

## THE NATION

### AMERICAN NOTES

#### Stand at Isla Vista

"At some time and in some place, Americans must decide as to whether they intend to have their decisions, indeed their lives, ruled by a violent minority. We are but one bank, but we have decided to take our stand in Isla Vista."

That determined declaration by one of the nation's usually faceless financiers, Bank of America Chairman Louis B. Lundborg, may not rank historically with Martin Luther's challenge at the Diet of Worms: "Here I stand—I cannot do otherwise, God help me." It does indicate, however, that society is growing grimmer as it confronts youthful radicals and rioting students. The bank's \$275,000 Isla Vista branch was burned to the ground last month during a rampage that began on the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California. Bank officials fear that they may smell smoke again. Nonetheless, they decided not to be intimidated, and workmen erected a \$55,000 prefabricated building next to the rubble. Last week the branch was back in business, which is, ironically, mainly that of serving students at the university. So that they can stay in school, some 1,600 students have taken \$1,500,000 in loans from the bank.

#### Questions in Technicolor

It sounded like a supermarket sweepstakes, the jackpot being \$20,000 a year, \$260 a month toward the rent and use of a credit card. But California's Republican Senator George Murphy did

not have to fill in a lucky coupon, much less tell why he liked a detergent. Technicolor, Inc., his old employer, was content merely that he serve as its public relations consultant after he went to the Senate five years ago.

Unethical? Apparently not. Senator John Stennis, chairman of the Senate's Select Committee on Standards and Conduct, gave Murphy's arrangement his approval without even referring the matter to the members. Many men in Congress, after all, have outside sources of income, particularly from the practice of law. Still, few have such a direct connection, and probably no other legislator is the employee of a company whose chairman, like Technicolor's Patrick Frawley Jr., is a militant advocate of right-wing causes.

Question: What would Stennis, a conservative from Mississippi, have said if Murphy's boss were the N.A.A.C.P.? Or the Black Panthers? Second question: What exactly does the Senator do as a public relations consultant?

#### Potato Bake in Idaho

U.S. agriculture is still one of the world's wonders—and its economics is still a mess. Amid spectacular farm production and surpluses, some 15 million Americans go underfed. Last week, in an attempt to drive the price of prize Idaho potatoes up from about \$2.50 a hundredweight to \$3.50, farmers burned 5,000,000 lbs. of them in eastern Idaho in giant bonfires fueled by straw and kerosene. If the price does not rise promptly, say the farmers, they will destroy another 5,000,000 lbs.



IBM OFFICES IN

## Bombing: A Way of

ONLY nine months ago, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence was able to report that the U.S. "has experienced almost none of the chronic revolutionary conspiracy and terrorism that plagues dozens of other nations." To be sure, plots and skirmishes have footnoted American history, and bomb blasts sometimes provided the punctuation. But they were usually isolated cases tied to a specific labor dispute, racial confrontation or criminal feud. For many decades, the specter of the political bomber has been as alien and anachronistic as the caricature of the bearded anarchist heaving a bomb the size and shape of a bowling ball. Last week that specter took on ominous substance as the nation was shaken by a series of bombings that highlighted a fearsome new brand of terrorism.

**Corrupt and Doomed.** Taking their cue from right-wing racists who used to keep blacks down with TNT, whites and blacks of the lunatic left have begun using explosives to produce sound effects and shock waves in their campaign to unnerve a society that they regard as corrupt and doomed. Schools, department stores, office buildings, police stations, military facilities, private homes—all have become targets. So far, miraculously, fatalities have been relatively few. One small slip, however—or one bloodthirsty bomber—could run up a death toll that could easily rival a week's total in Viet Nam. If the bomb threat continues, that is almost certain to occur.



NEW BANK BESIDE RUINS OF THE OLD  
Growing grimmer in the confrontation.



MANHATTAN AFTER BLAST

## Protest and Death

How slight is the margin of error has been demonstrated by the most recent bomb episodes. Two weeks ago, three explosions destroyed an elegant town house on Greenwich Village's West 11th Street. The basement had apparently been used as a factory for jerry-built bombs, one of which seemed to have accidentally exploded. Last week police found in the ruins the body of a young radical leader, a headless female torso, the remains of a third person so mangled that gender was still uncertain at week's end, and an arsenal of dynamite and homemade bombs (see box, page 10).

As demolition experts continued to probe the 11th Street wreckage for more explosives—and perhaps more bodies—bombs exploded at the Manhattan headquarters of Mobil Oil, IBM and General Telephone and Electronics. An organization that styled itself "Revolutionary Force 9" claimed responsibility. No one was hurt in the early-morning blasts, which were strikingly similar to three blasts in several New York office buildings last Nov. 11, but during the following two days news of the explosions triggered an outbreak of more than 600 phony bomb scares in a jittery New York. Three Molotov cocktails exploded in a Manhattan high school. There were scattered bomb threats elsewhere in the country, even at the Justice Department in Washington. One of them obliged Secretary of State William Rogers to leave his office. Mysterious nighttime explosions rocked a Pittsburgh shopping mall and a Washington nightclub. Another blast

hit the Michigan State University's School of Police Administration, and someone threw a Molotov cocktail in an Appleton, Wis., high school.

