

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY
MARCH 3, 1981

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"With spring vacation around the corner, it's never too early to get ready just in case my ride leaves early."

Love leaves quickly, silently

He came to me on Valentine's Day. I met him at the foot of the stairs. He was strong, dark and handsome, with gentle brown eyes.

He didn't say anything when our eyes met—he was the silent type. He moaned a little bit and looked lost and alone. I stroked his face and asked if I could help.

He still said nothing. He turned to walk away from me and I called after him, "Come back!" but he continued down the hallway inside the dorm at a slow and steady pace. He was ever so handsome in his gracefulness.

He moved through the first floor of Mosher Hall, and I was close behind him. I couldn't let him get away.

He quickened his pace through the breezeway and into the Commons where everyone and his uncle were playing pool. For a moment I feared that he, too, would want to shoot a game, and I certainly could never chase a pool shark.

I was relieved that he passed by the pool tables. He was too sleek, too handsome to play the rough and rugged pool shark anyway.

No one seemed to notice how much I wanted to catch him. A few people looked at handsome him and desperate me, but no one offered to help.

I had to catch up to him.

Coffee breaks

By Jane Brust

He finally stopped a few feet beyond the pool tables and turned around to face me. I quickly—yet gently—grabbed his neck and asked him to come back with me.

We walked together around the pool tables and back through the breezeway. He would not say a word.

My goal was to take him out to the first floor balcony, inside Mosher's quad. He wanted to stay in the breezeway.

I lost all sense of pride. I begged, I pleaded. Please come to the balcony with me.

He refused to move, he refused to speak. I was desperate. I couldn't abandon him—he needed me.

Sometimes a woman has to do what she has to do.

I took a deep breath and with both my arms outstretched, I lifted him up and carried him out to the balcony.

There he opened his mouth and sang. He couldn't carry a tune in a bucket and he wasn't a singing valet. He didn't even come with a red ribbon.

His whining echoed inside the quad and everyone in the dorm could hear him.

I left him for a moment. I ran upstairs to my room to get a cracker—anything to make him shut up. But when I came back he was gone. He had disappeared from my life just as suddenly as he'd come.

It was just as well. We can't keep Doberman pinschers in the dorm anyway. He made me think of my own pet snake.

My family's maintained a grand total of four dogs, five cats, two turtles and assorted rats and tropical fish in my 20 years. For 15 years we had three dogs and three cats—the family menagerie.

Now we're down to one of those dogs, two of those cats, and they're all spoiled rotten. They even send their love in post-prints every time my mom sends a letter.

Life is different in a dorm without the legged friends around to listen to every problem.

Dogs aren't allowed in the dorms, and accept that. Just the same, I'm glad the Doberman and I had a chance to meet and become friends. I even hope he comes to visit again some time.

It's your turn

Escalation not independent of U.S.

Editor:

In his guest column, Richard LeVieux was correct in stating that the North Vietnamese were responsible for the escalation of the Vietnam War. The statement, however, is incomplete in the sense that it leads us to believe that the North Vietnamese escalation was carried out entirely independent of American activities. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is that we had the means to thwart escalation and only through our failure to exercise these means was the war allowed to expand.

The North Vietnamese decision to escalate in 1965 presented numerous logistical problems for them. First and foremost among these problems was the task of getting supplies to N.V.A. (North Vietnamese Army) forces in South Vietnam. To resolve this dilemma the N.V.A. established a series of supply depots just inside the Cambodian border. These depots had the dual advantages of shortening the length of their supply lines and, more importantly, of being protected by the boundary of a neutral country.

With their supplies safely nestled behind the sanctuary of the Cambodian border, the North Vietnamese began waging war in earnest. The magnitude of the Tet offensive in 1968 and the steep rise in American casualties during the span 1965-1969, attest to the frightening efficiency of the N.V.A. supply routes. For all practical purposes the North Vietnamese had annexed this strip of the Cambodian border.

For four years the U.S. permitted the North Vietnamese to use Cambodia as a base of operations. By March 1969 the situation had grown intolerable. We were losing men at a rate of 300-500 per week. It was at this time that Richard Nixon issued the order to begin bombing N.V.A. strongholds inside Cambodia.

The bombings had the effect of letting the air out of the N.V.A. escalation strategy. American casualties dropped towards the end of 1969. In 1970 Nixon made the decision to supplement the bombings with a border incursion of Cambodia. Though this action came under intense fire in the U.S. (remember Kent State) it succeeded in bleeding N.V.A. supply lines even further. The net effect was to reduce the number of 1970 casualties to less than half of their 1969 level.

The success of U.S. border incursions of 1969-1970 lead one to speculate as to what might have happened had we implemented them earlier. My thoughts on the matter

are as follows. If the U.S. had shut off the Cambodian connection in 1965, the N.V.A. would have had much more difficulty sustaining large forces in the South. Supply lines extending down from North Vietnam would have been considerably more precarious than their Cambodian alternative. In the end, the North Vietnamese would have been unable to escalate the Vietnam War to the level it eventually attained in the late sixties. And, perhaps, the number of American casualties in South East Asia would not have reached such tragic proportions.

