

Opinion

Propositions 1 and 2 don't hold water

Texas needs an effective, comprehensive water plan to manage its diverse water problems. Propositions 1 and 2 are proposed state constitutional amendments aimed at solving some of our water woes. If the proposed amendments are ratified, Texas still will need an effective, comprehensive water plan.

The proposed amendments are really a massive bond issue designed to generate funds for the program. They establish low-interest loans for farmers to install high-efficiency conservation equipment. They deal with many important conservation issues untouched by previous water legislation, such as bay and estuary maintenance.

But the propositions don't contain specific goals, limitations or expenses.

They create a new bureaucratic hierarchy for groundwater management which has powers of taxation. The plan allocates most of the funds for reservoir constructions rather than conservation. The money for the reservoirs can be provided without taxpayers' approval, yet the specific sites for the reservoirs are not designated by the plan.

Part of Proposition 1 enables the Legislature to allocate an unlimited amount of funds for water assistance programs, essentially granting the Texas Water Commission a "blank check."

Texas desperately needs a good water management plan. We are using our water reserves faster than they are being replenished. But to effectively conserve this most vital natural resource, we need a plan that deals in specifics, not generalities.

Propositions 1 and 2 are not the answers. The Legislature must return to the drawing board — again. But they had better draft a new plan quickly. Time is running out for water in Texas.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. 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 be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

No right turns

EDITOR:

After reading Sylvia Pena's account (The Battalion, Oct. 22) the debate on the effects of the religious right on the First Amendment, I honestly wonder if she and I attended the same debate.

She quotes Fred Mason, the director of the Moral Majority in Texas, as describing the First Amendment as "made for all of us." She presents me as the censor, reporting that I said that the First Amendment is for everyone — except those who have radical ideas. The views are correctly stated; it is just that she tagged them with the wrong names.

I certainly did not say that "students should have the right to pray in schools, but giving them this right wouldn't be beneficial since Judeo-Christians probably would control it." My stated position was that religious clubs should be treated as any other student organization: that if they want to pray together before or after school then they should have the same status as the beekeeping club or the computer club.

On the other hand, the affable Mason listed three kinds of ideas which he, as a member of the Moral Majority, does not think are covered by the First Amendment: those that are "radical," those that are "unreasonable" and those that "violate national security." Since he offered no definition of these terms, I assume that he and his fellow right-wing religious zealots would make the call.

Pena was partially correct in reporting my claim that "there are portions of the Bible that are offensive to people." The passage that I paraphrased, Judges 19: 22-30, a passage which includes attempted homosexual rape, the gang-rape of a female, and her subsequent mutilation by her husband, was one which Mason himself professed to find disgusting. He apparently was not listening when I fed him the chapter and verse at the close of the paraphrase; he complained that I had brought up a book that he had not read and that it was one that he would certainly not read to his children. I maintained then, and still hold, that few of the books that the Moral Majority would like to take off the shelves of school libraries contain as many accounts of rape, incest, violence and overt sexist behavior as does the Bible.

If Mr. Mason's performance is any indication, much of the confusion and intolerance of the members of the Moral Majority must surely stem from the fact that they do not read the Bible.

During my 11 years as a faculty member at Texas A&M The Battalion has almost without exception quoted me fairly and correctly. But let me tell you, this article has caused me some problems: my friends and colleagues are now asking just when I took such a hard turn to the right.

