

Abuse of Power

■ By Scott Murphy

I grew up in Missouri, a state whose skepticism is typified by its much-maligned state slogan, "The show me state." I absorbed much of this attitude while growing up, but since coming to Harvard, this skepticism has been subsumed by my hopeful liberal/leftist world view. While many of my friends accept on faith that discrimination is pervasive, that neoclassical economics are ridiculous, and that powerful people abuse their power, I don't. This last assumption is a particular sore spot of mine—I want to believe that Watergate and the Iran/Contra affair are anomalies. But three recent events have shaken my faith.

On April 15th, the New York Times ran an editorial by Gary Sick that raised a number of serious questions about the Reagan/Bush campaign of 1980. Sick claims to have information that William Casey had extensive meetings with Iranian contacts—apparently, he guaranteed that arms would be shipped from Israel to Iran in return for Iran retaining the hostages until after the election. Arms were, in fact, shipped in October, and again following the release of the hostages. Sick also has witnesses who claim that George Bush participated in the negotiations with Iran. Finally, Sick believes that the Reagan campaign tried to derail a military rescue by generating publicity about its possibility.

Two weeks later I went to hear James Bacque speak about his new book, *Other Losses*, a recounting of the treatment of disarmed German personnel in US camps after WWII. Eisenhower ordered that German prisoners not be

declared official "prisoners of war." As a result, the US did not have to follow the Geneva Accords, and Switzerland was not allowed to check on camp conditions. Eisenhower also repeatedly reduced the prisoners' rations. Bacque claims that between April and September of 1945 more than 500,000 prisoners died in US camps in France and Germany, primarily from deprivation of food, shelter, water, and medicine. In fact, more Germans died in the camps than died on the Western front between June 1941 and April 1945.

Finally, I recently came across a copy of a 1982 letter alleging that an officer of the Dean of Students had broken into the Southern Africa Solidarity Committee's (SASC) office and destroyed flyers and records. Apparently, SASC had failed to return their room renewal contract before Christmas break, so an assistant to the Dean of Students entered the office during break. Upon finding a large number of papers in the cinderblock room, he decided they were a fire hazard, and promptly removed and destroyed them. Eventually, the officer apologized for not consulting the students, and admitted to acting hastily. The University also agreed to repay the students for the cost of reprinting the flyers, but the contact lists were lost forever.

Missouri's state slogan was coined after one of our Senators declared that, "I'm from Missouri. You'll have to show me." The last several weeks have shown me something—perhaps a strong dose of skepticism of authority is a healthy thing. ♦

PERSPECTIVE UPDATE

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

Organized and co-sponsored by the Radcliffe Union of Students, Take Back the Night Week presented an opportunity for students to learn about the prevalence of violence against women. Events included a Forum on acquaintance rape, a film and discussion about the pornography industry, a video on lesbian bashing, a model mugging workshop, and a speech by June Jordan. Serena Volpp, last year's co-president of RUS declared that the week was, "both depressing and empowering at the same time."

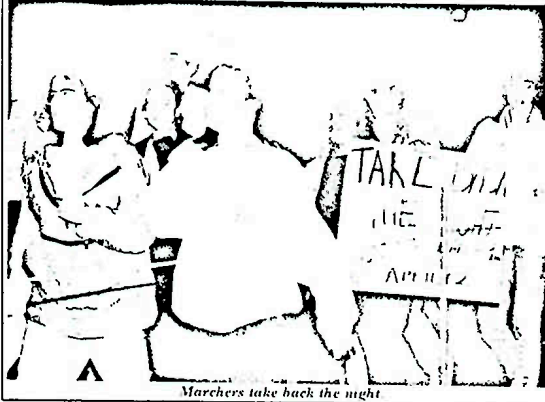
OTHER LOSSES

On Monday, April 29, Perspective sponsored a speech by James Bacque. His lecture, entitled "Other Losses: Eisenhower, De Gaulle, and the Mass

Deaths of German Soldiers," alleged that at the the of World War II the allied high command, primarily the French and Americans, instituted a deliberate policy of mistreatment, killing over 500,000 German prisoners. Bacque's book, *Other Losses*, which addresses these very issues, is currently available in bookstores. Martin Brech, a retired professor and former guard at the Allied camp at Andernach, also spoke, addressing governmental attempts to censor this information.

APOLOGIES ARE IN ORDER

Perspective apologizes to Crimson reporter Josh Gerstein. The feature "Pi Eta Vicum Takes Settlement," which appeared in the May *Perspective*, contained information from articles written by Gerstein in the April 4th *Crimson*.



Marchers take back the night

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