



# Polemicist

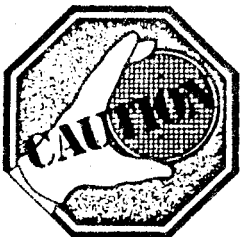
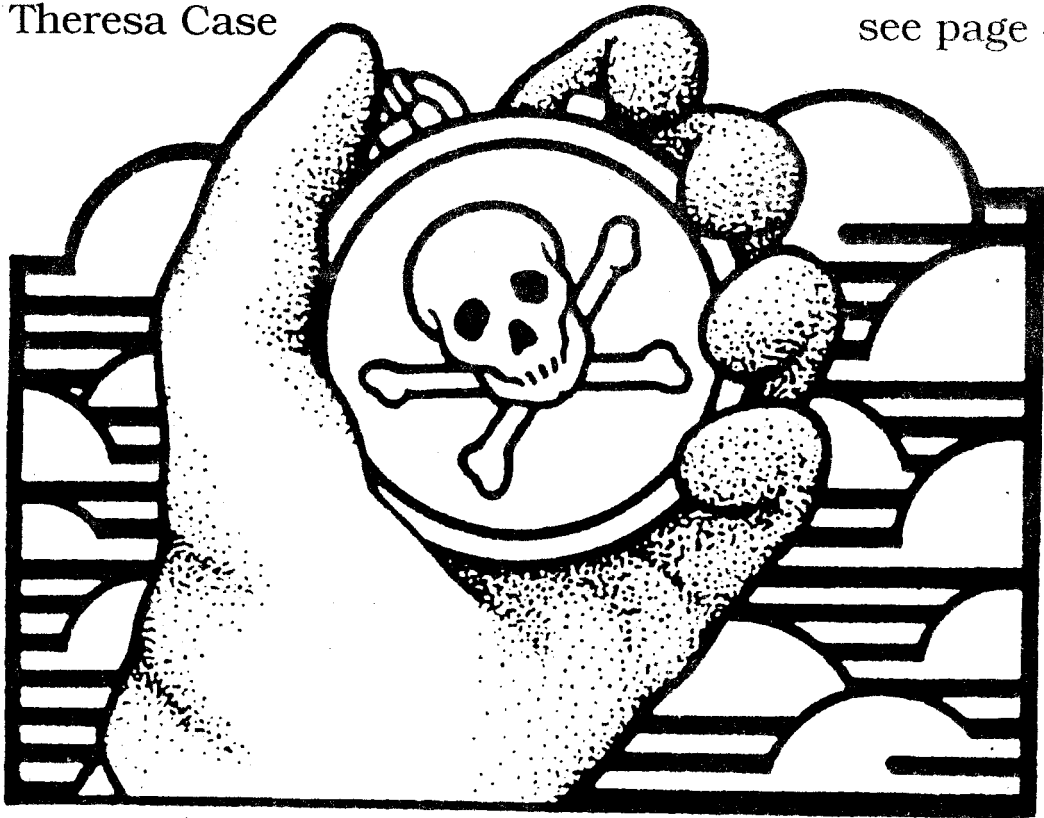
*A journal must have polemic, if it is to struggle.* —Karl Marx

## UT, high-tech and your health:

Will Austin become a toxic wasteland?

by Theresa Case

see page 4





# We Hereby Chastise...

**"Dollar" Bill Cunningham**  
*Peter Flawn disciple*

In his squalid *Primer for University Presidents*, former UT President Peter Flawn declares that "the *ad hoc* committee is, of course, the device by which the president buys time to deal with a potentially nasty situation, [or] defuses a fast-breaking and explosive situation."

Flawn must be applauding his successor Bill Cunningham's handling of UT's understaffing crisis. "Dollar" Bill has formed the *ad hoc* Committee on the Undergraduate Experience, his third in 18 months, charged with studying the "purpose undergraduate education," "in the broadest sense." For several years now students have demanded that the University hire enough faculty to bring the student-faculty ratio down to reasonable levels. This journal has argued repeatedly that the University must divert funds from its capital-intensive high-tech research projects in order to equitably fund undergraduate programs.

The creation of the new committee promises to postpone any meaningful action until at least next summer. A list of a few of Cunningham's more heinous appointments to the committee confirms his lack of seriousness in the matter. The list includes: failed SA-presidential candidate and political opportunist Tracy Silna; Rich Heller, one of the Texas Union bureaucrats responsible for the recently rejected franchising proposal; and Larry Carver, an Associate Dean of Liberal Arts who used to write speeches for UT Chancellor Hans Mark, an architect of UT's high-dollar research projects.

But most egregiously, Cunningham appointed Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, former CIA operative turned Austin booster. Inman served as the first CEO of MCC, a high-tech research consortium housed on UT property. To this day MCC pays one dollar per year in rent, even though the University paid \$34 million for the building and equipment. We doubt Inman will argue against multimillion dollar subsidies to the private sector just to hire more faculty.

Since Cunningham has so doggedly adhered to Flawn's technique of forming committees to defuse student unrest, we direct him to the last chapter of Flawn's treatise, entitled "Exiting the Presidency." "If your retirement from the presidency is timely," Flawn writes, "a great many nice things will happen to you." Aren't you getting tired, Bill, of the hassle over understaffing, Barton Creek, racist frats and E306? No more committees, Bill. Just step down.

**James Vick**

*UT Vice President for Student Affairs*

Outraged at the year-long barrage of fraternity rape, violence, misogyny and racism, some 400 students massed on the South Mall on Nov. 28 to demand justice. In defiance, 200-300 frat boys gathered threateningly to shout racist, sexist and homophobic slurs, thereby confirming the protestors reasons for being there.

Representing the administration at the near-riot was James Vick, a man who by all counts was a human being before becoming an administrator. Vick had to be cajoled into speaking by demonstrators who feared a violent backlash from the mob of angry frat boys. "What we need to do is to work together to solve these

problems," declared Vick. "All of us are committed to having a university that will tolerate differences of opinion." Vick tells us that "We expect you to tolerate all students as individuals."

Does Vick want us to "tolerate" students who carve Greek letters into an innocent victim's face? Or how about the student that raped a 16 year-old girl at the Sigma Chi house last spring? Or should we "tolerate" the students who not five minutes before Vick spoke shouted "nigger" at Toni Luckett? And should we "tolerate" shameless apologists like IFC President Larry Dubinski who try to deny the problem of fraternity violence out of existence?

The point of the rally, since Vick apparently missed it, was that students will *not* tolerate violence against women, violence against minorities, or violence against random people jogging down the street. To confront these problems, the UT administration should follow the advice of Students United for Rape Elimination—adopt multicultural curriculum reform and pressure the national organizations of all UT fraternities involved in violent acts to permanently revoke their charters.

## University Review

Despite its bitter attacks on multicultural curriculum reform and its chauvinistic construction of Western culture, the *Review* has claimed that its positions aren't racist, but merely alternative points of view that "the Left" refuses to "tolerate" (see previous chastisement). With their November/December issue, however, the *Review* editors shattered that weak argument. The entire back page of that issue displays the following racist caricature, ostensibly of the TV rapper MC Hammer, depicted standing in front of the Tower surrounded by the slogans, "The New E306?" and "Can't Teach This:"



No rational argument can be made that this anonymous cartoon relates to E306. The only possible connection must be that the *Review* staff essentializes black people, rap music, gold chains, and curriculum reform all together as one concept. According to the magazine's Advertisers' Index, the back page supposedly is an ad for Texas Textbooks. The publisher of the *Review* claims

that's a mistake. But mistake or not, other *Review* advertisers should hope that the magazine won't make a "mistake" and run a racist caricature where their ad should be.

**Victoria Moore**

*Sycophant, Power Monger*

We fear that Council of Graduate Students (COGS) president Victoria Moore is angling for a job with the UT administration. Like any UT bureaucrat, she champions causes that divide students while consolidating her own political power base.

She has actively thwarted efforts to mobilize graduate students since her arrival on the scene as president last spring. As the Graduate Professional Association, after years of work with the administration on insurance premiums for graduate students, began to mobilize mass protests, Moore set herself up as the negotiator for the "graduate student constituency." Despite her insistence that graduate students have their own agenda separate from undergraduates, Moore has consistently opposed attempts to unionize grad students around these issues.

Her latest offense was her attempt to purge graduate student SA Rep. David Ritchie, after he dared contradict her in public. In the Nov. 5 *Texan*, Moore advocated splitting the SA into graduate and undergraduate sections. "A combined graduate-undergraduate agenda is too broad for the Students' Association," she explained to *The Texan*. The next day in the paper, SA reps, including David Ritchie, blasted her idea as counterproductive, since divided students obviously wield less power. After Ritchie helped pierce her trial balloon, Moore backed down, claiming she never really suggested splitting the SA at all!

Moore justified her urge to spit the SA in part by implying that only a grad-student SA would appropriate money for groups like the Howlers, a grad-student research/activist organization. Ironically, though, while Moore was still mouthing off in the press, Ritchie maneuvered a bill through the Students' Assembly that gave \$2,000 to the Liberated Learning School (see ad page 9), a Howlers spinoff.

Despite her equivocations and misrepresentations, however, she still sought revenge for Ritchie's audacity in pointing out the stupidity of her plan. Moore wrote an open letter to Ritchie in *The Texan* chiding him for ignoring his "constituency" (read: Moore's agenda) and demanding that he appear at the next COGS meeting to repent for his sins. Ritchie showed up late, by which time Moore had already engineered a vote for his ouster as SA rep, without warning him first and despite the fact that COGS has no authority to do so. SA Executive Director Eric Dixon ruled that Moore has no power to fire Ritchie.

