

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
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Slouch

By Jim Earle



"There's a lot to be said for being broke when the budget is being cut back. We have absolutely nothing to lose."

Soviet congress to be rubber-stamp affair

By JOHN MOODY
United Press International

MOSCOW — If the Soviet Union is going to oust its leadership, decide to invade Poland or change the direction of its economy, it will do so at the Communist Party congress beginning Monday.

But no one expects any of those things to happen.

Instead, the 26th party congress, already called "historic" in the Soviet press, figures to be a rubber-stamp ratification of President Leonid Brezhnev's uninspired stewardship.

Western diplomatic analysts who have been watching the preparations for the once-every-five-years event agree it will produce few, if any, surprises.

"It's going to be 5,000 people getting together to say glory to Lenin and Leonid," said one European diplomat who was here to witness the 25th congress in 1976.

Communist Party congresses have not always been such cut-and-dried affairs.

The first Russian communists to meet in conclave did so in secret in Minsk. It apparently was not secret enough — the czar's political police arrested five of the nine delegates afterward.

The next four Communist Party congresses met well away from Russia — in Brussels, London and Stockholm — and drew little attention.

Even after Lenin and the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia, his ideas were not unanimously accepted. At the 1921 congress in Moscow, the goateed father of the Soviet Union actually was booed by a few delegates.

This year's congress is unlikely to produce such high drama. At best, Kremlin watchers think, it may provide some additions to the ruling Politburo.

Speculation is that Ivan Arkhipov, the 73-year-old first deputy premier, will be made the 15th member of the country's most exclusive club. According to the rigid rules that control the Soviet hierarchy, the No. 2 man in the government should also be a Politburo member, analysts say.

Another possible addition is Vladimir

Dolgikh, 55, an expert on heavy industry who has received much favorable attention of late. His accomplishments in developing the crucial energy industry of Siberia make him a serious candidate to join the top-flight leadership, and his relative youth inevitably causes speculation that he may eventually sit in Brezhnev's chair.

The same rumors apply to Grigory Romanov, at 57 the youngest voting member of the Politburo. Romanov heads the Communist Party apparatus in Leningrad, the nation's second largest city, and analysts expect him to be named to the secretariat, where he would have a larger role in day-to-day decision-making.

Brezhnev, at 74, is going nowhere. Although a party congress might be the logical and appropriate place to announce his retirement, there is no indication the man who has ruled the Soviet Union longer than anyone but Josef Stalin is thinking of calling it quits after 17 years.

After Brezhnev's opening speech, the congress technically will break into free-wheeling debate on the nation's policies and future course.

In reality, the major decisions have been made by the small elite with offices in the Kremlin. Even the speeches Politburo members make to the congress are censored for content to insure an uninterrupted flow of unanimity.

Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov will report on the domestic economy and lead the chorus of approval for the 11th five-year plan announced in November.

The one area where some variations could show through is the prickly situation in Poland and how best to contain it.

Political analysts believe that if the Soviets decide they must intervene militarily, it would be better to do so after the congress, to show the world Russia is acting with the concurrence of Communist parties throughout the world, almost all of whom will have delegates in Moscow.

"You would not compare the Communist Party congress to a Democratic convention," mused one veteran diplomat, "unless you are a Republican."

SCONA: Sights 'n' sounds

Did you see SCONA last week? Sure you did. The 26th Student Conference on National Affairs was everywhere — in the papers, on TV, clogging the cafeteria lines and bookstores.

Visually, SCONA was there, but it was pretty dull for observers. The real excitement was in the sounds of SCONA, and not just the speeches.

Come listen:
— Potato chips crunch loudly through a Singing Cadets concert. The 200 or so participants don't seem to notice anything but the enchanting, crisp voices.

— After 3½ days and long nights, several delegates snore during the final speech, an economic history lesson.

— Accents, both foreign and domestic, mingle freely in conversations ranging from mismanagement of U.S. foreign aid to the best place to eat in Montreal.

— "Roundtable B, the best you're gonna see, the best damn table in SCONA." Discussion groups made up their own yells, like Corps outfits, and even "beat the hell outta" other roundtables. An education on the practical side from Aggies.

Inside/outlook

By Liz Newlin

— One very frustrated delegate pounds his shoe on the table, ala Kruschev, to squeeze his thoughts into the discussion. We listened.

— A student from Guatemala says Indians in his country were given tractors to help with their farming. The only problem is they farm on patches the size of racquetball courts, not football fields.

