

an admirably rapid response, or was the reaction so quick because the media had already been informed of an imminent rebellion? In short, were the U.S. media complicit in the Salinas coverup of the imminent Mexican Revolution?

The Salinas clique, in the meanwhile, is reacting in ways typical of regimes that lack genuine popular support. Thus it claims that the rebellion is not *really* supported by the Indian peasantry, but instead consists merely of a handful of "outside agitators" from Nicaragua or Guatemala, who are coercing the peasantry into going along with the guerrillas. But this is a lot of nonsense, as anyone who knows anything about guerrilla movements will testify. Guerrilla movements can only take root and flourish if they are supported, and supported with enthusiasm, by the bulk of the peasantry in their areas. If they are not, the peasants will simply reveal their location to the more numerous and more heavily armed authorities, and that will be that.

Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara always stressed the need for the rebel guerrillas to have popular support, and for that reason the peasant

people were to be the "sea" in which the guerrillas "swim." Ironically enough, it was the violation of his own principles that brought Che to a swift and bad end: parachuting with his armed troop into a remote rural area of Colombia, he tried to rouse the Colombian Indian peasantry against their oppressors in Bogota. But, for one thing, Che and his men spoke Spanish, the hated tongue of the conqueror, and not the Indian language of the area; and so the peasantry regarded them as a simple bandits, and turned their location into the authorities. End of Che.

The Salinas regime is also handling the rebellion by a despicable method typical of counter-guerrilla action when the government lacks the support of the people: the imposi-

tion of what has been called a "White [in contrast to a Red] terror." Thus, the government has been executing rebel prisoners, and torching and killing civilian peasants in the region, including women and babies —thereby belying its claim that the peasantry is being coerced by an outside handful of guerrillas.

It's possible, of course, that the White Terror may work, but the revolutionary process appears to be too

far advanced for that. More likely, the tactics will horrify the Mexicans and drive far more of them into the Zapatista camp, thus intensifying the problem. Already, Commandante Marcos and the ZALN have been targeting government oil and electrical installations in urban as well as rural areas.

It looks like a long shot now, but who knows? It might be that the Zapatista Army of National Liberation will be marching in triumph down the streets of Mexico City before the Buchanan Brigades are able to take back Washington, D.C. In any case, the Mayan Indians of southern Mexico are showing a lot more spunk than their ethnic remote cousins in the northern part of that country. Overall, may we say that the Zapatistas form a militant wing of the Mexican division of the North American anti-NAFTA populist front? ■

## Vatican-Israel Rapprochement

by M.N.R.

On December 30, the Vatican ended its long-standing policy, and officially recognized the State of Israel, and the two states exchanged mutual recognition. Contrary to some press accounts, the Vatican's refusal to recognize was not based on Israeli treatment of Palestinians, but quite properly on Catholic religious con-

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cerns: in particular the Israelization of the Holy City of Jerusalem, which was originally not supposed to be subject to the control of any one religious faith.

It is notable that the Vatican caved in on its long-standing principled stance without one smidgen of concession from the State of Israel. In New York, Israeli Consul General Colette Avital praised New York Catholic John Cardinal O'Connor for playing a "fundamental role...behind the scenes" in bringing about the Vatican-Israel accord.

Several Israeli leaders, however, angrily denounced the agreement. In particular, Israel's most influential newspaper *Ha'aretz* bitterly attacked the accord. (It should be noted that *Ha'aretz*, far from being an "extremist" organ, is often considered the "*New York Times*" of Israel.) *Ha'aretz* wrote that the Catholic Church had "persecuted the Jews in the Middle Ages, and the pages of its history are stained with Jewish blood....[It] should not be forgiven for this."

Similarly, the Israeli newspaper with the largest circulation, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, commented that "The Catholic Church is one of the most conservative, oppressive and corrupt organizations in all human history... The reconciliation can be done only if the Catholic Church and the one who heads it fall on their knees and ask for forgiveness from the souls of millions of tortured who went to Heaven in black smoke, under the blessing of the Holy See."

In contrast to this hard-core

anti-forgiveness stance, as far as I know not a single Catholic leader or periodical anywhere has stood up to defend what had been strict Vatican principle before 1993. Moreover, while in the agreement, the Catholic Church pledges to combat "anti-Semitism," there is not even a hint of a sign that Israel would take any action whatever in combating rampant anti-Catholicism in its own bailiwick.

Why this outrageous double standard? What did they used to say about the perilous consequences of "appeasement"? ■

## Arts and Movies

by Mr. First Nighter

### Those Awards

Writing in late January, it is already all too clear that the fix is in, even more than usual, on the Academy Awards. The earlier awards, of the New York Film Critics Circle, the Golden Globes of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and other lesser lights, have presaged the main event.

The Oscars have increasingly taken on the dimensions of a racket. Since the eligible mov-

ies are those that emerge at any point during the calendar year, and since the producers fully understand the minuscule attention span of the typical Academy dimwit, all the Big Pictures, calculated to appeal to said dimwit, are held back until December 30 or 31. As a result, the experts were confidently predicting awards in late December to movies that *no one had yet seen*. The major studies have always had special previews for Academy members [i.e. Oscar

voters] for the pictures they are hyping for the awards; now, that has been supplemented by videocassettes expressed to the homes of each voter.

To the average Academy moron, the only movie deserving an award is that reeking with pretension: slow, ponderous, boring and *therefore* inevitably pregnant with what the "Saturday Night Live" comic calls "Deep Thoughts." In recent decades, as Hollywood culture has gone sharply Leftward, this has also meant a blend of leftish nihilism and what used to be called "social significance." 1993 was a year even more nightmarish for these attributes than usual. As far as Big Movies go, it was a year to head for the storm cellar.

If the Pretentious Pictures come out in late December, the

**What did they use to say about the perilous consequences of "appeasement"?**