While Moore may be self-serving in her chastisement of Ritchie for not serving his "constituency," we must admit that Moore has never lost sight of her own. Moore's vision of graduate students' separate agenda rests on the premise that grad-student teachers need special training to fulfill their classroom obligations. Conveniently, Moore champions a fat budget for the Center for Teaching Effectiveness, from which she draws her salary.

For her self-serving apologetics, she has earned our scorn.

# Crude Politics

## What Bush gains from high oil prices

The following article is the text of a talk given by Harry Cleaver at a November 26 teach in sponsored by the UT Progressive Faculty Group and the Austin Campaign for Peace in the Middle East.

by Harry Cleaver

What is going on in the Persian Gulf? Why are we headed for war? Should we back the president, or oppose his policies? These are not easy questions to answer. They were not easy to answer in the early stages of the Vietnam War; they were not easy to answer in Central America. Yet we must try, for many lives hang in the balance. In what follows, I want to share my present thinking about some of the political economic issues at play in the current situation. Although I don't pretend to have all the answers, what I do see is not pretty and it suggests to me the need to mobilize against current American policy both at home and abroad.

### Hussein and Bush:

#### The Motives of 'Madmen'

Saddam Hussein's economic motives for taking over Kuwait are relatively transparent. Hussein needed money. He needed the money to rebuild after the long war with Iran while maintaining his army to cope with continuing internal resistance to his rule from the Kurds (whom he has repressed and slaughtered), from the millions of foreign workers employed in Iraq (whom he has ruthlessly exploited), from Communists and Islamic fundamentalists (whom he has executed as quickly as he could identify and round them up) and from almost everyone else not part of his highly centralized political and military machine. He needed money to spread his Ba'athist ideology of Pan-Arabism and his own influence and power throughout the Arab world.

Prior to the invasion Hussein had threatened force to end the Kuwaiti (and UAE) practice of producing and selling more crude oil than their OPEC quota allowed, an action which tended to lower oil prices and to reduce Iraqi income from its own oil exports. Those threats achieved an OPEC capitulation on July 27 and agreement to cutbacks that would raise prices, but only about \$3 a barrel. Hussein had also demanded some \$30 billion in aid from the government of Kuwait and the other oil producers of the Gulf. The rulers of Kuwait were less than forthcoming. They reminded Hussein of their previous support during the war with Iran, of his outstanding debts to them and offered little more money. Kuwaiti refusal to comply with his de-



mands created an obstacle to the realization of Hussein's goals. He sent in his army to remove the obstacle.

But if Saddam Hussein's motives are clear enough, and condemnable, what of George Bush's? Why did he order American troops into the Gulf? We can reject out of hand the explanation currently stressed by the White House—to resist aggression—as simply unbelievable in the light of the Contra war, Panama, Grenada and the Bush Administration's silence on Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Syrian takeover of Lebanon. However, we must still take seriously the alternative, economic explanations which have been offered by the White House. First, of course, is the argument, made originally by Bush himself, that the troops were sent to defend "our way of life," i.e., cheap oil, cheap gasoline, gas guzzling cars and boats. Second, suggested at the same time and reinforced later by Baker, was the argument that defending cheap oil supplies also defends "jobs"—helps stave off recession and rising unemployment, such as that which followed the first "oil shock" in 1973-1974. Such arguments have some credibility because they have had some truth in the past or might have some in the future. But should we believe them today?

It is easy to argue that American policy toward the oil producing nations of the Gulf, and elsewhere, has at times been designed to guarantee steady sup-

plies of cheap oil. Certainly this was the case in the post-World War II period and explains, among other things, the CIA overthrow of the Mossadegh government in Iran in 1953 which was seen as endangering Western control over Iranian oil. In those days cheap oil fueled post-war reconstruction in Western Europe and economic growth in the U.S. There are also good reasons to think that U.S. policy makers wanted a reduction in the price of oil in the early 1980s. The attack on the price of oil was part of a more general anti-inflationary policy which was really an anti-wage policy. That time policy makers achieved their ends less with direct force (unless you include the bombing of Libya) and more with global recession induced by tight money and high interest rates—a recession which dramatically reduced the demand for oil and thus its price. Such policies have always lent great credence to traditional charges of imperialism, of the shaping of foreign policy for the profits of American business.

But at other times, American foreign policy has favored not cheap but expensive oil, as in the early 1970s when American negotiators let it be understood by OPEC that the U.S. was not opposed to an increase in the price of crude oil. In those days high priced oil achieved a variety of ends. It helped the Gulf countries cope with internal instability by providing them with more resources. It undercut European competi-

tiveness with the United States because it hurt Europe more than the U.S. In the U.S. (and around the world), it undercut real wages which had been rising faster than productivity (and thus hurting profits) by causing inflation while simultaneously making vast amounts of money available to Western business as the OPEC countries deposited their trade surpluses in Western commercial banks. As recently as April of 1986, then Vice President Bush hurried to the Persian Gulf to pressure Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states to cut production and raise prices—pleading "national security" and the economic needs of oil men and their bankers in the U.S.

### The economics of invasion

#### Does Bush really want cheap oil?

So, which is the case today? What does the Bush administration hope to gain? Cheap oil or high priced oil? Certainly, in the short term its military actions and the blockade of Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil have driven up the price of oil dramatically (from about \$18 dollars a barrel to over \$40, dropping since to about \$30). Although OPEC production has surged and already made up for blockaded Iraqi and Kuwaiti exports, prices remain high based on fears of future conflict and future shortages. The persistence of conflict keeps prices high. If Bush orders the troops against Hussein's army widespread destruction in the oil fields may actually reduce oil supplies and further drive up prices.

If Bush's policy advisors do want cheap oil, only in the long term can current actions be argued to be consistent with such an objective—assuming that preventing Hussein from controlling Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil would help hold down prices in the long run. Against the argument that Hussein's control over the combined oil exports would result in higher oil prices we must set what we know about the workings of the international crude oil market and the behavior of its major suppliers. As OPEC was beginning to discover, even before the global recession brought on by the Reagan Administration in 1982, persistent high oil prices lead to increased conservation, the development of alternative energy sources and new supplies, all of which tend to bring down the price. Any country with very large oil reserves, such as Saudi Arabia, has a vested interest in keeping prices at a level below that which would bring about such problems. If Saddam Hussein in control of both Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil fields would be such a

see *Crucity*, page 10

# UT, Austin, and High Tech Toxics: the dark side of economic development

by Theresa Case



When Austin successfully brought two high tech "plums" to town, the Microelectronics and Computer Technology Center (MCC) and Sematech, the media declared Austin a "megatrend" city. *The Economist* declared that "Austin Discards its Dungarees," while the *New York Times* headlined: "Is Austin the Next Silicon Valley?" Indeed, the state of Texas, the city of Austin, and the University of Texas have spent a considerable amount of energy and taxpayers' money attempting to transform Austin into a center for high technology and manufacturing.

Sematech and MCC, both consortia of high-tech companies pooling their research, provide critical momentum for this effort. Austin and the state of Texas promised at least \$56.3 million in public funds was promised to Sematech. About \$12.3 million of this amount came from the University of Texas, which purchased the old Data General site for the consortium and charges Sematech \$1 per year rent. UT also pitched in more than \$34 million to the effort to lure MCC to Austin. MCC pays UT \$1 per year in rent for its \$14 million site at the Balcones Research Center. More recently, the City of Austin enticed Applied Materials, a high tech company based in Santa Clara, California, with \$7.8 million in incentives. The incentive package includes a waiver of all building and development fees and a seven year 80 percent tax abatement on property improvement.

Politicians, university administrators and the legislature justify these expenditures by citing benefits of job creation, diversification of the economy, the pro-

duction of industry-trained graduate students, and enhanced prestige as a center of knowledge and excellence. However, missing from this discussion is any concern for the consequences of the "clean industry" on Austin's environment. To answer this concern, we should examine the history of high tech's birthplace, Silicon Valley in California, and the environmental impact of the high tech firms already located in Austin.

## A History Lesson:

### High-tech toxics in Silicon Valley

Santa Clara Valley was once an agricultural paradise called Valley of the Heart's Delight that has been transformed over the last twenty-five years into the center of computer design and manufacturing with the highest density of electronic manufacturing firms in the country. For most of its history, the electronics industry enjoyed a "clean" reputation—its smokestack-free facilities resembled modern college libraries. Inside, white-clad workers assembled parts in a "sterile" environment. But in 1981, the discovery of contamination sites at the facilities of both IBM and Fairchild Semiconductor put the lie the industry's "clean" image.

At the Fairchild site, 58,000 gallons of solvents leaked from an underground fiberglass storage tank, contaminating an aquifer that supplied drinking water to thousands of people. A subsequent study determined that the birth-defect rate in the area was three times the national average. Since then, more than 100 other toxic chemical spills have further polluted the Valley's environment.

The high-tech industry depends on semiconductor devices. Semiconductors are integrated circuits based on materials that only partially conduct electricity. Silicon that's "doped" with other metals is the basic building block for the semiconductor industry. The process of turning silicon into integrated circuits requires the use of various chemicals, most of them toxic, including solvents, acids, bases, metal solutions, and toxic dopant gases. Printed circuit board manufacture and disk drive manufacture and assembly also use toxic chemicals, particularly ozone-depleting CFCs. Many of these toxic materials can affect an exposed person's reproductive abilities, while many others are carcinogenic or acutely toxic.

