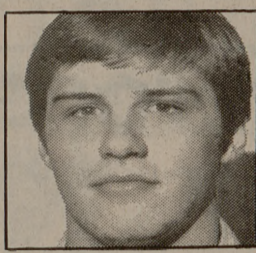


Opinion

Soviets challenge integrity of U.S. journalism

American journalists frequently are criticized by the government, the military and the general public for being too liberal. We make up "news," we sensationalize and we "report only the bad news," the charges go. In some cases, American journalists and authors have been labeled as sympathetic to the communist cause.



Loren Steffy

Despite constant efforts to combat the liberal-journalist myth (recent studies show there are far more conservative journalists, and many liberals in the business are unemployed), public opinion still leans toward the notion that journalists are leftist symps who like to dig up trouble.

But now journalists and authors are being attacked on a different front — from the very party where their loyalties allegedly lie. A recent issue of the Communist Party daily *Pravda* attacked American journalism and literature for being riddled with anti-Communist sentiment.

Some of *Pravda's* targets were easy — William F. Buckley Jr., for example. But the paper also singled out James Michener for his "fat opus 'Poland'" and Saul Bellow for "The Dean's December."

But, *Pravda* decided, Gore Vidal is OK because his portrayal of Lincoln in his novel of the same name "approaches the Marxist interpretation of this outstanding historical figure."

The *Pravda* piece points out the philosophical dichotomy between what Americans perceive to be communist sympathies and what the communists themselves perceive. Both sides sum up the situations in terms of their own perspectives.

Americans assume journalists are leftist lackeys

because they "dig up dirt" and therefore, the logic goes, change the system not for the better, but for the commies. Such sentiment, of course, presupposes the freedom to do such digging in the first place.

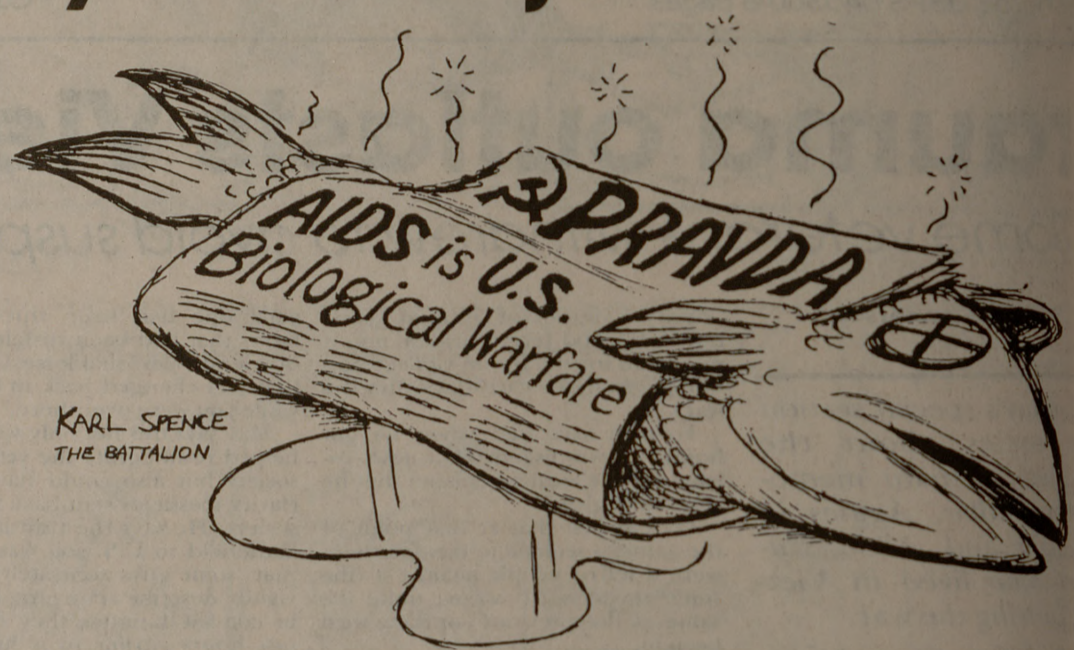
The Soviets, however, see the focus on social problems to be the result of capitalism. The system, they say, forces reporters to write such things. But the Soviets are used to being "forced" to write things and have little understanding of journalistic freedom. In their country, they are forced to gloss over and ignore similar problems in their system.

