

# CAQ

CovertAction Quarterly

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## Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa

*Looking Back,  
Moving Forward*

**Apartheid's Poison Legacy**  
Chemical and Biological Warfare

**Inside the Mind of Torture**  
The Story of Apartheid's Electrician

**Plus**

**Conservative Philanthropies**  
How They Transform US Policy

**Crypto AG**  
The NSA's Trojan Whore

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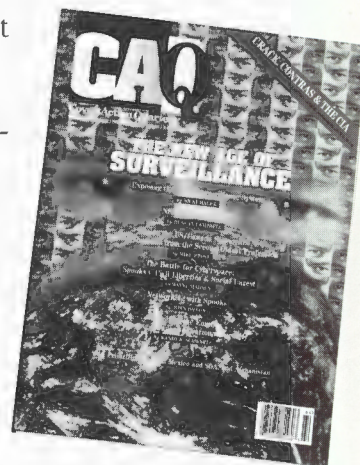
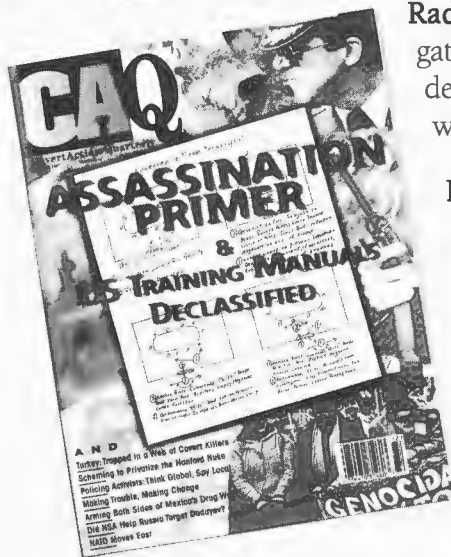
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— Ben Bagdikian

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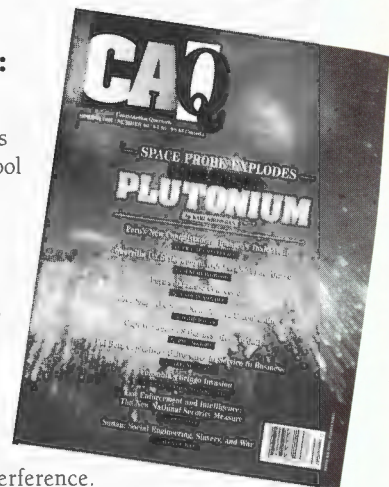
**Winter Special on the New Age of Surveillance:** Spooks in cyberspace and on the internet; Canadian spy world; NSA's plan; and NIMA. Plus: Privatizing welfare; Mexico and School of the Americas; Afghanistan; CIA-drug connection.

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# CAQ

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## Right Thinking, Big Grants, and Long-term Strategy: How Conservative Philanthropies and Think Tanks Transform US Policy

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Speaking truth to power is all well and good, but applying the dictum, "money talks," conservative foundations have long been bankrolling like-minded think tanks and advocacy groups. Together, they have effected radical change.

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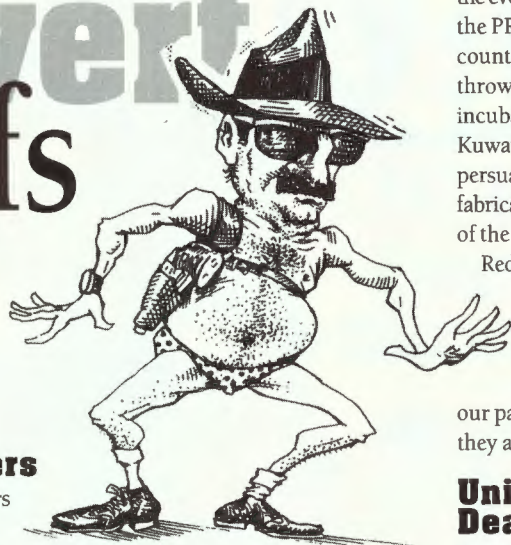
COVER ART BY JAY JOHNSON

The photos on the cover have been manipulated into a collage. The originals appear on page 24.

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# Covert Briefs



## Keystone Killers

When Coast Guard members boarded a disabled Miami-registered yacht near Puerto Rico last October 27, they probably expected to discover fishing gear, cocktail shakers, and relieved passengers. Instead, they found four nervous Cuban-American crew members, two .50-caliber long-range sniper rifles, ammunition, night vision equipment, portable radios, a satellite telephone, and other military supplies. At first, the men claimed they were on a fishing trip. But as the agents were mirandizing them, one of the rescued sailors, Angel Manuel Alfonso, kept interrupting to affirm his dedication to the cause. According to US Customs Special Agent Ismael Padilla, Alfonso blurted out that his only mission in life was to assassinate Castro. One prosecution affidavit noted that the ship's navigation computer had been set for the Venezuelan Island of Margarita where, Alfonso claimed, he was going to shoot Castro at the Ibero-American Summit. Cuba's president has escaped dozens of assassination attempts, plotted by or from the US.

According to FBI records, the paper trail for one of the sniper rifles led directly to Francisco Hernandez and implicated the longstanding cabal of Miami anti-Castro Cubans. Hernandez is president of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) — a position second only to that of

the late Jorge Mas Canosa. The gun was sold to Hernandez in 1994 by Juan Ramon Lopez de la Cruz, a Bay of Pigs veteran and retired US Army colonel. The ship, *La Esperanza* (hope), belongs to Juan Antonio Llama, a board member of the Miami-based CANF and veteran of Brigade 2506, an exile unit that participated in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. Neither Hernandez nor Llama was among the four men arrested on the yacht. Rather than facing a charge of conspiracy to commit murder, the sailors were indicted on a Customs violation: failure to report the guns. Imagine if the conspirators had been Black Panthers instead of right-wing Cubans.

## Political Bull Pen

Paul Belaga, a Clinton aide who devises "communications strategies" for the White House, commented for the *Washington Post* on the film *Wag the Dog*. Set just before a presidential election, it features an incumbent facing a breaking sex scandal who enlists a Beltway spin doctor and a Hollywood producer to create a fictional war to divert the nation's attention. The propaganda campaign that follows calls up images of Reagan's grotesque invasion of Grenada right after the bombing of the US base in Lebanon. It barely outdoes Hill & Knowlton's promotion of

pro-Gulf War fever. (In 1991, on the eve of the bombing of Baghdad, the PR firm manufactured an account of ravaging Iraqi soldiers throwing Kuwaiti infants out of incubators. The daughter of a Kuwaiti UN representative was persuaded to give Congress a fabricated "eyewitness account" of the heinous baby slaughter.)

Reducing the public to its essential role as consumers of propaganda, Belaga noted: "It's either 1994, and they're not buying our party's bull, or it's 1996, and they are buying our party's bull."

## Unified Deal Theory

Gore Vidal, reviewing Seymour Hersh's *Dark Side of Camelot*, for the December 1 *New Yorker*, gave his own assessment of the unseemly union of news, propaganda, and entertainment: "Remember back in the eighties, [they thought]: wouldn't it be wonderful if you could own a network and a studio that made films to show on it as well as magazines and newspapers to praise them in and a publishing house for source material and ... ? Well, now we have the marvelous comedy of Hersh's book having been published by Little, Brown, which is owned by Time Warner and reviewed negatively-nervously negatively by *Time* (same ownership); while *Newsweek* (owned by the Washington Post Company and still, perhaps, influenced by Kennedy's old friend Ben Bradlee) denounces Hersh; while ABC (owned by Disney) prepares a TV documentary that is tied in with it.

"Many years ago, there used to be something called 'conflict of interest.' No longer, I'm afraid. Today, we all bathe in the same river. It will be a relief when Bill Gates finally owns everything and there will be just one story."

## Spin Cycle

■ White House speech writers have been told to limit use of the term "fast-track." The replacement phrase is "renewal of traditional trading authority." The label,

"NAFTA expansion" is to be avoided completely.

■ The State Department also has a way with language. It describes Uganda, where Yoweri Museveni has held unelected power for 12 years as a "uni-party democracy," but excoriates Cuba as a "one-party totalitarian state."

■ Meanwhile, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, which enforces the embargo against Cuba, now oversees sanctions against Jonas Savimbi's CIA/apartheid-backed UNITA army. It seems the US now regards the Marxist MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola. Yet, one of the main reasons the US used for the embargo against Cuba was to punish Havana for coming to the aid of MPLA in the 1970s and 1980s when it was under attack by UNITA. Not even Maytag can spin that one.

## Ungrateful Bastards

Referring to US ascendancy as the world's only superpower "in an age of unrivaled dominance," William Drozdiak of the *Washington Post* Foreign Service announced an astonishing new trend: The rest of the world is not only ungrateful, but actually annoyed at US dominance. "Over the past few months," Drozdiak notes, "irritation and anxiety have begun to overshadow sentiments of admiration among America's closest allies. Across Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa, convictions are growing that the accumulation of so much political, economic and cultural clout by the United States is breeding an arrogance that is unpleasant and possibly dangerous."

With the wide-eyed title "Even Allies Resent US Dominance," Drozdiak explains that "Washington's efforts to compel other nations to embrace its policy of isolating Cuba, Iran, Iraq and Libya as pariah states have also provoked annoyance among US friends. When South African President Nelson Mandela visited [Qaddafi], he delivered a pointed rebuff to Washington's attempts to impose its views."



Annoyance barely describes the reaction of Nelson Mandela after Washington criticized his visit with Libya's Qaddafi.

"How can they have the arrogance to dictate to us where we should go or which countries should be our friends? Qaddafi is my friend. He supported us when we were alone and when those who tried to prevent my visit here today were our enemies. They have no morals. We cannot accept that a state assumes the role of the world's policeman."

Even Newt Gingrich, whose sharp intellect and ethical commitment in matters of foreign policy are renowned among snake handlers and used car dealers throughout his district, took note and offered his own modest solution: "If we do not learn to change our leadership style, we will eventually have enormous resentment across the planet," said the House speaker in a speech at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. "We are so large that unless we adopt a more 'learning and listening' leadership style, we will have a lot of resentment."

Madeleine Albright appeared to have been listening as this tide of Newtonian wisdom broke on the shores of the Potomac with a resounding plop. On her trip to Africa in December, she took up the call: "I talk less and listen more," she promised. And, said one member of her party, "We don't do Mary Robinson," referring to the emphasis the UN high commissioner for human rights put on curbing abuses.

The "new" US policy is a cunning mélange of fiction, farce, and condescension just guaranteed to win hearts and minds in Africa. As senior aides explained to the *Post*, it "means allowing national leaders whose security forces may seem *excessively vigorous* an opportunity to explain the need for force, rather than lecturing them about their tactics." [emphasis added] And when the children act up, Albright recommends engagement without judgment — as in the Congo.

The *Post*'s State Department source described the US approach as "recogniz[ing] that Congo is economically and politically bankrupt and that Kabila and other members of the new government are political amateurs who need help not lectures."

Picture the scene: Madeleine, helmet hair quivering slightly as a small frown marks her brow, approaches Laurent Kabila, military-backed head of the Congo's "transition" government: I would really like to understand, Mr. President, why you felt the need to massacre all those civilians. I'm not judging, mind you, I'm just curious and the US would like to help. More arms perhaps?

## Wretched Ignorance

On December 27, NPR's Susan Stamberg, introduced an interview about the 45 Zapatista supporters massacred in Chiapas: "Looking at further foreign news, just a wretched situation in Mexico, more than 40 people killed in Chiapas. Unheard of before this, that sort of violence, in the civil dispute between Indian guerrillas and armed militias."

Perhaps she wasn't aware of frequent and loud denunciations by human rights groups of four years of military harassment and repeated attacks by government-aligned or -sponsored paramilitary groups against the indigenous population.

## Mad Cow Update

On December 12, reacting to the danger of mad cow disease, Washington placed a ban on imports of not only beef, but of all lamb from Europe. In 1996, Americans had bought 375,000 tons of beef and veal from Europe and 112,000 tons of lamb and mutton. Eating meat or other body parts from diseased animals has been linked to the fatal brain-wasting Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans. Although the US has no reports of cow or sheep transmissions to humans, in Europe, outbreaks of the spongiform encephalopathies have occurred in England,

## Good Will Hunting the NSA

Scene from the movie *Good Will Hunting*: The hero, a working class mathematical genius from South Boston is set up with an interview for a job with the National Security Agency. Asked how he would like "working for Uncle Sam," he replies:

"Say I'm working at the NSA. Somebody puts a code on my desk, something nobody else can break. So I take a shot at it and maybe I break it. And I'm real happy with myself because I did my job well. But maybe that code was the location of some rebel army in North Africa or the Middle East. Once they have that location, they bomb the village where the rebels were hiding and 1,500 people I never had a problem with get killed."

"Now the politicians are saying, 'Send in the Marines to secure the area.' Because they don't give a shit. It won't be their kid over there getting shot. Just like it wasn't them when their number got called because they were pulling a tour in the National Guard. It'll be some guy from Southie taking shrapnel in the ass. And he comes home to find that the plant he used to work at got exported to the country he just got back from. And the guy who put the shrapnel in his ass got his old job, because he will work for 15 cents a day and no bathroom breaks."

"Meanwhile my buddy from Southie realizes the only reason he was over there was so we could install a government that would sell us oil at a good price. And of course the oil companies used the skirmish to scare up oil prices so they could turn a quick buck."

"A cute little ancillary benefit for them, but it ain't helping my buddy at \$2.50 a gallon. And naturally, they are taking their sweet time bringing the oil back and maybe even took the liberty of hiring an alcoholic skipper who likes to drink martinis and play slalom with the icebergs, and it ain't too long until he hits one, spills the oil and kills all the sea life in the North Atlantic. So my buddy is out of work and he can't afford to drive, so he has got to walk to the job interviews, which sucks, because the shrapnel in his ass is giving him chronic hemorrhoids. And meanwhile, he's starving because every time he tries to get a bite to eat, the only blue plate special they are serving is North Atlantic scrod with Quaker State."

"So what'd I think? I am holding out for something better. I figure I will eliminate the middleman. Why not just shoot my buddy, take his job and give it to his sworn enemy, hike up gas prices, bomb a village, club a baby seal, hit the hash pipe and join the National Guard? Christ, I could be elected president." ■

— quoted with permission of Miramax Films

France, Portugal, Ireland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, while two animals in Belgium and Luxembourg have been diagnosed with mad cow disease.

And even as the government is banning imports, a group of cattlemen is suing the Oprah Winfrey show for disparaging hamburgers and warning the public of the potential hazard.

This suit is the first constitutional test for the "food disparagement laws" that the food industry has introduced and lobbied into law in 13 states. In a highly unusual move, the judge in the case has imposed a gag order on all parties until after the jury verdict. ■

— Terry Allen & Sanho Tree



RIGHT THINKING, BIG GRANTS, AND LONG-TERM STRATEGY

# How Conservative Philanthropies and Think Tanks Transform US Policy



GEORGE COHEN/IMPACT VISUALS

The social safety net, initiated in the 1930s, has been quietly replaced with such dubious schemes as workfare.

by Sally Covington

*Speaking truth to power is all well and good, but applying the dictum, “money talks,” conservative foundations have long been bankrolling like-minded think tanks and advocacy groups. Together, they have effected far-reaching changes in US social, political, and economic policy.*

Proclaiming their movement a war of ideas, conservatives began to mobilize resources for battle in the 1960s. They built new institutional bastions; recruited, trained, and equipped their intel-

**Sally Covington** is the Director of the Democracy and Philanthropy Project of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. This article was adapted from *Moving a Public Policy Agenda: The Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations*, prepared for the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2001 S Street, NW, Suite 620, Washington, DC 20009, 202/387-9177. It covers the three-year period from 1992-94.

lectual warriors; forged new weapons as cable television, the Internet, and other communications technologies evolved; and threw their resources into policy and political battles. By 1984, moderate Republican John Saloma warned of a “major new presence in American politics.” If left unchecked, he accurately predicted, “the new conservative labyrinth” would pull the nation’s political center sharply to the right.<sup>1</sup>

1. John S. Saloma, *Ominous Politics: The New Conservative Labyrinth* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984).

Today, that labyrinth is larger, more sophisticated, and increasingly able to influence what gets on — and what stays off — the public policy agenda. From the decision to abandon the federal guarantee of cash assistance to the poor, to changes in the federal tax structure, to interest in medical savings accounts and the privatization of Social Security, conservative policy ideas and rhetoric have come to dominate the nation’s political conversation, reflecting what political scientist



Walter Dean Burnham has called a "hegemony of market theology."<sup>2</sup>

Spearheading the assault has been a core group of 12 conservative foundations: the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Carthage Foundation, the Earhart Foundation, the Charles G. Koch, David H. Koch and Claude R. Lambe charitable foundations, the Phillip M. McKenna Foundation, the JM Foundation, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Henry Salvatori Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, and the Smith Richardson Foundation. In 1994, they controlled more than \$1.1 billion in assets; from 1992-94, they awarded \$300 million in grants, and targeted \$210 million to support a wide array of projects and institutions.

Over the last two decades, the 12 have mounted an impressively coherent and concerted effort to shape public policy by undermining — and ultimately redirecting — what they regard as the institutional strongholds of modern American liberalism: academia, Congress, the judiciary, executive branch agencies, major media, religious institutions, and philanthropy itself. They channeled some \$80 million to right-wing policy institutions actively promoting an anti-government, unregulated markets agenda. Another \$89 million supported conservative scholars and academic programs, with \$27 million targeted to recruit and train the next generation of right-wing leaders in conservative legal principles, free-market economics, political journalism and policy analysis. And \$41.5 million was invested to build a conservative media apparatus, support pro-market legal organizations, fund state-level think tanks and advocacy organizations, and mobilize new philanthropic resources for conservative policy change.

The strong role that conservative foundations have played in shaping national and state policy debates reflects not only impressive cash reserves, but also a sophisticated funding strategy:

- Their grants are overtly and unabashedly political. They single out and support aggressive and entrepreneurial organizations committed to government rollback through the privatization of government services, deregulation of industry and the environ-

2. Walter Dean Burnham, "The 1996 Elections: Drift or Mandate?" *The American Prospect* 27 (July-Aug. 1996), pp. 43-49.



**The Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees (front from left): Midge Decter, Richard M. Scaife, David R. Brown, Edwin J. Feulner Jr., and Barb Van Andel-Gaby; (back row) Frederic Rench, Preston A. Wells, Thomas L. Rhodes, William J. Hume, Thomas A. Roe, and Frank Shakespeare. Not pictured: Jeb Bush, Grover Coors, J. William Middendorf II, William E. Simon, and Jay Van Andel.**

ment, devolution of authority from the federal to state and local governments, and deep cuts in federal anti-poverty spending.

- They work to build strong institutions by providing general operating support rather than project-specific funding. This unrestricted money allows groups considerable

## They have made "positive government action in social welfare and economic development policy seem off limits and inappropriate."

flexibility to attract, train, and keep talented people, launch special projects, and develop their databases and skills.

- They recognize that national budget and policy priorities significantly impact what happens on the state, local and even neighborhood levels, and fund accordingly.
- They emphasize marketing and communications techniques, funding grant recipients to flood the media and political marketplace with conservative policy ideas and to communicate with and mobilize their constituency base on behalf of these ideas.
- They emphasize networking with other groups around a common reform agenda.
- They invest in the recruitment, training, placement, and media visibility of conservative

public intellectuals and policy leadership.<sup>3</sup>

- They fund across the institutional spectrum, recognizing that institutions or programs that support conservative scholarship, rapid-fire research and advocacy, lobbying, strategic litigation, leadership development and constituency mobilization are all important components of an effective policy movement.
- They have made long-term funding commitments, providing large grants over a multi-year and, in some cases, multi-decade period. Long-term funding has financially anchored conservative institutions and enabled them to take the political offensive on key social, economic, and regulatory policy issues.
- They concentrate their grants, with 18 percent of the grantees getting more than 75 percent of the funding.

A significant portion of the conservative foundations' largess has flowed to a small group of think tanks that according to a sociologist "were particularly critical in the shift of the economic debate to the

3. Close to \$30 million went to finance fellowships at academic and non-academic institutions from 1992 through 1994, including sizable grants awarded to support the work of Dinesh D'Souza, American Enterprise Institute (\$483,023); Robert Bork, Heritage Foundation (\$459,777); Irving Kristol (\$380,600); Paul Craig Roberts, Institute for Political Economy (\$300,000); William Bennett (\$275,000); Linda Chavez, Manhattan Institute/Center for Equal Opportunity (\$240,000); Norman Podhoretz, Hudson Institute (\$50,000); and Abigail Thernstrom, Manhattan Institute (\$25,000). Other grants were made to support the research and programs of prominent conservatives such as Michael Novak (almost \$300,000 for his program in religion and public policy at the American Enterprise Institute), and Diane Ravitch (\$210,000 for her work in education reform at New York University.)



## SELECTED TOP CONSERVATIVE GRANTEES, 1992-1994

Organization	Total Awarded
<b>NATIONAL THINK TANKS/ADVOCACY</b>	
Heritage Foundation (Foun.)	\$8,979,852
American Enterprise Institute	6,934,945
Free Congress Research & Ed. Foun.	5,097,200
Cato Institute	3,927,557
Citizens for a Sound Economy	3,795,000
Hudson Institute	3,261,780
Hoover Institution	3,196,300
Natl. Bureau of Economic Research	2,135,000
Manhattan Institute	2,114,140
Ethics and Public Policy Center	2,089,820
Reason Foundation	1,181,000
National Taxpayers Union Foun.	815,000
National Center for Policy Analysis	789,000
Competitive Enterprise Institute	737,000
Political Economy Research Center	701,000
Inst. for Research on Econ. of Taxation	359,000

**Subtotal: \$46,113,594**

### MEDIA GROUPS

Ctr. for the Study of Popular Culture	\$3,270,000
Natl. Affairs (Pub. Interest, Natl. Interest)	1,937,000
Am. Spectator Educational Foun.	1,694,000
Foundation for Cultural Review	1,650,000
Center for Media and Public Affairs	1,181,000
Am. Jewish Committee (Commentary)	1,020,000
Accuracy in Media	365,000
Ctr. for Science, Technology and Media	325,000
Education and Research Institute	241,000

**Subtotal: \$11,683,000**

### LEGAL ORGANIZATIONS

Institute for Justice	\$2,425,000
Washington Legal Foundation	2,098,500
Federalist Soc. for Law & Pub. Pol. Studies	1,599,000
Center for Individual Rights	1,251,100
Pacific Legal Foundation	725,000
Landmark Legal Foundation	600,000
Atlantic Legal Foundation	317,000
New England Legal Foundation	285,000
Southeastern Legal Foundation	150,000

**Subtotal: \$9,450,600**

### STATE & REGIONAL THINK TANKS/ADVOCACY

Wisconsin Policy Research Institute	\$3,372,500
Pacific Research Inst. for Public Policy	676,000
Cwth. Fdn. for Pub. Policy Alternatives	519,500
American Legislative Exchange Council	385,500
State Policy Network	215,000

**Subtotal: \$5,168,500**

### RELIGIOUS SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

Institute on Religion and Public Life	\$1,857,000
Institute on Religion and Democracy	635,000
Acton Inst. for Study of Religion & Liberty	265,000

**Subtotal: \$2,757,000**

### PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS & NETWORKS

Capital Research Center	\$1,166,000
Philanthropy Roundtable	383,000

**Subtotal: \$1,549,000**

**TOTAL OF SELECTED GRANTS: \$86,702,490**

right [and] provided much of the groundwork for the radical change in policy taking place from 1978 through 1981."<sup>4</sup> Well-endowed with the financial and human resources to market their policy ideas, these institutions have effectively repositioned the boundaries of national policy discussion, redefining key concepts, molding public opinion, and pushing for a variety of specific policy reforms. Through the constant repetition and dissemination of conservative policy ideas, they have provided a philosophical underpinning for many of the most important fiscal and social policies developed and implemented over the past 16 years. And in the end, they have succeeded in making "positive government action in social welfare and economic development policy seem off limits and inappropriate."<sup>5</sup>

## Supply Side Swipe

The ramifications of conservative funding streams have been profound. In terms of political process, the existence of powerful and well-funded conservative "counter-institutions" raises the specter of what some have called "supply-side" politics. Political scientist Samuel Kernell has suggested that when aggressive marketing is linked to modern means of communication, those with resources to broadcast messages will find their place in the citizen-consumer marketplace irrespective of existing demand. This "supply-side" politics, he contends, is "so psychologically powerful as to determine what voters will think they want."<sup>6</sup>

One of the most impressive supply-side successes has been shaping national economic policy. As Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency, conservatives saw and seized their opening. Four private institutions — the National Bureau of Economic Research, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, American Enterprise Institute, and Center for the Study of Ameri-

can Business — led the push for "trickle-down" policies. Large tax cuts — they argued, using everything from sound bites to scholarly journals — would generate revenues by stimulating the national economy.

