

Opinion/Commentary/Letters

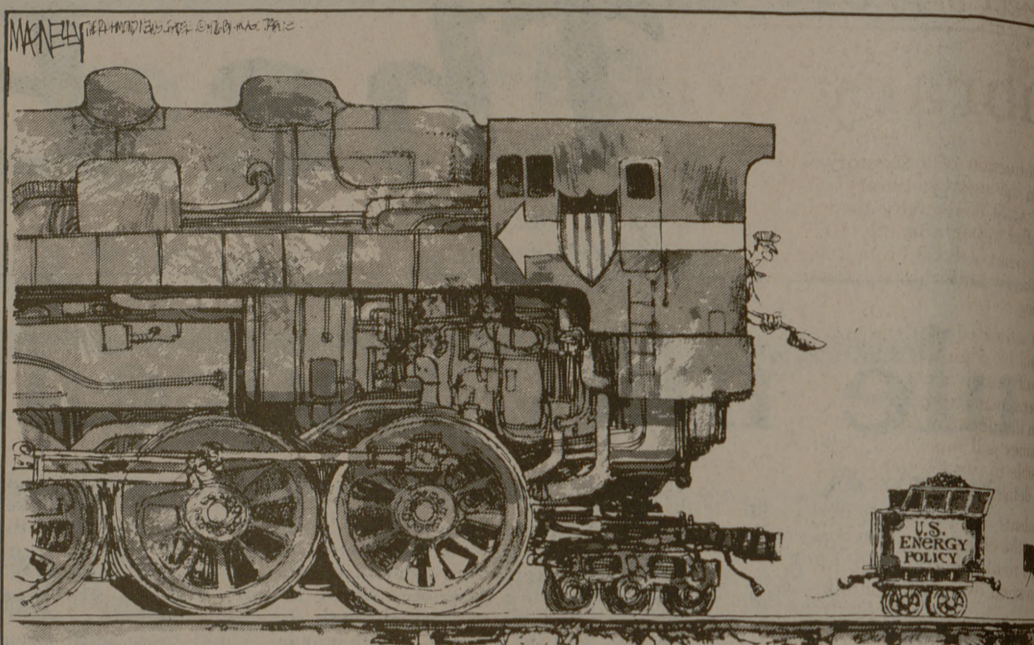
German workers help manage

By HANS-ULRICH SPREE
COLOGNE, WEST GERMANY
— Last March, when the West German legislature passed a law amplifying the right of employees to share in the running of their companies, one member of the parliament described the new act as "the most far-reaching in the world."
The statement may have been somewhat exaggerated, as speeches by politicians everywhere sometimes are. But the decision to include workers in the executive process was a unique step, and it has contributed to the enormous success of West Germany's industrial machine.

For it has removed the element of confrontation from the relationship between labor and management, and introduced a spirit of cooperation that seeks to promote the best interests of both parties — as well as the progress of the country as a whole.
Thus workers and their bosses do not squabble continually, as they do elsewhere in Europe and perhaps in the United States. Moreover, business prospers because little time is wasted in disputes.
We have even seen the powerful labor unions agree to hold down their demands for wage increases so that corporations can make larger

capital investments and thereby create new jobs.
To understand how the system operates, it is important to realize that West German corporations, unlike American companies, do not have large boards of directors and numbers of vice-presidents. They are run, in general, by small teams of executives who retain most of the management responsibilities for themselves.
The effective management of the huge Volkswagen Corporation, for example, has been in the hands of nine men. It was these men who reached the recent decision to build a Volkswagen plant in the United States.

Companies like Volkswagen also have supervisory boards elected by stockholders. But these boards are not supposed to interfere in the day-to-day activities of the corporation. They are supposed to approve or reject overall policies. And they appoint the managers, usually for a period of five years.
The new law does not alter this separation of functions between the managing directors and the supervisory board. But it stipulates that, by 1978, the supervisory boards of all enterprises with more than 2,000 employees must be composed half by representatives of the stockholders and half by labor spokesmen.
Implicit in this legislation is recognition of the fact that labor is a form of capital, and that workers should consequently have as much a voice in shaping corporation strategies as those who have put money into the company.
The recent law was not the first move in this development. As far back as 1952, workers were brought into the executive branch in the iron, steel and mining industries.
It was observed from that experience that the workers primarily played a role in two kinds of decisions. They exerted their influence in the selection of members of the supervisory boards. And they spoke up on personnel and social problems.
To put it more simply, they ex-



