

Opinion

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Catch-52

Fifty-two of the 1,199 teachers who twice failed the TECAT have been given emergency permits to teach another year, officials told the Senate Board of Education Saturday. Issuing only 52 waivers is good, but it could — and should — be better.

The permits were given to specialized instructors in building and industry trades, so these educators remain at the head of classes in Texas schools.

The state allowed the 6,579 teachers who failed the test once to take the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers again. Of these, 4,704, or 71.5 percent, passed.

School districts unable to replace their failed teachers were allowed to ask the Texas Education Agency for a one-time, one-year emergency extension for a teacher's permit.

Commissioner of Education William N. Kirby said 72 districts requested exceptions for 231 administrators and teachers who failed the tests. The TEA granted waivers to 52 teachers in 26 districts. Seven districts' requests are pending.

Kirby said only 52 teachers were given extensions because there is no teacher shortage to necessitate other waivers.

The state is working hard to build the quality of its public education. Hiring competent teachers is a key step toward the educational excellence we desire and our children deserve.

Finding competent teachers is not as easy as ridding the classroom of incompetent ones, but school districts should find replacements for the waiver-sustained teachers quickly.

The TECAT was a method to measure such basic skills as reading, writing and arithmetic. Against the state's best interest, those who failed were allowed to retake the test. Those who failed a second time clearly do not belong in the classroom — even by emergency waiver.

Reagan won't play 'tit-for-tat' games

Kids play the game of tit for tat. Hit someone and hours later he can hit you back, sing-songing "tit for tat." Big powers play the same game, only they call it equivalency. Arrest a Soviet spy in New York and, within a week, a Moscow-based American journalist is arrested on spying charges. The Soviets, though, don't understand our rules. We are not going to play.



Richard Cohen

If you are looking for equivalency you can find it only in the fact that both Nicholas Daniloff and the arrested Russian, Gennadiy Zakharov, do not enjoy diplomatic immunity. But there it stops. Zakharov probably is a spy; Daniloff is not. Zakharov was a government employee; Daniloff works for a private American firm, *U.S. News and World Report*. In the eyes of the Soviets these things do not matter. To our eyes they do, and greatly. Among other things, they distinguish our system from the Soviet one.

But we, too, have made our miscalculations. It is doctrine among American hard-liners that Ronald Reagan's bark is much worse than his bite, and they cite, as an example, his willingness to sell subsidized grain to the Soviet Union. But it is a given in the Soviet Union that Reagan's bark represents the real man, his most deeply held views. The grain sale to the Soviets is a mere nothing compared to what they think are Reagan's real designs for their country. In the Soviet Union, Reagan's rhetoric has had exactly the same impact Nikita Khrushchev's once did in our country. He said he would bury us, and we never forgot it.

It goes without saying that no one this side of the Kremlin wall knows for sure what the Soviet leadership is up to. But certain guesses can be made and one of them is that the Soviets simply have had it with us. They are tired of being pushed around, and from their point of view, they have been. This is the perspective I gained from a recent trip to the Soviet Union where, underneath the surface cordiality, there was an undercurrent of anger.

Let me give some examples — taken from a discussion with a top Soviet specialist on American affairs. In this man's view, the United States had been treat-

ing Russia as if it were a "Third World power." He cited U.S. support for covert wars in Marxist Nicaragua and Angola. He mentioned the U.S. invasion of Grenada, another state friendly to Moscow. He recalled the bombing of Libya and warnings directed toward Syria, a Soviet ally and not just a friendly state. He listed all of Mikhail Gorbachev's initiatives in arms control, most of them rebuffed by the United States, some for good reason.