Supply-side economic theory laid the basis for what became the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, a piece of legislation that reduced federal income tax rates by 25 percent over a three-year period. This deep and sweeping tax cut not only meant a cumulative loss of \$1 trillion to the Treasury Department by 1987, it also helped to create unprecedented federal deficits during the 1980s. The federal deficit was then used politically to justify "a frontal assault on the revenue base of the modern welfare state" by creating a zero-sum legislative environment, pitting individual programs against each other in the fight for revenues while rendering an expansion of federal social policy extremely difficult.

James Galbraith was one of many who tried in vain to debunk trickle-down theory as "reactionary and deeply implausible," saying that "it springs from a never-never land of abstract theory concocted over 25 years by the disciples of Milton Friedman and purveyed."<sup>7</sup> But, with few research and advocacy institutions having the money and clout to focus policy attention on such matters as wage stagnation, rising inequality, real and hidden unemployment, and poverty, the "conservative fiscal consensus" triumphed. The government's main economic management task devolved to balancing the budget, with debate centering on how many years that goal should take. There is "a common ground on economic policy," lamented Galbraith, "that now stretches with differences only of degree from the radical right to Bill Clinton."<sup>8</sup>

This conservative victory established a strategy model, set the stage for some of the most aggressively anti-poor legislation in a century, and ushered in a right-wing revolution likely to dominate both policy forums and the popular debate for years to come.

7. James K. Galbraith, "The Surrender of Economic Policy," *The American Prospect* 25, March/April 1996, p. 60.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 61.



4. Edsall, *The New Politics of Inequality*, p. 216.

5. Arnold Vedlitz, *Conservative Mythology and Public Policy in America* (New York: Praeger, 1988).

6. Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1986), pp. 221-22, quoted in David M. Ricci, *The Transformation of American Politics: The New Washington and the Rise of Think Tanks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 202.





GEORGE COHEN/IMPACT VISUALS

**At this New York City-run shelter for homeless families, adults and children are packed into a converted gym.**

## The War on the Poor

As conservative grantees hammered home on the revenue side of national fiscal policy, they did not neglect the expenditure side. Indeed, it is in the particular area of federal anti-poverty programs that conservative grantees have launched their most sustained and vitriolic attacks. In the early 1980s, the Manhattan Institute sponsored and heavily promoted two publications that urged the elimination of federal anti-poverty programs. George Gilder's book, *Wealth and Poverty*, contended that poverty was the result of personal irresponsibility coupled with government programs that rewarded and encouraged it; Charles Murray's *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980* extended the argument, stating that AFDC and other anti-poverty programs reduced marriage incentives, discouraged workers from accepting low-wage jobs, and encouraged out-of-wedlock births among low income teenage and adult women. These books were followed by Lawrence Mead's *Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizen-*

*ship*, which blamed governments for perpetuating poverty by failing to require welfare recipients to work.

Other conservative grantees have used their funds for more than a decade to capitalize on and extend the works by Gilder, Murray, and Mead, spreading conservative political rhetoric and policy opinion through major media and conservative-controlled print and broadcast outlets. They have redefined the problem by arguing that poverty is a relative concept, that the poor are significantly better off than is popularly understood, that moral failure causes the poor to be poor, and that government action has perpetuated rather than alleviated poverty by coddling the poor and entrapping them in a system that debases and clientizes them.

The 15-year conservative campaign to demonize the poor and eviscerate the government programs that minimally support them culminated in the passage of welfare "reform" in 1996. That legislation dismantled the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, eliminating the only federal

program guaranteeing cash assistance to poor women and their children. The anti-poor crusade also led to significant cuts in federal anti-poverty spending, with programs serving the poor absorbing a full 93 percent of the 1995 and 1996 budget cuts, even though those programs constituted only 24 percent of all entitlement spending.<sup>9</sup>

The conservative attacks on poor people, affirmative action, and government programs serving low-income constituencies — and their constant reaffirmation of market efficiencies without recognizing market inequities or failure — has not only led to an array of specific policies, but has also inhibited the development of alternative policies to address growing concentrations of poverty and inner-city decline, the social costs of which are astronomical.

Despite recently reported gains in the incomes of poor Americans last year, the nation remains an economically and racially divided one, with more than 40 million Americans lacking health insurance, an

9. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Bearing Most of the Burden*, Dec. 3, 1996.



# The Mean Ends of Privatization

Conservative grantees have used their attacks on federal anti-poverty programs to undermine the legitimacy of government activism. They have, in effect, turned specific critiques of government-created welfare dependency into an "overall symbol of government failure."<sup>1</sup> Having identified "big government" as the source of moral, social and economic decline, they propose the logical solution: a variety of privatization schemes ranging from school vouchers to medical savings accounts to Social Security privatization.

Here, ideological principles double as strategic initiatives. Privatization, for example, serves as both an end and a means for movement conservatives. As an "end," it reflects conservatism's belief that the market is the most efficient mechanism for the delivery of services. As a "means," conservatives advocate privatization as a mechanism to redistribute power from government to the private sector, with benefits most likely accruing to the wealthy.

Examining conservative foundations' enthusiasm for school vouchers, economist Paul Krugman points out that the program has several benefits.<sup>2</sup> First, it will help to erode middle-to-upper class support for public education when those parents realize that they would save more in taxes by reducing public education expenditures than they would lose in "decreased education subsidy." Second, he argues, vouchers have strong anti-union implications by offering a mechanism to break the power of public sector unions, "the last remaining stronghold

of the American labor movement." This, he says, is significant given the important role that unions play in maintaining wage levels and reducing income inequality.

Similar concerns over the distributional effects of privatization have been raised over current proposals to privatize Social Security or establish individual medical savings accounts. In both cases, privatization would theoretically allow all people to opt out of universal or collective programs of social or health insurance. In practice, only people of means would be able to do so, and they would then have an even stronger rationale to push for lower taxes and reduced government spending. The *New York Times* aptly described such efforts as "the breaking apart of common pools of citizenship."<sup>3</sup> ■

1. Michael B. Katz, *Improving Poor People: The Welfare State, The "Underclass," and Urban Schools as History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

2. Paul Krugman, "The Spiral of Inequality," *Mother Jones*, Nov./Dec. 1996, pp. 44-49.

3. "The Secret Attack on Have-Nots," Editorial, *New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1996.



Companies set up displays of products from foods to counseling services at this "fair," sponsored by the Wake County, NC, public school system. The event was picketed by opponents of privatization.

TOM BENTON/IMPACT VISUALS

appalling 20 percent child poverty rate, a rising prison population, the disappearance of jobs in inner city neighborhoods, and sharp and continuing inequities in education and educational opportunity. Although such economic inequities and social divisions might be expected to raise serious questions about the nation's political ethic, the current institutional forces driving federal and state policy debates almost guarantee that these will not even be asked.

## Marketing the Product

The proliferation and continued heavy funding of policy institutions such as the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and the Heritage Foundation threatens to tilt the debate even further to the right on key policy issues

and options. These groups flood the media with hundreds of opinion editorials. Their top staff appear as political pundits and policy experts on dozens of television and radio shows across the country. And their lobbyists work the legislative arenas, distributing policy proposals, briefing papers, and position statements.

Given the growing political importance of the media, conservative policy institutions have clearly stated the need for strong marketing and communications. "I make no bones about marketing," said AEI's former president, William Baroody:

We pay as much attention to the dissemination of the product as we do to the content. We're probably the first major think tank to get into the elec-

tronic media. We hire ghost writers for scholars to produce op-ed articles that are sent to the one hundred and one co-operating newspapers — three pieces every two weeks.<sup>10</sup>

In the late 1980s, the Heritage Foundation made the same point in an article advising others how to start and run an effective think tank:

The easy part is getting your message right. The real test is getting your message out. ... Everything you do, every day, must involve marketing in as many as six dimensions. Market your policy recommendations, market the principles and values behind them, market the tangible publi-

10. Ricci, *op. cit.*, p. 171.



cations and events your organization is producing. Market the think tank concept itself. Then market your specific organizations. And never stop marketing yourself and the other key individuals who personify the organization.<sup>11</sup>

A decade later, the marketing strategies of conservative institutions are even more sophisticated and aggressive. The Hoover Institution's public affairs office, for example, links to 900 media centers across the US and 450 abroad. The Reason Foundation, a national public policy research organization that also serves as a national clearinghouse on privatization, had 359 television and radio appearances in 1995 and more than 1,500 citations in national newspapers and magazines. The Manhattan Institute has held more than 600 forums or briefings for journalists and policy makers on multiple public policy issues and concerns, from tort reform to federal welfare policy. And the National Center for Policy Analysis reports that "NCPA ideas" have been discussed in 573 nationally syndicated columns and 184 wire stories over the 12 years of its existence.<sup>12</sup>

Relying not just on the mainstream media to disseminate their ideas, conservative institutions have created a variety of conservative-controlled media outlets and projects, newsletters and policy journals, web sites, and television and radio broadcasting networks. The Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy, for example, launched a strategic venture in 1995 to co-publish with William F. Buckley's *National Review*, the *National Review West*, that goes out to 80,000 political conservatives in the Western states. The Free Congress Foundation, in addition to its National Empowerment Television, is publishing *NetNewsNow*, a broadcast fax letter sent around the country to more than 400 radio producers and news editors, and the Heartland Institute's *PolicyFax*, which makes a variety of easy-to-read policy reports available free to journalists and legislators.

Conservative foundations also provided \$2,734,263 to four right-of-center magazines between 1990 and 1993, including the *The National Interest*, *The Public Interest*, *The New Criterion*, and *The American Spectator*. Over the same time period,

11. John K. Andrews, Jr., "So You Want to Start a Think Tank," *Policy Review* (Summer 1989), cited in Ricci, *op. cit.*, p. 293.  
12. All information on grantee institutions' media strategies and achievements was taken from the 1995 annual reports of the organizations mentioned.

however, four left-of-center publications — *The Nation*, *The Progressive*, *In These Times*, and *Mother Jones* — received only \$269,500 from foundations. Based on such funding disparities, one journalist concluded: "America's conservative philanthropies eagerly fund the enterprise of shaping opinion and defining policy debates, while similar efforts by progressive philanthropies are, by comparison, sporadic and half-hearted."<sup>13</sup>

"Think tank" journals also fit nicely into the conservatives' broader communications strategy by providing publishing opportunities for conservative thinkers and policy advocates. These in-house publications, as journalist Lawrence Soley has noted, "bear names that closely resemble those of [more] legitimate journals," masking the "academic anemia" of think tank staff while giving

them apparently impressive publications records. AEI's William Schneider, for example, published 16 articles in the Institute's *Public Opinion* — but not a single article in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, a respected journal of social science published since 1937. Yet, Schneider became one of the most "sought-after" political pundits, appearing 72 times on network news programs between 1987 and 1989, and serving as a regular political commentator for National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, as conservatives decried the media's left bias, they saw their institutions mentioned in various media almost 8,000 times in 1995, while liberal or progressive think tanks received only 1,152 citations.<sup>15</sup> The consequence — as true today as it was when journalist Karen Rothmyer wrote 16 years ago — is that "Layer upon layer of seminars, studies,

13. Beth Schulman, "Foundations for a Movement: How the Right Wing Subsidizes Its Press," *Extra!*, March/April 1995, p. 11.

14. Lawrence Soley, "Right-Think, Inc.," *City Pages* (Minneapolis) Oct. 31, 1990.

15. Michael Dolny, "The Think Tank Spectrum: For the Media, Some Thinkers are More Equal than Others," *Extra!*, May/June 1996, p. 21.

conferences, and interviews [can] do much to push along, if not create, the issues, which then become the national agenda of debate. ... By multiplying the authorities to whom the media are prepared to give a friendly hearing, [conservative donors] have helped to create an illusion of diversity where none exists. The result could be an increasing number of one-sided debates in which the challengers are far outnumbered, if indeed they are heard from at all."<sup>16</sup>

## Conservative Resource Mobilization

Complementing the strong marketing and communications focus of groups such as AEI and the Heritage Foundation are a variety of conservative foundation strategies to mobilize or redirect philanthropic resources in ways consistent with their policy agenda. In fact, the contemporary origins of the conservative funding movement go back to the early 1970s, when William E. Simon, former treasury secretary under Presidents Nixon and Ford, and other prominent conservatives, began to urge donors to align their philanthropy with their presumed political and public policy interests.

For Simon, who became president of the John M. Olin Foundation in 1977 and still holds that title, one key element of that alignment involved funding public intellectuals who could provide a sound defense of free-market policies and government rollback that were so ardently desired by new right enthusiasts. In *Time for Truth*, Simon wrote: "Funds generated by business must rush by the multimillions to the aid of liberty ... to funnel desperately needed funds to scholars, social scientists, writers, and journalists who understand the relationship between political and economic liberty." He called on the business community to "cease the mindless subsidizing of colleges and universities whose departments of economy, government, politics, and history are hostile to capitalism," and to move funds from "the media which serve as megaphones for anti-capitalist opinion" to those more "pro-freedom" and "pro-business."

Since then, a variety of investigative reporters and scholars have documented the hundreds of millions of dollars that

(continued on p. 14)

16. Karen Rothmyer, "Citizen Scaife," *Columbia Journalism Review*, July/Aug. 1981, pp. 48-50.





# The Wealthy Think Tanks

No set of institutions has done more to set the national policy agenda than the heavily-funded conservative think tanks and advocacy groups. Over the 1992-1994 period, the 12 key foundations poured almost \$80 million into these organizations: \$64 million was invested in multi-issue policy institutions trying to shape national domestic policy; \$15.2 million went to policy research and advocacy organizations emphasizing national security and foreign policy issues.

The top recipients follow in order of grant size over the 1992-1994 period:

■ **The Heritage Foundation** garnered close to \$9 million in 42 separate grants. Founded in 1973, its revenues more than doubled from \$14 million in 1986 to \$29.7 million in 1995.<sup>1</sup> "The unique thing we have done," says Heritage's Stuart Butler, "is combine the serious, high-quality research of a 'traditional think tank' like the Hoover Institution or Brookings Institution with the intense marketing and 'issue management' capabilities of an activist organization."<sup>2</sup>

Heritage stresses a production model to deliver a stream of policy products to key audiences on a timely and efficient basis. "We come up with the ideas," said official David Mason, and then Heritage hires dozens of relatively inexperienced policy analysts who are largely told what to write and how to write it.<sup>3</sup> The product is then marketed, "to people who will champion those ideas in the political arena."<sup>4</sup>

In 1995, its 100-plus management and professional staff, communications specialists, policy analysts, and senior fellows — including former high-ranking government officials such as William Bennett, Jack Kemp, and Edwin Meese — produced more than 200 policy products, distributing them widely to Congressional aides, lawmakers, journalists, and activist constituencies. The "delivery system consists of separate marketing divisions: Public Relations markets ideas to the media

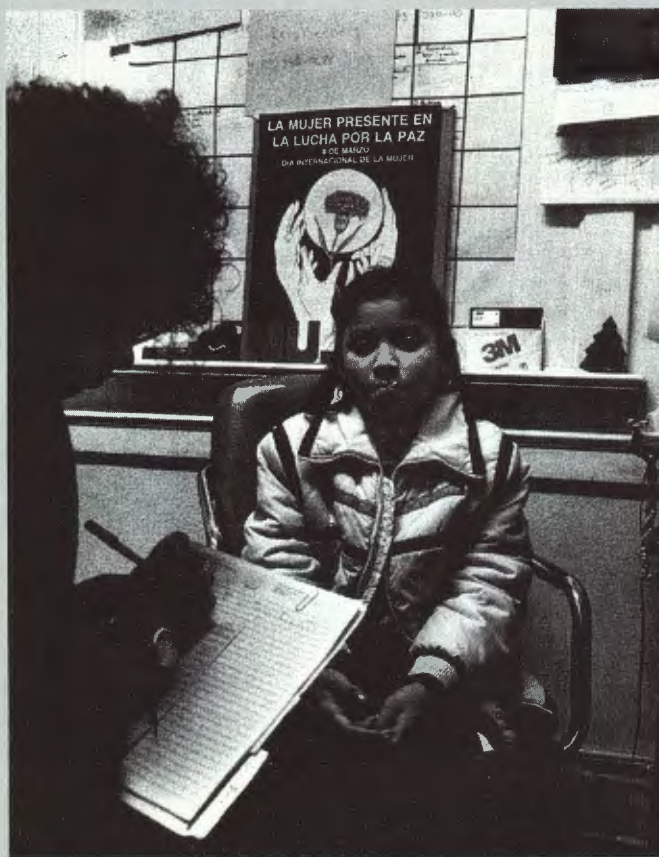
and the public; Government Relations to Congress, the Executive branch, and government agencies; Academic Relations to the university community; Resource Bank to institutions (including state think tanks), and the international conservative

■ **The American Enterprise Institute**, formed in 1943 as a traditional think tank, was granted almost \$7 million. Senior AEI staff include Robert Bork, Lynne Cheney, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Irving Kristol, Charles Murray, Michael Novak, Richard Perle, Ben Wattenberg, and 30 other conservative public intellectuals and activists, many of whom are closely intertwined with the institutional apparatus of the New Right. After being labeled too centrist in the mid-1980s and losing funding, AEI moved right and took a more aggressive public-policy role in domestic and foreign policy affairs, producing material of "immediate, practical utility" aimed at developing solutions to "real world" policy problems. Based snugly within the Beltway, AEI scholars seek to translate the "broad, variegated animus against government into specific policies,"<sup>6</sup> including economic, regulatory, welfare, health, and other social policies.

AEI staff appeared on national media several times a day during 1995-96 and organized policy conferences and seminars, including five on Medicare reform, two on welfare policy, and others on tax reform, telecommunications deregulation, and tort reform. Among its more than 600 articles, monographs, and books were *Fairness and Efficiency in the Flat Tax*, *The Frayed*

*Social Contract: Why Social Security Is in Trouble and How It Can Be Fixed*, and *Slouching toward Gomorrah: Liberalism and American Decline*. In 1995, it also published Dinesh D'Souza's racist tract, *The End of Racism*.

■ **The Free Congress Research and Education Foundation** is led by Paul Weyrich, who also co-founded the Heritage Foundation. Free Congress' \$5 million in grants funded efforts "to return to our nation's origins in limited government and personal liberty, despite the overweening power of the leviathan state."<sup>7</sup> One of its major (and now for-profit, independent) programs is National Empowerment Television (NET), a nationwide, interactive, 24-hour network which carries "its message



Immigrant and health services, like this one in Washington, DC, are a particular right-wing target.

network; and Corporate Relations to business and trades."<sup>5</sup>

In its equally important activist role, Heritage links policy analysts, Republican Party officials, conservative scholars, and grassroots constituencies. It maintains a databank and disseminates a *Resource Guide to Public Policy Experts* that lists more than 2,000 individuals and 400 organizations working from the right on a range of issues. Its analysts appeared more than 500 times on radio talk shows. Heritage also runs a bi-monthly working group of conservative organizations, maintains a speakers bureau to bring its messages to college campuses, holds policy briefings in House and Senate offices (200 in 1995), and publishes on the Internet.



of cultural conservatism and anti-Establishment politics into more than 11 million homes."<sup>8</sup> Weekly offerings include *Borderline*, a panel show on immigration policy; the *Cato Forum* on the illegitimacy of taxes and government regulation; *Legal Notebook* on crime; *Straight Talk*, produced in conjunction with the right-wing Family Research Council; and *On Target with the National Rifle Association*.

Another major Free Congress program, the Kriebel Institute, took advantage of the "conservative revolution" at home by switching its focus from communist bloc countries to a US grassroots political training program. The Congress' Center for Conservative Governance launched satellite conferences to develop grassroots conservative leadership, training 1,066 individuals in its first round. The curriculum included how to manage the media, frame issues, raise funds, and use technology in the campaign process.

■ **The Cato Institute**, founded in 1977 by libertarian activists, is a multi-million dollar, multi-issue research and advocacy organization dedicated to "increas[ing] the understanding of public policies based on the principles of limited government, free markets, individual liberty, and peace." Its staff of 40-plus senior managers, policy analysts, and communications specialists is supplemented by more than 75 adjunct Cato scholars, including ultra-conservative law professors Richard Epstein (University of Chicago) and Henry G. Manne. Cato publishes books and policy analyses, works extensively through the media, organizes conferences and policy briefings, and testifies regularly before Congress and other policymaking bodies. In 1994, it gave every Congressman *The Cato Handbook*, a 358-page, 39-chapter volume of policy reforms and proposals in every vital public policy area, including budget and tax reduction, Social Security, Medicare, education, environmental reform, and foreign and defense policy. A year later, its Project on Social Security Privatization, co-chaired by José Piñera, Chile's former minister of labor and welfare under Pinochet, and William Shipman, of State Street Global Advisors, began pushing private alternatives to Social Security. Assisted by a powerful advisory board of business leaders, conservative economists and political leaders, the project plans to spend \$2 million in a public relations campaign to depict Social Security as crisis-ridden and in need of significant reform. Cato also promotes medical savings accounts and backs property rights and tort reform.

■ **Citizens for a Sound Economy** was granted \$3.8 million. Founded in 1984, it openly and aggressively advocates market-based solutions to the nation's economic and social problems. Chaired by C. Boyden Gray, former general counsel to President Bush, CSE's self-described mission is "to fight for less government, lower taxes, and less regulation." In 1995, it spent \$17 million to advance its policy objectives<sup>9</sup> and produced more than 130 policy papers, each distributed to every office on Capitol Hill. It also conducted 50 different advertising campaigns, distributed 8,000 pieces of mail, appeared on more than 175 radio and television news shows, placed 235 op-eds, received coverage of CSE positions and activities in more than 4,000 news articles around the nation, released periodic "scorecards" grading the fiscal restraint of key congressional committees and subcommittees, generated more than 42,000 telephone calls from CSE members to elected officials, distributed dozens of

## In 1996, CSE announced plans to spend \$2 million "to make the political climate more friendly" to Social Security privatization.

faxes summarizing research on the budget, and co-chaired two grassroots coalitions supporting tax relief and a balanced budget. In addition, focus group research has helped CSE "create effective advertising products," propaganda used to develop grassroots and communications tools to promote flat tax proposals. CSE also maintains a sophisticated database of 37,000 "super activists" to whom it can appeal in the larger fight for free enterprise, and has hired 19 field directors to build "strategic alliances" in 17 states.

In 1996, CSE announced plans to spend \$2 million "to make the political climate more friendly" to Social Security privatization, paying particular attention to shaping the views of older people, women, and the 20-something generation. CSE plans to maximize impact by focusing "on states represented in Congress by members who sit on the Senate

Finance Committee and the House Ways & Means Committee, both of which have jurisdiction over Social Security. The campaign [which is now in full swing], intended to include newspaper, radio, and TV ads, and the distribution of anti-Social Security tracts."<sup>10</sup>

■ **The Hoover Institution**, with more than \$3.2 million in grants and an operating budget of almost \$19 million in 1995, has focused particular attention on tax policy, promoting the flat tax, and opposing federal social welfare policies.

■ **The Ethics and Public Policy Center**, which features convicted Iran-Contra felon Elliott Abrams as its head, is devoted to improving public appreciation of the role of business in a "moral society." Its founder, Ernest Lefever, worried that "US domestic and multinational firms find themselves increasingly under siege at home and abroad. They are accused of producing shoddy and unsafe products, fouling the environment, robbing future generations, wielding enormous power, repressing peoples in the Third World, and generally of being insensitive to human needs. We as a small and ethically oriented center are in a position to respond more directly to ideological critics who insist the corporation is fundamentally unjust."<sup>11</sup>

■ **The National Center for Policy Analysis** prides itself on aggressively marketing its products for maximum impact by "targeting key political leaders and special interest groups, establishing ongoing ties with members of the print and electronic media, and testifying before Congress, federal agencies, state lawmakers, and national associations." ■

1. According to journalist and author Thomas Byrne Edsall, the Heritage Foundation's budget in fiscal year 1976-1977 was \$1,008,557. By 1981-1982, its budget stood at \$7.1 million. See Edsall, *The New Politics of Inequality* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), p. 117.

2. Heritage Foundation, *Leadership in the New Conservative Era, 1995 Annual Report*, p. 11.

3. David M. Rice, *The Transformation of American Politics: The New Washington and the Rise of Think Tanks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 162.

4. Heritage Foundation, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

5. Ellen Messer-Davidow, "Manufacturing the Attack on Liberalized Higher Education," in *Social Text* 36 (Fall 1993), p. 52.

6. American Enterprise Institute, *Annual Report 1995*.

7. Jeffrey Coors, "Chairman's Message," Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, *Annual Report, 1995*.

8. *Ibid.*

9. All of the information provided on CSE is directly drawn from CSE's 1995 Annual Report.

10. Dreyfuss, Robert, "The End of Social Security as We Know It?" *Mother Jones*, Nov./Dec. 1996, p. 57.

11. Sara Diamond, "Endowing the Right-wing Academic Agenda," *Uncovering the Right on Campus* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: University Conversion Project, March 1994), p. 14.



