

Opinion

It's about time

After years of deliberation, the fatal Luther Street crossing finally will be closed. It's about time.

A year ago today Texas A&M student Katherine Hossley died in a train-related accident at the Luther Street crossing in College Station. The following night, Lynn Cash McDonald, another A&M student, was killed in a similar accident at the same intersection. The accidents sparked controversy in the community and a lawsuit on behalf of McDonald's parents.

The City of College Station requested, even before the deaths, that the Luther intersection be closed and Holleman Road be extended across the tracks. But first they had to have the permission of the railroads. The closing of the crossing wasn't a priority for the Missouri Pacific and Southern Pacific railroads. The deaths made the railroads take notice of the deadly situation on Luther Street.

Despite the attention, little has been done by the city or the railroads over the past year to improve the dangerous situation at the intersection.

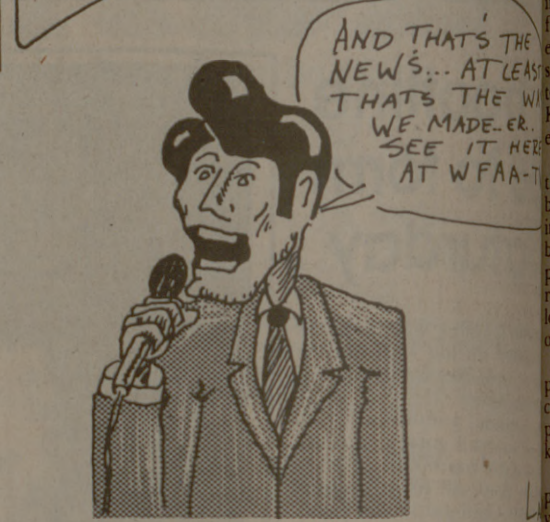
The crossing remains poorly marked and no safety devices have been installed. Although the bushes around the crossing were trimmed right after the accidents, they have not been maintained. By the end of the summer they had returned to their original height. Visibility, even when the bushes are trimmed, is still poor.

Finally, action will be taken.

Working together, the railroads and the City of College Station plan to close the Luther Street crossing by February and extend Holleman Road across the tracks. The new crossing is to be properly marked and visibility in the area made much better.

It's good to see measures being taken to make the crossing safer. It is unfortunate that two people had to die to make the problem a priority.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Sanctions for South Africa

The United States can't afford to abandon its interests

Dear fellow student, I'd like to test your knowledge. You've probably read more about South Africa in recent weeks than any single class subject detailed in your dust-gathering textbooks. At least you're up on the big issues of the day.

Cynthia Gay
Guest Columnist

You know that 25 million blacks and 4 million whites live in South Africa, and the whites have imposed a system called "apartheid" that draws racial lines of division between the country's inhabitants. Pictures of blacks setting fire to Indians' homes and cars have filled your news magazines, along with facts that 600 blacks have been killed. President Reagan has reluctantly applied economic sanctions against South Africa, and you've heard his critics say he went too far or not far enough. You are fully aware that the blacks can't vote, and

their governmental system runs counter to the Western standards.

Most likely you don't hold the news media in the highest esteem, and sometimes you are downright suspicious. So let's take a look at what most journalists overlook.

South Africa is one of the world's two self-sufficient countries in mineral deposits. The other country is the Soviet Union. Ninety percent of all strategic minerals come from either racially-disturbed South Africa or our Cold War contenders.

The world's largest known deposits of chrome, manganese, vanadium and fluorspar andalusite are found within South Africa's borders. The country exports more gem diamonds than any other country, along with 70 percent of the free world's gold. But the Kruger-rand must take a back seat to South Africa's treasure of chrome and man-

ganese, upon which the world depends for 81 percent and 78 percent of those minerals respectively.

While digesting these vital statistics, please consider South Africa's strategic location. The Cape of Good Hope is rounded by nearly 26,000 ships each year, making this ocean pathway the site of the world's heaviest traffic. Europe looks to this "Lifeline of the West" for 80 percent of its oil, 25 percent of its food supply and 70 percent of NATO nations' strategically important minerals. One-fourth of America's oil travels by way of the Cape, which is passed by 32 oil tankers daily.

Any nation contemplating world control must first subdue South Africa.

The headlines of Tuesday's Battalion read "South Africa strikes rebels across border." According to the text of the story, Angola's Marxist government serves as a home base for South-West African guerrillas, who are fighting a

19-year war to dissect the mineral-rich territory known as Namibia from South Africa. Twenty-five thousand Cuban troops also share Angola's hospitality with the guerrillas of the South-West Africa People's Organization. When you consider that 10,000 of these guerrillas have been killed in this war, the death toll of 600 requires re-examination.

What about this notion of majority rule? On the surface, it seems reasonably plausible. However, South Africa is not divided into just blacks and whites. It is a nation of minorities. Communities with diverse languages, cultures, religions and economies shoulder one another, causing the Washington Post to describe South Africa as "the most vital and ambitious social laboratory in the world." Every group seeks survival and therefore is dependent on its neighbor.

Millions of blacks don't want to line up with other blacks or major tribes.

