

Opinion

The Battalion

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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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Big bucks, small change

When General Motors and International Business Machines announced plans to disinvest from South Africa, apartheid opponents were quick to commend them. But the congratulations were premature. The corporations' decisions were made for the wrong reasons and by themselves will have little effect on the government-sanctioned racism practiced in South Africa.

GM and IBM didn't go through the motions of disinvestment because of a sudden awakening of concern for the oppression of South African blacks. They pulled out because it was economically advantageous, complying with social outcry was merely coincidental. It did wonders to boost their images as businesses with consciences.

IBM actually will make money on disinvestment. It will distance itself on a corporate level, but still enjoy profits from the sale of products and parts in the South African market. In addition, IBM is providing a loan to the local investors who are buying their operations. In return, the investors get a three-year renewable contract for importing and selling IBM products, a five-year contract on spare parts and access to future technology.

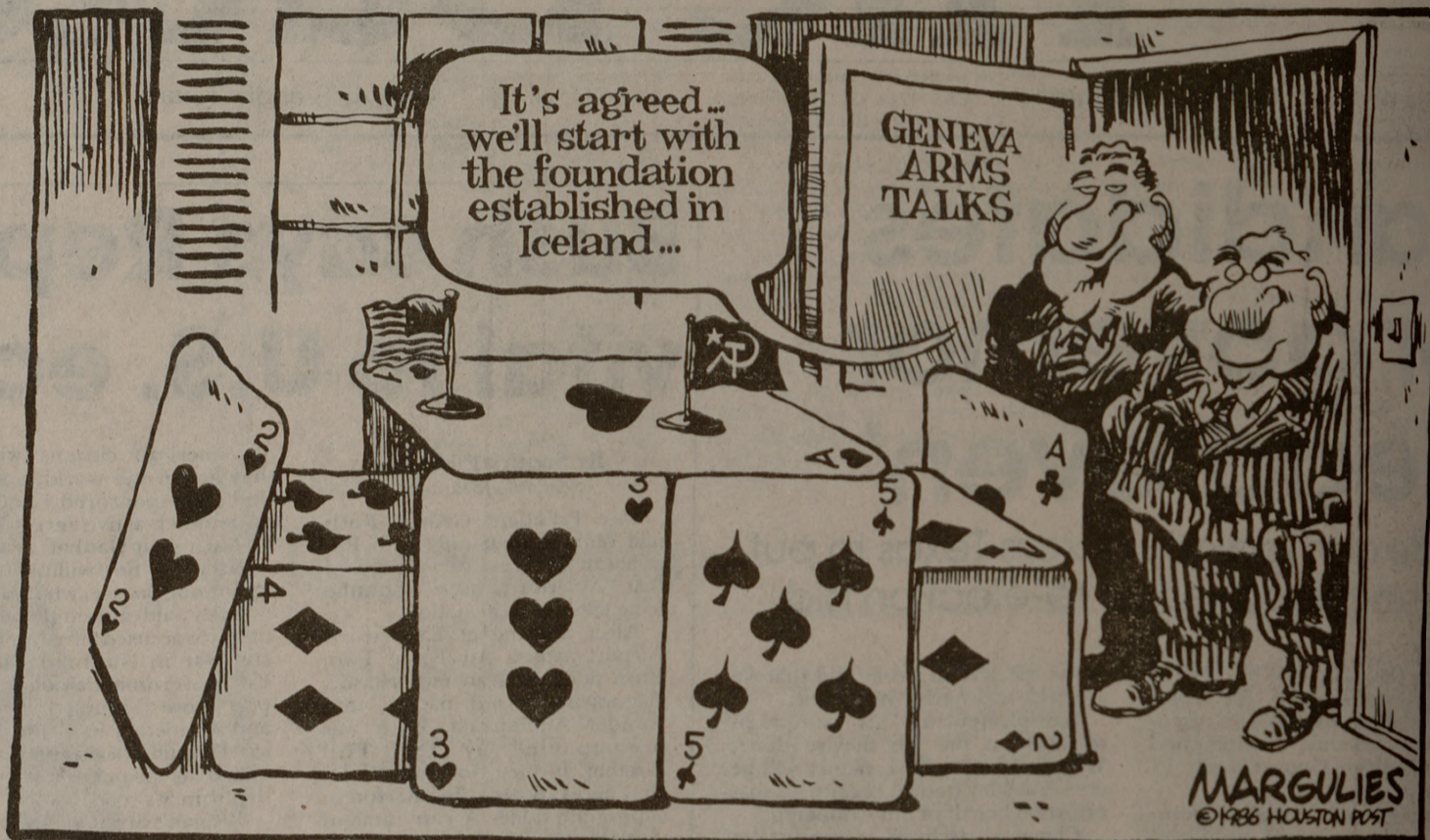
GM has made similar arrangements to unload GM S.A. Ltd., the company's South African subsidiary. GM hasn't made a profit in South Africa since 1981 and will just have to export its product and watch the money roll in. But it claims the disinvestment decision is based on South Africa's failure to abolish apartheid.