(Conservative, continued from p. 11)

conservative donors have invested to reshape the nation's political conversation and policy priorities. One such report, published in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* in the early 1980s, documented the millions of dollars that Richard Mellon Scaife, heir to the Mellon oil fortune and chair of the Sarah Scaife Foundation, alone has invested in right-wing policy institutions. Dubbed the "financier of the right," Scaife was found to have made substantial investments over the 1970s and early 1980s in more than 100 "ideological organizations."

A more scholarly analysis of right-wing funding found that 10 conservative institutions received a total of \$88 million between 1977 and 1986 to finance their policy activities. Sociologist Michael Patrick Allen found that the 12 "sustaining" foundations increased their support of these ten policy institutions by over 330 percent during the 10-year period studied. These and other data demonstrate a long-term pattern of politically motivated investment by conservative donors.

The role that conservative foundations have played in reinvigorating the intellectual, institutional and leadership base of US conservatism does not have a significant parallel in the philanthropic mainstream. While conservative donors see themselves as part of a larger movement to defeat "big government liberalism," and fund accordingly, mainstream foundations operate within a tradition of American pragmatism by adopting a problem-oriented, field-specific approach to social improvement.

The ideological commitments of conservative foundations and the caution of mainstream ones have exacerbated, if not created, a gap in the resources available to multi-issue public policy institutions working on the right and left of the policy spectrum. Consider, for example, that the combined revenue base of such conservative multi-issue policy institutions as the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, the Cato Institute, and Citizens for a Sound Economy exceeded \$77 million in 1995.

In strong contrast, the roughly equivalent progressive (e.g., multi-issue, left-of-

center groups whose work focuses on domestic policies at the national level) — the Institute for Policy Studies, the Economic Policy Institute, Citizens for Tax Justice, and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities — had only \$9 million at their collective disposal in 1995. Adding the Twentieth Century Fund, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, OMB Watch, and the Center for Community Change would push the combined 1995 budgets of these eight organizations to \$18.6 million, still less than a quarter of the top five conservative groups. While revenue base may be only one factor underlying (or contributing to) organizational capacity and effectiveness, surely it is a critical one.

## Reshaping the Institutional Landscape

The long-term investments that conservative foundations have made in building a "counter-establishment" of research, advocacy, media, legal, philanthropic, and religious sector organizations have paid off handsomely. These donors have altered the mix of organizations actively seeking to influence public policy in

Washington, DC, and in state capitals. In doing so, they have reshaped the institutional landscape of US politics and policymaking profoundly. Their long-term support of policy institutions has occurred at a time of significant change in American politics — change that has facilitated the emergence of groups

like the Heritage Foundation as particularly influential policy actors.

Among the most important of these changes are the long-term decline in electoral participation, the deepening class skew to US voting patterns, the transformation of political parties into top-down fundraising vehicles, the growing role of money in politics, the rising political importance of the media, and the decline of institutions (such as unions and political parties) that once played a stronger balancing role in setting national, state, and local priorities. Over time, these changes interacted in a way that reduced opportunities for

low income people to exercise influence while enlarging such opportunities for upper-income constituencies. Philanthropic money thus converged with political opportunity in a way that has not only pushed the debate to the right but also exacerbated America's "participatory inequality."<sup>17</sup>

Beyond the groups previously mentioned, the institutional actors receiving significant support over the 1992-1994 period include media groups, legal organizations, state-level advocates, and religious sector organizations. The following list represents a sampling of grantee institutions and activities.

## Media Organizations:

- American Spectator Educational Foundation received grants totaling \$1.7 million with more than \$600,000 to expand editorial staff and reporting at *The American Spectator*, \$515,000 in flexible general operating support, and \$485,000 in special project funding. Its subscription base lunged from 38,000 in 1992 to 335,000 today.

- National Affairs is the funding vehicle which handled grants for *The Public Interest* and *The National Interest* (\$1.9 million), and the Foundation for Cultural Review for *The New Criterion* (\$1.6 million).

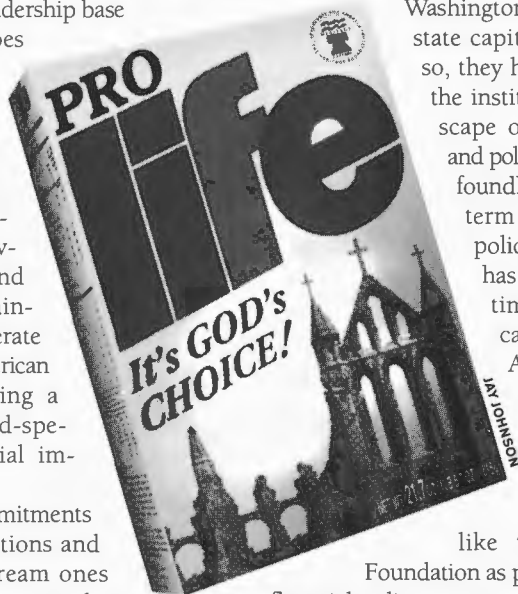
- *Commentary* magazine got a tidy \$1 million.

- American Studies Center. Grants worth \$410,000 helped ASC spread "Radio America" to 2,000 radio stations across the country, produce conservative programming, and support two conservative daily radio shows — the "Alan Keyes Show" and "Dateline Washington."

- *Firing Line* (William F. Buckley), *Think Tank* (Ben Wattenberg), *Peggy Noonan on Values*, and other conservative public television public affairs programs, got \$3.2 million.

- Center for the Study of Popular Culture (CSPC), Accuracy in Media, the Center for Media and Public Affairs, the Center for Science, Technology and Media, the Media Research Center, the Media Institute, and

17. Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Scholzman, and Henry E. Brady, "The Big Tilt: Participatory Inequality in America," *The American Prospect* (May/June 1997), pp. 74-80.







MARILYN HUMPHRIES/IMPACT VISUALS

**The right-wing approach to social problems has boosted the already astronomical US prison population. Here Suffolk, Massachusetts county jail.**

others were granted \$5.2 million "to perpetuate the myth of a liberal bias in mainstream media reportage,"<sup>18</sup> with particular criticism leveled against the Public Broadcasting Service. With seed money from the Sarah Scaife Foundation, CSPC launched the Media Integrity Project in 1987 to attack PBS for "left-wing bias." Other critics, including Laurence Jarvik, a former Bradley Research Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and a current fellow at the Capital Research Center, have called for cutting funds or privatizing PBS. Accuracy in Media criticized PBS for "blatantly pro-Communist propaganda."<sup>19</sup>

The efforts of these media grantees have made right-wing issues and views increasingly respectable and have pressured major media to become more responsive. Through scandal mongering and issue emphasis, conservative media outlets help to shape the news agenda for more established media while organized attacks on public television have pushed PBS to augment already substantial conservative public affairs programming.<sup>20</sup> The result is an even further narrowing of viewpoint. As the former dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, 18. People for the American Way, *Buying a Movement*, p. 10. 19. "The Right-Wing Agenda: Buying Media Clout," *Extra!*, June 1992, p. 16. 20. "All the Right Moves: How Republicans Get Their Way at PBS," *Extra!*, March/April 1995, pp. 18-19.

Ben Bagdikian observes, "what gets reported enters the public agenda. What is not reported may not be lost forever, but it may be lost at a time when it is most needed."<sup>21</sup>

## Legal Organizations:

■ **The Institute for Justice (IJ)**, the top grant recipient, received \$2.9 million in 24 separate grants to support litigation, training, and outreach activities focused on four areas: private property rights, economic liberty, school choice, and the First Amendment. The IJ's budget increased to more than \$1 million less than a year after it was founded in 1991 and is presently \$2.3 million.

■ **The Center for Individual Rights** and the **Washington Legal Foundation** were also heavily funded to reverse affirmative action programs of the federal government and in higher education.

These foundations not only emphasized litigation, but worked to nurture and coordinate a growing network of like-minded law students, alumni, and attorneys. The Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies, founded by two Yale law school students in the early 1980s, received \$1.6 million in grants to support its efforts to transform the legal profession, which it sees as "currently dominated by a form of liberal orthodoxy [advocating] a

21. Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, Fourth Edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), p. xxviii.

centralized and uniform society." According to the Federalist Society's 1995 annual report, its Student Division has more than 4,900 law student members in more than 140 law schools across the country, up from 2,137 members in 1989. Its Lawyers Division boasts more than 15,000 attorneys and legal professionals and more than 50 active chapters. The Society also publishes *The Federalist* (circulation 57,000), and other legal monographs and reports, and sponsors a Continuing Legal Education program.

## State/Regional Think Tanks & Advocacy Groups:

■ **The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute**, heavily funded since its inception by the Bradley Foundation, has pushed to shape state education and welfare policy in accordance with key conservative principles.

■ **The Pacific Institute for Public Policy Research** aggressively worked for California's Proposition 209, the ballot initiative to eliminate that state's affirmative action program.

■ **The Heartland Institute** publishes *Intellectual Ammunition*, a glossy, 25-page journal featuring condensed versions of policy statements and position papers of most of the think tanks and advocacy organizations to which the 12 foundations directed grants between 1992 and 1994. The May/June 1996 issue introduced *PolicyFax*, a regular insert described by Illinois state senator Chris Lauzen as:

a revolutionary public policy fax-on-demand research service that enables you to receive, by fax, the full text of thousands of documents from more than one hundred of the nation's leading think tanks, publications, and trade associations. *PolicyFax* is easy to use, and it's free for elected officials and journalists.

The 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week service features topics from crime to the economy to welfare, including *South Carolinians Have Nothing to Worry about from Concealed Handguns*; *Four Steps to Reforming Superfund*; *Medical Savings Accounts: The Right Way to Reform Health Care*; *Benefits of the Flat Tax*; and *Effective Compassion*.

■ **The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)** and the newer **State Policy Network**. Provide technical assistance, develop model legislation, and report about communications activities and conferences. ALEC, well-funded by private family foundations and corporate contributors, is a powerful and growing membership organization, with almost 26,000 state legislators — more than one-third of the nation's total. The organization, which has



a staff of 30, responds to 700 information requests each month, and has developed more than 150 pieces of model legislation ranging from education to tax policy. It maintains legislative task forces on every important state policy issue, including education, health care, tax and fiscal policy, and criminal justice.<sup>22</sup>

## Religious Sector Organizations:

**The Institute on Religion and Democracy** (IRD), founded in 1982, believes that “the National and World Councils of churches are theologically and politically flawed.” Its early focus was international, supporting US foreign policy in Central America during the Reagan years. Today, IRD publishes *Faith and Freedom* and monitors “mainliners and other Christian groups that often claim to speak for millions but really represent only an extreme few.”

■ **The Institute on Religion and Public Life** and the **Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty** both seek to influence the religious community through seminars, colloquia, sponsored research, book projects, newsletters, and journals. They work to instill a stronger appreciation of the morality of capitalism in the US and around the world. To counter “the clergy’s disturbing bias against the business community and free enterprise,” the Acton Institute runs three-day conferences for seminarians and divinity students to “introduce them to the moral and ethical basis of free market economies.” In 1995, it also launched a national welfare reform initiative to help shape national policy debates, believing that “churches and private individuals and organizations, not the government, can best help change people’s lives.”

Other national think tanks, both large and small, have decried the national moral decay and blamed teenage pregnancy, single-parent families, crime, and drugs on ceaseless expansion of the Leviathan state. This linkage between morality, poverty, and government spending — consistently propagated by a wide range of conservative grantees — has contributed to the movement’s overall political coherence, helping unite religious right activists and the often more secular fiscal conservatives. When moral failure is invoked to explain the plight of the poor, both can unite around a policy agenda stressing market discipline and the replacement of govern-

ment social programs with personal responsibility. As James Morone noted, “Once the lines are drawn [between a righteous us and a malevolent them], one can forget about social justice, progressive thinking, or universal programs. Instead the overarching policy question becomes, “How do we protect ourselves and our children? Never mind health care — build more jails.”<sup>23</sup>

## Integrated Strategy

Conservative foundations bring to their grant making programs a clear vision and strong political intention, funding to promote a social and public policy agenda fundamentally based on unregulated markets and limited government. They have created and anchored key institutions, concentrating their resources to sustain and expand a critical mass of advocacy, litigation and public policy groups working on the right of US politics and culture. The results have been cumulative and impressive. Scholars develop the intellectual basis for conservative social perspectives and policy views. Conservative think tanks and advocacy organizations produce hundreds of policy reports, briefings, action alerts, monographs and analyses on matters both broad and specific, from national fiscal policy to regulatory reform. Business-sponsored law firms pursue strategic litigation to advance conservative legal principles. Conservative media outlets profile policy approaches and proposals to inform and mobilize opinion while attacking the political and journalistic mainstream. And fellowships, internships, and leadership training programs create an effective pipeline for moving young conservatives into the fields of law, economics, government and journalism.

Further leveraging their investments, the 12 foundations have targeted their grants to support activities and projects intended to bring conservative scholars, policy analysts, grassroots leaders, and public officials into frequent contact with each other. Think tank leaders attend meetings to learn how to use new information and communication technologies for greater public opinion and policy impact. Grassroots activists are linked by satellite to training conferences focusing on how best to frame issues for public consumption. Students are subsidized to participate in public policy programs that teach them the essentials of free market econom-

ics and place them in think tanks, advocacy organizations, law firms and media outlets for further training. And organizations and projects are supported to build linkages and communication between grant making institutions and grant recipients.

In funding a policy movement rather than specific program areas, these 12 foundations distinguish themselves from the philanthropic mainstream, which has long maintained a pragmatic, non-ideological and field-specific approach to the grant making enterprise. The success of conservative foundation grantees in developing and marketing both general principles and specific policy proposals has also been enhanced by the institutional weaknesses of those who would place alternative policies on the table for political debate.

The political implications and policy consequences of this imbalance have been profound. First, the heavy investments that conservative foundations have made in New Right policy and advocacy institutions have helped to create a supply-side version of American politics in which certain policy ideas find their way into the political marketplace regardless of existing citizen demand. Second, the multiplication of institutional voices marketing conservative policies and policy approaches has resulted in policy decisions with disastrous and disproportionate consequences for low income constituencies.

The strategic grant making of the 12 foundations offers valuable lessons for those grant makers and others interested in national and state public policy matters. Seven stand out in particular. They include:

- Understanding the importance of ideology and overarching frameworks;
- Building strong institutions by providing ample general operating support and awarding large, multi-year grants;
- Maintaining a national policy focus;
- Recognizing the importance of marketing, media, and persuasive communications;
- Creating and cultivating public intellectuals and policy leaders;
- Funding comprehensively for social transformation and policy change by awarding grants across sectors, blending research and advocacy, supporting litigation, and encouraging the public participation of core constituencies; and
- Taking a long-haul approach.

While each of these lessons alone has funding power and significance, it is the combination that has given conservative philanthropy its vast clout. ■

22. Center for Policy Alternatives, *The Marketplace of Ideas: The States and a Progressive Future: A Consultation with Foundation Executives* (Washington, DC: Center for Policy Alternatives, March 1995), pp. 25-29.

23. James A. Morone, “The Corrosive Politics of Virtue,” *The American Prospect* 26, May/June 1996, p. 30.



# Inside the Mind of Torture

## The Story of Apartheid's Electrician

by Jacques Pauw



Prime Minister B.J. Vorster in the gunport  
of an armored personnel carrier, 1978

*In apartheid South Africa as in Nazi Germany, official terrorism was not simply an abstract function of state, it relied on the cooperation of many individuals. It was not simply political, it was often deeply personal.*

*"The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that there were so many like him, and the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, but they were and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal ... this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together." — Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*



**S**outh Africa, 1997: It is Sunday lunch on the farm "Drooglaagte" in the northern Transvaal bushveld. The burly, moustached man at the head of the table takes his wife's hand and says grace before digging into a plate piled high with steak and chops. A copper plate embossed with a storming elephant bull decorates the wall behind me. In the study next door hang two university degree certificates and photographs of prize-winning Brahman bulls.

As we sip glasses of sweetish white wine and orange juice, conversation ranges from raised taxes to the failure of black people to pay their electricity bills. Somebody tells a story of a township dweller who tried to "steal" electricity and got shocked to death. People laugh.

"Yes, and now we have our own electrician," says the woman next to me and looks at the man at the head of the table. More laughter. He grins and demolishes another T-bone steak.

There is nothing out of the ordinary about the scene around me. Regular Afrikaner people having Sunday lunch, shrieking children running around on the manicured lawn outside the dining room, plates of barbecued meat, and debate about Currie Cup rugby.

When only a pile of bones remains, a baby totters into the dining room. The big man picks the boy up. "Give me a kiss, my beautiful child," he says and hugs him. I look at his hands comforting the child.

## He had read about the torture methods of the SS and Pinochet. He had tortured more people than he can ever remember.

**Jacques Pauw**, a co-founder in 1988 of the anti-apartheid newspaper *Vrye Weekblad*, has written extensively and produced television documentaries on state-sponsored death squads. His first book, *Into the Heart of the Whore: The Story of Apartheid's Death Squads* (South Africa: Souther Books, 1991) was launched by Nelson Mandela. This article is adapted from his second book, *Into the Heart of Darkness: Confessions of Apartheid's Assassins* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1997).

The information in this article, except where otherwise indicated, is based on an interview with Paul van Vuuren on his farm near Warmbaths, March 1997; and evidence from the amnesty applications of Paul van Vuuren, Jacques Hechter and Jack Cronje at several sittings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Oct. 1996, and Feb. and March 1997, and the transcripts of various trials.

The hardy, muscular, and beefy hands of a farmer. Hands that have raised award-winning stock. Hands of a hunter who has shot hundreds of buck. Hands of a carnivore par excellence. But also hands that were made into fists and smashed into the faces of people. Hands that have strangled, aimed guns at people, thrown bombs into houses and pushed electrical wires against living flesh.



**Van Vuuren, a torturer and killer, at home, and with his bride.**

Paul Jacobus Jansen van Vuuren was a security policeman during the 1980s under South Africa's apartheid regime. Before our Sunday lunch, we sat on the pink lounge suite where he told me that the death squad he served in might have killed more people than any other security police unit. At the time, he said, he had enjoyed his work and had been proud of what he had achieved.

He had read about the torture methods of the SS in Nazi Germany and Augusto Pinochet's secret police in Chile. He had tortured more people than he can ever remember.

One of the methods he used was to shock and electrocute people. Hence his luncheon guest's reference to "the electrician."

Paul van Vuuren was a master of his craft. He is one of the men who represents the banality of the evil that was South Africa's culture, as much as it had been the country's system of government since the National Party took power in 1948 and legalized apartheid.

He and others like him were apartheid's ultimate and most secret weapon. When all else had failed — detention without trial, harassment and dirty tricks, state of emergency regulations, and criminal prosecution — the

death squads were sent out to finally "solve the problem." They acquired the power to decide over life and death. In the process, they not only abandoned their police or South African Defense Force (SADF) oaths to serve and uphold law and order, but some were also forced to abandon their own morality. The system they served rewarded them richly. The police counterinsurgency unit based

at Vlakplaas, a farm outside Pretoria where the death squads trained, stole hundreds of thousands of rands from the police secret fund — with the connivance of the generals. Members of SADF

death squads paid themselves "production bonuses" for successful operations. The more they killed, the more they were honored, these men based at Vlakplaas, these killer policemen of the Northern

Transvaal Security Branch, operatives of an SADF death squad blandly called the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB), and military intelligence and security police agents.

The death squad's culture in South Africa — its techniques, skills and methods — had much in common with those of a gang of ordinary thugs. What distinguished the squad's members from common criminals was that they believed themselves to be fighting a secret twilight war against an evil enemy. Any method that could lead to the destruction and disruption of the enemy was permitted and tacitly condoned. In committing these atrocities, there was one golden rule: never get caught. They referred to it as the "eleventh commandment."

We may never know to what extent the apartheid government conspired with the death squads to annihilate their political opponents, but there can be little doubt that statements by National Party politicians ignited the fire in the bellies of killer policemen and soldiers. Nor may we ever understand what caused souls like Van Vuuren's to become so dark and what led these men to so much wickedness.





## A Job to Do

July 1987. In a deserted stretch of open veld north of Pretoria, three men were lying on the ground, their hands and feet tied. Hours before, they had mysteriously disappeared from their homes in townships around Pretoria and Witbank. They were activists, members of the banned African National Congress (ANC). According to security police files, they were all trained guerrillas and deeply involved in the wave of unrest in the townships.

Standing over the activists were three security policemen, members of a secret death squad within the Northern Transvaal Security Branch. Night after night, the three men, sometimes wearing dark ski masks, roamed the townships around Pretoria, killing, bombing and kidnapping activists they regarded as a threat to the security of the apartheid state.

Next to the manacled activists stood a power generator intended to pump water for cattle, but that day, it was used to extract information from the captured men.

"We put the wire on his hands and feet and shocked it until his body went rigid. We only did it for a second or two," said Warrant Officer Paul van Vuuren, one of the three security policemen on the scene.

The other two were Capt. Jacques Hechter and Warrant Officer Joe Mamasela, the killer *askari* (ANC partisans turned informer or collaborator) who had been transferred from

*Vlakplaas*

to the Northern Transvaal security police at the end of 1985. The men of the death squad were playing prosecutor, judge, and executioner of the three men when they decided that Andrew Makupe, Jackson Maake, and Harold Sefola had to die. But they were worried that they might

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**"He said we can kill him, but the ANC would rule one day. ... and that democracy would be the end of the Boers."**

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leave traces of blood behind if they shot them. Another method had to be found. The generator.

The previous day, Maake had been the first captured. According to Van Vuuren, he was a security police informant, perhaps a double agent planning an attack against them. The policeman took the 19-year-old Mamelodi township scholar to the stretch of open veld. For about three hours, "We used the generator to send shocks through him to persuade him to talk. He admitted that he was a double agent.

He had in-

structions to eliminate us because we were seen as a danger to the ANC. He told us that the other member of his cell was Andrew Makupe in Mamelodi, who was a courier for the ANC. Late that same night, Andrew Makupe was kidnapped as he got into his car. He was taken to the

same spot, where his hands and feet were tied and a cloth stuffed in his mouth. The two men, guarded by two black policemen, were left in the open veld on a winter's night.

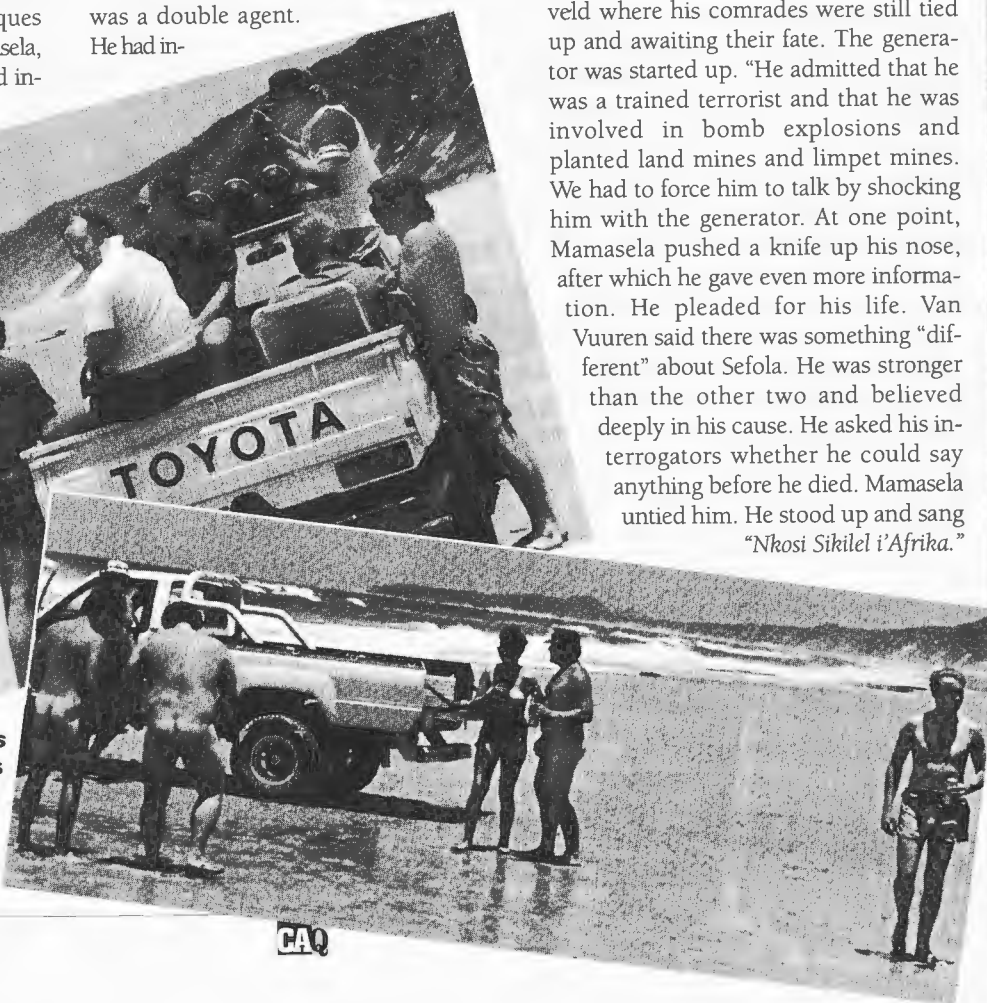
At dawn, the security policemen returned and questioned Makupe by starting up the generator

and shocking him. Makupe spoke immediately and told the men his commander in Witbank was codenamed "Bra H." The policemen rushed back to security police headquarters where they discovered that "Bra H" was Harold Sefola, a trained guerrilla and, according to informants, the mastermind behind several bomb explosions, but there had never been enough information to arrest and prosecute him.

