahoma's biggest cowboys, the descendant in spirit and fact of the whites who

overran Indian Territory and took away from the Indians, to whom it had been given in payment, sacred lands where their ancestors were buried.

Both of Keeler's grandfathers were pioneers in this part of Oklahoma and were intimately involved in its development. His mother's father, Nelson Carr, came here in the 1860s and opened the first trading post in the area, exchanging calico and coffee for furs which he sent to Kansas. In 1867 he married a woman who was one-eighth Cherokee and a member of the tribe, remarrying her a year later before a justice of the Cherokee Nation so that he too could become a member of the tribe and obtain an allotment of land. Carr decided to put modern farm techniques to use in the area, and began buying up all the Indian land he could get. At one time he had 5000 acres under fence, but after oil was discovered he leased out his land to drillers, having at one time 100 producing wells.

Keeler's paternal grandfather was George Keeler, who also married a one-eighth Cherokee and was one of the first to pump oil out of Oklahoma. When oil was discovered in the late 1880s, Keeler had decided to form an exploring company and he went to Talequah to get the Cherokee Nation to lease him over 200,000 acres. He then went to Washington and got Interior Secretary Hitchcock to agree to his plans for drilling, and then to Nebraska, where he convinced Michael Cudahy, the meat-packing mogul, to provide backing for the enterprise. In 1897 Cudahy hit the first big strike in Oklahoma, a well bringing in 150 barrels a day; six months later they hit the Nellie Johnstone, named after the wife of one of George Keeler's business partners. It was the first big strike in the area.

W. W. Keeler comes from people who built fantastic riches on the exploitation of Indians. It is only in retrospect, and in the wake of a frantic search for a worthy past, that such obsessive greed could be seen as heroic. But the fantasy has progressed one step further with Keeler deciding that he too is one of the Indians who was oppressed by his experience. But in his case the past is prologue to the present.

SOME OF KEELER'S ENEMIES insist that he has used his identification as an Indian as a cover for petty larceny against the Indians. Rumors circulate persistently about how Phillips has secret leases on tribally owned Cherokee lands which have been found to be rich in oil shale deposits. But this is not the way things work, at least not now that a patina of civilization has been added to the Oklahoma oil industry. And Phillips, with its success on the Alaskan North Slope and its recent strike in the North Sea, hardly needs to work such swindles on the Cherokees. But the corporation has gotten good mileage from its identification as an organization "concerned" about the first Americans. And it has gotten something more substantial from a chief executive officer who has become a public spokesman for the Indian and a friend of the people inside the Department of Interior who make decisions both about oil and about Indian Affairs.

There are intangibles. Over the years, Phillips has entered the foreign wars over oil with the advantage of having

an important executive who could go abroad, not as one of the whites who exploited native peoples, but as a native exploited somewhat by his own country, as an Indian who understood the aspirations of Third World people and could be trusted more than the average American businessman. Keeler helped design Phillips's international department in the '50s, when the corporation was making its giant leap forward into foreign markets. And it was a program more sensitive to Third World feelings than were those of bluebloods of the oil industry like Standard, who were uncompromising over the issue of control. For Phillips has gladly given away majority interest to foreign partners in their operations abroad, and it is a technique that has paid off handsomely. As Keeler says, "We've always done good business in the Middle East. I've always felt that those Arabs could relate to me because they saw me in some way as being like them. That is, I was a *chief* and I had a *tribe*. And we haven't had too much trouble over there, outside of Algeria. Take Nasser. When the war with Israel came along, we were only out six days because Nasser owned better than half of our operation and was interested in the profits. You've got to give them part of it so it doesn't look like you're just milking their country. It makes good political and economic sense."