The corporations' actions are a good first step, but they're not enough. Business in South Africa still will be conducted as usual but under different terms. Technically, IBM and GM have withdrawn their investments. But their products are still available and their former subsidiaries will continue to enjoy the profits.

South African investors realize the companies' moves will have minimal impact. What they fear is intensified anti-apartheid sentiment in the United States that might result in a total cutoff of the products. Despite their new-found social consciences, GM and IBM aren't willing to go this far.

IBM and GM once again have shown that morality isn't an entry in the profit-oriented corporate dictionary. Until companies are willing to commit unconditionally to disinvestment, until they are willing to put human rights ahead of the bottom line, apartheid will continue to prosper.

Only when U.S. corporations show they are as concerned with where their money goes as they are with how much is coming in, will they deserve commendation for battling apartheid.



Why are all men responsible for Sinatra's bad manners?



Lewis Grizzard

I recently completed Kitty Kelley's blockbuster, "His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra," and you know what I think?

I think it was Frank Sinatra who single-handedly started the women's movement.

I'm serious here. Frank Sinatra, if the book is to be believed, used and abused about half the female population of this country beginning way back in the '40s.

I think what all these women did was hold a meeting and what they decided was to make all males pay the price for what Sinatra had done to them.

This not only led to the women's movement, it led to Donahue, Cagney and Lacey, an overabundance of female products being advertised on television and, worst of all, Joan Rivers getting her own TV talk show.

If you're a man, you have to read this book. If you're a woman, please don't. We are in enough trouble with you people as it is.

Ol' Blue Eyes did such things as not showing up for the birth of his first two children. He sent his publicist instead.

Later, his first wife, Nancy, was hostess at Frank's New Year's Eve party. She noticed a stacked showgirl who was wearing a ring like the one her husband had given her.

As a matter of fact, it was Nancy's ring. Sinatra was supposed to have taken it to a jeweler for repairs, but he gave it to Miss Boobs instead.

"I felt like killing myself," said the first Mrs. Sinatra, whom he later dumped for Ava Gardner.

Ava Gardner later dumped him because he wanted her to give up her career and cook him spaghetti. So Frank started dating Judy Garland.

He dumped her for wanting to marry him. Then, he went out with Elizabeth Taylor. She got pregnant, and Sinatra made her get an abortion. Then, he issued her walking papers.

Sinatra decided then, no more Mr. Nice Guy.

At a party in Palm Springs, he got mad at an unnamed female and threw her through a plate-glass window.

One of the girl's arms nearly was severed. Sinatra paid her off to keep her quiet.

At a dinner party, he once said to a pathetic and drunken Marilyn Monroe, "Shut up, Norma Jean. You're so stupid, you don't know what you're talking about."

He insulted a young Natalie Wood while he was dating her to the point she often would run out of a crowded room in tears.

He called Nancy Reagan "a dope with fat ankles," he married Mia Farrow and then trashed her, and then he stole Zeppo Marx's wife, Barbara, whom he later married and called "the dumbest broad I ever met."

There is much, much more. Sinatra comes out of Kitty Kelley's book as a monster, an arrogant, spoiled jerk.

Sinatra would never apologize for any of this in the past, and he certainly wouldn't do it now.

But can I apologize for him? May I say to the female population that as bad as some of the rest of us are, we're not even close to Frank Sinatra when it comes to pigdom?

Let's be friends, again, ladies, and maybe as soon as Sinatra does the world a favor and leaves it, we can accomplish just that.

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Despite fears, 'classroom cops' all bark, no bite

"Today, class, we're going to discuss Karl Marx and the role his writings played in world politics," the professor begins.

In the back of the classroom a button is pressed, a distress signal sent. In a few minutes, uniformed guards burst into the classroom.

"Silence!" they shout. "Academic Police!"

The stormtroopers pummel the instructor into submission and drag his unconscious form from the room.

In the back of the class, the informant for Accuracy in Academia grins. The classroom has once again been made safe.

Such a scenario, of course, never happened and probably never will, but it reflects the anxiety with which many academicians anticipated the growing power of AIA, Reed Irvine's self-appointed classroom monitors.

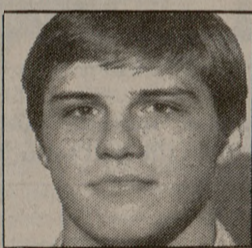
It's been more than a year since AIA announced it would be monitoring college classes for "liberal bias," but despite the early fears of academic freedom infringement, AIA has turned out to be little more than a paper tiger in watchdog's clothing.

The group has dropped its plans to monitor classes and is instead focusing on free-speech issues and academic controversies, particularly those attacking — you guessed it — conservatives. Most of these articles are "look at those horrible liberals suppressing free speech" redundancies. When conservatives engage in similar acts of suppression, the group is predictably silent. AIA has attempted to turn campus free-speech violations into an ideological issue, instead of an intolerance issue that knows no partisan boundaries.

