

SLOUCH By Jim Earle



"I'm really looking forward to when I can wear senior boots."

OPINION

Tired of the same old Bull?

Suddenly, Sen. Bill Moore is the media's friend. The challenge of Kent Caperton has forced Moore to apologize to the press — "Sorry," he says, "I've been busy." For the past four years Moore has been very busy indeed. Too busy to discuss the Texas Municipal Power Agency's virtual invasion of Grimes County. Too busy to discuss his support of a tax on groceries. Too busy to discuss his attempt to block the state charter of a bank that will challenge his own Bryan-based bank for business. Too busy to return phone calls, to make interview appointments, too busy even to answer a simple question.

This is Bill Moore as he has been throughout his term as 5th District State Senator. But some members of the local media are cozying up to Moore's new image. Somehow, despite his apologies, it's hard to imagine his approach to the media, and thus to the public, will change.

Unfortunately, this election comes at a time when Texas A&M has lost a great deal of political clout — Billy Clayton's speaker position is in question, and, because of that, so is Bill Presnal's chairmanship of the House Appropriations Committee.

Moore, Clayton, and Presnal, all former students, have helped Texas A&M grow from a small military school. To lose this power in one year would prove disastrous to the University. To replace Moore with former Texas A&M student body president Kent Caperton also seems folly.

So what to do? Do we return a megalomaniacal pawn of the lobby to another four years of power? Or do we send in a greenhorn?

Wish we had the answer. But we don't.

the small society by Brickman



THE BATTALION

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VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY
APRIL 22, 1980

The French Foreign Legion: Still looking for a few good men

By FRANCOIS DUPUIS
International Writers Service

PARIS — Despite its romantic aura, the French Foreign Legion is a subject of controversy here. Yet it survives as one of France's most durable institutions because it still fulfills a function.

A bill aimed at disbanding the Legion was recently introduced to the legislature by the Communist Party, which criticized the force of 8,000 professional soldiers as "an instrument for colonial conquest and repression." But the proposal went no further than a legislative committee, which defended the Legion as vital to France's security.

That portrayal may have been somewhat exaggerated. However, the Legion does serve President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who has been using military intervention to strengthen French influence in Africa over the past two years.

In May 1978, for example, a regiment of legionnaires was flown from its base in Corsica to rescue European families threatened by a rebellion in Zaire. That operation could not have been conducted by France's conscript troops, who are barred from going into combat except by special legislation.

But such daring forays abroad do not sway the leftist parties. They persist in demanding the dissolution of the Legion, contending that it has become "as anachronistic as the king's mousquetaires."

Created in 1831 by King Louis-Philippe, the Foreign Legion was in fact designed for colonial conquest. It was sent to save Maximilian, enthroned by Napoleon III as emperor in Indochina and North Africa. And between wars, legionnaires were assigned to build roads and other construction jobs.

Novels like "Beau Geste" and movies starring Gary Cooper or Jean Gabin gave the Legion an adventurous lustre, glorifying its volunteers as heroic figures in white kepis fighting against a backdrop of burning sands.

That image attracted idealists as well as delinquents. It also attracted numbers of defeated German soldiers after both World Wars. Germans now account for only 11 percent of the Legion's men, but in times past they represented half its strength.

Just retired after 30 years in uniforms, Chief Warrant Officer Horst Schacht joined the Legion after coming to France

from Germany as a coal miner following World War II. A veteran of Indochina, wounded three times, he has won the Military Medal, the highest French award. "The Legion," he said the other day, "is my family."

Though the Legion's training program is merciless, applicants for enlistment outstrip places by a ratio of three to one. The Legion is no longer a haven for criminals, since recruits are investigated before being signed up. They need not reveal their true identities, however.

According to studies made at the Legion's reception center near Marseilles, recruits generally join because of marital troubles and other unhappiness at home. Bernard Granier, a 22-year-old youth recently discharged for psychiatric reasons, summed up his motives: "I enlisted out of despair because my life was crumbling. I could have jumped in front of a train instead."

Grainer was lucky to have gotten a medical discharge. The only other way for a legionnaire to escape his five-year term is through desertion, and he is to be severely punished if caught.