The growth of the high-tech industry and the use of toxic chemicals severely damaged the environment in the Santa Clara Valley. It has, for example, resulted in extensive groundwater pollution: over 150 underground chemical leaks containing over one hundred chemicals have contaminated over two hundred public and private drinking water wells. Silicon Valley has 29 Superfund sites, the highest concentration in the country, 23 of

these are related to high-tech industry. Superfund sites are sites so polluted that the federal government must coordinate cleanup. In fact, Stanford's high tech industrial park, which played a critical role in the early growth of the industry, has been named a Superfund site because of leaks from an underground storage tank.

Applied Materials, the company which Austin recently lured to town with a multi-million dollar incentive package, also has a Superfund site in Santa Clara caused by storage tanks leaking carcinogenic toxics into groundwater. In 1988, a three year study conducted by the Department of Health Services in California found that pregnant women who drank tap water in the Silicon Valley area had twice as many miscarriages and four times as many birth defects in their offspring than did expectant mothers who drank filtered or no tap water during pregnancy.

The hazards of toxic gas storage and the emission levels of toxic gases into the air pose serious health risks to the community and environment. Companies near San Francisco emit almost nine tons of smog-forming gases daily. In addition, the discharge of ozone-destroying CFCs in Silicon Valley is higher than anywhere else in the country.

The purpose of the "clean room," where microchips are made, is to keep the area "clean" for products, not for workers or for the surrounding community. The air inside the "clean room" has been filtered of most particulates to protect the microelectronic components, but it can be contaminated by toxic vapors used as solvents. High-tech workers come into contact with toxic substances that damage the invisible world of chromosomes and body tissues and which can negatively affect their lungs, livers, kidneys, central nervous systems, and reproductive capacities.

Manufacturing chip components involves the use of many highly toxic materials: workers face the danger of spills, accidents, and chronic exposure. The reproductive hazards of the industry were documented by a 1986 University of Massachusetts study of employees at the Digital Equipment Corporation facility in Hudson, Massachusetts. The study found that certain women employees suffered twice the normal rate of miscarriage, and all production workers experienced headaches, nausea, and skin rashes. The rate of occupational illness among workers in the electronics industry is three times that of other industries.

Three-quarters of production workers in the electronics industry in Silicon Valley are women, and 35 to 45 percent are people of color. A report by the state of California's Employment Development Department on the 1985 slump in the semiconductor market found that assembly and production workers were disproportionately effected by layoffs and job loss. Younger and

FACILITY	Total TR 1988	Total TR 1989	sewage	off-site	air	ozone-dpltg
(numbers in pounds)						
Litton Advanced Circuitry		51845	51845			
Xetel Corp.		92870			92870	92870
Lockheed Missiles & Space		25785		11685	14100	
IBM Corp	653347	455055	22990	75583	356308	167200
Texaco	908800	1063200	4950	1025250	33000	
3M Dynatel Systems Division	66000	60910	500	9910	50500	37800
Mexas Instruments	117298	120825	33451	2059	70344	62600
Motorola	1875562	1988275	23991	1842479	121804	73250
Advanced Micro Devices	376444	522990	78200	251400	193390	23250
TOTALS	3997451	4381755	215927	3218366	3411756	

**Environmental Destination:** Source: 1989 reports that companies file with the EPA under the national community right-to-know law. The source for 1988 total toxic releases is a report by the Citizens Fund, **Poisons in Our Neighborhoods: Toxic Pollution in Texas.** TR—toxic releases; offsite—toxics transferred to off site locations; sewage—toxics emitted into the public sewage system; air—toxics emitted into the air.

FACILITY	Toxic-at	Toxic-ct	Toxic-e	Toxic-bd	Toxic-r	Toxic-c	Toxic-n	Toxic-p	Toxic-h
(numbers in pounds)									
Litton Advanced Circuity			51845						
Xetel Corp.		92870							
Lockheed Missiles & Space				25785	25785				
IBM Corp.	27590	282190	92811	14896	156486	45173	92016	56653	6590
Texaco	127450	143450	125750	12500	44250	12500	901700	15950	12250
3M Dynatel Systems Division	110	110	37660	32750	32750	23000		45800	
Texas Instruments	6601	84172	35413	500	51124	15650			15650
Motorola	1697818	1649108	91630	144300	148568		10020	46200	
Advanced Micro Devices	327380	498640	214610	278250	292750		59550		
TOTALS	2186949	2750540	649719	508981	751713	96323	1063286	164603	

**Toxicity:** Since some chemicals fall into more than one category of toxicity, the categories shown on the chart are not cumulative. at—acute toxicity (short term exposure by inhalation, oral, or dermal route can cause death); ct—chronic toxicity; e—environmental toxicity; bd—developmental toxicity (birth defects); r—reproductive toxicity; c—carcinogenicity; n—neurotoxicity; p—persistence in the environment; h—heritable and genetic and chromosomal mutations

older workers, those with low seniority, and African-American workers were more likely to be laid off. Blacks in particular were almost twice as likely to be displaced as to be reemployed. The report found that when the industry sales recovered, 13 percent of semiconductor jobs did not return.

All major firms used three strategies to restructure the Valley's workforce: Some work was transferred to new and less costly locations in the United States, some work was relocated overseas, and work also became more automated. Indeed, research in California has shown that the average life expectancy of a high tech facility is six years compared to thirteen for all other manufacturing in the state.

**High tech in Austin:  
The chip and the damage done**

The case of Silicon Valley has clear implications for communities such as Austin that look to high tech as a cornucopia of jobs and economic beneficence. In California, which Austin boosters hold up as a model, high tech has adversely affected workers health and it has disproportionately hurt marginalized populations during periods of economic contraction, calling into question the rhetoric surrounding high tech as a solution for economically disadvantaged Austinites.

Unfortunately, the news about high tech's environmental and safety record in Silicon Valley has not reached Austin. After successfully luring MCC to Texas, then-Governor Mark White told reporters: "I don't think you'll find that there will be any pollution [from the electronics industry] unless the Japanese cars they drive to and from work do it." However, one doesn't have to look to Silicon Valley to get some picture of the environmental effects of high tech. High tech, although on a much smaller scale, is already here, and it's already polluting Austin's environment.

According to EPA's Toxic Release Inventory, last year Austin's high tech industry legally emitted over 365 tons of

toxics into the environment, more than a ton of toxics per day. High-tech firms emitted 287 tons of toxic gas into Austin's air, nearly half a million pounds of this were ozone-depleting chemicals. Almost 216,000 pounds of waste were disposed of by underground injection, a process that pumps hazardous waste deep into the ground and which can result in extensive and unexpected contamination of groundwater. Nearly 900,000 pounds of waste were disposed of by incineration, a system that produces both air emissions and a toxic ash that must be buried.

While these figures are dwarfed by the figures of emissions by the petrochemical industry in the Houston area and along the Texas coastline (Beaumont, Port Lavaca), they represent a destructive impact upon Austin's environment and contribute to already high toxic pollution levels in Texas. In 1988, Texas manufacturers released a total of 724.5 million pounds of toxics into the state's environment, ranking Texas second in the country in toxic releases. That same year, Texas ranked first in the country in the release of toxic chemicals into the air: 169.9 million pounds. Significantly, most of these releases were legal and permitted by the government.

The large amount of toxic chemicals that are used during everyday production and the thousands of pounds of hazardous materials that are routinely trucked along the highways translates into a clear potential for accidents and spills. Austin's high-tech industry uses in largest quantities these chemicals: sulfuric acid, 111-trichloroethane, freon-113, methyl ethyl ketone, ammonia, nitric acid, and hydrochloric acid. Some of the dangers for some of the chemicals include:

**111-trichloroethane**-Chronic exposure can cause mutations and damage the liver, kidneys, and skin. Acute exposure can irritate the eyes and skin, cause dizziness, unconsciousness, and death.

**Ammonia**-Chronic exposure damages the lungs and acute exposure irritates the skin and eyes, possibly causing permanent or temporary blindness. This is a corrosive chemical which can cause

deep burns.

**Hydrochloric acid**-Breathing the vapor can irritate the lungs and higher exposure can cause buildup of fluid in the lungs, which can cause death.

**Hydrogen flouride**-A severe respiratory irritant, exposure can cause deep burns of the skin or eyes. Chronic exposure can cause weakening of the bones.

**Nitric acid**-This can cause lung irritation and pulmonary edema, which can be fatal. Acute exposure can irritate the lung nose, throat, and skin.

**Xylene (mixed isomers)**-Xylenes can affect you when breathed in and by passing through your skin. Xylenes may damage the developing fetus and cause problems with memory and concentration. Repeated exposure may damage bone marrow causing low blood cell count.

Two extremely dangerous gases in use by the high tech industry in Silicon Valley are arsine gas and phosphine. Exposure to even minute amounts of arsine gas causes rapid death. It is toxic to every organ studied. Arsine gas destroys red blood cells when inhaled, so that the only lifesaving procedure is a complete blood transfusion. There is no

life saving treatment for acute exposure to phosphine gas, only supportive measures. Phosphine is often transported and used in 100 percent concentrations. Although Austin's high tech firms do not use these gases (at least according to EPA's limited reporting requirements), these gases might be used here if the industry grows as much as high-tech boosters propose.

