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ON PAGE 1

HUMAN EVENTS
5 September 1981

El Salvador 'White Paper' Flap

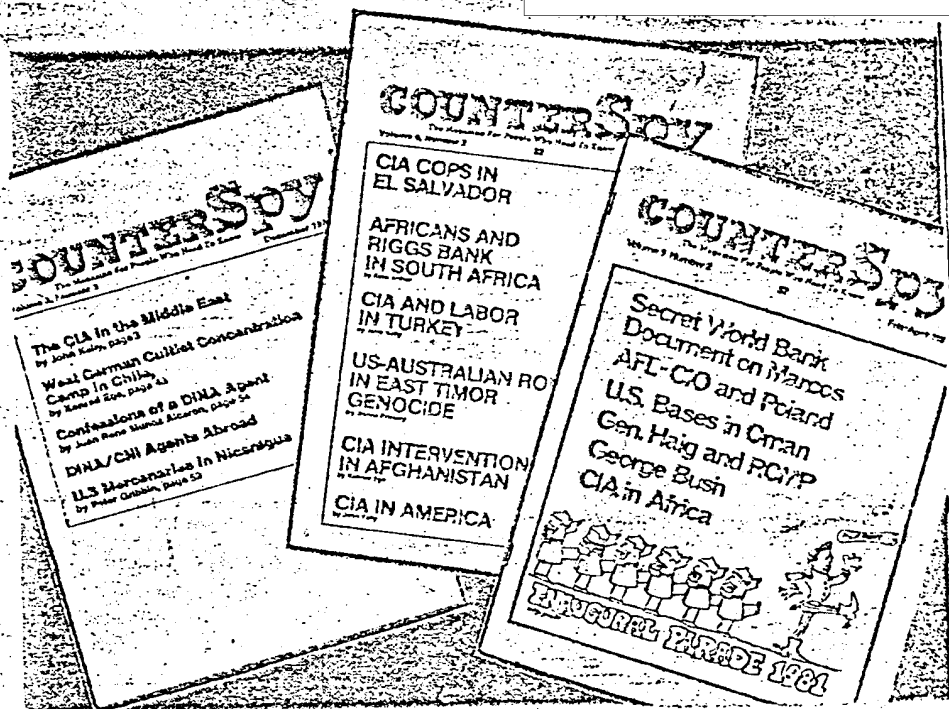
Why Do U.S. Media On Far-Left Sou

The *Wall Street Journal* has let an interesting cat creep out of the bag. It has long been believed that many of the media's reporters on intelligence matters and Latin American events are continuously spoon-fed information by far-left extremists, some of whom—like CIA defector Philip Agee—are dedicated enemies of the United States. The *Journal*, through the obvious naivete of its executive editor, Frederick Taylor, has inadvertently confirmed this far from unimportant fact.

Because HUMAN EVENTS attacked the *Journal's* savage critique of the State Department's White Paper on El Salvador, Taylor finally felt impelled to offer a "defense" in the August 21 edition of his paper. But in so doing, he waded through a lot of little land mines that have exploded all about the *Journal* and Taylor himself. What emerged from his defense was that the *Journal* has, in certain instances, become a pawn of a viciously anti-American element, including Agee himself.

The unassailable thrust of the White Paper is that the Soviet bloc, with Cuba in the forefront, has been busily helping guerrillas to overthrow the non-Communist government in El Salvador. Whatever "flaws" the document may contain, its core point—supported by captured documents, weapons and intelligence sources—is indestructible.

Yet the *Journal* on June 8—much to the comfort of the radical-left both here and abroad—published a front-page assault on this document, with the apparently obvious intention of destroying its credibility entirely. Written by Jonathan Kwitny, the article charged that the White Paper was strewn with lies. The headline im-



The viciously anti-American publication, CounterSpy, has been exposed as a source of information for two *Wall Street Journal* reporters.

Cloud U.S. 'White Paper' on Reds in El Salvador." The kicker reads: "Tarnished Report?" (The *Washington Post* weighed in with a similar slam the next day.)

By implying that the State Department had trumped up or highly exaggerated Soviet-bloc involvement, the *Journal* piece became a godsend to those opposed to the U.S. policy of helping the Salvadoran government resist the insurgents. And, indeed, in many respectable quarters, the *Journal* article was cited as a reason to be skeptical of the U.S. position.

But the *Journal* piece, it developed, was itself seriously flawed—and far more than the White Paper. Not only was it factually inaccurate in many places, but it was

however, was never alluded to in the *Journal* story. And so in our July 11 issue, we carried an article called, "The Invisible Hand of Philip Agee."

Taylor vigorously denies that the *Journal* was a dupe of Agee or anyone else, indicating that a primary source for his publication's criticism was an analysis of the supposedly defective White Paper itself. Well, the reader will have to make up his own mind, but even Taylor acknowledges that "Kwitny picked up a copy of the Agee critique in the Washington office of an organization that worked with Mr. Agee..." and that Agee's analysis "was one among others that Mr. Kwitny used to help determine the questions to ask the State Department."