

in the magazines

"American troops have been relentless, have killed to exterminate men, women, and children, prisoners and captives, active insurgents and suspected people, from lads of 10 and up . . . have taken prisoner people who held up their hands and peacefully surrendered; and an hour later, without an atom of evidence to show that they were even insurrectos, stood them on a bridge and shot them down one by one to drop into the water below and float down as examples to those who find their bullet-riddled corpses." Not a report from Vietnam but an "eye-witness" account from an earlier page of U.S. history—the period when American troops in Manila were fighting Filipino nationalists commanded by General Emilio Aguinaldo and were pursuing a policy which President McKinley called "benign assimilation."

"Few Americans are aware that 70 years ago this country fought a long and bloody war of counter-insurgency, one that was remarkably similar to our struggle today in Vietnam," writes Stuart C. Miller in *Transaction* (September, 1970). With it came "Our Mylai of 1900," and "what began as the court-martial of a major, ended up with a general standing trial and the Army's chief of staff being forced into early retirement—precisely for permitting a policy of terror against another people.

"Rarely do historical events resemble each other as closely as the involvements of the United States in the Philippines in 1899 and Vietnam in 1964," Miller contends. "The murky origins of the fighting; the quick adoption of unsuccessful Spanish techniques for suppressing the Filipinos; an unrealistically optimistic, handsome, martial-looking commander whose ineptness was rewarded with accolades from Washington; a peace movement with 'teach-ins' at universities and a more activist radical faction; rumors and finally evidence of American atrocities; complaints of rainy seasons, hidden jungle entrenchments and clandestine enemy soldiers who blended with the peasants after ambushing and booby-trapping American soldiers; talk of getting our native allies to assume the burden of fighting; and, finally, a scandal involving one officer and seven top sergeants, who pocketed commissary funds. . . ."

The most recent issue of *Social Action*, dedicated to "The Dink Syndrome," contains the following observation made by Edwin O. Reischauer, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, in an address at the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches last winter:

"We have a continuing, perhaps unconscious, racist attitude that we bring with us to Asia. The very fact that the Son My kind of massacre could occur—and

it did not in the European theatre—I think is an illustration of that point.

"There are many other illustrations. The assumption of our military that North Vietnam's will would buckle if we bombed them—when we knew perfectly well that this had not happened [25 years ago] in London or Berlin—was a product of racist thinking. We take with us there, I am afraid, all too often what you might call the 'gook' mentality. The word 'gook' was not invented in Vietnam, it was invented in Korea. In that war, too, we had an attitude of looking down, despising, hating the people we were trying to help. How can you help when you take that sort of attitude with you?

"The most shocking revelation of this came in the official indictment of the men that are being tried for massacre, in which it says they were responsible for the deaths of, and I quote, 'oriental' human beings. What is that adjective doing there? If we were referring to [the different] sexes, this might mean something. If we were referring to old age, old men—or children—it might mean something. But 'oriental' as opposed to 'occidental' in front of the words 'human being'? It shows the depths of our unconscious racism, and we have to correct this sort of thing before we can play the sort of role we must play in the world. . . ."

"One result of the belief that most wars in the world today are 'police actions' is A.I.D.'s Office of Public Safety, dedicated to international police-military cooperation and the development of national police forces as the 'first line of defense' against existing or potential insurgencies."

Elsewhere in this issue there is mention of the role of the O.P.S. in Latin America. Joe Stork, whose words appear above, is concerned too with the program's activities in Vietnam, to which he traces its beginnings in 1955 (*Hard Times*, August 10-17). "Public Safety's unique status and privilege," Mr. Stork contends, "is rooted in the shift under the Kennedy brothers to developing an invincible counter-insurgency capability for coping with wars of national liberation. Institutions and programs from the Green Berets to the Peace Corps were initiated under the premise that the struggle against International Communism would be lost or won in the arena of the Third World. After communism lost, 'internal stability' became the typical watchword of the New Frontier. At the foreign assistance hearings in 1965, A.I.D. director David Bell sketched the rationale for O.P.S.:

"Plainly, the United States has very great in-

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terests in the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere of law and order under humane, civil concepts and control. When there is a need, technical assistance to the police of developing nations to meet their responsibilities promotes and protects these U.S. interests."