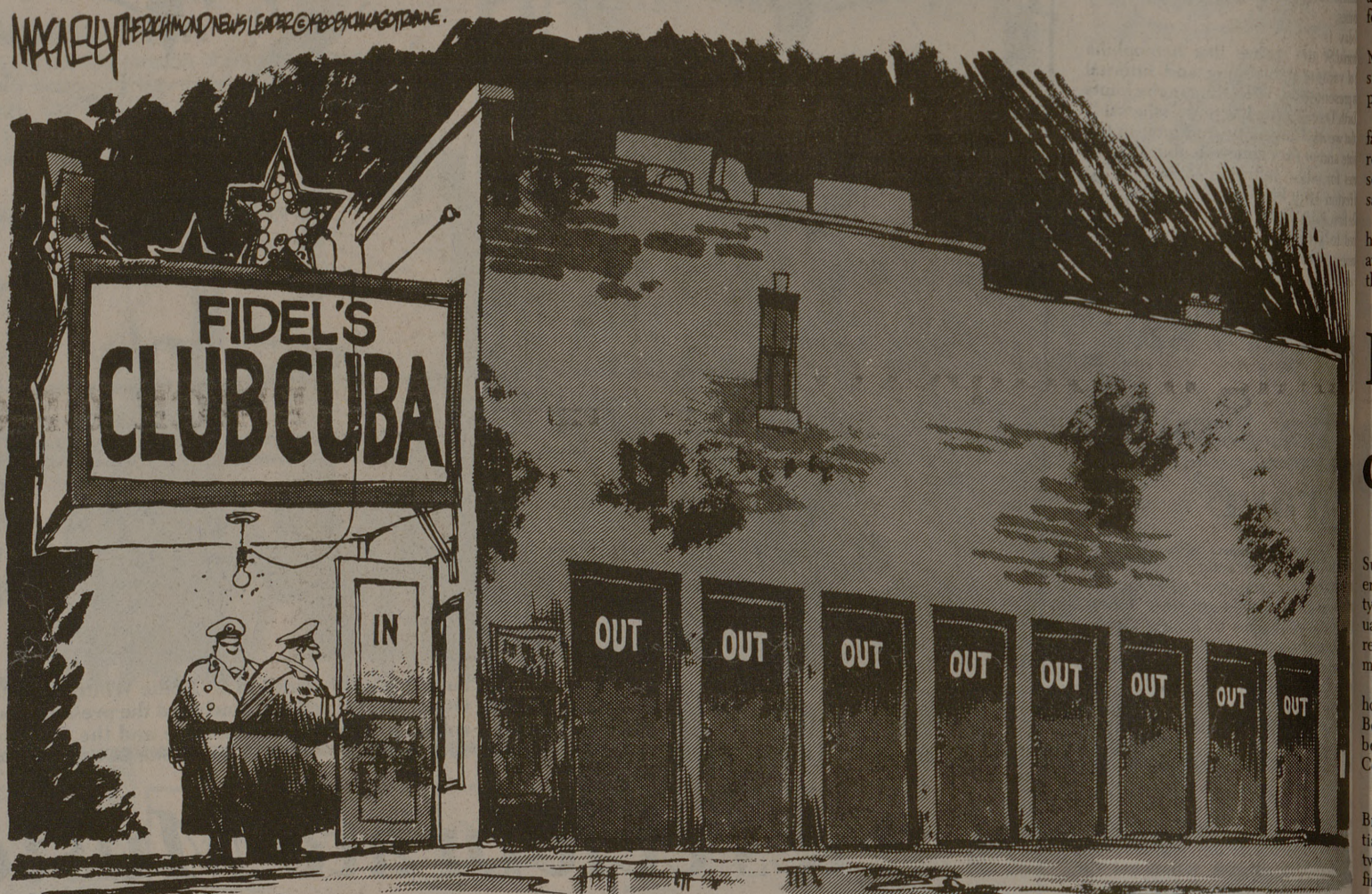
Compared to the old days, the Legion is

becoming increasingly less foreign. Only 40 percent of its recruits are French. The rest are Yugoslavs, Germans, Spaniards, Swiss, Belgians, Italians, Portuguese, Canadians. Only a handful are American. Consistent with tradition, officers or American.

The French recruits reportedly the discipline worst, perhaps because the Legion is too alien for them. It spokesmen claim, however, that 90 percent of recruits fail to measure standards.

The ideal legionnaire is supposed to be the model soldier, ready for any task obedient to his superiors and prepared to die in silence. This may be the case in action, but it is less valid in peacetime. In Corsica, where the Legion's main headquarters since it moved from Algeria in 1962, off-duty legionnaires often arrested for serious crimes. The fact that legionnaires may be swerving loyalty, legionnaires may be an enemy they cannot defeat.

Thus, for all their martial skills and swerving loyalty, legionnaires may be bored. (Dupuis writes for the Nouvelle Revue, the French weekly)



LETTERS Carter and Democratic Party defended

Editor: In reply to Richard Leonardan's letter of April 17th: I would just like to say that Mr. Leonardan demonstrated by his statements that he knew very little about what he was talking about.