That same night, Van Vuuren, Hechter, and Mamasela went to Witbank, trapped Sefola, and took him to the open veld where his comrades were still tied up and awaiting their fate. The generator was started up. "He admitted that he was a trained terrorist and that he was involved in bomb explosions and planted land mines and limpet mines. We had to force him to talk by shocking him with the generator. At one point, Mamasela pushed a knife up his nose, after which he gave even more information. He pleaded for his life. Van Vuuren said there was something "different" about Sefola. He was stronger than the other two and believed deeply in his cause. He asked his interrogators whether he could say anything before he died. Mamasela untied him. He stood up and sang

*"Nkosi Sikilel i' Afrika."*

**Vlakplaas men in what was officially called a "team building expedition," but which was, in fact, nothing more than a drunken orgy (1981).**





"He said we can kill him, but the ANC would rule one day. He said that apartheid cannot survive and that democracy would be the end of the Boers."

As Sefola sang the anthem of the anti-apartheid movement, Mamasela draped an ANC flag over the corpse of Jackson Maake. As the final notes faded, the wires of the generator were attached to Andrew Makupe, and he was electrocuted.

Mamasela said in an affidavit that Van Vuuren ordered Sefola to pray for the other two. He went on his knees, but put his fist in the air and saluted his comrades in the name of the struggle.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after, Sefola was also shocked to death. Mamasela said he was shocked until foam and blood came out of his mouth and ears.

"We had to kill them. We had to destroy the whole cell," said Van Vuuren. The three hitmen loaded the bodies into a minibus and took them to a dirt road in the homeland of Bophuthatswana. "We placed the landmine on the ground, put them on top of the landmine, we stood back and detonated the mine," said Van Vuuren. It had to look like the three activists tried to plant the mine and accidentally activated the device.

When Sefola stood in the veld singing "*Nkosi Sikilel i'Afrika*" and told the police that the ANC would one day rule the country, Van Vuuren had thought he was mad. Van Vuuren believed that the security police were winning the war. He and his death squad roamed the townships, killed and tortured activists, and bombed their houses with little thought of consequences.

## Forgive and Remember

1996. Nine years later. The ANC is ruling the country. Persistent and courageous struggle has brought an end to 40 years of apartheid rule. And in the cham-

1. Joe Mamasela refused to apply for amnesty, but has made a series of affidavits to the Transvaal Attorney General and has testified *in camera* before the TRC.

bers of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a former security policeman takes the witness stand to plead for amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Under the terms of the TRC, those who had committed political crimes and who revealed the full extent and details of their actions are granted amnesty.

"I felt as though I was the one being tortured," said Van Vuuren describing the moment he took the oath. Staring at him from the public gallery were the

shines, I think about my child. When the sun sets, I think about my child. This thing is hurting me. They must show me the place where they've killed my son."<sup>2</sup>

"We didn't like what we did, but we had to stop the killing of innocent women and children," said Van Vuuren defending his actions.

Mabel Makupe's last child was born only a month before her husband disappeared. "He was a nice guy. He was like a brother to me, like a father, he was everything to me. We were a very happy family. We were just looking for him. I kept on asking myself if he's still alive, why doesn't he come home?"<sup>3</sup>

Van Vuuren: "I would never have done this under normal circumstances. I did it for my country and my people. I was fighting communism." It is an excuse often used as a justification for the most heinous crimes. For example, former Minister of Defense Magnus Malan, who approved the formation of the CCB, told Parliament in September 1981: "As point of departure we have to accept that the onslaught here in southern Africa is Communist-inspired, Communist-planned and Communist-supported. ... They want to establish a dictatorial state for elite black Marxists in the

Republic of South Africa ... The security of the Republic of South Africa must be maintained by every possible means at our disposal."

Sitting across the commission room from Van Vuuren was Jacques Hechter. He told the commission that he suffered from amnesia and couldn't remember the event. He was, however, also asking

2. Elizabeth Maake, interviewed in Pretoria, Feb. 1997.  
3. Mabel Makupe, interviewed in Pretoria, Feb. 1997.



**Grief-stricken survivors of "black-on-black" violence, much of which was maliciously instigated by the government.**

ABDUL SHARIFF/IMPACT VISUALS

mothers and wives of Andrew Makupe, Jackson Maake, and Harold Sefola. They were there to listen to how and why their loved ones had to die. Elizabeth Maake spoke about the disappearance of her son. "He left on that Wednesday. That was the last time I saw him. I used to see him coming from school, but that day I didn't see him. I kept asking people whether they'd seen him, but nobody knew where he was. When the sun





PAUL WEINBERG/IMPACT VISUALS

**Transvaal whites celebrate their town's anniversary while blacks in the area face removal, 1988.**

for amnesty for the murder, assault and kidnapping of the three activists.

The third member of the death squad, Joe Mamasela, was not there. The former *askari* said he was also a victim of the security police because they forced him to commit the murders. He, therefore, refused to apply for amnesty. The former head of the Northern Transvaal Security Branch, Brigadier Jack Cronje, also applied for amnesty. Together, Cronje, Hechter and Van Vuuren applied for amnesty for the killing of more than 40 people from 1985 to 1988. In no way did Van Vuuren's applications constitute a "full confession" of their death squad activities. He later told me on his farm it was impossible: They had simply tortured, bombed and killed too many people.

They were only confessing to incidents already made public by Joe Mamasela. And before their testimony had ended, they had to prepare amnesty applications for about 15 more murders as a result of information given to the TRC by other policemen who were applying for amnesty. Van Vuuren said there were several more incidents that he was not going to

discuss. "Sometimes only Jacques Hechter and I went on operations. We are not going to split on each other and it will remain our secret. Nobody will ever know."

Van Vuuren told me that to sit and confess to the TRC was the most difficult thing he had ever done in his life.

"More difficult than killing people?"

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**"It was exciting days, those years.  
At times I could not wait to do it.  
They say to kill is like sleeping  
with a woman. It's true."**

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"That was easy after a while. The Commission are messing around with our souls. It isn't fair. They are making me responsible for the deeds of the politicians."

Looking at them, I thought about the words of former newspaper editor Donald Woods when he described the Eastern Cape security policemen testifying at the inquest into the September 1977 death of

Steve Biko. The Black Consciousness leader had died in custody after being severely beaten.

We at the inquest could see their faces, could watch their demeanor under cross-examination, and could hear their words — their version of the story. For the first time, these men, products and inheritors of the Afrikaner Nationalist tradition, were flushed out of their police stations and their little interrogation rooms. For once they were in the position of having to account for themselves. These men displayed

symptoms of extreme insularity. They are people whose upbringing has impressed upon them the divine right to retain power, and in that sense they are innocent men — incapable of thinking or acting differently. On top of that they have gravitated to an occupation that has given them all the scope they need to express their rigid personalities. They have been pro-



tected for years by the laws of the country. They have been able to carry out all their imaginative torture practices quite undisturbed in cells and rooms all over the country, with tacit official sanction, and they have been given tremendous status by the government as the men who "protect the State from subversion."<sup>4</sup>

## Dead Eyes

Nearly 20 years later, the disciples of death had changed very little. Steve Biko died naked, manacled and in pain. So did some of Paul van Vuuren and Jacques Hechter's victims. Donald Woods could see death in the eyes of Biko's torturers; there were times when I could see death in the eyes of Hechter and Van Vuuren.

But the difference is that the security policemen at the Biko inquest were protected and guarded by the apartheid powers. A horrifying picture of cruelty and brutality emerged, but the policemen who struck the final blows were defiant and undaunted. On the bench was a conservative Afrikaner magistrate, P. J. Prins, who shielded them: "The available evidence does not prove that the death was brought about by any act or admission involving or amounting to an offence on the part of any person."

Testifying before the TRC, Van Vuuren and Hechter were on their own, deserted by the politicians and many of the generals on whose behalf they had killed. They said that former President F. W. de Klerk lied in his own submission to the TRC when, to widespread scepticism, he declared his ignorance of state-sanctioned terrorism: "In dealing with the unconventional strategies from the side of the government, I want to make it clear from the outset that, within my knowledge and experience, they never included the authorization of assassination, murder, torture, rape, assault or the like. I have never been part of any decision taken by Cabinet, the State Security Council or any committee authorizing or instructing the commission of such gross violations of human rights."

The men end their opening statement with a poem from the Afrikaans poet C. Louis Leipoldt: "Give peace and rest to those of us who are tired of roaming, Courage and patience to those of us who are scared of dying." Hours later, Paul van Vuuren told the commission

how Andrew Makupe, Jackson Maahe, and Harold Sefola had pleaded for mercy in the face of death.

## The Joy of Murder

Is this the face of evil, I wondered as I looked at Paul van Vuuren, dressed in khaki clothes and stretched out on the pink couch in the lounge of the farmhouse. "How does it feel to shoot a human being?" I asked him.

"To shoot a human being and a buck is basically the same." Silence. Then he continued: "It was exciting days, those years. At times I could not wait to do it. They say to kill is like sleeping with a woman. It's true."

I didn't answer him.

"Do you understand?" he asked me.

I just looked at him. There were many things I didn't understand. The joy of murder and torture, for one, but above all, why this man had chosen to become a killer and inflict pain and suffering on others.

I have spoken to many death squad killers. Most, if not all, have expressed a deep regret for what they had done and said how sorry they were. In most cases, they were lying.

At least Paul van Vuuren was candid. He looked me squarely in the eyes and admitted that he had a task, which was to kill apartheid's opponents. He did it, he did it with conviction, and he isn't sorry. The faces and memories of his victims and his killings don't seem to haunt him. The only thing he regrets is that he had lost the war, was exposed, and has had to confess.

In Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, a play on the meaninglessness of the lives of the two minor characters sent to spy on Hamlet, Guildenstern says to Rosencrantz on the eve of their execution: "There must be a moment at the beginning, where we all could have said no. But somehow we missed it."

Paul van Vuuren is no different from many white Afrikaners who grew up during the era of apartheid and were subjected to propaganda about the ugliness and evil of black and the beauty and holiness of white. Most of us partici-

pated either willingly or unwillingly in creating the incredible pall that covered South Africa at the time. I know what he means when he talks about the effect that the total onslaught ideology had on him. Van Vuuren is only two years younger than I am; we both grew up in typical Afrikaner families and went to the same university. Van Vuuren joined the South African police in 1984. He said that day after day, he and other recruits heard about communism and the total onslaught.

That was the watershed year during which our paths diverged. I continued to work for the government-supporting Afrikaans newspaper *Rapport*, but four years later became co-founder of an anti-apartheid paper, refused to do any military service and exposed the existence of the police death squads.

That was the time when Van Vuuren should have said no and turned back, but instead he requested a transfer to the Security Branch. He became a killer.

## Total Onslaught

When Van Vuuren reported for service at the Northern Transvaal Security Branch, he was called in by Brigadier Jack Cronje.

"Yes, you duckfucker, where do you come from?"

"I grew up on a farm near Warmbaths, Brigadier."

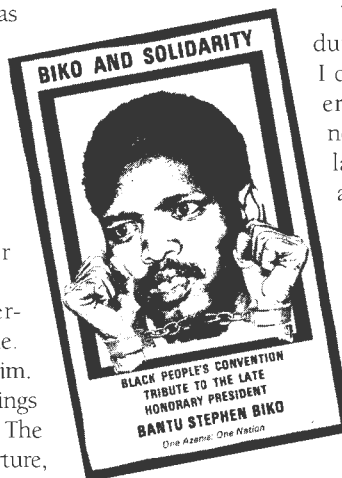
"So can you work with kaffirs [niggers]?"

"Yes, Brigadier."

"Well, report to Section B."

Section B was the unit dealing with black activists. The unit had a network of about 100 informants in the townships who would provide the security police with information about the movement, activities and strategies of ANC and United Democratic Front (UDF) activists and comrades. Files would be compiled on activists and "troublemakers" who needed the unit's "attention."

Van Vuuren said that when he arrived at the Security Branch in April 1985, a formal death squad had not yet been founded. But there was already a great deal of talk that a special unit was needed to counter unrest in the townships. "One day, Captain Flip Loots said: 'If we can only kill these bastards, the unrest would stop.'"



4. Donald Woods, *Biko* (London: Penguin, 1987).



Security Branch headquarters had the same idea. In his evidence before the TRC, Jack Cronje described how the death squad in his region came into being. "The ANC, UDF and other black organisations were waging a war against us, and it became necessary to eliminate terrorists and activists. The legal system could not handle the situation and detention under the state of emergency proved not to be effective."

Cronje said that early in 1986 he had had a meeting with Gen. Johan Viktor, who was second-in-command of the police counterinsurgency unit. "He said we had to bring the situation in the Pretoria area under control. It didn't matter how. He said that Pretoria was burning and the country was burning. Activists had to be eliminated before they could commit acts of terror. From that point on, we waged a full-scale guerrilla war against activists."

The same methods were applied by security branches in other regions, said Cronje. "It was done everywhere and we were never repudiated by the Commissioner of Police, the State Security Council, the Cabinet or the government."

In his evidence before the TRC, F. W. de Klerk rejected Cronje's submission that the security police had then fought terror with terror: "There was a fight to be fought against those activists which were part of the revolutionary onslaught aimed at making South Africa ungovernable, aimed at overthrowing the state. But to get people to kill other people, to get people to commit murder, was not part of the policy."

Cronje also revealed the existence of a secret security police unit called the Counter Revolutionary Information Target Center, better known by its Afrikaans acronym of Trewits. It was founded in 1985 to identify human targets for removal. Each month, representatives of the Security Police, Military Intelligence, Special Forces, and the National Intelligence Service would hold meetings at which intelligence information would be exchanged and targets identified.

"All our actions were contained in situation reports that were sent to Security Branch headquarters. Further reports about our actions were sent to the State Security Council, and, therefore, the Council had to know about the actions of my men," Cronje asserted.

F. W. de Klerk said of Trewits: "What they were doing, if they actually did it, would definitely have been unauthorized. It was never part of the policy and I totally distanced myself from that. They were not acting within the framework or anything that comes near a reasonable interpretation of the policies of the government."

Van Vuuren tells a different story. "In the beginning we only intimidated people. If activists burnt down a house, we would get reports from informants who they were. We would go that night and burn their houses. If they burn, we burn. After a while, the comrades were not sleeping in their houses anymore. We would throw petrol bombs through windows. I suppose people, maybe

women and children, could have died in the attacks. In the beginning I was scared, but after a while I couldn't wait to go out at night. It was like sleeping with a woman," reminisced Van Vuuren.

Joe Mamasela said they fire-bombed about 350 houses in and around Pretoria. Jacques Hechter underwent a crash course in explosives,

and when he came back, he introduced "bucket bombs" to his death squad compatriots.

Van Vuuren said a typical day would start at half past seven in the morning when they would go out for a cup of coffee. Later the same morning, they would ask Flip Loots which names had surfaced in the informant reports. He would tell



**In the name of anticommunism, the death squads justified all manner of crimes.**

them who was politically "active and who needed attention." They would read through the files and have to decide: did he only "need a hiding"? Or did they need to "steal him"? They had complete access to "terrorist" weapons such as AK-47s and Makarovs and could obtain explosives whenever they needed them. They had a .22 pistol with a silencer that they used to shoot noisy and aggressive dogs. "We went on operations about every second night. We would use stolen cars and would sometimes wear balaclavas. I must have conducted at least 200 operations, but it could have been 500."

The squad usually recruited informants from activists they abducted. They would drive around in a minibus and when they came alongside an activist, they would open the door, grab him, and pull him in. In other cases, Mamasela would infiltrate activist cells or units and lure activists into Van Vuuren and Hechter's waiting hands.

During interrogation, the men would evaluate the activist and decide if he might be worth recruiting as an informant. They would offer him money, up to R1,000 a month. Once he had given his first report, he was hooked. Interrogation and torture went hand in hand. Van Vuuren said they would always take a suspect to a remote place where he knew nobody could hear him. "We were very good at torturing



**Nelson Mandela and Ruth First, 1959.**





BRETT ELOFF/IMPACT VISUALS

**While black areas burned, whites lived protected lives marked with fear that the situation could be reversed.**

people. I quickly learned that if you don't hit him half-dead, he's not going to tell you everything."

Each unit and every security policeman had his own method of torturing people. *Vlakplaas*, for example, was fond of "tubing" people: pulling the inner tube of a car tire over a detainee's face to smother him. "I found that to 'tube' a person was not always that effective," van Vuuren continued. "You got tired because you had to use both hands and pull hard. We had various methods. We would tie a detainee very tightly to a chair. We had a gas mask which we would put over his face. We would close the air supply with a plug. While the activist would struggle and gasp for air, we could sit back and have coffee. It was much easier than tubing. I read books about the torture methods of the SS in

Germany and Pinochet's secret police in Chile. I learned that the best way to interrogate a person was to take all his clothes off to strip him of his dignity. Nobody could last more than five minutes. There was one very important factor when I tortured somebody, and that was that I felt fuck-all for life. I would have killed anybody. A detainee knew he was dead if he didn't cooperate. If you wanted to be a political activist, you had to be able to take the pain."

"How did you feel about killing people?" I asked him.

"It didn't bother me, because it was the enemy."

"Did you enjoy what you were doing?"



CATHERINE SMITH/IMPACT VISUALS

"Yes, I enjoyed what I was doing, because I thought it was the right thing to do. It was the enemy we were killing. I felt I was busy with big and important things. We always used to say: 'We are reducing the files.'"

"Were you an effective death squad?"

"Hechter and myself have killed more people than any other security policemen. We killed many more than those for whom we are applying for amnesty. It is just that we cannot remember everything. We were more effective than *Vlakplaas*. We never drank during an operation and never stole money. I never made a cent."

"Do you never feel guilty about anything you did?"

"Harold Sefola disturbed me, because he wasn't scared of dying. He died with dignity. The other two I didn't care about. They were like all the others. I do feel bad about innocent women and children that might have died. But I never have any nightmares."

"Do you think it was worthwhile?"

"At the time I was proud of fighting Communism, but if I think back about it today, we didn't make any difference. We wasted our time."

"Are you in any way sorry for what you did?"

"I can't say to the victims or their families that I'm sorry. They're empty words. I would rather say nothing, because it's too easy to say you have remorse."

The amnesty submissions of the killer commando at the

Northern Transvaal Security Branch consisted of several hundred pages. Together, Jack Cronje, Paul van Vuuren and Jacques Hechter applied for amnesty for more than 40 murders. Hechter applied for amnesty for 26 incidents, Paul van Vuuren for 18. Many more remain secret.

## Boss Farmer

Van Vuuren left the police force in 1989. On his game farm near Ellisras in the northern Transvaal he tried to come to terms with being just a farmer again. "I was very frustrated after I had left the



force. In 1992, I shot 2,000 impala buck. I had to keep my mind occupied and find an outlet for my adrenalin." He said he was very strict with his workers. If they didn't listen, he would "fuck them up." He would sometimes become so angry that he would get heart palpitations and go to bed.

Before he had testified to the TRC, he had "never had a problem with labor on the farm. Now, for the first time, people don't want to work for me any more. They see me on television and are scared. People recognize me in the streets. Some see me as a hero, but the higher-class Afrikaner looks down on me with contempt. It isn't fair, because I also killed for them."

He seems quite bitter that all is not forgiven despite the decision he and other police made to confess to the TRC "with a purpose of cleansing our souls from the darkness of the past, and to let the truth be spoken about our deeds."

## Truth/Reconciliation?

Many of the victims are also bitter. Sizwe Kondile had just completed his law studies and fathered his first child when apartheid assassin Dirk Coetzee murdered him and threw his body on a pyre of tires and wood. As the corpse sizzled and slowly turned to ashes, Coetzee and his compatriots in the *Vlakplaas* death squad sat nearby and gorged themselves on meat and brandy. "It was just another job to be done," he said. "We would have our own little *braai* [barbeque] and just keep on drinking ... Hell, we didn't care. It wasn't as if we had killed human beings."

During his amnesty hearing, Coetzee turned toward Charity Kondile, Sizwe's mother. "I ask your forgiveness. I am sorry for what I did," he said.<sup>6</sup> Kondile's legal representative read the reply: "You said that you would like to meet Mrs. Kondile and look her in the eye. She asked me to tell you that she feels it is an honor ... you do not deserve. If you are really sorry, you would stand trial for the deeds you did." A long uncomfortable silence filled the hall. The judges, the legal representatives, the audience, everybody, looked distraught — the only movement was that of Dirk Coetzee as he slowly turned away and clutched his fists.

In an interview afterward, Kondile said: "It is easy for [Nelson] Mandela and [Desmond] Tutu to forgive ... they lead vindicated lives. In my life nothing,

not a single thing, has changed since my son was burnt by barbarians ... nothing. Therefore, I cannot forgive."

After anti-apartheid leader Ruth First was assassinated, her daughter, Gillian Slovo, began the long search for her mother's killers. It led her to one of Johannesburg's industrial areas, where she confronted a man who "must have been all of twenty stone: his head looked tiny, perched as it was on top of all that fat." He was Craig Williamson, former commander of the Security Branch's foreign section and member of the President's Council, who has asked for amnesty for blowing up Ruth First with a parcel bomb in 1982.<sup>6</sup>

"I was in the loop that killed your mother," he said.

"Loop? What was he talking about? A baton race? A high-tech circuit? Or a group of men sitting in Pretoria's Wachthuis working out ways to rid themselves of Ruth?"

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**"I was very frustrated after I had left the [police] force. In 1992, I shot 2,000 impala buck. I had to keep my mind occupied and find an outlet for my adrenalin."**

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"... I was seized by anger. Perhaps stabbing would have been easier than sitting and listening to this bully's bloodless tale of murder ... those other qualities that I'd been searching for — regret, repentance, or conscience — had been conspicuously absent."

As the TRC ended its forum in which the victims who survived listened while the perpetrators confessed their crimes and pled for amnesty, questions about South Africa's future hung in the air. How are we going to deal with narrow culpability and broad responsibility, about where the essential guilt for the country's shameful past lies?

What about the majority of white South Africans who were the complicit and silent beneficiaries of apartheid? Not just whites, but the many Joe Mamaselas who collaborated, informed, and served?

What about the bureaucrats who did all the apartheid paperwork needed in order to classify, remove, disinherit, and control? Judges and magistrates that ignored the pleas of tortured detainees and absolved the inquisitors and killers? The Afrikaans churches that were nothing but the National Party at prayer? Big business that grew elephantine off cheap labor? Newspaper editors who helped to cover up and hide the truth? And yet, there is scant moral outcry by white South Africans about what was done in their names. Little condemnation of F. W. de Klerk and his predecessors who used their money to prop up and fund their death squads. Less understanding of the pain and suffering laid bare at the TRC. "We didn't know ... why must I feel guilty about something I knew nothing about? ... F. W. de Klerk didn't know about it, how were we supposed to know?"

When the TRC was set up in November 1995, the nation was looking for an essential gesture to take it beyond the scapegoating. To start with, the country wanted what post-war Germany got when Willy Brandt went down on his knees at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial

and asked the world for forgiveness. They needed reconciliation and the quest for forgiveness to come from the heart. But what they had hoped for will never be. F. W. de Klerk's "big denial" has not only brought Desmond Tutu to the brink of tears, but has left the people of South Africa further apart than ever before.