In Vietnam, Stork says, "Public Safety operations . . . have been largely obscured from publicity by the more blatant military operations. Throughout the rest of the Third World, and notably in Latin America, the Office of Public Safety plays a similarly low-profile but proportionally much more crucial role in promoting the effective counter-insurgent role of national police forces in defending U.S. and local elite interests. Through the activities of the O.P.S., the notion of the U.S. as world policeman is transformed from a metaphor to a reality."

"D.O." has woven a little tale for the readers of *Dissent* (July-August), which we respin below:

"Let us introduce to our readers a fascinating character—Prince Crazy, also known by his more mundane name of George Demerle. Prince Crazy, tottering into the advanced age of 39, was known as a 'character' in New Left, hippie, and East Village circles. Wherever the talk went far and fierce about the need for bombs and burnings, there Prince Crazy stood out for his 'revolutionary' boldness. No one could outdo him in his verbal readiness to smite the Establishment with fire and sword. . . .

"When a group of four people, including Sam Melville and Jane Alpert, was arrested several months ago on charges of bomb-throwing, Prince Crazy, as you might expect, was one of them. Soon, however, it became clear that he was not going to have to rot in jail, like Melville, or flee the country, like Alpert. For he was an F.B.I. agent, who, with his loose mouth, had helped entrap desperate people with loose minds. It may have been the prospect of his testimony that led the other defendants to enter a plea of guilty.

"Interviewed in the *New York Post*, May 25, 1970, Prince Crazy described his activities as spying—and about the pictures he gives of the political circles in which he distinguished himself—one doesn't know whether to cry or to laugh. He gained the confidence of far-left groups, he reports, by the simple expedient of imitating the antics of Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. . . . And if, in the course of developing revolutionary strategy with the Weathermen and other groups, he picked up a few personal pleasures—well, even a police agent is made of blood and flesh, isn't he?

"But there's one aspect of this sordid story that

strikes us as particularly interesting. Last year a group of 'crazies' tried to break up a banquet held by the League for Industrial Democracy, and one of the most active figures in this attempt was the Prince. He understood, you see, the necessity for striking a blow at the liberals and social democrats.

"Which leads to some interesting questions: How many other acts of violence and disruption, undertaken by far-out elements of the New Left, were in fact provoked by agents of the F.B.I. or the police? When will the more serious people on the New Left learn that if someone starts shouting for bullets and blood he is as likely to be a secret agent as a sincere nut? And might not institutions that have suffered damage from recent riots consider the possibility that they were provoked by police agents?

"A damage suit by the Bank of America against the F.B.I.: that would be something to look forward to."

Next month: Tales of Tommy the Traveler.

From "Reflections on Civil Disobedience," by Hannah Arendt (*The New Yorker*, September 12):

" . . . In contrast to the conscientious objector, the civil disobedient is a member of a group, and this group, whether we like it or not, is formed in accordance with the same spirit that has informed voluntary associations. The greatest fallacy in the present debate seems to me the assumption that we are dealing with individuals, who pit themselves subjectively and conscientiously against the laws and customs of the community—an assumption that is shared by the defenders and the detractors of civil disobedience. The fact is that we are dealing with organized minorities, who stand against assumed and non-vocal, though hardly 'silent,' majorities, and I think it is undeniable that these majorities have changed in mood and opinion to an astounding degree under the pressure of the minorities. It has been the misfortune of recent debates that they have been dominated largely by jurists—lawyers, judges, and other men of law—for they must find it difficult to recognize the civil disobedient as member of a group rather than to see him as an individual law breaker, and hence a potential defendant in court. It is, indeed, the grandeur of court procedure that it is concerned with meting out justice to an individual, and remains unconcerned with everything else—with the *Zeitgeist* or with opinions that the defendant may share with others and try to present in court. The only non-criminal lawbreaker the court recognizes is the conscientious objector, and the only group adherence it is aware of is called conspiracy—an utterly misleading charge in such cases, since conspiracy requires not only 'breathing together' but secrecy, and civil disobedience occurs in public. . . ."

PAMPHILUS