Keeler's identity as an Indian has involved him in governmental circles and he has been "loaned" to the Interior Department on several occasions. In 1952 Keeler worked as a deputy administrator of petroleum for defense in the Interior Department under Secretary Oscar Chapman. As the years went by and he became more prominent as a Cherokee, Keeler was called on to serve in other official and semi-official capacities. He admits casually that Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy both asked him to become Commissioner of Indian Affairs in their administrations. Although he turned them both down, he did convince Kennedy to name Phileo Nash. In 1961 Keeler served on a Special Task Force on the American Indian, and in 1963 Interior Secretary Udall asked him to head a committee studying the relations between the Alaskan natives and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This assignment took Keeler to native villages throughout Alaska and he became known as something of an expert, enough for then Governor Hickel to call on him later to mediate certain disputes between the natives and the oil companies.

BUT THE RELATIONSHIP between Keeler and government hasn't always been so one-sided. In fact, midway through the Johnson Administration it became reciprocal enough to cause a mini-scandal. Involved was Phillips's desire to build a petrochemical plant in Puerto Rico, an undertaking which required that it get a special import quota. Earlier, Mobil and other companies had had similar requests turned down, but in 1965 Udall approved Phillips's plan. The oil import quota, according to sources in the oil industry, involved a ten-year value for Phillips of somewhere between \$100 million and \$225 million. And in the complex negotiations that led to approval for its package, Phillips was represented by former Secretary of the Interior Chapman, now a Washington attorney. Keeler also dispatched Phileo Nash, now a free-lance con-

sultant on economic development, to Puerto Rico to assure the Puerto Rican government that the Phillips installation would involve natives in a maximum way and do minimum damage to the island's scenic beauty.

Clearly Phillips has not been hurt by the contacts Keeler has made in the course of his work inside the Interior Department and in Indian affairs generally. And while he has used his identity as an Indian with a degree of cynicism and an eye for corporate dividends, it is hard now not to feel that he has been called an Indian so often and been an Indian spokesman on so many occasions that he has begun to believe it. The Keeler Complex; the color photos of the Chief, steely-eyed and resplendent in his Indian headdress; the various displays of ego—they all seem to suggest this. He is a rather pleasant man and as you talk to him and watch him measure you covertly, while he alternates between saying "we" and "those Indians," you must wonder if he has pinned his hopes for immortality, not on being just another of the executives who have brought Phillips Petroleum to its current position as a giant of oil, but on being, as his Deputy Chief put it, a great Indian, the greatest since Will Rogers. If so, he is bound to be disappointed, for the Indians—the real Indians—will never buy it. Their sense of what is right will not allow it, and neither will their sense of humor. As fullblood Nathan Crittenden says in a slow drawl, munching on a wad of gum and stuffing envelopes in the OCCO office, "That Keeler come down here to see what the people really feel and he might go on back home up to Bartlesville without any hair."

[VII]

THE CHEROKEES ARE LIKE Indians everywhere in that they haven't yet disentangled themselves from the white man and his history. Over a hundred years ago they made a conscious decision to become "civilized" so that their white brothers would leave them alone; but this didn't save them. When they came here to Oklahoma they decided to withdraw to the remote hill areas; but the whites followed after them. And thus today they live under the thumb of rural white Oklahoma and beneath the shadow of the Phillips 66 shield.

The question of whether or not the Cherokees will outlast Bill Keeler and the others who use them was on my mind as I stopped at a cleared-off place in a field several miles outside Talequah. It was the Redbird Smith stomp-grounds, named after a fullblood patriarch of the 1900s. It was empty now, the circle of old log buildings totally deserted and nobody for miles around. Later in the summer there will be Indians here from all around this part of the country; there will be cars parked everywhere and the smell of frying food in the air. Indian women will strap shakers on their legs made of the shells of the small terrapins infesting this region, and they will do an old dance.

The culture this dance helps renew has been under attack for a long time. It is hard for any white really to appreciate what makes it so valuable. But I remembered Al Wahhaftig's definition of the difference between the whites down here and the Cherokee fullbloods: the one, he says, lives for himself; the other lives for his community.

