

Alistair Cooke disgruntled over TV election coverage

By ROBIN BLACK
Senior Staff Writer

"If you want to start a protest march about television election coverage, I will be at the head of it," Alistair Cooke said Thursday at Texas A&M. Cooke, the featured speaker of the E. L. Miller Lecture Series, spoke in 204C Sterling C. Evans Library. "I hope that before the next election the three networks get together and decide what things to cover, and especially to stop these exit polls," Cooke said. "In fact, I think they should make it illegal." Cooke discussed the media's influence on the election process in his last of three addresses this week. He said he is concerned "in a quiet way" about the extent networks go to cover primaries and the elections. Each network has about 250 people

at a primary where less than five percent of the registered voters turn out, he said. "Going into a network before a primary would be like walking into an advertising agency that had just laid out \$10 million to promote a new soft drink," he said, referring to the amount of effort and money the networks put into covering the primaries. Cooke said the network's heavy coverage of the elections often gives voters misconceptions of what really goes on. For example, he said, most viewers could be led to believe that more people play an active role in the process than actually do. "The whole method of television is deception," Cooke said. A reflection of this is seen in the coverage of the primaries, he said.

Cooke did say, however, that the networks chose this year to show less of the convention than they have in the past. This happened, he said, probably because they knew there would be no extended balloting and that the viewers were not really interested in the opening speeches of the conventions. "I hope at least one network has the sense to say that they won't spend all the time, money and energy that has been spent in election coverage in the past," he said. Cooke, a former journalist, was born in Manchester, England, in 1908. He worked as a correspondent in the United States for more than forty years, has published 10 books and is best known as the host of the PBS series "Masterpiece Theatre."

Loan system discussed by senate

By KARI FLUEGEL
Staff Writer

Student senate members discussed a loan system for student activities participants in a closed meeting after the senate's regular meeting Wednesday night. Student senate Speaker Pro Tempe Eric Thode said the senate had no plan or proposal written for the loan system. The loan system would benefit students who are discouraged from becoming active in student activities such as student government, the Memorial Student Center, the Residence Halls Association and Off-Campus Aggies because of financial hardships — for example, students who must work to pay for their education.

The loan system would be set up to provide low interest loans to organization members who could prove financial need. "It would be a loan fund system not a payment system," Thode said. "In no way would this be set up to pay the (student government) officers like they do at UT."

Thode said if the system was set up, he doubted that the money would come from the students. He said the money would probably come from outside sources such as former students. The senate is researching the situation to determine if there is a need for such a loan system. If the need is determined, a proposal would be drafted and presented to the senate, Thode said. If a proposal is submitted, Thode said it would probably be presented to the senate early next semester.

Workers burn buses in Peru

United Press International

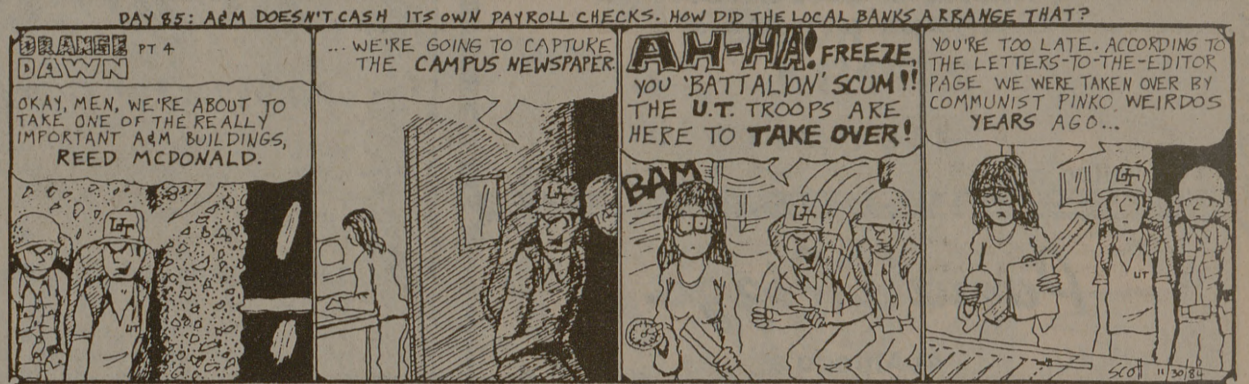
LIMA, Peru — Police enforcing a state of emergency fired tear gas and water cannon Thursday to disperse hundreds of workers and students who blocked roads and burned buses during a general strike to protest economic conditions. At least 100 people were arrested and four people were injured in violence in the capital and at least two northern cities during a 24-hour general strike called by leftist labor unions to protest high unemployment and annual inflation of more than 100 percent.