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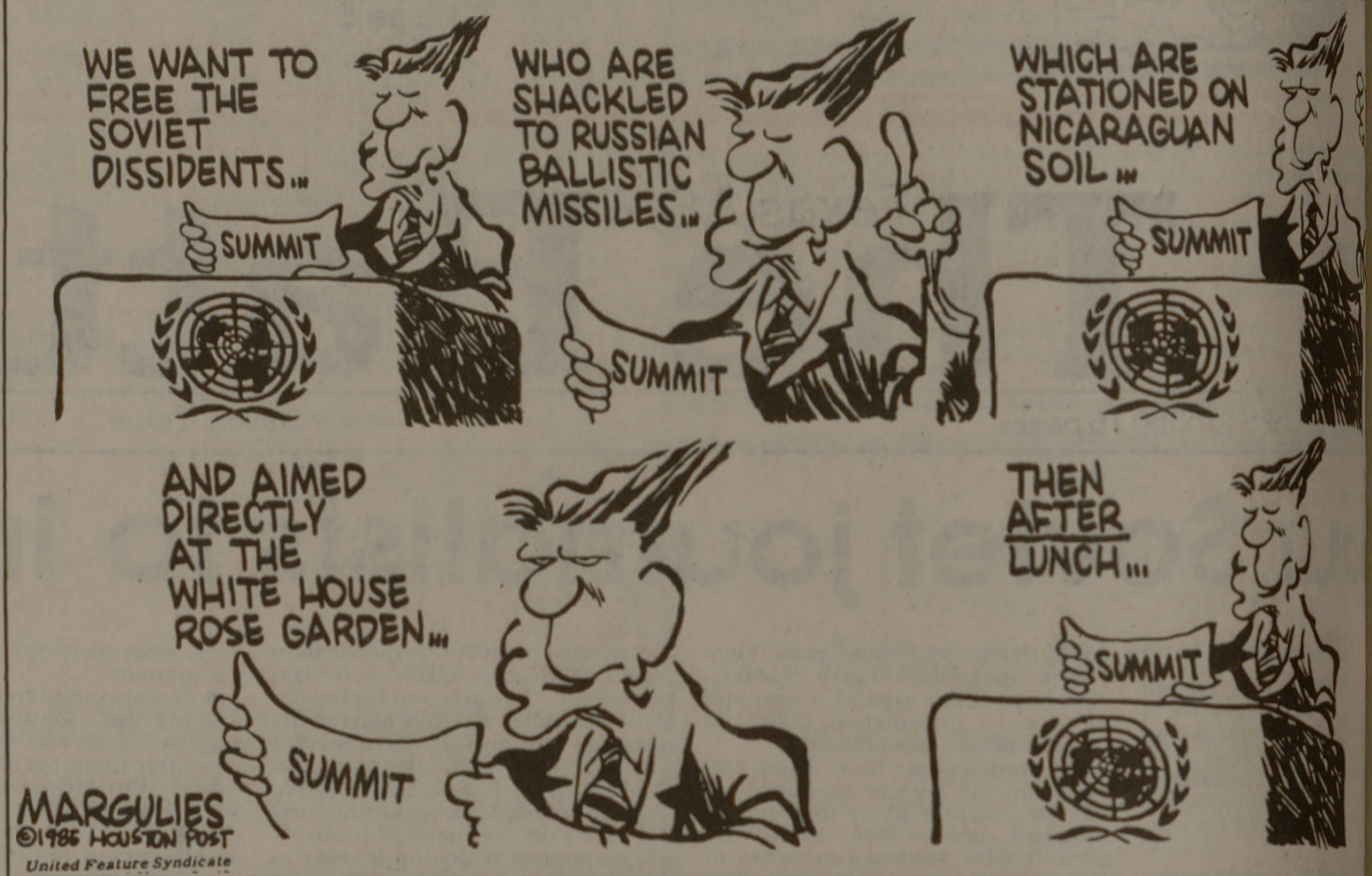
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The man behind the image

Every TV network is feverishly competing to get a presummit interview with Mikhail Gorbachev.



Art Buchwald

The person who will make the final decision is the incomparable Soviet image maker, Mik Deavervitch. It was Deavervitch who sold the Russian people on the fact that style was more important than substance. As Gorbachev's press chief during the recent Soviet elections, Deavervitch came up with the catchy slogan, "Vote for somebody who is red, but not dead."

So effective was Deavervitch's political strategy that when Konstantin Chernenko died, Gorbachev was elected less than five hours later — in a landslide. Since then Deavervitch has been consulted on everything Gorbachev does. He was responsible for advancing the secretary's trips to London and Paris as well as setting up photo opportunities with Margaret Thatcher, Francois Mitterand and Tip O'Neill.

Deavervitch has posed Gorbachev talking to nurses in a Lenin hospital, listening to hardhats in a Lenin auto works and shaking hands at a university with Lenin grads.

Not only does Deavervitch serve Gorbachev, but he also works for the Soviet

leader's wife. Moscow watchers say that Raisa Gorbachev, who is the real power in the Kremlin, does not make a move without first checking it out with Deavervitch.