Developer John Watson, who helped spearhead the effort to bring MCC to Austin, foresees a "Texas Triangle" where "different areas of the triangle will serve different needs—Austin with basic research, Dallas perhaps with applied research, San Antonio and Houston with assembly." However, Texas is already the home of 29 federal Superfund sites and an additional 29 sites are on the state registry of sites that warrant supervision and clean-up. The Houston area of Harris County alone hosts 11 of those Superfund sites.

Most groundwater contamination sites have been caused by leaking underground storage tanks. A new "model ordinance" in the Valley provides an incredibly simple approach to this problem by requiring that storage tanks be "double-walled" so that leaks are stopped by a second wall from polluting sensitive groundwater. One has to ask why multiple leaks had to occur before the industry implemented this obvious precaution. The answer is that the highly competitive nature of semiconductor manufacturing drives companies to maximize production at the cost of worker and environmental safety. The priority of the industry is to make everything faster, smaller and cheaper than domestic and international competition. The resistance to long term investment in toxics reduction stems from the fear that a competitor will get the edge in developing a faster, smaller product.

Recently, activists have focused on Sematech, a non-profit consortium of semiconductor manufacturing firms here

see **Toxics**, page 13...



# Women and Leadership

Interviews with UT women leaders

by  
Kathy  
Mitchell

This article represents an attempt to articulate the problems women face as leaders within largely non-hierarchical organizations of both women and men, and the writing process reflects the contradictory nature of this kind of role.

Leadership is like writing. As a woman I continue to refuse simple notions of progress and hierarchy, movement forward and upward toward some mythical ideal—the Great Man who outlines the Great Idea (usually in the Great Book) towards which the People will march inevitably (read: coercion).

Instead, the end of a sentence, a period, a decision, suggests not the possibility of closure for me but a necessary pause, a thinking place. The I that decides where a period should go is provisional as well. I am not where and what I was five years ago, or even a few minutes ago. The process over the years has been a group process.

The article began as a Roundtable for women to openly discuss leadership, formal and informal. After transcribing the tape nearly word for word, I interviewed two other women one at a time. I took all the comments as a whole, and wove them together myself. I at times dictatorially took them out of context, juxtaposing issues that seem to illuminate one another. I cut out most references to recognizable individuals, which meant cutting rather freely. I did not alter anyone's sentences. The end place, the period so to speak, is not better than the original discussions, but it is in a form that can appear in print under thirty pages. This writer neither nurtured nor castrated this text into being. She edited it.

Interviewees: Jenny Bowles, Sandy Soto, Purnima Bose, Kerry O'Brien, Renee Trevino and Toni Luckett.

J There are two responses really to having a woman directing and a woman setting the agenda for things. One is that people don't take me seriously at all. I try to call the top dogs at the sports and recreation center to reserve space for self defense classes and they say you are not a sports club, you don't have a recreational base, sorry. And I appeal to the Dean of Student's office and within two days these people give me a call and say how can we help you. When I talked about doing self-defense classes for women, they said that is not a real sport, not a real issue, that's not real important. And then the other reaction, aside from not being taken seriously, is a very kind of aggressive response. Almost like a really strong response to some one who is gay or lesbian. That really insane irrational response, I've encountered that several times now.

P One complaint that I have about is initially the way that people working in various left organizations respond to me at first or second meetings is to be very condescending because typically I have indian clothes on. "Oh, well what do you think".

J What do you think little lady.

P Right, and then when you speak

and participate then that gets translated into another kind of racism or ethnicism, which is to want to elevate the woman of color to a role of leadership. It's really hard to negotiate those two poles. I don't know how to think my way through this, because a lot of times the debates that go on are really dumb and we need to move beyond them anyway and get to the action, so its really easy to get sucked into that position of leadership.

K Yes, that's exactly right. Going to meetings, I look around and know that nothing I can deal with is gonna be said if I don't step in and go "we need an agenda, these are my suggestions".

J So we become control freaks.

K Based on having been to a lot of meetings and knowing when the best time to introduce a topic is and how far to push it and when to get a vote and all that. People I hate do the same thing and it just destroys any kind of sincerity.

KO: I guess power is the ability to

**Then you also have the people who expect to see a leader where there may not really be one.**

—Renee Trevino

ffect change. And in a concrete practical sense at this university its to have enough knowledge of a system to get something done. To have connections to people to get them onto your side to support you. To be able to use tools like copy machines, like the press. I don't think anyone is not a part of the system. If we can see ourselves on a continuum and say we've all bought into this thing a little bit. You may have a little more than me, but I haven't gone through the things that you have, that acknowledgement is something. You have to set your own agenda. Its hard to do because you are in the midst of all these agendas that are already set and so its easier not to think.

R: Then you also have the people who expect to see a leader where there may not really be one; they are very anti-leadership, neo-anarchists. They don't want to play a role in making decisions and doing work but they want things to happen. A lot of the people who refuse to go to a meeting to help decide what the objectives of an event are going to be are the most critical of the organizers, of the action, and that's part of the reason I have such a hard time with the word leadership right now.

J That's where I'm still learning. I guess I'm a very co-dependent leader. I don't want to say "this is my agenda, and I want you to do this particular aspect of it". I leave things really open at meetings. And its ended up that the organization is very loose. I say, what do you guys want to do, and yea things get thrown out but people really expect other people to make decisions, people to be authoritarian.

T So many people don't know what they want to do. They want to do something, but they don't have a clue what it

is. You can try over and over to say what do y'all think and what do ya'll want to do, and nothing gets accomplished. You cannot assume that every person will come with the same knowledge of an issue and be able to put in the same kind of thinking, and that you would be able to have a group consensus on a number of different points. When you look at it that way its seems silly to have that format. On the other hand, part of the process is that, when you go in with your plan of action that you have had for the past two days, you engage other people and make sure its talked out, and its not something that runs over someone but its something that is given to someone as an option. Communication "why". There has to be growth and involvement in it.

R: Whether we like to admit it or not, we are in contact with a lot of people at different levels of capability. For example, a couple of people will be in charge of a night of phone banking. They will make sure the materials are together, that people stay on the phones, that people were motivated. We had nobody with that kind of experience. I was learning how to do this at the same time that I was helping other people to learn how to do it and walking through the whole process and making mistakes together.

J But people always want to do their personal growing inside meetings. People want to identify their subject positions, and scrutinize, and ask questions about their subject positions at meetings to where we never get anything done because people have not done their work outside of the meetings. They expect for women and people of color to work on their racism and sexism and to do that work in the meeting. I had one man tell me "please educate me", and I told him I don't have time to educate you. And I gave him a poem by Audre Lourde. People want to take a time out from the meeting, totally slowing down the process of making agendas, carrying out the agenda and distributing work. Men in particular would rather take the time to be taken care of.

T I feel like I embody the perfect group of oppressions for someone to be able to come and have themselves be validated. Redeemed and absolved from all of their sins.

P That's part of the national coverage of you as well. You are the embodiment of political correctness.

T As far as what I as an individual might want to do, if I walk into a campaign for Peace meeting its a very different dynamic from when I am not there. Even on the left, if I come in wanting to do some work and say "Tell me what you want me to do", I can't do it within that group. I walk in and say three things and the majority of people are like "That's the best thing I heard since last week", and nobody is willing to question me. Its ridiculous. The only place where I can work is with the people I've always worked with who will say "no, fuck you, that's a stupid idea". Its a weird position to be in. I can't do the work I would like

to do with various groups because my presence there is disturbing and anti-everything I believe about empowerment.

J I guess part of what's disclosed is that people don't move from a solid center within themselves. A solid identity. These are my roots. This is where I move from. It's almost like clothes that people try on and off. Or these different things that people temporarily impose in themselves.

R I don't like the traditional concept of leadership cause the traditional concept

**Somebody out there some day is going to be able to have it make sense to me that the taking time and the going slowly is actually beneficial, but right now I just don't see it.**

—Kerry O'Brien

cept of leadership is that this person or these people make the decisions and they act, organize and everybody else just shows up. It allows the majority of people to go without any responsibility. It allows them to project any type of responsibility they might have onto the leader. A way of absolving themselves.

K: Do you feel that happens anyway.

R: Oh yea.

K: So what does avoiding the word leadership do?

R: The word doesn't do anything. The idea of having a coordinator or coordinators is that decisions are made by active members, working members, people who are in working committees. So that's the active membership. Decisions in theory are supposed to be made by the group as a whole. Things are proposed. We discuss them. The decision is made there and responsibility is dispersed. As with any group there tends to be a group of about ten to fifteen people that at times will do most of the work and then a volunteer base of thirty to a hundred fifty. The core group also usually makes the decisions because the core group shows up for the planning sessions or meetings. We had to make a conscious effort to get away from a certain group of three to six people making all the decisions, because when you have three to six people making all the decisions you have three to six people doing all the work because you have no ownership by most of the members.

KO: But as you move farther and farther to the left to emphasize the collective, maybe its getting less powerful or losing effectiveness. On the board we will try to have this discussion about feelings, try to get every one to speak and we will go on for two hours and we will have talked but we haven't gotten anywhere. Maybe I'm still too much in a male frame of mind, that I want us to just do something. And usually someone goes wait a minute, we don't necessarily have to decide this here and now. I don't know

about that. In some ways I feel that the left just works and works and works until everyone is feeling good and happy about what's going on, meanwhile the right is putting out a lot of stuff. I hear a lot about inclusionary leadership behaviors and consensus building and things like that and I think those are good. Somebody out there some day is going to be able to have it make sense to me that the taking time and the going slowly is actually beneficial, but right now I just don't see it. And particularly in a university, which is sort of a time bomb, where you have four to five years before you get out. You have a limited time here and you want to do something.