Off-campus housing not bad

Editor:
If 22,000 Aggies live off-campus, it cannot be all that bad! In fact, living away from the campus has many advantages that the majority of us readily forget.
New construction in Bryan and College Station, that now offers ample off-campus housing, is one such advantage. (Dormitory dwellers do not share in this good fortune; their limited space will not change, because the administration expects a decrease in enrollment starting in 1980.)
Off-campus students also have a variety of accommodations from which to choose, including apartments, houses, duplexes, mobile homes, boarding houses and even living with families.
Depending on the type of housing picked, a student can live more cheaply off-campus than on if he is frugal. Although most apartments range from \$75 to \$150 per person, you can live under \$100 a month. Eat frugally too, on \$40-\$60 monthly, and you will save almost \$200 a semester.
Despite the merits of off-campus housing, there are additional responsibilities the day student must handle. To help him, the Office of

Student Affairs carries an "Apartment Guide" and sponsors the Hassle-Free program, a liaison between Texas A&M University and the off-campus student in his residence.
—Deb Kilgore, '79
Let's break the cycle
Editor:
Let us assume, for whatever reason, you, your friends, and family are seeking new territory — a new place to live or at least stay for awhile. After a fairly lengthy search and tiring journey you come to an area that offers some protection from the weather and elements and actually remains warm during chilling winter nights. How easy would it be to make you leave to search for another place without the assurance such an ideal place even exists elsewhere? Could you be frightened away? Would you leave at the threat of death?
Any analogy breaks down eventually, but this is essentially the situation of the birds on campus. The stored warmth of the buildings which radiates at night and the pro-

ductive roosts around roofs are an attractive setting for these dering creatures. At least the birds and needs are comparable to human (your and my) needs and desires.
But because the birds have perfected the art of expelling their excrement and not keep their bodily functions literally private, we must bandage them for their droppings are a major irritation to the calculated and mented natural beauty of the campus. But it seems a bit absurd to carelessly landscaped areas where even trees are given aeration when sidewalks and are poured. (But then, the film and pea gravel slabs are tect us from a premature wet.) I am not sure, however, disturbs me more or more actively interrupts my attention this academic environment. periodic accumulations of droppings or occasional encounters with bird carcasses (birds pally dropping).
Perhaps we could have with the sewageless birds longer — until spring when suitable roosting and grounds are available or until mer when the muggy heat of lege Station is about as attractive birds as to people. What's done, but the cycle may not ken.

Slouch by Jim Earle

"NOT EXACTLY STUNNING, OR ATTRACTIVE, OR FASHIONABLE, BUT CERTAINLY RUGGED."

Creative spirits need more outlets

By COLIN CROMBIE
What can poets do?
On campus.
Apart from unimplemented suggestions directed at such "suspect" personalities, there is little available.
For credit, poets can consider one English course, English 325 (Creative Writing).
For improvement there is the Writing Lab in Building F. There Mr. Ray Leighman said he offers help and criticism to beginners in personal creation and technical skills. Books, tapes and other materials are used, but Mr. Leighman said the Writing Lab is better suited to prose than poetry.
For recreation there is no campus organization specifically for poets. Agreed, they are a minority, but other minorities have organized.

The reason is probably their own disinterest in organizing.
The Aggie image is hardly a bard seeking his muse, but the administration cannot be accused of suppression.
Conservatism, however, is grounds for complaint. One example—of writing other than poetry—concerns Cepheid Variable, the MSC science fiction committee.
Cepheid Variable once published a fanzine, "Stanley." Because of a profanity, "Stanley" was stopped after 18 issues in the fall of 1974.
said Ms. Maryanne Herzig of Cepheid Variable.
But poets and others, do not despair! There is some incentive for your art. The trouble is, you'll have to wait another year.
The Arts Committee of the MSC presents an annual Poetry and fiction contest. This semester it is also publishing "Moebius," an arts magazine for poetry, prose, art and photography. The deadline for the contest and the magazine was February 1.
So now you can prepare for next year. "Moebius" shall probably reappear if there is enough response this semester, said Mr. Ken Dimmick, chairman of the Arts Committee. When it comes out, go forth and demand. Every one, everyone.
On the other hand, there is The Battalion. Should it attempt to please all minorities on campus? It

Readers' forum

The editor later noted (October 21) that "Creative work is considered for inclusion in The Battalion on an individual merit basis."
One poem has since been good enough. This was "Twas the Night Before Finals" by Charlie Wampus which appeared on December 15. A light-hearted parody but nevertheless a poem. Being printed in the middle of finals week it is doubtful that it received much exposure or attention.
Something else of sufficient merit for publication may turn up if there are enough contributions.
So, poets (and others who are concerned), write, contribute, organize.
Add an ode to the Aggies' triumphs.

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Guest viewpoints, in addition to Letters to the Editor are welcome. All pieces submitted to Readers' Forum should be:
• Typed triple space
• Limited to 60 characters per line
• Limited to 100 lines
Submit articles to: Reed McDonald Bldg., College Station, Texas, 77843. Author name and phone number accompany all submissions.

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