

# Opinion

## The Battalion

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The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

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## Overdue resolution

Tonight the Student Senate once again will consider a resolution calling for the divestment of Texas A&M funds from South Africa after tabling the measure Oct. 8. The resolution should be passed in hopes that it may encourage the Board of Regents to consider student opinion on apartheid.

The regents have ignored Student Against Apartheid's requests to discuss divestment. The board's claim that the divestment issue is up to the Legislature is a blatant attempt to shirk responsibility for investments by the Texas A&M University System.

The Senate already has approved a "moral condemnation" of apartheid, but a stronger statement should be made. Aside from simply stating moral opposition to this repugnant form of government-supported racism, our student representatives should go on record as urging the regents to take action against apartheid.

Given the regents' previous concern for student opinion on the subject, the resolution probably will wind up in the trash can.

But the Senate should do what it can within its power to show that A&M students do not support funding of human rights oppression. We can't sow the seeds of social conscience in the regents' minds, but the Senate resolution can make the students' views clear and put the ball back in the board's court.

## Mail Call

### Memories of youth

EDITOR:

While reading Cathie Anderson's column (Friday's *Battalion*), and for many a moment thereafter, I found myself returning to my likewise long-lost days of youth. We all can learn valuable lessons about today by reliving the pleasant and not-so-pleasant memories.

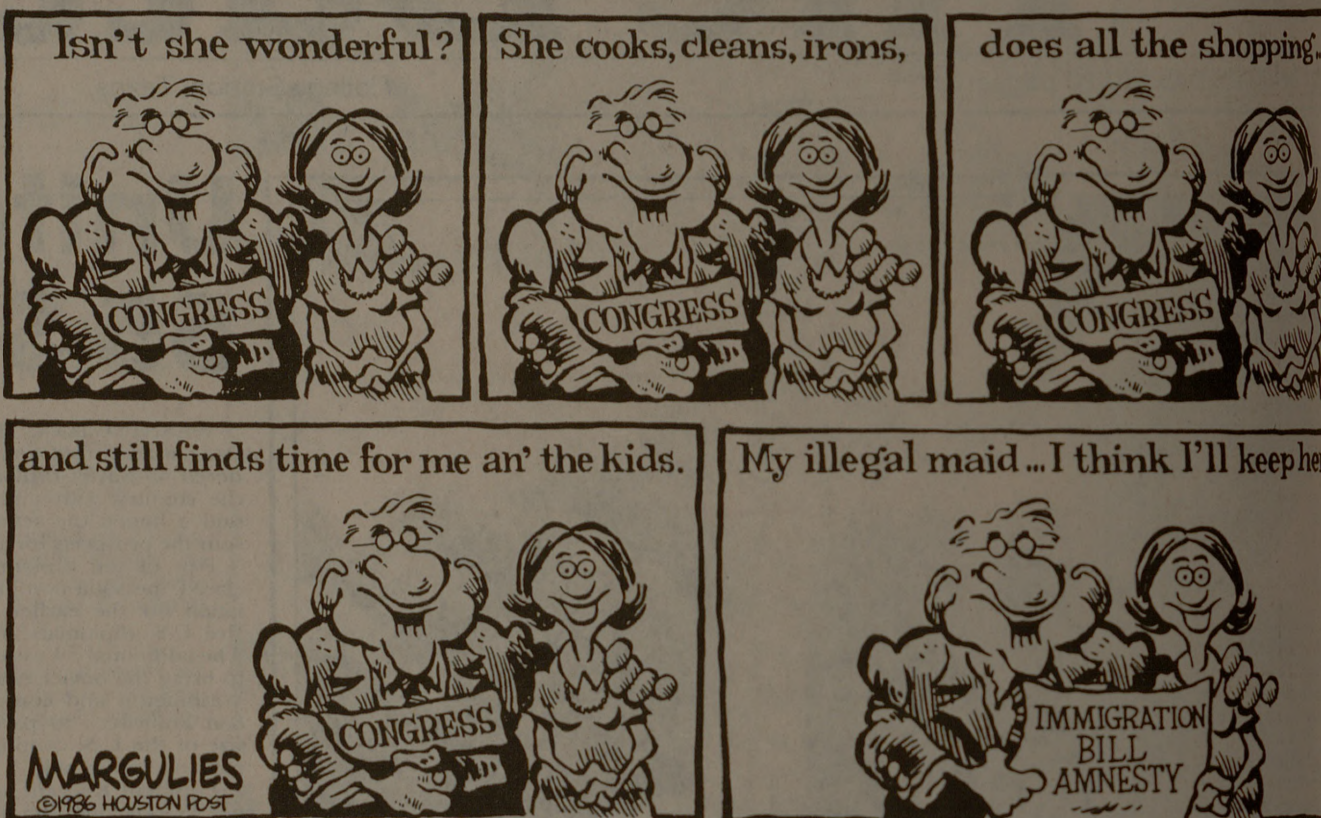
What made Anderson's piece so realistic for me was the manner in which she included sibling dialogue. Virtually all I had to do was insert other names and the story was almost the same. What is especially nice about my own particular situation is the way we four "kids" have grown to be such close friends in spite of numerous tooth-and-nail, fight-to-the-death conflicts.