But the concept of journalistic freedom also is culturally relative. The Soviet journalists believe they have more freedom than their American counterparts. They can write anything about anybody, with no regard for libel or invasion of privacy, except for their boss — the government.

To American reporters, however, this is no freedom at all. They would rather be a watchdog answerable to the people than a lapdog answerable to an oppressive master. Maybe Soviets have fewer restraints on what they write, but the price is more than most American journalists would be willing to pay. The Soviet form of freedom is highly selective, a mockery of information and nothing more than government-sponsored public relations.

The *Pravda* article mistakenly attributed the motivation for American journalism solely to profit. "Ever since Americans learned how to 'make' and 'sell' news, the printed word in the U.S. has been closely tied to the market. This has given rise to a conformist, commercial artistic consciousness. Never before has the 'almighty dollar' in the coinage of Washington Irving, dictated so imperiously what and how to write."

In our system, profit may be a concern, but the driving force behind newspapers is the public's right to know, the maintenance of freedom. If this is the "making" of news, what does *Pravda* call it



KARL SPENCE
THE BATTALION

when a government spoon-feeds selective information to a hype sheet masquerading as a newspaper?

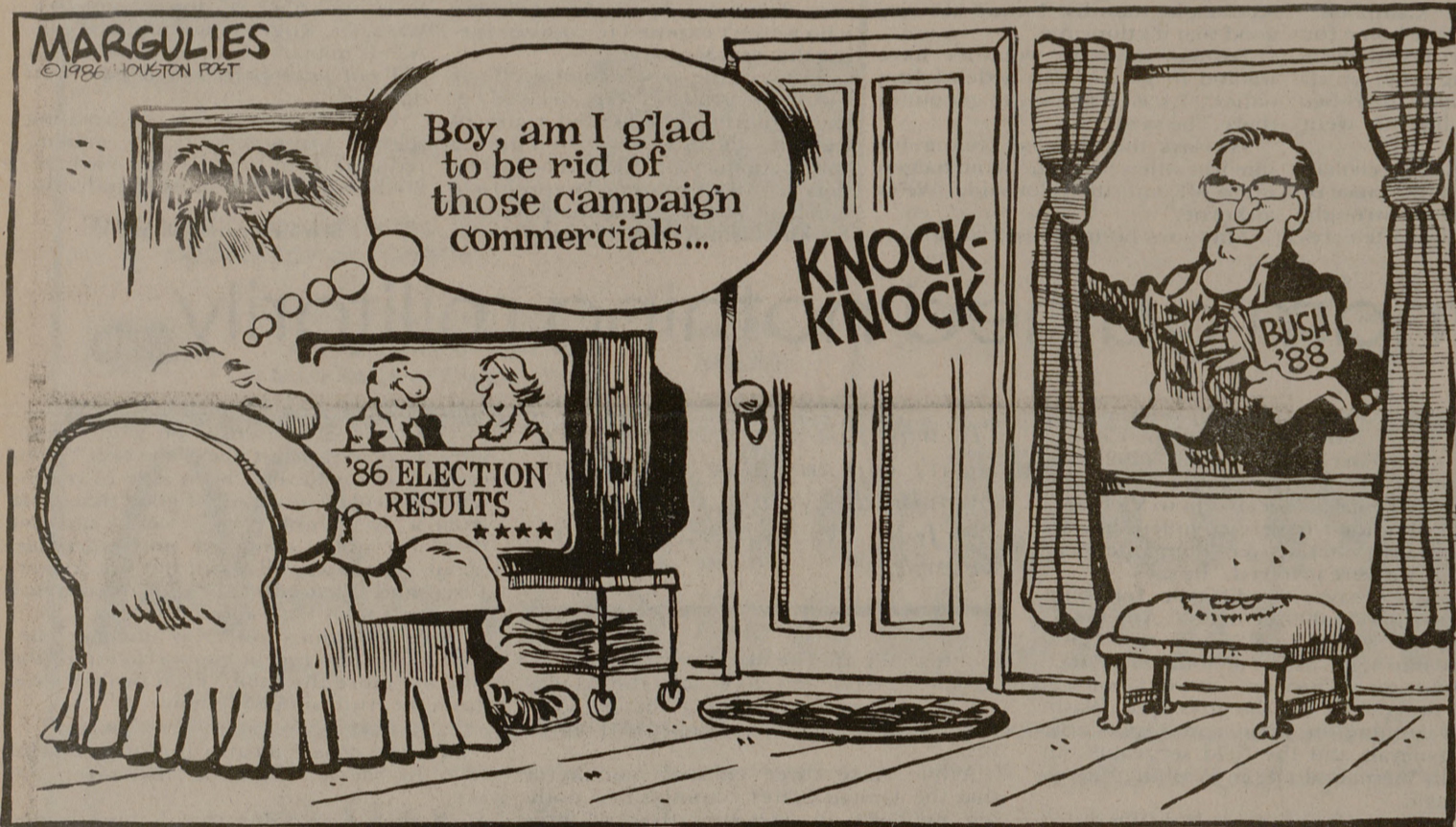
The article goes on to exemplify obscenity as "a feature of the general crisis in capitalist countries, attesting to the desolation of the individual's inner world in bourgeois society." The article, of course, ignores the Soviets' problems with pornography and prostitution run amok.