All For Vietnam

(Continued from page 27)

without honor holding to two convictions: that despite Johnson's retirement, despite the Paris talks, the U.S. aggression would continue; and that the anti-war movement should remain independent in the streets instead of placing itself at the disposal of "peace candidates." The Chicago confrontation was the peak in a year of demonstrations showing that any political leadership committed to staying in Vietnam would face domestic chaos and, ultimately, electoral defeat.

But at the same time we learned that in the face of chaos, "law and order" would be implemented long before withdrawal from Vietnam. Moreover, from Johnson's abdication we realized that America's stake in Vietnam took precedence over the personal fortunes of whoever happened to be President. The costs we were imposing on the American Establishment were real but (at least for a while) acceptable.

And with that discovery, radicalism came to an impasse.

Up to that point, and even today, most peace activists and radicals believe that Vietnam is a flaw—a terrible flaw—in the working of the American Empire, which could be repaired by a loud enough outcry of disagreement. Who would have believed that a supreme egomaniac like Lyndon Johnson would make winning the war more important than winning re-election? Who would have thought that with half the Senate and most of the press and public believing the war a "mistake," it would nevertheless continue to expand?

There has been a widespread failure to recognize in Vietnam the most serious international showdown of our time.

Radical intellectual theories about Vietnam, for example, have assumed that U.S. involvement is irrational—not in the sense liberals assert when they blame faulty Presidential advisers for our Vietnam commitment, but "irrational" in the sense that Vietnam is not in the "true interests" of corporate capitalism. In the radical view, America is ruled by a flexible corporate elite with many interests throughout the world. In this empire, Vietnam is a rather unimportant economic and political area (compared to India, Indonesia, Japan or Brazil). Since the corporate elite is concerned with the smooth over-all maintenance of empire, and not with the occasional loss of a small domino (the radical reasoning goes), our powerful gentry will cut their losses in Vietnam and dig in better elsewhere. In this view, the U.S. can withdraw to Thailand and India-Indonesia, keeping a forward base against China while consolidating its grip on richer possessions.

This world-view provided most of the operating assumptions of the major anti-war groups in the late Sixties—the Mobilization and the SDS—even though the two organizations were constantly at odds over strategy.

THE MOBE DID JUST what its name implied: it mobilized people to demand withdrawal from Vietnam. In most cases its demonstrations were large, legal and peaceful, designed to allow a variety of people to surface their opposition to Vietnam. Between mass mobilizations there were numerous attempts to do educational work among new constituencies, but local branches of the Mobe existed primarily to pull out people to rallies. The presence of ever larger numbers in the streets was effective



in several ways: first, it helped individuals feel they were not alone in opposing the war; second, it gave politicians and influential figures confidence that they could oppose the war without being crucified, which in turn legitimized dissent among larger numbers of people; and third, it gave encouragement to the Vietnamese revolutionaries while demoralizing the American military and the puppets they supported.

But eventually the underlying assumption—that decision-makers would end the war if enough widespread pressure was created—was proven inadequate by the government's repeated escalation. While its structure remains, the Mobe direction has blurred and support has waned since 1968.

The SDS radicals actually created the first national mobilization in the spring of 1965, but then very quickly shunned a leadership role in the anti-war protests because they did not believe in the "pressure" strategy. Their radicalism, however, often led in perverse and sectarian directions. They assumed the anti-war mobilizations would be deceptively "successful" because the American Establishment, sensing a bad investment in Vietnam, would use the anti-war sentiment as a popular basis for pulling out. The peace movement would be coopted in the process, used by a new set of politicians (Robert Kennedy) for their rise to power. The real issue, for SDS, was not Vietnam but the imperialist system which would continue beyond the withdrawal, a system which would strangle and threaten Vietnam (as the American blockade does Cuba) and other nations, until overthrown. In SDS language, there had to be an anti-imperialist movement able to muster resistance "seven wars from now."