Just hours before the strike began, suspected terrorists dynamited an American culture center, election offices and banks in four Peruvian cities. One woman was injured. Police attributed the bombings to Shining Path, a Maoist guerrilla group waging a 4-year-old war against the Peruvian government. On Thursday, police fired sub-machine guns into the air to drive away workers and students who built barricades of boulders and smoldering tires on streets north of the capital.

At the Dos de Mayo Plaza, where unions are headquartered, police in armored cars fired tear gas and water cannon to break up a rally by more than 500 workers chanting "national strike." Similar incidents were reported at the National Engineering University, where police said students set a passenger bus on fire. Protestors also burned buses.

Warped

by Scott McCullar



Budget

Reagan freezes spending

United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Reagan directed his advisers Thursday to cut spending enough to reduce the deficit by half in three years and has decided to freeze total government spending in the 1986 fiscal year to 1985 levels, an administration official said. The official, who asked not to be identified, said that Reagan made the decision to freeze spending at a meeting with his chief fiscal advisers where he tentatively approved an array of cuts in government programs. The president will meet again with his so-called budget "core" group Friday to wrap up this phase of the budget process.

Reagan's directive to his advisers came just hours after Republican congressional leaders warned that any plan that slashes such politically sensitive areas as Medicare, Civil Service and veterans' benefits must be accompanied by scaled-back military spending to stand a chance of passage on Capitol Hill. The admonition, which prompted a sharp rebuff by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, came as Reagan prepared to give broad direction to his advisers on a budget that would cut spending by as much as \$45 billion in fiscal 1986, \$85 billion in 1987 and \$110 billion in 1988.

While the means of achieving those targets remained undecided, Sen. Robert Packwood, R-Ore., said the goal described by budget director David Stockman was to reduce the deficit — now projected to stick in the \$200 billion range for the next few years — to \$100 billion, or 2 percent of the gross national product, by 1988. "He said, 'Folks, let's face up to it. If we're going to get it down on spending, we're not talking about 5 percent off this or 6 percent off that,'" Packwood said, quoting Stockman. "We're talking about eliminating programs." Congressional leaders said Stockman had determined that halving the deficit by 1988 through spending cuts alone would require the abolition of 15 to 20 programs, many with powerful constituencies. Rather than aiming at social welfare programs, as was done four years ago, the Reagan-Stockman plan zeroes in on subsidies and middle-class benefit programs, including farm supports, mass transit assistance, the Small Business Administration and the Export-Import Bank, congressional leaders said.

The only area held sacrosanct is Social Security. While Reagan ruled out any actual reduction in defense, pressure has been building for a military increase less than the 14 percent sought by Weinberger. The GOP leaders made the case to Reagan that in order to sell any deficit-reduction plan, the elimination of popular programs would have to be balanced by restraint in defense spending. House GOP leader Robert Michel of Illinois said the meeting was marked by a "rather heated discussion" on defense, with he and others at odds with Weinberger over the need to scale back growth in the Pentagon budget.