This being the case I decided to pick up the phone and speak to the man. It was much easier than I thought.

The Soviet operator put me right through, after saying "Thank you for using ST&T."

"Mr. Deavervitch, I'm calling about the selection you have to make concerning the secretary's first American television appearance."

"We are noodling it. Goodbye."

"Wait a minute. How will you arrive at your decision?"

"I just received the overnight ratings from our KGB man in New York. Daniel Rather defeated Peter Jennings and Thomas Brokaw. What kind of a man is this Rather?"

"He's a very decent sort, but then again so are Jennings and Brokaw. The three are only a point apart."

"Our mole at ABC says a point means a million viewers. I cannot allow the Secretary to appear in a vast wasteland."

"So you're putting your boy on the 'Evening News'?"

"Not necessarily. We also are considering one of the morning shows. The secretary likes Phyllis' George very much."

"Phyllis is a fine interviewer, but unfortunately she no longer works on the

CBS morning show. What about tonight? Ted Koppel is hot right now.

"The secretary doesn't want a head-to-head with Johnny Carson. Since our leader is making only one TV appearance we're hoping for the top ten."

"Would Mr. Gorbachev consider walk-on part in 'Dallas'?"

"No, our Bulgarian agent in Hollywood reports it is full of filthy dancing crossing capitalists. What other would you suggest?"

"There is 'Entertainment Tonight,' 'Miami Vice,' 'The Phil Donahue Show,' and then my favorite, 'Wheel of Fortune.' The best thing about 'Wheel of Fortune' is Gorbachev will not have a large audience, but he will win some valuable prizes."

"It's not dignified. Tell me, Howard, what is this Howard Cosell?"

"He tells it like it is," I said.

"How do you mean 'like it is'?"

"Remember when Krushchev took off his shoe and banged it on the table. Well, if Howard doesn't agree with the person he is talking to he does that thing."

Art Buchwald is a columnist for Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

Apartheid protests Issue-oriented or just the latest fad

It has become stylish to protest apartheid. The reason I say "stylish" is that, just as in the 1960s, there seem to be a lot of people who are protesting without really thinking about what they are doing. They are just following the latest fad.

J. Byron Schlomach
Guest Columnist

I cannot see this. I also cannot see how tribal and interparty strife is preferable to a relatively stable government that is less oppressive. I want to know why no one is protesting black cruelties against blacks.

In many nations majorities (and minorities) are more cruelly treated than the blacks are in South Africa. In Russia, there can be no Desmond Tutus and "fact-finding" trips by Jesse Jackson and Edward Kennedy to identify cruelties. This never would be allowed. But then, such anti-apartheidists insist that we must not offend the Russians — we must be friends with Russia.

Other countries' anti-apartheidists, like Jackson and Kennedy, insist we must be more friendly with Nicaragua and Cuba, where religion, freedom of the press, and virtually every other civil right has been robbed from the people. Nicaragua and Cuba, as well as Russia, harshly oppress their own people and are professed aggressor nations. Yet, the anti-apartheid leaders have different standards for them as opposed to South Africa.

Today's anti-apartheid leaders, according to their actions and words, apparently believe the following:

- Only blacks (or at least those who would be minorities in the United States) are oppressed.
- They are oppressed only by whites.

• As long as it is a majority-owned "socialist" government, it is good.

• Russia has nuclear weapons. Therefore we must be friends with Russia, especially now that the chief butcher is so-o friendly.

• The United States is always wrong.

Many of today's anti-apartheidists (especially Jackson and Kennedy) are themselves racists. They ignore the crimes of some and support many who have committed very crimes they condemn. These racists must believe only whites are guilty, at least such crimes are bad only if two different races are involved.

I think President Reagan's policy of condemning the actions of all aggressive nations while trying to be peaceful and friendly with the much more consistent and right policy of sucking up to the blacks on the one hand while fomenting lution and fanning the flames of Africa on the other. The anti-apartheid movement just falls on its face when it recognizes the inconsistencies.

So, if you are a serious anti-apartheid, be consistent and carry on protecting Russia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique well. Then I will be proud to join you.

J. Byron Schlomach is a graduate student in economics.