

'Investigative Reporting For Fun And Terrorism'

The recent spate of mud-slinging linking prominent union officials and political leaders to "organized crime," aimed at Senator Barry Goldwater among others, says more about the morality of the journalists involved than that of their intended targets. Consider the statements of Jim Drinkhall, staff reporter for the Wall Street Journal, and one of the co-founders of the group — Investigative Reporters and Editors, or IRE — which authored the recent "Arizona Mob" slanders of Goldwater.

Drinkhall described his job to an interviewer last week as "investigative reporting for fun and terrorism." He also spilled the beans on how this particular episode of journalistic terror was manufactured — a story which reveals that the IRE group itself was simply a pawn, a disposable front group, in the machinations of the Carter Administration's "house radical" networks run by Marcus Raskin's Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), and its reportorial arm, the Fund for Investigative Journalism (FIJ).

Let it be said at the outset that when Drinkhall uses the word terrorism to describe his profession, he is not speaking loosely. The Institute for Policy Studies, the "mother" agency which directs his operations, has been repeatedly identified as the controlling agency of such assassination-and-bomb-throwing outfits as the Weathermen and the Japanese Red Army. Drinkhall himself is an alumnus of "Overdrive," an overtly fascist publication which fomented the violence-riddled "independent truckers" strikes in the U.S. in 1973-74.

Who-Done-It

In the winter of 1975, IPS deployed a number of its personnel including Drinkhall and members of the FIJ to set up its midwest-based front for investigative terrorism, the IRE. The IPS planners and organizers of the IRE — Drinkhall; CIA conduit Seymour Hersh and David Burnham of the New York Times; Len Downie of the Washington Post;

ciates and Ron Koziol of the Chicago Tribune — addressed the groups' first public convention following the murder of Arizona investigative reporter Don Bolles, in June, 1976. Their theme: war on conservative politicians, businessmen and labor with links to "organized crime;" and war on any "conservative editors and publishers who get in our way." Their credentials: IRE president Ron Koziol of the Chicago Tribune, a known conduit for FBI leaks in the press, first cited in this role by the Church Committee on intelligence agency abuses; IRE vice-president David Burnham, New York Times "reporter" on nuclear terrorism; IRE board of directors members, Len Downie, Les Whitten and others.

The group's organizers launched its "Phoenix Probe" with funding from the FIJ, the notorious Stern Family Fund, and a team of 37 reporters — most of them dupes — dispatched into Arizona on a six month fishing expedition. The resulting 23-part slander on Sen. Goldwater and others was so full of holes that many contracting newspapers won't even publish it; but it has initiated a whole new barrage of "organized crime" rumor mongering and speculation in print.

Real Criminals Leave the Scene

An interesting thing happened, however, before the Arizona story ever hit the press. All the rats jumped ship. Former directors and officers of the group Burnham, Downie and Koziol resigned; and Drinkhall made his noisy exit by writing an "expose" of the group as his first assignment on his new job: "staff investigative reporter" for the Wall Street Journal.

What Drinkhall does and doesn't "reveal" in his Journal expose points to the *real* reason behind the IPS-agent exodus from the group, belying their cover story of "ethical disputes."

Drinkhall makes no mention of the IPS-FIJ affiliation of resigning members; he makes no mention of IPS-FIJ funding for the Arizona project; he makes no mention of Ron Koziol's cozy relationship with the FBI. What *is* clear from Drinkhall's interview, is that the agents are abandoning the group in order to leave a scapegoat — the IRE — to catch the flak from politicians, labor and industry, while they go on to new assignments.

About his own plans for the future, Drinkhall chirped: "I'm going to be stirring up lots of trouble (at the Wall Street Journal) ... no, I haven't gone over to the establishment. I don't like the term investigative reporting. I would call it reporting for fun and terrorism."

FIJ co-founder of the IRE and formerly the group's vice-president, David Burnham of the New York Times, made similar predictions on IRE's future in a conversation leaked to this column:

"There's a low probability of IRE's survival. Looking back on it now, the Phoenix Probe was a bad idea, a big mistake. Bob (Greene, Phoenix team leader and Newsday editor) has a good reputation, but he had no one to edit his story. I haven't seen the Phoenix Probe ... I had nothing to do with it. Some of my friends persuaded me to jump ship ... no, there's nothing IRE can do for anyone now. It won't survive."

What new front page headlines smearing Carter's political opposition will these "radical journalists" create tomorrow? We advise Senator Goldwater and anyone in Congress and the press concerned about terrorism and organized crime, to look into the Institute for Policy Studies without delay.