S I belong to about five different groups right now. MEChA doesn't have a hierarchy, they refuse to have a president, a secretary or whatever, so what happened at this MEChA at UT is that there were graduate students involved and there were undergraduate students involved. The graduate students happened to be the men and the undergraduates were the women. And so the men were talking about theory more, the men were bringing up possible projects more and the women were making the punch. When I'd bring it up they'd say that it was just that

we're graduate students and we have more theory behind us. And so it was a real problem. Because although there was no leadership per se, there was leadership. It's difficult for undergraduate women to have a space to talk. And in Todos Unidos, Todos Unidos is a very new organization and we got together really quickly and didn't have any organizational structure for a while, until the summer when we selected a steering committee of four people, and it was a battle to get two of the four people women. It was really hard to do that because Todos Unidos is a coalition of different Chicano organizations and some of them are very very conservative, like the Hispanic Business Students, and they had just never heard this stuff before. Equal representation of women. It was really hard. It was a victory when they finally said yes, ok, we can have 50 percent women.

Sometimes its the women who respond to you the most negatively, and that's really apparent in TU. Cause the women were the girl friends of these young men, who would take pictures of them while the men were speaking, who would fix the men's hair. The women wouldn't talk to the media, because it was the men that were talking to the media, and so the women would fix their

boyfriend's hair. The men were the one's constantly getting the media attention and the women weren't. You remember that march to the capital, the men totally took it over.

T That can happen so easily considering how sexist the press is in that they can easily focus on a man. You have to actively put a woman out there.

S You've got to remind yourself not to get angry and the women. Chicana women? They've been socialized to look up to the men and take care of the men, and its very hard to break away from that socialization. It took me a long time to quit being mad at them and to be mad at the men and to call the men on it all of the time. To say wait a minute, let your girlfriend speak. It gets old and I get tired of doing it. And I'm called Mal-inche all the time. But someone's got to do it.

K Sometimes I feel that its that "Someone's gotta do it" that gets me in the end, and I don't know if its a thought out position or if its just the kind of thing we do as women. We all step in at the last minute and are the ones that get the fliers out and the ones that do the last minute phone calls and are the ones running around like mad. "Someone's gotta do it", knowing perfectly well that this half a dozen men in the organization just won't.

P Or if they do it they will completely botch a simple project that they were given to begin with. Don't you think it really does play into that business of a strong maternal woman who is gonna take care of everything?

K I don't know how to resist it. I get totally bound up in this mindset where I really care about this project and want to see it through, knowing perfectly well that if this project dies the world is not gonna end. I just do the work.

S It takes so much energy to monitor the divisions of labor. To always be on top of thing and always be saying what's actually happening here. What are these dynamics; he's a graduate student, she's an undergraduate, whatever. You just want to give up. And you just want to go start a women's group. So we did. We started a Chicana support group, but then I felt weird because I was the only dyke in the group. And then I think about starting a Chicana Lesbian group, but then you have the class differences. I mean, and then it comes down to who is your community, who do you feel more comfortable with. Trying to find my community is always hard. At first it was definitely the Chicano community, men and women, straight and gay. That was

when I was at University of Houston. That's the group I worked with. That was my community. Since I've been at UT its changing. Sometimes its women. Sometimes I don't want to have anything to do with white people. I won't work with them and I go through periods of anger. Sometimes I just want to be with lesbians. Its something I'm having a really hard time with right now, trying to figure out who my allies are and who I feel more comfortable with.

KO: The Program Council is made up almost entirely of women, which has been a very interesting dynamic. The women are all chairs of their respective committees usually of about thirty people. So the chairs are very capable and responsible. We have done a number of proposals together and the women always comment that they have felt very comfortable in the group, that its been an experience like never before where everyone is on equal ground and there were no gender politics going on and so they felt they had a voice to speak out and they had opportunities.

I've developed a sort of masculine style where I won't take any shit. I'm not going to let myself get trampled on by men or drowned out where my opinions are not respected, and so that which is usually an asset becomes a bit of baggage when working with women because its hard to turn off. Sometimes I feel like I really intimidate them.

T Community to me is a sense of home. A home base. And my home is Austin, so its a lot of people in Austin. Now allies are people I can struggle with. That I can work with.

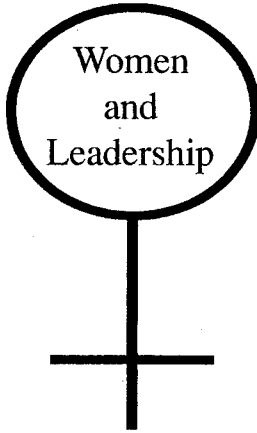
S So your community are all your allies, but your allies are not necessarily your community.

T yea. Yea there are some people that I can work with but they are not my home.

KO: You heard me yesterday call myself a part-time apologist. I've recognized my position and where I am most equipped to do work. Sometimes that requires, to use the Scott Henson rubric, an apologist's position. At the rally, for example, I wanted to say something that would speak to the Greeks directly. A lot of people have said they liked what I had to say, people I didn't think of. I went home last night and these people were calling me, and I said shit. What is this woman going to say. She's going to run me up one side and down the other about slamming fraternity men and her boyfriend, and I was dreading calling them. But they said it was great. That I had guts. A lot of people are getting somewhere. I made Orange Jackets, an honors service organization largely Greek. I think they have to listen to me because I am part of their group, and if they were to say "oh, she's just another one of those radicals", they can't because I'm one of them.

K What I find is that when the theory, and this gets down to that intel-

see Women, page 13...



# Military activity escalates in El Salvador

by Charley MacMartin

Military activity escalated in El Salvador during November as talks stalled in this country's decade-long civil war. Government and Army repression against El Salvador's unions and rural communities continues, making 1990 an ominous first year for the new decade.

## Threats and Killings Continue

Democracy is more than a procedural affair of ballot cards and well-groomed candidates. Democracy requires conditions which encourage a diversity of views and which offer the opportunity to organized collectively around a platform of demands.

In El Salvador during November, organizations which would constitute a functioning democracy suffered attacks by the government's Armed Forces. The Union of Unemployed Workers, CODYDES, had its offices surrounded and its members harassed by the National Police. On November 13, Salvadoran Marines attacked the agricultural community of La Lima in the province of La Libertad. By the attack's end, one villager was dead and three wounded.

Moderate political parties are not even safe. On November 12, Juan de Dios Mira, a politician from the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) was shot to death in a hit and run assassination. PDC leaders denounced the killing, calling it an attempt to intimidate the party in advance of elections in March of 1991.

## The role of solidarity

Members of the popular movement describe the importance of international solidarity when attacks occur. On November 26, the offices of the Christian Committee for the Displaced, CRIPDES, were surrounded by the National Police. The police threatened to enter although they had no search warrant.

CRIPDES is a vocal supporter and advocate for Salvadorans who have returned from refugee camps in Honduras to repopulate their original communities in northern and eastern El Salvador. These same Salvadorans were forced out of



During November, the FMLN responded to the Armed Forces intransigence at the negotiating table with escalated military activity. Nine of El Salvador's fourteen provinces saw attacks by FMLN combatants against military targets of the Armed Forces.

their home towns in the early 1980s when the government carried out bombings throughout the countryside.

CRIPDES feared a repeat of April 1989. In that instance, the National Police (along with members of the U.S. Embassy Security Police) ransacked the CRIPDES office and arrested those inside. The CRIPDES leadership was held illegally in prison for weeks. Testimony taken after release retold brutal treatment, including rape and torture.

Determined not to allow the same occurrence, CRIPDES immediately initiated an international alert concerning the National Police presence outside the CRIPDES offices in San Salvador. An hour later, the U.S. Embassy and National Police in San Salvador received

calls at the rate of ten per minute, demanding the safety and respect for the integrity of the CRIPDES offices. CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) chapters across the country joined the response, utilizing telephone and telex services to flood the U.S. Embassy.

Embassy spokespeople claimed they knew of no incident occurring at CRIPDES that morning although the CRIPDES offices stand but two blocks from the Embassy. CRIPDES members reported by phone that the National Police entered the block at 9:30 AM and remained in front of the offices with their distinctive patrol cars and with police dogs.

With Embassy and international attention suddenly focused on their morning mission, the National Police backed off. CRIPDES attributes the de-escalation of the scene to the international calls and telexes. By the afternoon, according to a CRIPDES spokeswoman, the National Police retreated to the end of the block and were searching the cars and personnel belongings of persons entering the street.

## Military Fighting Flares

During November, the rebel forces of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) initiated a "military campaign with limited objectives," in hopes of pressuring the Salvadoran Armed Forces into real negotiations during the last weeks of 1990.

Talks between the FMLN and the

Salvadoran Armed Forces stalled during November. The central point of disagreement, according to United Nations spokespeople supervising the talks, is the crucial issue of reorganizing El Salvador's police and security forces under civilian control. The Army opposes any reorganization.

While asserting that their latest attacks were "nationwide operation of limited objectives," the FMLN General Command said they reserved the right to launch a larger offensive in the near future if the government and the military "continue to oppose a political solution."