**Like Tarzan.** Two black militants were killed when their car was blasted to bits while they were riding on a highway south of Bel Air, Md. The dead were Ralph Featherstone, 30, and William ("Che") Payne, 26. Featherstone, a former speech therapist, was well known as a civil rights field organizer and, more recently, as manager of the Afro-American bookstore, the Drum & Spear, in Washington. Both were friends of H. Rap Brown, whose trial on charges of arson and incitement to riot was scheduled to begin last week in Bel Air. Reconstruction of the car's speedometer indicates it was traveling about 55 miles an hour when it blew up.

Police believed that Payne had been carrying a dynamite bomb on the floor between his legs and that it accidentally exploded. A preliminary FBI investigation supported that theory. Friends of the dead men contended that white extremists had either ambushed the pair or booby-trapped their car, perhaps trying to kill Brown. But police pointed out that Featherstone and Payne had driven in from Washington without notice, cruised around Bel Air briefly and seemed to be headed back. That assassins could plot and move so quickly defies belief.

Although Featherstone had not been known as an extremist, friends said that he had grown markedly more bitter in the past year. Police cited a crudely spelled typewritten statement found on his body: "To Amerika: I'm playing heads-up murder. When the deal goes down I'm gon be standing on your chest screaming like Tarzan. Dynamite is my response to your justice." Brown, meanwhile, was nowhere to be found.

The night after the Bel Air incident, a blast ripped a 30-ft. hole in the side of the Dorchester County courthouse in Cambridge, where Brown allegedly incited the 1967 riot and where his trial was originally scheduled. No one was hurt in the blast, which occurred just 100 miles from Bel Air. Police were seeking a young white woman seen at the courthouse before the blast.

**Haymarket Again.** Last week's violence was only the latest in a frightening trend. Though the upswing in bombing is far from nationwide, it has occurred in widely separated parts of the country. New York and San Francisco, both areas of left-wing extremist activity, have been particularly hard hit, but so have less electric cities, including Seattle, Denver and Madison, Wis.

In New York, there were 93 bomb explosions in 1969, police say, and another 19 bombs did not explode. Half the 93 are classed as political, a category that was virtually nonexistent ten

\* The Germanic spelling, which is used by some radicals to indicate America's control by "fascists."

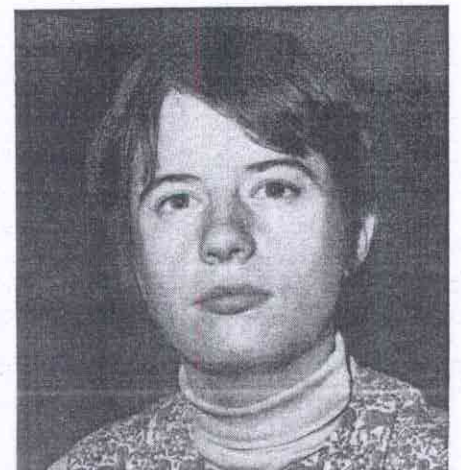
years ago, when there were no more than 20 bombings a year. New York authorities have accused 21 Black Panthers of a conspiracy to blow up stores and railroad tracks and, during a hearing on those charges, five bombs were set off around the city in one night, three at the home of the judge. Last July through November, a series of bombs exploded in government and corporate offices in the city; three left-wing white radicals were arrested and one is still sought. The San Francisco Bay Area had an estimated 62 bombings in the past year, Seattle 33. The



FEATHERSTONE



GOLD



WILKERSON

*How slight the margin for error.*

FBI says that there were 61 bombing and arson cases on U.S. college campuses in 1969.

Police are a prime target of black and white revolutionaries. There were two attempted bombings of police stations in Detroit earlier this month; both failed. A blast during last October's Weatherman rampage in Chicago toppled a statue commemorating policemen killed in the 1886 Haymarket Square riot and ensuing disturbances—all of which was triggered by an anarchist's bomb. While many of the attacks are clearly aimed at property and publicity rather than people, some seek to maim and murder. A bomb that ripped through the Park Precinct house near Haight-Ashbury on Feb. 16 killed a policeman when an industrial staple taped to the weapon shot through his left eye and brain.

Psychotic fads have a way of becoming contagious, and the political left has had no monopoly on bombings. Bank robbers in Danbury, Conn., recently set off three blasts to divert cops. In Detroit, rival motorcycle gangs with nary a trace of political ideology between them dynamited each other's clubhouses. In Denver, where a battle over busing for integration rages, 38 school buses were bombed last month. Three cars were recently destroyed there in separate explosions; the only link is that all were red and foreign-made.

**Cops and Robbers.** The most frightening aspect of the political bomb-throwing is the cool acceptance of terror as a tactic by educated people. Mainly young, often college-educated, many are guilt-ridden offspring of middle-class affluence. Others are black militants devoured by despair. What they share is

an apocalyptic and conspiratorial view of society and an arrogant, elitist conviction that only they know how to reform the world. They have only a vague, romantic idea of overthrowing the "Establishment" and ending the Viet Nam War. Thus, their goals cannot be achieved through traditional means of reform within the system. As Berkeley Police Chief Bruce Baker points out, they are "playing a very tragic form of cops and robbers, seeing themselves as modern-day revolutionaries."