But the group's greatest accomplishment, it claims, is that students, especially — you guessed it — conservative students, are more willing to challenge their professors. If that's the case, then even the instructors themselves should be ecstatic that AIA infiltrated academia.

Ask the average college professor to describe the average student, and you'll get such descriptions as "brain dead," "zombies" and "doorknobs."

A more realistic classroom scenario doesn't involve Academic Police. Instead the professor stands at the front of the class trying desperately to pry a response — any sign of life — out of a sea of



Loren Steffy

silent students. Questions that were meant to spark a discussion become painfully rhetorical, as students faithfully, mechanically, write down the instructor's every word without bothering to mentally savor what is being spoon-fed to them.

What teacher wouldn't feel a sense of accomplishment if a student was motivated to the point of saying, "I disagree with you; there's another side to this?"

But this is neither AIA's intent nor achievement. Instead the group flaunts its politics, mixing them with its "mission." Academia is not perfect, and a little watchdogging might do some good in some areas. But not if the watchdogs are lapdogs of a political ideology first. Far more will come of the recently formed Carnegie Forum than AIA. Despite its harsh criticism of higher education, improving the quality of education is the forum's primary goal, not championing a political majority that pretends to be oppressed.

AIA leapt at the academic community, to use director Les Csorba's description in an AIA column of scholars' pursuit of academic freedom, "with all the restraint, dignity and erudition of hogs charging the morning trough." But countless unfounded accusations, sloppy reporting and a lawsuit later, AIA is eating humble pie.

The "exposes" of alleged liberal misdoings on campuses were compiled from hearsay and unreliable sources. In some cases attempts to verify sources were done months after accusations had been printed. Fortunately, no professors lost their jobs because of AIA attacks. In fact, the group's claims were largely ignored by even the most conservative colleges and universities.

After a year of such pathetic tripe, AIA has proved itself a mere sham of its original prowess — the group cried "liberal bias" once too often. If students feel they're being subjected to such bias — and in some cases they undoubtedly are — they

should speak out. But the desire to challenge a professor's views should come from an internal need or desire, not from political peer pressure.

Assertion, self-motivation, confidence and tolerance of different views are part of the learning process as much as textbooks, research papers and all-night study sessions. But these qualities are denied to students who rely on a goon squad of self-proclaimed classroom monitors to stand up and shout "liberal bias" for them.

Luckily, no Academic Police storm the classroom. Their "law" has no authority, no backbone and deserves no respect. AIA may continue its paper tiger role of playing classroom cops for years to come, but its scare tactics ignore a higher law — for starters, the First Amendment.

Loren Steffy is a senior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor for *The Battalion*.

Mail Call

The rest of the bike story

EDITOR:

I feel that Robert Morris' article on super-sport bikes (Oct. 28) was incomplete. I have been riding motorcycles for 13 years, and feel that I know the hazards of riding. The worst hazard for the cyclist is the semi-senile lady blindly piloting her 4,000-pound Cadillac through parking lots and roadways. It is not the leaf in the middle of the road. Most of the single-vehicle accidents that reportedly are caused by the "advent of the super-sport bike" are the result of the rider trying to avoid an incompetent driver's judgement error.

In such a situation, the rider has two choices: go off the road onto a gravel shoulder and try to make a safe recovery, or lay the bike down and slide. A lot of the time car drivers do not even know that they are at fault. If auto drivers exercised the same caution that cyclists do, accidents would decrease even more than they already have.

Tim L. Mahaffey '87

Appalled at the coverage

EDITOR:

I was appalled at the anti-Semitic article by Olivier Uyttebrouck (Oct. 31) that expressed sympathy to the Palestine Liberation Organization. It is unfortunate that in the aftermath of the Istanbul massacre of 22 Jewish

people, *The Battalion* published pro-terrorist propaganda, failing even to mention the victims of Arab terrorism. In an attempt to equate the PLO with its victim, the author did not say a word about the crimes that Palestinian Arab terrorists continue to perpetuate, instead he quoted old Palestinian propaganda, such as calling Nobel Peace Prize winner Menachem Begin a "Zionist extremist." The truth is that Arab terrorists are attacking people indiscriminately, targeting Jews and non-Jews everywhere, trying to kill as many people as possible.

It is unfortunate that Uyttebrouck is trying to make *The Battalion* a forum for racism and anti-Semitism. *The Battalion* devoted a lot of space to apartheid and ignored the discrimination and racism that exists in the Soviet Union, which is also a primary sponsor of Arab terrorism. It is time to protest apartheid in Russia, where Jewish people have no rights and are not even allowed to leave the country.

Leon Luxemburg

Editor's note: The sympathy for the Palestine Liberation Organization was expressed by Dr. Mounir Bayyoud, the speaker quoted throughout the article — not by *The Battalion*. The speech was covered because it was sponsored by the International Students Association, an organization that provides a variety of cultural programs and viewpoints.

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.