To underline the FMLN's potential strength, combatants in northern and eastern parts of El Salvador used Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs) to down numerous Army aircraft including an A-37 jet fighter-bomber and Army helicopters. In addition, fighting occurred in nine of El Salvador's fourteen provinces during the last two weeks of November.

Rebel attacks included coordinated strikes against the Air Force base in Ilopango, attacks on major Army garrisons in Usulután, Morazán and three other provinces as well as escalated sabotage against the utility poles and electric substations throughout the capital, San Salvador.

The use of SAMs and damage to Army helicopters, according to observers, sent a strong message to the Salvadoran Army that its air superiority has peaked. Fighting is expected to continue

## UPCOMING CISPES EVENTS AND MEETINGS

**Dec. 7:** Campaign for Peace in the Middle East Town Meeting  
7-11 pm, State Capitol Building

**Dec. 8:** Planning Meeting for 1991 Strategy and Program  
Noon-6 pm, please call for location

**Dec. 16:** Mail-out Work Session,  
3-6 pm, place to be announced

For more information on these events,  
contact CISPES at 474-5893



**Report on CISPES Work-A-Thon, November 1990**

Austin CISPES would like to thank those who contributed to a successful November 17 Work-a-thon. We are happy to report that we surpassed our volunteer and material aid goals!

Fifty-five volunteers participated in a day-long project of home rehabilitation and weatherization, coordinated by CISPES and the Austin Housing Resources Association. Through money pledged for hours worked, volunteers raised over \$4,500 to support women community organizers in the San Salvador neighborhoods hardest hit by the war and economic crisis. Part of the money will go, as well, to supply hospital units of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

Austin's Work-a-thon, in conjunction with work-a-thons and other "thons" in over sixty cities around the United States, brought in over \$110,000 in material aid for FMLN and popular movement projects in El Salvador. The Austin project explicitly drew the connection between the struggle for adequate housing and human needs at home and the deadly use of U.S. tax dollars in El Salvador.

Austin CISPES looks forward to making the Work-a-thon an annual event and to continue agitating for revolutionary change at home and abroad.

A special thanks goes to the Austin Peace and Justice Coalition, Steve Biko Committee, National Lawyers Guild, Palestine Solidarity Committee, MEChA, and Todos Unidos.



CISPES activists teamed up with Austin's Housing Resources Association on November 17 to rehabilitate homes in Austin. Volunteers gathered pledges of money for hours worked; over \$4,500 will go toward FMLN and popular movement projects in El Salvador.

Photo by Peter Robertson

# Sam's Bar-B-Que

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SUNDAY - THURSDAY  
10:30 AM - 3:30 AM

FRIDAY & SATURDAY  
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first week of classes Spring  
1991

# Crudity

... continued from page 3

country. It is hard to see why it would act against its own long term interests by raising the price much above that favored by the Saudis.

What about the possibility that the Administration is really pursuing a high priced oil policy while claiming to want cheap oil —the kind of thing that was done in the early 1970s? There is some evidence of this, partly to be deduced from the actions of the Administration, partly from that of its allies in the Gulf, especially the Saudis. According to press reports, last January a former U.S. ambassador, "still used by the Bush Administration for foreign policy missions," told one of Hussein's closest associates that Iraq should engineer higher oil prices to get it out of its difficult economic situation. Moreover? leaked tapes of conversations between U.S. ambassador April Glaspie and Hussein shortly before the invasion suggest American agreement with Hussein's desire for higher prices (as well as a more widely discussed "neutrality" with respect to inter-Arab disputes whose articulation is widely interpreted as having left Hussein with the impression — apparently mistaken — that he could take over Kuwait with impunity). Furthermore, before the invasion the Iraqi pressure for OPEC cutbacks and price hikes had been supported by the Saudis who had threatened not only Kuwait but also the United Arab Emirates with no military protection because they were exceeding their OPEC quotas. Thus, the White House's closest ally, the Saudis, took a position similar to that of Hussein, at least with respect to oil prices. In the midst of this intra-OPEC feud, the White House backed up Iraq by opposing Congressional economic sanctions against that country.

What would the Bush Administration and the business interests it represents gain from high oil prices? To start with, they would gain some, but not all, of the same advantages they did in the mid-1970s:

1. Oil producers and those tied to them would have more resources to cope with internal stability — a serious problem in the wake of the debt crisis and domestic protests in countries such as Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, Trinidad and Venezuela.

2. Generalized inflation would cut real wages everywhere, again transferring wealth from workers to business via international banks. The Saudis alone may have a \$20-\$30 billion current account surplus available next year to invest in the West.

3. Because of increased efficiency abroad, stronger economies and a declining dollar, increased oil prices would have less of a recessionary impact on Western Europe and Japan than on the U.S., but real oil shortages would hit them more than the U.S. which imports far less of its energy needs.

Added to these old advantages are some new ones:

4. The militarization of the Gulf is a devastating blow to workers in that area, both local and foreign "guest" workers. The repression of foreign workers, including Palestinians, in Kuwait (who have fled by the thousands across the border into Jordan), the expulsion of hundreds of thousands more from Saudi Arabia into Yemen and the dramatic drop in repatriated wages have wrought havoc among workers of the whole area. Such violence undercuts such workers' struggles to share the oil wealth of the area and strikes back against the kind of upheaval mentioned in point #1 above.

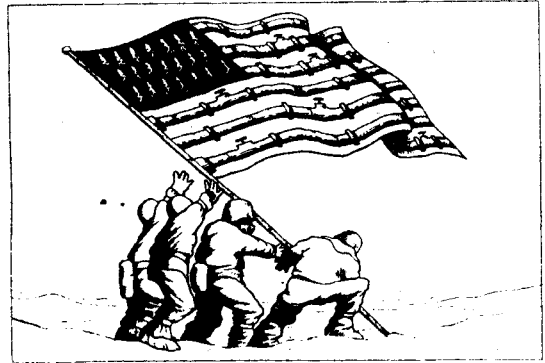
5. The Gulf conflict is providing the White House and its friends in the energy industry with an excuse to set aside environmental controls in the name of "national security." Reversing previous support for some limitations on offshore drilling, the Administration is now pushing hard for drilling off the coast of California and in the Alaskan Wilderness (which has so far been resisted by Congress). There is a parallel effort to use the crisis to help revive the defeated nuclear industry.

6. High oil prices will help Bush's new "partner" Mikhail Gorbachev attract foreign investment to the stagnating Russian oil fields, obtain the resources to carry out perestroika and avoid a destabilizing break up of the USSR.

7. At the same time high oil prices will help impose even stiffer austerity on the peoples of Eastern Europe making them more pliable to integration into the global economy as a new source of cheap labor — especially when the USSR follows up its summer cuts in deliveries by charging hard currency for its oil exports starting in January 1991.

8. The Gulf conflict provides the military industrial complex the reasons it has lacked for continued heavy defense expenditure for the rest of the century. The end of the cold war spelled crisis for that complex and the possibility of new "peace dividends" for others. With the Gulf intervention as a model (following Panama and Grenada) a new need for vast sums of money is clear.

9. Simultaneously, sustained military expenditures provide an excuse for continuing the attack on social services, entitlements, student loans and subsidies



for low income housing, in other words, a continuation of the social repression of the last ten years.

10. Last, but perhaps not least for oil man Bush, increased oil prices will raise the profits of American oil producers and encourage more production — which hit a 26 year low in 1989. They would also raise the value of oil real estate and the viability of many loans, especially in the Southwest, whose falling values have contributed to the current financial crisis in both the Savings & Loan and banking industries.

## Recession and Upheaval

### Disadvantages to Bush's Policy

Against this list of advantages we can examine the apparent disadvantages of high priced oil. The most obvious of these would seem to be the way higher energy costs and military expenditures will tend to accentuate both trade and federal budget deficits and add to recessionary pressures which were accumulating even before the invasion. Does the Administration want recession? It has not said so, of course, no American policy maker ever does, even when desired. Reaganomics was touted as producing cost free growth at the very moment its tight money precipitated the sharpest depression since the 1930s.

Recent behavior on the part of the Federal Reserve, whose five year plan to reduce inflation to zero seems hopeless without a recession, echos the same rhetoric and policy objectives that characterized the earlier Reagan-Bush period, albeit with much less intensity. Even before Hussein took over Kuwait the business press was bemoaning rising inflation due to wage increases exceeding productivity gains. After the invasion, "the fact that the central bank chose not to push interest rates lower in the early stages of the Persian Gulf crisis," wrote *The New York Times* recently, "may prove to be the deciding factor in hastening an economic downturn."

In the earlier Reagan-Bush period of

the early 1980s anti-inflationary recession brought a drop in oil prices at the same time it cut employment and wages.

Today such effects might well be offset by war and restricted oil supplies giving both recession and inflation, a situation more like that in 1974-1975 after the first oil shock — even if the Fed does not loosen the monetary strings as much as it did in that earlier period. Thus a recession would seem to be compatible with all the other goals outlined above.

It is also possible that the recessionary impact of the Bush Administration's Gulf policy will be partially or totally offset by the expansion of military expenditure and a renewal of our familiar Keynesian permanent arms economy. As mentioned in Advantage #8 above, the military-industrial complex is clearly delighted with current policies. Post-Great Depression American history has provided ample testimony to the efficacy of expanded military expenditure in stimulating general economic expansion.