He lays the blame for inflation and the energy crisis on President Carter and the Congress. Actually these two problems are one and the same since inflation is caused primarily by increasing energy costs. If you want to lay the blame for the energy crisis and inflation where it belongs then you should lay it on OPEC and the Republican administrations of Nixon and Ford. You should blame OPEC because they are the cause of the oil price increases, and you should blame Nixon and Ford because they did nothing to decrease American dependence on foreign oil.

Mr. Leonardan also cites deficit spending as a cause of inflation, and he blames this on the Democrats. Yet, I hardly think that the Republicans have an admirable record on balancing the budget. During the eight years of Nixon and Ford there was not one balanced budget. In fact, Ford has the dubious honor of signing the largest deficit budget ever. The last balanced budget was under a Democrat (Lyndon Johnson).

Mr. Leonardan also wrote about how the oil companies are picked on by Congress. My heart truly bleeds for the oil companies; last year they had their best year ever. Boy, Congress must have really been tough on the oil companies!

Finally, Mr. Leonardan says that President Carter is "an incompetent, worthless president" and he urges Aggies to "vote Republican (especially Reagan)." Just because Reagan is better than anyone else at giving quaint oversimplified answers to complex problems does not qualify him to be president. Remember, Reagan is the same man who once said, "The entire gra-

duated income tax structure was created by Karl Marx. It has no justification in getting the government needed revenues." Boy, he really sounds bright. Also, remember what President Ford said about Reagan in 1976: "Governor Reagan can't get us into a war. President Reagan could."

President Carter has done an admirable job under trying circumstances. He has been patient with Iran while at the same time applying tough economic sanctions against them. The important thing is that he has kept the hostages alive. If and when the time for military action comes at least the United States will have the comfort of knowing that we did everything we could to avoid bloodshed. There is little doubt in my mind that if Reagan had been president during the Embassy takeover that we would now have fifty American corpses instead of hostages.

I would like to urge all my fellow Ags not to vote for a party, but to vote for the best man. And I think that if you look at all the men in both parties that are running for President, you will come to the same conclusion that I have, and that is that President Carter is far and away the best choice.

John Cherry III, '83

No, anything but economics!

Editor: It is quite evident that you support your choice in presidential candidates by defending them with slandering remarks against the opposition. By no means is Ronald Reagan incapable of "intelligently confronting the problems of our country" as you so colorfully put in Monday's paper. Perhaps you should educate yourself by reading an economics text. Within the

pages of an economics book you will find a great deal of very interesting facts. Reagan's platform does not provide an absolute answer to our current problems; however, neither does any other presidential candidate's platform. Simply to attack with unsupported words is to be unrealistic and unfair to the readers of this newspaper. A little less unsupported and irrelevant journalism and a few more factual comments would serve each of the readers of the Battalion a great deal more benefit. Have a nice day.

Aubrey Smith

(Editor's note: The Opinion column contains the editorial opinion of The Battalion; not news stories, not features, but opinions. And we don't have to defend our opinions. Also, the editorial in question did not "support our choice in presidential candidates" — it endorsed no candidate).

Reagan: magic up his sleeve?

Editor: In response to Thursday's letter, Mr. Leonardan, the context of your letter seems to be either (A) John Tower's Newsletter, (B) a Young American's for Freedom Newsletter, or (C) both.

Where do these "facts" come from: We always hear them, but I for one can never find them. Did someone research your facts, or did someone make them up?

The letter expressed the need for competent leaders in 1980. What is a competent leader? Is it a man who bellows about tax reform while refusing to make public his own tax return? Another candidate (George Bush) supposedly paid \$3,000 in taxes last year on his \$100,000-plus reported earnings. What did Reagan pay, and where did his money come from?

What is a competent leader? Is it a man who promises to cut taxes by 25 percent and increase defense spending by 25 percent and balance the budget at the same time? This just a ploy to get support or to have some magic up his sleeve?

What is a liberal? Obviously it is (A) an opponent in an election, (B) a colleague's opponent in an election, (C) someone who has an idea that you think of first. How can I sign up for government giveaways that you want out? Are they anything like the election allowance?

Your letter said that President Carter "an incompetent worthless president." Incidentally, the author suggests a name for Reagan.

My point today is not that profits are or that big government is good. My point is that I will never vote Republican. My point is that all stories have two sides: facts about the different sides not the campaign ads, or from Washington lobbyists from governors who close their eyes when they talk, but from neutral sources.

In closing, the American people are in for a real task if November comes. Deciding between one former state governor who can't get anything done and another former state governor who knows how to do anything except sign his name.

Ted W. Arns

Readers' Forum

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