— A midshipman from the U.S. Naval Academy praises the review of the Corps of Cadets as better than what they do in Annapolis.

— A bureaucrat mumbles doubletalk, and a scholar waxes philosophical. They don't debate.

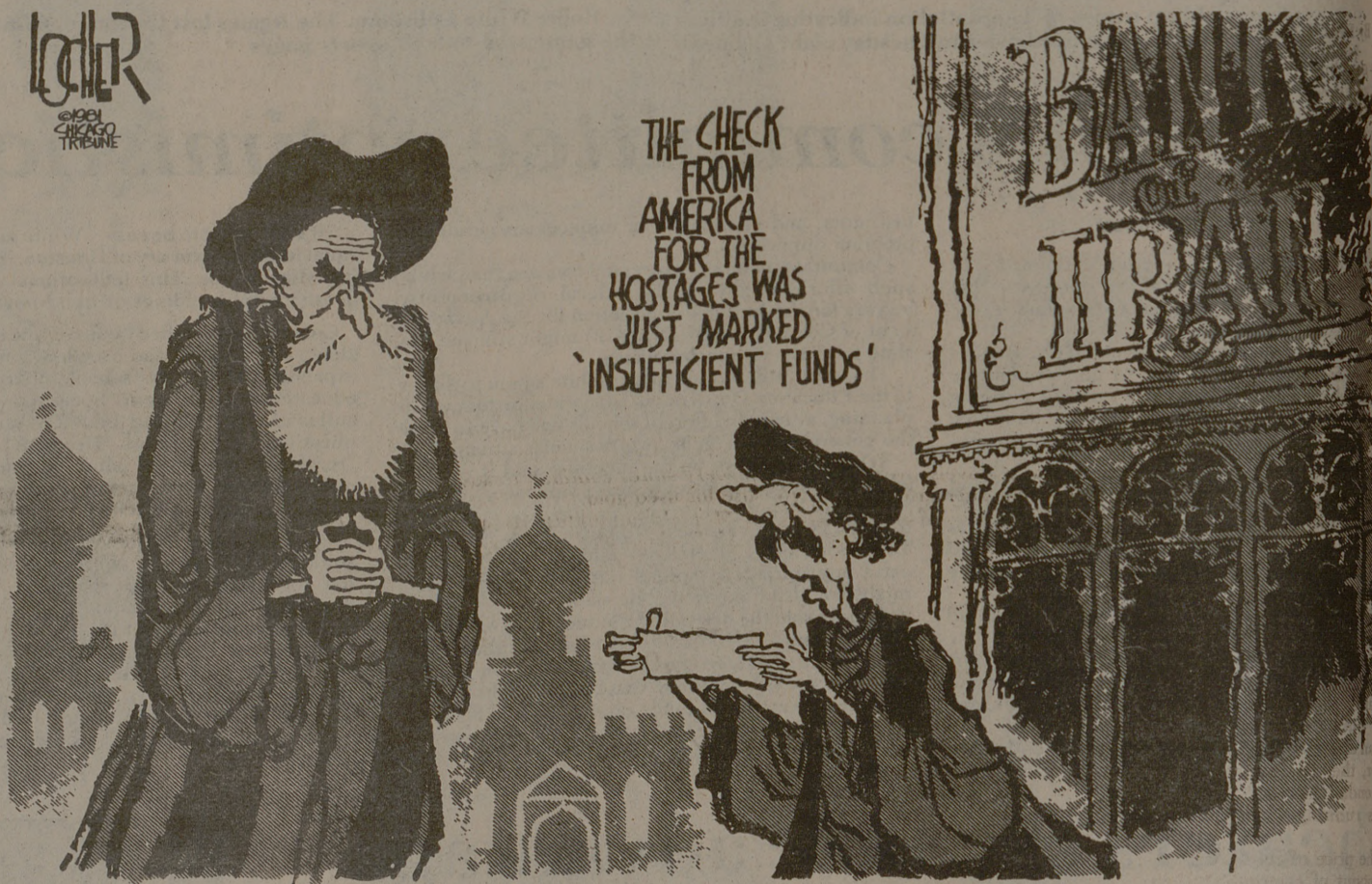
— A diplomat from the Egyptian embas-

sasy in Washington tells delegates to leave discouraged. "We focused on the things," the political consul says, "but are positive aspects. ... Somehow, they are moving." Reflecting on the 30-year conflict in the Mid-East, he adds, "Now we begin to find a way to solve the problems. We should not forget there is the world."