World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Reagan arms buildup all contributed, to a greater or lesser degree, to economic expansion. A renewal of such policies can be expected to have similar effects.

Some are even suggesting that the current conflict is a manifestation of the political business cycle. That is to say Bush is willing to go to war to avoid a recession which would undercut his chances in the next presidential elections. It is hard not to be appalled by such policies, whether aimed at 1992 or beyond, especially when they are being coupled with complementary attempts to drive down standards of living and renew the unimpeded exploitation of natural resources in pursuit of profit. What we seem to be faced with is a late Twentieth Century capitalism which is morally, socially and politically bankrupt, totally unable to address itself to the

see *Crudity*, page 14...



# • Letters •

*For what cause, O man, chargest thou me thy daily complaint?*

## School Spirit Necessary for Social Change

**Editors' note:** The following letter was far too long to run in its entirety; space constraints forced us to cut it by about a half. We hope that in its present form the letter remains faithful to the intent of its author.

Dear Editors,

I think the letter below will be clearer if I make a few remarks orienting myself to the latest ostensible outburst of school spirit.

However pleased I was by watching a good football game and by UT's victory, I was nonplussed—and later saddened—by the celebration that ensued in the West Campus area. Like the article below criticizes, this celebration had little to do with football or with school spirit as such. If UT's victory against A&M had, as Henson and Philpott argue, served in itself to confirm the inveterate chauvinism of student aficionados—that is, their notion that UT is "superior" to A&M (where was the class analysis on this point anyhow?)—then there would have been no motive for the impotent rampaging afterwards.

The gloating ostentation—which is to say, the rage, despair, and forlornness—of the celebration following the game indicates not a surfeit of school spirit but rather its appalling lack. After all, those committed deeply to their school and who feel themselves vitally involved in its ventures must feel that the image of their school depends on their conduct, too. Grace in victory and respect for adversaries are proper to school spirit; what followed the game on Saturday in West Campus, per contra, was sheer flagrance and apoplexy, a pathetic mania which for all its virulence was lacking entirely in content, and resembled nothing if not autism, albeit a very noisy autism.

In this vein, I am reminded particularly of a man I saw on Sunday morning at 2 am, twelve hours after the end of the game. He was high-fiving passing drivers, which by that time had dwindled to a steady trickle. To accuse that seriously lonely man—who is the type for every other participant in that disgraceful spectacle—of an excess of "spiritedness" seems ridiculous and wrong.

.....

"In every era the attempt must be made to wrest tradition away from a

conformism which is about to overcome it."

—Walter Benjamin

Henson and Philpott's jeremiad against school spirit is without question the worst thing they have written. As it appeared originally (in *Polemicist* Volume 1, Number 3) the piece was a fatuous, if otherwise harmless, exercise in polemical style in an immature and unproven publication; its reprinting in *Images*, however, was a revolting bit of preening by the editors/main contributors of a magazine which whether it wants to or not now represents the alternative press and as such the established left on campus. This reply cannot therefore in good conscience be withheld.

## **"The only apparent reason for the fact that a student movement does not already exist is a lack of school spirit."**

Flaubert once warned us in the matter of criticizing fools to take care against becoming fools ourselves. In this matter of college sports and school spirit they have done one better than the fools. In a fetid piece of writing that rests more on a passing academic disdain for plebeian concerns than upon the reflection they (only) rhetorically invoke, they miss all the important points concerning collegiate sports and school spirit, while falling back on an insipid and contradictory existentialism which in misunderstanding Nietzsche unwittingly incorporates one of his most questionable political propositions: national chauvinisms are to be denied not, as Henson and Philpott claim, because they cause war, violence, and division, but rather because they are not "grand" enough in scope.

Henson and Philpott are unable to understand what is wrong with collegiate sports, spectatorship and school spirit, because their invective stems from the worst of both historical materialism and liberal idealism. By assuming the immediate identity of culture with ideological mystification ("school spirit amounts to a training ground for the molding of young patriots"), they dispense with the difficulty of evaluating cultural experience in the context of traditions and historical developments by declaring all tradition, in true radical fashion, anathema. Culture is rudely extruded from transformative struggle, leaving the subject without the means by which to

judge its efforts just. In their zeal to avoid what they call the "abstraction" and "particularism" of mass culture, they end up affirming both more ferociously than ever at the level of the individual. The supposed magisterial autonomy of the individual, his refusal to acknowledge convention and to bow before any authority "outside" himself, turns out to be an abdication: his freedom from tradition and history is a freedom from moral responsibility. And his experience of the world which is supposed to be authentic because it is immediate, proves to be without depth utterly. What is so striking and momentous about the "raw feels" and "intensity" of picking up a stone, walking on warm sand ... in short, "life itself" as it is immediately given? These experiences seem concrete because of their obdurate "thisness," or, if you like, their intensity. But this "thisness" itself turns out to be abstract: every single thing is a "this," and all sensation is "intensity." What Henson and Philpott call "life itself" is therefore a full stop before an even cruder abstraction than the ones they castigate, which at least relate to determinate (i.e. content-bearing) human practices.

The upshot of Henson and Philpott's bungled philosophy, which is stripped of all historical consciousness, is that college athletics and school spirit in their present forms—which are deserving enough of criticism—are made indistinguishable from their respective concepts, which is to say, they are treated as if they had no concepts. Indeed, college athletics and school spirit cease to exist even as particulars for Henson and Philpott. There is nothing distinctive about them: athletics are merely a species of spectacle, in no way different from others, and school spirit is just another word for patriotism, which they assume to be reprehensible a priori, which is to say, ahistorically.

This demonization of particulars is unfortunate in spite of the fact that Henson and Philpott's portrait of them is correct—in every trivial way. Their formulations are unfortunate because the success of the very causes they propound depend precisely upon the confluence of "spirit" and "particularity." A transformation of university life seems impossible if students and faculty do not in body and spirit commit themselves to the fate of particular institutions and within those institutions remain loyal to those traditions and values they think that institution should embody and transmit. "The University," Tom Philpott Sr. advises, "is we who have the heart to make

it what it ought to be." That people be integrally committed to particular places, practices and institutions, so far from being bad by definition, is indispensable for vibrant civil solidarity—as was made clear at the City Council meeting deciding the fate of the Barton Creek PUD. If there really already exists a community of students with actually shared needs and interests, as Henson and Philpott suggest there is, then the only apparent reason for the fact that a student movement does not already exist is a lack of school spirit, that is, a lack of student commitment and loyalty to shared and determinate traditions, institutions and values. But this already is to suggest that such a community does not exist.

Further, it is enormously disheartening that Henson and Philpott, in their capacity as avowed advocates of liberation struggles, dismiss as cognitively bankrupt that area of culture in which Americans—and especially the working class—are most articulate and knowledgeable: sports and sports spectatorship. (Incidentally, their quite boorish supposition that there is something intrinsically disagreeable about football

## **"Every single thing is a 'this.'"**

players is beneath even my easily enough provoked contempt.) The anti-intellectualism of the working class seems more than vindicated when academics assume the avidity of that class for things academics can neither appreciate nor understand to betoken coarseness of intellect. I, for one, am not willing to say that people are dupes; or that the working class (or for that matter students) knows nothing about its deep needs or about ideology.

The status of traditions and practices relevant to our liberation has yet to be settled. If one thing is sure, it is that leaving traditions solely in the hands of (so-called) conservative free-market apologists would be to assure their ossification and our own.

—Thomas King

## **The editors reply:**

"[Wh]at followed the game on Saturday in West Campus ... was sheer flagrance and apoplexy, a pathetic mania which for all its virulence was lacking entirely in content, and resembled nothing if not autism, albeit a very noisy autism."

—Tom King

"I, for one, am not willing to say that people are dupes; or that the working class (or for that matter students) knows nothing about its deep needs or about ideology."

—Tom King

Those two statements taken together amount to a stunning contradiction. For that reason, they are emblematic of this pompous, ridiculous apology for school spirit. In the first instance, Tom strips the post-Aggie game west campus revelers of all agency, of all "content," and indeed of the ability to define their own emotions, which earlier he labels as "rage, despair, and forlornness." Then in the second statement, he hints that he would never do such a thing—he will not say people are dupes. Yet he can liken what goes on in West Campus after football games—what participants certainly consider school spirit—to "autism," which would be comical if it weren't so insulting to a group of people who suffer from a particular mental disorder.

Tom's lengthy philosophical digressions, heavily larded with jargon and quotations from Frankfurt school thinkers, seem to contradict this idea of the essentialized, "autistic" subject. It appears again in his outrageous statements on the "working class," who in Tom's view are "anti-intellectual" and are "most knowledgeable and articulate" about sports.

As for our polemic against school spirit, Tom never really attacks it so much as tries to define it away. He disassociates himself from post-game revelers—and presumably from frat boys who sing the Eyes of Texas at anti-frat-violence rallies, when they're not shouting racist, sexist, misogynist invective—by declaring that "Grace in victory and respect for adversaries are proper to school spirit, too." Therefore, people celebrating a football victory who don't meet Tom's guidelines for what's "proper" aren't really practicing school spirit; indeed, they aren't practicing anything, as their activities are "entirely lacking in content."

In this way, Tom avoids confronting the brunt of our critique, which is that school spirit tends to keep students satisfied at a time when the idea of the university has become debased almost beyond recognition; at a time when this university has become both a "certification mill" (to quote Tom in a part of his letter we cut), and a slush fund for the state's business interests.