In various local actions, SDS chapters made important anti-war contributions by their confrontations with recruiters and official spokesmen. But in the two major national confrontations against the war—at the Pentagon and Chicago—SDS stayed aloof and hostile until the sheer heat of the conflict persuaded them to participate.

The SDS outlook was clearer than the liberal and humanitarian politics of most of the movement, but it was a terribly



elitist view. Instead of regarding Vietnam as the crisis which would tear America apart and create conditions for domestic radicalism, a crisis which SDS would be deeply involved in resolving, they saw it more as an important issue for liberals.

THERE WERE OTHER strands of radicalism—the life-style, or cultural, rebellions—which were even further removed from the issue of the war. Taking Vietnam only as a symptom of what was wrong with the country, many chose to fight primarily against their own oppression as longhairs. They opted totally out of the anti-war movement into what would become the Woodstock Nation. To the early Merry Pranksters as well as to the later Yippies, the anti-war activists were “straight” or “too political” or “on a death trip,” not in touch with their own oppression and therefore building no alternative to America. And so there developed a genuine alternative culture, but its outlook, until quite recently, has been that of revolution-for-the-hell-of-it, revolution-for-ourselves, “Dope, Rock ‘n’ Roll and Fucking in the Street,” etc. Whatever impulse there has been in this culture against the war has had no outlet (except during Chicago) or has been channeled into a diffuse rage against America.

The women’s liberation movement, too, has been through a long alienation from the issues of Vietnam and the Third World. Rebelling against male-dominated structures in the anti-war movement, and focusing primarily on their particular oppression, they have assumed that the problem of Vietnam would be solved by others.

Even during our Chicago trial, though it was aimed at the anti-war movement we could not generate a new level of interest in Vietnam. In our speeches we emphasized the government’s attack on anti-war militants. We observed the Moratorium in court. We sent Bill Kunstler to Paris to obtain news of American prisoners held in North Vietnam. We

supported the idea of a release of U.S. prisoners in exchange for Bobby Seale and Huey Newton . . . Yet Yippie theatrics and Judge Hoffman’s personal quirks dominated popular consciousness of the trial. The same people whose nerves were deadened to the massive atrocity of Vietnam could be aroused by the relatively minor oppressiveness of our Chicago courtroom.

Paradoxically, the Vietnamese knew best that the trial was about the future of the anti-war struggle. Throughout Vietnam, people were concerned about our fate and, when we were jailed after the trial, our immediate release was demanded at the Paris peace talks.

GIVEN THE VACUUM of militant anti-war leadership, it was predictable that a group like Weatherman would reassert a revolutionary interest in Third World struggles. And the vacuum may also explain the extreme one-sidedness with which they would assert their politics.

Against the view that emphasized the stability and flexibility of imperialism, the Weathermen began with the view that the Vietnamese and other Third World peoples are winning; that imperialism is in its death throes. They advanced a fifth-column strategy, although cloaked in a hippie life-style and invoking Dylan and the Stones as well as Regis Debray and Lin Piao.

Their view: “The pump don’t work ‘cause the vandals stole the handle.” The exclusive task of white radicals, in their view, is irregular warfare behind enemy lines inside American imperialism’s fragile structure. Irregular, rather than conventional, guerrilla warfare, because the Weathermen are doubtful of ever achieving broad popular support inside the United States. They are essentially agents, John Browns, for the Third World revolution, with the goal of materially weakening imperialism by overextending its resources.

The immense contribution of the Weathermen has been in their assertion of internationalism and in their commitment

to give their lives, rather than lip service, in solidarity with Third World people. But the problem in their vandalism or fifth-column strategy is that it fails to embrace the legitimacy of other struggles against oppression: women's liberation, the cultural revolution, and so forth. Thus the Weathermen create a basic rupture between themselves and their natural base for revolution. The intertwined problem is that the Weathermen are underground by choice and necessity, thus cutting themselves off from any open leadership role in mass struggles against the war. They do not carry out the basic Vietnamese teaching that legal demonstrations, even activity by the liberal wing of the Establishment, can be more important on certain occasions than guerrilla attack.