I am similar to Anderson in that my upbringing was rural. Being from the Lubbock area I remember cotton fields, biting winter winds, the alternately despised and anticipated dust storms, livestock shows, street dances during Homecoming, (one of the best July Fourth celebrations and excursions to the serenity of neighboring mountain states — it is all there and neatly packaged for instant recall.

Thanks, Anderson, for helping me to forget (for five minutes anyway) about University-scale population density and educational stress and remember lost youth that might not be so lost after all.

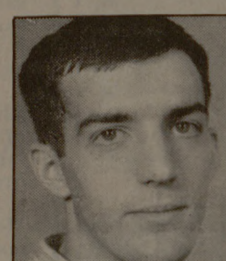
Bradley T. Bowen '85

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.



## Wanted: American pilots for Central American flights

Eugene Hasenfus has been charged by the Marxist Sandinista government with the crime of terrorism and violating public order. This was done at a formal hearing before "a revolutionary tribunal." One would think the Nicaraguans could do better than that. Perhaps the tribunal decided the terrorism charge would milk more publicity and induce a more severe punishment than a charge of gun smuggling or illegal entry.



Mark Ude

Set up three years ago, this court is made up of a lawyer and two lay people, who are usually politically active in the Sandinista regime. Their main job is to prosecute those accused of counter-revolutionary activities, whatever they may be.

In other words, they can avoid the direct due process and get on with stringing up political targets.

Hasenfus, after bailing out of the C-123 that was inconveniently shot down by the Sandinistas, had no reservations about claiming that the CIA was funding not only the shortened flight that he

was on, but also many others like it. This provided opponents the opportunity to question the involvement of the Reagan administration's present support of Nicaraguan rebels.

There were many suspicious questions left unanswered. First off, CIA Director William Casey denied any knowledge of the doomed flight's operations to Congress. And even more intriguing, Hasenfus was a former employee of a CIA-owned company during the Vietnam conflict, and the former chief pilot of that airline approached him a few months ago and asked him to work for another airline that was owned by a firm previously owned by the CIA. The previous head of this former CIA-owned airline was a former CIA director, and the current head is a lawyer who did legal work for the airline when it was under CIA ownership.

It's as clear as day.

The CIA definitely is running the show. President Reagan doesn't know what he's talking about when he suggests that perhaps free-lance groups are in action. Everybody knows that once a person is associated with the CIA, one is on the payroll, under the authority of and responsible to the CIA, no matter what.

President Reagan even goes as far to suggest that maybe there is a slight com-

parison between these free-lance organizations and other groups such as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Worse yet, he claims the U.S. government has no control over such volunteer forces. But that really got the surviving members of the brigade fired up! They went over to Spain in 1938 "to fight against fascism and for freedom." Reagan also seems oblivious to the fact that the brigade was defending the leftists, instead of fighting them like the Contras in Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, we may never know the exact circumstances of the Hasenfus incident because of the political atmosphere. The Sandinistas are parading Hasenfus before the international press but no one has been permitted to talk to him privately, not even his "defense" lawyer.

The U.S. government is not the only participant in the Central American struggle. As long as the Sandinistas remain in power, the rebels will need supplies.

So, kiddies, if you're interested in adventure, just pick up the latest issue of *Soldier of Fortune* or maybe even a back issue of some survivalist magazine. Now that the CIA is going to take the rap on arms shipments in Central America there might be some job openings in South-of-the-Border airlines.

Mark Ude is a senior geography major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.

## A&M shouldn't fund South African atrocities

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a two-part series on divestment of Texas A&M's funds from South Africa.

As an African historian it is my profession to disseminate knowledge about Africa. It is particularly important that information on South Africa be made available because there are many instant "experts" on the country who have been spreading inaccurate or misleading information in an effort to make Americans fear what an apartheid-free, democratic South Africa might look like.

Racially discriminatory laws have been a fundamental part of life for the black majority in South Africa since that nation obtained its independence from Great Britain in 1910. But it was only with the national election of 1948 (in which only whites could take part) that the all-encompassing system of white supremacy called apartheid (literally, "separateness") came into existence.

Apartheid is not just segregation, such as existed in the American South for many decades after the Civil War, but a system of total political, economic and social domination by the white minority over the "non-white" majority. It is a system of laws written only by whites that designates 87 percent of South African territory for whites only — whites constitute about 15 percent of the total population — and leaves the remaining 13 percent for blacks, who constitute 72 percent of the total population of some 31 million people (1985 est).