Tom should also be lashed for writing that we "declare ... all tradition, in true radical fashion, anathema." We declare nothing of the sort, and our polemic contains no idea remotely close to this. We do, however, think that all traditions should be critically judged, in context, by each emerging generation. The ones that prove damaging should be revised or discarded. School spirit, in our view, has earned the latter fate.

—the editors

## Toxics

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in Austin. Sematech's primary goal is to challenge the growing success of Japanese-owned competitors by developing ways to squeeze more and more circuit elements onto each flake of silicon. Such advancement, however, could make the industry even more reliant upon toxic chemicals since more solvents are needed to wash away ever smaller particles that could damage a circuit. Representatives from environmental organizations, labor officials, and other concerned citizens from across the U.S. formed a group called Campaign for Responsible Technology (CRT). CRT believes that Sematech, as a federally funded research project with significant influence in the semiconductor industry, is in a unique position to develop chip-making techniques that use less toxic materials.

By bringing producers together under one roof, Sematech could allow companies to share the risk of developing ways to reduce toxics use by the industry. Further, because Sematech receives half of its budget from the federal government, CRT activists argue that a good part of its resources should be directed toward serving the "broader interests of the American people," rather than focusing on the industry's efforts to "beat the Japanese." CRT also sees the opportunity for coordinating information and the training of employees in toxic use reduction. But CRT needs our help locally in pressuring Sematech to commit to toxics reduction.

The high tech industry has attempted to clean up its image and under public pressure, to reduce its use of some toxics. In 1987, the Semiconductor Industry Association began funding a \$3.5 million study of the hazards of the semiconductor industry on its workers, although no representation of workers exists on the oversight committee. IBM and other large high tech companies have pledged to reduce their emissions in the next few years, particularly the use of ozone depleting chemicals. In Silicon Valley, public outrage has produced two strong laws on storage of toxic materials and gases. Yet, zero toxic emissions, the ultimate goal by which all progress should be measured, has not been addressed.

High tech has a history of being a toxic polluter and a hazardous neighbor. If the future of Austin lies with high technology, citizens of Austin and their elected officials must ensure that the history of Silicon Valley does not repeat itself here. Austin's environmentally-consciousness reputation might lead us to have faith that our elected officials will uphold that reputation. But high tech is already polluting Austin. And as we have learned from the struggle against the Barton Creek PUD, for example, Austin's environmental future is only as good as the courage and scrutiny of its citizens.

## Women

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lectual leadership, you know coming in with the ideas, if its women who are coming in with the ideas, getting men to follow through with the work is like pulling logs without a horse. You get no response right, lots of nodding and smiling. Men will come to a meeting and say, "we're all gonna work this time. All of us together, we're all gonna work." And then the meeting is over and the division of labor has been made and once again half a dozen things haven't been picked up by anyone, and its all the things that

### What the fuck is "feminist process"?

—Jennifer Bowles

would require following through on the ideas that have been put forward mostly by women.

P And its more insidious than just having it be the MEChA kind of division of labor where the men are providing the intellectual leadership and the women are doing the grunt work, because its the typical working women syndrome where you are not only inputting into the intellectual process but then you are doing the grunt work, so you are working two jobs..... seriously.

J Well the one thing I've found out, men respond by telling me what I need to do with the program. Women respond with suggestions. The language is very interesting. A number of men come back with what I need to be educating men about, and what I need to be educating women about. That is the word they use. I tell them to their face that it is very interesting the way they choose their language. On the other hand, women respond to my assertiveness. Women in the SA, the mainstream women in the SA, had a hard time with me in the beginning.

T They had to assert their power in the way they could. I don't think they wanted to see you go down, but this is the place where they assert themselves, and they exert their power in that way.

J I know there is the stereotype of women cat fighting, but some of the most negative response to the rape education seminars that I've had has come from women. So I can think of that, when I see how in the SA the women in particular come out.

S The same thing with me. In the Chicano movement today, if there is a Chicano movement today, some of the people that come out against me when I'm vocal the most are the Chicanas. And I think a lot of it has to do with me being a dyke, but even before I came out its been that way. These women are really male identified and the men know that. A lot of the men don't even have to be sexist, the women are there doing their work for them.

J I think it fucks with the familiar. It

hits way down at the core. I've been told what a woman should be. I remember debating in HS, and I would walk into a room, debate is a totally male dominated sport, and there would be one woman, and I remember the woman was the one I'd dog cause I learned that. I learned to move like a man.

K Sometimes I feel like some of this dynamic affects the way I behave in meetings, because I find myself being more firm or even sharp with people. I would like a meeting where I could just say what I felt, right, and just say it and it would be out there along with what everybody else felt. Sometimes I feel like if I'm gonna be heard I'd better be mean.

S And then you're like a castrating bitch.

J I've never really worried about making a man angry, about putting him on the defensive, but I always have to sugar coat my words about three times over when there are women in the room. There's nothing worse than to have the woman who comes forth to say, "I'm a woman and I know everything and you're wrong."

S Like the woman during our panel that was angry at us because she felt we were attacking men for being sexist.

J Who comes forth and says No excuse me, I'm the real woman, you're not a real woman. I'm here to represent the real woman. Let me tell you what things are about.

P Actually that kind of line has come, in our experience which is most recently in the Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, has come from the most sexist males in the room who keep talking about "feminist process." Which is something that I had never heard of before this meeting.

J What the fuck is "feminist process."

K You know, non-hierarchical consensus building.

P Right. It seems to me that that betrays a real discomfort with assertive, independent minded articulate women.



# Crudity

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meeting of people's needs.

Of course, all these policies may fail—not only in the long run, but even in the short run. The dangers of the crisis for the Administration and its business allies—as well as the opportunities for those opposed to them—is that instead of producing submission and willingness to accept sacrifice, people will respond militantly and demand dramatic changes in policy. The danger of using the Gulf conflict as an excuse to strike out in all directions, to tip the balance against many foes, at home and abroad, is that those foes will recognize their common enemy and unite against the White House and its patrons.

The last time American policy makers sought to use high oil prices to undermine wages in the West and to stabilize the Middle East—1973-1974—resistance was widespread. In Egypt, when Sadat gave in to banker pressures to impose austerity on his people in 1976 by cutting subsidies and raising the price of basic food stuffs, they rose up instead and forced him to reverse the price increases. While the oil price increases gave more money to America's primary ally in the Persian Gulf—the Shah of Iran—he was forced to concede growing amounts of it to popular demands. Despite such concessions, the victims of his bloody rule soon overthrew him in 1978. In many countries of the Third World, the refusal of people to accept dramatic cuts in real income through increased imported oil prices forced their governments to support them with increasing amounts of recycled petrodollar debt. In the United States and Western Europe workers fought to defend their real wages by forcing money wages up as fast as inflation, even as unemployment rose, thus adding a new word to the economists' vocabulary: stagflation.

That the threat of war, and war itself, can be used to achieve political economic ends by other means is a lesson we Americans learned the hard way. Vietnam taught us to recognize such methods and to resist them. When President Jimmy Carter used rhetoric about the energy crisis being the moral equivalent of war to try to gain support for "collective sacrifice", i.e., wage cuts, Americans refused to go along. Soon after Carter, his generals and the Committee on the Present Danger tried to use the specter of limited nuclear war to achieve acquiescence to their political and economic policies in the U.S. and Western Europe. Instead they got the

biggest peace movement in history. Ronald Reagan and Alexander Haig sought a real war in Central America, but a reborn anti-war movement mobilized in response to the reinstitution of draft registration and prevented direct American military invasion. We then had to fight support for the contras and continue to oppose aid to the torturers and murderers of El Salvador and Guatemala—but we have prevented direct military intervention. Only in Grenada and Panama, have we failed to prevent the direct use of the White House's mailed fist. Now Saddam Hussein has given George Bush an opportunity to test the limits to the American people's resistance to the use of military force for covert goals. Is the "Vietnam Syndrome" over? Will we stand by and accept policies against which we have fought for years? Will we accept now what we wouldn't accept before? Or, will we organize ourselves once more and put together a coalition capable of blocking Bush's policies?



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# Polemicist,

an alternative student newspaper at the University of Texas at Austin, wants to thank everyone who sent money to help pay our phone bill and to publish this issue. We couldn't do it without you. Hopefully we'll have a phone number again in the near future. Until then leave messages at the Students' Association offices—471-3166.

We also want to thank our advertisers—especially Abel's, Wheatsville Coop, Sam's BBQ, Europa Bookstore Shiner Beer and West Campus Cafe. Please patronize them, since without them there would be no *Polemicist*.

Next semester *Polemicist* will publish as a class out of the Liberated Learning School, a free university that starts up in the spring. Contact the Students' Association offices the first week of classes to find out how to get involved.

Often in the holiday season, revelers extol the "Spirit of Giving." But in the *Polemicist* tradition of extreme poverty, we'd like to cut through the Yuletide cant and invoke the true spirit of Christmas—the Spirit of Taking. We're planning to open an office along with Liberated Learning next spring and have no idea how we will pay the rent, much less the deposit. In addition, we want to come out with a 20-page back-to-school issue if we raise the bucks.

So don't forget to put *Polemicist* on your gift list this holiday season. Make checks payable to *Polemicist*. Our more financially secure readers—professors, for example—should contact us about our sustainer program that will start up in January.

Thanks again for your continued support.

—the editors

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