So the liberal anti-war movement is trapped in electoral politics, the radical strategy is at an impasse, other revolutionaries have abandoned Vietnam for the issue of their own oppression, and a few people have gone underground. Clearly, we have come to the crossroads: either the Vietnamese people will win, or they will be maimed horribly in a larger war. Either we will stop this war, or we will live under an intolerable barbarism. *Our task: an all-out siege against the war machine. Our watchword: All for Vietnam.*

[WHAT IS TO BE DONE]

FIRST AND FOREMOST, we need an Emergency Consciousness about the real danger of further escalation. The only way the Vietnamese, the Cambodians and the Laotians can secure their national rights is if the U.S. government is prevented from enlarging the war to include China and the use of advanced chemical or nuclear weapons. We cannot rely on liberal politicians to initiate this alert. At most we can include them in a united front, but the strongest Emergency must be sounded by students on campuses like the University of California, where the bombs are being processed, by the scientists who know what is going on, by the local anti-war groups outside military institutions, and by all groups who are supposedly defending the Vietnamese Revolution. By forcing the government to answer in advance whether it is planning an ultimate genocidal blow, we can develop an international alarm which will make such an escalation far more difficult. We will also be laying the foundation for renewed militancy at home, since no tactics are too extreme in the face of this threat.

Second, Vietnam has become once more a leading priority for all groups struggling to change the country. It cannot be assigned to an anti-war movement that is no more than a bureaucratic skeleton which goes into motion several times annually. The practice of organizing *only* around one's particular oppression must be seen as self-indulgence in the face of what threatens Vietnam. It is also illogical because there are no Vietnamese inside this country, and therefore we have to speak for them.

Third, the Vietnam war should be linked always with the issues of racism and repression at home. There still are many who prefer to keep the issue of Vietnam "separate" for the purpose of drawing the greatest popular support. This political line is self-defeating for at least two reasons: it depresses and holds back the swiftly growing consciousness of hundreds of thousands of people who long ago were awakened to the war issue; and it neglects the obvious repression of the

anti-war radicals and blacks who are being crushed precisely because they are causing difficulties for imperialism. If the Administration can gun down and silence Panthers, one might ask, why would that Administration have to worry about an unarmed and less disciplined peace movement?

Fourth, it is time for the core of the anti-war movement to intensify the struggle with the goal of "cutting the supply lines" that feed the war machine. It is all well and good to make "reaching larger numbers of people" the goal of organizing, but there comes a moment when time is running out, when there can be no more waiting for the Silent Majority or the Working Class to be taking the stand we have to take. It is time to ask what has become of the hundreds of thousands who have been mobilized in the past for orthodox demonstrations, but who are never called upon to do more than repeat those performances. Is our "lack of numbers" and "isolation" the problem, or is it the cynicism and defeatism of those who have given up on stopping the war machine?

The image of "cutting the supply lines" is meant to deflect focus away from politicians and towards the precious institutions that must run smoothly if this war is to go forward. Now is the time to cripple this machinery of war by extending the "siege of the Pentagon" from one end of the country to another. The revolt of black GIs—and many whites as well—is a prime example of the way to do it. Delegitimizing and shutting down ROTC, which supplies the junior officers, is another example. Preventing nuclear and chemical warfare research is another. We need to be assailing corporations doing Vietnam business, striking at the authority of every important individual and agency involved in Vietnam, exposing and identifying the Vietnam lobby as a group of war criminals, isolating, weakening and stopping their murderous program.

This siege strategy embraces both "mobilization" and "guerrilla" tactics. The immediate problem is not whether the tactics are too moderate or too militant. The problem is to recommit the energies of every sincere person for a last stand on Vietnam. The problem is to make people see that Vietnam is not a permanent part of the American Way of Life; it is a war with a dynamic leading to a showdown.