Aggie Band fields fewer men this year

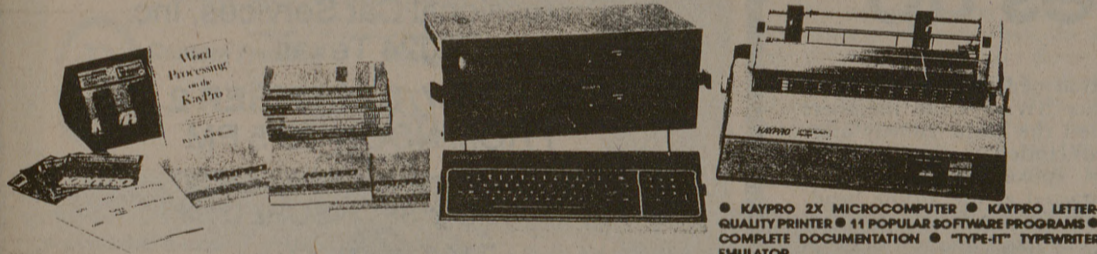
A quick count of the the Aggie Band at halftime this weekend will reveal that the crowd-pleasing unit is smaller than it has been in recent years. "Our ideal number of men to field is 303, but this year we are marching with only about 260 members," says band director Colonel Haney. Haney, director for 13 years, says smaller classes have caused the decrease in numbers over the last several years. "We just have a small senior class this year, and when you have smaller classes; it affects your numbers for four years." Haney says the band marched between 279 and 288 men the last two years.

"After this class graduates we will have more than 65 members in each class," he says. "I feel reasonably sure that next year the band will be back up to the 300 mark." "We usually have 300 or more men in the band, but the decrease in members this year does not affect our drills and marches," Haney says.

Police Beat

The following incidents were reported to the University Police Department through Thursday. MISDEMEANOR THEFT: • A gray Sears 10-speed bicycle was stolen from outside the Academic Building. • \$70 in cash was stolen from a student's room in Crocker Hall.

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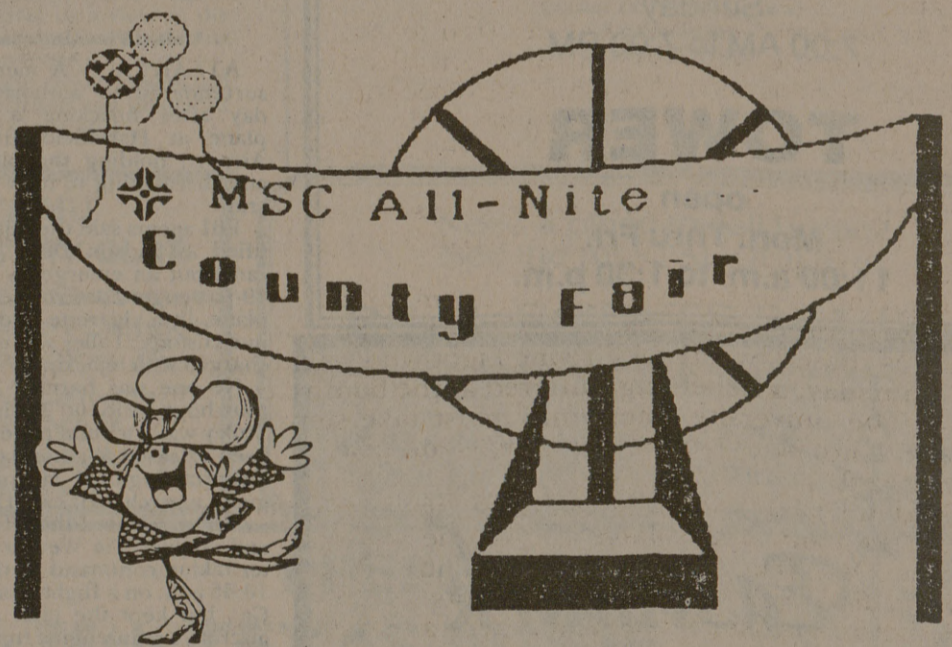
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