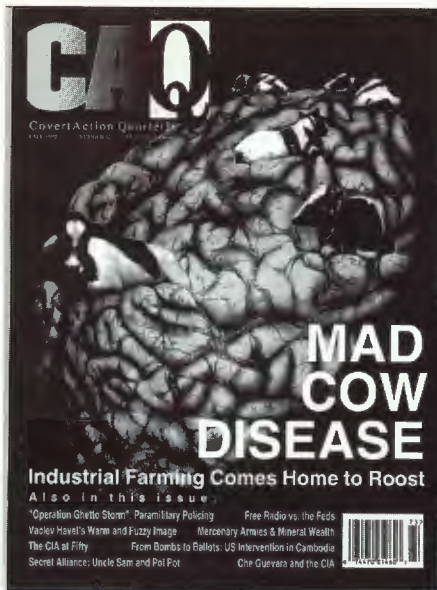
The TRC is uncovering a large chunk of our past, but has been less successful in achieving reconciliation, because there has been no collective apology from the white community for what was committed in its name. Says Gillian Slovo:

And yet, in the face of the displaced responsibility and the empty justifications that the likes of [her mother's assassin] Craig Williamson produced, forgiveness felt like just another effort, in a long string of previous efforts, that the victims, and not the perpetrators, would have to make. ■

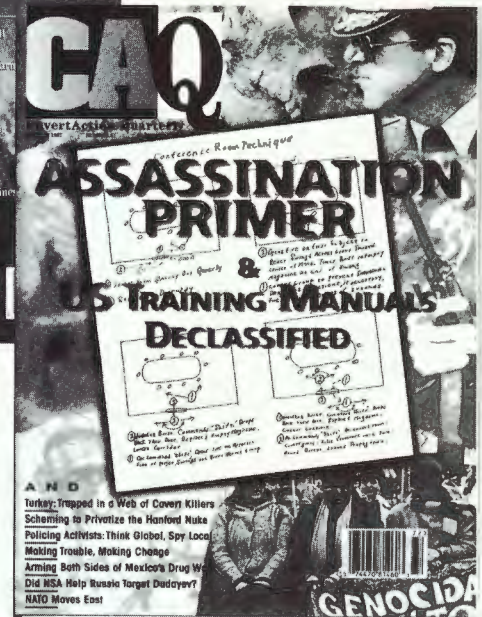
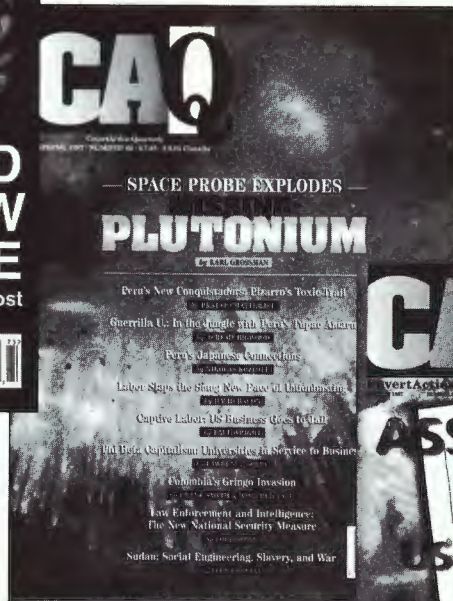
5. *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg), Feb. 7, 1997.

6. Gillian Slovo, *Every Secret Thing* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1997).





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# APARTHEID'S POISON LEGACY

## South Africa's Chemical and Biological Warfare Program

*Under apartheid, South Africa's securocrats poisoned opponents, spread toxins, and released disease germs in the name of white supremacy. Now, the new government must decide whether it can expose the past without loosing the genie of CBW proliferation.*

by De Wet Potgieter



**Wouter Basson, head of CBW program, on trial for drug charges.**

LEON BOTHA/BEELD

In 1986, Beatrice Wiltshire almost blew the lid off South Africa's covert project that promoted poisoning, assassination, infiltration, and experimentation with lethal chemical and biological weapons. The animal rights activist had stumbled on the strange activities of one of the many front organizations of that country's notorious multimillion dollar top secret chemical and biological warfare (CBW) program.

When Wiltshire insisted on knowing what was going on at the state-of-the-art Roodeplaat Research Laboratories (RRL) and the Roodeplaat Breeding Enterprises (RBE) outside Pretoria, her main concern was the plight of the animals. She had heard that horrific experiments on live baboons were being carried out behind the high elec-

trified fences. But she never realized that this animal research was a mere fraction of what was really being plotted in the name of "Total Onslaught" and *Rooi Gevaar*.<sup>1</sup> Nor did she realize that overnight, she had become an enemy of the state — a serious threat to the security of apartheid government. Wiltshire was

1. The *Rooi Gevaar* (Red threat) and "Total Onslaught" siege mentality were used by former state president P.W. Botha and his Minister of Defense Magnus Malan to drill fear into South Africans about the Cuban and Soviet threat on the country's doorstep during the bloody bush wars in Angola, Mozambique, and Namibia.

asking the wrong questions of very dangerous people who enjoyed *carte blanche* and protection at the very top echelons of the Nationalist government.

The faceless people fronting for the top secret project never allowed Wiltshire inside the facility, assuring her that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) regularly ran inspections and that internationally accepted standards prevailed. But by then, Wiltshire had pointed an unprecedented and unwanted spotlight on the secret facility. A decade later, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is finally uncovering

the facts  
about



De Wet Potgieter is a journalist with *Rapport*, an Afrikaans language Sunday newspaper, and author of *Combrabant: South Africa and the International Trade in Ivory and Rhino Horn* (Cape Town: Quellerie Publishers, 1995). The author wishes to thank Marlene Burger of the *Sunday Times* and Chris Opperman of the *Mail and Guardian*.





**Left: The notorious headquarters of 7th Medical Battalion Group still operating outside Pretoria. Below: Basson established the Delta-G Scientific state-of-the-art research laboratories expressly for the CBW program, and used it to manufacture the Designer Drug, Ecstasy, as part of Project Coast.**



the CBW program and the front companies that shielded it.

South Africa's CBW program, one of the most sophisticated in the world, produced toxins capable of killing millions. A tremendous battle with implications not only for South Africa and the continent, but for the globe, is now taking place among those who wish to expose and eliminate the CBW program, those who fear that the information could be used by terrorists, and those who are desperate to conceal their complicity in operations that repeatedly violated international law and humanitarian standards. The alleged crimes include the combat use of chemical weapons, the spread of cholera and yellow fever in neighboring countries, the distribution of drugs in South African ghettos, the establishment of illicit drug factories in neighboring countries to fund covert projects, and a seemingly endless list of political poisonings and assassinations.

## Securocratic Rule

The story of those violations begins in the early 1980s, when Pretoria's "securocrats," headed by President PW Botha, were obsessed with Cuban and Soviet military presence in the Angolan conflict. The apartheid rulers eagerly seized the false charge that the Angolan MPLA government had used chemical weapons against South African and CIA-backed UNITA forces. They used that claim to launch their own CBW pro-

gram.<sup>2</sup> In 1983, Minister of Defense Magnus Malan and his colleague, Finance Minister Barend du Plessis approved "Project Coast."

Wouter Basson, a brilliant medical doctor and a brigadier in the armed forces medical corps, was the driving force behind this "poison gas" project. He was also commanding officer of the 7th Medical Battalion, a unit that never officially existed, but which acted, nonetheless, as the medical support for members of *Recces* in secret operations.<sup>3</sup> The doctor had also served as a coordinator for the now infamous CCB (Civil Cooperation Bureau), a dirty tricks and assassinations unit.<sup>4</sup> In 1992, Basson was promoted to personal assistant to the surgeon general — a



**Beatrice Wiltshire, who cracked the lid on the secret CBW program.**

2. Erik Leklem and Laurie Boulden, "Exorcizing Project B: Pretoria probes its shady chemical past," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Aug. 1, 1997. The originator of this claim, Aubin Heyndrickx of Belgium, would not allow his findings to be peer reviewed and has since been convicted of financial fraud in Belgium.

3. The Special Forces Reconnaissance Unit — aka *Recces* — was the military's best trained fighting force.

4. Jacques Pauw, *Into the Heart of Darkness: Confessions of Apartheid's Assassins* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Pub-

lishers, 1997), p. 234.

very powerful and influential position he held for several years. Brigadier Basson's power fed on information. As the leader of Project Coast from 1983-92, he had travelled the globe to procure raw materials and gather new technology for his top secret project. He dealt with key people in Libya, Iraq, Russia, and several, as yet unidentified, Middle Eastern governments. With extensive knowledge of these countries' CBW programs, Basson was a high-ranking insider in South Africa's covert military circles. Accompanied by a hand-picked group, he flew all over the world conducting sanctions-busting deals on behalf of South Africa's armaments industry. Their specially equipped plane featured an empty compartment in one wing to smuggle commodities across international borders.<sup>5</sup> Inevitably, these secret sorties to Middle Eastern and former Eastern bloc nations attracted a great deal of unwanted attention from numerous international intelligence agencies. Indeed, Basson's activities stirred interest even at home.

In the early 1990s, following several security leaks, the South African Defense Force's (SADF) counterintelligence unit began to look into Basson and Project Coast. The unit probed allegations that Project Coast operatives were involved in business deals with Libyan leader Muammar

lishers, 1997), p. 234.  
5. De Wet Potgieter, "Gifgas-projek bring net meer raaisels" (More riddles about poisonous gas project), *Rapport* (Johannesburg), Aug. 22, 1996.



# Dirty Tricks and Dirtier Germs

As details of South Africa's CBW program emerge, tales of abuse and evil boggle the mind. These are among the cases that have emerged thus far:

■ **Using black units as guinea pigs.** Confidential military sources have suggested that members of the 31st Bushmen Battalion and other black units in the old SADF were used as guinea pigs for experimental drugs while they were treated for diseases and wounds in 1st Military Hospital in Pretoria.<sup>1</sup>

■ **Impregnating clothing with deadly toxin.** During the 1980s, Roodeplaat Research Laboratories worked to develop a poison that could be applied to T-shirts so that the wearer would absorb the poison slowly. As the toxin entered the bloodstream, it would form a blood clot causing heart failure. An autopsy would thus show the cause of death to be natural. The plan to target black student activists failed when the police hit squads who were to distribute the T-shirts "chickened out."<sup>2</sup>

■ **Developing race-changing drugs.** In one of the most bizarre projects, the Center for Scientific and Industrial Research worked on a pill that could turn whites into blacks so that apartheid operatives could infiltrate the ranks of the enemy.<sup>3</sup>

■ **Breeding killer dogs.** In addition to developing a CBW capability, Roodeplaat Breeding Enterprises also had a breeding program to develop a wolf-dog for military tracking and guarding. The resulting crossbreed of a Russian wolf with a German shepherd was "reluctant to submit to the authority of their trainers."<sup>4</sup> Scientist Peter Geertshen said proudly of his first wolf-dog, "One problem is that he doesn't like blacks because he was trained in the army — and he's become temperamental in his old age." Geertshen pointed out that the pups from this first animal were raised in a non-racial environment, "Our dogs don't discriminate — they're trained to attack blacks, whites and women."<sup>5</sup> An even more vicious animal — a cross between a Rottweiler, a Doberman, and a bloodhound — was also created at Roodeplaat. The 175-pound "boerbul" was so ferocious that even international pitbull fan clubs called for a ban because the dogs were "virtually uncontrollable." The boerbuls were advertised in the 1980s by the extreme right-wing *Herstigste Nasionale Party* as a "racist watchdog" bred "especially for South African circumstances."<sup>6</sup>

■ **Poisoning enemies.** Apart from developing new macabre technologies, the CBW program — often in collaboration with the CCB — planned numerous "conventional" poisonings. In the late 1980s, the CCB decided that Dullah Omar — a member of Lawyers for Human Rights and now the Justice Minister — should be killed for defending "terrorists." They hired a Capetown gangster to exchange Omar's heart pills with poison pills, but the assassin ultimately aborted his mission because he admired his intended victim too much.<sup>7</sup>

■ **Contaminating drinking water with disease pathogens.** During the transition to Namibian independence, the CCB hatched a plan to contaminate the drinking water of SWAPO refugee camps in northern Namibia with yellow fever and cholera bacteria. Fortunately, the bacteria died from the high chlorine content in the water supply.<sup>8</sup>

■ **Planning to poison Mandela.** Confidential military sources have claimed that there were also plans to contaminate

Nelson Mandela's medication with the toxic heavy metal thallium while he was at Pollsmoor Prison. Colorless, odorless, tasteless, and difficult to treat, the poison is alleged to have been used by South African agents on many occasions.<sup>9</sup>

■ **Poisoning Biko with thallium.** Recently seized documents also suggest that a thallium compound was administered to Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko while he was being tortured by police.<sup>10</sup> According to documents, the effects of thallium are easily mistaken for hemorrhaging of the brain resulting from a blow to the head; thus, a case of premeditated murder may have been disguised as an "accidental" death during a rough interrogation session. Dumisa Ntsebezi, head of the TRC investigative unit, has stated he has an unnamed source who is prepared to testify under oath that he was in the room in 1981 when another officer allegedly administered the poison to Biko.<sup>11</sup>

■ **Using carcinogens, CBW, and napalm.** President Mandela was also contemplated as a target of the defense force's CBW research into the effect of organophosphates and other substances that enhance cancer. Deputy President Thabo Mbeki testified before the TRC that the apartheid government used chemical weapons, poisonous gases, and napalm in attacks on neighboring states. He also said that scores of the apartheid government's opponents were assassinated with poison.<sup>12</sup>

■ **Paralyzing enemies with gas.** An investigation by the UN and the World Health Organization found that during the 1978 "mass murders at Kassinga" in Angola, victims were paralyzed with gas before they were shot. The South African Special Forces conducted the raid, which is regarded as one of the world's most successful hit-and-run operations in which the entire force was deployed by helicopter gunships.<sup>13</sup>

■ **Poisoning food.** In 1977, during the so-called "Black September" incident, apartheid forces tried to poison the food of 500 *Umkhonto we Sizwe* cadres (the now disbanded ANC military wing) who were undergoing training in Angola.<sup>14</sup>

■ **Proliferating poison gas.** In Mozambique, poison gases were provided to the South African-backed Renamo rebels in their fight against the Marxist Frelimo government. In 1983, Frelimo troops discovered bombs containing a "poisonous substance" when a Renamo base was overrun. According to the ANC, chemical weapons were also used in 1992 in an attack on Frelimo forces which 80 government troops died.<sup>15</sup> ■

1. "Basson Used Human Guinea Pigs," *Mail & Guardian*, Feb. 7, 1997; and, "Basson: Tests on Humans Alleged," *Cape Times* (Capetown), Feb. 7, 1997.

2. Mungo Soggot, "The Bizarre World of Apartheid's Mad Scientists," *Mail & Guardian* (Johannesburg), June 27, 1997.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Eddie Koch and Derek Fleming, "Bizarre Experiments at SADF Research Firms," *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (Johannesburg), Dec. 15, 1994.

5. Mungo Soggot and Eddie Koch, "Apartheid's Savage Canine Freaks," *Mail & Guardian*, June 27, 1997.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Pauw, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

8. Pauw, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-30.

9. Joseph Aranes and Michael Morris, "007-Style Operation Nets Biko Poison File," *Cape Argus* (Capetown), Feb. 20, 1997.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. "SAW Het Gifgas, Napalm in Buurstate Gebruik" (SADF Used Poisonous Gases, Napalm in Neighboring States), *Beeld* (Johannesburg), Aug. 23, 1996.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*





Qaddafi. As investigators drew closer, the CBW operation renamed itself Project B and later Project JOTA.

Although the alleged business deals and covert activities between Basson and Libya emerged during this investigation, there are no indications that the apartheid government tried to prevent further contact. Instead, the securocrats used the internal investigation to plug leaks and ensure that the project was not compromised in the media. Details about these connections only started to surface in 1996 when questions were raised in Parliament.



**The campaign by animal rights activists to expose horrific experiments at Roodeplaatt led to a scandal with global implications. Basson (r. detail) was implicated in selling the drug Ecstasy, as well as in the development and proliferation of CBW.**

Although the cover held, Basson and his associates were worried. By the early 1990s, South Africa was facing major political upheaval and the secrets of apartheid-era atrocities were surfacing. After years of bloody struggle against apartheid, the ANC had just been unbanned and had just begun negotiations to pave the way for South Africa's first democratically elected government. Sensing that it was losing its grip on power, the old guard grew desperate. Talk of civil war and plans for a *coup d'état* were rife, and the level of violence around the country escalated sharply, both within the black community and across color lines. But despite a growing conviction that some sinister "Third Force" was behind the turmoil, little hard evidence of a conspiracy could be found. If the National Intelligence Service — which was running an undercover operation to expose these maverick groups — had any hard evidence, it was not making it public.<sup>6</sup>

As tensions mounted, President FW De Klerk appointed internationally respected Justice Richard Goldstone to head a commission to investigate claims that right-wing paramilitary pressure groups and elements in the police force and military intelligence were covertly trying to derail talks between the government and the ANC.

## The Steyn Report

In November 1992, three months after it was founded, the Goldstone Commission created a team that raided an office block in Momentum Mews. This up-market Pretoria suburb housed the Directorate of Covert Collection (DCC), the nerve center of military intelligence's covert operations. The files that the Goldstone raid uncovered were

market Pretoria suburb housed the Directorate of Covert Collection (DCC), the nerve center of military intelligence's covert operations. The files that the Goldstone raid uncovered were



6. It was these NIS units which provided intelligence that ultimately brought Col. Eugene de Kock (dubbed "Prime Evil"), former commander of the police *Vlakplaas* hit squads, to trial. De Kock is serving two life sentences on 121 charges, including murder, after a 20-month trial that ended in Sept. 1996. *Vlakplaas* (police counterintelligence) was first identified as the home of police hit squads by former police officer Dirk Coetzee in 1989. Coetzee recently told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) how his police hit squad had used poison "knockout drops" to kill apartheid enemies or to "anesthetize" them so they could be killed later.

explosive. They contained incontrovertible evidence showing not only that a Third Force existed, but also that it had conducted extensive covert activity, sabotage, poisoning, and murder in the name of national security.<sup>7</sup>

After consulting with Goldstone, De Klerk appointed Lieutenant Gen. Pierre Steyn, a former Mirage fighter pilot, to investigate the DCC further. His interim report, handed to De Klerk on December 20, 1992, led to the Christmas Eve Defense Force purge. The report confirmed Third Force activities and implicated key parts of the defense force, specifically naming the DCC, GS2-army intelligence, GS3-army operations, the 7th Medical Battalion, and some Special Forces reconnaissance units (*Recces*) of the South African Army. Steyn also found evidence of an unofficial revival of the vicious Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB). During the apartheid era, this covert component of Special Forces, known for its dirty tricks and assassinations, had operated inside South Africa and abroad.

After De Klerk saw the highly classified Steyn Report, as well as the gleanings from the 1992 Goldstone raid, he "forcibly retired" Basson and several generals as well as other lower ranking personnel. The president also ordered Steyn to assume immediate command of all intelligence functions of the SADF, including DMI (Division of Military Intelligence) and the intelligence branches of the four services: army, air force, navy, and medical services. He tasked Gen. Steyn to conduct a complete and comprehensive analysis of SADF intelligence activities and to recommend reforms. In conjunction with Lieut. Gen. Alwyn Conradie of the SA Police, Steyn was also assigned to "secure immediate control" over all of DCC's files and determine whether its activities violated the law or government policy.<sup>8</sup>

## Risky Business

There was, in fact, little doubt of criminal abuse. Even those deeply suspicious of the methods of the Nationalist government were horrified by the extent of Third Force activity. A document from Steyn's report contained a smoking gun. Titled

7. Stefaans Brümmer, "De Klerk 'Knew of Third Force Activities,'" *Mail & Guardian*, Jan. 16, 1997.

8. Gen. Steyn, who took early retirement in 1994, has since been appointed by the ANC government as Secretary of Defense as part of an effort to "civilianize" the national defense force.





Overcome by grief.

*Riskante Bedrywighede van SAW Komponente* (Risky Activities of SADF Components), it confirmed Third Force involvement in a broad range of atrocities. In a handwritten cover memorandum by the now retired head of apartheid-era NIS counter-espionage, Dr. Kobus Scholtz implicated Basson and the 7th Medical Battalion he commanded in

- a chemical and bio-warfare program;
- murders using poison;
- a chemical-bomb attack against Frelimo troops in Mozambique during the late 1980s;
- corruption for personal gain;
- running an execution squad. This hit squad under Basson, composed of former members of a group of old CCB operatives and Special Forces, supposedly formed part of the core of the SADF's notorious elimination actions.

The extent of these operations has yet to be revealed, but one instance that has come to light reveals their bizarre, vicious nature. Following the Goldstone raid on Momentum Mews, undercover agents of

the NIS observed a flurry of activity and found DCC members desperately trying to retrieve bottles and cans of poisoned beer. Obtained from Basson's 7th Medical Battalion and from the police labs in Pretoria,

## The poisoned beer, from Basson's Medical Battalion, was to kill enemies in neighboring countries.

the beer was to be used to kill enemies of the state in neighboring countries.<sup>9</sup>

Further examination of intelligence documents revealed that a former member of the CCB was approached by military intelligence operatives working closely with Project Coast to supply poisoned beer to Zulus in the Bantustan of

9. "Police General Lied About Poisoned Beer," *Cape Argus*, Sept. 23, 1997. See also Jacques Pauw, *op. cit.*, pp. 243, 249.

Transkei. At that time, Pretoria was undertaking several operations to topple the military rule of Gen. Bantu Holomisa, once apartheid's hand-picked head of the Transkei defense force, who

himself had staged a coup in 1987, toppling South Africa's puppet government of Prime Minister Stella Sigcau. Basson also offered the CCB agent 100,000 mandrax tablets per month for one year as an incentive.<sup>10</sup>

## He's In, He's Out, He's In

In the months after the purge and the publicity that followed his extensive overseas trips, Basson's activities threatened to become a thorny international issue. Several foreign intelligence agen-

10. Mandrax (Quaalude) is a very popular drug in South Africa. It originated in India, but recently drug lords have set up factories in South Africa. Users pulverize the mandrax tablets, mix the powder with marijuana, and then smoke it in a "white pipe."



cies were concerned with activities and contact with radical Islamic operatives. Basson, however, kept a low profile. Just after being dismissed from the defense forces in March 1993, he became a director of Delta-G Scientific, one of the Project Coast front companies privatized in the late 1980s.<sup>11</sup>

Not well known by his colleagues at South African Medical Services (SAMS), he was described as a good organizer who always kept to himself. Only few people at SAMS knew what he was really doing there. Recently, controversy erupted when it became clear that the newly-elected ANC government had provided sanctuary to the controversial Basson by rehiring him into the new defense force structures as head of the military organ transplant program and chief cardiologist.

Basson was not only a very dangerous individual, but also a very vulnerable one. When the ANC government was elected in 1994, it may have considered him a man who knew too much. According to Deputy Minister of Defense Ronnie Kasrils, the National Defense Force rehired him in October 1995 to "bring him under a greater degree of control" and to "prevent him from leaking information to other countries."<sup>12</sup> Basson was reinstated as chief cardiologist at Pretoria's 1st Military Hospital in October 1995 —

11. Leklem and Boulden, *op. cit.*

12. "Why Basson is Kept Under Lock and Key," *The Star* (Johannesburg), March 20, 1997.

less than two years after he had been sacked by former President F.W. de Klerk for involvement in Third Force activities.

### "Protective" Custody

As a result of his knowledge of chemical and biological warfare, Basson was in an untenable position. The ANC government — as well as certain Western intelligence agencies — feared he would be

## While many of Basson's former compatriots were opening doors on the secrets of the CBW program, others were furiously sealing cracks in the conspiracy.

recruited by a hostile country to develop a CBW program. Several of his former clients wanted to see him silenced and numerous parties wanted to find out what he knew and with whom he'd cooperated. When narcotics detectives arrested him in January 1997, he suspected they were foreign assassins and jumped into the river. Others speculated that his arrest for selling 1,000 Ecstasy tablets worth \$24,000 was a

ploy to get him behind bars and pressure him to reveal to them the details of South Africa's secret CBW program.

Lending credence to that theory was the fact that as police conducted the sting against Basson, undercover agents from the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) swooped down on his house. The agents, who had Basson under surveillance, found two trunks laden with pa-

pers that provided valuable evidence about the CBW program and related matters. Basson's bail hearing in early February 1997 was held in closed session for reasons of state security — an unusual move for an ostensible drug arrest. Heavily censored transcripts showed that investigators used the opportunity to repeatedly question Basson about his involvement in South Africa's CBW program. Furthermore, his arrest had come only hours before he was due to be subpoenaed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to testify about gross human rights violations.<sup>13</sup>

In yet another strange turn of events, one of NIA's top agents, Mike Kennedy, testified in court on behalf of Basson's bail application and claimed the doctor's life

was in danger. Basson was freed on bail pending trial and is now living under government protection. NIA agents guard him and move him around from safehouse to safehouse avoiding possible assassination by those who wish to silence him forever.<sup>14</sup>

### The Irony and the Ecstasy

Basson's trial on drug related charges has been postponed until April 17, 1998 in order to consolidate all the charges against him in one case to be heard

13. A subpoena was served on Brigadier Basson by the TRC during his bail hearing on Feb. 1, 1997, but as of Dec. 1997, he had still not appeared before the Truth Commission.

14. Norman Chandler, "National Intelligence Agency Offers to Protect Dr. Wouter Basson," *The Star*, Feb. 6, 1997. The National Intelligence Agency (NIA) is the



Funerals of people killed by police programs or police-inspired violence became a common event in apartheid South Africa.



in the Pretoria Supreme Court. While Basson was out on bail for the drug charges, he was rearrested on October 22, 1997, by investigators from the Department of Justice's Office for Serious Economic Offences (OSEO) on 10 charges of fraud involving almost \$7 million. The charges are related to his activities as project manager of the CBW program. Once again, Basson was released after a month-long bail application process held behind closed doors. His upcoming trial may illuminate how taxpayers' money was used to manufacture illegal drugs, but more importantly, investigators hope to expose some of the most enduring mysteries of covert crimes committed by the military during the apartheid era — in particular the chemical and biological warfare program, Project Coast.