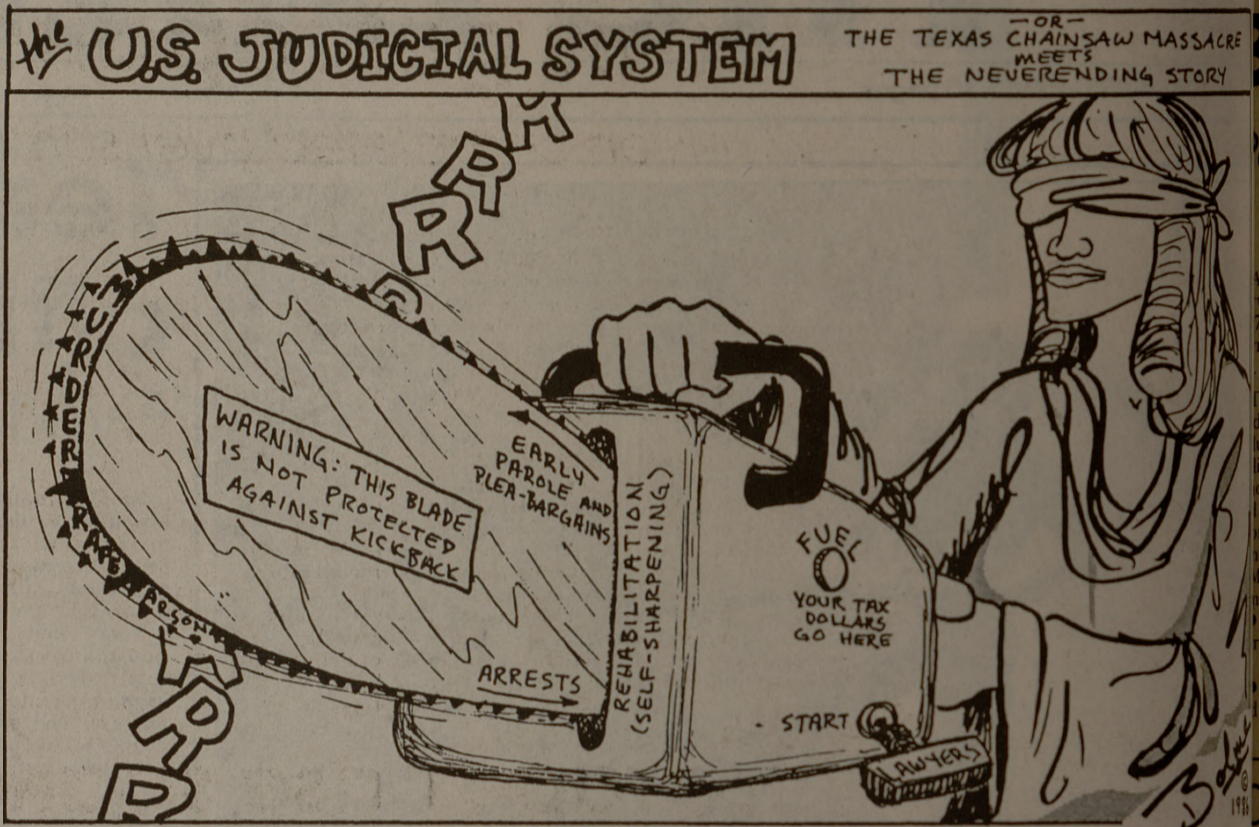
The Soviet specialist did not mention Afghanistan. His view was distinctly one-sided and biased, but is worth relating because of his evident anger. He was aware of the administration's rhetoric and of the belief among some key government officials that the Soviet Union is something of a paper tiger, a declining world power with an obsolete and unworkable economy. He referred to that and, finally, he mentioned the U.S. naval maneuver in which two destroyers entered the Black Sea and came close to the Russian coast. He called that provocative and, worse, insulting.

Now it is the turn of the Soviet Union to be insulting and, if you will, to break the rules of engagement. The arrest of Daniloff, for whatever reason and whatever the background, is a frame-up, pure and simple. The issue this time is not Soviet sensitivities, not a question of honor or even, as with the destroyers, of alleged territorial integrity but what is basic to our system and our values. People are not pawns.

To the Soviets, it might have seemed that they were merely engaging in the age-old game of equivalency. But no one who has seen Daniloff's wife, Ruth, on television can think that's the case. Business cannot go on as usual as long as Daniloff is detained, and there is a good chance now that both the summit and, for a time, U.S.-Soviet relations will suffer.

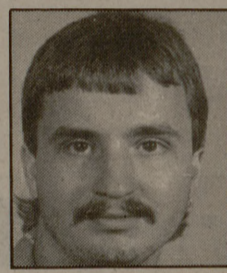
Nick Daniloff is not a hostage; Soviet-American relations are. Maybe the Reagan administration miscalculated when it used rhetoric that cheered Americans but insulted the Russians and then, after the arrest of Daniloff, publicly demanded that the Soviets back down. But those miscalculations are nothing compared to what the Soviets have done. If the Kremlin wants to play tit for tat with Nick Daniloff, it is dangerously ignorant of the sort of people we are and what matters most to us — the freedom of a single man. When it comes to that, nothing is equivalent.

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U.S. response to Pinochet just a slap on the hand

The Reagan administration expressed concern over Chile's General Augusto Pinochet's decision to impose a state-of-siege, banning news dispatches by the Reuters news agency and closing six opposition magazines. Five foreign priests and several opposition leaders also were arrested.



Craig Renfro

Under the emergency decree the government is allowed to tap telephones, open mail, hold prisoners in secret locations indefinitely, ban public gatherings and censor the press.

The administration's reaction is nothing more than a slap on the hand, and similar to the way it first reacted to growing dissension over Ferdinand Marcos' rule in the Philippines and Jean Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier's reign in Haiti.

When Pinochet overthrew the Marxist regime of Salvador Allende in September 1973, Chile's citizenry rejoiced. Democratic government at last, they thought.

Pinochet's military junta had the support of the middle class and several right-wing movements. However, it soon became apparent that the military officers in power had their own political objectives, and the basic human rights of the citizens were not among them.