But ignoring the facts while criticizing those abroad is *Pravda's* style. It picks out anti-communism in American newspapers and literature while

conveniently overlooking that its own writers are prohibited from expressing similar sentiment.

The *Pravda* article's ludicrousness, however, is best exemplified in the paper's own pages. The same publication that attacked the integrity of American journalism less than a month earlier, in a true supermarket-journalism style, "exposed" the AIDS epidemic as a Pentagon plot. The *Nation's Enquirer* is green with envy.

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



MARGULIES
©1986 HOUSTON POST

Boy, am I glad to be rid of those campaign commercials...

KNOCK-KNOCK

BUSH '88

Good ol' boys cling to existence despite ever-encroaching BMWs

The Associated Press recently quoted Doug Marlette of Charlotte, N.C., creator of the Southern-flavored comic strip "Kudzu," as saying good ol' boys are out of fashion in the South and currently are trading in their pickup trucks for BMWs.



Lewis Grizzard

Marlette points to the development of the Sun Belt, which is fast replacing the good ol' boys native habitat, as the primary reason *Billy Bobus Rednexus*, his term, may soon be a thing of the past.

Marlette may be correct in relation to Southern cities. In Atlanta, for instance, one rarely sees a pickup truck anymore. It even has been reported Atlanta residents have been spotted drinking wine instead of beer.

So I console myself somewhat of an

expert on the Southern male (see my latest work entitled, "Jan Kemp: The First Teacher Who Was Sacked" or "The Revenge of the Pot-Bellied Alumni," in the December issue of *Smokeless Tobacco Illustrated*) and I daresay Marlette needs to do more research outside the cities of the South before he pronounces the good ol' boy as a thing of the past.

As proof of that, let us hear from my favorite G.O.B., my boyhood friend and idol, Weyman C. Wannamaker Jr., a great American who lives in my hometown of Moreland, Ga., where the late Curtis "Fruit Jar" Haney, the town drunk, grew the first recorded beer belly south of Baltimore, Md.

I located Weyman relaxing over at the pool hall.

"Weyman," I asked him, "is it true good ol' boys are turning in their pickup trucks for BMWs?"

"Not that I know of," replied Weyman, "but Gator Turnipseed traded his

shotgun for two tickets to 'Wrestlemania' last week. What's a BMW?"

"Never mind," I said to Weyman. "By the way, do you still carry your shotgun in the gun rack of your pickup?"

"Right next to my window decal," said Weyman.

"What does your window decal say?"

"Let's Shove Cuba Up the Mississippi!"

I asked Weyman if he and his good ol' boy friends still enjoyed country music.

"Not as much since Willie started wearing an earring," he explained, "but like Gator says, Willie sings all them duets with them foreigners and rock and roll singers and that's what can happen when you fall in with a bad crowd."

I wondered if Weyman and his friends still were drinking as much beer as always.