The idea is to deny blacks any basis for political participation in government by "de-nationalizing" them, denying them the possibility of citizenship in South Africa by creating artificial, supposedly independent "tribal homelands" in which all blacks are expected to become citizens.

To reach the theoretical goal of total territorial separation, the South African government has removed forcibly since 1960 some 3.5 million black

men, women and children from whites-only land (where they are said to constitute "black spots") to the black "homelands," where there is little or no work and the land is invariably barren. These "homelands" have aptly been described as dumping grounds.

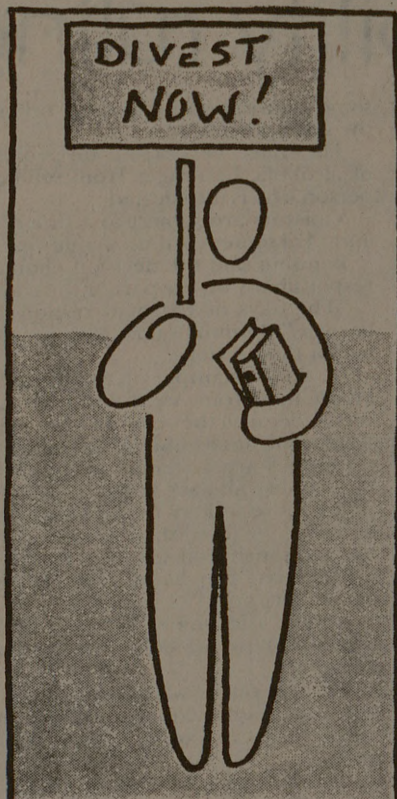
To repress any black resistance to this plan the government of South Africa has enacted since 1948 a series of draconian police-state measures. Among other things these policies have led to the killing of more than 2,000 blacks since September 1984 (when the current cycle of black defiance began). Some 13,000 people, many of them children, have been arrested and detained without any form of due process of law or even access by family. It is well-established that the South African government systematically tortures its detainees.

Under current legislation, anyone who publicly speaks in favor of the abolition of apartheid, or simply states that blacks and whites should be equal before the law, is liable to arrest and conviction as a "communist" or "subversive." It is against the law for anyone, white or black to advocate the application of international economic sanctions against the South African regime.

For South African blacks, the land of their birth has become a horrendous nightmare of political

repression, denial of the most elemental human rights, and, all too frequently, death.

During the 1950s all the non-violent efforts of black political parties to protest the imposition of apartheid met with government-sponsored violence: dogs, night-sticks and bullets.



In 1960, following the police killing of 69 unarmed blacks in Sharpeville — many shot in the back as they fled the scene — the government outlawed the major black opposition parties, including the African National Congress (founded in 1912), whose current head, Nelson Mandela, remains in prison nearly 25 years after his conviction for seeking the end of apartheid.

Most Americans, of course, find this system repugnant. The question is what to do. First, what have Americans done, particularly in the years since 1948? While most Americans remained unconcerned or unaware about South Africa, many American businessmen saw fit to place substantial investments in South Africa during the period that apartheid was being constructed.

American businesses flocked to the country to take advantage of the higher-than-average returns on investment afforded by a system that kept black wages at a level one-fourth to one-twentieth of those paid to whites.

Some 350 U.S. companies operate currently in South Africa. The most recent accounting places U.S. direct and indirect investment at 10 billion, of which the overwhelming bulk came since 1948.

American investment has been in industries strategically important to the South African government: computers, oil, automotive vehicles. Not surprisingly, many South African blacks see the effect of foreign investment as serving to strengthen the apartheid regime. Since at least 1959 black leaders have called for the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa as the only non-violent means that outsiders have to help bring about the abolition of apartheid. Comprehensive, effective sanctions will help to reduce the amount of bloodshed in the inevitable process of dismantling apartheid.

Finally Congress has come to see the logic of these arguments, recently voting to override President Reagan's veto of a sanctions bill. The fight to override in the Senate was led by Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind. His action demonstrates that non-partisan economic action against South Africa is not a partisan issue.

Why would a conservative like Lugar take the politically dangerous step of breaking with the head of his party and lead so many of his fellow Republicans in voting for sanctions? Because the South African government has left no other alternative. It is in America's own interest to impose sanctions, to do what we can to express our disapproval and to raise the cost to white South Africa of maintaining its abhorrent system of racial domination.

This then is one of the principal reasons for universities like Texas A&M to divest themselves of their investments in South Africa. Some 120 colleges and universities already have undertaken total or partial divestment of securities in companies that continue to do business in South Africa. It's time for A&M to join them.

Larry Yarak is an assistant professor of history.