Pinochet soon faced world criticism for political repression, torture and news censorship. After the United Nations General Assembly reported that Chile was violating human rights, Pinochet ordered a national referendum Jan. 4, 1978, which upheld his government.

In 1980, Pinochet wrote a constitution that will allow him to stay in power for the next 25 years. This further alienated those who were upset with the policies of Pinochet's military rule.

The politics of the new government caused unemployment and a decline in real wages and the standard of living. In addition, all left-wing political groups have been repressed by Pinochet's powerful dictatorship.

This summer, during a two-day general strike by the citizens of Chile, six people were shot to death. One of those murdered was an American photographer whose body was burned after he was shot.

The citizens demanded free elections and a return to a democratic form of government.

On Sept. 7 an assassination attempt was made on Pinochet's life. Although the attempt failed, five escorts were killed and 10 were wounded. The attack followed a month of highly publicized government claims concerning the discoveries of large hidden caches of automatic rifles, rocket launchers and explosives in Santiago.

On Tuesday the government arrested

16 left-wing dissidents in a crackdown after the attempt on the leader's life. Under the emergency decree they can be held indefinitely without charge.

In addition, the government has decided that to censor means to kill. Carrasco Tapia, editor of an opposition magazine, was dragged from his home and brutally murdered Tuesday, a move that Pinochet will stop at nothing to ensure his power.

Since then the government has had an Italian news agency and expelled three French Roman Catholic priests. Later in the week riot police arrested several hundred people, about half of them journalists, who had gathered for Tapia's funeral.

Pinochet said, "Now the war is to begin from our side... all those people involved in human rights and other things are going to be expelled from the country or locked up."

In 1974, it was learned that the United States funneled more than \$1 million through the CIA to overthrow the Allende government. Pinochet received most of that money.

For an adequate return on its investment the United States should demand free congressional and municipal elections. If Pinochet should refuse the election, economic sanctions or direct intervention is the only course of action lest Chile become another Haiti.

Mail Call

'Neanderthal' a compliment

EDITOR:

Karl Pallmeyer's column (Sept. 11) about the lack of culture in Bryan-College Station goes far to show what's lacking in Karl. He used a comparison with Neanderthals to put down the football team. But in his attempt, he really was the author of a great compliment.

Homo sapiens neanderthalensis skull shows that he had a larger brain than we do. His Broca's area, the seat of speech, was large enough to demonstrate that he perfected language. His brain was just as complex as ours. What's more, Neanderthal man was the first to be associated with evidence of religion and altruism. In addition to this, his appearance was virtually indistinguishable from ours.

As I read the column, somehow the word "hypocrite" came to mind. People who live in glass houses...

Margaret Shannon

No apology required

EDITOR:

It sounds as though my brother in Christ, Mike Foarde, owes Marco Roberts an apology for insensitivity in handling information on the death of Roberts' friend (*The Battalion*, Sept. 10). But Foarde owes no one an apology for his literal interpretation of the Bible.

Roberts tried to discredit such an interpretation by citing a passage in Genesis that refers to a dome of water around the Earth. That none of the 20th century's space missions has encountered this dome is explained in Genesis 7:11, when the contents of this reservoir are deposited on the earth in the Great Flood.

Even those who reject the Flood of Noah as a historical event must acknowledge that the Bible's account is consistent within itself (and that the preserved remains of dinosaurs that archaeologists find today would have required some sort of preservative medium to keep them intact; the sediment deposited by a worldwide deluge would meet this requirement).

For Roberts' benefit, here are some entries for his index of Bible verses that can be taken literally: blood is

the principal fluid of animal life (Leviticus 17:14), the atmosphere exerts pressure on the earth (Job 28:25), clouds contain particulate matter, such as dust (Nahum 1:3) and man's body is made of the elements of the Earth (Genesis 2:7).

Even those who don't believe these words were written under the inspiration of the giver of natural law must acknowledge that they were written centuries before these facts were verified by science!

I apologize to Roberts for the un-Christlike behavior my brethren (I've been guilty too, Marco). But having looked at what the Bible says about the past, I beg him to consider literally its explanation of the present and predictions for the future.

Bill Hough '88

Light from the 'black hole'

EDITOR:

I'd just like to say a few things about the cultural "black hole" that Karl Pallmeyer discussed in his Sept. 11 column. Once again he sees only what he wants to. There is some light escaping from that black hole right here on campus.

I'm talking about one of the best kept secrets at Texas A&M — the Aggie Players. The Aggie Players is the production company of the Department of Speech Communication/Theatre Arts. This year alone we are producing a comedy, a Tony Award-winning musical, a Greek tragedy and a Pulitzer Prize-winning drama.

If that is not cultural enough for Pallmeyer, we are bringing back members of The Royal Shakespeare Company and The National Theatre of Great Britain. As we did last year, we will have a film and lecture series on Shakespeare and his works. The Aggie Players offer all this for less than the price of one ticket for a Broadway musical.

So there is culture at A&M. It is not that hard to find.

Troy Herbert

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editor 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.

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