Majority rule holds no benefits for them. Only about half of all Africans may claim to have majority rule now, and they profess no form of democracy. As for the United Nations, which has repeatedly condemned South Africa, merely 20 percent of its member states have democratic majority rule.

Since 1952, 55 coups d'etat have stirred up the African continent, and military dictatorships and civilian one-party states dominate Africa's governments making you wonder if potential democracy would be followed by disastrous stability.

South Africa's interests are our interests, for the United States could wage a prolonged war without a supply line flowing steadily from South Africa. Similar arguments for overthrowing South Africa's government were leveled against Rhodesia in 1980, Zimbabwe now, and it's Marxist.

Cynthia Gay is a junior journalist and a staff writer for The Battalion.

U.S. corporations don't want to abandon their money

"If anything is certain to destroy our free society, to undermine its very foundations, it would be a widespread acceptance by management of social responsibilities in some sense other than to make as much money as possible. This is a fundamentally subversive doctrine."



Karl Pallmeyer

Milton Friedman, economist and Newsweek columnist, made that statement in 1958. Friedman is saying that the sole purpose of big business is to make tons of money despite the consequences it may have on others. It seems as if many American corporations practice the Friedman doctrine.

There are about 300 American corporations that have investments in South Africa. These corporations are obviously interested in making money. These corporations obviously don't care about the effects their investments have on the majority of the people in South Africa. These corporations obviously don't care that their investments are being used by the white minority in South Africa to deny the black majority basic civil rights.

Apartheid is a political, social and economic system of segregation and discrimination against non-white people of South Africa. Apartheid is enforced by a system of laws that prevent blacks and other non-whites, about 70 percent of the population, in South Africa from enjoying basic civil rights.

Because of apartheid, blacks cannot

vote or run for office. Because of apartheid blacks are not considered legal citizens of South Africa and are required to carry pass books when traveling from one place to another. Because of apartheid blacks cannot hold meetings or even publically speak out against the government. Because of apartheid blacks cannot own land and are required to live in certain areas called "homelands." These "homelands" are made up of only 13 percent of the land — the most barren and desolate land in the country. Because of apartheid blacks don't get paid as much as whites while the blacks are vital to the industries of South Africa.

The reason the South African government can oppress and subjugate so many of their people is power. The South African government has political power because of 300 years of white rule. The South African government has economic power because South Africa is one of the world's richest sources of minerals which are vital to many nations' strategic defense systems.

The United States and many American corporations trade items that the South African government needs to get these minerals. Until recently it seemed as if the United States and American corporations didn't care if blacks were used almost like slaves to get the minerals out of the ground and process them into usable forms. Until recently it seemed as if the United States and American corporations didn't care about anything as long as they got what they wanted.

Last week President Reagan ordered the implementation of most of the anti-apartheid provisions in a bill that Con-

gress probably would have passed over his veto. Reagan's order will ban computer exports to the South African military and law enforcement agencies, block the sale of nuclear technology, prohibit U.S. banks from lending money to the South African government unless the funds are used to help blacks and ban the importation of Kruggerands.

... the sole purpose of big business is to make tons of money despite the consequences it may have on others — Milton Friedman

Reagan wasn't doing anything brave or original, he was trying to save face by not having Congress pass sanctions over his veto. But maybe his order will do some good. Maybe this order will show the South African government that they need us as much as we need them. Maybe this order will show the South African government that the American people will not tolerate something as evil as apartheid.

After Reagan's announcement many companies decided to divest their funds in South Africa. Because Reagan has such an influence on big business many corporations have decided to abandon the Friedman doctrine and follow Reagan's lead. The money these corporations were losing due to the current economic situation in South Africa may have had a larger influence on their decision to divest.

Reagan's order has come under fire from many of his old friends who be-

lieve that imposing sanctions against South Africa is wrong. These critics say that without investments in South Africa we have no right to tell them what to do and that apartheid can only be stopped by working with their government. We have been "working" to end apartheid with the South African government for quite a long time now — that was Reagan's "constructive engagement" program. Constructive engagement has proven to be ineffectual, so the time has come for stronger methods.

Some people say that the blacks in South Africa don't deserve the right to representation. These people claim that the blacks belong to too many different tribes, come from such diverse cultures, hold many different religious and political beliefs and are not unified in their cause. The "majority," meaning most, of the South African people have no voice in the government that rules over them. Our government is set up to represent the wishes of the majority and to protect the rights of the minority.

By the way if you want to see how a group of people that comes from many different tribes, many diverse cultures and holds many different religious and political beliefs can rule themselves, take a look at our nation.

Some people say that America will lose the valuable South African minerals to the Soviets if we don't take care in our policies in South Africa. That is true.

If we are not careful and if we don't help the South African people, black and white, get together and work for a mutually beneficial government, the Soviets will take advantage of the internal strife and begin to help the subjugated

people overthrow their oppressors. When that new South African government takes power they will remember who helped them and who helped their former oppressors.

Friedman believes the sole purpose of big business is to make tons of money despite the consequences it may have on others. Big business and the American people must realize that if they don't work with a conscience, they stand to lose more than money.

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