Recently, several people have begun to talk to the team of prosecutors led by Transvaal Attorney General Jan D'Oliveira. Dr. Johan Koekemoer, Basson's former research manager at Delta-G Scientific, one of the Project Coast front companies, was also caught with the designer drug Ecstasy. He turned state witness. Investigators are confident that the top scientist will aid their long-term task of determining the exact volume of dangerous drugs that were manufactured at the factory, the SADF's intentions for them, and what ultimately happened to them.

Koekemoer's knowledge is extensive and intimate. He was recruited in May 1986 as a researcher at Delta-G and worked with Basson until 1993. After the privatization of Delta-G, Koekemoer continued working at the laboratories until he was summarily sacked after his own arrest on Ecstasy charges. In a recent interview in the presence of his lawyer, he admitted receiving instructions in the early 1990s from one of his seniors to

## Drugs were hidden in the nose cone and wing of an air force jet that flew top secret sanctions-busting missions abroad.

new name of the former National Intelligence Service (NIS) consisting of members of the secret service, the ANC's former department of intelligence and security (DIS) and still-employed members of the old guard.



**The approaching freedom of South Africa's nonwhite population sparked panic in the white supremacist regime and its supporters.**

manufacture more than a ton of Ecstasy crystals.<sup>15</sup> The D'Oliveira team of investigators has information that some of the drugs were — for reasons unknown — dumped into the sea, but that others were hidden in the nose cone and wing of an air force jet that flew frequent top secret sanctions-busting missions abroad. Confidential military sources have also alleged that Basson's operations were funded by drug money generated by Mandrax factories in Botswana, Zambia, and Mozambique.<sup>16</sup>

Another Basson associate, a former procurement official who worked for Delta-G for eight years, is also cooperating with the official investigation. He kept a careful diary of all products and raw materials entering the facility. The employee also had several business dealings with Thor Chemicals executive Alan Kidger, who was brutally murdered in November 1991.

The former employee said, "I had an unofficial business deal with Kidger two weeks before his death. I ordered two and half tons of mercuric oxide from him. A colleague of mine at Delta-G fetched the oxide from Thor's plant on the East Rand and paid in cash."<sup>17</sup> Kidger was

17. Interview with author, Aug. 1996. "Red Mercury" is an almost mythical substance which is rumored to aid the manufacture of compact nuclear weapons. No samples of Red Mercury have ever been presented for independent analysis and thus its existence and properties cannot be verified.

15. Chris Opperman, "Basson's Army Buddy Blows the Whistle," *Mail & Guardian*, June 27, 1997.

16. "Basson: Tests on Humans Alleged," *Cape Times*, Feb. 7, 1997.





**Wouter Basson**

found soon after in the trunk of his car. His body was dismembered and covered with a black sticky substance, described as red mercury."

The former Delta-G employee described the laboratory as a "state-of-the-art" facility consisting of five different sections. The official product was tear gas for the security forces; everything else was "top secret." Only the researchers working on the projects knew what was going on and even they held only a piece of the puzzle. "We worked in cell structures on a need-to-know basis and nobody really knew what the other was doing," said the former employee, who requested anonymity.

In the meantime, the continued struggle against vivisection by animal rights activist Beatrice Wiltshire led to a new revelation. In June 1997, she took a former researcher and veterinarian from the Roodeplaat Research Laboratories, Dr. Andre Immelman, before the South African Veterinary Council on charges of

unprofessional and unethical conduct. He was exonerated, but revealed in a sworn statement that part of RRL's research was with organophosphates, in order to develop antidotes against possible chemical and biological attack.

He said he knew nothing about Project B and stated that RRL was a "private concern" that had "several clients" including the defense forces. He also denied any knowledge of the chemical attack on the former head of the South African Council of Churches, Rev. Frank Chikane, who almost died during a 1989 visit to the United States. It was alleged at the time that Chikane, an outspoken opponent of apartheid, was poisoned by toxic organophosphates found in his clothes.

### **Plugging the Leaks**

While many of Basson's former compatriots were opening doors to the secrets of the CBW program, others were furiously sealing cracks in the conspiracy. In a supreme court application at the beginning of August, the State Prosecutor, Torie Pretorius, described South Africa's CBW program as one of the world's most sophisticated, its compounds capable of killing millions. According to court papers filed with the Pretoria High Court, Minister of Defense Joe Modise joined a phalanx of ANC government officials trying to keep details of Project Coast one of South Africa's most guarded secrets. Other secrecy advocates include: Dr. Jan D'Oliveira, Transvaal attorney general; Alfred Nzo, minister of Foreign Affairs; and the South African Council for Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Defense Force Surgeon-General Niel Knobel is another strong advocate for keeping South Africa's chemical and biological capabilities classified. Revealing details, he argues, could not only lead to the prosecution of foreign collaborators but also "neutralize our ability to defend ourselves against chemical and biological attack." So covert was Project Coast that not even Knobel, project manager by virtue of his post as the recently retired surgeon-general, knew "which people or foreign agencies" Basson used as agents and middlemen in acquiring technology, raw materials and equipment.

D'Oliveira also opposes disclosure because it could compromise his investigation into Basson's alleged abuse of the program. He says that releasing the in-

formation would breach the nonproliferation treaty to which South Africa is a signatory, since it "may enable third parties to manufacture chemical and biological armaments. ... The information is so dangerous that it could harm the lives and health of many innocent people if it fell into the wrong hands." According to Knobel, documents found at Basson's home included formulas and procedures for the synthesis of "deadly" chemicals listed in the international Chemical Weapons Convention that could be used to "develop with relative ease extremely dangerous chemical substances." Those documents also include detailed information about end users, intermediaries, and possible diversion destinations used to circumvent the United Nations' former arms embargo.

Members of the apartheid-era government insist that the multimillion-dollar Project Coast was a "purely defensive" program. But it is clear from affidavits made by D'Oliveira, Knobel, and NIA Deputy Director Mike Kennedy, that the expertise could just as easily be used for offensive purposes. South Africa is a member of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (ratified in 1975) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (ratified in 1995) — treaties that bar the development and transfer of offensive CBW technology.

Indeed, soon after he was granted bail, Basson and other South African officials met with a delegation from the US and the UK to discuss CBW proliferation issues. South African officials have admitted that they met with US State and Defense Department representatives in March 1995, but the US will not comment on whether the CIA participated in the talks. "Our officials came to help the South Africans review their national declaration under the Biological Weapons Convention," said an unnamed US official.<sup>18</sup>

The Basson trial will add to the shocking revelations of the old apartheid defense force's top secret CBW program that involved operations both inside South Africa as well as in Europe, the US, and elsewhere in Africa. The various top level investigations underway may begin to unravel the intricate spider's web of clandestine operations carried out under the banner of national security and white supremacy. ■

18. Chris Steyn, "Basson was in Talks with US and UK," *The Mercury* (Durban), March 20, 1997.

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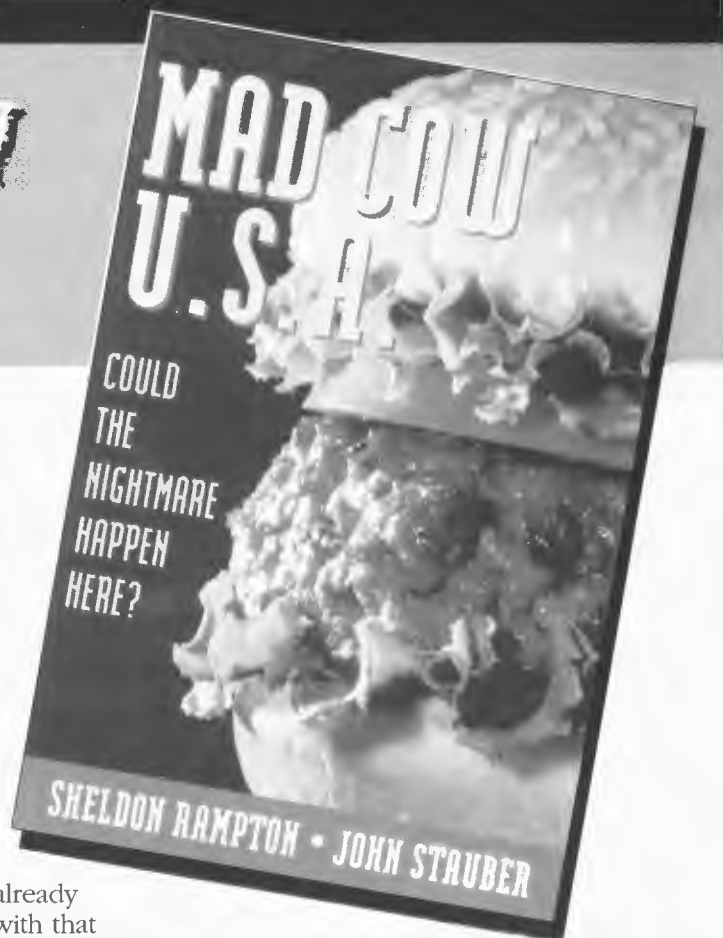
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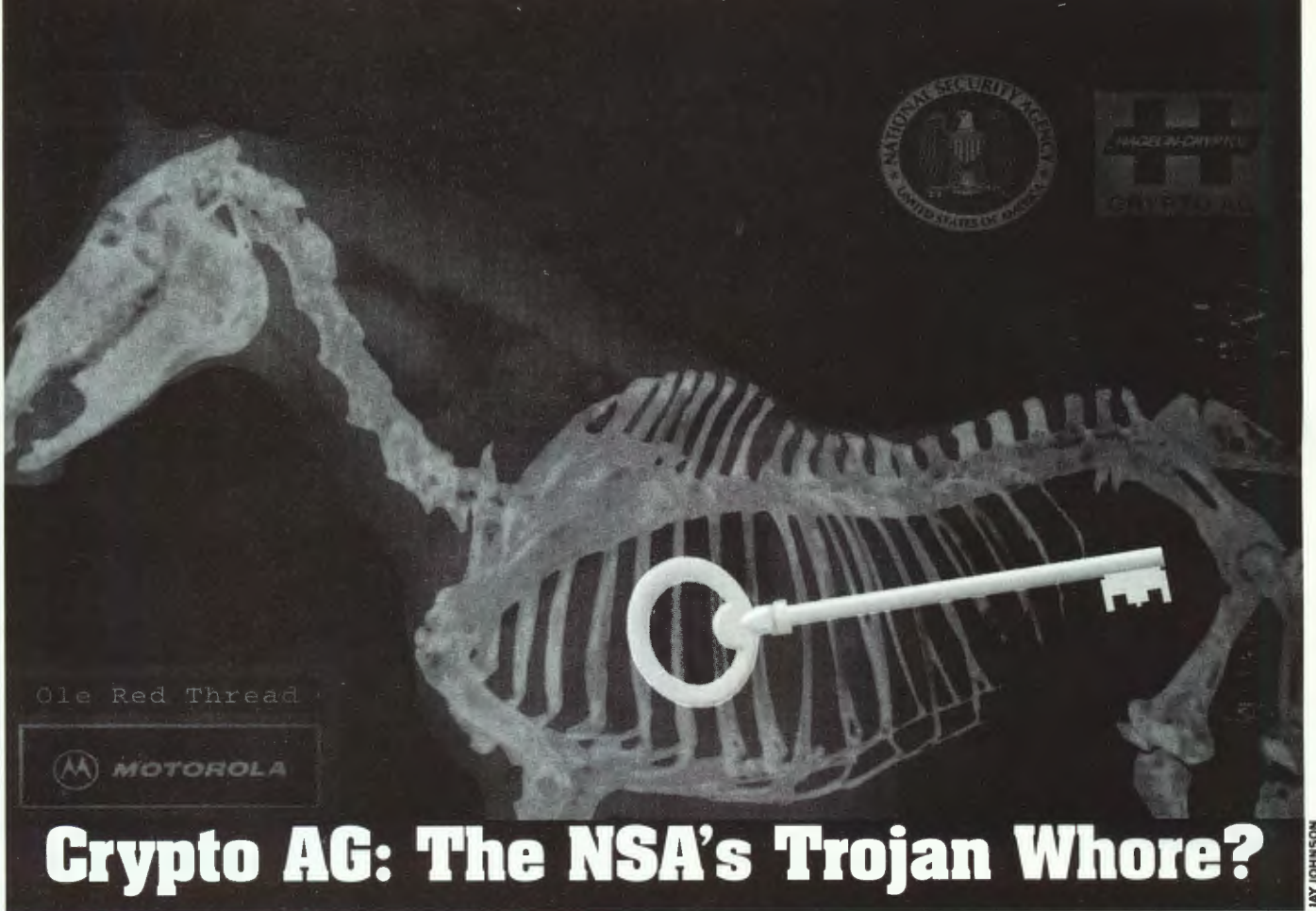
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by Wayne Madsen

*For at least half a century, the US has been intercepting and decrypting the top secret communications of most of the world's governments.*

It may be the greatest intelligence scam of the century: For decades, the US has routinely intercepted and deciphered top secret encrypted messages of 120 countries. These nations had bought the world's most sophisticated and supposedly secure commercial encryption technology from Crypto AG, a Swiss company that staked its reputation and the security concerns of its clients on its neutrality. The purchasing nations, confident that their communications were protected, sent messages from their capitals to embassies, military missions, trade offices, and espionage dens around the world, via telex, radio, teletype, and facsimile. They not only conducted sensitive albeit legal business and diplomacy, but sometimes strayed into criminal matters, issuing orders to assassinate political leaders, bomb commercial

buildings, and engage in drug and arms smuggling. All the while, because of a secret agreement between the National Security Agency (NSA) and Crypto AG, they might as well have been hand delivering the message to Washington. Their Crypto AG machines had been rigged so that when customers used them, the random encryption key could be automatically and clandestinely transmitted with the enciphered message.<sup>1</sup> NSA analysts could read the message traffic as easily as they could the morning newspaper.

The cover shielding the NSA-Crypto AG relationship was torn in March 1992, when the Iranian military counterintelligence service arrested Hans Buehler, Crypto AG's marketing representative in Teheran. The Iranian government charged the tall, 50ish businessman with spying for the "intelligence services of the Federal Re-

public of Germany and the United States of America."<sup>2</sup> "I was questioned for five hours a day for nine months," Buehler says. "I was never beaten, but I was strapped to wooden benches and told I would be beaten. I was told Crypto was a spy center" that worked with foreign intelligence services.<sup>3</sup> Despite prolonged interrogation, Buehler — who had worked for Crypto AG for 13 years and was on his 25th trip to Iran — apparently maintained his ignorance. "I didn't know that the equipment was bugged, otherwise the Iranians would have gotten it out of me by their many 'methods.'"<sup>4</sup>

With millions of dollars in contracts and a major international spy operation at stake, the company was eager to make the

Wayne Madsen, an Arlington, VA-based journalist, specializes in computer security, privacy, and intelligence and is author of *Handbook of Personal Data Protection* (NY: Stockton, 1992).

1. Interview with former Crypto AG employee, Sept. 20, 1994.

2. "The Case of Hans Buehler," Swiss Radio International, *Sunday Supplement*, May 14, 1994.

3. Scott Shane and Tom Bowman, "No Such Agency: Rigging the Game," *Baltimore Sun*, Dec. 10, 1995, p. 1A.

4. Frank Garbely, Interview with Hans Buehler, Swiss German Television, *Polit Magazin*, March 23, 1994.



incident and Buehler go away, even though the salesman had brought in 40 percent of Crypto's 100 million Swiss franc sales revenue.<sup>5</sup> Crypto bought Buehler's freedom with a \$1 million payment to the Iranians, returned him to Switzerland, and then, astonishingly, fired him and ordered the bewildered salesman to repay the bond. The cover-up backfired, however, when current and former Crypto employees came to Buehler's defense and shared their firsthand knowledge of manipulated cipher equipment. "I hold proofs [sic] of the rigging of code machines," said an unidentified former Crypto AG engineer. "Fifteen years ago, I saw American and German engineers doctoring our machines.<sup>6</sup> It took me some time until I was certain about the manipulations. The proofs: technical documents. ... I put them in a bank safety deposit box. Then I informed the federal prosecutors' office in Berne. There were many conversations. Suddenly, these contacts were broken off and the affair petered out."<sup>7</sup>

The engineer told another reporter:

the schemes and the cipher keys were created by them [NSA and BND (*Bundesnachrichtendienst* — the German intelligence service)]. I immediately, discreetly, notified the Swiss prosecutors. There was an investigation. I was never able to find out the result. Today, the Buehler affair brings everything out in the open again.

And, I'm afraid. What happened to Hans Buehler could happen to any other salesperson of Crypto AG. It's not a question of attacking this company; it's a question of saving lives. ...<sup>8</sup>

When the Swiss media began to reveal the background of Buehler's story, Crypto AG responded with a lawsuit in an attempt to quash the story and muzzle Buehler.<sup>9</sup> The suit was settled days before former Crypto engineers were to testify that they thought the machines had been altered. The parties agreed not to disclose the settlement and Crypto sought to reassure its clients. Informed sources in Switzerland and the Middle East con-

firmed that Crypto AG settled because it, and the NSA and BND, didn't want to reveal anything in court.

Nevertheless, the damage to Crypto AG's credibility was already done. Customers from Saddam Hussein to the Pope grew nervous. Informed of the details around the Hans Buehler incident, the Vatican — which uses Swiss cipher machines to secure diplomatic communications transmitted from the Holy See to the many papal nuncios around the world — showed a marked lack of charity. An official branded the perpetrators "bandits!"<sup>10</sup>



**After Hans Buehler was arrested in Iran on spying charges, the Crypto AG image of neutrality suffered and various nations reexamined their security arrangements.**



## Swiss Cheese Neutrality

Although the Iranians may have been technically wrong about Buehler's complicity in the massive deception, they were right that something was rotten at Crypto AG. And even before the firing of Hans Buehler, some of Crypto's engineers were ambivalent about secret deals with the NSA. "At first, I was idealistic," said Juerg Spoerndli, who left Crypto in 1994. "But I adapted quickly. ... The new aim was to help Big Brother USA look over these countries' shoulders. We'd say, 'It's better to let the USA see what these dictators are doing.'" Soon, however, Spoerndli grew apprehensive over the manipulation. "It's still an imperialistic approach to the world. I don't think it's the way business should be done." Ruedi Hug, another former Crypto AG engineer, was also critical. "I feel betrayed," he declared. "They always told

us, 'We are the best. Our equipment is not breakable, blah, blah, blah. ... Switzerland is a neutral country.'"<sup>11</sup>

Apparently not. A document released in 1995 by Britain's Public Records Office indicates that Switzerland and NATO concluded a secret deal in 1956. The "Top Secret" document, dated February 10, 1956, with the reference "prem 11/1224," was written by the famous British World War II figure, Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery. While "Monty" was a vice-commander of NATO, he discussed a secret alliance with Swiss Defense Minister Paul Chaudet. In peacetime, Switzerland would be officially neutral, but in wartime, it would side with NATO.<sup>12</sup> A US document released in 1995 shows Switzerland's importance to US national security. A Presidential directive on national security prepared for President Truman states that "Switzerland ... delivers precision instruments and other materials necessary for the armament of the USA and NATO countries [emphasis added]."<sup>13</sup>

Germany's BND, too, has apparently cooperated with the US encryption rigging

5. Yvan Stefanovitch, "Hans Buehler, Espion Sans le Savoir (The Spy Who Didn't Know he was a Spy)," *VSD* April 14-20, 1994, p. 50.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Frank Garbely, Interview with Hans Buehler, *op. cit.*

8. Stefanovitch, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

9. "Rendezvous: People and Places in Switzerland," interview with Hans Buehler by James Nason, *Swiss Radio International*, July 18, 1994.

10. Res Strehe, *Verschlüsselt* (Enciphered), (Zurich: Werd Verlag, 1994), p. 199.

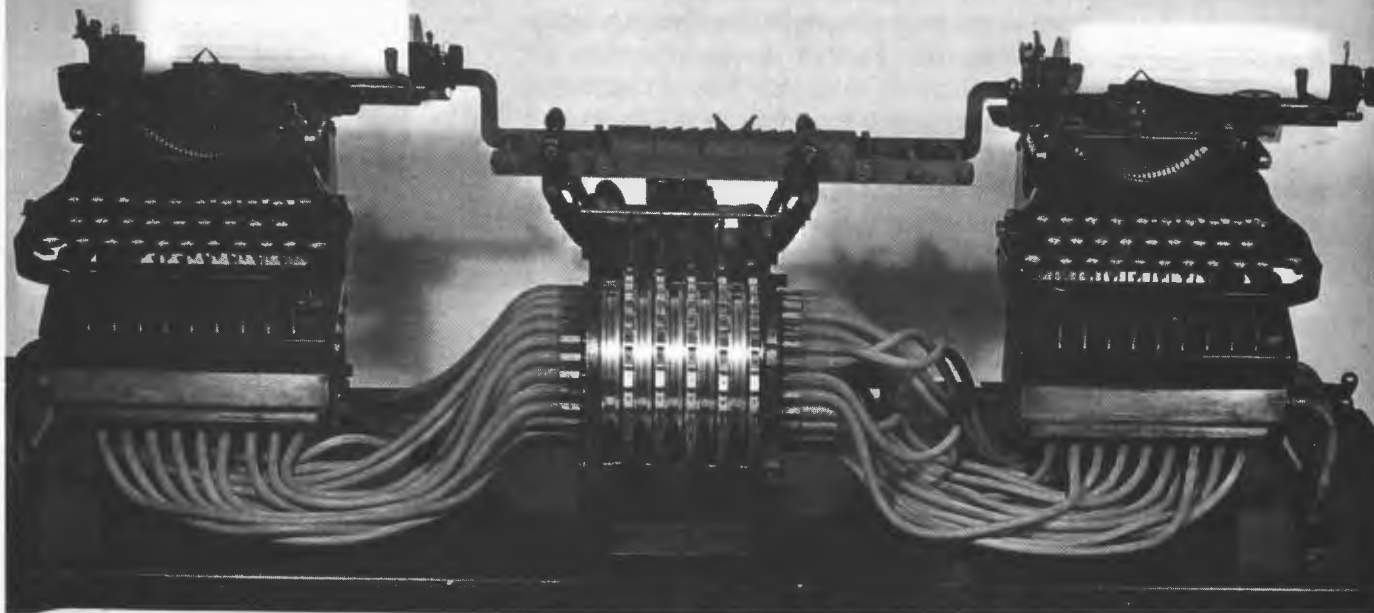
11. Shane and Bowman, *op. cit.*, p. 9A.

12. "Montgomery memorandum casts shadow over Swiss neutrality," *Statewatch* (London), Sept.-Oct. 1995, p. 12.

13. *Ibid.*



# Crypto's Cryptic Ownership



A predecessor of the Hagelin machines, this 1926 device later evolved into WWII-era Axis cipher machines.

The ability of the NSA to decipher classified foreign diplomatic and military intercepts would not have been possible without the assistance of Boris Hagelin, one of the 20th century's greatest cryptographers. Hagelin aided the US during World War II when he sold 140,000 invaluable cryptographic machines to the US Army. In the early 1950s, the Russian-born Swede founded the giant Swiss cryptographic firm, Crypto AG. By 1957, Hagelin had sealed a secret agreement with William Friedman, a legendary NSA cryptographer, to modify the crypto machines sold by Crypto AG to some 120 countries.<sup>1</sup>

Although the official line is that Crypto AG is an independent Swiss company started and owned by Hagelin, there is strong circumstantial evidence that from the beginning, Hagelin was merely a figurehead controlled by the German intelligence service and "his" company was an intelligence front.

According to the Zug canton Registry of Commerce, when his Steinhausen-based firm was organized on September 28, 1950, 48 out of the total 50 shares were held by a secretive "brass plate" company with a mailbox in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, called the Establishment European Trading Company (German acronym, AEH).<sup>2</sup> The original shares were sold for 1,000 Swiss francs each. They have been managed by the KPMG Trust Company (KPMG

Treuhandgesellschaft), a subsidiary of KPMG, the international accounting firm.

Boris Hagelin owned only one share of Crypto's original 50 stock shares. Another privately held share was owned by Albert Dormann, a Crypto vice director and attorney-of-record for AEH, who also worked for Credit Suisse Bank in

Zug, where the 50,000 Swiss francs was deposited. AEH of Vaduz owned the remaining 48 shares (as a proxy for Germany). AEH is reportedly owned by the Federal German Estates Administration (*Bundesvermogensverwaltung*).<sup>3</sup> In a 1993 interview with German television, Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, the author of a book on the German BND, said that the Ger-

man Estates Administration is often used to "camouflage" the activities of the BND, especially in electronic eavesdropping matters. US intelligence was involved at least since 1947 when the Dutch found that their Hagelin ciphers were bugged by the US Army Security Agency, then based at Arlington Hall, Virginia. ■

1. James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), pp. 408-9. According to a confidential source in Europe familiar with the cryptographic industry, Crypto AG's customers include or have included the former Kingdom of Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso (and the former Upper Volta), Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Syria, the United Nations, Vatican City, Venezuela, Yemen, the former Yugoslavia, and the former Zaire.