Mark Howell '82

Commitment needed

Editor:

Let us face a few facts about fire safety on campus, interviewing a marshal (who has no authority on the A&M campus and can not even repress violations within his own jurisdiction) that sites deviations in code compliance without plausible solutions is of little value, except for filling newspapers. As if this was not enough he further states the fallacy that "... if they had one place where all hazardous chemicals were stored, then things would be fine." If the fire marshal has a plan which would work for a university as large as A&M—tell the Nation; we will all sleep better!

The Safety Office on campus made the true but regrettable statement that the campus is not in full code compliance, which there are few universities across the nation that are exceptions.

Codes constitute a minimum of the degree of protection needed, whether it be Fire Prevention or Life Safety, so just mere compliance sometimes is not enough nor is it adequate. The answer to A&M's problems lies not in pointing our violations and ensuring the potential for a vast conflagration. Only through constructive programs of education, engineering, and enforcement of Fire Prevention and Life Safety, can A&M offer the protection to which the students and staff are entitled. To accom-

plish this, the directors of the University must show commitment to make every "reasonable" effort to ensure an improved environment.

Mike Sawyer

Thoughts on purity

Editor:

I would like to respond to David Witzel's letter of Feb. 24, and also comment on the general attitude of the student body. In his letter, Witzel, alongside of badmouthing a few other organizations, admonished the med students because they "seem more interested in graduating than in joining the 'Aggie Fraternity.'" I am one of those students who does put graduation at the top of his priority, because if I am mistaken, acquiring an education is the main purpose in going to college.

I would also like to state that I have a desire to become a member of any pre-professional body, such as the "Aggie Fraternity" who's main goal is to remain "pure" by excluding and excluding any person who does not think and act as they do. This thousand of you (less 2 percent of course) call me a "damn two-percent" and instruct me that "Highway 6 runs both ways but I won't be leaving because there's good education to be found here and no one can force me to go elsewhere if I don't desire to. All of the talk about keeping "Aggie pure" and eradicating the "several subversive groups," as Witzel puts it, reminds me about the ideals of "Aryan Supremacy" and the need to wipe out the "Demon Jew" Nazi Germany. The diversity of people on the right of the individual to hold and express independent thoughts is the foundation of America. If Texas A&M does not respect these ideals, it has no right to exist as a public institution. Remember, if it were mandatory that all students coming here be exactly alike, it would not be possible for more than one student to attend this university at a time.

David Wade

Rebels losing appeal for Thailand radicals

By PAUL WEDEL
United Press International

BANGKOK, Thailand — Some 1,500 Thai intellectuals, politicians and labor leaders have defected from Thailand's belligerent communist movement in a victory for the government of this pro-Western Asian nation.

More than 3,000 left-wing Thai leaders joined their country's communist forces in the jungles after bloody right-wing violence in 1975 and 1976 that culminated in a military coup.

Five years ago it seemed they might well return to Bangkok at the head of a victorious communist army.

In two years the number of communists carrying arms jumped from 9,000 to 13,000, the first such leap in more than 30 years of party recruitment, according to Commander Prasong Soonsiri, secretary-general of Thailand's National Security Council.

Most of the new recruits were motivated by hopes for democratic revolution, fear for their own lives, and a desire to avenge friends killed in the rightist crackdown.

But in the years that followed, many of the radicals found themselves angered by their Chinese-educated communist leaders who followed Mao Tse-tung to the letter, and increasingly frustrated by an inability to influence party strategy.

The radicals had little chance to leave the communists until the Thai military, behind Gen. Kriangsak Chomanand, quietly deposed hardline rightist Premier Tanin Kraivixien in 1977.

Several months later, Kriangsak announced an amnesty and appealed to the radicals to come out of the forest. At the same time he began to improve relations with China and Vietnam, the two main backers of the Thai communists.

Labor leader Therdpoom Jaidee said, "We all listened to the Kriangsak amnesty announcements on the radio and began thinking about getting out."

"The bombers striking at us were fueled

with Chinese oil, Kriangsak was warmly greeted in Peking and still the party followed the rear-ends of the Chinese," Therdpoom said.

The exodus began in 1978 and increased greatly in the second half of 1980.

Therdpoom made his break with 39 armed followers while communist headquarters was being moved.

Other radicals were given party permission to leave.

"If they killed us, it would have destroyed the party's chances of ever recruiting more intellectuals," said student leader Pridi Boonsue. "If they let us remain, we might have infected the others."

Thai counter-insurgency experts treated the defectors carefully.

"We welcome the students with open arms," said one counter-insurgency official. He said more high level dropouts from communist ranks are expected.

Several of the best known radicals, like Sekson, have gone abroad. Others meet regularly in Bangkok to discuss their experiences and problems. All insist they will go back to the communists.

"The communists are far from defeated. The leadership and the hard core of supporters remain loyal," Cmdr. Prasong said. "But they had a chance to really expand and they missed it."

Among the defectors was a young couple, Seksan and Jiranan Prasertkul, both 32. Seksan was the best known student leader in Thailand. Jiranan is a former university beauty queen-turned-feminist activist.

Four months ago they were carrying Chinese-made AK-47 assault rifles in the Thai jungle.

Last month they boarded a flight to the United States to continue their studies at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

"When I was a student leader, I fought for democracy," Seksan said. "And with the communists I found I still had to fight for it."

By Scott McCullar

Warped



THE BATTALION

MEMBER U S P S 045 360

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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The Battalion is published daily during Texas A&M's fall and spring semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$32.50 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

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