The only way to brush off our cynicism is to realize that we are not alone and isolated inside the United States. We should follow the war not as a "tragedy" but as a struggle in which the side of humanity is making a stand so heroic that it should shatter the hardest cynicism.

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS to gain strength for the struggle is to explore and measure the contribution of the Vietnamese people to ourselves and to the rest of the world. Developing this sense of internationalism means going beyond the conceptions of Vietnam offered by dove professors in the teach-ins. Their view, accepted widely in the anti-war movement, is that Vietnam is a case of "civil war" in which the U.S. should not have intervened. The notion of "civil war" suggests that there are several Vietnamese sides with different ethnic, religious and political backgrounds, all quarreling among themselves. The implication is that Vietnam always has had internal problems which should not be important to the U.S. government. There is no basis for solidarity with Vietnam in this view, only a basis for paternalistic regret.



This kind of thinking hides from people a history which is both informative and stirring. What has happened in Vietnam is no more a "civil war" than the American Revolution was a "civil war." The fact that some Vietnamese have identified first with the French and now with the Americans is no more significant than the fact that some American colonists were linked to the British.

The real history of Vietnam is a history of successful revolution which the Western powers have been trying to erase for 25 years. The important fact about Ho Chi Minh's 1945 Proclamation of Independence is not that he quoted the American Declaration (which the doves constantly use to show how cooperation would have been possible with him) but that he declared the independence of his country. The basic conflict since that time has not been among the Vietnamese. The Diem government and the Thieu-Ky government were established by the U.S. and would fall without the U.S.: they have no significant roots among the Vietnamese people. The basic conflict is between the Vietnamese Nation and American Imperialism.

This Vietnamese Nation is a threat not only to American generals but to American professors and liberals, because of the revolutionary example it is establishing. The Vietnamese defy the military assumption that weapons can preserve America's power, and in their defiance revive a romantic revolutionary spirit that is supposed to be out of style.

In Vietnam the word "individualism" does not exist. The Vietnamese word that comes closest to individualism is "cannibalism." Their culture and their oppression have helped them approach the communist ideal of suffering, sharing and struggling together. In order to survive they have had to become brothers and sisters in everything *before* achieving the technology and abundance that is supposed to make such a socialist life-style possible.

Their age-old fight against foreign aggression makes struggle seem to be in their blood. Their existence, like that of

Cuba and Korea, demonstrates not only that socialist and national liberation struggles can be joined; it demonstrates that the Modern Imperial Colossus can be fought and beaten by a small country with primitive technology.

THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE have fired the modern "shots heard round the world." They are defeating the United States in war, destroying the myth of American superiority.

In this triumph they have raised the spirit of millions of Third World people.

They have provided the triggering issue for the new student movements in Western Europe.

They have inspired black and brown people, and young white people, inside the United States itself.

More than any other people, they have come to represent the conscience of humanity. When Ho Chi Minh died he was the most revered statesman in the world.

And they have done all this alone. The initiative has been theirs. They began fighting and dying long before there was a peace movement in America. They fought despite the fact that their communist allies were impossibly divided.

If it seems embarrassing or fuzzy-headed to mention these truths in America, it is only because our country is an emotional wasteland too decadent to believe in being born again.

But if these truths continue to inspire greater numbers of Americans, the Vietnamese people will have to be thanked for a final gift: opening our eyes to our own history as a genocidal nation, and starting us on the road to our own revolution.

This article is an abridged chapter from Tom Hayden's The Trial, to be published this fall by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. The rest of the book appeared in RAMPARTS, July 1970.

Back-of-the-Book

Books:

CORPORATIONS AND THE COLD WAR. Edited by David Horowitz. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969. \$6.00.