2. Facsimile dated May 20, 1994, from a former Crypto AG employee.

3. *Ibid.*



scheme through Siemens Defense Electronics Group of Munich. A previous director of Siemens called Crypto AG a "secret Siemens daughter,"<sup>14</sup> while a former Crypto AG financial director said, "the owner of the firm [Crypto] is the Federal Republic [of Germany]."<sup>15</sup> The Siemens connection to Crypto was remarkably incestuous. Siemens provided technical assistance for the machine manipulation process. Suspicion about the German electronics giant's role in Crypto's operations was heightened when it was reported that Siemens helped raise the \$1 million to spring Buehler from his Teheran prison cell.<sup>16</sup> In fact, after revelations of the Crypto-Siemens association hit the Swiss press, Crypto's managing director Michael Grupe informed the employees that the advisory board to Crypto's board of directors was being dissolved. The two advisers — Alfred Nowosad and Helmut Wiesner — were both full-time Siemens employees. With the world media describing the company as a silent partner of German and American signals intelligence (SIGINT) agencies around the world, Grube announced that "Crypto is changing its profile."<sup>17</sup>

The German government's contribution to the encryption rigging scheme also in-

14. "Geheimniskrämer," *Bilanz*, March 1988, p. 147.

15. "Trojan Ear," *Focus*, March 28, 1994, p. 38.

16. Stefanovich, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

17. *Hauszeitung* ([Crypto AG's House Journal] (translation), n. 15, Dec. 15, 1994.



**Boris Hagelin and one of his early cryptographic machines.**

cluded its pressuring another Swiss firm, Gretag Data Systems AG, to allow a "red thread" program to be installed in the encryption software. "Red threading" is the software equivalent of sending in a Greek Trojan horse.<sup>18</sup> Once owned by AT&T, this encryption

manufacturer was acquired in 1995 by Information Resources Engineering (IRE), Inc. of Baltimore, Maryland.<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, IRE is staffed by a number of ex-NSA cryptographic

18. Interview with former Crypto AG employee, Sept. 1994.

19. IRE Press Release, Nov. 6, 1995, <[www.ire.com/nr/newrelea/g-tag.htm](http://www.ire.com/nr/newrelea/g-tag.htm)>.

engineers.<sup>20</sup> A third Swiss encryption company, Info Guard AG, was fully acquired by Crypto AG on June 16, 1994. Info Guard, which had been 50 percent owned by Crypto AG, primarily sells encryption units to banks in Switzerland and abroad.<sup>21</sup> Although German and American SIGINT agencies were involved in manipulating Crypto's cipher machines, Motorola, one of the NSA's major US contractors, performed the actual technical alteration, according to a former Crypto AG chief engineer who was personally involved in the manipulation process.<sup>22</sup>

## Crypto Huddle

Once the cipher machines were rigged to include the secret decryption key, the BND and NSA codebreakers could use the transmitted key to read any message sent

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**Crypto AG's Zug, Switzerland headquarters**

by Crypto AG's 120 country customers. One previous Crypto AG employee contends that all developmental Crypto AG equipment had to be sent for approval to the NSA and to the German Central Cipher Bureau (*Zentralstelle für Chiffrierung* [ZfCH]), now the Federal Information Security Agency (*Bundesamt für Sicherheit in der Informationstechnik* [BSI] which is also Department 62 of the BND) in Bad Godesberg, near Bonn.

In other cases, Crypto AG was apparently forced to market encryption equipment manufactured in the US, sent to Crypto, and passed off as Swiss equipment. In the 1970s, as Crypto was moving from electro-mechanical to com-

20. Author's observations from a 1993 visit to IRE headquarters.

21. *Schweizerisches Handelsamtsblatt*, n. 124, S. 3634, June 29, 1994.

22. Garbely, *op. cit.*



puterized crypto units, a former Crypto AG engineer in Switzerland inspected one of the first prototype computerized machines sent from the US. He remarked that since the code could be easily broken, he found the machine useless. But when he told his superiors that he could improve the encryption process if he was given access to the mathematical functions, two US cryptographic "experts" refused to disclose the information.<sup>23</sup>

According to a confidential Crypto AG memorandum, one of the NSA "experts" may have been Nora L. Mackabee, an NSA

crypton equipment, had heard from older engineers about the visits in earlier years by mysterious Americans. He concluded that NSA was ordering the design changes through German intermediaries. He confirmed the manipulation and admitted that in the late 1970s, he was "ordered to change algorithms under mysterious circumstances"<sup>25</sup> to weaken his cipher units.

## Privacy? Ha!

Although the Buehler incident lent credence to the NSA Trojan Horse theory, it was not the first time that suspicions were raised. Teheran had become concerned in

not Libya. One intelligence summary, prepared by the US Air Force Intelligence Agency, cites Iran's Mohtashemi as the mastermind. Released in redacted form pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request by lawyers for the bankrupt Pan American Airlines, it states:

Mohtashemi is closely connected with the Al Abas and Abu Nidal terrorist groups. He is actually a long-time friend of Abu Nidal. He has recently paid 10 million dollars in cash and gold to these two organizations to carry out terrorist activities and was the one who paid the same amount to bomb PanAm Flight 103 in retaliation for the U.S. shoot-down of the Iranian Airbus. Mohtashemi has also spent time in Lebanon.<sup>27</sup>

An Israeli intercept of Iranian diplomatic coded communications between Mohtashemi's Interior Ministry in Teheran and the Iranian embassy in Beirut (where Mohtashemi once served as ambassador) revealed — more than two years before Buehler was arrested by Iran — that the Shi'ite cleric transferred \$1.2 to \$2 million used for the bombing of PanAm 103 to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command headed by Ahmed Jibril.<sup>28</sup> Such revelations must have made the Iranians extremely suspect of the security of their diplomatic traffic. The role of Israel may be explained by a little-reported intelligence alliance. NSA maintains a link with the Israeli SIGINT entity, "Department 8200," located in northern Tel Aviv at Herzliya. The SIGINT link is

said to involve the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) base on Cyprus. Israel's ability to crack the Iranian Crypto AG codes indicates that Israel had access to the key decoding programs. The ease with which the West was reading Iranian coded transactions obviously meant that someone in Israel's SIGINT services possessed the decryption keys.<sup>29</sup>

27. US Air Force Intelligence Agency intelligence summary SECRET NOFORN WINTEL message dated March 4, 1991, to various military commands involved with Desert Storm (O 041900Z MAR 91). "O" means the message had a precedence of Operational Immediate and "1900Z" means 1900 hours Greenwich Mean Time. NOFORN stands for Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals while WINTEL is an acronym for Warning Notice - Intelligence Methods and Sources Revealed.

28. David Horowitz, "Israel Discovered: Iran Paid for Lockerbie," *Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 21, 1989.

29. Interview with intelligence specialist in Tel Aviv, May 2, 1995.



Radomes at NSA listening station, Menwith Hill, England.

cryptographer who is now retired on a horse farm in Maryland along with her husband Lester, another retired NSA employee. Between August 19 and 20, 1975, three Crypto AG engineers huddled with Mackabee (identified as representing "IA" — most likely "intelligence agency") along with three Motorola engineers and one other American, Herb Frank. One Motorola engineer recalled that Frank was probably from another US intelligence agency based in northern Virginia but described him as a non-technical person who seemed to be making the administrative arrangements for Mackabee.<sup>24</sup>

Crypto engineer Juerg Spoerndli, who was responsible for designing the firm's en-

1987 when US officials claimed "conclusive evidence that Iran ordered the kidnapping" of ABC News Beirut correspondent Charles Glass.<sup>26</sup> Washington's alleged proof was coded Iranian diplomatic cables — intercepted by the NSA — between Teheran and the Hezbollah (Party of God) terrorist group in Lebanon via Iran's embassies in Beirut and Damascus.

The next year, when a terrorist bomb brought down PanAm Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, it seems the NSA gained information by intercepting the communications of Iranian Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi. It was apparently these messages that implicated Iran,

25. *Ibid.*, p. 9A.

26. UPI, "NBC Says U.S. intelligence shows Iran ordered Glass's kidnapping," *Boston Globe*, July 2, 1987, p. 17.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Shane and Bowman, *op. cit.*, pp. 8A-9A.



Then in 1992, Buehler was arrested. As the Swiss authorities struggled to put the pieces together, they at first believed that the Iranian secret services were retaliating for the arrest in Switzerland of Zeinold Abedine Sarhadi, an employee of the Iranian embassy in Berne and a nephew of former Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani. Swiss police had arrested Sarhadi in early 1992 and were planning to extradite him to France to face trial for the 1991 assassination in Paris of former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar. On August 7, 1991, one day before Bakhtiar was found dead with his throat slit, the Tehran headquarters of the Iranian Intelligence Service, VEVAK, transmitted a coded message to Iranian diplomatic missions in London, Paris, Bonn, and Geneva, inquiring "Is Bakhtiar dead?" The Iranians concluded from Western press reports that British and American SIGINT operators had intercepted and decoded the message (as reported by *L'Express* of Paris) and knew that Tehran was behind the assassination. They realized that their code had been broken,<sup>30</sup> looked to their Crypto AG cipher machines, and picked up Buehler.<sup>31</sup> According to one European source, they may also have been tipped off by Stasi files of the ex-East German regime that found their way to Iran and revealed the Crypto AG ruse.

In any case, the Iranians immediately began grilling prisoner 01228-1 about the role he and his company played in giving Iranian and Libyan codes to the US.<sup>32</sup> Iran knew that Bakhtiar's assassination had compromised the intelligence functions of the Iranian UN mission and embassy in Geneva. The NSA had already identified one of the assassins, Mohammed Azadi, from intercepts of his phone calls from a pay phone in the town of Annecy in Savoy and an Istanbul apartment to the Iranian diplomatic mission in Geneva.<sup>33</sup>

30. Stefanovitch, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

32. Richard Norton-Taylor and Alex Duval Smith, "For Sale: Secret Codes with the Cracks Built In," *The Observer* (London), May 5, 1996, p. 22.

33. Louise Lief, "Murder, they wrote: Iran's web of terror," *U.S. News and World Report*, Dec. 16, 1991, p. 67.

On December 6, 1994, a special French terrorism court convicted two Iranians of murdering Bakhtiar, but strangely, it acquitted Sarhadi. "Justice has not been entirely served [for] reasons of state," complained Bakhtiar's widow bitterly. Those "reasons" may have included a tacit agreement among France, Switzerland, the German BND, and the NSA to spare Sarhadi in order to avoid producing captured transmissions and preserve the questionable secrecy surrounding the Crypto AG cipher manipulation program.<sup>34</sup>

It was not only the "rogue states" that were targeted. During the sensitive Anglo-Irish negotiations of 1985, the NSA's British counterpart, the GCHQ, was able to decipher the coded diplomatic traffic being sent between the Irish embassy in London and the Irish Foreign Ministry in Dublin. It was reported in the Irish press that Dublin had purchased a cryptographic system from Crypto AG worth more than a million Irish pounds. It was also reported that the NSA routinely monitored and deciphered the Irish diplomatic messages. Later, during the Falklands War, British GCHQ operators were able to de-

34. "Indications but No Proof of Iranian State Terrorism," *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, Dec. 8, 1994.

crypt classified Argentine message traffic because the Argentines were using rigged Crypto AG cipher machines. Former British Foreign Office minister Ted Rowlands publicly stated that GCHQ had penetrated Argentine diplomatic codes.<sup>35</sup>

## US: Crypto Bully

If it turns out that the extent of communications interception is as broad as suspected, the international implications are profound. Every country in the world that used secure communications is potentially affected. Some have sought to abandon Crypto AG, but found their options limited. The US had at times required purchase of specific machines as a condition for favors. Pakistan was allegedly granted American military credits with only one provision, that it buy its encryption equipment from Crypto AG.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, "It is not unheard of for NSA to offer preferential export treatment to a company if it builds a back door into its equipment," says one per-

35. Conor O'Clery, "Irish coded messages broken by British," *Irish Times* (Dublin), Jan. 24, 1987, p. 2; and "America's Falklands War: A relationship sweet and sour," *The Economist*, March 3, 1984, p. 25.

36. Martin Stoll, "Trieb die Crypto ein Doppelspiel," *Tages Anzeiger*, July 5, 1994.



In this official NSA PR photo, the agency intercepts a message from above.

NSA



son with long experience in the field. "I've seen it. I've been in the room."<sup>37</sup>

Several countries abandoned Crypto AG but failed to ensure secrecy. The Libyans switched to Gretag units after the NSA cited secret communications to allege Libyan involvement in the 1986 La Belle disco bombing in West Berlin. One senior US official said the fact that the Libyans were making their codes more difficult to crack would "make our job tougher."<sup>38</sup> But the NSA seemed to have the Gretag base covered as well.

According to one knowledgeable cryptographic industry expert, NSA's program to co-opt the services of encryption manufacturers probably extends to all those within reach of NSA operatives. US cryptographic companies would be definite candidates for such participation. The NSA program also likely extends to companies in NATO and pro US countries which have close relationships with GCHQ, NSA, and the BND. Even neutral countries' firms are not off-limits to NSA manipulations. A former Crypto AG employee confirmed that high-level US officials approached neutral European countries and argued that their cooperation was essential to the Cold War struggle

against the Soviets. The NSA allegedly received support from cryptographic companies Crypto AG and Gretag AG in Switzerland, Transvertex in Sweden, Nokia in Finland, and even newly-privatized firms in post-Communist Hungary.<sup>39</sup> In 1970, according to a secret German BND intelligence paper, supplied to the author, the Germans planned to "fuse" the operations of three cryptographic firms — Crypto AG, Grattner AG (another Swiss cipher firm), and Ericsson of Sweden.<sup>40</sup>

Securocrats often turn to the hoogeiman of "rogue" nations in order to justify the expense and ethical necessity of cavedropping on all forms of international communication, but in reality many intercepts involve messages by neutral or allied nations. NSA's 1993 release of the World War II era "MAGIC" intercepts under FOIA pressure revealed that US military intelligence read not only messages by Axis nations, but also intercepted and decrypted the top secret communications of Allied and neutral nations.<sup>41</sup> Switzerland was among the more than 30 countries whose messages were being read.<sup>42</sup> Since Swiss-

made cipher machines were used by many governments at the time, it is likely that the US has been reading such messages for over half a century. An early example is the use of top secret intercepts by the US delegation to the 1945 founding convention of the United Nations in San Francisco.<sup>43</sup>

Fifty years of intercepted communication have given the US and its co-conspirators trade, diplomatic, economic and strategic advantages. By intercepting the "bottom line" negotiating positions of foreign governments, they have been able to shape international treaties and negotiations in their own favor: They will know, for example, the exact health status of the king of Saudi Arabia, the secret financial transactions of the president of Peru, the negotiating position of South Africa's trade delegation to the World Trade Organization, or the anti-abortion strategy of the Pope in the United Nations. Such information, presented daily to the president and the secretary of state in their intelligence briefings, is extremely useful and allows the US to play high-stakes diplomatic poker with a mirror behind everyone else's back. ■

37. Shane and Bowman, *op. cit.*

38. William Beecher, "Libya Reportedly Seeking to Thwart US Intelligence," *Boston Globe*, April 22, 1986, pp. 1, 5. See also, "Libyans Buy Message-Coding Equipment: Effort to Thwart U.S. Intelligence Leaks Leads to Swiss Firm," *Washington Post*, Apr. 22, 1986, p. A8.

39. Interview with former Crypto AG employee, Sept. 20, 1994.  
40. *Bundesnachrichtendienst* Paper dated Oct. 13, 1970, paragraph e.

41. Tim Weiner, "US Spied on Its World War II Allies," *New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1993, p. A9.

42. Among the countries included were Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iran, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Peru,

Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia.

43. *Beichohobunsho ULTRA kokuren tanjo 50 nen me no shingitsu* (Secret US Documents on ULTRA: The Reality About the Birth of the UN, 50 Years Later), NHK Television program (Tokyo), Oct. 22, 1995; see also National Archives, Record Group 457, "MAGIC Diplomatic Summaries."

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**Promise Keepers rally at Fort Bragg Army Base, 1996.**

# Promise Keepers, Religious Revival, and Cultural Militarism

by Lee Cokorinos and Alfred Ross



*There are forces in our culture not liking what is going on today. In fact, they are marshaling themselves against us. And, of course ... they are being orchestrated from the pit of hell. ... And what I want to say to the hosts of hell is this tonight. As Christian men, we are not backing off, we are coming on, so then get out of the way because the spirit of God is coming now!*

— Dale Schlafer, Promise Keepers vice president for Church Relations<sup>1</sup>

*It is no longer enough for Marines to "reflect" the society they defend. They must lead it. Not politically but culturally.*

*For it is the culture we are defending.*

— Col. Michael Wyly (Ret.), writing in *Marine Corps Gazette*<sup>2</sup>

It was the biggest, and possibly best disguised, mass demonstration in favor of male supremacy and right-wing politics in the history of the country. On October 4, 1997, Promise Keepers (PK) rallied hundreds of thousands of men to the nation's political capital, while claiming that the \$10 million march

**Lee Cokorinos** is senior research associate at the CDS, and editor of *PK Watch*. He has been researching political conflict and social movements for three decades.

**Alfred Ross** is executive director of the New York-based Center for Democracy Studies (CDS), a former director of Public Policy Institute at Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and a long-time researcher of the far right.

was nonpolitical. The goal was to mainstream PK's message that Christian men must assume firm leadership of family and society, and to position PK as the leading force for returning America to these "traditional biblical values." The leadership portrays the movement as a groundswell, grassroots force. In reality, PK — with a budget of almost \$100 million and full-

1. Dale Schlafer, speaking at a conference of evangelical charismatics at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, videotape (June 1996).

2. Cited in Thomas E. Ricks, *Making the Corps* (New York: Scribner, 1997), p. 286.

time staff of nearly 400<sup>3</sup> — is largely a top-down effort by religious conservative organizations to create a men-only movement to promote its social and political agenda.

The October "Stand in the Gap" march was the culmination of hundreds of rallies around the country since 1990 that have brought together an estimated two million men and raised hundreds of millions of dollars for the PK effort. As busloads of men

3. Promise Keepers, "Fact Sheet: Stand In The Gap: A Sacred Assembly Of Men," Aug. 1997; and Promise Keepers, "Press Conference Transcript Announcing 'Stand In The Gap: A Sacred Assembly Of Men,'" Feb. 4, 1997.



# Didax Weaves the Christian Web

Information warfare is a critical element of any campaign, and a key field of battle for Promise Keepers is the internet.<sup>1</sup> Co-founded by William H. Bowers, the former branch division chief of the CIA for new technology assessment, Didax, Inc. designed and maintained PK's state-of-the-art website. Didax donated at least \$211,000 of internal system maintenance, software, and web development services to PK in addition to 40,000 shares of its corporate stock.

Bowers was a senior CIA technical wizard from April 1990 until May 1993 when he left to become co-founder, board member, and Chief Technical Officer of Didax, Inc.<sup>2</sup> Since its inception in 1993, this Chantilly, Virginia-based company has focused on research, development, and marketing activities related to the website it sponsors, the Christian Community Network (CCN) at <www.christcom.net>. By June 1996, Didax had developed most of the infrastructure necessary to support a coordinated network of web sites.

In addition to its "strategic alliance" with PK, Didax has provided internet services to some of the leading organizations of the religious right, including Gary Bauer's Family Research Council, Paul Lindstrom's Christian Liberty Academy, Watergate felon Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries, *Christianity Today*, Ted Engstrom's World Vision, and Learn@Home, a coalition of Christian home schooling organizations.

According to information filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission in anticipation of the initial public offering of its stock, Didax, "during the years ended December 1996 and December 1995, provided without charge

to Christian ministry customers ... otherwise saleable computer consulting services, including web site development services valued at approximately \$240,500 and \$250,000, respectively." During 1997, it began to receive revenue from PK, among other clients.<sup>3</sup>

Another Didax co-founder was Virginia-based pastor Dade B. West, who had received a B.A. in biblical studies from the Washington Bible College in 1978, and an M.A. in Christian education from Talbot Theological Seminary in 1981. Didax bylaws stipulate that it is a "religious corporation," whose senior officers and directors must subscribe to its fundamentalist Christian statement of faith. In its SEC filings, the company indicates that it intends to tithe 10 percent of its net profits, if any, to support persons or entities that are "expected to make significant efforts to propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Didax has just announced that it has signed a contract with Auto-By-Tel, the largest automobile purchasing program on the internet. The agreement lets Auto-By-Tel sell through Didax's Christian Community Network Web site.<sup>4</sup> ■

1. Some of the information in this sidebar originally appeared in Alfred Ross, "PK's Wartime Scenario Proceeds Apace," *PK Watch*, n. 2 (1997).

2. Didax chief financial officer, Gary Struzik, had been director of accounting for Loral and Unisys Defense Systems. *Ibid.* In his autobiography, Oliver North acknowledged Didax board member James Buick, who as former president of Zondervan Corporation, published in North's *Under Fire: An American Story* (New York: Harper Collins/Zondervan, 1991), p. xi.

3. Didax, Inc., SEC IPO Filings, June 24, 1997.

4. Didax press release, "DIDAX Inc. Signs Contract With Auto-By-Tel, A Major Internet Auto Purchasing Program," *PR Newswire*, Nov. 21, 1997. Thanks to Jerry Sloan for this information.

sporting bibles and Christian theme T-shirts filled the Mall from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, the media provided saturation coverage and limited analysis. While much of the criticism of PK focused on its insistence that women must submit to their husbands' authority,<sup>4</sup> even elements of the liberal community, such as Naomi Wolf, offered up Promise Keepers as a salve to the problem of the "broken family."<sup>5</sup>

But there is another side of PK that is potentially troubling: Significant and growing ties, which appear at this point to be informal and personalized, link Promise Keepers with the military and intelligence communities.

Largely unnoted is a newly de-

veloping relationship between the US national security establishment and the "Third Wave" of the American Christian Right.<sup>6</sup> The convergence of views among right-wing elements in the national security establishment, and among groups like Promise Keepers, is clear from the com-

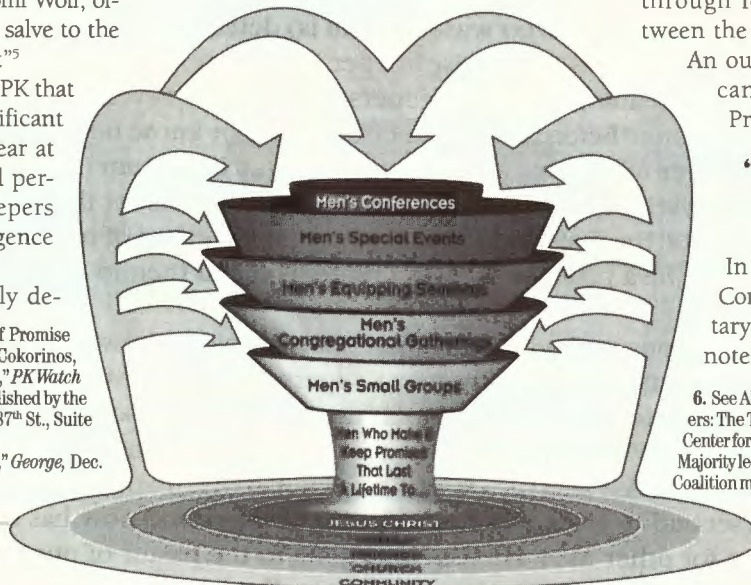
ments of Michael Wyly and Dale Schlafer above. Recent reports of mistreatment and assaults on women inside the military make the growth of this male-supremacist organization inside the military particularly troubling. But these converging views are also being institutionalized through formal and informal ties between the military and Christian Right.

An outline of one such relationship can be glimpsed by looking at Promise Keepers.

## "National Security" and the Christian Right

In his new book on the Marine Corps, the *Wall Street Journal's* military correspondent Thomas Ricks notes growing concern among re-

6. See Alfred Ross and Lee Cokorinos, "Promise Keepers: The Third Wave of the American Religious Right," Center for Democracy Studies, 1997. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority led the first wave, and Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition made up the second wave.



4. For a fuller discussion of this aspect of Promise Keepers' Stand in the Gap rally, see Lee Cokorinos, "Promise Keepers Marches on Washington," *PK Watch* No. 2, special supplement. *PK Watch* is published by the Center for Democracy Studies (177 East 87th St., Suite 404, New York, NY 10128).