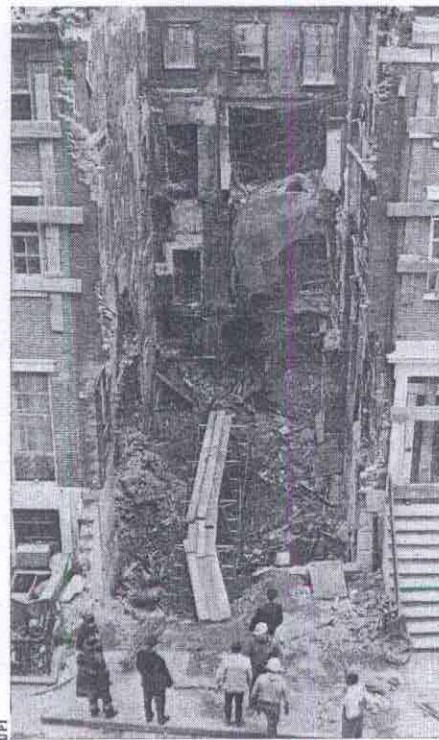
Some inkling of the bombers' psychology appeared in a letter mailed last week just before the New York office bombings by Revolutionary Force 9: "All three [companies bombed] profit not only from death in Viet Nam but also from Amerikan imperialism in all of the Third World. To numb Amerika to the horrors they inflict on humanity,

## The House on 11th Street

NEW YORK'S West 11th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues is a gracious, tree-shaded reminder of the Greenwich Village of Henry James. A community of successful artists, writers and businessmen, it is lined with stately town houses like the four-story dwelling at No. 18, which until last week looked much the same as when it was built in 1845. There was a formal garden in back where few sounds louder than the tinkling of teacups were ever heard. The owner of the Federal-style \$250,000 house, Businessman James Platt Wilkerson, had furnished the interior Georgian style. The rooms were filled with art and rare antiques, including a 1790 square piano. Wilkerson was especially proud of his paneled library, called the Bird Room because it housed a collection of wood, metal and china birds. It was a site for refined, elegant living.

Now No. 18 is a tangle of ground-level debris. Behind its façade of gentility, the house had become a laboratory of violence, its products designed to destroy the stable society that its elegance symbolized. When three explosions shattered the dwelling, Wilkerson's daughter Cathlyn, 25, and an unidentified young woman emerged dazed and trembling from the crumbling, burning ruins. Having donned a neighbor's old clothes, the pair disappeared before police came. At the end of last week, they were still missing.

In the ruins, police found 60 sticks of dynamite, 30 blasting caps and four dynamite-packed pipes wrapped with heavy nails that could act as flesh-shredding shrapnel. They also found the body of Theodore Gold, 23, and the unidentified remains of two other persons. A credit card belonging to Kathy Boudin, 26, who may have been the person with Cathlyn, also turned up in the debris. Gold and the girls were all mem-



bers of the violent Weatherman faction of Students for a Democratic Society. Police speculated that, while Wilkerson and his wife were vacationing in the Caribbean, the amateurs had turned the basement into a bomb factory.

The bright, attractive children of moderately wealthy families, the youngsters were unlikely by normal standards to have ended up as bombers. But in college they had turned away from traditional values and become increasingly radicalized. Though the pretty, brown-haired Miss Wilkerson attended the best of private schools and Swarthmore College, she seemed also lonely and unsure of herself. "Every time I think of something to explain Cathy," said her

mother, who is divorced from Cathy's father (both have remarried), "I think of something that contradicts it. She didn't think much of herself. And she could develop a deep and fierce loyalty to things."

Bearded Ted Gold was the son of two physicians; his father, Hyman, is known as "the Movement Doctor" for his free treatment of penniless radicals. Gold was a bright, committed student in New York's Stuyvesant High, where a former teacher, Bernard Flicker, recalls: "He had everything—wit, charm. He could have been anything." At Columbia University, Gold began as a moderate leftist, working for civil rights and antiwar causes. But he moved further toward the fringe, Flicker says, and "began to feel that protests did no good, that nothing could change. In the end, he took the view that any means to an end was legitimate."

Kathy Boudin was destined to be a crusader. Her father Leonard is a prominent lawyer for leftist causes. She was a *magna cum laude* graduate of Bryn Mawr. Her mother recalls: "Kathy did everything *cum laude*." Kathy's parents have refused to cooperate with police in their search for her, and her mother says only: "We know she is safe."

The three moved to the Weatherman organization after S.D.S. split up in a factional dispute in 1969. All had several scrapes with the law. Last year the girls were among 26 women who "raided" a Pittsburgh high school. By then, their upper-class breeding was wearing thin; some of the girls ran through the corridors bare-breasted, yelling "Jail-break!" The girls were also arrested during the violent Weatherman clashes with police in Chicago's Grant Park last October. But their class privileges paid off: the women were released in \$40,000 bail. They are supposed to go on trial this week.