ONE OF THE STRIKING failures of the American Left has been its unwillingness to do the hard and specific research into exactly how the "system" which it rejects actually operates at home and abroad. An important beginning of such detailed and systematic inquiry is the new book edited by David Horowitz, *Corporations and the Cold War*, a collection of essays by six distinguished authorities in the field.

Two of the essays in the Horowitz volume—William Appleman Williams's "The Large Corporation in American Foreign Policy" and Lloyd C. Gardner's essay on the New Deal—provide the necessary historical background for understanding the roots of the current American policy. It is especially rewarding to have in one brief space an overview of the development of modern American imperialism by Professor Williams, its most eminent historian. Williams's piece includes an appreciative mention of the vigorous attempt by the much abused "isolationist" Senator Robert A. Taft to block America's launching of the Cold War. Many readers will be startled at his bracketing of Taft with Henry A. Wallace, with Taft appearing as a far more thoroughgoing anti-imperialist than his "left-wing" counterpart.

Professor Gardner, a distinguished student of Williams, is our most important critic of the New Deal, demonstrating the continuity of New Deal imperialism in the 1930s and '40s and on into the Cold War. I was particularly interested in Gardner's point that the Roosevelt Administration was worried about Russia as early as the fall of

1941, and strongly opposed a projected Anglo-Russian treaty which would have given Russia a free hand in Eastern and Central Europe after the war. (More of Gardner's work on the New Deal can be found in his critically important *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (1964).)

I HAVE TWO disagreements with Williams's essay. One is his depreciation of the "Anti-Imperialist" opposition movement to the Spanish-American War. While it is true, as Williams point out, that William Jennings Bryan was almost as imperialistic as Teddy Roosevelt, this was not true for the laissez-faire wing of the Anti-Imperialists, led by such exponents as William Graham Sumner and Boston businessman Edward Atkinson, a veteran abolitionist and financial backer of John Brown. Atkinson went so far as to mail pamphlets to American soldiers in the Philippines, calling upon them to mutiny; the pamphlets were confiscated by the U.S. Post Office. Secondly, Williams adopts the view that the intercorporate struggles were waged between the "industrialists" and the "bankers," with the former gradually winning out. I believe instead that Lenin's view was correct then and continues to be correct now: namely, that the corporate ruling class is an amalgam of industry and finance, with the banks aiding the owning rich in exercising their ownership rights in the industrial corporations. The "banker" Morgans own and control large sections of U.S. industry, while the "industrialist" Harrimans operate through the banking house of Brown Brothers, Harriman. And in which slot would one place the Rockefeller family? Surely as industrialists, and yet exercising much of their control through the Chase Manhattan Bank and other large financial institutions.

The ways in which corporate institutions have been making foreign policy are treated in articles by Professors G. William Domhoff and David Eakins. Domhoff, who gave us our most important sociological study of the ruling elite in his *Who Rules America?* (1967), here presents a most welcome analysis of the specific corporate elites and how they make foreign policy through transmission belts like the Council on Foreign Relations, and through their roles on the National Security Council. Eakins, applying his extensive research on corporate liberal service agencies, shows the crucial role played by the Committee for Economic Development and the Twentieth Century Fund in establishing and operating the foreign aid and other postwar foreign economic programs. It is a measure of our progress from Old Left to New that these outfits, once praised as "progressive" and "enlightened," are now seen to be the crucial resource organizations for the creation and operation of our corporate state.

THE DOMHOFF AND EAKINS pieces are, in a sense, the heart of the book, for they are the ones which, above all, identify the specific means by which the corporate elite establishes and controls American foreign policy. One point on the Eakins article: In his clear and incisive study of the corporatist creation of the Marshall Plan, Eakins (a) omits mention of the Committee of One Thousand for the Marshall Plan, an interesting ad hoc committee of virtually every leading banker and export industrialist in the country, which took out full-page ads in the New York Times and elsewhere and helped push the Marshall Plan through a rather recalcitrant and conservative Congress; and (b) while properly pointing up the leading