5. Naomi Wolf, "Onward Christian Hippies," *George*, Dec. 1997, p. 66.



**"I believe with all of my heart that the military structure that we know and love so well is perfect for the accountable relationships that God is calling us to in Promise Keepers."**

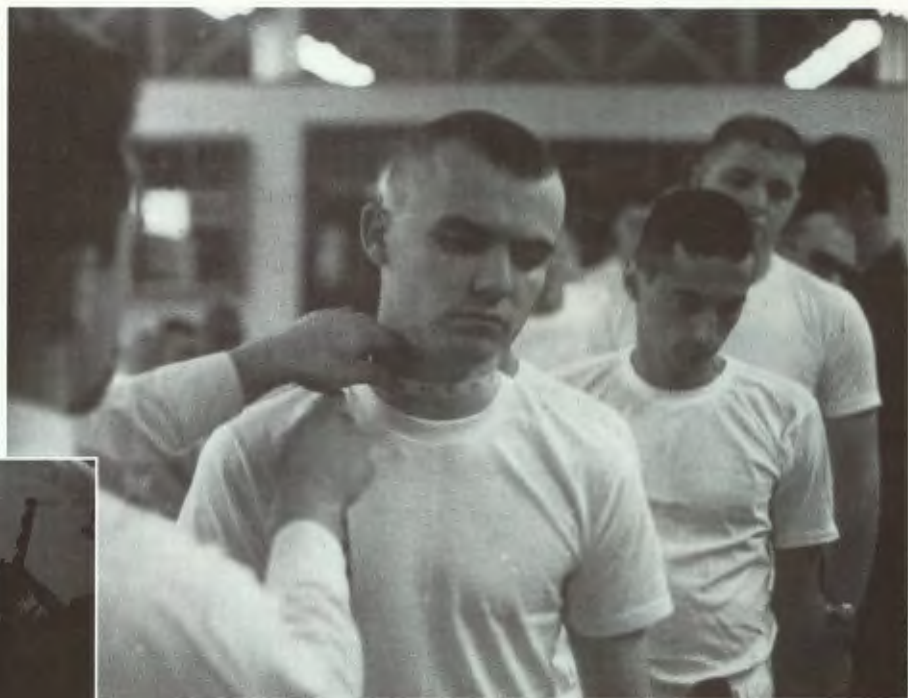
— Lt. Col. Chuck Stecker (Ret.)



**An ad for New Man magazine—formerly an official PK publication.**

searchers about the increasingly politicized nature of the US military.<sup>7</sup> Ricks writes that "open identification with the Republican party is becoming the norm — even, suggests former Army Maj. Dana Isaacoff, part of the implicit definition of being a member of the officer corps."<sup>8</sup> In addition to politicization, Ricks sees both subtle and overt religious pressures applied to military personnel. He followed a platoon through boot camp and observed an environment in which prayer was mandatory and recruits were categorized Protestant, Catholic and other — with all that

7. A mounting body of research backs these observations. One influential study is Ole R. Holsti, "A Widening Gap Between the Military and Civilian Society? Some Evidence, 1976-1996," published by the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, Project on US Post Cold-War Civil-Military Relations (Working Paper No. 13, Oct. 1997).  
8. Ricks, *op. cit.*, p. 280.



ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

**During boot camp, recruits are stripped of their civilian identity, and inculcated with the persona of a warrior. At this vulnerable time, right-wing theology can be inserted easily in the indoctrination process.**

implies for defining the bounds of social acceptability, advancement, and democratic diversity in the military.<sup>9</sup>

## **PK's Military and Intelligence Overtones**

"It's wartime!" cried Promise Keepers founder and leader, "coach" Bill McCartney, to the 39,000 clergy he had summoned to Atlanta's Georgia Dome for a massive three-day leadership conference in February 1996. Since PK has carefully nurtured its "better hubby/better daddy" media image, few observers took the former University of Colorado football coach literally. But behind that facade is a profoundly competent and focused propaganda and recruitment machine that employs cutting-edge technology and proven psychological warfare techniques with martial efficiency. PK is working from this military model to win the "hearts and minds" of the American electorate, and the coach is lining up current and former military cadres to support his effort.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-71. See also pp. 116-19. Ricks cited a recruit who, when grilled by his drill instructor, admitted he was neither Catholic nor Protestant — a statement greeted with some disbelief by his sergeant. In fact, the recruit was a Black Muslim, but wasn't about to disclose that to "a white cracker drill instructor he just met."

The military theme was echoed by Chuck Stecker,<sup>10</sup> a retired Army Special Forces lieutenant colonel who, until last summer, headed PK's South Central Region:

I believe with all of my heart that the military structure that we know and love so well is perfect for the accountable relationships that God is calling us to in Promise Keepers. That same structure, whether it be at the detachment level, squadron level and so forth, is exactly what we need. I believe that accountable relationships build readiness, quite frankly, and having served in a Ranger battalion, if a squad leader did not know where his soldiers were, his Rangers, he wasn't doing his job. And in order to be able to know those things he had to be in accountable relationships with them in order to develop that. We have to carry this a step further so that our lives, if you will, reflect Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup>

10. Promise Keepers list, "Regional Managers," February 1996. In this document, Stecker is described as follows: "[R]etired from United States Army as a Lieutenant Colonel after serving 23 years, leadership assignments included Infantry, Airborne, Airborne Ranger, Special Forces, Italian Alpini, and three years with the Joint Staff in the Pentagon; active in men's, youth and couples ministries; married with three children."

11. Center for Democracy Studies, "Promise Keepers: The Third Wave of the American Religious Right," video (1997). For a comprehensive overview of the practice of shepherding, which is central to the operation of PK accountability groups, see Russ Bellant, "Promise Keepers and the Christian Shepherding Movement," *PK Watch* No. 1 (1997), at <www.cdsresearch.org>. See also Sara Diamond, "Shock Troops of the Christian Right: Shepherding," *CovertAction Information Bulletin*, n. 27, Spring 1987, pp. 18-31.



Stecker was one of the PK leaders who spoke at the luncheon for military chaplains held during the Atlanta conference. It was at the 1996 Atlanta Clergy Conference where PK announced that it was working closely with the Military Ministry of Bill Bright's Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) with its \$300 million annual budget and international outreach. Campus Crusade provided 85 full-time staff to PK to help it get started, and its senior staff wrote the briefing manuals for the PK "small groups."<sup>12</sup> Campus Crusade's Military Ministry has also conducted "Military Wake-Up Calls" in cooperation with Promise Keepers.<sup>13</sup> The luncheon was also addressed by the CCC Military Ministry national director, retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Richard Abel, who had served as former chief of the Combat News Division in the Directorate of Information in

was commanding general at the US Army Information Systems Command at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona from 1990-91. He now heads MICA Systems, Inc. of Falls Church, Virginia, which, according to Promise Keepers, is an "information management, business services and consulting company."<sup>15</sup>

**Robert Hicks**, an early proponent of the small group bonding model used by PK and author of *The Masculine Journey*. PK distributed and endorsed Hicks' book, which posits the notion of a "phallic Jesus," and says that "we are called to worship God as phallic kinds of guys." The book has come under heavy fire from other fundamentalists for its sexual interpretation of scripture.<sup>16</sup> "Possessing a penis," according to Hicks, "places unique requirements upon men before God in how they are to worship Him."<sup>17</sup> Hicks served

writes, "have not only neutered Christ but would call for the castration of all men in the name of rape prevention."<sup>19</sup> According to his biography on the "Closer Look" Christian book club website, Hicks "has studied in Israel and represented the US Air Force at the first international conference on wartime stress in Tel Aviv."<sup>20</sup> As a result of the controversy surrounding the book, PK has since discontinued marketing and distributing *The Masculine Journey*, but continues to maintain that "we believe Mr. Hicks' core theology is consistent with orthodox evangelical Christianity."<sup>21</sup> His latest book is *Man of All Passions*, a fictional story comparing a modern day Israeli soldier with King David.<sup>22</sup>

**Stu Weber**, a rising star in right-wing evangelical circles. He served in the Fifth Special Forces Group as the intelligence operations officer of "Iron Mike" Healy, the legendary head of the Green Berets, during the Vietnam War.<sup>23</sup> Weber includes an account of his experiences in his first book, *Tender Warrior*.<sup>24</sup> Weber attended the US Army Ranger school at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1967, where he learned the importance of male small-group bonding. In an article for James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* magazine, he compares his experience there with Promise Keepers' commitment to building "vital relationships" among men.<sup>25</sup> PK founder Bill McCartney singled out Weber's new book *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart*<sup>26</sup> from the podium at PK's rally in Washington. McCartney plugged it as the book to read and PK currently distributes the book.

**Raleigh Washington**, who led PK's Washington, DC assembly. An African-American pastor from Chicago and PK's vice president of reconciliation, he is the PK official



**Political and ideological links between the evangelical and charismatic movements and Promise Keepers make churches like this one in Roxbury, MA, good recruiting ground for PK men.**

Vietnam, and by 1983 was director of public affairs in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force.<sup>14</sup>

Among other prominent PK speakers and supporters with military backgrounds are:

**Gen. Alonzo E. Short, Jr.**, recently added to PK's board of directors. Short

as a chaplain in the Air National Guard and was honored in 1985 as "Chaplain of the Year" by the American Legion (the award was presented by Ronald Reagan).<sup>18</sup> "Some in the women's movement," Hicks

15. Promise Keepers website, biography of Alonzo E. Short, Jr. Fort Huachuca is also home to the US Army Intelligence Center.

16. Robert Hicks, *The Masculine Journey* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993), pp. 51, 180-81. Hicks sees "the phallus as determiner of religious service" (p. 49). The book contains a full-page plug for Promise Keepers, and was distributed by PK as a basic text of their movement. It is dedicated to Hicks' son Tom with the verse, "As an M-16 in the hands of a marine, so you are, the son of my youth."

17. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

20. See the book blurb "Dealing with God, Passion," on the website at <[www.acloserlook.com](http://www.acloserlook.com)>.

21. Promise Keepers, "Statement on *The Masculine Journey*," <[www.promisekeepers.org](http://www.promisekeepers.org)>.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Stu Weber, *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart — Bringing Strength into Balance* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1997), pp. 15-18.

24. Stu Weber, *Tender Warrior: God's Intention for a Man* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1993), especially Chap. 1.

25. Stu Weber, "Someone to Lean On," *Focus on the Family* with Dr. James Dobson, June 1996, pp. 2-4.

26. Among the advice Weber offers wives in this book are that "the influence of applied femininity" is "dangerous"; that they should strive for "capable feminine nobility"; that a woman should not "abuse" the "power of her femininity" and upset the "fragile male ego"; that "a wise woman chooses to stay away from women who criticize their husbands"; and





Nearly 45,000 men sang, sobbed, hugged, and prayed at this 1995 PK rally in an Oakland, CA stadium.

most directly responsible for giving the organization a veneer of multiculturalism — despite Promise Keepers' overwhelmingly white Protestant base and indifferent, if not hostile, position toward public policy action to promote racial justice. A retired lieutenant colonel and recipient of the Bronze Star for meritorious service in Vietnam, he writes in his autobiography that he was “drummed out of the army” as the result of a charge of sexual assault. A 1980 military review board found Washington guilty of “conduct unbecoming an officer.” Nine years later, that decision was reversed.<sup>27</sup> In an interview with the *Dallas Observer*, Washington stated, “I think Promise Keepers will become the model organization for every Christian movement in the country. ... There's no way the group can restrict itself when it comes to public policy. We are producing leaders in this organization. They will enter the political sphere.”<sup>28</sup>

to “love unconditionally,” “listen intently,” “see your husband as God's gift to you,” and, of course, “follow his leadership.” *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart*, op. cit., pp. 257-71.

27. Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein, *Breaking Down Walls* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), pp. 43-70.

28. Jimmy Fowler, “60,000 Naked Men: When The Promise Keepers Revival Rolls Into Town, Every Soul In Sight Gets Exposed,” *Dallas Observer*, Nov. 14, 1996.

Tom Hemingway, staff member of Officers Christian Fellowship, an organization led by a council of military officers. The organization counted Oliver North among its members at the height of the 1980s conflict in Central America. Hemingway, who like North is a retired Marine lieutenant colonel, is a Vietnam

## “Possessing a penis places unique requirements upon men before God in how they are to worship Him.”

veteran with 30 years in the military. He is an instructor for the US Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and has been a guest speaker for the FBI Academy's Terrorist Research Management Section. He is also the national director for Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) ministries.<sup>29</sup> At the 1996 PK rally in Miami, he described the participants

29. Promise Keepers, “1997 Promise Keepers Conference Speaker List,” Oct. 1997.

as “soldiers in training,” who will “march to battle for Christ.”<sup>30</sup>

## Looking for a Few Good Men

Promise Keepers' efforts to organize within the military have, on occasion, drawn attention and criticism. In November 1996, a PK rally sponsored by the Navy (to build “wholesome masculinity”) had to be cancelled after protests by, among others, the Anti-Defamation League. Atlantic Fleet Chaplain Barry Black said of the rally, “This is an effort to help men lean on each other more and to have accountability to one another. ... In this day and age, when character is ostensibly not an issue in the public forum, to be able to maintain spiritual, ethical and sexual purity, boy, that's really tremendous. It's a kind of positive peer pressure, actually.” The rally was instead held under the sponsorship of the Military Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.<sup>31</sup>

30. Jimmy Fowler, op. cit.

31. Diane Tennant, “Navy, Churches Organize Wake-Up Call: The Effort with Promise Keepers Should Reinforce Navy Values,” *The Virginian-Pilot* (Norfolk), Nov. 7, 1996; and Diane Tennant, “Navy Won't Sponsor Christian Men's Rally after Protests,” *The Virginian-Pilot*, Nov. 15, 1996.



Fifteen military chaplains from Ft. Bragg returning from the Atlanta PK conference held a “wake-up call” at the base. Col. Jim Pack, a retired 20-year Green Beret veteran who had trained and specialized in psychological warfare at Fort Bragg, led the event attended by hundreds of active duty soldiers. He now is PK’s state manager for Texas.

A recent web posting by the Military Ministry of the Navigators — an organization with roots in the military, and which publishes official PK training and recruitment books, as well as provided staff to PK in its early days — lauded a religious resurgence at Army base. The ministry boasted that “a revival is happening at Fort Bragg [that] has been picking up intensity over the past couple of years as people from many places have been praying for a spiritual reawakening here. A group of people began praying and fasting one day each week specifically for the four-day revival meeting at the Main Post Chapel last month. ... Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Doug Carver, chaplain assignments officer at the Pentagon, led the well attended revival services.”

Promise Keepers also has an active chapter at Aviano Air Force Base in Italy, a large staging ground for elements of the American NATO contingent working in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>32</sup> PK encourages military personnel stationed overseas to promote the organization: “The role of missionaries, military personnel, or expatriates can be one of a ‘middle man’ between the nationals of that country and the Promise Keepers organization in the United States.”<sup>33</sup>

## International Outreach

PK’s efforts culminated with the massive October 1997 rally in Washington, DC. The stage was replete with major figures, unfamiliar to most Americans, of the right-wing international evangelical movement. In front of a giant video screen projecting a close-up of his face, McCartney announced that in 1999, PK was going global, making a determined effort to set up a virtual patriarchalist international. PK has already set up provisional structures in Britain, Australia, Canada, and South Africa; and McCartney visited India last year. PK has received requests from every continent and has volunteer groups in the United Kingdom, Norway, South Africa, and the Netherlands.<sup>34</sup>

32. Interested readers can visit the Aviano PK chapter’s website <[www.ets.it/personal/pgs/sparks/pka.htm](http://www.ets.it/personal/pgs/sparks/pka.htm)>.

33. PK official website <[www.promisekeepers.org/2b3e.htm](http://www.promisekeepers.org/2b3e.htm)>.

34. PK website <[www.promisekeepers.org](http://www.promisekeepers.org)>.

A year before, looking to previously closed “markets,” right-wing evangelist Luis Palau,<sup>35</sup> keynote speaker at the 1996 New York Promise Keepers stadium conference, had announced that the event was being broadcast by radio into Cuba, where, Palau claimed, it would “explode like a bomb.” He added that God’s forgiveness was great enough to encompass sins that some conference participants may have committed in El Salvador.<sup>36</sup>

## Global Revival and Global Restructuring

In constitutionally secular countries such as the US, there are few more politically sensitive subjects than the role of religious organizations in advancing national policy or security objectives. Public discourse

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**“We just gotta make sure that the Constitution doesn’t find itself in violation of God’s Law.”**

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— PK founder Bill McCartney

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rarely touches on how religious and political leaders cooperate. Or how religious groups influence policy-makers. When these relationships involve military or intelligence efforts — as in the recent flap over whether US intelligence agencies can use religious cover for their overseas operatives — the debate is usually relegated to narrowly focused interest groups.

Increasingly, the domestic and international agendas of the religious right are converging and influencing policy. It has helped fuel a formidable, “bipartisan” policy effort to dismantle the remains of the social safety net, and to rollback hard won constitutional freedoms. These fundamentalists have fought hard against secular public education and the use of affirmative action to redress racial and gender inequalities. At the forefront of this effort have been quasi-religious institutions such as Pat Robertson’s Christian Coalition and American Center on Law and Justice, the James Dobson-backed Family Research Council, and little known but highly influential journals like

35. Palau was also a member of the ultra right-wing fundamentalist Coalition on Revival. COR letterhead, April 26, 1988.

36. The broadcast went out over New Jersey-based *Radio Vision Cristiana* via its transmitter on South Caicos island Caribbean, which was constructed in 1993.

Catholic theologian Richard John Neuhaus’ *First Things*.

On the international front, the US “victory” in the Cold War and the near death of liberalism have bolstered the religious right’s influence. With hundreds of millions of dollars of largely unmonitored money, and connections to organizations such as Didax, they can develop sophisticated methodologies and technologies of information warfare. At the same time, Pat Robertson’s Operation Blessing, Bill Bright’s Campus Crusade for Christ International, James Dobson’s Focus on the Family, and Charles Colson’s Prison Fellowship International have been able to play a more active role in foreign policy.

The convergence of the domestic and international spheres presents a new set of concerns. The recent elevation of Gary

Bauer, the right’s leading voice on domestic policy, to that of an international human rights advocate illustrates the growing international aspirations of the religious conservatives. During Jiang Zemin’s recent visit, Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, shared the stage with

AFL-CIO president John Sweeney to protest Beijing’s treatment of Christians. While liberals engaged traditionally conservative issues such as Tibet, the religious right inserted itself into the historically liberal territory of human rights. Having solidified its domestic base in recent years, this Third Wave of the religious right is set to advance into the international arena.

At the Washington, DC event and at rallies around the country, PK proclaims that it has “no political agenda.” But when PK founder Bill McCartney spoke on CNN’s *Impact* program, he presented a view antithetical to a secular constitutional democracy. On the eve of their Washington rally he declared, “We just gotta make sure that the Constitution doesn’t find itself in violation of God’s Law.”<sup>37</sup> Whether PK chooses to label its objectives as political or social, its goals for the civil society threaten the secular tradition underlying our democracy. As PK begins to take its “spiritual” warfare abroad, its links to military and intelligence figures, as well as their nearly \$100 million war chest, warrant closer scrutiny. ■

37. Interview with McCartney, *Impact*, CNN, Sept. 21, 1997.



# Off the Shelf:

## CAQ'S BOOKS OF INTEREST

### The Beast Reawakens

by Martin A. Lee

LITTLE, BROWN AND CO., 1997, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, 546 PP., \$24.95 HB.

A decade ago, Martin Lee's *Acid Dreams*, an account of the CIA's efforts to manipulate the 60s counterculture, established his reputation as an investigative journalist. *The Beast Reawakens*, Lee's story of fascism's survival on the margins after World War II and reemergence as a potent political force in the post-Cold War period, will only enhance his stature.

Based on hundreds of interviews and thousands of pages of recently declassified documents, *The Beast Reawakens* kicks over rocks scattered across the postwar European terrain, and the creatures that scuttle forth are both discomfiting and dangerous. From German war hero and postwar Nazi networker Otto Skorzeny to American fascists Francis Parker Yockey and H. Keith Thompson, from 1960s Italian Maoist Nazis (or is it Nazi Maoists?) to 1990s Russian "red browns" and US militiamen, Lee provides a sweeping overview of the interlocking and overlapping fascist networks.

Along the way, he revisits the fateful US decision to integrate fascist collaborators and the Nazi's Eastern Front intelligence apparatus—the infamous Gehlen organization—into its anticommunist Cold War campaign. With Reinhard Gehlen playing the Americans against the Russians, former Nazis finding work in the new West German government, and Skorzeny and his ilk running "rat lines" for war criminals, the vanquished Nazi dream managed to survive, just barely.

But survive it did, and now fascism prospers again. Some of the book's most disturbing pages deal with fascism's newfound respectability, evidence of which can be easily found in the success of Le Pen's

National Front in France, the recent scandals in the German military, and among US "patriots." His point that contemporary fascists gain support by deemphasizing white supremacy and instead concentrating on "national identity" and "cultural uniqueness" is well-made, if not exactly original.

*The Beast Reawakens* is a provocative and enjoyable piece of work. Lee's prose is lively, his research unimpeachable and his analysis, for the most part, savvy and sophisticated. Still, at times, his description of political forces lacks nuance: He dismisses the anti-Yeltsin revolt of October 1993, for example, as simply "fascist." Similarly, Lee fails to distinguish between white supremacy/fascism and anti-corporate, anti-state populism in his sweeping denunciation of US militias. While, as Lee makes clear, fascism remains a threat, an overly broad and simplistic definition of the movement risks serious error.

### The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground

by Ron Jacobs

VERSO, 1997, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, 216 PP., \$14.00 PB.

It is hard to imagine that less than thirty years separate us from the days of the Weather Underground. Mass mobilizations against racism and the Vietnam War, riots in the streets, revolutionary change in the air—it seems a faded, distant vision. Ron Jacobs only partially succeeds in evoking one part of that era: the bomb-planting, manifesto-spouting zealotry of a student-based revolutionary movement at wits' end. With *The Way the Wind Blew*, Jacobs fills a gap in the story of the New Left. Other historians have either ignored or simply loathed the Weather Underground, preferring instead to concentrate on the early history of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), from which emerged the Weathermen (as it was known early on), or on the peak year of 1968, prior to the group's existence.

But Jacobs zeroes in on the Weather Underground, detailing its origins, its collective decision to go underground, its analyses of critical questions (what is the role of white revolutionaries? is the counterculture revolutionary?), and its coups and fiascos. The group had its share of both: Timothy Leary's prison break, the deadly explosion of the Greenwich Village bomb factory, the Days of Rage, the paeans

to Charles Manson, the bombing of the US Capitol.

Jacobs exposes Weather's errors—they were many and ultimately fatal—and also summons the excitement and sense of possibility that the era embodied. Still, his portrayal seems somehow flat: too many manifestoes and not enough conversations, too much theory and not enough scenery. The book's only other significant drawback, and one easily redressed by some additional reading, is that Jacobs offers little of the broader political context of the New Left.

Reading the Weather communiques now, with their Marxist-inspired jargon and "revolutionary" profanity, is as embarrassing as listening to an old MC5 album. They reflect a mixture of arrogance, idealism, mania, and naiveté, along with an undeniable commitment and dedication. The Weather Underground was a dead end, an armed vanguard with no mass following, one doomed to isolation and repression. But it is not surprising that somebody bombed the New York State Corrections Commissioner's office in the wake of Attica.

### Against All Odds: A Chronicle of the Eritrean Revolution

by Dan Connell

RED SEA PRESS, REVISED 1997, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, 334 PP., \$14.95 PB.

Dan Connell has covered Eritrea for nearly three decades, one of a handful of Western journalists who have bothered to report at all on its bloody, protracted independence struggle. Clearly sympathetic to the cause of an independent Eritrea, he early on gained unmatched access to the eventual winners of the nationalist revolution, the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front. His repeated behind-the-scenes journeys throughout the region, his reporter's eye, and his sharp political sensibilities position him to create a narrative of the Eritrean struggle intimate in detail and judicious in analysis.

Designated a province of greater Ethiopia by European colonialists, largely peasant and traditional Eritrea struggled for decades, first against the Emperor Haile Selassie and then against the repressive Marxist junta that overthrew him, the forebodingly named Derg. In a case study of successful nationalist revolution, Connell describes the twists and turns of the war that left an estimated one in 10 Eritreans dead and the country's infrastructure in



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ruins. In part, Connell's work is pure war correspondent, its accounts of desert treks, guerrilla ambushes, and pitched battles finely drawn and certain to quicken the pulses of revolutionary romantics. As well, he captures the sense of certainty and resolution that marked those days when all good revolutionaries knew that Marxism-Leninism would lead them to the promised land. Along the way, Connell conjures up a world that now seems irretrievably distant, the world of the Heroic Guerrilla. It is to his credit that he both captures that heady atmosphere and, with the benefit of time's passage, can see in it elements of fever dream.

In a recently penned epilogue, Connell shows how now, a handful of years after achieving independence, that idealism has been eroded not only by global events but also by the wearisome and unglamorous tasks of building an egalitarian and democratic society. Still, the Eritreans remain committed to their hard-won revolution. The book ends with a cautiously optimistic assessment of the challenges they face in a world where socialist development is not on the agenda and capitalist development is almost impossible. ■

— Phillip Smith

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