— Step-by-uncertain-step instructions guide Texans, Canadians, Mexicans, Kuwaitians through square dances, a man polka and the Cotton-eyed Joe.

— A Mexican student from a relatively wealthy family says she's glad two Mexican students left early. They got disgusted because they met opposition to the idea that "Yankee imperialism" should be blamed for Mexico's poor economic state as well as most other world problems. Others in the roundtable wished they stayed, so they could talk it over.

— Laughing and more laughing. Finally, though, you listen but you hear the most important sound that SCONA produces — the sound of understanding.



It's your turn

Greeks a threat to fraternal spirit

Editor:

Texas A&M has long held the reputation of being a truly unique institution, and rightfully so. While virtually every other major college and university have blended together with the sameness that comes only from imitation and a lack of purpose, A&M has remained as special and as unique as it was intended to be. As Aggies, we pride ourselves on being different, and not only different, but right as well. And now, because of the efforts of a few, we are about to join the ranks of all the other schools that we so desperately try not to emulate.

The push by the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic to obtain University recognition is definitely a step in that direction. Obviously fraternities and sororities fill a need on our campus; if they did not, they would have no membership. However, to recognize these groups as viable campus organizations not only gives them the right to use campus facilities, but also gives them the support they need in order to recruit and grow. And as these groups take hold as campus organizations, we will have the

rivalry, the competition, and the "We're better than they are" attitudes that almost certainly follow. Instead of being Aggies first, we will be Greeks first, Aggies second. This is already happening in many instances, with fraternity and sorority functions occurring during university events.

Hopefully the Student Organizations Board and Dr. Koldus will realize that Texas A&M is different, and let us stay that way. The long-standing, Ivy League image of well-to-do Greeks excluding those who don't belong is not needed here. Our student body is one giant fraternity, and as A&M grows it will be harder and harder to keep that brotherly spirit. Let's not make it even harder by recognizing the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic. As the song

says, "We are the Aggies, the Aggies are we." There is no need to say more.

John B. Wagner

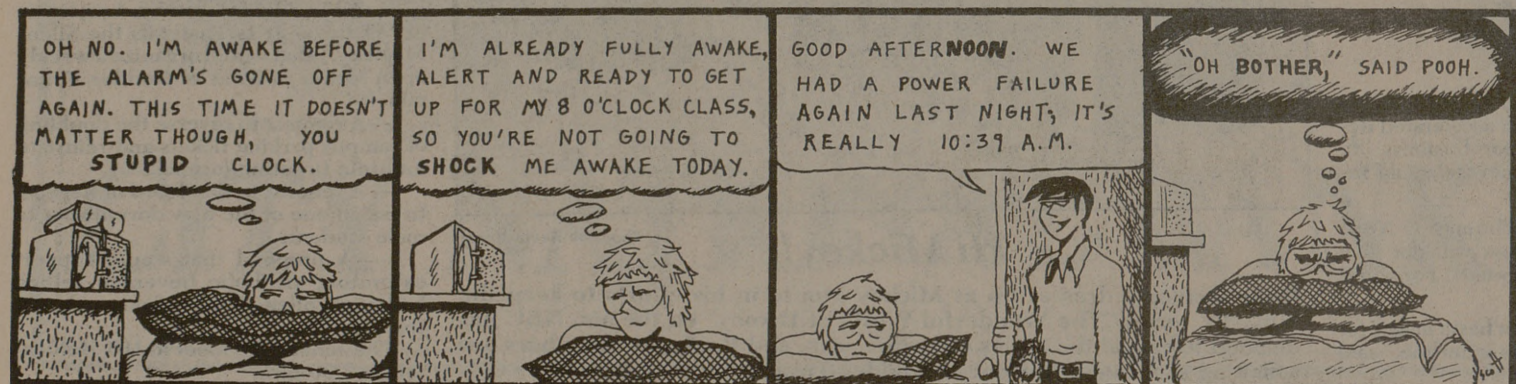
Apologies due

Editor:

I desperately ask this appeal be submitted to the student body. After tonight's game, and after several blunt words were exchanged between myself and a girl in the stands — I very emotionally and unjustly struck this same girl. I want sincerely to extend my apology to her for my actions and to beg her forgiveness.

Richard Mach

Warped



By Scott McCullar

THE BATTALION

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 350 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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