"Gator's wife tried to make him quit," Weyman said. "She wanted him to have a little more class, so one day, he sent her to the store to get a six-pack and she came home with some of them Barletts and James wine coolers they advertise on the television."

"And what happened?"

"Gator took his wife's Wrestlemania ticket away from her and gave it to me."

"Wasn't she upset she didn't get to go?"

"Betty Sue Ann?" asked Weyman. "Shoot, no. She had to change the oil in Gator's truck anyway."

Billy Bobus Rednexus — the legend continues.

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Mail Call

Plan can't be denied

EDITOR:

Chris Carson said that "Immorality is like beauty — in the eye of the beholder..." (Mail Call Oct. 29). He also said that Robert D. Farrell should "open his mind to accepting homosexuality not as a freak of nature, but as an individual's chosen lifestyle. He is right about the latter. He also said the Lord said to "love thy neighbor."

Paraphrased, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 says, "Don't you know that those doing such things have no share in the kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who live immoral lives — who are idol worshipers, adulterers or homosexuals — will have no share in his kingdom. Neither will thieves nor greedy people, drunkards, slanderers, or robbers."

I have not condemned Carson or anyone else, but what the Lord's plan discloses cannot be denied. Whether one believes it or not, it is there. If you love the Lord, then immorality is in his eyes — if you don't, then it is in your eyes. True, the choice is yours on whether to choose his way or yours, but don't forget that he is the final judge. My prayers are with Carson, not my resentment. I love my neighbor.

Sir Arthur W. John
Chaplain, Corps of Cadets

Mideast oversimplified

EDITOR:

Three points pertaining to Leon Luxemburg's letter Nov. 4:

1. Anti Semitic Coverage: As we see it, Olivier Uyttebroeck merely was doing his job — reporting on campus activities of international concerns. As an unbiased journalist, he would be expected to do similar reporting if an Israeli official were on campus presenting his/her perspective on the Middle East issue.

2. Menachem Begin: The fact that Begin was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize does not cover up historical facts. Begin, Yitzhak Shamir (the new Israeli Prime Minister) and others of the Jewish underground in the days before the creation of the Israeli State in 1948 did terrorize the Palestinian population much in the same way as 1) the Israeli population is being terrorized today by some Palestinian groups, and 2) the Palestinian refugees in neighboring Arab countries are being terrorized by being under constant bombing threat by Israeli jets. So let us not pretend that the violence in the Middle East is being perpetuated by only one side.

3. Soviet Jews: If Luxemburg wants to compare institutionalized racism in South Africa to the mistreatment of Soviet Jews and label them both as apartheid, then we believe he does not really comprehend what apartheid is.

It is saddening to see people like Luxemburg oversimplifying reality in the Middle East by naively classifying one side as the good guys and the other as the bad guys.

Thomas Mebrahtu
Beatriz Bravo
Jose F. Rodriguez

Letter lacked correct facts

EDITOR:

Brian Petruskie, in his Nov. 6 letter claims that the majority of the Palestine Liberation Organization's terrorist activity was conducted by splinter groups. The fact is that more than 85 percent of all murders and mutilations were claimed and done by Yassir Arafat's faction. Most of the other Palestinian terrorist activity was supported verbally and lauded by Arafat.

The supporters of the PLO always talk about the 40-year-old King David Hotel explosion because there is nothing else that they can say. This explosion has nothing to do with terrorism. The King David Hotel was a military object containing arms storage and military archives and guarded by a large number of British troops.

Petruskie also says that persecution of Jews in Russia is mostly religious and is not based on race. The implication here is that it can be condoned.

Unfortunately, less than 10 percent of the Jews in Russia practice Judaism. Their persecution is based solely on their ethnic origin. I speak from my own experience. Petruskie claims that there is a good percentage of Jews in the Supreme Soviet. There was one token Jew in the Presidium 20 years ago and he is long since dead.

Petruskie's final statement about concentration camps on the West Bank is false also. Any Arab resident of Israel is free to leave the country, except for convicted terrorists. It is difficult to say whether Petruskie is as blissfully ignorant of the facts as his letter shows (with all the glib arrogance that goes with ignorance) or his sympathies to Soviet racism and Palestinian terrorism override any sense of fairness to the truth.

Leon Luxemburg

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.

The Battalion

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